

# Results of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Survey, West Chester University, 2004

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the American Freshmen Survey, initiated by CIRP at UCLA, is to ascertain the educational and career goals of new freshmen. It also seeks to identify study and social proclivities.

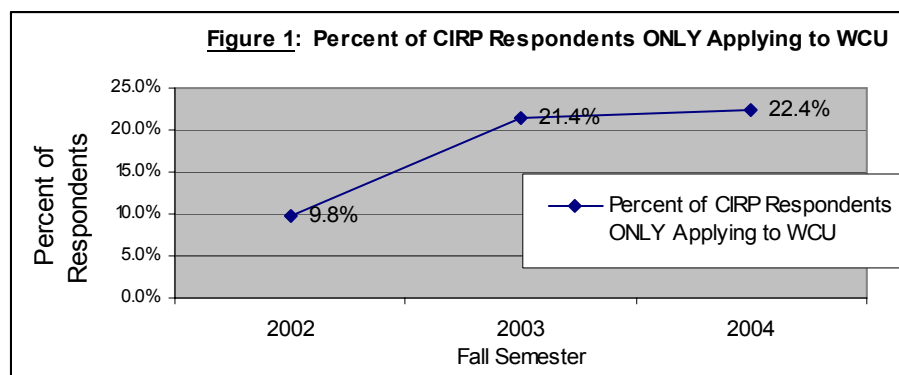
The CIRP was administered to both full and part-time freshmen at WCU during orientation in August 2004. Because of the small number of part-time respondents in the 2004 CIRP sample, the full-time sample is reported below.

There were 1405 full-time 2004 CIRP respondents. This was three-fourths (75.0%) of all new full-time freshmen enrolled in fall 2004. Of those CIRP Survey respondents, almost all were Caucasian (89.5%). Eight percent of the 2004 CIRP respondents were African-American (8.0%). This is similar to the ethnic breakdown of the fall 2004 new freshmen enrollment.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Most (92.2%) of the 2004 CIRP respondents indicated that their High School GPA was between 3.00 and 4.00. This was higher than the HS GPA reported by the 2003 CIRP respondents (87.3%) but about the same as reported by the 2002 CIRP respondents (91.4%). Eighty percent of the 2004 CIRP respondents said that WCU was between 11-100 miles from their permanent residence (80.4% in 2004, 75.0% in 2003, 73.9% in 2002).

WCU was the first choice for two thirds of the 2004 CIRP sample (68.6% in 2004, 73.7% in 2003, 70.7% 2002). Close to eighty percent of the respondents indicated that they applied to more than one school. Conversely, the percent of CIRP respondents, applying to only WCU has been increasing. This is illustrated in **Chart 1**.



## ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The 2004 CIRP participants were asked to indicate what activities they engaged during the last year. The results for some of the activities listed on the survey are shown in Table 1.

<b>Table 1: Student Activities, Percent Engaged</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2-Year Diff.</b>
Attended a religious service	<b>80.6</b>	<b>81.9</b>	<b>82.8</b>	-2.2
as bored in class	47.3	40.1	49.6	-2.3
Tutored another student	46.4	39.6	41.2	<b>+5.2</b>
Studied with other students	<b>84.2</b>	<b>83.4</b>	<b>83.7</b>	+0.5
Drank beer	60.4	51.5	66.3	-5.9
Drank wine or liquor	67.5	56.4	70.5	-3.0
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	32.5	26.3	31.1	+1.4
Felt depressed	<b>8.8</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>9.3</b>	-0.5
Performed volunteer work	77.9	77.2	76.8	+1.1
Asked a teacher for advice after class	27.0	<b>18.0</b>	23.6	+3.4
Overslept and missed class or appointment	NA	28.3	34.9	NA
Discussed politics	<b>21.4</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>+7.0</b>
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group	69.2	71.4	70.4	-1.2
Communicated via e-mail	NA	63.4	68.0	NA
Used the Internet for research or homework	NA	<b>84.8</b>	<b>81.5</b>	NA
Other Internet use	NA	64.3	NA	NA
Participated in Internet chat rooms	NA	NA	16.9	NA
Communicated via Instant Messaging	NA	78.1	NA	NA
Performed community service as part of a class	NA	50.7	NA	NA
Used a personal computer	NA	<b>85.5</b>	<b>85.6</b>	NA

The activities with the largest and smallest percents are denoted in bold. Note that several of the computer usage items were not part of the 2004 CIRP Institutional Summary.

As seen in Table 1, *Studied with other students* (84.2%) and *Attended a religious service* (80.6%) were activities with the largest percent of engagement for the 2004 CIRP respondents. As with the 2003 CIRP sample, *Felt depressed* (8.8%) and *Discussed politics* (21.4%) were the activities with the lowest response rates for 2004 CIRP respondents. The largest increase posted between the 2004 and 2002 CIRP Survey samples were that of the *Discussed Politics* (+7.0%) and *Tutored another student* (+5.2%).

#### **PAYING FOR COLLEGE**

Over half of the 2004 CIRP respondents indicated that *None of their financial aid would have to be repaid*. This is similar to the 2003 CIRP respondents (53.7% in 2004, 53.8% in 2003, 50.8% in 2002). As with 2003, the 2004 CIRP respondents were much more likely than the 2004 CIRP national 4-year public college sample (38.8%) to state that *None of their financial aid would have to be paid*.

Only one-fifth of the 2004 CIRP respondents stated that none of their first year expenses would come from family resources such as parents, relatives, spouses, etc (17.0% in 2004, 18.6% in 2003, 12.5% in 2002). This result was less than the 2004 CIRP national four-year public college CIRP sample (21.0%). However, as a whole, WCU freshmen are less likely to hail from households eligible for need based aid than the 2004 CIRP national four-year public college sample.

The 2004 WCU CIRP respondents were less confident than the 2003 WCU CIRP respondents in their ability to finance their college education AND complete college. The response rates for both the 2004, 2003 and 2002 CIRP samples are shown in Table 2.

<b>Table 2: Concerned about Ability to Finance College Education</b>				
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2-Year Diff.</b>
None (I am confident I have sufficient funds)	37.1%	35.7%	34.4%	1.4%
Some (but I will have enough funds to complete college)	52.4%	56.6%	55.7%	-4.2%
Major (not sure I will have enough funds to complete college)	10.5%	7.7%	10.0%	+2.8%

#### **EDUCATIONAL & CAREER OBJECTIVES**

Unlike the 2003 CIRP respondents, the 2004 WCU CIRP respondents were more likely to say they wanted *To raise a family* (83.8%). This replaced *To be well-off financially* as the objective with the most responses as most important (79.0% in 2004, 79.1% in 2003, 76.2% in 2002).

The most cited objective for attending college was *To get training for a specific career* (81.1% in 2004, 78.4% in 2003, 81.4% in 2002) and *To learn more about things that interest me* (78.3% in 2004, 75.0% in 2003, 77.9% in 2002). The reason for attending college that was least frequently cited was *There was nothing better to do* (4.1% in 2004, 2.5% in 2003, 3.7% in 2002). These are consistent with both the 2002 and 2003 CIRP respondent sample results.

Students were asked to cite the reasons that influenced their attendance at WCU. The response rates for the 2004, 2003 and 2002 CIRP samples are shown in Table 3.

<b>Table 3 Reasons for Attending WCU</b>				
<b>Reason</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2-Year Diff.</b>
My relatives wanted me to come here	7.6	6.4	7.2	+0.4%
My teacher advised me	5.4	3.9	5.0	+0.4%
This college has a very good academic reputation	<b>53.7</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>51.5</b>	+2.2%
This college has a good reputation for social activities	25.4	<b>35.4</b>	<b>39.2</b>	-13.8%
I was offered financial assistance	28.2	15.4	17.5	+10.7%
This college offers special educational programs		17.4	21.4	-21.4%
This college has low tuition	<b>40.4</b>	31.1	36.7	+3.7%
High school guidance counselor advised me	7.9	6.0	7.9	0.0%
Private college counselor advised me	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.6</b>	+0.2%
I wanted to live near home	26.8	23.5	23.1	+3.7%
Not offered aid by first choice	6.3	5.0	5.3	+1.0%
I was attracted by the religious affiliation/orientation of college	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.8</b>	+0.3%

<b>Table 3 Reasons for Attending WCU (continued)</b>				
<b>Reason</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2-Year Dif</b>
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	<b>42.7</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>40.6</b>	+2.1%
Rankings in national magazines	6.1	3.0	4.3	+1.8%
Information from a website	12.5	7.6	10.2	+2.3%
I was admitted through an Early Action or Early Decision	4.2	4.5	3.5	+0.7%

The reasons with the largest and smallest percents are denoted in bold. As seen in Table 3, the reason for attending WCU that posted the largest percent for the 2004 CIRP respondents was *The college has a very good academic reputation* (53.7% for 2004, 50.0% for 2003, 51.5% in 2002).

The next largest percent for the 2004 CIRP sample was *I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college* (42.7% for 2004, 34.6% in 2003, 40.6% in 2002). Interestingly, this was followed by *This college has low tuition* (40.4% for 2004, 31.1% in 2003, 36.7% in 2002).

There was an increase in the percent of respondents in 2004 CIRP respondents over the 2003 CIRP respondents who indicated they attended because of the *Information on the web site* (+4.9%) and *Rankings in national magazine* (+3.1%).

#### SUMMARY

Three-fourths of the full-time freshmen participated in the 2004 CIRP. Almost all of the students indicated that they studied with other students. This result is consistent with both the 2003 and 2002 CIRP respondents.

One discouraging finding of the 2004 CIRP Survey is that there was the increase in the percent of students who reported they used alcohol (beer, wine or alcohol) from the 2003 CIRP sample. Over two-thirds of the 2004 CIRP sample indicated that they drank wine or liquor in the past year (67.5% in 2004, 56.4% in 2003, 70.5% in 2002).

As with both the 2003 and 2002 CIRP respondents, the most important reason for attending college was *To get training for a specific career* and *To learn more about things that interest me*. Clearly, these disparate reasons will be a challenge for both the faculty and students to realize.

Comparison with the 2002, 2003, and 2004 CIRP respondents has underscored some of the trends, principally similarities between the three freshmen classes. For example, the reasons for attending college and the concerns about paying for college seem to be constant across time. As such, the CIRP Survey results can be an important tool in the examination of current academic and student services that are provided to new freshmen.