

## ***METHODOLOGY***

### **Overview**

From 1988 to 1991, the Institutional Research office (IR) distributed a national freshman survey, the Cooperative Institutional Research Project survey (CIRP) to ERAU freshmen at both campuses. National results of aggregated responses from all participating institutions in this survey, which is overseen by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, are published annually. In 1993, ERAU developed and administered its own freshmen survey instrument, the *Incoming Freshmen Survey*, which was modeled in large part after the CIRP freshman survey and included additional questions tailored to the needs of the university. The *Incoming Freshmen Survey* has been administered at Daytona Beach each fall since 1993, and at Prescott each fall since 1995.

### **Survey Administration**

IR administered the *Incoming Freshmen Survey* to Fall 1999 first-time freshmen at both the Daytona Beach and Prescott campuses. At the Daytona Beach campus, IR and trained campus staff conducted the administration of the survey during orientation week. At the Prescott campus, survey instruments were mailed to the Director of the Student Success Center, who coordinated the survey administration process. Surveys were distributed to instructors of the College Success course and administered during the first month of classes. After completion the forms were collected and returned to IR for processing. The number of participants (and proportion of the entire incoming freshmen class that was represented) for the past five administrations are shown below:

Daytona Beach, Fall 1999 – 945 (88%)	Prescott, Fall 1999 – 313 (58%)
Daytona Beach, Fall 1998 – 829 (89%)	Prescott, Fall 1998 – 223 (70%)
Daytona Beach, Fall 1997 – 736 (71%)	Prescott, Fall 1997 – 212* (64%)
Daytona Beach, Fall 1996 – 409 (57%)	Prescott, Fall 1996 – 144 (47%)
Daytona Beach, Fall 1995 – 484 (73%)	Prescott, Fall 1995 – 155 (56%)

\*May include some transfer students, as the majority of respondents did not provide student identification numbers, which are used to identify respondents' demographics.

### **Weighting**

Where appropriate, Incoming Freshmen Survey data have been weighted to bring the group of survey completers into representative proportion with the total population of first-time freshmen. Data for Daytona Beach were already representative of the population and did not require weighting, but Prescott data required weighting by major.

### **Trend Data**

The in-house survey has collected responses from first-time freshmen students each fall since 1993 for the Daytona Beach campus, and information since 1995 for the Prescott campus. Discussion of longitudinal trends is limited to results within the past five years. Details of survey results prior to 1995 may be found in their respective reports.

### **Possible Sources of Error**

The results of any survey research are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. (1) Sampling – Since this survey is not a census, a possible sample error is the inability to survey first-time freshmen because they were, for whatever reason, unavailable to participate. (2) Non-sampling – This research is also subject to errors such as unit item non-response, where students answer only certain items. No imputation was performed for

missing data items. Another type of non-sampling error is measurement error, which may exist for some of the variables due to difficulty of defining ambiguous concepts. Lastly, differences in interpreting questions and inability or unwillingness to give correct information are two other sources of non-sampling errors. Error margins are not listed in this report, but may be obtained through IR if needed.

### **CIRP Institutional Stratification Design**

The 2,693 institutions identified as part of the national population are divided into 37 stratification groups based on institutional race (predominantly non-black vs. Predominantly black), type (two-year college, four-year college, university), control (public, private nonsectarian, Roman Catholic and Protestant) and “selectivity level” of the institution. “Selectivity” is defined as the average composite SAT score of the entering class. The 1999 CIRP data reflects that out of 2,693 institutions, 2,582 were predominantly white. Out of this group, 1,250 colleges were 4-year, of which 379 were private nonsectarian. Finally, out of this group of 379 schools, 84 had an average SAT score (unrecentered) between 1,025 and 1,174. ERAU is compared to this group of 84 schools.

### **Calculation of Averages**

An average of the estimate of parental income was computed using the midpoint of each category. The top-end category “\$2000,000 or more” was reassigned to the closed interval, “\$2000,000 to \$249,999” and its midpoint was calculated as \$224,99.50. The low-end category “less than \$6,000” was reassigned to the closed interval “\$0 to \$6,000” and its midpoint was calculated as \$3,000.