Georgia Institute of Technology

Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)
2007 Freshman Survey Report

Office of Assessment
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Executive Summary

The Georgia Institute of Technology (GT) has participated in the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) since 1966. Each year incoming freshmen at participating institutions complete the Student Information Form, and the results are used by HERI as part of a longitudinal study. In the study, Georgia Tech is classified as a public high-selectivity (SAT scores of 1140 or more) institution and is compared to both public high-selectivity and private very high-selectivity universities ("Public" and "Private" comparator institutions).

Incoming 2007 Georgia Tech freshmen living on campus were asked to complete the CIRP student survey in their first week on campus. As a result, this report is based on the 1,102 responses of those students (46.0 percent of the first-time full-time class). The results may not be fully representative of the 2007 freshman class due to the lower response rate and bias in demographic representation. Caution is encouraged when interpreting these data.

This report presents selected results from the 2007 survey, and can be found along with tables of the complete results at < http://www.assessment.gatech.edu >. Highlights from the survey:

- A substantial majority (86.4%) of freshman respondents cite Georgia Tech's academic reputation and the opinion that GT's graduates get good jobs (78.0%) as main reasons influencing their decisions to attend Georgia Tech.
- More than one-third, 36.9 percent, of GT respondents report working for pay 6 or more hours per week their senior year in high school. This figure has decreased among GT respondents over 20 percent in the past 20 years (57.0 percent in 1987 versus 36.9 percent in 2007).
- Compared to their public university and private institution counterparts, GT respondents were twice as likely to join a social fraternity or sorority. GT respondents (20.2%) estimated that the chances were very good that they would join a social fraternity or sorority compared to 10.0 percent at public universities and 10.5 percent at private institutions.
- With regard to parental involvement, the majority of GT freshmen considered their parents' participation in their college careers to be the "right amount," with 87 percent reporting the "right amount" of parental involvement in their decision to go to college, 82.8 percent in their decision to attend Georgia Tech, and 78.2 percent in dealing with GT officials.
- GT respondents' self-confidence in academic ability exceeds that of their comparators. GT respondents are more likely to rate themselves highly in their academic (91.2%, 86.7%) and mathematical (75.8%, 59.7%) abilities when compared to their public university counterparts. GT respondents rate themselves less highly in social self-confidence (45.5%, 53.3%).
- Over time, fewer GT freshmen have reported drinking beer, wine and liquor "frequently" or "occasionally" in their senior year of high school. In 2007, 35.2 percent of GT respondents indicated they drank beer compared to 53.6 percent in 1997. Similarly, 40.4 percent of freshman respondents in 2007 reported consuming wine and liquor compared to 61.3 percent in 1997.
- Compared to their public and private university counterparts, GT respondents were far more likely to classify themselves as "conservative" or "far right" politically; 31.8 percent of GT respondents characterized their political views as "conservative" or "far right," compared to 20.8 percent at public universities and 18.5 percent at private institutions.
- GT females were more likely than their male counterparts to report that visiting the Tech campus played an important role in their attendance decision. More than one-third of female GT respondents (36.2%) reported a campus visit was important to their decision compared to 24.3 percent of GT males.

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Overview

The Georgia Institute of Technology (GT) has participated in the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) since 1966. Each year, incoming freshmen at participating institutions complete the Student Information Form, and the results are used by HERI as part of a longitudinal study.

Incoming Georgia Tech freshmen were asked to complete the survey by Georgia Tech housing staff. Ultimately, the housing staff distributed 2,500 surveys to GT freshmen. Of the 2,391 first-time, full-time students in the incoming 2007 class, 1,102 students completed the survey. This report is based on the 1,102 responses of first-time, full-time students (46.0% of the incoming first-time, full-time class). Chi-square tests for sample representativeness (p <.01) revealed that there were no significant differences in proportion between the 2007 freshman class and the obtained response in terms of self-reported ethnicity or college entered. There were significant differences by gender: Female students responded at a higher rate and male students responded at a lower rate than expected. Thus, the results may not be fully representative of the 2007 freshman class and should be interpreted with caution, particularly where gender might be considered a covariate.

In addition to GT's results, HERI reports aggregate results of other institutions, categorized by admission selectivity. Georgia Tech is classified as a public high-selectivity (SAT scores of 1140 or more) institution. Thirteen universities are included in the public high-selectivity comparison norms ("Public" comparison group).[1] This report also provides comparison norms for 17 private very high-selectivity (SAT scores of 1310 or more) institutions ("Private" comparison group).[2]

In most cases, a response difference of +/- 5 percent between Georgia Tech and either comparison group (public or private comparator institutions) was used to highlight the results. Based on the obtained samples of students, these differences are significant at a p<.01 level. Results for GT males and females are presented for select items. As a rule of thumb, differences of 12 percent or more between sexes at GT are significant at the p<.01 level.

[1] *Public high selectivity institutions*: Florida State University, Iowa State University, Miami University, Oklahoma State University, Rutgers University—New Brunswick, University of California—Los Angeles, University of California—San Diego, University of California—Santa Cruz, University of Florida, University of Massachusetts—Amherst, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, University of Pittsburgh, and University of Vermont.

[2] *Private very-high selectivity institutions*: Brandeis University, Brown University, California Institute of Technology, Carnegie-Mellon, Columbia University, Cornell University, Duke University, Emory University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northwestern University, Rice University, University of Chicago, University of Notre Dame, University of Pennsylvania, University of Rochester, and Vanderbilt University. There is no "very-high selectivity" group for public universities.

Demographics

- CIRP respondents at GT were 61.0 percent male and 39.0 percent female
- Ethnicity: GT respondents labeled themselves as
  - White/Caucasian (71.3 percent)
  - African American/Black (4.8 percent)
  - Asian American/Asian (22.3 percent)
  - Hispanic (6.6 percent)[3]

In Table 1, Georgia Tech CIRP respondents are compared to the population of full-time freshmen on the basis of sex, ethnicity, residency and citizenship.

Table 1. CIRP respondents compared to GT freshmen

	CIRP Respondents %	GT Freshmen %
Sex		
Male	61.0	67.3
Female	39.0	32.7
Ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	71.3	66.0
African American/Black	4.8	4.1
American Indian/Alaska native	2.5	0.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	24.0	23.2
Hispanic	6.6	5.3
Residency		
In-state	55.6	60.2
Out-of-state	37.5	33.2
International	6.8	6.6
Citizenship Status		
U.S. citizen	92.2	88.2
Permanent resident	4.5	5.6

- Citizenship/Language: 92.2 percent of GT respondents are U.S. citizens and 87.1 percent report English as their native language.
- Distance from home: 48.0 percent of GT respondents report their home as more than 100 miles away, compared with 55.9 percent of public university students and 81.5 percent of private university students.

[3] Respondents are allowed to check more than one ethnicity. Thus, numbers sum to more than 100 percent. The Hispanic category includes Mexican American/Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Other Latino.

Parents of GT respondents were comparable to parents at the public and private schools in terms of both income and education. Significant differences were observed with regard to the income of private school parents whose income exceeds $250,000 and the percent of those who earned graduate degrees. The percentage (9.0%) of GT respondents whose parental income exceeds $250,000 was slightly down from 10.3% in 2006, although this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 2. Respondents' parental income

	GT %	Public %	Private %
Under $30,000	5.5	10.6	6.9
$30,000 to $49,999	7.5	10.0	6.9
$50,000 to $74,999	15.2	15.8	12.0
$75,000 to $99,999	15.7	14.8	11.8
$100,000 to $249,999	47.1	38.8	39.1
$250,000 or more	9.0	9.9	23.1

Table 3. Respondents' parental education

	Father			Mother		
	GT %	Public %	Private %	GT %	Public %	Private %
Grammar school or less	1.2	2.4	1.1	1.3	2.3	1.0
Some high school	1.1	3.0	1.7	1.6	2.4	1.3
High school graduate	5.5	12.5	5.9	8.1	13.0	6.5
Postsecondary school other than college	1.8	2.9	1.4	2.5	3.5	2.1
Some college	9.1	10.9	6.3	9.9	13.4	7.9
College degree	37.8	32.0	26.1	43.6	38.4	37.5
Some graduate school	3.4	3.1	3.6	4.2	3.8	4.9
Graduate degree	40.0	33.1	53.9	28.9	23.2	38.9

High School Activities and College Preparation

Students were asked if they engaged in a number of activities during the past year. A selection of these items and the percent of respondents who indicated they frequently engaged in these activities is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Percent of respondents indicating "frequently" in the following activities

	GT	Public	Private
Was bored in class	47.7	42.3	40.1
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	22.2	25.7	27.9
Asked teacher for advice after class	25.9	25.4	31.4
Voted in a student election	19.8	21.4	26.6
Used the Internet to read news sites	51.7	48.1	57.9
Discussed politics	34.9	35.3	43.1
Tutored another student*	75.5	67.5	78.6
Came late to class*	55.2	61.4	61.9

*Includes "frequently" and "occasionally" responses

GT respondents were more likely than their peers to have been bored in class and less likely to have felt overwhelmed. These results may suggest that GT respondents were not academically challenged or perhaps experiencing what is commonly referred to as "senioritis." Compared to their public and private university cohort, GT respondents were also less likely to report coming late to class and were more likely to tutor other students.

Information about how much time students spent on various activities in their senior year further reveals differences between GT respondents and those from their public and private counterparts. Relative to their private-school counterparts, more GT respondents report working 6 hours or more a week for pay and fewer report spending significant time studying. Few differences were observed in the amounts of time spent reading for pleasure and watching television, although responding GT males exhausted more time playing video games than males from either the public or private institution comparator groups.[4]

[4] GT females reported spending considerably less time playing video games than their male counterparts, as did females in the public and private comparator groups. There were no significant differences between females among the three groups.

Table 5. Time spent per week on various activities in senior year (percent responding)

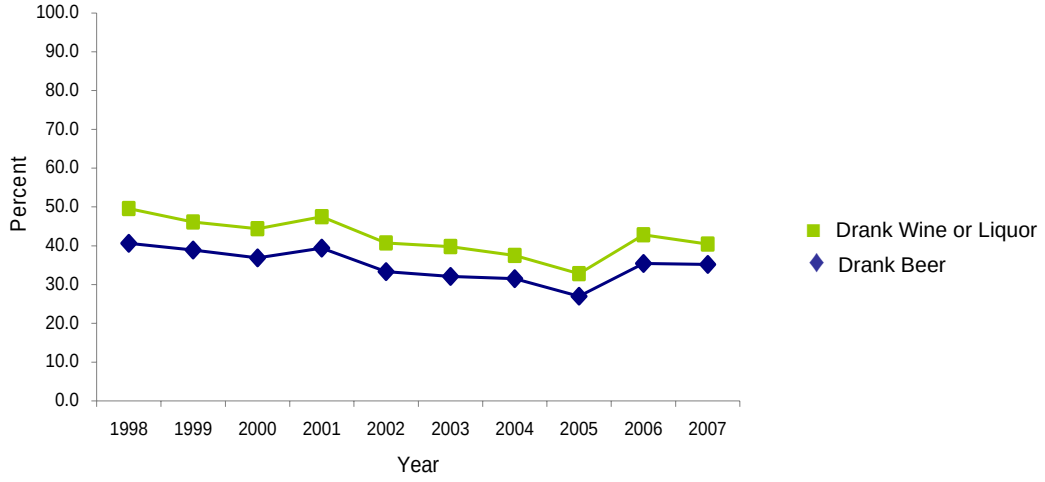
	GT	Public	Private
Studying/homework (11 or more hours)	20.5	23.0	44.1
Socializing with friends (11 or more hours)	37.9	43.2	41.7
Talking with teachers outside of class (more than one hour)	49.8	46.4	59.3
Partying (3 or more hours)	29.6	37.9	35.5
Working for pay (6 or more hours)	36.9	46.0	25.3
Student clubs/groups (3 or more hours)	45.4	36.7	52.3
Watching TV (6 or more hours)	24.9	24.0	23.3
Reading for pleasure (3 or more hours)	31.1	25.1	31.7
Playing video/computer games (6 or more hours; males only)	26.2	19.7	16.9
Online social networks (MySpace, Facebook, etc.) (6 or more hours)	14.0	15.5	17.2

Alcohol Use

When compared to 2006, there was no significant change in the percentage of GT respondents reporting "occasional" or "frequent" use of alcohol in their senior year of high school. More than one-third (35.2 percent) of respondents cited beer consumption and 40.4 percent wine or liquor. This is a slight decrease over the 2006 respondents (35.4 percent beer and 42.8 percent wine/liquor).

The trend since 1998 is presented in Chart 1.

Chart 1. GT freshmen respondents stating "frequent" or "occasional" use of alcohol in their senior year of high school



Influences on College Choice

Students were asked to rate the reasons that influenced them to attend their particular institution. GT respondents continued a 36-year trend in rating Georgia Tech's academic reputation as the top reason for choosing Georgia Tech. The ability of graduates to obtain good jobs was cited by 78.0 percent of GT respondents as a reason for their enrollment. Georgia Tech's reputation for graduates' admission to top graduate/professional schools, rankings in national magazines, and financial cost were also cited as very important in influencing GT respondents to attend Georgia Tech. Compared to both their public university and private institution counterparts, GT respondents were more likely to report the ability to obtain a good job, rankings in national magazines and financial cost as a reason for enrollment. Conversely, GT respondents were less likely than their counterparts to report a visit to campus, the offering of financial assistance, the size of the institution, and the institution's reputation for its social activities as a reason for enrollment.

Table 6. Reasons noted as "very important" in influencing student's decision to attend this particular college (percent responding)

	GT Men	GT Women	GT Total	Public Total	Private Total
This college has a very good academic reputation	84.4	89.6	86.4	77.1	88.4
This college's graduates get good jobs	75.1	82.5	78.0	58.8	68.1
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	47.7	62.2	53.4	45.0	57.4
Rankings in national magazines	50.4	55.5	52.4	30.6	41.6
The cost of attending this college	36.3	48.7	41.2	34.9	20.4
A visit to campus	24.3	36.2	29.0	35.5	49.0
I was offered financial assistance	25.4	35.0	29.2	27.8	34.7
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	21.7	35.8	27.2	26.9	39.2
Information from a website	20.3	21.9	20.9	17.6	25.3
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	19.4	21.6	20.3	46.1	34.1
My relatives wanted me to come here	5.4	3.4	4.6	4.2	4.2

College Expectations

Students were asked to estimate the occurrence of various actions and events during their first year of college. Table 7 presents some selected items in which respondents felt the chances of occurrence were "very good."

Table 7. Predictions for the college experience: percent estimating a "very good chance"

	GT	Public	Private
Change major field	11.6	17.4	18.0
Change career choice	10.4	17.4	22.3
Make at least a "B" average	59.6	67.6	71.9
Need extra time to complete your degree requirements	19.5	4.5	2.7
Be satisfied with your college	60.8	63.2	73.6
Participate in volunteer or community service work	29.6	32.6	46.3
Communicate regularly with your professors	25.2	34.6	48.0
Participate in student clubs/groups	57.5	55.7	70.2
Participate in a study abroad program	34.6	38.2	47.2
Participate in the International Plan	16.1	n/a	n/a
Participate in undergraduate research	22.5	n/a	n/a
Participate in Co-op	34.7	n/a	n/a

GT respondents were less likely than both their public university and private institution counterparts to change major field (GT: 11.6% versus 17.4% and 18.0%), change career choice (GT: 10.4% versus 17.4.0% and 22.3%), make a least a "B" average (GT: 59.6% versus 67.6% and 71.9%), and communicate regularly with professors (GT: 25.2% versus 34.6% and 48.0%). GT respondents, however, were more likely than both counterparts to need more time to complete their degree requirements (GT: 19.5% versus 4.5% and 2.7%). GT respondents were significantly less likely to volunteer or engage in community service than their private institution counterparts and just slightly less likely than their public institution counterparts (GT: 29.6% versus 32.6% and 46.3%). With regard to participation in student clubs/groups, 57.5 percent of GT respondents predicted participation compared with 55.7 percent at public universities and 70.2 percent at private institutions. More than one third (34.6 percent) of GT respondents expected to participate in a study abroad program compared with 38.2 percent at public universities and 47.2 percent at private institutions.

Approximately two-thirds (67.1 percent) of those for whom GT was their first choice college reported a "very good" chance of being satisfied, while only 34.0 percent of those for whom GT was a less than third choice thought it a "very good chance" they would be satisfied with Georgia Tech. These data are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Percent of respondents who believe there is a "very good chance" they will be satisfied with Georgia Tech by college choice

GT was my:	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Less than Third Choice
	67.1	52.8	40.3	34.0

Self-Ratings of Abilities and Life Objectives

Students were asked to rate themselves with the average person their age in a number of abilities. The percentages of students rating themselves "above average" or "in the highest 10%" of all eighteen abilities are shown in the Table 9. GT respondents generally rated themselves higher than their public university respondents, but lower than private institutions. GT respondents rated themselves significantly higher than their public university counterparts in both academic and mathematical ability. Over time, the percent of GT respondents reporting their mathematical ability as "above average" or "in the highest 10%" has decreased 11.5 percentage points. In 2002, 87.3 percent of GT respondents reported their mathematical ability as "above average" or "in the highest 10%" compared to 75.8 percent in 2007. Similarly, the percent of GT respondents reporting their physical health as "above average" or "in the highest 10%" has decreased 17.5 percentage points. In 1985, 71.9 percent of GT respondents reported their physical health as "above average" or "in the highest 10%" compared to 54.4 percent in 2007.

Table 9. Ability self-ratings: Percent rating themselves "above average" or "highest 10%" compared with the average person their age

	GT Men	GT Women	GT Total	Public	Private
Academic ability	91.9	90.0	91.2	86.7	94.8
Artistic ability	27.8	33.6	30.1	29.0	34.8
Computer skills	56.6	28.9	45.8	41.2	42.6
Cooperativeness	71.8	69.0	70.7	74.7	75.6
Creativity	54.4	57.0	55.5	55.8	61.5
Drive to achieve	74.8	87.1	79.6	81.4	88.5
Emotional health	66.0	54.0	61.3	59.9	62.6
Leadership ability	60.9	62.1	61.4	64.6	71.9
Mathematical ability	81.0	67.9	75.8	59.7	73.8
Physical health	58.6	47.8	54.4	59.4	61.8
Public speaking ability	43.8	39.5	42.1	40.6	52.4
Self-confidence (intellectual)	76.3	59.5	69.7	67.0	76.4
Self-confidence (social)	47.1	43.0	45.5	53.3	54.1
Self-understanding	66.0	56.8	62.4	60.7	66.5
Spirituality	41.0	41.9	41.4	35.8	38.6
Understanding of others	62.6	62.5	62.5	67.3	70.1
Writing ability	45.4	55.2	49.3	52.5	63.4

Students were asked to rate the personal importance of 20 life objectives from "essential" to "not important." Table 10 illustrates the top five objectives for GT respondents, along with the ratings from their public university and private institution counterparts.

Table 10. Selected life objectives: Percent rating objective "essential" or "very important"

	GT Men	GT Women	GT Total	Public	Private
Being very well off financially	75.8	69.5	73.3	73.2	68.1
Raising a family	74.2	72.5	73.5	74.7	74.5
Becoming an authority in my field	61.6	61.5	61.6	58.3	66.9
Helping others who are in difficulty	59.3	71.2	64.0	68.6	73.1
Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions in my special field	56.5	55.6	56.1	55.6	60.0

GT respondents were significantly less likely than their private counterparts to report *helping others who are in difficulty* as "essential" or "very important" (GT: 64.0% versus 73.1%). GT respondents further differed from their Private counterparts and were more likely to report *being very well off financially* as "essential" or "very important" (GT 73.3% versus 68.1%) and less likely to report *becoming an authority in my field* (GT 61.6% versus 66.9%) as "essential" or "very important."

Among GT respondents, gender differences were also observed. Female GT respondents were significantly more likely than their male counterparts to report *helping others who are in difficulty* as "essential" or "very important" *(*GT females: 71.2% versus GT males 59.3%) and less likely than their male counterparts to rate *being very well off financially* as "essential" or "very important" (GT females 69.5% versus 75.8%).

Political Orientation and Opinions

When asked for their overall political orientation, respondents at GT state they are more conservative than their counterparts at the public and private comparator institutions. The trend for GT freshman respondents from 1971–2007 is presented in Charts 2 and 3, along with selected trend data for specific opinion items in Table 11.

Chart 2. Political orientation of freshman respondents

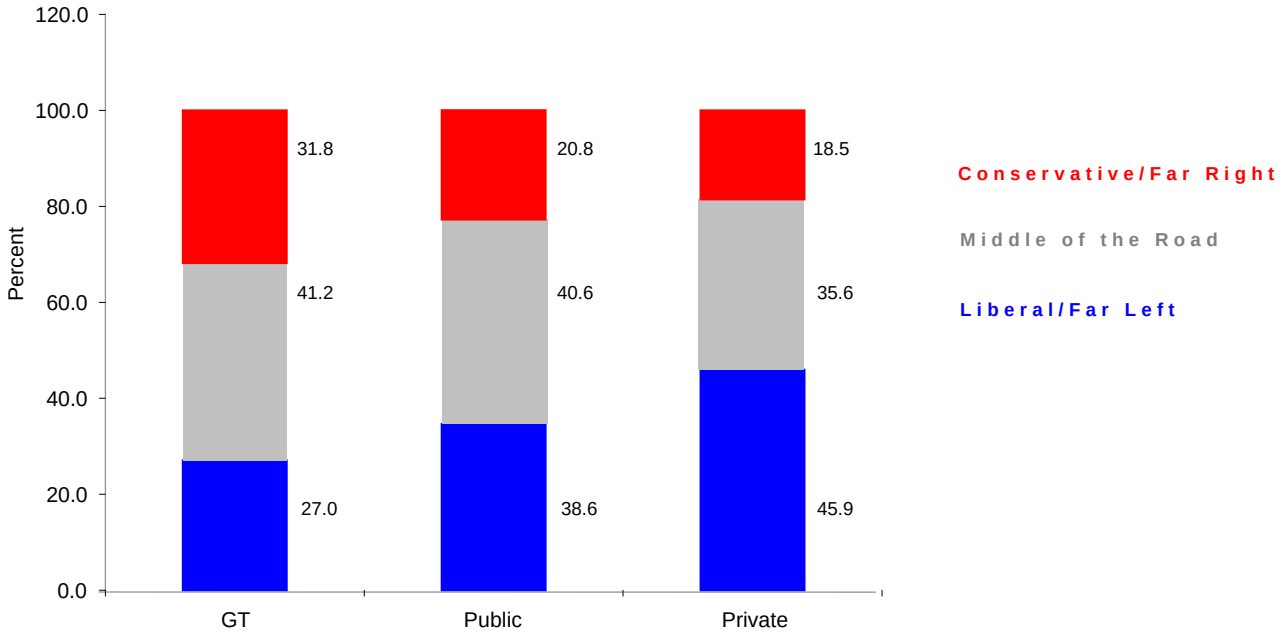


Chart 3. Political identification of GT freshman respondents: 1971–2007

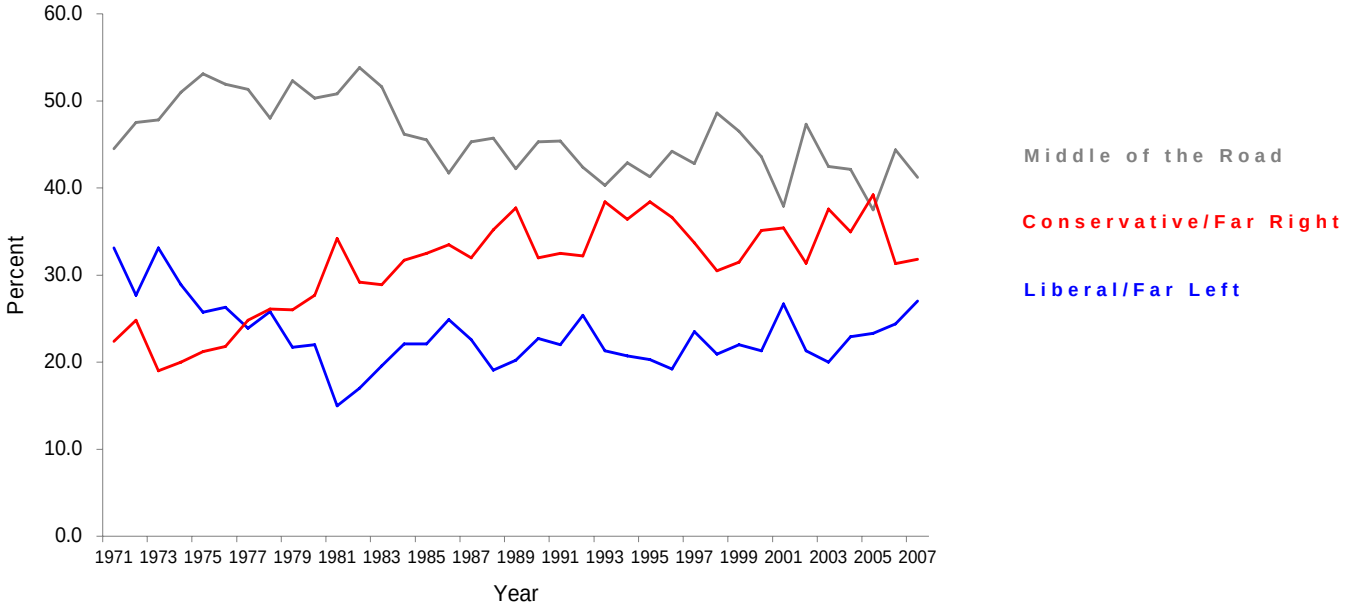


Table 11. Opinion trends for GT respondents with public and private comparators

Percent saying "Strongly" or "Somewhat Agree"	Georgia Tech			Public	Private
	1997	2002	2007	2007	2007
Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	22.5	30.4	28.2	18.2	16.3
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	71.5	66.3	65.1	55.9	58.2
There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals	78.9	68.3	58.1	51.7	44.2
The death penalty should be abolished	19.4	29.6	34.1	39.7	51.0
Abortion should be legal	56.2	54.7	59.4	66.2	71.7
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	55.6	43.1	48.3	58.2	57.6
It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships	33.1	25.5	24.9	18.5	14.0
Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	45.1	54.2	62.2	69.9	75.4

Conclusion

The CIRP Freshman Survey has been conducted annually at the Georgia Institute of Technology since 1966. Results of the CIRP Freshman Survey provide a comprehensive portrait of the changing character of our entering students. Since the sample may include bias in demographic representation, it is encouraged that any interpretation of change between survey years or of differences between students and comparison institutions be made with caution. Continuation of the CIRP Freshman Survey and further analysis (e.g., honor students vs. non-honor students) would be helpful. Additional information about the CIRP Freshman Survey may be found at < http://www.assessment.gatech.edu >.