

Cornell University

**2002 CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND EXTENDED REPORT

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Introduction to the 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.
- ▶ Through a consortium of institutions with whom Cornell shares data, it is possible to compare Cornell's first year students to first year students at institutions in two "norm groups." In this report, the two 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 first year students were less likely than first year students at norm group institutions to come from distant places within the U.S. Instead, larger shares of Cornell's students were either local (e.g. from New York state) or international. Partly because of the latter, Cornell students were also slightly less likely than students in norm group institutions to be native English speakers. (See Figure 1, page 8.)

### *High School Experiences*

- ▶ Compared to students at the two norm groups considered in this report, incoming students at Cornell had averaged fewer hours studying in high school. They were also less likely to have reported having studied with other students or to have tutored another student "frequently." (Discussion on page 10.)
- ▶ Eighteen percent of incoming Cornell students reported having done no reading for pleasure during high school. This is slightly higher than the 15-16% reported by students affiliated with the two norm groups. The percentages are higher for men (22%) than for women (15%), and for students affiliated with Industrial & Labor Relations (30%). Only 10% of students with citizenship outside the U.S. did no reading for pleasure. (See Figure 6, page 14.)
- ▶ About 12% of first year students at Cornell and in the norm groups had "remedial work" of some kind prior to entering college, with 7% having had such tutoring in mathematics. Larger percentages of students – such as 18% at Cornell – anticipate requiring remedial work in the future. The disparity between past experience and future anticipation is especially large for under-represented minority students; 18% of those students had special tutoring in the past, but 43% report feeling that they will need such work in the future. (See figures on pages 11 and 12.)

- ▶ Cornell students participated less in volunteer or community service in high school than did students affiliated with the two norm groups. There are substantial differences by race, with women and under-represented minorities having done more volunteer work.

### *Reasons for College*

- ▶ The majority of students at Cornell and at the two norm group institutions 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. Still, Cornell students are slightly less likely than students in our norm groups to have said that such reasons were “very important.” In contrast, Cornell students – and especially those in Engineering and in Hotel – are more likely than students at norm group institutions to have emphasized the financial and career gains of college such as, “to make more money.” (See Figure 7, page 17.)
- ▶ Almost 70% of incoming Cornell students indicated that Cornell was their first choice institution, and an additional 19% indicated that it was their second choice. These figures are comparable to those from Head-to-Head institutions, and larger than those from the Cornell Preferred norm group. At Cornell, there is variability by college, as more than 80% of students affiliated with Agriculture & Life Sciences; Architecture, Art & Planning; and Hotel ranked Cornell as their first choice. (See Figure 8, page 19.)
- ▶ First-year students reported that the single most important factor in choosing a particular institution is “good academic reputation.” The second most important factor – though well behind the first – is “rankings in national magazines.” Among Cornellians, under-represented minorities are more likely than white students or Asian American students to have indicated that the following reasons were “very important” in choosing Cornell: “I was offered financial assistance”; “This college offers special educational programs”; “High school counselor advised me”; “Rankings in national magazines”; “Information from a website” and “Reputation for campus safety.” Under-represented minority students were less likely to indicate that early decision was important to them in deciding to attend Cornell. (See Figure 9, page 20.)

### *Academic Plans*

- ▶ Ninety-two percent of Cornell freshman aspire to some sort of graduate degree, a figure comparable, though slightly lower, than the percent among students within both norm groups. White students are less likely than students in other racial/ethnic categories to anticipate getting a graduate degree. Twenty-eight percent of first-year Cornellians intend to stay at Cornell for some graduate degree – a percentage slightly higher than that for norm group institutions. (See Figure 13, page 25.)
- ▶ Cornell students are 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, for example, Figure 11, page 22.)

- ▶ Cornellians are less likely than students in norm group institutions to have anticipated social interactions in college such as: participating in community service, participating in student organizations, communicating regularly with professors, and developing close friendships. (See, for example, Figure 11, page 22.)

### *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 are 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 16, page 28 and Figure 17, page 29.)

### *Important Life Goals*

- ▶ Two-thirds of Cornellians indicated that “becoming an authority in my field” was a “very important” or “essential” life goal. Slightly higher percentages placed such high levels of importance on “raising a family” and on “being very well off financially.” (See Figure 18, page 30.)
- ▶ Compared to their counterparts at norm group institutions, Cornell students are more likely to have placed high levels of importance on “being very well off financially,” “becoming successful in a business of my own,” and “making a theoretical contribution to science.” Cornell students placed somewhat less importance on social/ political goals and on finding meaning in life. (See discussion on page 30.)

### *Political, Racial, and Religious Views*

- ▶ As is 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 Engineering are most likely to have identified as conservative and students in Architecture, Art & Planning are least likely. (See Figure 19, page 32.)

### *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 79% reported this regarding their mothers. A slightly smaller percentage of Cornell students than students at norm group institutions reported that their parents had received a graduate degree (for example, 52% of Cornellians’ fathers, as compared to 54-58% of fathers of students at norm groups institutions). (See Figure 21 and Figure 22, both on page 37.)
- ▶ Cornell parents are somewhat less wealthy, on the whole, than parents at norm group institutions. This varies some by college, with 64% of students in Architecture, Art & Planning reporting parents’ incomes of less than \$100,000 last year, as compared to 37% of students in Hotel and in Industrial & Labor Relations. Fully three-quarters of under-represented minority students but only 37% of white students reported family incomes this low. (See Figure 23, page 38.)

- ▶ Sixty-nine 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 72% for Head-to-Head schools and comparable to the 68% for Cornell Preferred institutions. (See Figure 24, page 39.)
- ▶ Seventy-seven percent of Cornell students will meet some of their first-year expenses themselves (as with a work-study job or savings), but only 4% will spend over \$10,000 of their own resources. These figures vary by college, with students in Architecture, Art & Planning most likely to report that they will not be funding any of their first year expenses themselves. (See Figure 25, page 40.)
- ▶ Cornell students 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 36% of Cornell students reported grants at that level, as compared to 45-47% in the norm groups. There is considerable variation by college in grants of this high level, with 58% of students in Architecture, Art & Planning but less than a quarter of students in the contract colleges of Agriculture & Life Sciences and Human Ecology reporting grants at that level. (See Figure 26, page 41.)
- ▶ More Cornell students than students at norm group institutions reported using loans to meet first-year expenses: 64% of Cornellians, but 57-58% of students in the norm groups had used some amount of loans. Sixteen percent of Cornellians (compared to 13-14% of students in norm groups) reported using loans in excess of \$10,000 for first year expenses. Among Cornell's colleges, Engineering students are most likely to have loans and most likely to have loans of \$10,000 or larger. Students in Architecture, Art & Planning are least likely to have reported the large loans, with only 9% reporting using loans of at least \$10,000 to meet their first year expenses. (See Figure 27, page 41.)
- ▶ Most Cornellians (63%) expressed at least "some" concern that they could run out of funds before completing college. This percentage is comparable to – though slightly higher – than the percentage within norm group schools. Students in Architecture, Art & Planning are most likely, and students in the Hotel School least likely, to have expressed concern regarding ability to pay, with percentages of 84% and 54% respectively. Eighty-one percent of under-represented minority students expressed some concern, as compared to 58% of white students. (See Figure 28, page 42.)

## II. INTRODUCTION TO THE CIRP STUDY AND REPORT

The *Cooperative Institutional Research Program* is a national longitudinal study administered by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. The Freshman Survey instrument is administered annually at some 1,800 institutions, including Cornell University, each year. Nationwide, over 11 million students participate. The CIRP is generally regarded as the most comprehensive source of information on incoming college students.

The analyses described in this report are based primarily on the responses of 2,652 Cornell freshmen – 96% of that incoming class – who entered in the fall of 2002. 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: basic 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. Accordingly, in addition to extensive analyses of Cornell students’ responses, this report considers data from students affiliated with a small number of institutions who participate in a data-sharing consortium. These norm group institutions are grouped into two “norm groups”:

- “Head-to-Head” institutions are those with 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

The analyses presented here also highlight differences among Cornell’s first year students, making comparisons by gender, race/ethnicity/citizenship, and college affiliation.

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

The following abbreviations for Cornell’s seven undergraduate colleges are used within this report:

- ALS: New York State College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
- AAP: College of Architecture, Art, & 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 of any race or ethnicity.



### III. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

#### *Sex, Race, Age, and Citizenship*

**Gender.** While just over half of all Cornell freshmen are female, the gender distribution varies greatly between the colleges, with the highest percentage of females in Human Ecology at 76% and the lowest in Engineering at 26%. (See Appendix Table A-1.)

**Race.** Cornell freshmen are about 62% white, 17% Asian American, 11% under-represented minorities, 5% multiracial, and 6% international. Races are distributed differently across the colleges. In the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, more than 80% of freshmen are white, compared to less than half of those in Engineering and Arts, Architecture and Planning. Asian Americans are most highly represented in Engineering, where they make up nearly a third, but they are least represented in Agriculture & Life Sciences and Industrial & Labor Relations, where they make up less than 7%. Under-represented minorities are most highly represented in Architecture, Art & Planning and Industrial & Labor Relations, where they comprise almost 22%. (See Appendix Table A-23.a.)

**Age.** Cornellians are slightly younger than their norm group peers. Almost 77% of first year students at Cornell are no more than 18 years old, compared to 72% of students at Cornell Preferred institutions and 69% of students at Head-to-Head schools. Under-represented minorities are the youngest racial group, with 85% age 18 or younger, followed by 75-78% of whites, Asian Americans, and multiracial students. Less than half (48%) of international students are age 18 or younger. There are also differences by sex: among first year students at Cornell, about 30% of men, but only 20% of women, are older than 18 years. (See Appendix Table A-2.)

**U.S. citizenship and native language.** Cornell has more international students than our norm group institutions: more than 11% of Cornell freshmen are neither citizens nor permanent residents, compared to 9% of Head-To-Head students and 6% of students attending Cornell Preferred institutions. The Colleges of Architecture, Art & Planning; Arts & Sciences; Engineering; and Hotel have the largest percentages of internationals. Cornell has more students for whom English is not their native language (16%, compared to 13% of Head-To-Head students and 11% of Cornell Preferred students). More than 65% of international students at Cornell reported being non-native English speakers, followed by 44% of Asians, 16% of under-represented minorities, 6% of multiracial students, and less than 4% of whites. (See Appendix Tables A-3 and A-9.)

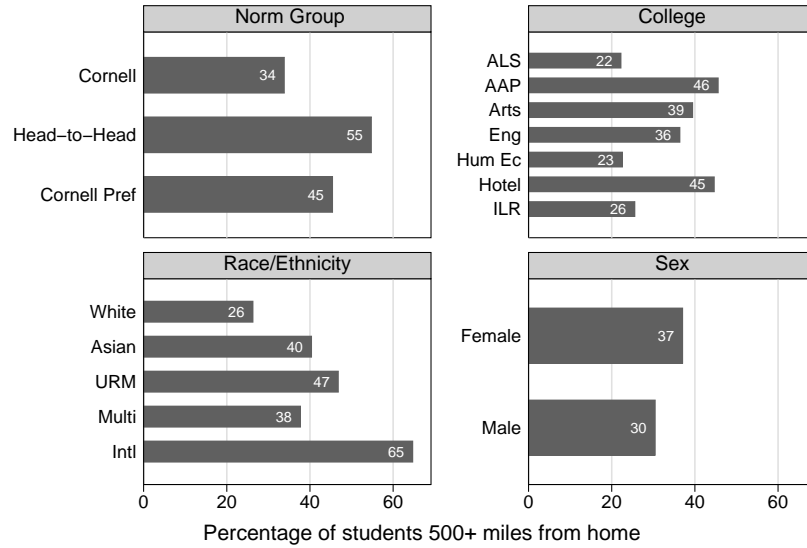
#### *Distance from Home*

More Cornell freshmen live close to home than do students at norm group institutions; Cornell's contract colleges in particular draw strongly from within the state. Over half of students in Head-to-Head institutions and 45% of students at Cornell Preferred schools have traveled more than 500 miles to school, but only about a third of Cornellians are that far from home (see Figure 1).

Not surprisingly, international students are more likely than students with U.S. citizenship to come from a long distance, with 64% of international students traveling over 500 miles. Beyond that, however, there are still large racial/ethnic differences. For example, 47% of under-represented minorities, but only about a quarter of white students, are 500 or more miles from home. Women are slightly more likely than men to come from such a far distance (37% versus 30%, see Figure 1) The three contract colleges (Industrial & Labor Relations, Agriculture & Life Sciences, and Human Ecology) have

relatively low percentages of students far from home (22-26%), while Architecture, Art & Planning and Hotel have more than 44% of their freshmen traveling 500 miles or more. (See 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



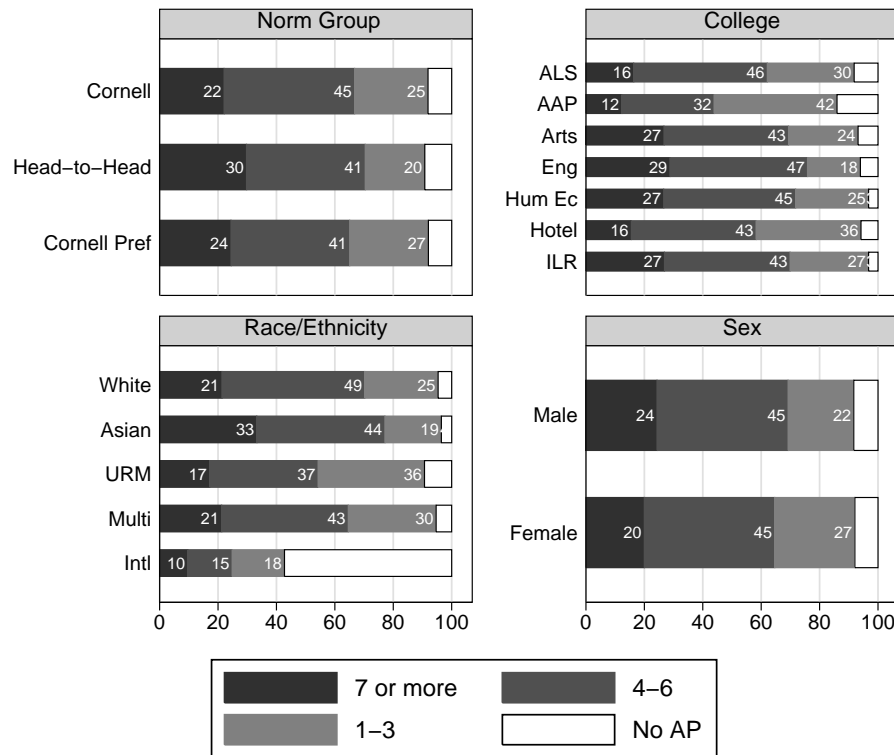
### IV. HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

The first part of this chapter addresses the academic elements of first year students' reports of their high school experiences, and the second part addresses the social and personal aspects.

#### *Academic Experiences in High School*

**AP experience.** At Cornell and norm group institutions, approximately nine out of ten college students took at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course or exam in high school. First year students at Head-To-Head institutions took slightly more AP credits than Cornell students and Cornell Preferred students. Among Cornell students, there are substantial differences by race/ethnicity, perhaps partly reflecting geographic differences in AP availability. In particular, international students took far fewer AP courses and exams than American students (see Figure 2). Students entering the College of Engineering took more APs than did other Cornell freshmen, with more than three-quarters of Engineering freshmen having had 4 or more AP credits in high school. (Also see Appendix Tables A-25.a and A-25.b.)

Figure 2. Number of AP Credits Taken in High School by Norm Group, Race and Ethnicity, College, and Sex.



**High School Grades.** As might be expected at an elite institution, nearly all Cornell students had a "B" or better average in high school. Indeed, the majority – 60% – had "A" averages. Cornell, with 60%, had slightly fewer freshmen with "A" averages than Head-To-Head schools (64%) but more than Cornell Preferred schools (57%). (See Appendix Table A-7.)

Among Cornell students, more international students (65%) got an “A” average than the overall proportion at Cornell, while only 47% of under-represented minorities had an “A” average. Differences by college at Cornell are also substantial, with two-thirds of students in Engineering, Agriculture & Life Sciences and Human Ecology having had “A” averages in high school and less than 38% of Hotel and Architecture, Art & Planning students having such an average.

**Experiences in the classroom.** The CIRP instrument includes 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 our norm groups reporting being at least “occasionally” bored. Cornell students are slightly more likely than students at norm group institutions to have overslept and missed class as well as to have come late to class.

Among Cornell students, a slightly larger percentage of white students than other race Americans were bored “frequently” (45% versus 40% among Asian Americans and under-represented minorities), while only a quarter of international students reported such frequent boredom in class. Within Cornell, differences on the other measures of classroom experiences are generally small. (For details, see Appendix Tables A-24.b, A-24.o, and A-24.s.)

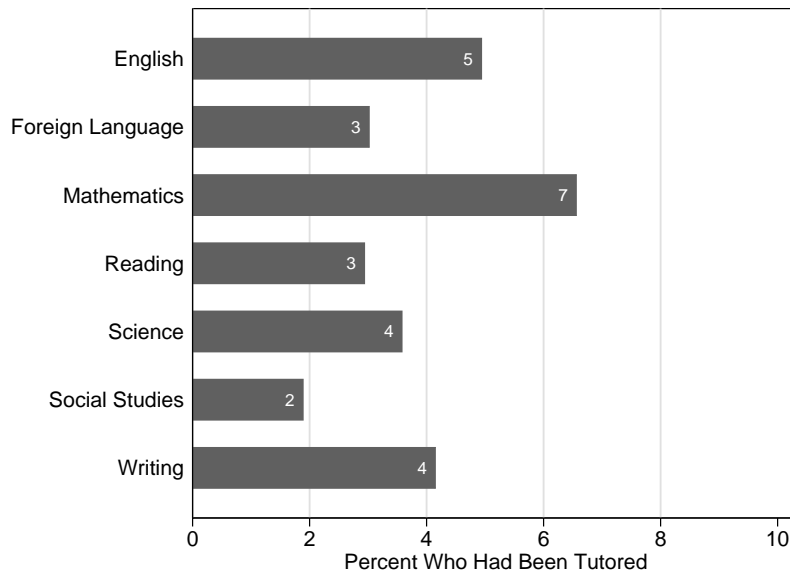
**Study habits outside of the classroom.** Students responded to three different measures of the frequency of various study behaviors. Two were measured on a scale including “not at all,” “occasionally” and “frequently;” these were “tutored another student,” and “studied with other students.” A third 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, 60% 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 67% of Head-To-Head students. Among Cornell students, international students were most likely to have spent six or more hours each week on studies, with three-quarters reporting such long hours. Less than half of Cornell under-represented minority students reported having studied for six or more hours in high school. Women appeared to have studied longer than men (e.g. 65% versus 55% for six or more hours of weekly study time), and a larger portion of students in Arts & Sciences studied long hours than students in other Cornell colleges.

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 and Human Ecology freshmen were more likely than Architecture, Art & Planning and Hotel freshmen to have tutored others. (For details, see Appendix Tables A-24.d, A-24.e, and A-33.a.)

**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 12-13% of students at Cornell and our norm group institutions had any experience with this kind of tutoring in any of the seven listed areas. The largest share of these students (e.g. 7% of incoming Cornellians) had required remedial work in mathematics, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Cornellians Experiences with Special Tutoring or Remedial Work, by Area



There are notable differences between patterns in having had remedial work *in the past* and anticipating needing remedial work *in the future* that can be seen by comparing Figure 4 and Figure 5. For example, while Cornell students are about equally likely to have had past experiences with special tutoring as students at norm group institutions, Cornell students are *less likely* than those peers to anticipate future remedial work. Similarly, women and men at Cornell have roughly equal rates of remedial experience, but women are more likely than men to anticipate it in the future. The distinction between experience and anticipation is especially profound among under-represented minority students: 18% of under-represented minorities at Cornell had remedial work in the past, but more than twice that number – 43% – anticipate needing it in the future. (Detailed results appear in Appendix Tables A-10.a and A-10.b.)

Figure 4. *Prior Experiences with Any Remedial Work, by Norm Group, Race and Ethnicity, College, and Sex.*

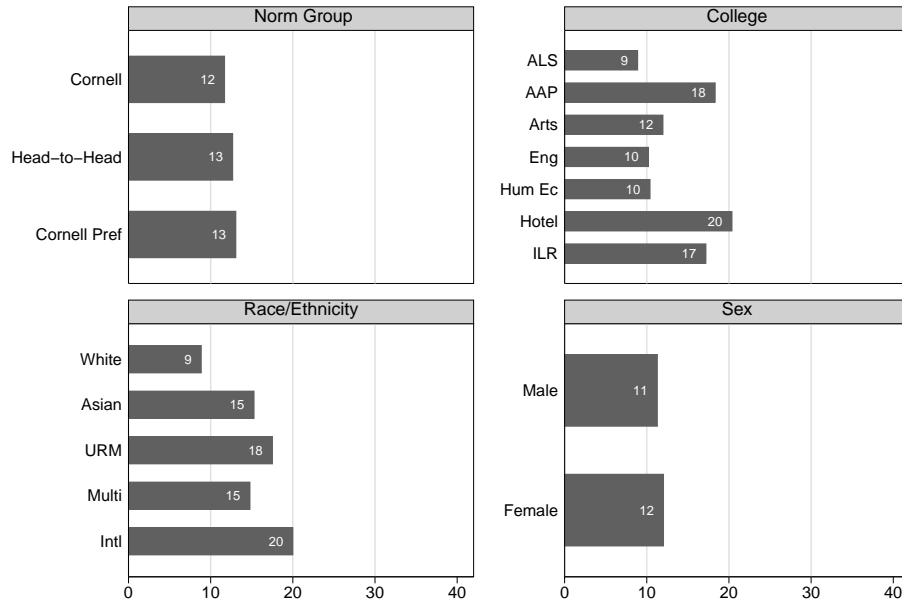
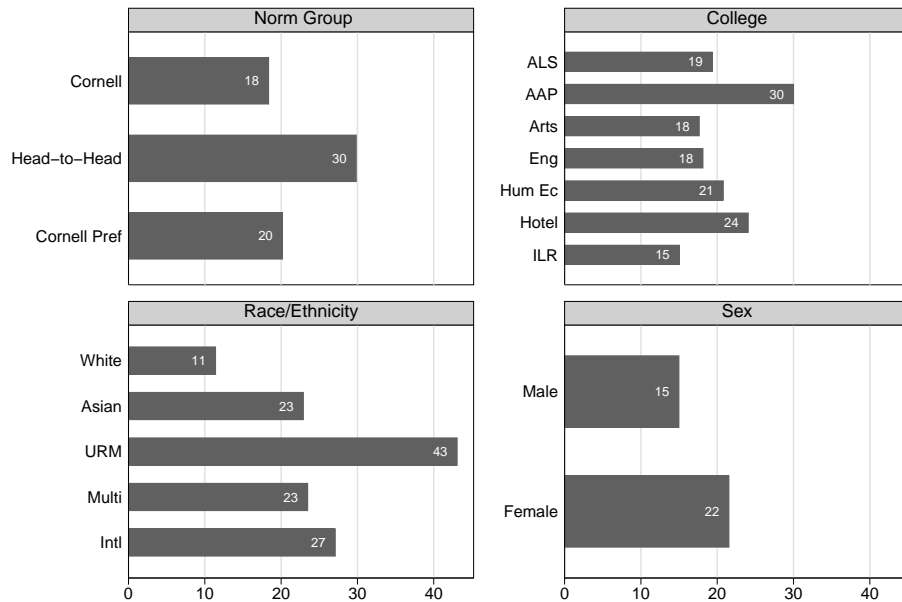


Figure 5. *Anticipation of Any Future Remedial Work, by Norm Group, Race and Ethnicity, College, and Sex*



**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, only 27% of Cornell students asked for advice from teachers “frequently,” while 34% of Head-To-Head students and 30% of Cornell Preferred students did so. Fewer Asian Americans than whites (22% versus 36%) reported having been a guest in a teacher’s home. Also, women are more likely to have asked for help than are men, as about a third asked for help frequently, compared to about a quarter of men. (See Appendix Tables A-24.f, A-24.n, and A-33.c.)

### *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 3-4% of Cornellians and their peers at norm group institutions reported smoking frequently, though white students are 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, 12% of Cornellians reported drinking beer “frequently;” and the percent is equivalent for drinking wine or liquor. For Head-to-Head schools, the percentages are 13-14% and for Cornell Preferred Schools, they are 7-8%.

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, 60% of white students but less than 40% of Asian Americans drank beer at least occasionally. Men drank and partied more than women, as they are almost twice as likely to have been frequent beer drinkers. Notably, first year students associated with the Hotel School drank, smoked, and partied more than students in other colleges; in particular, Hotel students are almost 5 times as likely as Engineering students to have been frequent drinkers of beer, wine, or liquor. (For more information about these items, see Appendix Tables A-24.g, A-24.h, A-24.i, and A-33.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, fewer Cornell students did volunteer work than their counterparts in norm group schools. For example, only 36% of Cornell students volunteered frequently, compared to over 40% of students in both norm groups. This is notable given that 40% of Cornellians (in addition to 42% of students at Head-to-Head and 37% of students at Cornell Preferred institutions) reported that their high school required service in order to graduate.

Differences by race are substantial, with almost half of under-represented minorities and multiracial students having done volunteer work, compared to about a third of other groups. Females volunteered substantially more than males did: 43% of women and only 28% of men reported that they volunteered frequently. (See Appendix Tables A-16, A-24.l, A-24.aa, and A-33.g for further details on these items.)

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

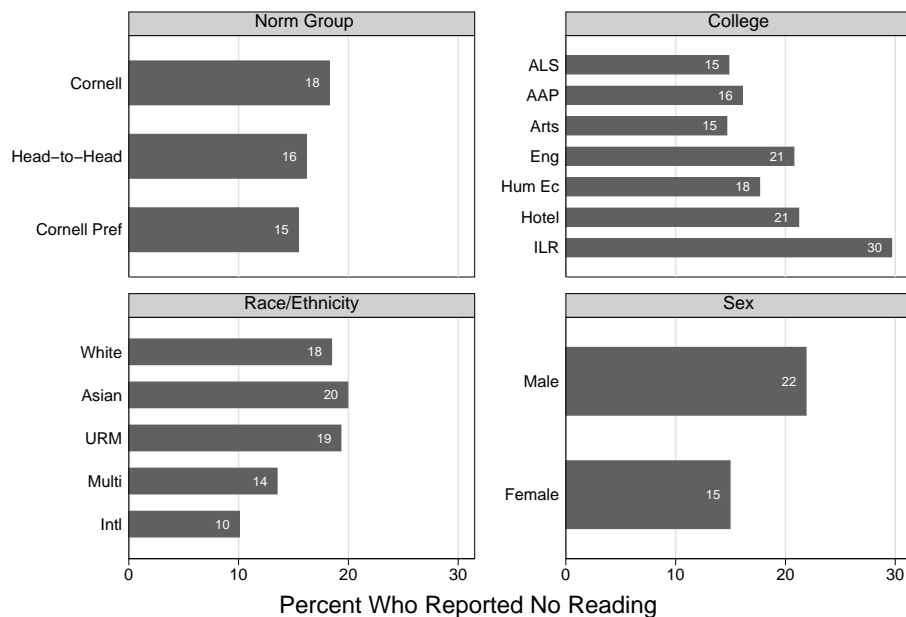
election,” and “participated in organized demonstrations.” Cornellians reported fewer of these sorts of activities than norm group counterparts: 28% of Cornellians discussed politics and 26% voted in student elections “frequently”; at norm group institutions, 27-32% of students discussed politics often and voted often in student elections.

Asian Americans reported lesser amounts of political activity than did their peers on all three measures. Whites and multiracial students are disproportionately likely to have had frequent political discussions, while under-represented minorities and multiracial students reported the most frequent voting and protesting. Gender differences are important, with women being 7 percentage points less likely than men to have frequently discussed politics. (See Appendix Tables A-24.c, A-24.p, and A-24.q.)

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

A larger proportion of Cornell students reported having done no reading for pleasure during high school: 18% of Cornellians, as compared to 15-16% of students at norm group institutions, did not read for pleasure. The proportion of those who did not read for pleasure is highest in Industrial & Labor Relations and lowest in Arts and in Agriculture & Life Sciences (See Figure 6). Asian American students are more likely than their counterparts of other ethnicities to have done no pleasure reading.

Figure 6. 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 83% of Cornellians had attended a concert at least “occasionally,” as compared to 87% of Head-To-Head and Cornell Preferred students.



Asian Americans played instruments more often than others, especially compared to under-represented minorities, as almost half of Asian Americans and less than a quarter of under-represented minorities played frequently. Whites and multiracial students are most likely to have attended public concerts; and under-represented minorities are least likely to have visited museums.

Men are more likely to have played instruments, but women are more likely to have attended recitals, visited museums, and read for pleasure. Engineering students are more likely than other students to have played instruments frequently. Students in the college of Architecture, Art & Planning are more likely than students in other colleges to have attended recitals and visited museums. (See Appendix Tables A-24.m, A-24.t, A-24.u, and A-33.k.)

**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,” “participated in internet chat rooms,” “other internet use,” and “used a personal computer;” and a measure of the number of hours spent each week “playing video/computer games.”

Cornellians emailed less, but participated in chat rooms and played video games more than their peers at other institutions. While 85% of Cornell Preferred students and 88% of Head-To-Head students reported frequent use of email, only 83% of Cornell students did so.

Four percent of under-represented minorities come to Cornell without having used email and 2.2% without using a personal computer. While these figures are small, they are double or more than double the share within other racial/ethnic categories

Computer usage patterns differ by gender. More than 88% of women at Cornell reported “frequent” email usage, compared to 77% of men. However, Cornell men are far more likely to have participated in chat rooms (63% of men and 37% of women). An even larger disparity is 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 is six times that figure at 18%.

Long hours of video game playing were also common among students in the College of Engineering, where 18% 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.

Detailed tables on computer use appear in Appendix Tables A-24.w, A-24.x, A-24.y, A-24.z, A-24.bb, and A-33.l.

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

**Socializing.** Cornell freshmen spent slightly less time socializing with friends during their last year of high school compared to Head-To-Head students: three-quarters of Cornellians and students at Cornell Preferred institutions had spent six or more hours per week socializing with friends, and about a quarter had spent *sixteen* or more hours. This compares to 78% of Head-To-Head students who socialized at least six and 35% who socialized sixteen or more hours per week.

Among Cornell students, more Whites than any other group spent time socializing with their friends, as 79% of Whites and 68% of Asian Americans spent six or more hours. Differences are also substantial by college, with more than 85% of Hotel

freshmen but only two-thirds of Engineering freshmen having spent six or more hours socializing with friends. (See Appendix Table A-33.b.)

**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 56% of Head-To-Head freshmen spent six or more hours each week, only 54% of Cornell freshmen and 49% of Cornell Preferred freshmen reported this. White students are far more likely to have spent time on athletics than any other racial group. More than 60% of Whites devoted six or more hours, while only about 40% of Asian Americans and under-represented minorities and about 50% of multiracial and international students did so. Also, men reported more time spent in athletics than women, with an average of about nine hours a week for men and eight for women. (See Appendix Table A-33.d.)

**Student clubs/groups.** Compared to the norm groups, Cornell freshmen spent less time with clubs during high school. Only 22% spent six or more hours each week, compared to 24% of Cornell Preferred freshmen and 26% of Head-To-Head freshmen. International students spent the most time in clubs, as 30% reported six or more hours. Whites and Asian Americans spent the least time, as only a fifth reported six or more hours. Women participated in clubs and groups more than men, as a quarter of Cornell’s women and one-fifth of men reported six or more hours per week. (See Appendix Table A-33.h.)

**Watching T.V.** The mean number of hours spent watching TV each week in high school is about 4.4 among students at Cornell and those at Head-to-Head institutions, and about 4.2 among students at Cornell Preferred schools. Under-represented minorities and Asian Americans reported spending more than five hours per week watching television, while the mean for other racial/ethnic groups was about 4 hours. Males watched more television than women; 28% of men watched six or more hours, compared to about a fifth of women. (See Appendix Table A-33.i.)

**Household/childcare duties.** Differences in time spent on chores and childcare are small across institutions, but within Cornell, there are substantial differences by race, gender and college. In particular, under-represented minority students are far more likely to have spent significant numbers of hours engaged in household chores and childcare duties: the mean number of hours spent in these tasks among under-represented minorities is about 2.6, or more than 50% higher than the mean of 1.7 for all Cornellians. Women spent more time on household duties than men, with mean hours of 2.0 and 1.4, respectively. Across colleges, 14% of Architecture, Art & Planning students spent six or more hours but less than 3% of HE students did so. Indeed, Architecture, Art & Planning students are more than twice as likely as any other Cornell students to have spent six or more hours weekly on household chores and childcare. (See Appendix Table A-33.j.)

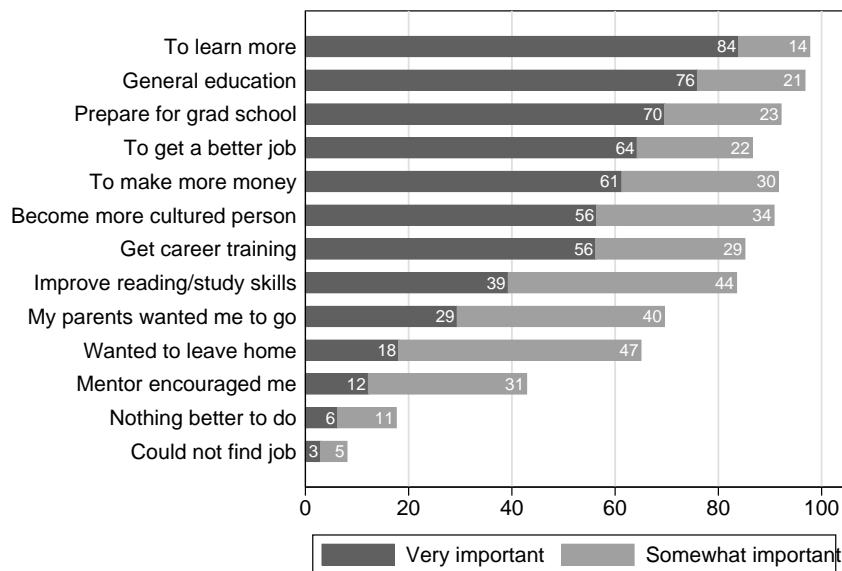
## V. REASONS FOR COLLEGE

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 school* and the expectations that they have of it.

### *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 7, where they are listed in order of importance among Cornell students.

Figure 7. Cornellians' Reasons for Deciding to Attend College



***Intrinsic interest.*** The top two items in Figure 7 relate to attending college because of what it 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 7). Indeed, more than 97% of freshmen across institutions said “to learn more” was important, and more than 80% found it “very important.” However, Cornell students are slightly less likely than norm group students to rank this factor as critical: 83% of Cornellians but 87-88% of students at our norm group institutions considered learning more about their interests as a “very important” reason to go to college. This pattern is replicated across the other measures of intrinsic attractions to college, with Cornell students being slightly less likely to consider 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 are more likely than men to have identified the intrinsic reasons as “very important.” Differences by college suggest that students in Engineering and Hotel are less likely those in Arts & Sciences and in Agriculture & Life

Sciences to have found intrinsic rationales to be fundamental in their decision to attend college. (For more details, refer to 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 (as shown in Figure 7) 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.”

In general, Cornell students appear to place a slightly higher emphasis on the career-related reasons for attending college than do students at other institutions considered in this report. For example, 61% of Cornellians reported that making more money was a “very important” reason to attend college, and this compares to 58% of freshmen at both norm groups. Within Cornell, men are more likely to have cited this reason than women, as two-thirds think it “very important,” compared to 57% of females. While the vast majority (92%) of Cornell students considered earnings capacity to be at least “somewhat important,” there are some differences by college. For example, less than 90% of Architecture, Art & Planning and Human Ecology students but all responding Industrial & Labor Relations students considered the ability to make more money to be very important. (Additional details are in Appendix Tables A-28.d, A-28.i, A-28.k, and A-28.m.)

***Encouragement from others.*** More than two-thirds of students indicated that “My parents wanted me to go” was important in their deciding to go to college. Mentors were also “important” for 40% of Cornellians. Differences by institution are fairly small, though Cornellians appear to be slightly more likely than those at our norm group institutions to have been influenced by a mentor.

More than 80% of Asian American freshman at Cornell cited their parents’ desires as important, a figure that compares to less than 70% of any other racial group. Under-represented minorities are least likely to have considered parents’ desires as important. More women value this reason than men: almost three-quarters of females and less than two-thirds of men cited parents’ wishes as important. (Detailed tables are presented as Appendix Tables A-28.a and A-28.l.)

***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 a result of a lack of other, better options. For example, 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. Among international students at Cornell, however, nearly one-in-five indicated that this particular rationale was important.

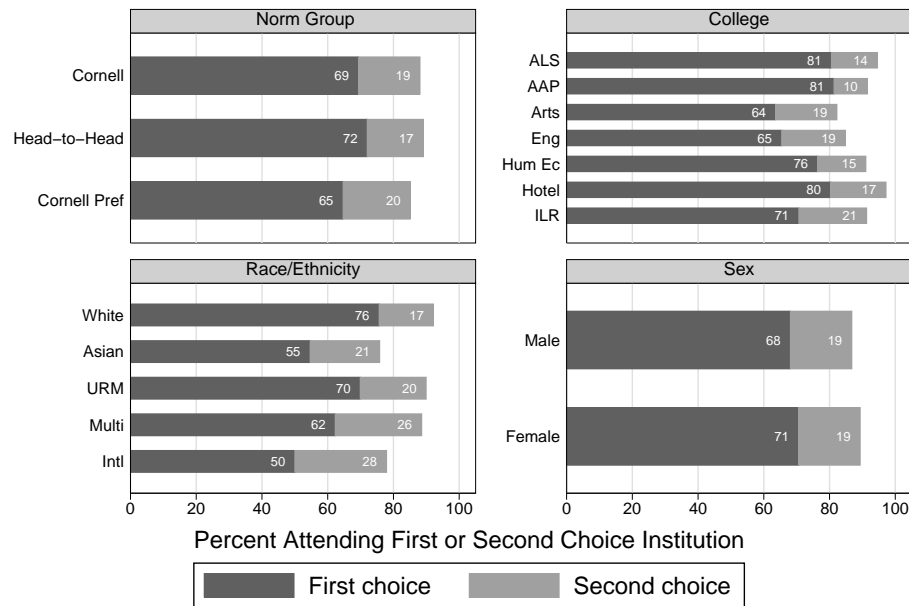
Similarly, only a minority of students identified “There was nothing better to do” as an important reason to attend college. At Cornell, men are nearly twice as likely as women to have considered this at least “somewhat important” (22% versus 13%, respectively).

On the other hand, many students identified “Wanted to get away from home” as at least “somewhat important” in deciding to attend college. Cornell freshmen are less likely than the norm groups to have considered this. Among the different racial, ethnic, and citizenship categories examined here, international students are the least likely to have considered this important; only 39% considered it at all important, compared to 60-73% of other racial groups. Under-represented minorities are most likely to have found this reason at least somewhat important. (See Appendix Tables A-28.b, A-28.c, and A-28.g.)

### Choosing an institution

**First choice of institution.** Almost 70% of Cornell freshmen indicated that Cornell was their “first choice” of institutions to attend, compared to analogous figures of 72% from freshmen at Head-To-Head and 65% of freshman at Cornell Preferred institutions (see Figure 8). Among Cornellians, there are substantial differences in this measure by college: more than 80% of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Architecture, Art & Planning, and Hotel freshmen ranked Cornell as their “first choice;” but less than two thirds of Engineering and Arts & Sciences freshmen did so. There are also disparities by racial groupings at Cornell, such that more white students than Asian American or international students considered Cornell their “first choice.”

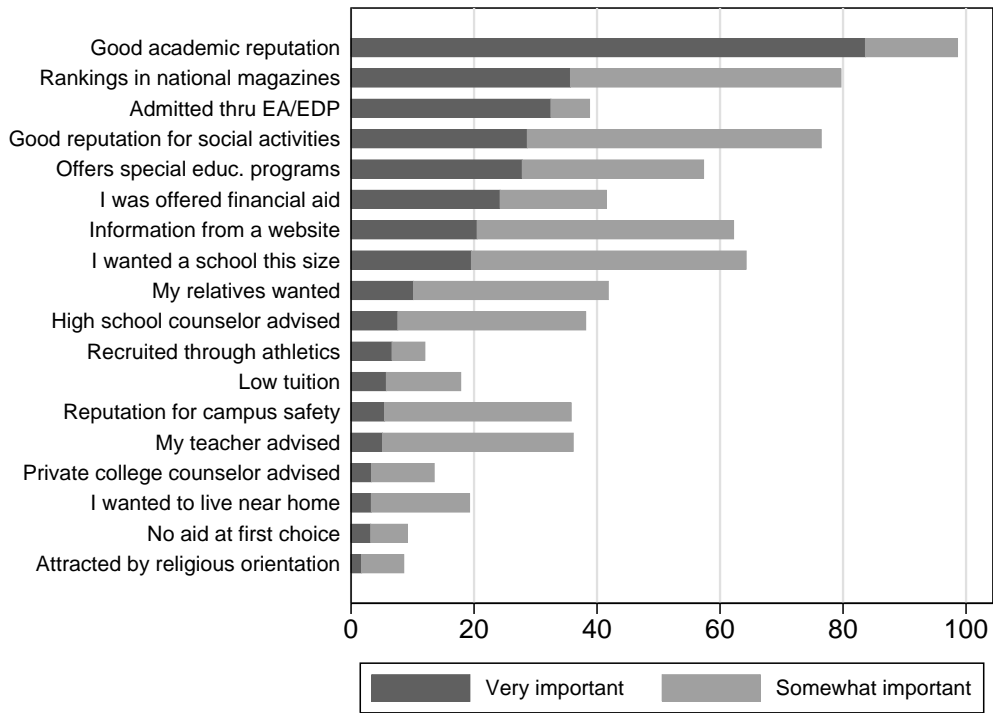
Figure 8. Percent of Students Attending First or Second Choice Institution



### Reasons for attending this particular school

Among the eighteen rationales for choosing a particular institution offered by the 2002 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-four percent of Cornellians indicated that “This college has a very good academic reputation” as a “very important” factor in their decision to attend Cornell (see Figure 9 and Appendix Tables A-35.a – A-35.r). At our norm group institutions, the figures are comparable, with 86-87% of students from those schools citing academic reputation as “very important.”

Figure 9. Cornellians' Reasons for Choosing Cornell



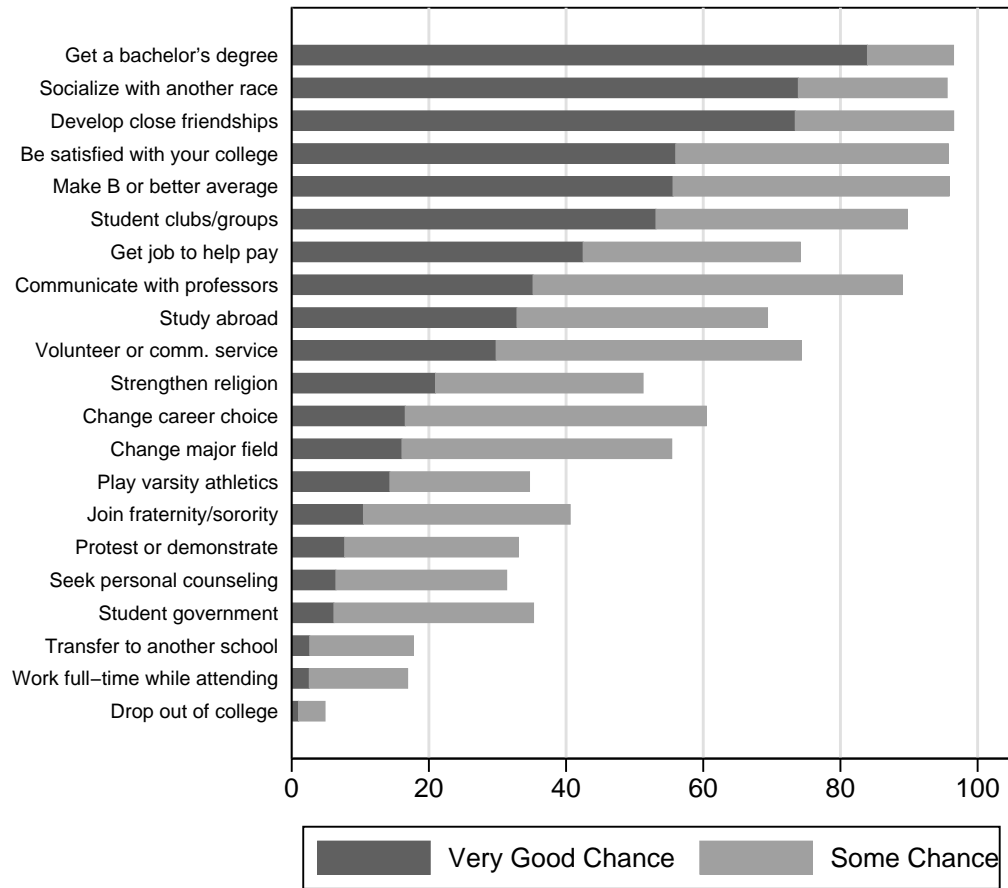
In comparison to students at norm group institutions, Cornellians are *more likely* to have said that the following two factors were “very important:” “My relatives wanted me to come here” (10% versus about 8% at other schools); and “This college offers special educational programs” (27% at Cornell versus 23% at other schools). Cornellians are substantially *less likely* to have placed the highest level of importance on the following: “I was offered financial assistance” (24% of Cornellians said this was “very important” compared to 28-35% at norm group institutions), “I wanted to live near home” (3% of Cornellians, versus 5-6% at norm group schools), and “I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college” (20% of Cornellians, compared to about 40% at both norm groups).

Among Cornellians, under-represented minorities are more likely than white students or Asian American students to have indicated that “I was offered financial assistance,” “This college offers special educational programs,” “High school counselor advised me,” “Rankings in national magazines,” “Information from a website,” and “Reputation for campus safety” were “very important” in choosing Cornell. Under-represented minorities are least likely of all racial groups to have indicated that early decision was very important to them.

***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 10, and in Appendix Tables A-38.a - A-38.t. Respondents were asked to indicate whether there was: “no chance,” “very little chance,” “some chance,” or a “very good chance.”

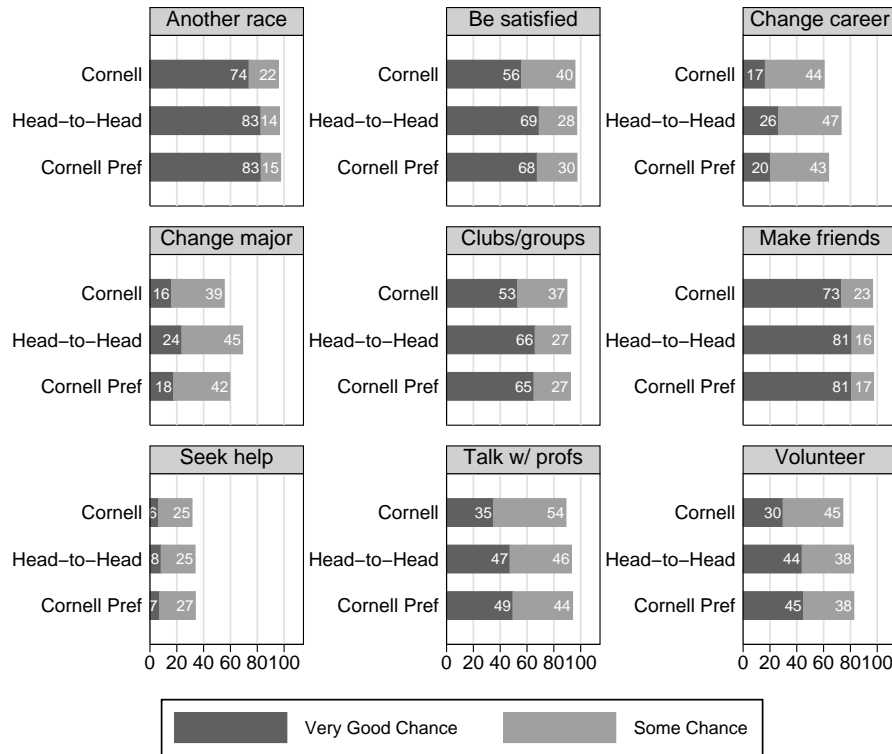
Figure 10. Cornellians' Plans for the Future



Approximately three-quarters or more of Cornell students indicated that there was a “very good chance” they would: finish their bachelor’s degree (84%), socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group (74%), and develop close friendships with other students (73%). While these figures are large among Cornell students, they are slightly larger at our norm group institutions (specifically, 87-89% for getting a bachelor’s, 83% for other race relationships, and 81% for close friendships). Consistent with those differences, Cornell students are also somewhat less likely to have anticipated that they will “be satisfied with your college.” (See Figure 11)

Cornell students are less likely than those at our norm group institutions to have indicated that there is a strong possibility that they will change their career choice or change majors (see also “Chapter VI. Academic Plans”); that they will participate in student government, participate in student clubs, or volunteer for community service; and that they will “communicate regularly with your professors.” (See Figure 11)

Figure 11. Plans for the Future, Cornell and Norm Groups



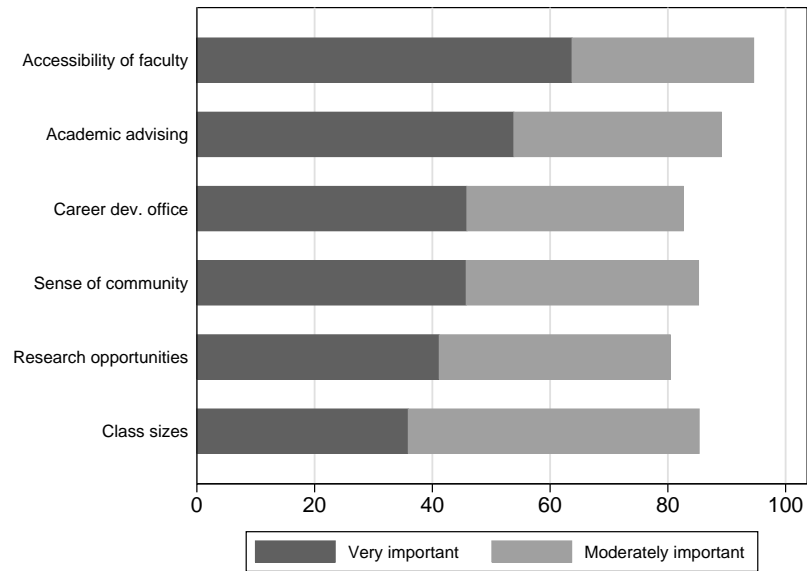
The 2002 CIRP Freshman Survey allowed individual institutions to attach a series of “local questions” to the main survey instrument. Cornell asked its first year students a series of twenty-one items which were not asked at other institutions (thus making norm group comparisons impossible). Some of these touched upon expectations for the Cornell experience, including the stem questions, “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 listed items, eighty percent or more of respondents considered the factor or service to be at least “moderately important.” (See Figure 12) The single most important factor to incoming Cornellians anticipating their college experience was the “accessibility of faculty members.” Nearly 95% of respondents indicated that they considered faculty accessibility to be at least “moderately important.”

For five 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 exception is “research opportunities with faculty,” an item which Asian American and international students are equally as likely as under-represented minority students to have rated as “very important.” Still, white Cornellians are less likely than these three groups to have indicated that this domain would be “very important” to their undergraduate experience. (See Appendix Tables A-39.a - A-39.f.)



Figure 12. 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 2002 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 are engineering (23%) and biological sciences (18%), together accounting for the anticipated majors of 41% of students. As a comparison, at Cornell Preferred schools the most popular two majors were engineering (19%) as well as arts & humanities (19%, compared to 9% at Cornell). At Head-To-Head schools, the most popular majors were arts & humanities (14%) and social science (26%, compared to 11% at Cornell). Cornell students are more likely than students at our norm group institutions to have marked business, professional, or "other"; and they are less likely to have marked physical science or "undecided."

Among Cornellians, white, Asian American, and international students are more likely than under-represented minority and multiracial students to have reported intentions to major in biological sciences, with 19%, 18%, and 15% of those white, Asian and international students, respectively, reporting such intentions. Those same groups are also more highly represented than other racial groups in engineering, with 19%, 37%, and 34%, respectively, stating that intention. Arts & humanities disproportionately attracted multiracial students; business appealed more to whites and international students than others; engineering especially lured Asian Americans and international students; physical science attracted whites more than others; professional majors enticed under-represented minorities; and social sciences had a significantly lower representation of Asian Americans compared to other races. "Undecided" was marked by multiracial students more often than by students of other races.

Male-dominated areas included: engineering (with 33% of men but only 14% of women stating an intention to major in this field), and the physical sciences (6% men, 4% women). Women, in turn, tended to be disproportionately represented in the fields of arts & humanities (10% of women, 8% of men), the biological sciences (22% women, 14% men), social science (13% women, 8% men), and professional fields (13% women, 7% men). More women than men are "undecided" (6% of women versus 4% of men marked "undecided"). Details are presented in Appendix Table A-36.

**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," "very good chance."

As shown in Figure 10 on page 21, 45% of Cornellians reported at least some chance, and almost 20% reported a very good chance that they will change majors. As noted in the previous chapter, Cornell freshmen reported more confidence about their majors than their counterparts at norm group institutions. Under-represented minority students are substantially less likely to have suggested that there is a possibility of changing majors: for example, more than 20% of under-represented minorities reported "no chance" at all, compared to an average of 12% among all Cornellians. There are also large differences by college, perhaps reflecting curricular differences inherent in the

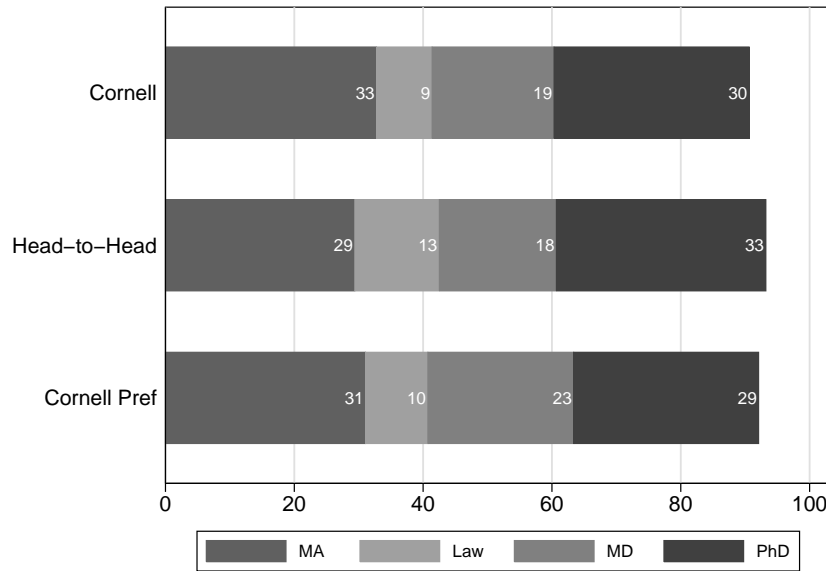
colleges. For example, 68% of Arts & Sciences students and 59% of Human Ecology students reported at least some chance, compared to only 30% of Hotel students. About a quarter of Arts & Sciences students reported a “very good chance,” while less than 9% of Hotel and Engineering students did so. (See Appendix Table A-38.a.)

***Aspirations for Educational Attainment***

***Highest academic degree intended.*** In this sample of students at selective institutions, a very small minority – fewer than 10% overall – plan to stop their education with a bachelor’s degree or less. As is illustrated in Figure 13, the overwhelming majority of students at Cornell and at our norm group institutions intend to attain at least a Master’s degree.

Even so, Cornell freshmen seem to have slightly lower aspirations than their norm group peers, with 92% of Cornell freshmen aspiring to acquire some sort of graduate degree, as compared to 95% among Head-to-Head freshman and 93% among first year students at Cornell Preferred schools. Similarly, more Cornell freshmen than freshman at these other institutions aspire to stop their graduate education with a master’s degree (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Highest Academic Degree Planned, Cornell and Norm Groups



Among Cornellians of different racial/ethnic groups, white students are most likely to intend to stop their schooling with a bachelor degree or less: for example, 11% of white students but only 3% of under-represented minority students plan to stop with a bachelors degree. International students and Asian Americans are somewhat less likely than white students to have expressed interest in obtaining a law degree, while multiracial students reported the most interest. Asian Americans and under-represented minorities are most likely to have reported being interested in obtaining a medical degree, with 23% of those groups stating such intentions compared to 16-18% of other groups. A relatively high percentage – 71% – of international students indicated aspirations for either a master’s degree or Ph.D. degree, compared to only 55% of multiracial students.

More men than women plan to earn a master's degree or doctorate degree. Conversely, more women than men are working toward a medical degree and slightly more women than men are working toward a law degree.

There are substantial differences by college, with only 80% of Hotel students planning to go beyond a bachelor's degree, as compared with 85% of students in the college of Architecture, Art & Planning and 92-98% of students in the other colleges. Notably, 45% of Industrial & Labor Relations students intend to earn a law degree, followed by 11% of Arts & Sciences students, and less than 8% of Cornellians affiliated with other colleges.

***Highest degree intended at this college.*** Most freshmen at Cornell as well as at our norm group institutions intend to leave once they earn a bachelor's degree. However, Cornell has more first-year students interested in staying for graduate school than the norm group institutions do, with 28% of Cornell freshman intending to stay, as compared to 22% of Head-To-Head students (see Appendix Table A-17.b).

***Confidence in ability to complete the bachelor's degree.*** All CIRP 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."

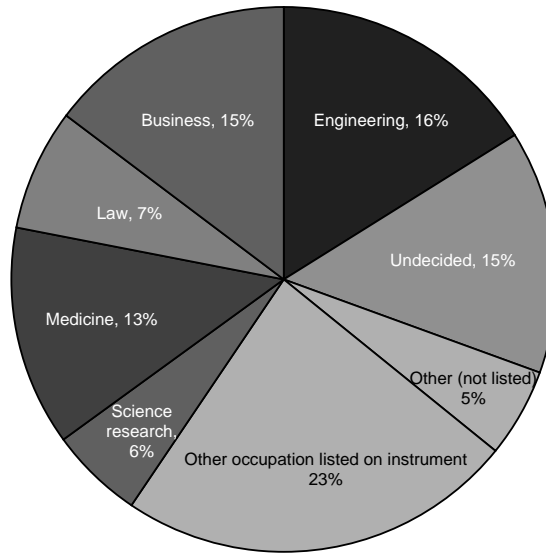
As shown in Figure 10, page 21, the vast majority of Cornellians intend to attain a baccalaureate, though slightly fewer students at Cornell estimated their chances as "very high" than students at norm group institutions (84% versus 88-89%). This tendency varies across colleges; 90% each of Arts & Sciences and Engineering freshmen marked "very good chance," but less than three-quarters of Hotel students did so.

Commensurately, 84% of Cornell freshmen indicated that there was "no chance" that they would drop out. Four percent considered there to be "some chance," while only 1% considered there to be a "very good chance." Women and under-represented minorities are less likely to have considered there to be any chance at all of dropping out. (Detailed tables are present in Appendix Tables A-38.h and A-38.t.)

## ***Career Plans***

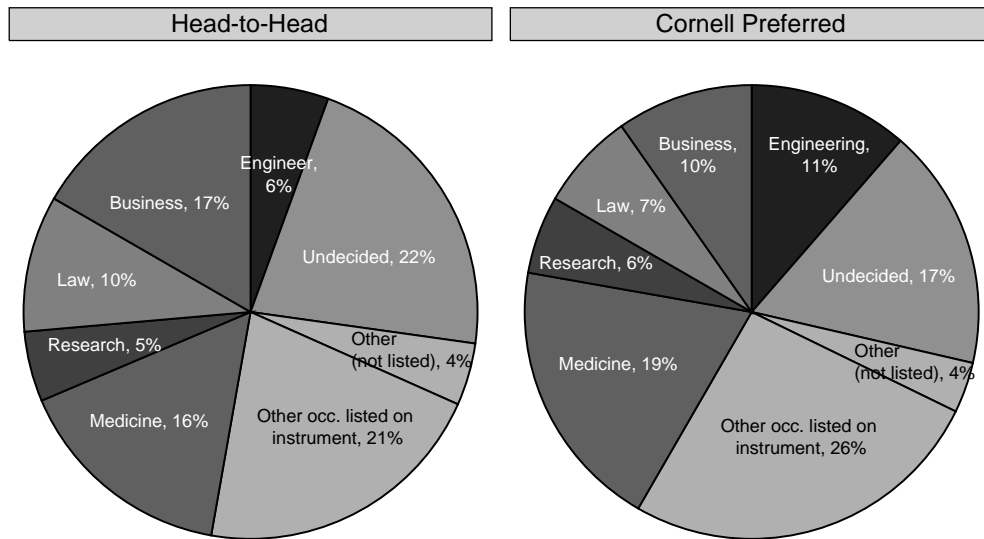
***Probable career occupation.*** Respondents to the 2002 CIRP were asked to mark their "probable career occupation." Forty-four occupations – ranging from unskilled laborer to full-time homemaker to business executive – were listed along with "unemployed," "other" and "undecided." The most popular single occupation listed was "Engineer" with 16% of Cornellians indicating that it was their probable career occupation. Thirteen percent of Cornellians indicated they would enter the medical field, and 7% aspired for law. Ten percent identified "business executive" as their career occupation and an additional five percent marked: business owner, business salesperson or buyer, or "business (clerical)" for a total of 15% aspiring for business occupations of some kind. Fifteen percent of Cornellians marked that they were "undecided" as to their probable future career occupation. (See Figure 14).

Figure 14. Distribution of Probable Career Occupation among Cornellians



Compared with incoming students at the norm group institutions, Cornellians are more likely to envision a career in engineering. Cornellians are also less likely to be “undecided” as to their career occupation upon entering college (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Distribution of Probable Career Occupation, by Norm Group



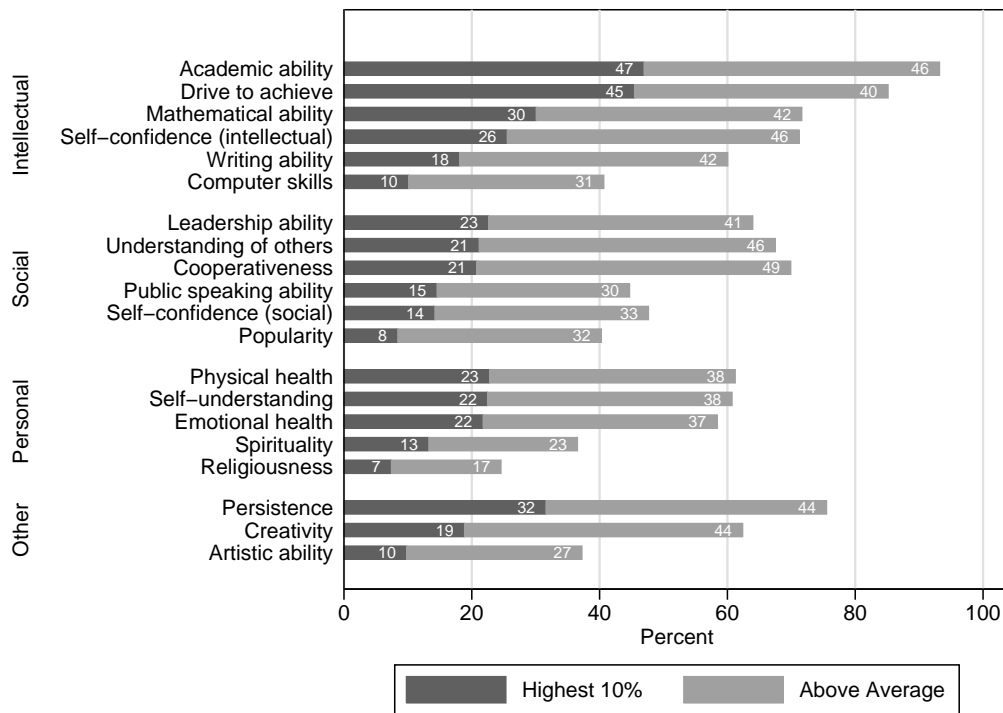
Among Cornellians, there are differences in occupational aspirations by racial/ethnic identity, sex, and college. Many of these results echo differences reported above for major field. (For specifics, see Appendix Table A-30.)

**Confidence in career choice.** Survey respondents rated the likelihood of changing their career aspirations. The results for this item are comparable to those for a similar item regarding major field. (See Figure 10) As with the results for major field, Cornell students, women and under-represented minority students are more likely than their counterparts to express a high degree confidence in their career choices. (See Appendix Table A-38.b for details.)

## VII. HOW CORNELLIAN'S SEE THEMSELVES: SELF-RATINGS

The 2002 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 16. 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, religiousness, and artistic ability.

Figure 16. Cornellians Self-ratings for Twenty-one Traits



Tables of differences in these twenty-one items by norm group, race, sex, and college can be found in Appendix Tables A-29.a – A-29.u. Across these tables, a number of generalizations might be made.

For example, under-represented minority students rate themselves higher – and Asian American students rate themselves lower – than white students in “social” traits, such as understanding of others, leadership ability and social self-confidence. Under-represented minority students are also more likely than other students to consider themselves above average with respect to spirituality and self-understanding.

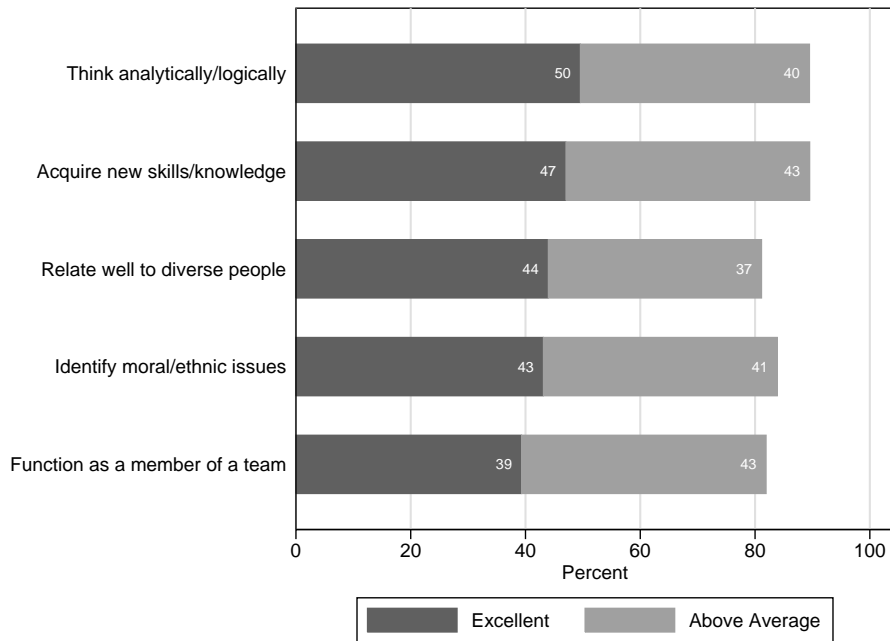
Further, women at Cornell rate themselves higher than men with respect to understanding of others, but lower than men with respect to understanding of themselves and emotional health. Women are also less likely than men to consider

themselves in the “highest 10%” with respect to academic ability and intellectual self-confidence.

Finally, nearly two-thirds of students in the college of Engineering considered themselves in the “highest 10%” for academic ability, as compared to about half of first year students in Arts & Sciences and only a quarter in the college of Architecture, Art & Planning.

In the supplemental, local questions appended to the Cornell version of the 2002 CIRP instrument, students were asked additional items related to self-ratings, as illustrated in Figure 17. Here too, Cornellians were more likely to have ranked their intellectual skills (such as “Think analytically and logically”) 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.” (See Appendix Tables A-43.a - A-43.e)

Figure 17. Cornellians’ Self-ratings for Five Items on the Local Supplement

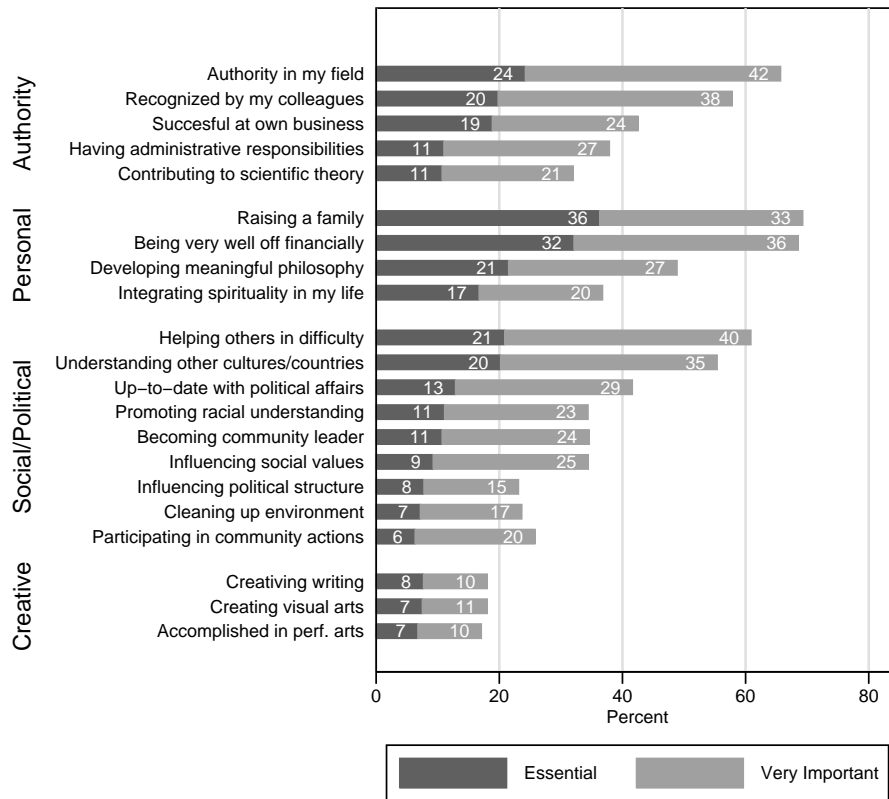


### VIII. IMPORTANT LIFE GOALS

The 2002 CIRP Freshman Survey asked all respondents to indicate the importance they place on each of twenty-one items. As illustrated in Figure 18, those items 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 previous chapter, there is some tendency for Cornellians to have placed a high 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 55% placing a high value on this goal). Cornellians also tended to place high levels of importance on “Being very well off financially” and “Raising a family.”

Figure 18. The Importance Cornellians Place on Various Life Goals



Only 48% of Cornellians thought it was “very important” or “essential” to “[Develop] a meaningful philosophy of life,” and 37% placed such a high value on “Integrating spirituality into my life.” Fewer than one-in-four Cornellians considered it “very important” or “essential” to influence the political structure or to become involved in programs to clean up the environment.

Examination of Appendix Tables A-37.a – A-37.u lead to a number of generalizations:



Compared to peers at norm group institutions, Cornell students are more likely to have placed a very high level of importance on “Being very well off financially” (with 32% of Cornellians and 28% of students at norm group institutions considering it “essential”) and “Becoming successful in a business of my own” (with 19% of Cornellians and 12-15% of students at norm group institutions considering it “essential”). Cornellians are also slightly more likely to have intended to “[Make] a theoretical contribution to science,” (with 11% of Cornellians and about 9% of students at other institutions describing that goal “essential”).

While Cornellians placed more importance on those career-related ambitions, Cornellians tend to have placed somewhat *less* importance on social/political goals and on finding meaning in life. For example, only 20% of students at Cornell considered “Helping others who are in difficulty as an “essential” life goal, compared to a quarter or more of students in norm group institutions. Similarly, few Cornell students placed the highest level of importance on “Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures” (20% versus 23-28% at norm group institutions) and “Keeping up to date with political affairs” (13% compared to 15-20% at other institutions). Fewer Cornell students placed a high value on “Developing a meaningful philosophy of life” (21% considering it “essential” versus 24-28% at norm group schools) and “Integrating spirituality into my life” (with 17% of Cornellians and 20-21% of norm group students considering this “essential”).

In general, under-represented minorities are more likely than white students to have considered the listed life goals as “essential.” This pattern holds true across goals relating to authority, personal goals, social or political goals, and creative goals, but differences are especially large for goals which are social or political in nature. For example, nearly twice the percentage of under-represented minority students as the percentage of white students (18% versus 32%) considered it “essential” to help others in difficulty.

## IX. POLITICAL, RACIAL, AND RELIGIOUS VIEWS

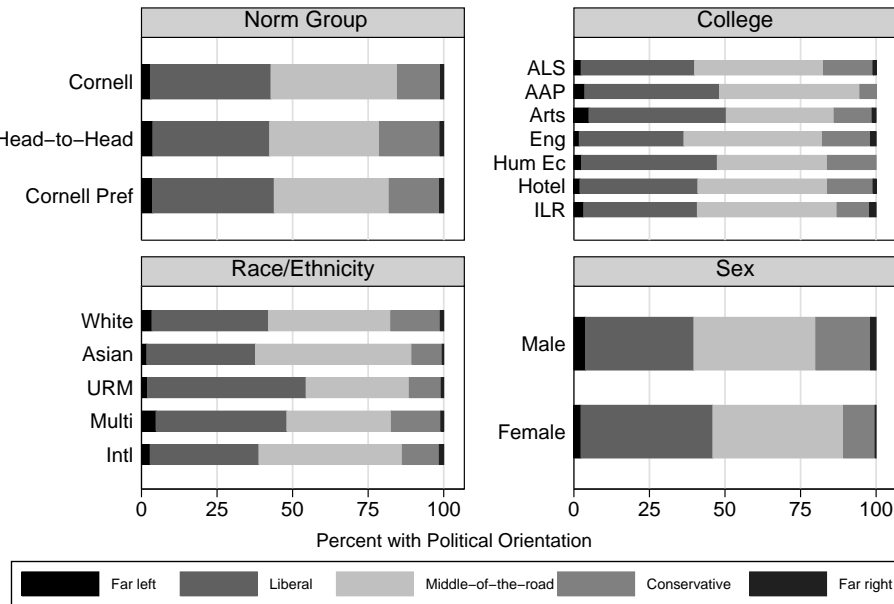
The first part of this section will address students' general political views; the second part will address students' responses toward racial issues; and the third part will address students' religious beliefs and practices.

### Political Views

Respondents to the 2002 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 19. Across all four panels of Figure 19, 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.

At Cornell as well as at our norm group institutions, more incoming students identify themselves as "liberal" than as "conservative." This difference is largest in the college of Arts & Sciences (where 45% of students identified as liberals and only 13% identified as conservatives) and the college of Architecture, Art & Planning (45% and 5% liberal and conservative, respectively) and smallest in Engineering (with 35% and 16% liberal and conservative, respectively). Asian American students are slightly less likely to be liberal than are white students, whereas under-represented minority students are more likely to be so. More women than men identify as liberal as well.

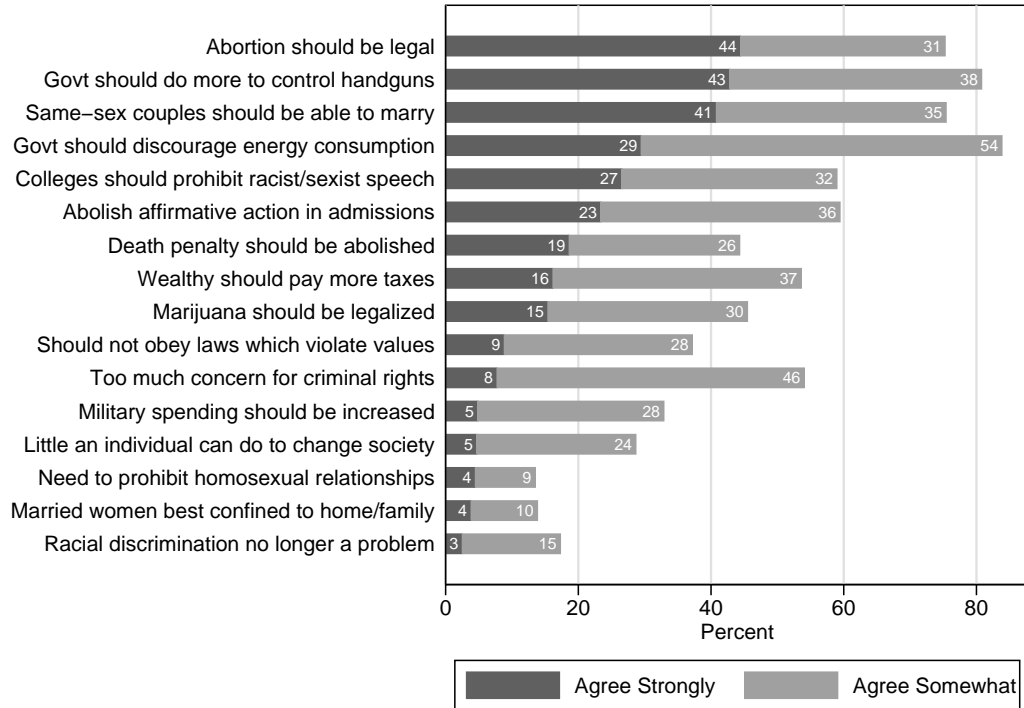
Figure 19. Political Views by Norm Group, Race and Ethnicity, College and Sex



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 handguns, homosexuality, taxes, capital punishment and the legality of marijuana. The percentage of Cornellians who agreed

with those statements are portrayed in Figure 20. For specific comparisons by norm group, college, race or sex, refer to Appendix Tables A-31.a – A-31.p.

Figure 20. Percent of Cornellians Who Agree with Various Statements



To highlight a few differences in opinions towards these items:

**Racist/sexist speech.** Cornell students (60%) are much more likely than norm group students (less than 50%) to have agreed with the statement, “Colleges should prohibit racist/ sexist speech on campus.” Among Cornell students, under-represented minorities, international students, and females are more likely than whites and males to have strongly agreed with banning racist or sexist speech. While 37% of Human Ecology freshmen agreed strongly to ban such speech, less than a quarter of freshmen from each Architecture, Art & Planning; Arts & Sciences; and Engineering did so.

**Women’s place.** Most Cornellians (86%) disagreed with the statement “The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family,” a percentage slightly lower than that for norm group students (88-90%). There are large differences by gender in attitudes towards this item, with female Cornellians being twice as likely as men to have disagreed. There are also differences by ethnicity, such that Asians and international students are more likely than whites and under-represented minorities to have agreed that married women should be at home.

**Anomie.** Confronted with the statement “Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society,” most students at Cornell and in the norm groups reported disagreement. However, Cornell students are more likely than their norm group counterparts to think that individuals are powerless (29% versus 24%). Within Cornell, under-represented minorities, multiracial students, and women placed more belief in individuals’ powers for social change than did Asians, international students, and men.

*Affirmative action.* Among the consortial institutions, 60% of freshmen agreed that “Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished.” There are substantial differences by race in the pattern of responses with only 25% of under-represented minorities supporting this view, as compared to 50% or more of other groups and more than two-thirds of whites. Hotel and Industrial & Labor Relations students are almost three times more likely than Agriculture & Life Sciences and Engineering students to have strongly supported affirmative action.

### *Inter-racial Relationships*

Students answered three items about past and future inter-racial 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 about future plans, they were asked about the likelihood that they “will socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group.”

Looking across measures, Cornell freshmen are less likely than norm group students to have socialized or want to socialize with people from different racial backgrounds, and are less interested in helping to promote racial understanding. For example, while 83% of norm group freshmen reported a “very good chance” of socializing with someone of another racial/ethnic group, only 74% of Cornell freshmen did.

Differences by race in measures of interracial interaction reflect, in part, the prevalence of individuals of other races. Thus, under-represented minorities are more likely than whites to have socialized with others of a different race in the past year. Perhaps reflecting the demographics of their home countries, international students were least likely to have reported inter-racial interactions. However, these demographic dynamics may not tell the full story, as it is also the case that under-represented minorities at Cornell were also more likely than whites to indicate that they found it “important” or “essential” to help promote racial understanding.

More detailed comparisons on these three items relating to inter-racial interactions appear in Appendix Tables A-24.r, A-37.q, and A-38.p.

### *Religion and Religiosity*

Students reported their religious denominations on the CIRP survey instrument. Differences by norm group, race, sex, and college appear in Appendix Table A-21. Compared to the norm group schools, Cornell has more freshmen who classified themselves as Jewish, Catholic, Unitarian, or no religion at all. Engineering students appear to be the least religious group, as 35% marked no religion, followed by Arts (31%), Hotel (25%), Agriculture & Life Sciences (24%), Architecture, Art & Planning (20%), Human Ecology (19%), and Industrial & Labor Relations (17%) students.

Three measures in this survey relate 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 spent on “prayer/meditation” during high school. Overall, Cornell students appear to be less religious than are norm group students. For example, 29% of Cornell first year students had attended religious services “frequently,” as compared to about 36% in norm group

schools. And while over 90% of Head-To-Head and Cornell Preferred students reported having engaged in some sort of religious discussion, only 87% of Cornell students did so.

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. (For detailed comparisons by norm group, as well as by race, sex, and college, see Appendix Tables A-37.t and A-38.r).

## X. PARENTS AND THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COLLEGE

Eighty-two percent of Cornell students indicated on the survey instrument that their parents are 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 are essentially the same for both norm groups.

However, there are some differences by college within Cornell. Specifically, nearly 5% of Hotel students have at least one deceased parent, while less than 1% of Human Ecology and Engineering parents report this. Students affiliated with Architecture, Art & Planning are about 10 percentage points more likely than other groups to have parents living apart. (See Appendix Table A-18 for details.)

### *Parents' Occupations, Educational Attainment, and Income*

**Parents' occupations.** Respondents to the 2002 CIRP Freshman survey were asked to indicate the occupation of their mothers and fathers, marking one choice on a list of forty-four specific occupations plus "unemployed" and "other."

Twenty-eight percent of Cornellians indicated that their fathers were involved in business. This is slightly lower than the percent at norm group institutions, with 32% at Head-to-Head schools and 30% at Cornell Preferred institutions. Similarly, fewer Cornellians than their peers indicated that their fathers were doctors (9% at Cornell, and 12% at both norm groups). Fathers who were lawyers are about as prevalent at Cornell as at Cornell Preferred institutions (7%), but this is slightly more common at Head-to-Head institutions. Cornell students are more likely than students at the norm group institutions to have indicated that their fathers' occupations were not listed on the instrument (i.e. they marked "other").

While Cornellians are less likely than students at norm group schools to have a father in business, they are slightly more likely to have a mother in business: 16% of Cornellians indicated that their mothers' careers were in business, compared with 15% in both norm groups. Only 12% of Cornell's respondents indicated that their mothers are homemakers, and this compares to 15% among both norm groups. As with fathers' occupations, Cornell students are more likely to have indicated that their mothers had "other" occupations not listed on the instrument. (For further information, see Appendix Table A-30a.)

**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 54-58% reported that fathers and 38-41% reported that mothers had graduate degrees. Under-represented minority students are substantially less likely than students of other backgrounds to have reported a mother or a father with a college or graduate degree. Students with citizenship in other countries as well as Asian American students are less likely than white or multiracial students to have indicated that their mother had graduated from college, though their fathers had roughly equivalent educational attainments (see Figure 21 and Figure 22, as well as Appendix Tables A-25.a and A-25.b).

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

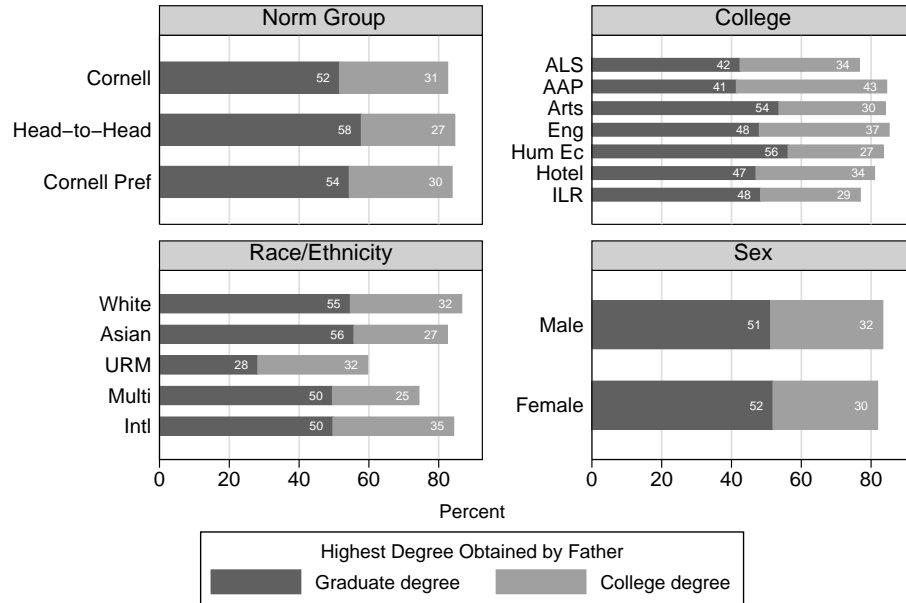
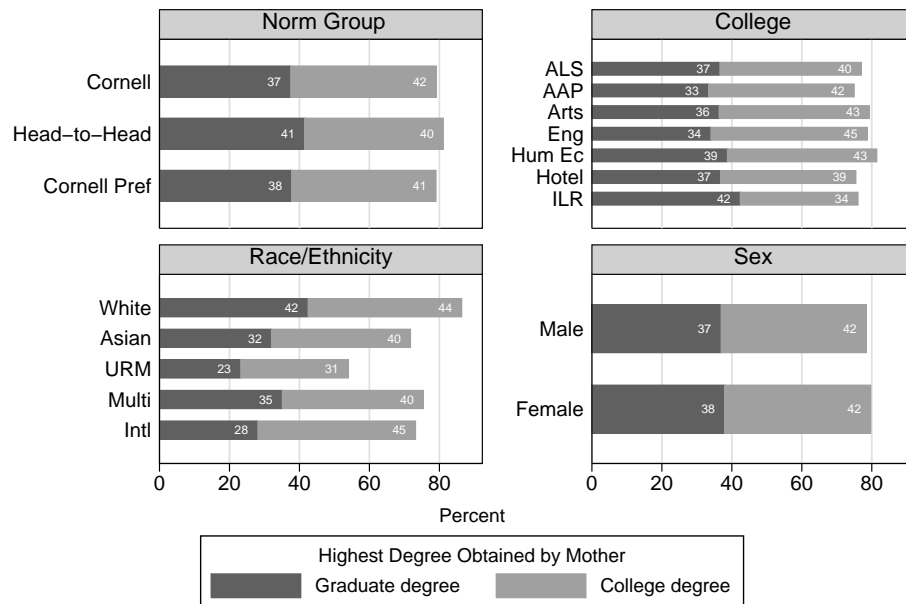


Figure 22. Highest Degree Earned by Mother, by Norm Group, College, Race and Sex



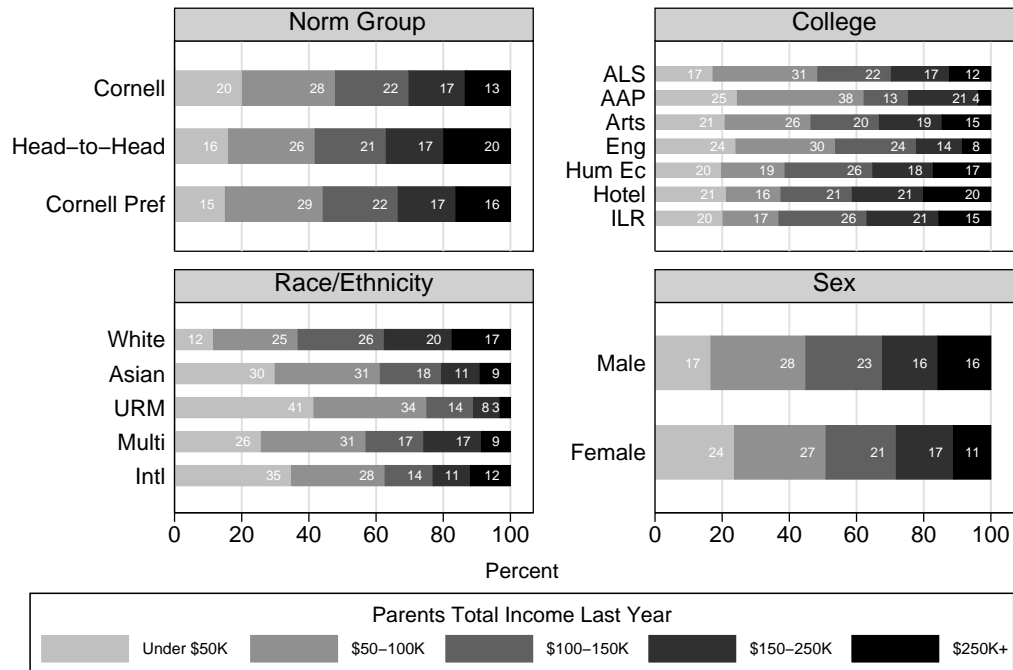
**Parents' total income.** Incoming students were asked for their “best estimate of your parents’ total income last year” by checking off one of fourteen income categories. These categories ranged from “less than \$10,000” to “\$250,000 or more.” In Figure 23, the fourteen income categories are consolidated into just five categories.

Overall, Cornell parents have lower levels of income than parents affiliated with norm group institutions. For example, more than 20% of Cornell parents take in less than \$50,000 each year, compared to 16% of Head-To-Head parents and 15% of Cornell Preferred parents. At the other end of the income distribution, only 13% of Cornell students – compared with 16-20% 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 is 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 groups (see Figure 23). However, a relatively large percentage of students affiliated with the Hotel School (20%) and with Human Ecology (17%) report parental incomes over \$250,000 last year.

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 is merely 12%. The data from the 2002 CIRP Freshman Survey also suggest that parents of male students are significantly wealthier than parents of female students, but this finding may also represent differences in the accuracy of men’s and women’s estimates of family income.

For detailed comparisons of income distributions, see Appendix Table A-20.

Figure 23. Distribution of Parents’ Total Income, by Norm Group, College, Race, and Sex



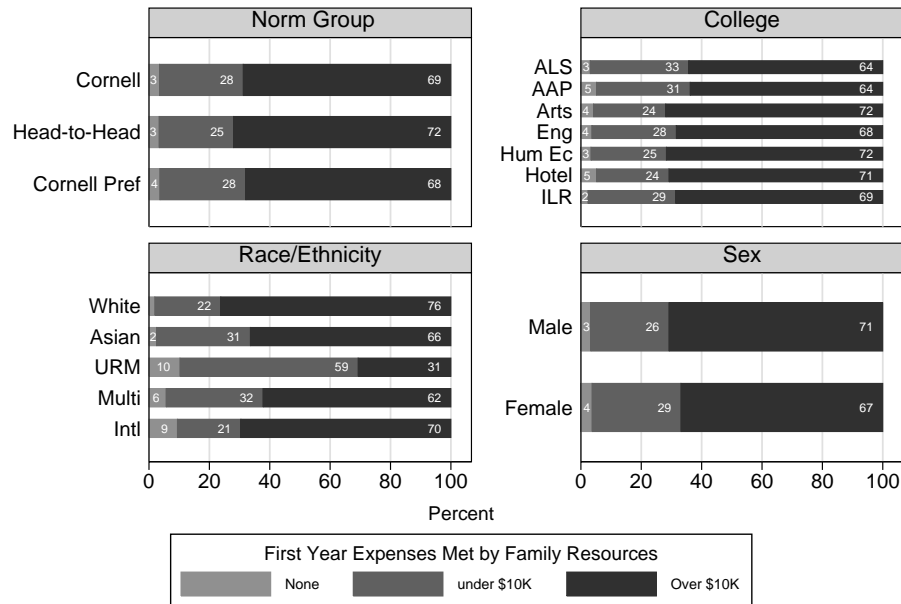


### Meeting Educational Expenses

The 2002 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.

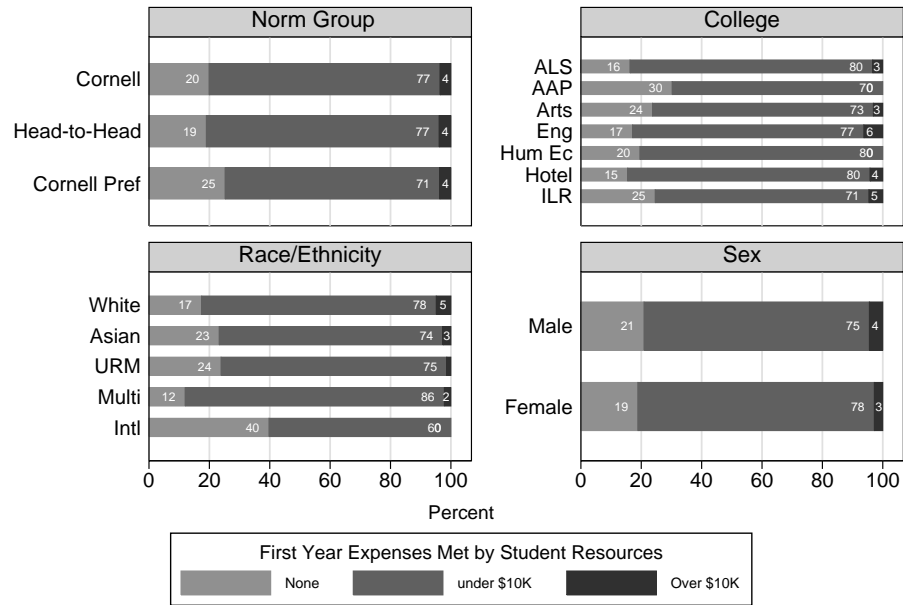
**Family resources.** As illustrated in Figure 24, almost all first-year students at Cornell and at norm group institutions spent some family resources to meet educational expenses. Further, more than two-thirds of these students’ families spent \$10,000 or more of their own resources to pay for their first year of educational expenses. Given the differences in family income described above, it is not surprising that a small proportion of the families of under-represented minority students pay such a large amount out of their own pockets. (For further details, see Appendix Table A-19.a.)

Figure 24. Family Resources Spent on Meeting First Year’s Educational Expenses, by Norm Group, College, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex



**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 is equivalent to the percentage at Head-to-Head institutions, but slightly higher than the percentage at Cornell Preferred institutions where a larger percentage of students contribute none of their own financial resources (see Figure 25 and Appendix Table A-19.b).

Figure 25. Student Resources Spent on Meeting First Year’s Educational Expenses, by Norm Group, College, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex



**Grants.** Cornell students are less likely than students in either of the two norm groups considered here to have reported that grants are meeting \$10,000 or more of their first-year expenses; 36% of Cornell students reported grants at that level, as compared to 45% at Head-to-Head institutions, as 47% at Cornell preferred schools (see Figure 26).

White students, with the highest levels of earnings (see Figure 23) are least likely of the racial/ethnic groups to have grants in excess of \$10,000, while nearly three-quarters of under-represented minority students at Cornell reported grants that high (see Figure 26). The majority – 58% – 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 Hotel have the next highest proportions, but at 43% each, they are substantially lower than the proportion in Architecture, Art & Planning. Less than a quarter of students in the contract colleges of Agriculture & Life Sciences and Human Ecology reported grants of \$10,000 or more (see Figure 26 and Appendix Table A-19.c).

**Loans.** More Cornellians than students in norm group institutions reported meeting expenses with loans: 16% reported using over \$10,000 in loans, and another 47% reported lesser amounts of loans. These figures compare to 13-14% and 43-35%, respectively, at our norm groups (see Figure 27).

Under-represented minority students are slightly less likely than other American students to have reported very large loans, with 11% of minority students reporting \$10,000 or more in loans, as compared to 17-18% of the other groups of American students. Only 8% of international students reported loans that large. Only the colleges of Engineering and Architecture, Art & Planning have less than 12% of students who reported loans greater than \$10,000. (For more details, see Figure 27 and Appendix Table A-19.d.)

Figure 26. Grants Used Towards Meeting First Year's Educational Expenses, by Norm Group, College, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex

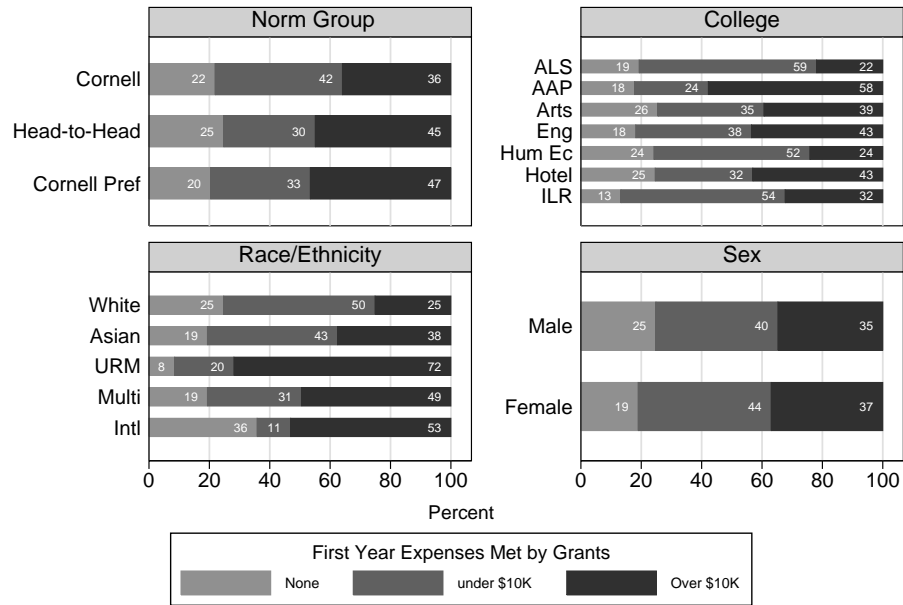
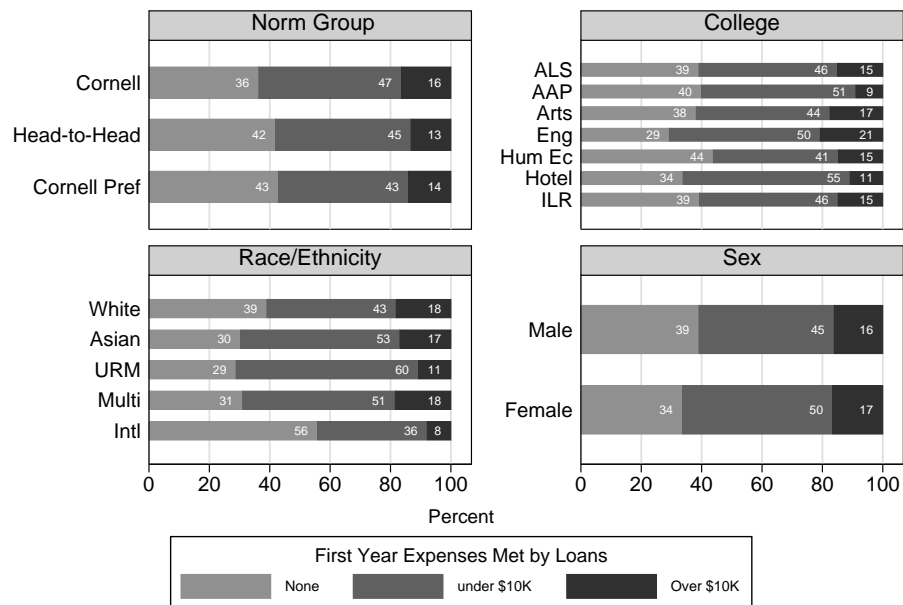


Figure 27. Loans Used Towards Meeting First Year's Educational Expenses, by Norm Group, College, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex



**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-six percent of Cornell students reported that they had no concerns; this compares to 40-41% of students in the norm groups.

White Americans and international students at Cornell are the most likely to hold no concerns about their ability to finance their college education, with 42% and 46% respectively. This contrasts sharply with under-represented minorities, among whom only 19% reported no concerns and 20% report “major” concerns. There are substantial differences by sex, with male students being far more likely to have expressed no concerns about ability to pay. (See Figure 28) Looking across colleges at Cornell, the highest level of concerns about ability to pay is in the college of Architecture, Art & Planning, where only 16% of students have no serious concerns and nearly as many – 14% – have “major” concerns about their ability to pay. Conversely, the Hotel School and the College of Human Ecology reported the lowest levels of concern (see Figure 28 and Appendix Table A-34).

Figure 28. Concern for Ability to Pay for College, by Norm Group, College, Race and Sex.

