

Differences in Student Characteristics and Attitudes by Age Group

Highlights

The purpose of this report was to identify differences in demographics, attitudes, and experiences between traditional-aged students (18-23) and older students at Evergreen. Olympia campus degree-seeking undergraduate data from the BANNER student database system from spring 2006 ("population data", n=3432) and from the Evergreen Student Experience Survey 2006 ("survey data", Olympia campus respondents, n=386)¹ were used to compare three major groups of students: traditional-aged students (18-23), students aged 24-30, and 31+ year-old students. For retention analysis, fall to fall BANNER data for degree-seeking Olympia campus undergraduates were used.

Differences in Student Satisfaction, Confidence, and Growth

- While on average all respondents rated all but one of the areas surveyed positively, students 31 and older were universally more satisfied with all areas surveyed than either students aged 24-30 or traditional-aged students. Students aged 31 and older were significantly more satisfied with seminars, their academic interactions with faculty, and the amount of diversity and personal experiences with diversity than either of the two younger groups of students. In addition, students aged 31 and older were significantly more satisfied than both younger groups of students that they could study what they were interested in at Evergreen.
- Overall, students 31 and older were significantly more confident than either students aged 24-30 or traditional-aged students. Students aged 31+ were significantly more confident than the two younger groups of students that they would receive a well-rounded education, that they would get the kinds of courses they wanted to take, and in areas pertaining to preparation to enter the workforce. Most interestingly, students aged 24-30 were significantly less confident in regards to personal support structures needed to complete their Evergreen education than students aged 31+ or traditional-aged students.
- Students 31 and older indicated that their Evergreen experiences contributed more to their growth in all but one non-computer-related area surveyed than either students aged 24-30 or traditional-aged students. All three age groups have the same highest ranked areas of reported personal and academic growth: independent learning, participation in class discussion, and synthesizing information. Growth in areas that specifically represent preparation for future endeavors was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for traditional-aged students or students aged 24-30. It is also worth noting that of the three age groups, students aged 24-30 had the lowest average growth pertaining to preparation for future endeavors. Also worth noting is that students aged 31+ indicated a significantly higher level of growth than traditional-aged students or students aged 24-30 for writing effectively, defining and solving problems, and synthesizing information. They also reported significantly higher growth than traditional-aged students in functioning as a responsible member of a diverse community.
- While not statistically significant, students 31 and older indicated that Evergreen contributed slightly less to their growth in the surveyed computer-related areas than either students aged 24-30 or traditional-aged students.
- The goals for which older students had the most significant differences in comparison to traditional-aged students and students aged 24-30 pertained to employment: having a professional career, making more money, and having expertise in a particular field.

Differences in Student Employment and Credit Load

- The percentage of students who were part-time was much higher for students aged 31+ (25%) than for students aged 24-30 (12%) or traditional-aged students (7%). Older students took proportionately more Evening and Weekend Studies part-time programs and internships and took fewer daytime full-time programs or Evening and Weekend courses. Participation in contracts, classes through Extended Ed, and Leisure Ed were similar between all three groups.
- About half (53%) of students aged 18-23 and 31+ were employed while attending Evergreen. In comparison, 70% of students aged 24-30 were employed. At the same time, the proportion of students working full-time

¹ The survey was of a random sample of all Evergreen undergraduates, and the responses of students 18 and older who reported their age studying primarily on the Olympia campus were used in the analysis. In spring 2006, five students were under 18 and two did not report their age.

while attending Evergreen increased with age, from 4% for traditional-aged students to 15% for students aged 24-30, and 29% for students aged 31+.

- The average credit load decreased significantly with increasing age from 15.3 credits for traditional-aged students to 14.1 credits for students aged 24-30 and 12.4 for students aged 31+.

Differences in Student Retention

- Student retention and class standing were analyzed using fall data because retention is typically calculated from fall to fall. Data from fall 2004-fall 2005, fall 2005-fall 2006, fall 2006-fall 2007, as well as a three-year aggregate of fall to fall data were highly similar and revealed the same patterns. As to be expected, a greater proportion of older students were juniors and seniors than traditional-aged students. Because retention changes with class standing and there is such a different distribution in class standing between age groups, fall to fall retention was analyzed by both class standing and age group. Among freshmen, traditional-aged students had a lower adjusted retention rate (67%; adjusted retention includes both retention and completion) than students aged 24-30 (71%) or students 31 and older (81%). Interestingly, among sophomores and juniors, there is very little difference in adjusted retention between the three age groups. Adjusted retention among traditional-aged seniors is higher (90%) than students aged 24-30 (85%) or students 31 and older (84%). Even more notable, when adjusted retention is calculated for the three age groups regardless of class standing, adjusted retention rates are almost identical between the three groups (78-80% retained or completed).
- When asked to evaluate their academic workload, students aged 31+ rated their workload as heavier than students aged 24-30 and significantly heavier than traditional-aged students did.

Differences in Student Demographics

- There are more females among both groups of older students than in the traditional-aged group.
- Students aged 31 and older had the highest percentage with a documented disability at 13%.
- While not statistically significant, fewer students 31 and older (17%) identified as a minority in terms of sexuality or gender than either traditional-aged students (21%) or students aged 24-30 (22%).
- A much higher percentage of students aged 24-30 (91%) and 31+ (98%) were residents than traditional-aged students (68%).
- The two older student groups were comprised of greater proportions of transfer students and Returning Greeners than the traditional-age group.

Introduction and Methodology

Age was identified as a possible influence on student attitudes and behaviors. The purpose of this study is to examine the differences between traditional-aged students (18-23) and older students by comparing student characteristics and survey response data from these groups of students.

If traditional-aged students are treated as a separate group, three prominent groups emerge when examining the age distribution for Olympia campus degree-seeking undergraduates: traditional-aged students (18-23), the remainder of the bulk of the student age distribution (24-30), and the tail of the curve (31+; Figure 1). It is hypothesized that there are key differences between traditional-aged students and older students, with possibly more similarities between traditional-aged and intermediate group and more pronounced differences with the older group of students.

Student demographics were compared between all Olympia campus degree-seeking undergraduates from spring 2006 and the randomly-sampled survey respondents from the Evergreen Student Experience Survey 2006. Responses to selected questions pertaining to student engagement, retention, confidence, and goals first were compared between the traditional-aged students and the two groups of older students. While not a primary goal of this study, demographic data and survey data between the two groups of older students were then compared to each other to analyze differences.

Because the survey responses did not follow a normal distribution, the data were analyzed using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test for comparing two groups to each other and the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance test to compare all three groups. A statistical significance level of 5% was used to assess significance. Population data were drawn from the BANNER student database system. To minimize contribution from campus-specific and program-specific differences, only population and survey data from degree-seeking Olympia undergraduates were included in the analysis. In addition, students younger than 18 (n=5 for population data, n=0 for survey data) and students without an indicated age (n=2 for population data, n=0 for survey data) were excluded from the study because there were too few responses for analysis. "All Students" or "Population Data" refers to all degree-seeking Olympia undergraduates 18 and older, spring 2006 records from the BANNER student database system (n=3432, excludes five students 17 and younger); "Survey Data" or "Survey Respondents" refers to all Olympia respondents from the Evergreen Student Experience Survey 2006 (n=386).

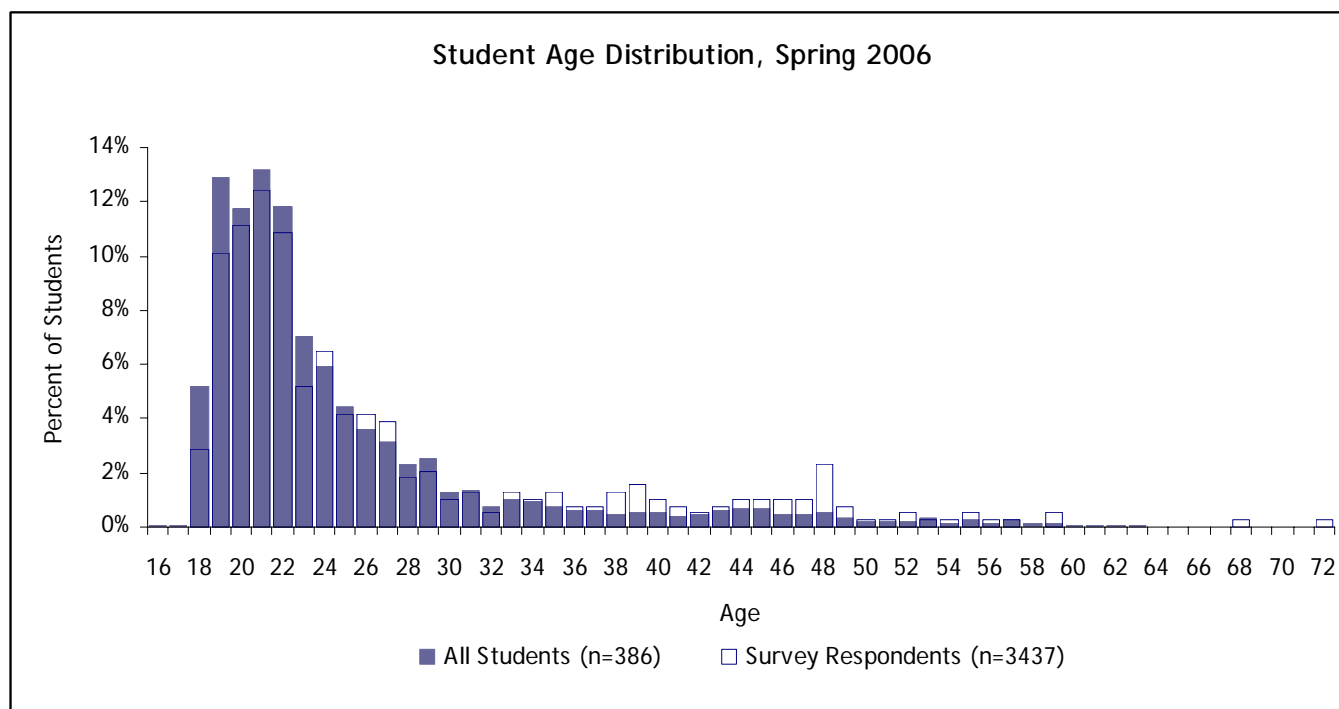


Figure 1: Age distribution of survey respondents compared to all students. "All Students" includes only degree-seeking undergraduates from the Olympia campus; "Survey Respondents" includes randomly-sampled degree-seeking Olympia undergraduate respondents to the Evergreen Student Experience Survey 2006.

Student Characteristics

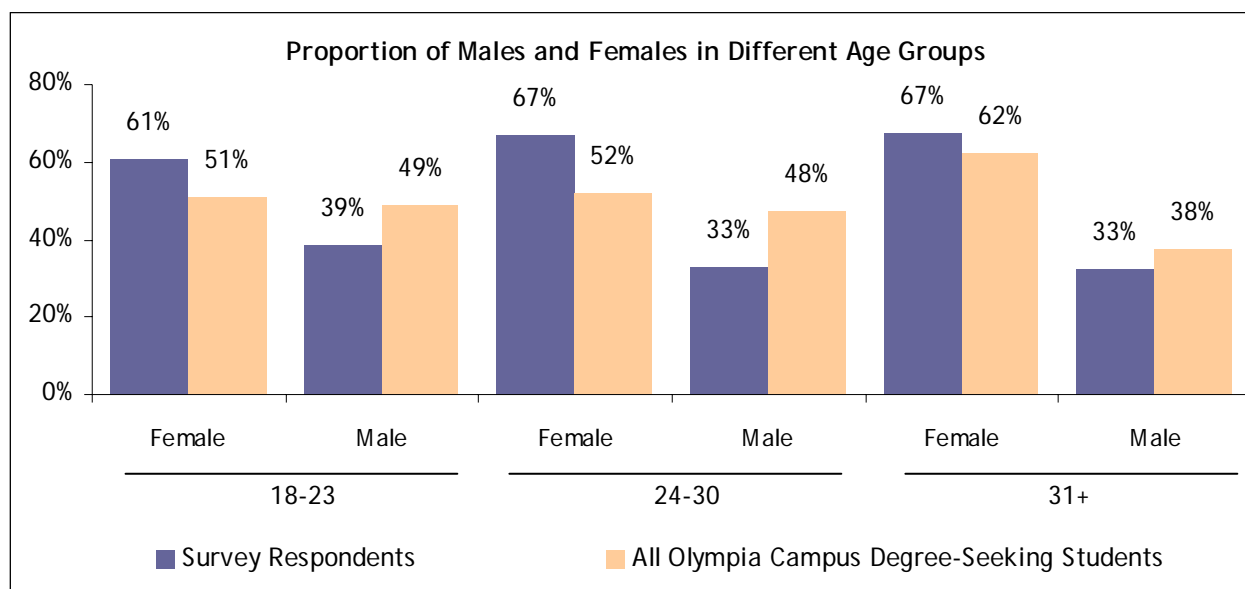
Differences in student characteristics between the three age groups (18-23, 24-30 and 31+) were examined including gender, disability status, sexual/gender minority status, residency status, admissions status, credit status, work status and types of classes taken. Where available, population data were compared to survey data to determine if any groups were overrepresented as well as to show the demographic profile for the population from which the survey respondents were selected.

Demographics: Gender

Age group-related differences in representation by gender, residency status, and disability status for survey respondents were analyzed. Population data and survey data were compared to each other to test for any significant differences between the two. Second, the three age groups within each data set were analyzed for significant differences.

As determined by a Chi-square test, females are significantly overrepresented among traditional-aged survey respondents ($p=.005$) and for 24-30 year-old students ($p=.008$), but not for students 31 and older.

There was a significantly higher percentage of females among students 31 and older than for either 18-23 or 24-30 year-old students ($p<.001$; Figure 2).



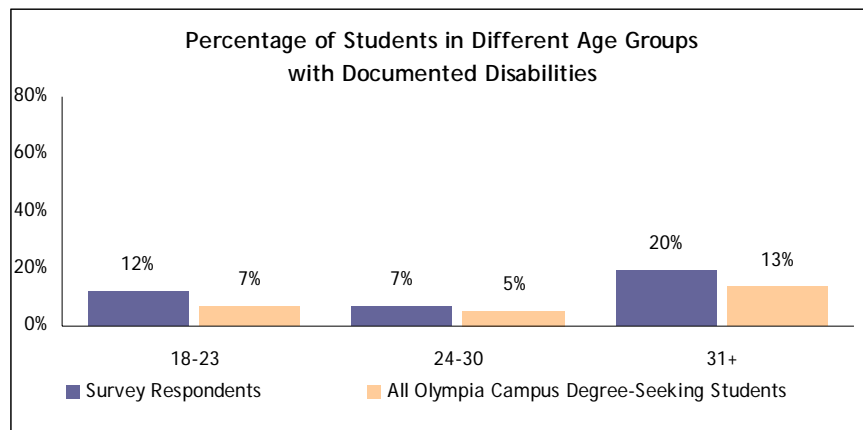
Gender	18-23		24-30		31+	
	Survey respondents (n=203)	All Students (n=2127)	Survey respondents (n=91)	All Students (n=799)	Survey respondents (n=92)	All Students (n=506)
Female	61%	51%	67%	52%	67%	63%
Male	39%	49%	33%	48%	33%	38%

Figure 2: Proportion of males and females in the three age groups of survey respondents and for all students.

Demographics: Disability Status

Students with documented disabilities were not overrepresented among traditional-aged students or students aged 24-30; however they were significantly overrepresented among traditional-aged survey respondents ($p=.006$).

For the population data, there were significant differences in the proportion of students with documented disabilities between all three age groups ($p<.001$ for all three comparisons; Figure 3).

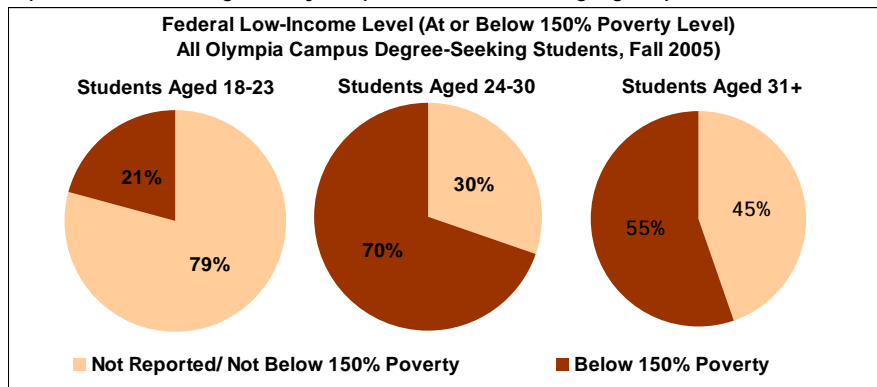


Documented Disability as of 7/18/06	18-23		24-30		31+	
	Survey respondents (n=203)	All Students (n=2127)	Survey respondents (n=91)	All Students (n=799)	Survey respondents (n=92)	All Students (n=506)
Disability	12%	7%	7%	5%	20%	13%
No Disability	88%	93%	93%	95%	80%	87%

Figure 3: The percentage of students who had a documented disability as of 7-18-2006.

Demographics: Federal Low-Income Status

Fall 2005 federal low-income status was assessed for survey respondents. All survey respondents were represented in the fall 2005 BANNER student database and these data were compared to data from all degree-seeking Olympia undergraduates from fall 2005. Federal low-income status between the three age groups differed dramatically with the highest representation of students at or below federal low-income level among students aged 24-30 at 70% (Figure 4). In addition, students at or below federal low-income level were under-represented among survey respondents in this age group.

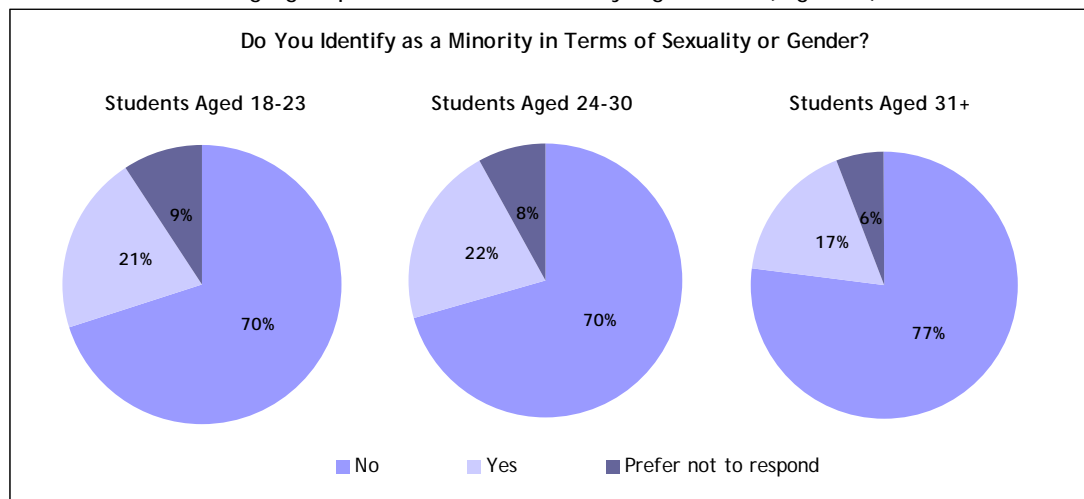


Federal Low-Income Status (At or Below 150% Poverty Status)	18-23		24-30		31+	
	Survey Respondents (n=203)	All Students (n=2377)	Survey Respondents (n=91)	All Students (n=773)	Survey Respondents (n=92)	All Students (n=513)
At or Below 150% Poverty Level	22%	21%	49%	70%	51%	55%
Not Reported/ Above 150% Poverty Level	78%	79%	51%	30%	49%	45%

Figure 4: Federal low-income status (at or below 150% poverty level) of all degree-seeking Olympia campus undergraduates from fall 2005. Survey respondent data are also included in the table to show representativeness.

Demographics: Sexual/Gender Minority

Students were asked if they identified as a minority in terms of sexuality or gender. While the percentage of students identifying as a sexual/gender minority was lower for students aged 31 and older, the differences between the three age groups were not statistically significant (Figure 5).



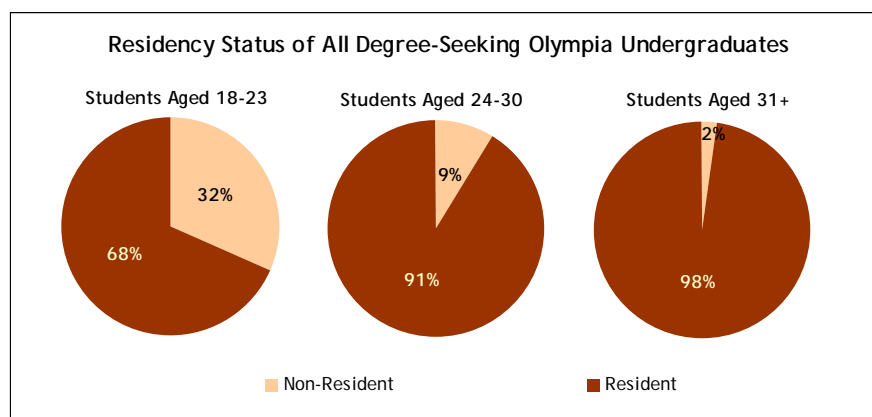
Do You Identify as a Minority in Terms of Sexuality or Gender?	18-23	24-30	31+
	Survey respondents (n=187; 16 missing)	Survey respondents (n=88; 3 missing)	Survey respondents (n=87; 5 missing)
Yes	21%	22%	17%
No	70%	71%	77%
Prefer Not To Respond	9%	8%	6%

Figure 5: Identification as a sexual or gender minority.

Residency Status

For all three age groups, the proportion of residents to non-residents among survey respondents was representative of the population data.

Residency status was significantly different between the three age groups ($p < .001$); traditional-aged students were more likely to be non-residents than students aged 24-30 or students 31 and older (Figure 6).



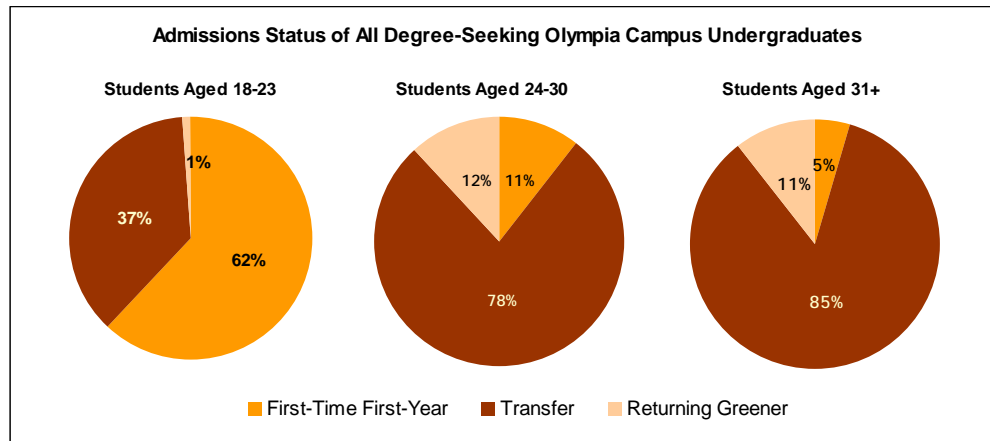
Residency	18-23		24-30		31+	
	Survey Respondents (n=203)	All Students (n=2127)	Survey Respondents (n=91)	All Students (n=799)	Survey Respondents (n=92)	All Students (n=506)
Resident	71%	68%	93%	91%	98%	98%
Non-Resident	29%	32%	7%	9%	2%	2%

Figure 6: Residency status of Olympia degree-seeking undergraduates and survey respondents

Admissions Status

The proportion of survey respondents who were first-time first-year students, transfer students, or returning Greeners was not significantly different than the proportion seen for all students. For the population data, there were significant differences between all three age groups ($p < .001$; Kruskal-Wallis; Figure 7).

The two older student groups were comprised of greater proportions of transfer students and Returning Greeners than the traditional-aged group.

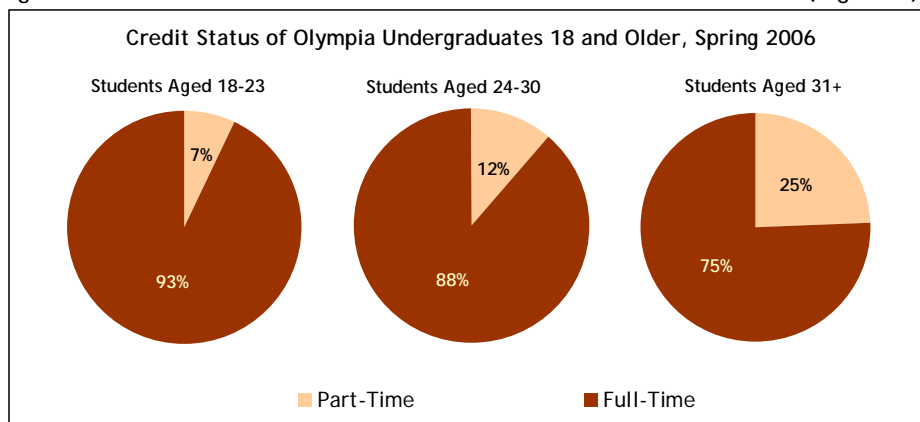


Residency	18-23		24-30		31+	
	Survey respondents (n=203)	All Students (n=2127)	Survey respondents (n=91)	All Students (n=799)	Survey respondents (n=92)	All Students (n=506)
First-Time First-Year	65%	62%	9%	11%	2%	5%
Transfer	34%	37%	79%	78%	88%	85%
Returning Greener	2%	1%	12%	12%	9%	11 %

Figure 7: Admissions Status of All Degree-Seeking Olympia Campus Undergraduates. Survey Respondent data are also included in the table to show representativeness.

Coursework Profile

The credit status was charted for traditional-aged students, students aged 24-30, and 31+ year-old students. The percentage of full-time students was highest for the traditional-aged students at 93%, lower for the students aged 24-30 at 88% and lowest for the 31 and older students at 75% (Figure 8).



Credit Status	18-23	24-30	31+
	(n=2127)	(n=799)	(n=506)
Part-Time	7%	12%	25%
Full-Time	93%	88%	75%

Figure 8: Percentage of Olympia undergraduates who were part-time (under 12 credits) or full-time students (12+ credits).

The average credit load also decreases with the two older age groups from 15.3 credits for traditional-aged students to 14.1 credits for students aged 24-30 and 12.4 for students aged 31+. This drop is statistically significant (Kruskal-Wallis test, $p < .001$; Figure 9).

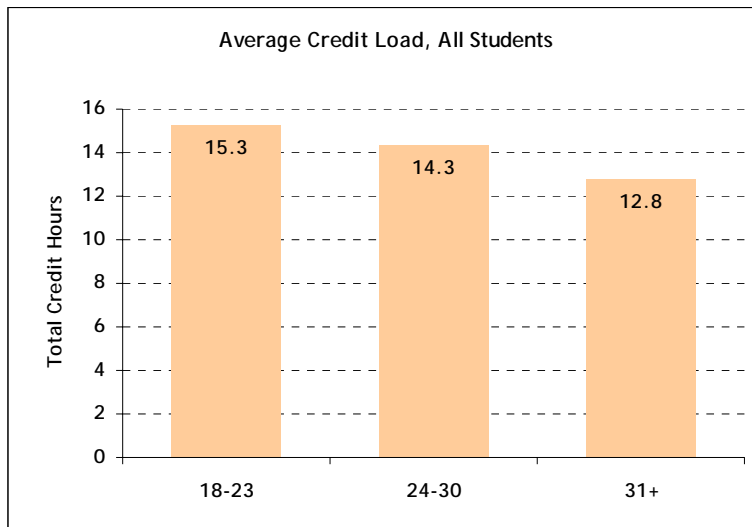


Figure 9: Average Credit Load for spring 2006 Olympia campus degree-seeking undergraduates.

Corresponding with the decrease in full-time status and credit load is a changing distribution of the types of classes taken by older students. Eighty-seven percent of traditional-aged students took a daytime full-time programs in 2005-06 compared to 68% of students aged 24-30 and 48% of 31+ year-old students. Evening and Weekend course participation showed a similar pattern, though the difference between groups was less dramatic. Evening and weekend part-time program and internship participation showed a progressive increase with age group (Figure 10, Table 1).

When looking at the combinations of classes that students take, the percentage of students taking exclusively daytime classes or both daytime and Evening and Weekend Studies classes decreases progressively from traditional-aged students to older students. Conversely, there is a dramatic increase in the number of students taking exclusively evening and weekend studies classes (Figure 11).

The percentage of students taking courses decreases with age group from 47% among traditional-aged students to 39% of students aged 24-30 and 32% of students aged 31+. At the same time the percentage of students taking exclusively courses increases by age group. 1% of traditional-aged students took courses exclusively whereas 3% of students aged 24-30 and 5% of students aged 31+ took courses exclusively. The difference between the percentage of students aged 18-23 and students aged 31+ taking different types of classes is statistically significant ($p = .048$; Figure 12).

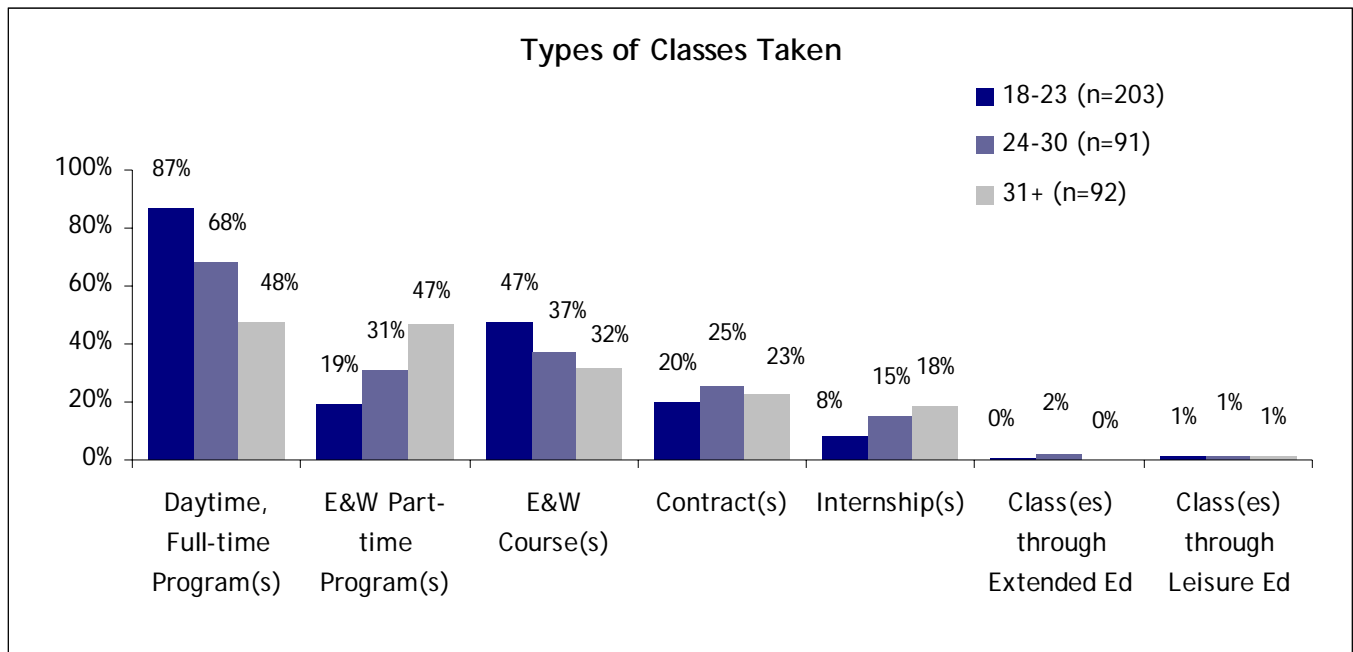


Figure 10: Types of classes taken by survey respondents aged 18-23, 24-30, and 31+. The groups are not mutually exclusive as students can attend more than one type of class.

This year, what kinds of classes did you take?	18-23 (n=203)	24-30 (n=91)	31+ (n=92)
Daytime, Full-time Program(s)	87%	68%	48%
E&W Part-time Program(s)	19%	31%	47%
E&W Course(s)	47%	37%	32%
Contract(s)	20%	25%	23%
Internship(s)	8%	15%	19%
Class(es) through Extended Ed	1%	2%	0%
Class(es) through Leisure Ed	2%	1%	1%

Table 1: Types of classes taken by survey respondents aged 18-23, 24-30, and 31+. The groups are not mutually exclusive as students can attend more than one type of class.

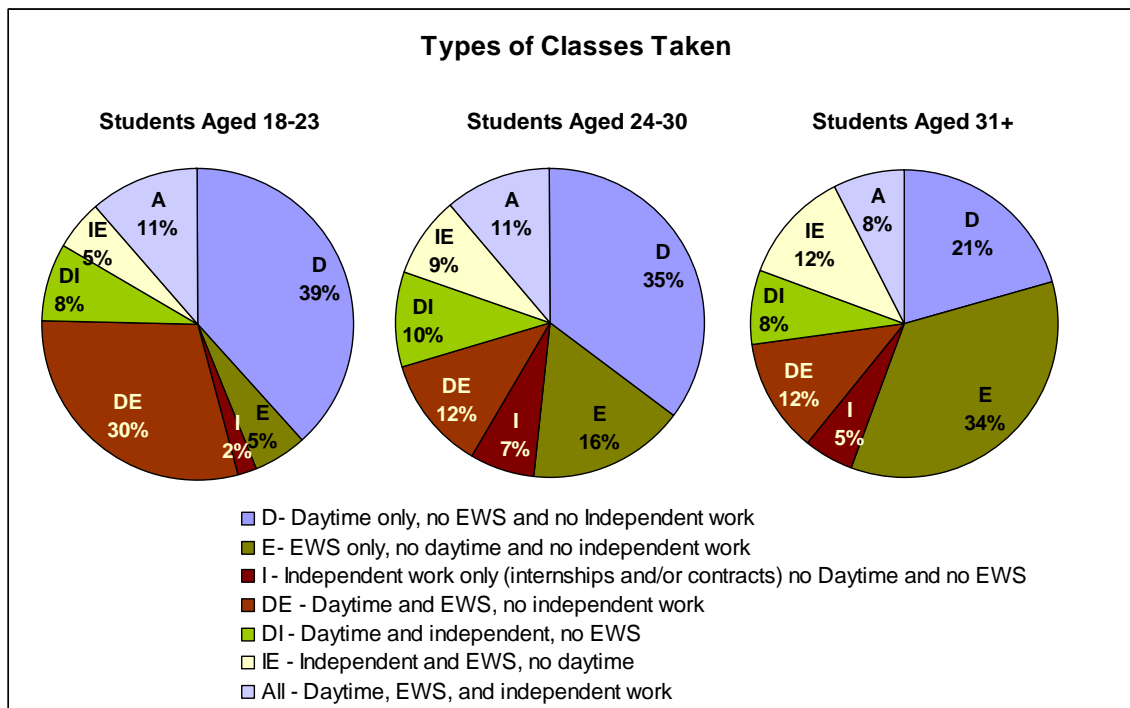


Figure 11: Combination of types of classes taken by students aged 18-23, 24-30, and 31+.

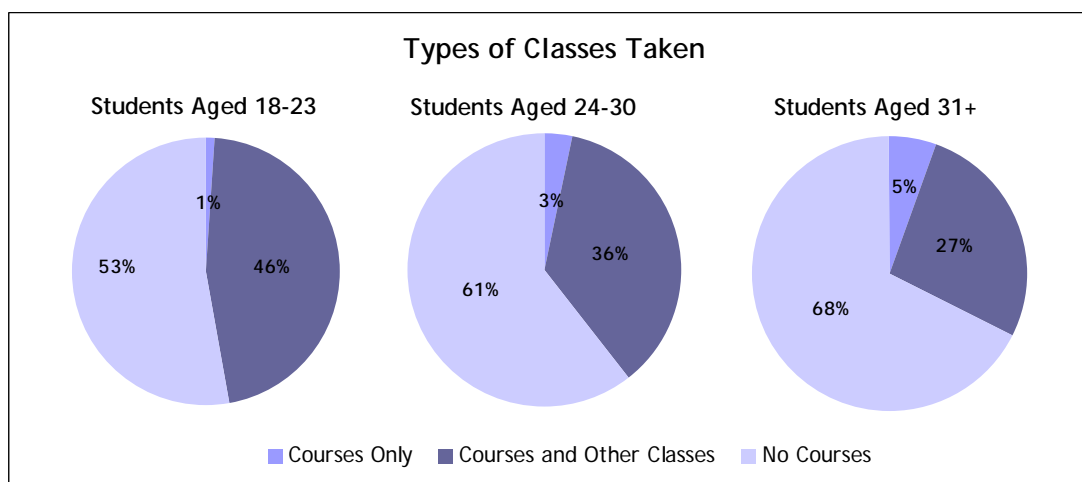
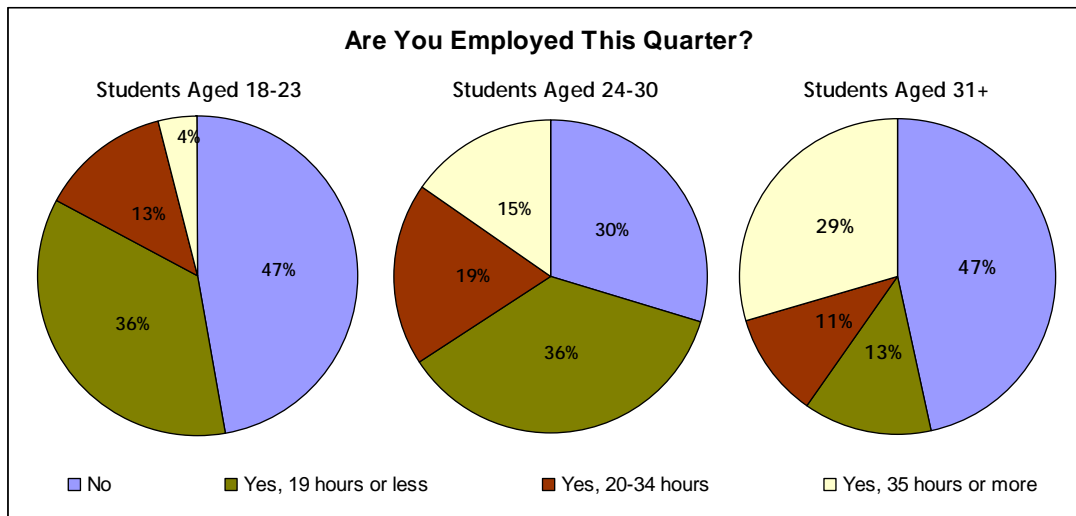


Figure 12: Percentage of students aged 18-23, 24-30, and 31+ taking courses only, courses and other classes, or no courses at all. The distribution of types of classes taken between students aged 18-23 and students aged 31+ is statistically significant ($p=.048$).

Student Employment

Interestingly, almost half (47%) of students aged 18-23 and 31+ were not employed while attending Evergreen. The lowest percentage of non-employed students was seen in students aged 24-30. At the same time, the proportion of students working full-time while attending Evergreen progressed with age, from 4% for traditional-aged students to 15% for students aged 24-30, and 29% for students aged 31+ (Figure 13).



	18-23 (n=203; 0 missing)	24-30 (n=91; 0 missing)	31+ (n=92; 0 missing)
Are you employed this quarter?			
No	47%	30%	47%
Yes, 19 hours or less	36%	36%	13%
Yes, 20-34 hours	13%	19%	11%
Yes, 35 hours or more	4%	15%	29%

Figure 13: Employment status of survey respondents.

Employment and Coursework

This then prompted the question whether there was any relationship between credit status and work status. To answer this question, part-time and full-time status were broken down further into part-time student, employed; part-time student, not employed; full-time student, employed; and full-time student, not-employed. When employment status and credit status were analyzed simultaneously, an interesting pattern emerged. With age there was a progressive increase in the proportion of part-time students who were not employed (from 2% for traditional-aged students to 10% for students aged 31+). Thirty-seven percent of students 31 and older were not employed and were attending Evergreen full-time in comparison to 45% of traditional-aged students and only 23% of students aged 24-30. Full-time students who were simultaneously employed are represented most heavily among traditional-aged students and students aged 24-30 (47% and 62%, respectively) while only 36% of students 31 and older are attending classes full-time and working. The proportion of part-time students who are employed increases by age group, from 6% for traditional-aged students to 17% of students aged 31+ (Figure 14).

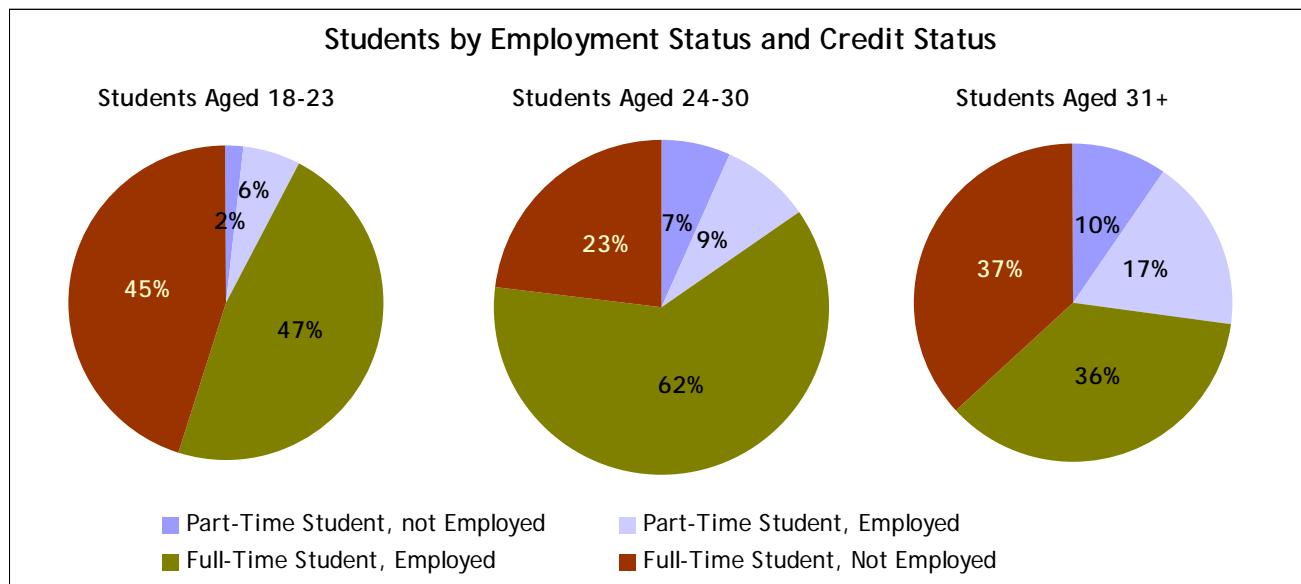


Figure 14: Students by Employment Status and Credit Status

Academic Workload

Students 31 and older rated their workload on average as heavier than traditional-aged students and students aged 24-30. The difference between traditional-aged students and students 31 and older was statistically significant ($p=.035$; Figure 15, Table 2).

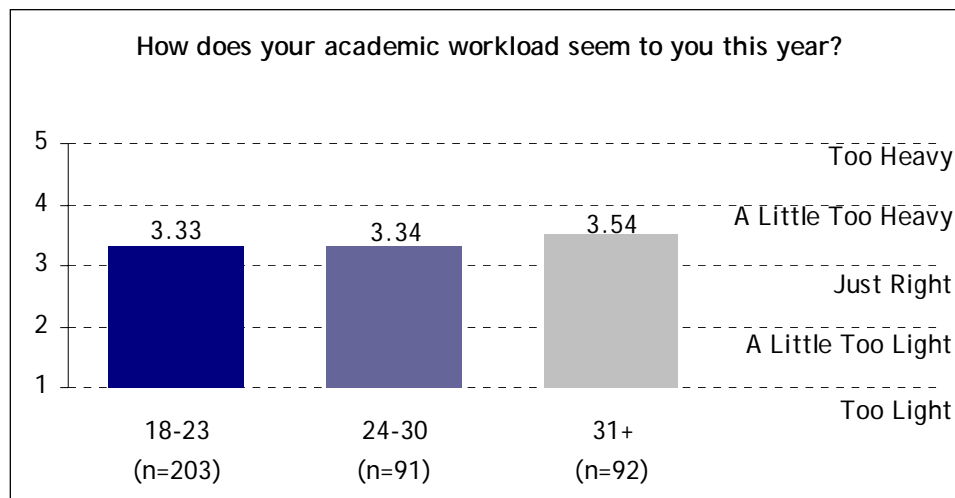


Figure 15: Student academic workload.

How does your academic workload seem to you this year? (1= Too Light, 2=A Little Too Light, 3=Just Right, 4=A Little Too Heavy, 5=Too Heavy)	18-23 (n=203, 0 missing)	24-30 (n=91, 0 missing)	31+ (n=91, 1 missing)
	3.33	3.34	3.54 ($p=.035$)

Table 2: Student academic workload. The bolded values indicate a statistically significant pair (significance level of .05)

Class Standing and Retention

Class standing and retention/completion rates were charted by age group. Rather than using the spring 2006 population data from which the Evergreen Student Experience Survey 2006 sample was derived, fall-to-fall data were used for retention analysis.²

Class standing and retention/graduation rates were charted by age group for all fall 2006 Olympia degree-seeking undergraduates. As expected, there is a larger proportion of juniors and seniors and a smaller proportion of freshmen and sophomores among the 24-30 and 31+ year-old students (Figure 16).

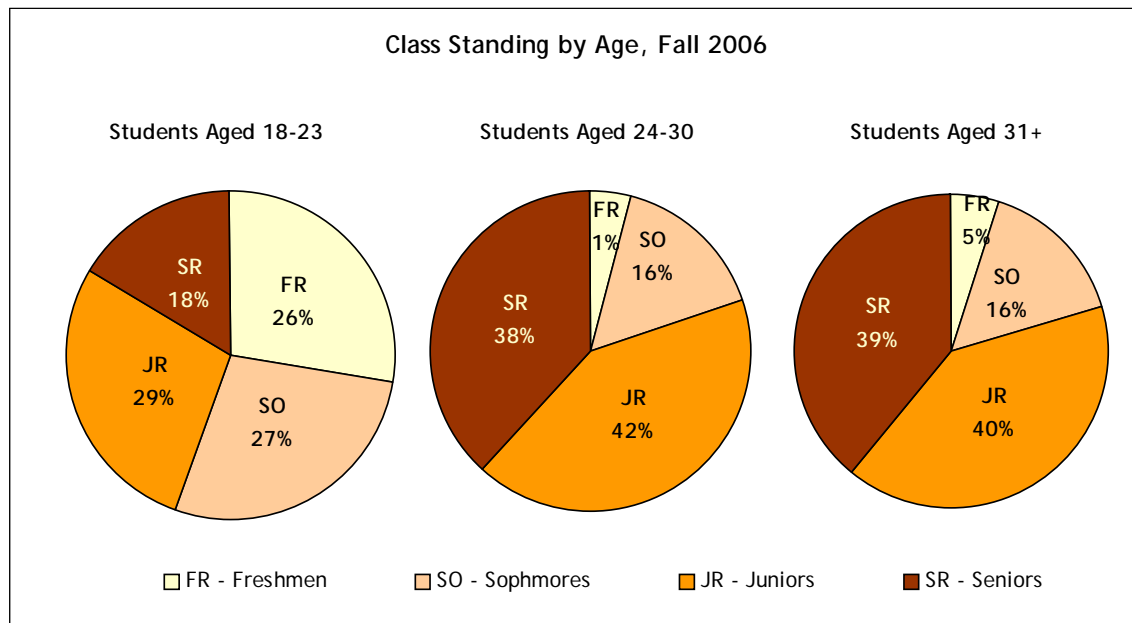


Figure 16: Fall 2006 student class standing by age

Because retention varies by class standing and the three age groups had very different proportions of upper level and lower level students, the data were charted by both age group and class standing. The fall 2006 to fall 2007 retention data when separated by class standing and age groups revealed several patterns. First, at 66% traditional-aged freshmen had the lowest retention rate of all groups of students; however traditional-aged students showed a progressive increase in retention rates with class advancement. Second, retention/completion rates for sophomores and juniors were similar between all three age groups. Third, senior retention/completion rates were the highest for traditional-aged students but were lower for older students. Most notable, when looking at adjusted retention regardless of class standing, all three groups showed remarkably similar retention rates (Figure 17, Figure 18). Because transfer students, females, and Washington residents (all of whom having higher retention rates than their complements) are so heavily represented among older students, it is intuitive that older students would have universally higher retention rates. With the exception of freshman retention rates, these findings run counter to what would be expected.

² 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007 fall-to-fall Olympia campus undergraduate retention data from the BANNER student database system were used for this portion of the study.

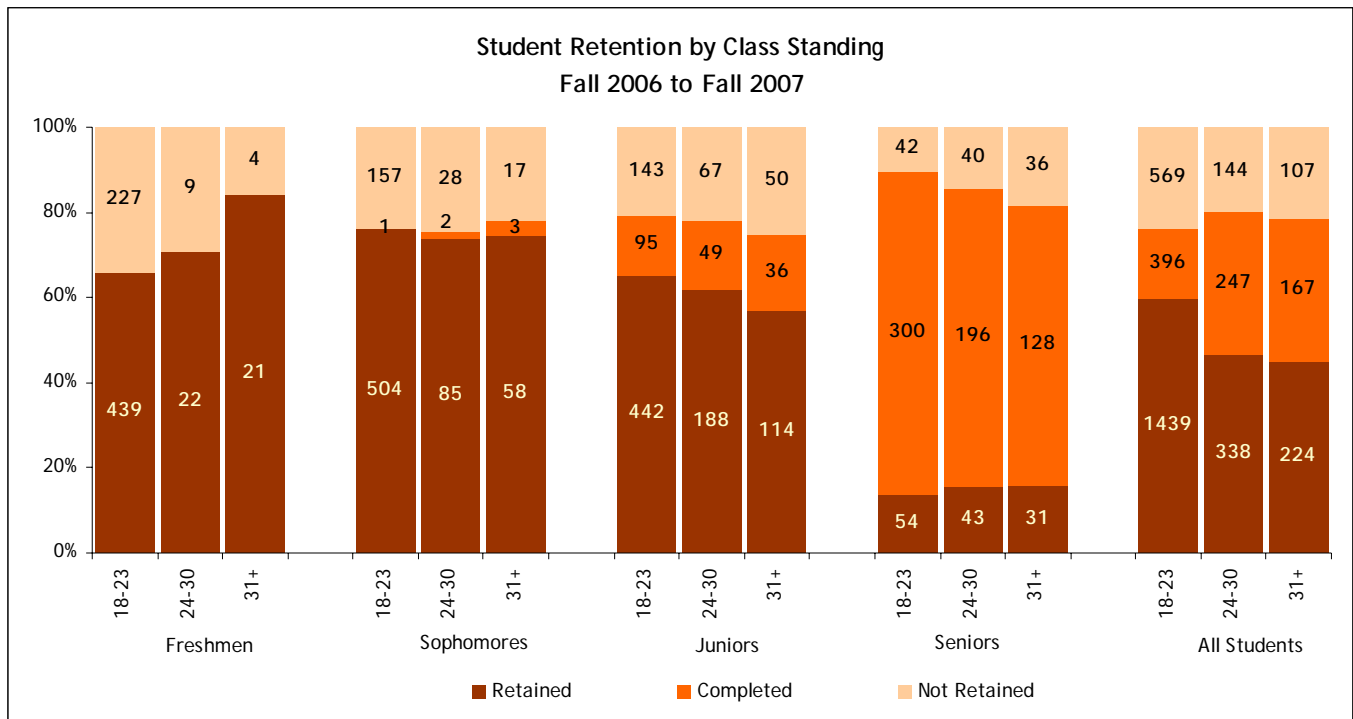


Figure 17: Student retention by class standing, fall 2006 to fall 2007. Student retention and completion are graphed as normalized stacked columns to illustrate the relative proportions.

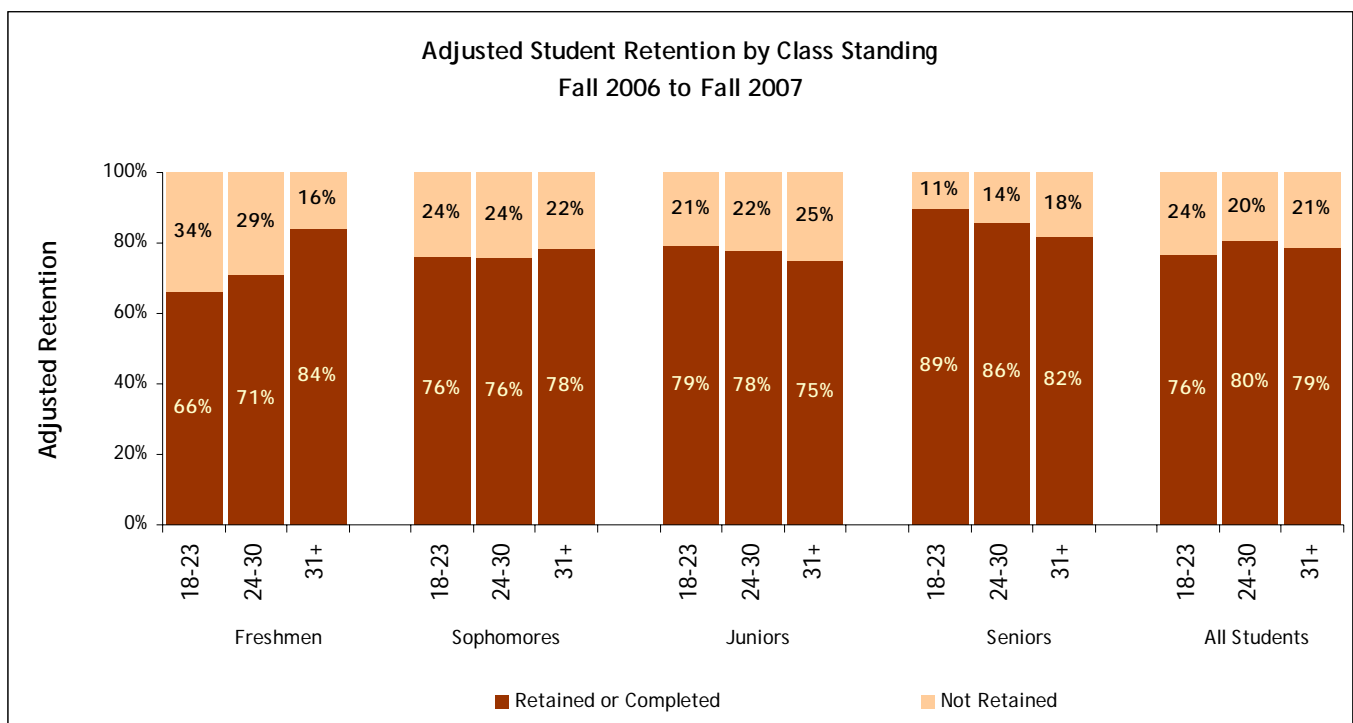


Figure 18: Adjusted Student Retention by Class Standing, Fall 2006 to Fall 2007. Student retention/completion is depicted as a percentage of the total to indicate the proportion of positive student outcomes.

One area of concern is the low representation of older freshmen in the fall 2006-fall 2007 student data. The two previous years were analyzed and showed very similar retention patterns (data not shown), therefore a three year aggregate of student retention — fall 2004-2005 to fall 2006-2007 — was analyzed by class standing and age group in the same manner as the fall 2006-fall 2007 data. With the larger numbers derived from aggregating the data, the patterns seen in the single year data persist. What is especially remarkable is that while adjusted retention is the lowest for traditional-aged freshmen, traditional-aged students' adjusted retention rates

increase with class standing to even higher adjusted retention rates than older students by their senior year. When retention rates are analyzed by age group regardless of class standing, the retention rates are almost identical between all three groups of students. In short, while traditional-aged students are less likely to be retained in their first year than older students, by the time they reach their senior year they show virtually identical cumulative adjusted retention as older students (Figure 19, Table 3).

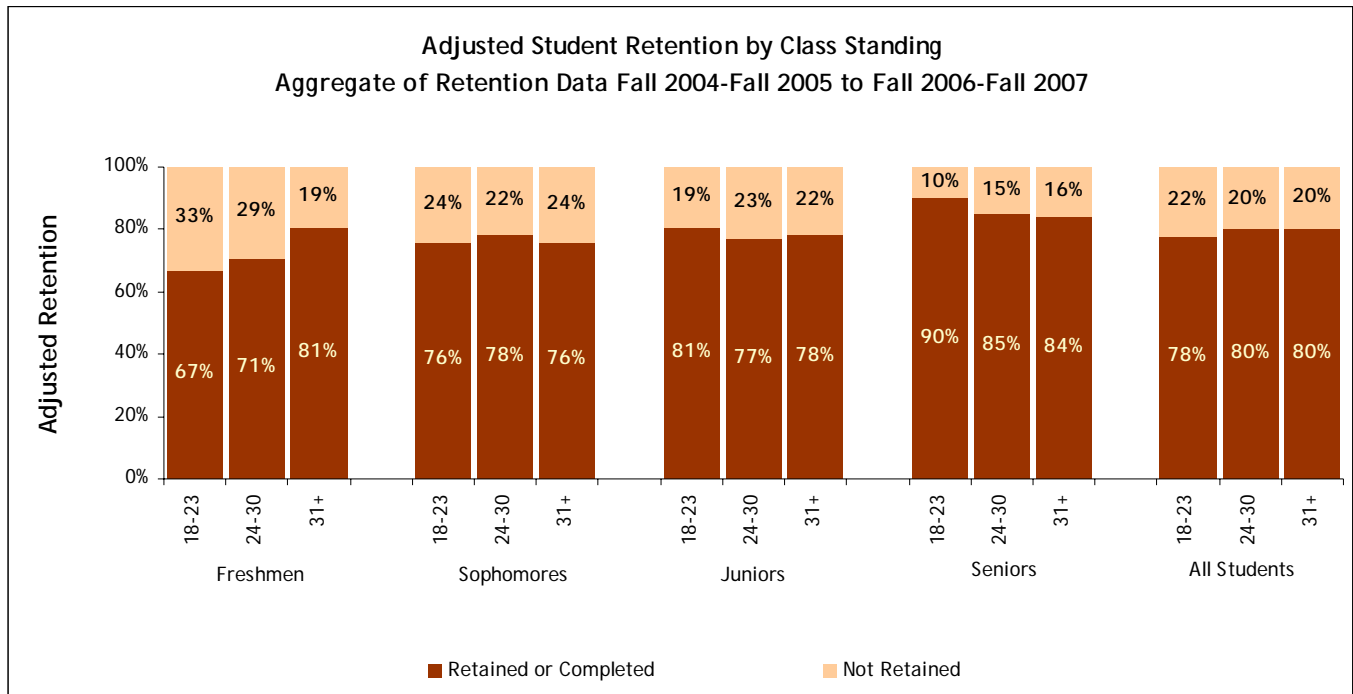


Figure 19: Student Adjusted Retention by Class Standing, Fall 2004 - Fall 2005 to Fall 2006 - Fall 2007. Student retention/completion is depicted as a percentage of the total to indicate the proportion of positive student outcomes.

Fall 2004-05 to Fall 2006-07 Aggregate Retention Data		Retained		Graduated		Not Retained		Total
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Freshman	18-23	1246	67%	NA	NA	614	33%	1860
	24-30	68	71%	NA	NA	28	29%	96
	31+	58	81%	NA	NA	14	19%	72
Sophomore	18-23	1431	76%	5	0%	456	24%	1892
	24-30	279	77%	5	1%	78	22%	362
	31+	172	74%	5	2%	56	24%	233
Junior	18-23	1288	63%	353	17%	388	19%	2029
	24-30	528	57%	188	20%	212	23%	928
	31+	388	59%	124	19%	143	22%	655
Senior	18-23	150	12%	1019	79%	128	10%	1297
	24-30	138	16%	606	69%	130	15%	874
	31+	83	15%	390	69%	89	16%	562
Post-Bacc. *	18-23	0	0%	0	0%	6	100%	6
	24-30	8	29%	4	14%	16	57%	28
	31+	12	32%	8	21%	18	47%	38
All Students*	18-23	4115	58%	1377	19%	1586	22%	7078
	24-30	1013	45%	799	35%	448	20%	2260
	31+	701	46%	519	34%	302	20%	1522

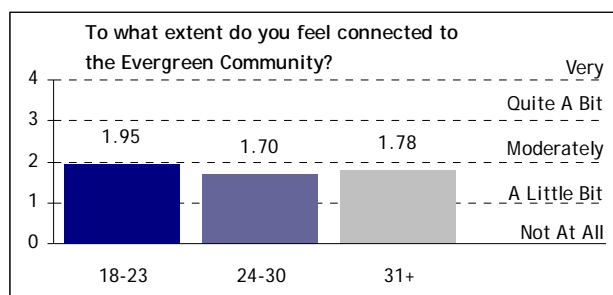
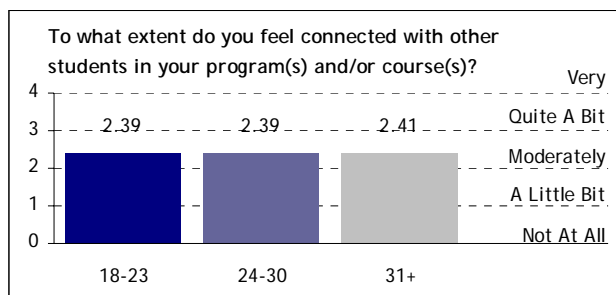
*Post-Baccalaureate students not included in retention analysis.

NA: not applicable

Table 3: Fall 2004-2005 to Fall 2006-2007 aggregate student retention data by class standing and age group. Olympia campus degree-seeking undergraduates 18 and older only, excluding post-baccalaureate students.

Connection to Other Students and the Evergreen Community

Two questions were asked on the Evergreen Student Experience Survey 2006 that were designed to explore the sense of connection to the Evergreen community and to other students (Figure 20). While there were no significant differences between any of the three groups for either of these questions, the extent to which respondents stated they felt connected to the Evergreen community was lower for both older groups of students.



Averages of student responses (0=Not At All, 1=A Little Bit, 2=Moderately, 3=Quite A Bit, 4=Very)	18-23 (n=203)		24-30 (n=91)		31+ (n=92)	
	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing
To what extent do you feel connected with other students in your program(s) and/or course(s)?	2.39	1	2.39	1	2.41	1
To what extent do you feel connected to the Evergreen Community?	1.95	3	1.70	1	1.78	1

Figure 20: Student connectedness to programs/courses and to the Evergreen community

Student Satisfaction

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with several aspects of their academic life, interactions with faculty, social life, experience with diversity, experience with technology-related resources, and experience with accessing information on campus. Using a four-point Likert scale, students ranked their satisfaction from one to four, one being "Very Dissatisfied" and four being "Very Satisfied." Student responses were averaged across the board as well as by the three age groups (18-23, 24-30, 31+); the means of individual responses from the three age groups were compared to each other using a Mann-Whitney U test (Figure 21, Table 4). Interestingly, for every question asked, students 31+ had a higher average response than either traditional-aged students or students aged 24-30.

Even though the focus of this study is the comparison of traditional-aged students and older students, potential differences between students aged 24-30 and 31+ year-old students were examined as well. The responses of students aged 24-30 were much more similar to the traditional-aged students' responses and in many cases were significantly different from the 31+ age group.

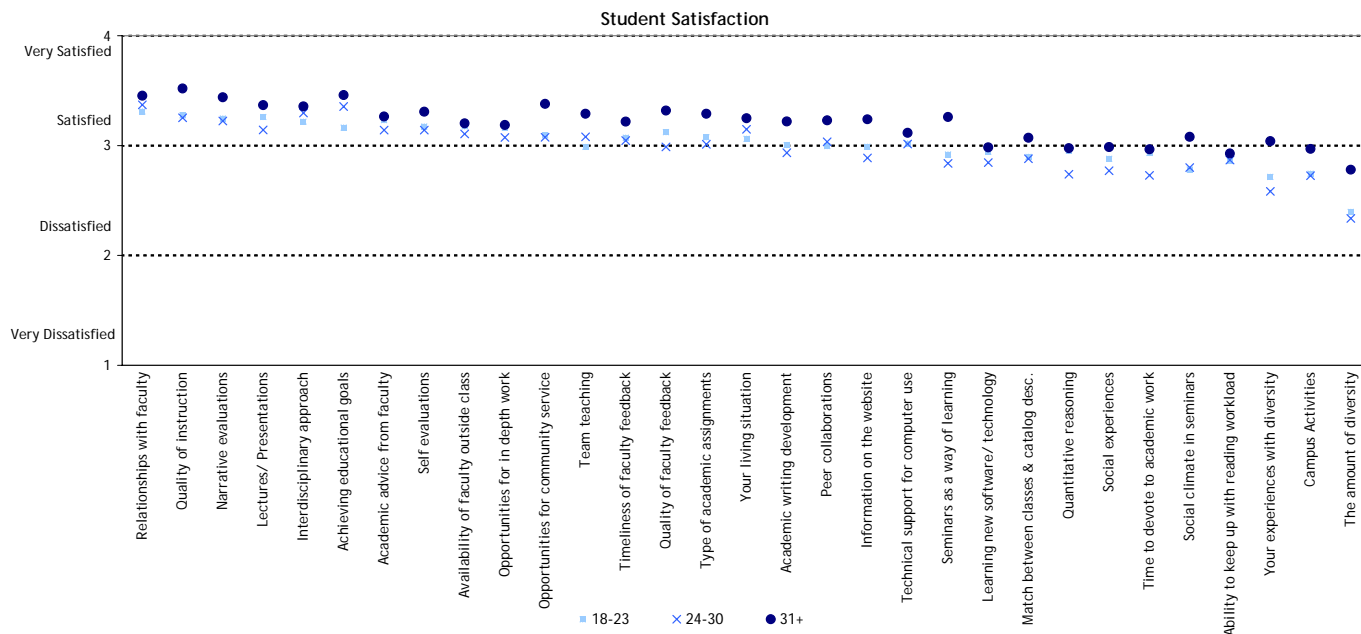


Figure 21: Student satisfaction by age group. The averages for students aged 18-23, 24-30 and 31+ are represented by a scatterplot with traditional-aged student means indicated by the light-shaded squares, 24-30 year-old student means indicated by the medium-shaded crosses, and 31+ year-old student means indicated by the dark-shaded circles. Significant differences and p-values are detailed in Table 4. It should be noted that while the categories are in the same order as in the corresponding table, the subject lines in the chart have been abbreviated for sake of space.

This year, how satisfied are you with...?

Averages of student responses (1=Very Dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3=Satisfied, 4=Very Satisfied)	18-23 (n=203)		24-30 (n=91)		31+ (n=92)		All Students (n=386)	
	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing
Relationships with faculty	3.31	7	3.37	2	3.45	4	3.37	13
The overall quality of instruction	3.28 (p=.003)	11	3.25* (p=.004)	4	3.52	5	3.34	20
Narrative evaluations by faculty	3.25 (p=.032)	12	3.22* (p=.012)	6	3.44	10	3.33	28
Lectures and other presentations by faculty	3.26	11	3.14* (p=.026)	7	3.37	8	3.28	26
Interdisciplinary approach to course content	3.22	11	3.30	7	3.36	8	3.28	26
Your own progress in achieving your educational goals	3.16 (p=.005)	8	3.36	1	3.46	3	3.26	12
Academic advice from faculty	3.23	14	3.14	6	3.26	5	3.21	25
Self evaluations	3.17	13	3.14	6	3.31	11	3.21	30
Availability of faculty outside of class	3.18	15	3.11	6	3.20	13	3.18	34
Opportunities for in depth academic work/research	3.17	16	3.07	10	3.19	12	3.14	38
Opportunities for community service or volunteer work	3.09 (p=.007)	54	3.08* (p=.031)	25	3.38	45	3.13	124
Team teaching by faculty	2.99 (p=.006)	29	3.08	16	3.29	22	3.12	67
The timeliness of faculty feedback on your work	3.07	10	3.05	5	3.22	5	3.11	20
The quality of faculty feedback on your work	3.08 (p=.014)	8	3.01* (p=.006)	5	3.29	5	3.10	18
Type of academic assignments	3.12 (p=.007)	8	2.99* (p=.001)	5	3.32	7	3.10	20
Your living situation (on or off campus)	3.06	9	3.15	3	3.25	12	3.06	24
Evergreen's support for your development as an academic writer	3.01 (p=.024)	20	2.94* (p=.027)	14	3.22	13	3.04	47
Group projects and other peer collaborations	2.99 (p=.008)	12	3.04	6	3.23	12	3.03	30
The availability of information on the college website	2.99 (p=.006)	9	2.89* (p=.003)	2	3.24	4	3.02	15
The availability of technical support for your use of computers on and off campus	3.02	46	3.01	22	3.12	23	3.01	91

* denotes a significant difference between the average responses for students aged 24-30 and 31 and older students.

Table 4 cont'd: Student Satisfaction. Questions are ordered in highest to lowest mean response. Responses to individual questions were averaged for all students or by age group. Where average responses were significantly different between traditional-aged students and either students aged 24-30 or 31+ year-old students, the significantly different pair was shaded and the greater value of the two was bolded with the p-value listed below. Even though the focus of this study is the comparison of traditional-aged students and older students, potential differences between students aged 24-30 and 31+ year-old students were examined as well. Overall, these students' responses were much more similar to the traditional-aged student responses and in many cases these showed significant differences to 31+ year-old students' average responses. Significant differences between these two groups are denoted with an asterisk alongside the average for students aged 24-30 and the p-value is listed below the average value.

This year, how satisfied are you with...? (cont'd)

Averages of student responses (1=Very Dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3=Satisfied, 4=Very Satisfied)	18-23 (n=203)		24-30 (n=91)		31+ (n=92)		All Students (n=386)	
	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing
Seminars (as a way of learning)	2.92 (p=.002)	16	2.84* (p=.001)	11	3.26	10	3.01	37
Opportunities for learning new software and working with technology	2.94	60	2.85	20	2.98	29	2.95	109
The match between the classes you are taking and their description in the catalog	2.90	8	2.88* (p=.044)	7	3.07	8	2.93	23
Evergreen's support for your development in quantitative reasoning (e.g. math, statistics)	2.95	72	2.74	45	2.98	47	2.92	164
Your social experiences at Evergreen	2.88	11	2.77	8	2.99	13	2.90	32
Amount of time that you are able to devote to your academic work	2.93	8	2.73	6	2.97	5	2.89	19
Social climate in seminars	2.78 (p=.003)	19	2.80* (p=.018)	11	3.08	9	2.89	39
Your own ability to keep up with the reading workload	2.86	10	2.87	7	2.93	8	2.83	25
Your experiences with diversity at Evergreen (ethnic/racial, political, socioeconomic, sexual orient., etc.)	2.71 (p=.004)	14	2.58* (p=.001)	7	3.04	8	2.81	29
Campus Activities	2.74 (p<.001)	34	2.73* (p=.048)	18	2.97	35	2.77	84
The amount of diversity at Evergreen	2.40 (p=.002)	11	2.34* (p=.002)	5	2.78	6	2.52	22

* denotes a significant difference between the average responses for students aged 24-30 and 31 and older students.

Table 4 cont'd: Student Satisfaction. Questions are ordered in highest to lowest mean response. Responses to individual questions were averaged for all students or by age group. Where average responses were significantly different between traditional-aged students and either students aged 24-30 or 31+ year-old students, the significantly different pair was shaded and the greater value of the two was bolded with the p-value listed below. Even though the focus of this study is the comparison of traditional-aged students and older students, potential differences between students aged 24-30 and 31+ year-old students were examined as well. Overall, these students' responses were much more similar to the traditional-aged student responses and in many cases these showed significant differences to 31+ year-old students' average responses. Significant differences between these two groups are denoted with an asterisk alongside the average for students aged 24-30 and the p-value is listed below the average value.

Three main themes emerge when examining these data:

- Students aged 31 and older were universally more satisfied in all areas surveyed than either students aged 24-30 or traditional-aged students.
- Students aged 31 and older were significantly more satisfied with seminars than either students aged 24-30 or traditional-aged students. "Satisfaction with seminars as a way of learning" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for traditional-aged students (p=.002) or students aged 24-30 (p=.001). "Satisfaction with the social climate in seminars" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for traditional-aged students (p=.003) or students aged 24-30 (p=.018).
- Students aged 31 and older were significantly more satisfied with their academic interactions with faculty than either students aged 24-30 or traditional-aged students. "Satisfaction with overall quality of instruction" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for traditional-aged students (p=.003) or students aged 24-30 (p=.004). "Satisfaction with narrative evaluations by faculty" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for traditional-aged students (p=.032) or students aged 24-30 (p=.012). "Type of academic assignments" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for students aged 18-23 (p=.007) or students aged 24-30 (p=.001). "Satisfaction with the quality of faculty feedback on your work" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for students aged 18-23 (p=.014) or students aged 24-30 (p=.006).

- Students aged 31+ were significantly more satisfied with the amount of diversity than either of the two younger groups of students ($p=.002$ for both groups) and more satisfied with their experiences with diversity (compared to 18-23-year-old students, $p=.004$; compared to 24-30-year-old students, $p=.001$).

To arrive at a general measure of overall student satisfaction, each respondent's ratings for the series of satisfaction questions were averaged. The composite scores for students aged 31+ were significantly higher than those for either traditional-aged students ($p<.001$) or students aged 24-30 ($p=.001$; Figure 22).

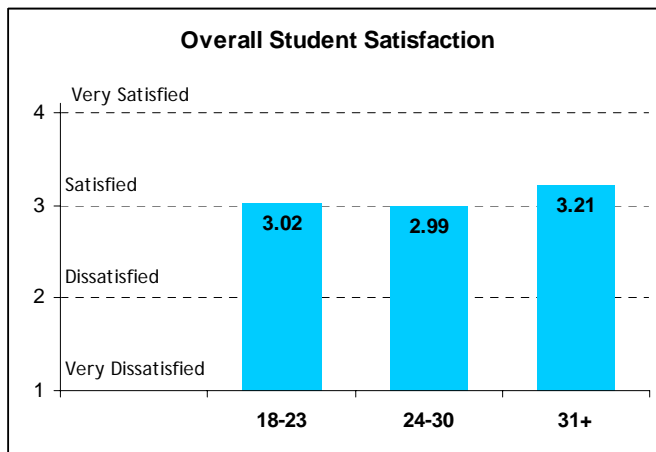


Figure 22: Composite satisfaction scores for survey respondents

An additional question regarding student satisfaction was asked separately: "This year, to what extent do you feel satisfied that you can study what you are interested in at Evergreen?" Students 31 and older on average responded more favorably than traditional-aged students ($p=.002$; Figure 23). In addition, the average response for 24-30 year-old students was compared to 31+ year-old students, and this difference was significant as well ($p=.020$).

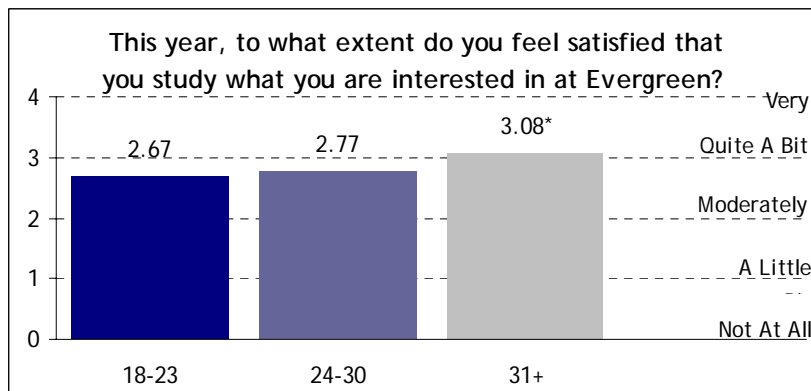


Figure 23: Extent to which students in different age groups are satisfied they can study what they are interested in at Evergreen.

Diversity

In addition to the satisfaction questions regarding diversity, two separate questions were asked specific to this area of campus life and learning. All three age groups on average rated diversity on campus as being "Quite A Bit" important to their learning. While the differences were not statistically significant, when asked how much respect they thought there was for different backgrounds, perspectives, and lifestyles on campus, students 31 and older rated this more highly than either 18-23 or 24-30 year-old respondents (Table 5).

Respondents 31 years and older were significantly more satisfied with the amount of diversity and personal experiences with diversity at Evergreen than either 18-23 or 24-30 year-old students.

(0=Not At All, 1=A Little Bit, 2=Somewhat, 3=Quite A Bit, 4=Very)	18-23 (n=203)		24-30 (n=91)		31+ (n=92)	
	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing
How important do you think diversity on campus is to your learning?	2.94	7	3.07	1	2.91	3
How much respect do you think there is for different backgrounds, perspectives, and lifestyles on campus?	2.55	8	2.52	1	2.75	3

This year, how satisfied are you with..? Averages of student responses (1=Very Dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3=Satisfied, 4=Very Satisfied)	18-23 (n=203)		24-30 (n=91)		31+ (n=92)	
	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing
Your experiences with diversity at Evergreen (ethnic/racial, political, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, etc.)	2.71 (p=.004)	14	2.58* (p=.001)	7	3.04	8
The amount of diversity at Evergreen	2.40 (p=.002)	11	2.34* (p=.002)	5	2.78	6

* denotes a significant difference between the average responses for students aged 24-30 and 31 and older students.

Table 5: Student perspectives on diversity by age group.

Student Confidence

Students were asked about their level of confidence in a variety of areas. Using a five-point Likert scale, students ranked their level of confidence from “Not At All” confident to “Very” confident. Student responses were averaged overall as well as by broad age groups (18-23, 24-30, 31+); the means of individual responses from the three age groups were compared to each other using a Mann-Whitney U test (Figure 24, Table 6).

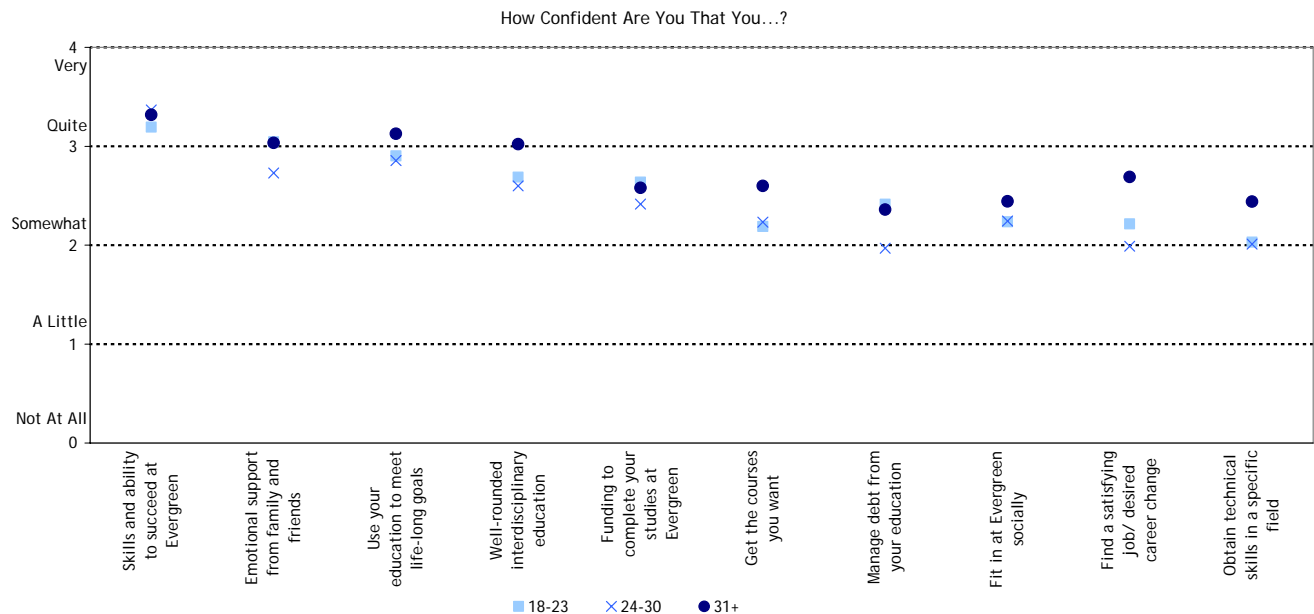


Figure 24: Student confidence by age group. The averages for students aged 18-23, 24-30 and 31+ are represented by the superimposed scatterplot with traditional-aged student means indicated by light-shaded squares, 24-30 year-old student means indicated by medium-shaded crosses, and 31+ year-old student means indicated by dark-shaded circles. Significant differences and p-values are detailed in Table 6. It should be noted that while the categories are in the same order as in the corresponding table, the subject lines in the chart have been abbreviated for sake of space.

How confident are you that you...? Averages of student responses (0=Not At All, 1=A Little, 2=Somewhat, 3=Quite, 4=Very)	18-23 (n=203)		24-30 (n=91)		31+ (n=92)		All Students (n=386)	
	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing
Have the skills and ability to succeed at Evergreen	3.19	7	3.37	1	3.32	4	3.26	12
You have the kind of emotional support from family and friends that you need	3.05 (p=.040)	7	2.73	1	3.03	4	2.97	12
You will be able to use your education to meet life-long goals	2.90	7	2.86	1	3.13	5	2.94	13
You will obtain a well-rounded interdisciplinary education	2.69 (p=.005)	7	2.60* (p=.005)	1	3.02	4	2.75	12
You have the funding to complete your studies at Evergreen	2.64	7	2.42	2	2.58	4	2.57	13
You can get the kinds of courses you want at Evergreen	2.19 (p=.003)	7	2.23* (p=.042)	1	2.60	4	2.30	12
You fit in at Evergreen socially	2.24	8	2.24	1	2.44	4	2.29	13
You will be able to manage any debt that you incur in completing your education at Evergreen	2.41 (p=.002)	7	1.97* (p=.027)	1	2.36	6	2.29	14
You will be able to find a satisfying job or make a desired career change after graduation	2.21 (p=.001)	7	1.99* (p<.001)	2	2.69	5	2.27	14
You will obtain technical skills in a specific field	2.03 (p=.005)	7	2.01* (p=.025)	2	2.44	6	2.12	15

* denotes a significant difference between the average responses for students aged 24-30 and 31 and older students.

Table 6: Student Confidence by Age Group: Questions are ordered in highest to lowest mean response. Responses to individual questions were averaged for all students and by age group. Where average responses were significantly different

between traditional-aged students and either students aged 24-30 or 31+ year-old students, the significantly different pair was shaded and the greater value of the two was bolded with the p-value listed below. Even though the focus of this study is the comparison of traditional-aged students and older students, potential differences between students aged 24-30 and 31+ year-old students were examined as well. Overall, these students' responses were much more similar to the traditional-aged student responses and in many cases these showed significant differences to 31+ year-old students' average responses. Significant differences between these two groups are denoted with an asterisk alongside the average for students aged 24-30 and the p-value is listed below the average value.

Analysis of student confidence by age group revealed three interesting patterns:

- Students aged 31+ were significantly more confident with their preparation to enter the workforce than either traditional-aged students or students aged 24-30. "Confidence that you will be able to find a satisfying job or make a desired career change after graduation" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for traditional-aged students ($p=.001$) or for students aged 24-30 ($p<.001$). "Confidence that you will obtain technical skills in a specific field" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for traditional-aged students ($p=.005$) or for students aged 24-30 ($p=.025$).
- Students aged 31+ were significantly more confident than traditional-aged students or students aged 24-30 that they would receive a well-rounded education ($p=.005$ for both comparisons) and get the kinds of courses they wanted to take ($p=.003$ for traditional-aged students, $p=.042$ for students aged 24-30).
- Most interestingly, students aged 24-30 were much less confident in regards to personal support structures needed to complete their Evergreen education. "Confidence that you will be able to manage any debt that you incur in completing your education at Evergreen" was significantly lower for students aged 24-30 than traditional-aged students (an average of 1.97 versus 2.41; $p=.002$) or for students aged 31+ (an average of 1.97 versus 2.36; $p=.027$). "Confidence that you will have the kind of emotional support from family and friends that you will need" was significantly lower for students aged 24-30 than traditional-aged students (an average of 2.73 versus 3.05; $p=.040$), and though not statistically significant, lower than students aged 31+ (an average of 2.73 compared to 3.03)

To arrive at a general measure of overall student confidence, each respondent's ratings for the series of questions regarding confidence were averaged. The composite scores for students aged 31+ were significantly higher than those of either traditional-aged students ($p=.032$) or students aged 24-30 ($p=.010$; Figure 25).

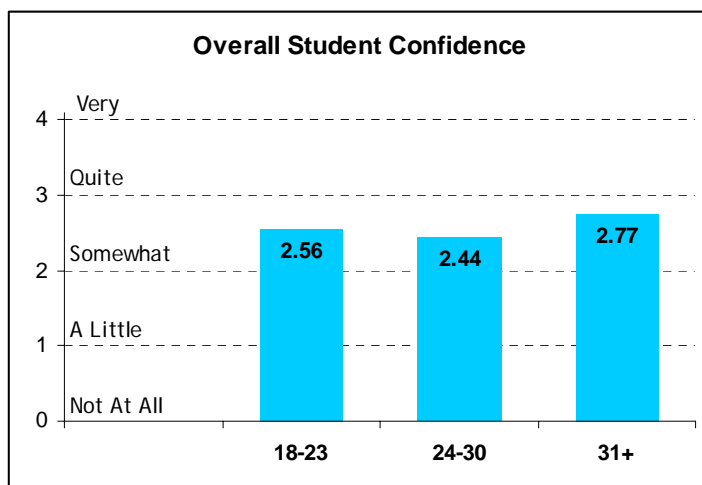


Figure 25: Composite confidence scores for survey respondents

Academic and Personal Growth

Students were asked a series of questions regarding Evergreen's contribution to their growth in several areas, including academic growth, social growth, and career preparedness. Using a five-point Likert scale, students ranked Evergreen's contribution to their level of growth from "Not At All" to "A Lot". Student responses were averaged overall as well as by broad age groups (18-23, 24-30, 31+). The means of individual responses from the three age groups were compared to each other using a Mann-Whitney U test (Figure 26, Table 7).

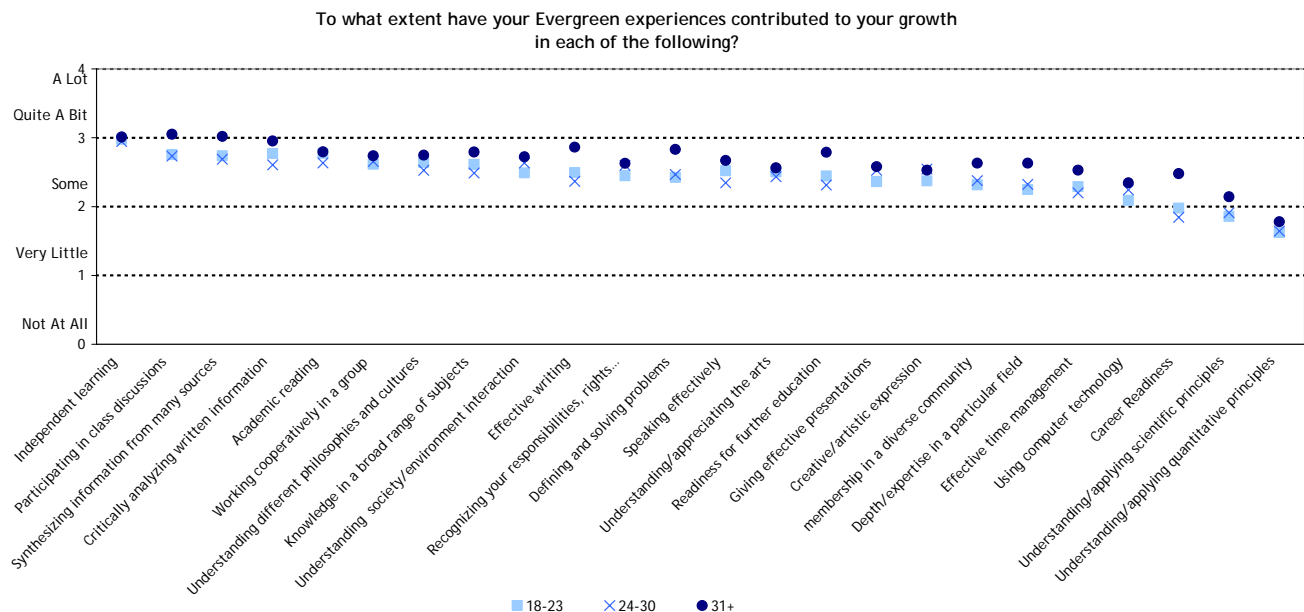


Figure 26: Growth by age group. The averages for students aged 18-23, 24-30 and 31+ are represented by scatterplot with traditional-aged student means indicated by light-shaded squares, 24-30 year-old student means indicated by medium-shaded crosses, and 31+ year-old student means indicated by the dark-shaded circles. Significant differences and p-values are detailed in Table 7. It should be noted that while the categories are in the same order as in the corresponding table, the subject lines in the chart have been abbreviated for sake of space.

All three age groups have the same highest ranked areas of reported personal and academic growth: "Learning independently", "Participating in class discussions", and "Synthesizing information and ideas from many sources". With the exception of "Growth in expressing yourself in creative or artistic ways," students 31 and older indicated that their Evergreen experiences contributed more to their growth in all non-computer-related areas surveyed than either students aged 24-30 or traditional-aged students.

Growth in areas that specifically represent preparation for future endeavors was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for traditional-aged students or students aged 24-30. "Growth in readiness for further education" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for students aged 18-23 ($p=.014$) or students aged 24-30 ($p=.002$). Interestingly, students aged 24-30 had the lowest average score (2.31), compared to traditional-aged students (2.44) or students aged 31+ (2.79). "Growth in readiness for a career" was significantly higher for students aged 31+ than for students aged 18-23 or students aged 31+ ($p<.001$ for both groups). Once again, students aged 24-30 had the lowest average score of the three (1.84, compared to 1.98 for traditional-aged students and 2.48 for students aged 31+).

Other areas that showed significant differences between students aged 31+ and both of the younger groups of students were:

- "Synthesizing information and ideas from many sources" (3.02 for students aged 31+ compared to 2.74 for traditional-aged students - $p=.009$; compared to 2.69 for students aged 24-30 - $p=.007$).
- "Growth in writing effectively" (2.86 for students aged 31+ compared to 2.49 for traditional-aged students - $p=.002$; compared to 2.37 for students aged 24-30 - $p=.001$).
- "Growth in defining and solving problems" (2.83 for students aged 31+ compared to 2.42 for traditional-aged students - $p=.001$; compared to 2.47 for students aged 24-30 - $p=.015$).

Lastly, students aged 31+ reported significantly higher growth than traditional-aged students in "Functioning as a responsible member of a diverse community" ($p=.033$).

To what extent has your experience at Evergreen contributed to your academic and personal growth in each of the following...?

Averages of student responses (0=Not At All, 1= Very Little, 2=Some, 3=Quite A Bit, 4=A Lot)	18-23 (n=203)		24-30 (n=91)		31+ (n=92)		All Students (n=386)	
	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing	mean	n Missing
Learning independently	2.98	13	2.94	1	3.01	6	2.98	20
Participating in class discussions	2.76 (p=.022)	14	2.73* (p=.041)	1	3.05	4	2.82	19
Synthesizing information and ideas from many sources	2.74 (p=.009)	15	2.69* (p=.007)	1	3.02	4	2.80	20
Critically analyzing written information	2.77	14	2.61* (p=.034)	2	2.95	4	2.78	20
Reading for academic purposes	2.77	13	2.63	1	2.80	4	2.74	18
Working cooperatively in a group	2.62	13	2.66	1	2.74	4	2.65	18
Understanding different philosophies and cultures	2.64	13	2.53	2	2.75	5	2.64	20
Knowledge in a broad range of subjects	2.61	14	2.49* (p=.025)	3	2.79	5	2.63	22
Understanding the interaction of society and the environment	2.49	13	2.63	1	2.72	5	2.58	19
Writing effectively	2.49 (p=.002)	13	2.37* (p=.001)	1	2.86	4	2.55	18
Defining and solving problems	2.42 (p=.001)	14	2.47* (p=.015)	1	2.83	4	2.53	19
Recognizing your responsibilities, rights, and privileges as a citizen	2.45	13	2.60	1	2.63	6	2.53	20
Speaking effectively	2.52	13	2.34* (p=.018)	1	2.67	4	2.51	18
Understanding and appreciating the arts	2.50	14	2.43	1	2.56	5	2.50	20
Readiness for further education (graduate, professional, or doctoral)	2.44 (p=.014)	14	2.31* (p=.002)	1	2.79	7	2.49	22
Giving effective presentations	2.36	14	2.53	2	2.58	4	2.46	20
Expressing yourself in creative or artistic ways	2.37	13	2.54	1	2.53	5	2.45	19
Functioning as a responsible member of a diverse community	2.32 (p=.033)	14	2.38	1	2.63	4	2.41	19
Depth or expertise in a particular field	2.25 (p=.007)	14	2.32	1	2.63	5	2.36	20
Managing your time effectively	2.29 (p=.043)	13	2.20* (p=.020)	1	2.53	4	2.33	18
Using computer technology to present work, find information, or solve problems	2.09	14	2.24	1	2.34	5	2.19	20
Readiness for a career	1.98 (p<.001)	13	1.84* (p<.001)	1	2.48	5	2.07	19
Understanding and applying scientific principles and methods	1.86	14	1.91	2	2.14	8	1.94	24
Understanding and applying quant. principles and methods	1.62	15	1.64	1	1.78	10	1.66	26

* denotes a significant difference between the average responses for students aged 24-30 and 31 and older students.

Table 7: Growth by Age Group: Questions are ordered in highest to lowest mean response. Responses to individual questions were averaged across the board and by age group. Where average responses were significantly different between traditional-aged students and either students aged 24-30 or 31+ year-old students, the significantly different pair was shaded and the greater value of the two was bolded with the p-value listed below. Even though the focus of this study is the comparison of traditional-aged students and older students, potential differences between students aged 24-30 and 31+ year-old students were examined as well. Overall, these students' responses were much more similar to the traditional-aged student responses and in many cases these showed significant differences to 31+ year-old students' average responses. Significant differences between these two groups are denoted with an asterisk alongside the average for students aged 24-30 and the p-value is listed below the average value.

To generate a general measure for student growth, each respondent's ratings for the series of questions regarding Evergreen's overall contribution to growth were averaged. The composite scores of students aged 31+ were significantly higher than those of either traditional-aged students ($p=.007$) or students aged 24-30 ($p=.013$; Figure 27).

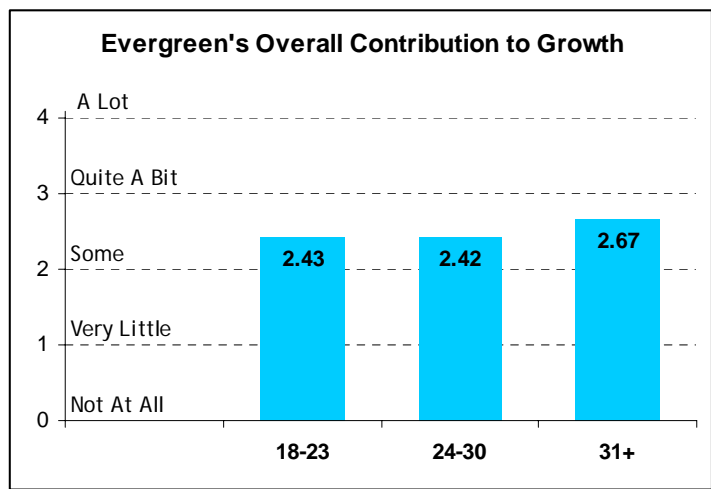


Figure 27: Composite growth scores for survey respondents.

Growth in Computer-Related Areas

Students were asked a series of questions regarding Evergreen's contribution to their growth in computer-related areas. Using a five-point Likert scale, students ranked Evergreen's contribution to their level of growth from zero to four, zero being "Not At All" and four being "A Lot." Student responses were averaged overall as well as by broad age groups (18-23, 24-30, 31+). The means of individual responses from the three age groups were compared to each other using a Mann-Whitney U test (Figure 28, Table 8).

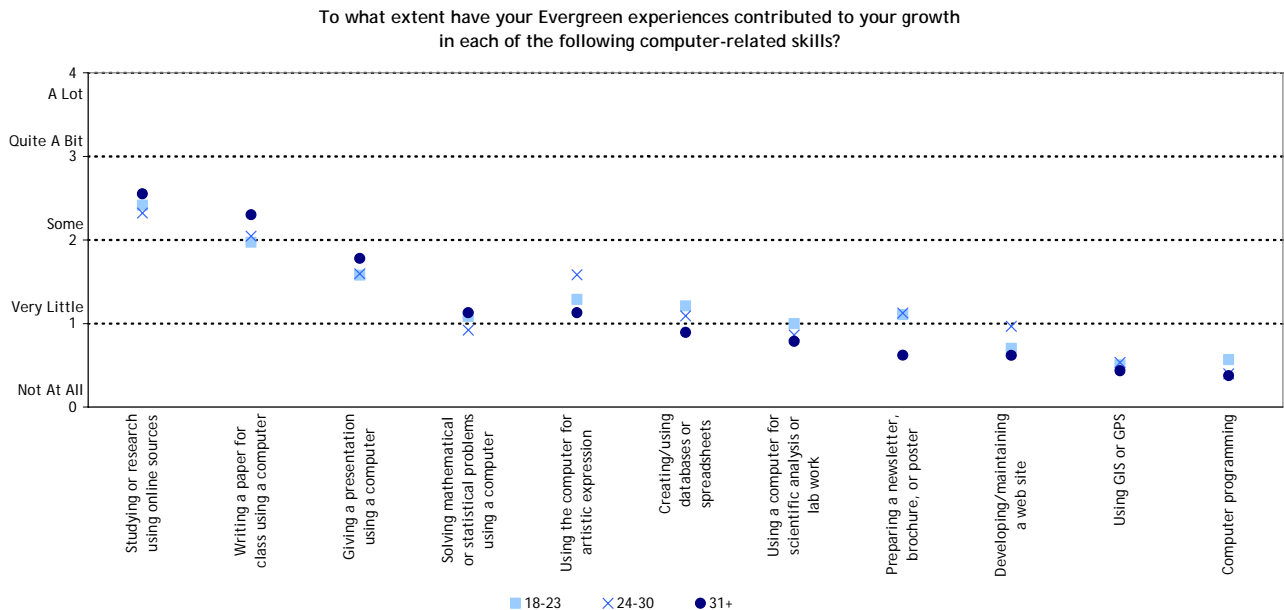


Figure 28: Growth in computer-related skills by age group. The averages for students aged 18-23, 24-30 and 31+ are represented by scatterplot with traditional-aged student means indicated by light-shaded squares, 24-30 year-old student means indicated by medium-shaded crosses, and 31+ year-old student means indicated by the dark-shaded circles. Significant differences and p-values are detailed in Table 7. It should be noted that while the categories are in the same order as in the corresponding table, the subject lines in the chart have been abbreviated for sake of space.

To what extent has your experience at Evergreen contributed to your progress in each of the following computer-related skills...?

Averages of student responses (0=Not At All, 1= Very Little, 2=Some, 3=Quite A Bit, 4=A Lot)	18-23 (n=203)		24-30 (n=91)		31+ (n=92)		All Students (n=386)	
	mean	n missing	mean	n missing	mean	n missing	mean	n missing
Studying or doing research via the Internet or other on-line sources	2.42	13	2.32	1	2.55	5	2.43	19
Writing a paper for class using a computer	1.97	13	2.04	1	2.30	6	2.07	20
Giving a presentation using a computer (e.g. using Word)	1.58	13	1.60	2	1.78	6	1.63	21
Solving mathematical or statistical problems using a computer	1.08	13	0.92	3	1.13	7	1.06	23
Using the computer for artistic expression (i.e. music, other audio, still images, animation, video, etc.)	1.29	13	1.58* (p=.015)	2	1.13	7	1.32	22
Creating/using databases or spreadsheets	1.21	14	1.09	3	0.89	7	1.11	24
Preparing a newsletter, brochure, or poster	1.11 (p=.003)	14	1.13* (p=.016)	3	0.62	7	1.00	24
Using a computer for scientific analysis or lab work	1.00	15	0.86	3	0.79	7	0.92	25
Developing/maintaining a web site	0.70	14	0.97* (p=.039)	2	0.62	8	0.75	27
Using GIS or GPS	0.51	13	0.53	3	0.44	7	0.50	23
Computer programming	0.57	13	0.40	3	0.38	7	0.48	23

* denotes a significant difference between the average responses for students aged 24-30 and 31 and older students.

Table 8: Growth in computer-related skills by Age Group: Questions are ordered in highest to lowest mean response. Responses to individual questions were averaged across the board and by age group. Where average responses were significantly different between traditional-aged students and either students aged 24-30 or 31+ year-old students, the significantly different pair was shaded and the greater value of the two was bolded with the p-value listed below. Even though the focus of this study is the comparison of traditional-aged students and older students, potential differences between students aged 24-30 and 31+ year-old students were examined as well. Overall, these students' responses were much more similar to the traditional-aged student responses and in many cases these showed significant differences to 31+ year-old students' average responses. Significant differences between these two groups are denoted with an asterisk alongside the average for students aged 24-30 and the p-value is listed below the average value.

To generate a general measure for student growth in computer-related areas, each respondent's ratings for the series of questions regarding Evergreen's overall contribution to computer-related growth were averaged. While not statistically significant, students 31 and older indicated that Evergreen contributed slightly less to their growth in the surveyed computer-related areas than either students aged 24-30 or traditional-aged students (Figure 29).

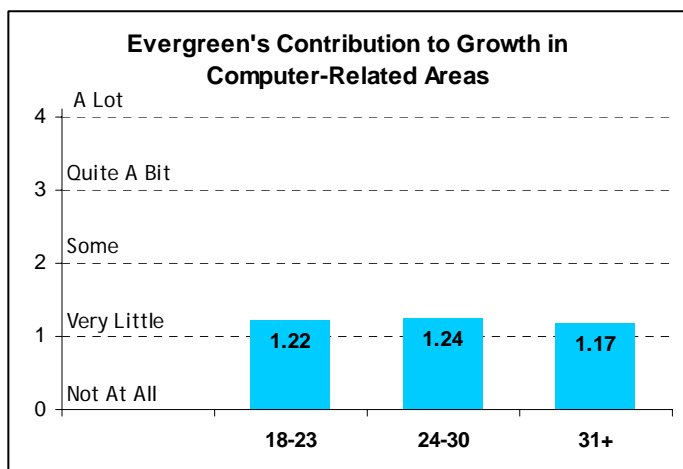


Figure 29: Composite computer-related growth scores for survey respondents.

Goals for Earning a College Education

Students were asked to rank the level of importance of a series of goals for their earning a college education. Using a four-point Likert scale, students ranked a list of goals from zero to three, zero being “Not Important” and three being “Very Important”. Student responses were averaged overall as well as by broad age groups (18-23, 24-30, 31+). The means of individual responses from the three age groups were compared to each other using a Mann-Whitney U test (Figure 30, Table 9).

The goals for which older students had the most significant differences in comparison to traditional-aged students and students aged 24-30 pertained to employment: “Having a professional career” had an average score of 2.31 for students aged 31+ and was significantly higher than the average score for students aged 24-30 (average of 1.89, $p=.001$) or 18-23 year-old students’ average score (average of 1.83, $p=.001$). “Making more money” had an average score of 2.01 for students aged 31+ and was significantly higher than the average score for students aged 24-30 (average of 1.70, $p=.009$) or the traditional-aged students’ average score (average of 1.52, $p<.001$). “Having expertise in a particular field” had an average score of 2.57 for students aged 31+ and was significantly higher than the average score for students aged 24-30 (average of 2.31, $p=.026$) or the traditional-aged students’ average score (average of 2.30, $p=.005$).

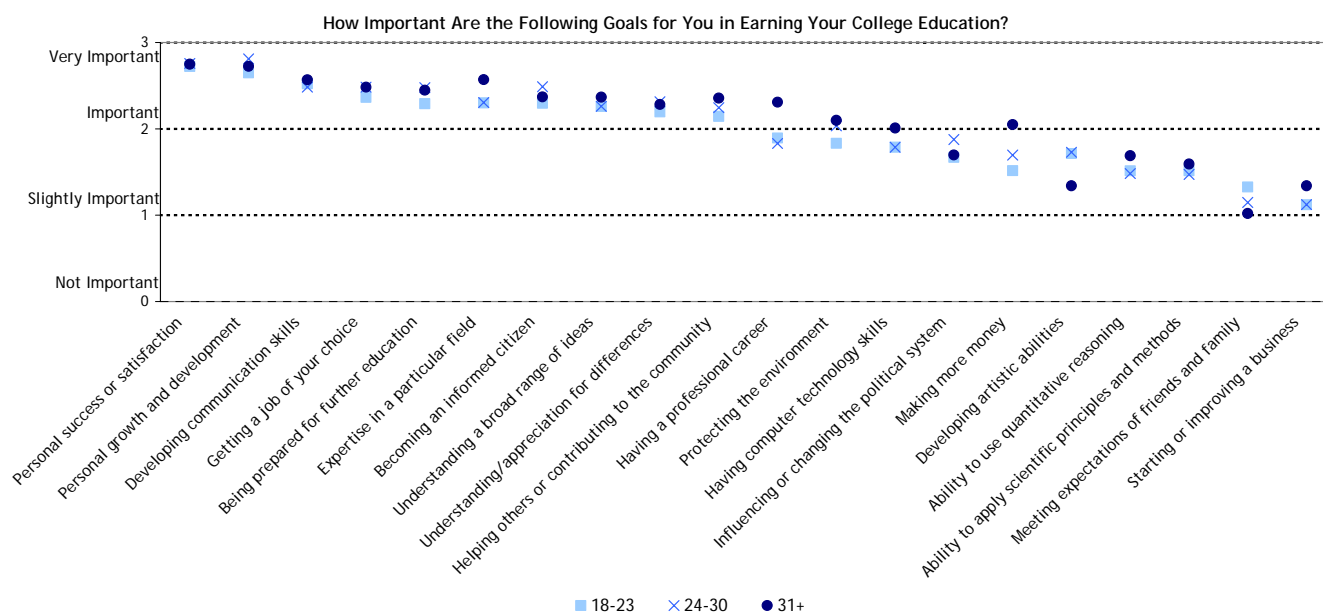


Figure 30: Importance of specific goals in earning a college education. The averages for students aged 18-23, 24-30, and 31+ are represented by scatterplot with traditional-aged student means indicated by light-shaded squares, 24-30 year-old student means indicated by medium-shaded crosses, and 31+ year-old student means indicated by the dark-shaded circles. Significant differences and p-values are detailed in Table 9. It should be noted that while the categories are in the same order as in the corresponding table, the subject lines in the chart have been abbreviated for sake of space.

How important are the following goals for you in earning a college education?

Averages of student responses (0=Not Important, 1= Slightly Important, 2=Important, 3=Very Important)	18-23 (n=203)		24-30 (n=91)		31+ (n=92)		All Students (n=386)	
	mean	n missing	mean	n missing	mean	n missing	mean	n missing
Achieving personal success or satisfaction	2.72	15	2.76	4	2.75	4	2.74	23
Personal growth and development	2.65	15	2.81 (p=.024)	2	2.72	5	2.71	22
Developing creative and effective communication skills	2.52	14	2.48	2	2.57	4	2.52	20
Getting a job of your choice or making a career change	2.37	14	2.48	2	2.48	3	2.42	19
Having expertise in a particular field	2.30 (p=.005)	14	2.31* (p=.026)	3	2.57	6	2.37	23
Being prepared for further education	2.29	15	2.48	3	2.45	5	2.37	23
Becoming an informed citizen	2.30	15	2.49	3	2.37	3	2.36	21
Gaining an understanding of a broad range of ideas and fields of study	2.26	14	2.26	3	2.37	5	2.29	22
Having a better understanding and appreciation for differences (ethnic, political, etc.)	2.20	15	2.31	2	2.28	4	2.25	21
Helping others or contributing to the community	2.14	16	2.25	2	2.36	5	2.22	23
Having a professional career	1.89 (p=.001)	14	1.83* (p=.001)	3	2.31	4	1.98	21
Improving and protecting the environment	1.83 (p=.048)	17	2.03	2	2.10	4	1.95	23
Having computer technology skills	1.79 (p=.042)	15	1.79	2	2.01	5	1.84	22
Influencing or changing the political system	1.67	15	1.88	2	1.70	6	1.73	23
Making more money	1.52 (p<.001)	15	1.70* (p=.009)	3	2.05	4	1.69	22
Developing artistic abilities using one or more media	1.71 (p=.007)	14	1.73* (p=.025)	2	1.34	7	1.63	23
Having the ability to use quantitative reasoning	1.51	14	1.48	2	1.69	5	1.55	21
Having the ability to apply scientific principles and methods	1.51	16	1.47	2	1.59	6	1.52	24
Meeting the expectations of my friends and family	1.33 (p=.012)	16	1.15	2	1.02	5	1.21	23
Starting or improving a business	1.12	14	1.12	2	1.34	4	1.17	20

* denotes a significant difference between the average responses for students aged 24-30 and 31 and older students.

Table 9: Importance of Goals to Earning a College Education: Questions are ordered in highest to lowest mean response. Responses to individual questions were averaged across the board and by age group. Where average responses were significantly different between traditional-aged students and either students aged 24-30 or 31+ year-old students, the significantly different pair was shaded and the greater value of the two was bolded with the p-value listed below. Even though the focus of this study is the comparison of traditional-aged students and older students, potential differences between students aged 24-30 and 31+ year-old students were examined as well. Overall, these students' responses were much more similar to the traditional-aged student responses and in many cases these showed significant differences to 31+ year-old students' average responses. Significant differences between these two groups are denoted with an asterisk alongside the average for students aged 24-30 and the p-value is listed below the average value.