



WHAT SAY THE FRESHMEN?

Columbia Campus students are idealistic, somewhat conservative



He thinks he should have a "major role" in defining the University curriculum, but he doesn't intend to participate in any student protests or demonstrations.

He is somewhat concerned about financing his college education, but his most important personal goal is idealistic: He wants to "develop a meaningful philosophy of life."

Based on a survey made of incoming freshmen to the University of Missouri-Columbia at the time of their enrollment last summer, this partial picture of a typical Columbia campus freshman corresponds closely with nationwide findings reported by the American Council on Education. The young people at Mizzou did exhibit more conservative tendencies, however: Where 4½ per cent of the nation's freshmen figured their chances very good that they would participate in a demonstration, only 1 per cent of the Missouri class felt that way.

Not all the members of the Class of 1972 filled out the four-page questionnaire. Presented as a voluntary assignment at the time the

recent high school graduates were completing pre-enrollment forms, the survey was answered by 2326 of the Columbia campus freshmen. Since 3700 freshmen were enrolled last fall, 38 per cent chose not to fill out the questionnaire. As all good researchers know, the non-respondents might have presented a different picture, but the return is high enough that the survey does tell some important things about the Missouri young people.

First of all, they are very much like their counterparts in universities across the nation. There are few significant differences in backgrounds, goals and aspirations between the Columbia campus group and the 240,000 other incoming freshmen who took part in the ACE survey. Most of both groups ranked in the top 25 per cent of their classes (60 per cent for Missouri, 65 per cent for the nationwide university group); nine out of 10 ranked in the top 50 per cent (93 per cent Missouri, 89 per cent nationwide).

Both groups were similarly active in their

THE FRESHMEN

(UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA)

	University of Missouri-Columbia			Nationwide Total
	Total	Male	Female	

Agree That

Students should have a major role in specifying the college curriculum	89.8	88.5	91.9	90.2
My beliefs and attitudes are similar to those of most other students	75.3	72.8	77.8	67.9
Faculty promotions should be based in part on student evaluations	67.2	66.2	68.3	65.7
Student publications should be cleared by college officials	64.4	63.7	65.1	49.2
Most college officials have been too lax in dealing with student protests on campus	60.6	63.5	57.6	51.7
The chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one's earning power	56.7	66.5	46.6	52.1
Scientists should publish their findings regardless of the possible consequences	48.9	52.1	45.6	55.4
Urban problems cannot be solved without huge investments of federal money	46.5	47.8	45.0	49.1
Air pollution in cities justifies using drastic measures to limit the use of motor vehicles	39.4	39.0	39.8	45.8
Cigarette advertising should be outlawed on radio and TV	38.0	36.2	39.9	39.3
College officials have the right to ban persons with extreme views from speaking on campus	34.2	36.1	32.1	27.9
Students from disadvantaged backgrounds should get preferential treatment in college admissions	33.5	35.7	31.3	37.8
Realistically, an individual person can do little to bring about changes in our society	27.9	31.7	24.0	31.1
Only volunteers should serve in the armed forces	26.4	31.9	20.9	39.0
College officials have the right to regulate student behavior off campus	25.1	25.3	24.9	19.3
Marijuana should be legalized	11.4	12.4	10.3	22.8

Major Influences in Deciding to Attend This University

Parent or other relative	1	2	1	2
Academic reputation of the college	2	1	2	1
Opportunity to live away from home	3	5	3	4
High school teacher or counselor	4	3	5	5
Friends attending this college	5	4	4	6
Low cost	6	6	6	3
Graduate or other representative from this college	7	8	7	7
Social life of the college	8	7	8	8
Most of the students are like me	9	10	9	9
Other extracurricular activities	10	11	10	10
Athletic program of the college	11	9	12	11
Professional counseling or college placement service	12	12	11	12
Religious affiliation	13	13	13	13

Objectives Considered to Be Essential or Very Important

Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	1	1	1	1
Becoming an authority on a special subject in my subject field	2	2	3	2
Helping others who are in difficulty	3	6	2	3
Keeping up to date with political affairs	4	5	4	4
Being successful in a business of my own	5	3	5	5
Being very well-off financially	6	4	7	6
Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contribution in a special field	7	7	6	7
Having administrative responsibility for the work of others	8	8	12	9
Becoming a community leader	9	9	13	10
Never being obligated to people	10	10	8	8
Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories etc)	11	13	10	12
Participating in an organization like the peace corps or vista	12	15	9	11
Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, decorating etc)	13	18	11	13
Becoming an outstanding athlete	14	12	17	16
Making a theoretical contribution to science	15	14	16	14
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts (acting, dancing etc)	16	16	14	17
Becoming an expert in finance and commerce	17	11	18	15
Becoming an accomplished musician (performer or composer)	18	17	15	18

high school extracurricular activities, although Missouri freshmen were more likely to have been president of a student organization, to have done well in a state music contest, to have had a major part in a play, and to have lettered in a varsity sport. Scholastic Honor Society and National Merit recognition were about the same for both groups, however.

Girls in both the Columbia campus and national groups listed their probable career occupations as (1) secondary education; (2) elementary school teacher; and (3) artist (including performer). Both groups of boys listed engineer as their first choice of occupation and businessman, second. Missouri freshmen placed law third, while nationwide the third choice was either an M.D. or D.D.S.

Almost half of both groups came from the city or one of its suburbs, but Missouri had more freshmen from farms than the National average, 14 per cent to 8. Nationwide, university freshmen were reported to be 3.2 per cent Negro; on the Columbia campus, this percentage was 1.7.

Their activities during their senior year in high school held few surprises. Most took part in student elections; most attended some kind of religious services; most had some form of vocational counseling. About half checked out books frequently from the library, occasionally came in late for class, helped another student in his school work, arranged a date for a friend, played chess (a little surprising), and discussed sports. Few cut class, or, on the other hand, did any extra reading for a class. About one out of 10 smoked regularly. More (41.2 per cent) had an occasional beer. Only 4 per cent reported taking sleeping pills.

Compared to the national survey, freshmen who matriculated to Missouri had much less experience with protests. About 1 per cent said they had participated in a demonstration against the Vietnam war; 5 per cent of the national sample had. Two per cent of the Missourians had demonstrated against racial discrimination; 7 per cent of the national sample had. Ten per cent had protested against the school administration; nationwide, 17 per cent reported such activities.

One of the most surprising—and disturbing—survey results was the incoming freshmen's response to a question concerning talking over their futures with their parents. Only 39 per cent of Missouri freshmen boys and 53 per cent of the girls reported even occasionally discussing their futures with their parents during the past year. Nationally, the results were worse, 32 per cent of the boys, 47 per cent of the girls. The generation gap may be broader than many persons realize.

The class of '72 seems to be idealistic. As was reported earlier, their most important personal goal was, "developing a meaningful philosophy of life." This was followed by "being an authority in my field" and "helping others who are in difficulty." Girls ranked the latter objective, second; boys, sixth. The third most important goal for the boys was "being successful in a business of my own." A complete ranking of goals appears on the opposite page.

Youthful idealism showed up again when the freshmen were asked whether or not they agreed that, "Realistically, an individual person can do little to bring about changes in our society." Only 28 per cent thought the statement was accurate, the rest apparently feeling that the individual still could play an important role. But, paradoxically, most (57 per cent) agreed that the "chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one's earning power."

About two-thirds believed that "faculty promotions should be based in part on student evaluations," but two-thirds also were in favor of faculty approval of student publications. A third felt cigarette advertising should be outlawed, and 10 per cent were in favor of legalizing marijuana. Only a fourth thought the University had a right to regulate their *off-campus* activities, but more than half believed that college officials had been too lax in dealing with student protests *on campus*.

How did this "typical" freshman happen to come to the University of Missouri-Columbia? The major influences were his parents or other relatives, but the academic reputation of the University was almost equally important. The influence of Columbia campus alumni ranked far down the list. □