

Future of the Substance Abuse Workforce in North Carolina

Building Blocks from the Past

Workforce Crisis

National studies indicate that the behavioral health workforce is not equipped in skills or in numbers to respond adequately to the changing needs of the American population.

Annapolis Coalition on the Behavioral Health Workforce, 2007

NC Workforce Trends

The Workforce Development Initiative shows:

- There is currently an inadequate number of mental health and substance abuse professionals to meet service demands.
- There is a chronic mal-distribution of mental health and substance abuse professionals across the state.

(The Workforce Development Initiative, April 2008, NC Commission for MH/DD/SAS and NC Division of MH/DD/SAS)

Strategies for Workforce Development Include

- Recruit by increasing the number of students entering human services.
- Recruit by increasing the number of workers entering the public system.
- Retain by decreasing the rate of workers leaving the public sector.

What Has Experience Taught Us?

- During an earlier period the federal system addressed a “compelling need for more trained addiction counselors”.
- The Alcohol and Drug Section of the NC Division of MH/DD/SAS participated in the federal initiative.

In 1991 PACT Launched

- Professional Addiction Counselor Training (PACT) originated in 1991 as a federal initiative with grant-funded projects in state and regional offices.
- The primary goal was *to recruit and train individuals to become certified substance abuse counselors.*

NC PACT

- The NC PACT Project began in December 1991 as one of the federally-funded state-level projects.
- The national office developed criteria for admission and handled the recruitment and initial screening of applicants.

National PACT Criteria

Those who were recruited had:

- Less than 3 years experience working in the field of substance abuse,
- Not yet been certified,
- A professional goal to be or remain a substance abuse counselor.



Priority was given to cultural or ethnic minorities.

National Office and North Carolina

- The national PACT office closed in September 1995.
- The national office had created interest through widespread publicity.
- NC retained the PACT Project and shifted the application process instate.

North Carolina



PACT

Professional Addiction
Counselor Training

NC PACT

- Contracted with a certified clinical supervisor to identify, approve, and follow-up with internship sites (supervised practica).
- Developed application procedures using national admission criteria.
- Processed 100 applications within first six months.

Within Two Years NC PACT Emphasis Shifted to Higher Education

- Added financial aid for college or graduate school.
- Limited enrollment to those already working as substance abuse counselors, except for applicants from community colleges with substance abuse track.
- Gave preference to those who had at least 100 hours toward certification.

Community Colleges Approved

- Central Piedmont Community College
- Guilford Technical College
- Sandhills Community College
- Southwestern Community College
- Western Piedmont Community College

Initial Admission Criteria for College Financial Aid

- High school diploma or GED
- Currently working in the substance abuse field
- If in recovery, at least three years' sobriety
- Commitment to a career goal of becoming a substance abuse counselor
- Already accepted or in the process of enrolling in an accredited institution of higher learning

Application Process Included:

- Information on current employment, background, progress toward certification, name of school and program, years in substance abuse.
- Financial information on income and expense categories, statement of intent.
- Face-to-face interview with Certified Clinical Supervisor.

Review Process Included

- Confirmation of current substance abuse employment.
- Documentation of class hours toward certification and supervision contract.
- Consideration of income and number of dependents.
- Satisfactory interview with emphasis on commitment to career as substance abuse counselor.

Applicants Agreed:

- I am seeking a degree in higher education as a part of my career goal of becoming employed in a licensed treatment facility as a professional substance abuse counselor.
- I have no history of alcohol or other drug abuse in the past three (3) years.
- I understand that, if I receive PACT financial aid for college or university study, I must maintain at least a C in every course that I take.
- I agree to send PACT my mid-term and final grades for each course each term.

Process for Stipend Awards

- Established relationship with individual students, not with schools
 - Exception: community colleges
- Set up system for
 - Processing and recording grades, financial aid requests, invoices, and updates on changes in status.
 - Method for disbursing financial aid for tuition and books.

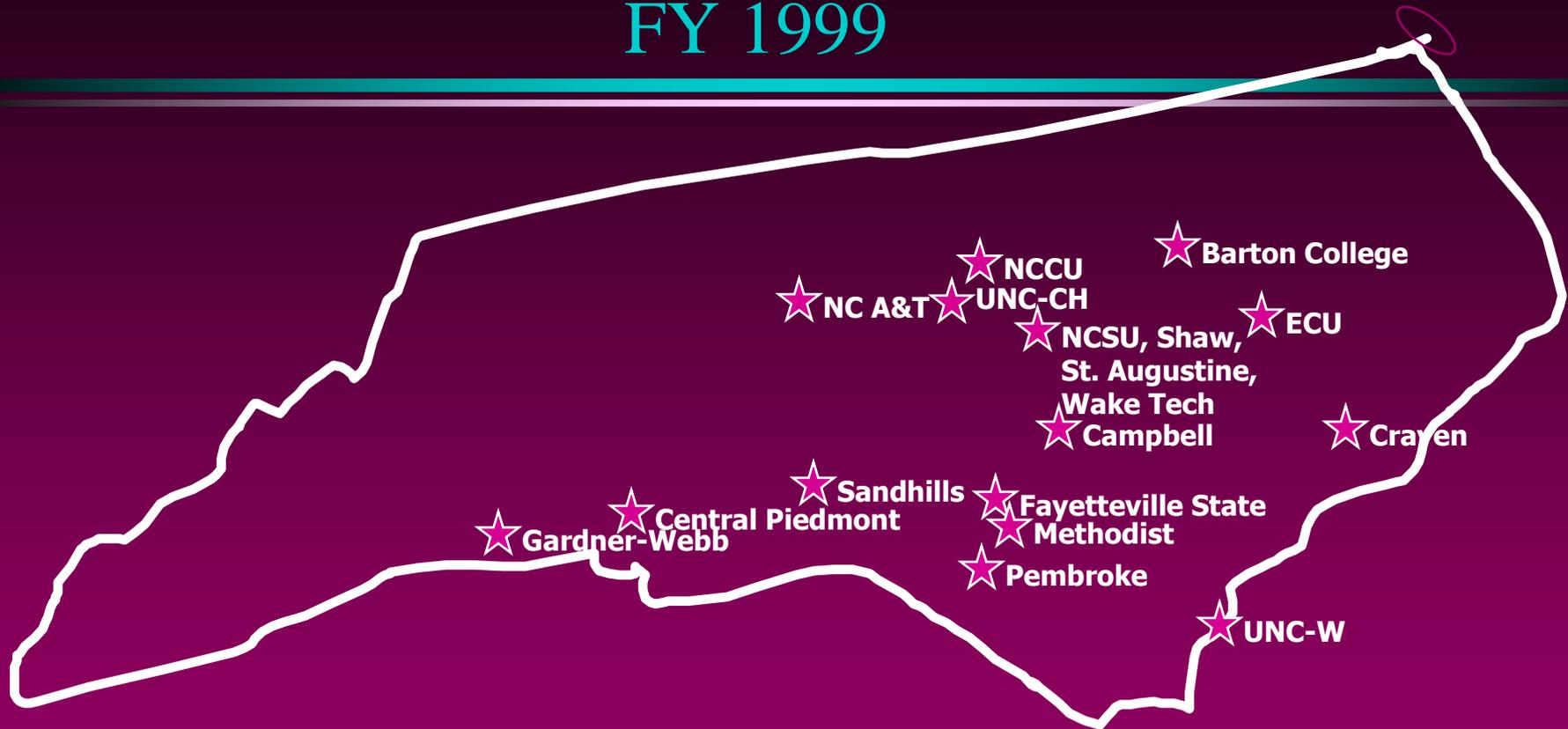
Early Lessons

- People who work and go to school may not attend consecutive semesters.
- Monitoring grades twice per term weeds out those who are not serious.
- Salaries are low enough that often applicants also qualify for Pell grants which eliminates or reduces the PACT funding (non-duplication of federal dollars).
- Community college students not working in the field do not have the same commitment.

First Stipend Recipients

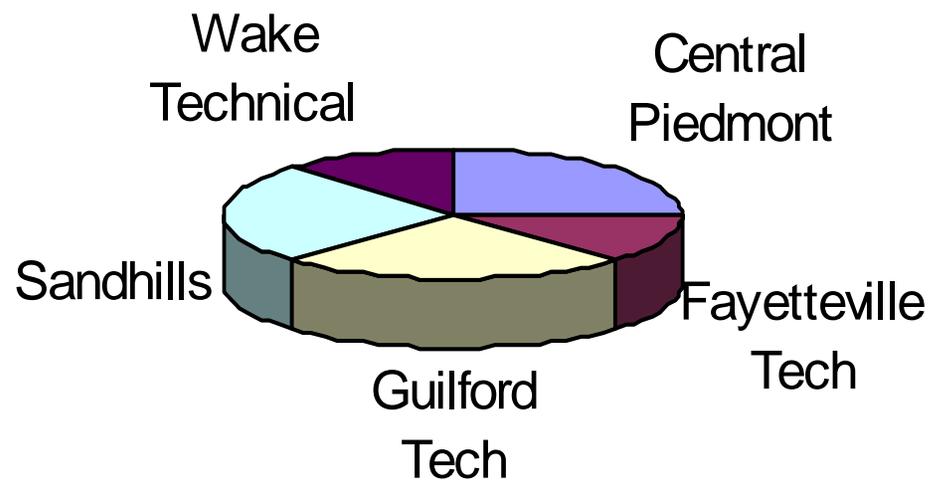
Hispanic Male	1
African Amer. Male	5
African Amer. Female	4
Caucasian Male	4
Caucasian Female	3
Total	17

Locations for NC PACT College Stipends FY 1999



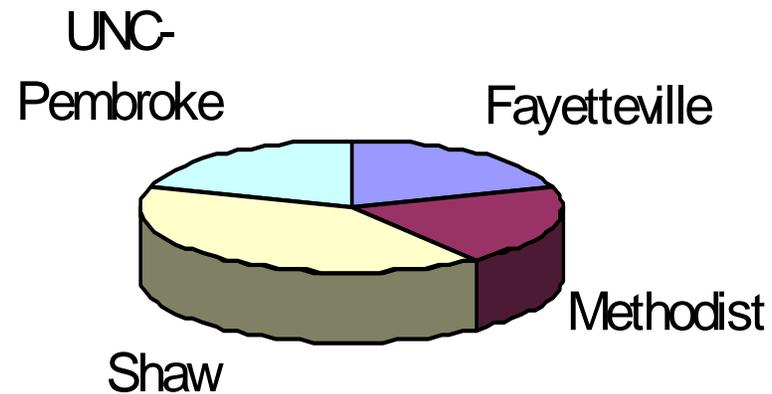
Stipends per school

Associate's Degrees



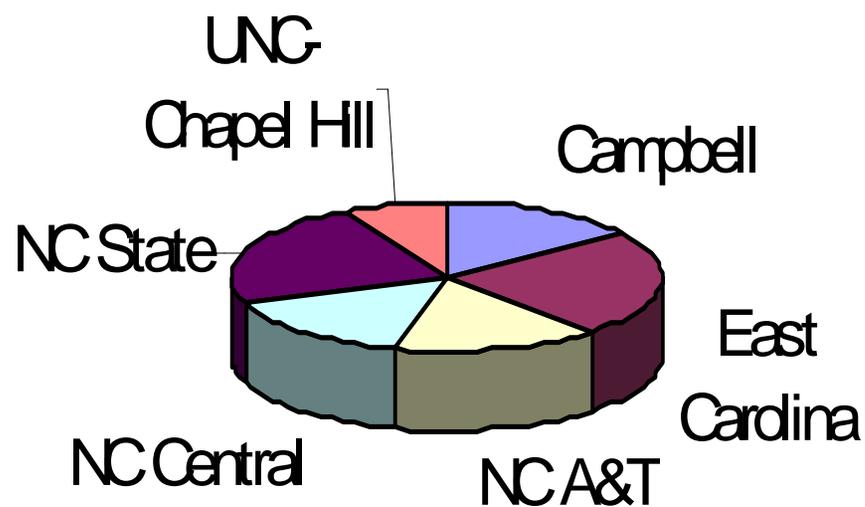
Schools Con'd.

Bachelor's Degrees



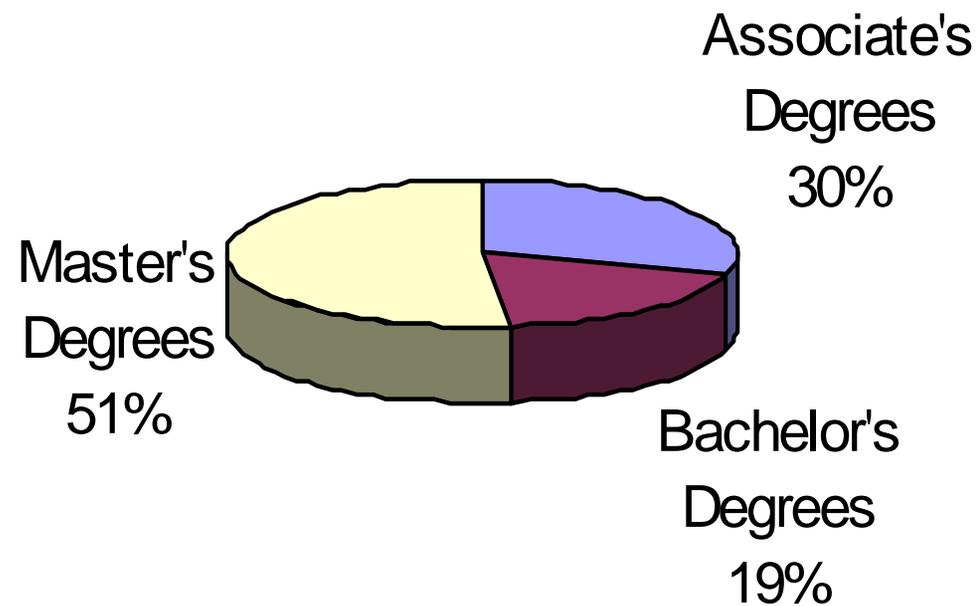
Schools Con'd.

Master's Degrees



Stipends Overview

Distribution of Stipends



Recruitment Methods

- Flyers and applications to Area Mental Health offices and private providers.
- NC PACT web site with application.
- Quarterly newsletter to enrollees.
- Coordination with NC Addiction Technology Transfer Center (NCATTC) and participating community colleges.

Locations for College Stipends 1998 - 2008



Updated Requirements

- Working as substance abuse counselor, unless referred from community college
- Accepted in an accredited school of higher education physically located in North Carolina
- Pursuing clinical degree—counseling, psychology, social work

Requirements con'd

- Completes face-to-face interview with CCS
- Registered as CSAC or LCAS and lists progress made
- Supplies basic financial information on income and expenses
 - Includes sources of other financial aid

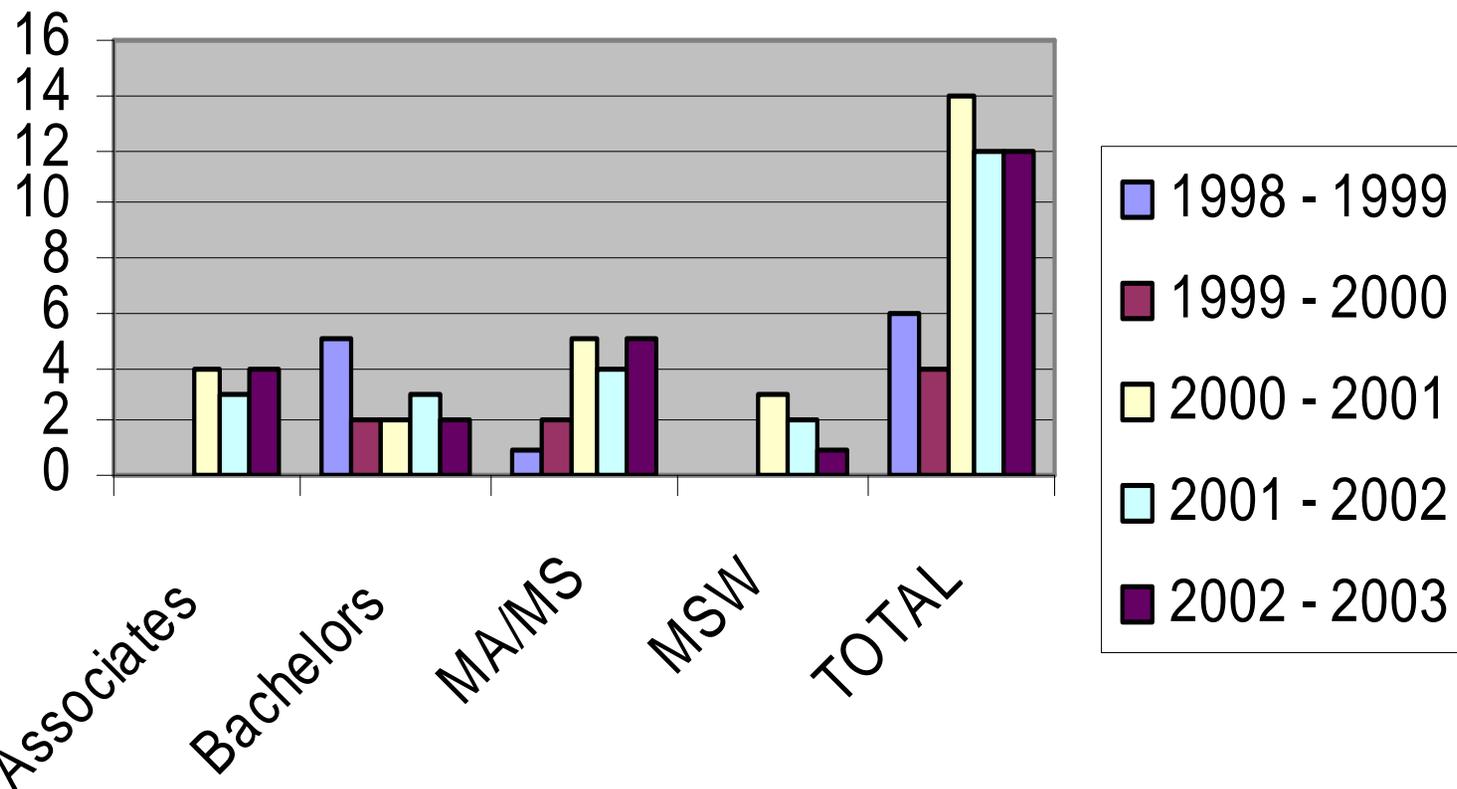
Requirements con'd.

- Two letters of reference—one from current CCS.
- Financial aid considers levels of household income plus number of dependents.
- Academic progress monitored each term through mid-term reports and final grades.
 - Less than a C in a course means inactive status until satisfactory grade obtained at the student's expense.

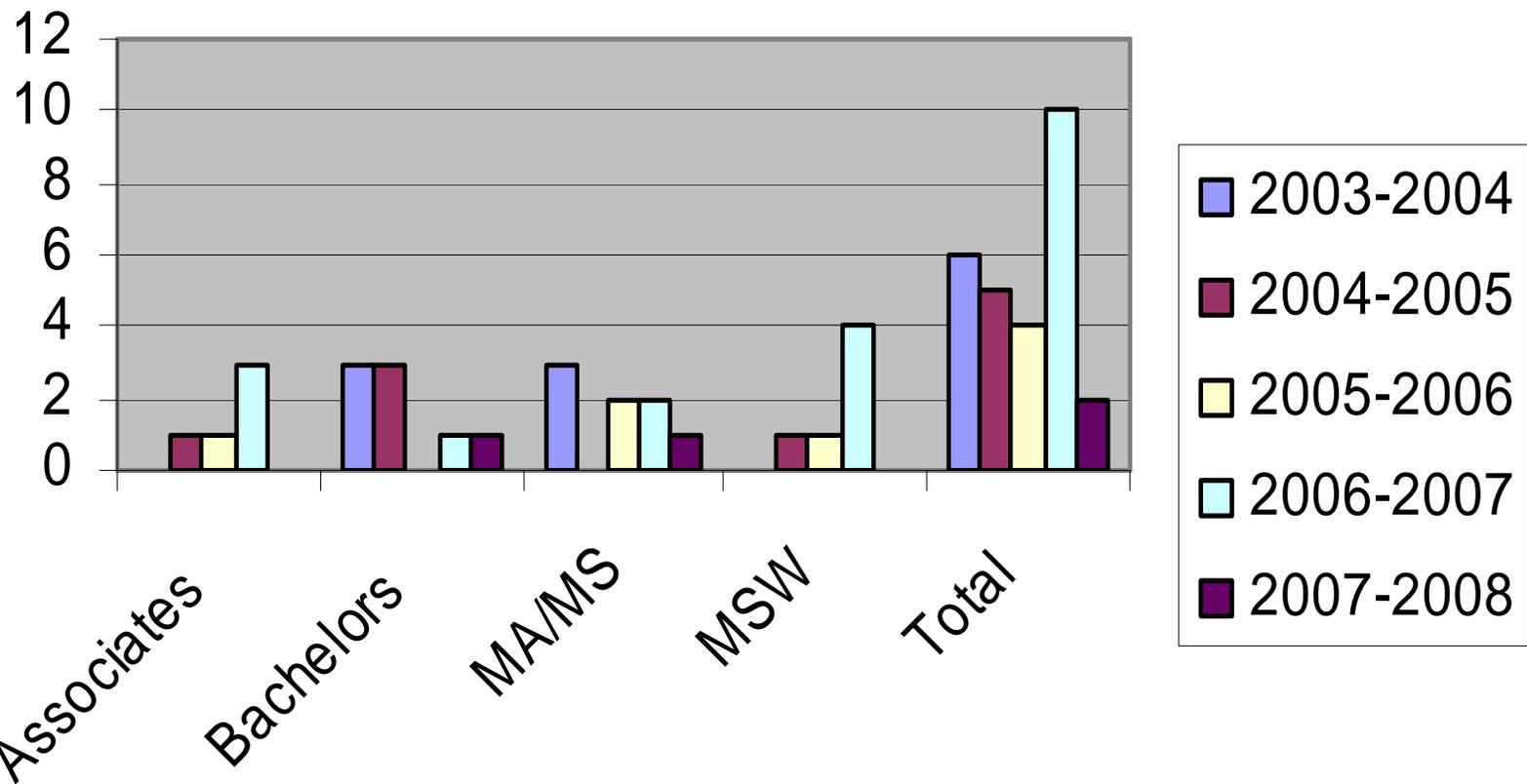
Requirements con'd.

- Students who drop out during a semester for any reason are expected to repay the stipend.
- Students must request financial aid for each semester.
- Financial aid covers tuition, fees, books.

Degrees Completed



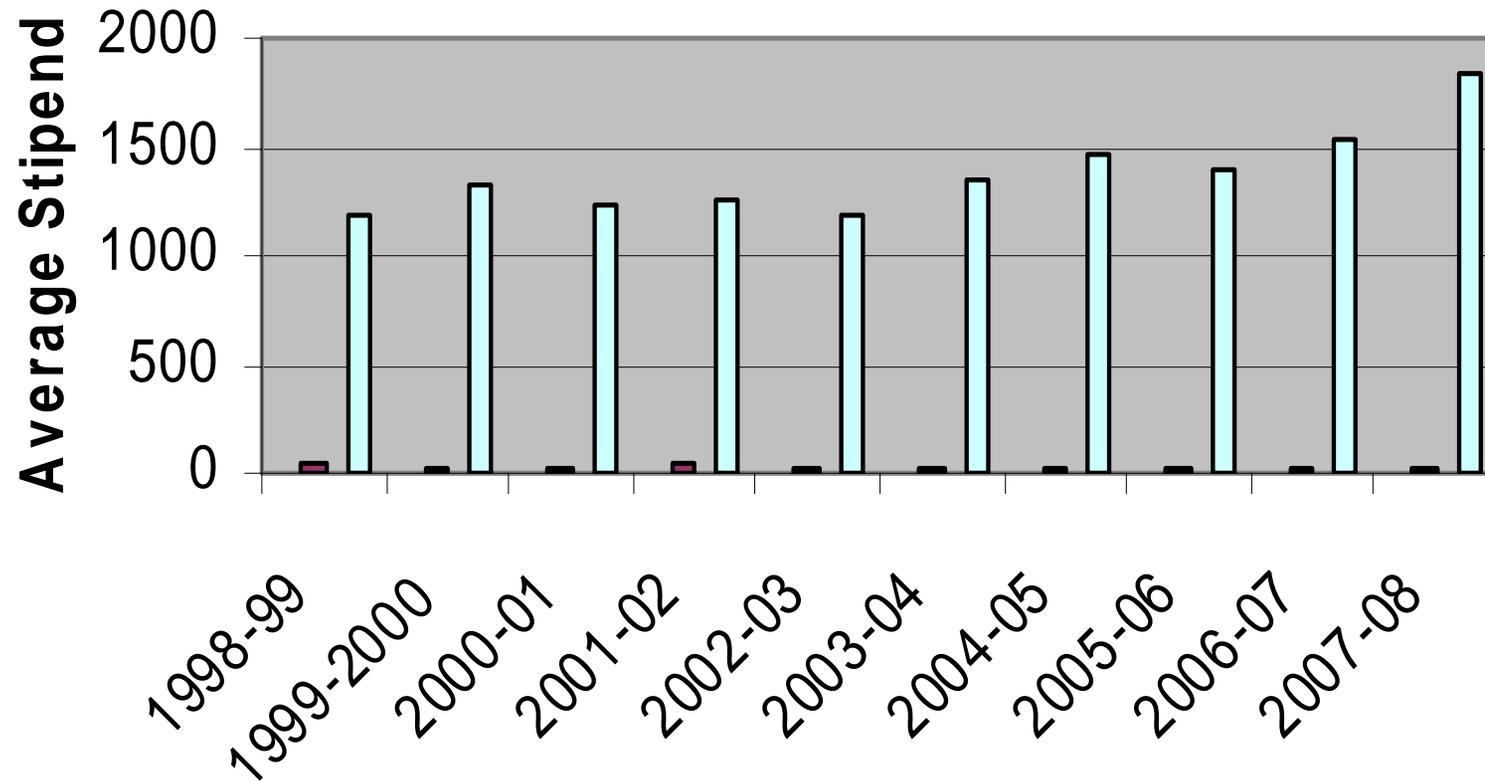
Degrees Completed Con'd.



Graduates 1998-2008

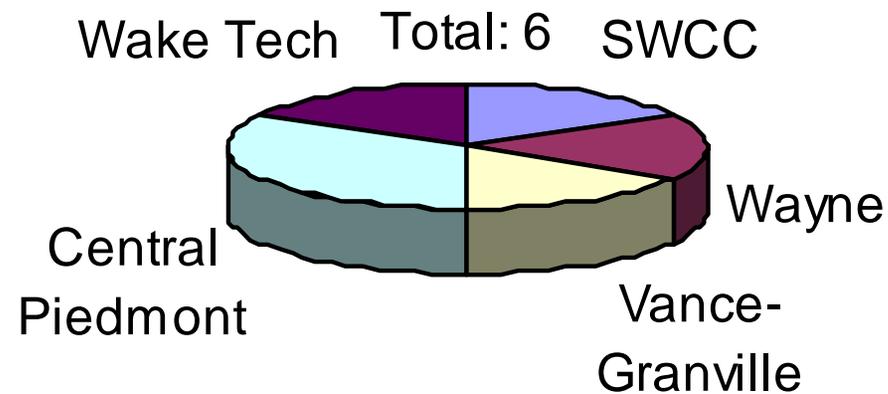
- 125 enrolled for higher education support
- 75 completed 1 degree
- 6 completed 2 degrees
- 1 completed 3 degrees

Average Award per Year



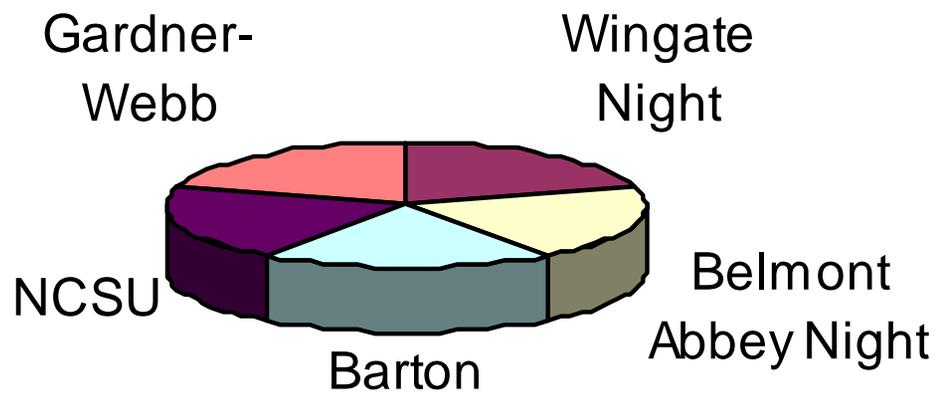
Eligible Participants' Schools

Associate's Degrees



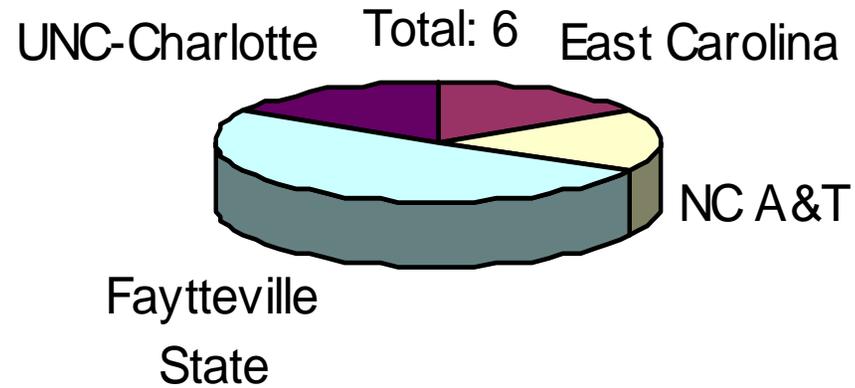
Schools Con'd.

Bachelor's Degrees

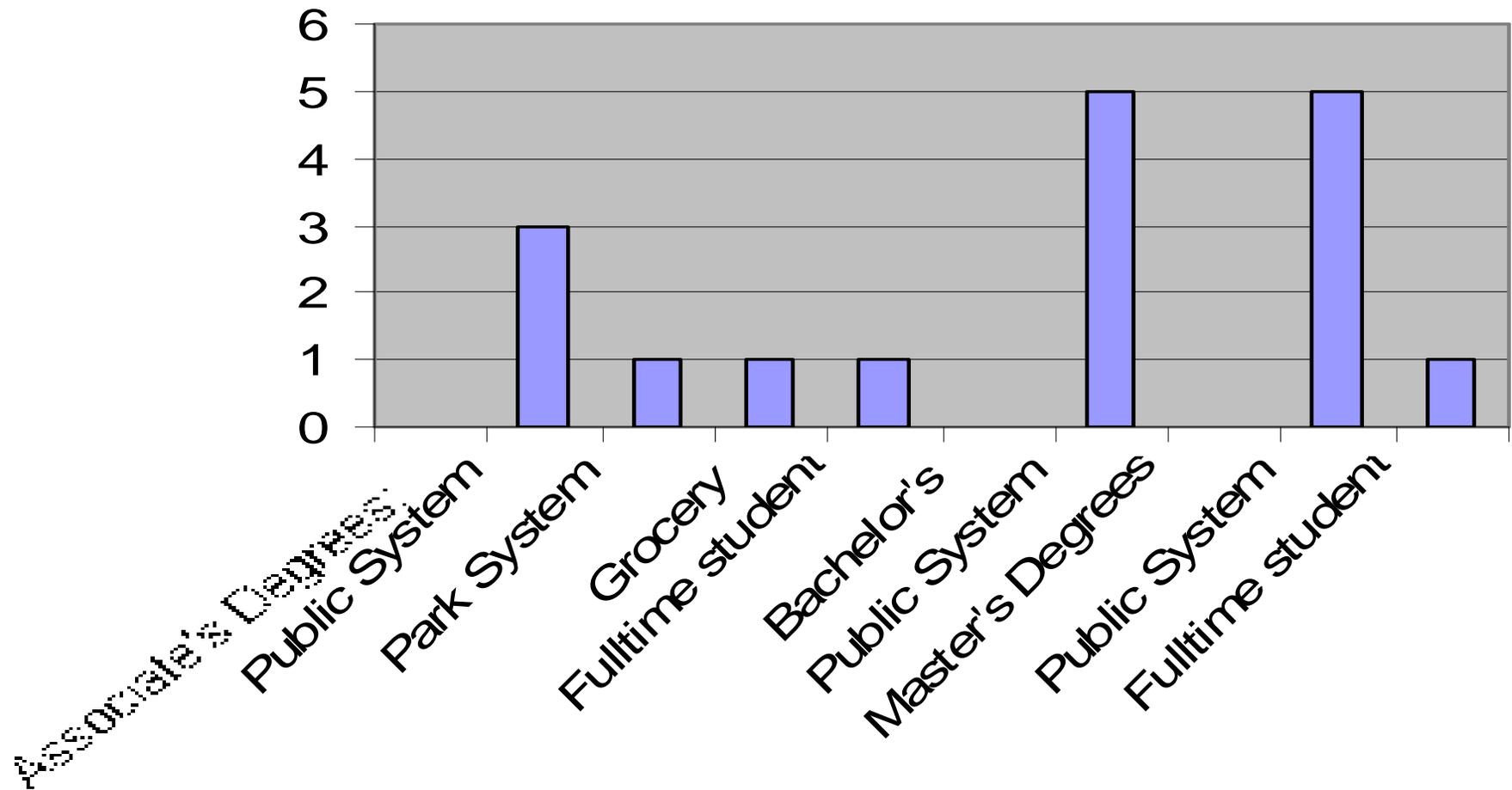


Schools Con'd.

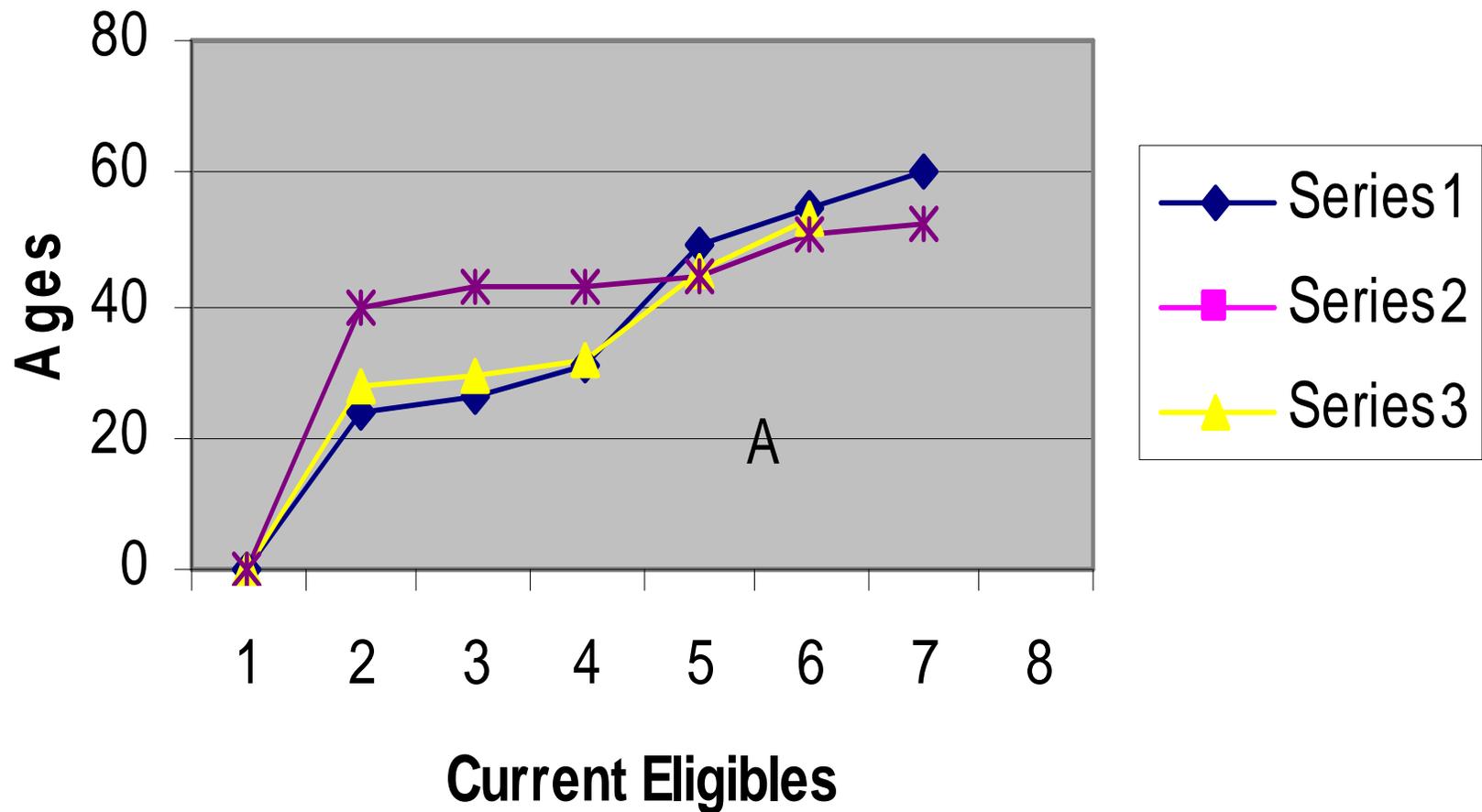
Master's Degrees



Current Students' Employers



Ages of Current Students



Lessons Learned

- Relationships need to be established with clinical departments as well as with individual students.
- Working full-time and going to school means a minimum of 6 semesters regardless of the degree.
- Partial financial aid is not adequate with increasing tuition and book costs.

Lessons con'd

- Students without work experience, such as those from community colleges, have difficulty finding internships or entry level positions.
- With a few exceptions a career path is not available with providers.
- Salaries are not competitive.

Strategies for Workforce Development Include

- Recruit by increasing the number of students entering human services.
- Recruit by increasing the number of workers entering the public system.
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