

Results of the Fall 2002 CIRP Freshman Survey

Introduction

Each year, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA administers the CIRP Freshman Survey to students at a wide variety of colleges and universities. UC Santa Cruz participated annually from 1966 to 1992, and has participated biannually since then. UC Santa Cruz is classified by HERI as a highly selective public university, (with average combined SAT score of 1,140 or more). UCSC's national comparison group of other highly selective public institutions includes most other University of California campuses, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the University of Michigan, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and the University of Illinois, Urbana. The results from the UC Santa Cruz survey are based on 2508 students, 78% of the fall 2002 entering class.

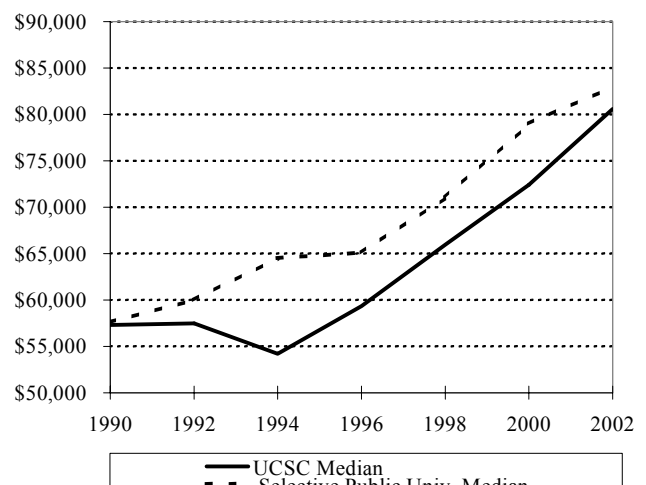
Student Characteristics

Respondents who took the CIRP were fairly representative of UCSC new frosh in terms of gender and ethnic composition, although Asian/Asian American students were overrepresented among respondents. Compared with their national peer group at selective public universities, significantly fewer UCSC students identified as White, and significantly more reported Asian or Asian American, Chicano, Latino, and Other ethnic identities. About 28% of UCSC frosh came from families where parents had divorced or separated compared to 20% nationally. New UCSC frosh were twice as likely to hold liberal or far left political views as those of students at highly selective public universities. About 58% of UCSC students characterized their views as liberal or left-wing, one-third described their views as middle-of-the-road, and 8% held conservative views.

Student Finances

This year the self-reported median family income for UCSC freshmen climbed to \$80,600, up from \$72,000 in 2000. Financing their college education was a major concern for 16% of UCSC freshmen compared with only about 11% nationally. About 27% of UCSC freshmen received \$1,000 or less in funds from their families, compared with 22% of students at other selective public universities. Fewer UCSC students received grants or scholarships than their national peer group, although about the same proportion received some funding in college loans.

Median Family Income of Frosh



Academic Plans

Top reasons for attending college were to learn about things of interest and gain a general education, to be able to get a better job, and to prepare for graduate school. Nearly half (48%) of freshmen preferred UCSC to other schools, and another quarter selected UCSC as a viable second choice. Some of the most common reasons students cited for choosing UCSC included the school's academic reputation, the college size and its reputation for social activities. Almost all entering freshmen expected to complete a bachelors degree, but UCSC students were more likely to think that they would leave school for a while, transfer to another college, change their major, or get a job than their peers at other selective schools. UCSC students were also more interested in pursuing study abroad than their peers at selective public universities.

Expectations Affecting Academic Plans

	UCSC	Pub Hi Sel
Get job to pay expenses	50%	43%
Be satisfied w/college	47%	54%
Join student clubs/groups	36%	48%
Study abroad	34%	25%
Community service work	25%	27%
Change major field	22%	18%
Transfer out	11%	4%

Forty-one percent of this year's entering class planned to complete a masters degree, and 41% intended to complete a doctorate or professional degree. New frosh at UC Santa Cruz were much more interested in studying the social sciences, arts, humanities, and biological sciences than students from their national peer group, who tended to favor business, engineering, and professional fields.

Abilities and Activities of Freshpersons

About 71% of UC Santa Cruz students rated themselves highly in academic ability, and most gave themselves high marks for cooperation (70%), understanding of others (69%) creativity (63%), drive-to-achieve (62%), and self-understanding (61%). As in past year, UCSC students tended to distinguish themselves from other students at selective public universities in their self-ratings as well as their political leanings, philosophies and interests. It is important to note that self-rating scales may reflect self-image as much as level of skill or abilities. Nonetheless, UCSC students self-rated lower than their national peers on a number of abilities, such as academic ability, drive-to-achieve, leadership ability, popularity, and physical and emotional health. As in past years, UCSC ratings were higher on artistic ability and creativity than freshmen nationally. Certain activities and behaviors also differentiated UCSC frosh from their comparison group. For example, UCSC frosh were much more likely to socialize with an ethnically diverse group of friends (84% vs. 70%) and more often visited a gallery or museum (76% vs. 62%) or played musical instruments than their peers (51% vs. 46%). UCSC frosh reported more contemplative tendencies than their peers, and more often reported engaging in self-reflection, or thinking about the meaning, purpose, interconnectedness or sacredness of life. UCSC students were more likely than their national peers to ask teachers for advice (30% vs. 25%), and were more politically expressive in discussions and demonstrations compared with their national peer group. They attended fewer religious services but more often discussed religion than their comparison group. Fewer exercised regularly than students nationally. UCSC students were more likely to be late, miss class or feel bored in class, and they were more often overwhelmed or depressed than their national peers. Overall, UCSC frosh are less traditional, more expressive, artistic and sensitive, and less physically fit than their national comparison group.

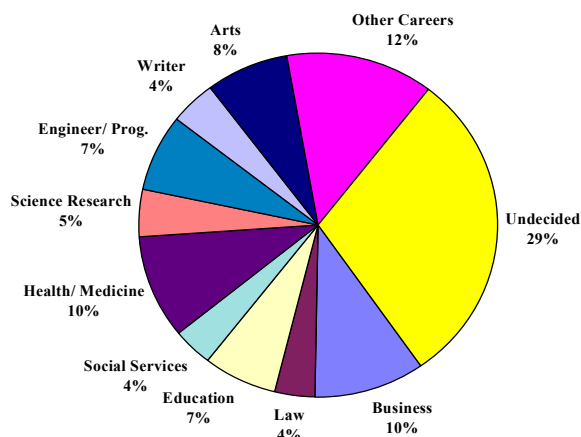
Life and Career Goals

UCSC students greatly valued family and financial success, the development of cultural perspectives, a philosophy of life, and political and social interests. But in general, Santa Cruz freshmen continued to hold more pronounced political, philosophical and artistic aspirations compared to freshmen at other selective public universities.

Life Goals of 2002 Frosh

	UCSC	National
Raise a family	64%	73%
Understand countries/cultures	63%	46%
Be well-off financially	61%	73%
Develop philosophy of life	54%	43%
Promote racial understanding	44%	30%
Keep up with politics	43%	37%
Help clean up environment	30%	18%
Administrative responsibility	29%	38%
Create artistic works	26%	15%
Influence political structure	26%	19%
Write original works	24%	15%

Career Choices of UCSC Frosh



Interested in a variety of possible careers, many UCSC students chose health, medicine, business or engineering (although less often than did the national comparison group). In contrast, UCSC freshmen more often mentioned the arts, scientific research, or social services as likely careers than did their national counterparts.

Student Satisfaction with Services

Fall freshmen were asked to rate their initial impressions from a variety of aspects of their new environment. Almost all new freshmen found faculty and staff to be friendly and approachable, and most were satisfied with their college, social environment and housing. Financial worries were among the greatest concerns for new frosh, including apprehension about finding work, contacting financial aid counselors, and the amount of financial aid funding available. The accessibility of financial aid counselors was of special concern, and ratings declined from fall of 2000. But in general, ratings of many services were as high or higher in 2002 as in 2000, and satisfaction improved with Ethernet connections, Teleslug enrollment, and the campus Website. Ratings for satisfaction with dining hall food also improved considerably over the last two years.

	2000	2002
Staff friendly and approachable	94%	96%
Faculty friendly and approachable	94%	94%
College assignment satisfactory	88%	90%
Informal social college atmosphere	88%	89%
Satisfied with housing assignment	86%	87%
Interested in career internships	na	84%
Enough Ethernet connections in room	79%	83%
No difficulty with Teleslug enrollment	74%	81%
College sponsored social activities	83%	81%
Orientation information helpful	na	76%
Web page helped to acquaint w/ campus	59%	74%
Doing well finding way around campus	74%	72%
Plan to consult advisor about a major	na	71%
No problems with campus shuttles	71%	68%
Received enough help choosing classes	na	65%
Satisfied with quality of dining hall food	59%	66%
Know how to find non-work/study job	56%	48%
Understand how to find work/study job	55%	44%
Financial aid offer timely	69%	43%
Financial Aid package adequate	na	40%
Financial Aid counselors accessible	59%	38%

SIXTEEN-YEAR CIRP FRESHMEN SURVEY TRENDS

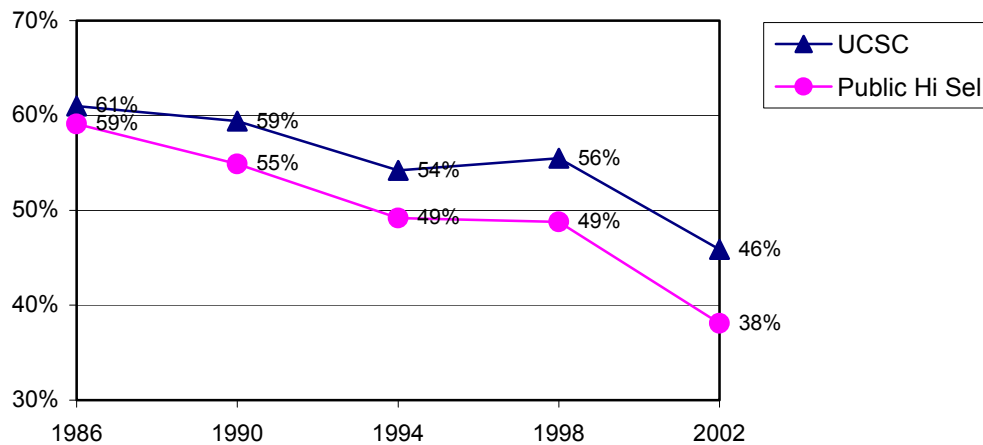
High School Achievement and Activities

The high school grade point average of new UCSC freshmen has improved slightly over the last 16 years, but survey respondents reported having spent less time studying in high school than students in past years. This downward trend in study time has been somewhat less pronounced for UCSC students than for their peers at selective public universities nationally.

Freshmen's Average High School GPA

	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002
A	35%	38%	38%	40%	37%
B	62%	60%	60%	60%	63%
C	3%	2%	2%	0%	1%

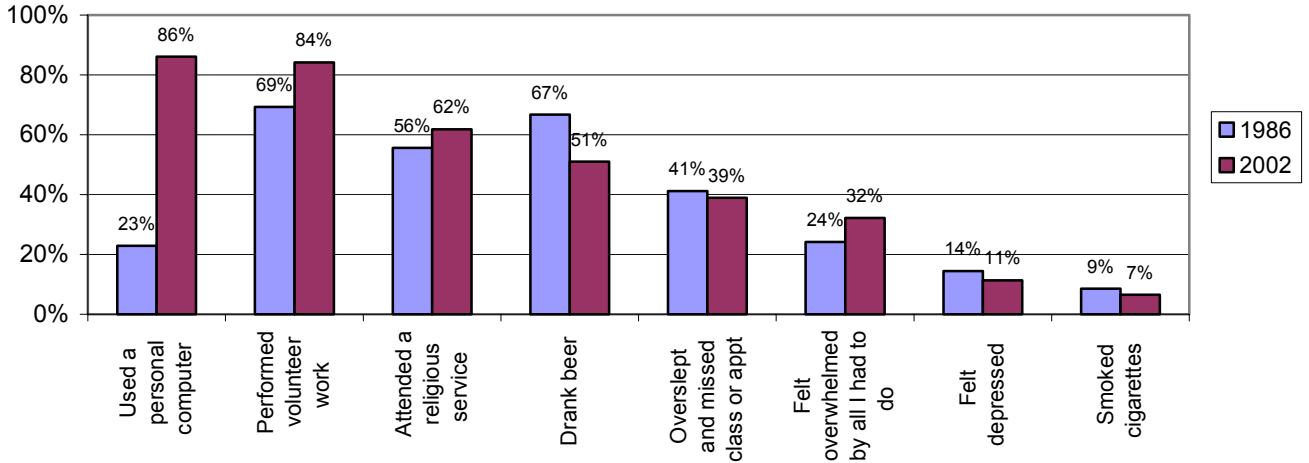
Percentage of New Freshmen Who Studied Six or More Hours a Week During Last Year of High School



While freshmen spent less time in high school studying than their predecessors, they spent more time using personal computers and surfing the internet than students from earlier years. Commonly, students went online to complete research or homework (80%), to use email (73%), to visit chat rooms (18%) and for other uses (63%). Overall, 86% of recent UCSC freshmen had used a personal computer in high school compared to only 23% of new freshmen in 1986. It is possible that traditional study time has in part been supplanted by computer time, whether for schoolwork or for other uses.

The freshmen of 2002 had changed from earlier classes in other respects, as well. For example, recent freshmen more often performed volunteer work than students in 1986 (84% vs. 69%), and were not as likely to drink beer, smoke cigarettes or feel depressed as freshmen in 1986, although they more often felt overwhelmed by all they had to do. Recent freshmen were also somewhat more likely to attend religious services (62% in 2002 compared with 56% in 1986). In general, the freshmen of 2002 appeared to use better self-care and to devote more of their time to others than did freshmen sixteen years ago.

1986 and 2002 -- UCSC Freshmen's Activities During Senior Year High School



Political and Social Attitudes

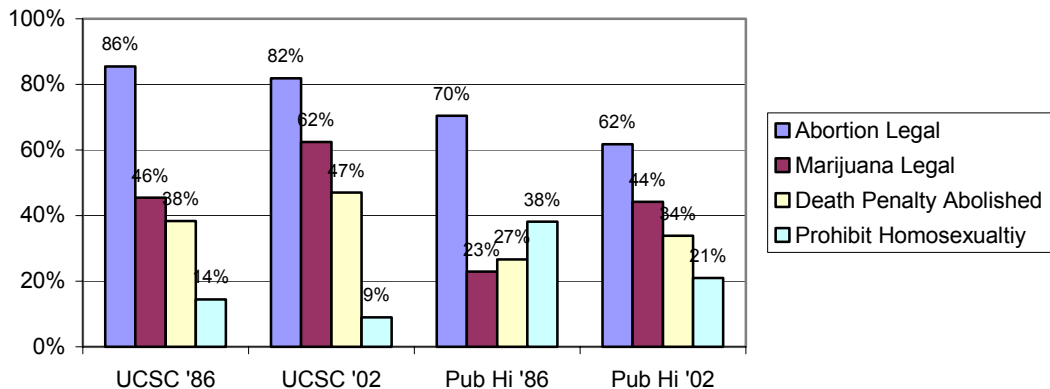
Political Identification of UCSC Freshmen

Although more UCSC students from the campus's earliest years identified as far left and liberal than freshmen today, over the last 16 years students' sense of political identity has remained remarkably stable, and is generally more liberal than students nationally.

	1986	1990	1994	1998	2000	2002
Far Left	6%	7%	7%	8%	9%	8%
Liberal	49%	52%	50%	50%	52%	51%
Middle of Road	35%	34%	36%	34%	33%	34%
Conservative	9%	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%
Far Right	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%

Students' social values can be more complex than political identification, but in general UCSC students also hold more liberal social attitudes than students nationally. For example, UCSC students from 16 years ago and last fall were more accepting of liberal positions on key issues than students at selective public universities nationally. Over the years, students nationally have become much more tolerant on these attitudinal measures (except for legalization of abortion), but they remain more conservative than UCSC students, who have also moved towards increasingly liberal social attitudes (although with a very slight decrease in support for abortion rights).

Social Attitudes: UCSC and Highly Selective Public Universities 1986 and 2002



However, recent freshmen are more similar to their national comparison group in terms of their life priorities than in past years. For example, compared to the freshmen of 1986, the most recent class of UCSC freshmen place greater importance on financial success, and less importance on developing a life philosophy, racial understanding, or writing original works. Overall, UCSC freshmen are somewhat more conventional in their priorities and aspirations than freshmen 16 years ago.

Life Priorities of UCSC Freshmen and High Select Public University Freshmen in 1986 and 2002

