



Vol. 5, No. 1, April 2000

1999 Freshmen CIRP Survey Results at Mason and Nationally Comparisons of Mason and Public University Freshmen

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Introduction

Freshmen students enrolled in randomly selected English 101 sections (and referred to in this report as "Mason" students, n=224) completed the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey during the first two weeks of the fall semester 1999. The CIRP is a continuing longitudinal study of the American higher education system sponsored by the American Council on Education and the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. In this report, selected responses of Mason's first-year students are compared to the responses of first-time, full-time freshmen enrolled at other CIRP public universities across the U.S. (**referred to as other students [OS] in this report**, weighted n=312,116).

Differences (10% or larger) between Mason and OS are designated by * . Because of rounding and because students can, on selected questions, specify more than one answer, some totals do not equal 100%.

I. Demographics and Background

Like other American public university students, 1999 Mason first-year students are predominantly U.S. citizens or permanent residents of traditional age (18 or 19 years old), graduated from high school in 1999, and lived in a two-parent household with an estimated combined family income of \$30,000 and up. Unlike students attending other public universities, Mason first-year students are more diverse and a larger percentage do not report English to be their native language.

Characteristics	Mason OS		Ethnicity/Race	Mason OS	
Traditional age	96%	97%	African American	8%	7%
Graduated from high school in 1999	97%	98%	* Asian or Asian American	21%	8%
U.S. citizen or permanent resident	99%	99%	* Caucasian	61%	83%

* English reported as native language	80%	94%	Mexican American or Chicano	3%	2%
Parents alive and living together	71%	75%	Native American Indian	4%	2%
Parents' Estimated Total Income			Puerto Rican	3%	1%
	<u>Mason</u>	<u>OS</u>	Other Latino	6%	1%
\$29,999 or less	15%	16%	Other	11%	3%
\$30,000 - \$49,999	13%	18%	NOTE: Because students can check more than one "ethnicity" category, the percentages do not equal 100%.		
\$50,000 - \$74,999	25%	25%			
\$75,000 and up	47%	41%			

II. Educational Choices, Decisions, and Motivations



- Survey Question -		<u>Mason</u>	<u>OS</u>
1. Is your college your			
* ...first-choice college?		50%	76%
* ...second-choice college?		33%	17%
...third-choice college?		12%	5%
...less than third choice?		5%	3%
2. To how many colleges, other than this one, did you apply?			
...none		9%	27%
...1 or 2		29%	31%
* ...3 or more		52%	42%
3. How many miles is college from your permanent home?			
* ...10 miles or less		31%	8%
* ...11-50 miles		49%	20%
* ...50 or more miles		21%	73%
4. Where do you plan to live during your first year?			
* ...with parents or relative		45%	9%
...private home, apartment, or room		5%	4%
* ...college dormitory or other campus housing		50%	87%

...other	<1%	<1%
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- Survey Question -

Mason OS

**5. What reasons were very important in your decision to go to college?
(reasons given by 50% or more of students)**

...To be able to make more money	70%	71%
...To be able to get a better job	67%	72%
...To learn more about things that interest me	67%	75%
...To get training for a specific career	66%	72%
...To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	55%	63%
...To prepare for graduate/professional school	53%	57%

**Reasons identified as very unimportant
(given by 25% or less of students)**

...I could not find a job	5%	4%
...There was nothing better to do	6%	3%
...A mentor/role model encouraged me to go	10%	11%
...Wanted to get away from home	20%	21%

**6. What reasons are very important in your decision to attend Mason/this particular college
(given by 25% or more of students)?**

* ...This college's graduates get good jobs	35%	51%
* ...This college has a good academic reputation	29%	55%
...This college has low tuition	27%	25%
* ...I wanted to live near home	25%	14%
...I wanted to go to a college about this size	19%	24%

**Reasons identified as very unimportant
(given by 10% or less of students)**

...Private college counselor advised me	2%	1%
...My teacher advised me to come here	2%	3%
...Attracted by religious affiliation of the college	2%	3%
...Admitted through Early Decision program	2%	5%
...Information in a multicollge guidebook	3%	6%

...Rankings in a national magazine	5%	10%
...Not accepted anywhere else	5%	2%
...Not offered aid by first choice	6%	6%
...High school guidance counselor advised me	7%	5%
7. What objectives are essential/very important for you? (noted by 50% or more of students)?		
* ...Being very well off financially	84%	74%
...Raising a family	74%	74%
...Becoming an authority in my field	66%	61%
...Obtaining recognition for contributions to field	55%	53%
Reasons identified as very unimportant (noted by 20% or less of students)		
...Writing original works	13%	13%
...Creating artistic works	13%	14%
...Making a theoretical contribution to science	14%	18%

Probable Area of Major for Mason and CIRP Public University Students		
	<u>Mason</u>	<u>OS</u>
Arts & Humanities	9%	10%
Biological Sciences	3%	8%
Business	22%	17%
Education	3%	6%
Engineering	9%	14%
Physical Sciences	1%	2%
Professional	11%	13%
Social Science	12%	8%
Technical	5%	2%
Other fields	11%	10%
Undecided about major	14%	9%

III. Financing College & Work \$\$\$



1. Do you have concerns about your ability to finance your college education?

	<u>Mason</u>	<u>OS</u>
* I am confident I will have sufficient funds.	48%	36%
* Some concern, will probably have sufficient funds.	41%	53%
Major concern, not sure I will have enough funds.	11%	12%

2. How much of your first-year educational expenses (room, board, tuition, and fees) of \$1,500 or more do you expect to cover from the following sources? (Because students could specify more than one source, the responses sum to more than 100%.)

	<u>Mason</u>	<u>OS</u>
Parents/spouse	70%	67%
* Savings	10%	23%
PT or FT work	5%	7%
* Grants	14%	35%
Loans	22%	27%
Other	1%	3%

3. During college chances are very good that student will work to help pay college expenses:

Mason 38%; OS 39%

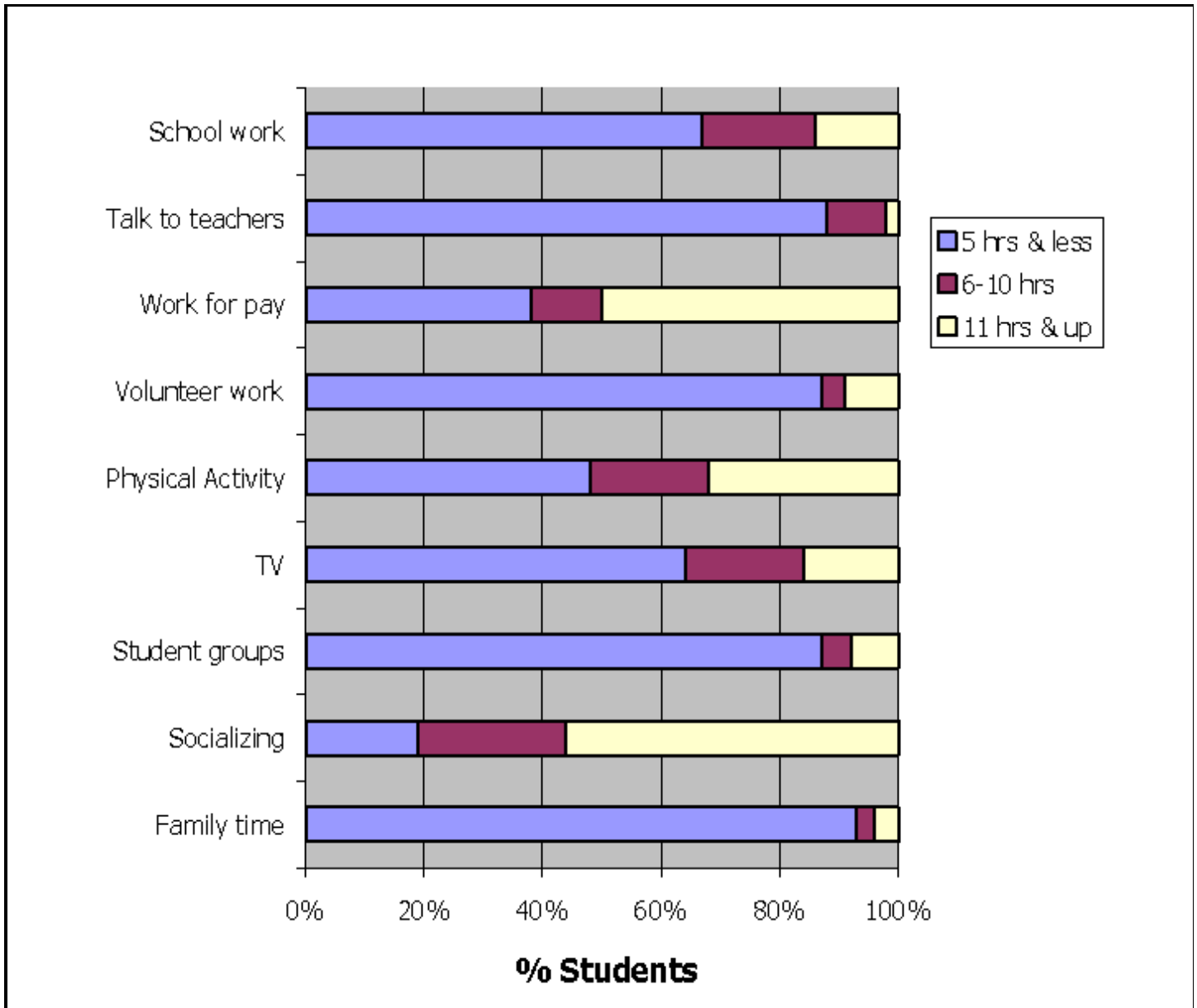
While 38% of Mason freshmen intend to work, results from the 1998-99 GMU senior survey show that 75% of the seniors worked 11+ hrs/week in the senior year:

0-10 hrs	25%
11-20 hrs	24%
21-30 hrs	22%
31 hrs & up	28%

IV. High School Experiences

1. Average High School Grade	<u>Mason</u>	<u>OS</u>
* "A"	10%	50%
* "B"	78%	47%
"C"	11%	3%

2. Percent of Mason students who spent time on various senior year activities.



In senior year of high school...

Two-thirds of Mason students spent five hours or less each week on schoolwork, volunteer work, student organizations, family activities, and talking with teachers outside of class.

As high school seniors, more than half of Mason students spent 20 hours or more each week socializing with friends and working for pay.

3. One CIRP question asked freshmen to report activities that they had

participated in during the last year of high school....**Activities**

	<u>Mason</u>	<u>OS</u>
Studied with other students	84%	89%
Used a personal computer	75%	71%
* Came late to class	75%	65%
Used the Internet for school	67%	60%
Communicated via e-mail	66%	57%
Performed community service as part of class	60%	55%
* Was bored in class	54%	43%
* Overslept and missed class/an appointment	48%	34%
* Tutored another student	42%	57%
Voted in a student election	21%	24%
Checked out a book from the school library	16%	20%
* Was a guest in a teacher's home	14%	30%
* Asked a teacher for advice after class	14%	24%
* Socialized with person of another ethnicity	83%	64%
Performed volunteer work	74%	82%
* Attended a religious service	70%	85%
* Attended a public recital/concert	70%	81%
Visited an art gallery/museum	58%	58%
Drank wine or liquor	60%	54%
Drank beer	57%	50%
Read the editorial page of daily newspaper	56%	65%
Participated in organized demonstrations	44%	43%
* Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	40%	30%
Played chess	34%	38%
Played a musical instrument	36%	44%
Participated in Internet chat rooms	28%	20%
* Discussed religion	21%	31%
Discussed politics	20%	18%
Smoked cigarettes	18%	11%
Felt depressed	14%	7%
Took a prescribed anti-depressant	5%	4%

Most frequently reported behaviors for Mason students were...
 studied with other students (84%),
 socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group (83%),
 used a personal computer (75%),
 came late to class (75%),
 performed volunteer work (74%),
 attended a public recital or concert (70%),
 used the Internet for research or homework (67%),
 and communicated via e-mail (66%).

- All George Mason University freshmen will complete the CIRP survey during orientation in the summer of 2000. -

V. Student Self-Perceptions and Academic Plans and Goals



1. Rate yourself as above average or in the highest 10% compared to the average person of your age in:

	<u>Mason</u>	<u>OS</u>		<u>Mason</u>	<u>OS</u>
Cooperativeness	72%	74%	Leadership ability	54%	63%
Understanding others	67%	66%	* Emotional health	49%	59%
Creativity	60%	57%	* Initiative	45%	57%
Intellectual self-confidence	59%	64%	Spirituality	44%	46%
* Drive to achieve	59%	74%	* Mathematical ability	39%	51%
Physical health	59%	60%	Computer skills	39%	34%
Competitiveness	57%	60%	Popularity	38%	43%
Self-understanding	56%	60%	* Writing ability	36%	48%
Self-confidence - social	55%	54%	Public speaking ability	35%	39%
* Academic ability	55%	76%	Artistic ability	33%	29%

* Compared to students in other CIRP public universities, fewer (10% or more difference) Mason first-year students judge themselves to be above average or among the top 10% in drive to achieve, academic ability, writing ability, initiative, leadership ability, emotional health, and mathematical ability.

2. Small numbers of Mason students feel that they will need special tutoring or remedial work (% yes) in:

English (9%), reading (4%), mathematics (25%), social studies (5%), science (13%),

and foreign languages (9%).

Percentage of students who agree that chances are very good that they will:			Needed tutoring in high school and expect to need it in college:				
			in High School		in College		
	Mason	OS	Mason	OS	Mason	OS	
Complete a Bachelor's degree	69%	77%	English	5%	4%	9%	8%
* Make at least a "B" average	39%	55%	Reading	3%	4%	4%	3%
Graduate with honors	10%	19%	Mathematics	17%	9%	25%	21%
Be elected to an honor society	7%	10%	Social Studies	1%	3%	5%	2%
Fail one or more courses	3%	1%	Science	4%	4%	13%	9%
Need extra time to graduate	9%	7%	Foreign Language	7%	4%	9%	10%
Change major field	14%	16%	Mason students (%) indicate that the highest degree they plan to achieve is:				
Change career choice	13%	15%		BA/BS	Master's	Doctoral	
Drop out temporarily	2%	1%	At any institution	26%	46%	25%	
Drop out permanently	1%	1%	At Mason	67%	27%	3%	
Get a job to pay for college	38%	39%					
Work full-time in college	6%	3%					
* Transfer before graduating	19%	5%					
* Be satisfied with my college	30%	52%					

See **EXIT SURVEY** results for :

Senior 2006

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