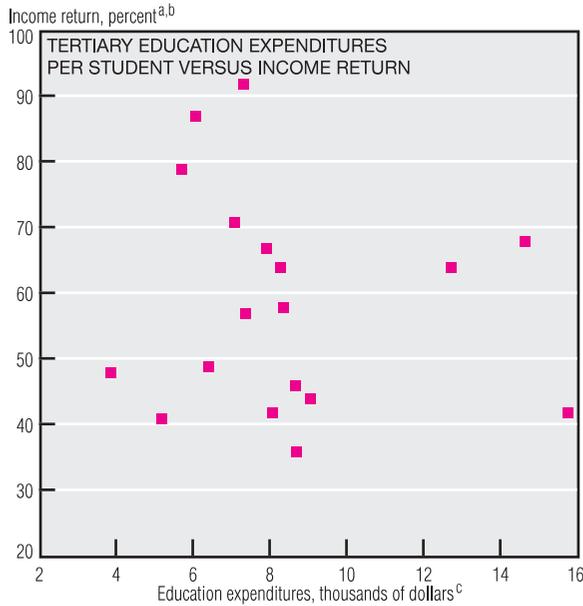
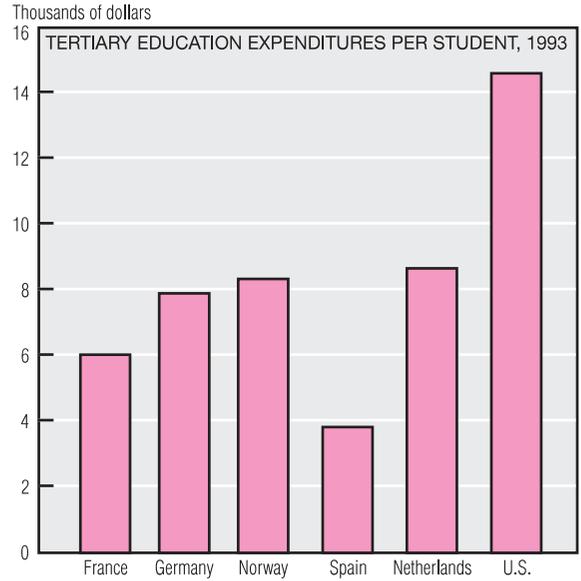
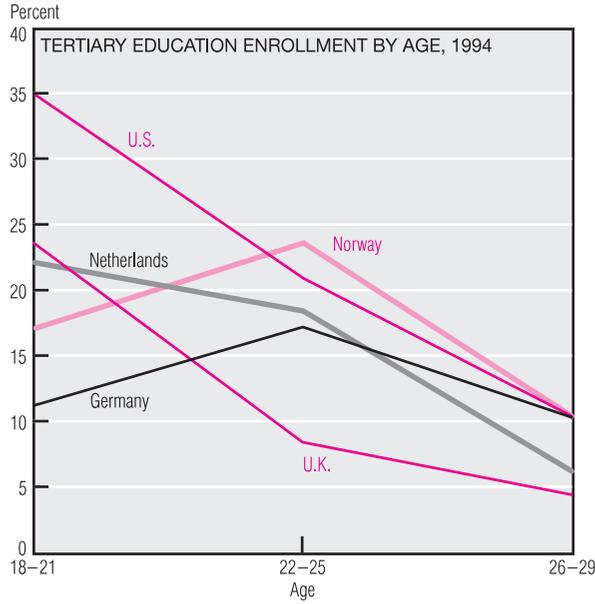


Higher Education: An International Perspective



a. Income return to a university degree relative to a high school diploma, for men.
 b. Data pertain primarily to 1993, but include one observation each for 1991 and 1992, and three observations for 1994.
 c. All data are for 1993.
 d. Data refer to 1993 for the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain and to 1994 for France, Germany, and the U.S.
 NOTE: Tertiary education includes any formal instruction beyond the twelfth grade.
 SOURCE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Education at a Glance: Indicators*, 1996 ed.

Economic theory predicts that human capital investment will be highest for younger workers, and cross-country comparisons bear this out. The pattern is particularly pronounced in the U.S., where 35% of students enrolling in college are between the ages of 18 and 21, compared to 10% between the ages of 26 and 29. Germany is something of an exception: The share of its college students aged 18 to 21 is nearly identical to the share aged 26 to 29.

Expenditures per student for post-secondary education (public and private) do not seem related to the financial returns to a university degree. For instance, the U.S. and Switzerland spend the most on higher education (\$14,600 and \$15,700, respectively), but the U.S. returns are only in the middle range among the countries; Switzerland's returns are near the bottom. On the other hand, the Finns and French get the biggest bang for their col-

lege buck, with returns that far exceed those in other countries. Their expenditures per pupil, however, are among the lowest.

Earnings differentials of male and female college graduates vary considerably across countries. For example, women graduates in Spain earn 72% as much as their male counterparts, while women graduates in the Netherlands earn only 53% as much as males.