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# A Profile of Selected Characteristics of the Spring 1990 Western Washington University Graduating Class

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A Profile of Selected  
Characteristics of the Spring  
1990 Western Washington University  
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Report 1990-01

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## Executive Summary

This report contains an analysis of two different sets of data: one obtained from the Registrar's student information data base, the other from the Office of Assessment and Testing's data base.

From the Registrar's student information data base, the report finds that Western graduated 991 students in June of 1990. A majority were women (56%) and transfer students (56.2%); most were Caucasians (83%) and in-state residents (95%). Ethnic-minority students made up 5.8% of the graduates and were mostly transfers (70.2%).

Three different GPA's were analyzed: high school, transfer, and university. June 1990 graduates had a mean high school GPA of 3.19, a mean transfer GPA of 3.01, and a mean university GPA of 3.08. Females scored higher than males in all categories. Most other comparisons showed little differentiation, except in two areas: disabled students had a considerable improvement from transfer to university GPA; and older students had a dramatic improvement from high school to university GPA.

A majority of June 1990 graduates studied in the College of Arts & Sciences (64.4%). A considerably higher percentage of men than women graduated from the College of Business & Economics; a considerably higher percentage of women than men graduated from the Woodring College of Education.

June 1990 graduates spent an average of 12 quarters at Western. Credits were transferred from other institutions not only by transfer students, but by 44.6% of the 1990 native graduates as well. Most graduates earned a BA degree.

The second half of the report analyzed information gathered from the UCLA/CIRP survey taken in 1985 by 70 of the June 1990 graduates. That survey indicated, among other points, that the fathers of those graduates were mostly better educated than mothers, but that female graduates had better educated mothers than their male counterparts.

The UCLA-CIRP survey indicated that in 1985 a majority of the 1990 graduates were politically middle-of-the-road. To the question regarding personal objectives, the most frequent response of "very important" was to become an authority in the students chosen field of study. As to why they chose to attend college, 100% responded as "very important" to two choices: to gain a general education and appreciation of ideas, and to learn about things that interest me (sic). When asked to rate a number of personality traits, the ranking of "above average" occurred most frequently in the area of academic ability.

A Profile of Selected Characteristics  
of the Spring 1990 Western Washington University  
Graduating Class

Introduction

The following report presents information intended to provide insight into various characteristics of Western Washington University's Spring 1990 graduating class. Information presented in this report was obtained from the student information data base maintained by the University's Registrar and from data files maintained by the Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing.

Information is presented in summary form and, where appropriate, through tables and a figure. Thirty-six variables were selected from the student information data base and analyzed, using fundamental descriptive statistics (see Appendix A). Summaries are presented according to thematic categories to form the first half of the report.

The second half of the report contains a summary of selected information on 70 of the 1990 graduates who, in 1985, completed the UCLA Cooperative Institutional Research Program Student Information Form (CIRP). Western participates in the UCLA/CIRP survey every four years and up until this year the instruments were only administered to incoming freshmen. Beginning in the Spring of 1992, Western intends to administer a revised version of the UCLA/CIRP to a random sample of graduating seniors. In so doing longitudinal comparisons can be made between the freshman level and senior level responses of the same cohort of students.

Student Information

In June of 1990 Western Washington University graduated 991 students. A majority of them (83%) entered Western in the Fall quarter at a fairly even rate between the years 1985 through 1988 (20.8% in 85; 24.1% in 86; 20% in 87; and 21.5% in 88). There were 555 females (56%), and 436 males (44%). Students between the ages of 21-24 accounted for 61.9% of the graduates; students 25 and older made up 37.9%. White students accounted for 83% of the graduates, and 95% of the June class listed the state of Washington as their home state. There were 34 veterans (3.4%), and 10 students with disabilities (1%). Transfer students made up 56.2% of the 1990 graduates, natives 39.6%, and special categories (summer transients, graduates initially enrolled through continuing ed, transfers taking second degrees) 4.2%.

Even though the number of ethnic-minority graduates was small (57), an analysis of responses by admission type (native or transfer) and ethnicity revealed that while transfers made up 54.4% of white graduates (1.8% under the mode), they made up a much larger percentage of minority graduates at 70.2% (14% over).

### Academic Preparation

High school grade point averages were a part of the records of 540 of the 991 graduates, and verify a mean high school GPA of 3.19. In 63.7% of the cases, the high school GPA was over 3.00. Females scored higher than males in this category (as they did in all three GPA comparisons: high school, transfer, and university). Mean high school GPA for females was 3.25, for males 3.1.

As mentioned, the number of ethnic-minority graduates in June of 1990 was small (5.8%); nonetheless, an analysis of responses reveals little difference between the high school GPAs of ethnic-minority and white students (nor would there be in any of the GPA comparison categories). Mean high school GPA for ethnic-minorities was 3.17, for whites 3.2.

Other comparative results of mean high school GPA revealed only minor variations: natives scored 3.2, transfers 3.18; in-state students scored 3.19, out-of-state 3.18. Veterans scored 3.06. There were seven Canadian and four foreign graduates whose mean high school GPAs were 3.1 and 3.3 respectively.

### College of Study

A majority of June 1990 Western graduates studied in the college of Arts & Sciences (64.4%). Graduates by percent of subcollege also include: College of Business & Economics, 18.5%; Woodring College of Education, 5.9%; Fairhaven College, 4.5%; College of Fine & Performing Arts, 4.2%; and Huxley College, 2.5%. For a further analysis of June 1990 graduates by frequency of ethnic-minority and college of study, see Table 1.

With the exception of Fairhaven College, which had no ethnic-minority graduates in the Spring of 1990, Table 1 shows a slightly lower percentage of ethnic-minority seniors than white seniors graduating from the College of Arts & Sciences, but a slightly higher percentage graduating from the other subcolleges.

### College of Study by Gender Status

Females and males in fairly equal percentages chose to study in the College of Arts & Sciences (63.8% of females; 65.1% of males). For a complete breakdown of percentages of graduating seniors by gender status and college of study, see Figure 1.

Table 1

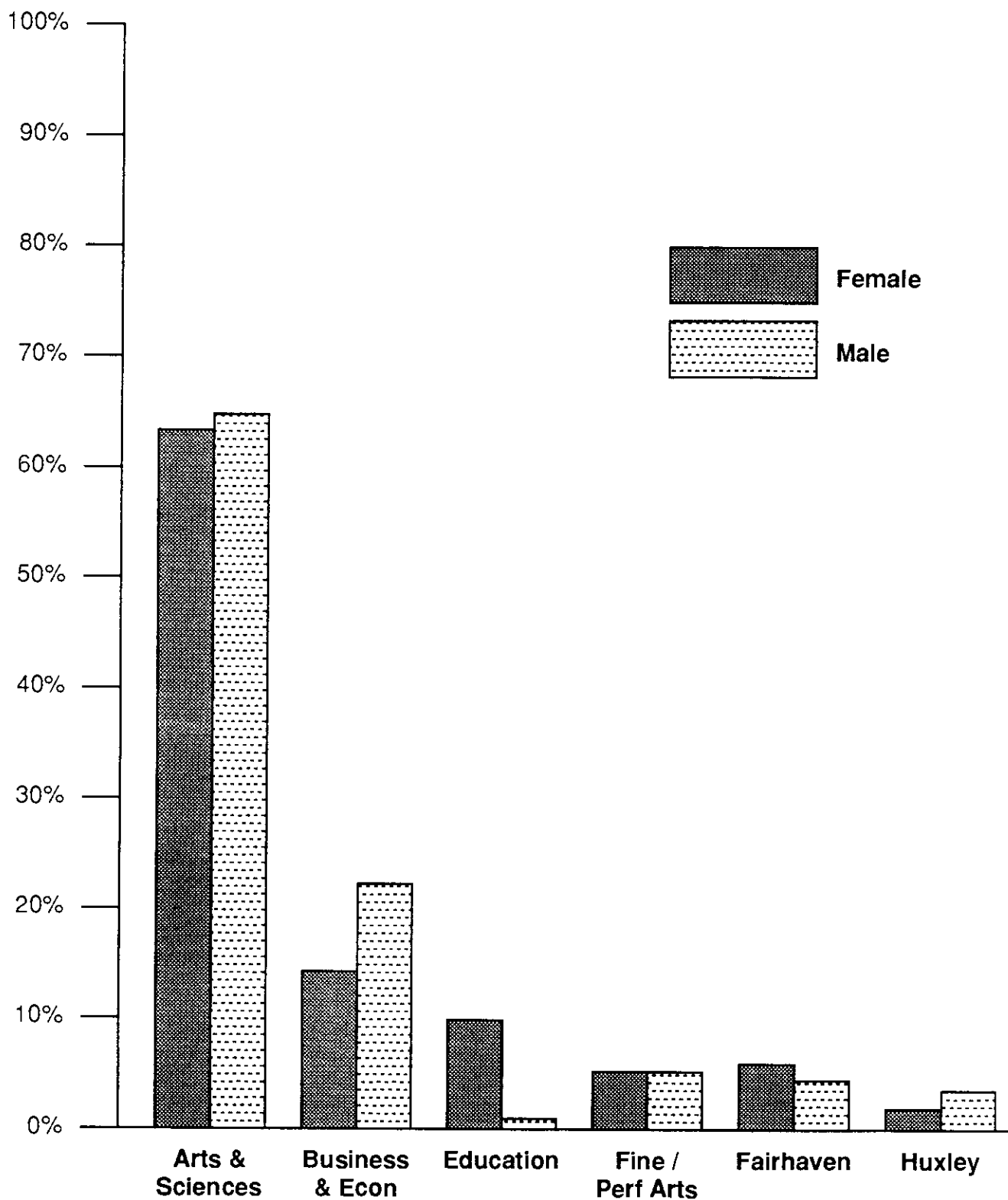
Frequency of 1990 graduating seniors  
by ethnic-minority background and college

	<u>Ethnic-Minority</u>			<u>White</u>			<u>Foreign</u>			<u>Undeclared</u>		
	Frequency	(Column %)	(Row %)	Frequency	(Column %)	(Row %)	Frequency	(Column %)	(Row %)	Frequency	(Column %)	(Row %)
College of Arts & Sciences	29	(54)	(5.4)	494	(61.1)	(91.9)	4	(44.4)	(0.7)	10	(58.9)	(1.8)
College of Business & Economics	12	(22.3)	(7.1)	155	(19.3)	(91.2)	2	(22.2)	(1.2)	1	(5.9)	(0.5)
Woodring College of Education <sup>1</sup>	3	(5.6)	(7.1)	36	(4.5)	(85.7)	0	(0)	(0)	3	(17.6)	(7.1)
Fairhaven College	0	(0)	(0)	24	(3.0)	(96.0)	0	(0)	(0)	1	(5.9)	(4.0)
College of Fine & Performing Arts	3	(5.6)	(7.9)	35	(4.4)	(92.1)	0	(0)	(0)	0	(0)	(0)
Huxley College	2	(3.7)	(9.5)	19	(2.4)	(90.5)	0	(0)	(0)	0	(0)	(0)
Other Applied	5	(9.3)	(9.1)	45	(5.6)	(81.8)	3	(22.2)	(5.5)	2	(11.8)	(3.6)
Totals	54			808			9			17		
(Row %)	(6.1)			(91.0)			(1.0)			(1.9)		

<sup>1</sup> Frequency does not reflect the number of students in the teacher education programs. Students have already been counted in their respective academic majors.

Figure 1

Percentage of 1990 graduating seniors by gender status and college



As indicated by Figure 1, females graduated in slightly lower percentages than males from the College of Arts & Sciences and Huxley College, and by a considerably lower percentage from the College of Business & Economics. Males and females in equal percentages graduated from the College of Fine & Performing Arts. Females graduated in a slightly higher percentage from Fairhaven College, but in a considerably higher percentage from the Woodring College of Education.

### Transfer Characteristics

Credits were transferred from other institutions by 775 graduates (76.2%), indicating that 198 out of 434 non-transfer students (45.6%) took at least some of their courses outside of Western. Of the 755 cases, 50.1% transferred between 46-90 credits, 31.3% transferred less than 45, and 18.7% more than 90. Associate of Arts degrees were earned by 294 of the June 1990 graduates (29.6%).

The mean GPA of all transfer credits was 3.01. The mean for females was 3.07, for males 2.94. Ethnic-minorities transferred a mean GPA of 3.04, whites 3.01. The mean for Washington students was 3.01, for out-of-state students 3.06. Veterans transferred mean GPAs of 3.05, Canadians 3.04, and foreign students 3.17.

Although there were only 10 disabled June 1990 graduates at Western, all were transfer students and had a mean transfer GPA of 2.7. At graduation, these same students had a mean university GPA of 3.06, the most dramatic increase between transfer and university GPA of all categories.

### Quarters Attended/Credits Earned

The median number of quarters spent at Western by 1990 graduates was 12, although there were significant percentages of students completing the following number of quarters: 7 (10.1%), 10 (12.3%), 13 (12.3%), and 16 (10.5%). In 572 cases (57.6%), graduates earned 136 credits or more; in 291 cases (29.4%), they earned between 91-135. In 120 cases (12.1%), grads earned between 46-90 credits. Only eight graduates earned 45 credits or less.

### Academic Performance at Western

Western's June 1990 graduates earned a mean university GPA of 3.08, with 54.7% earning better than a 3.00. The Junior Writing Exam (JWE) was taken by 965 graduates (97.3%), 586 receiving a satisfactory on the essay section (60.7%), 379 an unsatisfactory (39.3%). On the objective section of the JWE, 754 graduates passed (78.1%), while 211 failed (21.9%). The JWE objective test median score was 28 (out of a possible 45).



As in the other two GPA comparisons, females scored higher than males in mean university GPA. Females had a 3.15, males a 2.99. Ethnic-minorities scored a mean of 3.04 at Western, whites a 3.06. Transfer students, with a mean university GPA of 3.17, fared somewhat better than natives at 2.97. Out-of-state students scored 3.12, Washington students 3.08. The 34 veteran graduates had a GPA of 3.12. As mentioned previously, the 10 disabled students had a 3.06.

The most interesting GPA comparison in terms of change and differentiation came when looking at GPAs subcategorized by age. In June of 1990, there were 155 graduates between the ages of 21-22. These students had the highest mean high school GPA at 3.3. At the same time, there were 55 graduates over the age of 40. That category's mean high school GPA, 2.73, was the lowest of the five categories listed. (By comparison, the next lowest high school score was 3.06, that of students between the ages of 25-29.) By graduation day in June of 1990, however, students over the age of 40 had the highest university GPA at 3.46, while students between the age of 21-22 had fallen to a GPA of 3.15, third behind not only the 40 plusers but also students between the ages of 30-39, whose mean university GPA was 3.23.

#### Degrees Earned

June 1990 graduates of Western earned 727 BA degrees. BS degrees were earned by 170. Other degrees earned included: BA, Ed (85), BM (5), and BFA (2). Twenty-eight of these graduates earned honors (2.8%). Of the honor students, 16 were females, 12 were males.

#### Subcollege of Graduation

The College of Arts & Sciences graduated the most number of students with 638, followed by the College of Business & Economics with 183. Woodring School of Education graduated 58 students, Fairhaven College 45, the College of Fine & Performing Arts 42, and Huxley College 25. For the number of students graduated by each college broken down by admissions level and college of study, see Table 2.

In Table 2, row percentages (the percentage of the total number of graduates in any one subcollege) show that in all but the College of Fine & Performing Arts, transfer students made up the majority of subcollege graduates, and in some cases by a considerable margin. Huxley College (72%), Fairhaven College (68.9%), and Woodring College of Education (60.3%) have wide margins of percentage difference between transfer and native graduates. The percentage difference in the College of Business & Economics (57.9%) and the College of Arts & Sciences (55.2%) continues to favor transfer graduates over natives, but by not as

Table 2

Frequency of 1990 graduating seniors  
by admissions level category and college of study

	<u>Natives</u>			<u>Transfer</u>			<u>Other Special</u>		
	Frequency	(Column %)	(Row %)	Frequency	(Column %)	(Row %)	Frequency	(Column %)	(Row %)
College of Arts & Sciences	267	(68.1)	(41.8)	352	(63.2)	(55.2)	19	(45.2)	(3.0)
College of Business & Economics	75	(19.1)	(41.0)	106	(19.0)	(57.9)	2	(4.8)	(1.1)
Woodring College of Education <sup>1</sup>	9	(2.3)	(15.5)	35	(6.3)	(60.3)	14	(33.3)	(24.1)
Fairhaven College	10	(2.6)	(22.2)	31	(5.6)	(68.9)	4	(9.5)	(8.9)
College of Fine & Performing Arts	26	(6.6)	(61.9)	15	(2.7)	(35.7)	1	(2.4)	(2.4)
Huxley College	5	(1.3)	(20.0)	18	(3.2)	(72.0)	2	(4.8)	(8.0)
Totals	392			557			42		
(Row %)	(39.6)			(56.2)			(4.2)		

<sup>1</sup> Frequency does not reflect the number of students in the teacher education programs. Students have already been counted in their respective academic majors.

wide a margin. Only in the College of Fine & Performing Arts do native graduates outnumber transfers, and they do so by a considerable margin (natives 61.9%, transfers 35.7%).

Summary of Selected Information  
of 1990 Graduates Who  
Completed the UCLA/CIRP Survey

In 1985 a sample of Western Washington University freshmen participated in the Student Information Form, a survey prepared by the Higher Education Research Institute and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the University of California, Los Angeles. Of these original participants, 70 graduated in the Spring of 1990 from Western, and their responses to the UCLA/CIRP form were extracted from the Office of Institutional Assessment & Testing's data bank for a more thorough analysis.

The general purpose of the UCLA survey was to investigate general student attitudes and demographic characteristics. One item of particular interest to this report was the findings concerned with the educational backgrounds of the students' mothers and fathers.

Parent's Education Background of 1990 Graduates

Fathers of these 70 graduates had better educations than mothers. Fathers had graduate degrees in 28.6% of the cases, college degrees in 25.7%, with an additional 20% having some college education. Mothers had high school degrees in 25.7%, and in equal percentages, college degrees or some college (24.3%). A majority of mothers and fathers had a least some college education: 77.2% in the case of fathers, 61.5% in the case of mothers.

Comparisons of responses by gender status and mother/father education, in both male and female graduates, showed that fathers had at least a college degree in a majority of cases in a near equal percentage (males 55.5%, females 54.8%). Female graduates, however, had better educated mothers than male graduates. Mothers of female graduates had a least post-secondary education experience in 78.6% of the cases, compared to 59.2% of the mothers of male graduates.

A majority of the questions on the UCLA/CIRP form focused on the respondents' political viewpoints, their academic and career goals, and their attitudes and feelings in a variety of content areas. Results from some of the content areas are presented below.

## Political Views

A majority of the 70 survey participants considered themselves to be politically middle-of-the-road (52.9%). Liberal and conservative viewpoints were nearly equally split (liberal 24.3%, conservative 22.9%).

Comparative results between gender status and political viewpoint revealed no deviations from the general frequency findings. Males were 55% middle-of-the-road, and 22.2% equally split between liberal and conservative. Females were 51.9% middle-of-the-road, 25.6% liberal, and 23.3% conservative.

## Personal Objectives

Using a five-point graduated rating scale, June 1990 graduates who participated in the UCLA/CIRF survey rated becoming an authority in their chosen field of study as "very important" (the 4th highest degree scale) most frequently (73.1%). They rated raising a family second highest (67.2%), and becoming well off financially third (62.7%). Graduates rated two other personal objectives equally: obtaining recognition from colleagues, and being successful in their own business (56.7%).

The personal objective that received the fewest number of "very important" ratings was making theoretical contributions (3%). Tied for second lowest were: becoming accomplished in the arts, writing original works, and becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment (11.9%).

Analysis of responses between personal objectives and gender status showed no change in the top personal objective (to become an authority in the field of study). Both males and females rated raising a family second. Females rated being very well off somewhat higher than males (63.4% females, 61.5% males), but also rated helping others in difficulty equally with being very well off and raising a family (all three 63.4%). Males rated helping others in difficulty much lower than females (38.5%), while rating having administrative responsibilities higher (73.1% males, 46.3% females). Both genders rated obtaining recognition from colleagues fifth.

## Reasons for Attending College

When answering the question regarding their reasons for attending college, all participants (100%) responded with a "very important" to the following two items: 1) to gain a general education and appreciation of ideas; and 2) to learn about things that interest me (sic). Participants rated getting a better job third (98.6%). Improving study skills (92.9%) and making more money (87.1%) followed.

Comparative results between gender status and reasons for attending college showed only one minor difference: females rated becoming better cultured slightly ahead of making more money (88.4% versus 83.7%).

### Self-rating personality traits

Another of the UCLA/CIRF survey questions asked students to rate themselves on a scale in regards to a number of personality traits. The ranking of "above average" occurred most frequently in the area of academic ability (69.6%). Ranking just behind academic ability were the drive to achieve and emotional health (65.2%). Leadership ability ranked fourth highest at 55.1%, and physical health ranked fifth at 53.6%.

As freshmen, the June 1990 graduates ranked themselves as above average the least often in the area of artistic ability (33.3%), followed in ascending order by popularity (34.8%), mathematical ability (39.1%), and writing skills (42%).

Analysis of responses by gender status showed the top three rankings (academic ability, drive to achieve, and emotional health) remaining in the same order whether male or female. The last two highest ranking scores, however, changed with gender. Males listed physical health fourth and intellectual self-confidence fifth, while females ranked leadership ability fourth and social self-confidence fifth.

### Summary

This report found that the June 1990 graduating class was in the main women and transfer students, and overwhelmingly Caucasians and in-state residents. The June graduates had a mean university GPA of 3.08, with women scoring slightly higher than men, and graduates forty years old and over scoring highest of all.

Most graduates took BA degrees, most studied in the College of Arts & Sciences. A considerably higher percentage of men than women graduated from the College of Business & Economics; more women than men graduated from Woodring School of Education. In nearly half the cases, native students transferred credits from other institutions.

The UCLA/CIRP survey administered in 1985 indicated that fathers of graduates were better educated than mothers, but that mothers of female graduates were better educated than mothers of males. A majority of the survey participants were politically middle-of-the-road. Most often, students wanted to become authorities in their field of study. They ranked themselves "above average" most frequently in the area of academic ability, and gave as their two most important reasons for attending

college: to gain a general education and to learn about things of a personal interest.

Appendix A

Selected Items from  
Students Information Data Base

## Appendix A

### Selected Items from Student Information Data Base

ID	Permanent ID number
AGECAT	Age categories
SEX	Gender
ETHNICOR	Ethnic categorized
DISABIL	Disability
VETERAN	Veteran/non-veteran
PLCEORGN	Place of Origin
HSGPA	High school grade point average
HSGPACAT	High school gpa categorized
SMRSTART	Summerstart participant
YRADMIT	Year of admission
QTRADMIT	Quarter of admission
ADMTYPE	Admission type
TCREDCAT	Transfer credits categorized
TRANSGPA	Transfer credits grade point average
TGPACAT	Transfer gpa categorized
AADEGREE	AA degree transferred
ACTV	ACT verbal
ACTQ	ACT quantitative
ACTTOTAL	ACT verbal+quantitative
SATV	SAT verbal
SATQ	SAT quantitative
SATTOTAL	SAT verbal+quantitative
WPCTV	WPCT verbal composite
WPCTQ	WPCT quantitative composite
WPCTTOT	WPCT verbal+quantitative
JWESAY	JWE essay grade
JWEOSCOR	JWE objective score
WWUQTRS	Quarters attended WWU
UGPA	WWU grade point average
UGPACAT	WWU gpa categorized
UCREDCAT	WWU credits categorized
MAJORCAT	Majors categorized
DEGREE	Degree granted
SUBCOL	Graduation subcollege
HONORS	Honors at graduation