

**H I G H E R  
E D U C A T I O N  
R E S E A R C H  
I N S T I T U T E**

**C I R P  
F R E S H M A N  
S U R V E Y**

**T H E 2 0 0 4 C I R P F R E S H M A N S U R V E Y**

AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

## THE 2004 CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY

**The Higher Education Research Institute**

**at UCLA invites you to participate in the**

**Cooperative Institutional Research**

**Program's 2004 Freshman Survey.**

**The Survey is designed to provide**

**community colleges, four-year colleges,**

**and universities with a cost-effective**

**method of collecting comparative data**

**on their entering students for use in**

**institutional decision-making, research,**

**and assessment activities.**



### **Program Overview**

The CIRP Freshman Survey is designed to be of immediate use to institutions. Participating institutions receive a detailed profile of their entering freshman class, as well as national normative data for students in similar types of institutions (e.g., public four-year colleges, moderately selective Protestant colleges, highly selective Catholic colleges, public two-year colleges). These campus profile reports, together with the national normative profile, provide important data that are useful in a variety of program and policy areas:

- admissions and recruitment;
- academic program development and review;
- institutional self-study and accreditation activities;
- public relations and development;
- institutional research and assessment;
- retention studies; and
- longitudinal research about the impacts of campus policies and programs.

Although the normative data provided with the institutional reports (and published annually in *The American Freshman*) are based on the population of first-time, full-time freshmen, participating institutions also receive separate reports for their part-time and transfer students. Additionally, participating campuses

# out students

can obtain supplemental reports profiling students by various subgroups (for example, by intended major or career, by academic ability, by home state) as part of the basic participation costs.

## **The Survey Instrument**

The Freshman Survey questionnaire is appropriate for students in all institutions. The four-page survey instrument covers a broad array of issues:

- demographic characteristics;
- expectations of the college experience;
- secondary school experiences;
- degree goals and career plans;
- college finances;
- attitudes, values, and life goals; and
- reasons for attending college.

The Freshman Survey instrument repeats items from previous years to help institutions assess trends in the characteristics, attitudes, values, and aspirations of their entering freshmen. At the same time, the Freshman Survey is revised annually to reflect the changing needs of institutional participants. Moreover, the survey form provides space for participating campuses to add up to 20 local option items to those that already appear on the questionnaire.

## **Reports & Special Services**

In December, campuses receive a detailed report profiling freshman responses from their institution. This report provides an in-depth profile of freshman men, freshman women, and all freshmen, plus separate profiles of transfer and part-time students. Additionally, the report provides comparative normative data for freshmen entering similar types of institutions (see FIGURE 1).

In addition to the campus profile report, the CIRP offers a number of special supplemental services:

### ***Breakout reports***

Separate subgroup reports (by intended major or career, for example) are available at no additional cost.

### ***Data Files***

Campuses can obtain a data tape or diskette for additional analyses of the data. The CIRP Freshman Survey data can also be merged with campus data (from admissions and/or registrar's files) for longitudinal analyses.

### ***Reports on spreadsheet***

Each report in the campus profile can be provided in a spreadsheet format (e.g., EXCEL or LOTUS) on diskette. These reports allow additional analyses to be performed without the task of hand-entering the profile results.



### Special group codes

Institutions can add special codes to the data file for subsequent analyses by campus officials.

### Consortium reports

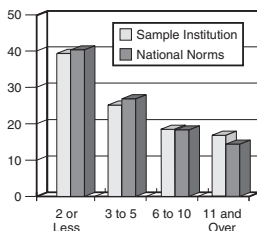
CIRP is ideal for developing consortium activities and data-sharing projects.

### Freshman Survey Results

Annually, more than 400,000 students complete the CIRP survey at 700 colleges and universities nationwide. Surveys from those institutions providing the most representative samples are used to compute the national norms, which are statistically adjusted to represent the nation's total population of approximately 1.2 million first-time, full-time freshmen. Placing institutions in comparison groups based on type, control (public, private, etc.) and selectivity level is a key feature of creating the national norms and (as explained in *The American Freshman*) permits us to provide institutions with national normative data for students in similar types of institutions.

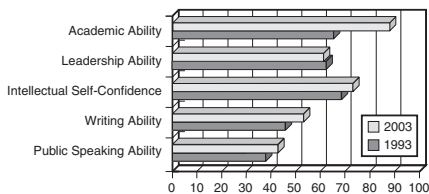
The normative sample provides a framework for evaluating your institution's results. For example, the recent survey results showed that entering students are less academically engaged than ever before. One measure of "engagement"—hours per week spent doing

**FIGURE 1**  
**TIME SPENT STUDYING IN HIGH SCHOOL**



Source: 2003 CIRP Freshman Survey

**FIGURE 2**  
**FRESHMAN ACADEMIC SELF-CONFIDENCE (1993–2003)**



Source: 1993 and 2003 CIRP Freshman Surveys

homework or studying—ranged widely over the sample. 44.5 percent of students entering public 4-year colleges reported spending 2 or less hours studying; this figure dropped to 22.5 percent of students entering private universities. Clearly, it is important to be able to compare your results to the appropriate normative sample.

Other information about freshmen can be followed from year to year, such as students' interest in volunteering. Since students are asked each year to assess their skills and abilities, changes in academic preparedness can be easily followed (see FIGURE 2). Many items in the Freshman Survey are repeated each year, allowing you to assess trends and compare student cohorts over time.

# THE 2004 CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY

Please check one:

- We wish to participate in the  
2004 CIRP Freshman Survey
- We do not wish to participate in the  
2004 CIRP Freshman Survey

\_\_\_\_\_  
INSTITUTION NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
CONTACT PERSON

\_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DEPARTMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
CAMPUS ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_

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(            )  
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PHONE

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FAX

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E-MAIL

\_\_\_\_\_  
NUMBER OF CIRP SURVEYS

\_\_\_\_\_  
DELIVER BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF CONTACT PERSON

By signing I agree to follow survey procedures and pay fees for participation when billed.

(NOTE: There is a \$100 fee if participation is canceled after surveys are received.)

## Administrative Procedures

Institutions planning to participate in the annual survey notify the CIRP project office.

Registration consists of a request to participate, plus notification of (A) the number of forms needed (based on the number of anticipated new freshmen and entering transfer students), and (B) the date the forms must arrive on campus (a minimum of one week prior to the scheduled administration date). On most campuses students complete the survey during freshman orientation. Most institutions allow about one hour for survey administration. The best results occur when the survey is administered in a proctored setting.

## 2004 CIRP Participation Fees

In 2004, the cost of participating in the CIRP Freshman Survey includes a basic participation fee of \$400 plus \$1.50 per returned survey (for the first 1,000 surveys, \$1.00 per survey, thereafter).

## Registration Information

To register your campus for the 2004 CIRP Freshman Survey, please complete the attached registration form and return it to the HERI office.

Mail to:

UCLA Higher Education Research Institute  
3005 Moore Hall, Box 951521  
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521  
ATTN: 2004 CIRP Freshman Survey

## Real Information or Just Data?

One advantage of participating in any CIRP survey is that the information you receive is “benchmarked” against similar schools’ results. This provides context and perspective to any reports you create based on these data. Because the surveys are regularly offered, you may create “trends” reports showing changes over time.

HERI maintains extensive databases of all surveys: the College Student Survey, the CIRP Freshman Survey; and the Faculty Survey. HERI provides a number of special reports and data files in connection with all its surveys. These permit you to view your survey results in different ways, or to develop special needs analyses.

### **The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)**

*Director:* Alexander W. Astin, Ph.D.

HERI is housed in the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. The Institute serves as an interdisciplinary center for research, evaluation, information, policy studies, and research training in postsecondary education, leadership development, faculty performance, federal and state policy, and educational equity. Visiting scholars, faculty, and graduate students have made use of HERI facilities and research resources since its affiliation with UCLA in 1973.

### **The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)**

*Director:* Linda J. Sax, Ph.D.

*Associate Director:* Jennifer A. Lindholm, Ph.D.

CIRP is a national longitudinal study of the American higher education system. Established in 1966, the CIRP is now the nation’s largest and oldest empirical study of higher education, involving data on some 1,800 institutions and over 11 million students. The CIRP has been administered by the Higher Education Research Institute since 1973.



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