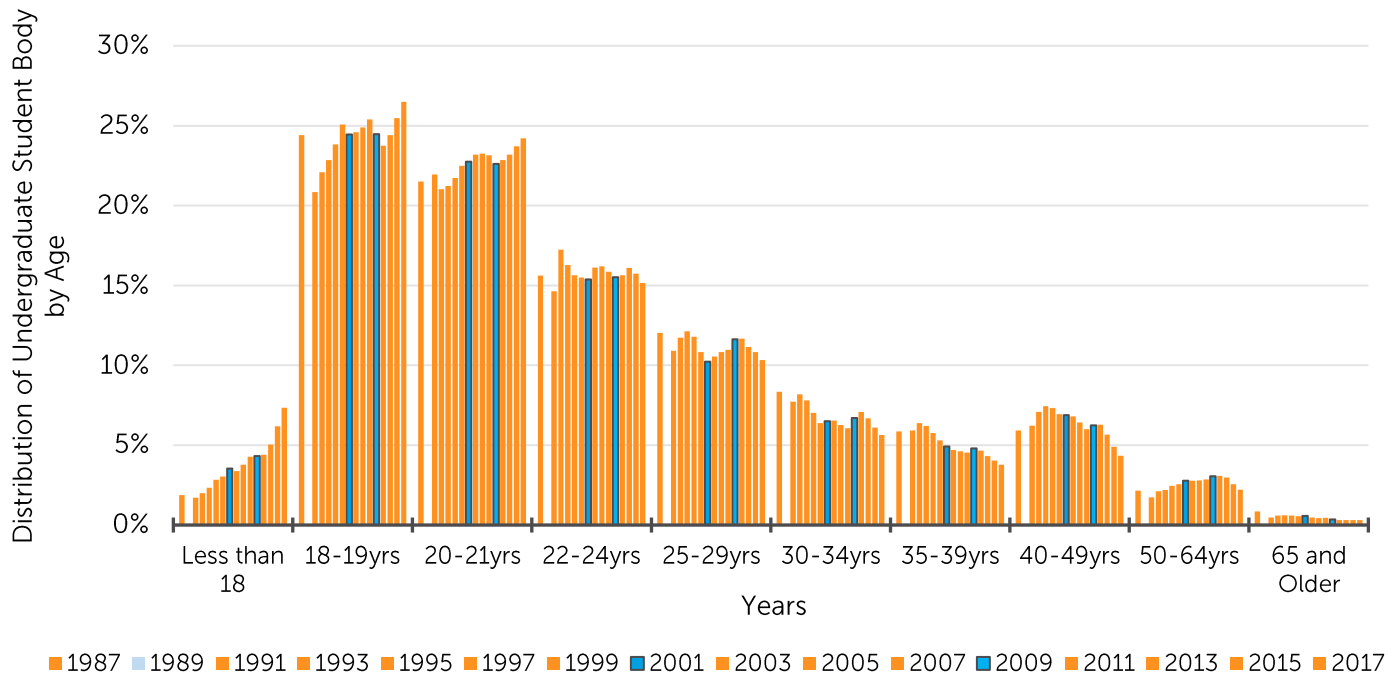


Recessions Bring Older Students

History suggests older students, who will be coming to college when the recession wanes, will benefit at institutions who have implemented reforms.



Source: Analyses of data presented in multiple years of the *Digest of Education Statistics*, U.S. Department of Education.
Notes: Data not available for 1989, a recession year. Blue bars reflect recessions. All bars reflect undergraduate enrollments.

This chart illustrates how recessions have historically changed the make-up of the study body across age groups. One observation to recognize - the student body is getting younger. One reason among many is that students over the age of 30 tend to exhibit a short-term bump in enrollment after a recession only to return to historic levels. For example, in 2011 more than 3.8 million students over 30 were enrolled, a number that decreased to 2.7 million students within six years.

This information coupled with increases in developmental course-taking for first-year students over age 30 suggest that there may likely be a spike in enrollment of adult students in fall 2021 who have traditionally been placed in developmental education but who haven't benefitted by it. Luckily changes in [policy](#) and practice benefit adult students. In Tennessee, for example, corequisite math produces [five times the success rate](#) over the traditional model for adults. This Points of Interest shows that history suggests older students, who will be coming to college when the recession wanes, will benefit at institutions who have implemented reforms.

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