

2001
College
Freshmen
with
Disabilities
A Biennial Statistical Profile

HEATH
Resource Center

ACE American Council on Education

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by
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Introduction and Sources of Data

In a strong economy, high school graduates have many options. Some students use their secondary educational training to secure an entry-level job with the possibility of advancement. Other graduates enroll in vocational schools to acquire specific occupational training. The community college system also offers a wide variety of curricula for recent high school graduates as well as for adults who are starting postsecondary education or returning to college.

Recent high school graduates who choose to enroll in four-year institutions face a variety of changes in their lives. Many students will be leaving home and living in residence halls with a cross-section of students from diverse backgrounds. As time passes, these students will find that they often have a great deal in common. They are eager to take challenging courses, to expand their social lives, and to become more independent.

In addition to these changes, some students face additional challenges: They have specific disabilities. About 6 percent of first-time, full-time freshmen attending four-year institutions in fall 2000 self-reported a disability. These students may need disability-related accommodations such as notetakers, interpreters, readers, or other accommodations to ensure that the academic program is accessible to them.

This report describes students who reported disabilities and who enrolled in fall 2000 as full-time freshmen at public and independent four-year colleges and universities. Since 1966, a national survey of college students has been administered to a large sample of freshmen each year. This survey is conducted by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)

In fall 2000, survey administrators tabulated questionnaires from 269,413 students at 434 baccalaureate colleges and universities.

and is cosponsored by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). The purpose of this survey is to provide a profile of first-time, full-time freshmen at the beginning of their college experiences. Sometimes follow-up surveys are administered to some of these students to assess their progress through college or in their careers.

Typically, the survey sponsors administer the annual survey of freshmen in early fall, gathering data on students' personal background, high school experiences, educational and career goals, and opinions. Administrators collect survey responses from a stratified sample of accredited institutions across the United States; these samples are weighted to reflect the national cohort of freshmen for each specific year of the survey. For example, in fall 2000, survey administrators tabulated questionnaires from 269,413 students at 434 baccalaureate colleges and universities. The responses were weighted to represent the national enrollment patterns of the total 1.1 million first-time, full-time freshmen attending four-year institutions in 2000.

Note:

Until fall 2000, survey administrators had collected data yearly from two- and four-year institutions; however, it has become increasingly difficult to tabulate survey responses from two-year colleges that reflect the experiences of first-time, full-time freshmen. So many of these students are either (1) returning to college and therefore are not first-time students, or (2) enrolled part time. The fall 2000 CIRP survey was the prototype of a redesign intended to focus on students attending only four-year institutions.

As a result, data from this 2001 publication—which presents data collected in fall 2000 from four-year institutions only—cannot be compared directly to data found in previous editions of this report. (Data from past reports reflected responses from students attending both four-year and two-year institutions.) This 2001 edition of *College Freshmen with Disabilities* is the first report to reflect only the survey responses of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

Following the principles of responsible data analysis, this report is solely a data profile. Until a future report contains only data generated from first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions only, comparisons of findings cannot be made. Correspondingly, this data profile cannot, and does not, speculate on implications and/or recommendations that can be drawn from the data. Future implications and/or recommendations can only be made once there are at least two similar data profiles that can be directly compared.

Readers of this 2001 edition of *College Freshmen with Disabilities* also should know that, for consistency, the author of this report uses language which directly mirrors that used in the CIRP survey. For example, this report refers to “special programs offered by the college” and “special tutoring and remedial services.” Due to the author’s desire for consistency, use of the word “special” within such phrases directly reflects language used in the CIRP survey. “Special” does not imply any direct relationship between the K–12 special education system and the parameters of providing accommodative services at the postsecondary level.

The CIRP provided the HEATH Resource Center with a special set of tabulations based on fall 2000 freshman answers to the following question:

Do you have a disability? (Mark all that apply.)

- None
- Hearing
- Speech
- Orthopedic
- Learning disability
- Health-related
- Partially sighted or blind
- Other

Students who respond to the CIRP question self-report their disabilities in the fall of their freshman year. The survey does not provide definitions of the disability categories listed. In addition, there is no information available on how long the students have lived with their disability(ies) or whether the disability(ies) have been formally diagnosed. When survey administrators weighted the responses to reflect the national cohort of entering freshmen across the United States, the survey results revealed 66,197 freshmen with disabilities—this represents about 6 percent of all first-time, full-time students enrolled during fall 2000 at four-year institutions.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which went into effect in 1977, prohibits discrimination based on disability in all institutions that receive federal funds; this includes most colleges and universities. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 reaffirmed the Rehabilitation Act and extended the protection of civil rights of people with disabilities to include public and private entities. Of students surveyed at four-year institutions only, the proportion of freshmen reporting disabilities averaged 6 to 8 percent between 1988 and 2000 (see Table 1).

The survey results revealed 66,197 freshmen with disabilities—this represents about 6 percent of all first-time, full-time students enrolled during fall 2000 at four-year institutions.

Table 1
Percentage of Full-Time College Freshmen Reporting Disabilities at Four-Year Institutions: Selected Years

Disability	1988	1991	1994	1996	1998	2000
	<i>(by percentage)</i>					
Hearing	.8	.8	.8	.7	.7*	.5
Speech	.2	.3	.3	.3	.4	.2
Orthopedic	.9	1.0	.8	.7	.7	.4
Learning disability	1.0	1.4	2.0	2.3	2.6	2.4
Health-related	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.5	.9
Partially sighted or blind	1.9	2.4	2.2	1.9	1.1	1.0
Other	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.0
Any	6.5	7.8	8.2	8.1	7.1**	6.0

*Hearing data were not collected in 1998; this figure reflects 1996 data.

**Estimated.

Notes:

- Individuals were allowed to identify more than one disability.
- “Any” means students reporting any type of disability.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, selected years.)

Highlights of the 2000 Freshman Survey

Between 1988 and 2000, “learning disability” was the fastest growing category of reported disability among students. By 2000, two in five freshmen with disabilities (40 percent) cited a learning disability (see Table 2); compare this with only 16 percent in 1988. The actual number of freshmen with learning disabilities also rose substantially during this 12-year period (see Figure 1).

In 1988, students most commonly categorized their disability as “partially sighted or blind,” but in 2000 it was the third most frequently reported (after “learning disability” and “other”). Among freshmen reporting disabilities, the actual number of students with sight impairments declined from 1988 to 2000, and the percentage of students who were partially sighted or blind decreased from 30 percent to 16 percent.

Slightly more than half of students reporting disabilities attended public institutions (54 percent). Another 42 percent attended independent colleges and universities, and 4 percent chose Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

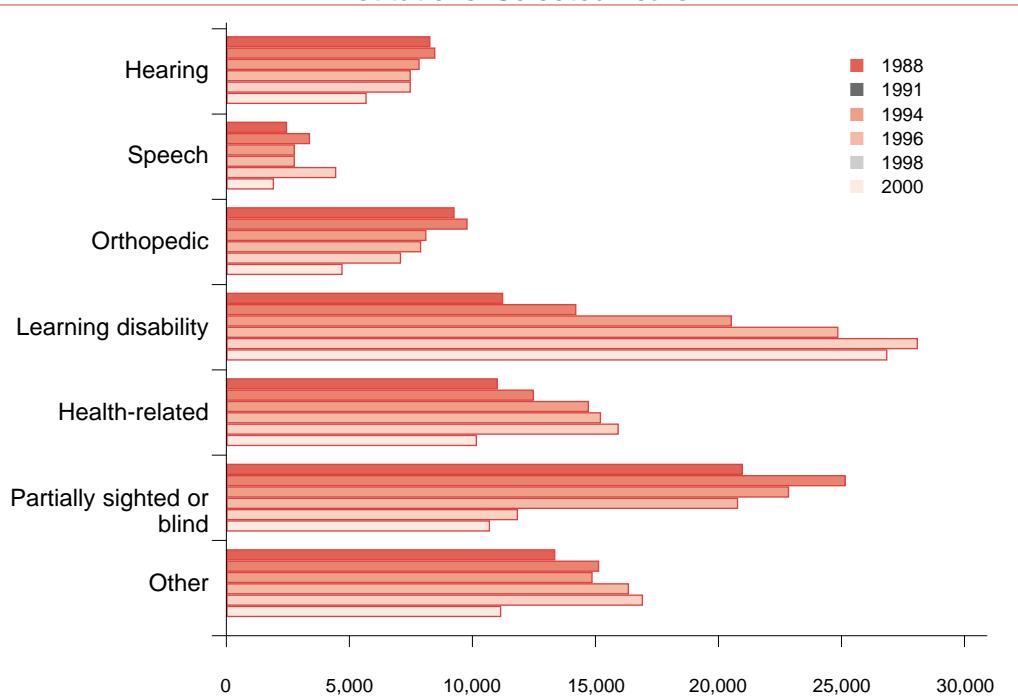
The following sections examine how two groups of freshmen enrolled at four-year institutions during fall 2000—those who reported disabilities and those who did not—compared on a wide range of descriptors: personal and family background, high school performance, preparation for college,

The actual number of freshmen with learning disabilities also rose substantially during this 12-year period (see Figure 1).

educational and career expectations, self-perceptions, and opinions. Later sections compare women and men who have disabilities with students who have specific types of disabilities as reported by freshmen.

For many characteristics, no substantial differences existed between students with and without disabilities; therefore, this report uses a single number, such as 8 percent, to describe both groups. When discussing characteristics that did yield substantial differences, however, this report will present two percentage comparisons, such as 19 percent versus 55 percent. In such a case, the first number refers to students with disabilities and the second number applies to students who have not self-reported any disabilities in 2000. Detailed statistics by type of disability appear in Appendix A.

Figure 1
Number of Full-Time College Freshmen with Disabilities Attending Four-Year Institutions: Selected Years



Note: Hearing data were not collected in 1998; this figure reflects 1996 data.
 Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, selected years.)

Table 2

**Types of Disabilities Reported by Full-Time College Freshmen
Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Percentage: Selected Years**

Disability	1988	1991	1994	1996	1998	2000
			<i>(by percentage)</i>			
Hearing	11.7	10.5	9.3	8.5	8.5*	8.6
Speech	3.6	4.2	3.3	3.2	3.0	2.9
Orthopedic	13.2	12.2	9.7	9.0	8.1	7.1
Learning disability	16.1	17.6	24.5	28.3	34.3	40.4
Health-related	15.8	15.4	17.6	17.4	16.4	15.4
Partially sighted or blind	30.0	31.3	27.3	23.7	19.9	16.1
Other	19.1	18.9	17.7	18.6	17.8	16.9

*Hearing data were not collected in 1998; this figure reflects 1996 data.

Notes:

- Above data should be interpreted in the following way: For example, in 2000, 40.4 percent of students with disabilities reported a learning disability.
 - Columns do not necessarily add to 100 percent because students could list more than one disability.
- Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, selected years.)

Table 3

**Types of Disabilities Reported by Full-Time College Freshmen Attending
Four-Year Institutions, by Control of Institution: 2000**

Disability	Public	Independent	HBCU*	Total
Hearing	3,397	2,208	57	5,662
Speech	965	753	212	1,930
Orthopedic	2,537	1,927	235	4,699
Learning disability	12,835	13,369	535	26,739
Health-related	6,104	3,561	509	10,174
Partially sighted or blind	6,085	4,164	427	10,676
Other	6,365	4,131	670	11,166
Total reporting a disability	38,288	30,113	2,645	71,046

Percentage Distribution

Hearing	60	39	1	100
Speech	50	39	11	100
Orthopedic	54	41	5	100
Learning disability	48	50	2	100
Health-related	60	35	5	100
Partially sighted or blind	57	39	4	100
Other	57	37	6	100
Total reporting a disability	54	42	4	100

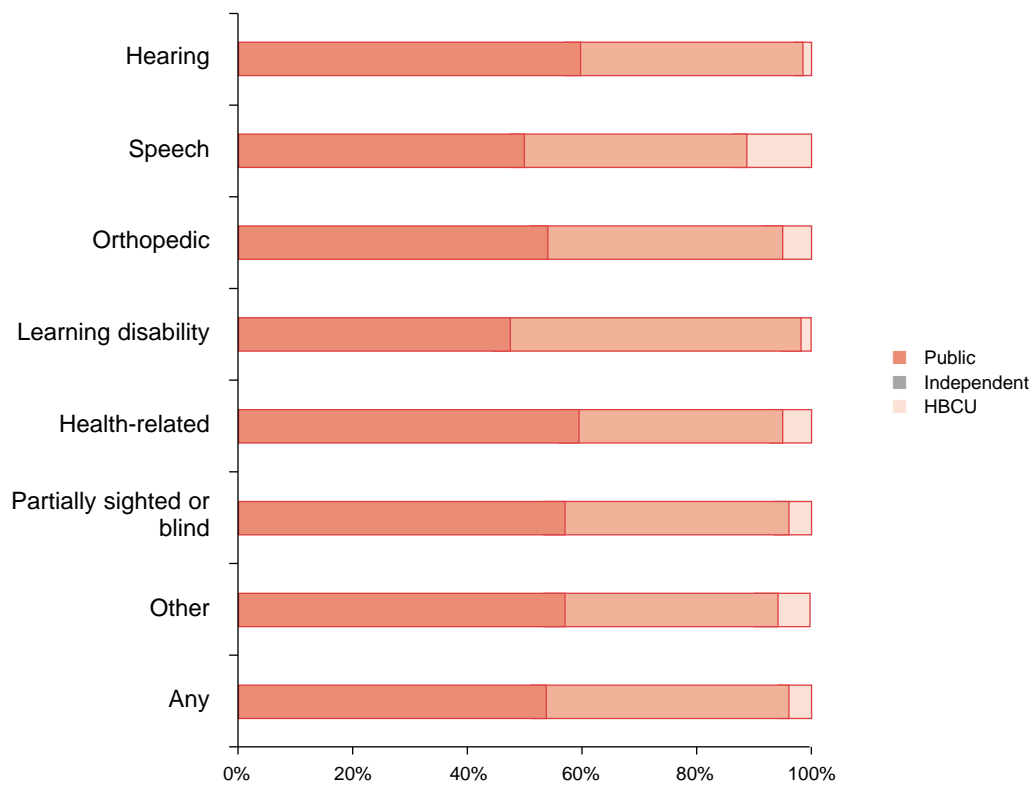
*Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Note: This table shows the distribution of 71,046 disabilities reported by 66,197 freshmen.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Slightly more than half of students reporting disabilities attended public institutions (54 percent). Another 42 percent attended independent colleges and universities, and 4 percent chose Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Figure 2
Full-Time College Freshmen with Disabilities Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Type of Disability and Type of Institution: 2000



Note: Data for this figure are included in Table 3. HBCUs are Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Personal and Family Background

The survey results revealed more similarities than differences in students' personal and family characteristics, regardless of their disability status. The percentage of all students who were individuals of color has changed substantially since 1988, when results showed an average of one in five students (20 percent). By 2000, this figure increased to 28 percent, regardless of disability status (see Table 4 and Figure 3). The vast majority of students in 2000 were 18 or 19 years old when they entered college (95 percent versus 96 percent). However, the survey revealed striking differences related to gender: Students with disabilities were more likely to be male than were students without disabilities (52 percent versus 45 percent) (see Figure 4). In addition, compared to students without disabilities, white/Caucasian men were overrepresented among freshmen with disabilities (38 percent reported a disability; 33 percent did not) (see Appendix B). In contrast, white/Caucasian women were underrepresented among freshmen with disabilities (35 percent reported a disability; 39 percent did not).

Regardless of their disability status, nearly all students were U.S. citizens (97 percent versus 96 percent) and spoke English as their native language (95 percent versus 92 percent). At least seven in 10 students of each group (72 percent versus 73 percent) were living with both parents. About one in four students (24 percent versus 23 percent) was living with a divorced or separated parent; a small proportion (4 percent) had parents who were deceased.

The survey also revealed similar demographic characteristics between parents of students with disabilities and parents of other students. For each group, about 94 percent of both parents had at least graduated from high school, and about half had completed a college degree. Likewise, parents' careers were similar for students with and without disabilities. The four most frequently cited occupations for mothers were business managers (15 percent), full-time homemakers (11 percent), elementary education teachers (11 percent versus 10 percent) and nurses (9 percent). Among fathers, the three most prevalent types of employment included business managers (31 percent versus 29 percent), engineers (8 percent), and skilled workers (7 percent versus 8 percent).

Freshmen with disabilities were slightly more likely to come from higher income families. The median family income of freshmen with disabilities was \$66,794, compared to \$64,500 for other students' families.

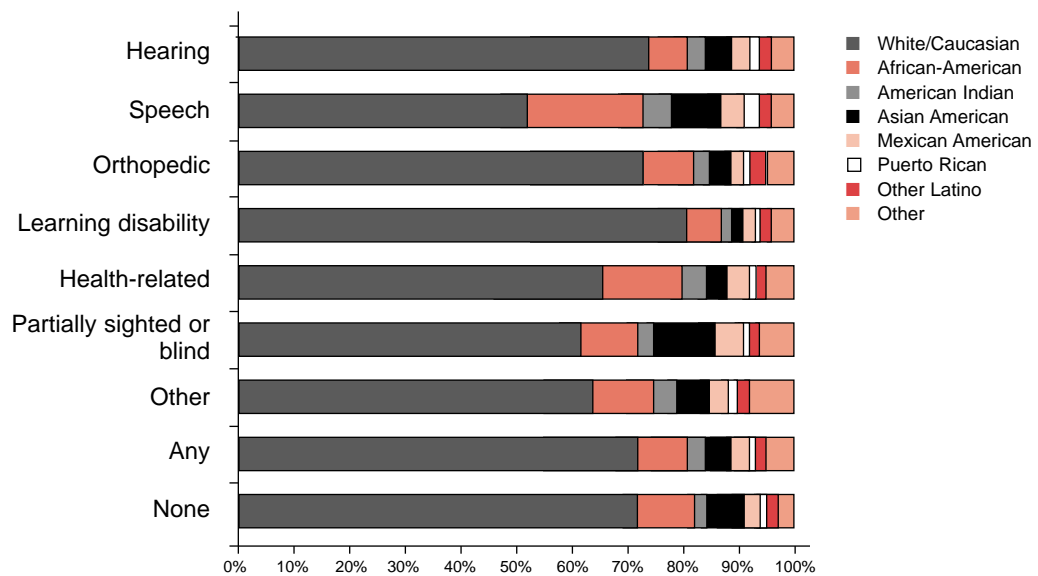
Table 4
Race/Ethnicity of Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Disability Status: 2000

Race/Ethnicity	Any Disability	None Reported
	<i>(by percentage)</i>	
White/Caucasian	72	72
African American	9	10
American Indian	3	2
Asian American	5	7
Mexican American	3	3
Puerto Rican	1	1
Other Latino	2	2
Other	5	3

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

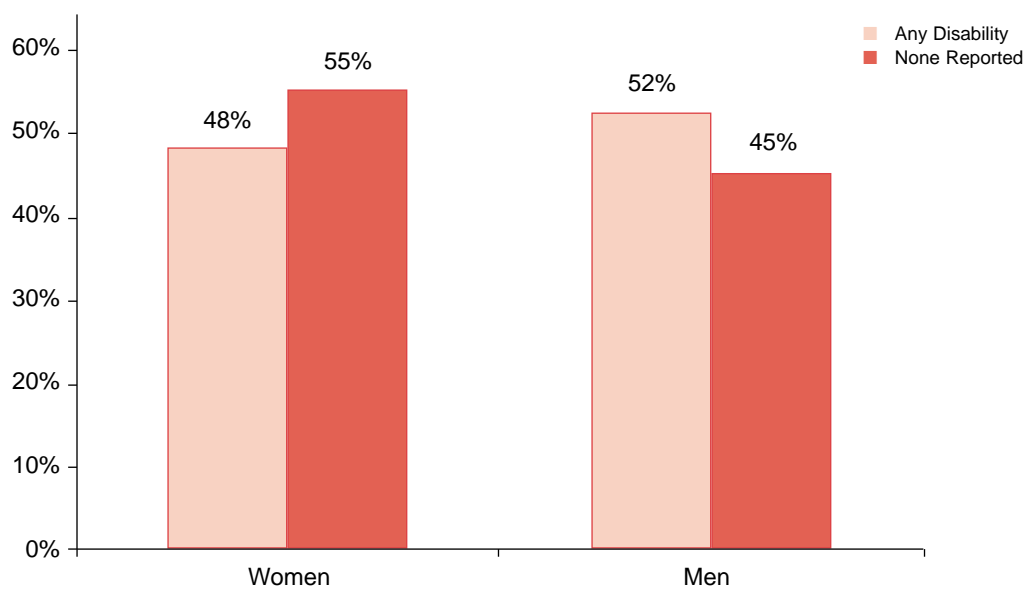
Compared to students without disabilities, white/Caucasian men were overrepresented among freshmen with disabilities (38 percent reported a disability; 33 percent did not).

Figure 3
Full-Time College Freshmen with Disabilities Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity: 2000



Note: Data for this figure are included in Appendix, Table A-1.
 Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Figure 4
Difference Between Female and Male Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Disability Status: 2000



Note: Above data should be interpreted in the following way: For example, male students constituted 52 percent of students reporting disabilities, but only 45 percent of students not reporting disabilities.
 Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

High School Preparation and Matriculation to College

Students with and without disabilities shared many common experiences during their high school years. Both groups typically spent four hours on homework per week, and about three in four students had used a personal computer during the year prior to the time of the fall 2000 survey administration. Yet differences arose in the level of academic performance: A smaller share of students with disabilities than other students had earned “A” averages (30 percent versus 44 percent), and a larger proportion had earned “C” and “D” averages (12 percent versus 6 percent). In addition, students reporting disabilities were more inclined to have asked their high school teachers for advice (33 percent versus 23 percent). However, the survey results revealed no significant difference in the average amount of time spent working for pay, performing domestic chores, watching television, volunteering, or participating in sports or student clubs.

Most students (98 percent), regardless of disability status, had graduated from high school and enrolled in college during calendar year 2000. About one in 10 students had attended college courses at another postsecondary institution prior to enrolling as a full-time freshman. For both groups of students, the vast majority (70 percent) were attending the college that had been their first choice. When listing important factors that had influenced their decisions to attend college, students responded with similar answers. Table 5 lists the major reasons cited by both groups. However, two reasons seemed more important to freshmen with disabilities than to freshmen who did not report disabilities:

- The desire to improve reading/study skills (45 percent versus 41 percent).
- The encouragement of a role model /mentor (18 percent versus 13 percent).

When asked specifically why they had chosen their particular colleges, both groups of students gave many similar responses, the top three being (1) the college’s solid academic reputation, (2) the fact that graduates traditionally got good jobs, and (3) the size of the college (see Table 6). However, students with disabilities recognized that the size of the college and its special programs were more important to them than to their classmates without disabilities.

The survey revealed no important differences between the average distance from each of the group’s homes to their colleges. About half of each group traveled 100 miles or fewer to enroll. Students with disabilities were as likely as their peers to be living on campus (81 percent versus 78 percent) or to be living with parents, with relatives, or in a private apartment (19 percent versus 22 percent).

Freshmen with disabilities received fewer college-based grants (28 percent) than their peers who did not report disabilities (33 percent).

Regardless of their disability status, three in five freshmen reported at least some level of concern about their ability to finance their college educations. In general, both types of students were as likely to have received help from major sources such as parents/family, savings, jobs, and loans/grants/work-study subsidies from the federal government (see Table 7). However, freshmen with disabilities received fewer college-based grants (28 percent) than their peers who did not report disabilities (33 percent).

Table 5
Major Reasons for Attending College, by Disability Status of Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions: 2000

Reason	Any Disability	None Reported <i>(by percentage)</i>
Learn more about things that interest me	79	76
Get a better job	69	72
Make more money	67	70
Receive a general education	65	65
Prepare for graduate/professional school	57	57

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Table 6
Reasons Why Full-Time Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions Chose Particular Colleges, by Disability Status: 2000

Reason	Any Disability	None Reported <i>(by percentage)</i>
Good academic reputation	53	55
Good jobs after graduation	49	51
College size	39	35
Offers of financial assistance	31	32
Good social reputation	29	28
Special programs	29	21
Graduates go to top graduate/professional schools	27	30
Low tuition	19	20

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Table 7

Sources of Financial Support of Full-Time Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Disability Status: 2000

Source of Financial Support	Any Disability	None Reported
	<i>(by percentage)</i>	
Parents or family	81	83
Savings from summer work	46	49
Other savings	33	32
College grants	28	33
Stafford/Guaranteed Student Loan(s)	25	26
Part-time job on campus	25	26
Part-time job off campus	20	22
State scholarship or grant(s)	19	22
Pell grant(s)	16	17
College work-study subsidies	13	13
Private grants	12	12
Institutionally financed college loan(s)	11	12
Perkins loan(s)	9	10
Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants	6	6

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

College and Career Expectations

In the survey, freshman respondents were asked to describe their educational and career goals, including their major field of study while in college and their preferred occupation. The top field of study chosen by students without disabilities was business (17 percent). Students who did report disabilities listed business and arts/humanities as their top choices (15 percent for each field). In general, more students with disabilities than other students predicted that they would need extra time to complete their degree requirements (10 percent versus 6 percent).

The survey presented the freshmen with a list of more than 40 possible occupations. Regardless of disability status, the top four career occupations chosen were “business executive,” “engineer,” “elementary teacher/administrator,” and “computer programmer or analyst” (5 percent to 9 percent for each occupation).

A smaller share of freshmen with disabilities than other students rated themselves as “above average or in the top 10 percent of people” on most measures of self-esteem, academic ability, and physical health.

Self-Perceptions

Students who completed this questionnaire already had achieved one measure of educational success: They had enrolled as first-time, full-time college students. A certain level of intellectual competence and emotional maturity was necessary for each student to have accomplished this important step; however, the successful completion of educational and career goals may be tied to students’ perceptions about their strengths and weaknesses.

One series of questions asked the students to compare themselves with average persons of similar ages. At least 60 percent of the students, with and without disabilities, considered themselves to be “above average or in the top 10 percent of all people” on the ability to be understanding of others and to possess leadership skills.

However, on most of these self-rated comparisons, a smaller share of students with disabilities than other students ranked themselves at this high level of ability. For example, a smaller share of freshmen with disabilities than other students rated themselves as “above average or in the top 10 percent of people” on most measures of self-esteem, academic ability, and physical health (see Table 8). However, on two ability measures—artistic and creative—a larger share of students who reported disabilities than students without disabilities rated themselves high.

Students with disabilities predicted that they would use special tutoring and remedial services for specific subjects more often than other students (see Table 9). Also, higher proportions of students with disabilities had used extra tutoring assistance in high school.

Table 8
**Self-Perceptions of Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year
Institutions, by Disability Status: 2000**

Ability	Any Disability	None Reported <i>(by percentage)</i>
Cooperativeness	69	73
Drive to achieve	67	71
Understanding of others	67	66
Creative ability	64	57
Leadership ability	61	61
Intellectual self-confidence	57	61
Academic ability	57	68
Self-understanding	56	57
Competitiveness	53	57
Social self-confidence	50	52
Spirituality	46	45
Physical health	46	57
Emotional health	44	55
Writing ability	42	46
Public speaking ability	40	37
Popularity	39	41
Mathematical ability	38	45
Artistic ability	35	29

Note: Students were asked to rate themselves as “above average or in the top 10 percent of people” on these measures of ability.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Students with disabilities predicted that they would use special tutoring and remedial services for specific subjects more often than other students.

Table 9

Use of Special Tutoring and Remedial Help by Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Disability Status: 2000

Subject	Any Disability	None Reported
	<i>(by percentage)</i>	
Have Had Special Tutoring or Remedial Help in High School		
English	15.8	5.1
Reading	13.7	4.5
Mathematics	24.4	12.0
Social studies	7.3	3.5
Science	10.4	4.7
Foreign language	10.9	4.8
Expect to Need Special Tutoring or Remedial Help in College		
English	19.1	8.2
Reading	11.4	3.7
Mathematics	35.6	23.5
Social studies	7.4	3.0
Science	16.7	10.1
Foreign language	19.5	10.6

Note: Columns do not necessarily add to 100 percent because students can receive help in more than one subject.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Opinions

These freshman surveys serve as annual barometers of the attitudes and political opinions of college students. Similar proportions of those with and without disabilities agree on the importance of achieving life objectives such as raising a family, being successful, helping others, and obtaining recognition from colleagues (see Table 10). However, freshmen with disabilities placed a higher priority than their peers on social concerns (such as promoting racial understanding and being involved in environmental clean-up efforts) and creative contributions (such as writing and the performing arts).

Generally, the results of the 2000 survey did not reveal important distinctions in the political opinions expressed by students based on disability status (see Table 11). For example, at least half of each group of students felt that (1) the federal government could do more to control handguns, (2) colleges should prohibit racist and sexist speech on campus, and (3) abortion should be legal. In addition, both groups of freshmen characterized their political views similarly across the political spectrum; about one in two students, regardless of their disability status, classified themselves as “middle-of-the-road.”

Table 10
Life Objectives of Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Disability Status: 2000

Life Objective	Any Disability	None Reported <i>(by percentage)</i>
Raise a family	71	73
Be very well off financially	70	74
Help others in difficulty	64	62
Become an authority in one’s field	59	60
Obtain recognition from colleagues	52	51
Develop a philosophy of life	45	42
Be successful in one’s own business	40	39
Influence social values	40	37
Have administrative responsibility for the work of others	37	37
Promote racial understanding	35	30
Become a community leader	34	31
Keep up to date with political affairs	31	28
Participate in community action	26	22
Be involved in environmental clean-up efforts	21	17
Create artistic works	20	14
Write original works	20	14
Achieve recognition in a performing art	19	14

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Generally, the results of the 2000 survey did not reveal important distinctions in the political opinions expressed by students based on disability status.

Table 11

Political Opinions/Orientation of Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Disability Status: 2000

	Any Disability	None Reported
	<i>(by percentage)</i>	
Political Opinion Reported		
Federal government should do more to control handguns.	80	82
Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus.	59	62
Abortion should be legal.	57	54
The wealthy should pay more taxes.	53	52
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished.	50	50
Political Orientation Reported		
Far right	2	1
Conservative	18	19
Middle-of-the-road	49	52
Liberal	26	25
Far left	5	3

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Differences by Gender Among Full-Time College Freshmen with Disabilities Attending Four-Year Institutions: 2000

In response to many questions in the freshman survey, gender appeared to be a more significant characteristic of students than disability status. For example, women with disabilities considered themselves more similar to women without disabilities than to men with them. Specifically, women (regardless of their disability status) were more likely than men to have the following characteristics in common (see Appendix C):

- To come from a lower-income family.
- To have a single parent.
- To have earned excellent high school grades.
- To have more interest in education, professional fields, and the social sciences and less interest in engineering and business.
- To have major concerns about financing their college educations.

However, among freshmen with disabilities, some important distinctions surfaced between men and women. First, the types of disabilities reported varied (see Table 12). Women were more likely to report health-related disabilities, while men reported higher incidences of learning disabilities.

Among freshmen with disabilities, fewer women than men thought that they ranked high on measures of emotional and social skills.

In the process of choosing a college, more women than men (each with disabilities) based their choices on the academic reputation, size of the college, low tuition, proximity to home, religious affiliation/orientation, and availability of special programs. Expectations also varied by gender. A higher proportion of women than men thought it was likely that they would get a job to help offset college expenses, earn at least a “B” average, receive a bachelor’s degree, volunteer for community service, seek personal counseling, and be satisfied with their college experiences.

On measures of competence, a smaller proportion of women than men, regardless of disability status, rated themselves above average on academic ability, competitiveness, mathematical ability, and physical health. Among freshmen with disabilities, fewer women than men thought that they ranked high on measures of emotional and social skills. For example, women were more likely to report that they often felt depressed or overwhelmed, and they rated themselves lower than men on measures of popularity, self-confidence, and self-understanding.

Table 12
Differences Between Female and Male Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Type of Disability: 2000

Type of Disability	Women <i>(by percentage)</i>	Men
Hearing	9.2	7.9
Speech	1.7	4.1
Orthopedic	7.9	6.4
Learning disability	37.4	43.2
Health-related	19.0	12.0
Partially sighted or blind	16.4	15.9
Other	16.2	17.5

Notes:

- Above data should be interpreted in the following way: For example, 37.4 percent of women with disabilities reported having a learning disability.
- Columns do not necessarily add to 100 percent because students could report more than one disability.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Highlights of Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Type of Disability: 2000

When each different type of disability is examined, distinctive differences emerge in the characteristics of the students who self-reported specific conditions. For example, students with certain disabilities were more likely to report more than one condition (see Table 13). College students with each type of disability, as well as those who teach, advise, or administer postsecondary support services for them, may be especially interested in the following section.

Learning Disability

Among freshmen with disabilities attending four-year institutions, the largest group (two in five, or 40 percent) reported a learning disability; in 1988, the comparable proportion was only 16 percent. In 2000, 45 percent of those reporting a learning disability were women and 19 percent were students of color. Compared to other freshmen with disabilities, students with learning disabilities were the most likely to:

- Be from white/Caucasian families (81 percent versus 72 percent).
- Be 19 or older (45 percent versus 37 percent).

Among students with disabilities, those with learning disabilities were the least likely to have been offered financial assistance as an incentive to enroll.

- Be from families whose income exceeded \$100,000 (42 percent versus 30 percent).
- Have parents who were college graduates (65 percent versus 55 percent).
- Have earned “C” or “D” averages in high school (17 percent versus 12 percent).
- Expect that they will need special tutoring or remedial work in English (28 percent versus 19 percent), reading (18 percent versus 11 percent), and mathematics (41 percent versus 36 percent) (see Figure 5).
- Consider majoring in arts and sciences (20 percent versus 15 percent). (Note: They were the least likely to be interested in professional fields [4 percent versus 10 percent]).
- Rank themselves lowest on math ability (31 percent versus 38 percent), intellectual self-confidence (51 percent versus 57 percent), academic ability (42 percent versus 57 percent), and writing ability (34 percent versus 42 percent).

Table 13
Percentage of Full-Time College Freshmen with Multiple Disabilities Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Type of Disability: 2000

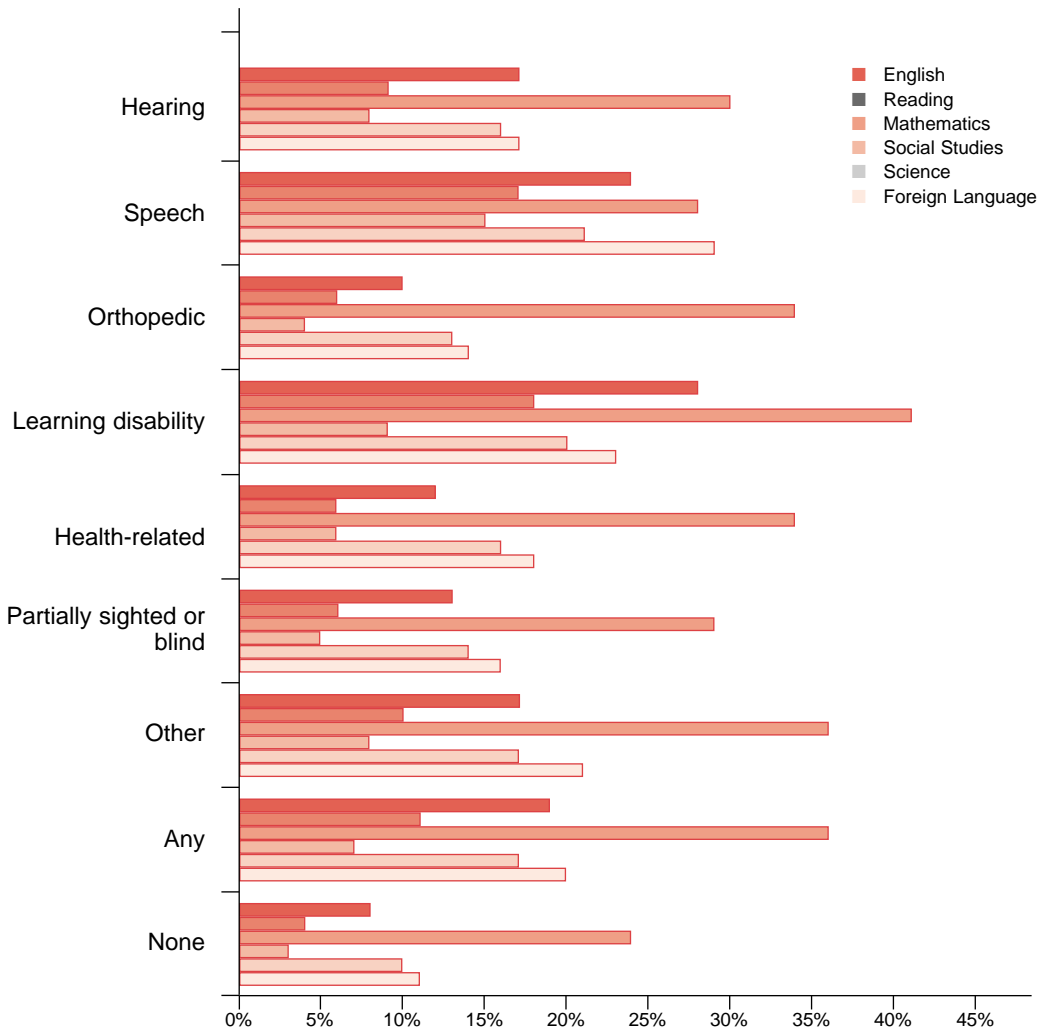
Disability	Hearing	Speech	Ortho- pedic	Learning disability	Health- related	Partially sighted or blind	Other
Hearing	100.0	15.0	1.7	1.6	2.1	2.9	1.7
Speech	5.1	100.0	.9	1.0	.7	1.0	.9
Orthopedic	1.4	2.2	100.0	.8	3.8	1.6	2.0
Learning disability	7.5	13.4	4.4	100.0	5.0	2.9	6.4
Health-related	3.8	3.9	8.2	1.9	100.0	2.8	4.3
Partially sighted or blind	5.4	5.3	3.6	1.2	3.0	100.0	1.9
Other	3.3	5.1	4.7	2.7	4.8	2.0	100.0

Note: This table explains multiple disabilities reported by students. The primary disability is listed along the top and the secondary disability is listed along the left side. Above data should be interpreted in the following way: For example, 5.1 percent of students with a hearing impairment also reported a speech impairment. The number of students reporting each type of disability varied. Therefore, 15 percent of those students reporting a speech impairment also reported a hearing impairment. The 100 percent figures indicate the overlap of reporting a specific type of disability.
 Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Freshmen with learning disabilities particularly valued special programs offered by colleges (35 percent versus 29 percent of peers without disabilities). Among students with disabilities, those with learning disabilities were the least likely to have been offered financial assistance as an incentive to enroll (23 percent versus 31 percent).

Figure 5

Use of Special Tutoring and Remedial Help by Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Disability Status: 2000



Note: Data for this figure are included in Appendix, Table A-1.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Partially Sighted or Blind

About one in six freshmen with disabilities (16 percent) at four-year institutions reported being partially sighted or blind. This figure is almost half of the 1988 proportion of 30 percent. In 2000, about half (49 percent) of the freshmen who were partially sighted or blind were women, and 38 percent were students of color.

The proportion of freshmen with disabilities who cite health-related conditions has remained relatively stable at 15 to 18 percent since 1988.

Among students reporting disabilities, students who were partially sighted or blind were the most likely to:

- Be 18 years or younger (71 percent versus 63 percent).
- Have earned an “A” average in high school (43 percent versus 30 percent).
- Have chosen the college because they had been offered financial assistance (38 percent versus 31 percent).
- Have rated themselves above average on measures of academic ability (69 percent versus 57 percent) and mathematical ability (48 percent versus 38 percent).

Health-Related Disability

Of students at four-year institutions, 15 percent described their disability as “health-related.” These students may have conditions such as severe allergies, cystic fibrosis, cancer, lupus, or multiple sclerosis. The proportion of freshmen with disabilities who cite health-related conditions has remained relatively stable at 15 to 18 percent since 1988. In 2000, three in five students reporting a health-related disability (60 percent) were women, and about one in three (34 percent) was a student of color.

Compared to other students with disabilities, students who reported health-related disabilities were the most likely to:

- Be women (60 percent versus 48 percent).
- Get a job to help pay for college expenses (45 percent versus 38 percent).
- Have received aid from state scholarships and grants (27 percent versus 19 percent).
- Cite the good academic reputation of the college as a major reason for having chosen it (59 percent versus 53 percent).
- Rank themselves highest on writing ability (49 percent versus 42 percent) and lowest on a comparison of physical health characteristics (30 percent versus 46 percent).
- Predict that they will earn a bachelor’s degree (79 percent versus 72 percent).
- Value helping others who are experiencing difficulty as an important life objective (70 percent versus 64 percent).

Hearing Impairment

Of freshmen attending four-year institutions, 9 percent reported having a hearing impairment; this is lower than the 1988 figure of 12 percent. In 2000, 52 percent of these freshmen were women and 26 percent were persons of color.

Generally, the characteristics of freshmen with hearing impairments paralleled those of other students with disabilities. However, among students with disabilities, they were the most likely to:

- Rank themselves highest on the characteristic called “drive to achieve” (72 percent versus 67 percent).
- Have used savings from summer work to help offset college expenses (53 percent versus 46 percent).

Orthopedic Impairment

In 2000, 7 percent of the freshmen with disabilities at four-year institutions reported having an orthopedic condition; this is almost half of the 1988 figure of 13 percent. In 2000, fewer than half were women (46 percent), and 27 percent were persons of color.

Compared to their peers with other disabilities, freshmen with orthopedic disabilities were the most likely to:

- Have tutored other high school students (60 percent versus 51 percent).
- Predict that they will earn at least a “B” average (60 percent versus 51 percent).
- Have used a personal computer (83 percent versus 77 percent).
- Participate in volunteer or community service work (31 percent versus 25 percent).
- Aspire to be a community leader (40 percent versus 34 percent) and an authority in their chosen field (65 percent versus 59 percent).
- Rank themselves the highest on leadership ability (68 percent versus 61 percent), public speaking ability (47 percent versus 40 percent), and intellectual self-confidence (63 percent versus 57 percent).

Speech Impairment

In 2000, relatively few freshmen with disabilities who enrolled at four-year institutions (3 percent) reported that they had a speech impairment. This is similar to the 1988 proportion of 4 percent. Because the number of cases is small, caution should be used when comparing the characteristics of these freshmen with others who reported disabilities.

Compared to any other group of freshmen with disabilities, those with speech impairments were the most likely to:

- Be men (72 percent versus 52 percent).
- Be students of color (48 percent versus 28 percent).
- Be citizens of other countries (10 percent versus 3 percent).
- Speak a language other than English (11 percent versus 5 percent).
- List additional disabilities (see Table 13).
- Be a first-generation college student (41 percent versus 30 percent).
- Expect that they will need special tutoring or remedial work in social studies (15 percent versus 7 percent), science (21 percent versus 17 percent), and foreign language (29 percent versus 20 percent).
- Have received aid from Pell Grants (24 percent versus 16 percent) and federal loans (43 percent versus 33 percent).
- Be enrolled at HBCUs (11 percent versus 4 percent).

Summary: Recent Trends

Generally, the characteristics of the freshmen who participated in the most recent CIRP survey were similar to those of students attending four-year institutions that CIRP surveyed 12 years earlier in 1988. However, several changes are worth noting. The 2000 freshmen, regardless of disability status, were more likely to have reported:

- Being individuals of color.
- Earning higher average high school grades.
- Having parents with higher levels of education.
- Giving lower ratings on measures of emotional health, leadership ability, and social and intellectual self-confidence.
- Expecting to make at least a “B” average and graduating with honors.
- Considering financial assistance as a key factor in deciding to enroll at a particular college.
- Getting a job to help pay for college expenses.

The proportion of full-time college freshmen reporting disabilities at four-year institutions remained stable (6 to 8 percent) between 1988 and 2000. Students with learning disabilities continued to be the fastest growing group: By 2000, two in five freshmen with disabilities (40 percent) reported having a learning disability.

It is impossible to determine if the overall proportion of students with disabilities (9 percent)—which was reported for all colleges and universities in the 1998 HEATH report, *College Freshmen with Disabilities: A Biennial*

Statistical Profile—would have remained the same, fallen, or risen if the 2000 CIRP survey had included the two-year sector. Until 1998, the proportion of students who enrolled in public two-year colleges had declined steadily, while the percentage choosing four-year colleges and universities had slowly increased. However, the 1998 figures suggested that a shift had occurred among all freshmen—regardless of disability status—toward more enrollment in community colleges. It is unclear if these shifts would have continued in 2000 and how they would have affected the overall percentages of students with disabilities. The 2000 profile in this report does highlight the fact that students enrolled in baccalaureate colleges and universities are younger and more affluent than their counterparts at community and junior colleges.

Appendix

Table A-1

Selected Characteristics of Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Type of Disability: 2000

Characteristic	None	Hearing	Speech	Ortho- pedic	Learning disability	Health- related	Partially sighted or blind	Other	Any
	<i>(by percentage)</i>								
GENDER									
Men	45	48	72	54	55	40	51	54	52
Women	55	52	28	46	45	60	49	46	48
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
AGE									
17 or younger	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
18	69	61	59	63	54	69	69	61	61
19	27	34	33	31	41	26	27	33	34
20 or older	2	4	6	4	4	3	2	4	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
RACE/ETHNICITY									
White/Caucasian	72	74	52	73	81	66	62	64	72
African American	10	7	21	9	6	14	10	11	9
American Indian	2	3	5	3	2	4	3	4	3
Asian American	7	5	9	4	2	4	11	6	5
Mexican American	3	3	4	2	2	4	5	3	3
Puerto Rican	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
Other Latino	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2
Other	3	4	4	5	4	5	6	8	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
ESTIMATED PARENTAL INCOME									
Less than \$20,000	9	12	17	10	7	11	14	15	10
\$20,000–\$49,999	26	28	26	28	18	30	29	28	25
\$50,000–\$74,999	25	24	21	24	20	22	23	19	21
\$75,000 and above	40	36	36	38	55	37	34	38	44
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Median Income	\$64,500	\$60,805	\$56,874	\$61,080	\$84,375	\$58,406	\$57,070	\$58,720	\$66,794

Table A-1 (continued)

Characteristic	None	Hearing	Speech	Ortho- pedic	Learning disability	Health- related	Partially sighted or blind	Other	Any
AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GRADES									
A	44	42	32	39	16	40	43	31	30
B	50	52	56	52	67	52	50	57	58
C and D	6	6	12	9	17	8	7	12	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
EXPECT TO NEED SPECIAL TUTORING OR REMEDIAL HELP IN COLLEGE									
English	8	17	24	10	28	12	13	17	19
Reading	4	9	17	6	18	6	6	10	11
Mathematics	24	30	28	34	41	34	29	36	36
Social studies	3	8	15	4	9	6	5	8	7
Science	10	16	21	13	20	16	14	17	17
Foreign language	11	17	29	14	23	18	16	21	20
MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY									
Arts and humanities	12	17	17	18	20	18	19	19	15
Biological sciences	7	6	5	7	5	7	7	6	6
Business	17	14	18	16	15	12	14	15	15
Education	11	14	9	11	14	13	10	11	13
Engineering	9	8	10	6	6	7	9	7	7
Physical sciences	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
Professional programs*	12	9	7	10	4	12	8	7	10
Social sciences	10	9	7	9	9	8	8	8	11
Technical fields**	2	6	9	5	6	5	8	8	3
Other fields***	18	15	16	16	20	16	15	17	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Includes architecture or urban planning, home economics, health technology, library or archival science, nursing, pharmacy, pre-dental, pre-medical, pre-veterinary, therapy (occupational, physical, and speech), and other professional programs.

**Includes building trades, data processing/computer programming, drafting or design, electronics, mechanics, and other technical fields.

***Includes agriculture, communications, computer science, forestry, law enforcement, military science, other fields, and undecided.

Note: "Any" means students reporting any type of disability.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Table A-2

Distribution of Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Disability Status: 2000

Characteristic	Any Disability		None Reported	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White/Caucasian men	25,051	37.8	338,125	32.7
White/Caucasian women	22,830	34.5	403,653	39.0
African-American men	2,875	4.3	41,280	4.0
African-American women	3,230	4.9	60,605	5.8
American Indian men	890	1.4	7,421	.7
American Indian women	1,023	1.5	10,292	1.0
Asian-American men	1,711	2.6	33,395	3.2
Asian-American women	1,407	2.1	37,735	3.6
Mexican-American men	992	1.5	15,770	1.5
Mexican-American women	895	1.4	21,726	2.1
Puerto Rican men	376	.6	4,174	.4
Puerto Rican women	384	.6	5,717	.6
Other Latino men	582	.9	8,813	.9
Other Latino women	735	1.1	13,150	1.3
Other men	1,745	2.6	14,842	1.4
Other women	1,471	2.2	18,868	1.8
Total	66,197	100.0	1,035,566	100.0

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

Table A-3

Selected Characteristics of Full-Time College Freshmen Attending Four-Year Institutions, by Gender and Disability Status: 2000

Characteristic	Women		Men	
	None Reported	Any Disability	None Reported	Any Disability
	<i>(by percentage)</i>			
AGE				
17 or younger	2	2	2	1
18	74	67	64	56
19	23	29	32	39
20 or older	1	2	2	4
Total	100	100	100	100
RACE/ETHNICITY				
White/Caucasian	70	72	73	73
African American	11	10	9	8
American Indian	2	3	2	3
Asian American	7	4	7	5
Mexican American	4	3	3	3
Puerto Rican	1	1	1	1
Other Latino	2	2	2	2
Other	3	5	3	5
Total	100	100	100	100
LIVING ARRANGEMENT OF PARENTS				
Both alive and living with each other	71	70	75	74
Both alive, divorced or living apart	25	26	21	22
One or both deceased	4	4	4	4
Total	100	100	100	100
ESTIMATED PARENTAL INCOME				
Less than \$20,000	11	12	7	9
\$20,000–\$49,999	28	28	24	23
\$50,000–\$74,999	24	21	25	21
\$75,000 and above	37	39	44	47
Total	100	100	100	100
Median Income	\$60,971	\$60,526	\$68,334	\$71,848

Table A-3 (continued)

Characteristic	<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>	
	None Reported	Any Disability	None Reported	Any Disability
	<i>(by percentage)</i>			
<u>AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GRADES</u>				
A	48	34	38	26
B	48	57	53	59
C and D	4	9	9	15
Total	100	100	100	100
<u>EXPECT TO NEED SPECIAL TUTORING OR REMEDIAL HELP IN COLLEGE*</u>				
English	7	17	9	21
Reading	3	10	4	13
Mathematics	27	41	19	31
Social studies	4	8	2	7
Science	12	20	7	4
Foreign language	10	20	11	19
<u>MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY</u>				
Arts and humanities	15	17	15	14
Biological sciences	7	7	6	5
Business	14	10	21	19
Education	15	17	6	8
Engineering	3	2	16	12
Physical sciences	1	2	2	3
Professional programs**	13	13	5	7
Social sciences	10	15	4	7
Technical fields***	3	1	10	4
Other fields****	19	16	15	21
Total	100	100	100	100

Table A-3 (continued)

Characteristic	<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>	
	None Reported	Any Disability	None Reported	Any Disability
<i>(by percentage)</i>				
<u>CONCERN ABOUT FINANCING COLLEGE EDUCATION</u>				
None	31	33	43	43
Some	55	50	47	44
Major	14	17	10	13
Total	100	100	100	100

*Percentages do not necessarily add to 100 percent because students can receive help in more than one subject.

**Includes architecture or urban planning, home economics, health technology, library or archival science, nursing, pharmacy, pre-dental, pre-medical, pre-veterinary, therapy (occupational, physical, and speech), and other professional programs.

***Includes building trades, data processing/computer programming, drafting or design, electronics, mechanics, and other technical fields.

****Includes agriculture, communications, computer science, forestry, law enforcement, military science, other fields, and undecided.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. (Based on unpublished data from the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, 2001.)

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Universities*
Lawrence J. DeNardis,
President
University of New Haven, CT

*National Association of
State Universities
& Land-Grant Colleges*
Lattie F. Coor, President
Arizona State University

ELECTED OFFICERS OF ASSOCIATIONS—EX OFFICIO FOR ONE-YEAR TERMS

*American Association for
Higher Education*
Leo M. Lambert, President
Elon University, NC

*National Association of
Student Financial Aid
Administrators*
Dallas Martin, President
National Association of
Student Financial Aid
Administrators, DC

*Washington Higher
Education Secretariat*
Judith S. Eaton, President
Council for Higher
Education Accreditation, DC

HEATH

Resource Center

 American Council on Education