Student Enrollment History Graphic Trends

This file contains graphs and trend lines related to student enrollment.

Figure 1: Fall 20th Day Headcounts and Student Credit Hours (SCH) by Year
Figure 2: Fall 20th Day Headcounts for Selected Post-Secondary Institutions
Figure 3: Fall 20th Day Headcounts by Degree Bound Status
Figure 4: Fall 20th Day Headcount Trends in Full-time Enrollment
Figure 5: Student Lifecycle by Academic Year
Figure 6: Headcount Trends in New Freshmen and Transfers by Fiscal Year
Figure 7: Headcount Trends in New Transfers by Student Class by Fiscal Year
Figure 8: Headcount Trends in Fall 20th Day by Student Class
Figure 1: Fall 20th Day Headcounts and Student Credit Hours (SCH) by Year

Headcount & credit hours rose in unison throughout the 60s & 70s, plateauing during the 80s; the 90s witnessed the first sustained decline (largely the loss of non-degree students to community colleges); from the late 90s forward headcount & credit hours exhibited different growth patterns as more students pursued full-time enrollment.
During the late 80s & early 90s WSU saw many non-degree students migrate to Butler Community College (especially after 1989 when the Andover Campus opened), not surprising given that nearly 80% of our student body resides within the Sedgwick County area, and Butler is a convenient and cost-effective (40% of WSU tuition) postsecondary alternative in contrast to WSU, Newman and Friends.
Non-degree bound students largely migrated to community colleges in the 80s and early 90s and then began to exit post-secondary education in the 2000s (National Student Clearinghouse data). Growth in degree bound students continued except for the mid-1990s during the economic boom that saw many students re-enter the workforce.
While the increase in FT enrollment was partly a result of the loss in non-degree bound students, the major factors were a shift in student intent (faster degree completion connected to career entry and increasing education cost) and greater reliance on financial support which requires higher enrollment hours.
Viable institutions need inputs (incoming students) to exceed outputs (outgoing students) in order to sustain growth connected to attrition during processing (in-process returning students) with processing loads approximately 2/3rds of inputs & outputs.

Student lifecycle measures students in fall terms on 20th day categorizing them as new students (incoming), returning students who will not earn a degree during the academic year (in-process) and students who will earn a degree during the academic year (out-going).

1Academic year is comprised of a fall-spring-summer sequence.
WSU, like many postsecondary institutions, witnessed a shift in new student populations from new freshmen dominant in the 80s, to new transfer students becoming dominant starting in the 90s with increased growth in the last decade. This parallels a national trend in that students are now more likely to pass through multiple institutions (churn) before degree completion.

\(^1\)Fiscal year is comprised of a summer-fall-spring sequence.
Figure 7: Headcount Trends in New Transfers by Student Class by Fiscal Year\(^1\)

The substantial growth in junior transfers and to a lesser extent sophomore transfers reflect the national trends of increasing institutional churn.

\(^1\)Fiscal year is comprised of a summer-fall-spring sequence.
Over the past 30 years WSU has gone from a bi-modal distribution of student class, where graduates and freshmen were dominant, to a tri-modal distribution in which seniors are dominant, the students of "other" is a small element and the remaining student classes are clustered in the middle.

*Other student class includes high school & college guest, intensive english & UG non-degree in unaffiliated academic programs