

Mind the Gap: Equity Gaps in COTA

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Research Questions

To identify and communicate the Equity Gaps across the College of the Arts, we asked several animating questions:

- Who are our arriving students?
- Who are our graduating students?
- How long is it taking them to graduate and how does that differ across departments, academic programs, FTFY vs. TRANSFER, and across demographic measures?
- Who are we losing? And how can we communicate this and other findings effectively?

Introduction

From the COTA Strategic Plan
“Investing in the Next
Generation of the Arts for All,”

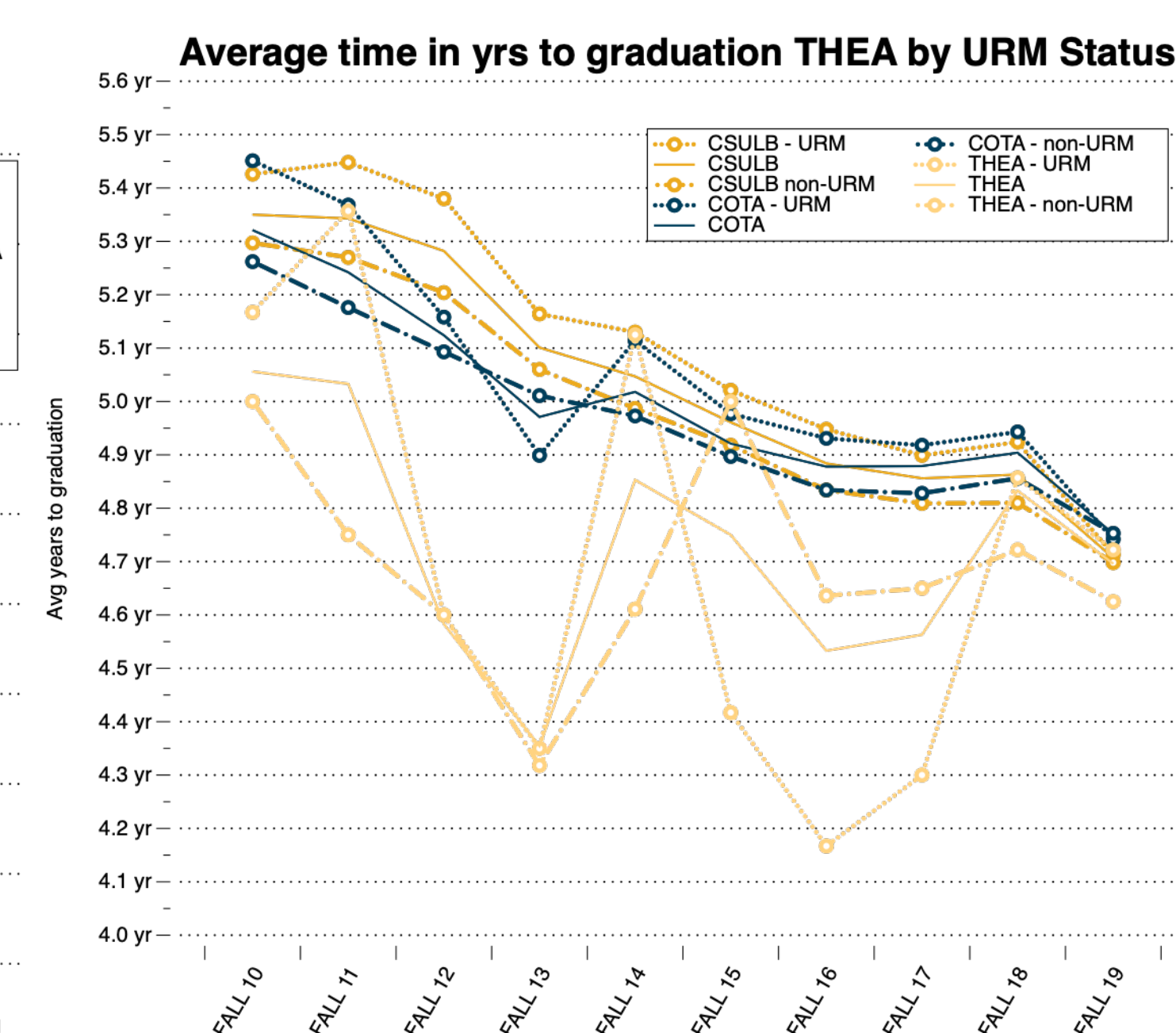
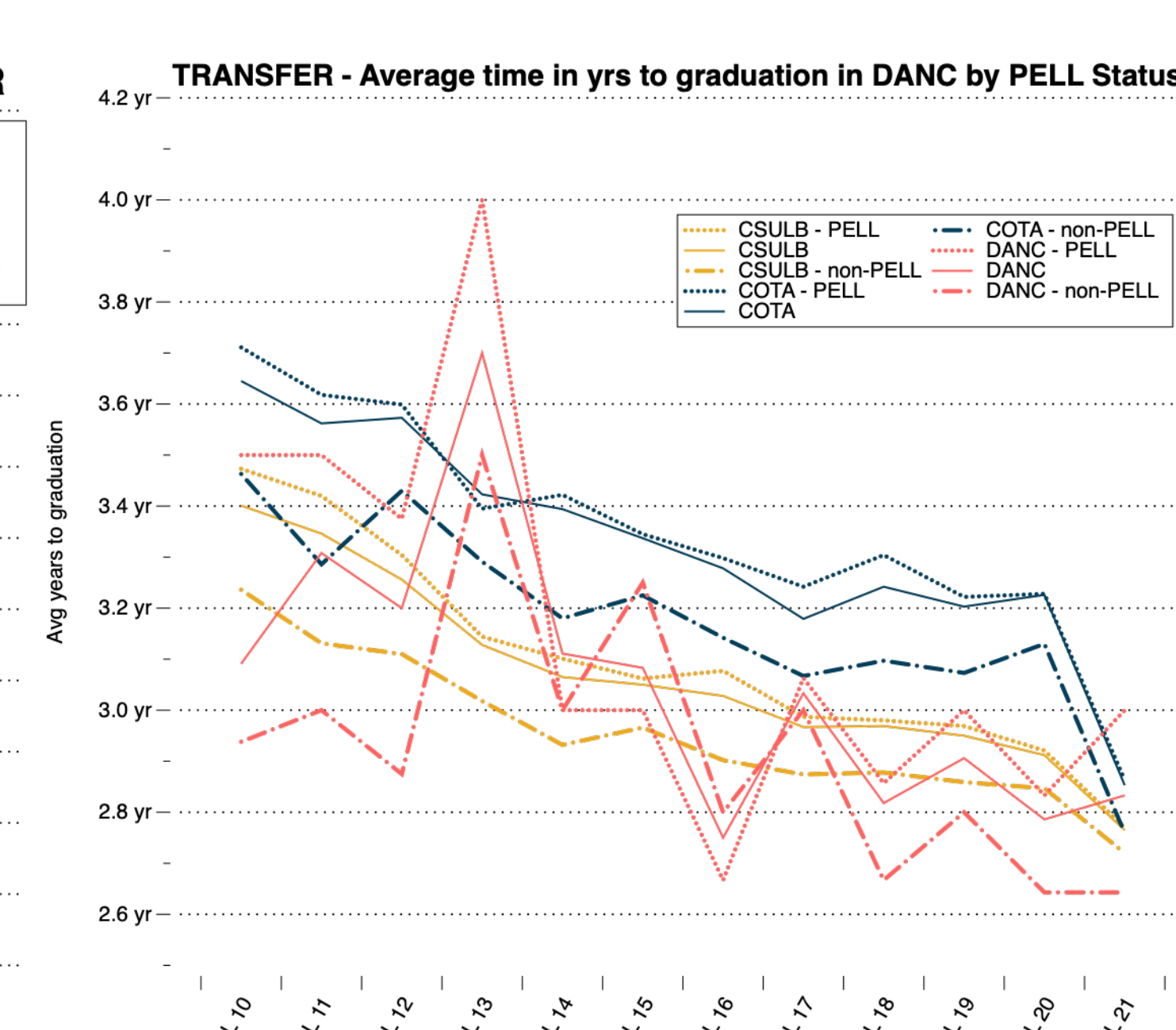
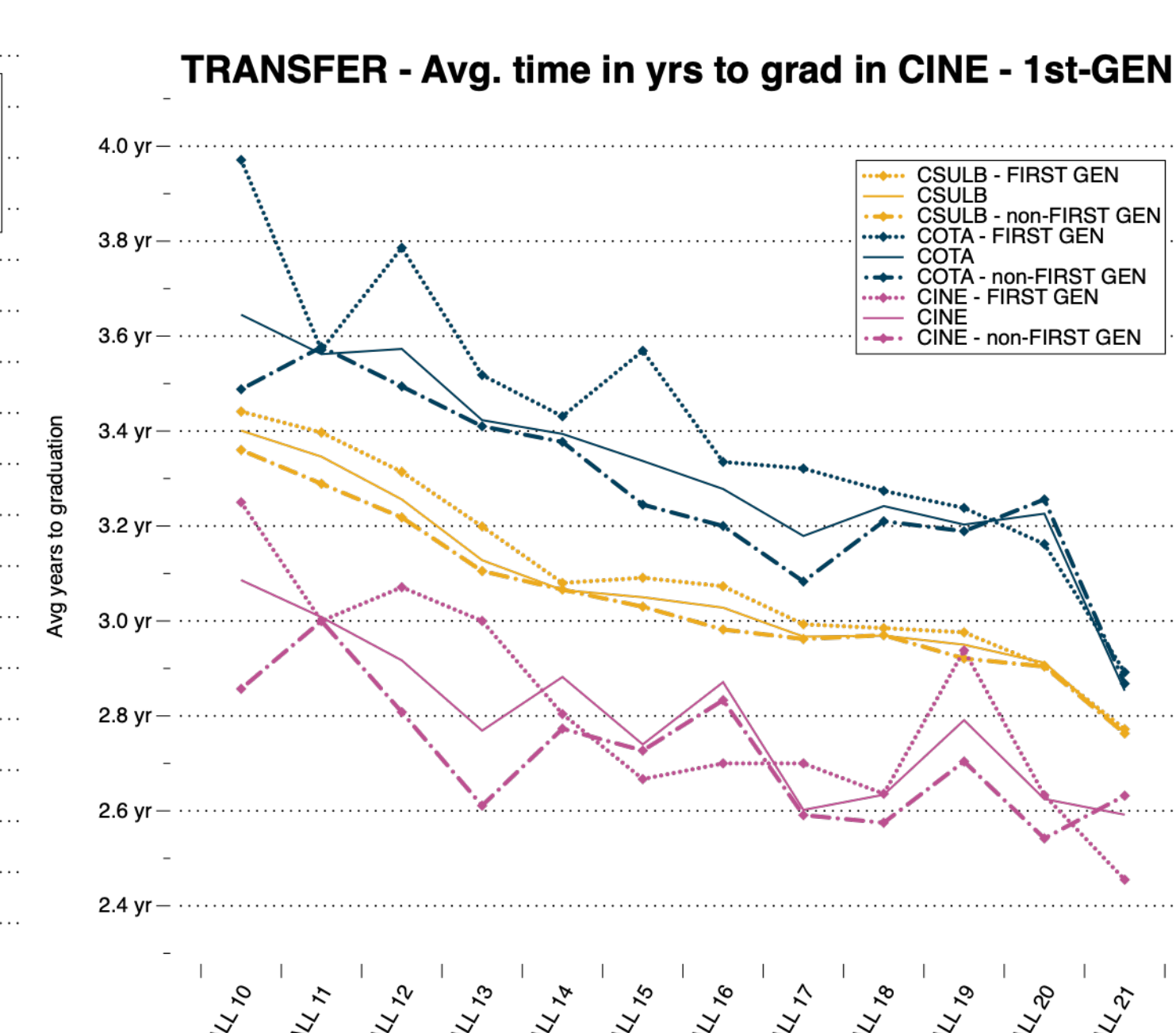
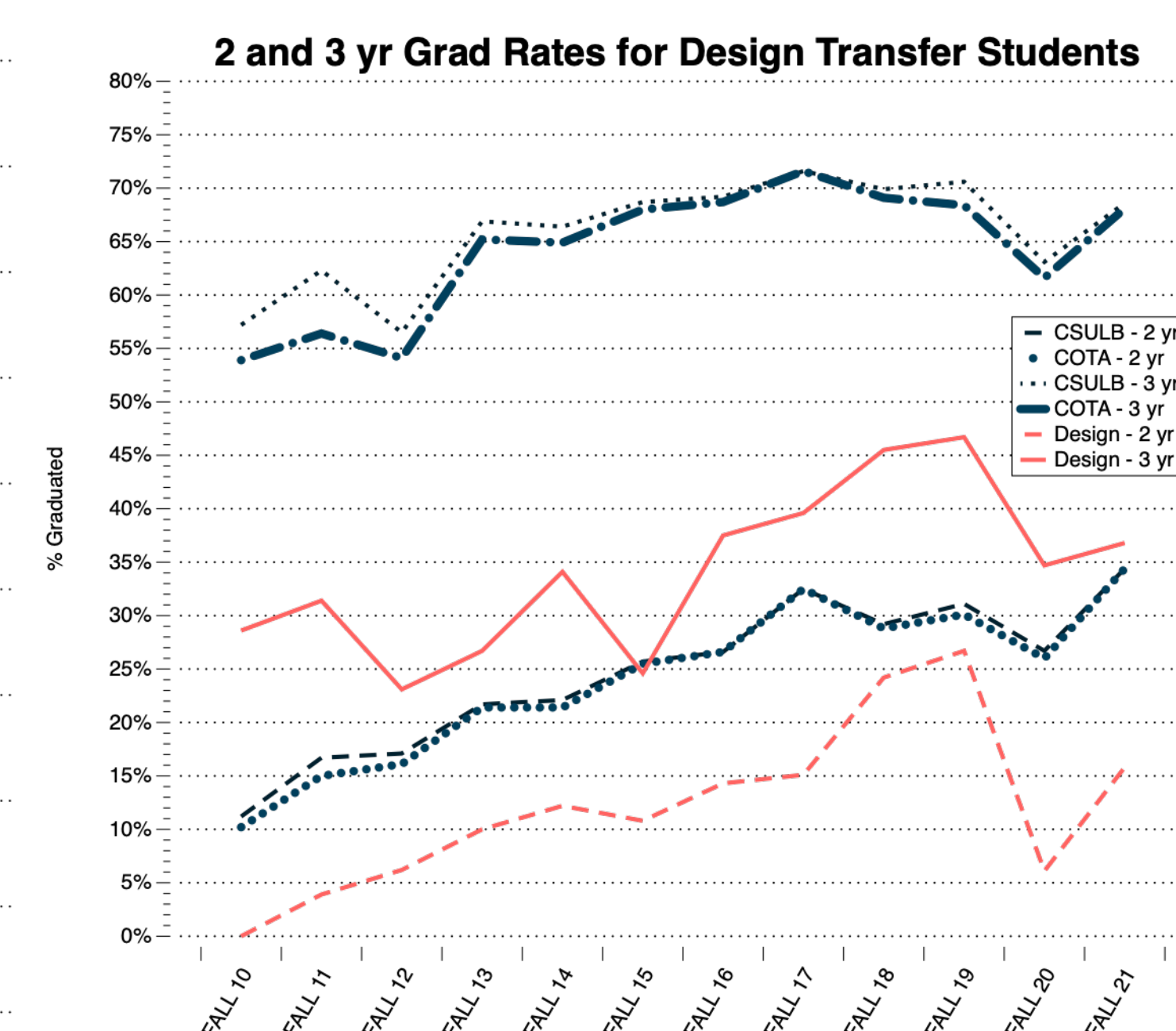
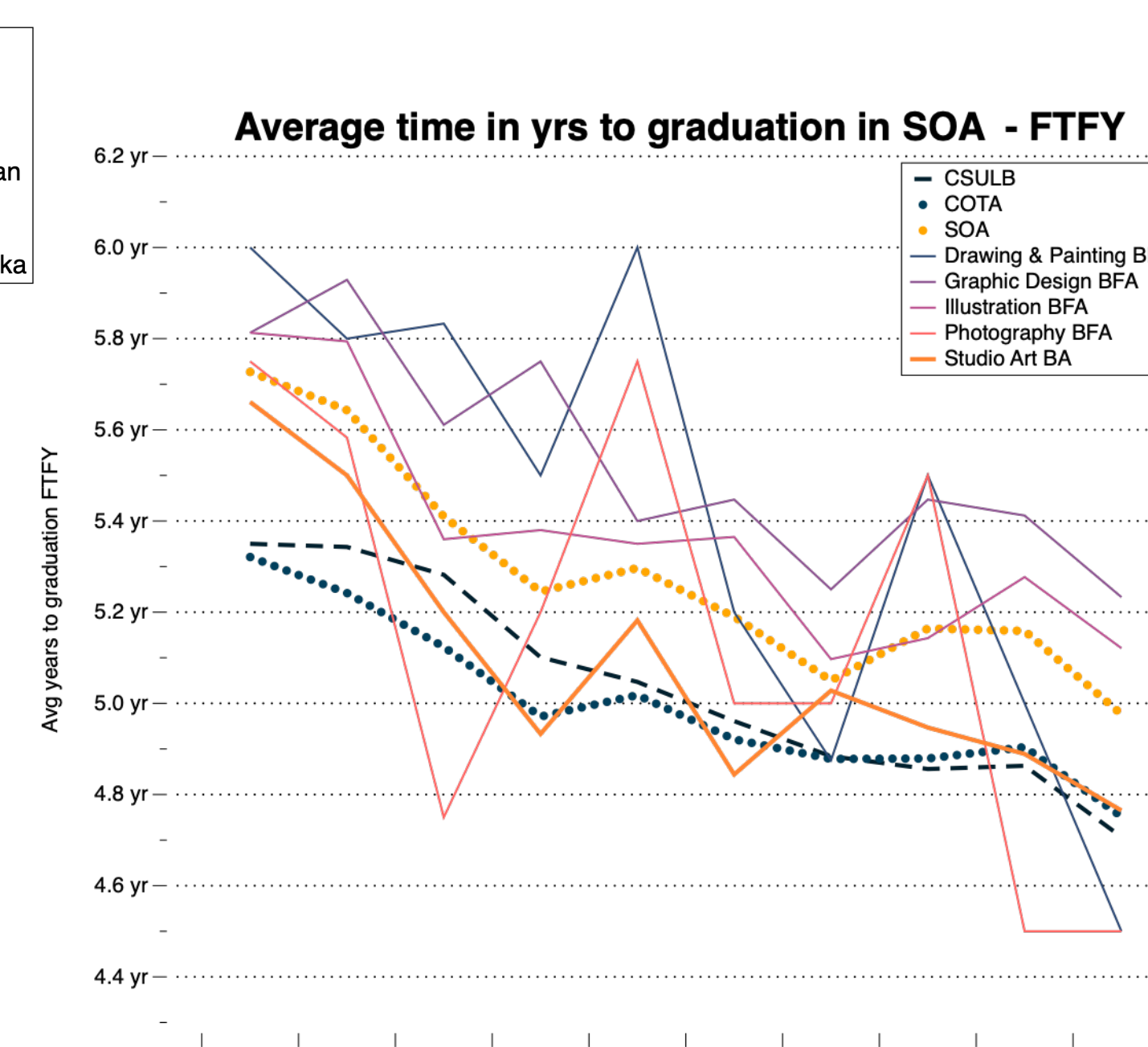
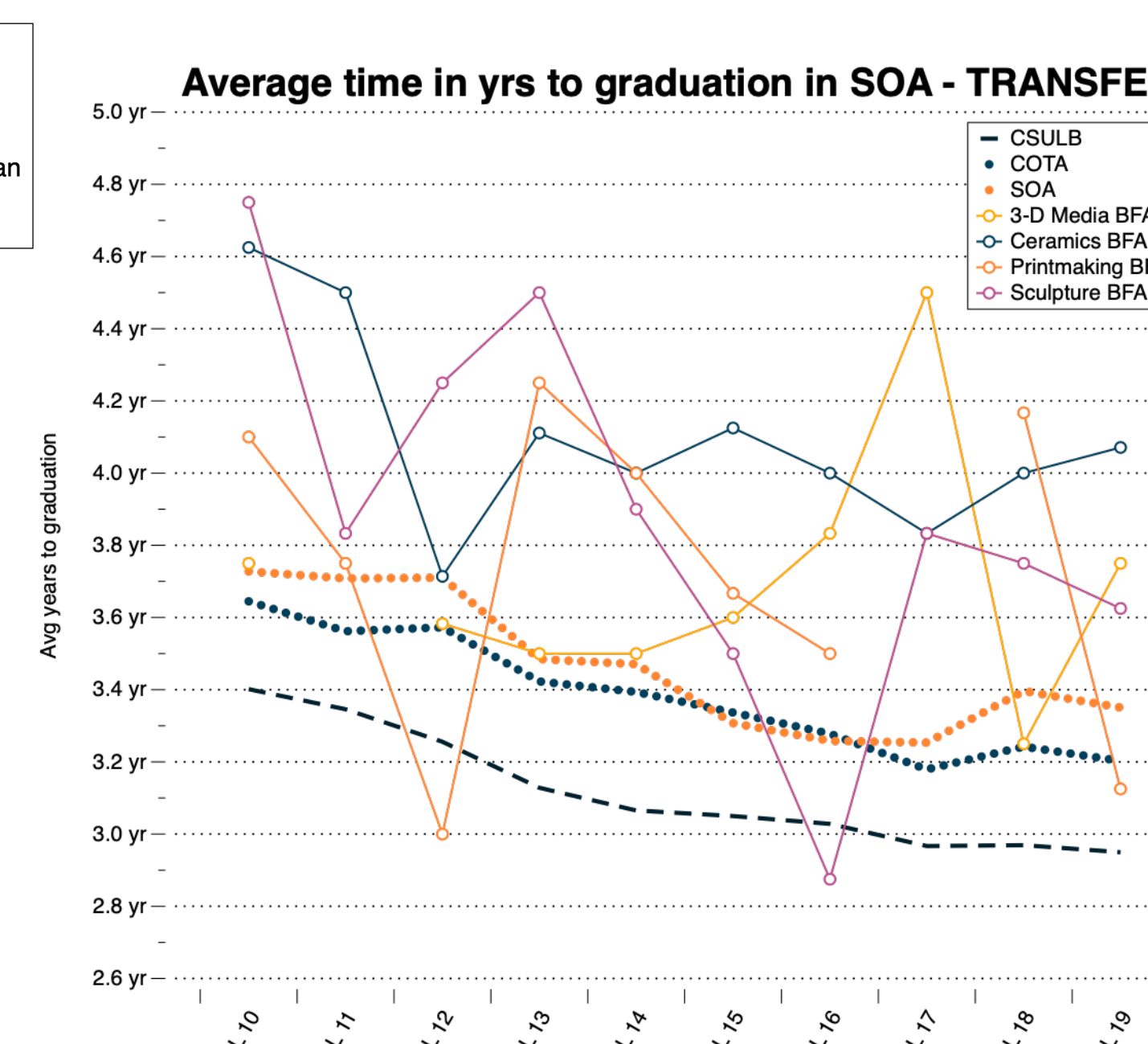
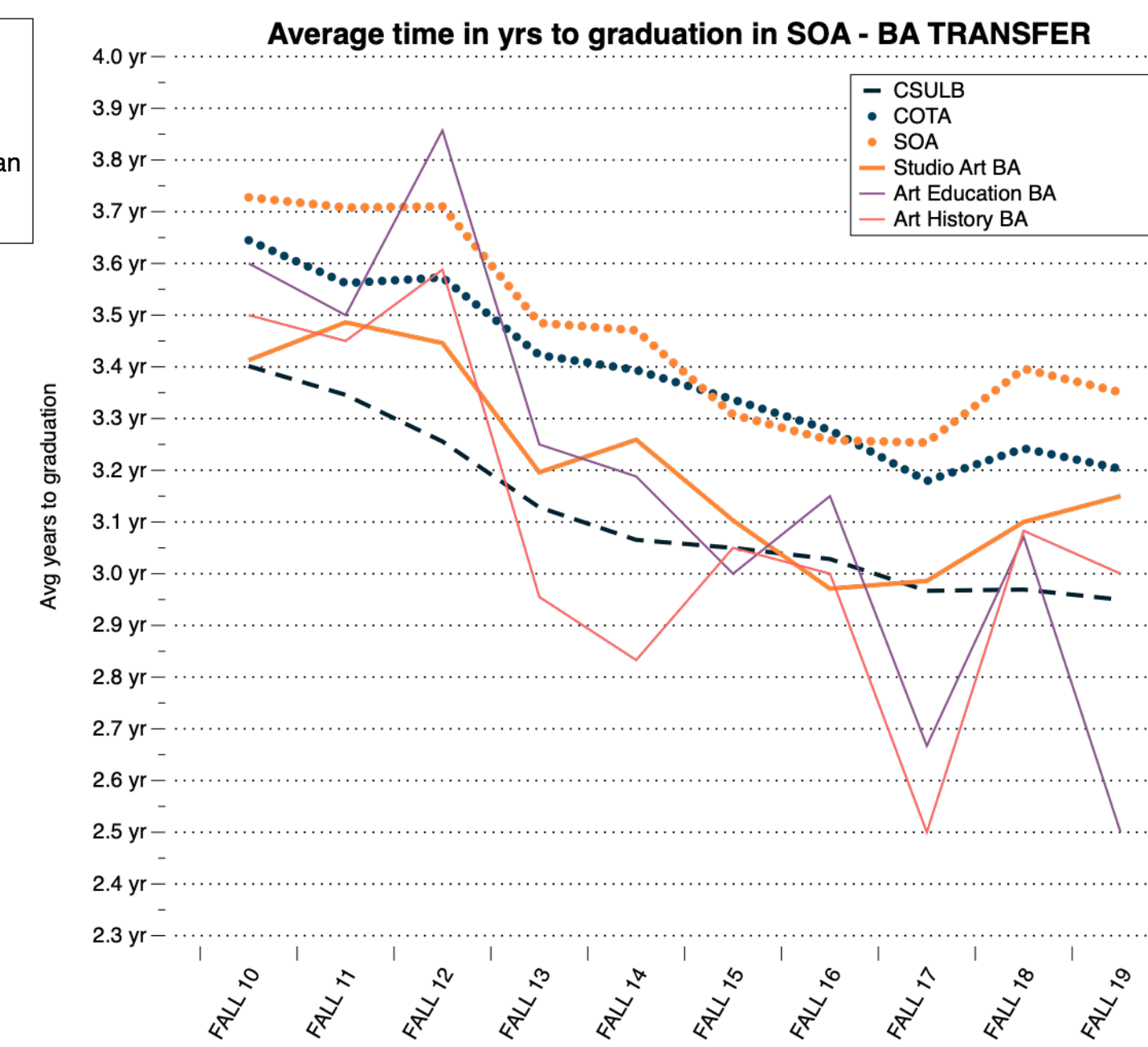
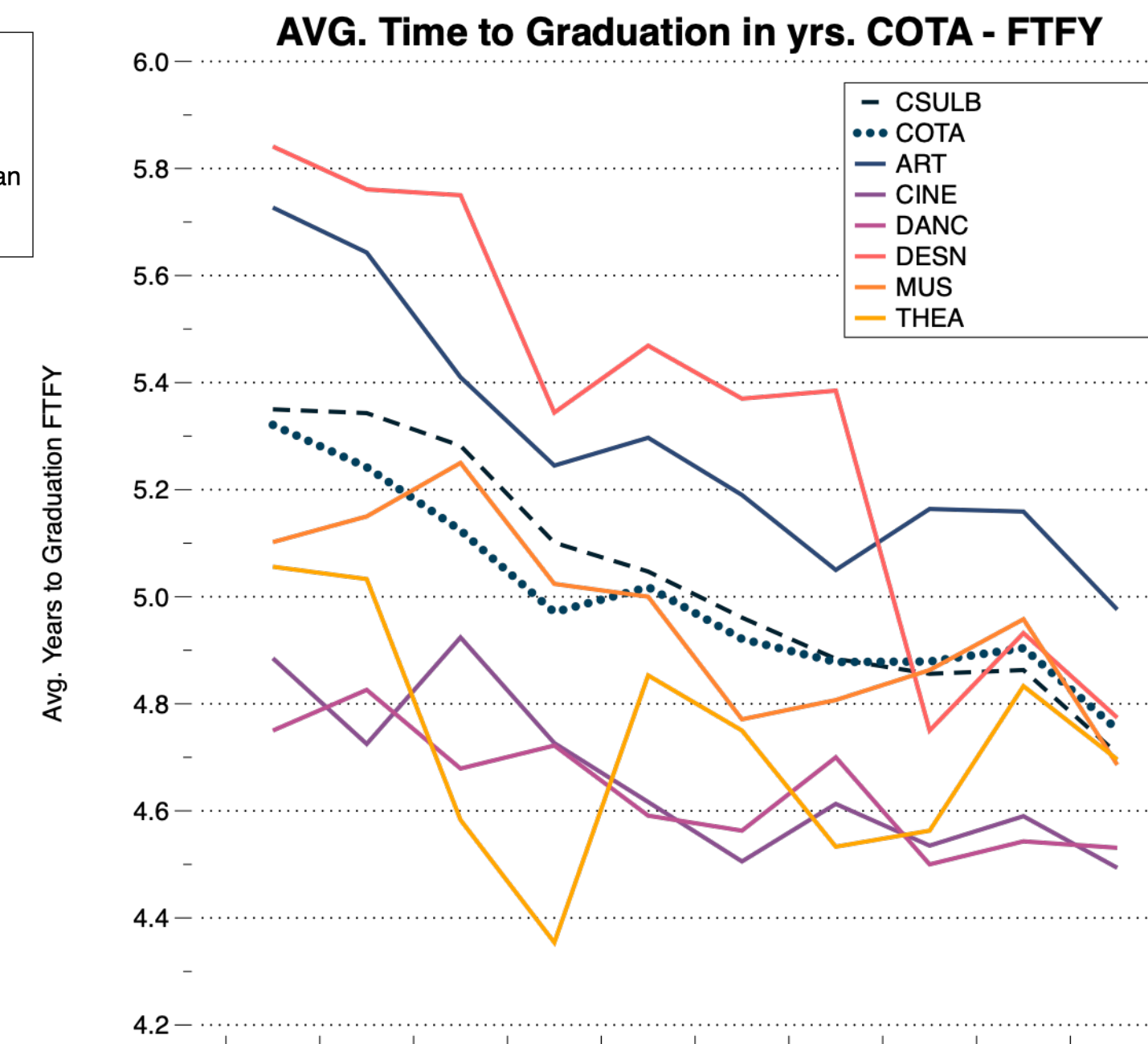
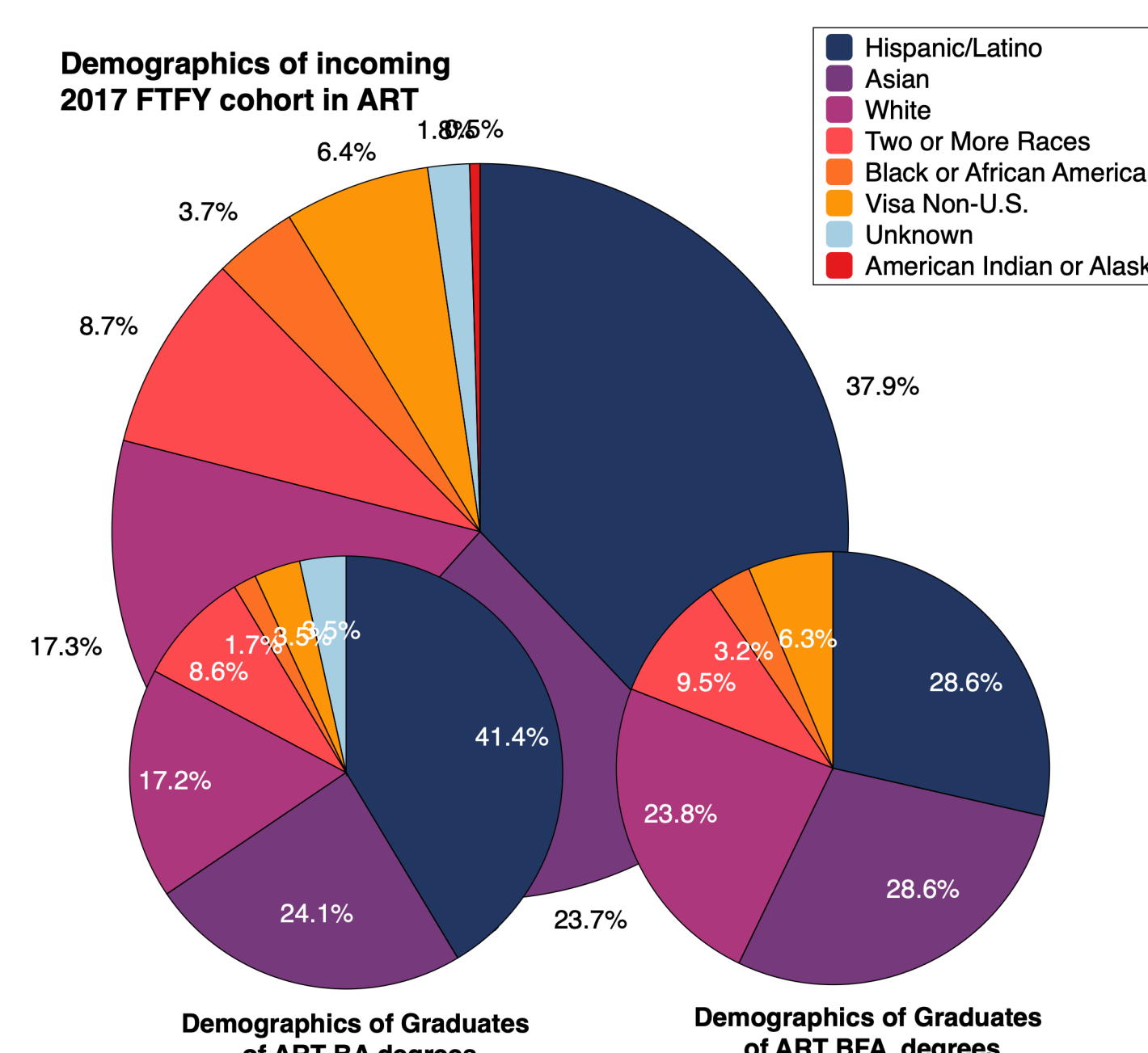
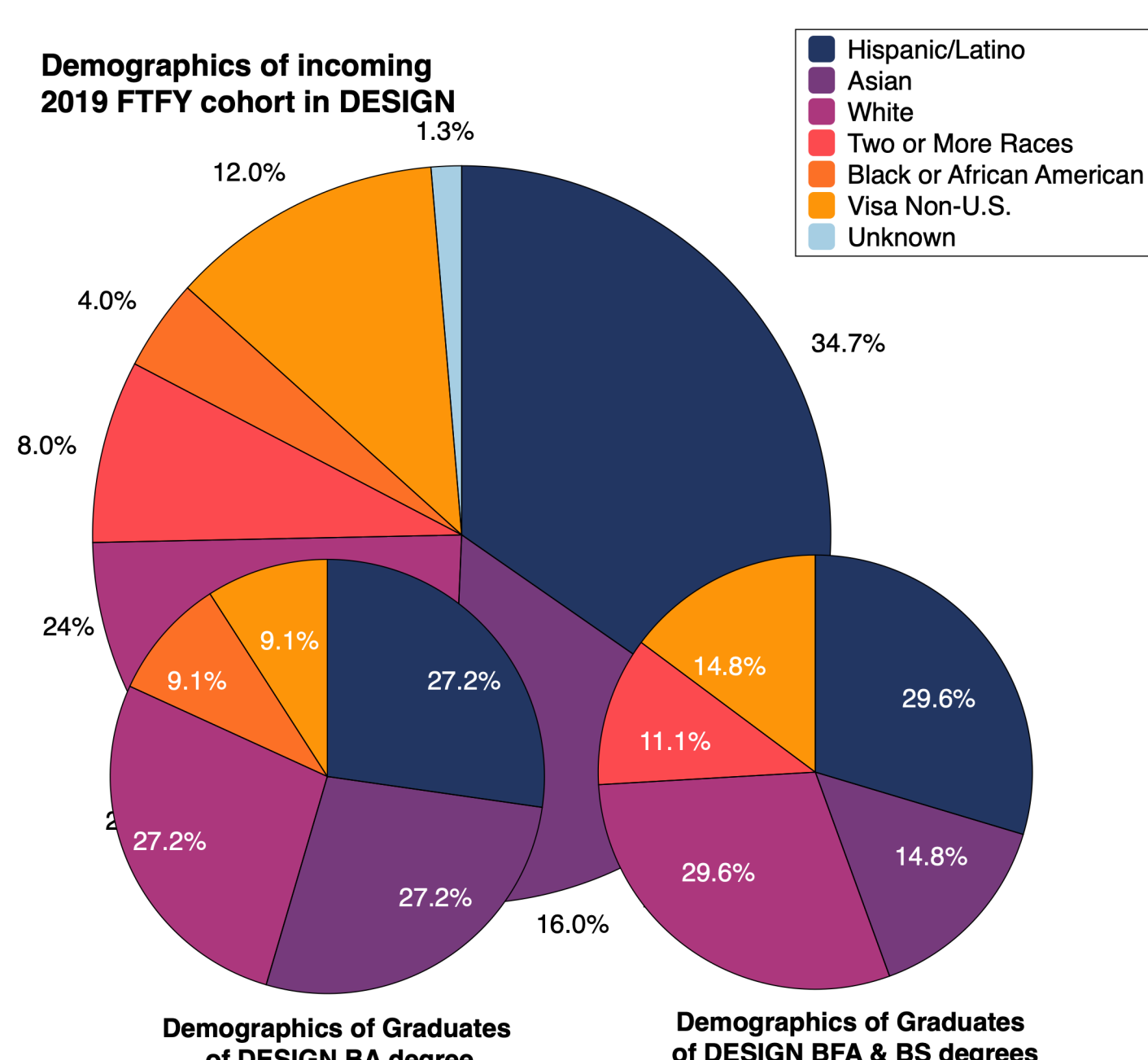
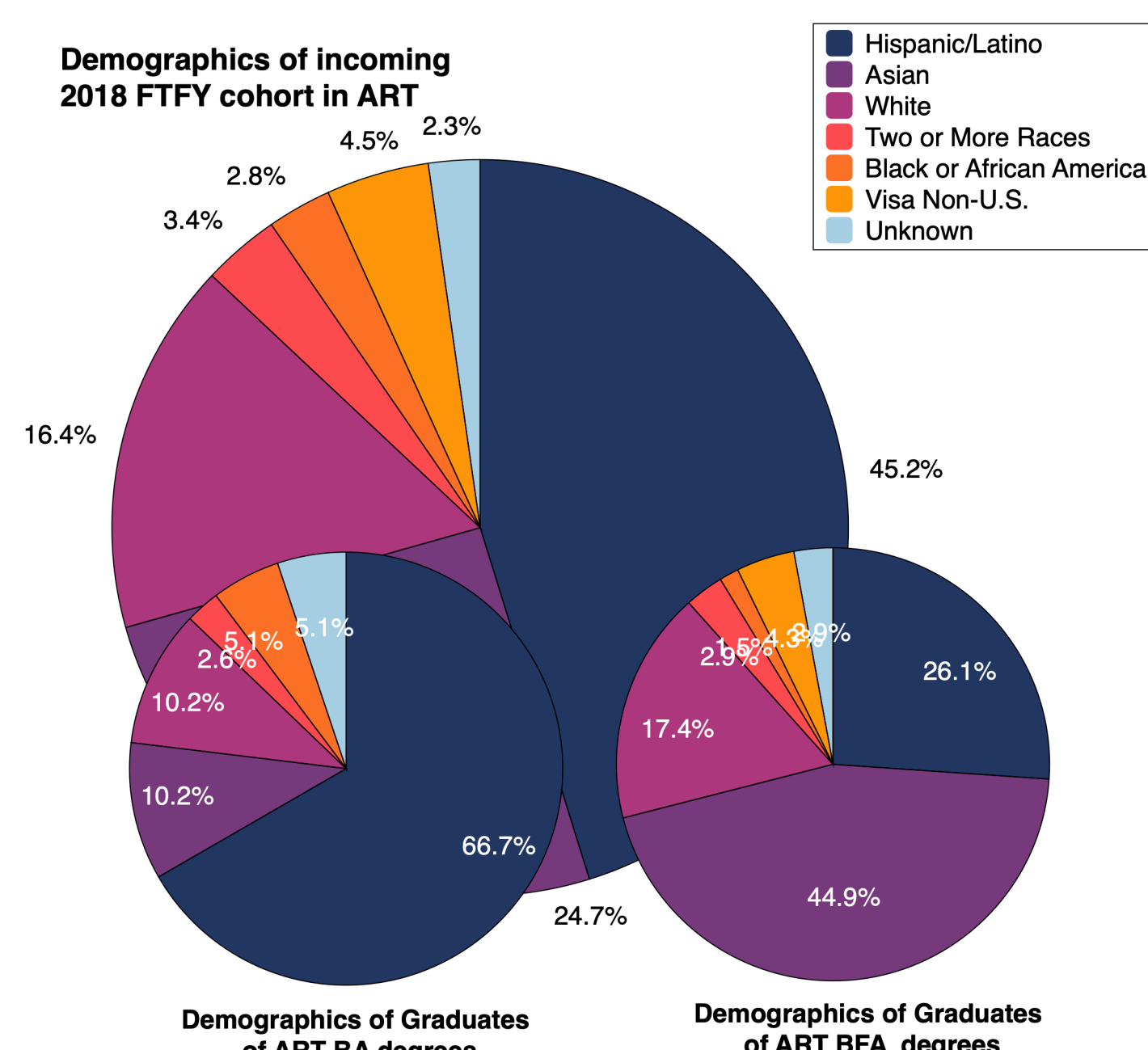
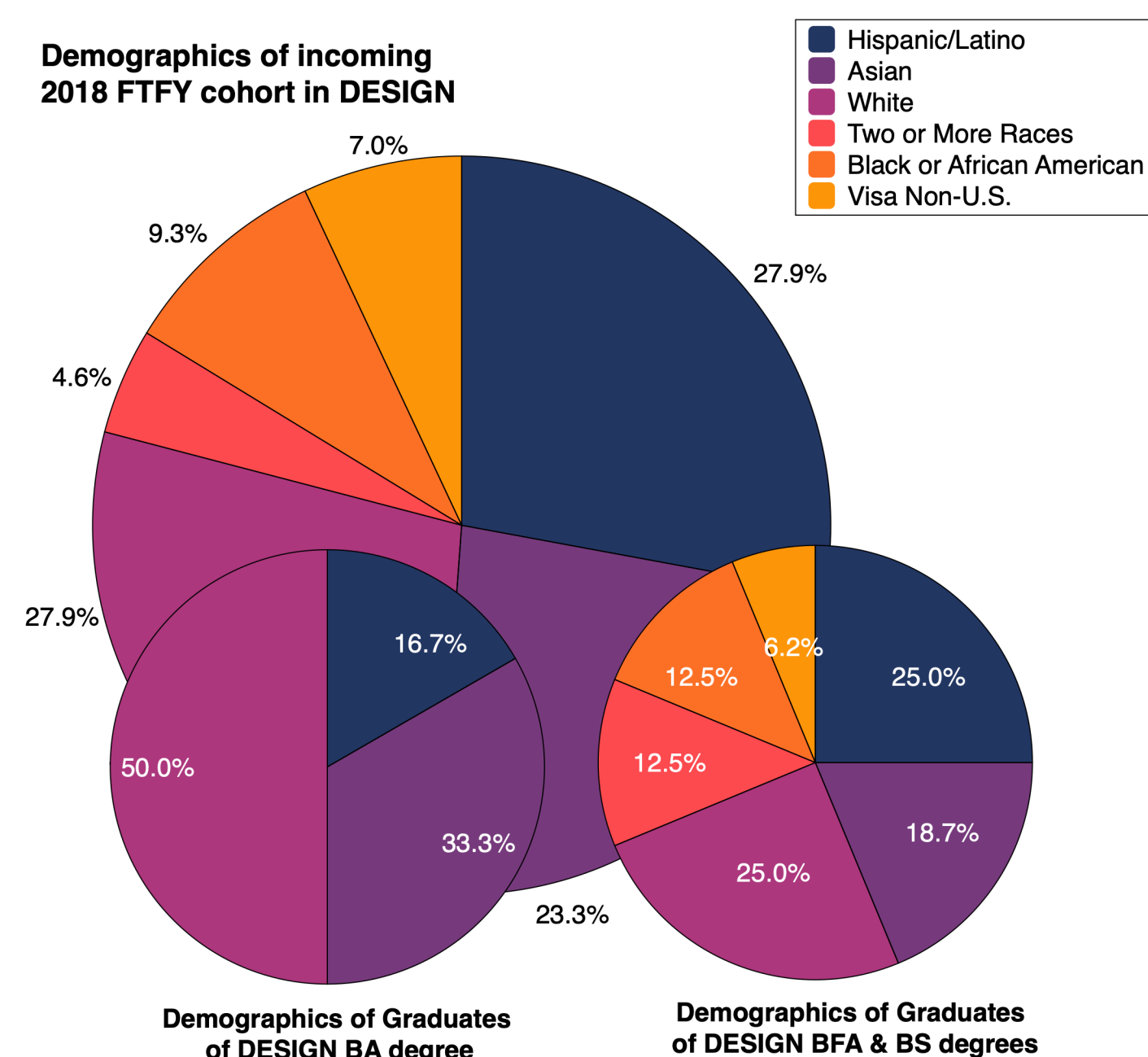
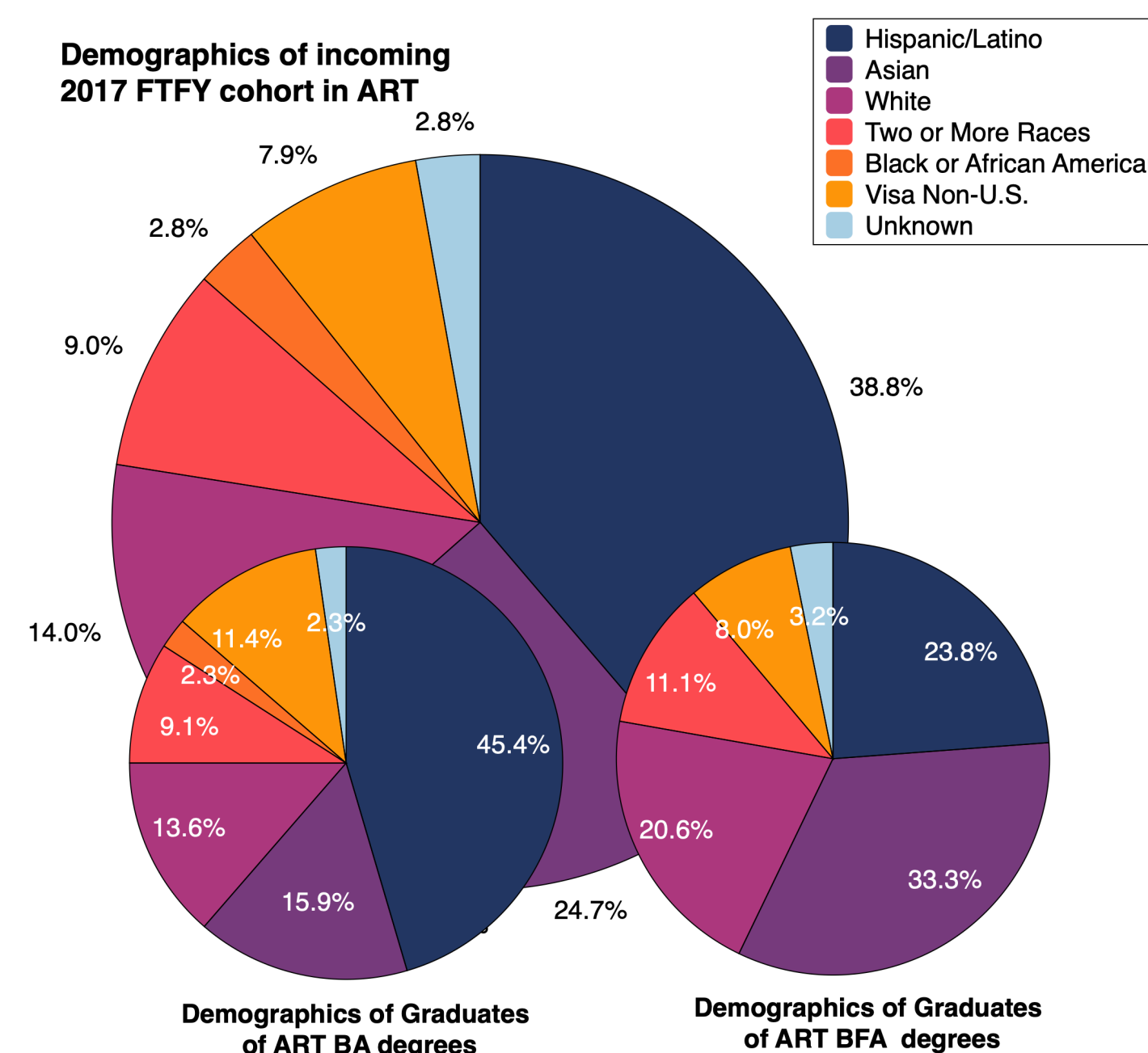
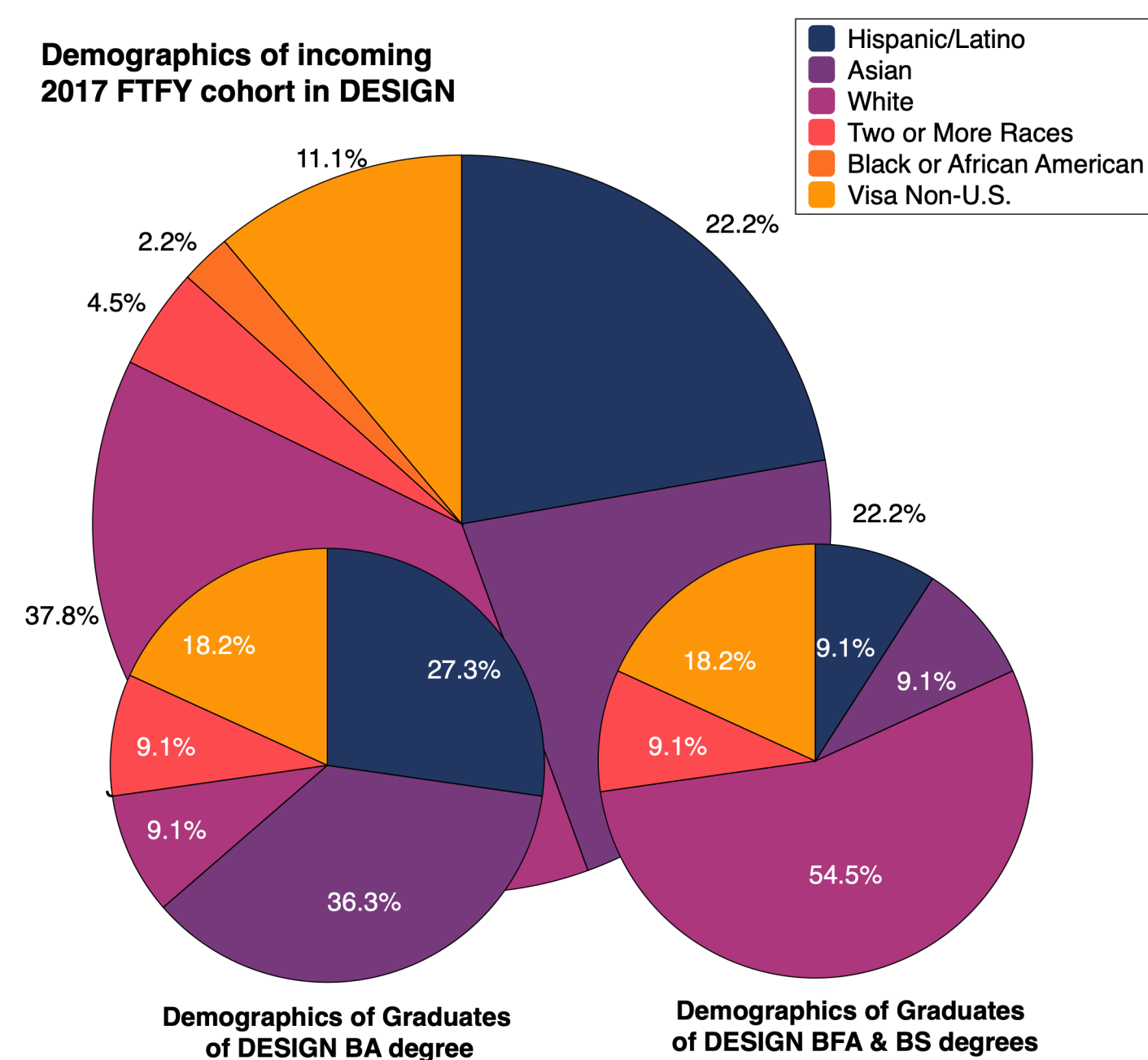
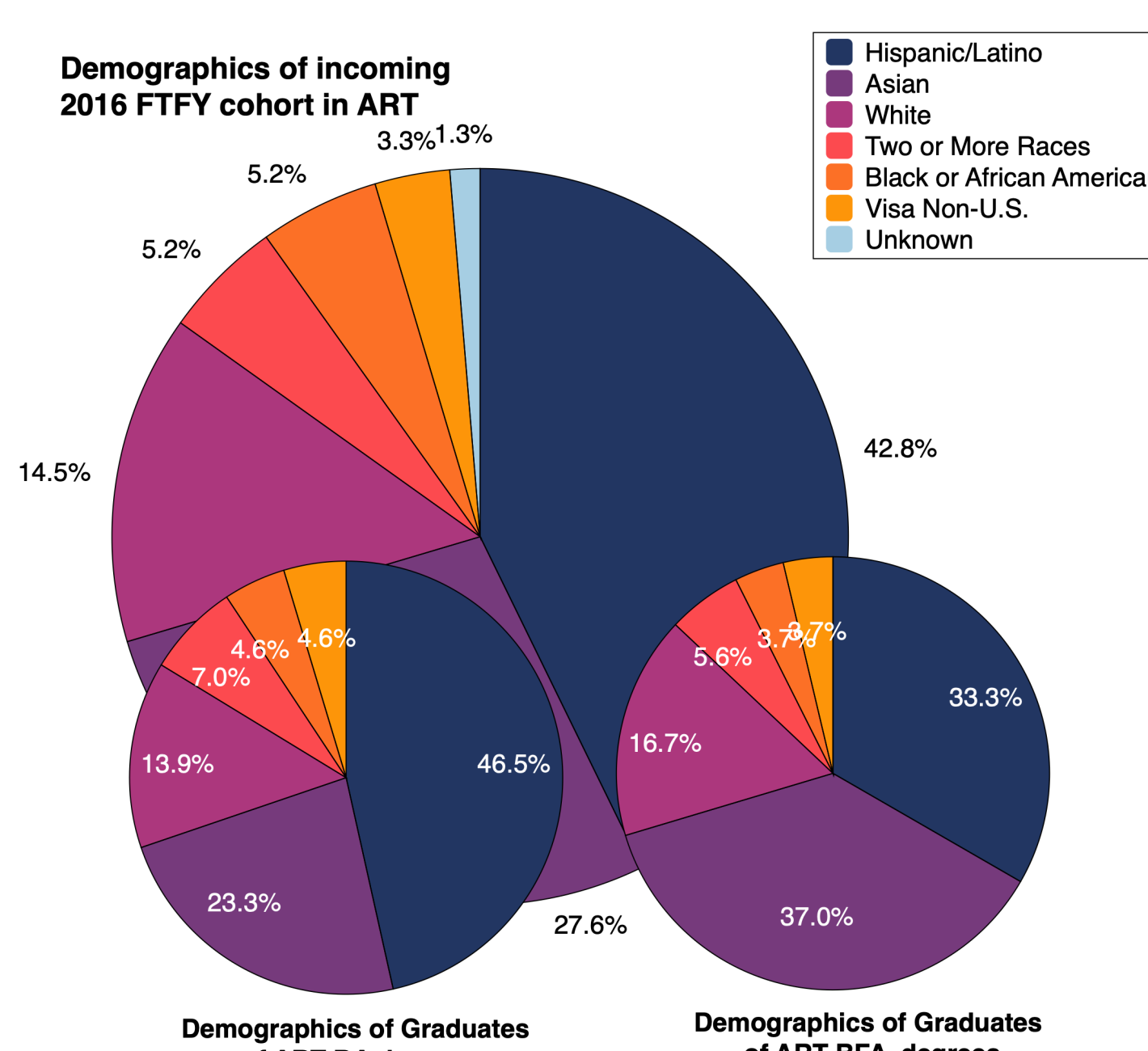
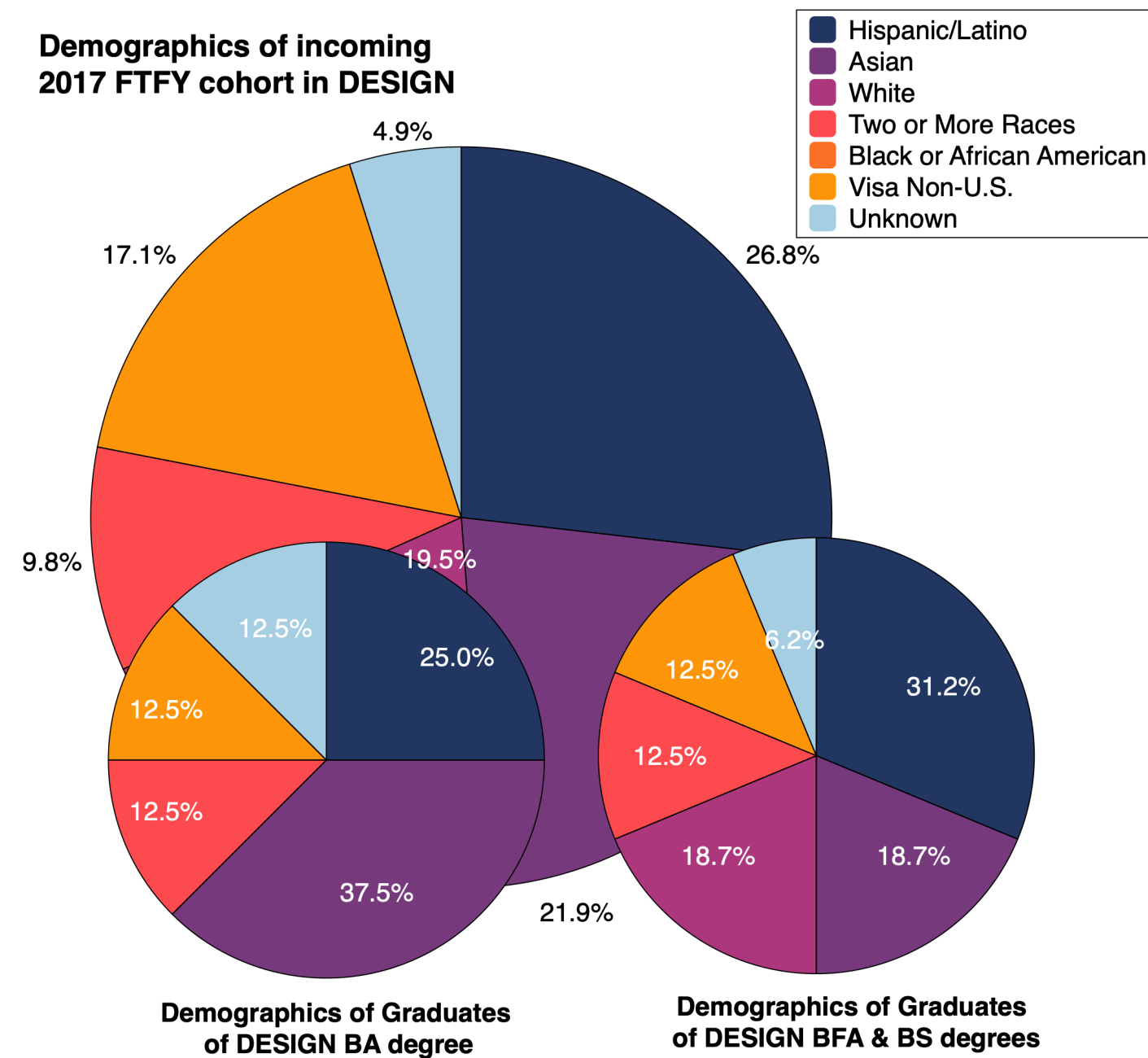
By 2030 COTA will:

1. Promote an Equitable College of the Arts for All: Launch data-informed initiatives to identify and close persistent equity gaps and ensure equitable retention and recruitment rates for students, faculty, and staff across the college.

Methods

Our ‘successful’ data queries relied on cohort student data from SSD 2.0. While we were able to broadly paint the picture across the college with this data, we discovered that some of our most pressing questions were found in data not captured by the university and not captured consistently by the college. Many of our questions revolved around the successful transitions students make from the pre-BFA programs to either the BFA or BA. We wanted to capture information about the students in the interstitial moments between arriving and finding their successful path. Many advising and enrollment challenges in COTA revolve around the lack of data in this transitional period for students.

Results



Conclusion / Discussion

We were pleased to find that many of the equity gaps we anticipated finding were not as significant as we feared. Once we got to the academic plan level, we could see significant differences between plans in their year over year numbers. For some, those numbers varied, but within a fairly tight range. For others the ‘sawtooth’ was extreme year over year.

Our most significant findings came in the specific differences in time to degree between FTFY and TRANSFER students. While we have known this to be an issue, the extent and scope is far easier to communicate to others with the visual data we’ve been able to create.

The humbling realization was the significant lag between a change and that change actually creating a new trend. There needs to be an odd mixture of patience and urgency. How can we effectively communicate this time scale to our faculty as they contemplate change within their programs and departments?

Implications for Action

The ‘missing’ data has the most profound implications for action. We recognized that a number of the challenges we face with successful advising, enrollment management, and ultimately curricular change require that we rethink how we capture data and how we can partner more effectively with the university. This goes beyond tracking to finding a more effective method for students, advisors, faculty, chairs, and the dean's office to track the size and interest of each of our student populations.

Next Steps / Future Directions

- Build out the data to the level of each academic plan.
- Create department and program level data dashboards to quickly and continuously communicate both the historic trends and present opportunities facing each unit.
- Begin internal conversations to clearly identify the data that is needed and the best form to capture that data in existing university systems.