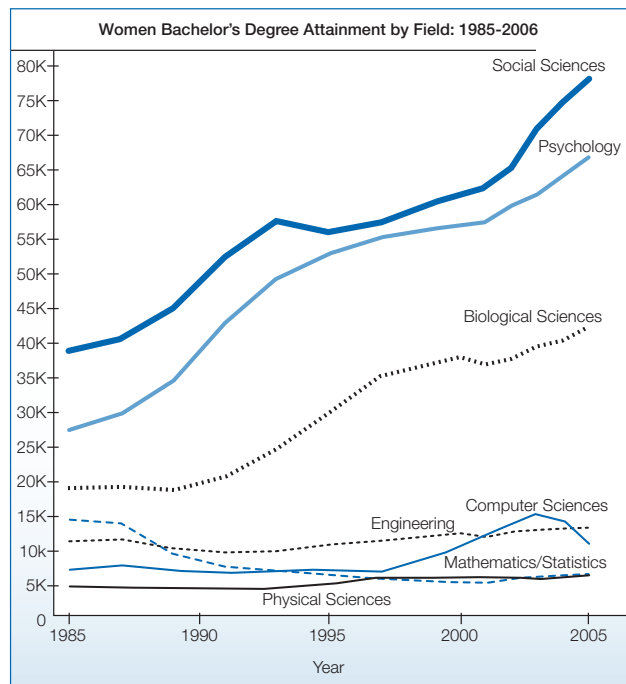
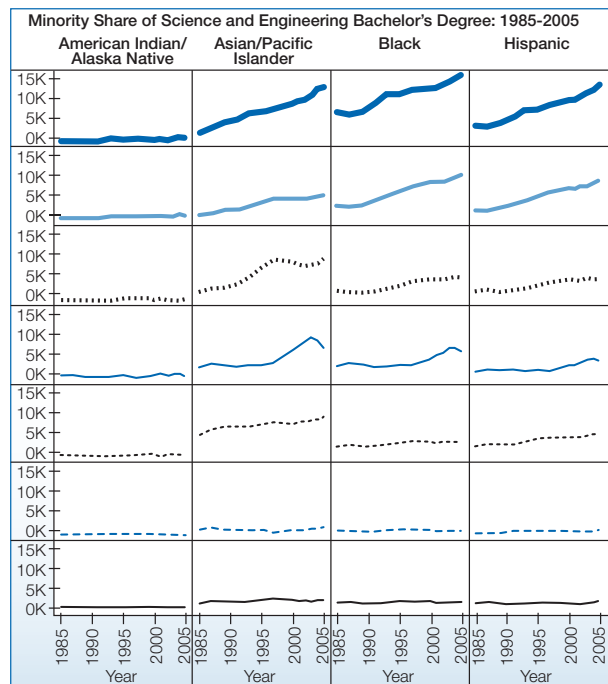


The number of S&E bachelor's degrees awarded to women and minorities has largely increased over the last two decades, but not in the physical sciences, engineering or mathematics.

Figure 16.1. Earned bachelor's degrees by sex: Selected years, 1985–2005



Figures 16.2. Earned bachelor's degrees by race: Selected years, 1985–2005



SOURCE: Appendix Table 2-27, *Science and Engineering Indicators 2008*, National Science Foundation.

Why is this indicator important?

- Demographic trends and world events contributed to changes in both the numbers and types of students participating in U.S. higher education.

Key Observations

- The share of bachelor's degrees awarded to women increased in almost all major S&E fields during the past two decades.
- For all racial/ethnic groups (except white), the total number of bachelor's degrees, the number of S&E bachelor's degrees, and the number of bachelor's degrees in most S&E fields, except computer sciences generally increased over the past two decades.
- Women earned more than half of bachelor's degrees in psychology (78%), agricultural sciences (51%), biological sciences (62%), chemistry (52%), and social sciences (54%).

Related Discussion

- Despite considerable progress for underrepresented minority groups between 1985 and 2005 in earning bachelor's degrees in any field, the gap in educational attainment between young minorities and whites continues to be wide.