

# City College of San Francisco



## Non-Credit ESL Promotion Testing Spring 2009 Summary Statistics

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## I. Introduction

### A. Background

In the Fall 1994 semester, the non-credit sector of the ESL department implemented a new curriculum based on the California Department of Education's *Model Standards for Adult Education Programs*. The new curriculum de-emphasizes grammar in favor of a more balanced presentation of the four major skill areas (i.e. reading, writing, listening, speaking). The new curriculum offers eight major levels of ESL non-credit instruction (in addition to literacy training): Beginning Low 1 through Intermediate High 8. Additionally, four new levels were created to serve students wishing to study ESL at a more accelerated rate. Labeled Intensive courses, these classes cover two levels in a single semester.

The conversion to a new curriculum, under the best of circumstances, is an arduous task and was made all the more difficult at City College of San Francisco given the size of the student population in non-credit ESL. With over 20,000 students across numerous sites city-wide, the challenge became insuring that the new *Non-Credit Curriculum Guide* created by the Non-Credit Curriculum Committee was being consistently followed across sites and classes. In other words, a Level 1 class at the Chinatown/North Beach Campus needed to be at the same proficiency level as a Level 1 class at the John Adams campus. To help establish consistency in the program, the Teachers Resource Center sponsored numerous staff development opportunities for instructors. The ESL Resource Instructor visited campuses and met with teachers to examine the differences between the old and new curricula and discuss important issues concerning book selection and course content.

While under the former *Master Plan*-driven curriculum, series of tests had been developed and utilized to assess student readiness for promotion between levels, no such tests existed for the new curriculum. Because the new curriculum was significantly different in content and scope, none of the old tests were appropriate for use with the new program. Assessment is an integral part of any program. In addition to providing a valuable tool for instructors to assess student readiness for promotion, standardized testing helps all program participants understand what exactly is expected skill-wise, for student success. That is, the assessment component helps stabilize a program and insure that important topics and content areas are covered in every class. To remedy the problem of lack of formal assessment in the new curriculum, The Test Developer's Working Group was formed to create new exit tests. The Non-Credit Curriculum Committee, overseeing the work of the Working Group, decided that tests should be developed for Levels 2, 4 and 6 (The CCSF *Curriculum Guide* subdivided the *Model Standards* levels and created Levels 1,3,5, and 7. These levels do not exist outside City College, so creating tests for these levels would have been illogical given that the goal of the *Model Standards* was standardizing levels across all agencies in California). Further, it was decided that reading and listening tests be developed first, with oral production and writing skills assessed less formally by classroom instructors.

After extensive field study and revision, six tests were ready for implementation in the Fall 1996 semester: Level 2 Reading, Level 2 Listening, Level 4 Reading, Level 4 Lis-

tening, Level 6 Reading, and Level 6 Listening. The tests were introduced in December, 1996 and summary statistics generated for each semester the tests have been utilized.

Almost immediately after the new Reading and Listening tests were launched, work began on creating second drafts of these tests. Because they are less cumbersome to create, the alternate Reading tests were focused on first, and the final drafts of the Level 2, 4, and 6 Reading tests were introduced in Fall 2002. With the second drafts of the Reading tests in place, work began on second versions of the three Listening tests. Final drafts of these tests were introduced in Fall 2006 .

In Fall 2004, the Non-Credit Curriculum Committee surveyed non-credit instructors to help determine which steps should come next in the development of promotion assessment tools. The committee, after reviewing the survey results, decided to add a writing and oral production component to the Level 4 exit test, thus creating a "gateway" between the lower and upper levels of the program. Students exiting Level 4 are eligible to enter vocational ESL and other programs where proficiency in all four skill areas is important, so assuring that students were ready for this coursework became a priority. Though labor intensive to administer, the Curriculum Committee decided to create a test battery for Level 4 similar to one that had been successfully utilized with Level 300 students prior to the *Model Standards* program changes. Faculty were again recruited to form the Test Developer's Working Group. The group spent three semesters developing the components and establishing guidelines for the implementation of the new Level 4 Exit Test Battery. The test was launched in Spring 2006.

## **B. This Report**

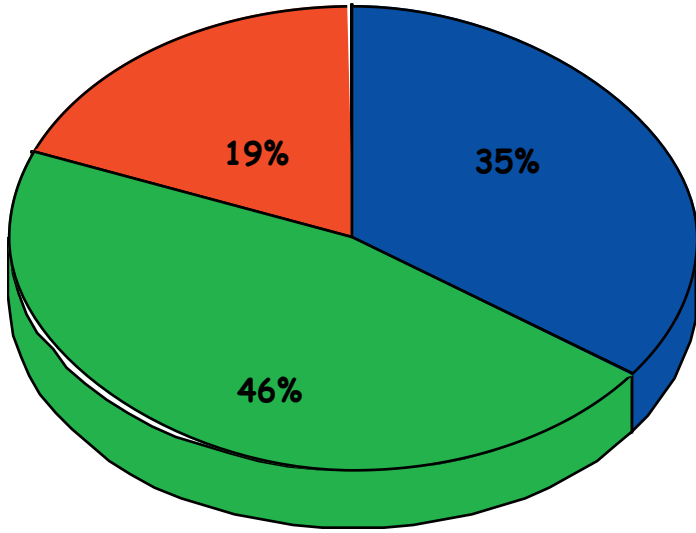
The goal of this report is to continue building a database of results from non-credit ESL Exit Testing by reporting the testing results from the Spring 2009 semester. The information garnered from the analysis of test results will provide important information about how students progress through our program. Variables such as rate of student progress, numbers of students testing, and percentage of promotion may provide program developers with needed input when planning changes in class offerings, etc. Insofar as the addition of an assessment component helps stabilize programs, it will be interesting to view what, if any, disparities exist in the data and how that may change *over time*. Unfortunately, little formal data and record keeping is maintained on non-credit students, and it is hoped that more report projects such as this will be undertaken to provide program developers and instructors with a clearer picture of our student population.

## **II. The Test Results**

### **A. Totals**

A total of 5,764 tests were given to students in Levels 2, 4, and 6. Figure 1 indicates the percentage of total tested in each level. Not surprisingly, more students tested in the lower levels, reflecting the population of the non-credit program. Figure 2 shows the percentage of tests given by campus. For ease of data analysis, students testing at the Giannini site and PKP site were combined with the Eddy Street site for the Alemany Campus findings.

**Figure 1**  
**Percentage of Students Taking Each Level**  
**of the Promotion Tests**

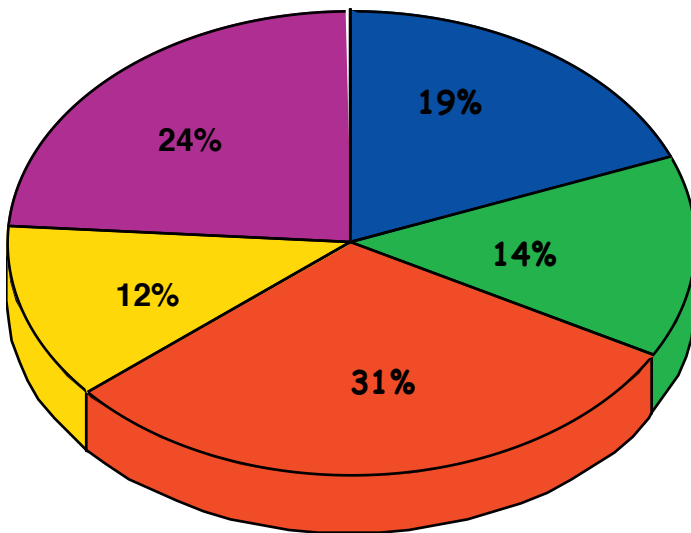


Level 2

Level 4

Level 6

**Figure 2**  
**Percentage of Total Tests**  
**Given by Campus**



Alemany

Chinatown/NB

Downtown

John Adams

Mission

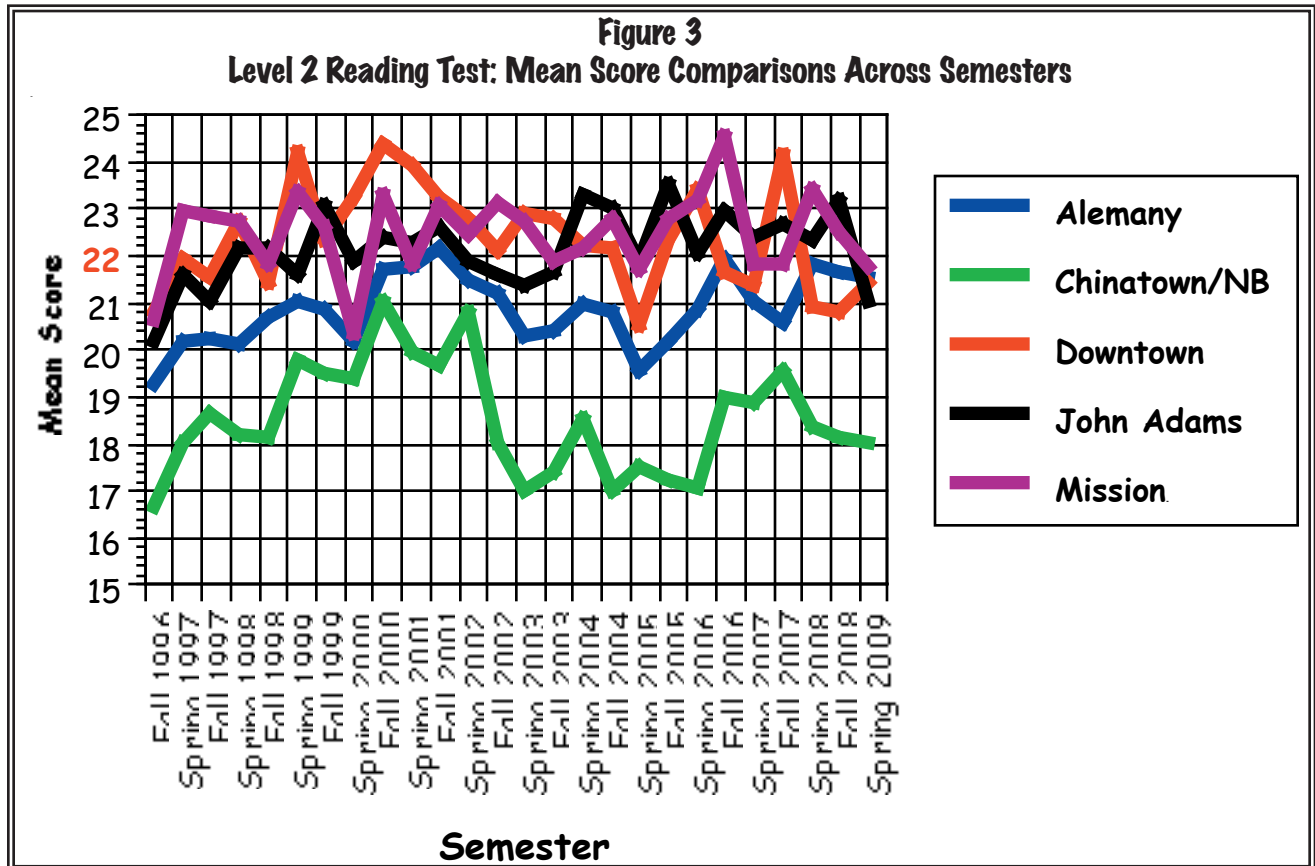
**B. The Level 2 Tests**

**1. Level 2 Reading**

A total of 1002 students took the Level 2 Reading test. Table 1 shows the results. The passing score for the Level 2 Reading test is 22. When the mean scores across campuses are examined, there is a spread of about 4 points. Figure 3 shows a comparison of means across the years the test has been given. While the mean Chinatown/North Beach score is lower than the others, this finding is not surprising since, historically, Chinatown/North Beach scores have lagged behind the other campuses.

**Table 1  
Level 2 Reading Test**

Campus	Total Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Alemanya	229	21.41	7.11
Chinatown/North Beach	208	17.92	7.66
Downtown	223	21.33	6.38
John Adams	79	20.90	7.41
Mission	263	21.64	6.36

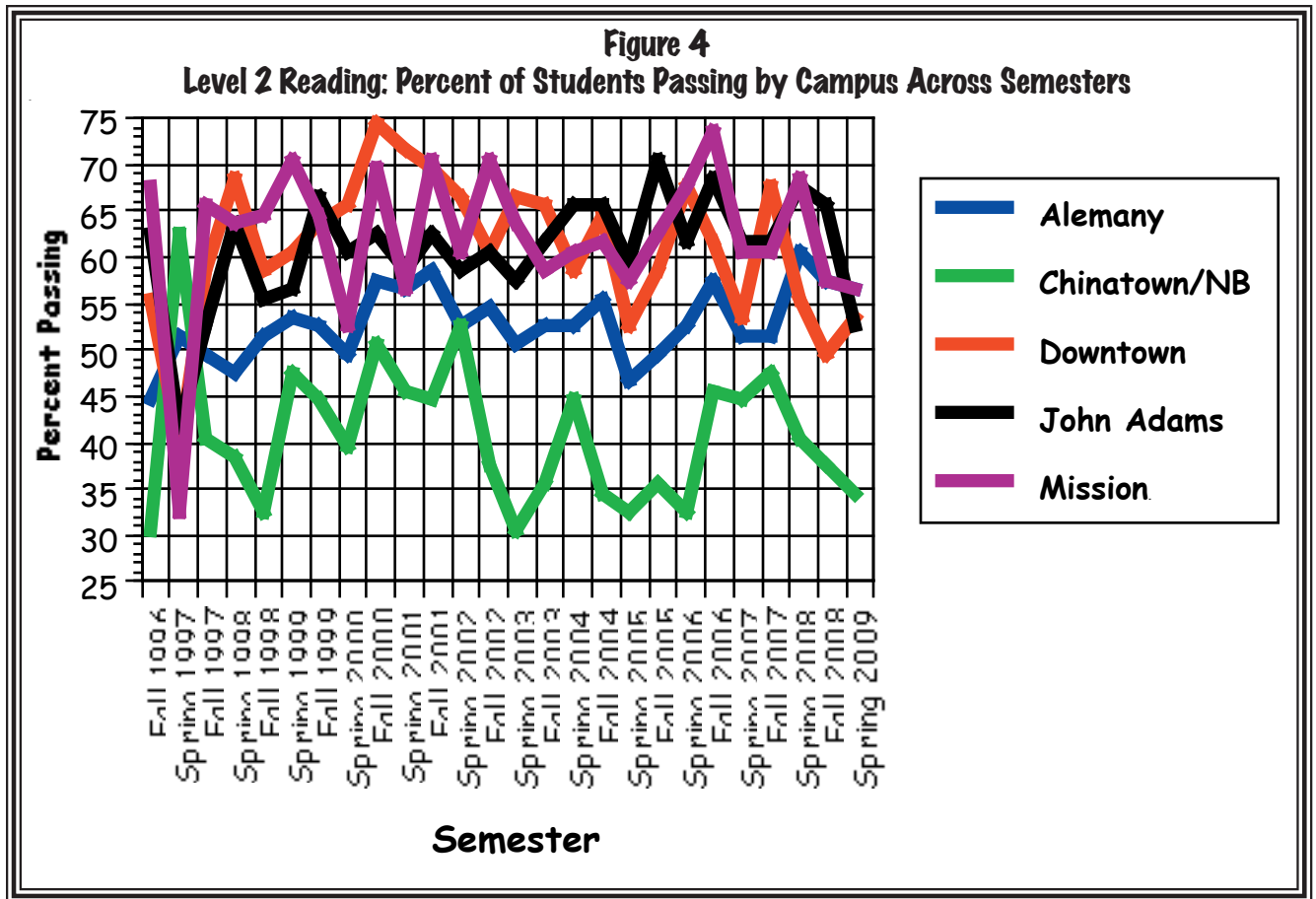


In addition to turning in the Scantron sheets that students used, instructors were asked to fill out a test results sheet on which they were asked to record both their students' scores for the two tests taken as well as the recommended level for the Fall 2009 semester. It was hoped that having this information regarding promotion would help data collection in two ways. First, knowing how many students were promoted in each class would help provide a picture of how students move through the non-credit ESL program. Secondly, the promotion rate would provide additional insight into the efficacy of the tests.

Some interesting information can be gleaned from the teachers' results sheets, including the number of students passing each test. Table 2 illustrates the results from the Level 2 Reading test. Figure 4 offers a comparison of percent of students passing the Level 2 Reading test across the years the test has been offered. It is interesting to note that, in many cases, there is a large disparity in the percentages across semesters. One might predict that there would be a slow but steady increase of students passing the tests over time, but these data do not reflect that. There are many intervening variables involved (e.g. disparate number of students tested, incomplete data supplied by teachers, not knowing how many semesters students have studied in a particular level, etc.), making it difficult to know why the percentage rates seem to fluctuate over semesters. After well over a decade, one pattern of pass rate is emerging such that, generally speaking, students testing at the Chinatown/North Beach campus have the lowest pass rate. These data reflect findings similar to those garnered when the now defunct *Master Plan* tests were employed prior to 1994, suggesting both that Chinatown/North Beach students have more difficulty testing and that the new tests are picking up the same pass rate patterns that the old ones did (which is an indication of the new tests' efficacy).

**Table 2**  
**Level 2 Reading: Percent of Students Passing by Campus**

Campus	Total Number of Classes	Total Number of Students Testing	Total Passing Test	Percent Passing Test
Alemanya	12	229	129	56%
Chinatown/ North Beach	9	208	71	34%
Downtown	7	223	118	53%
John Adams	6	79	41	52%
Mission	11	263	146	56%



## 2. Level 2 Listening

A total of 989 students took the Level 2 Listening test. Table 3 outlines the results from this test. The passing score for the Level 2 Listening test is 30. The range of means across campuses for this test is about 2 points. Figure 5 highlights mean scores by campus across semesters. Mean scores have been trending down at several campuses recently, which is a curious finding.

**Table 3**  
**Level 2 Listening Test**

Campus	Total Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Alemany	241	29.24	6.18
Chinatown/North Beach	210	28.00	6.62
Downtown	214	27.73	6.26
John Adams	72	30.25	5.35
Mission	252	29.07	6.05

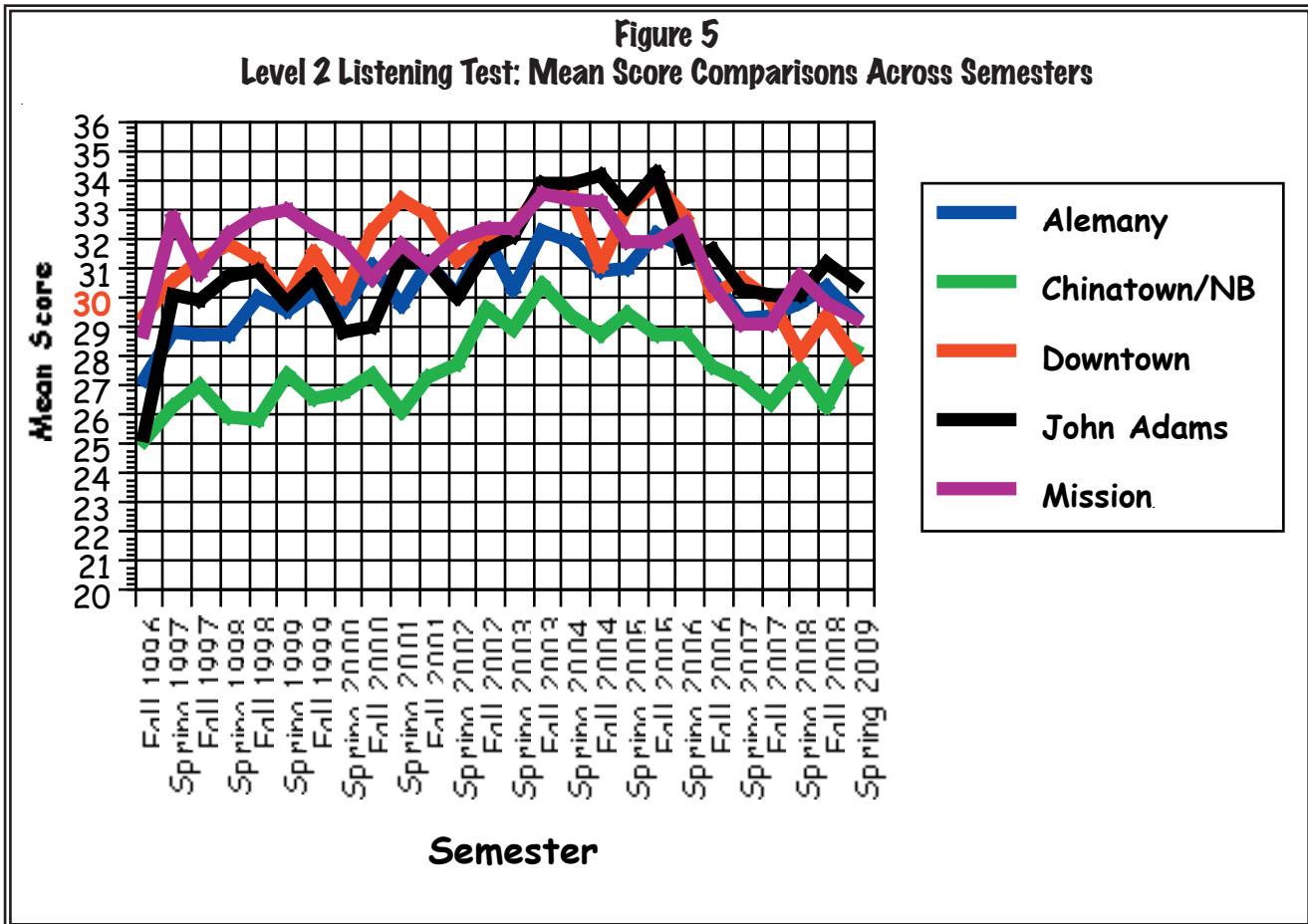
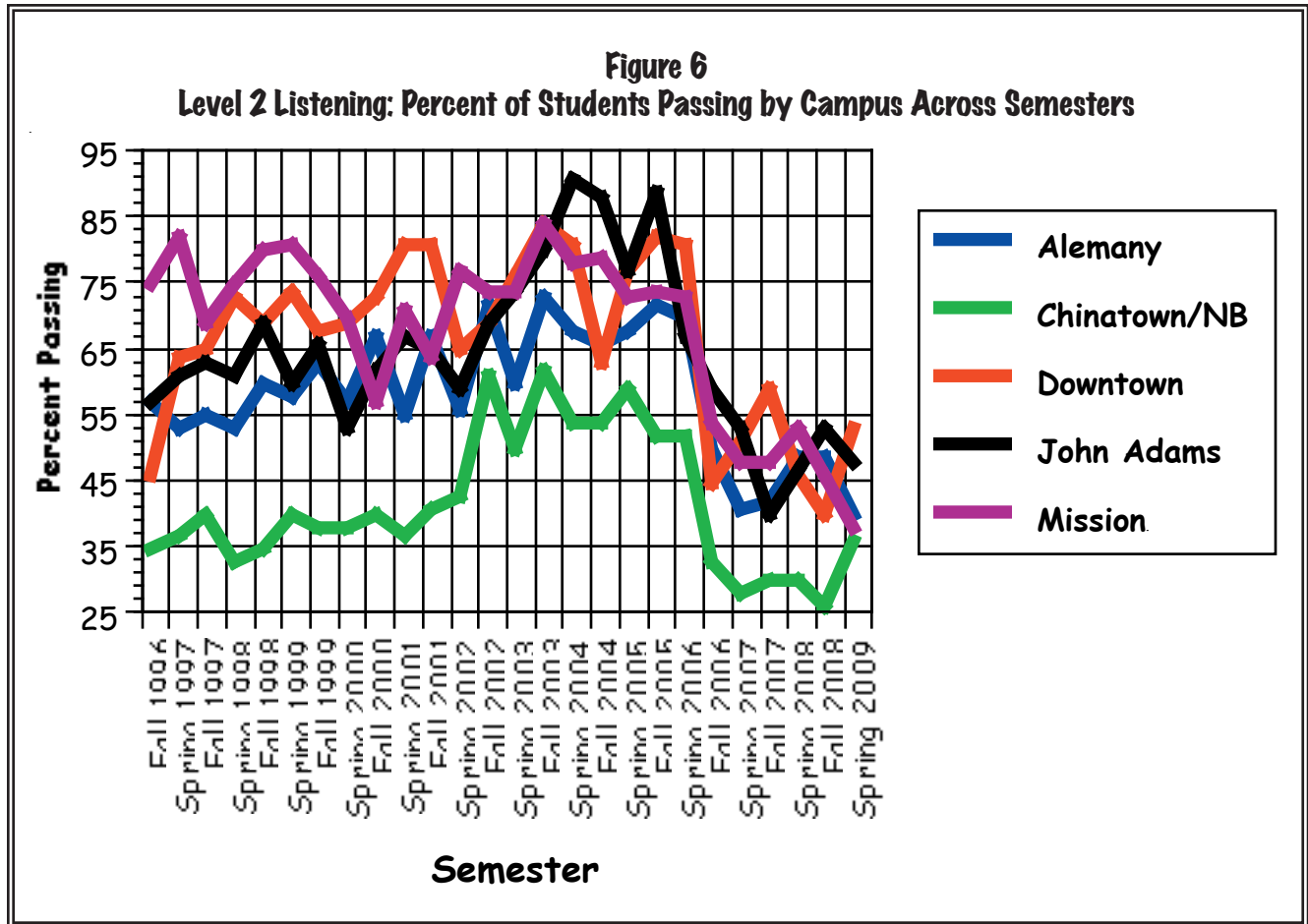


Table 4 shows the percentage of students passing the Level 2 Listening test across campuses.

**Table 4**  
**Level 2 Listening: Percent of Students Passing by Campus**

Campus	Total Number of Classes	Total Number of Students Testing	Total Passing Test	Percent Passing Test
Alemany	12	241	94	39%
Chinatown/ North Beach	9	210	74	35%
Downtown	7	214	111	52%
John Adams	6	72	34	47%
Mission	11	252	106	37%

A comparison of percentage of students passing the test across semesters is indicated in Figure 6. As was seen with the mean scores, the overall pass rate for this new form of the test has dropped. There are multiple explanations for this finding. Perhaps the new form is slightly more difficult than its predecessor. Switching from analog tape to digital CD may have impacted test administration. Maybe repeated exposure to the older form of the test created a regression toward the mean or other testing effect. It will be interesting to watch the pass rate in future administrations of this new form to track what trends develop.



### C. Level 4 Tests

#### 1. Level 4 Reading

A total of 675 students took the Level 4 Reading test. Table 5 provides the results of the analysis of the student scores. The passing score for this test is 25. The spread of mean scores across campuses for this test is much closer than for the Level 2 tests. Figure 7 provides longitudinal findings. Because the Level 4 Test Battery includes four tests and is more labor-intensive for both students and teachers, only students who are ready are encouraged to participate. As a result, the mean scores for campuses that traditionally lagged behind seem to be catching up to their counterparts. This is a positive development.

**Table 5  
Level 4 Reading**

Campus	Total Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Alemany	102	25.69	6.26
Chinatown/North Beach	72	24.18	6.11
Downtown	236	26.89	5.58
John Adams	103	26.93	5.54
Mission	162	27.69	5.28

**Figure 7  
Level 4 Reading Test: Mean Score Comparisons Across Semesters**

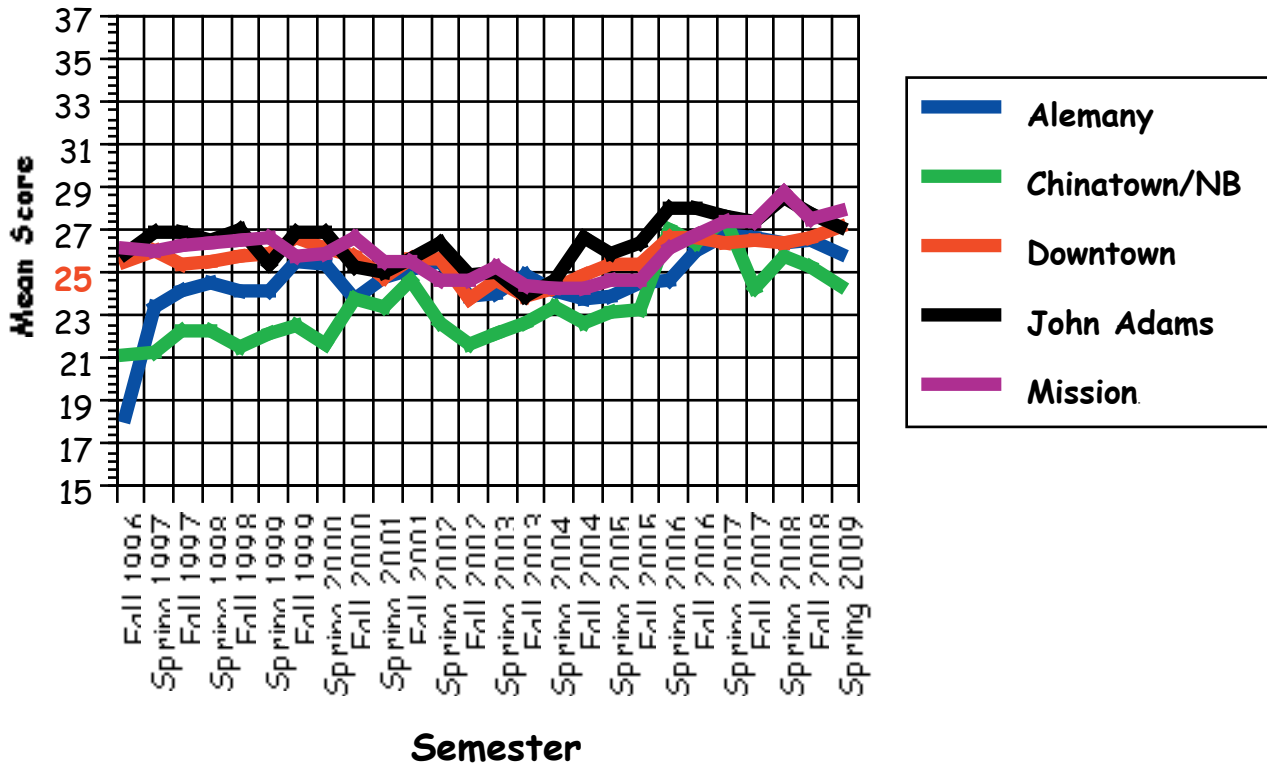
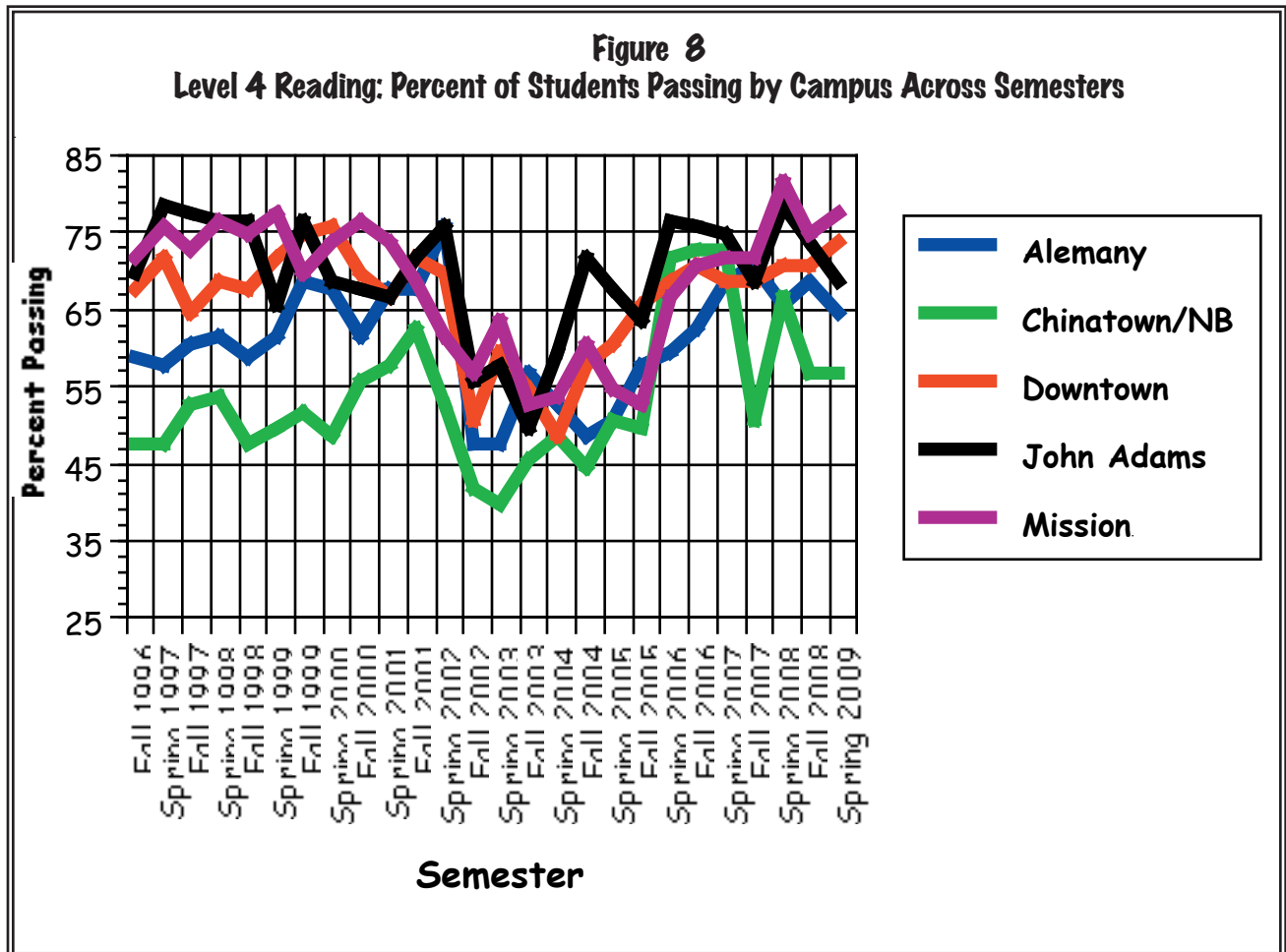


Table 6 indicates the percentage of students passing the test across campuses.

**Table 6**  
**Level 4 Reading: Percent of Students Passing by Campus**

Campus	Total Number of Classes	Total Number of Students Testing	Total Passing Test	Percent Passing Test
Alemany	9	102	65	64%
Chinatown/ North Beach	7	72	40	56%
Downtown	9	236	173	73%
John Adams	6	103	70	68%
Mission	8	162	124	77%

Finally, Figure 8 shows a comparison of percentages across semesters.



2. Level 4 Listening

A total of 662 students took the Level 4 Listening test. Table 7 and Figure 9 highlight the mean scores achieved across campuses and time. The passing score for this test is 24.

**Table 7**  
**Level 4 Listening**

Campus	Total Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Alemany	103	25.52	3.47
Chinatown/North Beach	64	23.59	3.97
Downtown	237	24.83	4.06
John Adams	103	25.10	3.92
Mission	155	25.32	3.95

**Figure 9**  
**Level 4 Listening Test: Mean Score Comparisons Across Semesters**

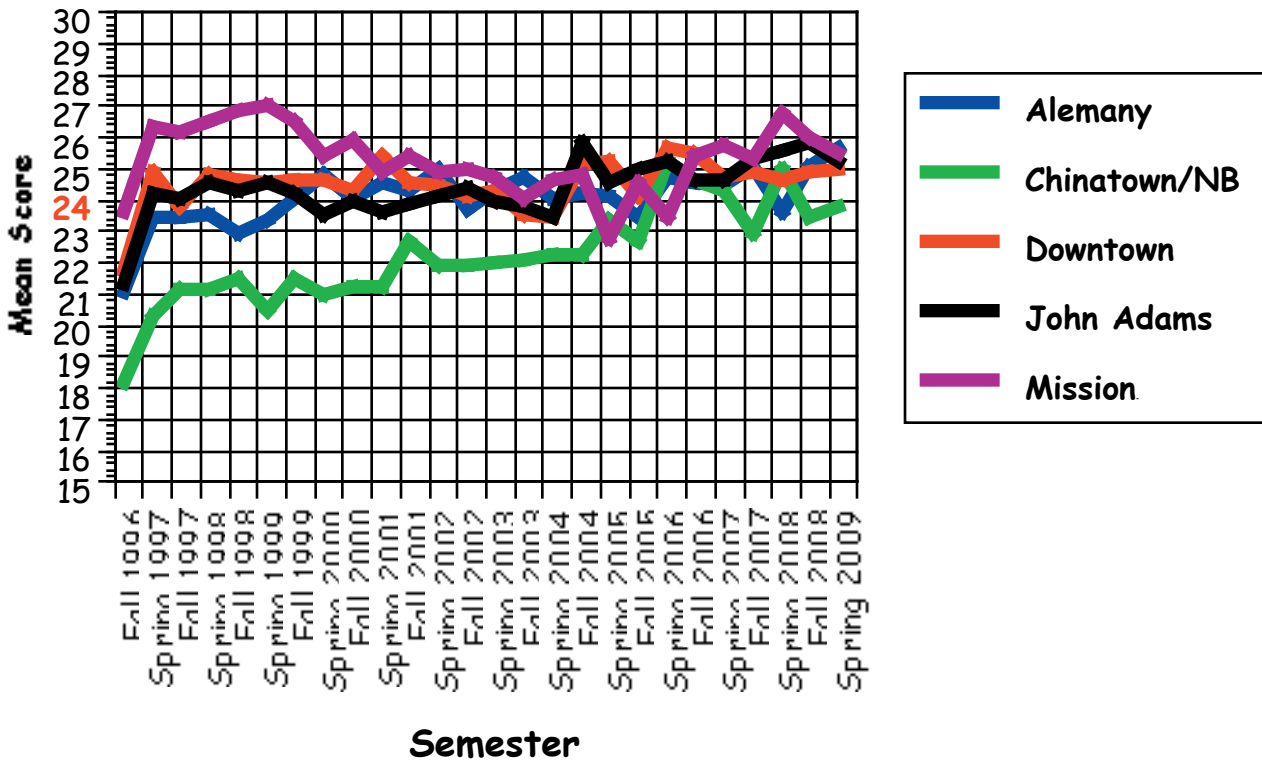
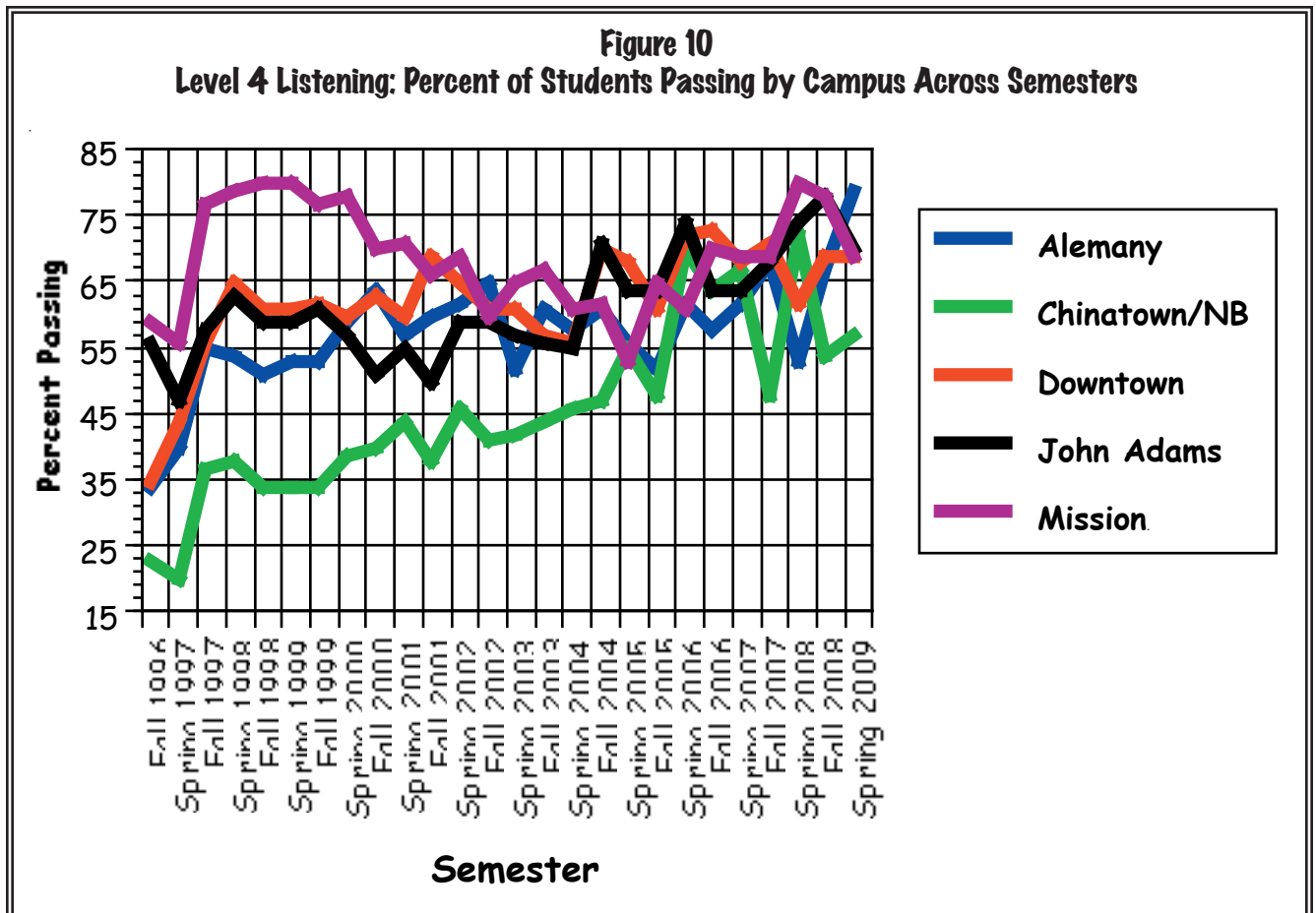


Table 8 and Figure 10 examine the percentage of students passing the Level 4 Listening test. The pass rates are high for this test.

**Table 8**  
**Level 4 Listening: Percent of Students Passing by Campus**

Campus	Total Number of Classes	Total Number of Students Testing	Total Passing Test	Percent Passing Test
Alemany	9	103	80	78%
Chinatown/ North Beach	7	64	36	56%
Downtown	9	237	161	68%
John Adams	6	103	71	69%
Mission	8	155	105	68%

**Figure 10**  
**Level 4 Listening: Percent of Students Passing by Campus Across Semesters**



**3. Level 4 Oral Interview**

A total of 634 students took the Level 4 Oral Interview test. Table 9 and Figure 11 highlight the mean scores achieved across campuses. The passing score for this test is 30.

**Table 9  
Level 4 Oral Interview**

Campus	Total Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Alemanya	96	35.75	8.48
Chinatown/North Beach	61	34.07	8.74
Downtown	223	33.48	9.56
John Adams	97	35.07	9.22
Mission	157	37.12	8.39

**Figure 11  
Level 4 Oral Interview: Mean Score Comparisons by Campus Across Semesters**

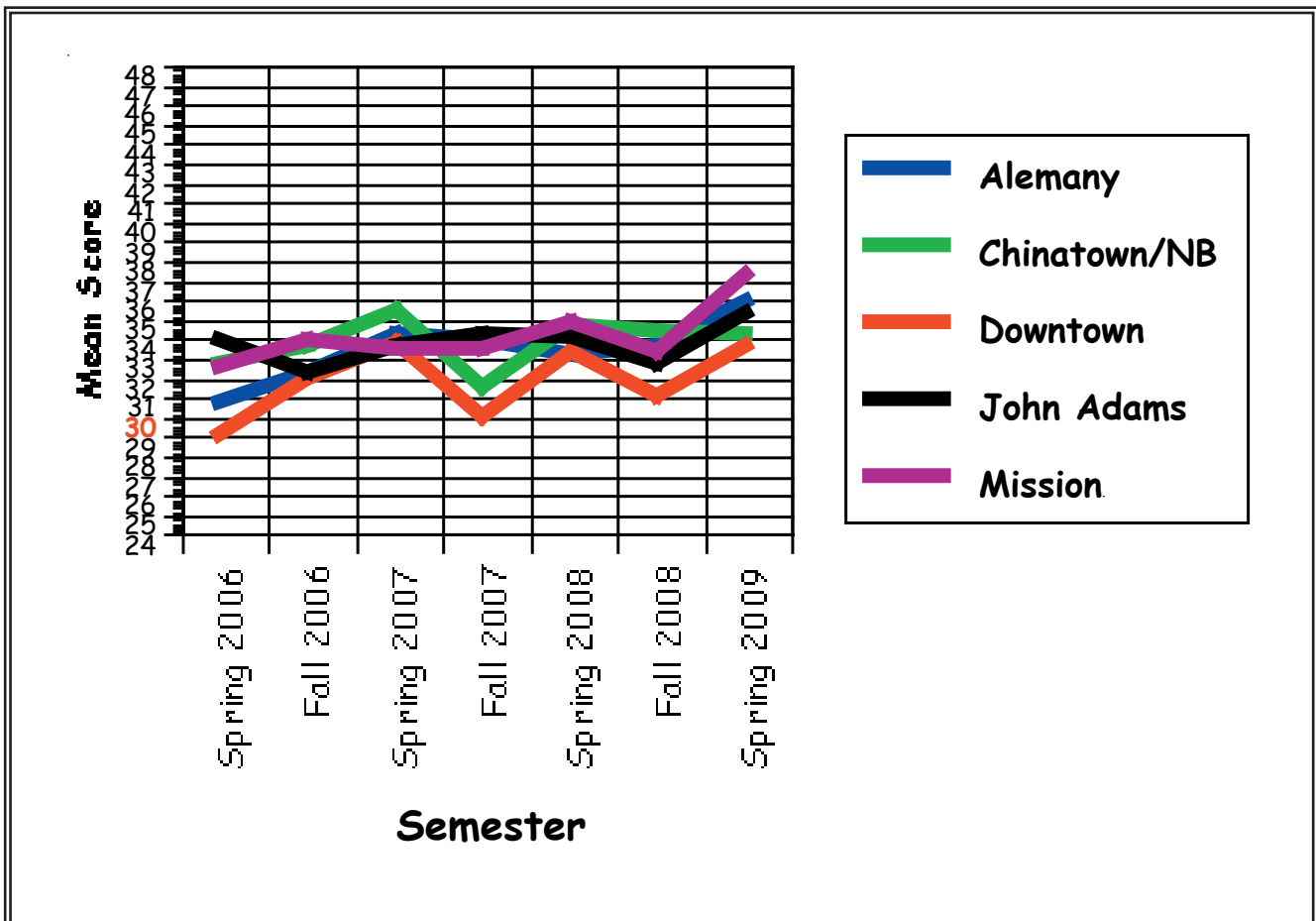
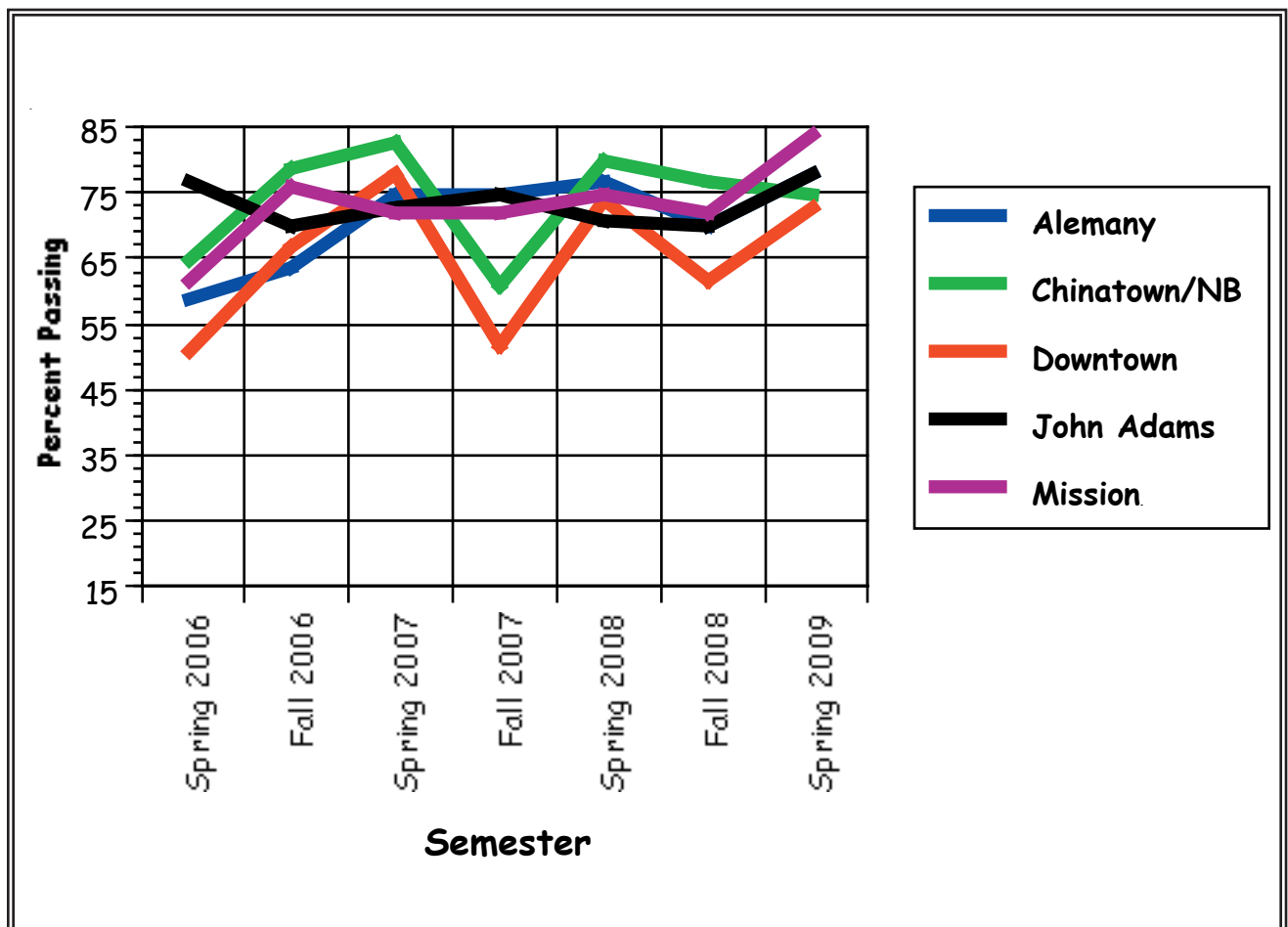


Table 10 and Figure 12 show the pass rates for this exam.

**Table 10**  
**Level 4 Oral Interview: Percent of Students Passing by Campus**

Campus	Total Number of Classes	Total Number of Students Testing	Total Passing Test	Percent Passing Test
Alemany	9	96	74	77%
Chinatown/ North Beach	7	61	45	74%
Downtown	9	223	161	72%
John Adams	6	97	75	77%
Mission	8	157	130	83%

**Figure 12**  
**Level 4 Oral Interview: Percent of Students Passing by Campus Across Semesters**



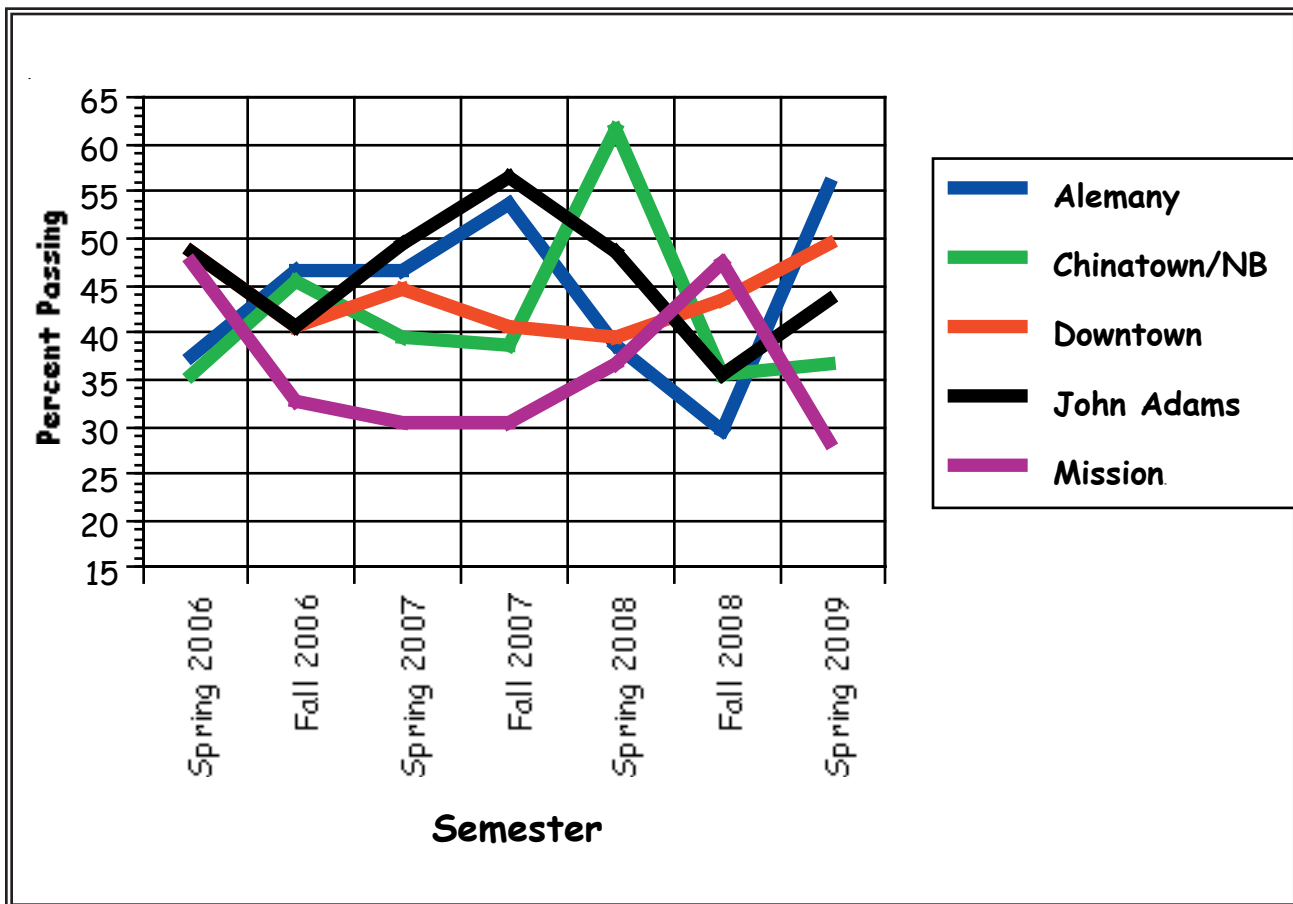
**4. Level 4 Writing Test**

A total of 702 students took the Level 4 Writing test. This exam is holistically graded, and students receive a Pass or Not Pass grade. Table 11 and Figure 13 provide the available statistics for this exam, namely, the pass rate for the test.

**Table 11  
Level 4 Writing Test**

Campus	Total Number of Classes	Total Number of Students Testing	Total Passing Test	Percent Passing Test
Alemany	9	114	63	55%
Chinatown/ North Beach	7	73	26	36%
Downtown	9	237	115	49%
John Adams	6	115	49	43%
Mission	8	163	46	28%

**Figure 13  
Level 4 Writing Test: Percent of Students Passing by Campus Across Semesters**



**D. Level 6 Tests**

**1. Level 6 Reading**

A total of 552 students took the Level 6 Reading test. Table 12 provides the results of the analysis of this test. The passing score for this exam is 20.

**Table 12  
Level 6 Reading**

Campus	Total Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Alemaný	105	20.90	4.81
Chinatown/North Beach	53	19.72	5.67
Downtown	213	19.92	5.07
John Adams	65	20.00	5.56
Mission	116	20.39	5.40

Figure 14 shows the means across the years the test has been given.

**Figure 14  
Level 6 Reading Test: Mean Score Comparisons Across Semesters**

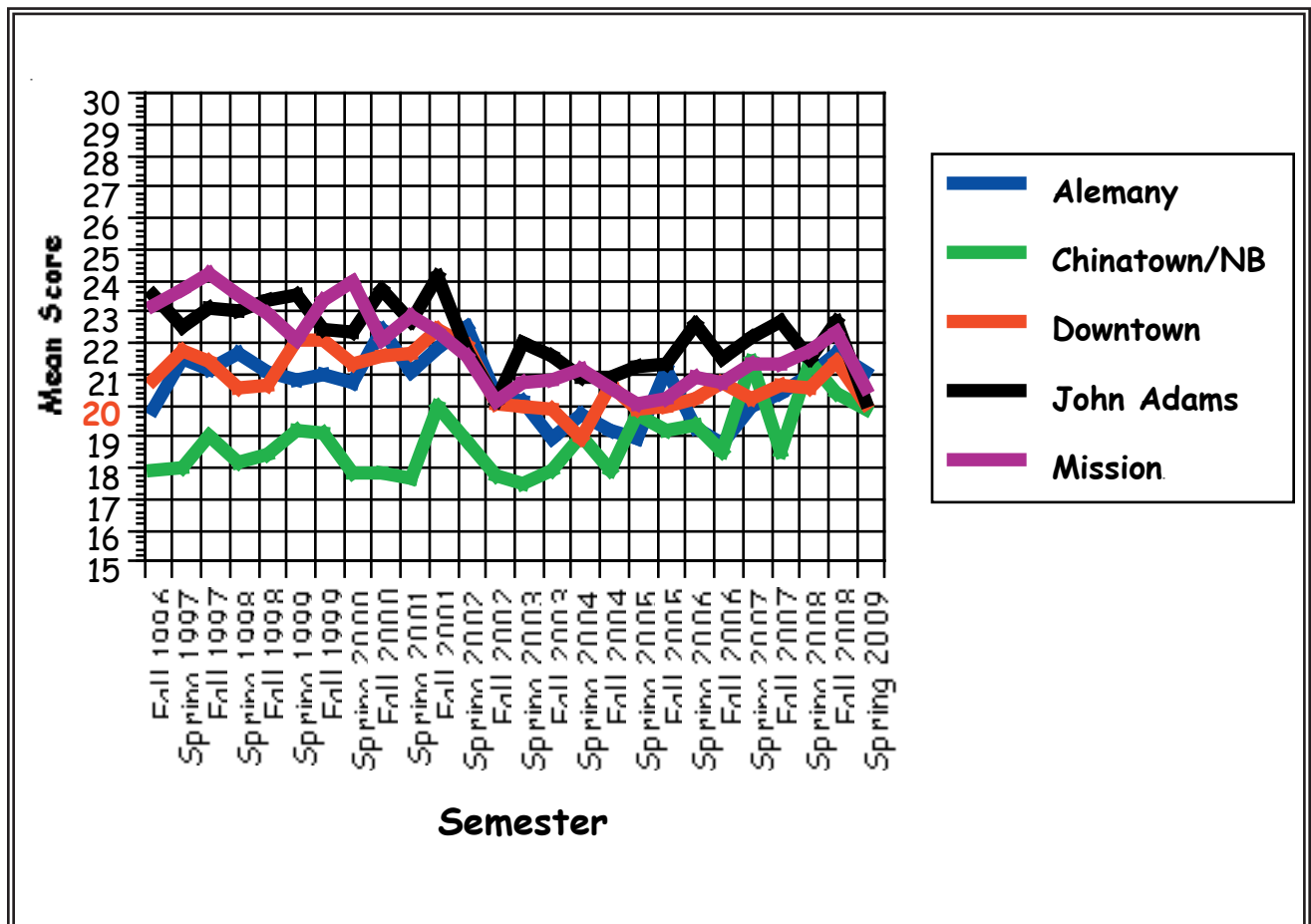
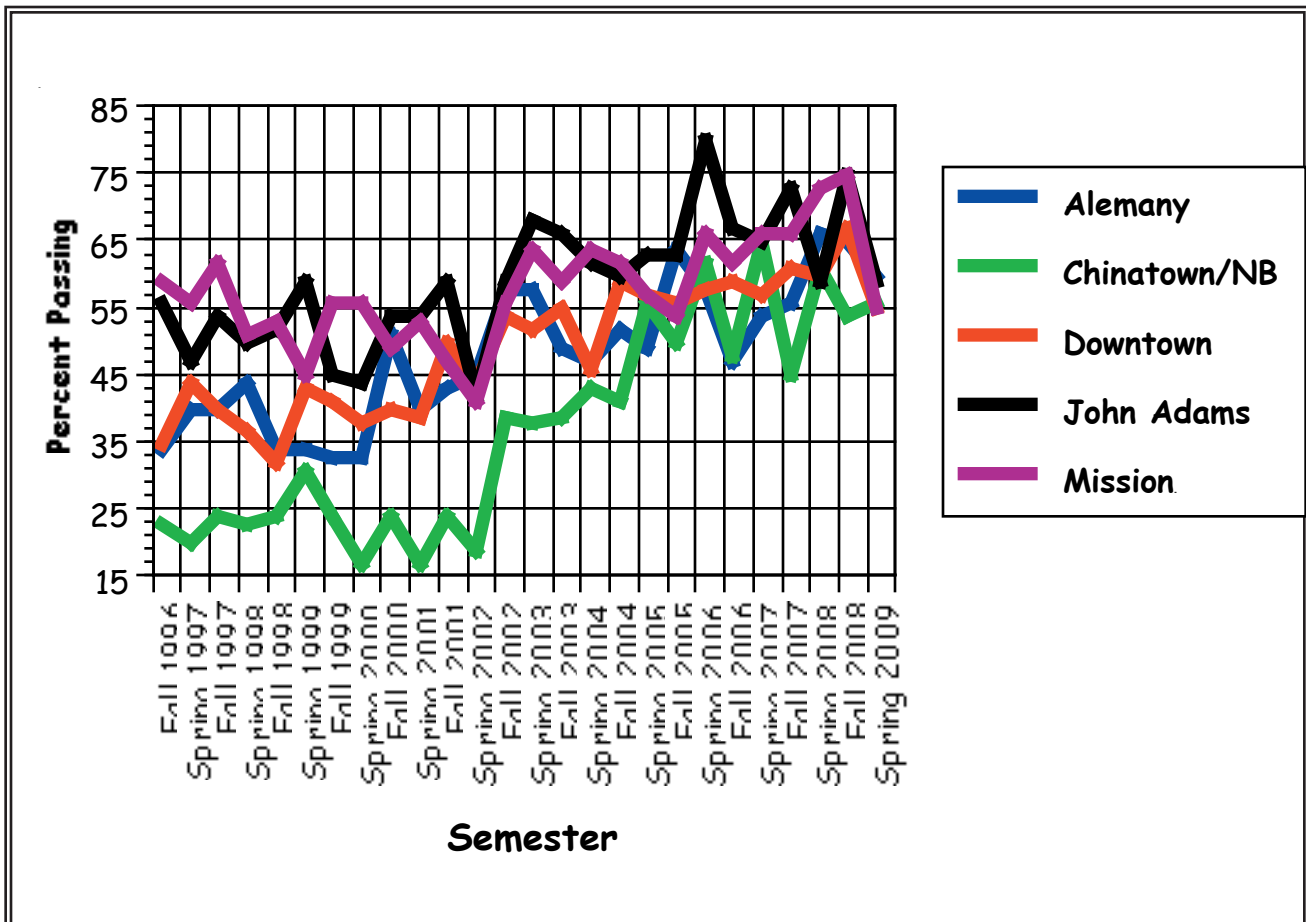


Table 13 and Figure 15 highlight the percentage of students passing the Level 6 Reading test.

**Table 13**  
**Level 6 Reading: Percent of Students Passing by Campus**

Campus	Total Number of Classes	Total Number of Students Testing	Total Passing Test	Percent Passing Test
Alemany	6	105	62	59%
Chinatown/ North Beach	3	53	29	55%
Downtown	8	213	115	54%
John Adams	5	65	38	58%
Mission	4	116	63	54%

**Figure 15**  
**Level 6 Reading: Percent of Students Passing by Campus Across Semesters**



2. Level 6 Listening

A total of 548 students took the Level 6 Listening test. Table 14 provides details. The passing score for this test is 19. Figure 16 shows the comparison of means across semesters. The results of this test are both generally better than the Level 6 Reading test, and seem more consistent across campuses (i.e. there seems to be less disparity in results across the campuses).

**Table 14**  
**Level 6 Listening**

Campus	Total Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Alemanya	103	24.70	4.36
Chinatown/North Beach	54	23.33	4.80
Downtown	206	23.57	4.13
John Adams	67	23.54	4.35
Mission	67	24.55	4.36

**Figure 16**  
**Level 6 Listening Test: Mean Score Comparisons Across Semesters**

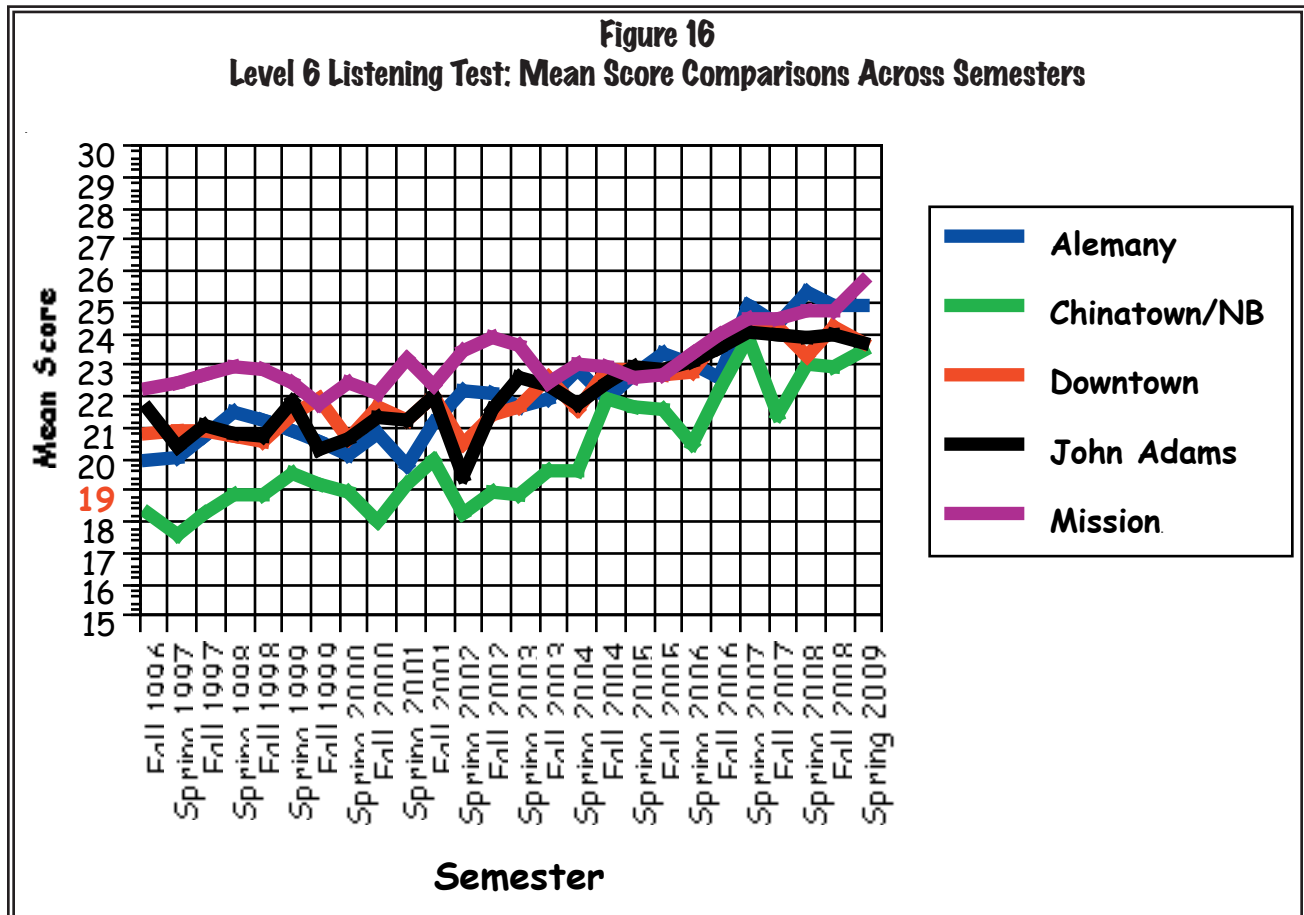
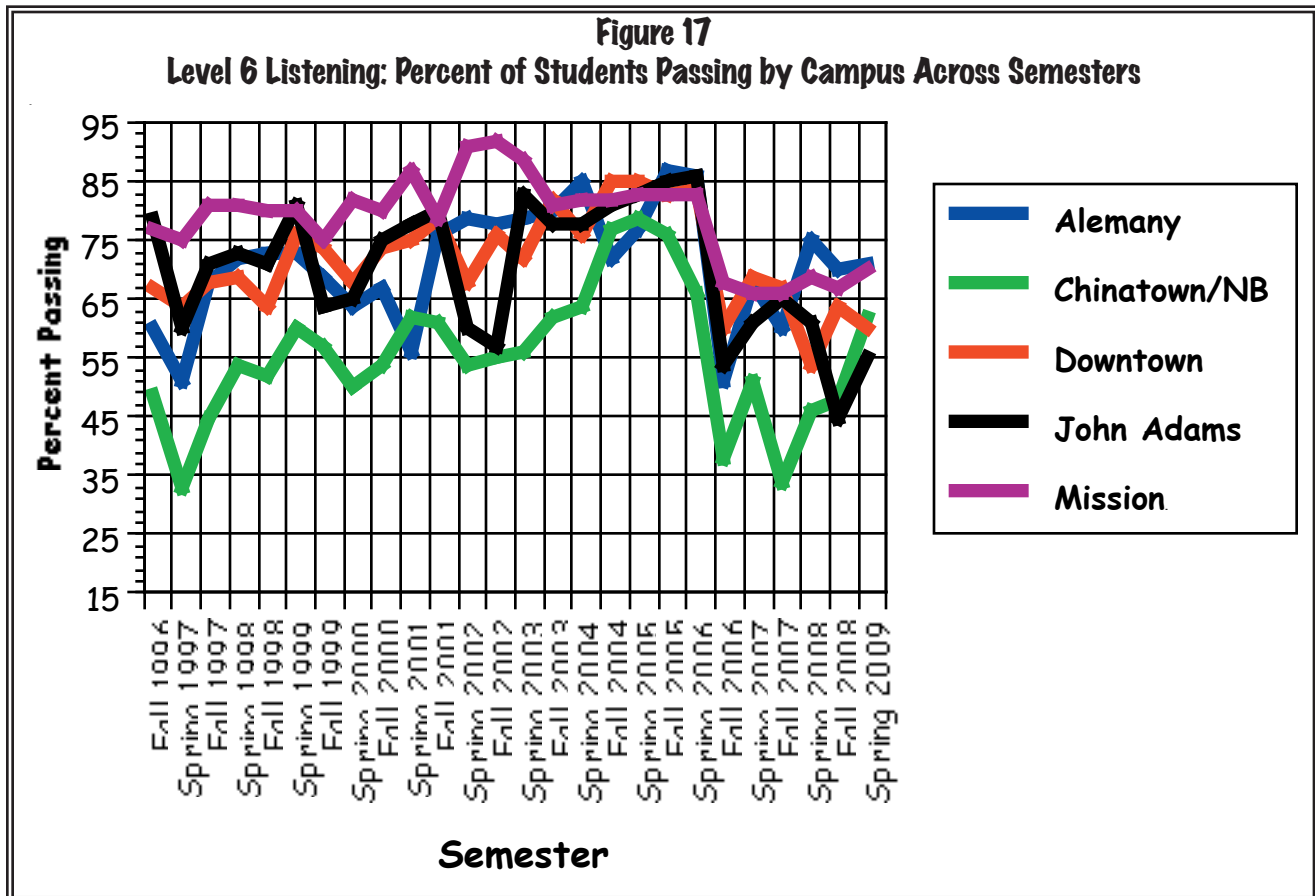


Table 15 shows the percent of students passing the Level 6 Listening test.

**Table 15**  
**Level 6 Listening: Percent of Students Passing by Campus**

Campus	Total Number of Classes	Total Number of Students Testing	Total Passing Test	Percent Passing Test
Alemanya	6	103	72	70%
Chinatown/ North Beach	3	54	53	61%
Downtown	8	206	121	59%
John Adams	5	67	36	54%
Mission	4	118	82	69%

Figure 17 shows the percentage of students passing the Level 6 Listening test across semesters.



### E. Student Promotions

In addition to scores for each individual test, information was gathered concerning how many students in each of the three levels tested were promoted by their instructors. As was stated earlier, teachers were asked to fill out test result forms on which they recorded student scores on tests as well as their level recommendation for each student for the Fall 2009 semester. From these result forms, an indication of promotion rates can be calculated. Under no circumstances should these data be viewed as reliable insofar as they are incomplete and reflect instructor recommendation vs. actual final placement. That is, it is possible that the level recommendations were made prior to teacher-student conferences at which changes took place. Nevertheless, since we currently collect no data on student promotion through the non-credit levels, these anecdotal data might be of interest. Table 16 provides information on the percentage of promotion for students taking the Level 2 tests.

**Table 16**  
**Level 2: Percent of Students Promoted to Level 3**

Campus	Total Number of Students Taking One or More Tests	Total Number of Students Promoted	Percent of Total Promoted
Alemanya	257	121	47%
Chinatown/North Beach	229	87	38%
Downtown	235	103	44%
John Adams	83	48	58%
Mission	302	197	65%

Figure 18 illustrates the comparison of promotion rates from Spring 1997 to Spring 2009.

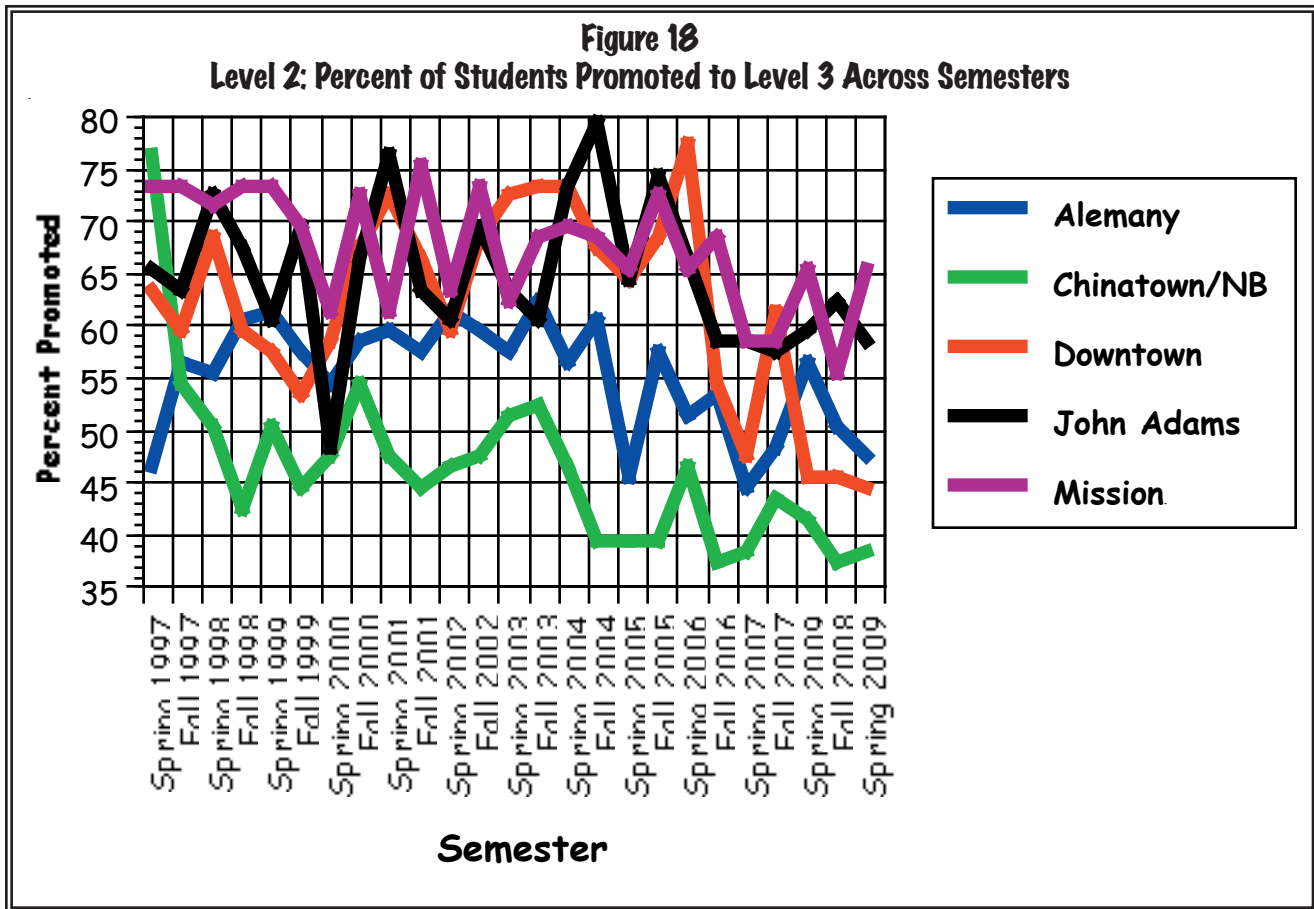


Table 17 contains the data gathered on the Level 4 tests.

**Table 17**  
**Level 4: Percent of Students Promoted to Level 5**

Campus	Total Number of Students Taking One or More Tests	Total Number of Students Promoted	Percent of Total Promoted
Alemany	117	62	53%
Chinatown/North Beach	83	31	37%
Downtown	271	157	58%
John Adams	116	62	58%
Mission	172	113	66%

Figure 19 shows the percent of students promoted across semesters.

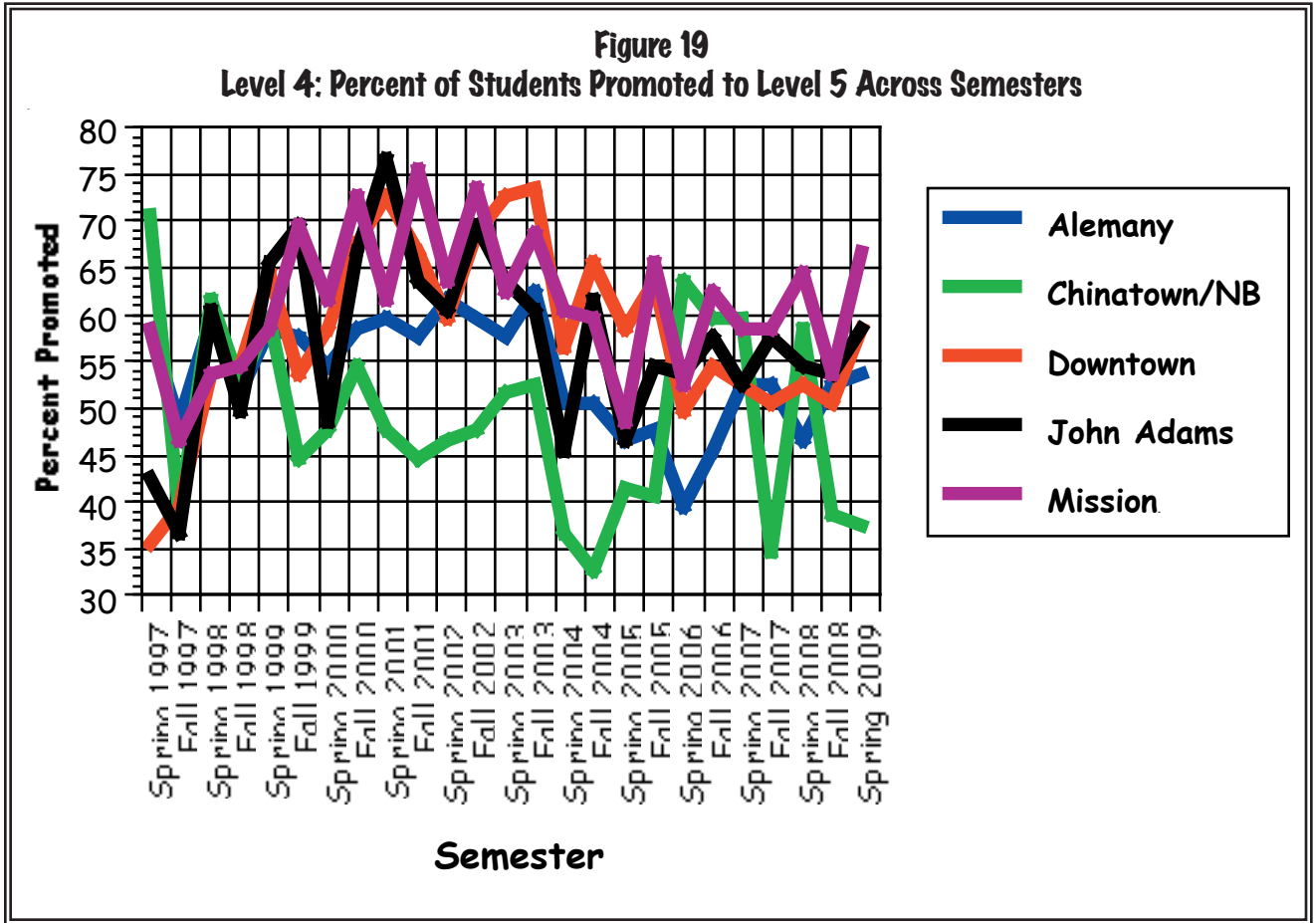
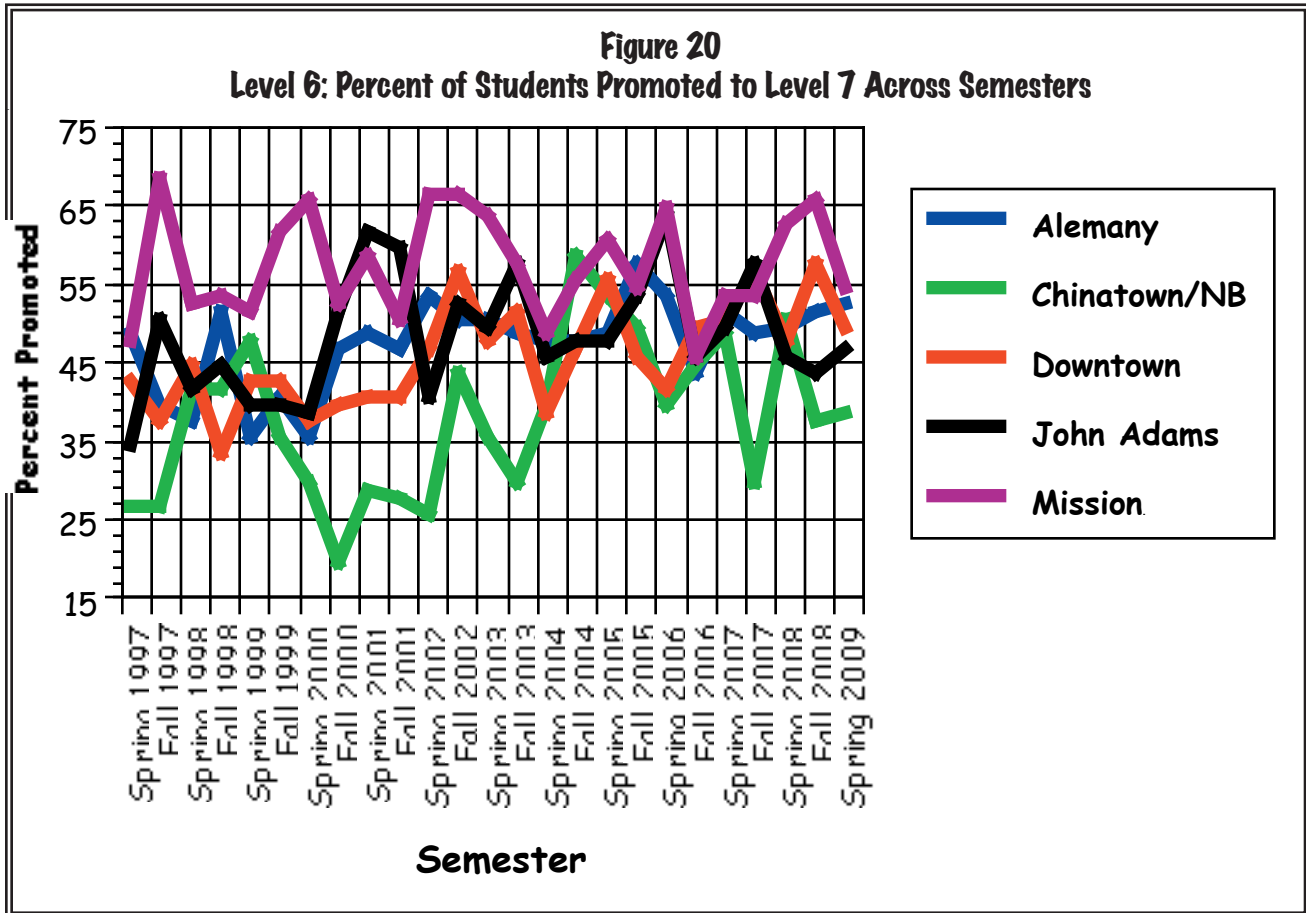


Table 18 illustrates the data gathered on the Level 6 tests, and Figure 20 shows the percent of students promoted to Level 7 across semesters.

**Table 18**  
**Level 6: Percent of Students Promoted to Level 7**

Campus	Total Number of Students Taking One or More Tests	Total Number of Students Promoted	Percent of Total Promoted
Alemany	117	61	52%
Chinatown/North Beach	55	21	38%
Downtown	227	111	49%
John Adams	70	32	46%
Mission	131	71	54%



#### F. Level 4 Certificate

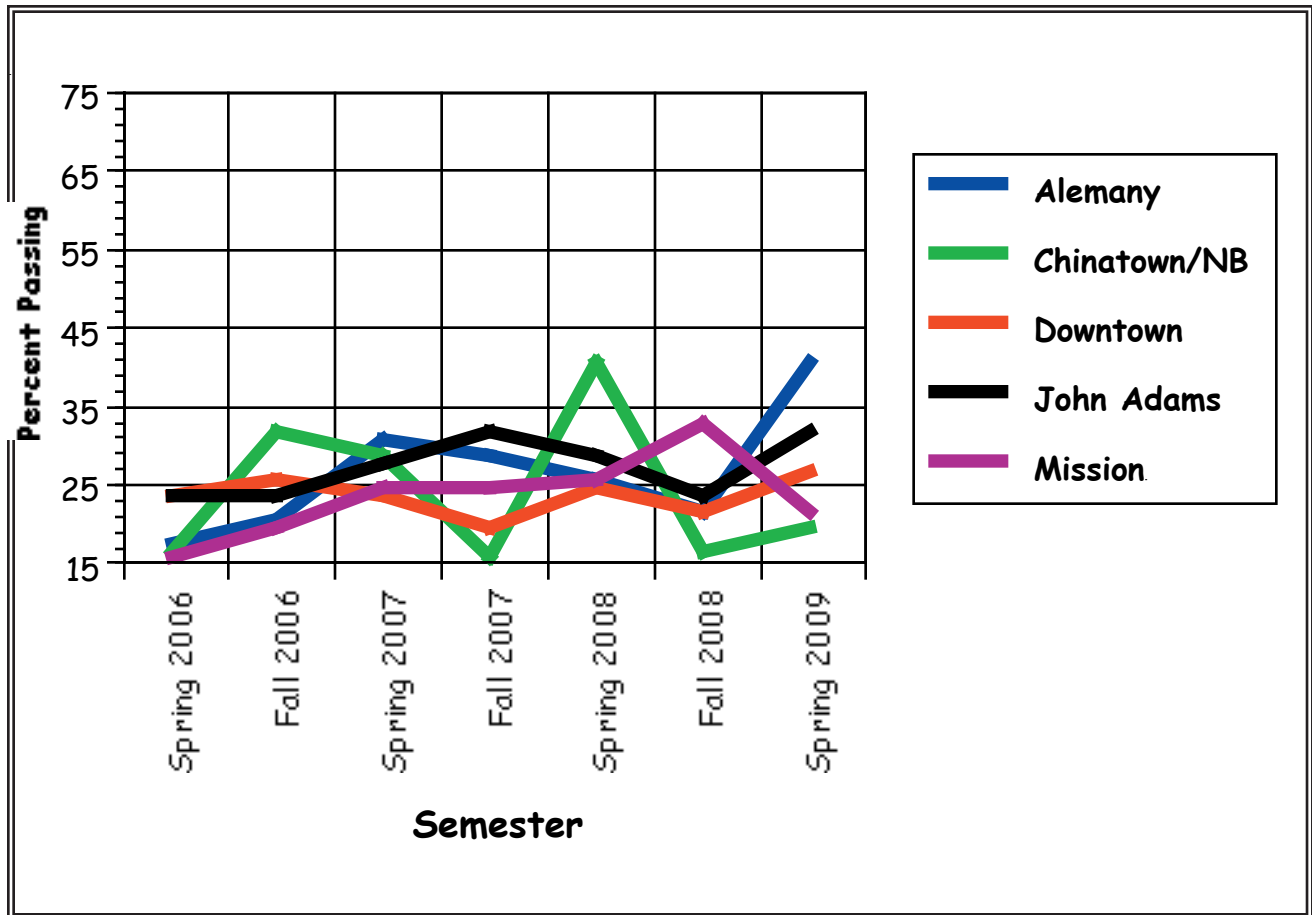
Following past practice with the old Level 300 Test system, Level 4 students are required to pass three of the four tests in the Level 4 Test Battery before being promoted to Level 5 in the program. However, to help increase enrollment, maintain attendance, and provide additional incentive, students who pass all four exams in the Battery are presented with a certificate of achievement. Table 19 and Figure 21 include these statistics.

**Table 19**  
**Level 4 Test Battery Certificates**

Campus	Total Number of Students Taking One or More Tests	Total Number of Students Earning Certificate	Percent of Total Earning Certificate
Alemany	117	47	40%
Chinatown/North Beach	83	16	19%
Downtown	271	71	26%
John Adams	116	36	31%
Mission	172	36	21%

Figure 21

## Level 4 Test Battery Certificate: Percent Earning Across Semesters



### III. Summary

The Spring 2009 semester saw the 26<sup>th</sup> formal application of standardized exit testing in non-credit ESL classes. Students, these data suggest, are moving through our non-credit ESL program successfully. There may have been some initial concern when the Level 4 Battery was instituted that the test could possibly create a "roadblock" for students. These data do not suggest that students are getting stuck at Level 4. Indeed, at the Chinatown/North Beach campus, the Level 4 test seems to be functioning as a successful gatekeeper between the lower levels and entrance into the upper levels of our program. In other words, limiting testing to those students fully prepared to master them seems to be working. This is exactly the effect the designers of the tests hoped to achieve. Perhaps program developers can use these data to make recommendations to teachers at all levels concerning the application of our promotion tests.