

# First Year Academic Programs @ Western Washington University



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Fall 2014

# Western Washington University

Comprehensive, Liberal Arts University

- 14,000 Students
- 1120 Median SAT

New 1<sup>st</sup>-Time Students

- 25% Pell Eligible
- 25% Minority

# National Recognition

Number 1 in Peace Corps Participation

Number 1 in Fulbright Fellowships (2013)

Number 1 in Hollings/NOAA Fellowships (2014)

Top 2%: NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates

# Performance Data

6-Year Grad: 69% 73% 67% 69% 71%

Retention: 85% 84% 85% 82% 82%

# Wanted! A 1st-Yr program to increase retention & graduation which

- Is successful.
- Is affordable.
- Faculty support.
- Can be scaled.

## Academic First-year Programs serve the first-year mission to help students:

- understand the intellectual, moral, civic, and personal purposes of their liberal arts education;
- negotiate successfully the academic and personal opportunities and challenges of their first year; and
- connect to Western faculty and the larger campus community.

# First Year Academic Programs

We have actively piloted several 1<sup>st</sup>-year options:

- FYE Seminars
- GUR Strands
- Viking Launch
- FIGS



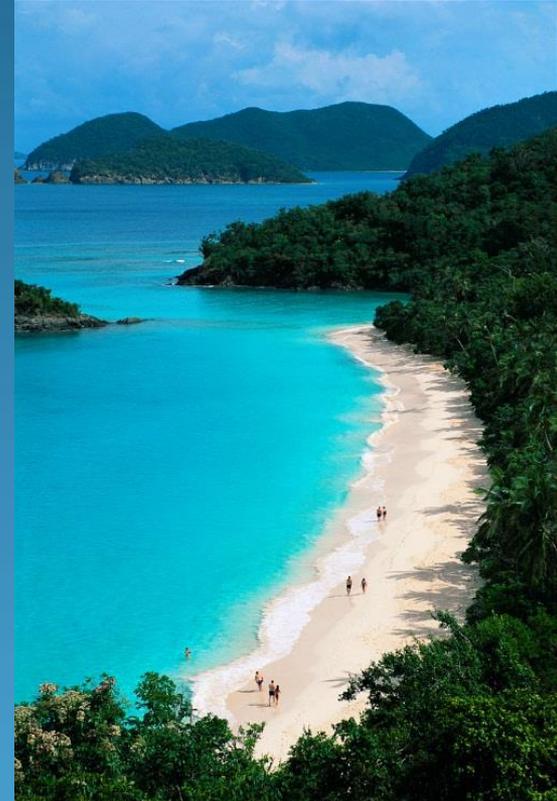
# FYE Courses

- Are small, stand-alone seminars for 1<sup>st</sup>-year students.
- Supported by faculty.
- Expensive but successful.



# FYE Courses Fall 2014

- **Education 109**  
Explorations in the  
Scholarship of Teaching
- **English 238 Society**  
through its Literature:  
Caribbean Literature



Strands are

Year-long sequences  
of thematically  
connected Gen-ed  
courses.

Successful but  
difficult to enroll.



# Viking Launch

A Fall early-start program designed to help “launch” students into academic majors and their work and life at Western.



# Viking Launch

- Student arrive on campus early for an intensive week of study and preparation for a successful Western Experience.
- All courses are field or lab-based, and ungraded.
- September 14-20, 2014

# Viking Launch Courses

## Course Name

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- BIOL 197: Marine Biology (2)
- CHEM 197: Intro to Chemistry (2)
- ENG 195: Intro to Creative and Technical Writing (2)
- ESTU 195: Environmental Impact and Sustainability (2)
- PSY 197: Neuroscience (2)
- GEO 197A: Mt. Baker Geology (1)
- EDUC 197C: Perspectives on Learning/Teaching (1)
- Materials Science 197A: Intro to the Science of Renewable Energy (1)

# Viking Launch is

- Successful for
  - Non-resident retention.
  - Fall GPA
  - Major declaration.
- Supported by Faculty.
- Small.
  - 100 students.





# The FIG Seminar 101

Each FIG creates a cohort of 25 students who co-enroll in large GUR classes and in their own 2-credit seminar.

## SEMINAR 101 COURSE DESCRIPTION

  
*Make connections with professors and peers and examine perspectives across different fields of study. Learn to find and evaluate information and collaborate with peers through discussions, projects, and presentations. Explore academic goals, campus resources, and enhance skills for learning in college.*



Limit = 25



# The Seminars

- Help students extend, apply or integrate the GUR content knowledge.
- Teach college success skills.
- Culminate in a formal paper or presentation.
- Increase faculty/student interaction.

# Words & Music FIG

Pablo Picasso told us that “Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life,” and that art “makes us realize the truth.”

But do we experience and understand all forms of art in the same way? Students in “Words and Music” explore this question through a study of visual art, music, literature and song writing.

# Faculty Support for Figs increased when

- FIGS became more academic in orientation.
- A formal paper or presentation was required.
- Departments began to form their own FIGs.
- Selection of seminar faculty returned to departments.
- Faculty received a stipend for participation.
- Faculty visited the seminars.
- We could demonstrate program effectiveness.

# Assessment

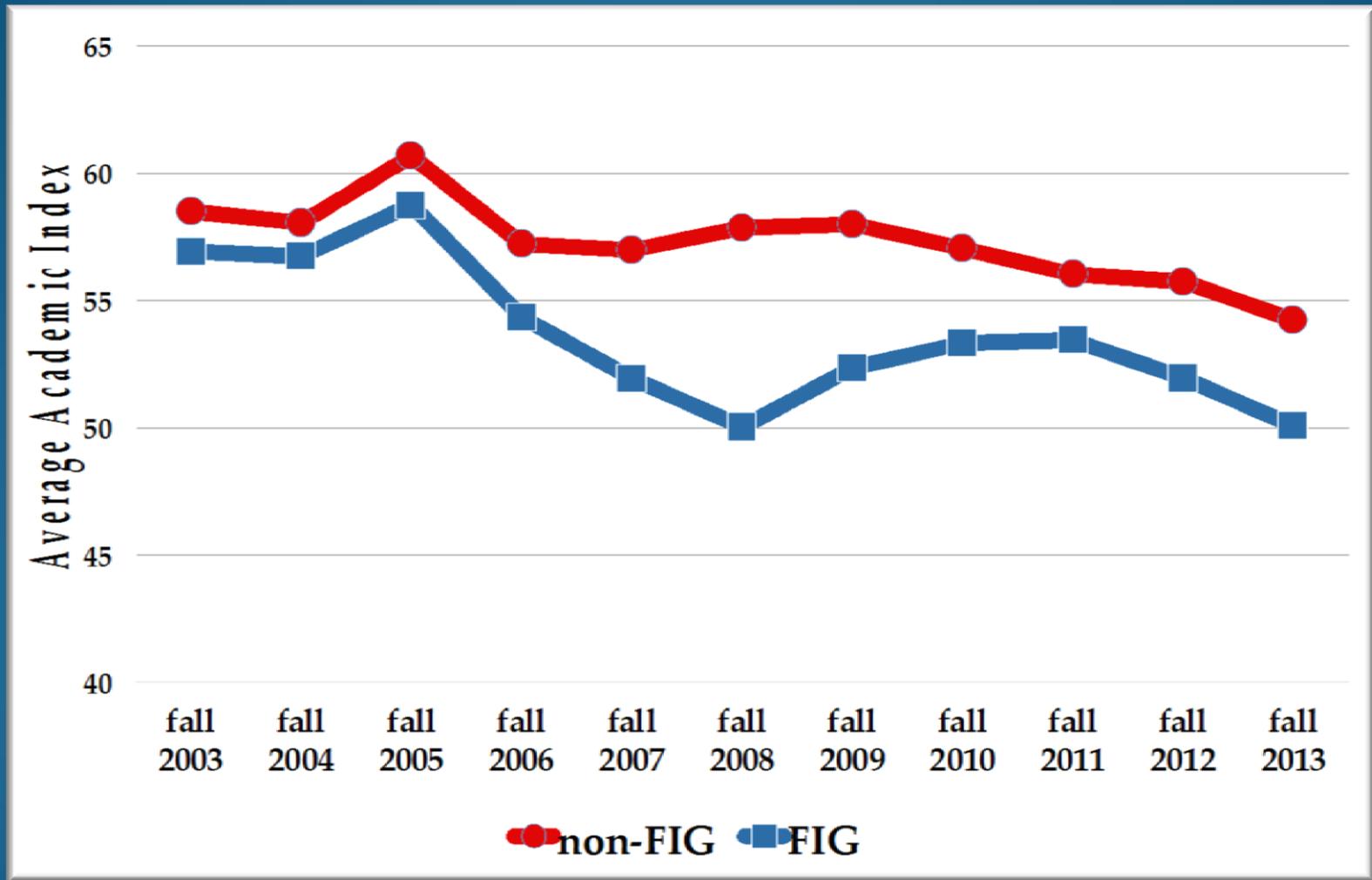
As a cohort, FIG students:

- earn higher fall grades.
- fail fewer fall courses.
- are more satisfied with their 1<sup>st</sup> year.
- are slightly more likely to be retained and to graduate.

# 6-Year Graduation Rates by Academic Index (AI) Averaged for Entering Classes 2002-2007

AI <= 40	49.3
AI 41-50	60.0
AI 51-60	66.4
AI 61-70	71.8
AI 71-80	75.8
AI => 81	80.8

# Average Admissions Index (Freshmen)



# Profile of Fall, 2012, 1<sup>st</sup>-Time 1<sup>st</sup>-Yr Students: FIG/Not-FIG Comparison

	FIG	Not-FIG	Total
Non-Resident	17%	12%	13%
First Generation	32%	30%	30%
<b>Average AI</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>55.7</b>	<b>55.3</b>
Average Fall Hours Attempted	14.8	14.2	14.3
Average Fall Hours Earned	13.7	13.0	13.1
<b>Average Fall GPA</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>2.79</b>
Fall Academic Warning	10%	15%	14%
Withdraw at least 1 course	7%	8%	8%
Retained to Winter Quarter	96%	96%	96%

# Average Percent of 1<sup>st</sup>-yr Students on Low Academic Standing at the End of Fall Quarter

(Eight Frosh Cohorts Combined: Fall 2006 through Fall 2013)

<b>FIG</b>	<b>Not-FIG</b>	<b>FYE</b>	<b>Not-FYE</b>
<b>10.8%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
<b>(N=277)</b>	<b>(N=2389)</b>	<b>(N=122)</b>	<b>(N=2543)</b>

# FIGs Students Report Higher NSSE Scores

Factors with a Positive Correlative Relationship to NSSE Benchmarks

	LAC	ACL	SFI	EEE	SCE
FIG		+		+	
Fairhaven	+	+	+		
Honors	+		+		+

**NSSE Benchmarks:**

LAC = Level of Academic Challenge

ACL = Active and Collaborative Learning

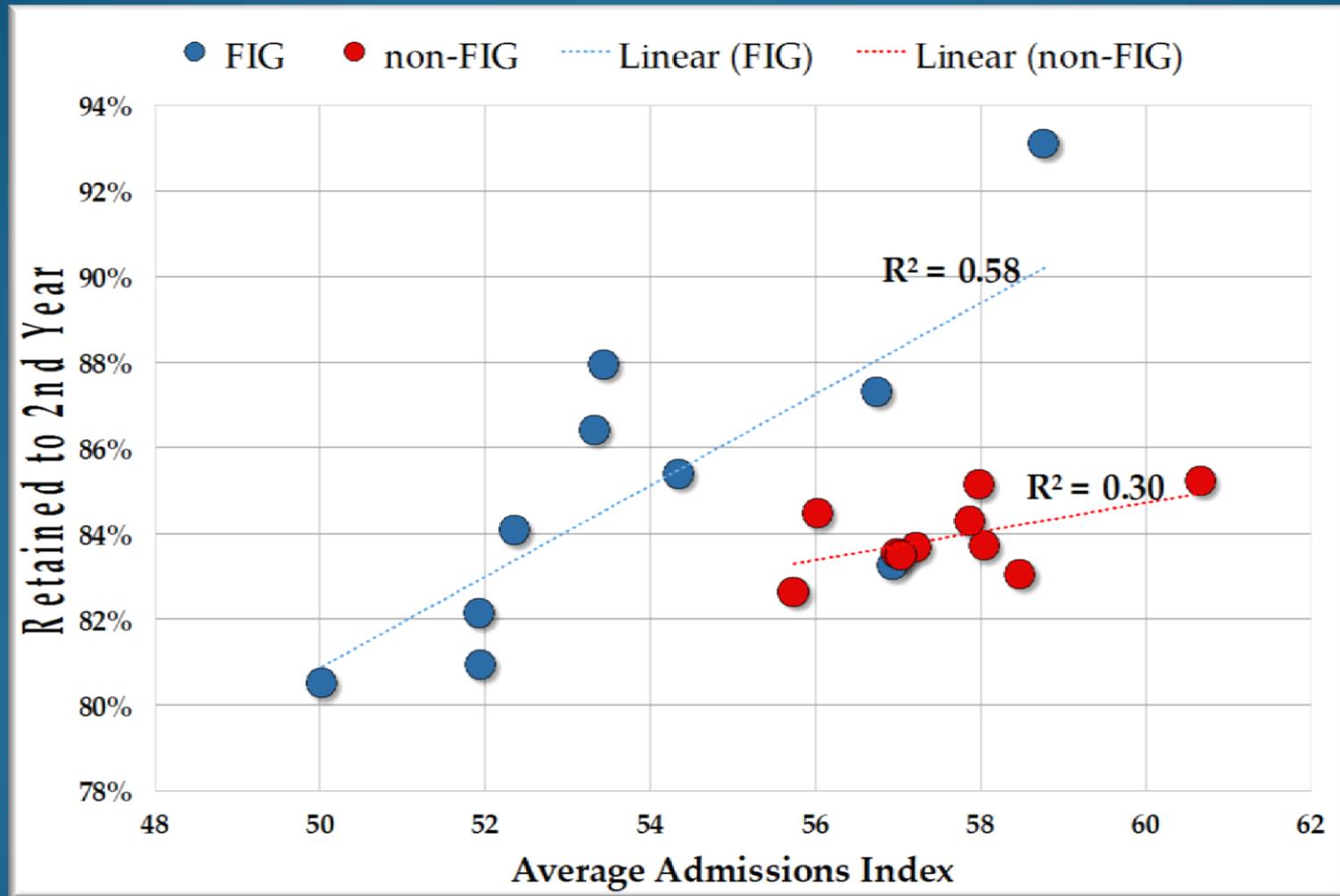
SFI = Student-Faculty Interaction

EEE = Enriching Educational Experiences

SCE = Supportive Campus Environment

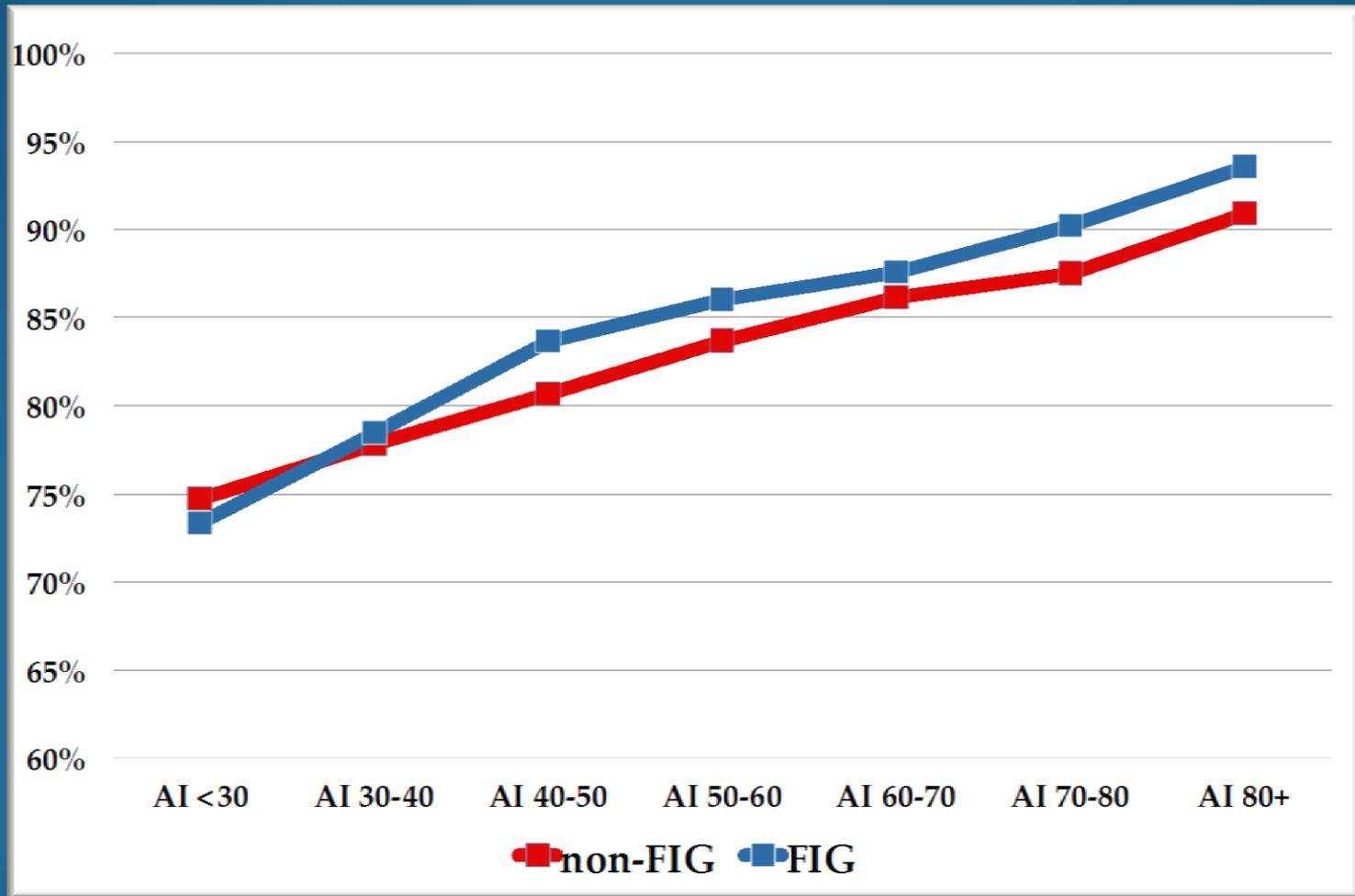
# Retention to 2<sup>nd</sup> Year by Average AI: FIG vs Non-FIG

(Cohort Years Fall 2003 through Fall 2012)



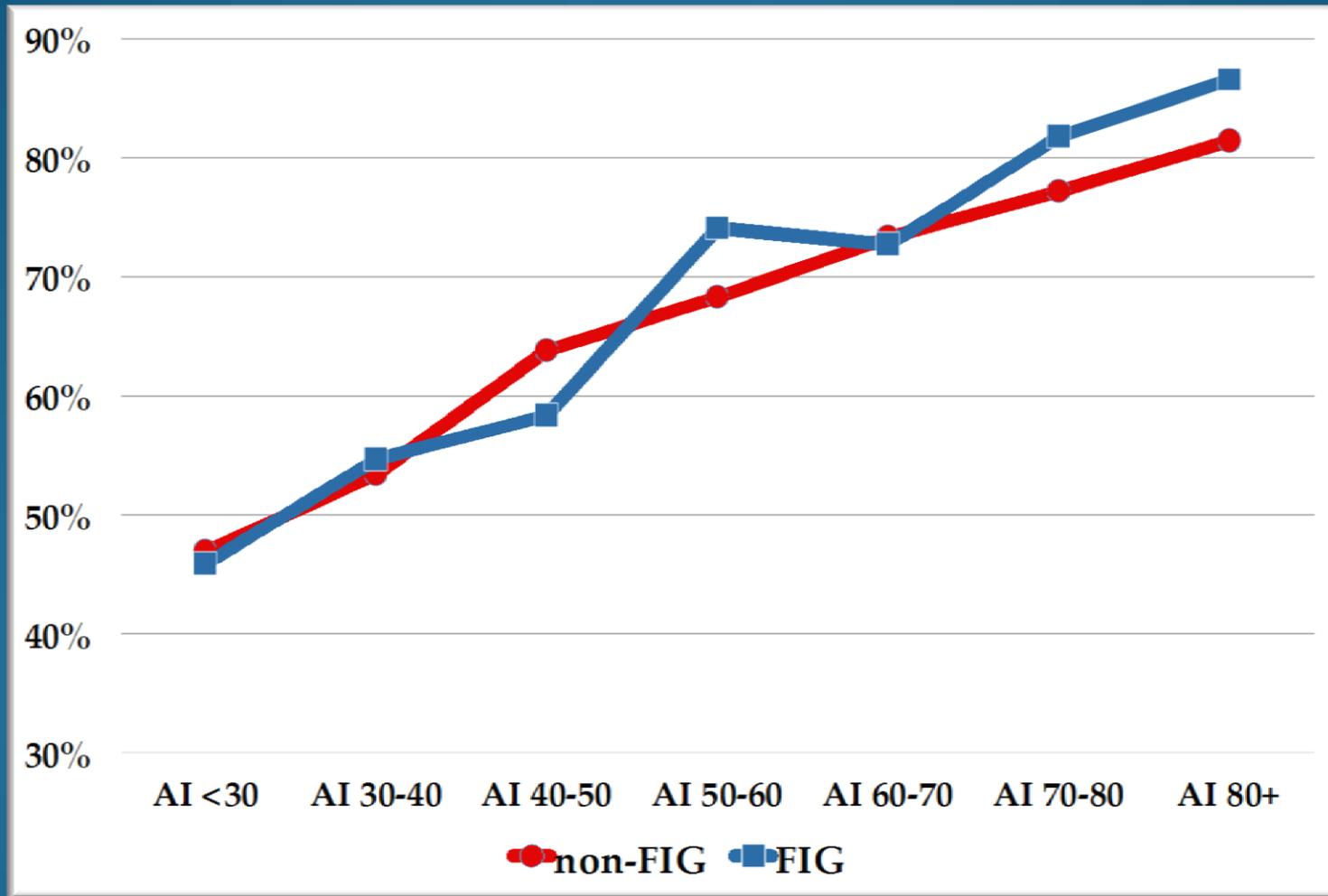
# Retained to 2nd Fall by Admissions Index

(Ten Frosh Cohorts Combined: Fall 2003 through Fall 2012)



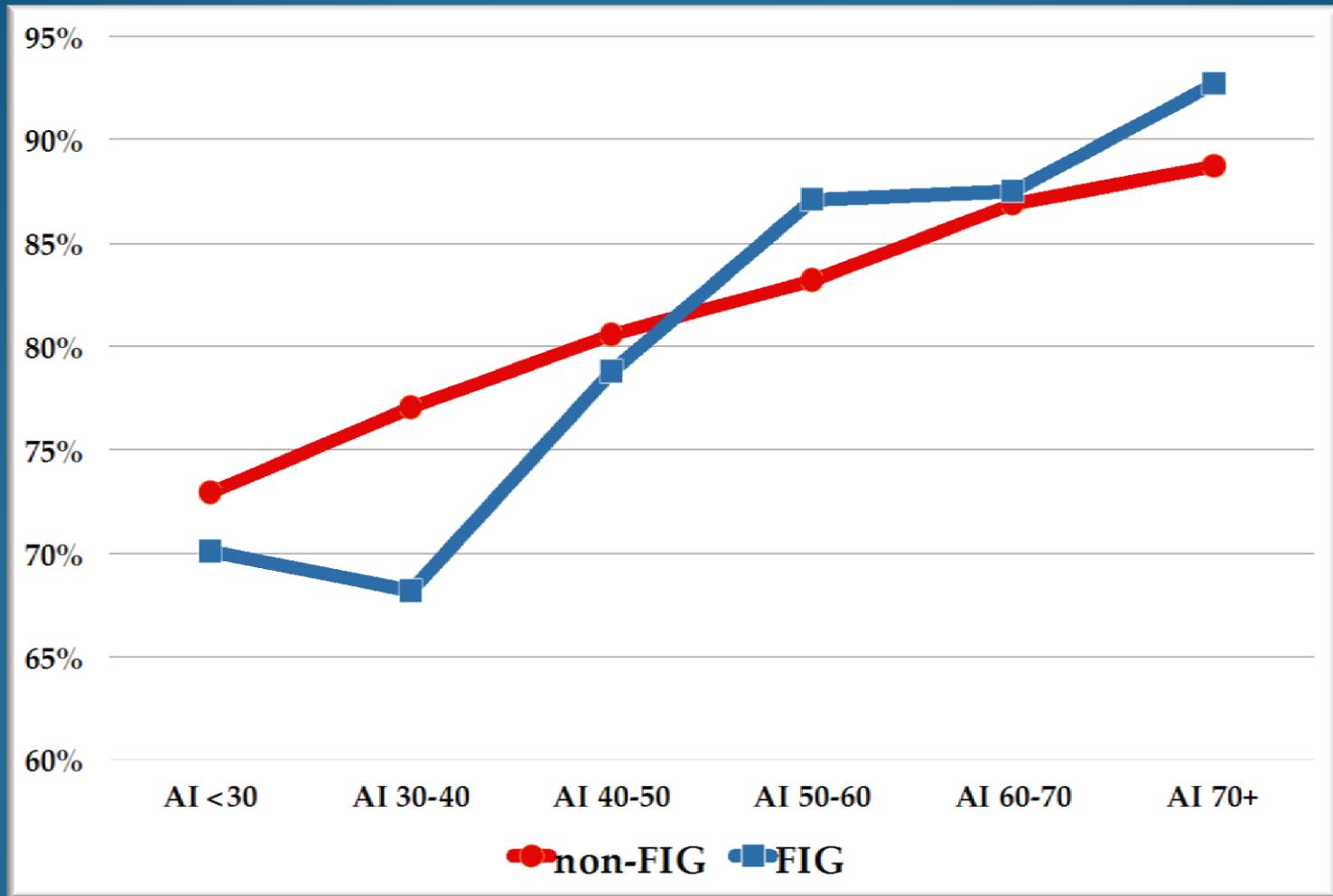
# 6-Year Graduation Rate by Admissions Index

(Five Frosh Cohorts Combined: Fall 2003 through Fall 2007)



# Retained to 2nd Fall by AI: Students of Color

(Ten Frosh Cohorts Combined: Fall 2003 through Fall 2012)



# Retained to 2nd Fall by AI: PELL & State-Need Grant Recipients

(Ten Frosh Cohorts Combined: Fall 2003 through Fall 2012)

