



THREE-YEAR
STRATEGIC PLAN:
2008-2011 FIRST UPDATE

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

DEAN'S MESSAGE

It is with pleasure that we present to you the first update on what is the second three-year strategic plan of my administration as Dean of The Graduate School (TGS). What you will find in this document is a reiteration of the visionary but grounded strategic plan set forth last year, an update on how we are doing and going about meeting our stated goals, and an articulation, when relevant, of how our plans may have changed from last year to this one. The structure of our plan is based on improvements in three key areas: academics, student affairs, and administration. Through strong work internally and collaboration with our partner schools at the University, we are pleased to report that we have made and continue to make great strides in these three areas.

While I provide this update to you with pleasure, I also provide it with delicacy and prudence, as, at the time of this writing, our nation is coping with its worst financial crisis in over seventy-five years. Our University, and certainly our school, is not immune to the realities of this economic environment. Indeed, as graduate education is among the most expensive things a University does, we at TGS are well-attuned to this fiscal situation and how it leads us to consider and reconsider our plans. Fortunately, I can say with confidence that the great majority of what we have proposed to accomplish to upgrade graduate education at the University can still be accomplished during this downturn. Our stated goals and set plans are ambitious but achievable, and while some adjustments will be necessary, we are confident, enthusiastic, and eager to demonstrate that our programs can and should continue to improve.

In the area of academic innovation and improvement, our interdisciplinary cluster initiative in the humanities and non-quantitative social sciences, a drive to highlight our best interdisciplinary areas of study, and to recruit and educate students in these areas (while simultaneously maintaining the integrity of disciplinary study), has proven to be a major success. Data demonstrate that students who choose to affiliate with a cluster at the point of admission are both admitted and choose to enroll at a greater rate than students in the same areas who do not affiliate. Moreover, interdisciplinary competitions for funding lines guarantee that the best students are awarded fellowships and recruited to both the admitting "disciplinary" program and the interdisciplinary cluster. We could not be happier that the Mellon Foundation recognized the value of the interdisciplinary cluster initiative this year with an

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endowment to provide ongoing support for Mellon Fellowships in these “south campus” cluster areas.

Next year, we will extend this cluster initiative to incorporate programs in engineering, and quantitative social, life, and physical sciences. These new clusters will work in a somewhat different manner than those up and running in the humanities areas. Rather than having students join clusters from the point of admission, students in these five new clusters will join interdisciplinary training programs at the end of their first year of study. In this way, students will be able to train with “disciplinary” mentors while also learning valuable interdisciplinary approaches and techniques as part of a broader program that runs alongside their lab education. Students in year one can participate in cluster activities (colloquia, seminars), but they will not officially join and be funded by the clusters until year two. A selection of our best faculty will lead these new clusters and we are excited about their prospects to recruit and educate the best students.

We imagine that a similar academic training structure will be instituted as part of the “One Northwestern” initiative to unify life and biological sciences education at the doctoral level. Part of a broader University endeavor to

expand and improve how research happens across campuses and among affiliates, TGS is leading efforts to upgrade our doctoral training through innovative approaches to recruitment, curriculum design and delivery, entrepreneurship, and academic community building. With the support of the Provost and President, the deans of Feinberg, McCormick, and Weinberg, and our faculty and students, we are extremely optimistic that our plans to unify, integrate, and upgrade will be realized in the coming year.

TGS also continues to innovate academically through partnerships internally and externally. One of the more intriguing new programs approved for launch next year is a PhD program in Plant Biology and Conservation, offered in tandem with the Chicago Botanic Garden. This new degree plays to the strengths of two great research institutions and will be the first degree program of its kind. We are also excited about the potential for a new master’s degree in Management specifically for scientists and engineers that we are developing with Kellogg. Our scientists very often come back to Kellogg for an executive MBA – our idea is that our PhDs would be better served to receive this management education before they leave in the first place (with the bulk of the master’s degree delivered after the PhD is complete). We believe this novel degree will be extremely appealing for students at the University and

also from our peer schools. As part of our NU Directions professional development programming, we are also developing with Kellogg a leadership training series for doctoral students who have reached all-but-dissertation status. Designed for students who choose either academic or non-academic career paths, we are enthusiastic about delivering this leadership training as a complement to graduate research. We will also launch in the coming year a civic engagement program (in tandem with our new University center) for students interested in promoting the public good through their research and community service. We see these two endeavors as part of our plan to broaden the definition of success for our graduates, open the field of possibility for what a PhD could and should do, and provide our alumni with the tools to be successful in whatever career path they pursue.

These new initiatives will supplement the comprehensive slate of student quality of life efforts that we have undertaken in the past few years, including the move to a much-improved and fully subsidized health insurance plan, the adoption of a reduced commuter-fare program, and the institution of our popular community building programs. I am pleased to note, also, that we are on the forefront nationally of graduate schools acting in a family-friendly manner, as evidenced by our childbirth

accommodation policy, networking events (including kids) for students who are parents, and the creation of a dependent-care professional development grant program. Moreover, we have improved our funding packages in terms of fellowship years offered and years of stipend guaranteed so that our students across all graduate programs are now among the best compensated in the country. Most importantly, perhaps, we have dedicated considerable resources to our initiative to “build a better student,” funding for independent research, conference travel, language acquisition, and the like, ensuring that every student who needs the resources for such things has easy access to them. I would like to make abundantly clear that these resources to maintain and promote our students’ quality of life will not be compromised during this economic downturn.

This seems an appropriate place to mention our “Value of the PhD” initiative. Trends indicate that fewer domestic students are choosing to pursue PhDs than ever before. We (as well as our peer graduate schools nationally) see this as a major concern, even as a risk to national security and competitiveness. Therefore, in addition to broadening the definition of what a successful PhD looks like (mentioned above) we also are committing resources to promote the value of the PhD – to communicate to undergraduate populations at Northwestern

and beyond that earning a doctorate is a critical, challenging, rewarding endeavor. Many of our best students now participate in TGS programs to visit their alma maters and talk to undergraduates about why one would pursue a PhD; other students serve as research mentors to undergraduates at Northwestern (and receive TGS fellowships for the effort), guaranteeing that some of our best undergraduates, perhaps a greater percentage of them, are future PhD students.

In addition to these academic and student affairs improvements, TGS will also continue to dedicate considerable energy and effort to ensuring the highest quality administrative support for our stakeholders. Through our three-year block aid allocation program, we will still place responsibility for admission and enrollment management in the hands of graduate programs and allow them to manage their enrollments and aid allocations more closely but with added flexibility. Indeed, with the support of the Provost, the entire PhD program community, as of winter 2009, now operates on this proven model of resource allocation. In addition, in the coming year, we plan to upgrade a number of other aspects of our financial aid operations, including a modernization of our tuition schedule (and rationalization of faculty contribution of tuition from grants), the creation of a marketplace for

teaching assistants (so, via a match system, advanced students can select their assignments rather than being assigned to them), and the development of a teaching and research assistant equity program (so we can ensure no student is severely disadvantaged relative to another when it comes to providing service to the University).

TGS is also home to two offices that are outside the typical purviews of graduate schools but whose presence in TGS underscores the key role we play in promoting success in research: the offices Training Grant Support (TGSO) and of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA). Our Training Grant Support team continues to provide top-flight service to our research community, and in the coming year we will seek out opportunities to extend the reach of the unit. Moreover, in the current year, we plan to release, in concert with the Provost and the Vice President of Research, a comprehensive slate of policies, processes, and best practices for the training of postdoctoral fellows. We are confident that this document will demonstrate to the internal and external community our commitment to the highest quality experience for postdocs at the University.

Much like our nation at this point in time, we at TGS are concerned about the current financial climate but optimistic and hopeful that we can

steer through these tough times with a mix of responsibility, alertness, and creativity. It is an exhilarating time to be working with TGS as we continue to improve the way we do business academically and administratively. We have come a long way during my time as Dean, but, like our University as a whole, we are an ambitious unit and are excited to support Northwestern in its goal to become one of the most elite research institutions in the world. Of course, we will not and cannot do it alone. It should be clear from this plan update that collaboration and partnership form the foundation for our current and continued success. I invite you to read this first-year update to see where we propose to go from here.

Andrew B. Wachtel
Dean

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of The Graduate School of Northwestern University to be a trusted, responsive, and visionary leader and partner in order to maintain and promote the highest quality education and research. The Graduate School collaborates with the University's schools and central administration to guide and sustain an institutional culture that facilitates excellence in teaching, innovation and rigor in research, and the personal and intellectual growth of its diverse student and postdoctoral fellow population.

GOALS

- Sustain and promote the excellence of graduate programs through strategic investment of effort and resources, and ensure overall graduate program quality through open collaboration and firm governance
- Serve as trusted resource for data and analysis for all areas related to graduate education, and utilize data to inform investments that will improve recruitment selectivity and yield, retention and completion rates, and placement success
- Innovate programmatically and establish visible partnerships within and outside the university, at home and abroad, to extend research and expand degree-seeking opportunities
- Engage in national efforts to illustrate the value of doctoral education and to connect the importance of advanced study in all disciplines to the sustained global competitiveness of the United States
- Enhance the quality of the graduate student and postdoctoral fellow experience at the University through additional and improved services, community building activities, and expanded professional development programming
- Create system, process, technology, and policy enhancements to guarantee the highest quality service to stakeholders

ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT

ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT: RECRUITMENT

- Analyze recruitment selectivity and yield patterns and develop program-specific recruitment strategies in partnership with academic programs and schools

Update: Data suggests that the interdisciplinary cluster initiative (to be funded in part by the Mellon Foundation beginning in FY10) is a draw to prospective students and TGS will continue to work closely with admitting programs and clusters to highlight the interdisciplinary activity and curricula available to new and continuing students; new resources have been dedicated to amplify and support this interdisciplinary recruitment strategy

- Provide resources to programs willing to innovate in order to improve selectivity and yield rates, and quality of student population

Update: Admission and Recruitment unit of TGS awarded two recruitment innovation grants this year: one to Physics to improve the interaction of current and prospective students, the other to Mechanical Engineering and Civil Engineering to improve the interaction between these programs as they recruit top students collaboratively

- Send more students on increased number of targeted recruitment trips, especially to their own alma maters to promote value of doctoral study; conduct “value of PhD” sessions for Northwestern undergraduates

Update: TGS has sent its Presidential Fellows (winners of the university’s most prestigious PhD award) to their alma maters to recruit undergraduates to graduate school; we plan to extend these visit efforts to our population of Ryan, Mellon, and Biophysics Fellowship awardees as well as to the general student population on a limited basis; the “Value of the PhD” initiative has been launched in partnership with the Office of Fellowships, who offer a colloquium series (Cross-Honors Colloquium) for undergraduates to gain exposure to doctoral research; TGS now also funds a fellowship program for doctoral students to mentor undergraduates on research at home and abroad (TGS also funds a similar fellowship program for graduate students as part of the “One Book, One Northwestern” program as well as for graduate student mentors in International Studies)

ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT: PROGRAM INNOVATION, AND PROMOTION

- Encourage faculty presenting research at peer institutions to recruit for the University and promote the value of the PhD; encourage participation of faculty with students at Northwestern sessions, as well

Update: More work must be done to encourage faculty to recruit; we have begun to send students and faculty together with some success (students are in many ways much more effective recruiters), but we intend to articulate a more coherent strategy and implementation plan to this end in FY10

- Promote and streamline recruitment for interdisciplinary and combined programs

Update: As noted above, TGS sees tangible advantages to recruiting students via disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs; to this end, we will ensure that the majority of prospective students will be recruited into programs and interdisciplinary clusters during the recruitment season; programs and clusters will host students together during applicant visits and TGS will sponsor interdisciplinary events for new and current students

- Extend efforts to diversify graduate programs by continuous, aggressive recruitment of underrepresented populations, including international diversity recruitment efforts

- Improve SROP as recruitment tool, and partner with universities nationally for student exchange

Update: Major strides have been made in SROP, as our new early admission decision program allows SROP students to apply and for programs to admit these rising seniors (who now come from a far better selection of our peer schools) during the summer program; in this way SROP may be utilized strategically, to recruit the strong students in whom we invest during the summer

- Encourage programs to globalize recruitment efforts by traveling to target countries to establish or maintain student pipelines

Update: In each of our annual quality assurance meetings, we now present data on international recruitment numbers and trends and discuss the value of international recruitment and program partnerships with our doctoral programs; certain programs, when viable, are strongly encouraged to seek out and/or expand current international collaborations – TGS sees real value in joint programming with international peers, up to and including the offering of dual degrees with these peer schools; TGS believes firmly that offering such degrees will improve our visibility and reputation globally, a key strategic goal of the University

- Encourage strategic partnerships both within the university and outside it, including collaborations with research institutions at home and abroad; ensure administrative, funding, and policy flexibility without compromising quality to facilitate partnerships and combined/dual degree opportunities

- Support assertive, creative, responsible efforts to globalize graduate education

Update: As stated above, TGS now actively promotes the creation of partnerships with schools internationally, recognizing that dual degree offerings must be fully vetted at the program level; TGS now is the home for the visiting pre-doctoral fellowship program (formerly in Office of Research), so we can manage this visiting graduate student population more effectively; we also recognize the need for collaboration domestically, as well, which we continue via the CIC and the SROP, among other venues

- Facilitate improvements in curriculum planning and communication among programs and students through development of centralized, transparent curriculum database; utilize Student Enterprise System, if possible

Update: During this academic year, TGS will work with partner schools to develop an integrated system and operations for course planning by programs and course selecting by students; currently, such mechanisms are insufficient, unwieldy, and/or incoherent

- Support innovations in teaching across and within disciplines

- Provide all resources necessary to guarantee success of efforts to streamline life sciences training at the University and with affiliates

Update: TGS has taken the lead this year in the “One Northwestern”(1NU) endeavor to unify the two existing biological sciences PhD programs; by the end of FY09, a plan will be in place to recruit and train students on a new model, with the stated goal of improving program quality via curricular and co-curricular innovation and rejuvenation; significant TGS and Feinberg School of Medicine resources have been and will be contributed to this unification

- Upgrade CIC “Courseshare” and “Traveling Scholar” participation and explore distance-learning options to expand curricular offerings

Update: As the opportunities available via the “Courseshare” program are still limited, our participation has also been minimal – as opportunities expand, so will Northwestern participation; technology upgrades made possible via 1NU (improved videoconferencing and distance-learning technologies) will facilitate our participation in such efforts

ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT: FUNDING

- Extend language acquisition opportunities for foreign students via program-specific English training

Update: TGS is partnering with the Linguistics program on an initiative called “Texicon,” a web interface that teaches English pronunciation with field-specific vocabularies; preliminary reports from pilot with Math program this year suggest success in interface to improve ESL training among foreign students

- Encourage faculty to utilize summer quarter to deliver programming, on campus in classrooms or otherwise and partner with schools to ensure faculty receive credit for such teaching, if appropriate

Update: More work still to be done in this area, but TGS and WCAS now have agreement in place to encourage curricular innovation at the graduate level and to credit faculty accordingly if teaching done outside the conventional models meets certain requirements; interdisciplinary cluster directors will submit plans for novel curriculum delivery; 1NU efforts to energize curriculum should also lead to new modes for life science training and education

- Promote excellence of programs through a series of visibility conferences, symposia, and other activities and extend public relations campaign to ensure national and international attention on such activities, especially those that highlight the University’s commitment to interdisciplinary excellence

Update: TGS continues to dedicate significant resources towards these visibility efforts, committing funds and publicity to two major visibility conferences annually, as well as to multiple and various University events across all disciplines; clearly, the Mellon Foundation commitment of \$4.5M in endowment this year to support interdisciplinary training in the humanities suggests the improved visibility of cluster programs in this area

- Invest new and existing resources strategically to sustain and promote the highest quality graduate education and research, and collaborate with schools, programs, and central administration, especially the offices of the Provost and Vice President of Research, to determine targeted areas for such investments

Update: TGS continues to dedicate resources strategically; however, in the current economic environment, we will exercise prudence and some restraint and expect to decrease size of incoming PhD class by approximately 5% in FY10; TGS will, however, dedicate new resources towards the creation of interdisciplinary cluster programs in the sciences and engineering, sharing costs of second-year students with faculty mentors in order to guarantee the balance of lab-based training and interdisciplinary education

- TGS Office of Research and Analysis aims to become a national leader in analysis of doctoral education and support of evidence-based decision-making; statistical reports and critical analysis on each graduate program will be delivered annually to the program, school, and central administration; benchmarking against national peers in terms of admission selectivity and yield, retention, time-to-degree, and financial aid, among other items, will be made possible via data delivered as part of the National Research Council survey of doctoral programs

Update: NRC report is expected this summer or fall; in anticipation, TGS will publish current data on all programs for public consumption – such data has already been made available to, and discussed with, all graduate programs as part of our quality assurance initiative

- Increase size of programs in a systematic, thoughtful, strategic manner through series of select interdisciplinary competitions for new students among doctoral programs; current competitions exist and more are planned for interdisciplinary programs between and among all disciplines: humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, life sciences, and engineering

Update: As stated above, TGS will pause on program growth, but will continue to invest in interdisciplinary competitions and recruitment as our data reinforces our belief that such investments recruit better students who are a better fit for Northwestern

- Raise stipends in disciplines where we are at competitive disadvantage, should analysis suggest that such increases will improve recruitment and retention

Update: Data suggests that overall, especially considering cost of living, our stipend levels currently across all programs are quite competitive; however, programs are now given the opportunity to offer larger, or even differentiated stipend awards, to incoming students if they have the resources and

inclination; TGS will examine these recruitment efforts to determine if such investments lead to a) better students and b) better outcomes

- Continue to expand resources available for student research, language acquisition and conference travel

Update: Even in current financial climate, we continue to increase resources for student research – our focus is squarely on quality over quantity at this juncture and incremental increases to research resources guarantees the promotion of student quality and improved outcomes of our population

- Continue to provide 100% health insurance subsidization for all PhD and MFA students, even as health costs rise; collaborate with schools and programs to plan for possible shortfalls in sponsored funding resources and on issues relating to caps on such funding

Update: Efforts continue in this area, and new tuition and registration reform plan to be launched in FY10 will allow TGS to (finally) centralize all health insurance premium coverage; collateral benefit of this reform will be elimination of confusing registration system and institution of clear two-tiered system

- Move all programs in humanities and social sciences to guaranteed five academic years plus four summers funding package, including two academic years of fellowship

rather than one, incrementally and contingent upon new endowment resources

Update: This funding move has been accomplished and data demonstrates that funding upgrades have improved our recruitment yield in these areas

- Create “teaching assistant pools” for advanced students so teaching needs of programs match professional development requirements of students

Update: TGS has partnered with WCAS to develop this pool mechanism; this year we have developed a centralized model for distributing TA resources, next year we plan to move to a more free-market enterprise, with students provided with the opportunity to “match” with desired courses, much like an MD Residency match is done

- Develop all-student forecasting and enrollment management model in order to facilitate planning and tracking of new and existing expenses and revenues

Update: Improved financial aid processes and technology have upgraded our reporting and forecasting abilities immeasurably – by FY10, when upgrades are complete (and BI tools for University are fully available), we will have capacity to model in far more exacting manner

STUDENT AFFAIRS IMPROVEMENT

STUDENT AFFAIRS IMPROVEMENT

- Ensure program compliance with TGS policies regarding satisfactory student progress, including the completion of comprehensive annual student progress reviews, continuous registration, and the communication of transparent, unambiguous program policies

Update: It is now part of our Student Service unit protocols to ensure that our partner programs are in compliance and intervening when TGS rules are not followed (unit now conducts random checks of programs); best practices for managing student progress, conducting annual reviews, etc. will be developed this year for launch in FY10 (based also on the lessons learned during random checks, as well as through regular examination of program practice)

- Continue enhancements to delivery and content of communication campaign, ensuring our stakeholders – prospects, students, faculty, staff, alumni – are made aware of significant plans, activities, policies, and accomplishments

Update: TGS “e-news” is now delivered monthly – we have just begun research into whether readership of TGS web is up because of such targeted communication; new position of communications directorship established to lead communication and online community building efforts and make adjustments if our messages are not reaching our stakeholders as they should

- Implement refurbished professional development programs under the rubric of NU Directions; partner with affiliate programs, schools, and central administrative units to deliver programming that will ensure the successful careers of our graduates, whether they pursue academic or non-academic career paths

– Focus on expanded definitions of “success” of our doctoral alumni, broadening definition to encompass more than a tenure-track placement and to include support for doctorates to pursue careers in industry, government, education, or non-profit arenas (many advanced students quit if a tenure-track job is not imminent); work with University Career Services and Kellogg School of Management to deliver programming

Update: New professional development grants were awarded to numerous programs (and program consortia) to bring alumni to campus to present on different options available to PhD graduates; new programming in development (for launch in FY10) with KSM to create two flavors of professional programming: the first being a leadership and skill-building workshop for all PhD students, the second being a one-year MS in Management for scientists and engineers (both programs will be ideal for students who choose academic or non-academic paths)

– Expansion of slate of professional options may lead to improved retention rates, especially in humanities and social sciences, and the long-term success of our students; a delicate balance must be struck in attempt to acculturate University to broadened definition of success

Update: TGS Research and Analysis unit now has baseline data for retention and time-to-degree for all programs, so such longitudinal analysis is now possible

- Expand availability of and access to pedagogic training for doctoral students in collaboration with Searle Center for Teaching Excellence and encourage students from all disciplines to participate in ongoing teacher training to improve quality; make programming available to postdoctoral fellows seeking pedagogic training

Update: Searle has increased the size of its certificate program based on this stated goal; TGS also partners with Searle now to fund “teaching fellows,” more advanced graduate students who mentor junior students on best practices in the classroom; TGS will continue to partner with Searle to expand the pedagogic training available to doctoral students at all stages of their graduate career; TGS will also seek external foundation funds to support teacher-training programs

- Continue to encourage and facilitate students’ application for external funding in collaboration with the Office of Fellowships

Update: Reports this year suggest the success of efforts of TGS and the Office of Fellowships to stimulate our students’ efforts to apply for and win external awards – percentage of winners increased by nearly 33%

- Gauge student satisfaction through creation and delivery of systematic surveys from point of entry to exit (with degree or without); continue to interface with the Graduate Leadership Council and constituent student groups for guidance related to policy and resource commitment

Update: TGS now partners with the GLC to deliver the survey and research the data, TGS leadership working in tandem with GLC more closely than ever on development of policies and strategic direction, especially with regard to commuting policies, childcare issues, and mentor-student relations and expectations (new U-Pass usage expansion to 365 days a result of this administration/student collaboration); TGS is also developing new exit surveys for all students, both those who complete degrees and those who do not

- Expand community building initiatives and create infrastructure for communication and participation in all TGS and TGS-affiliated or sponsored events; develop electronic calendar and communication options for students to build online and real communities

– New generation of graduate students has far different expectations about what a University should provide to its population, the ability to deliver professional and social programming is more and more critical to recruitment and retention success

Update: Community building activities have expanded and our research shows that 40% of population has participated in at least one TGS-sponsored community event this year; TGS now is clearinghouse of information for all activities available to graduate students and provides these posts via Google calendar available to all students; specific events are highlighted in monthly e-news; as noted above, new communication position leads online virtual community-building efforts which will continue in tandem with actual “brick and mortar” efforts

- Continue efforts to create a climate of family friendliness; explore commitment of resources to childcare and eldercare, especially in emergency situations

Update: TGS now sponsors quarterly “Days Out” for student parents (events include days at Navy Pier, Lincoln Park Zoo, and Kohl’s Children’s Museum); participation in these events has skyrocketed as visibility increases (five families at the first event last year, 30 families at the most recent event); students who participate create network of support

and TGS has created listserv for this specific population; TGS will also launch a “Dependent Care Professional Development Grant” program this year to assist students who care for a child or loved one and need additional resources to participate in a conference, teach a class, attend a seminar, or engage in some other activity that promotes professional development but is otherwise inaccessible due to family care responsibilities

- Extend and improve “CV Initiative,” a project to enable all graduate students to have an online University URL for their curriculum vitae; interface will provide students with opportunity to download and customize document

Update: All students now have the ability to create online CVs through new interface and the number of students in system jumps about 100 each month; TGS must still coordinate with IT staff in partner schools to ensure that student CVs link to program pages

- Coordinate with Office of Alumni Relations and Development (specifically, Foundation and Corporate Relations) to develop relationships with corporate and non-profit partners to create placement opportunities for students and postdoctoral fellows

Update: Very little has been done in this regard thus far, but it is our intention to amplify this activity in FY10

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENT: TGS TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONS

- Continue to explore and extend online prospecting and recruitment tools to improve selectivity and yield

Update: TGS will monitor the use of new customizable recruitment documents being piloted in McCormick to determine its viability for entire graduate population; focus of admission and recruitment unit from a technology standpoint in FY10 will be on the development of a faculty review tool to facilitate application review and streamline admission processes at the program level; TGS is now partnering with NUIT on the examination and development of such a tool

- Collaborate with NUIT on continuous business improvement projects such as delivery of a centralized net ID system for incoming students and, with the Office of the Registrar, a centralized document management solution for graduate student records

Update: Efforts with these units continue in these areas, as well as in the area of dual-degree (and dual-program) tracking; currently, the student system does not provide a useful mechanism to track and/or account for students in two “careers” or programs concurrently; in order to chart outcomes of students with such “dual citizenship,” such a mechanism must be created and implemented in the coming year

- Ensure continuous improvement of distributed “self-service” technology that supports admission, student services, and financial aid

Update: Such continuous improvement is part of our quarterly staff and unit reviews in TGS, as well as regular and active participation in committee work outside TGS

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENT: OFFICE OF POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS

- Examine current systems regularly to ensure data and system security

Update: Such examination is part of our IT protocols; suitable back-up planning is in place

- Continue to utilize TGS web site as tool for doing business with constituency; upgrade content management system and site interface, as necessary, and track usage to determine ongoing utility

Update: TGS is making substantial improvements to its web site this year, including the creation of a new database to undergird all program pages on the web as well as a new navigation system based on the site user (applicant, student, faculty, staff member); examination of new web architecture will begin in earnest in FY10

- Improve the collection, reporting, and updating of data regarding external awards of current students and placements of our alumni

Update: We now track our external winners far more effectively than in years past; new technology launched in FY10 will further facilitate such reporting; placement data gathering and reporting has also improved dramatically in the past year; our Research and Analysis unit now has data on over 90% of our PhD graduates from the past eight years and a new user-friendly interface will allow faculty and programs to update information on their former students more regularly and easily; this placement information will then be made available (in aggregate) on our site for prospective students to review

- Become national leader in terms of innovative service, visibility, and integration of office into fabric of university culture and research enterprise

Update: The OPA has improved its visibility on campus considerably in the past year; the visibility of the office internally and externally should improve further in the next year with launch of slate of policies, guidelines, and best practices for postdoctoral training (draft approved for launch by Provost, VPR, and school deans and to be communicated to community once final version is developed in partnership with key offices, such as that of the Provost, OSR, and HR

- Create and implement a set of policies - in collaboration with Human Resources and the Offices of the Provost and Research - to guide postdoctoral training at the University, including but not limited to clear rules governing appointment, categorization, performance management and review, and benefits eligibility

Update: See above update

- Ensure postdoctoral fellow participation in student professional development and community building events, when appropriate; develop and deliver programming specific to the postdoctoral fellow population, including a customized orientation program, professional

development and community building options, and career service; establish “development tracks” for fellows that can serve as guideposts for career management

Update: OPA now offers TGS “Nights Out,” social events for postdoctoral fellows and fellows also join students at NU Directions professional events; more work must be done to create the “development tracks” but such work should be facilitated by launch of new postdoctoral training slate

- Explore creation of internal postdoctoral awards competitions to recognize excellence among this population and build community and visibility

Update: Little work has been done in this area this year, but we plan to act in this area next year

- Measure satisfaction of the postdoctoral population (and the units who employ them) to determine quality of their experience at University and the “market penetration” of the office

Update: A satisfaction survey for the postdoctoral population (and the faculty who hire this population) is in development and should be launch by start of FY10

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENT: TRAINING GRANT SUPPORT OFFICE

- Continue to improve and support the training grant proposal development and submission process to maximize opportunities for new and renewed funding

Update: Unit continues to demonstrate value and strategic importance; three NIH competing renewals awarded had increase of trainee slot (none lost slots), a significant accomplishment in this funding climate

- Establish best practices for proposal development and administration; explore opportunities for responsible, efficient centralization of effort and resources; convene advisory board to spur acceptance of such recommendations

Update: TGS recognizes that work still must be done in this area and we will work with central administration and partner schools as part of 1NU process to plan and deliver operational upgrades and streamlining opportunities

- Expand purview of the office to create and support standards for post-award practice

Update: See above update

- Implement improved data collection mechanisms with Research and Analysis and the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs; upgrade the training grant support data system and user application with TGS IT

Update: Such improvements have occurred and additional upgrades are planned with addition of staff member to Research and Analysis to facilitate data gathering for training grants, among other activities; new TGSO data system begins full-fledged development this winter

APPENDIX

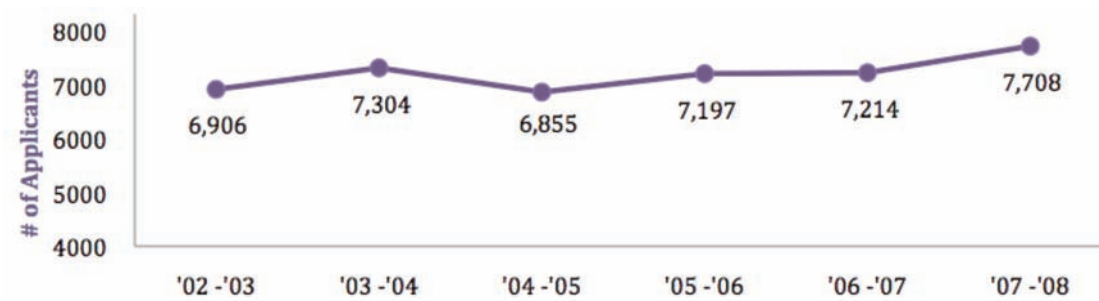
APPENDICES

These appendices provide information on graduate education in five key areas: admissions, enrollment, outcomes, graduation, and placement for PhD students. Data are presented for the overall PhD population by student demographic characteristics (gender, minorities, and citizenship status), and by field. The admissions section contains information on the number of applications, selectivity rates, and yield rates. The enrollment section includes trend and demographic information on first-time matriculants and total enrollment. The outcomes section contains information on attrition and completion rates based on the matriculation cohort year. The graduation section contains information on the number of degrees awarded and the average amount of time needed to complete the degree. The placement section contains first placement data for PhD graduates on the type of position and the classification of institutions for academic and postdoctoral placements.

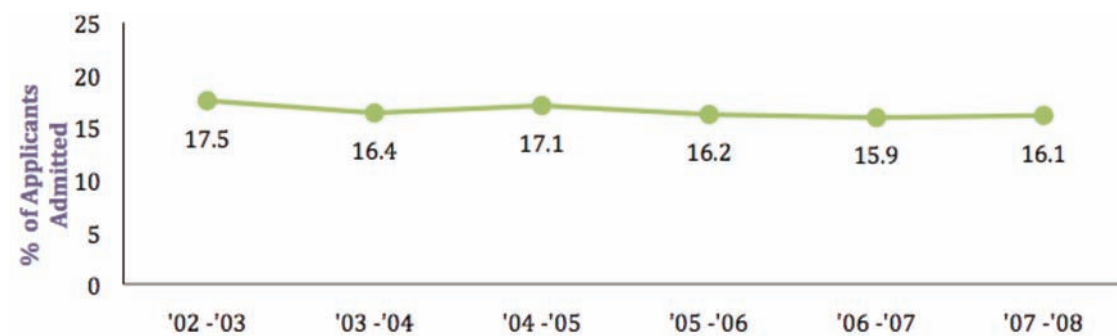
In the future, we hope to provide additional benchmark information on graduate education as more comparison data become available. Dean Andrew Wachtel is part of a national task force led by the Association for American Universities (AAU) on graduate education to implement recommendations for data collection of key graduate education indicators, such as time-to-degree, completion rates, financial support, a student survey, and placement outcomes. The goal is to collect data from peer institutions in order to produce relevant and comparable data across all AAU universities. Additionally, the National Research Council (NRC) will release its assessment of doctoral programs, and additional data on programs from peer institutions will be available to benchmark Northwestern University among peer institutions.

PHD ADMISSIONS: APPLICATIONS, SELECTIVITY AND YIELD

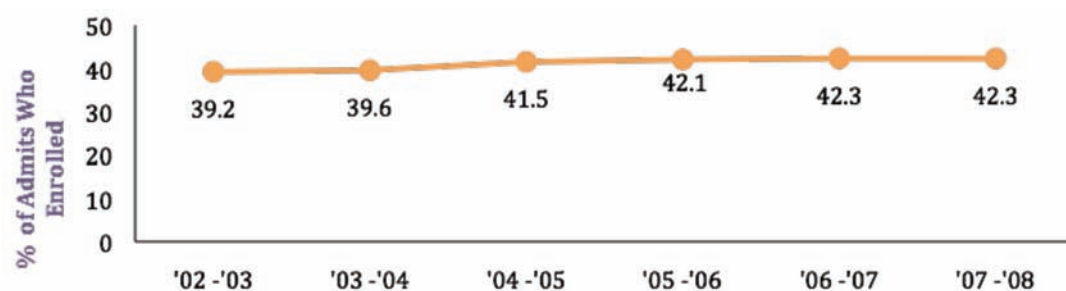
Applications for PhD programs at Northwestern University have increased over the past five years, from 6,906 to 7,708. In 2007-2008, applications increased 6% over the past year and increased 10% over the past five years.



Selectivity is the percentage of applicants admitted to an institution in a given year. A lower percentage indicates a higher selectivity. Selectivity has remained stable at 16% for three consecutive years. The selectivity for PhD programs at Northwestern University is lower than the national average of 25%.



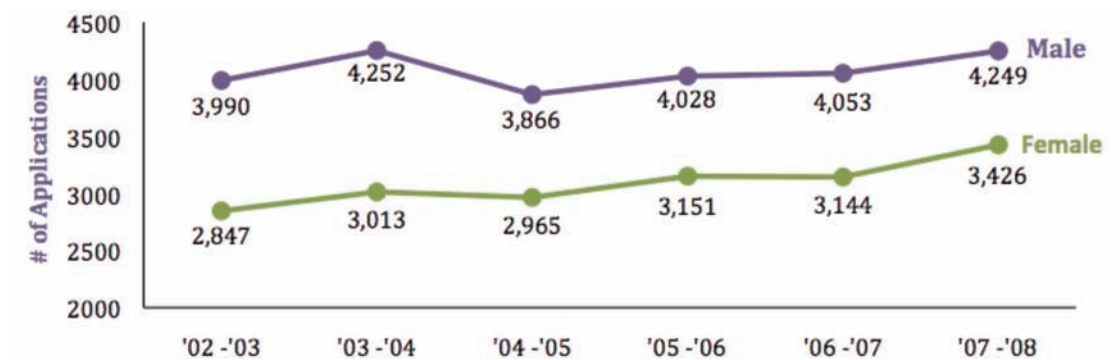
Yield is the percentage of admitted applicants who chose to enroll at an institution in a given year. Yield in 2007-2008 was 42%. Yield has remained constant at 42% for the last four years and increased slightly compared to five years ago.



PHD ADMISSIONS: NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BY DEMOGRAPHICS AND FIELD OF STUDY

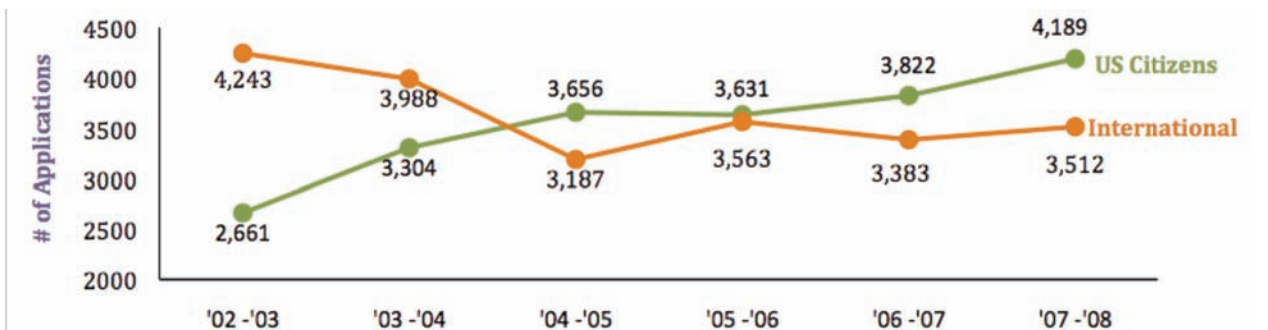
PhD Applications by Gender

Over the last five years, applications for male and female applicants have continued to increase, as the total number of applications increased. The rate of increase for female applicants has outpaced the increase for male applicants. In the past year, the number of female applicants has increased by 9%, and by 5% for male applicants. Compared to five years ago, applications for females have increased by 20%, whereas applications for males have only increased by 7%. The proportion of female to male applicants has remained fairly constant, with females accounting for 42% of applicants for the past four years.



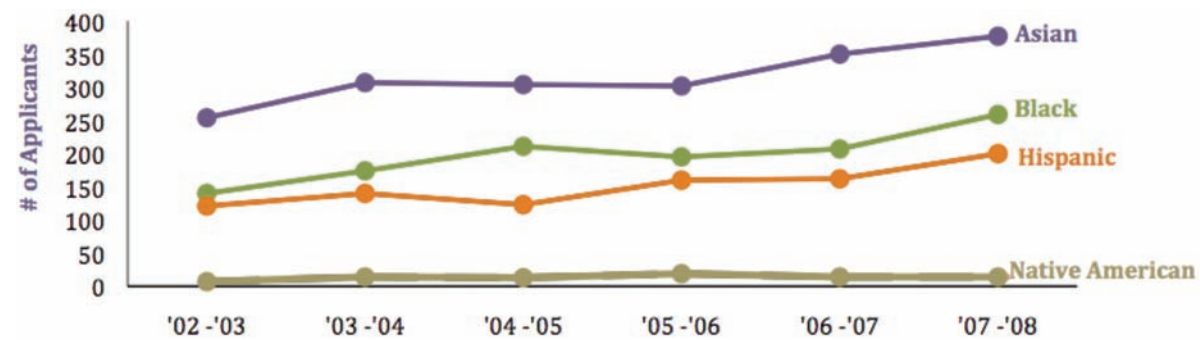
US and International PhD Applications

Over the past five years, the number of U.S. PhD applicants to Northwestern University has increased, while the number of international applicants has decreased. In the past year, the number of U.S. applications was 4,189, an increase of 10% from the previous year, and a 46% increase from five years earlier. In 2007-2008, the number of international applications was 3,512, a decrease of 4% from the previous year, and a 17% decrease from five years earlier.



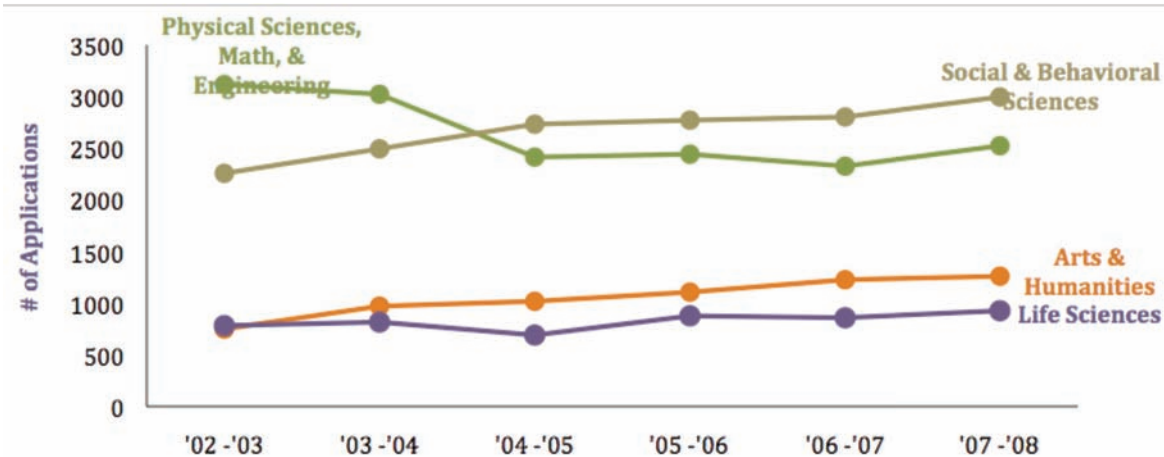
Minority PhD Applications (US Citizens Only)

The number of minority PhD applicants has increased 14% from the previous year, and increased 39% from five years earlier. Compared to last year, the number of Asian applicants increased by 8%, the number of Black applicants increased by 25%, the number of Hispanic applicants increased by 23%, and the number of Native American applicants stayed the same. Over the last five years, the number of Asian applicants per year increased by 48%, the number of Black applicants per year increased by 85%, the number of Hispanic applicants per year increased by 65%, and the number of Native American applicants increased by 100%.



Number of PhD Applications by Field of Study

Northwestern University has received the highest number of PhD applications in the Social and Behavioral Sciences for the past four years, and increased by 33% from five years earlier, and account for 39% of all PhD applications. Although applications in the Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering have decreased by 19% over the past five years, they still account for 33% of all applications received. Arts and Humanities increased their number of applications by 68% from 5 years before. Life Sciences also experienced an increase of 18% from five years ago.

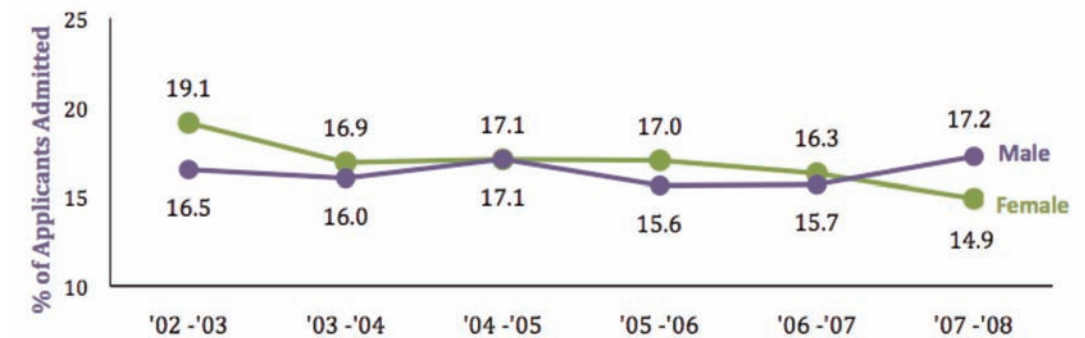


PHD ADMISSIONS: SELECTIVITY BY DEMOGRAPHICS AND FIELD OF STUDY

Selectivity is the percentage of applicants admitted to an institution in a given year. A lower percentage indicates a higher selectivity. Overall, the selectivity rate for PhD programs at Northwestern University is 16% compared to the national selectivity rate of 25% (Council of Graduate schools).

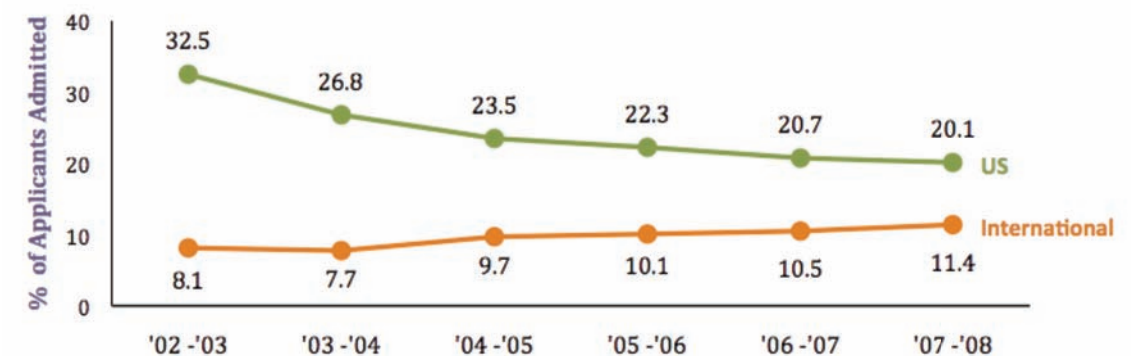
Selectivity by Gender

In 2007-2008, selectivity for male PhD applicants was 17%, which is 1% higher than the year before, and 1% higher than five years earlier. Selectivity for females was 15% in 2007-2008, which is a 1% decrease from the year before, and a 4% decrease from five years earlier.



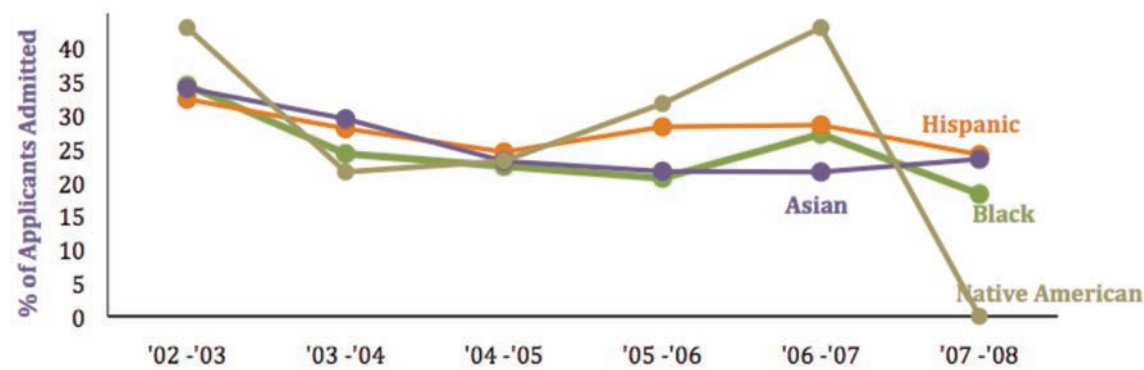
Selectivity by Citizenship

In 2007-2008, selectivity for U.S. PhD applicants to Northwestern University was 20%, a decrease of 1% from the year before and a 13% decrease from five years earlier. International selectivity was 11% in 2007-2008, a 1% increase from the year before and an increase of 3% from five years earlier. Over the last five years, selectivity for U.S. applicants has steadily decreased, while selectivity for international applicants has risen slightly.



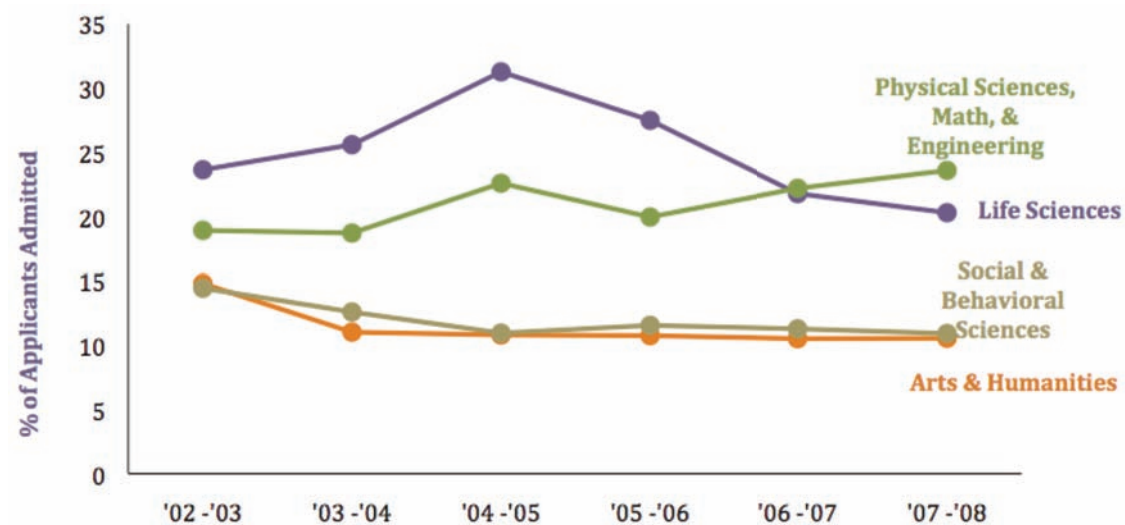
Selectivity for Minorities (US Citizens Only)

In 2007-2008, selectivity for Hispanic PhD applicants to Northwestern University was 24%, a decrease of 4% from the year before, and an 8% decrease from five years earlier. Selectivity for Asian applicants was 23% in 2007 - 2008, which is a 2% increase from the year before, and an 11% decrease from five years earlier. In 2007-2008, selectivity for Black applicants was 18%, a 9% decrease from the year before, and a 16% decrease in the rate as compared to five years earlier. Selectivity for Native Americans was 0% due to the small number of applications received. Overall, selectivity for minority applicants has steadily declined over the past five years, from an average of 33% selectivity in 2002-2003 to an average of 22% in 2007-2008.



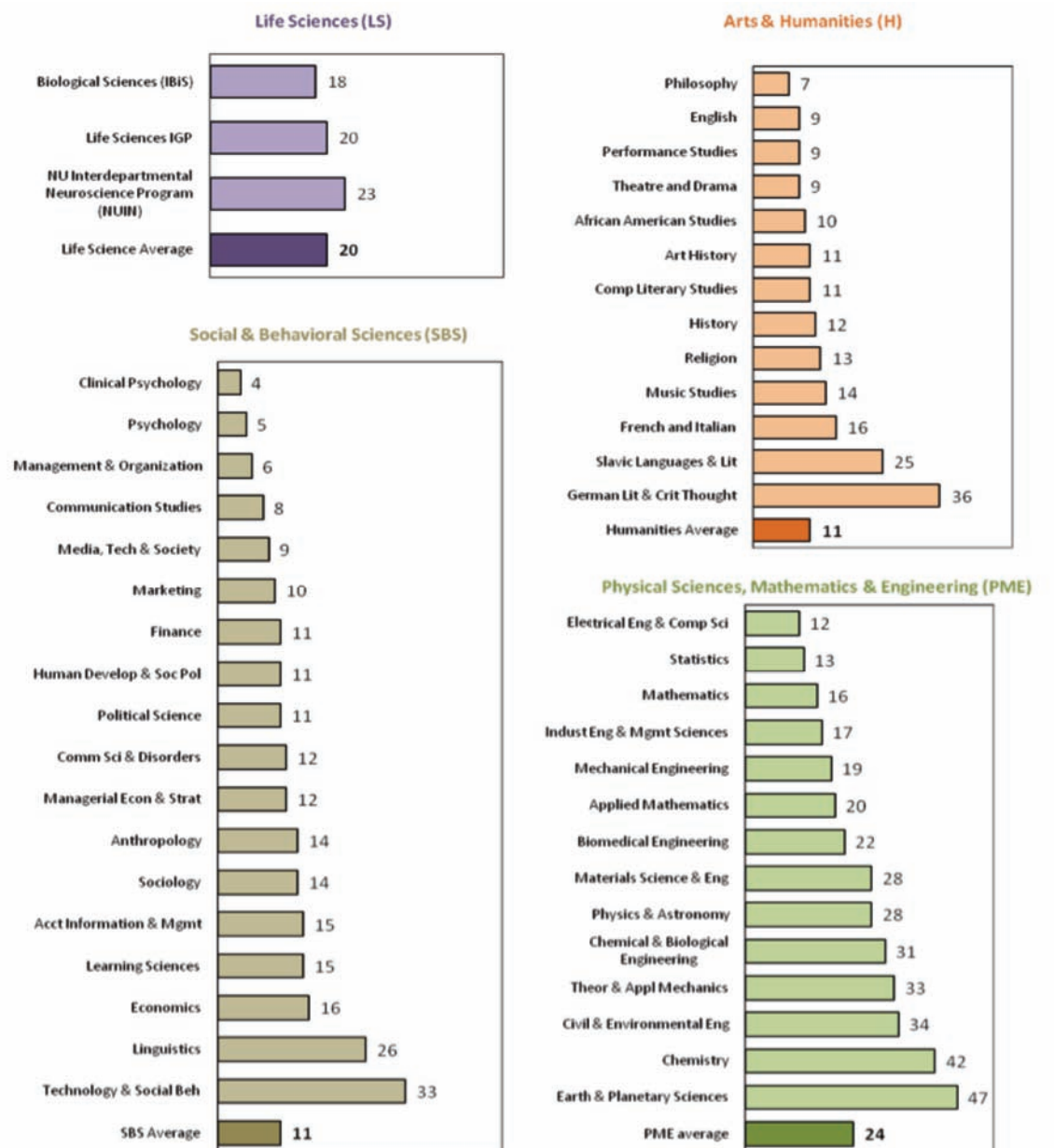
Selectivity by Field of Study

Programs in the Life Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Arts and Humanities have become more selective over the past five years. In 2007-2008, the selectivity for PhD programs in Life Sciences was 20%, a 2% decrease from the year before, a 4% decrease from five years earlier, and an 11% drop from its five-year high of 31% in 2004-2005. Selectivity for Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Arts and Humanities was 11% in 2007-2008, unchanged from the year before. In 2007-2008, selectivity for Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering was 24%, a 2% increase from the year before, and a 5% increase from five years earlier.



PHD ADMISSIONS: SELECTIVITY BY PROGRAM, 2007 - 2008

The programs that admitted the fewest number of applicants were in Clinical Psychology, Psychology, Management and Organization, Philosophy, and Communication Studies. In contrast, Earth and Planetary Science admits approximately 1 out of every two applicants, as they receive fewer applications.

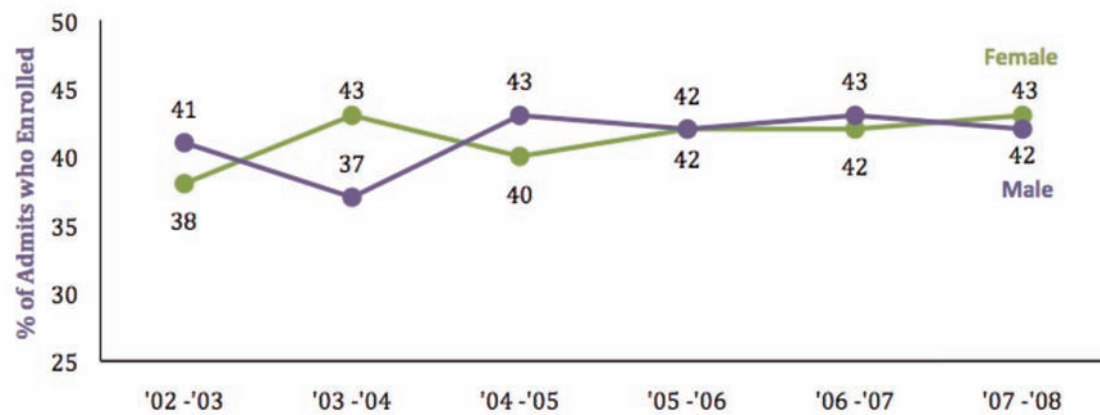


PHD ADMISSIONS: YIELD BY DEMOGRAPHICS AND FIELD OF STUDY

Yield is the percentage of admitted applicants who chose to enroll at an institution in a given year. The overall yield for PhD programs at NU was 42%.

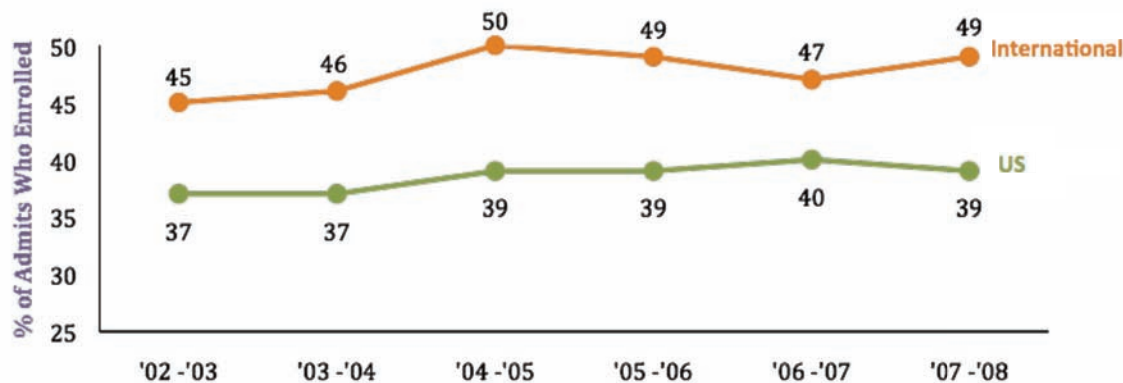
Yield by Gender

In 2007-2008, the yield rate for female PhD admits was 43%, 1% more than the year before and 5% higher than five years earlier. The yield rate for male admits in 2007-2008 was 42%, which was a decrease of 1% from the year before, and an increase of 1% from five years earlier. Five years ago, the difference between yields for male and female admits was 3%, with yield for males being higher. In 2007-2008, the difference between male and female yields was 1%, with yield for females being higher.



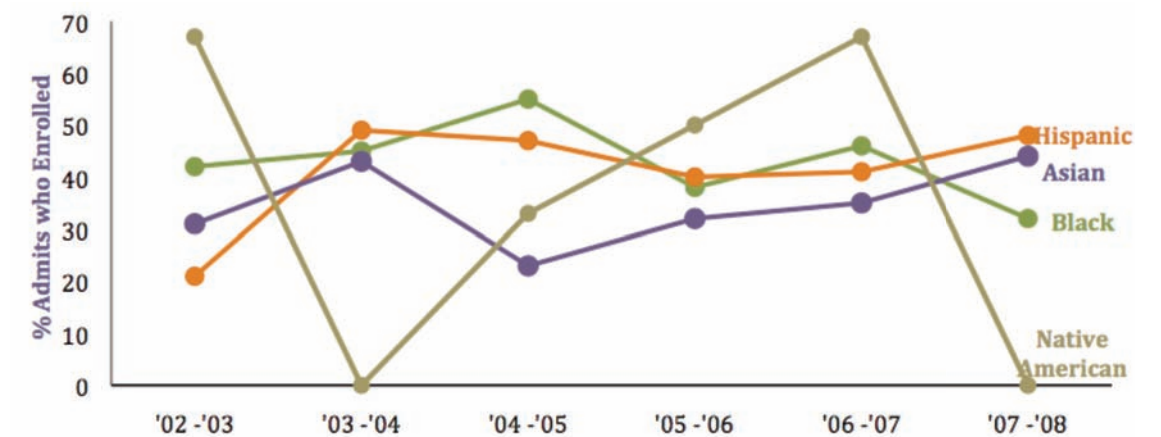
Yield by Citizenship

In 2007-2008, yield for U.S. PhD admits to Northwestern University was 39%, down 1% from the year before, and up 2% from five years before. The yield for 2007-2008 international admits was 49%, up 2% from the year before, and 4% from five years earlier. Over the last five years, yield for U.S. students has remained stable at around 39%, while yield for international admits has risen to 49%.



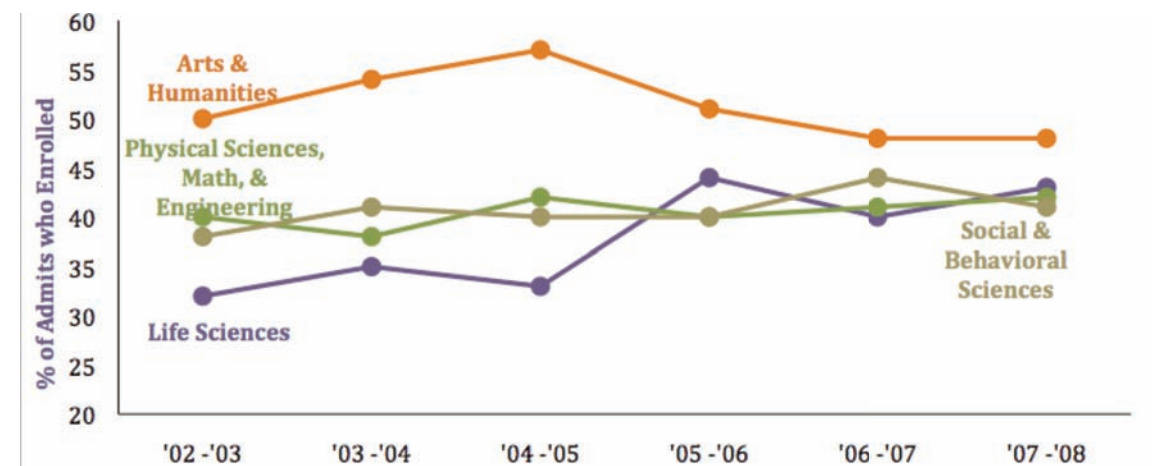
Yield for Minorities (US Citizens Only)

In 2007-2008, yield for Hispanic PhD admits to Northwestern University was 48%, a 7% increase from the year before and 27% increase from five years earlier. The yield for Asian admits in 2007-2008 was 44%, which was an increase of 9% from the year before, and an increase of 13% from five years earlier. Black admits enrolled at a rate of 32%, a decrease of 14% from the year before, and a 10% decrease from five years earlier. The yield for Native American admits was 0%, due to the small number of applications received. The previous year, the yield for Native Americans was 67%.



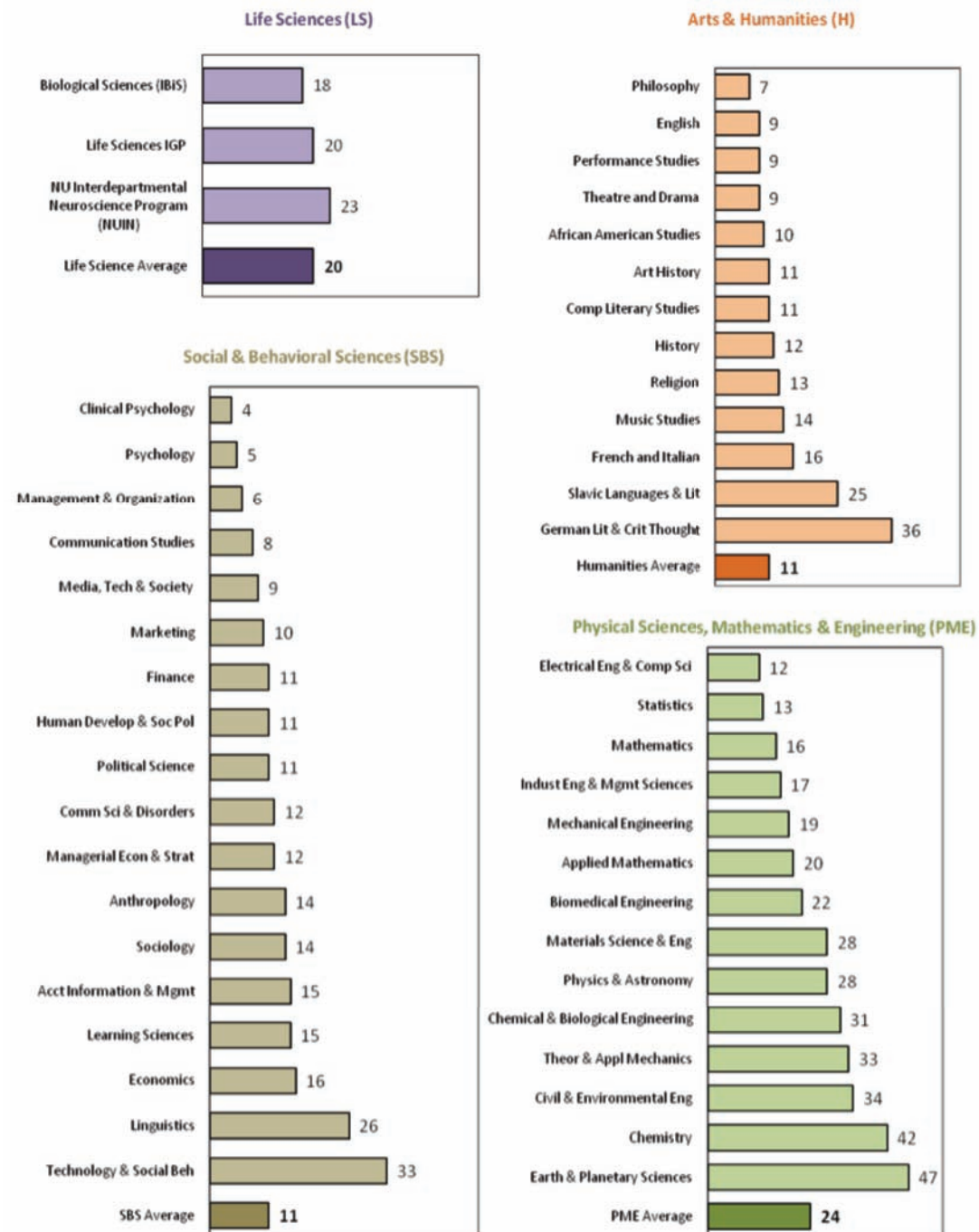
Selectivity by Field of Study

The average yield for PhD programs in Life Sciences at Northwestern University was 43% in 2007-2008, an increase of 3% from the year before, and an increase of 11% from five years earlier. The yield for Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering in 2007-2008 was 42%, a 1% increase from the year before, and 2% increase from five years earlier. The yield for Social and Behavioral Sciences was 41% this year, a 3% decrease from the year before, and a 3% increase from five years earlier. In 2007-2008, yield for Arts and Humanities was 48%, which was the same rate as the year before, and a decrease of 2% from five years before.



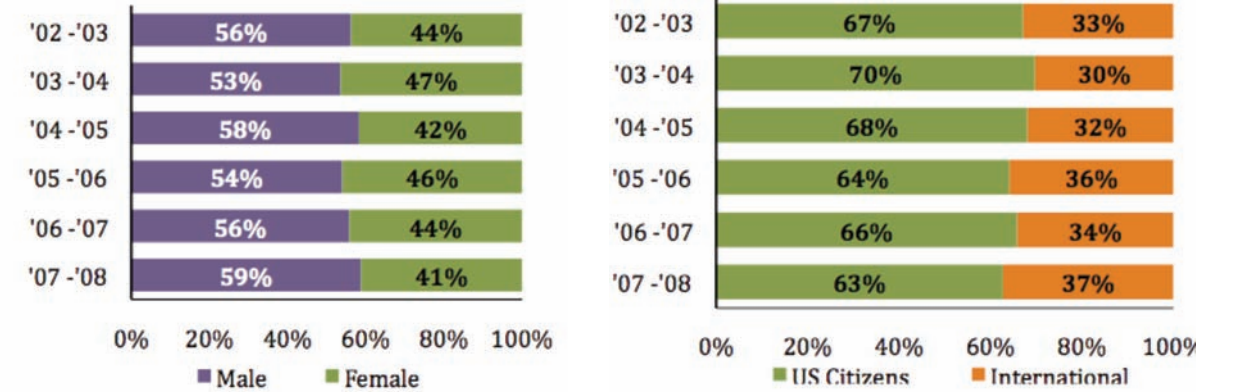
PHD ADMISSIONS: YIELD BY PROGRAM, 2007 - 2008

The programs with the highest number of admits who enrolled at the university were Performance Studies, Religion, Learning Sciences, Anthropology, and Communication Studies. The program with the lowest yield was Linguistics.



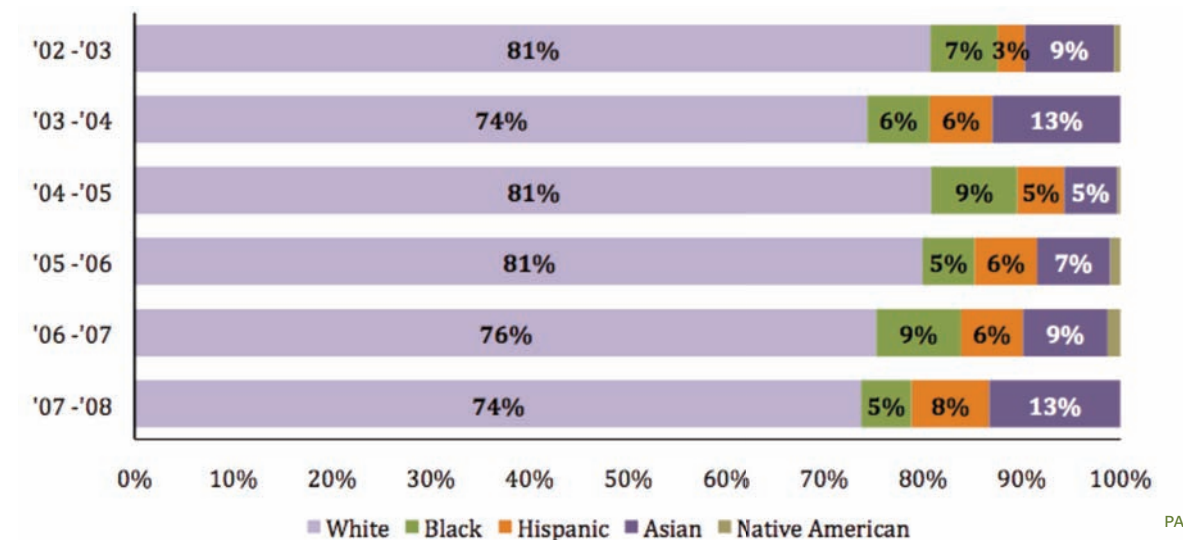
PHD ENROLLMENT: FIRST TIME MATRICULATION BY DEMOGRAPHICS

2007-2008, a total of 526 students matriculated into Northwestern University PhD programs. Of those, 59% of all first-time enrollments were male students, and 41% were female students. In 2007-2008, 63% of all first-time enrollments were US citizens, compared to 37% international students. First-time enrollment of international students has continued to increase compared to five years ago.



First-Time PhD Matriculation by Ethnicity (%)

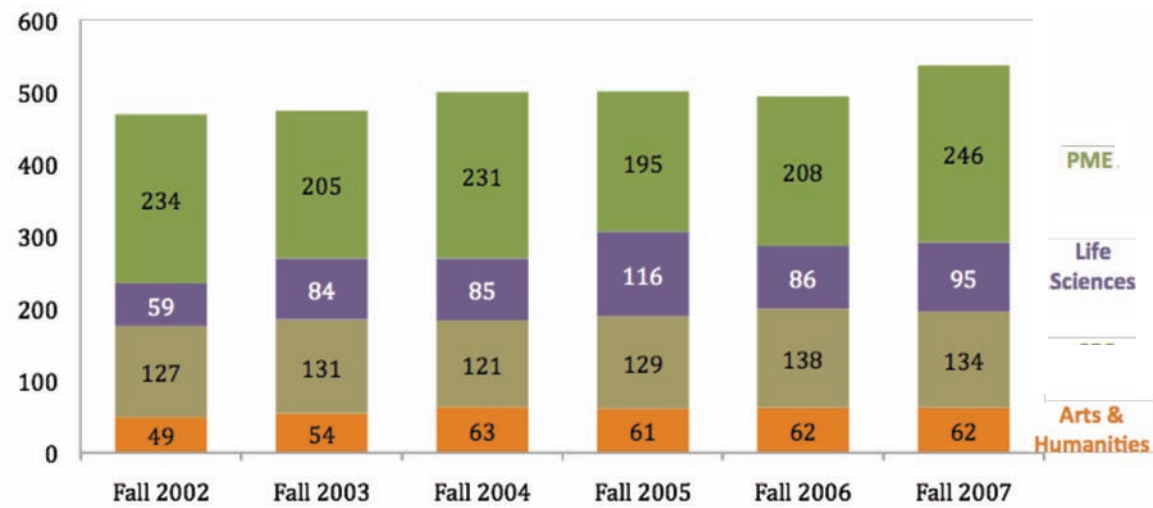
In 2007-2008, 74% of all first-time enrollees to PhD programs at Northwestern University were White students, 5% were Black, 8% were Hispanic, and 13% were Asian. Compared to five years ago, the percentage of White, Black, and Native American first-time PhD matriculants has decreased, whereas the percentage of Hispanic and Asian students has increased.



PHD ENROLLMENT: FIRST-TIME MATRICULANTS AND TOTAL ENROLLMENT BY FIELD OF STUDY

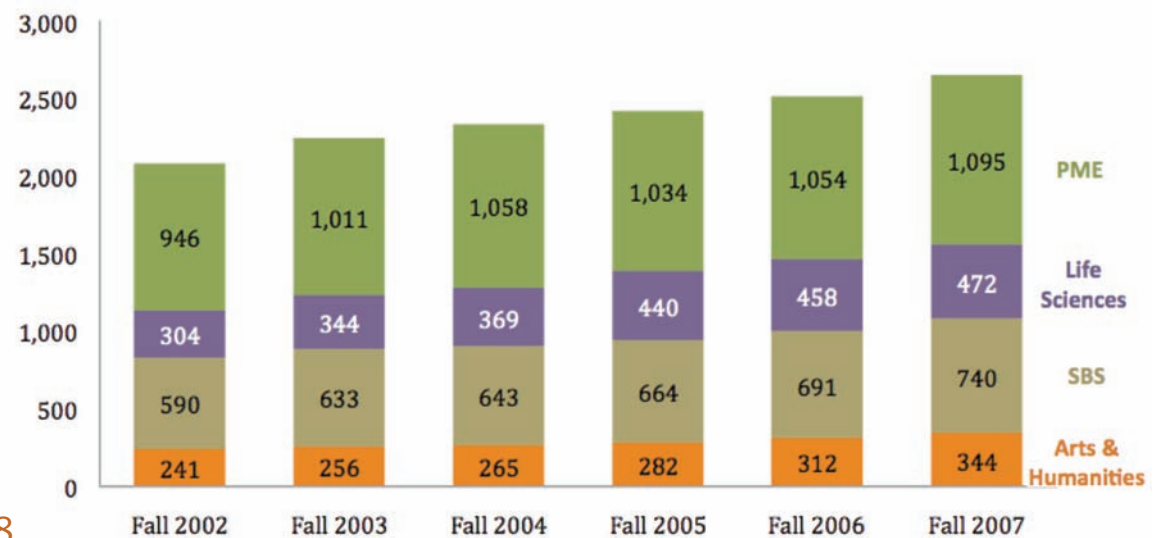
First-Time PhD Matriculation by Field of Study (% of Total)

In Fall 2007, Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering comprised the largest percentage of first-time PhD matriculants (46%), followed by Social and Behavioral Sciences (25%), Life Sciences (18%), and Arts and Humanities (12%).



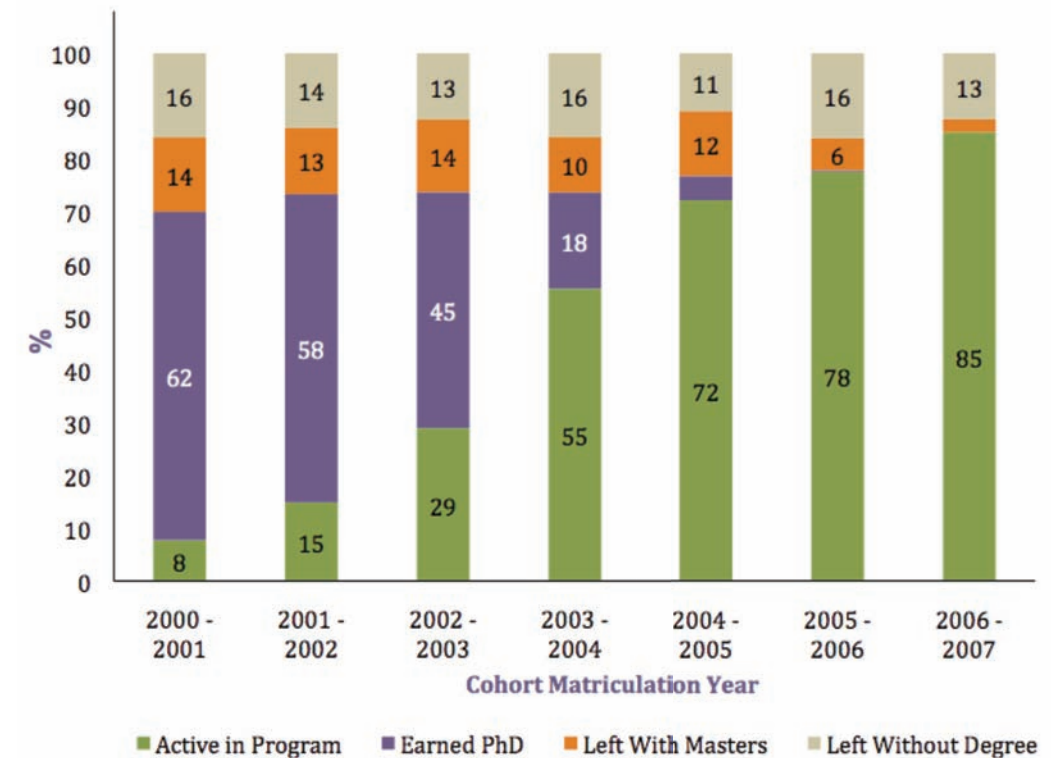
Overall Enrollment by Field of Study PhD (% of Total)

The overall enrollment in PhD programs has continued to increase. In Fall 2007, the total PhD enrollment was over 2,600. Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering comprised the largest percentage of total PhD enrollment (41%), followed by Social and Behavioral Sciences (28%), Life Sciences (18%), and Arts and Humanities (13%).



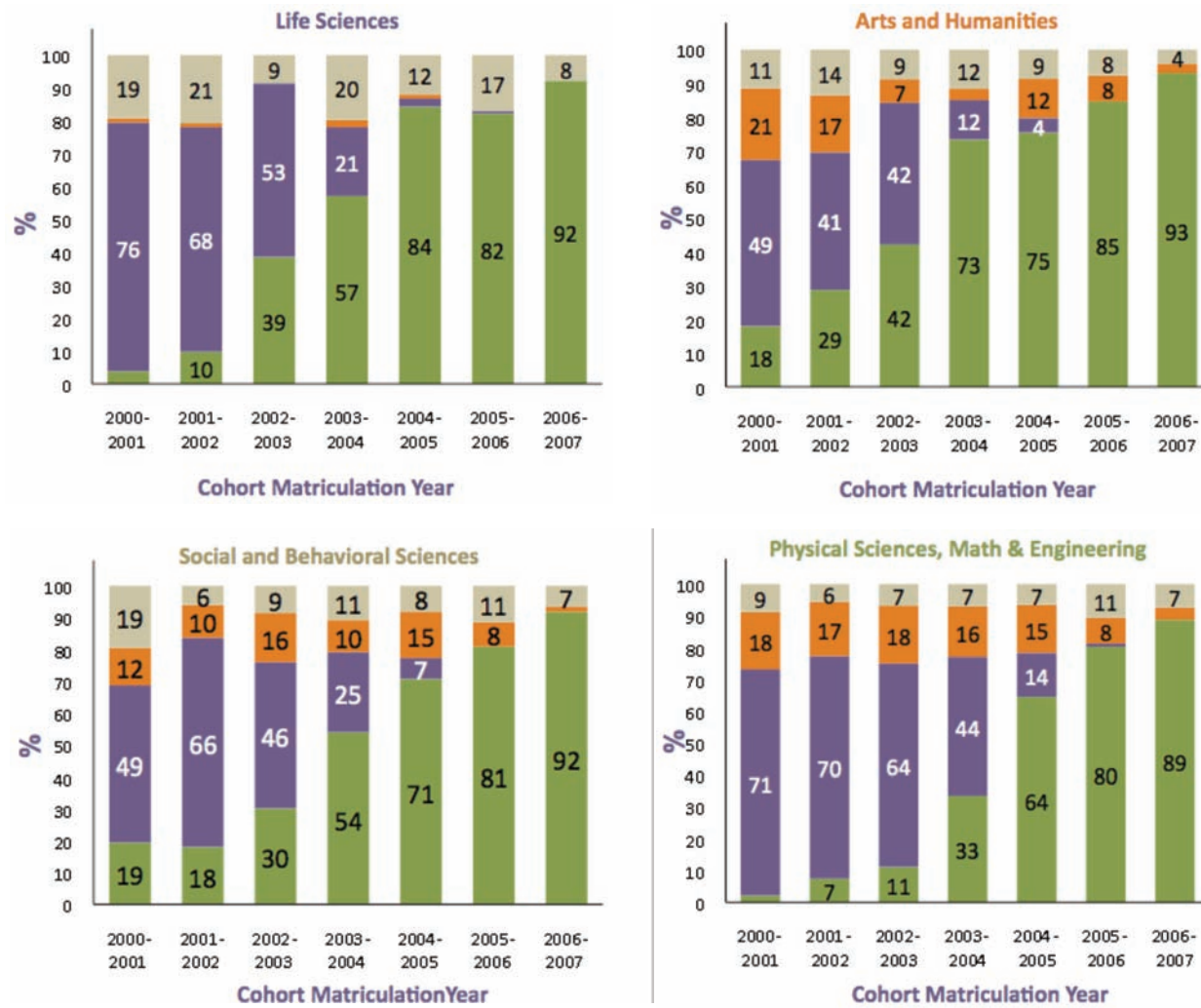
PHD OUTCOMES: ATTRITION AND COMPLETION BY COHORT MATRICULATION YEAR

The chart below depicts the outcomes of PhD students by the year they first matriculated into their program. Each cohort is represented by a horizontal bar with the year of admission listed at the bottom. The bottom portion of the bar in green indicates the percentage of students from the cohort who are still enrolled in their program. The purple portion of the bar indicates the percentage of students who earned their PhD. The orange portion of the bar indicates the percentage of students who left with a master's degree. The top portion of the bar in tan indicates the percentage of students who left without a degree. Looking at the 2000-2001 cohort, a total of 8% of the students are still enrolled, 62% earned a PhD, 14% left with a master's degree, and 16% left the program without a degree.



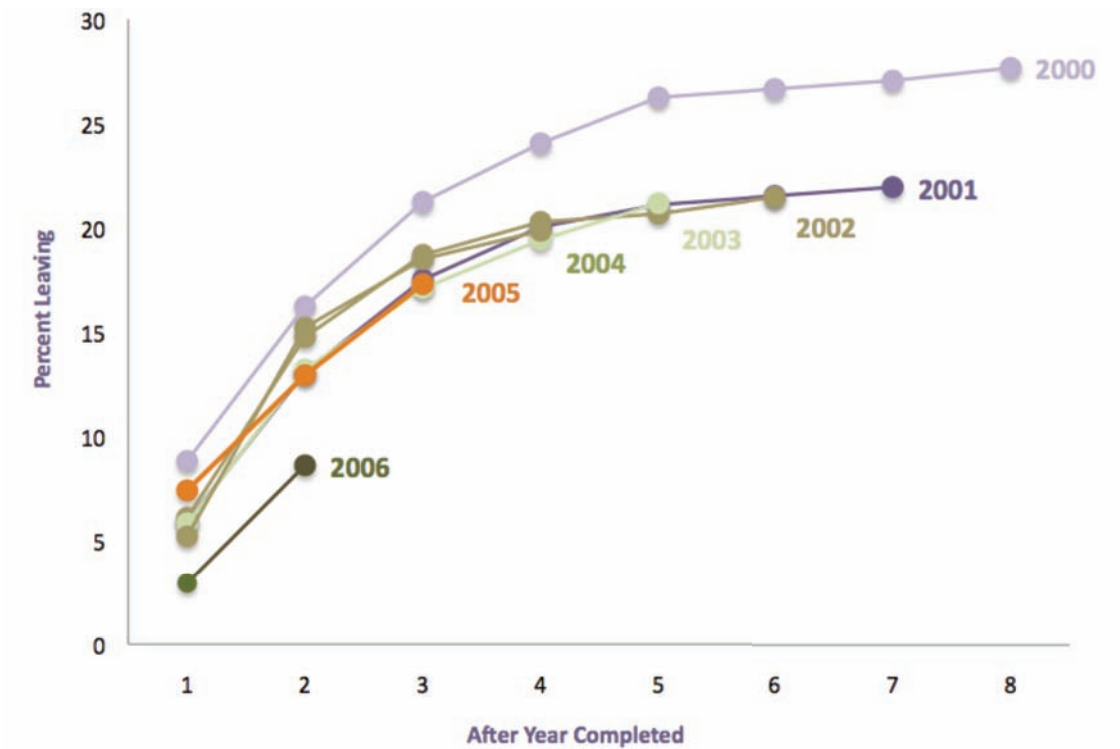
PHD OUTCOMES: ATTRITION AND COMPLETION BY COHORT AND FIELD OF STUDY

The charts below illustrate the outcomes of PhD students by their field of study. Physical Sciences, Math, and Engineering have the largest percentage of students earning a PhD and the lowest percentage of students leaving without a degree. It should be noted that, until recently, a master's option was not utilized for the Life Sciences programs.



CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE OF COHORT LEAVING WITHOUT A PHD

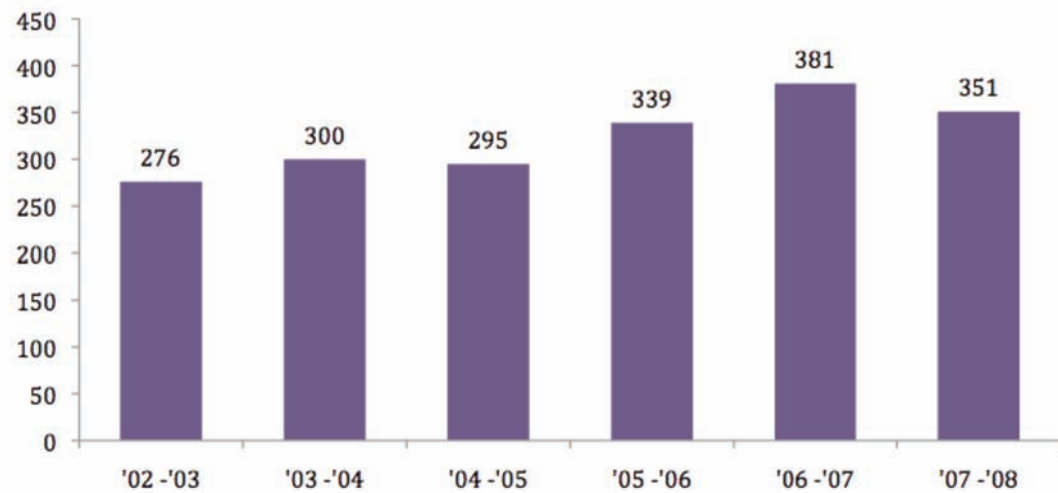
In the chart below, each line represents a cohort by their year of matriculation and the number of years completed before leaving. For the 2000 – 2001 cohort (light purple line), 9% left after their first year, 16% left after their second year, 21% left after their third year, 24% left after their fourth year, 26% left after their fifth year, 27% left after their sixth and seventh year, and 28% left after their eighth year. Overall, the largest percentage of students leave after their first and second year. After their third year, the average attrition rate is 19%. New strategies have been implemented to reduce the attrition rate.



PHD DEGREES AWARDED: TOTAL AND BY FIELD AND PROGRAM

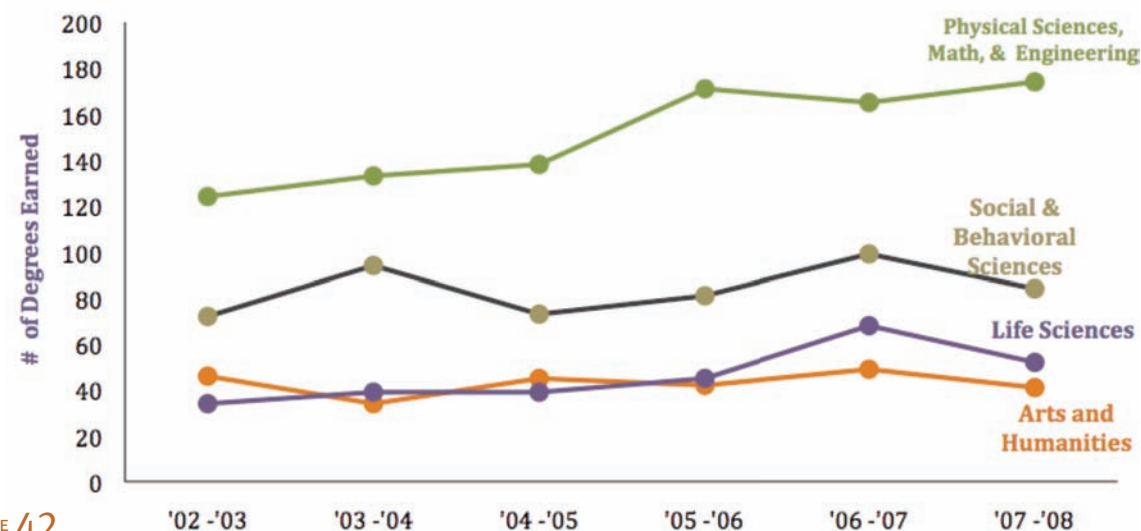
TOTAL NUMBER OF PHD DEGREES AWARDED

The number of PhDs awarded at Northwestern University in 2007-2008 was 351, an 8% decline from the five year high of 381 in 2006-2007. Over the five year period, the number of PhD's awarded increased from 276 to 351, a 27% increase.

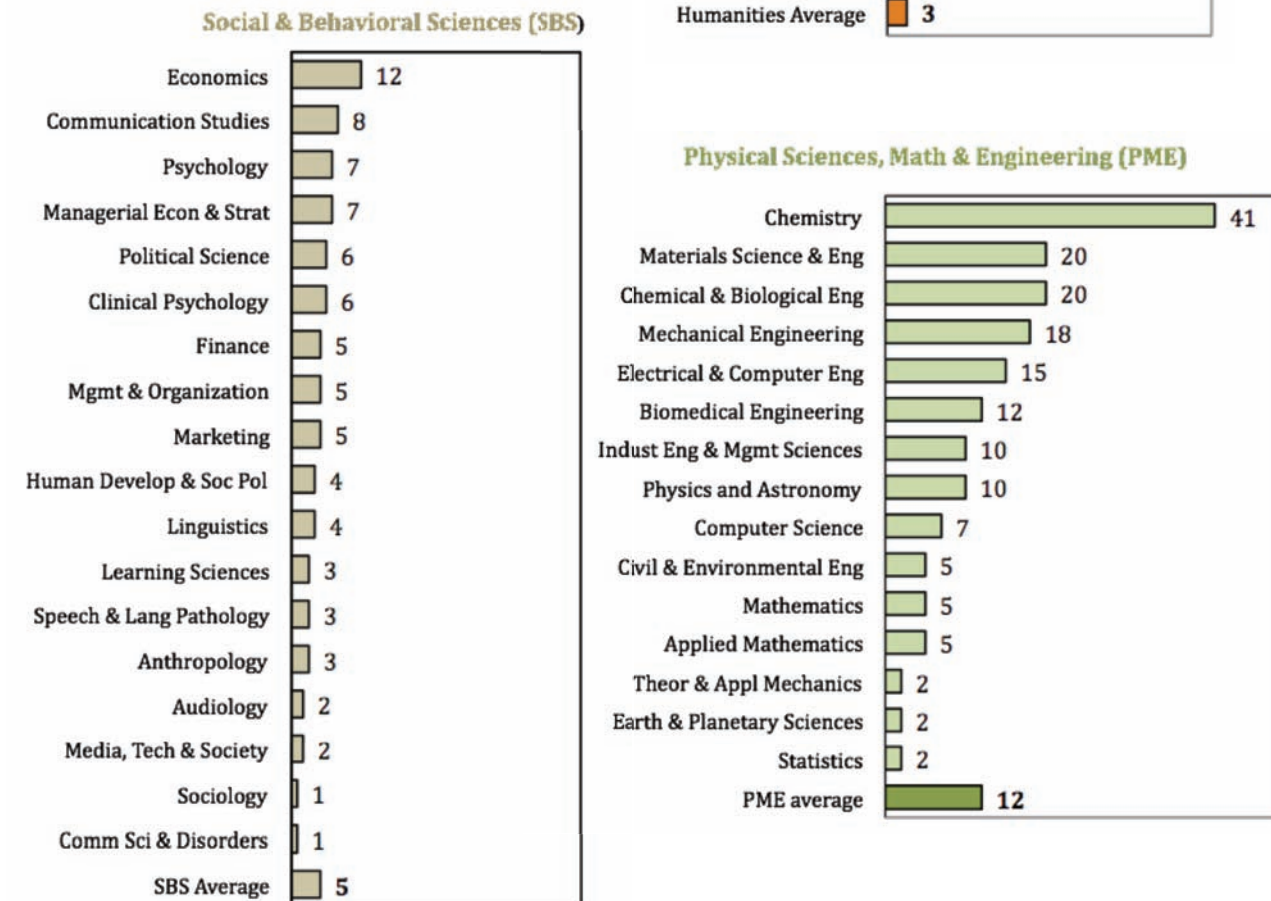
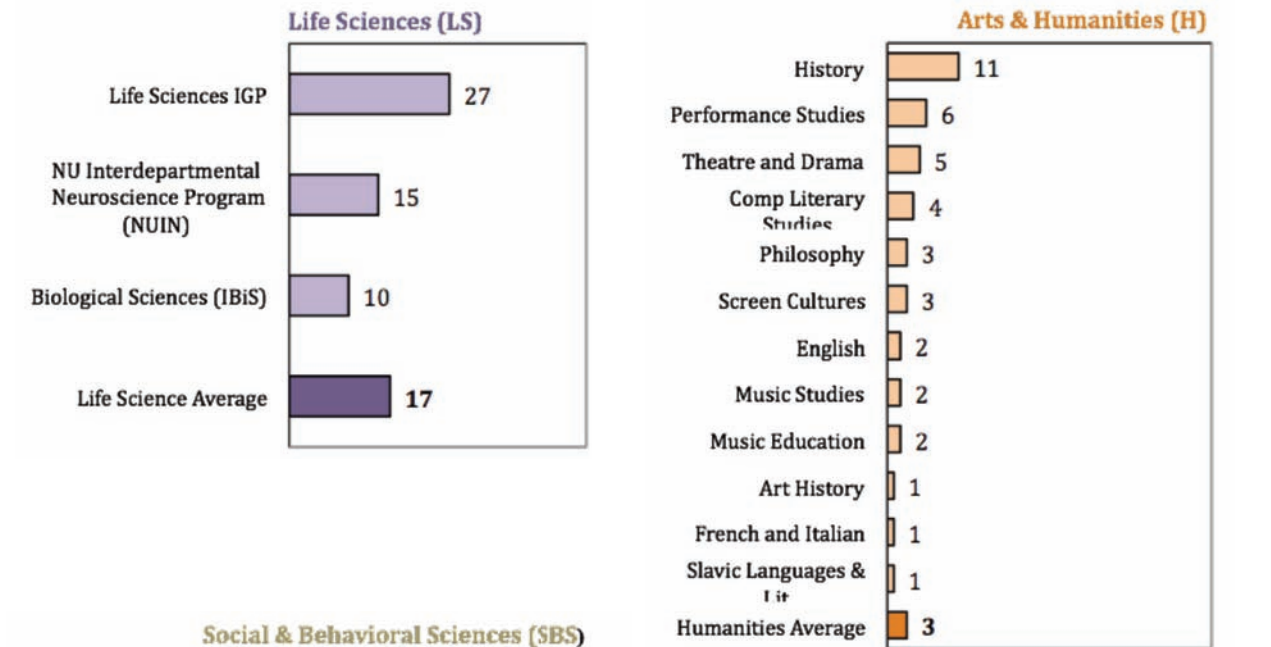


Number of PhD Degrees Awarded by Field

The Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering field annually award the most PhD degrees, accounting for 50% of all degrees awarded. Programs in the Social and Behavioral Science account for 24% of all degrees, followed by Life Sciences with 15%, and Arts and Humanities with 12%.



The charts below depict the number of PhD degrees awarded by program in 2007-2008. Chemistry awarded the highest number of degrees (41), followed by Life Sciences IGP (27), and Materials Science and Engineering (20) and Chemical and Biological Engineering (20).

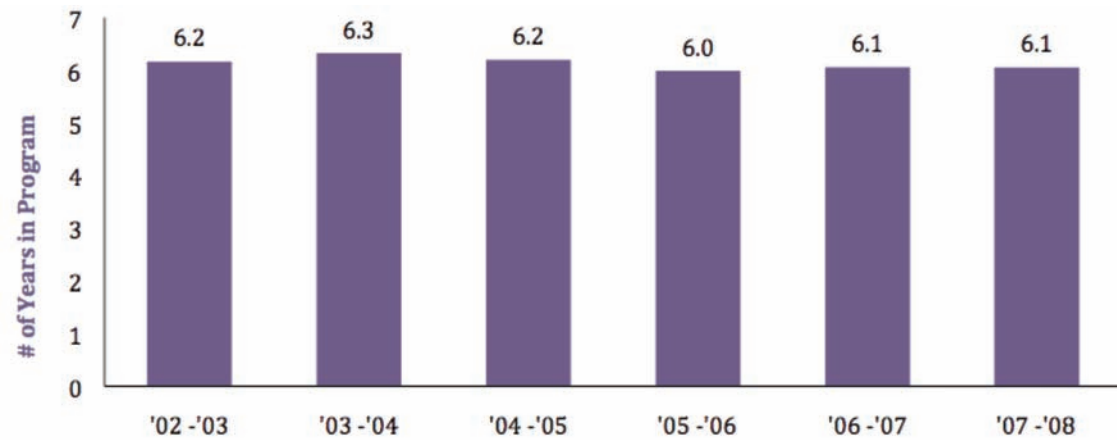


PHD DEGREES AWARDED: AVERAGE TIME-TO-DEGREE OVERALL AND BY FIELD

Time-to-degree (TTD) is defined as the number of years between the student's entry point into the graduate school (master's or PhD) and the attainment of the degree at graduation.

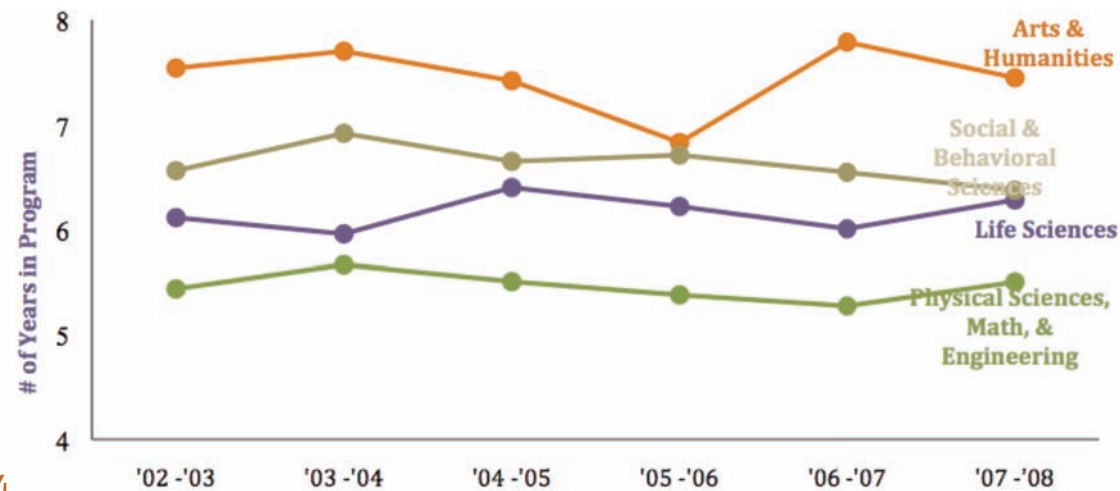
Overall Average Time-to-Degree

In 2007-2008, PhD recipients at Northwestern University took an average of 6.1 years to complete their degrees, consistent with the year before, and a slight decrease from the 2002-2003 average of 6.2 years.



Average Time-to-Degree by Field

Graduates in the Physical Sciences, Math, and Engineering have the shortest time-to-degree, with an average of 5.5 years in 2007-2008, followed by graduates in Life Sciences programs with an average of 6.3 years and Social and Behavioral Sciences programs with an average of 6.4 years. Graduates in the Arts and Humanities have the longest time-to-degree average with 7.5 years.

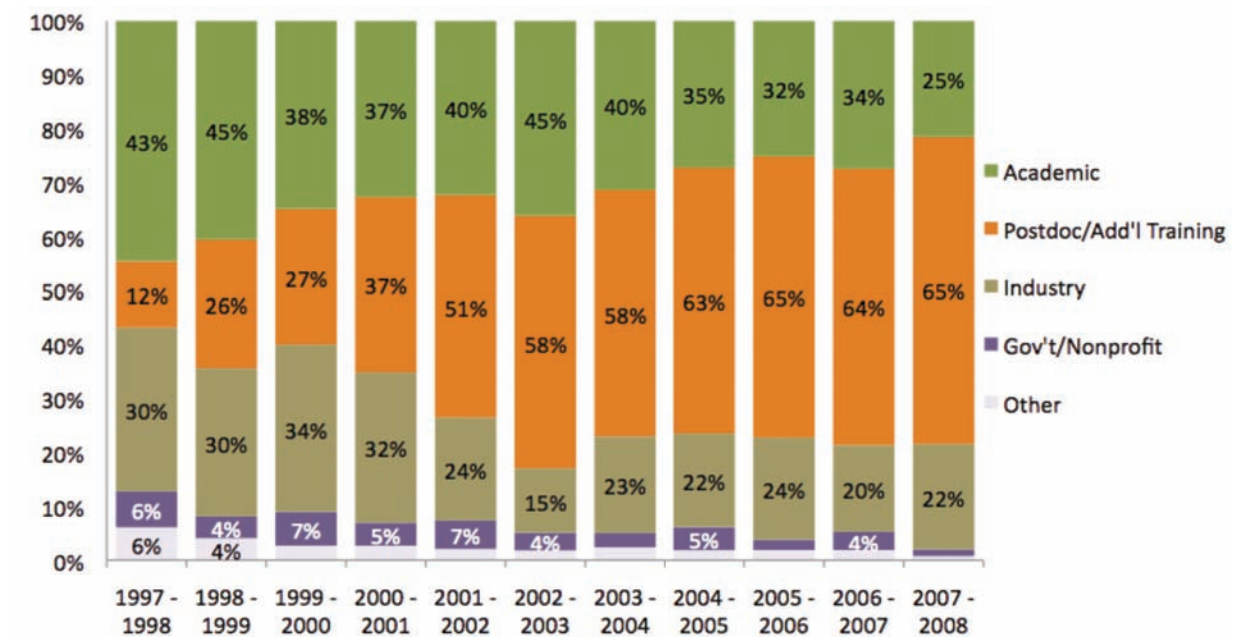


PHD FIRST PLACEMENT: POSITION TYPE

There are five main categories for placement type: academic, industry, postdoctoral, government and nonprofit, and other. Academic includes teaching and research positions at a university or college. Industry includes research, leadership, technical, and professional positions at private industries and businesses. Postdoctoral includes postdoctoral fellows, researchers, associates, and other training positions, such as medical residents and students. Government/Nonprofit includes research and leadership positions at government and nonprofit organizations. Other includes individuals who are self-employed, work at medical facilities, and stay-at-home parents.

PhD First Placement Type by Graduation Year

The figure below provides information on the placement type of all NU PhD recipients since Fall 1997 through Spring 2008. In recent years, postdoctoral positions make up the majority of placements, followed by academic positions, and industry positions. This demonstrates a shift in the placement type of earlier graduates. In 1997 – 1998, a larger proportion of placements were in academics, followed by industry, and postdoctoral positions.

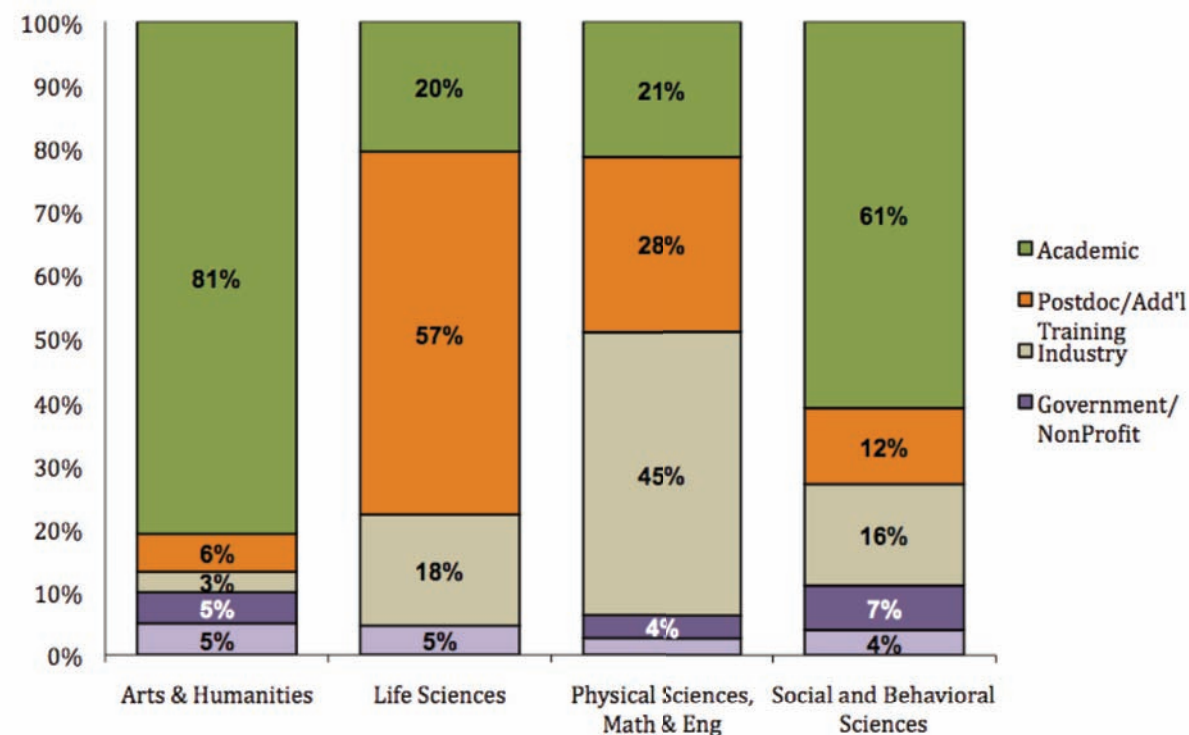


Graduation Year	1997 - 1998	1998 - 1999	1999 - 2000	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008
# of graduates with known placement	345	278	301	323	269	265	292	288	323	352	278
% of placements known	97%	96%	98%	99%	99%	99%	98%	98%	96%	93%	79%

PHD ACADEMIC AND POSTDOCTORAL PLACEMENTS, 1997 - 2008

PhD First Placement Type by Graduation Year and Field of Study, Fall 1997 – Spring 2008

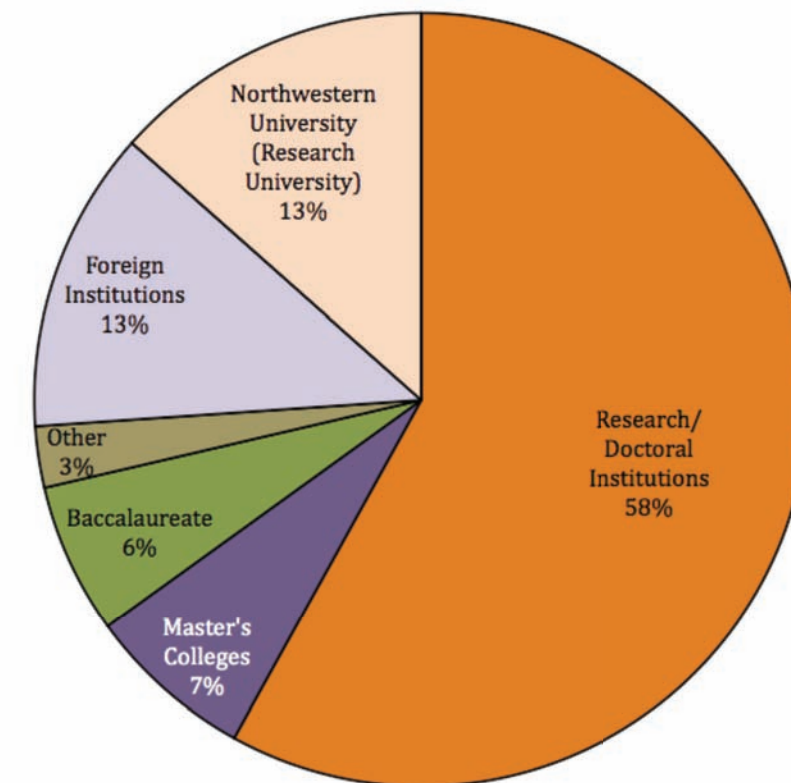
The figure below provides information on the placement type of all NU PhD recipients in the last ten years by field of study. In the Arts and Humanities, the majority (81%) of first placements were academic. In Life Sciences, the majority (57%) of first placements were postdoctoral positions. In the Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering, the majority (45%) were in the private industry and business sector. In the Social and Behavioral Sciences, the majority (61%) of first placements were academic, similar to Arts and Humanities.



The Carnegie Classification categorizes all U.S. Higher Education institutions into of the following general areas: Research/doctoral universities are institutions that offer a variety of baccalaureate degrees and award at least ten doctoral degrees per year across at least three academic disciplines or at least twenty doctoral degrees per year overall. Master's colleges and universities are institutions that offer a wide variety of baccalaureate degrees and award twenty or more master's degrees per year. Baccalaureate colleges are institutions that award baccalaureate degrees. Other includes colleges awarding associate degrees and specialized institutions that award degrees in a particular field such as medical and law schools, religious institutions, schools of business, engineering, art, design, and military institutes. Also included are foreign institutions outside of the U.S. that award higher education degrees.

PhD Academic and Postdoctoral First Placement by Carnegie Classification

The figure below provides the Carnegie Classification of institutions where Northwestern University PhD graduates placed if in an academic or postdoctoral position. Over the past ten years, the majority of academic and postdoctoral placements were at research/doctoral universities.



PhD Academic and Postdoctoral First Placement by Institution Ranking

The figure below shows the U.S. News and World Report ranking of institutions where Northwestern University PhD graduates placed if in an academic or postdoctoral position at a U.S. institution from Fall 1997 to Spring 2008. Two-thirds of NU PhD graduates with an academic or postdoctoral placement were at institutions ranked in the top 125. Slightly over half of all PhD graduates placed at institutions ranked in the top 50. The majority of PhD graduates placed at institutions ranked in the top 25. One-third of NU PhD graduates had placements at colleges and universities not ranked in the top 125.

