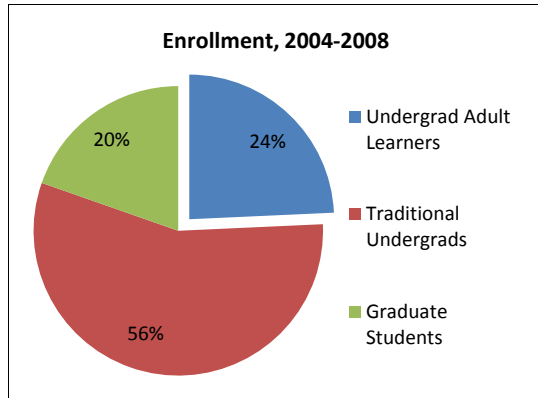


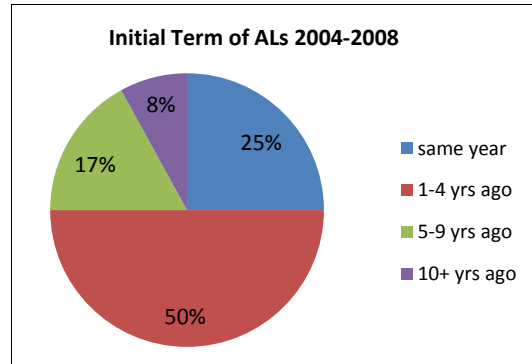
## Undergraduate Adult Learners 2004-2008

Undergraduate level adult learners are a substantial part of the UCCS student body, making up 24% of all students and 30% of undergraduates for each of the past 5 years. **An adult learner (AL) is defined here as an undergraduate who is more than 23 years old.**



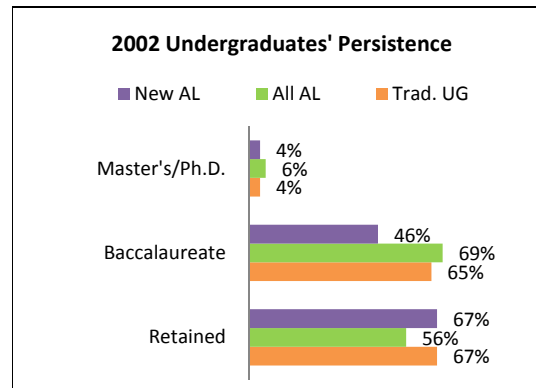
**Class.** Most ALs are juniors or seniors. From 2004 to 2008, 2% were unclassified, 5% were freshmen, 12% sophomores, 26% juniors, and 55% seniors. ALs are typically continuing (79%), transfer (16%), or readmitted students (4%).

**Initial term.** The majority of adult learners (75%) are only 1 to 4 years into their academic career at UCCS. On average, 17% of ALs began 5 to 9 years ago, and 8% started more than 10 years ago.



**Persistence.** In Fall 2002, there were 1837 ALs at various stages in their academic careers and 18% were new to UCCS. Among these *new* adult learners, 67% were retained one year later and 46% graduated. These rates are comparable to the Fall 2002 cohort of freshmen who marked a 67% retention rate and a 45% graduation rate.

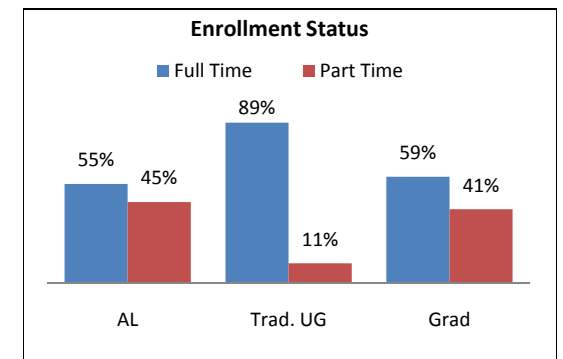
Among all ALs in 2002, 56% were enrolled one year later and 75% graduated by Fall 2008 with a baccalaureate degree (69%) or a master's degree (6%). Among the traditional age students in 2002, 65% earned baccalaureate degrees and 4% earned a master's or Ph.D.



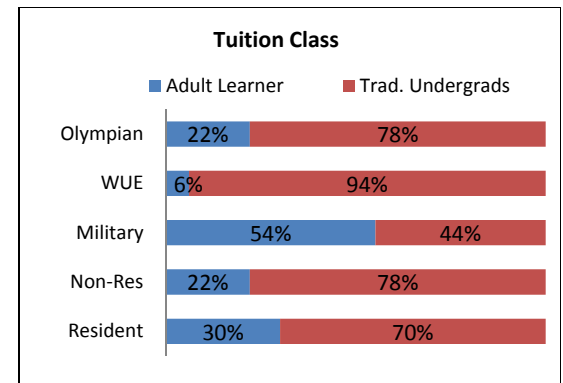
**GPA.** Adult learners averaged a 3.04 GPA over the past five years compared to 2.87 among traditional undergraduates, suggesting that their experience may be paying off in the classroom.

**Credit hours.** Among the 55% of adult learners who enroll full-time, they average 13.9 credit hours (Fall) in comparison to 14.3 among undergraduates less than 24 years old. Part-time adult learners average 6.8 hours or 0.7 fewer hours than other undergraduates. Overall, adult learners take 1 less course than traditional undergraduates.

**Part time.** Approximately 45% of adult learners are enrolled part time compared to 11% of traditional-aged undergrads and 59% of graduate-level students.

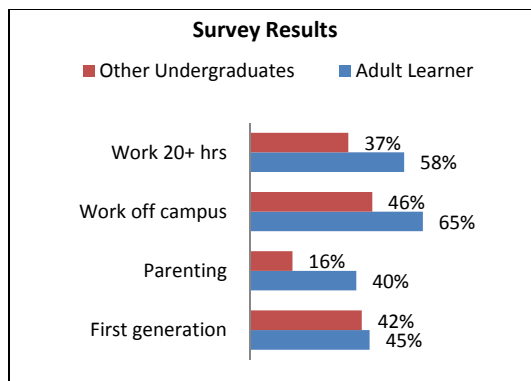


**Tuition Group.** About 91% of adult learners are residents. They make up 22% of both Olympian and Non-resident students; they are over-represented among students with military tuition waivers (54%).



**Gender & Ethnicity.** Like the student body as a whole, women are about 60% of adult learners. The ethnicity of adult learners is also similar to our student body: White (75%), Latino (9%), Black (4%), Asian (4%), and Indian (1%). The remaining 6% did not disclose their ethnicity.

**Survey Results.** According to our internal surveys, adult learners differ substantially from other undergraduates. ALs are more likely to be first-generation students, raising children under age 18, working off campus, and working more than 20 hours per week in comparison to other undergraduates.



**Major.** Over the past 5 years, the most popular majors among adult learners are nursing, psychology, and biology.

Top Majors: 2004-2008	Students	% of adult learners
Nursing	694	7%
Psychology	661	7%
Biology	658	7%
History	552	6%
English	549	6%
Communication	531	6%
Geography	389	4%
Sociology	355	4%
Nursing Prep	352	4%
Accounting	286	3%

The top ten majors vary according to gender although they share 5 of the top ten majors.

Women's Top 10	Men's Top 10
Nursing	<b>Biology</b>
<b>Psychology</b>	Mech. Engr.
English	<b>History</b>
<b>Biology</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>History</b>	Computer Sci.
Nursing Prep	<b>Psychology</b>
<b>Communication</b>	<b>Geography</b>
Sociology	Political Sci.
<b>Geography</b>	Electrical Engr.
Accounting	Pre-Engineering

**Financial Aid.** For the most recent academic year in which financial aid data are available, about the same percentage of AL's as other undergraduates received financial aid. However, adult learners were more likely to have loans, higher loan amounts, and Pell grants. Their estimated family contribution and income are about 45% of the estimates for other undergraduates.

AY 2007-2008	%	Avg Amt.
<b>Adult Learners:</b>		
Total aid	67%	10,059
Loans	55%	7,739
Pell Grant	38%	2,273
Family Contribution		4,041
Income		24,855
<b>Other Undergrads:</b>		
Total aid	66%	8,061
Loans	43%	7,049
Pell Grant	20%	2,790
Family Contribution		9,024
Income		54,336

**Summary.** We expect adult learners' persistence to be negatively influenced by competing roles such as off-campus employment and family-related responsibilities that place demands on their time, energy, and attention. However, we discovered that the 2002 adult learners at UCCS are persisting at a similar rate than other students despite evidence of competing roles.

While competing roles may be a barrier for adult learners, there are also potential advantages: (a) accumulated credit hours from previous enrollment can make "the distance to the finish line shorter," (b) they may be more committed to their academic career due to greater maturity and motivation, and (c) they may have more resources to afford tuition and juggle responsibilities.\*

Overall, we learn from these data that adult learners are a substantial part of our student body and despite competing roles (working and parenting) and other disadvantages (first generation status, student loan debt, less income, fewer family resources, and part time enrollment) they are earning good grades and graduating at a clip that is slightly better than other undergraduate students.

If you have questions, comments, or ideas for further research on issues that influence adult learners, please contact the Office of Institutional Research.

\*Jacobs, Jerry A. & Rosalind Berkowitz King. 2002. Age and College Completion. *Sociology of Education* 75(3): 211-230.