Reversing the Decline in Planning School Enrollment

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*Participants:*
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  Meghan Gough, Ph.D., Virginia Commonwealth University

ACSP 2016 Annual Conference - Portland, Oregon
Joint Task Force on Enrollment Report

Presenter:
Lois Takahashi, President, ACSP
Joint Task Force on Enrollment

- Where is enrollment declining, increasing, or remaining stable and why?
- What should we do to analyze and respond to the decline in enrollments in planning education?
Task Force - Overview

- Appointed by the Presidents of APA, AICP, ACSP, PAB
- Representatives on the Task Force from each organization
- Establishment of Task Force based on increasing concern regarding enrollments issues at planning schools/programs
- Examined existing information regarding enrollments for colleges & universities, planning programs, and collegial programs
- Developed a survey
- Looked at the complexity of the issue
- Developed a series of questions to further analyze the situation
## Students Enrolled in Master’s Accredited Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Programs</th>
<th>U.S. Citizens and Residents</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>% change year to year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4485</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>4986</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4822</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>5299</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4914</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>5432</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4638</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>5194</td>
<td>-4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4336</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>-3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4094</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>4851</td>
<td>-3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3911</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>4764</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data excludes University of Montreal and the University of British Columbia
### Students Enrolled in Bachelor’s Accredited Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Programs</th>
<th>U.S. Citizens and Residents</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>% change year to year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1308</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1343</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1305</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1369</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1282</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1353</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1277</td>
<td>-5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>-21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>-4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>-3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data excludes University of Montreal
# Table 1: Estimated National Enrollment by Sector (Title IV, Degree-Granting Institutions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>FALL 2015</th>
<th>% Change from Prior Year</th>
<th>FALL 2014</th>
<th>% Change from Prior Year</th>
<th>FALL 2013</th>
<th>% Change from Prior Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment, All Sectors</td>
<td>19,280,473</td>
<td>-1.7%</td>
<td>19,619,773</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
<td>19,885,203</td>
<td>-1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year Public</td>
<td>8,055,192</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>8,020,444</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>7,964,090</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year Private Nonprofit</td>
<td>3,811,176</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
<td>3,823,465</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>3,761,953</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year For-Profit</td>
<td>1,134,974</td>
<td>-13.7%</td>
<td>1,315,167</td>
<td>-0.4%</td>
<td>1,321,107</td>
<td>-9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Year Public</td>
<td>5,906,419</td>
<td>-2.4%</td>
<td>6,052,069</td>
<td>-4.4%</td>
<td>6,329,631</td>
<td>-3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unduplicated Student Headcount (All Sectors)</td>
<td>18,929,736</td>
<td>-1.7%</td>
<td>19,258,730</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
<td>19,511,518</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## UNDERSTANDING THE NUMBERS

Table 1 provides counts of fall term enrollments submitted to the Clearinghouse by December 1 of each year. Enrollments represent one student in one institution and thus would count twice a student enrolled simultaneously at two institutions. The unduplicated headcount provides the number of unique students with no double-counting. This figure can be used to determine the percentage of concurrent enrollments in any given year. In each term, about 2.0 percent of total enrollments can be accounted for by students enrolling in more than one institution.

Institutional classifications for the current term are based on the most recently available IPEDS institutional characteristics at the time of publication. Less-than-two-year institutions have been aggregated with two-year institutions. Two-year for-profits and two-year private nonprofits are not shown in the table due to small counts, but enrollments from those sectors are included in the overall totals. Additional notes on data and coverage are included at the end of this document.
**Peer Disciplines**

Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration

![Chart 15: Applicants, Admissions and Enrollments](chart15.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>'11 - '12</th>
<th>'12 - '13</th>
<th>'13 - '14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Applicants</strong></td>
<td>22,881</td>
<td>20,908</td>
<td>22,051</td>
<td>21,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Admissions</strong></td>
<td>14,772</td>
<td>14,134</td>
<td>14,185</td>
<td>14,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Enrollments</strong></td>
<td>8,668</td>
<td>8,118</td>
<td>8,276</td>
<td>8,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Admission Rate</strong></td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment Rate</strong></td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Programs seeking accreditation are included.

_Data Source: NASPAA Data Center_
Peer Disciplines

Architecture

ACCREDITED PROGRAMS, 2010–2014

STUDENT ENROLLMENT - DOMESTIC/INTERNATIONAL

Source: National Architectural Accrediting Board. Highlights from the 2014 NAAB Annual Report; Landscape Architecture Accrediting Board. Annual Report Summary
Joint Task Force Survey

- Task Force developed a survey to understand what was happening at the planning schools
- Survey emailed to PAB schools
- 67% response
- 38 questions
- Wide variety of individual answers
Survey of PAB-accredited Programs

Enrollment at Accredited Masters Program

- Stable: 47%
- Decreased: 36%
- Increased: 17%
Survey of PAB-accredited Programs

Current Enrollment Levels

- Too high: 2%
- Too low: 53%
- About right: 45%
Impacts

Current enrollment too low

Applications are decreasing

Enrollment decreasing

12 Programs

50% reported negative impacts, such as:

- Inability to hire new faculty
- Fewer course offerings; limited number of electives
- Variable student quality
- Concern about declining institutional support
Factors contributing to Decline

Number of students applying to college
Lack of student awareness of planning profession
Competition from other schools
Lack of or limited financial aid
Competition from similar degree programs
Limited outreach by program
Other
Recruitment Strategies

- Specific outreach events
- Recruit from undergrad programs at regional universities
- Social media
- Recruit from other university programs
- Recruit through international contacts
- Other
What’s Next?

- APA, AICP, ACSP, PAB Review of Report
- Phone follow-up with certain programs
- Additional questions and further research
- Investigation of trends for “competing” programs (example: Sustainable Development degrees)
- Understanding suggested “best practices” being implemented at planning schools