

CIRP 2005 FRESHMAN SURVEY

SELECTED FINDINGS

*Prepared by
Daniel Teodorescu, Carol Kushner & Sheenah Bell-White*

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
EMORY UNIVERSITY

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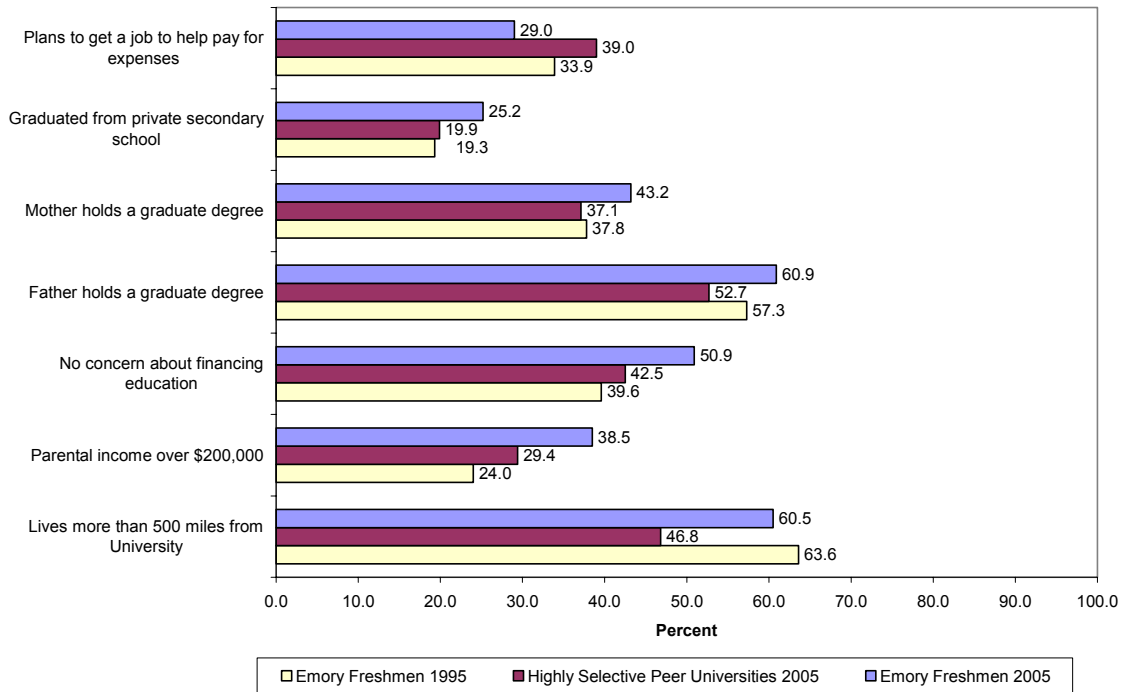
CIRP 2005 Freshman Survey Selected Findings

A total of 1,220 students or 97 percent of Emory first-time full-time freshmen responded to the national UCLA Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Fall 2005 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey. This report summarizes some of the responses of Emory freshmen and compares them to responses of freshmen at similar highly selective private universities, and in some cases to 1995 Emory freshmen. Among the peer group institutions are Brown, Duke, and Johns Hopkins. (The appendix to this report contains a complete list.) Our report highlights several specific areas of comparison such as students' socioeconomic background, factors that influence college choice, reasons for selecting the university, career aspirations, and students' plans for further education.

Socioeconomic Profile

More Emory freshmen live over 500 miles from their permanent home than freshmen at other highly selective private universities (60.5 vs. 46.8 percent). Chart 1 reveals that compared to their peers at other highly selective private universities, more Emory freshmen report they do not have any concern about financing their education (50.9 vs. 42.5 percent). This might be why fewer Emory freshmen expect to work to help cover educational expenses compared to freshmen at other highly selective private universities (29.0 vs. 39.0 percent).

Chart 1. 2005 First-Year Students: Socioeconomic Profile



In addition, 38.5 percent of Emory freshmen estimated their parents' total annual income was over \$200,000 compared to 29.4 percent of freshmen at other highly selective private universities. Moreover, 37.2 percent of Emory freshmen reported having been offered a merit scholarship by other colleges or universities to which they applied; and 57.9 percent of them indicated an offer of financial aid outside Emory would have made the cost of attending less compared to the cost of attending Emory. Seemingly relevant to family income, more Emory freshmen are graduates of private independent secondary schools than their peers at other highly selective universities (25.2 vs. 19.9 percent). Further, more parents of Emory freshmen have earned graduate degrees than the parents of freshmen at other highly selective private universities (fathers: 60.9 vs. 52.7 percent; mothers: 43.2 vs. 37.1 percent).

College Choice

The percentage of freshmen in 2005 who reported that Emory was their first choice closely reflects the 1995 response (63.0 vs. 63.6 percent: see Chart 2). Trend data for those who responded that Emory was their first, second, or third choice can be seen in Chart 3. As Chart 4 shows, in 2005, 86.1 percent of freshmen chose Emory because of its good academic reputation; this proportion has remained relatively stable over the last ten years. In fact, 63.6 percent of Emory freshmen indicated gaining admission to a top graduate or professional school influenced their choice compared to 58.6 percent of freshmen at other highly selective universities. More students now than in 1995 consider that Emory has a good reputation for social activities (31.1 percent vs. 24.6 percent).

Chart 2. 2005 First-Year Students: College Choice

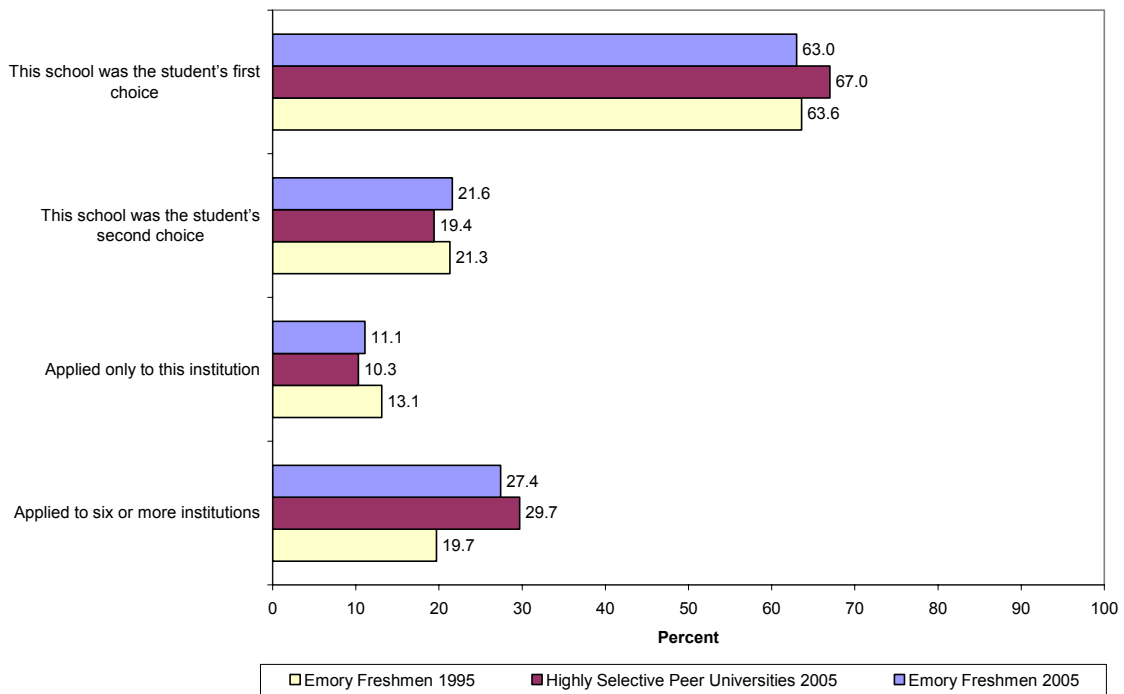
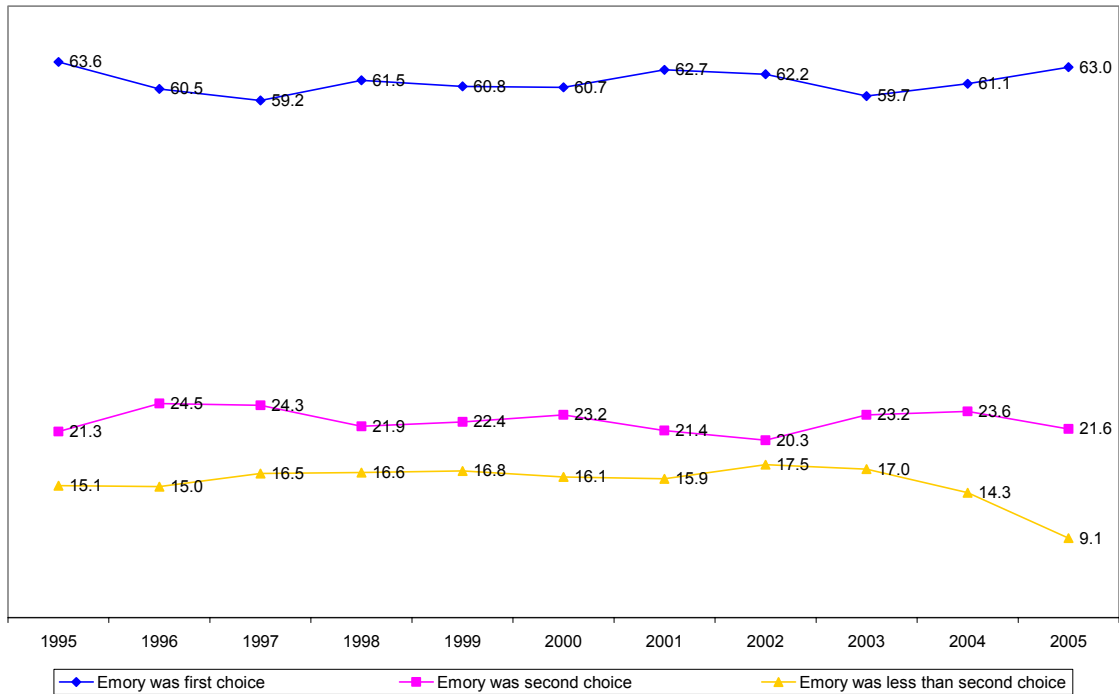
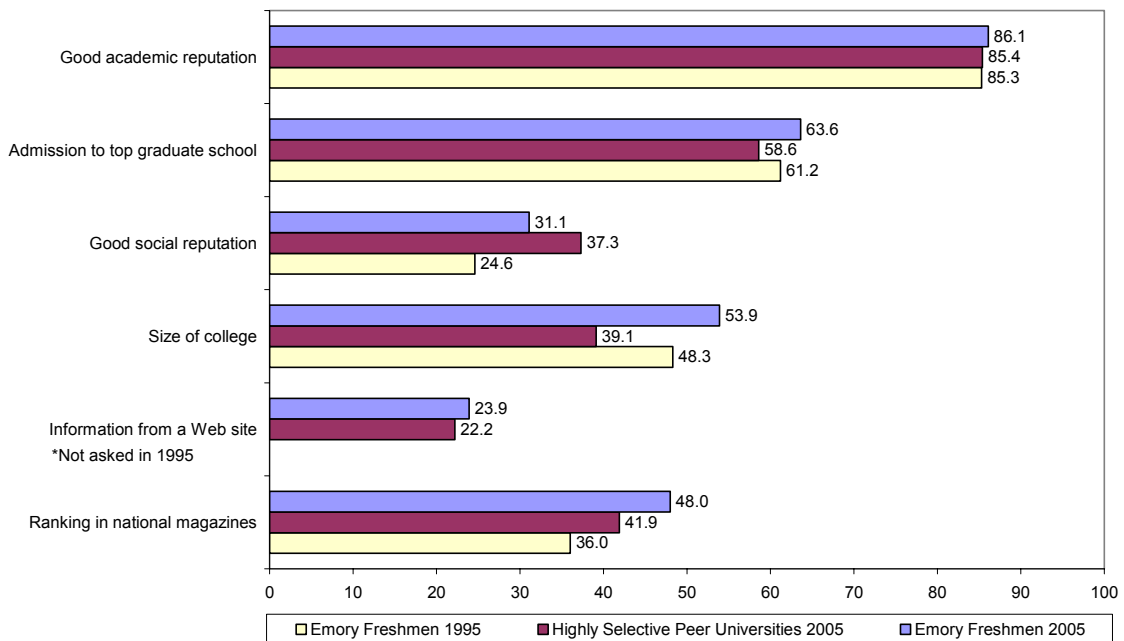


Chart 3. Emory as First, Second or Third Choice



Compared to freshmen at other highly selective universities, more Emory freshmen noted the school's size influenced their decision in choosing a university (53.9 vs. 39.1 percent). See Chart 4.

Chart 4. 2005 First-Year Students: Reasons Noted as "Very Important" in Selecting this University



Besides academic reputation and school size, other reasons freshmen chose Emory include the university's rankings in national magazines and information from a Web site. Charts 5 and 6 show how Emory freshmen were more likely to be influenced than the cohort of freshmen at other highly selective private universities by rankings in national magazines (48.0 vs. 41.9 percent) and Web site information (23.9 vs. 22.2 percent).

How significant or influential are the Web, national rankings, and other sources of information in students' decisions for selecting an institution? A discussion follows in the next section.

Significance of National Rankings, the Web, and other Sources of Information

The percentage of Emory freshmen who chose their university because of rankings in national magazines has increased slightly from 2004 to 2005 (45.9 vs. 48.0 percent) as it has for those from other highly selective private universities (37.1 vs. 41.9 percent). [Refer to Chart 5.] And the percentage of freshmen at Emory and other highly selective private universities who chose their school because of information from a Web site increased significantly from 2000 (the year HERI first asked this question) to 2005, as can be seen in Chart 6. However, from 2004 to 2005 the percentage of Emory freshmen whose choice was influenced by information from a Web site has somewhat decreased (26.0 vs. 23.9 percent), while the percentage of those at other highly selective private universities has only slightly increased (21.2 vs. 22.2 percent).

Chart 5. Influence of Rankings in National Magazines

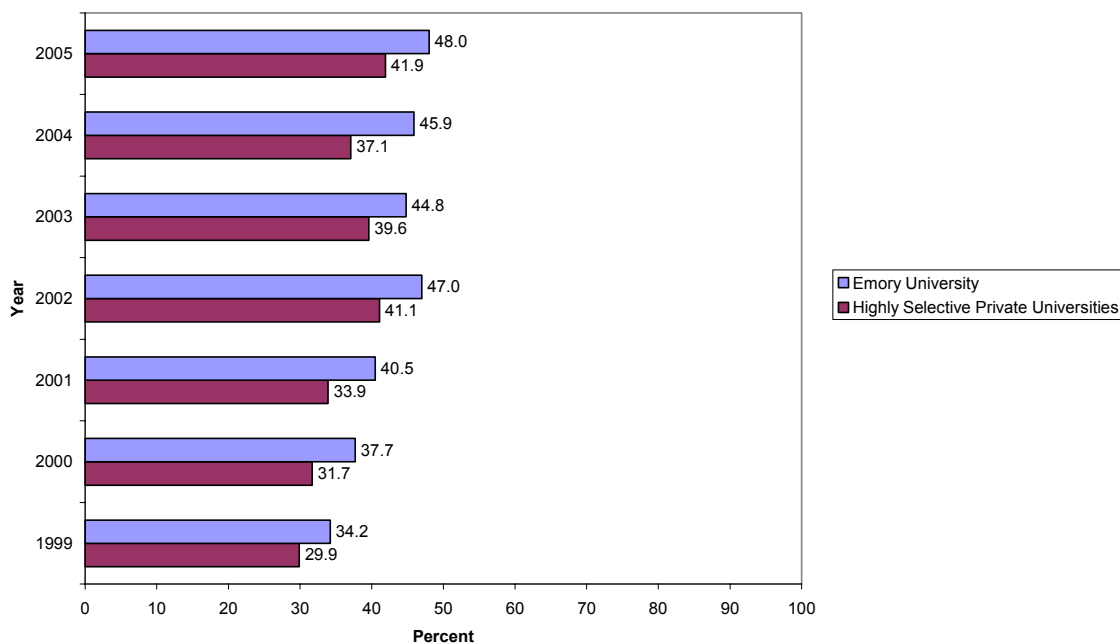
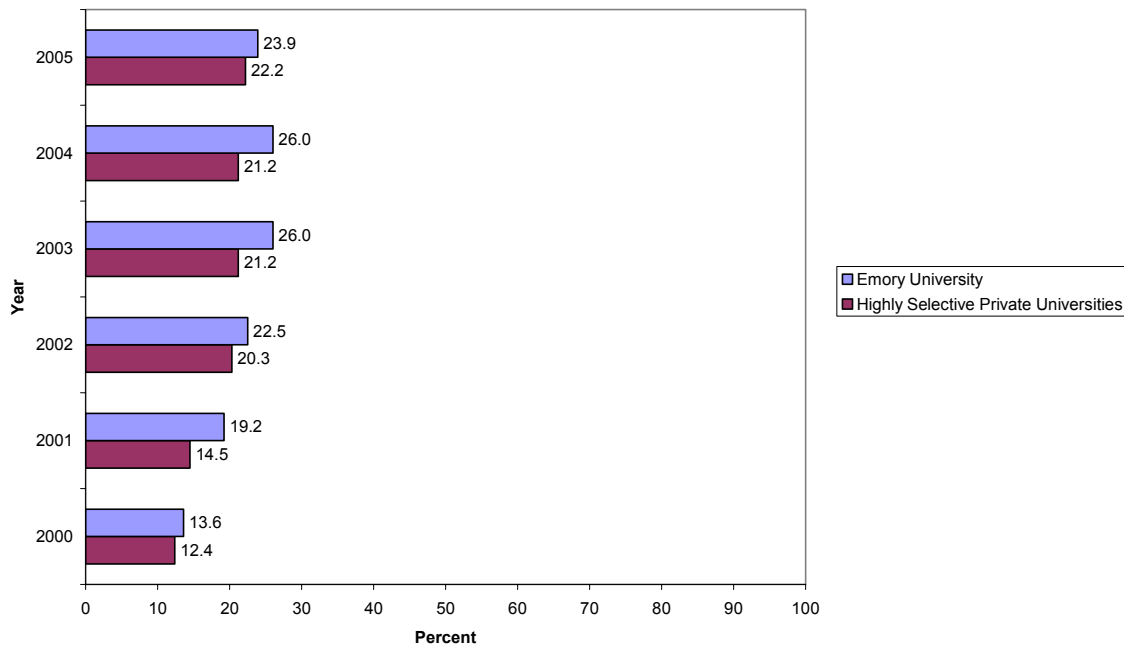


Chart 6. Influence of Information from a Web site



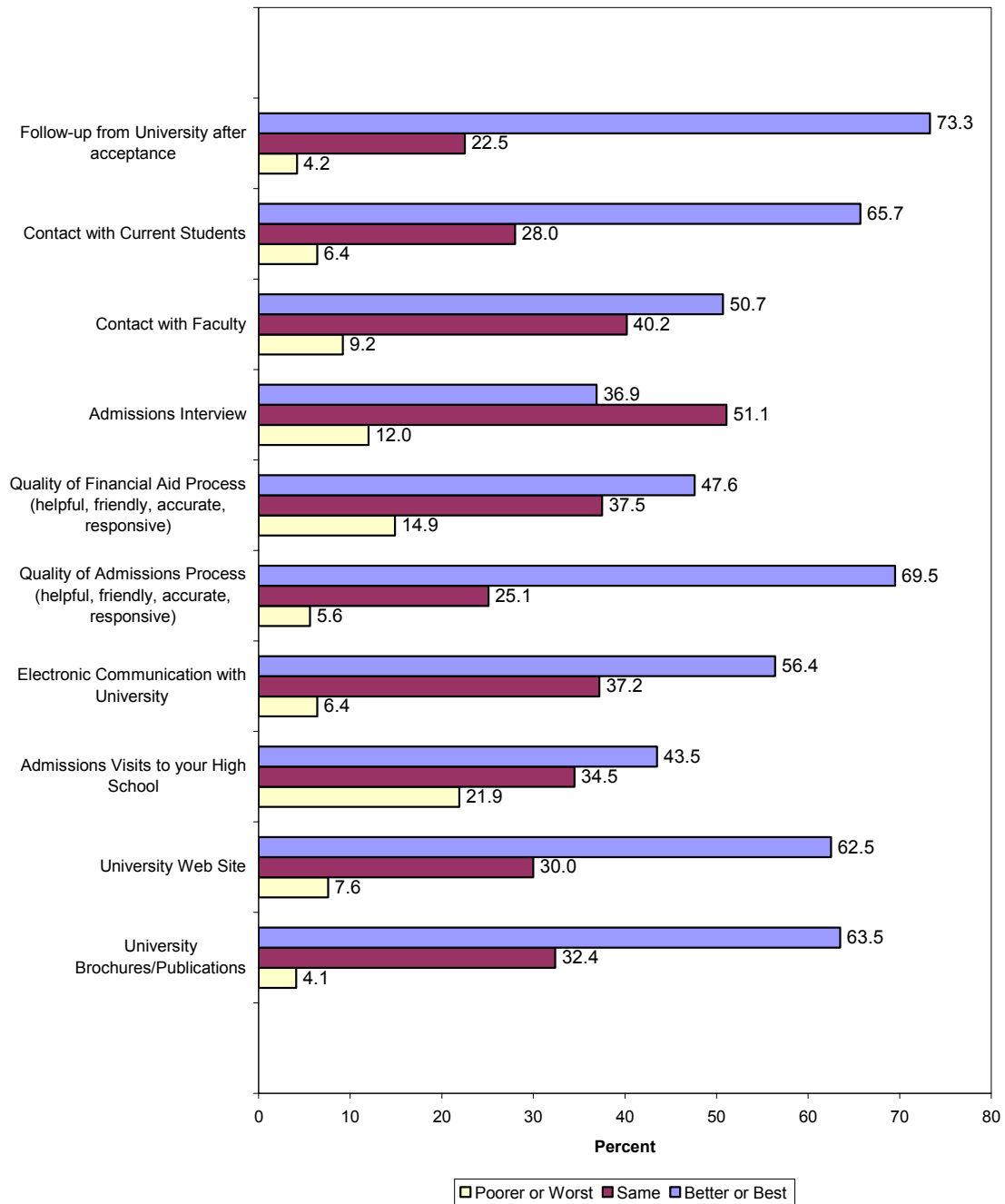
Thus, although information from the Web may influence students' decisions about choosing a university – actually, Emory freshmen reported the quality of information from Emory's Web site is better compared to Web sites of other institutions to which they applied – other sources of information play a role in students' decisions to apply to and attend Emory. To learn how various sources of information available from Emory to prospective students compare to other colleges or universities, we asked students to rate the quality of a variety of sources. These include university brochures and publications, the admissions process, contact with enrolled students, follow-up from the university after acceptance, and electronic communication with the university. Students' responses can be seen in Chart 7.

We found that most students indicated Emory's information was better, compared to other institutions, for a number of items:

- Quality of admissions process (69.5 percent)
- Follow-up from the university after acceptance (73.3 percent)
- University brochures and publications (63.5 percent)
- Contact with current students (65.7 percent)
- University Web site (62.5 percent)

Some items that many students rated as the same in comparing Emory to other institutions to which they applied were the admissions interview (51.1 percent), electronic communication with the university (37.2 percent), and contact with faculty (40.2). See Chart 7.

Chart 7. Rate Quality of Information from Emory University Compared to other Colleges or Universities Applied To



Also, we wanted to learn how students initially become interested in the university; the most useful source of information for deciding to apply to and accept Emory's offer of admission; and the value of campus visits.

Here are some of the findings:

- Students indicated their initial interest in the university comes from peers and enrolled Emory students or Emory graduates (27.5 percent), and from college guidebooks or national rankings (25.6 percent) more than from printed material from Emory (13.0 percent), or a high school teacher or counselor (12.8 percent).
- Students reported that talks and a visit with an admissions counselor at Emory (32.7 percent) are the most useful university sources of information in their decision to apply to the university.
- Students' decisions to accept Emory's offer also are influenced by talks and a visit with an admissions counselor at Emory (26.0 percent).
- As an applicant, students reported the two experiences they most wanted, but did not have, were staying overnight in a residence hall (41.2 percent) and attending a class (30.1 percent).
- When applying to Emory, most students indicated they wanted to know more about residential life (35.6 percent) and academic programs (32.2 percent) than about financial aid (12.5 percent) or academic support programs (11.6 percent).

As mentioned earlier in this report, some students were offered a merit scholarship (excluding HOPE and other similar state-funded scholarships) by other colleges or universities to which they applied. Those who received such an offer were asked if it would have made the cost of their education higher, lower, or comparable to the cost of attending Emory University. Most students said the cost would have been lower (see Chart 8).

Community Service

The percentage of students who reported they performed volunteer work in high school has remained relatively high over the last ten years. In fact, compared to Emory freshmen ten years ago, the current cohort was as active in performing volunteer work (91.8 vs. 91.4 percent). Ninety-two percent of freshmen at other highly selective private universities indicated volunteer work among their activities. Chart 9 shows trend data for the percentage of Emory freshmen involved in volunteer work.

Chart 8. Offer of Merit Scholarship from other School(s) Would Have Made Cost of Education Higher, Lower, or Comparable to Emory's Cost

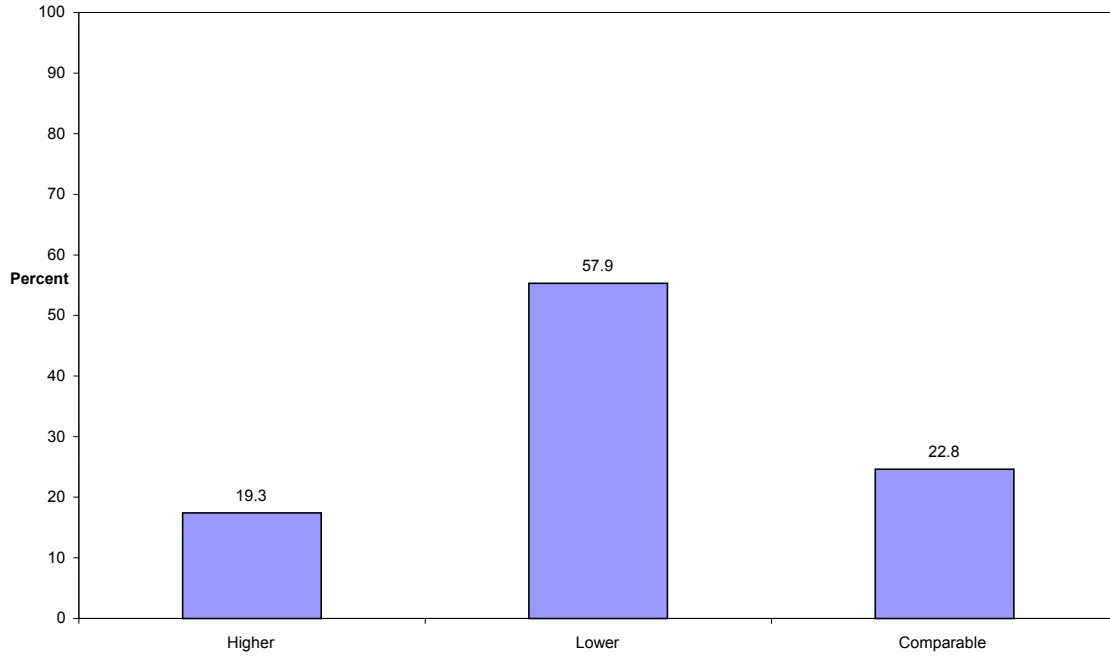
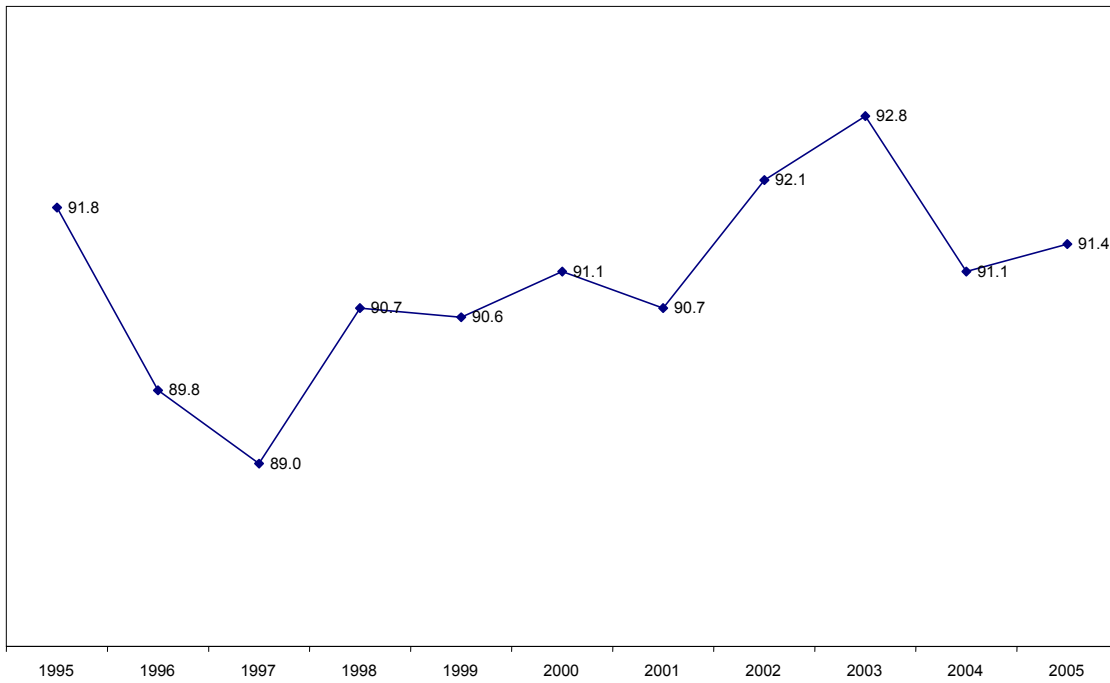


Chart 9. Percentage of Emory Freshmen Who Performed Volunteer Work in High School



Education Plans and Career Aspirations

In the last section of this report we highlight students' responses about their probable undergraduate majors, intentions to earn advanced degrees, interest in study abroad, and their career aspirations. Compared to freshmen at other highly selective private universities, Emory freshmen are more likely to aspire to a professional degree than to an academic degree, that is, a Ph.D. or an Ed.D. For instance, 28.1 percent of Emory freshmen intend to earn an M.D., a D.O., D.D.S., or D.M.V. compared to 19.9 percent of freshmen at other highly selective private universities, and 14.6 percent intend to earn a J.D. compared to 10.8 percent. Only 22.4 percent of Emory freshmen intend to earn a Ph.D. or an Ed.D., compared to 24.9 percent at other highly selective private universities.

In comparison to Emory freshmen ten years ago, the current cohort is less likely to aspire to a Ph.D. or an Ed.D. (22.4 vs. 26.3 percent) or to an M.D., a D.O., D.D.S. or D.M.V. (28.1 vs. 32.1 percent). However, the 2005 cohort is more likely to earn a J.D. than Emory freshmen in 1995 (14.6 vs. 11.8 percent). Additionally, the current cohort is more likely to aspire to a Master's degree than freshmen ten years ago (27.7 vs. 22.6 percent).

When selecting an area of specialization, Emory freshmen's probable major is somewhat tied to their intended advanced degree or career aspirations. Although 9.1 percent are "undecided," 12.1 percent plan to major in biology, followed by medicine or dentistry (11.3 percent), and political science (9.7 percent). See Charts 10 and 11. It is interesting to note that among Emory freshmen's last choice of a probable major, management is closely tied with history and English (2.4, 2.3 and 2.1 percent, respectively [not shown in Chart 11]).

More Emory freshmen estimate they may participate in a study abroad program than freshmen at other highly selective private universities (54.7 vs. 43.4 percent). Indeed, 69.8 percent of Emory freshmen consider that improving their understanding of other countries and cultures is essential or very important in comparison to 63.4 percent of freshmen at other highly selective private universities.

In contemplating possible careers, Emory freshmen's responses are reflective of their further education plans. For instance, compared to 1995, fewer Emory freshmen plan to become physicians (31.1 vs. 23.8), while the percentage of freshmen who are undecided about their career plans has increased (16.6 vs. 19.2). See "Career Plans" in Chart 12, the final diagram in this report.

Chart 10. 2005 First-Year Students: Further Education Plans

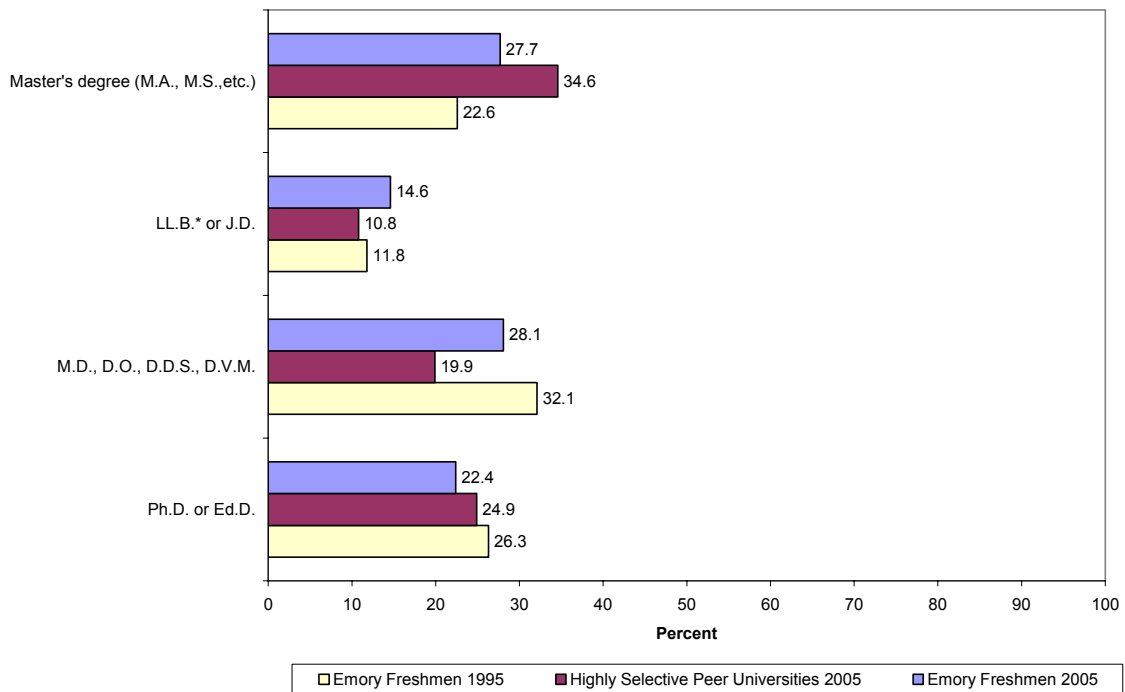


Chart 11. 2005 First-Year Students: Ten Most Probable Majors

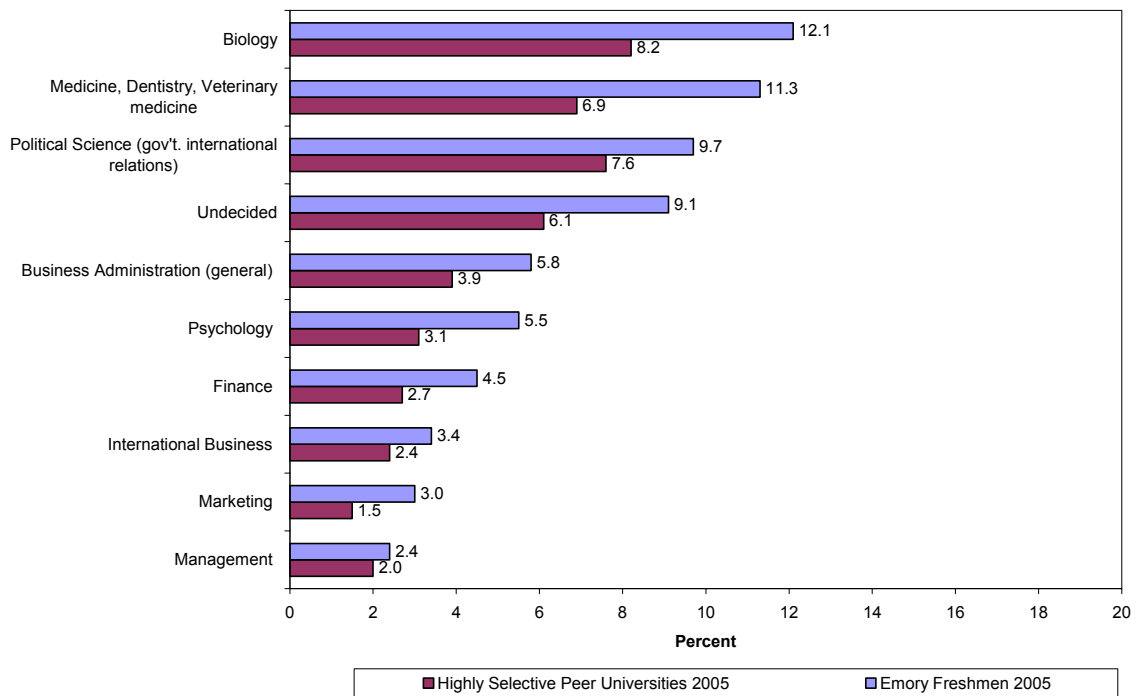
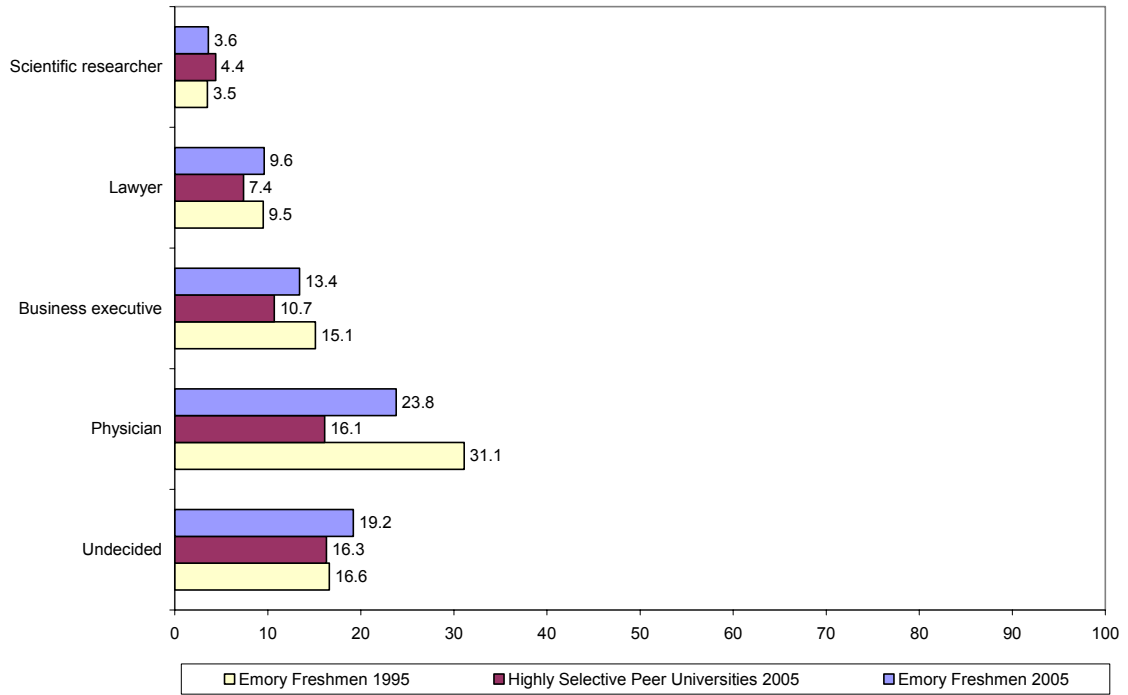


Chart 12. Career Plans



Appendix

Institutions that Comprise Highly Selective Private Universities in CIRP Survey

- Brown University
- California Institute of Technology
- Carnegie-Mellon University
- Case Western Reserve
- Cornell University
- Duke University
- Emory University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Northwestern University
- Rice University
- University of Chicago
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Rochester
- Vanderbilt University