ANALYSIS OF RUTGERS-NEW BRUNSWICK/PISCATAWAY DATA 2005

With regard to Selection of College (Items A1-A5), Rutgers-New Brunswick/Piscataway (Rutgers-NBP) first-time full-time students are less likely to consider their institution their first choice compared to students in other highly selective public universities (54% vs. 69%). Additionally, Rutgers-NBP students appear to have a less positive view of Rutgers than these peer institution students of their own school: a lower percentage of Rutgers-NBP students notes that Rutgers has a very good academic reputation (55% vs. 71% for peer institution students). Approximately three-fourth of Rutgers-NBP students and students at peer institutions decided to go to college to learn more about things that interest them. The other reasons reported by more than two-thirds of Rutgers-NBP and peer institution students as very important in their decision to go to college are making more money, getting a better job, and gaining a general education. Similarly, more than 80% Rutgers-NBP and peer institution students (87% for Rutgers and 84% for peer institutions) expect to attend graduate school.

The cost of attending college, being offered financial assistance and proximity to home are stronger selection factors for Rutgers-NBP students than for their peers. The percent of students who indicated each of these factors as “Very Important” in selection of their college of attendance are 50%, 30% and 23%, respectively, compared to 31%, 25% and 12% selection rates by students at peer institutions. However, students at peer universities are more likely to indicate that they selected their current university because of its good academic reputation (71% vs. 55%), good reputation for social activities (39% vs. 32%) or the job opportunities for this college’s graduates (57% vs. 44%).
Financing their education is an important concern for both Rutgers-NBP students and peers in other highly selective public universities. Rutgers-NBP students and their peers report approximately the same level of concern about college financing with half of the students expressing some concern and one in ten having major concern. Therefore, close to half of students at Rutgers-NBP and peer institutions expect to get a job to help pay for college expenses (41% and 46% from survey question C2).

Like their peers, Rutgers-NBP students rely most heavily on parents, family, and friends to fund their college education (83% Rutgers-NBP and 84% peer institutions). Rutgers-NBP students are also similar to students at peer institutions reporting they plan to take out loans (48% and 45%), but are less likely to rely on scholarships or grants to help finance their education (52% vs. 61%). Savings are not as major a source of college funding for Rutgers-NBP first year students compared to those at comparable institutions. Half (51%) of Rutgers-NBP students report they will not utilize their own resources to fund their education compared to 41% of students at peer institutions.

With regard to Educational and Career Plans (Items B1-B4), a similar percentage of Rutgers-NBP students and students at peer institutions plan to obtain a post baccalaureate degree (87% and 84%). A slightly higher percentage of Rutgers-NBP students indicate that they plan to obtain a post baccalaureate degree at their current university than do students at peer institutions (39% and 36%, respectively). In terms of specific educational plans, Rutgers-NBP students are similar to the peer institution students. The most commonly intended majors are professional fields\(^1\) (17% for Rutgers-
NBP and 15% for peer institutions), and business (16% for Rutgers-NBP and 15% for peer institutions). The other probable majors for Rutgers-NBP students and their peers are biological sciences (13% for both), social sciences (12% for both), arts and humanities (11% for both), and engineering (10% and 14%, respectively). Seven percent of Rutgers-NBP first-time full-time students and 9% of the students attending peer institutions report they are undecided about their undergraduate field of study as they begin their college education. These educational choices translate into probable careers with 10% Rutgers-NBP and 11% peer institution students expecting to be a physician and 8% to be engineer and 7% to be business executives (11% and 8% for peer institutions, respectively). Rutgers-NBP students are also slightly more likely to indicate they expect to pursue a career in pharmacy than are students at peer institutions (6% and 4%, respectively).

Responding to Questions for Rutgers Students Only (Items B5 – B9), more than two-thirds of Rutgers-NBP students believe that it is extremely important to achieve their career goals when pursuing an undergraduate degree. Furthermore, over half of these first-year fulltime students believe it is extremely important to achieve social interaction and personal growth, intellectual growth as well as personal interests and talents goals. Fifty percent of Rutgers-NBP students indicate that achieving critical thinking and communication skills goals is extremely important. Altogether, more than eighty percent of Rutgers-NBP students feel it important or extremely important to achieve each of the five goals while pursuing their undergraduate degree.

The responses to the survey questions pertaining to Student Attitudes and Background (Items C1-C15) reveal few differences between Rutgers-NBP and peer
institution students. These two groups of students are very similar in their responses to questions about life goals and their political attitudes. Both expect to be very well-off financially and to raise a family (more than 70%). Slightly less than half of Rutgers-NBP students and their peers describe their political views as “middle-of-the-road” (45% and 41%). Approximately one in three describe themselves as “liberal” (37% and 34%). Rutgers-NBP students are slightly less likely than their peers to view themselves as conservative (14% vs. 20%). When it comes to issues of personal freedom, Rutgers-NBP students are similar to their peers in supporting the legalization of same-sex marriage (71% and 67%), but slightly more likely to agree that wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes (66% vs. 60%). About two-thirds of both groups believe that abortion should be legalized, while nearly sixty percent agree that there is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals (59% for Rutgers-NBP and 54% for peer institutions).

Rutgers-NBP students are also similar to students at peer institutions in various background factors, such as age, parental income, status of parents (living together or not), and self-reported needs for remedial coursework. Almost one in five Rutgers-NBP (18%) and peer institution (17%) students indicate they will need remedial work in mathematics for their college study. One in ten of both Rutgers-NBP and peer institution students feel the need for remedial work in writing, close to ten percent in each group feel need remedial work in English and science. One difference between the two groups is that Rutgers-NBP has a lower percentage of native English speakers among its student population compared to the peer institutions (79% vs. 88%) and slightly fewer report they
are U. S. citizens (92% vs. 96%). Racial and ethnic backgrounds\(^2\) also differ. Fewer than three in five Rutgers-NBP students indicate they are white (57%) compared to close to three-fourths of students at peer institutions (72%). The corresponding distribution of minority students also differs: Asian (25% vs. 18%), Latino (9% and 6%), and African American (9% and 5%).

As for expectation about their future experience in college, more than two-thirds of Rutgers-NBP and peer institution students expect to socialize with people from other racial/ethnic groups (68% and 71%, respectively), however, they both report low expectations for regular communication with their professors (25% and 32%). Academically, sixty percent of Rutgers-NBP students and their peers at highly selective public universities expect to make at least a “B” average in coursework although Rutgers-NBP students seem less confident in their expectations about their future experiences at their university. Substantially fewer Rutgers-NBP students expect to be satisfied with their university (39% vs. 57%). They also anticipate that they are less likely to participate in student clubs or groups (43% vs. 52%) or in a study abroad program (25% vs. 35%). Rutgers-NBP students are similar to the peer institution students who rate themselves above average or in the highest 10 percent of people who are their age on the following attributes: academic ability (80% and 85%), cooperativeness (71% and 75%) and intellectual self-confidence (60% and 65%). However, they are slightly less positive

\(^2\) In answering the question about racial background, students may have selected more than one category. Consequently, the percentages may add to more than one hundred percent when the total percentage of minority students is added to the percentage of white students. This is true for both Rutgers-NBP and its peer institutions.
compared to their peers at highly selective public universities about their drive to achieve (70% vs. 78%).

The manner in which the Rutgers-NBP students report spending their time in the past year did not differ from the peer institution students in most activities. However, Rutgers-NBP students were less likely to engage in volunteer work: 69% state that they spent time doing volunteer work compared to 77% of the peer institution students. In contrast, Rutgers-NBP students spent more time working for pay than their counterparts at peer institutions. Twenty-nine percent of Rutgers-NBP students reported spending sixteen or more hours per week working for pay, while 22% of students at peer institutions report having worked to this extent. Similarly, thirty five percent of peer institution students reported spending no time working for pay compared to thirty percent of Rutgers-NBP students. Rutgers-NBP students are also more likely to have socialized frequently with members of a different racial or ethnic group during the previous year than students at peer institutions (80% vs. 72%).

Most first year undergraduate students are computer literate. Both Rutgers-NBP and peer institution students indicate they frequently used a personal computer (89% and 90%). Furthermore, more than 80% of both groups had frequently used the internet for research or homework in the past year before their college.