History:
The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), national data on the characteristics of students attending American colleges, is in its 41st year. The University of Central Oklahoma is in its fourth consecutive year of participation and is in the medium level of selectivity. In 2006 UCO had 820 respondents, 333 males, and 487 females.

The information learned as a result of the CIRP survey is used to enhance student learning, meet or exceed their college experience expectations, and to generally meet the needs of the student.

After reviewing these data and in the interest of obtaining a realistic view, the difference of 5% was systematically selected and will be termed “academically significant.”

2006 CIRP Results
(by level of selectivity)

- The ethnic background at UCO was comparable with peers except UCO has a higher American Indian population (11.9%) than our peers (2.3%).
- A higher number of UCO students come from families where parents are divorced or living apart (37.0%) than peer institutions (28.5%).
- More UCO students (24.0%) lived 5 or less miles from campus compared to (6.4%) peer institutions.

Students rated self “above average” or highest 10% compared with their peers.

- A smaller number of UCO students rated themselves above average in:
  - mathematical ability (28.9%) peers (33.9%);
  - physical health (46.1%) peers (51.9%); and
  - writing ability (36.2%) peers (42.3%).

Students indicated the activities they participated in during the past year.

- Read a newspaper for:
  - national and global news (61.4%) peers (69.8%);
  - local news and information (79.5%) peers (85.7%);
  - and schoolwork (59.5%) peers (68.7%).
- A higher number of UCO students (35.4%) spent 1 or 2 hours studying/homework during a typical week than peer institutions (28.3%).
- A smaller number of UCO students between 3-10 hours a week studying (34.7%) than peers (41.4%).

Conclusion:

According to those first-time, full-time freshmen taking the CIRP survey UCO is in many ways similar to our peers. However it is the differences that UCO administrators, faculty, and staff are interested in. In many cases it is easy to see why some of the differences exist. It is the differences in behaviors and abilities; such as students rating themselves lower than peers in math, physical health, and writing ability; the smaller number of students that had 2 years of foreign language and physical science; and those that read newspapers for national and global news, local news and information, and school work where UCO and the higher education system in Oklahoma can make a difference.

Recommendations:

It would be beneficial for UCO decision makers to take a closer look at the differences found in this report. Action teams and focus groups are methods that would be beneficial to help determine if the differences are important and if the university could make or recommend changes that would help students learn, and encourage them to become productive, creative, ethical, and engaged citizens. Other aspects of this survey should also be examined; such as the difference between males and females, and the longitudinal changes from 2003-2006.

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