

# **The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2001 Compared with Eastern Michigan University's Fall 2001 Freshmen**

## **Introduction**

In early January the Assessment Task Force received four reports from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). The cross-divisional task force provided several avenues to disseminate the information received:

1. All Cabinet members received all reports.
2. All reports were put on Eastern Michigan University's web caucus conferencing system called Freshman Data 2001. The web caucus address was announced on EMU Today.
3. Two round table discussions were held for the campus community. Fifty colleagues responded. Faculty and staff from Housing, Campus Life, Enrollment Services, and several members from the Strategic Planning Committee attended.
4. A third round table discussion was held as a follow-up to the initial discussion.
5. PowerPoint presentations were given to Enrollment Services, the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents and at the Teaching and Learning Showcase sponsored by FCIE.

This report is a summary from the campus round table discussions and is divided into the following topics:

1. Executive Summary
2. Planning Implications
3. Eastern Michigan University's freshmen compared to the 2001 freshmen national norms and trends identified by the CIRP data.
4. Eastern Michigan University's 2001 freshmen compared to the 2001 freshmen at other 4-year public medium select colleges and with all 4-year public colleges.
  - a. Who are Eastern Michigan University freshmen students?
  - b. Data of interest to Enrollment Services
  - c. Data of interest to Academic Affairs
  - d. Data of interest to Student Affairs
5. Possible additional studies

It should be noted that the following data are in percentages. These percentages represent 1,248 responses from a freshman class of 2,800 or 44 percent of the total population. Statistically this response rate represents a +/- 3 percent sampling error.

## Executive Summary

The overarching impression the 2001 CIRP data left with roundtable discussion participants was that Eastern Michigan University freshmen are similar to other freshmen attending all four-year public medium selective colleges and universities, all four-year public colleges and with the national norms.

Eastern freshmen responses for the following items were virtually identical to those of freshmen at other universities.

- Family income of \$75,000 or higher 36.7%
- One parent has a college degree 41.3%
- Family will fund the first year of college 23.7%
- Obtain a bachelors degree at Eastern 60.5%
- Want to get a better job 69.8%
- Get a general education and appreciation for ideas 63.0%
- Want to learn about things that interest them 73.9%
- Worked 16-20 hours 22.7%
- Studied 6-10 hours per week 15.7%
- Studied 3-5 hours per week 31.9%

Responses for Eastern students differed from those of other freshmen for the following:

	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>4-Y Med Sel.</u>
• Eastern has more women than our counterparts	65.4%	57.0%
• Our freshmen live within 50 miles of campus	50.7%	29.7%
• Freshmen come here to be teachers	27.2%	19.0%
• Undecided on a major	5.4%	9.2%
• Need special tutoring		
• Mathematics	40.0%	29.2%
• Science	20.0%	11.2%
• Students plan to live in the residence halls	85.0%	67.7%

Alexander Astin identified eight important student trends in the publication *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2001*. Responses by Eastern students were within sampling error for these key national trends with the exception that Eastern Michigan University's freshmen women reported lower physical and emotional health.

- Freshmen espouse more liberal political views
- Renewed interest in politics
- Continued growth in student activism
- More interracial interaction
- Physical and emotional health hit a record low in 2001
- Record number of freshmen report no religious preference

- Boredom and tardiness signal record levels of academic disengagement
- Intrinsic motivation to attend college

## **Planning Implications**

### Attraction and Retention

Sixty percent of the First-time Full-time freshmen students reported that they expect to receive a bachelor's degree from Eastern and 24 percent expect to receive their master degree from Eastern. It would be possible to use this 2001 database to identify a sample group of these students and track their progress toward their education goals. This cohort of students could be identified for several focus group meetings that would help determine student retention issues.

By far the career and major of choice for freshmen entering Eastern Michigan University is teaching at both the elementary and secondary levels. Teaching majors represent 27.2 percent of the freshman class. This is a larger class size than currently enrolled which might have significant planning implications for the College of Education in regard to increasing the number of classes available to students. Career Services might need to plan to educate the students on career opportunities in education.

The new freshmen at Eastern reported that they need tutoring services in a greater proportion than their counterparts at other institutions. New students coming to Eastern need to be made aware of the tutoring services available at the Holman Learning Center. Additional support services may need to be expanded for Mathematics and English. Although faculty feel that this need is currently being met, it might be helpful to monitor referral and usage of the tutoring on campus.

Thirty-one percent of the freshmen said that their financial aid package was a deciding factor in coming to Eastern. In addition, 15 percent of Eastern Michigan University's entering students felt that they would have a major problem paying for college. Fifty-four percent plan to get a job to help pay for college expenses. The university's financial aid component that is made available to students is valuable in attracting and sustaining students in their educational goals.

Also of interest, 80 percent of the incoming freshmen have a computer. This might have some impact on the number of computers the university is providing for student use in the computer laboratories. A follow-up to this data might be monitoring the student use of various computer laboratories in the university to determine usage and student computer needs.

### **Eastern Michigan University's freshmen compared to the 2001 freshmen National Norms and Trends identified by the CIRP data.**

The CIRP data were analyzed at the Higher Education Research Institute and provides statistical data on the 2001 freshmen norms based on the responses of 281,064

students at 421 of the nation's baccalaureate colleges and universities. These data have been statistically adjusted to reflect the responses of the 1.2 million first-time, full-time students entering four-year colleges and universities as freshmen in 2001. The trends section of this report summarizes the 2001 results as well as major trends in the national survey and then compares these results with Eastern Michigan University's 2001 freshmen. These comparisons will be discussed in the following seven trends.

**Trend 1: Freshmen are more liberal than in the past**

Freshmen espouse more liberal political views than in the past. As the chart below suggests, Eastern's freshmen are within +/- 3 percent of the national trends. Eastern has more middle of the road students than the national norm.

Question	Historic National Comparative Data %	National Data 2000 %	National Data 2001 %	EMU 2001 %
Liberal or far left	21.0 (1981) 40.9 (1971)	27.7	29.9	27.8
Middle of the road	X	51.9	49.5	56.6
Conservative or far right	X	20.4	20.9	15.6
Same sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	50.9 (1997)	56.0	57.9	64.9
There should be a law prohibiting homosexual relationships	50.4 (1987)	27.2	24.9	19.7
Marijuana should be legalized	51.3 (1977)	34.2	36.5	34.0
Death penalty should be abolished	30.2 (1980)	31.2	32.2	36.6

**Trend 2: Freshmen have a renewed interest in politics**

There is a renewed interest in politics, especially political extremes. The students who reported that they frequently discussed politics in the past year rose sharply from a record low last year. This was consistent with renewed interest in the presidential election. The students who responded either far left or far right had a stronger interest in politics. Eastern students were within the national average.

Frequently discussed politics	X	16.4	20.0	17.4
Very important to keep up to date with political affairs	X	28.1	31.4	27.0

### Trend 3: Continued growth in student activism

The data from Eastern's freshmen seem consistent with the norms of other public colleges for volunteerism and participating in demonstrations.

Question	Historic National Comparative Data %	National Data 2000 %	National Data 2001 %	EMU 2001 %
Continued growth in student activism:				
Participated in organized demonstration	15.8 (1966)	45.4	47.5	53.0
Frequently or occasionally volunteered	66.0 (1989)	81.0	82.6	76.4
High school required community service for graduation	23.2 (1998)	X	28.2	24.2

### Trend 4: Freshmen have more interracial interaction

There is more interracial interaction and an increased awareness of racial issues. Freshmen coming to Eastern have socialized with someone of another race or ethnic group less than the national average. The other data from Eastern students are consistent with the national norms in terms of helping promote racial understanding and affirmative action.

Incoming freshmen have socialized with someone of another racial or ethnic group	58.0 (1992)	67.7	70.0	62.9
Helping to promote racial understanding is important	46.4 (1992) 30.0 (1999)	30.8	31.5	33.8
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	X	49.9	49.0	47.1

### Trend 5: Physical and mental health hit record low

The sense of health and wellness continues to decline. A gender gap persists. Eastern's women have lower ratings on physical and emotional health compared with national norms. The data that Eastern's freshmen reported are consistent with the national norms.

Question	Historic National Comparative Data %	National Data 2000 %	National Data 2001 %	EMU 2001 %
Rated their physical health above average for their age	64.3 (1986)	56.4	66.8 men 45.8 women	66.8 men 39.7 women
Rated their emotional health above average for their age	63.6 (1985)	53.8	60.4 men 47.7 women	59.7 men 39.8 women
There was a very good chance they will seek personal counseling	3.5 (1989)	6.4	6.6	8.0
Feels overwhelmed	X	X	17.4 men 36.6 women	17.5 men 40.6 women

### Trend 6: Boredom and tardiness signal record levels of academic disengagement

Boredom and tardiness signal levels of academic disengagement in high school. The data reported by Eastern's freshmen are consistent with the national averages with boredom and coming late to class, but our freshmen report that they missed more high school classes than the norm, spent less time studying and earned lower grades.

Report being bored in high school class	29.3 (1985)	39.7	41.1	40.9
Report coming late to class frequently or occasionally	48.2 (1966)	64.5	65.1	68.7
Overslept and missed class	19.6 (1968)	35.3	35.6	40.5
Spent 6 hours or more on homework per week during high school	47.0 (1987)	X	34.9	26.8
Freshmen reported their high school grades averaged an A	17.6 (1968)	X	44.1	27.1

### Trend 7: Freshmen express higher intrinsic motivation for attending college

The data from Eastern's freshmen students are lower than the national norms in this category but within sampling error. The exception is Eastern's freshmen reported being less concerned about becoming a cultured person than the national norm data reports.

Reasons to go to college:				
To learn more about things of interest	80.9 (1977)	76.6	77.8	73.9
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	70.0 (1970) 66.8 (1993)	64.5	65.8	63.0
To make me a more cultured person	45.0 (1995)	40.5	42.0	37.2
My parents wanted me to go	37.4 (1996) 23.0 (1971)	35.7	33.3	29.8
To be able to get a better job	80.3 (1993)	71.6	70.3	69.9

The remainder of this report will compare Eastern Michigan University freshmen that were surveyed in fall 2001 with other 4-year public medium select universities as well as all 4-year public colleges. All data is taken from the Total First-time, Full-time report.

**Eastern Michigan University’s freshmen compared to the 2001 freshmen at other 4-year public medium select colleges and with all 4-year public colleges.**

**Who are Eastern Michigan University freshman students?**

Contrary to some widely held beliefs about Eastern’s freshmen, Eastern Michigan University has more women than men when compared to peer institutions. Eastern Michigan University has more African American students than peer institutions. The permanent residence of most of our freshman is within 11-50 miles. Family income for Eastern’s freshmen is similar to other 4-year public medium select colleges. One or more parents have a college degree similar to other freshmen in our comparison group.

Question	EMU %	4-year Public Medium Select %	All 4-year Public Colleges %
Men	34.6	43.0	43.8
Women	65.4	57.0	56.2
African American/Black	20.4	7.4	14.9
White/Caucasian	74.2	82.5	67.2
How many miles from college is your permanent home?			
11-50 miles	50.7	29.7	32.5
51-100 miles	21.9	19.0	16.5
101-500 miles	16.6	34.3	28.7
Family income \$75,000 or higher	36.7	35.3	34.7
One parent has a college degree	41.3	41.6	40.8
Family will fund first year college expenses (\$6,000-\$10,000)	23.7	25.7	22.5

**Data of Interest for Enrollment Services**

As reported in fall 2001, Eastern Michigan University was the first choice of 62.9 percent of the freshman class and second choice for 27.8 percent. This is a higher percentage than reported by Admissions before the freshman class was admitted. The higher percentage might be due to the student not remembering clearly the information early in the admission process. Eastern’s freshman class reported that 54 percent did not take a placement course or exam. Sixty percent of the freshman class expect to obtain a bachelor's degree from Eastern, 24 percent expect to obtain a master's degree from Eastern and 5 percent expect to obtain an Ed.D. from Eastern. Students note several important reasons for deciding to go to college: ability to get a better job, gain an education and appreciation of ideas, have the ability to earn more money, learn things

of interest, and get training for a specific career. The primary influences freshmen students noted as reasons to attend Eastern are its good academic reputation; offer of financial assistance; graduates get good jobs; and the size of Eastern's campus.

Question	EMU %	4-year Public Medium Select %	All 4-year Public Colleges %
How many advance placement courses did you take?			
None	54.0	55.9	51.0
One	21.0	19.0	19.3
Is this college your			
First Choice	62.9	67.8	67.4
Second Choice	27.8	24.3	23.9
What is the highest academic degree you intend to obtain from Eastern?			
Bachelor's	60.5	67.8	68.9
Master's	24.0	21.7	20.9
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	5.1	2.2	2.2
I plan to live in the residence halls.	85.0	67.7	61.2
Very important reasons for deciding to go to college:			
To be able to get a better job	69.9	71.9	72.4
To gain a general education	63.0	60.8	63.4
To earn more money	68.2	72.6	73.3
To learn more things that interest me	73.9	73.6	65.4
To get training in a specific career	76.4	75.6	76.0
Chances are very good that I will:			
Be satisfied with this college	40.4	40.2	42.6
Transfer to another college before graduation	11.0	10.9	10.0
Influences in my decision to attend this college:			
Good academic reputation	39.0	40.6	44.5
Financial assistance	31.4	26.6	29.1
Low tuition	29.4	31.3	31.4
Graduates get good jobs	37.4	40.2	42.2
Like the size of campus	30.6	33.1	31.2
The amount and type of financial aid you received from EMU influenced your decision to attend here	38.0	X	X
Chances are very good that:			
I will work full time	8.3	8.1	8.7
I will get a job to help pay expenses	54.3	48.5	45.8

Question	EMU %	4-year Public Medium Select %	All 4-year Public Colleges %
Do you have any concern about your ability to finance your college education?			
None	33.6	33.5	36.0
Some	51.2	53.9	51.5
Major	15.2	12.6	12.5

### Data of Interest to Academic Affairs

By far students who come to Eastern have chosen a career as a teacher or administrator in elementary or secondary education. Only 5.4 percent of freshmen coming to Eastern in the fall are undecided on a career. Students report that they had tutoring in mathematics, but still feel they need additional help, and to a lesser extent need help in science, foreign languages, and writing. Fifteen percent of our incoming freshmen had learning problems in school. Eighty percent of the freshmen surveyed said they have a computer.

Your probable major is:			
Elementary Education	12.0	9.2	7.9
Secondary Education	9.4	4.7	3.5
Fine Arts	3.3	3.3	3.4
Marketing	3.5	2.9	2.7
Management	3.4	3.8	3.7
Nursing	2.9	2.5	3.8
Therapy	2.3	2.0	2.4
Psychology	4.8	5.2	5.2
Computer Science	2.3	3.4	3.6
Undecided	5.4	9.2	8.8
Activities of note in the past year:			
Was bored in class	40.9	44.4	41.2
Tutored another student	50.3	47.2	51.4
Studied with other students	86.3	84.0	85.5
Asked for teacher advice	26.2	23.3	23.2
Overslept and missed class	40.5	37.6	37.4
Came late to class	68.7	66.1	65.6
Communicated via e-mail	68.8	63.7	61.0
Used internet for research	72.9	71.7	70.2
Used a personal computer	77.8	77.4	76.2

Question	EMU %	4-year Public Medium Select %	All 4-year Public Colleges %
How many hours did you spend during a typical week doing these activities?			
Studying/homework			
1-2 hours	25.1	27.1	25.3
3-5 hours	31.9	29.5	30.1
6-10 hours	15.7	14.9	16.9
Working for pay			
None	19.7	18.9	23.9
11-15 hours	16.4	15.9	14.4
16-20 hours	22.7	20.6	18.7
Over 20 hours	22.7	23.9	22.0
Reading for pleasure			
None or less than 1 hour	47.7	57.0	54.1
Do you feel you will need special tutoring or remedial work in:			
Mathematics	40.9	29.2	30.6
Science	20.0	11.2	12.2
Foreign Language	16.5	11.1	12.3
Writing	15.2	10.2	13.1
English	13.3	8.9	11.7

### Data of Interest to Student Affairs

Issues that apply to Student Affairs relate to the mental and physical health of the student's, their involvement in co-curricular activities, their career aspirations and the number of students who expect to live on campus.

### Health and Rec/IM Issues

The freshmen entering Eastern report smoking less and drinking less than their counterparts, but report that they party about the same amount. They also report feeling more overwhelmed and depressed than the other public university students in 2001. Eastern's entering freshmen seem to exercise less than their counterparts, except for the women who exercised in the 6-10 hour range.

Health and Recreation			
Smoked cigarettes	9.3	12.6	9.7
Drank beer	41.7	50.2	45.0
Drank wine or liquor	55.1	56.2	52.0
Felt overwhelmed by all I have to do	32.4	29.6	27.6
Felt depressed	11.4	8.4	8.2

Question	EMU %	4-year Public Medium Select %	All 4-year Public Colleges %
Health and Recreation, continued			
Exercised: 1-2 hours	Men	9.8	13.0
	Women	17.7	19.7
3-5 hours	Men	14.8	18.0
	Women	17.5	20.4
6-10 hours	Men	13.6	18.5
	Women	16.2	16.7
Partying 3-5 hours	Men	18.2	20.4
	Women	20.2	21.4
6-10 hours	Men	14.6	15.5
	Women	12.6	15.1
Will most likely seek personal counseling	8.0	6.0	7.1

### Campus Life/Dean of Students

Eastern's freshmen seem to be very consistent with the other public college and university students in the amount and kind of activities they participated in while in high school. Note also, the national trends discussed earlier in regard to political views, volunteerism and racial issues.

Activities noted in the past year:			
Participated in organized demonstrations	53.0	55.1	52.5
Performed volunteer work	76.4	77.4	78.3
Voted in a student election	24.2	22.3	23.3
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group	62.9	65.9	70.8
Attended recital or concert	81.8	79.3	76.6
Visited an art gallery or museum	59.1	52.6	54.9
Did volunteer work			
None or less than 1 hour	58.3	59.0	57.9

### Career Services

Freshmen entering college ranked education higher as a major opposed to other professions. Other careers selected were business and computer programming. Seventy-two percent of the students coming to Eastern said being very well off financially was essential or very important. Thirty-six percent said becoming successful in a business of their own was very important.

Question	EMU %	4-year Public Medium Select %	All 4-year Public Colleges %
Very important reasons for deciding to go to college:			
To get a better job	69.8	71.9	72.4
To make more money	68.2	72.6	73.3
Prepare myself for graduate school	54.2	50.5	55.0
Get training for a career	76.4	75.6	76.0
College graduates from this college get good jobs	37.4	40.2	42.2
Students estimate chances are very good they will:			
Change major fields	15.0	13.7	13.7
Change career choice	13.4	12.2	11.8
Get a job to help pay for college	54.3	48.5	45.8
Work full-time while attending college	8.3	8.1	8.7

### Resident Life

Even though 50% of our students live within 50 miles or less from their permanent home, 85% of the freshman students report that they expect to live on campus in university residence halls.

Where do you plan to live during the fall term?			
With family or relatives	12.4	24.1	28.9
College dormitory	85.0	67.7	61.2

### Possible additional studies

This information is only a beginning to understanding our freshmen class 2001. Additional study would be helpful to determine why the students answered the questions as they did. Samples of possible questions to be answered are listed below.

1. How do the ACT score and standards for Mathematics and English correlate to the request for tutoring from students taking the CIRP?
2. Does the mandatory math test given to freshmen students correlate with the data from the CIRP?
3. Is there a higher percentage of students coming to Eastern from a feeder school who are requesting tutoring in Math and English?
4. Identify the students who requested Mathematics and English tutoring and follow-up to see if Eastern retained these students into the sophomore year.
5. Is there a correlation between the large number of women coming to Eastern, with miles from home, requests for tutoring, ethnicity origin, financial assistance, and health issues?

A four-year study could be conducted with a sample from the 2001 freshmen class to determine persistence, customer service issues, and areas of student concern to determine retention issues.