

CIRP 2002 Freshman Survey Selected Findings

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More than 1,200 Emory first-time freshmen responded to the fall 2002 national UCLA Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey of freshmen. This report summarizes some of the more interesting responses from Emory freshmen, and compares them to those from freshmen at similar highly selective private universities and 1992 Emory freshmen. We chose to highlight the following areas of comparison: student background characteristics, college choice, college plans, and career plans (see Appendix A).

Some of the more interesting comparisons reveal:

- Emory freshmen are more likely than their counterparts at other highly selective private universities to have no concern about financing their education (48 vs. 41 percent). The current percentage of freshmen responding this way is up considerably from 1992 freshmen (48 vs. 39 percent). This might help to explain why when compared to freshmen at other highly selective private universities, Emory freshmen are less likely to consider getting a job to help pay for expenses (32 vs. 40 percent). The relatively lower level of concern with finances is also related to the fact that 35 percent of Emory freshmen reported an estimated parental income over \$200,000, compared to only 25 percent of freshmen at other highly selective private universities. Differences in parental income are also reflected in different levels of education: the parents of Emory freshmen are more likely to have graduate degrees than those of freshmen at other highly selective private universities (fathers – 60 percent vs. 54 percent; mothers – 43 percent vs. 37 percent). Further, the percentage of Emory freshmen with mothers holding a graduate degree has increased by 14 percentage points since 1992 to 2002 (29 percent to 43 percent). (Appendix A)
- Compared to freshmen at other highly selective private universities, Emory freshmen are more likely to aspire to a professional degree than a Ph.D. For example, 27 percent of Emory freshmen intend to earn an M.D., a D.O., D.D.S., D.V.M. compared to just 20 percent at other highly selective private universities, and 15 percent intend to earn an LL.B. or a J.D. compared to 10 percent. In contrast, only 24 percent of Emory freshmen intend to earn a Ph.D. or an Ed.D., compared to 30 percent at other highly selective private universities. Compared to Emory freshmen ten years ago, the current cohort is more likely to aspire to a Ph.D., master's degree, and LL.B. or J.D. However, current Emory freshmen are less likely than their counterparts a decade ago to aspire to an M.D., a D.O., D.D.S., or D.V.M. (Appendix A and Chart 1)

- When we look at trends in Emory freshman responses to questions about their educational goals, we see that from 1992 to 2002 there has been a decline in the percentage planning to earn an M.D., while the percentage aspiring to J.D.s has been growing. Also of note is that in recent years more students are aspiring to earn a Ph.D. (Chart 2)
- When Emory freshmen were asked about their career goals, their responses seem to mirror educational aspirations. For example, compared to 1992, fewer Emory freshmen intend to become physicians (21 percent vs. 32 percent). At the same time, there has been an increase among those who plan a business career (13 percent vs. 7 percent). This parallels the increase in the percentage aspiring to a master's degree to the extent that this includes the M.B.A. (Appendix A and Chart 2)
- Emory freshmen were more likely to choose their school because of its size (50 vs. 37 percent) and live more than 500 miles from their university than freshmen at other highly selective private universities (63 vs. 49 percent). (Appendix A)

Chart 1. What is the highest academic degree you intend to obtain?

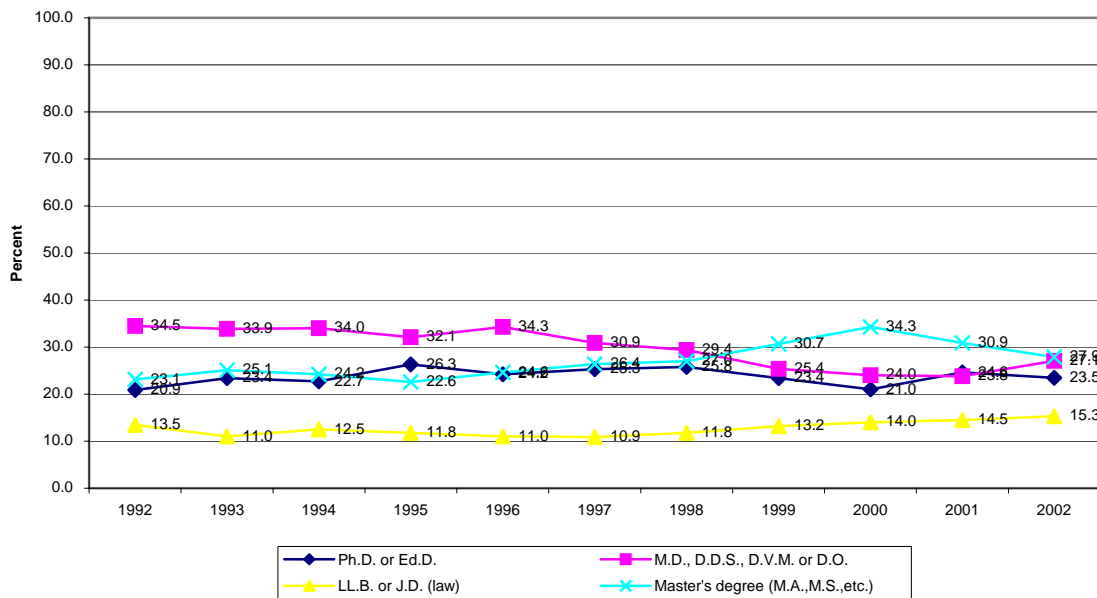
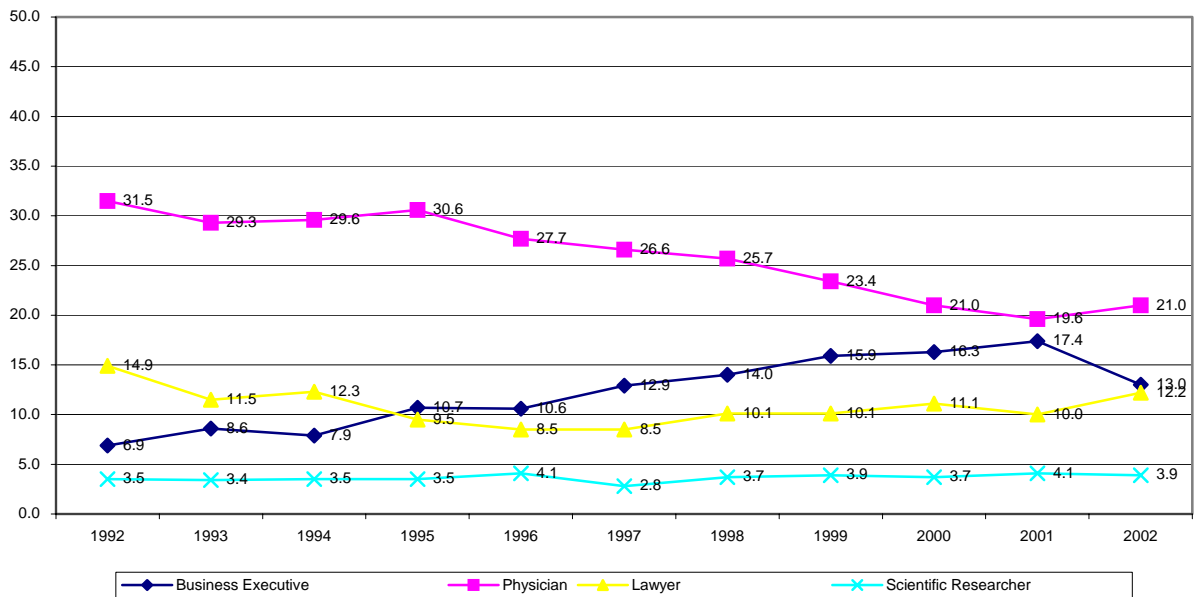


Chart 2. Probable Career



- Emory’s national reputation has slightly improved over the past ten years (see Chart 3). Eighty-seven percent of the freshmen in 2002 chose Emory because it has a good academic reputation (an increase from 83 percent to 87 percent). Other factors influencing their choices included Emory’s ranking in national magazines and information from a website. Emory’s freshmen were more likely than their peers at other highly selective private universities to be influenced by both rankings in national magazines (47 vs. 41 percent) and information from a website (23 vs. 20 percent). (Appendix A)
- While the vast majority of freshmen still indicate that Emory was their first choice (62 percent in 2002) that percentage is slightly down from 1992 when 65 percent of freshmen responded this way. Conversely, a growing number are reporting that Emory was less than their second choice (12 percent in 1992 vs. 18 percent in 2002). (Chart 4)

Chart 3. Reasons Noted as Very Important in Choosing Emory

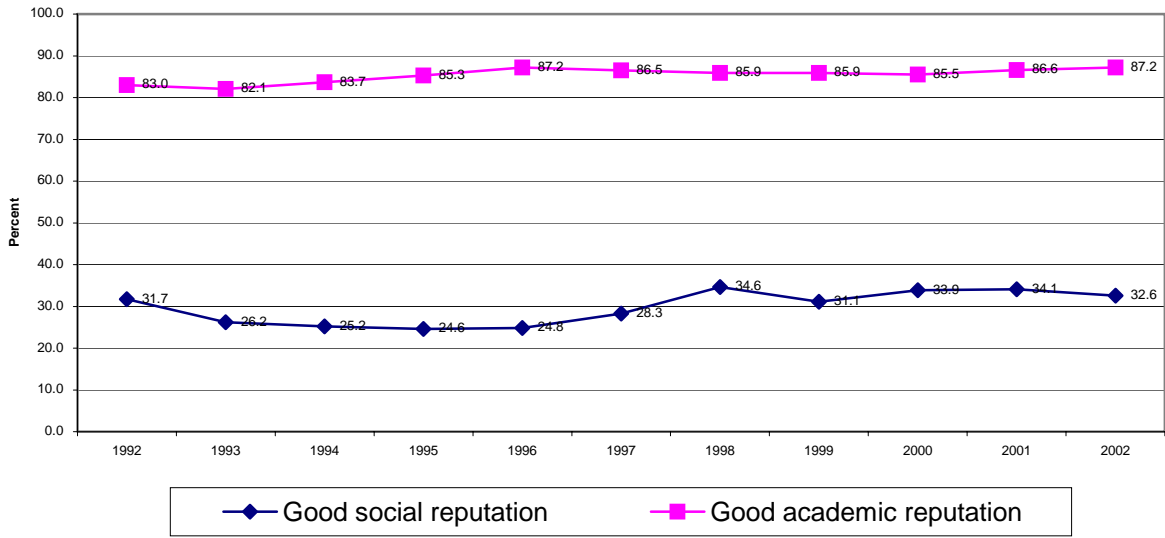
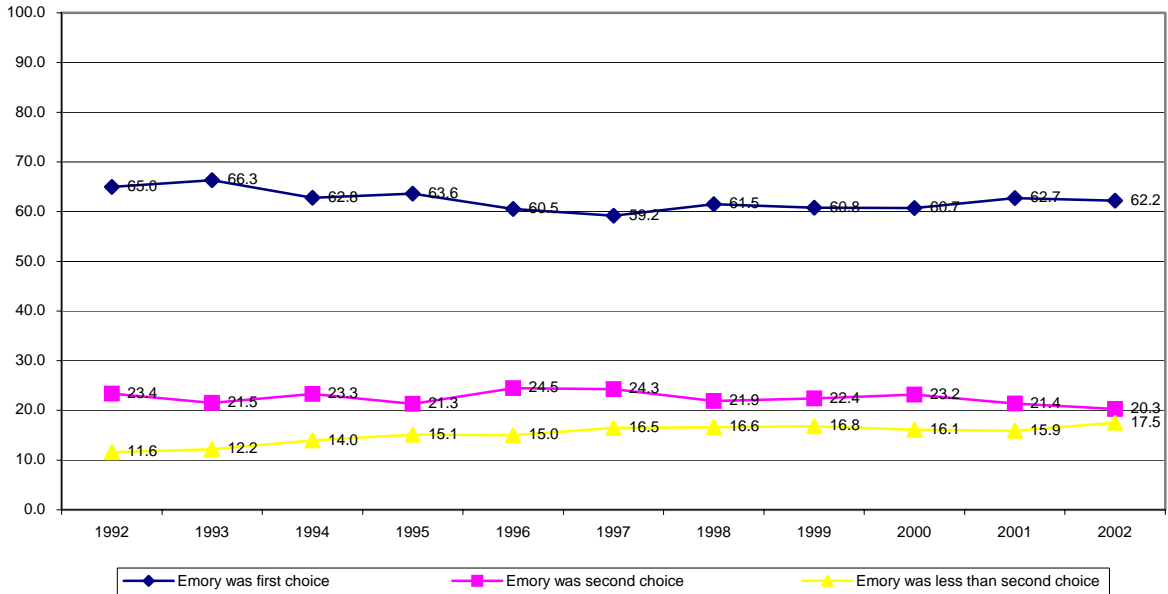


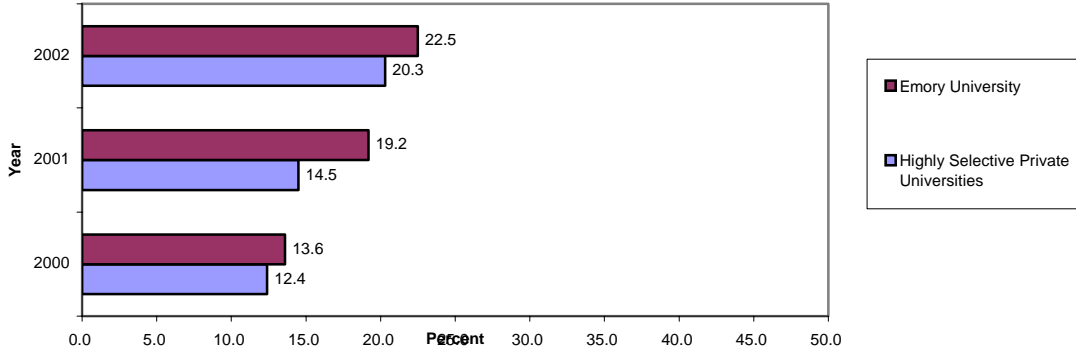
Chart 4. Choice of Emory



The Rising Importance of the Web and National Rankings

While the percentage of freshmen at Emory University and other highly selective colleges and universities who chose their institution because of information from a website has been on the increase since 2000, the trend has been slightly more pronounced at Emory.

Chart 5. Chose Emory because of Information from a Website



The same can be said for freshmen who chose their institution because of rankings in national magazines or admission through an early action or early decision program. (Appendix A. and Charts 5, 6, and 7.)

Chart 6. Chose Emory because of Rankings in National Magazines

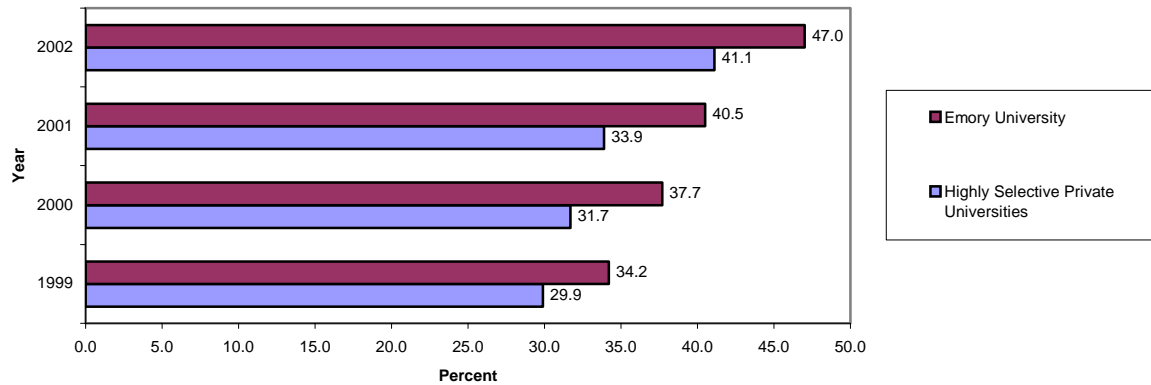
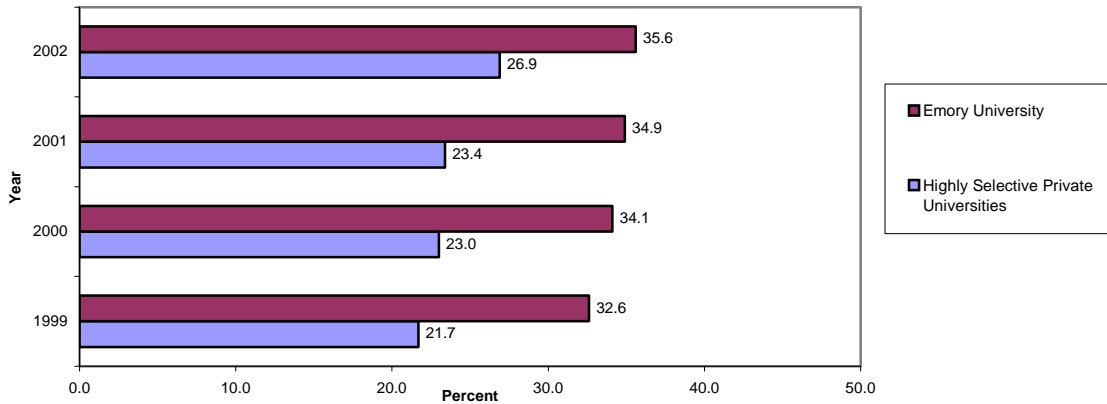


Chart 7. Chose Emory because of Admission through an Early Action or Early Decision Program



Given the increasing importance of the web in college choice decisions, we decided to look at this in greater depth. Specifically, we looked at the impact of Emory’s website on parents’ and students’ decisions to apply to and attend Emory, and how they view it in comparison to websites at other colleges and universities.

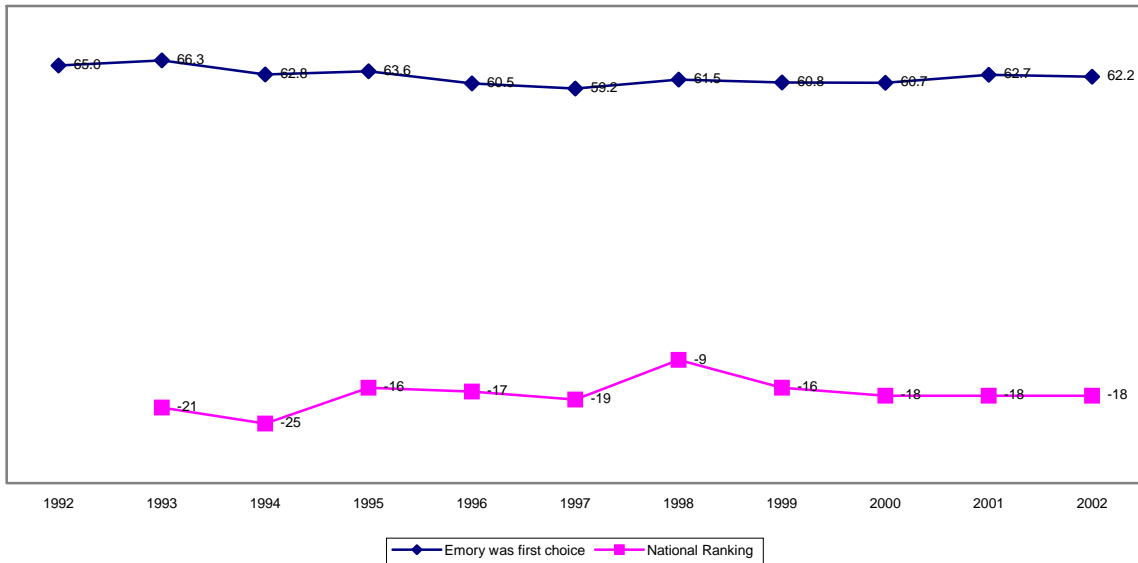
The results indicate that:

- Fifty percent of Emory freshmen said that their parents visited Emory’s website before they applied.
- Fifty-eight percent felt that Emory’s website was useful to their parents.
- Forty-six percent reported that they visited the website both before and after they were accepted.
- Ninety-seven percent said that the website was useful in learning about the university.
- Eighty-seven percent said that they were able to find what they were looking for when they visited the website.
- Fifty-four percent said that the academic programs section of the website most influenced their decision to apply to Emory.
- Sixty-eight percent said that Emory’s website was about the same as the websites of the other colleges and universities to which they applied.

Trends in College Choice and Career Aspirations

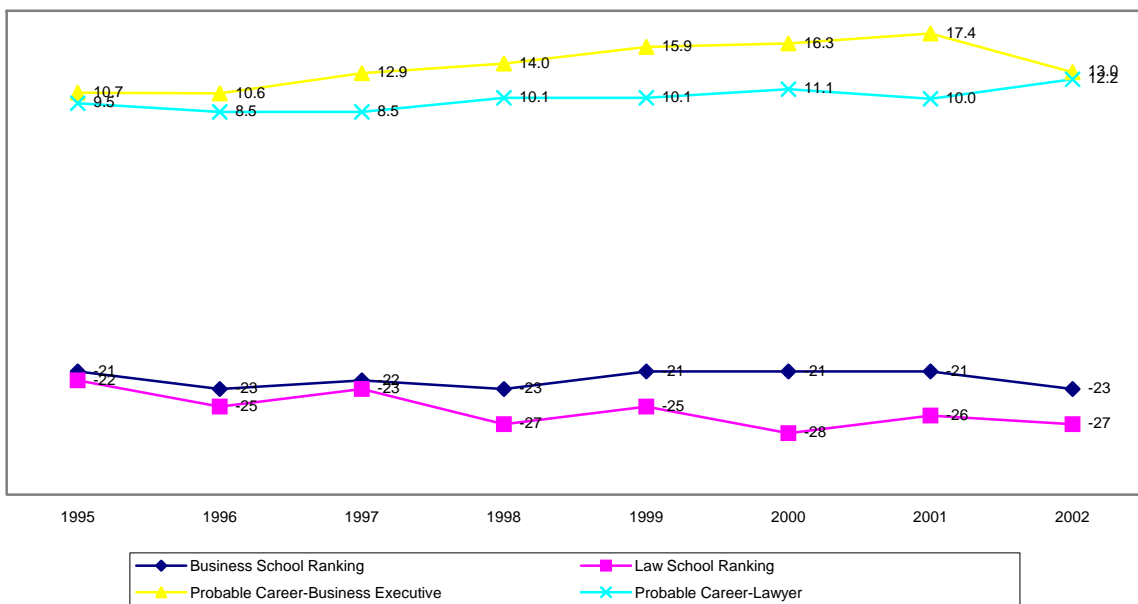
Earlier we have noted the rising importance of national rankings in college choice decisions. Chart 8 indicates that the proportion of freshmen who indicated Emory as their first choice has generally fluctuated in tandem with Emory’s national rankings.

Chart 8. Percentage of students indicating Emory as first choice and US News Rankings



In contrast, Chart 9 shows that changes in the proportions of freshmen who aspire to be business executives or lawyers do not appear to follow changes in the USNews rankings for the Business or Law schools.

Chart 9. Emory's Business and Law School USNEws Rankings and Probable Career Choice



College Choice and Parental Influence

We ran a series of cross-tabulations, highlighting three variables (choice of Emory, the importance of Emory's reputation in national rankings to parents, and the role of parents in students' decisions to apply to Emory) by region, parental income, race/ethnicity, and SAT scores. We also looked at the importance of Emory's reputation in national rankings to parents and the role of parents in students' decisions to apply to Emory by choice of Emory. The results of these analyses are presented in **Appendix B**. Below are several highlights of these findings.

Choice of Emory

- When looking at choice by region, freshmen from the South were most likely to say that Emory was their first choice (68 percent). In contrast, students from the western states were least likely to report Emory as their first choice (53 percent). (Chart 10)
- No major differences in parental income exist for those who reported that Emory was their first choice. (Chart 11)
- When race/ethnicity is considered, African-Americans were most likely to report that Emory was their first choice (76 percent), while Asian/Pacific Islanders were least likely (43 percent). (Chart 12)
- Freshmen in the lowest SAT quartile (800-1290) were most likely (73 percent) to say that Emory was their first choice, while students in the highest quartile (1401-1600) were the least likely (49 percent). Further, freshmen scoring in the top quartile were also more likely to say that Emory was their third (15 percent) or less than third choice (17 percent). (Chart 13)
- Seventy-three percent of freshmen reporting that Emory's ranking in national magazines was "not important" to their parents, said that Emory was their first choice. (Chart 14)
- Seventy percent of freshmen reporting that the role of their parents in their decision to apply to Emory was "pivotal," said that Emory was their first choice. (Chart 15)

Importance of Emory's Reputation in National Rankings to Parents

- Freshmen from the mid-Atlantic region were most likely to say that Emory's reputation in national rankings was essential to their parents (25 percent), while those from the western states were least likely. (Chart 16)
- Freshmen with parental incomes of \$200,000 or more were most likely to say that Emory's reputation in national rankings to their parents was essential (24

- percent), while those reporting in the \$10,000-\$74,999 range were more likely to say that rankings were not important (10 percent). (Chart 17)
- Asian/Pacific Islanders were most likely to say that rankings were essential to their parents (35 percent), while African-Americans were more likely to say that they were not important (10 percent). (Chart 18)
 - Interestingly, the freshmen with SAT scores in the top and bottom 25 percent were more likely to say that Emory's national ranking was essential to their parents than those with scores in the middle 50 percent. (Chart 19)

Parent's Role in Decision to Apply to Emory

- Freshmen from the South were most likely to say that their parents played a pivotal role in their decision to apply to Emory (25 percent). Freshmen from the western states were the least likely to report a pivotal role for their parents (11 percent). (Chart 20)
- Freshmen reporting parental incomes of \$200,000 or more were most likely to say that the role of their parents in their decision to apply to Emory was pivotal (25 percent). Overall, involvement of parents appears to decrease with income level. (Chart 21)
- Asian/Pacific Islanders were most likely to report that the role of their parents in their decision to apply to Emory was pivotal (25 percent). African-Americans were the least likely to note a pivotal role for their parents (13 percent). (Chart 22)
- Freshmen with SAT scores in the bottom 25 percent were more likely to say that the role of their parents in their decision to attend Emory was pivotal (26 percent). On the other hand, those in the top SAT quartile were more likely to report that their parents were not really involved in their decision (32 percent). (Chart 23)