

Making Your Case: Presenting Results and Writing Reports

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Resource

- Bers, T. H. & Seybert, J. A. (1999). Effective reporting. *Resources in institutional research* 12. Tallahassee, FL: Association for Institutional Research.

Session Outcomes

- Develop better reports
- Present data in a way that others understand it

Application

- Identify a report you will need to write or types of data you will need to present

Challenges

- What challenges do you face when presenting or reporting assessment results?

Reporting Process

- Determine clients, purpose, and audience for report
- Determine data and info available or need to gather for report
- Select type of report (i.e., survey report, factbook)
- Select format of report (i.e., written, oral, etc.)
- Decide how to depict data and information
- Produce the report
- Disseminate the report

Types of Audiences

- Executives
- Board of trustee members
- Faculty members
- Experts
- Lay people
- Parents
- Combined audiences
- Students

Audiences

- List your primary and secondary audiences

Considering Audiences

- What do my audiences need to know?
- What do my audiences want to know?
- What do I tell my audience about this?
- What decisions will or might they make based on this report?
- What other individuals might my audience send this report to?
- Who else might be interested and will they have access to relevant documents?

Considering Audiences

- Thinking about your primary audiences?
 - What is going to have an impact on my audience
 - quantitative, qualitative, or both
 - conclusions, recommendations, supporting evidence
 - What is the knowledge level of the audience

Purposes of Reports

- Historical record
- Support for planning or decision making
- Public relations
- Information dissemination
- Compliance with external reporting requirements

Purpose

- What is the purpose of the report you need to write or data you need to present?

Types of Reports

- Survey or major projects reports
- Projections
- Accreditation self-studies
- Program review and evaluation reports
- Factbooks
- Planning reports
- Technical reports
- Financial reports
- Peer group comparisons
- Promotional materials

Report Formats

- What are the various formats that reports can take

Types and Formats

- What type of report would be most appropriate?

- What format of report would be most appropriate?

Audiences, Types, and Formats

- How do you decide which types and formats to use with which audiences?

Cone of Experience

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we see and hear
- 70% of what we discuss
- 80% of what we experience
- 95% of what we teach

Report Components

- Meaningful title
- Executive summary
- Table of contents
- Introduction and purpose
- Methodology
- Findings
- Summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations
- References
- Glossary
- Appendices, exhibits, attachments

Quantitative Data and Reports

- Summarize key findings in both narrative and numeric forms
- Statistical significance may not be practical significance for decision makers
- Use tables and graphics judiciously in the body
- Provide narrative description of what statistical significance means
- Consider using a question-answer format

Quantitative Data and Reports

- Use 1-page briefs and/or Web pages referring readers to full report
- Use anecdotes and quotes to liven up the report
- Ask audience how to improve reports

When to Graph

- Use graphs when to illustrate relations among measurements
- Use a precise title to clarify message and data supporting it
- Organize the graph to help reader answer the question resulting from the graph
- Use concepts and displays that are familiar

Kosslyn, S. M. (1994). *Elements of graph design*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company

Good and Bad Reports

- What are characteristics of:
 - Good reports
 - Bad reports

Fonts

- Safe fonts include Times Roman, Bookman, Century Schoolbook, Garamond, or Arial
- Use both CAPITAL and small letters
- Use *italics* sparingly
- Use underlining sparingly
- Use **boldface** for emphasis
- Mix fonts in the same document, but use only 2-3

Tables

- Order table rows and columns in a way that makes sense
- Round number to whole numbers if possible using one decimal place for more technical audiences.
- Use mean, median, or total for comparison
- Column headings should be about same length

Adapted from Wainer, H. (1992, January-February). Understanding graphs and tables. *Educational Researcher*, 12-23.

Tables

Dartmouth College Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity for 2003-2008

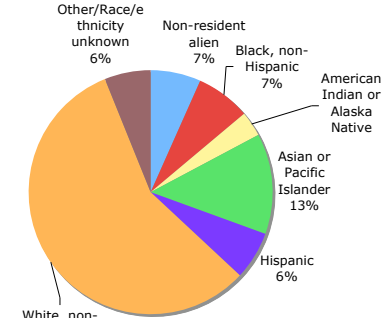
	Non-resident alien	Black, non-Hispanic	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	Other/ Race-ethnicity unknown
2003-2004	5%	6%	3%	12%	6%	58%	10%
2004-2005	5%	6%	3%	13%	6%	57%	8%
2005-2006	5%	6%	3%	13%	6%	57%	8%
2006-2007	6%	6%	4%	13%	6%	57%	7%
2007-2008	7%	6%	4%	13%	6%	57%	6%

Data is from the Common Data Set years 2003-2008

Charts

- Pie charts show proportional size

Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity 2007-2008

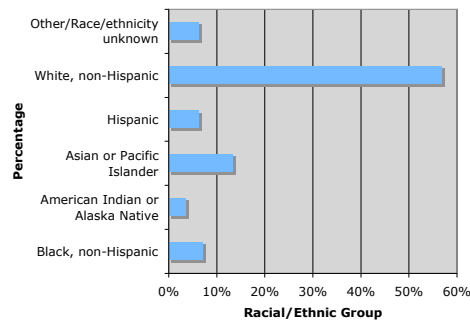


2007-2008 Dartmouth Common Data Set

Charts

- Horizontal bar charts show proportional relationships

Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity 2007-2008

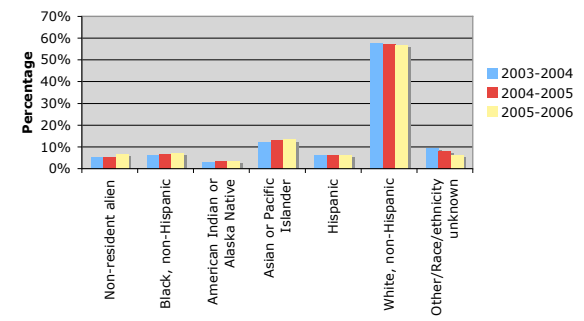


2007-2008 Dartmouth Common Data Set

Charts

- Cluster bar charts allow grouping of multiple variables for comparison over time

Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity by Year 2003-2006

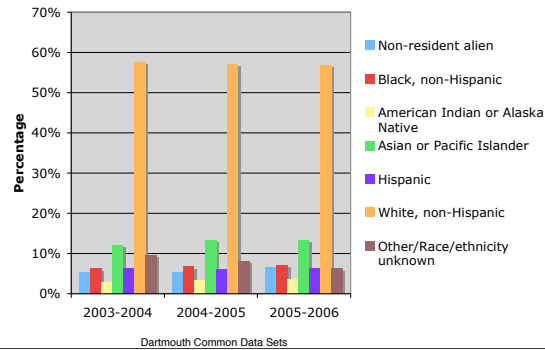


Dartmouth Common Data Sets

Charts

- Cluster bar charts allow grouping of multiple variables for comparison over time

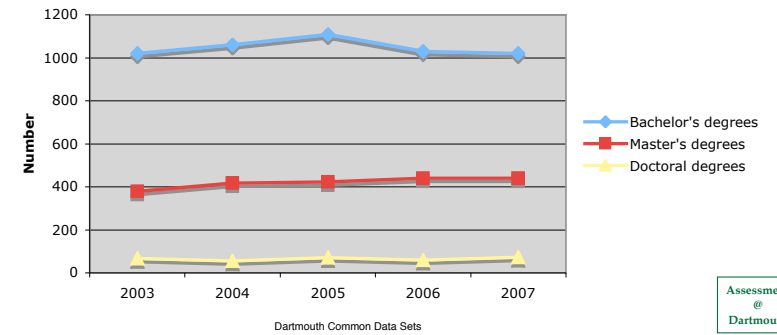
Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity by Year



Charts

- Line charts show trends

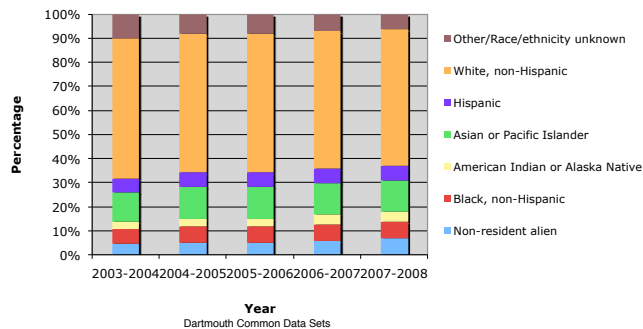
Dartmouth Degrees Awarded by Year



Charts

- One hundred percent bar charts display how proportional relationships change over time

Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity by Year



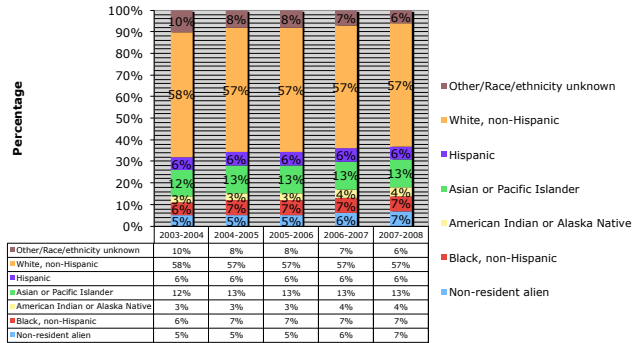
Charts

- Would charts be useful in your reports?
- If so, which ones might be most useful?

Guidelines for Presenting Charts

- Keep charts simple

Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity



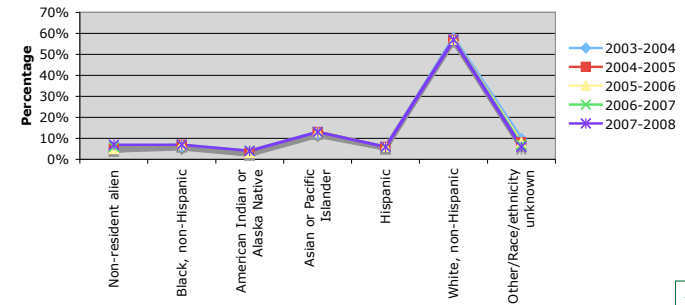
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33

Dartmouth Common Data Sets

Guidelines for Presenting Charts

- Present variables according to logic

Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity for 2003-2008



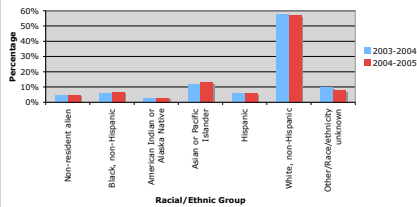
Assessment @ Dartmouth
34

Dartmouth Common Data Sets

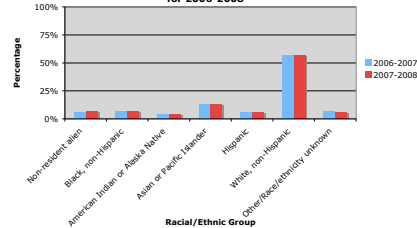
Guidelines for Presenting Charts

- When comparing charts, keep displays comparable

Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity for 2003-2005



Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity for 2006-2008



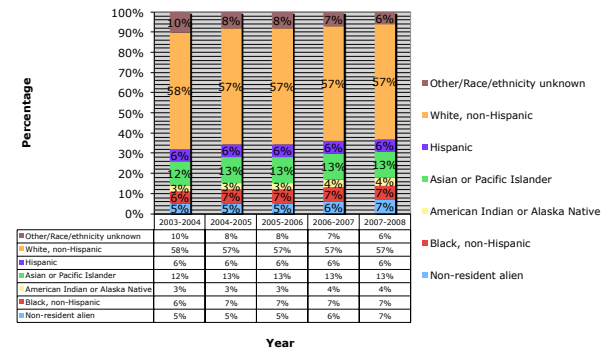
Assessment @ Dartmouth
35

Dartmouth Common Data Sets

Guidelines for Presenting Charts

- Use common sense for use of grid marks, tick marks, and labels

Dartmouth Undergraduate Composition by Race/Ethnicity

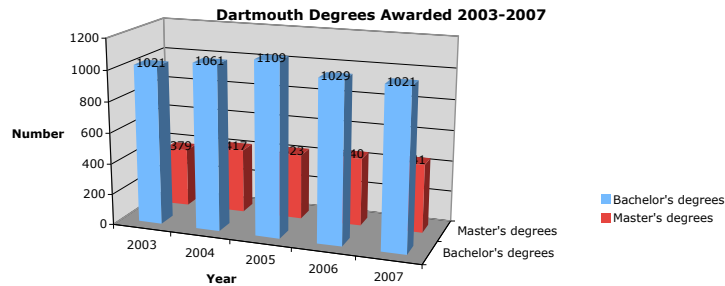


Assessment @ Dartmouth
36

Dartmouth Common Data Sets

Guidelines for Presenting Charts

- Avoid three dimensions



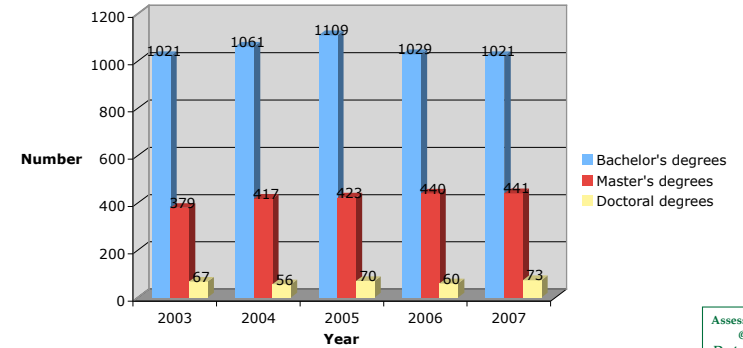
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37

Dartmouth Common Data Sets

Guidelines for Presenting Charts

- Avoid three dimensions

Dartmouth Degrees Awarded 2003-2007



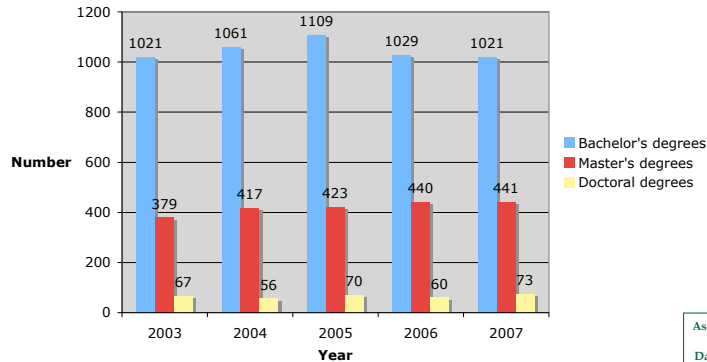
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38

Dartmouth Common Data Sets

Guidelines for Presenting Charts

- Avoid three dimensions

Dartmouth Degrees Awarded 2003-2007



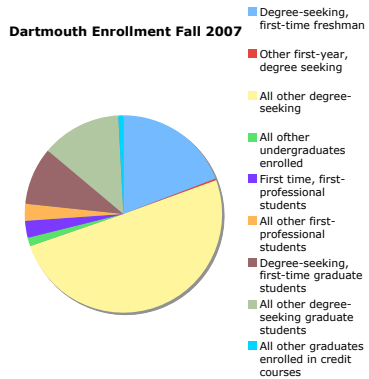
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39

Dartmouth Common Data Sets

Guidelines for Presenting Charts

- Use a maximum of six segments in a pie chart

Dartmouth Enrollment Fall 2007

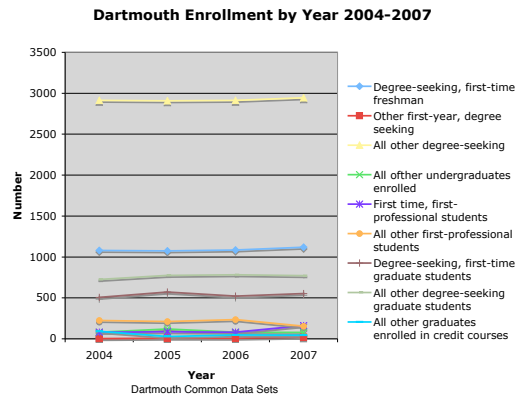


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40

Dartmouth Common Data Sets

Guidelines for Presenting Charts

- Use no more than five or six data series on any single line graph



PowerPoint - Don'ts

42

Most Useful Tips

- Which tips will be most useful to remember when presenting results and writing reports?

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43

Conclusion

- Any final thoughts, questions, or comments?

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44

Additional Resources

- Fraenkel, J. R. & Wallen, N. W. (2003). How to design and evaluate research in education (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. P. 610.
- Suskie, L. A. (1996). Questionnaire survey research: What works (2nd ed.). Tallahassee, FL: Association or Institutional Research.
- Upcraft, M. L. & Schuh, J. H. (1996). Assessment in student affairs: A guide for practitioners. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 282-286.