ANALYSIS OF RUTGERS-New Brunswick/Piscataway DATA 2004

With regard to Selection of College (Items A1-A5), Rutgers-New Brunswick/Piscataway (Rutgers-NBP) students are less likely to consider their institution their first choice compared to students in other highly selective public universities (56% vs. 68%). 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 note that Rutgers has a very good academic reputation (55% vs. 69% 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 and get training in a specific career. 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 (84% for Rutgers and 82% for peer institutions) expect to attend graduate school.

The cost of attending college, being offered financial assistance and proximity to home are greater 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 52%, 33% and 22%, respectively, corresponding to 42%, 23% and 12% selection rates by students at peer institutions. However, students at peer universities are more likely to indicate that they select their current university because of its good academic reputation (69% vs. 55%), good reputation for social activities (35% vs. 29%) or the job opportunities for this college’s graduates (54% 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-tenth having major concern. Accordingly, more than one in ten students at Rutgers-NBP and peer institutions expect to hold down a part-time job to help pay for college expenses (41% and 44% from survey question C2).

Like their peers, Rutgers-NBP students rely most heavily on parents, family, and friends to fund their college education (82% Rutgers-NBP and 86% peer institutions). Rutgers-NBP students are also similar to students at peer institutions reporting they plan to rely on state scholarships or grants in helping to finance their education (58% and 60%), while Rutgers-NBP students are slightly more likely to take out loans (50% vs. 45%).

Savings are not as major a source of college funding for Rutgers-NBP first years students compared to those at other institutions. Half (49%) of Rutgers-NBP students report they will not utilize their own resources to fund their education compared to 40% 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 (84% and 82%). 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 (41% 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 (18% for Rutgers-NBP and 15% for peer institutions), and business (15% for both Rutgers-NBP and peer institutions). The other probable majors for Rutgers-NBP students and their peers are biological sciences (12% for both), engineering (11% and 15%, respectively), social sciences, and arts and humanities (11% in each for both). Seven percent (7%) 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 peer institution students expecting to be a physician and 7% (8% for peer institutions) to be business executives. Only two percent of Rutgers-NBP and peer institution students see themselves working as a computer programmer/analyst, which continues declining from the peak proportion of four percent in 2002. Rutgers-NBP students are also slightly less likely to indicate they expect to pursue a career in engineering than are students at peer institutions (8% vs. 12%).

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

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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
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) also 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. They expect to be very well-off financially and to raise a family (more than 70%). Approximately half of Rutgers-NBP students and their peers describe their political views as “middle-of-the-road” (48% and 44%). They are equally likely to describe themselves as “liberal” (35% and 32%). When it comes to issues of personal freedom, Rutgers-NBP students are slightly more likely than their peers to support the legalization of same-sex marriage (70% vs. 64%) and agree that wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes (64% vs. 57%). About sixty percent of both groups believe there is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals and that abortion should be legalized.

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 fulfillment of high school study requirements. Almost one hundred percent of Rutgers-NBP and peer institution students met or exceeded recommended years of high school study in English (four years), Mathematics (three years), Foreign Language (two years) and History/American Government (one year). One difference between the two groups was that Rutgers-NBP has a lower percentage of native English speakers among its student population compared to the peer institutions (80% vs. 88%) and slightly fewer therapy, and other professional.
report they are U. S. citizens (91% vs. 95%). Racial and ethnic backgrounds\(^2\) also differ. More than half Rutgers-NBP students indicate they are white (55%) compared to three-fourths of students at peer institutions. The corresponding distribution of minority students also differs: Asian (26% vs. 17%), Latino (12% vs. 6%), and African American (9% vs. 5%).

As for expectation about their future experience in college, more than 60% of Rutgers-NBP and peer institution students expect to socialize with people from other racial/ethnic groups (65% and 69%, respectively), however, they both report low expectation for regular communication with their professors (27% and 30%).

Academically, sixty percent of Rutgers-NBP students and their peers at highly selective public universities expect making 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 (38% vs. 56%). They also anticipate less likely to participate in student clubs or groups (40% vs. 47%) or in a study abroad program (25% vs. 31%). Rutgers-NBP students are similar to peer institution students who rate themselves above average or in the highest 10 percent of people who are their same age on the following attributes: academic ability (80% and 84%), drive to achieve (72% and 75%), and intellectual self-confidence (59% and 62%).

\(^2\) 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.
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; seventy one percent stated that they spent time doing volunteer work compared with seventy eight percent of the peer institution students. In contrast, Rutgers-NBP students spent more time working for pay compared to their counterparts at peer institutions. Thirty percent of Rutgers-NBP students reported spending sixteen or more hours per week working for pay, compared with twenty four percent of students at peer institutions. Similarly, thirty four percent of peer institution students reported spending no time working for pay compared to twenty nine percent of Rutgers-NBP students. Rutgers-NBP students are more likely to report frequent socializing with a member of a different racial or ethnic group than are students at peer institutions (81% vs. 73%). However, both Rutgers-NBP students and their peers report low expectation for communicating regularly with their professors.

Most first year students are computer literate. Both Rutgers-NBP and peer institution students indicated they frequently used a personal computer during the previous year (89% and 91%). Furthermore, approximately three-fourths of both groups had frequently used the internet for research or homework during this time.