ACADEMIC INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT
Buffalo State College
BRIEF: FRESHMEN, FALL 2001 CLASS PROFILE

Background:

1180 full-time first-time freshmen were surveyed during summer orientations, 2001.

- 76.8% were Caucasian; 14.6% were African-American; 5.6% were Hispanic; 3.5% were Asian Americans; and 1.4% were Native Americans.
- Two-thirds (67.2%) live with both parents.
- Median parents’ estimated income from last year is $58,000.
- 55.1% of fathers and 54.6% of mothers have attended college.
- Fathers’ occupations: 21.6% business; 11.6% skilled workers; 9% engineers; and 6.1% laborers.
- Mothers’ occupations: 12.7% business; 11.3% elementary/secondary teachers; 11.1% nurses; 8.3% homemakers; and 7.3% clerical.
- Median GPA from high school (self-reported) is B/B+.
- One out of five had special tutoring or remedial work in mathematics.
- One out of three feels they will need special tutoring or remedial work in mathematics.
- One-third (31.8%) want to be elementary or secondary teachers and 11.5% are undecided about their future careers.
- Not surprisingly, one-third (33.4%) expect to major in education, 9% in social sciences, 8% in business, 5% in a technical area, and 6.5% are undecided.
- Two-thirds (65.6%) report living within 50 miles of campus.
- 31.8% characterized their political views as liberal/far left; 12.5% as conservative/far right and 55.7% as middle of the road.

Why do freshmen go to college?

Freshmen who entered Buffalo State in Fall, 2002 cite the following reasons for going to college:

- To get training for a specific career  79.7%
- To get a better job    79.2%
- To make money       79.0%
- To learn more about things that interest me  78.1%

Freshmen for the past two years cited “to make more money” as the most important factor in deciding to go to college. This year the focus shifted to jobs: training for a specific career and getting a better job edging out money as a reason for college.
Why do freshmen choose Buffalo State?

The majority of freshmen do not cite any one particular reason as very important in their decision to attend Buffalo State although percentages citing the top three reasons were significantly higher than in past years.

- Buffalo State graduates get good jobs 47.5% up from 33% in 2000
- Buffalo State has a good academic reputation 43.9% up from 34% in 2000
- Low tuition 40.0% up from 35% in 2000
- Wanted to live near home 30.9% 30% in 2000
- This college offers special education programs 30.1%
- Wanted to go to a school about this size 28.3%

Again, jobs were mentioned most often.

How do freshmen rank Buffalo State among other colleges/universities they considered?

- 54.8% chose Buffalo as their first choice down from 58% in 2000
- 32.6% chose Buffalo State as their second choice up from 28% in 2000
- 8.7% chose Buffalo State as their third or lower choice down from 14% in 2000

At the same time, 85.9% of Buffalo State freshmen applied to at least one other institution.

What predictions do freshmen make about their education careers at Buffalo State?

The 2001 freshmen class is the most optimistic about their academic success as any entering group since we began the annual survey in 1998. Over three-quarters (77.3%) expect to earn a bachelor’s degree compared to two-thirds last year. Over half (55.8%) think chances are very good that they will make at least a “B” average compared to 44% a year ago; 14.4% expect to graduate with honors compared to 13% a year ago. Few expect to fail: only 3% say there is a very good chance that they will fail one or more courses.

One-third (33.2%) say there is a very good chance they will be satisfied with Buffalo State which is up 3% since last year. At the same time, 11.6% indicate that they are very likely to transfer to another institution compared to 13% last year.

Women are more likely than men to say there is a very good chance they will:

- earn a bachelor’s degree women 80.8%; men 71.2%
- be satisfied with college women 35.7%; men 28.5%
Along with the focus on career/job, the 2001 freshmen appear less likely to anticipate changing their major (9.6% in 2001 and 14% in 2000) or their career choice (9.3% in 2001 and 14% in 2000).

Students continue to be concerned about their ability to finance college. About seven out of ten (69.6%) report some or major concerns about their ability to afford college with 15.6% not sure they will have enough funds to complete college. These percentages have held steady with past years. Women continue to report more financial concerns than men: 72.8% of women are concerned about financing college compared to 64% of men.

**What are their long-term academic goals?**

Freshmen have high long-term academic goals: 72.9% expect to earn a graduate degree with 37.1% expecting to earn that graduate degree at Buffalo State. While the percentage who anticipate earning a graduate degree has held steady, there was a jump of 8% from last year for those who expect to attend Buffalo State for graduate work.

**How did freshmen spend their time last year?**

Incoming freshmen continue to be academically disengaged with 66.8% coming late to class, 41.2% oversleeping and missing classes and 42.3% being bored in class. At the same time, 54.3% drank beer (down from 60.5% in 2000) and 64.5% drank wine or liquor (66.5% in 2000). Cigarette smoking has steadily decreased since 1998 from a high of 23.4% to 14.2% this year.

The median amount of time freshmen:

- studied during their last year in high school  
  3 hours/week
- partied  
  4 hours/week
- worked for pay  
  5.5 hours/week
- watched TV  
  3+ hours/week
- read for pleasure  
  less than 1 hour/week

**How do freshmen see themselves?**

Freshmen were asked to rate themselves on nineteen traits by comparing themselves with “the average person your age”. 2001 freshmen were most likely to rate themselves about average on the following traits:

- Cooperative  
  68.5%
- Understanding of others  
  63.5%
- Creative  
  59.3%
- Driven to achieve  
  58.4%
- Persistence  
  50.6%
- Leadership ability  
  50.5%
These qualities were in almost the same rank order last year. There is one exception: intellectual self-confidence dropped from 52% last year to 44.6% this year.

What are the long-term personal goals of today’s freshmen?

Freshmen were asked to rate the personal importance of eighteen long-term goals. **Once again the most highly rated goal by far was “being well off financially”: 80.8% rate this goal as essential or very important** - up 5% since last year.

Other highly rated goals are:

- Raising a family 69.8%
- Helping others 66.7%
- Becoming an authority in my field 55.5%
- Recognition from colleagues for Contributions to special field 52.1%

Computer Use

Three-quarters (75.1%) of freshmen have frequently used computers in the last year and over half (52.5%) had at least one-half year of coursework in high school in computing science. In addition:

- 63.6% frequently communicated via e-mail
- 75.3% frequently used the internet for research or homework
- 20.9% frequently participated in internet chat rooms
- 56.2% frequently used the internet

All data reported here is from the CIRP freshmen survey administered during summer orientation 2001, 2000.

For more information, contact:

Rosalyn Lindner  
Senior Advisor to the Provost  
102 Bulger Communication  
878-6939  
lindnera@bscmail.buffalostate.edu