ANALYSIS OF RUTGERS-NEWARK DATA 2003

It should be noted at the outset that although CIRP usually includes the Rutgers-Newark campus in the “highly selective public university” stratum, this year their report shows peer institutions as “public university – low selectivity.” For reporting purposes, we continue with the traditional practice of comparing Rutgers-Newark students to those attending peer institutions of high selectivity. Even so, given the different character and mission of some of the institutions included in the high selectivity stratum, the following comparisons between Rutgers-Newark and peer institution students should be viewed cautiously.

The responses to questions regarding Selection of College (Items A1-A5) reveal that Rutgers-Newark and peer institution students are somewhat different. Students at Rutgers-Newark are more likely than students in peer institutions to state that their institution was their first choice (77% vs. 68%). The most important reasons in deciding to go to college differ also for students in Rutgers-Newark and its peer institutions. Rutgers-Newark students are more likely to be motivated to get training for a specific career (81% vs. 64% for students at peer institutions), or state that they decided to go to college to gain a general education (75% and 68%) as well as more likely to indicate attending a college to prepare for graduate or professional school (72% vs. 64%). Slightly more Rutgers-Newark students than their counterparts at peers institutions indicate they would like to be able to make more money (73% and 68%), but they equally intend to get a better job (71% for Rutgers and 69% for peer institutions).

Rutgers-Newark students and students at other highly selective institutions cite different reasons for selecting their college. The most important reason for college
selection is the colleges’ good academic reputation (62% for Rutgers and 65% for peers institutions). However, Rutgers-Newark students are much more likely to cite two additional reasons: low tuition and the desire to remain close to home (46% vs. 26% and 37% vs. 11%, respectively). The offer of financial assistance is also more important for Rutgers-Newark students than for their peers (30% vs. 22%).

Three out of four Rutgers-Newark students report concern about college financing. About half of both Rutgers-Newark students and peer institution students report some concern (56% and 53%, respectively), or major concern about financing college (15% vs. 11%). Although the majority of Rutgers-Newark students plan to receive some financial support for educational expenses from parents, family or friends (75%), more students at the peer institutions expect similar support from these sources (85%). Close to half of Rutgers-Newark and peer-institution students plan to rely on a part-time job off-campus as an income source for educational expenses (44% for both; answers to survey question C2). One third of Rutgers-Newark students (37%) plan to rely on loans, which is slightly less than those in peer institutions (41%), in order to help fund their education.

With respect to Educational and Career Plans (Items B1-B4), Rutgers-Newark students plan on attaining a post-baccalaureate degree at similar rate compared to students in peer institutions (81% for both). Rutgers-Newark and students at peer institutions are almost equally likely to plan on obtaining a Masters degree (44% and 40%). As far as other professional or terminal degrees, including Ph.D., Ed.D., medical, and law degrees, they are roughly the same as well, 37 percent for Rutgers-Newark and 41 percent for other students. Of those students indicating that they intend to pursue post-baccalaureate degrees, a higher percentage of Rutgers-Newark students (44%) than peer institution
students (32%) intend to do so at their current institution.

The most probable undergraduate major field of study for first-time full-time students attending Rutgers-Newark is in the professional fields\(^1\) (34%). Approximately seven percent are undecided as they begin their first year in college, but this may change beyond a student’s first year. There are a similar number of students at peer institutions who begin without a major area of study in mind as well (9%). Business and engineering are the second and third most probable majors at Rutgers-Newark (25%, and 6%), while students from peer institutions intend to go into those fields at a rate of 15 percent for each.

In responding to questions developed for Rutgers students only (Items B5 through B9), more than three-fourths of Rutgers-Newark students believe that it is extremely important to achieve their career goals while pursuing an undergraduate degree (76%). Furthermore, more than half of them believe it is extremely important to achieve social interaction and personal growth or personal interests and talents goals (57% and 53%, respectively). Half of Rutgers-NBP students indicate that achieving intellectual growth goals and critical thinking and communication skills goals are extremely important (50%). Altogether, ninety or nearly ninety percent of Rutgers-Newark students feel it important or extremely important to achieve each of the five goals while pursuing their undergraduate degree.

With regard to **Student Attitudes and Background** (Items C1-C15), Rutgers-Newark students are more likely than peer institution students to consider financial success an essential or very important objective to achieve (86% vs. 74%), while simultaneously

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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.
being more likely to cite raising a family as important (82% vs. 74%). Students at Rutgers-Newark are slightly more likely to see themselves as "middle-of-the-road" on political issues (57%) compared to students at peer institutions (47%) and slightly less likely to see themselves as “conservative” (11% vs. 20%).

Rutgers-Newark students are slightly more likely to support government control of the sale of handguns (85% vs. 78%) and state that wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now (65% and 53%, respectively). On the other hand, Rutgers-Newark students show a lower approval rate than peer institution students towards legalizing abortion (49% vs. 63%).

Slightly more peer institution students report higher parental income compared to incomes reported by Rutgers-Newark students. Nineteen percent of Rutgers-Newark students report parental income of less than $30,000 compared to 12 percent of peer institution students, while a far lower percentage of Rutgers-Newark students report parental income exceeding $100,000 (17%) compared to peer institution students (40%). In general, parents’ education is considerably lower for Rutgers-Newark students than for students at peer institutions. Only 47 percent of Rutgers-Newark students’ fathers received a college or graduate degree compared to 62 percent of peer institution students’ fathers having a college or graduate degree. Only 58 percent of Rutgers-Newark students state that they are native English speakers, while 89 percent of peer institution students indicate that their native language is English. Eighty-two percent Rutgers-Newark students are U. S. Citizens versus 96 percent at peer institutions.

Rutgers-Newark students are much more ethnically diverse than peer institution students. Less than one-third (30%) indicated they are White or Caucasian compared to
three-fourth at peer institutions. There are corresponding higher percentages of students at Rutgers-Newark who are Asian American/Asian (30%), Latino (15%), and African American (8%) compared to students at peer institutions (14%, 5%, and 5%, respectively).\(^2\) Furthermore, Rutgers-Newark students are much more likely than students from peer institutions to report that they frequently socialized with people of a different ethnic group (85% vs. 73%) in the previous year.

Mathematics seems to be the most challenging subject for students at highly selective institutions. Seven percent of Rutgers-Newark students and nine percent of peer institution students report having had remedial work in mathematics, and 20 percent and 17 percent of each group report that they will still need remedial work in mathematics.

The two groups differed markedly in their self-ratings. Only 68 percent of Rutgers-Newark students compared to 85% at peer institutions rated themselves above average or in the highest 10 percent of people their age in academic ability; they also express slightly lower intellectual self-confidence (60% vs. 65%). However, they rate themselves similarly or higher in terms of cooperativeness (79% at Rutgers-Newark and 74% at peer institutions), in their drive to achieve (78% and 76%), and their understanding of others (68% and 67% at peer institutions).

Rutgers-Newark students report a number of ways they spent their time during the previous year that differ from students at peer institutions. Rutgers-Newark students were as likely as those at peer institutions to have “frequently” or “occasionally” studied with

\(^2\) 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-Newark and its peer institutions.
other students in the previous year (86% and 89%) and slightly less likely to have performed volunteer work this often (83% vs. 88%). In fact, about one-third of Rutgers-Newark students reported that they had performed no volunteer work compared to only one-fourth of peer institution students (32% vs. 24%).

Rutgers-Newark students are similar to students at peer institutions in how they spent time in the previous year before their first year of college. Similar numbers of hours were spent in each week on homework and working for pay: twenty-eight percent of Rutgers-Newark students and 32 percent of peer institution students spent six to fifteen hours on studying and about 26 percent of both spent the same amount time working. Thirty-eight percent of Rutgers-Newark students spent six to fifteen hours each week socializing with friends, but 47 percent of their peers spent this much time with friends. Many Rutgers-Newark students and peers spent sixteen or more hours per week working for pay (28% and 25%, respectively).

Most students in both groups frequently used the internet for research or homework during the previous year (85% of Rutgers-Newark students and 86% of their peers). Rutgers-Newark students were similarly likely to report frequent use of personal computers (86% vs. 89%) and frequent communication by email (67% vs. 69%) over this period of time.