



The Commission on Peer
Review & Accreditation

ANNUAL ACCREDITATION DATA REPORT

2016-17

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2016-17 ANNUAL ACCREDITATION DATA REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

This is the seventh annual report aggregating data collected on behalf of programs in the NASPAA Accreditation process. In the 2016-17 academic year, a total of 209 programs were engaged in the NASPAA Accreditation process, either as accredited programs or programs seeking accreditation. Programs within this report span seven countries including China, Colombia, Egypt, New Zealand, South Korea, the United States, and Venezuela.

In this report, student recruitment, student characteristics, faculty governance, graduation rates, employment, and standards monitored are presented, drawing from self-study reports and annual data reports submitted for the 2016-2017 academic year, followed by a study examining factors that may affect program-specific graduation rates and job placement. Moreover, multi-year analyses are presented to show the trends of several key indicators. Several trends are worth noting:

1. **The average number of applications declined over the past two years. However, admission rates continue to grow over the past six years.** This may indicate that given the recent decline of applications, programs are increasing admission rates to support a consistent number of incoming students.
2. **Almost half (45 percent) of students graduated within two years and 81 percent of students either graduated or remain active in the program.**
3. **The public sector continues to hire the largest number of graduates.** Among different levels of governments, state or regional and local governments are the top two employers of public service program graduates. For non-US based programs, the majority of graduates were hired by a national government.
4. **Students in NASPAA accredited programs are diverse in terms of ethnicity and gender.** Students of minority backgrounds constituted 35 percent of the student population, and female students outnumbered male students by 16 percent.

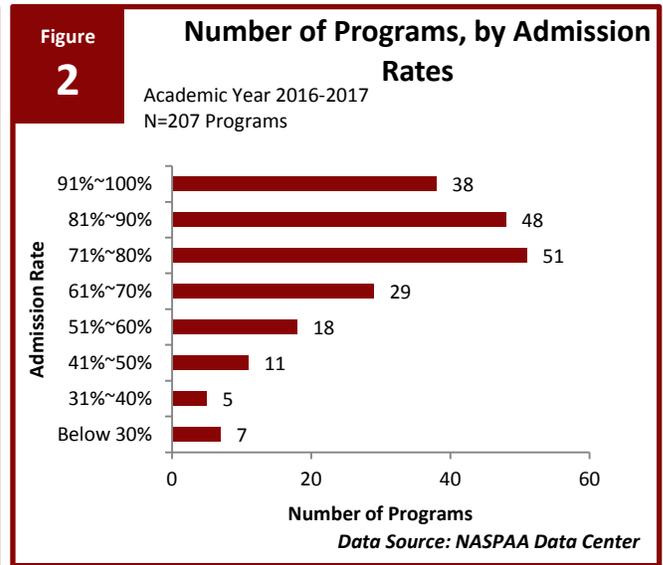
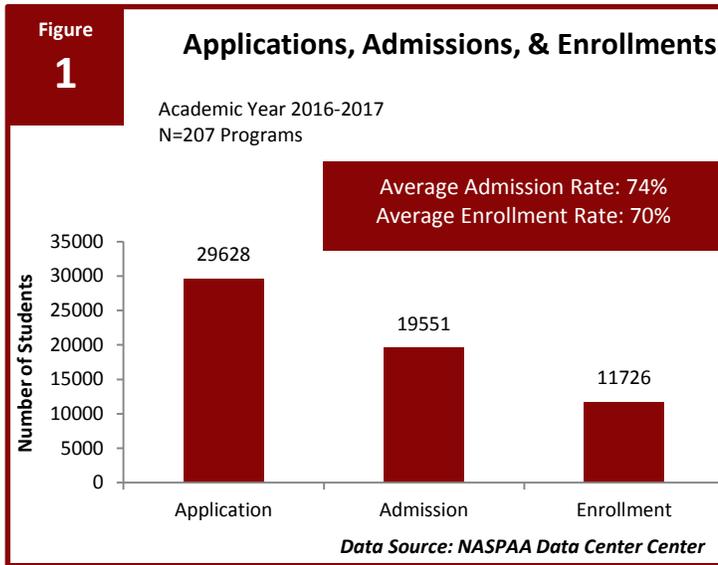
Please note, that the views expressed within this report do not represent the views of COPRA or NASPAA.

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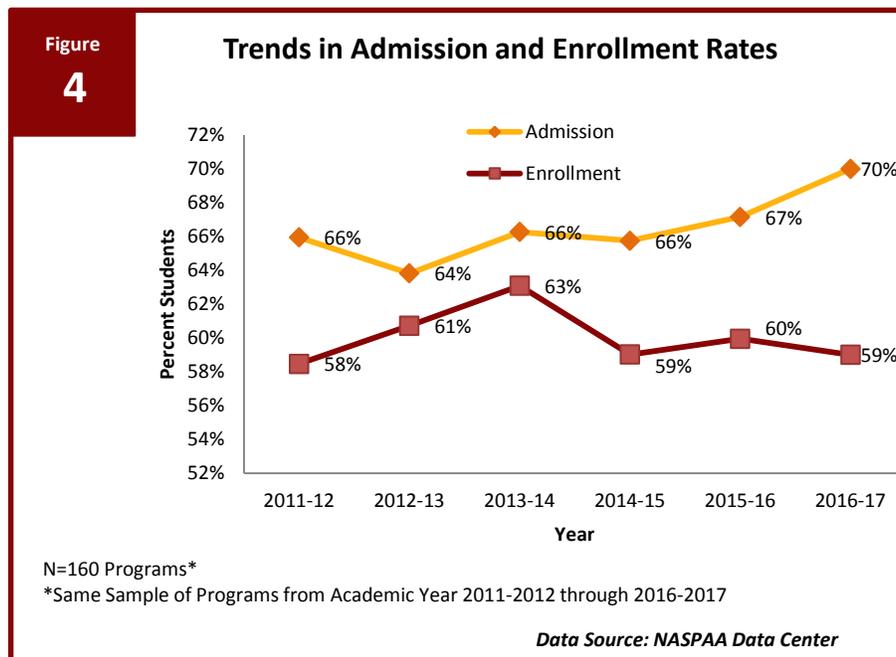
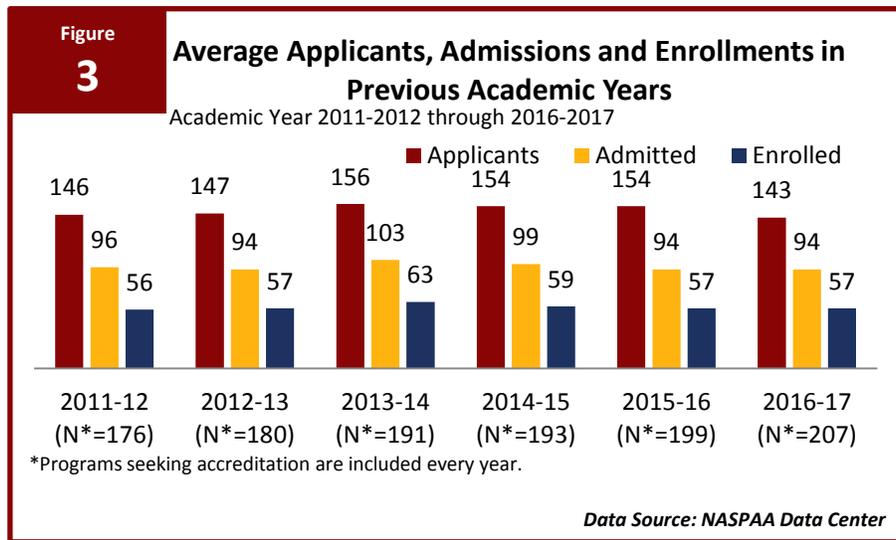
2016-17 STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

This section presents the general pattern of student recruitment in programs seeing (re)accreditation. **Figure 1** shows that a total of 29,628 applications were received by 207 programs in academic year 2016-2017. Among those applications, 19,551 were offered admission, and 11,726 students enrolled in one of the programs. On average, each program received 143 applications, with the average admission rate of 74 percent and a 70 percent enrollment rate.



Programs vary greatly in terms of their applicant pools, admission rates, and enrollment rates. Some large programs received more than 1,600 applications, while some small programs received fewer than 20 applications. In terms of admission rates, the majority of the programs (89 percent) have admission rates above 50 percent, and 66 percent programs have an admission rate over 70 percent, as shown in **Figure 2**. There are 13 non-US based programs included in the data set. Of these non-US based programs, most of them have large applicant pools with low admission rates and high enrollment rates.

Figures 3 and 4 reflect annual changes in student recruitment from 2011 to 2017. Across those years, the average number of applications decreased, but the average number of students admitted and enrolled remained constant. Moreover, admission rates went up each year except for academic year 2012-2013, while applications and enrollment rates decreased, as shown in Figure 4. This might indicate programs' efforts to maintain a consistent number of incoming students despite the recent decline of the number of applications, which might be due to current political and social contexts.



2016-17 FACULTY GOVERNANCE AND INSTRUCTION

The Standards require accredited programs to maintain a minimum of five faculty members who exert substantial determining influence over the program. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of the faculty nucleus. 68 percent (135 programs) of programs in the sample have a nucleus faculty size below ten. The mean and the median of the faculty nucleus were 12 and seven, respectively. The median dropped by one in 2016-2017, when compared with previous years.

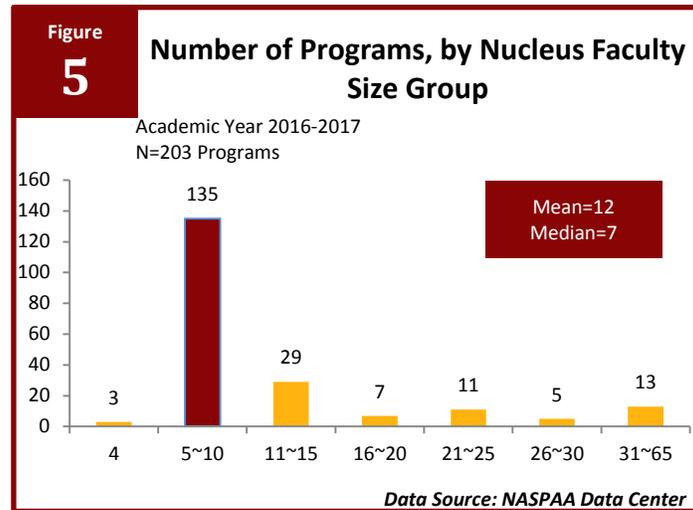
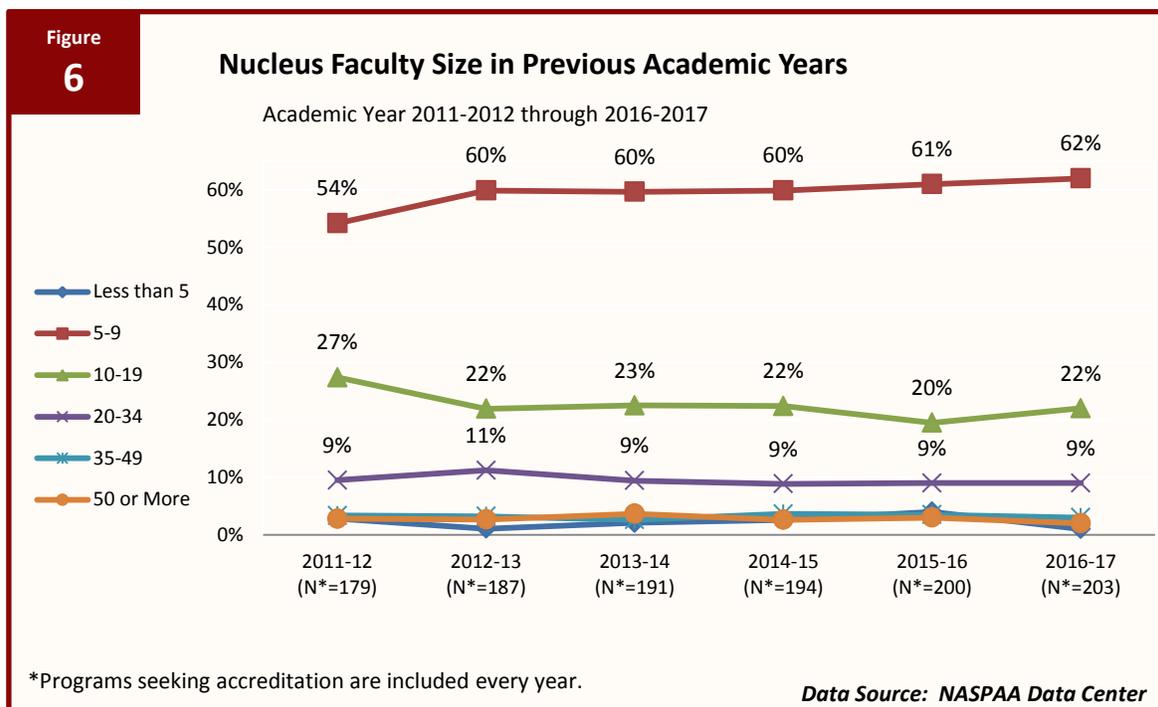
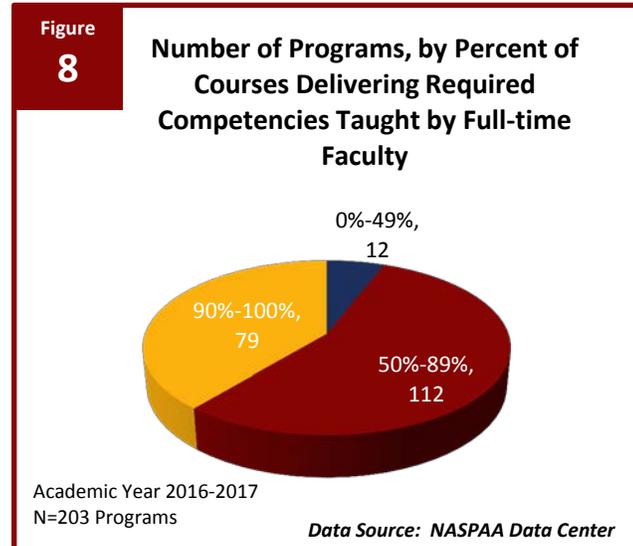
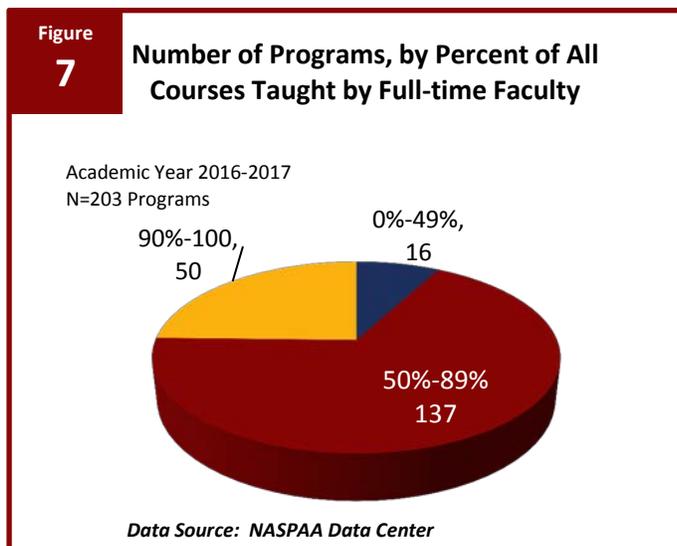


Figure 6 presents a multi-year analysis of faculty nucleus size. More specifically, the number of programs with nucleus faculty sizes between five and 10 increased every year, from the initial 54 percent in 2011-2012 to 62 percent in 2016-2017, with an eight percent increase. The percent of programs with a faculty nucleus between 10 and 19 declined from its high point in 2011-12, but has been relatively stable since.

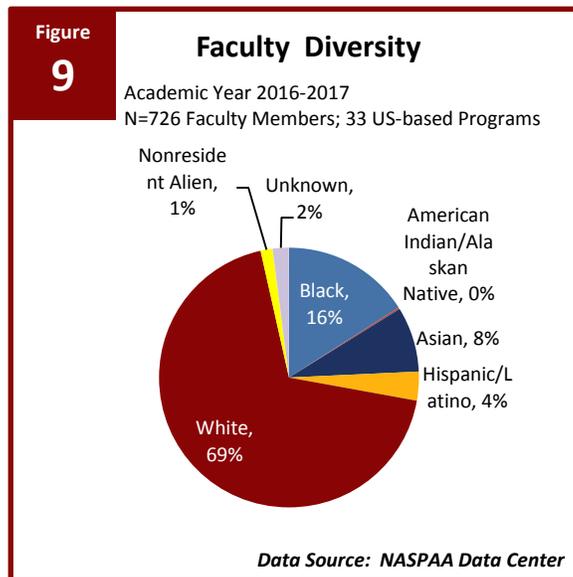


Figures 7 and 8 illustrate the distribution of percent of courses taught by full-time faculty. 187 out of 203 or 92 percent of programs had more than half courses that deliver required competencies instructed by full-time faculty. 191 out of 203 or 94 percent of programs had more than half of all courses taught by full-time faculty.



The NASPAA Standards emphasize faculty diversity and a climate of inclusiveness and encourage each program to implement strategies to recruit, retain, and support faculty from diverse backgrounds to enrich its students' learning experience. **Figure 9** displays faculty diversity based on data provided by 33 US-based programs¹ covering 726 faculty members in academic year 2016-2017. It shows that for these programs, 69 percent of faculty members are white with the second largest racial group of faculty being black, accounting for 16 percent of the population. Asian faculty constitute eight percent of the population, followed by Hispanics representing four percent. When compared with faculty ethnic diversity from 2007-2013 as included in the *NASPAA 2013 Diversity Report*, African American and Asian faculty are now better represented, in this specific cohort.

When compared with the national data, NASPAA accredited programs in this cohort employ more Hispanic and African American faculty. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, among 1.6 million full-time faculty at US postsecondary institutions in fall 2015, 77 percent were white, ten percent were Asian, three percent were black, and two percent were Hispanics.² Therefore, the accredited programs in the sample tend to have a



¹ Faculty diversity data were collected in the 2016-17 self-study reports provided by the 2017-18 cohort. Non-US based programs are not included because the sample size for any one country is too small in the sample cohort.

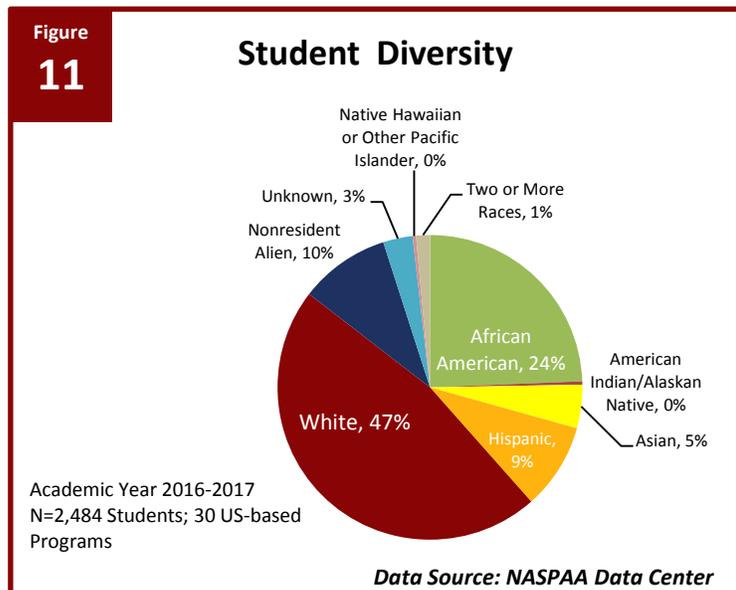
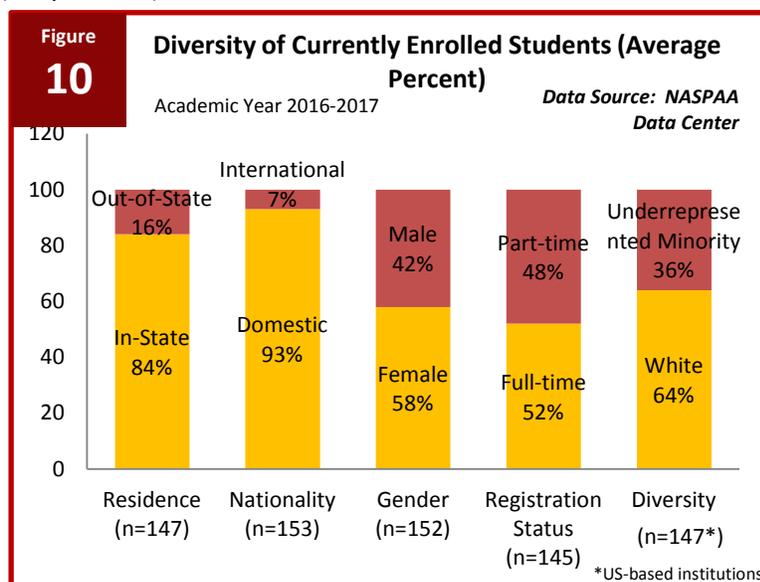
² More information about the statistics can be found at <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61>.

more ethnically diverse faculty. However, this sample may not represent all the accredited programs due to the small sample size. Moreover, as discussed more below, faculty diversity continues to lag behind student diversity. There is still potential to further improve faculty diversity as a critical component of promoting a climate of inclusiveness across programs.

2016-17 STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The NASPAA Standards consider diversity and a climate of inclusiveness holistically, focusing on not only curriculum and faculty diversity, but student diversity, as well.

Figure 10 indicates the characteristics of current students. Among currently enrolled students, the majority are domestic students (92 percent), most of whom come from the same state/province as the program they attended (85 percent). There are more female than male students, with women representing 58 percent of total students and men representing 42 percent. In terms of student registration status, full-time and part-time students are almost equal in number. As for ethnic diversity, students of minority backgrounds constitute 35 percent of the population at US-based institutions.



Based on data submitted by 30 US-based³ programs, which cover 2,484 students, **Figure 11** provides a more detailed demonstration of student ethnic diversity in AY2016-17. Almost half of the student population is white, followed by black students representing 24 percent, non-resident aliens representing 10 percent, Hispanic students representing nine percent, and students of Asian origin

³ Student diversity data were collected in the 2016-17 self-study reports provided by the 2017-18 cohort. Non-US based programs are not included because the sample size for any one country is too small in the sample cohort.

representing five percent of the population. As mentioned above, when comparing faculty diversity with student diversity, it can be seen that faculty diversity lags behind student diversity.⁴

While this student sample is likely not representative of NASPAA accredited programs at-large, in order to have a better understanding of student diversity, it worth considering the student diversity of other disciplines. For instance, according to the Council of Graduate Schools, underrepresented minorities constituted 23.4 percent of graduate students of all disciplines in 2016. Among them, 11.8 percent were African American students, 10.9 percent were Hispanics, and 0.5 percent were American Indians.⁵ Business schools enrolled 7 percent Hispanic/Latino students in 2015, and 12 percent African American students. Unlike NASPAA programs, business schools are also largely male.

As for students' gender and nationality, the Council of Graduate Schools reports that women constituted 58.9 percent of students pursuing a master degree, and international students accounted for 21.2 percent of first-time graduate students in 2016. Therefore, when comparing with the national data, it can be seen that the percent of women in the accredited programs is similar with the national pattern, but there are fewer international students in the NASPAA accredited programs.

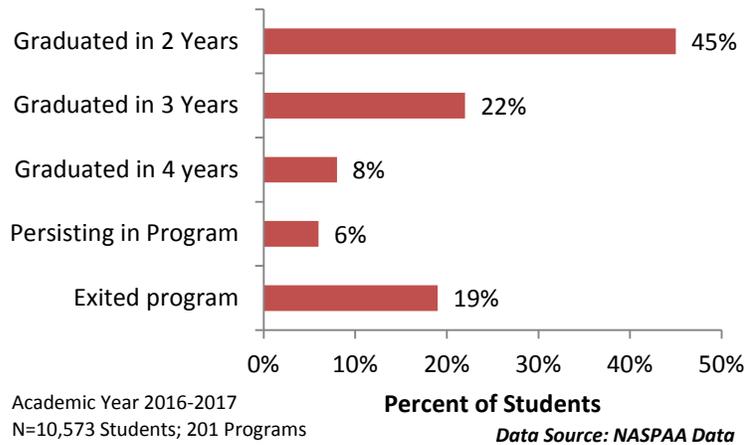
⁴ This analysis is based on only one cohort of programs, and thus not necessarily representative of all NASPAA Accredited programs, due to the presence of several Minority Serving Institutions.

⁵ More information about the report "Graduate Enrollment and Degrees" published by the Council of Graduate Schools can be found at https://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGS_GED16_Report_Final.pdf.

Graduation rates and job placement are important output indicators reflecting program and student performance. AY2016-17 marked the first time programs provided completion rates at set benchmarks, including a persistency rate, allowing for cross-program comparison. As shown in **Figure 12**, on average 45 percent of students graduated within two years, 22 percent graduated within three years, and eight percent graduated within four years. Moreover, six percent of students are persisting to graduation, while 19 percent are no longer in the program. Overall, 75 percent graduated within four years, with a combined graduation and persistence rate of 81 percent.

Figure 12

Average Graduation Rates of Students Enrolled in the ARY-5 Cohort

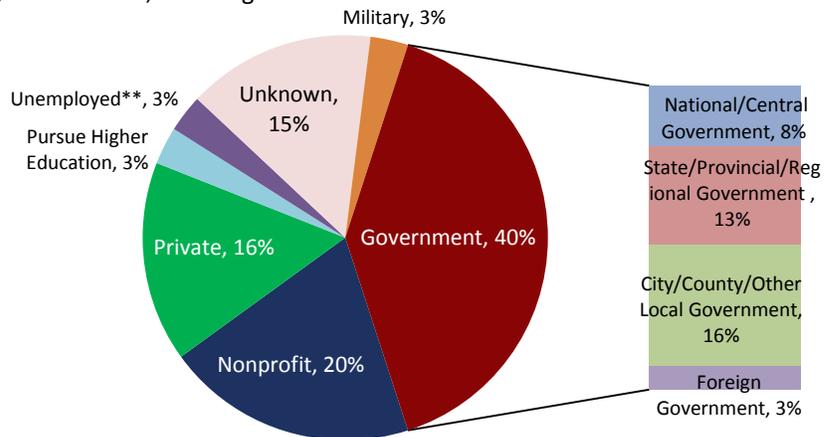


Job placement is another important output indicator that has been tracked continuously by all programs. It can be influenced by a number of factors including faculty instruction, career services, alumni networks, program location, students' skills, etc. **Figure 13** presents the distribution of job placement by sector, including graduates with an unknown employment status. It can be seen that 40 percent of graduates were employed in the government sector, 20 percent in the nonprofit sector, and 16 percent in the private sector. Graduates pursuing further education and entering the military were both three percent. Among those students who entered the government sector, most were hired by state and local governments. Three percent of graduates were unemployed six

Figure 13

Employment within 6 Months of Graduation, by Sector, Percent of Graduates

Academic Year 2016-2017
N=9,233 Students; 202 Programs*



*Programs reported employment statistics for the year prior to the annual survey year.
**Graduates who are not seeking employment are not included.

Data Source: NASPAA Data Center

Three percent of graduates were unemployed six

months after graduation, in academic year 2016-2017. As for non-US based programs, the majority of graduates were hired by the public sector, and a small number of students entered the private sector. When excluding graduates with unknown employment status, the public sector hired 46 percent of graduates, and the nonprofit and private sector hired 24 percent and 19 percent of graduates respectively.

Figure 14 compares job placement by sector from 2011 to 2016 including graduates with known employment status only. More specifically, it shows that the percent of graduates entering the public sector increased by two percent from last year, while those entering the private sector dropped by two percent. The unemployment rate went up by one percent from the last year. Moreover, among the graduates entering the public sector, a large proportion was hired by state/regional and local governments. These numbers continue to grow, and is likely partially influenced by the increasing presence of non-US programs in the sample, as they graduates of those programs are likely to enter the public sector.

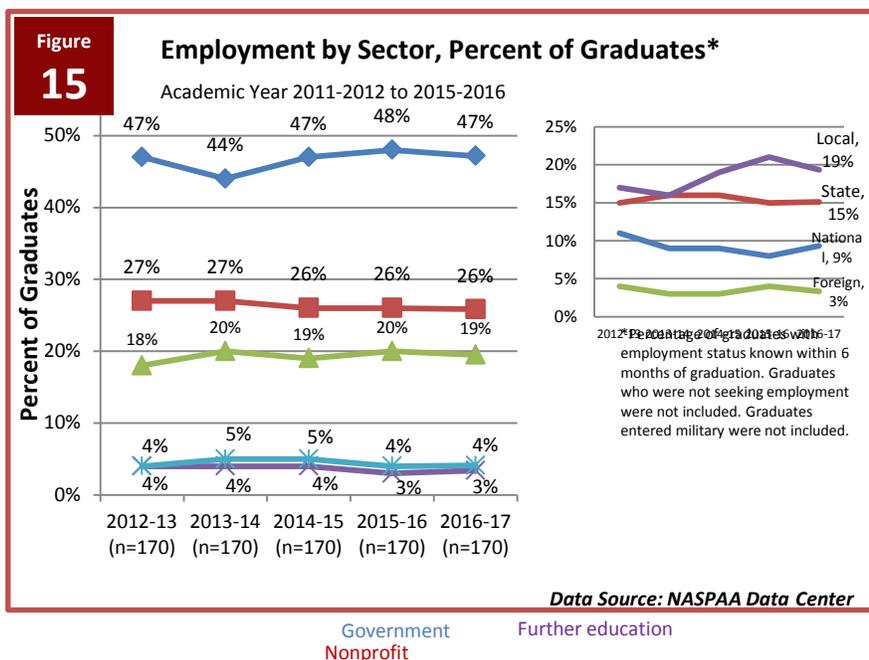
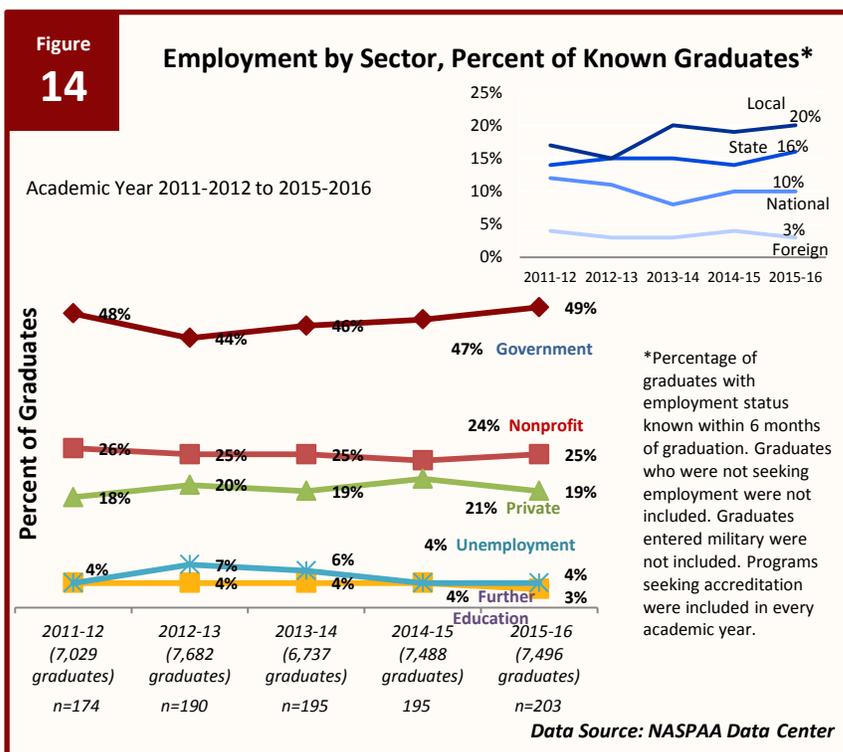
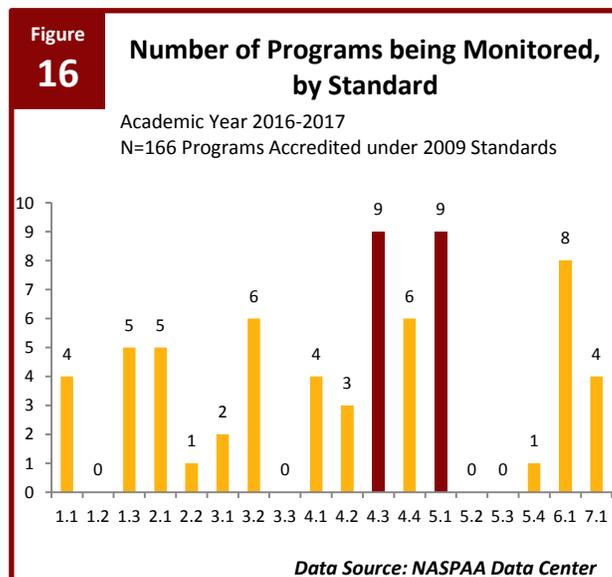


Figure 15 examines the known graduate employment trends of the same 170 programs over the past 5 years. In general, the proportions of students entering various public service fields has remained consistent.

2016-17 STANDARDS MONITORED

All accredited programs are required to demonstrate substantial conformance to the NASPAA standards. **Figure 16** shows that of the 166 accredited programs submitting annual reports, some continue to be subject to standards monitoring to support ongoing improvements to program performance. More specifically, it shows that standard 4.3 (support for students) and standard 5.1 (universal required competencies) are the most common standards being monitored in academic year 2016-2017.



2016-17 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO COMPLETION AND JOB PLACEMENT

Graduation rates and job placement are important output indicators reflecting the performance of programs and students. This section will examine factors that influence graduation rates and job placement. More specifically, inputs including admission, enrollment, and student characteristics and processes regarding faculty governance and instruction may all play a role in determining the success of a program. As this marks the first year of such an analysis, there are some limitations to the data considered, namely the more limited collection of data on the annual basis, as compared to those programs under review for (re)accreditation. Given the importance of graduation and employment rates to the impact of public service master's degree programs, further research into the factors impacting student outcomes is necessary.

Most students enter a master's degree program in public service with the expectation of finding a job in the public and nonprofit sectors. Therefore, graduation and job placement are two important output indicators reflecting whether or not the program is meeting its mission to prepare students for effective and competent public service. To better understand the relationship between graduation, employment, and other input and process indicators, a linear regression model with robust standard errors is estimated. The specification takes the following form:

$$\text{Graduation}_{2016-2017} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{admission}_{2016-2017} + \beta_2 \text{enrollment}_{2016-2017} + \beta_3 \text{nucleus}_{2016-2017} + \beta_4 \text{course}_{2016-2017} + \beta_5 \text{female}_{2016-2017} + \beta_6 \text{in-state}_{2016-2017} + \beta_7 \text{part-time}_{2016-2017} + \beta_8 \text{race}_{2016-2017} + \beta_9 \text{international}_{2016-2017} + \beta_9 \text{ProgramSize} + e$$

where graduation=graduation rates within four years, admission=program admission rates, enrollment=program enrollment rates, nucleus=the number of nucleus faculty in a given

program, course=percent of courses delivering required competencies instructed by full-time faculty, program size=the number of currently enrolled students.

Two variables are found to have statistically significant effects on graduation rates (see appendix A). First, the size of nucleus faculty is statistically significant. When controlling for other factors, on average, graduation rate within four years increases by 0.3 percent if faculty nucleus increases by 1 person. This might be because programs that are able to support larger faculty nuclei may be more likely to also have the personnel and financial resources to provide student services and financial supports to help students succeed. Second, as expected, the effect of student registration status is significant: the more part-time students a program recruits, the longer it takes for students to graduate.

As for unemployment rate, the regression results suggest that the enrollment rate is negatively associated with unemployment rate (see appendix B). More specifically, an increase of enrollment rate⁶ by one percent is associated with a seven percent decrease in the unemployment rate, holding other variables constant. Therefore, enrollment rate has statistically and substantively significant effect. This might be because programs with higher enrollment rates may have greater probability of securing students of well-suited for their mission, which in turn improves employment rates. Another explanation might be that programs with high enrollment rates mostly enroll local students who are already employed, or have strong connections to employers, and this increases subsequent employment rates. The other variable that is statistically significant is the percent of courses delivering required competencies taught by full-time faculty. The direction of this variable is unexpected: unemployment rate is positively associated with the percent of courses delivering required competencies taught by full-time faculty. This could be a result of programs engaging fewer adjunct faculty members – and thus having limited employer connections – an interesting impact for future exploration. Ultimately, it has a very small effect (0.04 percent).

This preliminary analysis suggests that both enrollment rates and the size of faculty nucleus may be associated with student performance. However, other factors not included in this model may also have an impact on performance. Moreover, it is important to note that this analysis has several limitations. For example, the sample only includes accredited programs or those currently seeking accreditation. The programs that have been accredited or are actively seeking accreditation may be different from those non-accredited programs. As a result, there might be selection bias. Moreover, there are some other factors that may be correlated with the independent and dependent variables, such as resources or current employment status, and the exclusion of those variables make this model suffer from omitted variable bias. Therefore, the results presented here are tentative. This analysis represents a first step into understanding factors that contribute to the performance of public service programs. Further research is needed to inform future funding and administrative decisions to improve program performance and student outcomes.

⁶ Rate at which students admitted to a program, enroll in the program.

2016-17 CONCLUSION

This annual report presents several key trends in the current state of public service education by comparing aggregate data from academic year 2011-2012 to 2016-2017. It further provides an empirical analysis to examine factors that influence graduation and employment rates, which are two important outputs reflecting the performance of public service programs. Programs can benchmark their performance and identify challenges in faculty governance, student recruitment, instruction, and so on in order to improve student outcomes.

As NASPAA increases its global footprint, the number of non-US based programs continues to grow. They exhibit unique patterns in terms of applicant pools, admission rates, job placement, etc., and their impacts are growing. In the future, it may be worth analyzing public service education by differentiating countries or regions as a means to deepen our understanding of public service in the global context.

2016-17 APPENDIX A

The Impact of Different Factors on Graduation Rates

VARIABLES	(1) Graduation	(2) Graduation	(3) Graduation
Admission rate	0.041 (0.078)	0.020 (0.080)	-0.066 (0.092)
Enrollment rate	-0.184*** (0.064)	-0.112 (0.068)	-0.052 (0.090)
Total currently enrolled	0.000** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Courses providing required competencies		-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Faculty nucleus		0.004*** (0.001)	0.003* (0.002)
In-state students			-0.001 (0.001)
International students			-0.001 (0.002)
Female students			0.001 (0.002)
Part-time students			-0.002*** (0.001)
Ethnic minority background student			-0.001 (0.001)
Constant	0.830*** (0.079)	0.828*** (0.092)	0.993*** (0.181)
Observations	158	148	131
R-squared	0.075	0.138	0.230

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; two-tailed test

2016-17 APPENDIX B

The Impact of Different Factors on Unemployment Rates

VARIABLES	(1) Unemployment rates	(2) Unemployment rates	(3) Unemployment rates
Admission rate	-0.006 (0.015)	-0.008 (0.016)	-0.016 (0.020)
Enrollment rate	-0.072** (0.030)	-0.080** (0.035)	-0.074* (0.043)
Total currently enrolled	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Courses providing required competencies		0.000* (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)
Faculty nucleus		0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
In-state students			0.000 (0.000)
International students			-0.000 (0.001)
Female students			0.000 (0.000)
Part-time students			0.000 (0.000)
Ethnic minority background students			-0.000 (0.000)
Constant	0.081*** (0.029)	0.054** (0.026)	0.019 (0.049)
Observations	156	146	130
R-squared	0.081	0.099	0.108

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; two-tailed test