

Who is a Doctoral Student, and What Difference Does it Make?

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What Difference Does it Make?

□ Accountability

- Need to know when student started program to determine Time-to-Degree.
- Need to know if a given graduate student started a program to determine Completion Rate.

□ Money

- State subsidies
- Student stipends and funding eligibility

Who is NOT a Doctoral Student?

- Undergraduates
- Non-Degree seeking students
- Students enrolled in programs that neither award a doctoral degree nor serve as preparation for doctoral study in a separate program at the same institution

Who is NOT a Doctoral Student?

- Categorization can be difficult on a case-by-case basis
- Some doctoral degrees are more doctoral than others
 - Philosophical Issues Vs. Data Issues

Who *Might* be a Doctoral Student?

- The following criteria do not tend to be mutually exclusive, nor are they typically hierarchical
- They are presented in roughly descending order of probability

You Might Have a Doctoral Student if...

- A) Degree-Seeking Student is enrolled in a program that exclusively offers the Ph.D
 - E.g. requires a master's degree obtained outside of the program prior to acceptance

- B) Degree-Seeking Student has taken candidacy exam

You Might Have a Doctoral Student if...

- C) Degree-Seeking Student is enrolled in a program that offers the Ph.D, after having obtained a master's degree in the program

- D) Degree-Seeking Student is in program that offers Ph.D and has explicitly stated to the institution their intention of earning a Ph.D in that program.

You Might Have a Doctoral Student if...

- E) Degree-Seeking Student is in program that offers Ph.D and program has reported to the institution student's intention of earning a Ph.D in that program.
- F) Degree-Seeking Student is in program that self-identifies as "Ph.D Only," but awards optional MA or MS.

You Might Have a Doctoral Student if...

- G) Degree-Seeking Student is in program that offers both MA/MS and Ph.D, and student has taken coursework beyond the number of credits required for MA/MS
- H) Degree-Seeking Student is in program that awards both MA/MS and Ph.D, and has completed the equivalent of two full years of academic coursework (credit) in the program

You Might Have a Doctoral Student if...

- I) Degree-Seeking Student is in program that offers both MA/MS and Ph.D, and student began program more than three academic years ago.
- J) Degree-Seeking Student is in program that offers both MA/MS and Ph.D, and student began program more than two academic years ago.

You Might Have a Doctoral Student if...

- K) Degree-Seeking Student is in program that does not offer Ph.D, but provides gateway to separate Ph.D program.
- L) Student merely appears to fulfill one of the conditions that disqualifies them (undergraduate, non-degree, non-Ph.D program)

Issues

- Data Issues
 - Agreement exists that condition is sufficient to categorize student as “doctoral” student.
 - Disagreement exists as to whether given student satisfies that condition, based on available data.
- Philosophical Issues
 - Agreement exists that student satisfies condition, given the available data
 - Disagreement exists concerning whether condition is necessary and/or sufficient for labeling a student “doctoral”

Does it Really Make a Difference?

□ Within a given program

- Data issues should be minor
- Philosophical issues should be less thorny

□ Within an institution

- Philosophical issues may have dramatic effects
- Data issues may (at least) be consistent
 - May reflect philosophical issues

Examples from a Large Midwestern Research Intensive University

TAGGED MASTER'S DEGREES

Definition: Pre-professional programs that are not designed to lead to doctoral study.

Degree	Graduate Program
Master of Accounting	Accounting & Management Information Systems
Master of Applied Statistics	Statistics

- Note that both Accounting and Statistics do offer the MS and Ph.D as well.

Examples from a Large Midwestern Research Intensive University

MASTER'S-ONLY DEGREE PROGRAMS

Definition: Master's degree programs that do not lead to doctoral study in that same graduate program at Ohio State.

Degree

Graduate Program

Master of Arts

African American & African Studies
Arts Policy and Administration
East Asian Studies
Journ & Comm (Non-Thesis MA in Journalism)
Public Policy and Management
Slavic and East European Studies

Master of Science

Biochemistry
Dentistry
Evolution, Ecology, & Org. Biology (Non-Thesis)
Horticulture and Crop Science (Non-Thesis)

- Requires knowledge of thesis vs. non-thesis options, which may not be determined at program entry

Examples from a Large Midwestern Research Intensive University

MASTER'S/DOCTORAL DEGREES

Definition: Graduate programs at Ohio State that offer both a master's and doctoral degree and where the master's degree is considered a steppingstone to the doctoral degree. (Note: Three tagged master's programs at Ohio State are designed to lead to the doctorate.)

Disciplines vary in how they manage the relationship between the master's and Ph.D. degree. In some programs, all graduate students are considered master's students at the time of admission. Acceptance into the doctoral program is considered once the master's program is successfully completed. In other programs, graduate students are admitted either to the master's or the doctoral program according to their actual degree objectives.

Degree	Graduate Program
Tagged Master's/Doctor of Philosophy	City and Regional Planning (M.C.R.P./Ph.D.) Human & Community Res. Dev. (M.Ed./Ph.D.) Music (M.M./D.M.A.)
Master of Arts/Doctor of Philosophy	Anthropology Art Education ... English French and Italian (Italian M.A. only)

- It is possible to be in a program that offers the Ph.D, but not in one's area of focus.

Examples from a Large Midwestern Research Intensive University

DOCTORAL ONLY DEGREES

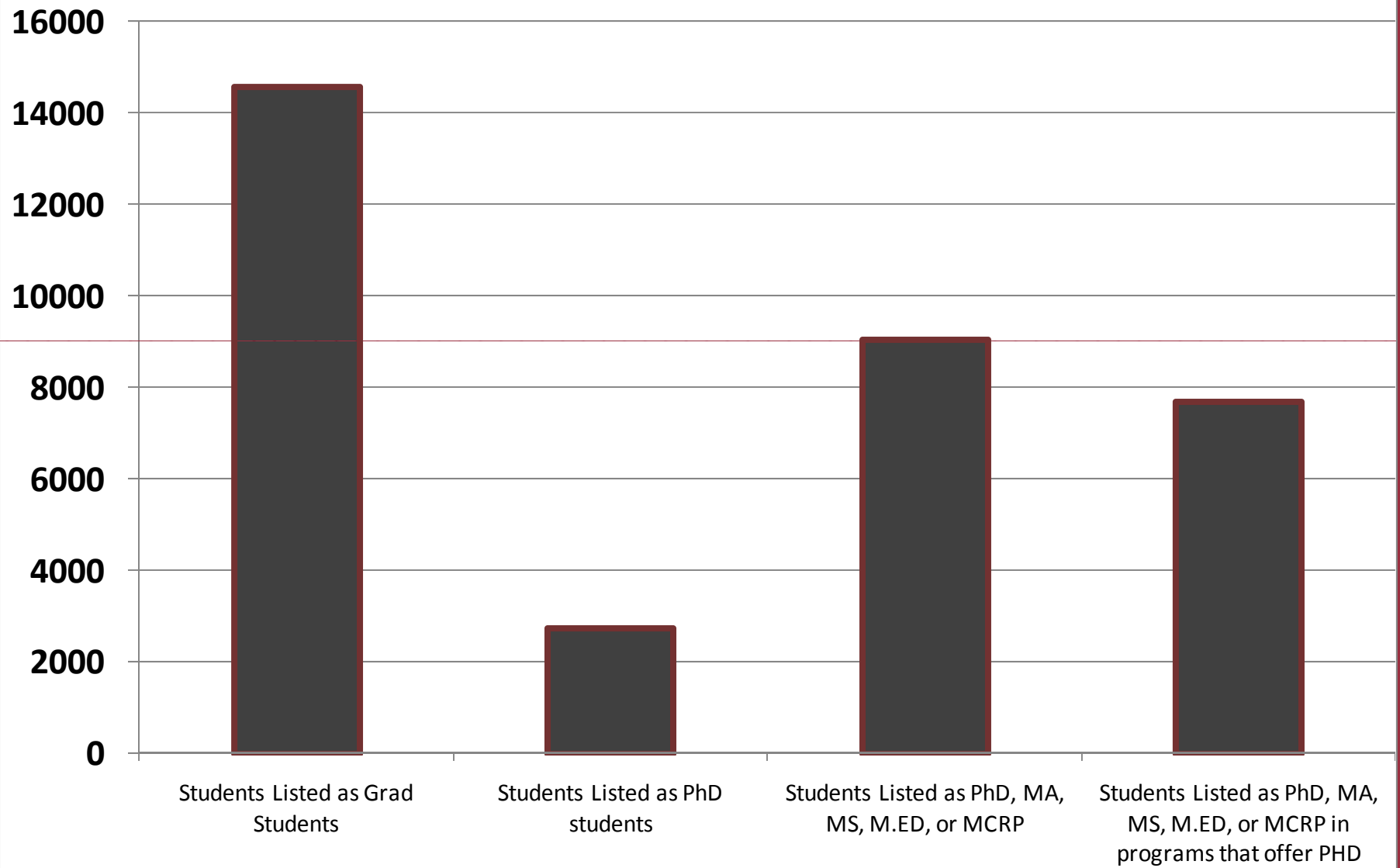
Definition: Graduate programs at Ohio State in which the focus is on the doctoral degree.

In some programs, all of the program's graduate students are admitted directly into the doctoral program, and students may or must complete a master's degree as the first stage of the doctoral program. In other programs, all of the program's graduate students are admitted directly into the doctoral program. Although the master's degree is offered, it is awarded only when a student cannot complete the doctoral degree but has completed all of the requirements for the master's degree or has successfully completed the doctoral candidacy exam.

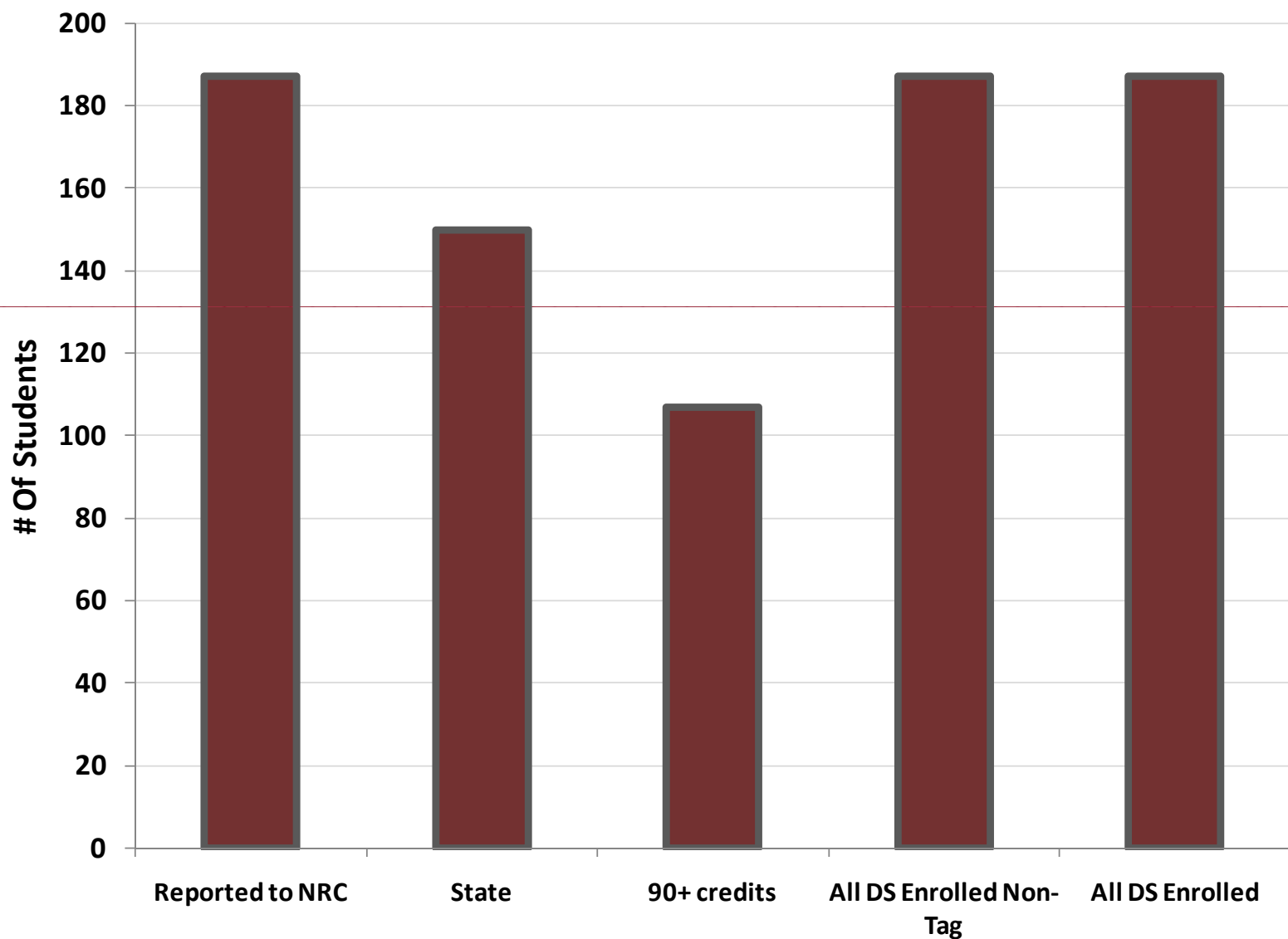
Degree	Graduate Program
Doctor of Audiology	Speech and Hearing Science
Doctor of Philosophy	→ Accounting & Management Information Systems Ohio State Biochemistry Program Biostatistics Business Administration Chemical Physics Chemistry Economics → Journalism & Communication (PhD in Comm) Health and Rehabilitation Sciences History → Integrated Biomedical Science Grad Program Labor and Human Resources

- IBSG is merged, interdisciplinary program. Individual departments offer MS.

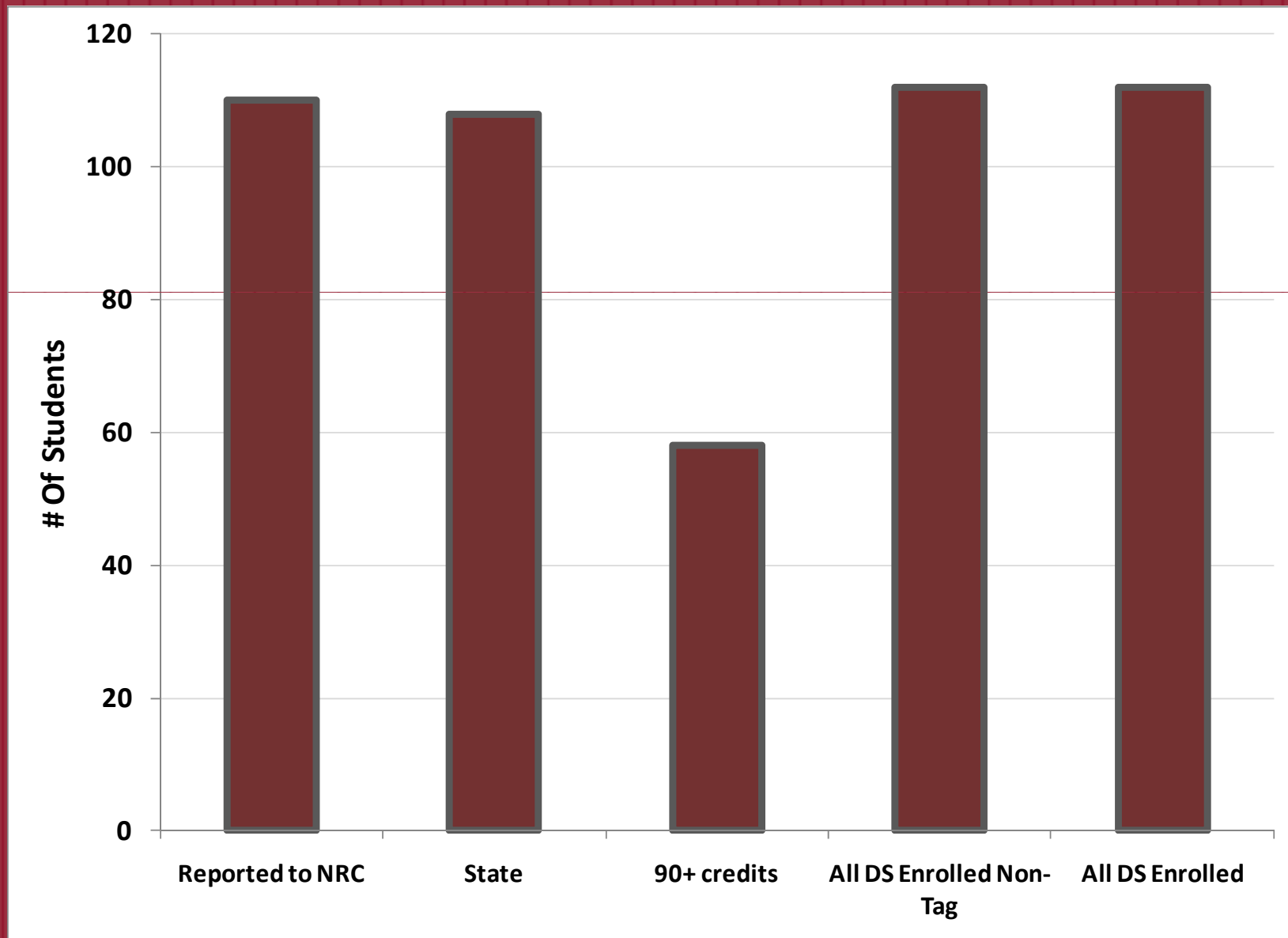
Graduate Students Enrolled in Classes, Autumn 2009



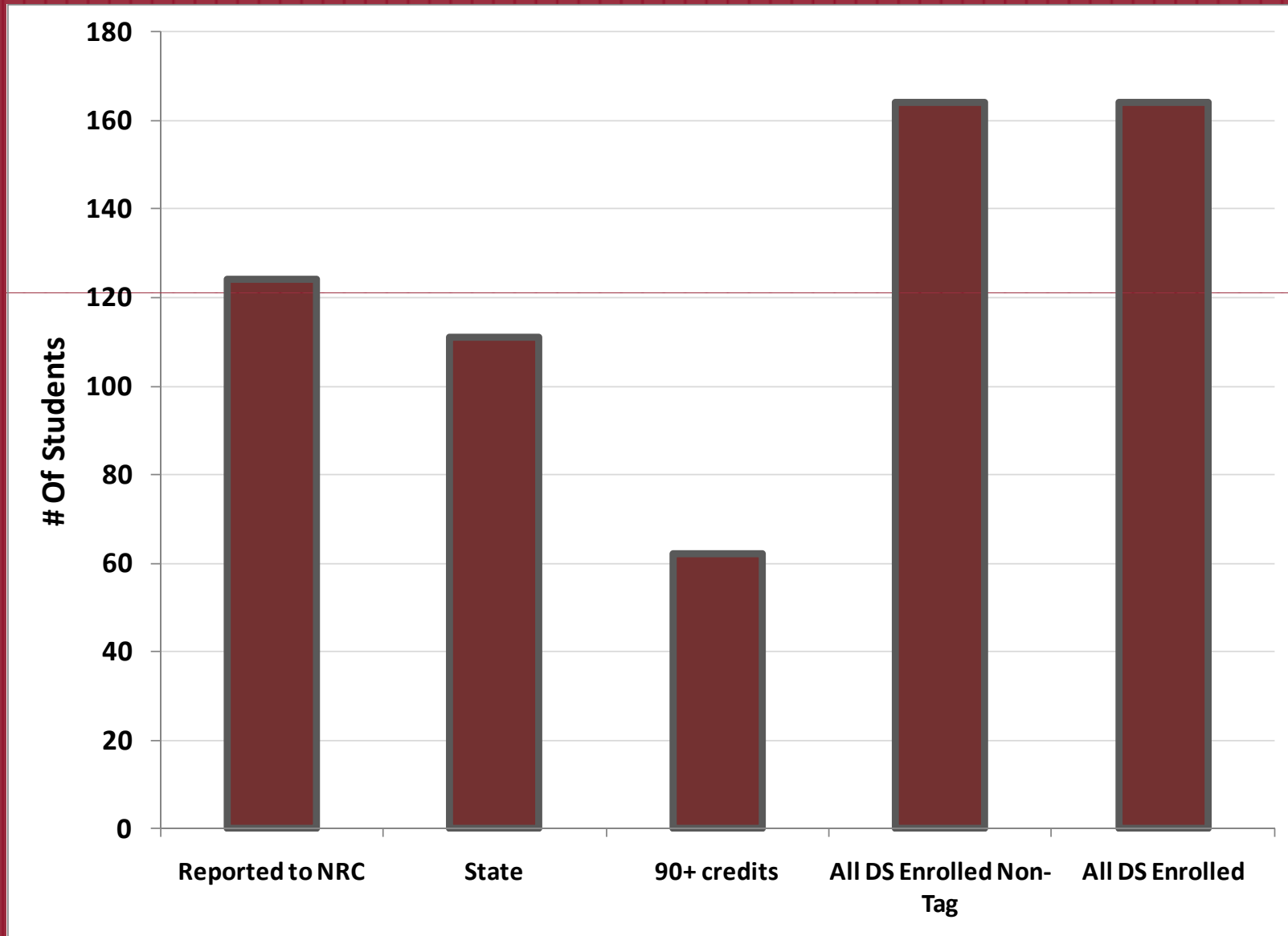
Chemistry – Au '05 Snapshot



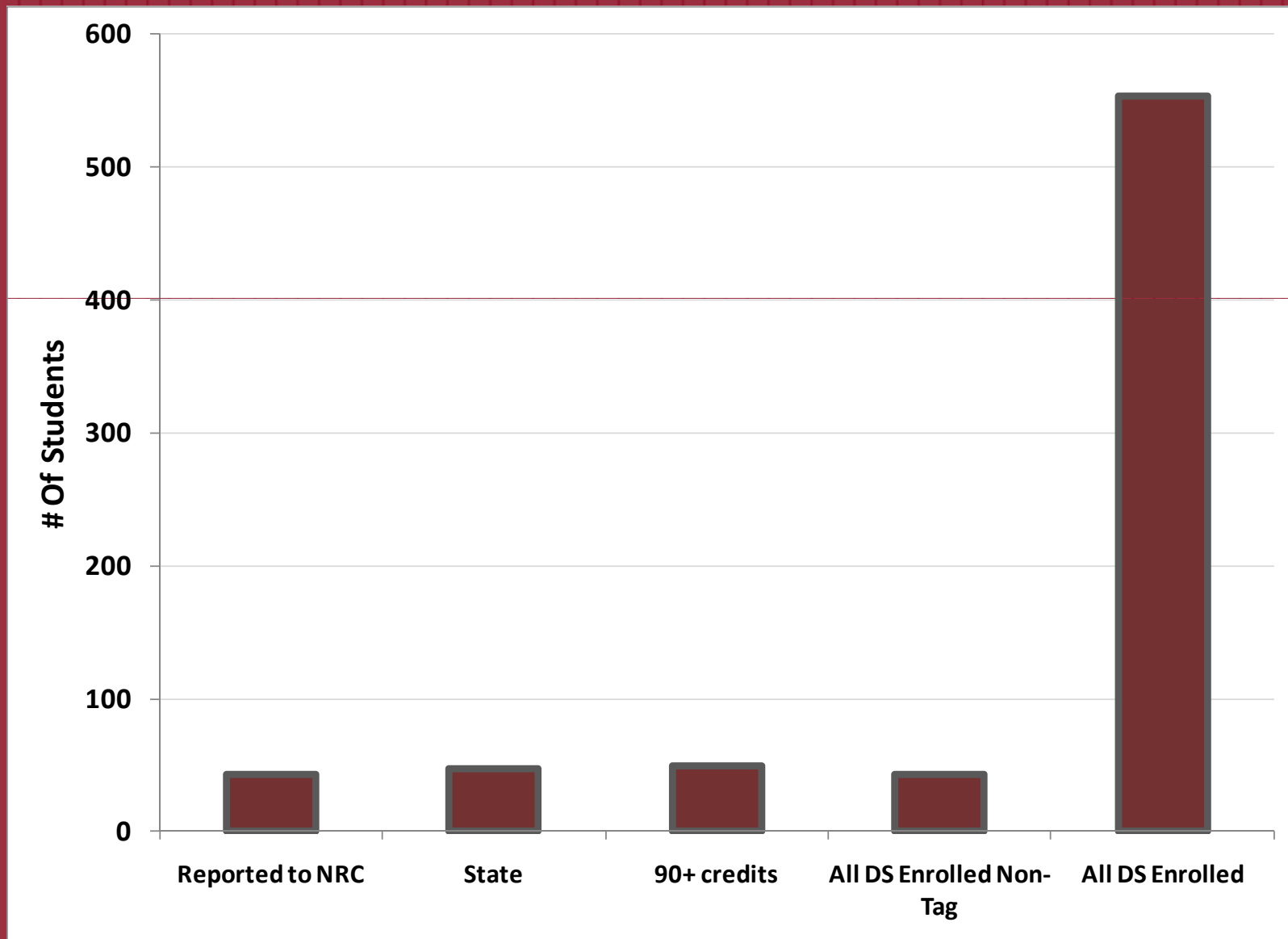
Economics – Au '05 Snapshot



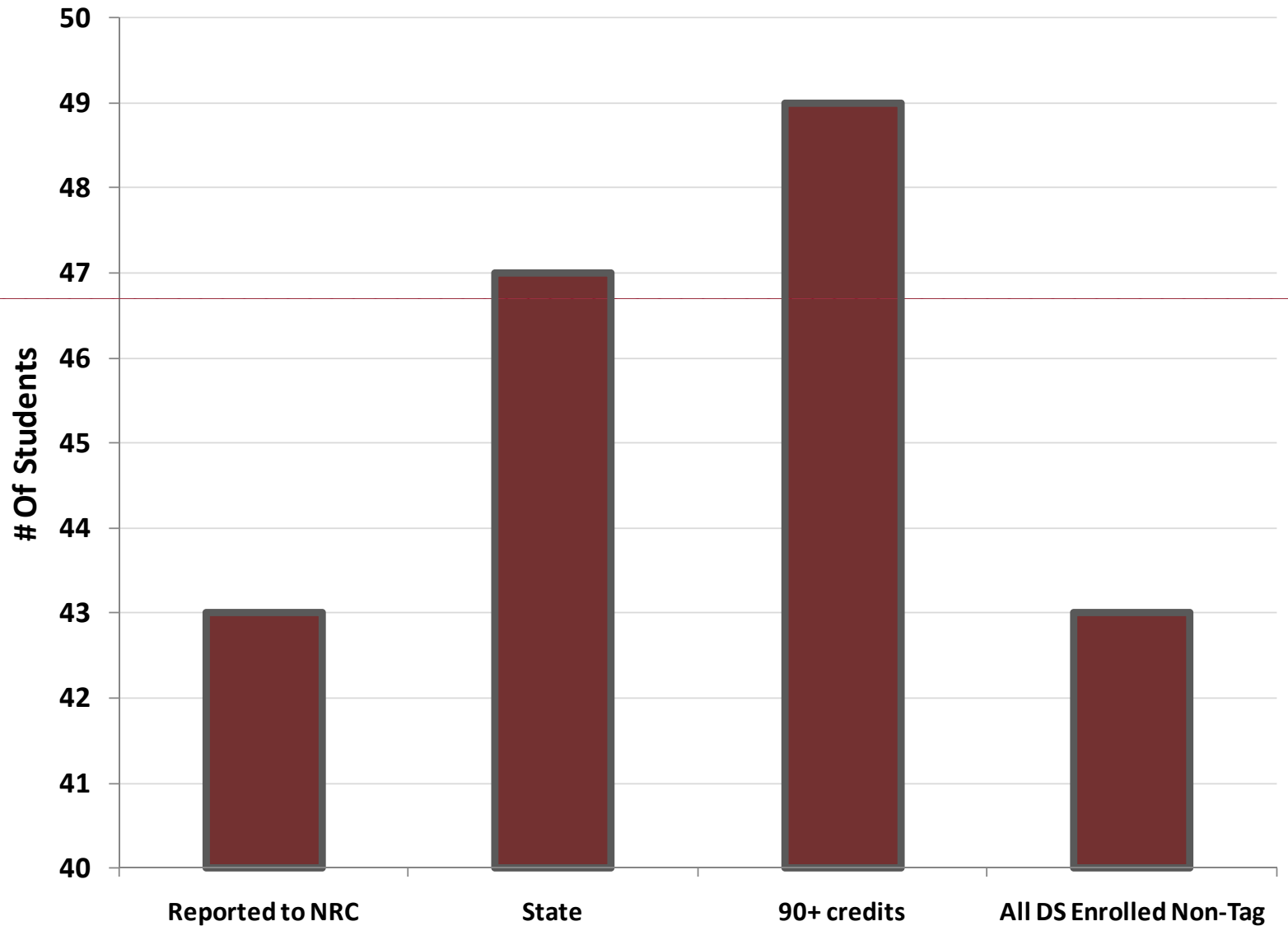
English – Au '05 Snapshot



Business – Au '05 Snapshot



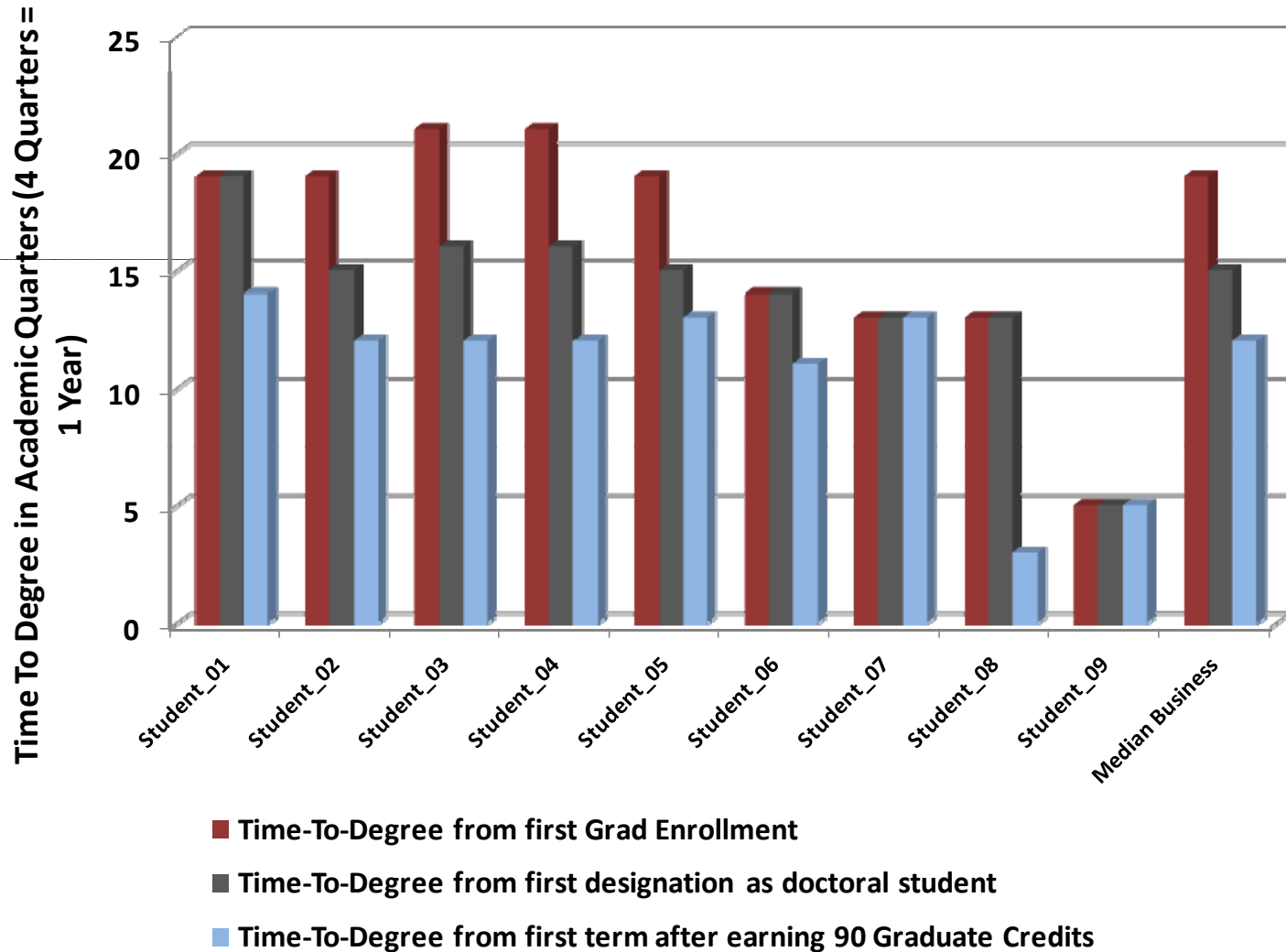
Business – Au '05 Snapshot



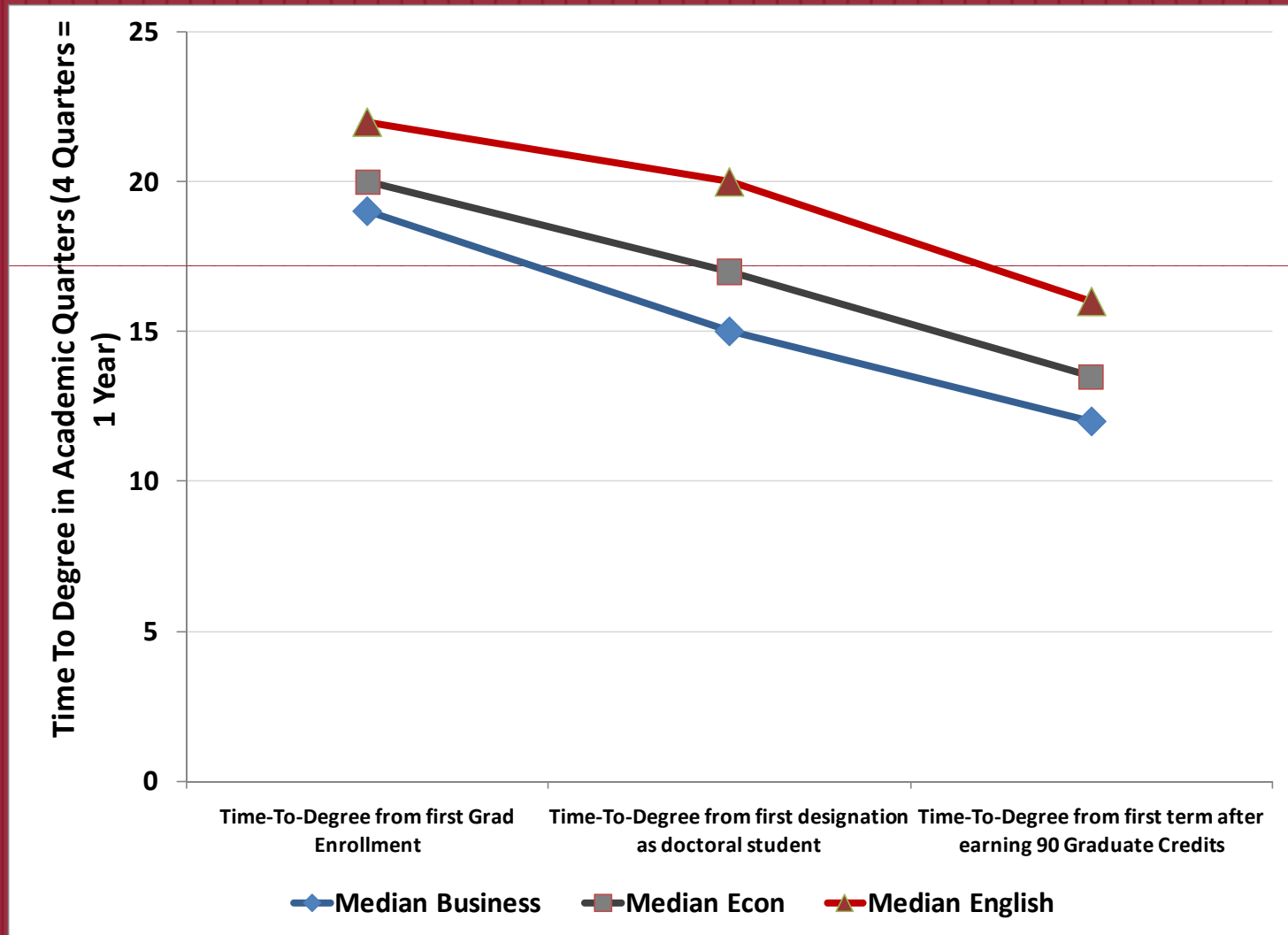
What Difference Does it Make - Cohort Data

- Snapshot data does not give good idea of inter-program differences
- Cohort comparisons are tricky, as every definition changes cohort composition
- Degree Cohorts provide clearer distinctions

Business Administration – Effect on Time-To-Degree

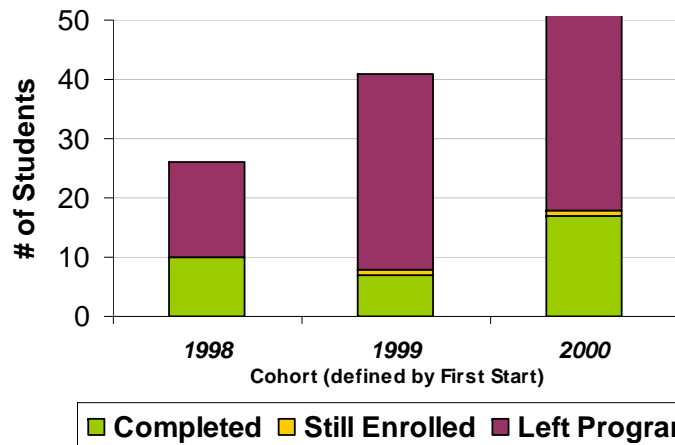


Comparison of Time-to-Degree Medians

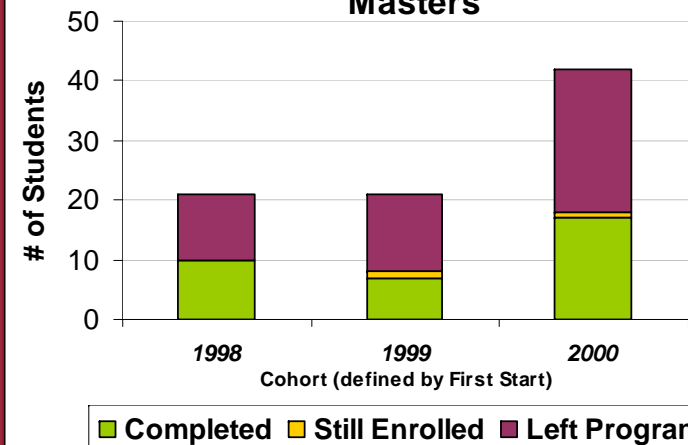


Completion Rate Example

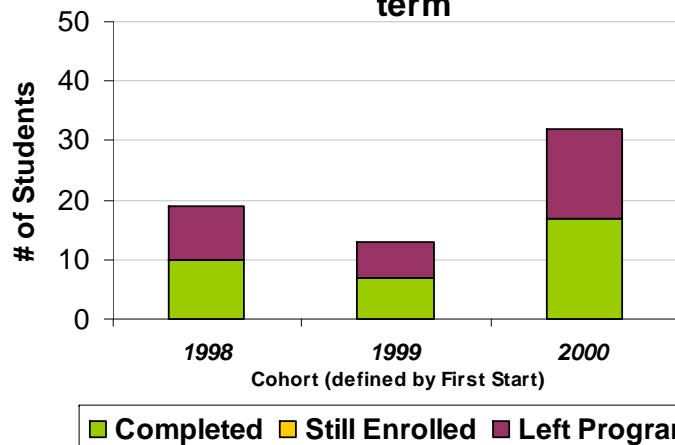
Romance Languages - Any Grad Start



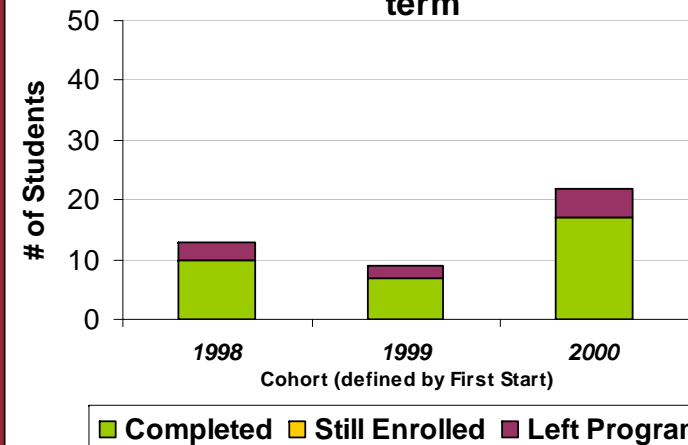
Romance Languages - Enrolled "Post-Masters"



Romance Languages - Started a 7th term



Romance Languages - Started a 9th term



Does it *Really* Make a Difference?

□ Across Institutions

- Philosophical issues can cause dramatic effects
- Data issues will vary, as will the nature of best proxies
- Structural differences in programs may make some instances of either type of issue impossible to truly resolve

Consensus?

- Cross-Institution comparisons require common definitions
- Choice of criteria affects three main dimensions
 - Ease of Collecting Data
 - Ease of Interpreting Data
 - Reliability of Comparisons

Consensus?

- ▣ Data Consortium using 2 primary criteria for completion rate reporting:
 - Does Institution have reliable Intention Data?
 - Does Program offer Masters Degree?
- ▣ Same Consortium using 4 different criteria in determining Time-To-Degree

Consensus?

- For Completion rates, 2 types of program:
 - All students are known Ph.D students
 - Intention known
 - No other degree option
 - All students must be assumed to be Ph.D students
 - Criteria do not allow for distinguishing between Master's and Doctoral students.

In Conclusion

□ Who is a doctoral student?

- You tell me?
- Well, that depends...

□ What difference does it make?

- Reasonable alternatives create great variability
- This variability is itself variable
- Without a consensus that allows for valid and reliable comparisons, we cannot answer some of the most basic questions we have regarding doctoral programs
- People will attempt to provide answers to these questions, regardless.