

Majors in Political Science, 2008 – 2013

Summary: In our [previous report](#), we reported growth in departments of all types between AY 2000-01 and AY 2010-11. Here, we add data from AY 2012-13, which suggests that political science departments are maintaining a constant range of reported majors in the short term while also indicating long-term growth in the total number of political science majors. Figures from AY 2012-13 are universally higher than those from AY 2008-09, but with the exception of private MA-granting programs, these are slightly lower than the figures reported for AY 2010-11.

This trend is consistent with the number of degrees conferred in political science, as shown in data from the National Center for Education Statistics from 1949 to 2011. Over the last sixty years, the number degrees conferred in political science surpassed those of three other major social science fields (History, Economics, and Sociology). The number of degrees conferred in political science sustained long-term growth, recovering when large dips occurred (such as those in 1974-75 and 1993-94), giving us reason to believe that this trend will continue, even if the number of political science majors may have hit a plateau in the short-term.

Seats Filled: We also asked department chairs to indicate an approximate range of seats filled (enrollment) in political science courses in 2012-13. As with the data on number of majors, there have been slight contractions in seats filled among programs, most particularly among MA- and BA-granting programs, and some slight growth among PhD-granting programs. While at this time programs appear to be maintaining approximately the same numbers as in 2010-11, we will be observing these trends in the future in the case that this indicates a longer-term trend in political science programs.

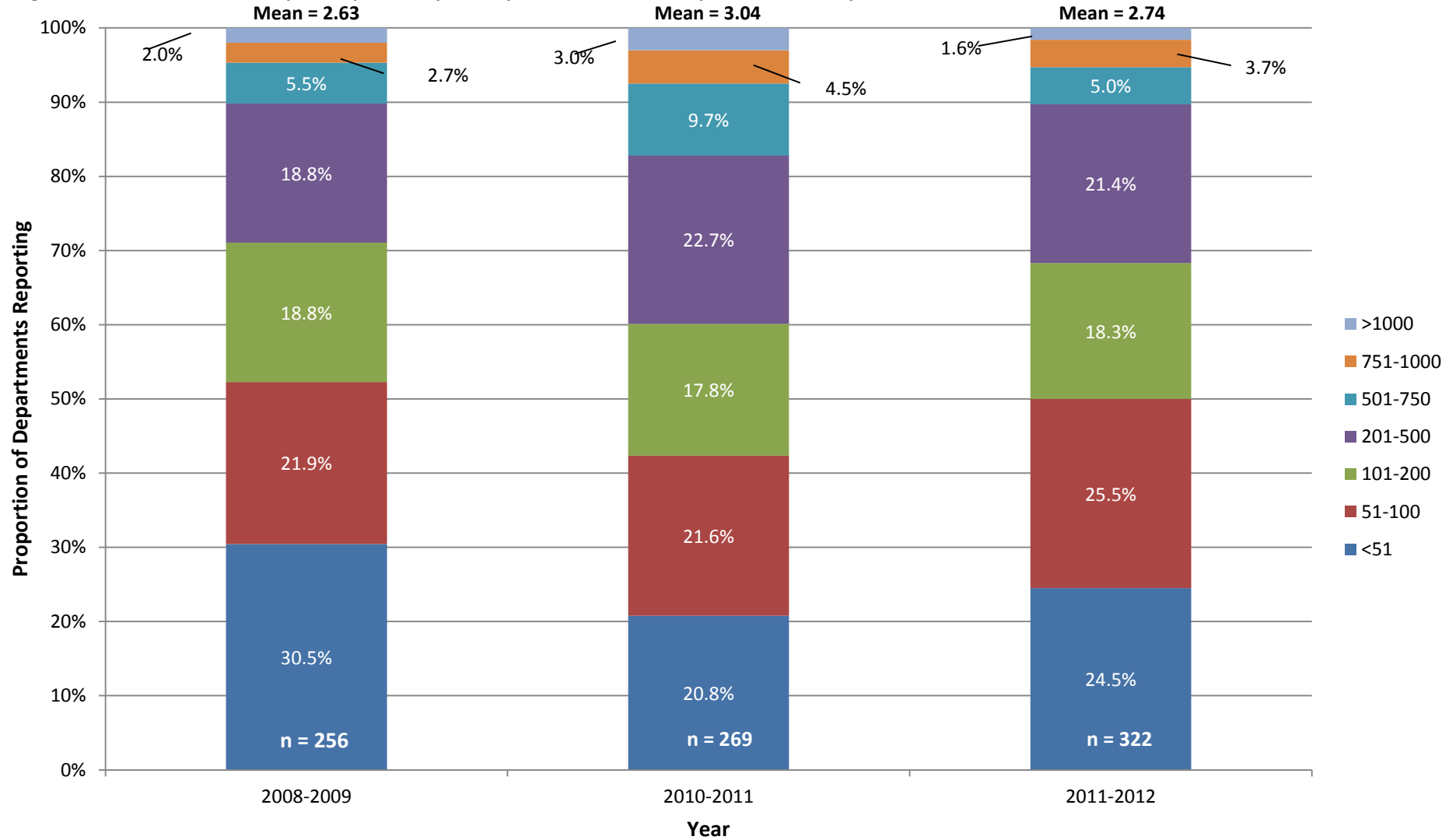
Demographics: We collected data on the demographic breakdown of minority groups among political science majors. Smaller programs report smaller proportions of minority groups among their majors and larger programs reporting larger proportions. These data are limited, as shown by the notably large proportion of programs who indicated 'Don't Know'.

About the Data: The 2012-13 APSA Departmental Survey was administered to 1224 departments of political science and public administration at 4-year colleges and universities in the United States. The response rate was 30% (n = 368) for all programs. Departments offering a PhD as the highest degree had a 57.3% (n = 75) response rate; departments offering an MA as the highest degree had a 35.6% (n = 58) response rate; departments of political science offering a BA as the highest degree had a 34.9% (n = 171) response rate; and, combined or social science departments offering a BA as the highest degree had a 15.7% (n = 69) response rate. The 2008-09 and 2010-11 APSA Departmental Surveys were reported on in the 2012 report [Political Science Majors: 2000-01, 2008-09, and 2010-11](#). Details of survey administration and response rates may be found in that document.

Sources: APSA Departmental Survey, 2008-09, 2010-11, 2012-13; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Earned Degrees Conferred, 1949-50 through 1963-64; Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred" surveys, 1965-66 through 1985-86; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:87-99); and IPEDS Fall 2000 through Fall 2011, Completions component.

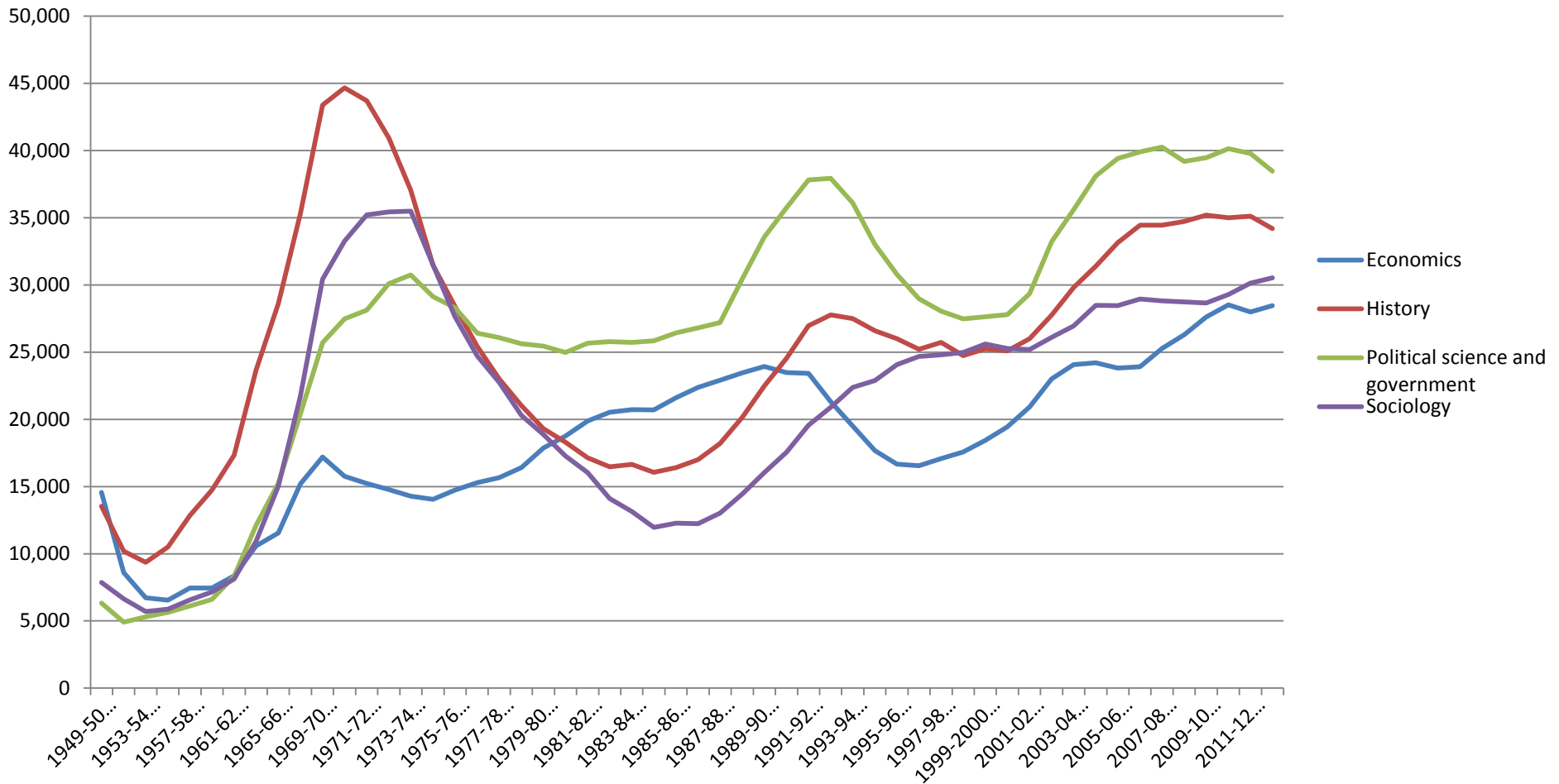
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Figure 1. Political Science Majors Reported by All Departments (APSA Department Survey)



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Figure 2. Undergraduate Degrees Conferred* in Economics, History, Political Science and Government, and Sociology, 1949 - 2013

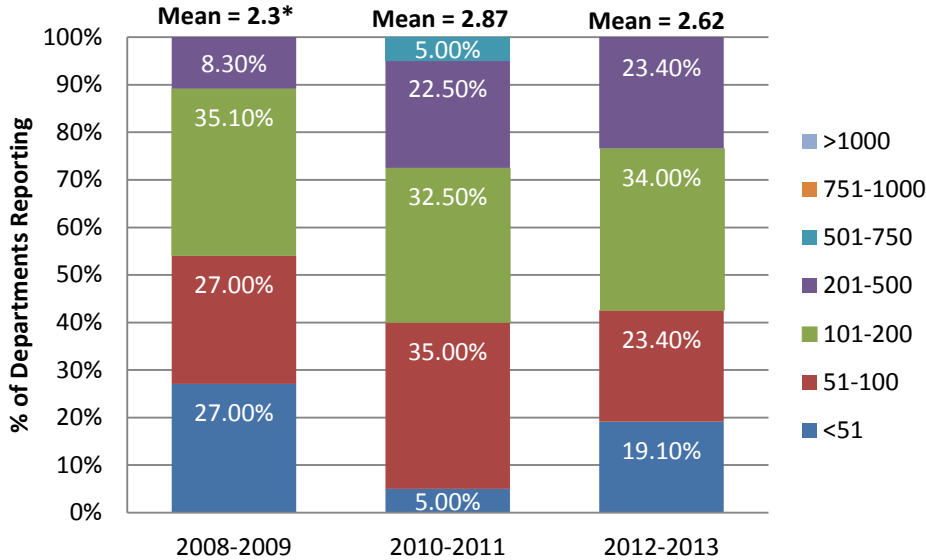


*Compare to majors reported in APSA Departmental Survey

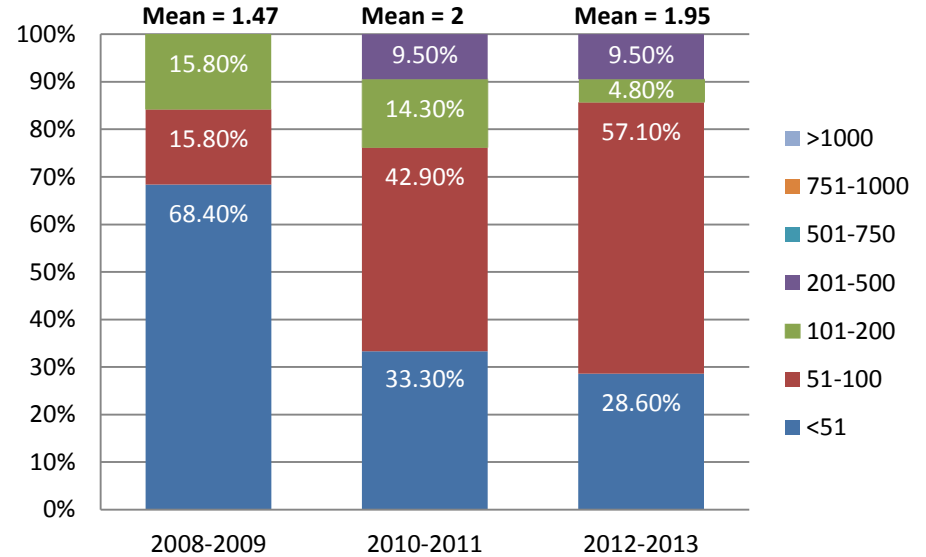
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Earned Degrees Conferred, 1949-50 through 1963-64; Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred" surveys, 1965-66 through 1985-86; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:87-99); and IPEDS Fall 2000 through Fall 2013, Completions component. Graph by APSA Research & Development.

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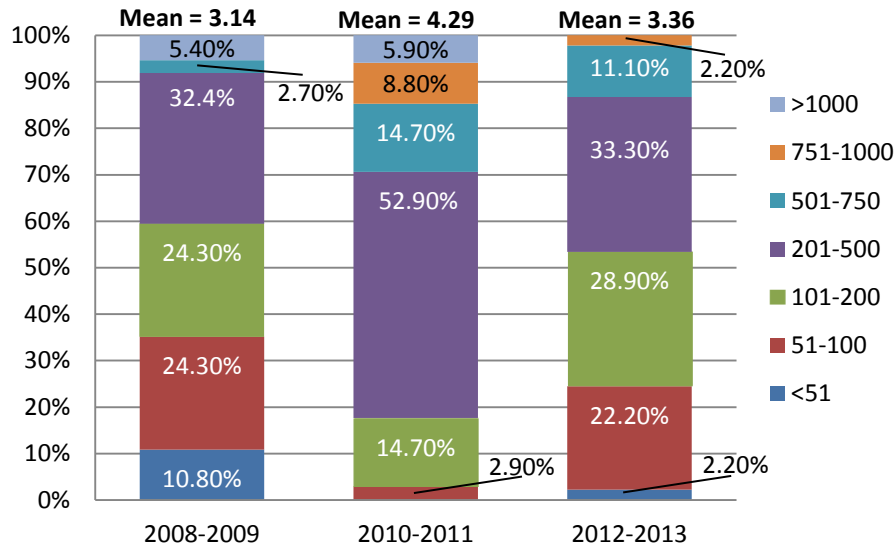
Fig. 3.1. Political Science Majors Reported by Public BA Programs



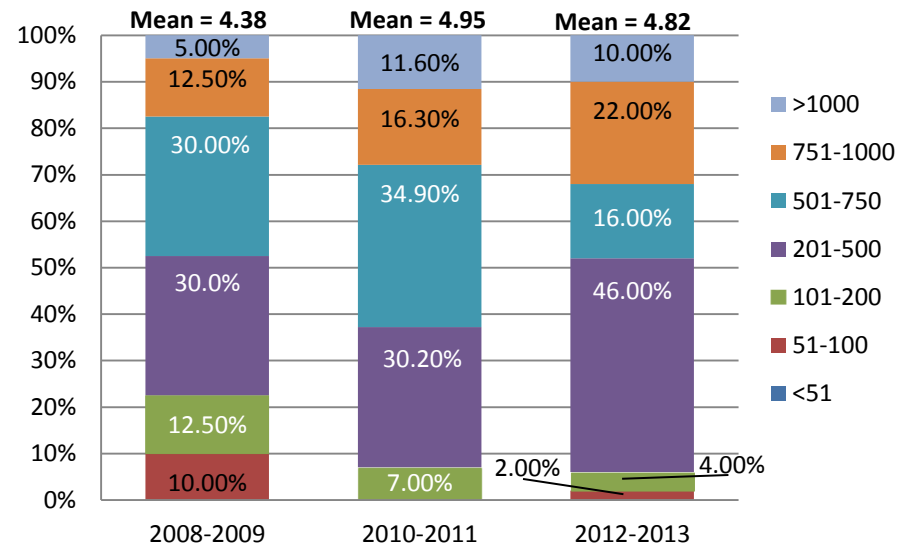
3.2. Poli. Sci. Majors Reported by Public Combined BA Programs



3.3. Political Science Majors Reported by Public MA Programs



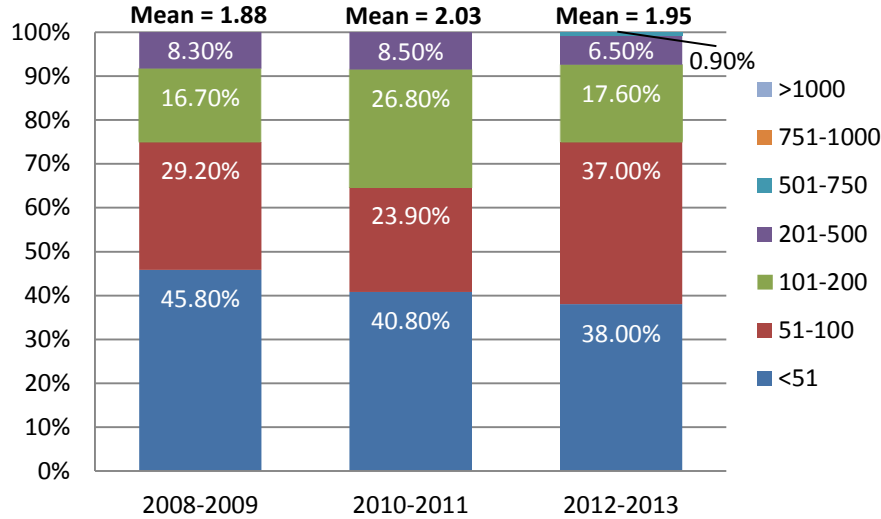
3.4. Political Science Majors Reported by Public PhD Programs



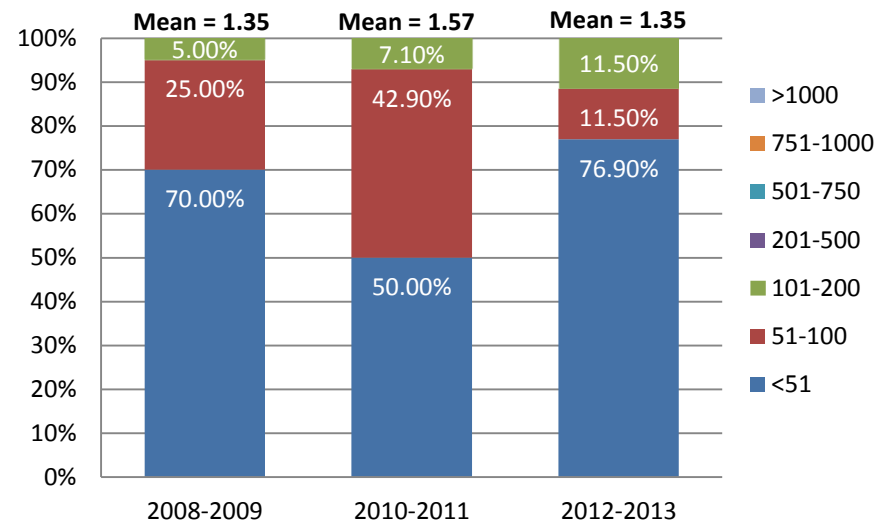
*Programs combining Political Sciences with other disciplines (i.e., Social Science departments)

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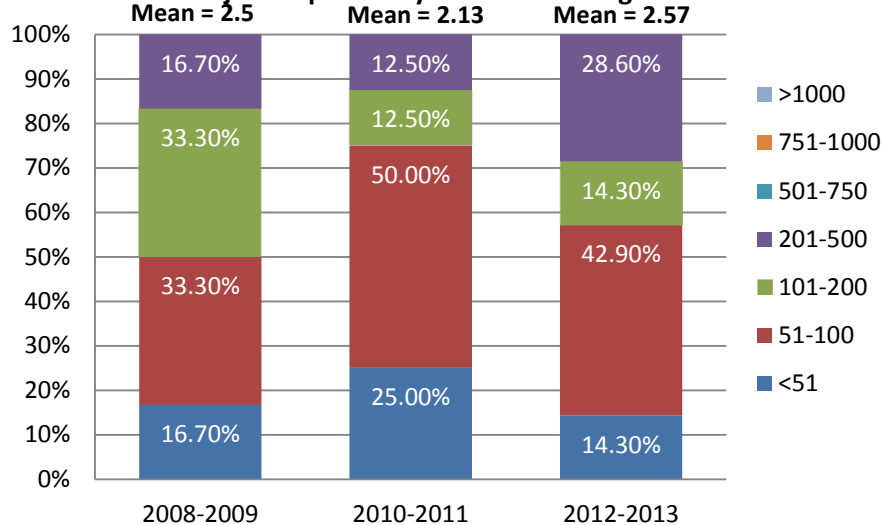
Figure 4.1. Political Science Majors Reported by Private BA Programs



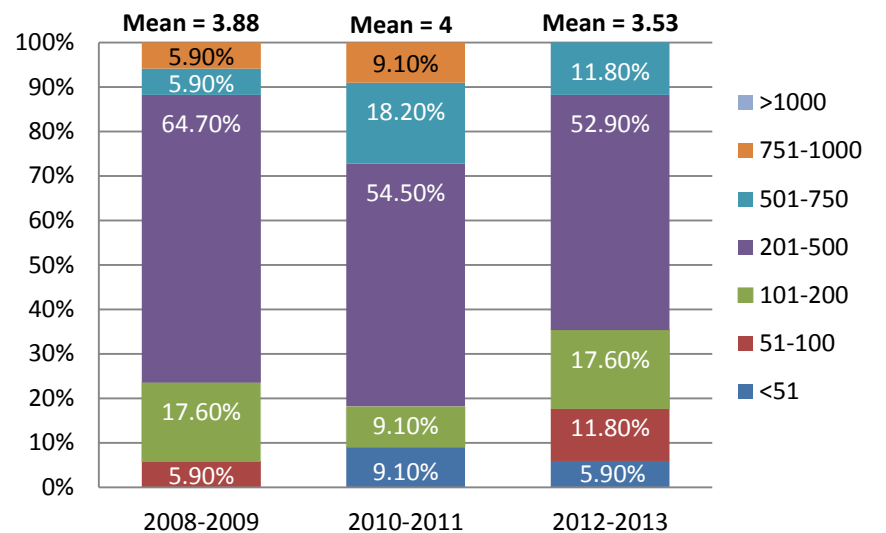
4.2. Political Science Majors Reported by Private Combined* BA Programs



4.3. Political Science Majors Reported by Private MA Programs



4.4. Political Science Majors Reported by Private PhD Programs

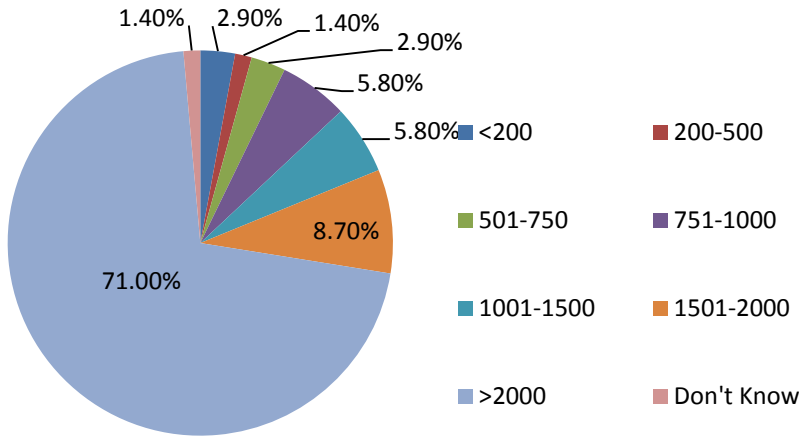


*Programs combining Political Sciences with other disciplines (i.e., Social Science departments)

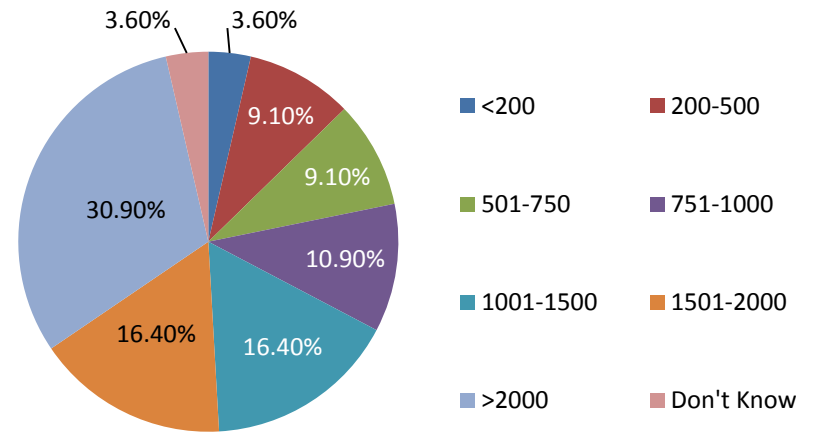
Guide to Corresponding Range Categories for Numbers of Majors: 1: <51; 2: 51-100; 3: 101-200; 4: 201-500; 5: 501-750; 6: 751-1000; 7: >1000

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Figure 5.1. Undergraduate Seats Filled (Enrollment) Reported by PhD-Granting Programs, 2012-13



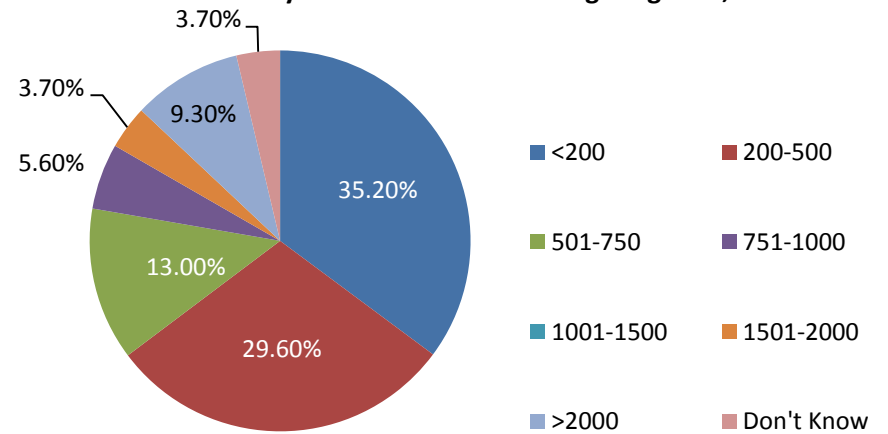
5.2. Undergraduate Seats Filled (Enrollment) Reported by MA-Granting Programs, 2012-13



5.3. Undergraduate Seats Filled (Enrollment) Reported by BA-Granting Political Science Programs, 2012-13



5.4. Undergraduate Seats Filled (Enrollment) Reported by Combined* BA-Granting Programs, 2012-13



*Programs combining Political Sciences with other disciplines (i.e., Social Science departments)

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Table 1. Number of Majors by Gender, Race & Ethnicity, and Program Type

Program Type	Women						Caucasian					
	0	1-25	26-100	101-250	>250	Don't Know	0	1-25	26-100	101-250	>250	Don't Know
PhD	0.0%	3.0%	10.4%	16.4%	31.3%	38.8%	0.0%	1.5%	12.1%	7.6%	37.9%	40.9%
MA	0.0%	5.7%	34.0%	28.3%	3.8%	28.3%	0.0%	7.8%	25.5%	25.5%	15.7%	25.5%
BA	0.0%	31.0%	41.7%	6.5%	1.2%	19.6%	0.0%	16.9%	45.8%	10.2%	2.4%	24.7%
BA Combined	0.0%	58.5%	24.5%	1.9%	1.9%	13.2%	1.9%	56.6%	18.9%	3.8%	1.9%	17.0%
	African American						Latino/a					
	0	1-25	26-100	101-250	>250	Don't Know	0	1-25	26-100	101-250	>250	Don't Know
PhD	0.0%	23.1%	30.8%	4.6%	0.0%	41.5%	0.0%	26.6%	23.4%	7.8%	1.6%	40.6%
MA	1.9%	41.5%	30.2%	0.0%	0.0%	26.4%	2.0%	49.0%	15.7%	3.9%	0.0%	29.4%
BA	2.4%	70.5%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	3.8%	64.1%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%	26.3%
BA Combined	7.5%	71.7%	3.8%	1.9%	0.0%	15.1%	11.5%	65.4%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	19.2%
	American Indian/Alaska Native						International					
	0	1-25	26-100	101-250	>250	Don't Know	0	1-25	26-100	101-250	>250	Don't Know
PhD	3.1%	42.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	53.1%	0.0%	40.6%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	53.1%
MA	12.0%	42.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	46.0%	3.9%	51.0%	3.9%	0.0%	0.0%	41.2%
BA	37.3%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.7%	7.2%	63.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%	27.6%
BA Combined	51.0%	20.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	19.6%	62.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%
	Asian-American/Pacific Islander						Other					
	0	1-25	26-100	101-250	>250	Don't Know	0	1-25	26-100	101-250	>250	Don't Know
PhD	0.0%	33.8%	16.9%	4.6%	3.1%	41.5%	0.0%	16.0%	18.0%	0.0%	2.0%	64.0%
MA	2.0%	50.0%	8.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%	71.4%
BA	16.8%	47.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	34.2%	9.3%	9.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	81.5%
BA Combined	42.0%	38.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	56.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	43.8%

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Table 2.1. Number of Majors, BA (Political Science Only)

		<51		51-100		101-200		201-500		501-750		751-1000		>1000		Total Depts Responding	Mean
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
2008-09	Total	43	39.4%	31	28.4%	25	22.9%	10	9.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	109	2.02
	Private	33	45.8%	21	29.2%	12	16.7%	6	8.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	72	1.88
	Public	10	27.0%	10	27.0%	13	35.1%	4	10.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	37	2.3
2010-11	Total	31	27.9%	31	27.9%	32	28.8%	15	13.5%	2	1.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	111	2.33
	Private	29	40.8%	17	23.9%	19	26.8%	6	8.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	71	2.03
	Public	2	5.0%	14	35.0%	13	32.5%	9	22.5%	2	5.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	40	2.87
2012-13	Total	50	32.3%	51	32.9%	35	22.6%	18	11.6%	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	155	2.16
	Private	41	38.0%	40	37.0%	19	17.6%	7	6.5%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	108	1.95
	Public	9	19.1%	11	23.4%	16	34.0%	11	23.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	47	2.62

Table 2.2. Number of Majors, BA (Political Science + Other Discipline)

		<51		51-100		101-200		201-500		501-750		751-1000		>1000		Total Depts Responding	Mean
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
2008-09	Total	27	69.2%	8	20.5%	4	10.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	39	1.41
	Private	14	70.0%	5	25.0%	1	5.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	1.35
	Public	13	68.4%	3	15.8%	3	15.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	19	1.47
2010-11	Total	21	42.9%	21	42.9%	5	10.2%	2	4.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	49	1.75
	Private	14	50.0%	12	42.9%	2	7.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	28	1.57
	Public	7	33.3%	9	42.9%	3	14.3%	2	9.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	2
2012-13	Total	26	55.3%	15	31.9%	4	8.5%	2	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	47	1.62
	Private	20	76.9%	3	11.5%	3	11.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	26	1.35
	Public	6	28.6%	12	57.1%	1	4.8%	2	9.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	1.95

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Table 2.3. Number of Majors, MA Programs (Political Science)

		<51		51-100		101-200		201-500		501-750		751-1000		>1000		Total Depts Responding	Mean
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
2008-09	Total	5	11.6%	11	25.6%	11	25.6%	13	30.2%	1	2.3%	0	0.0%	2	4.7%	43	3.05
	Private	1	16.7%	2	33.3%	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	2.5
	Public	4	10.8%	9	24.3%	9	24.3%	12	32.4%	1	2.7%	0	0.0%	2	5.4%	37	3.14
2010-11	Total	2	4.8%	5	11.9%	6	14.3%	19	45.2%	5	11.9%	3	7.1%	2	4.8%	42	3.88
	Private	2	25.0%	4	50.0%	1	12.5%	1	12.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	2.13
	Public	0	0.0%	1	2.9%	5	14.7%	18	52.9%	5	14.7%	3	8.8%	2	5.9%	34	4.29
2012-13	Total	2	3.8%	13	25.0%	14	26.9%	17	32.7%	5	9.6%	1	1.9%	0	0.0%	52	3.25
	Private	1	14.3%	3	42.9%	1	14.3%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	2.57
	Public	1	2.2%	10	22.2%	13	28.9%	15	33.3%	5	11.1%	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	45	3.36

Table 2.4. Number of Majors, PhD Programs (Political Science)

		<51		51-100		101-200		201-500		501-750		751-1000		>1000		Total Depts Responding	Mean
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
2008-09	Total	0	0.0%	5	8.8%	8	14.0%	23	40.4%	13	22.8%	6	10.5%	2	3.5%	57	4.22
	Private	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	3	17.6%	11	64.7%	1	5.9%	1	5.9%	0	0.0%	17	3.88
	Public	0	0.0%	4	10.0%	5	12.5%	12	30.0%	12	30.0%	5	12.5%	2	5.0%	40	4.38
2010-11	Total	2	3.1%	0	0.0%	5	7.7%	25	38.5%	19	29.2%	9	13.8%	5	7.7%	65	4.63
	Private	2	9.1%	0	0.0%	2	9.1%	12	54.5%	4	18.2%	2	9.1%	0	0.0%	22	4
	Public	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	7.0%	13	30.2%	15	34.9%	7	16.3%	5	11.6%	43	4.95
2012-13	Total	1	1.5%	3	4.5%	5	7.5%	32	47.8%	10	14.9%	11	16.4%	5	7.5%	67	4.49
	Private	1	5.9%	2	11.8%	3	17.6%	9	52.9%	2	11.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	17	3.53
	Public	0	0.0%	1	2.0%	2	4.0%	23	46.0%	8	16.0%	11	22.0%	5	10.0%	50	4.82

Guide to Corresponding Range Categories for Numbers of Majors:

1: <51; 2: 51-100; 3: 101-200; 4: 201-500; 5: 501-750; 6: 751-1000; 7: >1000

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Table 4. Total Seats Filled (Enrollment) in Political Science Classes by Department Type

		<200		200-500		501-750		751-1000		1001-1500		1501-2000		>2000		Don't Know	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
2010-11	PhD	0	0.0%	3	4.7%	4	6.2%	2	3.1%	4	6.2%	4	6.2%	45	70.3%	2	3.1%
	MA	2	4.8%	2	4.8%	1	2.4%	4	9.5%	6	14.3%	5	11.9%	21	50.0%	1	2.4%
	BA	11	10.0%	30	27.3%	16	14.5%	18	16.4%	11	10.0%	10	9.1%	13	11.8%	1	0.9%
	BA (PoliSci + Other)	14	29.2%	17	35.4%	6	12.5%	4	8.3%	4	8.3%	2	4.2%	1	2.1%	0	0.0%
2012-13	PhD	2	2.9%	1	1.4%	2	2.9%	4	5.8%	4	5.8%	6	8.7%	49	71.0%	1	1.4%
	MA	2	3.6%	5	9.1%	5	9.1%	6	10.9%	9	16.4%	9	16.4%	17	30.9%	2	3.6%
	BA	18	10.6%	59	34.7%	26	15.3%	14	8.2%	25	14.7%	9	5.3%	12	7.1%	7	4.1%
	BA (PoliSci + Other)	19	35.2%	16	29.6%	7	13.0%	3	5.6%	0	0.0%	2	3.7%	5	9.3%	2	3.7%