



School Reputation Important to Incoming Freshmen: Loyola and Comparison Groups

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research

Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

Report number: 10-13

May, 2010

Students have multiple reasons for going to college in general and for going to a particular school. In this report, many of those reasons are examined for new, first-time freshmen, comparing students at Loyola to those at universities in two peer groups. Results are presented separately by gender.

The HERI CIRP Freshman Survey is a national survey administered annually to new freshmen at participating institutions across the United States. At Loyola, the survey is administered during the "Discover Loyola" orientations in the summer prior to students' first semester at Loyola, so the response rate is higher than for most other student surveys. In 2009, Loyola's response rate was 93%.

The Freshman Survey asks a number of questions about incoming freshmen's reasons for going to college in general, as well as their reasons for choosing the specific school they did. Students are asked about the importance of a given reason. Average responses are presented here, where 0 represents "Not important," 1 = "Somewhat important," and 2 represents "Very important."

Average responses for each reason are presented for Loyola and for two comparison groups of other institutions participating in the 2009 Freshman Survey: other private universities of medium selectivity and other private universities of at least medium (medium, high, or very high) selectivity (see Appendix A for lists of universities in each comparison group). The former group includes other universities that are similar to Loyola in selectivity, and so comprises a group of similar peers, whereas the latter group also includes universities more selective than Loyola, and so comprises a group that is more aspirational.

Results are presented separately for men and women, as there are some gender differences in the importance of reasons for Loyola students compared to their peers.

Key findings

College applications

- Incoming new freshmen at Loyola, both men and women, had applied to fewer colleges than had

those at other private universities of at least medium selectivity (see Table 1).

- Loyola students were at least as likely to say that they had been accepted by their first choice school as were those at other private universities of at least medium selectivity.
- There were no meaningful differences between Loyola and the comparison groups in whether students said the school they were attending had been their first, second, etc., choice.

Reasons for going to college

- Men at Loyola were less likely than men at other medium selectivity schools to say that getting a better job was an important reason for going to college (1.72 vs. 1.82; see Table 2).
- Compared to men at other medium selectivity schools, men at Loyola placed greater importance on gaining a general education and appreciation of ideas (1.73 vs. 1.61) and on becoming a more cultured person as reasons for going to college (1.54 vs. 1.32).
- Men at Loyola placed less importance than did men at other medium selectivity universities on being able to earn more money as a reason for going to college (1.59 vs. 1.74).

Reasons for attending a specific school

- For Loyola men, their school's academic reputation was a less important reason for choosing that school than it was for those at other universities of at least medium selectivity (1.64 vs. 1.76; see Table 3).
- For Loyola men, that their school's graduates get good jobs was less important in choosing their school than it was for men at schools in both comparison groups (1.43 vs. 1.57 and 1.61).
- Being offered financial assistance was more important for Loyola students than for those at other universities of at least medium selectivity, for both men (1.45 vs. 1.12) and women (1.46 vs. 1.22).
- For Loyola men, the cost of attendance was more important in choosing their school than it was for men at other universities of at least medium selectivity (1.00 vs. .80).
- For Loyola men, information from a website was

less important than for men at other universities of at least medium selectivity (.74 vs. .89).

- National magazine rankings were less important in choosing a school than they were for those at other universities of at least medium selectivity, for both men (.79 vs. 1.12) and women (.79 vs. 1.10).
- Wanting to live near home was more important to Loyola students than it was to those at other universities of at least medium selectivity, for both men (.61 vs. .42) and women (.74 vs. .47).
- For Loyola students, an attraction to the religious affiliation of their school was more important than it was for those in either comparison group, for both men (.63 vs. .35 and .47) and women (.72 vs. .46 and .54). This makes sense, given Loyola's Jesuit identity.
- For Loyola women, a teacher's advice was a more important reason for choosing their school than it was for women at other universities of at least medium selectivity (.32 vs. .44).
- For Loyola men, not being able to afford their first choice was more important a reason for choosing their school than it was for men at other universities of at least medium selectivity (.33 vs. .22).

Conclusions

- Incoming Loyola freshmen, both women and men, had applied to fewer colleges than had their peers

at other universities of at least medium selectivity. There were no differences between Loyola students and their counterparts in the comparison groups in whether they were attending their first choice school.

- Compared to men at other private medium selectivity universities, those at Loyola are less likely to cite as important reasons for going to college the abilities to make more money and get a better job, and more likely to cite gaining a general education and appreciation of ideas, as well as becoming a more cultured person.
- In their reasons for choosing their school, there are more differences between incoming Loyola freshmen and those at other universities of at least medium selectivity (that is, the more aspirational group) than there are between Loyola students and those at other universities of medium selectivity (that is, the most similar peers). This is especially true of men.
- For both men and women at Loyola and in the comparison groups, their school's academic reputation is the most important reason for choosing it. Also important is that their school's graduates get good jobs.
- Compared to those at other private universities of at least medium selectivity, school reputation is less important to Loyola men and, to some degree, women, while being able to live near home is more important, as is an offer of financial assistance.

Table 1									
College Applications, by Gender									
	Men			Women			Total		
	University type			University type			University type		
	Loyola	Private, at medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹	Loyola	Private, at medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹	Loyola	Private, at medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹
		Percent	Percent		Percent	Percent		Percent	Percent
Number of other schools applied to									
None	5.5	6.6	9.0	3.8	4.6	7.8	4.4	5.5	8.4
One to two	21.8	17.3	13.7	18.5	14.8	12.8	19.6	15.9	13.2
Three to four	34.4	30.2	20.0	34.8	28.5	19.6	34.7	29.2	19.8
Five to six	21.3	24.2	21.2	22.7	24.5	20.8	22.2	24.3	20.9
Seven or more	17.0	21.7	36.1	20.2	27.7	39.1	19.1	25.0	37.7
Accepted by first choice school	76.3	73.2	67.4	79.0	77.6	71.5	78.1	75.6	69.6
College is...									
First choice	58.7	56.7	58.8	62.9	56.5	59.3	61.5	56.6	59.1
Second choice	27.7	28.5	23.9	25.1	27.4	24.5	25.9	27.9	24.2
Third choice	8.5	9.3	10.5	8.6	10.4	10.2	8.6	9.9	10.3
Less than third choice	5.1	5.5	6.8	3.5	5.7	6.0	4.0	5.6	6.4

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2009 (weighted data)

Note: Differences not tested for statistical significance.

¹ Includes medium, high, and very high selectivity.

Table 2 Reasons for Going to College, by Gender									
In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons? <i>Average on scale from 0 to 2</i>	Men			Women			Total		
	University type			University type			University type		
	Loyola	Private, medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹	Loyola	Private, medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹	Loyola	Private, medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹
		Average	Average		Average	Average		Average	Average
To learn more about things that interest me	1.82	1.76	1.81	1.86	1.83	1.88	1.85	1.80	1.85
To be able to get a better job	1.72	1.82	1.79	1.82	1.85	1.81	1.79	1.84	1.80
To gain general education and appreciation of ideas	1.73	1.61	1.70	1.79	1.73	1.80	1.77	1.67	1.76
To make me more cultured person	1.54	1.32	1.45	1.65	1.53	1.64	1.61	1.43	1.55
To be able to make more money	1.59	1.74	1.66	1.59	1.68	1.59	1.59	1.70	1.62
My parents wanted me to go	1.12	1.12	1.11	1.15	1.20	1.20	1.14	1.17	1.16

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2009 (weighted data)

Note: **Blue/red** indicates that Loyola's average is **higher/lower** than that of the comparison group; difference is statistically significant with an effect size of at least .2.

¹ Includes medium, high, and very high selectivity.

Table 3 Reasons for Attending a Specific School, by Gender									
In deciding to go to your school, how important to you was each of the following reasons? <i>Average on scale from 0 to 2</i>	Men			Women			Total		
	Loyola	University type		Loyola	University type		Loyola	University type	
		Private, medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹		Private, medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹		Private, medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹
		Average	Average		Average	Average		Average	Average
This college has a very good academic reputation	1.64	1.61	1.76	1.75	1.70	1.81	1.72	1.66	1.79
This college's graduates get good jobs	1.43	1.57	1.61	1.60	1.65	1.66	1.54	1.62	1.64
I was offered financial assistance	1.45	1.44	1.12	1.46	1.52	1.22	1.46	1.49	1.17
A visit to campus	1.19	1.12	1.25	1.39	1.29	1.38	1.33	1.22	1.32
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	1.21	1.14	1.35	1.33	1.30	1.42	1.29	1.23	1.39
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	1.18	1.13	1.21	1.31	1.29	1.35	1.27	1.22	1.28
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	1.12	1.15	1.25	1.17	1.20	1.25	1.15	1.18	1.25
The cost of attending this college	1.00	1.00	0.80	1.01	1.10	0.89	1.01	1.05	0.85
Information from a website	0.74	0.77	0.89	0.94	0.91	1.01	0.87	0.85	0.95
Rankings in national magazines	0.79	0.82	1.12	0.79	0.81	1.10	0.79	0.82	1.11
My parents wanted me to come here	0.70	0.76	0.77	0.74	0.82	0.83	0.73	0.79	0.80
I wanted to live near home	0.61	0.64	0.42	0.74	0.73	0.47	0.70	0.69	0.44
I was attracted by the religious affiliation/orientation of the college	0.63	0.35	0.47	0.72	0.46	0.54	0.69	0.41	0.51
I was admitted through an Early Action or Early Decision program	0.53	0.50	0.63	0.57	0.55	0.63	0.56	0.53	0.63
High school counselor advised me	0.45	0.51	0.53	0.42	0.50	0.51	0.43	0.51	0.52
Not offered aid by first choice	0.36	0.38	0.26	0.34	0.39	0.27	0.35	0.38	0.26
My teacher advised me	0.34	0.42	0.45	0.32	0.41	0.44	0.33	0.41	0.45
Could not afford first choice	0.33	0.34	0.22	0.30	0.37	0.25	0.31	0.36	0.24

continued...

Table 3, continued									
Reasons for Attending a Specific School, by Gender									
In deciding to go to your school, how important to you was each of the following reasons? <i>Average on scale from 0 to 2</i>	Men			Women			Total		
	University type			University type			University type		
	Loyola	Private, medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹	Loyola	Private, medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹	Loyola	Private, medium selectivity	Private, at least medium selectivity ¹
		<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>		<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>		<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>
My relatives wanted me to come here	0.31	0.38	0.39	0.27	0.33	0.35	0.28	0.36	0.37
Private college counselor advised me	0.19	0.26	0.26	0.17	0.23	0.23	0.18	0.24	0.24
The athletic department recruited me	0.14	0.22	0.21	0.09	0.13	0.14	0.11	0.17	0.17
Ability to take online courses	0.11	0.19	0.14	0.11	0.14	0.10	0.11	0.16	0.12

Source: HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, 2009 (weighted data)

Note: **Blue/red** indicates that Loyola's average is higher/lower than that of the comparison group; difference is statistically significant with an effect size of at least .2.

¹ Includes medium, high, and very high selectivity.

Appendix A

Comparison Group 1

Bradley University
Butler University
Clarkson University
Drexel University
Pratt Institute-Main
St. John's University – New York
University of San Diego
University of the Pacific

Comparison Group 2

American University
Baylor University
Boston College
Bradley University
Brandeis University
Butler University
California Institute of Technology
Clarkson University
Cornell University
Creighton University
Drexel University
Duke University
Emory University
Fordham University
Georgetown University
Johns Hopkins University
Northwestern University
Santa Clara University
St. John's University – New York
Tulane University of Louisiana
University of Notre Dame
University of Pennsylvania
University of Rochester
University of San Diego
University of the Pacific
Vanderbilt University
Villanova University