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A Profile of the 1999 Western Washington University Graduating Class

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A PROFILE OF THE 1999 WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATING CLASS

Prepared by Gary R. McKinney, Joseph E. Trimble,
and Evelyn Albrecht

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Information for this research summary was obtained from the Student Tracking System, jointly maintained by the Registrar's Office and the Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing (OIAT). The report presents information intended to provide insights into the various characteristics of 1999 Western Washington University graduates (academic year: Fall Quarter, 1998, through Summer quarter, 1999).

Western graduated 2417 in 1999, compared to 2433 students in 1998 and 2438 in 1997. (The class of 1996, with 2461 graduates, is the largest to date.) The 1999 class was comprised of 14% ethnic-minorities, about the same as in 1998 and 1997, compared to 11% in 1996. Females made up 59% of 1999 graduates, compared to 58% in 1998 and 61% in 1997. Transfers made up 51% of 1999 graduates, the same as in 1998, compared to 55% in 1997.

For those students earning BS degrees, 39% were female, the same as 1998, compared to the recent high of 44% in 1997. (In the last 17 years females have accounted for over 40% of the BS degrees granted only one other time: 42% in 1991.)

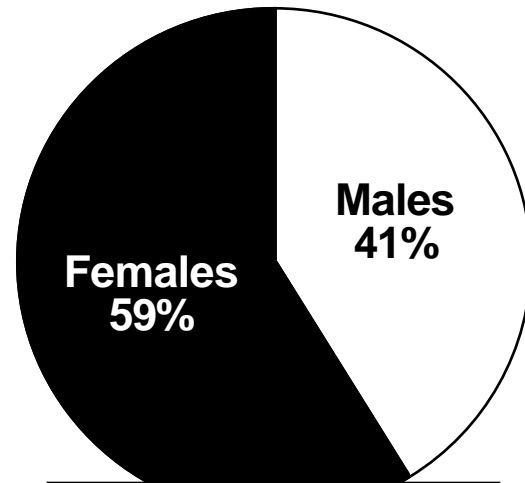
The Graduation Efficiency Index (GEI)—a formula that measures degree attainment efficiency via credits earned—rose to 86% in 1999, up from 82% in 1998. The overall GEI was 83% in 1997 and 88% in 1996. In 1999, the GEI for natives was 90% and for transfers 84%.

Over the last three years, about 37% of graduates dropped a course, compared to 43% in 1996, and 47% in 1995. Over the last two years, about 11% of graduates repeated a course, compared to 28% in 1997, and 14% in both 1996 and 1995.

The overall Western grade point average for 1999 graduates was 3.13, compared to 3.15 in 1998, 3.16 in 1997, and 3.15 in 1996.

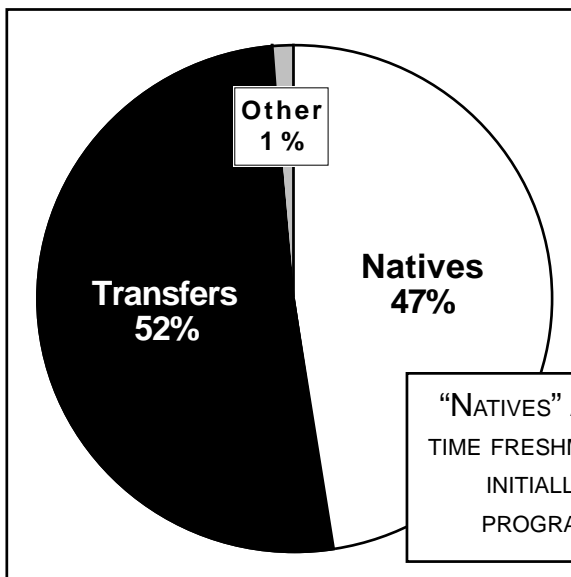


- There were 2417 graduates in 1999 (fall quarter, 1998, through summer quarter, 1999), down from 2433 in 1998.
- Most graduates began attending classes in a fall quarter (80.1%).
- The youngest graduate was 19 years old; the oldest was 71. The most common age of graduates (the mode) was 22.
- Most graduates were between the ages of 21 to 24 years old (72.5%); fewer were between 25-29 years old (15.1%), 30-39 years old (7.3%), and 40 years old or older (4.6%).

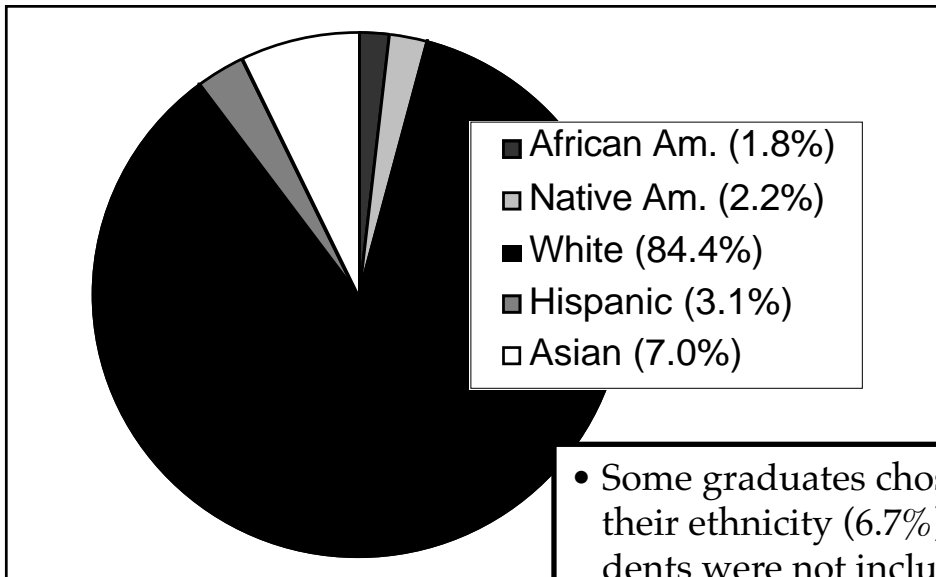


THERE WERE SLIGHTLY FEWER MALE GRADUATES IN 1999 THAN IN 1998, WHEN 42% WERE MALE.

- 96 graduates listed their parents as Western alumni (4.0%).
- 78 graduates were veterans (3.2%).
- 87 graduates listed a disability—learning, hearing, ambulatory, and other (3.6%).

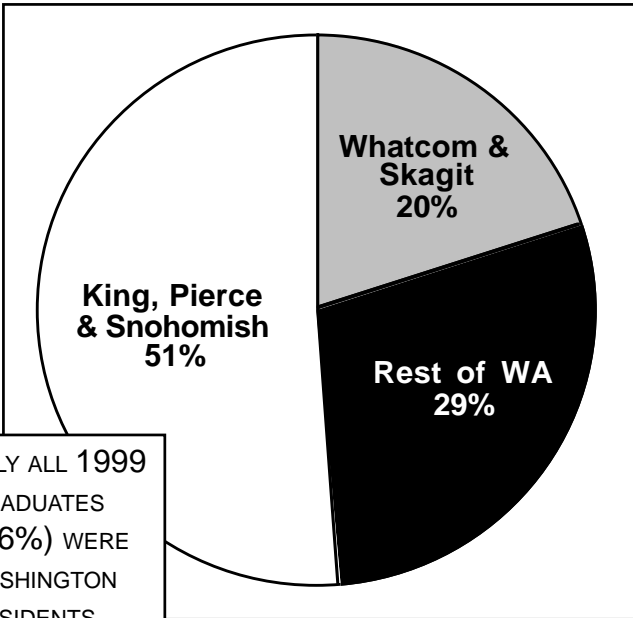


“NATIVES” ARE STUDENTS WHO ENTERED WESTERN AS FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN. ADMIT STATUS “OTHER” INCLUDES GRADUATES INITIALLY ENROLLED THROUGH CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND TRANSFERS TAKING SECOND DEGREES.



- Some graduates chose not to list their ethnicity (6.7%). These students were not included when figuring ethnicity findings for this report.
- There were 32 graduates from foreign countries.

ETHNIC-MINORITIES MADE UP 14.2% OF THE 1999 GRADUATING CLASS (INCLUDING 0.1% LISTING THEIR ETHNICITY AS "OTHER"). THE PERCENT OF ETHNIC-MINORITIES IN THE 1998 GRADUATING CLASS WAS 14.0%.

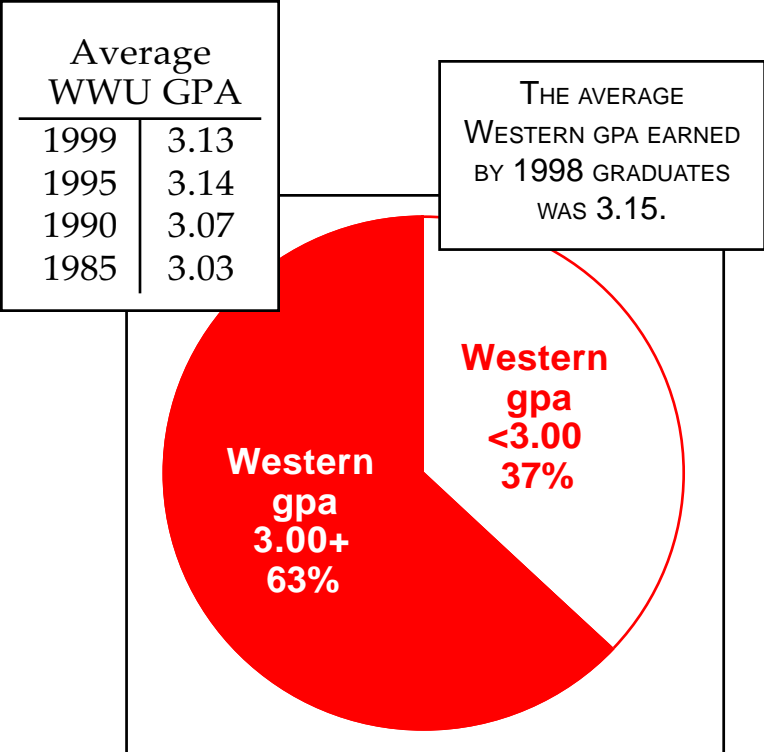


NEARLY ALL 1999 GRADUATES (94.6%) WERE WASHINGTON COUNTY RESIDENTS. BREAKDOWNS ARE AS SHOWN.

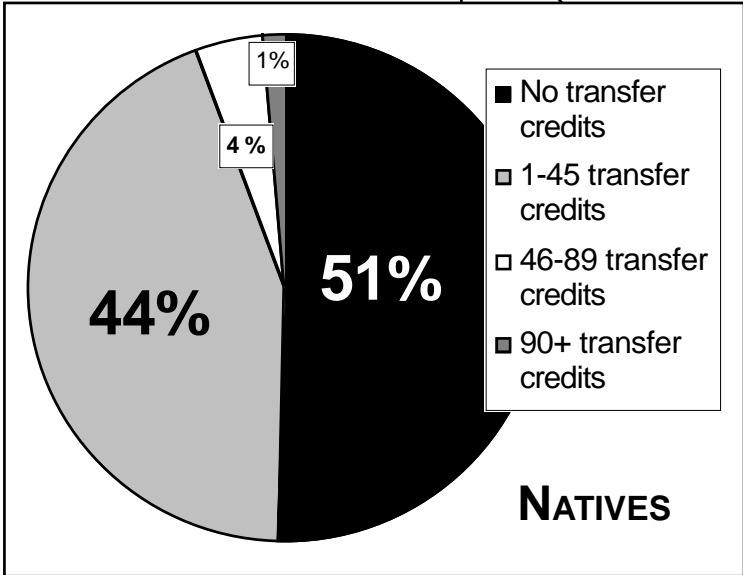
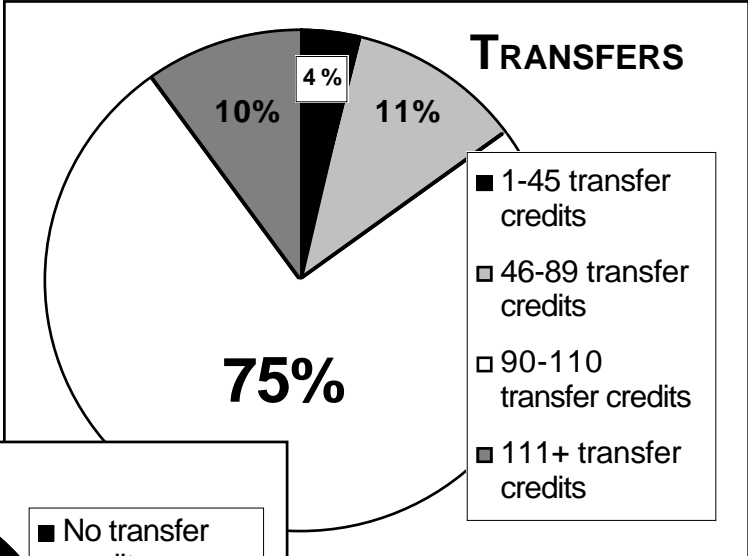
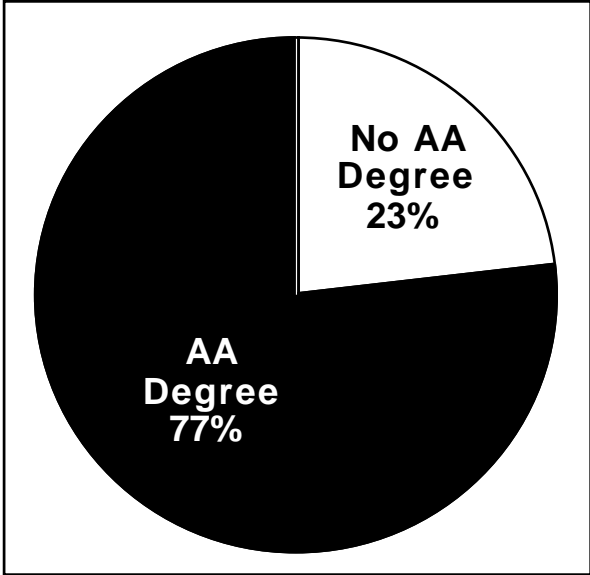
- When noting the high school grade point average (hsgpa) of Western graduates, it should be kept in mind that most cases are for native students (81.4%). The same is true for pre-college test scores like the SAT (54.2%). Transfer students with AA degrees do not need to include either their hsgpa's or pre-college test scores when applying for admission.
- The average hsgpa for 1999 Western graduates was 3.50; the average SAT-composite score was 1082. The average Admissions Index (a formula that combines hsgpa and pre-college test scores) was 62.9.

HONORS WERE EARNED BY 8.4% OF WESTERN'S 1999 GRADUATES: 101 EARNED CUM LAUDE; 103 EARNED MAGNA CUM LAUDE. THIS IS DOWN FROM 10.5% EARNING HONORS IN 1998.

- The average hsgpa for females was 3.55, and for males 3.42.
- The average hsgpa for natives was 3.54 (n = 1144); for transfers including hsgpa in their files (n = 252), the average was 3.35.
- The average transfer gpa was 3.17. The transfer gpa for females was 3.24, and for males was 3.08.



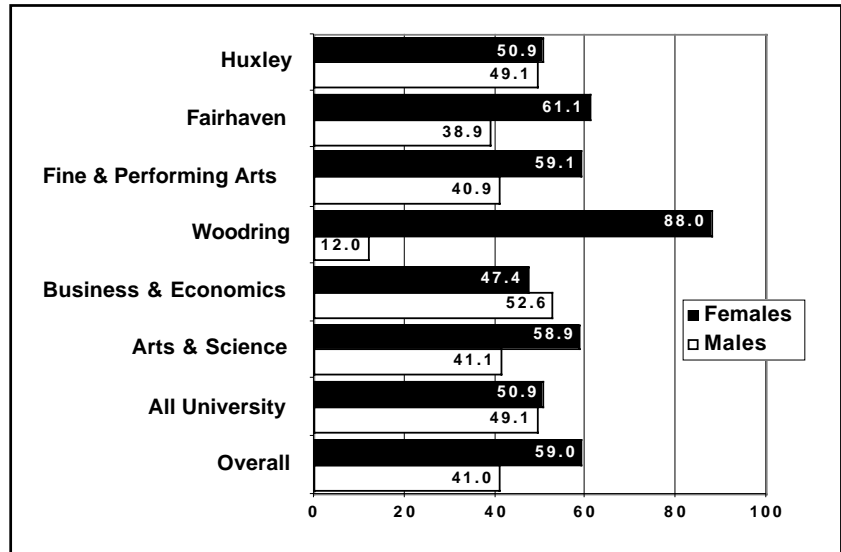
NEARLY HALF (49.5%) OF GRADUATES WHO ENTERED WESTERN AS FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN (NATIVES) EARNED CREDITS TOWARDS GRADUATION FROM SCHOOLS OTHER THAN WESTERN. IN OTHER WORDS, ONLY ABOUT HALF OF NATIVE GRADUATES ACTUALLY EARNED ALL THEIR ACADEMIC CREDITS AT WESTERN. ALSO, BECAUSE RUNNING START STUDENTS ARE CONSIDERED NATIVES REGARDLESS OF THE NUMBER OF COLLEGE CREDITS THEY'VE EARNED, 37 NATIVES HAD EARNED AA DEGREES.



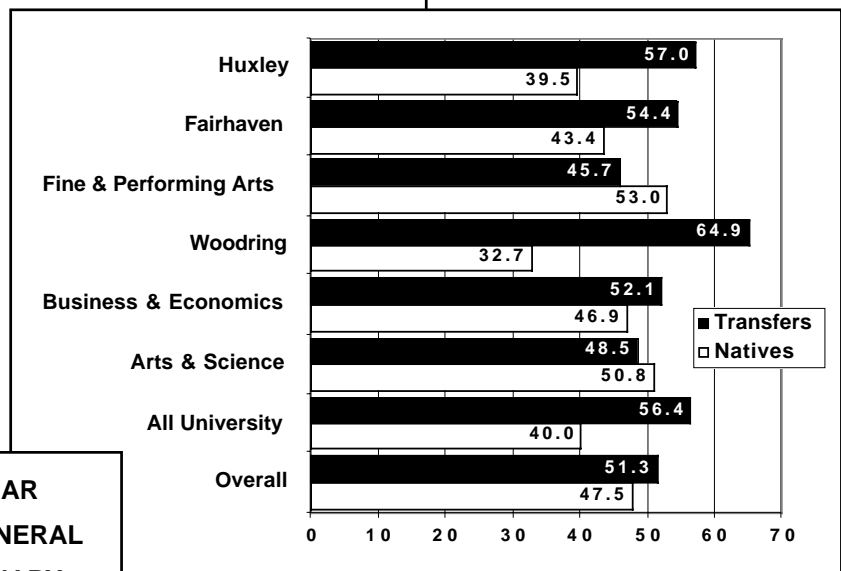
Average number of credits transferred by age:
 21-22 = 46 credits
 23-24 = 67 credits
 25-29 = 90 credits
 30-39 = 87 credits
 40+ = 98 credits

Arts & Sciences graduated the most students (55.1%), followed by Business & Economics (15.9%), Woodring (8.6%), Fine & Performing Arts (6.8%), Huxley (4.7%), and Fairhaven (3.7%). Compared to 1998, there were slight decreases in the percentage of graduates in Woodring (down 2.7%), Huxley (down 2.0%), and Fairhaven (down 0.7%). There were slight increases in the percentage of graduates in Arts & Sciences (up 1.6%), All-University (up 1.4%), Business & Economics (up 1.2%), and Fine & Performing Arts (up 1.0%).

OVERALL



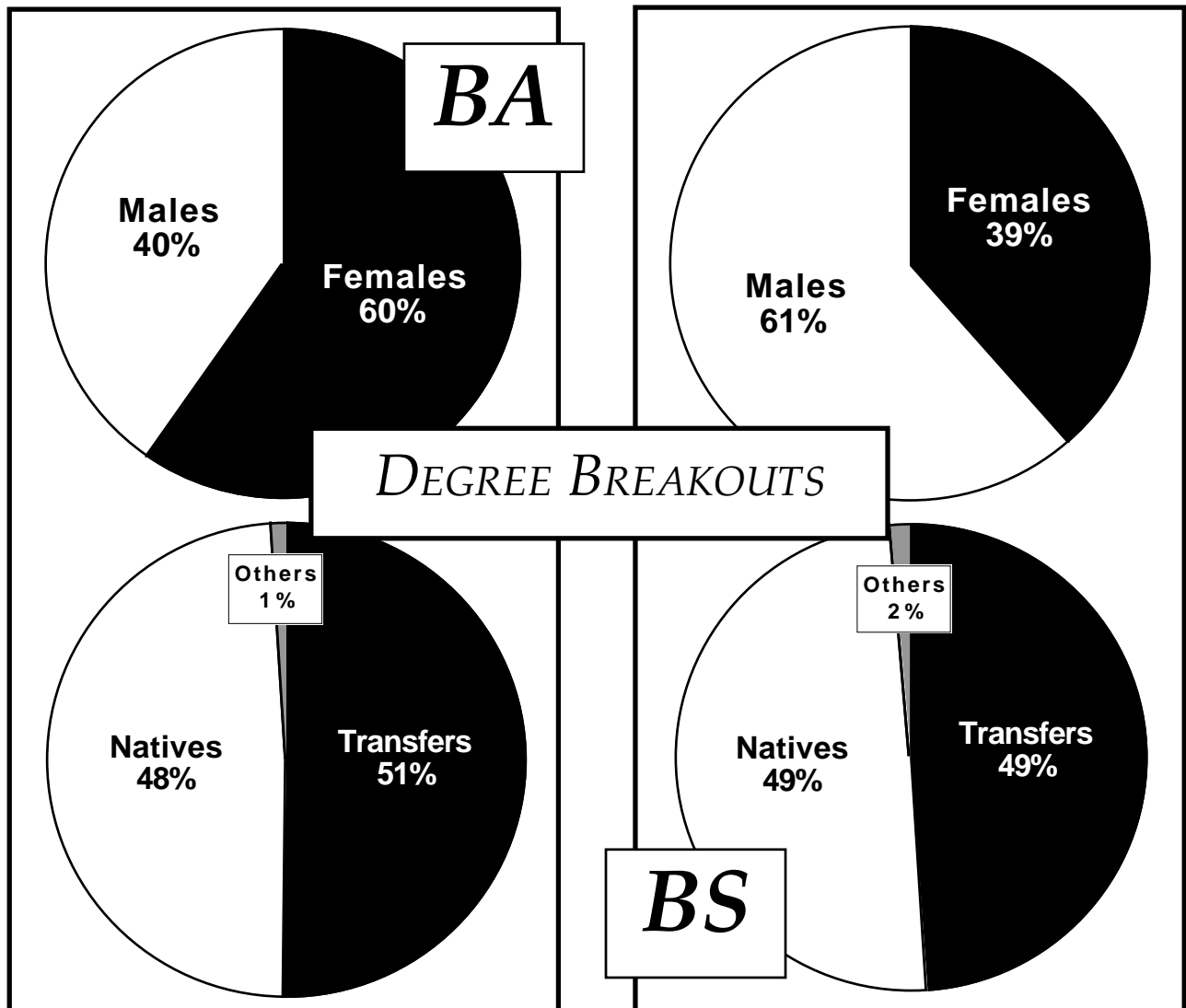
SUBCOLLEGE BREAKOUTS



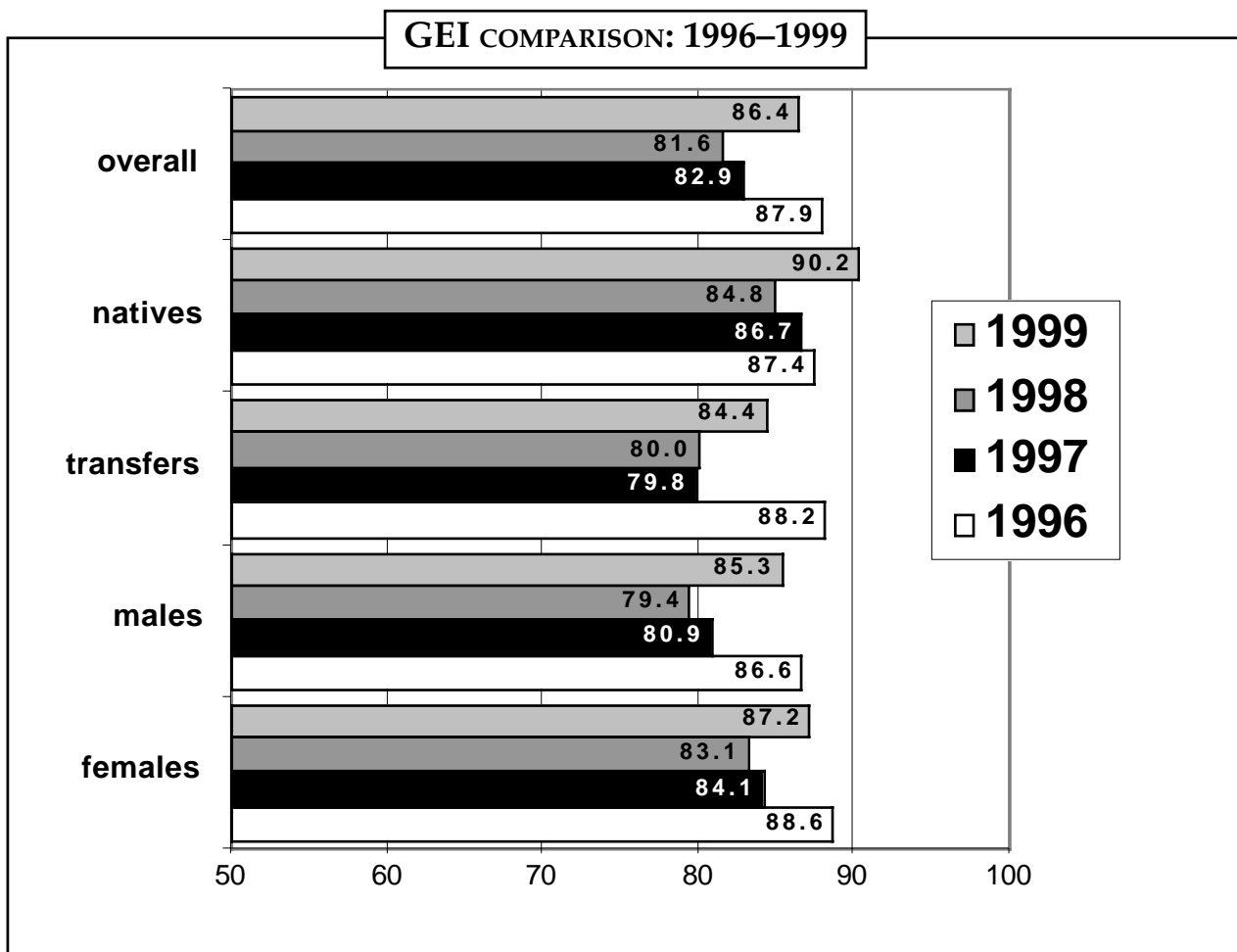
FOR ONLY THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS GRADUATED IN GENERAL STUDIES, A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY MAJOR, AND EARNED ALL-UNIVERSITY DEGREES (4.6% IN 1999 COMPARED TO 3.2% IN 1998).

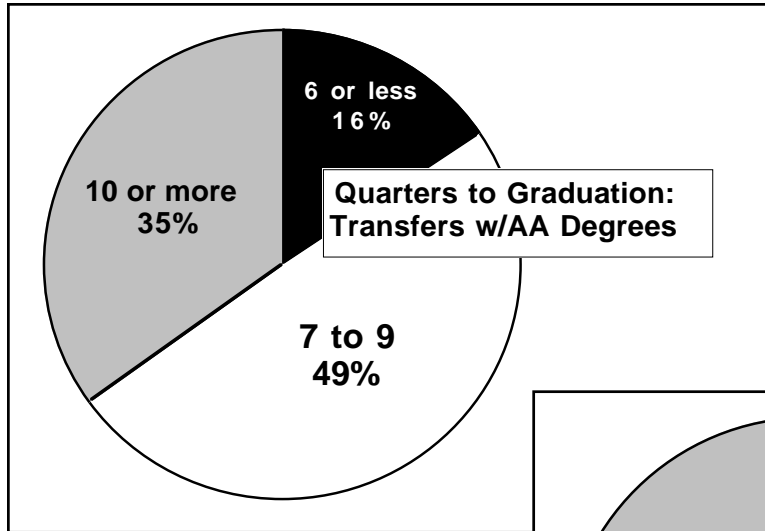
Most 1999 graduates earned BA Degrees (69.3%), followed by BS Degrees (16.4%), BA / Ed Degrees (13.2%), BFA Degrees (0.3%), and BMUS Degrees (0.8%). Relative to their overall proportions (natives = 48%; transfers = 51%), natives were more likely to earn BMUS degrees (natives = 70%), while transfers were more likely to earn BAE degrees (transfers = 60%). Similarly, relative to their overall proportions (females = 59%; males = 41%), females were more likely to earn BAE degrees (females = 82%), while males were more likely to earn BS and BMUS degrees (BS males = 62%; BMUS males = 60%).

OVERALL

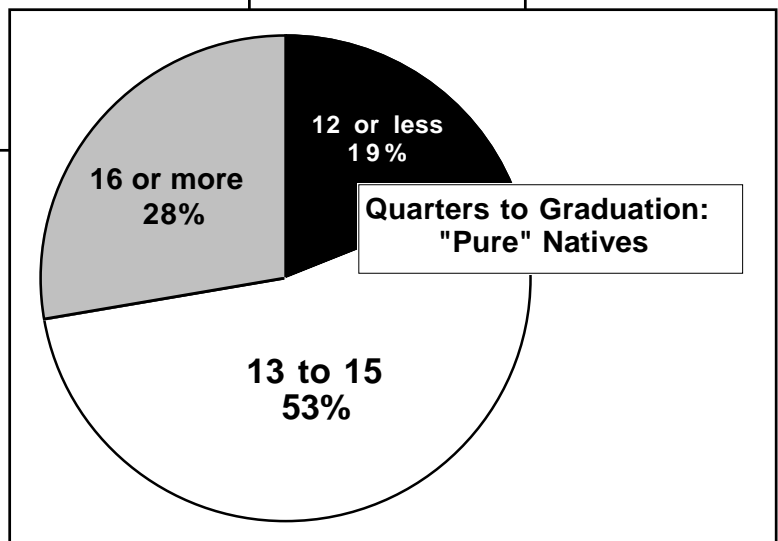


- Previous graduate reports have highlighted issues of time-to-degree efficiency. Included in this year’s report are measures such as the number of quarters attended before graduation and the Graduation Efficiency Index (GEI). The GEI does not track linear time to graduation, but rather student credit efficiency. Its formula utilizes transfer credits (if any), the number of credits earned, and the number of credits needed to earn the degree—180 being the usual. Using the GEI formula, a student who earns no more than the necessary number of credits for graduation has achieved 100% efficiency. (A copy of this formula can be requested from the OIAT.)
- The overall GEI for 1999 graduates was 86.4%. For natives the GEI was 90.2%, and for transfers 84.5%. For females the GEI was 87.2%, and for males 85.3%. (See the figure below for 1996-99 GEI comparisons.)

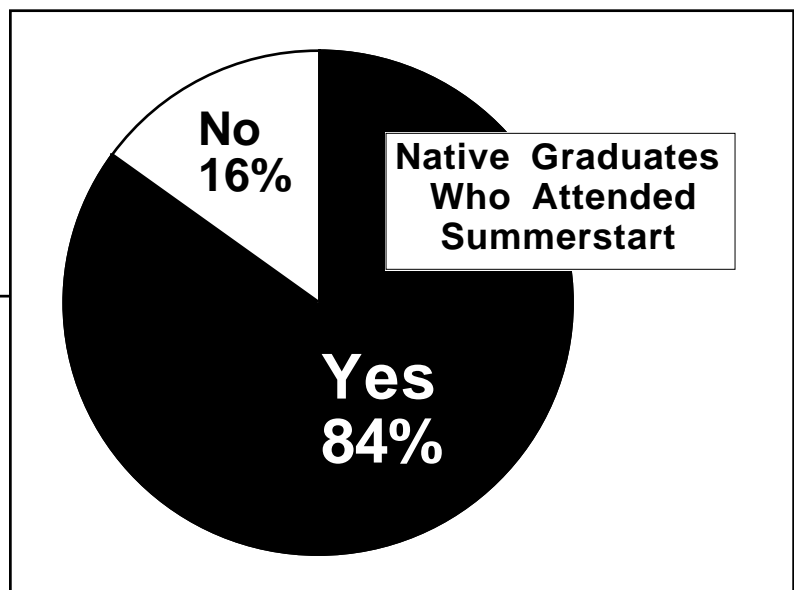




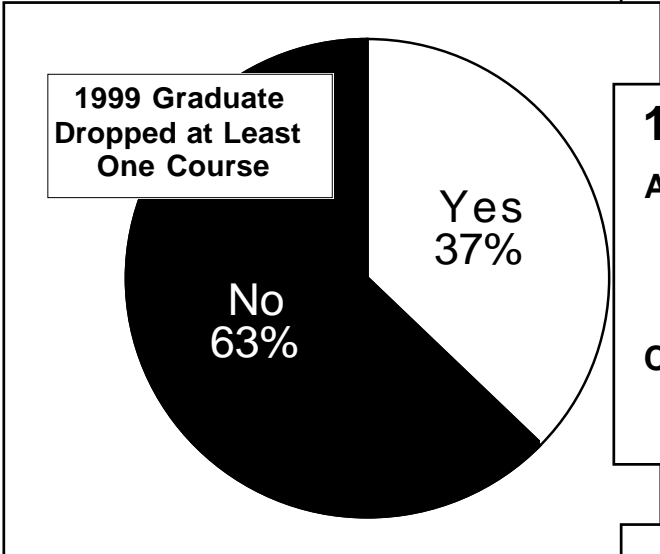
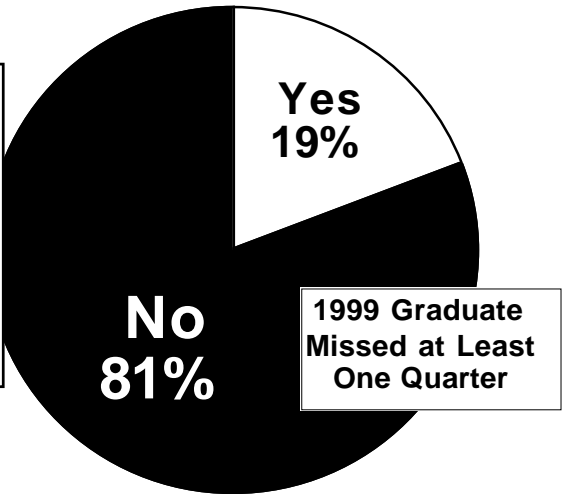
Traditionally, a transfer with an AA degree might be expected to graduate within six quarters, while a "pure" native (a native graduate who earned Western credits only, no outside credits) might be expected to graduate within twelve quarters.



- Studies have indicated that participation in orientation programs has had a positive effect on time-to-degree efficiency.
- Summerstart is the freshman orientation program, first offered in 1986.
- Transitions is the summer orientation program for transfers, first offered in 1994.

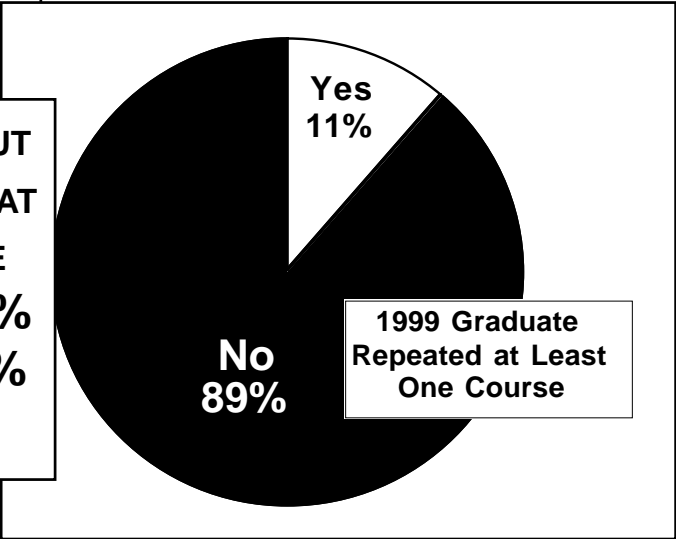


1999 GRADUATES WERE ABOUT AS LIKELY TO HAVE MISSED A QUARTER AS WERE GRADUATES IN PREVIOUS CLASSES (20% IN 1998 AND 19% IN 1997).

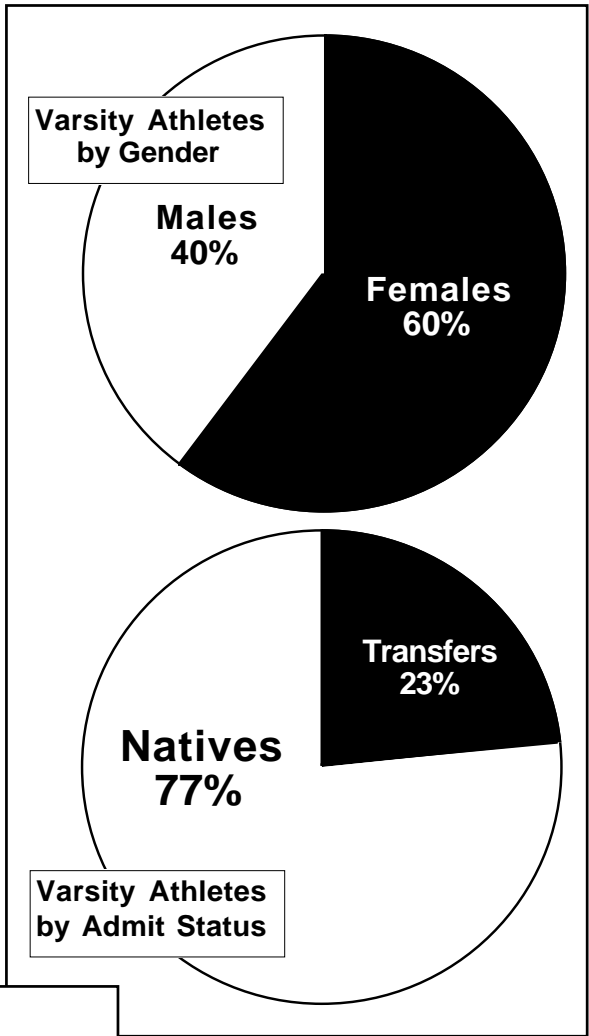


1999 GRADUATES WERE ABOUT AS LIKELY TO HAVE DROPPED AT LEAST ONE COURSE AS WERE GRADUATES IN PREVIOUS CLASSES (37% IN 1998, 38% IN 1997 AND 43% IN 1996)

1999 GRADUATES WERE ABOUT AS LIKELY TO HAVE REPEATED AT LEAST ONE COURSE AS WERE LAST YEAR'S GRADUATES (11% IN 1998, 28% IN 1997, 14% IN BOTH 1996 AND 1995).



- There were 124 graduates from the class of 1999 who had participated in varsity athletics (class of 1998 = 131; 1997 = 136; 1996 = 141).
- Graduating varsity athletes were predominately White (85.7%), followed by Asian (6.7%), African-American (2.5%) Hispanic (3.4%), and American-Indian (1.7%).
- Graduating varsity athletes earned degrees in 32 of Western's 45 departments, including 16.9% in Physical Education, 9.5% in Teacher Education, 7.3% in FMDS, 6.5% in Psychology, and 5.6% in both Biology and Political Science.
- 8.1% of graduating varsity athletes earned honors, compared to 8.5% of graduates earning honors overall.



1999 Varsity Athlete Graduates

Sport	N	%
Track	35	28.2%
Crew	20	16.1%
Football	18	14.5%
Soccer	16	12.9%
Cross-country	10	8.1%
Fast Pitch	9	7.3%
Volleyball	6	4.8%
Tennis	4	3.2%
Basketball	3	2.4%
Golf	3	2.4%
	124	100.0%

VARSITY ATHLETES OVERALL EARNED A 3.06 WESTERN GPA. MALE ATHLETES EARNED A 3.01 WESTERN GPA, AND FEMALES A 3.10. NATIVE ATHLETES EARNED A 3.04 WESTERN GPA, AND TRANSFERS A 3.13.

PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- Analyses by statistical correlation indicated that the variable with the strongest positive correlation with Western gpa was the Admissions Index ($r = .501$; $p = .000$). The Admissions Index is a mathematical formula that combines high school gpa and pre-college test scores (for example, the SAT and ACT) into one synthesized figure. The Admissions Index is utilized statewide and has a scale of 0-100. The average AI for 1999 Western graduates was 62.9, up from 60.6 in 1998, 58.5 in 1997, and 55.6 in 1996. The strong positive correlation between the AI and Western gpa indicates that the Admissions Index is a reliable predictor of academic success at Western, using Western gpa as the success criterion.
- Transfer gpa was also included in the correlation analyses, as high school gpa and the AI are rarely a part of transfer graduates' records. Though not as strong a predictor as the AI, transfer gpa indicated a modest to strong correlation with Western gpa ($r = .474$; $p = .000$).
- Regression analysis was also performed on the data. This statistic helps to indicate which of a number of variables can predict the score of a dependent variable (in this case, Western gpa). This test was performed on "pure native" only, those students who had entered Western as freshmen and not taken any transfer credits. Statistically, this cohort offered the most coherent analysis, for the following reasons: a) all their credits were taken at Western, and b) high school gpa, pre-college test scores, and the Admissions Index were included in their records. For "pure natives" the Admissions Index proved the strongest predictor of Western gpa ($R^2 = .227$). In other words, 22.7% of the variance in Western gpa could be explained by the Admissions Index of the "pure native" cohort.
- In summary, if a variable was needed that might help predict how well an incoming freshman might perform at Western, using Western gpa as that criterion for success, the Admissions Index would currently be the best. For transfer graduates, transfer gpa might serve as a decent alternative.



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