The University of North Dakota Freshman

Cooperative Institutional Research Program

UND Freshmen vs. National
Fall 2015

Office of Institutional Research
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Executive Summary
The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshmen Survey (TFS) is administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California-Los Angeles. The survey is designed to collect extensive information including academic preparedness, behaviors established in high school, college expectations, individual values and goals, as well as financial concerns, in order to provide institutions with a comprehensive snapshot of incoming freshmen before they begin at the institution. The number of new freshmen enrolled at UND in fall 2015 totaled 1,900; 1,412 (74%) of these students completed the CIRP TFS (along with eight UND-specific questions) while participating in the 2015 Summer Orientation. Some notable survey findings include:

- Of the respondents, 52% were male and 48% were female. The majority of respondents were either 18 or 19 years of age (55.6% and 42.1%, respectively), graduated from high school in 2015 (98%), and identified themselves as U.S citizen (99%).

- The top three “very important” reasons for going to college were to:
  - be able to get a better job (86% UND, 86% peers),
  - get training for a specific career (82% UND, 75% peers),
  - learn more about things that interest me (77% UND, 84% peers).

- The top five reasons UND freshmen listed as “very important” in their decision to attend UND were:
  - this college has a good academic reputation (60%, 73% peers)
  - this college’s graduates get good jobs (51%, 60% peers)
  - this college has a good reputation for its social activities (47%, 48% peers)
  - cost of attending this college (44%, 44% peers)
  - a visit to campus (33%, 37% peers)

- When looking at the highest level of education of the parents, there were more mothers (69.5%) who have some college and a Bachelor’s degree compared to fathers (63.5%). There was an equal amount of parents having a graduate degree (17%). First-generation students accounted for 8% of survey respondents.

- The number one probable field of study for UND’s entering freshmen was health professions (22%, 10% peers), followed by engineering (19%, 17% peers), business (12%, 14% peers), and biological & life sciences (9%, 18% peers).

- 94% of UND respondents were accepted by their first choice college. Slightly more women (96%) were accepted by their first choice college compared to (92%) men. When asked if UND is their first choice, 86% of respondents indicated such; 85% of both women and men indicated UND was their first choice.
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Introduction
The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshmen Survey (TFS), first offered in the mid-1960’s, is administered through the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California-Los Angeles. UND, an early charter participant, joined in 1967 and has administered the survey every few years since that time. 2015 marked the 50th year of the CIRP TFS; since its introduction, over fifteen million students from more than 1,900 colleges and universities have participated in the survey. The survey is designed to assess a wide range of student characteristics, past behaviors, current attitudes, as well as the educational and career aspirations of incoming freshmen. With this survey, one can observe student trends over time and compare the responses of UND incoming freshmen to the responses of those at peer institutions. Peer institutions (defined by CIRP as public universities with low selectivity) that took part took part in the 2015 CIRP TFS included: Oakland University, Old Dominion University, Rutgers University – Newark, University of Texas at El Paso, University of California – Riverside, University of Hawaii and Manoa, University of Idaho, University of Northern Colorado, University of Toledo, and Wayne State University.

The 2015 fall enrollment of first-year freshmen at UND totaled 1,900; while participating in UND’s 2015 Summer Orientation program, 1,412 (74%) students completed the 51 item CIRP Freshmen Survey (Appendix A-1) along with eight UND-specific questions (Appendix A-2). This overview covers the major findings from the 2015 survey, compares key variables with peer institutions, and reports on a few notable longitudinal trends.

Demographics
Of UND’s 1,412 CIRP TFS participants, 727 (51.5%) were male; 685 (48.5%) were female. The majority of respondents were either 18 or 19 years of age (55.6% and 42.1%, respectively), White/Caucasian (91.1%), English was their native language (98.4%), U.S. Citizens (98.9%), identified their sexual orientation as heterosexual/straight (97.4%), and graduated from high school in 2015 (97.8%). Only 7.9% identified as being first-generation college students.

A vast majority (92.8%) of incoming freshmen planned on living in the residence halls. For nearly two-thirds (62.8%) of these students, UND is within 101-500 miles of their permanent home. More than one-third (38.3%) of entering freshmen at UND lived in a small city (2,001 to 40,000 people) during high school, with most (92.8%) having attended a public high school, with over one-third (37.3%) having a high school senior class of 300 or more students, and a majority (70.4%) describing the racial composition of the high school as mostly white.

Students were asked to rate themselves, in comparison to their average, same age, peers on nineteen different characteristics. The top self-reported traits (“Highest 10%” or “Above Average”) of UND incoming students were: drive to achieve, academic ability, cooperativeness, leadership ability, and understating of others. The traits where UND students self-reported as being “Below Average” or “Lowest 10%” were in: artistic ability, public speaking ability, spirituality, computer skills, and writing ability.

Academic Preparation
An increasing percentage (25.1% in 2012 to 26.7% in 2015) of UND freshmen self-reported that their average grade in high school was an A or A+, with decreases noted across all other grades. Nearly half (47.3%) of UND incoming freshmen took between one and four Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high school, significantly lower than freshmen at peer institutions (UND mean: 2.5, Peer mean: 3.34; p < .001, effect size -.89); 41.6% took between one and four AP exams, significantly lower than freshmen at peer institutions (UND mean 2.33, Peer mean: 3.23; p < .001, effect size -.95).

In looking at self-reported college entrance exam scores of UND incoming freshmen, they noted having an average ACT Composite score of 24 (Peer mean: 27). Although the ACT is more commonly taken by UND incoming freshmen, some respondents did note SAT scores: Critical Reading 576 (Peer mean: 625), Mathematics 609 (Peer mean: 647), and Writing 545 (Peer mean: 625).
A majority (62.2%) of students estimate that there is a “very good chance” that they will make at least a “B” average (peers 70.6%). Although in addressing the possibility that they may be underprepared for college study in some areas, students were asked if they feel they will need remedial work in a variety of subject matters: 23.3% feel they may need remedial work in mathematics (22.8% peers), 14.2% in science (14.1% peers), 10.3% in writing (11.8% peers), and 9.2% in English (8.8% peers).

Student Involvement
In looking at which student involvement opportunities incoming freshmen think they might engage in or be a part of, they noted a “very good chance” that they would: play club, intramural, or recreational sports (UND 31.4%, Peers 32.6%), participate in student clubs/groups (UND 31.7%, Peers 58.8%; UND mean 3.05, Peer mean 3.46 p<.001, effect size -.56), join a fraternity or sorority (UND 12.4%, Peers 13.1%), participate in student government (UND 3.9%, Peers 6.5%), be satisfied with their college (UND 54.1%, Peers 63.1%); and take an online course at this institution (UND 7.3%, Peers 6.3%).

Areas of significant difference between incoming freshmen at UND compared to those at peer institutions include their involvement in:
- Diversity opportunities
  - Socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group (UND 45.6%, Peers 72.6%; UND mean 3.30, Peer mean 3.67, p < .001, effect size -.62) Have a roommate of a different race/ethnicity (UND 10.3%, Peers 34.4%; UND mean 2.35, Peer mean 3.04, effect size -.57)
- Academic involvement
  - Discussing course content with students outside of class (UND 32.4%, Peers 58.7%; UND mean 3.13, Peer mean 3.5, effect size -.54 )
  - Communicating regularly with their professors (UND 27.8%, Peers 43.4%; UND mean 3.11, Peer mean 3.24 p < .001, effect size -.35)
  - Participating in a study abroad program (UND 19%, Peers 38.6%; UND mean 2.59, Peer mean 3.01, p < .001, effect size -.43)
  - Working on a professor’s research project (UND 16.6%, Peer 32.1%; UND mean 2.75, Peer mean 3.09, p < .001, effect size -.43)

Time Spent on Social Media
In 2007, CIRP added a question to TFS to assess the use of online social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. As shown in Figure 1, an increasing percentage of UND incoming freshmen reported spending more than six hours per week on social media, from 17% in 2012 to 21% in 2015, with the majority of students (73%) having spent between 1-5 hours per week using social networking sites.

![Figure 1. Time Spent on Social Media per Week](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>&lt;1 to 5 Hours</th>
<th>6 to 15 Hours</th>
<th>16 + Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individual Student Objectives

The top objectives that were "essential" or "very important" to individual incoming freshmen included: being very well off financially (UND 85.3%, Peers 82.3%), raising a family (UND 75.9%, Peers 70.0%), helping others who are in difficulty (UND 66.1%, Peers 73.6%), obtaining recognition from their colleagues for contributions to my special field (UND 53.7%, Peers 57.7%), and becoming an authority in their field (UND 50.9%, Peers 57.8%). With the least essential or important objectives being: writing original works (UND 9%, Peers 14.4%) and creating artistic works (UND 9.2%, Peers 13.6%).

Areas of significant difference between UND freshmen and those at peer institutions were: developing a meaningful philosophy of life (UND mean 2.10, Peer mean 2.46; p < .001, effect size .36), helping to promote racial understanding (UND mean 1.96 Peer mean 2.34; p < .001, effect size .40), keeping up to date with political affairs (UND mean 1.98 Peer mean 2.34; p < .001, effect size .38), and improving their understanding of other countries and cultures (UND mean 2.30, Peer mean 2.78; p < .001, effect size .52).

Deciding on College

The top three “very important” reasons for going to college sited by UND incoming freshmen were to: be able to get a better job (UND 86.2%, Peers 85.5%), get training for a specific career (UND 81.8%, Peers 74.7%), and learn more about things that interest them (UND 77.4%, Peers 83.8%). While men and women had similar responses, the areas with the greatest difference between the genders at UND was: preparing themselves for graduate or professional school (“very important” to 61.3% women, compared to 38.4% men) and to gaining a general education and appreciation of ideas (“very important” to 63.7% women, compared to 51.3% men).

A vast majority (94%) of UND incoming freshmen were accepted by their first-choice institution (74% Peers); with more women (96.3%) accepted by their first-choice institution compared to men (92.4%). For most (85.6%), UND was their first choice, with 12% indicating UND as their second choice. Just over one-third (35%) of UND freshmen did not apply to any other institution, compared to 8.9% of those attending peer institutions.

Why UND?

The top “very important” reasons for attending “this university” noted by incoming UND freshmen were that: there is a very good academic reputation (UND 60%, Peers 73%), graduates get good jobs (UND 51%, Peers 60%), has a good reputation for its social activities (UND 47%, Peers 48%), the cost of attending this college (UND 44%, Peers 44%), and a visit to campus (UND 33%, Peers 37%). As shown in Figure 2, the importance of cost and social activities are of increasing importance to UND incoming freshmen, in choosing to come to UND.

Figure 2. Very Important Reasons Influencing a Student’s Decision to Attend “This University”
UND incoming freshmen cited some reasons for attending “this institution” considerably lower than those attending peer institutions including: this college’s graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools (UND 22.4%, Peers 39.8%), I was offered financial assistance (UND 25.6%, Peers 36%), admitted through an Early Action/Decision program (UND 4.4%, Peers 18.5%), and rankings in national magazines (UND 8%, Peers 25.4%).

Financing Education
When asked how they would be paying for their first year’s educational expenses (Figure 3), a decreasing percentage of incoming freshmen reported using financial resources from family, themselves, or aid that must be repaid, with an increasing percentage of students relying on aid which does not need to be repaid and other sources.

![Figure 3. Sources of Financing the First Year of College](image)

In 2015 the CIRP TFS added questions specific to the types of aid students reported having received. As shown in Figure 4, far fewer UND incoming freshmen report having received need-based grants/scholarships or Pell grants, compared to those at Peer institutions.

![Figure 4. Types of Financial Aid Received](image)

The level of concern incoming students have regarding their ability to finance their college education has remained relatively unchanged, with most students (60.1%) having had “some” concern about their ability to finance their college education (Figure 5).

![Figure 5. Concern about Ability to Finance College Education](image)
Work and School
Twenty-four percent of UND incoming freshmen (Peers 43%) did not work for pay during a typical week during their last year in high school, while 28% (17.2% Peers) worked sixteen or more hours per week. When asked about the chances that they would be getting a job to help pay for college expenses, a vast majority (85.9%) of UND incoming freshmen (Peers 81.8%) felt there was “some chance” or a “very good chance” that they would be working; with 24.7% (28.3% Peers) thinking that they would work full-time while attending college.

Field of Study, Level of Degree, and Graduation
The top intended majors of UND entering freshmen in 2015 were: health professions (UND 21.7%, Peers 9.9%), engineering (UND 18.6%, Peers 16.8%), business (UND 12%, Peers 11.7%), biological & life sciences (UND 8.8%, Peers 17.8%), and education (UND 5.2%, Peers 3.1%). Examining those students who may be interested in later professional programs, 18.5% of UND (Peers 23.4%) incoming freshmen consider themselves to be Pre-Med and 2.3% (Peers 5.7%) Pre-Law. The majors with largest increase in the percent of students interested were engineering (up from 16.5% in 2012) and biological & life sciences (up from 5.6% in 2012); the majors with the largest decreases were in arts and humanities (3.4% in 2012 to 2.1% in 2015) and health professions (down from 22.7% in 2012).

The percentage of incoming freshmen who had already been thinking that there is a chance that they would transfer to another college before they graduate has decreased, both at UND (16.5% in 2012 to 15% in 2015) and at peer institutions (20.2% in 2012 to 16.8% in 2015). As shown in Figure 6, an increasing percentage of UND incoming freshmen expect that it will take them four and six years to graduate. In looking at their degree goals (Figure 7) the percentage of incoming freshmen planning on attaining a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree has remained relatively unchanged, however an increasing percentage of these students are planning on obtaining a Ph.D. or medical degree (both in general and from UND)
Career Plans
The top careers/occupations of interest to incoming UND freshmen were health professional (UND 12.6%, Peers 7.4%), doctor (UND 11.1%, Peers 15.1%), business (UND 10.7%, Peers 12.8%), engineering (UND 9.2%, Peers 11.5%), and nurse (UND 5.6%, Peers 2.9%). The careers with the greatest increase in percent of students interested were doctor (up from 7.3% in 2012) and homemaker/stay at home parent (from 0% in 2012 to 2.1% in 2015); the careers with the largest decrease in interest were engineer (down from 11.8% in 2012) and nurse (down from 7.7% in 2012). Very few (UND 7.5%, Peers 15.0%) students think that there is a “very good chance” that they would change their career choice.

Political Views and Involvement
Many incoming freshmen were witnesses to rising political and racial tensions across the country in 2015, including several officer involved shootings and a protest at the University of Missouri, where several students perceived a lack of administrative response in regards to increasing racial tensions on campus. As highlighted in The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2015, a small, but increasing percentage of incoming freshmen think that there is a “very good chance” that they will participate in student protests or demonstrations: UND 2.3%; Peers 8.6%, and nationally 8.5% (the highest share nationally since the question was first asked in 1967).

As shown in Figure 8, the percentage of incoming UND freshmen that characterize their political views as far left/liberal has increased from 2012. Nationally, 33.5% of freshmen described their political views in the same manner; the last time students described themselves in such a way was back in 1973, near the end of Vietnam War. With an upcoming Presidential election, will these students act on those beliefs by voting? A majority (58.1%) of UND students (Peers 64.8%, nationally 59.8%) believe that there is a “very good chance” that they will vote in a local, state, or national election during their time in college.

Religious Preferences
The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2014 noted that more students than ever selected “none” as their religious preference (UND 12.3%, Peers 27.0%, nationally 27.5%). In 2015 two addition response options were added: Agnostic and Atheist; along with “none”. The CIRP TFS 2015 noted that the percentage of students identifying with a specific religious preference was again down (UND 79.9%, Peers 64.7%, nationally 70.5%). Nearly one-third (32.7%) of UND’s incoming freshmen had a Lutheran religious preference, followed by Roman Catholic (24.9%).

Personal Opinion
In addition to characterizing their political and religious views, students were asked about their agreement or support on a series of social issues. Many of these questions have changed over time, as to reflect the ever changing political, economic, and social climate of the times. Figure 9 shows the percentage of incoming UND freshmen who agree
(“strongly” or “somewhat”) with various statements. There was a considerable increase in UND freshmen who agree that abortion should be legal (from 50% in 2012, to 54% in 2015) and that same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status (from 58% in 2012, to 73% in 2015). UND incoming freshmen students’ level of support is significantly lower than the level of support noted by students at peer institutions: abortion should be legal (UND mean 2.5, Peer mean 2.94; p<.001, effect size -.42); same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status (UND mean 3.08, Peer mean 3.48; p<.001, effect size -.45). A topic with little change (30% in 2012, to 29% in 2015) in the level of support by UND freshmen over the years has been that racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America; UND students’ level of support for this statement was significantly higher than the level of support noted by students at peer institutions (UND mean 2.10, Peer mean 1.79; p<.001; effect size .39).

Figure 9. Agreement with Social Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion should be legal</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissent is a critical component of the political process</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from disadvantaged social backgrounds should be given preferential treatment in college admissions</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UND Specific Questions
Results from the eight UND specific-questions can be found online at: [http://und.edu/research/institutional-research/surveys/2015-cirp-fr.cfm](http://und.edu/research/institutional-research/surveys/2015-cirp-fr.cfm)

For Additional Information on CIRP
For additional information on the CIRP TFS visit: [http://www.heri.ucla.edu/cirpoverview.php](http://www.heri.ucla.edu/cirpoverview.php)