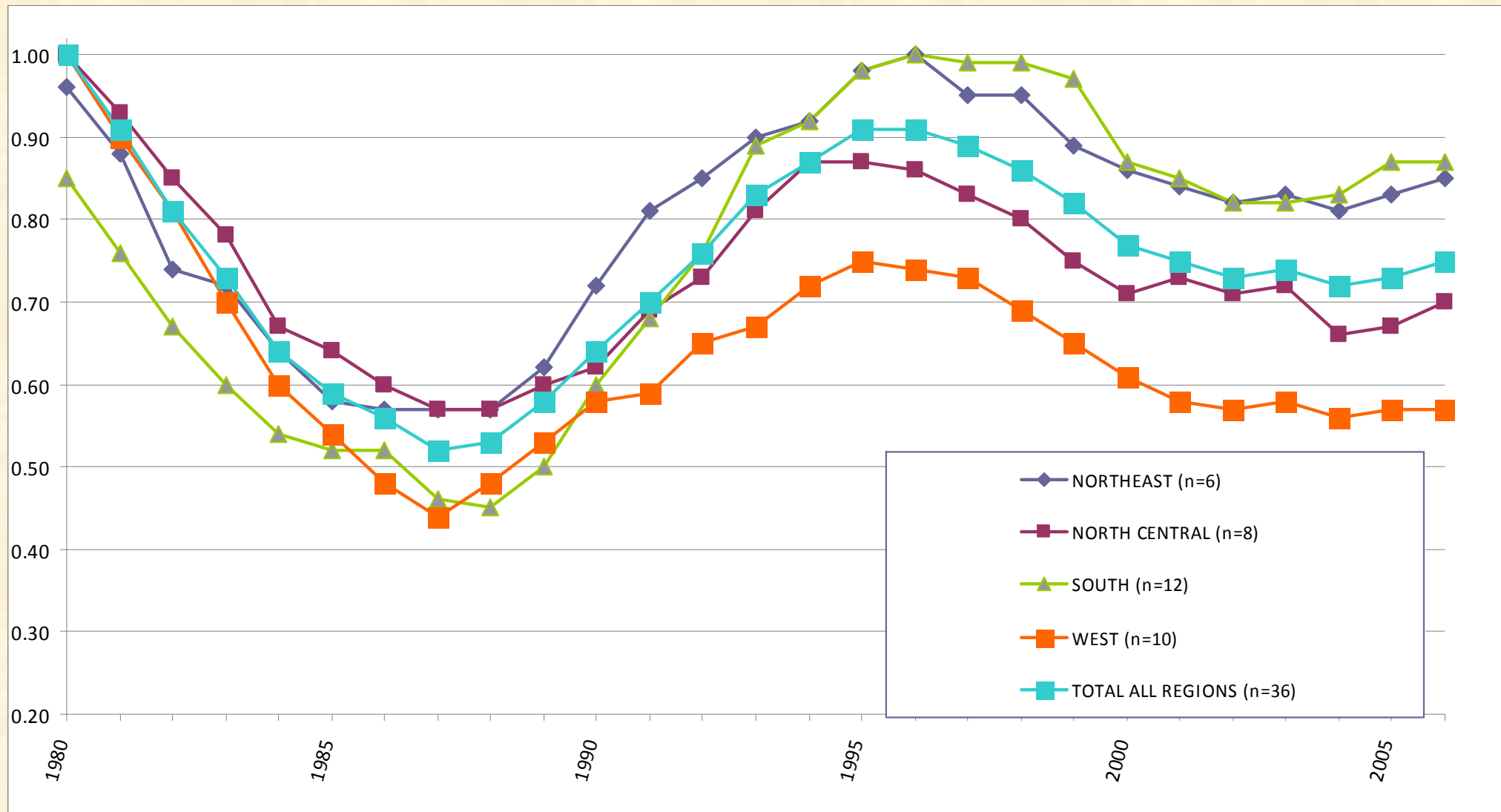


Western NAUFRP Meeting, June 19, 2008

# Reasons and Reservations for Enrolling in Forestry Degree Programs: A Survey of Undergraduate Students

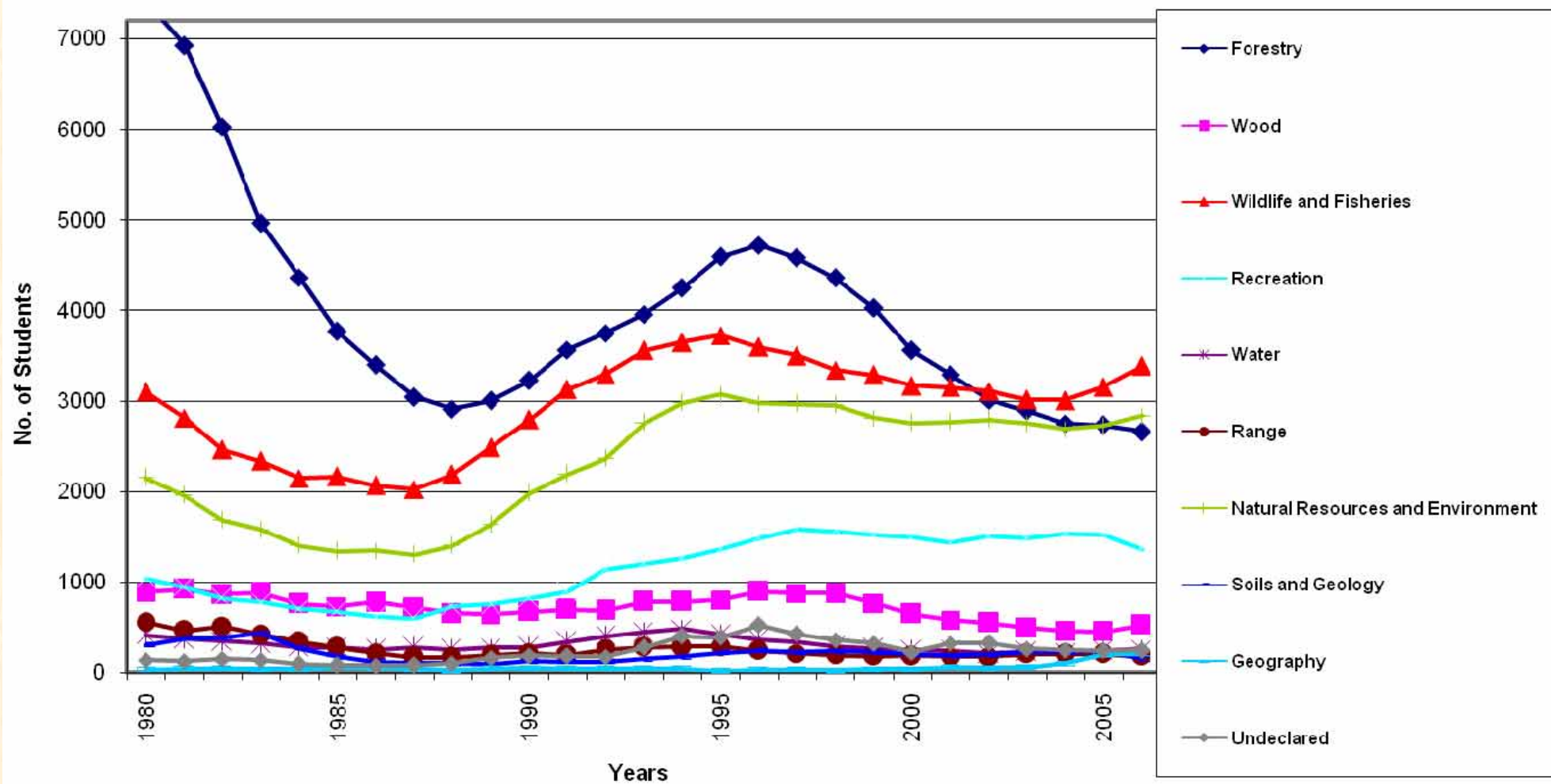
Terry L. Sharik and Stacey Frisk  
Department of Environment and Society  
College of Natural Resources  
Utah State University  
Logan, UT 84322-5215

# Relativized\* Undergraduate Enrollments in Natural Resources by Region, for NAUFRP Institutions, 1980-2006

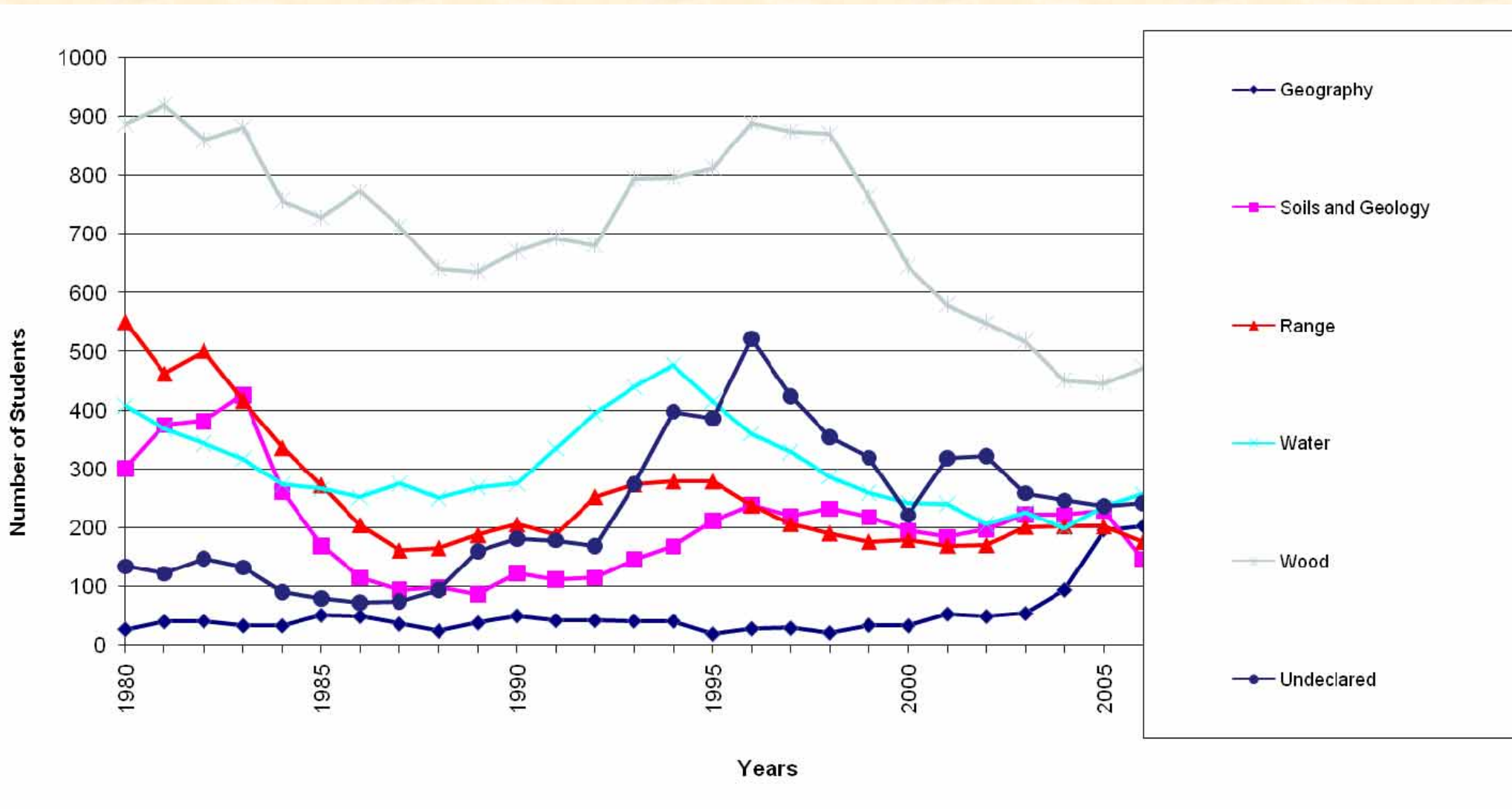


\* Values are relative to the highest reported enrollment in each respective region.

# Undergraduate Enrollments in Forestry Dropping Sharply since mid-90's: A Concern



# Traditional Fields of Study with Historically Low Enrollments Exhibit Trends Similar to Those in Forestry





# Potential Reasons for Declining Enrollment

- Considerable uncertainty in the existence of jobs in natural resources.
- Relatively low salaries compared to other professions.
- Increasing disconnect between society, particularly young people, and natural resources (with increased urbanization).
- Tendency for minorities to gravitate toward programs that are perceived as addressing issues affecting their communities.
- Rigid, narrow curricula.
- Science “phobia” by students.

# Potential Reasons for Declining Enrollment

- Relatively long period of time beyond a bachelor's degree to obtain a terminal professional degree compared to other fields such as business, law, and the health professions.
- Increase in similar degree programs outside formal colleges of natural resources.
- Negative perceptions of natural resource management.
- Lack of intellectual leadership and charisma nationally in natural resource issues.
- Lack of marketing/communications/education
- Fewer students matriculating in colleges and universities.

# Survey Methods

Undergraduate Leaders in Forestry and Related Natural Resource Programs were surveyed for:

- Demographics
- Reasons and reservations about choosing to matriculate in Forestry/NR

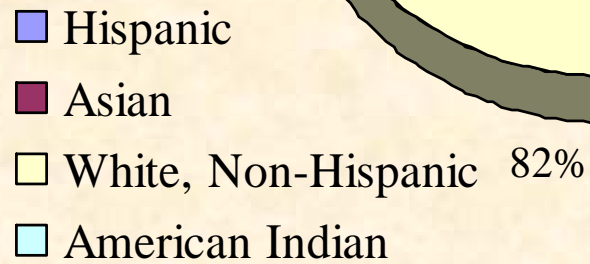
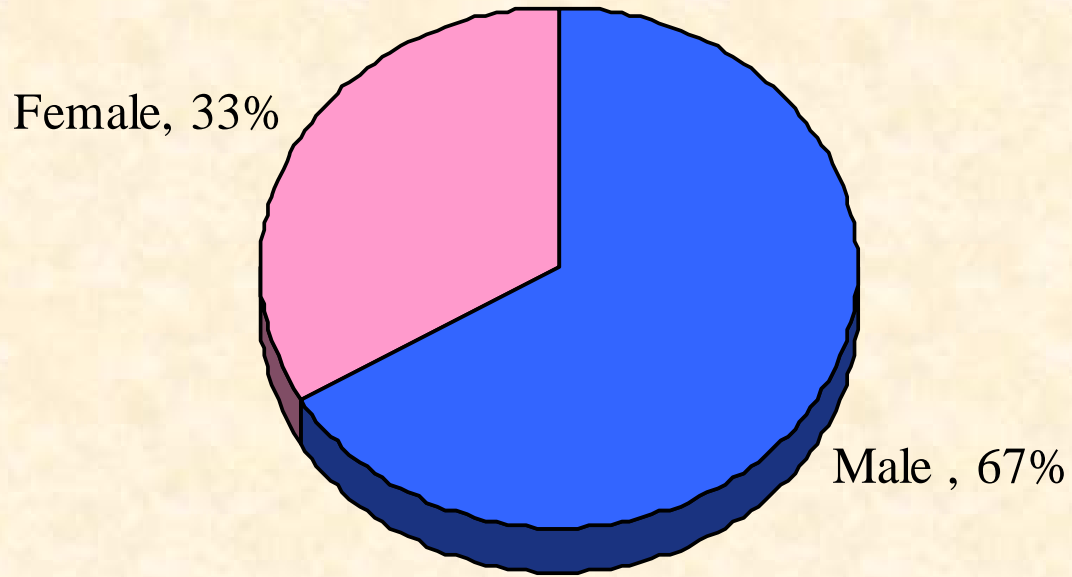
2004: SAF Convention, Edmonton

N=72

2007: SAF Convention, Portland

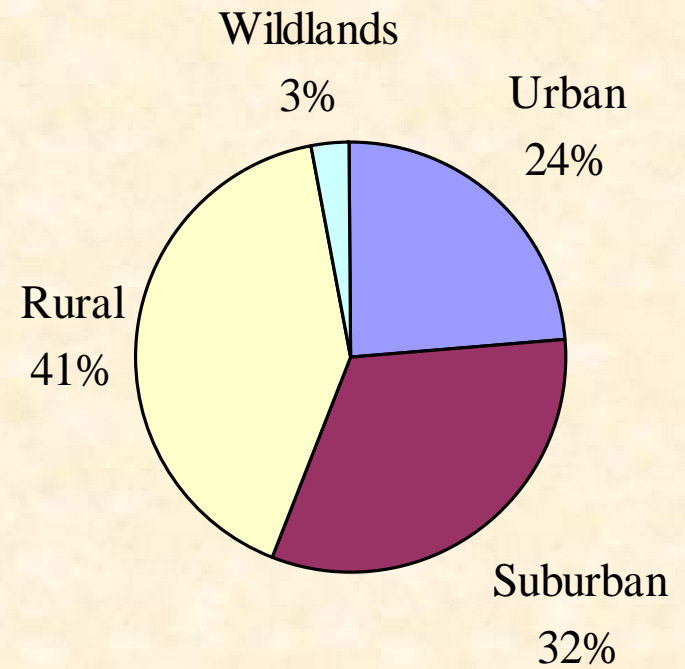
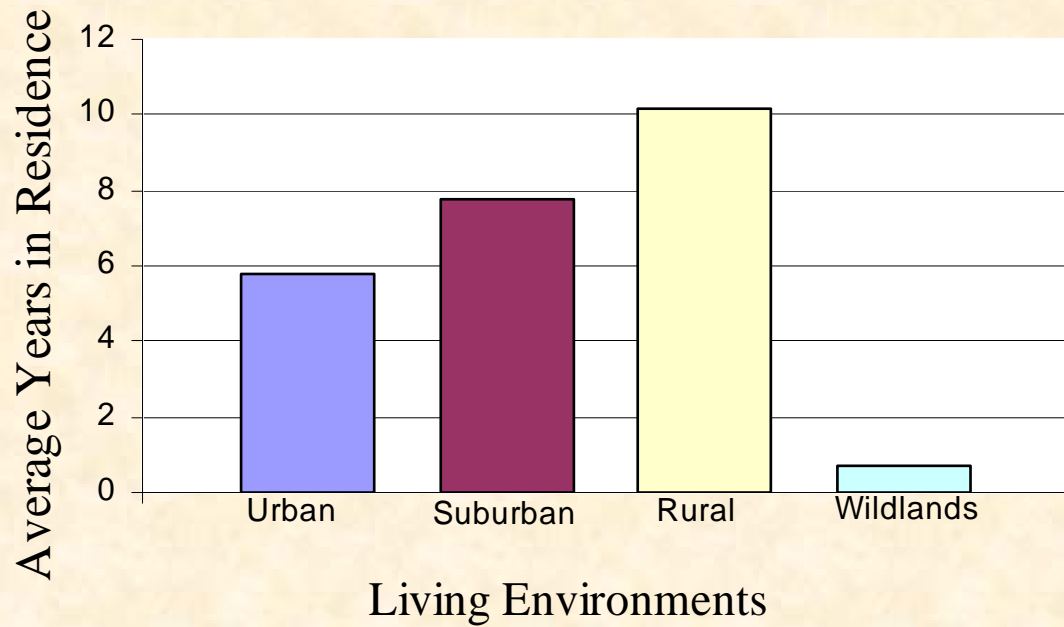
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# Demographics

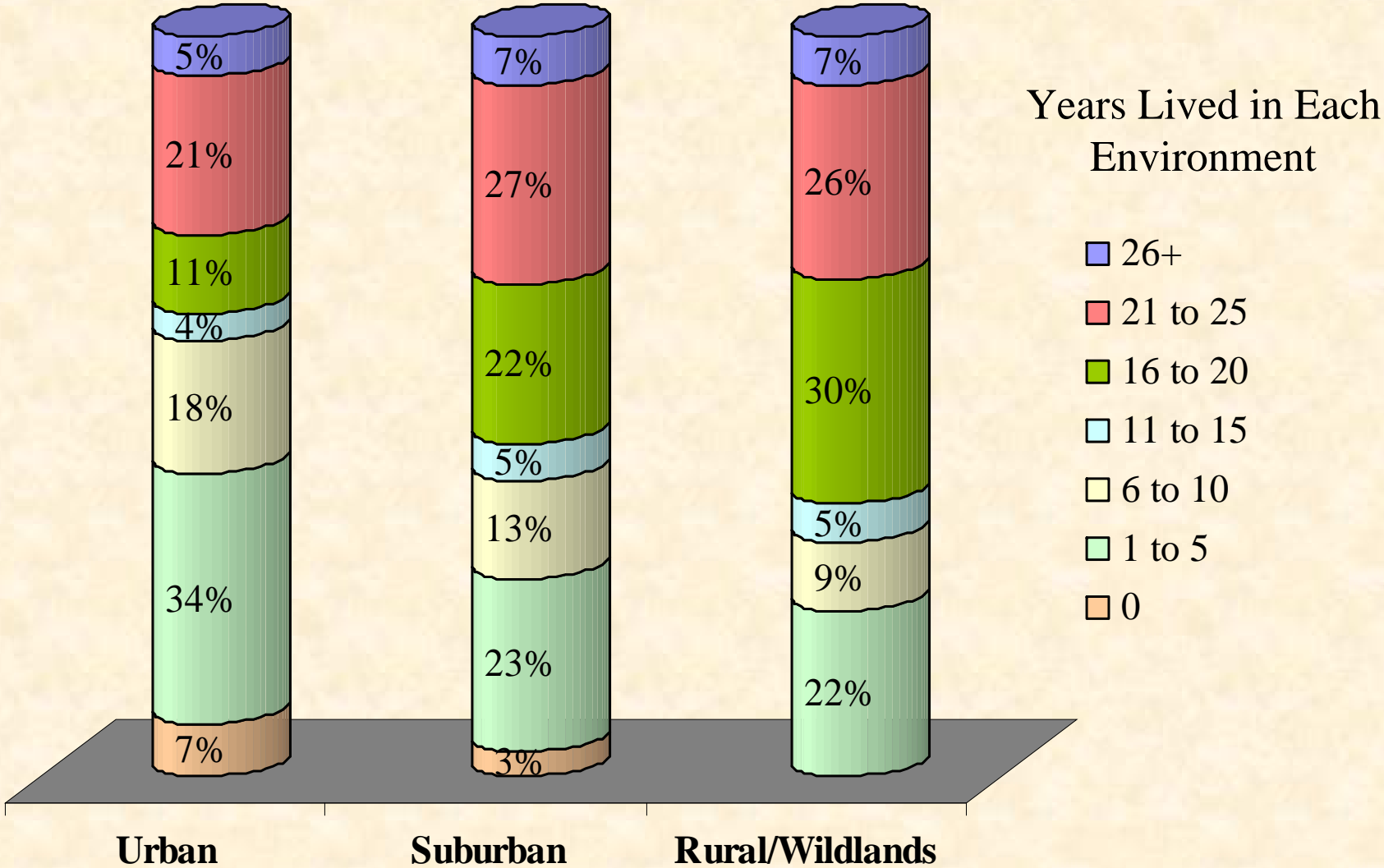




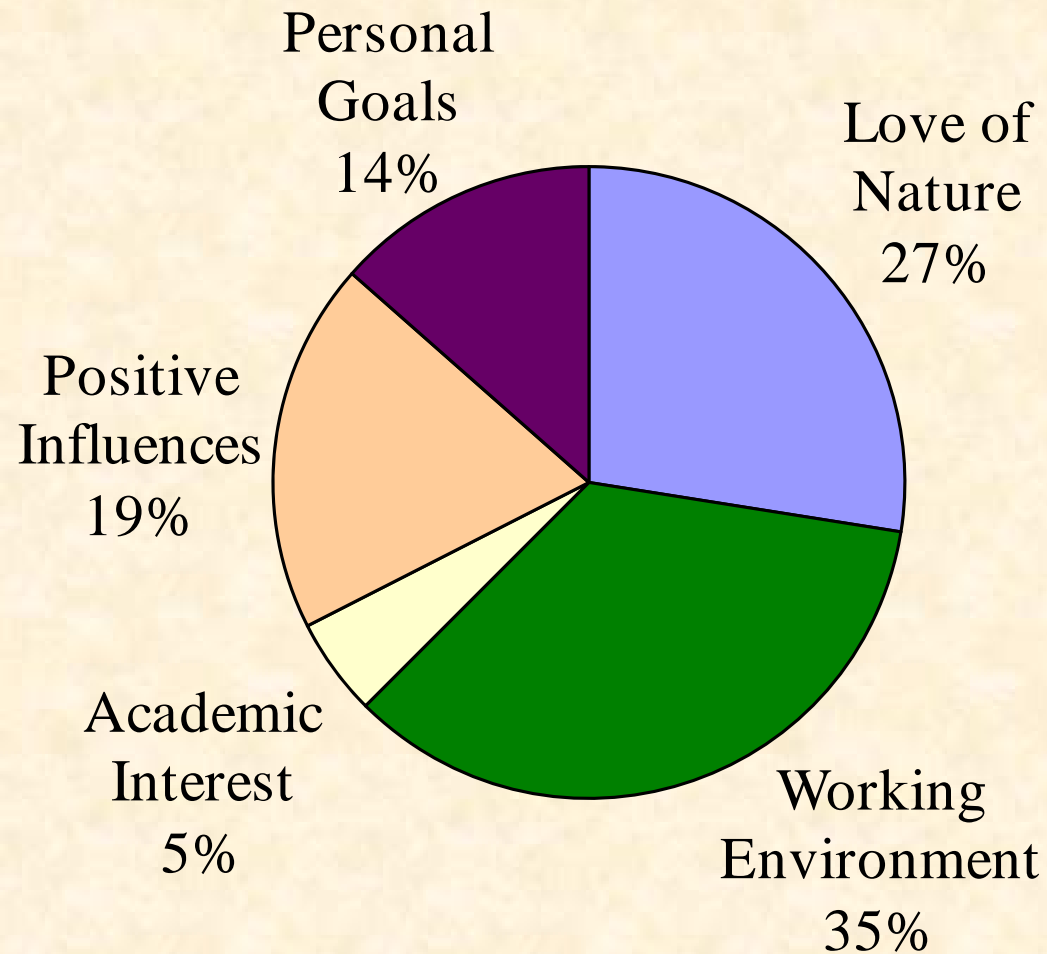
# Living Environments



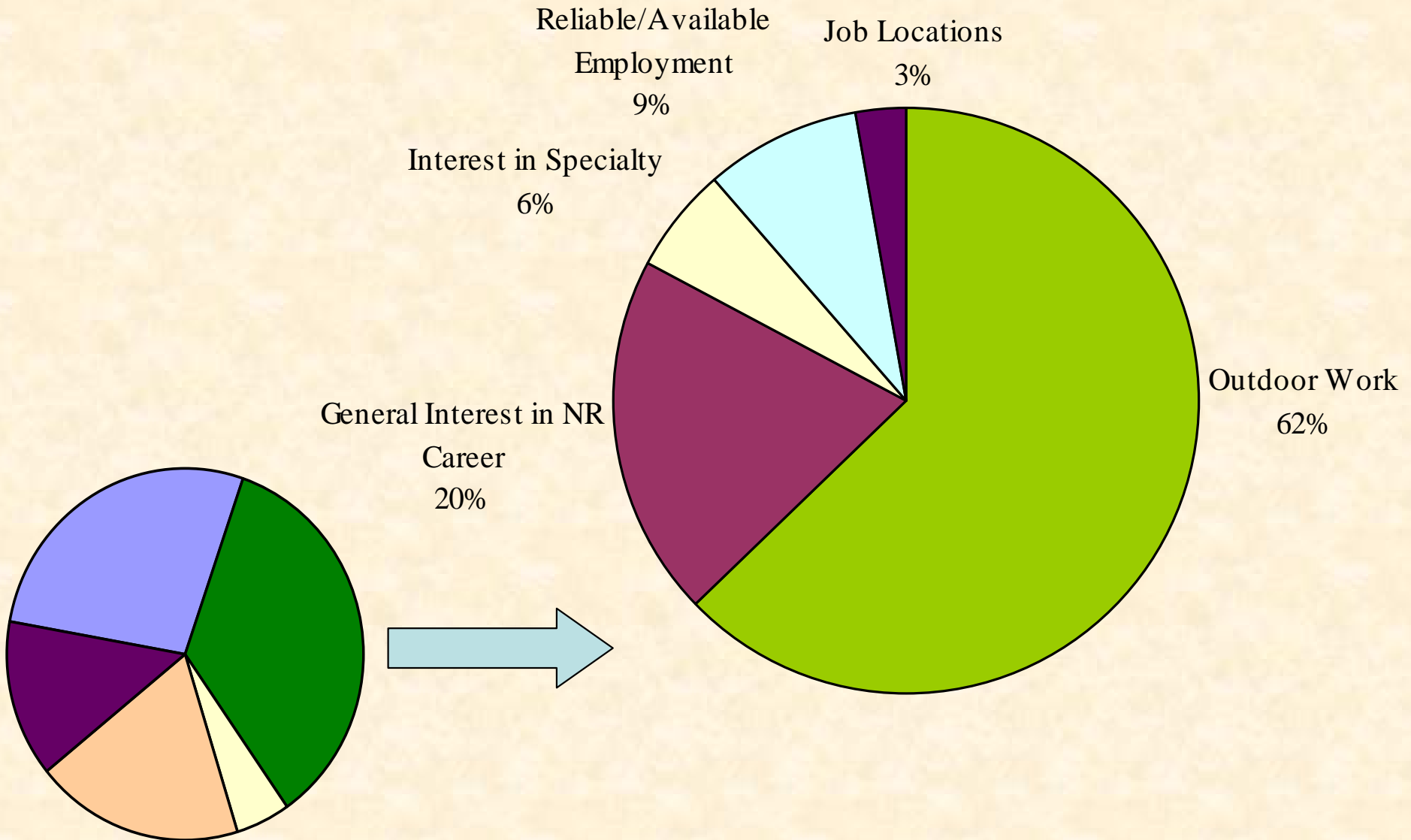
# Student Backgrounds



“List the factors that lead to your decision to major in forestry or a related NR program”

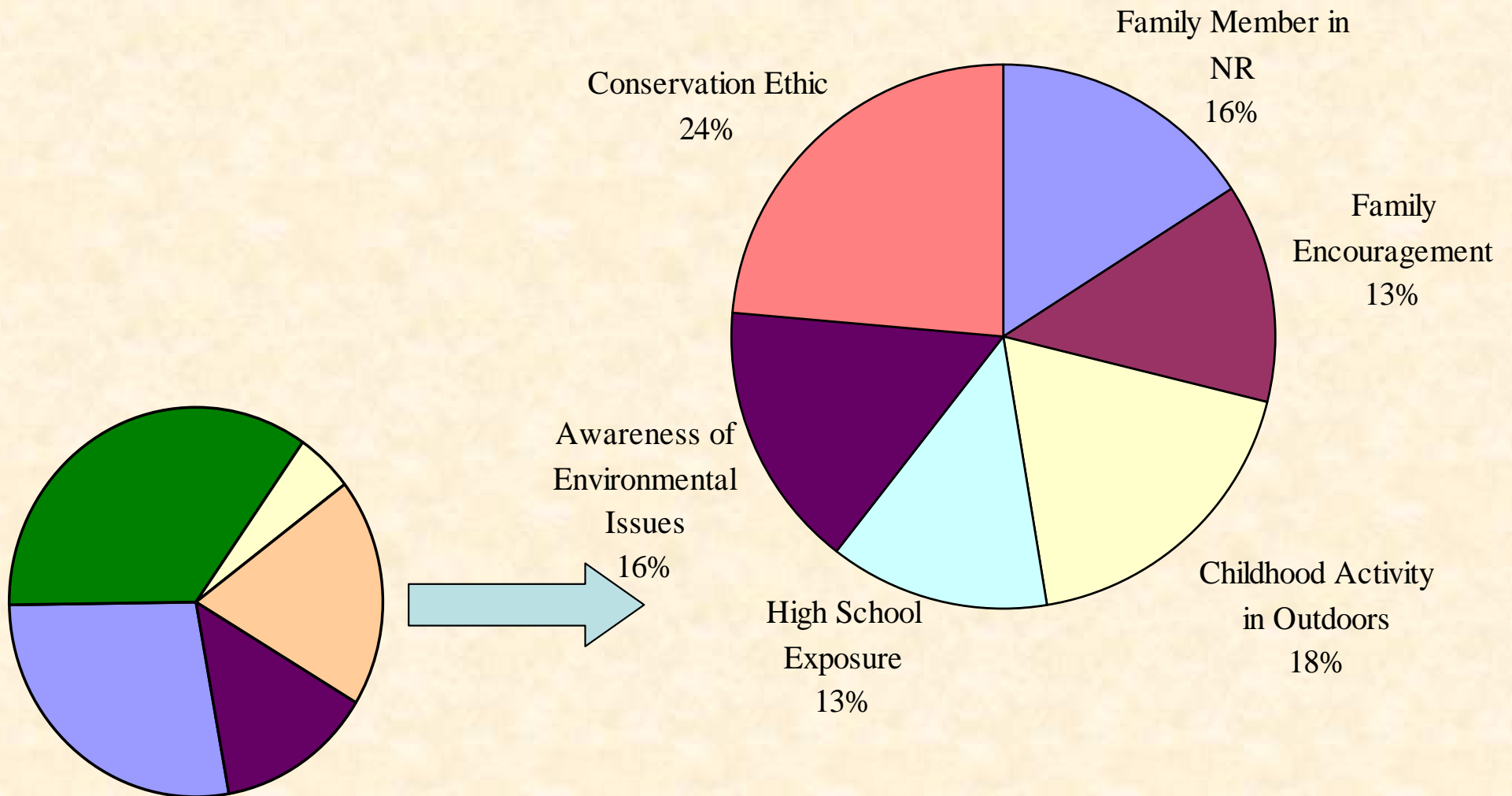


# Working Environment

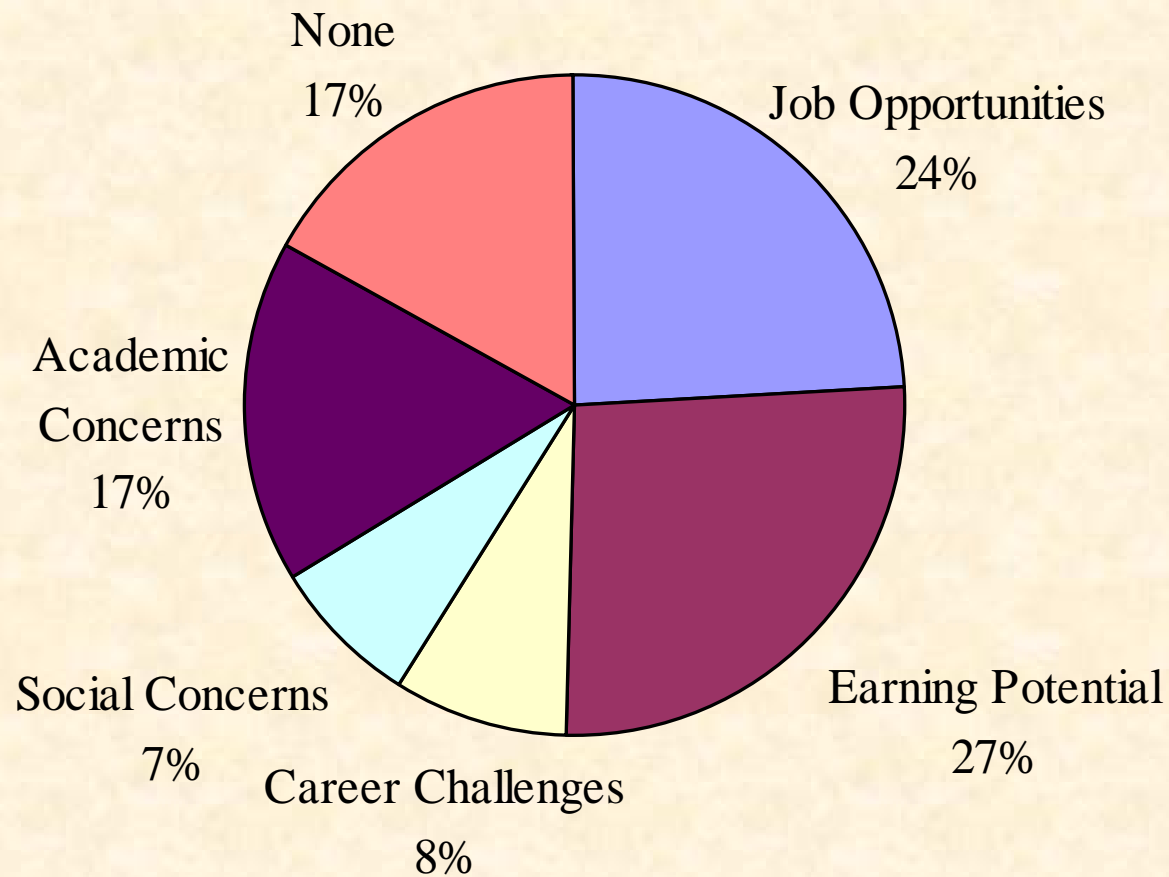




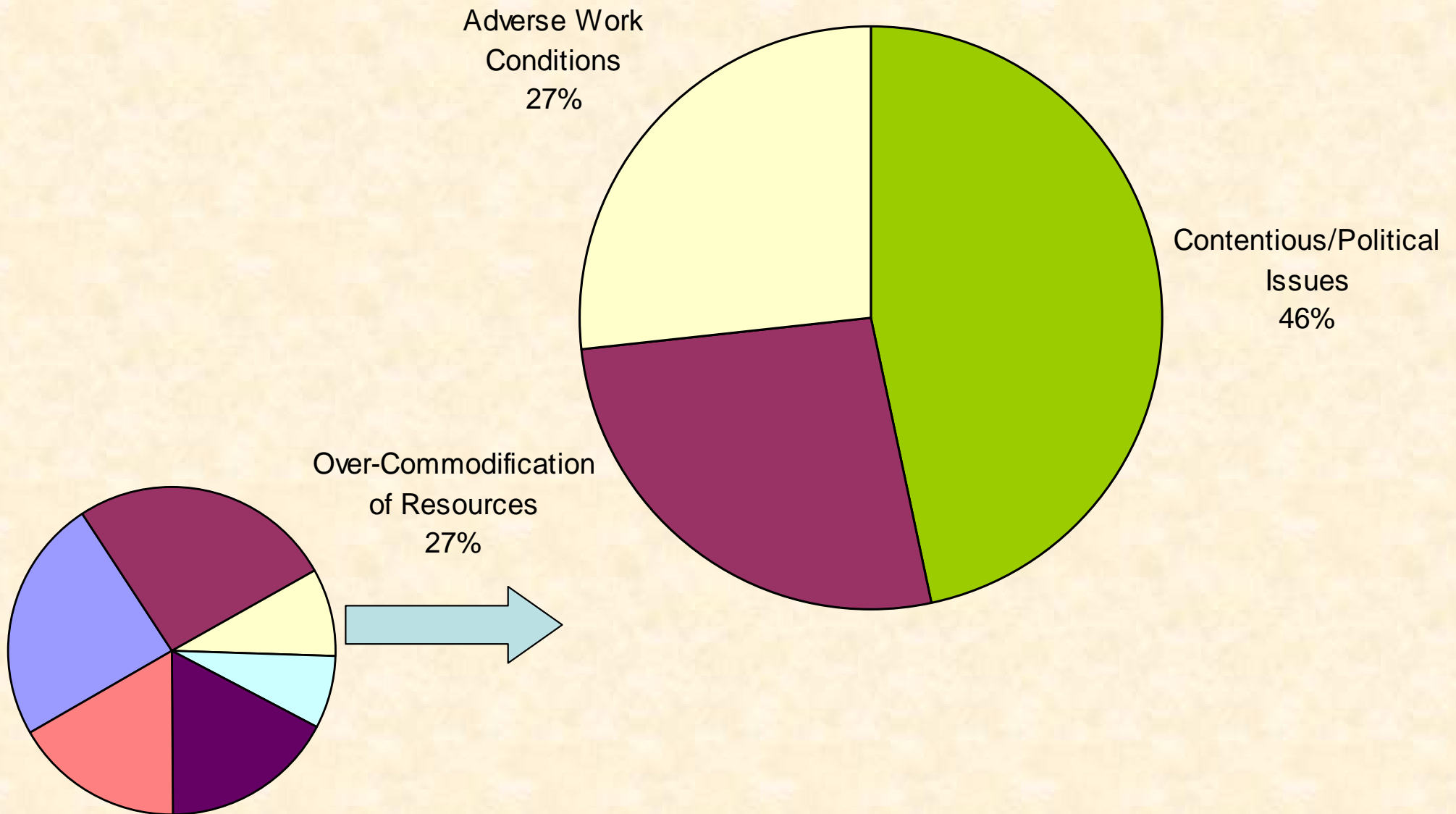
# Positive Influences



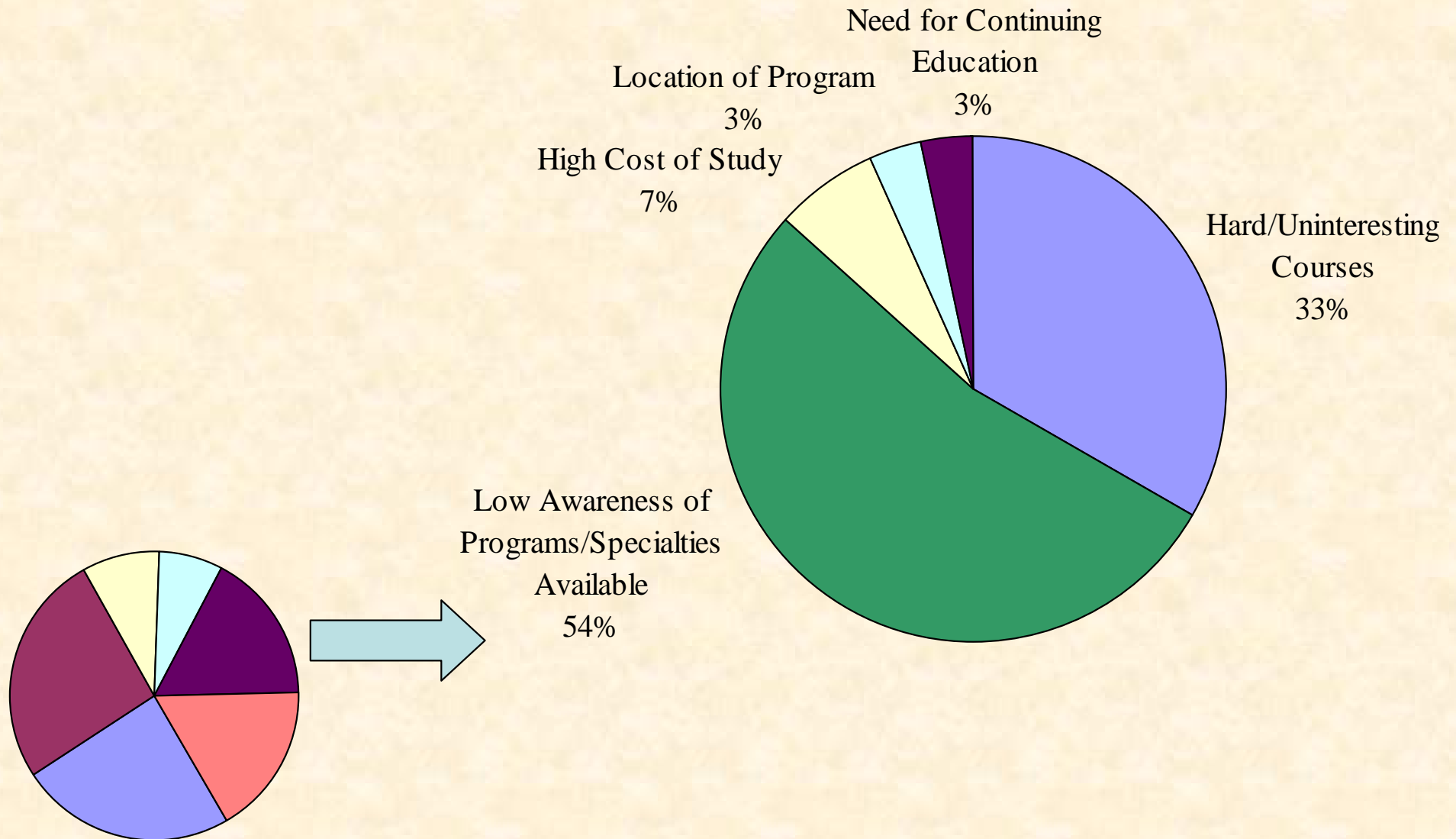
# “What factors caused you to be hesitant about majoring in forestry or a related NR program?”



# Career Challenges

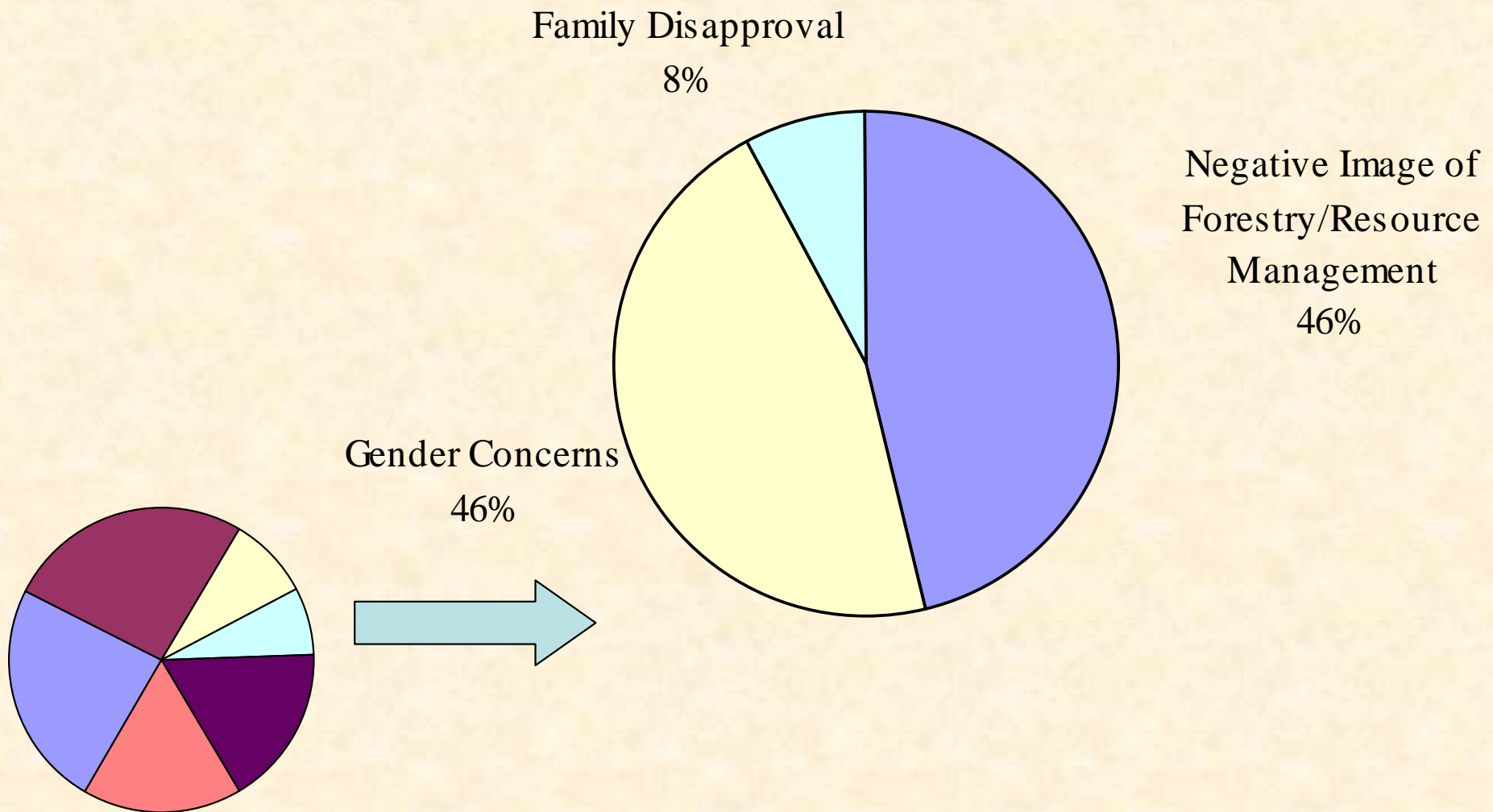


# Academic Concerns





# Social Concerns



# Suggestions

- Increase High School Exposure:
  - Science & Math
  - Forestry Undergraduate Programs
  - Career Possibilities
- Enhanced skills in managing contentious/political issues
- Greater sensitivity to gender concerns
- Re-Branding of Forestry
- Evaluate Salaries
- And Remember... Love of Nature is the greatest attraction!

# Future Research

Comprehensive National Survey of  
Undergraduate Students:

Within Natural Resources

Beyond Natural Resources

# Contact Information

Terry.Sharik@usu.edu

Stacey.Frisk@aggiemail.usu.edu