



Student Activities and Beliefs: Results from the 2010 Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey

Introduction

During the summer of 2010, the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey was sent electronically to first-year students at 279 colleges and universities across the United States. The survey results were collected and compiled by the Higher Education Research Institute. At Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), 1,021 first-year students received the survey and 453 responded (44%). This report provides an overview of the CWRU 2010 class' high school activities and current beliefs and compares the current class to (1) the class entering in 2007 and (2) first-year students enrolling at other highly selective private universities¹ in 2010.

Participant Demographics and Sample Quality

Of the students who were asked to complete the survey, 44% of the students responded (51% of all females; 38% of all men). The majority of participants were Caucasian (63%) and Asian American (16%). Other ethnic groups included Asian/Indian Subcontinent (6%), African-American or Black (5%), Hispanic or Latino (4%), Unknown Ethnicity (4%), and American Indian or Alaskan Native (1%). Overall response rates did not differ significantly among minority and majority participants.² Similarly, participants did not differ significantly by intended major. Respondents to the survey had a significantly higher high school index³ on average (99) than did non-respondents (97). Similarly, respondents had higher SAT Verbal scores (659) than did non-respondents (647). Respondents and non-respondents did not differ from each other on SAT Math, SAT Writing, or ACT Composite scores.

Comparisons by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

In terms of parental relationships, minority participants were significantly more likely than non-minority participants to report their parents as divorced or living apart (36% vs. 15%). Minority participants were also three times more likely to live with their families than in on-campus housing (9% vs. 3%).

¹ Highly selective private institutions in the 2010 comparison group include: Boston College, California Institute of Technology, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Emory University, Northwestern University, Rice University, University of Chicago, University of Pennsylvania, University of Southern California, and Vanderbilt University.

² "Majority" students include the Asian/Indian Subcontinent, Asian American, and Caucasian or White ethnic groups. "Minority" students are made up of the Hispanic or Latino, African-American or Black, and American Indian or Alaskan Native ethnic groups.

³ High school index is calculated by dividing the student's GPA by their high school's GPA scale and multiplying by 100.

The table below summarizes how participants' parental education broke down:

Participant Group	Mother			Father		
	College Degree	Some Graduate School	Graduate Degree	College Degree	Some Graduate School	Graduate Degree
Male	39%	4%	36%	28%	2%	52%
Female	28%	2%	21%	33%	5%	29%
Majority	43%	6%	32%	31%	4%	46%
Minority	18%	2%	34%	14%	0%	30%

*The highest percentage in each column is bolded.

Comparison to 2007 CWRU First-Year Class

Women made up a significantly higher percentage of the sample (48%) in 2010 than they did in 2007 (41%). Similarly, Asian/Asian-American students made up 22% of the 2010 sample but were only 17% of the 2007 group. Those who responded in 2010 were equally likely as those in 2007 to say their parents were still living with each other and were equally likely to have a family member who graduated from CWRU. Though respondents in 2010 were slightly less likely to say that they were first generation students, the difference was not significant (9% in 2007, 7% in 2010). Finally, those who responded in 2010 were significantly more likely to have permanent residencies more than 101 miles from CWRU than were those who responded in 2007 (74% in 2010, 62% in 2007).

Comparison to Other Highly Selective Private Institutions

In comparison to participants at other highly selective private institutions, this year's CWRU freshman class has a smaller proportion of Asian respondents (18% vs. 23%) and a larger proportion of Caucasian respondents (74% vs. 64%). The percentage of CWRU participants was fairly equal to the percentage of students at other highly selective private institutions in terms of other ethnic groups, age, native language, citizenship status, and veteran status. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the survey respondents in the comparison group were male and 52% were female whereas CWRU's survey participants were exactly opposite, 52% male and 48% female.

Activities

CWRU 2010 First-Year Profile

During the past year, over half of the participants reported performing volunteer work (94%), attending a religious service (71%), demonstrating for or against a cause (57%), and helping raise money for a cause or campaign (51%). Participants were asked to estimate the amount of time they spent last year on various activities during a typical week. The average participant reported that he/she spent a total of 24 to 40 hours (6 to 10 hours per activity) per week exercising or playing sports, participating in student clubs or groups, watching television, and viewing online social networks. Additionally, a total of 12 to 20 hours (3 to 5 hours per activity) per week were dedicated to

volunteering, reading for pleasure, playing video/computer games, and performing household/childcare duties. Lastly, participants reported spending 1-2 hours per week partying.

Comparisons by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

In comparing participants' high school activities based on gender, males spent more time playing video/computer games, while females spent more time perusing online social networks, volunteering, attending to household or childcare duties, and reading for pleasure. In the past year, females were more likely to attend a religious service (71%), demonstrate for or against a cause (57%), and help raise money for a cause or campaign (51%). Overall, males were more likely than females to believe that they will participate in intercollegiate athletics or play club, intramural, or recreational sports while in college. Females were more likely to believe that they would participate in student protests and demonstrations during college. In terms of activities, minority participants spent more time volunteering, performing household/childcare duties, and partying. Minority students were also more likely to have been a guest in a teacher's home.

Comparison to 2007 CWRU First-Year Class

Compared to students who responded in 2007, the respondents in 2010 spent significantly less time per week in high school exercising/playing sports or partying. In fact, in 2007, 34% of respondents said they spent 0 hours per week partying, compared to 47% of students in 2010. Conversely, students in 2010 spent significantly more time participating in student clubs/groups, on online social networks, performing volunteer work, and reading for pleasure. The activity with the largest increase, in terms of time, was time spent on online social networks. In 2007, only a third of students (33%) spent 3 or more hours in a typical week on online social networks; by 2010 over half of participants (51%) said they spent 3 or more hours in a typical week on social networks.

Comparison to Other Highly Selective Private Institutions

Over the past year, CWRU participants spent more time reading for pleasure, performing household/childcare duties, and playing video/computer games than students at other highly selective private schools. During a typical week last year, fewer CWRU participants:

- Perused social networks (89% vs. 96%);
- Spent more than 10 hours studying or doing homework (41% vs. 47%); and
- Spent more than 10 hours socializing with friends (26% vs. 47%).

Additionally, fewer CWRU participants engaged in the following activities during the past year:

- Voting in a student election (23% vs. 18 %);
- Raising money for a campaign (21% vs. 63%); and
- Working on a local, state, or national campaign (11% vs. 16%).

Student Values, Goals, and Political Beliefs

CWRU 2010 First-Year Profile

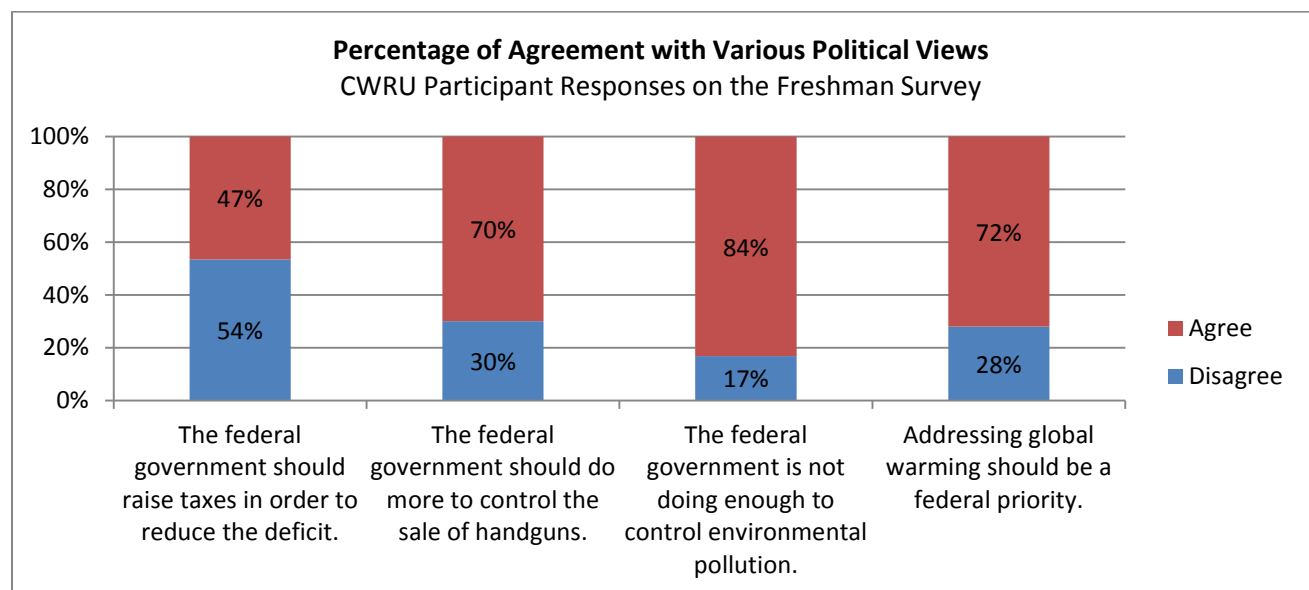
The majority of participants reported that it was “very important” or “essential” to:

- Improve their own understanding of other countries and cultures (60%);
- Help others who are in difficulty (74%);
- Adopt “green” practices to protect the environment (53%);
- Be very well off financially (73%);
- Raise a family (70%); and
- Develop a meaningful philosophy of life (54%).

Less than half of participants felt that it was very important or essential for them to:

- Keep up to date with political affairs (44%);
- Participate in a community action program (38%);
- Help promote racial understanding (38%);
- Influence social values (37%);
- Become a community leader (37%);
- Become involved with programs to clean up the environment (32%);
- Influence the political structure (18%);
- Write original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc; (15%); or
- Create artistic works (11%).

When asked to characterize their political views, 39% of students chose “middle of the road,” 38% chose “liberal,” and 17% chose “conservative”. In addition, students were asked to provide feedback on several controversial topics.



Students also agreed with the following statements:

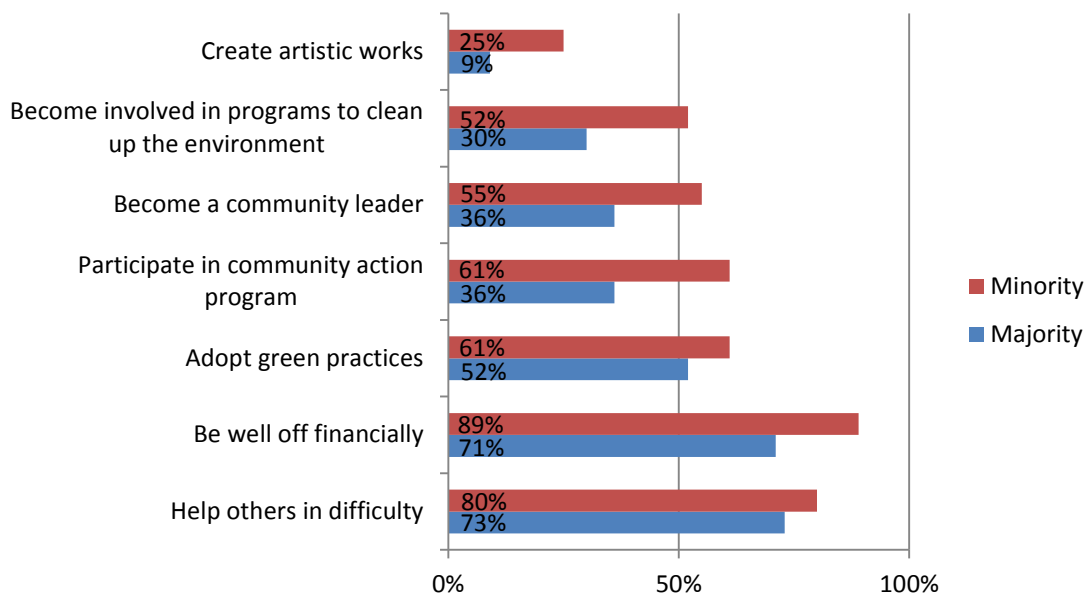
- Gays and lesbians should have the legal right to adopt a child (87%);
- Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now (73%);
- Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished (67%);
- A national health care plan is needed to cover everybody's medical costs (63%);
and
- The chief benefit of a college education is increasing one's earning power (62%).

Comparisons by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

In general, more females felt it was very important or essential to help others who are in difficulty (83% vs. 65%) and adopt "green" practices to protect the environment (54% vs. 51%). Fewer males than females felt it was very important or essential to become involved in programs to clean up the environment (28% vs. 36%) or participate in community action programs (29% vs. 49%).

Minority participants were less likely to agree that affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished (50% vs. 69%) and more likely to agree with the statements, "The federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns" (89% vs. 68%) and "A national health care plan is needed to cover everybody's medical expenses" (82% vs. 61%). There was no significant difference between minority and majority participants' responses regarding whether or not wealthy people should be required to pay more in taxes. Overall, minority participants were more likely to have helped raise money for a cause or campaign (73% vs. 49%) and have demonstrated for/against a cause during the past year than non-minority participants (68% vs. 56%). The following chart displays the differences in student values and goals.

**"Essential" and "Very Important" Goals
By Race/Ethnicity on the Freshman Survey**



Comparison to 2007 CWRU First-Year Class

Compared to their peers who participated in 2007, those who took the survey in 2010 were significantly more likely to say it was very important or essential for them to help others who are in difficulty (74% in 2010, 68% in 2007), become involved in programs to clean up the environment (32% in 2010, 27% in 2007), participate in a community action program (38% in 2010, 29% in 2007) and write original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.; 15% in 2010, 12% in 2007).

In terms of political views, compared to participants who took the survey in 2007, participants in 2010 were more likely to agree somewhat or strongly that the federal government should raise taxes to reduce the deficit (47% in 2010, 32% in 2007) and that wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now (74% in 2010; 64% in 2007). Students in 2010 were less likely than their 2007 peers to somewhat or strongly agree that a national health care plan is needed to cover everybody's medical costs (63% in 2010, 70% in 2007).

Comparison to Other Highly Selective Private Institutions

Compared to their peers, a lower percentage of CWRU participants reported that it was very important or essential to become accomplished in the performing arts (34 vs. 41%).

CWRU participants were also less likely to take a risk even if they had more to gain (39% vs. 45%) or publicly communicate their opinion about a cause (8% vs. 13%).

They placed a lower importance on becoming successful in a business of their own (57% vs. 74%), keeping up-to-date with political affairs (79% vs. 85%), and becoming a community leader (72% vs. 82%). Fewer CWRU also participants engaged in the following activities during the past year:

- Voting in a student election (23% vs. 18 %);
- Raising money for a campaign (21% vs. 63%); and
- Working on a local, state, or national campaign (11% vs. 16%).

When asked about their long-term goals, more CWRU participants reported that it was very important or essential for them to obtain recognition from their colleagues for contributions to their special field (67% vs. 61%) and make a theoretical contribution to science (53% vs. 31%). When asked about their anticipated college activities, a higher percentage of CWRU participants said there was a chance they would play intercollegiate athletics (48% vs. 44%) and more CWRU participants said there was a "very good chance" that they would participate in volunteer or community service work (54% vs. 49%). Lastly, in comparison to participants at other highly selective institutions, CWRU participants were more likely to agree that wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now (73% vs. 61%) and less likely to agree that the federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns (70% vs. 76%).

Additional Information

If you would like additional information about this report, please contact us at (216) 368-2338. To submit a request for data, please visit our website at:

<http://www.case.edu/president/cir/cirhome.html>.

