

Cornell University
2003 CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND EXTENDED REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Executive Summary.....	1
	Introduction to the 2003 CIRP Study and Report	1
	Demographic Overview	1
	High School Experiences.....	1
	Reasons for College.....	2
	Academic Plans	3
	How Cornellians See Themselves: Self-Ratings.....	3
	Important Life Goals.....	3
	Political, Racial, and Religious Views.....	4
	Parents and the Financial Impact of Attending College	4
II.	Study Protocol.....	6
III.	Demographic Overview	7
	Sex, Race, Age, and Citizenship	7
	Distance from Home.....	7
IV.	High School Experiences	9
	Academic Experiences in High School.....	9
	High School Social Activities and Time Use.....	12
	Socializing, Exercise, Student Clubs, TV, and Household Chores	15
V.	Reasons for College	17
	General reasons to attend college	17
	Choosing an Institution.....	19
	Reasons for attending this particular school	19
	Expectations that students have of their colleges	21
VI.	Academic Plans	24
	College Major	24
	Aspirations for Educational Attainment.....	24
	Career Plans	26
VII.	How Cornellians See Themselves: Self-Ratings	28
VIII.	Important Life Goals	30
IX.	Political, Racial, and Religious Views	32
	Political Views	32
	Interracial Relationships.....	34
	Religious Views	34
X.	Parents and the Financial Impact of Attending College.....	35
	Parents' Occupations, Educational Attainment, and Income	35
	Meeting Educational Expenses.....	37

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction to the 2003 CIRP Study and Report

- ▶ The *Cooperative Institutional Research Program* (CIRP) survey instrument, typically administered to students during their first few days on campus, is used at hundreds of institutions nationwide. It is generally regarded as the most comprehensive source of information on incoming college students.
- ▶ Cornell has administered the CIRP annually to incoming students since 2000, as well as a five times between 1973 and 1981.
- ▶ Through a consortium of institutions with whom Cornell shares data, it is possible to compare Cornell's first year students to students at a handful of institutions grouped into two "norm groups." In this report, the norm groups are referred to as:
 - "Head-to-Head" institutions: the group of schools which compete with Cornell on a relatively even basis for commonly admitted undergraduates
 - "Cornell Preferred" institutions: a group of institutions which more often "lose" when in direct competition with Cornell for commonly admitted undergraduates.

Demographic Overview

- ▶ Cornell freshmen were slightly younger than norm group students, as almost three-quarters of first year students at Cornell were 18 or younger, compared to less than 70% at norm group schools. Under-represented minorities at Cornell were somewhat younger than other Cornellians, while international students tend to be older (see Appendix Table A-2).
- ▶ Compared to our norm groups, larger shares of students at Cornell were either local (e.g. from New York state) or international. Partly because of the latter, Cornell students were also slightly less likely to be native English speakers (see discussion on page 7).

High School Experiences

- ▶ Compared to students at norm groups institutions, incoming students at Cornell had studied fewer hours in high school, and they were less likely to have reported having studied with other students or to have tutored another student "frequently." (See discussion on page 9.)
- ▶ As was the case in 2002, 18% of incoming Cornell students in 2003 reported having done no reading for pleasure during high school. This was slightly higher than the 15-16% reported by students affiliated with the two norm groups. First year students in Engineering were more likely to have done no reading for pleasure, with 22% reporting thus. Conversely, Arts & Sciences (14%) and Architecture, Art & Planning had lower proportions of non-readers (14% and 16%, respectively). Only 14% of students with citizenship outside the U.S. did no reading for pleasure. See Figure 5, page 14 for additional comparisons.

- ▶ As was true in 2002, there were a substantial proportion (26%) of incoming Cornell students in 2003 who anticipated needing remedial work in the future. This proportion was far greater than the 14% of first year students at Cornell who reported having had such work prior to entering college. The disparity between past experience and future anticipation was especially large for under-represented minority students; 18% of those students had special tutoring in the past, but 49% report feeling that they will need such work in the future (compare Figure 3 and Figure 4, page 11).
- ▶ Cornell students participated less in volunteer or community service in high school than did students affiliated with the norm groups. There were substantial differences by race, with women and under-represented minorities having done more volunteer work in the past (see discussion on page 13 and Appendix Tables A-24.1, A-24.aa, A-22, and A-32.g.)

Reasons for College

- ▶ The majority of students at Cornell and at norm group schools reported that educational goals such as “to learn more” and “to gain a general education and appreciation of ideas” were “very important” in their decision to attend college, though Cornell students were slightly less likely to have said that such reasons were “very important.” In contrast, Cornell students—and especially those in colleges with orientations towards the professions like Industrial & Labor Relations and Engineering—are more likely than students at norm group institutions to have emphasized the financial and career gains related to college such as “to prepare myself for graduate or professional school” and “to make more money” (see Figure 6, page 17 and Appendix Tables A-28.d, A-28.i, A-28.k and A-28.m).
- ▶ Most—69%—of incoming Cornell students indicated that Cornell was their first choice institution, and an additional 17% indicated that it was their second choice. These figures were comparable to those from norm group institutions. At Cornell, there was variability by college, with more than 80% of students affiliated with Agriculture & Life Sciences; Architecture, Art & Planning; and Hotel ranked Cornell as their first choice (see Figure 7).
- ▶ The single most important factor in choosing a particular institution among Cornellians as well as among students in the norm groups was the institution’s “Good academic reputation.” Among Cornellians (but not norm group students), the second most important factor was “This college’s graduates get good jobs.” (Discussion on pages 17 and 18; see also Appendix Tables A-28.a – A-28.m.).
- ▶ Among Cornellians, under-represented minorities were more likely than students of other races or ethnicities to have indicated that “very important” reasons for choosing Cornell were: “My teacher advised me,” “High school/Private counselor advised me,” “This college has a good academic reputation,” “Rankings in national magazines,” “This college’s graduates get good jobs,” “This college offers special educational programs,” “I was offered financial assistance,” and “Not offered aid by first choice.” Under-represented minority students were less likely to have indicated that early decision was important to them in deciding to attend Cornell. For an overview of Cornellians responses, see Figure 8, page 20; for more detailed differences by group, see Appendix Tables A-34.a through A-34.r.

- ▶ More than two-thirds of students at Cornell and in norm group institutions reported visiting their campus before they applied, but Cornellians were more likely than norm group students to have reported that their first visit occurred *after* they had already decided to attend. Within Cornell, whites were more likely than international students to have visited before they applied. Approximately three-quarters of students in the contract colleges visited before they applied to Cornell, as compared to 59-64% of incoming students in Arts & Sciences; Engineering; and Architecture, Art & Planning. (Discussion on page 20 and Appendix Table A-25.)
- ▶ More than 95% of Cornellians indicated that they anticipated that faculty accessibility would be at least “moderately important” to the outcomes of their experiences at Cornell (see Figure 11, page 23).

Academic Plans

- ▶ Ninety-three percent of Cornell freshman aspire to some sort of graduate degree, a figure comparable, though slightly lower, than the percent among students within the norm groups (see Figure 12, page 25). White students were less likely than students in other racial/ethnic categories to anticipate getting a graduate degree (see Appendix Table A-17.a).
- ▶ Cornell students appear to enter college with firm career plans in mind, as they were less likely than students in the norm groups to have indicated that they were undecided as to their major or that there was some chance they would change their mind about their major (see discussion on page 24). However, compared with students in our norm groups, incoming students at Cornell were slightly less likely to have anticipated “being satisfied with their college” or “getting their bachelor’s degree,” and were more likely to have reported some chance of “transferring to another college” (discussion on page 21).
- ▶ Cornellians were less likely than norm group students to have anticipated social interactions such as: socializing with other racial groups; participating in community service, student organizations, student government, athletics, protests, or study abroad programs; communicating regularly with professors, and developing close friendships (e.g. Figure 10, page 22, but also Appendix Tables A-36.a - A-36.t.).

How Cornellians See Themselves: Self-Ratings

- ▶ As is appropriate for young adults attending an elite Ivy League institution, nearly all Cornellians (93%) view themselves as above average in their academic ability. They were less likely to consider themselves above average regarding aspects of social abilities (such as leadership ability and understanding of others), personal qualities (such as emotional health) and creativity. See Figure 15, page 28 and Figure 16, page 29.

Important Life Goals

- ▶ The two most important life goals of Cornellians, as identified by the survey, were “Raising a family” and “Being very well off financially” with about 70% reporting that those goals are “essential” or “very important.” The next two most important life goals of Cornellians were “Becoming an authority in my

field” and “Helping others in difficulty” with about two-thirds placing such a high level of importance on those goals (see Figure 17, page 30).

- ▶ Compared to peers at norm group institutions, Cornell students were more likely to have placed high levels of importance on “being very well off financially,” “becoming successful in a business of my own,” “making a theoretical contribution to science,” and “cleaning up the environment.” Cornell students placed somewhat less importance on many of social/political goals on the survey instrument and on finding meaning in life (see discussion of Figure 17 on page 30 and Appendix Tables A-35.a through A-35.u).

Political, Racial, and Religious Views

- ▶ As was true at norm group institutions, more incoming first-year students at Cornell identified as “liberal” than identified as “conservative.” Among colleges at Cornell, students in Human Ecology were more likely to identify as “liberal” while those in Hotel and Industrial & Labor Relations were less likely (see Figure 18, page 32).
- ▶ Cornellians were significantly more likely than norm group students to have agreed with the statement “Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus” (see Appendix Table A-31.j).
- ▶ Compared to students at norm group institutions, a slightly larger proportion of Cornell students marked “no religion”: the figure was 30% at Cornell, as compared to 23-25% at norm group institutions (see Appendix Table A-21). Consistent with that, Cornell students had attended religious services less often in high school and were less likely to anticipate strengthening their religious convictions in the future (see page 34).

Parents and the Financial Impact of Attending College

- ▶ Eighty-three percent of Cornell students reported that their fathers had earned at least a baccalaureate degree, and 78% reported this regarding their mothers. A slightly smaller percentage of Cornell students (52%) than students at norm group institutions (56-57%) reported that their parents had received a graduate degree (see Figure 20, page 36 and Figure 21, page 36).
- ▶ Cornell parents were somewhat less wealthy, on the whole, than parents at norm group institutions. This varies by college, with 54% of students in Agriculture & Life Sciences reporting parents’ incomes of less than \$100,000 last year, as compared to 38% of students in Hotel. Fully three-quarters of under-represented minority students but only 37% of white students reported family incomes this low (see Figure 22, page 37).
- ▶ Sixty-eight percent of Cornell students reported that their family resources (such as savings) will pay for \$10,000 or more of their first-year expenses. This is slightly lower than the 70-75% for norm group schools (see Figure 23, page 38).
- ▶ Cornell students – and especially those in the contract colleges – are less likely than students in either of the two norm groups to have reported that grants will be meeting \$10,000 or more of their-year expenses; only 40% of Cornell students reported grants at that level, as compared to 42-50% in the norm groups. See Figure 24, page 39 for additional comparisons.

- ▶ More Cornell students than students at norm group institutions reported using loans to meet first-year expenses: 60% of Cornellians, but 53-59% of students in the norm groups had used some amount of loans. Eighteen percent of Cornellians (compared to 13-15% of students in norm groups) reported using loans in excess of \$10,000. See Figure 25, page 39 for other comparisons.
- ▶ Three-quarters of Cornell students will meet some of their first-year expenses themselves (as with a work-study job or savings), but only 3% will spend over \$10,000 of their own resources. These figures vary by race, with international students most likely to have reported that they will not be using funding any of their first year expenses themselves (see Figure 26, page 40).
- ▶ The majority of Cornellians (61%) expressed at least some concern that they could run out of funds before completing college. This percentage was higher than the percentage within norm group schools (54-59%). Students in Agriculture & Life Sciences were most likely, and students in the Hotel School least likely, to have expressed concern regarding ability to pay, with 69% and 51% concerned, respectively. Seventy-nine percent of under-represented minority students expressed some concern, as compared to 55% of white and international students (see Figure 27, page 41).

II. STUDY PROTOCOL

The *Cooperative Institutional Research Program* (CIRP) is a national longitudinal study administered by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. Nationwide, over 11 million first time college students participate each year. The CIRP Freshman Survey is generally regarded as the most comprehensive source of information on incoming college students.

The analyses described in this report were based primarily on the responses of 2,994 Cornell freshmen – 95% of that incoming class – who entered in the fall of 2003. For the most part, students answered the survey during their second evening on Cornell’s campus. The instrument is self-administered with paper and pencil. The survey instrument includes a wide range of topics including: demographics; pre-college experiences; reasons for attending college; academic plans; personal opinions and beliefs; financial aid status; and parental background.

Part of the appeal of using the CIRP survey instrument is that the large number of participating institutions makes it possible to make inter-institutional comparisons. Thus in addition to intra-institutional comparisons, this report considers data from students affiliated with a small number of institutions who participate in a data-sharing consortium. These comparator institutions are grouped into two “norm groups”:

- “Head-to-Head” institutions are those which Cornell competes on a relatively even basis for commonly admitted undergraduates
- “Cornell Preferred” institutions are those institutions that most often “lose” when in direct competition with Cornell for commonly admitted undergraduates

Within Cornell, comparisons are made by gender race and college. The following abbreviations for Cornell’s seven undergraduate colleges are used in graphics within this report:

- ALS: New York State College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
- AAP: College of Architecture, Art, and Planning
- Arts: College of Arts & Sciences
- Eng: College of Engineering
- Hum Ec: New York State College of Human Ecology
- Hotel: School of Hotel Administration
- ILR: New York State School of Industrial & Labor Relations

In addition, the following terms are used to identify racial, ethnic and/or citizenship groups in this report:

- White: U.S. citizens who self-identified as White/Caucasian
- Asian: U.S. citizens who self-identified as Asian, Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- URM: U.S. citizens who self-identified as African American, black, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Other Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native or any combination of those identities.
- Multiracial: U.S. citizens who self-identified as two or more of White, Asian, and/or URM.
- International: Non-citizens (without green cards) of any race or ethnicity.

Detailed tables containing percentage tabulations of responses by norm group, race, gender, and college for almost all survey questions are presented in Appendix A.

III. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Sex, Race, Age, and Citizenship

Gender: Roughly half of all Cornell freshmen in 2003 were women, but the gender distribution varies greatly between the colleges, with the highest percentage of females in Human Ecology at 78% and the lowest in Engineering at 29%. (See Appendix Table A-1)

Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship. On the 2003 CIRP Survey instrument, about 61% of incoming freshmen at Cornell identified as white, 16% as Asian American, 10% as under-represented minorities, 6% as multiracial, and 7% as international. Races were distributed differently across the colleges. (See Appendix Table A-23.a for additional details.) Compared to the racial composition of freshmen as reported in the 2002 CIRP Freshman Survey, three colleges increased their non-white populations in 2003: Agriculture & Life Sciences, Human Ecology, and Industrial & Labor Relations.

Age. Cornellians were slightly younger than their norm group counterparts. Almost three-quarters of first year students at Cornell were 18 years of age or younger at the time of the 2003 survey, as compared to less than 70% at norm group schools. Under-represented minorities and multiracial students were the youngest racial groups, with 81-83% age 18 or younger, followed by 74-79% of whites and Asian Americans. Less than half (44%) of international students were age 18 or younger. There were also differences by sex: among first year students at Cornell, about 30% of men, but only about 20% of women, were older than 18 years. (See Appendix Table A-2.)

U.S. Citizenship and Native Language: Results from the 2002 Freshman Survey indicated that 11% of students were Internationals; in 2003, that figure declined to 7%. Analogous figures from norm group institutions also declined between 2002 and 2003. However, it remained the case in 2003 that Cornell had more international students than norm group institutions: 7% of Cornell freshmen were neither citizens nor permanent residents, compared to 3% of Cornell Preferred students and 6% of Head-to-Head. As was true in 2002, the Colleges of Architecture, Art & Planning and Engineering had the largest percentages of internationals in 2003, while Industrial & Labor Relations and Agriculture & Life Sciences had the smallest.

Compared to norm group institutions, Cornell also has more students for whom English was not their native language: 16%, as compared to 13% of Head-to-Head students and 12% of Cornell Preferred students. More than 62% of international students at Cornell reported being non-native English speakers. It was also the case that English was a second language for 43% of Asian Americans, 21% of under-represented minorities, 10% of multiracial students, and less than 4% of whites (see Appendix Table A-3).

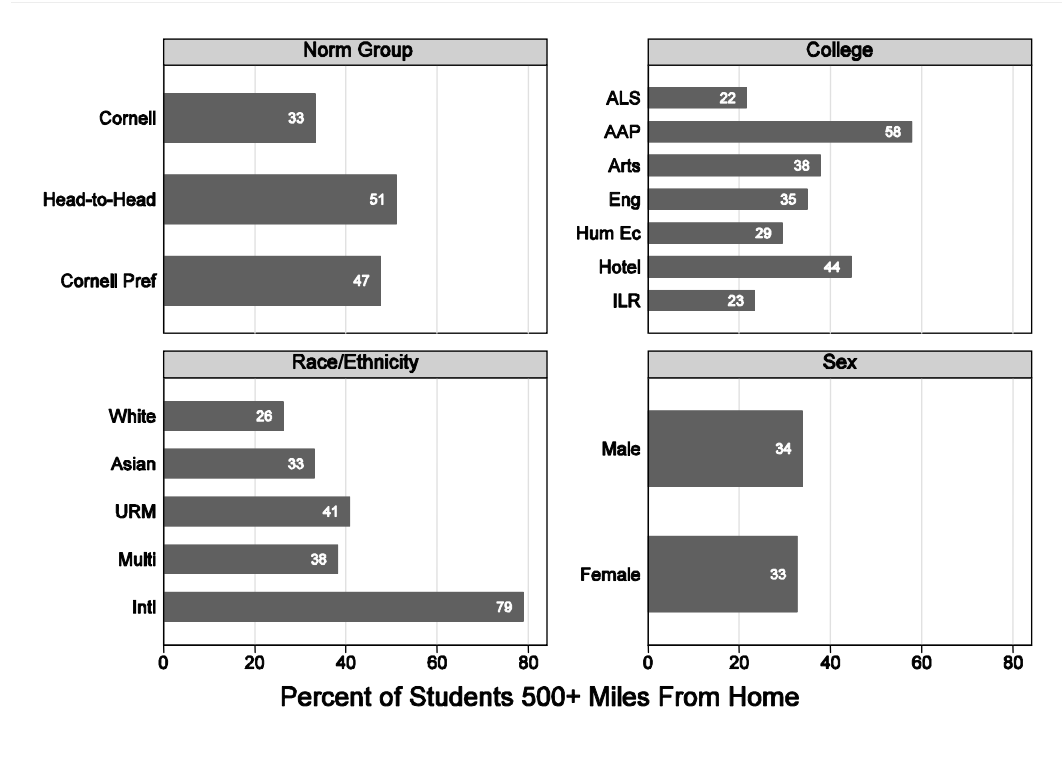
Distance from Home

More Cornell freshmen reported living close to home than did students at norm group institutions; Cornell's contract colleges especially draw disproportionately from within the state. Over half of students in "Head-to-Head" institutions and 48% of students at "Cornell Preferred" schools have traveled more than 500 miles to school, but only about a third of Cornellians were that far from home (see Figure 1).

Not surprisingly, international students were more likely than students with U.S. citizenship to come from long distance, with 79% of international students traveling over 500 miles. Beyond that, however, there were still large racial/ethnic differences. For example, 41% of under-represented minorities, but only about a quarter of white students, were 500 or more miles from home. The three contract colleges (Industrial & Labor Relations, Agriculture & Life Sciences, and Human Ecology) have relatively low percentages of students far from home (22-

29%), while Hotel (44%) and Architecture, Art & Planning (58%) have high percentages of their freshmen traveling 500 miles or more (see Figure 1 and Appendix Table A-6).

Figure 1. Percent of Students Attending College 500 or More Miles From Home, by Norm Group, Race and Ethnicity, College, and Sex



IV. HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

The first part of this chapter will address the academic elements of their high school experiences, and the second part will address the social and personal aspects.

Academic Experiences in High School

High School grades. As might be expected at an elite institution, nearly all Cornell students had a “B” or better grade averages in high school. Indeed, the majority – 59% – had “A” averages. Cornell had slightly fewer freshmen with “A” averages than Head-to-Head schools (63%) but more than Cornell Preferred schools (57%). These differences are consistent with those found in the 2002 data.

Among Cornell students, more Asian Americans (63%) got an “A” average than the overall proportion at Cornell, while only 50% of under-represented minorities had an “A” average. This racial disparity – 13 percentage points – declined as compared to 2002, when it was 18 percentage points.

Significantly more women (62%) than men (56%) had “A” averages. Differences by college at Cornell were also substantial, with more than 60% of students in Engineering, Agriculture & Life Sciences and Human Ecology having had “A” averages in high school as compared to less than 35% of Hotel students (see Appendix Table A-7).

Experiences in the classroom. Respondents to this survey responded to three different measures relating to the frequency (“not at all,” “occasionally,” or “frequently”) of the following classroom experiences: “was bored in class,” “overslept/missed class,” and “came late to class.” Over 95% of all the respondents at Cornell and at norm groups reporting being at least “occasionally” bored. Cornell students were slightly more likely than students at norm group institutions to have reported “occasionally” or “frequently” on all three measures, and compared to 2002 freshmen, 2003 Cornell freshmen were more likely to have been bored in class.

Among Cornell students, a slightly larger percentage of white students were bored “frequently,” especially as compared to international students: 50% of whites versus less than 30% of international students reported being so often bored in class. Men were almost twice as likely as women to have felt bored. (For more on this measure, see Appendix Table A-24.b.)

Within Cornell, differences on the other measures were small, though students in Hotel and in Industrial & Labor Relations were less likely than other students to have reported that they had overslept and missed class in the past (see Appendix Table A-24.o).

Study habits outside of the classroom. Students responded to three different measures relating to the frequency of various study behaviors. Two were measured on a scale including the responses “not at all,” “occasionally” and “frequently”; these were “tutored another student,” and “studied with other students.” A third measure asked about the weekly number of hours spent on “studying/homework.”

Compared to students at norm group institutions, Cornellians reported engaging in these three study behaviors somewhat less often. For example, 61% of Cornell students reported having spent six or more hours each week studying in high school; this compares to 64% of Cornell Preferred students and almost 67% of Head-to-Head students. However, time spent studying among incoming students at Cornell was slightly higher in 2003 than it was in 2002.

Among Cornell students, international students were more likely than U.S. students of any race to have spent six or more hours each week on studies, with 69% reporting such long hours. Women appear to have studied longer than men (e.g. 68% versus 54% reported six or more hours of weekly study time), and a larger portion of students in Arts & Sciences (73%)

studied long hours than students in other Cornell colleges. Complete tables for study time are in Appendix Table A-32.a.

Nonwhite students and women were more likely to have reported tutoring another student; multiracial students were less likely than international students to have studied with others. Engineering, Industrial & Labor Relations, and Human Ecology freshmen were more likely than Architecture, Art & Planning and Hotel freshmen to have tutored others. (See Appendix Tables A-24.d, A-24.e.)

Remedial work. The CIRP Freshman survey asked students to identify areas in which they had experience with “special tutoring or remedial work” or in which they anticipated needing such work in the future. Seven areas were listed: English, Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Foreign Language and Writing. Looking across all areas, only 11-14% of students at Cornell and norm group institutions had any experience with this kind of tutoring in any of the seven listed areas. However, Cornellians were more likely than norm group students to have had remedial work in at least one of the seven areas in the past, and were more likely than norm group students to anticipate needing it in the future. The largest share of Cornellians with experience with remedial tutoring had been tutored in mathematics specifically (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). Math was also among the most common areas for anticipated tutoring needs, though an equal proportion (12%) of Cornellians anticipated needing special guidance in writing.

Within Cornell, women and men reported roughly equal rates of remedial experience, but women were more likely than men to anticipate requiring tutoring in the future. The distinction between experience and anticipation was especially profound among under-represented minority students: in mathematics, 12% of under-represented minorities at Cornell had remedial work in the past, but 32% anticipate needing it in the future (compare Figure 3 and Figure 4.)

While the overall percentage of incoming Cornellians who have had, and who anticipated needing, remedial work remains small, the results from the 2003 Freshman Survey suggest some increases in these numbers as compared to 2002. Specifically, there was a small increase (8% versus 7%) in the number of students reporting have had remedial work in mathematics in the past, and a somewhat larger increase in the proportion of students anticipating future remedial work in English (9% versus 5%) and science (12% versus 5%).

Figure 2. Cornellians Experiences with Special Tutoring or Remedial Work, by Area

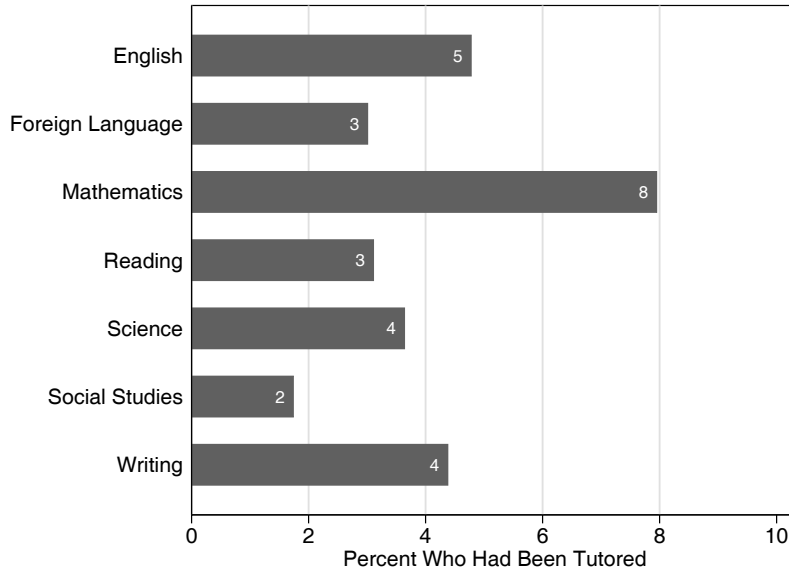


Figure 3. Prior Experiences with Any Remedial Work, by Norm Group, Race and Ethnicity, College, and Sex.

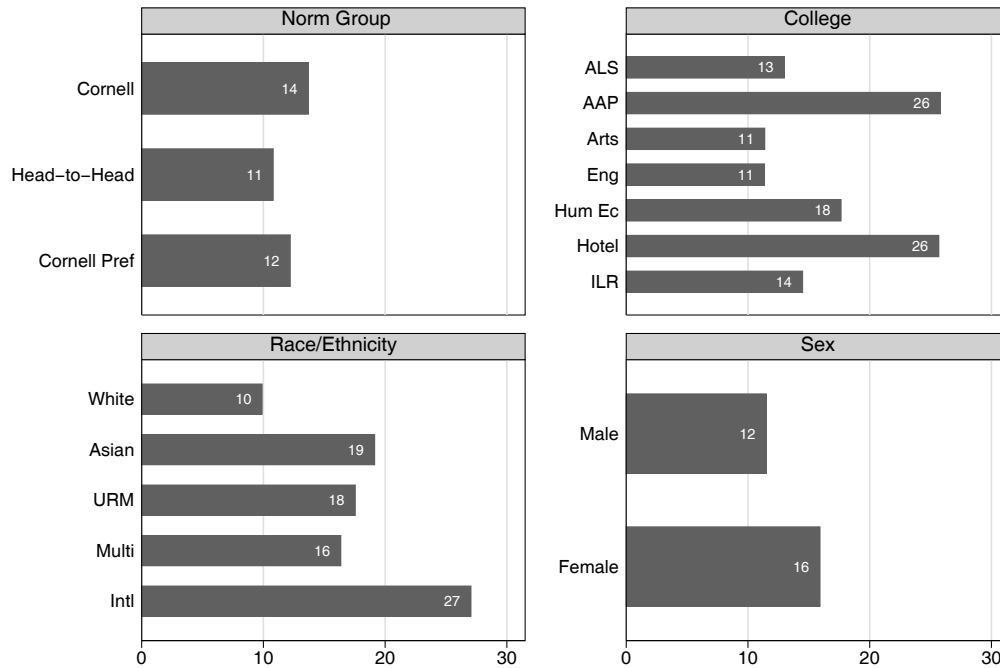
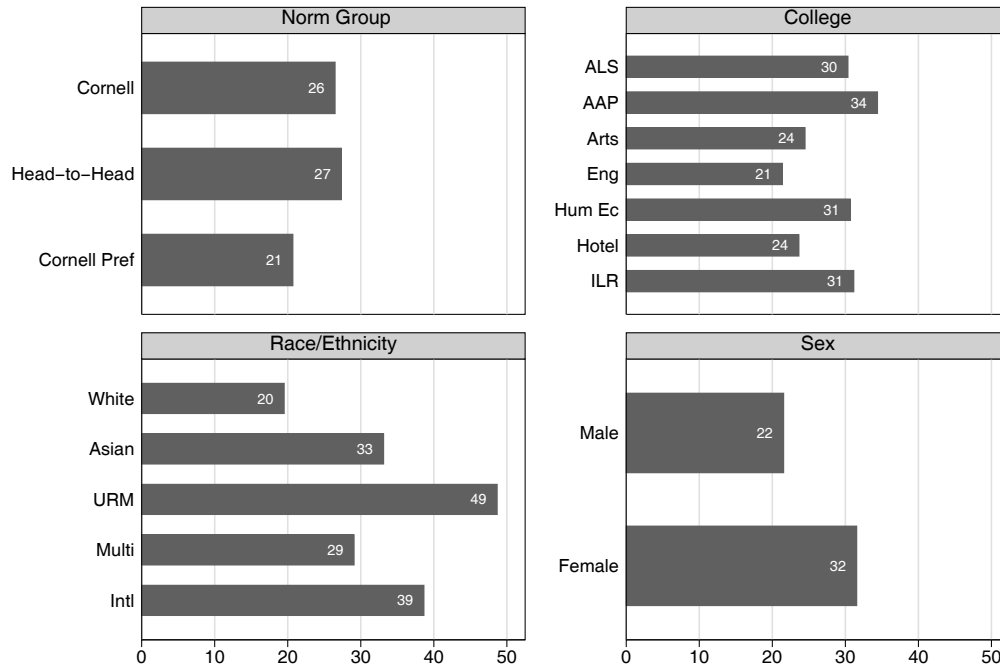


Figure 4. Anticipation of Any *Future* Remedial Work, by Norm Group, Race and Ethnicity, College, and Sex



Out-of-class interactions with teachers. Three items on the CIRP Freshman Survey instrument touched on the frequency of out-of-class interactions with teachers/faculty in the past: “was a guest in a teacher’s home” (responses included “not at all,” “occasionally,” “frequently”); “asked a teacher for advice after class” (with the same responses); and a measure of how many hours during a typical week during high school respondents spent “talking with teachers outside of class.”

Overall, Cornellians, Asian Americans, and men had fewer interactions with their teachers in high school than their counterparts did. For example, less than 30% of Cornell students visited a teacher at home, while 36% of Head-to-Head students and 33% of Cornell Preferred students did so. (Fewer Asian Americans than international students (22% versus almost 40%) reported having been a guest in a teacher’s home.)

Women were more likely to have asked for help than were men, as more than a third asked for help frequently, compared to about a quarter of men. Hotel and Architecture, Art & Planning students were more than twice as likely as Engineers to have asked a teacher for advice. (See Appendix Tables A-24.f, A-24.n, and A-32.c for more information on these measures.)

High School Social Activities and Time Use

Partying. Students were asked how often (“not at all,” “occasionally,” or “frequently”) they smoked, drank beer, and drank wine or liquor. They were also asked to estimate how many hours during a typical week in high school they spent “partying.” Only 2-3% of Cornellians and norm group peers reported smoking frequently, though multiracial students were slightly more likely than students of other races to have reported having smoked “frequently.” Cornell freshmen drank and partied less than freshmen at Head-to-Head schools but slightly more than freshmen at Cornell Preferred institutions. For example, 14% of Cornellians reported

“frequently” drinking wine or liquor; and 15% for drinking beer. For Head-to-Head schools, the percentages were 15-16% and for Cornell Preferred Schools, they were 7-8%. Compared to 2002 incoming students, 2003 first-year students at Cornell were slightly more likely to have consumed beer or liquor in the past year: 56% reported this in 2003 as compared to 52% in 2002.

Among Cornell students, over a quarter of whites but only a tenth of Asian Americans spent six or more hours each week at parties. Similarly, 64% of white students but less than 40% of Asian Americans drank beer at least occasionally in the previous year. Men drank and partied more than women, with a 6 percentage point gap between the sexes in frequent beer drinking.

First-year students associated with the School of Hotel Administration and in the School of Industrial & Labor Relations drank, smoked, and partied at higher rates than students in other colleges: about a quarter of incoming students affiliated with those two colleges reported drinking beer, wine or liquor “frequently,” as compared to 9-15% in other colleges (see Appendix Table A-24.h). Similarly, 34-38% of Industrial & Labor Relations and Hotel students partied six or more hours each week, while less than 15% of Engineers had done so (see Appendix A-32.e).

Community Service and Volunteer Work. Four measures on the CIRP instrument related to community service and volunteer work. These include measures in which students were asked to identify how often they “performed volunteer work” or “performed community service as part of a class;” as well as an estimate of the number of hours per week spent on “volunteer work;” and an indicator of whether or not their high school required community service for graduation.

Overall, slightly fewer Cornell students did volunteer work than their counterparts in norm group schools, though the percentage at Cornell increased slightly between 2002 and 2003. In 2003, 39% of Cornell students volunteered frequently, compared to 41-43% of students in norm groups that year. (In 2002, the percentage at Cornell was 36%; norm group schools were again at 41-42%.)

Differences by race were substantial with more than half of under-represented minorities and multiracial students having done volunteer work “frequently,” compared to about a third of other groups. Females volunteered substantially more than males did: 47% of women and only 31% of men reported that they volunteered frequently. Engineers were least involved with volunteer work, as 32% volunteered “frequently,” as compared to, for example, 52% of Architecture, Art & Planning freshmen. (For additional details, see Appendix Table A-24.i, as well as Appendix Tables A-24.aa, A-22, and A-32.g.)

Political involvement. Students reported on three measures of the frequency of political involvement. These activities included: “discussed politics,” “voted in a student election,” and “participated in organized demonstrations.”

Cornellians reported less participation than their counterparts at norm group schools on two measures: 32% of Cornellians discussed politics “often” and 25% voted in student elections “frequently”; at norm group institutions, 37-39% of students discussed politics so frequently, and 26-31% voted often in student elections this often. Incoming Cornellians in 2003 were slightly more likely than students entering Cornell the previous year to have participated in demonstrations and to have discussed politics “often.”

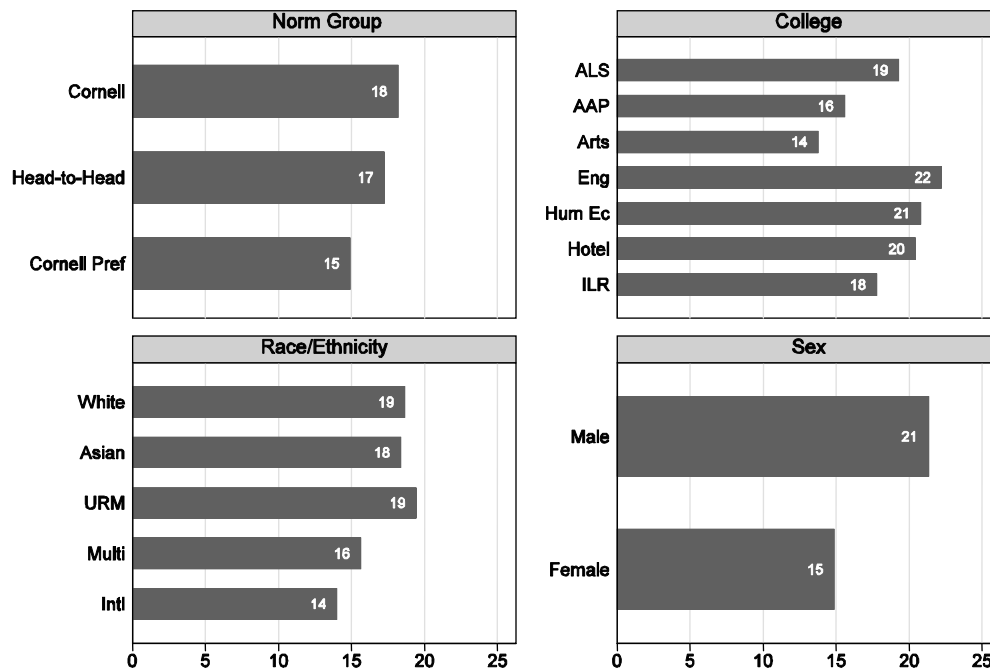
International students and Asian Americans reported lesser amounts of political activity than did their Cornell peers on all three measures. For example, whites, under-represented minorities, and multiracial students were twice as likely as Asians and internationals to have had “frequent” political discussions. Gender differences were substantial, with women being 12 percentage points less likely than men to have frequently discussed politics. Across colleges, Industrial & Labor Relations students were more than twice as likely as Agriculture & Life

Sciences, Engineering, Human Ecology, and Hotel students to have voted and discussed politics frequently. (See Appendix Tables A-24.c, A-24.p, and A-24.q.)

Reading and the Arts. Three measures on the survey related to literature and the arts, including: the frequency that respondents “played a musical instrument,” and “visited an art gallery or museum;” and one measure of the number of hours per week spent “reading for pleasure.”

Compared to norm group schools, a larger proportion of Cornell students reported having done no reading for pleasure during high school: 18% of Cornellians as compared to 15-17% of students at norm group institutions did not read for pleasure. (These figures were essentially unchanged from 2002.) The proportion of those who did not read for pleasure was highest in Engineering and lowest Arts and in Architecture, Art & Planning (see Figure 5). Under-represented minorities were more likely than students of other races to have done no pleasure reading.

Figure 5. Percent of Student Reporting Spending *No Time* Reading for Pleasure During High School, by Norm Group, Race and Ethnicity, College, and Sex



Cornellians were also slightly less artistically involved than were freshmen in norm group institutions. For example, only 73% of Cornellians visited a museum, compared to 78% of norm group students. However, Cornellians reported slightly more instrument playing than Head-to-Head students.

Asian Americans played musical instruments more often than other race students, and reported playing “frequently” twice as much as under-represented minorities did. Under-represented minorities were also least likely to have visited a museum, while whites were most likely. Students in the college of Architecture, Art & Planning were much more likely than students in other colleges to have visited museums. (See Appendix Tables A-24.m, A-24.t, and A-32.k for additional details.)

Computer use. Students responded to six different measures relating to their use of computers: the frequency of having “communicated via email,” “used the internet for research or homework,” “communicated via instant messaging,” “other internet use,” and “used a personal computer;” and a measure of the number of hours spent each week “playing video/computer games.”

Most students at Cornell and norm group institutions were well-versed in computer use; only 1% of new Cornellians reported that they had not used a personal computer in the previous year. Further, these measures of computer use suggest some increase in intensity from 2002: incoming students in 2003 used the internet for homework somewhat more often and spent more time playing video games.

With high rates of regular computer use across the board, differences between institutions are fairly small. Cornellians emailed slightly less often than their peers at norm group institutions (with 82% of Cornellians emailing “often” as compared to 83-86% at norm group schools), but used a personal computer, used instant messaging, and played video games somewhat more. Thus, 85% of Cornellians were frequent IMers, as compared to 80-85% at norm group schools.

It remains the case that under-represented minorities were least likely to have used a personal computer: only 92% reported having used a PC “frequently” as compared to at least 94% among other racial categories.

Computer usage patterns differ by gender. More than 87% of women at Cornell reported “frequent” email usage, compared to 76% of men. Furthermore, more than 92% of females but only 86% of males frequently did homework on the computer. An even larger disparity was apparent with respect to video games: only 3 % of females spent six or more hours each week playing video games, but the rate among men was six times that figure at 19%.

Long hours of video game playing were also common among students in the College of Engineering, where 19% spent six or more hours a week playing games. No other college had more than 10% of its freshmen spending this much time on video games. (Related data are contained in Appendix Tables A-24.u, A-24.w, A-24.x, A-24.y, A-24.z, and A-32.l.)

Socializing, Exercise, Student Clubs, TV, and Household Chores

Socializing. Results from this survey suggest that incoming college students had spent large portions of time over the preceding year socializing with friends. For example, more than 30% of incoming Cornellians spent 16 hours per week or more socializing during the preceding year. (This figure is slightly higher than the 25% reported in 2002.) Incoming Cornell students had spent more time socializing than students at norm group institutions (see Appendix Table A-32.b).

Among Cornell students, whites were more likely than students of other races to have reported spending long hours socializing with their friends. For example, as 80% of whites spent six or more hours socializing, as compared to 68-70% of Asian Americans, under-represented minorities, and multiracial students.

Exercise or sports: Cornell freshmen reported spending less time on “exercise or sports” than Head-to-Head freshmen but more time than Cornell Preferred freshmen. While 59% of Head-to-Head freshmen spent six or more hours each week, only 53% of Cornell freshmen and 50% of Cornell Preferred freshmen reported this. Compared to 2002, the 2003 freshmen spent more time on exercise and sports. White students were far more likely to have spent time on athletics than any other racial group. More than 60% of whites reported six or more hours of exercise per week, compared to less than 40% of Asian Americans and under-represented

minorities. Also, men reported more time spent in athletics than women, as 15% of women and 23% of men spent sixteen or more hours each week (see Appendix Table A-32.d).

Student clubs/groups. Compared to students at norm group schools, Cornell freshmen spent less time participating in student clubs during high school. Seventy-seven percent spent more than an hour each week at this kind of activity, compared to 78% of Cornell Preferred freshmen and 81% of Head-to-Head freshmen. Under-represented minorities and Asian Americans spent the most time in clubs, as 80-85% reported more than an hour, while international students spent the least time, as less than 70% reported more than an hour. Women participated in clubs and groups more than men, as 82% of Cornell's women and 72% of men reported more than an hour per week. Across colleges, Industrial & Labor Relations and Human Ecology students were more involved than others. (See Appendix Table A-32.h for details.)

Watching T.V. Incoming Cornellians reported having watched more T.V. than did students at norm group institutions. Almost 30% reported having watched six or more hours per week, compared to about a quarter of norm group students. This figure for Cornell represents a slight increase in television watching over 2002.

Under-represented minorities and Asian Americans reported spending more time with the television, with 32-36% having watched six or more hours. Men watched more T.V. than women: a third of men watched six or more hours, compared to a quarter of women (see Appendix Table A-32.i).

Household/childcare duties: Differences in time spent on chores and childcare are small across institutions, but within Cornell there were substantial differences by race and gender. In particular, under-represented minority students were far more likely to have spent significant numbers of hours engaged in household chores and childcare duties: 28% spent more than 3 hours per week, compared to 17% of whites and Asian Americans and 9% of international students. Women spent more time on household duties than men, as 21% of women and 15% of men spent more than 3 hours each week. (See Appendix Table A-32.j.)

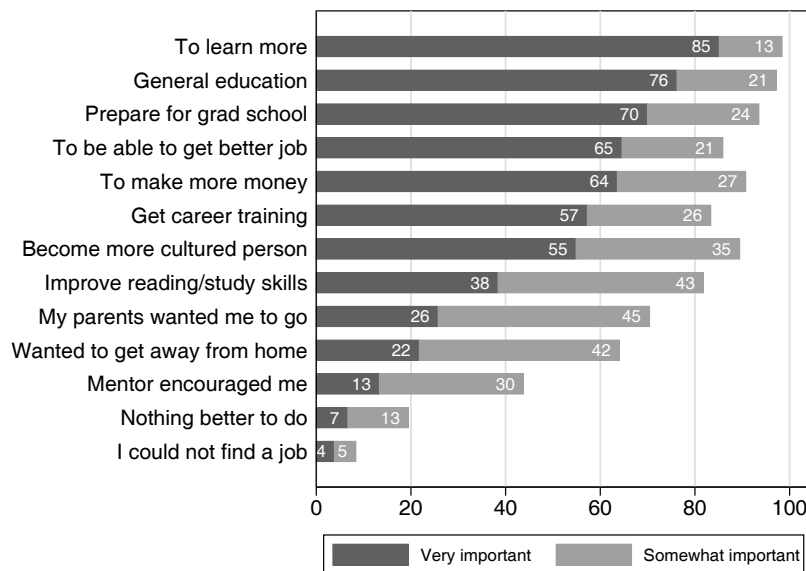
V. REASONS FOR COLLEGE

This chapter addresses two related topics: first, the reasons that students decided to attend college *in general* and second, the reasons that students decided to attend their *particular schools* and the expectations that they have of their schools.

General reasons to attend college

A series of thirteen items tapped several of the many reasons why students might want to attend college. These items are represented in Figure 6, where they are listed in order of importance among Cornell students.

Figure 6. Cornellians' Reasons for Deciding to Attend to College



Intrinsic interest. The top two items in Figure 6 relate to attending college because of what college offers intrinsically. Specifically, these items are “To learn more about the things that interest me” and “To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas.” Another item, “To make me a more cultured person,” similarly relates to intrinsic aspects of gaining a college education at an elite institution like Cornell.

For all three of these items, a majority of Cornellians identified them as “very important” reasons for their own decisions to attend college (see Figure 6). Indeed, more than 90% of freshmen across institutions found “[becoming] a more cultured person” to be important and about 60% found it “very important.” However, Cornell students were slightly less likely than norm group students to have ranked this factor as critical: 55% of Cornellians but 59-64% of students at norm group institutions considered becoming more cultured as a “very important” reason to go to college. This pattern was replicated across the other measures of intrinsic attractions to college, with Cornell students being slightly less likely to have considered the intrinsic reasons as very important reasons to attend college.

Among Cornellians, differences by race/ethnicity in these measures are small. However, across all three measures, women were more likely than men to have identified the intrinsic reasons as “very important.” Differences by college suggest that students in Engineering and in Hotel were less likely those in Arts & Sciences and in Industrial & Labor Relations to have found

intrinsic rationales to have been fundamental in their decision to attend college. (See Appendix Tables A-28.e, A-28.h, and A-28.j)

Career and Financial Enhancement. After the intrinsic reasons for attending college, the next most important rationales in Figure 6 generally relate to career development and growth in earnings. These include “To prepare myself for graduate or professional school,” “To be able to get a better job,” “To make more money,” and “To get training for a specific career.”

For two of these career-related items, Cornell students appear to place a slightly higher emphasis than do their peers at other institutions. For example, 64% of Cornellians reported that making more money was a “very important” reason to attend college, and this compares to 58-61% of freshmen in norm groups. (This is also a slight increase over the analogous figure of 61% for Cornell entering students in 2002.) Furthermore, 57% of Cornellians found it “very important” to get specific career training, while only 43% of Head-to-Head students did so.

Within Cornell, under-represented minorities were more likely to have reported that preparing for grad school and getting specific career training was “very important.” While the vast majority (92%) of Cornell students considered earnings capacity to be at least “somewhat important,” there were some differences by college. For example, less than half of Architecture, Art & Planning students but more than three-quarters of Industrial & Labor Relations students considered the ability to make more money to be very important. (See Appendix Tables A-28.d, A-28.i, A-28.k, and A-28.m for additional details.)

Encouragement from others. More than 70% of students indicated that “My parents wanted me to go” was important in their deciding to go to college. Mentors were also “important” for 44% of Cornellians. Differences by institution were fairly small, though Cornellians appear to be slightly more likely than those at norm group institutions to have been influenced by a mentor.

Almost 80% of Asian American freshman at Cornell cited their parents’ desires as important, compared to less than 70% of whites and under-represented minorities (see Appendix Table A-28.a). In contrast, under-represented minorities were more likely to have been influenced by a mentor, with 53% of minority students saying that a mentor was at least somewhat important (see Appendix and A-28.l). More women valued these social influences than men, with differences of 2-4 percentage points in the proportion who reported parents/mentors to be “very important” in the decision to attend college.

Lack of other options. Overall, students from the elite sorts of institutions considered in this report did not seem to consider their decision to attend college as a result of a lack of other, better options. For example, only a minority of students identified “There was nothing better to do” as an important reason to attend college (see Appendix Table A-28.g). Similarly, only 8% of Cornellians and 6% of students in the two norm groups reported that “I could not find a job” was at all important in their decision to attend college (see Appendix Table A-28.b). This motivation was more common among international students and Asian Americans at Cornell – among whom more than 15% indicated that not finding a job was important – but the percentages were still small.

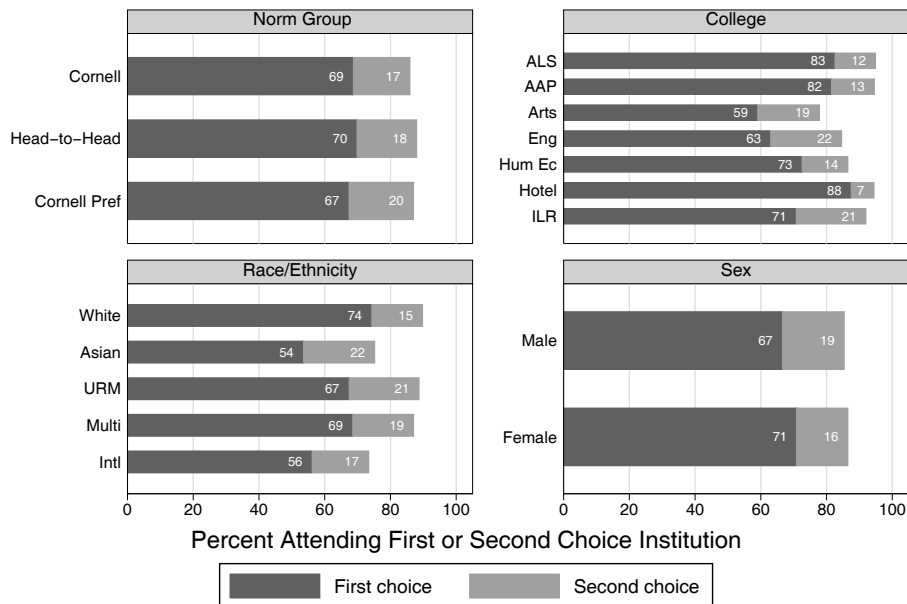
On the other hand, many students identified “Wanted to get away from home” as at least “somewhat important” in deciding to attend college (see Appendix Tables A-28.c). Among the different racial, ethnic, and citizenship categories examined here, international students were the least likely to have considered this important; only 39% considered it at all important, compared to 61-72% of other racial groups. Under-represented minorities were most likely to have found this reason important.

Choosing an Institution

First choice of institution. Sixty-nine percent of Cornell freshmen indicated that Cornell was their “first choice” of colleges, compared to analogous figures of 70% from freshmen at Head-to-Head and 67% of freshman at Cornell Preferred institutions (see Figure 7). There was a very slight decline from 2002 in the percentage of Cornellians who ranked Cornell their first or second choice, with 88% saying Cornell was a first or second choice in 2002, as compared to 86% in 2003.

Among Cornellians, there were substantial differences in this measure by race, sex, and college. Almost three-quarters of whites but only 54-56% of Asian Americans and internationals ranked Cornell as their first choice. Women were about 5 percentage points more likely than men to have ranked Cornell first. More than 80% of freshmen from Agriculture & Life Sciences, Architecture, Art & Planning, and Hotel ranked Cornell as their “first choice;” but less than two-thirds of Engineering and Arts & Sciences freshmen did so.

Figure 7. Percent of Students Attending First or Second Choice Institution

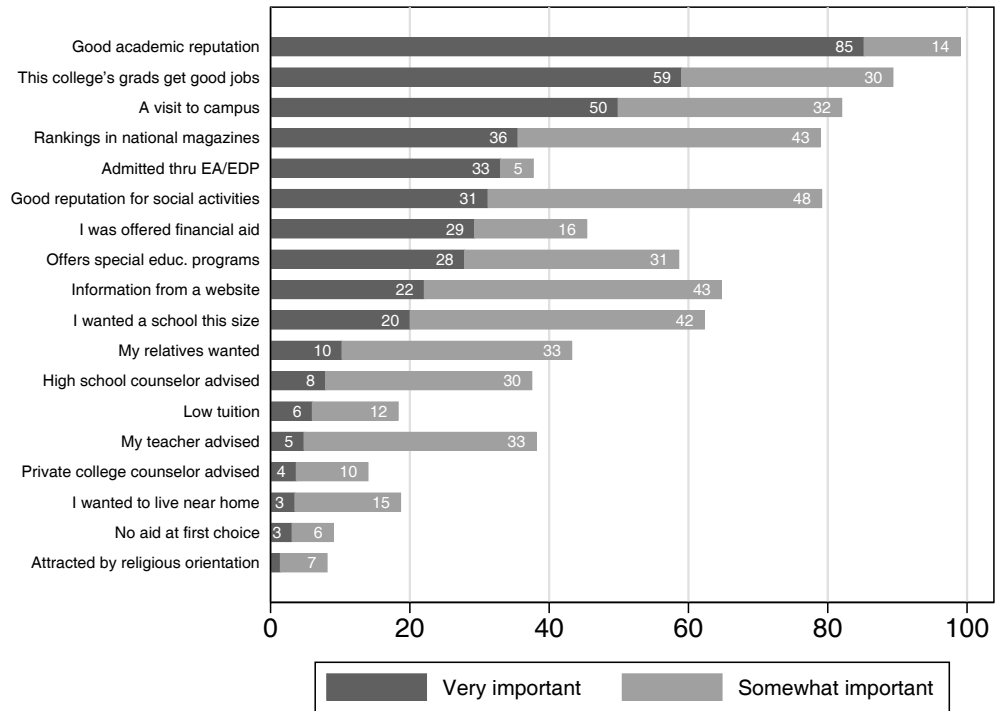


Reasons for attending this particular school

Among the eighteen rationales for choosing a particular institution offered by the 2003 CIRP Freshman Survey instrument, the single item most frequently selected as being “very important” in decision making was the overall academic reputation of the institution. Eighty-five percent of Cornellians indicated that “This college has a very good academic reputation” was a “very important” factor in their decision to attend Cornell (see Figure 8). At norm group institutions, the figures are comparable, with 85-88% of students from those schools citing academic reputation as “very important” (see Appendix Table A-34.c).

In comparison to students in the norm groups, Cornellians were *more likely* to have said that the following two factors were “very important:” “This college’s graduates get good jobs” (59% compared to 48-56% at other schools); “I was admitted through ... Early decision” (33% compared to 26-30% at norm group schools); “My relatives wanted me to come here” (10% versus 8-9% at other schools); and “This college offers special educational programs” (28% at Cornell versus 25-26% at other schools).

Figure 8. Cornellians’ Reasons for Choosing Cornell



Cornellians were *less likely* to have placed the highest level of importance on the following: “I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college” (20% of Cornellians, compared to almost 39% at both norm groups); “Rankings in national magazines” (36% compared to 39-40% at norm group schools); and “A visit to the campus” (50% versus 56-57% at other schools).

Among Cornellians, under-represented minorities were more likely than any other group to have indicated that “My teacher advised me,” “This college has a good academic reputation,” “I was offered financial assistance,” “This college offers special educational programs,” “High school/Private counselor advised me,” “Not offered aid by first choice,” “Rankings in national magazines,” and “This college’s graduates get good jobs” were “very important” in choosing Cornell.

In contrast, Whites were most likely to have indicated that “This college has a good reputation for its social activities,” “I wanted to live near home,” “I was admitted through Early Decision,” and “A visit to the campus” were “very important” in choosing Cornell.

Additional details on racial differences as well as differences by sex and college are available in Appendix Tables A-34.a - A-34.r.

Campus visits. Students were also asked on the survey, “When did you visit this college?” with response choices: “Before I applied,” “After I applied but before I was accepted,” “After I was accepted but before I decided to attend,” and “After I decided to attend.”

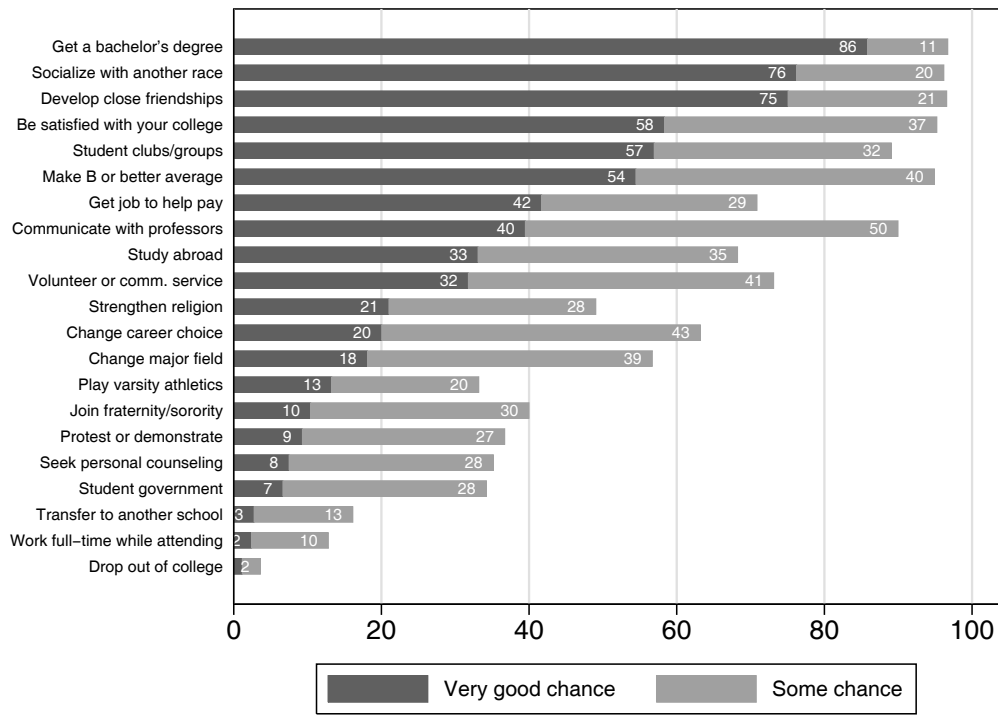
More than two-thirds of students at Cornell and in norm groups reported visiting before they applied, but Cornellians were more likely than other students to have reported their first visit occurred *after* they decided to attend (see Appendix Table A-25).

Among Cornellians, 80% of white incoming students visited before they applied, but fewer than half of under-represented minority and Asian American students did. Even fewer – less than a third – of international students visited before applying. All three contract colleges (Agriculture & Life Sciences, Human Ecology, and Industrial & Labor Relations) and the Hotel school had more than 72% of their students visit before they applied, compared to 59-64% of Arts & Sciences; Engineering; and Architecture, Art & Planning.

Expectations that students have of their colleges

Students were asked, “What is your best guess as to the chances that you will...” followed by a list of twenty-one items, as illustrated in Figure 9. Respondents were asked to indicate whether there was: “no chance,” “very little chance,” “some chance,” or a “very good chance.”

Figure 9. Cornellians’ Plans for the Future

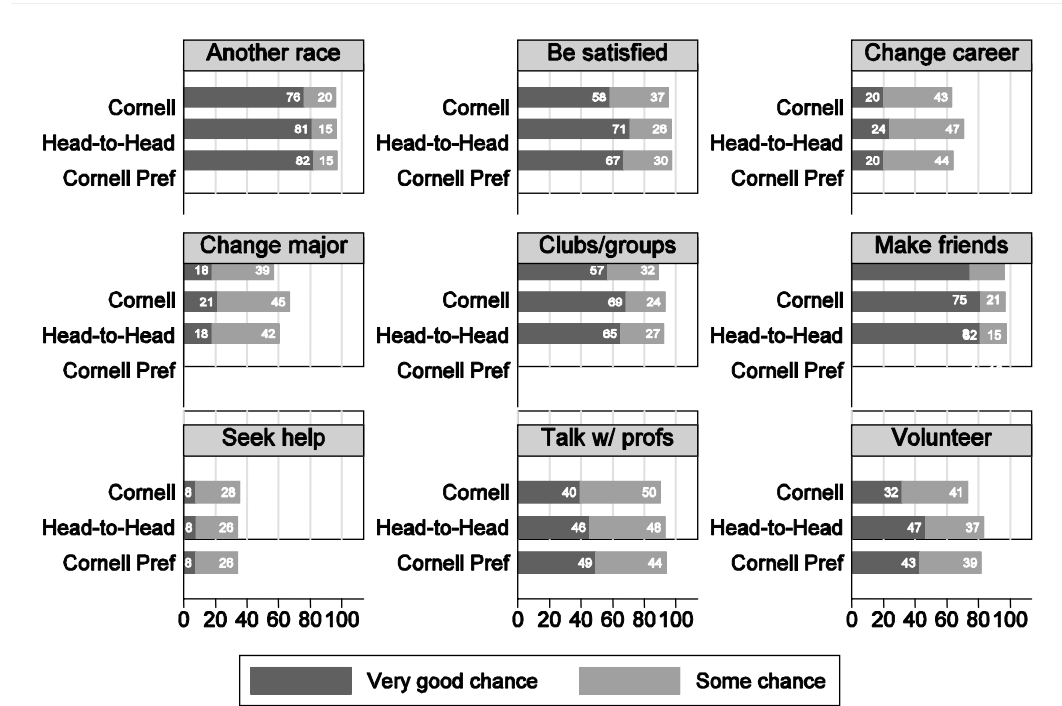


Approximately three-quarters or more of Cornell students indicated that there was a “very good chance” they would: finish their bachelor’s degree (86%), socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group (76%), and develop close friendships with other students (75%). While these figures are large among Cornell students, they are slightly larger at norm group institutions (specifically, 88-89% for getting a bachelor’s, 82% for other race relationships, and 81-82% for close friendships).

Cornell students were also somewhat less likely than norm group students to anticipate that there was a “very good chance” that they will “be satisfied with your college,” or “communicate regularly with your professors.” Further, Cornellians were less likely to foresee participation in student government, intercollegiate sports, student protests, community service, a study abroad program or student groups.

Compared to norm group students, Cornellians were more likely to have reported a “very good chance” that they will “transfer to another college,” “work full-time,” “get a job,” or “join a social sorority or fraternity.” (See Figure 10, as well as Appendix Tables A-36.a-A-36.t.)

Figure 10. Plans for the Future, Cornell and Norm Groups

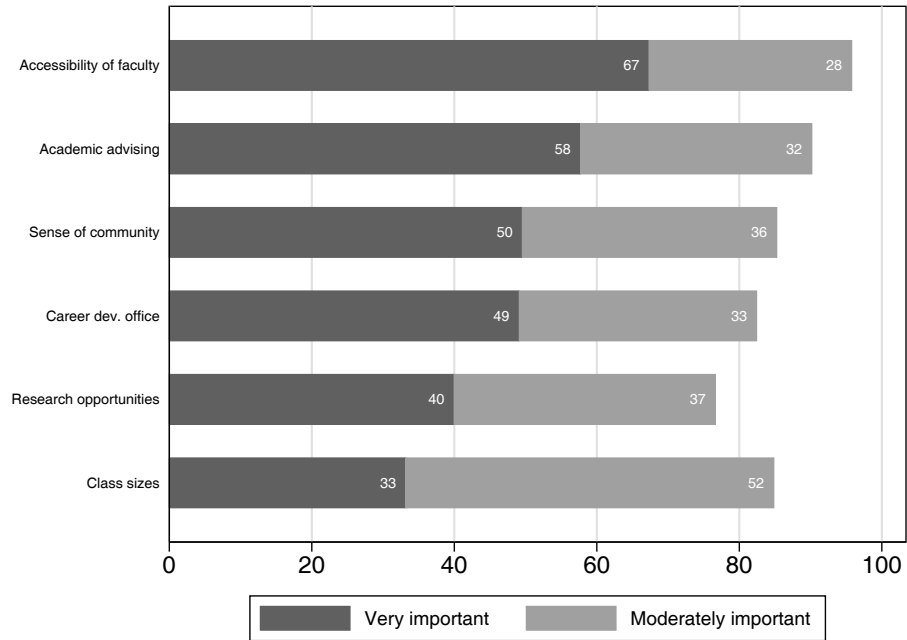


The 2003 CIRP Freshman Survey allowed individual institutions to attach a series of “local questions” to the main survey instrument. Cornell asked its first year students a series of twenty-one items which were not asked at other institutions (thus ruling out the possibility peer comparisons). Some of these touched upon expectations for the Cornell experiences, including the stem question, “Please rate how important you believe the following factor or services will be to the outcomes of your undergraduate experience at Cornell.” Six items followed, including “Accessibility of faculty members,” “Size of classes,” “Sense of community on campus,” “Research opportunities with faculty,” “Academic advising” and “Career development office.” Responses included “very important,” “moderately important,” “somewhat important,” or “not important.”

For each of the six items, three-quarters or more of respondents considered the factor or service to be at least “moderately important,” (see Figure 11). Of these six, the single most important factor to incoming Cornellians anticipating their college experience was the “accessibility of faculty members”: more than 95% of respondents indicated that they considered faculty accessibility to be at least “moderately important.”

For four out of six of these domains, the tendency to mark the factor as “very important” was stronger among women and under-represented minorities than it was among men and other racial groups. The exceptions are “size of classes,” an item for which international students were most likely to have ranked “very important,” and “research opportunities with faculty,” an item for which international students were equally as likely as under-represented minority students to have rated as “very important.” For additional group comparisons, see Appendix Tables A-41.a – A-41.f.

Figure 11. Anticipated Importance of Factors and Services to the Undergraduate Experience among Incoming Cornellians



VI. ACADEMIC PLANS

College Major

Probable field of study/college major. The 2003 CIRP Freshman Survey asked students to indicate their probable field of study by marking one choice on a list of eighty-five possibilities. In the discussion below, the eighty-five different options are grouped into the following eleven categories: arts & humanities, biological science, business, education, engineering, physical science, professional, social science, technical, other, and undecided.

At Cornell, the most commonly selected majors among the eleven categories listed above were engineering (22%) and biological sciences (18%), together accounting for the anticipated majors of 40% of students. As a comparison, at Cornell Preferred schools the most popular two majors were engineering (18%) and arts & humanities (20%, compared to 8% at Cornell). At Head-to-Head schools, the most popular majors were business (16%, compared to 13% at Cornell) and social science (24%, compared to 11% at Cornell). Cornell students were more likely than students at norm group institutions to have marked biological science, engineering, professional, technical, or "other"; and they were less likely to have marked arts & humanities, business, education, social science, or "undecided."

There were substantial differences in the racial distribution and sex composition of students across intended majors; see Appendix Table A-40 for details.

Confidence in Choice of Major. Students were asked, "What is the chance that you will change your major?" with possible answers including: "no chance," "very little chance," "some chance," and "very good chance."

As shown in Figure 10 on page 21, 57% of Cornellians reported at least "some chance," and 18% reported a "very good chance" that they will change majors. Cornell freshmen reported more confidence about their majors than their counterparts at norm group institutions. There were large differences in the levels of confidence regarding major by college, perhaps reflecting curricular differences inherent in the colleges. For example, 71% of Arts & Sciences students reported at least "some chance" that they would change majors, and 30% suggested there was a "very good chance." A majority of students (54-55%) within the colleges of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Engineering, and Human Ecology also admitted at least "some chance" of changing majors. In contrast, 40% of students in Industrial & Labor Relations, 30% in Architecture, Art & Planning, and only 20% of Hotel students admitted to some chance of changing majors (see Appendix Table A-36.a).

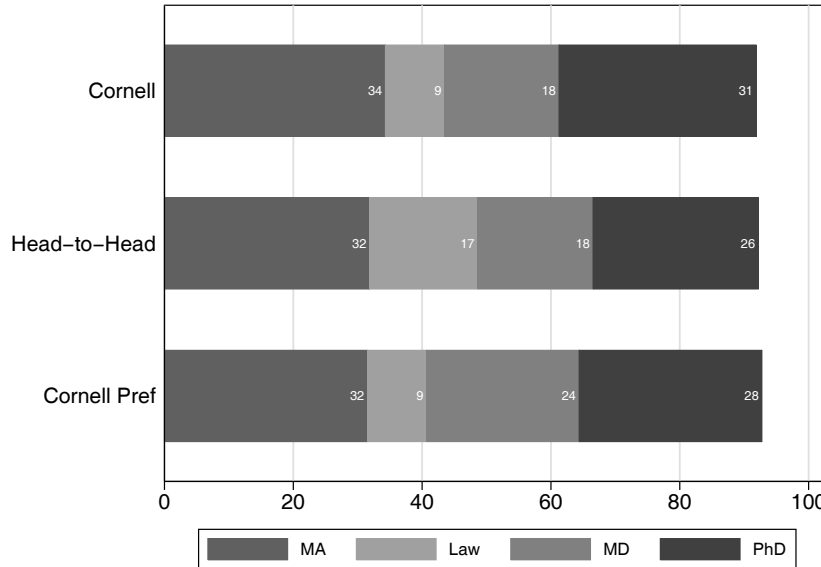
Aspirations for Educational Attainment

Highest academic degree intended. In this sample of students at selective institutions, a very small minority – fewer than 7% across Cornell and norm groups – plan to stop their education with a bachelor's degree or less. As is illustrated in Figure 12, the overwhelming majority of students at Cornell and at norm group institutions intend to attain at least a Master's degree. Differences across norm groups suggest that Cornell freshmen seem to be more likely to aspire for master's and doctorate's degrees and somewhat less likely to aspire for medical and especially law degrees (see Figure 12).

As might be expected, there were substantial differences by college, with less than 70% of Hotel students planning to go beyond a bachelor's degree, as compared with 91-98% of students in other colleges. And while only 9% of Cornellians overall aspire to a law degree, a majority (58%) of students in Industrial & Labor Relations aspire for law.

There were some differences by race and sex and educational aspirations. For example, among Cornellians of different racial/ethnic groups, white students were most likely to intend to stop their schooling with a bachelor degree or less: for example, 10% of white students but about 3% under-represented minority students plan to stop with a bachelor degree. For additional comparisons, see Appendix Table A-17.a.

Figure 12. Highest Academic Degree Planned, Cornell and Norm Groups



Highest degree intended at this college. About a quarter of first-year students at Cornell indicated plans to stay at Cornell for graduate school. This figures compares to 21% of students at Head-to-Head institutions and 27% of students at Cornell Preferred institutions. Within Cornell, under-represented minorities, multiracial students, males, Engineers, and Architecture, Art & Planning students were more likely than their counterparts to report that they intend to stay at Cornell past their bachelor’s degree. (See Appendix Table A-17.b)

Confidence in Ability to Complete the Bachelor’s Degree. Survey respondents were asked their “best guess as to the chances” that they will “get a bachelor’s degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)” and that they will “drop out of college,” with possible responses including: “no chance,” “very little chance,” “some chance,” and “very good chance.”

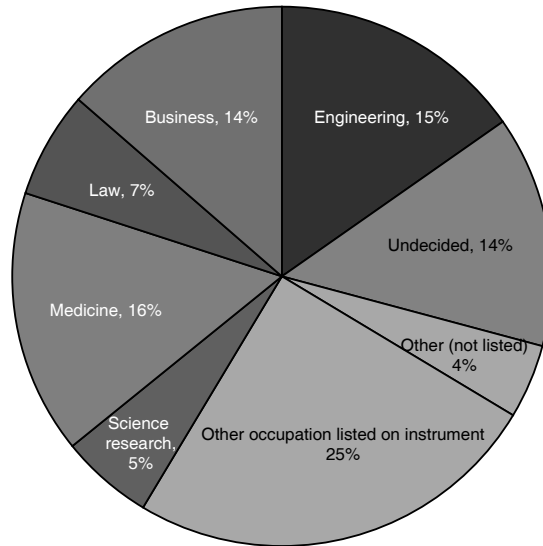
As shown in Figure 10, page 21, the vast majority of Cornellians intend to attain a baccalaureate, though slightly fewer students at Cornell estimated their chances as “very good” than students at norm group institutions (86% versus 88-89%). This tendency varies across colleges; 89% each of Arts & Sciences and Engineering freshmen marked “very good chance,” but only 79% of Hotel students did so. Also, more women (88%) than men (84%) indicated a “very good chance.”

Commensurately, 84% of Cornell freshmen indicated that there was “no chance” that they would drop out. Three percent considered there to be “some chance,” while only 1% considered there to be a “very good chance” of dropping out. Women and under-represented minorities were less likely to have considered there to be any chance at all of dropping out. (For additional comparisons, see Appendix Tables A-36.h and A-36.t.)

Career Plans

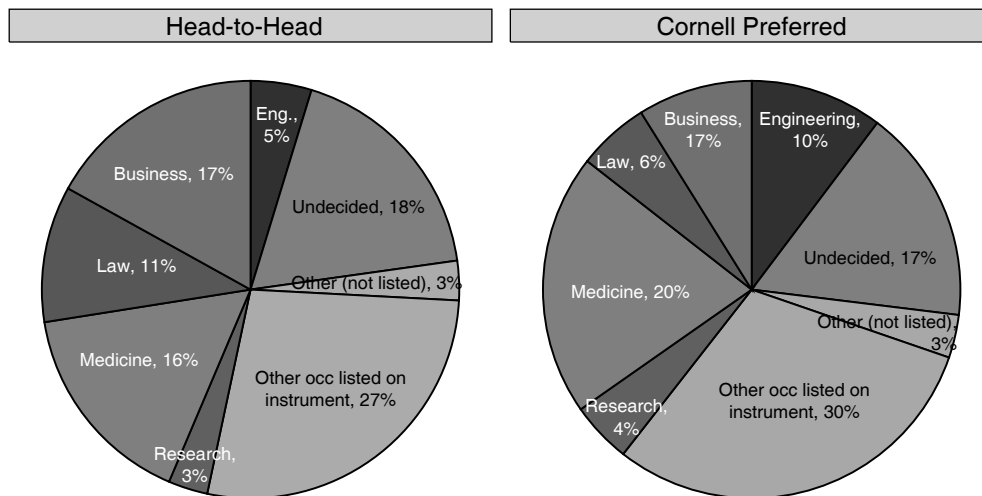
Probable career occupation: Respondents to the 2003 CIRP were asked to mark their “probable career occupation.” Forty-four occupations – ranging from unskilled laborer to full-time homemaker to business executive – were listed along with “unemployed,” “other” and “undecided.” The most popular single occupation listed was “Engineer” with just over 15% of Cornellians indicating that it was their probable career occupation. Another sixteen percent of Cornellians indicated they would enter the medical field (with 12% naming “Physician” specifically), and 7% aspired for law. Fourteen percent aspired for business occupations of some kind. Fifteen percent of Cornellians marked that they were “undecided” as to their probable future career occupation. (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Distribution of Probable Career Occupation among Cornellians



Compared with incoming students at Cornell’s norm group institutions, Cornellians were much more likely to envision a career in engineering, and somewhat less likely to foresee a career in medicine. Cornellians were also less likely to be “undecided” as to their career occupation upon entering college (compare Figure 13 and Figure 14).

Figure 14. Distribution of Probable Career Occupation, by Norm Group



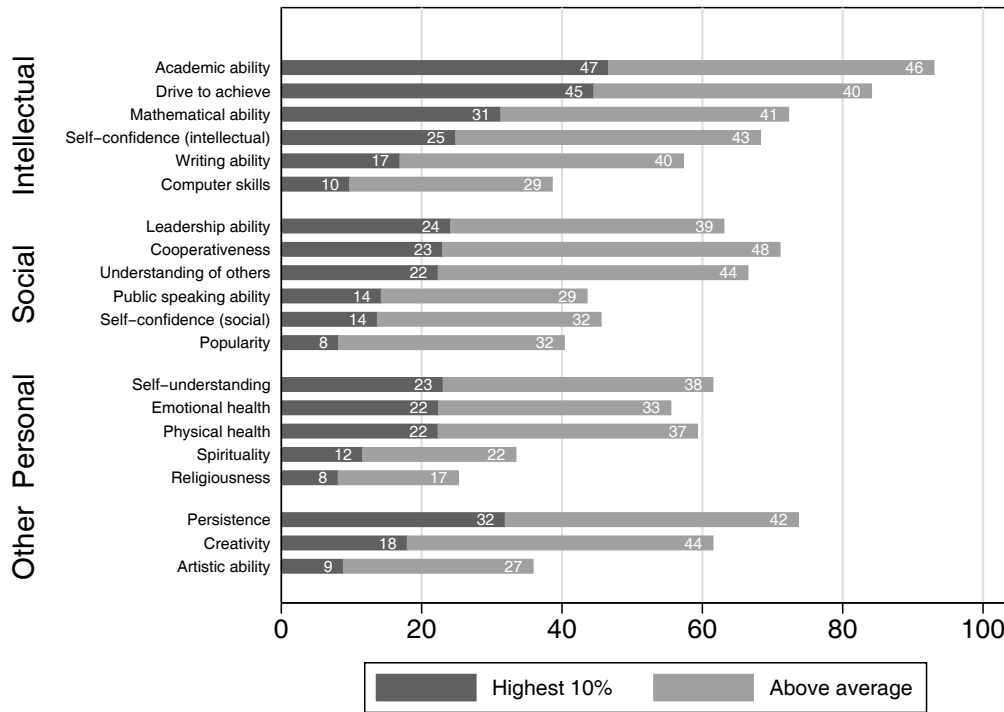
Among Cornellians, there were differences in occupational aspirations by racial/ethnic identity, sex, and college. Many of these results echo differences reported above for major field. See Appendix Table A-39 for additional information on probable career occupation.

Confidence in Career Choice. Survey respondents rated the likelihood of changing their career aspirations. Again, the results for this item resonate with those for a similar item regarding major field (see Figure 10). As with the results for major field, Cornell students and women were more likely than their counterparts to express a high degree confidence in their career choices. (See Appendix Table A-36.b for details.)

VII. HOW CORNELLIANS SEE THEMSELVES: SELF-RATINGS

The 2003 CIRP Freshman Survey instrument asked incoming college students to rate themselves on each of twenty-one traits “compared with the average person of your age.” The percent of Cornellians who rated themselves “above average” or in the “highest 10%” on each of these traits is illustrated in Figure 15. As is appropriate for young adults attending an elite Ivy League institution, nearly all Cornellians (93%) view themselves as above average in their academic ability. Further, as a generalization, Cornellians tend to have rated themselves more highly on measures of their intellectual capacities (including academic ability, mathematical ability, and intellectual self-confidence) than they did on measures of their social abilities. For example, only 8% of Cornellians rated themselves in the “highest 10%” with respect to popularity. Also, a minority of Cornellians see themselves as above average with respect to spirituality, religiosity, and artistic ability.

Figure 15. Cornellians Self-ratings for Twenty-one Traits



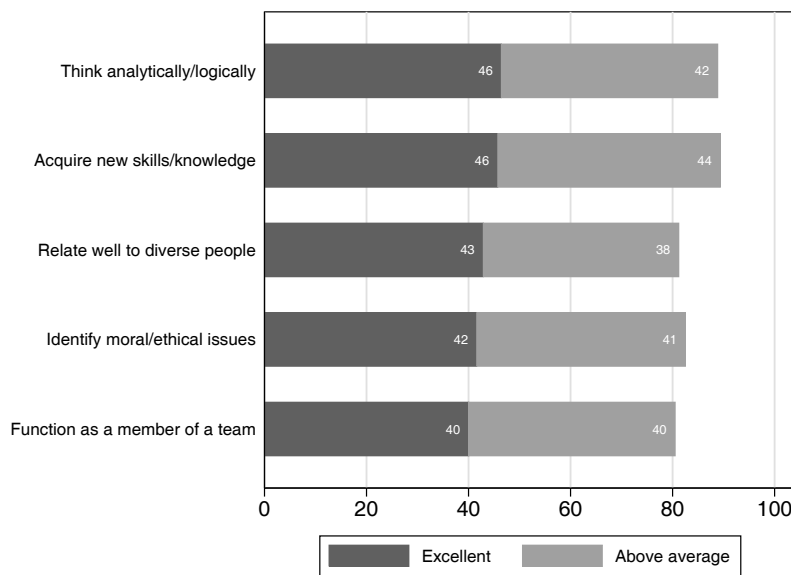
There were considerable differences by race in these self-perceptions. In general, Asian American students tended to rate themselves lower than others on social traits, such as: leadership ability, popularity, public speaking ability, and social self-confidence. At the other end of the spectrum, under-represented minority students rated themselves higher on these types of measures. Under-represented minority students also rated themselves higher than whites and others on: religiousness, spirituality, and risk-taking

On these measures of self-perception, men tended to rate themselves higher than women did. Exceptions to this pattern include self-ratings of artistic ability, cooperativeness, religiousness, and understanding of others, in which slightly larger proportions of women than men rated themselves as above average. Female Cornellians also rated themselves higher than the men did in “drive to achieve”: 88% of women as compared to 80% of men considered themselves as above average in drive.

Differences by college were substantial. For example, students from Industrial & Labor Relations and Hotel were more likely than students in other colleges to have reported that they had at least “above average” leadership abilities, popularity, social confidence, and public speaking abilities. Students from Arts, Industrial & Labor Relations, and Engineering students rated themselves more highly than those from the other colleges on their academic abilities. (See Appendix Tables A-29.a - A-29.u for more details.)

In the supplemental, local questions appended to the Cornell instrument, students were asked a similar self-rating question touching on five additional topics, as illustrated in Figure 16. Here too, Cornellians were more likely to have ranked their intellectual skills (such as “Acquire new skills and logic on my own”) as above average than they were to have ranked their social skills (such as “Relate well to people of different races, nations, and religions”) this way. Still, on all five measures, more than 80% of students considered themselves to be at least “above average” if not “excellent.” Women tended to rate themselves higher than men on the social questions, while men tended to rate themselves higher than women on the intellectual questions. (See Appendix Tables A-44.a - A-44.e)

Figure 16. Cornellians’ Self-ratings for Five Items on the Local Supplement

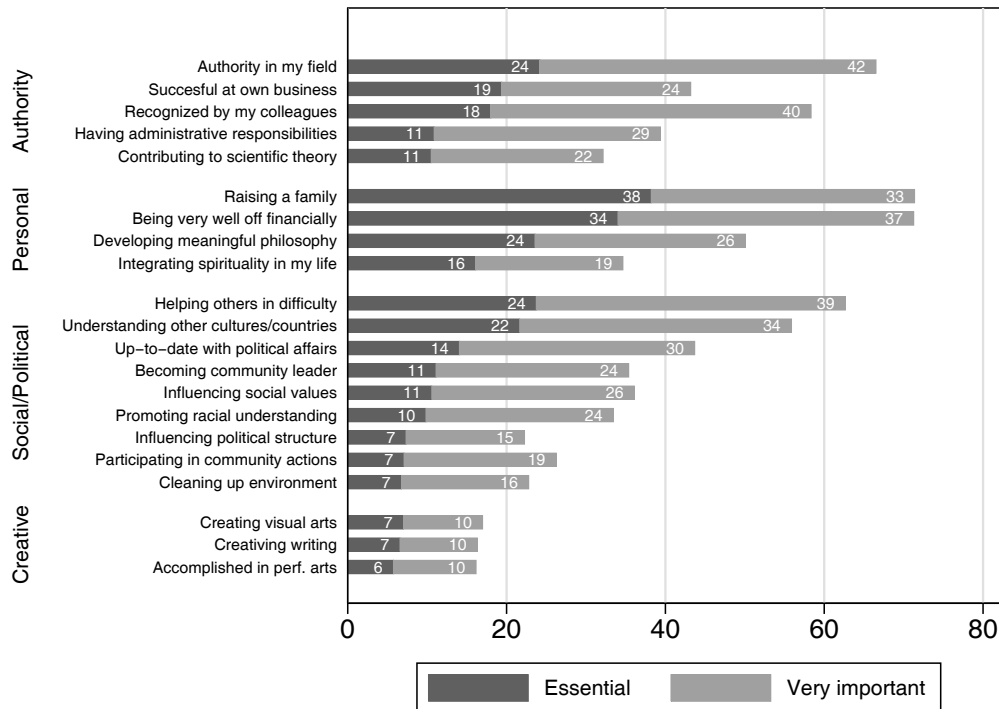


VIII. IMPORTANT LIFE GOALS

The 2003 CIRP Freshman Survey asked all respondents to indicate the importance they place on each of twenty-one various life goals. As illustrated in Figure 17, those goals can be clustered into four broader categories of life goals: goals relating to authority, personal goals, social or political goals, and goals relating to creative expression.

Similar to the findings on self-ratings reported in the preceding chapter, there was some tendency for Cornellians to have placed the highest value on goals relating to intellectual accomplishments, such as “Becoming an authority in my field” (with two-thirds of Cornellians saying this was “very important” or “essential”) and “Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field” (with 58% placing a high value on this goal). Cornellians also tended to place high levels of importance on “Being very well off financially” (71%), “Raising a family” (71%), “Helping others who are in difficulty” (63%), and “Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures” (56%). Compared with data from 2002, there was a slight increase (two percentage points) in the percentage of students who thought “Raising a family” was an “essential” life goal.

Figure 17. The Importance Cornellians Place on Various Life Goals



Only half of Cornellians thought it was “very important” or “essential” to “[Develop] a meaningful philosophy of life,” and 35% placed such a high value on “Integrating spirituality into my life.” Only about one-in-four Cornellians consider it “very important” or “essential” to influence the political structure, become involved in programs to clean up the environment, or participate in community actions. Overall, Cornellians placed the least importance on creative goals.

Compared to peers at both norm group institutions, Cornell students were more likely to have placed a very high level of importance on “Being very well off financially,” “Becoming successful in a business of my own,” “Obtaining recognition from my colleagues,” “Making a

theoretical contribution to science," and "[Cleaning] up the environment." Cornellians were less likely than students in either norm group to have placed high levels of importance on "Helping others," "Participating in a community action program," "[Promoting] racial understanding," "Keeping up to date with political affairs," and "Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures." Similarly, Cornellians place somewhat less importance on "Integrating spirituality into my life," "Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.)" As compared to the preceding year, incoming students to Cornell in 2003 were slightly more likely to place a high value on "Keeping up to date with political affairs."

In general, under-represented minority students were more likely than white students to have considered the listed life goals as "essential"; differences were especially large for goals which are social or political in nature. For example, four times the percentage of under-represented minority students as the percentage of white students (25% versus 6%) considered it "essential" to promote racial understanding.

See Appendix Tables A-35.a - A-35.u for additional comparisons.

IX. POLITICAL, RACIAL, AND RELIGIOUS VIEWS

The first part of this chapter addresses students' general political views; the second part addresses students' responses toward racial issues; and the third part addresses students' religious beliefs and practices.

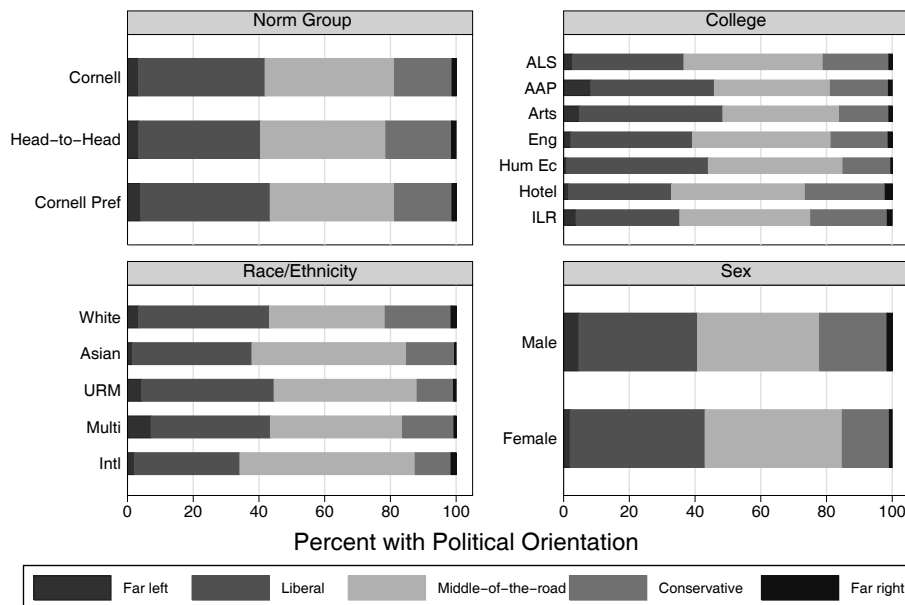
Political Views

Respondents to the 2003 CIRP Freshman Survey were asked to characterize their political views along a five category spectrum ranging from "far left" to "far right." Comparisons of this distribution across norm groups, racial/ethnic groups, college and sex are presented in Figure 18. Across all four panels of Figure 18, the extreme categories on the left and right (both shown in very dark gray) represent very small minorities; the overwhelming majority of all students across different categories considered themselves to be "liberal," "middle-of-the-road" or "conservative" (rather than "far left" or "far right").

At Cornell as well as at norm group institutions, more incoming students identified themselves as "liberal" than "conservative." This difference was largest in the college of Arts & Sciences (where 48% of students identified as liberals and only 16% identified as conservatives) and the college of Human Ecology (with 44% and 15% liberal and conservative, respectively) and smallest in Hotel (with 33% and 26% liberal and conservative, respectively). International and Asian American students were slightly less likely to be liberal than were white students, whereas under-represented minorities and multiracial students were more likely. Also, more women than men identify as liberal (see Appendix Table A-26)

The percentage of Cornellians who reported themselves as conservative in 2003 was three percentage points higher than it was in 2002.

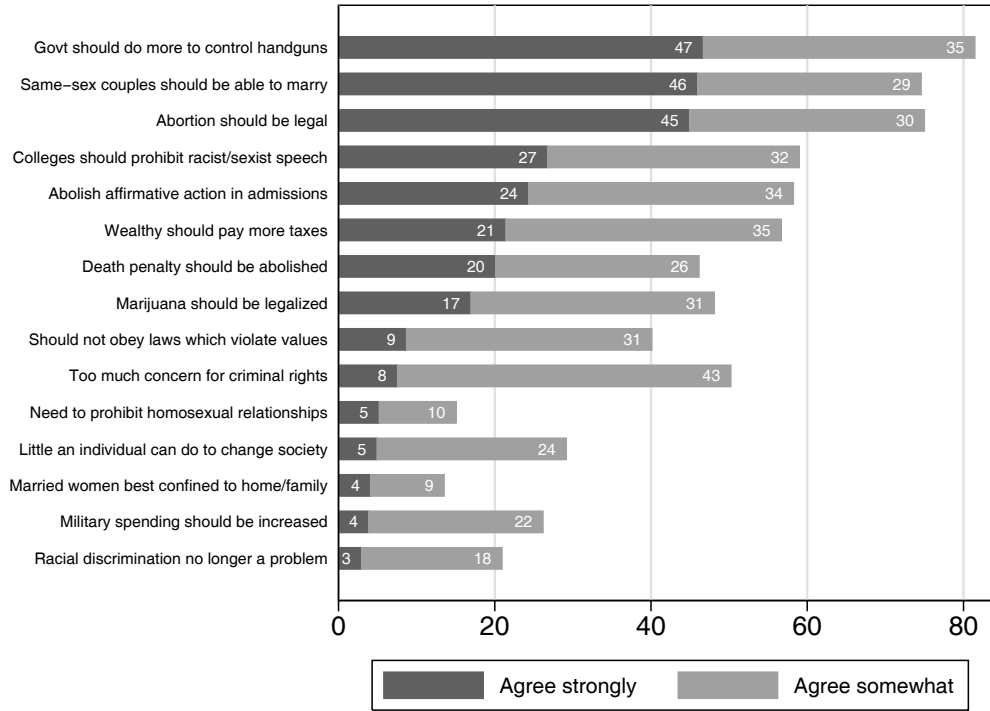
Figure 18. Political Views by Norm Group, Race and Ethnicity, College and Sex



Respondents were also asked to indicate their level of agreement on a four-point scale ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly" with sixteen different statements on a wide variety of topics including hand guns, homosexuality, taxes, capital punishment and the legality

of marijuana. The percentages of Cornellians who agreed with those statements are portrayed in Figure 19.

Figure 19. Percent of Cornellians Who Agree with Various Statements



Selected differences include:

Free speech on campus. Cornell students (59%) were much more likely than norm group students (less than 50%) to have agreed with the statement “Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus.” Under-represented minorities, international students, and females were more likely than whites and males to have strongly agreed with banning racist or sexist speech. See Appendix Table A-30.j.

Women’s role inside/outside the home. Most Cornellians (86%) disagreed with the statement “The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family.” There were large differences by gender on this item, with female Cornellians being twice as likely as men to have disagreed. Differences by race and college were presented in Appendix Table A-30.m.

Anomie. Confronted with the statement, “Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society,” most students at Cornell (71%) and in the norm groups (76-78%) reported disagreement. Within Cornell, under-represented minorities, and women placed more confidence in individuals’ power to change society than did Asians, international students, and men (see Appendix Table A-30.h.)

Affirmative action. About 58% of Cornell freshmen reported support for abolishing affirmative action, and 24% felt strongly so. However, there are large differences by race: while two-thirds of whites and more than half of Asians and internationals would abolish affirmative action, less than a quarter of under-represented minorities would. Men were much more willing to abolish affirmative action than were women.

Interracial Relationships

Students answered three items about past and future interracial relationships: First, they were asked if, in the last year, they had “socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group.” Second, they were asked as to the level of importance they placed on “helping to promote racial understanding.” And third, in a question regarding future plans, they were asked to estimate the likelihood that they “will socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group.”

Looking across measures, Cornell freshmen were less likely than norm group students to have socialized or to want to socialize with people from different racial backgrounds, and were less interested in helping to promote understanding. For example, while 79% of Cornell Preferred students and 77% of Head-to-Head students frequently socialized with others of different races, but only 74% of Cornell students did so (see Appendix Table A-24.r).

Differences by race in measures of interracial interaction reflect, in part, the demographics of majority/minority mixing: in a pure numeric sense, it is “easier” for a member of a minority group to encounter someone of a majority group than vice-versa. Thus, it is to be expected that more under-represented minority students (90%) reported interacting with others of a different race “frequently” in the past year than white students (69%). International students were the least likely to have different-race experiences (only 66%), perhaps reflecting the demographics of the home country. However, these demographic dynamics may not tell the full story, as international students were also least likely to anticipate frequent mixed-race interactions in the future, with 66% reporting this, as compared to 75% of white and 86% of under-represented minority students (see Appendix Table A-36.p). It was also the case that under-represented minority students at Cornell were more likely than whites to place a high level of importance on the life goal of promoting racial understanding (see Appendix Table A-35.q).

Religious Views

Survey respondents were asked to report their religious denominations on the CIRP survey instrument, with seventeen specific denominations listed plus “other religion” and “none.” Differences by norm group, race, sex and college are reported in Appendix Table A-21. Compared to norm group schools, Cornell has more freshmen who classified themselves as Jewish, Buddhist, Unitarian, Quaker, or no religion at all. Cornellians with no religion were disproportionately Asian American, multiracial, international, and male.

Three other measures in this survey related to religiosity: students reported on how often in the past year they had “attended a religious service” and had “discussed religion,” with answer choices of “frequently,” “occasionally,” and “not at all.” They were also asked to report on the number of hours per week they had spent on “prayer/meditation” during high school.

Overall, Cornell students appeared to be less religious than norm group students. For example, only 30% of Cornellians reported having attended religious services “frequently” as compared to about 36-38% in norm group schools. And while almost 90% of Head-to-Head and Cornell Preferred students had engaged in discussion about religion, only 85% of Cornell students did so. For more details on these measures, see Appendix Tables A-24.a, A-24.v, and A-32.m.

Survey respondents were also asked about the importance of “integrating spirituality into my life” and their “chances of [strengthening] religious beliefs/convictions” in the future. On these measures as well, Cornellians appear to place less value on spiritual or religious activities than do students at norm group institutions. (See Appendix Tables A-35.t and A-36.r.)

X. PARENTS AND THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF ATTENDING COLLEGE

Eighty-three percent of Cornell students indicated on the survey instrument that their parents were both alive and living together. The vast majority of the remainder reported that their parents were divorced or living apart, and just two percent of Cornellians indicated that one or both parents were deceased. These percentages were essentially the same for both norm groups.

However, there were some differences by group within Cornell. Specifically, under-represented minorities were much more likely to have parents living apart or to have a deceased parent, as only 56% have parents living together. Also, students from Architecture, Art & Planning, those from Agriculture & Life Sciences, and those from Industrial & Labor Relations were more likely to have parents living apart than were students from other colleges. (See Appendix Table A-18 for details.)

Parents' Occupations, Educational Attainment, and Income

Parents' Occupations. Respondents to the 2003 CIRP Freshman survey were asked to indicate the occupations of their mothers and fathers, marking one choice on a list of forty-four specific paid occupations plus "homemaker," "unemployed" and "other."

Twenty-nine percent of Cornellians indicated that their fathers were involved in business, a figure comparable to the 28% at Cornell Preferred institutions but lower than the 34% at Head-to-Head institutions. Compared to first year students at norm group schools, Cornell freshmen were slightly more likely to report that their fathers were in engineering (11%, compared to 7-10% at norm group schools) and less likely to indicate that their fathers were lawyers (6% at Cornell, 8-10% at norm group schools).

Only 17% of Cornell mothers were unemployed or homemakers, compared to 19-21% of norm group mothers. Cornell mothers were also slightly more likely to be involved in business, and much more likely to have "other" occupations not listed on the instrument.

There were a number of differences within Cornell by racial group and college affiliation, which can be viewed in the appendix (see Appendix Tables A-37 and A-38).

Highest degree obtained. A smaller percentage of Cornell fathers (52%) and mothers (37%) had graduate degrees than reported by students at both norm groups, where 56-57% reported that fathers and 39% reported that mothers had graduate degrees.

Among Cornellians, under-represented minority students were substantially less likely than students of other backgrounds to have reported a mother or a father with a college or graduate degree. Whites were not only more likely than any other group to have a father with a graduate degree, but were also much more likely than other groups to have a *mother* with a graduate degree. (See Figure 20 and Figure 21, as well as Appendix Tables A-27.a and A-27.b)

Figure 20. Highest Degree Earned by Father, by Norm Group, College, Race, and Sex

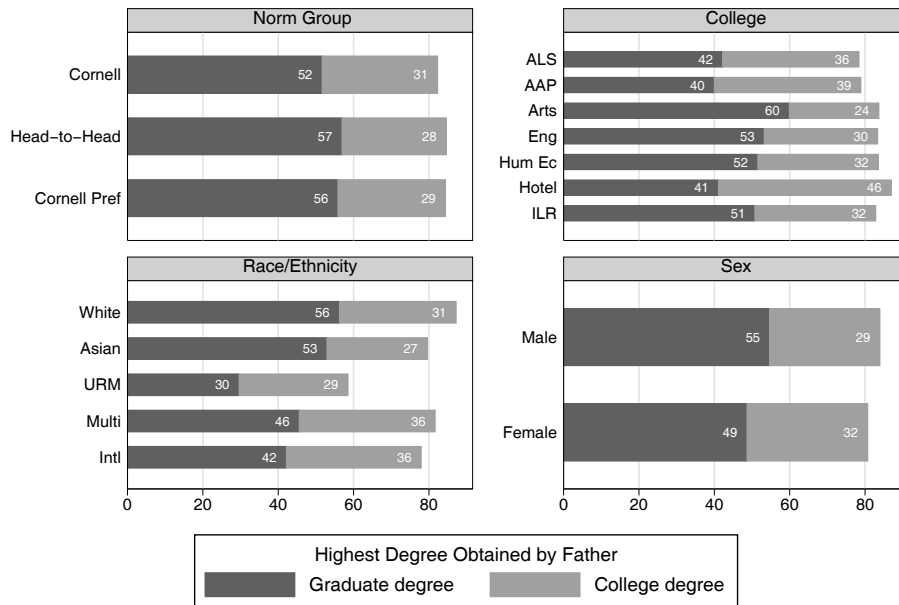
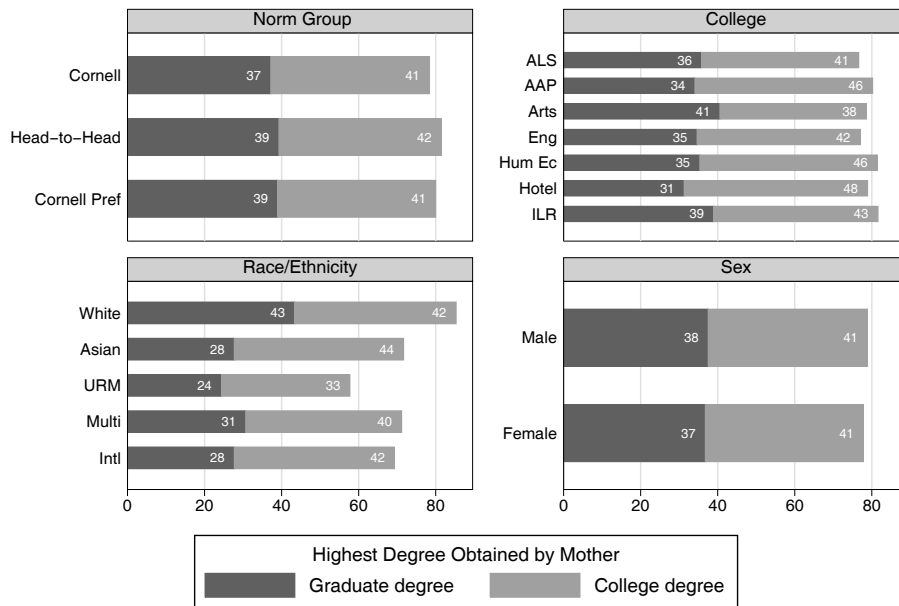


Figure 21. Highest Degree Earned by Mother, by Norm Group, College, Race and Sex



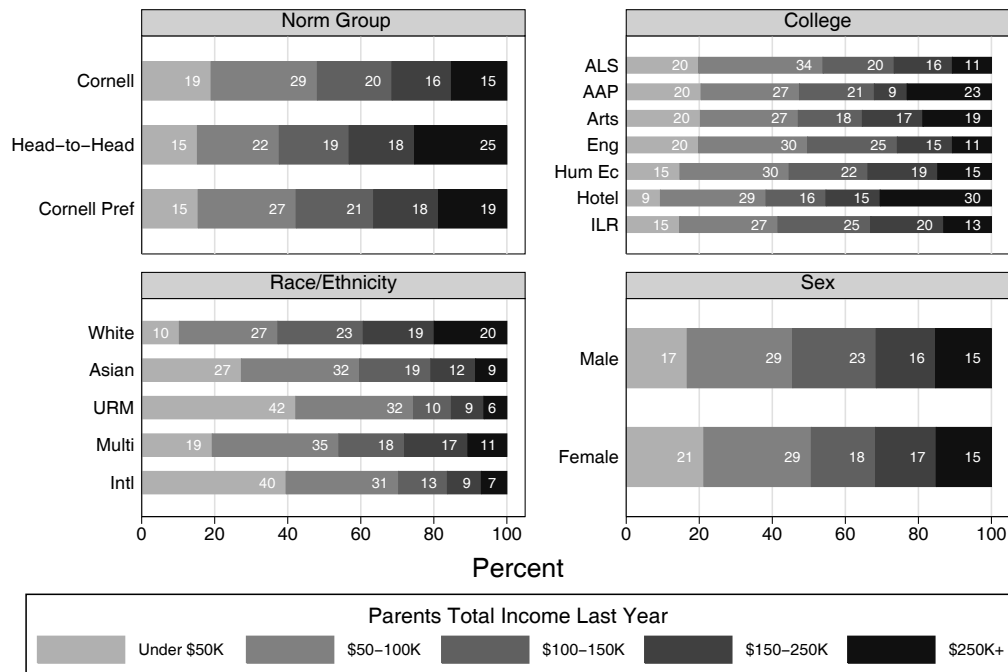
Parents' total income. Incoming students were asked for their “best estimate of your parents’ total income last year” by checking off one of fourteen income categories. These categories ranged from “less than \$10,000” to “\$250,000 or more.” In Figure 22, the fourteen income categories are consolidated into just five categories.

Overall, Cornell parents have lower levels of income than parents affiliated with norm group institutions. For example, 19% of Cornell parents take in less than \$50,000 each year, compared to 15% of norm group parents. At the other end of the income distribution, only 15% of

Cornell students – compared with 19-25% of students at norm group institutions – report that their parents’ incomes were \$250,000 or more last year. By and large, this pattern of lower incomes was true within colleges at Cornell as well, with a larger percentage of parents within each college receiving less than a total of \$50,000 in income last year than the percentage within the norm group schools (see Figure 22). However, a relatively large percentage of students affiliated with Hotel (30%) reported parental incomes over \$250,000 last year and a smaller percentage (9%) reported incomes of less than \$50,000. This represents a departure from 2002, in which only 20% of Hotel students reported parental incomes over \$250,000. There was also a large shift at the upper end of the distribution reported by students in Architecture, Art & Planning; in 2002, only 4% reported incomes over \$250,000 while the analogous figure for 2003 was 23%.

Racial variation in parents’ incomes at Cornell mirror broader patterns of racial disparities in the United States. White students at Cornell reported the highest levels of parents’ incomes, while under-represented minority students reported much lower levels. Indeed, 42% of under-represented minority students report that their parents had less than \$50,000 in annual income last year. The analogous figure for white students was merely 10% (see Figure 22 and Appendix Table A-20).

Figure 22. Distribution of Parents’ Total Income, by Norm Group, College, Race, and Sex



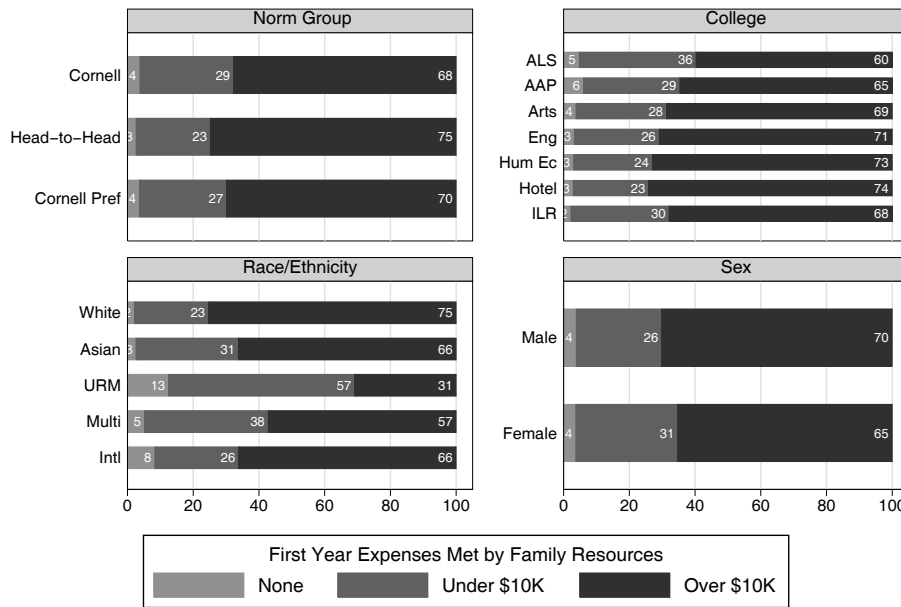
Meeting Educational Expenses

The 2003 CIRP Freshman Survey asked respondents, “How much of your first year’s educational expenses (room, board, tuition, and fees) do you expect to cover from each of the sources listed below?” Five sources were listed: “family resources (parents, relatives, spouses, etc.);” “my own resources (savings from work, work-study, other income);” “aid which need not be repaid (grants, scholarships, military funding, etc.);” “aid which must be repaid (loans, etc.);” and the catchall “other than above.” For each of these five sources, respondents indicated a

category corresponding to a dollar amount. In the discussion below, the six categories of dollar amounts are consolidated into three: none, something less than \$10,000 and \$10,000 or more.

Family resources. As illustrated in Figure 23, almost all first-year students at Cornell and at norm group institutions spent some family resources to meet educational expenses. more than About two-thirds of Cornellians’ families spent \$10,000 or more of their own resources to pay for their first year of educational expenses, a percentage slightly less than those for the norm groups. Given the differences in family income described above, it is not surprising that a small proportion of the families of under-represented minority students paid such a large amount out of their own pockets. (For more detail, also see Appendix Table A-19.a.)

Figure 23. Family Resources Spent on Meeting First Year’s Educational Expenses, by Norm Group, College, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex



Grants. Cornell students were less likely than students in either of the two norm groups considered here to have reported that grants were meeting \$10,000 or more of their first-year expenses; 40% of Cornell students reported grants at that level, as compared to 42% at Head-to-Head institutions, and 50% at Cornell preferred schools (see Figure 24). Compared to students who entered Cornell in 2002, those who entered in 2003 were more likely to have received grants of \$10,000 or more to pay for their education (40% as compared to 36% in 2002).

White students (32%), with the highest levels of family income (see Figure 22, page 37) were least likely of the racial/ethnic groups to have grants in excess of \$10,000, while 69% of under-represented minority students at Cornell reported grants that high (see Figure 24). The majority – 53% – of students in the college of Architecture, Art & Planning reported receiving grants in excess of \$10,000 towards their first-year educational expenses. The colleges of Engineering and Arts & Sciences have the next highest proportions at 45-46%. (Also see Appendix Table A-19.c.)

Figure 24. Grants Used Towards Meeting First Year’s Educational Expenses, by Norm Group, College, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex

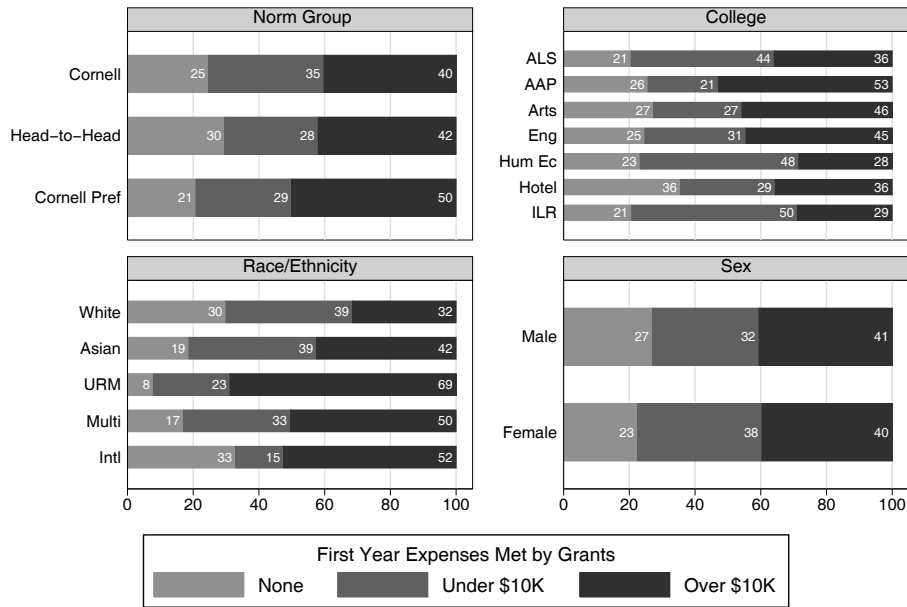
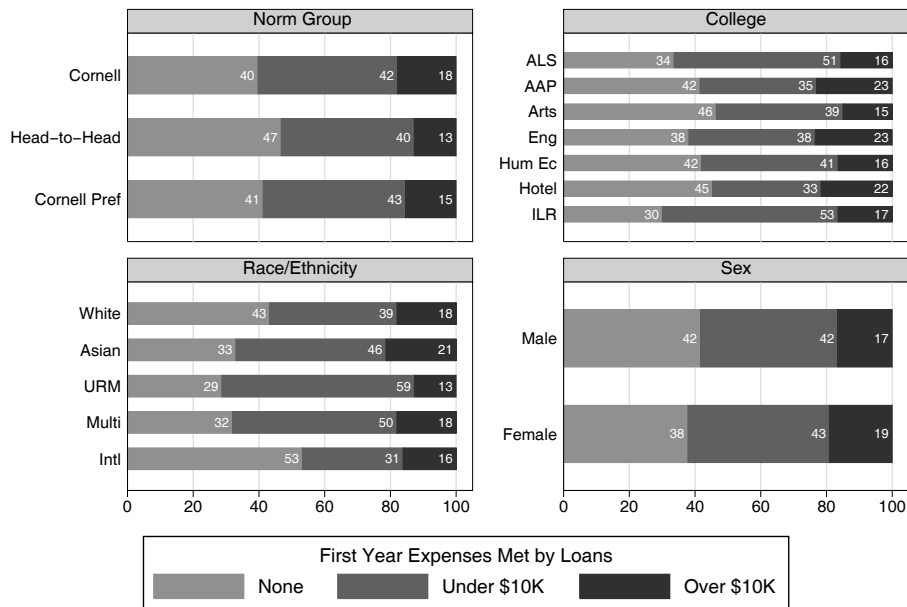


Figure 25. Loans Used Towards Meeting First Year’s Educational Expenses, by Norm Group, College, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex



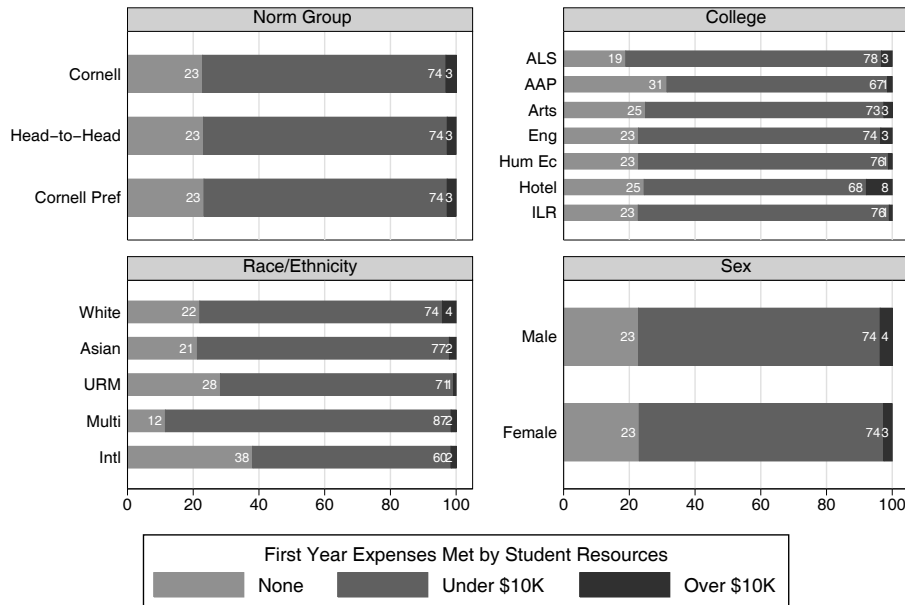
Loans. More Cornellians than students in norm group institutions reported meeting expenses with loans: 18% reported using over \$10,000 in loans, and another 42% reported lesser amounts of loans. These figures compare to 13-15% and 41-43%, respectively, at norm groups. (see Figure 25)

Under-represented minority students were slightly less likely than other students to have reported very large loans, with 13% of minority students reporting \$10,000 or more in loans, as compared to 18-21% of the other groups. The colleges of Engineering; Hotel; and Architecture, Art & Planning have 22-23% of students who reported loans greater than \$10,000. (See Appendix Table A-19.d)

Compared to 2002 freshmen, fewer 2003 freshmen will have loans to pay back, especially fewer whites, Asians, and multiracial students, as well as Arts and Sciences, Engineering, and Hotel freshmen.

Student resources. While few students pay more than \$10,000 towards meeting their first year educational expenses with their own resources (such as personal savings or work-study income), the majority – about three-quarters – of Cornell students do make some contribution to their expenses. This proportion was roughly equivalent to the percentages at norm group institutions (see Figure 26 and Appendix Table A-19.b). Compared to 2002 freshmen, more 2003 freshmen reported spending no personal savings to finance college.

Figure 26. Student Resources Spent on Meeting First Year’s Educational Expenses, by Norm Group, College, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex



Concerns about Financing College. Students responding to this survey were asked, “Do you have any concern about your ability to finance your college education?” Responses included: “None (I am confident that I will have sufficient funds);” “Some (but I probably will have enough funds);” and “Major (not sure I will have enough funds to complete college).” Thirty-nine percent of Cornell students reported that they had no such concerns; this compares to 41-46% of students in the norm groups. The 2003 freshmen at Cornell had less concern about their ability to pay than did 2002 Cornell freshmen. For example, 36% of entering students in 2002 indicated no concerns; this increased to 39% in 2003.

White and international students at Cornell were more likely than other race students to hold no concerns about their ability to finance their college education, with 45% reporting no concerns. This contrasts sharply with under-represented minorities, among whom only 21% reported no concerns and 22% reported “major” concerns. There were substantial differences by

sex, with male students being far more likely to have expressed no concerns about ability to pay (see Figure 27).

Looking across colleges at Cornell, the highest level of concerns about ability to pay was in Agriculture & Life Sciences, where only 31% of students have no serious concerns and 13% have “major” concerns about their ability to pay. Conversely, the Hotel School reported the lowest levels of concern, where almost half of students reported no concerns and only 5% have major concerns. (See Figure 27 and Appendix Table A-33)

Figure 27. Concern for Ability to Pay for College, by Norm Group, College, Race and Sex.

