

How Pervasive is Academic Clustering?

An Analysis of Academic Majors of SEC and PAC-10 Football Players



Kadie Otto, Ph. D.

Associate Professor

Western Carolina University

Prior Research

- USA Today (2008)
 - 83% of schools had at least one clustered team
 - More than 50% was “extreme clustering”
- Fountain & Finley (2009)
 - Clustering was found in all ACC football programs
 - Minorities clustered at greater rates than Caucasians
 - 6 programs had 75% or more of Minorities into two majors

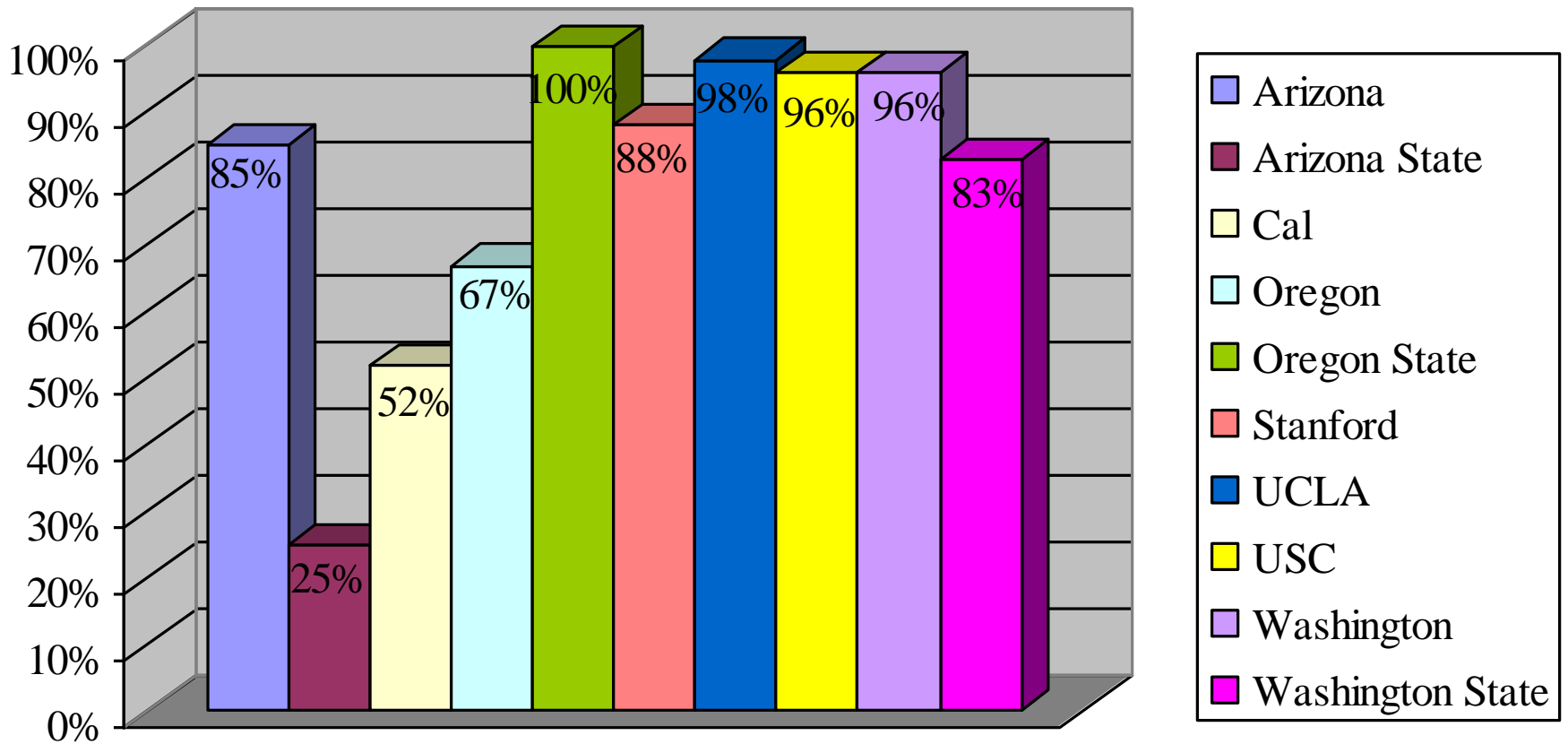
Purpose of the Study

- Analyze the academic majors of all ($n = 21$) SEC and PAC-10 football upperclassmen to determine whether academic clustering exists
 - SEC (11 of 12: Alabama did not report the academic major of any of its football players)
 - PAC-10 (10 of 10)

Methodology

- Football media guides were used to obtain athletes majors and racial categorization
- University websites were utilized to obtain detailed information regarding academic majors
- All seniors, juniors and red-shirt sophomores were classified as “upperclassmen”

Percentage of PAC - 10 Football Upperclassmen w/Declared Major (79% overall average)



Key

UPR = Upperclassmen (Sr., Jr., & red-shirt So.)

C = Clustering (25-39%)

EC = Extreme Clustering (40% or greater)

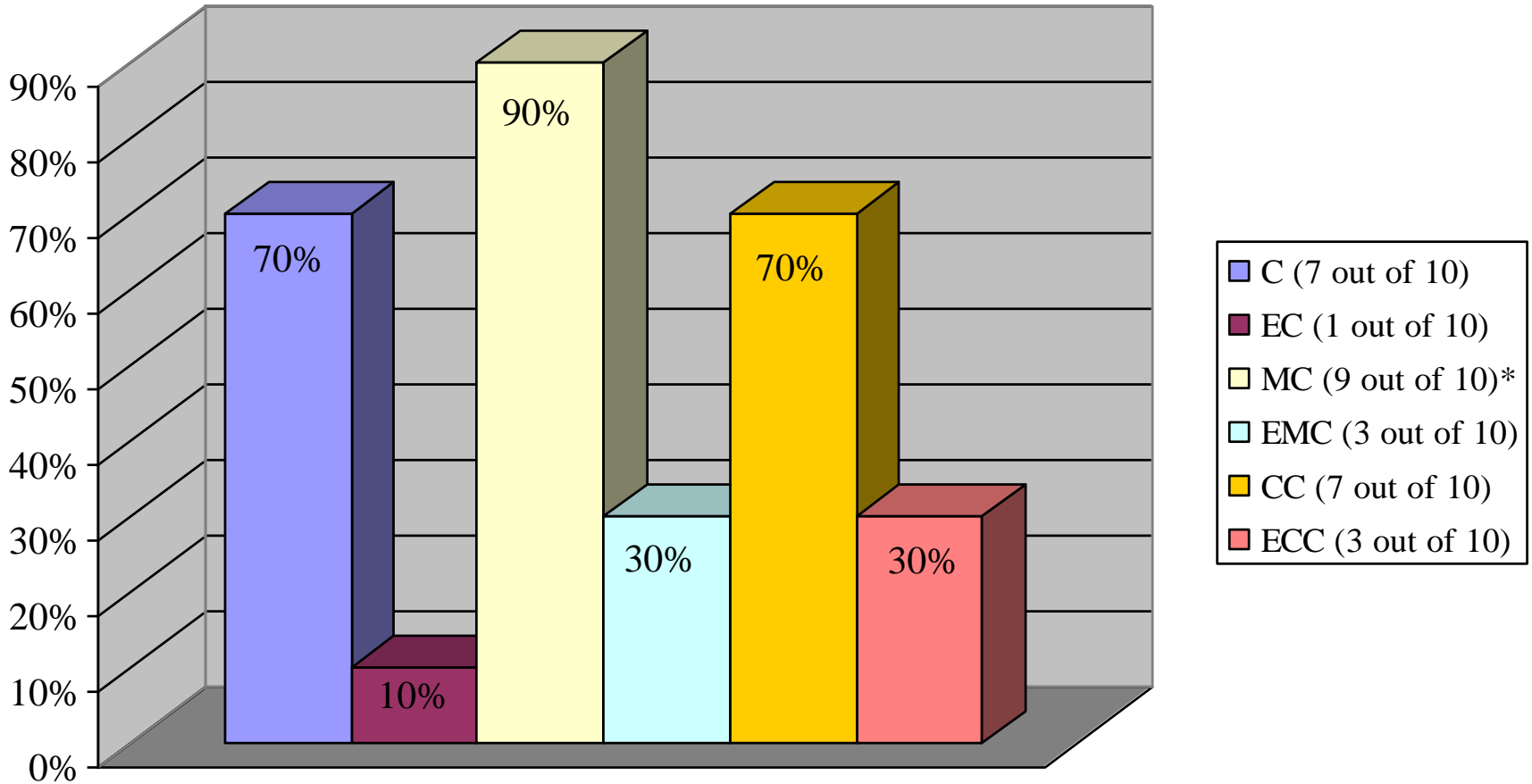
MC = Minority Clustering

EMC = Extreme Minority Clustering

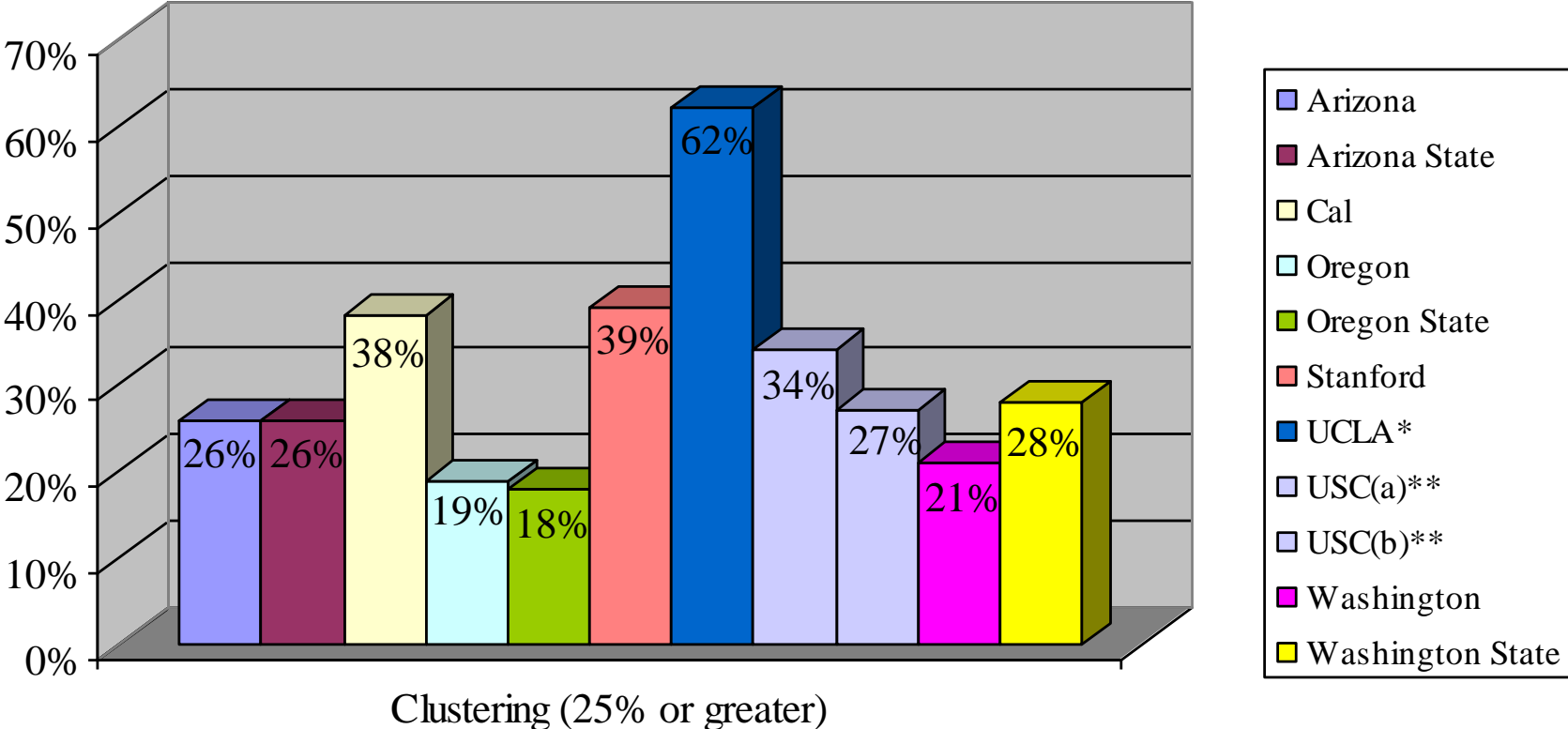
CC = Caucasian Clustering

ECC = Extreme Caucasian Clustering

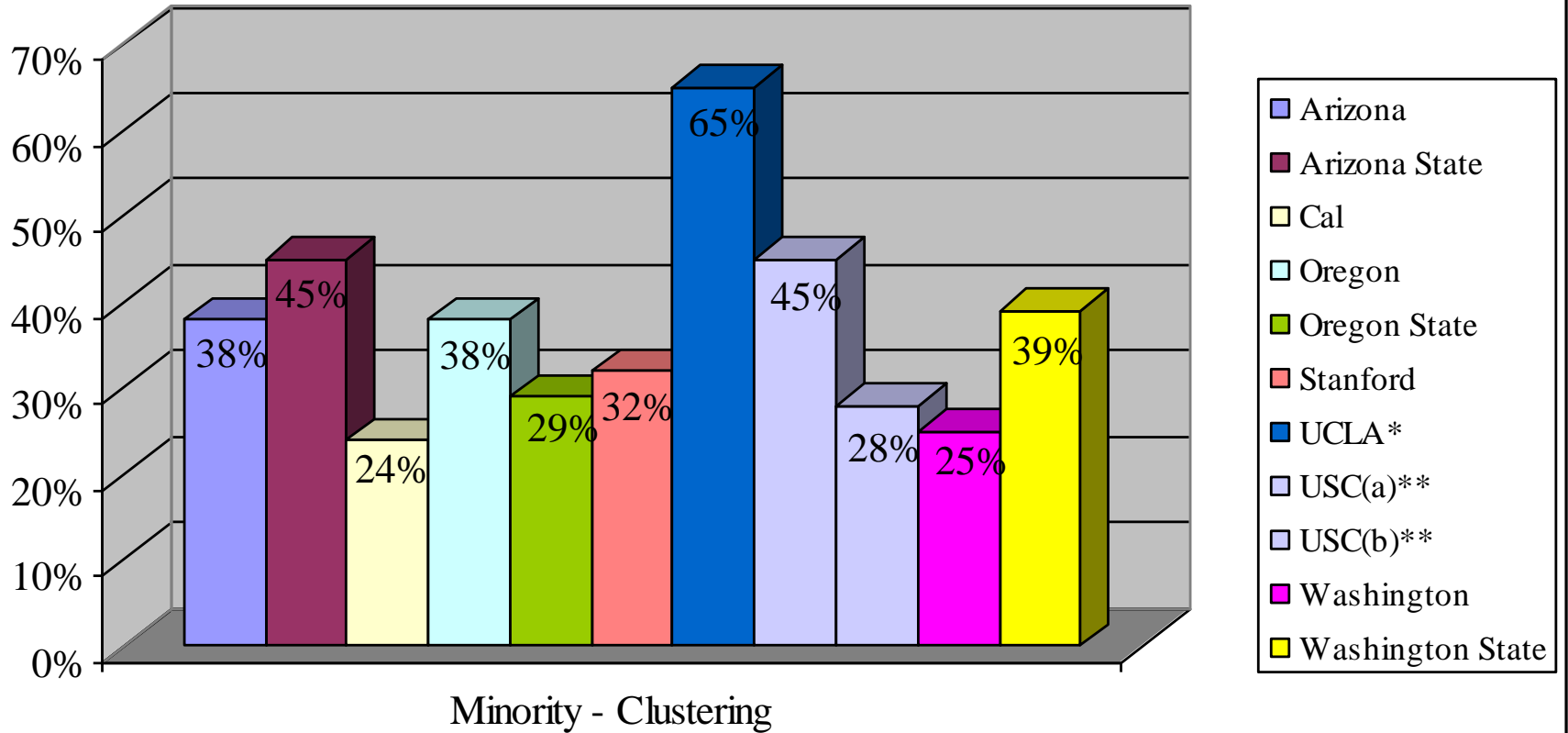
PAC - 10 - Summary Results ($n = 10$)



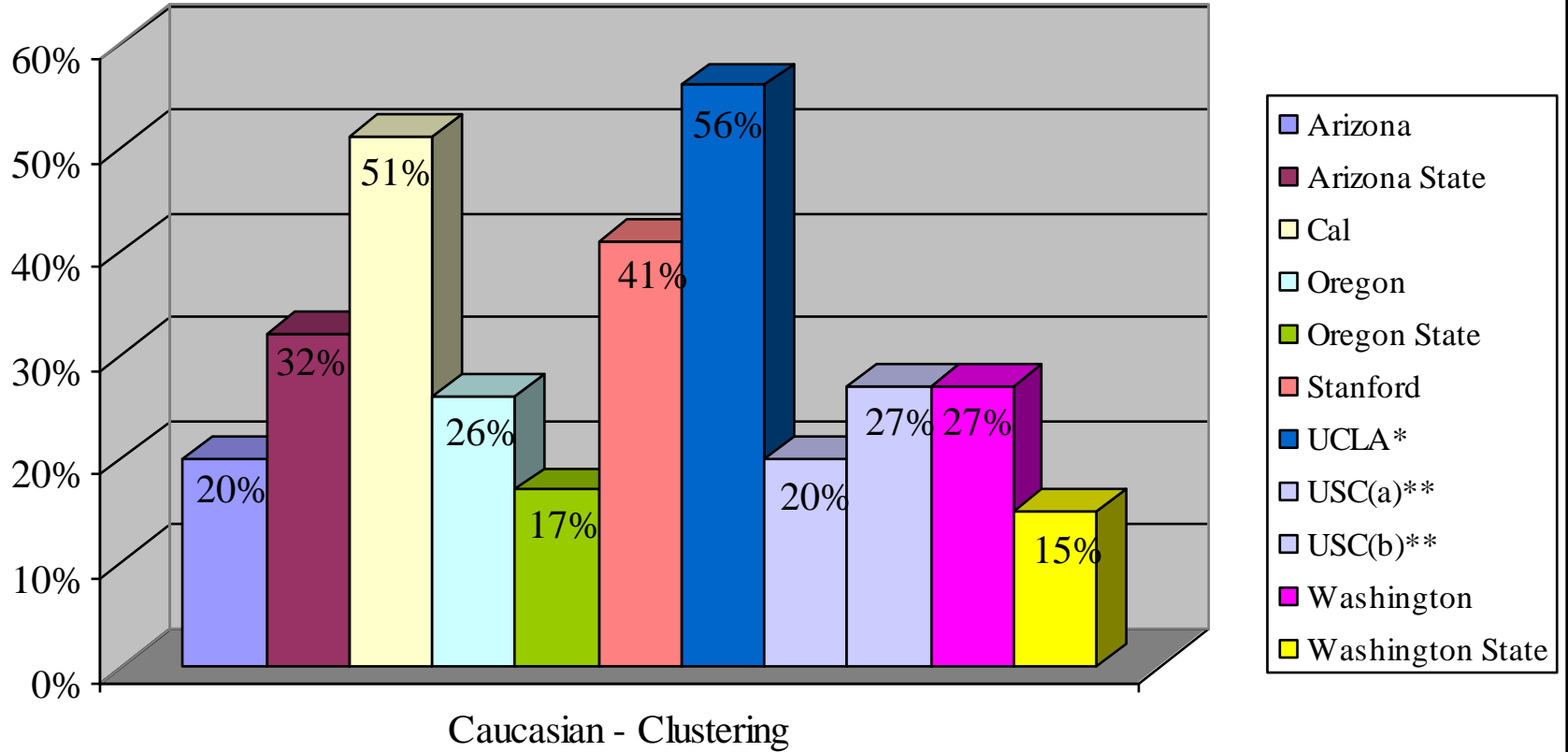
Clustering in PAC - 10 Football



Minority Clustering in PAC - 10 Football



Caucasian Clustering in PAC - 10 Football



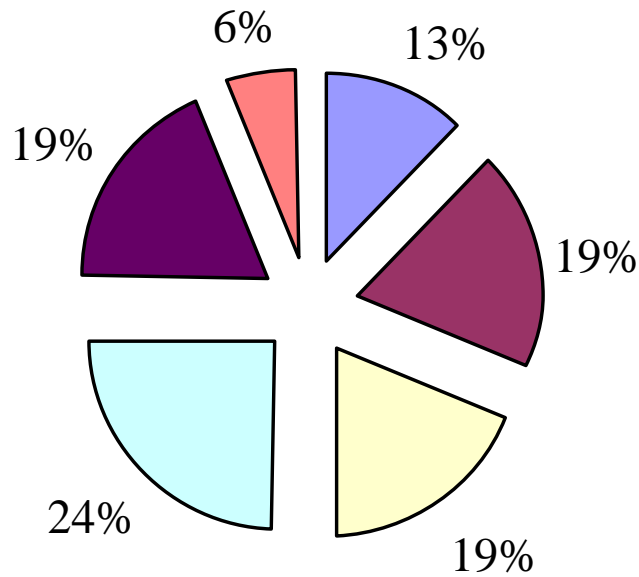
Cal

C = 38% American Studies*

MC = 24% American Studies

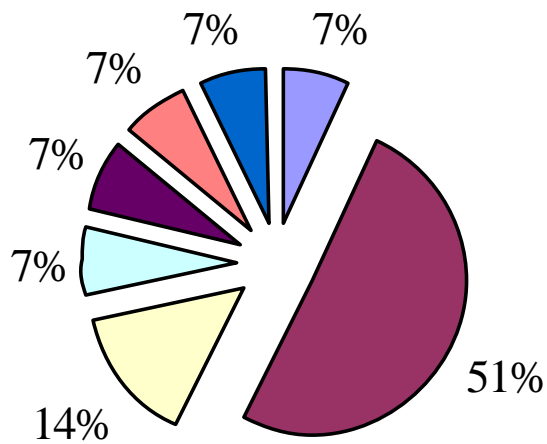
ECC = 51% American Studies**

2009-10 Academic Majors of Cal Football MINORITY Upperclassmen ($n = 16$)



- Ethnic Studies
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Social Welfare
- American Studies
- African-American Studies
- Legal Studies

2009-10 Academic Majors of Cal Football Caucasian Upperclassmen ($n = 14$)



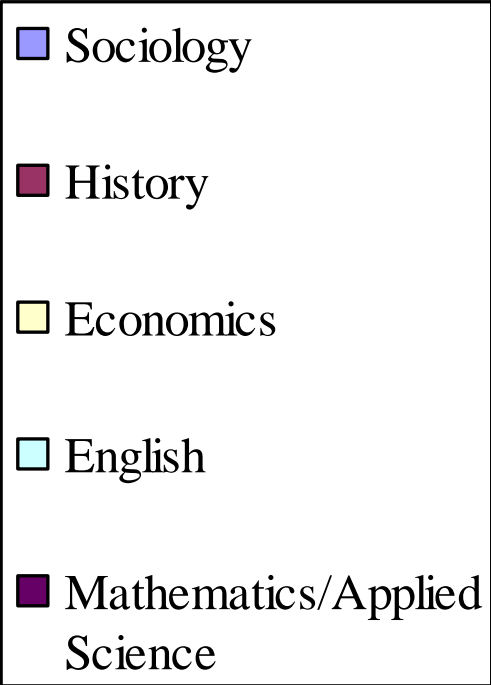
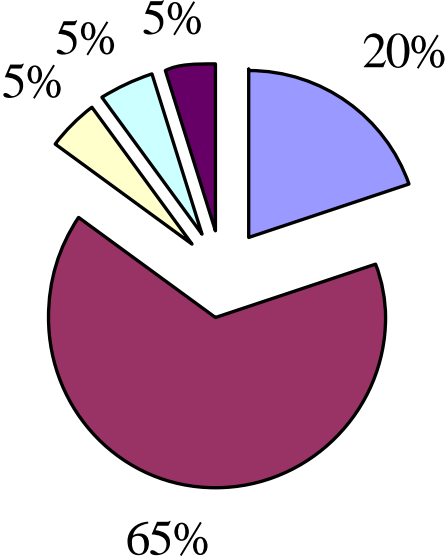
- Social Welfare
- American Studies
- Political Science
- Sociology
- Mechanical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Business Administration

UCLA

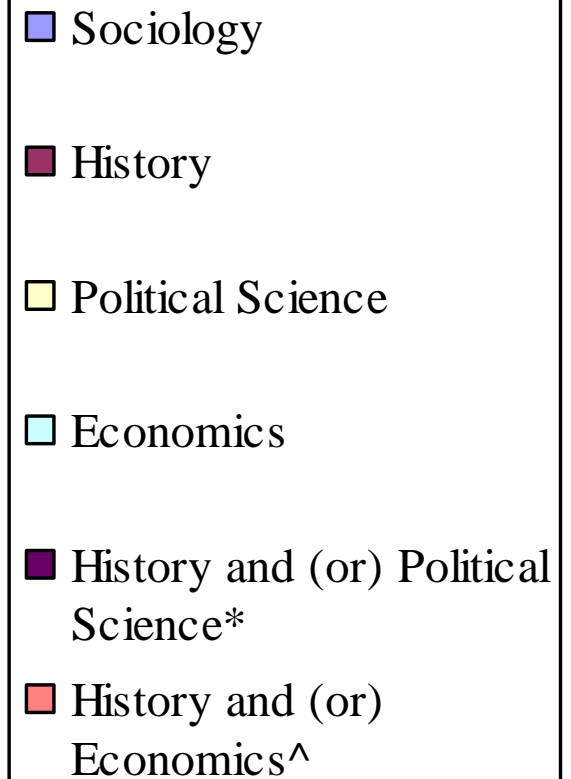
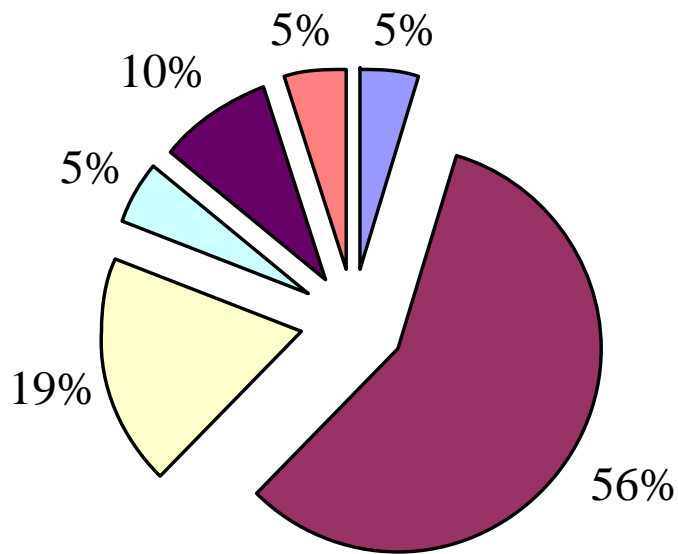
- UCLA
 - EC = 62% History**
 - EMC = 65% History**
 - ECC = 56% History**

2009-10 Academic Majors of UCLA Football

MINORITY Upperclassmen ($n = 20$)



2009-10 Academic Majors of UCLA Football Caucasian Upperclassmen ($n = 21$)



USC

C(a) = 34% Sociology*

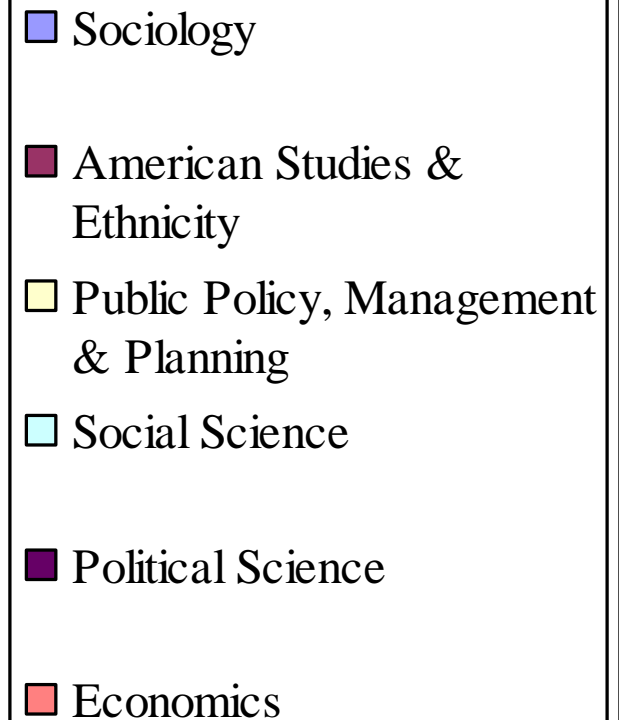
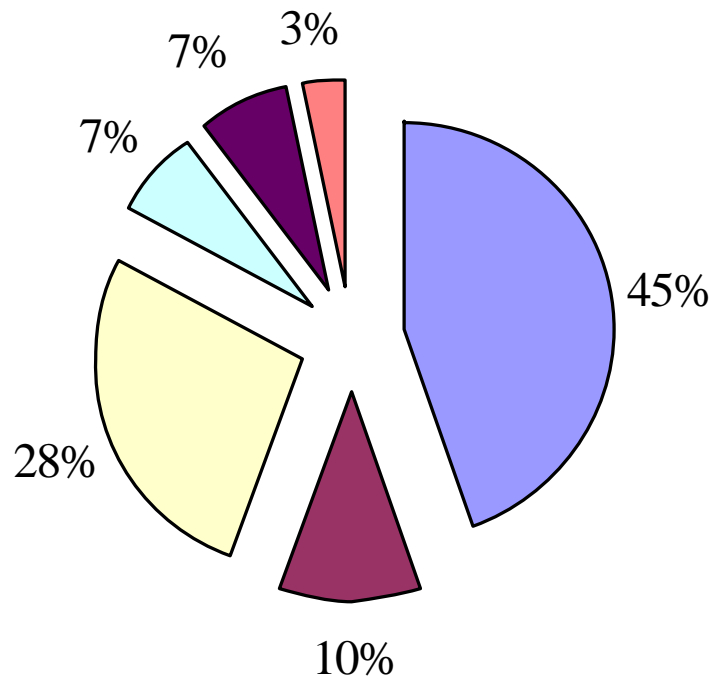
C(b) = 27% Public Policy, Management & Planning*

EMC(a) = 45% Sociology**

MC(b) = 28% Public Policy, Management & Planning*

CC(b) = 27% Public Policy, Management & Planning*

2009-10 Academic Majors of USC Football MINORITY Upperclassmen ($n = 29$)



Washington State

C = 28% Social Sciences*

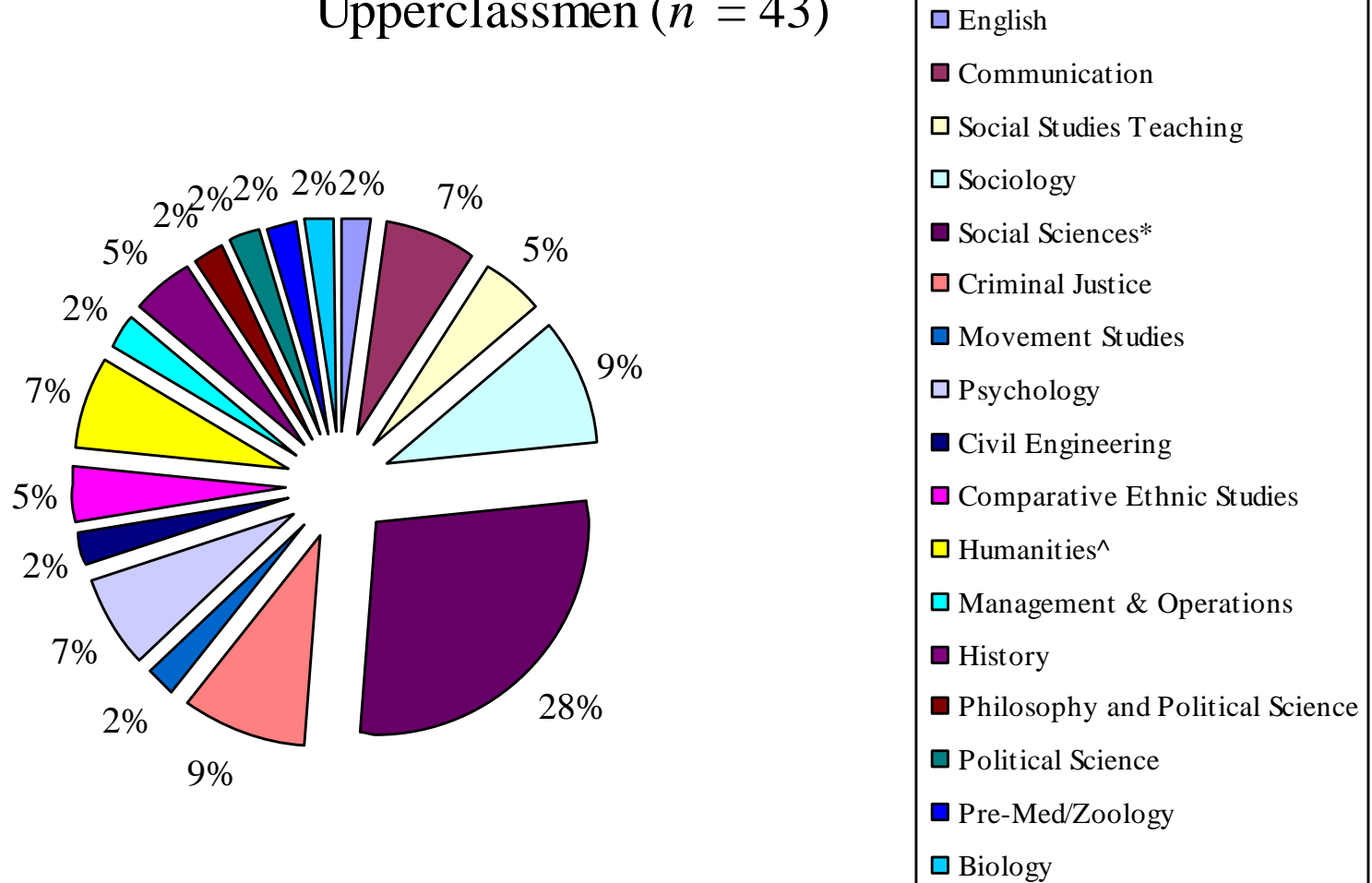
MC = 39% Social Sciences*

CC = 15% Social Sciences

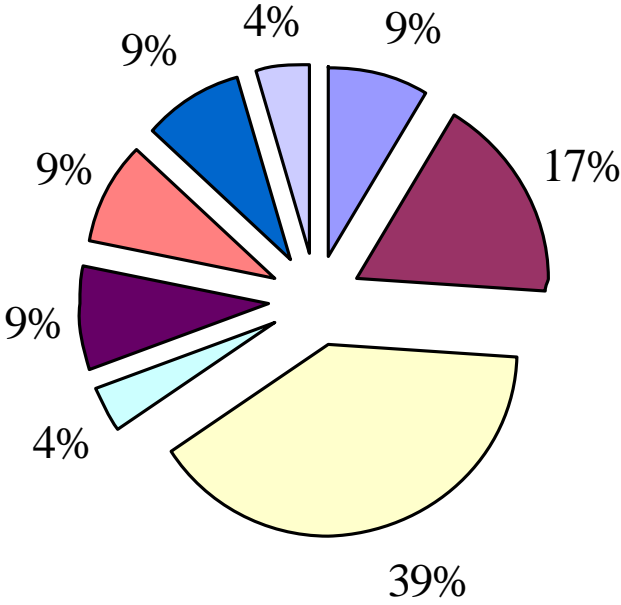
- * Social Sciences is an on-line degree program and offers concentrations in the following subject areas: Anthropology, Business (Management Information Systems; Management and Operations; Entrepreneurship), Criminal Justice, Economics, History, Human Development, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Women's Studies.

2009-10 Academic Majors of Washington State Football

Upperclassmen ($n = 43$)



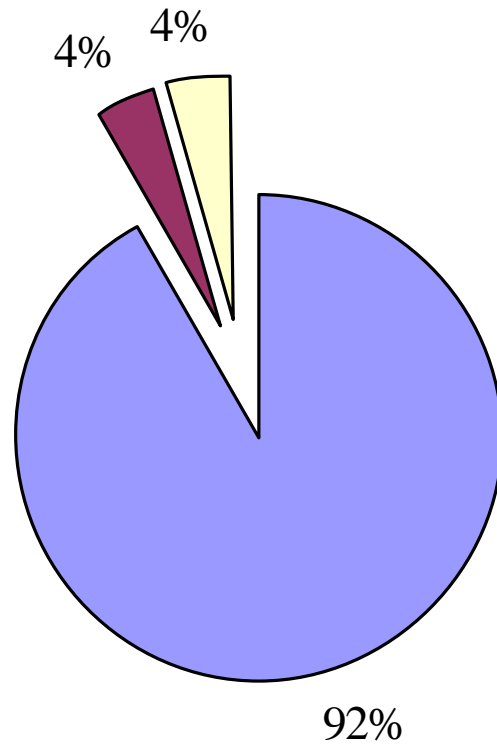
2009-10 Academic Majors of Washington State Football MINORITY Upperclassmen ($n = 23$)



- Communication
- Sociology
- Social Sciences*
- Criminal Justice
- Psychology
- Comparative Ethnic Studies
- Humanities^
- Political Science

PAC - 10 Clustered Areas of Academic Study

($n = 25$)

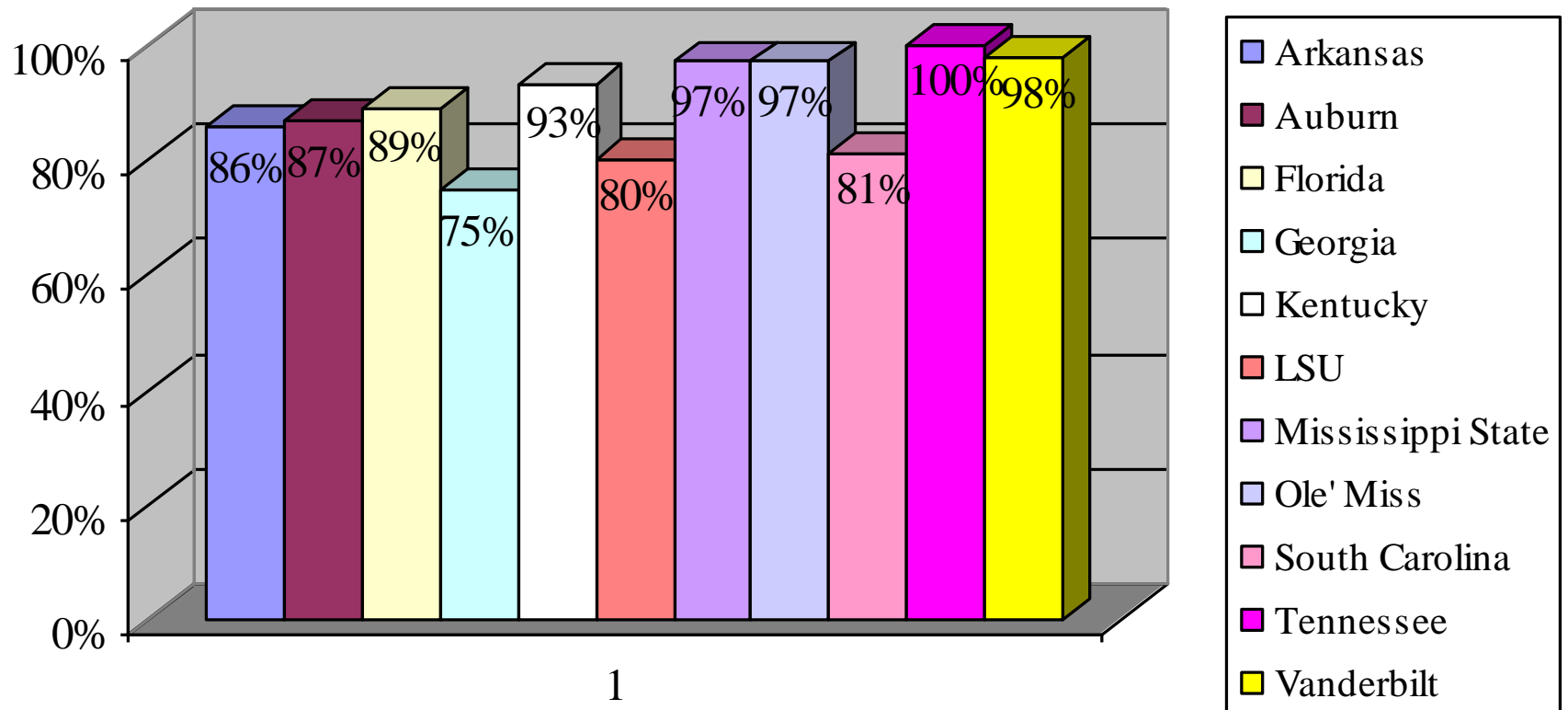


■ Social & Behavioral Sciences

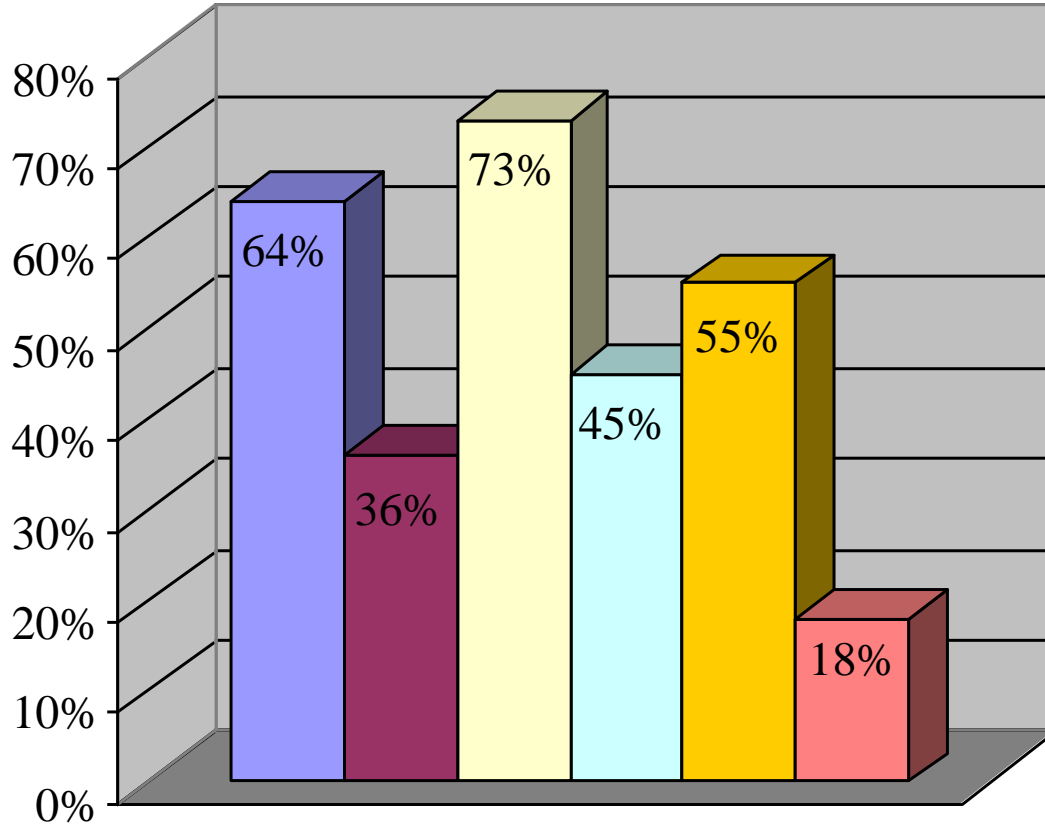
■ Communications

■ Business

Percentage of SEC Football Upperclassmen w/ Declared Major (89% overall average)



SEC - Summary Results ($n = 11$)



■ C (7 out of 11)

■ EC (4 out of 11)

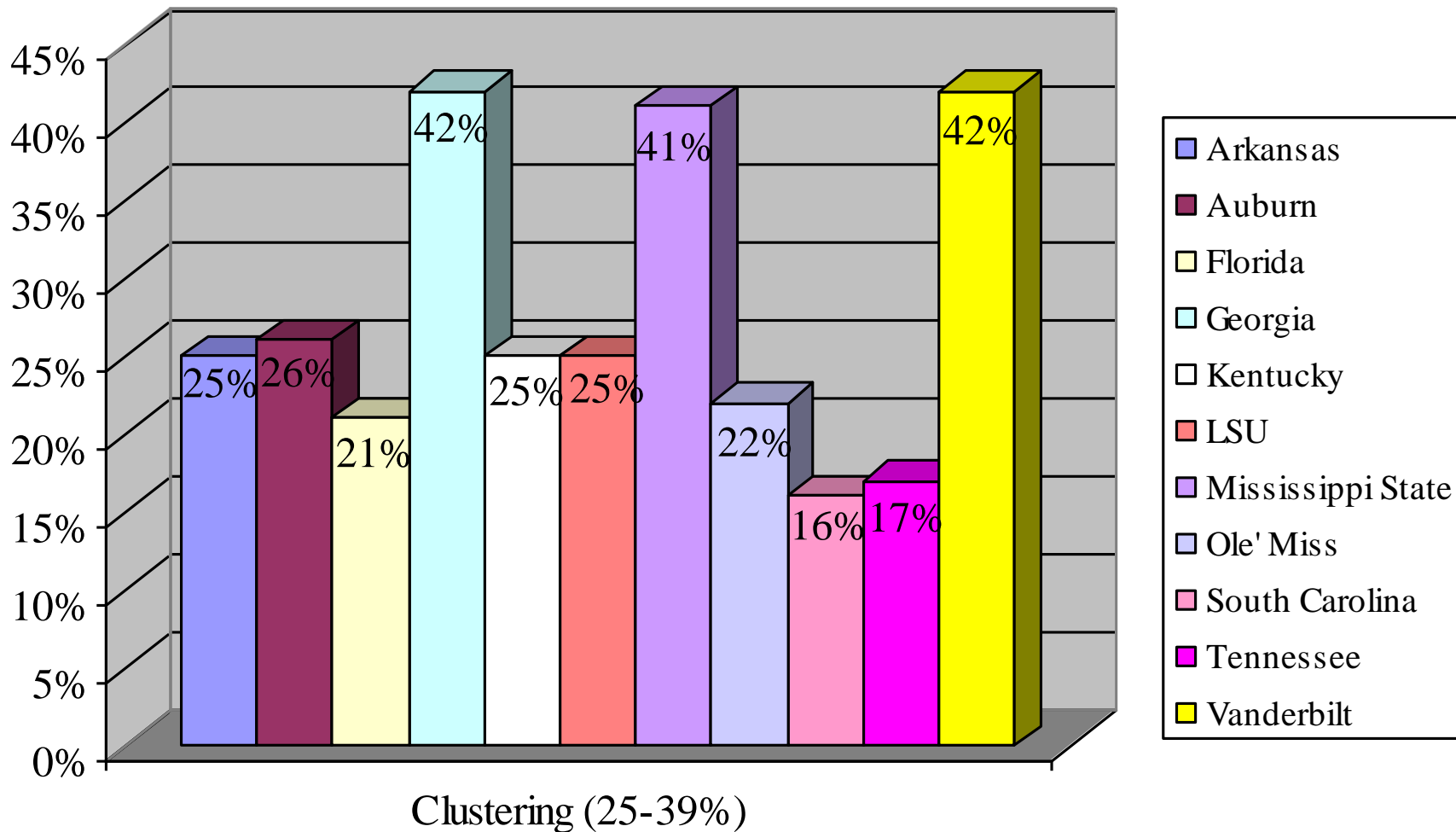
■ MC (8 out of 11)*

■ EMC (5 out of 11)

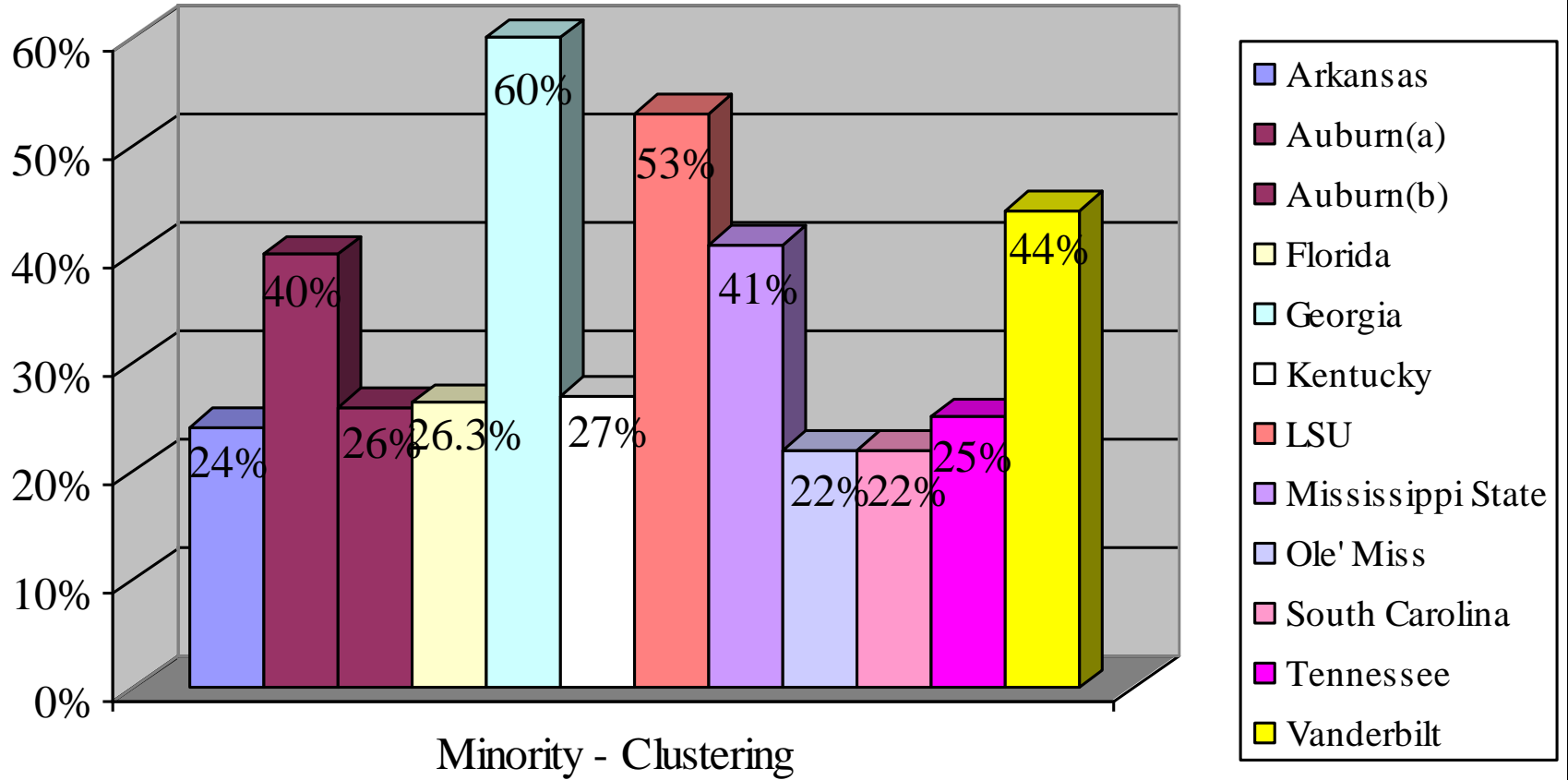
■ CC (6 out of 11)*

■ ECC (2 out of 11)

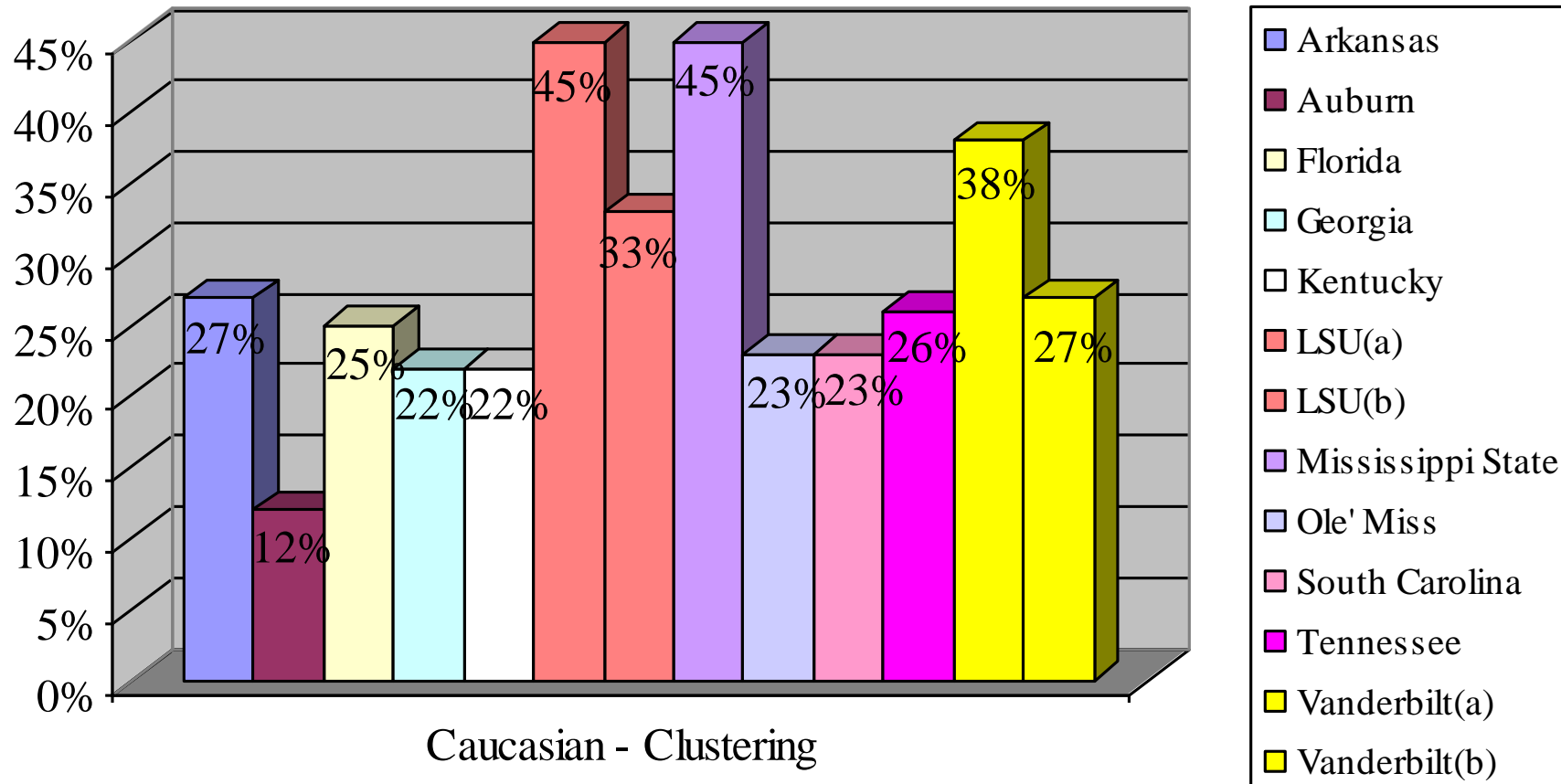
Clustering in SEC Football ($n = 11$)



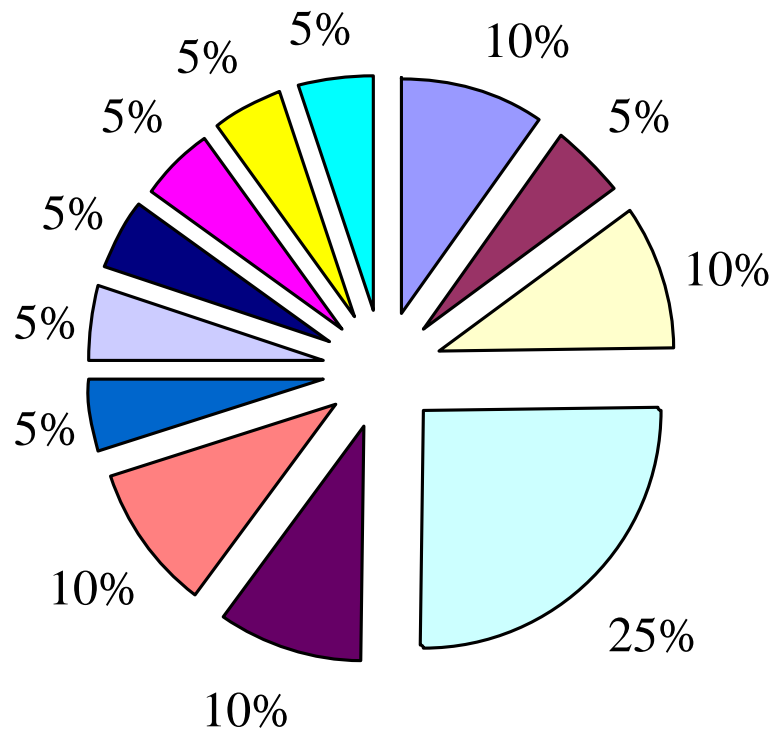
Minority Clustering in SEC Football



Caucasian Clustering in SEC Football



2009-10 Academic Majors of Florida Football Caucasian Upperclassmen ($n = 20$)

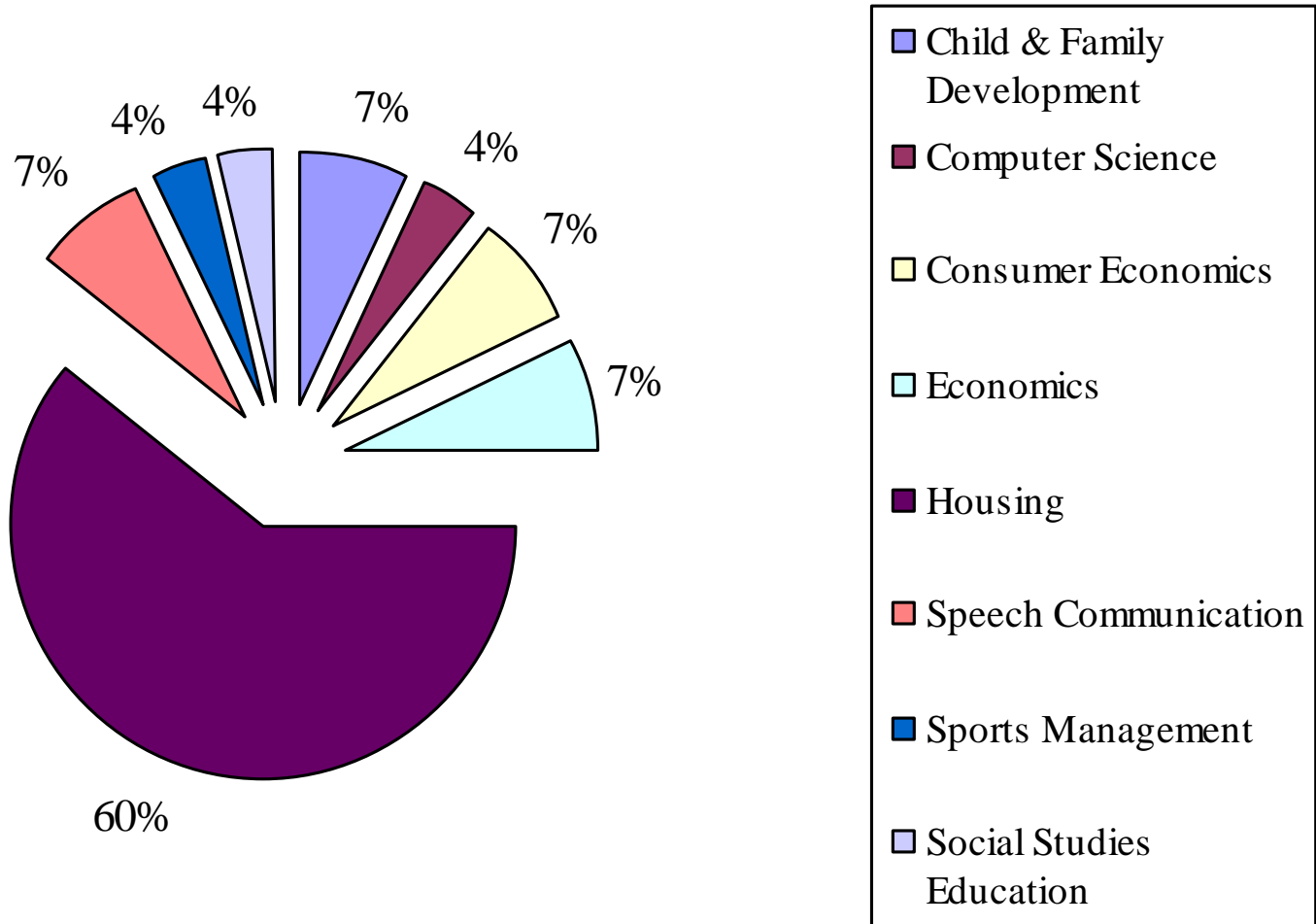


- Social & Behavioral Sciences*
- Political Science
- Exercise Physiology
- Sport Management
- Sociology
- Family, Youth & Community Sciences^
- General Business Administration**
- Food & Agribusiness Management^^
- Real Estate`
- Biology
- Building Construction
- Civil Engineering

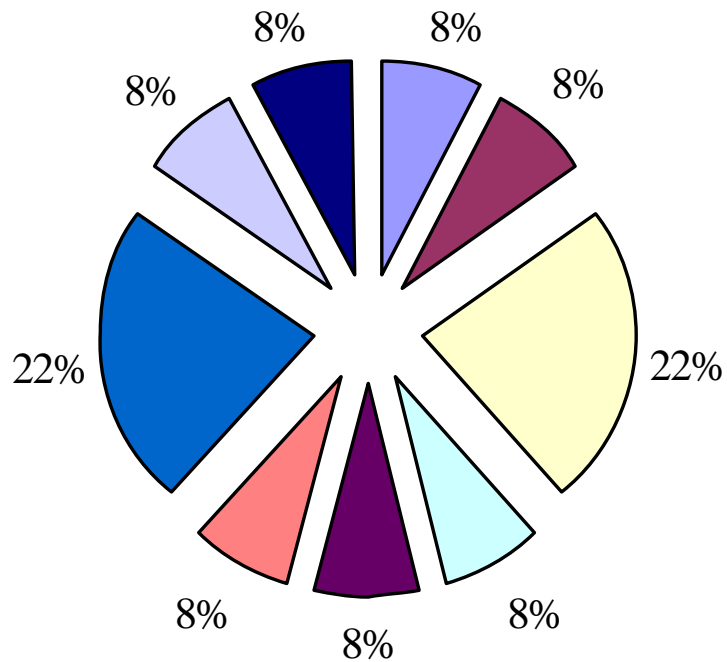
Georgia

- $C = 42\%$ Housing**
- $EMC = 60\%$ Housing**
- No CC = 22% Finance
22% Risk Management & Insurance

2009-10 Academic Majors of Georgia Football MINORITY Upperclassmen ($n = 28$)

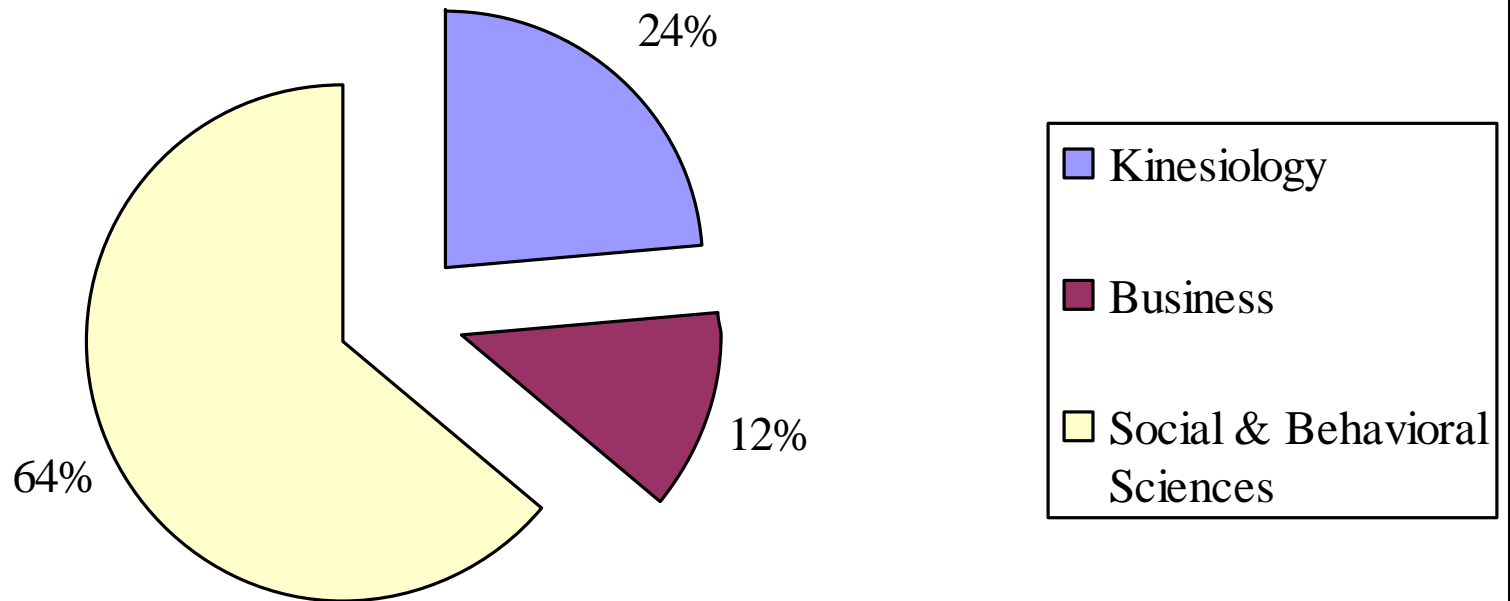


2009-10 Academic Majors of Georgia Football Caucasian Upperclassmen ($n=13$)

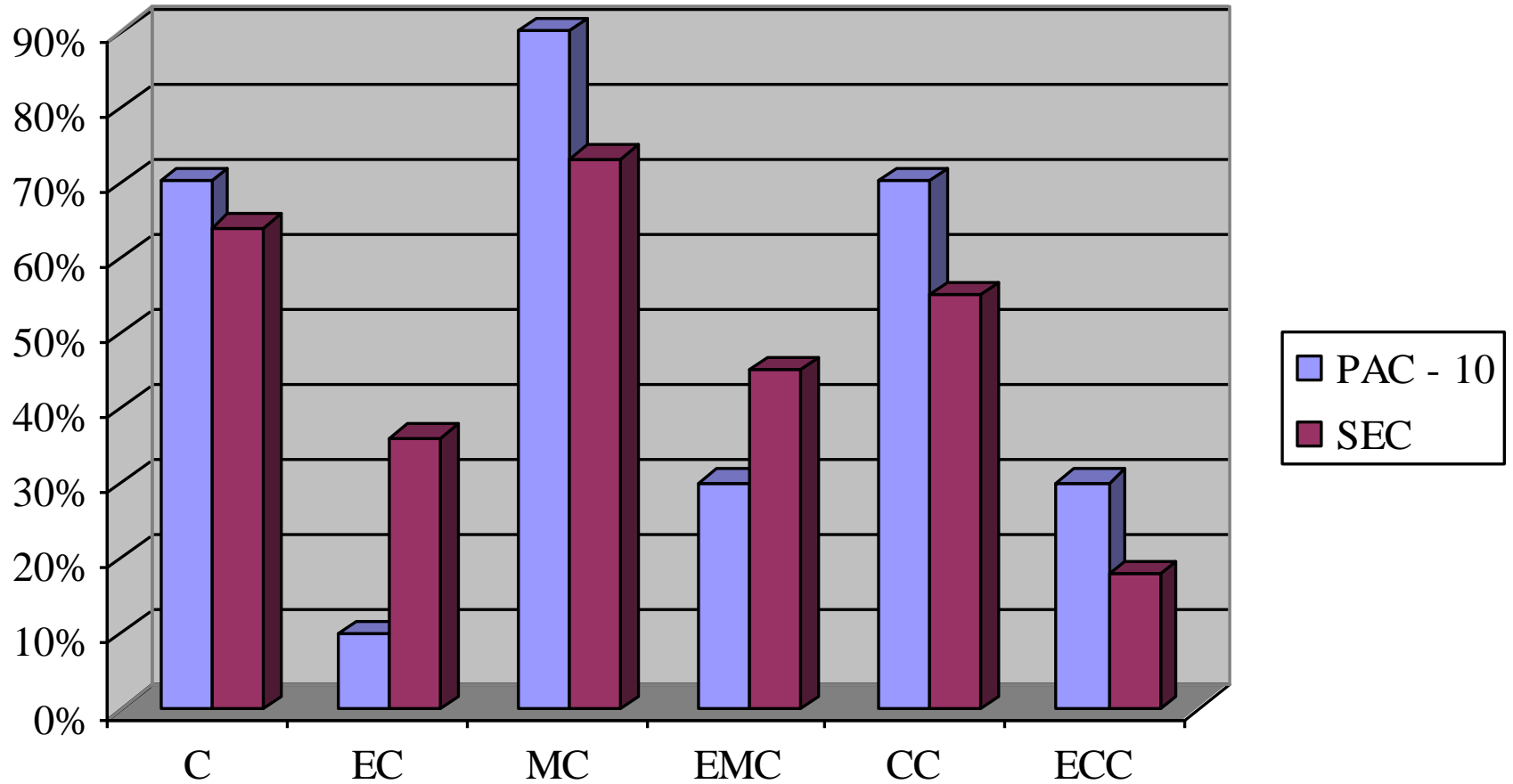


- Biomedical Engineering
- Child & Family Development
- Finance
- Health & Physical Education
- Middle School Education
- Psychology
- Risk Management & Insurance
- Speech Communication
- Wildlife

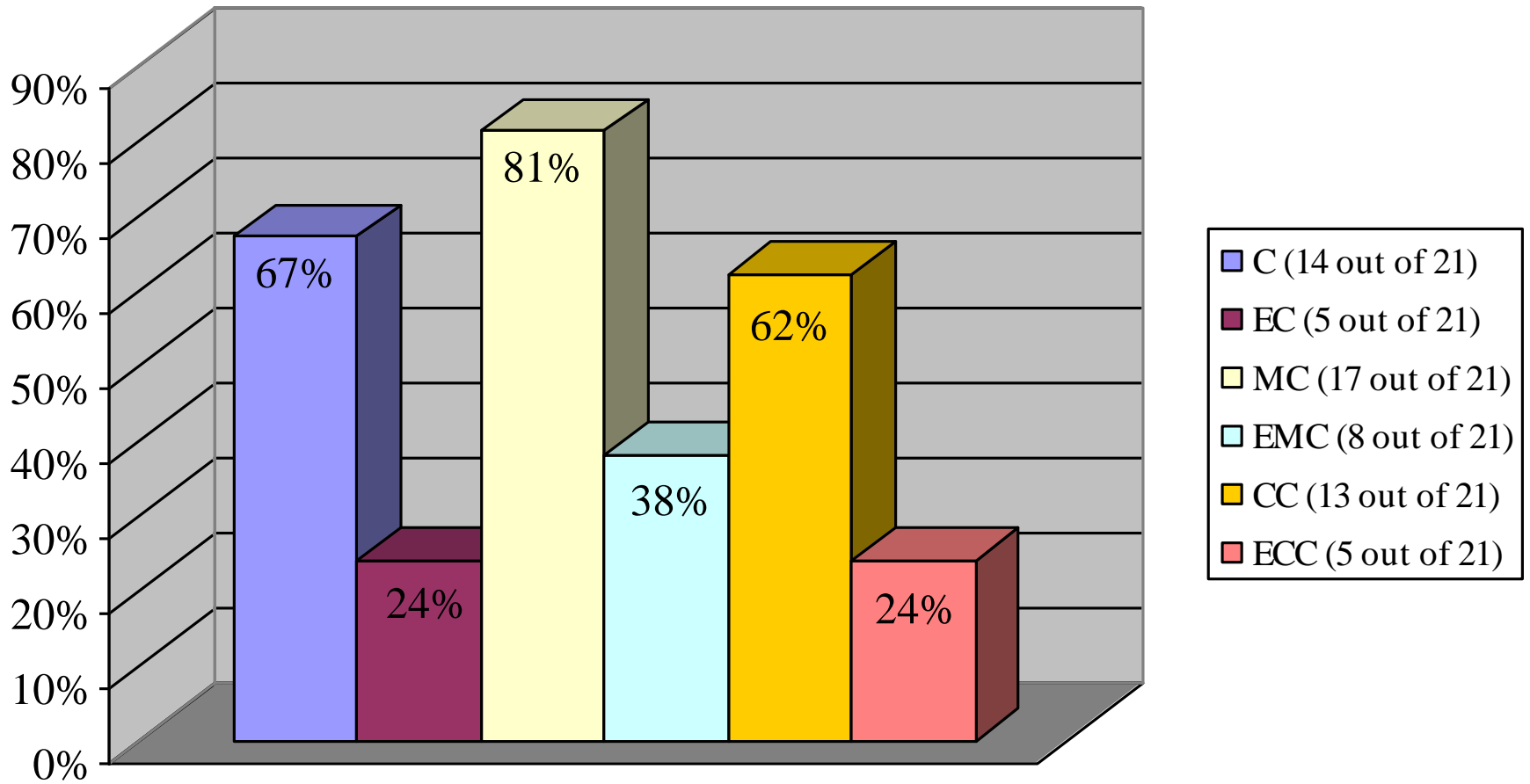
SEC Clustered Areas of Academic Study ($n = 24$)



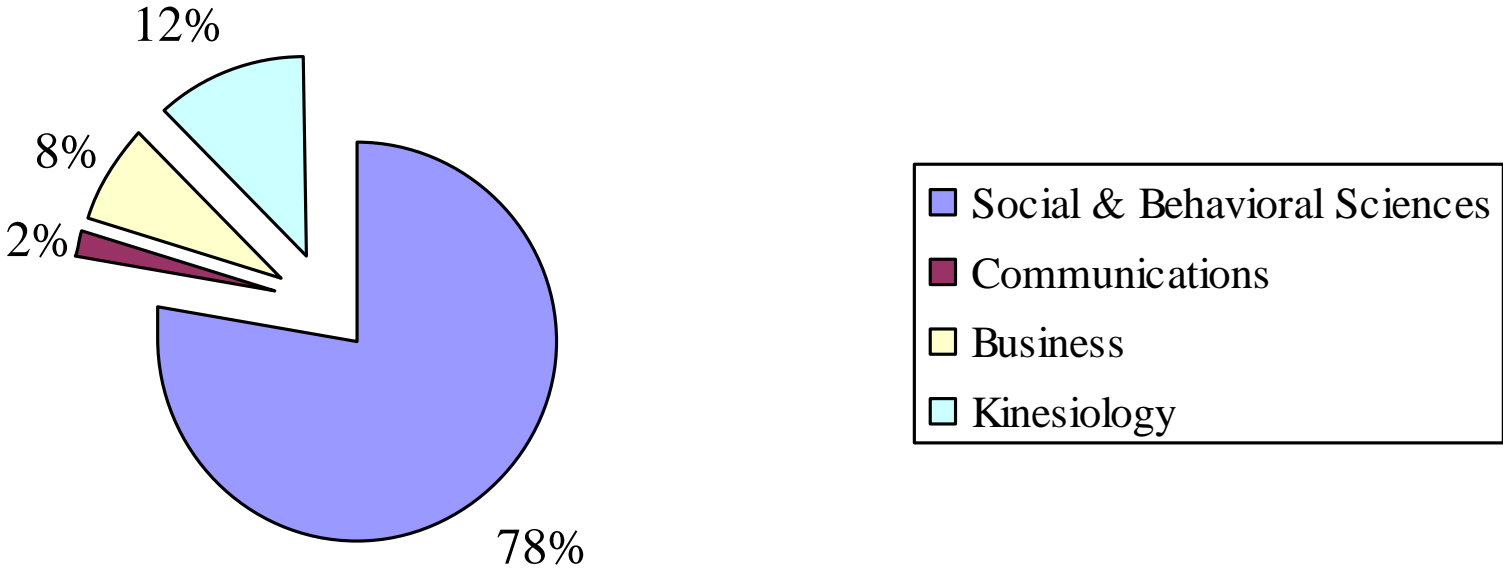
A Comparison of Academic Clustering Between PAC - 10 and SEC



PAC - 10 & SEC Combined ($n = 21$)



PAC - 10 & SEC Clustered Areas of Academic Study Combined ($n = 49$)



Findings of Interest

- Reporting differences pertaining to “Major”
- Kentucky
 - Integrated Strategic Communication & Family Studies
 - Integrated Strategic Communication
 - Family & Consumer Science
 - Family Science

Findings of Interest

- Inter/Multidisciplinary major in Social & Behavioral Sciences
 - Kentucky - Community Comm.& Leadership Development
 - Florida – Family, Youth & Community Sciences
 - Cal – American Studies
 - LSU – General Studies
 - Mississippi State – Interdisciplinary Studies
 - Tennessee – Enterprise Management
 - Washington – Individualized Studies
 - Washington State – Social Sciences

Findings of Interest

- “Major” was not a “Major”
 - Liberal Arts, Arts & Letters, General Education
 - College or Department (ex. Business or Education)

Concentration/Emphasis

Mississippi State – Major is PE

- Clinical Exercise Physiology (5)
- Teaching/Coaching (4)
- Fitness Management (4)
- Sports Communication (2)

Findings of Interest

- “Major” did not match with “Favorite Course/Subject”

UCLA (EC = 62% History**)

M – History – English

M – History – Marine Biology

M – Sociology – Math

C – History – Physics

C – History – Science

Findings of Interest

- “Major” did not match with “Career Goal”

UCLA (EC = 62% History**)

- M – History – Civil Engineer
- M – History – Computer Designer
- M – History – TV Sports Announcer
- M – Sociology – Architectural Engineer

Future Research

- Critical examination of reported “majors”
- Qualitative analysis to determine whether athletes are being afforded the opportunity to major in the 100+ majors
- Ascertain why career goals do not line up with academic major
- Compare % athletes v. % of overall student body in clustered major
- Determine why Minorities are clustered at greater rates than their Caucasian counterparts
- Examine whether a correlation exists between academic clustering and athletic rank

Recommendations

- Accuracy in reporting
- Full disclosure & transparency
- Part-time students, full-time athletes
- Eliminate conflict-of-interest (student-athlete academic advising/support services)
- Implement university policies that ensure that athletics are afforded an equal opportunity to earn an education
- Adhere to written policies, bylaws, contracts