

Completion Data Analysis of Student Clearinghouse Data 2003-2005

The National Student Clearinghouse collects data from colleges and universities (both 2-year and 4-year institutions) including enrollment and degree conferral data. Each term, the Registrar at participating institutions prepares a data report submitting student identification numbers, name, and degree/major information. Participating institutions may then query that data to analyze where their students attend college post-completion. The Office of Institutional Research and Analysis prepared and submitted a list of students who received degrees from Western Carolina University from 2003, 2004, and 2005. The National Student Clearinghouse returned a data file containing information about all institutions where the student either enrolled for courses or received a degree after leaving Western. Currently, the StudentTracker service gives users electronic access to current and historical enrollment records of more than 75 million post-secondary students. The service includes over “2,800 post-secondary institutions representing more than 91% of the currently enrolled students in the United States” (<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/colleges/Tracker/pdfs/Schoolsbrochure.pdf>). The returned data file also included degrees earned pre-enrollment at Western Carolina University (e.g., transfer students entering with an associate degree).

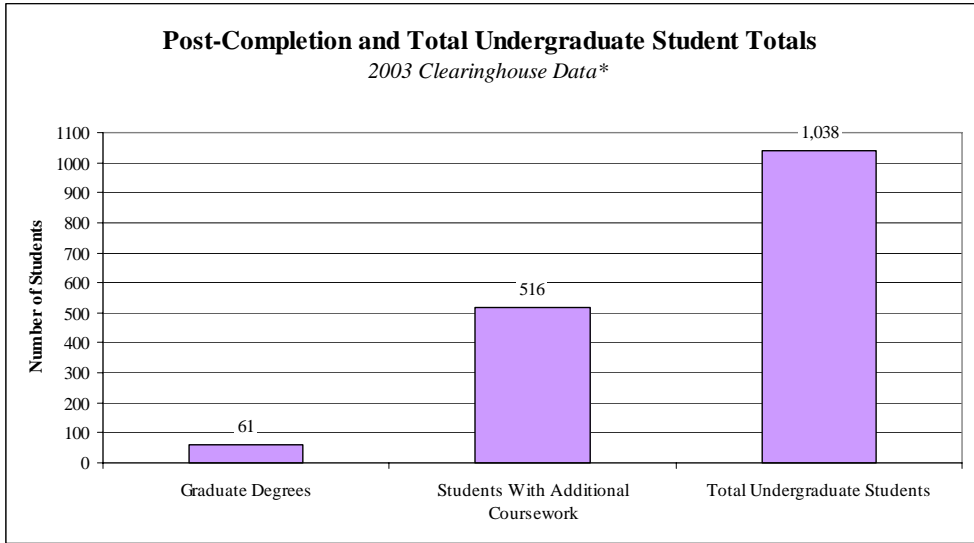
Methodology

The returned data files were imported into an Access database where the set of two files from each academic year (December/May graduates and August graduates) were merged into one table. The combined graduate files for each year were then imported into SPSS for further data analysis. Students with multiple records were then filtered until a clear representation of the number of unique records was obtained for all undergraduate students, undergraduate students who continued on from Western to complete degrees at all levels, and undergraduate students who continued on from Western to graduate schools. Cross Tabulations were run on each academic year’s data files to arrive at analysis of additional academic work pursued by Western’s students after completion of their undergraduate career.

2003 Clearinghouse Data

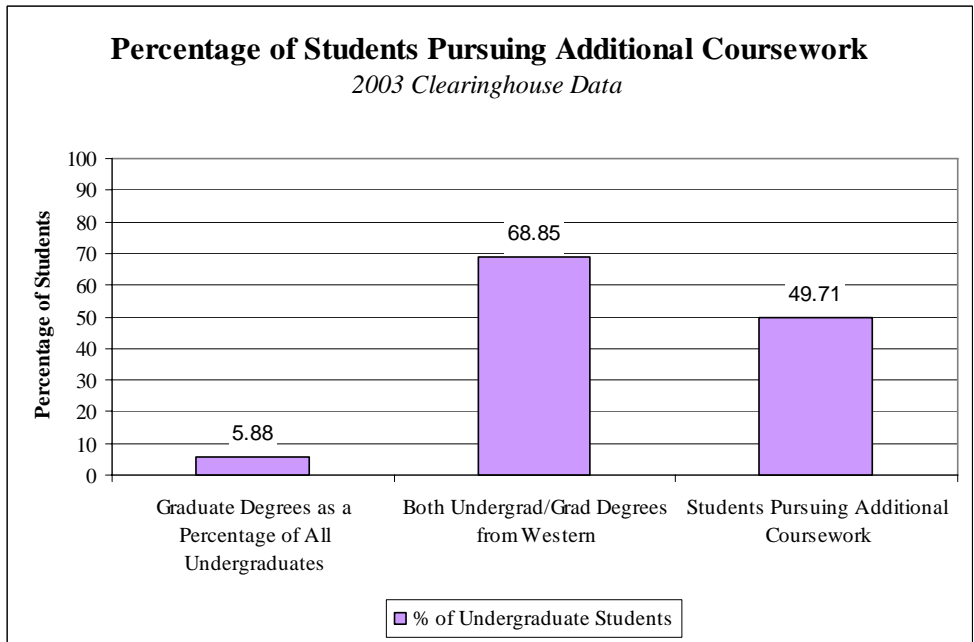
The 2003 data file illustrates quite clearly that a large number of Western’s undergraduates pursued graduate degrees after receiving their undergraduate degree. Of the 1,038 unduplicated students in the 2003 file, 516 students completed graduate level coursework (see Figures 1, 2). These students attended a wide variety of institutions including Arizona State University, Boston University, Illinois State University, Johns Hopkins University, Michigan State University, North Carolina State University, the University of Georgia, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and many others.

Figure 1



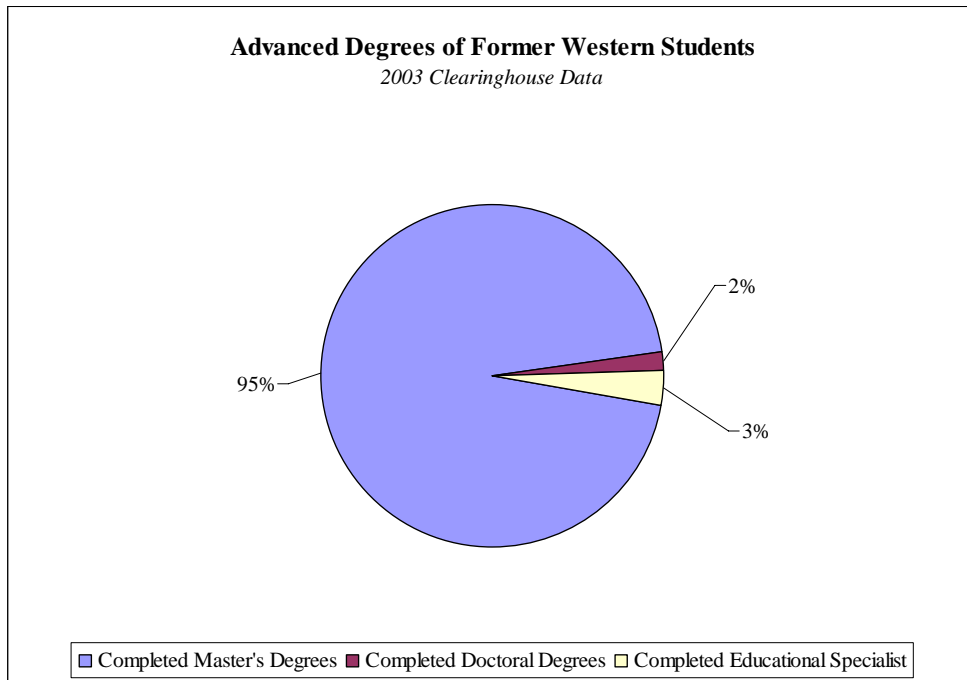
*Unduplicated student totals.

Figure 2



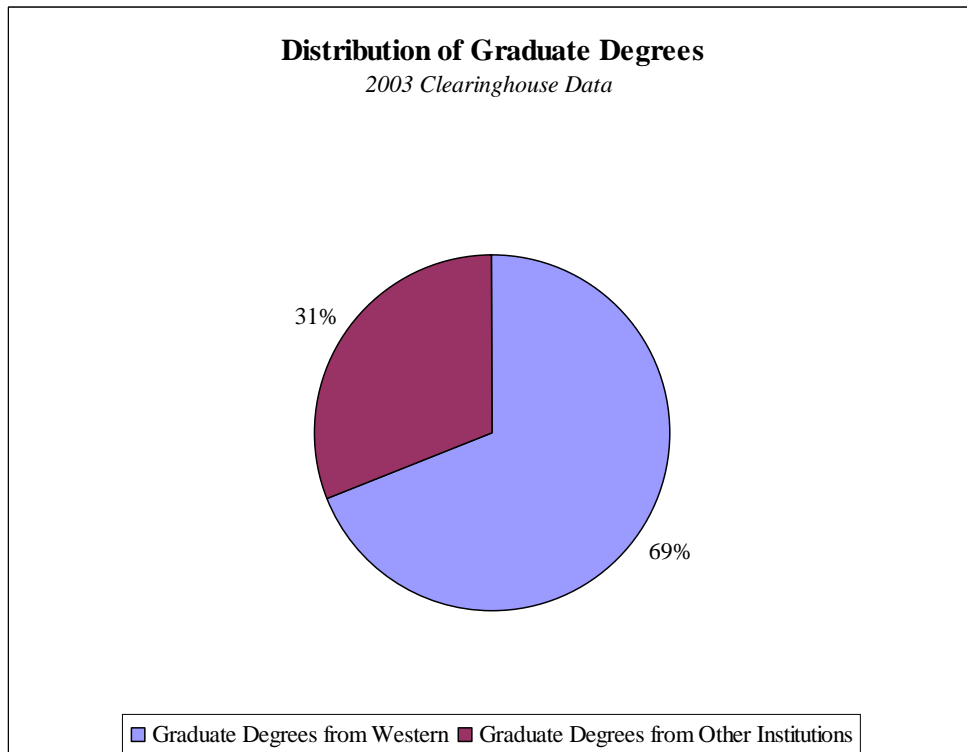
The data file contained 95 students who pursued and completed degrees after their initial undergraduate career at Western. Of these, 61 students (5.88% of all undergraduate students included in the file) earned advanced degrees. The advanced degrees numbered 58 master's degrees, two educational specialist degrees and one educational doctorate. Figure 3 displays the distribution of advanced degrees earned by former Western students. However, although 91% of currently enrolled students are represented in the Clearinghouse data, a large number of institutions do not report major and degree data skewing results of degree completion at other institutions.

Figure 3



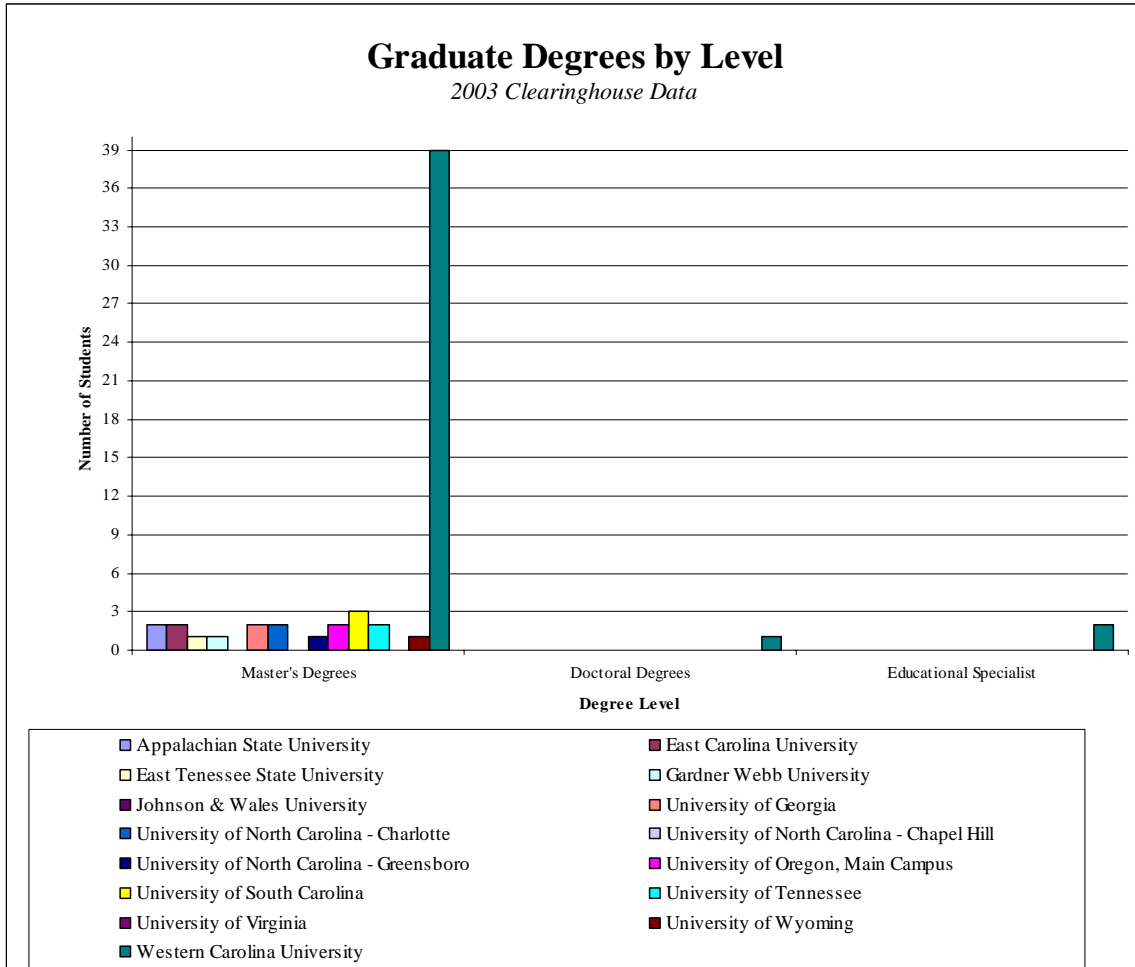
A large proportion of Western's undergraduate students included in this file returned to Western to obtain their graduate degree. Of the 61 students completing graduate degrees, 42 received graduate degrees from Western (see Figure 4).

Figure 4



Graduate degrees were earned at a number of notable institutions. Figure 5 illustrates where graduate degrees (all master's degrees in this file) were earned from institutions other than Western Carolina University. Students earned degrees from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the University of Virginia, the University of Georgia, and the University of Tennessee.

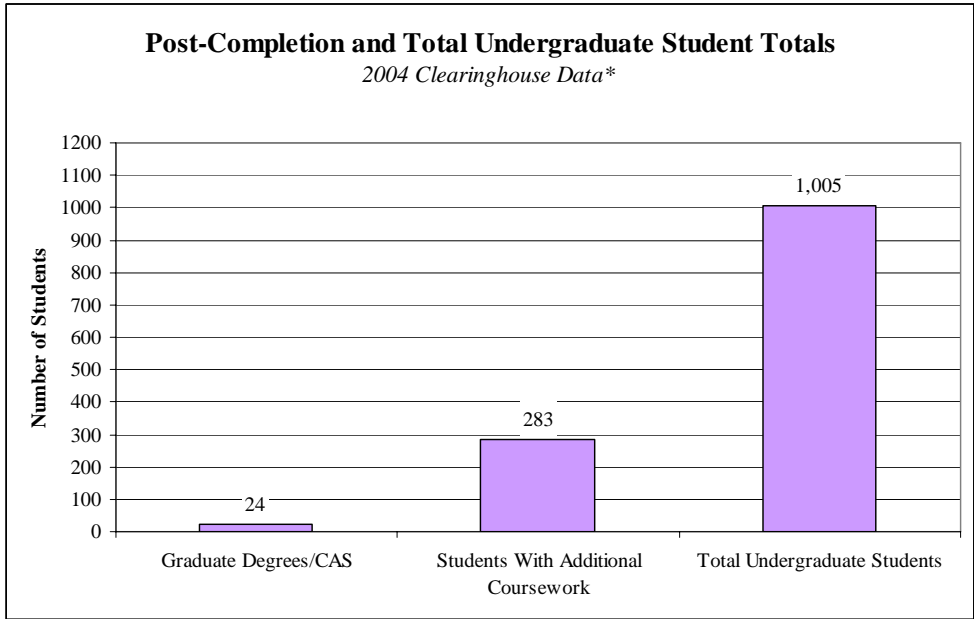
Figure 5



2004 Clearinghouse Data

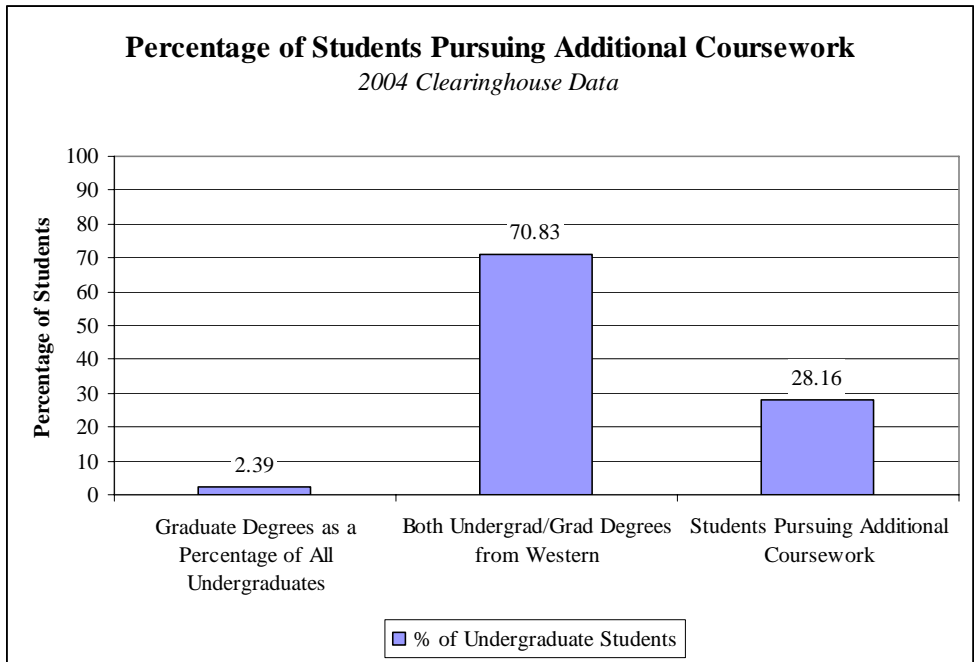
The 2004 data file illustrates that a large number of Western's undergraduates pursued graduate degrees after receiving their undergraduate degree. Of the 1,005 unduplicated students in the 2004 data file, 283 students completed additional coursework (see Figures 6, 7). These students attended a wide variety of institutions including Auburn University, Brigham Young University, Florida State University, Kent State University, Loyola University of New Orleans, and Vanderbilt University along with many others.

Figure 6



*Unduplicated student totals

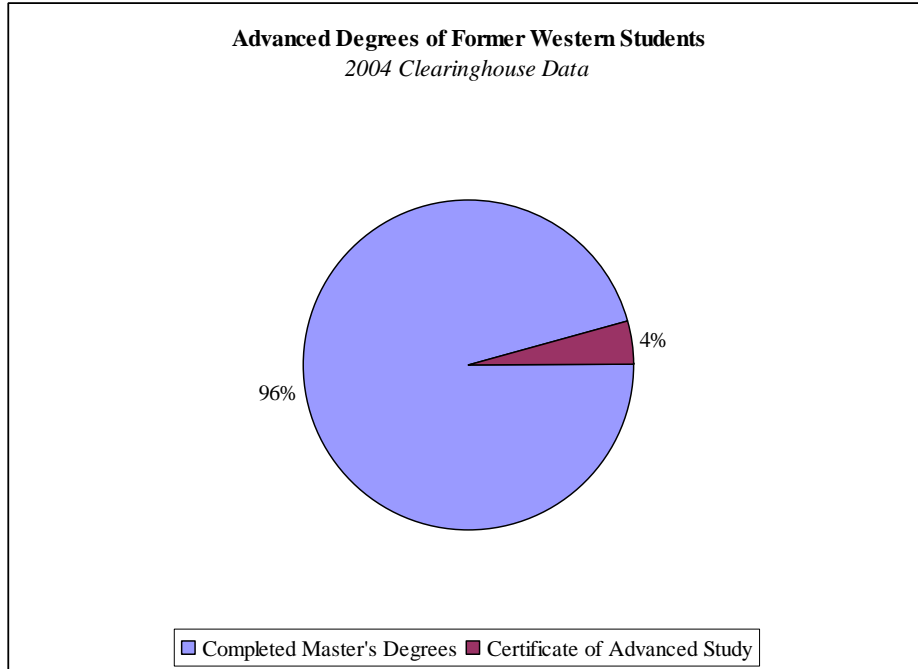
Figure 7



The 2004 data file contained 31 students who pursued and completed degrees after finishing their initial academic career at Western. Of these, 24 students (2.39% of all undergraduate students included in the file) earned advanced degrees. The advanced degrees numbered 23 master's degrees and one certificate of advanced study. Figure 8 displays the distribution of advanced degrees earned by former Western students. Again, the fact that a number of institutions do not report degree and major data skews the

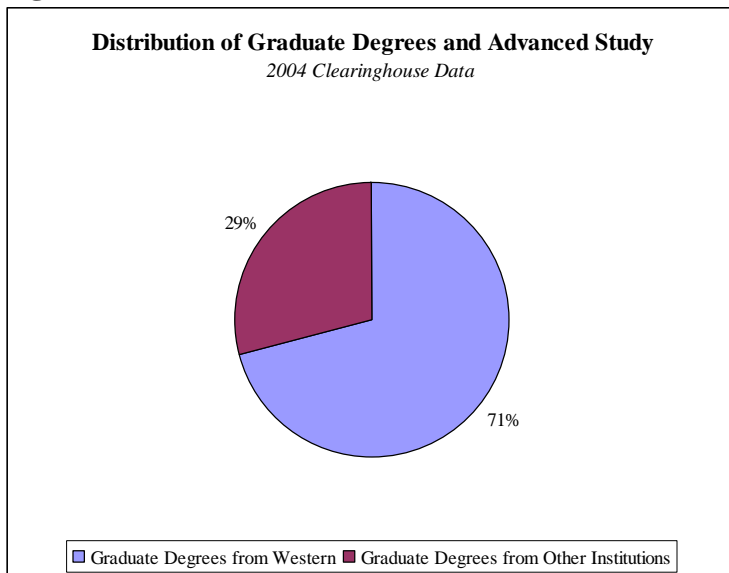
results. Also, due to the length of most graduate programs in the United States, many of these completing students would just now be reaching the point at which they would earn their master's degree.

Figure 8



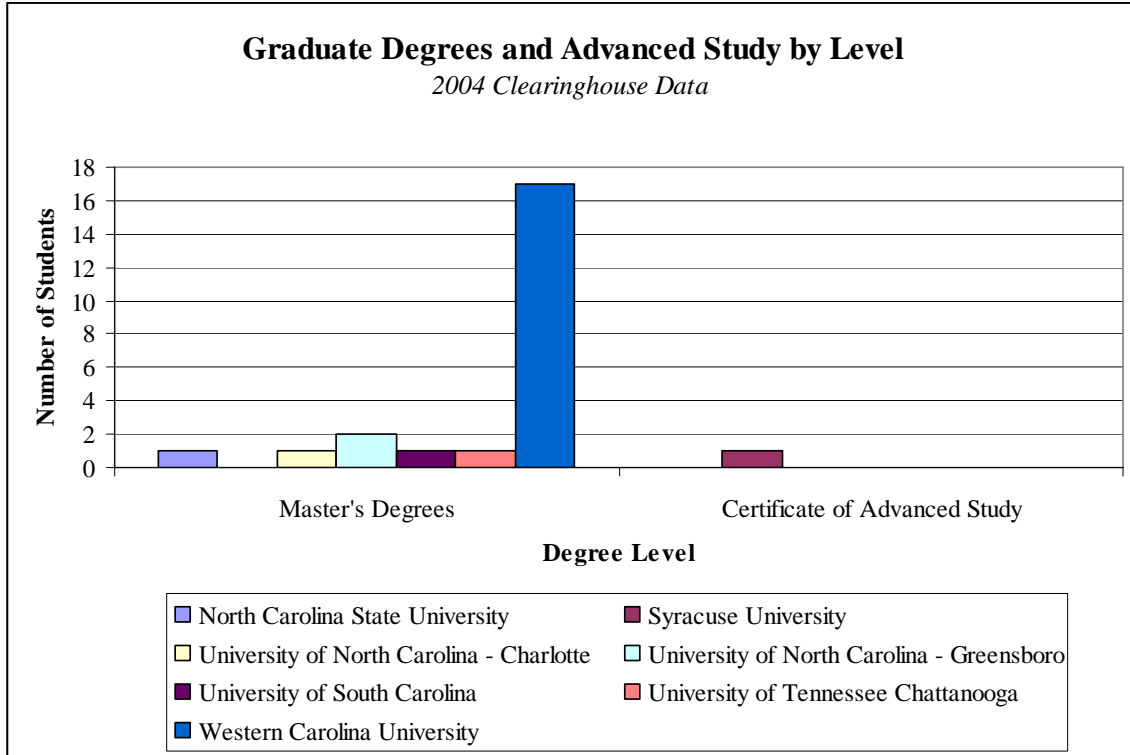
As with 2003, a large proportion of Western's undergraduate students in this sample returned to Western to obtain their graduate degree. Of the 24 students completing graduate degrees, 23 received graduate degrees from Western (see Figure 9).

Figure 9



Graduate degrees and the certificate of advanced study were earned at a number of different institutions. Figure 10 illustrates where graduate degrees were earned from institutions other than Western Carolina University. Students earned degrees or certificates from North Carolina State University, Syracuse University, the University of South Carolina, and the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

Figure 10

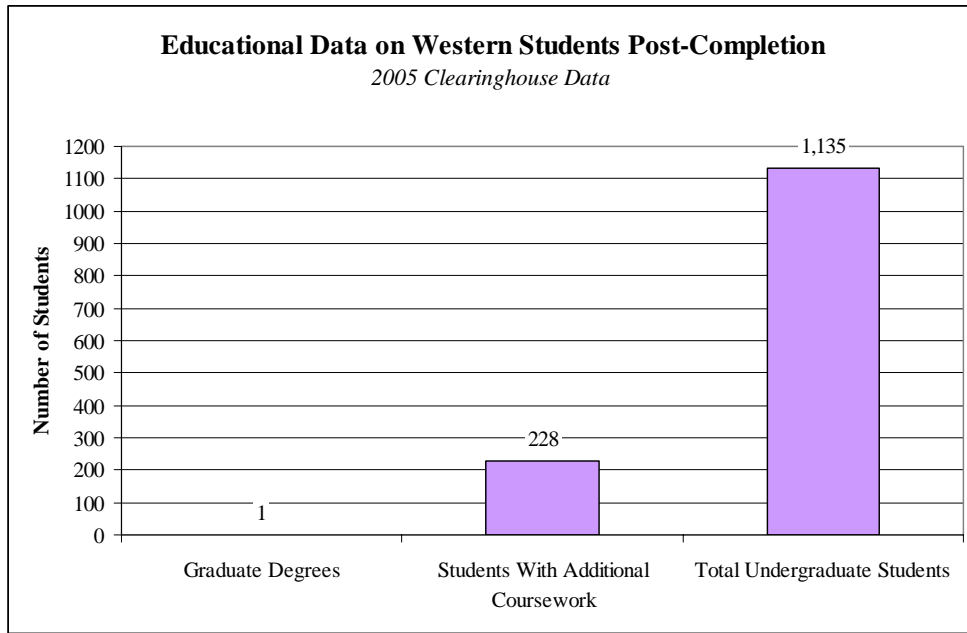


2005 Clearinghouse Data

As in the prior two years of data, a large number of Western’s undergraduates pursued graduate degrees after receiving their undergraduate degree. Of the 1,135 unduplicated students in the 2005 data file, 228 students completed advanced coursework (see figure 11). These students attended a wide range of institutions including Emory University, Florida State University, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the University of South Carolina, the University of Tennessee, and the University of Wyoming.

The 2005 data file contained 13 students who pursued and completed degrees after their initial undergraduate career at Western. Of these, only 1 student earned a master’s degree. Given that most graduate programs take at least two years to complete, the timing of this file is problematic and not representative of the likely population of students nearing completion of a graduate program both at Western and at other institutions.

Figure 11



More detailed information of degree conferral at Western by CIP Code classification and by academic college is available in the 2005 Fact Book located at:

<http://planning.wcu.edu/factbooks.htm>.

For more information about the National Student Clearinghouse, visit their website at:

<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org>.

Appendix A

Sample of Institutions Where Students Pursued Additional Coursework 2003 Clearinghouse Data

1. Appalachian State University
2. Arizona State University
3. Auburn University
4. Boston University
5. East Carolina University
6. George Mason University
7. Illinois State University
8. Johns Hopkins University
9. North Carolina State University
10. University of Alabama
11. University of Georgia
12. University of Iowa
13. University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
14. University of North Carolina – Charlotte
15. University of North Carolina – Greensboro
16. University of North Carolina - Wilmington
17. University of South Carolina
18. University of Tennessee
19. University of Virginia
20. Wake Forest University

*Sample of Institutions Where Students Pursued Additional Coursework
2004 Clearinghouse Data*

1. Appalachian State University
2. Auburn University
3. Brigham Young University
4. Clemson University
5. East Carolina University
6. East Tennessee State University
7. Florida State University
8. Medical University of South Carolina
9. Meharry Medical College
10. North Carolina State University
11. Syracuse University
12. Thomas M. Cooley Law School
13. University of Georgia
14. University of Illinois at Urbana
15. University of North Carolina – Charlotte
16. University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
17. University of North Carolina – Greensboro
18. University of Tennessee
19. University of Wyoming
20. Vanderbilt University

*Sample of Institutions Where Students Pursued Additional Coursework
2005 Clearinghouse Data*

1. Appalachian State University
2. Colorado State University
3. CUNY New York City Technical
4. East Carolina University
5. Emory University
6. Florida State University
7. George Washington University
8. New York Chiropractic College
9. North Carolina State University
10. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
11. University of Kansas
12. University of Kentucky
13. University of Louisville
14. University of Massachusetts at Amherst
15. University of North Carolina - Charlotte
16. University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
17. University of North Carolina - Greensboro
18. University of Tennessee
19. University of Wyoming
20. Wake Forest University

Appendix B

Graduate Degrees Earned by Completers Fall 2003-2005

2003	
Degree	Number of Degrees
Doctor of Education	1
Education Specialist	2
Master of Accountancy	1
Master of Arts	8
Master of Arts in Education	2
Master of Arts in Teaching	1
Master of Business Administration	10
Master of Criminal Justice	1
Master of Education	2
Master of Entrepreneurship	2
Master of Music	1
Master of Physical Therapy	2
Master of Public Affairs	5
Master of Science	20
Master of Science in Nursing	1
Master of Social Work	2
Total	61

2004	
Degree	Number of Degrees
Certificate of Advanced Study	1
Master of Accountancy	5
Master of Arts	1
Master of Arts in Teaching	1
Master of Entrepreneurship	5
Master of Music	1
Master of Project Management	1
Master of Public Affairs	2
Master of Science	5
Master of Social Work	1
Masters	1
Total	24

2005	
Degree	Number of Degrees
Master of Entrepreneurship	1
Total	1

Source: StudentTracker Clearinghouse Crosstabs 2003, 2004, 2005

Appendix C

Crosstabulations of Western Degree and Major by Graduate Institution Clearinghouse Data 2003-2005

The crosstabs from the 2003-2005 data files of students pursuing graduate degrees are available as HTML files at the following links:

2003 Crosstab

http://planning.wcu.edu/reports/crosstabs/2003_crosstab.htm

2004 Crosstab

http://planning.wcu.edu/reports/crosstabs/2004_crosstab.htm

2005 Crosstab

http://planning.wcu.edu/reports/crosstabs/2005_crosstab.htm