Political Engagement, College Choice & Skills for a Diverse Workplace: Results from the 2008 CIRP Freshman Survey

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CIRP Freshman Survey

- Project of the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA
- Comprehensive survey of incoming first-time full-time college students
- 43rd year
- Over 13 million students
- Beginning of longitudinal research program for colleges that continues with the YFCY and CSS
2008

• Administered at
  – 522 colleges and universities
  – 328,182 students

• “Norms” (high response rates)
  – 340 colleges and universities
  – 240,580 students
2008 Significant Findings

- College Choice and Financial Issues
- Political Engagement
- Skills for a Diverse Workplace
- College Readiness
- Interest in Engineering
- Learning Disabilities
- “Green” Initiatives
- Internet Use
- Drinking Behavior
- A Meaningful Philosophy of Life
College Choice and Financial Issues
College Choice

Gap: 16.5

Gap: 17.1

Attending 1st Choice
Accepted by 1st Choice
I was offered financial assistance
I was not offered aid by my first choice
The cost of attending this college
Multiple Sources Used to Finance College

- Family Resources
- Student Resources
- Aid, not need repaid
- Aid, need repayment
More students than ever plan to get a job to help pay expenses.
Major Concerns About Financing College
Politics
More Students Discussing Politics

![Graph showing the percentage of students discussing politics from 1991 to 2007.](image)
More Students Discussing Politics: Election Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Comparing Boom Generations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussed politics frequently</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect to participate in student protests/demonstrations very good chance</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing the political structure essential or very important</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing social values essential or very important</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping up to date with political affairs essential or very important</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increased Support for Liberal Causes

Marijuana should be legalized
Federal military spending should be increased
Same sex couples should have the right to legal marital status
A national health care plan is needed to cover everybody's costs
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now
Skills for a Diverse Workplace
Skills for a Diverse Workplace

- Employers of college graduates need workplace competencies associated with a diverse world

- New item on CIRP surveys:
  - Pluralistic Orientation
## Pluralistic Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self rating compared to peers</th>
<th>“Top 10%” or “Above average”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance of others with different beliefs</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to see the world from someone else’s perspective</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to having my own views challenged</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Pluralistic Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Asian/PI American</th>
<th>Latino/a</th>
<th>Multi-Racial American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to work...</strong></td>
<td>77.3%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tolerance of others...</strong></td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to see...</strong></td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to discuss...</strong></td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Openness to having...</strong></td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
College Readiness
College Readiness

• National Commission on Excellence
  – 4 yr English
  – 3 yr Math
  – 2 yr Foreign Language
  – 2 yr Physical Science
  – 2 yr Biological Science
  – 1 yr History/American Government
  – 1 yr Art/Music
  – $\frac{1}{2}$ yr Computer Science
College Readiness

- 98.9% History/American Government
- 98.5% Math
- 97.9% English
- 92.9% Foreign Language
- 82.3% Art/Music
- 61.8% Physical Sciences
- 60.8% Computer Science
- 49.5% Biological Sciences
College Readiness

- Although still low, biological sciences are at a high, up 2.7 percentage points from 2006.

- Physical sciences are also at a high.

- Racial disparities persist, as it is more likely that White and Asian American students will meet the requirements for college than other students.
Further Findings
Interest in Engineering

![Graph showing interest in engineering over time.
- Red line represents probable major.
- Yellow line represents probable career/occupation.
- Data points from 1972 to 2008.]
Increase in Self-Reported Learning Disabilities
Learning Disabled Student’s Anticipation of Needs/Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Students with Learning Disability</th>
<th>All Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need Extra Time to Complete Degree Requirements</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek Personal Counseling</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Tutoring Help in Specific Courses</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support for “Green” Initiatives

- Essential/Very Important To Clean Up Environment: 29.5%
- Essential/Very Important to Adopt "Green Practices": 45.3%
- Addressing Global Warming Should Be A Federal Priority: 74.3%
Greater “Green” Initiative Support Among More Liberal Students

- Addressing global warming should be a federal priority (Agreement)
- Adopting Green Practices To Protect The Environment (Very important or essential)
Internet Use

- 98.8% for Research or Homework
- 86.5% Read news sites
- 18.9% College website was important factor in determining where to attend
Internet Use

• 57.1% Read blogs
• 34.5% Have a blog

• Female students were more likely to both read blogs and have blogs of their own

• Male students slightly more likely to read news sites
Meaningful Philosophy of Life

Being very well off financially
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life
Conclusions

• Many record highs and lows this year
• Financial concerns are manifested in college choice
• Political involvement at a high
• Beginning to monitor skills for a diverse and interconnected world
• Moving towards eliminating disparities in college readiness
• Progress in science initiatives