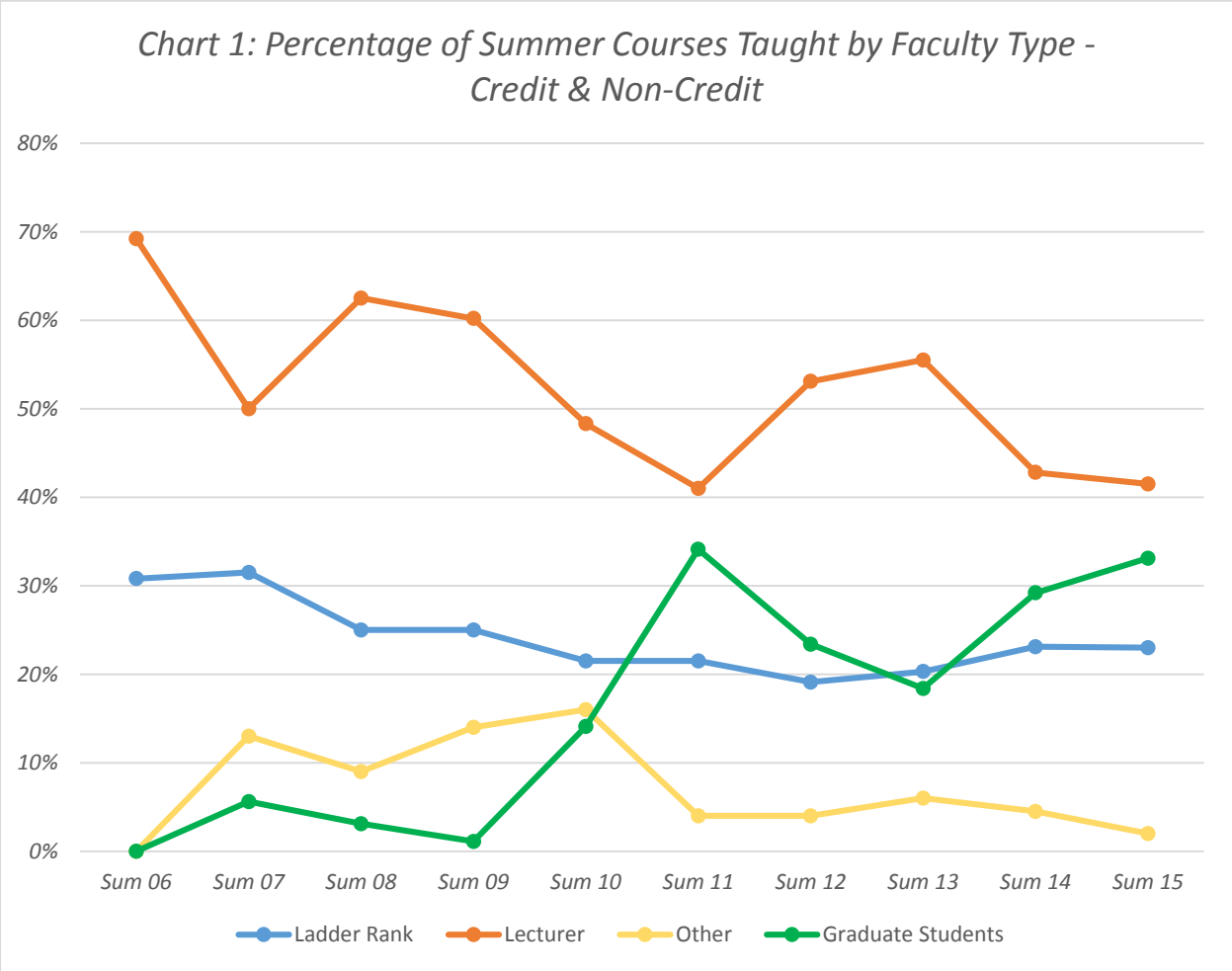
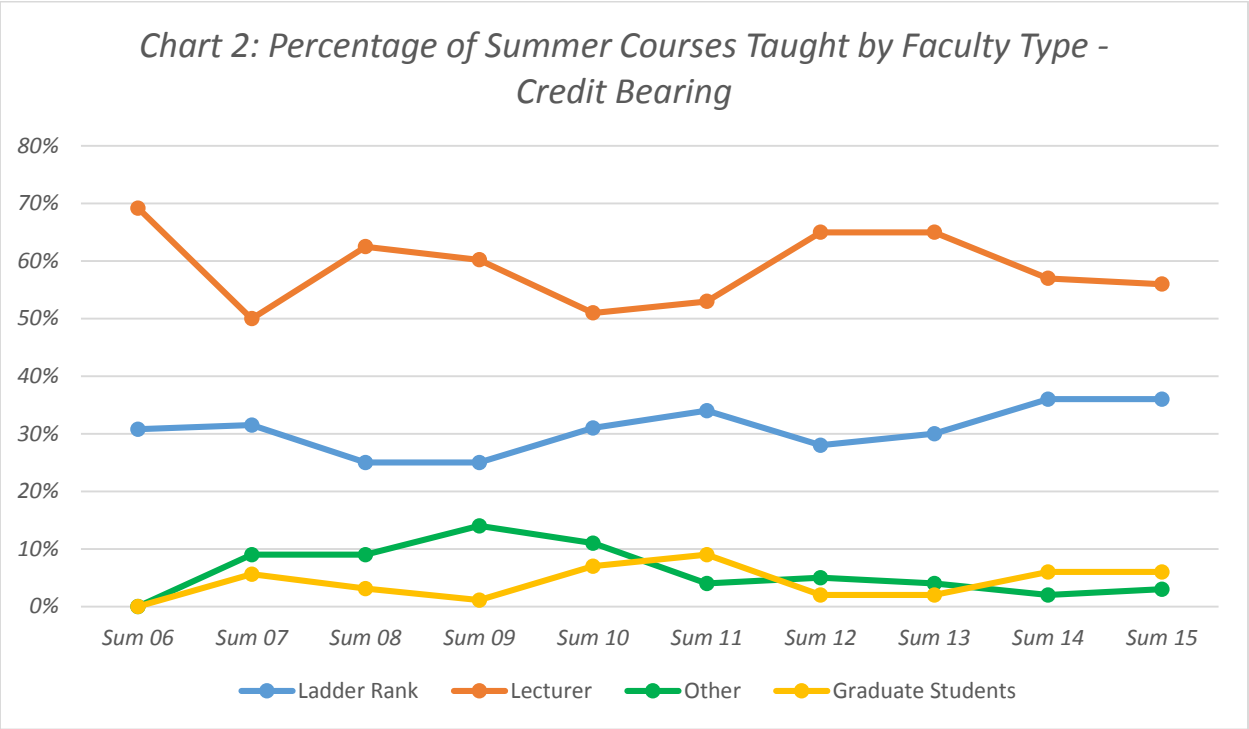
UC Merced Summer Session Faculty and Student Credit Hour Distribution

As part of the framework for long-term funding worked out between Governor Brown and President Napolitano, the UC system will look at the feasibility of offering 3-year degrees in popular majors. Increasing enrollment in summer courses is likely to be a major strategy component in any program designed to reduce student time to degree. Research conducted by Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRDS) highlighted the positive impact of summer enrollment on graduation rates - http://irds.ucmerced.edu/docs/Reports/3rdPieceSummerSessionsNewComposite.pdf.

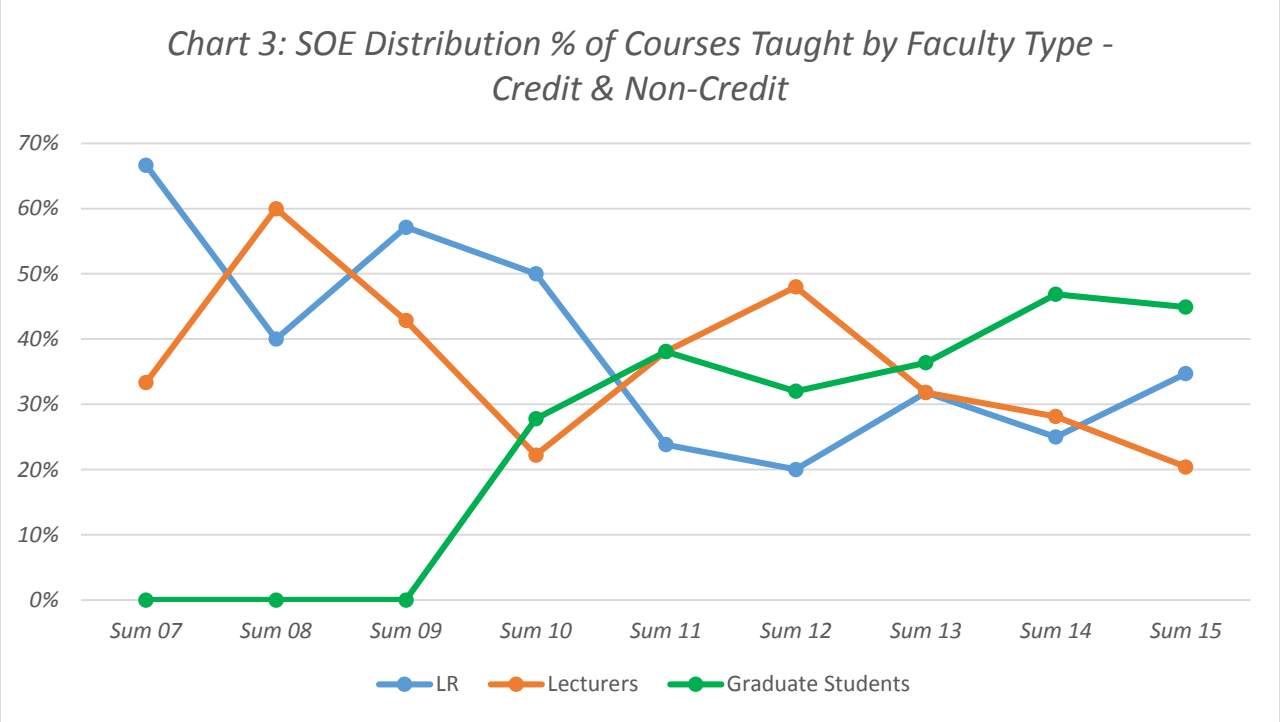
IRDS has prepared a series of graphs showing the faculty who have traditionally taught summer courses at UCM and the distribution of student credit hours (SCH) by school. UC Merced (UCM) officially began offering summer courses in 2006.

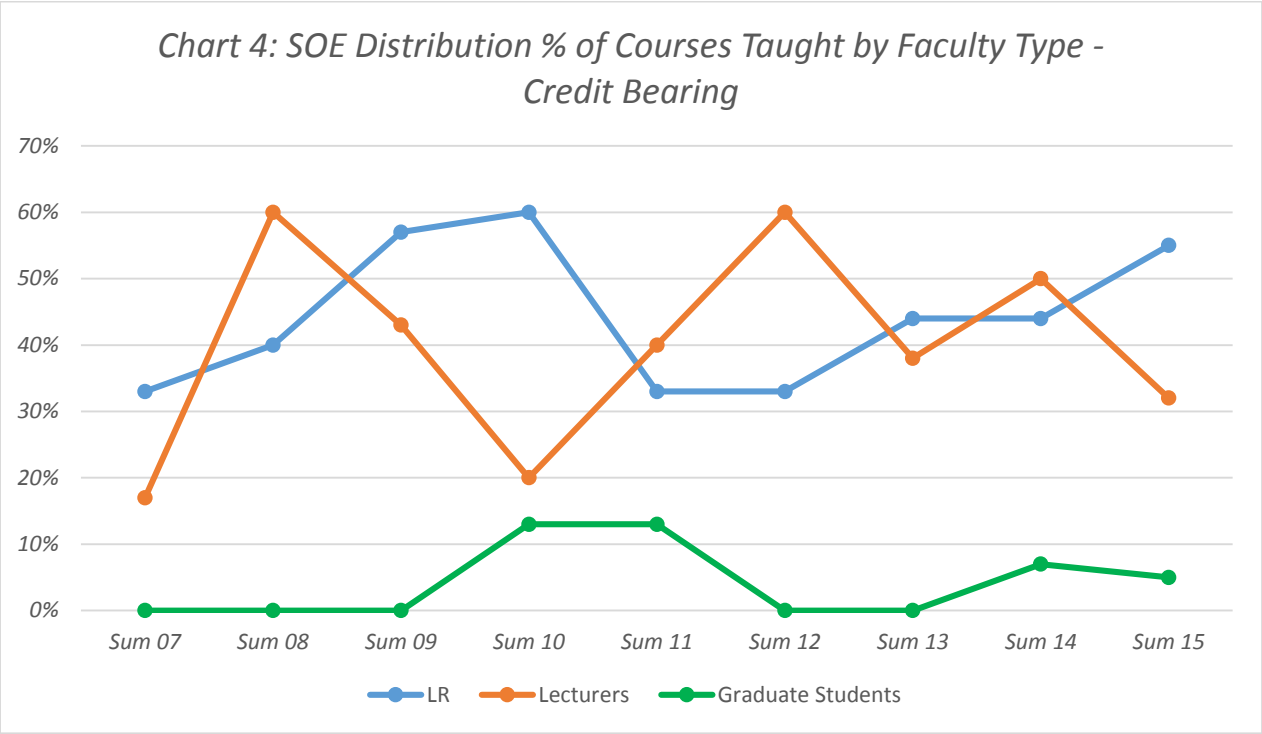
Chart 1 includes all courses, including non-credit bearing discussion sections. Lecturers have traditionally handled the bulk of teaching during summer. Beginning in summer 2010, graduate students begin to be assigned as the primary instructor to a large number of non-credit bearing discussion.



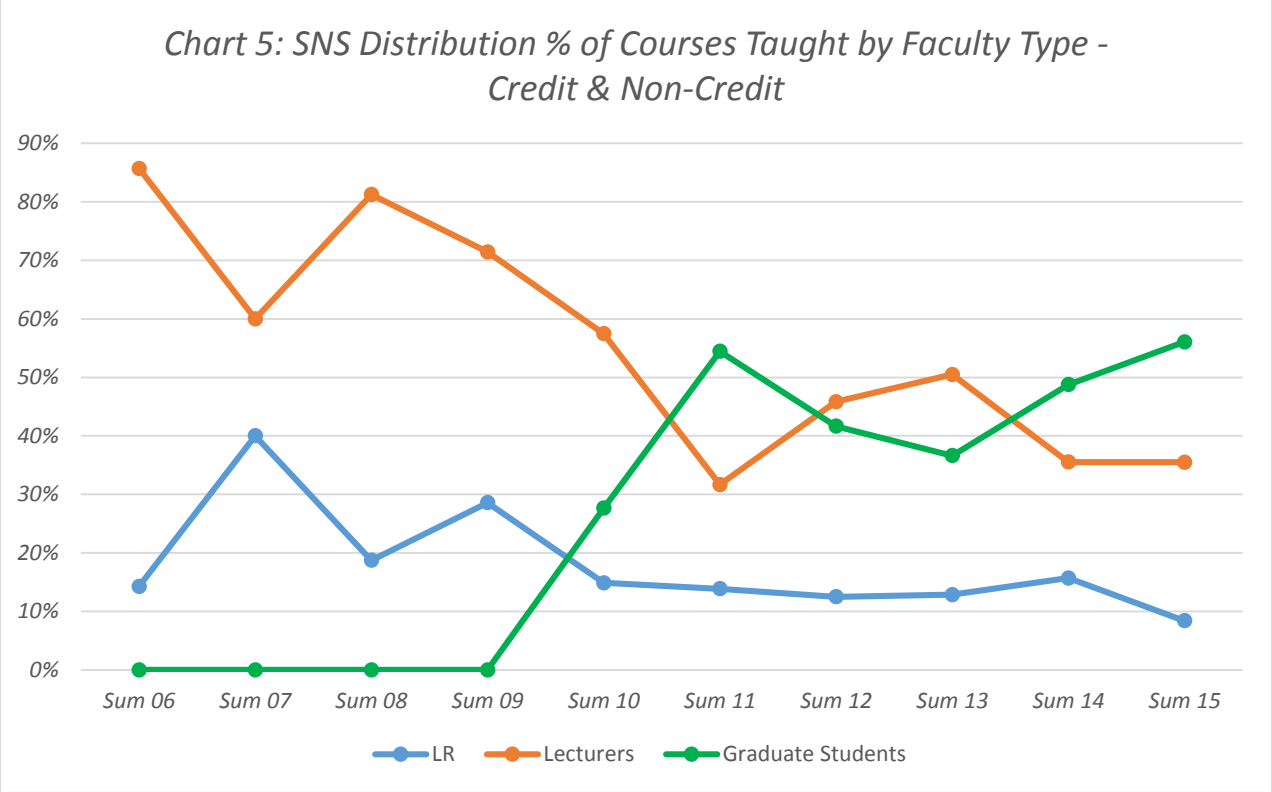


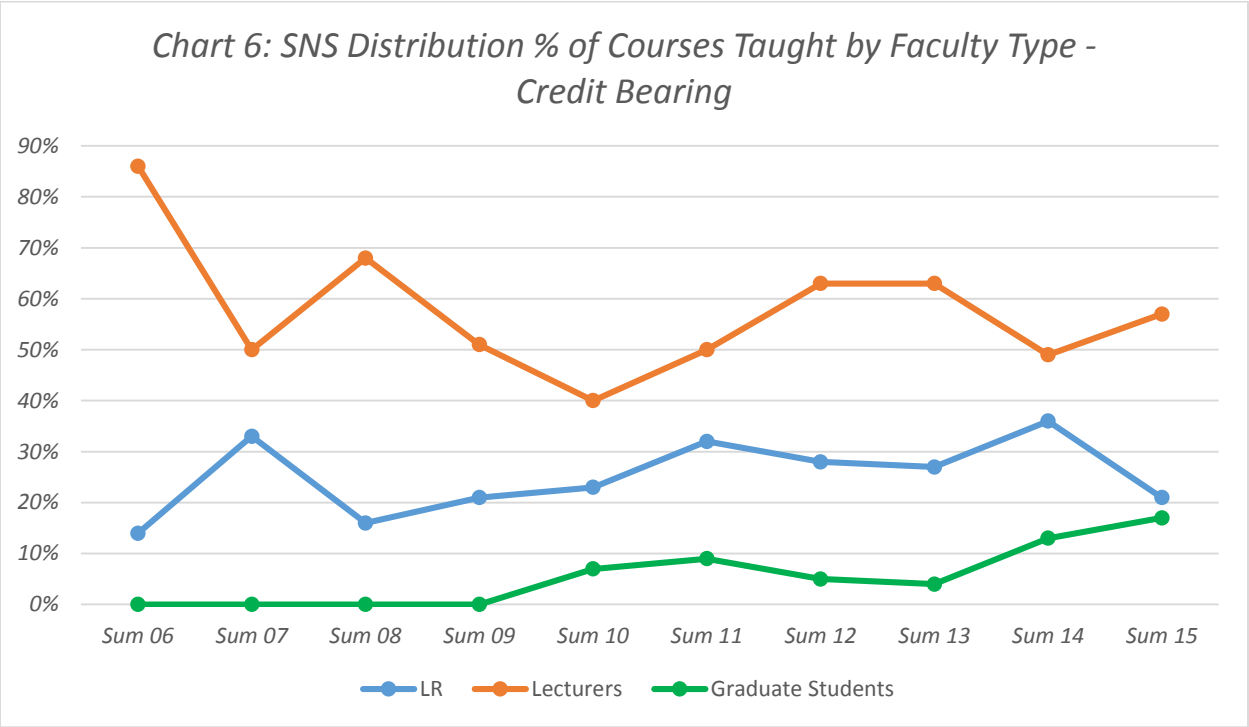
The following charts show the distribution of faculty type by courses offered by the schools. The SOE pattern matches Chart 1 and Chart 2 where graduate students begin taking on more of the teaching workload beginning in summer 2010 but primarily in non-credit bearing sections.



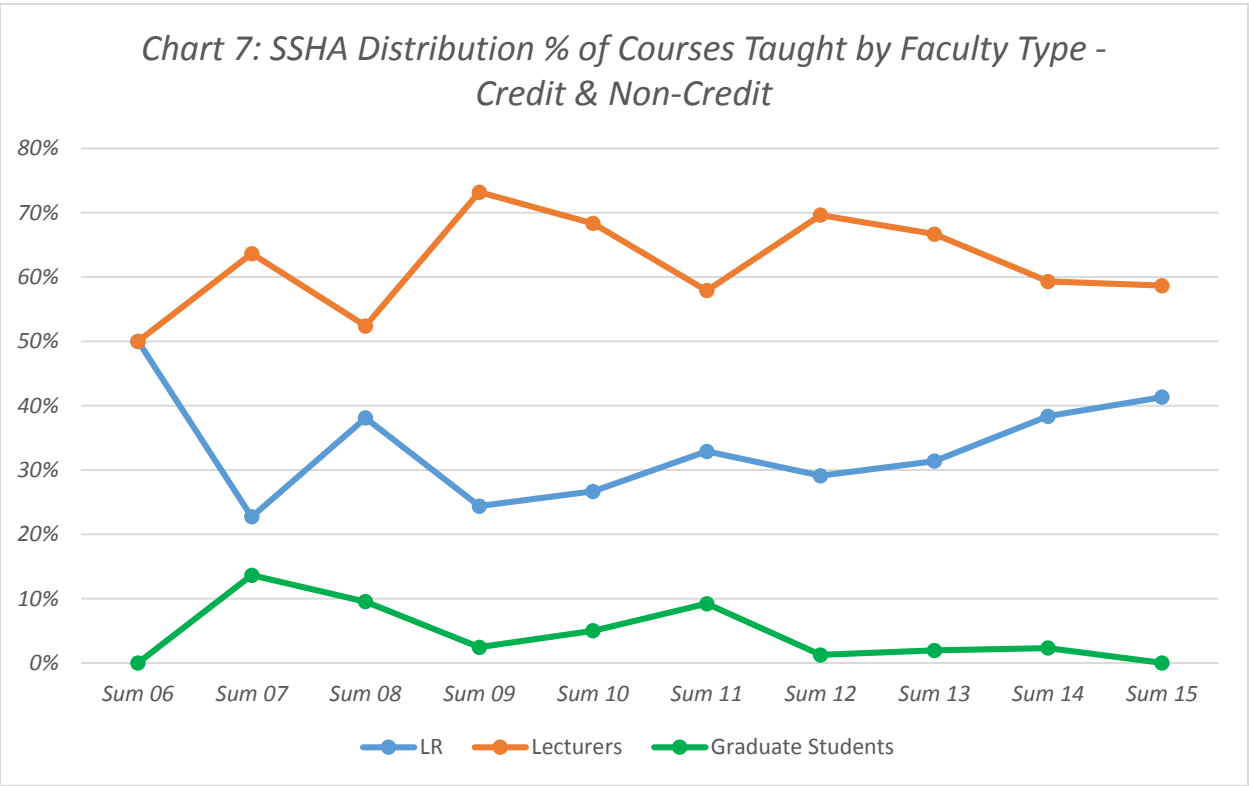


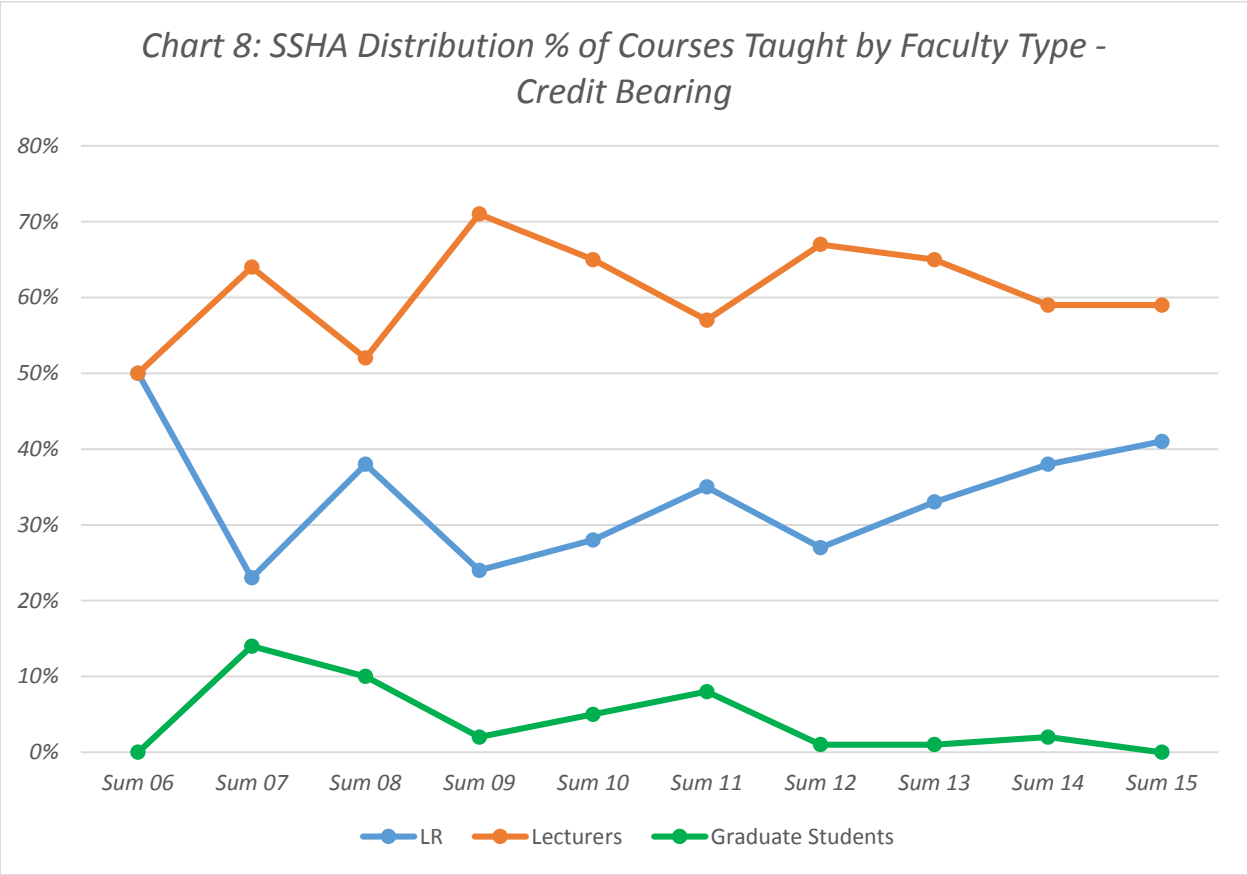
SNS also follows the pattern shown in Chart 1 and 2 where graduate students teach the highest percentage of courses offered by the school during summer but primarily are responsible for non-credit bearing discussion sections.





Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SSHA) have very few graduate students teaching in summer and therefore you do not see large differences between the faculty distribution for all courses and credit bearing courses.





STUDENT CREDIT HOURS

Summer enrollment peaked in 2012 and have since stayed in the 1700-1800 headcount range. IRDS looked at the student credit hours (SCH) for each school and found that SSHA credit hours show a large drop over this period while NS shows a slight decrease and SOE a slight increase. Part of the drop in SSHA SCH can be attributed to courses traditionally affiliated with SSHA (Writing, USTU and CORE) being moved to College 1.

Chart 9 shows SSHA SCH have been predominate beginning in summer 2009 term and by summer 2012, SSHA SCH was almost twice that of Natural Science. For the past 3 summer terms, SSHA SCH has fallen from just under 8,000 to 6,000, a 25% drop. During this same 3 year period, Natural Science SCH has stayed stable and Engineering SCH has been increasing.

Chart 10 shows the same data as Chart 9 except as a percentage distribution of summer term SCH by school. SSHA accounts for almost 50% of SCH.

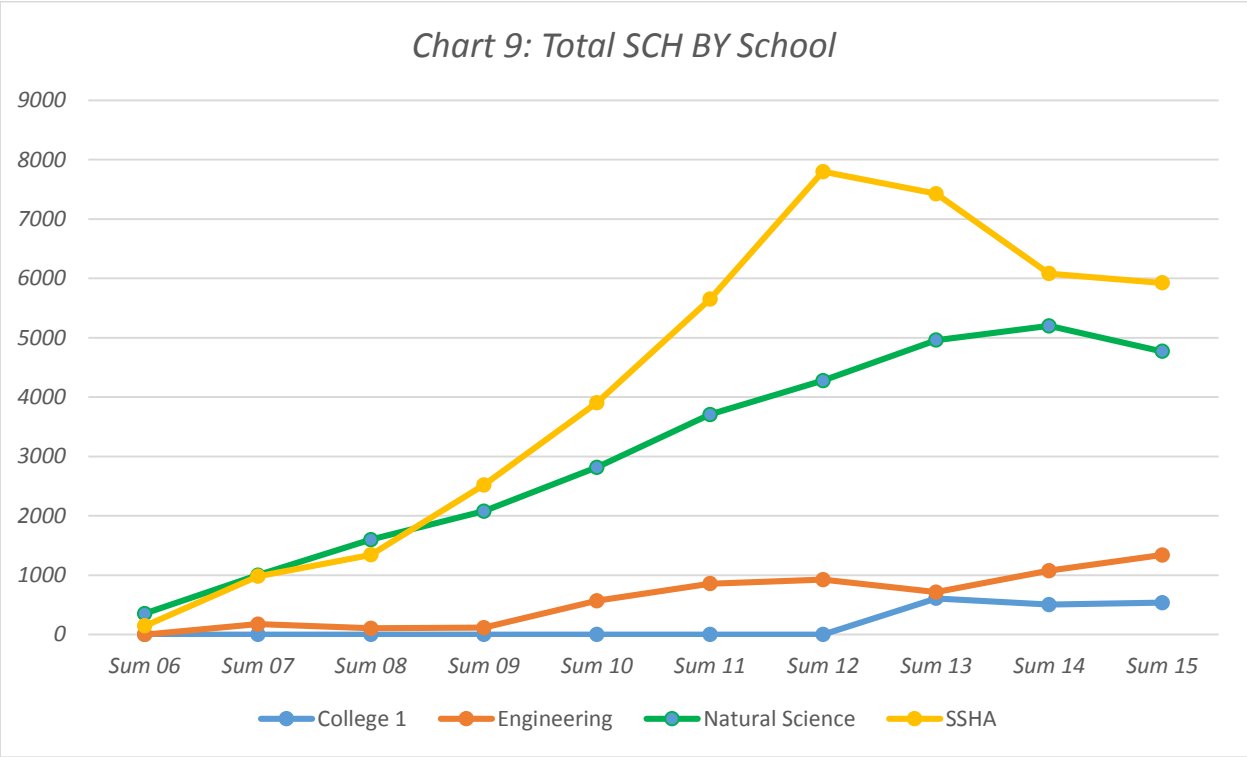


Chart 9: Total SCH BY School
9000
8000
7000
6000
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
Sum 06
Sum 07
Sum 08
Sum 09
Sum 10
Sum 11
Sum 12
Sum 13
Sum 14
Sum 15
College 1
Engineering
Natural Science
SSHA

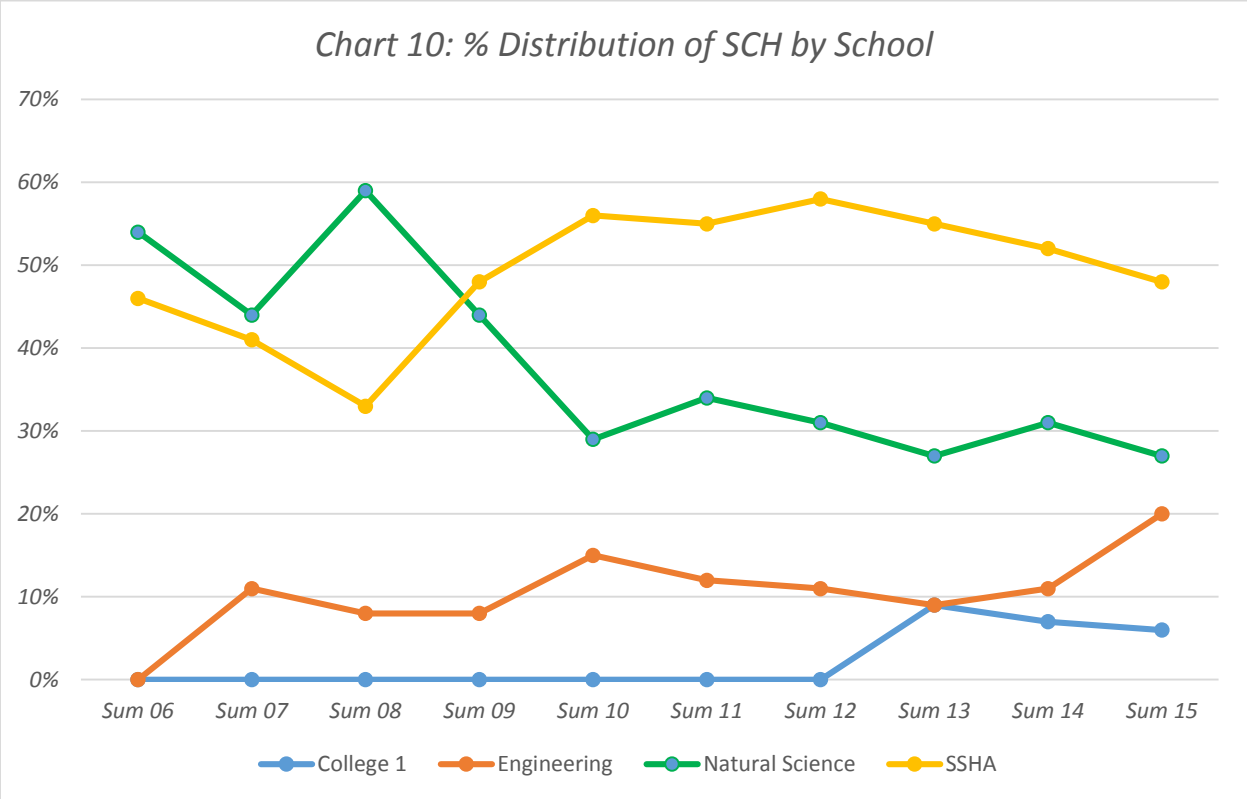
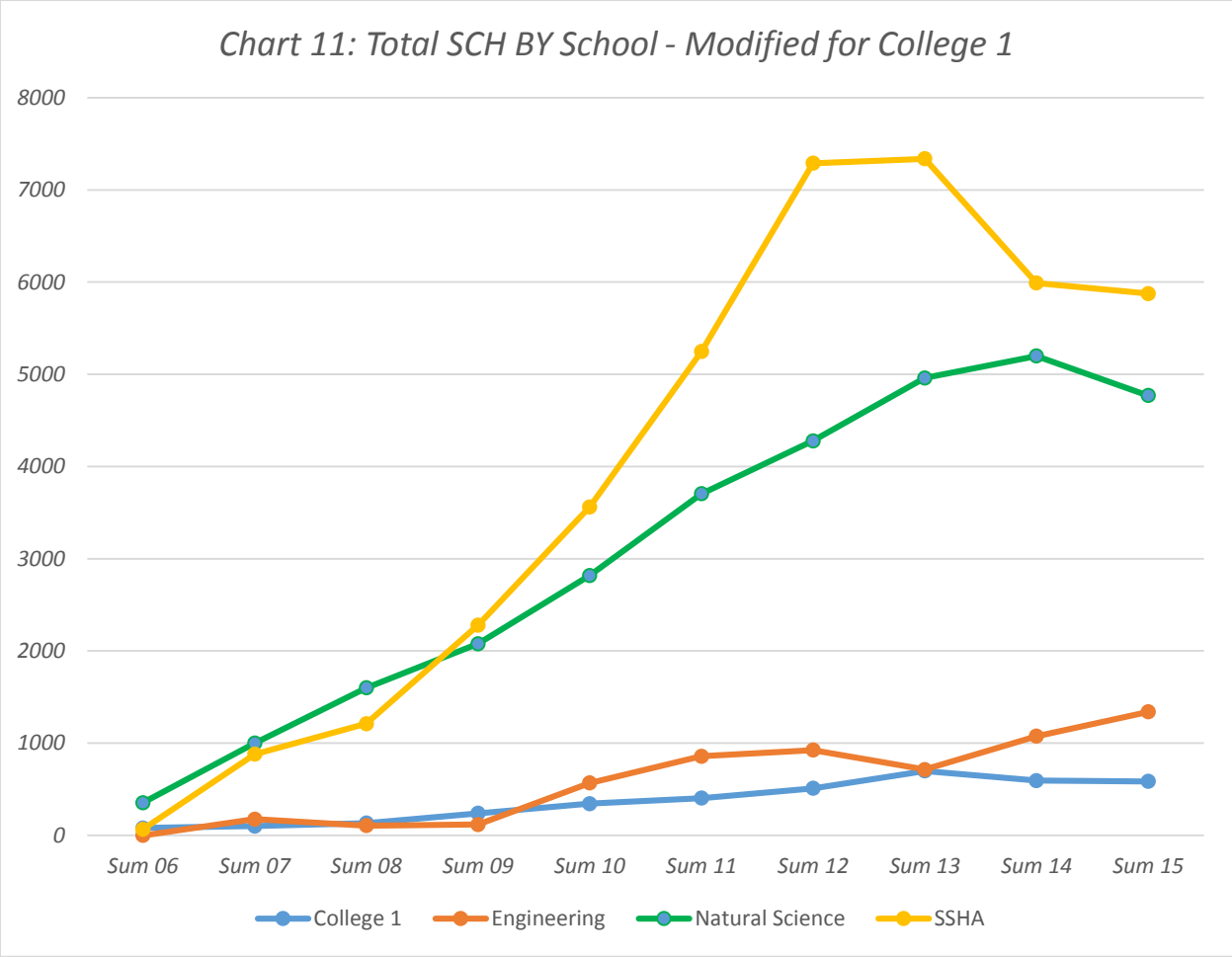


Chart 10: % Distribution of SCH by School
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Sum 06
Sum 07
Sum 08
Sum 09
Sum 10
Sum 11
Sum 12
Sum 13
Sum 14
Sum 15
College 1
Engineering
Natural Science
SSHA

Chart 11 shows SCH by school modified as if College 1 taught the courses instead of SSHA. SSHA SCH actually peaked in summer 2013 and then slid dramatically in summer 2014.



An analysis looking at SCH offered over the past 4 years show the growth and subsequent decline in SSHA SCH is driven largely by Psychology courses. Chart 12 shows that from summer 2012 to summer 2015, Psychology SCH declined from 3,323 to 2,475 (25%). Since Psychology is such a large component of summer SCH generated by SSHA (over 40% as shown in Chart 13), other programs are still too small to compensate for the difference. Note that only a few selected SSHA programs are shown in Charts 12 and 13 but totals and percentages include all SSHA programs.

Chart 14 shows some Psychology courses offered from summer 2012 through summer 2015 (Abnormal Child Psychology, Data Analysis, Introduction to Psychology and Clinical Psychology) which combined accounted for 1228 SCH in summer 2012 but only 444 SCH by summer 2015, a decrease of 64%. One course (Data Analysis) generated 440 SCH in summer 2012 but was not offered in summer 2015.

It is important to note that not all Psychology courses have been experiencing decreases in SCH and this analysis does not include other factors such as faculty availability or student demand for courses.

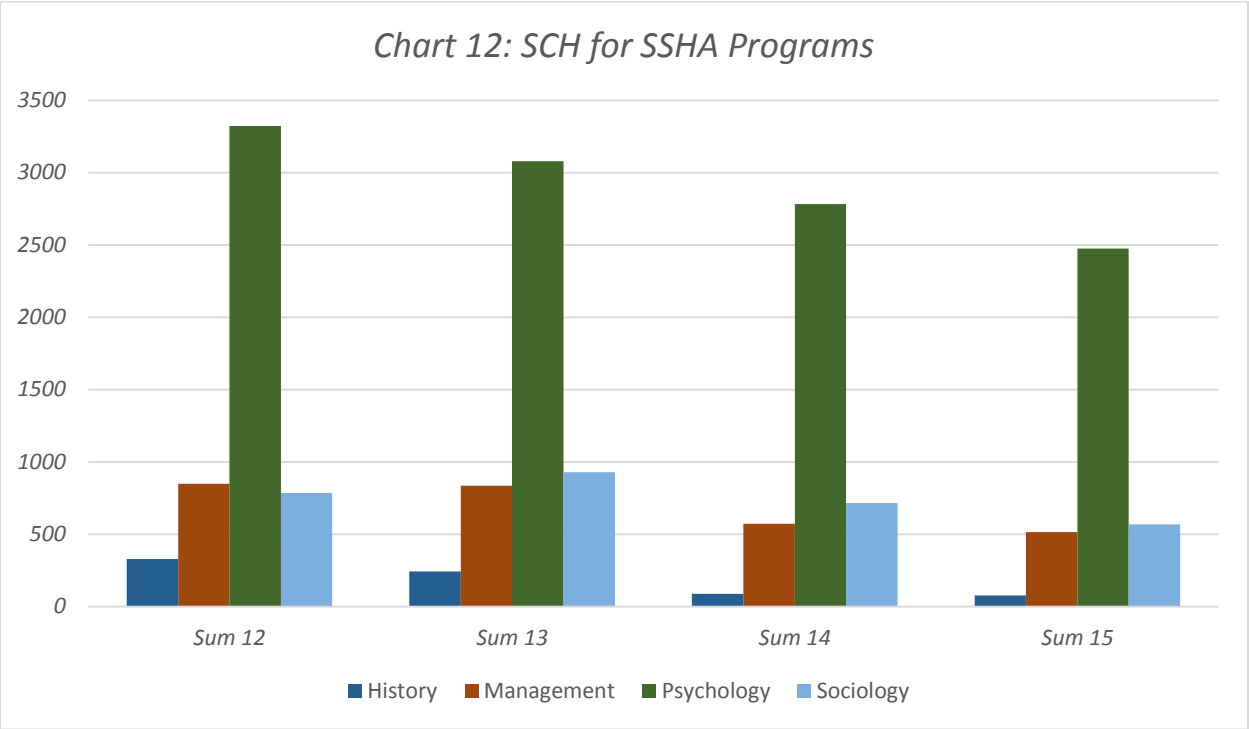


Chart 12: SCH for SSHA Programs
3500
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
Sum 12
Sum 13
Sum 14
Sum 15
History
Management
Psychology
Sociology

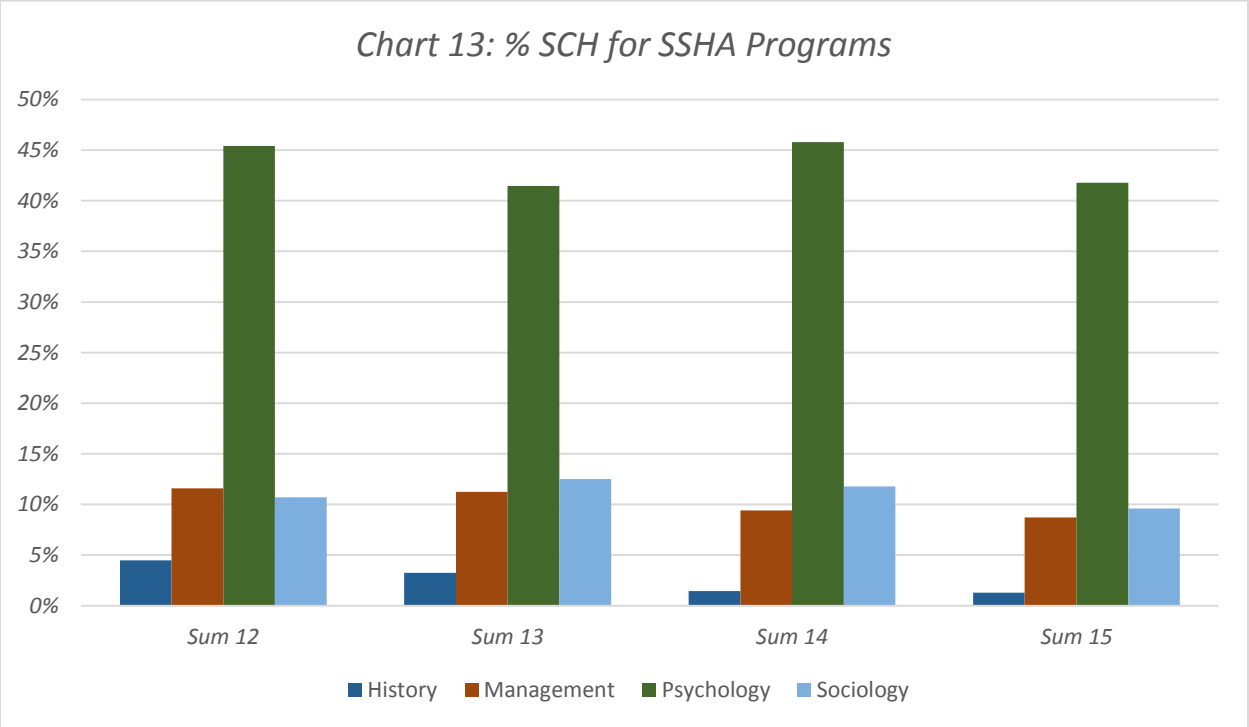
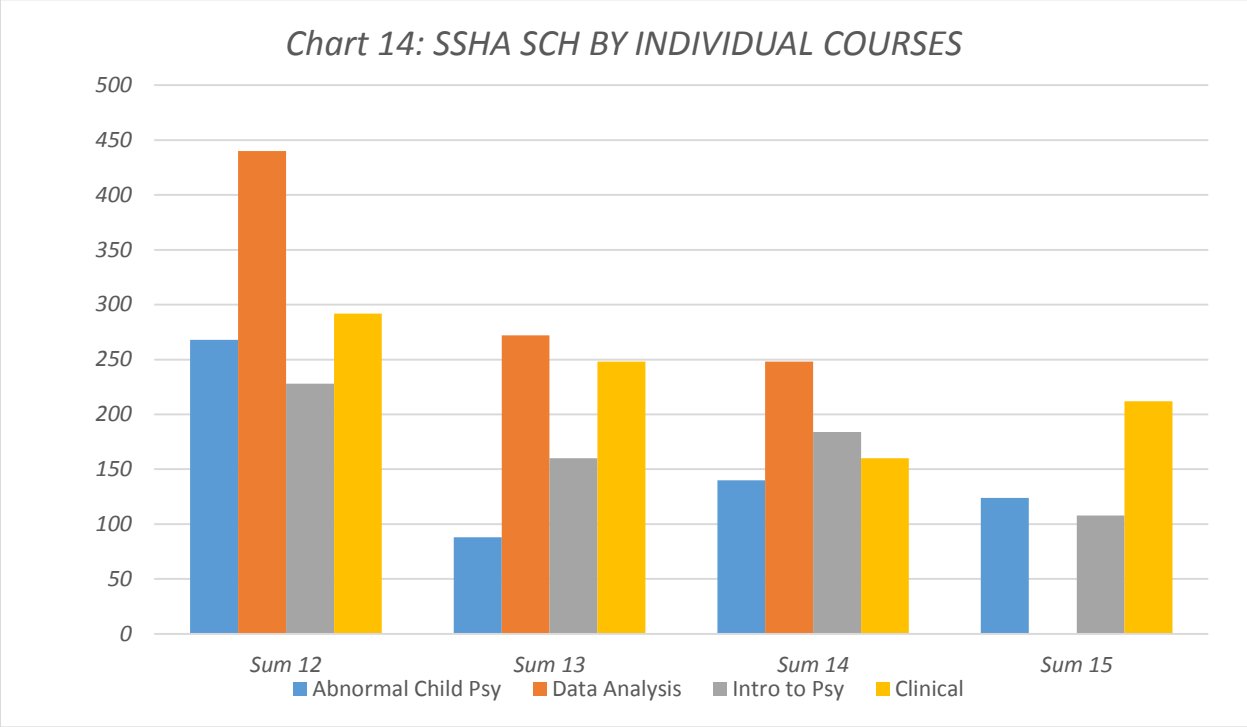


Chart 13: % SCH for SSHA Programs
50%
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
Sum 12
Sum 13
Sum 14
Sum 15
History
Management
Psychology
Sociology



NEXT STEPS

This is an initial step on looking at how summer session has been structured historically as UCM begins to plan for future growth. Other questions that need to be explored include:

1. What factors influence which courses will be offered during summer?
2. Are courses offered meeting student demand?
3. How do colleges who offer 3-year degrees use summer term as part of their process?
4. Can summer be used to lower student cost of education and increase graduation rates?