

Background on University Credit Hour Regulation

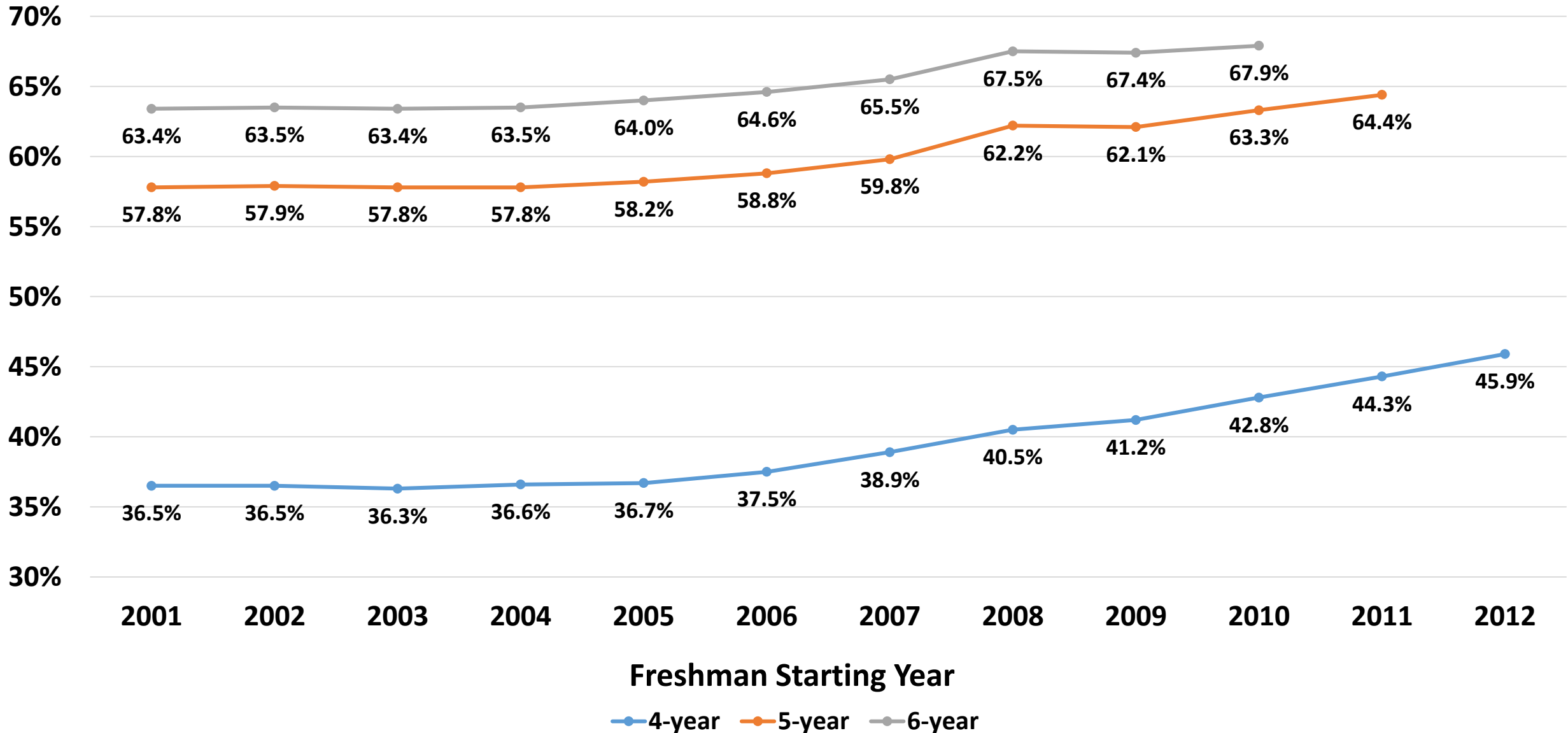
Presentation to UNC Board of Governors 2017

Undergraduate Degree Program Credit Requirements



Where Do We Stand?

Graduation Rates at Any UNC Institution



The “Traditional” Four-Year Degree

15 credits per semester is “full time.”

2 semesters per year (**30** credits per year)

4 years or **8** semesters (**120** credits in total)

Why Do Students Take Longer Than Four Years to Graduate?

FEDERAL POLICIES

Definition of “full time” (12 hours)

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Taking courses outside of degree program

Changing majors

Additional minors/majors



INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

Transfer policies

Acceptance policies for AP exams

Exam scores of “3” not accepted at some institutions

Course offerings (how often and at what times)

Degree program credit requirements

OTHER CAUSES

Work demands

Family commitments

Financial issues

Illness

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**How many credits are
required for an
undergraduate degree by
SACS COC?**

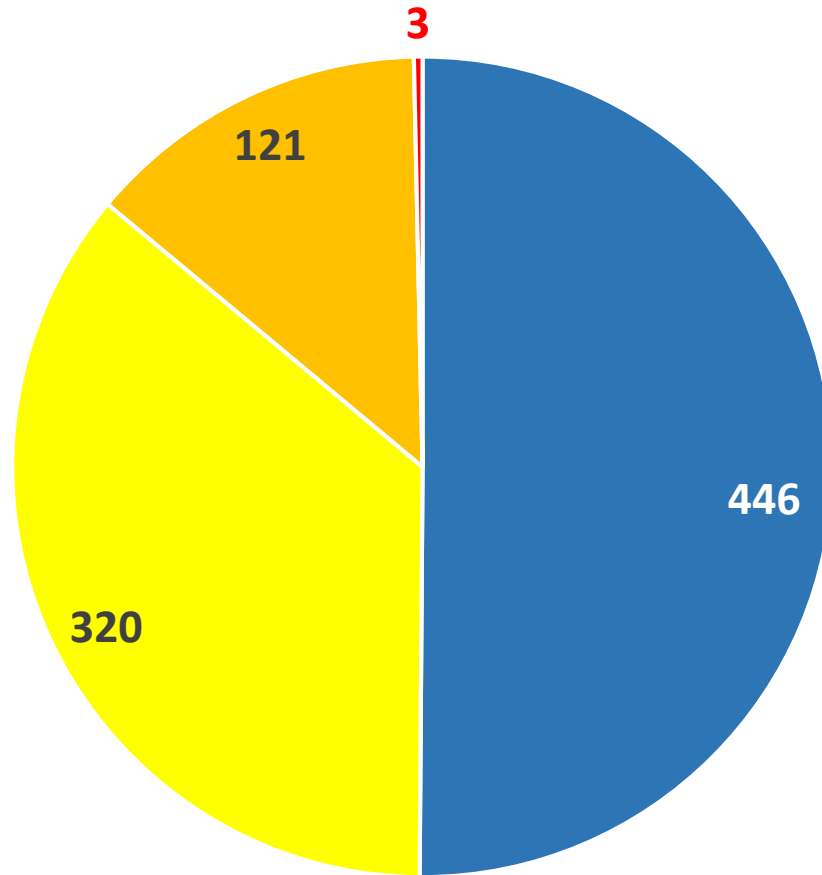
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS COC)

Core Requirement 2.7.1 (Program Length)

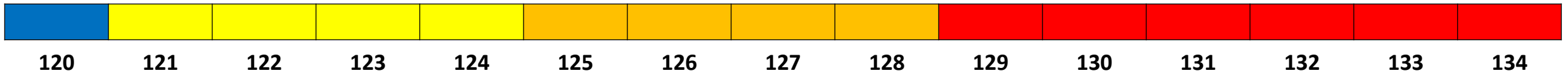
2.7.1 The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; **at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level**; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.
(Program length)

What are the credit-hour requirements across the UNC System?

Number of Four-Year Undergraduate Degree Programs by Credit Requirement (2017-18)

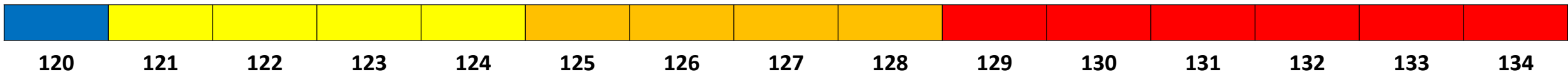
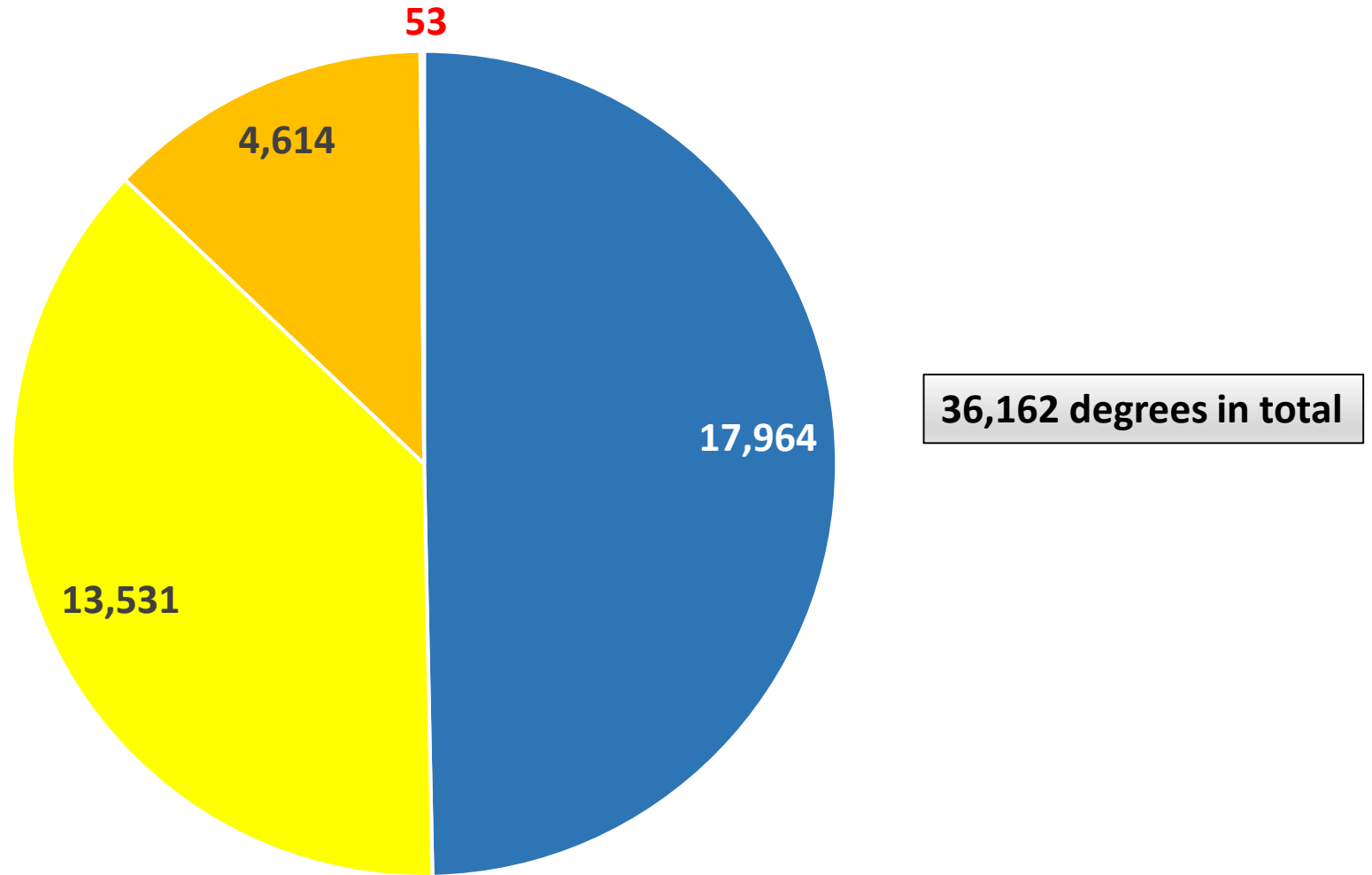


890 degree programs in total*



* Data were missing or unverified for 3 other degree programs, as of October 31, 2017.

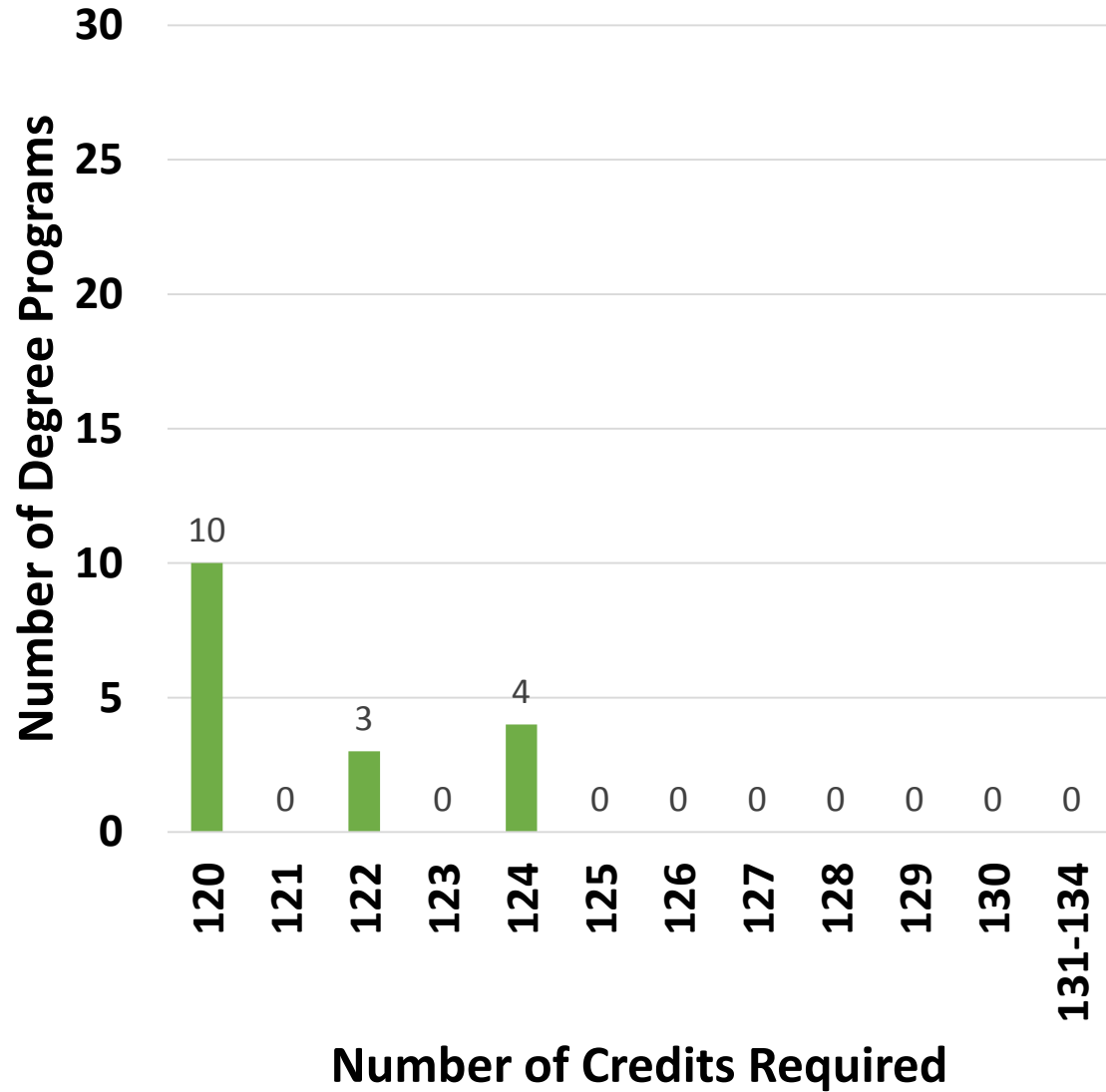
Number of Four-Year Undergraduate Degrees Awarded (2015-16) by Credit Requirement (2017-18)



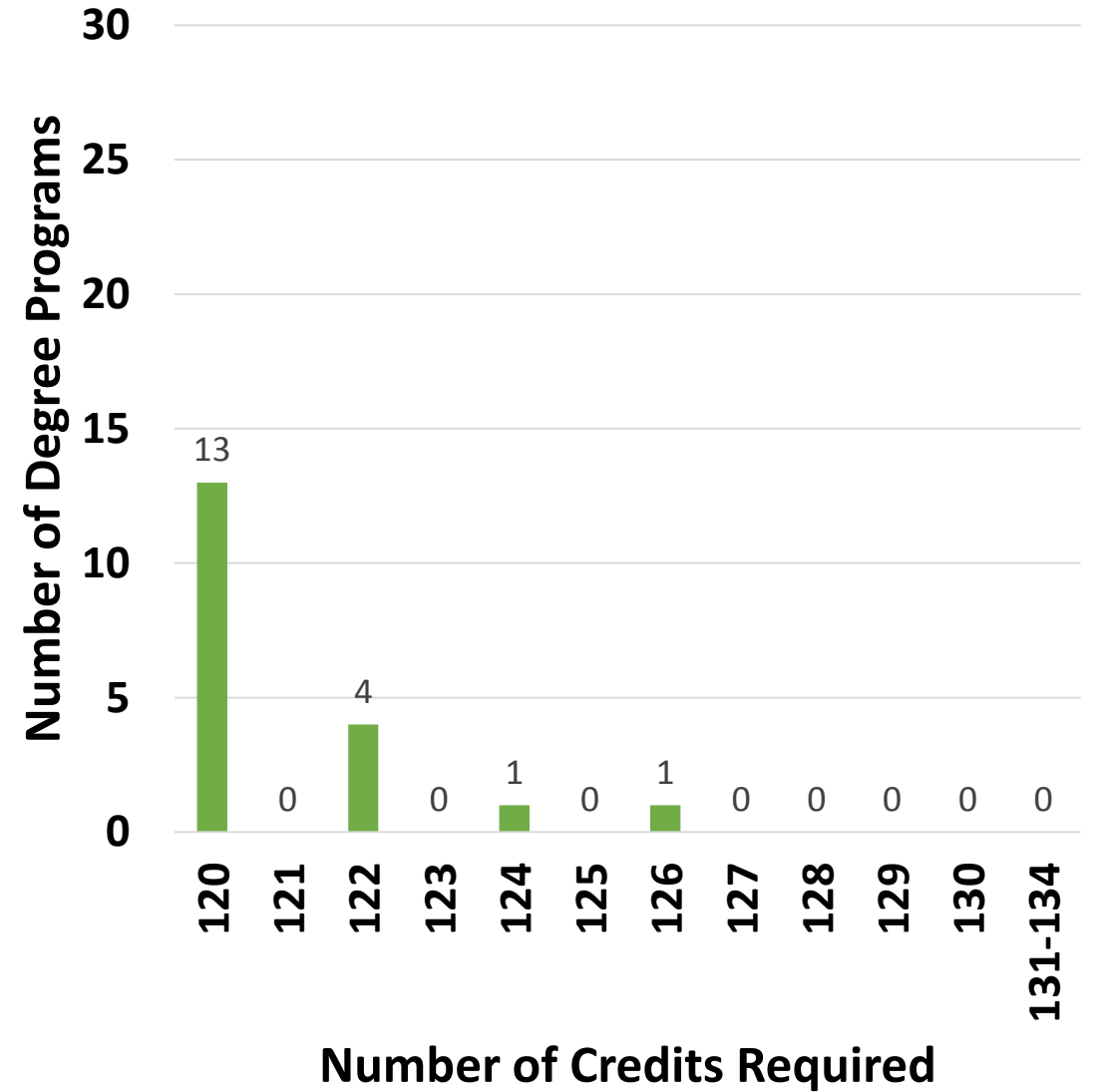
2,179 FTEs annually

the FTE equivalent for the total number of credits beyond 120 (**65,367**) associated with the degrees awarded (**18,198**) in 2015-16, in degree programs with requirements exceeding 120 credits.

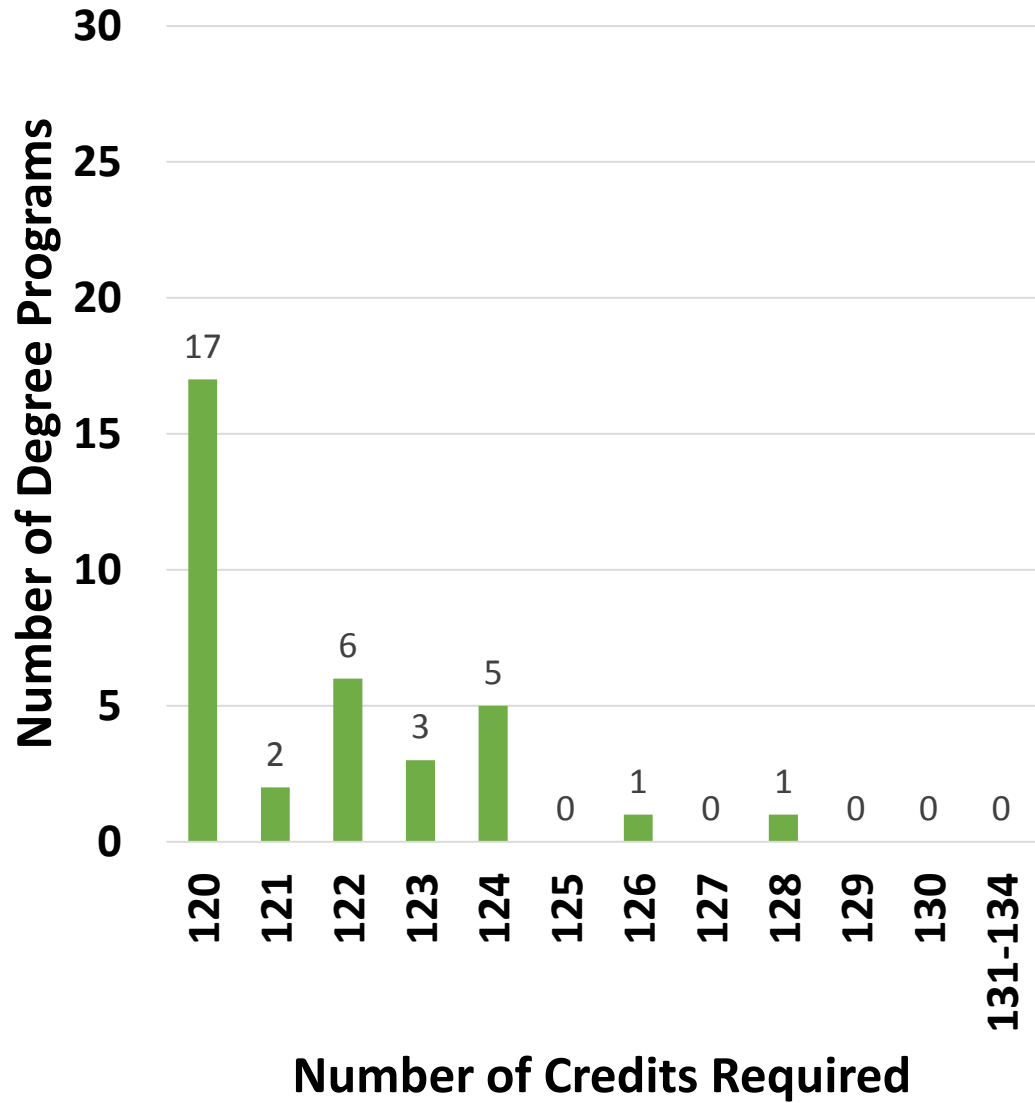
English



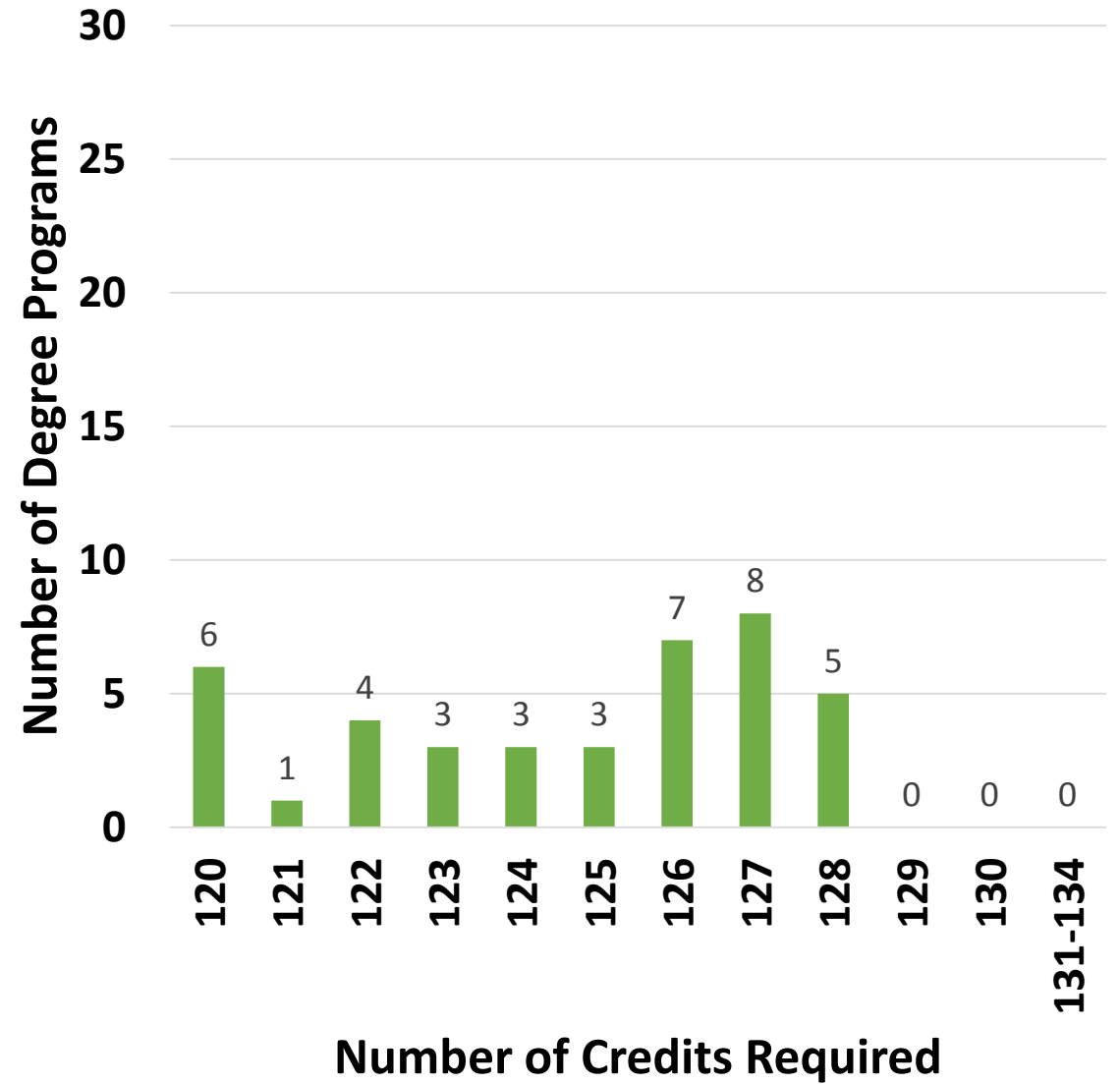
History



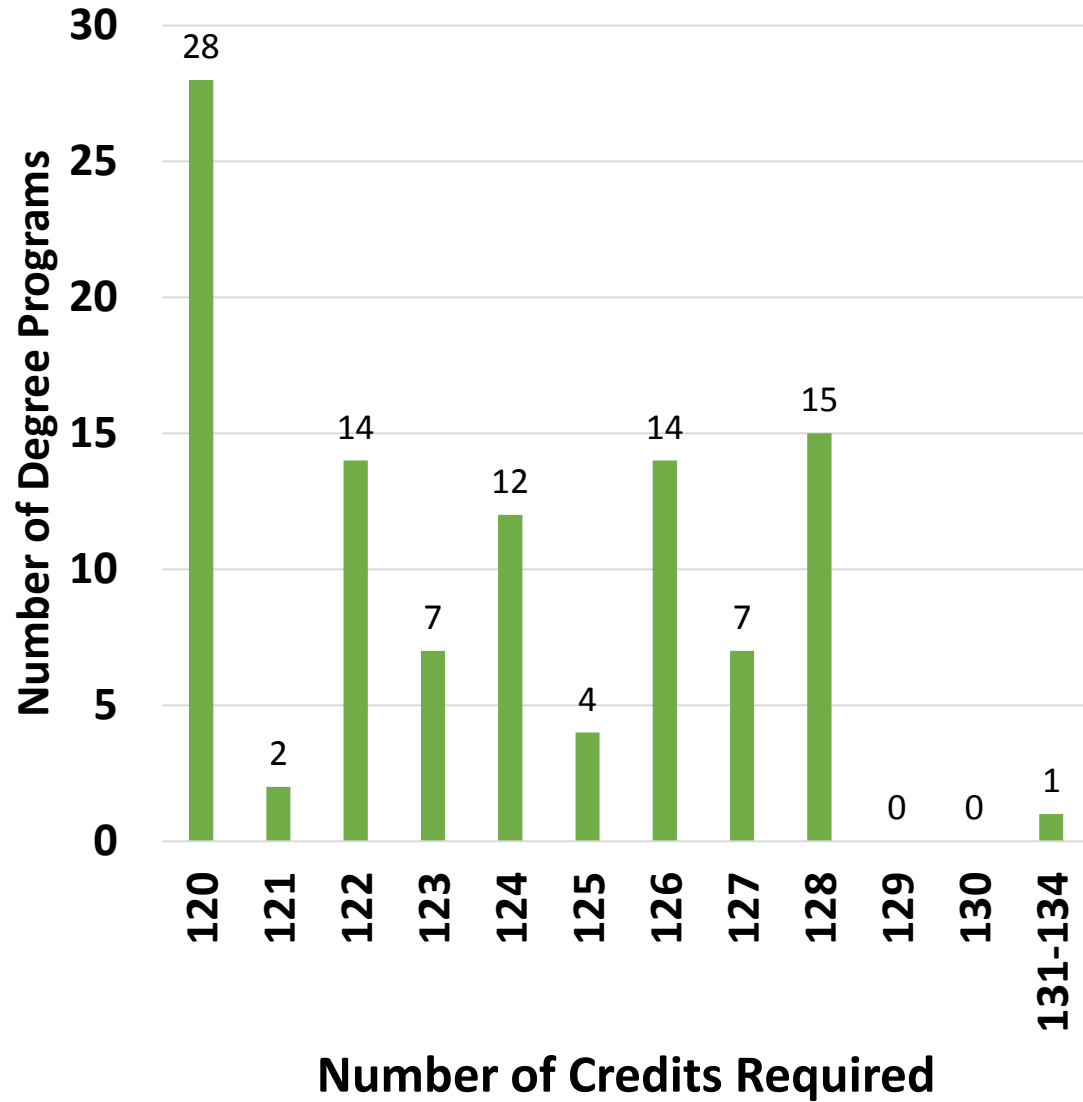
Biology



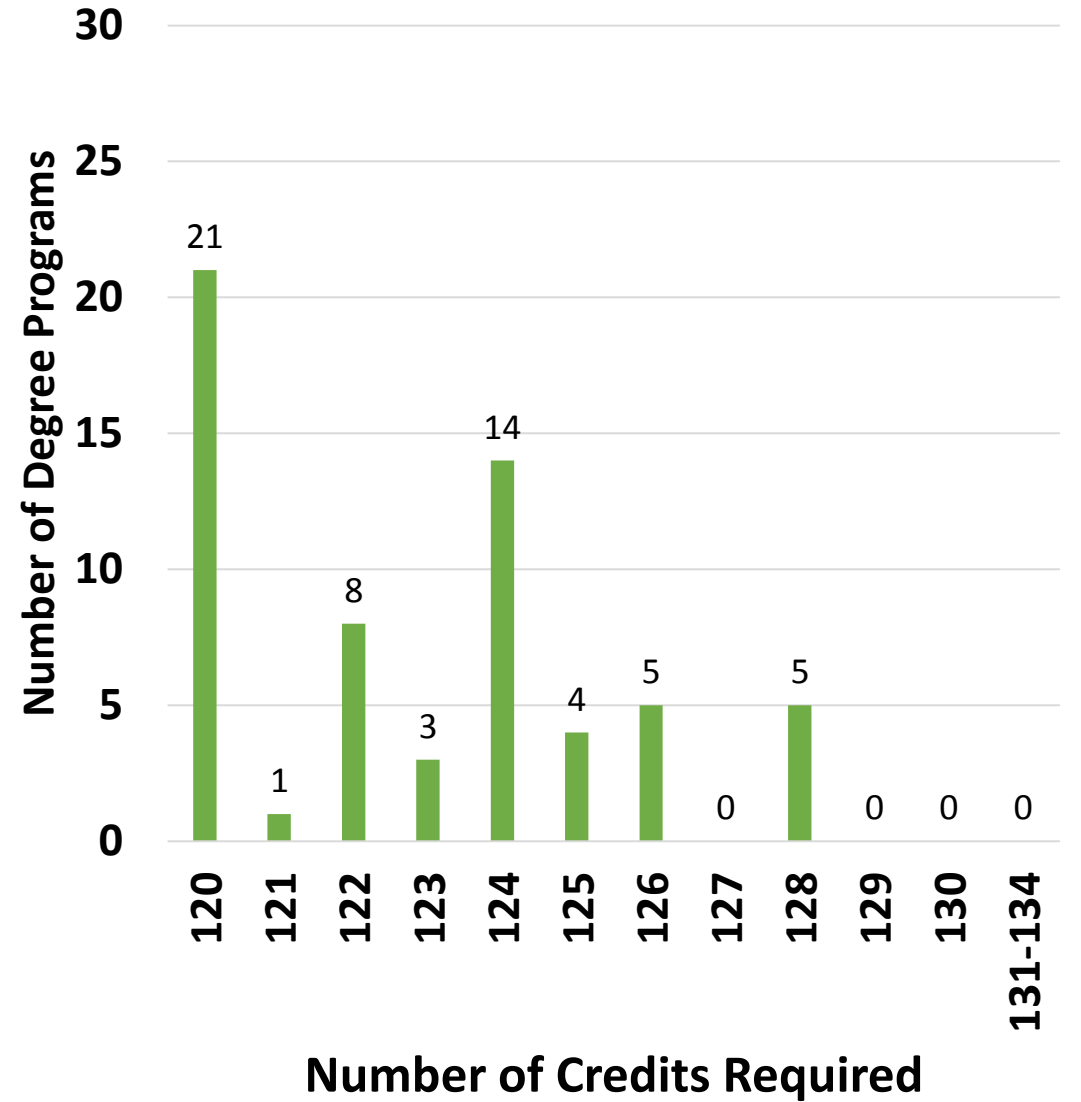
Engineering



Education



Health Professions



BS in Athletic Training

UNC University 1

Gen Ed Requirements
(including electives) 44 credits

Major Requirements 75 credits

Freshman Seminar 1 credit

TOTAL 120 credits

UNC University 2

Gen Ed Requirements 40 credits

Major Requirements 83 credits

Electives 3 credits

TOTAL 126 credits

Credit Requirements for Undergraduate Degree Programs Across UNC

Consequences

- Undergraduate degree requirements in excess of 120 credits translate into. . .
 - additional costs to students/families.
 - additional costs to taxpayers.
 - opportunity costs for students.
 - additional time-to-degree and student debt.

Other fully accredited systems of higher education with 120 credit hour policies:

- 1. California State University System**
- 2. Colorado**
- 3. Florida**
- 4. Georgia**
- 5. Indiana**
- 6. Louisiana**
- 7. Montana**
- 8. Minnesota**
- 9. Nevada**
- 10. Pennsylvania**
- 11. Texas**

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Regulations Related to Fostering Undergraduate Student Success

I. Limiting Hours for Baccalaureate Degree Programs

Baccalaureate degree programs shall be limited to no more than 128 semester credit hours. Any requirement beyond 128 hours must be approved by the Board of Governors. Any program authorized by the Board of Governors to require 135 semester credit hours or more shall be officially designated as a five-year baccalaureate program.

A. Campuses shall observe these guidelines in all proposals for new degree programs.

B. Campuses must publicize the required number of semester credit hours and projected length of full-time enrollment required to obtain the baccalaureate degree in both printed and online catalogs, as applicable. During new student orientation sessions and in publications for students and parents, campuses must provide a description of factors that may extend the length of time to complete a degree.

Identical Programs, Varying Credit Requirements

RANGE

Information Technology (BS)

120 credits - 125 credits

Geology (BS)

120 credits - 126 credits

Physical Education, K-12 (BS)

121 credits - 128 credits

Engineering (BS)

120 credits - 128 credits

Across UNC, courses at different institutions but with identical (6-digit) CIP codes and program/degree titles can vary greatly by credit requirement. The variation is often as great as 4 credits. Sometimes, the variation can be between 5 and 8 credits, as these examples demonstrate. . .

OCTOBER 2017 SURVEY OF UNC CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS

1. Do you have a formal centralized review process and re-review timelines for examining undergraduate degree program credit hour requirements? **7 Yes; 8 No**
 - a. If not, do colleges/departments handle this? **4 Yes; 4 No**

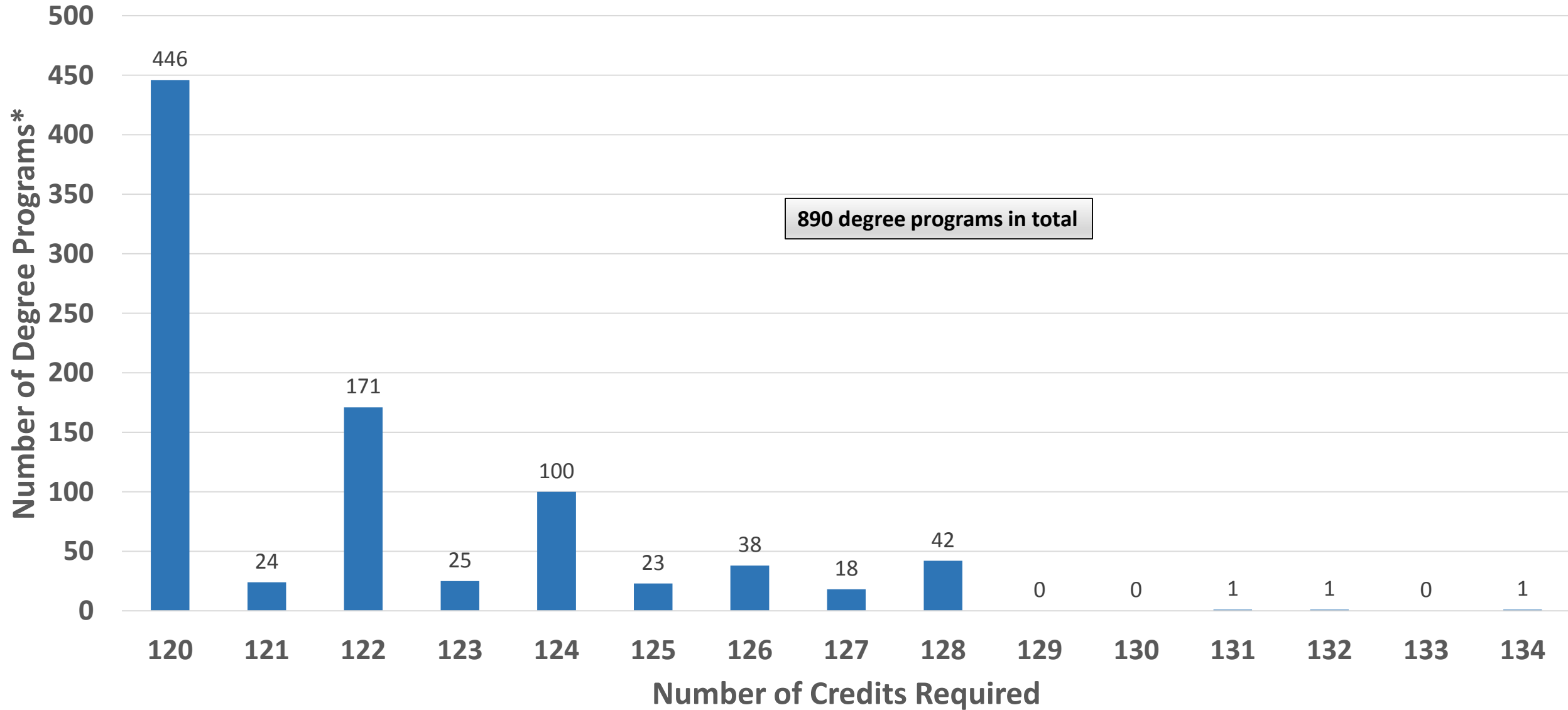
2. For new program approval processes, do you use guidelines that include the total SCH as an issue? **13 Yes; 2 No**

3. Has your office worked on this issue in the last 3 years? **7 Yes; 7 No**

4. What other items do you think are important in consideration of total SCH/program? If deemed important, are these routinely assessed by the department to improve student throughput?
 - a. Core Gen Ed total SCH Important (*routine assessment?*) **15 Yes; 0 No**
 - b. Sequencing of required courses (e.g., prerequisites) (*routine assessment?*) **11 Yes; 3 No**
 - c. Scheduling of courses (e.g., from day/hour offered to frequency in academic year) (*routine assessment?*) **12 Yes; 3 No**

5. What percent of programs over 120 SCH do you estimate could be moved to 120?
Answers varied from “none” to “100.”

Number of Four-Year Undergraduate Degree Programs by Credit Requirement (2017-18)



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