

2013 *The Freshman Survey*:

College Decisions

Introduction

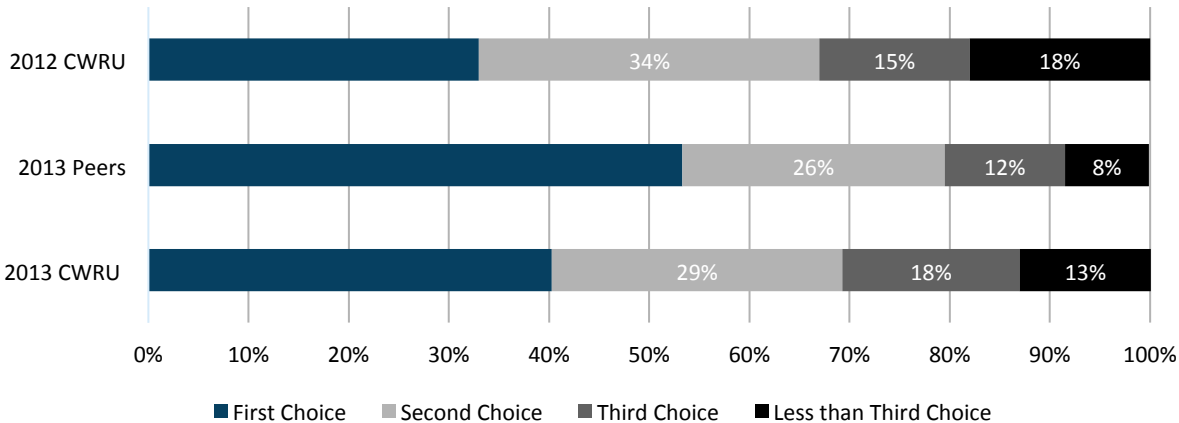
In summer and fall of 2013, first-year students enrolled at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) were asked to complete the Cooperative Institutional Research Program’s *The Freshman Survey (TFS)*. The survey covers a variety of topics related to students’ experiences, beliefs, and expectations prior to entering college. Only first-time, first-year students who were 18 years and older were eligible to participate.¹ This report focuses on factors students took into consideration when choosing their college



College Choice

Nearly half of first-year students who enrolled at CWRU applied to 8 or more colleges (47.9%). Additionally, over half of the students reported being accepted by their first choice college (50.2%). As highlighted in Figure 1, CWRU was most commonly a student’s first choice college (40.3%). This was not a significant increase ($p < .05$) from 2012 when 33% of students indicated CWRU was their first choice. Those students who enrolled at CWRU were *significantly less* likely to indicate CWRU was their first choice when compared to peer schools.² Almost 70% (68.3%) of students agreed or strongly agreed that the current economic situation weighed heavily on their decision to attend college.

Figure 1: Is this college your:



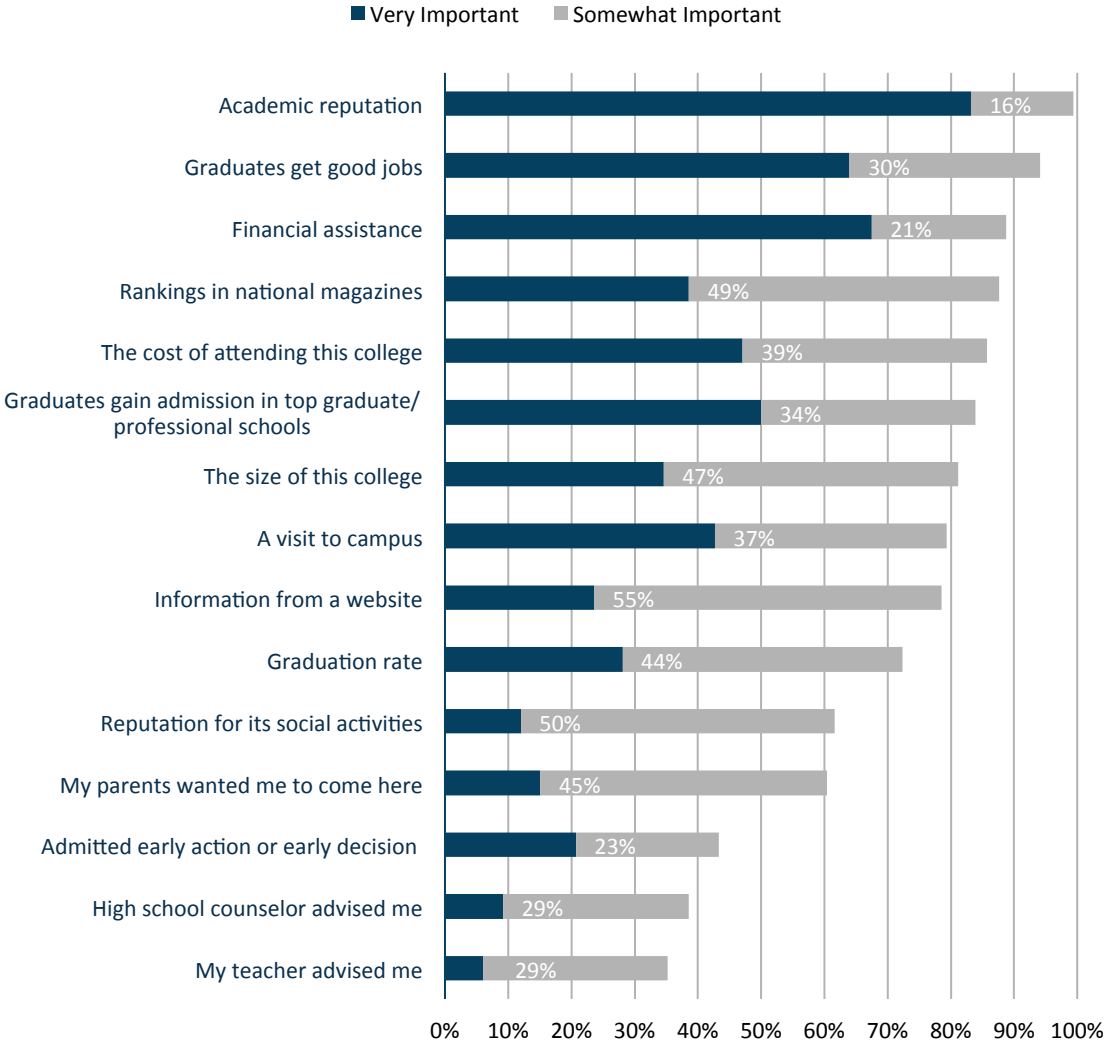
¹ Of the 1,021 eligible students, 522 completed the survey resulting in a 51% response rate. Compared to their peers, women, White/Asian students, and domestic students were more likely to participate in the survey.

² Peer universities included: Boston College, Brown University, California Institute of Technology, Duke University, Emory University, Northeastern University, Northwestern University, Rice University, Tulane University, University of Notre Dame, University of Rochester, University of Southern California, and Vanderbilt University.

Reasons for attending CWRU

Incoming first-year students were asked the extent to which various factors influenced their decision to attend CWRU. Figure 2 shows the percent of students who indicated a factor was “very important” or “somewhat important” in that decision. Only the top 15 factors are included in Figure 2. As with previous years, the enrolling class indicated the school’s academic reputation, the belief that CWRU’s graduates get good jobs, and financial aid were the most important factors influencing their decision to attend CWRU. When compared to their peers, students at CWRU put *significantly more weight* on the following factors: financial assistance, cost of attendance, inability to afford their first choice, lack of financial aid from first choice college, and rankings in national magazines. CWRU students put significantly less weight than their peers on the following factors: reputation for social activities, relative wanting them to attend, the college’s graduates get good jobs, the school’s religious affiliation, and the size of campus.

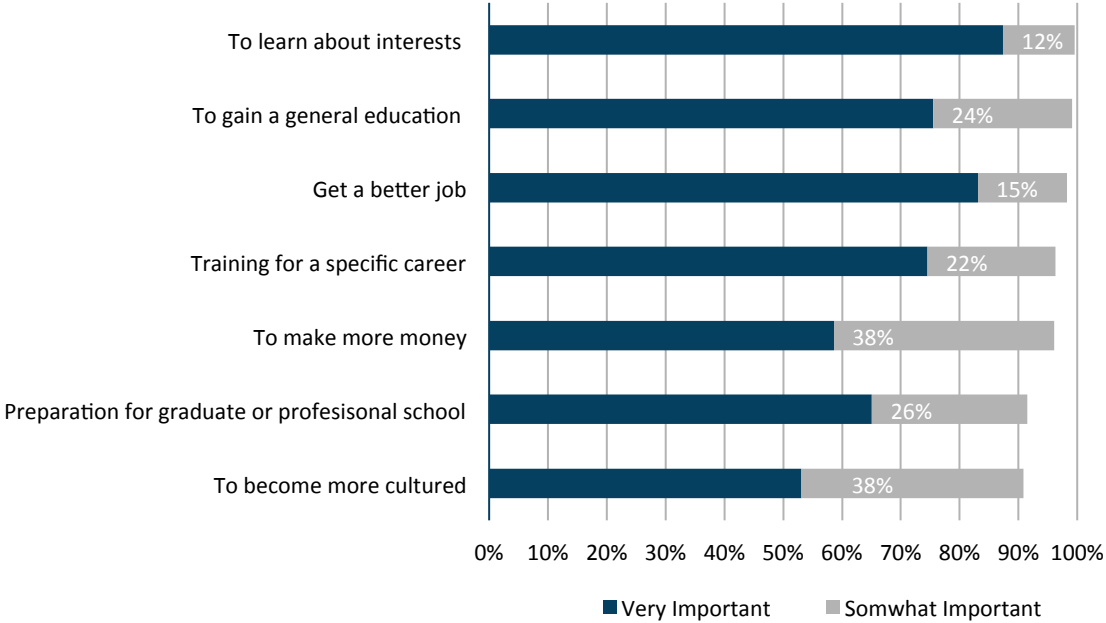
Figure 2: Factors somewhat important or very important in influenceing students to attend CWRU



Reasons for attending college

First-year students were also asked why they choose to attend college in general. Figure 3 highlights the percentage of students who indicated a factor was “very important” or “somewhat Important” in their decision to attend college. As with previous years, most CWRU students choose to attend college because it would allow them to learn more about things that interest them, to gain a general education and an appreciation of ideas, and to get a better job. Compared to their peers, CWRU students put significantly more weight on preparing themselves for graduate or professional schools and getting training for a specific career.

Figure 3: Reasons for attending college



Sources of funding for the first year

Students were asked several items pertaining to funding their education. The table below highlights the type of aid they received and the median value. As can be seen in the table below, the main sources of funding for most CWRU students was family resources or aid that does not need to be repaid.

Aid Type	% with more than \$10,000
Family Resources	63%
My own Resources	4%
Aid which need not be repaid	80%
Aid which must be repaid	15%

When asked if they had any concerns about their ability to finance college, 9.5% indicated they had major concerns and an additional 57.5% had some concerns.

Additional Information

For additional information, please contact Joshua Terchek at (216) 368-1500 or jjt7@case.edu. Additional reports can be found on our website at <https://www.case.edu/president/cir/cirhome.html>.