

Table 278. College Freshmen—Summary Characteristics: 1970 to 2006

[In percent, except as indicated (12.8 represents \$12,800). As of fall for first-time full-time freshmen in 4-year colleges and universities. Based on sample survey and subject to sampling error; see source]

Characteristic	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004	2005	2006
Sex: Male	52.1	48.8	48.9	46.9	45.6	45.2	44.9	45.0	45.1
Female	47.9	51.2	51.1	53.1	54.4	54.8	55.1	55.0	54.9
Applied to three or more colleges	(NA)	31.5	35.4	42.9	44.4	50.5	52.8	55.4	56.5
Average grade in high school:									
A- to A+	19.6	26.6	28.7	29.4	36.1	42.9	47.5	46.6	46.0
B- to B+	62.5	58.2	57.1	57.0	54.2	50.5	47.6	48.0	49.4
C to C+	17.7	14.9	14.0	13.4	9.6	6.5	5.0	5.4	4.6
D	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Political orientation:									
Liberal	35.7	21.0	22.4	24.6	22.9	24.8	26.1	27.1	28.4
Middle of the road	43.4	57.0	53.1	51.7	51.3	51.9	46.4	45.0	43.3
Conservative	17.3	19.0	21.3	20.6	21.8	18.9	21.9	22.6	23.9
Probable field of study:									
Arts and humanities	(NA)	10.5	10.1	10.5	11.2	12.1	12.0	12.8	13.1
Biological sciences	(NA)	4.5	4.5	4.9	8.3	6.6	7.7	7.6	8.3
Business	(NA)	21.2	24.6	21.1	15.4	16.7	16.0	17.4	17.9
Education	(NA)	8.4	6.9	10.3	10.1	11.0	9.6	9.9	9.5
Engineering	(NA)	11.2	11.0	9.7	8.1	8.7	9.6	8.3	8.0
Physical science	(NA)	3.2	3.2	2.8	3.1	2.6	3.0	3.1	3.1
Social science	(NA)	8.2	9.4	11.0	9.9	10.0	10.3	10.7	11.2
Professional	(NA)	15.5	13.1	13.0	16.5	11.6	15.1	14.6	13.0
Technical	(NA)	3.1	2.4	1.1	1.2	2.1	1.5	1.2	1.1
Data processing/computer programming	(NA)	1.7	1.7	0.7	0.8	1.5	0.6	0.5	0.5
Other ¹	(NA)	14.0	15.1	15.8	16.0	17.9	15.0	14.1	14.2
Communications	(NA)	2.4	2.8	2.9	1.8	2.7	1.9	2.0	2.2
Computer science	(NA)	2.6	2.4	1.7	2.2	3.7	1.4	1.1	1.1
Personal objectives—very important or essential:									
Being very well off financially	36.2	62.5	69.2	72.3	72.8	73.4	73.6	74.5	73.4
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	79.1	62.5	46.9	45.9	45.4	42.4	42.1	45.0	46.3
Keeping up to date with political affairs	57.2	45.2	(NA)	46.6	32.3	28.1	34.3	36.4	37.2
Attitudes—agree or strongly agree:									
Capital punishment should be abolished	59.4	34.8	27.6	23.1	22.0	31.2	33.2	33.3	34.5
Legalize marijuana	40.6	37.1	21.4	18.8	33.4	34.2	37.2	37.7	37.1
There is too much concern for the rights of criminals	50.7	65.0	(NA)	65.1	73.2	66.5	58.1	57.9	55.9
Abortion should be legalized	85.7	53.7	56.4	65.5	59.9	53.9	53.9	55.2	56.8
Median family income (\$1,000)	12.8	24.5	37.3	46.6	54.8	64.4	71.9	73.2	76.2

NA Not available. ¹ Includes other fields, not shown separately.

Source: The Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, *The American Freshman: National Norms*, annual.