

Seattle University College of Arts & Sciences
Strategic Planning 2019/2020
September 9, 2019

PHASE 1: MEMO 1
Summary of Environmental Scan

I. INTRODUCTION

As part of Phase 1 of CAS Strategic Planning, the committee gathered information about the broader context that is impacting education today, with an emphasis on trends for private liberal arts colleges. We drew from information provided by the University-wide Strategic Planning process, from external sources relevant to our College as well as from internal data about the College of Arts & Sciences. This information provides important context for Phase 2 of the CAS Strategic Planning processes as we work together to identify challenges and opportunities for the future.

II. EXTERNAL CONTEXT

A. WHAT ARE PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS LOOKING FOR IN CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY? WHAT IS DRIVING SOME SCHOOLS TO GO OUT OF BUSINESS?

According to a May 2019 report from the University Strategic Planning Steering Committee the following are important external context assumptions:¹

- Higher Education is increasingly competitive:
 - Small liberal arts schools in rural areas with declining demographics are closing (different than SU); also schools with small endowments and discount rates higher than 50% for entering FTIC
 - Low cost options: community colleges, online universities
 - Peer institutions in our area
 - Traditional UG population becoming smaller, less wealthy and more debt-averse
- Many universities with mission, character and structure like SU are thriving
- Public perspectives regarding Higher Ed are mixed: skepticism regarding cost, while recognition that a college degree leads to greater life satisfaction and lifetime earnings
- Tremendous social and environmental challenges

¹ Seattle University: Strategic Positioning Document (May 19, 2019)
<https://www.seattleu.edu/media/secure/strategic-planning/Strategic-Positioning-Document---endorsed-by-SPSC.pdf>

- Technology has changed some of the degrees that are needed (e.g., demand for data science), but higher order skills, such as critical thinking, communications, ethical analysis and leadership, are increasingly needed and in demand
- Seattle location: advantage and challenge

The **CAS Strategic Planning Committee** considers the information from the following sources relevant to our particular external context:

1. Education Advisory Board (EAB):

A 2016 report from the Education Advisory Board (EAB), prepared for Seattle University and titled “Preparing for Future Programs: The State of Higher Education and the Case for Programmatic Innovation” argues the following:²

- Readily available information shifts power to the student (referred to as the consumer of education)
- Three college choice drivers: 1) reputation; 2) job outcomes (this keeps increasing as a choice driver); 3) aid awarded
- Post-graduation salary data are misleading and incomplete; career earnings for liberal arts students grow over time, getting significantly closer to other students, even surpassing students in some pre-professional and professional programs (not in physical and natural sciences and math)
- Master and Professional programs are growing faster than baccalaureate
- Untapped audience of disengaged but undecided career changers; adults going back to college
- Focus on T-shaped professional: T-top=Collaboration (leadership, empathy, cross-cultural experience); T-stem=Innovation (mastery of a skill, process, product, or body of knowledge)
- Recommend adding flexible, market-responsive tracks/minors/specialties into the liberal arts (eg., data science, law and human rights, global business, nonprofit and public service)
- Humanities/STEM and Humanities/Professional interdisciplinary collaborations are growing
- Growth of professional Master’s degrees: part-time, low residence, path to employment, cross-disciplinary, self-pay. High-growth programs offer flexible delivery, stackable credentials, practical experience, professional development, interdisciplinary pathways

² Education Advisory Board, “Preparing for Future Programs: The State of Higher Education and the Case for Programmatic Innovation” (2016) <https://www.seattleu.edu/media/secure/strategic-planning/EAB-Preparing-for-Future-Academic-Programs.pdf>

- Need to ensure sufficient demand before launch; the future is specialized. Design to cater to different market segments (eg., career starters, career climbers, career changers, career crossers)
- Stackable programs do well: Certificate plus Master's or BA in 4 years plus Master's in 1
- Imminent challenge: moderate growth in Washington between 2015-25; nationally, "precipitous" demographic decline of High School graduates between 2025 and 2030

2. Inside Higher Ed's 2019 Survey of College and University Chief Academic Officers³:

The following findings from this 2019 survey are particularly relevant for the College of Arts and Sciences:

- Most provosts are skeptical of the way some colleges have eliminated departments based on low numbers of majors.
- More than three-quarters (78 percent) of provosts believe that colleges are prioritizing technology and professional programs over those that support general education.
- 90 percent of provosts believe that high-quality undergraduate education requires healthy departments in traditional liberal arts fields such as English, history and political science.
- A majority of provosts are concerned about the impact of cuts to academic programs in higher education, and at their institutions. Only 31 percent of provosts believe that their students understand the purpose of general education requirements.
- Most provosts report pressure from presidents, boards and deans to focus on academic programs outside of the liberal arts.
- A majority of provosts believe that students feel comfortable in classrooms, but some doubt whether this is the case for minority and conservative students.

B. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF RISING COSTS AND STUDENT DEBT?

1. Increased attention to student debt

Two recent articles highlight the increased attention to student debt.

In "Top Higher Ed Debate in 2019? Big Solutions for Borrowers," published by *Inside Higher Ed* Andrew Kreighbaum argues as follows:⁴

- Where the 2016 presidential campaign pushed free college onto the national agenda, candidates and policy makers are getting pressure now to take a position on solutions

³ "2019 Survey of College and University Chief Academic Officers," *Inside Higher Ed* (2019)

<https://www.insidehighered.com/booklet/2019-survey-college-and-university-chief-academic-officers>

⁴ Andrew Kreighbaum. "Top Higher Ed Debate in 2019? Big Solutions for Borrowers." *Inside Higher Ed*. June 18, 2019. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/06/18/student-debt-cancellation-pushes-mainstream-higher-ed-debate>

for current student borrowers struggling to repay their loan debt. An idea that was previously relegated to the political fringes -- canceling student debt -- is gaining new momentum. That's a reflection of just how many borrowers have student debt that is a major concern, observers say.

Nigel Chiwaya, in "These Five Charts Show How Bad the Student Load Debt Situation," in *NBC News*, observes,⁵

- One in five adult Americans carry student loan debt. The issue returned to the headlines this week, when Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts proposed canceling this debt for more than 40 million Americans. Here's a look at the landscape.

2. Student Debt as a Public v. Private Good

In "Student Debt is a Continuous Drain on College Students," Chris Newfield makes a case for considering student debt a public, not a private, issue:⁶

- The market-driven allocation of high-quality college is a main reason why US attainment has fallen steadily over the last 4 decades... It is also why college racial inequality persists. Most of us feel somewhat badly about this unjust, unequal allocation and try to patch it with our high-tuition-high aid system, stuffed like a Thanksgiving turkey with loans (2:1 loans over grants vs. the reverse 30 years ago). We know it doesn't provide equal outcomes by race or class, or actually equal opportunity... Rather than putting financial aid on a market system, we should have put it on a public good allocation system... In practice it would mean that society would set a goal of all students graduating debt-free.

3. Student Debt: Race, Class & Gender

The following articles consider the relationship between student debt and race, class and gender:

- Annie Nova, in "The Student Debt Crisis Has Hit Black Students Especially Hard. Here's How" argues that student debt weighs heavier on black Americans than their white counterparts, a legacy of structural discrimination in the U.S.⁷
- Elissa Nadworny and Clare Lombardo, in "I'm Drowning: Those Hit Hardest By Student Loan Debt Never Finished College," examine the impact of debt on borrowers who did not complete degree.⁸

⁵ Nigel Chiwaya, "These Five Charts Show How Bad the Student Load Debt Situation." *NBC News*. April 24, 2019. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/student-loan-statistics-2019-n997836>.

⁶ Chris Newfield, "Student Debt is a Continuous Drain on College Students." *Remaking the University*. November 21, 2018. <http://utotherescue.blogspot.com/2018/11/student-debt-is-continous-drain-on.html>

⁷ Annie Nova, "The Student Debt Crisis Has Hit Black Students Especially Hard. Here's How". *CNBC*. July 27, 2019. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/07/27/how-the-student-debt-crisis-has-hit-black-students-especially-hard.html>

⁸ Elissa Nadworny and Clare Lombardo, "I'm Drowning: Those Hit Hardest By Student Loan Debt Never Finished College." *NPR*. July 18, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/07/18/739451168/i-m-drowning-those-hit-hardest-by-student-loan-debt-never-finished-college>

- Allana Akhtar and Hillary Hoffower, in “9 Ways Student Debt is One More Thing That's Worse for Women Than Men,” observe that the student-loan debt crisis is hurting many Americans — but it's hitting women particularly hard.⁹

4. Student Debt: Graduate school

Allana Akhtar and Hillary Hoffower, “How Grad Schools Became the Hidden Culprit Behind America's Student-Debt Crisis,” examine the role that graduate school plays in student debt.¹⁰

5. Responses to Student Debt:

In response to the increase in student debt Eric Kelderman, “Enrollment Shortfalls Spread,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, notes that students increasingly choose price over a preferred campus experience.¹¹ The less difference parents see between the private colleges and the public ones, he said, the more likely they are to choose the less-expensive option. The current Ithaca College president told Kelderman that we need to make college more affordable and increase the diversity of the student population: “That will require new sources of money, she said, such as finding uses for the campus during traditional down times, providing more-affordable housing and dining options for students, and increasing the number of adult learners and community-college transfers.”

Rick Seltzer, “Privates Matching Public Prices,” notes that some private universities are offering matching pricing with public universities.¹²

Beth Akers, “There’s too much emphasis on reducing student loans and not enough on reducing risk,” reports that “at Pacific Lutheran University, the PLU Pledge provides financial assistance to help borrowers who earn less than \$43,000 annually after graduation. Borrowers who make \$20,000 or less annually are reimbursed for 100 percent of their student loan payments. As a borrower’s income rises toward the \$43,000 threshold, the reimbursement rate is reduced. The

⁹ Allana Akhtar and Hillary Hoffower. 9 Ways Student Debt is One More Thing That's Worse for Women Than Men. Business Insider. August 9, 2019. <https://www.businessinsider.com/student-loan-debt-facts-women-versus-men-2019-8>.

¹⁰ Allana Akhtar and Hillary Hoffower, “How Grad Schools Became the Hidden Culprit Behind America's Student-Debt Crisis.” Business Insider. August 22, 2019. <https://www.businessinsider.com/graduate-student-loan-debt-nationwide-crisis-2019-8>Role that graduate school plays in student debt.

¹¹ Erick Kelderman, “Enrollment Shortfalls Spread,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 20, 2019. https://www-chronicle-com.proxy.seattleu.edu/article/Enrollment-Shortfalls-Spread/246341?cid=wsinglestory_hp_7

¹² Rick Seltzer, “Privates Matching Public Prices,” *Inside HigherEd*, September 10, 2018 <https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2018/09/10/private-colleges-are-trying-attract-students-matching-public-prices>

assistance continues until the borrower's income surpasses \$43,000 or until the loans are completely paid off."¹³

A 2017 report by Young Invincibles, "Race & Ethnicity as a Barrier to Opportunity: A Blueprint for Higher Education Equity," "explores racial and ethnic disparities in higher education and proposes a package of equity-focused federal policy solutions that can help close gaps moving forward." The authors argue that "The United States is in the midst of one of the most significant demographic shifts in the history of the country... [P]eople of color will become the new majority in educational and workforce settings during our lifetime... At the same time, our country is plagued by deep and persistent inequities by race and ethnicity from classrooms to boardrooms."¹⁴

Finally, Chris Newfield, "Why Elizabeth Warren's Free College Plan is so Important. Remaking the University" has recently argued that "The student debt boom is an unjust burden on recent college cohorts and has reflected a politically-motivated wealth transfer from young to old, poorer to richer, less white to whiter. It can and should be reversed through the political process."¹⁵

C. WHAT TRENDS IN SEATTLE ARE RELEVANT?

Seattle is both

- an *opportunity*: increasing demographics, thriving tech, non-profit, arts organizations; job opportunities and therefore attractive to prospective students
- and a *challenge*: high cost of living for students, faculty, and staff

D. WHAT ARE PERCEPTIONS OF A&S VS STEM AMONG PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS?

In a research report supported by the Mellon Foundation, Catherine B. Hill and Elizabeth Davidson Pisacreta make the following observations:¹⁶

- Critics claim that a liberal arts education is worth less than the alternatives, and perhaps not even worth the investment at all. They argue that increasing costs and low future earnings limit the value of a liberal arts education, especially compared to alternative

¹³ Beth Akers, "There's too much emphasis on reducing student loans and not enough on reducing risk." *Washington Post*. July 17, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/07/17/theres-too-much-emphasis-reducing-student-loans-not-enough-reducing-risk/>

¹⁴ Young Invincibles, "Race & Ethnicity as a Barrier to Opportunity: A Blueprint for Higher Education Equity." February 2017. <https://younginvincibles.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Higher-Education-Equity.pdf>

¹⁵ Chris Newfield, "Why Elizabeth Warren's Free College Plan is so Important. Remaking the University." April 29, 2019. <http://utotherescue.blogspot.com/2019/04/why-elizabeth-warrens-free-college-plan.html>

¹⁶ Catherine B. Hill and Elizabeth Davidson, Pisacreta. "The Economic Benefits and Costs of a Liberal Arts Education." *A Mellon Foundation Research Report*. January 2019. <https://mellon.org/resources/news/articles/economic-benefits-and-costs-liberal-arts-education/>

options such as pre-professional programs that appear to be better rewarded in the current labor market.

- Existing evidence does not support these conclusions, when other student and institutional characteristics are controlled for. At the same time, the empirical evidence is limited and further empirical research is needed to better understand the value of a liberal education relative to alternatives types of higher education. In the conclusion, we discuss possible areas for future research.

In “As Tech Companies Hire More Liberal Arts Majrs, More Students Are Choosing STEM Degrees,” Sydney Johnson argues that “the number of students choosing liberal arts majors is dipping. At the same time, more STEM employers are hiring workers with humanities backgrounds, according to a new report by researchers at Strada Education Network and Emsi, a labor market analytics firm.”¹⁷

E. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM EXPERIMENTS IN ONLINE LEARNING?

In Spring 2019 the SU’s Online Education Task Force provided a powerpoint to the SU community and reported the following findings, among others:

- Nationally, between 2012 and 2016 the number of students taking online courses increased by 933,715, while the number of students taking on-campus courses dropped by 1,173,805
- SU is in the lower tier of Jesuit universities in terms of the number of online programs it offers: 6, only one of which, Crime Analysis is in A&S
- The number of courses offered online at SU in the summer has gone from 16 in 2014 to 58 in 2018
- The number of online courses offered throughout the academic year has gone from 1 in 2013-14 to 114 in 18-19
- The number of hybrid courses offered throughout the academic year has gone from 2 in 2013-14 to 153 in 18-19
- Based on a comparison of course evaluations ratings, students’ satisfaction with these courses in A&S is not significantly different than with traditional courses

F. ONGOING/FUTURE STUDY WHICH MAY HAVE AN IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION:

The Gates Foundation has launched the *Gates Foundation’s Postsecondary Values Commission* to study the value of postsecondary education. This Commission may have an impact on public

¹⁷ Sydney Johnson, “As Tech Companies Hire More Liberal Arts Majrs, More Students Are Choosing STEM Degrees” *EdSurge* Nov. 13 2018. <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-11-13-as-tech-companies-hire-more-liberal-arts-majors-more-students-are-choosing-stem-degrees>

perceptions of Higher Education in the near future.¹⁸ The Commission states that “we know that opportunity extends beyond graduation day, but we can and must know more about how much and for whom.” It also explains its goal as follows: “a national commission to study the value of education after high school and offer recommendations about how to define, measure, and improve that value.”

G. ONGOING INTERNAL STUDY THAT WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON FACULTY WORK AT SU

SU ADVANCE GRANT: seeks to transform how SU values and defines faculty research and service to align mission and rewards for the purposes of tenure, promotion, and other rewards structures.¹⁹ The work of the SU Advance team is currently ongoing.

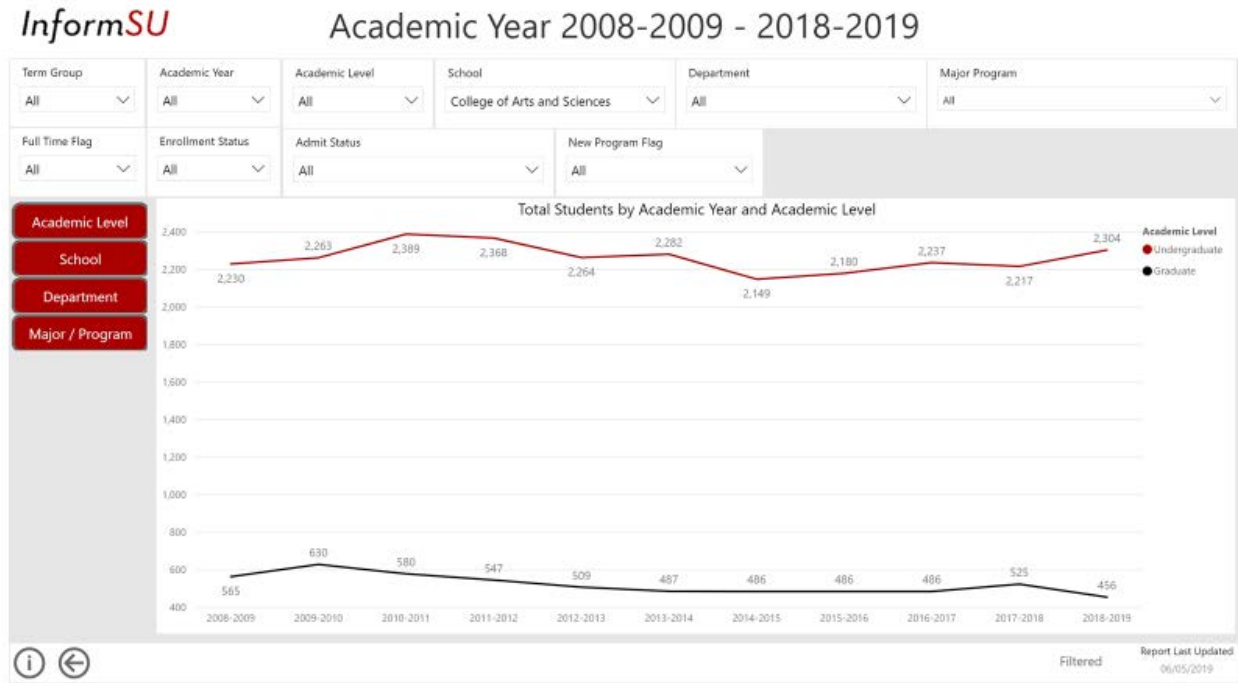
¹⁸ *Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Values Commission*,
https://postsecondary.gatesfoundation.org/postsecondary-value/?utm_medium=ihe&utm_source=paid&utm_content=eblast&utm_campaign=aw_us_gradseason

¹⁹ For the most recent presentation on the ongoing work of the SU Advance Grant, see
https://www.seattleu.edu/media/advance/SU-ADVANCE-Campus-Presentation_April-2019_.pdf

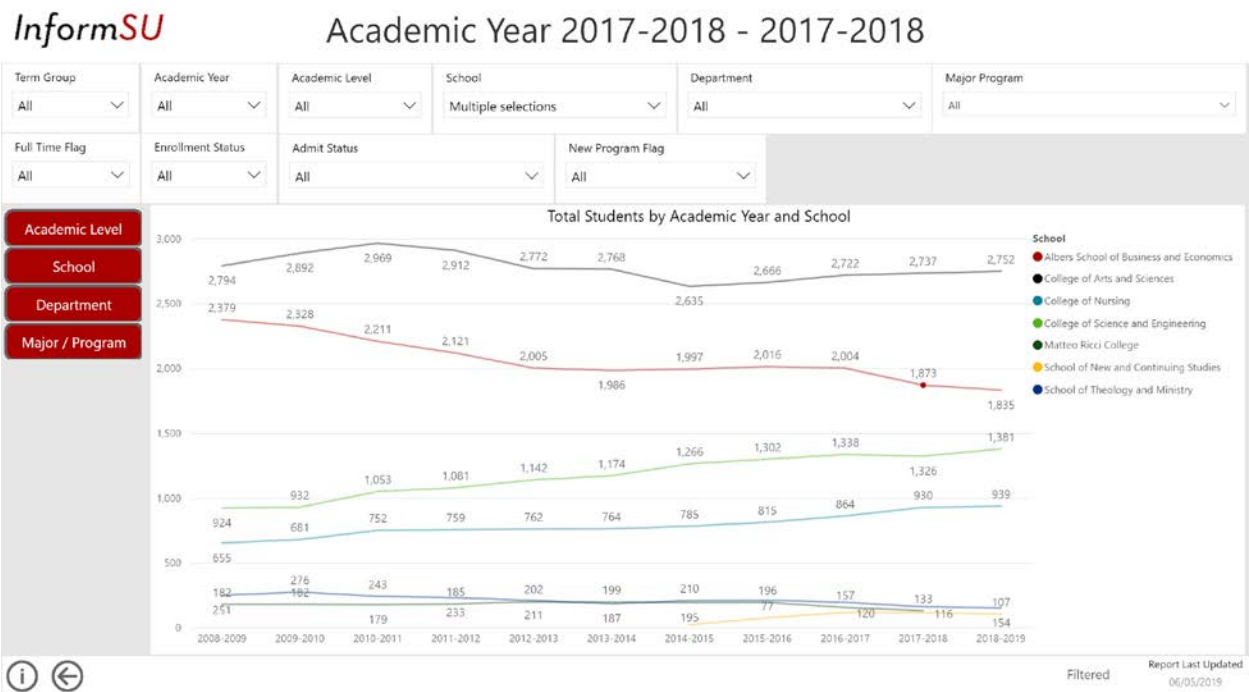
III. DATA ON SEATTLE UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

A. IN WHAT WAYS ARE SEATTLE UNIVERSITY CAS APPLICANT TRENDS SHIFTING?

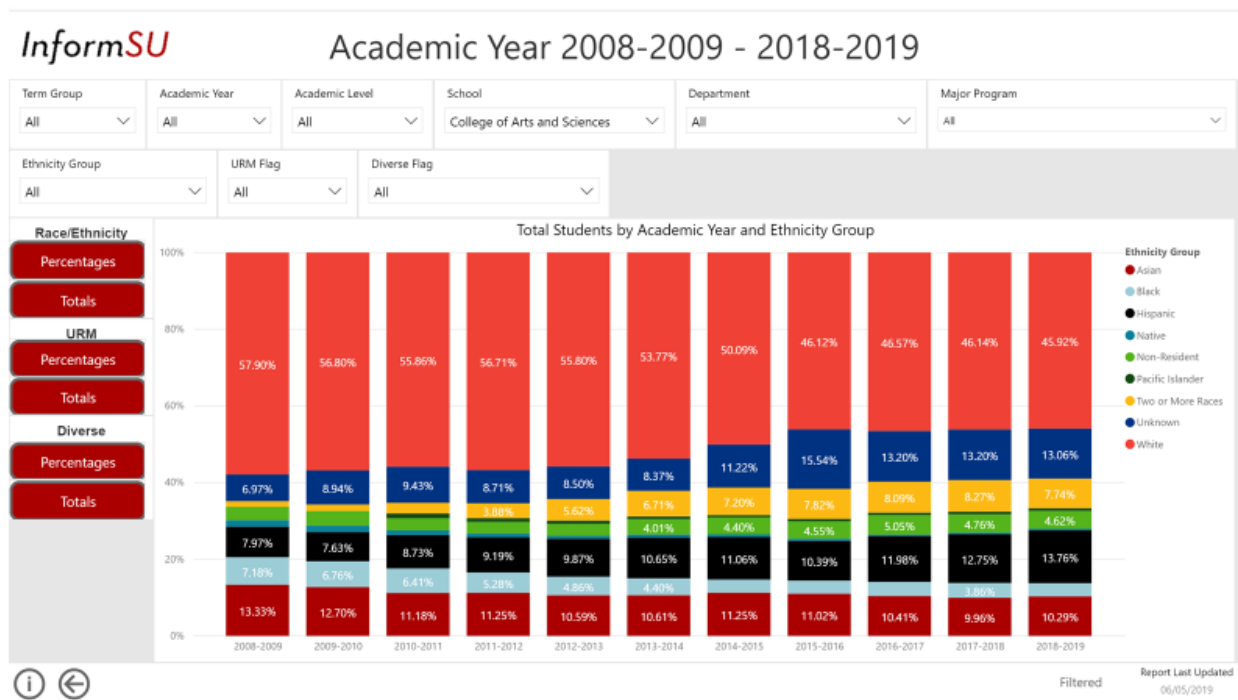
ENROLLMENT TRENDS



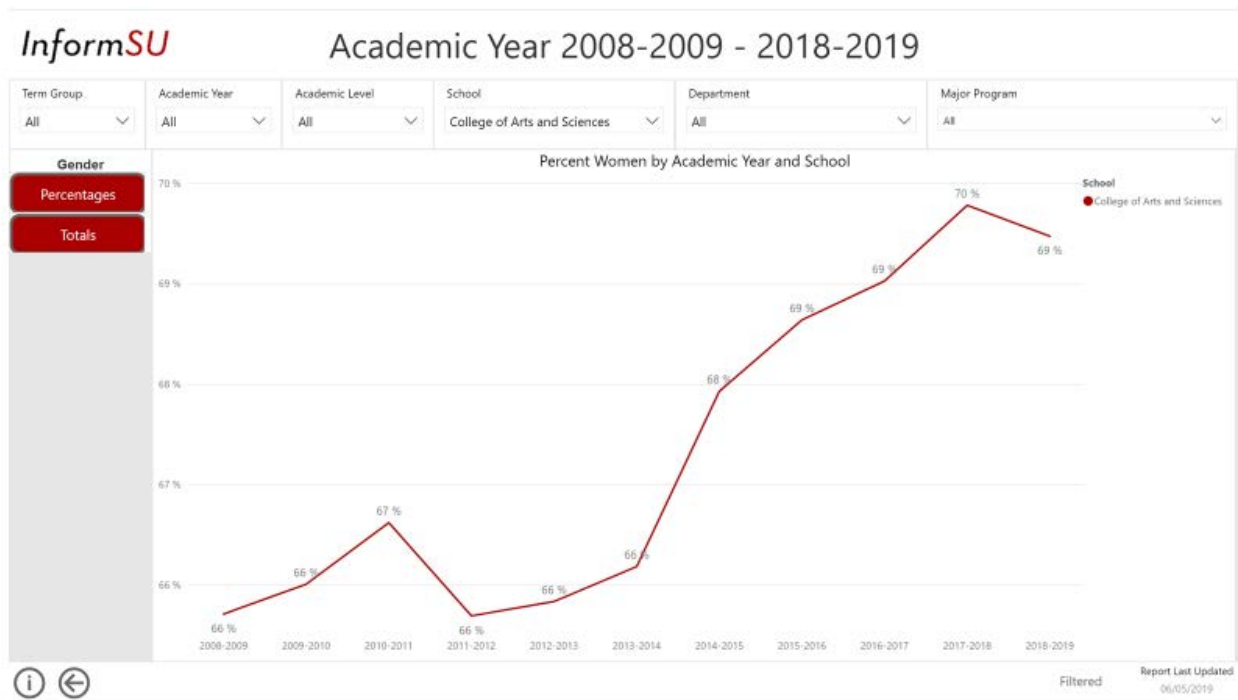
ENROLLMENT TRENDS IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER SU SCHOOLS



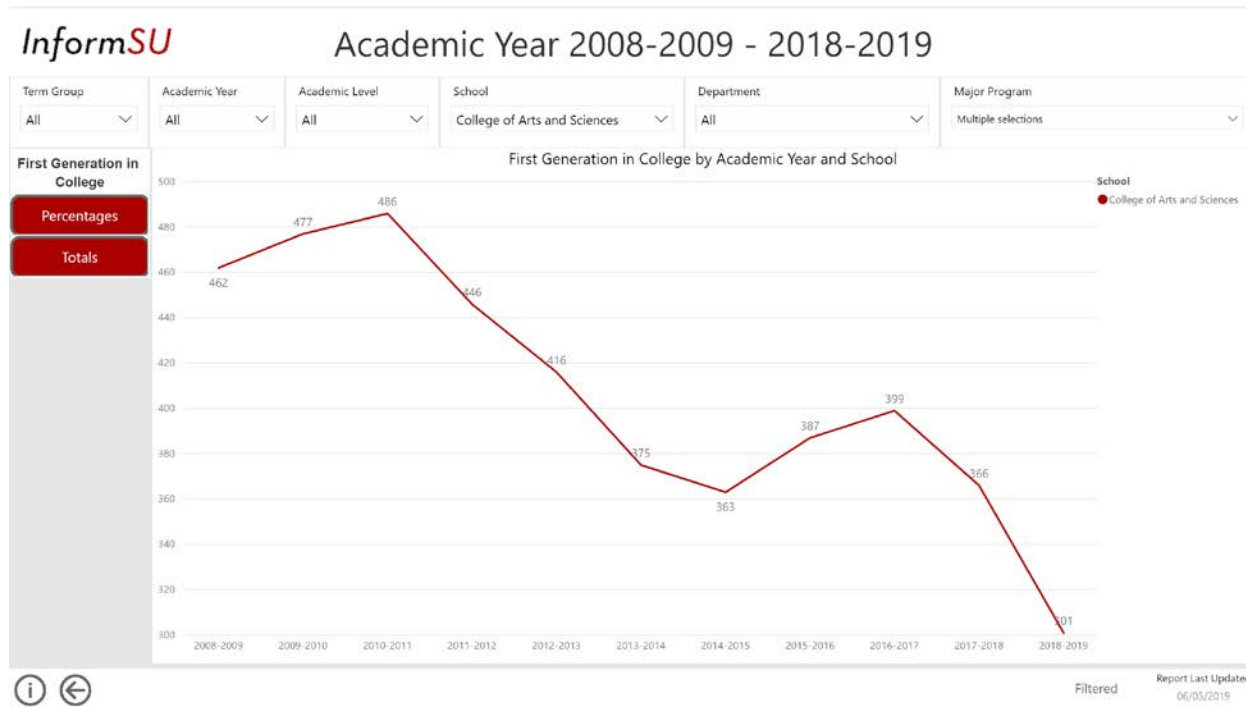
CAS STUDENTS' RACE AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND



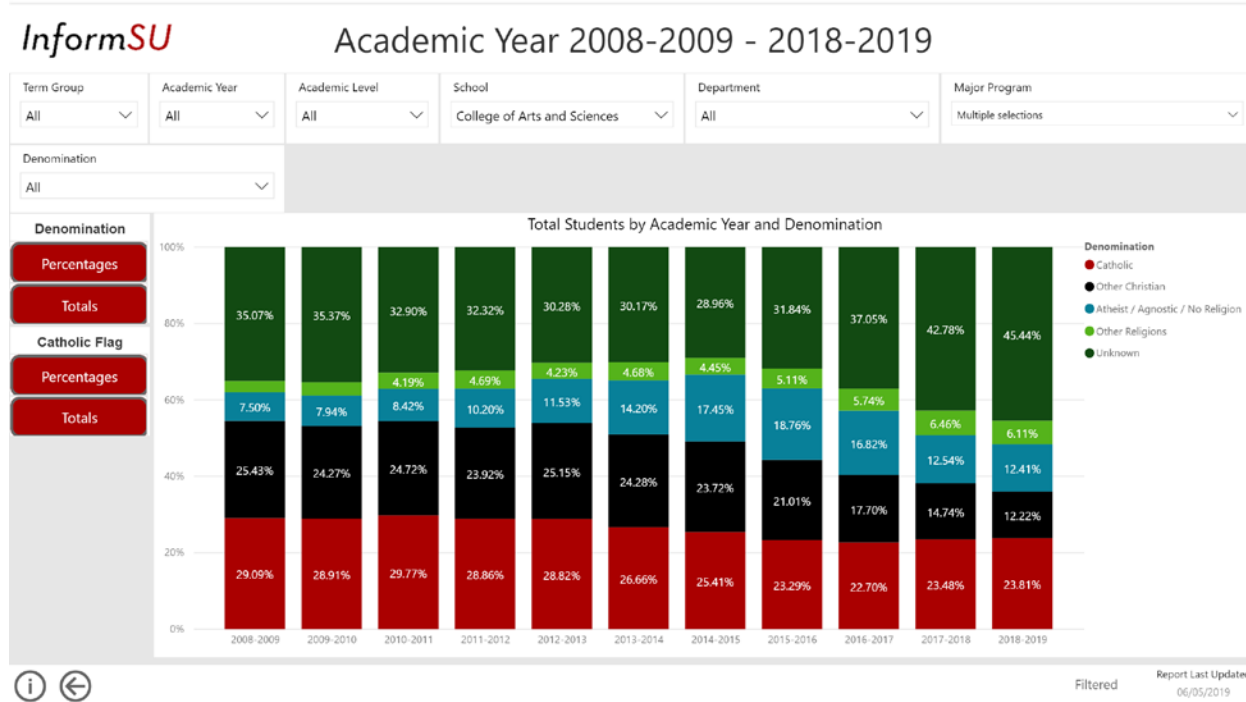
CAS STUDENTS' GENDER



CAS FIRST GENERATION IN COLLEGE



CAS STUDENTS' DENOMINATIONS



B. CAMPUS CLIMATE:

We don't currently have recent survey data regarding CAS students' views on their experiences in our College. The 2019 SGSU Undergraduate Student Survey has information about our campus climate. However, it needs to be taken into account that it was a survey of all SU students, 42% of which identified as Arts and Sciences students. With regard to campus climate, the Survey reports that 26% of students overall, that is, including all colleges, reported instances of exclusionary experiences. The top source of this conduct was from other students; the second source was from faculty. Also, 62.98% of students who responded identified as having a mental or physical disability and 50.84% of those who responded have utilized the Disabilities Services Office.

C. FACULTY TRENDS

Student-faculty FTE Trends and faculty status information from Dean's 2018 Convocation College Update:

- From AY12-13 to AY17-18, Undergraduate Student FTE declined from 2249 to 2117 (*ca. 6% decline*) and Graduate Student FTE increased from 295 to 319 (*ca. 8% increase*). [words in italics are MBF's addition]
- The final slide indicates that the overall budget, faculty FTE and staff FTE have increased since 2012-13 (17%, 2% and 13% respectively), while Student FTE has decreased by 1.4% and Faculty-Student ratio has declined very slightly, by 0.5% (thus, we are teaching slightly fewer students per faculty member than six years ago).
- In 2012-13, 51% of *contracted* faculty (that is, faculty who were teaching and were not on sabbatical or leave that year) were TT faculty. In 17-18, 54% of *contracted* faculty were TT faculty. In 2012-13, of the 49% who were NTT faculty, 61% were full-time NTT faculty and 39% PT. In 17-18, of the 46% who were NTT faculty, 63% were full-time NTT faculty and 37% PT.

D. INFORMATION ABOUT RACE AND GENDER IDENTITY OF CAS FACULTY AND STAFF

(Provided by Institutional Research, August 19, 2019)

FACULTY (TT, NTT, PT)

(Clarification from Matthew Borda (IR) regarding the tables with faculty data: these tables include all part-time and full-time faculty included in our fall faculty census. The census excludes faculty administrators, such as a dean, whose primary function is not teaching. For faculty on sabbatical, it counts the faculty member on sabbatical and not the faculty replacements. Finally, the faculty member had to have been teaching in the fall to be counted. These counts are smaller and use a different methodology from the program review methodology.)

RACE/ETHNIC BACKGROUND (FACULTY)

	CAS 2012	CAS 2018	SU TOTAL 2018
ASIAN	7.34%	10.38%	9.81%
BLACK	2.29%	3.81%	2.81%
HISPANIC	2.92%	6.57%	4.81%
NATIVE	0.00%	0.00%	0.04%
NATIVE AMERICAN	0.00%	0.00%	0.37%
NON-RESIDENT	0.77%	0.00%	0.23%
PACIFIC ISLANDER	0.00%	0.00%	0.10%
TWO OR MORE RACES	0.00%	0.35%	0.33%
UNKNOWN	20.08%	17.30%	20.11%
WHITE	63.71%	61.59%	61.41%

GENDER (FACULTY)

	CAS 2012	CAS 2018	SU TOTAL 2018
FEMALE	49.03%	51.56%	52.09%
MALE	50.97%	48.10%	47.86%

CAS STAFF WHO ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED (AUGUST 2019)

(Clarification from Matthew Borda: The staff data includes exempt and non-exempt and excludes vendors, work study, and student workers. It only includes this year for CAS.)

RACE/ETHNIC BACKGROUND (STAFF)

	CAS	SU TOTAL
ASIAN	9.09%	11.36%
BLACK	9.09%	6.62%
HISPANIC	4.55%	6.49%
ISLANDER	0.00%	0.87%
NATIVE	0.00%	0.62%
NON-RESIDENT	0.00%	0.37%
TWO OR MORE RACES	4.55%	2.00%
UNKNOWN	13.64%	16.23%
WHITE	59.09%	55.43%

GENDER (STAFF)

	CAS	SU TOTAL
FEMALE	81.82%	62.30%
MALE	15.91%	37.45%
UNKNOWN	2.27%	0.25%

IV. CONCLUSION

The information provided by this report is partial and provides a snapshot of the external context and internal trends that are impacting the College of Arts and Sciences. The committee welcomes additions or corrections. If you have information or perspectives to add to this, please contact the chairs of the CAS Strategic Planning Committee, Maureen Emerson Feit (feitm@seattleu.edu) and María Bullón-Fernández (bullon@seattleu.edu)