

Item II.D2

Relationship of Enrollment to the Economy

Adelphi University
Office of Research, Assessment and Planning
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SUMMARY

- The attached analyses compare trends in Adelphi enrollment and applicants (freshmen and new graduate students) to the population and the yearly unemployment rate on Long Island from 1980 until the present.
- The number of applicants and the size of enrollment at Adelphi tend to reflect demographic trends more than the state of the economy.
- The number of high school graduates on Long Island is expected to increase sluggishly until 2003. Starting in 2004, it will sharply increase.
- Minorities compose a greater proportion of first time Adelphi freshmen than they do of Long Island's 15-19 year old population. On the other hand, a greater percentage of graduate students are white than there are whites in the 20-29 year old Long Island population.
- Despite strong theoretical backing, there is little evidence of a relationship between unemployment and freshmen applications or undergraduate enrollment in either the 1980s or the 1990s.
- The lack of a relationship in the 1990s between the economy and freshmen enrollment may be due to one of four reasons:
 - First, the Long Island economy has been relatively robust over the last ten years.
 - Second, the well-publicized turmoil at Adelphi affected the number of applicants and the enrollment.
 - Third, perhaps the failure to develop “cutting-edge” programs that take into account changes in the structure of business (e.g., e-commerce classes) has made Adelphi less attractive to students seeking to hone their job skills.
- The number of graduate applications and the size of graduate enrollment does appear to be sensitive to the state of the economy, at least in the 1990s.
- Employment in education and social work on Long Island is expected to grow fairly rapidly in the near future, but Adelphi graduate enrollment in these programs has been decreasing.

Population trends and Adelphi.

This analysis will focus on Adelphi students and the population and economic conditions on Long Island. In 2000, a little more than 40 percent of first-time freshmen and a little less than 40 percent of new graduate students came from Nassau County while an additional 15 percent of each are from Suffolk County.

The data presented cover the period 1980-2000. Some information about graduate students was available only after 1985.

When we compare Adelphi's enrollment to population characteristics¹ of Long Island, we find:

- The number of new freshmen at Adelphi fluctuated less over the last twenty years than did the number of applicants. (Figure 1)
- In the 1980s, the number of freshmen applicants moved pretty closely in step with the population of Long Island aged 15-19.
- In the 1990s, however, the relationship between Adelphi enrollment and Long Island's high school aged population became more complex possibly due to public relations problems at Adelphi in the mid-1990s. The number of freshmen applicants fluctuated wildly compared to the population trend.
- Total graduate enrollment showed an inverse relationship with the 20-29 year old population from 1981 until 1992. As the population increased, graduate enrollment decreased.
- Since 1992, graduate enrollment and applicants and the population of Long Island aged 20-29 have both shown a fairly steady decline. (Figure 2)
- From 1980 until 1988, freshmen applications as a percentage of Long Island's high school-aged population was fairly steady. There was then a large jump in this ratio between 1990 and 1992.
- In 1997, the number of freshmen applicants as a percentage of the high school aged population on Long Island was less than half the percentage in 1992 (.82% versus 1.68%). By 1999, the percentage (1.8%) exceeded that of 1992, a possible reflection of a successful recruitment campaign. (Figure 3)
- Graduate enrollment has been a constant proportion of the number of 20-29 year olds on Long Island over the last ten years.

Ethnicity and Adelphi.

- Minority students make up a greater percentage of Adelphi's freshmen than they do of the high school age population on Long Island. (Figure 4)
- The gap between the percentage of minority freshmen and in the population has decreased over the last ten years.
- There is a smaller percentage of minority graduate students at Adelphi than of minority freshmen.
- White graduate students tend to be slightly overrepresented at Adelphi in comparison with the population of Long Island aged 20-29. (Figure 5)

¹ New freshmen applicants and enrollment are compared to the population aged 15-19 while graduate enrollment and applicants are compared to the number of 20-29 year olds.

Population projections and Adelphi.

The number of future freshmen applicants and students can be estimated from population projections. Unfortunately, estimates of the future population are not available at the same level of specificity as are current estimates of population. However, the Office of Elementary/Secondary Education of New York does project the number of high school graduates until the 2010-11 school year. Their data begins in the 1996-97 school year, so it does not cover the same period as the population figures presented above. Still, for the four years that the data do overlap, high school graduates on Long Island as a percentage of the population aged 15-19 is constant. It varies only between 16.5 and 16.7 percent. Thus, the number of high school graduates is a good proxy for the population aged 15-19.

- In 2000, the total number of freshmen applications was 11.4 percent of Long Island's high school graduates. (Figure 6)
- Holding only the relationship between freshmen applications and Long Island high school graduates constant, Adelphi will receive almost 3,700 freshmen applications by 2004, up from 3,300 received in 2000.
- The number of high school graduates on Long Island is expected to grow sluggishly until 2004 when there will be a dramatic increase for the following four years.

U.S. enrollment at private institutions and Adelphi enrollment.

Enrollment at Adelphi can also be compared to enrollment in private 4-year institutions in the U.S. Data on freshmen, undergraduate, and graduate enrollment are taken from the *Digest of Education Statistics 2000*. Unfortunately, data are not available either after 1998 or broken down by state.

- Freshmen enrollment at U.S. private universities and at Adelphi have both fluctuated wildly in the last 20 years. Between 1991 and 1997, Adelphi enrollment moved in the opposite direction as that in private universities. Only in 1998, did the number of Adelphi freshmen start to increase again, concurrently with national data. Although not shown in Figure 7, Adelphi's freshmen enrollment continued to increase in the next two years.
- Since 1980, there has been a gradual increase in the number of undergraduates enrolled at private colleges in the United States. Adelphi enrollment, on the other hand, had shown a fairly steady decline until 1997 when it started increasing. (Figure 8)
- Graduate student enrollment at U.S. private universities has also increased gradually since 1980. Again, Adelphi graduate student enrollment has tended to decrease since 1980, though there were periods when it increased. (Figure 9)

Unemployment and Adelphi.

It is commonly believed that college enrollment is correlated with the state of the economy. When the economy is doing poorly, students who would otherwise enter the job market may decide to go to college because of poor job prospects. If unemployment is low, on the other hand, jobs are easier to come by, so potential college students may put off their education in order to make money now.

Two problems suggest that the relationship between economics and enrollment may not work at Adelphi.

- Adelphi is a private college and more expensive than public institutions. Thus, students who decide to go to college because they had difficulty finding a job may not perceive Adelphi as a viable option.
- Turmoil experienced by Adelphi in the mid-1990s affected both the number of applicants and enrollment.

As expected, it is difficult to find a consistent relationship between unemployment and enrollment or applications for undergraduates. There is some evidence for a correlation in graduate student enrollment and applications in the 1990s, but little evidence for a relationship in the 1980s.

Undergraduate enrollment and unemployment.

- There appears to be no correlation between freshmen applications and unemployment on either Long Island or in the New York metropolitan area. (Figure 10)
- The relationship between applications and the unemployment rate on Long Island is especially poor after 1997. Unemployment continued to decline while the number of applications greatly increased.
- Total undergraduate enrollment and the unemployment rate both decreased from 1983 to 1988 and from 1992 to 1997. (Figure 11)
- From 1988 until 1992, however, unemployment increased without a corresponding increase in enrollment. Similarly, after 1997, unemployment has continued to decrease but enrollment has increased.

Graduate enrollment and unemployment.

- In the 1990s, the number of graduate applications tended to move in step with the unemployment rate fairly consistently. (As indicated above, this may be a spurious relationship explained more by population trends than the state of the economy).
- There was no immediate relationship between graduate enrollment and unemployment in the 1980s. Both showed signs of a gradual decline but tended to move at different times. (Figure 12)
- In the 1990s, graduate enrollment reflected Long Island's unemployment rate pretty accurately. Both displayed a steep decrease in the mid-1990s before leveling off around 1997. However, total graduate enrollment increased from 1992 to 1993 and from 1997 to 1998 despite declines in the unemployment rate.

Employment and Enrollment in Graduate Programs.

It is difficult to find consistent data on employment at the county level that is broken down by industry. Data is available, however, on employment projections at a relatively specific level. In this section, we compare graduate enrollment in the Education, Nursing, and Social Work schools to the occupational outlook for Long Island of these industries. The New York Department of Labor *Occupational Outlook* projects employment by industry and county for the year 2007.

- Education and social work are growth areas on Long Island. Employment in education and social work from 1997-2007 is expected to grow more quickly than total employment in Long Island. (Table 1)
- Employment in nursing is expected to increase at a slower rate than total employment in Long Island.
- The number of graduate applicants to the Education program has increased steadily since 1997. (Figure 13)
- The number of graduate applicants to the Nursing and Social Work programs increased between 1997 and 1998, but have decreased since then. (Figures 14-15)

Figure 1—Freshmen Compared to Long Island Population

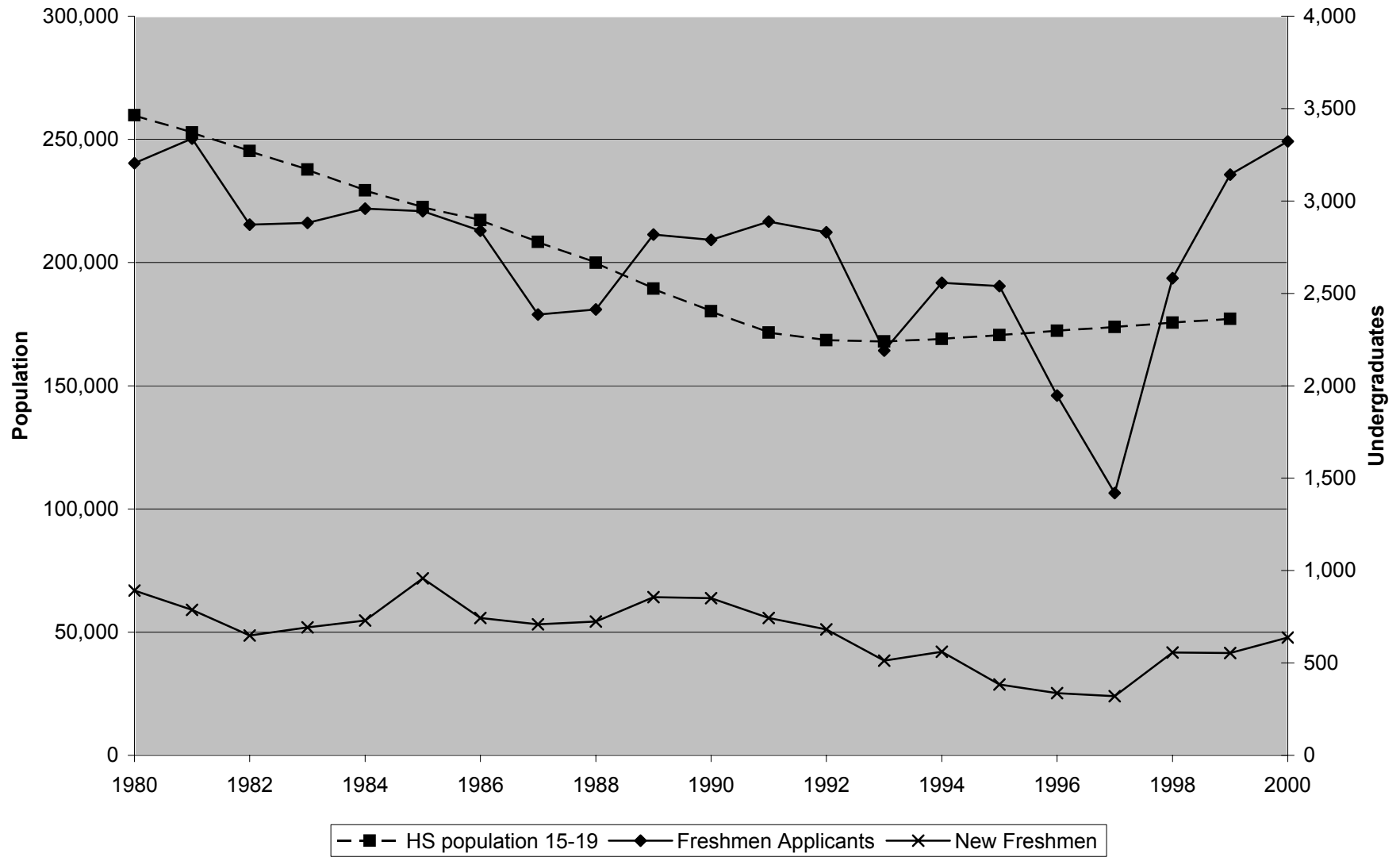


Figure 2—Graduate Students Compared to Long Island Population

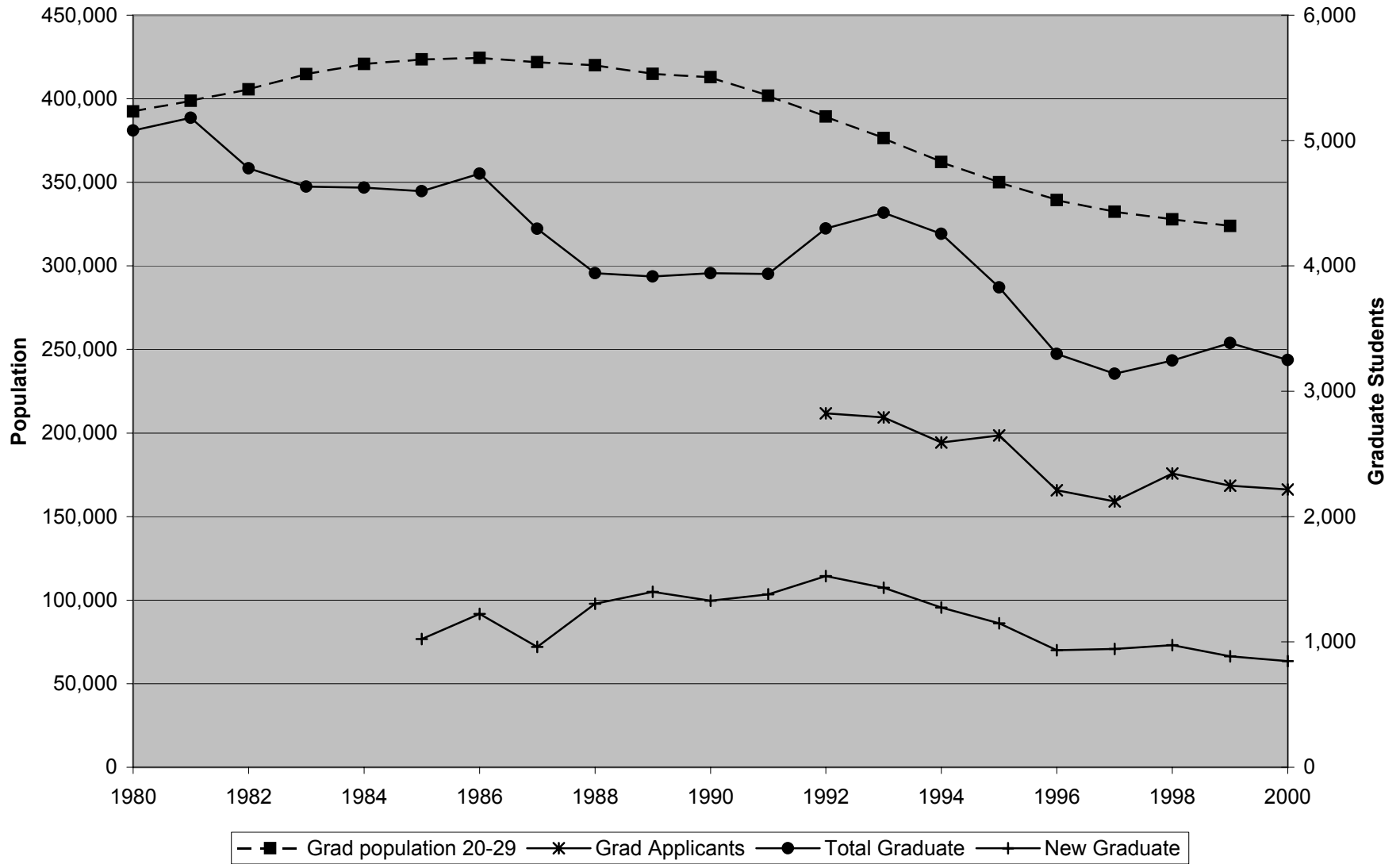


Figure 3—Adelphi Applicants as a Percent of Long Island Population

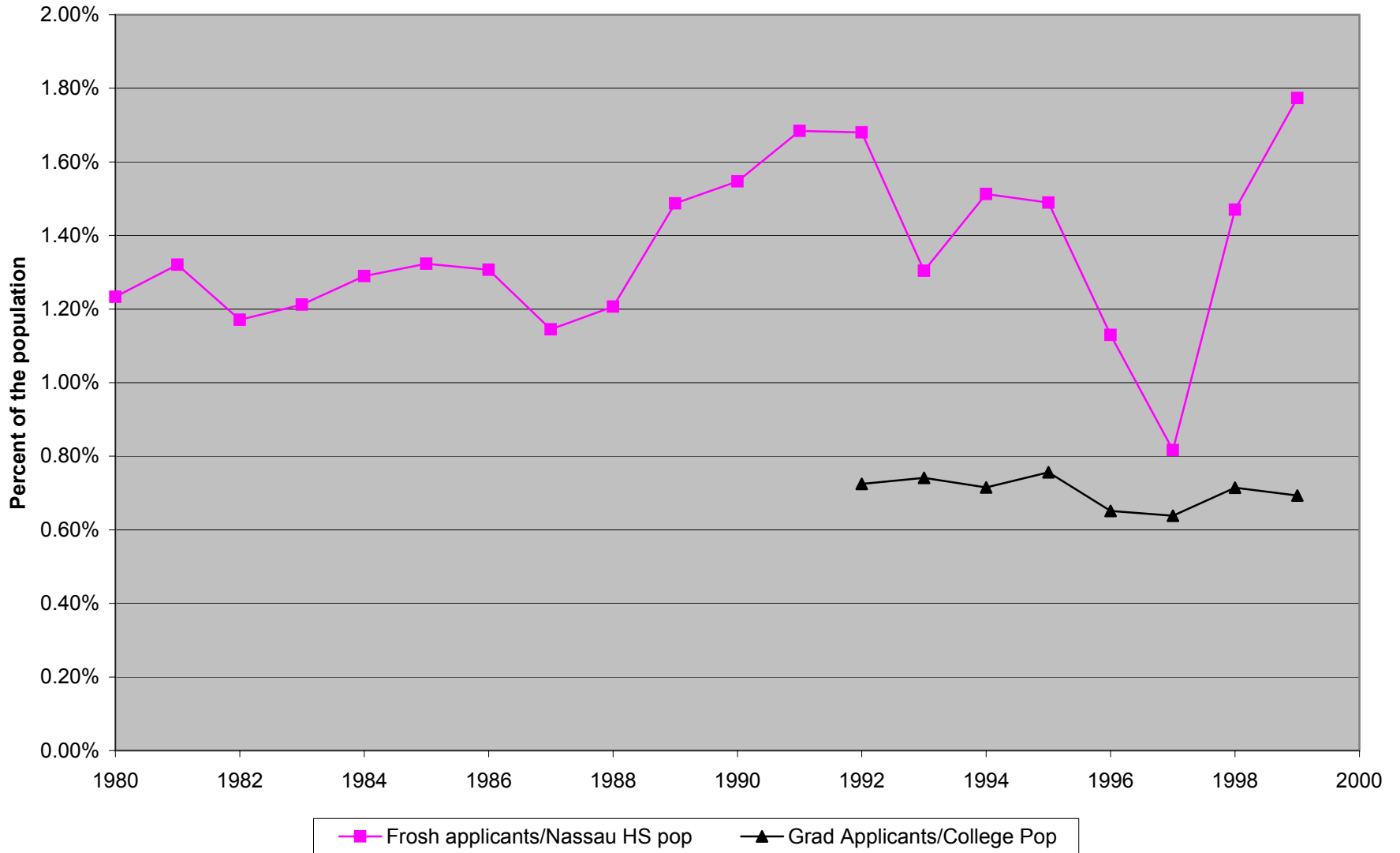


Figure 4—Long Island Population and Adelphi—Minorities

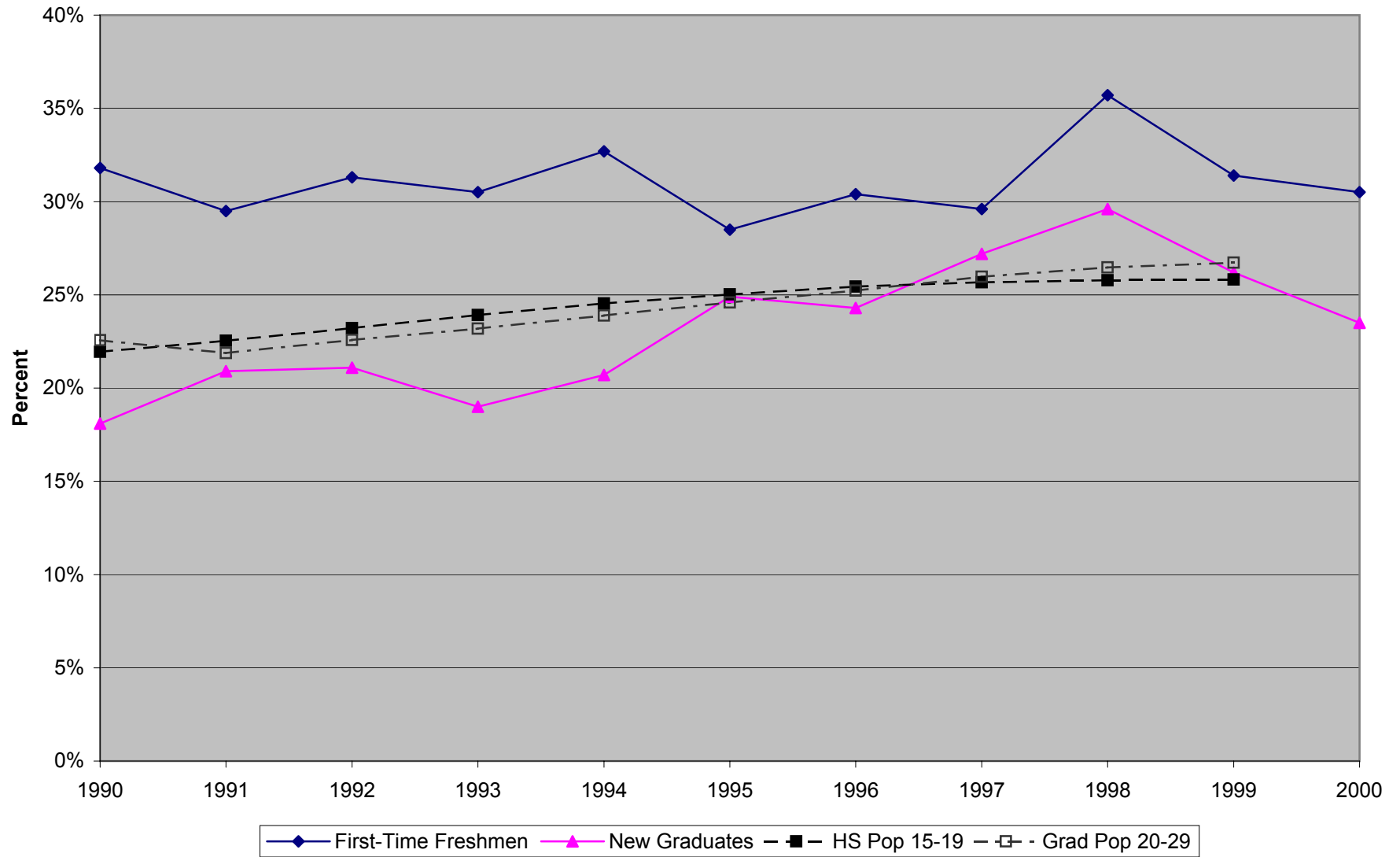


Figure 5—Long Island Population and Graduate Students—White

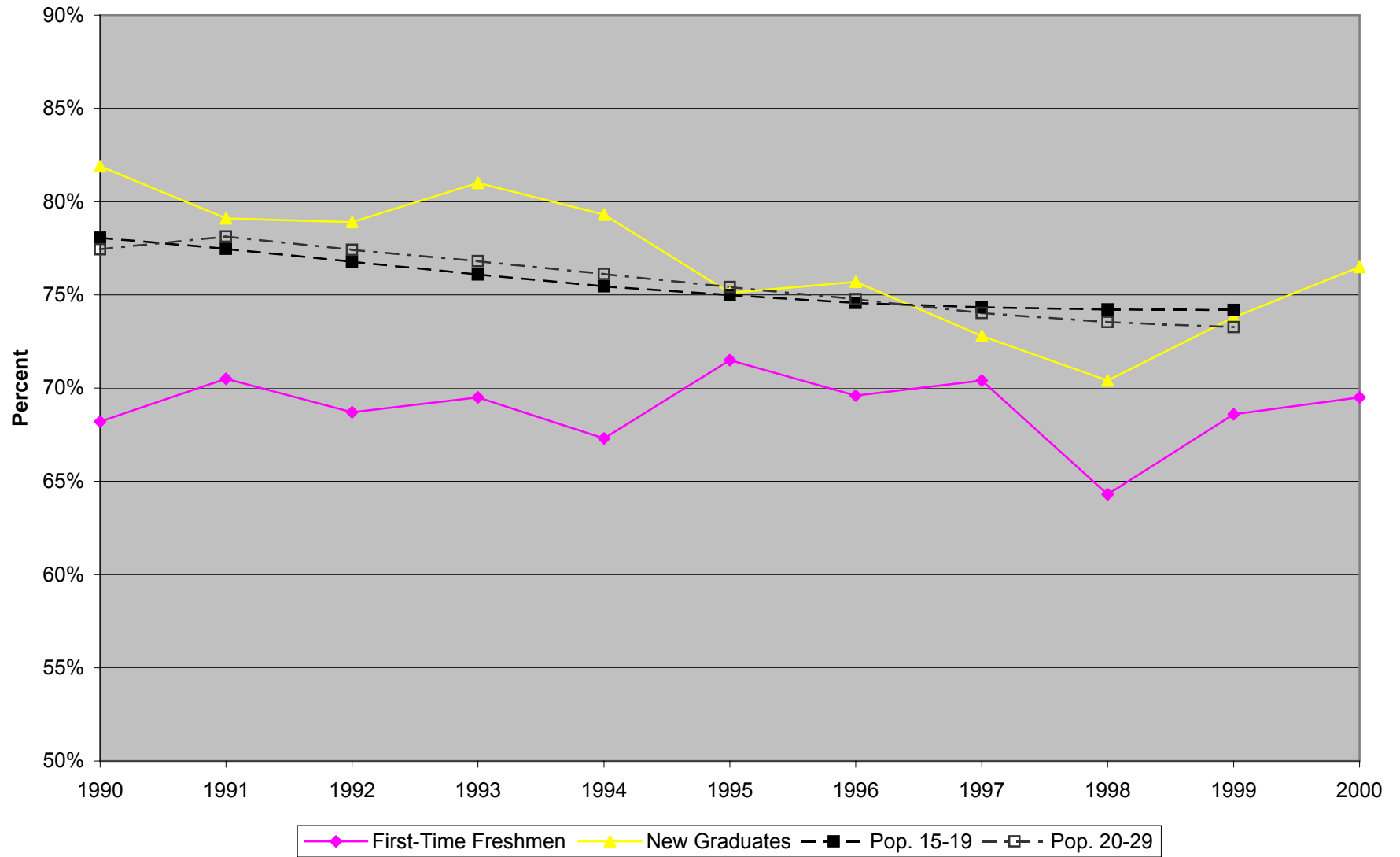


Figure 6—Projections of High School Graduates and Adelphi Freshmen

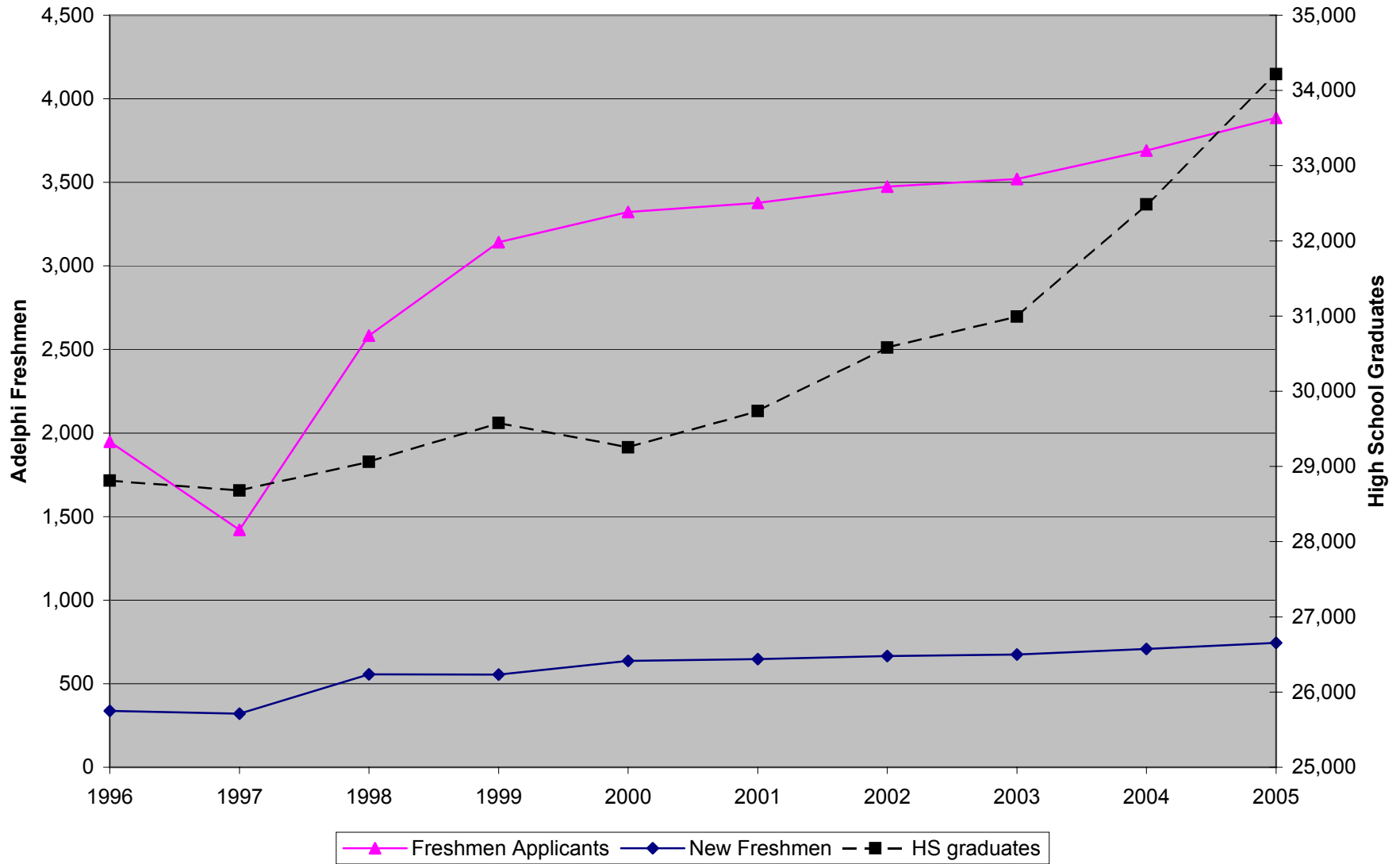


Figure 7—Adelphi Freshmen Enrollment Compared to Freshmen Enrollment at U.S. Private Institutions



Figure 8—Adelphi Undergraduate Enrollment Compared to Undergraduate Enrollment at U.S. Private Institutions

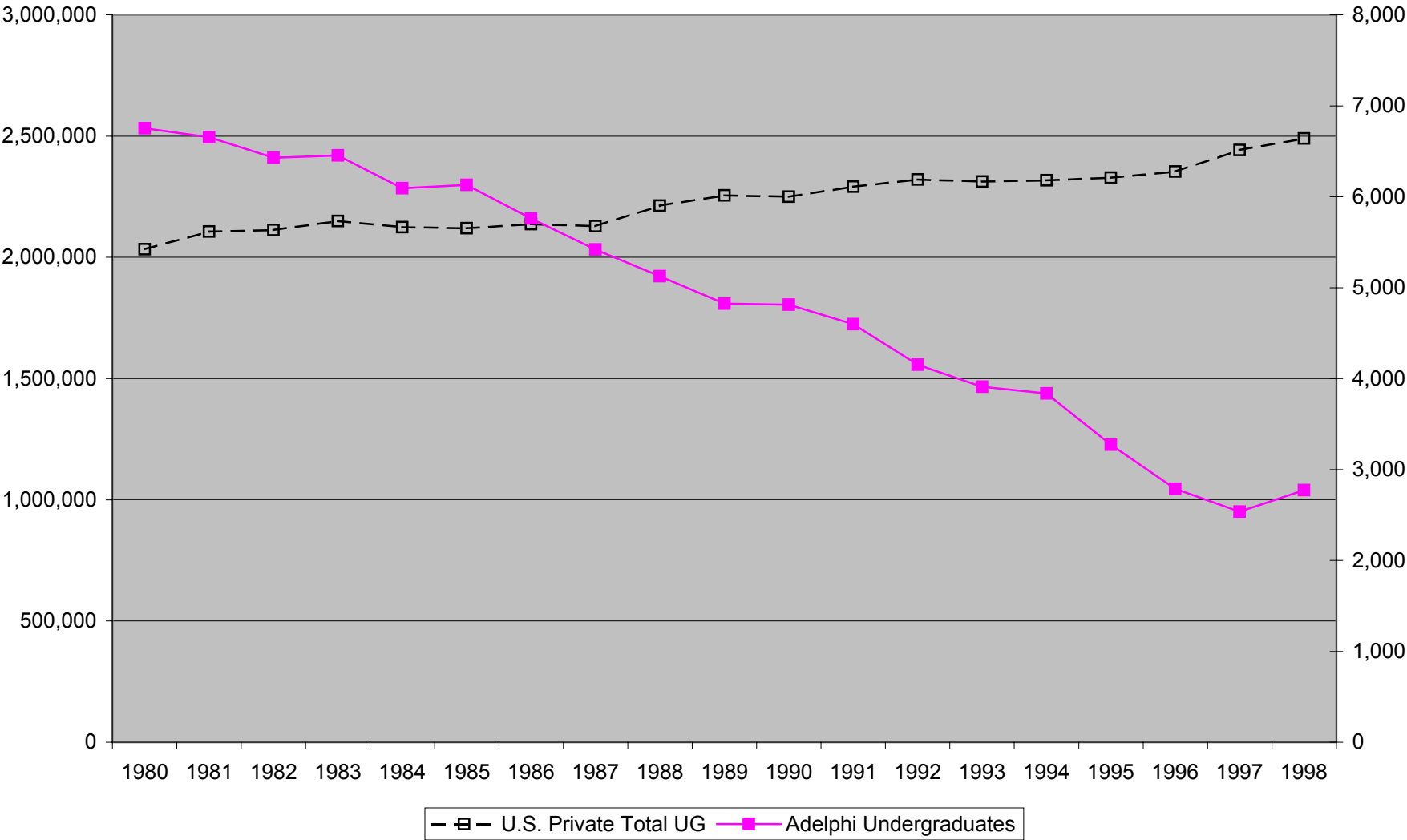


Figure 9—Adelphi Graduate Enrollment Compared to Graduate Enrollment at U.S. Private Institutions

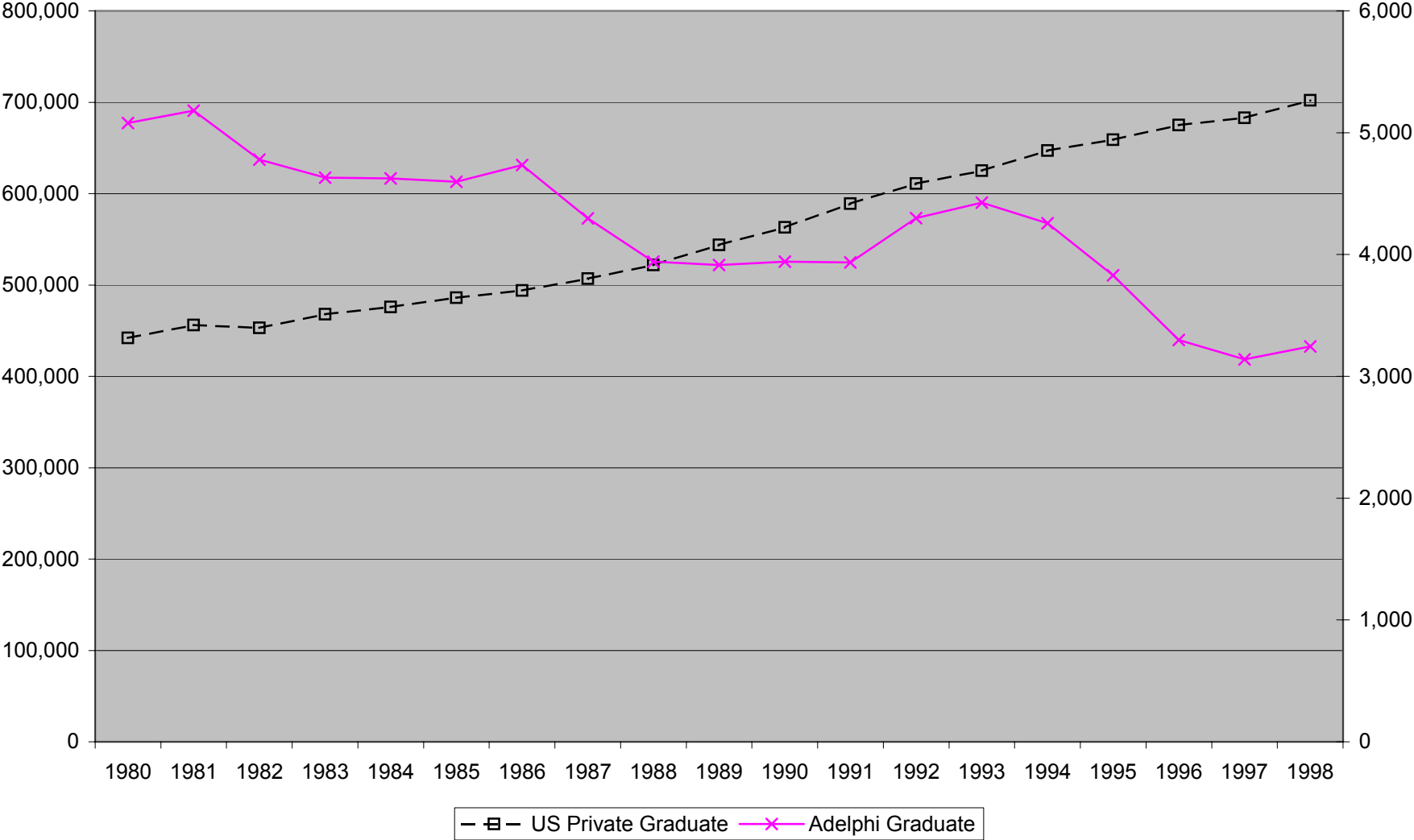


Figure 10—Relationship between Unemployment and Applications

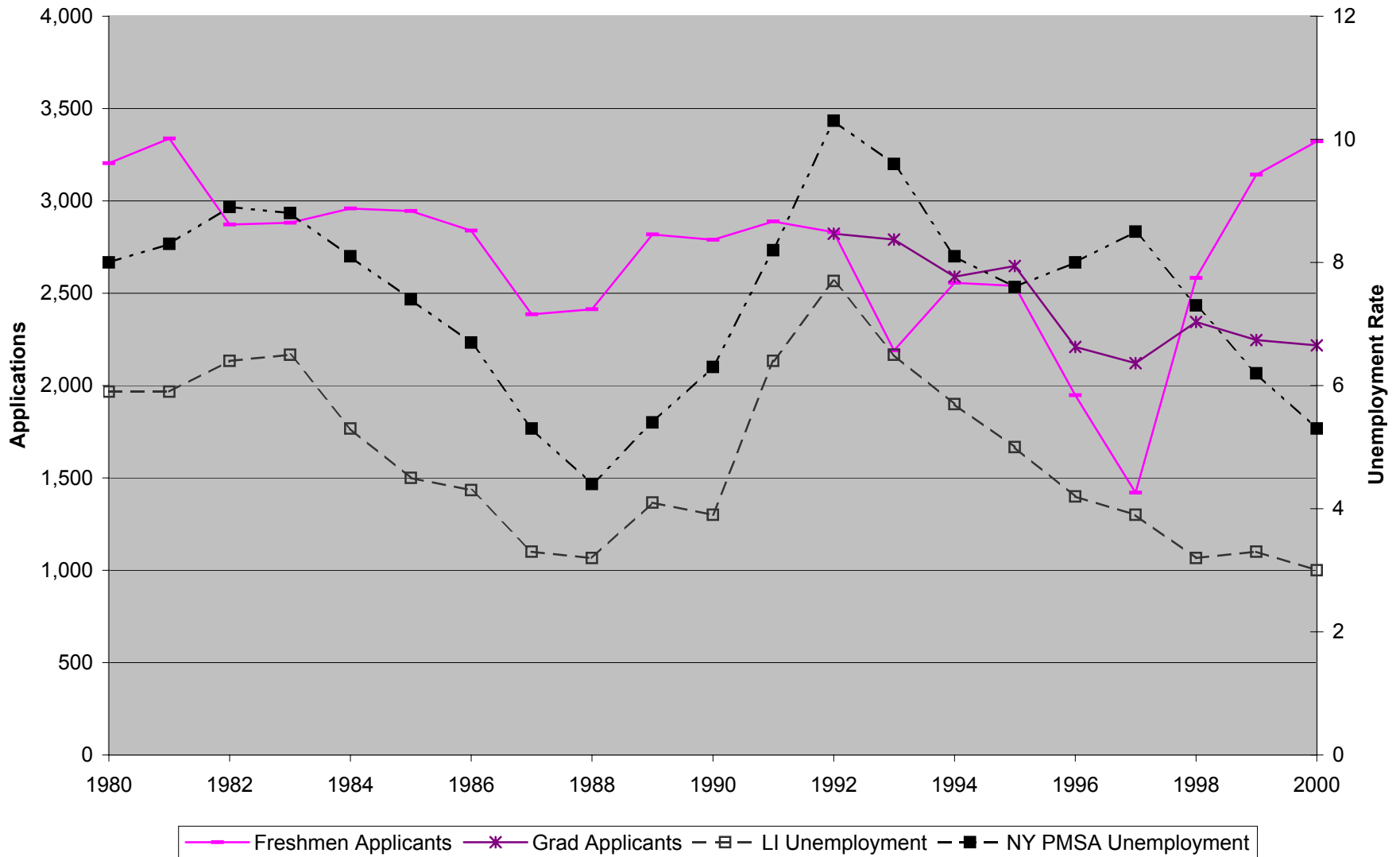


Figure 11—Relationship between Unemployment and Undergraduate Enrollment

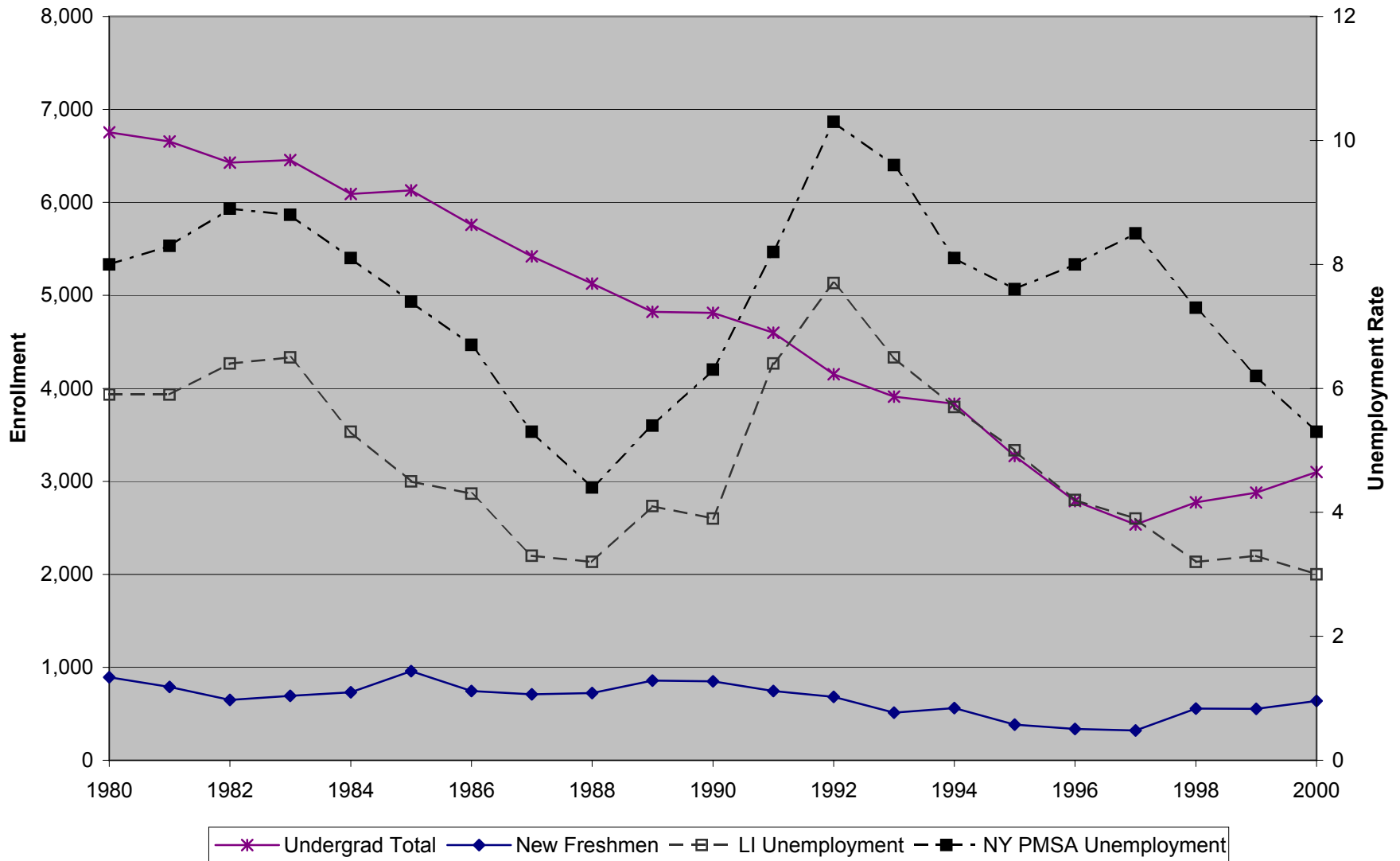


Figure 12—Relationship between Unemployment and Graduate Enrollment

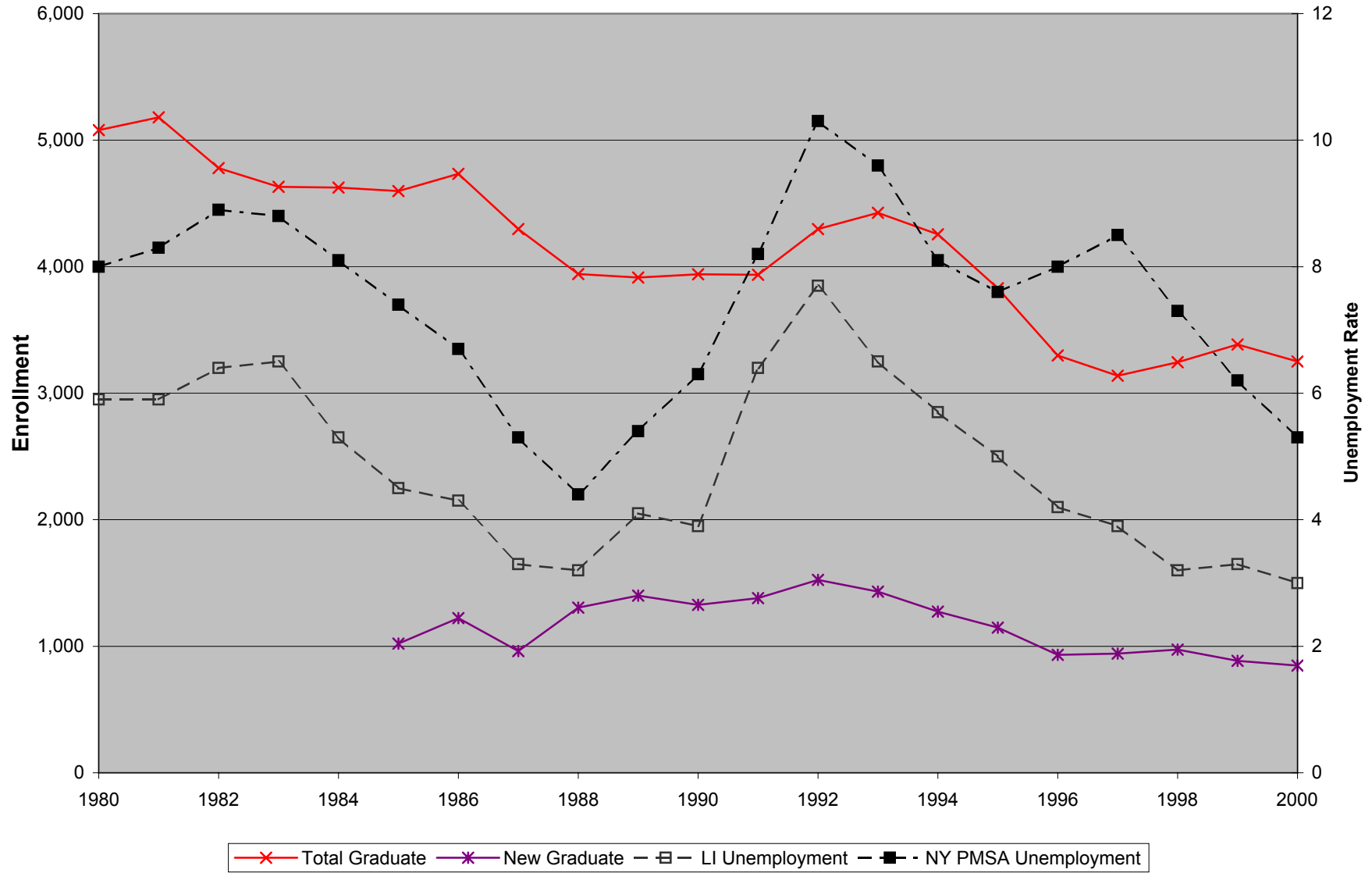


Table 1
Long Island Occupational Outlook, 1997-2007

	Employment 1997	Proj. Emp. 2007	Growth
Teachers and Instructors	54,160	65,730	21.4%
Registered and Licensed Practical Nurses	25,230	27,400	8.6%
Social Workers	6,120	7,400	20.9%
Total, All Occupations	1,227,300	1,373,180	11.9%

Figure 13—Education Employment and Graduate Applications

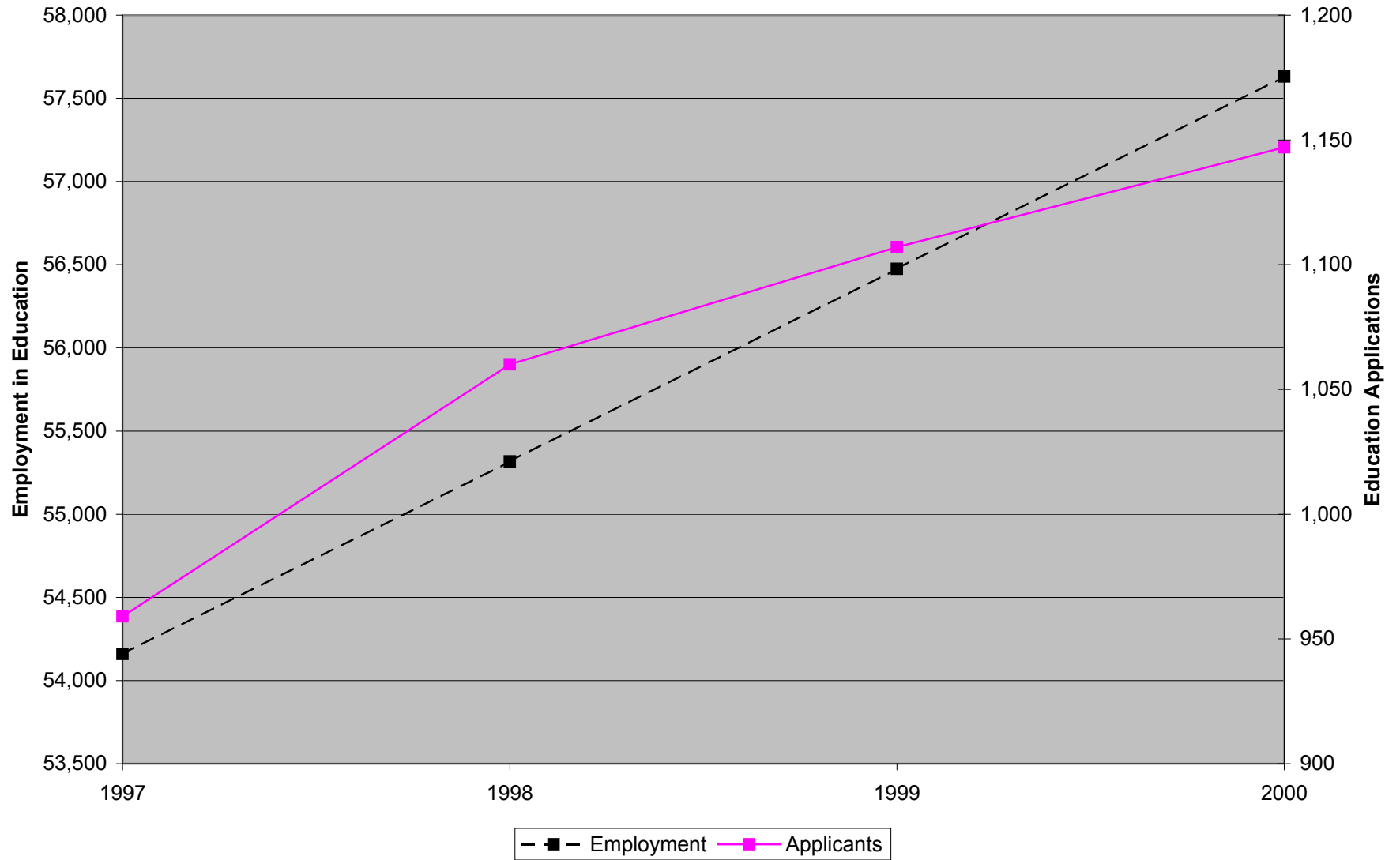


Figure 14—Nursing Employment and Graduate Applications

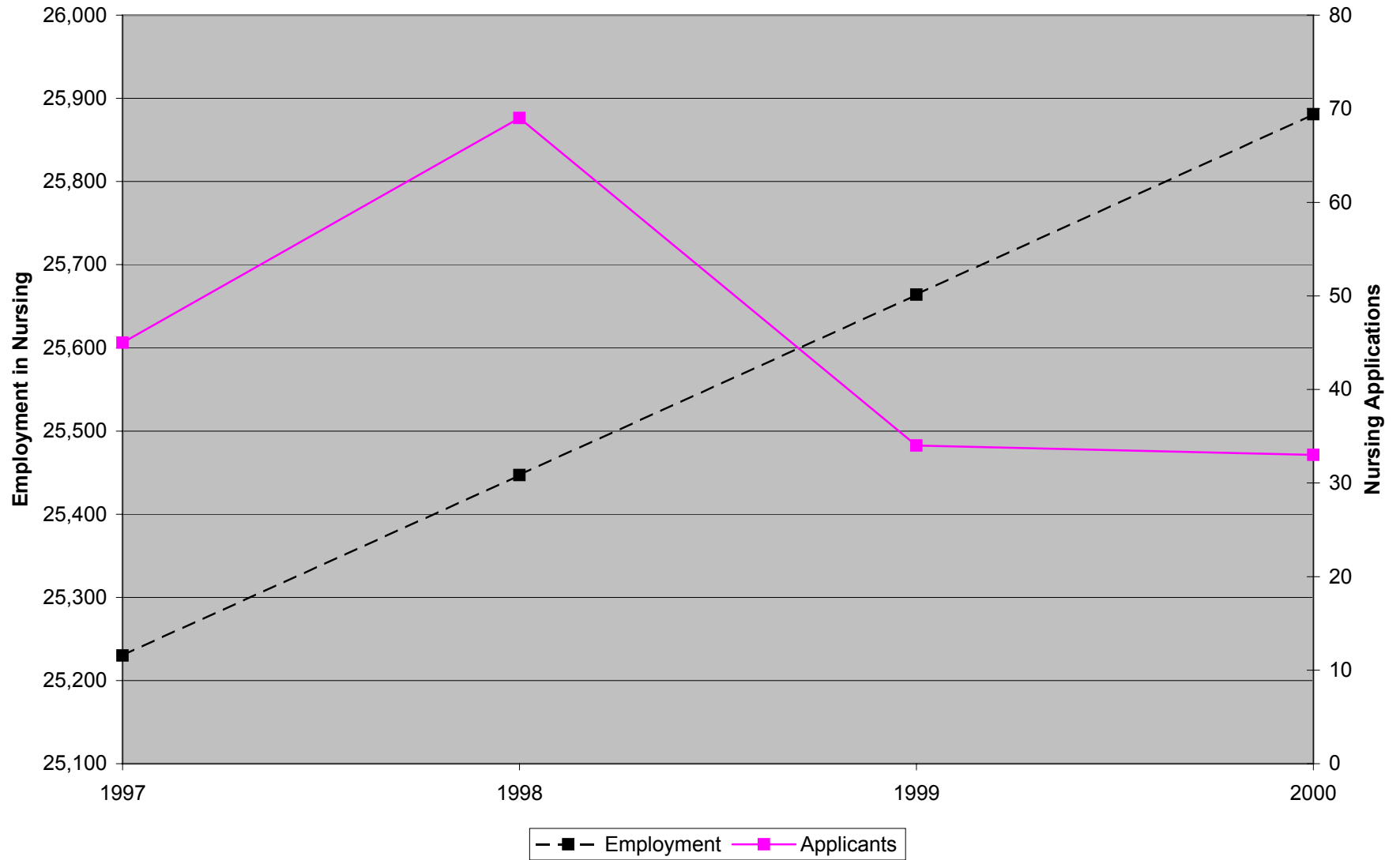


Figure 15—Social Work Employment and Graduate Applications

