

Council reports decline in college minorities

WASHINGTON - The percentage of low- and middle-income blacks and Hispanics entering college after high school graduation declined dramatically in the past decade, and fewer black college undergrads achieved degrees, according to a report from the American Council on Education.

The "Eighth Annual Status Report on Minorities in Higher Education," released by ACE's Office of Minority Concerns, said that based on Census Bureau figures, college participation rate for low-income black high school graduates between 18 and 24 years old dropped from 39.8 percent in 1976 to 30.3 percent in 1988. For Hispanics, the rate fell from

50.4 percent to 35.3 percent over the same period, "indicating an educational failure rate of intolerable magnitude," the report said.

Low-income white high school graduates made a slight gain in college participation, rising from 36.8 percent to 38.8 percent, the report said.

Deborah Carter, who compiled the study for the Washington-based education group along with Reginald Wilson, said the focus was on the high school completion and college participation patterns of low-income and middle-income black and Hispanic youth living at home with their families.

The Associated Press over the weekend obtained a copy of the report, which was being released Monday.

The study said the bulk of the black and Hispanic youth, 51 percent and 45 percent respectively, were from families with incomes under \$18,581. Twenty-five percent of the blacks and 33 percent of the Hispanics had family incomes between \$18,582 and \$33,510, and 16 percent of the blacks and 17 percent of the Hispanics had family incomes of between \$33,511 to \$52,119, the report said.

Eight percent of the black youth and 5 percent of Hispanic youth were from families with incomes of \$52,120

and above.

Middle-income blacks and Hispanics showed the most severe declines in college participation during the late 1970s and early 1980s, said the report. By 1988, the college participation rate of middle-income blacks had fallen to 36.2 percent from 52.7 percent in 1976, with black males hit most severely.

Corresponding rates for Hispanics were 46.4 percent in 1988 compared with 53.4 percent in 1976.

The report showed that as a group, the number of degrees earned by minorities, including blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans and American Indians, increased from 1976 to 1987,

with jumps of 30.9 percent in bachelor's degrees and 63.4 percent for first-professional degrees.

But blacks sustained the greatest losses among all racial and ethnic groups. From 1976 to 1987, the number of blacks earning bachelor's degrees fell 4.3 percent, from 59,122 degrees to 56,554 degrees. For black males the drop was 12.2 percent, from 25,634 to 22,498 bachelor's degrees.

Blacks earned 6.4 percent of the 918,388 bachelor's degrees awarded in 1976, but only 5.7 percent of the 991,264 bachelor's degrees in 1987. Hispanics earned 2 percent of the degrees in 1976 and 2.7 percent in 1987.

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Soviet ethnic violence explodes in Azerbaijan

MOSCOW - At least 25 people died in the capital of the Azerbaijan republic after ethnic rioting broke out, and dozens more people were killed or wounded as the unrest spread across the republic, official media said Sunday.

Extra internal security troops were flown to the southern republic to try to quell the violence, and a military commander of one besieged area called for a state of emergency, the television news program "Seven Days" reported.

It was the bloodiest clash in nearly two years between Azerbaijanis and Armenians, who are locked in a feud over Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave populated mainly by Armenians but which is controlled by Azerbaijan.

Most Armenians are Christians; most Azerbaijanis are Shiite Muslims.

The violence was set off by news that an Azerbaijani had been killed

and another wounded by Armenians in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, 1,240 miles southeast of Moscow.

Radio Moscow said the incidents were announced at a rally attended by about 150,000 people Saturday night in Baku's central square.

"Calls were made at the rally to drive the Armenians out of the city," the Radio Moscow correspondent reported from the Caspian Sea port of 1.7 million people.

The official Tass news agency said 25 people were killed in Baku. Radio Moscow quoted local Interior Ministry officials as saying most victims were Armenians.

Late Sunday, Tass said the violence had spread to the Shaumyanovsk and Khanlar regions of Azerbaijan, near Nagorno-Karabakh, and that there were "tens of dead and wounded from both nationalities."

"Seven Days" said thousands of armed Azerbaijani militants were

massing in the two districts and that Armenians also bearing arms were being transported there.

The military commander in Shaumyanovsk, Maj. Gen. Yu. A. Kosolapov, called for the introduction of a state of emergency, "Seven Days" said.

Two helicopters were shot at with artillery guns, and a lieutenant aboard one was wounded. Highways and railroads to Nagorno-Karabakh were blocked and shipments of food and fuel were not reaching the district, according to Soviet TV.

It said four soldiers of the Interior Ministry, which is responsible for internal security, have disappeared since Saturday and that a fifth was killed.

The fate of Armenians taken hostage by Azerbaijanis, including the entire Communist Party and government leadership in Shaumyanovsk,

was unknown, according to the reports.

Alexander Argumanyan, a press officer for the Armenian National Movement, said at least 250,000 people gathered in Yerevan, the Armenian capital, Sunday after hearing of the violence.

He said Vano Syragedlyan, a member of the movement's directorate, urged Armenians who own firearms to volunteer to be flown by helicopter to two districts of Azerbaijan near the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Radio Moscow said the strife was kindled in Baku, a major petroleum-producing center, when two Azerbaijanis visited an Armenian family at midday and demanded they leave town. The Armenians had an ax, and the Azerbaijanis were hurt in a struggle and taken to a hospital.

One died and the other was in serious condition, the radio said.

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Cholesterol dangers highest among women from age 55-74, heart association reports

SAN ANTONIO, Texas - More than half of American women age 55 to 74 have elevated cholesterol levels that "pose a major risk of heart attack and stroke," the American Heart Association said Sunday.

In the annual update of its statistics, the heart association said that by age 55 women are as likely as men to develop high blood pressure. By age 65, women have a higher risk than men.

The most recent figures show that heart disease and strokes killed 976,706 Americans in 1987, almost as many as died from all other causes com-

ined.

The statistics were released at the opening of the heart association's annual science writers' forum, at which scientists report on recent heart disease research.

The tally shows that more than half of all women age 55 to 74 have blood cholesterol levels above 240, the level at which heart disease risk increases substantially.

Only one-third of men in that age group have cholesterol levels over 240, the heart association said.

Men remain more likely than women overall to have heart attacks.

But women have a much higher rate of strokes.

Cigarette smoking seems to pose a greater risk for women than for men, the figures show. For example, a 55-year-old woman who smokes is in more danger of a heart attack than a 55-year-old man who smokes.

A 55-year-old woman who smokes and who has high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol has a one-third higher risk of heart attack than a 55-year-old man with the same three risk factors.

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EPA to fine Exxon for not explaining New Jersey spill

ELIZABETH, N.J. - A half-million-gallon oil spill that one official dubbed Exxon's "mini-Alaska" has fouled one of the East Coast's richest spawning grounds, and environmentalists fear it will cause long-term devastation.

The Environmental Protection Agency said it was prepared to fine Exxon Corp. \$10,000 a day starting Wednesday unless it received a detailed explanation of the Jan. 2 spill of home heating oil in the Arthur Kill shipping channel between New Jersey and the New York City borough of Staten Island.

New Jersey filed suit Friday against Exxon over the 567,000-gallon spill which the company originally had pegged at just 5,000 gallons. But New York officials decided not to sue because the company agreed to pay for an environmental study and damages.

Carcasses of oil-coated ducks and dying seagulls have been recovered from the shores of Prall's Island, one of the Audubon Society's oldest urban sanctuaries. By midday Saturday, 369 birds had been counted dead by the Coast Guard and dozens more were being cleaned and treated for injuries.

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