



Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Some Loyola Freshmen May Not Be Sufficiently Prepared Academically or Socially

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research

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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 for many years.¹ This report looks at results for Loyola's 2008 incoming freshman class. Complete results are shown in the Appendix, but only selected results are discussed. A separate report presents changes in results from 2001 to 2008.

Key Findings

Student characteristics

- About two thirds of the students answering the survey were female, which mirrors the actual percentage of incoming students (see Appendix Table 1).
- One quarter of incoming freshmen were first generation college students (see Figure 1). More than a third of the freshmen planned to get a master's degree, however, and an additional half planned to get a doctoral or professional degree.
- For 62% of the students, Loyola was their first choice.
- For about one in five students, Loyola was at least 500 miles from their permanent home.

Financial situation

- Twenty percent of incoming freshmen estimated their parents' gross income as less than \$50,000, while a third estimated it as between \$50,000 and \$100,000 (see Appendix Table 2). The rest, 46%, gave an estimate of \$100,000 or over.
- More than half (56%) of freshmen said that their family contribution to their first year expenses was at least \$10,000, but only 5% said so about their own resources.

¹ At Loyola, the survey is currently administered at Discover Loyola orientations during the summer before freshman year, and although participation is voluntary, the response rate is very high.

- Fifty two percent were receiving grants and scholarships worth at least \$10,000, while a third were receiving at least \$10,000 in loans for their first year.
- Twenty nine percent of incoming freshmen had no concerns about paying for college, but 13% had major concerns (see Figure 2).

Reasons for attending Loyola

- 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 Appendix Table 3 and Figure 3).
- The least important reasons for choosing Loyola included the advice of others: private college counselors (4%), relatives (4%), teachers (5%), and high school counselors (10%).

Self-ratings

- A full 87% of students rated themselves as above average in their ability to work cooperatively with diverse people; 84% rated themselves above average in their tolerance of others with different beliefs (see Appendix Table 4 and Figure 4).
- Eighty four percent reported that their academic ability was above average, compared to their peers, but only 44% rated their mathematical ability as above average. Sixty three percent said that their writing ability was above average.

Expectations for college years

- Fifty eight percent of incoming freshmen in 2008 thought there was a very good chance that they would be satisfied with Loyola (see Appendix Table 5 and Figure 5).
- Five percent of 2008 incoming freshmen said that there was a very good chance that they would transfer to another school before graduating.
- More than half (55%) expected to get a job to help pay for expenses, and 8% expected to work full time.
- Six percent expected to need extra time to complete their degree.

Life goals

- The goal seen as very important or essential by the highest percentage of students was helping others in difficulty (78%; see Appendix Table 6 and Figure 6).
- That goal was followed in importance by being very well of financially and by raising a family (73% each).

Activities during past year

- Eighty seven percent of incoming freshmen reported frequently using the internet for research or homework in the past year (see Appendix Table 7). Just over half had frequently used the internet to read news sites.
- About three quarters said that they had frequently socialized with someone of another racial ethnic group.
- A third of students said that they had frequently felt overwhelmed by all that they had to do, while 54% felt depressed at least occasionally.
- Fifty four percent had come late to class at least occasionally, and 41% said that they had frequently been bored in class.
- Almost half of incoming freshmen reported drinking wine or liquor at least occasionally; the percentage was 40% for drinking beer and 20% for smoking cigarettes.

Time use in typical week in past year

- Only half of the incoming freshmen reported spending at least six hours a week on homework, while 20% said that they partied at least six hours a week (see Appendix Table 8).
- Half of students reported working for pay at least six hours a week.

Political orientation and sociopolitical views

- Forty seven percent of incoming freshmen described themselves as liberal or far left, while only 17% said that they were conservative or far right (see Appendix Table 9 and Figure 7).
- Most students agreed that the federal government should do more in a number of areas, including controlling pollution (83%), addressing global warming (79%), and controlling sale of handguns (79%; see Figure 8).
- Only fifteen percent thought that racial discrimination is no longer a problem in America, but more than half thought affirmative action in college should be abolished and only 35% thought students from disadvantaged backgrounds should be given preferential treatment.

Intellectual activities during past year

- Seventy three percent of students reported that they had frequently taken class notes during the last year, while 60% said they had frequently asked questions in class (see Appendix Table 10 and

Figure 9).

- Sixty nine percent had frequently supported their opinions with a logical argument, half had frequently sought alternative solutions to a problem, and 42% had frequently evaluated the quality or reliability of information.
- Around half frequently sought feedback on their academic work.
- Fifty six percent had frequently revised papers in order to improve their writing.

Implications

- A quarter of incoming freshmen were first generation, yet a high percentage, 87%, intend to get an advanced degree (significantly more than will eventually do so).
- Many students (71%) were taking on debt. A third were taking out at least \$10,000 in loans, just for their first year.
- Two potential warning signs are that more than half of incoming freshmen said that they had felt depressed at least occasionally in the last year, while about a third said they had frequently felt overwhelmed by all they had to do. Feelings of depression and being overwhelmed are likely to increase when students are first adjusting to college life, suggesting the importance of intervention or, at least, sufficient and easily accessible resources to help students cope.
- Freshman reports of their intellectual activities in the last year, such as taking notes in class, asking questions, revising papers, and evaluating the quality/reliability of information, are low enough to raise concerns about the level to which these students are prepared for the intellectual demands of a college environment. Further, the fact that well over four fifths of students rated themselves as above average in academic ability suggests that they may have inflated expectations about their ability to do college work. Finally, more than half of incoming freshmen had frequently come to class late in the past year, and 41% said they had been bored in class. It is to be hoped, however, that their coursework at Loyola will challenge them enough to provoke their interest, encourage their engagement, and further their intellectual development.
- Although 62% of incoming students said that Loyola was their first choice school, only 42% thought there was no more than some chance that they would be satisfied with Loyola.
- Loyola's academic reputation is very important to students' decisions to come here, as is its reputation for its graduates getting good jobs. Least important reasons for choosing Loyola were recommendations from other people.

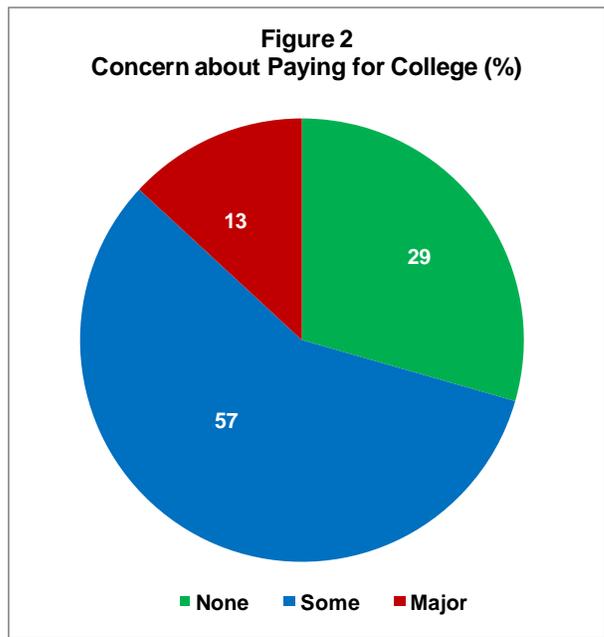
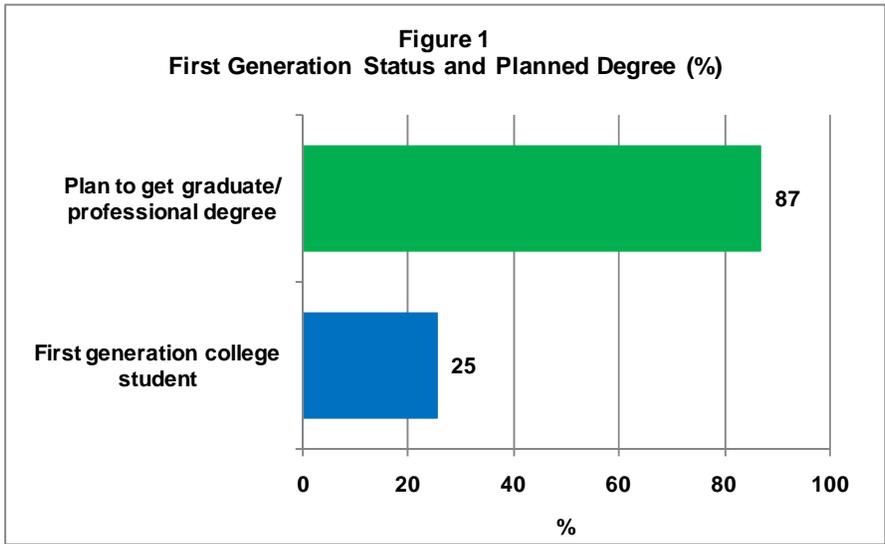


Figure 3
Reasons for Choosing Loyola (% Very Important)

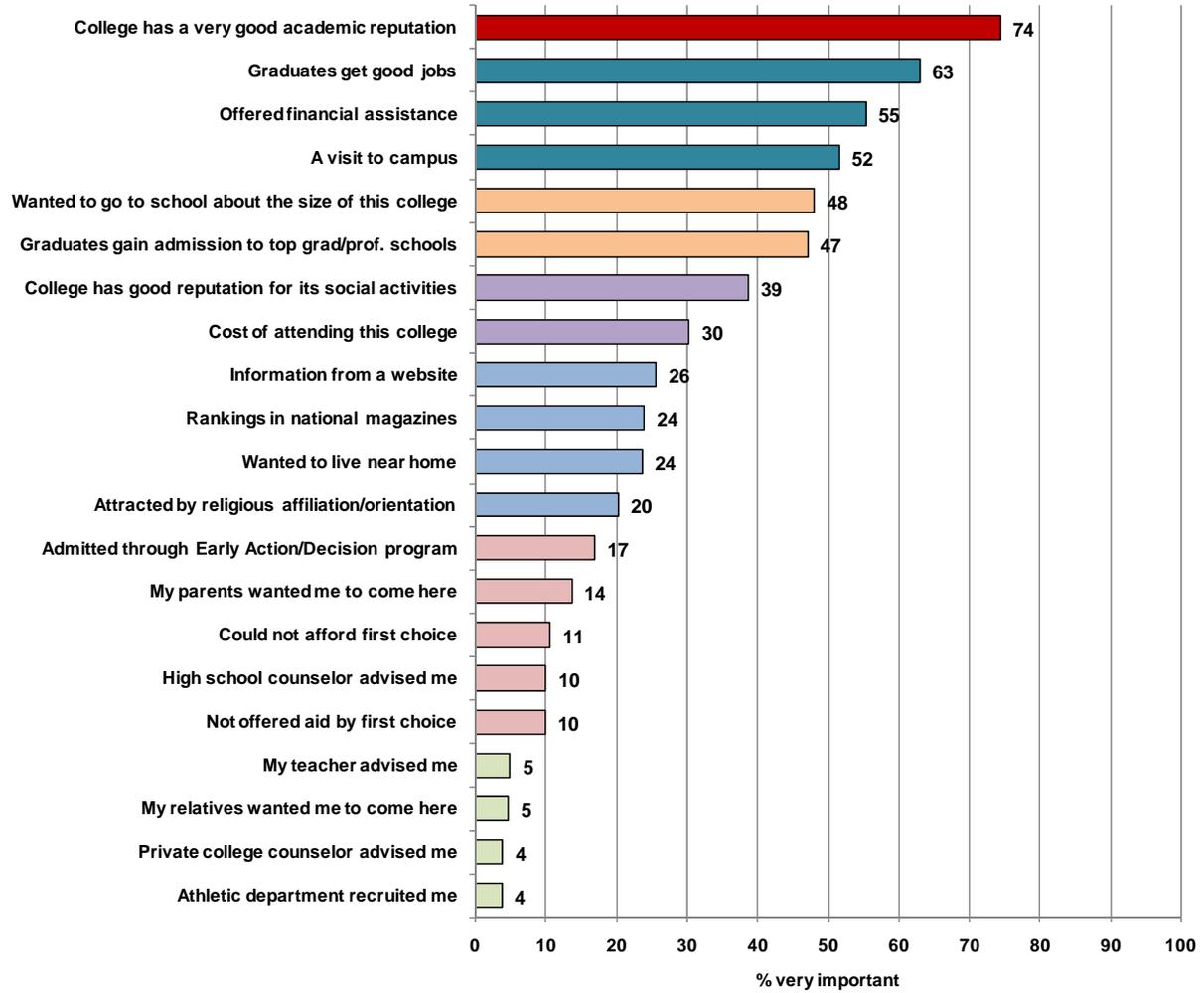


Figure 4
Self-Ratings (% Above Average)

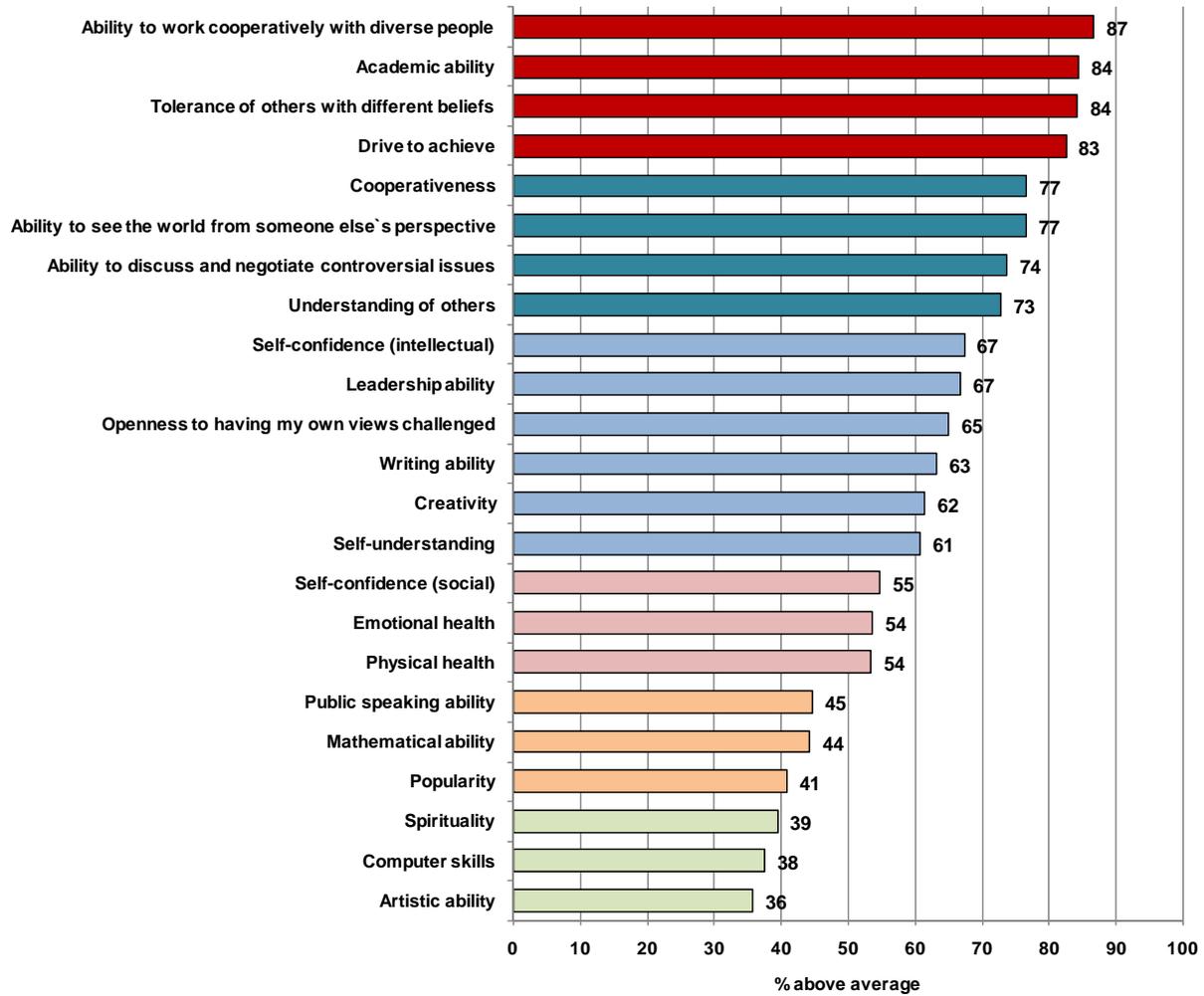


Figure 5
Expectations for College Years (% Very Good Chance)

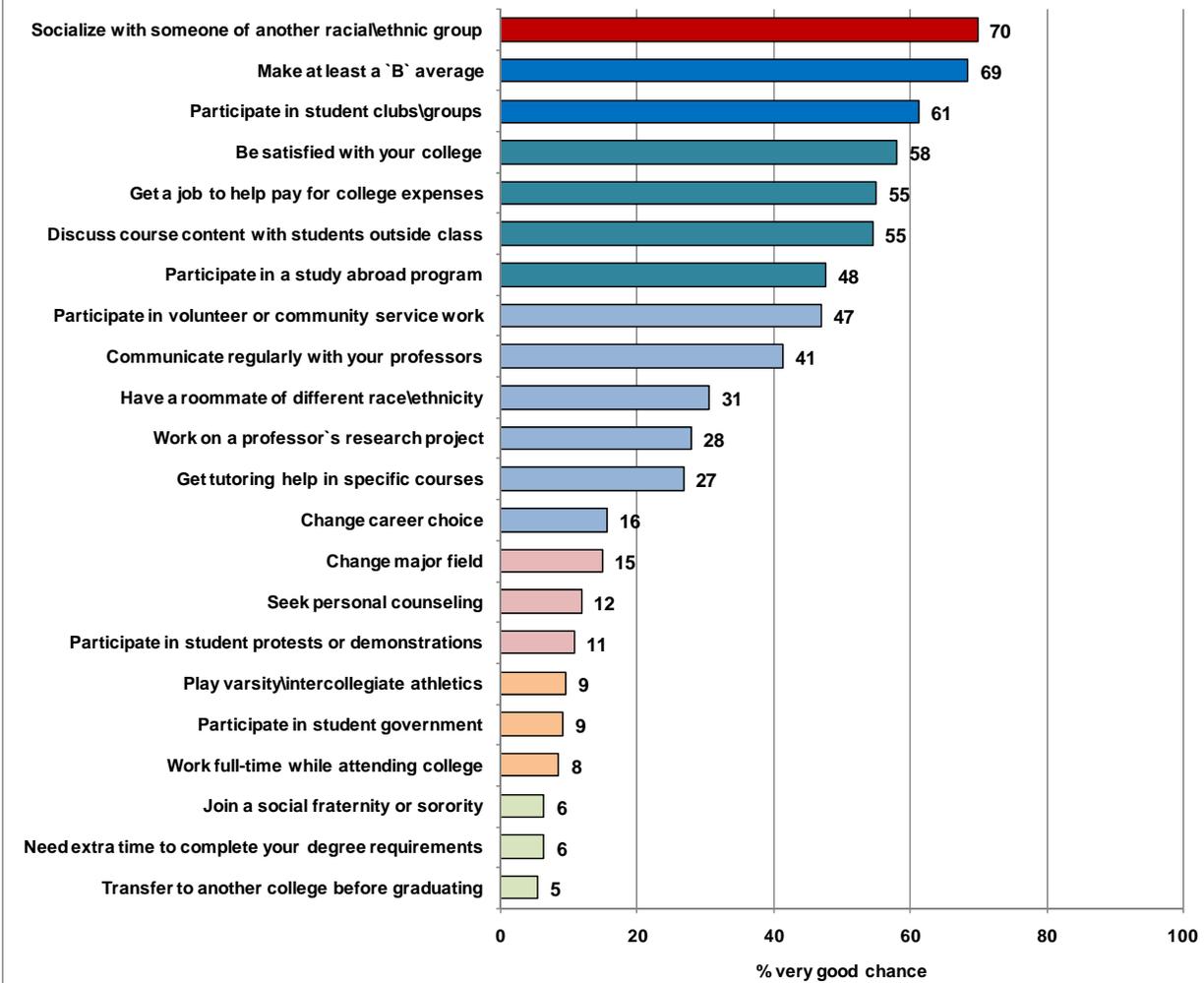


Figure 6
Life Goals (% Very Important or Essential)

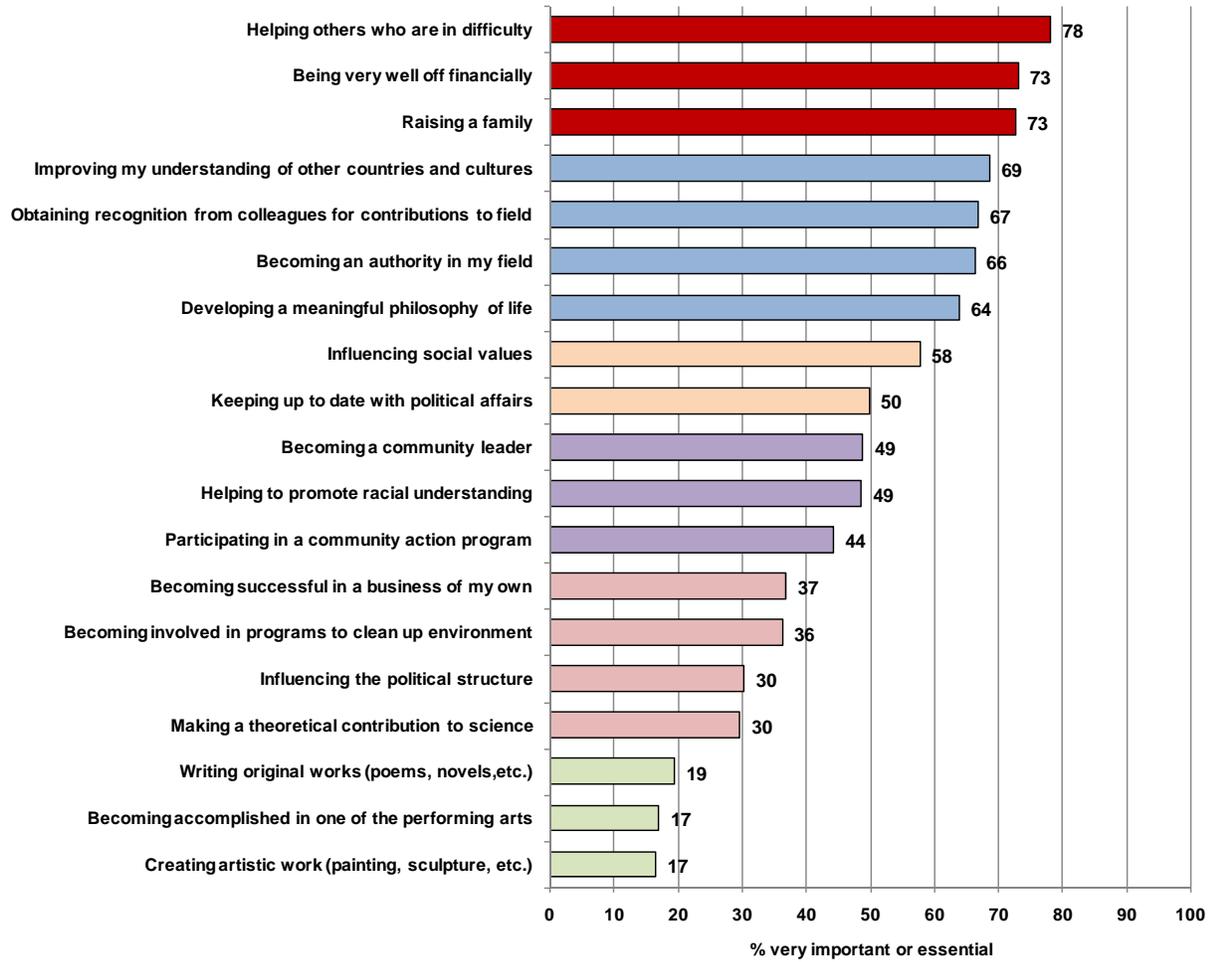


Figure 7
Political Orientation (%)

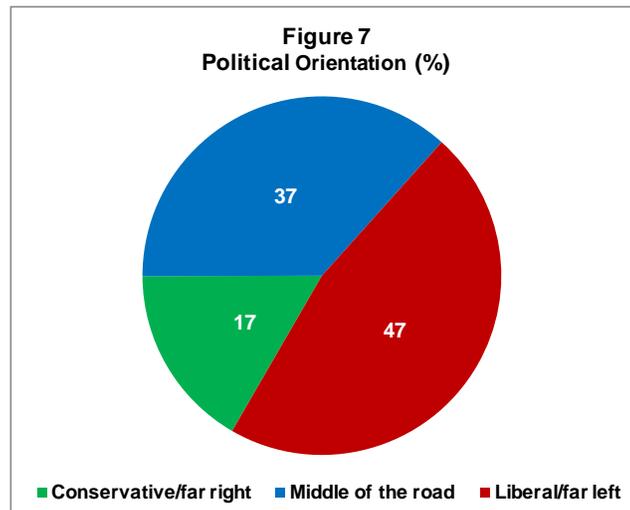


Figure 8
Sociopolitical Views (% Agree Somewhat or Strongly)

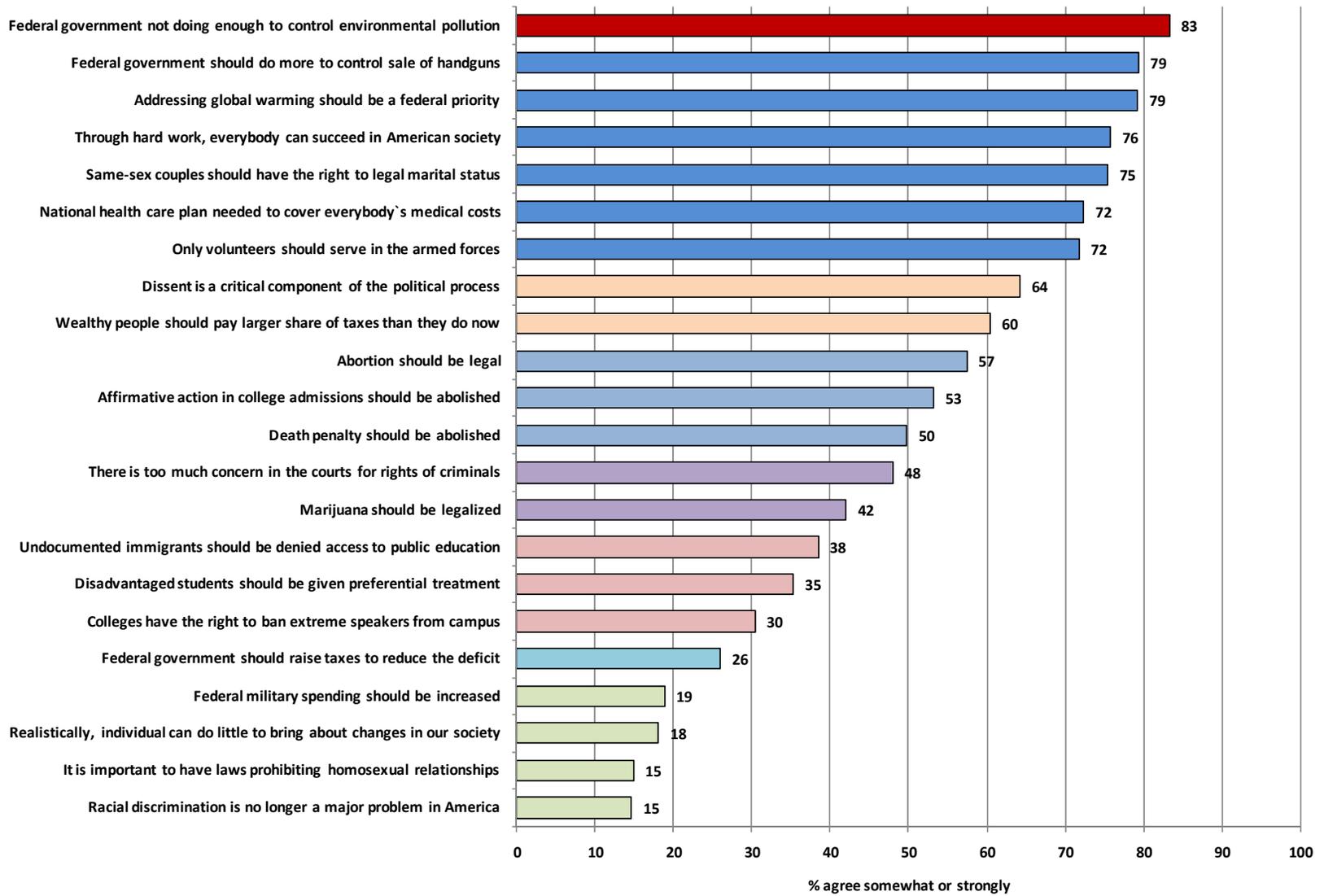
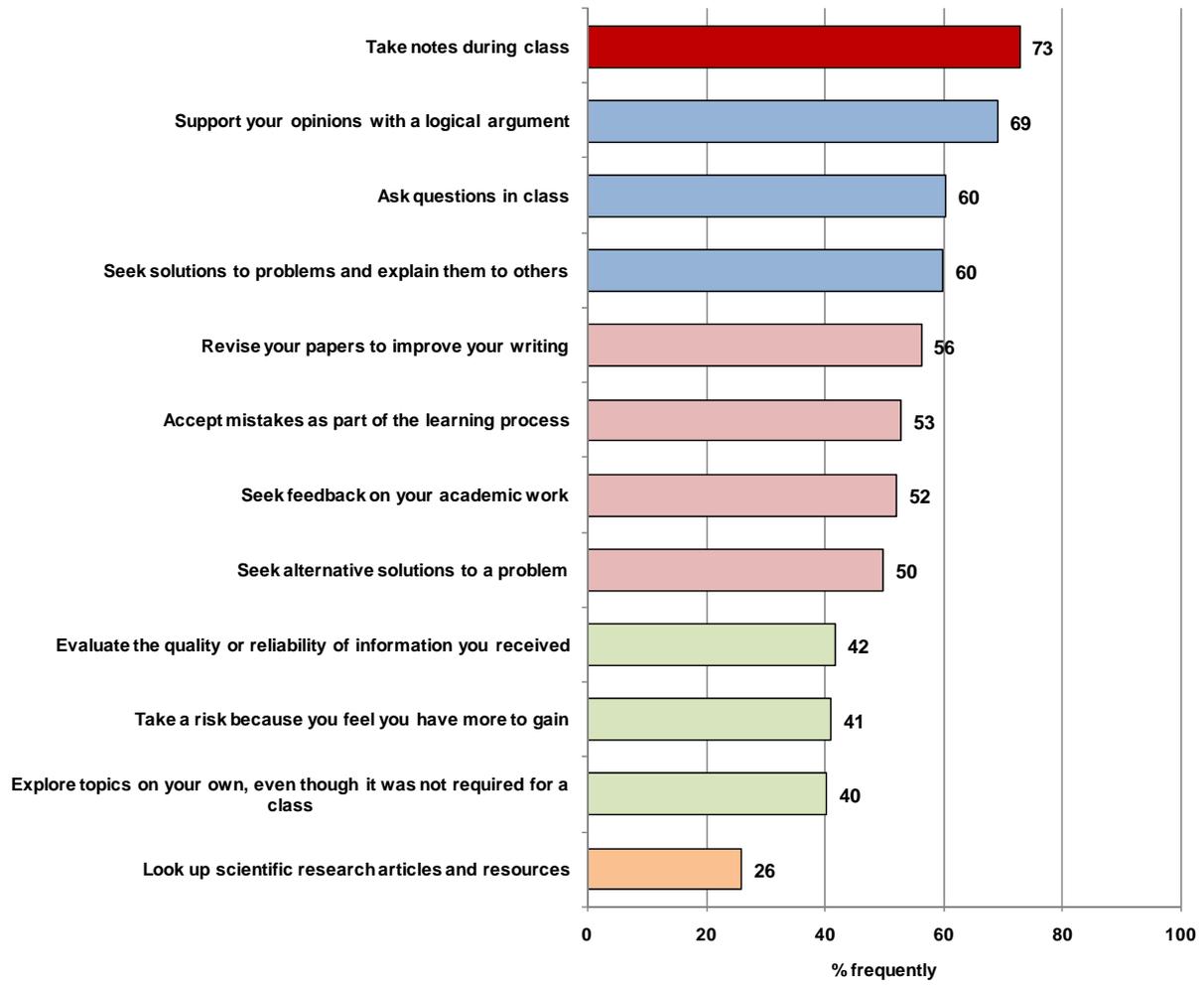


Figure 9
Frequent Intellectual Activities during Past Year (% Frequently)



Appendix Table 1	
Selected Characteristics of Respondents	
	%
Gender	
Female	67
Native English speaker	87
High school race composition	
Completely non-White	1
Mostly non-White	6
Roughly half non-White	23
Mostly White	61
Completely White	10
Neighborhood race composition	
Completely non-White	2
Mostly non-White	8
Roughly half non-White	14
Mostly White	56
Completely White	21
Parents' education: college or grad/prof. degree	
Father's education	62
Mother's education	61
First generation college student	25
Highest degree planned	
Master's	36
Doctoral or professional	51
Seven or more college apps	15
Accepted at first choice college	77
Loyola first choice	62
Residence plans for fall	
At home with family	13
College dorm	86
Other	1
Distance from home more than 500 miles	19

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Appendix Table 2 Respondents' Financial Situation	
	%
Estimated parents' gross income	
Less than \$50,000	20
\$50,000 to \$99,999	34
\$100,000 to 149,999	19
\$150,000 to 199,999	10
\$200,000 to 249,999	5
\$250,000 or more	12
Financial resources for paying first year of college	
Family resources	
None	9
\$10,000 +	56
My own resources	
None	23
\$10,000 +	5
Aid which need not be repaid	
None	11
\$10,000 +	52
Aid which must be repaid	
None	29
\$10,000 +	32
Concern about paying for college	
None	29
Some	57
Major	13

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Appendix Table 3 Reasons for Choosing Loyola	
	%
Very important	
This college has a very good academic reputation	74
This college's graduates get good jobs	63
I was offered financial assistance	55
A visit to campus	52
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	48
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate\professional schools	47
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	39
The cost of attending this college	30
Information from a website	26
Rankings in national magazines	24
I wanted to live near home	24
I was attracted by the religious affiliation/orientation of the college	20
I was admitted through an Early Action or Early Decision program	17
My parents wanted me to come here	14
Could not afford first choice	11
High school counselor advised me	10
Not offered aid by first choice	10
My teacher advised me	5
My relatives wanted me to come here	5
Private college counselor advised me	4
The athletic department recruited me	4

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Appendix Table 4 Self-ratings (compared to peers)	
	%
Above average	
Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people	87
Academic ability	84
Tolerance of others with different beliefs	84
Drive to achieve	83
Cooperativeness	77
Ability to see the world from someone else`s perspective	77
Ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues	74
Understanding of others	73
Self-confidence (intellectual)	67
Leadership ability	67
Openness to having my own views challenged	65
Writing ability	63
Creativity	62
Self-understanding	61
Self-confidence (social)	55
Emotional health	54
Physical health	54
Public speaking ability	45
Mathematical ability	44
Popularity	41
Spirituality	39
Computer skills	38
Artistic ability	36

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Appendix Table 5 Expectations for College Years	
	%
Very good chance	
Socialize with someone of another racial\ethnic group	70
Make at least a `B` average	69
Participate in student clubs\groups	61
Be satisfied with your college	58
Get a job to help pay for college expenses	55
Discuss course content with students outside of class	55
Participate in a study abroad program	48
Participate in volunteer or community service work	47
Communicate regularly with your professors	41
Have a roommate of different race\ethnicity	31
Work on a professor`s research project	28
Get tutoring help in specific courses	27
Change career choice	16
Change major field	15
Seek personal counseling	12
Participate in student protests or demonstrations	11
Play varsity\intercollegiate athletics	9
Participate in student government	9
Work full-time while attending college	8
Join a social fraternity or sorority	6
Need extra time to complete your degree requirements	6
Transfer to another college before graduating	5

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Appendix Table 6	
Life Goals	
	%
Very important or essential	
Helping others who are in difficulty	78
Being very well off financially	73
Raising a family	73
Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures	69
Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special f	67
Becoming an authority in my field	66
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	64
Influencing social values	58
Keeping up to date with political affairs	50
Becoming a community leader	49
Helping to promote racial understanding	49
Participating in a community action program	44
Becoming successful in a business of my own	37
Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	36
Influencing the political structure	30
Making a theoretical contribution to science	30
Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.)	19
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts (acting, dancing, et	17
Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, decorating, etc.)	17

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Appendix Table 7 Frequency of Activities in Past Year	
	%
Frequently	
Used the Internet: For research or homework	87
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group	73
Used the Internet: To read news sites	52
Discussed politics	46
Attended a religious service	45
Discussed religion	43
Was bored in class	41
Performed volunteer work	39
Studied with other students	38
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	35
Asked a teacher for advice after class	34
Voted in a student election	24
Occasionally or frequently	
Tutored another student	65
Used the Internet: To read blogs	61
Performed community service as part of a class	60
Felt depressed	54
Came late to class	54
Drank wine or liquor	48
Played a musical instrument	46
Drank beer	40
Used the Internet: To blog	38
Participated in political demonstrations	27
Smoked cigarettes	20
Was a guest in a teacher's home	18
Worked on a local, state or national political campaign	14

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Appendix Table 8 Time Use in Typical Week During Past Year	
	%
Playing video\computer games (any)	52
Talking with teachers outside of class (at least 1 hour)	51
Reading for pleasure (at least 1 hour)	58
Volunteer work (at least 3 hours)	31
Student clubs/groups (at least 3 hours)	41
Watching TV (at least 3 hours)	51
Household/childcare duties (at least 3 hours)	31
Online social networks (at least 3 hours)	44
Studying\homework (at least 6 hours)	51
Exercise or sports (at least 6 hours)	46
Partying (at least 6 hours)	20
Working (for pay; at least 6 hours)	51
Socializing with friends (at least 11 hours)	45

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Appendix Table 9 Political Orientation and Sociopolitical Views	
	%
Political orientation	
Conservative/far right	17
Middle of the road	37
Liberal/far left	47
Views: agree somewhat/agree strongly	
The federal government is not doing enough to control environmental pollution	83
The federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns	79
Addressing global warming should be a federal priority	79
Through hard work, everybody can succeed in American society	76
Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	75
A national health care plan is needed to cover everybody's medical costs	72
Only volunteers should serve in the armed forces	72
Dissent is a critical component of the political process	64
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	60
Abortion should be legal	57
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	53
The death penalty should be abolished	50
There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals	48
Marijuana should be legalized	42
Undocumented immigrants should be denied access to public education	38
Students from disadvantaged backgrounds should be given preferential treatment	35
Colleges have the right to ban extreme speakers from campus	30
The federal government should raise taxes to reduce the deficit	26
Federal military spending should be increased	19
Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society	18
It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships	15
Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	15

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Appendix Table 10	
Intellectual Activities During Past Year	
	%
Frequently	
Take notes during class	73
Support your opinions with a logical argument	69
Ask questions in class	60
Seek solutions to problems and explain them to others	60
Revise your papers to improve your writing	56
Accept mistakes as part of the learning process	53
Seek feedback on your academic work	52
Seek alternative solutions to a problem	50
Evaluate the quality or reliability of information you received	42
Take a risk because you feel you have more to gain	41
Explore topics on your own, even though it was not required for a class	40
Look up scientific research articles and resources	26

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2008