

**MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY'S FALL FRESHMAN CLASS THEN AND NOW:
A SUMMARY OF THE CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEYS FOR FALL 1991 AND FALL 2000**

Part I: A Statistical Comparison Of Entering Full-Time Freshmen and Their Parents

Background

For the second consecutive year, Montclair State University participated in the national Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey administered by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). The survey is extensive and questions range from demographic background information to students' political views, high school behaviors and college expectations. The survey provides the University with baseline information about our entering freshman class. It also gives us the option of administering follow-up surveys to assess the effects of college participation. This kind of information is particularly important as MSU moves towards an enrollment management model.

The summary reports the Office of Institutional Research produces have several purposes: to provide a statistical portrait of our current freshman class, and to compare current responses to the responses of those who entered Montclair State College as freshmen in fall 1991. The survey has a set of core questions that are asked each year allowing trends in freshmen experiences and beliefs to be traced over time. We can also report significant differences between MSU responses and the national norms. The large number of participants, over 434 baccalaureate colleges and universities, that take part in this survey allows the Institute to develop nationally normed results for all four-year public institutions participating in the study as well as our comparator sector of four year medium selective public institutions (this is MSU's classification as determined by HERI).

This Year's Sample

With the help of the New Student Experience Program, the Institutional Research Office administered the Freshman Survey to almost all entering Fall 2000 full-time freshmen during New Student orientation week. Older adult, EOF and foreign students were not part of these orientation sessions. All told, 867 respondents, or 65 percent, of the entering freshman class responded (although each student did not answer every question). This is a very good survey completion rate. The sample group mirrors the sex distribution and is similar to the racial/ethnic makeup of the fall 2000 freshman class. The sample somewhat under-represents African Americans and Latino/as and over-represents White freshmen and, to a lesser degree, Asians.

What are the Demographic Characteristics of Entering Fall Freshmen?

- In fall 1991, 61.0 percent of the respondent, were female; in fall 1999, 62.4 percent were; and in fall 2000 63.6 percent were female. Nationally, the percent of females at four-year public institutions is 56.2.
- In the past ten years MSU's freshman class has become more racially and ethnically diversified. Montclair's fall 2000 freshman sample mirrors the national norms for four-year public colleges, where 28.7 percent identify themselves a members of a racial/ethnic minority group.

Table 1

Race/Ethnicity of Freshmen, %s

% Reporting They Are:	Fall 1991 %	Fall 1999 %	Fall 2000 %
African American	9.6	12.3	8.2
Asian	3.1	6.7	7.4
Latino/a	5.4	18.5	12.0
White	80.1	63.1	71.3
Other	5.0	5.0	5.3

As in fall 1999, this year MSU's freshman sample is more racially/ethnically diversified than the comparative medium selective four-year public institutions. At these institutions, only 10.1 percent of freshmen identified themselves as African American, Asian, Latino/a and other.

- In 1991, 82.3 percent were 18 years of age when they entered college and an additional 12.7 percent were 19 years old. This fall 76.9 percent were age 18 when they entered MSU, 19.2 percent were 19 and 1.3 percent were 20 and older. While the percent of 18 year olds has declined and the percent of 19 year olds increased since the beginning of the 1990s, the University's fall 2000 freshman class seems somewhat more traditional in its age distribution than freshman at other four-year public institutions. At these institutions 69.1 percent are 18 years of age, 26.5 are 19 and 2.4 are 20 and older. However, our sample does not include older adult freshmen so the difference is probably not quite as large as these percents suggest.
- Three-quarters report their permanent home is within a hundred-mile radius of the University. Both now and ten years ago, the majority of freshmen, almost 51 percent, reported that MSU is 11 to 50 miles from their permanent home. Freshmen at other public four-year colleges tend to live farther away from their campuses. For example, only 7.3 percent of MSU freshmen report their permanent residences were 100 or more miles away while the comparable percent for all four-year public colleges is 37.2 percent. This is not as surprising as it may initially seem since one of the reasons freshmen cite for choosing MSU is its proximity to their homes. As well, we are not a predominantly residential university.
- Slightly come than half, 51.0 percent, of MSU freshmen are Roman Catholic. In 1991, the percent was 59.0. The comparable fall 2000 figure at other four-year public institutions is 32.3. Table 2 lists the religious preferences from which students were able to choose and the percent choosing that particular religion.

Table 2

Freshmen's Religious Choices, %s

% Reporting This Religious Choice:	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000
	%	%	%
Baptist	5.6	6.5	4.8
Buddhist	0.3	0.4	1.3
Eastern Orthodox	1.8	1.4	1.5
Episcopal	1.1	1.3	0.9
Islamic	1.0	2.4	3.0
Jewish	3.9	1.5	2.8
LDS (Mormon)	0.0	0.1	0.0
Lutheran	1.5	2.4	1.8
Methodist	2.7	2.7	3.0
Presbyterian	3.9	2.5	3.0
Quaker	0.5	0.1	0.3
Roman Catholic	59.8	49.4	51.0
Seventh Day Adventist	0.5	0.8	0.4
United Church of Christ	0.6	0.4	0.8
Other Christian/Protestant	2.9	9.7	7.8
Other religion	3.5	6.1	4.9
None	10.3	12.1	12.8

- The percent of freshmen holding permanent resident status increased, reflecting the State's continuing role as a center for newly arrived immigrant groups. In fall 1991, 3.9 percent held permanent resident status and 95.9 percent were U.S. citizens. Last year, a little more than 10.0 percent reported they held permanent resident status (green cards) and 88.2 percent were U.S. citizens. This fall, 8.0 hold permanent resident status and 90.6 percent are U.S. citizens. A larger percentage of both comparator groups are U.S. citizens, 98.5 for medium selective public colleges and 95.9 for all four-year public colleges.

- The percent of MSU freshmen reporting English is their native language decreased over the ten year period. At the beginning of the last decade, 88.4 percent reported English was their native language; last fall, 80.0 percent and this fall, 81.7 percent did. The percent at other similarly selective colleges is 97.4 percent for all public institutions it is 91.2 percent.
- Slightly over 14 percent of MSU's fall 2000 freshmen report their parents' total income as less than \$25,000 a year. This is a significant difference from last year's 25.0 percent but last year's survey included students from the EOF program which serves economically disadvantaged students; this year's survey did not. More female than male respondents have families falling into this income category, 16.6 percent and 10.8 percent, respectively. Almost 12.0 percent of the comparator group fell into the less than \$25,000 income category and gender difference was not as pronounced. Almost half, 47.7 percent, of fall 2000 MSU freshmen report their family income as \$60,000 or more and the comparable figure for 1991 was 31.9 percent. In 1991, 14.9 percent estimated that their parents had incomes over \$75,000 and this fall 33.4 percent did. Table 3 summarizes family income information. (Respondents were asked to give their best estimate of their parents' total income last year. They were to consider income from all sources before taxes.)

Table 3
% Reporting This Family Income Category

Income Category:	Montclair State University			
	Fall 1991 %	Fall 1999 %	Fall 2000 %	4 Yr Pub Med Select
Less than \$19,999	8.9	17.5	9.6	7.8
\$20,000 to \$24,999	4.9	5.6	4.8	3.9
\$25,000 to \$24,999	6.8	4.0	6.1	4.2
\$30,000 to \$39,999	13.1	9.0	10.3	9.4
\$40,000 to \$49,999	14.1	12.3	11.2	11.4
\$50,000 to \$59,999	20.3	10.6	10.3	12.9
\$60,000 to \$74,999	17.0	15.0	14.3	16.3
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7.7	14.4	15.3	15.5
\$100,000 to \$149,999	4.0	9.0	12.0	12.1
\$150,000 or more	3.2	2.5	6.1	6.5

What are the Parental Background Characteristics of Entering Fall Freshmen?

The CIRP study asked freshmen several background questions about their parents: mother and father's religious preferences; their living status; their educational levels; and their occupations. Not surprisingly, as in fall 1991 and fall 1999 the religious preferences of entering fall 2000 freshmen reflect the preferences of their parents; 56.7 percent of their mothers and 56.0 percent of their fathers were Roman Catholic.

In fall 1991, 75.6 percent reported that their parents were living with each other, 19.2 percent were divorced or separated and 5.2 percent had one or both parents deceased. Fall 2000 figures did not change substantially: 73.1 percent have parent living with each other, 23.0 percent are divorced or separated and 3.9 percent have one or both parents deceased. MSU's freshmen figures were nearly the same as other medium selective four year institutions but slightly higher than the national norms for all four year public institutions for the first two characteristics; 68.7 percent and 27.1 percent respectively.

This fall more than one out of three freshmen have at least one parent with a college or graduate degree. As Table 4 shows, 37.6 percent of fathers and 30.0 percent of mothers had a college or graduate degree. Ten years ago the comparable figures were 28.5 percent of fathers and 17.3 percent of mothers had a college or graduate degree. Not only has the percent of college educated parents increased, but the gap between father's and mother's education has significantly narrowed. The accessibility to higher education has

especially benefited women. MSU's fall figures are just slightly lower than those of other medium selective four-year public institutions.

Table 4
% of Parents' Having This Educational Level

Education Level:	Fall 1991		Fall 1999		Fall 2000	
	Father %	Mother %	Father %	Mother %	Father %	Mother %
Some high school or less	16.6	13.5	15.3	12.9	13.0	11.2
High school graduate	31.8	45.9	28.9	30.1	26.4	36.2
some college	14.8	11.6	16.7	16.2	16.9	12.9
College degree	16.6	12.5	21.5	21.2	23.0	20.1
Graduate degree	11.9	4.8	12.1	9.8	14.6	9.8
Other	8.3	11.7	5.5	9.8	6.2	9.7

Table 5 represents the most frequently reported parental occupations. Most freshmen have both parents in the labor force. Fathers have less unemployment than mothers; 3.5 percent and 7.6 percent, respectively. An additional 11.1 percent of mother's are full-time (at-home) homemakers. There have been small shifts in occupations over the decade. Two noticeable changes occurred in mothers' occupations: the decrease in the percent of freshmen with mothers in business related clerical positions, 15.2 percent in fall 1991 and 7.0 percent in fall 2000 and a modest increase in the number of mothers who are elementary and secondary teachers, 9.1 percent in fall 1991 to 12.5 percent in fall 2000.

Table 5
% of Parents' With This Occupation

Occupational Category :	Fall 1991		Fall 1999		Fall 2000	
	Father %	Mother %	Father %	Mother %	Father %	Mother %
Business	25.0	10.1	24.5	13.5	23.9	11.9
Business (clerical)	--	15.2	0.6	7.6	1.4	7.0
Skilled worker	13.9	3.8	10.3	2.0	10.7	1.3
Eng over	6.5	0.5	6.3	0.9	6.0	0.3
Education (<i>elementary & secondary</i>)	4.6	9.1	5.0	12.3	4.8	12.5
Nurse	--	6.0	0.8	9.1	0.4	6.7
Homemaker (full-time)	--	12.7	0.3	9.8	0.0	11.1
Clergy/professor/M.D./research scientist/lawyer/health prof.	4.5	3.0	3.9	3.4	4.0	3.9
Unemployed	3.9	7.5	3.2	8.2	3.5	7.6

Next Report: Academic Characteristics and High School Senior Year Activities of Entering Full-Time Freshmen

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY'S FALL FRESHMAN CLASS THEN AND NOW: A SUMMARY OF THE CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEYS FOR FALL 1991 AND FALL 2000

Part 2: Academic Characteristics and Senior Year Activities of Entering Full-Time Freshmen

This is the second in a series of Institutional Research reports summarizing the results of the national CIRP Freshman Survey in which Montclair State University participated in this summer. This report focuses on the questions respondents were asked about their academic achievements in high school and their past senior year activities. As in the first report, responses will be compared to those of the freshman class of 1991. As well, if there are significant differences between this year's MSU freshman responses and last year's, or the national normative data, these differences will be noted.

Respondents were asked about their average grades in high school. Table 1 shows that in fall 1991, 23.3 percent of the respondents had average high school grades ranging from A- to A+. This fall the comparable percent was 29.1. More females than males reported grades in the A- to A+ range, 32.1 and 23.9 percent, respectively. Comparable four-year medium-selective public institutions reported 30.5 percent of entering freshmen had A range average high school grades. Almost 86.0 percent of MSU's freshmen reported they had a B or better high school average, up slightly from last year. In their annual report of the CIRP study, the authors said, "despite the reduction in time devoted to schoolwork, students' high school grades continue to soar. A full 42.9 percent of freshmen report earning 'A' averages in high school, compared to 42.7 last year, and a low of 17.6 percent in 1968." (Table 4, in this report, confirms the reduction in hours spent studying.)

Table 1
% Having This as Their Average Grade in High School

Grade Range:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
	%	%	%	%
A or A+	8.8	10.2	11.6	12.3
A-	14.5	15.1	17.5	18.2
B+	24.8	26.1	29.0	22.2
B	30.3	30.1	27.8	28.8
B-	14.4	11.7	9.4	11.2
C+	4.7	4.1	3.0	5.1
C	2.4	2.5	1.7	2.2
D	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.1

In the early 1990's, as well as this fall, about 27.0 percent of entering MSU freshmen reported some special tutoring or remedial work while in high school. This is appreciably less than last year's 36.0 and fall 2000's 40.0 percent for four-year medium selective colleges. But the number of basic skills classes offered this fall suggests that the decline may be more apparent than real, more a reflection of the sample's composition than a real decline in the need for high school remediation.

Table 2
% Freshmen Reporting They Had Remediation in High School

Remedial Area:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
	%	%	%	%
Mathematics	10.8	11.8	10.7	13.0
English	3.6	6.4	3.8	5.1
Reading	3.1	5.7	2.9	4.9
Science	3.6	5.5	2.8	4.8
Foreign Languages	3.9	4.0	3.1	4.8
Social Studies	2.7	2.9	1.3	3.4
Writing (New this yr)			2.2	4.1
Total	27.7	36.3	26.8	40.1

Many felt they would need special help or remedial work while in college. As Table 3 shows, almost a quarter think they will need help in mathematics, up from 1991 when the percent was 20.0. Students' anticipated foreign language and English needs were relatively consistent over the decade and all other areas edged up slightly.

Table 3
% Feeling They Will Need Special Help While at MSU

Remedial Area:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
	%	%	%	%
Mathematics	20.0	22.9	24.4	25.6
English	8.9	9.8	8.1	7.9
Reading	8.0	9.6	9.6	3.5
Science	6.9	9.4	9.0	9.9
Foreign Languages	14.7	14.5	14.9	10.0
Social Studies	2.5	3.9	3.3	2.8
Writing (New this yr)	-	-	9.4	8.9

Even though females had higher high school averages, they were more likely to feel they would need help with all remediation areas. Not surprisingly, the differences are greatest in math, 30.1 percent for women compared to 14.5 percent for males, and science, 11.4 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively.

Freshmen were asked how they spent their time during a typical week of their senior year. The activities ranged from studying/doing homework to socializing with friends; Table 4 summarizes the time spent in each activity. This year 83.0 percent worked for pay, up by 3.0 percent from last year, and 47.0 percent reported working 16 or more hours per week. Nearly everyone socialized with friends; 39.3 percent reported they spent more than 16 hours a week that way. Fifty-five percent reported they spent some time volunteering, down from last year by 7.0 percent; while for at least one hour a week, 93.0, exercise or participate in sports; and 71.8 percent, are active in student clubs or groups. While most watched TV (only 5.0 percent indicated no hours), 30.5 percent reported they spent no time reading for pleasure. A large percent, 92.0, talked with teachers outside of the classroom and 43.6 percent did so for an hour a week.

Table 4
% 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	Over 20
Studying/homework	4.5	20.9	25.3	26.9	13.0	5.3	2.1	1.9
Socializing with friends	0.8	2.0	5.3	16.9	19.9	15.6	13.0	26.3
Talk w/ teachers outside of class	8.1	43.6	26.8	12.4	5.8	1.8	0.8	0.7
Exercise or sports	7.0	12.9	18.4	17.6	13.8	11.8	8.2	10.3
Partying	14.8	10.2	16.4	23.0	19.4	8.0	3.7	4.6
Working (for pay)	17.3	2.0	2.2	4.1	11.1	16.3	17.6	29.4
Volunteer work	45.1	15.4	21.1	9.9	4.7	1.8	0.7	1.3
Student clubs/groups	28.2	16.2	25.6	15.2	7.5	2.6	1.5	3.2
Watching TV	5.0	16.8	24.4	25.3	15.6	5.6	2.5	4.8
Household/childcare duties	23.3	17.1	28.5	17.0	8.0	2.9	1.3	2.0
Reading for pleasure	30.5	27.9	22.3	10.6	5.2	1.8	0.8	0.9
Playing video/computer games	38.8	22.1	16.4	11.3	5.9	2.9	0.9	1.6
Prayer/meditation	41.4	32.7	17.1	5.0	2.4	0.7	0.1	0.7

There are differences in how males and females spend their time. For example, more females worked the last year of high school than males, 85.0 percent and 79.0 percent, respectively. But males more frequently worked 20 or more hours than females, 35.9 percent to 25.8 percent. The number of hours spent in household/childcare duties also varied; 82.4 percent of females and 66.4 percent of males reported spending at least one hour in these activities. While both groups certainly watched TV, males tended to watch more; 39.4 percent compared to 22.5 percent watched six or more hours per week. Females were less likely to play video/computer games; 51.8 percent of females and 15.4 percent of males reported spending no time with video games. "Partying" seems to be an exception; males and females participated equally.

Perhaps reflecting the slower pace of senior year in high school, most students put five or fewer hours a week into studying and doing homework; this year only 22.3 percent reported they studied for six or more hours a week; last year 30.7 percent reported they did. The CIRP researchers in their summary of the national data, cite this as one of the indicators of student academic

disengagement. They point out, "Today's freshman is spending less time studying and doing homework than any previous entering class. Only 36.0 percent of entering college students report studying or doing homework six or more hours per week in the past year. This marks the lowest figure since this question was first asked in 1987, when 47.0 percent reported studying six or more hours weekly." (The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2000, pp.4-5)

Respondents were also asked if they had participated frequently, occasionally, or never during the past year in a list of activities. Table 5 summarizes these activities and responses.

Table 5
% Freshmen Indicating They Participated in Activity During the Past Year

Activities:	Frequently/Occasionally Participating Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub Med Select
	Fall 1991 %	Fall 1999 %	Fall 2000 %	%
Studied with other students	82.6	82.6	78.0	85.8
Attended a religious service	81.3	78.5	75.7	81.5
Attended a public recital or concert		74.0	76.2	78.5
Performed volunteer work		72.9	68.9	74.5
Came late to class	56.9	60.1	62.8	62.7
Visited an art gallery or museum		57.2	52.9	51.8
Drank wine or liquor	61.6	55.8	59.4	58.4
Participated in organized demonstrations	49.9	54.6	55.1	50.4
Tutored another student	43.2	49.7	46.6	44.5
Performed community service as part of a class		49.7	46.8	50.4
Drank beer	60.5	48.6	51.5	54.8
Played a musical instrument	37.3	37.3	33.2	37.2
Overslept and missed class or an appointment		32.5	35.4	35.2
Was a guest in a teacher's home	25.0	25.2	20.7	26.0
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group *		77.5	76.4	61.0
Used a personal computer *	31.6	56.6	74.0	74.3
Used the Internet for research or homework *		52.3	66.6	66.6
Communicated via e-mail *		46.5	60.5	61.8
Was bored in class *	33.7	39.9	43.5	41.5
Other Internet use *		36.4	50.0	49.6
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do *	21.0	31.4	35.8	28.4
Discussed religion *		26.0	20.1	24.3
Participated in Internet chat rooms *		25.3	22.1	20.3
Asked a teacher for advice after class *		24.5	24.3	21.6
Voted in a student election *		20.8	19.1	17.8
Discussed politics *		13.5	10.5	12.6
Felt depressed *	10.6	13.1	14.8	8.5
Smoked cigarettes *	10.1	12.1	15.3	15.1

Percentages reported are for those responding frequently or occasionally except where an asterisk, (*), indicates responses only for those responding frequently

Four broad areas are highlighted: computer proficiency, academically-related activities/behaviors, health or student well-being issues and political interest. In the fall of 1991, not even a third, 31.6 percent, reported frequently using a personal computer; this fall nearly three-quarters, 74 percent, did. Last fall only 56.6 percent reported they frequently used a personal computer. Two-thirds, compared to last fall's 52.3 percent, frequently used the Internet for research or homework. Respondents also frequently communicated via e-mail; 60.5 percent this fall and 46.5 percent last fall. As the CIRP researchers pointed out, the use of computers by students has escalated in recent years, reflecting the growing reliance on technology in education. A record 78.5 percent of college freshmen report using a personal computer frequently during the year prior to entering college. This signifies a major increase in computer use, up from 68.4 percent last year and 27.3 percent when this question was first introduced to the survey in 1985." MSU's figures also confirm the CIRP researchers' finding that "the gender gap in use has nearly closed"; 77.7

percent of our male and 72.0 percent of our female freshmen reported using a personal computer frequently. Women communicated somewhat more frequently by e-mail than men, 63.5 percent and 55.2 percent, respectively. The University's continued investment in academic technology, such as the new computer labs and the integration of technology into the classroom, certainly helps us meet the expectations and skill levels which today's students bring to college.

Turning to academically-related activities/behaviors, almost eight out of ten respondents reported studying with other students frequently or occasionally. Less than half, 46.6 percent, tutored another student and 46.8 percent performed community service as part of a class during the past year. Over three-quarters of our freshmen reported they frequently socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group. This is significantly larger than the 61.8 percent for similar medium-selective four-year colleges.

Respondents also engaged in extracurricular activities that may have an effect on their academic choices and performance as well as the services the University may feel it needs to provide students. Freshmen reported frequent or occasional attendance at cultural events during the past year; 76.2 percent attended a public recital or concert and 52.9 percent visited an art gallery or museum.

As well, the percent reporting that they occasionally or frequently came late to class increased slightly from last year's 60.0 percent to 62.8 percent. The percent reporting frequent boredom in class during the past year also increased slightly from last year's 40.0 percent to 43.5 percent. The national summary put out by CIRP last year characterized these two factors as indicators of student academic disengagement.

The percent of freshmen reporting they felt overwhelmed by all they had to do in the past year increased from last fall's 31.4 percent to 35.8 percent for fall 2000. Mirroring the national trend, more female respondents reported this than male respondents, 44.0 percent and 20.0 percent, respectively. A smaller percentage of freshmen, 14.8, said they frequently felt depressed. Again, women reported feeling this way more frequently than men, 16.8 and 11.1 percent respectively.

The percent of MSU freshmen reporting that they drank wine, liquor or beer increased from last year. This fall 59.4 percent reported drinking wine or liquor frequently or occasionally, compared to last year's 55.8 percent. In 1991, the percent was 61.6 percent. MSU's percents are somewhat higher than those reported by the CIRP researchers in the fall 2000 national summary. They noted that 53.9 percent this year said they drank wine or liquor frequently or occasionally compared to last year's 53.2 percent. The report also noted that this year's national figure is still far below the high of 67.8 percent reported in 1987.

Slightly over half of MSU freshmen, 51.5 percent, compared to last year's 48.6 percent, said they drank beer frequently or occasionally during the past year. In 1991 the comparable percent was 60.5 percent. The CIRP researchers reported in the fall 2000 national summary that 48.3 percent reported drinking beer frequently or occasionally, compared to 48.6 percent in 1999 and the 1982 high of 73.7 percent. MSU's figures, while slightly higher, do follow the national norm. These figures seem to support the idea of making the Freshman Seminar a standard part of the student curriculum. The Freshman Seminar highlights these and other important student development issues and brings the University's related services to students' attention.

Finally, since this was an election year, freshman political activities were of interest. The national survey results reported that the downward trend of student political disengagement continued and reached an all time low. "Only 28.1 percent of entering college students are interested in keeping up to date with political affairs . . . compared with the high of 60.3 percent in 1966. Further, a record low 16.4 percent of freshmen discuss politics frequently. . . compared to a high of 33.6 percent in 1968. The percent of freshmen who voted in a student election also hit an all time low of only 22.8 percent. . . compared to 78.7 percent in 1968. Although the 2000 results reflect a long-term decline in students' political interest, the persistent downward trend is noteworthy since freshman interest in politics traditionally increases during a presidential election year." (The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2000, pp. 3-4.) MSU's percents were slightly lower than the national norms; only 10.5 percent said they discussed politics during the past year and 19.1 percent voted in a student election.

Part 3: Admission Choices, College Expectations and Expenses

**MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY'S FALL FRESHMAN CLASS THEN AND NOW: A
SUMMARY OF THE CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEYS FOR FALL 1991 AND FALL 2000**

***Part 3: Personal Objectives, Admission Choices, College Aspirations, Expectations and Expenses of
Entering Full-Time Freshmen***

This is the third and last in a series of Institutional Research reports summarizing the results of the national CIRP Freshman Survey that Montclair State University participated in last summer. This particular report focuses on questions about life goals, the factors that affected their decision to attend college in general and MSU in particular, expected career and major choices and how students plan to pay for college. As in the previous two reports, comparisons to entering fall 1991 MSU freshmen and national norms for fall 2000 will be included.

What Are Students' Personal Life Objectives?

Approximately three quarters of the entering MSU freshmen began both the last decade and this one with two major personal life objectives: being financially well off and raising a family. As Table 1 shows, the importance of being financially well off was very important to 80.9 percent of this fall's respondents; somewhat higher than last year's and the national average for other four-year medium-selective public colleges. A much larger percent, 45.8, of MSU freshmen want to reach financial success through having a business of their own than the national norm of 34.5 percent for four-year medium-selective colleges.

**Table 1
% of Freshmen Considering Various Objectives Essential or Very Important**

Objectives:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
Being very well off financially	77.1	76.1	80.9	75.8
Raise a family	72.0	72.1	74.0	73.4
Helping others who are in difficulty	61.6	67.9	62.3	58.9
Becoming an authority in my field	65.1	66.3	61.6	56.4
Obtain recognition from colleagues for contributions to my field	58.1	60.6	57.5	48.8
Becoming successful in a business of my own	47.9	47.6	45.8	34.5
Having administrative responsibility for the work of others	39.2	43.5	42.7	35.7
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	46.3	41.6	42.2	36.2
Influencing social values	44.4	42.5	41.9	35.3
Integrating spirituality into my life	--	39.5	37.4	35.9
Helping to promote racial understanding	44.1	37.5	32.6	25.3
Becoming a community leader	--	30.0	28.1	25.4
Keeping up to date with political affairs	38.4	26.0	24.7	21.7
Influencing the political structure	23.0	21.6	22.7	14.4
Participating in a community action program	28.4	25.2	22.3	17.4
Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.)	18.3	24.1	21.0	13.2
Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, decorating etc.)	16.4	22.1	19.9	13.8
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts	19.7	22.7	19.9	12.8
Become involved in programs to clean up the environment	34.9	22.8	19.7	14.0
Making a theoretical contribution to science	14.5	20.2	16.7	11.3

MSU freshmen also viewed several other life goals as more important to them than did freshmen in other four-year medium-selective colleges: becoming an authority in their chosen fields, obtaining recognition

from colleagues for contributions to their fields, having administrative responsibility over the work of others, influencing social values, developing a meaningful philosophy of life, helping promote racial understanding, influencing the political structure and writing original works.

What Are Freshmen's Higher Education Aspirations?

Freshmen were asked what was the highest degree they planned to pursue anywhere and then, specifically which degrees they planned to earn at Montclair. Over half, 53.8 percent, reported they planned on earning a master's degree and 15.6 percent said a Ph.D. or Ed.D. was in their education plans. Sixty-one percent planned on earning their bachelor's degree at MSU but only a third are currently planning to earn post-baccalaureate degrees here.

At the beginning of the last decade 58.3 percent said Montclair was the first choice of colleges they wanted to attend. This fall 61.5 percent said MSU was their first choice. MSU is significantly below the 71.5 percent of other public four-year medium-selective colleges. An additional 27.1 percent said that MSU was their second choice and 11.4 percent said it was their third or lower-ranked choice.

Why Are Freshmen Attending College?

Respondents were asked to choose from a list of 13 possible reasons for attending college. Table 2 summarizes these responses. The most important reason for all freshmen was to get training for a specific career, followed by learning about things that interest me. MSU freshmen were more likely to view their undergraduate education as preparation for graduate school than those at other medium-selective institutions, 56.7 and 47.5 percents, respectively. As well, MSU freshmen put more emphasis on gaining a general education and appreciation of ideas as an important reason for attending college than those in the comparator group, 63.6 percent and 58.6 percent, respectively.

Table 2
% of Freshmen Responding Reason Is Very Important in Deciding to Go to College

	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
Reasons:				
To get training for a specific career	--	76.1	73.3	76.2
To learn more about things that interest me	74.1	75.2	69.5	72.0
To be able to make more money	73.0	71.3	69.5	72.7
To be able to get a better job	75.8	69.2	65.7	74.7
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	60.1	71.3	63.6	58.6
To prepare myself for graduate or professional school	47.3	69.7	56.7	47.5
To improve my reading and study skills	36.8	47.6	40.8	38.1
My parents wanted me to go	36.5	36.9	39.1	34.7
To make me a more cultured person	38.3	43.2	39.0	32.1
Wanted to get away from home	15.1	16.0	18.7	21.8
A mentor/role model encouraged me to go	--	16.9	17.8	12.0
I could not find a job	6.1	6.2	4.9	5.0
There was nothing better to do	5.3	4.2	3.3	2.6

What Factors Are Important to a Freshman's Decision to Attend Montclair State University?

Table 3 lists the reasons freshmen gave as very important in their decisions to attend MSU. The three most important reasons cited were: the university's very good academic reputation; graduates get good jobs and the university's low tuition. Academic reputation plays a larger role for MSU freshmen than for those in other four-year medium-selective colleges. Low tuition and graduates getting good jobs are still top reasons for attending MSU but the role each plays in current decision making has changed a bit. Today, 41.5 percent say low tuition is very important compared to 48.3 percent in fall 1991. Getting a good job was very important to a third of entering 1991 freshmen compared to 46.4 percent in 2000.

Table 3
% of Freshmen Responding Reason Is Very Important in Deciding to Go to MSU

Reasons:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
This college has a very good academic reputation	48.9	56.4	51.4	43.0
This college's graduates get good jobs	33.3	48.1	46.4	42.2
This college has low tuition	48.3	42.8	41.5	31.6
I wanted to live near home	38.0	33.5	37.8	21.8
I was offered financial assistance	23.0	29.0	19.2	21.5
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	28.4	28.3	31.8	35.1
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	29.4	27.8	27.1	23.3
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	16.2	27.0	24.5	18.6
This college offers special educational programs	18.9	26.5	21.4	18.5
High school guidance counselor advised me	10.0	13.6	13.6	6.2
My relatives wanted me to come here	11.1	12.3	12.4	6.5
Private college counselor advised me	--	3.9	3.5	1.1
Information in a multi-college guide book	--	10.7	--	-
Rankings in national magazines	--	9.4	6.2	3.2
My teacher advised me	7.1	9.3	8.0	3.5
Not offered aid by first choice	--	8.3	8.4	4.5
I was attracted by the religious affiliation of this college	2.4	4.2	2.3	2.1
Not accepted anywhere else	3.4	3.5	5.1	2.5
Information from Website	--	--	7.0	5.0
My friends are attending	--	--	5.6	7.6
I was offered:				
An athletic scholarship	--	--	3.3	3.4
A merit-based scholarship	--	--	10.0	11.6
A need-based scholarship	--	--	6.4	5.1
I was admitted through an Early Action program	--	--	5.1	3.2

What Careers and Majors do Freshmen Wish to Pursue?

Freshmen were given a list of over 40 careers from which to choose. Again this fall, as in previous ones, no career dominates student choices; only a few were chosen by four percent or more of the freshmen respondents.

Table 4
% of Freshmen Indicating This Area as Their Probable Career, Top Choices

Probable Career:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
Accountant or actuary	10.3	5.1	5.6	2.8
Business executive (management, administrator)	11.2	9.6	10.6	7.7
Teacher or administrator (elementary)	8.6	7.9	8.6	12.3
Teacher or administrator (secondary)	9.7	8.9	9.7	8.6
Computer programmer analyst	--	5.8	4.0	4.7
Actor or entertainer	3.9	5.3	4.5	1.8
Undecided	14.8	14.2	14.8	13.0

Freshmen were also given a long list of possible majors and asked which one they thought might be their choice. Table 5 groups majors by area as well as selected majors within an area.

Table 5
% of Freshmen Indicating This Area as Their Probable Major

Probable Major Areas With Selected Majors:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
Arts and Humanities	16.4	19.1	16.7	10.4
Art, fine and applied	4.1	5.5	3.2	2.6
Music	2.1	2.3	1.1	1.7
Theatre or drama	3.4	4.8	4.2	1.4
Biological Sciences	4.9	7.8	3.3	3.8
Biology (general)	4.0	5.7	2.7	1.8
Business	25.3	18.2	22.6	16.3
Accounting	9.1	5.7	5.3	2.9
Business administration (general)	6.9	3.8	4.1	4.0
International business	--	2.5	3.4	1.1
Marketing	2.6	2.5	3.5	2.8
Management	3.1	2.2	2.4	3.2
Education	13.8	17.5	18.5	22.0
Elementary education	5.3	6.3	7.3	10.8
Physical education or recreation	3.3	4.8	3.2	1.6
Secondary education	3.1	3.8	4.2	4.9
Physical Sciences	3.0	1.1	2.8	2.0
Professional (e.g. physical therapy)	6.0	4.3	3.2	8.7
Social Science	8.4	7.6	12.7	8.9
Psychology	5.9	4.3	9.6	4.8
Other fields	7.0	12.7	9.2	17.7
Computer science	--	6.3	4.1	3.4
Undecided	13.8	12.6	10.5	9.6

The three top areas that freshmen expect to major in are: business, education and the arts and humanities. The interest in a business major declined slightly since 1991, while education increased and the arts and humanities were relatively stable over the nine year period.

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 6 summarizes the percents for freshmen saying they thought chances were very good that they would take part in the activity.

Table 6
% Reporting Chances are Very Good That S/he Will Participate in This Activity

Activity:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
Change major field	17.3	15.3	15.9	14.6
Change career choice	15.7	13.1	11.7	12.6
Graduate with honors	16.4	20.5	20.6	15.8
Make at least a "B" average	49.0	50.6	54.4	52.5
Get a job to help pay for college expenses	41.8	39.8	41.9	47.1
Work full-time while attending college	6.9	8.8	8.4	5.7
Get a bachelor's degree	75.0	70.8	70.1	75.2
Need extra time to complete your degree requirements	12.9	10.7	11.0	6.9
Be satisfied with your college	47.5	45.0	37.5	41.2
Transfer to another college before graduating	7.0	9.0	7.0	9.0
Participate in volunteer or community service work	16.1	19.2	16.9	14.7
Seek personal counseling	6.0	11.1	10.2	5.0
Participate in student protests or demonstrations	9.0	5.6	6.0	4.1
Play varsity/intercollegiate athletics	16.8	14.9	12.9	12.5
Develop close friendships with other students	--	--	58.8	68.4
Participate in student government	--	--	8.0	5.1
Participate in student clubs/groups	--	--	37.6	35.3
Join a social fraternity or sorority	--	--	11.3	10.5
Communicate regularly with your professors	--	--	29.5	27.7
Socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group	--	--	62.2	59.6

MSU freshmen are entering college with high expectations: 70.1 percent expect to get a bachelor's degree, more than half expect to earn atleast a "B" average, and 20.6 percent expect to graduate with honors. Only 11.0 percent think it is very likely that they will need extra time to complete their degrees.

Of note, this year 37.5 percent report there is a very good chance that they will be satisfied with MSU. This is somewhat lower than last fall's 45.0 percent and is 10 percentage points lower than in fall 1991. The percent who think they will transfer to another college before completing their degree at MSU has been consistent over the nine-year period; seven percent said this was something they would very likely do.

As we saw earlier, freshmen see the University's low tuition as one of its selling points. Never the less, 41.9 percent say there is a very good chance that they will be getting a job to help pay for college expenses; only 8.4 percent think they will have to work full-time while attending college.

How Will Freshmen Finance Their College Education?

Another question asked students specifically if they were concerned about their ability to finance their college education. This year, 32.2 percent said they had none, that they were confident that they would have sufficient funds. Another 52.4 said they had some concern, but they probably would have enough funds and 15.4 percent said they had major concerns, that they were not sure if they would have enough funds to complete college. Last year the respective percents were: 27.6, 54.8 and 17.6. The differences were minor between last year's freshman sample which included EOF students and this year's that did not. However, when the questions shifted to sources of financing rather than opinions, there were some significant differences between this year's and last year's sample that can be attributed to the difference in sample composition.

The first question exploring educational expenses asked how much of the first year's educational expenses (room, board, tuition and fees) would be covered by various sources. Table 7 summarizes these responses. Over three-quarters of the freshmen cite their parents as a source for some of the costs of their educational expenses. MSU freshmen have less general or summer work savings for college expenses than freshmen from other four-year medium-selective institutions. Thirty-six percent of MSU freshmen reported they had savings from summer work to put towards their college expenses compared to 54.6 percent of those at other similar types of colleges.

Table 7
% Reporting the Source (Any Amount) of Their First Year College Expenses

	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
Sources for Educational Expenses, Any Amount:				
Parents, other relatives, spouse, family	--	--	76.6	83.2
Savings from summer work	41.8	37.9	36.3	54.6
Other savings	24.3	23.7	23.4	35.8
Part-time job off-campus	27.3	29.3	27.6	28.0
Part-time job on-campus	17.0	18.2	20.1	25.4
Full-time job while in college	4.4	5.3	4.0	3.4
Pell Grant	12.3	17.1	8.1	14.6
Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)	2.3	8.5	3.6	3.9
State Scholarship or Grant	16.5	17.6	14.2	19.0
College Work-Study Grant	2.5	7.2	6.9	8.1
Other College Grant/Scholarships	16.2	12.6	10.7	20.4
Vocational Rehabilitation funds	--	1.6	0.9	0.6
Other private grant	9.0	9.4	7.3	7.8
Other Government Aid (ROTC, BIA, GI/military benefits)	0.9	3.3	1.9	2.2
Stafford Loan (GSL)	15.3	22.5	14.1	20.8
Perkins Loan	2.3	4.3	1.6	6.7
Other college loan	2.7	7.7	6.9	12.4
Other loan	4.4	6.4	5.8	8.7
Other than above	3.0	4.2	5.2	4.9

The final question asked freshmen about specific sources from which they would receive \$1500 or more. These responses are summarized in the last table, 8. While slightly over three-quarters of the fall 2000 MSU freshmen are counting on their parents for some of their college expenses, only 58.8 percent of parents and family will be contributing \$1500 or more during the first year of college. To meet their educational expenses students seem to invest a good number of hours piecing together moneys from numerous sources. Freshmen at other medium selective institutions seem to have slightly more loan and grant moneys available to them than MSU freshmen.

Table 8
% Reporting the Sources for \$1500 of Their First Year College Expenses

Sources for Educational Expenses, \$1500 or More:	Montclair State University			4 Yr Pub
	Fall 1991	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Med Select
Parents, other relatives, spouse, friends	--	--	58.8	60.4
Savings from summer work	4.8	5.1	5.3	10.5
Other savings	5.0	3.8	5.8	8.6
Part-time job on-campus	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.9
Part-time job off-campus	2.3	3.1	3.9	3.6
Full-time job while in college	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.3
Pell Grant	3.1	3.4	3.8	5.8
Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)	0.5	1.2	1.2	0.9
State scholarship or grant	3.1	2.9	4.9	8.6
College Work-Study Grant	0.2	0.1	1.2	1.4
Other College Grant/Scholarship	6.6	4.8	6.1	9.2
Vocational Rehabilitation funds	--	0.0	0.5	0.2
Other private grants	1.6	2.3	1.5	1.9
Other Government Aid (ROTC, BIA, GI/military benefits, etc.)	0.5	1.0	1.4	1.2
Stafford Loan (GSL)	7.3	8.1	6.9	12.9
Perkins Loan	0.2	1.4	0.7	2.5
Other college loan	1.7	3.9	3.3	7.3
Other loan	2.3	2.5	2.8	5.3
Other than above	1.1	0.8	3.2	2.3