



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Contextual Grading

Bruce W. Carney
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost:

Grade Inflation

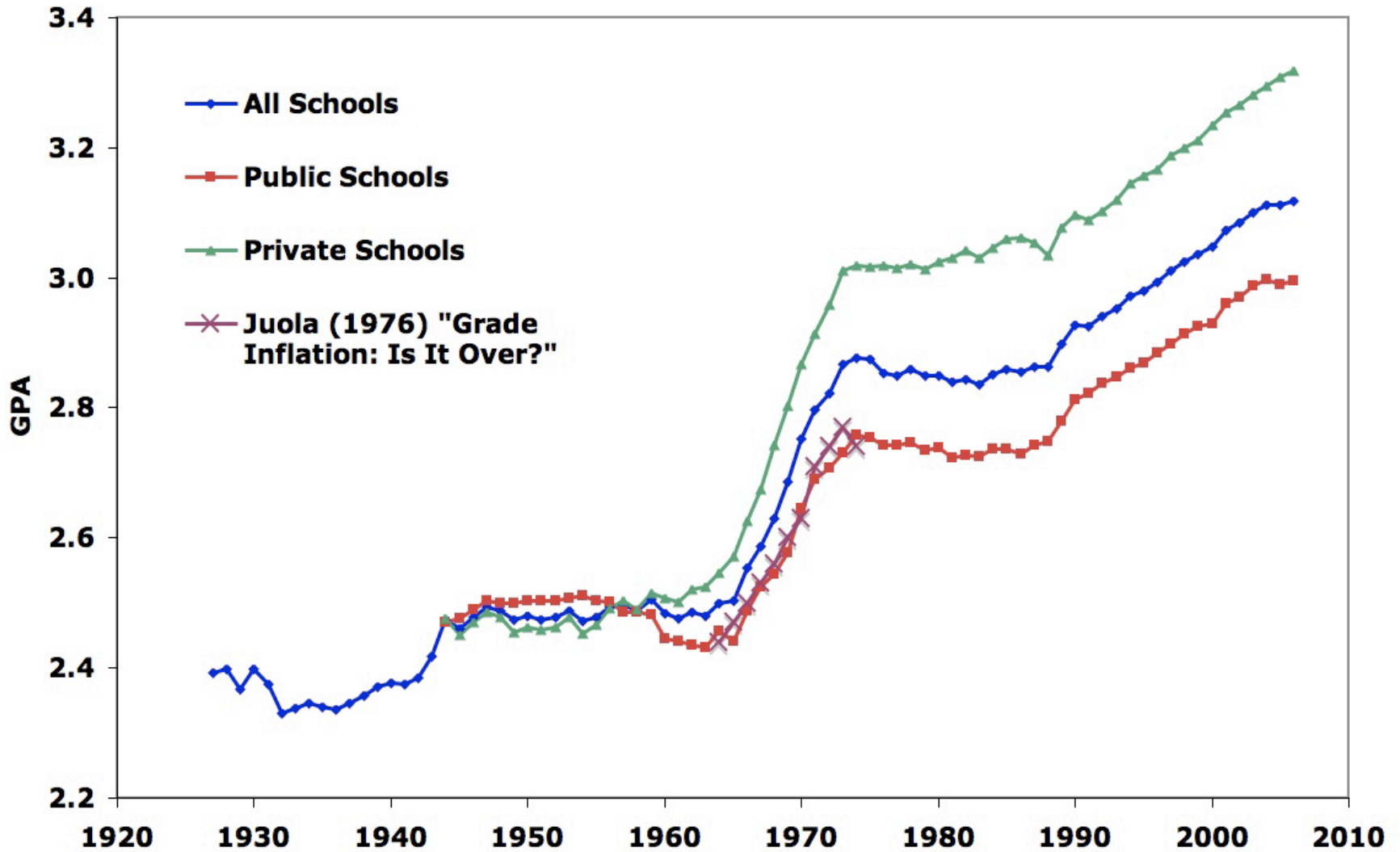
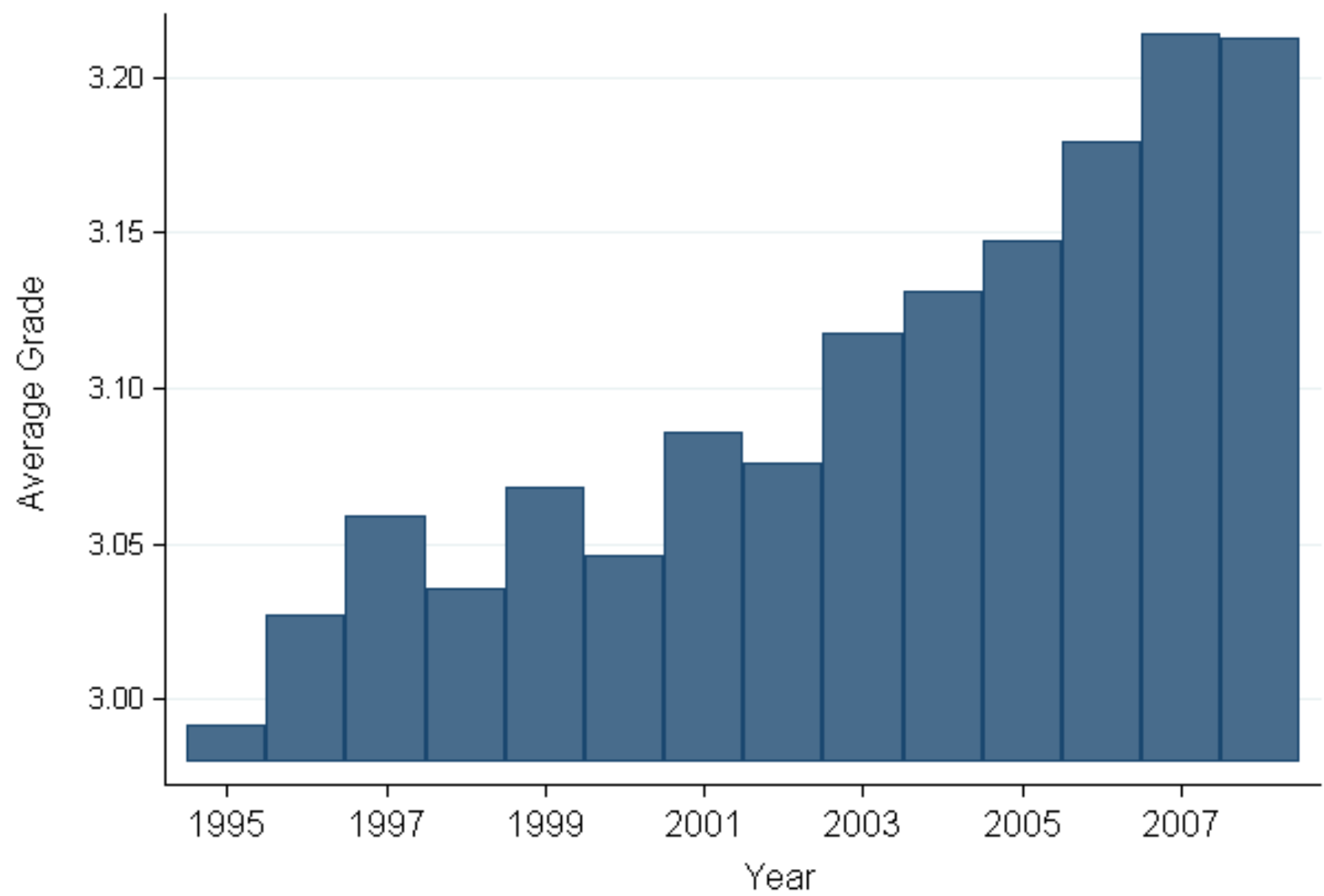
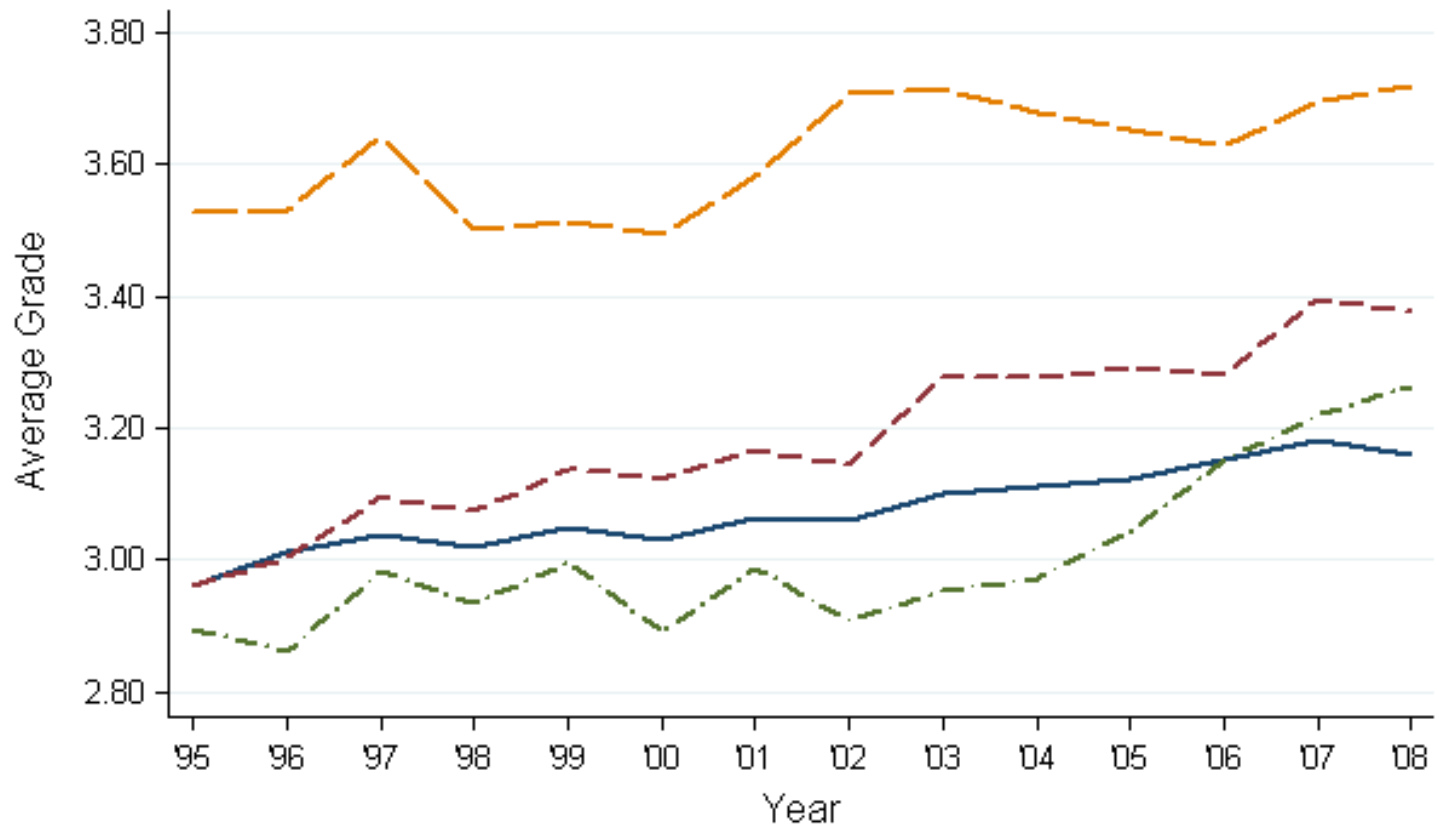


Figure 1b: Undergraduate Grades by Fall Term, 1995-2008



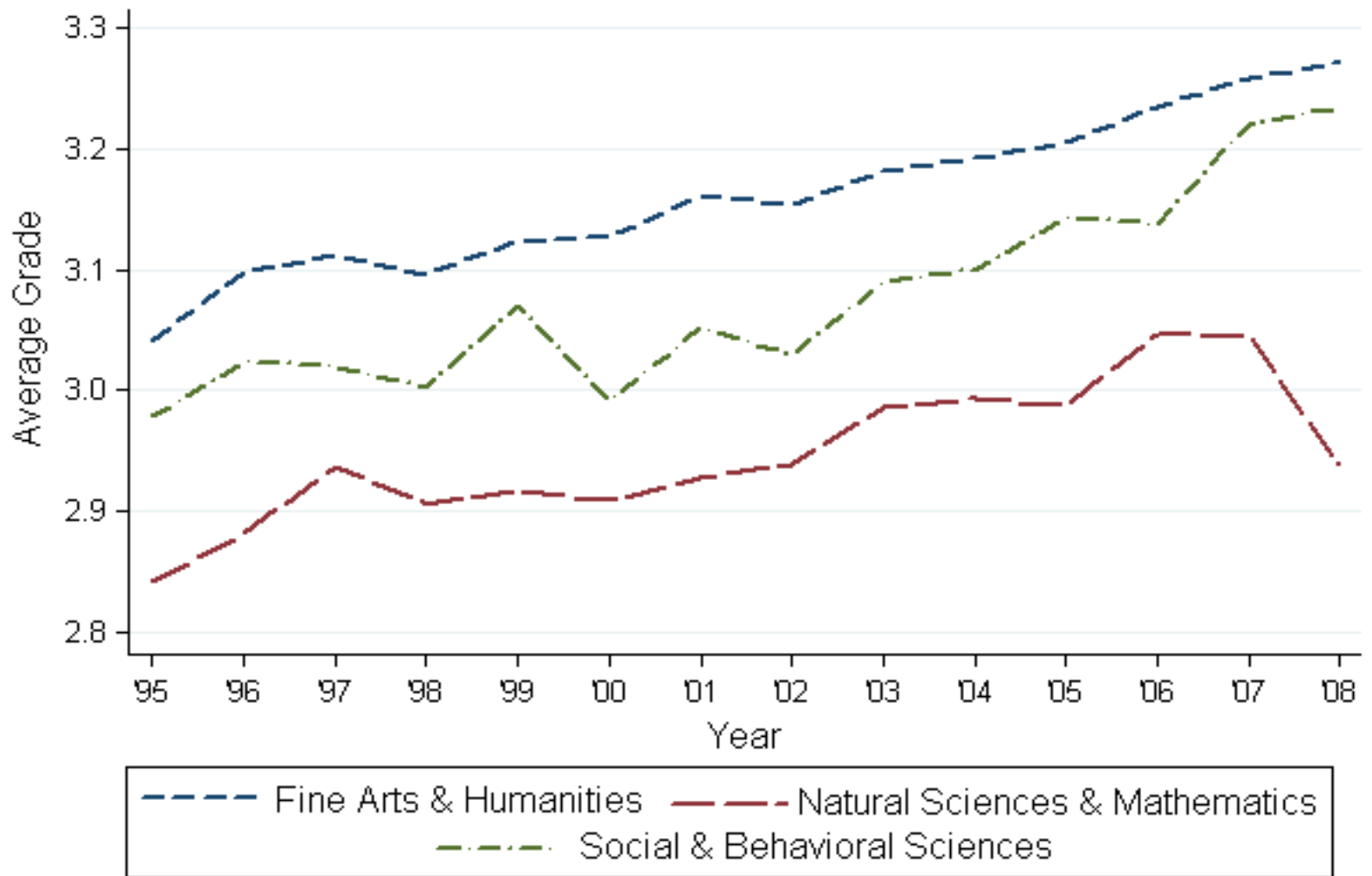
Grade Inequality

Figure 3a: Fall Undergraduate Grades, by School



Grade Inequality

Figure 3b: Fall Undergraduate Grades, Arts & Sciences, by Division



Grade Compression

Figure 2a: Distribution of Letter Grades, 1995-2008

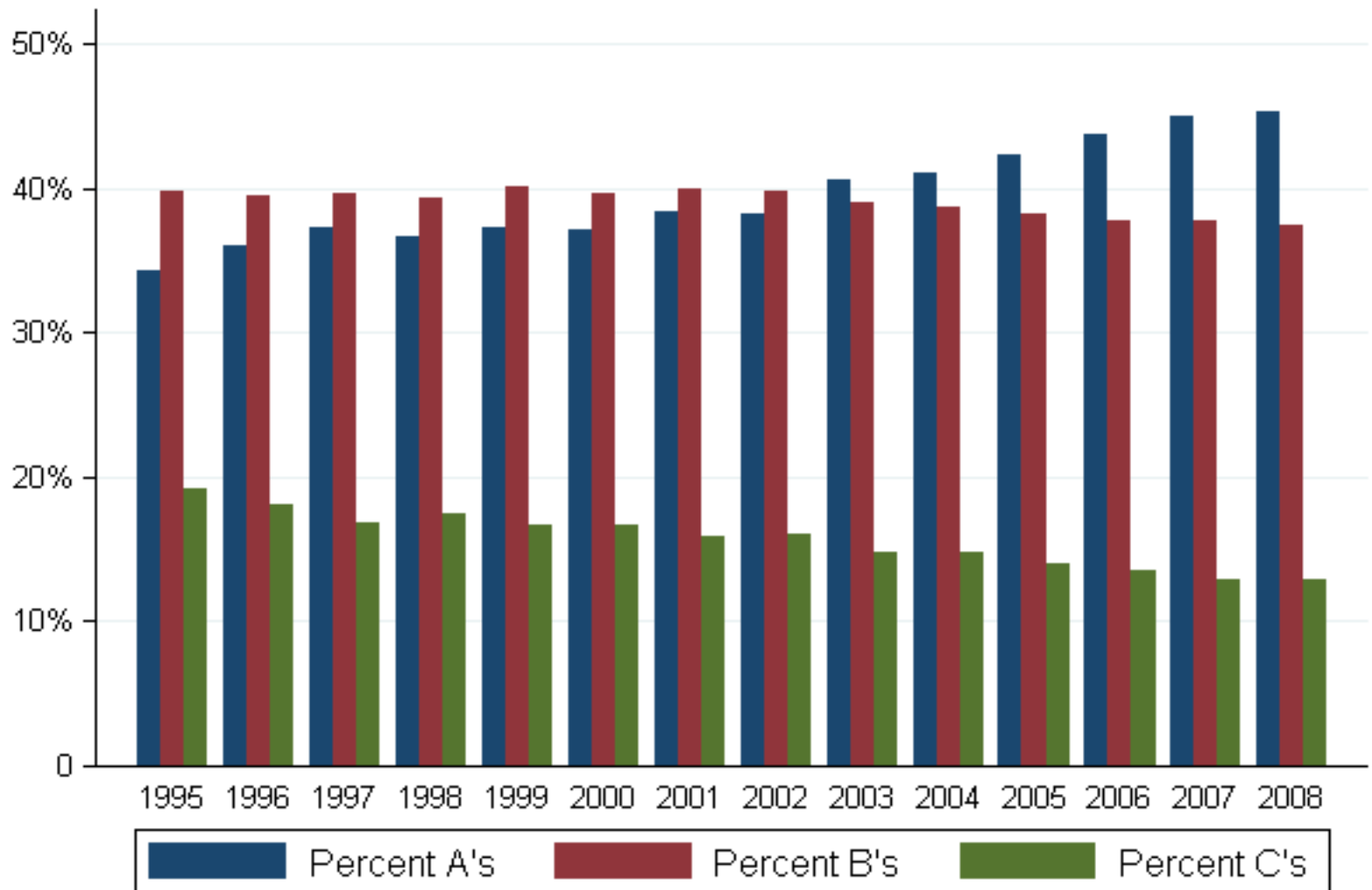
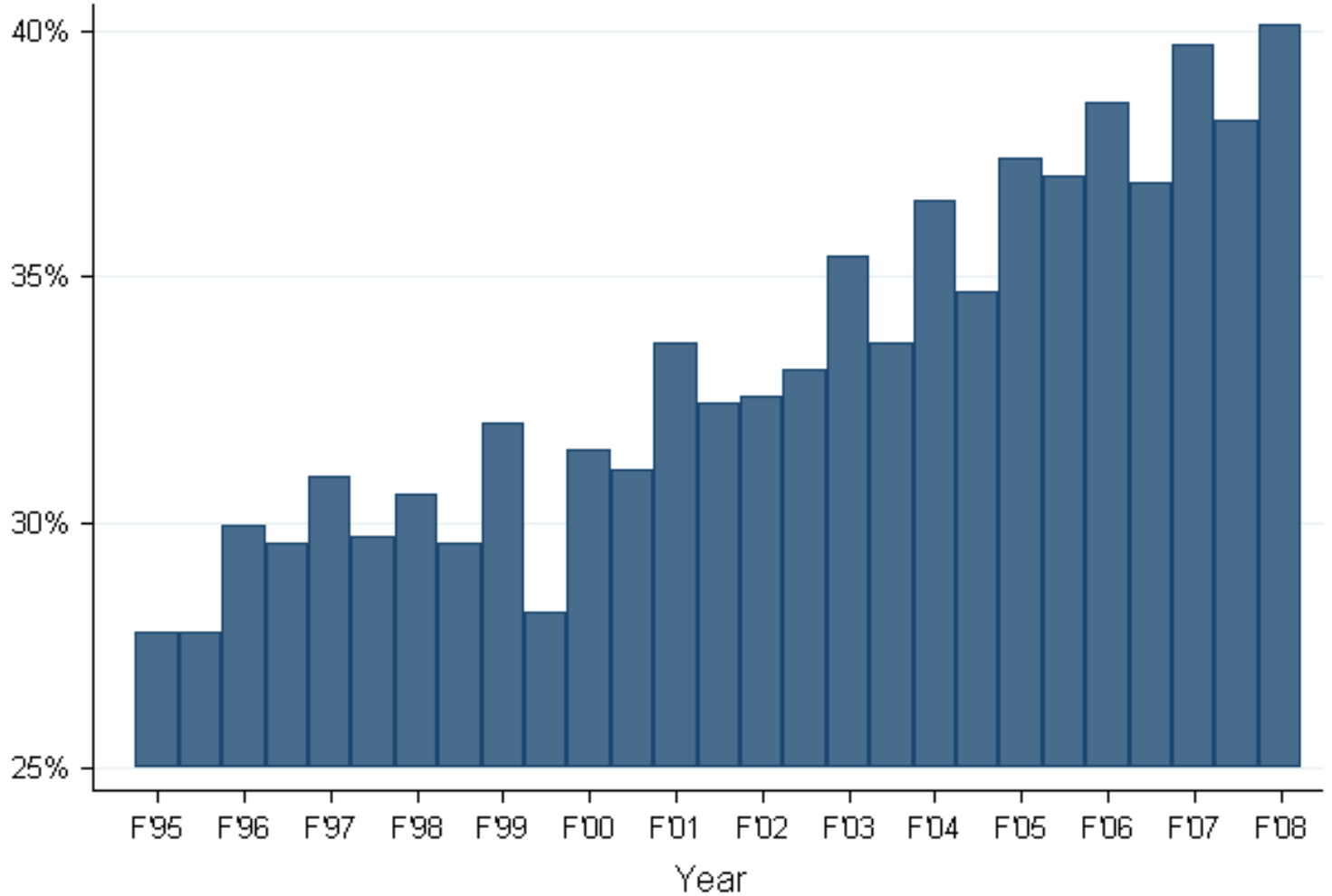


Figure 2b: Percent Qualifying for Dean's List, by Semester



Quick Summary

- **Private universities – 3.3**
- **Public universities – 2.95 (UNC \approx 3.2)**
- **Education – 3.7**
- **Kenan-Flagler Business School – 3.4**
- **School of Journalism – 3.25**
- **College of Arts and Sciences – 3.16**
 - Natural Sciences – 2.94**
 - Social Sciences – 3.24**
 - Humanities and Fine Arts – 3.27**



Handling Grade Inflation:

- **Mandating course median grades (a few UNC science departments)?**
- **Rationing grades (Princeton) or defined averaging (Wellesley)?**
- **Rank all the students?**
- **Put grades into context (Indiana)?**
Faculty Council recommendation.



Some issues and definitions

- **Apply to only course sections with 10 or more students.**
- **Median grade \equiv mid-point in a ranked array of grades.**
- **Percentile range \equiv the relative rank of a particular grade (*e.g.*, B⁺) within the distribution of grades. The reporting includes the top and bottom of the percentiles for each grade.**
- **Student schedule point average \equiv mean of the median grades for each student for all reportable ($N \geq 10$) sections, weighted by the number of credit hours per course.**



Future transcripts will include:

- For each section, the median grades for students (only those achieving quality points).
- For each section, the percentile range for each student's individual grade.
- For all sections, the total number of students taking the course section.
- For each term (*e.g.*, Fall 2013), a schedule point average reported for each term and cumulatively across terms.
- For each term, a count of the number of course sections in which the student achieved below, at, or above the course section median.



Instructor Grade Reports

- **Each instructor should be informed of the course section mean grade.**
- **The instructor should also be able to learn the mean grades for other sections of the same course, other courses in the course's department and in the school and the University.**
- **Likewise, all the above should also include the frequency of letter grade distributions, and historical trends.**



Searchable database

- **Full grade distribution information for all course sections for courses taught in Fall, 2010, and subsequently should be available.**
- **Median and percentile ranges must be available.**
- **The information should be searchable by section, course, semester, instructor, department, and school.**

***Will this alter grade distributions?* Evaluation will begin five years after implementation.**



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Implementation

- **The resolution was passed by the Faculty Council on Friday, April 29, 2011.**
- **The Faculty Council has asked the Provost to commence implementation preferably in time for the Fall, 2012.**
- **The Registrar is studying an implementation plan. An initial assessment suggests that we might be able to have instructor reports ready by Fall 2012, and transcripts in the new format following the Fall 2013 semester.**
- **I will share the recommendation with all Department chairs prior to final implementation.**



Questions and Comments?



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