

INCOMING FRESHMEN SURVEY

**DAYTONA BEACH AND PRESCOTT CAMPUSES
FALL 1999**

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EMBRY-RIDDLE
AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Institutional Research administered the 1999 Incoming Freshmen Survey to Fall 1999 first-time freshmen at both the Daytona Beach and Prescott campuses. Out of 945 incoming freshmen from the Daytona Beach campus, 828 (88%) responded to the survey. Out of 313 incoming freshmen from the Prescott campus, 181 (58%) 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 CIRP¹ study. The executive summary includes selected highlights.

The Student:

- ◆ Both Daytona Beach (43%) and Prescott (50%) incoming freshmen cited spending more time than in previous years engaged in studying or doing homework, with Prescott freshmen equaling that of the CIRP comparative group (50%).
- ◆ The Daytona Beach freshmen participation rate in flying lessons/flight clubs hit a 5-year high (34%) while the participation rate in Civil Air Patrol (CAP) hit a 5-year low (6%). In contrast, the Prescott freshmen participation rate in CAP hit a 5-year high (13%), while the participation rate in flying lessons/flight clubs (33%) decreased by 7% points since the last administration.
- ◆ As compared to CIRP respondents, Daytona Beach freshmen continue to rate themselves more frequently as being in the “highest 10%” or “above average” in terms of drive to achieve, cooperativeness, leadership ability, competitiveness, physical health, emotional health and mathematical ability. Prescott freshmen survey participants, for the first time in 5 years, drop below CIRP respondents when rating themselves in terms of drive to achieve, cooperativeness, competitiveness and emotional health, but continue to rate themselves higher in terms of leadership ability, physical health and mathematical ability.

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. Over 40% of entering ERAU freshmen reported family incomes over \$75,000; an increase of 6% points for Daytona Beach incoming freshmen and 3% points for Prescott incoming freshmen.
- ◆ The proportion of college-educated parents of ERAU’s incoming freshmen is somewhat lower than the proportion nationally. Nationally, 63% of fathers and 60% of mothers of incoming freshmen held some type of college degree. 53% of both fathers and mothers of Daytona Beach incoming freshmen, and 57% of fathers and 50% of mothers of Prescott incoming freshmen, held a college degree.

Attendance Decision:

- ◆ For the past five years, the largest proportions of ERAU incoming freshmen at both campuses have cited the same three factors as “very important” in their decision to attend ERAU: Want to be in aviation/aerospace environment; ERAU’s graduates get jobs; and Good academic reputation.
- ◆ Both ERAU residential campuses attracted a larger share of first-time freshmen whose first choice was ERAU (87% at Daytona Beach and 82% at Prescott) than did the average college attended by CIRP respondents (74%).
- ◆ The percentage of incoming freshmen at Daytona Beach rating their housing experience as “good” or “excellent” has steadily increased over the past four years (80%), while for the Prescott campus this figure has steadily decreased, resulting in a 5-year low (64%) and 7% point decrease from 1998.

Career and Major Choice:

- ◆ Incoming freshmen at ERAU continue to indicate a strong commitment to an aviation-related career. In the past five years, over 80% of all incoming freshmen responded they were “strongly” committed.

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 33-year old survey are published each year in [The American Freshmen](#).

- ◆ Responses regarding chances of change in career field indicate that ERAU freshmen are much more certain about their career choice (2% at Daytona Beach and 3% at Prescott) than are CIRP freshmen (18%), solidifying their strong commitment to an aviation-related career choice.
- ◆ “Interest in field” has consistently been the most frequently selected reason for choosing their declared ERAU major over the past five years. “Career satisfaction” and “Earn more money” have remained over the past five years the second and third ranked reason, respectively.
- ◆ ERAU freshmen, more so than CIRP respondents, come to college with a clear direction in mind for their course of study. Only 5% and 3% of Daytona Beach and Prescott incoming freshmen respectively expect their chance is “very good” they will change their major, compared to 16% of incoming freshmen nationwide.
- ◆ Over one-third of Embry-Riddle incoming freshmen felt they were “very knowledgeable” about their major’s course requirements and career opportunities.

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.
- ◆ 29% of Daytona Beach incoming freshmen anticipate borrowing over \$30,000 in order to graduate from ERAU, while 42% of their contemporaries at Prescott anticipate the same.
- ◆ 23% of Daytona Beach and 21% of Prescott incoming freshmen expect there is a very good chance they would be employed in an off campus job to help pay for college expenses. Daytona Beach freshmen estimate they will work off campus an average of 8 hours a week, while freshmen at Prescott estimate they will work an average of 6.
- ◆ 34% of Daytona Beach and 27% of Prescott incoming freshmen rated their chances of working on campus as “very good”. Daytona Beach freshmen estimate they will work on campus an average of 9 hours a week, while freshmen at Prescott estimate they will work an average of 8.

Expectations of College and Beyond:

- ◆ Incoming freshmen from both Daytona Beach (72%) and Prescott (60%) continue to predict more frequently a very good chance of being satisfied with their college than their contemporaries nationwide (58%) are.
- ◆ Similar to freshmen nationwide (58%), 60% of Daytona Beach freshmen and 59% of Prescott freshmen expect their chances are very good they will earn at least a “B” average.
- ◆ Like past years, the majority of 1999 ERAU incoming freshmen at both campuses (over 60%) were in agreement that the university should offer a course to enhance career development skills covering a variety of career-related topics.
- ◆ Less than 10% of incoming freshmen at ERAU feel there is a very good chance they will be elected to a student office, get married while in college, participate in student protests or demonstrations, or join a social fraternity or sorority. Additionally, freshmen at Daytona Beach showed little interest in joining a student organization (9%, a decrease of 4% points from 1998), while interest in playing varsity or intercollegiate athletics continue to decline at Prescott, reaching a low of 8% (a 7% point decrease from 1998).
- ◆ As with previous years, respondents from both campuses placed a high degree of importance on becoming an active participant in the field of aviation (90% at Daytona Beach and 83% at Prescott) and being well off financially (81% at both campuses). Furthermore, ERAU incoming freshmen continue to place “becoming an authority in my own field” as one of the top career goals (73% at Daytona Beach and 71% at Prescott).
- ◆ More ERAU incoming freshmen (39% at Daytona Beach and 36% of Prescott) have indicated a higher importance on making a theoretical contribution to science than freshmen nationwide (17%).

INTRODUCTION

The Incoming Freshmen Survey was developed to gather information from students prior to their experiencing college life. Demographic, experiential and attitudinal information are gathered as first-time freshmen begin their educational experience at Embry-Riddle. This data can then be used to assess the effects of college on students and provide initial input information that can be used for longitudinal research. Improvements to the quality of college education can be a direct result of data gathered, thus benefiting future generations of Embry-Riddle students. Modeled in large part after a national freshman survey that is conducted by the Cooperative Institute Research Program (CIRP) at the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), the ERAU Incoming Freshmen Survey yields data that may be used for comparison against national CIRP benchmarks. Such comparisons provide a comprehensive picture of how Embry-Riddle freshmen differ from first-time freshmen entering “highly selective”, private, four-year colleges elsewhere in the nation, and of how the composition, attitudes, and expectations of Embry-Riddle freshmen are changing over time.

The Office of Institutional Research administered the 1999 Incoming Freshmen Survey to Fall 1999 first-time freshmen at both the Daytona Beach and Prescott campuses. Out of 945 incoming freshmen from the Daytona Beach campus, 828 (88%) responded to the survey. Out of 313 incoming freshmen from the Prescott campus, 181 (58%) responded to the survey. Data have been statistically weighted where necessary so that results are representative of all Fall 1999 incoming freshmen.

This report presents the 1999 survey responses of Embry-Riddle first-time freshmen by campus and, where appropriate, by major. Within the body of the report, when available, national CIRP results are presented for comparison. These national statistics are comparable to those of ERAU in that they are based on responses of first-time freshmen attending private, 4-year colleges with average SAT scores ranging from 1025 to 1175, termed “high selectivity” colleges by the CIRP Foundation. Discussion of longitudinal trends is limited to results within the past five years.