

Rating the Importance of 22 Value Statements: Changes Made by Berea College Students

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Overview of the Study

Entering freshman students at Berea College rated the importance of 22 value statements and then rated them again when they were graduating seniors. Value statements included items such as, “Getting a good education,” “Protecting the natural environment,” “Developing a strong spiritual self,” and “Volunteering service to my community.”

The ratings were collected from the Entering and Exit surveys used at the College. The Entering Survey was first administered to new freshmen in Fall Term of 1995; it has since been given to all new entering freshmen during orientation periods before classes begin. The Exit Survey was first administered to graduating seniors in May of 1996 and has been administered to May graduating seniors since that time (and December graduates since 2000). Response rates have been generally very high (averaging a response rate of 85% for the Entering Survey and 77% for the Exit Survey over six years).

Both surveys include a variety of questions about student background, goals, ratings of various experiences, etc. To date, 228 students have completed both an Entering and Exit survey and therefore rated each of the 22 values in terms of “importance to you” using a four-point scale that ranged from “extremely important” to “not at all important.” Most of the respondents were female (67.5%), non-African American and non-International students (83.8%), came from the In-Territory region (70.6%), and could be considered first generation college students (58.0% reported that neither parent held a college degree). **Refer to Graph A for basic demographics.**

The purpose of this report is to illustrate the changes that students made from freshman to senior year regarding the rating of the 22 value statements.

Summary of Findings

In general, students made statistically significant changes in their ratings on ten items (**refer to Table 1 and Graph B**). Seven of these items were rated of significantly *greater* importance when the students were graduating seniors. These included:

- Learning about the arts
- Developing a desire for life-long learning

- Solving environmental problems
- Having a mate
- Working for social change
- Finding work that is challenging and that stimulates personal growth
- Volunteering service to my community

The other three items were rated as significantly *less* important by seniors. These included:

- Making a lot of money
- Getting a good education
- Finding a fulfilling career

In general, females rated most items as more important both as freshmen and as seniors (compared to males). Many of these differences between females and males were statistically significant. Refer to **Table 2, Graph C, and Graph D.**

Males made significant changes from freshman to senior year on eight items (**refer to Graph E**) compared to six items for females (**refer to Graph F**). On two items, both males and females increased their ratings of importance significantly. These included “Developing a desire for life-long learning” and “Learning more about the arts.” On two other items, both males and females decreased significantly their importance ratings. These included “Making a lot of money” and “Getting a good education.” **Refer to Graph G.**

The *amount* of change made by males (in terms of their importance ratings) on two items, “Learning more about Appalachian culture/history” and “Finding work that is challenging and stimulates personal growth” was significantly *larger* than for females. **Refer to Graph H.**

Various differences emerged both in freshman and senior value ratings among the sub-groups of African Americans, Internationals, and All Other students (non-African Americans and non-International students). **Refer to Table 3.** African American students showed significant increases in their importance values on four items (**refer to Graph I**). For example, results revealed that African American students rated the statement, “Serving humankind,” significantly *less* important than the other groups when freshmen but rated it significantly *more* important than either of the other two groups as graduating seniors. More specifically, only 35% of African American students rated “Serving humankind” as “extremely important” when they were freshmen but fully 69% of them did so as seniors. As freshmen, 58% of “other students” (non-International, non-African American students) rated the item as “extremely important” compared to 53% as seniors (a decline). Fifty-three percent of International students rated “Serving humankind” as “extremely important” as freshmen compared to 65% when they became seniors.

However, International students showed no significant changes while All Other students significantly increased their importance ratings of six items and decreased their ratings of three items. **Refer to Graph J.**

Analyses of major discipline differences are not reported here but will be done in the future as more data are collected in this longitudinal study. At present, only three majors had more than 10 graduates in the data set and generalizations based on majors would be tentative at best.

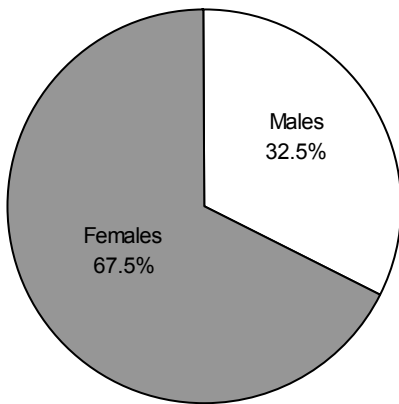
Questions for discussion:

- Why do men make relatively greater “gains” than do women in rating the importance of “Learning more about Appalachian culture/history” and “Finding work that is challenging and stimulates personal growth”?
- Is there something in the Berea experience that causes African American students to rate “Serving humankind” significantly and substantially higher as seniors compared to when they were freshmen? And why do other students make very little change in this area? In the case of non-African American/non-International students (“All Other” students), the change is actually negative.
- For any item (possibly excluding “Making a lot of money”), should we be concerned where the average graduating senior rating is less than 3 (less than a rating of “somewhat important”)? For senior students overall, “Solving environmental problems,” “Learning more about Appalachian culture,” “Learning more about Black culture/history,” and “Learning more about women’s culture/history” were all rated below “somewhat important.” African American students also rated “Protecting the natural world” below the “somewhat important” level.

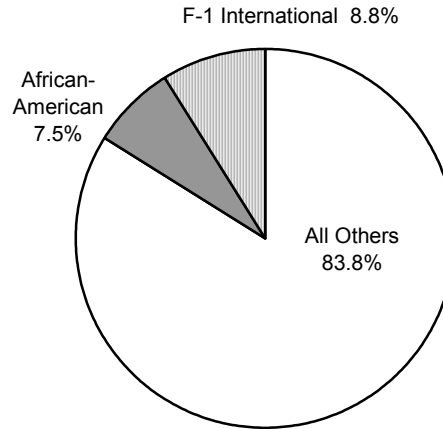
GRAPH A

Demographics of 228 Graduating Seniors Who Completed Both an Entering and Exit Survey

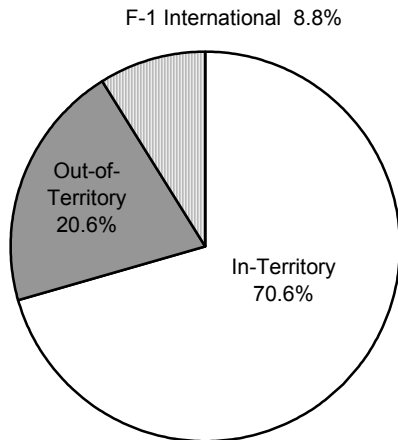
Gender



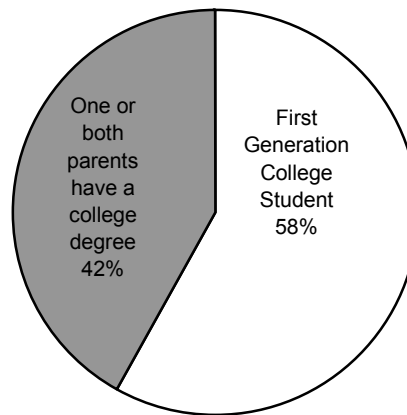
Cohort Category



Territory



First Generation Status



Mean ACT = 21.8 (based on 166 of the 228 (73%) students), 52 of the 166 (31%) had less than a 20 ACT composite.

TABLE 1

**Value Items Ranked by Magnitude of Change:
Entering, Exit Means, and Change Scores
For All Students (N= 228)**

	<u>Entering</u>	<u>Exit</u>	<u>Change</u>
Learning about the arts	2.72	3.03	0.31*
Developing a desire for life-long learning	3.28	3.57	0.29*
Making a lot of money	2.90	2.67	-0.23*
Getting a good education	3.95	3.73	-0.22*
Solving environmental problems	2.81	2.99	0.18*
Working for social change	3.17	3.31	0.14*
Having a mate	3.32	3.46	0.14*
Finding work that is challenging and that stimulates personal growth	3.56	3.68	0.12*
Volunteering service to my community	3.22	3.34	0.12*
Having children	3.12	3.23	0.11
Learning more about Appalachian culture/history	2.61	2.72	0.11
Finding a fulfilling career	3.93	3.83	-0.10*
Protecting the natural world	3.12	3.18	0.06
Learning more about Black culture/history	2.78	2.84	0.06
Being a responsible citizen of the world	3.47	3.52	0.05
Serving humankind	3.47	3.42	-0.05
Striving for racial harmony	3.34	3.38	0.04
Traveling to new places	3.42	3.46	0.04
Developing a strong spiritual self	3.48	3.51	0.03
Being physically fit	3.38	3.36	-0.02
Learning more about Women's culture/history	2.85	2.83	-0.02
Developing friendships	3.71	3.70	-0.01

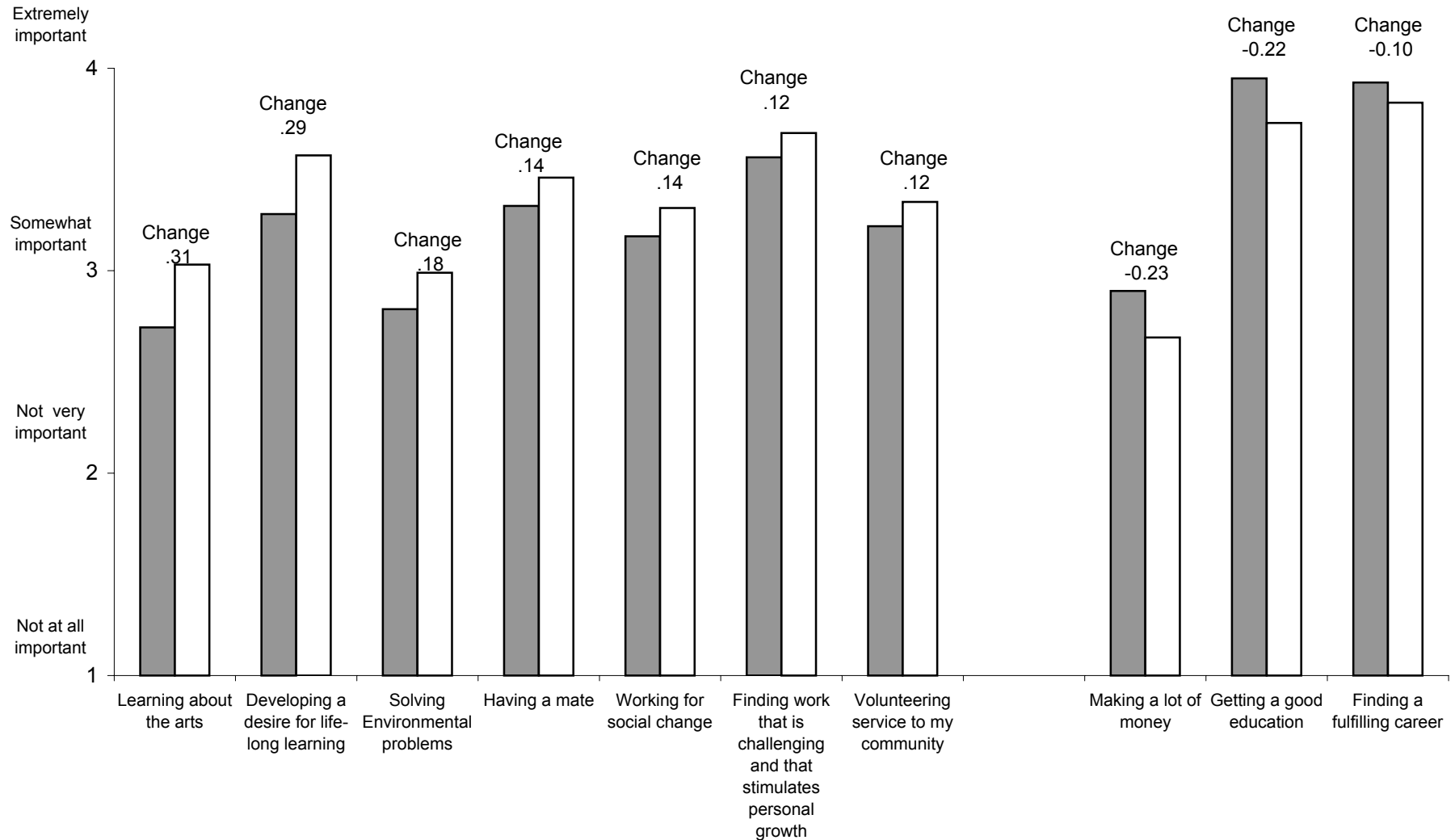
<p>Scale: Extremely Important = 4 Somewhat Important = 3 Not Very Important = 2 Not At All Important = 1</p>
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NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean."

*Indicates significance at the $p \leq .05$ level.

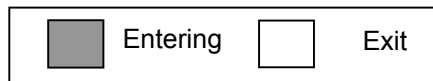
GRAPH B

Value Items that Showed Significant* changes from Entering to Exit Surveys for *All Students*



Importance Value *Increased*

Importance Value *Decreased*



*Significance levels equal $p \leq .05$

NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean."

TABLE 2

Value Items: Entering, Exit Means, and Change Scores by Gender

	<i>Males</i>			<i>Females</i>		
	<u>Entering</u>	<u>Exit</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Entering</u>	<u>Exit</u>	<u>Change</u>
Getting a good education	3.93	3.70	-0.23*	3.95	3.75	-0.20*
Finding a fulfilling career	3.93	3.84	-0.09	3.93	3.82	-0.11*
Making a lot of money	3.17	2.85	-0.32*	2.77	2.58	-0.19*
Serving humankind	3.28	3.26	-0.02	3.56	3.50	-0.06
Protecting the natural world	3.16	3.23	0.07	3.09	3.16	0.07
Solving environmental problems	2.89	3.00	0.11	2.77	2.98	0.21*
Developing a strong spiritual self	3.35	3.32	-0.03	3.54	3.61	0.07
Being physically fit	3.51	3.39	-0.12	3.32	3.35	0.03
Learning about the arts	2.67	2.96	0.29*	2.75	3.06	0.31*
Developing a desire for life-long learning	3.14	3.47	0.33*	3.35	3.62	0.27*
Striving for racial harmony	3.19	3.20	0.01	3.41	3.47	0.06
Developing friendships	3.57	3.54	-0.03	3.78	3.78	0.00
Having a mate	3.31	3.49	0.18	3.33	3.45	0.12
Having children	3.07	3.21	0.14	3.14	3.23	0.09
Traveling to new places	3.39	3.45	0.06	3.44	3.47	0.03
Learning more ... Appalachian culture/history	2.39	2.67	0.28*	2.72	2.75	0.03
Learning more ... Black culture/history	2.70	2.69	-0.01	2.80	2.91	0.11
Learning more ... Women's culture/history	2.55	2.60	0.05	2.94	2.95	0.01
Being a responsible citizen of the world	3.28	3.41	0.13	3.56	3.57	0.01
Working for social change	2.83	3.07	0.24*	3.33	3.43	0.10
Finding work that is challenging and that stimulates personal growth	3.33	3.61	0.28*	3.66	3.71	0.05
Volunteering service to my community	2.94	3.14	0.20*	3.35	3.43	0.08

NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean." Gray highlights indicate a statistically significant difference between the change values for males versus females.

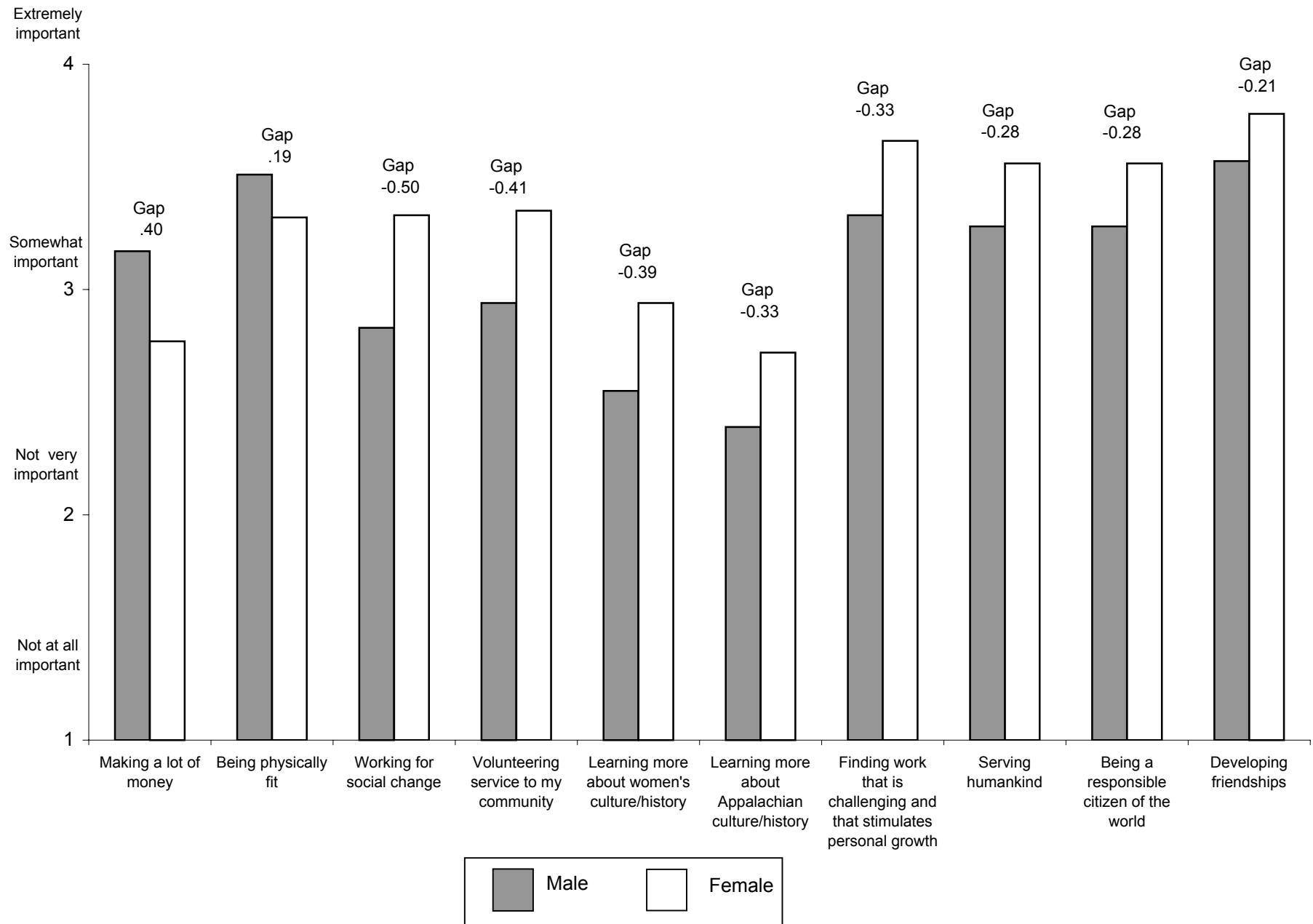
*Indicates significance at the $p \leq 0.05$ level.

Source: Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, October 2001.

Scale: Extremely Important = 4, Somewhat Important = 3 Not Very Important = 2, Not At All Important = 1
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GRAPH C

Entering Value Items: Significant* Differences by Gender

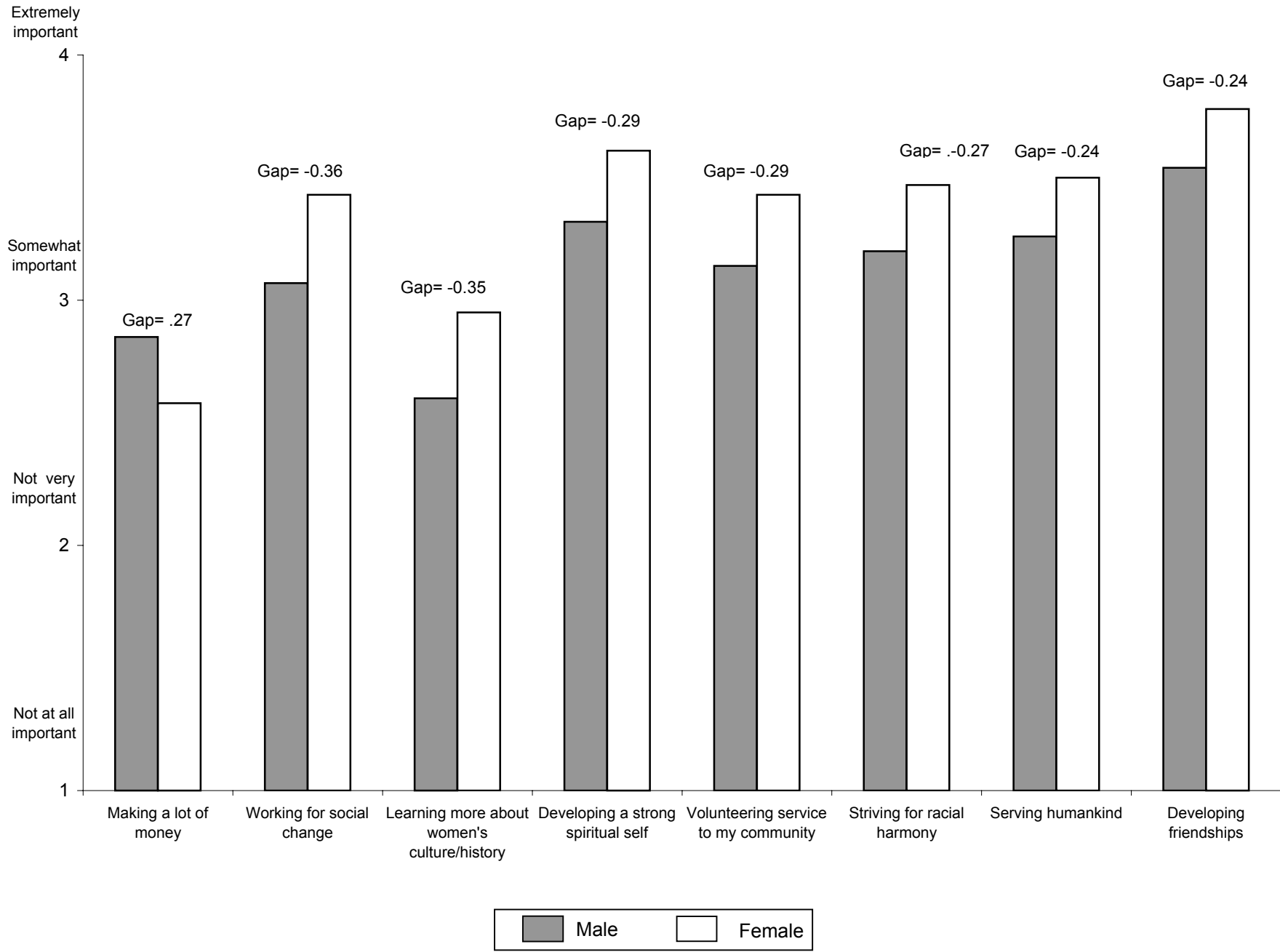


*Significance levels equal $p \leq .05$

NOTE: Gap equals "Male mean minus Female mean."

GRAPH D

Exit Value Items: Significant* Differences by Gender



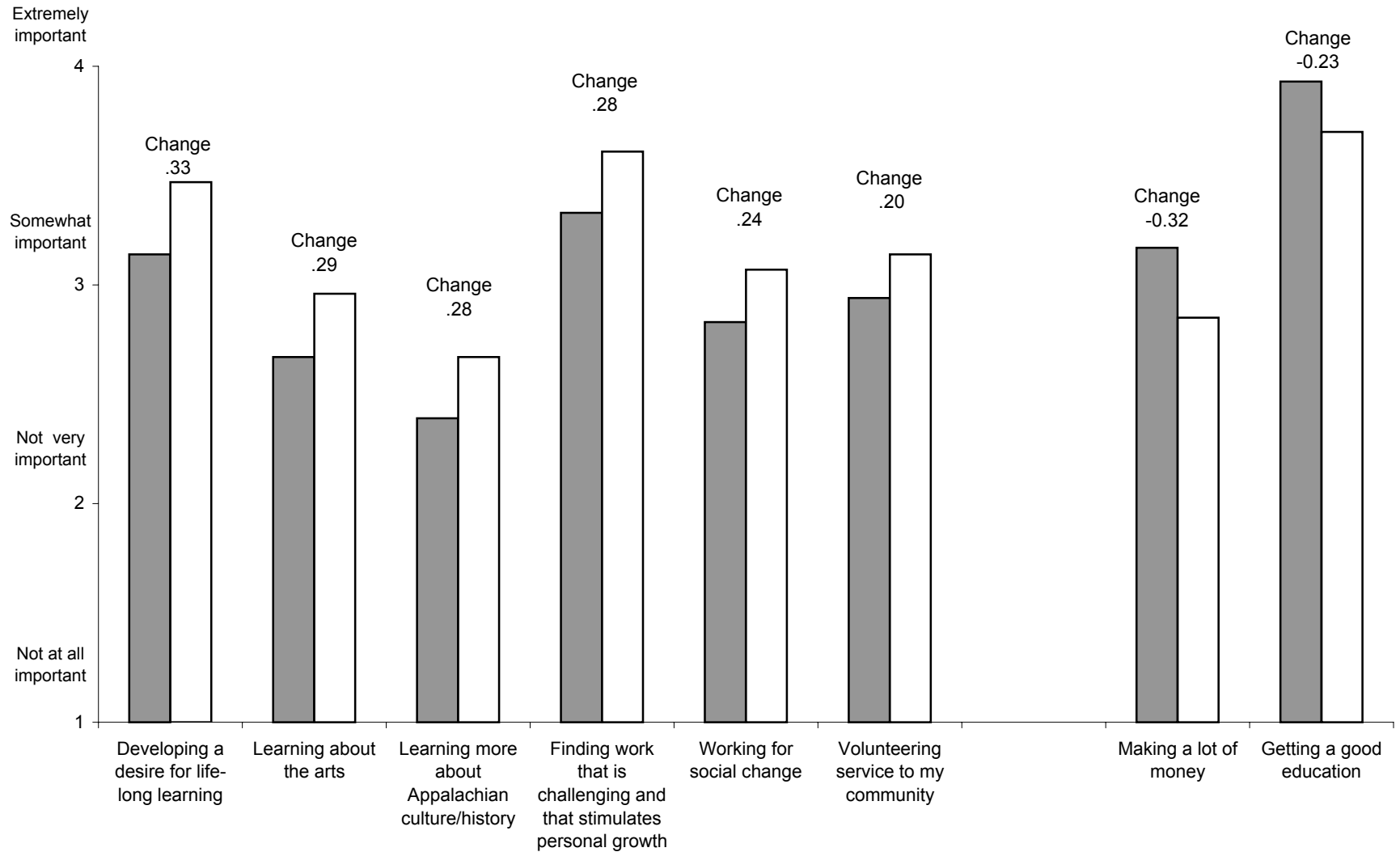
*Significance levels equal $p \leq .05$

NOTE: Gap equals "Male mean minus Female mean."

Source: Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, October 2001

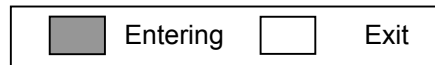
GRAPH E

Value Items that Showed Significant* changes from Entering to Exit Surveys for *Male Students*



Importance Value *Increased*

Importance Value *Decreased*

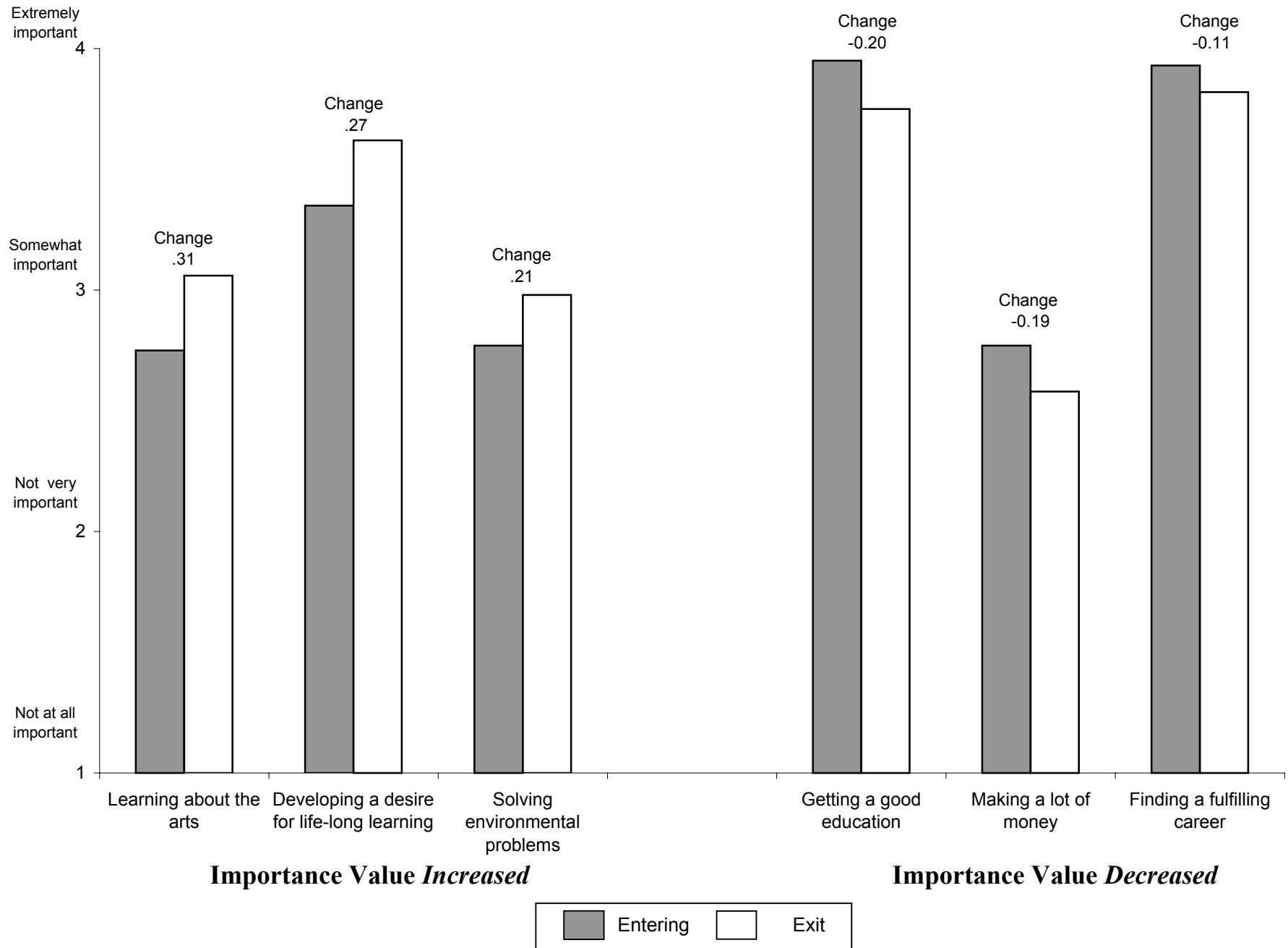


*Significance levels equal $p \leq .05$

NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean."

GRAPH F

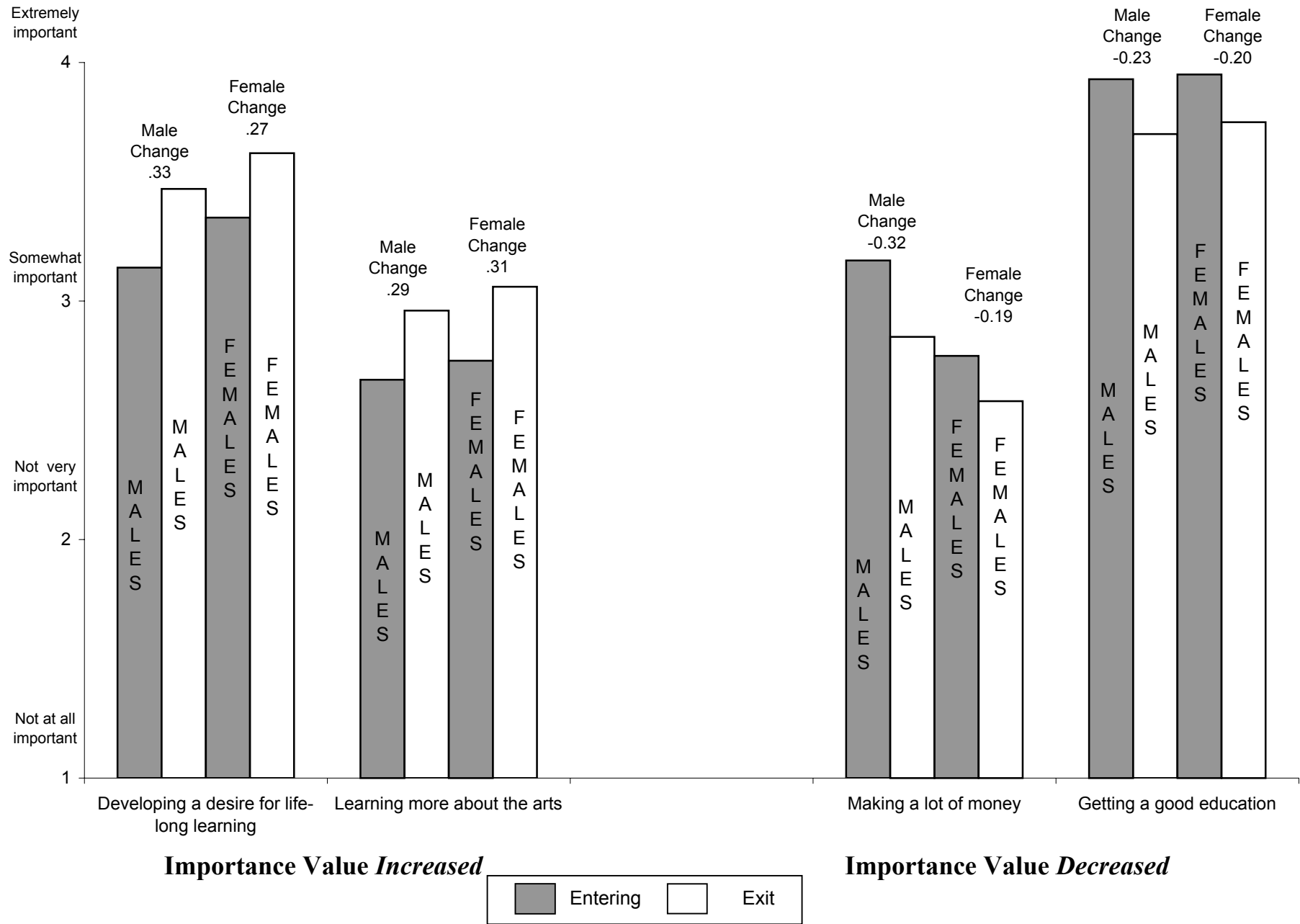
Value Items that Showed Significant* Changes from Entering to Exit Surveys for *Female Students*



*Significance levels equal $p \leq .05$

NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean."

GRAPH G Value Items that Showed Significant* Changes from Entering to Exit Surveys for Both Male and Female Students

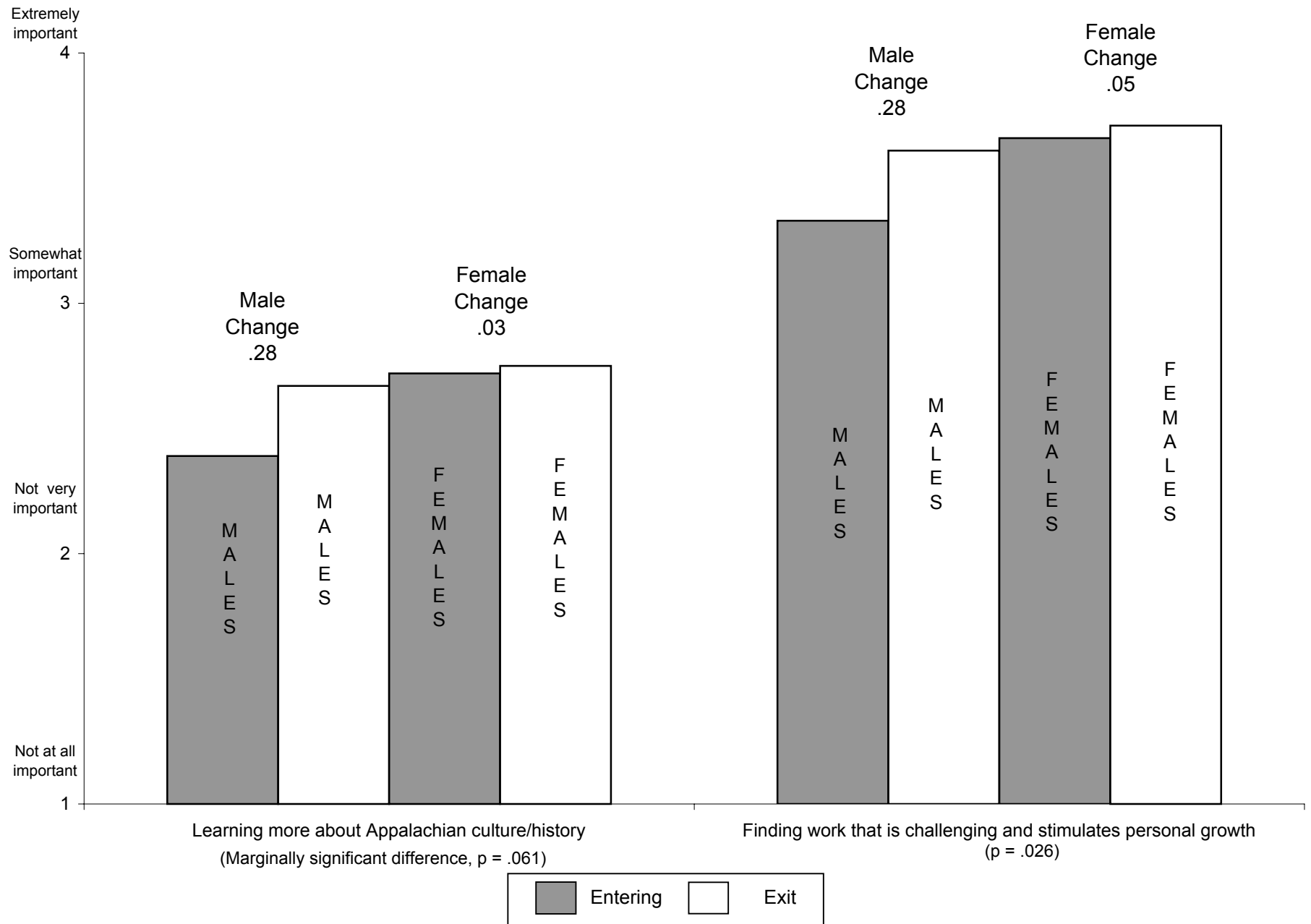


*Significance levels equal $p \leq .05$

NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean."

GRAPH H

Value Items that Showed Significant Differences in the way Males versus Females Changed Over Time



NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean."

Source: Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, October 2001

TABLE 3

Value Items: Entering, Exit Means, and Change Scores by Cohort Type

	<i>African-American</i>			<i>All Others</i>			<i>F-1 International</i>		
	<u>Entering</u>	<u>Exit</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Entering</u>	<u>Exit</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Entering</u>	<u>Exit</u>	<u>Change</u>
Getting a good education	3.94	3.82	-0.12	3.94	3.70	-0.24*	4.00	4.00	0.00
Finding a fulfilling career	3.82	3.76	-0.06	3.94	3.82	-0.12*	4.00	3.95	-0.05
Making a lot of money	3.47	3.12	-0.35	2.85	2.64	-0.21*	2.83	2.55	-0.28
Serving humankind	3.06	3.63	0.57*	3.50	3.39	-0.11	3.47	3.55	0.08
Protecting the natural world	2.88	2.75	-0.13	3.12	3.20	0.08	3.33	3.35	0.02
Solving environmental problems	2.41	2.75	0.34	2.83	2.98	0.15*	3.00	3.20	0.20
Developing a strong spiritual self	3.59	3.73	0.14	3.47	3.49	0.02	3.50	3.55	0.05
Being physically fit	3.41	3.44	0.03	3.38	3.36	-0.02	3.42	3.35	-0.07
Learning about the arts	2.41	3.13	0.72	2.76	3.02	0.26*	2.63	3.00	0.37
Developing a desire for life-long learning	3.24	3.59	0.35*	3.24	3.55	0.31*	3.72	3.70	-0.02
Striving for racial harmony	3.59	3.63	0.04	3.30	3.35	0.05	3.47	3.45	-0.02
Developing friendships	3.65	3.94	0.29*	3.72	3.69	-0.03	3.74	3.60	-0.14
Having a mate	3.29	3.24	-0.05	3.36	3.50	0.14	3.00	3.35	0.35
Having children	3.13	3.41	0.28	3.15	3.21	0.06	2.78	3.25	0.47
Traveling to new places	3.29	3.65	0.36	3.44	3.44	0.00	3.37	3.50	0.13
Learning more ... Appalachian culture/history	2.41	2.47	0.06	2.64	2.78	0.14*	2.58	2.40	-0.18
Learning more ... Black culture/history	3.67	3.53	-0.14	2.70	2.80	0.10	2.75	2.65	-0.10
Learning more ... Women's culture/history	3.50	3.12	-0.38	2.81	2.80	-0.01	2.75	2.90	0.15
Being a responsible citizen of the world	3.18	3.53	0.35	3.49	3.52	0.03	3.56	3.50	-0.06
Working for social change	3.24	3.41	0.17	3.16	3.28	0.12*	3.22	3.50	0.28
Finding work that is challenging and that stimulates personal growth	3.24	3.71	0.47*	3.57	3.66	0.09	3.74	3.85	0.11
Volunteering service to my community	3.06	3.35	0.29	3.22	3.32	0.10*	3.37	3.45	0.08

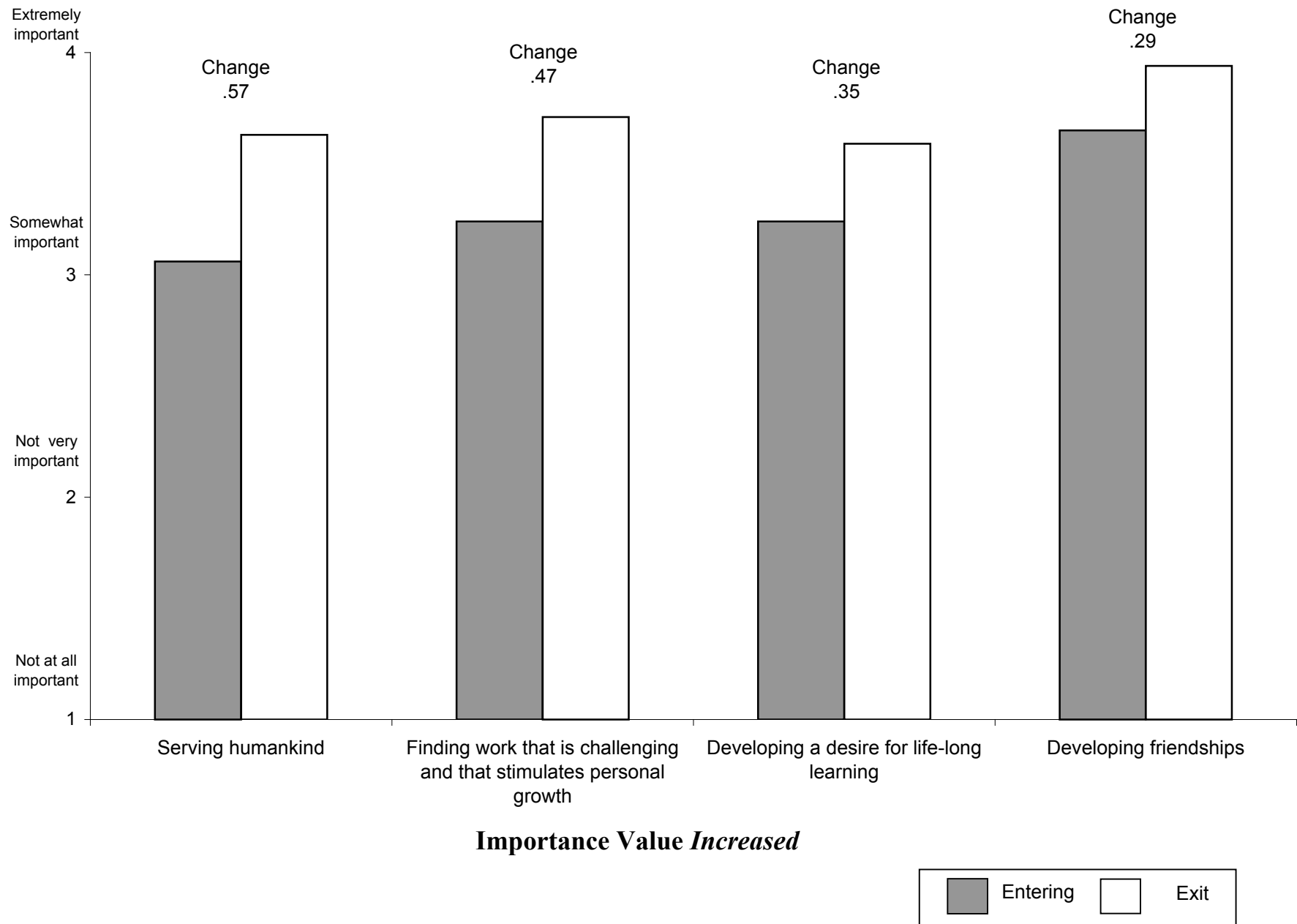
NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean.

*Indicates significance at the $p \leq 0.05$ level.

Source: Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, October 2001.

Scale:	Extremely Important = 4
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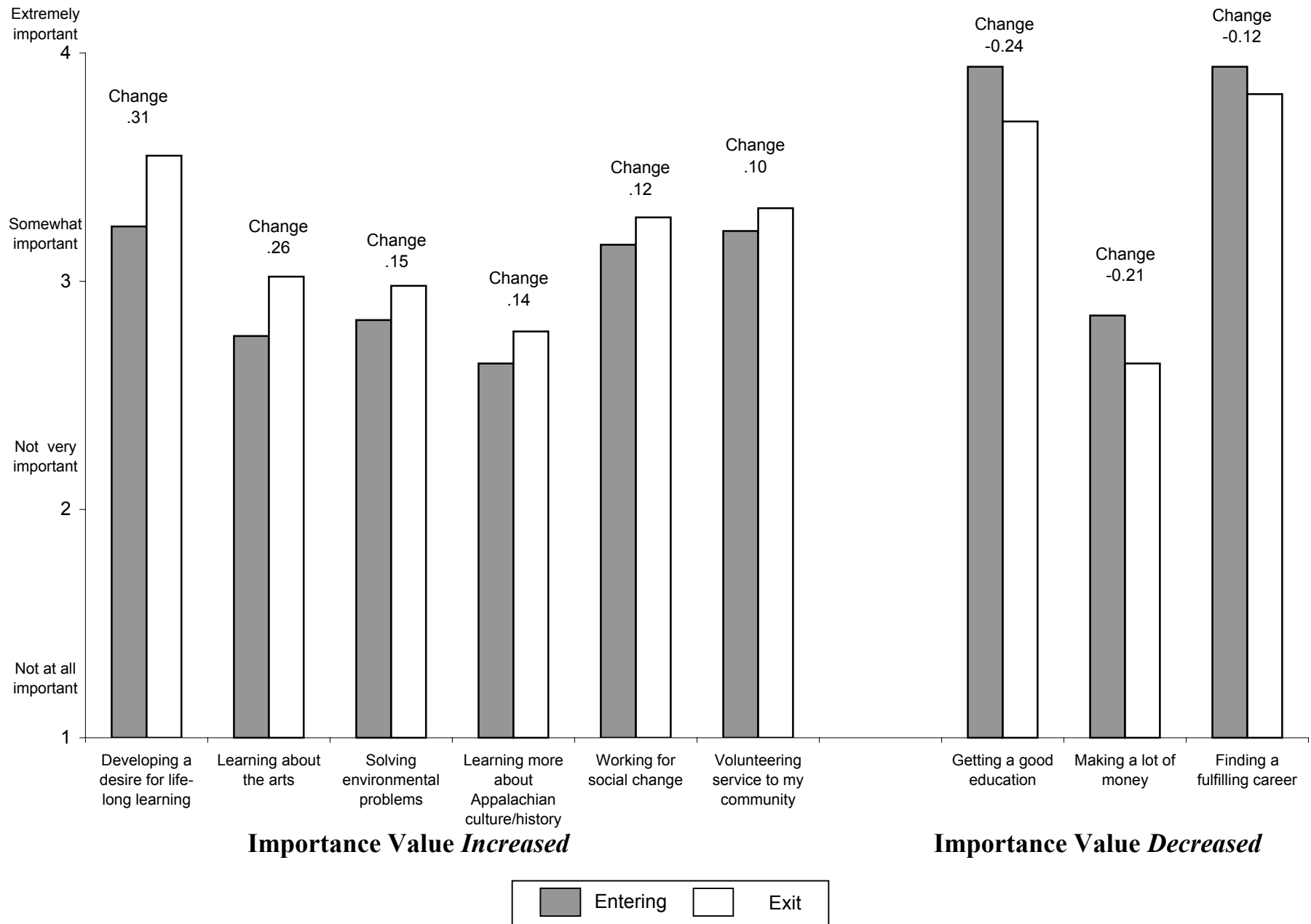
GRAPH I Value Items that Showed Significant* Changes from Entering to Exit Surveys for African-American Students



*Significance levels equal $p \leq .05$

NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean."

GRAPH J Value Items that Showed Significant* changes from Entering to Exit Surveys for All Other Students (Non-African-American and Non-International)



*Significance levels equal $p \leq .05$

NOTE: Change equals "Exit mean minus Entering mean."

Source: Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, October 2001