

Appendix T

The Freshman Survey (CIRP)

A Profile of Incoming Freshmen at the University of California, San Diego: Highlights from the 2004 National Freshman Survey

The Cooperative Institutional Research (CIRP) survey (also known as the “National Freshman Survey”) is part of the largest national assessment in higher education. Now in its 39th year, the UCLA survey is the nation’s longest running and most comprehensive assessment of student attitudes and plans. The survey serves as a resource for researchers, practitioners and policy makers throughout the world. Through the efforts of the six undergraduate colleges at UCSD last summer, 3,539 first-time UCSD freshmen were given the CIRP during college orientation sessions. This report presents a brief summary of selected highlights from the UCSD findings and compares these data to national norms for “highly selective” public colleges and universities, (N=42,017) and all public four-year colleges included in the national CIRP sample (62,839). In the following summary of highlights, page numbers are used to refer to the location of the tables containing the referenced UCSD and comparison data in the 2004 CIRP report for UCSD.

The survey instrument is revised annually to reflect the changing concerns of the academic community and of others who use the information. Reports from prior administrations of the CIRP at UCSD are available in the “Surveys” section on the UCSD Student Research and Information website (<http://studentresearch.ucsd.edu>) In addition, each of the six undergraduate colleges at UCSD receive individual reports about their incoming freshmen and new transfer students. The data are useful to the general community of current and future college students, their parents, and college faculty.

In 2004, the Freshman Survey was also administered to incoming students at seven of the eight general campuses of the University of California. It is anticipated that a report will be produced by the CIRP that will enable comparisons of the UCSD freshmen profile with other UC freshmen.

A major purpose of the Freshman Survey is to provide initial input or entry characteristics information for longitudinal research on new UCSD students. To that end, the Student Research and Information office also conducts an additional survey to gather follow-on data for the UCSD Freshman Survey respondents. The Your First College Year (YFCY) survey is sent to students at the end of the first year of college and uses many of the same items from the Freshman Survey in addition to questions concerning college experiences, behaviors, and perceptions. This survey, together with the Freshman survey provides useful data on first year student adjustment and change, and enables a clearer focus on the impact of various college experiences over time by controlling for the entry characteristics and dispositions of the student. Reports from prior administrations of the YFCY integrated with longitudinal data from the Freshman Survey are also available from the “Surveys” section of the Student Research and Information website.

Recent press releases and reports about the CIRP have focused on the shifting political and social attitudes, grade inflation, and academic engagement among the nation’s freshmen, and increasing anxiety over financing college. These reports use data based on the 2004 freshman norms obtained from the responses of 289,452 students at 440 of the nation’s baccalaureate colleges and universities. The national data have been statistically adjusted to reflect the responses of the 1.2 million first-time, full-time students entering four-year colleges and universities as freshmen in 2004. Because the

