



## Bachelor's Degrees Awarded in the University System of Georgia and the Nation

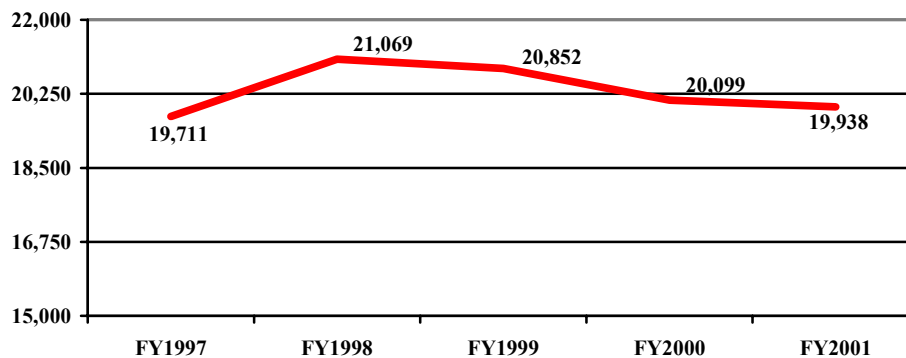
### Introduction

The Student Information Reporting System (SIRS) contains data on all degrees awarded annually in the University System of Georgia. SIRS is the source of data for the System response to the annual federal *IPEDS Completions Survey*, the detailed USG reference report, *USG Degrees Conferred*, and all other reports on degree production in the USG. This *Research Note* is an analysis of the most recent data on bachelor's degree production in the University System compared to national bachelor's degree data obtained from IPEDS.

### USG Bachelor's Degrees - FY2001

In Fiscal Year 2001, University System of Georgia institutions awarded 19,938 bachelor's degrees, a one-year decrease of 0.8 percent or 161 degrees fewer than the corresponding FY 2000 total. In FY 1998, the year prior to the University System's conversion from quarters to semesters, the USG experienced a 1.8 percent one-year spike in bachelor's degree production to an all-time high of 21,069 degrees. Although the annual total has declined gradually from that level, there has still been a net increase in bachelor's degrees awarded over the five-year period of 1.2 percent. The following chart illustrates that trend.<sup>1</sup>

**Total USG Bachelor's Degrees  
Five-Year Trend**



<sup>1</sup>National data are only available from IPEDS through FY1998, so there is no corresponding five-year trend at the national level. However, nationally the number of bachelor's degrees awarded increased by 19,228 degrees or 1.6 percent from FY 1993 to FY 1998.

## The Top Ten National and University System of Georgia Bachelor's Degree Fields

Identifying the specific fields in which bachelor's degrees are awarded is also relevant to academic planning. The table on the following page compares the ten most popular degree fields for the University System of Georgia with those for the United States as a whole.

<b>Top Ten Bachelor's Degree Fields – USG and U.S.*</b>	
<b>University System of Georgia</b>	<b>United States</b>
1. Business	1. Business
2. Education	2. Social Sciences
3. Engineering and Engineering Technology	3. Education
4. Social Sciences	4. Health Professions
5. Health Professions	5. Psychology
6. Psychology	6. Engineering and Engineering Technology
7. Computer Science	7. Biological and Life Sciences
8. Biological and Life Sciences	8. Visual and Performing Arts
9. Visual/Performing Arts	9. English Language/Literature/Letters
10. Communications	10. Communications

\*Sources: The most recent available national data are FY1998 from the *Digest of Education Statistics 2000*, National Center for Education Statistics (IPEDS Completions Survey), Table 254; USG data are for FY2001 from annual SIRS degree completions data.

Business administration is the most popular bachelor's degree for both the USG and the nation, and nine of the top ten bachelor's degree fields are common to both, although not in the same order. Among the notable differences between the two lists are:

- Engineering is the third most productive field in the USG, but just sixth nationally.
- Computer science is the seventh most popular bachelor's field in the USG, but it is not in the top ten nationally.
- English language/literature/letters is ninth on the national top-ten list but does not appear on the University System list.

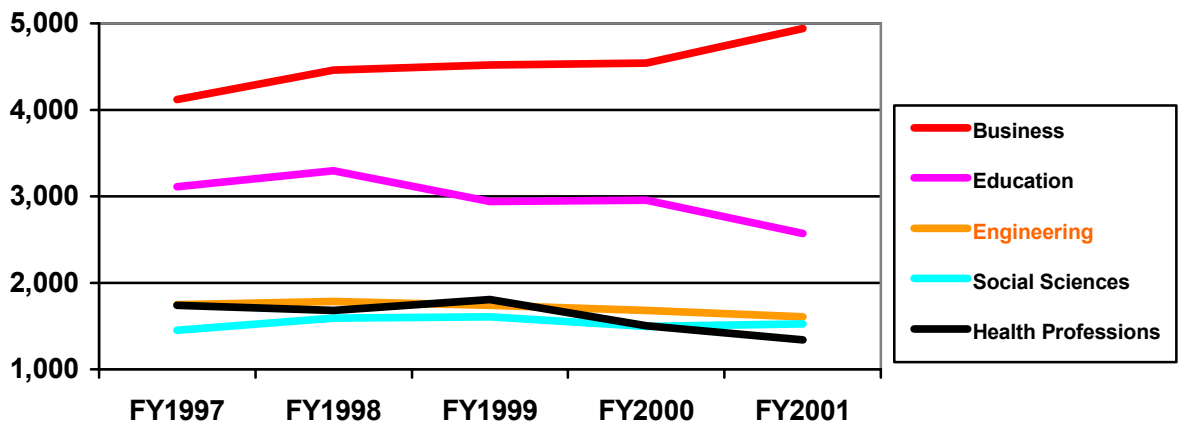
Eighty-two percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded in the USG in FY 2001 were in the ten disciplines shown above. The corresponding U.S. percentage is 77 percent, making the selection of bachelor's degree disciplines relatively more diverse nationally than in the USG.

### Changes Over Time

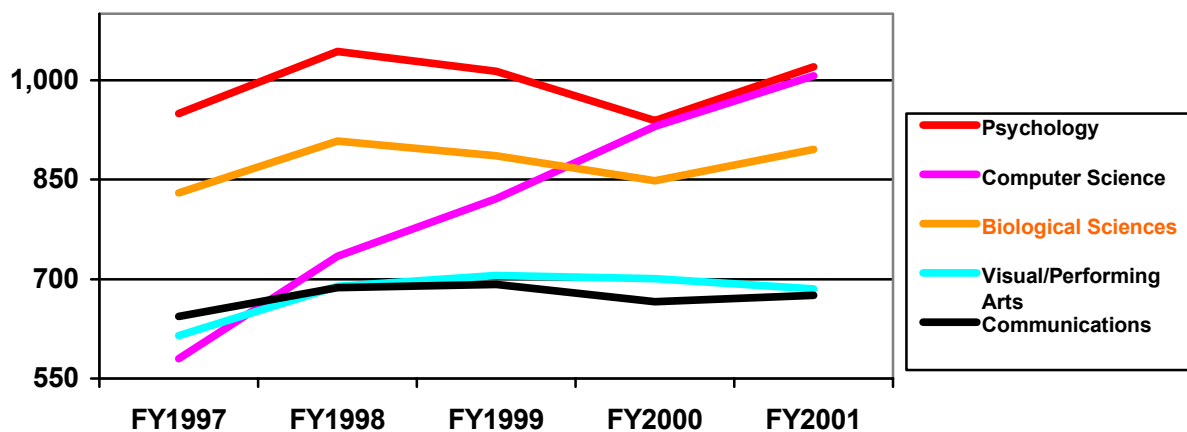
The charts on the next page provide a closer look at the ten most popular bachelor's degree fields in the USG, showing five-year trends in degrees awarded.

The first chart below shows that the two most frequently awarded bachelor's degrees in the USG, business and education, have diverged over the last five years, with the numbers of business degrees steadily growing and education declining. Despite decreasing numbers, education still leads the next most popular field by a large margin. The second chart shows that the most dramatic growth in degree production has occurred in computer science, which has overtaken all of the second-tier disciplines except psychology and is on a growth curve (73 percent in the last 5 years) that could move it into the top five. From FY 2000 to FY 2001, 4 of the top 10 bachelor's fields produced fewer degrees, and 6 produced more, for a one-year net change of -2 degrees. Thus, the overall one-year decrease in total degrees noted on page one occurred in fields that are not among the top ten degree producers (which awarded just 18 percent of all baccalaureates in FY 2001).

**1st to 5th Most Popular USG Bachelor's Degree Fields  
Five-Year Trends**



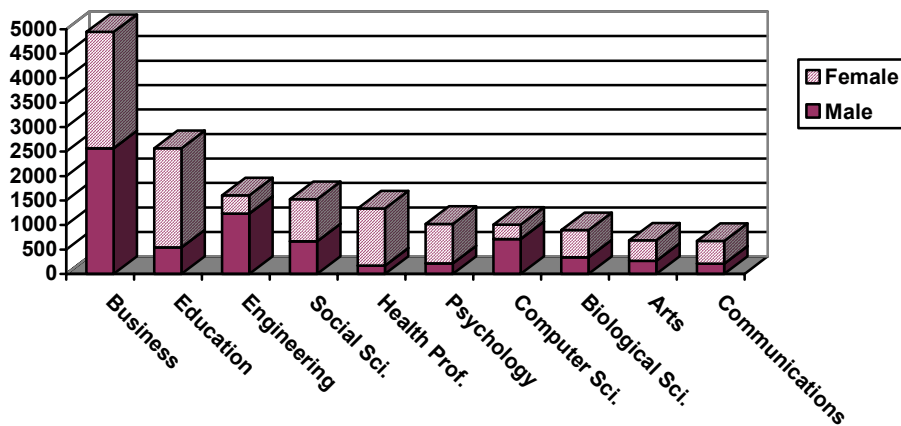
**6th to 10th Most Popular USG Bachelor's Degree Fields  
Five-Year Trends**



## Bachelor's Degree Awards by Gender

Historically, some fields were dominated by males, such as engineering and business, and some by females, such as education and nursing. These trends are gradually changing. The differences, however, have implications for academic planning, gender equity, and other socio-economic issues. The following chart shows the relative numbers and proportions of bachelor's degrees conferred on females and males in the ten most popular bachelor's fields in the USG.

**Bachelor's Degrees Awarded by Gender  
in Top Ten University System of Georgia Degree Fields**



\*Source: FY2001 USG data are from the *Student Information Reporting System*.

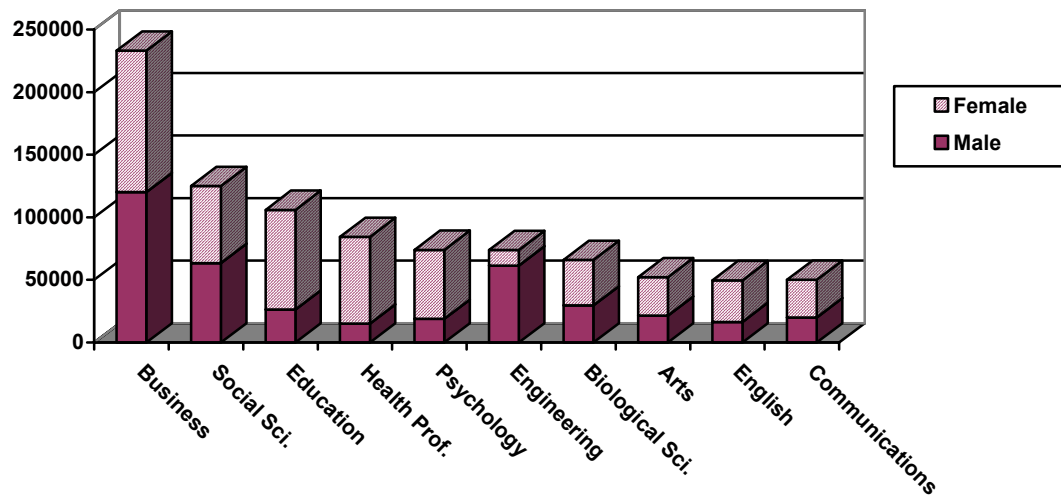
In seven of the top ten USG baccalaureate fields, females earn well over one-half of the bachelor's degrees awarded. The three fields in which males dominate are business (by just 52 percent to 48 percent), engineering, and computer science<sup>2</sup>. Females earned 58 percent of both total bachelor's degrees and those awarded in the ten most popular fields in the University System.

The next chart shows the corresponding female/male degree award pattern at the national level. Again, females receive the majority of degrees in seven of the ten most popular fields, with males dominating engineering, business and social sciences (the latter two fields with just 52 percent and 51 percent, respectively). Overall, females earn 56 percent of all bachelor's degrees and 57 percent of those awarded in the top ten fields nationally.

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<sup>2</sup> Computer science is defined in this analysis as all programs in the 11.0000 CIP field, Computer and Information Sciences.

### Bachelor's Degrees Awarded by Gender in Top Ten U.S. Degree Fields



\*Source: FY1998 IPEDS data are from the *Digest of Education Statistics 2000*, Table 257.

Thus, the top ten bachelor's degrees chosen by males and females differ, both in the University System and the nation. The following tables show the national female and male top ten bachelor's degree fields, and the corresponding lists for the USG.

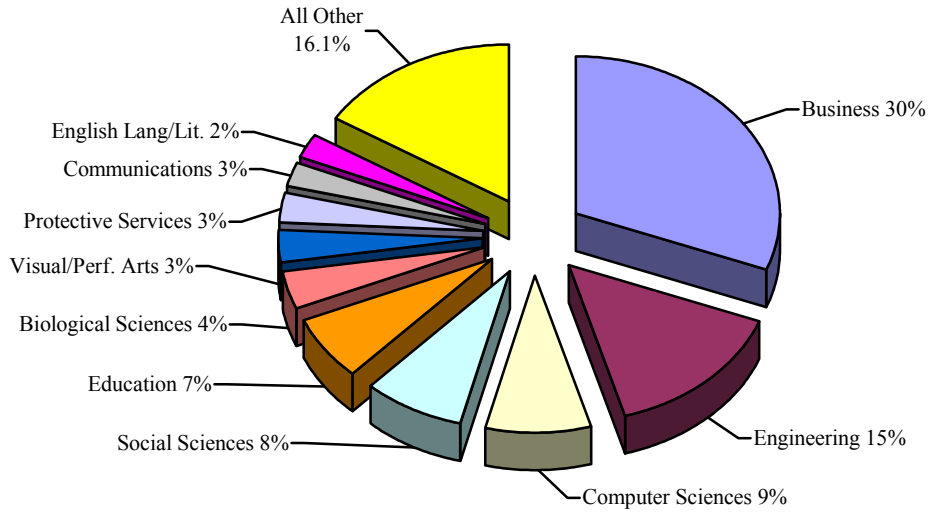
Top Ten Bachelor's Degree Fields in the U.S. by Gender*	
Females	Males
1. Business	1. Business
2. Education	2. Social Sciences
3. Health Professions	3. Engineering and Engineering Technology
4. Social Sciences	4. Biological and Life Sciences
5. Psychology	5. Education
6. Biological and Life Sciences	6. Visual and Performing Arts
7. English Language/Literature/Letters	7. Communications
8. Visual and Performing Arts	8. Computer Science
9. Communications	9. Psychology
10. Liberal Arts and Sciences/Humanities	10. English Language/Literature/Letters

\*Source: IPEDS data, FY1998, *Digest of Education Statistics 2000*, Table 257.

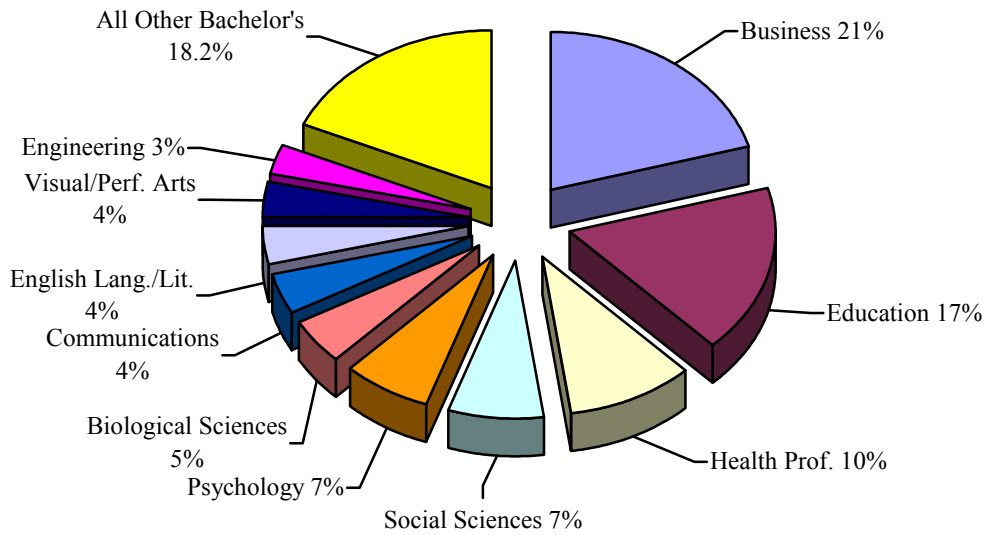
<b>Top Ten Bachelor's Degree Fields in the USG by Gender*</b>	
<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
1. Business	1. Business
2. Education	2. Engineering and Engineering Technology
3. Health Professions	3. Computer Science
4. Social Sciences	4. Social Sciences
5. Psychology	5. Education
6. Biological and Life Sciences	6. Biological and Life Sciences
7. Communications	7. Visual and Performing Arts
8. English Language/Literature/Letters	8. Protective Services
9. Visual/Performing Arts	9. Communications
10. Engineering and Engineering Technology	10. English Language/Literature/Letters
*Source: FY2001 SIRS, USG	

The proportions of USG bachelor's degrees awarded to female and male graduates in their respective top ten fields of study are illustrated in the following pie charts:

**Top Ten USG Bachelor's Degree Fields for Males  
by Percentage of Total Bachelor's Awarded to Males**



**Top Ten USG Bachelor's Degree Fields for Females  
by Percentage of Total Bachelor's Awarded to Females**



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