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CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

First Generation College Freshmen Have More Practical Goals and May Be Less Engaged

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research

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The Freshman Survey, conducted yearly by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Higher Education Research Institute, is administered to incoming first time college freshmen at a wide range of institutions. The survey includes questions in a number of areas, including student characteristics, plans, values and attitudes, self-concept, and goals. It is intended to provide a comprehensive picture of each year's incoming freshman class. The Freshman Survey has been administered at Loyola for many years. Students take the survey during their Discover Loyola orientation, before they begin their fall semester.

This report looks at differences in 2008 between Loyola students who do not have a parent who attended any college¹ ("1st generation") and those with at least one parent who attended at least some college ("later generation"). Other research suggests that parents who have at least some college experience are able to impart to their child general knowledge of a campus environment, as well as college level academic expectations. Differences between 1st generation and later generation students that are both substantively and statistically significant are emphasized.

Key Findings

Characteristics of respondents

- In 2008, 13% of the 2,152 new freshman respondents at Loyola were 1st generation college students; that is, they did not have a parent who had attended any college (see Table 1).
- First and later generation students were not different in terms of gender. First generation students, were however, less likely to be white and more likely to be Latino (see Table 2).
- Twenty five percent of 1st generation students had English as their second language, compared to just 12% of later generation students.
- First generation students were more likely to come from a home within 500 miles of Loyola, compared to later generation students.
- First generation students were more likely than later generation students to plan to live at home with their families during their first year, and less likely to plan to live in a residence hall at Loyola.

¹ "College" does not include community college.

Financial status

- The parents of first generation students, compared to those of later generation students, were much more likely to have incomes of less than \$50,000 and much less likely to have incomes of at least \$100,000 (see Figures 1a and 1b and Table 3).
- First generation students were more concerned about paying for their college education than were later generation students.
- First generation students were less likely to use family resources to pay for their first year of college, more likely to use scholarships and grants, and more likely to use loans (e.g., loans).

Reasons for coming to Loyola

- First generation students were more likely to report wanting to live near home and receipt of financial assistance offers as very important reasons for coming to Loyola, compared to later generation students (see Figure 2 and Table 4).
- First generation students were slightly more likely to cite advice from a teacher or a high school counselor as very important reasons for coming to Loyola.

Self-reported characteristics

- Later generation students rated themselves higher on a number of characteristics, compared to 1st generation students. These included creativity, public speaking ability, physical health, artistic ability, and writing ability (see Figure 3 and Table 5).
- Later generation students also rated themselves slightly higher on cooperativeness, self-confidence (social and intellectual), self-understanding, tolerance of others with different beliefs, and ability to work cooperatively with diverse people.

Probability of future events/activities

- A higher proportion of 1st generation students thought that there was a very good chance that they would get a job to help pay for college expenses and that they would work full-time, compared to later generation students (see Figure 4 and Table 6).
- First generation students were also more likely to expect to need extra time to complete their degree and to transfer to another school, and less likely to expect to make a B average.

- They were less likely to report that there was a very good chance that they would participate in a study abroad program, student clubs/groups, or protests/demonstrations, but were more likely to say that they would probably have a roommate of another ethnicity.

Goals

- Later generation students were more likely to see as important goals keeping up with political affairs, improving their understanding of other countries and cultures, and developing a meaningful philosophy of life, compared to 1st generation students (see Figure 5 and Table 7).
- First generation students were more likely to see as important goals obtaining recognition in their field and becoming an authority in their field.
- First generation students also saw as more important becoming successful in a business of their own and being very well off financially.
- First generation students were more likely to report that influencing the political structure was very important to them.

Frequency of activities in past year

- In their last year of high school, later generation students were more likely than 1st generation students to have frequently discussed politics, discussed religion, and attended a religious service (see Figure 6a and Table 8).
- First generation students were more likely to, at least occasionally, have read or written online blogs (see Figure 6b).
- Later generation students more often reported that they at least occasionally had worked on a political campaign.

Weekly time use in last year

- During their last year of high school, 1st generation students were more likely than later generation students to have spent at least 6 hours a week working for pay, and more likely to have spent at least 3 hours a week on household/childcare responsibilities (see Table 9).
- Later generation students were more likely to have spent at least 6 hours a week on studying/homework.

Political views and beliefs

- First generation students were more likely than later generation students to consider themselves as “middle of the road” politically, and less likely to consider themselves as liberal or far left (see Figure 7 and Table 10).
- First generation students were more likely to agree that wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now (see Figure 8).

- Later generation students were more likely to agree that dissent is a critical component of the political process, that the death penalty should be abolished, and that marijuana should be legalized. They were less likely to agree that there is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals.
- First generation students were a little more likely to say that an individual, realistically, can do little to bring about changes in society.

Intellectual habits

- Later generation students were more likely than 1st generation students to report that they frequently seek solutions to problems and explain them to others.
- Later generation students also reported more frequently revising their papers to improve their writing, as well as more frequently taking notes in class.

Implications

- Compared to later generation college students, first generation college students are more likely to be Latino and to have English as their second language. They come from families with lower incomes, compared to later generation students, and are more likely to be concerned about paying for their education.
- Wherever there are differences, later generation students are more likely than first generation students to see themselves as above average, across a range of characteristics.
- First generation students tend to be more conservative politically than later generation students.
- First generation students have higher practical and professional goals than do later generation students.
- First generation students seem to have more work and family obligations than do later generation students. They are more likely to expect to work full-time during their first year at Loyola, and less likely to expect to take advantage of certain student opportunities.
- Some of the results suggest that incoming first generation students are less likely to be engaged academically and socially at Loyola than are later generation students.
- First generation students are more likely to live at home during their first year of college, rather than in the dorms.
- In general, first generation students are more like the type of student usually identified as “non-traditional,” compared to later generation students.

Figure 1a
Parental Income of First Generation Students (%)

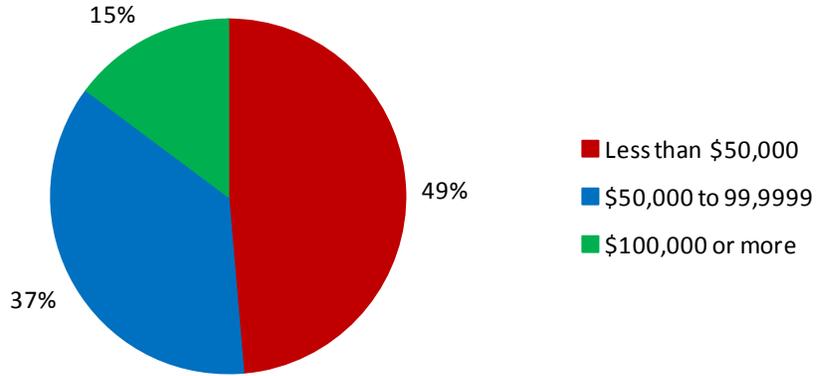
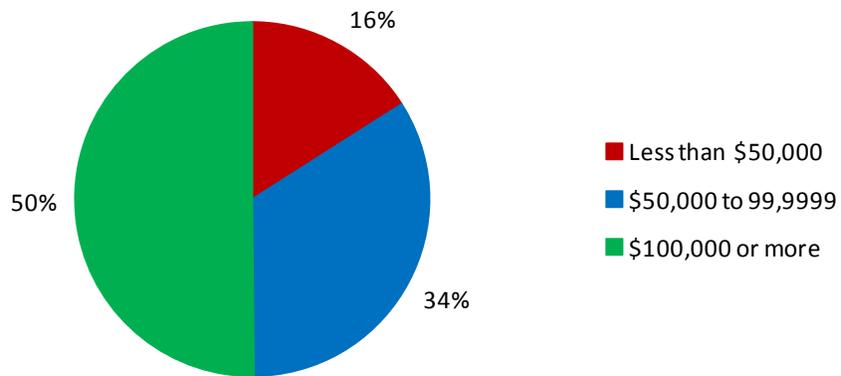
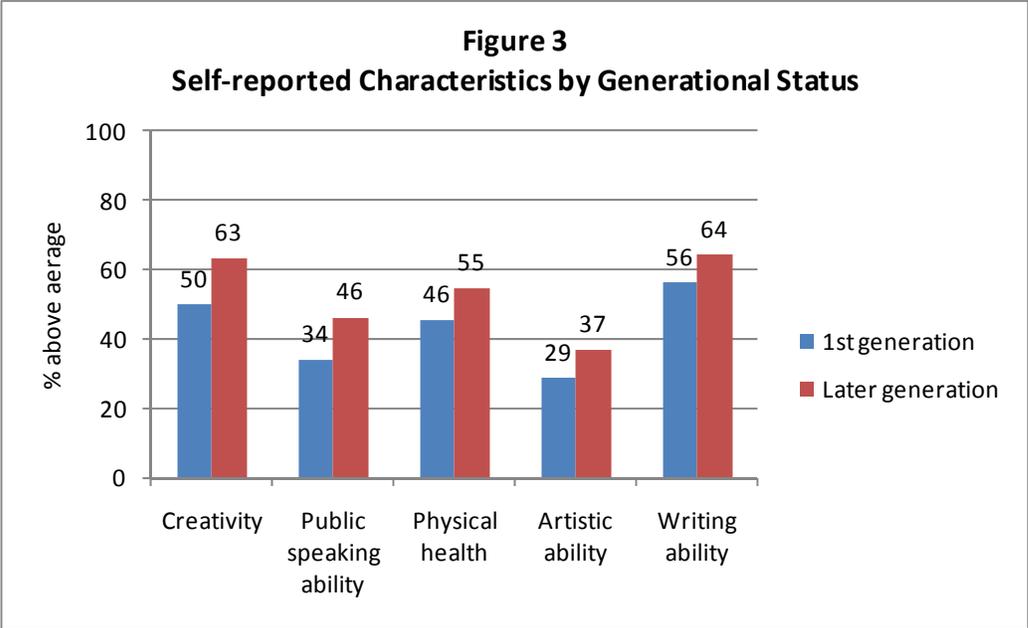
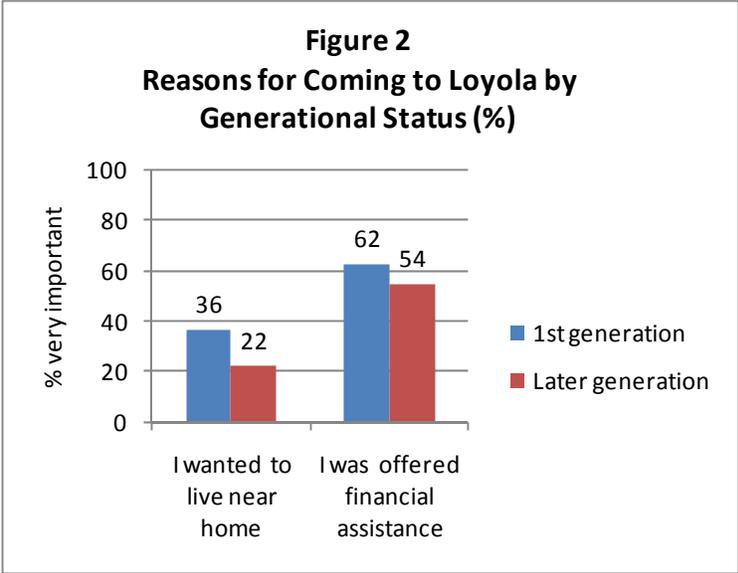
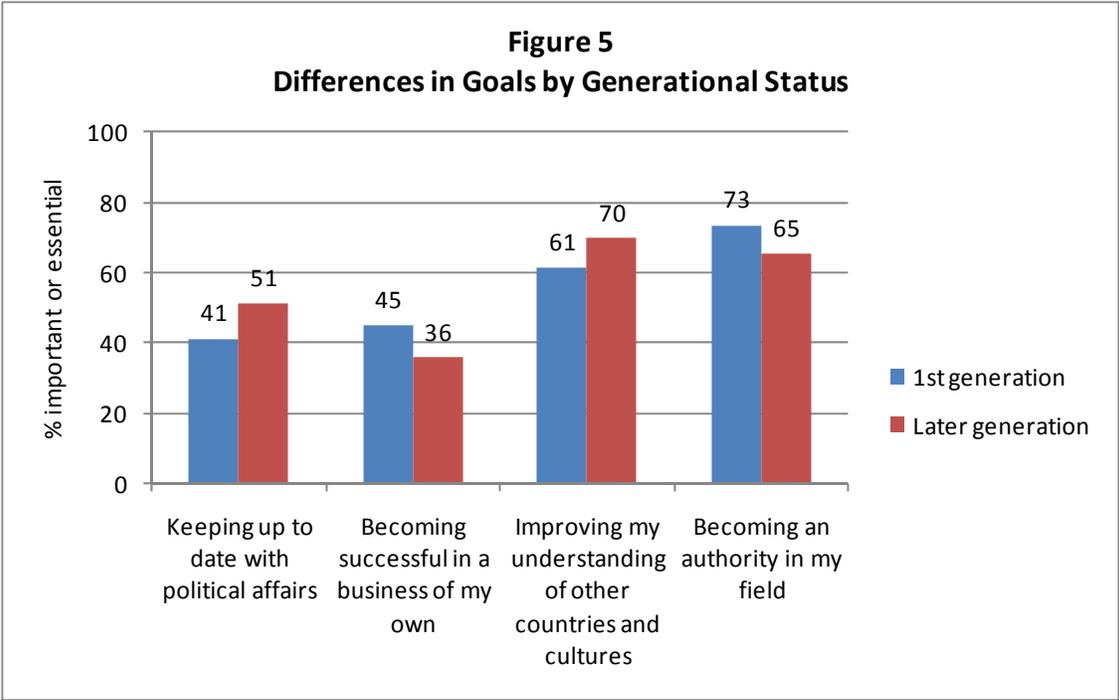
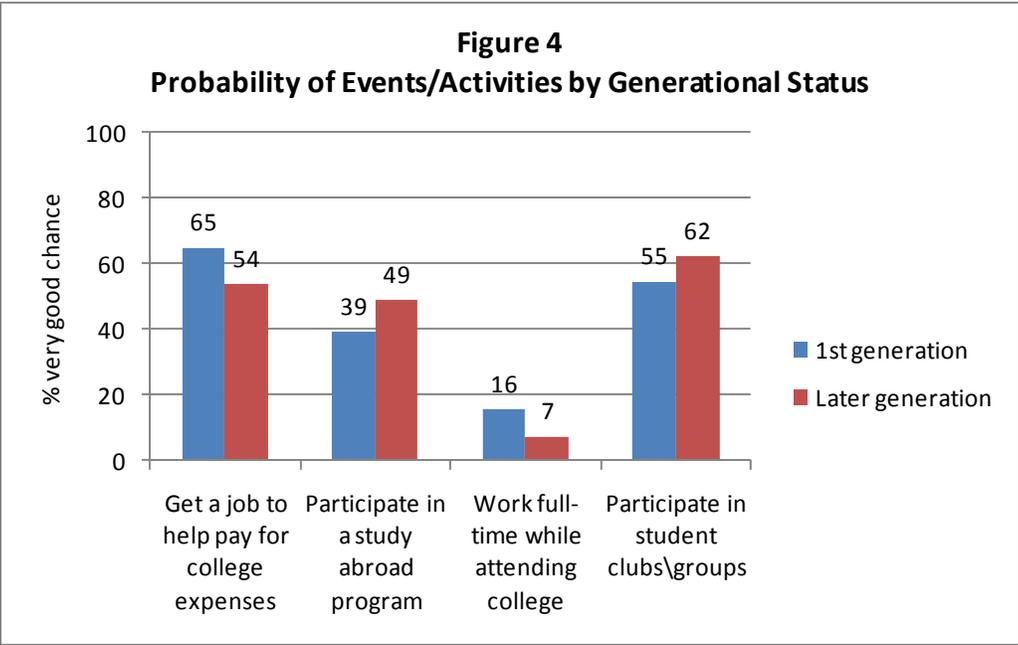
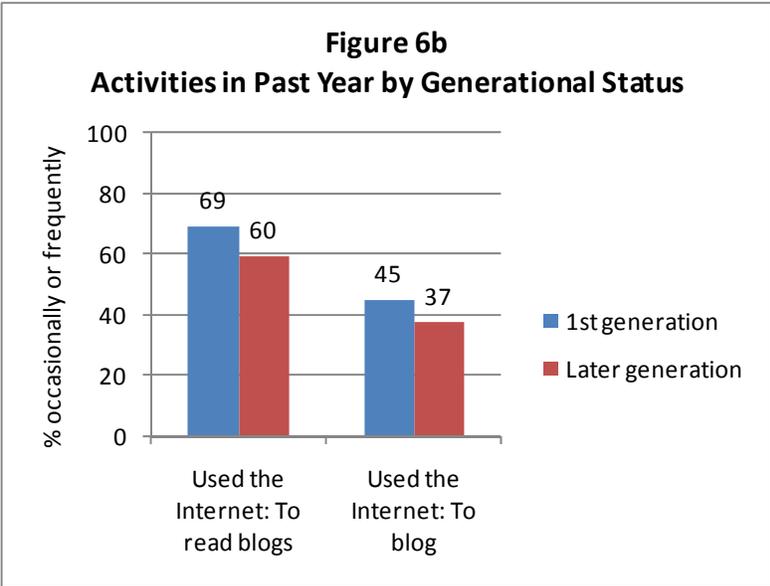
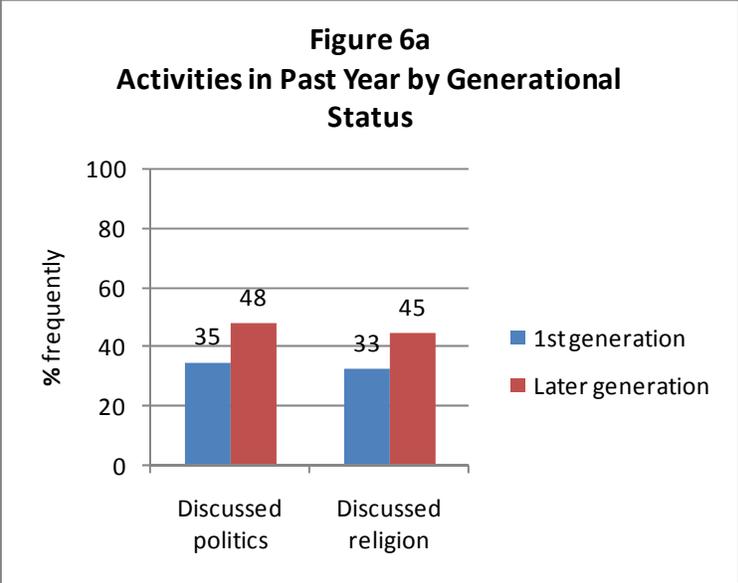


Figure 1b
Parental Income of Later Generation Students (%)









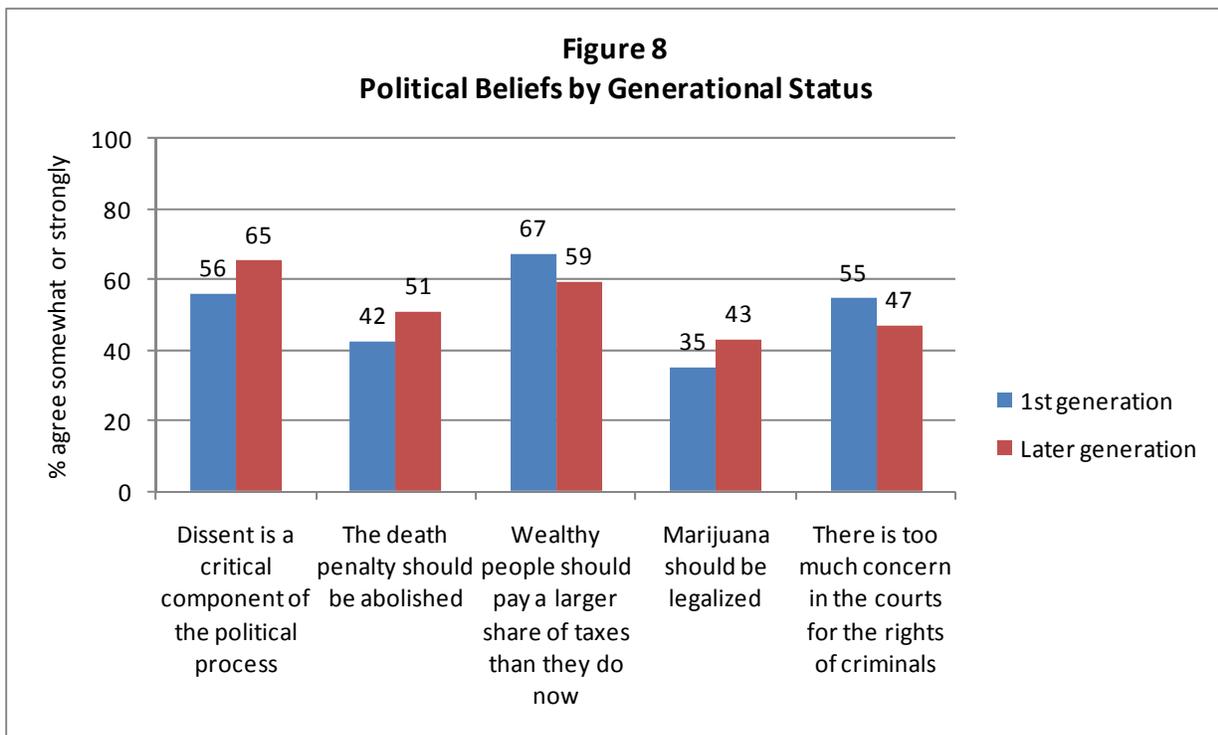
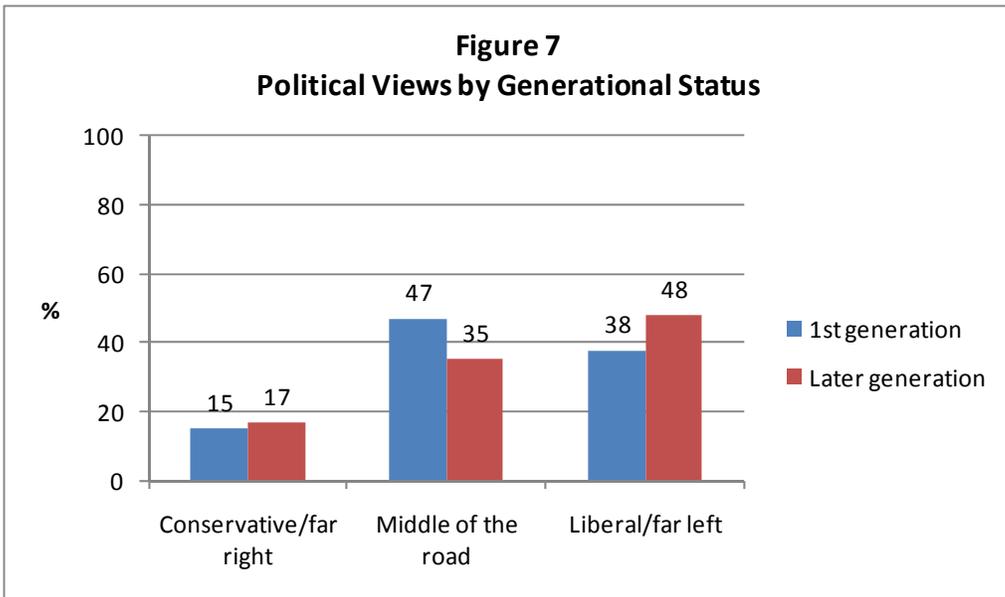


Figure 9
Intellectual Habits by Generational Status

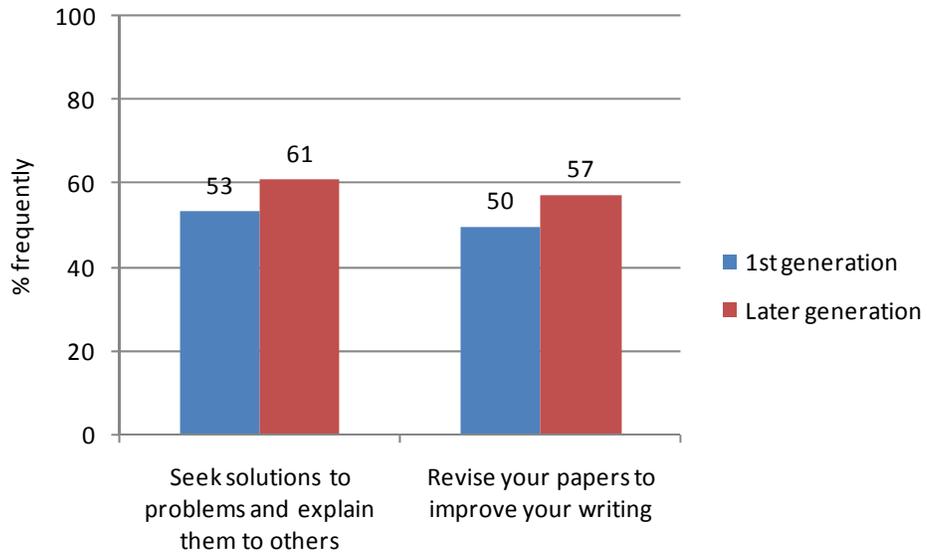


Table 1		
Generational Status of Respondents		
	%	N
1st generation	13	274
Later generation	87	1878
Total	100	2152

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Table 2		
Respondent Characteristics by Generational Status		
	1st generation	Later generation
	%	%
Gender		
Female	64	67
Male	36	33
Race/ethnicity		
White	61	74
Black	3	4
Asian	10	10
Latino	22	8
Other	4	4
Native English speaker		
ESL	25	12
Native English	75	88
Distance from home		
More than 500 miles	9	21
500 miles or less	91	79
Residence plans for fall		
At home with family	30	10
College dorm	69	88
Other	1	2
Highest degree planned		
Master's	35	36
Doctoral or professional	53	50
No advanced degree	12	13
Loyola first choice		
First choice	67	61
Not first choice	33	39

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 3		
Financial Status by Generational Status		
	1st generation	Later generation
	%	%
Parental income		
Less than \$50,000	49	16
\$50,000 to 99,999	37	34
\$100,000 or more	15	50
Concern about paying for college		
None	14	32
Some	66	56
Major	20	12
Sources of first year college costs		
Family resources		
None	21	7
\$10,000 +	27	60
Own resources		
None	18	24
\$10,000 +	4	6
Aid which need not be repaid		
None	6	12
\$10,000 +	62	51
Aid which must be repaid		
None	16	30
\$10,000 +	42	31

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 4		
Reasons for Coming to Loyola, by Generational Status		
	1st generation	Later generation
% very important reason	%	%
This college has a very good academic reputation	79	74
This college's graduates get good jobs	65	63
I was offered financial assistance	62	54
A visit to campus	48	52
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/prof. schools	48	47
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	46	48
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	44	38
I wanted to live near home	36	22
The cost of attending this college	33	30
Information from a website	30	25
Rankings in national magazines	29	23
I was attracted by religious affiliation/orientation of school	19	20
My parents wanted me to come here	15	14
High school counselor advised me	13	10
Could not afford first choice	11	11
My teacher advised me	9	4
Not offered aid by first choice	9	10
My relatives wanted me to come here	6	5
The athletic department recruited me	4	4
Private college counselor advised me	4	4

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 5		
Self-reported Characteristics by Generational Status		
	1st generation	Later generation
% self-report as above average	%	%
Drive to achieve	83	82
Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people	83	87
Academic ability	81	85
Tolerance of others with different beliefs	79	85
Ability to see the world from someone else's perspective	73	77
Understanding of others	71	73
Ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues	71	74
Cooperativeness	70	78
Openness to having my own views challenged	63	65
Leadership ability	63	67
Self-confidence (intellectual)	62	68
Writing ability	56	64
Self-understanding	55	62
Emotional health	51	54
Creativity	50	63
Self-confidence (social)	49	56
Physical health	46	55
Mathematical ability	40	45
Computer skills	38	38
Popularity	37	42
Spirituality	35	40
Public speaking ability	34	46
Artistic ability	29	37

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 6		
Probability of Future Events/Activities by Generational Status		
	1st generation	Later generation
% very good chance	%	%
Socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group	71	70
Get a job to help pay for college expenses	65	54
Make at least a `B` average	63	69
Be satisfied with your college	57	58
Participate in student clubs/groups	55	62
Discuss course content with students outside of class	50	55
Participate in volunteer or community service work	42	48
Participate in a study abroad program	39	49
Communicate regularly with your professors	39	42
Have a roommate of different race/ethnicity	36	30
Work on a professor's research project	29	28
Get tutoring help in specific courses	28	27
Work full-time while attending college	16	7
Change career choice	15	16
Change major field	14	15
Seek personal counseling	13	12
Play varsity/intercollegiate athletics	10	9
Need extra time to complete your degree requirements	10	6
Transfer to another college before graduating	9	5
Join a social fraternity or sorority	8	6
Participate in student protests or demonstrations	7	11
Participate in student government	7	9

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 7		
Goals by Generational Status		
	1st generation	Later generation
% very important or essential	%	%
Helping others who are in difficulty	82	78
Being very well off financially	78	72
Becoming an authority in my field	73	65
Obtaining recognition from colleagues for contributions to my field	73	66
Raising a family	71	73
Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures	61	70
Influencing social values	61	57
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	59	65
Adopting `green` practices to protect the environment	57	57
Helping to promote racial understanding	51	48
Becoming a community leader	49	49
Becoming successful in a business of my own	45	36
Participating in a community action program	45	44
Keeping up to date with political affairs	41	51
Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	38	36
Influencing the political structure	35	30
Making a theoretical contribution to science	34	29
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts	18	17
Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.)	18	20
Creating artistic work	15	17

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 8		
Frequency of Activities in Past Year by Generational Status		
	1st generation	Later generation
	%	%
% frequently		
Used the Internet: For research or homework	85	87
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group	75	73
Used the Internet: To read news sites	56	51
Was bored in class	40	41
Attended a religious service	38	45
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	37	35
Asked a teacher for advice after class	36	33
Discussed politics	35	48
Performed volunteer work	34	40
Studied with other students	34	38
Discussed religion	33	45
Voted in a student election	20	25
% occasionally or frequently		
Used the Internet: To read blogs	69	60
Tutored another student	68	64
Performed community service as part of a class	63	60
Came late to class	55	54
Felt depressed	52	54
Drank wine or liquor	48	48
Used the Internet: To blog	45	37
Played a musical instrument	41	47
Drank beer	37	40
Participated in political demonstrations	23	27
Smoked cigarettes	17	20
Was a guest in a teacher's home	16	19
Worked on a local, state or national political campaign	10	15

Source: HERICIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 9			
Weekly Time Use in Last Year by Generational Status			
Activity (%)	Time per week	1st generation	Later generation
		%	%
Working (for pay)	At least 6 hours	59	50
Talking with teachers outside of class	At least 1 hour	56	51
Playing video\computer games	Any	56	51
Reading for pleasure	At least 1 hour	55	58
Watching TV	At least 3 hours	51	51
Online social networks	At least 3 hours	44	44
Studying\homework	At least 6 hours	43	52
Socializing with friends	At least 11 hours	43	45
Exercise or sports	At least 6 hours	41	47
Student clubs/groups	At least 3 hours	40	41
Household/childcare duties	At least 3 hours	37	30
Volunteer work	At least 3 hours	34	31
Partying	At least 6 hours	21	19

Source: HERICIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 10		
Political Views and Beliefs by Generational Status		
	1st generation	Later generation
	%	%
Political views		
Conservative/far right	15	17
Middle of the road	47	35
Liberal/far left	38	48
% agree somewhat or strongly		
The federal government is not doing enough to control environmental pollution	83	83
The federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns	80	79
Through hard work, everybody can succeed in American society	78	75
Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	76	75
A national health care plan is needed to cover everybody's medical costs	75	72
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	67	59
Only volunteers should serve in the armed forces	67	72
Dissent is a critical component of the political process	56	65
There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals	55	47
Abortion should be legal	52	58
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	51	54
The death penalty should be abolished	42	51
Students from disadvantaged backgrounds should be given preferential treatment	39	35
Marijuana should be legalized	35	43
Undocumented immigrants should be denied access to public education	35	39
The federal government should raise taxes to reduce the deficit	26	26
Colleges have the right to ban extreme speakers from campus	26	31
Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society	23	17
Federal military spending should be increased	22	18
It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships	18	14
Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	18	14

Source: HERICIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 11		
Intellectual Habits by Generational Status		
	1st generation	Later generation
% frequently	%	%
Take notes during class	67	74
Support your opinions with a logical argument	64	70
Ask questions in class	56	61
Accept mistakes as part of the learning process	54	53
Seek solutions to problems and explain them to others	53	61
Seek feedback on your academic work	51	52
Revise your papers to improve your writing	50	57
Seek alternative solutions to a problem	48	50
Take a risk because you feel you have more to gain	42	41
Explore topics on your own, even though it was not required for a class	42	40
Evaluate the quality or reliability of information you received	40	42
Look up scientific research articles and resources	26	26

Source: HERICIRP Freshman Survey, 2008

Note: Bolded numbers indicate that difference in percentages is statistically significant at the .05 level.