



Wide Variation in Reasons New Freshmen Have for Coming to Loyola

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Students have many reasons for going to college and for choosing a specific college to attend. Loyola has an interest in knowing these reasons, to better understand what incoming students want out of Loyola academics and the Loyola experience more generally.

The HERI CIRP Freshman Survey is a national survey administered annually to new freshmen at participating institutions across the United States. With the exception of 2005, the Freshman Survey has been administered at Loyola every year since the 1980s. The survey is administered to new freshmen during the "Discover Loyola" orientations in the summer prior to students' first semester at Loyola, so response rates are higher than for most other student surveys. In 2010, the response rate was 97%.

This report examines new freshmen's reasons for attending college and for choosing Loyola; students indicated the importance of each reason listed on the survey.¹ The importance students placed on each reason included not important, somewhat important, and very important. For each reason, results displayed and discussed indicate the percentage of students reporting that the reason was very important.² The focus of the report is on the reasons reported by fall 2010 incoming new freshmen, as well as changes over time, from 2001 to 2010. Statistically significant, meaningful changes are indicated in red or blue in the tables (see table Notes).

Key findings

Reasons for going to college

- New freshmen's most commonly reported reason for attending college (of those listed) was the desire to learn more about things that interest them, with 86% reporting it as very important in 2010.
- Other very important reasons for going to college for new freshmen in 2010 were the more practical considerations of being able to get a better job (84%) and getting training for a specific career

¹ Students may have had other reasons that were not on the lists.

² Entire scale includes very important, somewhat important, and not important.

(78%). The importance of being able to get a better job increased substantially, from 63% reporting it as very important in 2001 to 84% reporting it so in 2010.

- Another practical consideration, however, the desire to be able to make more money, was much less often reported as a very important for going to college (65% in 2010).
- Sixty nine percent of new freshmen in 2010 cited preparing themselves for graduate or professional school as a very important reason for attending college.
- To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas was reported as very important by 77% of the new freshmen in 2010, while becoming a more cultured person was reported as very important by 66%.

Reasons for coming to Loyola

- Of the reasons for coming to Loyola listed in the survey, the one most frequently cited by new freshmen as very important was that Loyola has a very good academic reputation, with 71% in 2010 so citing.
- The next most common reason for new freshmen's decision to come to Loyola was being offered financial assistance, with 63% citing it as very important in 2010. The cost of attending Loyola was reported as very important by 35% of new freshmen in 2010, an increase from 23% in 2004. That they could not afford their first choice school increased in importance from 8% very important to new freshmen in 2001 to 11% in 2010.
- Fifty nine percent of 2010 new freshmen cited as very important that Loyola's graduates get good jobs.
- The percentage of new freshmen saying that Loyola's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools was a very important reason in choosing to come to Loyola decreased from 49% in 2001 to 42% in 2010.
- Fifty three percent of 2010 new freshmen said that a visit to campus was very important to their decision to come to Loyola, an increase from 42% in 2003.
- There was also an increase in the percentage of new freshmen who reported wanting to go to a

school of about Loyola's size as very important, from 38% in 2001 to 46% in 2010.

- That Loyola has a good reputation for its social activities was cited as very important by 25% of new freshmen in 2001, increasing to 32% in 2010.
- The percentage of new freshmen reporting information from a website as a very important reason for coming to Loyola doubled, from 10% in 2001 to 20% in 2010. Only 15% reported rankings in national magazines as very important in 2010.
- Being admitted through an early decision program decreased in importance to the decision to come to Loyola, with 18% saying it was very important in 2001 to 13% saying so in 2010.
- That relatives wanted the student to come to Loyola decreased in importance, from 7% in 2001 to 4% in 2010.
- Eighteen percent of the respondents said that Loyola's religious affiliation was a very important reason for their decision to come.

Conclusions

- For new freshmen, important reasons for going to college are a mix of the practical with the

personal and developmental. The importance of being able to get a good job, however, has increased substantially over the last decade, while the importance of other very important factors has remained steady.

- Most reasons identified as very important in new freshmen's decision to come to Loyola were cited by less than a third of the respondents, indicating substantial variation in reasons for choosing Loyola.
- Of the list of reasons, Loyola's academic reputation is the one most important to new freshmen in coming to Loyola, yet it was cited by less than three quarters of the students.
- In general, students did not consider advice from others as very important to their decision to come to Loyola.
- National magazine rankings is a relatively unimportant reason for coming to Loyola, with only 15% of respondents reporting that as a very important reason.
- Loyola's identity as a Jesuit Catholic university also seems to be relatively unimportant, with only 18% reporting it as a very important reason for coming to Loyola.

Table 1 New Freshmen's Reasons for Going to College and for Choosing Loyola: 2001-10									
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reasons for going to college									
<i>% very important</i>									
To learn more about things that interest me	85.7	83.8	83.8	86.4	84.6	---	---	85.9	86.2
To be able to get a better job	62.6	67.2	64.6	65.6	71.1	---	---	82.4	83.9
To get training for a specific career	69.7	69.5	70.3	75.5	73.7	---	---	---	78.4
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	73.8	74.2	71.7	71.7	72.2	---	---	78.4	77.1
To prepare myself for graduate or professional school	76.3	77.8	76.2	74.3	73.7	---	---	---	69.3
To make me a more cultured person	57.9	58.2	58.9	60.2	62.3	---	---	67.4	65.8
To be able to make more money	61.1	67.2	65.2	61.0	65.2	---	---	65.8	64.5
Reasons for coming to Loyola									
<i>% very important</i>									
This college has a very good academic reputation	70.2	66.9	65.8	67.1	72.0	73.0	74.4	73.3	71.2
I was offered financial assistance	56.1	56.6	51.4	49.3	47.8	49.8	55.4	59.7	63.3
This college's graduates get good jobs	59.9	---	44.2	57.5	59.2	57.1	63.0	62.2	58.9
A visit to campus	---	---	42.0	40.1	38.8	42.3	51.6	48.5	53.2
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	37.8	39.0	34.1	38.6	42.8	44.4	48.1	43.1	45.6
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	49.4	---	---	43.5	46.6	45.4	47.1	45.3	41.7
The cost of attending this college	---	---	---	23.3	23.5	26.8	30.4	31.4	34.8
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	25.3	21.7	20.0	21.4	29.6	32.5	38.7	33.5	32.2
I wanted to live near home	18.7	19.9	19.4	19.8	22.5	20.9	23.7	22.2	21.6
Information from a website	10.3	13.5	16.1	16.6	21.0	19.4	25.7	21.2	20.1
I was attracted by the religious affiliation/orientation of the college	18.4	15.0	13.0	18.6	18.4	19.4	20.3	18.2	18.1
Rankings in national magazines	15.0	17.9	15.5	21.1	22.1	21.2	24.0	18.2	14.9
My parents wanted me to come here	---	---	---	---	---	12.4	13.7	---	14.5
I was admitted through an Early Action or Early Decision	18.2	17.3	21.5	17.2	17.3	17.4	17.0	18.8	12.6
Could not afford first choice	---	---	---	---	8.2	9.3	10.7	10.9	10.8
Not offered aid by first choice	8.8	9.8	7.5	7.7	7.9	9.9	10.0	10.4	10.0
High school counselor advised me	7.1	5.7	5.7	7.3	8.5	9.4	10.1	7.4	7.8
My relatives wanted me to come here	6.8	8.2	7.2	9.2	10.1	4.0	4.7	4.5	4.3
My teacher advised me	4.0	3.6	3.7	3.5	5.0	4.5	5.0	4.2	4.0
The athletic department recruited me	---	3.2	---	---	2.0	3.1	3.8	3.3	3.5
Private college counselor advised me	2.9	2.4	2.5	1.6	2.2	3.0	3.9	3.1	2.7
Ability to take online courses	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1.4	1.1
Total respondents	1314	1443	1327	1396	1814	1934	2152	1920	1978

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey, 2001-04, 2006-10 (includes new incoming freshmen only)

Note: Red/blue indicates that there was a statistically significant decrease/increase in the percentage from the first year measured to 2010 and the decrease/increase was at least 25% and at least 5 percentage points.