

FIRST IN MY FAMILY:
A PROFILE OF FIRST-GENERATION
COLLEGE STUDENTS AT FOUR-YEAR
INSTITUTIONS SINCE 1971



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Foreword by William E. Hamm & Michelle D. Gilliard
The Foundation for Independent Higher Education

Cooperative Institutional Research Program
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May 2007

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Table of Contents

Tables.....	iii
Figures.....	iii
Foreword.....	iv
Executive Summary: First-Generation College Students.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
<i>Existing Research on First-Generation College Students</i>	3
<i>Description of Methods</i>	5
Demographic Summary.....	6
<i>Gender Differences</i>	8
<i>Educational Attainment</i>	8
<i>Racial/Ethnic Group Differences</i>	10
<i>Citizenship Status</i>	14
CIRP Freshman Survey Trends.....	14
<i>Parental Encouragement</i>	15
<i>Reasons for Choosing a College: Motivations for First-Generation Students and Peers</i>	16
<i>Reasons for Going to College: Financial Security and Future Plans for Education</i>	18
<i>Work Experiences and Expectations at College Entry</i>	20
<i>Financial Considerations for Going to College</i>	22
<i>Influence of Home in the College Choice Process</i>	24
<i>College Residence</i>	26
<i>Academic Preparation at College Entry</i>	28
<i>Social Self-Confidence and Leadership Ability</i>	33
<i>Changing Student Values</i>	34
<i>Degree Objectives</i>	36
A Special Focus on Private Colleges and Universities.....	38
<i>Private Institutions: A Profile of Entering First-Generation College Students</i>	38
<i>Private Institutions: First-Generation Students' Reasons and Motivations for Going to College</i>	40
<i>Private Institutions: First-Generation Student Activities and Expectations</i>	41
Conclusions.....	44
<i>Implications for Institutional Support</i>	45
References.....	47
Appendix: CIRP Freshman Survey Trends Data.....	50

Tables

1.	Racial/Ethnic Percentage Comparisons Among the U.S. Population with No College Education and First-Generation College Students	12
2.a	Profile of Entering First-Generation College Students by Institutional Control (2005)	39
2.b	Reasons/Motivations for Going to College for First-Generation Students (2005)	40
2.c	Service and Religious Activities of Entering First-Generation College Students (2005)	42
2.d	Expectations, Values, and Degree Aspirations for First-Generation College Students (2005)	43

Figures

1a.	Proportion of First Generation College Students Among Entering First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen (1971-2005)	7
1b.	Proportion of First-Generation College Students Among Men & Women	8
2.	Proportion of U.S. Adults (25 years and older) without a College Education and First-Generation College Students at Four-Year Institutions	9
3.	Proportion of First-Generation College Students within Racial/Ethnic Group	11
4.	Proportion of First-Generation College Students by US Citizenship Status	14
5.	Very Important Reason to go to College: Parents Wanted Me to Go	15
6a.	Very Important Reasons to go to This College: Sources of Encouragement	17
6b.	Very Important Reasons to go to This College: Academic Reputation	18
7.	Very Important Reasons to go to College: Financial/Career Motivations	19
8.	Work Experiences & Expectations	20
9a.	Very Important Financial Reasons to go to This College	22
9b.	Concerns over Financing College	23
10.	Influence of Home	25
11.	Planned Residence: On-Campus	27
12.	Last Year of High School: Hours Per Week Studying/Homework (6+ hours)	28
13.	Average GPA in High School (B+ or higher)	29
14.	Self-ratings on Academic Confidence	30
15.	Self-Ratings: Writing and Math Ability	31
16.	Mean SAT Composite Scores by First Generation Status	32
17.	Social Self-Confidence & Leadership	34
18.	Changing Student Values	35
19.	Degree Objective: Masters Degree or Higher	37

Foreword

William E. Hamm & Michelle D. Gilliard
The Foundation for Independent Higher Education

First-generation students are increasingly the focus of researchers, educators and policy makers. This study by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program helps to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge about this important group of students.

To some extent, interest in first-generation students grows out of a larger belief in the promise of our nation as a land of opportunity. There is little or no disagreement that to the extent we are able to improve access and success in higher education, we expand opportunity for citizens to improve their circumstances in life, including the prospect for lifelong employment and higher earning power.

Interest in first-generation students also reflects awareness that education at all levels has not been as effective with students from what are also described as underrepresented populations. Further, recent and rapid demographic change has heightened among leaders in all sectors of our society a concern for our ability to replace in the workplace the soon-to-retire “Baby Boomers.”

The Foundation for Independent Higher Education shares this concern. Our “signature” initiative—First Opportunity Partners—aims to assist our thirty-four state and regional association partners and their 650 private college and university members in working collaboratively to more effectively serve first-generation, low-income, minority, and new American students.

For us, one of the interesting findings of this study is the narrowing of the gap between public and private institutions in the proportion of first-generation students among first-time, full-time students. Other recent studies have also shown that four-year private and public institutions enroll about the same percentage of what we call First Opportunity students (first-generation, low-income, minority and new Americans), but private institutions are more successful in retaining and graduating these students¹.

Interestingly, this study may begin to shed some light on the conditions that enable private institutions to achieve comparable success, at least among first-generation students. For

¹ Source: *Independent Colleges and Universities: A National Profile (2004)*. National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C.

example, as it will be revealed, first-generation students are attracted to private institutions because of their small size, a condition which allows for smaller classes, more opportunities to interact with faculty and enhanced student learning. First-generation students attending private institutions are also more likely to reside on campus, thus providing greater opportunity for campus engagement and academic success. Lastly, these institutions' financial aid policies make them a competitive choice, enabling students to select a college that matches their academic and extra-curricular interests. The study, of course, also reveals contexts in which private institutions can improve; for example, by increasing the proportion of their first-generation students who come from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. Our First Opportunity Partners initiative, therefore, builds on the strengths of private colleges; but, our initiative reflects a challenge facing both sectors as well as two-year institutions.

In our initiative we have received generous support from The UPS Foundation, The Coca-Cola Foundation, HSBC-North America, BP-America, and The Chubb Group of Insurance Companies, among others, which reflect the broad support for effectively addressing the challenges of access and success for first-generation students. We are grateful for this support as well as for the opportunity to partner with the Higher Education Research Institute in publishing this important study.

William E. Hamm, President
Michelle D. Gilliard, Vice President for Programs
The Foundation for Independent Higher Education
Washington, D.C.

FIHE is the national partner in a network of member state and regional fundraising associations. The Foundation secures financial resources in support of America's independent colleges and universities and their students; develops collaborative programs within its network and with other organizations; and, together with its members, is a primary voice of independent higher education to corporate and philanthropic communities.

* * *

First Opportunity Partners (FOP) is FIHE's signature initiative. Launched in 2005, FOP strengthens the ability of private higher education to serve first generation, low-income, minority and new American students ("first opportunity students"). Its three-fold purpose is to broaden the accessibility of higher education, to strengthen student retention and academic experiences and to prepare students for the future world of work.

Executive Summary: First-Generation College Students

As part of the 40th Anniversary of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA—in partnership with the Foundation for Independent Higher Education—proudly offers this important new report on the first-generation college student. This report explores 35 years of trends on first-generation college students and their peers with college-educated parents, utilizing survey data collected through the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's (CIRP) Freshman Survey from 1971 to 2005. The trends results yield important insights on first-generation college students. In particular, examining survey trends over time for this critical population of entering college students both confirms previous research and also reveals previously unknown or unanticipated pre-college behaviors, college-going motivations, and career-oriented values and objectives.

The report begins with a review of existing research on first-generation college students, followed by an overview of the changing demographic profile of first-generation students within the CIRP Freshman Survey trends sample, including a special focus on gender, racial/ethnic, and institutional differences. The key contribution of this report is in its review of CIRP trends on such issues as the importance of parental encouragement, students' reasons and motivations for going to college, students' financial concerns and considerations while in college, the influence of home in the college choice process, students' pre-college academic preparation, as well as students' goals and values at college entry.

Among the key findings:

Demographic Characteristics

- The proportion of first-generation students within the overall population of first-time, full-time entering college freshman at four-year institutions has steadily declined since 1971, reflecting increasing levels of education among the U.S. population.
- However, differences between racial/ethnic groups are cause for concern. Specifically, since 1975, African Americans show the greatest decline in their representation of first-generation college students—a declining rate that is of concern because it is faster than the relative proportion of African American adults without a college education as well as the decline of first-generation students in other racial/ethnic groups. Hispanics remain the least educated group (69.1 percent of Hispanic adults lacked a college education in 2005) and have the highest proportion of first-generation college students (38.2 percent) at four-year colleges of any racial/ethnic group.

Parental Encouragement

- Contrary to the notion that the parents of first-generation college students can be a deterrent to college access, over the last 15 years, these students are now more likely to report than their peers with college-educated parents that the reason why they went to college was because their parents wanted them to go. While both groups' reports of parental encouragement increased, the trend has more than doubled for first-generation college students since 1971.

Work Experiences and Financial Considerations

- Over the years, higher percentages of first-generation college students than their peers worked 20+ hours per week in their final year of high school, and well over half (55 percent) now expect to get a job to pay for college expenses—a gap that has widened between these students and their peers since 1987.
- Given their typically low socioeconomic status, it is not surprising to find that attending college to “make more money” was more likely to be cited as an important reason for first-generation students relative to their peers (76.4 percent vs. 69.8 percent).
- Between 1972 and 2003, more first-generation college students than their peers considered financial factors very important to their choice of specific colleges and at college entry they are twice more likely than peers to report having a major concern about financing college.

Influence of Home in the College Choice Process

- Not only have greater proportions of first-generation students than their peers attended higher education institutions within 50 miles from home, but these students considered the close proximity of the institution to their home a very important reason for choosing their institution.
- Over the years, first-generation students have consistently been less likely relative to their counterparts to expect to live on campus in their freshmen year, a factor which portends for differences in college academic and social integration outcomes.

College Selection

- First-generation students were more likely to rely on the advice of high school guidance counselors and relatives in deciding to attend a particular institution.
- Non-first-generation students were most influenced by the academic reputation of the university, likelihood of gaining entry to professional/graduate program and the institutions national ranking. By 2005, however, both groups of students were equally likely to report that preparation for graduate school was a very important reason for attending college.

Academic Preparation and Leadership Ability at College Entry

- A consistent gap between first-generation students and their peers has been demonstrated in the amount of time spent studying in high school, average grade in high school, academic self-confidence, and a widening gap is evident in the self-ratings of math and writing ability.
- Although there remains a slight disparity in the measure of social self-confidence, the gap is consistently larger for the self-rating of leadership ability, with first-generation students rating themselves lower.

Degree Objectives

- First-generation students tend to have lower educational aspirations than non-first-generation students. This may be explained by students' lack of information about degrees, college progress, availability of resources and their academic preparation.
- Over the last three decades, however, the data reflects rising degree aspirations for both groups of students. This portends a positive outlook for the expansion of graduate education.

Changing Student Values

- Financial considerations, including future earnings, have become a much stronger motivation for all students attending college over the last 35 years. In particular, first-generation students are more likely to report "being well off financially" as a very important or essential personal goal (81 percent vs. 73 percent).
- During this same time period, the desire to develop "a meaningful philosophy of life" (which is consistently higher among peers with college-educated parents) has declined in importance.

First-Generation Students at Private Institutions

- While public institutions have typically had higher proportions of first-generation college students compared to private institutions, the differences between institution types have narrowed since 1971.
- First-generation students attending private institutions were more likely to have families with annual incomes over \$40,000, more likely to have attended a private high school (religious or non-denominational), and more likely to have earned an A or better while in high school than their first-generation peers at public institutions.
- First-generation college students are more likely to choose to attend private colleges for reasons of size and because they received financial assistance. They are also more likely to live on campus than first-generation college students who elected to attend public institutions. These factors portend well for student engagement and retention in college.

Introduction

Over the last few decades, advances in increased access to higher education for many historically underrepresented groups — coupled with increased college participation rates among high school graduates — has generated an influx of new college students, some of whom are the first in their immediate family to go to college. First-generation college students are defined as those students whose parents have had no college or post-secondary experiences (Billson & Terry, 1982; Terenzini et. al., 1996; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Horn & Nunez, 2000; Choy, 2001; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001; Pascarella et. al., 2004). First-generation college students are receiving increasing attention from researchers and policymakers with the goal of better understanding their college decision-making process and supporting their progress in higher education. This is a critical population of students to study because of the general perception that, relative to their peers, such students have poorer academic preparation, different motivations for enrolling in college, varying levels of parental support and involvement, different expectations for their college experience, and significant obstacles in their path to retention and academic success. This report explores the differences between first-generation students and their non-first-generation peers by utilizing thirty-five years of survey trends data collected through the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's (CIRP) Freshman Survey (1971 to 2005).

A review of existing empirical and policy research on first-generation students examines critical differences across demographic characteristics, pre-college academic and social experiences, and college persistence measures. Missing from these discussions has been an historical overview of how the first-generation student population has changed over time relative to their peers. This report explores these historical differences across a variety of pre-college

measures through the use of CIRP Freshman Survey trends data. Fulfilling the evolving needs of first-generation college students necessitates a clearer understanding of their pre-college characteristics and college expectations. The report provides an historical approach that frames our present understandings and informs our future planning and programming for first-generation college students.

Our results yield important findings relative to our views, understandings, and misconceptions of first-generation college students. In particular, examining survey trends over time for this student population has revealed previously unknown or unanticipated pre-college behaviors, college-going motivations, and career-oriented values and objectives. Our results support contentions in prior research that financial considerations and family support and responsibilities are important for first-generation college students. Further, first-generation college students have been found to arrive at college with pressing differences in academic preparation compared to their non-first-generation peers, results that can portend gaps in achievement and eventual college success. The results of these trends analyses are a provocative portrait of the changing face of college students, especially for students that have little or no repository of prior knowledge or experiences from which to draw.

The report first reviews existing research and theoretical understandings concerning first-generation college students and discusses the methodological approach employed in conducting the trends analyses. This is followed by an overview of the demographic characteristics of the CIRP freshman survey trends sample over the last thirty-five years, which includes a focus on gender, racial/ethnic, and institutional differences. The crux of this report dissects CIRP trends on such issues as the importance of parental encouragement, students' reasons and motivations for going to college, students' financial concerns and considerations while in college, the

influence of home in the college choice process, students' pre-college academic preparation, as well as students' goals and values at college entry.

Existing Research on First-Generation College Students

Parental education is a key predictive measure of both college enrollment and degree completion for students from all racial/ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds (Terenzini et. al., 1996; Astin & Oseguera, 2005). The basic theoretical understanding for this relationship between parental education and college student success stems from research focusing on the effects of social and cultural capital on students' decisions to seek and obtain a higher education. Students with more educated parents (i.e., parents with at least some post-secondary education experience) tend to have an advantage over their first-generation peers in navigating the higher education landscape due to their greater access to financial, informational, and social resources. In effect, students with college-educated parents have greater social and/or cultural capital and thus enhanced access to such resources through their family relationships and social networks (Coleman, 1988; McDonough, 1997; Hossler et. al., 1999; Dika & Singh, 2002). At the same time, a lack of social and/or cultural capital—in the form of non-college-educated parents—can serve to undermine this access to resources for first-generation college students. This can then lead to less informed decisions about such critical issues as the college application process and choosing colleges, as well as academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular choices while attending college.

A disproportionate number of first-generation college students come from lower socioeconomic classes, are Hispanic, are foreign-born, and come from households where English is not the primary language spoken (Warburton et al., 2001). First-generation students are also

more likely than their peers to have attended high schools in small towns or rural communities, and they typically have lower overall SAT scores.

Since the likelihood of attending and graduating from college is strongly correlated to parental education, first-generation students face more difficult challenges relative to their peers in traversing through the higher education pipeline. Such obstacles can include: limited access to information about how to choose the best college; lack of knowledge over navigating the college environment, its academic expectations, and bureaucratic operations; lack of adequate academic preparation, and lack of family support (McDonough, 1997; Thayer, 2000; Pascarella et. al., 2004). Other recent studies of first-generation students indicate that even among those most qualified and academically prepared for college, they are less likely to enroll in 4-year institutions and are less likely to complete a bachelor's degree as compared to their non-first-generation peers (Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Horn & Nuñez, 2000). In sum, students whose parents have no education beyond high school are significantly less likely to attend and graduate from college than their peers whose parents have at least a bachelor's degree (Pascarella et al., 2004; Astin & Oseguera, 2005).

One area that remains unexamined within this body of research is the historical overview of how incoming first-generation college students have changed over time relative to their peers. This report aims to explore these historical differences across many key facets, including their motivations for attending college, their varying levels of parental support and involvement, their concerns over financing college, and their varying expectations about work, family, and academics. Chronicling the evolving needs of this critical subset of students can serve to enhance our awareness and inform our institutional planning and programming targeting these students.

Description of Methods

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program's (CIRP) Freshman Survey was initiated in 1966 and is the longest running study of the American higher education system. Throughout the last four decades, the CIRP Freshman survey has canvassed the incoming college freshmen population on a variety of pre-college experiences, motivations, and college expectations. Each year, these data are collected along an institutional sampling plan to ensure representation of four-year institutions and to reflect a national normative profile of the American freshman population at all four-year, public or private colleges and universities (Pryor, Hurtado, Saenz, Korn, Santos & Korn, 2006). These data from four-year institutions can thus be used by individuals engaged in policy and/or educational research, human resource planning, higher education administration, and guidance and counseling.

The normative nature of these data, accomplished by asking the same (or similar) questions across different cohorts of students, has enabled the collection of CIRP "trends" for a national normative sample of incoming college freshmen across four decades. CIRP Freshman trends data were available for first-generation college students and their peers beginning in 1971 through 2005². As with other CIRP Freshman trends reports (Astin, Oseguera, Sax & Korn, 2002; Allen, Jayakumar, Griffin, Korn & Hurtado, 2005), these data were drawn from a weighted national normative sample of first-time, full-time freshman students attending four-year institutions across the US.

The two primary groups of analysis include first-generation college students, defined as those students who reported that neither parent ever attended a post-secondary institution (i.e., a high school graduate or below), and non-first-generation college students, defined as those

² While CIRP Freshman survey data is available as early as 1966, we begin our reporting in 1971 due to minor inconsistencies in the data collection methods prior to that year and the inability to construct national norms.

students who reported that at least one of their parents attended and/or completed some post-secondary education (e.g., associate's degree, college graduate, and etc.). A collection of other empirical and policy researchers have employed this schema in distinguishing between the two groups (Billson & Terry, 1982; Terenzini et. al., 1996; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Horn & Nunez, 2000; Choy, 2001; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001; Pascarella et. al., 2004).

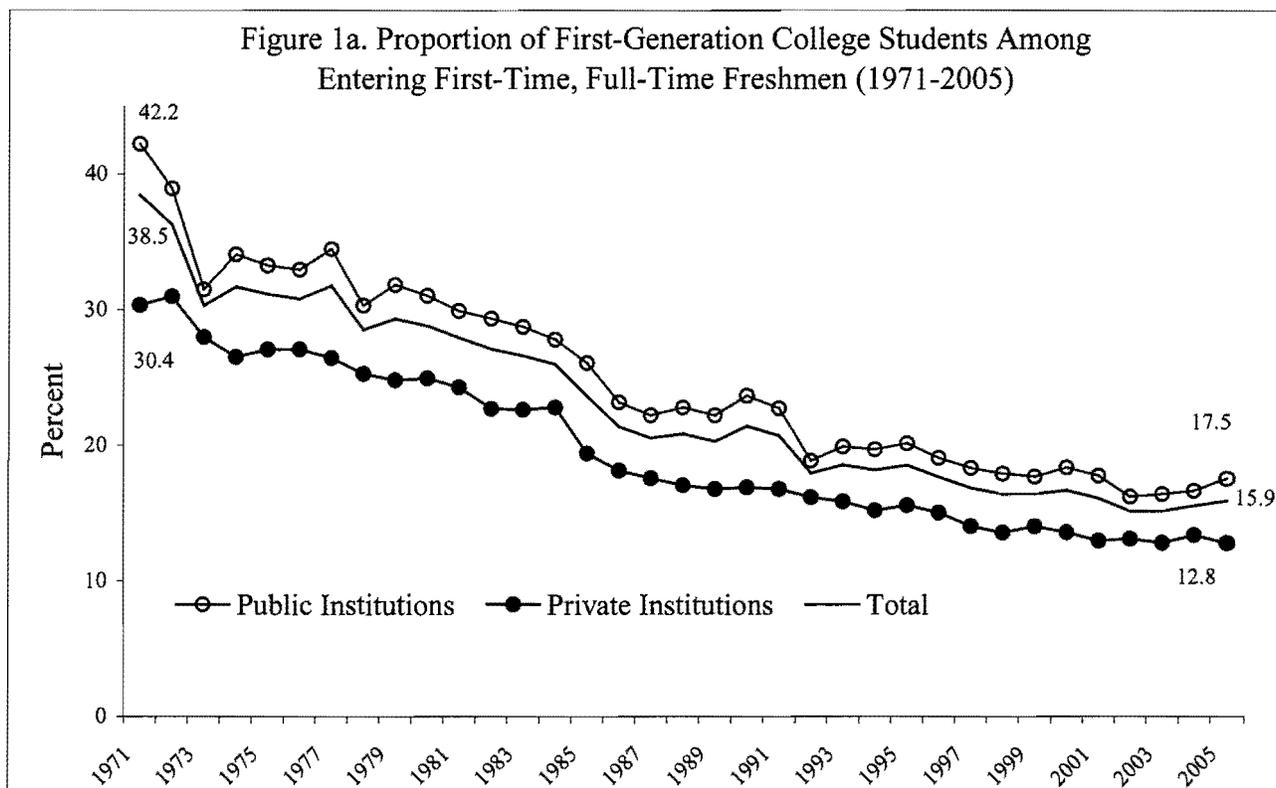
Demographers often use the descriptor "first-generation" to designate someone who is first in their immediate family to enter into a new country or embrace a new social status. Similarly, those who are first in their immediate family to attend college can be labeled as first-generation college students, and conversely, their peers with parents who have had at least some college are non-first-generation college students.

Demographic Summary

Since 1971, CIRP freshman survey data indicate that the proportion of first-generation students within the overall population of first-time, full-time entering college freshman at four-year institutions has steadily declined. In 1971, first-generation students represented 38.5 percent of all first-time, full-time college freshman, a figure that drops in half by 1992 (Figure 1a). By 2005, the proportion of first-generation college students declined to 15.9 percent of all entering freshman. The overall decline in proportional representation of first-generation college students at four-year institutions over the last thirty-five years is an important contextual point to establish at the outset.

In exploring these data by institutional characteristics (public and private sectors), first-generation students represented 42.5 percent of students at public institutions in 1971 and 30.5 percent of students at private institutions in the same year. However, the proportion of first-generation students at both public and private institutions has decreased over time, and they

remain slightly more prevalent at public than at private institutions. By 2005, the proportion gap between public and private institutions narrowed to 4.7 percentage points, down from 12.0 points in 1971.

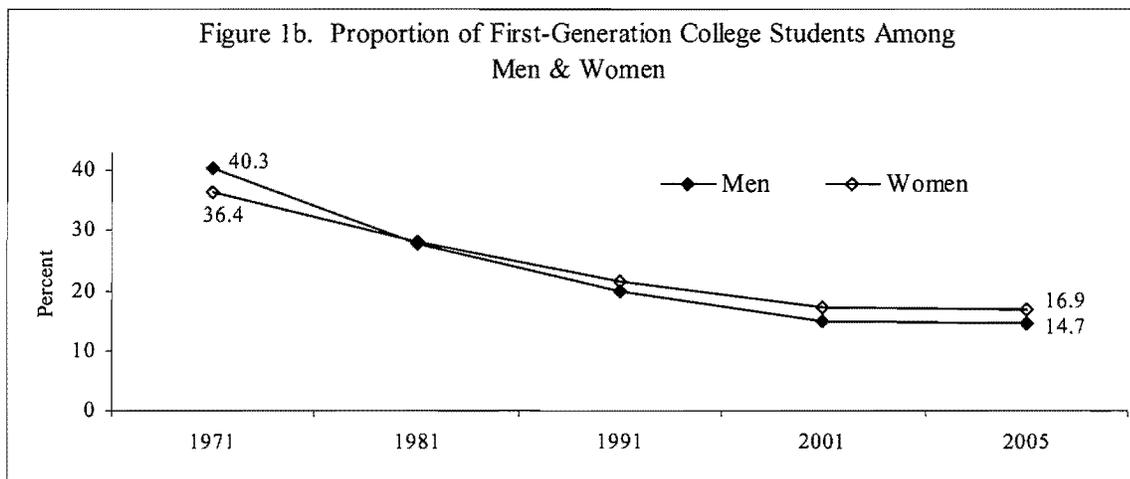


Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

All private institutions are included in this analysis, ranging from research institutions to liberal arts colleges, religious-affiliated colleges and universities, and other nonsectarian institutions. Relative to their public counterparts, many of these private institutions tend to have a smaller undergraduate student body, fewer curricular offerings, and are more expensive (i.e., tuition and fees); yet they offer a variety of financial aid options, are more focused on teaching and learning, and have specific missions. In partnership with the Foundation for Independent Higher Education (FIHE), first-generation college students attending private institutions are given special attention in this report due to this unique institutional context.

Gender Differences

A closer look at the demographic data reveal some slight differences across sex, with women somewhat more likely than men to be first-generation students since the late 1980s (Figure 2). In 1971, 40.3 percent of all men and 36.4 percent of all women were first-generation college students, and by the early 1980s these proportional representations reversed. In 2005, 16.9 percent of all women and 14.7 percent of all men among entering college students were first-generation. While the differences in proportional representation appear to be small, these trends establish important demographic characteristics for the first-generation population that help to inform further results.

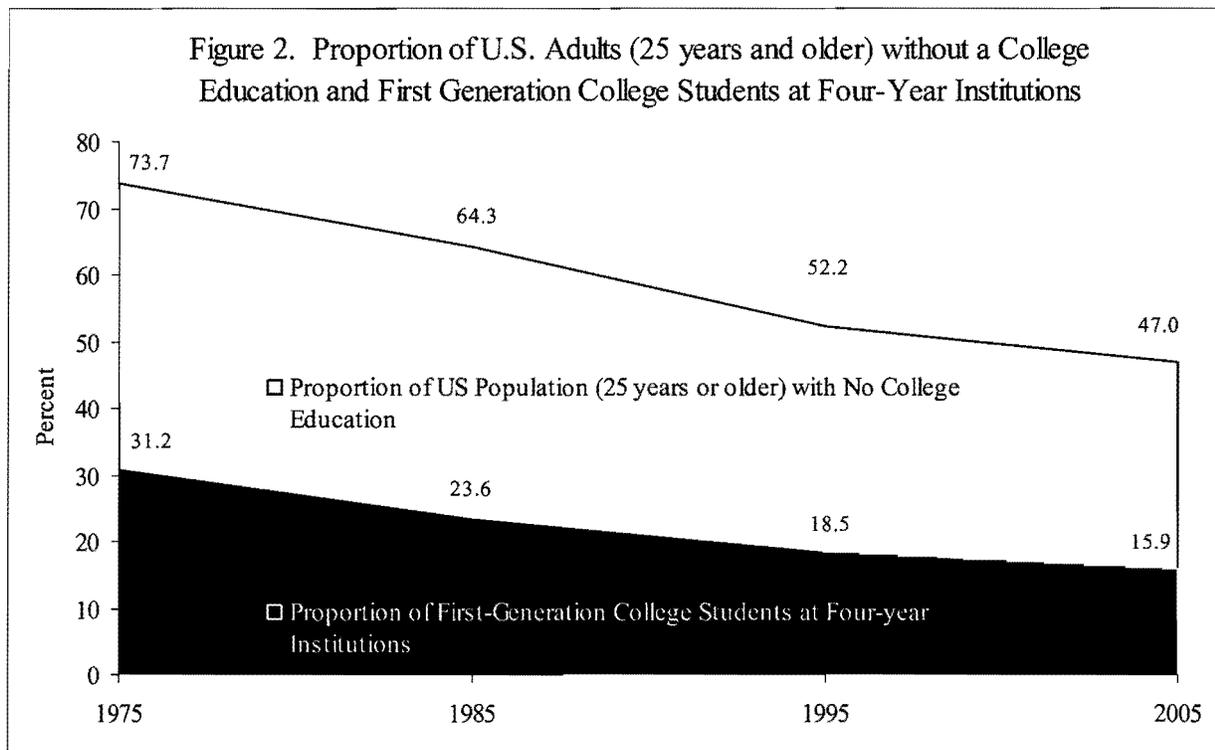


Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

Educational Attainment

The decline in proportional representation for first-generation college students is partly attributable to the increased educational attainment of the U.S. population over this same time period as well as the increased tendency of first-generation students to attend two-year rather than four-year institutions immediately after high school (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Horn & Nunez, 2000; Choy, 2001). The first point can be further illustrated by comparing the

proportion of the U.S. population with no college education against the proportion of first-generation college students entering four-year institutions. In 1975, Figure 2 shows that the proportion of the U.S. population over 25 years of age with no college education was 73.7 percent, a figure that has declined to less than half of the population (47.0 percent) by 2005. This represents a percent decrease of 36.3 percent during this thirty-year span. Meanwhile, within the same time period, the proportion of first-generation college students has declined from 31.2 percent to 15.9 percent, a percent decline of 49.0 percent.



Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys for 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005; CIRP Freshman Survey Trends for 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005.

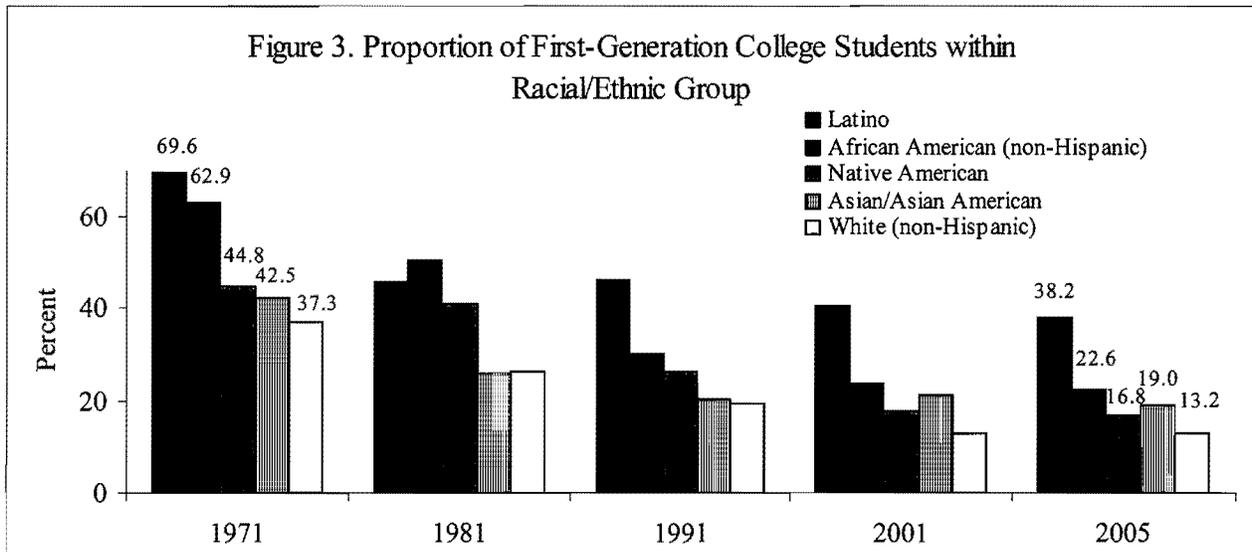
The two trend lines portrayed in Figure 2 are intended for demonstration purposes only in order to establish a context with which to consider the declining proportion of first-generation students among entering college freshman. The intention is not to suggest that a statistical relationship exists between the two, but rather to offer a broad backdrop for how educational

attainment rates have changed in the last 35 years. Nonetheless, the mirrored relationship between these two trends suggests that the proportion of the non-college-educated populace has been declining at a parallel rate with the proportion of first-generation college students. This lends support to the notion that the declining proportion of first-generation college students—among entering college freshmen—is partly due to the increasing level of educational attainment among the U.S. population. Other educational attainment data also reinforces this point, as over 1.29 million bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2002 compared to just under 918,000 in 1977 (NCES, 2003). It is widely acknowledged, however, that gains in the rate of educational attainment are not necessarily uniform across racial/ethnic groups.

Racial/Ethnic Group Differences

Compelling differences over time are seen when we disaggregate the first-generation trends data by racial/ethnic groups (Figure 3). Even while the national average of first-generation students was 38.5 percent in 1971 among entering freshmen, the proportion was much higher for Hispanics (69.6 percent), African Americans (62.9 percent), Native Americans (44.8 percent), and Asian/Asian Americans (42.5 percent). These differences are not surprising given the wide gap in educational opportunities that existed prior to the 1970s, before the advent of many financial aid programs and other state and federal policies designed to give greater access to low-income and historically underrepresented students (Anderson, 2002). Over the last 35 years, while the proportion of first-generation students within each of these racial/ethnic groups has steadily declined, this proportion has remained highest for Hispanic first-generation students. Over time, Hispanic students have remained more likely than their peers to be first-generation college students, with over one-third (38.2 percent) included in this category in 2005. Considering that these CIRP trends only focus on four-year institutions, this proportion for

Hispanic students would be much higher if we were to account for their over-representation in community colleges. Also, relative to other racial/ethnic groups, the proportional decline of Hispanic first-generation college students has been much slower, a relevant finding that could be indicative of the poor overall gains in access to four-year institutions for this population of students.



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions. Latina/o students can include students from Mexican American/Chicano, Puerto Rican, or other Hispanic backgrounds. The descriptor “non-Hispanic” indicates that the respective group omits all Hispanic students; as such students can be from any racial group.

Within the White (non-Hispanic) group, students have remained consistently less likely to be first-generation at 13.2 percent in 2005; nonetheless, it should be noted that White (non-Hispanic) students represent a large majority of all entering first-generation college students due to their numerical majority within the entering college student population. Also of note, the ratio of first-generation Native American students has decreased to 16.8 percent in 2005, which is close to the national average for that year (15.9 percent). However, this downward trend may be skewed by the low overall representation of Native American students at four-year institutions. Meanwhile, Asian/Asian American students have shown significant decreases over the last three

decades in the representation of first-generation students within this group at the same time that this group has shown significant gains in overall representation within four-year institutions. African American students show a declining proportion of first-generation representation, dropping by almost two-thirds from 1971 (62.9 percent) to 2005 (22.6 percent). Compared to other groups, African American students show the greatest decline in first-generation status relative to the proportion of African American adults without a college education, a point illustrated in Table 1.

When comparing the proportion of first-generation students by overall educational attainment rates within racial/ethnic groups, some additional differences emerge. In further exploring key racial/ethnic differences, Table 1 displays the proportion of first-generation college students for 1975 and 2005 compared to the proportion of the U.S. population (25 years or older) with no college education at these two time points.

Table 1. Racial/Ethnic Percentage Comparisons Among the U.S. Population with No College Education and First-Generation College Students

		1975	2005	%
		%	%	change
U.S. Population (25 years or older) with No College Education	All	73.7	47.0	-36.3
	White	72.8	42.8	-41.2
	African American	84.5	55.7	-34.1
	Hispanic	85.0	69.1	-18.7
First-Generation College Students	All	31.2	15.9	-49.0
	White	28.9	12.9	-55.4
	African American	51.5	20.4	-60.3
	Hispanic	57.6	35.8	-37.8

Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys for 1975 & 2005; CIRP Freshman Survey Trends for 1975 & 2005. Data for Asians/Asian Americans was not available within U.S. Census data prior to 1990 and thus cannot be displayed. U.S. Census data for Hispanics in 1975 includes all “Spanish-origin” groups.

As observed in Figure 2, the proportion of the 25 and older U.S. population with no college education has been on the decline over the last 30 years, paralleling the proportional

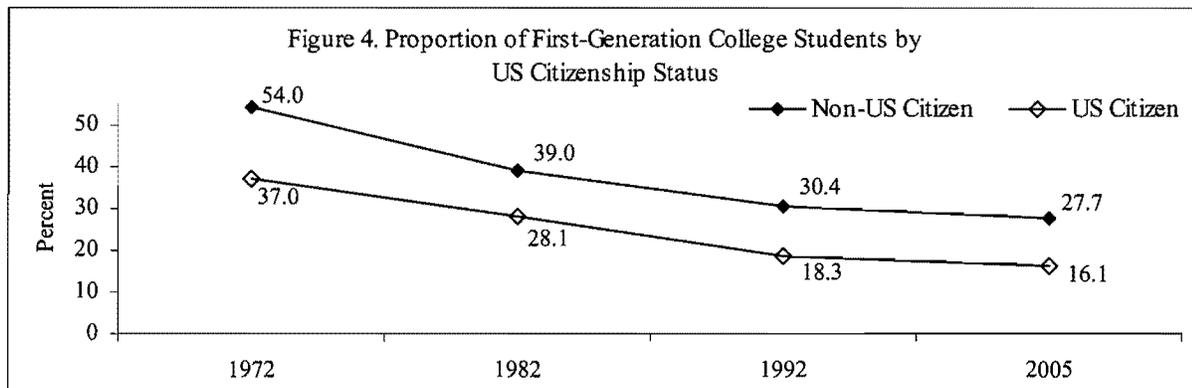
decline for first-generation college students. Nonetheless, in all cases, the rate of decline has been stronger for first-generation college student representation than in their respective adult population.

While the proportion of non-college-educated White citizens has declined by 41.2 percent in the last 30 years (from 72.8 percent to 42.8 percent), this same decline for Hispanics registers at 18.7 percent. Likewise, the rate of decline for White students that are first-generation over the last thirty years is 55.4 percent as compared to a rate of 37.8 percent among Hispanics. Meanwhile, African American students have shown the greatest proportional decrease in first-generation students in the last three decades, greater even than for Whites (60.3 percent change, 1975 to 2005). Yet, this may be a cause for concern precisely because the rate of decline is faster than the relative proportion of African American adults without a college education. In other words, it is very probable that first-generation African American students are having more difficulty gaining access to four-year institutions, a supposition which can also be made for Hispanic first-generation students.

Thus, while it may appear in the aggregate that the declining representation of first-generation college students has aligned with the declining proportion of the U.S. population with no college education, a closer look yields a much more nuanced and compelling portrait. The declining proportion of first-generation college students entering four-year institutions over the last 30 years should be closely scrutinized, and careful consideration out to be take before we can characterize these proportional declines as “gains” for these historically underrepresented student populations. These important distinctions within racial/ethnic groups reaffirm the increasing attention that is necessary to make a four-year college education available to Hispanic and African American first-generation students.

Citizenship Status

Another demographic characteristic that we examined was U.S. citizenship status. Figure 4 shows that for U.S. citizens, the decline in overall representation of first-generation college students has closely mirrored the decline for all entering college students (Figure 1a). Likewise, the proportion of first-generation status within non-citizens has decreased by half over the last thirty years, from 54.0 percent in 1972 to 27.7 percent in 2005. This would place non-citizens immediately after Hispanics as the group most likely to be first-generation college students.



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

These trends results establish important demographic differences between first-generation students and their non-first-generation peers, differences that help to shape our interpretations of other pre-college trends that are further explored.

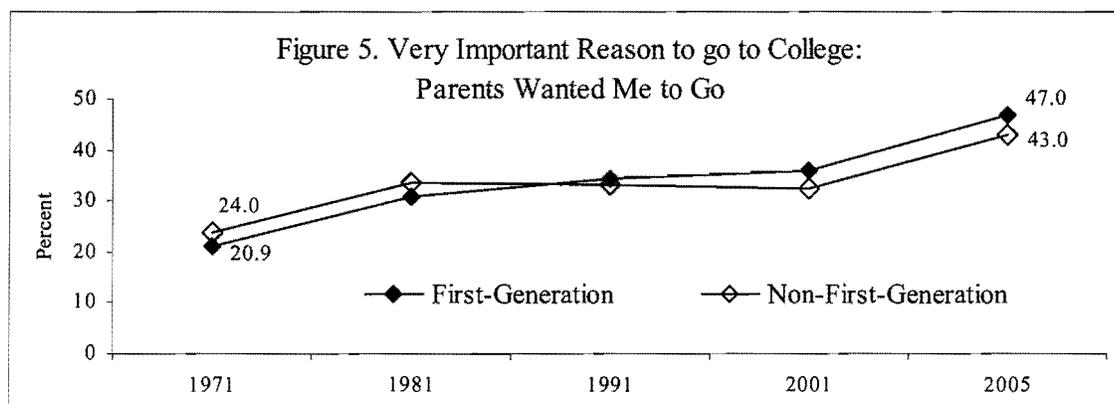
CIRP Freshman Survey Trends

Examining differences over time between entering first-generation college students and their peers allows us an occasion to inform our understandings and perhaps challenge some of our assumptions about this first-generation college student population. With a focus on parental encouragement, reasons and motivations for going to college, financial concerns and considerations while in college, pre-college academic preparation, as well as students' goals and

values at college entry, the remainder of the report delves into the changing face of entering college students from a fresh perspective.

Parental Encouragement

As noted earlier, some of the challenges facing first-generation students are the lack of knowledge regarding college applications, financial aid and support from parents who did not pursue college themselves (Thayer, 2000; Vargas, 2004). Despite the assertion that first-generation students are at a disadvantage due to their parents' lack of knowledge about formal educational systems and higher education, our CIRP trend results show that both first-generation and non-first-generation students placed similar importance on parental encouragement for college. An increasing proportion of students over the last couple of decades have reported that a very important reason why they went to college was because their parents wanted them to go. In 2005, 47.0 percent of first-generation students (vs. 43.0 percent for non-first-generation students) reported this as a very important reason for attending college. It is important to note that this trend has reversed for the two groups—first-generation students are now more likely to report parental encouragement as a very important reason for going to college.

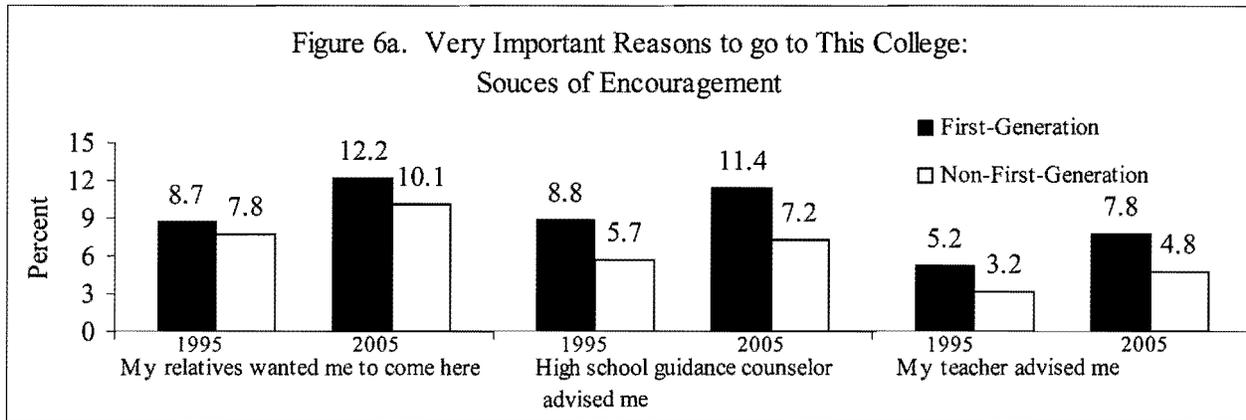


Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

The trends for each group in Figure 5 show the similarity with which parents of first-generation students value higher education relative to the parents of non-first-generation students. The awareness and the value placed on higher education align with larger societal shifts from the industrial employment sector to more technological fields, shifts that predicate how more education is essential in the new global economy (Feliciano, 2006). Perhaps influenced by the current “hour glass” economy, with more employment opportunities in the top and bottom stratifications of society and fewer for the middle class, most parents are more likely to encourage their children to pursue careers aligned with the top of the economic structure (Feliciano, 2006). These results further suggest that parents may have central roles in shaping first-generation students’ orientation for higher education despite their lack of first-hand experience. This finding dispels the common misconception that the parents of first-generation college students may deter a student’s college aspirations.

Reasons for Choosing a College: Motivations for First-Generation Students and Peers

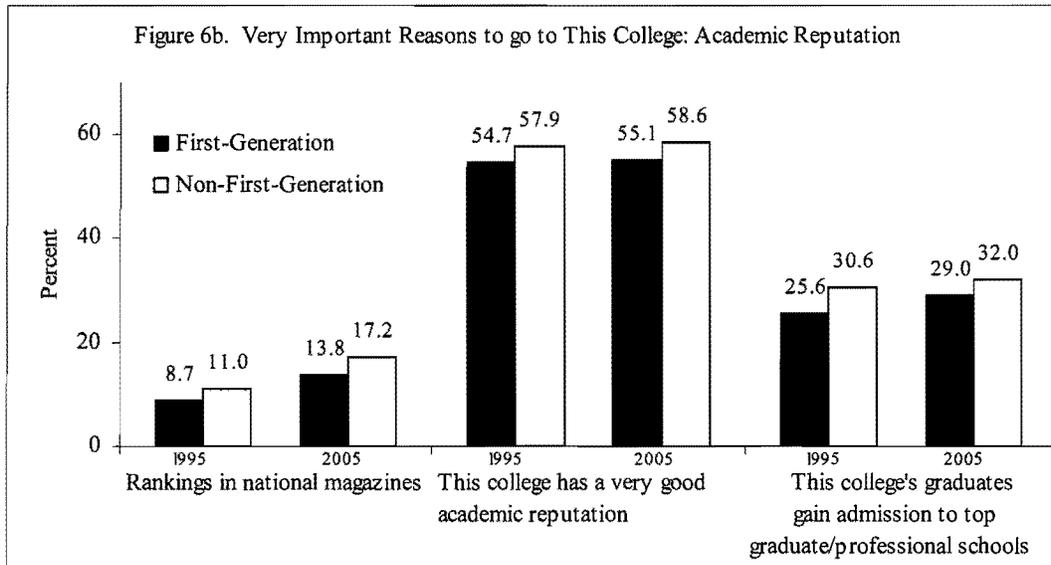
Given that first-generation students are the first in their families to pursue higher education, they tend to have limited access to information about applying to college relative to their non-first-generation peers (Thayer, 2000; Vargas, 2004). Although previous research has indicated that students receive marginal assistance from high school guidance counselors, relatives, and teachers (Choy, 2001), the trends analyses suggest that an increasing proportion of first-generation students report that such guidance was very important in their decision to choose a college (Figure 6a).



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

Among the reasons for attending a particular college, first-generation students indicated that high school guidance counselors (11.4 percent) and relatives (12.2 percent) were very important in affecting their decisions to attend a particular institution. Each of these sources of encouragement yields a stronger influence on first-generation students as compared to their peers. These relationships underscore the importance of familiar adults who can support students through their college decision-making process.

First-generation students increasingly look to a college's academic reputation, the likelihood of gaining entry into a top graduate/professional program, and the institution's national ranking as very important reasons for choosing their respective colleges. In 2005, more than half (54.7 percent) of first-generation students indicated that the school's good academic reputation was a very important reason for selecting their particular college. In the last decade, the trends data also show slight increases for first-generation students and non-first-generation peers who relied on rankings to choose a particular college. However, first-generation students are slightly less likely to rely on rankings to select their college.



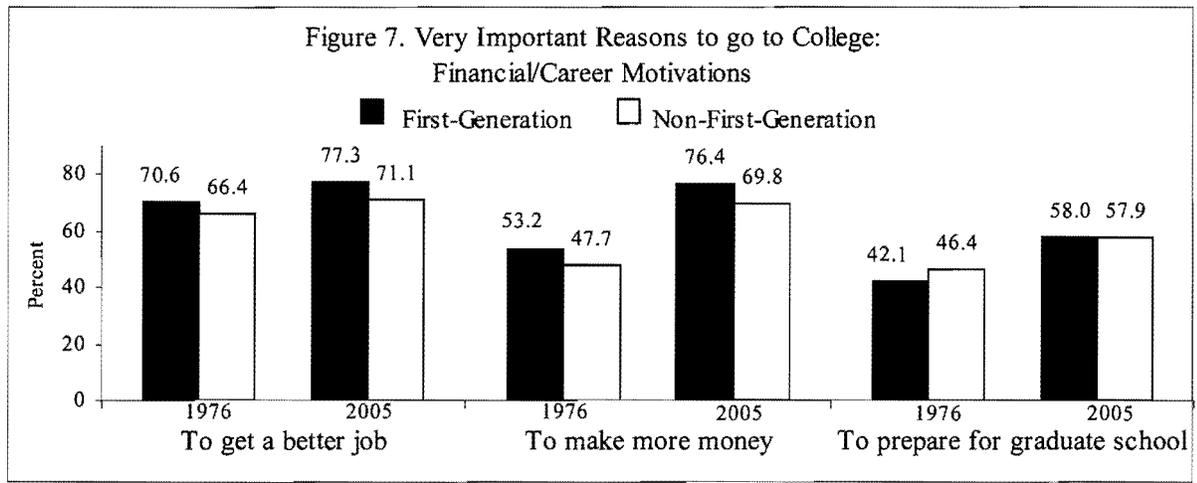
Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

There appear to be only slight yet statistically significant differences that first-generation students exhibit in their college choice process relative to their peers among influences related to the academic reputation of the institution (proportional difference test, $p < .001$). Indeed, first-generation students as compared to their peers are slightly more likely to report that academic reputation and a strong track-record of placing students in top graduate/professional schools are more important factors to them in influencing their choice of institution. These findings represent important areas for further research on first-generation students.

Reasons for Going to College: Financial Security and Future Plans for Education

For most first-generation students, other reasons noted as very important in deciding to go to college include to get a better job, to make more money, and to prepare for graduate school. Our findings demonstrate that first-generation students are more concerned with financial security, which influences the importance students place on obtaining a good job that pays well after college. A student's decision to attend college is inextricably linked to their financial

situation. This relationship will be explored further in subsequent sections. In Figure 7, we observe that since 1976, an increasing percentage of students view college as a pathway to both getting a better job and preparing for graduate education. In 2005, similar percentages of first-generation students and their peers reported that getting a better job and preparing for graduate school were very important reasons for attending college.

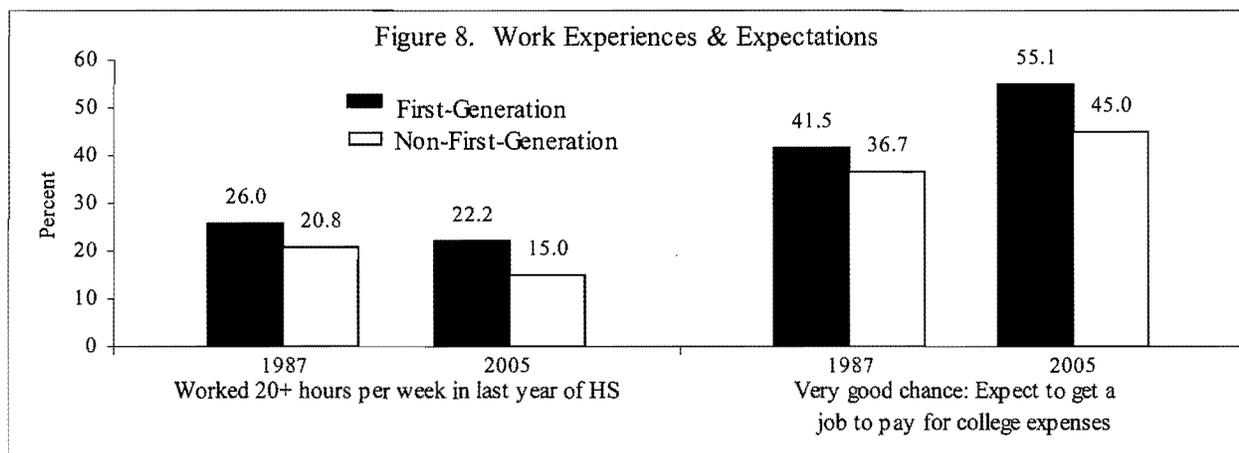


Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

Aspirations to attend graduate school and future financial stability are also intertwined to shape the contextual mindset that first-generation students enter college with, one that does not appear to differ much from their non-first-generation peers on these key reasons for going to college. One key exception lies in the importance of “making more money” as a reason for going to college, as first-generation college students report that this remains a slightly more important priority for them relative to their peers (76.4 percent vs. 69.8 percent). Most evident in these trends data is the increasing importance of these key factors for attending college for both student groups over three decades. We have seen tremendous societal change over this time, and the college students of today are much more driven by personal and economic priorities that have come to define our emerging global economy.

Work Experiences and Expectations at College Entry

Prior research shows that on average, first-generation college students work more than their counterparts and they are more likely to have full-time positions (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). The CIRP freshman survey trends expand on these findings, demonstrating that more first-generation college students report working 20 hours per week or more during their last year of high school, and more of them expect to work to pay for college expenses than their non-first-generation peers (see Figure 8). Compared to their counterparts, 26.0 percent of first-generation students in 1987 (when the item was first introduced into the survey) reported working over 20 hours per week in their last year of high school compared to 18.9 percent of non-first-generation students. In 2005, 22.2 percent of first-generation students reported working more than 20 hours compared to 15.0 percent of their peers.



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions. HS: high school.

In the last twenty years, a rising proportion of students are reporting stronger expectations to get a job to pay for college expenses. From 1987 to 2005, there was an increase of 13.6 percentage points in the proportion of first-generation college students reporting a very good

chance they would get a job to pay for college, increasing from two out of every five students (41.5 percent) to well over half (55.1 percent). In comparison, between 1987 and 2005, more non-first-generation college students reported a high expectation to get a job to help pay for expenses (36.7 percent to 45.0 percent). Most concerning is that the trends data reveal an increasing gap between first-generation college students and their peers on this measure.

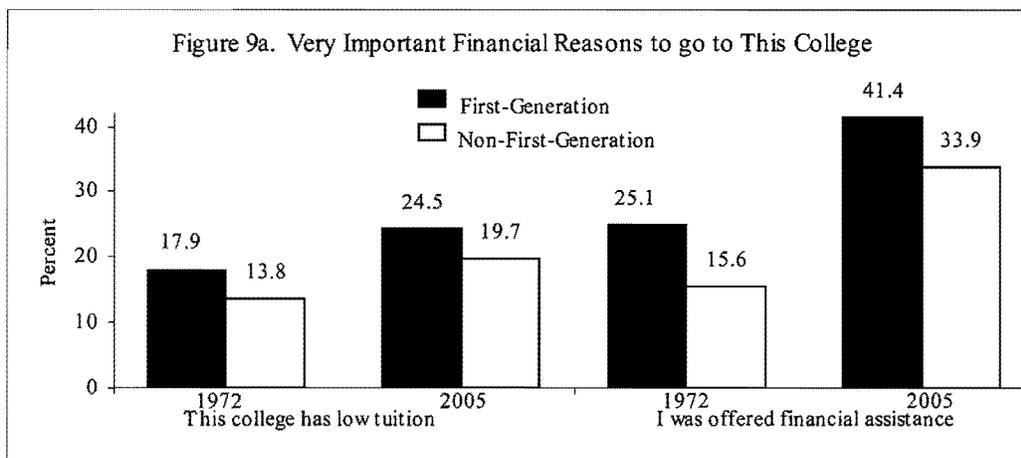
One of the more striking observations about these two trends is that over the last 20 years, there is an apparent inverse relationship between reported work experiences during high school and expectations to work during college. Perhaps upon facing the realities of a rising tab for financing college, students seem more resigned to get a job in anticipation of higher college costs. The sharp rise in tuition and fees from the mid 1980s to 2005 could certainly be affecting these increased expectations for work during college. Data from the College Board (2005) indicate that tuition and fees for private colleges and universities has risen 587 percent (in current dollars) from 1980 to 2005 and even higher for public colleges and universities (683 percent). Considering the rising costs of higher education, students may be choosing paid work during college as an alternate financing method for college (Orfield, 1992; Debard, 2000).

This alternative appears to be a viable option for most undergraduates, considering that seventy-two percent of undergraduates are working while enrolled in college (NCES, 2003). Yet this viability has the potential to translate into disastrous results for students' eventual degree attainment (Astin & Oseguera, 2005). Institutions should heed these trends data in informing their institutional programming for first-year students, as the expectation to work during college can translate into more time spent away from campus, lack of preparation for classroom assignments, and declines in formal and informal engagement within the college environment that could affect degree attainment.

Financial Considerations for Going to College

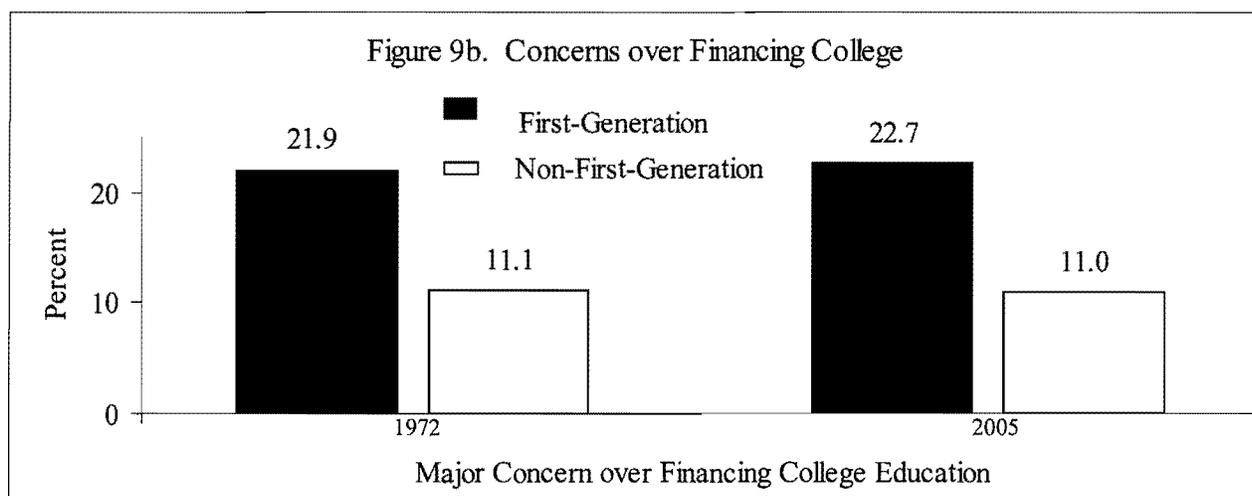
Research on the college choice process identifies financial factors as important to students' decision to attend a particular college (Paulsen & St. John, 1997). Financial assistance has been shown to be more crucial in the decision-making process for lower income students, among them, first-generation college students. One-half of first-generation students are from low-income families compared to one-third of students whose parents have had at least some college experience (Horn & Nunez, 2000). Therefore, as our trends data suggest, the ability to finance higher education is an important concern for first-generation students.

Figure 9a displays students' financial considerations in their college decision in 1972 and 2003. The picture is clear: since the 1970s, a greater proportion of first-generation students compared to their peers have considered financial factors very important in their decisions to attend their particular higher education institution and their ability to finance their college education. In 2003, nearly one quarter (24.5 percent) of first-generation college students compared to 19.7 percent of their peers considered their colleges' low tuition status as very important to their decision to attend a specific college.



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

Also, more first-generation college students in 2005 (41.4 percent) reported that an offer of financial assistance was very important in affecting their decision to attend a specific college compared to 1972 (25.1 percent). Figure 9a shows an increase of 16.3 percentage points for first-generation college students and 18.3 percentage points for their non-first-generation peers between 1972 and 2005 in terms of this consideration.



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

Among all college freshmen, major concerns over financing a college education have changed little since 1972 although a persistent gap remains between the two groups (Figure 9b). In 2005, first-generation students were about twice as likely to report major concerns over their ability to pay for college expenses as compared to their peers (22.7 percent versus 11.0 percent). This may be due to the fact that on average, first-generation college students report lower incomes than their peers. Additionally, the rise in college tuition and fees for all students over the past three decades may be a contributing factor (College Board, 2005).

First-generation college students tend to choose less expensive institutions and those offering financial assistance, an inference borne out both by these data as well as existing

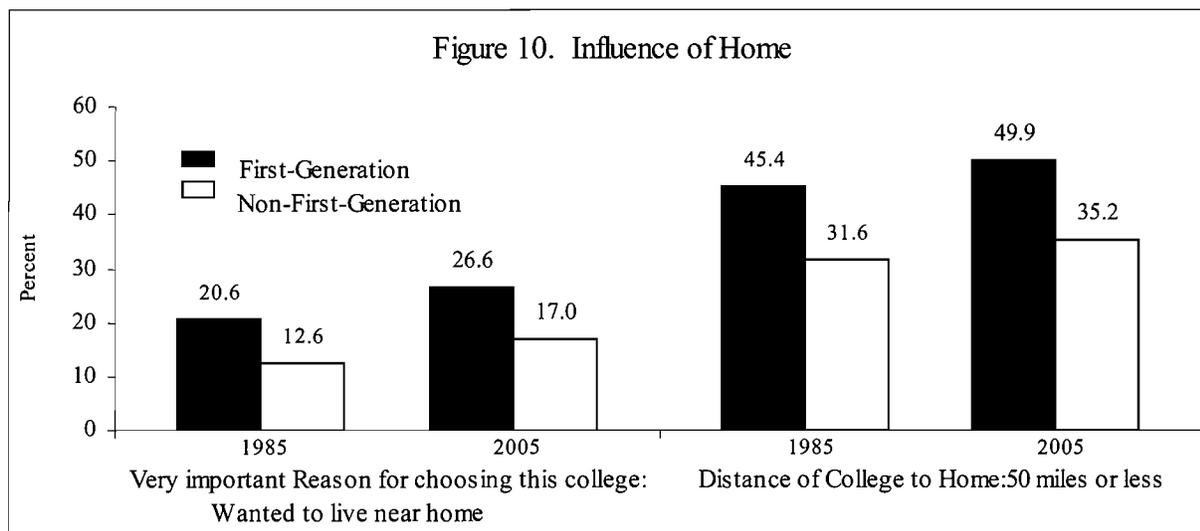
research. Empirical evidence shows that first-generation college students are more likely to enroll in lower-cost institutions than students whose parents have bachelor degrees (Education Resources Institute & Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1997). Because of their lower socioeconomic status compared to other students, first-generation college students may view a low-tuition institution or an offer of financial assistance as a more enticing opportunity toward the realization of their educational goals. Yet, this seemingly pragmatic approach in making their college decision may also serve to limit the pool of institutions they consider for enrollment.

Influence of Home in the College Choice Process

First-generation college students are more likely to choose a college so they can live closer to home as compared to their counterparts for several reasons: 1) they have limited social capital necessary to successfully integrate into the college/university environment (Pascarella et al., 2004); 2) they are less likely to attend college full-time, which may disqualify them from eligibility for campus housing; 3) they are more likely to attend community colleges located near their homes; and, 4) first-generation college students are more likely to live with family or relatives than their counterparts (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). Qualitative studies suggest that first-generation college students may experience more challenges with separation from the family and past communities than students whose parents have some college experience (London, 1989).

The CIRP Freshman survey trends data illustrated in Figure 10 support these findings. Over time, more first-generation college students as compared to their peers reported that living close to home was a very important reason for choosing their respective college. In 1985, 20.6 percent of first-generation students reported this was a very important consideration compared to

12.6 percent of their peers. By 2005, the proportions had increased to 26.6 percent and 17.0 percent, respectively. The trends data suggest the gap is increasing, and living closer to home is a more salient consideration for first-generation students relative to their peers in their choice of college.



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

Between 1985 and 2005, trends data also show an increase in the percentage of all students reporting their college was fifty miles or less from their home. A higher percentage of non-first-generation students also reported living close to home in 2005 than in 1985 (31.6 percent to 35.2 percent). Over time, a steady gap of about 14 percentage points has remained between the two groups on this measure, indicating that first-generation students are more likely than their peers to choose an institution that is closer to home (within 50 miles or less).

Perhaps one reason why more students in 2005 reported living close to home than in 1985 could be the rising costs of room and board at public and private four-year institutions. In a report of college pricing between 1975 and 2005, the College Board (2005) reported the average cost of room and board for private universities in the mid 1980s of \$5,007 per full-time

undergraduate student (in constant dollars), compared to \$7,791 in 2005. Although not as expensive, the average public four-year institution charged \$4,452 for room and board in 1985 (in constant dollars) and \$6,636 in 2005. Given the increase of approximately 64 percent in the cost of room and board for private four-year institutions and 67 percent for public four-year institutions over the past 20 years, one can assume that more students are choosing colleges closer to home. By attending a college less than 50 miles from home, entering freshmen can decrease their costs of attendance through in-state tuition or living at home for free.

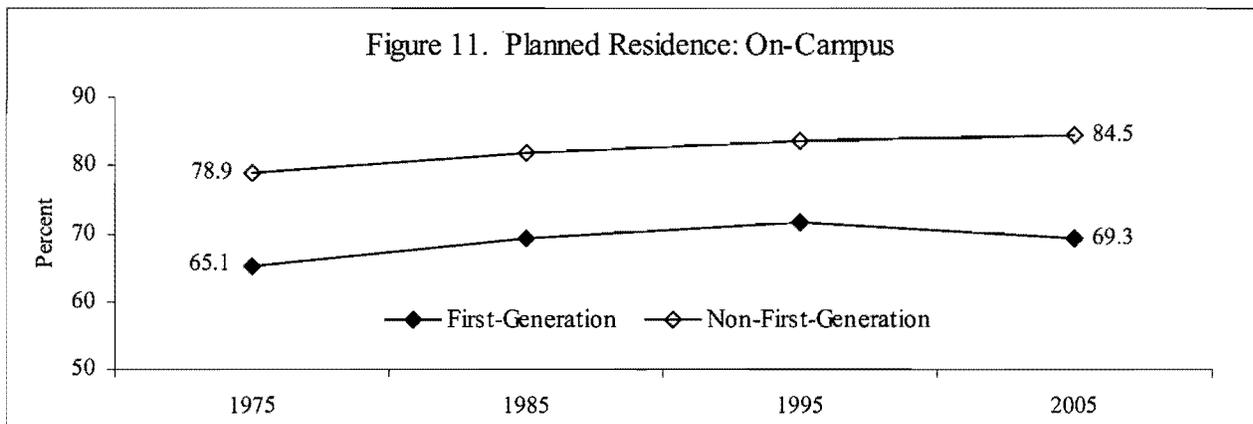
Unfortunately for all students—and first-generation college students in particular—higher education costs are expected to continue increasing, especially considering the recent stagnation in the value of Pell Grants (College Board, 2005). These increased costs have the potential of further tracking first-generation students into low-cost public and private four-year institutions as well as two-year institutions.

When coupled with other considerations, the decision to attend a college close to home may be directly influenced by the financial outlook of the student and his/her family. It is possible that students want to live near home to cut educational expenses (as suggested above) or that in this time of economic uncertainty, first-year college students are not confident they can be financially independent, which is a key marker of young adulthood (Arnett, 1998). In spite of the reason, more college students now are considering the ability to live closer to home as an important consideration in their college choice process.

College Residence

One important gap that has held relatively constant over the years for each group is students' reported place of residence during their first year of college (Figure 11). Over the last three decades, non-first-generation students have consistently reported a greater likelihood to live

on campus, which is definitively associated with student social involvement and college success (Astin, 1993; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak and Terenzini, 2004).



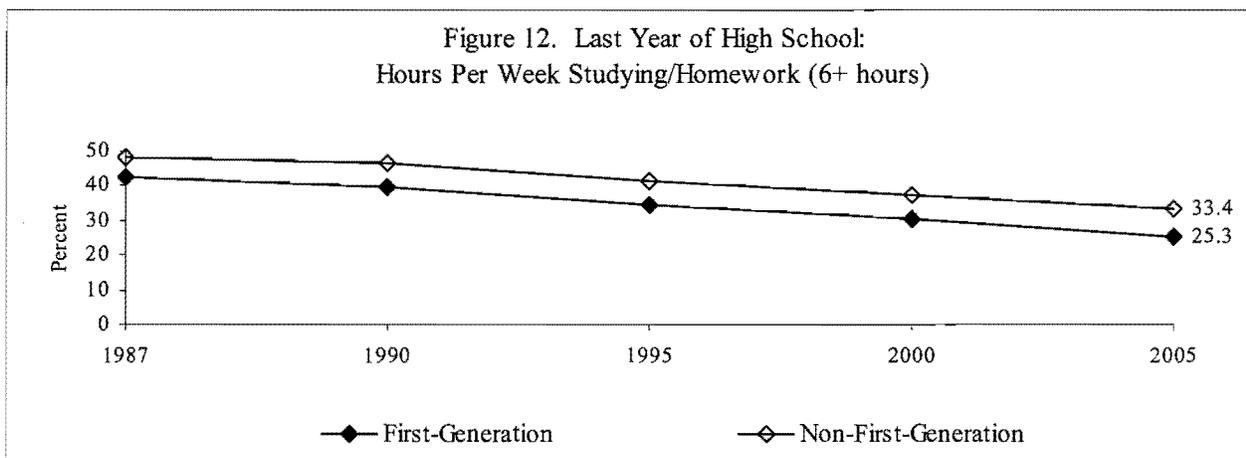
Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

In 1975, there was almost a fourteen percentage-point difference between the groups in this expectation (78.9 percent vs. 65.1 percent). In 2005, the gap has remained steady at just over fifteen percentage points, with 84.5 percent of non-first-generation students expecting to live on campus, compared to 69.3 percent of first-generation students. Research have shown that campus engagement can lead to desired academic outcomes such as critical thinking, degree attainment, and control over academic success (Astin, 1993; Pascarella et. al, 2004). The persistent gap between the two peer groups reveals an important characteristic about their first-year experience which has the potential for increasingly disparate effects in their degree attainment, especially when compounded with other challenges. It should be noted that over time, more colleges have offered opportunities for campus residence for freshmen, yet the gap between first-generation and non-first-generation college students remains pervasive. New research on living-learning programs—widely adopted at many four-year colleges in the last ten years—suggests that such programs and their support structures promote the transition to college of first-generation college students (Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2007). On top of other financial and academic

challenges many first-generation students may face, the fact that almost one-third of this student population is living off-campus during their first year diminishes the probability of achieving desired college outcomes.

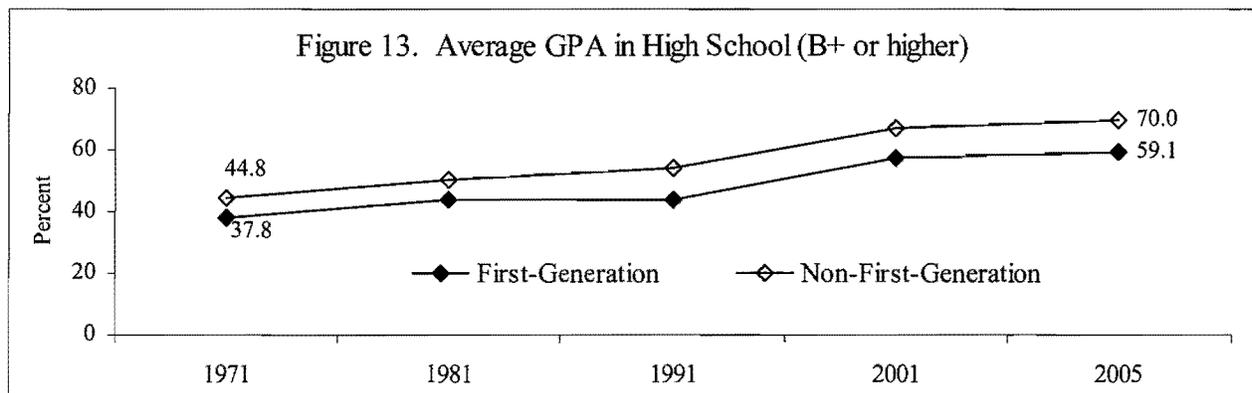
Academic Preparation at College Entry

The CIRP Freshman Survey trends data reveal that first-generation students consistently report spending less time than non-first-generation students studying and doing homework during their last year of high school. Figure 12 shows that although the groups follow a consistent downward pattern in the percentage of students who spend six hours or more per week studying, there is also a consistent gap between the groups. For example, in 1987, 48.4 percent of non-first-generation students reported spending six or more hours per week doing homework, as compared to 42.5 percent of first-generation students. Nearly twenty years later, 33.4 percent of non-first-generation students reported spending this much time studying, compared to just 25.3 percent of first-generation students. Thus, even though both groups are experiencing a decline in reported time spent studying in their last year of high school, the decline is even slightly more pronounced for first-generation students.



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

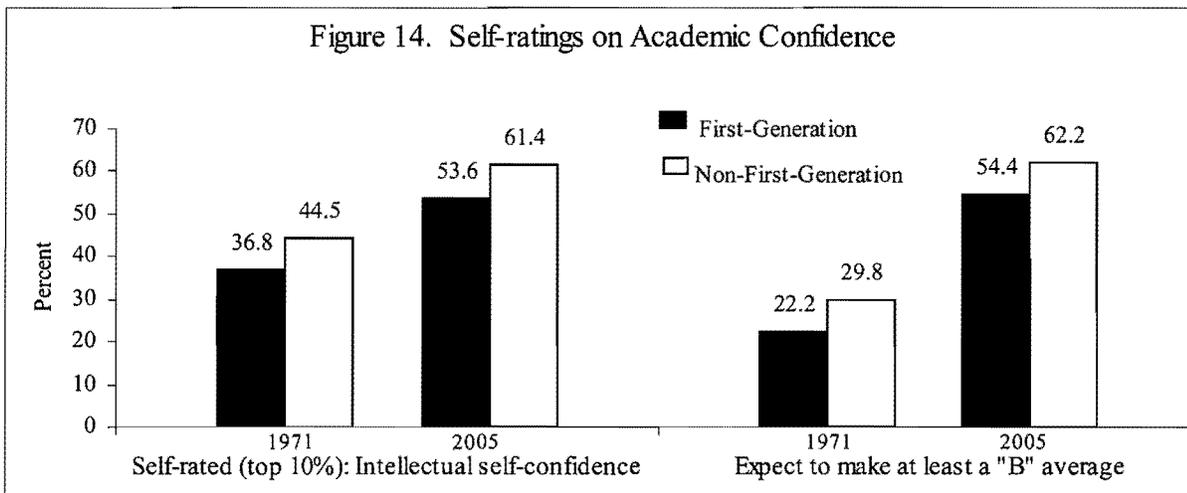
Despite the decrease in time spent studying, the trends reveal an increase for both first-generation and non-first-generation students in reported high school grade point averages (GPA) from 1971 to the present. This trend would appear to be counter-intuitive, yet it has been well documented in prior research on CIRP Freshman Survey trends data (Astin et al., 2002). Nonetheless, although self-reported high school GPA has seen a steady increase since 1971, the trends data once again demonstrate a consistent gap between these two groups of students (Figure 13). In 1971, 37.8 percent of first-generation students and 44.8 percent of their peers reported an average high school grade average of B+ or higher.



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

In 2005, the proportion of first-generation students reporting a B+ or better high school GPA had increased to 59.1 percent, while 70.0 percent of non-first-generation students reported an average of B+ or higher. The gap has increased from 7.0 percentage points in 1971 to 10.9 percentage points in 2005. Even while both groups have reported improving high school academic performance, the gap between the groups has remained persistent and even slightly widened. Because high school GPA has been demonstrated to be one of the strongest predictors of college GPA (Astin, 1993), first-generation students may face some academic disadvantages compared to their counterparts.

To wit, the percentage of students who feel there is a very good chance they will achieve at least a “B” average while in college reveals similar trends (Figure 14). Just as with their high school grades, there has been an increase for both groups in their reported expectation to make at least a B average while in college. However, the trends reveal a consistent gap between the first-generation and non-first-generation students. In 1971, 22.2 percent of first-generation students reported the chances were very good they would make at least a B average. By 2005, that number had grown to 54.4 percent.



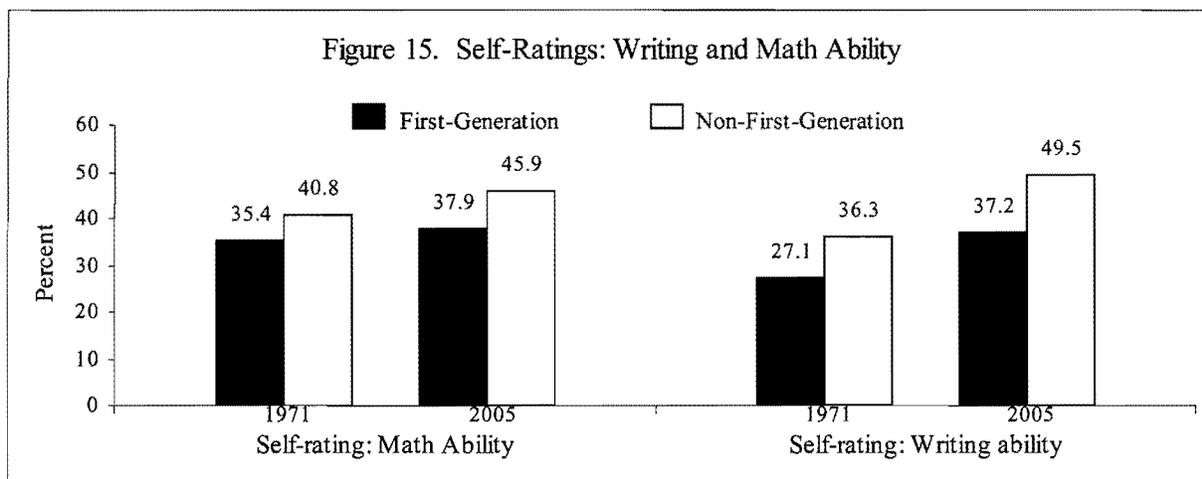
Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

In contrast, 29.8 percent of non-first-generation students stated in 1971 there was a very good chance they would achieve at least a B average while in college, and by 2005, the number had grown to 62.2 percent. Correspondingly, the trends reveal a consistent eight to nine point gap over the years of students rating themselves above average or among the highest ten percent as compared to their peers in the area of intellectual self-confidence, with the percentage of non-first-generation students consistently greater.

The other survey item in Figure 14 highlights students’ self-ratings on intellectual self-confidence, and the data reveal a similar increase for both student groups over time. Again, a

persistent gap is evident between first-generation students and their peers. When combined with the rising trend for reported high school GPA and expectations for at least a B average in college, these three items spotlight the increasing academic confidence of today's entering college students, a trend that is evident across each group of interest. The key question is whether such increasing levels of intellectual self-confidence translate into student success for first-generation college students and their peers.

A closer look at students' self-ratings for writing and math ability yields interesting findings. In contrast to the self-ratings for intellectual self-confidence, the trends here reveal a growing disparity between the two student groups (Figure 15). In 1971, non-first-generation students outpaced their peers in reported self-rating on math ability by about five percentage points (40.8 percent vs. 35.4 percent). By 2005, that gap had grown to about eight percentage points (45.9 percent vs. 37.9 percent).

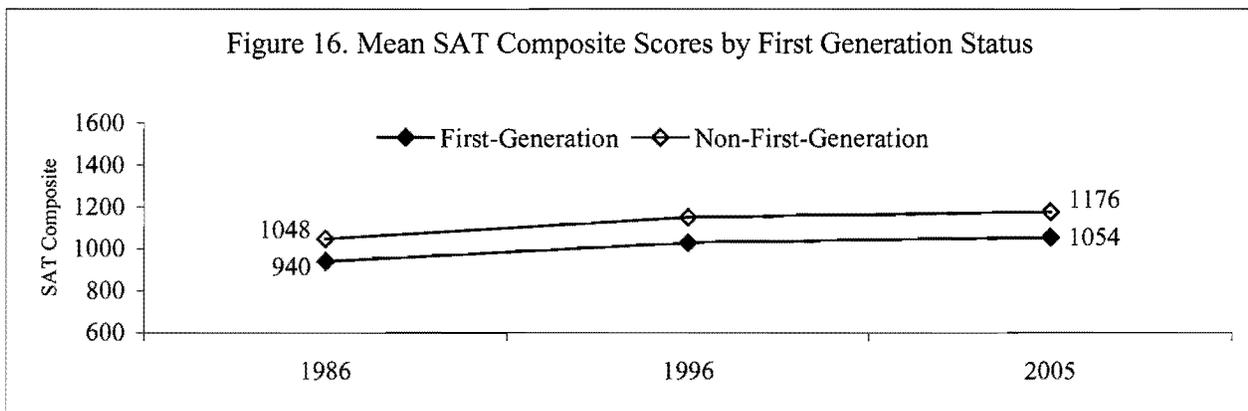


Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

Self-rated writing ability demonstrated an even larger disparity, from just over nine percentage points in 1971 (36.3 percent vs. 27.1 percent) to over twelve percentage points in

2005 (49.5 percent vs. 37.2 percent). Again, as with other trends patterns, the gaps are widening slightly.

One important academic indicator where meaningful differences continue to persist is in students' reported SAT composite score (Figure 16). In 1986, first-generation college students reported an SAT composite score (math plus verbal) average of 940 on their SAT out of a possible 1600, while their peers reported an average of 1048. The mean difference between the two groups on this measure was statistically significantly at $p < .0001$, indicating a strong and significant difference. Over the last twenty years, the gap has continued to increase, and significant differences have been maintained ($p < .0001$) for each year. These continuing significant differences constitute a pertinent warning about future outlooks for college access and success for first-generation students, and more research is necessary to further explore these critical differences.



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

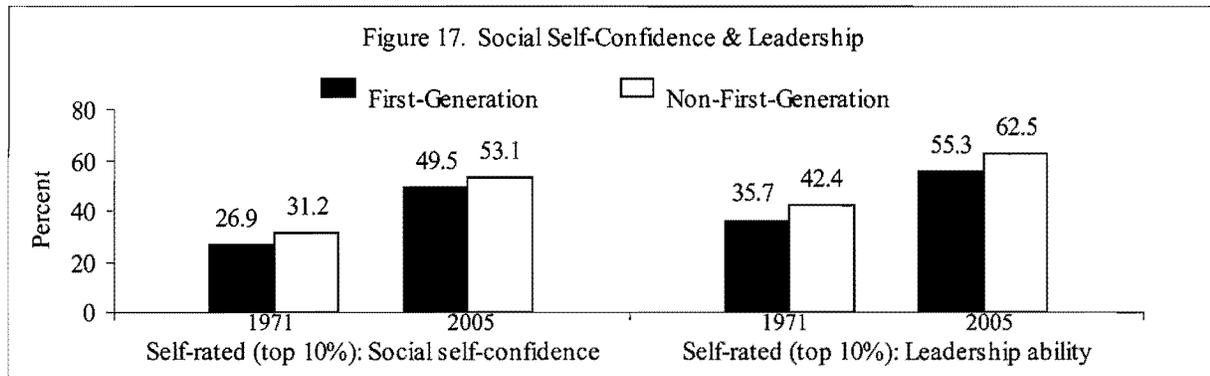
Taking into account that consistently more first-generation students than their peers report lower high school GPAs, report lower SAT scores, have lower expectations for their college GPAs, and rate themselves lower on intellectual self-confidence, math ability, and writing ability, it appears these students are coming into college more academically challenged

than their counterparts. At least descriptively, these differences between first-generation students and their peers are supported by prior research that has detailed similar results in terms of pre-college academic preparation (Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella and Nora, 1996).

Nonetheless, the trends results for first-generation students on key academic indicators at college entry suggest that while these students have higher expectations for academic performance today than in the past, they still lag behind their peers. These observations for first-generation students should be examined more thoroughly in terms of how they might translate into academic success during the college years.

Social Self-Confidence and Leadership Ability

As with academic preparation, students' self-perceptions on social self-confidence and leadership attributes are markedly different for the two groups. The trends demonstrate that self-ratings on social self-confidence have consistently increased for first-generation and non-first-generation students (Figure 17) over the last three decades. In 1971, 26.9 percent of first-generation students rated themselves among the top ten percent with respect to their social self-confidence at college entry, and this figure has almost doubled in thirty-five years (49.5 percent in 2005). Their non-first-generation peers have also shown a similar increase on this measure over time (31.2 percent to 53.1 percent). The gap between the two student groups has narrowed somewhat in their view of their own social self-confidence.



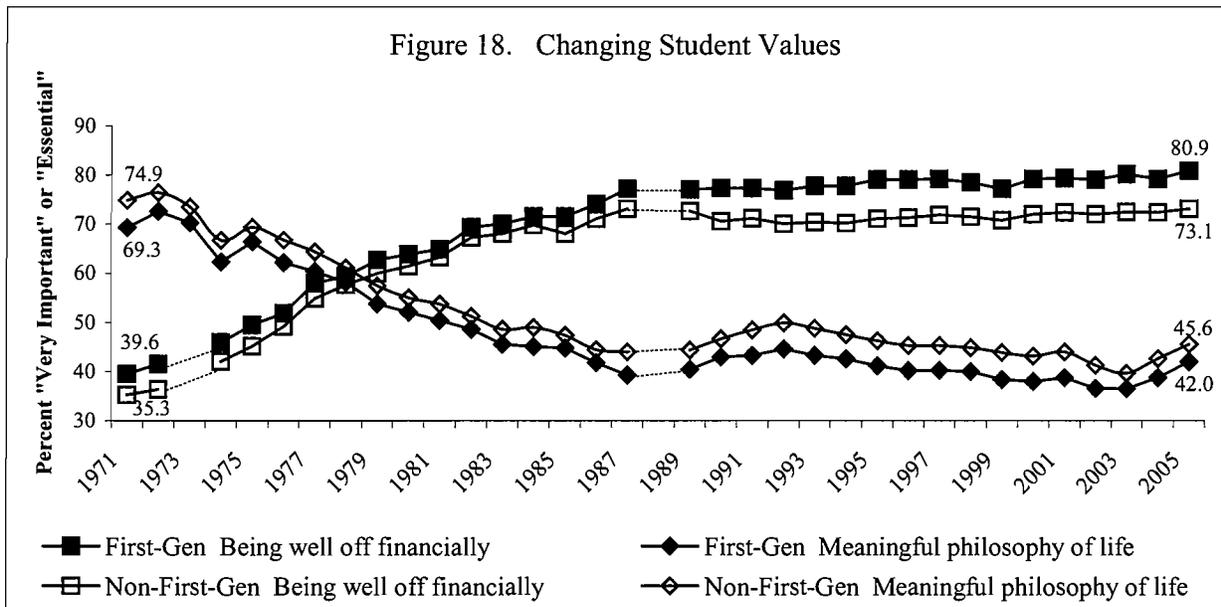
Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

However, there continues to be a slightly larger disparity in self-rating of leadership ability between first-generation students and their peers. In 1971, 35.7 percent of first-generation students rated themselves above average or among the highest ten percent in leadership ability. That same year, 42.4 percent of non-first-generation students rated themselves in a similar fashion. By 1990, the gap had increased to about nine percentage points, and in 2005 the disparity held at 7.2 percentage points, with 55.3 percent of first-generation students rating their leadership ability above average or at the top ten percent as compared to 62.5 percent of their counterparts. Increases in each of these socialization measures appear to be on the upswing, although the persistent gap may be indicative of the lower self-confidence of first-generation students entering college. This suggests an area for further research in order to better understand why such differences exist between the two groups and how such differences can affect their early college experiences.

Changing Student Values

There are consistent trends between the two groups in their changing values. Since 1971, there has been a mirror effect between how both groups of students report their goals. While “developing a meaningful philosophy of life” has steadily declined as an essential or very

important value, “being very well-off financially” has conversely increased in its importance. In 1971, 39.6 percent of first-generation students reported that “being very well off financially” was an essential or very important goal, while 69.3 percent wanted to develop “a meaningful philosophy of life.”



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

By 2005, these characterizations had flipped, as 80.9 percent of first-generation students looked toward financial prosperity and just 42.0 percent said they were concerned with developing a meaningful philosophy.

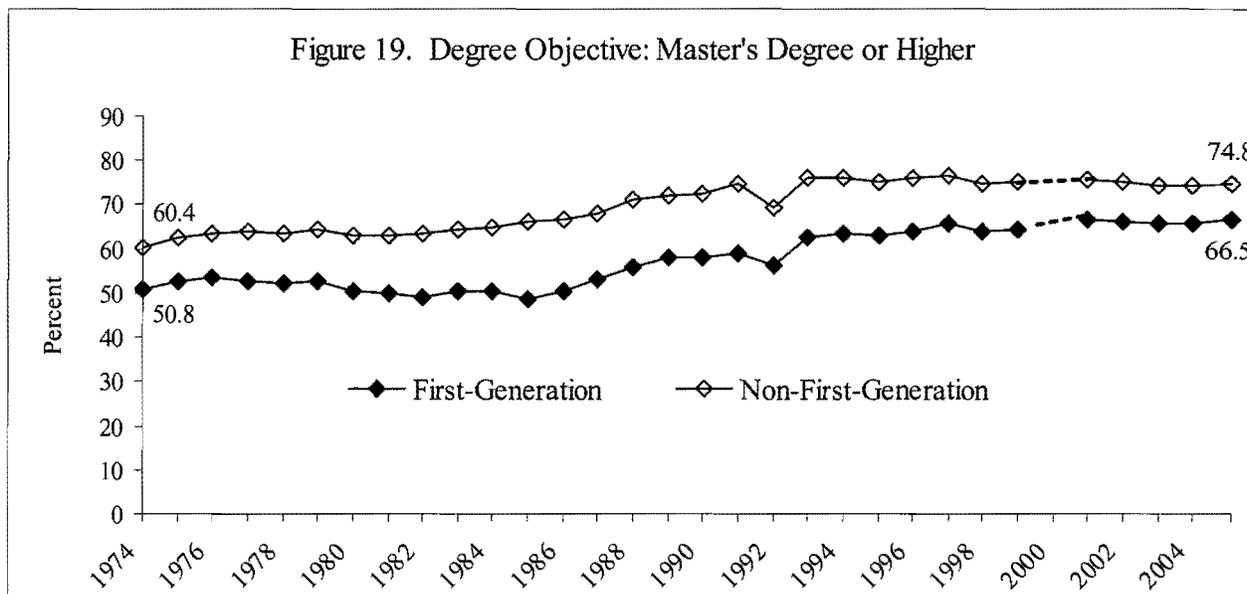
While we see similar trends for non-first-generation students, the shift is not quite as dramatic. In 1971, 35.3 percent were concerned with being well off financially, whereas 74.9 percent wanted to develop a meaningful philosophy of life. Thirty-four years later, 73.1 percent of non-first-generation students valued financial prosperity at the same time that 45.6 percent valued developing a meaningful philosophy of life. Most interesting about these trends is that first-generation college students consistently have outpaced their counterparts in reporting that

“being well off financially” is an important life objective. Coupled with other data related to financing college, these trends reinforce the saliency of financial considerations for first-generation college students to become college-educated.

Degree Objectives

We conclude with a review of the future educational plans of first-generation college students and their peers. While previous trends charts highlighted similar proportions of first-generation students and their peers who reported that preparing for graduate school was a very important factor in their decision to go to college, there remain consistent and distinct differences in their reported degree objectives over the last three decades (Figure 19). In 1974, 50.8 percent of first-generation students and 60.4 percent of their peers reported a degree objective of master’s degree or higher at college entry. In 35 years, this trend has seen a steady climb for both groups, with the proportional difference between the two groups remaining persistent. These findings are congruent with research that has shown that first-generation college students generally have lower educational degree aspirations than non-first-generation students. Lower degree objectives may also be explained by the first-generation student’s pragmatic assessments of available resources and feasibility, including their family’s financial, academic capital, and socioeconomic status, to meet their goals (Feliciano, 2006). Also, these students’ general lack of access to information about the college going process may be placing them at a further disadvantage with regard to an understanding of post-baccalaureate opportunities.

Figure 19. Degree Objective: Master's Degree or Higher



Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

It is worth noting that the gap between the two groups visibly widened then slightly narrowed over time, from a difference of 9.6 percentage points in 1974 to a difference of 8.3 percentage points in 2005. Despite the persistent gap, the rising degree aspirations of both first-generation students and their peers over the last three decades portends a positive outlook for students, especially as an increasing body of research shows that degree aspirations at college entry are critical indicators of eventual college success (Swail & Perna, 2000). One possible explanation for the steady increase in reported masters or higher degree objectives can be attributed to the high levels of parent encouragement as previously noted. Parents' encouragement may be parents' unmet goals they have for themselves, which they have now delegated to their children (London, 1989). First-generation students with parents who have high optimism for their academic future will often internalize these aspirations and produce higher goals for themselves as well (Feliciano, 2006). This is an important finding for institutions to learn from as they inform their policies and practices related to their first-generation student populations.

A Special Focus on Private Colleges and Universities

As co-sponsor of this report on first-generation college students, the Foundation for Independent Higher Education (FIHE) has a special interest in the sector of higher education comprised of private colleges and universities. CIRP Freshman Survey trends data for 2005 were utilized to explore selected characteristics of first-generation students that chose to attend private institutions. The various themes that have been spotlighted throughout this report relate to motivations for college-going, financial considerations, role of family, academic preparation, and degree objectives help to shape the portrait of such students.

Private Institutions: A Profile of Entering First-Generation College Students

Table 2.a displays a profile of entering first-generation college students at all institutions as well as those attending private colleges and universities for 2005. For all first-generation students attending a private institution, they were more likely to be female (60.2 percent) and more likely to be White (non-Hispanic) (69.0 percent). The proportion of White (non-Hispanic) first-generation students at private institutions is markedly higher than at public institutions (56.7 percent), and conversely, lower for other racial/ethnic students. Additionally, first-generation students attending private institutions were more likely to have families with annual incomes over \$40,000 (57.8 percent), more likely to have attended a private high school (religious or non-denominational) (18.1 percent), and more likely to have earned an A or better while in high school (40.6) than their public institution counterparts.

Table 2.a
 Profile of Entering First-Generation College Students by Institutional Control (2005)

Entering Characteristics	First-Generation Students at:		
	All 4-yr %	Private 4-yr %	Public 4-yr %
Female Students	59.4	60.2	58.6
White (non-Hispanic) Students	60.1	69.0	56.7
Annual Family Income: \$40,000 or more	51.9	57.8	49.4
Attended a Private High School	10.1	18.1	7.1
HS GPA: A+ or A	37.4	40.6	36.2
Planned First-year Residence: College Residence Hall	67.1	74.6	64.2
Number of College Applications: Four or more	50.8	56.6	48.5
Distance of College from Home: 100+ miles	30.8	37.2	28.4

Note: These CIRP Freshman Survey data are for 2005 only. Private and public 4-yr institutions include both 4-year colleges and 4-year universities.

Other important characteristics in Table 2.a include the higher proportion of first-generation students at private institutions who planned to live in a college residence hall in their first college year (74.6 percent) compared to their peers at public institutions (64.2 percent). First-generation students at private institutions were also more likely to have submitted four or more college applications (56.6 percent) and were more likely to have chosen a college further away from home (37.2 percent). These demographic, socio-economic, and academic preparedness indicators suggest stark differences in the profile of first-generation students attracted to private as opposed to public institutions.

Private Institutions: First-Generation Students' Reasons and Motivations for Going to College

Investigating the college-going motivations of first-generation college students at private institutions also yields an important and dynamic portrait of this subset of the entering college student population. Table 2.b displays a variety of reasons cited by students at private and public institutions as very important in affecting their college decision-making. First-generation students attending private institutions reported high levels of importance on some of the prominent financial motivations discussed earlier. About three-quarters of first-generation students at private institutions reported that a very important reason for going to college was to get a better job (75.7 percent) and to make more money (73.4 percent). While these figures were lower than for students at public institutions, the one notable exception was receiving an offer of financial aid.

Table 2.b
Reasons/Motivations for Going to College for First-Generation Students (2005)

Reasons	First-Generation Students at:		
	All 4-yr %	Private 4-yr %	Public 4-yr %
<i>Very Important Reason to go to College</i>			
To be able to get a better job	77.3	75.7	77.9
To be able to make more money	76.4	73.4	77.5
My parents wanted me to go	47.0	44.9	47.8
<i>Very Important Reason to go to THIS College</i>			
This college has a very good academic reputation	55.1	62.0	52.3
This college's graduates get good jobs	49.8	57.5	46.8
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/ professional schools	29.0	33.9	27.1
I was offered financial assistance	41.4	55.5	35.9
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	36.4	48.5	31.6

Note: These CIRP Freshman Survey data are for 2005 only. Private and public 4-yr institutions include both 4-year colleges and 4-year universities.

First-generation students at private institutions cited financial assistance as a very important factor in choosing their specific college (55.5 percent) compared to students at public institutions (35.9 percent). This result offers strong validation for the growing trend among many private colleges and universities to offer more generous and competitive financial aid packages to qualified low-income students, a great number of which are also first-generation students. An offer of financial aid by a private institution appears to increase the college-going options for first-generation students, which in turn may offset the information and college choice disadvantages that such students often face relative to non-first-generation peers.

In terms of other specific reasons for choosing their eventual private institutions, first-generation students reported that a good academic reputation (62.0 percent) as well as a strong track-record of job-placement (57.5 percent) and graduate school matriculation (33.9 percent) was very important in their decision. Also, the size of the institution (e.g., size of student body, size of faculty and institutional infrastructure) was a very important reason for first-generation students attending a private institution (48.5 percent), while a much smaller proportion of their peers at public institutions reported the same (31.6 percent).

Private Institutions: First-Generation Student Activities and Expectations

The final portion of this special focus on first-generation college students at private institutions discusses selected activities and expectations at college entry. On both service and religious activities, Table 2.c displays some key differences between first-generation students at private institutions and their public institution peers. First-generation college students at private institutions were more likely to engage in at least one hour of volunteer work per week (49.0 percent) in high school, and they were more likely to report performing volunteer work

“frequently” or “occasionally” in their last year of high school compared with first-generation students entering public institutions (81.5 percent vs. 77.0 percent).

Table 2.c
Service and Religious Activities of Entering First-Generation College Students (2005)

Activities	First-Generation Students at:		
	All 4-yr %	Private 4-yr %	Public 4-yr %
<i>Hours per week in last year of high school doing...</i>			
Volunteer Work (1+ hours)	44.4	49.0	42.8
<i>Frequently or Occasionally...</i>			
Performed volunteer work	78.3	81.5	77.0
Attended a religious service	74.3	76.2	73.6
<i>Frequently...</i>			
Discussed religion	27.1	30.5	25.8

Note: These CIRP Freshman Survey data are for 2005 only. Private and public 4-yr institutions include both 4-year colleges and 4-year universities.

Students at private institutions reported slightly more frequent attendance at religious services (76.2 percent) than their public institution counterparts (73.6 percent), and they reported frequently discussing religion at somewhat greater rates (30.5 percent versus 25.8 percent). The differences indicate a somewhat stronger orientation towards service and religiousness for students at private institutions. This is a result that somewhat mirrors the historical alignment of most private colleges with religious organizations and their focus on undergraduate teaching.

Finally, Table 2.d explores the expectations, values, and degree aspirations of first-generation college students at private and public institutions. Over half of all first-generation students reported they had a very good chance of making at least a “B” average in college, a proportion that was only slightly higher for students attending private institutions (56.7 percent versus 53.6 percent). Interestingly, such students were also more likely to report a greater chance

of being satisfied with their college (51.8 percent) as compared to their public institution peers (47.3 percent). Also, consistent with their orientation towards service prior to arriving at college, over one-quarter of first-generation students at private institutions (27.2) reported a very good chance of participating in service work during college compared to 19.9 percent of their peers at public institutions.

Table 2.d
 Expectations, Values, and Degree Aspirations for First-Generation College Students (2005)

Items	First-Generation Students at:		
	All 4-yr %	Private 4-yr %	Public 4-yr %
<i>Expectations: Very Good Chance...</i>			
Make at least a "B" average	54.4	56.7	53.5
Be satisfied with your college	48.6	51.8	47.3
Participate in volunteer or community service work	22.0	27.2	19.9
<i>Values: Very Important or Essential...</i>			
Influencing social values	41.7	43.1	41.2
Participating in a community action program	26.2	27.4	25.8
Becoming successful in a business of my own	47.1	46.0	47.5
Becoming an authority in my field	58.4	58.9	58.2
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	42.0	42.2	41.9
Influencing the political structure	21.9	22.0	21.9
Being well off financially	80.9	78.3	82.0
<i>Degree Aspirations</i>			
Master's degree or higher (e.g., PhD, JD, MD)	66.2	68.1	65.4

Note: These CIRP Freshman Survey data are for 2005 only. Private and public 4-yr institutions include both 4-year colleges and 4-year universities.

In reporting about their values, first-generation students at private institutions demonstrated many similarities with their public institution peers. First-generation students were a little more likely to respond that participating in a community action program was a very important or essential goal (27.4) as compared to their public institution peers (25.8 percent), and

they were slightly more likely to report the same for influencing social values. Nonetheless, across a majority of other very important or essential values at college entry, the students reported few if any meaningful differences. The one exception is being well off financially, which was a very important or essential value each student group but it was slightly more salient for first-generation students at public institutions (82.0 percent) than at private institutions (78.3 percent). As for degree aspirations, students reported slightly higher levels of degree objectives, with about two-thirds of all first-generation students aspiring to a master's degree or higher (66.2 percent).

Conclusions

We set out to explore trends among the first-generation college student population with the aim of better understanding their college decision-making and elements that might affect their progress in higher education. In distinguishing this report from previous research, we explored historical changes across a wide variety of pre-college measures through the use of the CIRP Freshman Survey trends data. An analysis of thirty-five years of these CIRP trends has revealed many important findings about this population in comparison to their peers with college-educated parents. Relative to their peers, first-generation students are distinct in lower self-confidence and academic preparation prior to arriving at college. They are more likely to reflect concerns with financial security in their choice of college and personal values, have different expectations for their college experience and beyond, and have distinct experiences that serve as obstacles in their path to degree attainment and academic success.

The results of this study confirm prior understandings as well as yield findings about the evolving nature of first-generation college students. Our results corroborate findings from

previous research regarding financial considerations and that family support and responsibilities are significant for first-generation college students. Contrary to previous research, however, these students report parental support for coming to college at higher rates than their peers with college-educated parents.

Implications for Institutional Support

One of the key missions of higher education is to advance social progress in addition to advancing competencies among individuals (Bowen, 1977). The education of first-generation college students is key in achieving these goals in that college opportunities provide social mobility for individual students and also advance the underrepresented communities from which students originate. Many colleges have begun to revise their admissions criteria to acknowledge the particular obstacles faced by students who are the first in the family to go to college. It is clear from this report, that such admissions considerations must be accompanied by adequate financial support and acknowledgement that these students may be more “price sensitive” in their selection of colleges. Moreover, admissions recruitment and outreach may consider a targeted appeal to these students that involve parents, information about financing college, and extensive information about choosing a college. For instance, in addition to the federal TRIO and GEAR UP programs, a growing number of colleges and universities have begun to design their own college access programs to increase the number of first-generation students prepared for college. Latina Summer Academy at the College of Saint Mary in Nebraska encourages Latina tenth grade students to explore science-related careers during an on-campus residential summer program, as well as to pursue an academically rigorous curriculum in high school in preparation for college. Given that first-generation college students are more reliant on teachers and

counselors than other students, admissions staffs would do well to develop such activities for these groups at high schools that have high numbers of first-generation college students.

Once on campus, structures of support are key to enhancing student self-confidence and feelings of competence. Programs that focus on enhancing academic skills, study habits, and convey expectations for college level work help students achieve their goals. A few good examples include a special program designed for first-generation college students at UCLA called the Academic Advancement Program, which identifies such students from the time they are accepted and admitted to the University. The I-LEAD Fellowship at the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University in Minnesota is designed to minimize the debt for first-generation and low-income students and to support their success. Therefore, in addition to offering substantial financial assistance, students participate in community-based leadership development and mentoring programs. Lastly, another type of program enlists family support in the success of first-generation college students such as the Hispanic Mother Daughter program at Arizona State University. These programs not only help students on campus, but also nurture a reputation of institutional support for first-generation students and their families.

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Appendix: CIRP Freshman Survey Trends Data

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All First-Gen		All Non First-Gen		First-Gen @ Public Inst.		First-Gen @ Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
Number of Respondents	43,223	34,122	111,022	220,677	24,003	18,230	19,220	15,892
Student's Gender								
Male	52.5	40.6	50.0	44.4	52.6	41.4	52.4	39.8
Female	47.5	59.4	50.0	55.6	47.4	58.6	47.6	60.2
How old will you be on December 31 of this year? [1]								
16 or younger	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
17	3.3	1.6	4.3	1.7	3.1	1.6	3.6	1.5
18	75.2	69.1	79.8	69.1	75.7	69.7	74.2	67.6
19	17.1	26.7	14.3	28.1	17.0	26.0	17.6	28.6
20	1.8	1.5	0.8	0.8	1.6	1.4	2.1	1.5
21 or older	2.6	1.1	0.7	0.3	2.6	1.3	2.5	0.8
Are you: (mark all that apply) [1]								
White/Caucasian	80.8	60.1	92.5	78.4	81.1	56.7	80.2	69.0
African American/Black	15.2	14.2	5.3	9.9	15.2	14.8	15.2	12.9
American Indian	0.8	1.7	0.7	1.7	0.7	1.7	1.0	1.9
Asian American/Asian	1.2	9.9	1.2	8.4	1.2	10.8	1.3	7.5
Mexican American/Chicano	1.2	10.6	0.5	2.4	0.9	12.6	2.0	5.2
Puerto Rican American	1.2	1.8	0.3	1.0	1.5	1.6	0.7	2.2
Other Latino	---	5.3	---	2.4	---	5.4	---	5.2
Other	1.3	3.1	1.5	2.7	1.1	3.0	1.8	3.4
Is English your native language? [1987]								
Yes	93.6	82.4	96.6	94.1	93.8	80.2	93.0	87.9
No	6.4	17.6	3.4	5.9	6.2	19.8	7.0	12.1
Citizenship status [1] [1973]								
Yes	98.5	94.2	99.0	97.0	99.0	94.0	97.4	94.7
No	1.5	5.8	1.0	3.0	1.0	6.0	2.6	5.3
Your religious preference								
Protestant (Christian)	51.5	45.5	50.1	46.5	53.6	45.9	46.9	44.4
Roman Catholic	32.7	29.1	28.5	28.0	31.4	28.0	35.7	32.1
Jewish	2.1	0.4	5.6	3.0	2.0	0.3	2.2	0.7
Other	5.1	7.1	3.8	5.1	4.1	7.5	7.1	6.0
None	8.6	17.9	11.9	17.3	8.8	18.3	8.1	16.8
Do you consider yourself a born-again Christian? [1985]								
Christian?								
No	69.8	73.6	77.6	76.6	69.8	74.6	69.8	71.0
Yes	30.2	26.4	22.4	23.4	30.2	25.4	30.2	29.0
Are your parents: [1972]								
Both alive and living with each other?	83.3	62.7	87.6	74.6	83.4	62.2	83.1	64.0
Both alive, divorced or living apart?	8.4	32.1	6.7	22.3	8.5	32.5	8.4	31.1
One or both deceased?	8.3	5.2	5.7	3.1	8.2	5.3	8.5	4.9

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All First-Gen		All Non First-Gen		First-Gen @ Public Inst.		First-Gen @ Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
	What is the best estimate of your parent's total income last year? Consider income from all sources before taxes							
Less than \$6,000	15.5	---	4.1	---	14.7	---	17.3	---
\$6,000 to \$9,999	16.4	8.5	6.3	2.0	16.3	9.1	16.8	7.0
\$10,000 to \$14,999	32.2	7.3	18.9	1.8	32.5	7.7	31.4	6.2
\$15,000 to \$19,999	18.1	6.1	17.7	1.7	18.6	6.5	17.1	5.1
\$20,000 to \$24,999	8.9	7.5	16.6	2.6	9.2	8.0	8.4	6.4
\$25,000 to \$29,999	3.6	6.9	10.4	2.6	3.8	7.2	3.1	6.2
\$30,000 to \$39,999	---	11.8	---	5.7	---	12.0	---	11.3
\$30,000 to \$34,999	2.0	---	7.7	---	2.1	---	1.8	---
\$35,000 to \$39,999	1.0	---	5.0	---	1.0	---	1.0	---
\$40,000 to \$49,999	1.0	10.7	4.8	7.1	0.9	10.5	1.0	11.5
\$50,000 or more	1.4	---	8.5	---	1.1	---	2.1	---
\$50,000 to \$59,999	---	10.3	---	8.7	---	10.1	---	10.9
\$60,000 to \$74,999	---	11.4	---	12.3	---	10.9	---	12.7
\$75,000 to \$99,999	---	9.3	---	16.3	---	8.8	---	10.5
\$100,000 to \$149,999	---	5.9	---	19.4	---	5.7	---	6.6
\$150,000 to \$199,999	---	1.7	---	8.1	---	1.6	---	2.0
\$200,000 or more	---	2.3	---	11.6	---	1.8	---	3.7
What is the highest level of formal education obtained by:								
your father?								
Grammar school or less	15.2	14.3	0.9	0.5	14.3	15.4	17.2	11.4
Some high school	26.7	18.0	2.7	2.0	26.8	18.5	26.4	16.8
High school graduate	58.1	67.6	9.5	12.1	58.9	66.0	56.4	71.8
Postsecondary school other than college	0.0	0.0	6.2	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Some college	0.0	0.0	21.0	17.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
College degree	0.0	0.0	31.1	33.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Some graduate school	0.0	0.0	4.2	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Graduate degree	0.0	0.0	24.3	27.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
your mother?								
Grammar school or less	9.1	13.1	0.4	0.2	8.5	14.4	10.6	9.8
Some high school	22.1	15.4	2.3	1.0	22.1	16.1	22.1	13.7
High school graduate	68.8	71.5	24.5	10.5	69.4	69.5	67.3	76.5
Postsecondary school other than college	0.0	0.0	10.8	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Some college	0.0	0.0	23.5	20.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
College degree	0.0	0.0	25.6	38.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Some graduate school	0.0	0.0	3.9	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Graduate degree	0.0	0.0	8.8	21.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All First-Gen		All Non First-Gen		First-Gen @ Public Inst.		First-Gen @ Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
	Your father's occupation [1976]							
Artist	0.5	0.5	1.2	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.7
Business	21.8	18.5	36.7	30.8	21.0	17.3	23.5	21.5
Clerical	1.2	1.2	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2
Clergy	0.4	0.3	1.9	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.2
College teacher	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Doctor (MD or DDS)	0.1	0.1	4.7	3.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Education (secondary)	0.2	0.2	5.0	2.9	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Education (elementary)	0.0	0.1	0.9	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Engineer	3.3	3.2	11.7	9.5	3.5	3.3	3.0	3.2
Farmer or forester	6.5	2.2	3.0	1.4	6.9	2.4	5.9	1.9
Health professional	0.6	0.4	1.7	1.7	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.5
Homemaker	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3
Lawyer	0.1	0.1	2.8	2.8	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Military	2.0	1.3	2.3	1.6	2.3	1.3	1.4	1.0
Nurse	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.3
Research scientist	0.1	0.0	1.2	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Social worker	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Skilled worker	17.7	12.8	5.6	6.7	17.7	12.5	17.8	13.4
Semi skilled worker	11.0	7.3	2.1	2.2	11.0	7.6	11.0	6.6
Laborer	8.0	9.9	0.9	2.1	7.9	10.3	8.2	8.8
Unemployed	3.6	5.9	1.1	2.0	3.8	6.1	3.4	5.3
Other occupation	22.5	35.2	14.4	25.6	22.7	35.7	22.0	33.9
Your mother's occupation [1976]								
Artist	0.4	0.6	1.8	2.0	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.7
Business	6.0	14.3	6.7	17.1	6.0	13.9	6.0	15.4
Clerical	10.3	6.3	9.5	4.8	10.4	6.1	10.1	6.8
Clergy	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
College teacher	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Doctor (MD or DDS)	0.0	0.3	0.3	1.5	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
Education (secondary)	0.3	1.1	4.5	5.7	0.2	1.0	0.3	1.2
Education (elementary)	0.8	2.2	8.9	10.1	0.8	2.0	0.8	2.6
Engineer	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.8	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2
Farmer or forester	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.4
Health professional	0.9	1.1	1.8	3.5	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.2
Homemaker	37.4	10.1	34.6	9.5	36.7	10.0	38.8	10.5
Lawyer	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Military	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Nurse	2.1	3.3	8.1	9.8	2.0	3.3	2.2	3.4
Research scientist	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Social worker	0.6	1.0	1.4	2.0	0.7	1.1	0.6	0.9
Skilled worker	2.4	2.6	1.0	1.3	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.5
Semi skilled worker	5.7	5.1	1.5	1.4	5.8	5.3	5.6	4.6
Laborer	4.5	6.2	0.6	0.9	4.5	6.7	4.6	5.2
Unemployed	11.5	10.3	6.7	4.4	11.9	10.8	10.7	9.1
Other occupation	16.5	34.4	11.3	22.5	16.8	34.3	15.9	34.7

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All First-Gen		All Non First-Gen		First-Gen @ Public Inst.		First-Gen @ Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
Your father's religious preference								
Protestant (Christian)	53.3	41.8	54.6	47.5	55.8	41.9	47.6	41.7
Roman Catholic	32.4	32.2	28.5	30.2	31.0	31.3	35.5	34.3
Jewish	2.3	0.6	6.4	3.8	2.3	0.5	2.5	0.9
Other	3.8	8.8	2.5	5.2	2.9	9.6	5.7	6.7
None	8.2	16.6	8.0	13.3	8.0	16.7	8.6	16.4
Your mother's religious preference								
Protestant (Christian)	56.0	46.4	57.1	51.0	58.5	46.6	50.5	45.8
Roman Catholic	34.1	32.9	30.1	31.9	32.7	31.8	37.4	35.6
Jewish	2.3	0.5	6.2	3.5	2.2	0.4	2.4	0.8
Other	4.2	8.7	2.6	5.0	3.3	9.5	6.2	6.8
None	3.4	11.4	4.0	8.6	3.3	11.6	3.5	11.0
Student rated self above average or highest 10% as compared with the average person of his/her age in: [1976]								
Academic ability	53.6	57.8	68.2	72.3	52.8	57.8	55.3	57.9
Artistic ability	18.3	25.1	25.0	30.6	18.2	25.2	18.4	24.8
Cooperativeness [1990]	70.9	69.2	74.0	73.8	70.4	68.9	56.8	70.0
Creativity [1993]	43.5	51.1	53.9	58.7	43.4	50.9	43.8	51.4
Drive to achieve	66.1	71.2	68.8	72.6	65.0	70.7	68.5	72.7
Emotional health [1985]	58.8	49.1	65.2	55.5	58.3	49.0	59.9	49.4
Leadership ability	44.9	55.3	53.0	62.5	43.8	54.8	47.2	56.5
Mathematical ability	34.2	37.9	43.5	45.9	33.5	38.1	35.8	37.3
Physical health [1985]	59.7	49.1	65.4	57.3	59.2	48.6	60.6	50.4
Popularity [1976, 2003]	31.3	42.7	37.5	39.0	31.2	32.9	31.7	34.9
Public speaking ability	21.9	29.2	29.5	38.2	20.7	28.9	24.6	29.9
Self confidence (intellectual)	44.6	53.6	52.4	61.4	43.7	53.9	46.7	52.9
Self confidence (social)	36.9	49.5	41.4	53.1	36.5	50.0	37.8	48.2
Spirituality [1996]	39.2	32.8	45.0	38.5	39.1	32.4	39.5	33.7
Understanding of others	65.9	62.8	71.8	67.4	65.1	62.7	67.6	62.8
Writing ability	31.5	37.2	42.0	49.5	31.0	36.7	32.6	38.6
From what kind of secondary school did you graduate? [1972]								
Public	83.8	89.9	81.7	81.6	87.7	92.9	74.7	82.0
Private, denominational	13.0	7.6	12.6	11.8	9.4	5.6	21.4	12.8
Private, non-denominational or other	3.2	2.5	5.7	6.6	2.9	1.5	3.9	5.3
What was your average grade in high school?								
A or A+	9.7	17.5	12.3	24.3	8.7	16.7	12.1	19.6
A	12.4	19.9	15.8	24.7	11.9	19.5	13.4	21.0
B+	21.8	21.7	23.8	21.0	22.4	22.0	20.5	21.1
B	26.2	24.0	24.5	19.1	27.8	24.7	22.8	22.3
B-	13.1	8.6	12.1	6.2	13.4	8.7	12.3	8.4
C+	10.0	5.7	7.2	3.3	9.7	5.8	10.8	5.4
C	6.5	2.3	4.1	1.3	6.0	2.5	7.7	2.0
D	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All		All		First-Gen @		First-Gen @	
	First-Gen		Non First-Gen		Public Inst.		Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
In what year did you graduate from high school?								
this year	93.8	97.3	96.9	98.6	93.8	97.3	93.7	97.4
one year ago	3.0	1.3	1.9	1.0	3.0	1.3	3.1	1.5
two years ago	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.4
three or more years ago	1.7	0.7	0.5	0.2	1.7	0.7	1.6	0.6
did not graduate but passed G.E.D. test	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.2
never completed high school	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.0
Student met or exceeded recommended years of high school (grades 9-12) in the following subjects [2] [1984, 2004]								
English (4 years)	91.9	96.6	95.2	98.0	91.0	96.6	93.6	96.7
Mathematics (3 years)	85.0	97.2	91.9	98.3	83.8	97.2	87.7	97.2
Foreign language (2 years)	61.6	88.5	76.7	93.1	58.8	88.0	67.6	89.6
Physical science (2 years)	51.0	52.8	58.5	59.9	50.3	51.9	52.6	55.1
Biological science (2 years)	34.1	42.1	36.3	44.5	33.7	41.3	34.9	44.0
History/American govt. (1 year)	98.7	98.1	99.1	98.8	98.7	98.1	98.7	98.1
Computer science (1/2 year)	50.3	63.3	57.9	62.3	49.5	63.3	51.8	63.2
Arts and/or music (1 year)	57.9	75.7	62.8	81.0	58.0	75.7	57.8	75.7
Have you had any special tutoring or remedial work in: [1980]								
English	7.0	7.6	4.6	5.6	6.7	7.6	7.6	7.8
Reading	7.4	6.5	4.7	4.6	7.1	6.6	8.0	6.2
Mathematics	7.8	12.2	7.1	12.8	7.4	11.4	8.6	14.1
Social studies	7.5	5.1	4.5	3.2	7.3	5.2	7.8	4.8
Science	6.3	5.4	4.1	4.7	5.9	5.3	7.1	5.7
Foreign language	4.2	5.5	3.5	4.8	4.0	5.5	4.6	5.7
Do you feel you will need any special tutoring or remedial work in: [1971]								
English	17.6	14.9	12.6	8.1	17.6	15.8	17.5	12.6
Reading	10.7	7.3	9.5	3.6	10.6	7.7	11.2	6.2
Mathematics	36.6	31.1	33.1	22.4	36.9	32.3	35.7	28.0
Social studies	3.9	5.7	3.0	2.7	3.7	6.0	4.1	4.9
Science	22.9	14.4	21.9	10.1	22.5	14.9	24.1	13.2
Foreign language	23.8	12.7	22.4	10.7	22.4	12.9	27.6	12.4

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All First-Gen		All Non First-Gen		First-Gen @ Public Inst.		First-Gen @ Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
	Indicate which activities you did during the past year [1971]							
Asked teacher for advice after class [3]	22.4	24.6	25.2	24.8	21.1	24.2	26.0	25.5
Attended a religious service	88.5	74.3	86.8	80.8	88.2	73.6	89.3	76.2
Came late to class	49.4	58.7	56.5	62.9	49.0	59.3	50.3	57.2
Discussed politics [3] [1971, 2004]	20.5	17.9	27.2	27.1	19.5	17.2	23.1	19.5
Discussed religion [3]	26.5	27.1	31.1	36.7	24.9	25.8	31.2	30.5
Drank beer	56.1	38.3	59.6	44.9	57.0	37.1	53.7	41.6
Drank wine or liquor [1987]	61.8	45.0	69.9	51.9	63.3	43.7	58.4	48.3
Felt depressed [3] [1985]	9.3	8.0	8.4	6.7	9.2	8.0	9.5	8.2
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do [3] [1985]	16.5	27.2	18.7	26.7	15.8	26.4	18.2	29.3
Participated in organized demonstrations [1978]	17.2	55.5	16.1	48.3	17.3	55.1	17.0	56.5
Performed volunteer work [1984]	70.0	78.3	73.7	84.3	68.9	77.0	72.4	81.5
Played a musical instrument	34.7	34.8	44.8	45.6	33.4	35.0	38.2	34.4
Smoked cigarettes [3]	11.0	6.1	13.3	5.7	11.2	6.1	10.4	6.2
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group [3] [1992]	52.7	68.2	59.6	70.6	51.3	67.8	55.9	69.4
Stayed up all night [1971, 2004]	58.8	79.7	61.7	77.6	59.4	80.0	56.9	79.1
Studied with other students [1985]	89.6	84.5	91.4	87.0	89.6	84.4	89.7	84.6
Tutored another student	46.9	52.4	50.6	54.6	45.2	53.1	51.8	50.7
Used a personal computer [3] [1985]	24.1	79.8	28.6	87.1	24.4	79.3	23.4	81.0
Voted in a student election [3]	65.7	21.9	67.6	23.5	65.7	21.9	65.9	21.9
Was bored in class [3] [1984]	25.9	35.6	31.3	41.7	26.0	35.6	25.9	35.7
Was a guest in a teacher's home [1985]	35.7	21.5	35.8	24.4	35.6	20.8	36.1	23.6
Worked in a local, state or national political campaign	12.0	9.9	17.6	12.4	11.5	9.8	13.3	10.1
During your last year in high school, how much time did you spend in a typical week doing the following activities? [1987]								
Studying/homework								
None	1.4	3.7	1.1	2.7	1.4	4.0	1.5	2.9
Less than one	8.2	16.6	7.0	13.6	8.4	17.1	7.8	15.3
1 to 2	17.5	26.7	14.5	22.5	18.1	27.0	16.1	25.7
3 to 5	30.4	27.7	28.9	27.9	31.2	27.7	28.8	27.8
6 to 10	25.1	14.8	26.6	18.4	25.0	14.2	25.5	16.3
11 to 15	10.5	5.8	12.8	8.2	9.9	5.5	11.6	6.5
16 to 20	4.1	2.6	5.6	4.0	3.6	2.4	5.1	3.1
Over 20	2.8	2.1	3.4	2.8	2.4	2.1	3.6	2.3
Socializing with friends								
None	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.5
Less than one	1.5	2.2	0.8	1.2	1.3	2.2	1.8	1.9
1 to 2	5.1	8.3	3.2	5.4	5.2	8.7	4.9	7.3
3 to 5	15.6	20.1	12.4	17.8	15.3	20.4	16.3	19.6
6 to 10	23.7	23.3	23.6	26.3	23.7	23.1	23.7	24.0
11 to 15	18.8	16.4	21.1	19.0	18.7	16.4	18.9	16.6
16 to 20	13.5	10.2	15.0	12.1	13.6	9.9	13.2	11.1
Over 20	21.6	19.0	23.8	17.9	21.9	19.0	21.0	19.0

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All First-Gen		All Non First-Gen		First-Gen @ Public Inst.		First-Gen @ Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
	Talking with teachers outside of class							
None	6.9	12.2	5.6	10.1	7.4	12.9	6.0	10.2
Less than one	37.1	42.9	37.8	44.5	38.4	43.6	34.3	40.9
1 to 2	31.3	27.9	33.6	30.3	30.8	27.0	32.4	30.1
3 to 5	17.0	11.5	16.4	10.7	16.3	11.0	18.3	12.7
6 to 10	5.0	3.4	4.4	2.8	4.5	3.2	5.8	3.7
11 to 15	1.7	1.2	1.2	0.9	1.6	1.2	1.9	1.4
16 to 20	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.6
Over 20	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.4
Exercising or sports								
None	5.0	7.5	3.1	4.2	5.0	7.8	4.9	6.6
Less than one	11.0	12.6	8.7	9.1	11.1	13.0	10.9	11.6
1 to 2	16.5	17.4	15.1	15.2	16.8	17.8	15.8	16.5
3 to 5	20.6	18.6	21.1	19.5	21.0	18.8	19.9	18.1
6 to 10	16.6	16.0	19.9	19.0	16.7	16.1	16.4	15.7
11 to 15	13.1	10.9	14.4	14.4	12.8	10.4	13.7	12.3
16 to 20	7.2	6.7	7.8	8.3	7.1	6.3	7.3	7.5
Over 20	10.0	10.3	10.0	10.3	9.4	9.9	11.1	11.6
Partying								
None	14.2	26.3	10.7	24.8	12.7	26.1	17.4	26.7
Less than one	12.5	15.0	11.2	15.5	12.2	14.9	13.1	15.0
1 to 2	16.9	18.5	15.5	17.7	16.6	18.8	17.5	17.7
3 to 5	23.7	18.9	24.6	19.7	24.1	18.9	22.8	18.8
6 to 10	16.5	11.0	19.9	12.2	17.0	10.9	15.4	11.2
11 to 15	7.8	5.1	9.1	5.3	8.3	5.1	6.6	5.0
16 to 20	3.7	2.3	4.1	2.4	3.9	2.3	3.1	2.3
Over 20	4.8	2.9	4.8	2.5	5.1	2.8	4.2	3.2
Working (for pay)								
None	23.3	27.8	26.8	31.3	21.5	28.3	27.1	26.5
Less than one	2.2	2.1	2.5	3.1	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.1
1 to 2	3.2	3.1	3.4	4.2	3.1	3.0	3.5	3.3
3 to 5	5.9	5.7	6.1	7.5	5.8	5.5	6.2	6.3
6 to 10	10.0	11.0	10.4	12.4	9.4	10.6	11.1	11.9
11 to 15	11.8	12.7	13.1	13.2	12.2	12.7	10.9	12.7
16 to 20	17.6	15.4	16.9	13.5	18.6	15.4	15.4	15.5
Over 20	26.0	22.2	20.8	15.0	27.2	22.4	23.5	21.7
Volunteer work								
None	59.1	34.3	55.5	28.3	60.2	36.0	56.9	30.0
Less than one	14.6	21.2	15.9	23.9	14.7	21.3	14.3	20.9
1 to 2	13.7	20.3	14.9	24.4	13.2	19.4	14.7	22.6
3 to 5	7.3	13.1	8.4	13.7	7.1	12.9	7.7	13.8
6 to 10	2.9	5.4	3.0	5.3	2.6	5.0	3.5	6.6
11 to 15	1.0	2.2	1.0	1.9	0.9	2.1	1.1	2.4
16 to 20	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.1	0.7	1.3
Over 20	0.9	2.3	0.9	1.6	0.8	2.3	1.0	2.3

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All First-Gen		All Non First-Gen		First-Gen @ Public Inst.		First-Gen @ Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
	Student clubs/groups							
None	29.7	32.0	24.6	26.2	30.6	33.2	28.0	29.1
Less than one	12.9	15.6	12.3	15.8	13.2	15.9	12.1	14.8
1 to 2	24.3	23.2	24.8	25.9	24.2	23.0	24.5	23.8
3 to 5	18.5	15.9	20.9	17.7	17.9	15.2	19.8	17.6
6 to 10	8.4	6.9	9.8	7.8	8.1	6.5	8.9	7.7
11 to 15	3.1	2.8	3.8	3.2	3.0	2.7	3.2	3.2
16 to 20	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.6
Over 20	1.7	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.6	2.1	2.0	2.2
Watching TV								
None	4.0	5.2	5.6	5.8	3.8	5.1	4.4	5.3
Less than one	11.6	15.9	12.8	14.8	11.4	16.2	12.1	15.0
1 to 2	20.6	24.0	21.7	24.1	20.8	23.8	20.2	24.4
3 to 5	27.9	26.0	28.5	27.8	28.4	26.0	26.9	25.7
6 to 10	19.4	15.1	18.3	15.9	19.3	14.7	19.7	16.3
11 to 15	8.3	6.1	6.8	5.9	8.3	6.2	8.4	6.0
16 to 20	3.4	3.0	2.9	2.5	3.4	3.0	3.5	2.9
Over 20	4.7	4.8	3.4	3.3	4.6	4.9	4.9	4.5
Reasons noted as very important in deciding to go to college [1976]								
A mentor/role model encouraged me to go [1992]	16.4	20.5	12.9	14.6	15.7	20.8	18.0	19.7
I could not find a job	5.6	9.2	3.1	5.8	6.0	9.8	4.8	7.6
My parents wanted me to go	27.6	47.0	30.5	43.0	26.7	47.8	29.4	44.9
There was nothing better to do	2.6	4.2	2.5	3.9	2.7	4.4	2.3	3.6
To be able to get a better job	70.6	77.3	66.4	71.1	71.9	77.9	68.0	75.7
To be able to make more money	53.2	76.4	47.7	69.8	54.9	77.5	49.6	73.4
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	64.8	64.5	68.5	65.5	64.2	64.5	66.1	64.6
To learn more about things that interest me	72.8	75.3	75.7	78.2	72.8	75.3	72.8	75.1
To make me a more cultured person	34.2	38.8	35.7	43.2	33.2	38.3	36.3	40.1
To prepare for graduate or professional school	42.1	58.0	46.4	57.9	40.8	58.6	44.9	56.4
Wanted to get away from home	9.2	19.6	12.8	22.1	8.9	19.9	9.8	18.9
Reasons noted as very important in influencing students' decision to attend this particular college								
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college [1989]	34.1	36.4	35.7	39.2	28.5	31.6	47.9	48.5
I wanted to live near home [1983]	22.1	26.6	14.4	17.0	23.6	27.2	18.6	25.2
I was attracted by the religious affiliation/orientation of the college [1989]	5.0	5.8	5.3	7.1	1.6	3.2	13.1	12.5
I was offered financial assistance	26.4	41.4	15.8	33.9	20.1	35.9	40.3	55.5
High school guidance counselor advised me [1993]	10.5	11.4	7.0	7.2	10.5	11.8	10.5	10.5
Private college counselor advised me [1993]	2.1	3.1	1.5	2.5	1.7	2.6	3.1	4.4
My relatives wanted me to come here	7.0	12.2	7.6	10.1	6.8	12.5	7.4	11.6
My teacher advised me	6.0	7.8	4.1	4.8	5.6	7.8	7.0	7.7
Not offered aid by first choice [1984]	4.7	7.1	4.3	6.5	4.5	7.0	5.1	7.2
Rankings in national magazines [1995]	8.7	13.8	11.0	17.2	7.6	12.9	11.2	16.1
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools [1983]	24.4	29.0	29.7	32.0	21.4	27.1	31.6	33.9
This college's graduates get good jobs [1983]	47.7	49.8	48.2	51.6	44.8	46.8	54.3	57.5

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All First-Gen		All Non First-Gen		First-Gen @ Public Inst.		First-Gen @ Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
Reasons noted as very important in influencing students' decision to attend this particular college								
This college has a good reputation for its social activities [1983]	22.9	31.0	23.7	31.2	22.8	30.7	23.1	31.7
This college has low tuition [2003]	22.5	24.5	16.6	19.7	28.4	30.7	9.0	9.7
This college has a very good academic reputation	54.5	55.1	57.7	58.6	49.9	52.3	64.7	62.0
This college offers special educational programs [2003]	29.7	24.2	27.7	20.5	29.4	24.0	30.2	24.8
Is this college your:								
First choice?	81.8	70.3	79.0	69.9	82.4	70.2	80.3	70.7
Second choice?	15.1	21.7	17.0	21.0	14.8	21.9	15.8	21.3
Less than second choice?	3.2	7.9	4.0	9.1	2.8	7.9	3.9	8.0
To how many other colleges than this one did you apply for admission this yr?								
None	46.9	19.4	37.6	17.1	49.5	20.7	41.0	15.9
One	22.3	13.3	21.4	11.8	22.5	13.9	21.7	11.8
Two	14.1	16.5	16.1	14.9	13.5	16.8	15.4	15.7
Three	8.6	17.7	11.1	16.6	7.8	17.6	10.3	17.9
Four	3.9	12.1	6.5	12.5	3.2	11.6	5.6	13.5
Five	2.2	7.4	3.6	8.9	1.8	6.8	3.1	8.9
Six or more	2.1	13.6	3.7	18.1	1.7	12.5	3.0	16.3
What is the highest academic degree you intend to obtain?								
Anywhere								
None	2.7	1.3	1.8	0.6	2.5	1.3	3.2	1.3
Associate (A.A.) or equivalent	2.2	0.9	1.1	0.4	1.7	0.9	3.4	0.9
Bachelor's (B.A.,B.S.,etc.)	39.6	29.2	32.5	22.7	42.1	30.1	33.9	27.0
Master's degree (M.A.,M.S.,etc.)	30.5	39.7	32.5	42.3	31.1	39.8	29.1	39.4
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	9.5	15.5	12.2	17.2	9.0	15.2	10.6	16.1
M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M. or D.O.	7.2	7.5	10.4	9.6	6.2	7.3	9.3	7.8
LL.B. or J.D. (law)	4.6	3.5	7.0	5.4	4.3	3.1	5.4	4.8
B.D. or M.Div. (divinity)	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.3	1.2	0.4
Other	2.9	1.9	1.9	1.4	2.5	1.8	4.0	2.0
At this institution								
None	4.9	1.5	5.2	1.2	5.0	1.7	4.5	1.0
Associate (A.A.) or equivalent	3.9	2.7	2.7	1.5	3.3	2.9	5.1	2.2
Bachelor's (B.A.,B.S.,etc.)	68.7	63.9	71.4	70.9	67.7	61.3	70.8	70.0
Master's degree (M.A.,M.S.,etc.)	14.1	23.2	13.2	19.1	15.8	24.8	10.7	19.3
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	2.2	4.1	2.0	3.3	2.3	4.5	2.0	3.3
M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M. or D.O.	1.8	1.7	2.4	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.7	1.1
LL.B. or J.D. (law)	1.2	0.8	1.4	0.8	1.2	0.7	1.1	0.9
B.D. or M.Div. (divinity)	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.2
Other	2.7	1.6	1.5	1.1	2.4	1.6	3.3	1.8

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All		All		First-Gen @		First-Gen @	
	First-Gen		Non First-Gen		Public Inst.		Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
Your probable career/occupation [1976]								
Artist	7.2	6.4	8.1	8.9	7.1	5.8	7.3	7.8
Business	15.9	15.1	14.1	15.0	15.5	14.7	16.8	16.3
Clerical	1.3	0.8	0.7	0.5	1.4	0.8	1.1	0.9
Clergy	0.9	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.1	2.4	0.7
College teacher	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4
Doctor (MD or DDS)	5.2	5.5	7.8	7.5	4.2	5.2	7.3	6.0
Education (secondary)	6.2	5.8	4.1	5.0	6.4	6.1	5.7	5.1
Education (elementary)	6.2	6.8	4.5	4.8	6.8	7.0	5.2	6.3
Engineer	7.0	5.5	7.8	6.8	7.1	6.1	6.9	4.1
Farmer or forester	2.2	0.4	2.1	0.5	2.3	0.5	1.9	0.4
Health professional	8.1	7.6	7.6	7.1	8.7	8.1	6.9	6.1
Homemaker	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1
Lawyer	4.7	3.4	6.4	4.2	4.3	3.1	5.6	4.2
Military	1.0	0.4	1.4	1.0	1.3	0.5	0.2	0.3
Nurse	4.7	5.7	3.8	3.5	4.5	5.6	5.2	5.7
Research scientist	2.6	1.2	3.4	1.9	2.5	1.1	3.0	1.4
Social worker	3.3	1.5	2.4	0.8	3.3	1.6	3.2	1.3
Skilled worker	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3
Other career	13.1	19.7	11.9	16.9	14.0	19.5	11.2	20.2
Undecided	9.3	13.2	12.0	14.3	9.5	13.5	9.0	12.5
Student's probable major field								
Agriculture	2.7	0.5	2.6	0.5	3.1	0.6	1.6	0.2
Biological Science	6.3	6.8	8.9	7.8	5.6	6.8	7.7	6.6
Business	16.6	18.5	13.9	17.2	16.5	17.9	17.0	19.9
Education	13.4	12.6	10.2	9.3	14.4	13.0	11.0	11.7
Engineering	8.3	7.0	8.7	8.7	8.1	7.8	8.7	4.8
English	0.9	1.2	1.6	2.0	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.5
Health Professional	8.0	14.2	6.6	11.8	8.3	14.4	7.3	13.7
History or Political Science	3.6	3.2	5.2	5.3	3.3	3.0	4.3	3.9
Humanities	2.9	2.5	3.7	3.7	2.1	2.3	4.9	3.1
Fine Arts	5.1	4.3	5.9	5.5	5.0	3.8	5.5	5.5
Mathematics or Statistics	1.4	0.7	1.6	0.8	1.4	0.7	1.6	0.7
Physical Sciences	3.0	1.8	3.7	2.4	3.0	1.8	3.1	1.8
Social Sciences	7.3	8.1	7.3	7.0	7.4	8.2	7.0	8.0
Other Technical	6.7	3.1	5.4	2.6	6.1	3.2	8.0	2.8
Other Non-technical	9.1	8.4	8.7	7.8	9.9	7.9	7.2	9.6
Undecided	4.7	7.0	5.9	7.4	5.0	7.3	3.8	6.1
How many miles is this college from your permanent home?								
10 or less	18.3	16.2	13.1	9.7	19.0	16.4	16.7	15.9
11 to 50	24.6	33.7	18.5	25.5	26.6	35.2	20.2	29.9
51 to 100	16.9	19.2	15.7	17.9	18.6	20.1	13.0	17.0
101 to 500	32.4	24.4	38.5	33.1	31.2	24.2	35.0	25.0
More than 500	7.8	6.4	14.2	13.8	4.5	4.2	15.2	12.2

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All		All		First-Gen @		First-Gen @	
	First-Gen		Non First-Gen		Public Inst.		Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
Where do you plan to live during the fall term?								
With parents or relatives	29.4	26.5	18.2	13.0	31.9	28.5	23.7	21.2
Other private home, apartment, room	4.8	3.8	2.5	2.3	4.1	4.5	6.2	2.1
College dormitory	62.7	67.1	76.5	82.1	61.1	64.2	66.5	74.6
Fraternity or sorority house	0.6	0.2	0.9	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.1
Other campus student housing	1.8	2.0	1.5	2.1	1.5	2.1	2.6	1.7
Other	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.3
Student's Estimates: Chances are very good that he/she will								
Be satisfied with your college	55.2	48.6	56.7	53.4	53.2	47.3	59.9	51.8
Change career choice	11.5	10.3	16.4	13.8	12.0	10.7	10.4	9.4
Change major field	12.0	12.3	16.2	14.3	12.7	13.2	10.4	10.1
Get a job to help pay for college expenses [1976]	40.9	55.1	41.6	45.0	40.0	55.3	43.0	54.5
Join a social fraternity, sorority, or club [1999]	14.6	14.7	19.5	19.3	13.3	14.5	17.4	15.3
Make at least a "B" average	36.4	54.4	45.3	62.2	34.9	53.5	39.9	56.7
Participate in student protests or demonstrations [1978]	2.9	5.8	3.7	6.5	2.9	5.6	2.9	6.3
Participate in volunteer or community service work [1990]	13.5	22.0	17.8	27.2	11.9	19.9	18.1	27.2
Play varsity/intercollegiate athletics [1983]	15.4	14.8	16.7	16.5	12.8	12.3	21.2	21.0
Seek personal counseling	6.4	9.2	5.3	7.1	6.0	9.6	7.2	8.0
Transfer to another college before graduating	10.5	7.1	13.2	6.2	11.3	7.5	8.7	6.1
Work full time while attending college [1982]	4.1	10.6	2.3	5.4	4.4	11.5	3.3	8.5
Objectives considered to be essential or very important								
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts (acting, dancing, etc.)	11.0	14.9	13.7	16.3	10.6	15.0	11.9	14.7
Becoming a community leader [1971]	15.0	33.6	14.2	33.9	14.3	33.2	16.9	34.6
Becoming an authority in my field	71.9	58.4	71.0	59.2	72.3	58.2	71.0	58.9
Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	29.3	21.5	29.2	20.0	29.9	21.8	27.9	20.6
Becoming successful in a business of my own	42.5	47.1	40.4	41.4	42.5	47.5	42.7	46.0
Being very well off financially	49.5	80.9	45.2	73.1	50.7	82.0	46.8	78.3
Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, decorating, etc.)	12.2	16.1	16.2	16.5	12.3	15.9	11.9	16.5
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	66.4	42.0	69.4	45.6	65.3	41.9	68.7	42.2
Having administrative responsibility for the work of others	31.8	43.2	28.0	39.8	32.2	43.4	31.1	42.6
Helping others who are in difficulty	68.6	68.3	67.8	65.8	67.6	68.1	70.9	68.9
Influencing social values	32.3	41.7	30.5	41.1	31.4	41.2	34.5	43.1
Influencing the political structure	15.6	21.9	15.9	21.7	15.2	21.9	16.3	22.0
Keeping up to date with political affairs	38.6	29.7	44.9	37.8	38.3	29.4	39.3	30.4
Making a theoretical contribution to science	14.5	19.8	14.5	18.7	14.4	20.1	14.7	19.1
Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field	45.9	55.0	43.8	54.1	46.5	55.0	44.5	55.0
Participating in a community action program	33.1	26.2	32.7	25.3	33.1	25.8	33.3	27.4
Helping to promote racial understanding [1977]	39.3	35.3	38.0	32.5	38.1	35.4	42.3	35.2
Raising a family [1977]	58.2	75.1	59.3	76.2	57.1	74.6	61.0	76.3
Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.)	12.0	15.8	14.5	15.8	11.7	15.8	12.5	16.0

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All First-Gen		All Non First-Gen		First-Gen @ Public Inst.		First-Gen @ Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
	Student agrees strongly or somewhat							
A national health care plan is needed to cover everybody's medical costs [1977]	64.3	79.9	55.6	72.1	65.2	80.1	62.0	79.3
Abortion should be legal[ized] [1977]	49.9	51.6	58.6	55.9	52.4	51.9	43.4	51.0
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished should be abolished [1995]	45.8	42.0	53.1	50.2	44.9	41.7	48.1	42.9
Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus [1992]	63.0	59.0	57.9	59.2	62.4	58.2	64.3	61.2
Federal military spending should be increased [1982]	38.4	34.0	37.0	34.3	39.4	33.9	35.7	34.4
If two people really like each other, it's all right from them to have sex even if they've known each other for only a very short time	45.5	44.9	48.4	44.8	47.5	45.2	41.0	44.1
It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships [1976]	49.7	29.3	40.4	27.0	48.3	29.2	52.5	29.6
Marijuana should be legalized	41.7	33.7	48.1	38.4	43.5	33.6	37.7	33.7
Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America [1990]	20.3	22.2	17.3	20.9	20.7	22.8	19.3	20.7
Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about change in our society	47.8	31.3	45.8	26.4	48.5	32.0	46.2	29.8
Same sex couples should have the right to legal marital status [1997]	48.1	56.6	51.4	58.2	48.3	56.5	47.6	56.7
The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family	30.3	23.9	23.3	19.4	29.2	24.5	32.7	22.5
The death penalty should be abolished [1971]	57.4	30.1	62.1	33.8	56.8	29.7	58.9	31.1
The federal government is not doing enough to control environmental pollution	81.7	77.3	83.0	77.1	81.8	77.5	81.4	76.6
The federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns [1989]	78.5	79.8	80.1	78.4	78.1	79.6	79.7	80.1
The federal government should do more to discourage energy consumption [2002]	80.3	70.1	84.3	76.1	80.3	70.2	80.2	69.6
There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals	56.1	61.6	51.0	57.2	56.2	62.1	55.8	60.3
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	80.8	63.0	73.3	57.1	81.3	63.2	79.9	62.4
How would you characterize your political views?								
Far left	1.9	3.2	1.7	3.3	1.8	3.3	2.0	3.1
Liberal	28.5	25.4	31.6	27.3	28.9	25.7	27.6	24.8
Middle of the road	54.5	52.1	50.8	43.6	55.2	52.8	53.0	50.4
Conservative	14.4	17.6	15.3	23.8	13.4	16.8	16.7	19.8
Far right	0.7	1.6	0.5	2.0	0.6	1.5	0.8	1.9

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY TRENDS -- First-Generation College Students

	All		All		First-Gen @		First-Gen @	
	First-Gen		Non First-Gen		Public Inst.		Private Inst.	
	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005	1975	2005
Do you have any concern about your ability to finance your college education?								
None (I am confident that I will have sufficient funds)	24.4	21.1	40.5	36.9	25.7	20.9	21.5	21.6
Some (but I probably will have enough funds)	50.9	56.3	46.6	52.1	50.1	56.3	52.9	56.1
Major (not sure I will have enough funds)	24.6	22.7	12.9	11.0	24.2	22.8	25.6	22.3

Note: Results in italics were taken from year(s) other than 1975 or 2005, because the questions on which the results are based were not asked in those year(s). The actual year from which the results were taken is indicated in the Item column.

Note: "Public Inst." refers to public four-year institutions; "Private Inst." refers to private four-year institutions; "First-Gen" refers to first-generation college students.

- [1] Percentages may total to more than 100.0 if any respondents marked more than one category.
- [2] Based on the curriculum recommendations of the National Commission on Excellence in Education.
- [3] Reflects the percentage responding "frequently" only. All other items in this section reflect the percentage responding "frequently" or "occasionally".

About the Authors

Dr. Victor B. Saenz is the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's (CIRP) Research Manager, responsible for managing research and reporting activities for the range of surveys conducted under the CIRP umbrella at the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). Dr. Saenz has worked at HERI for over five years in various capacities, including as a research analyst, a postdoctoral scholar, and as Director of Follow-up Surveys. He currently holds a joint academic appointment with the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Dr. Saenz is a former Spencer Foundation Fellow, and his research interests include: assessing the educational benefits of racial diversity on college campuses; desegregation issues; exploring the leakages in the Education pipeline for underrepresented students; and, chronicling the policy impacts of changing affirmative action and remedial education policies in higher education.

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Higher Education Research Institute Publications List

The American Freshman

Provides national normative data on the characteristics of students attending American colleges and universities as first-time, full-time freshmen. In 2006, data from approximately 300,000 freshmen students are statistically adjusted to reflect the responses of 1.3 million students entering college. The annual report covers: demographic characteristics; expectations of college; degree goals and career plans; college finances; attitudes, values and life goals.

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Note: National norms for most years between 1966–1997 are available.

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