

CIRP Freshman Survey – Executive Summary

Rachael Dykstra, Institutional Analysis

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey was administered at GVSU during orientation in the summer of 2012. 3,992 students attended freshman orientation and a total of 2,639 students participated in the survey, however many students did not complete the survey. Average student response for the first page of the survey was 2,228 and by the last page of the survey the average student response was 1,153.

Following are some highlights in GVSU responses compared to peers nationwide. The nationwide peers are from public 4 year colleges that have also participated in the 2012 CIRP. A four-year college is defined as an institution that awards master and/or bachelor level degrees.

College Choice

GVSU students were more likely to be attending their first choice school (77% vs. 68%). Freshmen were more likely to cite a good academic reputation than national peers (71% vs. 66%) or a good reputation for social activities (51% vs. 35%) among the reasons for choosing a college. 66% of GVSU freshman believe that the current economic situation affected their college choice.

Financing College

GVSU freshman are more concerned about their ability to finance college than their peers. 61.6% indicated that they were somewhat concerned compared to 48.3% from their peers. They are more likely than their peers to indicate that they will get a job to help pay college expenses (89.3% vs. 68.9%) or work full-time while attending college (39.6% vs. 32.3%).

Civic Engagement

GVSU freshman are less likely than their peers to say that they discuss politics frequently (24.8% vs. 29.9%). However, they are more likely to frequently communicate their opinion about a cause (13.6% vs. 12.1%) or frequently help raise money for a cause or campaign (17.4% vs. 13.5%). GVSU freshman are also more likely than national peers to participate in volunteer or community service work (31.6% vs. 27.5%).

Diversity

Our students have less experience with ethnic diversity than their peers as they described their high school as mostly white (61.9% vs. 48.7%). They also described the neighborhood they grew up in as mostly or completely white (82% vs. 67.7%). Students indicated that they are less likely than their peers to frequently socialize with someone of another ethnic group in the past year (59.4% vs. 73.7%).

Health and Wellness

Freshmen are less likely to have smoked cigarettes (1.8% vs. 2.7%) drank beer (19.9% vs. 26.2%) or drank wine or liquor (26.5% vs. 30.4%) than their peers. GVSU students are more likely to feel overwhelmed by all they had to do (31.6% vs. 27.6%). They are also more likely to seek personal counseling than their peers (13.1% vs. 9.2%).

Career Planning

In deciding to go to college, GVSU freshman were more likely than their peers to indicate that it is very important to learn more about the things that interest them (80.8% vs. 78.3%) and to prepare themselves for graduate or professional school (64.1% vs. 55.8%). 26.2% of GVSU freshmen expect a bachelor's degree to be the highest degree obtained compared to 23.6% from their peers.

Additional information can be found at <http://reports.ia.gvsu.edu/cirp.html>