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CIRP Freshman Survey 2001-08

Little Change in Freshmen Over Time, but Slightly More Likely to Expect to Be Satisfied with Loyola

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 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 every year since 1990, except 2005.¹ This report looks at only at **selected changes** in Loyola's incoming freshman classes from 2001 to 2008 (complete results are available upon request). A separate report presents a more comprehensive portrait of Loyola's 2008 incoming freshman class, and another one compares Loyola to our peer institutions.

Key Findings

Student characteristics

- While the percentage of Loyola students who are black has always been low, it dropped to only 3% of the 2008 incoming freshman class. From 2001 to 2008, the percentage of students who were white went from 66% up to 73%.
- From 2001 to 2008, incoming freshmen grew a little less likely to plan to live at home during their first year (22% in 2001 to 13% in 2008), and more likely to plan to live in a dorm (75% in 2001 to 86% in 2008; see Table 1 and Figure 1).
- The proportion of incoming freshmen who were first generation college students dropped from about a third in 2001 to a quarter in 2008.

Financial situation

- While the percentage of students whose parents fall in a middle income category stayed the same, the percentage whose parents earned less than \$50,000 dropped from one third in 2001 to. During the same time period, the percentage whose parents earned at

least \$10,000 rose from 29% to 46%. These numbers do not control for inflation, but still indicate something of a trend.

- As would be expected with a rise in parental income, the percentage of students whose family contribution to their first year of education was \$10,000 or more rose from 39% in 2001 to 56% in 2008.
- The percentage of incoming students taking out at least \$10,000 in loans also increased, from 10% in 2001 to 32% in 2008.

Reasons for attending Loyola²

- There was a very slight drop in the percentage of freshmen who indicated that Loyola was their first choice college, from 67% in 2001 to 62% in 2008.
- Incoming freshmen were increasingly likely over time to report that Loyola's reputation for its social activities was very important to their decision to attend (25% in 2001, 39% in 2008; see Figure 2).
- There was a slight increase in the percentage of respondents reporting that national magazine rankings were important in their decision to come to Loyola (15% in 2001, 24% in 2008).
- Website information³ has also become increasingly very important (10% in 2001, 26% in 2008), as has a campus visit (42% in 2003, 52% in 2008) and Loyola's size (38% in 2001 to 48% in 2008).

Self-ratings

- Student self-ratings on various traits changed little from 2001-2008. Only the percentage of freshmen who reported that they were more spiritual than average (compared to their peers) dropped, from 50% in 2001 to 39% in 2008 (see Figure 3), as did the proportion who rated themselves above average in religiousness (40% in 2001 down to 34% in 2006).

Expectations for college year

- Fifty eight percent of incoming freshmen in 2008 thought there was a very good chance that they would

² See Report 09-10 for more detail on students' reasons for coming to Loyola.

³ The survey question asks about "a website," and does not specify whether that means the school website or any website with information about institutions in general.

¹ At Loyola, the survey is administered at Loyola Discovery orientations during the summer before freshman year, and although participation is voluntary, the response rate is very high.

be satisfied with their college, up from 48% in 2001 (see Figure 4).

- Students in 2008 were a little more likely to say that they thought there was a very good chance that they would do volunteer/community service work than were those in 2001 (47% v. 37%).

Life goals

- Compared to 2001/2002, goals more frequently reported as very important or essential in 2008 were: improving understanding of other cultures/countries, keeping up to date with political affairs, and becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment (in 2008, 69%, 50%, and 36%, respectively; see Figure 5).

Activities during past year

- Over the period from 2001-2008, students reported more frequently discussing politics (27% up to 46%), but less frequently attending religious services (54% down to 45%; see Figure 6).
- Students also grew less likely to report that they occasionally or frequently had participated in political demonstrations (46% down to 27%) or having been a guest in a teacher's home (28% down to 18%).
- There was some decline in the percentage of students who reported that they occasionally or frequently drank wine/liquor, drank beer, or smoked (59% to 48%, 46% to 27%, 28% to 18%, respectively; see Figure 7).

Time use in typical week in last year

- While 30% of students in 2001 reported having spent at least six hours a week partying in the past year, only 20% did so in 2008 (see Figure 8).
- There was a small decline in the percentage of students who reported working more than six hours a week (60% in 2001 vs. 51% in 2008).

Political and social views

- The percentage of freshmen describing themselves as politically "middle of the road" decreased somewhat (48% to 37%), as the percentage describing themselves as liberal or far left increased (36% to 47%; see Figure 9). The percentage that considered themselves conservative or far right stayed low.
- Students in 2008 were more likely than those in 2001 to agree that wealthy people should pay an increased share of taxes (49% up to 60%), and that abortion should be legal (48% up to 57%; see figure 10).
- They were less likely than those earlier students to agree that there is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals (59% to 48%), and that federal military spending should be increased (25% in 2002 to 19% in 2008).

Implications

- Most changes in results were fairly small, which is important to keep in mind when interpreting these results. Because the participation rate among incoming freshmen was high, however, we can have a little more confidence that those changes are not due to chance. With that in mind, there is some evidence of interesting changes.
- It is striking that the percentage of students taking out at least \$10,000 in loans has risen from 10% to 32% in just eight years.
- There are indications that students are changing in terms of religiosity/spirituality. Incoming freshmen in 2008 reported themselves as less spiritual and religious, and to have been attending church less frequently than those over time.
- The goals that are increasingly very important or essential to students are socially oriented: political awareness, environmental action, and cultural understanding.
- Overall, students are becoming more interested in politics. Not only have recently entering students been discussing politics more frequently than earlier students, they also increasingly see keeping up with politics as a very important or essential goal.
- Although the percentage of students who consider themselves to be conservative or far right has stayed stable over the past 8 years, there has been a shift from "middle of the road" to liberal/far left. This is supported by the fact that where there were changes in specific political/social views over that time, changes were in a liberal direction.⁴
- The fact that a growing percentage of students said that information from a website was an important factor for them in deciding to come to Loyola underlines the key role a website plays in attracting applicants and, later, enrollees. This growing importance probably reflects both increased use of the internet in general, but suggests that continuing investment in Loyola's website may pay off in attracting students.
- While one would prefer that more than 58% of incoming freshmen would think there was a very good chance they would be satisfied with Loyola, it is encouraging that the percentage has been rising fairly steadily, from less than half in 2001.

⁴ Some changes in political views are probably due to a changing sociopolitical context. For example, support for increased military spending was at 35% shortly after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, but had dropped to 19% by 2008.

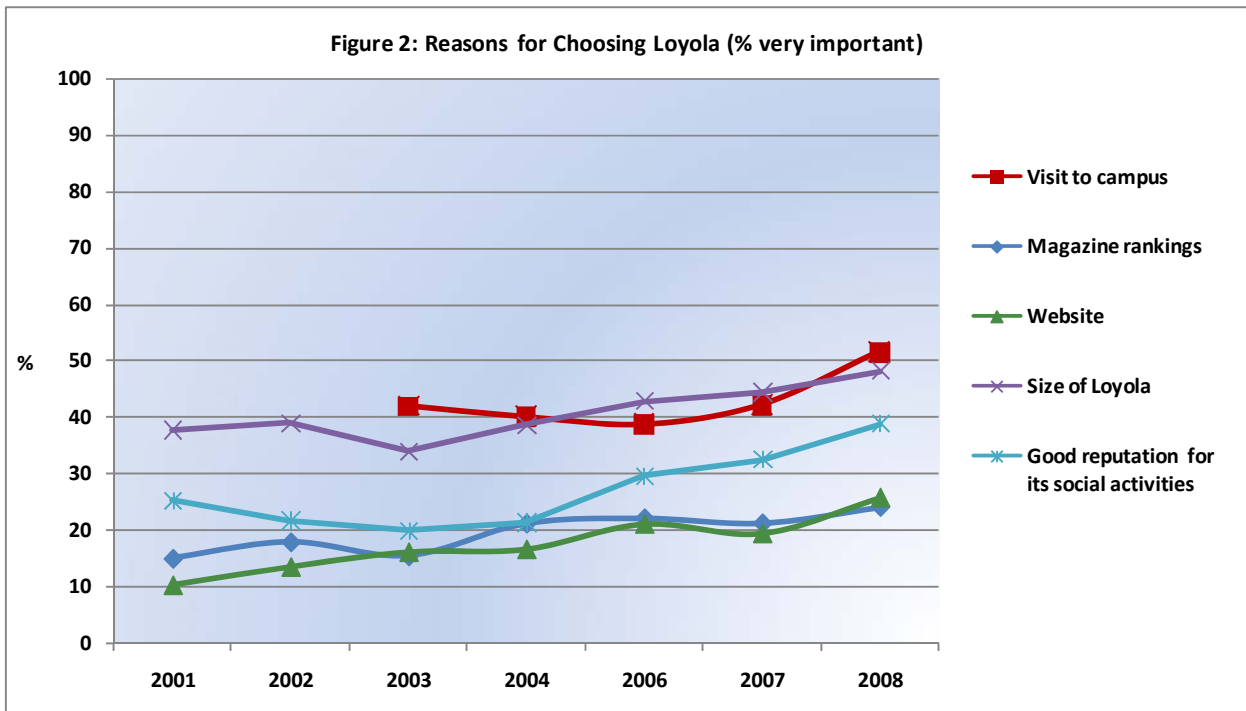
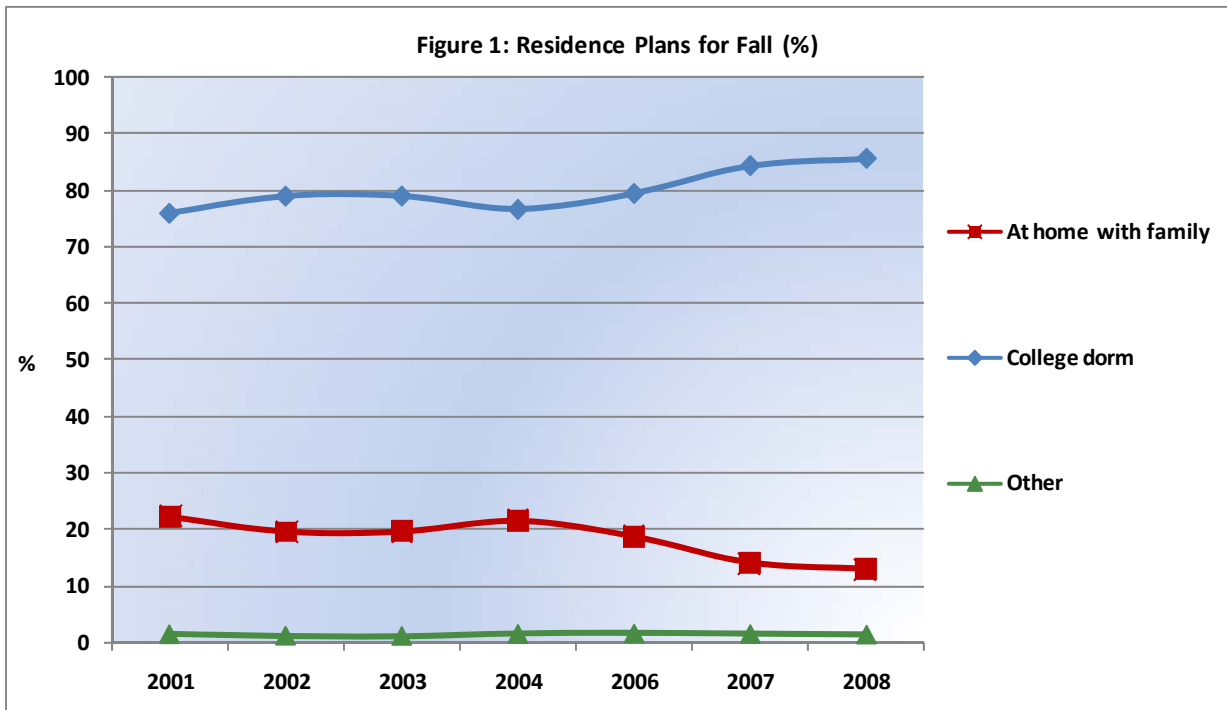


Figure 3: Self-ratings (% above average compared to peers)

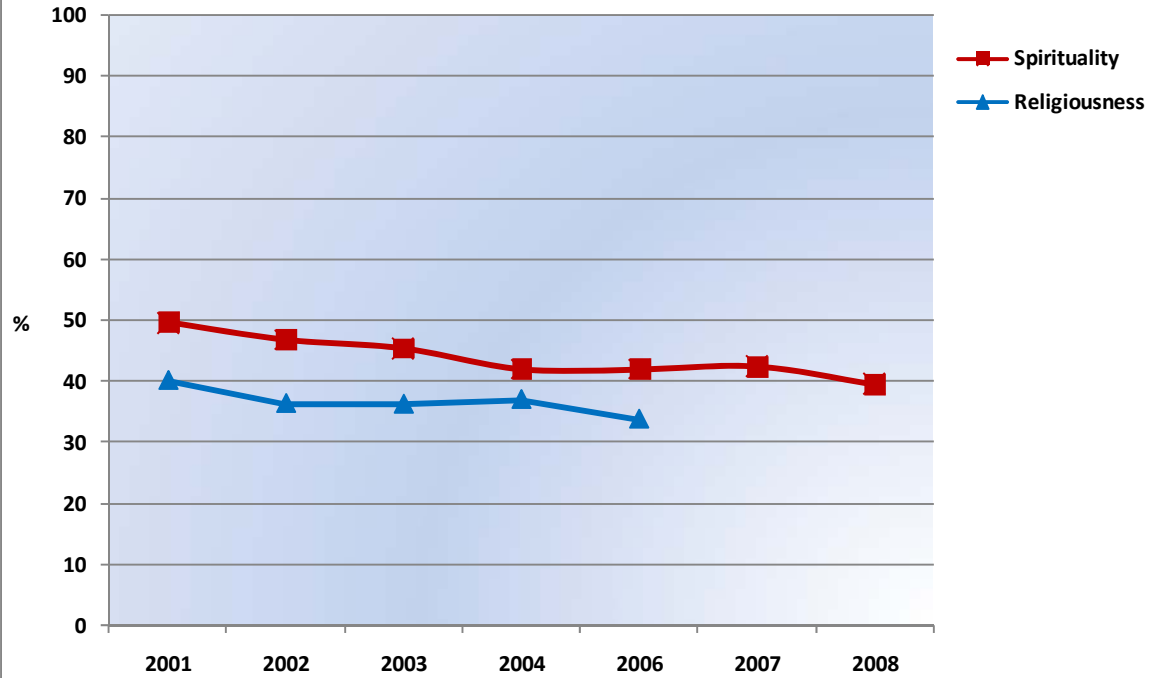


Figure 4: Expected future actions (% very good chance)

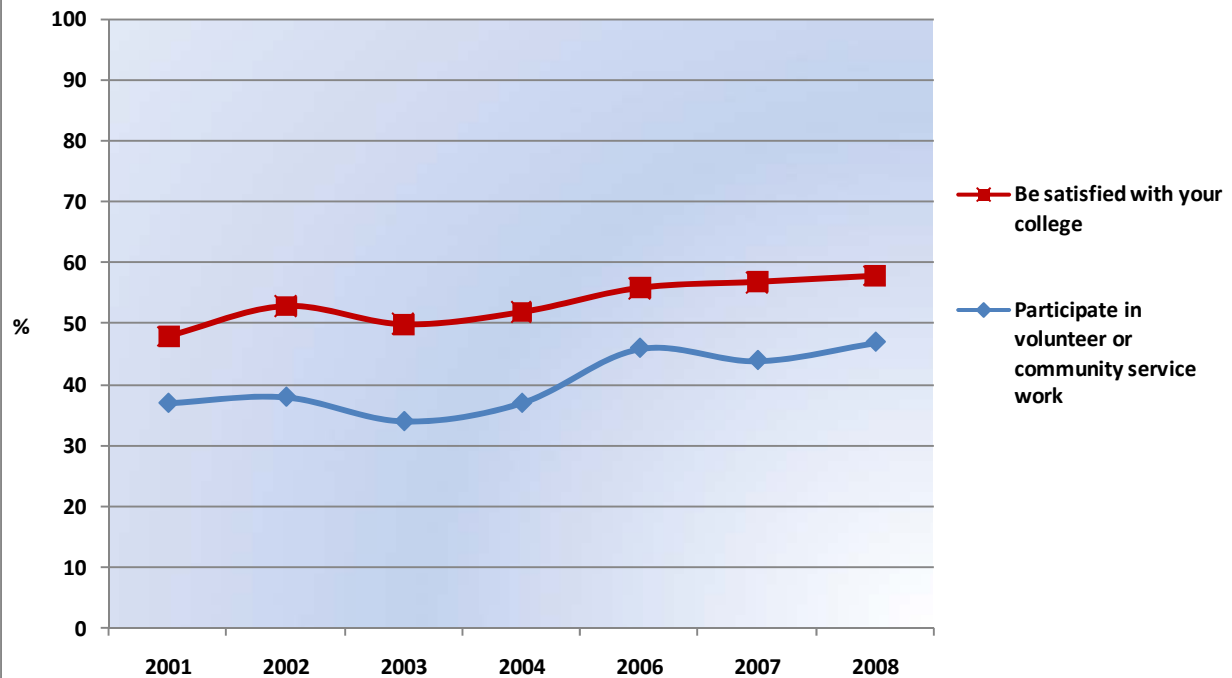


Figure 5: Life Goals (% very important or essential)

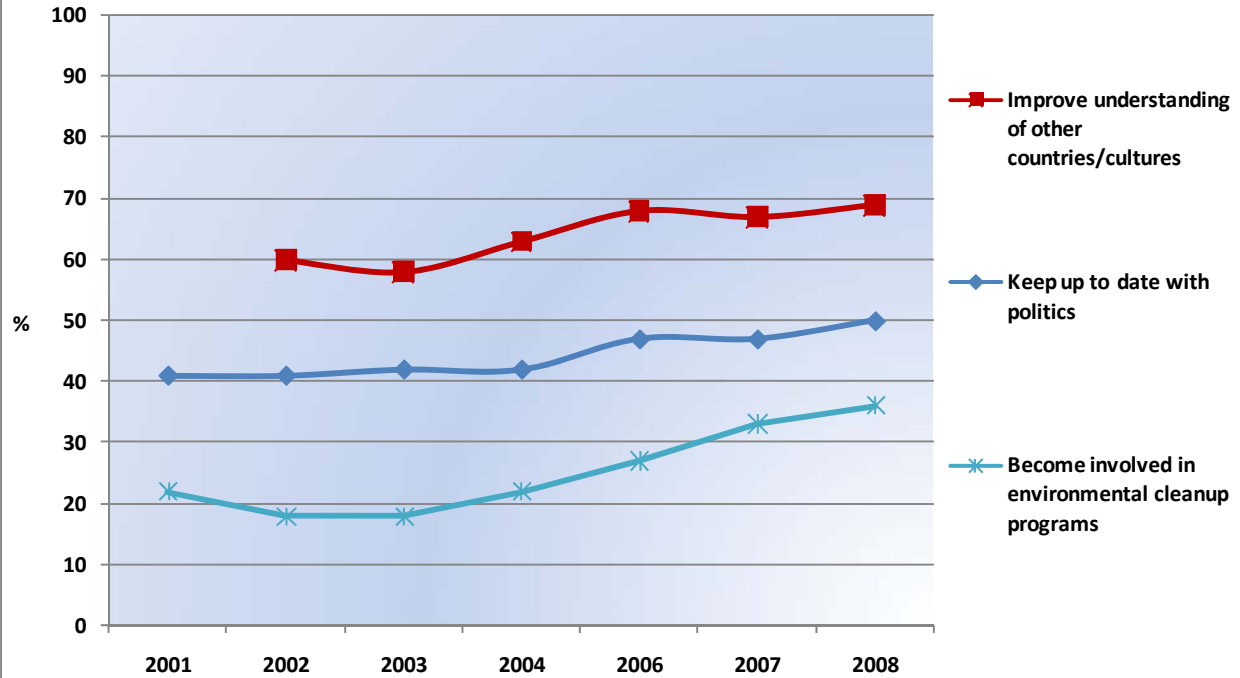


Figure 6: Frequent Activities During Last Year (%)

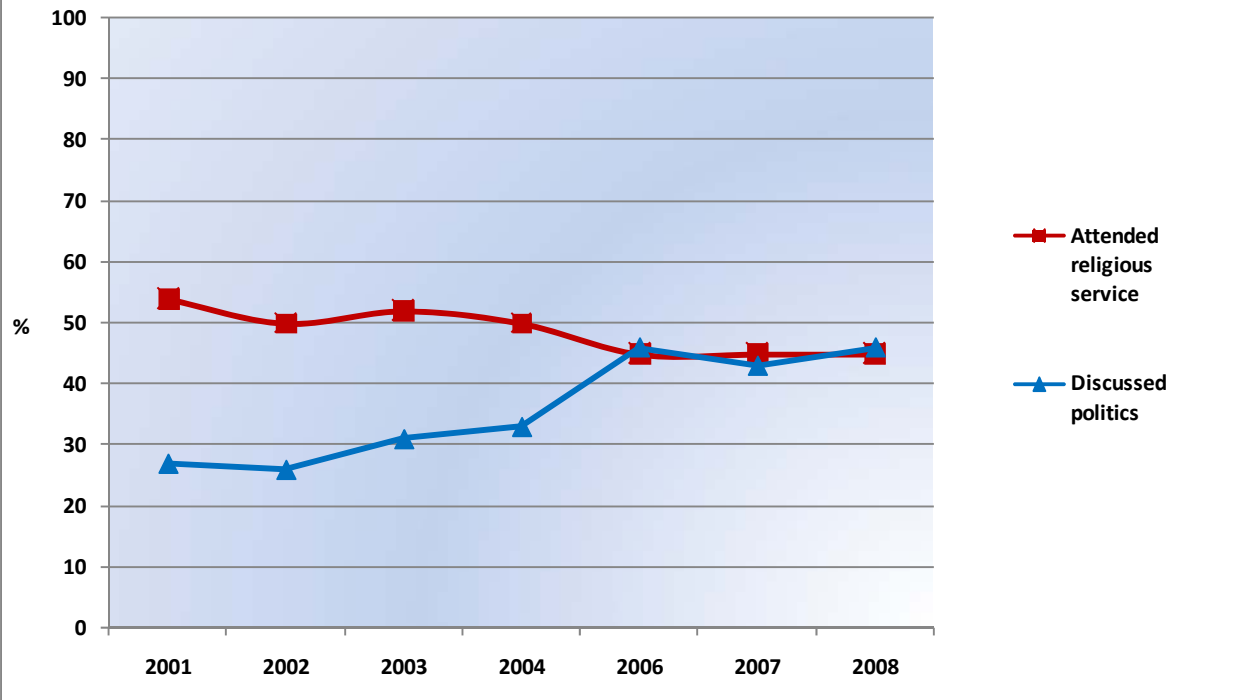


Figure 7: Occasional/Frequent Activities During Last Year (%)

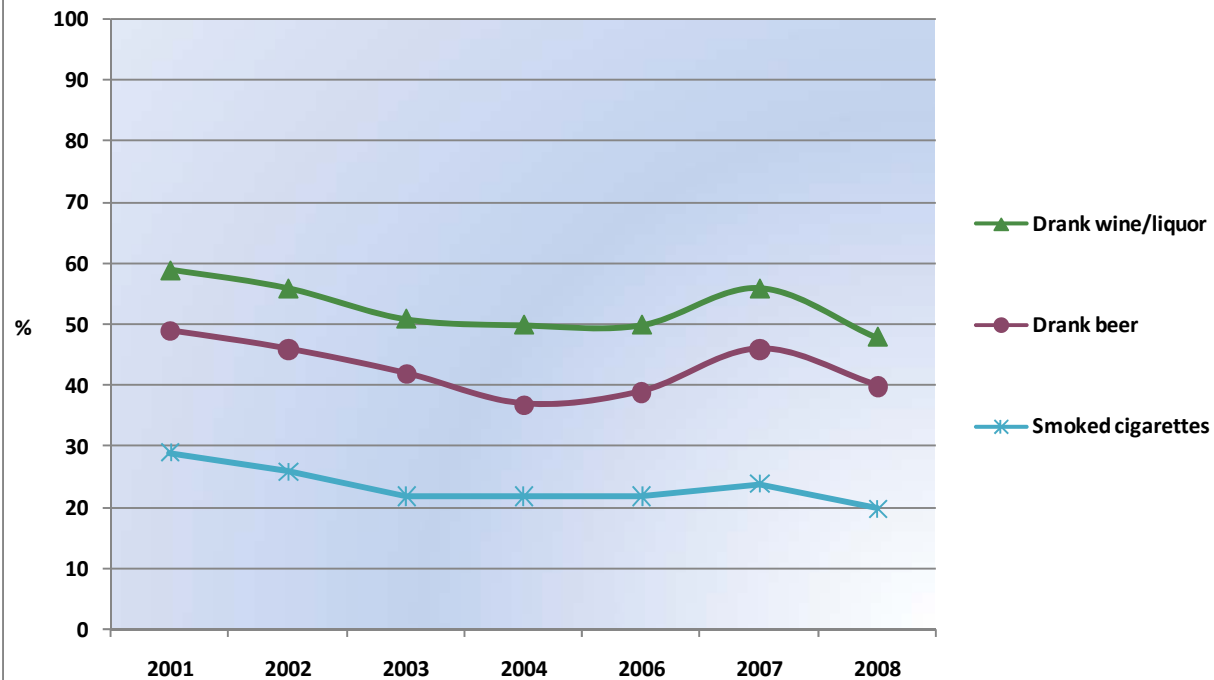


Figure 8: Time Use in Typical Week in Past Year (% at least 6 Hours)

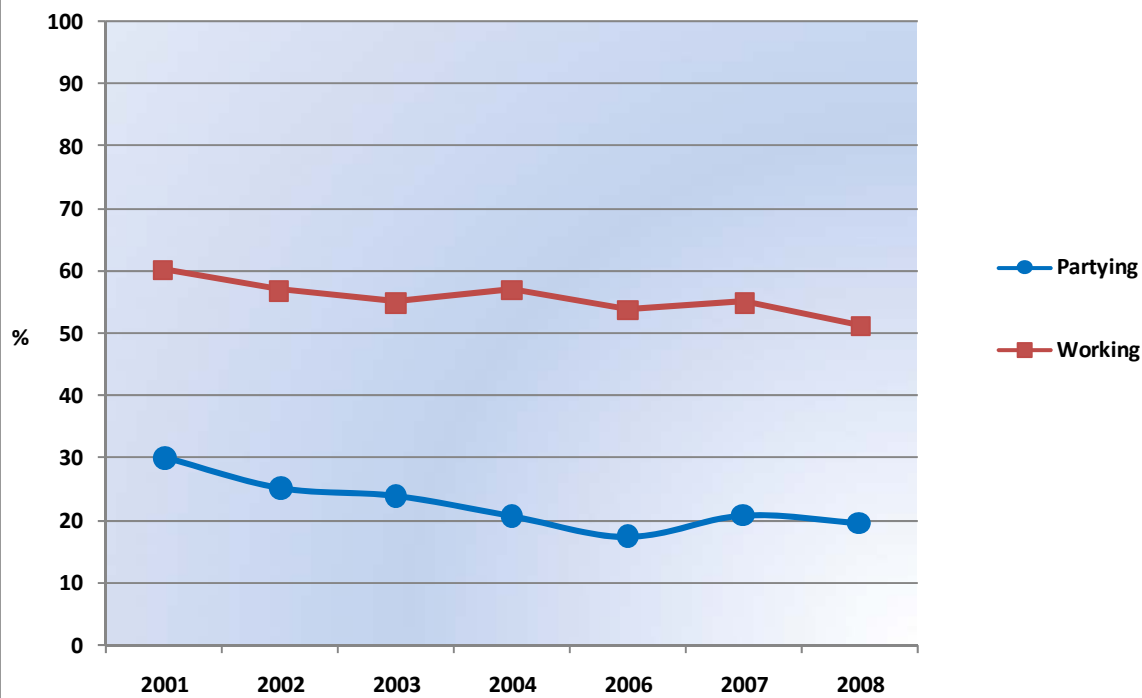


Figure 9: Political Orientation (%)

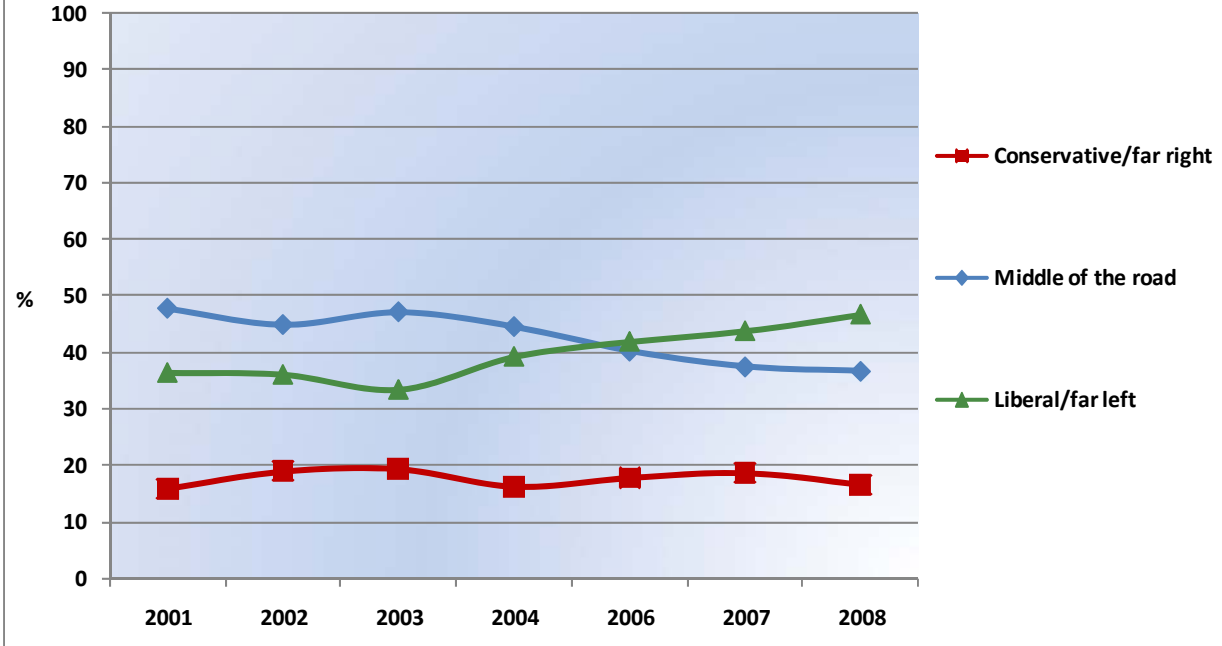


Figure 10: Political and Social Views (% agree or agree strongly)

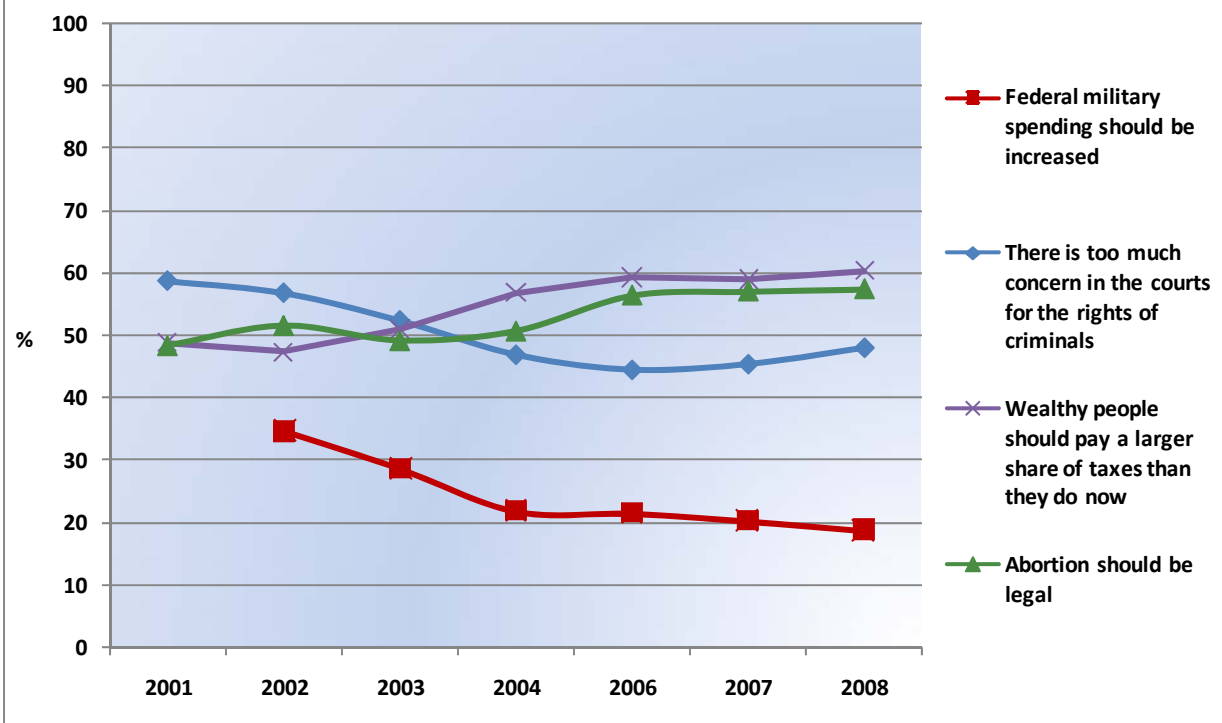


Table 1 CIRP Freshman Survey Results for Loyola: 2001-08							
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Race							
White	66	70	69	67	67	69	73
Black	4	4	5	5	5	5	3
Residence plans for fall							
At home with family	22	20	20	22	19	14	13
College dorm	76	79	79	77	80	84	86
Other	2	1	1	2	2	2	1
First generation college student	32	30	32	32	30	27	25
Parental income							
Less than \$50,000	33	28	30	31	27	22	20
\$50,000 to 99,999	38	36	36	34	36	35	34
\$100,000 or more	29	36	34	35	37	43	46
Resources for paying for first year of college							
Family resources: \$10,000 or more	39	41	45	47	---	54	56
My own resources: \$10,000 or more	3	2	2	4	---	6	5
Grants, scholarships, etc.: \$10,000 or more	45	43	38	42	---	47	52
Loans: \$10,000 or more	10	12	18	21	---	29	32
Loyola was first choice	67	67	66	66	66	62	62
Reasons for coming to Loyola							
A visit to campus	---	---	42	40	39	42	52
I wanted to go to a school about this size	38	39	34	39	43	44	48
This college has good reputation for its social activities	25	22	20	21	30	32	39
Information from a website	10	13	16	17	21	19	26
Rankings in national magazines	15	18	15	21	22	21	24
Self-rating: above average							
Spirituality	50	47	45	42	42	42	39
Religiousness	40	36	36	37	34	---	---
Expected future actions: very good chance							
Be satisfied with your college	48	53	50	52	56	57	58
Participate in volunteer or community service work	37	38	34	37	46	44	47
Life goals: very important or essential							
Becoming involved in programs to clean up environment	22	18	18	22	27	33	36
Keeping up to date with political affairs	41	41	42	42	47	47	50
Improving my understanding of other countries/cultures	---	60	58	63	68	67	69

Table 1, continued							
CIRP Freshman Survey Results for Loyola: 2001-08							
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Frequency of activities in past year							
Frequently							
Discussed politics	27	26	31	33	46	43	46
Attended a religious service	54	50	52	50	45	45	45
Occasionally or frequently							
Drank wine or liquor	59	56	51	50	50	56	48
Drank beer	49	46	42	37	39	46	40
Participated in political demonstrations	46	44	46	47	47	25	27
Smoked cigarettes	29	26	22	22	22	24	20
Was a guest in a teacher`s home	28	24	22	21	18	17	18
Time use in typical week in last year							
Partying (at least 6 hours)	30	25	24	21	18	21	20
Working (for pay; at least 6 hours)	60	57	55	57	54	55	51
Political orientation							
Far right	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Conservative	15	18	18	15	17	18	16
Middle of the road	48	45	47	45	40	37	37
Liberal	33	33	30	35	39	40	41
Far left	3	3	4	4	3	4	5
Political views (agree somewhat/agree strongly)							
There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of	59	57	52	47	44	45	48
Abortion should be legal	48	52	49	51	56	57	57
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than t	49	47	51	57	59	59	60
Federal military spending should be increased	---	35	29	22	22	20	19

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey 2001-08