

New Century College Freshman Survey

I. Introduction

This report examines the responses of 157 New Century College (NCC) first-time freshmen students who took the national Freshmen Survey developed by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) and administered to students at the beginning of their first semester of enrollment (fall 1995). The overall response rate for this survey was 82%, excluding the responses of six freshmen transfers. Comparisons between NCC students and freshmen attending public universities across the United States are given. Only select items from the survey are included in this report.

II. Students Characteristics/Background

The table below highlights those characteristics of NCC students that differ substantially from freshmen who enrolled at a public university in the fall of 1995. NCC students are more ethnically diverse, more likely to be non-native speakers of English and more likely to be "far left" or "liberal" in their political orientation. NCC freshmen said their home was closer to college than other freshmen. Further, parents of NCC students are more likely to be divorced or living separately than the parents of freshmen nationally. The average age of NCC students (not shown here) is slightly lower than for public university freshmen.

| Characteristics and Background | NCC Freshmen | | | Public Univ Freshmen | | |
|---|--------------|--------|-------|----------------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Ethnic background* | | | | | | |
| White American | 72.5 | 59.1 | 65.0 | 85.2 | 83.1 | 84.1 |
| African American | 4.3 | 19.3 | 12.7 | 5.3 | 8.3 | 6.9 |
| Asian American | 10.1 | 11.1 | 10.8 | 6.5 | 5.8 | 6.1 |
| Hispanic American | 11.5 | 3.4 | 7.0 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| All others | 7.2 | 14.8 | 11.5 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.8 |
| Non-native English speakers | 19.1 | 14.8 | 16.7 | 6.4 | 5.8 | 6.1 |
| Parents divorced/living separately | 29.0 | 30.7 | 29.9 | 20.5 | 24.2 | 22.5 |
| Miles from college to home | | | | | | |
| 5 or less | 5.8 | 10.5 | 8.4 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 3.8 |
| 6-10 | 14.5 | 15.1 | 14.8 | 4.8 | 5.1 | 4.9 |
| 11-50 | 44.9 | 44.2 | 44.5 | 20.8 | 20.6 | 20.7 |
| "Far left" or "liberal" political orientation | 27.7 | 38.5 | 33.8 | 22.4 | 29.3 | 26.0 |

*Percentages add to more than 100 due to students checking more than one category.

III. Reasons For Going to College

NCC students were more likely to give altruistic reasons for their college attendance. For example, they were more likely to say that becoming a more cultured person, learning more about things, and encouragement from a role model or mentor were very important reasons for attending college. NCC students were slightly less likely to say that making more money was a very important reason for attending college.

| Reasons <i>Very Important</i> in Deciding to go to College | NCC Freshmen | | | Public Univ Freshmen | | |
|--|--------------|--------|-------|----------------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| become a more cultured person | 52.2 | 65.9 | 59.9 | 34.6 | 49.5 | 42.5 |
| make more money | 65.2 | 72.7 | 69.4 | 75.0 | 69.9 | 72.3 |
| learn more about things | 76.8 | 86.4 | 82.2 | 72.5 | 80.8 | 76.9 |
| gain general education | 68.1 | 75.0 | 72.0 | 57.1 | 70.8 | 64.4 |
| improve reading and study skills | 50.7 | 59.8 | 55.8 | 35.4 | 44.1 | 40.0 |
| role model/mentor encouraged me | 17.4 | 21.8 | 19.9 | 11.4 | 12.5 | 12.0 |

IV. Reasons Very Important In Deciding To Attend George Mason

NCC students differed from students nationally in their reasons they gave for their choice of college. Having special programs was identified by the largest proportion of Mason students as very important in selecting their college. NCC students were more likely than other freshmen to say that relatives wanted them to come and that they wanted to live near home. They were less likely to say that a good academic reputation, financial assistance, the opportunity to attend top graduate schools or post-graduation jobs were very important in their decision to attend Mason.

| Reasons <i>Very Important</i> in Deciding to go this College | NCC Freshmen | | | Public Univ Freshmen | | |
|--|--------------|--------|-------|----------------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| relatives wanted me to come | 7.2 | 14.1 | 11.0 | 6.2 | 7.4 | 6.8 |
| good academic reputation | 29.0 | 54.0 | 42.9 | 53.0 | 62.9 | 58.2 |
| offered financial assistance | 11.8 | 19.0 | 15.8 | 20.6 | 26.3 | 23.6 |
| wanted to live near home | 14.5 | 33.3 | 25.0 | 11.8 | 16.5 | 14.3 |
| graduates go to top graduate schools | 5.8 | 19.0 | 13.1 | 23.8 | 32.7 | 28.5 |
| offers special programs | 33.3 | 51.8 | 43.5 | 14.7 | 23.9 | 19.6 |
| graduates get good jobs | 24.6 | 28.9 | 27.0 | 43.8 | 50.8 | 47.5 |

V. Educational Choice, Goals and Experiences

Describing their goals relative to the institution in which they had matriculated, NCC students were less likely to say that GMU was a first choice institution and that GMU was the only college they applied to compared with other freshmen. NCC students were more likely to say they planned on earning a Ph.D. or Ed.D. and were more likely to indicate that their baccalaureate would be earned at GMU. NCC students were more likely to say they had or would need remedial work in math, English and science. The difference between NCC males and females are striking, particularly in their rating of their need for remediation in math and science. One-quarter of both males and females say they will need remedial work in math, however, only 6% of men said they will need remedial work in science.

| Educational Choice/Goals/Experiences | NCC Freshmen | | | Public Univ Freshmen | | |
|--|--------------|--------|-------|----------------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| College they're attending wasn't their first choice | 7.2 | 14.1 | 11.0 | 6.2 | 7.4 | 6.8 |
| Applied only to the college they are attending | 29.0 | 54.0 | 42.9 | 53.0 | 62.9 | 58.2 |
| Highest degree student plans to earn | | | | | | |
| Bachelor's | 24.0 | 14.9 | 18.5 | 26.0 | 21.6 | 23.7 |
| Master's (MA or MS) | 38.0 | 29.7 | 33.1 | 38.9 | 40.3 | 39.6 |
| Ph.D. or Ed.D. | 20.0 | 35.1 | 29.0 | 17.1 | 17.2 | 17.2 |
| Highest degree planned where currently enrolled | | | | | | |
| Bachelor's | 56.8 | 71.7 | 65.1 | 59.3 | 60.7 | 60.0 |
| Master's (MA or MS) | 27.0 | 26.1 | 26.5 | 25.6 | 24.2 | 24.8 |
| Had remedial work in... | | | | | | |
| English | 14.5 | 10.2 | 12.1 | 4.4 | 3.0 | 3.6 |
| Mathematics | 24.6 | 25.0 | 24.8 | 7.7 | 10.4 | 9.1 |
| Science | 13.0 | 10.2 | 11.5 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.5 |
| Will need remedial work in... | | | | | | |
| English | 11.6 | 11.4 | 11.5 | 8.8 | 6.1 | 7.4 |
| Mathematics | 26.1 | 38.6 | 33.1 | 16.3 | 25.5 | 21.2 |
| Science | 5.8 | 20.5 | 14.0 | 6.6 | 11.1 | 8.9 |

VI. Educational Preparation

NCC students rated themselves substantially higher on artistic ability, social self confidence and understanding of others when compared to other freshmen. They rated themselves substantially lower on mathematical ability and somewhat lower on physical health when compared to others. Further, NCC students were dramatically less likely to say their average grade in high school was between a B+ and an A+.

| Educational Preparation | NCC Freshmen | | | Public Univ Freshmen | | |
|---|--------------|--------|-------|----------------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Proportion who rated self above average or top 10% in... | | | | | | |
| artistic ability | 42.0 | 39.8 | 40.8 | 30.2 | 26.6 | 28.3 |
| leadership ability | 69.6 | 55.7 | 61.8 | 63.1 | 59.2 | 61.1 |
| mathematic ability | 40.6 | 17.0 | 27.4 | 59.8 | 42.3 | 50.5 |
| physical appearance | 62.3 | 45.5 | 52.9 | 49.5 | 39.6 | 44.3 |
| physical health | 58.0 | 45.5 | 51.0 | 66.8 | 50.1 | 57.9 |
| popularity | 50.7 | 39.1 | 44.2 | 48.8 | 38.0 | 43.1 |
| intellectual self confidence | 69.6 | 52.3 | 60.0 | 68.8 | 54.9 | 61.4 |
| social self confidence | 68.1 | 55.2 | 60.9 | 54.2 | 49.2 | 51.6 |
| understanding of others | 79.7 | 90.9 | 86.0 | 65.9 | 78.0 | 72.3 |
| High School Grade was B+ to A+ | 21.6 | 33.4 | 28.1 | 57.0 | 66.3 | 61.9 |

VII. Important College Objectives

A greater proportion of NCC freshmen rated each of the objectives listed below as essential or very important when compared to freshmen nationally. Very striking differences exist between the two groups. NCC students, in general, place a higher priority on community involvement than freshmen nationally.

| Objectives Considered to be <i>Essential</i> or <i>Very Important</i> | NCC Freshmen | | | Public Univ Freshmen | | |
|---|--------------|--------|-------|----------------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| achieve in a performing art | 13.4 | 19.8 | 17.0 | 11.0 | 11.5 | 11.3 |
| influence political structure | 32.8 | 33.3 | 33.1 | 19.7 | 16.5 | 18.0 |
| write original works | 30.9 | 24.1 | 27.1 | 13.5 | 13.0 | 13.2 |
| create artistic work | 19.1 | 19.5 | 19.4 | 13.1 | 13.3 | 13.2 |
| be involved in enviromental clean-up | 32.4 | 36.8 | 34.8 | 20.5 | 23.6 | 22.2 |
| participate in community action | 25.0 | 47.1 | 37.4 | 18.1 | 27.8 | 23.2 |
| promote racial understanding | 45.6 | 57.5 | 52.3 | 28.2 | 37.2 | 32.9 |
| be a community leader | 41.2 | 42.5 | 41.9 | 31.6 | 32.7 | 32.2 |
| develop a philosophy of life | 58.8 | 59.8 | 59.4 | 43.3 | 45.0 | 44.2 |

VIII. Opinions and Activities

NCC freshmen were more likely than freshmen nationally to say that they would participate in student protests and participate in volunteer community service. They were less likely to think that married women are best at home, more likely to say that sex was OK if the people like each other and less likely to agree that racial discrimination is no longer a problem.

| Opinions and Activities | NCC Freshmen | | | Public Univ Freshmen | | |
|--|--------------|--------|-------|----------------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Chances are very good that student will.... | | | | | | |
| participate in student protests | 18.2 | 18.4 | 18.3 | 4.5 | 6.6 | 5.6 |
| participate in volunteer/community service | 16.4 | 45.8 | 32.7 | 11.5 | 26.2 | 19.3 |
| Agrees strongly or somewhat that... | | | | | | |
| married women are best at home | 15.2 | 14.0 | 14.5 | 27.2 | 15.5 | 21.0 |
| sex OK if people like each other | 62.7 | 46.0 | 53.2 | 56.9 | 33.2 | 44.3 |
| racial discrimination is no longer a problem | 13.4 | 3.4 | 7.8 | 22.1 | 13.6 | 17.6 |

IX. Activities Engaged In During the Past Year

NCC freshmen were more likely to say they had felt depressed during the past year, to say they worked in a political campaign, used a personal computer, and socialized with different ethnic groups. NCC men were more likely than NCC women and freshmen men nationally to say that they had drunk beer, wine or liquor. Women were more likely than men to feel overwhelmed or depressed, with NCC women more than twice as likely to feel depressed when compared to freshmen women nationally.

| Activities Engaged in During Past Year | NCC Freshmen | | | Public Univ Freshmen | | |
|--|--------------|--------|-------|----------------------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| drank beer | 71.0 | 36.4 | 51.6 | 59.3 | 54.4 | 56.7 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| drank wine or liquor | 71.0 | 47.7 | 58.0 | 53.5 | 59.8 | 56.9 |
| felt overwhelmed | 20.3 | 37.5 | 29.9 | 16.4 | 34.2 | 25.8 |
| felt depressed | 8.7 | 21.6 | 15.9 | 6.4 | 9.7 | 8.2 |
| worked in a political campaign | 26.1 | 22.7 | 24.2 | 10.4 | 10.2 | 10.3 |
| was bored in class | 49.3 | 45.5 | 47.1 | 38.7 | 38.6 | 38.7 |
| didn't complete homework in time | 79.7 | 77.0 | 78.2 | 69.7 | 62.1 | 65.7 |
| used a personal computer | 63.8 | 65.9 | 65.0 | 59.6 | 53.3 | 56.2 |
| socialized with different ethnic groups | 85.5 | 87.5 | 86.6 | 61.5 | 66.7 | 64.3 |

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