ANALYSIS OF RUTGERS-NEW BRUNSWICK DATA

With regard to Selection of College (Items A1-A5), Rutgers-New Brunswick students are less likely to consider their institution their first choice compared with students in peer institutions (50% vs. 71%). Additionally, Rutgers-New Brunswick students appear to have a less positive a view of their institution than peer institution students: a lower percentage of Rutgers-New Brunswick students note that their institution has a very good academic reputation (55% vs. 70% for peer institution students), or that their graduates get good jobs (48% vs. 61%). Like those attending peer institutions, first year students at Rutgers-New Brunswick indicate that their university’s graduates go to top graduate and professional schools (33% vs. 41%). Approximately 70% of Rutgers-New Brunswick students and students at peer institutions decided to go to college to make more money, get a better job, get training in a specific career or to gain a general education. Also, similar to peers at comparable institutions, approximately two-thirds expect to go to graduate schools (65% and 61%, students at peer institutions). Proximity to home is a greater selection factor for Rutgers-New Brunswick students than for their peers with one-fourth (25% vs. 10%) indicating this was “Very Important” in selecting their college of attendance.

Finances are an important concern for many Rutgers-New Brunswick students. They are more likely than students at peer institutions to report low tuition (46% vs. 26%) and being offered financial assistance (31% vs. 20%) as important reasons in the selection of their college of attendance. Like their peers, Rutgers-New Brunswick students rely most heavily on parents, family, and friends to fund their college education (82% Rutgers New-Brunswick and 86% peers). Savings are not as major a source of college funding for
Rutgers-New Brunswick first years students compared to those at other institutions. 52% report they will utilize their own resources to fund their education as well as 64% of students at peer institutions. Rutgers-New Brunswick students are slightly less likely to report that they plan to rely on state scholarships or grants in helping to finance their education as students at peer institutions (51% vs. 59%) and are slightly more likely to take out Stafford loans (45% vs. 42%). Rutgers-New Brunswick students and peer institution students report approximately the same level of concern about college financing; 51 percent of Rutgers-New Brunswick students and 52 percent of peer institution students. Students at Rutgers-New Brunswick and peer institutions expect to hold down a part-time job on campus (38% and 44%), however, only 5 percent of first year students Rutgers-New Brunswick expect to work full-time while in college. 3 percent is true of students at peer institutions.

In responding to questions developed for Rutgers students only (Items A6 through A10), most Rutgers-New Brunswick students (57%) indicate that their main source of information during the college selection process was something other than those specified in the survey: college guides (21%), the World Wide Web (13%), or magazine ratings (7%). Rutgers’ position as a major research university influenced the decision to attend to “a huge degree” for 22 percent of the respondents, to “a moderate degree” for 45 percent, and to “a small degree” for 18 percent, while 14 percent report it having no influence at all. “Breadth of the academic program” is cited as the most appealing aspect of Rutgers as a major research university by 47 percent of Rutgers-New Brunswick students, while 19 and 17 percent cited “opportunity to obtain an internship” and “opportunity to participate in
research”, respectively. Students from New Jersey who were accepted at colleges out of state but elected to stay in New Jersey cite “cost” as the most important reason for selecting Rutgers (%). Students not from New Jersey cite “another reason” and “part of the country in which Rutgers is located” as the most important reasons for selecting Rutgers (26% and 24%, respectively). Recommendations of friends, relatives, or high school counselors and cost (15% each) are contributors to choosing Rutgers-New Brunswick for out-of-state students as well.

With regard to Educational and Career Plans (Items B1-B4), a similar percentage of Rutgers-New Brunswick students and students at peer institutions plan to obtain a post baccalaureate degree (86%, each). However, a slightly larger percentage of Rutgers-New Brunswick students indicate that they plan to obtain a post baccalaureate degree at their current university as compared to students at peer institutions (40% vs. 36%). In terms of specific educational plans, Rutgers-New Brunswick students are extremely similar to peer institution students. The most commonly cited intended majors are business (14% for Rutgers-New Brunswick and 16% for peer institutions), professional fields\(^1\) (13% for Rutgers-New Brunswick and 10% for peer institutions), biological sciences (13% for Rutgers-New Brunswick vs. 10% for peer institutions), and engineering (10% and 17%). 9 percent of Rutgers-New Brunswick first-time full-time students as well as similar students attending peer institutions are undecided about their probable undergraduate field of study as they begin their college education.

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\(^1\) Professional fields include architecture/urban planning, home economics, health technology, library/archival science, nursing, pharmacy, predental/medical/veterinarian, occupational/physical/speech therapy, and other professional.
These educational choices translate into probable careers with 8% expecting to work in management, as a physician (9% and 8% for Rutgers-New Brunswick and peer institution students, respectively), or as a computer programmer/analyst (7% and 5%). Rutgers-New Brunswick students are less likely to indicate they expect to pursue a career in engineering than are students at peer institutions (8% vs. 14%).

The responses to the survey questions pertaining to Student Attitudes and Background (Items C1-C15) also reveal few differences between Rutgers-New Brunswick and peer institution students. These two groups of students are very similar in their responses to questions about life goals and expectations and their political attitudes. Furthermore, they are similar in various background factors such as: age, parental income, status of parents (living together or not), remedial work done in high school, and remedial work needed in college. One difference between the two groups was that Rutgers-New Brunswick has a lower percentage of native English speakers among its student population compared to peer institutions (78% vs. 91%) and slightly fewer U. S. citizens (90% vs. 95%). Racial and ethnic backgrounds also differ. Approximately six in ten Rutgers-New Brunswick students indicate they are white (58%) compared to eight in ten students at peer institutions (78%). The distribution of minority students also differs: Asian (22% vs. 12%), Latino (9% vs. 4%), and African American (8% vs. 5%).

Rutgers-New Brunswick students are less confident in their expectations about their

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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-New Brunswick and its peer institutions.
future experiences at their university. Rutgers-New Brunswick students are slightly less confident that they will attain a bachelor’s degree (69% vs. 80%), develop close friendships with other students (62% vs. 78%), participate in student clubs or groups (43% vs. 52%) or be satisfied with their college (36% vs. 53%). Furthermore, Rutgers-New Brunswick students are somewhat less likely than peer institution students to rate themselves above average or in the highest 10 percent of people who are their same age on the following attributes: academic ability (78% vs. 84%), cooperativeness (70% vs. 74%), drive to achieve (68% vs. 75%), and intellectual self-confidence (56% vs. 64%).

Like students at peer institutions, at least 10 percent have had remedial work in math. Rutgers-New Brunswick students indicate their need for additional remedial work in mathematics (12%), writing (13%), and science (3%). Peer institution students also have a need for remedial work: mathematics (9%), writing (4%), and science (4%).

Approximately half of the Rutgers-New Brunswick and peer students describe their political views as “middle of the road” (52% and 44%, respectively). Rutgers-New Brunswick students as well as their peers are equally likely to describe themselves as “liberal” (33% each). When it comes to issues of personal freedom, Rutgers New-Brunswick students, are slightly more likely than their peers, think the federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns (86% and 82%). They are also more likely to support the legalization of same-sex marriage (72% vs. 66%) and legalized abortion (67% vs. 64%). More than two-thirds of both groups believe there is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals and both groups support drug testing of employees/applicants by employers.
The manner in which the Rutgers-New Brunswick students report spending their time in the past year differed from the peer-institution students in a number of ways. Rutgers-New Brunswick students were less likely to engage in volunteer work; 64 percent stated that they spent time doing volunteer work compared with 74 percent of the peer institution students. In contrast, Rutgers-New Brunswick students spend more time working for pay compared to peer institution students. Thirty-eight percent of Rutgers-New Brunswick students reported spending sixteen or more hours per week working for pay, compared with 30 percent of students at peer institutions. Similarly, 30 percent of peer institution students reported spending no time working for pay compared to only 24 percent of Rutgers-New Brunswick students. Rutgers-New Brunswick students are more likely to report frequent socializing with a member of a different racial or ethnic group than are students at peer institutions (78% vs. 68%).

Most first year students are computer literate. Both Rutgers-New Brunswick and peer institution students indicated they frequently used a personal computer during the previous year (83% and 85%). Furthermore, nearly three-fourths of both groups had frequently communicated by email or used the internet for research or homework during this time.