

CIRP 2004 Freshmen Survey Macalester and Four Midwestern Colleges

Prepared by Cheryl Job
Institutional Research
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The CIRP survey asks new freshmen about their views and expectations as they enter college. This is a nation-wide survey coordinated by the Higher Education Research Institute out of UCLA. The report that follows compares results from Macalester College to results from four other Midwestern liberal arts institutions for freshmen entering in fall 2004. The data sharing agreement between the five colleges specifies that institution names should not be listed in reports, so the other four colleges are listed as College A, College B, College C, and College D.

Macalester students are generally very similar to their counterparts at the four other Midwestern liberal arts colleges.

- About 70% of them are attending their first choice college.
- Their most important reasons for attending college are to learn more about things and gain a general education.
- Academic reputation and size of the school were major factors in choosing among colleges.
- They expect to be satisfied with college, with about 70% of them also expecting to make a B average.
- Most of them rate themselves very highly in terms of academic ability (about 90%) and drive to achieve (about 70%).

However, there are some differences between Macalester's incoming freshmen of 2004 and the freshmen at the other colleges, which are hi-lighted in the tables and graphs below.

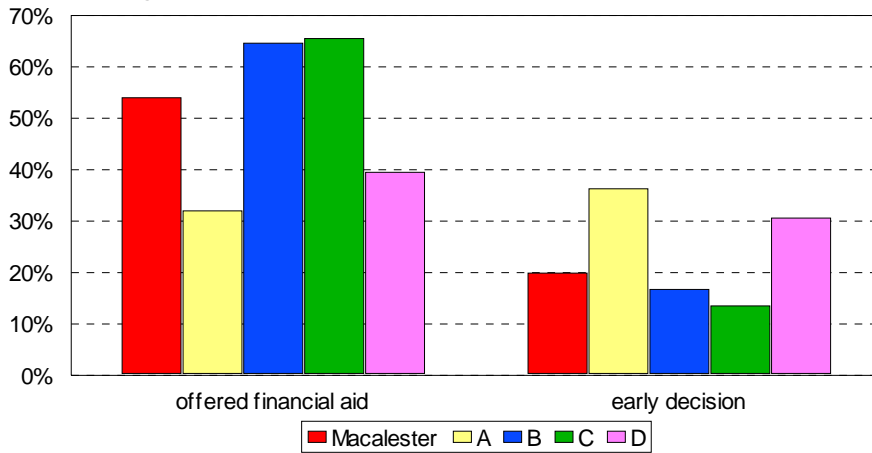
Highest Degrees Planned Anywhere...

	Macalester	College A	College B	College C	College D
Master's	35.1	25.3	34.2	42.2	42.0
Doctorate	43.2	45.2	39.1	33.2	27.7
Medical	6.7	12.2	11.2	8.2	11.0
Law	9.7	12.2	8.1	3.9	9.7

Macalester and College A have more freshmen planning on doctorates rather than masters degrees as their highest degrees earned anywhere. Macalester freshmen are similar to the other colleges in the percentages planning law degrees, but slightly lower in the percentage planning medical degrees.

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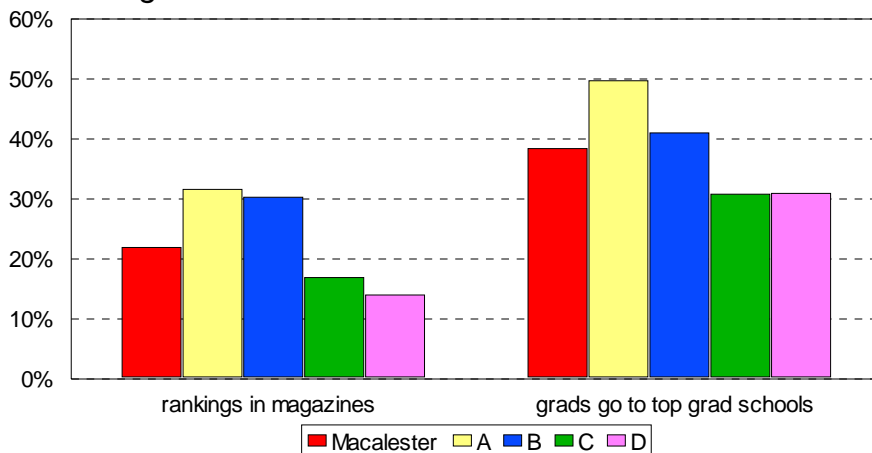
Reasons noted as being very important in choosing a college...



The two Midwestern schools who are less likely to offer financial aid are also more likely to accept students in an early decision program. Generally, students who will need financial aid to attend college are unable to apply as early decision candidates because they must wait until all offers of admission are received to evaluate financial aid awards.

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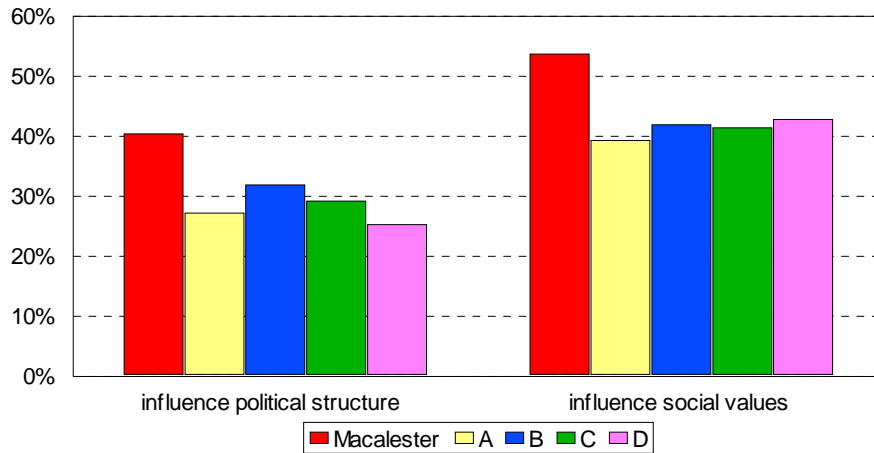
Reasons noted as being very important in choosing a college...



The value of prestige when choosing a college differs between Macalester and the other colleges. The two colleges where rankings are more important for new freshmen also happen to be the two colleges with the higher U.S. News rankings in the group.

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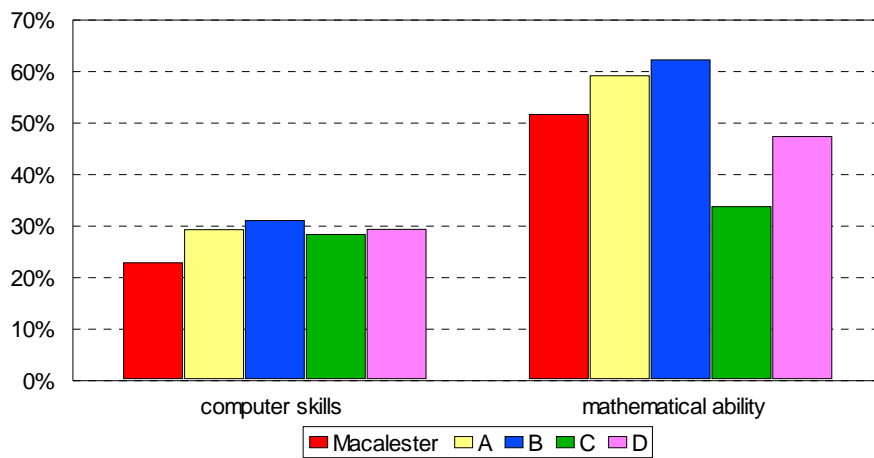
Objectives considered to be essential or very important...



Macalester freshmen are distinctive from freshmen at the other four colleges in their desire to influence politics and social values.

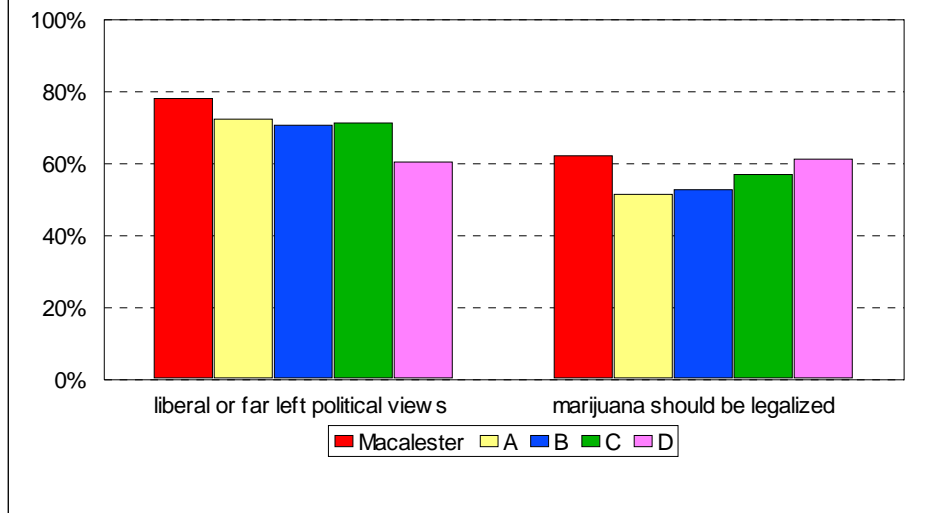
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Rated self above average or top 10% in...



Macalester freshmen rated themselves slightly lower than freshmen at the other colleges in computer skills. Mathematical skills varied greatly among the colleges, with Macalester freshmen rating themselves somewhere in the middle of the group.

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Are we more liberal? Of course we are, but perhaps not as much as you might expect, in comparison to the other Midwestern colleges. The colleges generally reflect their liberal views in the percentages of freshmen agreeing that marijuana should be legalized, except for College D.

There are other differences between the colleges where one of the five colleges stands out. But because the differences did not distinguish Macalester, they are not included in this report.