

BY THE NUMBERS: Fall 2002 MSU Freshmen Facts

Montclair State University enrolled 1,478 first-time, full-time freshmen this past fall. All full-time freshmen, except for nontraditional, Center for Adult Learning (CAL) students, were asked to participate in the CIRP Freshman Survey. Their responses give us an in depth portrait of these entering students: what they did in their senior year of high school, what their life aspirations are, why they are attending college and in particular MSU, what their beliefs are, if they have concerns about financing college, as well as a host of other issues.

Who Responded to the Survey?

- 59% completion rate
- the sample over represents EOF freshmen and under represents males

With the appointment this fall of a divisional researcher and the implementation of a required freshman seminar, the survey's administration was shifted to Student Development and Campus Life. This year Freshman Seminar classes were the collection points for the survey for the majority of freshmen and only one group, EOF students, responded during Freshman Orientation (the collection point in prior years).

The overall completion rate of 59 percent, 823 respondents, is respectable but is down from prior years' rates. The sample somewhat under represents males and over represents EOF freshmen. Males make up 40 percent of the overall full-time freshman population and 36 percent of the sample. Similarly, EOF freshmen make up 12 percent of the total freshman population and 18 percent of the sample. If possible, the CIRP Freshman Survey should be administered during Freshman Orientation; which affords better control of the process because distribution and collection are completed at one time and in one place.

Who Are our Freshmen?

- 4 out of 10 freshmen report they are members of an ethnic or racial minority group
- 75% are 18 years old
- 51% identify themselves as Roman Catholic
- 22% say English is not their native language

Montclair State University's freshmen are more ethnically and racially diverse, younger, and living closer to home than freshmen at other four-year medium-selective universities/colleges. The ethnic and racial diversity of our freshmen is also reflected in the higher percents that report English is not their native language and that they hold permanent resident status. MSU freshmen are also more likely to be Roman Catholic (Table 1).

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics, Fall 2002

Characteristics:	Montclair State University	Medium Selective Colleges
Racial/ethnic group:	%	%
African American	12.3	5.9
Asian	4.8	2.9
Latino/a	20.4	6.6
White	59.9	84.1
Other	8.0	4.0
Sex:		
Male	36.1	40.7
Female	63.9	59.2
Age:		
18 Years	74.9	66.2
19 Years	21.4	30.2
Other	3.7	3.6

Religious preference:		
Baptist	6.5	9.6
Buddhist	0.3	0.6
Eastern Orthodox	2.2	0.5
Episcopal	1.0	1.1
Islamic	2.8	0.8
Jewish	2.8	1.4
Lutheran	0.5	6.7
Methodist	1.9	6.0
Presbyterian	2.0	3.2
Roman Catholic	50.6	35.5
Seven Day Adventist	1.4	0.2
United Church of Christ	0.4	1.9
Other Christian	10.4	12.1
Other religion	4.5	4.0
None	12.9	16.5
U.S. citizen:		
Yes	90.7	98.0
Permanent resident	8.5	1.6
Neither	0.9	0.4
English is native language:		
Yes	77.7	96.3
College is miles from home:		
5 or less	12.4	6.4
6 to 10	17.9	10.0
11 to 50	48.2	34.1
51 to 100	14.5	18.8
101 to 500	6.1	27.6
Over 500	0.9	3.1

What Are Freshmen Parents Like?

- 24% of freshmen parents are college graduates and an additional 11% have graduate degrees
- 25% of fathers are in business and 15% of mothers are school teachers

Almost a quarter of all employed fathers are in business and another 10 percent are skilled workers and 7 percent are engineers. Mothers who work are found in most of the listed occupations but are more represented in elementary education, nursing, and the clerical side of business than fathers. About 11 percent of MSU freshmen mothers, and almost 9 percent of the comparator group, are full-time homemakers.

Nearly a quarter of MSU freshmen fathers and mothers are college graduates; and an additional 11 percent of fathers, and 7 percent of mothers, have graduate degrees (Table 2).

Table 2
Parental Background Characteristics

Characteristics:	Montclair State University		Medium Selective Colleges	
	Father %	Mother %	Father %	Mother %
Racial/ethnic group:				
African American	11.4	11.4	5.8	5.8
Asian	4.2	4.4	2.0	2.3
Latino/a	18.5	18.2	5.9	5.9
White	59.0	59.6	84.2	84.7
Other	6.9	6.4	2.1	1.3
Religious preference:				
Baptist	5.7	6.5	9.2	10.1
Buddhist	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.6
Eastern Orthodox	1.9	2.1	0.6	0.5
Episcopal	0.8	0.9	1.3	1.4
Islamic	4.2	3.2	0.9	0.7
Jewish	3.7	3.5	1.9	1.7
Lutheran	1.0	1.3	7.4	7.7

Methodist	2.3	1.7	6.3	7.1
Presbyterian	2.7	3.5	4.0	4.0
Roman Catholic	55.3	55.7	38.5	40.0
Seven Day Adventist	1.0	1.3	0.3	0.3
United Church of Christ	0.5	0.7	1.9	2.0
Other Christian	9.4	10.7	11.1	12.1
Other religion	4.1	4.3	3.3	3.5
None	7.0	4.1	12.7	8.0
Occupation:				
Artist	1.5	0.9	0.8	1.2
Business	24.5	11.4	26.5	15.8
Business (Clerical)	1.9	7.4	1.1	7.5
Clergy	0.7	0.1	0.8	0.1
College teacher	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3
Doctor (MD or DDS)	1.4	0.4	1.2	0.8
Education (secondary)	2.9	3.6	2.6	4.3
Education (elementary)	1.4	11.3	1.0	9.3
Engineer	6.7	0.0	7.9	0.4
Farmer or forester	0.3	0.0	2.1	0.3
Health professional	0.7	1.4	1.3	2.7
Homemaker (full time)	0.1	10.8	0.2	8.5
Lawyer	0.8	0.1	1.1	0.3
Military (career)	0.4	0.0	1.6	0.2
Nurse	0.3	7.0	0.6	9.8
Research scientist	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.2
Social/welfare/recreation worker	0.7	1.6	0.7	1.8
Skilled worker	9.8	2.4	10.8	1.9
Semi-skilled worker	3.4	3.4	3.7	2.6
Unskilled worker	5.7	4.2	4.1	2.0
Unemployed	4.0	6.4	2.4	4.4
Other	32.5	27.4	28.9	25.6
Educational level:				
Grammar school or less	5.7	5.7	2.0	1.8
Some high school	10.2	7.6	5.0	3.6
High school graduate	26.7	32.0	28.6	29.8
Post secondary other than college	5.2	7.3	4.8	5.4
Some college	15.6	15.9	17.6	19.5
College degree	24.3	22.5	26.0	26.2
Some graduate school	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.8
Graduate school	10.8	7.2	14.5	11.8

MSU freshmen report that more than a quarter, 27.5 percent, of their parents have family incomes of less than \$30,000; the comparable figure for medium-selective colleges is 16 percent. At the other end of the income range, 17 percent of MSU parents and 22 percent of the comparator group report having incomes of \$100,000 or more. While there is a difference in the affluence of the two groups, the difference is somewhat overstated here because EOF students are over represented in the MSU sample (one of the major criteria for admission to the university for these students is economic need) (Table 3)).

Table 3
Other Parental Characteristics, Fall 2002

	Montclair State University	Medium Selective Colleges
Income range:	%	%
Less than \$10,000	5.2	2.5
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5.3	2.8
\$15,000 to \$19,999	4.1	2.8
\$20,000 to \$24,999	6.3	3.7
\$25,000 to \$29,999	6.6	4.0
\$30,000 to \$39,999	10.0	7.8
\$40,000 to \$49,999	7.4	10.5
\$50,000 to \$59,999	13.3	12.2
\$60,000 to \$74,999	11.9	15.1
\$75,000 to \$99,999	13.2	16.6
\$100,000 to \$149,999	11.7	13.8
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2.7	4.4

\$200,000 to \$249,999	1.1	1.5
\$250,000	1.1	2.2
Parents are:		
Both alive & living w/ each other	65.6	70.7
Both alive, divorced or living apart	28.4	25.8
One or both deceased	5.9	3.6

What was High School Like for Freshmen?

Grades

- 31% had average high school grades ranging from A- to A+
- 84% report B or better high school averages

Table 4
Average High School Grades

Grade Range:	Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %
A or A+	11.5	13.3
A-	19.4	19.4
B+	25.3	23.5
B	27.9	26.4
B-	9.3	10.7
C+	4.3	4.5
C	2.2	2.1
D	0.0	0.1

Courses

- 41% took at least one advanced placement course in high school
- 30% took advance placement exams
- 38% had some special tutoring or remedial course work in high school
- 24% feel they will need remediation in mathematics while attending MSU

Table 5 looks at freshmen high school remediation in various areas as well as those that feel they will need help at MSU. The areas in which entering freshmen feel they will need the most help in are: mathematics, 23.7 percent, foreign languages, 13.2 percent, and writing, 12.8 percent.

Table 5
Remediation Courses in High School and College

High School Remediation Courses		Remedial Area	Will Need College Remediation	
Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %		Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %
13.6	13.2	Mathematics	23.7	25.8
4.7	5.2	English	8.6	8.7
5.2	5.1	Reading	6.3	4.1
3.0	5.1	Science	7.9	10.0
4.4	5.0	Foreign Languages	13.2	11.2
3.0	3.9	Social Studies	3.9	3.4
4.3	4.5	Writing	12.8	11.1

Typical Weekly High School Activities

- 81% worked for pay during the senior year of high school
- 44% worked more than 16 hours a week

- 59% spent some time volunteering
- three-quarters spent five or fewer hours a week studying and doing homework

The New York Times referred to the senior year in high school as the senior slide year; a time described as not quite as “productive, stimulating and challenging as it needs to be” (*The New York Times*, 1/19/03, Section 14, page 1, How Schools Are Trying to Avoid the ‘Senior Slide’). Table 6 summarizes the time spent in each activity during a typical week as high school seniors. Traditional school activities – studying and homework— were not primary activities for most seniors. Almost 6 out of 10 seniors participated in volunteer work; one of the activities suggested as a counter to the ‘senior slide’.

Table 6
% MSU Freshmen Spending Time in Activities in a Typical Week During the Last Year of High School

Activities:	Hours Spent in Activity							
	None	< One	1 to 2	3 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	20 +
Studying/homework	2.4	16.0	27.5	29.8	16.0	5.1	2.1	1.1
Socializing with friends	0.9	2.7	6.8	16.9	22.0	17.9	10.6	22.1
Talk w/teachers outside class	10.2	42.3	28.1	13.2	4.1	1.5	0.2	0.4
Exercise or sports	8.7	13.2	16.0	21.1	15.0	10.7	7.1	8.2
Partying	20.0	11.8	17.1	25.0	15.0	5.3	2.8	3.0
Working (for pay)	18.8	1.2	2.6	5.9	12.6	14.8	20.9	23.1
Volunteer work	41.1	18.1	19.6	11.9	5.5	1.8	0.5	1.5
Student clubs/groups	28.4	13.8	27.1	16.5	8.0	3.4	1.0	1.8
Watching TV	5.1	14.3	21.5	29.8	14.7	8.0	2.2	4.5
Household/childcare duties	18.2	19.8	30.0	18.4	8.0	3.2	1.1	1.2
Reading for pleasure	30.5	28.1	22.8	11.5	5.4	1.1	0.4	0.3
Play video/computer games	42.0	24.1	16.3	8.6	5.5	1.7	1.4	0.4
Prayer/meditation	35.2	37.8	18.3	5.5	1.4	1.1	0.0	0.7

There are some differences in how males and females spend their time. More females worked the last year of high school than males, 83 percent and 78 percent, respectively. The number of hours spent in household/childcare duties also varied; 88 percent of females and 71 percent of males reported spending at least one hour in these activities. Females were far less likely to play video/computer games than males; 56 and 17 percent, respectively, reported spending no time playing these types of games.

Other High School Activities

- 79% frequently socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group (compared to 66% for other four-year medium-selective colleges)
- eight out of ten reported they studied with other students
- 44% frequently or occasionally performed community service as part of a class
- 74% attended a public recital or concert
- 57% reported coming late to class
- 34% were frequently bored in class
- 34% also reported frequently feeling overwhelmed by all they had to do
- two-thirds frequently communicated by e-mail
- 11% smoke cigarettes frequently
- 57% drank wine or liquor occasionally or frequently
- 17% voted in a school election

Respondents were asked if they had participated “frequently”, “occasionally”, or “never” during the past year in a list of activities. Four broad areas are highlighted: computer proficiency, academically related

activities/behaviors, health or student well-being issues and political interest. Table 7 summarizes student responses.

Table 7
Freshmen Indicating They Participated in Activity During the Past Year

Activities:	Participated	
	Frequently/Montclair State University %	Occasionally/Medium Selective Colleges %
Studied with other students	82.8	84.5
Attended a religious service	79.6	80.2
Attended a public recital or concert	74.4	78.4
Performed volunteer work	72.5	76.8
Came late to class	56.9	62.5
Visited an art gallery or museum	54.5	51.4
Drank wine or liquor	56.6	56.9
Participated in organized demonstration	52.3	53.0
Tutored another student	48.6	45.7
Performed community service as part of a class	43.9	50.2
Drank beer	48.9	52.9
Played a musical instrument	34.9	38.3
Overslept and missed class or an appointment	28.7	34.4
Was a guest in a teacher's home	21.6	25.1
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group*	79.0	65.5
Used a personal computer*	77.8	80.1
Used the Internet for research or homework*	75.5	76.2
Communicated via e-mail*	66.3	61.4
Was bored in class*	34.0	41.3
Other Internet use*	57.2	59.3
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do*	34.0	27.2
Discussed religion*	22.1	24.8
Participated in Internet chat rooms*	18.9	17.3
Asked a teacher for advice after class*	23.1	21.5
Voted in a student election*	17.0	18.2
Discussed politics*	10.5	15.0
Felt depressed*	11.0	8.0
Smoked cigarettes*	11.2	11.5

*Percentage reporting "frequently" only. Results for other items represent percentage responding "frequently" or "occasionally".

What are Freshmen's Higher Education Aspirations?

- 49% intend to earn a master's degree as their highest degree
- 65% want to earn a bachelor's degree and 25% want to earn a master's degree at MSU
- 64% said MSU was their first choice of college/university to attend

Why Do MSU Freshmen Want to Attend College?

- 78% are attending college because they want to learn more about things that interest them
- 78% want to get training for a specific career
- 77% say to be able to make more money

Respondents were asked to choose from a list of 13 possible reasons for attending college. Table 8 summarizes these responses. For MSU freshmen, learning about things that interest me and to get training for a specific career, were equally as important as reasons for attending college, followed by, being able to make more money. MSU freshmen were more likely to view their undergraduate education as a way of improving their

reading and study skills than those at other medium-selective institutions, 50 and 40 percent, respectively. As well, MSU freshmen put a bit more emphasis on “gaining a general education and appreciation of ideas” and “to make me a more cultured person” as important reasons for attending college than those in the comparator group and somewhat less emphasis on “getting away from home” as a reason.

Table 8
% Of Freshmen Responding Reason is Very Important in Deciding to Go to College

Reasons:	Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %
To learn more about things that interest me	77.9	73.0
To get training for a specific career	77.8	75.7
To be able to make more money	76.8	74.1
To be able to get a better job	71.1	74.4
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	68.7	61.5
To prepare myself for graduate or professional school	56.8	51.8
To improve my reading and study skills	49.6	40.4
My parents wanted me to go	43.5	36.4
To make me a more cultured person	43.5	35.0
A mentor/role model encouraged me to go	15.8	13.7
Wanted to get away from home	12.7	20.4
I could not find a job	6.7	6.3
There was nothing better to do	3.3	3.4

Why Are Freshmen Attending MSU?

- The top three reasons for attending MSU are:
 55% say its good academic reputation is very important
 42% chose low tuition as very important and
 closeness to home was mentioned by 38%

Table 9 lists all the reasons freshmen gave as “very important” in their decisions to attend MSU. Academic reputation, low tuition and nearness to home play significantly larger roles for MSU freshmen than for those in other four-year medium-selective colleges.

Table 9
% Of Freshmen Responding Reason is Very Important in Deciding to Go to MSU

Reason:	Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %
This college has a very good academic reputation	54.6	41.5
This college has low tuition	42.1	34.5
I wanted to live near home	37.7	25.2
This college offers special educational programs	30.6	18.4
I was offered financial assistance	30.3	23.9
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	26.8	30.4
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	23.5	22.7
High school guidance counselor advised me	12.0	7.3
Reputation for campus safety	11.6	8.9
My relatives wanted me to come here	11.5	9.1
Information from Website	8.6	7.7
My teacher advised me	8.0	4.4
Not offered aid by first choice	7.8	5.5
The athletic department recruited me	6.1	5.6
Rankings in national magazines	5.8	4.3
I was admitted through an Early Action program	5.3	4.3
Private college counselor advised me	1.7	1.3
I was attracted by the religious affiliation of this college	1.0	1.4

Which Personal Life Objectives Do Freshmen Think Are Very Important?

- 81% want to be very well off financially
- 80% want to raise a family
- 70% say it is very important to help others who are in difficulty

Table 10 shows, being financially well off was “very important” to 81 percent of this fall's respondents, slightly higher than the percent for other four-year medium-selective public colleges. A considerably larger percent of MSU freshmen, 48, than those from four-year medium-selective colleges, 36, want to reach financial success through having a business of their own.

Table 10
% Freshmen Considering Various Objectives Essential or Very Important

Objectives:	Montclair State University	Medium Selective Colleges
Being very well off financially	81.3	75.7
Raise a family	80.4	72.8
Helping others who are in difficulty	70.0	60.6
Becoming an authority in my field	64.5	57.3
Obtain recognition from colleagues for contributions to my field	59.5	51.6
Becoming successful in a business of my own	47.9	36.2
Improving my understanding of other countries and culture	46.4	34.7
Having administrative responsibility for the works of others	44.5	38.0
Influencing social values	42.1	37.4
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	39.8	34.7
Integrating spirituality into my life	38.1	32.5
Helping to promote racial understanding	33.6	27.9
Becoming a community leader	28.9	26.6
Keeping up to date with political affairs	27.6	26.8
Participating in a community action program	22.9	17.8
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts	22.7	14.3
Influencing the political structure	19.3	17.2
Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.)	19.1	14.3
Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, decorating, etc.)	16.5	15.4
Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	16.4	14.3
Making a theoretical contribution to science	13.3	13.6

MSU freshmen also viewed several other life goals as more important to them than freshmen in other four-year medium-selective colleges: helping others who are in difficulty, becoming an authority in my chosen field, obtaining recognition from colleagues for contributions to my field, and improving my understanding of other countries and cultures.

What Majors Are Freshmen Pursuing?

- The three top areas in which freshmen expect to major in are:
education
business
arts and humanities
- 13 percent are undecided about their major

Freshmen were given a long list of possible majors and asked which one they thought might be their choice. Table 11 groups majors by area as well as selected majors within an area. The three top areas in which freshmen expect to major are: education, business, and the arts and humanities.

Table 11
% Of Freshmen Indicating This Area as Their Probable Major

Probable Major Areas With Selected Majors:	Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %
Arts and Humanities	16.1	10.4
Art, fine and applied	3.6	2.7
Music	2.3	1.7
Theatre or drama	3.7	1.0
Biological Sciences	3.9	4.5
Biology (general)	3.1	2.4
Business	20.5	15.8
Accounting	4.1	2.7
Business administration (general)	3.3	3.5
International business	4.0	0.9
Marketing	2.9	3.0
Management	3.3	3.7
Education	21.0	20.9
Elementary education	11.4	10.0
Physical education or recreation	2.9	1.6
Secondary education	2.8	5.4
Physical Sciences	1.2	2.3
Professional (e.g. physical therapy)	5.4	10.4
Social Science	9.3	8.9
Psychology	6.1	5.1
Other fields	8.0	9.7
Computer science	1.9	2.5
Undecided	12.7	9.5

What Are Some of the Expectations Freshmen Have for Their Upcoming College Years?

- 76% expect to graduate from MSU
- 50% expect to get a job to help pay for college expenses
- 47% expect to be satisfied with their choice of MSU
- 30% expect to communicate with their professors regularly
- 20% will participate in volunteer or community service work
- 16% want to study abroad
- 7% expect to transfer from MSU

Another set of questions asked freshmen to speculate a bit on their actions during their upcoming college years, e.g., do they think they will transfer to another college, complete their degrees or work full-time. Table 12 summarizes the percents for freshmen saying they thought chances were “very good” that they would participate in the activity.

Freshmen expect to be engaged in social activities as well as extracurricular ones while they are attending MSU. Sixty-four percent expect to develop close friendships with other students and almost three-quarters expect they will socialize with someone of another race or ethnic group. Ten percent want to join a social fraternity or sorority. Thirty percent expect to participate in student clubs or groups, 13 percent want to play college sports, and 8 percent think they will join in student government activities.

Even though freshmen see the University's low tuition as one of its selling points, 50 percent say there is a very good chance they will get a job to help pay for college expenses; only 10 percent think they will have to work full-time while attending college.

Table 12
% Reporting Chances are Very Good That S/he Will Participate in This Activity

Activity:	Montclair State University	Medium Selective Colleges
	%	%
Get a bachelor's degree	76.3	75.3
Socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group	74.4	60.7
Develop close friendships with other students	64.3	65.8
Make at least a "B" average	64.2	55.7
Get a job to help pay for college expenses	50.0	51.2
Be satisfied with your college	47.2	43.4
Participate in student clubs/groups	30.2	32.3
Communicate regularly with your professors	30.1	28.9
Participate in volunteer or community service work	20.4	16.1
Strengthen religious beliefs/convictions	17.3	17.4
Participate in a study abroad program	15.7	11.8
Change major field	14.0	13.9
Play varsity/intercollegiate athletics	12.6	12.6
Change career choice	11.1	11.9
Seek personal counseling	11.0	6.2
Join a social fraternity or sorority	10.3	9.6
Work full-time while attending college	9.5	9.3
Participate in student government	7.9	5.4
Transfer to another college before graduating	6.9	11.9
Participate in student protests or demonstrations	4.8	4.5
Drop out of college	0.8	0.7

How Do Freshmen Characterize Themselves?

- 55% of male and female freshmen rate themselves as above average in academic ability
- 46% of male and 20% of female freshmen characterize themselves as above average in computer skills
- 38% say that searching for a mission/purpose in life describes them well

Table 13
% Rating Themselves on Certain Characteristics as Above Average or in the Highest 10% as Compared to the Average Person of His/Her Age

Attributes/Abilities:	Montclair State University		Medium Selective Colleges	
	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %
Academic ability	55.2	55.7	62.3	53.6
Artistic ability	30.1	26.5	28.5	26.2
Computer skills	45.7	19.8	51.6	28.9
Cooperativeness	67.8	68.8	68.1	73.5
Creativity	58.3	58.2	58.5	53.6
Drive to achieve	63.7	69.1	59.8	65.6
Emotional health	52.1	43.5	57.4	44.3
Leadership ability	62.4	52.7	60.1	52.6
Mathematical ability	40.8	27.3	46.1	28.7
Physical health	67.6	38.8	65.6	44.0
Persistence	63.2	59.4	60.1	55.2
Popularity	44.9	28.9	44.7	30.9
Public speaking ability	33.3	29.8	34.5	29.4
Religiousness	20.4	24.1	23.8	27.8
Risk-taking	47.4	34.9	52.4	36.6
Self confidence (intellectual)	62.2	48.7	64.3	44.9
Self confidence (social)	56.1	45.4	54.5	44.0
Self-understanding	59.2	49.0	56.9	46.3
Spirituality	32.5	31.4	31.0	34.2
Understanding of others	67.1	70.0	60.1	65.7
Writing ability	41.5	42.9	38.9	42.6

Freshmen were asked to rate themselves in relation to others their own age on a number of attributes and abilities. Table 13 summarizes the responses for those rating themselves “above average” or in the “highest 10 percent”. For this particular table the comparison will be between male and female respondents for MSU and other public four-year medium-selective college freshmen.

For about half of these abilities and attributes there are some interesting differences between men’s and women’s self-assessments. For example, 27.3 percent of MSU’s female freshmen feel they have above average mathematical ability, while 40.8 percent of males do. Men outnumber women, 2 to 1, in feeling their computer skills are better than other people their own age. About half, 48.7 percent, of the women compared to 62.2 percent of the men, report intellectual self-confidence that is above the average for students their own age. Women also report feeling socially less self-confident about themselves and they are less likely to report being above average in emotional and physical health.

For the first time, the CIRP survey asked freshmen if certain traits were descriptive of them. Table 14 summarizes their responses.

Table 14
% Saying These Traits Describe Them to a Great Extent

Traits:	Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %
Searching for mission/purpose in life	38.0	31.3
Engaging in self reflection	27.7	20.6
Appreciating the interconnectedness of everything	25.7	20.3
Believing in the sacredness of life	33.2	28.4
Being honest in my relationships with others	77.8	72.5

What Political Views Do Freshmen Hold?

- The most popular political label is middle of the road
- Less than 3% say they are at the extremes of the political spectrum: far left and far right
- 86% somewhat or strongly agree that the federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns
- 71% somewhat or strongly agree that same sex couples should have the right to legal marital status

Table 15
% Freshmen Holding This Political View

Political Views:	Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %
Far left	1.9	2.2
Liberal	26.7	22.6
Middle of the Road	59.8	58.0
Conservative	10.7	16.1
Far Right	0.9	1.0

Freshmen were asked their opinions on a number of social issues. Table 16 summarizes the responses of those who agree “strongly” or “somewhat” with each statement. MSU freshmen are more liberal than their peers in other four-year medium-selective colleges especially for the two issues: controlling the sale of handguns, 86 percent of MSU freshmen agree and 78 percent of the comparative colleges do; and the right to legal marital status for same sex couples, 71 percent and 62 percent respectively.

Table 16
% Freshmen Agreeing Strongly or Somewhat with These Opinions

Issues:	Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %
There is too much concern in the courts for rights of criminals	63.0	66.9
Abortion should be legal	58.1	52.4
The death penalty should be abolished	31.9	28.1
Marijuana should be legalized	36.2	40.6
It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships	16.5	23.3
The federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns	85.6	78.1
Racial discrimination no longer a major problem in America	19.3	22.7
Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society	29.2	29.7
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	55.7	52.1
Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus	59.4	60.3
Same sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	71.1	61.9
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	44.3	46.0
The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family	22.4	22.2
People should not obey laws which violate their personal values	37.1	34.1
Federal military spending should be increased	42.3	47.3
The federal government should do more to discourage energy consumption	70.8	72.0

How Will Freshmen Finance A College Education?

- over half of our freshmen, 54%, have some concern about their ability to finance college
- 15% are not sure they will have enough money to complete college
- a family's own resources is the major source for financing a college degree

Finally, freshmen were asked how much of their first year's educational expenses such as room, board, tuition and fees, they expected to cover from a variety of sources. Table 17 summarizes these responses. Family resources is the major source for funding college costs. For MSU, 73 percent of freshmen say some amount of their college expenses will be paid for from family resources and 78 percent report this at medium-selective colleges. A smaller percent of our freshmen also say their own personal resources will be used as a source of funding: 50 percent for MSU and 61 percent for medium-selective institutions. This is also the case for aid which need not be repaid, such as scholarships and grants: 49 percent of MSU freshmen say this is a source for some of their college expenses and 57 percent cite this at other four-year medium-selective colleges.

Table 17
% Freshmen Reporting This as a Source for College Funding

Sources:	Montclair State University %	Medium Selective Colleges %
Family resources (parents, relatives, spouse etc.)		
None	26.7	22.2
Less than \$1,000	13.9	14.7
\$1,000-2,999	19.2	17.9
\$3,000-5,999	15.4	17.6
\$6,000-9,999	11.9	12.4
\$10,000+	12.9	15.2
My own resources (savings from work, work-study, other)		
None	50.4	38.9
Less than \$1,000	30.0	30.9
\$1,000-2,999	13.1	21.2
\$3,000-5,999	4.5	6.5
\$6,000-9,999	0.9	1.5
\$10,000+	1.1	1.0

Aid which need not be repaid (grants, scholarships, etc.)		
None	51.4	43.3
Less than \$1,000	9.1	14.2
\$1,000-2,999	15.9	22.2
\$3,000-5,999	11.7	13.2
\$6,000-9,999	6.1	4.7
\$10,000+	5.8	2.4
Aid which must be repaid (loans, etc.)		
None	57.5	54.2
Less than \$1,000	7.0	6.5
\$1,000-2,999	19.9	20.1
\$3,000-5,999	9.2	10.9
\$6,000-9,999	4.0	5.2
\$10,000+	2.3	3.0
Other than above		
None	95.3	95.6
Less than \$1,000	2.8	2.2
\$1,000-2,999	0.6	1.0
\$3,000-5,999	0.7	0.6
\$6,000-9,999	0.2	0.2
\$10,000+	0.4	0.4