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PRESS RELEASE

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First-Time Enrollment Holds Steady, Application Counts Slightly Decline at U.S. Graduate Schools

For Second Time Since 2003, First-Time Enrollment for International Students Decreased

Washington, DC — Today the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) reported that growth in first-time graduate enrollment remains flat, according to its most recent data, while the number of graduate applications to U.S. universities has decreased. Between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017, first-time graduate enrollment dropped by -0.1% and the number of applications for admission to U.S. graduate schools decreased -1.8%. Although the overall number of applications for admission declined, several broad fields of study saw increases, including business (4.5%), public administration and services (1.9%), education (1.8%), and mathematics and computer sciences (1.7%). The data is part of the latest *CGS/GRE Graduate Enrollment & Degrees: 2007-2017* report.

Decrease in International Enrollments

First-time graduate enrollment for U.S. citizens and permanent residents increased 1.1% between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017. In contrast, first-time graduate enrollment of international students decreased -3.7%, but the five-year (4.7%) and ten-year average annual increase (5.6%) rates remain strong. Universities with an R1 Carnegie Classification, or highest research doctoral institutions, saw no negative impacts, posting a 3.0% increase between Fall 2017 and Fall 2017.

"The decrease in application and flat first-time enrollment rates are not unexpected given the robust economy and job market. After years of steady growth, the slow down aligns with typical cycles in the economy," said CGS President Suzanne Ortega. "What is worrisome, however, is the decline in the number of international students pursuing graduate education in the U.S. The 3.7% drop in first-time enrollment between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 is the second consecutive decrease we've seen since 2003. While it is difficult to pinpoint what caused the decline, the current policy climate around U.S. visas and immigration may be a contributing factor."

Enrollments Align with Fastest Growing Fields

Enrollment trends by broad field of study are consistent with last year. The largest one-year gains in first-time enrollment by broad field of study were in mathematics and computer sciences (3.8%) and business (3.7%) between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017. The largest five- and ten-year average (2012-2017) percent changes by broad field were in mathematics and computer sciences (12.8%, 12.1%) and the health sciences (4.0%, 6.9%). In contrast, the one-year change in first-time graduate enrollment in engineering was -3.8%, compared to -0.9% between Fall 2015-2016; engineering also posted the biggest application decline in the one-year period (-7.3%). These results are consistent with CGS's *International Graduate Applications and Enrollment: Fall 2017*, indicating that the decline in engineering enrollment is largely driven by a decrease in international students.

"The continued growth in applications and first-time enrollment in the health sciences indicates graduate education is aligning with the increasing workforce demand for advanced degree holders," said Ortega. "According to the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics data on employment projections, many of the fastest growing fields are in mathematics and computer sciences and the health sciences, including physician assistants, occupational therapists, mental health and substance abuse social workers, mathematicians, and computer and information research scientists. These jobs all require at least a master's degree for a typical entry-level position."

Institutions responding to the CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment & Degrees for Fall 2017 enrolled more than 1.8 million graduate students. Nearly three quarters (74.0%) of total graduate enrollment was in master's programs. Over one million of those graduate students, or 57.9%, were women. Academic year 2016-17 marked the eighth consecutive year in which women earned the majority of degrees awarded. However, in many STEM fields, men still earned the majority of graduate degrees and certificates.

Other report findings are summarized below.

Findings by Broad Field

- The three largest broad fields of study: business, education, and health sciences, were also the fields with the largest proportions of part-time graduate students.
- Graduate applications decreased in engineering (-7.3%), arts and humanities (-1.8%), physical and earth sciences (-0.6%), and biological and agricultural sciences (-0.4%) between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017.
- The largest one-year increases in graduate applications occurred in the broad fields of business (4.5%), public administration and services (1.9%), education (1.8%), and mathematics and computer sciences (1.7%).

Findings by Degree Level

- About 70% of the applications received for Fall 2017 were to master's/other programs. The large majority of all first-time graduate students in Fall 2017 were enrolled in programs leading to a master's degree or a graduate certificate (83.4%).
- The number of doctoral degrees awarded increased 1.7% and the number of master's degrees awarded increased 4.6% between 2015-16 and 2016-17.
- The largest one-year percent increases in master's degrees were in mathematics and computer sciences (13.6%), health sciences (4.7%), and "other fields" (4.7%).

Findings by Student Demographics

- In Fall 2017, approximately 23.9% of all first-time U.S. citizens and permanent resident enrollees were underrepresented minorities. American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino first-time graduate students remain particularly underrepresented in STEM fields.
- In Fall 2017, the majority of first-time graduate students at all degree levels were women – 59.2% at the master's degree and certificate level and 53.5% at the doctoral level.
- Among first-time graduate enrollment, 79.7% were U.S. citizens and permanent resident graduate students in the Fall of 2017 and about 20.3% were international.
- International students comprised the largest share of first-time graduate students in mathematics and computer sciences (56.3%), followed closely by engineering (52.9%).

About the report

Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 2007 to 2017 presents the findings of an annual survey of U.S. graduate schools, co-sponsored by CGS and the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board. It is the only annual national survey that collects data on graduate enrollment by all fields of study and is the only source of national data on graduate applications by broad field of study. The report includes responses from 619 institutions and presents statistics on graduate applications and enrollment for Fall 2017, degrees conferred in 2016-17, and trend data for one-, five- and ten-year periods.

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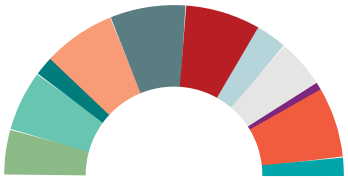
The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. The organization's mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.

Graduate Enrollment & Degrees: 2007-2017

Full report available: https://bit.ly/2OvP5zC

% Share of Total Graduate Doctoral Enrollment by Broad Field

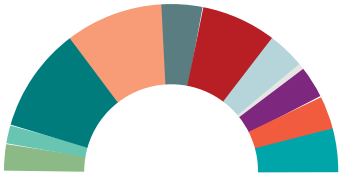
Table B.15



Arts & Humanities (8.58%) Bio & Ag Sciences (11.59%)
Business (3.66%) Education (13.84%)
Engineering (14.39%) Health Sciences (14.26%)
Math & Comp Sciences (6.03%)
Physical and Earth Sciences (9.09%)
Public Admin & Services (1.40%)
Social & Behavioral Sciences (13.59%) Other Fields (3.57%)

% Share of Total Graduate Master's Enrollment by Broad Field

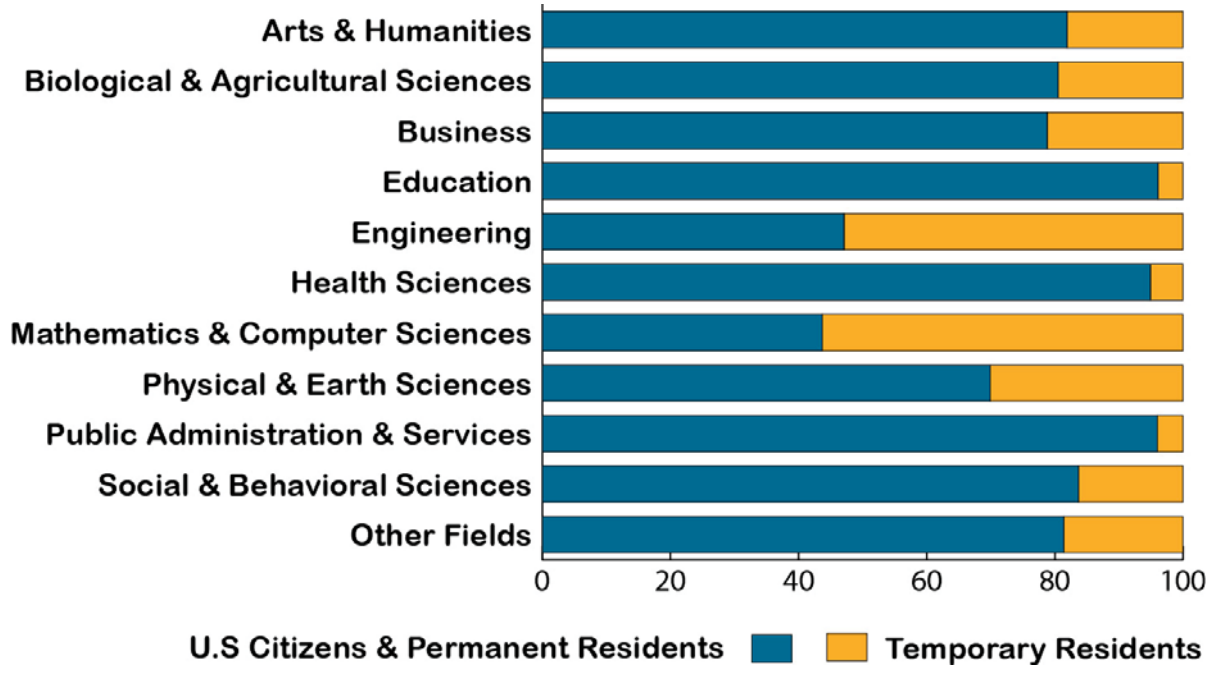
Table B.15



Arts & Humanities (5.09%) Bio & Ag Sciences (3.54%)
Business (20.34%) Education (18.97%)
Engineering (8%) Health Sciences (14.46%)
Math & Comp Sciences (7.25%)
Physical and Earth Sciences (1.18%)
Public Admin & Services (6.33%)
Social & Behavioral Sciences (6.49%) Other Fields (8.36%)

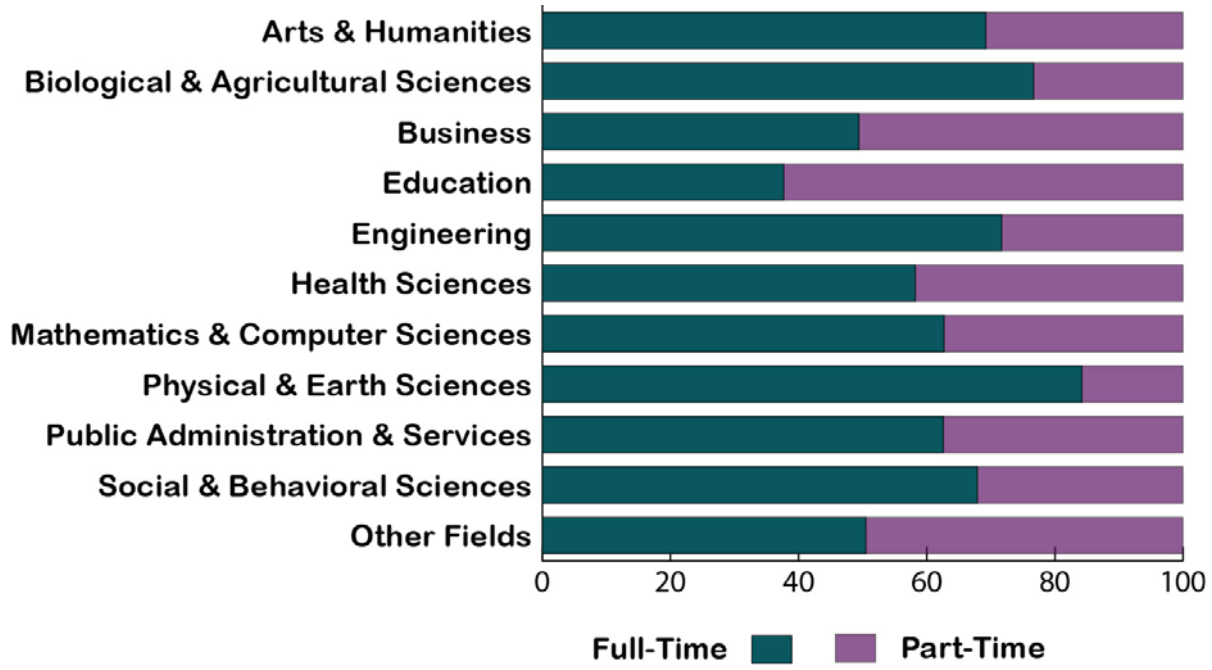
First-Time Graduate Enrollment by Broad Field & Citizenship

Table B.9



Total Graduate Enrollment by Broad Field, Attendance Status

Table B.13



Total Graduate Enrollment by Broad Field, Degree Level

Table B.15