

Evergreen New Student Survey 2012 Research Methodology

Since 2003, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment has administered the Evergreen New Student Survey (NSS) on a biennial basis to all students new to the college before they start their academic career at Evergreen. The administration of the NSS is alternated with the National Survey of Student Engagement for peer-comparison years. 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 designed by members of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment in collaboration with staff, faculty, and students and first administered in the spring of 2003. Subsequent administrations 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 have included clarification of language, adjustment of rating scales, and occasionally the addition or removal of survey items. Modification of questions precludes the possibility of inter-annual comparisons, so changes are made only when deemed necessary. 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 (ESES) and the Evergreen One-year Alumni survey to provide longitudinal data. The ESES, 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 ESES. 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 2012 Survey

Students admitted in fall 2012 who were registered as of tenth-day included 530 first-time, first-years, 725 students who transferred without prior attendance at Evergreen, 45 students who were readmitted to Evergreen with new transfer credits from another institution and 15 students who were readmitted to Evergreen with no new transfer credits.¹

All new students were asked to participate in the survey. Of these 1,315 students, there were 67 students for whom there was no e-mail address or mailing address. Many of these students were invited to participate via proctored sessions at New Student Orientation or Advising Workshops and are included in the calculation of response rates.

A substantial proportion of newly admitted students participated in the NSS: 56.4% of students newly admitted in 2012 responded to the survey, including 62.5% of first-time, first-year students and 53.3% 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	331	530	62.5%
Transfer Students (not including Returning Greeners)	388	725	53.3%
Returning Greeners with transfer credits	6	15	40.0%
Returning Greeners without transfer credits	19	45	42.2%
Total Students Admitted Fall 2012	744	1,315	56.4%

Disaggregating the data into the groupings by location revealed that students attending at the Tacoma campus had the highest response rate (79.7%), followed by first-time, first-years (62.5%), and Olympia campus transfer students (51.5%). Due to the small number of surveys returned from Grays Harbor campus and Tribal: Reservation-based programs data from these respondents were pooled together with Olympia campus transfer students (denoted by shaded rows in table below).

Summary of Response Rates by Campus Location

	Respondents	Population	Percent of Population Responded
First-time, First-year Students	331	530	62.5%
Olympia campus transfer students (not including Returning Greeners)	326	632	51.5%
Tacoma campus	59	74	79.7%
Grays Harbor campus	3	13	23.1%
Tribal: Reservation-based program	0	6	0%
Total Students Admitted Fall 2012	719	1,255	57.2%

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, Olympia Campus Transfer Student Advising Day, Tacoma Campus Orientation, and New Student Advising Workshops. 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. Students who did not complete a paper survey in a proctored session or did not complete a web survey were mailed a paper survey with an invitation letter and business reply envelope.

In all 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 76.2% of the responses came via the web. This was the most common mode of response, followed by responses via paper surveys returned by mail (8.9%), Tacoma New Student Orientation (5.1%), and paper survey completed during Freshman Advising Day (4.6%).

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

		New Student Responses	
Date	Administration	N	%
May 11	Freshman Advising Day	33	4.6%
May 16	Transfer Student Advising Day	30	4.2%
May 21-Oct 5	Web Survey	548	76.2%
Aug 14	Mail Survey	64	8.9%
Sept 15	Tacoma New Student Orientation	37	5.1%
Sept 17-21	New Student Advising Workshops	7	1.0%
Total		719	100%

The most frequent mode of survey response for both first-time, first-year students and transfer students was by web (80.4% and 80.5%, respectively). However, the most frequent mode of survey response for Tacoma students was Tacoma New Student Orientation (62.7%).

Mode of Response by Admission Type

		First-time, First-year Responses		Transfer Student* Responses		Tacoma Student* Responses	
Date	Administration	N	%	N	%	N	%
May 11	Freshman Advising Day	32	9.7%	0	0%	0	0%
May 16	Transfer Student Advising Day	0	0%	30	9.1%	0	0%
May 21-Oct 5	Web Survey	266	80.4%	266	80.9%	17	28.8%
Aug 14	Mail Survey	29	8.8%	32	9.7%	3	5.1%
Sept 15	Tacoma New Student Orientation	0	0%	0	0%	37	62.7%
Sept 17-21	New Student Advising Workshops	4	1.2%	1	0.3%	2	3.4%
Total		331	100%	329	100%	59	100%

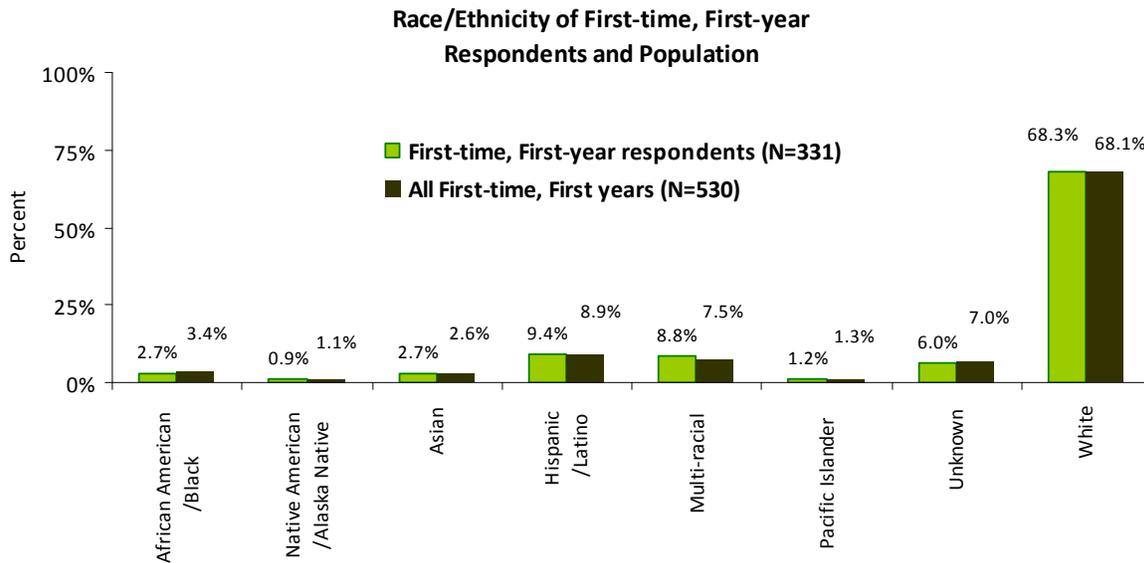
* Excludes Returning Greeners

Comparisons of Survey Respondents and Population Demographics

Demographic data were collected at the time of application to the college and drawn from the BANNER administrative database. Demographic data were examined for three groups: Olympia campus first-time, first-years, Olympia campus transfer students, and Tacoma students. Returning Greeners were excluded from demographic analyses. We compared demographics and population data between survey respondents and all new students.

Olympia Campus First-time, First-year Students

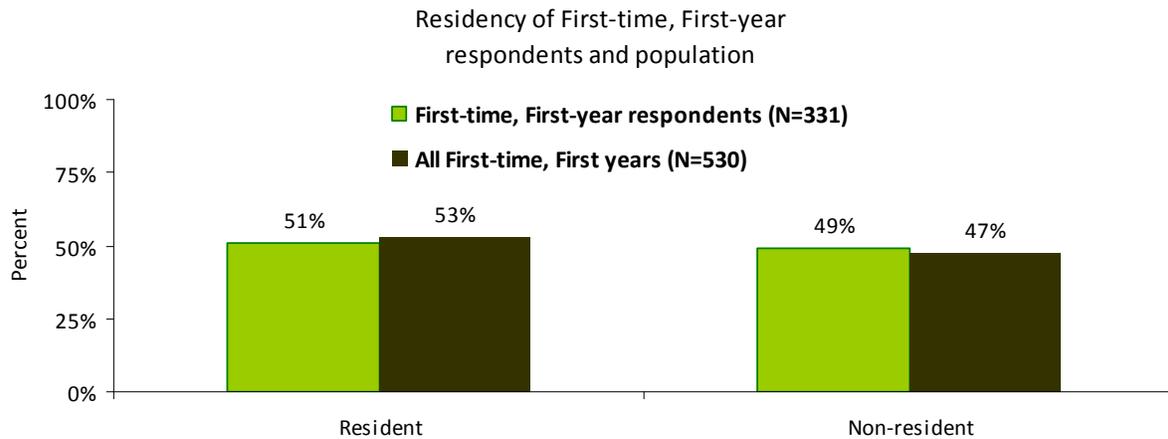
Statistical analyses were performed to determine if demographic differences between all first-time, first-years and NSS respondents were statistically significant. The following chart shows the differences between the race/ethnicity distribution of first-time, first-year respondents and that for all first-time, first-year students enrolled in fall 2012. A Chi-square test revealed these differences were not statistically significant ($\chi^2=1.125$, $p=0.993$).



Gender data for survey 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” or “Female”; therefore, percentages are slightly different from administrative data. 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 statistically significant ($\chi^2=4.702$, $p=0.030$). Females were oversampled relative to male survey respondents.

	BANNER Data		Survey Data
	All First-time, First-years (N=530)	First-time, First-year Respondents (N=331)	First-time, First-year Respondents (N=331)
Male	253	133	126
Female	277	198	184
Other			6
No response			15

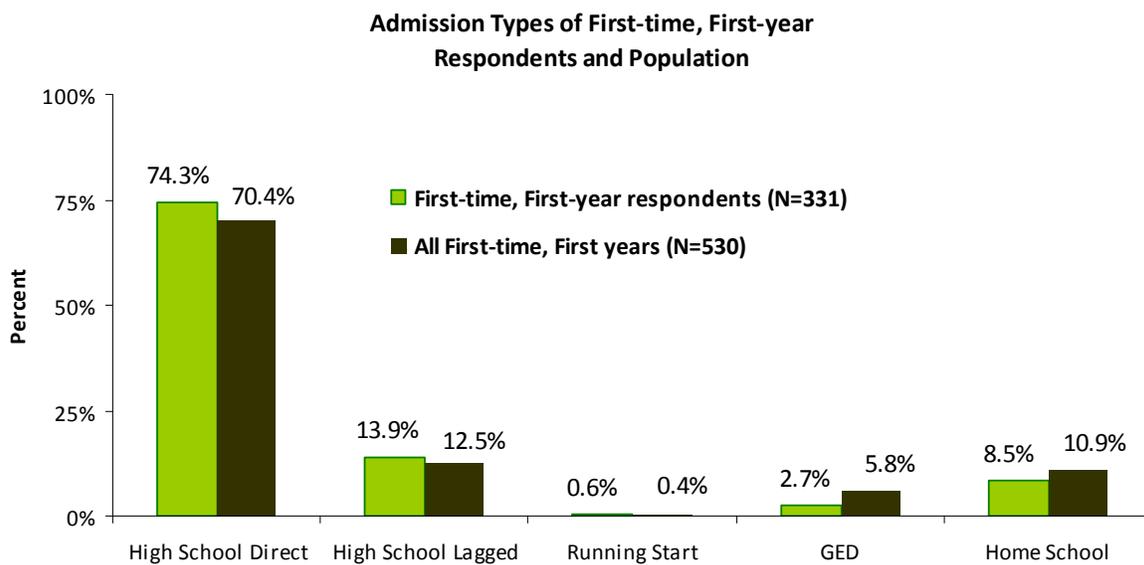
The following chart illustrates the residency status distribution for first-time, first-year respondents compared to entire population of first-time, first-year students. The difference in residency status between respondents and the population was not statistically significant ($\chi^2=0.257$, $p=0.612$).



There was no difference in median age between all first-time, first-years students and those of respondents. The difference in mean age between respondents and all first-time, first-year was statistically significant (one-sample t-test, 2-tailed sig.=0.036).

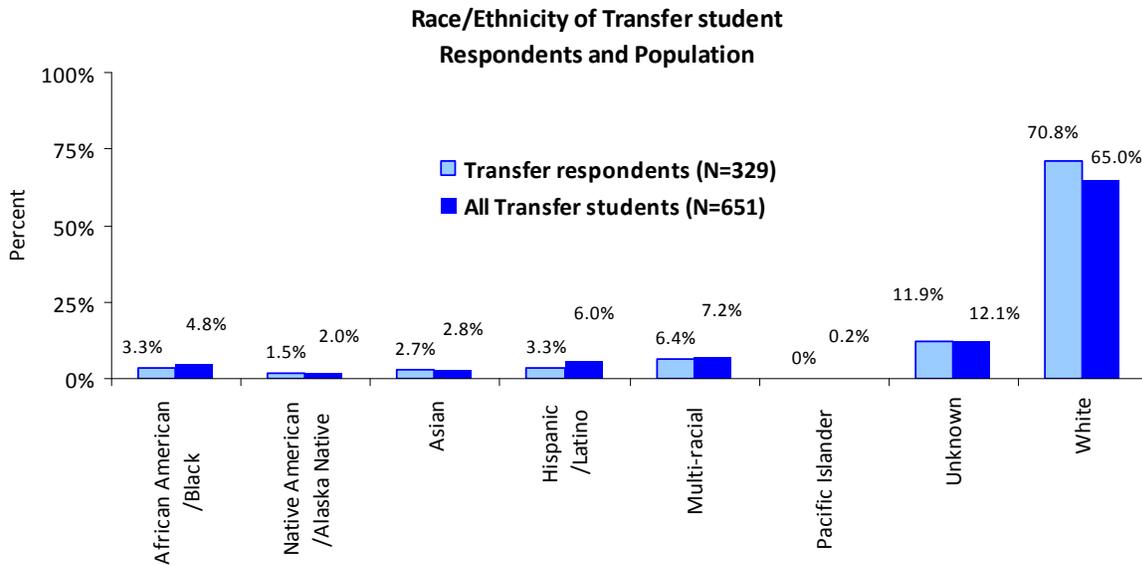
	First-time, First-year Respondents (N=331)	All First-time, First-year students (N=530)
Median Age	18	18
Mean Age	18.6	18.9

The chart below shows the differences in the distribution of admission types for first-time, first-year respondents compared to the population. Differences between admission types of first-time, first-years were not statistically significant ($\chi^2=6.549$, $p=0.162$).



New Olympia Campus Transfer Students

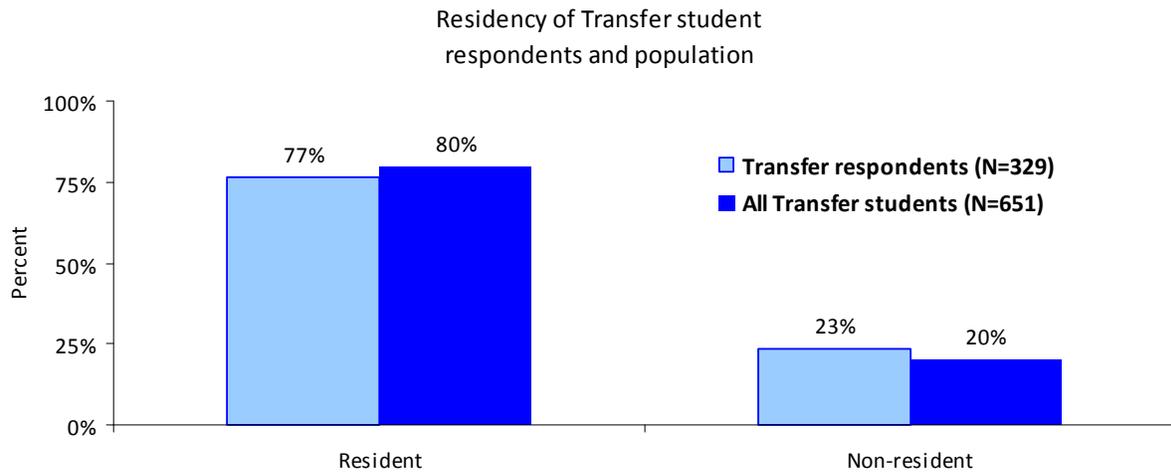
We also examined differences between new Olympia campus transfer respondents and all new Olympia campus transfer students. The chart below shows the differences between the racial/ethnic composition of transfer respondents and the entire transfer student population. These differences were not statistically significant. ($\chi^2=6.155$, $p=0.522$).



The following table displays gender data from BANNER for all new transfer students as well as for Olympia transfer respondents. Differences among new transfer respondents were statistically significant ($\chi^2=4.002$, $p=0.045$). Female students were significantly more likely to respond than male students. Percentages gathered from BANNER are different than those from the NSS data because the survey question allowed students to identify as either Male, Female, or Other.

	BANNER Data		Survey Data
	All New Olympia Transfer Students (N=651)	Olympia Transfer Respondents (N=329)	Olympia Transfer Respondents (N=329)
Male	313	136	128
Female	338	193	176
Other			8
No response			17

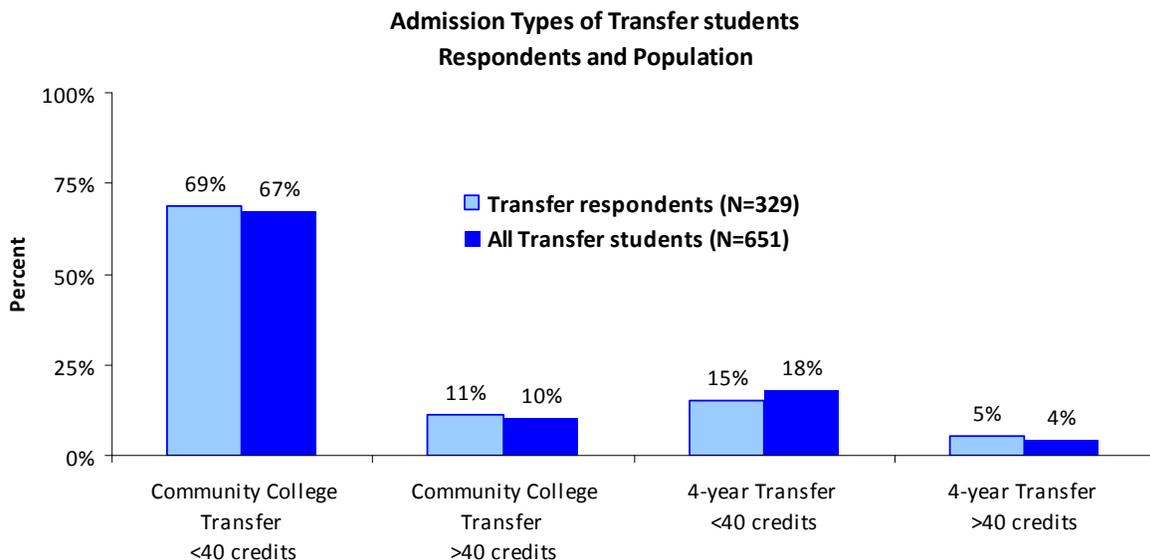
The following chart illustrates the differences in the residency status distribution between all new all Transfer students and those who responded. The differences between these two groups were not statistically significant ($\chi^2=1.548$, $p=0.213$).



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.=0.228).

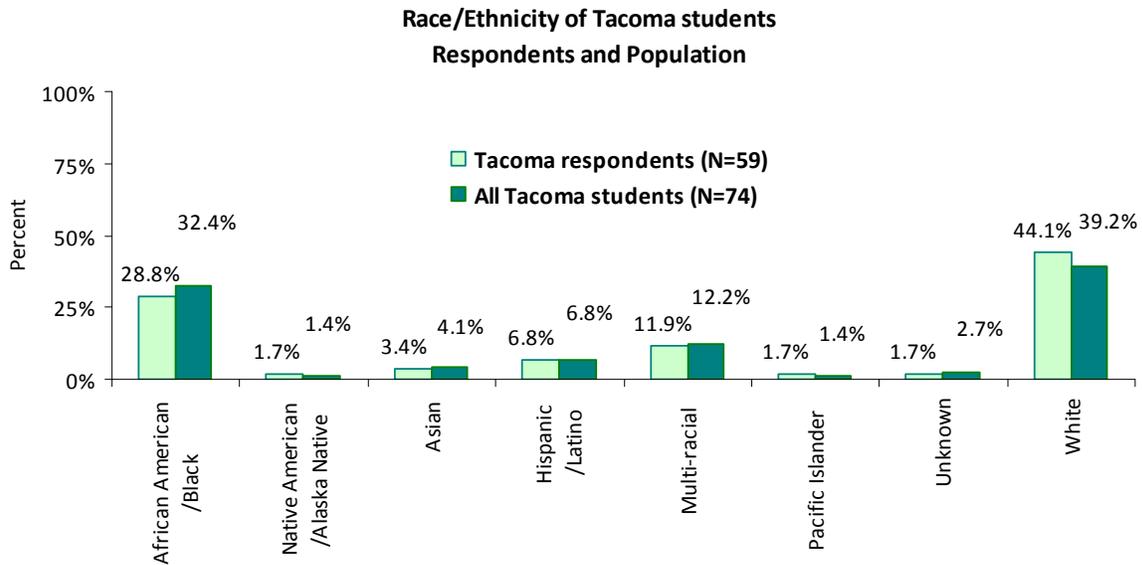
	Olympia Transfer Respondents (N=329)	All New Olympia Transfer Students (N=750)
Median Age	24	24
Mean Age	27.4	28.0

The chart below shows the differences in frequency distribution between the admission types of transfer student respondents and all new transfer students. Differences between admission types among transfer students were not statistically significant ($\chi^2=1.711$, $p=0.634$).



New Students attending Tacoma Campus

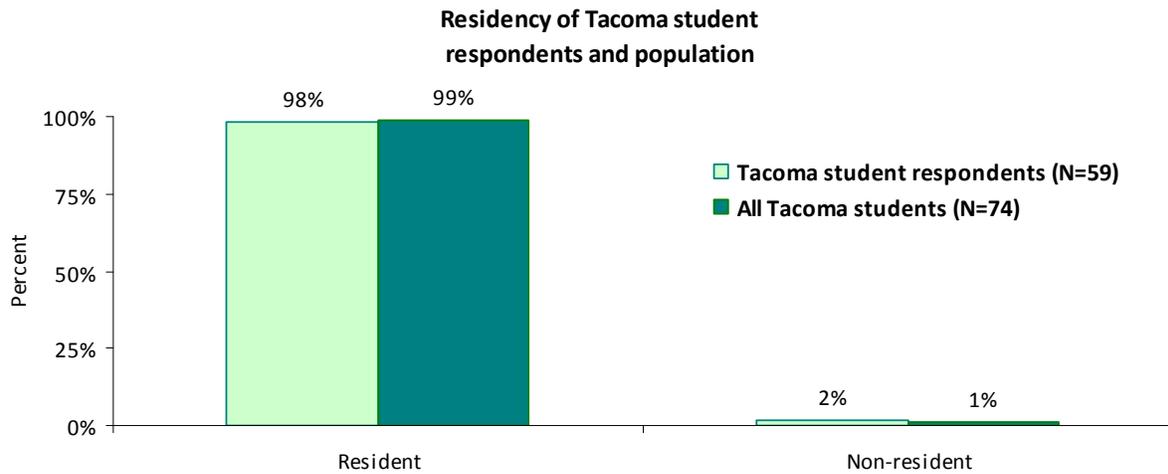
We analyzed demographic differences between students attending class primarily at the Tacoma campus respondents and all new Tacoma students. The following chart shows the differences between the racial/ethnic frequency distribution of respondents and all new Tacoma students. In order to obtain sufficient representation per category to run a Chi-square analysis, 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. Differences in response rates between all new Tacoma students and Tacoma respondents identified as white or students of color were not significant ($\chi^2=0.424$, $p=0.809$).



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 ($\chi^2=0.238$, $p=0.625$). Self-reported gender data was also available from the NSS. Percentages gathered from BANNER are different than those from the NSS data because the survey question allowed students to identify as either Male, Female, or Other”.

	BANNER Data		Survey Data
	All New Tacoma Students (N=74)	Tacoma Respondents (N=59)	Tacoma Respondents (N=59)
Male	19	13	12
Female	55	46	46
Other			0
No response			1

Of the new Tacoma Program respondents, 98.3% were Washington residents. This was slightly lower than the 98.6% 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 33 for all new Tacoma students and 35 for Tacoma survey respondents. The difference in average age between all Tacoma students (36.9) and Tacoma NSS respondents (36.0) was not statistically significant (one sample t-test, 2-tailed sig.=0.537).

	Tacoma Respondents (N=59)	All New Tacoma Students (N=74)
Median Age	35	33
Mean Age	36.9	36.0

Differences in the proportion of Tacoma respondents and all new Tacoma students by admission type were mostly among students with less than 40 transfer credits. Yet, the differences in the proportions of transfer students were not statistically significant ($\chi^2=0.152$, $p=0.927$).

