

Texas State First-Time Freshmen: Results of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) 2003 Freshman Survey

Background

Texas State University-San Marcos has participated in CIRP Freshman Survey for three years, in the fall semesters of 2000, 2001 and 2003. New freshmen complete surveys in their first discussion group meetings during PAWS Preview. In the fall of 2003, surveys were completed by 2,556 students or 81 percent of the 3,139 new freshmen enrolled at Texas State. This report focuses on the responses of a subset of 2,439 new students who enrolled as first-time, full-time freshmen at Texas State.

Findings

In addition to results from Texas State first-time full-time freshmen in 2000, 2001 and 2003, comparison data are reported for U.S. public university freshmen from institutions of medium selectivity¹ (n=13,843 in 2003).

- The Texas State freshman class has more freshmen of Mexican American/Chicano descent (14%) than do public universities (1%), and fewer freshmen of White/Caucasian descent (78%) than public universities (90%).
- More than half (53%) of Texas State freshmen come from homes 101 to 500 miles from campus.
- One quarter (27%) of Texas State freshmen applied only to Texas State for admission. Nearly half (49%) of Texas State freshmen applied to two or more colleges in addition to Texas State.
- Texas State has more freshmen (25%) coming from homes 11 to 50 miles away than public universities (14%).
- Texas State freshmen more often report drinking beer frequently or occasionally in high school (66%) than public university freshmen (49%), and they more often report drinking wine or liquor (71%) than public university freshmen (53%).
- Texas State freshmen reported more frequent socialization with someone of another racial/ethnic group (76%) than public university freshmen (59%).
- Texas State freshmen less often communicated via e-mail during high school (56%) than public university freshmen (67%).
- More Texas State freshmen spent 20+ hours per week socializing with friends during high school (30%) than public university freshmen (19%).

¹ Selectivity is an estimate of the mean score of entering freshmen on the Verbal plus Mathematical portions of the SAT (or the converted SAT Math and Verbal equivalents from the ACT composite). In 2003, public universities of medium selectivity have mean scores ranging from 1085 to 1139.

- Fourteen percent of Texas State freshmen reported they spent no time partying during high school compared to 24 percent of public university freshmen.
- Texas State freshmen less often expect to cover first-year college expenses from grant aid (42%) than public university freshmen (57%).
- Texas State freshmen most often note very important reasons for attending college as “to be able to make more money” (74%) and “to learn more about things that interest me” (71%).
- Texas State freshmen less often decided to attend college to get a better job (64%) than did public university freshmen (75%).
- When asked about reasons that were very important in influencing the decision to attend a particular college, Texas State freshmen were less likely than public university freshmen to cite the very good academic reputation of the college (18% Texas State compared to 54% public university) or the financial assistance offered (16% Texas State compared to 27% public university).
- Texas State freshmen are less likely to estimate chances as very good that they will be satisfied with their college (43%) compared to public university freshmen (54%).

Texas State Survey Questions

In 2003, Texas State developed 21 local questions that were appended to the survey. Important findings from these survey results include:

- A campus visit was the most influential source for forming an impression about the college for 40 percent of new freshmen.
- The Internet was an important or very important source of information about Texas State during the college choice process for 69 percent of females and 57 percent of males.
- Most Texas State freshmen (90%) know personally at least one other student in attendance. More than one-third (37%) know six or more students attending the university.
- Freshmen are most concerned about succeeding academically in college (44%), followed by finances (24%) and making friends/fitting in (21%).
- Seventy-one percent of Texas State freshmen think that the “average” Texas State student uses alcohol two or more times per week. Fourteen percent think the average use is five or more times per week.
- Sixty percent of female and 42 percent of male freshmen are likely or very likely to get involved in Texas State student organizations.

- Half (50%) of female freshmen are most likely to become involved in special interest or service student organizations. About one-third (35%) of males are most likely to become involved in sports/sport spectator organizations, and 25 percent in special interest or service organizations.
- Sixty-one percent of freshmen are likely or very likely to participate in university athletic events.
- Only 20 percent of Texas State freshmen do not have a job nor plan to work during their first year.
- Thirty-seven percent of Texas State freshmen expect to spend 10 or fewer hours per week preparing for classes.