



# NASPAA ANNUAL ACCREDITATION DATA REPORT

2011-2012

# Introduction

This is the second annual accreditation data report to be released by NASPAA, *The Global Standard for Public Service*. The report that follows details the state of accredited programs in public service education. With many years of experience, NASPAA works to ensure excellence in public affairs, public policy, and public administration education, along with other directly related degrees. NASPAA focuses accreditation efforts on masters-level education and training for public service and seeks to promote the ideal of public service, while expanding its efforts to improve the quality of education in the field throughout the world.

As part of the accreditation process, Master of Public Administration (MPA), Master of Public Policy (MPP), and related public service degree programs are monitored on the [NASPAA 2009 Standards](#). The report provides analysis that reflects the programs' fulfillment of these standards. In support of transparency and accountability in public service education, NASPAA requires each accredited program to "provide appropriate and current information about its mission, policies, practices and accomplishments, to inform decisions by its stakeholders, such as prospective and current students, faculty, employers of current students and graduates, university administrators, alumni and accrediting agencies."

This year's report presents data on the faculty, admissions and enrollment processes, employment of graduates, and more. The report presents some of the main challenges programs face as they transition to NASPAA's 2009 Standards, as well as an overview of the standards on which programs are monitored, as a measure of cross-program challenges. This analysis also includes the programs that have already transitioned to the 2009 Standards, allowing a better look at the transition process and the challenges that it poses.

The report does not include data from programs that have membership in NASPAA but are neither accredited nor seeking accreditation, as the data is pulled from the accreditation maintenance reports, required of accredited programs annually. NASPAA's data center is working on collecting comparable data from non-accredited programs, which will be available for future analyses. Using data from both types of programs would not only increase the pool of data, but allow NASPAA to compare accredited and non-accredited programs and discuss the impact of accreditation.

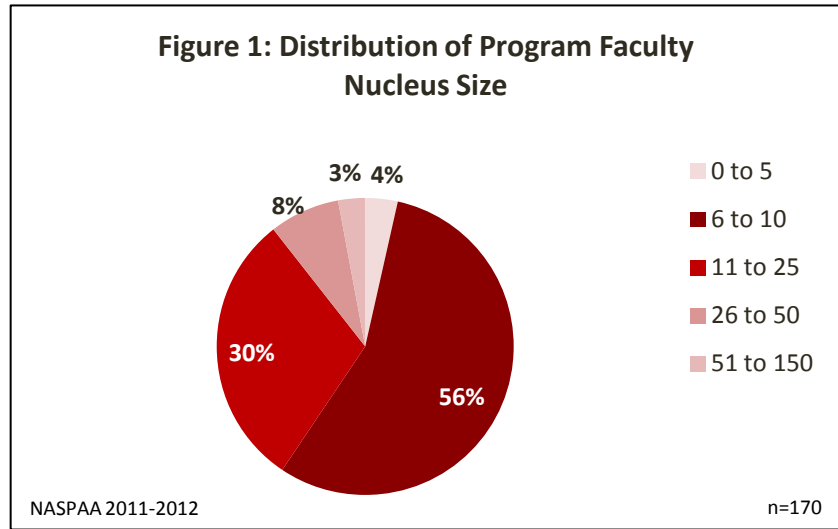
Finally, this second report builds on the 2010-2011 Annual Accreditation Data Report. As NASPAA continues to publish this report annually, it will be able to better understand multi-year trends and obtain further insights regarding the future of public service education.

# Faculty

NASPAA seeks to ensure that programs have adequate administrative capacity to support their mission, goals, and objectives. Therefore, NASPAA asks programs to report the number of faculty in the nucleus. NASPAA defines faculty nucleus as those who “accept primary responsibility for the professional graduate program and exercise substantial determining influence for the governance and implementation of the program.” In addition, NASPAA also collects data detailing the productivity and involvement of all faculty members.

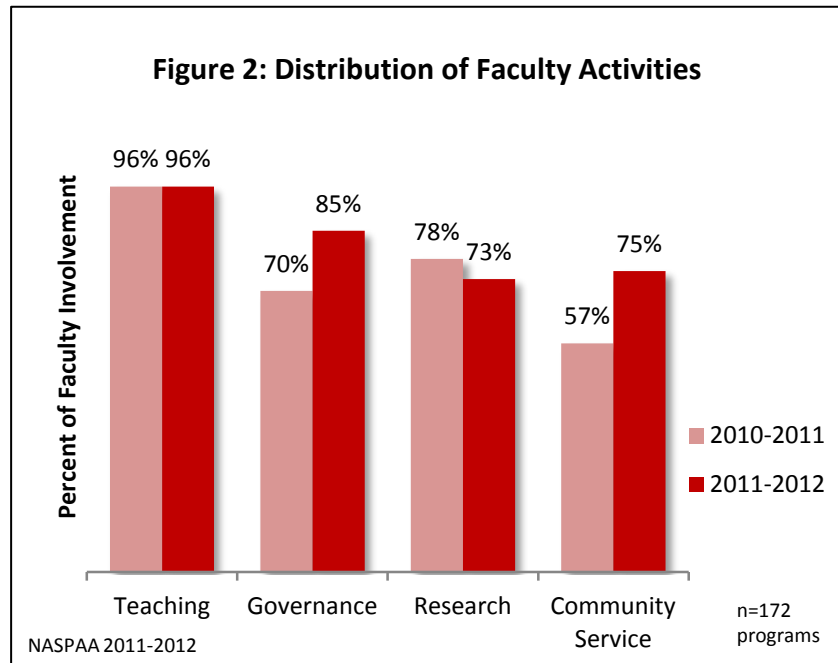
## Size of Faculty Nucleus

Figure 1 presents data from 170 programs and reveals that the majority of programs have 10 or fewer nucleus faculty members. 85 percent of the programs have 25 or fewer faculty members. The average program faculty nucleus size is 13 and the median is 8.



## Faculty Activities

Faculty members often assume multiple roles within their programs. These roles commonly include a combination of teaching, governance, research in areas related to public affairs, and community service. Figure 2 represents the distribution of these activities. Teaching is the most common activity, with an average participation rate of 96 percent among faculty members. On average, 85 percent of faculty are active in the governance of the program, 73 percent conduct research, and 75 percent participate in community service.



Community service is broadly defined, encompassing a range of activities to support the local public, college, university community, and/or public service profession. Some examples include policy analysis, program evaluation, training of public managers, and program management. Many faculty members make broader contributions through media appearances or by guiding public discourse in areas such as organizing emergency response efforts or improving public financial management. These activities involve the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

It is likely that the trends in faculty activities reflect a better understanding of the different activities' definitions rather than actual changes in kinds of involvement. For instance, as programs better understand the definition of "governance" the data present a more accurate estimation of the average involvement in governance (85%), helping NASPAA gain a clearer perspective of the distribution of faculty activities. While the trends in different activities are interesting, this is only the second year that NASPAA has published the report and over time, NASPAA will be able to have a better understanding of systematic changes.

### Required and Total Course Offerings Taught by Full- and Part-time Faculty

In addition to the composition and activities of the faculty nucleus, the distribution of teaching responsibilities between full-time and part-time faculty is an indicator of administrative capacity. Programs were asked to provide the percentage of courses delivering required competencies, and all courses, that are taught by full- and part-time faculty. Table 1 provides the average percentages reported.

	2010-2011	2011-2012
<b>Core Courses</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>All Courses</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>74</b>

## Students

With regard to students, NASPAA is interested in how recruitment, admissions, and student services are consistent with the program's mission. NASPAA expects programs to be accountable to their students and stakeholders and that the recruitment and service processes should be equitable, diverse, and participatory.

### Admissions and New Enrollment

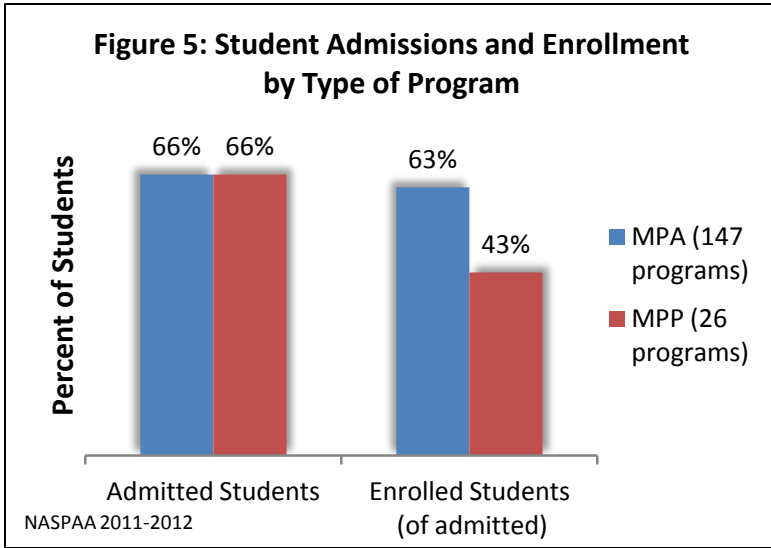
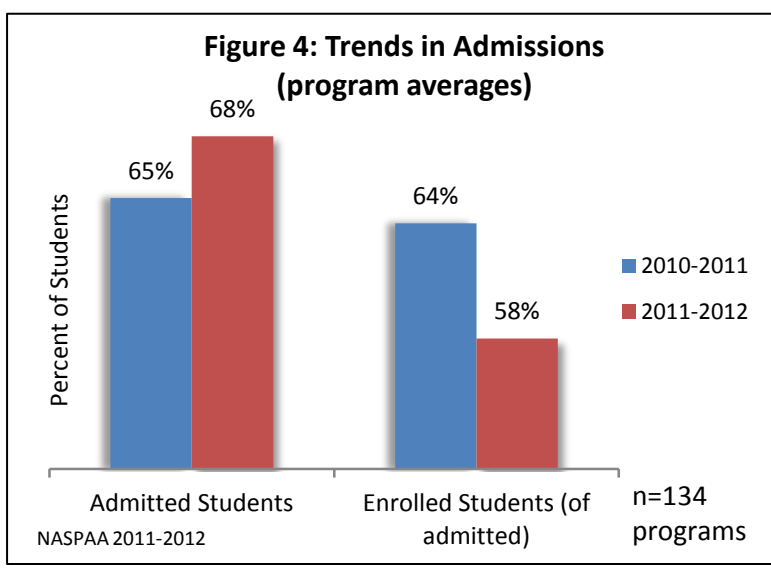
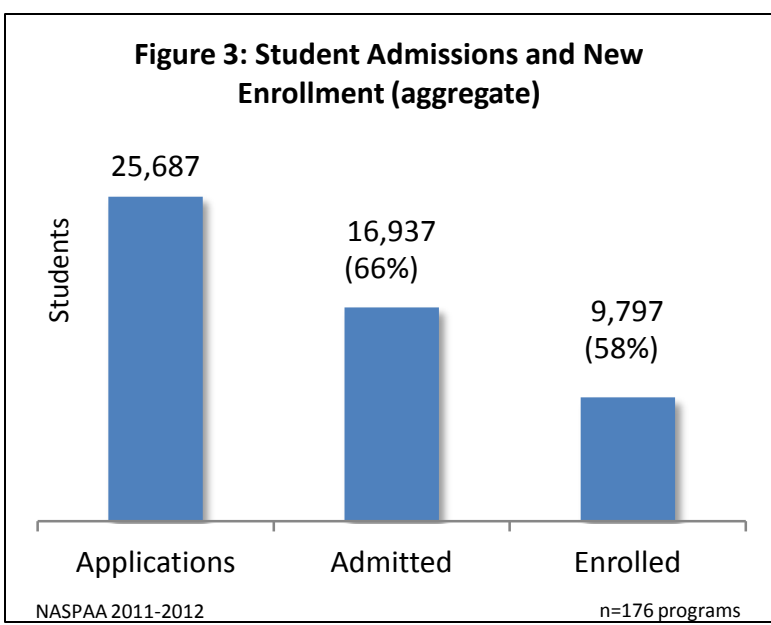
This section provides information on applications, admissions, and enrollment of students in public service degree programs. Programs that are NASPAA accredited or were in the process of accreditation enrolled 9,797 new students in Fall 2011.

As an indication of overall student demand, NASPAA programs received 25,687 applications for enrollment in academic year 2011-2012. Figure 3 shows that 66 percent of applications were admitted and 58 percent of admitted students enrolled. It is likely that some students applied to multiple programs and therefore the true "yield" is unknown.

In addition, the enrollment statistic could be downward biased, as some of the most prestigious MPA and MPP programs are not accredited. Therefore, some students who were admitted to accredited programs might have eventually enrolled in programs unaccounted for in NASPAA data. While the graph displays the aggregate data, the average program admission rate was 73 percent, and the median, 72 percent. Both the average and median enrollment rates of new students were 69 percent.

Figure 4 presents trends in enrollment and changes from the 2010-2011 report. For this chart data was included from the 134 programs that submitted full data in both 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. For this group of programs, while the admission rate increased from 65 to 68 percent, the enrollment yield rate decreased, from 64 to 58 percent.

Figure 5 compares the admissions and enrollment rates between MPA and MPP programs,\* observing differences across programs both in admission and enrollment rates. However, it is important to take into account the fact that NASPAA accredits a relatively low number of MPP programs, yielding a small sample. It remains to be seen whether MPP students apply to and enroll in more competitive, unaccredited programs, dropping the overall enrollment rate.



\*For this analysis, NASPAA compared Master of Public Policy and Master of Public Affairs Programs (referred to as MPP) with master of Public Administration and Master of Public Management programs (referred to as MPA). For the full list of programs included, see the Appendix.

## Graduation

Figure 6 presents the overall graduation rates of NASPAA accredited programs. This figure examines how many students graduated within the program-defined time-to-degree length. To conform with NASPAA Standards, programs report the self-defined length of the degree, thus the specific degree length varies by programs. As such, this measurement emphasizes accountability to the goals set by each program. Since reporting graduation rates is required only for programs that are accredited under the 2009 Standards, a lower number of programs (95) submitted these data.

23 percent of students did not graduate within 200 percent of the defined degree length; NASPAA does not collect information regarding the exact status of these students (continued enrollment, exited the program, etc.). However, given that programs define their own time-to-degree, NASPAA would be interested in taking a closer look at this issue as well as examining the possibility to collect more information from the programs to increase the comparability of this statistic.

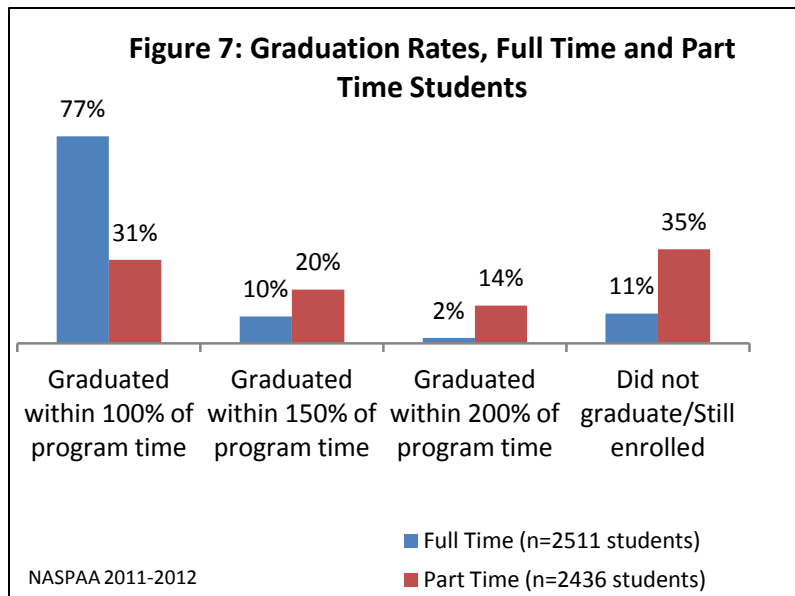
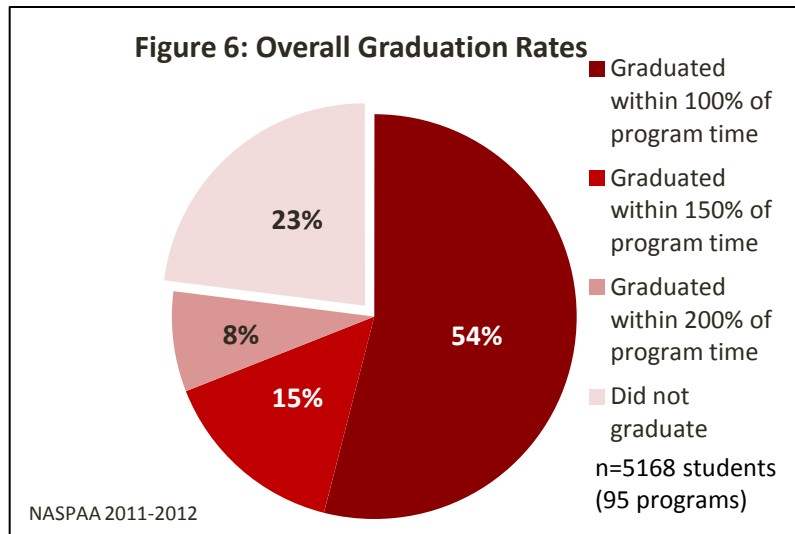


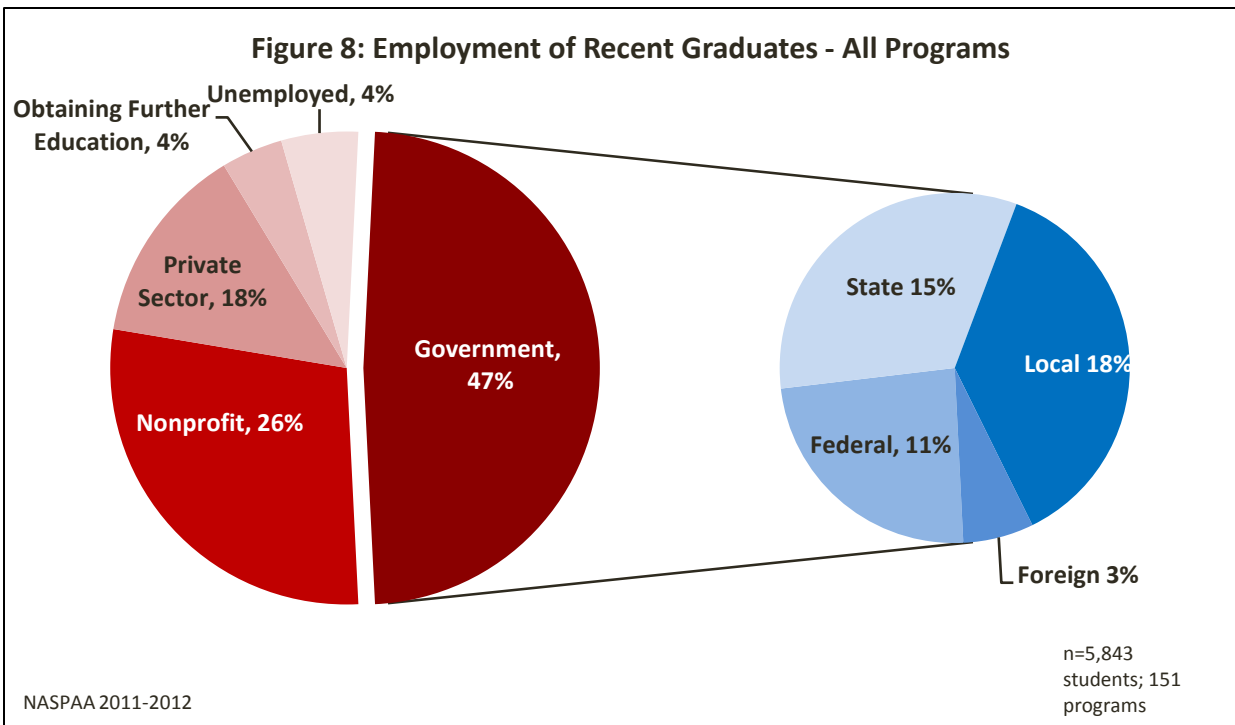
Figure 7 displays graduation rates controlling for full-time and part-time students. This chart shows that overall graduation rates are primarily driven by part-time students. Only 11 percent of full-time students did not graduate within 200 percent; however, 35 percent of part-time students failed to graduate within the same time period. The variability in the program design length when applied to part-time students may bias the graduation rates of part-time students. Applying the full-time time-to-degree length to part-time students could unfairly preclude complete graduation data for those cohorts (assuming for some programs part-time students take less than one-half the credits of full-time students per semester). Considering these data, NASPAA plans to further examine program graduation rates for full-time and part-time students. (Note: The difference in total n for Figures 6 & 7 is due to the 221 students info was provided on that were not designated as FT or PT).

# Graduates

## Employment of Graduates

A principal interest for prospective students in public service education – and a useful student learning outcome for program decision-making – is employment following graduation. Public administration and policy degrees make graduates marketable and productive not only in government, but also in the nonprofit and private sectors.

Figure 8 provides a breakdown of graduate employment by sector and subsector six months after graduation, for students who graduated in Spring 2011. Government employment status is disaggregated by the following categories: federal government, state government, local government, and foreign government, which includes international, quasi-governmental organizations.



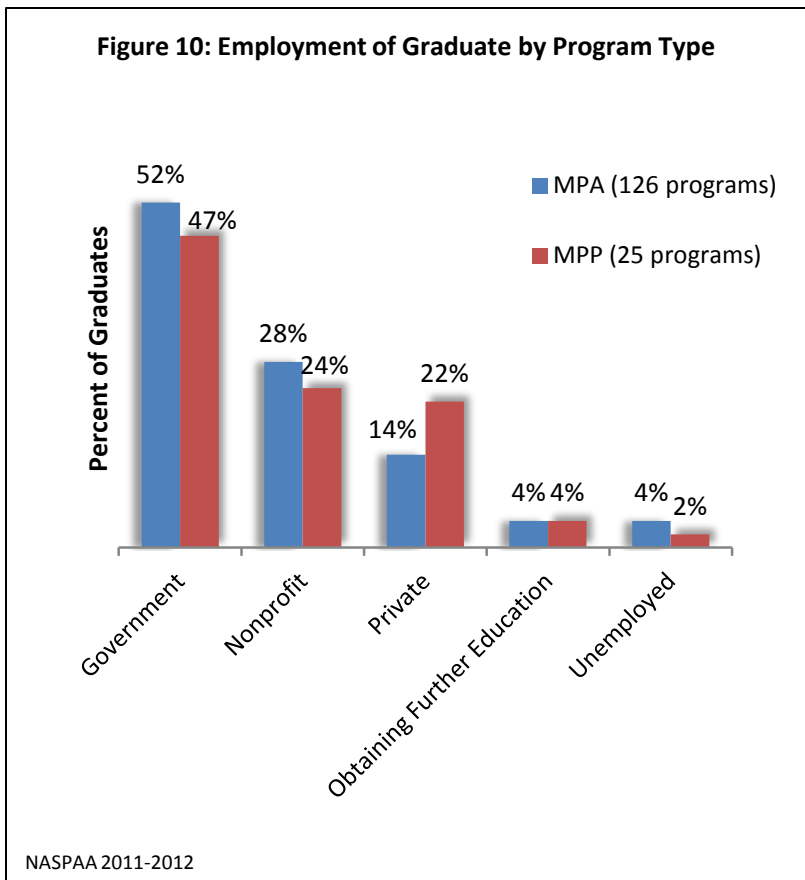
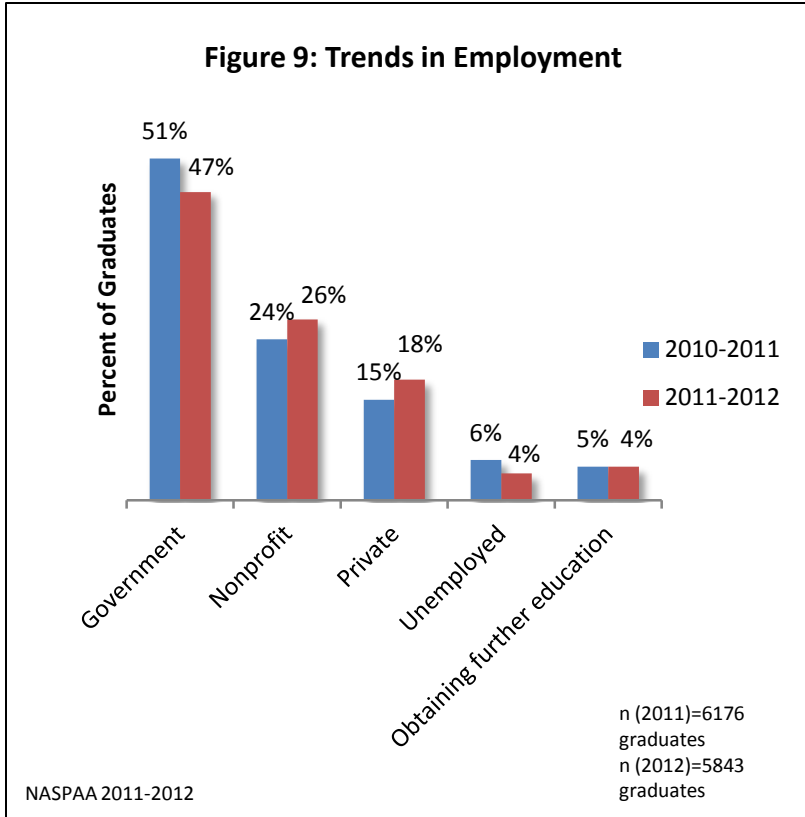
Most graduates (47%) are employed by the government, with 44 percent of graduates employed either in the nonprofit or the private sectors. According to the data reported to NASPAA, 38 percent of those employed in the private sector are conducting research or consulting, and thus are still likely to be affiliated with public service. 80 percent of those employed in the nonprofit sector work for domestically-oriented organizations, the remainder employed by internationally-oriented organizations.

The employment results are based on self-reported data from 7,271 graduates of 151 accredited programs, totaling 80 percent of all graduates. There are 1428 reported unknown cases (i.e. recent graduates for whom programs could not obtain data). This is a large improvement from the 69 percent reporting rate in 2010-2011.

Figure 9 compares the data with the findings from 2010-2011. The overall unemployment rate decreased between report years; yet, employment in various government agencies declined 5 percentage points, indicating that students in the current report year were more likely to be employed in the private or nonprofit sectors. Please note that unemployment data provided by NASPAA are not categorized in accordance with unemployment as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS). NASPAA data include graduates actively seeking employment and those voluntarily out of the workforce for travel, volunteer work, family, or other reasons, potentially causing the unemployment rate to appear higher than the true value with respect to USBLS definition. As programs are not required to provide a breakdown of causes of unemployment, these data are unavailable.

It is also important to consider that as the 2010-2011 cohort had 31 percent missing data and the current cohort has 19 percent, the results could be slightly biased.

Figure 10 shows employment by program type. While the graduates in both MPA and MPP programs are similarly employed, MPA students have higher employment rates in the government and the nonprofit sector, while MPP students have higher rates of employment in the private sector and are more likely to obtain further education.

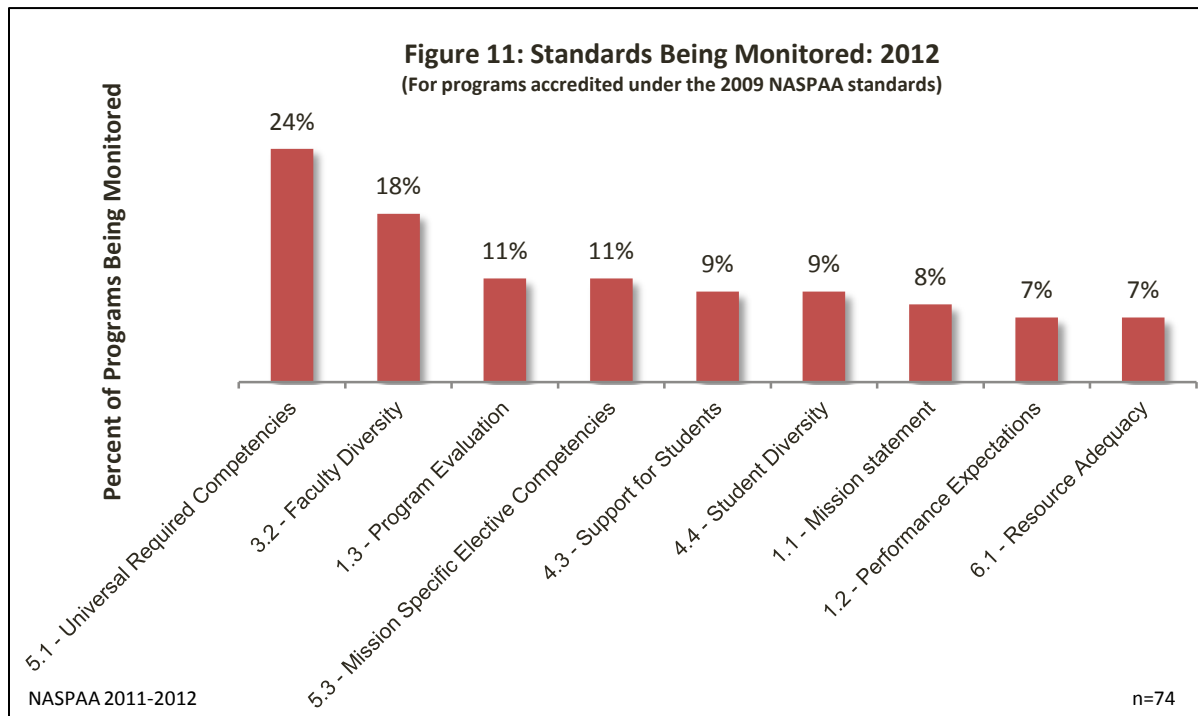




# Standards Being Monitored

As this is the second iteration of NASPAA's Annual Accreditation Data Report, the data afford a deeper look into the implementation of the 2009 Standards. Many programs found in overall conformity with the NASPAA Standards are accredited subject to annual monitoring provisions. These requirements are noted in the Commission's decision letter to programs successfully completing the accreditation process. Programs are often monitored on specific standards when the Commission deems that a program is in overall conformance, yet needs improvement in a specific area, or the Commission wishes to follow the implementation of a new practice. All programs are expected to respond to monitoring provisions each year in the annual accreditation maintenance report, or until the program is notified that those provisions have been formally removed by COPRA.

This section highlights the standards that are most commonly monitored by COPRA to identify challenges across programs. Data consist of the monitoring provisions from the 74 programs that have successfully transitioned to the 2009 Standards.



**Standard 5.1 - Universal Required Competencies:** 24 percent of programs are being monitored under this standard. Standard 5.1 measures a program's adoption of a set of universal required competencies related to its mission and public service values. The required competencies include five domains: "the ability

- To lead and manage in public governance;
- To participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- To articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry."

While the pre-2009 standards focused primarily on the existence of a curriculum, under the 2009 Standards, programs are asked to develop a set of measurements that are consistent with the program’s mission, ensuring accountability to its stated mission and goals.

COPRA looks at different factors when determining whether to monitor this standard. For each domain COPRA considers if the program has defined the domain and linked the competency to its mission, gathered evidence of student learning outcomes, analyzed this evidence, and ultimately used the evidence to guide programmatic changes and improvements. Only after examining each program’s full cycle of assessment, does COPRA pass judgment on program conformance.

Implementing the 2009 Standards is a long process, one that poses significant adaptations and modifications for the programs. The vast majority of NASPAA accredited programs have not yet completed full implementation of this standard – a complete assessment cycle for each universal competency. Programs are still developing strategies for gathering and analyzing data regarding student learning, prompting COPRA to allow for a transition period as programs make progress toward full conformance.

In 2012, one in every four programs that has been accredited under the 2009 Standards is being monitored on Standard 5.1. This is a result of the complicated transition to outcomes-based accreditation. The challenges in implementing this standard are common among all programs and most programs have received comments from COPRA corresponding to different stages of implementation. Considering the drastic change that Standard 5.1 has presented, 24 percent is a relatively low portion of the programs.

**Standard 3.2-Faculty Diversity:** Standard 3.2 states that “the program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment and retention of faculty members.”

This standard does not measure the specific diversity within the faculty, but rather the measures that are being taken in order to achieve, encourage, and maintain it. 18 percent of programs are being monitored on this standard, indicating COPRA believes that there are stronger measures available to help programs promote diversity within their faculty.

Given that almost one-fifth of the programs are monitored on this standard, it is important to note that even under the pre-2009 standards, faculty diversity was a common challenge. Under the prior diversity standard, NASPAA monitored approximately 12-36 percent of programs on faculty diversity, in the years leading up to the 2009 revisions.

Besides faculty diversity, no other faculty standards (Standard 3) are commonly being monitored by COPRA. As COPRA gave special emphasis to the implementation of the faculty standards in the 2011-2012 Cohort, it is commendable that programs were largely successful in articulating conformance.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, this second report builds on the observations and comparisons of data across NASPAA's accredited programs introduced in the 2010-2011 report. The report grants programs the ability to look at their special characteristics in a comparative manner. By having this data distributed, NASPAA and its stakeholders are able to identify strengths and challenges facing public service education.

While a small percentage of NASPAA-accredited programs are significantly larger than the average program, in terms of faculty size and student population, most programs are relatively similar to one another. Considering employment, most graduates across all programs are employed in fields related to public administration, whether it's in the public, private, or the nonprofit sectors.

The report presents three main challenges facing NASPAA and its member programs:

1. Implementing Standard 5.1 and developing a systematic set of competencies that ensure program accountability;
2. Taking stronger measures to promote diversity within faculties; and
3. Addressing concerns regarding low graduation rates, especially for part-time students.

Although the 2011-2012 report elaborates on different trends, the 2012-2013 report (to be released in 2014) will allow for a better time-dimensional perspective. It is NASPAA's goal to improve the accuracy of the data that are delivered by the programs and to increase the number of programs – accredited or not – in the overall data pool.

COPRA's specific emphases are bound to change over time. To ensure that schools are adapting to the changing reality of public service and administration, COPRA will continue to develop the implementation requirements of the 2009 Standards and seek to make the review process more sophisticated and responsive. Different standards – for example Standard 5.3, mission-specific elective competencies – that are not emphasized today, could receive more weight in the future.

As NASPAA expands internationally and accredits programs abroad, it will gain the ability to provide a globally-minded comparison of public service education. The increasing inclusion of non-U.S. programs in the data will facilitate a deeper understanding of the global context of public service education and bring to light the trends, challenges, opportunities, and practices that face public administrators around the world.

# Appendix

## Figures 1 and 2: Faculty

List of programs and raw data: [Download Excel sheet](#)

## Table 1: Faculty

List of programs and raw data: [Download Excel Sheet](#)

## Figure 3: Admissions

List of programs and raw data: [Download Excel Sheet](#)

## Figure 4: Trends in Admissions

The n was modified such that only programs that submitted data for both 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 reports were used for this analysis. List of the programs and raw data: [Download Excel Sheet](#)

This table provides data without controlling for n. Presented are the averages in admissions and enrollment for 154 programs in 2010-2011 and 176 programs in 2011-2012:

	Percent of Applications Admitted	Percent of Enrolled Students (of admitted)
2010-2011 (154 programs)	72%	70%
2011-2012 (176 programs)	73%	68%

## Figure 5: Admissions by Program Types

For this analysis, NASPAA compared Mater of Public Policy and Master of Public Affairs programs (referring to them as MPP) with Master of Public Administration and Master of Public Management programs (referring to them as MPA). [Download the complete list of the programs on Excel sheet](#)

## Figures 6 and 7: Graduation

List of programs and raw data: [Download Excel Sheet](#)

## Figures 8, 9 and 10: Employment

List of programs and raw data: [Download Excel Sheet](#)

**Figure 10:** For the difference between means of employment NASPAA preformed a standard differences in means test and the z score is 8.72. For Obtaining Further Education the z is 6.58. Both are Statistically significant in a 99% confidence level.

## Figure 11: Standards Being Monitored

List of programs and raw data: [Download Excel Sheet](#)