

Evergreen New Student Survey 2010 Research Methodology

Since 2003, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment has administered the biennial Evergreen New Student Survey (NSS) to all students new to the college before they start their academic career at Evergreen. The most recent administration of the NSS was delayed by one year so it would alternate with peer-comparison years for the National Survey of Student Engagement. For survey results from this and previous survey administrations, please visit the Evergreen New Student Survey webpage: <http://www.evergreen.edu/institutionalresearch/newstudentsurvey.htm>.

Design of the NSS has been an iterative process. The survey was first launched in the spring of 2003; the survey was designed by members of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment in collaboration with staff, faculty, and students. Subsequent year surveys have incorporated suggestions from a variety of data users and other audiences. In addition, the survey has been modified over time based on prior survey results. Changes include clarification of language, adjustment of rating scales, and occasionally the addition or removal of survey items. Modification of questions precludes year-to-year comparisons; therefore, these changes are made sparingly and only when deemed necessary. Because an effort has been made to preserve the language between different survey administrations, trend analyses can be made with most questions contained on the survey. The NSS also contains one open-ended question that changes with each administration that is designed to elicit student feedback on salient topics.

While the NSS serves as a stand-alone survey, it was designed in conjunction with the Evergreen Student Experience Survey and the Evergreen One-year Alumni survey to provide longitudinal data. The Evergreen Student Experience Survey, a complementary end-of-year survey, is administered to all NSS completers as well as all off-site program students and a random sample of degree-seeking undergraduates stratified by class standing. Surveying new students at the beginning of fall quarter and again in the spring captures how responses are affected by a year of life at Evergreen. The paired surveys also allow for an understanding of changes in academic plans, comfort level, aspirations, and confidence, as well as factors that contribute to student retention and attrition. The Evergreen One-year Alumni Survey also shares several series of questions with both the NSS and the Evergreen Student Experience Survey. All three surveys in concert enable researchers to understand the progression of student experiences from college entry through graduation and life after Evergreen.

Participation of Evergreen New Students in the 2010 Survey

Students admitted in fall 2010 who were registered as of tenth-day included 624 first-time, first-years, 785 students who transferred without prior attendance at Evergreen, 23 students who were readmitted to Evergreen with new transfer credits from another institution and 49 students who were readmitted to Evergreen with no new transfer credits.¹

All new students were asked to participate in the survey. Of these 1,481 students, there were 19 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 NSS: 62.8% of students newly admitted in 2010 responded to the survey, including 75.5% of first-time, first-year students and 55.9% of new transfer students.

¹ "Transfer students" usually include students new to Evergreen transferring from other institutions as well as "Returning Greeners" – prior Evergreen students re-admitted to the college – who returned with transfer credits from another institution. In this study, all Returning Greeners are excluded from transfer student analyses.

Summary of Response Rates by Admission Status

	Respondents	Population	Percent of Population Responded
First-time, First-year Students	471	624	75.5%
Transfer Students (not including Returning Greeners)	439	785	55.9%
Returning Greeners with transfer credits	8	23	34.8%
Returning Greeners without transfer credits	12	49	24.5%
Total Students Admitted Fall 2010	929	1,481	62.8%

Disaggregating the data into the groupings used for data analysis reveals that the Tacoma Program had the highest response rate (79.3%), followed by first-time, first-years (75.5%) and Olympia campus transfer students (53.5%). Tribal: Reservation-based program responses were not analyzed separately because of the small number of surveys returned.

Summary of Response Rates by Analysis Groups

	Respondents	Population	Percent of Population Responded
First-time, First-year Students	471	624	75.5%
Olympia campus transfer students (not including Returning Greeners)	368	688	53.5%
Tacoma Program students	65	82	79.3%
Tribal: Reservation-based program	5	12	41.7%
All Returning Greeners	20	75	26.7%
Total Students Admitted Fall 2010	929	1,481	62.7%

Methods of Contacting Students

As new students registered for fall classes, they were contacted by their college e-mail address (evergreen.edu) with an invitation to participate in the NSS. The e-mail briefly introduced the survey and its purpose, contained a link to the web version of the survey, and offered students the ability to opt out of the project.

A paper version of the survey was administered at Freshman Advising Day, Orientation Week (Olympia Campus), Tacoma Program Orientation, and Grays Harbor Program Orientation. During these events the survey was introduced by either an advisor or a member of Institutional Research and Assessment, and students had the option of completing the surveys in a proctored session. If students did not complete a paper survey in a proctored session or did not complete a web survey, they were mailed a paper survey with an invitation letter and business reply envelope.

In all three methods of survey administration, students were informed that participation in the survey would enter them into a random drawing for a \$200 gift certificate for the Greener Store conducted shortly after the close of the survey.

The chart below shows the number and percentage of surveys returned by response type. A total of 57.7% of the responses came via the web. This was the most common mode of response, followed by responses via paper survey completed during Freshman Advising Day (22.3%), and paper surveys returned by mail (12.1%).

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

	N	%
Web Survey	536	57.7%
Freshman Advising Day	207	22.3%
Grays Harbor Orientation	4	0.4%
Mail Survey	112	12.1%
Orientation Week	35	3.8%
Tacoma Orientation	35	3.8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>929</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

The most frequent mode of survey response for both first-time, first-year students and transfer students was by web (47.1% and 68.7%, respectively).

Mode of Response by Admission Type

	First-time, First-year Responses		Transfer Student* Responses	
	N	%	N	%
Freshman Advising Day	187	39.7%	20	4.6%
Web Survey	222	47.1%	301	68.7%
Grays Harbor Orientation	0	0.0%	3	0.7%
Orientation Week	24	5.1%	11	2.5%
Mail Survey	38	8.1%	70	16.0%
Tacoma or Tribal Orientation	0	0.0%	33	7.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>471</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>438</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

* Excluding Returning Greeners

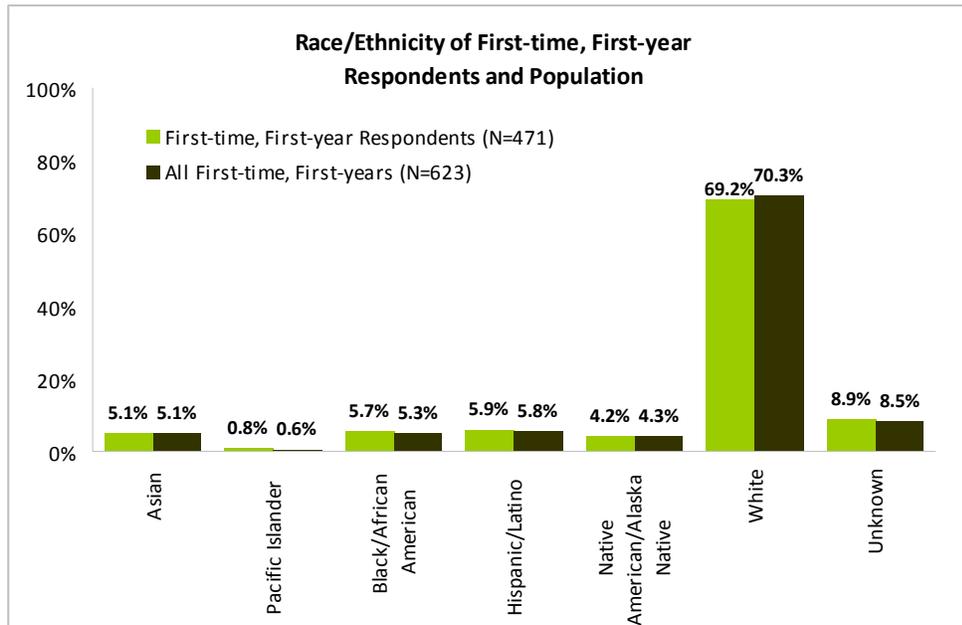
Comparisons of Survey Respondents and Population Demographics

Demographic data is collected at the time of application to the college and is drawn from the BANNER administrative database. Demographics were examined for the three main groups presented in analyses: Olympia campus first-time, first-years, Olympia campus transfer students, and new Tacoma Program students. Returning Greeners were excluded from demographic analyses. Survey respondent demographics for these groups were compared to corresponding new student population data to test for representativeness.

Olympia Campus First-time, First-year Students

Statistical analyses were performed to determine if demographic differences between all first-time, first-years and those who responded to the NSS were statistically significant. No statistically significant differences were found in the frequency distributions for race/ethnicity, gender, average age, residency, or admission status.

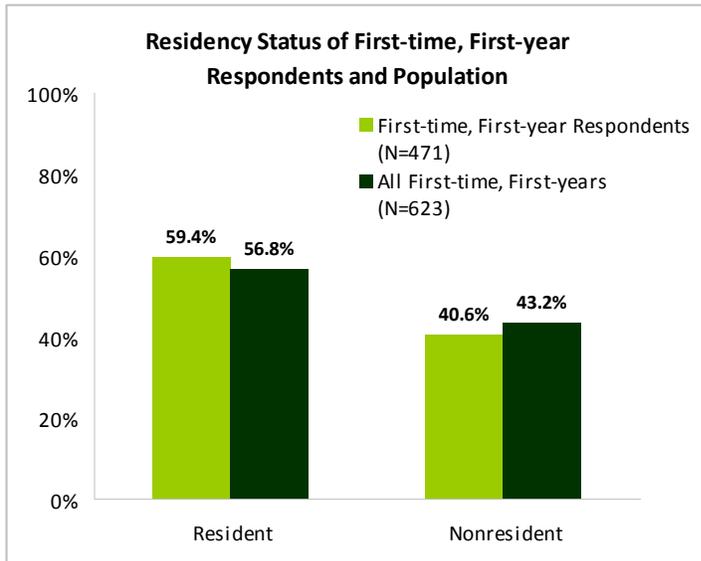
The following chart shows the differences between the race/ethnicity distribution of first-time, first-year respondents and that for all first-time, first-year students enrolled in fall 2010. A Chi-square test revealed these differences were not statistically significant ($\chi^2=.366$, $p=.999$).



The following table details gender data from BANNER for all first-time, first-year students and the subset of students who responded to the NSS. The difference in the gender distribution between respondents and all first-time, first-years was not statistically significant ($\chi^2=2.008$, $p=.157$). Gender data for respondents is also provided from the NSS. In contrast to BANNER data, the NSS survey question allowed for identification as “Other” in addition to “Male” and “Female”; therefore, percentages are slightly different from administrative data.

	BANNER Data		Survey Data
	All First-time, First-years (N=623)	First-time, First-year Respondents (N=471)	First-time, First-year Respondents (N=471)
Male	45.3%	41.0%	47.6%
Female	54.7%	59.0%	51.6%
Other	<i>Not available</i>	<i>Not available</i>	0.8%

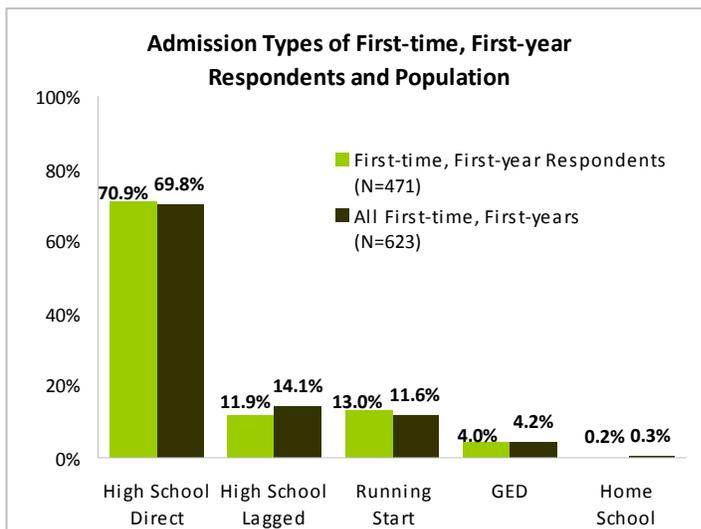
The following chart illustrates the residency status distribution for first-time, first-year respondents compared to that of the population of first-time, first-year students. The difference between respondents and the population was not statistically significant ($\chi^2=.759$, $p=.384$).



There was no difference in median age between all first-time, first-years and the subset of respondents and there was very little difference in mean age. This difference was not statistically significant (one-sample t-test, 2-tailed sig.=.638).

	First-time, First-year Respondents (N=471)	All First-time, First-years (N=623)
Median Age	18	18
Mean Age	18.8	18.9

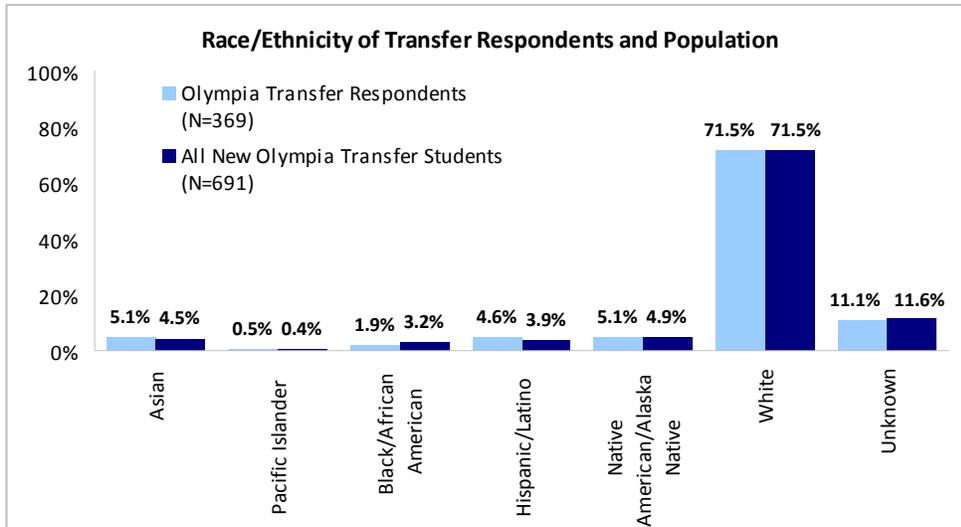
The chart below shows the differences in the distribution of admission types for first-time, first-year respondents compared to the population. Differences were not statistically significant ($\chi^2=1.621$, $p=.805$).



New Olympia Campus Transfer Students

Differences between new Olympia campus transfer respondents and all new Olympia campus transfer students were examined. Representativeness among nominal variables (gender, race/ethnicity, residency status, and admission type) was determined using chi-square tests. A one-sample t-test was used to determine whether the mean age for survey respondents was representative. This revealed a statistically significant difference in gender distribution, with females overrepresented among transfer respondents.

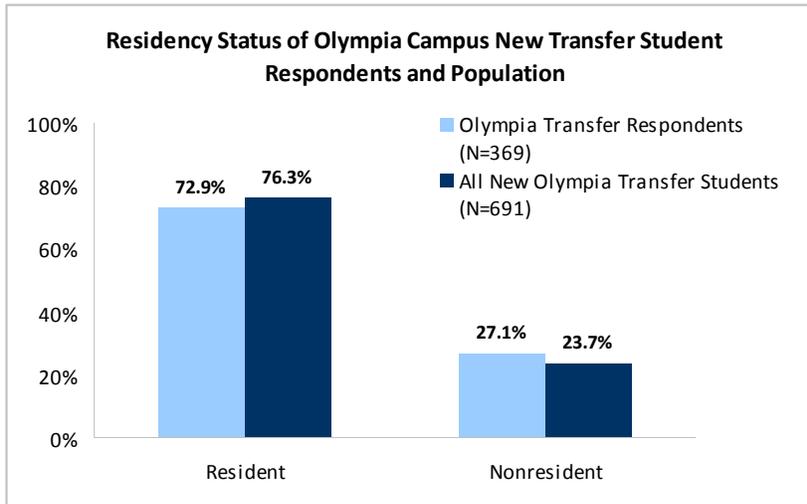
The chart below shows the differences between the racial/ethnic composition of transfer respondents and the overall transfer student population. These differences were not statistically significant. ($\chi^2=2.094$, $p=.911$).



The following table shows gender data from BANNER for all new transfer students as well as for Olympia transfer respondents. Females were significantly overrepresented among Olympia new transfer respondents ($\chi^2=5.426$, $p=.020$). Gender data for respondents is also provided from the NSS. Percentages are slightly different from administrative data because in contrast to BANNER data, the NSS survey question allowed for identification as “Other” in addition to “Male” and “Female”.

	BANNER Data		Survey Data
	All New Olympia Transfer Students (N=691)	Olympia Transfer Respondents (N=369)	Olympia Transfer Respondents (N=369)
Male	43.7%	36.3%	35.3%
Female	56.3%	63.7%	61.3%
Other	<i>Not available</i>	<i>Not available</i>	3.4%

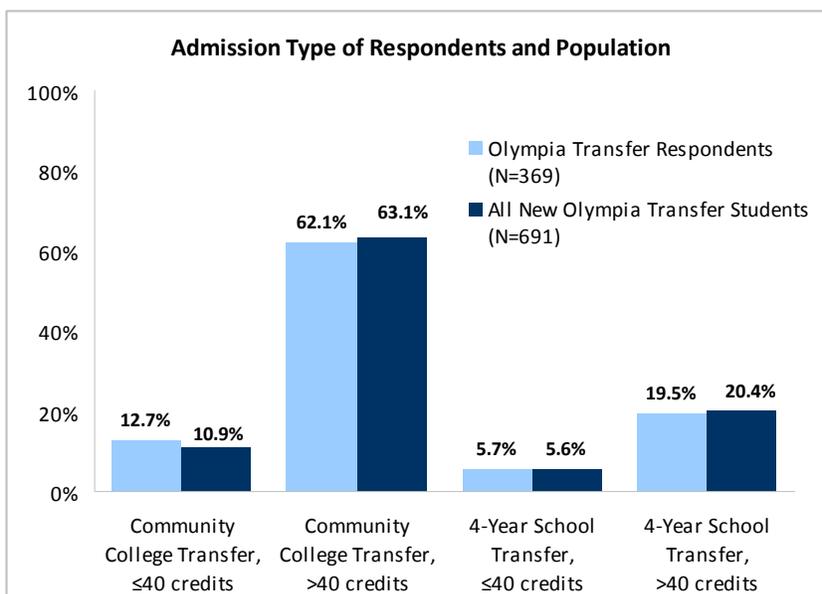
The following chart illustrates the differences in the residency status distribution between all new Olympia transfer students and Olympia transfer respondents. These differences were not statistically significant ($\chi^2=1.458, p=.227$).



There was no difference in median age between all new Olympia transfer students and those who responded to the NSS, and the difference in mean age was not statistically significant (one-sample t-test, 2-tailed sig.=.993).

	Olympia Transfer Respondents (N=369)	All New Olympia Transfer Students (N=691)
Median Age	23	23
Mean Age	27.3	27.1

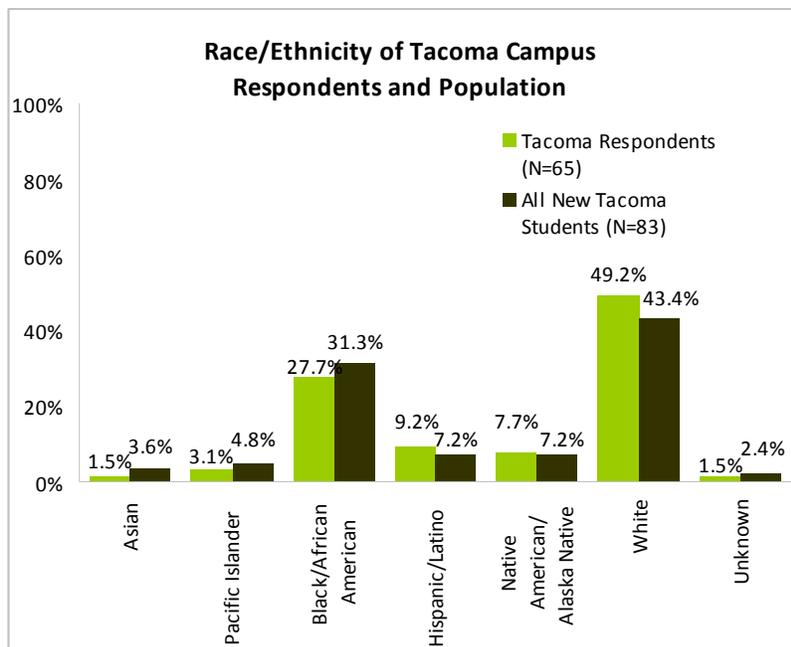
The chart below shows the differences in frequency distribution between the admission types of Olympia transfer respondents and all new Olympia transfer students. These differences were not statistically significant ($\chi^2=.879, p=.831$).



New Tacoma Program Students

Demographic differences between Tacoma Program respondents and all new Tacoma students were examined. Chi-square tests were used to test for representativeness for nominal variables: gender, race/ethnicity, and admission type. A one-sample t-test was used to determine whether the difference in mean age between respondents and population was statistically significant. There were no statistically significant differences between the demographics examined for all new Tacoma Program students and Tacoma respondents.

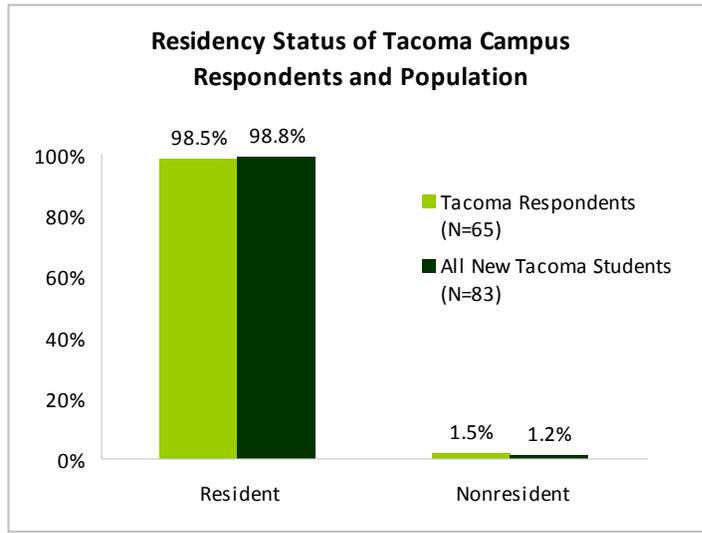
The following chart shows the differences between the racial/ethnic frequency distribution of respondents and all new Tacoma students. In order to have sufficient representation per category to run a Chi-test, race/ethnic groups were pooled into *Students of Color* (Asian, Pacific Islander, Black/African American, and Native American/Alaska Native) and *White Students*. Students of unknown race/ethnicity were excluded from the analysis because there were too few for statistical analysis. Representation of students of color and white students was not significantly different between all new Tacoma students and Tacoma respondents ($\chi^2=.443$, $p=.506$).



The following table details gender data from BANNER for all new Tacoma students and the subset who responded to the NSS. The difference in the gender distribution between all new Tacoma students and those who responded to the NSS was not significant ($\chi^2=.165$, $p=.684$). Self-reported gender data was also available from the NSS. In contrast to BANNER data, the NSS survey question allowed for identification as “Other” in addition to “Male” and “Female”.

	BANNER Data		Survey Data
	All New Tacoma Students (N=83)	Tacoma Respondents (N=65)	Tacoma Respondents (N=65)
Male	27.7%	30.8%	28.6%
Female	72.3%	69.2%	71.4%
Other	<i>Not available</i>	<i>Not available</i>	0.0%

Of the new Tacoma Program respondents, 98.5% were Washington residents. This was slightly lower than the 98.8% of all New Tacoma Students who were Washington residents. Statistical significance could not be tested because the number of non-residents was too small for analysis.



The median age of respondents was 36 for all new Tacoma students and 35 for Tacoma survey respondents. The difference in average age between all Tacoma students (37.3) and Tacoma NSS respondents (37.4) was not statistically significant (one sample t-test, 2-tailed sig.=.906).

	Tacoma Respondents (N=65)	All New Tacoma Students (N=83)
Median Age	35	36
Mean Age	37.4	37.3

There were slight differences in the proportion of students of each admission type between all new Tacoma students and those who completed the NSS. In order to have sufficient numbers to perform a Chi-square test, the one first-time, first-year Tacoma student was excluded from the analysis. The difference in the proportion of students who were community college transfer students and four-year transfer students was not statistically significant ($\chi^2=.006$, $p=.938$).

