

## Oregon State University 2002 Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey Results

### Executive Summary March, 2003

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program's Freshman Survey (CIRP) was introduced in 1966. It was given to entering students at colleges and universities across the country and was the longest standing research on student's attitudes, beliefs, and plans in the nation. This year 282,549 first year students were surveyed at 437 participating institutions. The CIRP was administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California—Los Angeles with additional support from the American Council on Education. The CIRP Freshman Survey data was regarded as the most comprehensive source of information on college students and served as a resource for researchers in higher education around the globe (Sax, Lindholm, Astin, Korn, & Mahoney, 2002).

The CIRP Freshman Survey posed questions covering a broad array of issues relevant to colleges and universities and the students attending them. In addition to demographic characteristics, CIRP asked students questions concerning their college expectations, high school experiences, degree and career goals, finances, reasons for attending college, and beliefs, attitudes and values.

OSU first administered the CIRP to incoming first year students in 1967. No follow-up was conducted until 2001 when the survey was once again administered to OSU entering students. The current report examined the 2002 CIRP data and where results differed noticeably from the 2001 results, from other public medium-selective colleges and universities, or between sexes the differences were noted.

As with the reporting of the 2001 CIRP results, the 2002 CIRP report was "to present students' perspectives and experience, not to describe a specific course of action for the university (Student Affairs Assessment Committee, p. 12) ." It was hoped that CIRP data would foster conversation and thoughtful reflection regarding OSU first year students.

#### **Response Rates**

Approximately 2,600 students were surveyed with a return rate of 42.5%. Of those, 95.3% were first time, full time, first year students (ft-ft-fy) 46% of whom were male and 54% were female.

#### **Demographic Information**

- 98% were 18-20 years old and U.S. citizens; 94% reported English as their native language.
- 86% were Caucasian, 1.2% African American, 1.5% Alaskan Native/American Indian, 9.6% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 5.1% Hispanic, 2% other (sums to more than 100% as some listed more than one category)
- Over half reported living within 100 miles from home; 11% reported a permanent address of over 500 miles from OSU.
- 5% reported a disability with the largest portion reporting a learning disability.

- An average of 46% of OSU ft-ft-fy students reported one or both of their parents had not completed a college degree.

### **Admission-Related Issues**

- “To learn more about things that interest me” was the most frequently selected reason for attending college. Following closely were: “To get training for a specific career,” “to be able to get a better job,” and “to be able to make more money.”
- OSU was ranked as their first choice by 80.6% of full-time, first-time, first year students
- 42.2% applied for admission only to OSU, while a little over 12% applied to four or more colleges.
- Factors that students reported as very important in deciding to go to OSU included:
  - Very good academic reputation 37.9%
  - Offer of financial assistance 22.7%
  - Good reputation for social life 20.8%
- Offer of financial assistance and good reputation for social activities were significantly more important to women applicants than to men.
- 82.5% planned to live in a university residence hall.
- 63% reported having taken at least one advanced placement course.

### **Financing College**

- Women reported expecting to receive aid that “need not be repaid” significantly more than men.
- 23% expected that their family would contribute \$10,000 or more to their first year expenses; 20.9% expected no financial assistance from their families.
- Generally, first year students showed some to no concern (84.3%) about their ability to finance their college education. 15.7% of students reported major concern about financing college.
- Women reported significantly more concern about their ability to finance college than did men.

### **High School Grades and Activities**

- 49.1% reported a high school GPA of A+, A, A-; 47% made a B+, B, B- GPA, 2.9% made less than a B- GPA
- Approximately 66% spent 5 hours or less per week studying or doing homework, regardless of high school GPA. C students reported spending 5 hours or less on homework at about the same rate as A or B students.
- Socializing with friends and working for pay were reported as the two most time-consuming activities in high school.
- 87% reported frequently using a PC; 83% frequently use the internet for research/homework and 66.3% frequently communicate via email.
- A little over 70% frequently socialize with people from a different ethnic group.
- Substance Use
  - 4.9% had drunk beer (down from 11.6% in 2001)
  - 3.5% had used wine or liquor (down from 9.4% in 2001)
  - 2.2% had smoked cigarettes (down from 3.7% in 2001)
  - 5.9% used marijuana in the last 30 days
  - 23.6% used alcohol in the last 30 days
  - 1.0% used club drugs (i.e., ecstasy, GHB, etc.) in the last 30 days
  - 7.1% used cigarettes in the last 30 days

### **Academic and Career Plans and Expectations**

- About three times as many women as men reported a history of special assistance with mathematics while in high school. In terms of expectations for mathematics assistance in college, about 1.5 times as many women as men reported this expectation. This difference between male students and female students and their expectation of needing additional assistance in mathematics was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).
- Male students expected to need additional assistance with English to a significantly greater ( $p < .05$ ) degree than women students.
- Generally, male students reported more expectation of needing additional assistance in writing and English while female students reported needing greater assistance in mathematics and science.
- Aspirations toward advanced degrees
  - 30% intended to get at least a bachelors degree
  - 43.3% a master's degree
  - 25.3% a doctoral or professional degree
  - women were twice as likely as men to report that they intended to get a professional degree in medicine (i.e., MD, DO, DD, DVM)

### **Political and Social Views**

- Nationally, the trend over the last several year has been toward a more liberal first year student class. At OSU, most students (48.8%) classify themselves as middle-of-the-road; 24.4% as conservative or far right; 26.7% as liberal or far left.
- On social and political issues, there are significant sex differences in opinions with the female students taking a more liberal stance on most items (e.g., handgun control, same-sex marital status, abolishment of affirmative action, etc.)

### **Student Opinions / Values/ Behaviors**

- Being honest in my relationships with others was the most frequently endorsed trait that students selected as descriptive of themselves.
- Raising a family and being very well off financially were the two most highly selected future goals for students (66.4% and 67.5% respectively).
- Generally, where significant sex differences in goals occurred, women tended to expect to be engaged in activities that involved working together to improve life situations. Men by contrast tended to emphasize career objectives that were focused on financial achievement.
- Self-rated top 5 rated skills and abilities of students
  - Academic ability (73.6%)
  - Cooperativeness (71.9%)
  - Drive to achieve (71.6%)
  - Persistence (63.8%)
  - Understanding of others (61.3%)
- Men tended to rate themselves higher than women on most skills and abilities.
- Women rated themselves significantly higher than men in:
  - Drive to achieve
  - Religiousness
  - Spirituality
  - Writing ability

The intention of this report was to provide information to the OSU community that would aid in understanding, discussing, and perhaps eventually decision-making concerning services, programs, and structures, and other systems that impact our students. With greater information, knowledge, and collaboration, we hoped that each of us would find ways to responsibly act on our knowledge (Student Affairs Assessment Committee, 2002).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Post report on the Student Affairs Research and Evaluation web page and distribute URL to university community.

Present data to faculty and staff groups and engage in discussion about implications of the data.

Continue to participate in the annual CIRP Freshman Survey annually for 3-4 years and then move to every other year.

For further information about the CIRP Freshman Survey

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A complete report of the OSU Results on the 2002 CIRP Freshman Survey can be found at:  
[http://oregonstate.edu/admin/student\\_affairs/research/com\\_research.html](http://oregonstate.edu/admin/student_affairs/research/com_research.html)