Adult undergraduate students (age 24+) have been an integral part of UNCG since its inception. Nationally, data show that more and more adult students are enrolling in higher education.

Currently 2,612 adult students are enrolled at UNCG comprising approximately 22% of all undergraduates. These older students come with a variety of needs, some of which are unique to adult students, prompting the Office for Adult Students (OAS) to identify ways to enhance their on-campus experience and to provide programs and services to support their success.

Among these efforts are the following:

**Emphasizing a positive presence:**

- **Posters, exhibits in display cases in Jackson Library and Elliott University Center, banners, brochures, and other public venues** celebrate “real” adult students at UNCG and seek to present a graphic identity to this group. The hope is to reinforce the significant presence of this non-traditional population on campus and to remind the larger UNCG community that they are an important part of the campus community.

- **Adult Student Profiles** are included on the OAS website (www.uncg.edu/oas), featuring the stories of outstanding adult students who are nominated by a faculty or staff member.

**Assisting with the transition back to school:**

- A **University Studies 102** class is offered specifically for new adult students to help them make a successful transition to this academic setting.

*(Continued on page 2)*

Also in this issue:

The Results of the Adult Learner Needs Assessment Survey are in! -- p. 4
“Get Set Saturday” is held on the Saturday before each semester begins to make certain new adult students are prepared. In collaboration with the University Teaching and Learning Center and the Learning Assistance Center, workshops are offered in Blackboard, Study Skills, and Time Management. Additionally, a forum is offered during lunch where currently enrolled adult students share their ideas and suggestions. A bus tour around campus is also provided.

- **Blackboard Workshop**

- **Lunch Live** is an opportunity for new adult students to meet and eat lunch with an OAS staff member and adult student volunteers during the first week of the semester. This is particularly targeted at adult students who do not know anyone on campus.

- **Phonathon** is held every semester in which each new adult student receives a phone call to check on how the semester is going and to inform the student about the process for registering for the next semester.

- **Mugs** are offered to all new adult students to encourage them to come by the Office for Adult Students in Elliott University Center and introduce themselves. In the process, they learn about the variety of activities and services available to them.

**Developing connections at UNCG:**

- **Commuter Deli Lunches** have a row of tables marked for Adult Students where volunteer hosts facilitate introductions and conversation.

- **Casino Night** has been offered as a stress-free evening of fun and festivities, complete with free babysitting. Using play money, adult students try their hand at roulette and blackjack (with help from a local Kiwanis Club).

- **Service Saturday** is a day to meet other adult students while serving the community in a Habitat for Humanity project.

- **CampusConnect** is an online message board for adult students which is accessed through the OAS website. In addition to messages, students may write and post articles of special interest to adult students.

- **“First Tuesdays at Five”** is held monthly in Charley’s Coffee House where adult students can join their peers for informal conversation and connection.

- **Adult Student Volunteers** sign up to help with various OAS campus events. These service-oriented students, identified by their red aprons, provide important “extra help” when needed.

**Informing adult students of campus-wide resources for involvement:**

- **OAS website (www.uncg.edu/oas)** provides a comprehensive listing of adult student concerns -- from childcare to insurance.

- **The Web Weekly** web page is changed each Wednesday to include updated information about activities that may be of special interest to adult students.

---

*My interest in caring for and teaching preschool children started with volunteering to teach a pre-K Sunday school class. I eventually started my own childcare/preschool, which in turn led me to begin taking classes at GTCC for my own professional development. I’m now a full-time student here at UNCG, majoring in Birth-Kindergarten education.*

I had always wanted to go to college and get my degree, but like so many other adult students I’ve talked to, life had a way of interfering with my plans. Marriage, children, and a business made going to school a difficult thing. I can’t describe how thrilling it was when I finally enrolled at UNCG and became a university student. That first day, riding to campus on the Park and Ride Shuttle, I could hardly contain my excitement -- I literally felt like shouting for joy.

School hasn’t been easy, but it certainly has been worth it. I feel like I am finally living a dream.

Angela Wilson-Newsome
UNCG Adult Undergraduate
Celebrating adult students’ successes:

- **Honors** given to adult students, such as being named to the Chancellor’s List or the Dean’s List, are posted on the OAS website, and a congratulatory message is sent to each student.

- **Graduation Dinners** have been given for all graduating adult students and their guests. At this occasion, the graduates were also given an opportunity to invite a faculty or staff member who has provided significant support in their academic journeys.

- **Graduation Canvases** on the second floor of Elliott University Center hold the signatures of hundreds of adult student graduates. It has become part of the adult students’ celebration of reaching their goal of graduation.

Providing advocacy and support:

- OAS has actively sought financial support for adult students in the form of **Scholarships**. Both the Class of ‘48 and the Class of ‘53 earmarked class gifts for adult student scholarships, resulting in more than a half-million dollars of endowed funds. Additional scholarships for adult students have been developed and are listed on the OAS website under “Scholarships.”

- Names of interested adult students are sent to **University Committees** (which invite student participation) in order that the perspectives of non-traditional students can be heard.

- The staff of the Office for Adult Students respond to all requests for information about this population, particularly **“Facts and Figures,”** which is available on the OAS website and which is updated each semester.

- Various direct mailings, phone calls, postcards, and other sources of **communication** are sent to adult students throughout the semester to help them feel a part of university life.

- **Video interviews** with faculty and administrators instrumental in serving the adult student population have been recorded and archived. A brochure tracing the history of adult students at UNCG has been published.

* * *

**Adult Student Volunteers**

**Graduation Dinner**
‘It was a chilly Monday my first day on campus at UNCG. I was used to being in control of most things in my life, but that day I felt as though I was entering a younger, smarter, and faster world. Luckily my initial perceptions were inaccurate. Nervousness subsided and I quickly moved on to a more permanent set of challenges: like finding time for a demanding two-year old son amidst studying for a variety of finals; trying to register for the classes I needed to graduate but fit them into a schedule that wouldn’t get me fired from work; and surrendering things such as golf, The West Wing, and family reunions over to library time. With so many time constraints I found that I had to take classes whenever I could. In five years of school, I never even took a single summer session off.

However, despite often being the oldest person in a class, especially when I could take a day class, one thing I never felt was isolated. I made many good friends both young and old and there are so many wonderful resources for adult students on campus. The best thing I can say about my experiences at UNCG, and I think this is a testament to both myself and the University, I graduated in May 2004 with a BA in History at the age of thirty. I remember thinking that first day on campus, in a moment of doubt, that perhaps the opportunity to get a degree had passed me by. I have never been happier to be wrong.’

Adam Arney
UNCG Adult Undergraduate

Office hours for the Office for Adult Students are Monday, Thursday, and Friday, 8am to 5pm, and Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8am to 6:30pm (to accommodate evening students). All adult students are encouraged to come by the office with their concerns and receive one-on-one consultation.

Adult Learner Needs Assessment Survey

The Adult Learner Needs Assessment Survey (ALNAS) is a component instrument of the Evaluation/Survey Services (ESS) program which was developed by ACT, Inc. to assist colleges and universities in the collection, interpretation, and use of survey data for such purposes as institutional planning, program evaluation, accreditation documentation, and other research-based needs. Of the 17 ESS survey instruments, the ALNAS is intended to focus on the perceived educational and personal needs of an institution’s current or prospective adult students. The ESS program provides not only compilation and descriptive analysis of data from local administration of the ALNAS, but also provides comparative data drawn from a sub-sample of 17,781 adult learners nationwide. We limit our comparison data to institutions which share similarities of college type, college size, full-time/part-time student status, gender, age, and ethnicity characteristics.

The ALNAS was distributed to 1,000 adult undergraduate students at UNCG and 190 useable responses were obtained. An adult student was defined as any student at or above the age of 24. Comparison data was drawn from a sample of nine universities nationwide of similar size and sharing comparable institutional profiles to that of UNCG. Institutions included in the comparison sample were: Grand Valley State University, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Youngstown State University, Oregon State University, Austin Peay State University, University of Texas at San Antonio, Western Washington University, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

At UNCG, the percentage of adult undergraduates categorized by gender (36% male, 64% female) is similar to the gender breakdown of the entire undergraduate population (33% male, 67% female). However, the gender composition of our survey sample was 22% male and 78% female.

Categorized by ethnicity, adult undergraduates parallel almost exactly the ethnic distribution for the undergraduate population as a whole. As expected, the two largest ethnic groups represented were White (68% of adult undergraduates, 69% of total undergraduates) and African-American (20% of adult undergraduates, 19% of total undergraduates). “Other” and “Unknown” ethnic groups comprised 13% of adult undergraduates, and roughly 12% of total undergraduates. Our respondents group contained 74% White, 17% African-American, and 3% who listed their ethnicity as “Other,” or “Unknown.”

We recognize that our survey sample is over-represented by females and white students and will temper our conclusions accordingly.
Table One reveals some interesting characteristics of adult undergraduate enrollment by major college. Both survey respondents and all adult undergraduates are enrolled in higher percentages than the general undergraduate population in the Colleges of Business and Economics, Human Environmental Sciences, and Nursing. Again, the reader should take into account that our survey respondents were disproportionately white and female.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>All Adult Undergrads</th>
<th>All Undergrads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=190</td>
<td>n=2555</td>
<td>n=11215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Economics</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Human</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Environmental</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not listed/special</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demographic profile for respondents of the ALNAS survey reveals that the typical adult undergraduate at UNCG is married with one child and is employed with a median annual income in the $30,000 to $39,999 range. The top areas of employment for our sample are Professional/Technical and Clerical or Secretarial occupations. The majority (91%) have previously attended college at or above the undergraduate level with 36% currently possessing an Associate’s degree, 18% holding a Bachelor’s, and 5% a Master’s degree. The large majority (96%) of these students plan to continue their education beyond the current course experience.

Reasons for continuing their education...

The top five reasons for continuing their education as listed by UNCG adult students were, in rank order: 1) for personal satisfaction or happiness, 2) to obtain a higher degree, 3) to become better educated and informed, 4) to improve my income, and 5) for general self-improvement. This was similar to the rankings for our nine comparison institutions; the comparison group ranking ‘to become better educated and informed’ second and ‘to obtain a higher degree’ third in their list of top five responses.

Sources for funding their education...

Important sources of funding for their education were reported by UNCG adult student respondents as, in rank order: 1) personal earnings (by a wide margin), 2) student loans, 3) educational grants, 4) scholarships, and 5) personal or family savings. The major difference between these rankings and those of the comparison sample was the decline of scholarship funding from 4th to 6th place in the comparison sample rankings. This might be evidence that UNCG provides better opportunities for its adult students in the area of scholarship assistance.

Enrollment preference...

Based on our sample, the typical UNCG adult undergraduate prefers full-time to part-time enrollment status, evening and morning classes, as opposed to those offered at lunch, in the afternoons or on weekends, would rather his or her courses meet only once or twice weekly, and is more comfortable in classes of mixed age, rather than classes composed primarily of traditional-aged undergraduates. Our students also preferred, by a wide margin (60% versus 17%), to attend classes on-campus, instead of at remote locations. Twenty-three percent of respondents stated no preference or gave no response to this question. This finding stands counter to recent trends toward offering off-campus courses for the purpose of attracting non-traditional students. Our students also preferred, by almost two to one, courses offered in traditional lecture format rather than small-group format. Other formats such as independent study, lab or shop, correspondence, and private tutor received little support from this group. The validity of this question could be called into question because of the use of the term “correspondence study” on the ALNAS, which is used to designate all forms of distance education.

Personal and educational needs...

When asked to outline their primary personal and educational needs, the sample of UNCG adult undergraduates chose a very distinct top five: 1) developing my speaking ability, 2) increasing my skills in mathematics and learning how to improve my test-taking skills (tie), 3) improving my writing skills, 4) improving my study skills and habits, and 5) learning how to budget money more wisely. There was some discrepancy here with the top five for the comparison sample. The top five needs for adults in the comparison sample were: 1) increasing my skills in mathematics, 2) learning how to improve my test-taking skills, 3) increasing my reading ability, 4) developing my speaking ability, and 5) improving my study skills and habits. Although not in the top five of stated needs, UNCG students also expressed interest in developing skills related to maintaining their physical and mental health, increasing their reading speed, learning how to use their leisure time to get more out of life, learning how to better manage time, and learning how to handle pressure from others.

Educational planning...

In the area of educational planning, the top five needs expressed by our UNCG adult undergraduate respondents were, in descending order: (1) learning how to get course credit...
through non-traditional means, 2) learning more about financial aid, 3) getting advice about educational plans, 4) learning more about graduation requirements and 5) learning more about entrance requirements for educational programs of interest. The top five priorities for the comparison sample were: 1) learning more about financial aid, 2) learning how to get course credit through non-traditional means, 3) obtaining child care services, 4) arranging a class schedule that will not conflict with my current job, and 5) getting advice about my educational plans. The most striking differences in educational planning needs between our students and the comparison group are in the areas of child care and class/job scheduling. Although these were of great importance to students in the comparison group, they received little attention from our UNCG respondents with class/job scheduling ranking ninth, and child care 13th in importance. Priorities expressed by both groups reflect the practical, college-for-career orientation of the adult student. As might be expected, these students display a preference for knowledge and actions directed toward accumulating credits and obtaining a degree in as expeditious a manner as possible, forgoing the distractions of campus involvement.

**Career development...**

Career development was the area of primary importance for our UNCG adult students, expressing the most interest in acquiring knowledge and skills during their educational experience that relate directly to their career plans. Thirty-eight percent of our adult undergraduates stated that they required a lot, or a medium amount of help with the aggregate of the 13 career development skills identified by the ALNAS. This is compared to an average of 24% who said they needed the same level of help with personal and educational needs, 18% with educational planning, and 10% who needed a lot or medium help with the skills dealing with associations with others. Table Two compares the top five career development skill/knowledge sets ranked by our UNCG sample as most important with the top five sets identified from the nine comparison institutions. The method of ranking for both samples involved assigning a 3 point value to those responses stating the student required a lot of help, two points for medium help, and 1 point for a little help.

One of the most interesting differences between the two samples shows up in the much greater interest shown by the comparison sample in learning what jobs are available near where they wish to live. This was the top choice for the comparison sample, whereas it ranked fourth for the UNCG sample behind three more general career needs: 1) job opportunities in the career interest area, 2) income potentials of jobs of interest, and 3) training requirements for jobs of interest. Considering the fact that most adult undergraduates live and work in the local area, these data could raise some questions as to the ability of the Triad area to provide desirable employment, at least as perceived by these students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNCG Survey</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>A lot of help</th>
<th>Medium help</th>
<th>A little help</th>
<th>No help</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about job opportunities in my career interest area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about income potentials of jobs of interest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning more about training reqs. for jobs of interest</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning what jobs are available near where I wish to live</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging to discuss career interests with people employed in area</td>
<td>5(tie)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting full-time job experience in new career area</td>
<td>5(tie)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparative Survey</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>A lot of help</th>
<th>Medium help</th>
<th>A little help</th>
<th>No help</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning what jobs are available near where I wish to live</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining part-time work in my career interest area</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning job opportunities in my career interest area</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to find job openings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting full-time job experience in new career area</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social needs...

The last area of needs surveyed by the ALNAS is “association with others.” As mentioned earlier, our UNCG sample reported the least amount of interest, overall, in acquiring help with these skills through their educational experience. The top five needs identified by our UNCG adult undergrads were, in descending order: 1) dealing with the conflicts of job, family, and education, 2) learning how to participate in government activities, 3) learning how to deal effectively with community problems, and learning how to work with my academic advisor (tie), 4) learning how to communicate better with instructors, and 5) dealing objectively with discrimination. The top five needs of the comparison sample were less community-oriented, more personal in focus. They were, in descending order: 1) coping with the problems of being a single parent, 2) dealing with the problems of divorce or separation, 3) raising children in today’s complex society, 4) dealing with the conflict of jobs, family, and education, and 5) learning how to work with my academic advisor. It is possible that the primary needs of the comparison sample reflect a tendency for adults who are facing, or have recently faced, life-changing personal events, to seek additional education as a coping strategy.

We also presented our UNCG adult students with a small battery of locally generated questions. The questions developed were clustered around three major facets of the adult undergraduate experience: 1) institutional connection/engagement, 2) student support services, and 3) academic support services. We have no national comparison data for these local option items.

Connectedness to UNCG...

In the area of institutional connection/engagement, our UNCG adult student respondents reported a strong willingness to seek help, if needed from the university. Ninety percent of our respondents stated they had met other adult students while at UNCG, and 58% were interested in meeting additional adult students. Preferred means of meeting other adult students were, in descending order: (1) informal social occasions, (2) study groups, (3) campus activities planned for single adults, and (4) campus family activities. Forty-seven percent of our sample was interested in becoming involved in on-campus activities, while 35% stated their possible involvement “depends” on other factors. Preferred ways of becoming involved in on-campus activities were, in descending order: (1) being a volunteer, (2) joining a focus group to address adult student issues, (3) becoming active in the Adult Student Organization, and (4) sitting on an adult student advisory committee. The majority (53%) of those surveyed stated that their first choice for information about what is going on at UNCG was the University’s main website, followed a distant second by campus bulletin boards (12%). Other traditional sources of campus information such as, “The Carolinian,” other students, and the Student Handbook received very low response rates. Not surprisingly, only 2% of UNCG adult undergraduates have any desire to participate in student government, and only 7% reported voting in student elections. Fifty-two percent of our sample said they eat on campus, and 61% prefer to study at an on-campus location. Thirty-one percent of respondents stated they felt “very much,” or “quite a bit” connected and/or part of UNCG, while 33% felt “some” connection to the university. Twenty percent perceived “very little” connection to UNCG, while 16% gave no response.

Student support services...

In the area of student support services, 87% of our adult undergraduate sample had heard of the Office of Adult Students at the time they were surveyed, but only 22% had participated in any activities sponsored by that department. Use of the Student Health Center was split almost evenly in our sample between those who had used this service (49%), and those who had not (45%). Six percent of the respondents had either never heard of the Student Health Center or chose not to respond to the question.

Academic support services...

Use of academic support services was mixed among our sample with 85% stating they used the Jackson Library while the services of the UNCG Writing Center and the Student Success Center were used by only 21% and 13%, respectively. Although the Writing Center was used by less than a fourth of our sample, only 10% stated they had never heard of this service. Perhaps of some concern is the fact that 50% of our sample had never heard of the Student Success Center. Forty-two percent of our group stated that they have one particular faculty or staff member to whom they go for help, while 55% have no person, in particular, to whom they turn for advice. With regards to advising, our sample is largely divided among three groups: 35% who believe their advising is excellent and that they are on track for their degree; 26% who believe they had a rough start with course advisement, but are currently on the right track; and 30% who say they figure out on their own what courses to take. A small number of respondents (7%) say they are currently unclear as to what courses to take and need help.