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CIRP Freshman Survey 2008

Why Do Students Come to 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. This report looks at why students come to Loyola, and how those reasons differ by whether or not Loyola was their first choice.

Key Findings

Reasons for attending Loyola

- Most students said that there were many factors that were very important to them in their choice of Loyola (see Figure 1). In fact, about three quarters cited five or more reasons, and six was the average number of factors students saw as very important.
- Three out of four incoming freshmen in 2008 said that Loyola's academic reputation was a very important reason for choosing Loyola, while almost two thirds said that the fact that Loyola graduates get good jobs was very important (63%; see Figure 2). Forty seven percent said that it was very important to them that Loyola graduates get into top graduate/professional schools.
- Other key reasons for coming to Loyola were receipt of financial aid, a visit to the campus, and the size of Loyola (55%, 52%, and 48%, respectively).
- Most of the least important reasons for choosing Loyola were the advice of others: private college counselors (4%), relatives (4%), teachers (5%), high school counselors (10%), and parents (14%).
- The cost of attending Loyola was very important to the decision of 30% of incoming freshmen, while only 24% of the freshmen cited national magazine rankings as very important (although this percentage has been rising in recent years).

Top choice school

- Although the top reasons were the almost the same, students' reasons for choosing to come to Loyola in

the end did differ between those whose first choice was Loyola and those for whom it was another school (see Figure 3).

- Academic reputation and job placement of graduates were relatively more important to those whose first choice was Loyola, as were a visit to campus¹ and Loyola's size.
- Relatively more important to those who had a first choice school other than Loyola was the cost of attending Loyola.

Admittance to top choice school

- Another factor pertaining to relative differences in reasons for coming to Loyola was, for those whose first choice was not Loyola (39% of freshmen; see Figure 4), whether or not they were admitted to their first choice school. Of those whose first choice was another school, 59% of them did not get into their first choice school (see Figure 5)..
- These students may be divided into three ordered groups according to their desire to be at Loyola. Those most positive about coming to Loyola are those for whom Loyola was their top choice (61%; see Figure 6). Next are those who came to Loyola even though they were admitted to another first choice school (16%). Those least positive about attending Loyola are those coming to Loyola after not being admitted to their top choice school.
- Freshmen with Loyola as their first choice were more likely than the others to cite academic reputation and good job placement as very important reasons for coming to Loyola (see Figure 7).
- For those who did get into another school that was their first choice school, but still came to Loyola, financial reasons were more important than for other students: receipt of financial aid and overall cost of attending Loyola.
- The top reasons for coming to Loyola among freshmen who did not get into their top choice school were basically the same as for the others, but those freshmen had, on average, one fewer reasons for coming to Loyola.

¹ It may be in part that students' campus visits motivate them to come here, but it is also the case that students already predisposed to come here are more likely to make campus visits.

Implications

- Loyola has more control over some of the reasons for which students come to Loyola, of course, than over others.
 - Factors amenable to more immediate manipulation include financial aid offers (especially for students admitted elsewhere to their top school) and students' campus visits.
 - Academic reputation and job placement of graduates are things that change incrementally over time, and so cannot be expected to improve quickly. They can, however, be publicized.
- Still other factors are beyond Loyola's control, such as the size of Loyola and its distance to someone's home.
- Advice from others to go to Loyola does not directly figure into students' choices. However, such referrals may matter indirectly if they get students to even consider Loyola when they otherwise might not have.
- Of the 2008 incoming freshmen, nearly a quarter came here after not being admitted to the school they most wanted to attend. Such students present a particular challenge to Loyola as it works to reduce its attrition rate. The good news, though, is that most of the students who come under these circumstances do end up staying at least past their first year.

Figure 1
Number of Very Important Reasons for Choosing Loyola

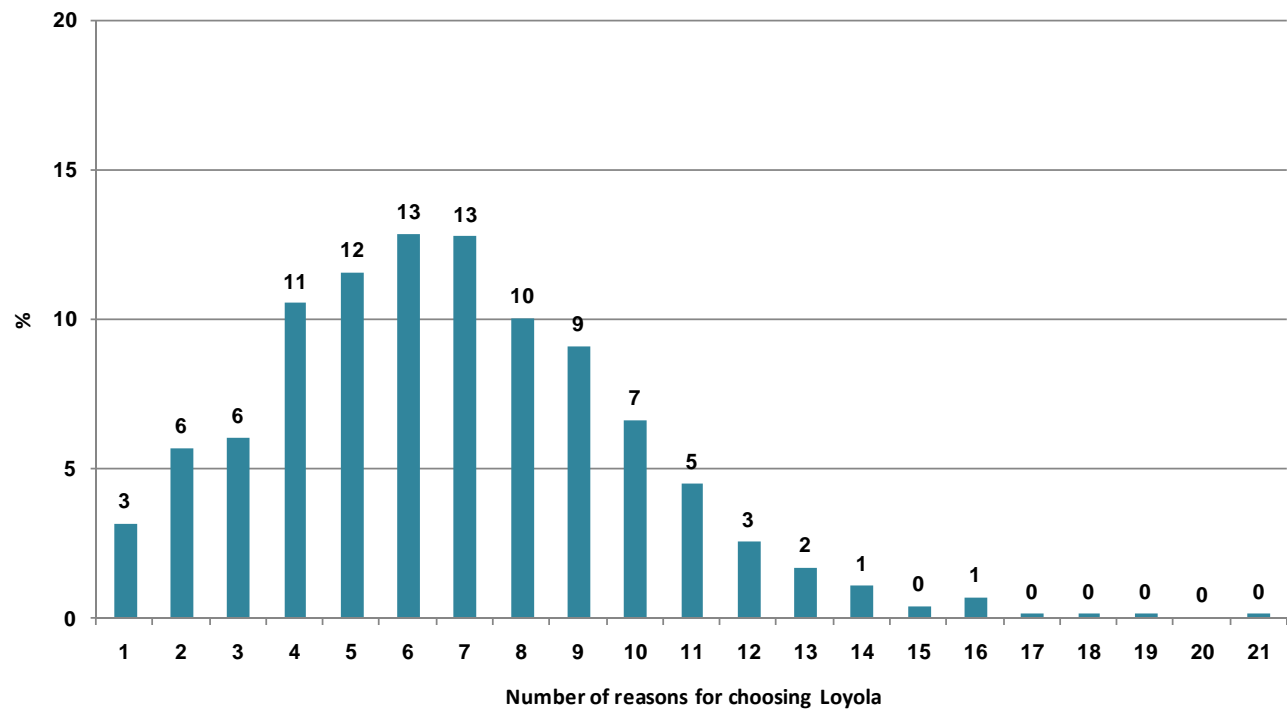


Figure 2
"Very Important" Reasons for Choosing Loyola

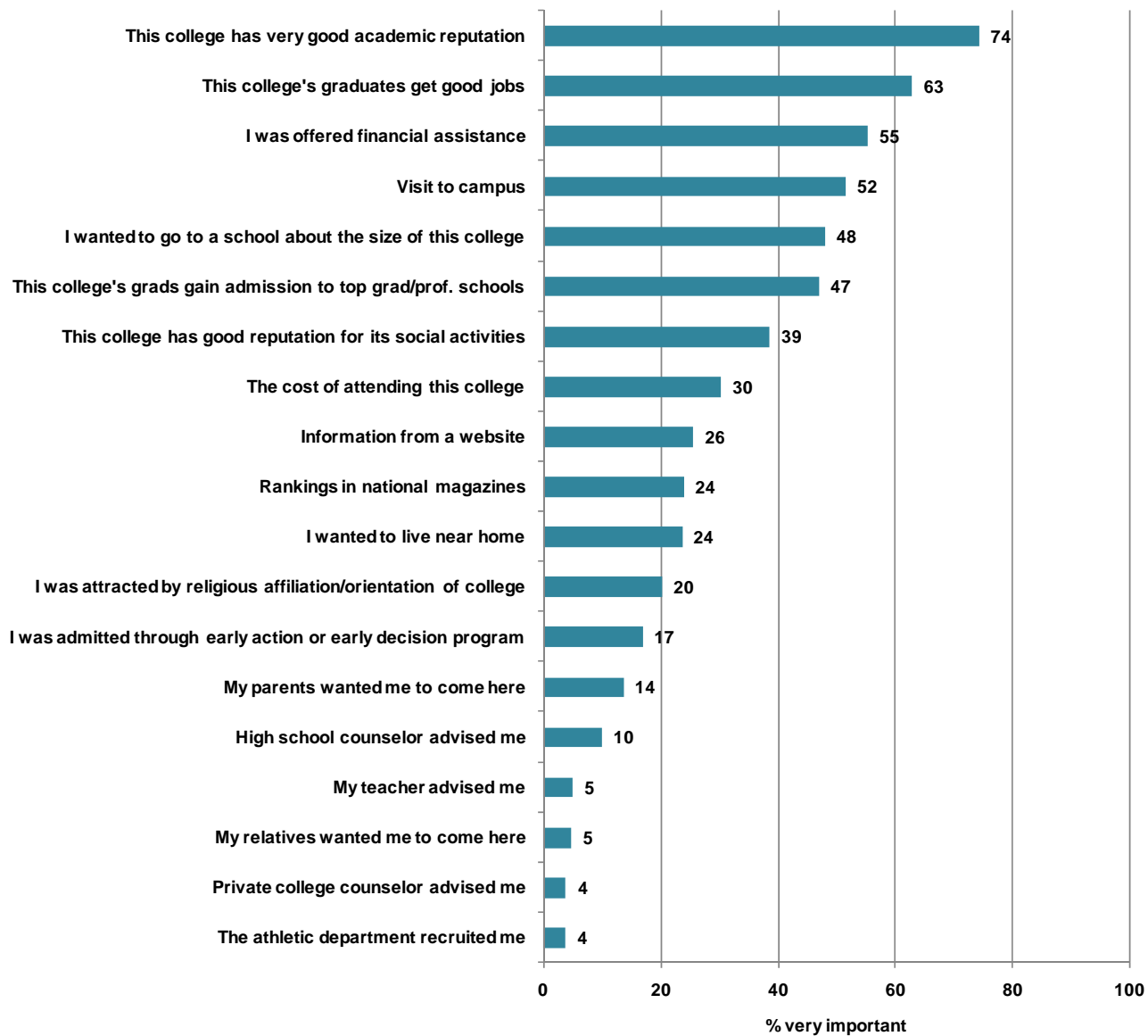
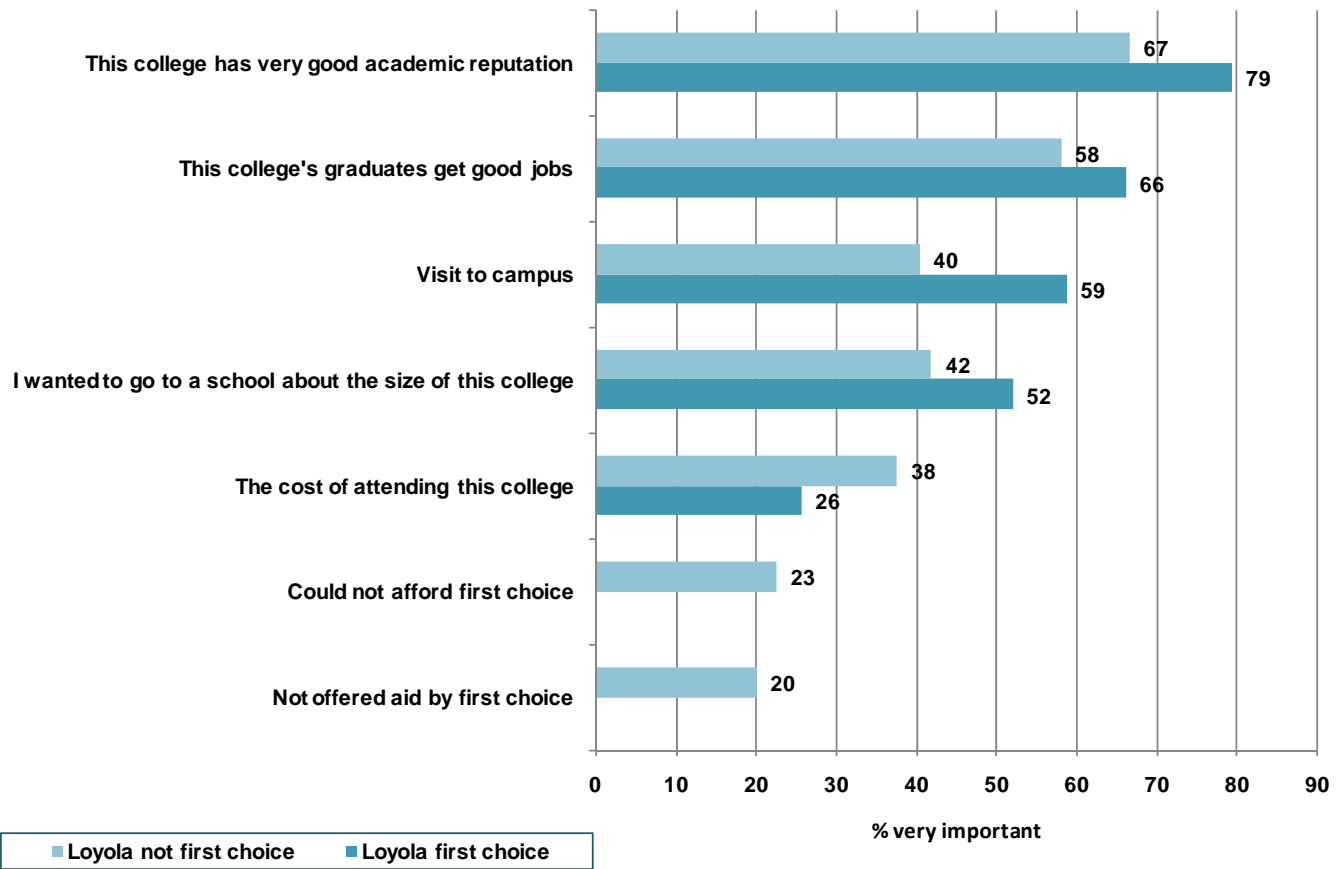
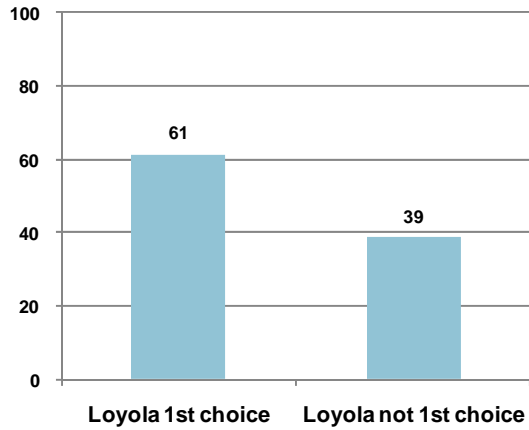


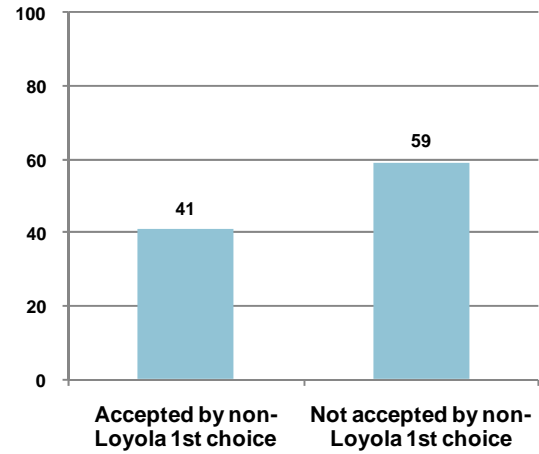
Figure 3
Selected "Very Important" Reasons for Choosing Loyola, by First Choice School



**Figure 4
First Choice School**



**Figure 5
Acceptance by First Choice School**



**Figure 6
Loyola as First Choice and Acceptance at Other First Choices**

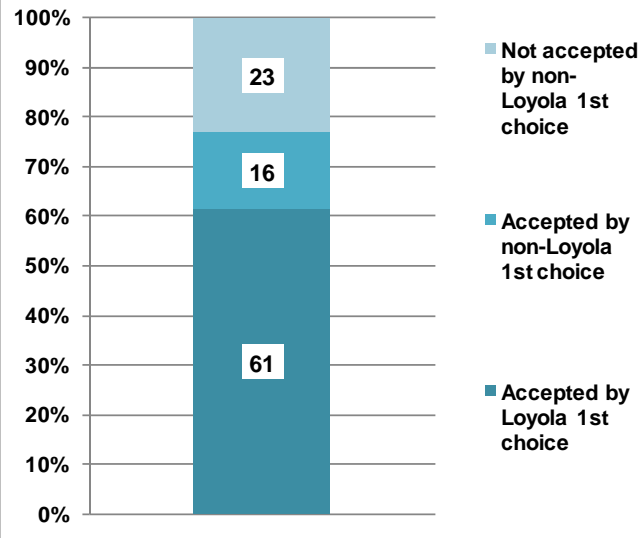


Figure 7
Reasons for Choosing Loyola, by College Choice and Acceptance

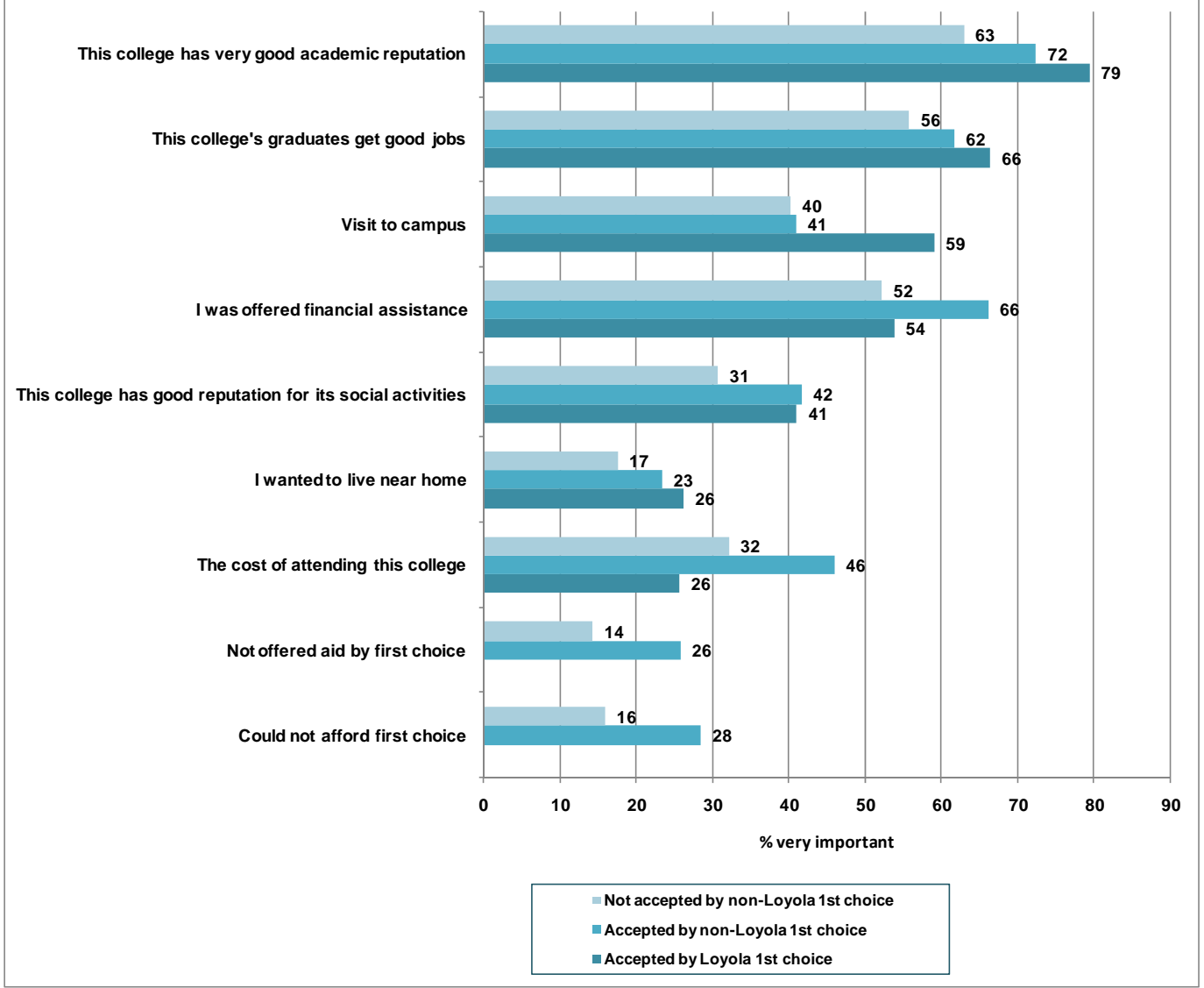


Figure 8
Reasons for Choosing Loyola by College Choice and Acceptance

