

# Have Grinnellians Changed?

Review of CIRP Data  
Office of Institutional Research  
Spring, 2007

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Each fall, Grinnell College first-year students participate in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) freshmen survey that is administrated by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. The survey, which is given during new student orientation, includes items about students' backgrounds and high school experiences, attitudes, and expectations about college. The data from the CIRP provides an overview of the incoming class that can be used for teaching and learning purposes and for developing campus-wide policies and programs. Perhaps more interesting, however, is that the longitudinal data also allows us to understand how this year's incoming class may be similar to or different from past years.

We occasionally hear the laments of seniors who are quick to point out the differences between their "wise" selves and their "newbie" peers. Alumni may be curious as they hear about changes on the campus: "We have different faculty and new buildings, but are the students still the same?" Having conducted the CIRP for over 20 years, a review of some of the data may provide a sliver of insight into this question: Have Grinnellians changed over the years?

The following are the results to some of the CIRP survey questions. Students are encouraged but not required to complete the CIRP so the response rates to the survey have varied over the years. Although not all first-year students chose to participate in the CIRP we believe the results still provide useful data about this population of students. Presented below are the results of the CIRP survey questions for the Class of 2010, Class of 2007, Class of 2000 and Class of 1990. Are this fall's first-year students similar to the seniors? Are they similar to those Grinnell alumni who matriculated 10 or 20 years ago? **Check it out...**

Note: If you have additional questions, please contact Ann Gansemer-Topf in the Office of Institutional Research at [gansemer@grinnell.edu](mailto:gansemer@grinnell.edu)

## Results of the CIRP Data: Class of 2010, 2007, 2000, and 1990

	<b>Class of 2010</b> (n=147)	<b>Class of 2007</b> (n=340)	<b>Class of 2000</b> (n=266)	<b>Class of 1990</b> (n=322)
<b>The percentage of students who rated self "above average" as compared with the average person of his/her age in the following categories:</b>				
Academic ability	93.9	91.9	92.1	96.3
Artistic ability	27.4	30.1	38.5	37.9
Drive to achieve	87.1	68.9	74.0	73.0
Emotional health	45.6	49.6	51.7	65.9
Leadership ability	52.4	57.0	50.2	56.7
Self-confidence (intellectual)	63.9	67.5	67.2	70.7
Self-confidence (social)	32.0	36.2	40.3	41.3
Spirituality	38.4	33.1	43.3	NA
Writing ability	66.0	64.0	70.1	67.7
<b>What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain</b>				
Bachelor's degree	5.1	4.3	2.9	8.9
Master's degree	37.5	32.2	30.2	33.4
Ph.D or Ed.D.	36.0	39.8	46.9	41.0
M.D., D. O, D.D.S., D.V.M.	7.4	12.2	13.9	9.8
J.D.	11.8	10.0	5.3	5.6
<b>Reasons as noted "very important" in influencing student's decision to attend this particular college:</b>				
This college has a very good academic reputation	86.3	83.5	83.0	89.8
I was offered financial assistance	56.8	64.3	59.5	47.4
Rankings in national magazines	29.0	26.4	29.0	NA
<b>Student estimates chances are "very good" that he/she will:</b>				
Get a job to help pay for college expenses	54.5	52.0	57.7	51.7
Play varsity/intercollegiate athletics	27.3	30.2	22.4	28.2
Make at least a "B" average	65.0	60.2	57.8	
Change major field	27.3	30.4	35.1	33.4
Change career choice	29.4	36.3	39.8	35.3
Participate in volunteer or community service work	46.2	44.4	42.5	NA

<b>Objectives considered to be "essential" or "very important"</b>				
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts	17.5	19.0	20.0	16.5
Becoming an authority in my field	64.3	56.3	55.0	65.6
Influencing the political structure	31.5	25.7	24.7	24.5
Influencing the social structure	48.3	42.0	36.6	33.3
Raising a family	55.9	56.1	58.9	54.1
Being very well off financially	39.2	39.4	34.8	44.9
Helping others who are in difficulty	72.0	65.3	65.9	61.3
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	66.4	63.5	72.8	58.6
Participating in a community action program	35.7	30.1	40.3	25.2
Helping to promote racial understanding	46.2	44.9	46.7	53.3
Becoming a community leader	34.3	30.7	31.6	NA
<b>Student agrees "strongly" or "somewhat"</b>				
Abortion should be legal	76.0	79.9	90.0	81.4
The death penalty should be abolished	68.3	64.5	51.2	39.2
It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships	5.5	7.3	5.4	13.8
Federal military spending should be increased	9.7	11.7	NA	6.3
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	76.6	76.7	81.6	83.7
<b>How would you characterize your political views?</b>				
Liberal/far left	71.7	69.8	70.4	54.5
Middle-of-the road	22.8	22.9	23.7	37.4
Conservative/far right	5.5	7.3	5.8	8.1

**Note:** Students are encouraged to participate in the CIRP survey during student orientation but are not required. Response rates have fluctuated over the years.