

**SPIRITUALITY OF ENTERING UCLA STUDENTS:
EVIDENCE FROM CIRP TRENDS DATA**

Student Affairs Briefing

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CONTENTS

- I. Purpose of This Briefing**
- II. Highlights**
- III. Overview**
 - 1. Overall Trends of Spirituality*
 - 2. Gender Differences in Spirituality*
 - 3. Racial/Ethnic Differences in Spirituality*

I. PURPOSE OF THIS BRIEFING

This briefing uses trends data from HERI's CIRP Freshman Survey through 2003. The main purpose is to examine UCLA's entering first-year students' self-reported spirituality: What are the trends over the time? How are gender and race/ethnicity related to spirituality?

II. HIGHLIGHTS

- There is an overall decline for recent years in self-reported spirituality, which includes self-rated spirituality level compared to peers, religious affiliation, and time spent praying or meditating.
- Overall, female students rate themselves higher on level of spirituality than do their male counterparts. The pattern is consistent over the time in spite of their similar declining trends among both men and women.
- African American students have the highest level of self-rated spirituality and have the largest proportion who report being born-again Christians.

III. OVERVIEW

1. Overall Trends of Spirituality

From 1982 to 2003, percentages of UCLA incoming students who report being religiously affiliated present a decline trend. Figure 1.1 demonstrates that this overall declining trend started with 80% in 1982, began to go down sharply in 1987, and ended in 2003 with 69%.

Figure 1.1

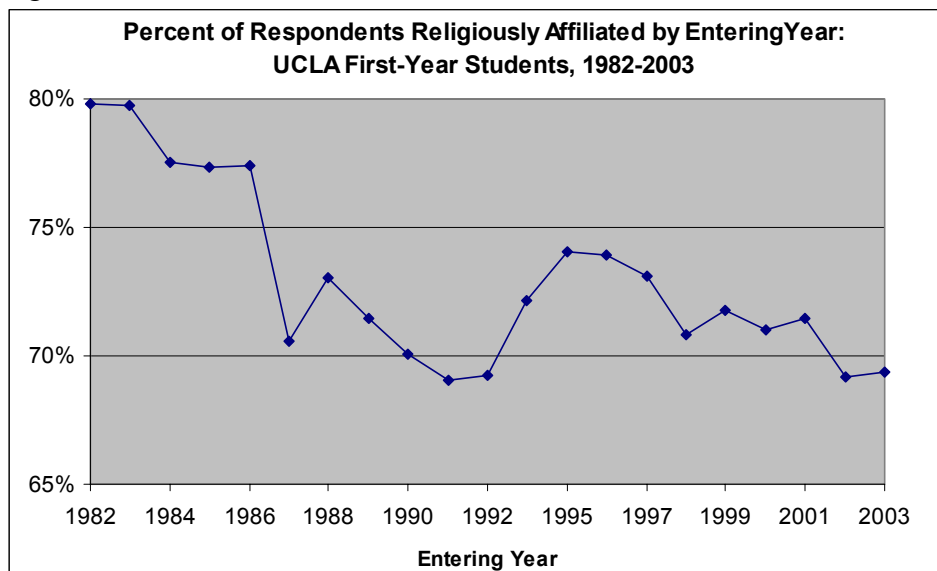


Figure 1.2 shows that since 2001, there has been a sharp decline in percentages of incoming students that rated their spirituality "above average or top 10%" compared to their peers. Before 2001, the percentages of those who rated themselves as "above average or top 10%" was

consistently around 45%, but among the 2003 entering first-year students, only 35% rated themselves at that level.

Figure 1.2

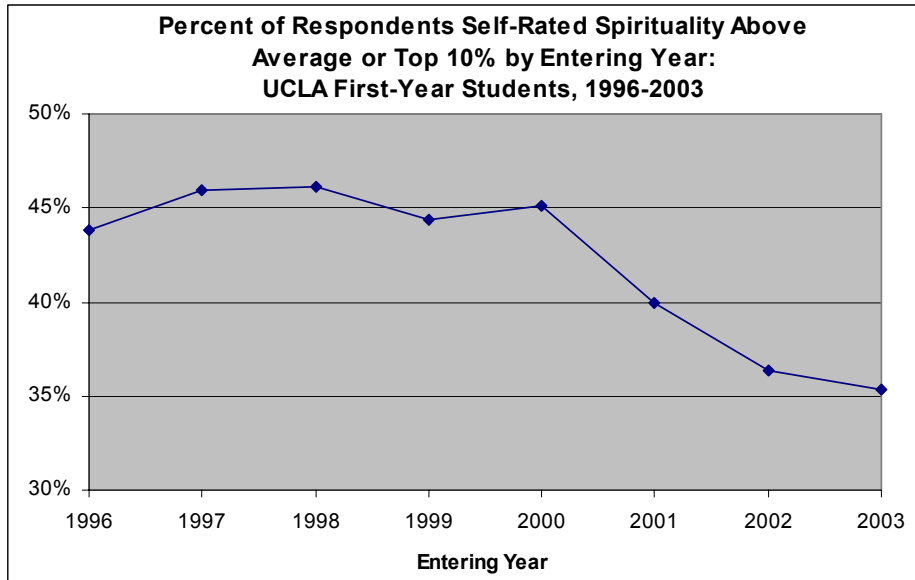
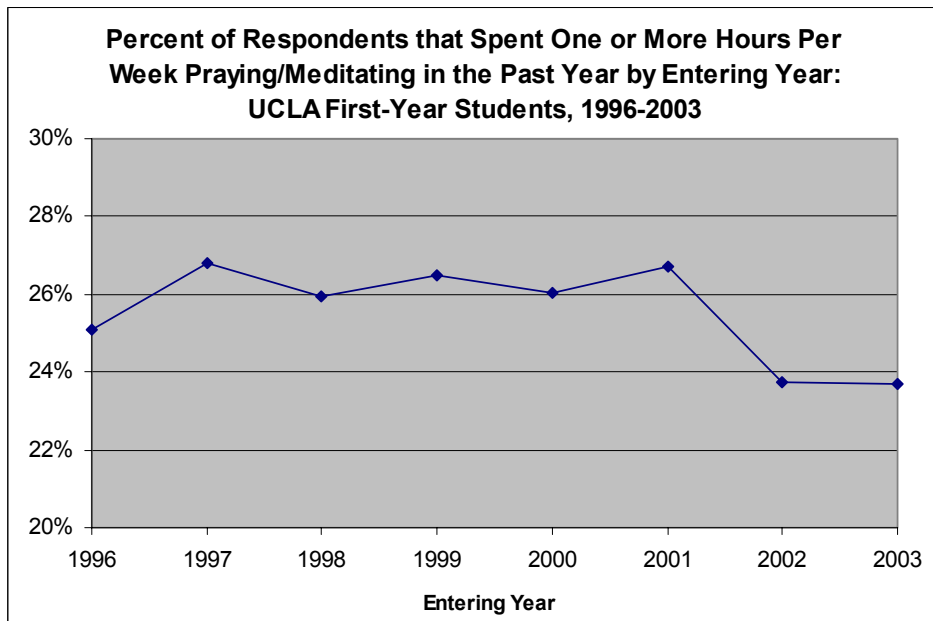


Figure 1.3 shows that since 2001, there has been a decline in percentages of incoming students reporting that they spent one hour or more per week praying or meditating during the past year. However, it is a relatively mild drop, from 27% to 24%.

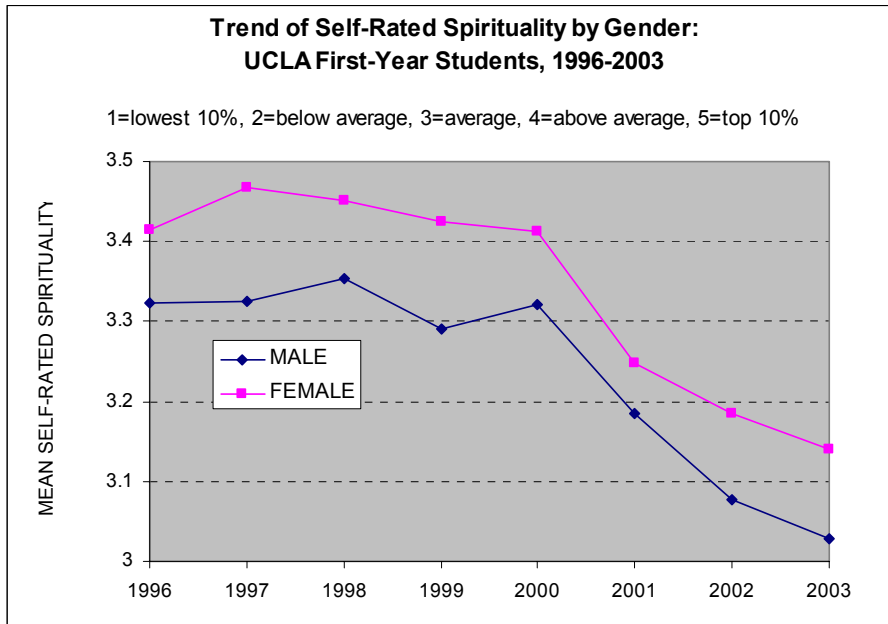
Figure 1.3



2. Gender Differences in Spirituality

There are overall trends of decline in self-rated spirituality for both male and female students between 1996 and 2003. The decline has become steeper since 2001. On a 1-5 scale of spirituality, female students consistently rated themselves higher than did their male counterparts over the years, in spite of the declining trends for both groups.

Figure 2.1



Although the difference between men and women in self-rated spirituality is only a tenth of one point on a 1-5 scale, the difference is statistically significant.

Figure 2.2

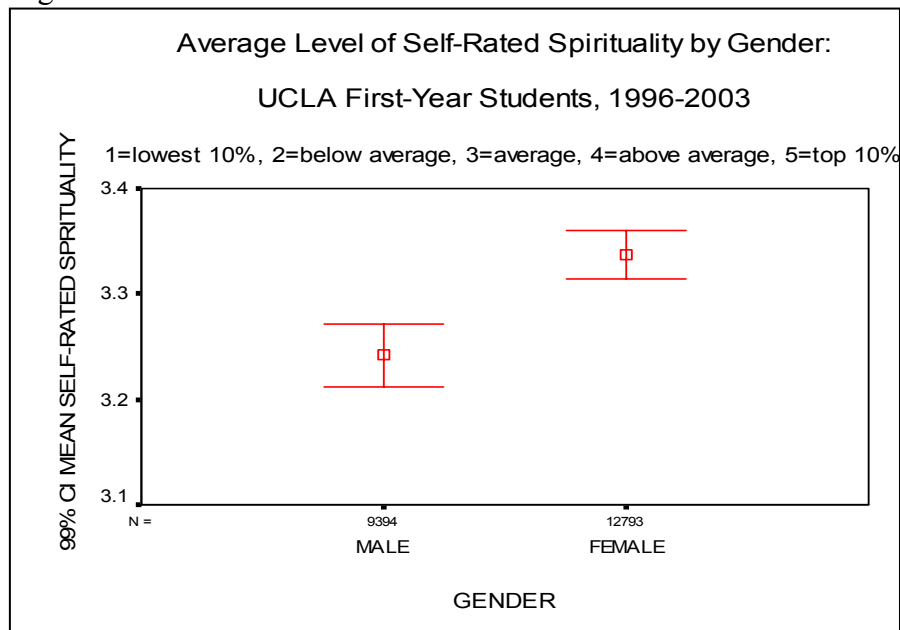
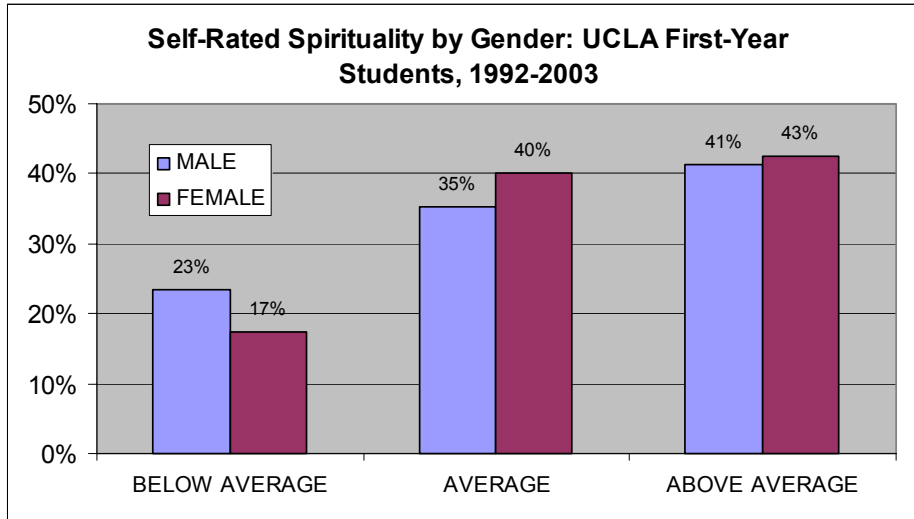


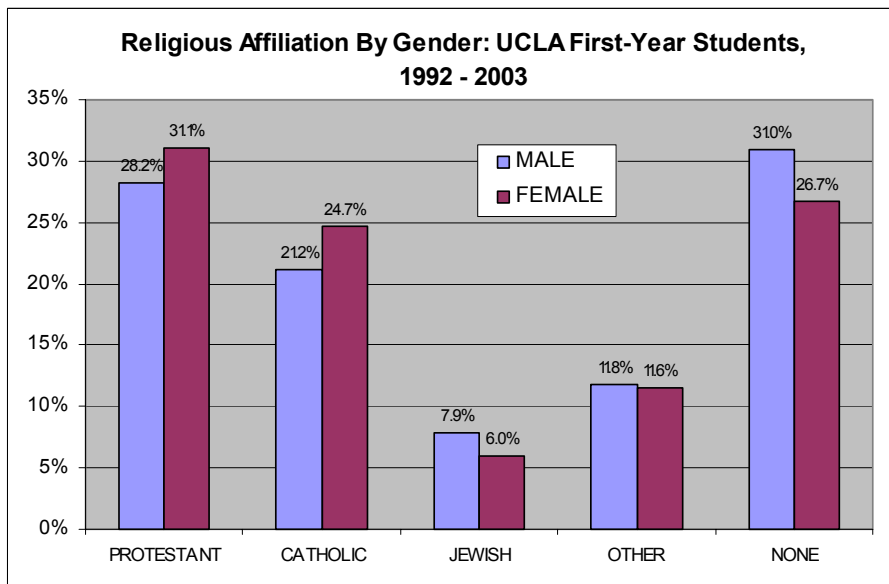
Figure 2.3 shows that 6% more male students than female students rated themselves “Below Average” in spirituality, but 5% more female students than male students rated themselves “Average” in spirituality. There is only a small percentage of gender difference among those who rated themselves “Above Average.”

Figure 2.3



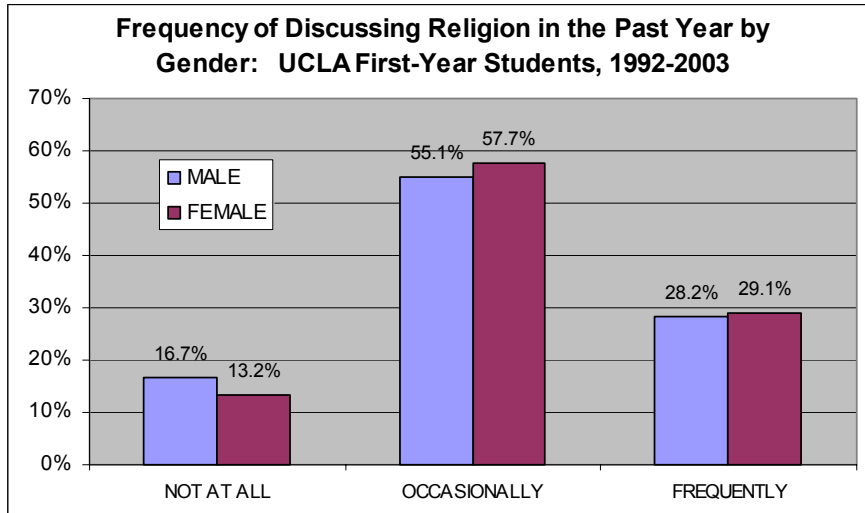
In Figure 2.4, 3% more female students than male students are Protestant and 3.5% more female students than male students are Catholic. Five percent (5%) more male students than female students claimed to be *not* affiliated with any religion. With the large sample size of the multiple-year pooled data, we have a high level of confidence that these gender differences are not by chance.

Figure 2.4



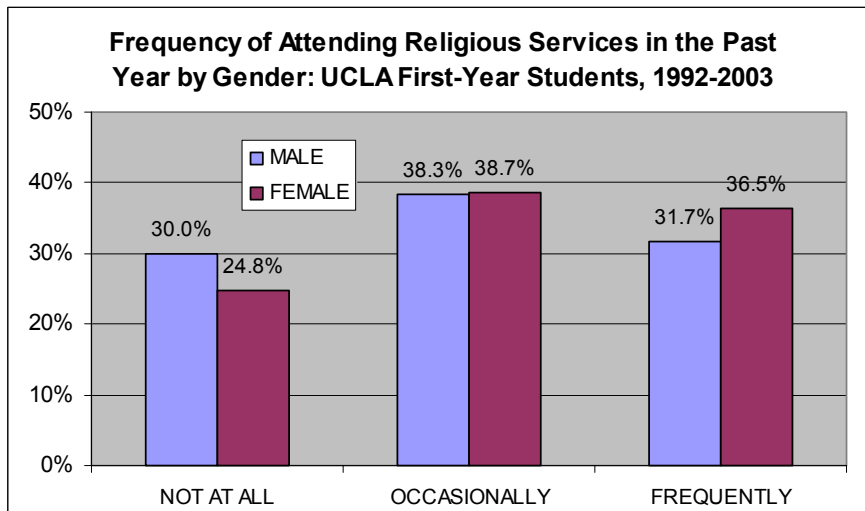
In comparison with their female counterparts, a higher percentage of male respondents reported they discussed religion “NOT AT ALL” in the past year. However, among those who “OCCASIONALLY” and “FREQUENTLY” discussed religion in the past year, the gender difference is very small, with percentages for females being only slightly higher.

Figure 2.5



It is interesting to observe that almost the same proportions of male and female respondents reported they OCCASIONALLY attended religious services in the past year, while a larger proportion of male respondents reported that they attended religious services NOT AT ALL (30% vs. 25%) and a larger proportion of female respondents reported they attended them FREQUENTLY (37% vs. 32%).

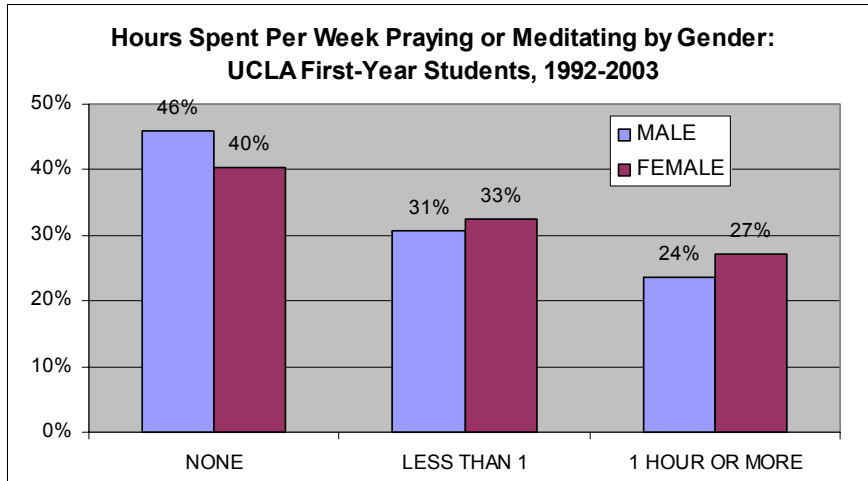
Figure 2.6



Again, a substantially higher percentage of male respondents than that of female respondents reported they spent NO TIME praying or meditating in the past year while higher percentages of

female respondents reported they spent LESS THAN 1 HOUR or 1 HOUR OR MORE per week praying or meditating than did their male counterparts in the past year.

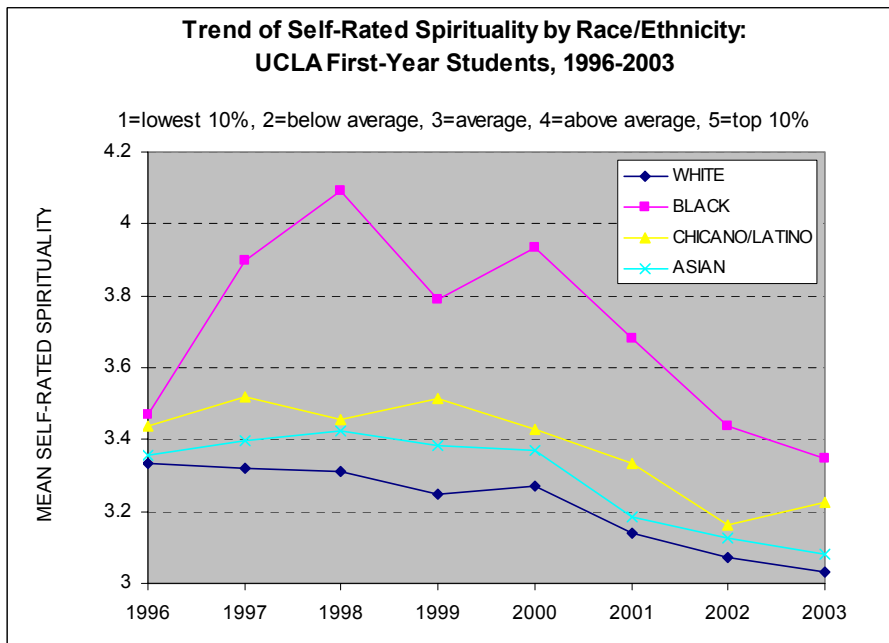
Figure 2.7



3. Racial/Ethnic Differences in Spirituality

When trends are examined by race and ethnicity, we find that African American students had higher average levels of self-rated spirituality over the period from 1996 to 2003 although they rated almost the same with other groups at the beginning of the period. Among the four racial and ethnic groups compared here, Caucasian students appeared to have consistently a lower average level of self-rated spirituality over the period.

Figure 3.1



Consistent with the findings from Figure 3.1, on a 1-5 scale of spirituality, African American students rated themselves the highest (3.70), followed by students of “Other” races and ethnicities (3.45), Chicano/Latino students (3.40), Asian students (3.30) and Caucasian students (3.25).

Figure 3.2

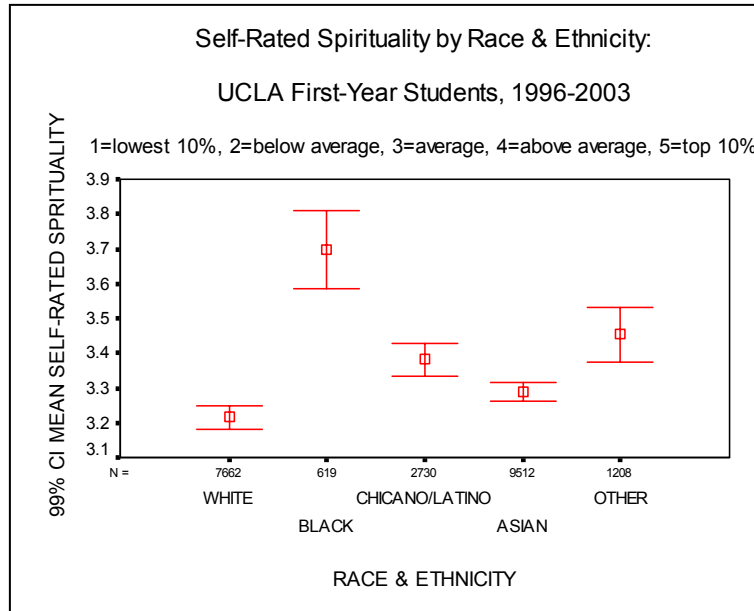


Figure 3.3 shows that the highest percentage (31%) of non-affiliated students is among Asians. Chicano/Latino students have the largest proportion (64%) affiliated with Catholicism, African American students have the largest proportion (64%) affiliated with Protestantism, and Caucasian students have the highest percentage (17%) affiliated with Judaism.

Figure 3.3

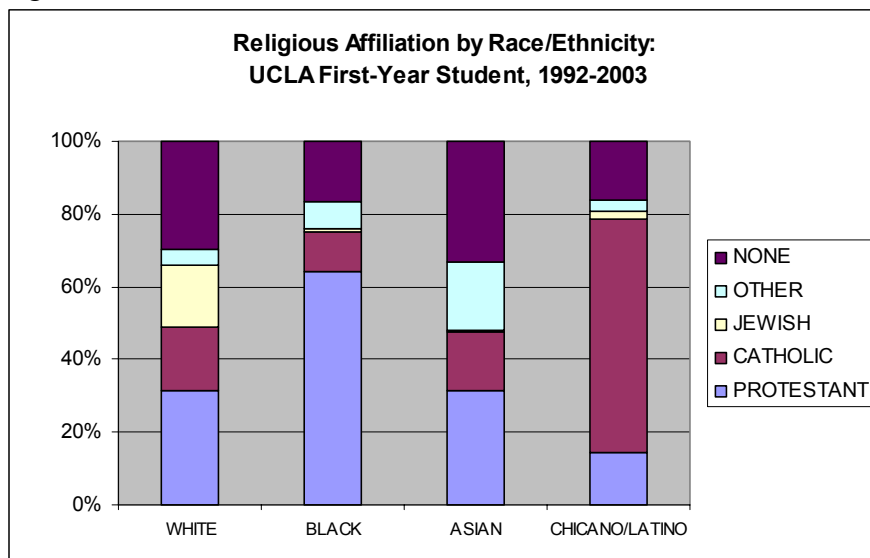


Figure 3.4 shows that among the four racial and ethnic groups compared, African American students have the highest proportion that claims to be born-again Christians, followed by Asians.

Figure 3.4

