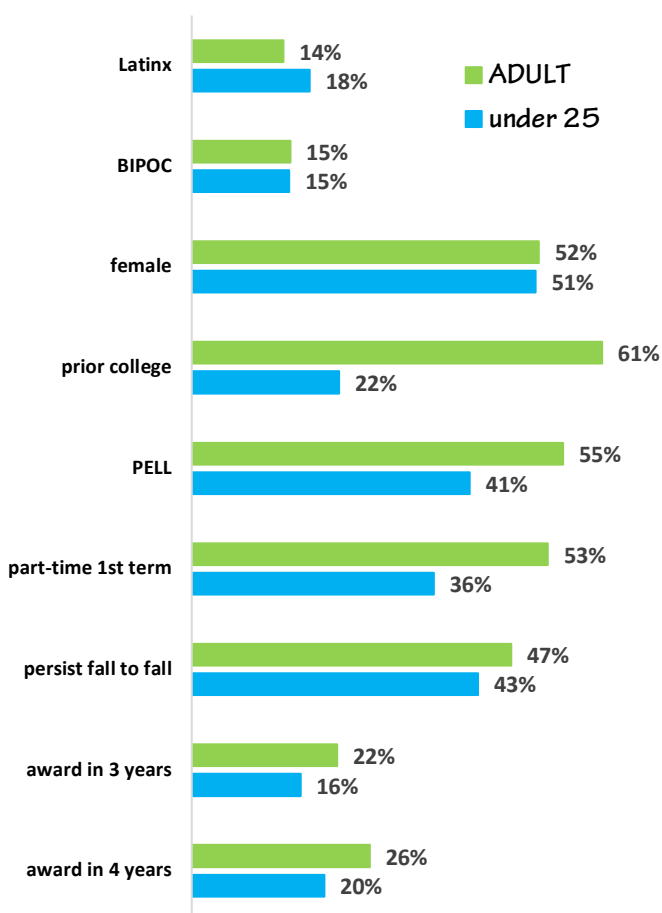


A Look at Adult Students

Oregon’s new funding formula defines four categories of **priority students**: career and technical, racial/ethnic, low income, and **“adult”—age 25 or older**. In this edition of TIPSS, we focus on Lane’s adult students.

Drawing on data from 2016 through 2023 fall cohorts of new, award seeking students, we compared adult students to those under age 25. Results are shown in a bar chart. Full study: <https://inside.lanecollege.edu/ir/tipss>

Comparing Adult and Younger Students



Lane’s adult and younger students share similar demographics but diverge on a range of other metrics.

Compared to younger classmates, adults are far more likely to arrive at Lane with prior college experience. At the same time, they display higher rates of characteristics associated with academic risk. **Adults are more likely to begin as part-time students and more likely to experience economic stress as indicated by PELL status.**

Adult students nevertheless distinguish themselves on key success outcomes. Compared to other new students, adults are more likely to:

- persist to the following fall (47% vs. 43%)**
- graduate within three years (22% vs 16%)**
- graduate within four years (26% vs 20%)**

Perhaps maturity endows adult students with qualities that help them persevere despite challenges—grit, focus, commitment, self-reliance, economic pragmatism?

In a survey of popular programs, older students were over-represented in Health Professions and Advanced Tech. **In the 2023 cohort, one fourth of adults declared a goal in Health Professions, one fifth in Advanced Tech.**

Although adult students persist and reach goals at higher rates, and although state funding prioritizes adult successes, *in light of the fact that only 1 in 5 of Lane’s new award-seeking students are 25 or older, the primary lesson we draw from the data is the importance of continuous improvement in service to both groups. Lane must be a college that welcomes and engages younger students while also providing maximum outreach and flexibility to recruit and support adult learners.*

