

2012-
2013

NASPAA Annual Accreditation Data Report



NASPAA
ACCREDITED

The Commission on Peer
Review & Accreditation



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NASPAA
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Introduction

The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration's (NASPAA) third annual Accreditation Data Report seeks to build off of what has been learned from past data regarding specific outputs and outcomes from public service professional graduate programs. NASPAA strongly believes in mission-based, performance driven programs that strive to improve the quality of education bestowed upon the future leaders in the areas of public policy, public administration, and public affairs. This report represents quantifiable data on the state of public service education and is intended to be used as a tool in an effort to adhere to NASPAA's mission of ensuring excellence in education and training for public service, while promoting the ideal of public service.

The data were collected by NASPAA from annual accreditation maintenance reports submitted each year by accredited programs and from self-study reports, which are completed cyclically by programs seeking accreditation. This information centers around the NASPAA Accreditation Standards. These standards are benchmarks that aim to measure the quality of masters level public service programs. For programs to be accredited by NASPAA, programs must "contribute to the knowledge, research, and practice of public service, establish observable goals and outcomes, and use information about their performance to guide program improvement."ⁱ

Programs are specifically measured according to the seven NASPAA Standards: 1) Managing the Program Strategically, 2) Matching Governance with Mission, 3) Faculty Performance, 4) Serving Students, 5) Student Learning, 6) Matching Resources with the Mission, and 7) Matching Communications with the Mission.

This report includes aggregated data from 180 programs that are currently accredited by NASPAA and 7 programs that are seeking accreditation, but are not yet accredited. The main sections of the report cover topics such as faculty composition and activities, student admissions and enrollment, student graduation rates, student employment, as well as information on programs that are currently being monitored under the NASPAA standards and their progress in complying with these standards. The report also offers a brief comparison between accredited and non-accredited programs regarding student body size and the number of degrees awarded in the 2011-2012 Academic Year (AY). Furthermore, data collected from the AY 2012-2013 will be compared and contrasted to past years in hopes of capturing any trends that exist within the data.

Data stemming back to AY 2010-2011 show the progress made in graduate level public service education. For example, programs have effectively recruited faculty who are committed to undertaking responsibilities that far extend classroom instruction. Furthermore, unemployment among graduates remains low, as students who complete graduate-level degrees in public policy, public affairs, and public administration go on to work in a variety of fields and sectors. The shift toward mission-driven accreditation and measurable outcomes is still in the process of being fully implemented, but in time will work to promote strategies for continuous improvement by identifying areas of concern within programs. With that being said, data collection still needs to be streamlined and augmented to present valuable information that has thus far been unable to be captured, such as persistence rates for students and long-term employment outcomes. Overall, this report, and the ones before it, represent positive steps toward bolstering excellence in public service education.

Faculty

Annually, programs must provide NASPAA with information to demonstrate their conformance with the NASPAA Standards. One of the standards that is essential for evaluating how well a program can pursue its mission is identifying the program’s administrative capacity. NASPAA deems a program to have fulfilled the faculty governance requirement if a program has a “faculty nucleus” of at least 5 members whom “accept primary responsibility for the professional graduate program and exercise substantial determining influence for the governance and implementation of the program.”ⁱⁱ

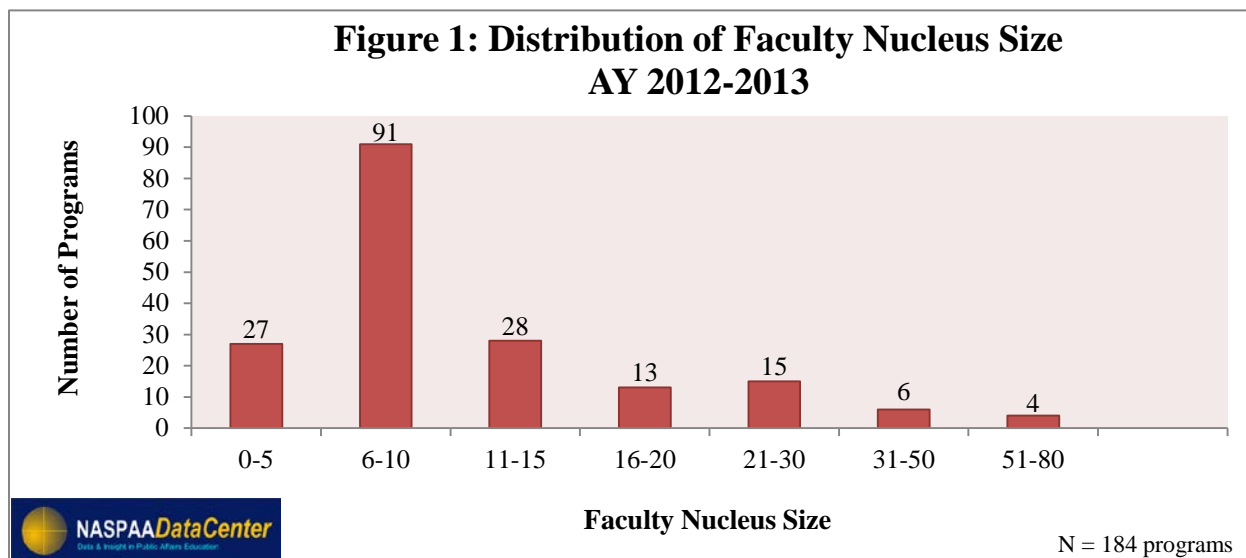
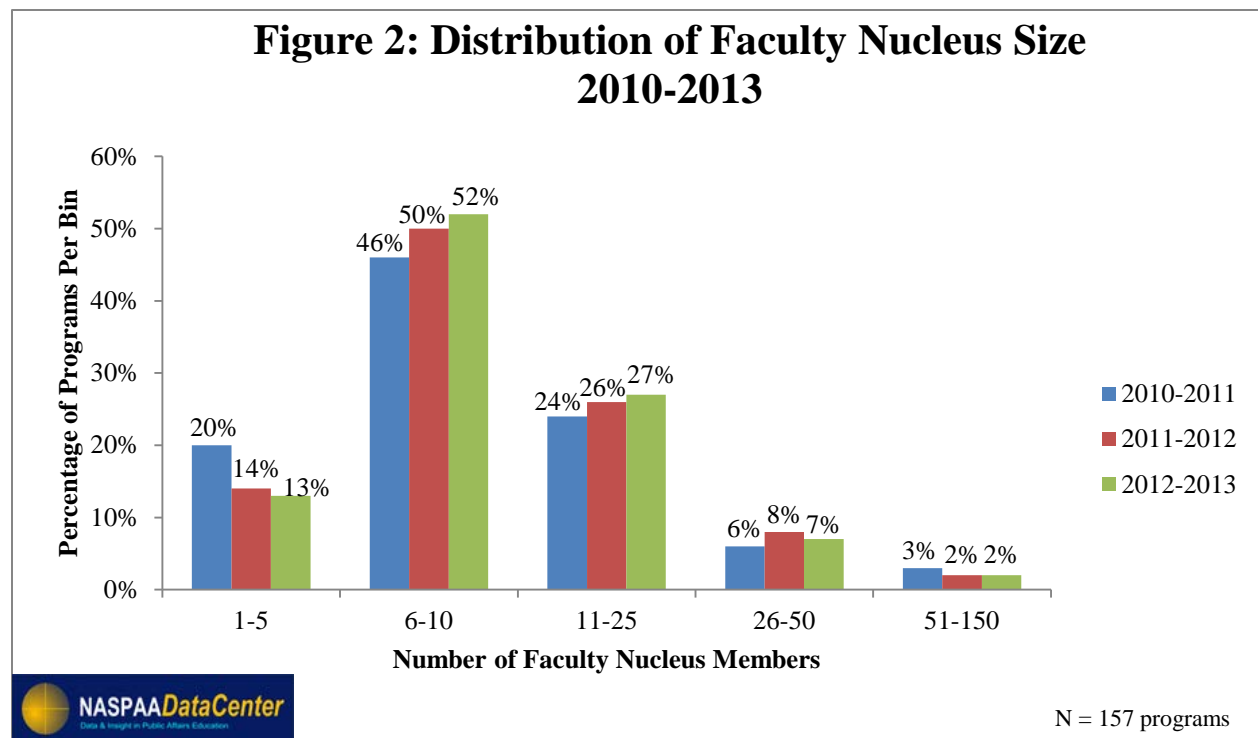


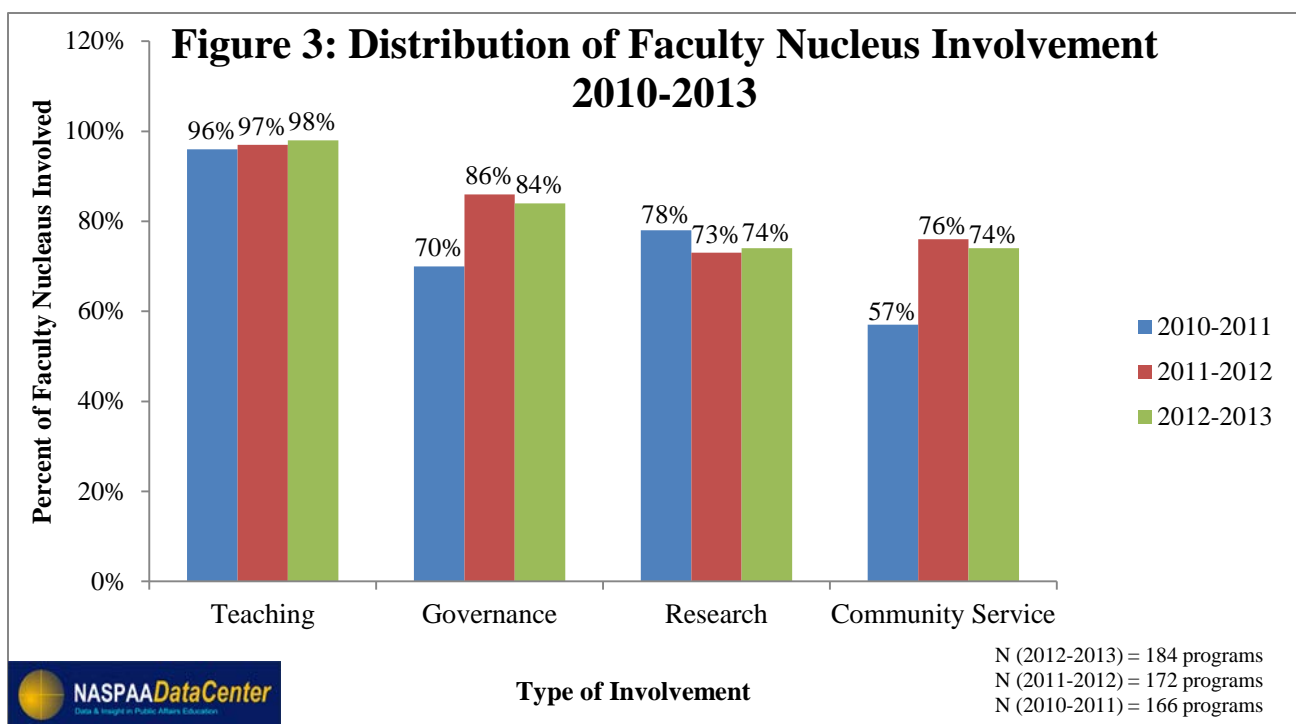
Figure 1 depicts the size of the faculty nucleus for the 184 programs that provided information on this topic. Programs are grouped into each category based on the size of their faculty nucleus. The graph shows that 86 percent of programs have a faculty nucleus that consists of 20 or fewer faculty. It is also clear from the graph that 157 programs, or 85 percent, fulfill the 5 member faculty nucleus requirement set by NASPAA. In reality, only 2 programs had less than 5 faculty nucleus members and this was likely due to short-term faculty turnover. The remaining 25

programs in the “0-5” category had 5 faculty nucleus members in AY 2012-2013. Nearly half of all the programs included in this sample have faculty nucleus’ that consist of 6-10 members.

Figure 2 shows how the size of faculty has changed from 2010 to 2013 using the same sample of 157 programs across all three academic years. The graph shows a shift in faculty nucleus sizes. The distribution of faculty nucleus size has become slightly more normal. There are a fewer percentage of programs with very large and very small nucleus support. The data from AY 2010-2011 show 20 percent of programs having faculty nuclei consisting of 1-5 faculty members. The percentage of programs in this range declined by 6 percent the next year and 1 percent in AY 2012-2013. Furthermore, the decline in the programs with 1-5 faculty in their faculty nucleus can be attributed to an increase in the number of programs with 6-10 and 11-25 members in their faculty nucleus. 79 percent of programs now have faculty nuclei between 6 and 25 members, compared to 70 percent of programs in 2010.




Faculty members often do much more than teach. In many instances, those faculty members who exercise substantial influence and responsibility over a graduate program do so because of their ability to contribute to endeavors outside of the classroom. Figure 3 breaks down how involved faculty nucleus members are within their respective programs, by identifying four common activities performed by faculty members: 1) Teaching, 2) Governance, 3) Research, and 4) Community Service. Teaching is by far the most common activity performed by faculty nucleus members; this has remained unchanged since AY 2010-2011. The percentage of faculty nucleus members who identified as being involved in governance has risen dramatically, by 16 percent, from AY 2010-2011 to AY 2011-2012. Governance can be thought of as exerting influence over the implementation of a program, including activities such as involvement in tenure decisions, curriculum design, and resource allocation. However, each program defines governance, along with the other activities discussed here, in its own, unique way. The percentage of faculty who identified as participating in governance activities declined by 2 percent between AY 2012-2013 and AY 2011-2012, but still remains high in comparison to the figures recorded in AY 2010-2011.



The percentage of faculty who identified one of their roles as “conducting research” decreased by 5 percent between AY 2010-2011 and AY 2011-2012, and subsequently increased by 1 percent, indicating that in AY 2012-2013, 74 percent of faculty nucleus members conduct some form of public affairs research. The third role highlighted is community service, which can be broadly defined as encompassing activities that support the local public, college, university community, and/or public service profession. Examples may include serving on the board of a local non-profit organization, consulting for the government, and making media contributions. Much like the percentage of faculty involved in governance, the data show that many more faculty nucleus members are now involved in community service activities than previously recorded. The most recent figures indicate that the percentage of faculty involved in community service has increased by approximately 17 percent from AY 2010-2011 to AY 2012-2013. The significant increases seen from the first year of the data report may reflect programs gaining a better understanding of what is meant by involvement in these four activities, rather than representing a true difference in the kinds of activities in which faculty are now involved in. This theory can be evidenced by the very similar figures seen between the last two periods covered by the data report. As programs begin to feel more comfortable with reporting these type of data, NASPAA will be able to paint a clearer picture of faculty involvement. Also, in some instances it is not the faculty themselves who identify their activities, but a program director or another person involved in the program who may not know the extent of a faculty member’s involvement within a certain field. This could potentially create inconsistencies between the true involvement of faculty and what is recorded in a program’s accreditation maintenance report or self-study report.

NASPAA also requires programs to submit data detailing the percentage of their faculty nucleus that teach courses delivering required competencies, as well as the percentage that deliver all courses; these percentages are subsequently disaggregated by full-time and part-time faculty. Programs are expected to have at least 50 percent of courses that deliver required competencies and 50 percent of all courses be taught full-time faculty.ⁱⁱⁱ Table 1 depicts the trend in faculty instruction from 2010 to 2013. The average percentage of full-time faculty teaching both classifications of courses far exceeds the 50 percent benchmark set by NASPAA. Table 1 also shows no significant changes in the percentage of courses taught by faculty among the three data report periods.

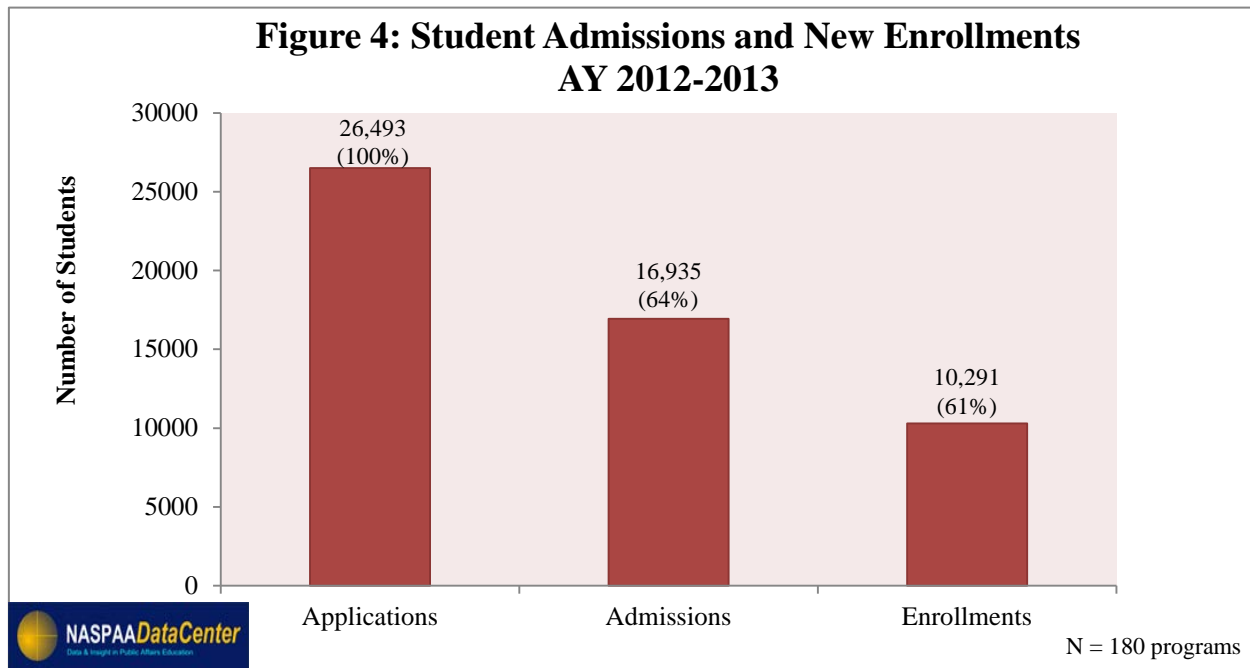
Table 1: Average Percentage of Courses Taught by Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty

|  NASPAA DataCenter <small>Data & Insight in Public Affairs Education</small> | AY 2010-2011 (N=158 programs) | AY 2011-2012 (N=174 programs) | AY 2012-2013 (N=170 programs) |
|--|---|---|---|
| % of All Courses Taught by Full - Time Faculty | 76 | 74 | 75 |
| % of All Courses Taught by Part-Time Faculty | 24 | 26 | 25 |
| % of Required Courses Taught by Full-Time Faculty | 83 | 80 | 83 |
| % of Required Courses Taught by Part-Time Faculty | 17 | 20 | 17 |

Students

To ensure that all NASPAA accredited programs are effectively recruiting and facilitating the successful completion of their curricula, programs are asked to submit information regarding

applications, admissions, enrollments, and graduation rates of their students. Figure 4 shows the number of applications, admissions, and enrollments for programs that were accredited or in the process of accreditation in AY 2012-2013.




The graph includes data on almost 26,500 applicants for 180 programs. 64 percent of applicants were admitted and of those 16,935 applications, 61 percent eventually enrolled in a public service graduate program in AY 2012-2013. A caveat to the data regarding applications and admissions is that these totals could be overestimated, as students could have applied to and been accepted by, multiple programs, potentially creating a double count of applications and admissions.

Table 2 shows the trend in admissions and enrollments from 2010 to 2013 for the same sample of 144 programs who submitted data in each data report year. The data indicate an almost 9 percent decline in total applications from AY 2010-2011 to AY 2011-2012. However, the

number of applications subsequently increased by about 3 percent, from AY 2011-2012 to AY 2012-2013.

**Table 2: Student Admissions and Enrollments
2010-2013**

|  NASPAA DataCenter <small>Data & Insight in Public Affairs Education</small> | AY 2010 – 2011 (N = 144 programs) | AY 2011 – 2012 (N = 144 programs) | AY 2012 – 2013 (N = 144 programs) |
|---|--|--|--|
| Applications | 23,274 | 21,239 | 21,953 |
| Admissions | 15,125 | 14,493 | 14,300 |
| Enrollments | 8,979 | 8,325 | 8,371 |
| % Admitted | 65 | 68 | 65 |
| % Enrolled | 59 | 57 | 59 |

Admissions among these 144 programs have been trending downward since the first data report year. The number of students admitted decreased by about 5 percent from the first data report to the last report year. This could be a product of programs becoming more selective in admitting prospective students. Enrollments modestly increased by half a percentage point from AY 2011-2012 to AY 2012-2013, this coming after a 7 percent decline in enrollments from AY 2010-2011 to AY 2011-2012. These figures are somewhat consistent with data collected by other organizations regarding graduate level education. The Council of Graduate Schools' (CGS) 2012 Survey on Graduate Enrollment and Degrees shows a 5 percent increase in first-time graduate enrollments in public administration and services programs from fall 2011 to fall 2012.^{iv} However, these data include students who enrolled in programs that award Master degrees as well as graduate-level certificate and education specialist programs. The CGS survey also reported a 5.7 percent increase in graduate applications for public administration and services programs from fall 2011 to fall 2012.^v While, applications and enrollments did both

increase for the 144 programs included in the NASPAA sample from AY 2011-2012 to AY 2012-2013, the increase seen was not as large as those reported by CGS. These differences in applications and enrollment between the two data sets could be a result of several dissimilarities between CGS and NASPAA data. First, CGS uses a much larger sample, consisting of 675 institutions, compared to the 144 program sample used to display enrollments, admissions, and applications for NASPAA-accredited programs. Also, CGS includes programs that award graduate certificates in its sample, in addition to including Master of Social Work programs within its public administration services sub-category. NASPAA only accredits public policy, public administration, and public affairs programs that award Master level degrees. Furthermore, CGS calculates its application and enrollment figures based on data collected for the fall semester, while NASPAA programs, in many cases, use aggregated numbers that span an entire school year. Despite these differences, the CGS survey still offers a useful benchmark that programs can use to assess where they stand in terms of student recruitment. Overall, it is encouraging that applications and enrollments for public service programs are trending upward.

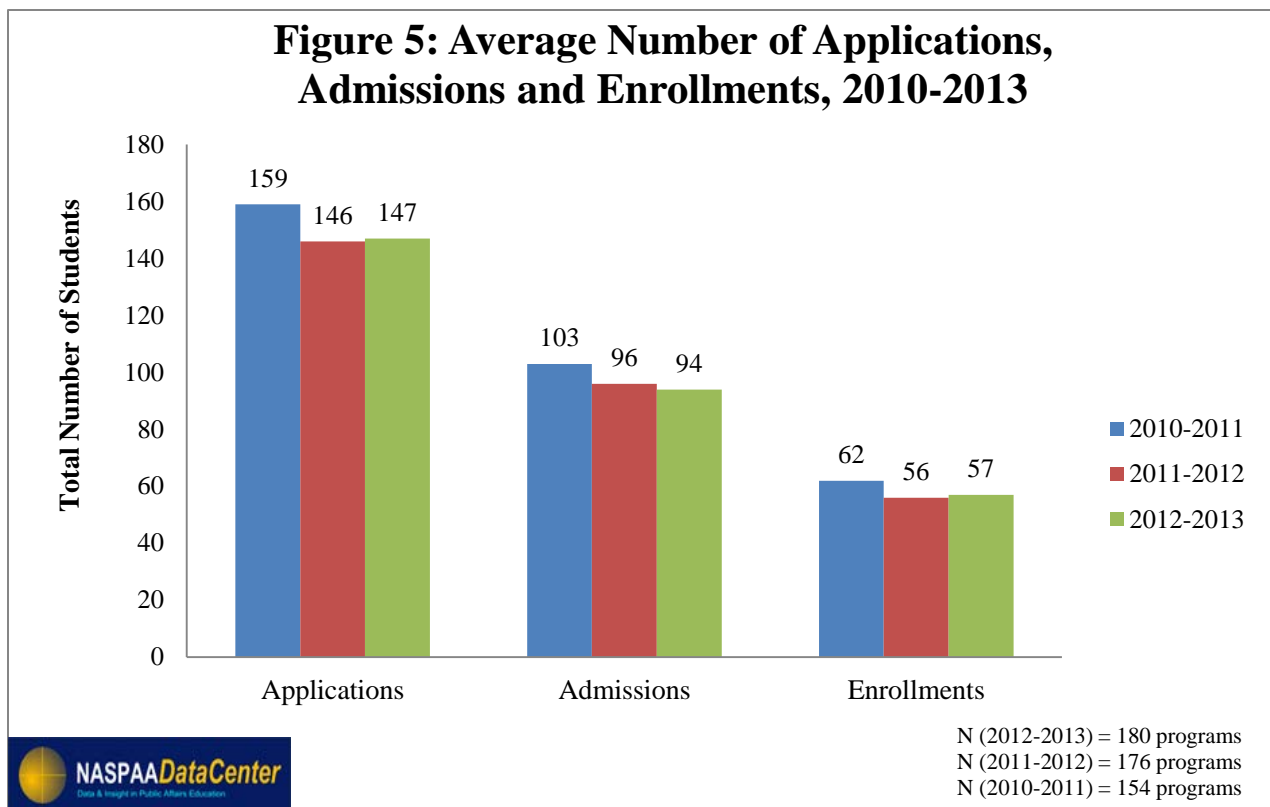
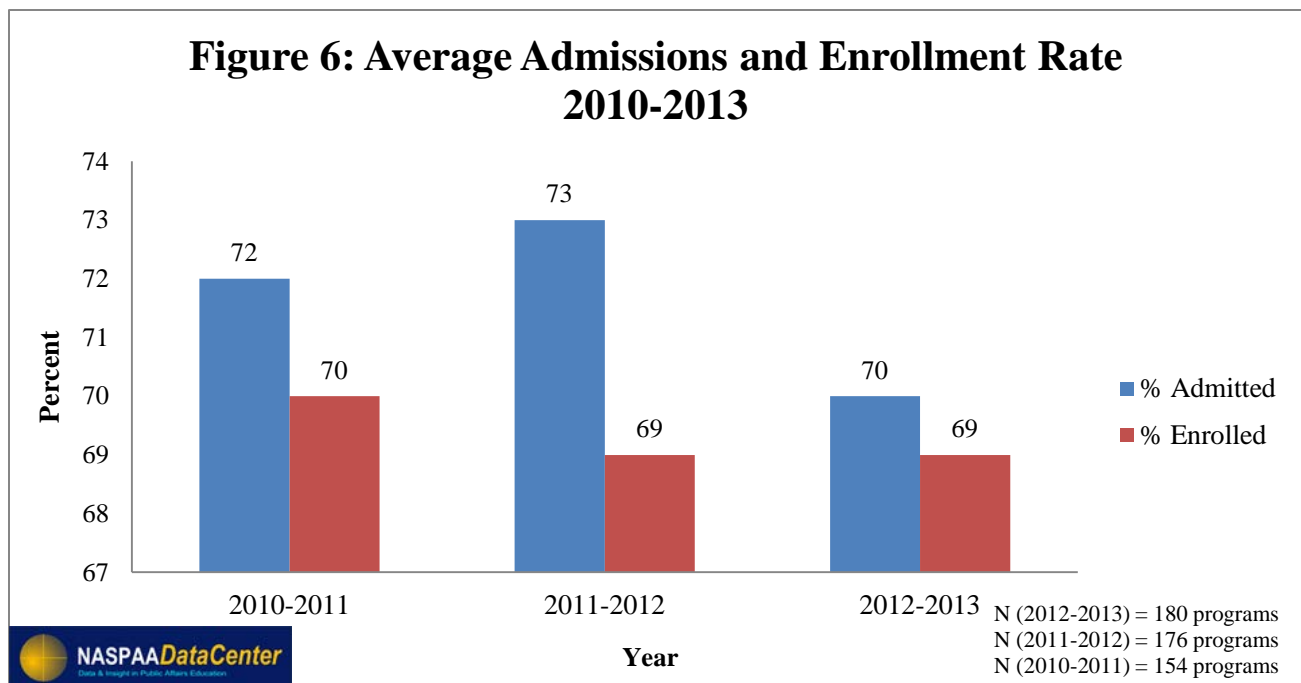


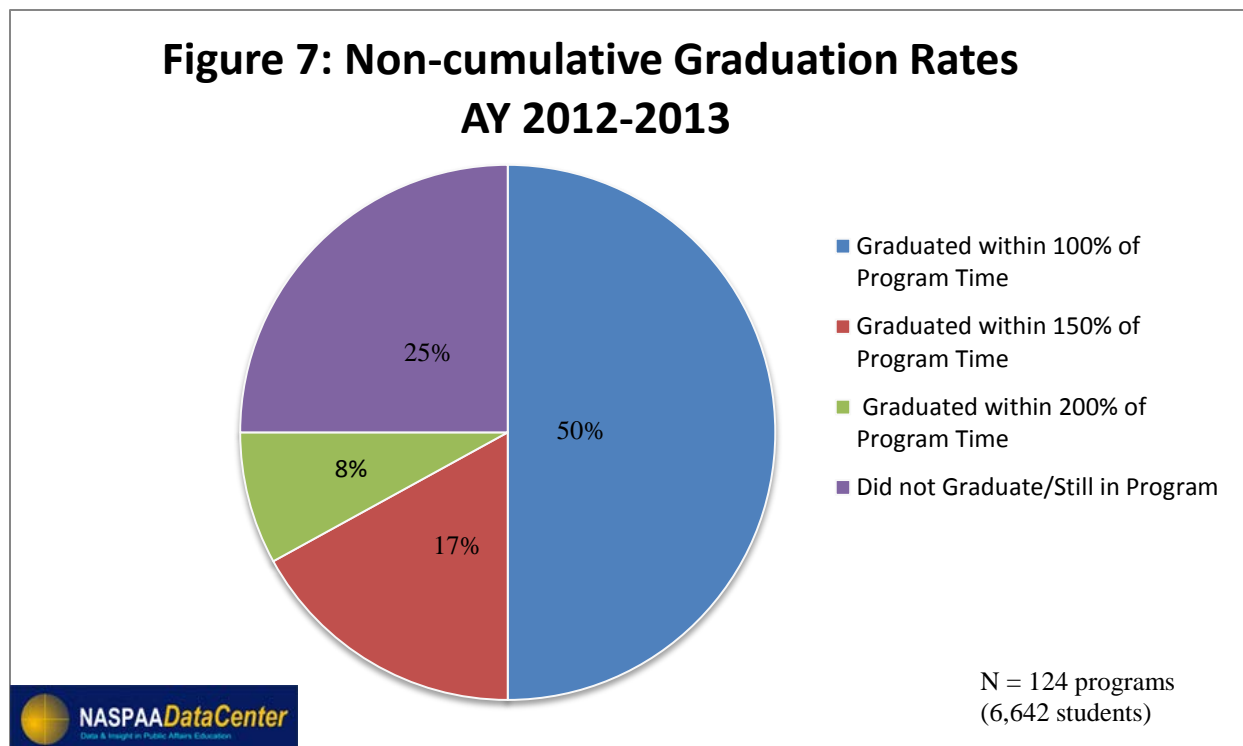
Figure 5 shows the same trend that is seen Table 2; a decrease in applications and enrollments overall, compared to AY 2010-2011, with a slight upward trend from AY 2011-2012 to AY 2012-2013. The average number of students admitted per program has continued to decline throughout all three data report years.

Figure 6 depicts the average percentage of students who were admitted and enrolled per program. It seems that programs are becoming slightly more selective, as the average admissions rate decreased by about 3 percent compared to AY 2011-2012. The average rate of student enrollment also slightly declined from AY 2010-2011 but stayed constant from AY 2011-2012 to AY 2012-2013. CGS' 2012 Survey on Graduate Enrollment and Degrees reports a 59 percent acceptance rate for Master level public administration and service programs, for fall 2012.^{vi} This is significantly lower than admissions rates reported by NASPAA accredited schools. It is possible that some of the schools included in CGS' survey were extremely selective and thus lowered the overall acceptance rate. Furthermore, the acceptance rates found by NASPAA and CGS are not completely comparable because of the differences between how each respective data set was collected, as previously mentioned.

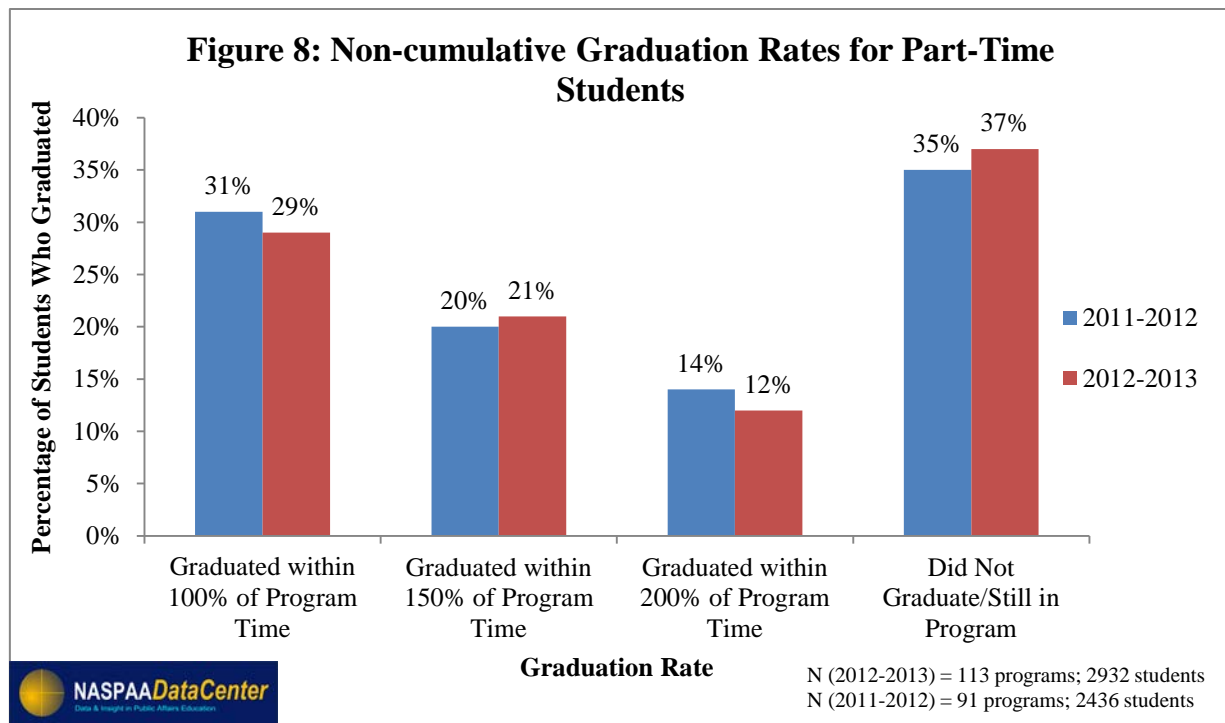


Graduates

Graduation rates recorded by NASPAA are disaggregated by the amount of time it took a student to graduate in relation to the expected length of their program, which is defined by each individual program. For example, if a Master of Public Policy program defines its program length as 2 years and a student graduates in 3 years, then they are reported as graduating within 150 percent of the program time. Also, the sample corresponds to students who entered their program in the academic year that began 5 years before the year of the respective data report. The pie chart below shows that 50 percent of students, including both full-time and part-time students, graduated within 100 percent of the specified program length. 25 percent of students were recorded as not graduating or still in the program. Unfortunately, the data collected by NASPAA do not identify why a student may not have graduated within at least 200 percent of the defined program length. This creates potentially misleading statistics, especially for programs that primarily serve part-time students, as the data cannot distinguish between students who are still in the program and those who have exited the program.

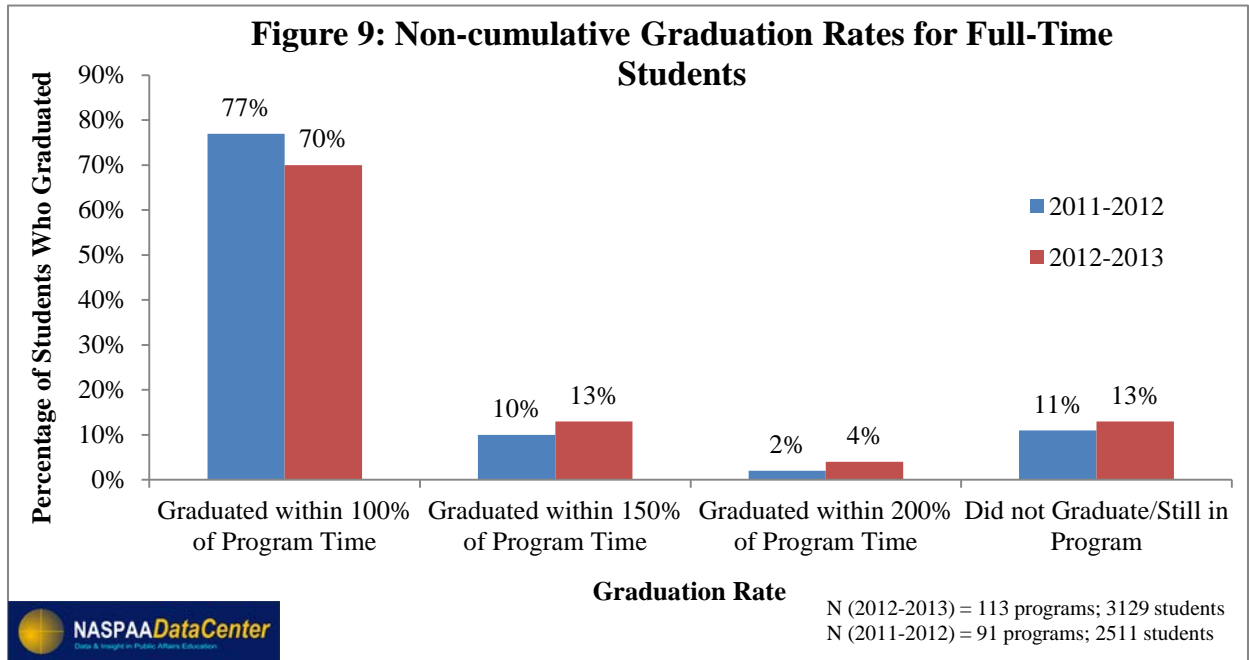


This situation is more pronounced in Figure 8, where graduation rates are disaggregated for part-time students. 35 percent of part-time students in AY 2011-2012 and 37 percent in AY 2012-2013 did not graduate within 200 percent of their designed program length. NASPAA has discussed using persistence rates in addition to graduation rates to remedy this problem concerning the uncertainty in graduation rates. Persistence rates would allow programs to differentiate between a student who may take longer to graduate, but is still actively taking classes, and a student who has left the program.



In terms of full-time student graduation rates (Figure 9), it seems as if students are taking more time to earn their degree. 77 percent of full-time students graduated within 100 percent of their designed program length in AY 2011-2012, compared to just 70 percent in AY 2012-2013. However, this variation could be due to students changing their enrollment status from full-time to part-time during the course of their studies, and thus taking longer to complete their program.

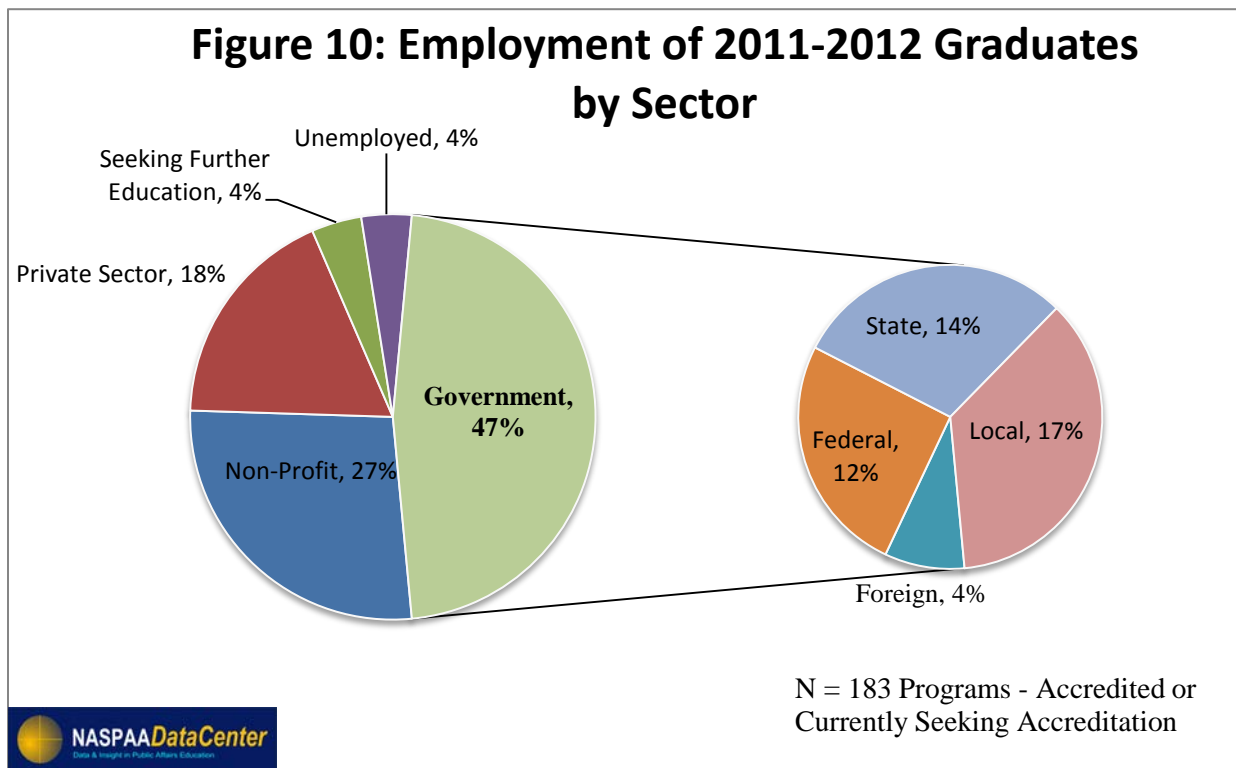
The trend is difficult to discern as the AY 2010-2011 data report did not include graduation rates as part of its discussion.



Finding employment or advancing career prospects are often the primary goals for students who enroll in professional graduate programs. This makes recording employment information from recent graduates critical in aiding prospective students as they decide whether or not pursue advanced public service education. These data points also allow those involved in program governance to assess whether or not their program is creating the intended outcome of preparing students with the tools necessary to be successful after graduation.

Figure 10 displays the employment status of graduates, six months after graduating from their respective program. Programs are asked to submit employment data pertaining to the year prior to the current annual or self-study report year. Thus, the 2012-2013 annual and self-study reports highlight employment for AY 2011-2012 graduates. The employment statistics are

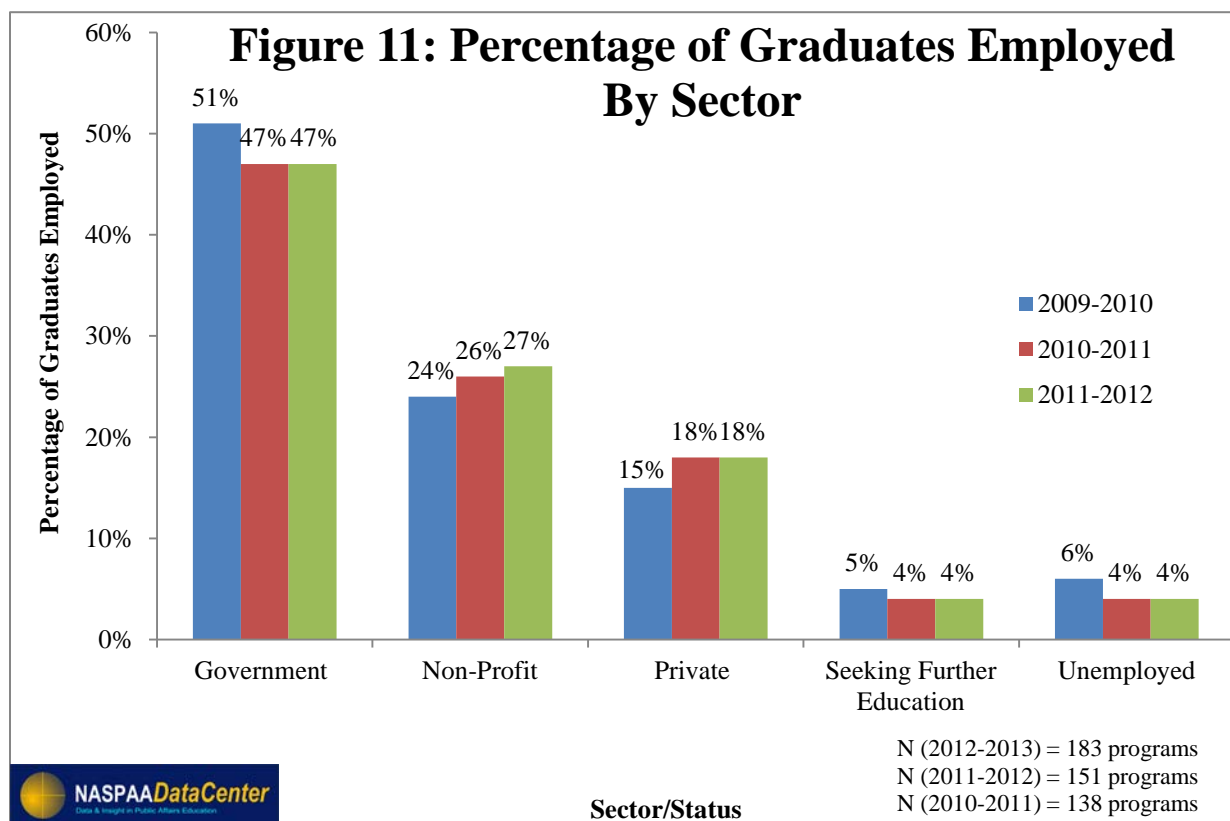
broken down by sector. Government employment is further disaggregated into subcategories which include: 1) national or central government within the same country as the program, 2) state, provincial, or regional government within the same country as the program, 3) city, county, or other local government within the same country as the program, and 4) foreign government of all levels including international quasi-governmental institutions. NASPAA defines foreign government as a government institution that is located outside of the country in which the graduate program a student attended was located.



The graph shows that the largest portion of graduates (47 percent) are employed by the government. From there, graduates are spread rather evenly across the different levels of government, with local government agencies employing the largest number of graduates among those working in the public sector. Graduates also seem to be drawn toward non-profit

organizations, as 27 percent took jobs working in that sector. Furthermore, 86 percent of those working for non-profits work for organizations that are domestically oriented. Of the graduates working in the private sector, 37 percent work specifically in research or consulting. It is interesting to note that the percentage of graduates working in the private sector exceeds the percentage of graduates working for any particular level of government.

Figure 11 shows the trend in graduate employment using data from all three annual reports. As was previously mentioned, the data regarding graduate employment lag one year behind the accreditation annual reports and self-study reports submitted by programs. Because of this, the graphs pertaining to employment span 2009 to 2012 and not 2010 to 2013. There is close to no change in the percentage of graduates employed in the various sectors indicated from AY 2010-2011 to AY 2011-2012. In comparing the data from AY 2009-2010 to the most recent employment statistics, it is clear that there are more graduates working in the private and non-profit sectors than there once were.



Also, the data show that employment in government institutions has marginally decreased. However, a positive sign is that unemployment among graduates has decreased since AY 2009-2010, although remaining constant within the two previous data report periods. Unemployment could however be overestimated as NASPAA currently considers graduates who are actively seeking employment and those that are voluntarily out of the workforce for travel, volunteer work, or other reasons, as unemployed. The inclusion of graduates with these characteristics deviates from the traditional definition of unemployed offered by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

As the majority of graduates from public affairs, public administration, and public policy programs find employment within the government, NASPAA chose to examine potential trends in government employment among graduates.

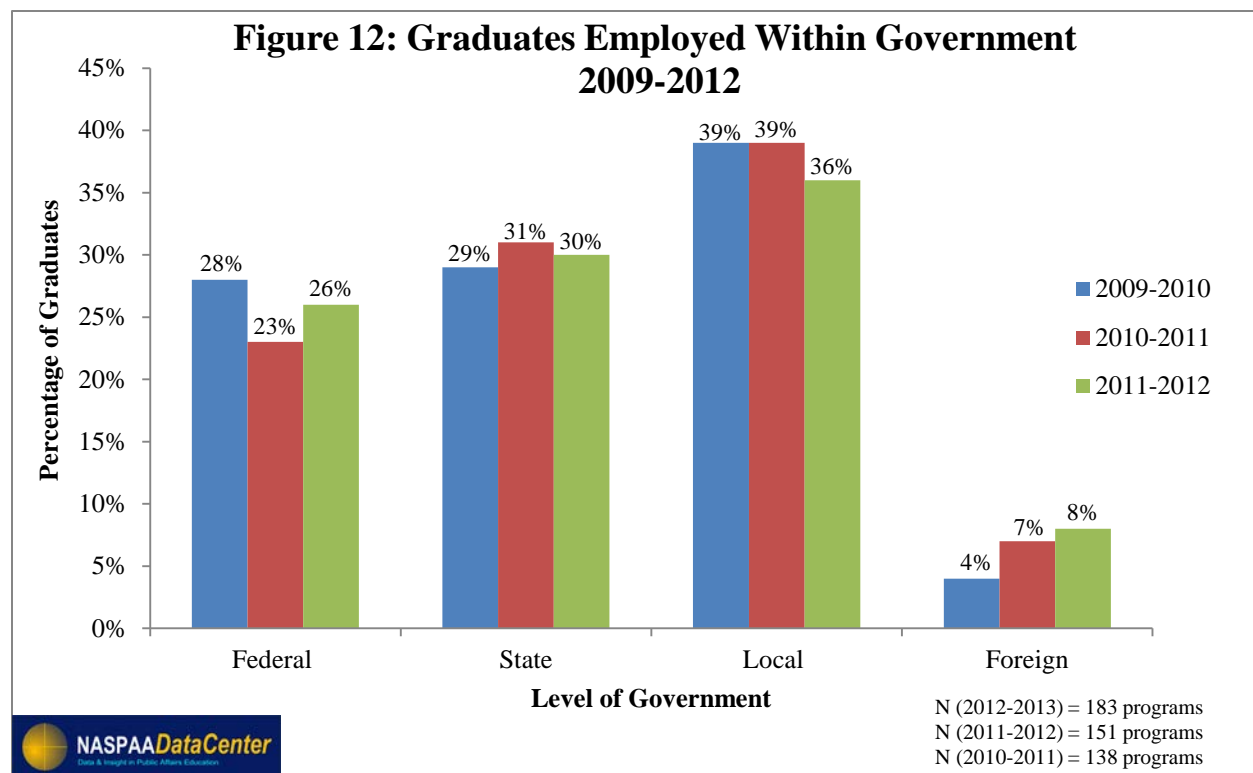


Figure 12 shows local government as the primary employer for graduates who choose to work within the government, however, the overall percentage of graduates working for local government agencies has slightly declined in AY 2011-2012. This 3 percent decline from AY 2010-2011 to AY 2011-2012 is indicative of an overall trend in local government employment. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, full-time employment in local government institutions decreased by over 400,000 full-time employees, which is approximately equal to a 4 percent decline, from March 2009 to March 2012.^{vii} This decline is accompanied by an increase in graduates working for foreign governments, as well as a 3 percent increase from AY 2010-2011 to AY 2011-2012 in the percentage of graduates working for the federal government. The percentage of graduates working at the state level has remained fairly constant, despite an almost 3 percent decline in overall, full-time state government employment from 2009 to 2012, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau.^{viii} The trend in federal employment among graduates from AY 2010-2011 and AY 2011-2012 seems somewhat contradictory with government employment figures reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. The number of full-time federal employees rose by 3.6 percent from 2009 to 2011.^{ix} However, Figure 12 shows a 5 percent decline in the percentage of graduates working for the federal government from AY 2009-2010 to AY 2010-2011. The subsequent increase in federal employment among graduates from AY 2010-2011 to AY 2011-2012 is peculiar, as full-time federal employment from March 2011 to March 2012 declined by 2 percent.

Furthermore, while it is informative to understand where graduates are employed, it may be even more critical to recognize how well graduates are performing in their jobs, and whether they possess the skills needed to be successful in their careers. NASPAA is in the process of launching an alumni survey in an effort to expand the discussion concerning long-term

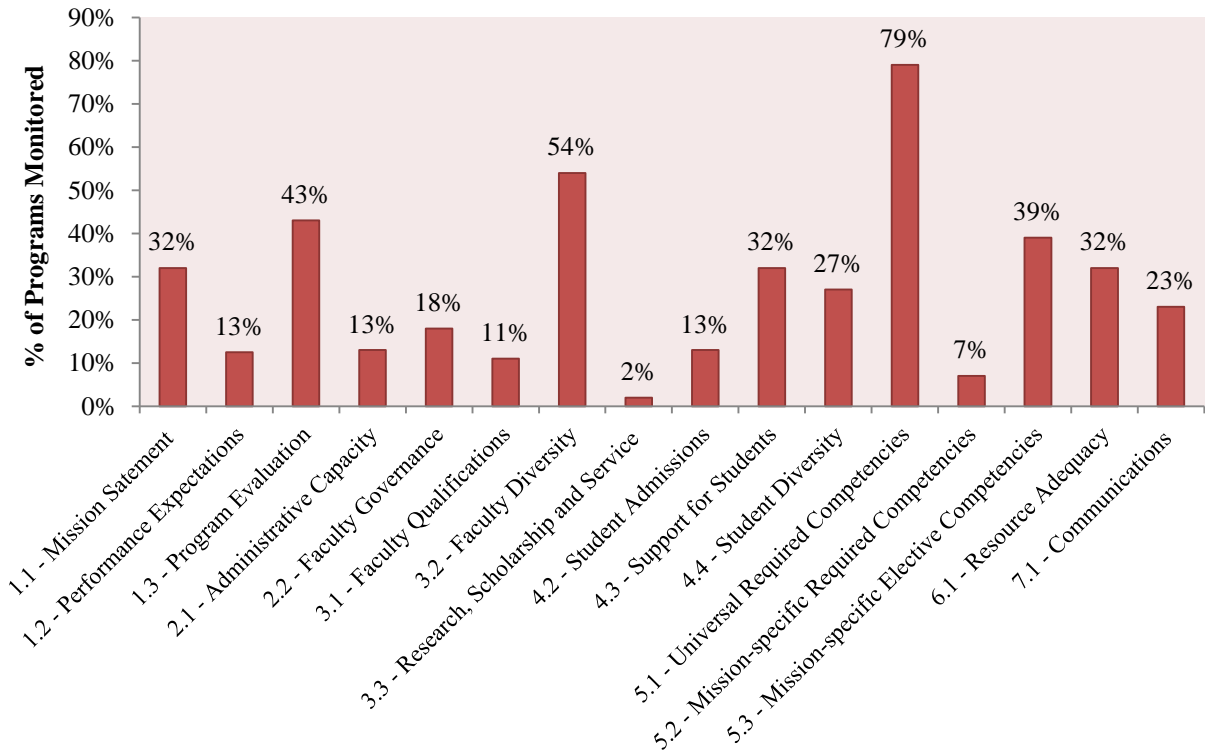
employment outcomes. It is vital that students not only gain employment, but also excel in their chosen profession.

NASPAA Standards

While all programs that are accredited by NASPAA are deemed to be in conformity with NASPAA Standards, some programs are subject to monitoring provisions at the suggestion of the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA). COPRA monitors the yearly progress of programs as they work to improve upon the specified area. Once a program has shown significant progress toward conformance, the monitoring is removed. With the implementation of the 2009 NASPAA Standards, programs seeking accreditation are evaluated based on mission-based and outcome-driven standards.

Figure 13 depicts the most commonly monitored standards among those programs that have been successfully accredited under the 2009 NASPAA Standards. 79 percent of the 56 programs accredited under the 2009 Standards were initially monitored under Standard 5.1 – Universal Required Competencies - when first accredited under the NASPAA Standards. Standard 5.1 ensures that programs base their curriculum on specific, program-defined competencies that relate to the program’s “mission and public service values.”^x The competency domains include, the ability: 1) to lead and manage in public governance; 2) to participate in and contribute to the policy process; 3) to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions; 4) to articulate and apply a public service perspective; and 5) to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry. The majority of COPRA’s concerns in monitoring Standard 5.1 are not the absence of a mission-based curriculum, but the program’s assessment of these competencies.

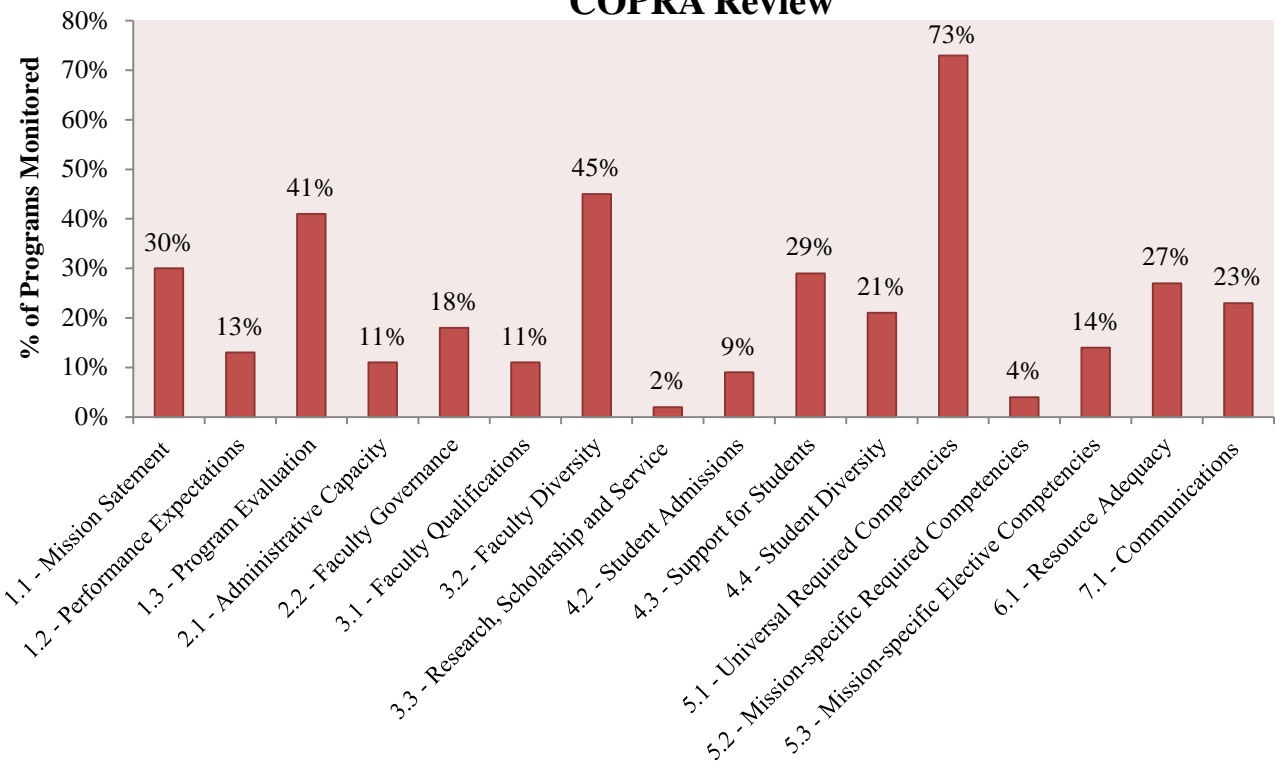
Figure 13: Initial Standards Monitored After Accreditation



NASPAA Standards

N = 56 programs

Figure 14: Standards Monitored After Subsequent, Annual COPRA Review



NASPAA Standards

N = 56 programs

The programs that are currently being monitored for Standard 5.1 have developed an assessment strategy to identify whether students have mastered the competencies aligned with their program mission, but are still working toward full implementation of the evaluation methods to inform program improvement. This elevated number of programs that are currently monitored for Standard 5.1 could also partially reflect programs that were given a 1 year accreditation by COPRA. These programs were deemed to have specific non-conformities that could be remedied after one year. If these non-conformities are addressed, programs are fully reaccredited.

Standard 1.3 – Program Evaluation - is closely linked to Standard 5.1. 43 percent of programs were initially identified by COPRA as needing to improve upon their efforts to “collect, apply and report information about [their] performance and [their] operations to guide the evolution of the program's mission and the program's design and continuous improvement with respect to standards two through seven.”^{xi} It is likely that the number of programs monitored under Standards 5.1 and 1.3 will decrease as programs become more familiar with NASPAA’s Standards and are able to fully develop strategies for gathering and analyzing data on student and program performance. The reduction in the amount of programs monitored for these two standards can already be seen in Figure 14. The percentage of programs monitored for Standard 5.1 decreased by 6 percent, while the programs monitored for Standard 1.3 decreased by 2 percent. This reduction in monitoring came after the subsequent review of programs annual accreditation maintenance report conducted by COPRA each year.

54 percent of programs accredited under the 2009 NASPAA Standards were initially monitored under Standard 3.2 – Faculty Diversity. This number subsequently decreased by 9 percent, as

some programs were able to show progress in achieving their diversity goals. The objective of this standard is to ensure that students are taught by qualified faculty that hold diverse perspectives and experiences in order to “invigorate discourse with each other and with students and to prepare students for the professional workplace.”^{xii} It is important to point out that COPRA does not simply measure the diversity of the faculty within these programs, but instead looks to ensure that each program has strategies in place to recruit and sustain a diverse group of faculty and are taking steps to actively promote an inclusive environment. It is likely that while most of these programs value diversity, they may not be explicit in describing their efforts in achieving their diversity goals. Furthermore, it may take a program a substantial amount of time to recruit and hire an equally qualified and diverse faculty. Thus, while programs may have processes in place to promote diversity among their faculty, the outcomes of these initiatives may not be immediately apparent. This may be one reason why fewer programs were monitored for Standard 4.4 – Student Diversity; the results of student recruitment are readily available as a new class is admitted and enrolled each year, giving constant feedback as to the diversity of the student population.

Accredited v Non-Accredited

There still remains a debate concerning the benefits of accreditation and why institutions should undertake the process of becoming accredited. At its most foundational, accreditation, as stated by the Council for Higher Education and Accreditation (CHEA), is “a means to assure and improve higher education quality, assisting institutions and programs using a set of standards developed by peers.” This quality assurance takes place at both the institutional and programmatic levels, facilitated by regional, national, and specialized accreditors. NASPAA

Accreditation represents a voluntary accreditation at the programmatic master's degree level, only.

Accreditation is a valuable exercise in self-reflection, whereby an institution can determine whether it is adhering to its mission and acting in accordance to its values. This facilitates continuous improvement within programs. The accreditation process also acts as a system of accountability and transparency that can aid students in choosing the right schools. Students, now more than ever, must understand how to gain an adequate return on their educational investment, as the price of higher education continues to rise. This is not to say that non-accredited schools cannot be of high quality or accountable to their stakeholders, however, a program that has gone through the rigorous accreditation process may find itself in a better position to identify and improve upon its processes in delivering a high quality education to its students. This report seeks to further add to the conversation regarding the benefits of NASPAA accreditation by offering a comparison between accredited and non-accredited programs in regards to two outputs: 1) student body size and 2) the number of degrees awarded.

Statistics concerning student body size and number of degrees awarded were taken from NASPAA's Annual Program Survey, which is an optional survey given to both accredited and non-accredited programs. In all, 140 accredited programs and 57 non-accredited programs provided data on student body size. Additionally, 138 accredited programs and 59 non-accredited programs submitted information regarding the number of degrees awarded. In order to have the most comprehensive and robust data, AY 2011-2012 data was used.

Table 3 looks at student body size (total enrollment) for accredited and non-accredited programs for 2011-2012. The data show that the student body for accredited programs tends to be larger compared to non-accredited programs. A potential explanation could be that larger programs seek accreditation more often because they find themselves in a better position to undertake the resource-intensive process of accreditation. Nonetheless, by continuing this comparison in future reports and by perhaps getting more non-accredited programs to respond the Annual Program Survey, it will give a better sense of whether the amount of students that are enrolled systematically differs between accredited and non-accredited programs. Furthermore, it would be interesting to have programs ask their students if the accreditation status of their chosen program factored into their decision to enroll. This information could potentially lead to a broader discussion on increasing accreditation amongst programs delivering public service education so students can further benefit from the idea of quality assurance.

**Table 3: Student Body Size of Accredited and Non-Accredited Programs
2011-2012**

| Student Body Size for Accredited Programs | |
|--|-----|
| Min | 6 |
| Quartile 1 | 61 |
| Median | 100 |
| Quartile 3 | 150 |
| Max | 910 |
| Average | 131 |
| Student Body Size for Non-Accredited Programs | |
| Min | 12 |
| Quartile 1 | 31 |


| | |
|---|-----|
| Median | 57 |
| Quartile 3 | 118 |
| Max | 477 |
| Average | 91 |
|  N = 140 Accredited programs N = 57 Non-Accredited programs | |

Table 4 shows the number of degrees awarded by accredited and non-accredited programs in AY 2011-2012. The table indicates that accredited programs awarded more degrees compared to non-accredited schools. This could be related however to the smaller student body size among non-accredited programs that can be seen in Table 3. For example, the non-accredited program with the largest student body awarded the most degrees in AY 2011-2012.

**Table 4: Total Number of Degrees Awarded by Accredited and Non-Accredited Programs
2011-2012**

| Total Number of Degrees Awarded by Accredited Programs | |
|--|-----|
| Min | 3 |
| Quartile 1 | 21 |
| Median | 35 |
| Quartile 3 | 64 |
| Max | 538 |
| Average | 51 |
| Total Number of Degrees Awarded by Non-Accredited Programs | |
| Min | 0 |
| Quartile 1 | 12 |
| Median | 22 |
| Quartile 3 | 56 |

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| Max | 231 |
| Average | 38 |



N = 138 Accredited programs
N = 59 Non-Accredited programs

Furthermore, the accredited program with the smallest overall student body awarded the least amount of degrees. This suggests that student body size is correlated to the number of degrees awarded by a program. Other factors that could impact the number of degrees awarded, which could not be explored using the current data available, are the types of students enrolled in a program. For example, the amount of part-time compared to full-time students could impact the number of degrees awarded in a given year because it tends to take part-time students longer to graduate compared to full-time students (see Figures 8 and 9). If a program primarily enrolls part-time students, then the amount of degrees awarded would likely fluctuate year to year, depending on each particular student's course load.

Conclusion

NASPAA is entering an exciting phase in accreditation as more programs begin to matriculate under the 2009 NASPAA Accreditation Standards. NASPAA's annual data report allows for programs to assess the progress experienced in the field of public service education, in addition to serving as a benchmark to compare program performance to an overall pooled average. Also, as more data are collected in subsequent years, the public service education community will be increasingly able to identify areas for improvement. Furthermore, NASPAA will be able to explore the best practices of public service education globally, as it continues to expand its network of international universities. The creation of an international community of public

service programs will enhance programs' abilities to learn from peers in an effort to deliver a higher quality education to their students.

The state of public service graduate programs is optimistic. The vast majority of students are graduating from their programs in less than 200 percent of the program's designed length. The seemingly high number of part-time students that have not graduated from their respective programs reflects the inability of the data to differentiate between students who have left the program and students who remain in the program but who may take a smaller course load because of job or familial commitments. Calculating persistence rates of students will allow NASPAA and individual programs to better identify trends in graduation rates. It is clear however, that when students graduate they are able to find employment. Unemployment among graduates since 2010 has decreased despite limited hiring efforts by government agencies. With a renewed focus on mission and outcome driven programs, students in the fields of public policy, public administration, and public affairs are prepared to begin careers creating positive change in the world.

ⁱ "About NASPAA Accreditation." *NASPAA Accreditation*. Web. 16 June 2014. <<http://accreditation.naspaa.org/about/>>.

ⁱⁱ "Self Study Instructions." 2.2 Faculty Governance (pg. 12). 21 May 2014. Web. 16 June 2014. <<https://naspaaccreditation.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/ssi-instructions-2014-update-final.pdf>>.

ⁱⁱⁱ "Self Study Instructions." 2.2 *Basis of Judgment* (pg.46). 21 May 2014. Web. 16 June 2014. <<https://naspaaccreditation.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/ssi-instructions-2014-update-final.pdf>>.

^{iv} Gonzales, L.M., Allum, J.R., & Sowell, R.S. (2013). “Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 2002 to 2012.” *Trends in First-Time Graduate Enrollment* (pg.55). September 2013. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools

^v Gonzales, L.M., Allum, J.R., & Sowell, R.S. (2013). “Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 2002 to 2012.” *Trends in Graduate Applications* (pg.52). September 2013. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools

^{vi} Gonzales, L.M., Allum, J.R., & Sowell, R.S. (2013). “Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 2002 to 2012.” *Graduate Applications* (pg.6). September 2013. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools

^{vii} United States Census Bureau. *Government Employment & Payroll*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from <https://www.census.gov/govs/apes/>

^{viii} United States Census Bureau. *Government Employment & Payroll*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from <https://www.census.gov/govs/apes/>

^{ix} United States Census Bureau. *Government Employment & Payroll*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from <https://www.census.gov/govs/apes/>

^x NASPAA Accreditation. (2009, October 19). *NASPAA Accreditation*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from <http://naspaaaccreditation.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/accreditation-standards.pdf>

^{xi} NASPAA Accreditation. (2009, October 19). *NASPAA Accreditation*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from <http://naspaaaccreditation.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/accreditation-standards.pdf>

^{xii} NASPAA Accreditation. (2009, October 19). *NASPAA Accreditation*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from <http://naspaaaccreditation.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/accreditation-standards.pdf>

Appendix/Data

Faculty Data (Figures 1, 2, 3 and Table 1)

- [2012-2013 Faculty Data](#)
- [2010-2012 Faculty Instruction Data](#)
- [2010-2012 Faculty Nucleus Data](#)

Applications, Admissions, and Enrollment Data (Figures 4, 5, 6, and Table 2)

- [2012-2013 Applications, Admissions, and Enrollments Data](#)
- [2010-2012 Applications, Admissions, and Enrollments Data](#)

Graduation Rate Data (Figure 7, 8, and 9)

- [2011-2013 Graduation Rate Data](#)

Employment Data (Figure 10, 11, and 12)

- [2012-2013 Employment Data](#)
- [2010-2012 Employment Data](#)

Data on Monitoring of NASPAA Standards (Figure 13 and 14)

- [2012-2013 Data on Programs Monitored Under 2009 Standards](#)

Accredited v Non-Accredited Program Data (Tables 3 and 4)

- [2011-2012 Accredited and Non-Accredited Program Data](#)