

# Texas High School Graduates – College Enrollment Trends 2003 -2009

## Key Findings

- The proportion of Texas high school graduates who enrolled in a Texas higher education institution the first fall following high school graduation increased steadily, from 52 percent in 2003 to 56 percent in 2009.
- The proportion of graduates who enrolled in a Texas four-year public college or university (22%) or a Texas private institution (5%) did not change from 2003 to 2009, but the proportion who enrolled in a Texas two-year institution increased from 26 percent to 30 percent.
- While the percentage of men and women Texas high school graduates enrolling in a Texas higher education institution increased by about four percentage points from 2003 to 2009, a larger percentage of women than men enrolled in college every year, resulting in a persistent gap of seven percentage points in their college-going rates.
- By 2009, more than 50 percent of all ethnic groups enrolled in college the first fall following high school graduation. Hispanic high school graduates increased their college-going rates the most (from 44% to 53%), followed by African American high school graduates (45% to 52%). The college-going rates for White and Other ethnic groups did not change significantly, though they remained high (59% and 75%, respectively).
- The college-going rate for students who were economically disadvantaged in the year they graduated increased from 44 percent to 49 percent from 2007 to 2009.
- Within seven years after high school graduation, only six percent of the students who first entered a Texas public four-year or a Texas private higher education institution waited until after the first year following their high school graduation. However, 22 percent of the students who enrolled in a two-year public institution delayed entering college until after the first year.

## **Background**

This report is the second in a series of research briefs designed to monitor the educational progress of students who graduate from Texas public high schools and enter higher education institutions in the state of Texas. The purpose of this report is to identify year-to-year trends in how many Texas high school graduates enrolled in a Texas higher education institution the fall semester immediately following their high school graduation. The number of students who delayed their enrollment for one or more years is reported as well.

The research reported here is based on seven cohorts of students who graduated from Texas public high schools between 2003 and 2009. Data from the Texas Education Agency were combined with data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to produce this report.

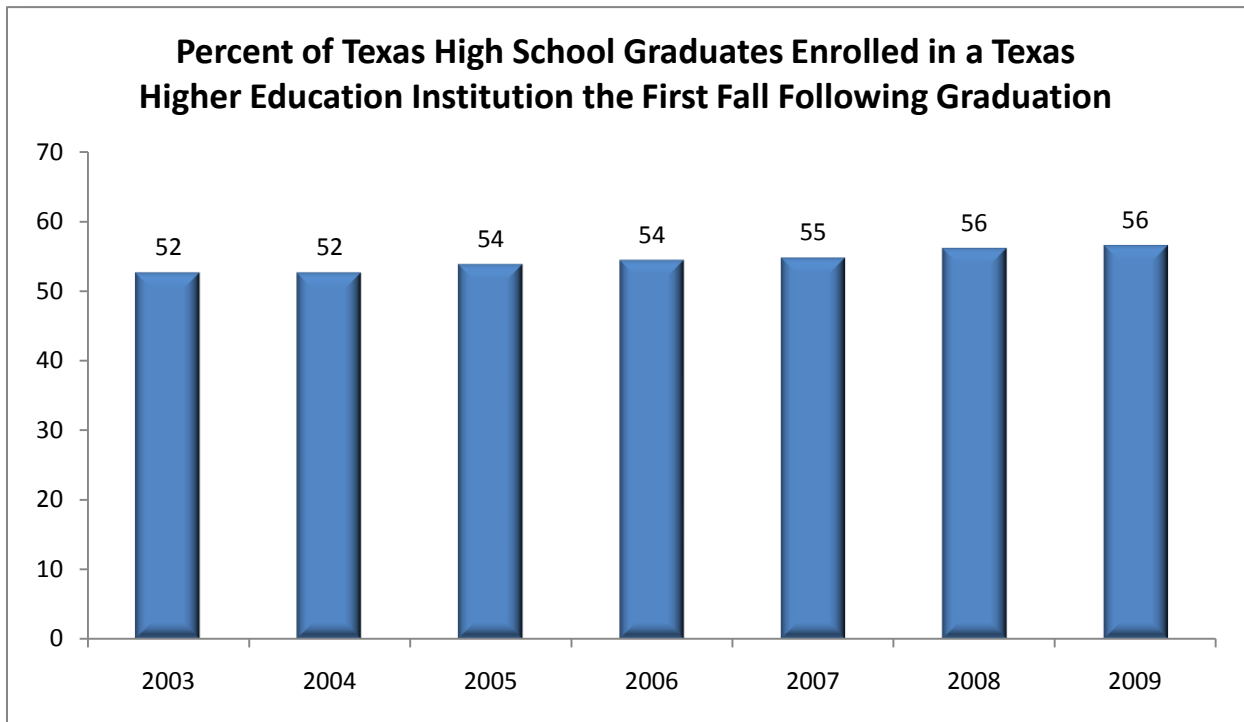
The 'college-going' rate was calculated by dividing the number of students enrolled in any type of Texas higher education institution (public or private, two-year or four-year) by the number of students with valid student identification numbers. This college-going rate does NOT include students enrolled in higher education institutions outside the state of Texas.

## **Questions**

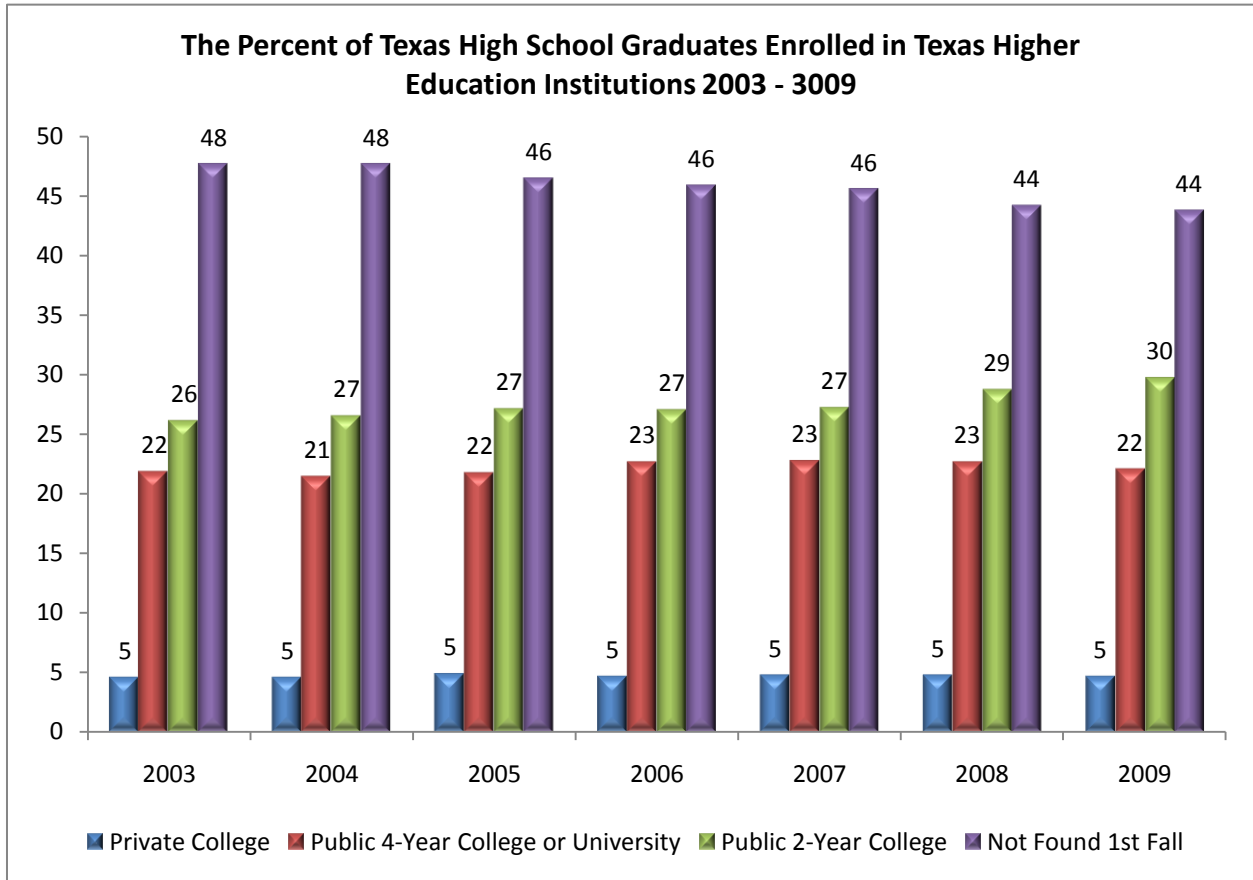
1. How has the rate of enrollment in Texas higher education institutions changed from 2003 to 2009?
2. Has the rate of enrollment changed by gender, ethnicity, family economic status, and type of high school diploma?
3. How many students delayed their first college enrollment beyond the first year following high school graduation?

## Results

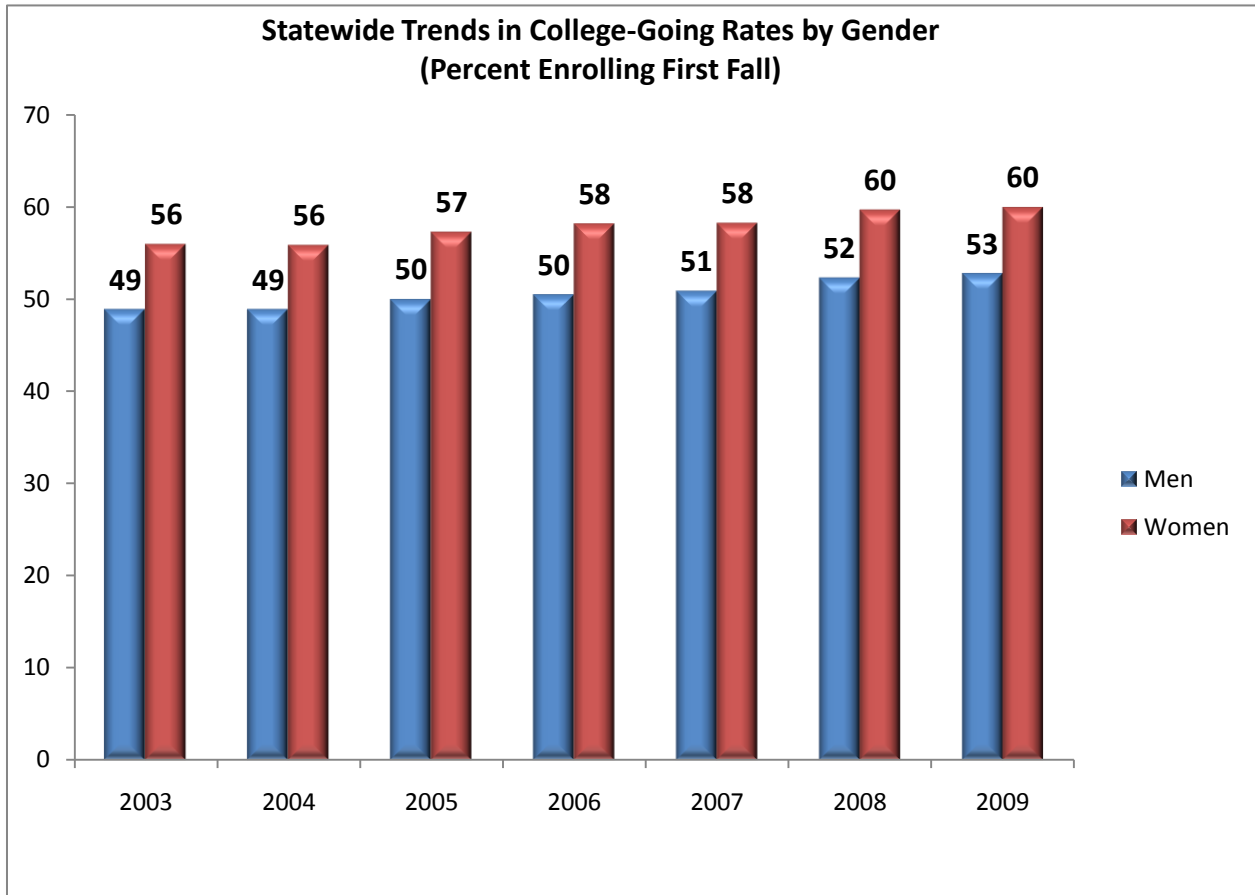
- The percentage of Texas high school graduates enrolled in college the first fall following high school graduation increased steadily from 52 percent in 2003 to 56 percent in 2009.



- The percentages of Texas high school graduates who first enrolled in Texas four-year public or private institutions (two-year and four-year) did not change, but the percentage enrolled in Texas two-year public institutions increased from 26 to 30 percent from 2003 to 2009. The percentage not enrolled in a Texas higher education institution decreased from 48 to 44 percent over the same time period.

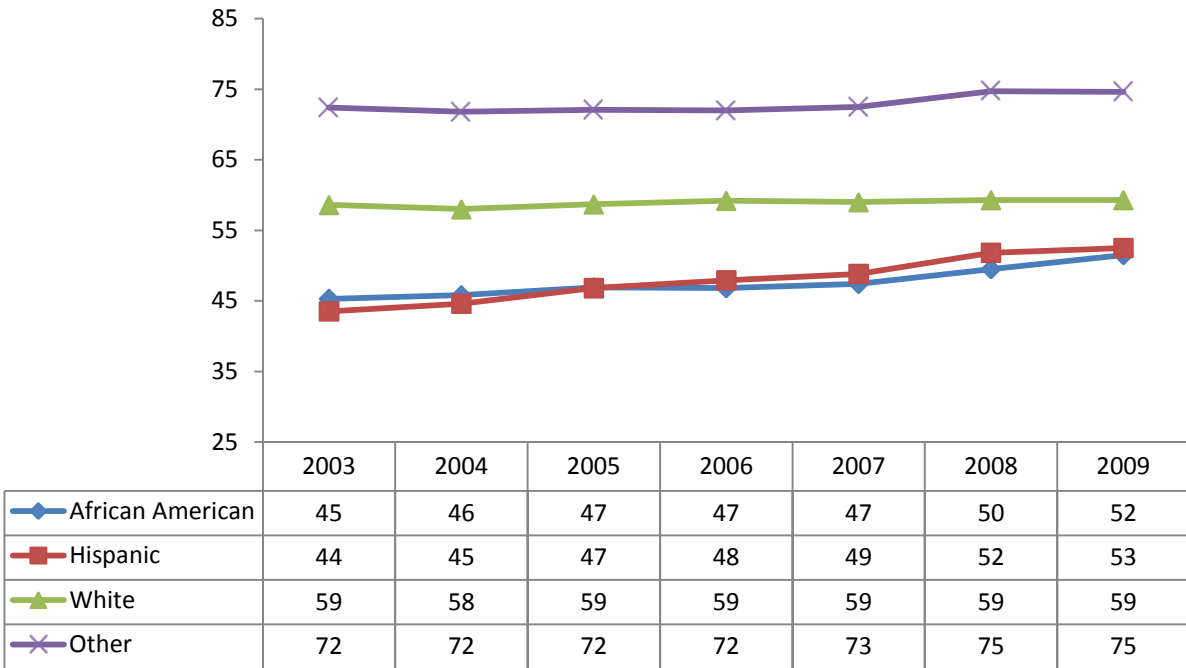


- While the college-going rate increased by the same amount (about 4 percentage points) for both men and women, women outpaced men by about 7 percentage points in their college-going rates each year.

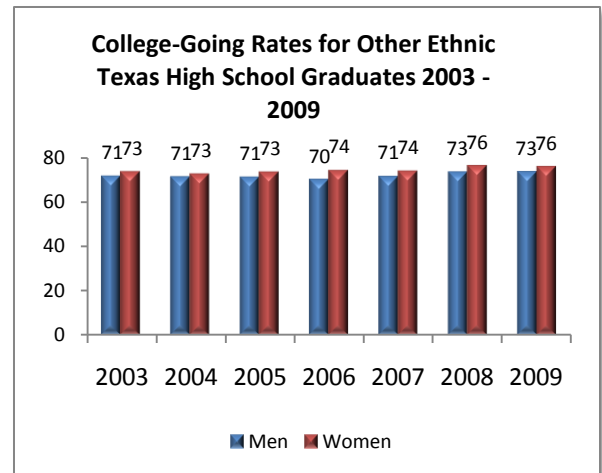
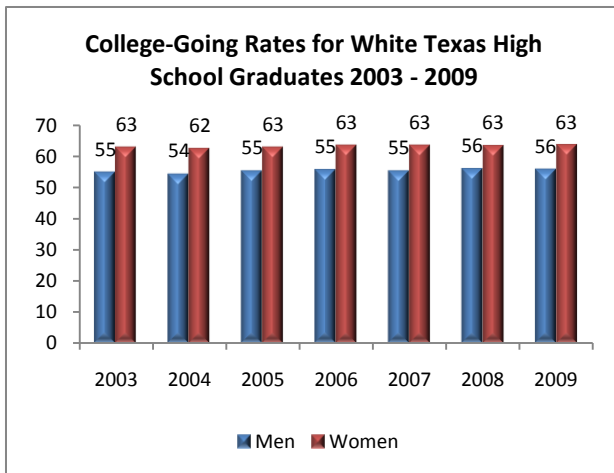
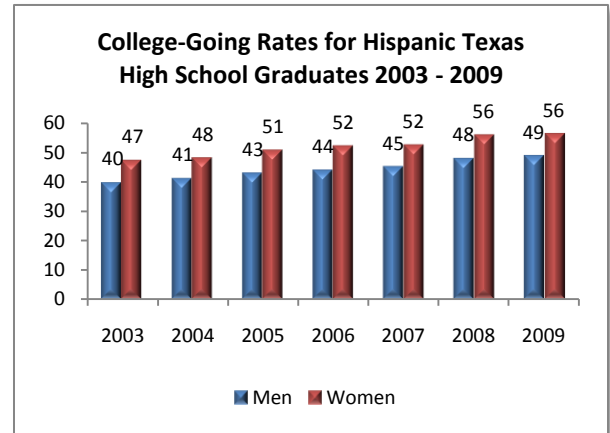
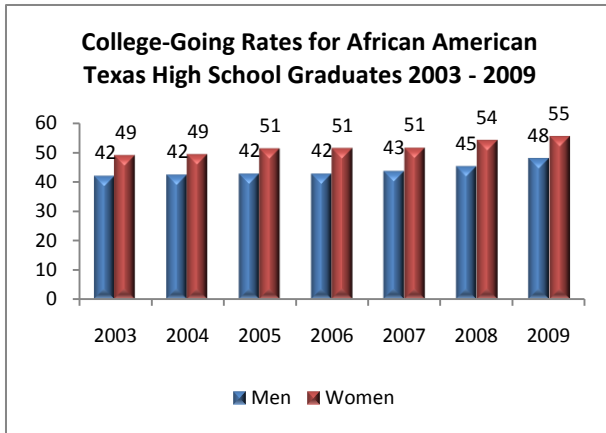


- From 2003 – 2009, the college-going rate increased for all non-White ethnic groups. The rate for Hispanic students increased by nine percentage points, the rate for African American high school graduates increased by seven percentage points and the rate for the combined Asian and Native American students increased by three percentage points. The college-going rate for White students was approximately 59 percent every year.

**Statewide Trends in Texas College-Going Rates by Ethnicity  
(Percent Enrolling First Fall)**

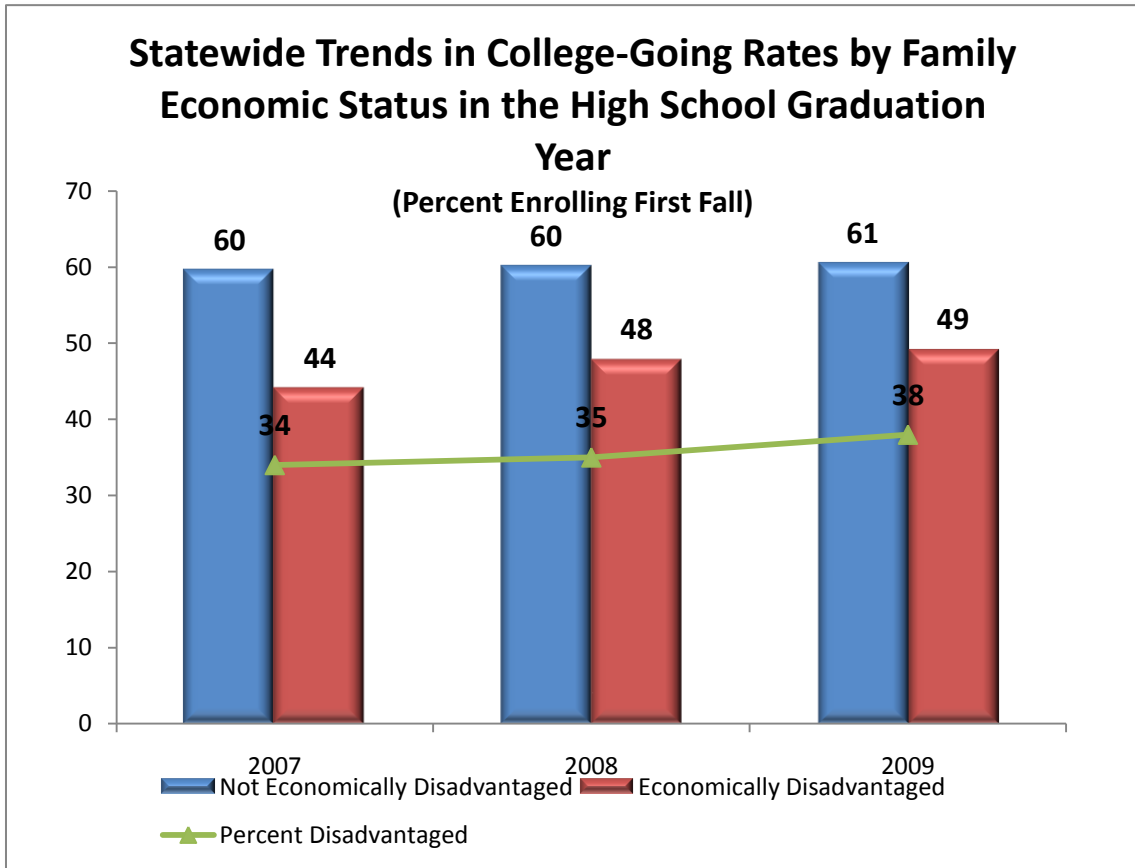


- Gender differences in the college-going rate within each ethnic group were about the same (about 7%) for all groups except the 'Other' category where the gender difference was just two to three percentage points from 2003 to 2009.



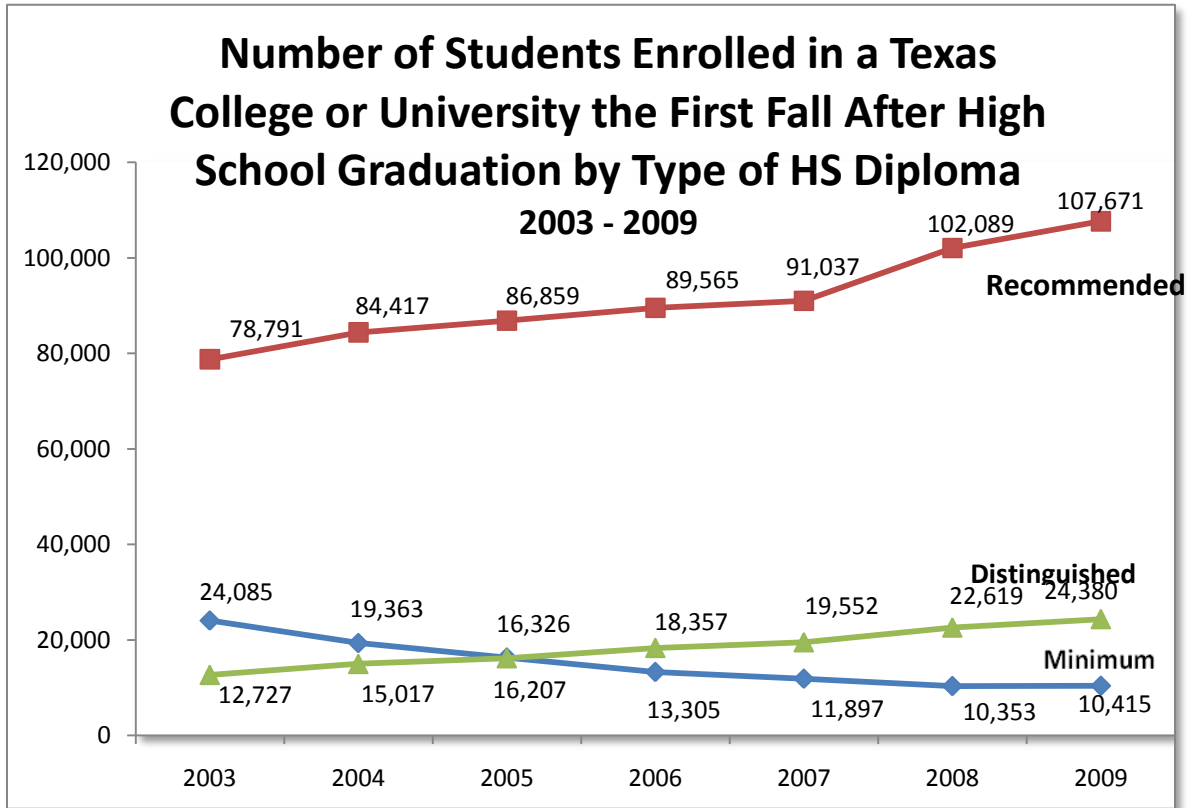
- From 2003 to 2009, the number of students within each ethnic group ranged from 29,555 to 35,269 for African American students, from 71,518 to 96,148 for Hispanic students, from 112,110 to 110,778 for White students, and from 7,480 to 10,841 students in the Other ethnic category.

- From 2007 to 2009, the percentage of students classified as economically disadvantaged in the year they graduated from high school increased from 34 to 38 percent. The college-going rate for these students increased from 44 percent to 49 percent over the same period of time. The college-going rate for students who were not economically disadvantaged when they graduated from high school was about 60 percent each year.

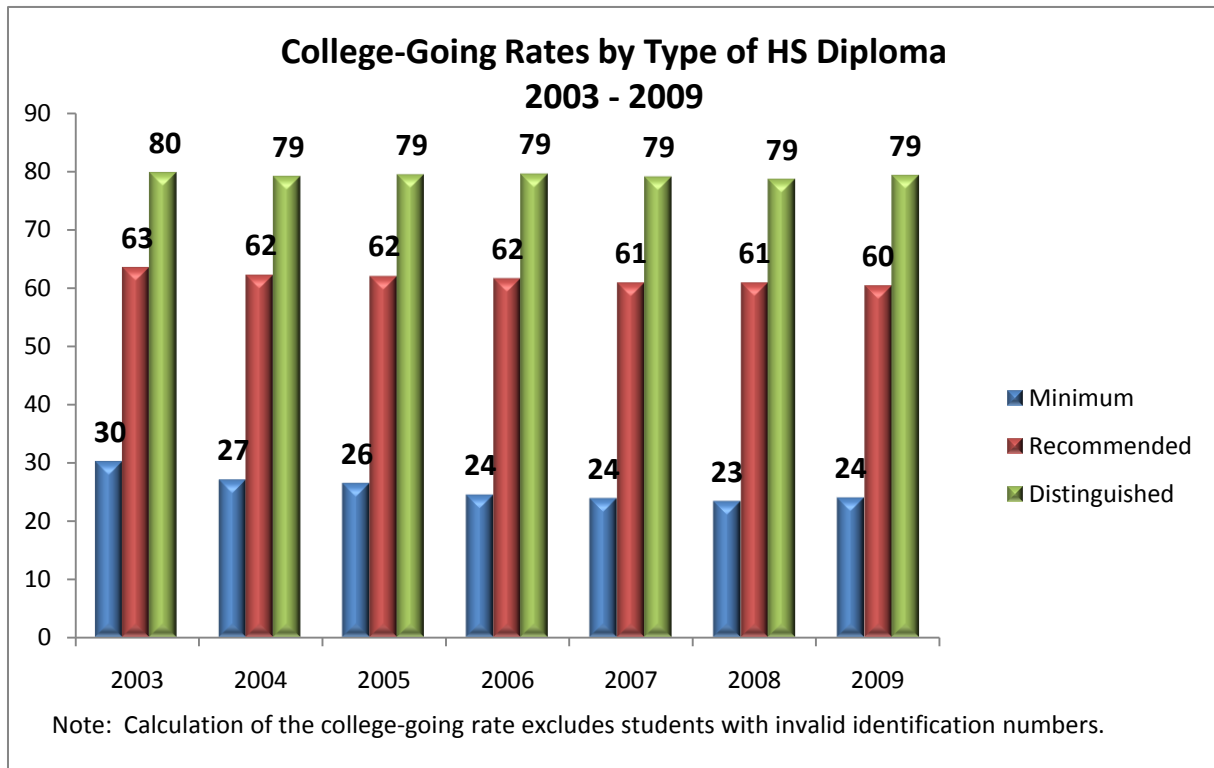




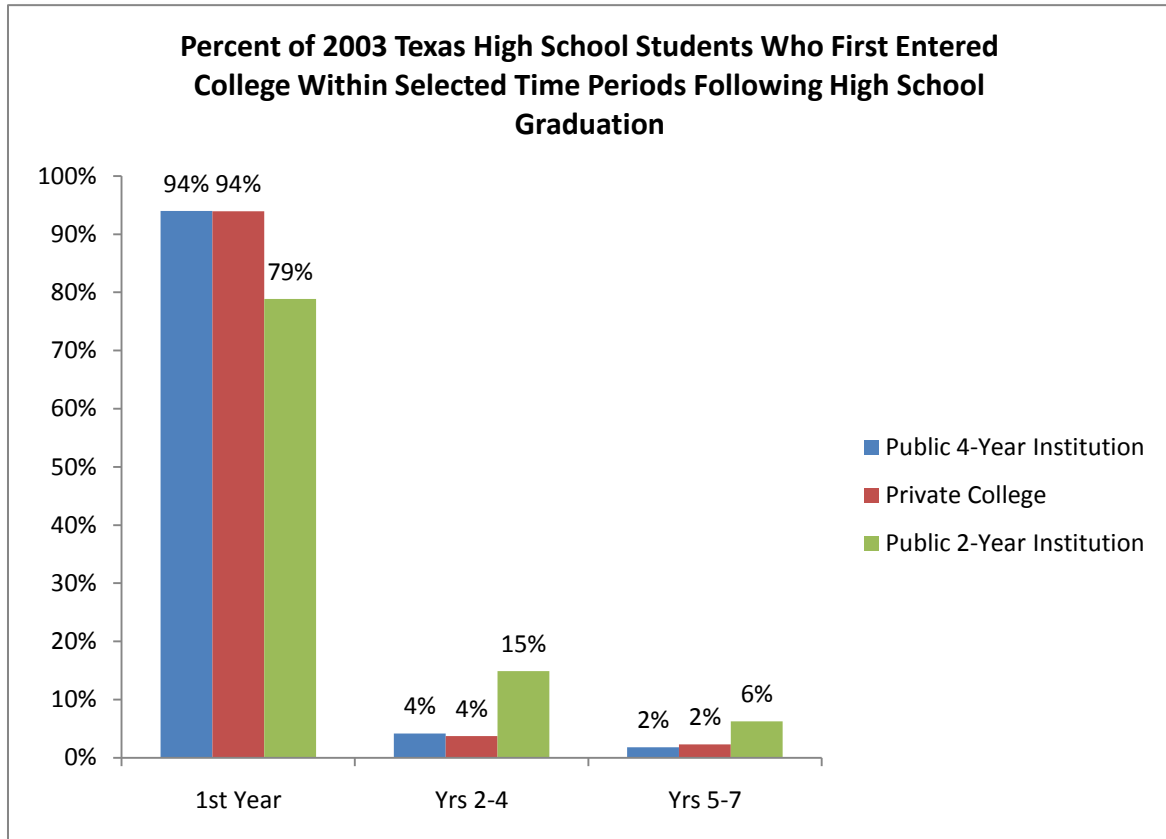
- The number of Texas high school graduates enrolled in college the first fall after graduation increased for students who earned a Recommended or Distinguished high school diploma, but declined for students with a Minimum high school diploma.



- The percentages of high school graduates with the Minimum and Recommended high school diploma who enrolled in college declined from 2003 to 2009 while the college-going rate for graduates with the Distinguished diploma remained high at about 79 percent.



- The majority (94%) of Texas high school graduates who first entered a public four-year or a private college did so within 12 months of graduating from high school, while 79 percent of graduates who entered a two-year college did so within the first 12 months. Fifteen percent of high school graduates who first entered a two-year Texas higher education did so two to four years after graduation and another six percent entered a two-year institution five or more years after high school graduation.



## Summary

Between 2003 and 2009 the rate at which Texas high school graduates enrolled in college the first fall following their high school graduation showed a slow, but steady growth, increasing from 52 percent to 56 percent. Some college enrollment trends have not changed. For example, a larger percentage of women than men enrolled in college each year over the seven year period of this study. A persistent seven percentage point gap remains. This seven-point gender gap is evident across all ethnic groups, except for the combined Asian American and Native American ethnic group, called 'Other' in this report, where the gap was not more than three points any given year. The percentage of Texas high school graduates who first entered a four-year public college or university (22%) or entered a private college or university (5%) did not change. Finally, the college-going rate for students who graduated with the Distinguished high school diploma remained high, about 79 percent over the seven years.

Nevertheless, there were noticeable changes in the college-going behavior of selected subgroups of Texas high school graduates. The proportion of Hispanic and African American high school graduates who enrolled in a Texas higher education institution increased, by nine points for Hispanics and seven points for African American students. In 2009, more than half of both ethnic groups enrolled in college the first fall after their high school graduation. In addition, high school graduates classified as economically disadvantaged not only increased in numbers, but the percentage enrolled in college increased from 44 percent in 2007 to 49 percent in 2009, a substantial shift over a relatively short period of time.

This study also documents how many students delayed their initial college enrollment more than a year after high school graduation. Students who graduated from high school in 2003 were followed for seven years to determine when they first enrolled. The majority of 2003 high school graduates (94%) who entered Texas four-year public or private colleges and universities did so the first year immediately following graduation. While the majority of 2003 high school graduates who first entered a two-year public community college (79%) did so within the first year following graduation, more than one graduate in five (21%) waited two or more years to enroll.