

Evergreen New Student Survey 2007 Research Methodology

The Evergreen New Student Survey was designed to gather information that can be used in planning academics and student support services at The Evergreen State College. The survey is intended to provide a mechanism for understanding the goals, skills, confidence, and characteristics of new students. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment has administered the Evergreen New Student Survey in 2003, 2005, and 2007 with plans to continue administering the survey every two years. This ongoing survey administration allows comparisons between years and continual improvement of the survey instrument. In survey administration years all new first-time, first-years students and new transfer students are asked to participate in the survey.

This document explains the survey research methodology and compares the demographics of respondents with the population of new students. For the actual results of the survey, refer to the webpage: www.evergreen.edu/institutionalresearch/nss2007results.htm.

The design of the Evergreen New Student Survey (New Student Survey) was facilitated by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The 2003 survey was vetted with representatives from Student Affairs and Academics Divisions, with faculty, and with a focus group of students. To prepare for the second administration, the survey was circulated among members of the Enrollment Coordinating Committee, the Academic Information Technology Priorities Group (one of the subgroups that make up the Information Technology Collaborative Hive), faculty, and other data users in Academics and Student Affairs. The survey was vetted again with staff and faculty prior to the administration of the 2007 survey. After the analysis of the 2003 and 2005 surveys, student comments written on the survey were also used to improve the survey instrument.

Part of a Longitudinal Study

The New Student Survey serves as both a stand-alone survey and a component of a larger longitudinal effort to understanding students' experiences. While the New Student Survey is a beginning-of-the-year survey administered only to new students, the Evergreen Student Experience Survey is an end-of-the-year survey of a sample of the undergraduate population stratified by class standing. Students who participated in the New Student Survey are also asked to participate in the Evergreen Student Experience survey, regardless of whether they were initially selected in the random sample.¹ This allows for comparisons between the responses of students on the New Student Survey when they are new to Evergreen with their responses on the Evergreen Student Experience Survey at the end of their first year at the college.

Both Evergreen surveys provide an ongoing opportunity to understand the student population. The results are a rich data source that can be mined to increase understanding of factors related to student retention and attrition, student choices and needs, and students' level of skill in various areas and Evergreen's contribution to students' learning. The survey helps Evergreen understand and respond to student needs, expectations, and aspirations.

Comparing the Evergreen New Student Surveys 2003, 2005 and 2007

The survey has been revised and some questions have been added since the first administration in 2003. In some cases, it is possible to make direct comparisons between questions from different administrations of the survey. In other cases, slight changes to the language or scales of questions and the addition of new questions and replacement of old questions has rendered year-to-year comparisons problematic. In making changes to the survey, the concern for the

¹ Additionally, all students who were enrolled in the Tribal: Reservation-based/Community-Determined Program in 2005 were asked to participate in the Evergreen Student Experience Survey for an assessment specific to that program.

ability to track trends in responses was balanced with other needs such as the need to rephrase questions for more clarity or add questions that were not asked on the original survey.

Caveats

There are some things that the Evergreen New Student Survey does not do. It does not provide comparisons to new students at other peer institutions. Prior to the Evergreen New Student Survey, Evergreen participated in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). Participation in this survey did allow for comparisons to other institutions; however, this benefit did not outweigh declining response rates and student comments that survey questions were irrelevant or offensive. Additionally, the CIRP was administered only to new freshmen, which means that there was no information from new transfer students, who make up a significant proportion of the incoming class at Evergreen. Finally, there were data needs among various offices that could not be added to the standardized, national survey. Instead, Evergreen's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment embarked on an effort to craft questions that would be relevant to the Evergreen community. For comparisons to peer institutions, Evergreen participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Evergreen New Students' Participation in the 2007 Survey

Students admitted in fall 2007 included 686 first-time, first-years, 828 students who transferred with no prior experience at Evergreen, 21 students who were readmitted to Evergreen with new transfer credits from another institution and 53 students who were readmitted to Evergreen with no new transfer credits.²

All new students were asked to participate in the survey (N=1,588). Of the 1,588, there were seven students for whom there was no e-mail address or mailing address. These students may have been asked to participate in proctored sessions at New Student Advising Workshops; therefore, they are included in the calculation of response rates.

A relatively high proportion of newly admitted students participated in the Evergreen New Student Survey - 61.3% of the population in 2007 responded to the survey. A total of 78.6% of first-time, first-year students responded to the survey and 50.0% of new transfer students responded.

Summary of Respondents, Population, and Response Rates

	Respondents	Population	Percent of Population Responded
First-time, First-year Students	539	686	78.6%
Transfer Students (Not including Returning Greeners)	414	828	50.0%
Returning Greeners with transfer credits	4	21	19.0%
Returning Greeners without transfer credits	17	53	32.1%
Total Students Admitted Fall 2007	974	1588	61.3%

Methods of Contacting Students

As new students registered for fall classes, they were contacted via their official college e-mail address (evergreen.edu). The e-mail sent to students had a link to a web version of the survey. If an e-mail address was not available, students were contacted via mail and also during orientation and advising sessions. Students who did have an e-mail address, but who did not respond to the first e-mail via the web or those who did not fill out a survey at an Evergreen orientation workshop were also contacted via mail.

² Many definitions of "transfer student" includes students who have transferred from either two- or four-year institutions as well as "Returning Greeners," students who have attended Evergreen previously but not for at least one year and who have transfer credits.² In analysis of transfer students that are presented on the web, transfer students refers only to those students who are attending Evergreen for the first time.

As mentioned above, some students were contacted during new student orientation or advising events. Institutional Research staff attended orientations and workshops including the First Year Advising Day, New Student Advising Workshops, and Tacoma Orientation in order to provide additional opportunities for students to participate in the survey. During these events, students were given time to complete and return the survey.

Students were informed that if they completed the survey, their name would be entered into a drawing for a \$200 gift certificate at the Evergreen Bookstore. A random drawing was conducted in November 2007.

The chart below shows the number and percentage of surveys returned by response type. A total of 40.7% of the responses came via the web. This was the most common mode of response, followed by responses via paper survey completed in a First-Year Advising Workshop (24.5%), and a paper survey returned via the mail (17.5%).

Mode of Response (Including Returning Greeners with or without transfer credit)

	N	%
Web Survey	396	40.7%
First-Year Advising Workshop	239	24.5%
Mail Survey	170	17.5%
New Student Advising Workshop or Academic Planning Workshop	124	12.7%
Tacoma Orientation	31	3.2%
Athlete Orientation	13	1.3%
Tribal: Reservation-based Orientation	1	0.1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>974</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

The most common form of survey response among first-time, first-year students was a paper survey at a proctored First-Year Advising Workshop (42.1%). The largest proportion of transfer students responded via web (50.7%).

Mode of Response by Admission Type

	Number of First-time, First-year Responses	Percent of First-time, First-year Responses	Number of Transfer Student* Responses	Percent of Transfer Student* Responses
First-Year Advising Workshop	227	42.1%	12	2.9%
Web Survey	178	33.0%	210	50.7%
New Student Advising Workshop, Academic Planning Workshop or Athlete Workshop	69	12.8%	67	16.2%
Mail Survey	65	12.1%	94	22.7%
Tacoma or Tribal Orientation	0	0.0%	31	7.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>539</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>414</i>	<i>100%</i>

* Excluding Returning Greeners

Comparisons of Survey Respondents' Demographics to those of the Population

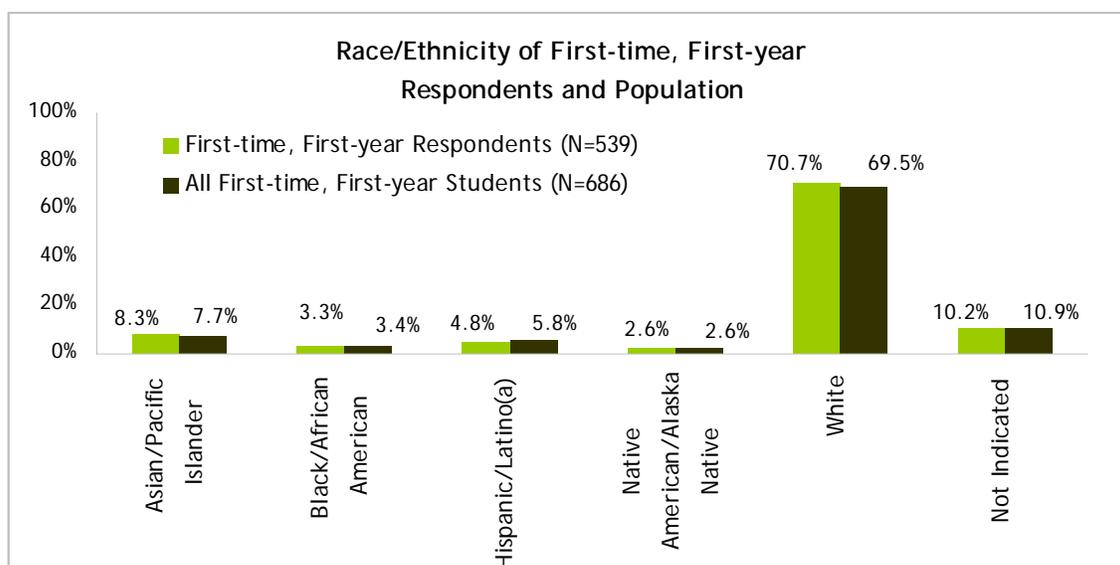
In order to assess the representativeness of survey respondents and thus the generalizability of Evergreen New Student Survey results to the population of new students, the demographics of respondents were compared to the demographics of the overall student population. Demographic data is from the BANNER student database system, and information regarding race/ethnicity and gender comes from information collected as students apply to Evergreen. At the time of application to the college, students are asked to identify their gender, race, and ethnicity. Demographics are not examined in this paper for those respondents who were Returning Greeners with or without transfer credits.

Demographics were examined for the three main groups presented in analyses: First-time, First-years studying on the Olympia Campus, Transfer Students studying on the Olympia Campus, and New Tacoma Students.

Olympia Campus First-time, First-year Respondents and Population

The differences between first-time, first-year respondents and the overall population of first-time, first-year students at Evergreen were tested using several statistical tests. Chi-square tests were used for the nominal variables: gender, race/ethnicity, residency status and admission type. No statistically significant differences were found between the demographics of first-time, first-year respondents and the overall population of first-time, first-years.

The chart below shows the slight differences between the racial/ethnic composition of first-time, first-year respondents and the overall first-time, first-year student population. These differences were not statistically significant when tested using a Chi-square test.

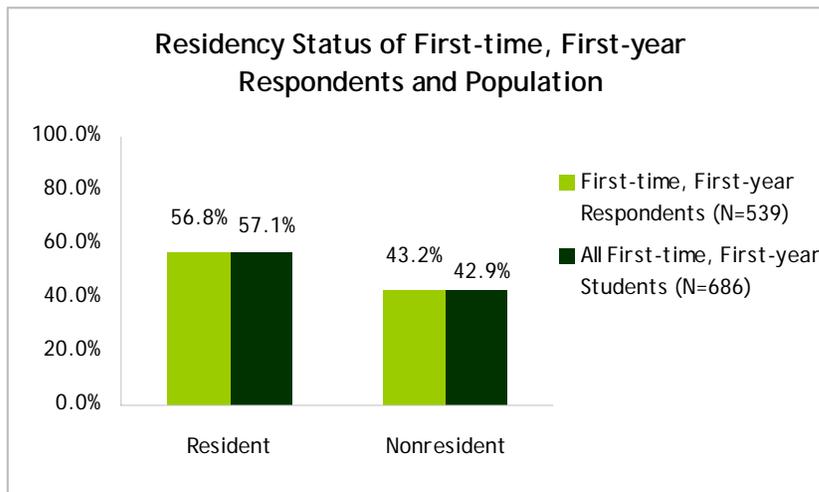


The table on the next page shows gender statistics for respondents based on BANNER data, gender as reported by respondents on the survey, and gender in the BANNER system for all first-time, first-year students at Evergreen. The survey question allowed for identification with "other" instead of male or female only, while data from BANNER requires a choice of either male or female. The difference between the proportion of male and female respondents was not statistically significant from the proportion among all first-time, first-year respondents when tested using a Chi-square test.

Gender

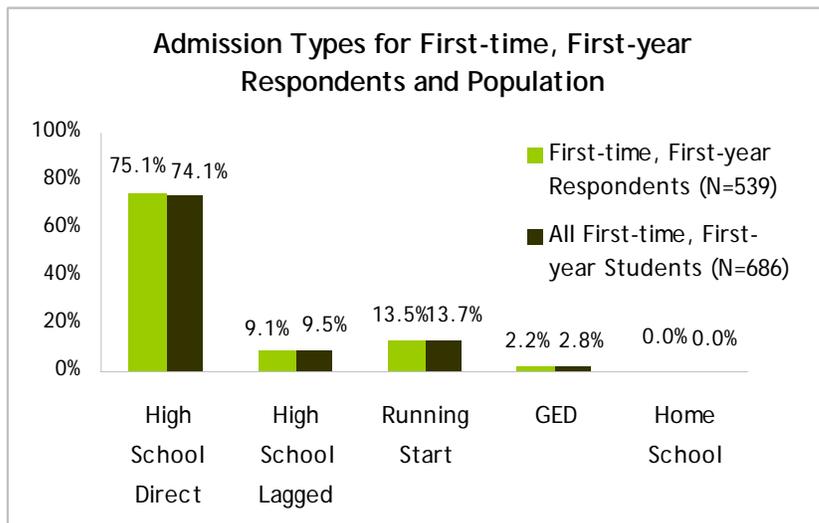
	First-time, First-year Respondents (N=539) Data from BANNER	First-time, First-year Respondents Data from survey	All First-time, First-year Students (N=686)
Male	47.3%	47.6%	48.7%
Female	52.7%	51.6%	51.3%
Other	Not available	0.80%	Not available

The chart below shows only a slight difference in the residency status of first-time, first-year respondents compared to the population of first-time, first-year students. The difference was not statistically significant when tested using a Chi-square test.



The median age of both respondents and the population of first-time, first-year students was 18. The mean age of both respondents and the population of all first-time, first-years was 18.6.

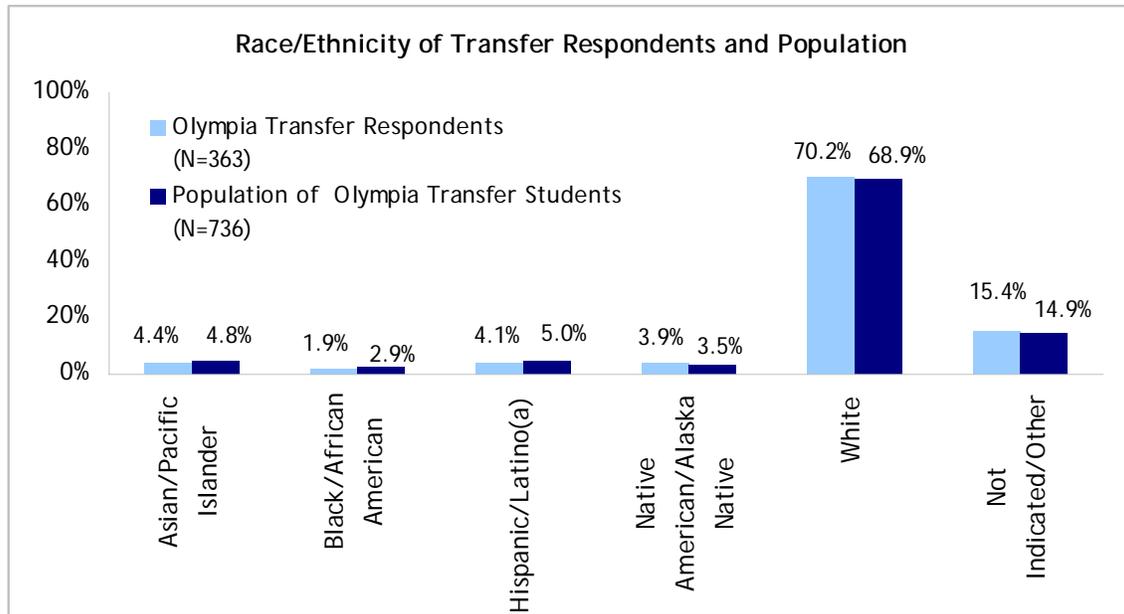
The chart below shows the slight differences between the admission types of first-time, first-year respondents compared to the population. Differences were not statistically significant when tested using a Chi-square test.



Olympia Campus Transfer Respondents and Population

The differences between Olympia campus transfer respondents and the overall population of Olympia transfer students at Evergreen were tested using several statistical tests. Chi-square tests were used for the nominal variables: gender, race/ethnicity, residency status and admission type. A one-sample t-test was used to determine whether the slight difference in mean age between respondents and population were statistically significant. There was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of males and females, with females overrepresented among transfer respondents. Non-residents were also somewhat over-represented among transfer respondents.

The chart below shows the slight differences between the racial/ethnic composition of transfer respondents and the overall transfer student population. These differences were not statistically significant.



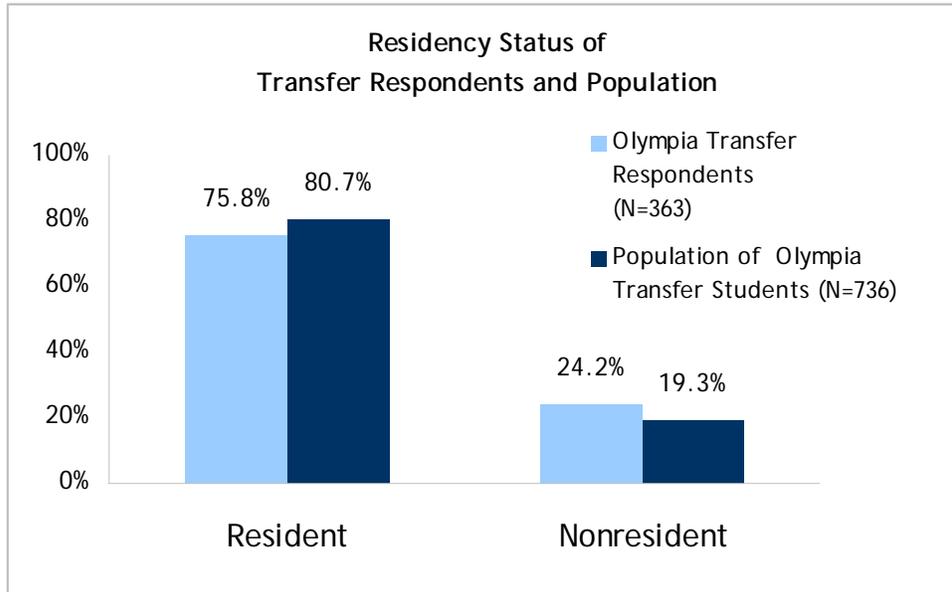
The table below shows the gender statistics for respondents from BANNER, gender as reported by respondents on the survey, and gender in the BANNER system for all transfer students at Evergreen. The survey question allowed for identification with "other", while data from BANNER requires a choice of either male or female. The difference between the proportion of male and female respondents was statistically significant³ from the proportion among all transfer students when tested using a Chi-square test.

Gender

	Olympia Transfer Respondents (N=363) Data from BANNER	Transfer Survey Respondents Data from survey	Population of Olympia Transfer Students (N=736)
Male	35.3%	36.2%	43.3%
Female	64.7%	62.4%	56.7%
Other	Not available	1.4%	Not available

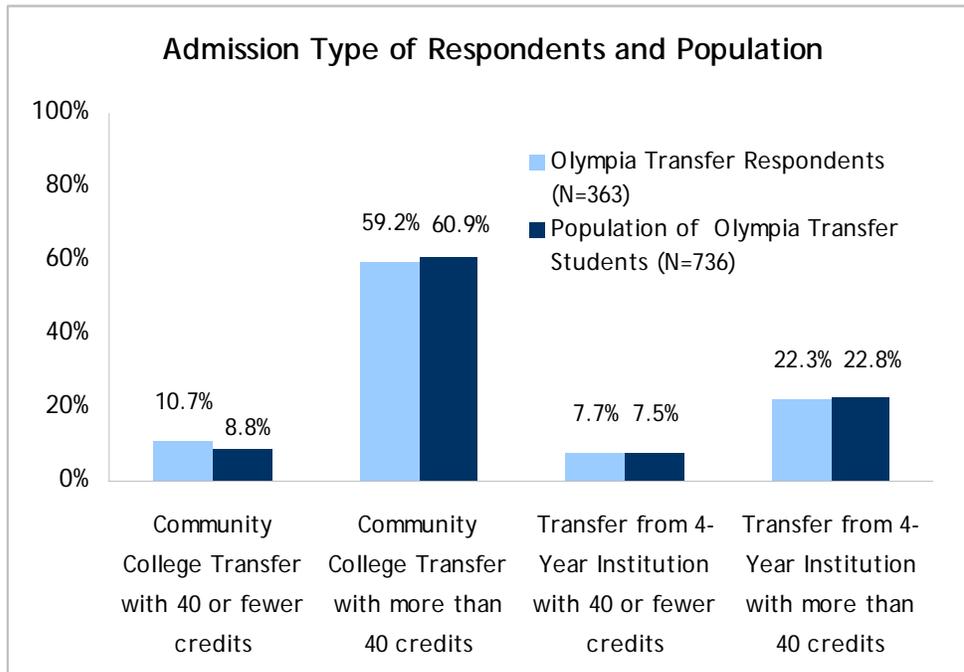
³ Asymp. Sig. = 0.002

The chart below shows differences in the residency status of transfer respondents compared to the population of new transfer students. The difference was statistically significant at $p=.017$.



The median age of respondents is 25 compared to 23 for the entire population of transfer students. The mean age of respondents is 25.8 and 25.6 for the population as a whole. The difference in mean age was not statistically significant when tested using a one-sample t-test.

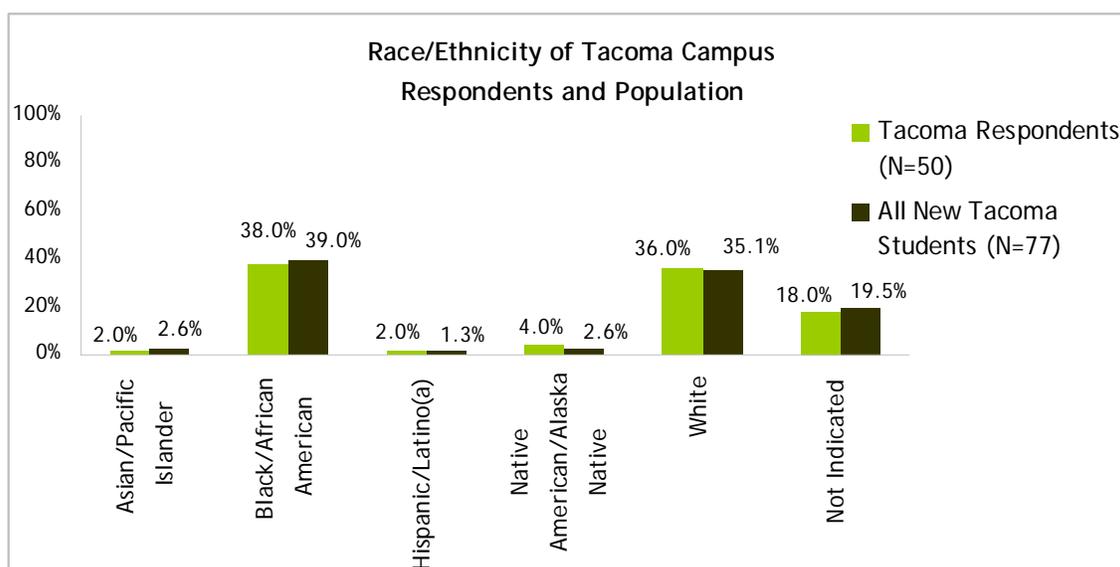
The chart below shows the slight differences between the admission types of transfer respondents compared to the population. Differences were not statistically significant when tested using a Chi-square test.



Tacoma Program Respondents and Population

The differences between Tacoma Program respondents and the overall population of students enrolled in the Tacoma Program were tested using several statistical tests. Chi-square tests were used for the nominal variables: gender, race/ethnicity, and admission type. A one-sample t-test was used to determine whether the slight difference in mean age between respondents and population were statistically significant. There were no statistically significant differences between the demographics of respondents compared to the population of Tacoma Program students.

The chart below shows only slight differences between the racial/ethnic composition of respondents and the overall Tacoma Program student population. Students were grouped into *Students of Color*, *White Students*, and *Race/Ethnicity Not Indicated* in order to run a Chi-square test, because each group must contain at least 5 cases. The differences were not statistically significant.

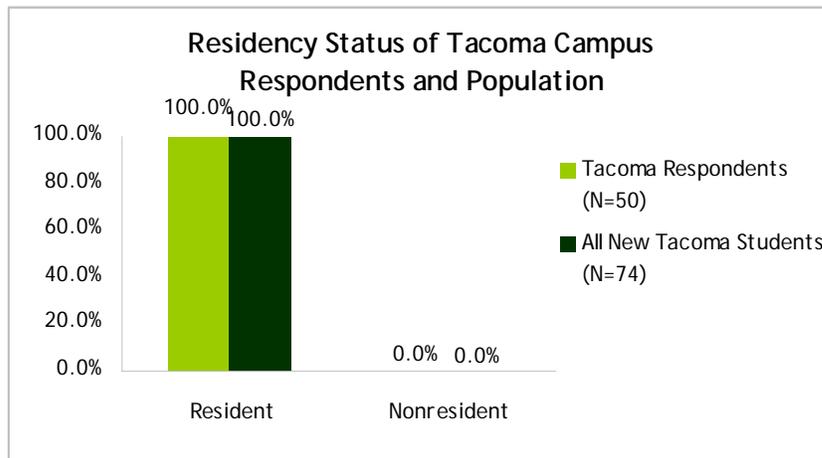


The table below shows the gender for respondents from BANNER, gender as reported by respondents on the survey, and gender in the BANNER system for all transfer students at Evergreen. The survey question allowed for identification with "other", while data from BANNER requires a choice of either male or female. The difference between the proportion of male and female respondents was not statistically significant from the proportion among all Tacoma students when tested using a Chi-square test.

Gender

	Tacoma Respondents (N=50) Data from BANNER	Tacoma Respondents Data from survey	All New Tacoma Students (N=77)
Male	22.0%	22.0%	23.4%
Female	78.0%	78.0%	76.6%
Other	Not available	0.00%	Not available

One-hundred percent of both respondents and the Tacoma student population had residency status.



The median age of respondents was 39.0 compared to 38.5 for the entire population of transfer students. The mean age of respondents was 38.8 and 38.5 for the population as a whole. The difference in mean age was not statistically significant when tested using a one-sample t-test.

The slight difference in the proportion of students in each admission type was not statistically significant when tested using a Chi-square test.

