



# EDUVENTURES

Continuing and Professional Education  
Learning Collaborative  
Custom Research Report  
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## Benchmarking Adult Undergraduate Student Retention

Data Type	Key Sources	Key Questions
Adult Undergraduate Retention Benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult undergraduate student data supplied by CPE-LC member institutions</li> </ul>	<p>What is the composition of peer institutions' adult undergraduate students?</p> <p>What benchmark retention rates of adult undergraduate students exist at other peer institutions?</p> <p>Of those identified above, what are key factors and variables that impact or correlate with adult learner retention?</p>

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### Inquiry Overview

A Continuing Professional Education Learning Collaborative (CPE-LC) member institution is interested in better understanding the challenges that adult undergraduate students' face and the impact on adult student retention. In response, the inquiring member conducted a detailed student retention analysis to uncover factors contributing to student retention risk and persistence. To expand the data available from its own institution, the inquiring member sought to expand data collection by benchmarking its results among peer institutions. This data collection will focus on factors that drive adult undergraduate degree students to persist, as well as the demographic factors that may prevent their continuation of an undergraduate degree program.

### Methodology

In order to establish adult undergraduate student benchmark data, CPE-LC staff developed a list of variables to be collected from each institution, by inputting its set of individual student data metrics. CPE-LC staff invited CPE-LC member institutions with cohort-based adult undergraduate degree programs to participate in this research investigation by submitting student data. Ten CPE-LC member institutions participated in addition to the inquiring member, for a total of 11 institutions.

**Custom Research Reports** – *In-depth analysis of issues of concern to individual members.* The CPE-LC program maintains dedicated staff to support members' needs for detailed, quick-turnaround research. Requests may be prompted by issues raised in the CPE-LC program's Collaborative Research investigations, may seek to leverage the collective experience of the CPE-LC membership, or may take the form of small-scale primary research investigations or reviews of secondary literature. Requests are fulfilled on a first-come basis and generally take 12 to 13 weeks to complete subsequent to the receipt of an approved proposal. CPE-LC staff works to deliver accurate, reliable data and information in all cases; however, we cannot guarantee the accuracy of data and information from all sources used.

## Executive Summary

- Enrollment levels within cohort-based adult undergraduate degree programs greatly vary by participating institution. Average enrollment levels across all cohorts analyzed ranged between 46 and approximately 1,900 with the inquiring member institution's average below the median (309 compared to a median of 400). One participating institution experienced the greatest enrollment levels (~1,790 to 2,040) among the three cohorts in which it submitted student data (2004-2006). The institution with the lowest enrollment levels ranged between 37 and 56 adult undergraduate students.
- The mean age of adult undergraduate students at the time of cohort start ranged between 26.5 and 38.2 with the inquiring member institution ranging between 29.4 and 30.4 between the years 2002 and 2006.
- Among institutions that submitted data, adult students' mean number of years out of school at the time of cohort start ranged between 2.9 and 6 among the five cohort start years. It is interesting to note that the number of years out of school experienced gradual declines at one participating institution, while the remaining institutions experienced a relatively flat trend in the mean number of years out of school of adult undergraduate students.
- Overall, the mean number of transfer hours that students possessed at the time of cohort start ranged between 22.6 and 80.5. Interestingly, the mean number of transfer hours at the inquiring member institution is relatively low compared to participating institutions. The overall mean G.P.A. of adult undergraduate students ranges between 2.57 and 3.44 with the inquiring member institution at the median (2.92).
- The average total number of courses ranged between four and 16, and the average total number of credits ranged between 10 and 45 across all cohort years and institutions. The number of adult students with at least one academic action<sup>1</sup> for all cohort start years ranged between four and 227. Interestingly, the inquiring member institution has experienced a declining trend in the number of students with at least one academic action between 2002 and 2006.
- Adult student's overall G.P.A. was the factor identified as being the most significant predictor of student retention at nearly all participating institutions. The number of transfer credits is a secondary predictor of retention at the majority of participating institutions. A higher G.P.A. appears to be correlated with a greater likelihood of graduation or continued enrollment as are a greater number of transfer credits. Interestingly, analysis revealed a surprising pattern regarding students within the upper G.P.A. level (greater than 3.6 most commonly). It appears that a number of participating institutions are losing more academically successful students, as the stop out percentage

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<sup>1</sup>Generally, academic actions defined as any type of academic warning that leads to a probationary period. Please note this definition was defined by the inquiring member and may not be necessarily reflective of peer institution's definitions.

among students with higher G.P.A. levels are stopping out at a greater rate than students with the a G.P.A. in the lower range (e.g. 3.5 to 3.6).<sup>2</sup>

## Key Findings

The goals of this research investigation is to identify the demographic and academic composition of adult undergraduate students at peer institutions as well as uncover average student retention rates and benchmarks in an effort to analyze the influence of specific variables on student retention outcomes.

It is important to note that caveats exist throughout this research investigation. Due to differences in reporting student data, definitions of specific variables, missing data, etc. some analysis may not be an ideal comparison. CPE-LC staff conducted this analysis on an institutional level due to these differences; aggregating all student data submitted by each institution into one sample was not feasible because of the unique traits of individual data sets. Comparisons on an institutional level will provide greater opportunities to evaluate specific benchmarks; however, again, this analysis should be reviewed cautiously as differences do exist. Thus, this research investigation should be considered on a directional basis. Throughout this investigation, CPE-LC staff provides a narrative on these caveats where necessary.

### **Demographic Composition of Adult Undergraduate Students at Participating CPE-LC Members**

Within this section of the retention study, CPE-LC staff provides an overview of the composition of the adult undergraduate student population at participating institutions on an individual institutional level. Again, to make comparisons between specific data points feasible, CPE-LC staff conducted some analysis using overall means of all cohorts combined (G.P.A., number of credits and courses) as opposed to providing a granular assessment by individual cohort year. CPE-LC staff does include this granular assessment by individual cohorts where feasible and applicable in the Appendix and will note this information throughout the investigation.

Specifically, this section provides the following demographic information:

- Identification of participating CPE-LC member institutions and number of cohorts and time period in which student data was submitted
- Number of adult undergraduate students enrolled in cohort start years (2002-2006)
- Median age by individual cohort start year
- Gender breakdown by individual cohort start year (by percentage of total cohort)
- Ethnicity breakdown by combined cohorts overall (by percentage of total cohorts combined)

#### *Participating CPE-LC Member Institutions*

In total, 11 CPE-LC member institutions participated in this retention benchmarking study. This total includes the inquiring member institution in addition to Rutgers University's three regional campuses. Participating institutions are listed below.

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<sup>2</sup>CPE-LC conducted CHAID analysis to determine which demographic and academic characteristics had the greatest influence on student retention and graduation at the participating institutions; this analysis is discussed later in the study.

- Adelphi University
- Avila University
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
- Ferris State University
- New York University
- Northern Illinois University
- Rutgers University, Camden Campus
- Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus
- Rutgers University, Newark Campus
- St. Edwards University
- Widener University

As displayed in Figure 1, the availability of student data varied by institution; seven institutions were able to provide student data for the five year period under review in entirety (2002-2006). The additional four institutions were able to report on two to four cohorts.

**Figure 1. Participating CPE-LC Member Institutions, Number of Cohorts of Adult Undergraduate Degree Student Data, and Time Period**

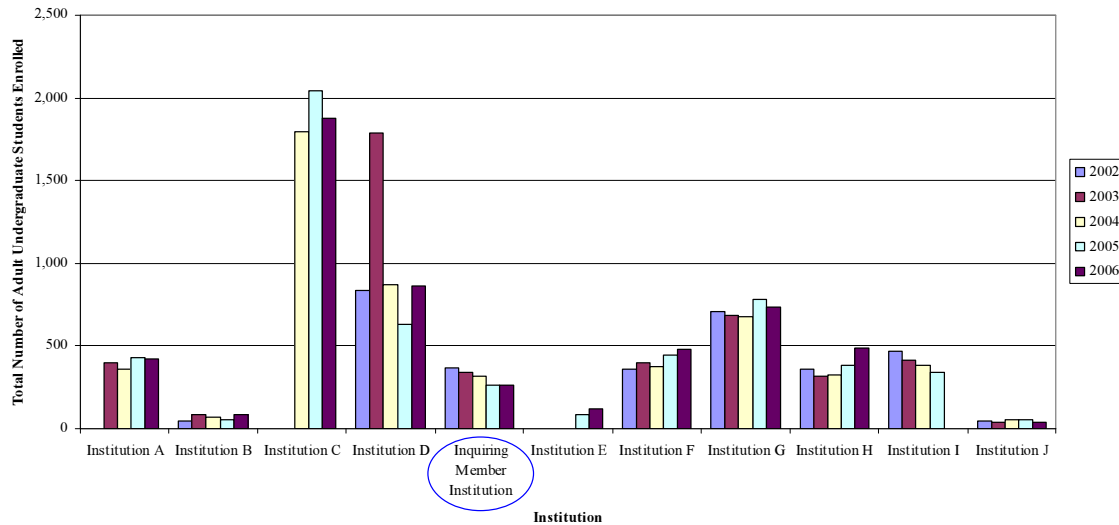
Name of Institution	Number of Cohorts	Time Period
Institution A	4	2003 through 2006
Institution B	5	2002 through 2006
Institution C	3	2004 through 2006
Institution D	5	2002 through 2006
Inquiring Member Institution	5	2002 through 2006
Institution E	2	2005 through 2006
Institution F	5	2002 through 2006
Institution G	5	2002 through 2006
Institution H	5	2002 through 2006
Institution I	4	2002 through 2005
Institution J	5	2002 through 2006

\*It is important to note that Institution E does not specifically operate on a cohort basis; the institution submitted student data based on individuals enrolled in the given academic year (2005 to 2006 and 2006 to 2007). Thus, this institution's analyses of its student data is limited and not included in all charts in this research investigation.

*Enrollment Levels of Adult Undergraduate Degree Programs by Cohort*

CPE-LC staff analyzed the total number of students enrolled in adult undergraduate degrees by individual cohort start year at participating institutions. As highlighted in Figure 2, enrollment levels within cohort-based adult undergraduate degree programs greatly vary by participating institution. Institution C experienced the greatest enrollment levels (~1,790 to 2,000) among the three cohorts in which it submitted student data (2004-2006). Interestingly, institution D experienced a dramatic increase in enrollment between its 2002 and 2003 cohort start year (~115%). Institutions B and J had the lowest enrollment levels among all participating institutions for the five year period.

**Figure 2. Total Number of Adult Students Enrolled in Undergraduate Degrees by Cohort Start Year, 2002-2006**

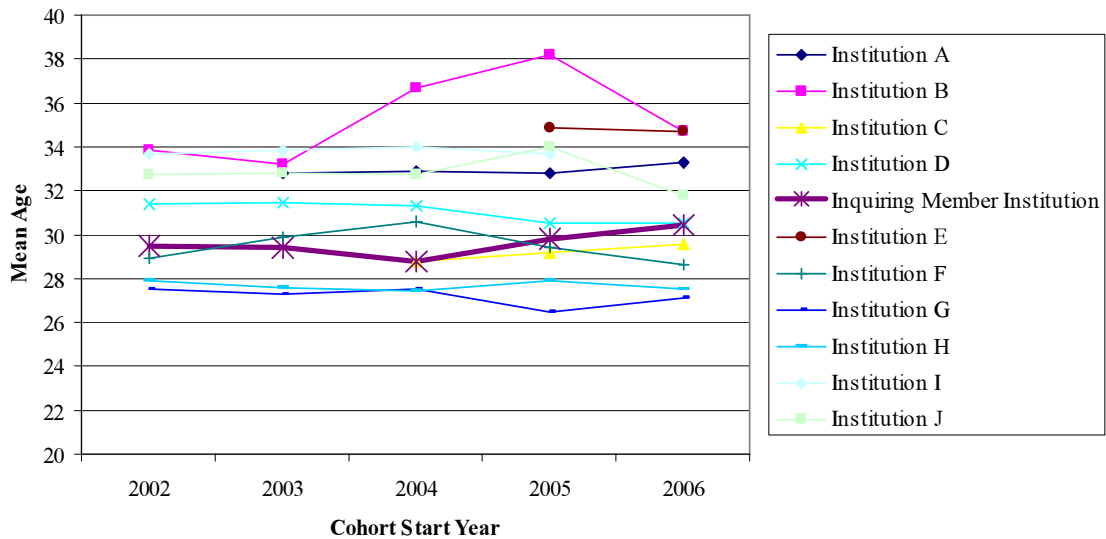


\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *Academic Year*

*Demographic Profile of Adult Undergraduate Students at Participating CPE-LC Members  
Mean Age by Cohort Start Year*

In order to compare the average age of adult undergraduate students at the time of cohort start, CPE-LC staff calculated the mean age of adult students by individual cohort year at participating institutions. Overall, the mean age of adult undergraduate students ranged between 26.5 and 38.2 with the inquiring member institution ranging between 29.4 and 30.4 between the years 2002 and 2006. Figure 3 displays the mean age of adult undergraduate degree students at participating institution by individual cohort start year.

**Figure 3. Mean Age of Adult Students by Cohort Start Year, 2002-2006**



\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *Age*

*Gender by Cohort Start Year*

CPE-LC staff analyzed gender of adult undergraduate students on an institutional level by individual cohort start year as well. Overall, the following trends emerged from this analysis:

- Enrollments at institutions A, B, F, and J are largely female dominated
- Enrollment at institution C is largely male dominated
- Enrollments at institutions D, E, G, H, I and the inquiring member are relatively split between males and females

The percentage breakdown of male and female adult undergraduate students by cohort start year is presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Gender of Adult Students by Cohort Start Year, 2002-2006**

Institution	Cohort Start Year: Gender Breakdown									
	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Institution A	N/A		22.7%	77.3%	21.4%	78.6%	20.2%	79.8%	23.3%	76.8%
Institution B	21.4%	78.6%	32.9%	67.1%	20.9%	79.1%	23.6%	76.4%	22.8%	77.2%
Institution C	N/A				88.7%	11.3%	89.0%	11.0%	89.4%	10.6%
Institution D	42.8%	57.2%	46.4%	53.6%	43.3%	56.7%	49.6%	50.4%	44.9%	55.1%
Inquiring Member Institution	46.9%	53.1%	43.7%	56.3%	48.0%	53.0%	47.3%	52.7%	43.8%	56.2%
Institution E	N/A						50.6%	49.4%	55.9%	44.1%
Institution F	32.0%	68.0%	37.3%	62.7%	34.1%	65.9%	36.8%	63.2%	40.0%	60.0%
Institution G	45.7%	54.3%	51.0%	49.0%	48.4%	51.6%	52.4%	47.6%	54.0%	49.6%
Institution H	45.4%	54.6%	44.5%	55.5%	49.2%	50.8%	49.1%	50.9%	47.2%	52.8%
Institution I	42.8%	57.2%	43.4%	56.6%	44.2%	55.8%	44.6%	55.4%	N/A	
Institution J	27.7%	72.3%	32.4%	67.6%	40.8%	59.2%	21.4%	78.6%	35.9%	64.1%

\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *Gender*

*Overall Ethnicity by All Cohorts Combined*

In order to compare ethnicity across a wide range of ethnicity definitions at participating institutions, first, CPE-LC staff classified all submitted student data by the eight ethnicity groups highlighted in Figure 5. Next, CPE-LC staff calculated the percentage of adult undergraduate students by ethnicity in all cohorts combined on an institutional level. It is important to note that the number of cohorts in which institutions were able to report student data varies between two and five. Thus, again, this data should be interpreted as directional in nature.

Overall, adult undergraduate students at nearly half of participating institutions are classified as Caucasian, Non-Hispanic (as highlighted in blue). Figure 5 presents the overall percentage of adult undergraduate students by ethnicity for all cohorts combined at participating institutions.

**Figure 5. Ethnicity of Adult Students by All Cohorts Combined, 2002-2006**

Institution	Ethnicity by All Cohorts Combined							
	Caucasian, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Non-Resident	Unknown	Other
Institution A	31.7%	24.3%	8.4%	5.9%	0.1%	2.3%	27.5%	0.0%
Institution B	60.0%	5.8%	4.3%	2.2%	0.0%	0.9%	26.8%	0.0%
Institution C	55.3%	7.5%	7.7%	3.5%	0.7%	0.0%	23.0%	2.2%
Institution D	70.5%	6.8%	1.9%	1.1%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%
Inquiring Member Institution	28.0%	15.0%	8.7%	7.7%	N/A	0.0%	35.2%	5.4%
Institution F	66.8%	18.2%	6.0%	5.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.4%	3.0%
Institution G	54.6%	10.9%	8.9%	17.8%	0.5%	3.7%	0.0%	3.7%
Institution H	25.8%	26.4%	17.7%	14.8%	0.2%	9.5%	0.9%	4.8%
Institution I	52.9%	11.3%	6.1%	3.3%	0.7%	2.1%	23.7%	0.0%
Institution J	57.5%	30.3%	1.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	8.3%	0.9%

\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *Ethnic Name*

*Overall State by All Cohorts Combined*

CPE-LC staff provides a high-level overview of states in which adult undergraduates reside. Again, this analysis was conducted for the overall percentage of adult undergraduate students by state in all cohorts combined on an institutional level. Most commonly, the state in which an adult undergraduate student resides is similar to the institution’s location. As displayed in Figure 6, the majority of students reside in the same state as the institution in which they were/are enrolled. Interestingly, institution C has the greatest diversity in states of residence, most likely due to existing regional campuses nationwide.

**Figure 6. Overview of Key Geographies of Adult Undergraduate Degrees by All Cohorts Combined, 2002-2006**

Institution	Overview of Key Geographies
Institution A	Vast majority located in New York (97%)
Institution B	Majority located in Missouri (79%); 20% in Kansas
Institution C	Largest diversity in geography nationally; top three locations include California (13%); Florida (11%); Texas (6%)
Institution D	Vast majority located in Michigan (91%)
Inquiring Member Institution	Majority located in New York (76%); 14% in New Jersey
Institution E	Vast majority located in Illinois (99%)
Institution F	Vast majority located in New Jersey (96%)
Institution G	Vast majority located in New Jersey (91%)
Institution H	Vast majority located in New Jersey (88%)
Institution I	Vast majority located in Texas (96%)
Institution J	Majority located in Pennsylvania (56%); 18% in New Jersey

\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *Pstate*

**Academic Profile of Adult Undergraduate Students at Participating CPE-LC Members**

Within this section of the research investigation, CPE-LC staff provides an overview of the key academic characteristics of adult undergraduate degree students at participating institutions.

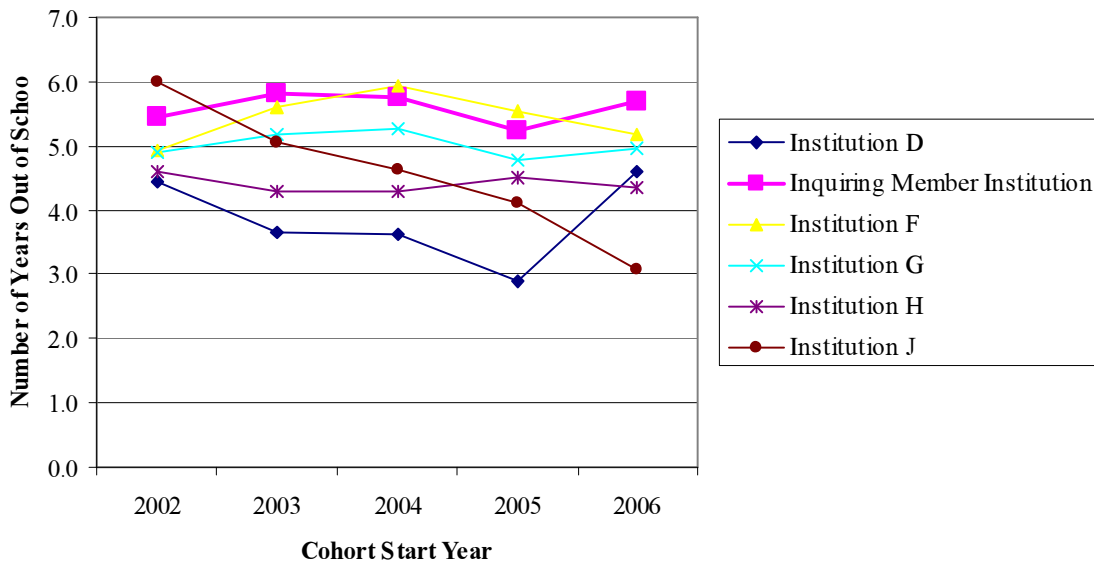
Specifically, this section provides the following academic information:

- Average number of years out of school by individual cohort start year (by percentage of total cohort)
- Average number of transfer hours by individual cohort start year (by percentage of total cohort)
- Identification of top three majors/disciplines of adult undergraduate degrees overall (by percentage of total cohorts combined)
- Average overall G.P.A. by combined cohorts overall (by percentage of total cohorts combined)
- Average total number of courses and total number of credits by combined cohorts overall (by percentage of total cohorts combined)

*Mean Number of Years Out of School When Starting*

CPE-LC staff calculated the mean number of years adult undergraduate students had been out of school at the time of cohort start. As highlighted in Figure 7, data on the number of years out of school was only submitted by six participating institutions; thus this analysis is only reflective of these six institutions. Overall, the mean number of years out ranged between 2.9 and 6 among the five cohort start years. It is interesting to note that the number of years out of school experienced gradual declines at institution J, while the remaining institutions have experienced relatively flat numbers with the exception of institution D’s 2005 to 2006 increase.

**Figure 7. Mean Number of Years Out of School by Cohort Start Year, 2002-2006\***



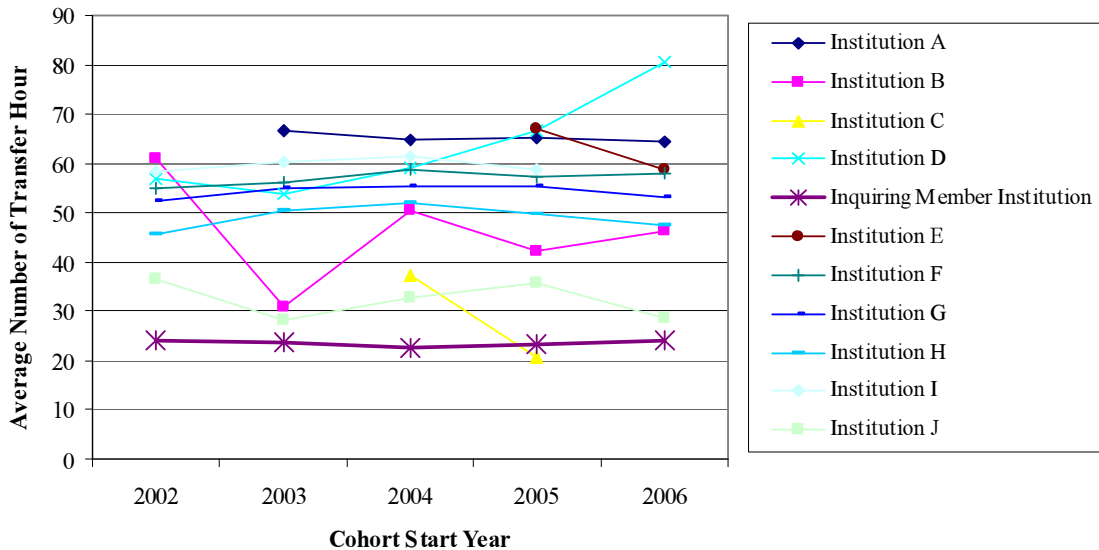
\*Institutions A, B, C, E, and I did not report number of years out of school

\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *Years Out*

### Mean Number of Transfer Hours by Cohort Start Year

In addition, CPE-LC staff calculated the mean number of transfer hours that undergraduate students possessed at the time of cohort start on an institutional level. As highlighted in Figure 8, overall, the mean number of transfer hours ranged between 22.6 and 80.5. Interestingly, the mean number of transfer hours at the inquiring member institution is relatively low compared to participating institutions.

**Figure 8. Mean Number of Transfer Hours by Cohort Start Year, 2002-2006**



\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *StatsTrfEhrs\_first*

### Key Disciplines of Adult Undergraduate Degrees

CPE-LC staff provides a high-level overview of the majors/disciplines in which adult undergraduate students were/are enrolled in at participating institutions. In order to construct an analysis in which the unit of measurement was equal, CPE-LC staff classified all relevant majors/disciplines supplied by participating institutions using CIP codes defined by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Similar to the state analysis, this discipline analysis was conducted for the overall percentage of adult undergraduate students by discipline in all cohorts combined on an institutional level. As highlighted in Figure 9, the following trends emerged:

- Liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities is the most common discipline/major of enrollment at four participating institutions
- Business, management, marketing, and related support services is the most common discipline/major of enrollment at three participating institutions; this discipline is also among the top three majors for four additional institutions
- Health professions and related clinical sciences-related disciplines are among the top three majors at four participating institutions

**Figure 9. Top Disciplines of Adult Undergraduate Degrees by All Cohorts Combined, 2002-2006**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Top Three Disciplines Overall</b>
Institution A	Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences (51%)
	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (16%)
	Public Administration and Social Service Professions (7%)
Institution B	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (43%)
	Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences (25%)
	Psychology (23%)
Institution C	Transportation and Materials Moving (82%)
	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (18%)
Institution D	Undeclared (26%)
	Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences (25%)
	Engineering Technologies/Technicians (9%)
Inquiring Member Institution	Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities (56%)
	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (22%)
	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services (10%)
Institution E	Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities (100%)
Institution F	Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities (23%)
	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (20%)
	Psychology (11%)
Institution G	Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities (31%)
	Social Sciences (15%)
	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (9%)
Institution H	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (39%)
	Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities (18%)
	Security and Protective Services (8%)
Institution I	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (39%)
	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services (10%)
	Social Sciences (8%)
Institution J	Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences (39%)
	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (15%)
	Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities (15%)

\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *Major Description*

The inquiring member institution shares two key trends with regard to common academic disciplines. Adult undergraduate students enrolled at the inquiring member institution appear to prefer computer and information sciences and support services-related majors also. The inquiring member should continue to offer a variety of disciplines particularly those focused in business, information systems, as well as general studies which provide adult undergraduate students with opportunities to concentrate in one field.

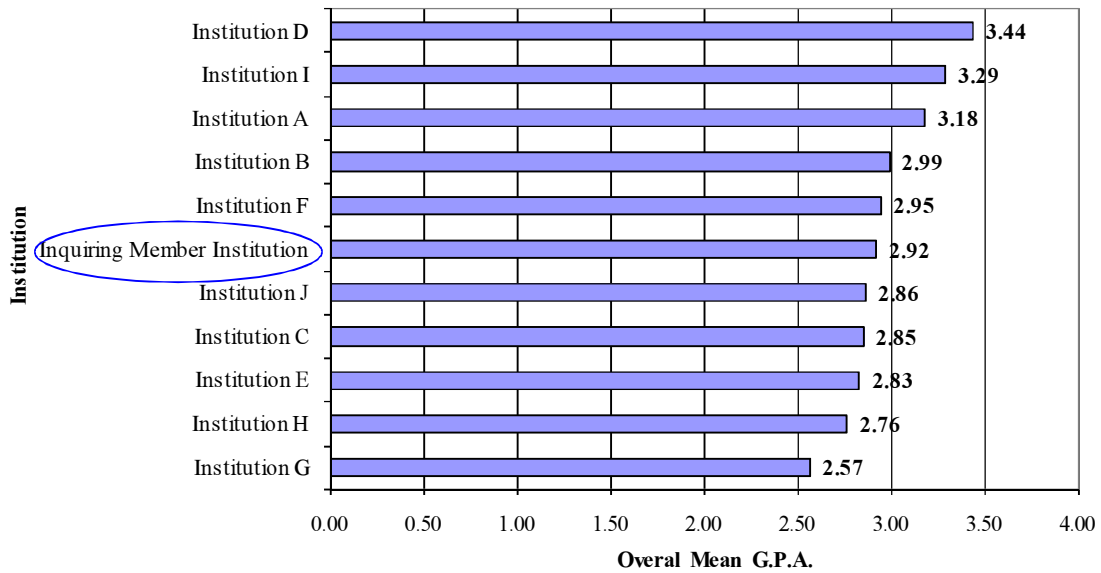
*Overall Mean G.P.A.*

CPE-LC staff analyzed the overall mean G.P.A. on an institutional level for all cohorts combined. It is important to note that this analysis was also conducted on an individual cohort basis for the participating institutions in which student data was available. For the purposes of comparison, CPE-LC staff includes the overall mean G.P.A. in this investigation; please refer to Figure 18 in

the Appendix for a more granular G.P.A. assessment by individual cohort start year at institutions in which this analysis was feasible.

As displayed in Figure 10, the overall mean G.P.A. of adult undergraduate students ranges between 2.57 and 3.44 with the inquiring member institution at the median (2.92). CPE-LC staff calculated five institutions as having a higher average overall G.P.A. of adult undergraduate students by all cohorts than the inquiring member institution.

**Figure 10. Average Overall G.P.A. of Adult Undergraduate Students by All Cohorts Combined, 2002-2006**



\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *StatsGPA*

*Average Number of Courses and Credits*

Similar to previous analyses, in order to ensure comparability between certain data points, CPE-LC staff analyzed the average total number of courses and credits in all cohorts combined on an institutional level. Overall, the average total number of courses ranged between four and 16, and the average total number of credits ranged between 10 and 45 as highlighted in Figure 11. Please refer to Figures 19 and 20 in the Appendix for a more granular course and credit assessment by individual cohort start year at institutions in which this analysis was feasible.

**Figure 11. Average Number of Courses and Credits Taken by Adult Undergraduate Students by All Cohorts Combined, 2002-2006 (Sorted by Mean Credits)**

Institution	Average Total Number of Courses in All Cohorts Combined			Average Total Number of Credits in All Cohorts Combined		
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Institution H	15	0	58	45	0	163
Inquiring Member Institution	11	0	36	41	0	142
Institution G	14	0	56	41	0	164
Institution A	N/A			37	0	112
Institution F	12	0	50	36	0	129
Institution I	12	1	46	34	3	138
Institution D	10	0	59	30	1	199
Institution B	10	1	47	27	0	125
Institution J	9	0	36	25	0	109
Institution C	7	1	34	20	1	105
Institution E	4	1	13	10	0	33

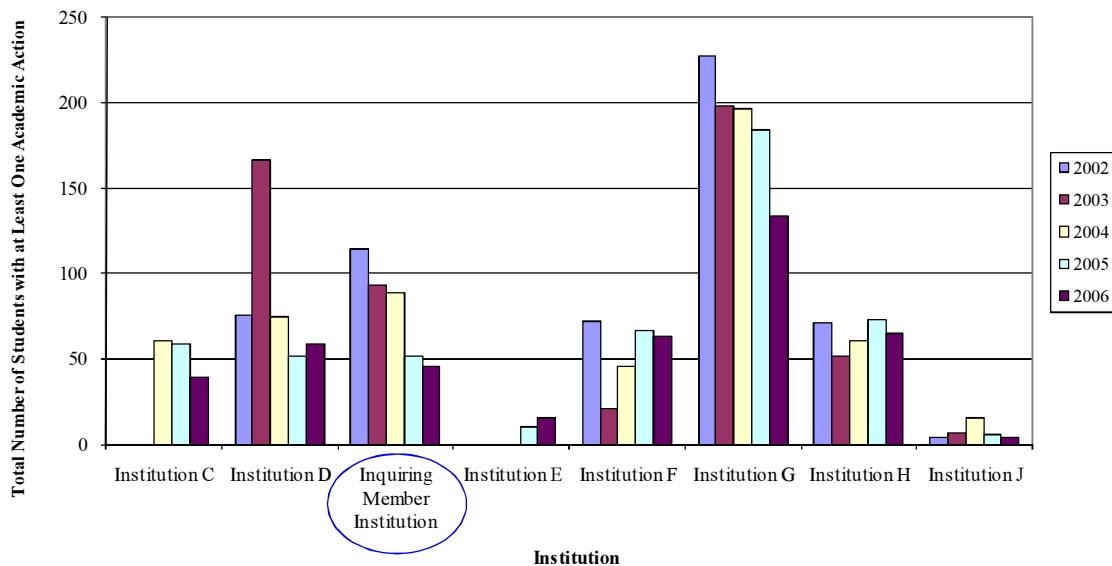
\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variables titled *TotalCredits* and *Total\_Num\_Courses*

Compared to all other institutions, adult undergraduate students at the inquiring member institution, on average, enroll in the second highest number of credits (41). This indicates that on average, there are higher credit enrollments at the inquiring member institution among adult undergraduate students than at peer institutions.

#### *Number of Academic Actions*

In order to analyze the number of academic actions adult undergraduate students experienced at participating institutions, CPE-LC staff calculated the total number of adult students who had at least one academic action in a given cohort year. The analysis was conducted in this manner due to institutional differences in the definitions of academic actions. Overall, the number of adult students with at least one academic action for all cohort start years ranged between four and 227. Interestingly, the inquiring member institution has experienced a declining trend in the number of students with at least one academic action between 2002 and 2006.

**Figure 12. Total Number of Adult Students With at Least One Academic Action by Cohort Start Year, 2002-2006<sup>3</sup>**



\*Institutions A, B, and I did not report number of academic actions

\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *Acadaction*

### **Benchmark Retention Rates of Adult Undergraduate Students at Peer Institutions**

Within this section of the research investigation, CPE-LC staff conducted an analysis of benchmark stop out and retention rates at participating institutions. While existing caveats to institutional data must be taken into consideration in the interpretation of this data, it is also important to consider the manner in which CPE-LC staff defined various terms.

Specifically, CPE-LC staff used the following definitions in this section of the research investigation:

- **Stop-Outs:** percentage of adult undergraduate students who were not enrolled in one or more years and did not re-enroll at a later date
- **Withdrawals:** percentage of adult undergraduate students who were institutionally classified as withdrawn in a given cohort year
- **Graduated:** percentage of adult undergraduate students who were institutionally classified as graduated in a given cohort year
- **Still Enrolled:** percentage of adult students still enrolled as of 2006 cohort start year

<sup>3</sup>Generally, academic actions defined as any type of academic warning that leads to a probationary period; Examples of “Academic Action” may include a student’s GPA dipping below 2.0, or has received too many “Incomplete” grades that impact their program progress; It may refer to formal notification that the student is not making “satisfactory progress” that meets financial aid guidelines. Please note this definition was defined by the inquiring member and may not be necessarily reflective of peer institution’s definitions.

*Percentage of Adult Undergraduate Stop-Outs and Withdrawals*

Overall, the total number of stop outs on an institutional level across all cohort years ranges between 11 and over 1,100. As a percentage of total students in a given cohort, the highlighted blue data points represent stop out benchmarks in which the majority of students are considered to have stopped out or withdrawn in the given cohort. Again, this data should be reviewed cautiously due to differences in institutional definitions of stop-outs and withdrawals. Benchmark rates on the percentages of adult undergraduate students stopping out or withdrawing by individual cohort year are displayed in Figure 13.

**Figure 13. Total Number of Stop Outs or Withdrawals by Cohort Start Year, 2002-2006<sup>4</sup>**

Institution	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Institution A	N/A		107	27.0%	105	29.2%	80	18.8%	0	0.0%
Institution B	15	35.7%	63	76.8%	39	58.2%	27	49.1%	79	100%
Institution C	N/A				1,104	61.5%	926	45.3%	0	0%
Institution D	446	53.7%	962	53.8%	426	48.7%	261	41.2%	38	4.7%
Inquiring Member Institution	203	55.5%	183	54.6%	154	48.3%	86	32.6%	9	3.5%
Institution F	166	46.2%	198	49.6%	142	37.9%	125	28.0%	29	6.0%
Institution G	340	48.1%	296	43.5%	269	39.7%	210	26.9%	40	5.4%
Institution H	148	41.5%	127	40.1%	108	33.4%	79	20.5%	12	2.5%
Institution I	237	51.2%	172	41.7%	127	33.2%	75	22.0%	N/A	
Institution J	21	44.7%	22	59.5%	31	63.3%	11	19.6%	1	2.7%

\*Institution E is omitted from this analysis due to a general lack of comparability in supplied student data

\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled Status\_First

*Percentage of Graduates and Enrolled Students*

CPE-LC staff also reviewed benchmark retention rates of adult undergraduate students at participating institutions. As a percentage of total students in a given cohort, the highlighted blue data points represents retention benchmarks in which the majority of students graduated or are still enrolled as of 2006. Benchmark rates on the percentages of adult undergraduate students who graduated or are still enrolled by individual cohort year are displayed in Figure 14.

<sup>4</sup>Inquiring member institution and Institution A is specifically defined as stop-outs (Institution A did not submit withdrawal data). In addition, Institution B did not submit withdrawal data, thus its data is also reflective of stop-outs specifically, not withdrawals. Please note for the 2006 cohort start year, the percentage of adult undergraduate students “stopping out” in 2006 is solely reflective of institutionally defined withdrawal data.

**Figure 14. Retention Benchmarks of Adult Undergraduate Degrees by Cohort Year, 2002-2006**

Institution	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
<b>Inquiring Member Institution</b>										
Graduated	121	33.1%	65	19.4%	37	11.6%	5	1.9%	0	0%
Still Enrolled	42	11.5%	87	26.0%	128	40.1%	173	65.5%	251	96.5%
<b>Institution A</b>										
Graduated	N/A		266	67.0%	183	50.9%	132	30.9%	5	1.2%
Still Enrolled			24	6.0%	71	19.8%	214	50.2%	391	92.7%
<b>Institution B</b>										
Graduated	25	59.5%	8	9.8%	12	17.9%	1	1.8%	0	0%
Still Enrolled	2	4.8%	11	13.4%	16	23.9%	27	49.1%	0	0%
<b>Institution C</b>										
Graduated	N/A				235	13.1%	86	4.2%	2	0.1%
Still Enrolled					456	25.4%	1,032	50.5%	1,874	99.8%
<b>Institution D</b>										
Graduated	358	43.1%	672	37.6%	255	29.2%	72	11.4%	38	4.4%
Still Enrolled	26	3.1%	154	8.6%	193	22.1%	301	47.5%	741	85.5%
<b>Institution F</b>										
Graduated	181	50.4%	193	48.4%	161	42.9%	58	13.0%	1	0.2%
Still Enrolled	12	3.3%	8	2.0%	72	19.2%	263	59.0%	450	93.4%
<b>Institution G</b>										
Graduated	345	48.8%	330	48.5%	279	41.2%	149	19.1%	8	1.1%
Still Enrolled	22	3.1%	54	8.0%	130	19.2%	422	54.0%	687	93.0%
<b>Institution H</b>										
Graduated	186	52.1%	150	47.3%	125	38.7%	36	9.4%	0	0.0%
Still Enrolled	23	6.4%	40	12.6%	90	27.9%	270	70.1%	466	96.1%
<b>Institution I</b>										
Graduated	187	40.4%	166	40.3%	106	27.7%	32	9.4%	N/A	
Still Enrolled	39	8.4%	74	18.0%	149	39.0%	234	68.6%		
<b>Institution J</b>										
Graduated	18	38.3%	8	21.6%	6	12.2%	5	8.9%	0	0.0%
Still Enrolled	8	17.0%	7	18.9%	12	24.5%	40	71.4%	36	92.3%

\*Institution E is omitted from this analysis due to a general lack of comparability in supplied student data.

\*Data for the inquiring member institution was derived by the variable titled *Status\_First*

**Key Factors and Variables Impacting or Correlating with Adult Student Retention**

In this section of the research investigation, CPE-LC staff conducted an analysis of key factors impacting student retention. This analysis was also conducted on an institutional level, again due to differences previously noted throughout the report (lack of available data, differences in definitions, etc.) Specifically, CPE-LC staff conducted CHAID analysis to determine which demographic and academic characteristics had the greatest influence on student retention and graduation at the participating institutions.

*CHAID Analysis Details*

CHAID analysis is a tree based statistical method that examines the relationships between independent variables and a categorical dependent variable. CHAID examines the variables

selected for analysis and picks the independent variables that make the greatest difference in the selected dependent variable and then investigates further within subgroup categories for this predictor. Due to the wide range of sample sizes along with the differing variable definitions and populations at participating institutions CHAID analysis is the most appropriate form of analysis.

Since this decision tree analysis was conducted on an institutional level, it is important to note that general comparisons will again be directional in nature. This information can assist the inquiring member institution in benchmarking itself against peer institutions, but should be considered in light of the various caveats discussed throughout this study.

The dependent variable is dichotomized to break students into two groups based on their current enrollment status. Students who have either stopped attending the institution or have been listed by the institution as having formally withdrawn comprised one group and students who are either still attending or listed as graduated comprised the other group.

The same independent variables were supplied by each institution and used as a base for creating a model to predict student graduation or retention. Many of the independent variables included were categorical in nature; those variables that were provided at the interval or ratio level of measurement were auto-classified into groups by the classification trees analysis procedure. The independent predictor variables included in this model are listed below.

- Age
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Overall G.P.A.
- Curriculum major
- Number of credit hours transferred
- Years out of school

Please note CPE-LC staff omitted the number of academic actions from this analysis due to the inconsistency in reporting among participating institutions, differences in institutional definitions of academic actions, and missing data. The level of inconsistency of this variable, compared to the other independent variables analyzed precludes it from CHAID analysis.

#### *Analysis of Key Predictors in Retention*

As previously mentioned, CPE-LC staff conducted the CHAID analysis on an institutional level to determine the key factors impacting student retention. Within this section, CPE-LC staff provides a narrative of key trends emerging from this analysis on an institutional level. Overall, based on the CHAID analysis, and displayed in Figure 15, G.P.A. was the strongest predictor of student retention at nearly all participating institutions.

**Figure 15. Strongest Predictor of Student Graduation or Continued Enrollment at Participating Institutions**

Institution	Strongest Predictor of Student Graduation or Continued Enrollment
Institution A	Overall G.P.A.
Institution B	Number of transfer credits
Institution C	Overall G.P.A.
Institution D	Overall G.P.A.
Inquiring Member Institution	Overall G.P.A.
Institution F	Overall G.P.A.
Institution G	Overall G.P.A.
Institution H	Overall G.P.A.
Institution I	Overall G.P.A.
Institution J	Overall G.P.A.

\*Institution E is omitted from this analysis due to a general lack of comparability in supplied student data.

*Overview of Key CHAID Analysis Findings at Participating Institutions*

CPE-LC staff provides an overview of key findings retrieved from the CHAID analysis for each of the 11 institutions in this section of the report. Key findings reflective of predictor independent variables are first presented for the inquiring member institution, followed by the remaining 10 participating institutions.

**The Inquiring Member:** The strongest predictor of graduation or continued enrollment for students at the inquiring member institution was overall G.P.A..

*Students with a G.P.A. less than 1.4*

- 78% of students with a G.P.A. less than 1.4 stop out or withdraw from the inquiring member institution.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 1.4 and 2.75*

- 56% of students with a G.P.A. between 1.4 and 2.75 stop out or withdraw from the inquiring member institution.

*Students with a GPA between 2.75 and 3.0*

- 62% students with a GPA between 2.75 and 3.0 are retained by or graduate from the inquiring member institution

*Students with a GPA Greater than 3.0*

- 71% of students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.0 are retained by or graduate from the inquiring member institution.
- Among students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.0, the amount of credit they transfer in is a strong predictor of graduation rate.
  - 54% of students that do not transfer in any hours, are likely to withdraw compared to a 26% withdrawal rate among students who transfer in up to 56 credits and a 10% withdrawal rate among students who transfer in more than 56 credits.

**Institution A:** The strongest predictor of graduation or continued enrollment for students at institution A was overall G.P.A..

*Students with less than a 2.4 G.P.A.*

- Students with an unrecorded G.P.A. or a G.P.A. of less than 2.4 were the most likely to stop out or withdraw from the institution.
- 75% of these students with a low G.P.A. either stopped out or withdrew from the institution.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.4 and 2.9*

- 73% of the students with a G.P.A. between 2.4 and 2.9 were more likely to either graduate or be retained by the institution.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.9 and 3.5*

- Students with a G.P.A. between 2.9 and 3.5 reported an 87.4% retention rate.
  - Within this group of students, the number of transfer hours further helped predict a student's overall chance of being retained.<sup>5</sup>
  - 92% of the students that transferred in more than 49 credits have either graduated or were retained as students by the university.
  - Of the students with less than 49 transfer credits, 77.5% have graduated or remain enrolled at the institution. Within the segment of students with a G.P.A. between 2.9 and 3.5 and fewer than 49 transfer credits, the curriculum area that the student has enrolled in is also a predictor of retention or graduation.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.65*

- 96.2% of the students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.65 were reported as either having graduated or remaining at the institution.
  - Of these students, the curriculum area the students were enrolled in had a significant impact on whether or not they stayed enrolled<sup>6</sup>. Students enrolled in liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities, business management, and marketing, and biological and biomedical sciences reported a 77.8% retention rate.

*Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.65*

- 87.6% of the students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.65 were retained by or graduated from the institution.

*Analysis by discipline area*

- Students enrolled in liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities; education, business management, and marketing; computer and information sciences reported an average retention or graduation rate of 55.8% compared to a graduation rate of 88.4% for those in other curriculum areas.

**Institution B:** The strongest predictor of graduation or continued enrollment for students at institution B was the number of credit hours they transfer into the institution.

*Students with less than nine transfer credit hours*

- Students who transfer in less than nine credit hours are the least likely to be retained or graduate, with only 12.5% of these students staying on at institution B. Among students

<sup>5</sup> The chi-square is 48.32 at 2 degrees of freedom.

<sup>6</sup> The chi-square is 30.0 at one degree of freedom.

with less than 9 transfer hours the next strongest predictor of retention or graduation is the students' overall G.P.A.<sup>7</sup>

- 96% of the students with a G.P.A. less than 3.2 either stopped out or withdrew from the institution. Among students with a G.P.A. above 3.2, 70% either stopped out or withdrew.

*Students with between nine and 58 transfer credits*

- 31% of the students that transferred in between nine and 58 credits were retained by or graduated from institution B. Among students who transferred in between nine and 58 credits, overall G.P.A. was the strongest predictor of retention.
  - 84% of the students with a G.P.A. less than 2.6 either stopped out or withdrew, among students with a G.P.A. higher than 2.6, only 52% stopped out or withdrew from the institution.

*Students with between 58 and 65 transfer credits*

- Student retention was highest among students that transferred in between 58 and 65 credits. Nearly 61% of these students either graduated or were retained.

*Students with more than 65 transfer credits*

- 40% of the students who transfer one or more than 65 credits graduated or were retained.

**Institution C:** The strongest predictor of graduation or continued enrollment for students at institution C was overall G.P.A.

*Students with a G.P.A. less than 2.0*

- Students with a G.P.A. less than 2.0 experience an average retention or graduation rate of 56%.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.0 and 3.0*

- Students with a G.P.A. between 2.0 and 3.0 experience an average retention or graduation rate of 72%.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 3.0 and 3.7*

- Students with a G.P.A. between 3.0 and 3.7 experience a graduation or retention rate of 83.5%. Within this group of students with a G.P.A. between 3.0 and 3.7 the number of credits transferred in is the next strongest predictor of retention or graduation.
  - Students who entered with no transfer hours have an 86% average graduation or retention rate.
  - Students who enter with some transfer credits but less than 50 transfer hours experience an average 73% retention or graduation.
  - Students who enter with more than 50 transfer hours experience an average of 85% graduation or retention.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 3.7 and 3.9*

- 90% of the students with a G.P.A. between 3.7 and 3.9 either graduated or were retained. Among these students that have a G.P.A. between 3.7 and 3.9 the number of credits transferred in is the next strongest predictor of retention and graduation.
  - Students that enter with no transfer hours experience an average of 93% graduation or retention.
  - Students with some transfer credits but less than 50 experience an average of 77% graduation or retention.

<sup>7</sup>The chi-square is 12.2 at one degree of freedom.

- Among the students with a G.P.A. between 3.7 and 3.9 those that enter with more than 50 transfer credits have a 91% predicted graduation or retention rate.

*Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.9*

- Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.9 have a 73% graduation or retention rate.

**Institution D:** The strongest predictor of graduation or continued enrollment for students at institution D was overall G.P.A.

*Students with a G.P.A. less than 2.4*

- Students with a G.P.A. less than 2.4 have a 60% retention rate. The next strongest predictor of retention or graduation among those with a low G.P.A. is the number of years out of school.
  - Student with a low G.P.A. and who are less than two years out of school experience a 73% retention or graduation rate.
  - Students with a low G.P.A. and who are more than two years out of school experience a 43% graduation or retention rate.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.4 and 3.5*

- Students with a G.P.A. of 2.4 to 3.5 have an 80% graduation or retention rate.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.85*

- Students with a G.P.A. of 3.5 to 3.85 have a graduation or retention of 84%, among these students, the strongest predictor of graduation or retention is the number of years they have been out of school.
  - Students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.85 and who have been out of school for less than two years experience an 89% graduation or retention rate.
  - Students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.85 who have been out of school for more than two years experience a 76% retention or graduation rate.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 3.85 and 3.97*

- Students with a G.P.A. between 3.85 and 3.97 have a 92% retention or graduation rate.

*Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.97*

- Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.97 have a 79% retention or graduation rate. For students with a high G.P.A. the next most important predictor of graduation is the number of transfer credits.
  - Students with a high G.P.A. that start with no transfer credits have an average of 47% retention or graduation rate.
  - Students with a high G.P.A. and some transfer hours have an 85% retention or graduation rate.

**Institution F:** The strongest predictor of graduation or continued enrollment for students at institution F was overall G.P.A..

*Students with a G.P.A. less than 1.7*

- 71% of students with a G.P.A. less than 1.7 stop out or withdraw from the institution. Among these students, the number of years out of school is a strong predictor of their likelihood of stopping out or withdrawing.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The chi-square is 17.631 at one degree of freedom.

- Of the students with a G.P.A. below 1.7, those that have spent one year or less out of school before enrolling are more likely to be retained or graduate from the institution. 53% of students who spent a year or less out of school were retained or graduated, compared to just 21% of those students who were out of school for more than a year.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 1.7 and 2.4*

- 57% of students with a G.P.A. between 1.7 and 2.4 were retained by or have graduated from the institution. Among these students, the number of years out of school is a strong predictor of their likelihood of stopping out or withdrawing from a program.<sup>9</sup>
  - Of these students, those who have been out of school for two years or less are more likely to be retained than those who have been out of school for more than two years. 75% of the students who have been out of school for two years or less are either still enrolled or have graduated, compared to just 42.7% of those who have been out of school for more than 2 years.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.4 and 2.8*

- 75% of students with a G.P.A. between 2.4 and 2.8 have been retained or graduated from the institution. Among these students, age is the next strongest predictor of program graduation or retention.<sup>10</sup>
  - Of the students with a G.P.A. between 2.4 and 2.8, students younger than 37 years of age are more likely than older students to be retained or graduate from the institution. 78% of students younger than 37 with a G.P.A. between 2.4 and 2.8 graduated from or remain retained at the institution. Within this group, only 45% of the students older than 37 were retained.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.8 and 3.9*

- 83% of the students with a G.P.A. between 2.8 and 3.9 were retained or graduated from the institution. Among these students, the curriculum area in which students chose to enroll is a strong predictor of their overall likelihood of graduating or being retained by the institution.
  - Students enrolled in multi/interdisciplinary studies, liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities, computer and information sciences, health profession and related sciences and philosophy or religious studies were less likely graduate or remain with the institution than students enrolled in other curriculum areas. On average, 67% of the students enrolled in these curriculum areas were retained by or graduated from the institution, compared to 89% of the students enrolled in other curriculum areas.

*Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.9*

- Interestingly only 67% of the students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.9 were retained by or graduated from the institution. Among these students, the curriculum area in which students were enrolled in was the strongest predictor of their overall likelihood of remaining at the institution or graduating.
  - Students enrolled in multi/interdisciplinary studies, health professions and related sciences and mathematics or statistics were the most likely to stop out or withdraw from the institution. On average 87% of the students with a G.P.A. above 3.9 enrolled in one of the previously mentioned curriculum areas has either

<sup>9</sup> (chi-square 20.15 at 1 degree of freedom)

<sup>10</sup> The chi-square is 10.4 at one degree of freedom.

stopped out or withdrawn from the institution. This is a significantly larger proportion when compared to the 23% of students who stop out or withdraw from the other curriculum areas.

**Institution G:** The strongest predictor of graduation or continued enrollment for students at institution G was overall G.P.A.

*Students with a G.P.A. less than 1.8*

- 79% of those with a G.P.A. below 1.8 have either stopped out or withdrawn from the institution.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 1.8 and 2.25*

- 63% of the students with a G.P.A. between 1.8 and 2.25 have been retained. Among these students, the next strongest predictor of retention and graduation is the students chosen major.
  - On average 60% of the students enrolled in liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities, business marketing and management, area ethnic and cultural studies, philosophy and religion, unclassified, and gender studies stop out or withdraw. This is much higher than the average of 18% of students who stop out in all other curriculum areas.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.25 and 2.5*

- 78% of students with a G.P.A. between 2.25 and 2.5 have been retained by or graduated. Among these students, the next strongest predictor of retention is the students chosen major.
  - On average there is a 51% retention rate among students with a G.P.A. between 2.25 and 2.5 who are enrolled in: liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities, business, management and marketing, natural resources and conservation, visual and performing arts, foreign languages and literatures, and parks, recreation leisure, and fitness studies.
- On average there is a 96.8% retention or graduation rate among students with a G.P.A. between 2.25 and 2.5 who are enrolled in: communications and journalism, health professions and related, engineering, social sciences, physical sciences, area ethnic and cultural studies, philosophy and religious studies, gender studies, mathematics and statistics, public administration and social services, and unknown major.
- On average there is a 89% graduation or retention rate among students with a G.P.A. between 2.25 and 2.5 who are enrolled in: English language and literature, biological sciences, security and protective services, computer and information sciences, history, and psychology.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.5 and 3.5*

- 83% of students with a G.P.A. between 2.5 and 3.5 have been retained by or graduated from the institution. Among these students, the strongest predictor of retention is the students chosen major.
  - On average there is a 53% retention rate among students with a G.P.A. between 2.5 and 3.5 that are enrolled in courses in the liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities.
- Among students with a G.P.A. between 2.5 and 3.5 there was an average retention or graduation rate of 80% among students enrolled in business management and marketing,

health professions and related, English language and literature, physical sciences, philosophy and religious studies, foreign languages and literatures, mathematics and statistics.

- Of students with a G.P.A. between 2.5 and 3.5 there was an average graduation or retention rate of 93% among students enrolled in: communications and journalism, biological or biomedical sciences, security and protective services, computer and information science, psychology, public administration and social services, agriculture and related sciences, social sciences, area, ethnic, cultural and gender studies, history; visual and performing arts, parks recreation, leisure and fitness studies. Among the students in one of these previously mentioned curriculum areas, there is a much higher graduation or retention rate among students who are younger than 39.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.8*

- 90% of students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.8 have been retained by or graduated from the institution. Among these students, the strongest predictor of graduation and retention is the number of hours transferred into the institution.
  - 92% of the students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.8 who have transferred in less than 67 credit hours have been retained by or graduated from the institution.
  - 84% of the students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.8 who transferred in more than 67 credit hours have been retained by or graduated from the institution.

*Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.8*

- 82% of the students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.8 have been retained or graduated from the institution. Among these students, the strongest predictor of graduation or retention is the student's selected major.
  - Among students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.8, only 36% of students in liberal arts and sciences; health professions; and visual and performing arts are retained.
  - The retention rate among students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.8 in other curriculum areas is, on average 91%.

**Institution H:** The strongest predictor of graduation or continued enrollment for students at institution H was overall G.P.A.

*Students with a G.P.A. less than 2.6*

- Students with a G.P.A. less than 2.6 have an average retention or graduation rate of 47%.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.6 and 3.2*

- 84% of the students with a G.P.A. between 2.6 and 3.2 graduated from or were retained at the institution. Among these students, the students' major is the next most important predictor of retention or graduation.
  - Among students with a G.P.A. between 2.6 and 3.2 there is a 49% graduation or retention among those who are enrolled in liberal arts, sciences, general studies and humanities.
  - This is low compared to an 87% retention rate of students with a G.P.A. between 2.6 and 3.2 in all other curriculum areas.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 3.2 and 3.75*

- Students with a G.P.A. between 3.2 and 3.75 experience a graduation or retention of 91%. Among these students, the most important predictor of retention or graduation is the students' chosen curriculum area.

- Students with a G.P.A. between 3.2 and 3.75 have an average graduation or retention rate of 55% if they are enrolled in: liberal arts, sciences, general studies and humanities, physical sciences, math and statistics, health professions and related, communications and journalism.
- Students in other curriculum areas with a G.P.A. between 3.2 and 3.75 have a 96% graduation or retention rate.

*Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.75*

- Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.75 have an 84% graduation or retention rate.

**Institution I:** The strongest predictor of graduation or continued enrollment for students at institution I was overall G.P.A..

*Students with a G.P.A. lower than 2.3*

- 57% of the students with a G.P.A. lower than 2.3 are retained or graduate from this institution.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 2.3 and 3.5*

- 77% of the students with a G.P.A. between 2.3 and 3.5 are retained by or graduate from this institution. Among these students, age is the most significant predictor of graduation rates<sup>11</sup>
  - 81% of those aged 37 or younger graduated from this institution, compared to 67% of those over the age of 37.

*Students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.97*

- 87% of the students with a G.P.A. between 3.5 and 3.97 are retained by or graduate from the institution. Among these students, the next strongest predictor of likelihood of graduating is the number of hours they transfer in to the school.
  - Students with fewer than 54 transfer hours are less likely to be retained than students with more than 54 transfer hours. 75% of students with 54 or fewer hours are retained or graduate compared to 93% of those with more than 54 transfer credits.

*Students with a G.P.A. higher than 3.97*

- 69% of students with a G.P.A. of 3.97 or higher are retained or reported as having graduated from this institution. Among these high performing students, the number of transfer hours is the strongest predictor of the student's likelihood of graduating or remaining with the school.
  - Students with more than 41 transfer hours are more likely to be retained or graduate than students with fewer than 41 transferred hours. 44% of the students with fewer than 41 transferred hours are retained or graduate from this institution, among students with more than 41 transferred hours the retention/graduation rate is 78%.

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<sup>11</sup> The chi-square is 8.87 at one degree of freedom.

**Institution J:** Due to the small sample size provided, G.P.A. was the only significant predictor of retention or graduation at institution J.

- 78% of students with a G.P.A. less than 2.2 or without G.P.A. data provided stopped out or withdrew from the institution, compared to 28% of students with a G.P.A. higher than 2.2.

## Conclusion

The goals of this research investigation was to identify the demographic and academic composition of adult undergraduate students at peer institutions as well as uncover average student retention rates and benchmarks in an effort to analyze the influence of specific variables on student retention outcomes. As noted throughout this investigation, caveats exist due to differences in reporting student data, definitions of specific variables, missing data, etc., thus, this analysis should be reviewed cautiously and considered directional in nature. Even so, this information will provide opportunities to evaluate specific benchmarks. The inquiring member institution should review the results of this benchmarking study internally with appropriate decision-makers to initiate discussion and brainstorming.

### *Overview of Adult Undergraduate Student Composition*

Overall, the composition of adult undergraduate degree programs varies significantly by participating institution. Average enrollments in cohort-based adult undergraduate degree programs range between 46 and 1,900 and the average age of adult students is between 26.5 and 38.3, with the majority of institutions enrolling, on average, adult students older than 31. Business and liberal arts/general studies are the majors adult students are most commonly enrolled in and on average, adult students are out of school between 3.8 and 5.6 years at the time of cohort start. In addition, on average, the number of transfer credits adult students possess ranges between 19.6 and 80.5 hours.

### *Overview of Key Factors Impacting Adult Undergraduate Student Retention*

Adult student's overall G.P.A. was the factor identified as being the most significant predictor of student retention at nearly all participating institutions. The number of transfer credits an adult student possesses is a secondary predictor of retention at the majority of participating institutions. A higher G.P.A. appears to be correlated with a greater likelihood of graduation or continued enrollment as are a greater number of transfer credits.

Interestingly, CHAID analysis revealed a surprising pattern regarding students within the upper G.P.A. level at some participating institutions. This threshold emerged at a G.P.A. level between 3.75 and 3.97 at peer institutions. It appears that a number of participating institutions are losing students that are excelling academically as the stop out percentage among students with a higher G.P.A. is significantly greater than stop out rates among students in the preceding G.P.A. range. Interestingly, this trend did not emerge within the inquiring member institution's data.

CPE-LC staff provides a high-level synthesis of the key findings emerging from the CHAID analysis of the inquiring member institution's adult undergraduate degree student data as displayed in Figure 16.

**Figure 16. Synthesis of Key Findings Impacting Adult Student Retention at the Inquiring Member Institution**

Overall G.P.A. Primary Predictor of Student Retention	Primary Finding Overall	Secondary Predictors Within Each G.P.A. Segment	Secondary Key Finding	Implication
Less than 1.4 (n=155)	78% stop out; 22% retained or graduate		N/A	Academic services should be targeted to adult students with lower G.P.A. levels. Support services should focus on preventative measures adult students can engage in to help them persist.
Between 1.4 and 2.7 (n=257)	56% stop out; 44% retained or graduate		N/A	Adult student stop out rates decrease as academic performance increases. Flexible transfer credit policies can play an important role in helping students persist, particularly adult students in these G.P.A. segments.
Between 2.7 and 3.0 (n=135)	62% retained or graduate; 38% stop out		N/A	
Higher than 3.0 (n=769)	71% retained or graduate; 29% stop out	Number of transfer credits	Retention rates are higher for students with up to or greater than 56 transfer hours	Again, a similar trend emerges as G.P.A. levels increase; the percentage of students stopping out decreases. Flexible transfer credit policies will benefit retention and persistence rates among this G.P.A. segment. Adult students with prior college-level credits may have the greatest likelihood of persisting to graduation.

### Additional Research Opportunities

CPE-LC staff suggests that the inquiring member consider the following research initiatives to complement this research investigation:

- Review the results of this benchmarking study internally with relevant stakeholders to facilitate discussion and brainstorming.

### Appendix

**Figure 17. Missing Student Data Points by Participating Institution**

Institution	Missing Student Data
Adelphi University	Country
	Number of years out of school when starting program
	Number of courses taken (2003-2006 cohort years)
	Withdrawals (2003-2006 cohort years)
	Academic Actions (2003-2006 cohort years)
Avila University	Number of years out of school when starting program
	Academic Actions (2003-2006 cohort years)
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	Number of years out of school when starting program
St. Edward's University	Number of years out of school when starting program
	Academic Actions (2003-2005 cohort years)

**Figure 18. Granular Assessment of Mean G.P.A. by Individual Cohort Start Year and Proceeding Cohort Years, 2002-2006\***

Institution	Mean G.P.A.	Cohort Start Year				
		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Institution A	2002	N/A	.	.	.	.
	2003		2.96	.	.	.
	2004		3.04	2.87	.	.
	2005		3.05	2.88	2.83	.
	2006		3.05	2.88	2.88	2.88
Institution B	2002	3.05	.	.	.	.
	2003	3.15	2.90	.	.	.
	2004	3.16	3.01	3.05	.	.
	2005	3.26	3.09	3.22	3.03	.
	2006	3.22	3.13	3.13	3.04	2.72
Institution C	2002	N/A	N/A	.	.	.
	2003			.	.	.
	2004			2.82	.	.
	2005			3.34	2.73	.
	2006			3.34	3.35	2.67
Institution D	2002	3.43	.	.	.	.
	2003	3.36	3.43	.	.	.
	2004	3.43	3.32	3.48	.	.
	2005	3.47	3.39	3.43	3.43	.
	2006	3.53	3.54	3.52	3.46	3.39
Institution E*	2002	N/A	N/A	N/A	.	.
	2003				.	.
	2004				.	.
	2005				2.77	.
	2006				N/A	2.87
Institution F	2002	2.97	.	.	.	.
	2003	3.08	3.21	.	.	.
	2004	3.11	3.24	3.11	.	.
	2005	3.15	3.19	3.19	2.98	.
	2006	3.07	3.35	3.26	3.13	2.92
Institution G	2002	2.65	.	.	.	.
	2003	2.79	2.63	.	.	.
	2004	2.94	2.82	2.65	.	.
	2005	2.94	2.91	2.89	2.68	.
	2006	3.09	2.94	3.02	2.92	2.69
Institution H	2002	2.86	.	.	.	.
	2003	3.00	2.96	.	.	.
	2004	3.08	2.97	2.88	.	.
	2005	3.04	3.11	3.01	2.85	.
	2006	2.87	2.94	3.07	2.95	2.81
Institution I	2002	3.22	.	.	.	.
	2003	3.35	3.22	.	.	.
	2004	3.41	3.26	3.28	.	.
	2005	3.38	3.35	3.35	3.28	.
	2006	3.34	3.28	3.31	3.30	.
Institution J	2002	3.05	.	.	.	.
	2003	2.28	2.70	.	.	.
	2004	2.20	1.68	2.33	.	.
	2005	1.69	1.60	1.49	3.25	.
	2006	1.19	1.07	0.96	2.52	2.90

\*CPE-LC staff includes this data where available from participating institutions

**Figure 19. Granular Assessment of Mean Number of Courses by Individual Cohort Start Year and Preceding Cohort Years, 2002-2006\***

Institution	Mean Number of Courses	Cohort Start Year				
		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Institution A	2002	N/A				
	2003					
	2004					
	2005					
	2006					
Institution B	2002	5.7	.	.	.	.
	2003	7.1	4.0	.	.	.
	2004	4.7	3.5	4.1	.	.
	2005	2.0	2.2	3.9	3.3	.
	2006	1.3	1.0	2.6	3.0	3.5
Institution C	2002	N/A	N/A	.	.	.
	2003					
	2004			4.2	.	.
	2005			2.6	4.4	.
	2006			1.7	2.7	4.3
Institution D	2002	3.6	.	.	.	.
	2003	3.6	3.8	.	.	.
	2004	2.4	3.5	3.8	.	.
	2005	1.5	2.3	3.7	4.1	.
	2006	0.7	1.3	2.1	3.4	4.4
Institution E	2002	N/A	N/A	N/A	.	.
	2003					
	2004					
	2005				4.0	.
	2006				N/A	3.7

Institution	Mean Number of Courses	Cohort Start Year				
		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Institution F	2002	6.0	.	.	.	.
	2003	7.0	6.1	.	.	.
	2004	3.7	3.4	6.0	.	.
	2005	1.1	1.1	6.2	5.8	.
	2006	0.4	0.3	3.5	6.7	6.0
Institution G	2002	5.8	.	.	.	.
	2003	6.0	6.0	.	.	.
	2004	3.6	6.2	6.1	.	.
	2005	1.4	3.7	6.2	6.2	.
	2006	0.5	1.4	3.4	6.6	6.3
Institution H	2002	6.2	.	.	.	.
	2003	7.0	6.1	.	.	.
	2004	4.8	7.3	6.3	.	.
	2005	2.1	4.5	7.5	6.6	.
	2006	0.6	1.7	4.2	8.0	6.6
Institution I	2002	4.4	.	.	.	.
	2003	4.4	4.5	0.0	0.0	.
	2004	2.3	4.4	4.4	0.0	.
	2005	1.2	2.7	4.4	4.0	.
	2006	0.6	1.4	2.7	4.7	.
Institution J	2002	4.4	.	.	.	.
	2003	2.7	3.9	.	.	.
	2004	2.6	2.5	4.3	.	.
	2005	2.0	2.3	2.9	4.9	.
	2006	1.8	1.4	2.0	4.3	3.9

\*CPE-LC staff includes this data where available from participating institutions

**Figure 20. Granular Assessment of Mean Number of Credits by Individual Cohort Start Year and Proceeding Cohort Years, 2002-2006\***

Institution	Mean Number of Credits	Cohort Start Year				
		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Institution A	2002	N/A	.	.	.	.
	2003		20.8	.	.	.
	2004		20.9	20.8	.	.
	2005		15.0	20.7	20.9	.
	2006		12.9	15.7	21.1	21.1
Institution B	2002	16.6	.	.	.	.
	2003	21.7	11.6	.	.	.
	2004	17.9	15.7	11.1	.	.
	2005	16.9	13.5	18.2	9.4	.
	2006	13.2	16.1	19.9	17.2	10.3
Institution C	2002	N/A	N/A	.	.	.
	2003			.	.	.
	2004			12.7	.	.
	2005			7.8	13.2	.
	2006			5.0	8.0	13.0
Institution D	2002	3.4	.	.	.	.
	2003	3.4	3.4	.	.	.
	2004	3.4	3.3	3.5	.	.
	2005	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.4	.
	2006	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.4
Institution E	2002	N/A	N/A	N/A	.	.
	2003				.	.
	2004				.	.
	2005				10.5	.
	2006				N/A	9.7
Institution F	2002	17.2	.	.	.	.
	2003	20.7	17.6	.	.	.
	2004	11.2	10.5	17.6	.	.
	2005	3.3	3.3	18.7	17.0	.
	2006	1.3	0.9	10.8	19.9	17.7
Institution G	2002	17.5	.	.	.	.
	2003	15.7	17.8	.	.	.
	2004	11.0	18.8	18.4	.	.
	2005	4.2	11.1	18.7	18.4	.
	2006	1.4	4.2	10.3	19.8	19.0
Institution H	2002	18.2	.	.	.	.
	2003	20.9	18.0	.	.	.
	2004	14.4	21.7	18.5	.	.
	2005	6.1	13.6	22.4	19.5	.
	2006	1.9	5.1	12.7	24.0	19.3
Institution I	2002	12.4	.	.	.	.
	2003	17.1	12.8	.	.	.
	2004	13.2	17.3	12.5	.	.
	2005	11.8	14.3	16.7	11.4	.
	2006	10.1	12.7	13.6	17.8	.
Institution J	2002	13.0	.	.	.	.
	2003	9.1	11.2	.	.	.
	2004	7.8	7.2	12.5	.	.
	2005	6.2	6.6	8.3	13.8	.
	2006	5.1	4.5	6.0	13.2	11.4

\*CPE-LC staff includes this data where available from participating institutions