

# 2005 CIRP Freshmen Survey Report: Mason Topics



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*Prepared by the  
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# I. Executive Summary

## 1. Introduction to the CIRP Freshman Survey

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) is a national longitudinal study established by the American Council on Education and administered by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. The CIRP Freshman Survey is designed for entering freshmen classes, mostly first-time full-time freshmen, who complete the survey right before they start college.

**FIRST-TIME freshmen** are defined as entering freshmen who have never attended any college but include students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term or who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school).

## 2. Response Rates by Program

Out of 2,529 first-time freshmen enrolled at Mason in fall 2005, 1,709 responded to the survey for a response rate of 68%. These respondents are representative of the entering first-time freshmen of Mason in fall 2005.

This report is one of four special reports for each of the following programs: University Scholars, Honors, Mason Topics and New Century College. In these reports, freshmen who enrolled in the special programs are compared to all other freshmen peers at Mason. Most of the respondents enrolled in the special programs were identified by matching student identification numbers with those provided by these programs. About **15%** of respondents did not give us permission to use their ID, and therefore, their enrollment status was self-reported. The following is a summary of response rate by program:

### **Response Rate Summary:**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Total Freshmen Enrolled</b>	<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>Response Rates</b>
<b>University Scholars</b>	30 (17 are also honors)	26 (14 are also honors)	87%
<b>Honors</b>	128 (including 17 scholars)	94 (including 14 scholars)	73%
<b>Mason Topics</b>	210	146	70%
<b>New Century</b>	126	91	72%

## 3. Important Notes:

- *This report includes both full-time and part-time freshmen, although the number of part-time freshmen is very small. Please check 'Table One: Enrollment Status' for exact counts of respondents.*
- *Throughout the report, the term "Other Freshmen" refers to all first-time freshman respondents who enrolled outside that particular program.*
- *ALL results are based on SELF-REPORTED data. In some areas, such as parental income, estimated use of time and college expectations, the data may NOT be reliable or realistic.*
- *Percentages throughout this report may not add to 100% due to rounding and multiple selections. Sometimes 0% may mean lower than .05%.*
- *Interpret statistical results with caution due to small sample sizes for special programs. This is particularly true for University Scholars.*

For more information about the characteristics of four cohorts of entering first-time full-time freshmen at Mason since 2000, please refer to an earlier report published by the Office of Institutional Assessment – *Trends among First-time Full-time Freshmen of George Mason University*. The University trend report and the special program reports can also be accessed from OIA website at:

<http://assessment.gmu.edu/Results/Freshman/Freshman.html>.

#### **4. Mason Topics Highlights**

Note that there are a total of 146 Mason Topics students who completed the 2005 Freshman Survey. With such a relatively small number, there is always the potential for surveys given in different years to different cohorts to result in different patterns of response. However, the response rate for Mason Topics was 70%, giving us confidence that these responses reflect the attitudes and perceptions of the entering Mason Topics students in fall 2005.

##### ***Entering Characteristics:***

1. Demographically, Mason Topics freshmen differ substantially from other Mason freshmen in race/ethnicity and immigrant background. Mason Topics has more white students and fewer Asian students than are in the general freshmen population. Fewer Mason Topics students come from immigrant backgrounds; nonetheless, 13% were born outside the U.S. and 3% are not U.S. citizens.
2. Mason Topics is as diverse as other freshmen programs in term of students' religious preferences.
3. Reported parental educational background of Mason Topics freshmen is higher than that of other freshmen. Consequently, fewer Mason Topics freshmen identified themselves as the first in their immediate families to go to college (17% vs. 22% among all other Mason freshmen).
4. Mason Topics students are far more likely to have their permanent home over 100 miles from campus (40% vs. 29% among other Mason freshmen) and far more likely to plan to live on campus compared to other freshmen.
5. The high school GPAs of Mason Topics students are comparable to those of their counterparts at Mason. Nonetheless, Mason Topics students are more likely to report having tutoring or remedial work in math in high school and less likely to report having it in English and reading than their counterparts. Consequently, Mason Topics students are more likely to think they will need special tutoring or remedial work in math in college and less likely to need it in writing than their counterparts at Mason.

##### ***High School Activities:***

6. Given a list of 25 possible high school activities, Mason Topics freshmen and other freshmen differ significantly on only four of them. Mason Topics freshmen were more likely to have used a personal computer and discussed politics at various occasions: in class, with friends and with family.
7. On the above referenced list, both Mason Topics and other freshmen identified the same 3 items as their most frequently engaged in activity: using a personal computer, using the internet for research or homework and socializing with someone of another racial/ethnic group.

##### ***College Motivation and Choices:***

8. Compared with their counterparts, more Mason Topics freshmen plan to earn a professional degree or a doctoral degree: 20% intend to earn a doctoral degree and 16% a law degree. Significantly more Mason Topics freshmen intend to get their master's degree and law degree from Mason than their counterparts.
9. Mason Topics freshmen are more likely than their peers to report the following as important motivators to go to college: to gain a general education and appreciation of ideas, to become a more cultured person, and to be away from home. They are less likely than their peers to say that it is because their parents wanted them to go or there was nothing better to do.
10. 27% of Mason Topics freshmen applied for admission to at least five institutions other than Mason, compared to 19% of their peers. Mason Topics freshmen (53%) are significantly less likely to say that Mason was their first choice school, compared to 63% of other freshmen.
11. Both Mason Topics and other freshmen identified the following most important reasons for them to choose Mason: good academic reputation, graduates getting good jobs, and a visit to campus. However,

Mason Topics students are significantly less likely to say that the following reasons are very important to them: their relatives wanted them to come here, they were offered financial assistance, and a private college counselor advised them. This last reason was identified as not important by nearly all Mason Topics students—98%.

### ***College Expectations and Plans:***

12. 35% of Mason Topics freshmen have no concern about their ability to finance their college education, and 55% have some concern, percentages similar to other Mason freshmen. Fifty-one percent expect to get more than \$6,000 from their families to cover their first year's educational expenses.
13. Mason Topics freshmen are less likely than other freshmen to expect to change major field. They are more likely to expect to be involved in college life: participating in student government, student protests or demonstrations, student clubs/groups, volunteer or community service work, and a study abroad program. They are also more likely than other freshmen to think they will communicate regularly with their professors, socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group and be satisfied with Mason.
14. Mason Topics freshmen are more likely than their peers to expect their professors to contact them outside of the classroom; they are also more likely to expect to meet their academic advisors weekly (84% for Mason Topics vs. 74% for other Mason freshmen).
15. Mason Topics freshmen are more likely than their peers to say that it is essential for them to attend a college with a multi-ethnic student body, to talk with professors outside of class, to have serious discussions about social issues in class, to contribute to class discussions and to socialize with students of other racial/ethnic groups.
16. More Mason Topics freshmen (60%) strongly agreed that the University climate should be welcoming to people with disabilities, compared to 50% of all other freshmen at Mason.

### ***Self-Perceptions and Goals:***

17. Mason Topics freshmen see themselves as having higher levels of leadership ability, public speaking ability, and writing ability and lower levels of math ability compared with other Mason freshmen.
18. Among a list of 21 personal goals, both Mason Topics freshmen and their Mason peers selected "being very well off financially" as their top goal. The two groups differ significantly on nine goals. Mason Topics freshmen are more likely than other freshmen to say it is essential or very important for them to "improve my understanding of other countries and cultures," "become an authority in my field," "keep up to date with political affairs," "promote racial understanding," "influence the political structure," "become a community leader," and "write original works." They are significantly less likely to say that important goals are "raising a family," and "making theoretical contributions to science."

### ***Political Views:***

19. A higher percentage of Mason Topics freshmen consider themselves liberal or far left than their peers (41% of Mason Topics vs. 31% of other freshmen). Forty-two percent are "middle-of-the-road" and 17% are conservative or far right.
20. The CIRP Freshman Survey presents students with 22 statements reflecting various political views. As suggested by their own self-characterization, Mason Topics students' political views are more liberal than their peers. For example, more Mason Topics students than freshmen in general support the legalization of marijuana and the right to legal marital status of same-sex couples; more reject confining the activities of married women to home/family and laws prohibiting homosexual relationships. More Mason Topics students strongly agree that the federal government is not doing enough to control environmental pollution.

2005 CIRP Freshmen Survey Report for Mason Topics

**I. Enrollment Status of Survey Respondents**

†Table 1. Enrollment Status		2005 Mason Freshmen			
		Mason Topics		Other Freshmen	
		Count	Column %	Count	Column %
Are you enrolled (or enrolling) as a:	First-time full-time freshmen	145	99%	1535	98%
	First-time part-time freshmen	1	1%	9	1%
	Enrollment status missing	0	0%	19	1%
	Total respondents	146	100%	1563	100%

†The survey only included FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN who entered Mason in fall 2005.

**II. Demographic and Family Characteristics**

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Your sex	Male	40%	44%
	Female	60%	56%
How old will you be on 12/31/2005?	18 or younger	74%	73%
	19	25%	24%
	20	1%	2%
	21 or older	1%	1%
Miles from college to your permanent home	10 or less	16%	25%
	11 to 50	36%	38%
	51 to 100	8%	7%
	101 to 500	32%	24%
	Over 500	8%	5%

Table 3. Immigrant Background		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Is English your native language?	Yes	90%	80%
	No	10%	20%
Citizenship status	U.S. citizen	97%	88%
	Permanent resident	2%	9%
	Neither permanent resident nor U.S. citizen	1%	3%
Which of the following statements applies to you?	I was born in the U.S.	87%	80%
	I came to the U.S. before age 6	7%	7%
	I came to the U.S. between ages 6-12	3%	6%
	I came to the U.S. after age 12	3%	8%

†Table 4. Race/Ethnicity	Mason Topics		Other Freshmen	
	Count	%	Count	%
White/Caucasian	104	71%	962	62%
African American/Black	15	10%	118	8%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1%	27	2%
Asian American/Asian	10	7%	316	20%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0%	20	1%
Mexican American/Chicano	1	1%	15	1%
Puerto Rican	3	2%	20	1%
Other Latino	11	8%	102	7%
Other	12	8%	107	7%

†Percentages add up to more than 100 when respondents select more than one category.

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Table 5. Religion		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Religion	Baptist	12%	10%
	Buddhist	1%	3%
	Episcopalian	2%	3%
	Hindu	0%	2%
	Islamic	4%	6%
	Jewish	2%	2%
	Lutheran	4%	3%
	Methodist	9%	5%
	Presbyterian	4%	5%
	Roman Catholic	23%	24%
	Other Christian	15%	15%
	Other Religion	2%	3%
	None	23%	20%

Table 6. Parental Background		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Parental Income	Less than \$25,000	10%	9%
	\$25,000-49,999	9%	16%
	\$50,000-74,999	18%	18%
	\$75,000-99,999	22%	16%
	\$100,000-149,999	27%	23%
	\$150,000 or more	15%	18%
Parental Educational Background	High school or lower	5%	13%
	No college degree	16%	16%
	College degree	33%	34%
	Above college	46%	37%
Are your parents?	One or both deceased	6%	3%
	Both alive, divorced or living apart	21%	22%
	Both alive and living with each other	73%	75%

III. Academic Preparation for College

Table 7. Type of High School		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
From what kind of high school did you graduate?	Public school (not charter or magnet)	84%	87%
	Public charter school	0%	0%
	Public magnet school	3%	2%
	Private religious/parochial school	8%	7%
	Private independent college-prep school	4%	3%
	Home school	1%	1%

Table 8. Prior College Credits		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Prior to this term, have you ever taken courses for credit at this institution?	Yes	1%	3%
	No	99%	97%
Since leaving high school, have you ever taken courses, whether for credit or not for credit, at any other institution?	Yes	7%	7%
	No	93%	93%

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Table 9. High School GPA and Community Service		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
What was your average grade in high school?	A or A+	9%	13%
	A-	18%	14%
	B+	28%	28%
	B	37%	37%
	B-	7%	6%
	C+ or lower	1%	2%
Did your high school require community service for graduation?	Yes	31%	32%
	No	69%	68%

Table 10. Have you had any special tutoring or remedial work in any of the following subjects?	Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Had remedial work: English	1%	7%
Had remedial work: Reading	1%	6%
Had remedial work: Mathematics	21%	15%
Had remedial work: Social Studies	1%	4%
Had remedial work: Science	3%	5%
Had remedial work: Foreign Language	4%	6%
Had remedial work: Writing	3%	5%

Table 11. Will you need any special tutoring or remedial work in any of the following subjects?	Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Need remedial work: English	4%	6%
Need remedial work: Reading	1%	3%
Need remedial work: Mathematics	21%	17%
Need remedial work: Social Studies	1%	2%
Need remedial work: Science	10%	7%
Need remedial work: Foreign Language	8%	9%
Need remedial work: Writing	5%	10%



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**IV. High School Activities**

†Table 12. High School Activities: How often did you engage in the following activities during the past year?	Mason Topics				Other Freshmen			
	Frequently	Occasionally	Not at all	Mean†	Frequently	Occasionally	Not at all	Mean†
Attended a religious service	42%	36%	22%	2.19	39%	38%	23%	2.15
Was bored in class	33%	63%	4%	2.29	33%	61%	6%	2.27
Participated in organized demonstrations	8%	37%	56%	1.52	9%	30%	61%	1.47
Tutored another student	11%	50%	39%	1.72	11%	46%	43%	1.67
Studied with other students	26%	59%	15%	2.10	27%	61%	13%	2.14
Was a guest in a teacher's home	1%	16%	83%	1.17	2%	15%	83%	1.19
Smoked cigarettes	3%	11%	86%	1.18	3%	10%	87%	1.16
Drank beer	2%	28%	69%	1.33	2%	26%	72%	1.30
Drank wine or liquor	1%	40%	59%	1.42	2%	30%	67%	1.35
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	20%	65%	15%	2.04	22%	65%	13%	2.09
Felt depressed	5%	45%	50%	1.55	6%	46%	49%	1.57
Performed volunteer work	25%	58%	17%	2.08	28%	57%	16%	2.12
Played a musical instrument	26%	18%	56%	1.71	22%	23%	56%	1.66
Asked a teacher for advice after class	26%	63%	10%	2.16	24%	63%	13%	2.11
Voted in a student election	27%	58%	15%	2.12	25%	57%	18%	2.07
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group	88%	12%	1%	2.87	84%	14%	2%	2.83
Came late to class	4%	53%	43%	1.61	6%	55%	39%	1.67
Used the Internet for research or homework	86%	14%	1%	2.85	86%	14%	0%	2.86
Performed community service as part of a class	18%	43%	39%	1.79	17%	42%	42%	1.75
**Used a personal computer	94%	6%	0%	2.94	89%	9%	3%	2.86
Discussed religion	36%	59%	6%	2.30	33%	54%	12%	2.21
*Discussed politics: In class	67%	32%	1%	2.66	60%	34%	5%	2.55
***Discussed politics: With friends	41%	54%	5%	2.37	31%	55%	14%	2.17
***Discussed politics: With family	39%	53%	8%	2.30	28%	54%	18%	2.10
Worked on a local, state, or national political campaign	4%	23%	73%	1.31	3%	16%	81%	1.23

†Note:

These items were rated on a 1-3 scale: 3=frequently, 2=occasionally and 1=not at all.

- When appropriate, an independent t-test is used to test whether the responses from the Mason Topics are significantly different from other Mason freshmen.
- Throughout this report, statistically significant differences are marked by adding asterisks to the corresponding statement:
  - \* means  $p < .05$
  - \*\* means  $p < .01$
  - \*\*\* means  $p < .001$

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†Table 13. Use of Time: During your last year in high school, how much time did you spend during a typical week doing the following?	2005 Mason Freshmen							
	Mason Topics				Other Freshmen			
	<1 hour	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	6 hours or more	<1 hour	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	6 hours or more
Studying/homework	4%	18%	34%	45%	8%	17%	31%	43%
Socializing with friends	0%	5%	21%	75%	3%	8%	22%	67%
Talking with teachers outside of class	51%	27%	18%	3%	59%	27%	11%	3%
Exercise or sports	21%	20%	24%	35%	18%	19%	20%	42%
Partying	51%	21%	17%	11%	51%	19%	17%	12%
Working (for pay)	37%	3%	10%	50%	33%	4%	7%	55%
Volunteer work	58%	19%	16%	6%	53%	24%	13%	10%
Student clubs/groups	38%	30%	19%	13%	45%	28%	16%	12%
*Watching TV	22%	14%	30%	33%	19%	25%	28%	28%
**Household/childcare duties	25%	34%	33%	8%	36%	33%	21%	10%
Reading for pleasure	40%	26%	22%	12%	46%	27%	15%	11%
Playing video/computer games	64%	16%	11%	9%	62%	13%	13%	12%
Prayer/meditation	72%	20%	4%	4%	71%	20%	6%	3%

†A Chi-square test shows the two groups of students to be significantly different at the following levels: \* means  $p < .05$ , \*\* means  $p < .01$ , and \*\*\* means  $p < .001$ .

V. College Motivation and Choice

Table 14. Educational Aspiration		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?	Associate degree or lower	1%	1%
	Bachelor's degree	16%	24%
	Master's degree	39%	44%
	Doctoral degree	20%	16%
	Medical degree (MD, DO, DDS, DVM)	7%	7%
	Law degree	16%	7%
	Other (including divinity degree)	1%	2%
What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain at Mason?	Associate degree or lower	1%	3%
	Bachelor's degree	61%	70%
	Master's degree	30%	20%
	Doctoral degree	1%	3%
	Medical degree (MD, DO, DDS, DVM)	1%	1%
	Law degree	6%	2%
	Other (including divinity degree)	0%	1%

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†Table 15. College Motivation: In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons?	Mason Topics				Other Freshmen			
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Mean	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Mean
**My parents wanted me to go	33%	47%	21%	2.12	46%	38%	17%	2.29
I could not find a job	6%	8%	87%	1.19	6%	11%	83%	1.23
*Wanted to get away from home	23%	38%	39%	1.84	16%	40%	45%	1.71
To be able to get a better job	72%	17%	12%	2.60	70%	18%	12%	2.57
**To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	72%	27%	1%	2.72	64%	32%	4%	2.60
**There was nothing better to do	1%	8%	92%	1.09	3%	12%	85%	1.18
***To make me a more cultured person	61%	32%	7%	2.54	47%	40%	14%	2.33
To be able to make more money	68%	25%	7%	2.61	69%	25%	6%	2.62
To learn more about things that interest me	86%	12%	1%	2.85	82%	16%	2%	2.81
To prepare myself for graduate or professional school	65%	24%	11%	2.53	59%	30%	11%	2.48
A mentor/role model encouraged me to go	10%	34%	56%	1.54	13%	34%	53%	1.60
To get training for a specific career	68%	23%	9%	2.59	69%	22%	9%	2.59
To find my purpose in life	46%	39%	14%	2.32	50%	33%	17%	2.34

†Rated on a 1-3 scale: 3=very important, 2=somewhat important and 1=not important. Asterisks are used to indicate statistically significant differences between two groups of freshmen at the following levels: \* means  $p < .05$ , \*\* means  $p < .01$ , and \*\*\* means  $p < .001$ .

Table 16. Number of Colleges Applied to		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
To how many colleges other than this one did you apply for admission this year?	None	8%	14%
	One	12%	12%
	Two	22%	19%
	Three	21%	20%
	Four	12%	15%
	Five or more	27%	19%

Table 17. Choice of College		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Is this college your:	First choice	53%	63%
	Second choice	32%	26%
	Third choice	10%	8%
	Less than third choice	4%	3%

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†Table 18. Reasons for Choosing Mason: How important was each of the following reasons in your decision to come to Mason? (Rated on a 1-3 scale: 3=very important and 1=not important)	Mason Topics				Other Freshmen			
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Mean	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Mean
***My relatives wanted me to come here	4%	25%	71%	1.33	12%	28%	60%	1.52
My teacher advised me	3%	20%	77%	1.27	4%	25%	71%	1.33
This college has a very good academic reputation	57%	38%	5%	2.51	51%	42%	7%	2.44
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	23%	55%	23%	2.00	26%	48%	25%	2.01
*I was offered financial assistance	10%	21%	69%	1.41	17%	21%	62%	1.56
The cost of attending this college	25%	48%	27%	1.97	31%	43%	26%	2.05
High school counselor advised me	2%	27%	71%	1.32	5%	27%	68%	1.38
***Private college counselor advised me	0%	2%	98%	1.02	1%	8%	92%	1.09
I wanted to live near home	22%	29%	49%	1.73	25%	31%	43%	1.82
Not offered aid by first choice	3%	10%	86%	1.17	5%	9%	85%	1.20
Its graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	25%	41%	34%	1.90	25%	43%	33%	1.92
This college's graduates get good jobs	46%	42%	12%	2.34	42%	40%	18%	2.24
I was attracted by the religious affiliation/orientation of the college	1%	14%	86%	1.15	3%	13%	84%	1.18
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	26%	42%	32%	1.95	26%	46%	28%	1.98
Rankings in national magazines	9%	38%	53%	1.55	11%	36%	53%	1.58
Information from a website	10%	45%	45%	1.66	16%	44%	40%	1.77
I was admitted through an Early Action or Early Decision program	8%	6%	86%	1.21	9%	10%	81%	1.28
A visit to campus	45%	34%	21%	2.23	41%	35%	23%	2.18

†Asterisks are used to indicate statistically significant differences between two groups of freshmen at the following levels: \* means p<.05, \*\* means p<.01, and \*\*\* means p<.001.

**VI. Expectations for College Life**

Table 19. College Living Arrangements		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Where do you plan to live during the fall term?	With my family or other relatives	21%	35%
	Other private home, apartment or room	1%	2%
	College residence hall	78%	61%
	Fraternity or sorority house	0%	0%
	Other campus student housing	0%	1%
	Other	0%	0%

Table 20. Concerns about Financing College Education	Mason Topics			Other Freshmen		
	None	Some	Major	None	Some	Major
Do you have any concern about your ability to finance your college education?	35%	55%	10%	36%	53%	11%

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Table 21. Sources of College Funds: How much of your first year's educational expenses do you expect to cover from each of the sources listed below?	2005 Mason Freshmen							
	Mason Topics				Other Freshmen			
	<\$1,000	\$1,000-2,999	\$3,000-5,999	\$6,000 or more	<\$1,000	\$1,000-2,999	\$3,000-5,999	\$6,000 or more
Family resources (parents, relatives, spouse, etc.)	19%	15%	15%	51%	24%	12%	16%	48%
My own resources (savings from work, work-study, other income)	66%	23%	8%	3%	73%	19%	5%	3%
Aid which need not be repaid (grants, scholarships, military funding, etc.)	70%	15%	8%	7%	65%	16%	10%	9%
Aid which must be repaid (loans, etc.)	62%	17%	12%	9%	61%	17%	11%	11%
Other than above	95%	2%	3%	1%	98%	1%	1%	1%

†Table 22. College Expectations: What is your best guess as to the chances that you will:	Mason Topics				Other Freshmen			
	Very good chance	Some chance	No or little chance†	Mean†	Very good chance	Some chance	No or little chance†	Mean†
*Change major field	8%	38%	54%	2.40	12%	40%	48%	2.54
Change career choice	9%	47%	45%	2.53	11%	44%	45%	2.57
***Participate in student government	19%	37%	44%	2.63	9%	29%	62%	2.23
Get a job to help pay for college expenses	52%	30%	17%	3.32	52%	31%	18%	3.30
Work full-time while attending college	8%	19%	73%	2.05	7%	22%	71%	2.06
Join a social fraternity or sorority	12%	29%	59%	2.21	8%	23%	69%	2.08
Play varsity/intercollegiate athletics	7%	27%	66%	2.06	12%	20%	68%	2.10
Make at least a 'B' average	74%	24%	1%	3.73	68%	31%	2%	3.66
***Participate in student protests or demonstrations	14%	33%	53%	2.47	7%	23%	70%	2.13
Transfer to another college before graduating	6%	25%	68%	2.20	8%	24%	68%	2.18
*Be satisfied with your college	63%	38%	0%	3.63	57%	40%	3%	3.54
**Participate in volunteer or community service work	33%	46%	21%	3.08	24%	43%	33%	2.85
Seek personal counseling	4%	26%	70%	2.24	6%	24%	70%	2.17
*Communicate regularly with your professors	40%	51%	9%	3.30	33%	52%	15%	3.17
***Socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group	88%	12%	0%	3.88	79%	17%	3%	3.75
***Participate in student clubs/groups	57%	36%	8%	3.47	42%	40%	18%	3.22
Strengthen your religious beliefs/convictions	23%	35%	42%	2.65	23%	31%	46%	2.59
***Participate in a study abroad program	40%	32%	28%	3.04	23%	30%	47%	2.59

†The above items were rated on a 1-4 point scale: 4=very good chance, 3=some chance, 2=little chance and 1=no chance. The table combines “no chance” and “little chance” responses. The mean values were calculated on the original 1-4 scale. Asterisks are used to indicate statistically significant differences between two groups of freshmen at the following levels: \* means p<.05, \*\* means p<.01, and \*\*\* means p<.001.

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**VII. Self-Perceptions and Personal Goals**

†Table 23. Self-Perceptions: Rate yourself compared to the average person of your age.	Mason Topics					Other Freshmen				
	Highest 10%	Above average	Average	Below average†	Mean†	Highest 10%	Above average	Average	Below average†	Mean†
Academic ability	13%	64%	23%	0%	3.90	14%	60%	26%	0%	3.88
Artistic ability	6%	28%	31%	35%	2.96	10%	24%	36%	30%	3.06
Computer skills	6%	39%	49%	6%	3.44	10%	37%	46%	6%	3.51
Cooperativeness	25%	55%	17%	3%	4.01	26%	50%	23%	1%	4.01
Creativity	20%	53%	24%	3%	3.90	21%	44%	30%	5%	3.80
Drive to achieve	31%	45%	21%	3%	4.03	32%	43%	22%	2%	4.05
Emotional health	22%	36%	34%	8%	3.73	23%	34%	36%	7%	3.72
**Leadership ability	27%	46%	24%	2%	3.99	24%	39%	31%	6%	3.80
***Mathematical ability	8%	22%	46%	24%	3.09	12%	34%	40%	15%	3.41
Physical health	17%	33%	42%	8%	3.59	20%	36%	38%	6%	3.69
*Public speaking ability	15%	31%	37%	17%	3.43	10%	27%	40%	22%	3.22
Religiousness	9%	19%	27%	45%	2.73	10%	19%	34%	37%	2.86
Self-confidence (intellectual)	21%	49%	27%	3%	3.88	19%	44%	33%	5%	3.77
Self-confidence (social)	21%	43%	27%	10%	3.75	19%	38%	34%	9%	3.66
Self-understanding	22%	49%	27%	2%	3.90	21%	43%	33%	3%	3.81
Spirituality	11%	32%	37%	20%	3.25	13%	26%	40%	21%	3.23
Understanding of others	27%	44%	27%	3%	3.94	23%	52%	24%	2%	3.95
**Writing ability	19%	45%	31%	6%	3.76	12%	40%	39%	8%	3.56

†The above items were rated on a 1-5 point scale: 5=highest 10%, 4=above average, 3=average, 2=below average and 1=lowest 10%. The table combines “below average” and “lowest 10%” responses. The mean values were calculated on the original 1-5 scale. Asterisks are used to indicate statistically significant differences between two groups of freshmen at the following levels: \* means p<.05, \*\* means p<.01, and \*\*\* means p<.001.

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†Table 24. Personal Goals: Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:	Mason Topics				Other Freshmen			
	†Essential/ Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Mean†	†Essential/ Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Mean†
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts	14%	30%	56%	1.61	15%	25%	61%	1.61
*Becoming an authority in my field	71%	25%	3%	3.00	65%	28%	7%	2.80
Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field	63%	30%	8%	2.78	57%	35%	8%	2.66
***Influencing the political structure	43%	33%	24%	2.38	24%	40%	36%	1.95
Influencing social values	47%	41%	12%	2.48	45%	39%	16%	2.39
*Raising a family	68%	23%	10%	2.89	74%	19%	7%	3.09
Having admin. responsibility for the work of others	42%	43%	16%	2.35	41%	41%	17%	2.34
Being very well off financially	76%	21%	3%	3.13	76%	20%	3%	3.15
Helping others who are in difficulty	75%	24%	1%	3.03	67%	30%	3%	2.90
*Making a theoretical contribution to science	10%	27%	63%	1.50	15%	31%	54%	1.65
**Writing original works (poems, novels, stories, etc.)	27%	27%	46%	1.90	15%	24%	61%	1.60
Creating artistic work	15%	23%	61%	1.61	16%	24%	60%	1.63
Becoming successful in a business of my own	38%	30%	32%	2.21	45%	29%	26%	2.39
Being involved in programs to clean up the environment	27%	48%	25%	2.06	21%	47%	32%	1.93
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	49%	38%	13%	2.57	46%	33%	21%	2.43
Participating in a community action program	26%	54%	20%	2.12	24%	48%	28%	2.01
***Helping to promote racial understanding	57%	30%	13%	2.63	38%	40%	22%	2.28
***Keeping up to date with political affairs	62%	29%	9%	2.87	43%	38%	19%	2.40
**Becoming a community leader	42%	36%	22%	2.37	30%	43%	27%	2.12
Integrating spirituality into my life	44%	31%	24%	2.39	36%	34%	29%	2.24
***Improving my understanding of other countries & cultures	76%	17%	6%	3.06	58%	33%	10%	2.72

†The above items were rated on a 1-4 point scale: 4=essential, 3=very important, 2= somewhat important and 1=not important. The table combines “essential” and “very important” responses. The mean values were calculated on the original 1-4 scale. Asterisks are used to indicate statistically significant differences between two groups of freshmen at the following levels: \* means p<.05, \*\* means p<.01, and \*\*\* means p<.001.

**VIII. Political Views**

Table 25. Political Standing		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
How would you characterize your political views?	Far Right	1%	2%
	Conservative	16%	20%
	Middle-of-the-road	42%	48%
	Liberal	36%	28%
	Far left	5%	3%

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†Table 26. Political Views	Mason Topics					Other Freshmen				
	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Mean	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Mean
There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals	9%	44%	38%	8%	2.54	8%	46%	39%	7%	2.54
Abortion should be legal	33%	32%	14%	22%	2.75	27%	33%	18%	21%	2.67
The death penalty should be abolished	18%	18%	39%	25%	2.28	12%	21%	38%	28%	2.18
*Marijuana should be legalized	10%	29%	26%	34%	2.16	7%	24%	29%	40%	1.99
*It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships	8%	9%	27%	55%	1.70	11%	14%	30%	45%	1.91
Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	2%	15%	50%	33%	1.86	3%	17%	48%	32%	1.91
Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society	6%	20%	33%	42%	1.90	4%	23%	40%	33%	1.98
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	19%	46%	24%	11%	2.74	17%	42%	29%	12%	2.63
Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus	30%	31%	24%	15%	2.76	27%	34%	26%	12%	2.77
**Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	45%	23%	18%	14%	3.00	32%	28%	20%	20%	2.73
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	19%	32%	36%	12%	2.59	20%	32%	39%	9%	2.64
*The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family	6%	7%	20%	68%	1.50	5%	15%	22%	58%	1.68
Federal military spending should be increased	10%	26%	41%	24%	2.22	6%	30%	47%	17%	2.25
If two people really like each other, it's all right for them to have sex even if they've known each other for only a very short time	11%	28%	36%	25%	2.26	11%	30%	33%	26%	2.25
The federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns	48%	34%	13%	5%	3.24	42%	40%	13%	6%	3.18
Only volunteers should serve in the armed forces	39%	22%	27%	12%	2.88	24%	37%	30%	10%	2.74
*The federal government is not doing enough to control environmental pollution	37%	44%	16%	3%	3.16	27%	50%	19%	3%	3.02
A national health care plan is needed to cover everybody's medical costs	29%	43%	21%	8%	2.93	27%	47%	19%	7%	2.94
Grading in the high schools has become too easy	12%	28%	43%	18%	2.33	7%	27%	48%	18%	2.24
Undocumented immigrants should be denied access to public education	20%	20%	37%	23%	2.37	18%	26%	36%	20%	2.42
Through hard work, everybody can succeed in American society	38%	40%	14%	8%	3.08	43%	38%	16%	3%	3.21
Dissent is a critical component of the political process	26%	51%	20%	4%	2.99	20%	52%	26%	2%	2.91

†Rated on a 1-4 scale: 4=strongly agree, 3=agree somewhat, 2=disagree somewhat and 1=disagree strongly. Asterisks are used to indicate statistically significant differences between two groups of freshmen at the following levels: \* means p<.05, \*\* means p<.01, and \*\*\* means p<.001.



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**IX. Mason Specific Questions**

Table 27. First in the Family to Attend College		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Are you the first in your immediate family to attend college?	Yes	17%	22%
	No	83%	78%

Table 28. Expected Studying Time in College		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
Approximately, how much time do you expect to spend studying for each hour spent in class or lab during your first year at Mason?	< Half an hour	3%	2%
	Half an hour	22%	18%
	One hour	37%	39%
	One and a half hours	24%	23%
	Two hours or more	13%	19%

†Table 29. Expectations for Mason Experiences: Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:	Mason Topics				Other Freshmen			
	†Essential/ Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Mean†	†Essential/ Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Mean†
*Attending a college with a multi-ethnic student body	66%	27%	7%	2.99	62%	27%	11%	2.81
Being at least moderately fluent in a language other than my native language	55%	32%	13%	2.72	49%	32%	19%	2.54
Increasing my technology skills in my classes at George Mason	62%	32%	6%	2.81	66%	29%	5%	2.85
*Talking with my professors outside of class	69%	28%	2%	2.96	62%	34%	4%	2.79
***Having serious discussions about social issues in class	74%	24%	1%	3.10	56%	35%	8%	2.68
***Contributing to class discussions	81%	19%	1%	3.19	70%	26%	4%	2.91
Working on class projects with a team of students	58%	38%	4%	2.70	59%	34%	7%	2.69
Studying with other students outside of class	71%	26%	3%	2.92	66%	29%	5%	2.83
*Socializing with students of other racial/ethnic groups	88%	7%	5%	3.14	83%	10%	7%	2.99

†The above items were rated on a 1-4 point scale: 4=essential, 3=very important, 2= somewhat important and 1=not important. The table combines “essential” and “very important” responses. The mean values were calculated on the original 1-4 scale. Asterisks are used to indicate statistically significant differences between two groups of freshmen at the following levels: \* means p<.05, \*\* means p<.01, and \*\*\* means p<.001.

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Table 30. Need for Advising: How often do you expect to meet with each of your professors and your academic advisor during your first semester?		2005 Mason Freshmen	
		Mason Topics	Other Freshmen
I expect that each professor will contact me outside of the classroom, about course-related information, my first semester	Weekly	16%	12%
	A few times during the semester	73%	70%
	Once	4%	6%
	Never	0%	1%
	I don't know	6%	11%
I expect to meet with my academic advisor, my first semester	Weekly	84%	74%
	A few times during the semester	16%	24%
	Once	0%	1%
	Never	0%	0%
	I don't know	1%	0%

†Table 31. Expected University Climate: It is important that the University climate is welcoming to:	Mason Topics					Other Freshmen				
	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Mean	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Mean
People of different ethnicities	74%	24%	1%	1%	3.72	71%	27%	2%	0%	3.68
People of different religious backgrounds	65%	32%	3%	1%	3.60	58%	37%	4%	0%	3.54
**People of disabilities	60%	37%	3%	1%	3.55	50%	41%	7%	2%	3.38
People of different sexual preferences	82%	18%	0%	1%	3.80	81%	18%	1%	0%	3.79

† Rated on a 1-4 scale: 4=strongly agree, 3=agree somewhat, 2=disagree somewhat and 1=disagree strongly. Asterisks are used to indicate statistically significant differences between two groups of freshmen at the following levels: \* means  $p < .05$ , \*\* means  $p < .01$ , and \*\*\* means  $p < .001$ .

†Table 32. Reasons for Choosing a Major: If you have chosen your major field of study, please state your level of agreement with the following:	Mason Topics					Other Freshmen				
	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Mean	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Mean
I was influenced to choose my major by the potential for employment	34%	34%	21%	11%	2.89	36%	38%	17%	8%	3.02
I was influenced to choose my major by my parents or a family member	11%	28%	28%	33%	2.17	11%	32%	29%	28%	2.26
I was influenced to choose my major by my own personal interest	90%	8%	2%	0%	3.89	85%	13%	1%	0%	3.83

† Rated on a 1-4 scale: 4=strongly agree, 3=agree somewhat, 2=disagree somewhat and 1=disagree strongly. Statistical tests did not find significant differences between two groups of freshmen.



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