

GOAL ACHIEVEMENT AT RUTGERS: A REVIEW OF RESPONSES TO SURVEYS OF ENTERING AND GRADUATING STUDENTS

Executive Summary

During their orientation to Rutgers, new students are asked to complete the Cooperative Institutional Research Program survey. This national survey asks entering students about their academic and career goals, expectations, and attitudes. The administration of the CIRP survey to new undergraduates is part of a broad survey research program at Rutgers that seeks to obtain information from undergraduates during different points in the pursuit of their baccalaureate degree. Another important survey that is administered to Rutgers' undergraduates is the Graduating Student Opinion Survey, which seeks the evaluation of students graduating from Rutgers about their academic experience and their plans for the future. Both surveys provide important information about the undergraduate experience at Rutgers. Some major findings of the two surveys include:

- The majority of first-time full-time students entering Rutgers indicated that Rutgers was their first choice. This was especially the case for Newark and Camden students, and less so for students on the New Brunswick campus. However, Camden and New Brunswick students lagged behind students attending peer institutions in the percentage indicating that the institution they are attending was their first choice. Newark has the same proportion of students indicating Rutgers as their first choice as students attending peer institutions.
- The academic quality of Rutgers was very important to the majority of students in selecting Rutgers as their college of choice.
- This perception of Rutgers as an institution with high academic standards is reinforced through an undergraduate's career at Rutgers: an overwhelming number of Rutgers' graduating students indicated that Rutgers has high quality academic programs, both in general and in their academic major.
- Another important reason for enrolling at Rutgers is cost. Roughly one out of two entering students indicated that the relatively low tuition charged by the university was an important factor in their decision to attend the university.
- Entering students also indicated concern for financing their college education, with many expecting having to work during the pursuit of their baccalaureate degree. This concern about college finances continued throughout students' undergraduate careers: many graduating students indicated that they worked more than ten hours per week during their last year of college attendance.
- Another important college decision factor for students to attend Rutgers is the availability of financial aid.
- A large majority of graduating students gave high grades to their academic experience at Rutgers and felt that the university prepared them well for the future.
- A large majority of students entering any of Rutgers' three regional campuses believe that they will be successful in obtaining their baccalaureate degree. While graduation rates

vary among the three Rutgers campuses, with New Brunswick students graduating at the highest rate, followed by Newark students, and then Camden students, these rates also show that the confidence regarding academic success expressed by entering students is somewhat if not strongly justified.

- While the percentage of students citing various reasons for going to college differed among the three Rutgers campuses, responses from students graduating from Rutgers show that the university plays an important role in students achieving their goals.