



Outlook on 2006 Texas Tech Freshman *Desire for Career Success & High Income*

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Understanding the characteristics and goals of incoming Texas Tech freshmen potentially affords the campus community an opportunity to tailor course content, programs and services to better meet student needs. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found that the reason for attending college today appears to be strongly linked to the perception that a college degree will provide the student with economic and career advantages. The following results from the 2006 CIRP study affirm these findings.

Texas Tech has administered the nationally recognized Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey for incoming freshman for 15 years. The study is conducted in collaboration with the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. The survey has been revised over time to reflect societal changes. All results from the national study are weighted to provide a normative profile.

The 2006 survey resulted in responses from 1,173 (n=505 males and n=668 females) first time, full-time Texas Tech students. The national cohort used for comparison with Texas Tech included 70,000 participants (n=31,791 males and n=38,209 females) from other public and private institutions. Findings from the study provide broad categories of information about the 2006 Texas Tech incoming freshmen.

Only selected questions with applicable comparisons to the national cohort are used in this newsletter. A more detailed profile about the 2006 Texas Tech freshmen can be found in the CIRP longitudinal profile, known as the TRENDS, located at <http://appserv.itts.ttu.edu/cirp/>.

General Student Characteristics

The majority, 88.1% of Texas Tech incoming freshmen that participated in the CIRP survey were White/Caucasian as compared to 72.8% from other public universities. Tech had comparatively more Mexican American/Chicano/Other Latino participants, 6.6%, than 4.8%

from other participating universities, a lower percentage of African American/Black students, 2.5%, compared to 7.3%, and fewer Asian American students, 3.1%, compared to 13% from other public universities.

Popular activities of interest reported by Tech students prior to college were attending religious services, performing volunteer work, studying with other students, reading a newspaper for local, national, and global news and using the internet for research or homework. A high percentage of respondents, 77.5%, had selected Texas Tech University as their first choice college; they also indicated a higher level of confidence in the ability to pay for the first college year than the national cohort.

Financial Concerns & Income

With high public interest in the increasing cost for attending college fewer Texas Tech students, 51.7%, expressed concern about the cost of higher education when compared to the national cohort at 64.1%. Tech students 45.9% indicated their first year's educational expenses (room, board, tuition, and fees) would be covered by family resources (parents, relatives, and spouse) as compared to 37.6% of students from other public

universities. A higher level of financial confidence was again affirmed by the Tech students participating in the CIRP as the majority of Tech freshmen, 88.2%, indicated they had no intention to work during their freshman year, compared to 74.4% of the respondents. A lower percentage of Tech students, 11.7%, had plans to work on or off campus as compared to 24.9% of students from other public universities.

When asked to give a "best estimate" of parental income in the last year, 52.2% of the Tech students estimated their parents' income to be \$60,000-\$149,999, compared to 45.8% of students from other public institutions. An additional 28% of Tech respondents estimated their parental average income to be \$150,000+ as compared to 19% from other public universities.

Career Goals & College

A majority of incoming Texas Tech CIRP participants, 77.9%, cited "making more money" as an important reason for attending college as compared to 71.3% of respondents from other public institutions. Tech students selected financial and career related goals as three of the top five very important reasons for attending college (Table 1).

The top four reasons given for attending Texas Tech were: academic reputation 51.5%, ability for graduates to get good jobs 49.9%, campus appeal during a visit 41.4% and school size 39.9%.

Table 1

College Expectations

| 2006 Freshmen (Class of 2011) | TTU | National Cohort |
|--|-------|-----------------|
| Make more money | 77.9% | 71.3% |
| Learn more about things that interest me | 77.6% | 78.1% |
| Get training for specific career | 76.0% | 69.0% |
| To get a better job | 73.4% | 71.9% |
| General education and for an appreciation of ideas | 64.2% | 65.4% |

In response to a twenty-one item question that asked students to select items they believed to be essential or very important objectives, Texas Tech respondents again reinforced their desire for financial success with the selection of “being well off financially” as one of the five most important goals, second only to “raising a family.” Participants also expressed their desire for career success and recognition, but only after first selecting the objective of providing assistance to those in need (Table 4.).

Students also indicated an overwhelming commitment to finishing their degree with a high level of respondents reporting they also wanted to complete graduate degrees at Tech (Table 3). This finding was somewhat complicated by the results of a second question on graduate education where completing a graduate degree at any college overshadowed the results of completing the graduate degree at Texas Tech (Table 2). Nonetheless, the results support CIRP participants dream of career success and the ensuing financial benefits after completing a graduate program.

What type of career are Texas Tech CIRP freshmen selecting in order to achieve their goals for financial success and recognition? Survey responses were spread across diverse job categories, with the top ten careers selected listed in Table 5. Given the interest in majors that traditionally require an advanced degree or fifth year, continued support of undergraduate education by student services could aid in the retention and recruitment of students into these graduate programs at Texas Tech.

References:
 Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P., (2005). How college effects students: a third decade of research (Vol. 2). San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

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Table 2.
Highest Degree Desired at any College

| 2006 Freshmen (Class of 2011) | TTU | National Cohort |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----------------|
| Bachelors degree | 26.1% | 20.6% |
| Master’s degree | 45.2% | 41.0% |
| Graduate and/or Professional | 25.6% | 35.7% |

Table 3.
Highest Academic Degree Desired at Texas Tech

| 2006 Freshmen (Class of 2011) | TTU | National Cohort |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----------------|
| Bachelors degree | 50.6% | 61.3% |
| Master’s degree | 32.4% | 24.3% |
| Graduate and/or Professional | 13.2% | 11.0% |

Table 4.
TTU freshmen students reported the following top five objectives as “essential” or “very important.”

| 2006 Freshmen (Class of 2011) | TTU | National Cohort |
|--|-------|-----------------|
| Raising a family | 83.3% | 74.9% |
| Being very well off financially | 79.6% | 75.4% |
| Helping others who are in difficulty | 65.7% | 65.8% |
| Becoming an authority in my field | 57.7% | 59.0% |
| Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions in my field | 55.7% | 55.2% |

Table 5.
Top Ten Career Aspirations

| 2006 Freshmen (Class of 2011) | TTU | National Cohort |
|--|-------|-----------------|
| Engineer | 15.8% | 10.2% |
| Business & related | 15.3% | 17.0% |
| Medical Field | 13.6% | 16.2% |
| Teacher (primary & secondary) | 9.1% | 5.7% |
| Lawyer (Attorney) or judge | 4.1% | 4.2% |
| Therapist (physical, occupational, speech) | 4.1% | 2.7% |
| Interior Decorator (including Designer) | 3.1% | 0.6% |
| Writer or Journalist | 2.7% | 2.9% |
| Architect or Urban Planner | 2.3% | 0.8% |
| Dietitian or Nutritionist | 2.1% | 0.6% |



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