

Results of the Fall 2004 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, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Michigan, University Pittsburgh, and University of Vermont, Georgia Institute of Technology, Miami University, Oklahoma State University, Rutgers University-New Brunswick, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and SUNY – Binghamton, Stony Brook, and Buffalo. The results from the UC Santa Cruz survey are based on 1,939 students which represents 64% of the fall 2004 first-time, full-time entering class. This response rate is lower than in previous years and thus may not be fully representative of the frosh population.

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. Consistent with survey results from 2002, about 27% of UCSC frosh came from families with parents who were divorced or separated compared to 20% nationally. New UCSC frosh were nearly twice as likely to hold liberal or far left political views as those of students at highly selective public universities. About 60% of UCSC students characterized their views as liberal or left-wing, almost one-third described their views as middle-of-the-road, and 8% held conservative or far right views.

Student Finances

Concerns regarding financing their college education were greater among UCSC frosh (19%) compared with only 10% nationally. A similar percentage (86%) of UCSC and national comparison group freshmen expected to fund their first year expenses through family resources. However, a greater number of UCSC frosh, 65%, expected to fund their first year expenses through their own resources including savings from work, work-study, and other sources of personal income compared to their national peer group (58%). In addition a greater percentage of UCSC freshmen (32%) anticipated having to repay

financial aid loans of \$3,000 or more, compared to only 27% of frosh at comparison universities. A smaller percentage of UCSC freshmen (25%) received between \$1,000-\$6,000 in grants and other funding that did not need to be repaid, compared with 31% of students at other selective public universities. However, a slightly greater percentage of UCSC students (14%) received grants or scholarships greater than \$10,000 compared to their national peer group (11%).

Academic Plans

Top reasons for attending college were similar to those reported by frosh in the 2002 survey and included: 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. However, compared to the nationwide sample, UCSC frosh reported less importance placed on job/career preparation and more emphasis on personal development and academic exploration. A little less than half (44%) of freshmen reported that UCSC was their first choice school, while 30% indicated that UCSC was their second choice. This differs from frosh at other comparison public universities of which 68% reported that their current school was their first choice college. Some of the most common reasons students cited for choosing UCSC included the school's academic reputation, the graduates get good jobs, the college size, its reputation for social activities, and a visit to the campus. Almost all entering freshmen expected to complete a bachelors degree, but UCSC students were more likely to think that they would transfer to another college, change their major, change their career choice, or get a job to help pay for college expenses than their peers at other selective schools. Consistent with findings from the 2002 survey, UCSC students were also more interested in pursuing study abroad than their peers at selective public universities.

Expectations Affecting Academic Plans

	UCSC	Comparison Universities
Get job to pay expenses	48%	44%
Be satisfied w/college	45%	56%
Study abroad	40%	31%
Join student clubs/groups	38%	47%
Community service work	24%	26%
Change career choice	22%	17%
Change major field	21%	18%
Transfer out	9%	4%

Forty percent of this year's entering class planned to complete a master's degree, and 44% intended to complete a doctorate or other professional degree. New frosh at UC Santa Cruz were much more interested in studying the social sciences, arts and humanities, and biological sciences than students from their national peer group, who tended to favor business, engineering, education, and professional fields.

Nine percent of UCSC frosh estimated that it was likely they would transfer to another college. Estimated likelihood of transferring to another college was unrelated to high school GPA as well as concerns about finances and amount of financial aid received. However, likelihood of transferring was related to where UCSC ranked in students' choices of colleges. For example, UCSC being perceived as a lower ranked choice was correlated with greater reported likelihood of transferring to another college ($r = -.28, p < .01$).

Abilities and Activities of Freshpersons

About 72% of UC Santa Cruz students rated themselves highly in academic ability, and most gave themselves high marks for kindness (75%), compassion (69%), cooperation (67%), understanding of others (66%), drive to achieve (65%), forgiveness (58%), and creativity (58%). As in past years, 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, religiousness, social and intellectual self-confidence, time management, 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 (82% vs. 73%) and more often participated in organized demonstrations (51% vs. 42%) or played musical instruments than their peers (52% 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 (32% vs. 24%), 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 more often reported feeling overwhelmed or depressed than their national peers. Overall, UCSC frosh are more expressive, artistic and sensitive, and less traditional and physically fit than their national comparison group.

Life and Career Goals

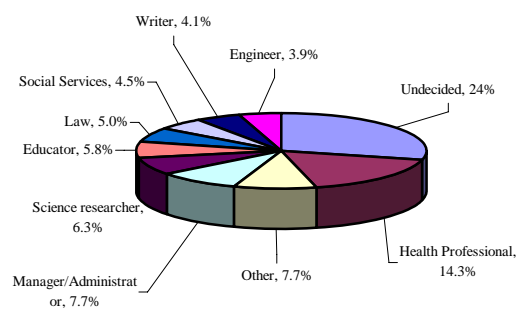
UCSC students greatly valued family and financial success, humanitarian work, the development of cultural perspectives and a philosophy of life, and political and social interests. These results are similar to those reported by UCSC students on the 2002 CIRP, with the exception of more attention placed on achieving authority and gaining recognition in one's specialize field and less focus on life goals related to the environment and artistic endeavors. Compared to freshmen at other selective public universities, Santa Cruz freshmen continued to place more emphasis on political, philosophical, and cultural aspirations.

UCSC students indicated interests in a wide range of possible careers; among the top choices were health professional, manager/administrator, and science researcher. However, compared to the national comparison group, fewer percentages of UCSC students chose potential careers in the fields of health, managerial/administration, and engineering. In contrast, UCSC freshmen more often mentioned the arts, scientific research, social services, education, or journalism as likely careers than did their national counterparts. In addition, a greater percentage of UCSC frosh (24%) reported being undecided about their career compared to students in the nationwide sample.

Life Goals of 2004 Frosh

	UCSC	National
Raise a family	66%	74%
Be well-off financially	65%	74%
Help others in difficulty	65%	61%
Understand countries/cultures	62%	47%
Develop philosophy of life	55%	44%
Be an authority in my field	51%	59%
Keep up with politics	48%	40%
Gain recognition for work	47%	53%
Influence social values	43%	35%
Promote racial understanding	42%	30%

Career Choices of UCSC Frosh



Student Satisfaction with Services

Fall freshmen were asked to rate their initial impressions from a variety of aspects of their new environment. Similar to findings from the 2002 survey, almost all new freshmen found faculty and staff to be friendly and approachable, and most were satisfied with their college, social environment, and housing. The lowest satisfaction rates were among issues related to financing students' college education including: including apprehension about finding work, contacting financial aid counselors, and the amount of financial aid funding available. However, compared to the 2002 cohort, a greater percentage of students in 2004 felt better able to find on-campus and off-campus jobs. In general, ratings of many services were similar in 2004 as in 2002, and satisfaction improved with students' ability to find their way around campus, campus shuttle transportation, and quality of dining hall food.

Assessment of UCSC Services

	2002	2004
Staff friendly and approachable	96%	93%
Faculty friendly and approachable	94%	87%
College assignment satisfactory	90%	85%
Informal social college atmosphere	89%	85%
Satisfied with housing assignment	87%	85%
Interested in career internships	84%	80%
College sponsored social activities	81%	80%
Enough Ethernet connections in room	83%	75%
Web page helped to acquaint w/ campus	74%	75%
Doing well finding way around campus	72%	75%
No problems with campus shuttles	68%	72%
Satisfied with quality of dining hall food	66%	70%
Plan to consult advisor about a major	71%	67%
No difficulty with enrollment ¹	81%	66%
Orientation information helpful	76%	65%
Received enough help choosing classes	65%	64%
Know how to find non-work/study job	48%	49%
Understand how to find work/study job	44%	47%
Financial aid offer timely	43%	42%
Financial Aid package adequate	40%	41%
Financial Aid counselors accessible	38%	36%

¹Enrollment via Teleslug for 2002, enrollment via Student Portal for 2004

High School Achievement and Activities

The high school grade point average of new UCSC freshmen for the 2004 cohort showed improvement over the 2002 cohort. However, compared to the national sample, a smaller percentage of UCSC frosh reported a high school GPA in the top range. A greater percentage of UCSC respondents (53%) reported having spent 6 or more hours a week studying or doing homework compared to their peers at other comparison universities (43%).

during high school, with tutoring/teaching being the most popular type of activity among both groups. UCSC frosh tended to participate in more volunteer activities related to environmental conservation (34% vs. 28%) and service to the homeless (27% vs. 23%) compared to students at other national universities. Fewer UCSC students participated in religious based service (20% vs. 33%).

Freshmen's Average High School GPA

Avg. Grade	UCSC 2002	UCSC 2004	Comparison Universities 2004
A	37%	40%	67%
B	63%	59%	32%
C	1%	1%	1%

Similar percentages of UCSC freshmen and those at comparison universities participated in community service/volunteer activities