The Freshman Survey, conducted yearly by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Higher Education Research Institute, is administered to incoming college freshmen at a wide range of institutions. The survey includes questions in a number of areas, including student characteristics, plans, values and attitudes, self-concept, and goals. It is intended to provide a comprehensive picture of each year’s incoming freshman class.

The Freshman Survey has been administered at Loyola every year since 1990. This report looks at why students come to Loyola, and how those reasons differ by whether or not Loyola was their first choice.

### Key Findings

**Reasons for attending Loyola**

- Most students said that there were many factors that were very important to them in their choice of Loyola (see Figure 1). In fact, about three quarters cited five or more reasons, and six was the average number of factors students saw as very important.

- Three out of four incoming freshmen in 2008 said that Loyola’s academic reputation was a very important reason for choosing Loyola, while almost two thirds said that the fact that Loyola graduates get good jobs was very important (63%; see Figure 2). Forty seven percent said that it was very important to them that Loyola graduates get into top graduate/professional schools.

- Other key reasons for coming to Loyola were receipt of financial aid, a visit to the campus, and the size of Loyola (55%, 52%, and 48%, respectively).

- Most of the least important reasons for choosing Loyola were the advice of others: private college counselors (4%), relatives 4%), teachers (5%), high school counselors (10%), and parents (14%).

- The cost of attending Loyola was very important to the decision of 30% of incoming freshmen, while only 24% of the freshmen cited national magazine rankings as very important (although this percentage has been rising in recent years).

**Top choice school**

- Although the top reasons were the almost the same, students’ reasons for choosing to come to Loyola in the end did differ between those whose first choice was Loyola and those for whom it was another school (see Figure 3).

- Academic reputation and job placement of graduates were relatively more important to those whose first choice was Loyola, as were a visit to campus¹ and Loyola’s size.

- Relatively more important to those who had a first choice school other than Loyola was the cost of attending Loyola.

**Admittance to top choice school**

- Another factor pertaining to relative differences in reasons for coming to Loyola was, for those whose first choice was not Loyola (39% of freshmen; see Figure 4), whether or not they were admitted to their first choice school. Of those whose first choice was another school, 59% of them did not get into their first choice school (see Figure 5).

- These students may be divided into three ordered groups according to their desire to be at Loyola. Those most positive about coming to Loyola are those for whom Loyola was their top choice (61%; see Figure 6). Next are those who came to Loyola even though they were admitted to another first choice school (16%). Those least positive about attending Loyola are those coming to Loyola after not being admitted to their top choice school.

- Freshmen with Loyola as their first choice were more likely than the others to cite academic reputation and good job placement as very important reasons for coming to Loyola (see Figure 7).

- For those who did get into another school that was their first choice school, but still came to Loyola, financial reasons were more important than for other students: receipt of financial aid and overall cost of attending Loyola.

- The top reasons for coming to Loyola among freshmen who did not get into their top choice school were basically the same as for the others, but those freshmen had, on average, one fewer reasons for coming to Loyola.

¹ It may be in part that students’ campus visits motivate them to come here, but it is also the case that students already predisposed to come here are more likely to make campus visits.
Loyola has more control over some of the reasons for which students come to Loyola, of course, than over others.

Factors amenable to more immediate manipulation include financial aid offers (especially for students admitted elsewhere to their top school) and students' campus visits.

Academic reputation and job placement of graduates are things that change incrementally over time, and so cannot be expected to improve quickly. They can, however, be publicized.

Still other factors are beyond Loyola's control, such as the size of Loyola and its distance to someone's home.

Advice from others to go to Loyola does not directly figure into students' choices. However, such referrals may matter indirectly if they get students to even consider Loyola when they otherwise might not have.

Of the 2008 incoming freshmen, nearly a quarter came here after not being admitted to the school they most wanted to attend. Such students present a particular challenge to Loyola as it works to reduce its attrition rate. The good news, though, is that most of the students who come under these circumstances do end up staying at least past their first year.
Figure 1
Number of Very Important Reasons for Choosing Loyola
The athletic department recruited me
Private college counselor advised me
My relatives wanted me to come here
My teacher advised me
High school counselor advised me
My parents wanted me to come here
I was admitted through early action or early decision program
I was attracted by religious affiliation/orientation of college
This college has good reputation for its social activities
Visit to campus
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college
This college's grads gain admission to top grad/prof. schools
This college has very good academic reputation
The cost of attending this college
Information from a website
Rankings in national magazines
I wanted to live near home
This college's graduates get good jobs
I was offered financial assistance
Figure 2
"Very Important" Reasons for Choosing Loyola

Office of Institutional Research
Figure 3
Selected "Very Important" Reasons for Choosing Loyola, by First Choice School

- **This college has very good academic reputation**: 79%
- **This college's graduates get good jobs**: 66%
- **Visit to campus**: 59%
- **I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college**: 52%
- **The cost of attending this college**: 38%
- **Could not afford first choice**: 23%
- **Not offered aid by first choice**: 20%

Legend:
- **Loyola not first choice**
- **Loyola first choice**
Figure 4
First Choice School

Figure 5
Acceptance by First Choice School

Figure 6
Loyola as First Choice and Acceptance at Other First Choices
Reasons for Choosing Loyola, by College Choice and Acceptance

- This college has very good academic reputation: 72% important, 63% very important
- This college’s graduates get good jobs: 66% important, 56% very important
- Visit to campus: 41% important, 40% very important
- I was offered financial assistance: 66% important, 54% very important
- This college has good reputation for its social activities: 41% important, 31% very important
- I wanted to live near home: 26% important, 23% very important
- The cost of attending this college: 46% important, 32% very important
- Not offered aid by first choice: 26% important, 14% very important
- Could not afford first choice: 28% important, 16% very important
Figure 8
Reasons for Choosing Loyola by College Choice and Acceptance

- This college has very good academic reputation: 72% (Accepted by Loyola 1st choice), 79% (Accepted by non-Loyola 1st choice)
- This college’s graduates get good jobs: 62% (Accepted by Loyola 1st choice), 66% (Accepted by non-Loyola 1st choice)
- Visit to campus: 40% (Accepted by Loyola 1st choice), 41% (Accepted by non-Loyola 1st choice)
- I was offered financial assistance: 56% (Accepted by Loyola 1st choice), 62% (Accepted by non-Loyola 1st choice)
- This college has good reputation for its social activities: 40% (Accepted by Loyola 1st choice), 41% (Accepted by non-Loyola 1st choice)
- I wanted to live near home: 26% (Accepted by Loyola 1st choice), 23% (Accepted by non-Loyola 1st choice)
- The cost of attending this college: 26% (Accepted by Loyola 1st choice), 32% (Accepted by non-Loyola 1st choice)
- Not offered aid by first choice: 26% (Accepted by Loyola 1st choice), 14% (Accepted by non-Loyola 1st choice)
- Could not afford first choice: 28% (Accepted by Loyola 1st choice), 16% (Accepted by non-Loyola 1st choice)