# Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs: An Overview

Self-supporting graduate professional degree programs (SSGPDPs) are programs in which all program costs, both direct and indirect, are covered by revenues generated by the program such as student charges or alternative revenues that are not disallowed funds (e.g., state general funds or student tuition and fees). SSGPDPs were created to serve additional students above and beyond those supported through resources provided by the State and to fulfill demonstrated higher education and workforce needs. SSGPDPs primarily serve professionals seeking to advance their careers and, thus, models of SSGPDPs programs include those that serve full-time employees, mid-career professionals, international students with specialized goals, and/or students whose professional education is supported by their employers. Although different in form from traditional programs, SSGPDPs are held to the same standards of quality as all other UC graduate professional degree programs and students in these programs must complete the same type of admissions process as other graduate programs and meet the same academic standards.

Growth of SSGPDPs and student characteristics

UC's first SSGPDP was the Evening-Weekend Master of Business Administration program established at the Berkeley campus in 1972. The second SSGPDP, an Executive Master of Business Administration program, was established at UCLA nine years later in 1981. UC added 9 more between 1981 and 1997. Between 2001 and 2005, 20 new programs were added, thereby doubling the number of SSGPDPs. This growth slowed during the Great Recession but then increased rapidly thereafter; an average of 7 SSGPDPs were established each year from 2011 to 2017. By Fall 2017, UC had established 93 SSGPDPs and SSGPDPs had become the fastest growing type of degree program.
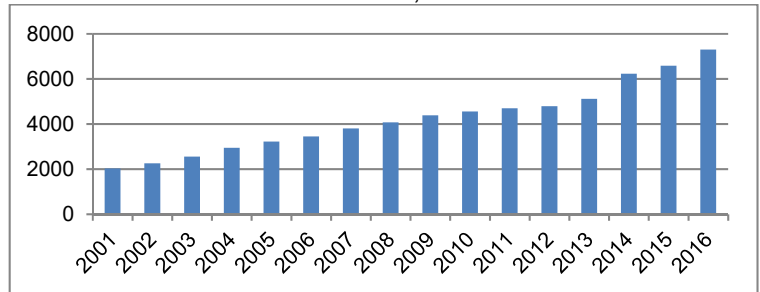
Number of SSGPDP establishments, AY 1972 to 2017
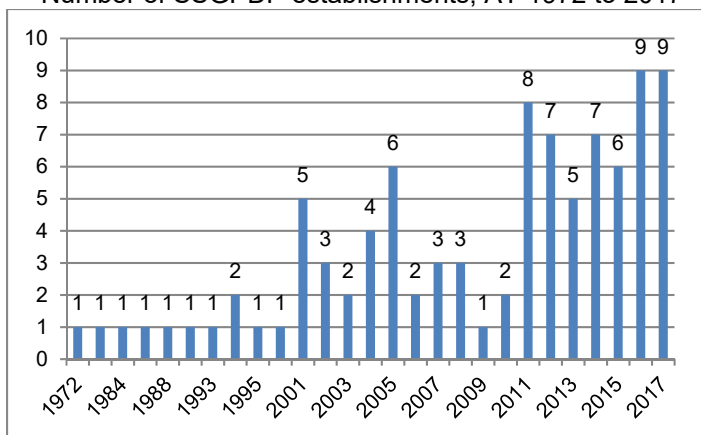
Accordingly, SSGPDP enrollment has grown: SSGPDP enrollment has more than tripled since 2001, from 2,031 enrollees in 2001 to 7,798 enrollees in 2016. In the next

couple of years—at the current rate of growth—enrollment will have quadrupled since 2001.
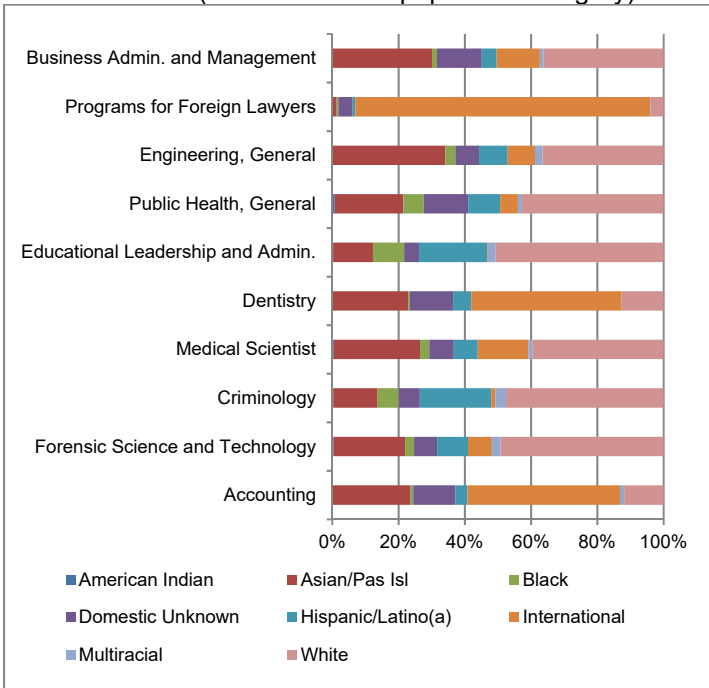
Total SSGPDP headcount, AY 2001 to 2016

From 2001 to 2016, with regards to SSGPDP enrollment by race/ethnicity, White, Asian/Pacific Islander, and International enrollment exceeded enrollment by all other racial/ethnic groups, with White enrollment making up 35% of total enrollment, Asian/Pacific Islander 26% of the total, and International 18% of the total in this period. Domestic Unknown made up 11% of the total. Enrollment for each of the remaining racial/ethnic groups was under 6 percent in this period: 0.2% of enrollment was American Indian, 1% Multiracial, 2% Black, and 6% Hispanic/Latino(a). Since 2001, the percent of Black enrollment has been static while the percent of Hispanic/Latino(a) enrollment has doubled. There are and have been more men in SSGPDPs than women, with men making up about two-thirds of the total from 2001 to 2016. The gender balance has increased though—in 2001, SSGPDPs were 73% male and 27% female whereas enrollment has been 61% male and 39% female since 2013.
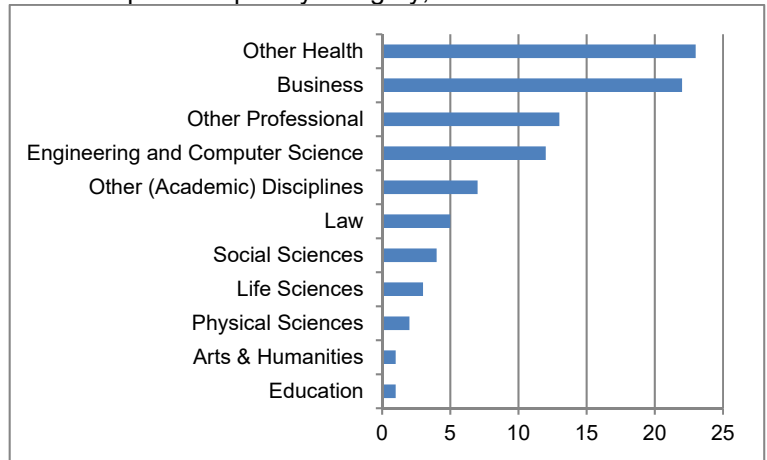
The disciplinary category with the highest enrollment among SSGPDPs is Business Administration and Management, about 70% of total enrollment. In Business Administration and Management, and the majority of other categories, White, Asian/Pacific Islander, and International enrollment dominates. For Business Administration and Management, male enrollment exceeded 70% in this period. Historically, SSGPDPs enrollment has been, therefore, more likely to be White and Asian/Pacific Islander, male, and concentrated in Business Administration and Management.

Percent of total SSGPDP headcount by race/ethnicity and 10 largest disciplinary categories, AY 2001 to 2016 combined (in order of most populated category).

Legend:
- American Indian
- Asian/Pas Isl
- Black
- Domestic Unknown
- Hispanic/Latino(a)
- International
- Multiracial
- White

of the total). More recently, however, programs have been established in a range of disciplines such as nursing, earthquake engineering, legal and forensic psychology, and pharmacology. The below chart shows this diversification in SSGPDP disciplines with "Other Health" accounting for 25% of the total, "Other Professional" accounting for 14% of the total, and Engineering and Computer Science accounting for 13% of the total:

Number of SSGPDP establishments by UC Accountability Report disciplinary category, AY 1972 to 2017

Percent of total SSGPDP headcount by gender and 10 largest disciplinary categories, AY 2001 to 2016 combined (in order of most populated category).
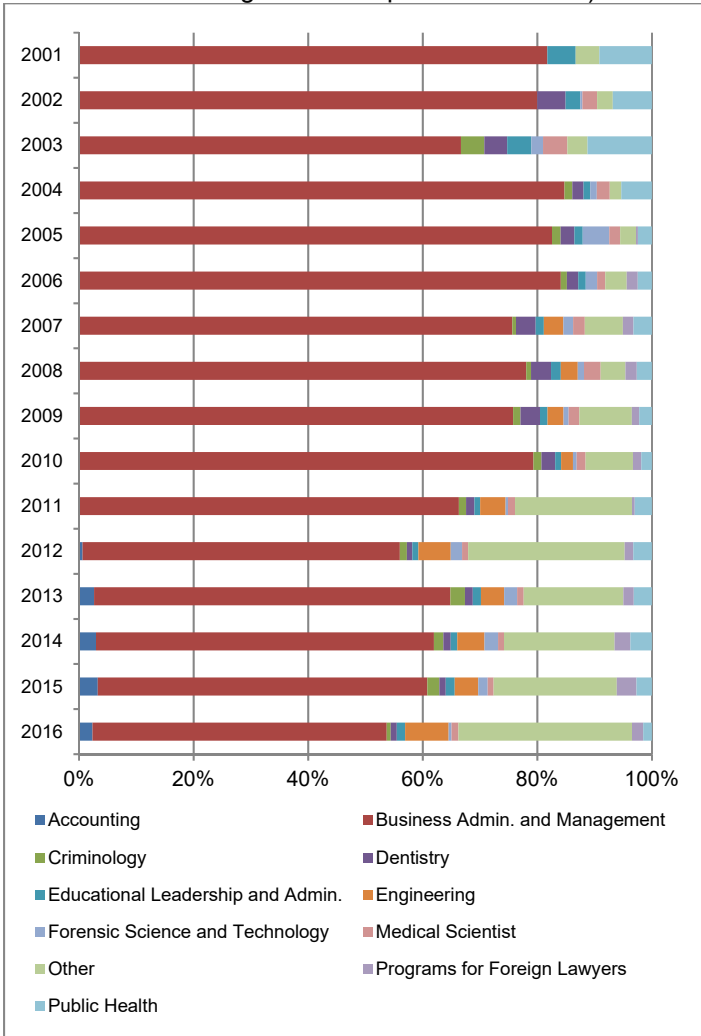

Legend: Female / Male
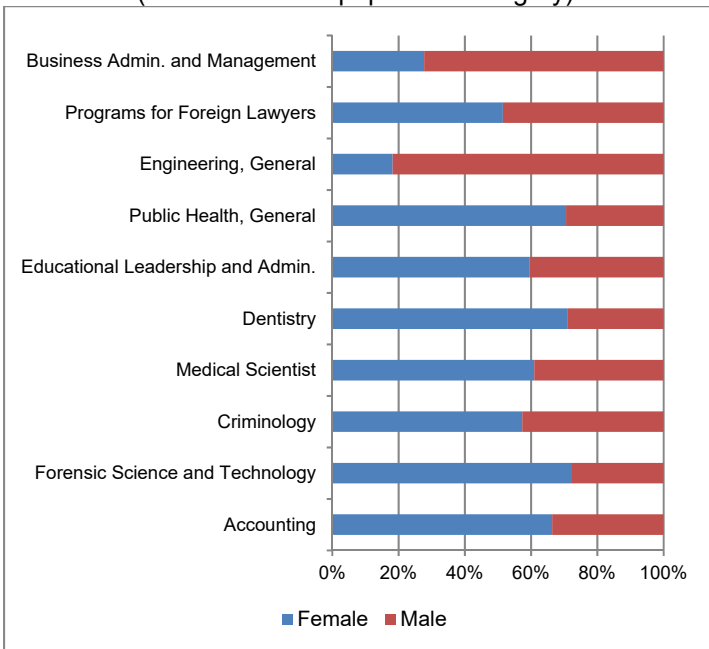
While Business and Management programs account for 24 percent of programs they are 70% of total SSGPDP enrollment and account for the majority of SSGPDP enrollment at all campuses with these programs. However, there is a trend toward increased diversification of enrollment by disciplinary category. In 2001, Business Administration and Management enrollment made up over 80% of total enrollment that year whereas in 2016, Business Administration and Management enrollment made up about half of the total that year. Nonetheless, Business Administration and Management enrollment dominates; in 2016, after "Other" (30%), the disciplinary category with the second largest enrollment was Engineering (8%), Accounting, Programs for Foreign Lawyers, and Public Health, each at 2% of the total.

Disciplinary characteristics of SSGPDPs
UC's oldest and largest self-supporting programs are evening/weekend and executive Master of Business Administration programs. Using the UC Accountability Report's system of disciplinary categories, this bears out as one of the largest disciplinary categories is Business (24%

Percent of enrollment in SSGPDP's by disciplinary category, AY 2001 to 2016 (Note: Business Administration and Management is represented as red)

Legend:
- Accounting
- Business Admin. and Management
- Criminology
- Dentistry
- Educational Leadership and Admin.
- Engineering
- Forensic Science and Technology
- Medical Scientist
- Other
- Programs for Foreign Lawyers
- Public Health

Distribution by campus
SSGPDPs are not distributed equally among UC campuses, and not all UC campuses have established them. UC Santa Barbara and UC Merced have never established a SSGPDP whereas the remaining eight UC campuses either have or have had a SSGPDP. UC San Diego has established the most, 20% of the total, followed by UCLA (18%), Irvine (16%), and Berkeley (15%).

Number of SSGPDP establishments by campus, AY 1972 to 2017
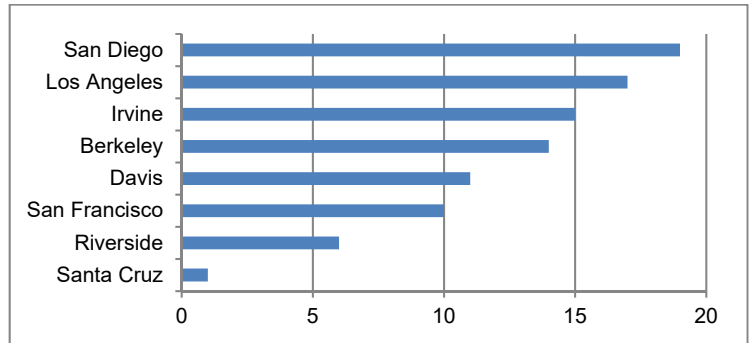
San Diego, although having the highest number of program establishments, does not enroll the greatest number of SSGPDP students. UCLA, Berkeley, and Irvine have had the highest enrollments, accounting for about three-fourths of total enrollment from 2001 to 2016, and Santa Cruz and Riverside historically have had the lowest enrollments.
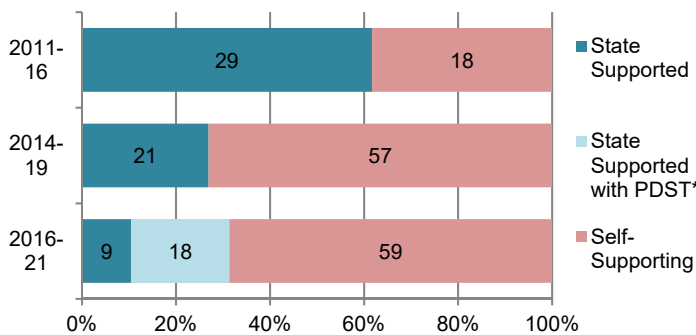
Total SSGPDP headcount by campus, AY 2001 to 2016

Legend:
- BERKELEY
- DAVIS
- IRVINE
- LOS ANGELES
- RIVERSIDE
- SAN DIEGO
- SAN FRANCISCO
- SANTA CRUZ
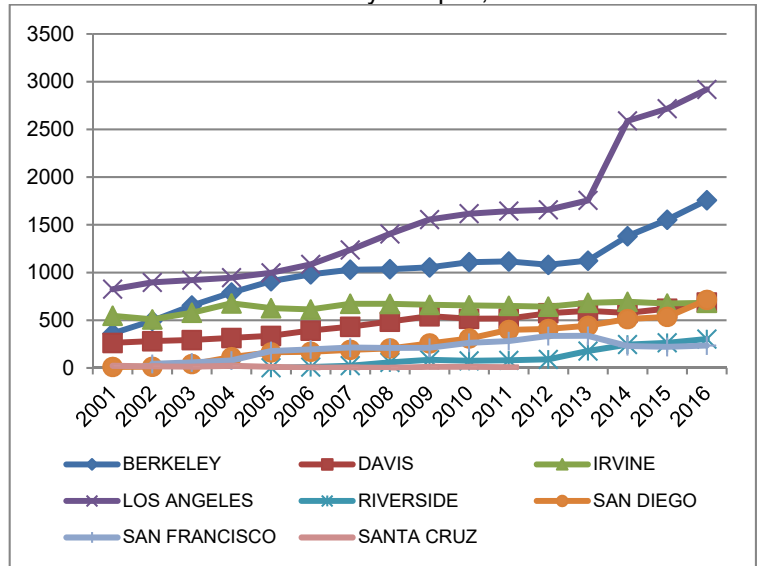
Expectation for continued SSGPDP growth

One indicator for the expectation of continued SSGPDP establishment are the *Five-Year Planning Perspectives.* The *Perspectives*, submitted by each campus to the UC Office of the President every other year, list the anticipated actions to establish, transfer, consolidate, disestablish, or discontinue undergraduate degree programs, graduate degree programs, schools, and colleges. The chart below shows the number of proposals to establish graduate professional degree programs, as reflected in the 2011-16, 2014-19, and 2016-21 *Perspectives* cycles. It identifies those programs that are state supported, those that are state supported with Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition, and those that are SSGPDPs.

Number of proposals to establish graduate professional
degree programs, by fee type.

2011-16	29 (State Supported)	18 (Self-Supporting)
2014-19	21 (State Supported)	57 (Self-Supporting)
2016-21	9 (State Supported), 18 (State Supported with PDST*)	59 (Self-Supporting)

* 2016-21 was the first Perspectives cycle to collect PDST information.

In the 2016-21 *Perspectives* cycle, 69% of the proposals to establish new graduate professional degree programs planned to be SSGPDPs and the other 31% planned to be state supported, with 21% planning to charge PDST and 10% not planning to charge PDST. In the 2014-19 cycle, 73% of these proposals were for SSGPDPs and 27% were for state-supported programs. In the 2011-16 cycle, 62% of these proposals were for state-supported programs while 38% were for SSGDPDs.

In the 2016-21 *Perspectives*, all campuses except Merced had proposals for establishing new SSGPDPs. UCLA has the largest number with 20 planned SSGPDPs, followed by Berkeley and Irvine, each of which has 13 planned SSGPDPs. Across all three *Perspectives* cycles, UCLA had the most proposals for SSGPDPs, 47 (35% of the total), followed by Irvine (22, 16% of total), Berkeley (21, 16% of total), San Diego (14, 10% of total), and Davis (11, 8% of total).

A second indicator for continued SSGPDP establishment derives from admissions data. The number of applications to SSGPDPs has more than quadrupled since 2007, from 3,987 applications in 2007 to 17,887 applications in 2016. Correspondingly, the number of admits has grown, along with, as has been shown, enrollment.

SSGPDP applications, admits, and new enrollees, AY 2007-2016
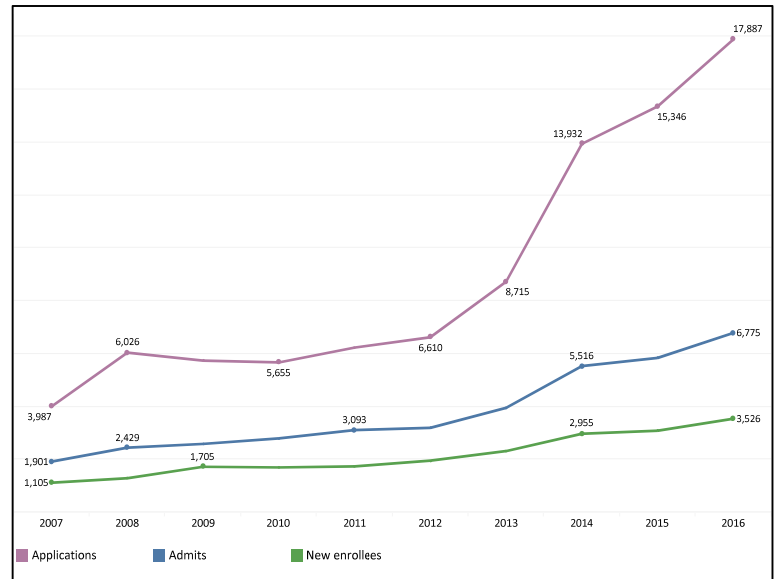
Clearly, SSGPDPs are attracting applications, and the overall demand for SSGPDPs points to further growth given UC's move to increase capacity through developing more SSGPDPs and boosting enrollment in existing programs.

Obervations

Undoubtedly, the growth of SSGPDPs relates to declining levels of state funding for UC. The establishment of these programs increased in the early 2000's and then sharply increased after 2010. In this same period, the percent of UC primary revenues that are state funds dropped dramatically; in 2003, for example, 18% of UC's primary revenues were from state funds whereas in 2013, 10% of these revenues were from the state. The growth of SSGPDPs must, then, be put in the context of UC grappling with diversification of funding strategies and the resulting changes in funding structures. SSGPDPs are a necessary educational strategy that allows the University to serve a greater number of students above and beyond those whom State resources will support. A new SSGPDP policy was adopted by the University in 2016.

SSGPDPs have the potential to generate resources that can enhance the quality, accessibility, and affordability of core academic programs and departments. And they have proven to be resilient—of the 93 SSGPDPs established at UC, only 10 are no longer operating—and thus an ongoing source of revenue for programs, departments, and campuses. They are also, as intended, training a population of students different from more traditional ones, educating professionals using instructional formats that suit their lives. SSGPDPs are therefore offering these educational opportunities in a continually-expanding range of disciplines that meet both students and employer needs.