

Lake Forest College
CIRP Freshman Survey 2014
Administered Fall 2014

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CIRP Freshman Survey

2014 Results Summary

Purpose

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) is a national longitudinal study of the American higher education system. The survey is administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

Lake Forest College has participated in the CIRP Freshman Survey since the beginning (40 years). We administer the survey during the first week of classes in the First Year Studies class. The participation rate is high because of the method of delivery. Key sections of the survey collect information about: 1) established behaviors in high school, 2) academic preparedness for college, 3) college admissions decisions, 4) overall expectations of college, 5) interactions with peers and faculty, 6) student values and goals, 7) student demographics, and 8) concerns about paying for college. After survey completion and analysis, Lake Forest College receives an institutional profile that contains detailed results including comparisons with other schools in our Peer Group (Private/Nonsectarian 4 year colleges with very high selectivity).

Lake Forest College is classified by CIRP as "Very Highly Selective", but Lake Forest College first-years' SAT scores place them at the lower end of the "Very Highly Selective" group. In the Profile report attached and throughout the body of this report, Lake Forest students' results are compared to the average responses of the schools in the "very highly selective" group (Comp1). Additionally, CIRP provided a second comparison group (Comp2) with all of the 4-year private/non-sectarian colleges that completed the 2014 administration of the CIRP Freshman Survey. A list of both groups is attached after the text of the report.

Important things to remember when reviewing CIRP data:

1. The study is completed by students and assesses their perception. Some of the data, such as types and levels of scholarships, are more accurately measured directly from the College's database. Sometimes the data are available at Lake Forest, but comparative data is hard to obtain and so the CIRP data becomes useful.
2. The study is based on this year's first year students, who may or may not reflect previous years' students.
3. Some results are highly influenced by gender. When looking at the total response, it is helpful also to look at the gender response.
4. Some questions have many possible responses (such as intended major), so a few students could affect what appears to be a large change year to year.
5. A national report of all students is published by HERI annually. The American Freshman: National Norms 2014 is available at <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/monographs/TheAmericanFreshman2014.pdf>

How do Lake Forest College students compare to national trends?

On February 16th, there was an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education titled “College Freshmen Seek Financial Security Amid Emotional Insecurity”. Below are our results and the national results. The five points are taken from the article and include data from the American Freshman monograph.

1. Students have less experience socializing, and they might want some help

The article reported that freshmen are spending fewer hours socializing (face to face) in high school per week compared to a few decades ago, and more time on social media. Students are less confident about their interpersonal skills than they are about critical-thinking and problem-solving skills and may be looking for colleges to help them socialize.

-Lake Forest College students are below the national average in terms of socializing with friends – 14% reported socializing 16 hours or more with friends during a typical week compared to the survey wide 18%.

-Lake Forest College students spend a lower amount of time on social media compared to the national average – 21% reported six or more hours of social media use in a week; the national average was over 25%.

-Lake Forest College students were directly in line with the national average when saying their interpersonal skills were a major strength or somewhat strong – around 50%. Similarly, Lake Forest College students reported that their critical thinking and problem-solving skills were better than their interpersonal skills at a higher-rate.

-However, in line with the national average, 49% of Lake Forest students said “This College has a good reputation for social activities” was a very important reason for selecting the College.

2. Students are open to diversity, but many lack experience with people from different backgrounds

Nearly a quarter freshmen nationally came from completely white or completely non-white neighborhoods. However, the students are confident of their ability to tolerate others with different beliefs and work cooperatively with diverse groups of people.

-Lake Forest College students were right in line with the national average with their confidence in their ability to tolerate others with different beliefs and working cooperatively with diverse groups of people.

-Lake Forest College students come from completely white/non-white neighborhoods at a lower rate than the national average – 21% versus 25%.

-Lake Forest College students who didn’t interact with students of other races often in high school were more likely to anticipate that there’s a very good chance that they’ll socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group (49%) rather than the national average (40%).

-81% percent of Lake Forest College students who interacted with someone of another race frequently in the past year rated their “ability to see the world from someone else’s perspective” as a strength. This is in line with the national average reported in the article (roughly 80%). 71% percent of Lake Forest College students who did not interact with someone of another race

frequently in the past year rated their “ability to see the world from someone else’s perspective” as a strength. This is a bit higher than the national average reported in the article (roughly 60%).

-36% of white students at Lake Forest College considered it important to promote racial understanding; 29% is the national average. 63% of black students at Lake Forest College considered it important to promote racial understanding; 57% was the national average.

3. Students increasingly see their undergraduate education as the first step in a long journey

- 38% Lake Forest College freshman plan to pursue a Master’s degree ultimately, compared to nearly half nationally as quoted in the article. However, 42% of our students are aiming at professional and doctorate degrees compared to the national average of one third.

-69% of first-gen freshman at LFC report wanting to get a graduate degree at some point; 3 out of 4 is roughly the national average.

4. Academic reputation still matters most in choosing a college, but an early offer counts, too.

-26% of LFC freshman reported Early Action decisions as an important factor in determining whether or not they’ll come to LFC. This is compared to 16% nationally for all schools and 25% for most selective schools.

5. About one student in 10 is depressed.

-9% of LFC freshmen surveyed say they are depressed; this is in line with the reported national average (10%).

How do Lake Forest College students compare to the peer groups?

Please note that the numbers in parenthesis reference where the data for individual questions can be located in the “Institutional Profile Report”.

**(Note: Comp1 is “4-year private/non-sectarian colleges – very high selectivity”. n=36
Comp2 is “4-year private/non-sectarian colleges – all” n=95)**

Demographics: Lake Forest’s first-years display similar gender demographics to both peer groups (1). Lake Forest College has higher rates of Hispanic/Latino students. Lake Forest College has lower rates of Black/African American students than Comp2, but higher rates than Comp1. Lake Forest College has lower rates of Asian American/Asian students than Comp1, but higher rates than Comp2. Lake Forest displays similar rates of Caucasian first-years compared to both peer groups (40).

37.6% of Lake Forest first-years have their permanent home located 11-50 miles from campus; this number is higher than both comparison groups. Lake Forest College students were less likely to be from over 50 miles away (1).

Lake Forest College first-years also came from public schools at a higher rate than Comp1 (2). Lake Forest first-years were more likely to be first generation college students and less likely to have English be their native language (1, 36).

Why pick Lake Forest? 83.1% of Lake Forest students were accepted by their first choice college, higher than the peer groups. 57.7% of Lake Forest first-years cite LFC as their first choice school (3), similar to the peer groups. In terms of choosing which schools to attend, Lake Forest first-years were more likely to cite “finding a better job” and “to prepare myself for graduate or professional school” as “Very Important” (41-42).

Lake Forest first-years cited multiple reasons as “Very Important” in helping them make a decision at attend the school. Lake Forest first-years were more likely to attend here because of the advice of family and college counselors. Lake Forest first-years were also more likely to attend because of the proximity to home and their view that LFC graduates get good jobs (56-59).

Paying for College: Lake Forest first-years frequently cited financial reasons as influencing their decision to attend the college. Lake Forest first-years were more likely to select “I was offered financial assistance”, “the cost of attending this college”, “not offered aid by first choice”, and “Could not afford first choice” as “Very Important” reasons to attend Lake Forest College (57-59). Lake Forest first-years were more likely to rely on personal resources, aid not to be repaid, and aid to be repaid (21). Finally, Lake Forest first-years were more likely to have “some” concern about the ability to finance their college educations (22).

Student Life & Characteristics: Lake Forest College first-years indicated they were less likely to be bored in class; drink beer, wine, or liquor; come to class late; skip school or class; and fall asleep in class. Lake Forest College first-years also indicated they were more likely to accept mistakes and see feedback from teachers. Lake Forest College students were more likely to use an online instructional website to learn something on their own that wasn’t assigned in class. Lake Forest College students were more likely to view their ability to work cooperatively with diverse others as “a major strength” (27-39).

Lake Forest College first-years view themselves as more cooperative and in better physical health than first-years at other schools in both comparison groups, but as also having lower mathematical and writing abilities (44-49).

Lake Forest College first-years spent less time socializing, partying, watching TV, and using social media during their final year of high school. Lake Forest College students spent less time during their senior year of high school studying than Comp1 first-years, but more time than Comp2 first-years. They were more likely to work for pay during high school compared to Comp1. (62-68).

Lake Forest College students were more likely to view obtaining recognition for contributions to my special field, helping others who are in difficulty, and becoming a community leader as important (71-76).

Lake Forest College's first-years also posited that there was a chance that they would join a social fraternity or sorority as a significantly higher rate than both comparison groups. They are more likely to believe there was a chance of working full-time while attending college. (79)

Remediation and Tutoring: Lake Forest first-years felt like they'd need remedial work in English, reading, mathematics, and writing at a higher rate than comparison group institutions (8). Lake Forest first-years also believed that they would need tutoring help in specific courses at a higher rate (85).

Emphasis on the Sciences: Lake Forest students report more years of study in high school in both physical and biological sciences, and less in arts and/or music (6-7). More consider themselves to be Pre-Med (8). Biological & Life Sciences is a strongly popular intended major (11) at 18% of respondents. This aggregated category includes general biology, zoology, ecology/evolutionary biology, marine biology, microbiology, molecular/cellular biology, neurobiology/neuroscience, botany, agriculture/natural resources, biochemistry/biophysics, and environmental science. Comprising the largest component of the disaggregated majors, 7% intend to major in neurobiology / neuroscience. A higher percentage of Lake Forest College students consider themselves to be pre-med (8).

A higher percent of Lake Forest students have intended careers as a Doctor (MD or DDS) or Health Professional when compared to Comp1 and Comp2. More Lake Forest students aspire to an academic degree of M.D., D.O., D.D.S., or D.V.M (26). A higher percentage report that "Making a theoretical contribution to science" is "essential" (73). Lake Forest College first-years also stated that there was a "very good chance" that they'd work on a professor's research project at a higher rate (84).

Emphasis on Business: Almost 19% of Lake Forest respondents intended to major in a field aggregated by HERI into Business. Disaggregated the highest percent is 7.0% in Finance, 3.6% in Business Admin, 2.8% in Marketing and then others in Entrepreneurship, Management and Accounting. An additional 2.1% said they intended to major in Economics, which is not aggregated into Business here. 15.7% intend a career occupation in an aggregated field within Business (18). 22.3% of the Lake Forest respondents indicated that "becoming successful in a business of my own" is "essential" (74).

Athletics: 34.4% of first-year students stated “the athletic department recruited me” was a very important reason for coming to Lake Forest (61). 36.7% said they had a “very good chance” of playing NCAA or NAIA sponsored intercollegiate athletics (80). These responses are both statistically higher than Comp1 and Comp2.

Career Themes: The top three intended aggregated career occupations of Lake Forest College students were Business (15.7%), Doctor – MD or DSS (13.7%), and Health Professional (10.8%) (18). Lake Forest College first-years decided to attend school here because they feel that graduates get goods at a higher rate (59). Lake Forest College first-years also believed they would change their majors and career choices at a lower rate than Comp1, but at a higher rate than Comp2 (78).

For more detailed results, please see the “CIRP 2014” files on the Institutional Research webpage on the my.lakeforest website.