

# Nuances of Full & Part-Time Undergraduate NDUS Headcounts Over Time

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## Introduction

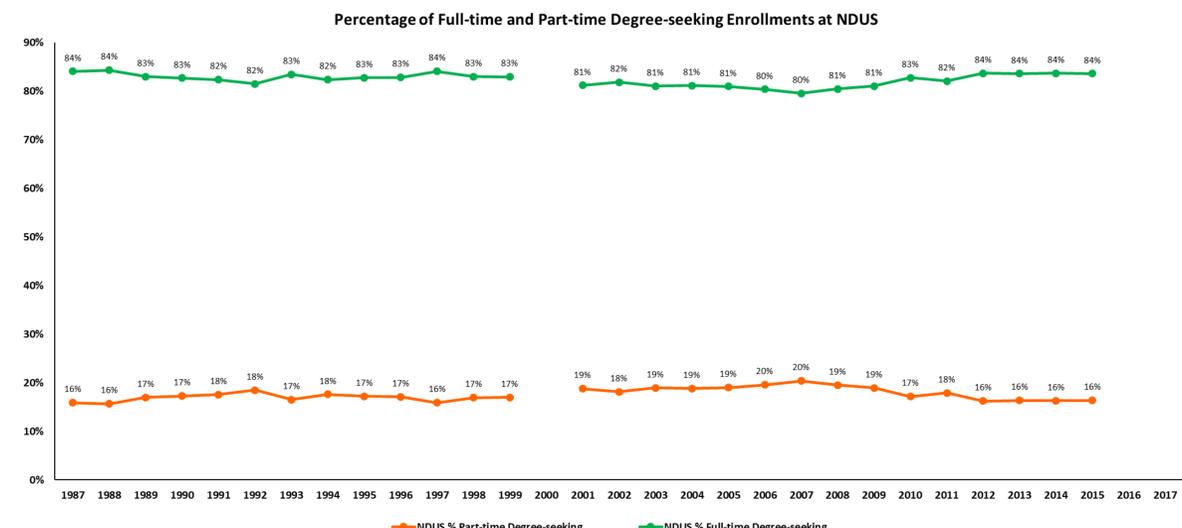
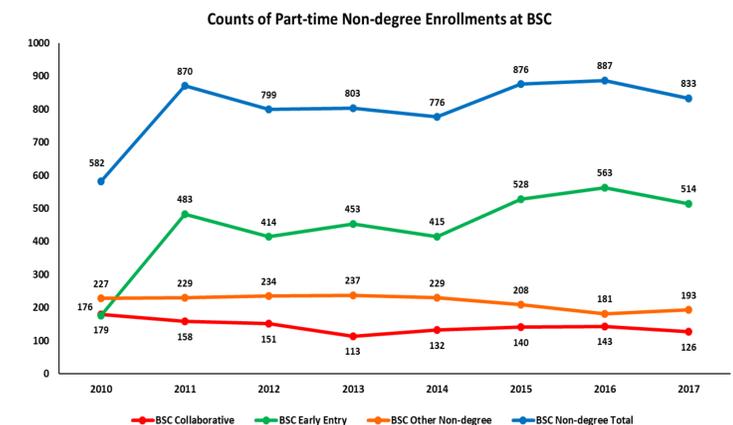
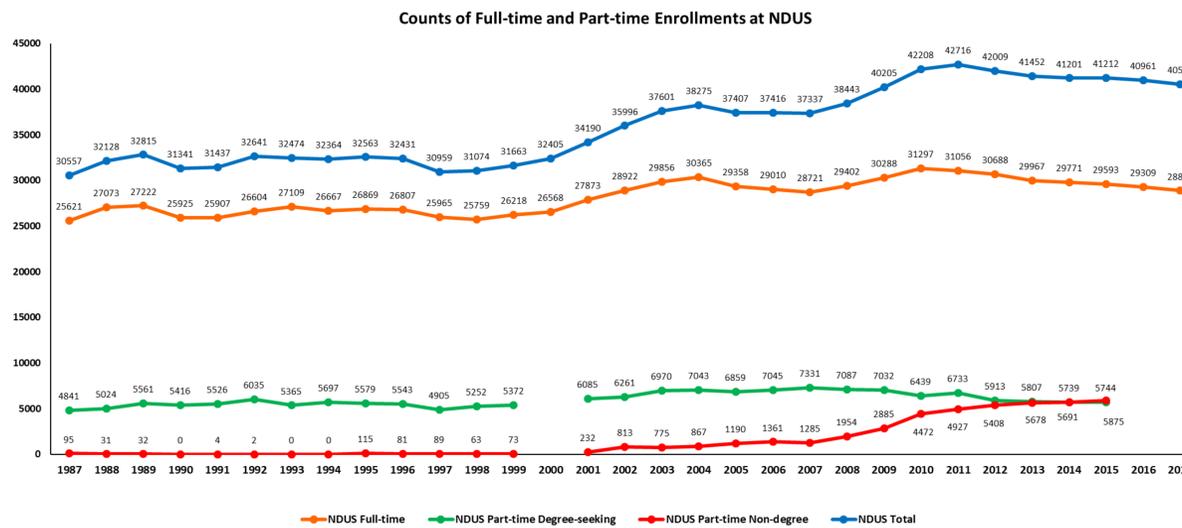
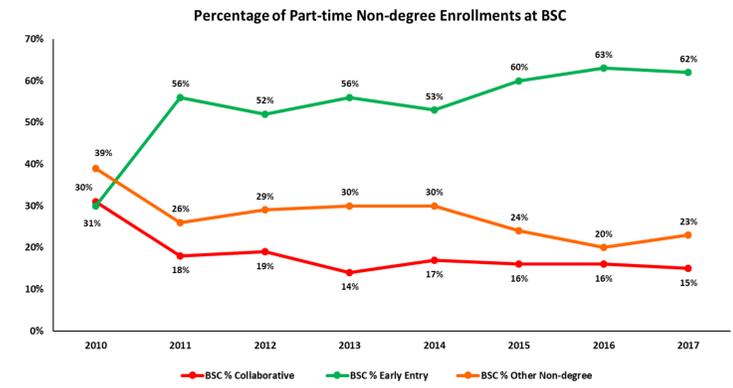
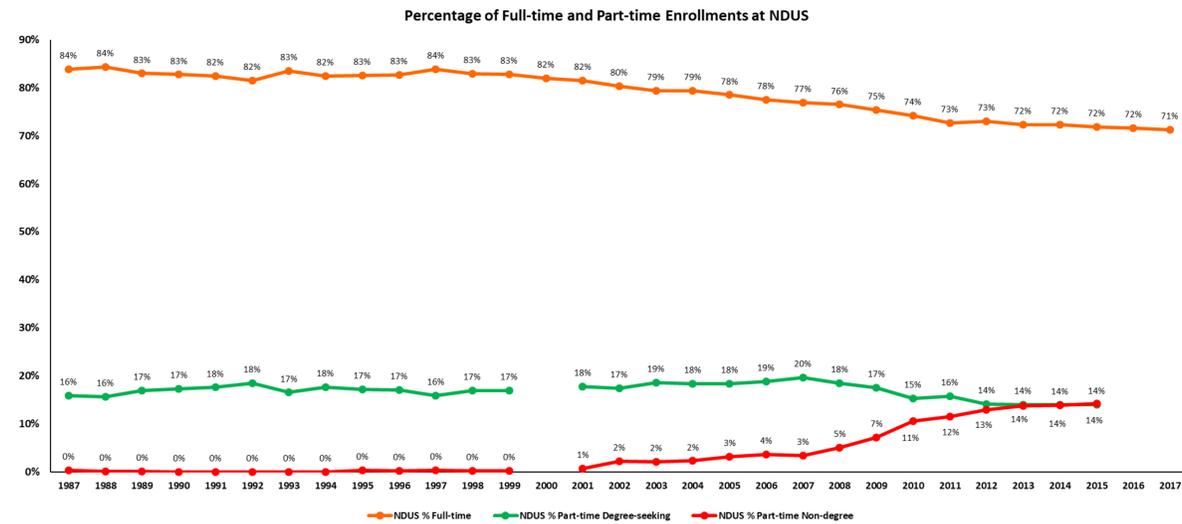
- The percentage of undergraduate North Dakota University System (NDUS) enrollments that are full-time has been steadily decreasing for two decades.
- While part-time students presently represent a significant percentage of college students, the nuances of undergraduate NDUS enrollments remain under-examined.
- Is it the case that NDUS undergraduates are more likely than ever to pursue degrees through a part-time schedule?

## Methods

- Fall enrollments data for the 11 NDUS colleges and universities were retrieved from NCES IPEDS data ([nces.ed.gov](https://nces.ed.gov)) and NDUS historical reports ([cts.ndus.edu/sites/departments/institutional-research/](https://cts.ndus.edu/sites/departments/institutional-research/)), 1987-2017.
- Detailed part-time non-degree enrollment trends are illustrated using Bismarck State College (BSC) fall enrollment reports data, 2010-2017.

## Results

- Although NDUS undergraduate part-time degree-seeking enrollments – both in terms of raw number and in terms of percentage of total undergraduate enrollments – were generally increasing from 1987 to 2007, the last decade has shown a different trend.
- Indeed, total undergraduate part-time degree-seeking enrollments have stabilized – or even declined – since 2007. It turns out that the decrease in the percentage of undergraduate enrollments that are full-time is partly explained by a considerable increase in the number of *non-degree* part-time enrollments beginning in the new millennium (but especially occurring in the last decade).
- Non-degree status is rarer when it comes to full-time undergraduate enrollments (.5%). However, among contemporary undergraduates, non-degree status characterizes about *half* of part-time enrollments. These include early entry (high school) students, collaborative students (those seeking a degree at one institution while additionally taking coursework at another), and other individuals taking courses for diverse reasons.
- BSC data reveal that early entry (high school) students may account for a large share of part-time enrollment increases.



## Conclusions

- When it comes to *specifically* degree-seeking students, part-time enrollments are somewhat stable in recent years. Full-time enrollments' decreases are less steep than they initially seem, especially when examining only degree-seeking students.
- While conventional wisdom implies that part-time college student headcount is rising to college students' pursuit of degrees in conjunction with other demands, data suggest that non-degree enrollment is really what is increasing.
- Among NDUS undergraduate *degree-seeking* students, full- and part-time enrollments are more stable than conventional wisdom implies. This stability is striking given North Dakota's recent growth and diversification.