



What We Know About AP[®] Students

AP Annual Conference

Las Vegas, Nevada

July 13, 2007

Ellen A. Sawtell, Philip Handwerk, and
Jacqueline M. Gillie

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A more in-depth look at AP test takers in the Nation and Florida

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Main Objective

- Are students who self-report that they take more years of study in a particular subject area more likely to take AP?

Desired Session Outcomes

- Participants will gain a clearer understanding of the characteristics of AP Students by examining variables such as their college interests.
- Participants will learn how this population has changed between 2001 and 2005.
- Participants will be better able to help identify students not currently being served by AP.

The Numbers – Nation

- In 2005, nearly 1.5 million students graduated having taken the SAT[®]
- When students register to take the SAT, they are asked to fill out a 42-item questionnaire
- 73 – 76% of students who took AP also filled out the SAT questionnaire

The Population & The Instrument

- The SAT is primarily taken by juniors and seniors in high school
- The SAT is a test that measures critical reading, math, and writing
- The SAT questionnaire includes questions about:
 - demographic information
 - high school coursework and activities, and
 - college preferences and aspirations

The Matched Cohort we built

- SAT Summary reports (i.e., College-Bound Seniors) are produced based on the graduating class of seniors
 - If you last took the SAT as a junior (in January 2004) your scores will be part of a summary report on all seniors graduating in 2005
- AP Summary reports are produced based on the academic year

The Matched Cohort we built

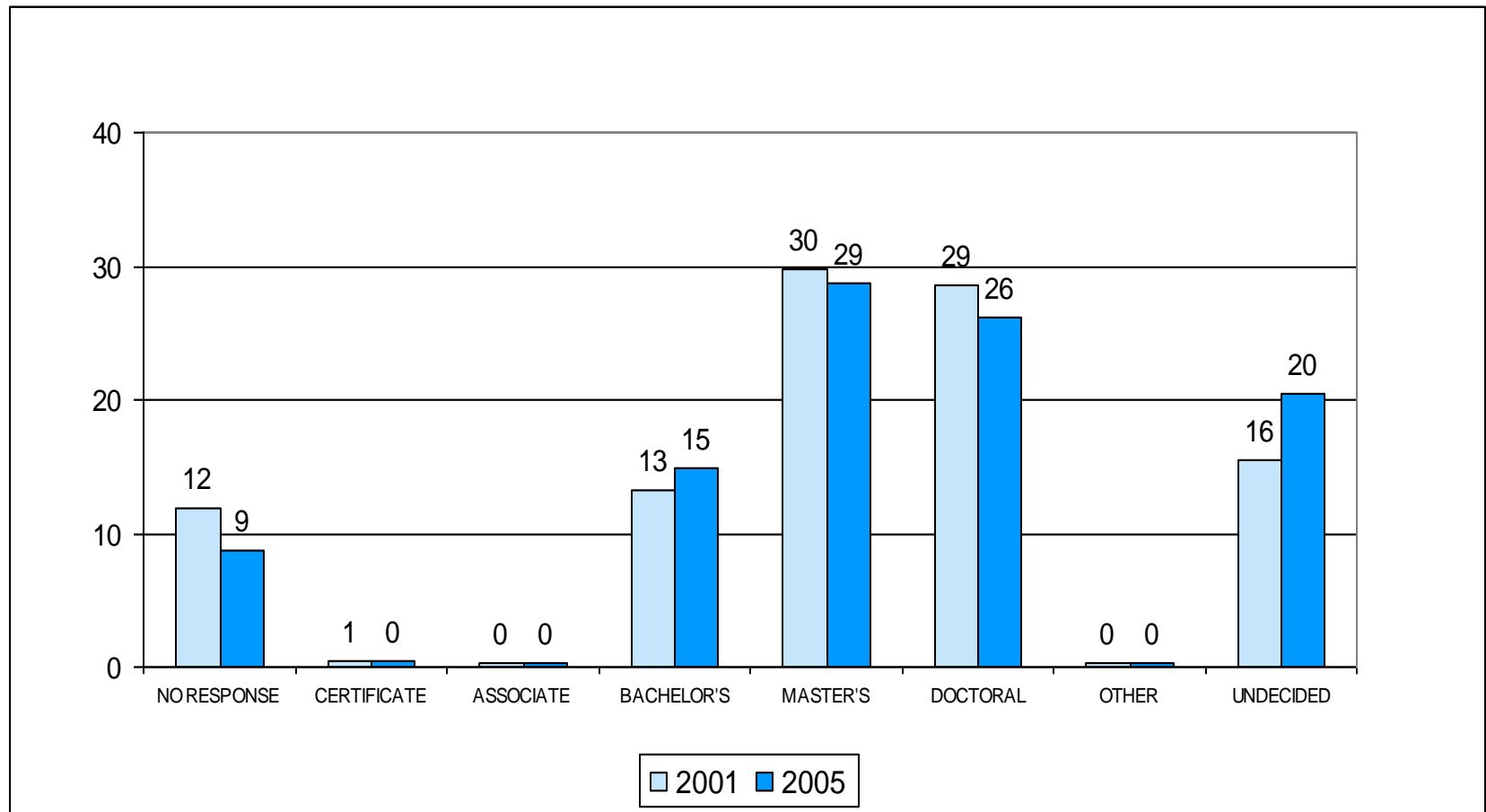
- Therefore, results presented are for the graduating class of seniors.
- Issue-Time lag for results
 - Impact of questionnaire modification in 2003 has impact on about 75% students

Test-Takers – Nation

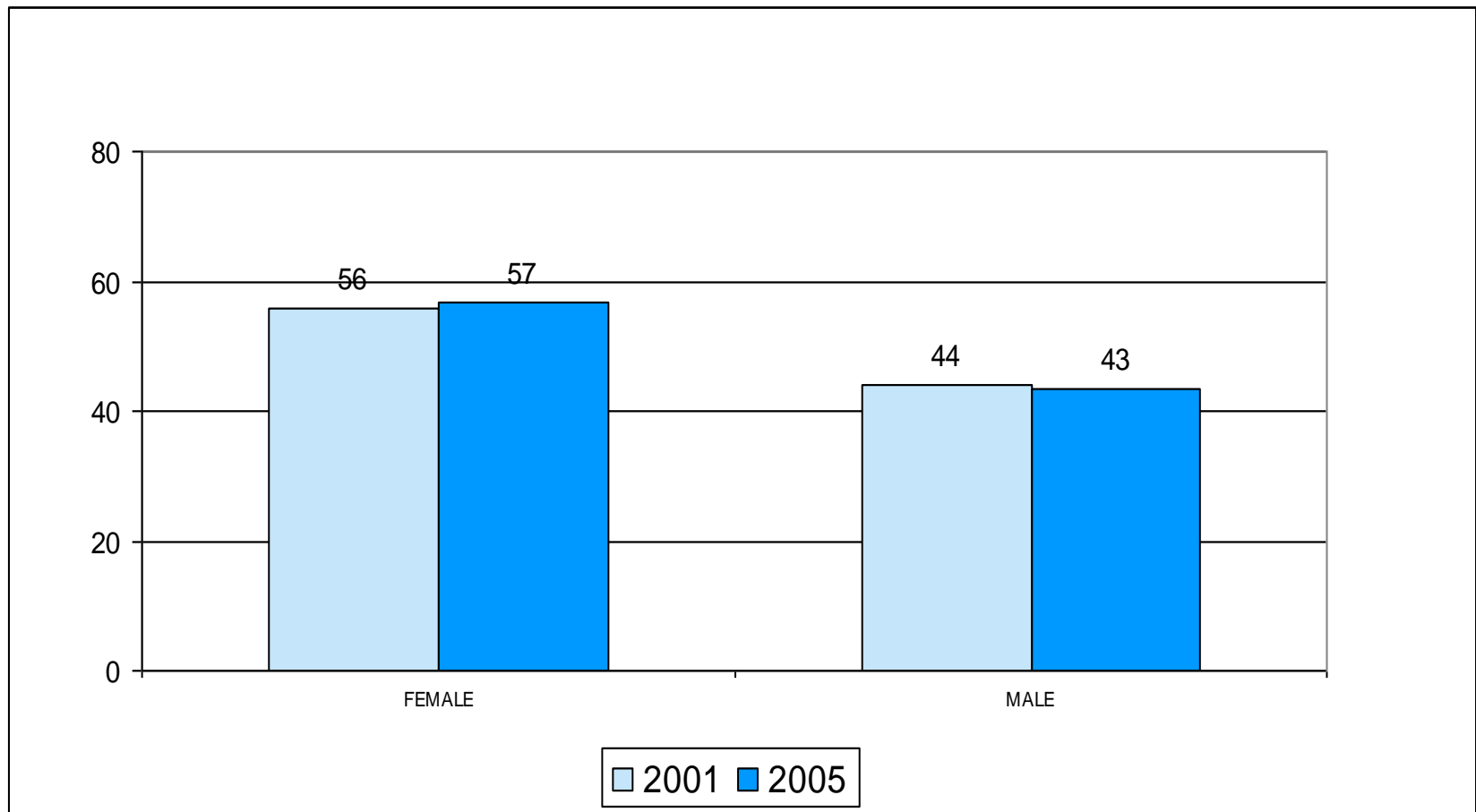
- In the 2001 graduating class of seniors:
 - 1,276,320 took the SAT Reasoning Test
 - 516,645 took an AP exam
 - 394,717 of those students who took an AP exam filled out the SAT Questionnaire
- In the 2005 graduating class of seniors:
 - 1,475,623 took the SAT Reasoning Test
 - 710,966 took an AP exam
 - 515,814 of those students who took an AP exam filled out the SAT Questionnaire

Analyses – Nation

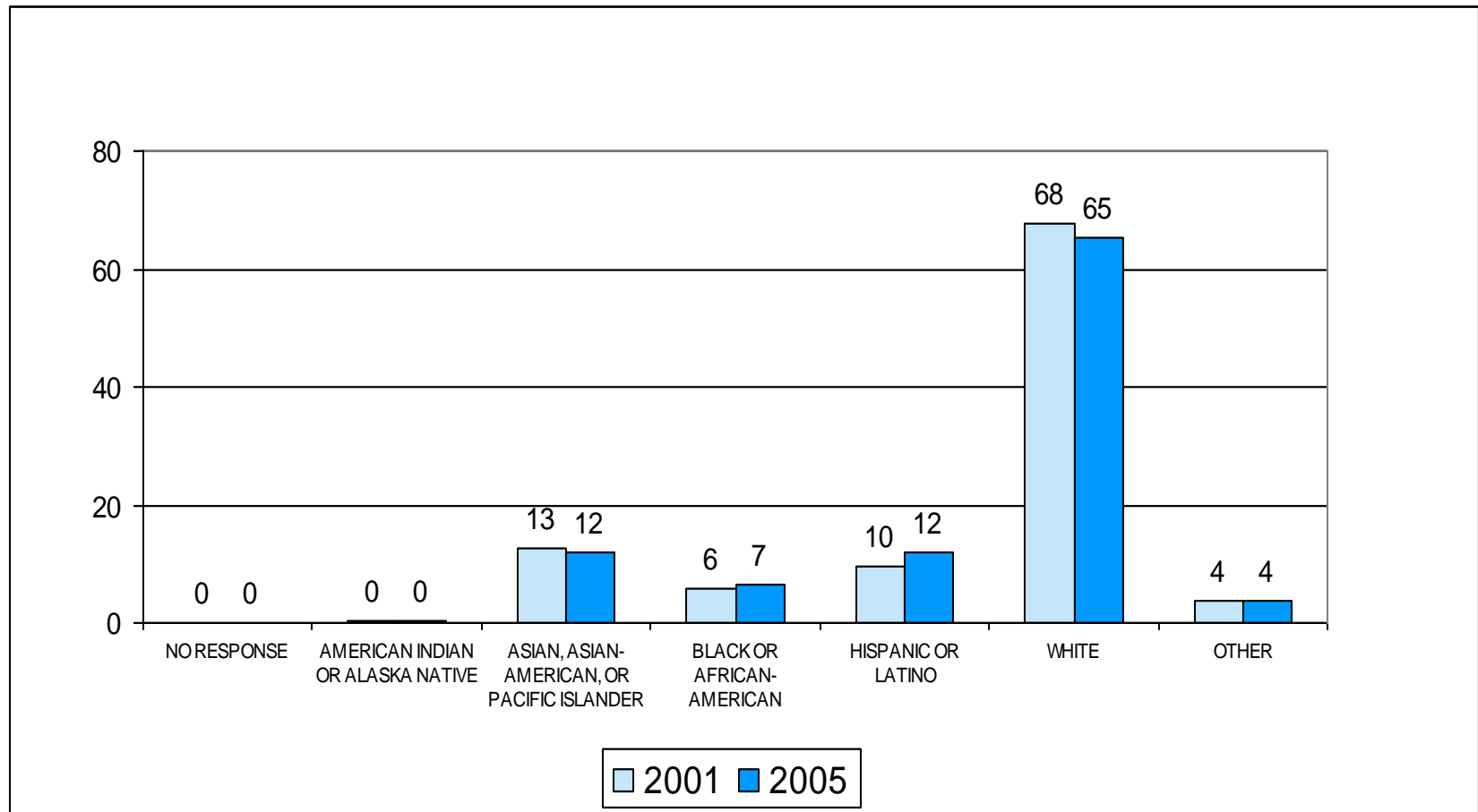
Percent by Degree Goal



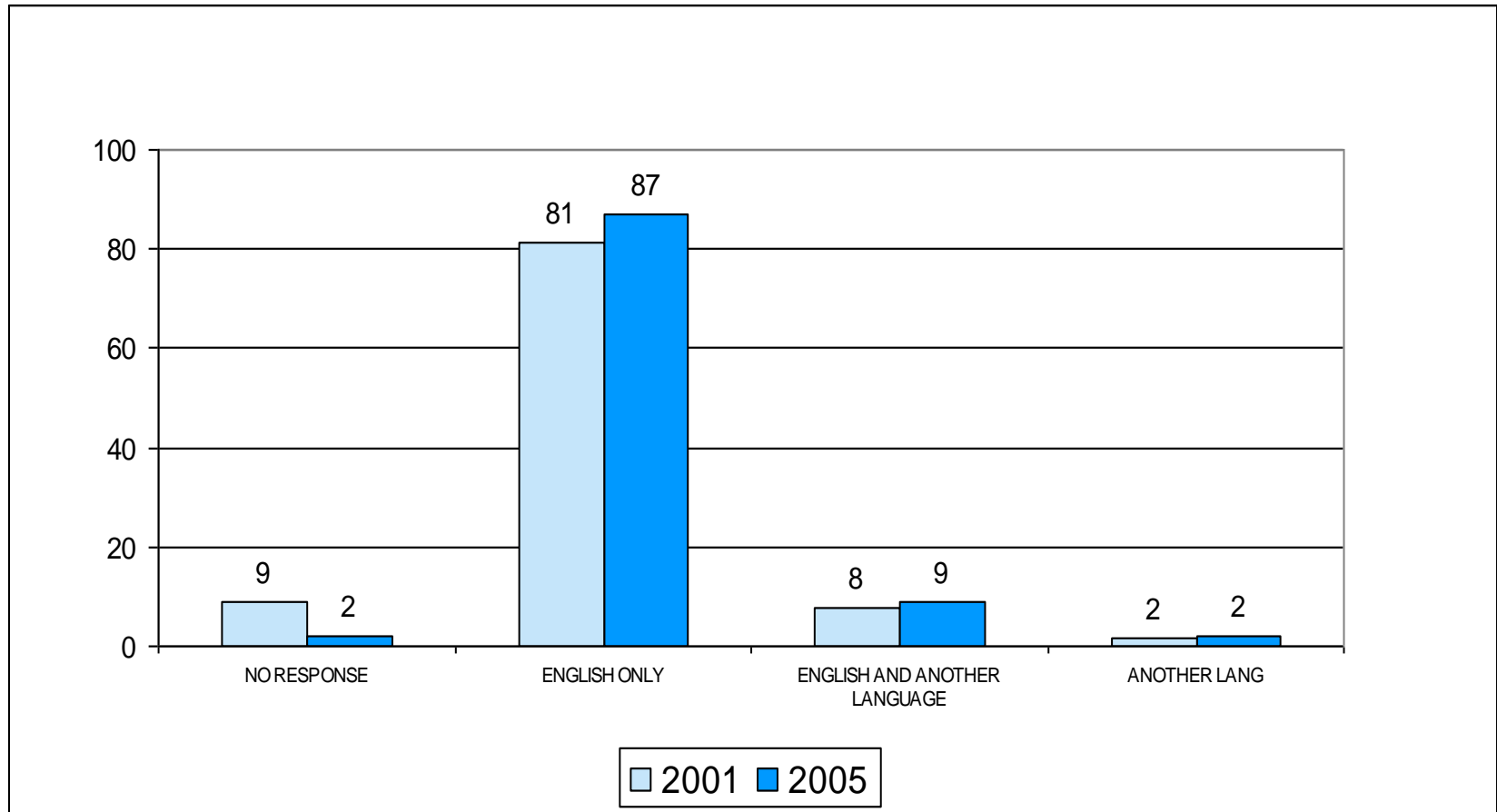
Percent by Gender



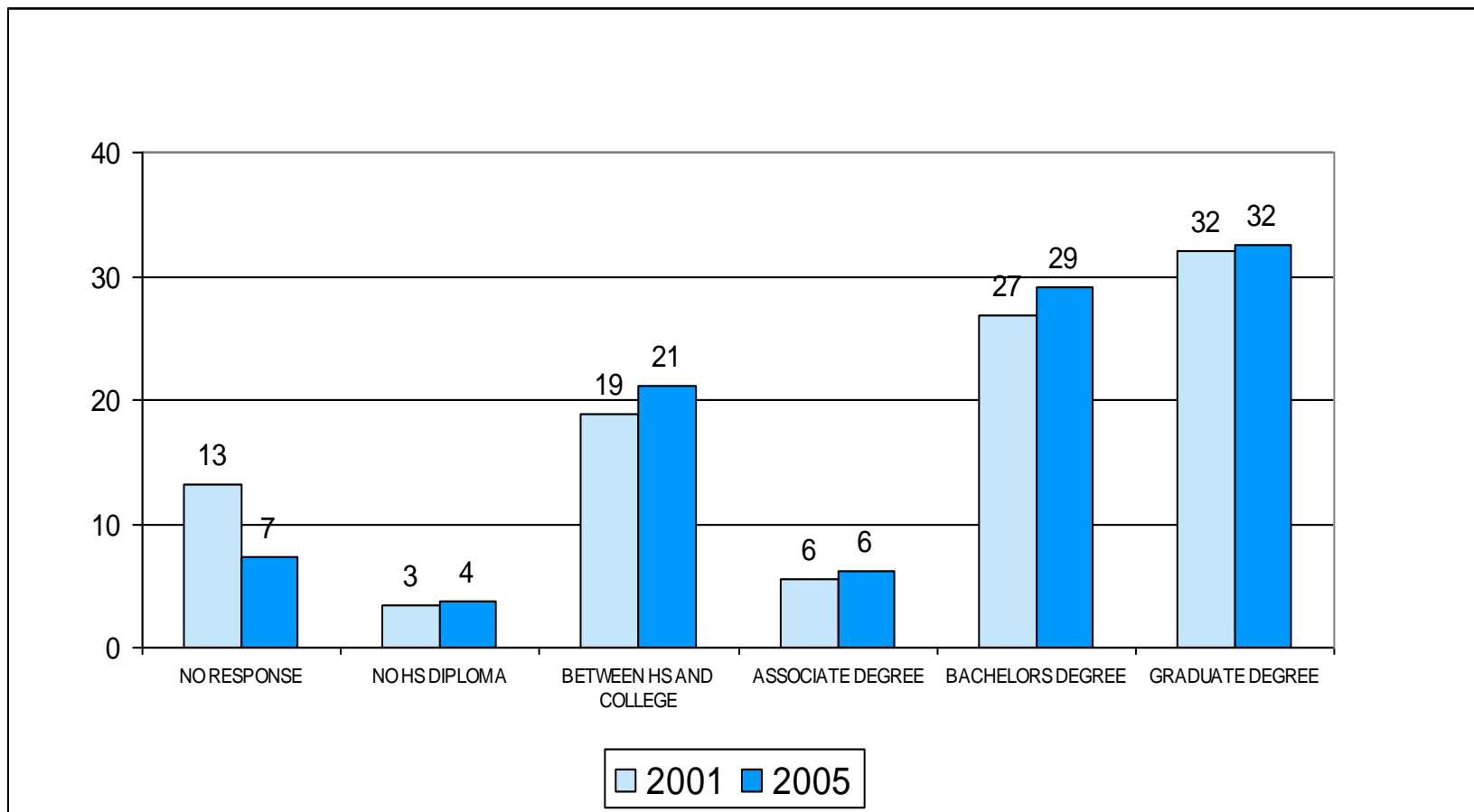
Percent by Race/Ethnicity



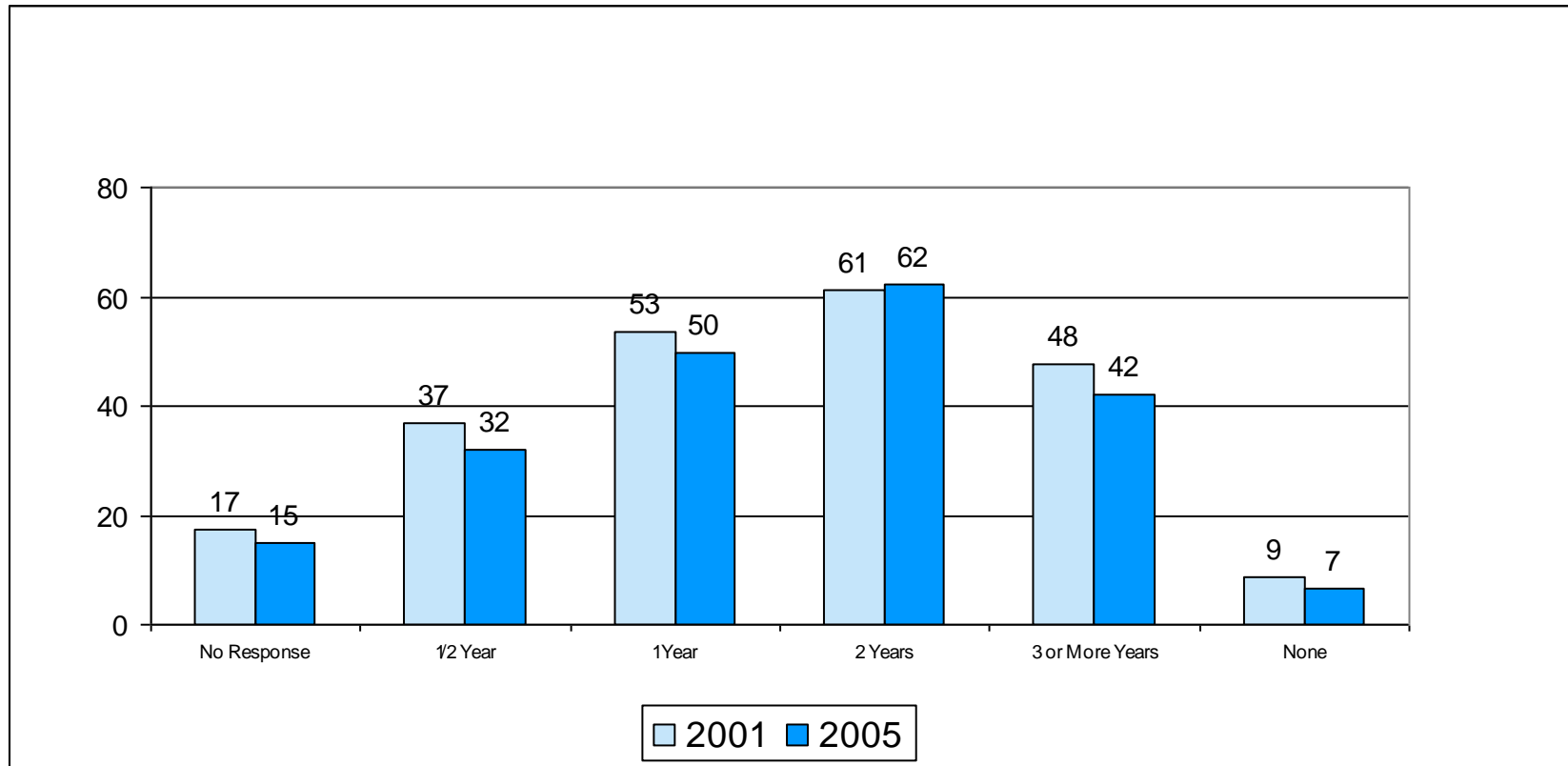
Percent by Best Language



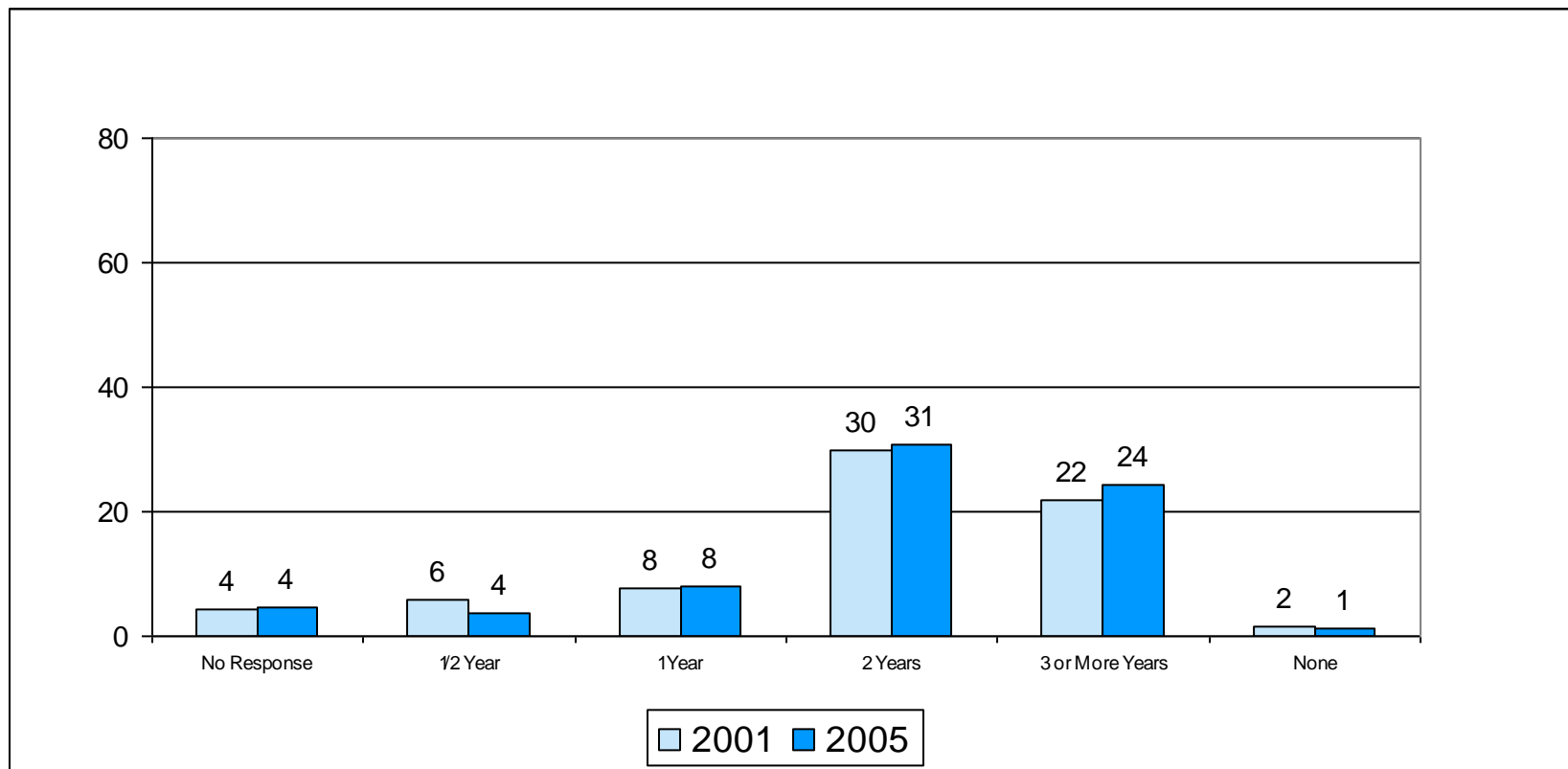
Percent by Parental Level of Education



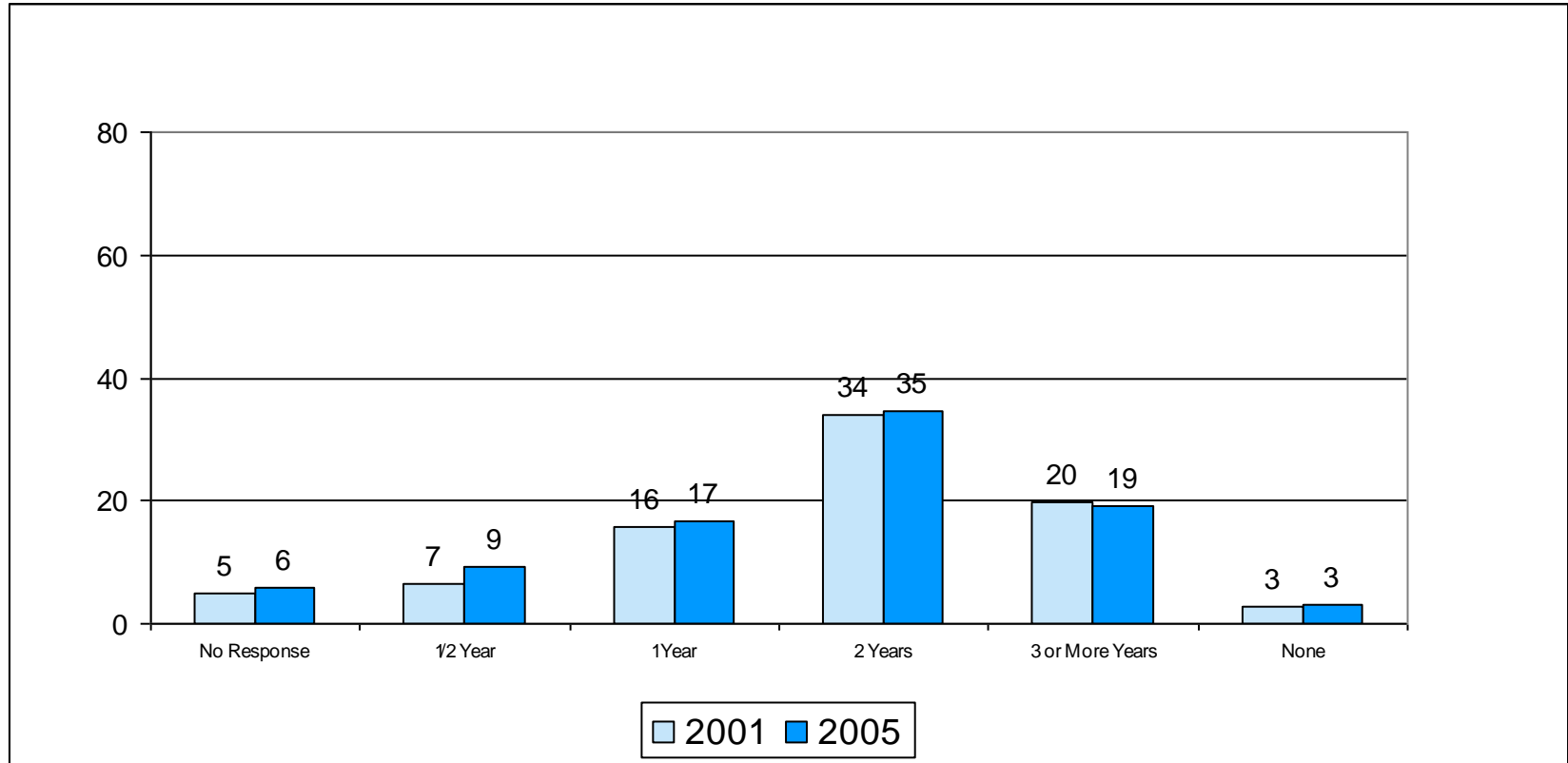
Percent of Students who took AP Calculus AB by Years of Calculus



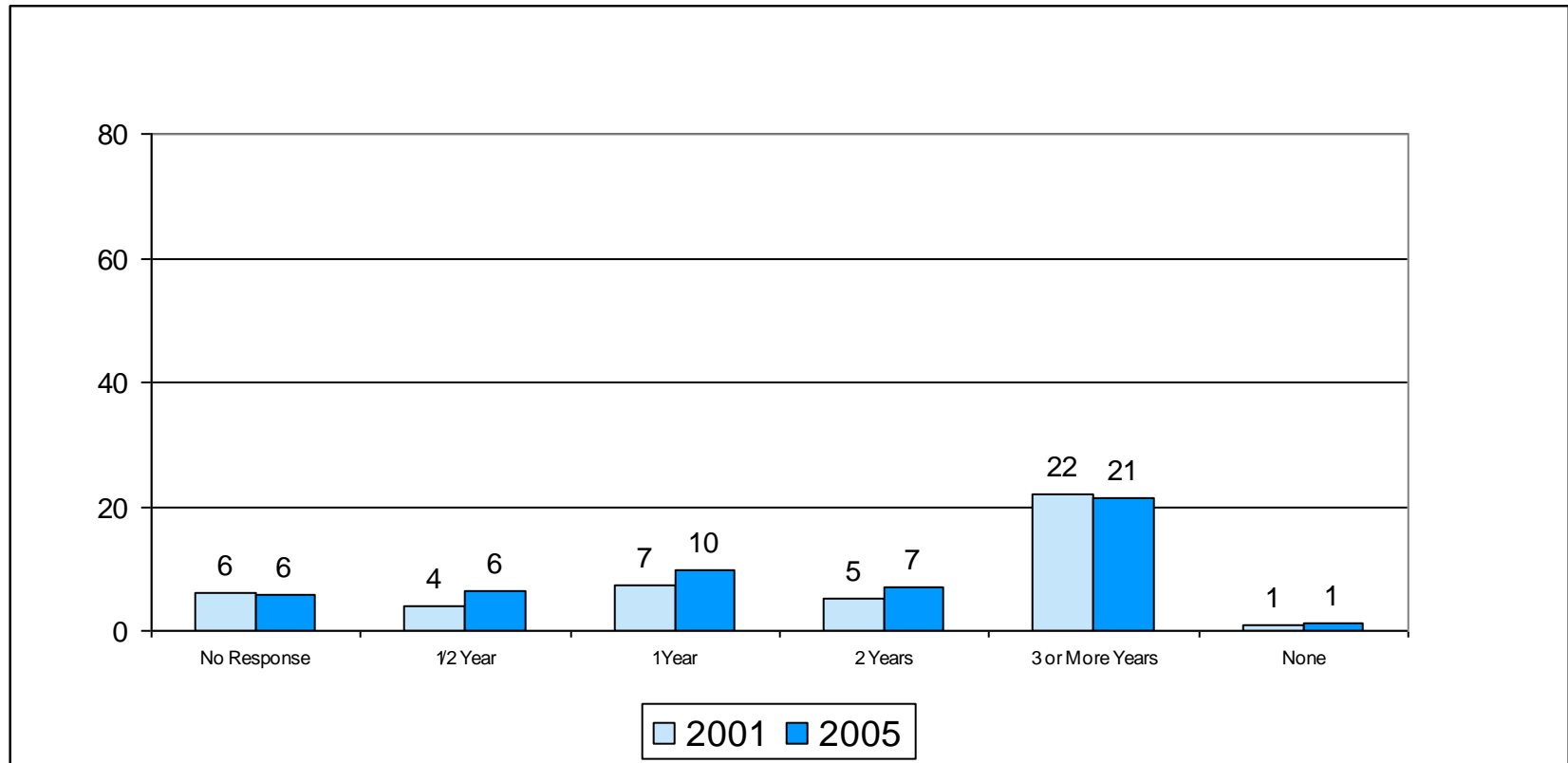
Percent of Students who took AP Physics B by Years of Physics



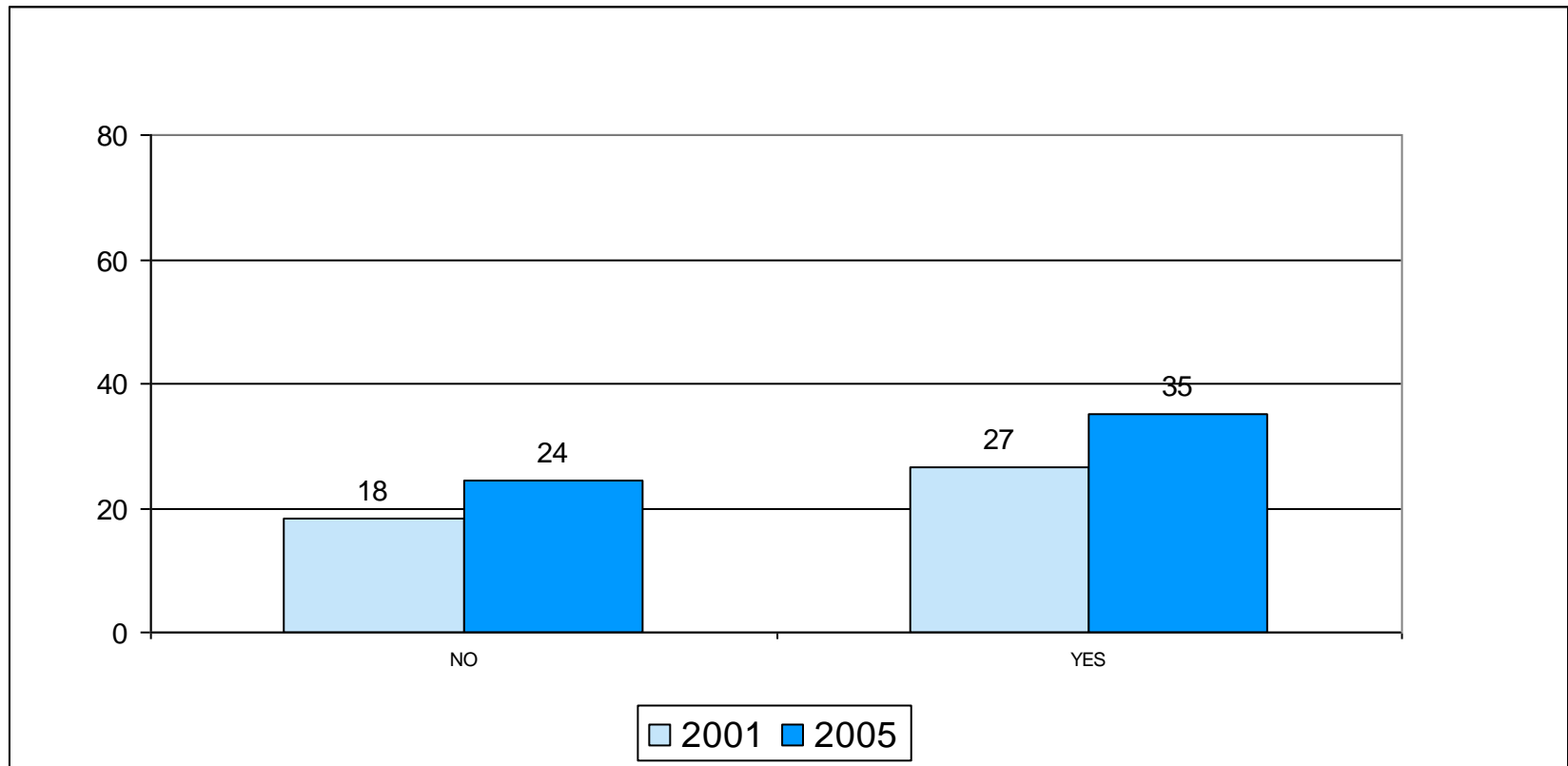
Percent of Students who took AP Macroeconomics by Years of Economics



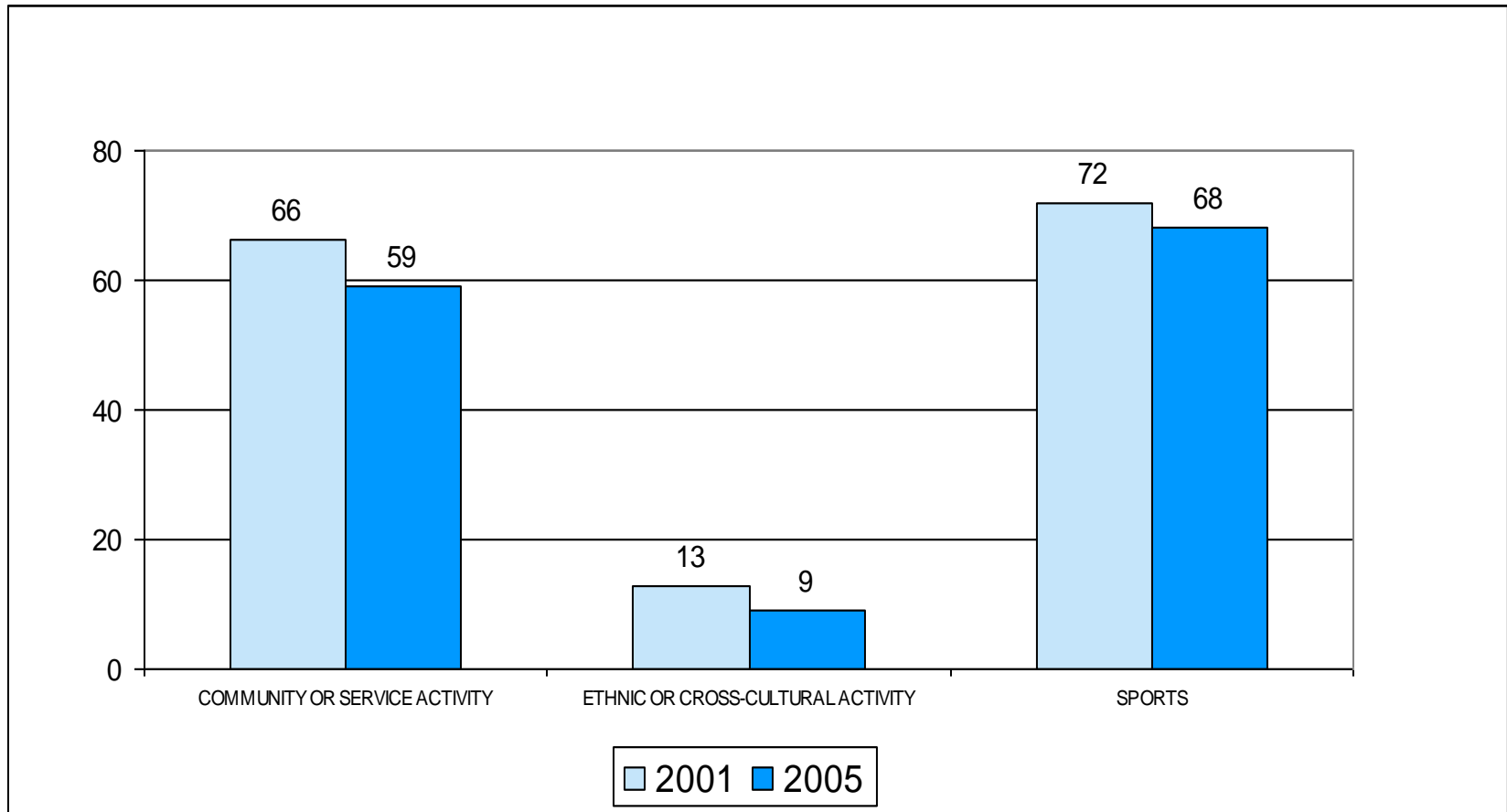
Percent of Students who took AP Spanish by Years of Spanish



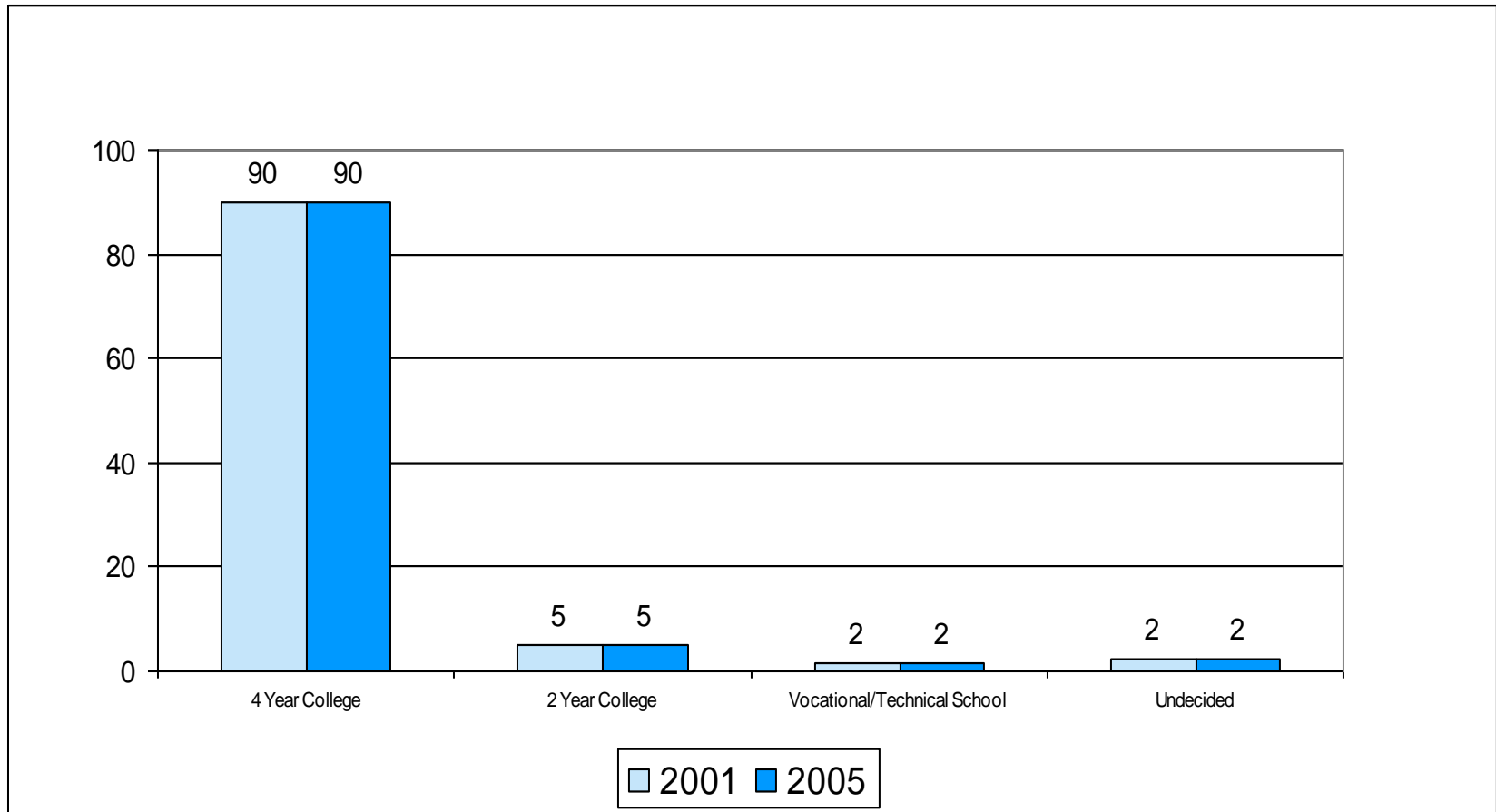
Percent of Students who took AP English Language by Composition Indicator



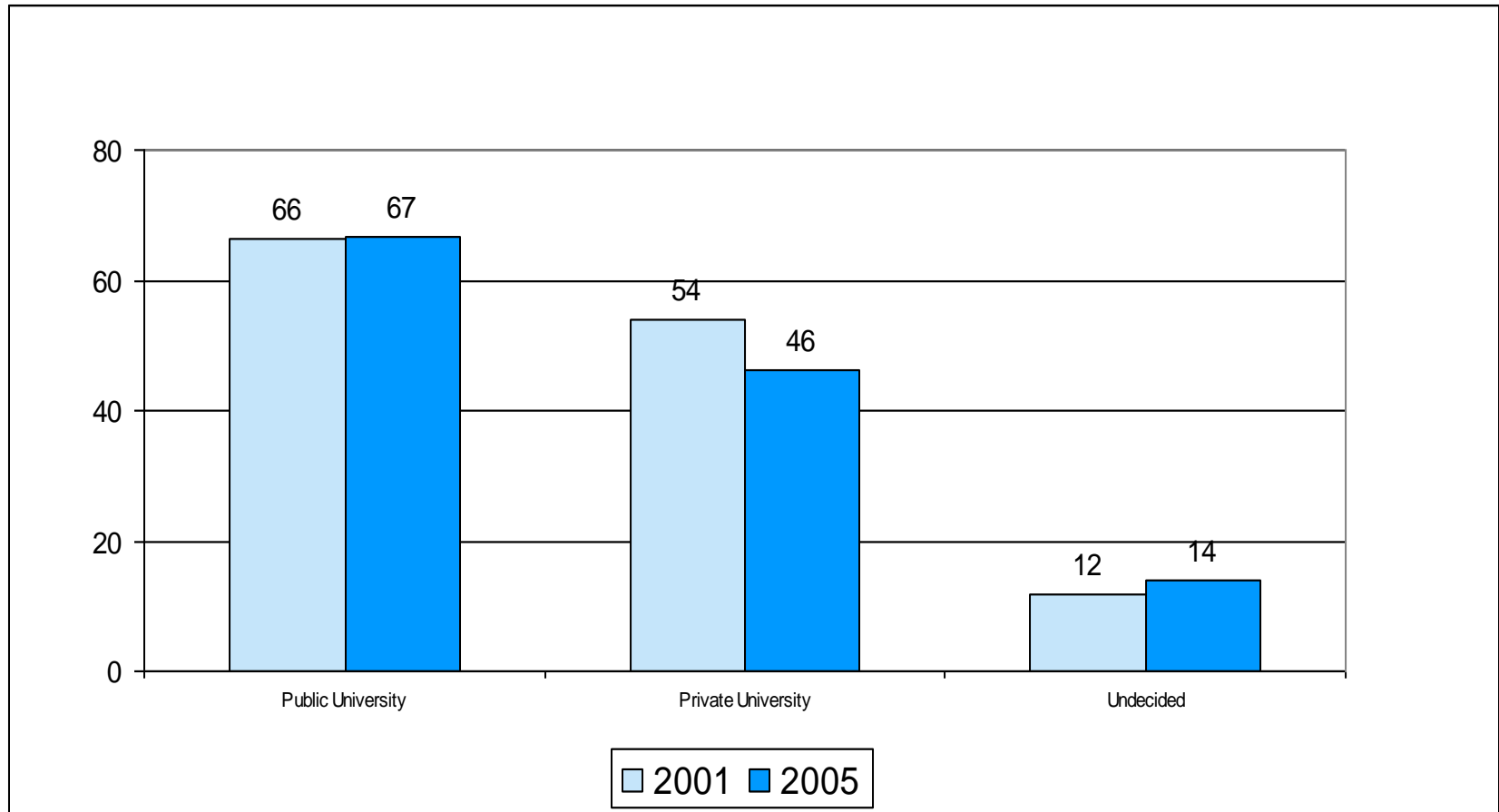
Percent by High School Activities



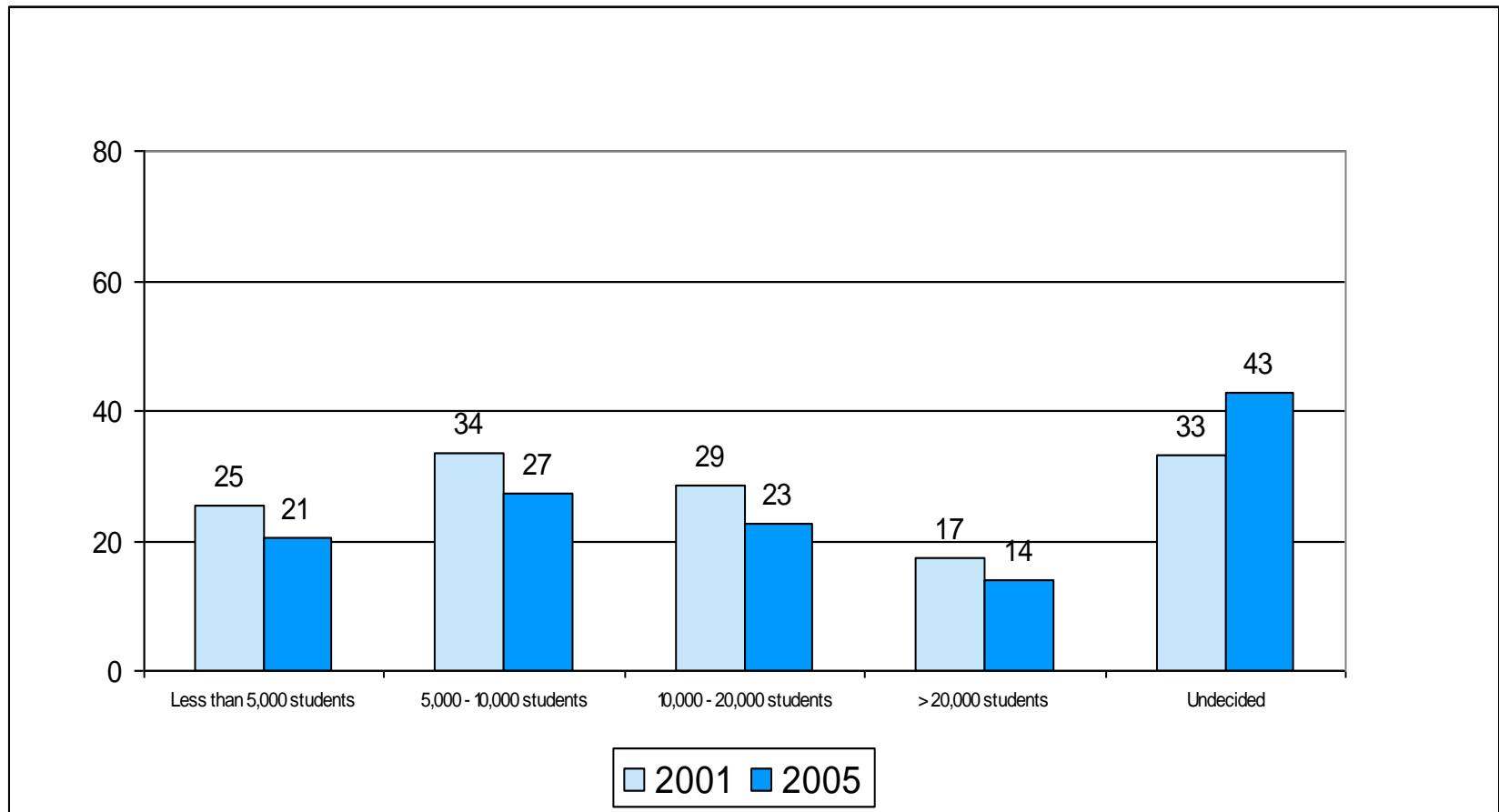
Percent by Type of Institution



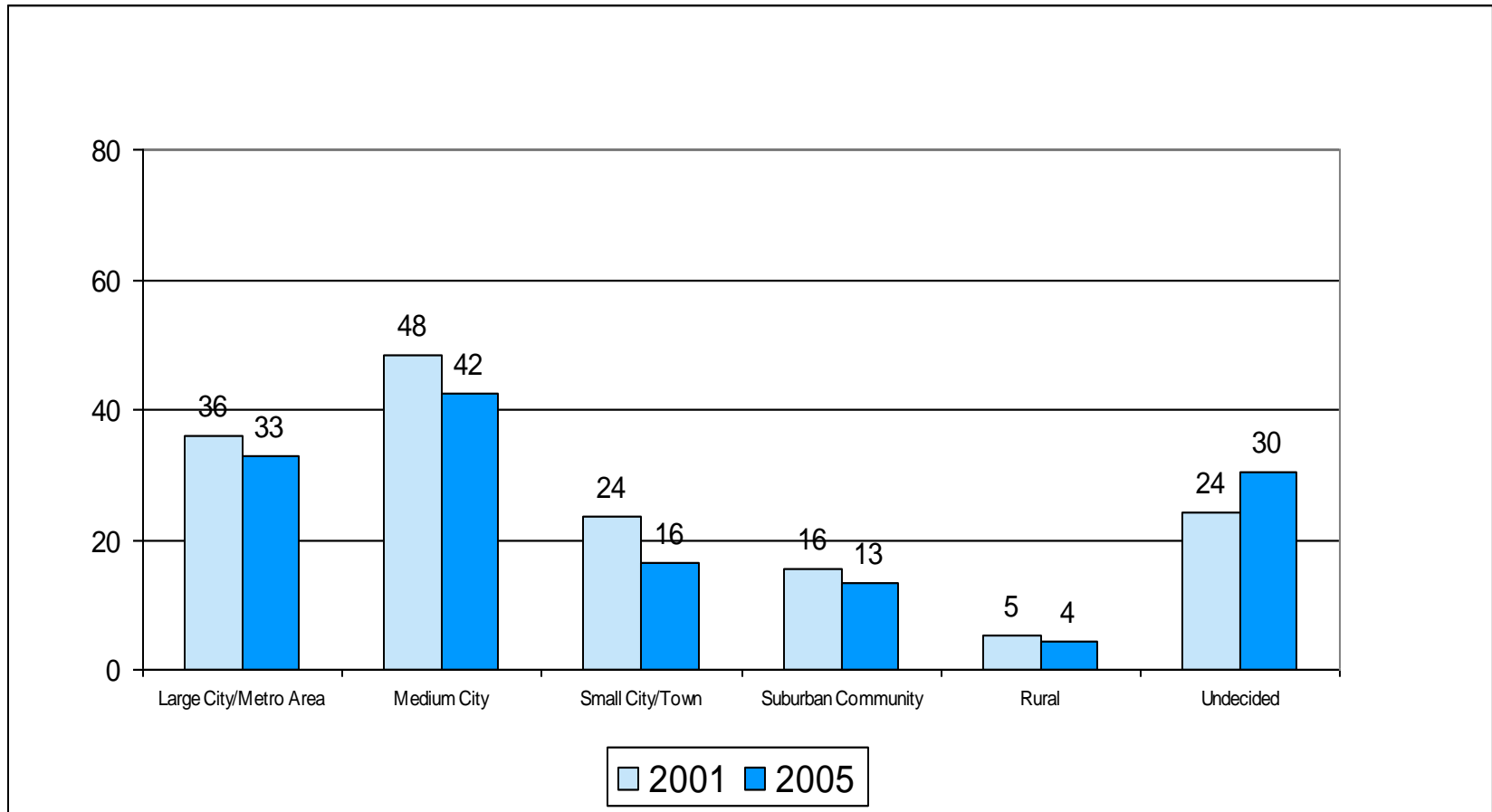
Percent by Type of University



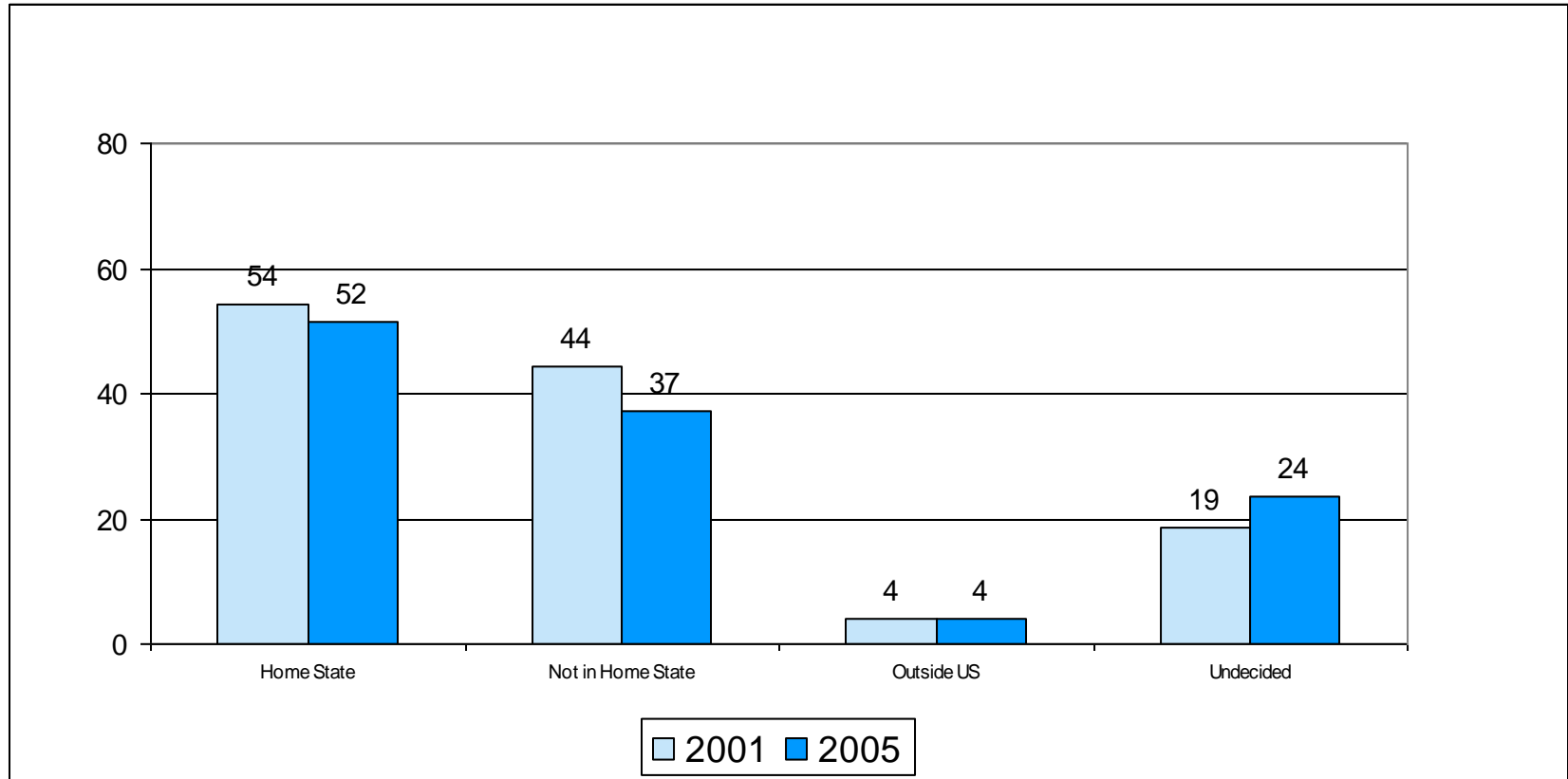
Percent by Size of College



Percent by College Setting



Percent by Proximity to Home



Analyses – Florida

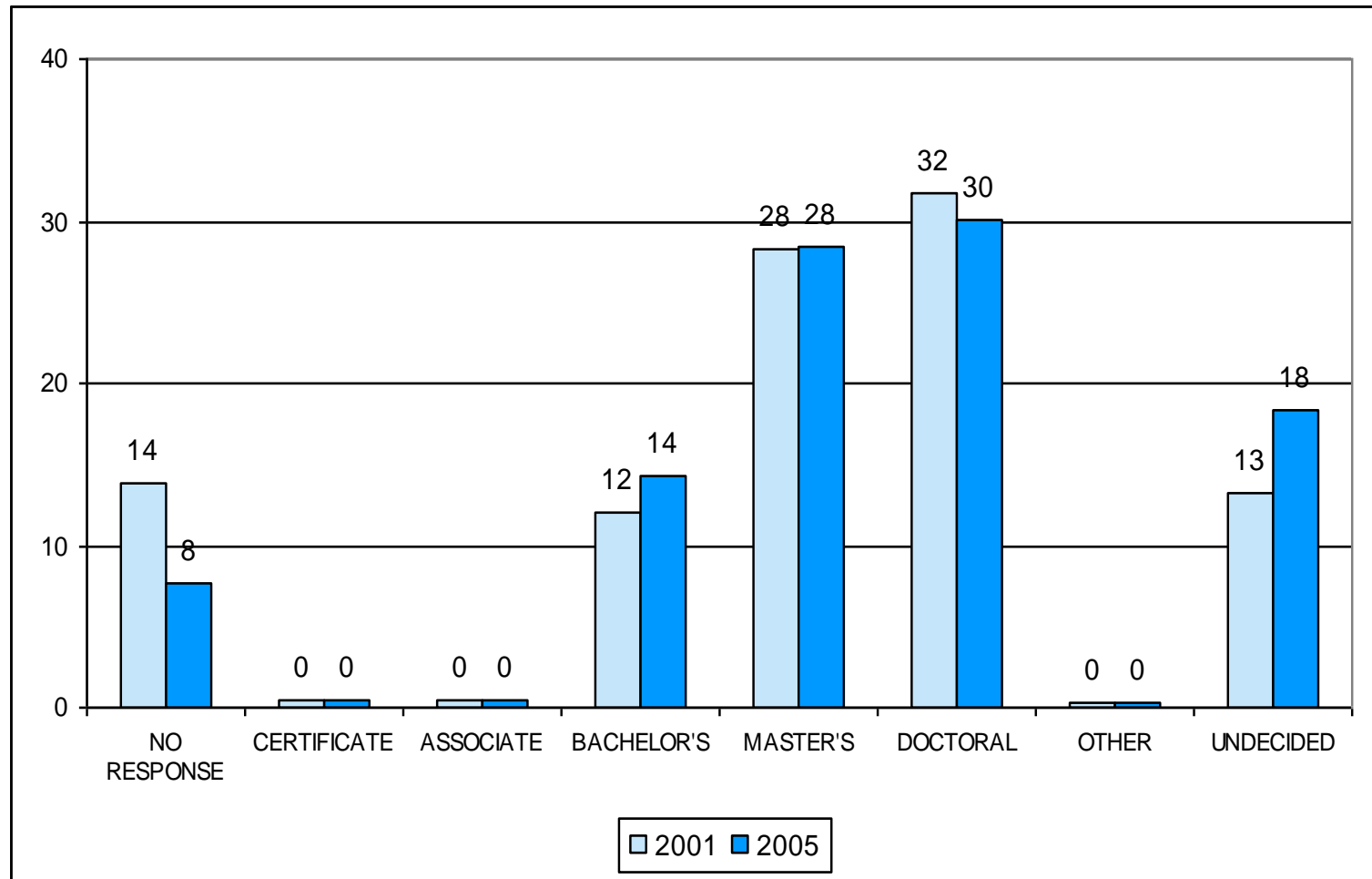
The Numbers – Florida

- In 2005, more than 93,000 students graduated having taken the SAT[®]
- 85 – 86% of students who took AP also filled out the SAT questionnaire

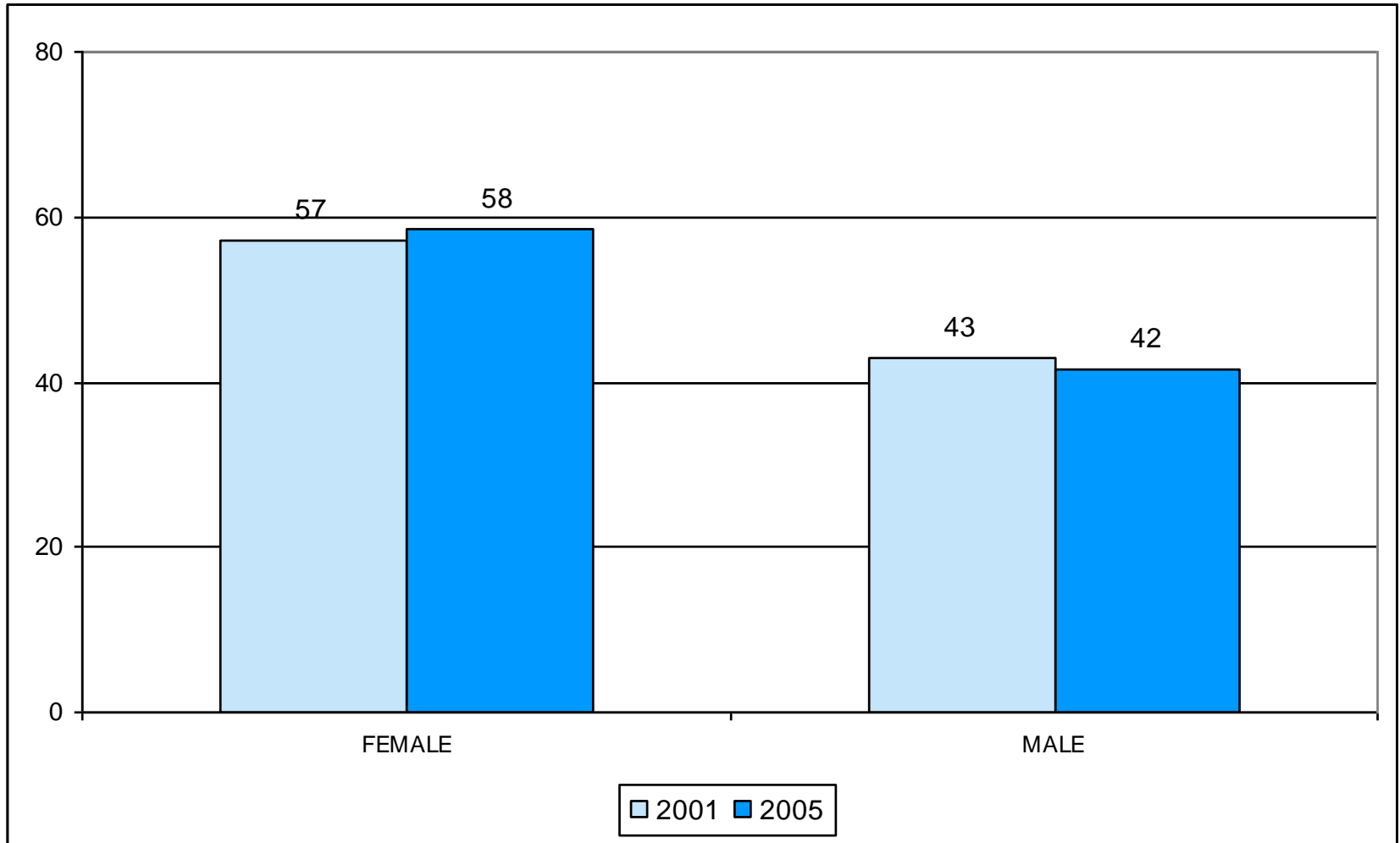
Test-Takers – Florida

- In the 2001 graduating class of seniors:
 - 69,363 took the SAT Reasoning Test
 - 28,195 took an AP exam
 - 24,315 of those students who took an AP exam filled out the SAT Questionnaire
- In the 2005 graduating class of seniors:
 - 93,505 took the SAT Reasoning Test
 - 45,900 took an AP exam
 - 39,141 of those students who took an AP exam filled out the SAT Questionnaire

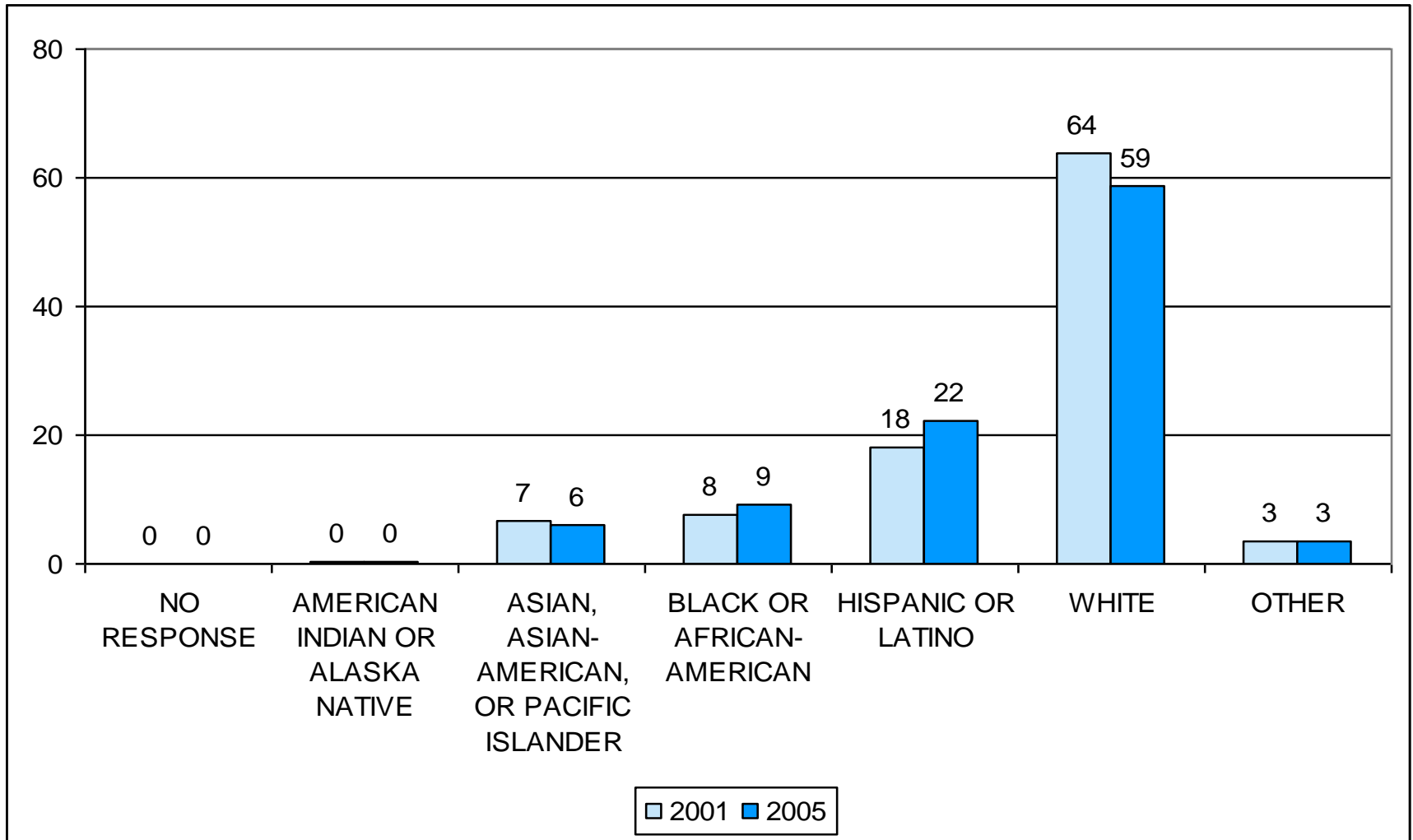
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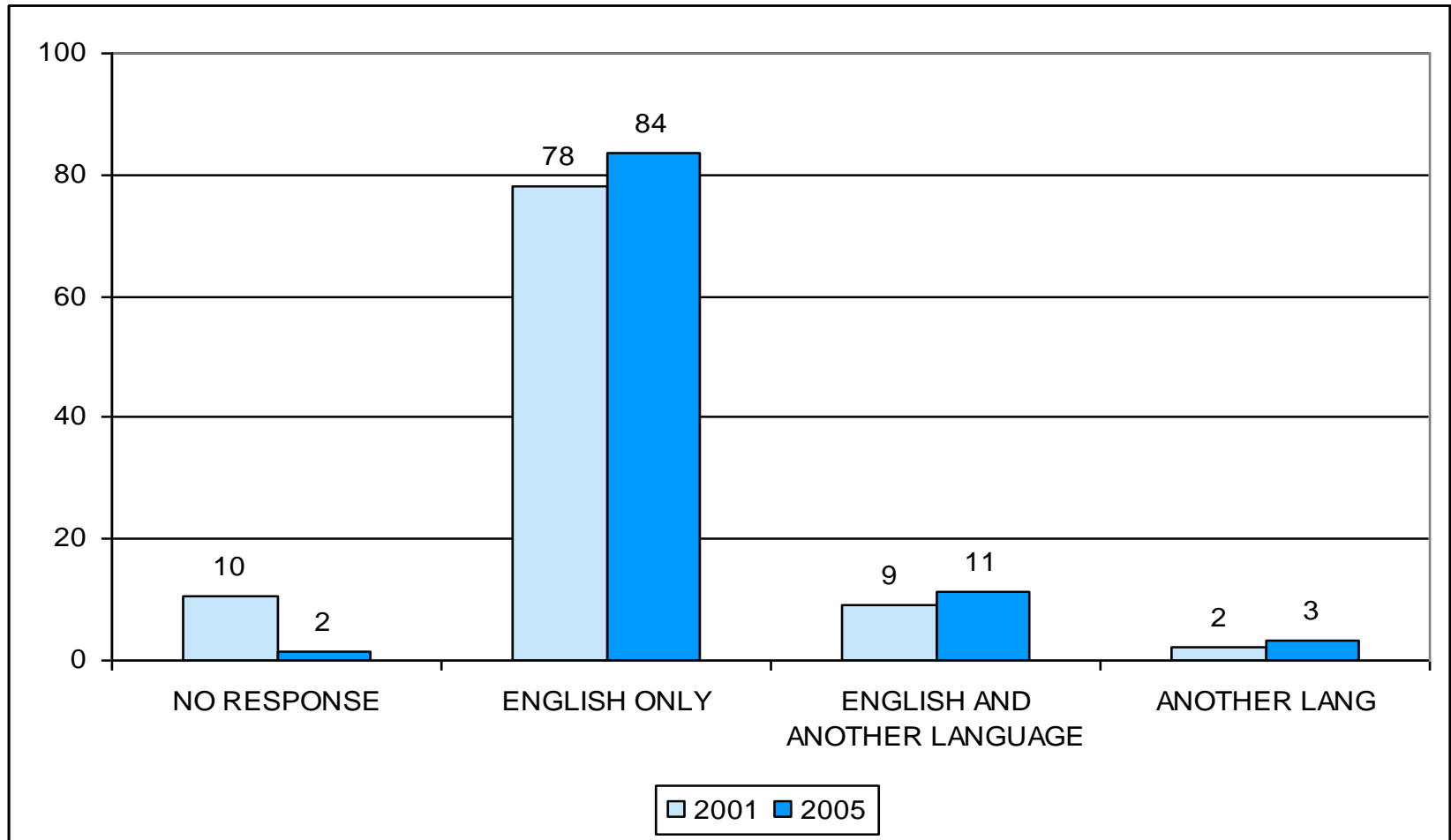
Percent by Gender



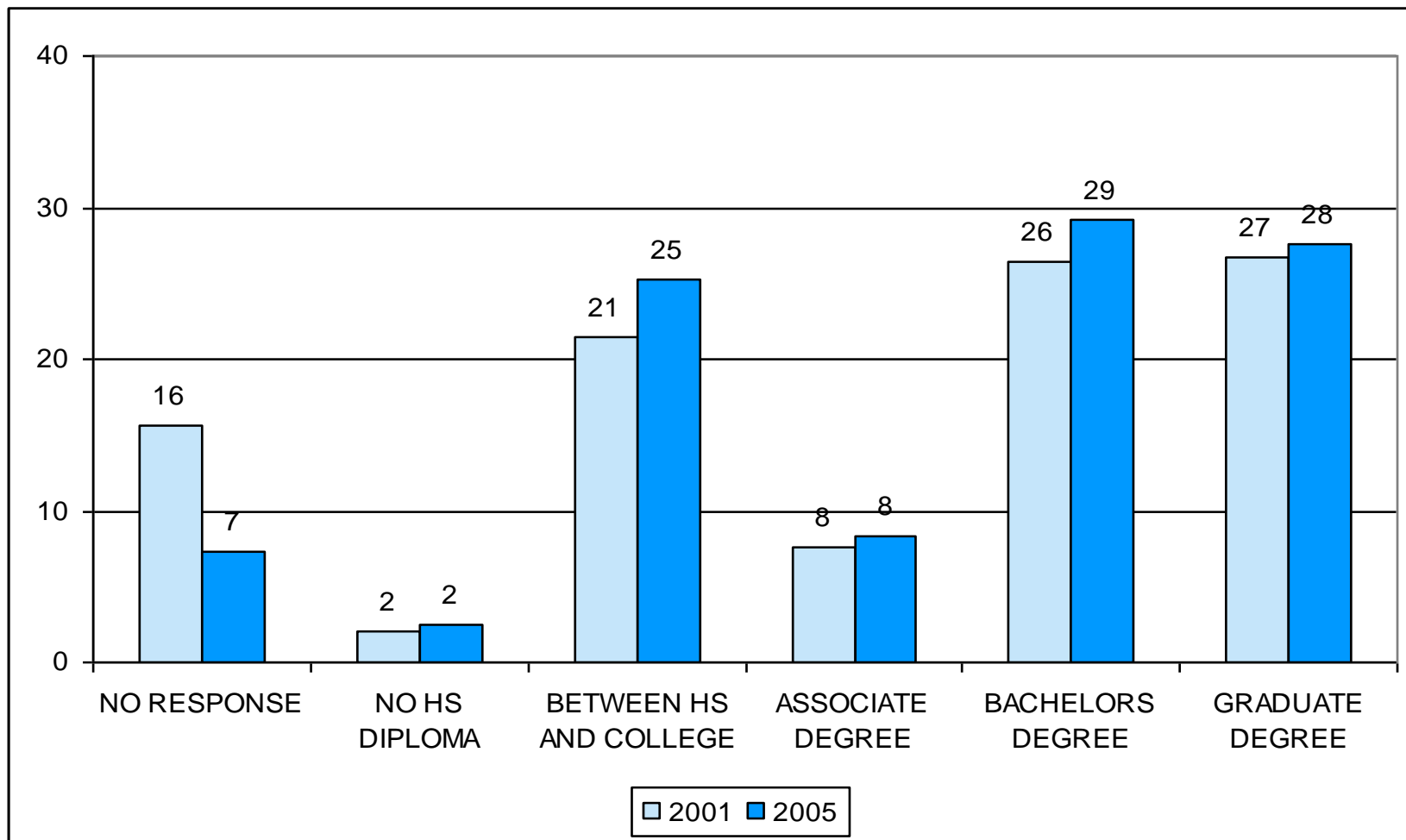
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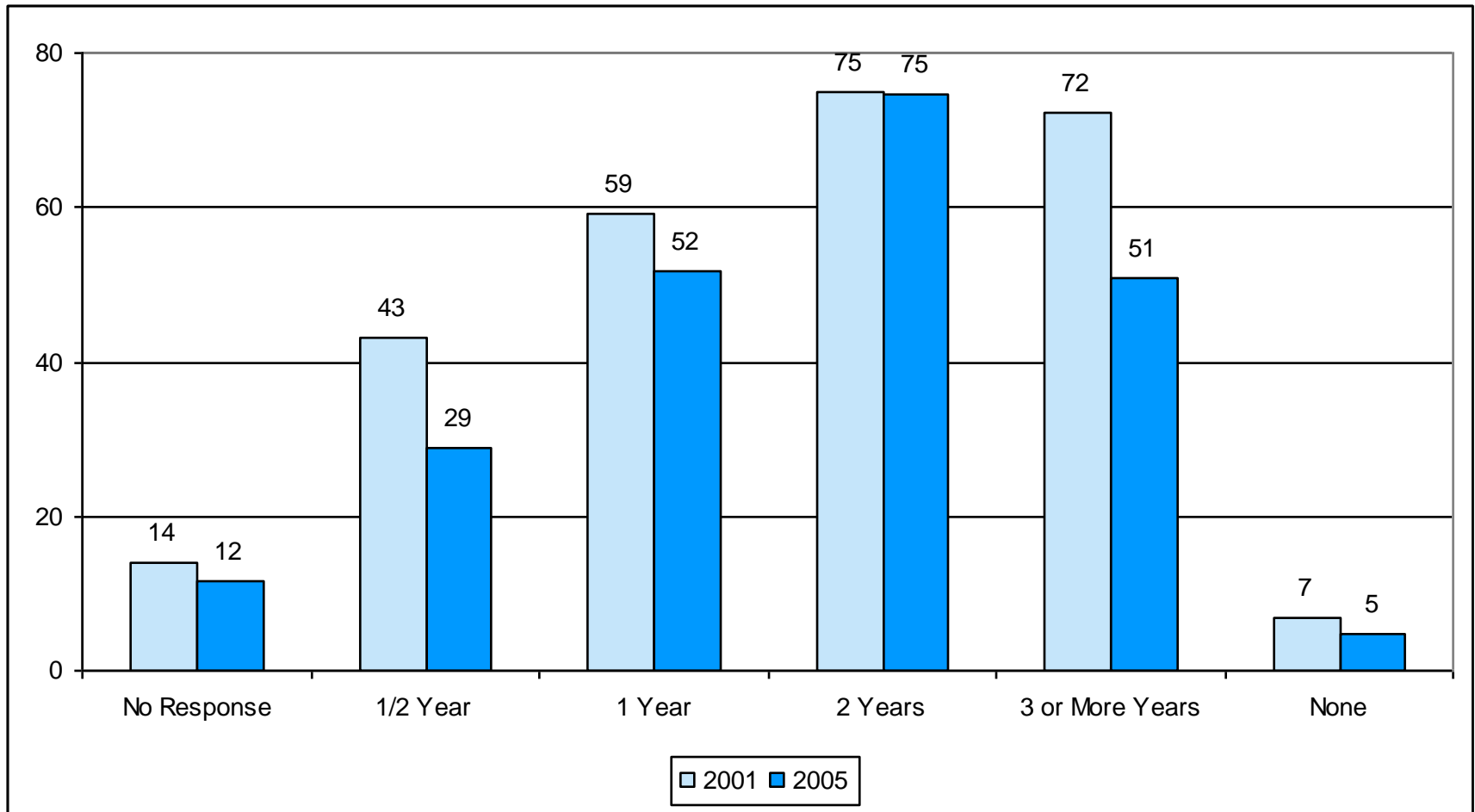
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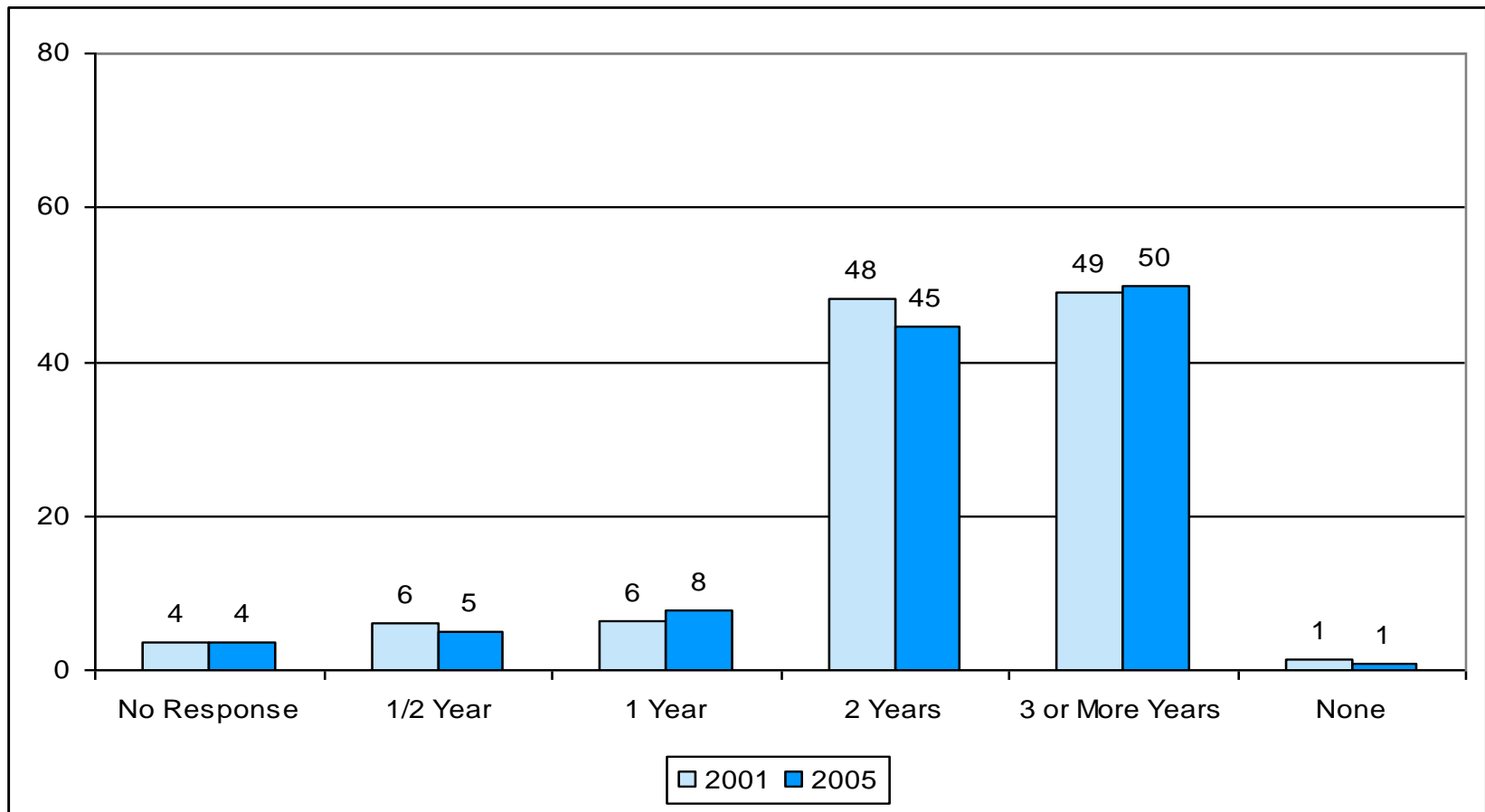
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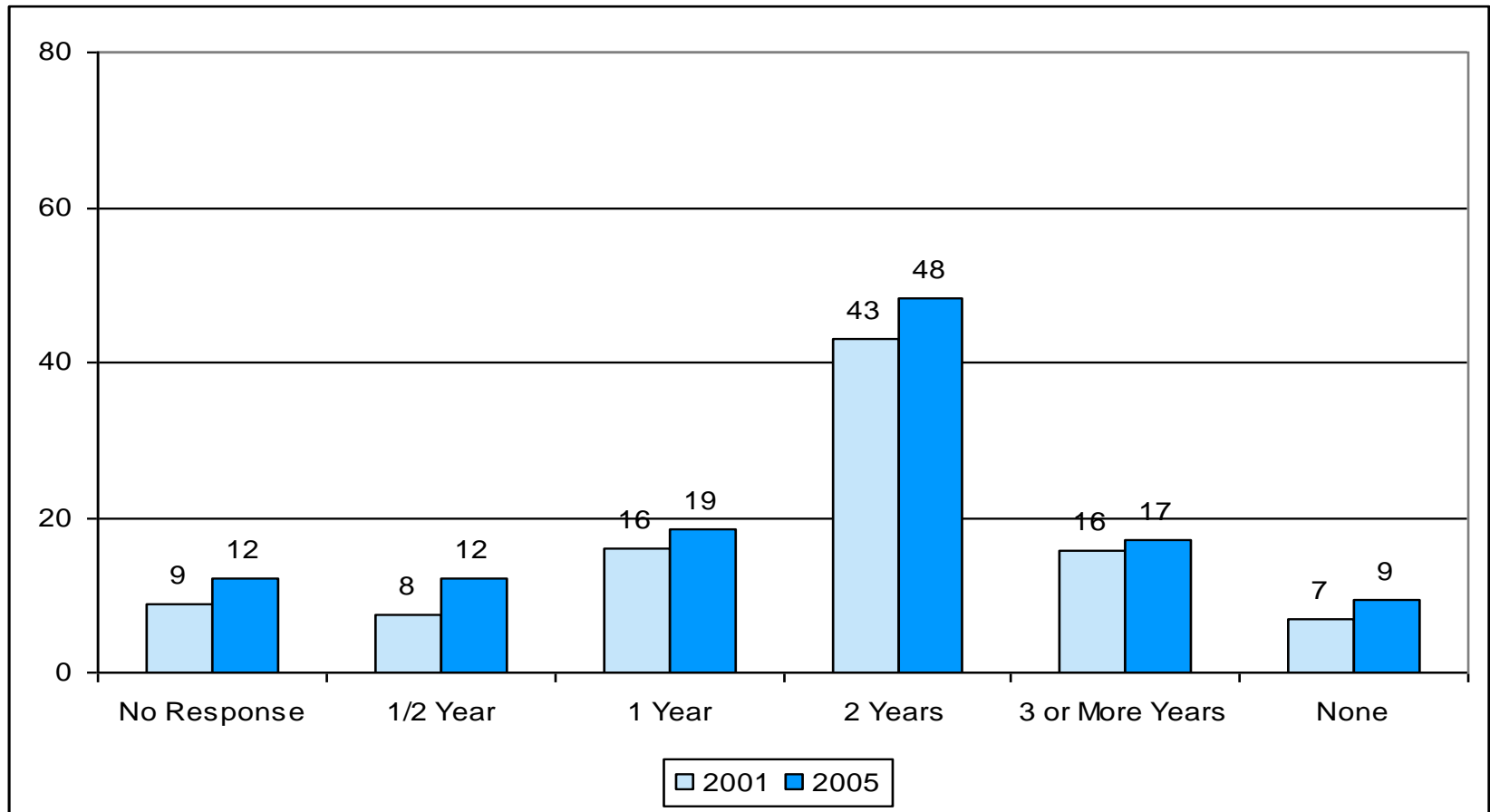
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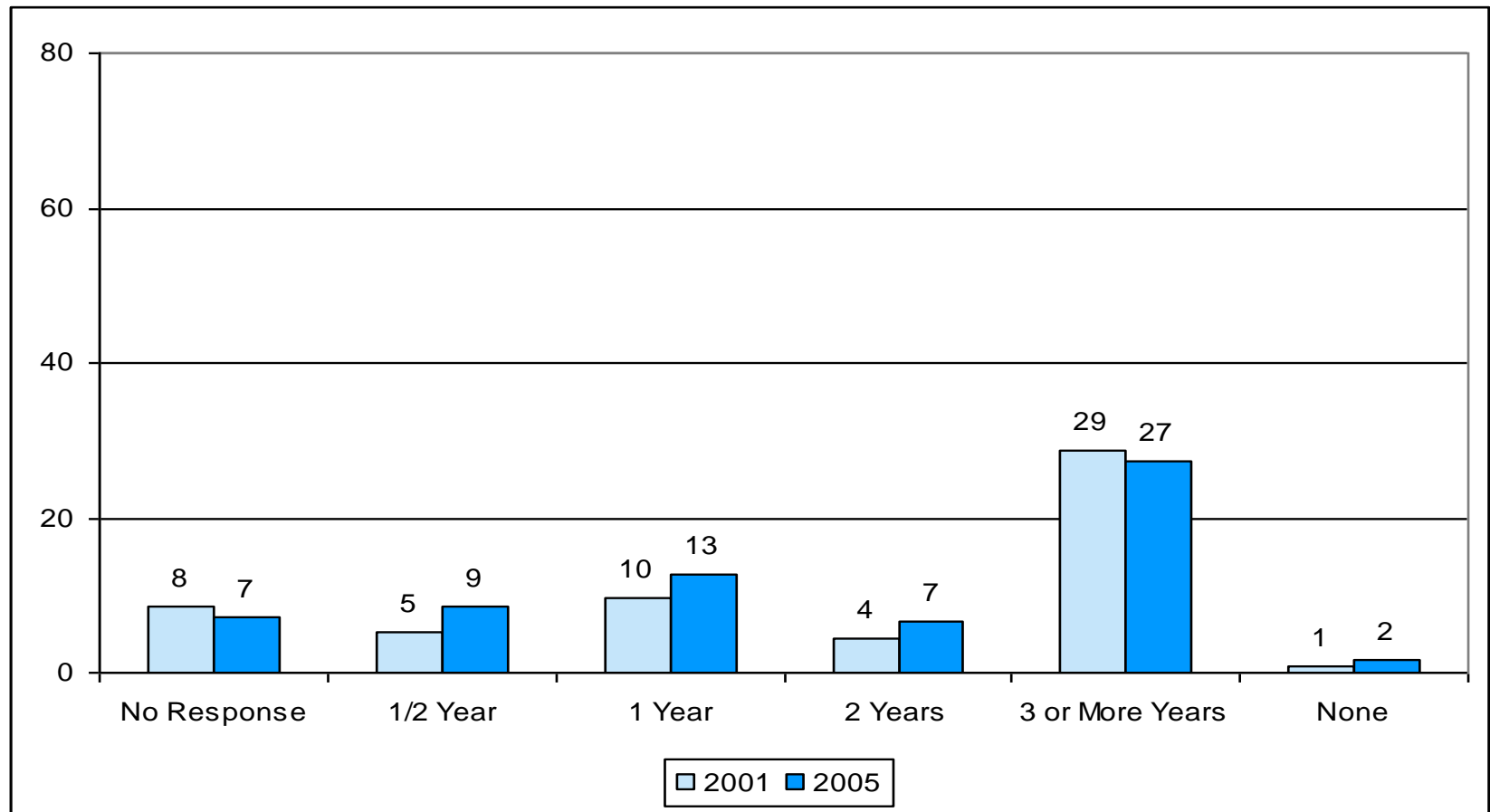
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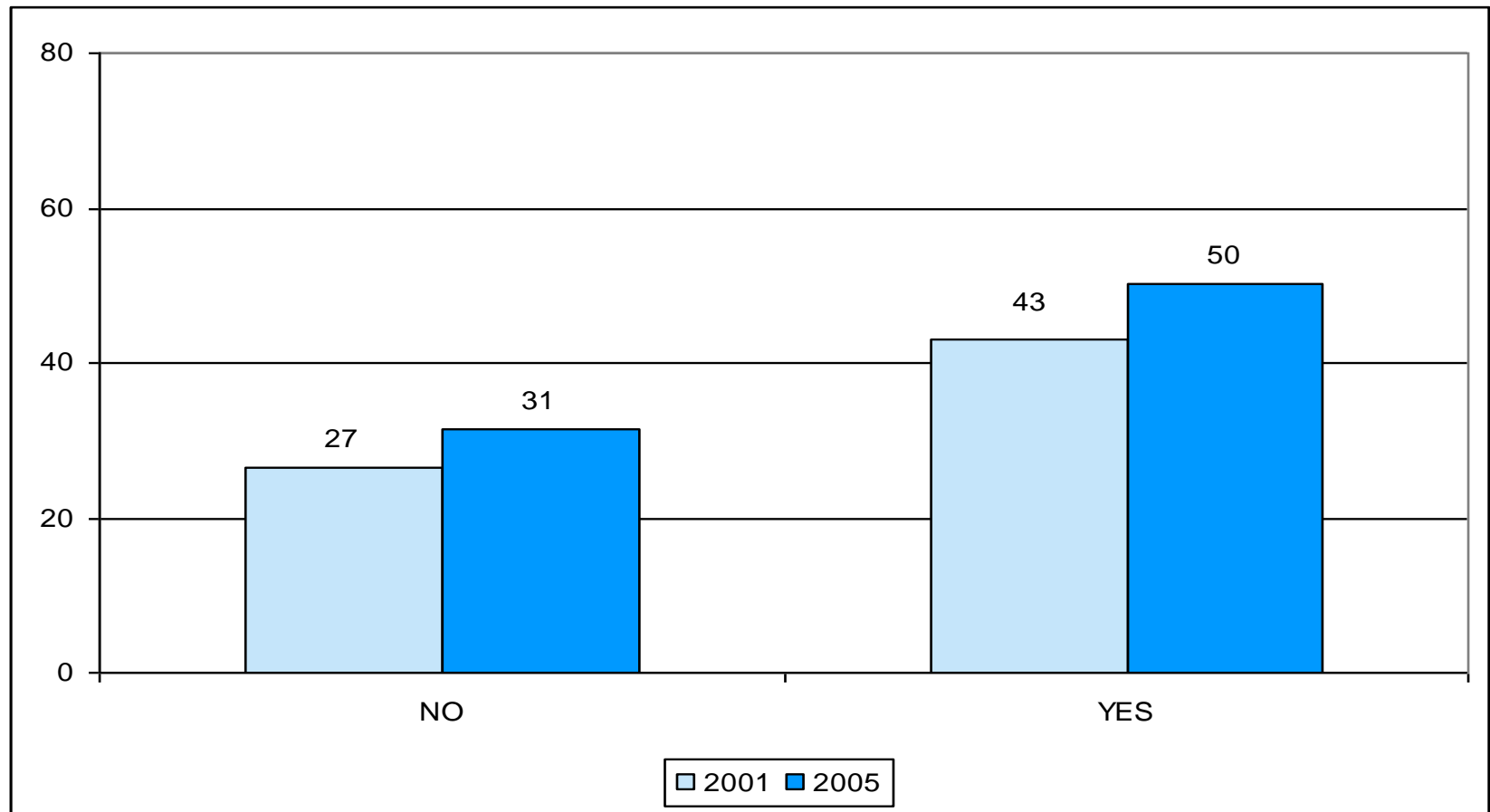
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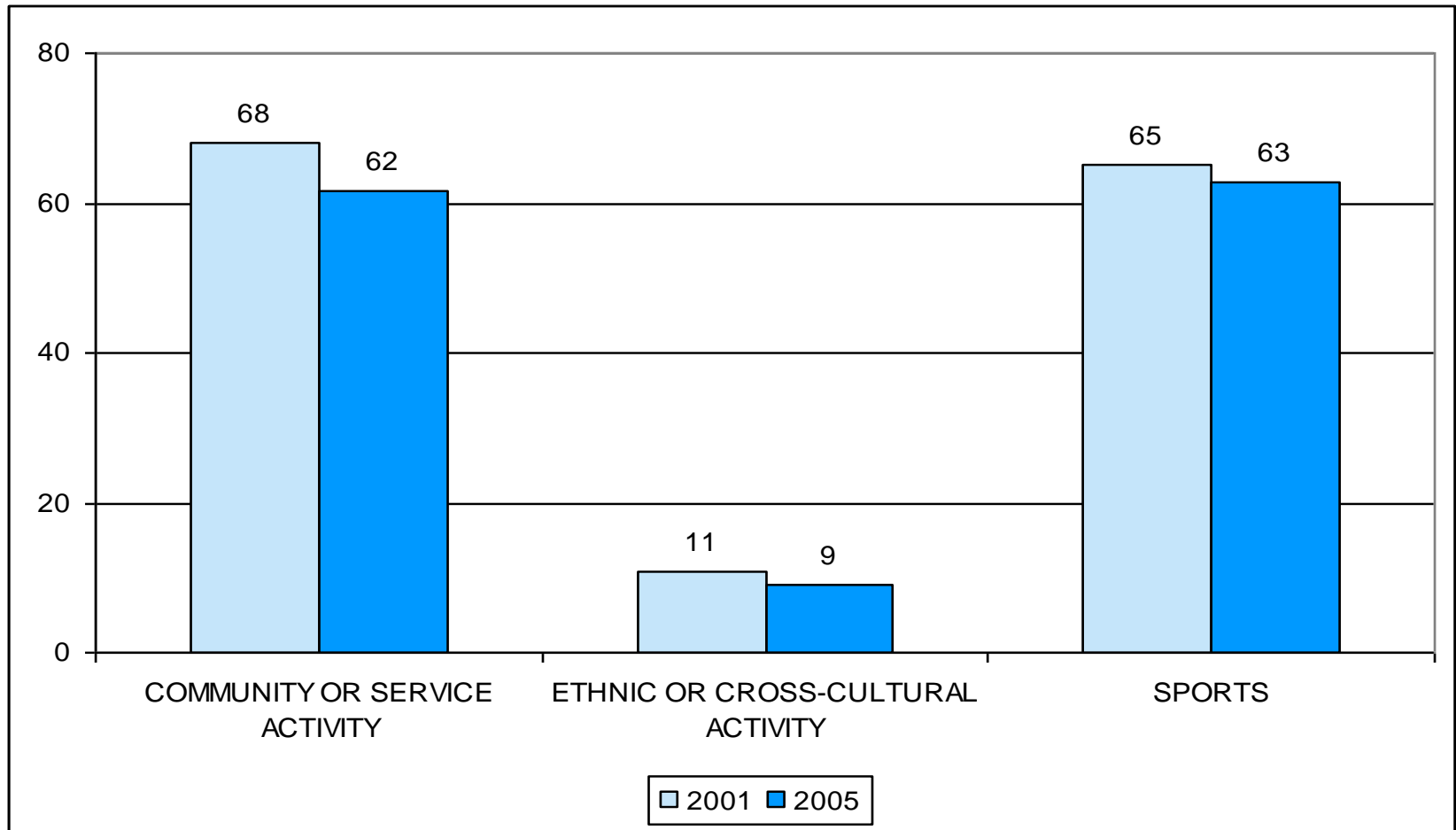
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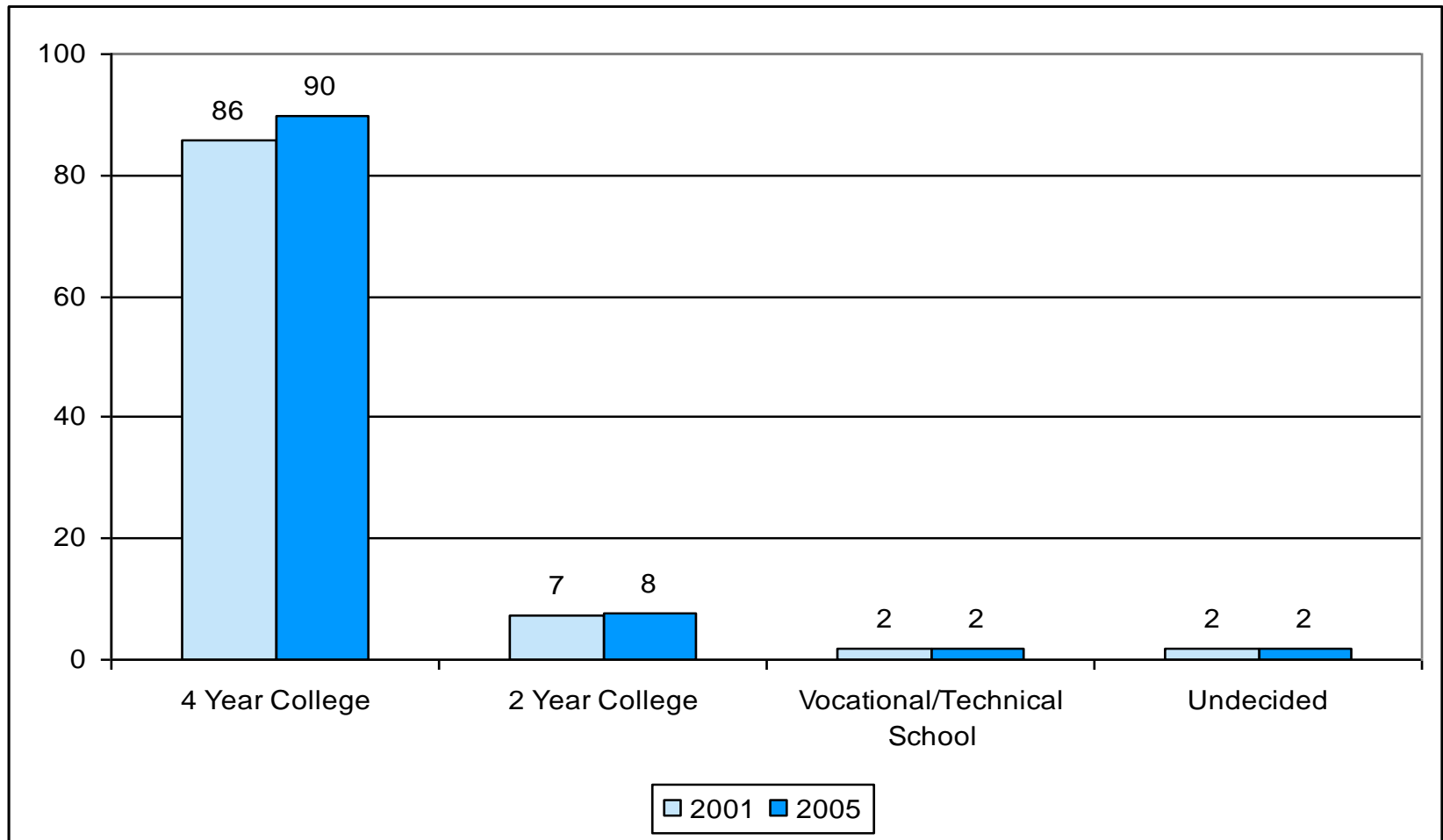
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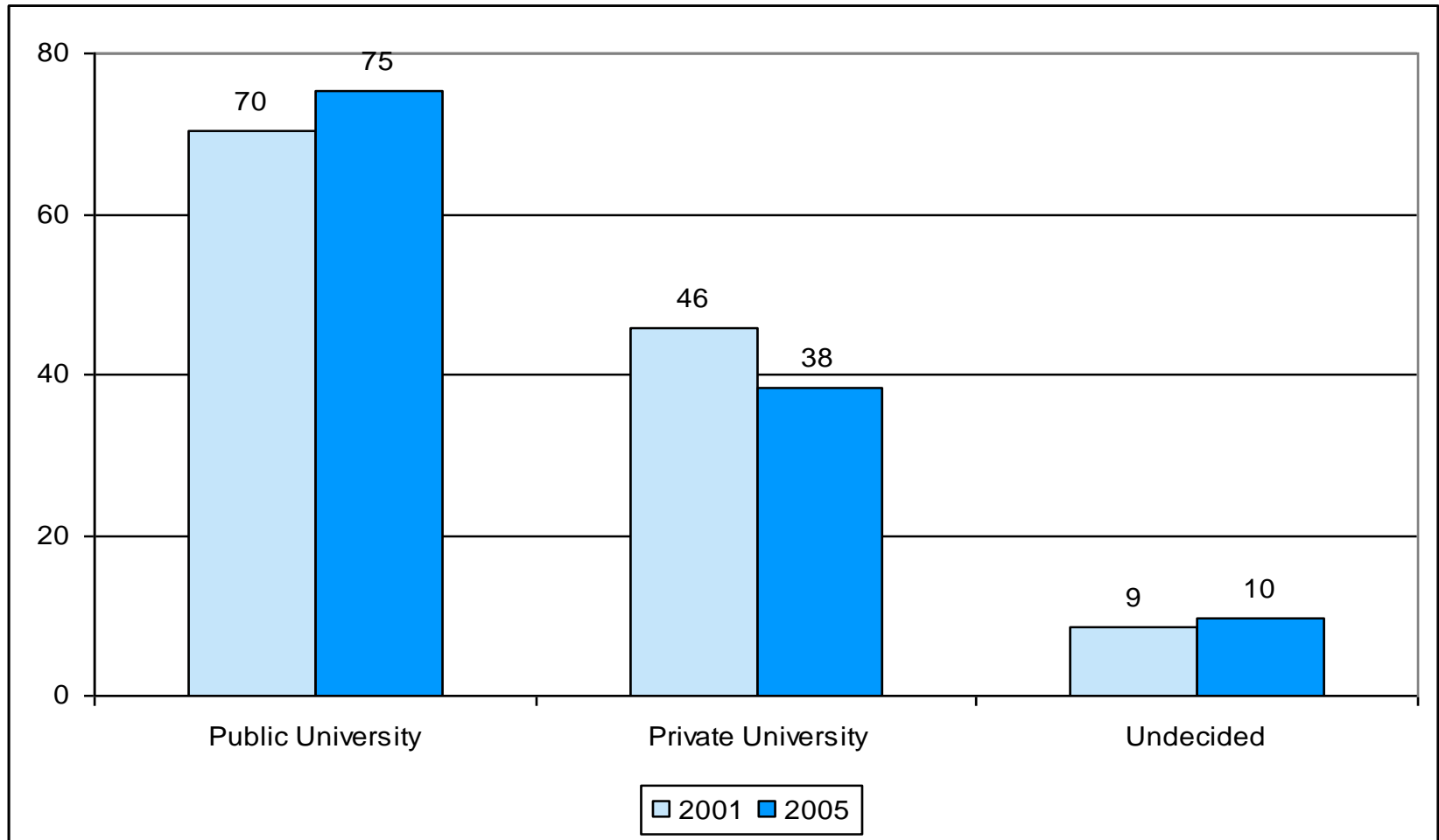
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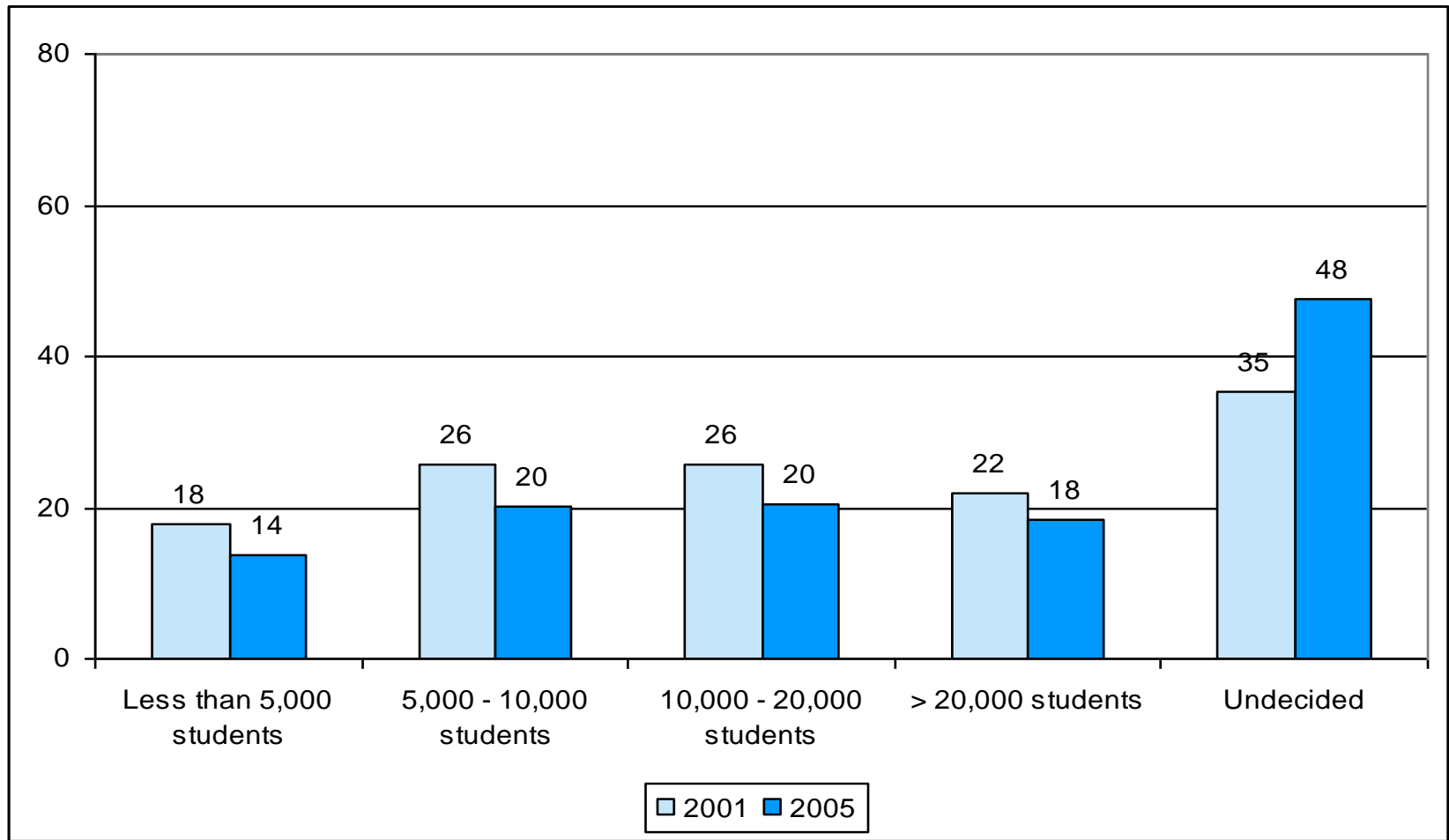
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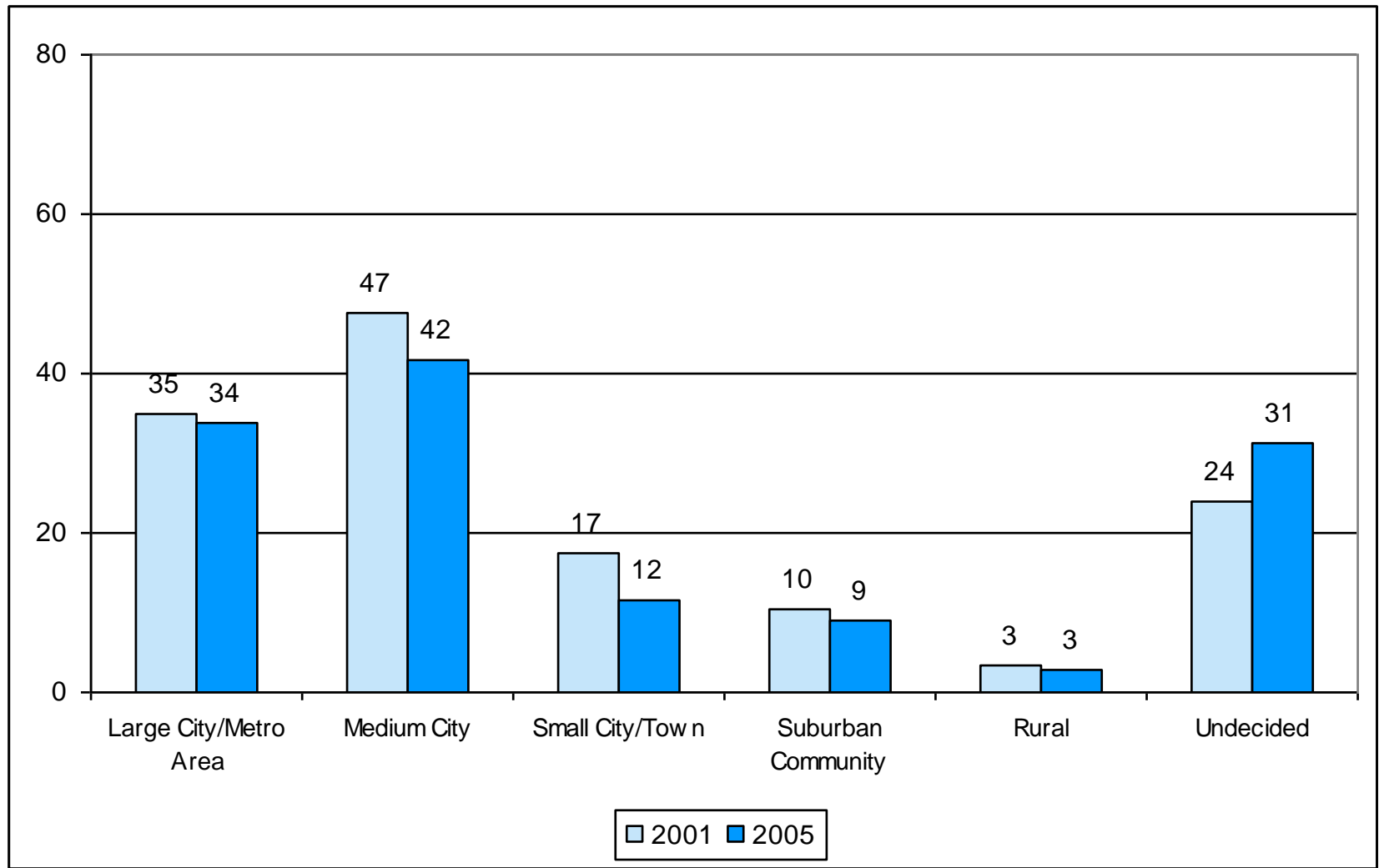
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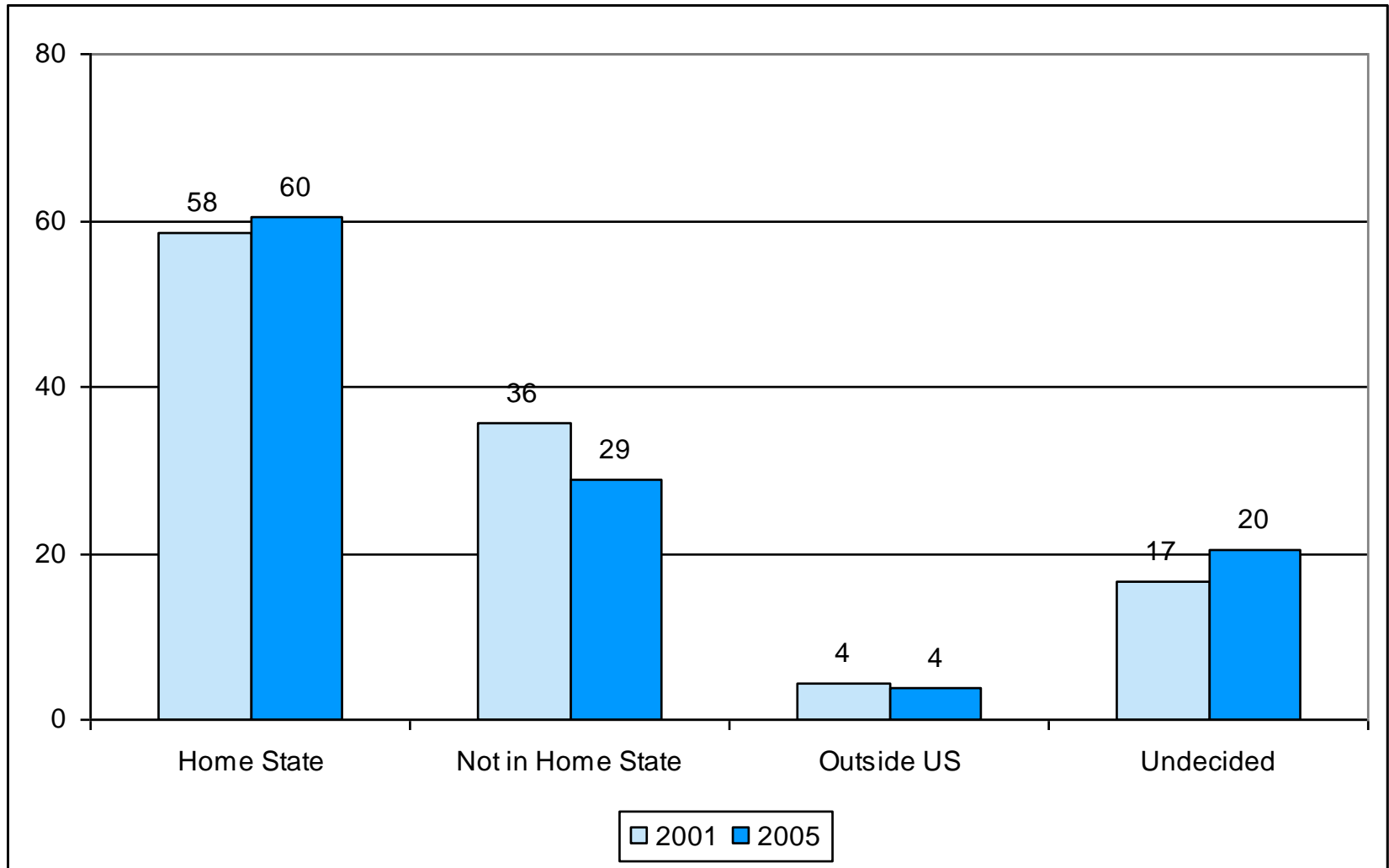
Percent by Size of College



Percent by College Setting



Percent by Proximity to Home



Conclusions

- Demographics

- Most AP Exam takers are aspiring to obtain a Master's or a Doctoral degree
- Female AP Exam takers continue to outnumber males
- A higher percentage of minority students are taking at least one AP Exam
- Most AP Exam takers indicate English only as their best language
- A majority of the parents had at least a Bachelor's degree

Conclusions

- Coursework
 - Calculus – Students who have two years of coursework are more likely to sit for the AP Exam
 - Physics – Nationally, students who have two years of coursework are more likely to sit for the AP Exam; in Florida, students with three or more years are more likely to sit for the AP Exam, followed closely by students with two years of coursework
 - Economics – Students with two years of coursework are more likely to take the AP Exam than other students
 - Spanish – Students with three or more years of coursework are more likely to take the AP Exam than other students
 - English – Students who have coursework and/or experience in Composition are more likely to sit for the AP Exam

Conclusions

- Aspirations
 - Sports appears to be the most popular extracurricular activity followed closely by community service; however, participation seems to be declining
 - Most AP Exam takers plan to attend a four-year, public institution
 - College size does not appear to be a major concern for students as indicated by the high percentage of undecided
 - Most AP Exam takers plan to attend a college in a medium-sized city
 - Most AP Exam takers plan to attend a college in their home state

What's an Administrator, AP Coordinator, Counselor To Do?

- Review current and trend characteristics of AP students, such as college interests, enabling school personnel to better serve students and facilitate the process of connecting them to college success.
- Understanding the characteristics of AP students can be a tool to identify potential students not currently taking advantage of AP.

Limitations of our research include..

- Students who are not offered AP at their schools
- Students who do not take the SAT
- Research limited to five AP Exams

Future Research

- Explore ways to match students as they come to the website to answer the questionnaire a little at a time
- Look at performance data in addition to participation
- Look at those students with two or more years of coursework that are not taking the corresponding AP Exam

Questions, Comments, Suggestions

- Researchers are encouraged to freely express their professional judgment. Therefore, points of view or opinions stated in College Board presentations do not necessarily represent official College Board position or policy.
- Please forward any questions, comments, and suggestions to:
 - esawtell@collegeboard.org and/or
 - jgillie@collegeboard.org

Appendix

- Copy of SAT Questionnaire

Changes Applied to Questionnaire

- Noted ‘for research only’ on parental questions
- Removed option for students to ‘Reset’ or respond ‘I don’t know’
- Added “I do not wish to respond” option
- Removed ‘Cancel’ option to exit
- Required all first-time web registrants to go to questionnaire
- If respondent left ‘key questions’ blank, question reloads

Web increase → Non-response increase

- Key questions in which non-response caused the most concern:
 - Ethnicity
 - Mother's Education
 - Father's Education
 - Parental Income
 - High School GPA
 - First Language Spoken
 - Best Language Spoken