

CIRP FRESHMAN SURVEY

**DAYTONA BEACH AND PRESCOTT CAMPUSES
FALL 2001**

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EMBRY-RIDDLE
AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Institutional Research administered the CIRP¹ Freshman Survey to Fall 2001 first-time freshmen at both the Daytona Beach and Prescott campuses. Out of 1,022 incoming freshmen from the Daytona Beach campus, a total of 598 (59%) responded to the survey. Out of 375 incoming freshmen from the Prescott campus, 311 (83%) responded to the survey. Where applicable, this report compares ERAU findings to those from a national comparative group - first-time freshmen entering “highly selective”, private four-year colleges - obtained from the longitudinal CIRP study. The executive summary includes selected highlights.

The Student:

- ◆ The percentage of incoming freshmen noting English as their second language edged higher at Daytona Beach, reaching double digits (10%) for the first time since 1997. At Prescott, the percentage doubled from the previous administration from 4% to 8%.
- ◆ A noticeably larger proportion of freshmen attending ERAU met or exceeded the recommended amount of study (as defined by the National Commission on Excellence in Education) for both computer science (76% at Daytona Beach, 65% at Prescott, and 59% nationwide) and physical sciences (75% at Daytona Beach, 79% at Prescott, and 64% nationwide) than did CIRP respondents, gaps that continue to widen over time.
- ◆ Over half of all incoming freshmen at ERAU cited prior participation in flying lessons or flight clubs (53% and 54% at Daytona Beach and Prescott, respectively).
- ◆ Incoming freshmen from both Daytona Beach (21%, up from 10%) and Prescott (18%, up from 11%) cited spending more time than in previous years playing video/computer games. Approximately twice as many ERAU freshman engaged in this activity than did the CIRP comparative group (10%, up from 6%).

Family Background:

- ◆ Although average parental income of ERAU respondents is generally lower than that of freshmen nationwide, ERAU continues to draw incoming freshmen from increasingly affluent family backgrounds. 45% and 39% of Daytona Beach and Prescott freshmen, respectively, reported family incomes over \$75,000 while over 50% of the CIRP comparative group cited the same.
- ◆ The proportion of college-educated parents of ERAU’s incoming freshmen is somewhat lower than the proportion nationally. 65% of fathers and 61% of mothers of incoming freshmen nationwide held some type of college degree. 55% of fathers of both Daytona Beach and Prescott incoming freshmen, and 51% of mothers of both Daytona Beach and Prescott incoming freshmen, held a college degree.

Attendance Decision:

- ◆ Like past administrations, the largest proportions of ERAU incoming freshmen at both campuses have cited the same three factors as ‘very important’ in their decision to attend Embry-Riddle: want to be in aviation/aerospace environment; ERAU’s graduates get jobs; and good academic reputation. At both Daytona Beach and Prescott, ratings for the factor ‘good academic reputation’ were considerably higher than in years past, at 89% from 79%, and 85% from 72%, respectively. Conversely, ratings for ‘want to be in aviation/aerospace environment’ had a notable decrease at the Prescott campus, dropping to 74% from 82%.
- ◆ Both ERAU residential campuses attracted a larger share of first-time freshmen whose first choice was ERAU (87% at Daytona Beach and 86% at Prescott) than did the average college attended by CIRP respondents (74%).

¹The Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP) survey is administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), located at UCLA’s Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, and conducted under the sponsorship of the American Council on Education. Results of this 35-year old survey are published each year in The American Freshman.

- ◆ Over half of the respondents (62% at Daytona Beach and 60% at Prescott) chose to attend their ERAU campus because of its location. Additionally, a large proportion of respondents (96% at Daytona Beach and 95% at Prescott) indicated that the degree programs offered at their campus choice was the reason for their attendance.
- ◆ 2001 respondents at both campuses rated financial aid services notably higher ('excellent' and 'good' ratings combined) than did respondents in 1999. 67% and 64% of Daytona Beach and Prescott freshmen, respectively, responded positively (an 18% point increase and 31% point increase, respectively). Admissions services at both campuses realized a gain of 5% points and 7% points at Daytona Beach (88%) and Prescott (86%), respectively. At Prescott campus (76%), housing services bounced back from a 5-year low with a 12% point increase from 1999 while at Daytona Beach campus (80%) housing services remained steady.

Career and Degree Program Choice:

- ◆ Responses regarding chances of a change in their career field indicate that ERAU freshmen are much more certain about their career choice (3% at Daytona Beach and 2% at Prescott) than are CIRP freshmen (16%), solidifying their strong commitment to an aviation-related career choice.
- ◆ ERAU freshmen, more so than CIRP respondents, come to college with a clear direction in mind for their course of study. Only 4% and 2% of Daytona Beach and Prescott incoming freshmen, respectively, expect their chance is 'very good' they will change their degree program, compared to 15% of incoming freshmen nationwide.

Plans for Financing College:

- ◆ Less than one-quarter of the incoming freshmen at both campuses expressed a 'major concern' over their ability to finance their college education while at least one-half expressed 'some concern'. Embry-Riddle incoming freshmen and their contemporaries responded proportionately the same.
- ◆ 62% of Daytona Beach incoming freshmen (up 16% points from 1999), and 66% of Prescott freshmen (up 14% points from 1999) expected to receive \$3,000 or more of financial aid that must be repaid, compared to 38% for those students nationwide (no 1999 comparison figure is available).

Expectations of College and Beyond:

- ◆ Incoming freshmen from both Daytona Beach (65%) and Prescott (59%) continued to predict more frequently a very good chance of being satisfied with their college than did their contemporaries nationwide (56%). However, the gap between both ERAU campuses and CIRP respondents has narrowed considerably; five years ago 80% or more of incoming freshmen at both residential campuses were responding that there was a very good chance of satisfaction with ERAU.
- ◆ A significantly higher proportion of incoming freshmen at both Daytona Beach (88%) and Prescott (91%) rated their chances of getting a bachelor's degree as very good compared with their contemporaries nationwide (80%).
- ◆ ERAU freshmen from both campuses placed a high degree of importance on becoming an active participant in the field of aviation (90% at Daytona Beach and 88% at Prescott) and being well off financially (77% at Daytona Beach and 74% at Prescott), a trend since 1993.
- ◆ Over three-fourths of 2001 ERAU incoming freshmen at both campuses were in agreement that the university should offer a course to enhance career development skills.
- ◆ The gap between freshmen at ERAU and their contemporaries has closed considerably with respect to career goals, including: recognition from my colleagues (51% at Daytona Beach and Prescott, and 48% nationwide), a 15% point and 19% point decrease for Daytona Beach and Prescott freshmen, respectively; becoming an authority in my own field (60% at Daytona Beach, 58% at Prescott and nationwide), a 13% point decrease for freshmen at both residential campuses; and making a theoretical contribution to science (28% at Daytona Beach, 24% at Prescott, and 16% nationwide), an 11% point and 12% point decrease for Daytona Beach and Prescott freshmen, respectively.
- ◆ Also notable is the drop in the importance incoming freshmen from ERAU placed on helping others who are in difficulty (45% at Daytona Beach, 48% at Prescott, and 61% nationwide); a 22% decrease at Daytona Beach and an 18% decrease at Prescott. Although freshmen nationwide also showed a decrease in this area, the change was less dramatic, at 2% points.