



# ***Imagining A World Unseen: Women's Colleges 2050***

***Prepared for the Faculty Research Symposium at Wesleyan College***

***March 26, 2010***

***President Patricia McGuire  
Trinity Washington University***

# *Imagine.*

**Imagine a world without women's colleges.**

## *Imagine a world without*

Rachel Carson

Pearl S. Buck

Gwen Ifill

Geraldine Ferraro

Hanna Holborn Gray

Katharine Hepburn

Charlene Payne Kammerer

Marian Wright Edelman

Susan Estrich

Alice Rivlin

Madeleine Albright

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Kathleen Sebelius

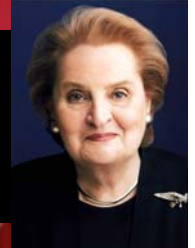
Nancy Pelosi

*Imagine a world where these women never had the opportunity to achieve*

**Imagine a world where young women never heard these names and others like them.**

*Imagine a world where women never aspired to be such leaders.*

**Imagine a world without women's colleges.**



# *Imagine.*

**Imagine a world without women's colleges.**

*Imagine a world without*  
Rachel Carson, **Chatham**

Pearl S. Buck, **Randolph-Macon Women's College**  
Gwen Ifill, **Simmons**

Geraldine Ferraro, **Marymount Manhattan**

Hanna Holborn Gray, **Bryn Mawr**

Katharine Hepburn, **Bryn Mawr**

Charlene Payne Kammerer, **Wesleyan College**

Marian Wright Edelman, **Spelman**

Susan Estrich, **Wellesley**

Alice Rivlin, **Bryn Mawr**

Madeleine Albright, **Wellesley**

Hillary Rodham Clinton, **Wellesley**

Kathleen Sebelius, **Trinity**

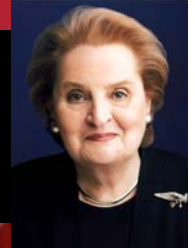
Nancy Pelosi, **Trinity**

*Imagine a world where these women never had the opportunity to achieve*

**Imagine a world where young women never heard these names and others like them.**

*Imagine a world where women never aspired to be such leaders.*

**Imagine this world  
without women's colleges.**





A world  
deprived of  
women's  
colleges  
would be, quite simply,  
**unimaginable.**

Our time is not past; our  
greatest work unfolds  
each day in each new life

we touch and  
**transform ...**

# Imagine Women's Colleges 2050

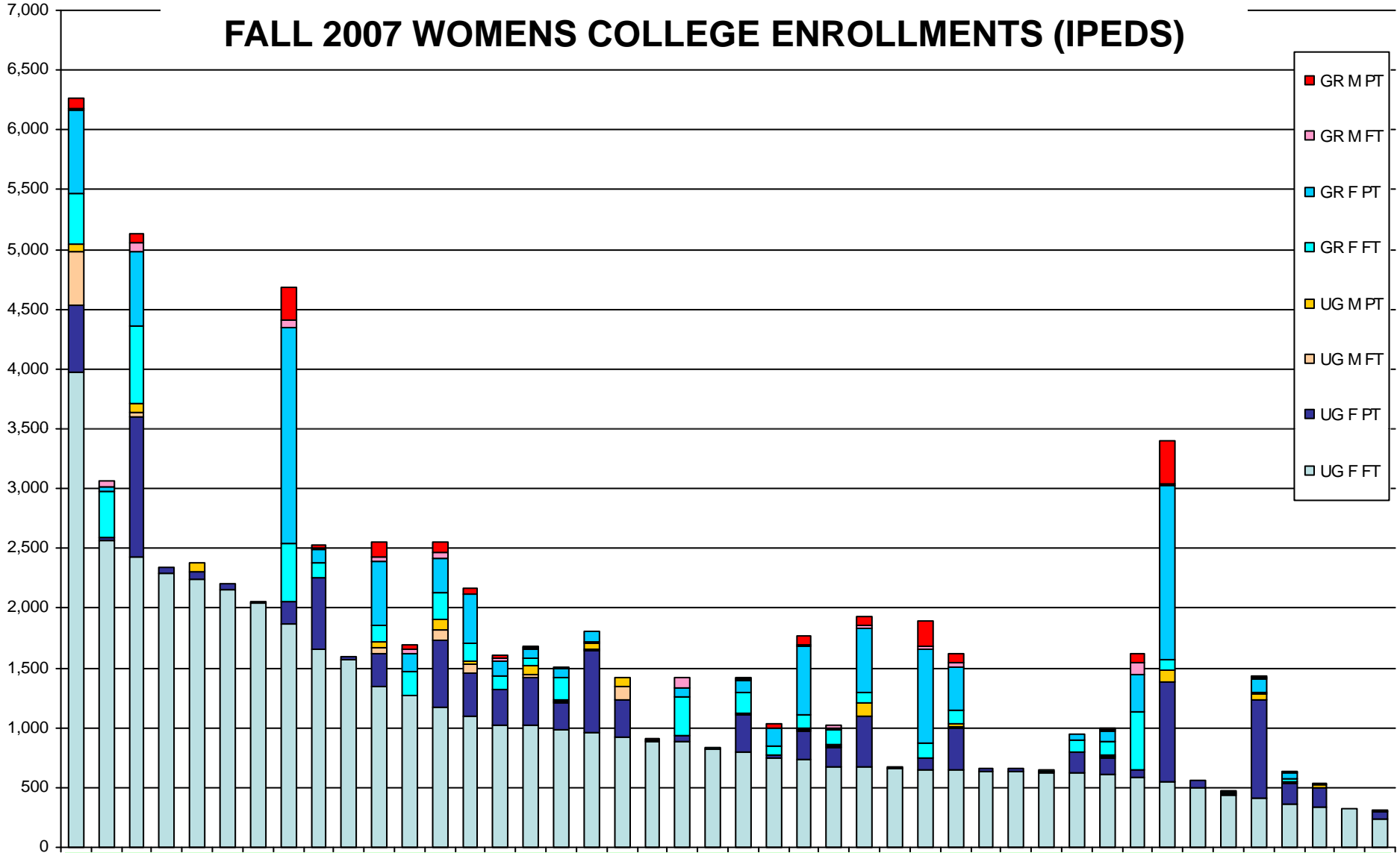
- If we don't or can't imagine what we will be by then, perhaps we won't be there at all
- We will not be the same institutions we are today --- if we are going to get there, change is essential and inevitable
- To know how to change we must know the shape, the potential, the liabilities and the opportunities of our current condition

# Snapshots of Women's College Data

Data slides prepared for use by Women's College Coalition for strategic planning; Data compiled from federal IPEDS reports

Thousands

# FALL 2007 WOMENS COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS (IPEDS)



- GR M PT
- GR M FT
- GR F PT
- GR F FT
- UG M PT
- UG M FT
- UG F PT
- UG F FT

**TOTAL UG FT W: 51,927 AVG: 1180 MED: 880**

TOTAL UG FT/PT W: 63,918 TOTAL UG MEN: 2332 TOTAL UG: 66,250

TOTAL GR W: 19,430 TOTAL GR M: 3117 TOTAL GR: 22,547

**TOTAL ENROLLED: 88,797**

20% OF UG W = PT W

25% OF TOTAL ENROLL = GRAD

**58% OF TOAL ENROLL = FT UG W**

## Women's Colleges Enrollment (2007 IPEDS)

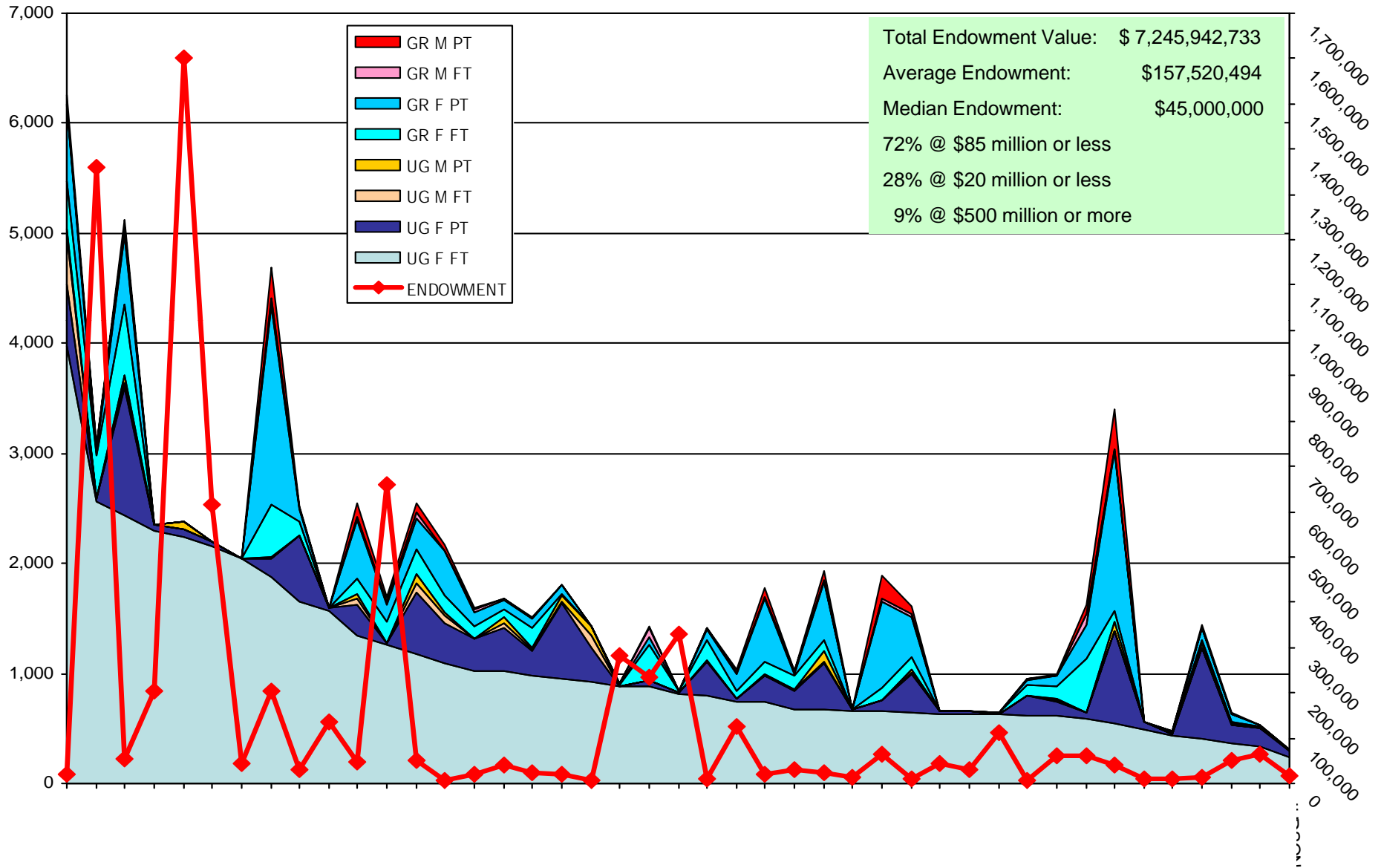
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>88,797</b>
<i>Full-time Undergraduate Women as Percentage of Total Enrollment</i>	<i>58%</i>
Full-Time Undergraduate Women	51,927
Average Undergrad FT Women	1180
Median Undergrad FT Women	880
Part-Time Undergrad Women	11,991
Part-Time Undergrad Women as % of Undergraduate Enrollment	20%
Undergraduate Men	2332
<b>TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE Enrollment</b>	<b>66,250</b>
Graduate Women	19,430
Graduate Men	3117
<b>TOTAL GRADUATE Enrollment</b>	<b>22,547</b>
Graduate Enrollment as % of Total Enrollment	25%
Men as % of Total Enrollment	6%



# 2007-2008 WOMEN'S COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS AND ENDOWMENTS

Thousands of Students

Millions of Dollars



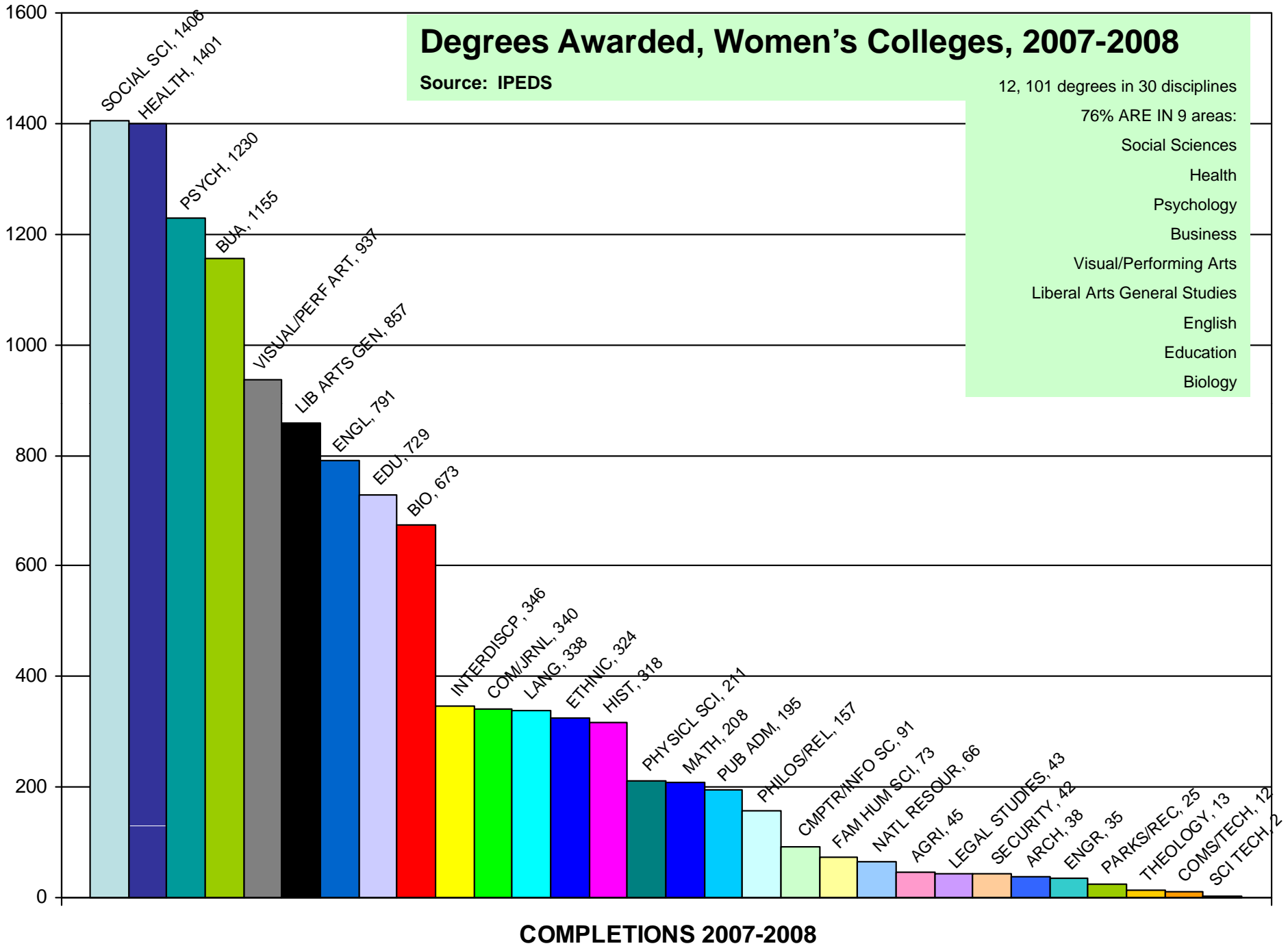
# Degrees Awarded, Women's Colleges, 2007-2008

Source: IPEDS

12, 101 degrees in 30 disciplines

76% ARE IN 9 areas:

- Social Sciences
- Health
- Psychology
- Business
- Visual/Performing Arts
- Liberal Arts General Studies
- English
- Education
- Biology



COMPLETIONS 2007-2008

# Current Women's Colleges

Of 50 institutions in the Women's College Coalition:

- 76% grew average of 21% since 1990
- 27% grew by more than 50%
- 65% grew in first-time full-time enrollment
- 18% = average gain in first-time full-time enrollment
- Wealthier institutions did not grow --- or need to
- Adult, part-time education growing swiftly among institutions with lagging full-time undergrad

# Historic Women's Colleges

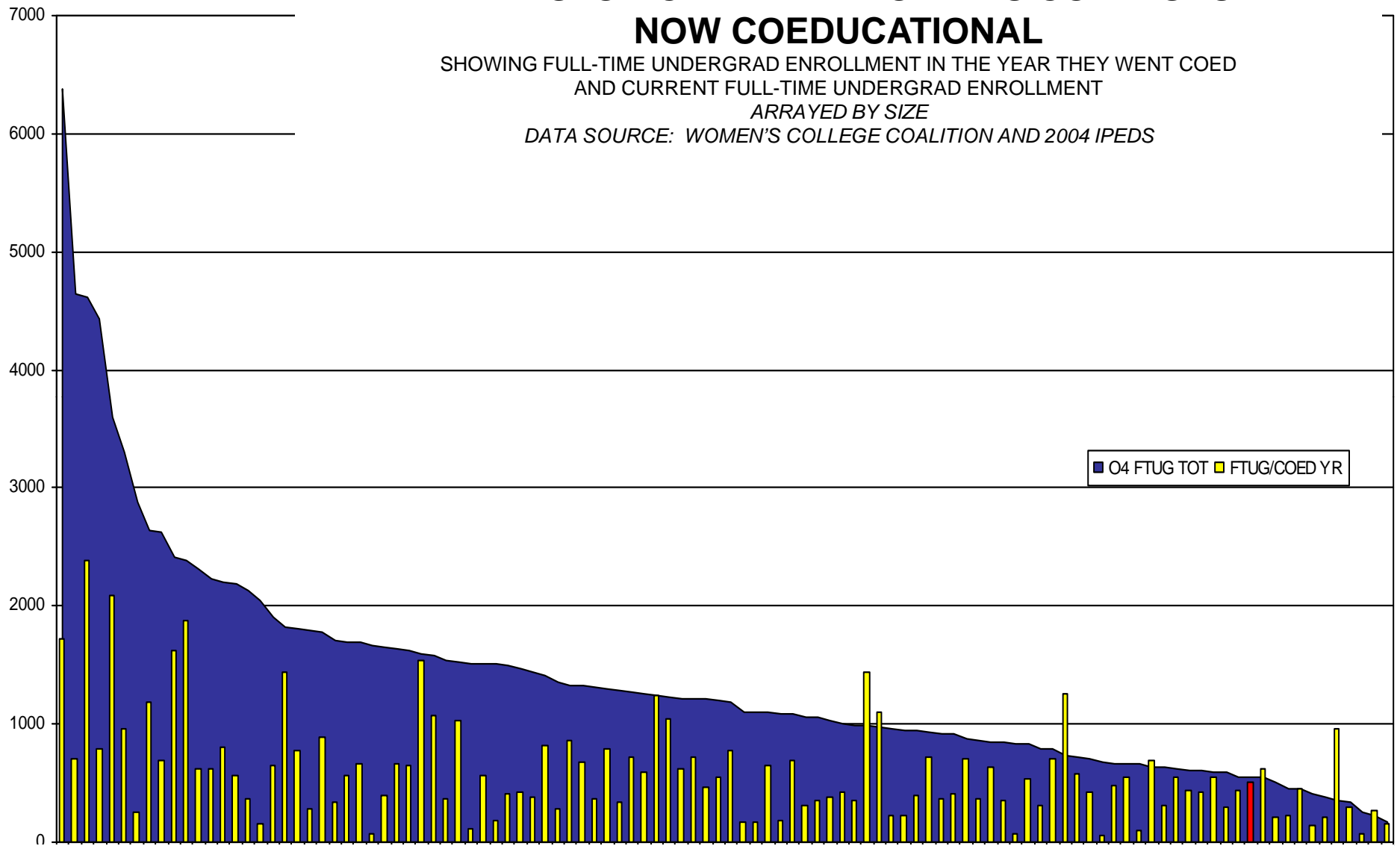
- 91 women's colleges disappeared entirely since 1960
- 118 institutions became coeducational or merged into larger men's universities
- 50 institutions continue with a primary identity as a women's college

# 112 HISTORIC PRIVATE WOMEN'S COLLEGES NOW COEDUCATIONAL

SHOWING FULL-TIME UNDERGRAD ENROLLMENT IN THE YEAR THEY WENT COED  
AND CURRENT FULL-TIME UNDERGRAD ENROLLMENT

ARRAYED BY SIZE

DATA SOURCE: WOMEN'S COLLEGE COALITION AND 2004 IPEDS



# Former Women's Colleges

- 119 still operating as coed institutions
- 91 no longer operating (some merged)

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Of those still operating as coed institutions:

69% = Average female full-time undergrad enrollment

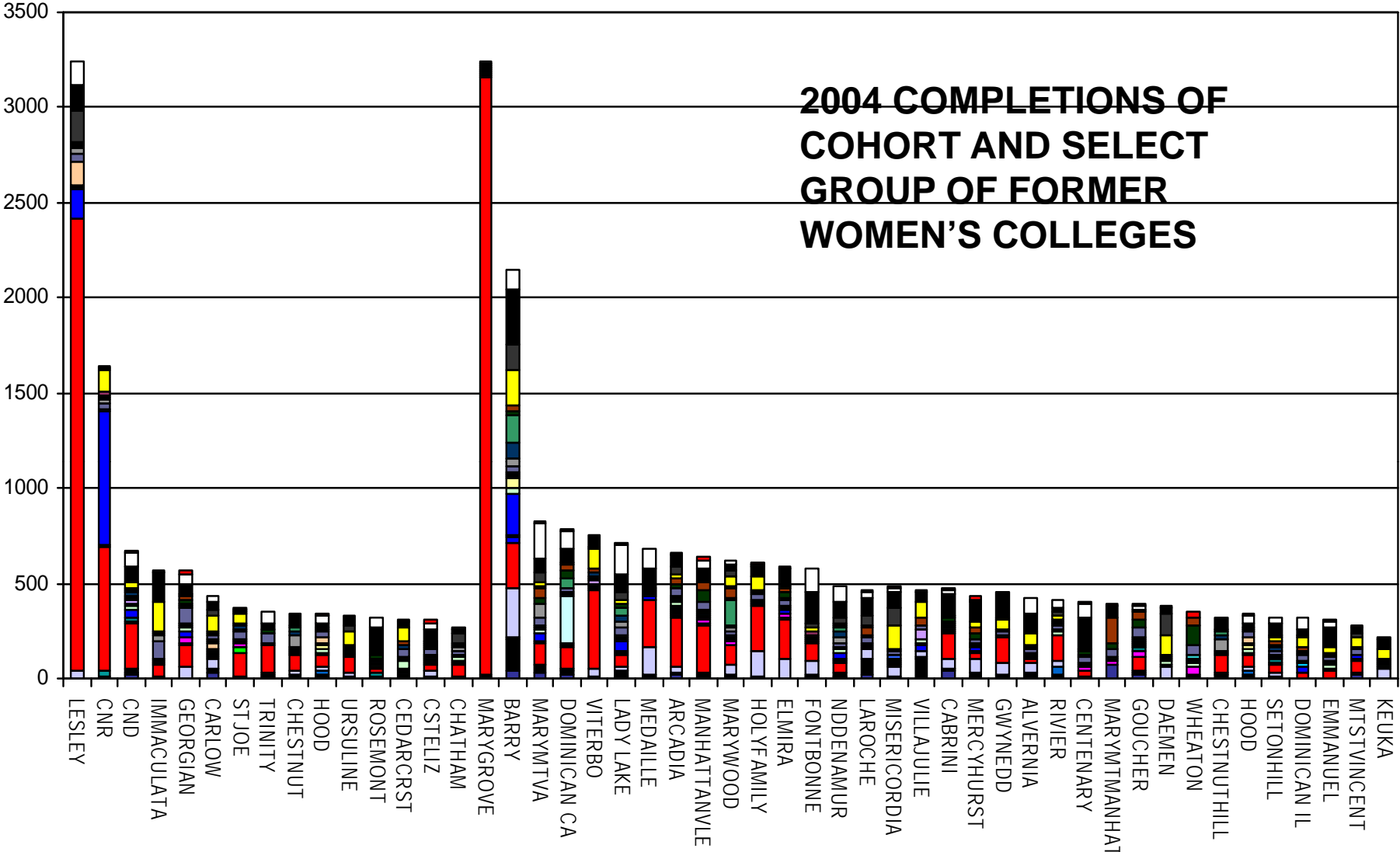
87% = *Proportion* (104 of 119) with more than 60% female students

47% = *Proportion* (57 of 119) with full-time undergraduate female populations that are 70% or greater

78% = *Proportion* (93 of 119) with total student populations *less than 2000 headcount*

21% = *Proportion* (25 of 119) with total student populations greater than 2000

# 2004 COMPLETIONS OF COHORT AND SELECT GROUP OF FORMER WOMEN'S COLLEGES



- |                |                |                          |                        |                |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| AREA - BA      | COMM - BA      | COMM - MA                | COMM TECH - BA         | COMM TECH - MA |
| CMPTR SCI - BA | CMPTR SCI - MA | EDU - BA                 | EDU - MA               | LANG - BA      |
| HUM SCI - BA   | HUM SCI - MA   | LEGAL - BA               | ENG - BA               | ENG - MA       |
| LIB ST - BA    | LIB ST - MA    | LIBRARY - MA             | BIO - BA               | BIO - MA       |
| MATH - BA      | MATH - MA      | MULTIDISCIPL - BACHELORS | MULTIDISCIPL - MASTERS | REC - BA       |
| PHIL RST - BA  | THE - BA       | THE - MA                 | PHYSICS - BA           | PHYSICS - MA   |
| PSYCH - BA     | PSYCH - MA     | PUB ADM - BA             | PUB ADM - MA           | SOC SCI - BA   |
| SOC SCI - MA   | VIS ART - BA   | VIS ART - MA             | HEALTH - BA            | HEALTH - MA    |
| BSNS - BA      | BSNS - MA      | HIS - BA                 |                        |                |

## Benchmarking and Strategic Thinking

- Disposition to change is imperative for good institutional health and vitality
- HOW to change requires study and strategic thinking
- Benchmarking informs the HOW and the WHY of proposals for institutional change
- Benchmarking also provides some stable basis for constituents to understand how the entire genre is changing, not just their alma mater



# Trinity as Case Study for Benchmarking and Strategic Change

- Change resistance:
  - “We’re **not trendy.**”
  - *Liberal Arts = timeless and pure.*
  - We don’t do *job training*.
  - We don’t want to be like everyone else.
  - We are **unique.**
  - *We’re so much better than those institutions.*
  - XXX College is *not* our peer.
  - We care about **mission**, not about the market.
  - The Alumnae **won’t like it.**
  - **If only Admissions knew what they were doing, we wouldn’t have to think about this.**

# Strategic Planning Can Overcome Change Resistance

- Benchmarking establishes “what’s normal today”
- Elements of potential institutional change identified through study of peers
- Analysis of characteristics that are both assets and liabilities
- Alignment with significant external trends, expectations, public needs
- Identification of change that is achievable and affordable in a realistic timetable with likely positive results for the bottom line and for institutional mission

# Selecting and Studying A Cohort

- Similarities: size, finances, location type, mission sensitivities, management capacity
  - NOT “romance” = comparing Trinity to Wellesley, e.g., makes no economic sense even though we ostensibly share a mission commitment to women
- Aspirational: some outliers can be in the group for challenge purposes, but be careful to keep characteristics relatively similar or know how to account for differences
- IPEDS Data: easily available and best stable source for long-term comparisons and analysis

# Trinity's Cohort Institutions

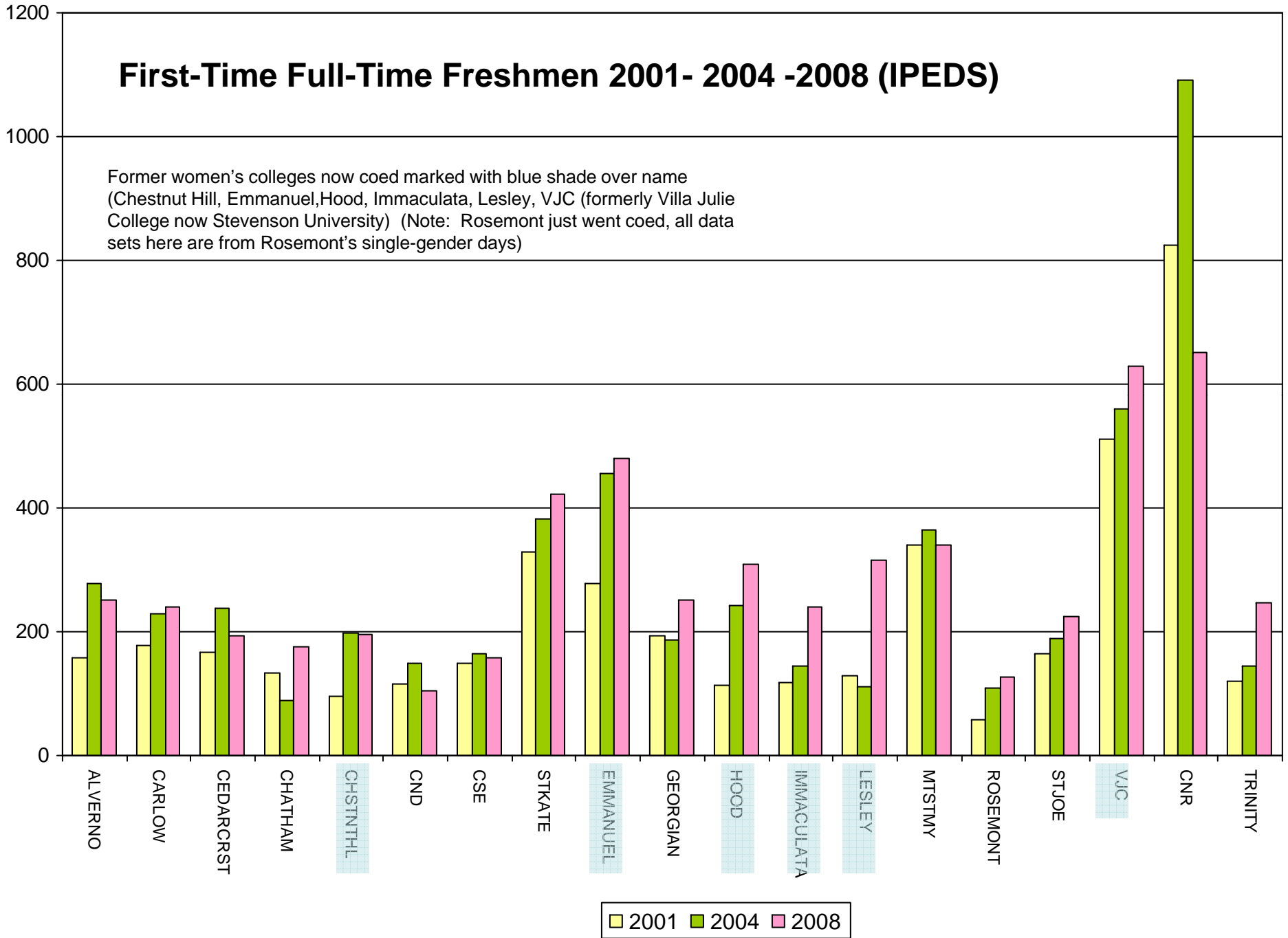
Historic women's colleges in urban centers, almost all founded by Catholic religious orders of women (those that are not historically Catholic marked with \*)

*Those that have gone coed are in blue*

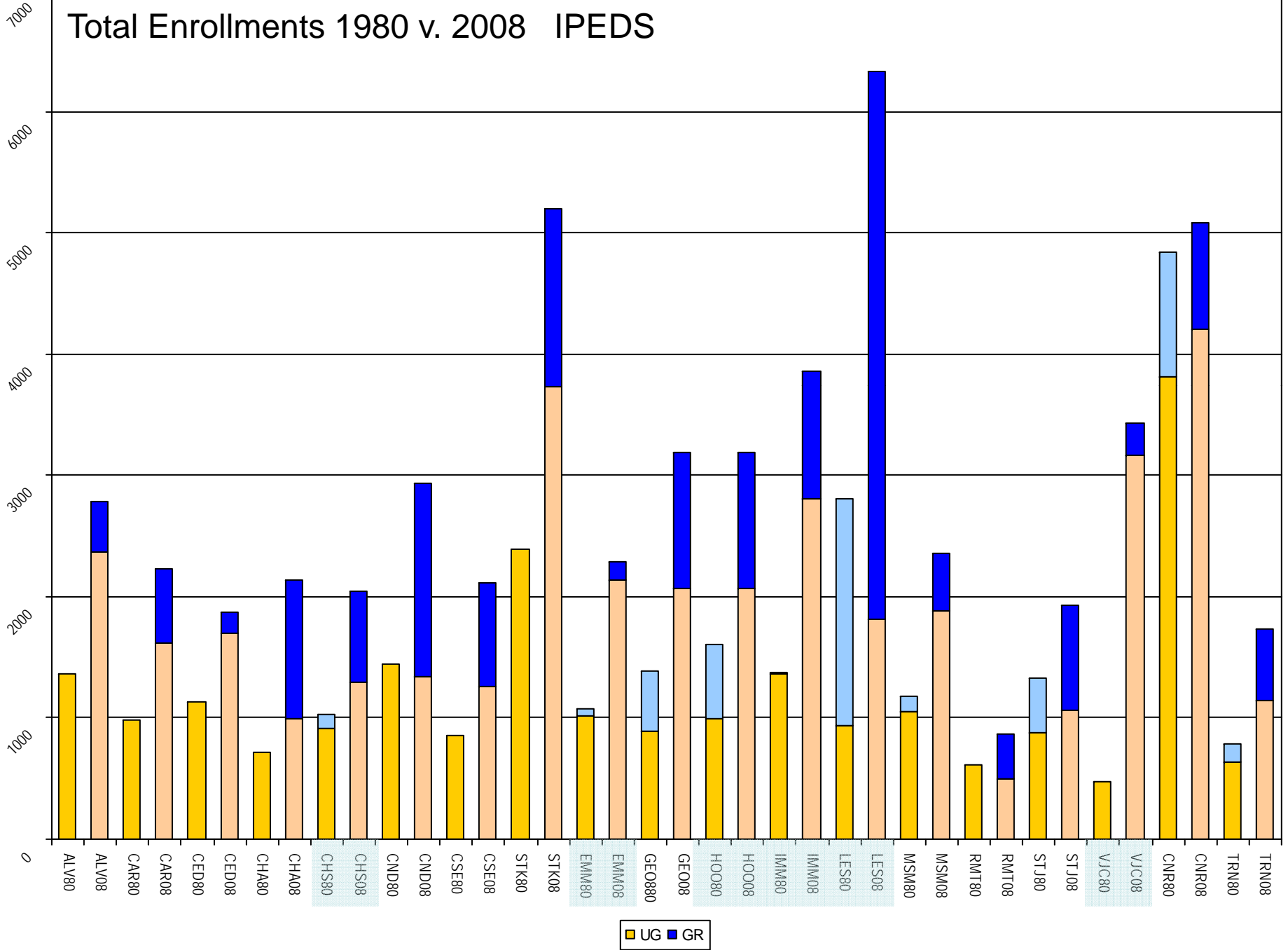
- Alverno (Milwaukee)
- Carlow (Pittsburgh)
- Cedar Crest\* (Allentown)
- Chatham\* (Pittsburgh)
- Chestnut Hill (Philadelphia)
- College of Notre Dame of Maryland (Baltimore)
- College of St. Elizabeth (NJ)
- College of St. Catherine (MN)
- Emmanuel (Boston)
- Georgian Court (NJ)
- Hood\* (MD)
- Immaculata (Philadelphia)
- Lesley\* (Boston)
- Mt. St. Mary's (Los Angeles)
- Rosemont (Philadelphia)
- Saint Joseph (Hartford)
- Stevenson U (Villa Julie) (Balt)
- College of New Rochelle (NY)

# First-Time Full-Time Freshmen 2001- 2004 -2008 (IPEDS)

Former women's colleges now coed marked with blue shade over name  
 (Chestnut Hill, Emmanuel, Hood, Immaculata, Lesley, VJC (formerly Villa Julie  
 College now Stevenson University) (Note: Rosemont just went coed, all data  
 sets here are from Rosemont's single-gender days)



# Total Enrollments 1980 v. 2008 IPEDS





# What did Trinity learn from benchmarking?

- Institutional conditions are not simply a function of one characteristic, i.e., being a women's college
- **The interplay of multiple institutional characteristics affects capacity for change, growth and seizing opportunities:**
  - Liberal Arts
  - Urban, Suburban, Rural
  - Graduate Programs
  - Professional Programs
  - Availability of Partners for Innovation
  - Governance
  - Ability to raise capital
  - Infrastructure
  - Faculty Capacity to adopt new technologies
  - Local issues in public/private higher education competitors
  - Athletics
  - Flagship Programs
  - Disposition to partner with business in workforce development
  - Ability to parlay women's commitment into regional economic opportunity



“Going Coed”  
is a 60’s solution  
for a 20<sup>th</sup> Century industry

# Imagine 2050

## Demographics

*400 million*

*54% historic minorities*

*20% over age 65*

## Economics

## Technologies

## Workforce Demands

## Educational Expectations

## Lifelong Learning

## Global Environmental Challenges

# Imagine 2050 Higher Education

Lifespan Education

Pervasive Virtual Classroom

Portable Library

24/7/365 Teaching and Learning

Multi-Lingual Instructional Pods

Disciplinary Demands:

STEM

Technology

Healthcare

Geriatrics

Media and Communication

Environmental Management

# Imagine 2050 Women's College

**Multi-dimensional university**

Undergraduate, Graduate Degrees

**Continuing Education**

Educating Women and Men of All Ages

Woman-Centered Mission

**Core Single-Gender Programs**

Special Emphases on Access for Success

**Significant Diversity**

Professional Pathways

**Technological Mastery**

Multi-locational

Global

**Key Partnerships for Program Delivery**

Will a distinctive primary collegiate mission  
to serve the educational needs of women

👉 still be necessary

👉 still have relevance

👉 be economically sustainable?

in 2050?

# Necessity

- Opportunities for higher education will continue to be limited or inaccessible for a majority of Americans, women in America, and women internationally --- to reclaim America's lead in the proportion of the population holding college degrees, higher education will need to provide millions more seats, not fewer, and women will fill the majority of those seats...
- Women from previously under-served populations have the most acute need for access to institutions that will promote their ability to be successful in the knowledge, skills and values that higher education teaches --- for women who also face disadvantage and discrimination because of race, age, national origin, language, social class and other characteristics, the need is even greater for access to colleges that promote equity, justice and women's success
- Inequality in professional opportunities, skepticism of women's leadership and management abilities, and outright discrimination against women in certain disciplines and professions (especially STEM fields) will continue --- to overcome these barriers, women will continue to need the role models of success, self-confidence and strong advocacy skills that women's colleges have long promoted

# Relevance

- Relevance depends heavily on the institution's astuteness in leveraging core competencies in liberal arts foundation disciplines --- critical reasoning, ethics, writing and oral expression, language skills, mathematical and analytical skills --- to develop platforms for success in professional disciplines serving workforce demands in healthcare, technology, social services, teaching, communications
- The simple state of being a women's college will not be relevant to future social, educational or workforce needs
- The ability to educate women, particularly women from historically marginalized groups, for successful professional lives will have large relevance in an increasingly diverse society where the work will require advanced higher learning

# Sustainable

- 20<sup>th</sup> century business models of most private colleges are not sustainable
- Private higher education must become significantly more entrepreneurial and responsive to economic and workforce realities
- Institutional business models must anticipate multiple lines of business and diverse revenue streams to provide flexibility and sustainability as new professions emerge and once-robust product lines diminish
- Sustainability requires acceptance of university-like models with a range of necessary credentials delivered through multi-modal platforms to students across a range of ages and preparatory readiness
- Woman-centered options, and even single-gender options, can continue to be desirable and relevant and able to claim a significant market share so long as they are *not the only product lines* for the institution
- Woman-centered and single-gender options may find the largest market opportunities among historically marginalized populations for whom a great education and professional empowerment is a driving ambition



If we think this mission is still worth it, then we must change completely to sustain our mission for future generations. This is the deeply counter-cultural paradox of the women's college mission.

The counter-cultural paradox of our mission requires us to embrace the possibilities inherent in making higher education accessible to the millions of women for whom the dream of a college degree is still so elusive.

The morality of our mission requires us to ask of ourselves: if we don't offer such women the opportunity of transformation through education, who will?

Women's colleges are the **witnesses**, the **memory**, the **voice** of women's *intellectual freedom* and **liberation**.

In an educational marketplace that exalts super-sized, homogenized credentialing machines, we need women's colleges as places that continue to give meaning to the ideals of **justice** and **equality** through the careful, attentive education of each person.

We need women's colleges to ensure that the **power of educated women** can continue to influence and lead our society toward those large goals of peace and economic security that are essential for our children and their children to flourish in the **Good Society** of our highest aspirations.

