RESEARCH BRIEF

No. 49-17   June 2017

Student Enrollment in A.A. and A.S. Programs: 2013-14 through 2015-16

This Research Brief presents trends in enrollment in A.A. and A.S. programs for first-time to NOVA (FTTN) students and returning students from 2013-14 through 2015-16 (excluding summer semesters). A FTTN student is a student who has never been to college and has enrolled at NOVA for the first time, or a student who was previously enrolled at another post-secondary institution but transferred to NOVA. A returning student is a student who was previously enrolled at NOVA.

This Brief also presents enrollment trends for New-to-Program and Continuing-in-Program students. A New-to-Program student is a student who is formally enrolled in a given program for the first time, either as a new-to-NOVA student or a student previously enrolled in another program or undeclared at NOVA. A Continuing-in-Program student is a student who was previously enrolled at NOVA in the same program.

Finding #1. Student enrollment in A.A. and A.S. programs increased slightly in Fall semesters over the past three years, but declined across Spring semesters.

Over the past three years in A.A. and A.S. programs, FTTN student enrollment declined 3 percent, while returning student enrollment declined 2 percent; which is an overall decline of 2 percent (see Table 1, next page). For both groups, these declines were more prevalent across Spring semesters: between Spring 2014 and Spring 2016, FTTN student enrollment declined 16 percent and returning student enrollment declined 4 percent (5 percent overall). Conversely, enrollment between Fall 2013 and Fall 2015 increased 1 percent overall, less than 1 percent for returning students, and 1 percent for FTTN students (Figure 1).

Figure 1. A.A. and A.S. Enrollment in Fall and Spring Semesters by FTTN or Returning Student Status: Fall 2013 through Fall 2015 and Spring 2014 through Spring 2016
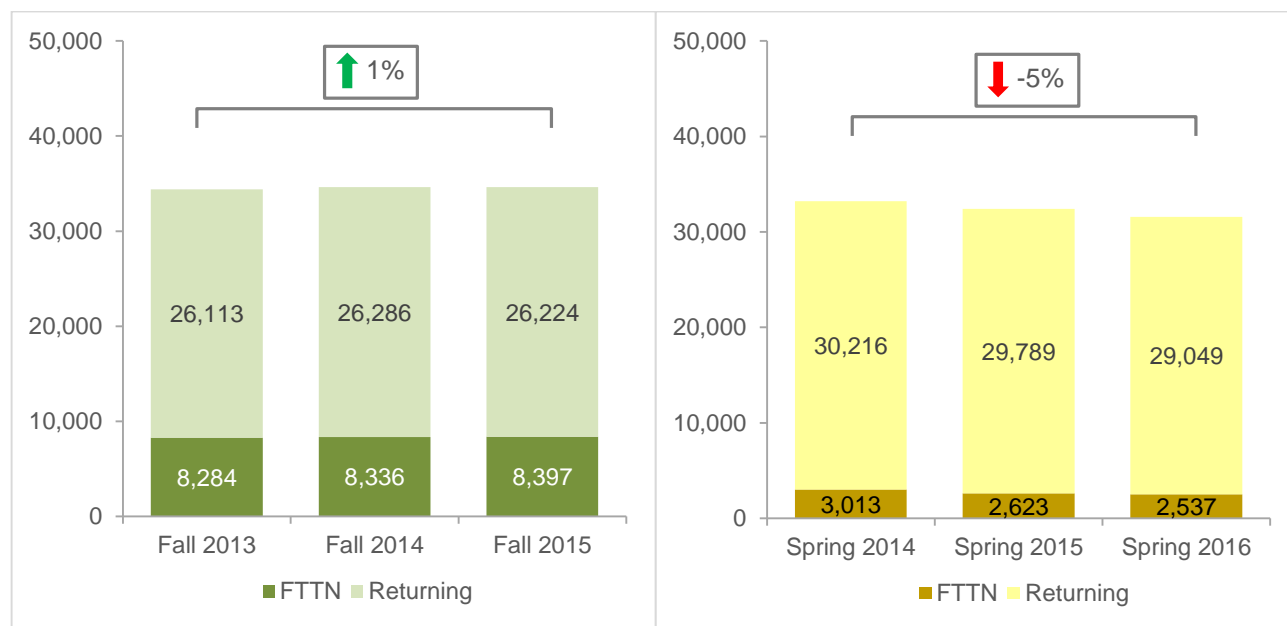
Finding #2. Over the past three years, student enrollment declined more in A.A. programs than in A.S. programs.

Over the past three academic years, student enrollment in A.A. and A.S. programs declined 2 percent overall. However, enrollment in A.A. programs declined more than enrollment in A.S. programs (11 percent decrease versus only a 1 percent decrease, respectively).

For both FTTN students and returning students, the largest increase in enrollment was in the Liberal Arts with a Specialization in English A.A. program. This specialization track had zero enrollments in 2013-14 (due to its approval as a new degree program in 2015), but increased 324 percent between 2014-15 and 2015-16. Declines in Liberal Arts and its other specialization tracks, such as Psychology, International Studies, or Art History, suggest that perhaps students in other Liberal Arts specializations are choosing to switch into the new specialization in English.

Particularly in high-enrollment majors (over 1,000 students), enrollment has increased the greatest over the past three years in the Social Sciences A.S. program (23 percent increase) and Computer Science (24 percent increase). However, student enrollment has declined over the past three years in other majors, the Liberal Arts A.A. program (22 percent decrease), the Social Science Teacher Specialization A.S. (16 percent decrease), and the General Studies A.S. program (10 percent decrease).

Table 1. Three-Year Enrollment Growth of A.A. and A.S. Programs by Program and Student Status: 2013-14 to 2015-16

Program	3-Year Enrollment Growth from 2013-14 to 2015-16		
	FTTN	Returning	Total
A.A. Programs			
Fine Arts	11.6%	2.1%	3.9%
Liberal Arts	-29.7%	-20.0%	-21.5%
Liberal Arts/Communication Studies	-20.3%	44.4%	25.8%
Liberal Arts/Psychology	-21.7%	-13.4%	-15.0%
Liberal Arts/English Specialization*	222.9%	407.0%	324.4%
Liberal Arts/International Studies	-20.2%	-12.5%	-13.9%
Liberal Arts/Art History	-71.4%	-53.7%	-57.4%
Music	-10.0%	1.4%	-1.3%
A.A. Subtotal	*-13.3%*	*-9.9%*	*-10.5%*
A.S. Programs			
Business Administration	12.9%	0.1%	1.7%
Computer Science	25.7%	23.0%	23.6%
Engineering	12.5%	7.9%	8.8%
Engineering/Electrical Engineering	-8.6%	-7.7%	-7.8%
General Studies	-15.5%	-9.0%	-10.2%
General Studies/Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies	-36.4%	-15.8%	-19.7%
Information Technology	-2.2%	5.2%	4.3%
Science	-2.4%	2.8%	1.9%
Science/Mathematics	-2.0%	-14.9%	-12.5%
Social Sciences	55.1%	18.2%	23.0%
Social Sciences/Deaf Studies	-55.6%	-3.0%	-14.3%
Social Sciences/Geospatial	-40.0%	147.6%	69.4%
Social Sciences/Political Science	-1.5%	3.2%	2.1%
Social Sciences/Psychology	-15.2%	-2.5%	-5.0%
Social Sciences/Teacher Education	-14.5%	-15.8%	-15.6%
A.S. Subtotal	*-1.6%*	*-0.7%*	*-0.8%*
Total A.A. and A.S.	**-3.2%**	**-1.9%**	**-2.1%**

*Represents two-year growth since the program was not offered in 2013-14; this was a new program in 2014-15.

Finding #3. The Liberal Arts with a specialization in English A.A. program has the highest proportion of FTTN students; the Information Technology A.S. program has the lowest proportion of FTTN students.

Over the past three academic years, the majority of students enrolled in all A.A. and A.S. degree programs were returning students. The degree program with the largest proportion of FTTN students was the Liberal Arts with a specialization in English A.A. program, in which 36 percent of all enrollments were FTTN students. This is likely due to the fact that it was a new program in 2014-15. The degree program with the lowest proportion of FTTN students was the Information Technology A.S. program, in which only 12 percent of all enrollments were FTTN students.

Figure 2. Three-Year Program Enrollment by Student Status: 2013-14 through 2015-16[1]
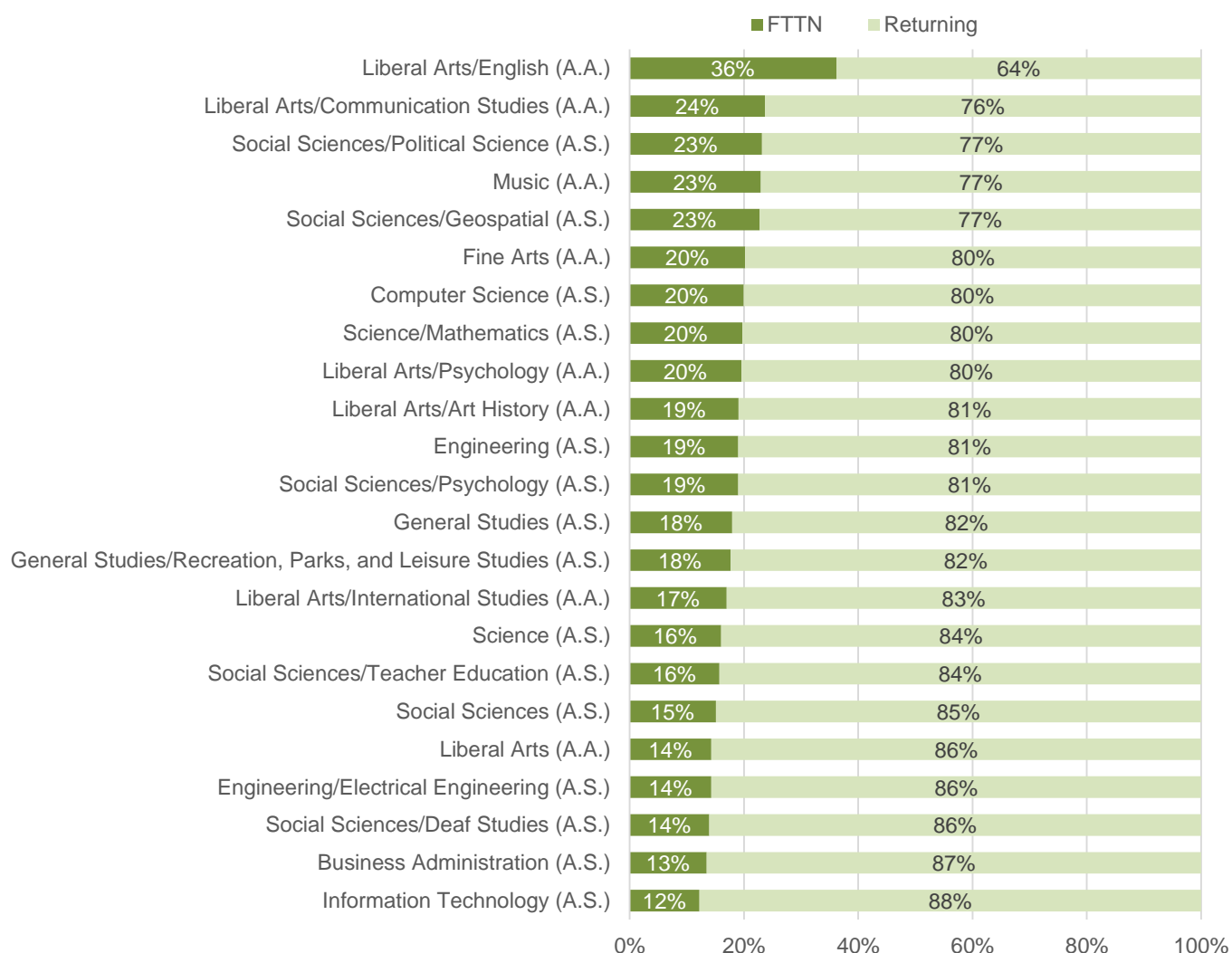
[1] The three-year enrollment total represents enrollment data in each program summed across the last three academic years (2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16), including Fall and Spring semester enrollment but excluding Summer semester enrollment. As a result of summing across years, totals will include duplicate students (for instance, a student could be counted as a FTTN student in Fall 2013 and counted as a returning student in Spring 2014).

Finding #4. The Liberal Arts A.A. program with a specialization in English has the highest proportion of New-to-Program students; the Engineering A.S. program with specialization in Electrical Engineering has the lowest proportion of New-to-Program students.

In all but one program, the majority of students enrolled in A.A. and A.S. programs over the past three academic years were Continuing-in-Program students. The degree program with the largest proportion of New-to-Program students was a new program in 2014-15, the Liberal Arts A.A. program with a specialization in English (62 percent were New-to-Program students). The degree program with the lowest proportion of New-to-Program students was the Engineering A.S. program with a specialization in Electrical Engineering, in which only 30 percent of all enrollments were New-to-Program students.

Figure 3. Three-Year Program Enrollment by Student Status: 2013-14 through 2015-16[2]

■ New-to-Program   ■ Continuing-in-Program

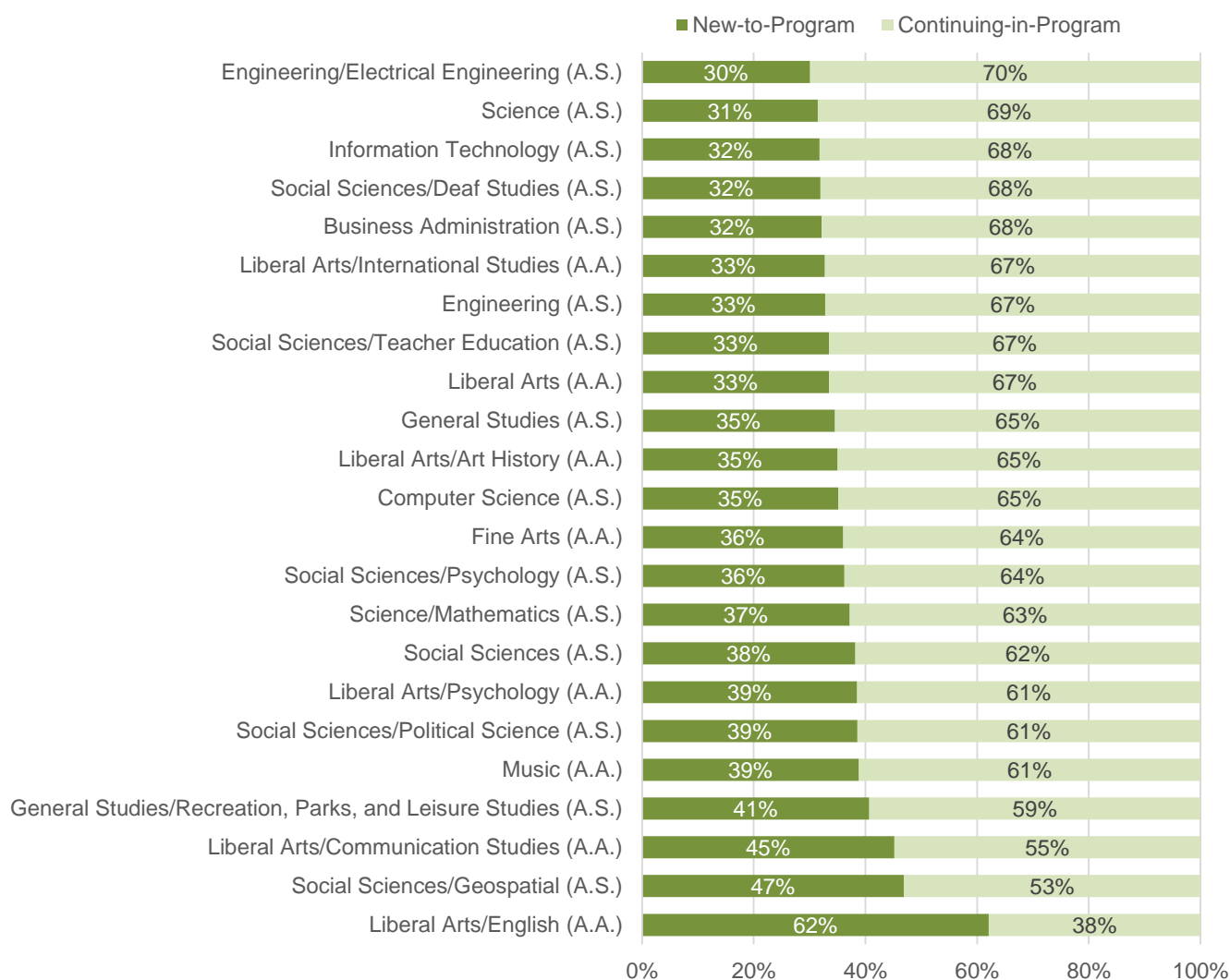| Program	New-to-Program	Continuing-in-Program
Engineering/Electrical Engineering (A.S.)	30%	70%
Science (A.S.)	31%	69%
Information Technology (A.S.)	32%	68%
Social Sciences/Deaf Studies (A.S.)	32%	68%
Business Administration (A.S.)	32%	68%
Liberal Arts/International Studies (A.A.)	33%	67%
Engineering (A.S.)	33%	67%
Social Sciences/Teacher Education (A.S.)	33%	67%
Liberal Arts (A.A.)	33%	67%
General Studies (A.S.)	35%	65%
Liberal Arts/Art History (A.A.)	35%	65%
Computer Science (A.S.)	35%	65%
Fine Arts (A.A.)	36%	64%
Social Sciences/Psychology (A.S.)	36%	64%
Science/Mathematics (A.S.)	37%	63%
Social Sciences (A.S.)	38%	62%
Liberal Arts/Psychology (A.A.)	39%	61%
Social Sciences/Political Science (A.S.)	39%	61%
Music (A.A.)	39%	61%
General Studies/Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies (A.S.)	41%	59%
Liberal Arts/Communication Studies (A.A.)	45%	55%
Social Sciences/Geospatial (A.S.)	47%	53%
Liberal Arts/English (A.A.)	62%	38%

---

[2] The three-year enrollment total represents enrollment data in each program summed across the last three academic years (2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16), including Fall and Spring semester enrollment but excluding Summer semester enrollment. As a result of summing across years, totals will include duplicate students (for instance, a student could be counted as a New-to-Program student in Fall 2013 and counted as a Continuing-in-Program student in Spring 2014).

Appendix Table A. Enrollment by Program and Student Status (FTTN vs. Returning): 2013-14 through 2015-16

Program	2013-14			2014-15			2015-16		
	FTTN	Return.	Total	FTTN	Return.	Total	FTTN	Return.	Total
A.A. Programs									
Fine Arts	242	1,002	1,244	262	987	1,249	270	1,023	1,293
Liberal Arts	791	4,394	5,185	652	4,054	4,706	556	3,515	4,071
Liberal Arts/Communication Studies	118	293	411	122	360	482	94	423	517
Liberal Arts/Psychology	184	754	938	176	667	843	144	653	797
Liberal Arts/English Specialization	-	-	-	35	43	78	113	218	331
Liberal Arts/International Studies	94	440	534	89	438	527	75	385	460
Liberal Arts/Art History	28	108	136	20	80	100	8	50	58
Music	90	293	383	90	285	375	81	297	378
Total A.A.	*1,547*	*7,284*	*8,831*	*1,446*	*6,914*	*8,360*	*1,341*	*6,564*	*7,905*
A.S. Programs									
Business Administration	1,409	9,477	10,886	1,432	9,469	10,901	1,591	9,482	11,073
Computer Science	606	2,413	3,019	652	2,715	3,367	762	2,968	3,730
Engineering	514	2,226	2,740	539	2,331	2,870	578	2,402	2,980
Engineering/Electrical Engineering	152	908	1,060	152	906	1,058	139	838	977
General Studies	4,135	18,061	22,196	3,682	17,260	20,942	3,496	16,433	19,929
General Studies/Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies	22	95	117	17	72	89	14	80	94
Information Technology	536	3,801	4,337	594	4,075	4,669	524	3,999	4,523
Science	1,067	5,422	6,489	1,055	5,605	6,660	1,041	5,572	6,613
Science/Mathematics	100	436	536	94	381	475	98	371	469
Social Sciences	445	2,970	3,415	579	3,165	3,744	690	3,512	4,202
Social Sciences/Deaf Studies	9	33	42	4	40	44	4	32	36
Social Sciences/Geospatial	15	21	36	9	39	48	9	52	61
Social Sciences/Political Science	132	441	573	142	443	585	130	455	585
Social Sciences/Psychology	388	1542	1,930	365	1,572	1,937	329	1,504	1,833
Social Sciences/Teacher Education	220	1,199	1,419	207	1,088	1,295	188	1,009	1,197
Total A.S.	*9,750*	*49,045*	*58,795*	*9,523*	*49,161*	*58,684*	*9,593*	*48,709*	*58,302*
Total A.A. and A.S.	**11,297**	**56,329**	**67,626**	**10,969**	**56,075**	**67,044**	**10,934**	**55,273**	**66,207**

"-" = Program not offered.

Appendix Table B. Enrollment by Program and Student Status (New vs. Continuing): 2013-14 through 2015-16

Program	2013-14			2014-15			2015-16		
	New	Contin.	Total	New	Contin.	Total	New	Contin.	Total
A.A. Programs									
Fine Arts	439	805	1,244	457	792	1,249	467	826	1,293
Liberal Arts	1,720	3,465	5,185	1,525	3,181	4,706	1,430	2,641	4,071
Liberal Arts/Communication Studies	210	201	411	205	277	482	222	295	517
Liberal Arts/Psychology	343	595	938	327	516	843	323	474	797
Liberal Arts/English Specialization	-	-	-	60	18	78	194	137	331
Liberal Arts/International Studies	166	368	534	177	350	527	155	305	460
Liberal Arts/Art History	44	92	136	32	68	100	27	31	58
Music	150	233	383	138	237	375	153	225	378
Total A.A.	*3,072*	*5,759*	*8,831*	*2,921*	*5,439*	*8,360*	*2,971*	*4,934*	*7,905*
A.S. Programs									
Business Administration	3,387	7,499	10,886	3,407	7,494	10,901	3,771	7,302	11,073
Computer Science	1,045	1,974	3,019	1,134	2,233	3,367	1,373	2,357	3,730
Engineering	911	1,829	2,740	912	1,958	2,870	993	1,987	2,980
Engineering/Electrical Engineering	302	758	1,060	308	750	1,058	321	656	977
General Studies	7,576	14,620	22,196	6,942	14,000	20,942	7,261	12,668	19,929
General Studies/Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies	48	69	117	35	54	89	39	55	94
Information Technology	1,369	2,968	4,337	1,429	3,240	4,669	1,499	3,024	4,523
Science	2,002	4,487	6,489	2,029	4,631	6,660	2,189	4,424	6,613
Science/Mathematics	184	352	536	178	297	475	188	281	469
Social Sciences	1,281	2,134	3,415	1,354	2,390	3,744	1,703	2,499	4,202
Social Sciences/Deaf Studies	18	24	42	11	33	44	10	26	36
Social Sciences/Geospatial	26	10	36	16	32	48	26	35	61
Social Sciences/Political Science	224	349	573	214	371	585	234	351	585
Social Sciences/Psychology	716	1,214	1,930	669	1,268	1,937	680	1,153	1,833
Social Sciences/Teacher Education	466	953	1,419	420	875	1,295	423	774	1,197
Total A.S.	*19,555*	*39,240*	*58,795*	*19,058*	*39,626*	*58,684*	*20,710*	*37,592*	*58,302*
Total A.A. and A.S.	**22,627**	**44,999**	**67,626**	**21,979**	**45,065**	**67,044**	**23,681**	**42,526**	**66,207**

"-" = Program not offered.