

**CORNELL UNIVERSITY**

**2002 PARENTS SURVEY**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND EXTENDED REPORT**

Draft: October 22, 2004

Prepared by: Marin Clarkberg

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Executive Summary .....	4
1. Study Design .....	9
2. A Profile of Cornell Parents .....	11
A. Gender .....	11
B. Race, Ethnicity and Citizenship .....	11
C. Income .....	12
D. Education.....	13
E. Students' Colleges.....	13
F. Family Ties to Cornell.....	14
G. Summary .....	15
3. Satisfaction and Endorsement.....	16
A. Institutional Comparisons .....	16
B. Race, Ethnicity, Citizenship and Satisfaction.....	20
C. Satisfaction by College .....	24
D. Satisfaction with Opportunities at Cornell.....	26
E. Summary .....	27
4. Parental Concerns .....	29
A. Institutional Comparisons .....	30
B. Race, Ethnicity, Citizenship and Parental Concerns .....	32
C. Parental Concerns by College at Cornell.....	34
D. Summary .....	36
5. Communication Home.....	38
A. Race, Ethnicity, Citizenship and Communication with Parents.....	38
B. Gender and Communication with Parents.....	39
C. Parent-Child Communication by College at Cornell .....	40
D. Summary .....	41
6. Information to Parents From Cornell.....	42
A. From What Sources did Cornell Parents Get Their Information? .....	42
B. Satisfaction with Information Received from Cornell Sources.....	43
C. Satisfaction with Information on Various Topics.....	44
D. Summary .....	48
7. Coming To Campus.....	49
A. Institutional Comparisons .....	49
B. Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship and Rating the Admissions Process.....	50
C. Rating the Admissions Process by College .....	51
D. Summary .....	52
8. Paying for College .....	53
A. Financial Aid .....	53
B. Financial Aid and the Perceived Financial Impact of Paying for College.....	56
C. Sources of Funding to Pay for College.....	57
D. Education-related Debt .....	58
E. Foregone Experiences.....	60

F. Assessing the Value .....	61
G. Race, Ethnicity and Citizenship .....	62
H. College Differences in Financing a Cornell Education .....	64
I. Summary .....	66

## — EXECUTIVE SUMMARY —

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PARENTS SURVEY AND REPORT

- The Parents Survey was administered in collaboration with a set of other highly selective colleges and universities.
- Through a consortium of institutions with which Cornell shares data, it is possible to compare the responses of Cornell’s parents to parents of students at institutions in two “norm groups.” In this report, the two “norm groups” are referred to as:
  - “Head-to-Head” institutions: the group of schools which compete with Cornell on a relatively even basis for commonly admitted undergraduates
  - “Cornell Preferred” institutions: a group of institutions which more often “lose” when in direct competition with Cornell for commonly admitted undergraduates.

### A PROFILE OF CORNELL PARENTS

- While high by national standards, the median family income of Cornell’s parents is slightly lower than the income of parents in norm group institutions (see Figure 2.1, page 13 and Appendix Table A-27).
- Cornell’s parents are much more likely than parents in norm group institutions to report family ties to Cornell: nearly 18% of Cornell’s parents report that at least one parent of the child had attended Cornell, compared with fewer than 14% among parents at norm group institutions. (See Figure 2.1, page 14 and Appendix Table A-20.)
- Students are slightly more racially and ethnically diverse than their parents (see Table 1.1, page 9).
- Among colleges at Cornell, the “family tradition” of Cornell is most common in the College of Architecture, Art and Planning and least common in the College of Engineering. (Figure 2.3, page 15).

### SATISFACTION AND ENDORSEMENT

- At Cornell, like most other norm group schools, the overwhelming majority of parents report that they are satisfied with the education that their child is receiving at college. (See Figure 3.1, page 16 and Appendix Table A-6.)
- In general, the percentage of parents “very satisfied” with aspects of Cornell is greater than the corresponding percentage at Cornell Preferred schools, but slightly less than the percentage reported by parents in Head-to-head schools. However:
  - Cornell parents are less likely to be “very satisfied” than parents at other norm group institutions with the responsiveness of the administration (Figure 3.5, Appendix

- Table A-10.l), their financial aid award (Figure 3.5, Appendix Table A-10.j), the financial aid office (Figure 3.5, Appendix Table A-10.i), racial and ethnic relations on campus (Figure 3.6, Appendix Table A-10.r) and the intellectual atmosphere outside of the classroom (Figure 3.6, Appendix Table A-10.q).
- Cornell parents are more likely to be “very satisfied” than parents at norm group institutions with the campus police (Figure 3.5, Appendix Table A-10.f), safety on campus (Figure 3.6, Appendix Table A-10.n), and student housing (Figure 3.5, Appendix Table A-10.e).
  - Parents of Asian American students are about 20 percentage points less likely than parents of other race/ethnicity/citizenship students to report that they are “very satisfied” with their children’s undergraduate education (Figure 3.7, page 20 and Appendix Table A-6).
    - The gap in overall satisfaction between Asian Americans and students of other racial and ethnic groups is slightly larger at Cornell than it is at other norm group institutions (Figure 3.8, page 21).
    - When asked about specific domains of the undergraduate experience, the largest Asian American differentials appear with respect to: 1) the quality of instruction, 2) the intellectual atmosphere outside of the classroom and 3) the sense of community in residences, on or off campus. On all these measures, parents of Asian American students are more than fifteen percentage points less likely than parents of white students to report being “very satisfied.” (See Figure 3.9, page 22 and Figure 3.11, page 23.)
  - Parents of students in Engineering are less likely than parents of students in other colleges to report that they are “very satisfied” with their children’s undergraduate education, the quality of instruction and the emphasis on undergraduate education. They are, however, among the most satisfied with tutorial services. (See Figure 3.13, page 24 and Figure 3.14, page 25.)

### **PARENTAL CONCERNS**

- On most measures of concern, parents of Asian American students are twice as likely as parents of white students to express “very much” or “quite a bit” of concern. For example, 64% of parents of Asian American students express those high levels of concern over their children’s career choices, as compared to 31% of parents of white students. (See Figure 4.5, page 32 and Appendix Tables A-12.a through A-12.t.)
- Along with parents of Asian American students, parents of international students express high levels of concern over their children’s eating habits and study habits at college (see Figure 4.8, page 34).
- College differences in the levels of parental concern are relatively small, though parents of students in Human Ecology are most likely to be highly concerned about their children’s career choices, repaying loans, and about graduate school admissions. Parents of students in the College of Arts and Sciences are least likely to be highly concerned about their children’s study habits.

**COMMUNICATION HOME**

- The vast majority of Cornell students communicate with their parents by email and/or by telephone weekly or more (Figure 5.1, page 38 and Appendix Tables A-20.a. and A-20.b).
- Only 47% of parents of Asian American students (as compared to 73% of parents of white students) exchange email on a weekly basis with their children at Cornell, though as many parents of Asian American students as parents of white students talk on the phone with their children at least once a week (about 83%). (See Figure 5.1, page 38 and Appendix Tables A-20.a. and A-20.b.)
- Parents of white students are more likely than other parents to have visited Cornell during the semester: only 22% of parents of white students did *not* visit campus, as compared to 30% of parents of Asian American and underrepresented minority Cornellians, and 50% of parents of international students. (See Figure 5.2, page 39 and Appendix Tables A-20.d and A-20.e.)
- Parents of female students are more likely to talk on the phone with their children more than once a week (Figure 5.3, page 39).
- Nearly 80% of parents of international students at Cornell reported that their children had visited home in the fall semester, though this percentage is much lower than the corresponding figure for American students. (See Figure 5.2, page 39 and Appendix Tables A-20.d and A-20.e.)

**INFORMATION TO PARENTS FROM CORNELL**

- Almost all parents receive information from Cornell publications, but there are substantial differences by race and college in the likelihood of obtaining information from campus visits and/or conversation with Cornell staff and faculty. (See Figure 6.1, page 42.)
- While parents of underrepresented minority students are at least as satisfied as parents of white students with the information that they receive from Cornell sources, parents of international students and parents of Asian American students tend to be slightly less satisfied with received information. (See Figure 6.2, page 43.)
- In general, parents of Cornell students rate information more positively than parents of students in Cornell Preferred institutions, but somewhat less favorably than parents of students in Head-to-Head institutions. However, Cornell ranks lower than both norm groups regarding information on events for parents (see Figure 6.4, page 45 and Appendix Table A-5.i). Cornell is perceived to do better than both norm groups regarding information on what graduates do after college (Figure 6.4, page 45 and Appendix Table A-5.e).

- Parents of international students tend to be least likely to rate information as “excellent” (see Figure 6.5, page 46).

### **COMING TO CAMPUS**

- Compared with parents from norm group institutions, Cornell’s parents rate many aspects of the admission process less favorably. (See Figure 7.1, page 49.)
- The biggest disparities between admission process ratings of Cornell parents and parents in the norm groups are in the following domains: the financial aid application process, admission forms and documents, and easing the stress of admissions.

### **PAYING FOR COLLEGE**

- The median income of grant recipients is lower at Cornell than the median for the two norm groups (Table 8.2, page 63).
- Within every income category except the very lowest, a smaller proportion of Cornell parents report that their children receive grants than the proportion of parents in norm groups (Figure 8.3, page 65).
- Even with this variation in financial aid, cross-institutional differences in subjective impressions of the financial impact of paying for college are minor. Indeed, within each category of financial aid status (large size grants, smaller grants, loans, etc.) Cornell parents are less likely than parents of students at norm group institutions to indicate that the financial impact of paying for college has been “severe” (Figure 8.5, page 57).
- The largest share of the expense of college is paid for with parents’ savings and with parents’ earnings from current employment. Most students contribute to the costs of college, but their contributions tend to meet far less than half of all expenses (Figure 8.6, page 53-58).
- Cornell parents have slightly lower levels of education-related debt than their counterparts at other schools (Table 8.1, page 59).
- Parents in middle-income categories are more likely other parents to incur debt as part of sending their children to college (Figure 8.8, page 60).
- Cornell parents are slightly more likely than parents of students at norm group institutions to report that their children have to forego some experience at college due to financial constraints (Figure 8.9, page 61).
- Cornell parents are at least as likely as parents of students at norm group institutions to report that their children’s experiences at college are “definitely” worth the financial impact (Figure 8.10, page 62).
- Parents of underrepresented minorities at Cornell are more likely than other parents: to report that paying for college has had a “severe” impact on family finances; to carry

education-related debt; and to report that their children have had to miss out on college experiences because of money. However, they are also more likely to report that their children's experiences at college are "definitely" worth the financial impact. (See Figure 8.11, page 62; Figure 8.12, page 63; and Figure 8.13, page 64.)

- Parents of Asian American Cornellians are less likely than other parents to report that their children's educational experiences were worth the financial impact (Figure 8.12, page 63).



## 1. STUDY DESIGN

The 2002 Parents Survey was administered simultaneously at several selective colleges and universities. While all institutions shared the same core instrument, sampling strategies were left to the institution.

At Cornell, we sampled 25% of all non-underrepresented minority students in their first three years at Cornell, 50% of all non-underrepresented minority students in their final year and all underrepresented minority (URM) students. The overall response rate was 58% at Cornell, though there is considerable variation in response rates by race and other characteristics (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Population and Respondents at Cornell

	Population	Number Sampled	Number Responded	Response Rate (%)	Respondents as % of Population
Total, Cornell	13,560	5,190	3,019	58.2	22.3
By Year, Cornell					
First	3,107	1,038	668	64.4	21.5
Second	3,364	1,099	656	59.7	19.5
Third	3,478	1,086	619	57.0	17.8
Fourth	3,544	1,927	1,053	54.6	29.7
Fifth or higher	67	40	23	57.5	34.3
By Race, Cornell					
White	8,328	2,607	1,716	65.8	20.6
Asian	2,240	710	351	49.4	15.7
URM	1,426	1,397	730	52.3	51.2
Intl	986	299	124	41.5	12.6
Unknown	580	177	98	55.4	16.9
By Sex, Cornell					
Male	6,533	2,638	1,454	55.1	22.3
Female	7,027	2,552	1,565	61.3	22.3
By College, Cornell					
ALS	2,975	1,087	653	60.1	21.9
AAP	528	235	134	57.0	25.4
Arts	4,381	1,740	993	57.1	22.7
Engineering	2,794	989	580	58.6	20.8
Hum Ec	1,362	533	298	55.9	21.9
Hotel	749	288	172	59.7	23.0
ILR	731	307	183	59.6	25.0
Internal Transfer	40	11	6	54.5	15.0

Despite differences in sampling strategies implemented by the several institutions who administered the 2002 Parents Survey instrument, cross-institutional comparisons are possible with the use institution-specific weights. In this report, we present all results for Cornell in comparisons with two “norm groups”, where each norm group is a collection of at least three comparator institutions. In the text, these groups are referred to as follows:

- “Head-to-Head” institutions: the group of schools which compete with Cornell on a relatively even basis for commonly admitted undergraduates
- “Cornell Preferred” institutions: a group of institutions which more often “lose” when in direct competition with Cornell for commonly admitted undergraduates.

## 2. A PROFILE OF CORNELL PARENTS

The parents of Cornell students are exceptional, tending to be wealthier and more educated than the general population. This chapter outlines some of the general demographic characteristics of the 2002 Cornell Parents Survey sample.

### A. Gender

Sixty-one percent of the respondents to the Parents Survey are female. This may reflect the well-known tendency for women to be more inclined to respond to surveys than men, but it is also a reflection of the fact that mothers are in fact more prevalent as custodial parents. The true population proportion of women among custodial parents of Cornell students is not known.

Parents' reports of the gender of their Cornell student children were more evenly divided with 54% reporting a male student and 46% a female student at Cornell. This is close to the actual enrollment of 51% male in the Spring of 2002.

### B. Race, Ethnicity and Citizenship

As described in Chapter 1, race was a factor in our sample design. Using information available on registrar records, we oversampled minorities both because underrepresented minorities (URMs) tend to have lower response rates than others and to ensure adequate numbers for our analyses.

Occasionally, registrar data on race does not concur with self-reports of race in a survey instrument. In the case of the Parents Survey, where students themselves were not asked about their racial or ethnic identification, we used registrar data instead of parents' reports of their children's races. In cases where registrar information was missing, we imputed any available values from parents' reports on the survey.

Table 2.1 Race of Cornell Students: Indicators from Registrar and Parents Survey

Race	Actual at Cornell, Oct 2002	Among Cornell Parents Survey Sample Respondents	Cornell Parents Adjusted with Sampling Weights
White	61.4%	59.9%	70.6%
Asian Am	16.5%	11.6%	13.8%
URM	10.7%	19.8%	7.5%
Intl <sup>a</sup>	7.1%	4.5%	4.6%
Multiracial	<sup>b</sup>	3.8%	3.0%
Unknown	4.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

<sup>a</sup> Students coded as "Intl" are not US citizens nor permanent residents of the US.

<sup>b</sup> Registrar data does not permit multiple race categories.

Taking into account sample design effects through weighting, 71% of our respondents were parents of students who were white citizens (or permanent residents) of the United States. Administrative data indicate that this figure is 61% in the population (see Table 2.1). This

disparity results from the lower likelihood of study participation among parents of nonwhite students and especially parents of international students, as shown in Table 1.1.

Parent race (as self-reported in the survey) and the student race (generally derived from registrar data) matched in 93% of the cases as shown in bold along the diagonal in Table 2.2. The most common forms of non-correspondence are instances of a white parent with a Hispanic or a multiracial child. White parents with Hispanic children constitute 1.0% of the responding population, and this group constitutes a sizeable minority of the 3.8% of all students who are Hispanic. Looking at this differently: slightly more than a quarter of students who are identified as Hispanic on registrar data have at least one parent who self-identifies as white. Similarly, four-in-ten multiracial students, a third of Native American students, and one-in-twenty of African American students have a white parent responding to the survey. These differences are not only an effect of using different sources of data for parents and students: analyses using parents' reports of their children's races also indicate that children are somewhat more diverse than parents. Thus it appears that a sizeable proportion of nonwhite students have at least one white parent.

Table 2.2 Race and Ethnicity of Students and their Parents

Student's Race	Responding Parent's Race								Total
	Afr. Am.	Asian	Hisp	Nat. Am.	White	Intl	Unk'n	Multi	
African Am.	<b>3.9%</b>	-	-	-	0.2%	-	-	-	4.3%
Asian Am.	-	<b>11.2%</b>	-	-	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	-	11.9%
Hispanic	-	-	<b>2.6%</b>	-	1.0%	-	-	-	3.8%
Native Am.	-	-	-	<b>0.2%</b>	0.1%	-	-	-	0.4%
White	-	0.2%	0.2%	-	<b>70.2%</b>	-	0.5%	0.2%	71.3%
International	-	0.4%	-	-	0.1%	<b>2.1%</b>	-	-	2.7%
Unknown	-	0.2%	-	-	0.5%	-	<b>1.5%</b>	-	2.3%
Multiracial	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	-	1.4%	-	-	<b>1.1%</b>	3.4%
Total	4.2%	12.5%	3.1%	0.3%	73.8%	2.4%	2.4%	1.3%	100.0%

Note: Only figures greater than .1% are displayed.

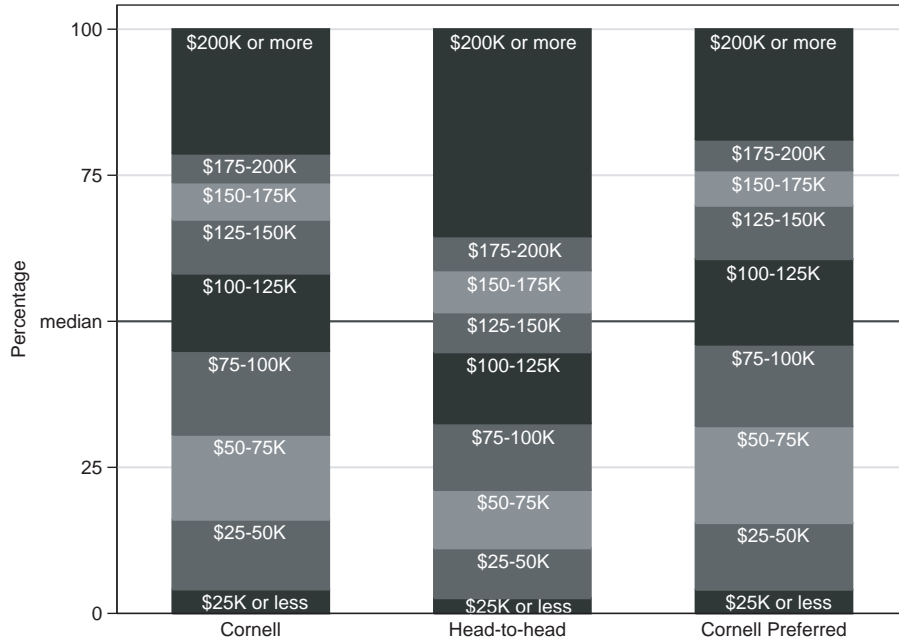
### C. Income

The median household annual income of Cornell parents who responded was in the range of \$100,000 and \$125,000, as indicated by the median line passing through this income category in the Cornell bar in Figure 2.1. (For more specifics on the income distribution, see Appendix Table A-27.) This is substantially greater than the median household income across U.S. Households,<sup>1</sup> but it is also somewhat less than the median of \$125,000 reported for parents across the collection of selective schools which administered this survey.

More specifically, the median income of Cornell parents was slightly less than the median income of parents of students in Head-to-Head institutions, and approximately equal to the median earnings of parents of students in Cornell Preferred institutions.

<sup>1</sup> For example, among all U.S. Households headed by someone 45 to 54 years of age, the median income is \$73,412.

Figure 2.1 Household Income Distribution, Cornell and Norm Groups



**D. Education**

Cornell parents are highly educated (see Table 2.3). Half of the sample has a graduate degree: 34% had attained a Master’s degree (and no higher), 5% had received a law degree, approximately 9% had received a Ph.D., and 5% had received an M.D. More details on parental educational attainment are presented in Appendix Tables A-18.a. and A-18.b.

Table 2.3 Parents’ Educational Attainment

Degree	Percent
Less than a Bachelor’s Degree	18.4
Bachelor’s Degree	29.1
Master’s Degree (only)	33.9
Law Degree (with or without Master’s)	4.8
Ph.D. (with or without other degrees)	9.1
M.D. (with or without Master’s)	4.7
Total	100.0%

**E. Students’ Colleges**

There are seven undergraduate colleges at Cornell University. Though response rates by college differ some (see Table 1.1), the sample of Cornell parents closely reflects the distribution of students across colleges in the University, with approximately one-third of our respondents being parents of students in the College of Arts and Sciences, and about one-fifth each in the colleges of Agriculture and Engineering. Each of the colleges of Hotel, Architecture and ILR were represented by between four and six percent of the sample (see Table 2.4).

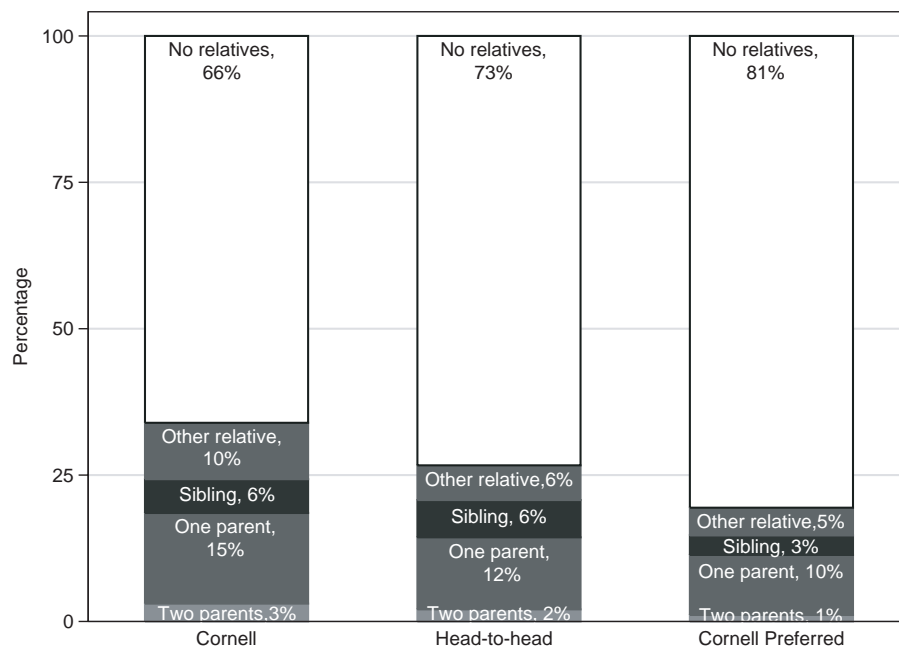
Table 2.4 College of Cornell Students: Registrar and Parents Survey Data

College	Actual at Cornell, Oct 2002	Among Respondents to the Parents Survey	Respondents Adjusted with Sampling Weights
AAP	4.1%	4.4%	4.2%
Arts	32.0%	32.9%	31.8%
Engineering	20.0%	19.2%	20.3%
Hotel	5.7%	5.7%	5.8%
Agriculture	22.2%	21.6%	22.4%
Hum Ec	10.1%	9.9%	9.8%
ILR	5.6%	6.1%	5.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## F. Family Ties to Cornell

Cornell students are more likely than students in our norm groups to have ties to their colleges or universities within their families. Fully one third of Cornell students have at least one relative who had attended Cornell, 18.1% have at least one parent who had attended Cornell, and 3% of students have two alumni parents. These figures are substantially higher than they are among our norm groups, as illustrated in Figure 2.2 and in Appendix Table A-20.

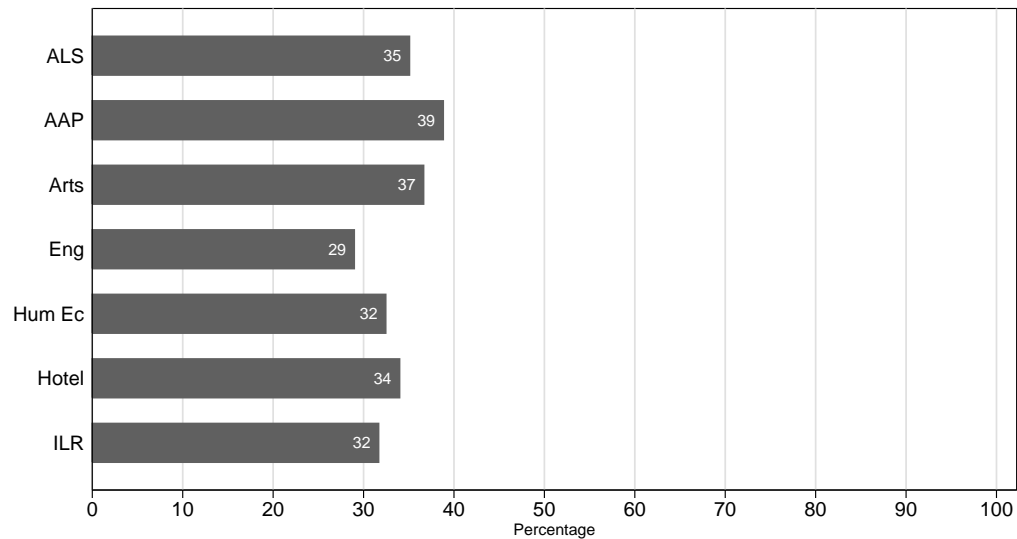
Figure 2.2. Family Ties to the Surveying Institution, Cornell and Norm Groups



Note: Students with multiple family relationships with alumni are coded according to the closest family tie, with parents being the most proximate, followed by siblings and other relatives.

The extent of family ties varies somewhat across colleges, with 39% of Architecture, Arts and Planning students and only 29% of Engineering students having at least one family tie to Cornell (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3 Percent of Students with at Least One Relative Having Attended Cornell, by College



## G. Summary

---

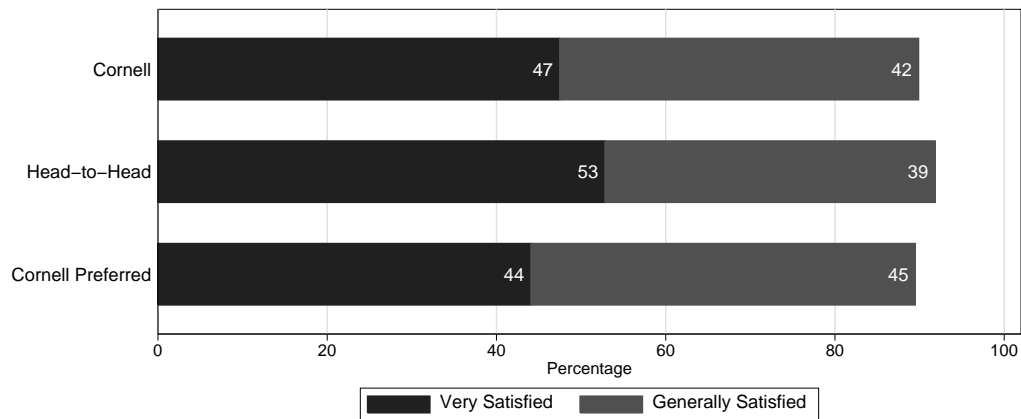
- While high by national standards, the median family income of Cornell's parents is slightly lower than the income of parents in norm group institutions (see Figure 2.1, page 13 and Appendix Table A-27).
- Cornell's parents are much more likely than parents in norm group institutions to report family ties to Cornell: nearly 18% of Cornell's parents report that at least one parent of the child had attended Cornell, compared with fewer than 14% among parents at norm group institutions. (See Figure 2.1, page 14 and Appendix Table A-20.)
- Students are slightly more racially and ethnically diverse than their parents (see Table 1.1, page 9).
- Among colleges at Cornell, the "family tradition" of Cornell is most common in the College of Architecture, Art and Planning and least common in the College of Engineering. (Figure 2.3, page 15).

### 3. SATISFACTION AND ENDORSEMENT

#### A. Institutional Comparisons

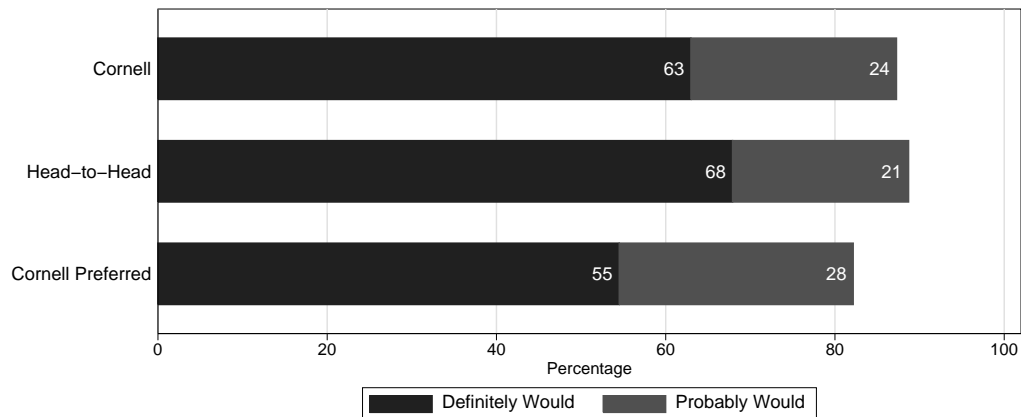
Parents were asked, “Overall, how satisfied are you with your child’s undergraduate education so far?” Forty-seven percent of Cornell parents reported that they were “very satisfied” and an additional 42% indicated that they were “generally satisfied” with their children’s education at Cornell (Figure 3.1). Very few parents indicate that they are dissatisfied in this overall measure. These figures are generally similar with the numbers reported at norm group institutions, although Cornell parents appear slightly less satisfied than those parents at institutions with which we compete most directly in admissions.

Figure 3.1 Parents’ Overall Satisfaction with Their Child’s Undergraduate Education, Cornell and Norm Groups



These high satisfaction rates among parents are echoed in the high rates of endorsement of their children’s institutions. When asked, “Would you encourage a high school senior who resembles your child (same background, abilities, interests, and temperament) to attend your child’s college/university?,” nearly two-thirds of Cornell respondents indicated that they “definitely would” (see Figure 3.2 and Appendix Table A-7).

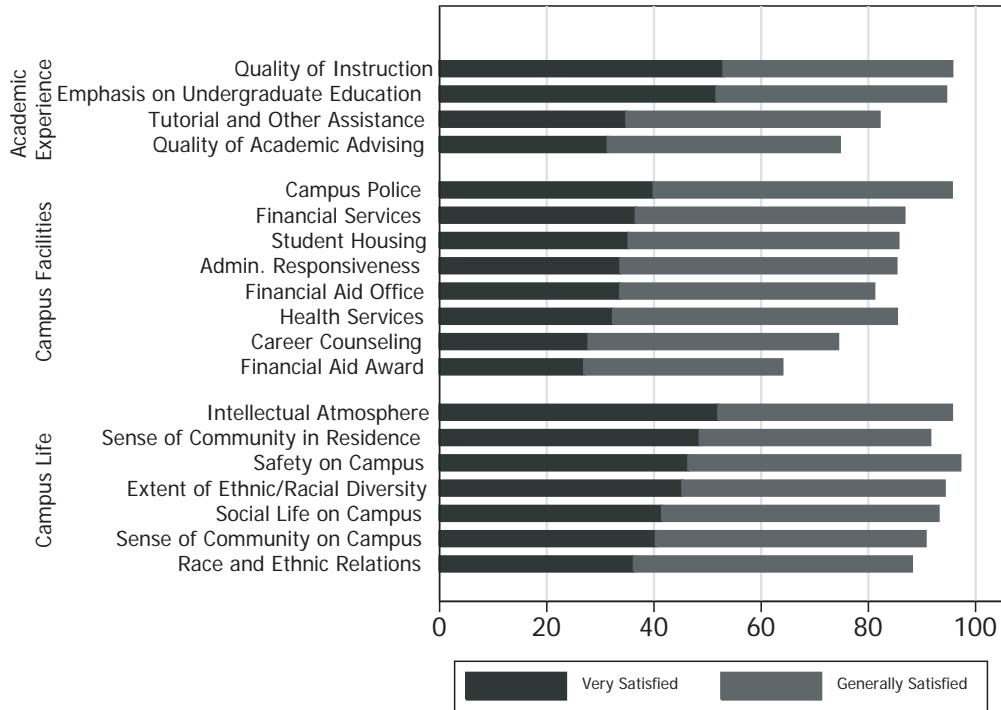
Figure 3.2 Parents’ Endorsement of Their Child’s Undergraduate Institution, Cornell and Norm Groups





The Parents Survey also asks respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction with a number of more specific services or aspects of the institution. Overall, satisfaction rates are high with a majority of parents reporting satisfaction on all items (Figure 3.3).

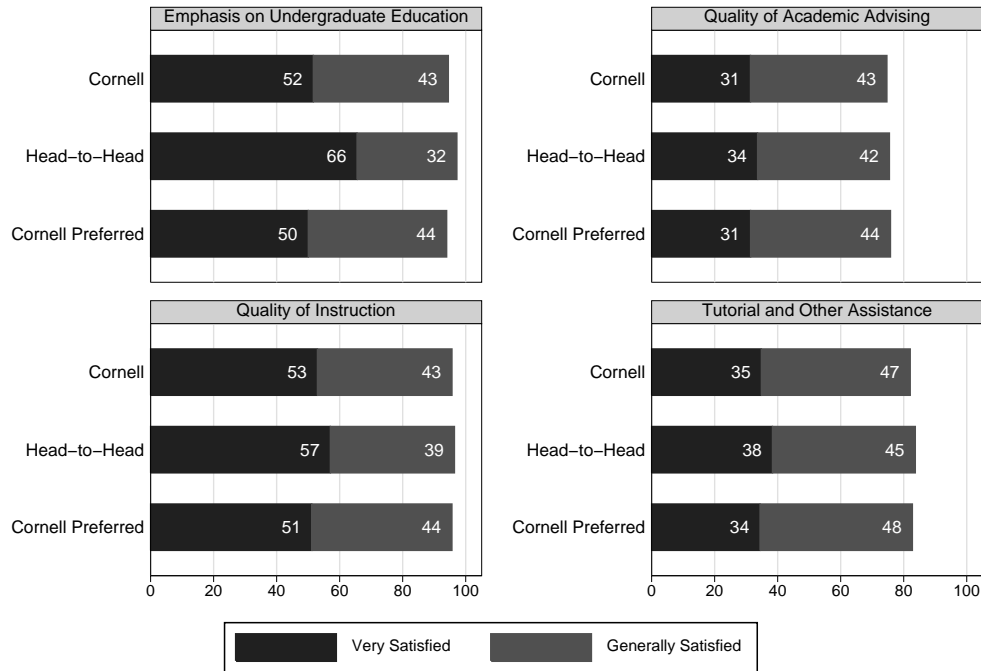
Figure 3.3 Parents’ Satisfaction with Various Aspects of Cornell



Among these measures, the four strongest correlates with overall satisfaction relate to the quality of academic experiences (all in the top panel of Figure 3.3): the quality of instruction, the emphasis on undergraduate education, tutorial help and other academic assistance, and the quality of academic advising.

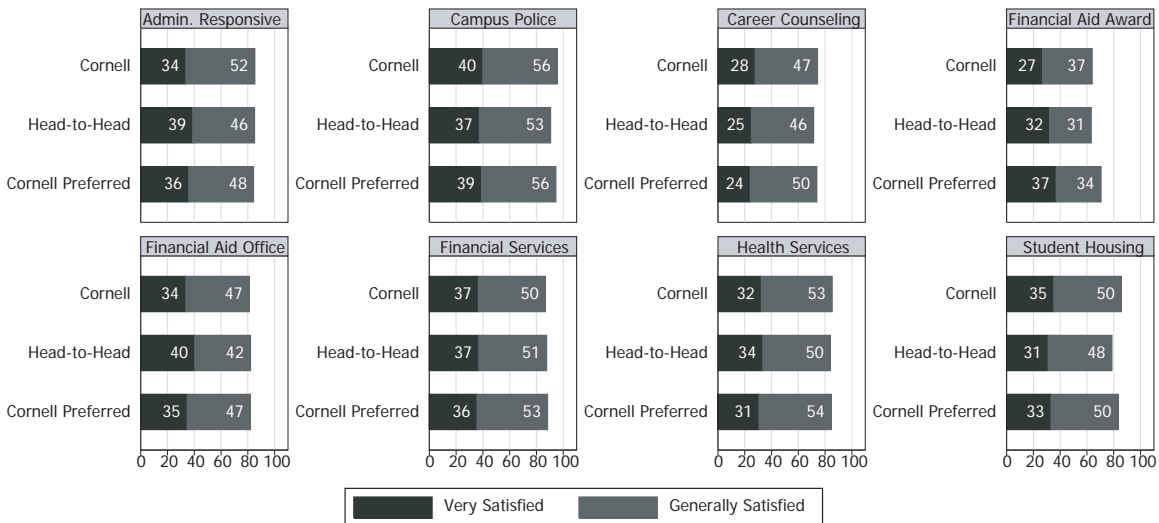
Consistent with results for overall satisfaction (e.g. Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 above), Cornell parents are less likely to be “very satisfied” than parents of students in Head-to-Head institutions, but are slightly more satisfied than the parents of students in Cornell Preferred schools with regard to the quality of instruction, the emphasis on undergraduate instruction, and tutorial help and other academic assistance (see Figure 3.4). Across institutions, parents are less satisfied with academic advising than they are with other aspects of the undergraduate academic experience, but differences by norm group are generally small (see Tables A-10.a through A-10.d for more detailed results).

Figure 3.4 Parents' Satisfaction with Academic Experiences, Cornell and Norm Groups



With respect to the quality of campus services and facilities (Figure 3.5), Cornell parents were more satisfied than parents of students in norm group institutions with respect to student housing and campus police (see also Appendix Tables A-10.e and A-10.f).

Figure 3.5 Parents' Satisfaction with Campus Services and Facilities, Cornell and Norm Groups

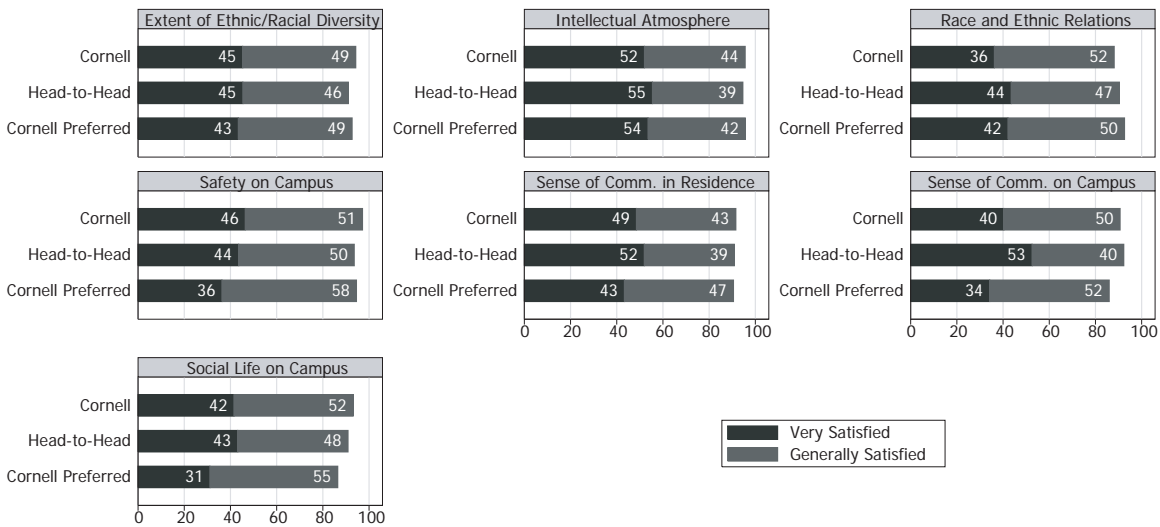


Cornell parents were somewhat less satisfied than other parents at norm group institutions with financial aid awards, with the financial aid office, and with the administration's responsiveness to parent and student concerns. For example, only 27% of Cornell parents were "very satisfied" with their children's financial aid awards, compared with 32% and 37%

of parents in the two norm groups considered here (Figure 3.5). Institutional differences in the administration’s responsiveness are statistically significant (see Table A-10.l) though smaller in magnitude.

In general, campus life is well-regarded by parents of Cornell students (see Figure 3.6). For example, 94% of Cornell’s parents report that they are “very” or “generally” satisfied with social life on campus—a percentage that compares favorably with figures from norm group institutions (see also Appendix Table A-10.m). Cornell parents are also more satisfied than other parents with respect to campus safety.

Figure 3.6 Parents’ Satisfaction with Campus Life, Cornell and Norm Groups



As noted above, satisfaction with student housing facilities (Figure 3.5) is high at Cornell. Cornell’s parents also report a high level of satisfaction with the the sense of community in children’s residences—on or off campus (see Figure 3.6 and Appendix Table A-10.p).

But while 48% of Cornell parents report that they are “very satisfied” with the sense of community in their children’s college residences (Figure 3.6), Cornell parents tend to be less satisfied with respect to the broader sense of community across the campus: only 40% of Cornell parents report being “very satisfied” with the “sense of community on campus.” This number is substantially lower than the figure of nearly 53% reported for our closest competitor campuses.

Cornell parents are less satisfied than other parents with racial and ethnic relations on campus, as well as Cornell’s intellectual environment outside the classroom. Only 36% of Cornell’s parents report being “very satisfied” with racial and ethnic relations on campus, as compared to over 42% at institutions in our norm groups. Differences in satisfaction with the intellectual atmosphere are smaller, but are statistically significant (Appendix Table A-10.q).

**B. Race, Ethnicity, Citizenship and Satisfaction.**

Satisfaction with the university experience is shaped by demographic factors, both at Cornell and at other institutions. In this section, we focus on racial, ethnic and citizenship differences in reports of satisfaction.

A few reminders about coding for race in this report: Students coded as “international” are those who have only a temporary or student visa; students who have green cards but are citizens of other countries are grouped here with American citizens. The category “URM” includes students who identified themselves to the registrar as African American, Hispanic American, Native American or some combination of those. The multiracial category includes students who marked multiple categories, including one non-URM category, in identifying their own race.

Note that the number of respondents in a racial/ethnic/citizenship category varies, with 1,809 parents of white Cornellians, 116 parents of international Cornellians, and 137 parents of multi-racial Cornellians responding to the survey (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Number of Respondents by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship, Cornell and Norm Groups

Student's Race	Cornell	Head-to-head	Cornell Preferred
White	1,809	2,490	3,923
Asian	350	278	827
URM	599	442	335
Multi	137	147	154
Intl	116	15	165
Unknown	9	121	260

Consistent with a broader body of literature on race and student satisfaction, data from Cornell indicate that parents of Asian American students are substantially less satisfied than parents of other students (e.g. Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 Cornell Parents' Overall Satisfaction with Their Children's Undergraduate Education, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship

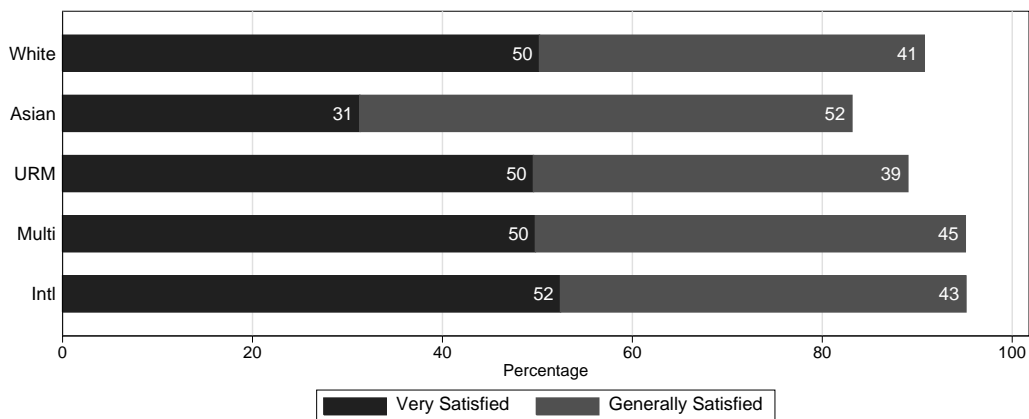
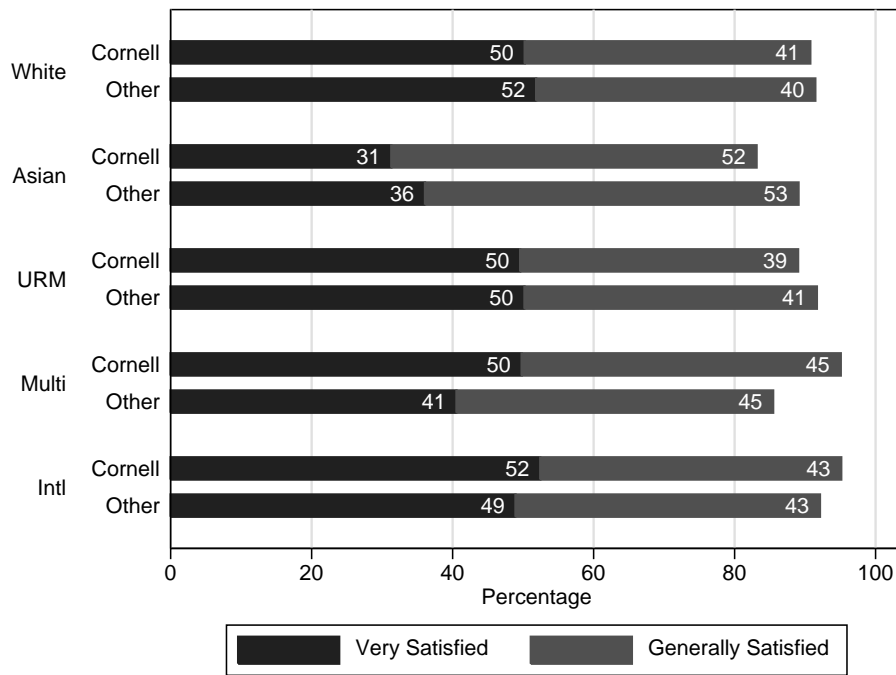


Figure 3.8 examines this disparity by institution, comparing Cornell with a combination of the two norm groups considered in this report. At Cornell, 50% of the parents of white students but only 31% of the parents of Asian Americans report being “very satisfied” with their children’s undergraduate education—a gap of nineteen points. This is slightly larger than the sixteen percentage point gap between whites and Asian Americans observed at other institutions in this study (Figure 3.8). However, when we consider “very satisfied” and “generally satisfied” parents together, racial gaps are smaller (e.g. Figure 3.7) with just over 90% of parents of white, 83% parents of Asian American, 89% of parents of under-represented minority, and 95% of parents of multi-racial and international Cornell students reporting a positive assessment of their children’s educational experience.

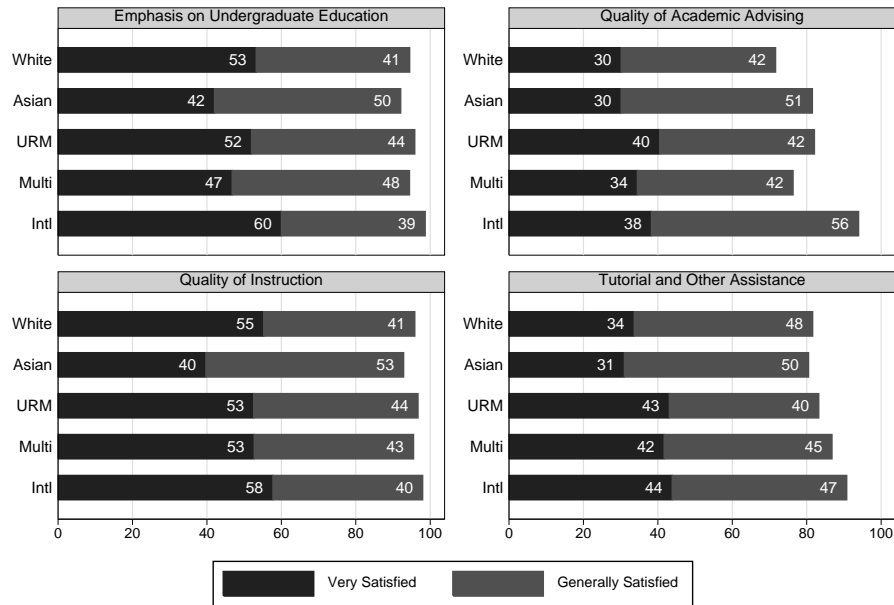
Figure 3.8 Parents’ Overall Satisfaction with Their Children’s Undergraduate Education, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship and Institution



Parents of Asian American students are also substantially less likely than other parents to say that they “definitely would” recommend their children’s college or university to another, similar child (see Appendix Table A-7). Two-thirds of parents of white, under-represented minority, multi-racial and international Cornell students say that they “definitely would” recommend Cornell. The corresponding figure for Asian Americans is 55%.

These differences in response patterns of the parents of Asian American students vis-à-vis other races are echoed in response to the two primary items tapping satisfaction with their children’s academic experiences. Parents of Asian American Cornellians were more than fifteen percentage points less likely than parents of white Cornellians to report that they were “very satisfied” with the quality of instruction at Cornell, and eleven percentage points less likely to report that they were “very satisfied” with Cornell’s emphasis on undergraduate education (Figure 3.8, Appendix Table A-10.a and A-10.b).

Figure 3.9 Parents' Satisfaction with Aspect of Academic Experiences, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship



Race, ethnicity and citizenship appear to play a relatively minor role in satisfaction with campus services and facilities. Parents of Asian American students are significantly less satisfied with student housing (see Appendix Table A-10.e): 29% report being “very satisfied” as compared to 35% of parents of white students and 45% of parents of underrepresented minority students. Parents of Asian American students are also slightly less likely to report being “very satisfied” with administration responsiveness and with campus police. Parents of white students are least likely to report satisfaction with their financial aid award (Figure 3.10 and Appendix Table A-10.i).

Figure 3.10 Parents' Satisfaction with Aspects of Campus Services and Facilities, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship

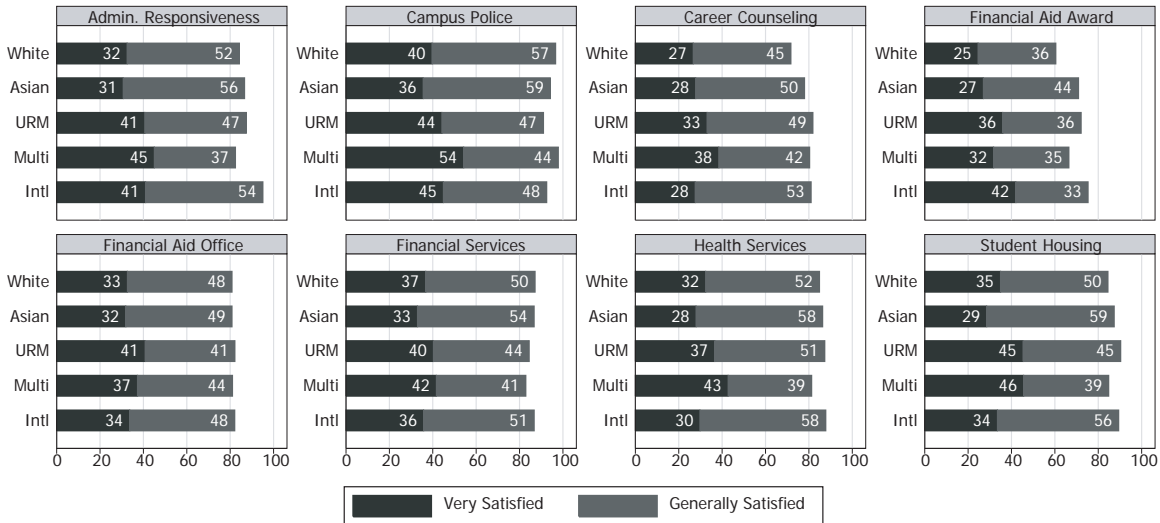
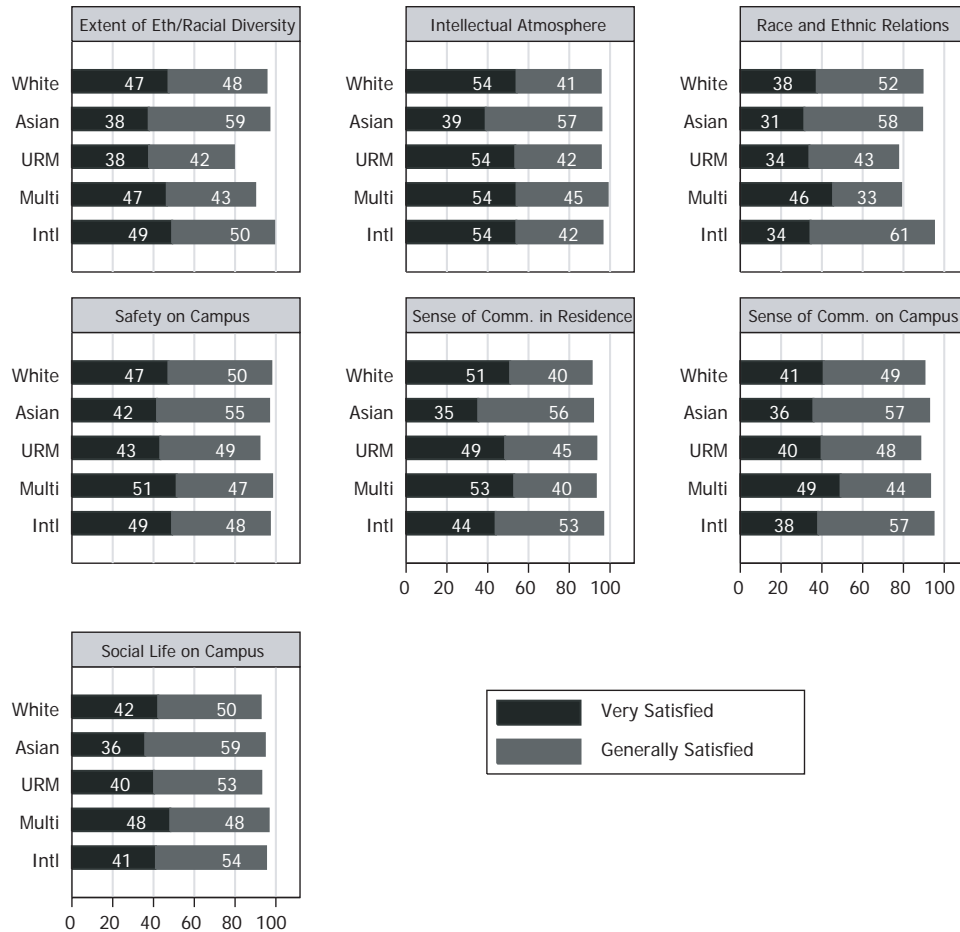


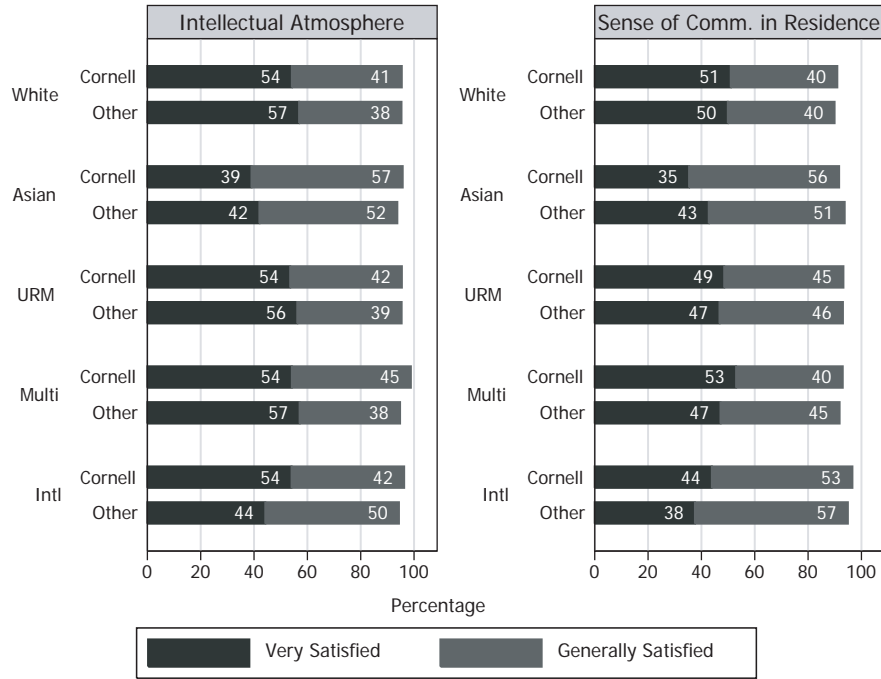
Figure 3.11 Parents' Satisfaction with Aspects of Campus Life, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship



Race, ethnicity and citizenship play an important role in shaping satisfaction with respect to several domains of campus life (Figure 3.11). Notably, parents of Asian American Cornellians are fifteen percentage points less likely than other parents to indicate that they are “very satisfied” with the intellectual atmosphere outside the classroom at Cornell. They are also less likely than other parents to report the highest level of satisfaction with the sense of community in their children’s residences: only 35% of parents of Asian American Cornellians, but about half of parents of white, multiracial and underrepresented minority students were “very satisfied” on this measure (Figure 3.11 and Appendix Table A-10.p). These disparities are larger at Cornell than at the other institutions considered in this study (Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.11 (as well as Appendix Table A-10.r) also indicates that satisfaction with the extent of racial and ethnic diversity on campus is highest among whites, with 47% of parents of white students saying they are “very satisfied” and lowest among parents of Asian American and underrepresented minority students, with only 38% reporting that level of satisfaction.

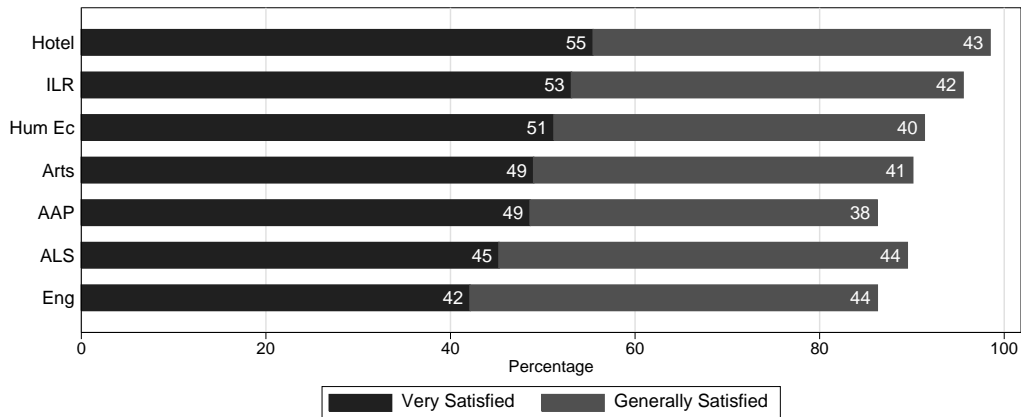
Figure 3.12 Parents' Satisfaction with Campus Intellectual Atmosphere and Sense of Community in Residence (On or Off campus), by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship



**C. Satisfaction by College**

There are some differences among Cornell's parents in the level of overall satisfaction they report depending on which college their children attend (see Figure 3.13) and Appendix Table A-6 and A-7). Overall, parents of students in Hotel (with 98%) and in Industrial and Labor Relations (with 95%) report the highest levels of satisfaction while parents of students in Engineering (with 86%) report the lowest levels of satisfaction. Across the other schools, approximately half of Cornell parents report being "very satisfied" on this measure.

Figure 3.13 Parents' Overall Satisfaction with Their Child's Undergraduate Education, by College

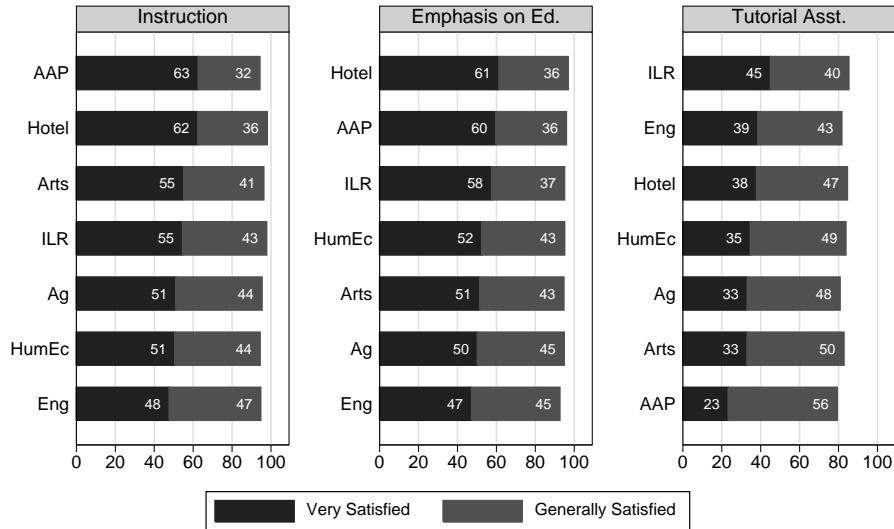




The Hotel School also does well relative to the other colleges at Cornell on three measures of the undergraduate academic experience: the overall quality of instruction, the emphasis on undergraduate education, and tutorial help and other academic assistance, as shown in Figure 3.14.

Parents of students in the College of Engineering have relatively low levels of satisfaction with the quality of instruction and with the emphasis on undergraduate education, but these parents suggest that the tutorial assistance available to students in Engineering is among the best available across Cornell’s seven colleges (Figure 3.14). Conversely, while parents of students in Architecture, Art and Planning tend to be very satisfied with the quality of instruction and with the emphasis on undergraduate education, less than a quarter of these parents are very satisfied with the tutorial assistance in that college.

Figure 3.14 Parents’ Satisfaction with the Quality of Instruction, the Emphasis on Undergraduate Education and Tutorial and Other Academic Assistance, by College



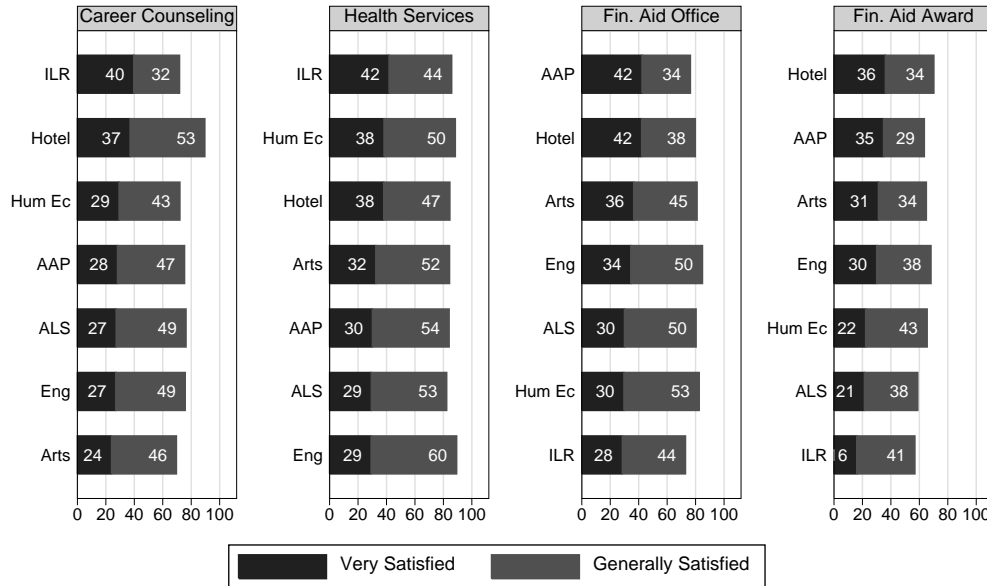
While colleges at Cornell share some institutional services, such as the campus health center, other services and facilities vary or are supplemented by individual colleges. Figure 3.15 illustrates parental satisfaction with respect to four domains of campus services and facilities by college.

Parents of students in different colleges also report widely divergent levels of satisfaction with respect to career counseling and placement services. Close to 40% of parents of ILR and Hotel students are “very satisfied” with these services, while only 27% of those in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 27% of those in the College of Engineering and 24% in the College of Arts and Sciences report such a high level of satisfaction.

Parents of students in Hotel and in Art, Architecture and Planning are the most satisfied among Cornell parents with respect to their financial aid award and the financial aid office. For example, 36% of parents of students in the Hotel school report that they are “very satisfied” with their financial aid award. In contrast, only 16% of parents of ILR students

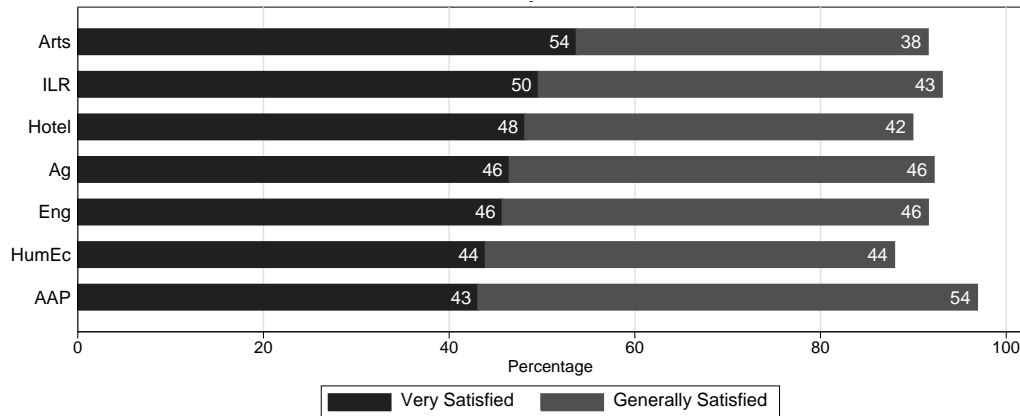
report that level of satisfaction on this measure (see Figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15 Parents' Satisfaction with the Career Counseling and Placement, Student Health and Counseling Services, the Financial Aid Office and Their Financial Aid Awards, by College



Parents of students in the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell are most likely to report being “very satisfied” with the sense of community in their children’s residence (Figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16 Parents' Satisfaction with the Sense of Community in Their Children's Residences (On or Off Campus), by College

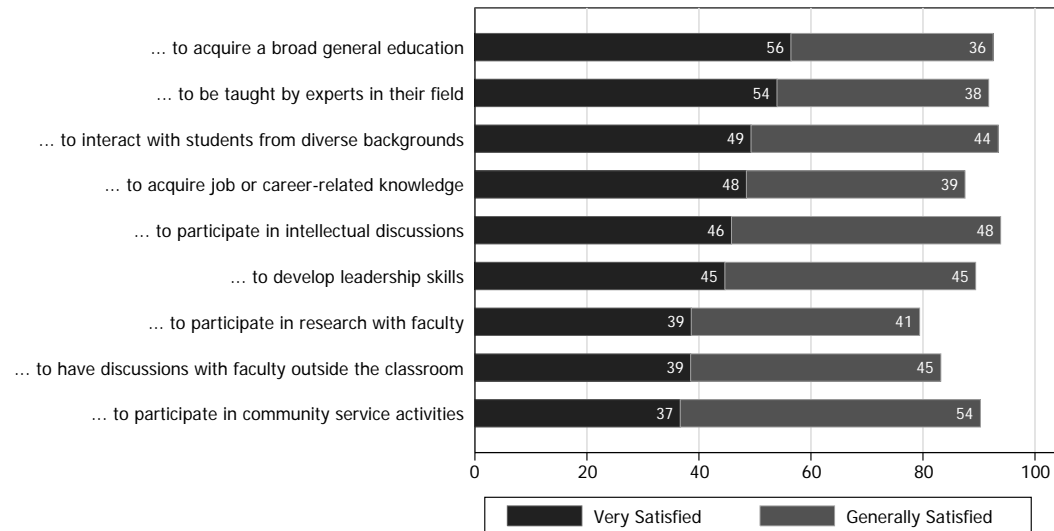


### D. Satisfaction with Opportunities at Cornell

In 2002, Cornell appended to the core instrument twenty questions which were asked only on the Cornell campus. Nine of these items followed the stem question, “As a parent, how satisfied are you with the extent to which Cornell has provided the following opportunities

to your son or daughter?” The nine items, and the percent of parents who responded that they were “very satisfied” or “generally satisfied” with each of the items, are portrayed in Figure 3.17.

Figure 3.17 Cornell Parents’ Satisfaction with Opportunities Provided by Cornell



Consistent with other evidence presented in this report, satisfaction rates are generally high among Cornell’s parents, with eighty percent or more reporting positive satisfaction with the opportunities provided at Cornell. Parents are somewhat more likely to be “very satisfied” with the broad education their children are receiving and with the opportunity to be taught by an “expert” than they are with the extent of student-faculty connections (either through research or in discussions outside of class) or the opportunity to participate in community service activities. Additional details on gender, racial/ethnic, and college differences in responses to these measures are in Appendix Tables A-31.a through A-31.i.

## E. Summary

- At Cornell, as at the norm group schools, the overwhelming majority of parents report that they are satisfied with the education that their children are receiving at college. (See Figure 3.1, page 16 and Appendix Table A-6.)
- In general, the percentage of parents “very satisfied” with aspects of Cornell is greater than the corresponding percentage Cornell Preferred schools, but slightly less than the percentage reported at Head-to-head schools. However:
  - Cornell parents are less likely to be “very satisfied” than parents at norm group institutions with the responsiveness of the administration (Figure 3.5, Appendix Table A-10.l), their financial aid award (Figure 3.5, Appendix Table A-10.j), the financial aid office (Figure 3.5, Appendix Table A-10.i), racial and ethnic relations on campus (Figure 3.6, Appendix Table A-10.r) and the intellectual atmosphere outside of the classroom (Figure 3.6, Appendix Table A-10.q).
  - Cornell parents are more likely to be “very satisfied” than parents at norm group

institutions with the campus police (Figure 3.5, Appendix Table A-10.f), safety on campus (Figure 3.6, Appendix Table A-10.n), and student housing (Figure 3.5, Appendix Table A-10.e).

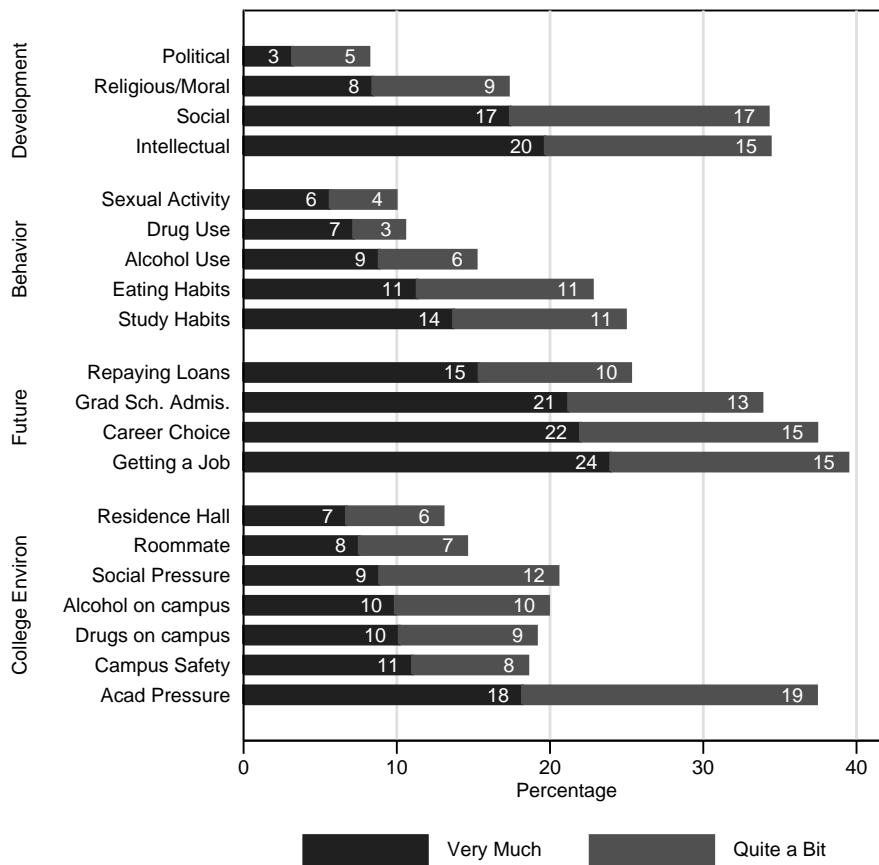
- Parents of Asian American students are about 20 percentage points less likely than parents of other race/ethnicity/citizenship students to report that they are “very satisfied” with their children’s undergraduate education (Figure 3.7, page 20 and Appendix Table A-6).
- The gap in overall satisfaction between Asian Americans and others is slightly larger at Cornell than it is at norm group institutions (Figure 3.8, page 21).
- When asked about specific domains of the undergraduate experience, the largest Asian American differentials appear with respect to: 1) the quality of instruction, 2) the intellectual atmosphere outside of the classroom and 3) the sense of community in residences, on or off campus. On all three measures, parents of Asian American students are more than fifteen percentage points less likely than parents of white students to report being “very satisfied.” (See Figure 3.9, page 22 and Figure 3.11, page 23.)
- Parents of students in the Engineering school are less likely than parents of students in other colleges to report that they are “very satisfied” with their children’s undergraduate education, the quality of instruction and the emphasis on undergraduate education. They are, however, among the most satisfied with tutorial services. (See Figure 3.13, page 24 and Figure 3.14, page 25.)

### 4. PARENTAL CONCERNS

Parents were asked “How much have you been concerned this academic year about the following aspects of your child’s life?” Four general areas were inquired about: “Your child’s development,” a section including four items; “Your child’s behavior,” including five items; “Your child’s future,” listing four items; and “The college environment,” a section with seven items. Parents chose from five response categories: “Not At All,” “Somewhat,” “Moderately,” “Quite a Bit” and “Very Much.”

In general, levels of concern were low, with a majority of parents expressing that they were “not at all” or only “somewhat” concerned with fourteen out of the twenty specific domains included in the questionnaire. The focus in this chapter is on responses which indicated that parents were either “quite” or “very” concerned with some aspect of their children’s lives. The percentage of parents responding with such a high level of concern to each of the twenty items in this series is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Cornell Parents’ Level of Concern



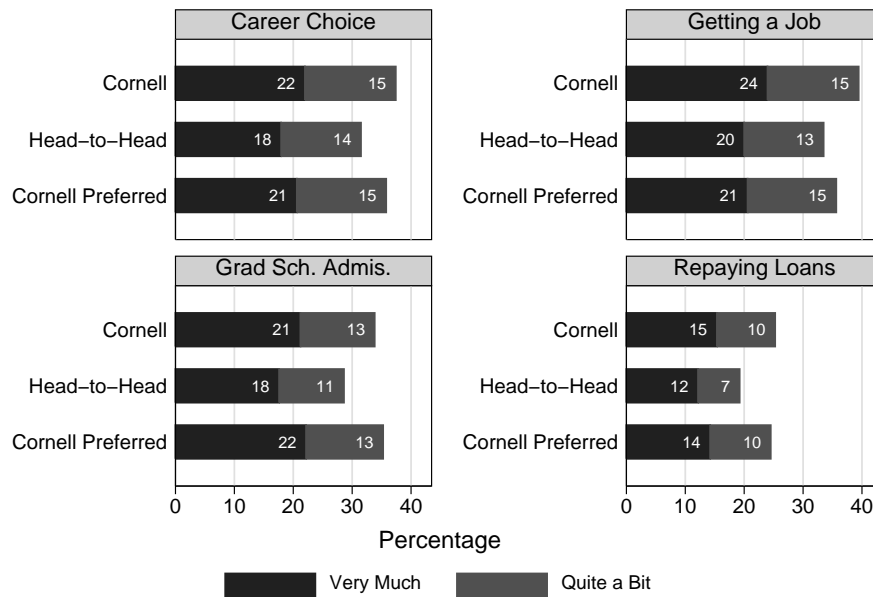
The top ten items generating substantial concern among Cornell parents include all four items relating to their children’s futures (getting a job, choosing a career, getting into graduate school, and repaying loans), two measures of the college environment (academic

stress/pressure and social stress/pressure), their children’s social as well as intellectual development, study habits and, finally, eating habits. For each of these ten variables, more than 1-in-5 parents expressed that they were “very much” or “quite a bit” concerned. The remainder of this chapter focuses primarily on differentials observed for these ten domains of concern.

**A. Institutional Comparisons**

As a block, the questions relating to their children’s futures generate the most concern among Cornell parents; relatively high levels of concern about the future are true at other institutions as well. Still, compared to parents at norm group institutions, Cornell parents are more likely to report that they are “quite a bit” or “very much” concerned about their children getting a job, choosing a career, and repaying loans (Figure 4.2). Cornell parents are more concerned than parents at Cornell’s closest competitor institutions about their children’s graduate school admissions.

Figure 4.2 Parents’ Level of Concern with Aspects of Their Children’s Future, by Norm Group

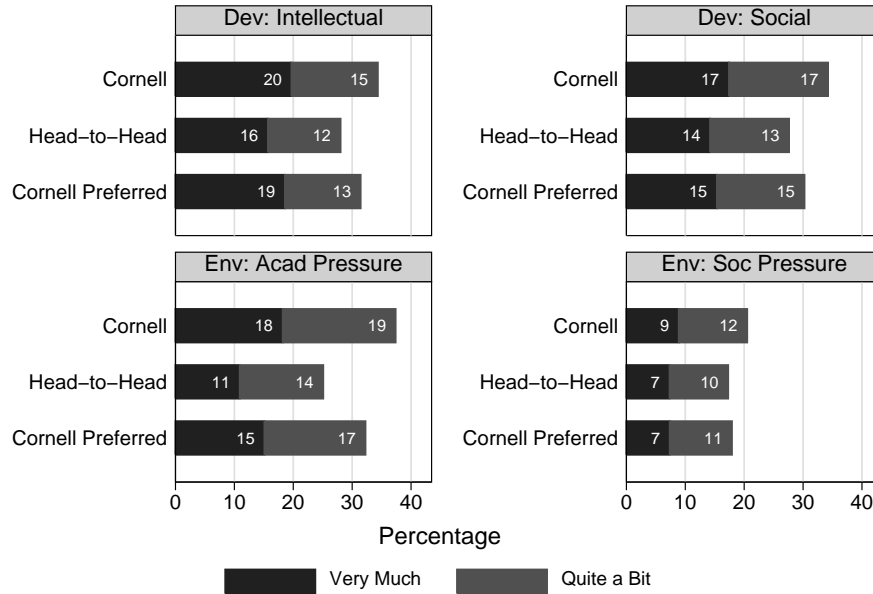


Cornell Parents are also more concerned than parents at norm group institutions about their children’s development. Just over a third (34%) of Cornell parents expressed that they were “very much” or “quite a bit” concerned with their children’s social development and a nearly equivalent number (35%) were similarly concerned with their children’s intellectual development. The proportions among the two norm groups considered here were lower, at between 28% and 32%.

This same pattern holds for two measures tapping pressures in the Cornell campus environment: more parents at Cornell than at norm group institutions expressed concern about the academic stress/pressure and the social stress/pressure on campus. Specifically, 37% of Cornell parents expressed high levels of concern about their children’s academic

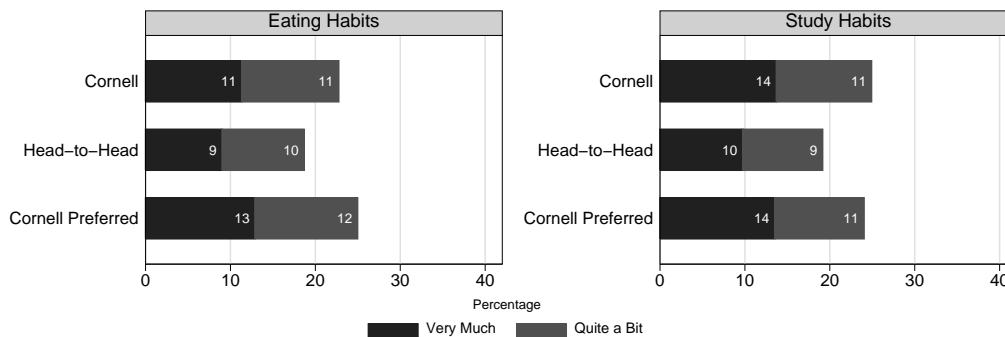
pressures, and 21% expressed high levels of concern about their children’s social pressures.

Figure 4.3 Parents’ Level of Concern with Aspects of Their Children’s Development and Aspects of the College Environment, by Norm Group



Two aspects of children’s behavior were among the top ten concerns of parents: eating habits and study habits. Among Cornell parents, 22% expressed “very much” or “quite a bit” concern over eating habits, and nearly 25% expressed that high level of concern with study habits. Parents at the institutions with which we compete most closely were less likely to report those concerns, with about 19% reporting high levels of concern on both these measures.

Figure 4.4 Parents’ Level of Concern with Aspects of Their Children’s Behavior, by Norm Group



**B. Race, Ethnicity, Citizenship and Parental Concerns**

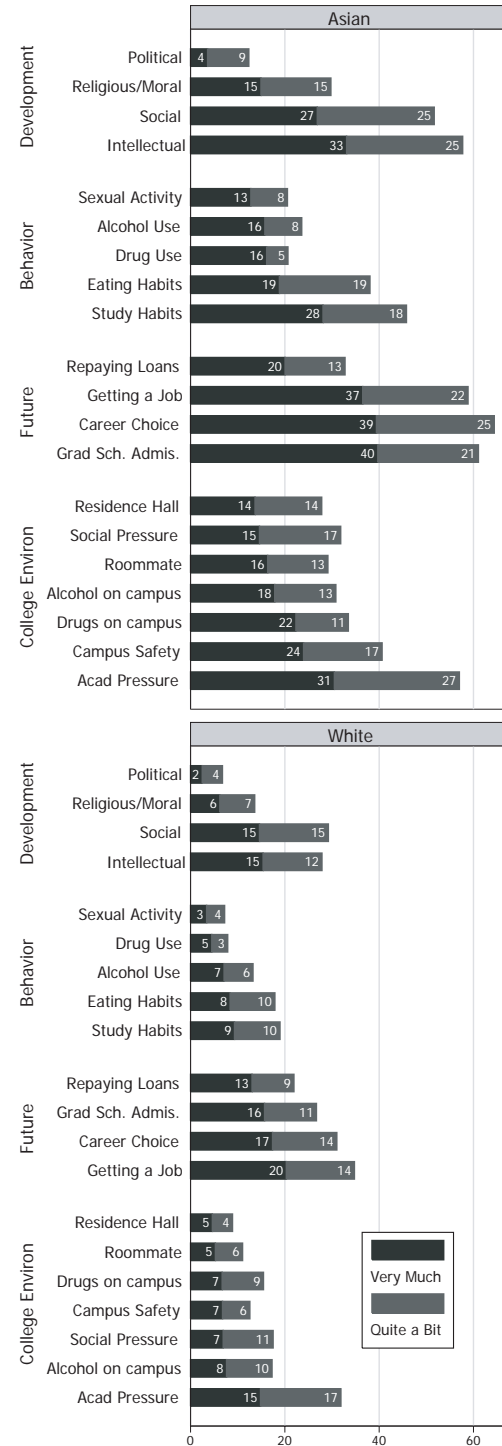
In Chapter 3, substantial differences between Asian Americans and other racial groups were noted for several measures of satisfaction.

This Asian American exceptionalism—and of Asian American versus white differences in particular—holds for measures of parental concerns as well, as illustrated in Figure 4.5.

In this figure, the horizontal bars in the top panel (signifying concerns among parents of Asian American students) are, on whole, substantially longer than the horizontal bars in the lower panel (parents of white students). Indeed, for six of the twenty domains, more than 50% of parents of Asian American students expressed “very much” or “quite a bit” of concern. In contrast, on no item did more than 35% of parents of white students express such a high level of concern.

Another feature of Figure 4.5 is that the overall ordering of items which garner “quite a bit” of concern also varies somewhat between Asian Americans and whites. For example, parents of Asian American students are more concerned about campus safety than they are about social pressure, while the reverse is true for parents of white students. (It is still the case, however, that parents of Asian American students are more concerned about social pressure than are parents of white students.)

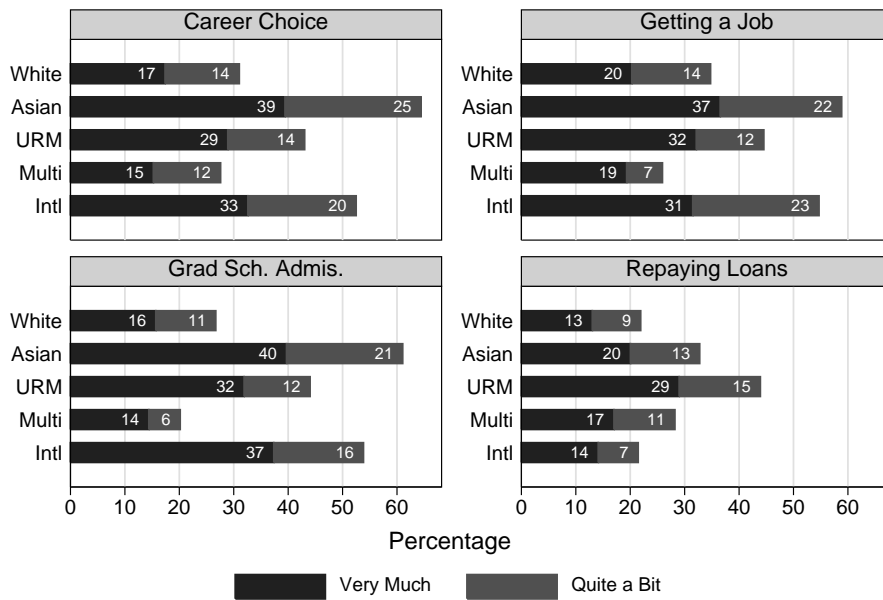
Figure 4.5 Parents’ Level of Concern, Asian & White Cornellians





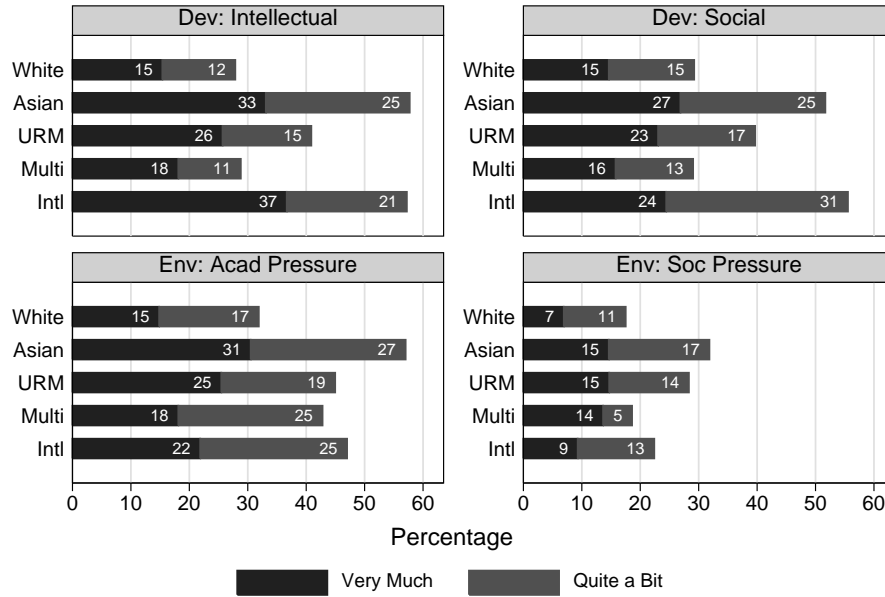
There are substantial differences in the likelihood of harboring significant concerns about the future among the five racial/ethnic/citizenship categories used here. Parents of Asian American and international students are more likely than parents of other students to express “very much” or “quite a bit” concern regarding their children’s career choices, getting a job after college, and getting admitted into graduate school (see Figure 4.6 and Appendix Tables A-12.j, A-12.k, and A-12.l). Parents of under-represented minorities, in turn, are less concerned about these issues than are parents of white students. Parents of under-represented minorities are substantially more likely to express significant concerns over loan repayment in the future (Figure 4.6 and Appendix Table A-12.m).

Figure 4.6 Cornell Parents’ Level of Concern with Aspects of Their Children’s Future, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship



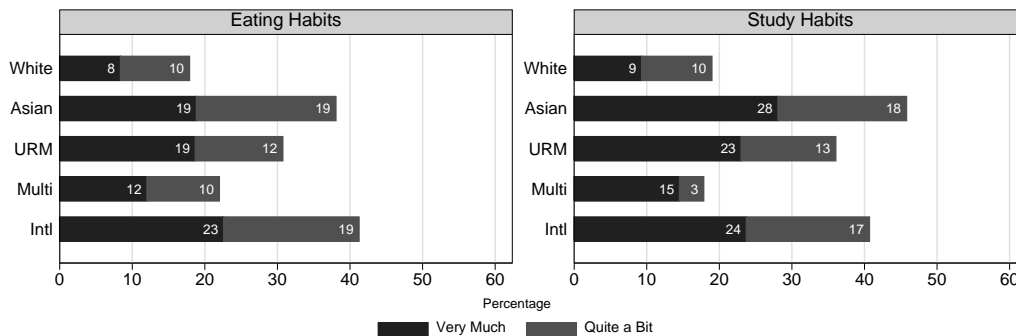
Parents of Asian American students as well as parents of international students are also more likely to express high levels of concern about their children’s social and intellectual development (see Figure 4.7). Thirty-percent of parents of under-represented minority students are highly concerned with the social pressures and stress at Cornell, as compared to only 18% of parents of white students (Appendix Table A-12.o).

Figure 4.7 Parents' Level of Concern with Aspects of Their Children's Development and Aspects of the College Environment, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship



Parents of international students are most concerned about their children's eating habits (see Figure 4.8, Appendix Table A-12.e), with over 45% expressing “very much” or “quite a bit” of concern, as compared to 18% of white parents. Parents of Asian American students are more likely than other parents to express concerns regarding their children's study habits (Figure 4.8, Appendix Table A-12.i).

Figure 4.8 Parents' Level of Concern with Aspects of Their Children's Behavior, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship

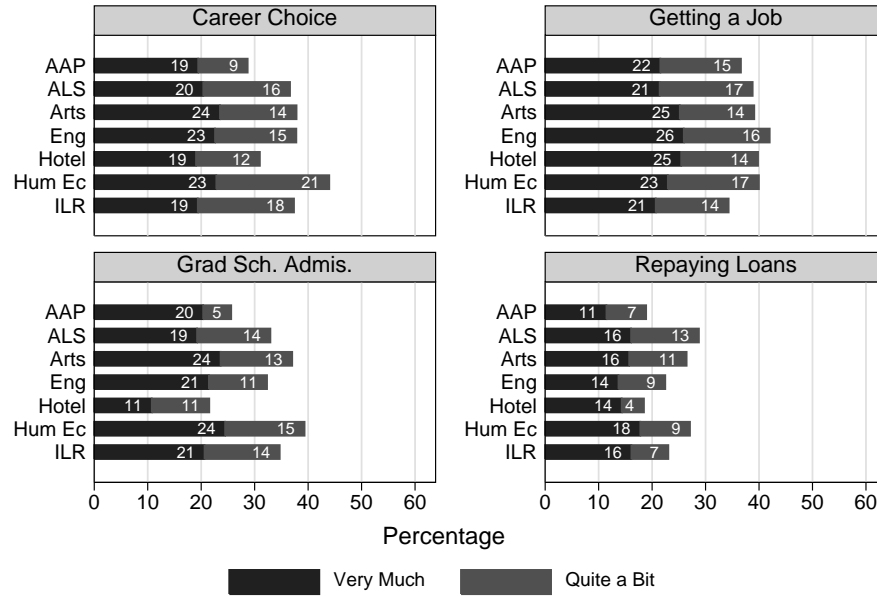


### C. Parental Concerns by College at Cornell

There are some notable differences in parental concerns about the future by college. In particular, parents of Human Ecology students appear to be more concerned than other Cornell parents about their children's future career choices and graduate school admissions, and—with the exception of parents of students in Agricultural and Life Sciences—are also more likely to express concern about repaying loans. Parents of students in the College of

Engineering are most concerned among all Cornell parents regarding their children’s job search after college, but cross-college differences are small.

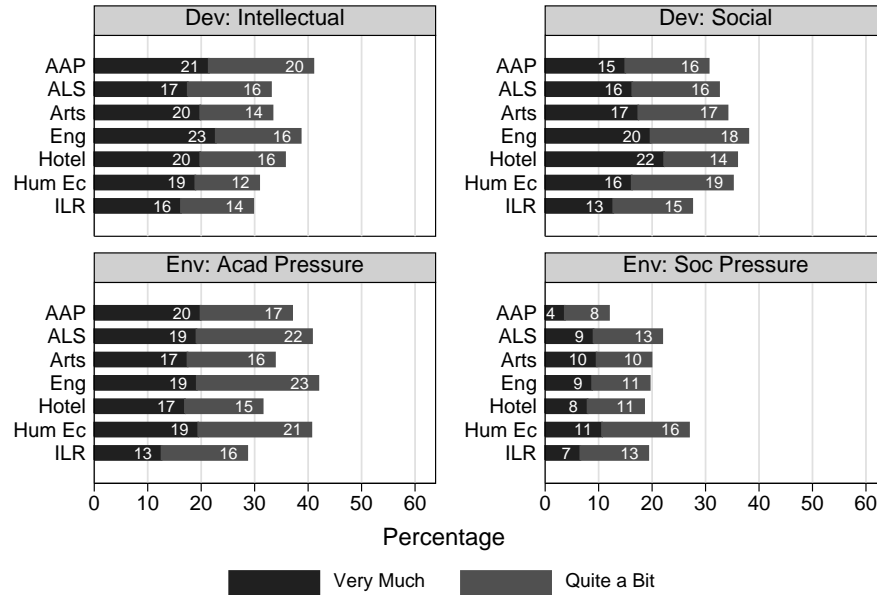
Figure 4.9 Parents’ Level of Concern with Aspects of Their Children’s Future, by College



Parents of students in the College of Architecture, Art and Planning are more concerned than parents of students in other colleges about their children’s intellectual development, but are among the parents least concerned about their children’s social development (Figure 4.10). Parents of students in the College of Engineering, by contrast, are relatively highly concerned about both social and intellectual development in their children.

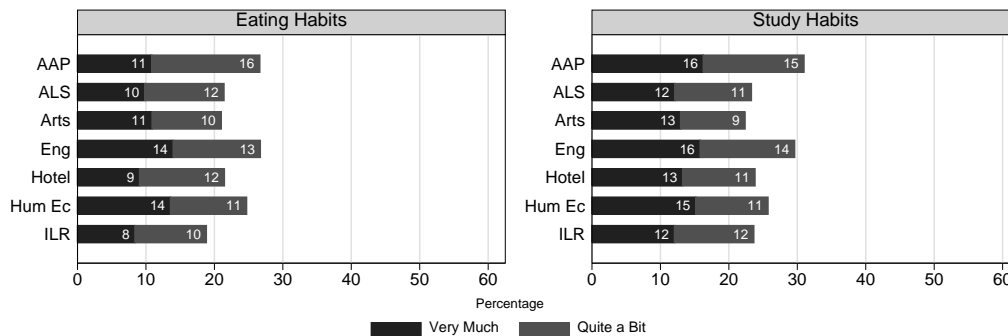
Three colleges stand out as being associated with high levels of concern among parents regarding academic pressure: Agriculture and Life Sciences, Engineering and Human Ecology, with 40% or more of parents in those three school expressing “very much” or “quite a bit” of concern. In contrast, less than a third of parents of Arts and Sciences are that concerned. Parents of students in Human Ecology also stand out with respect to their concern for social stresses and pressures with 27% reporting “very much” or “quite a bit” of concern, in contrast to 12% among parents of students in Architecture, Art and Planning (see Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10 Parents' Level of Concern with Aspects of Their Children's Development and Aspects of the College Environment, by College



There is relatively little variation by college in parental concerns with respect to their children's eating habits, though parents of students in Engineering and Human Ecology were the most likely to express "very much" concern. Parents of students in the College of Engineering and in Architecture, Art and Planning are most concerned about their children's study habits (Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11 Parents' Level of Concern with Aspects of Their Children's Behavior, by College



**D. Summary**

- On most measures of concern, parents of Asian American students are twice as likely as parents of white students to express "very much" or "quite a bit" of concern. For example, 64% of parents of Asian American students express those high levels of concern over their children's career choices, as compared to 31% of parents of white students. (See Figure 4.5, page 32 and Appendix Tables A-12.a through A-12.t.)

- Along with parents of Asian American students, parents of international students express high levels of concern over their children's eating habits and study habits at college (see Figure 4.8, page 34).
- College differences in the levels of parental concern are relatively small, though parents of students in Human Ecology are most likely to be highly concerned about their children's career choices, repaying loans, and about graduate school admissions. Parents of students in the College of Arts and Sciences are least likely to be highly concerned about their children's study habits.

### 5. COMMUNICATION HOME

Cornell appended to the 2002 Parents Survey five measures concerning communication between parents and their sons and daughters at Cornell. The five measures gauged the frequency of: telephone communication, email communication, communication by letter, parental visits to the Cornell campus and visits by children to parents’ homes. (Note that cross-institution comparisons are not possible with these “local” questions.)

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, most Cornell parents communicate at least weekly with their children via telephone (82% overall, Appendix Table A-29.a) and/or email (68%, Appendix Table A-29.b). Letter writing is far less common, with three-quarters of parents corresponding by mail with their children at Cornell less often than once a month (Appendix Table A-29.c). Two-thirds of Cornell parents reported visiting campus once during the most recent fall semester, and 84% reported that their children had visited them once at home in that period (Appendix Tables A-20.d. and A-20.e).

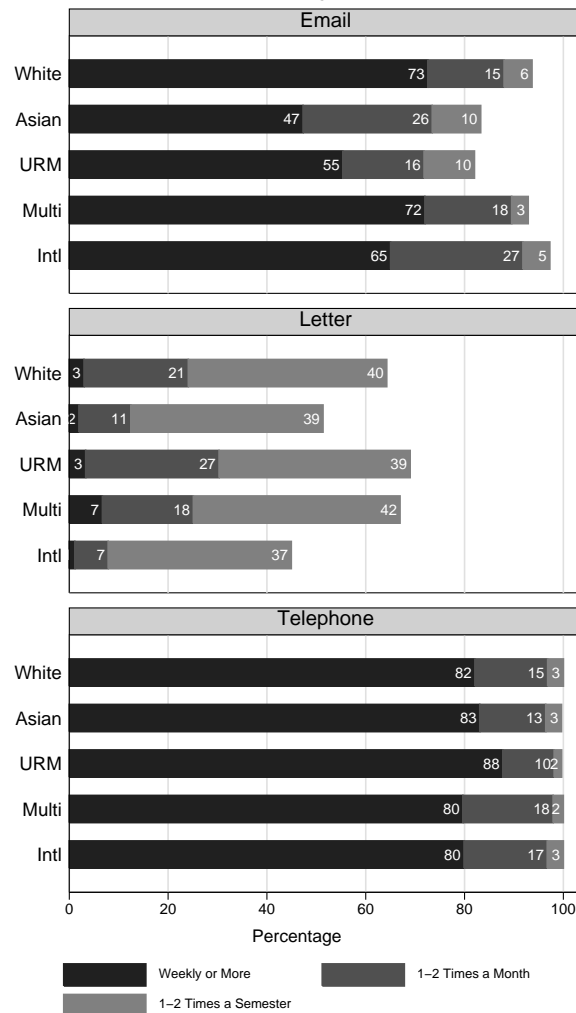
#### A. Race, Ethnicity, Citizenship and Communication with Parents

Regardless of race, the vast majority of Cornell parents are in regular contact with their children by phone. Eighty-percent or more of parents of students in all racial categories reported speaking with their children by phone at least once a week (Figure 5.1).

Communication by email, however, was less universal. While 73% of parents of white students reported emailing with their children at least once a week, only 47% of parents of Asian American and 55% of parents of under-represented minority students reported such frequent email communication (Figure 5.1). Indeed, nearly 20% of parents of students in those two groups never emailed with their children during the semester.

While regular letter writing appears to be fairly uncommon, parents of Asian American and international students are less likely than parents of other students to communicate by letter during the semester. Only 13% of parents of Asian American students and 8% of parents of international students reported receiving a

Figure 5.1 Parent-Child Communication, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship



letter at least once a month. This compares to 24% among parents of white students and 30% among parents of under-represented minority students.

While most Cornell parents reported making at least one visit to Cornell in the most recent fall semester, parents of international students were, not surprisingly, less likely to have made the journey to campus, with just 50% having been on campus in the preceding semester. In contrast, 78% of parents of white students had visited.

Similarly, international students were less likely to have traveled to their parents' homes, with less than 80% visiting home in fall of 2002.

Parents of Asian American students and those of under-represented minority students are less likely than parents of white students to have visited Cornell's campus, but they are slightly more likely to have hosted their children at home during the preceding semester.

Figure 5.2. Parent-Child Visits, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship

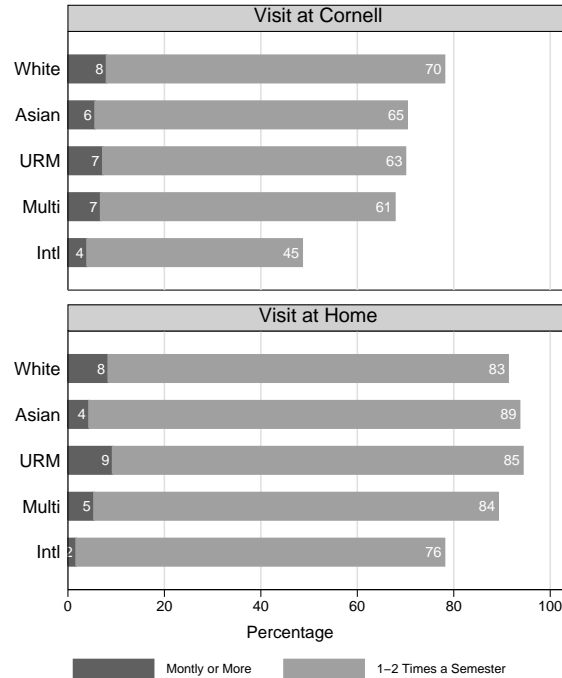
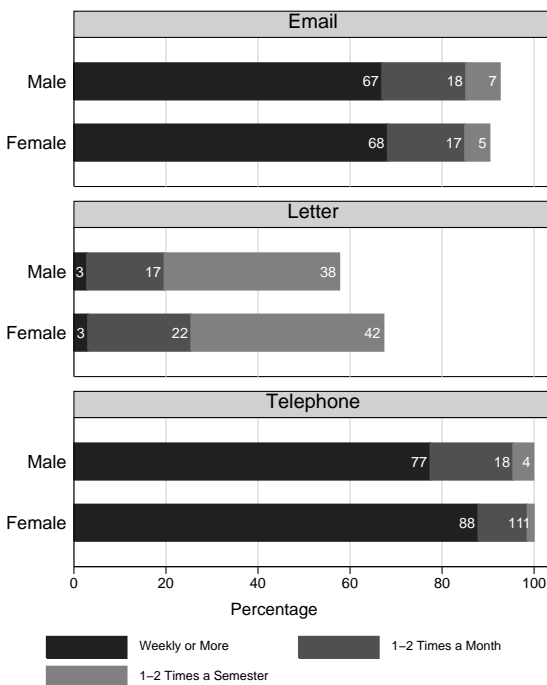


Figure 5.3. Parent-Child Distance Communication, by Sex



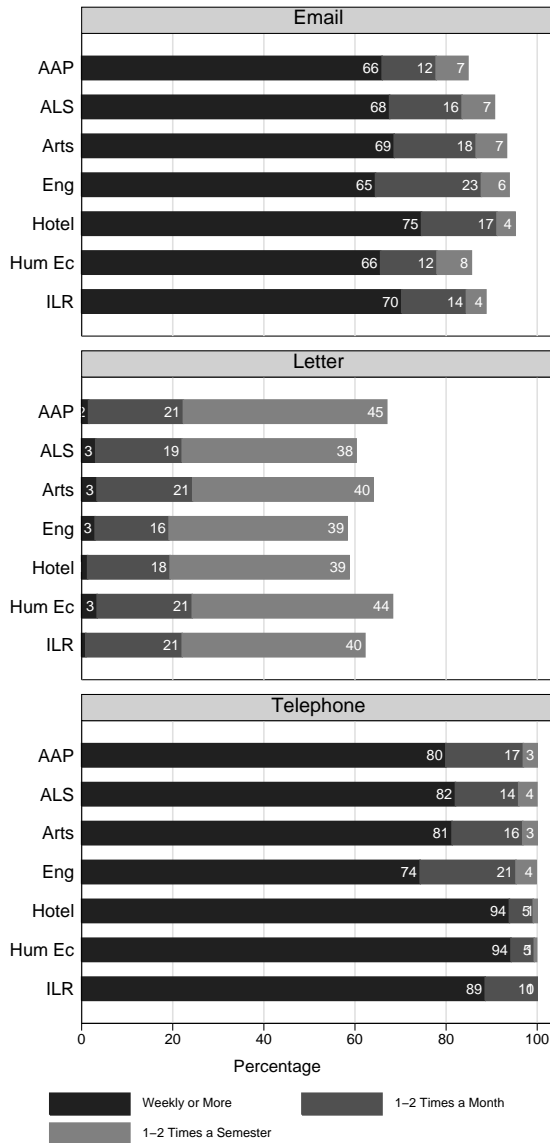
## B. Gender and Communication with Parents

Differences in the communication patterns of parents of sons at Cornell and parents of daughters at Cornell are small, but suggest more communication between parents and daughters than between parents and sons: 88% of parents of daughters report talking to their children at least weekly, while only 77% of parents of sons report talking so frequently. Parents of daughters are also slightly more likely to have communicated by letter (Figure 5.2).

Parents of daughters are also slightly more likely to visit campus, with 77% having done so in the previous semester, as compared to 73% of parents of sons.

**C. Parent-Child Communication by College at Cornell**

Figure 5.4. Parent-Child Distance Communication, by College

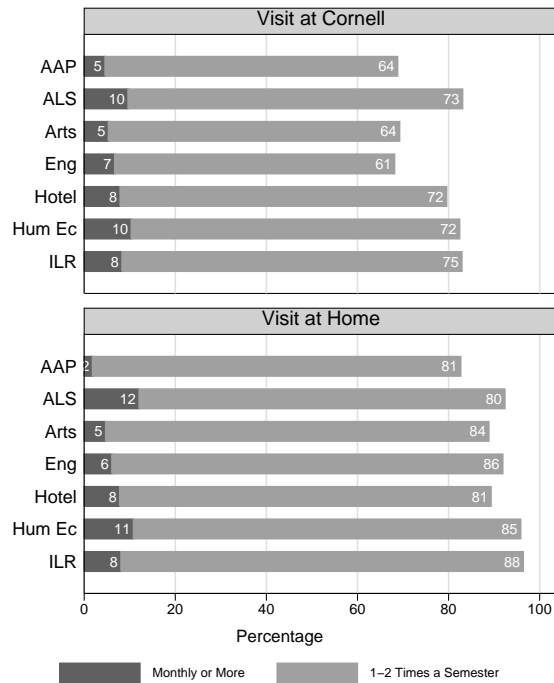


Parents of students in the Hotel School as well as those in Human Ecology were more likely than parents of students in other colleges to talk on the phone with their children on at least a weekly basis: 94% of parents in these two colleges reported such regular phone conversations. In contrast, only 74% of parents of students in the College of Engineering spoke by phone so frequently.

Parents of students in Engineering were also slightly less likely to be in weekly email contact with their children, to exchange letters by mail or, as shown in Figure 5.4, to have visited the Cornell campus in the previous semester.

Parents of students in the colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Industrial and Labor Relations, and Human Ecology were most likely to have exchanged visits, with either parents coming to campus or students traveling home (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5. Parent-Child Visits, by College





## D. Summary

---

- The vast majority of Cornell students communicate with their parents by email and/or by telephone weekly or more (Figure 5.1, page 38 and Appendix Tables A-20.a. and A-20.b).
- Only 47% of parents of Asian American students (as compared to 73% of parents of white students) exchange email on a weekly basis with their children at Cornell, though as many parents of Asian American students as parents of white students talk on the phone with their children at least once a week (about 83%). (See Figure 5.1, page 38 and Appendix Tables A-20.a. and A-20.b.)
- Parents of white students are more likely than other parents to have visited Cornell during the semester: only 22% of parents of white students did *not* visit campus, as compared to 30% of parents of Asian American and underrepresented minority Cornellians, and 50% of parents of international students. (See Figure 5.2, page 39 and Appendix Tables A-20.d and A-20.e.)
- Parents of female students are more likely to talk on the phone with their children more than once a week (Figure 5.3, page 39).
- Parents of international students are least likely to have reported that their children visit home at least once a semester. (See Figure 5.2, page 39 and Appendix Tables A-20.d and A-20.e.)

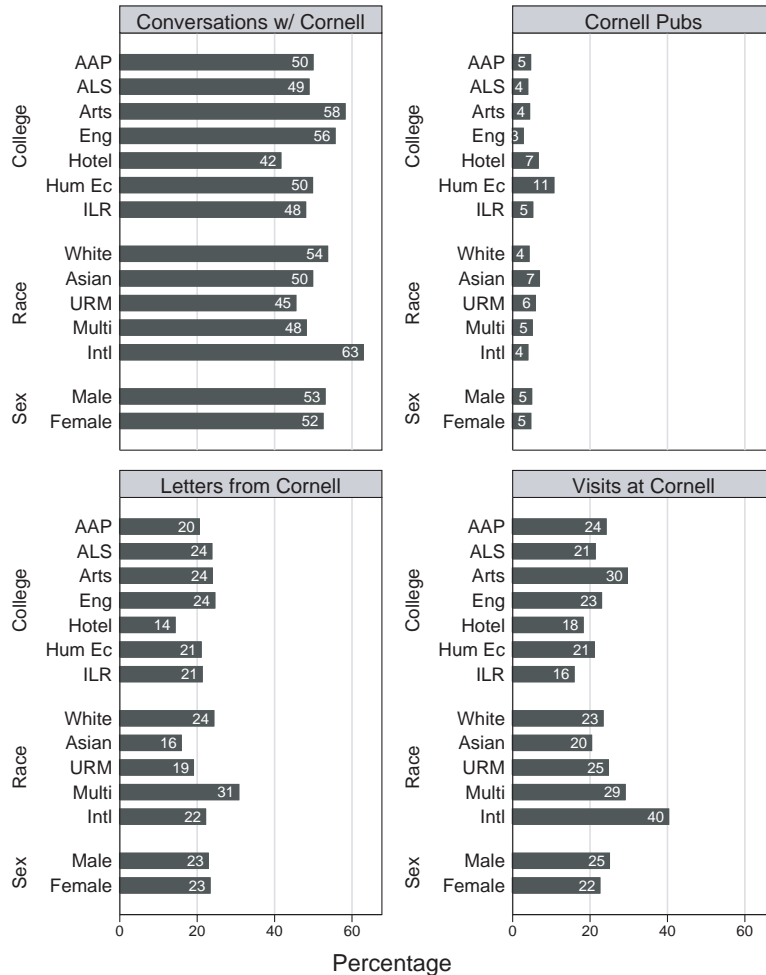
## 6. INFORMATION TO PARENTS FROM CORNELL

The 2002 Parents Survey included fourteen questions asking parents to “rate the information that your child’s college/university has provided *directly to you* as a parent.” In addition to these items, Cornell’s own version of the Parents Survey included four items asking parents to indicate their satisfaction with four *sources* of information: Cornell publications, visits or meetings at Cornell, letters from Cornell faculty or staff, and conversations with Cornell faculty or staff.

This chapter first examines the sources of information, and then examines information quality in the fourteen domains identified by the core instrument.

### A. From What Sources did Cornell Parents Get Their Information?

Figure 6.1. Percentage of Parents Who Did Not Obtain Information from Conversations, Publications, Letters and Visits; by College, Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship, and Child’s Sex



When asked to describe their level of satisfaction with each of four information sources, parents also had the opportunity to indicate that they “did not obtain [any] information from [that] source.” As illustrated in Figure 6.1, the majority of parents received information from

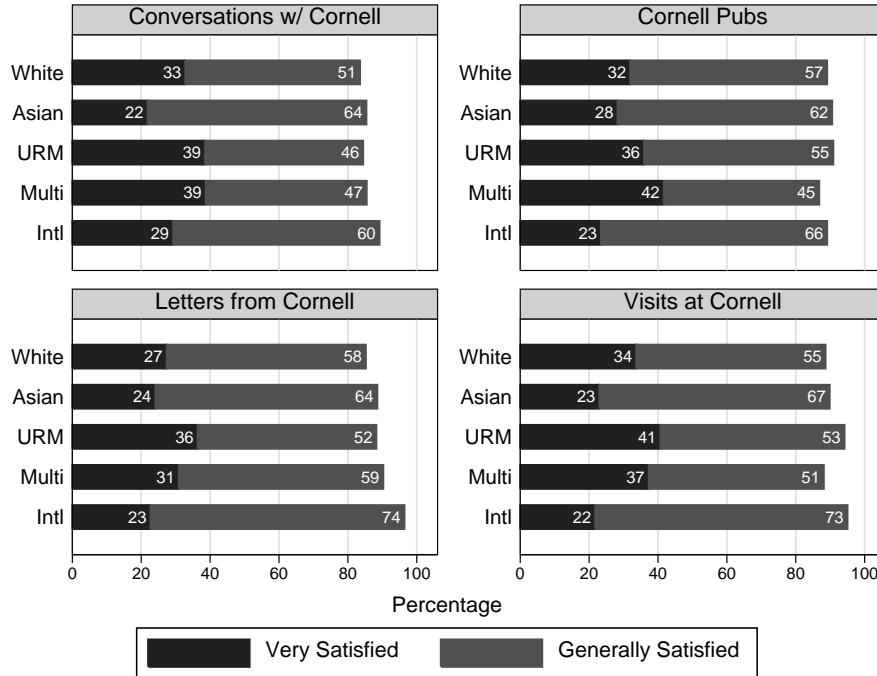
Cornell publications, letters from Cornell, and Cornell campus visits. Overall, 95% of parents received Cornell publications, 77% received letters from Cornell faculty or staff, and 76% received information during visits to campus. Only 47% of parents, however, received any information through conversations with Cornell faculty or staff. (See Appendix Tables A-30.a through A-30.d for details.)

Differences by college indicate that parents of students in the Hotel school were most likely to have spoken with a faculty or staff member, while students in the College of Arts and Sciences were least likely (Figure 6.1 and Appendix Table A-30.d). Consistent with the earlier finding that parents of international students were less likely to have visited the campus, these parents are also least likely to have spoken with an employee of Cornell.

**B. Satisfaction with Information Received from Cornell Sources**

When parents receive information from a Cornell source, satisfaction with that information is generally high: overall 89% of those who received Cornell publications are satisfied with the information, as are 89% of parents who received information from campus visits. Among those who received letters from or had conversations with Cornell employees, 86% are satisfied with the information contained in letters, and 84% are satisfied with the information gleaned from conversations.

Figure 6.2 Parents' Satisfaction with Information from Conversations, Publications, Letters and Visits; by Race

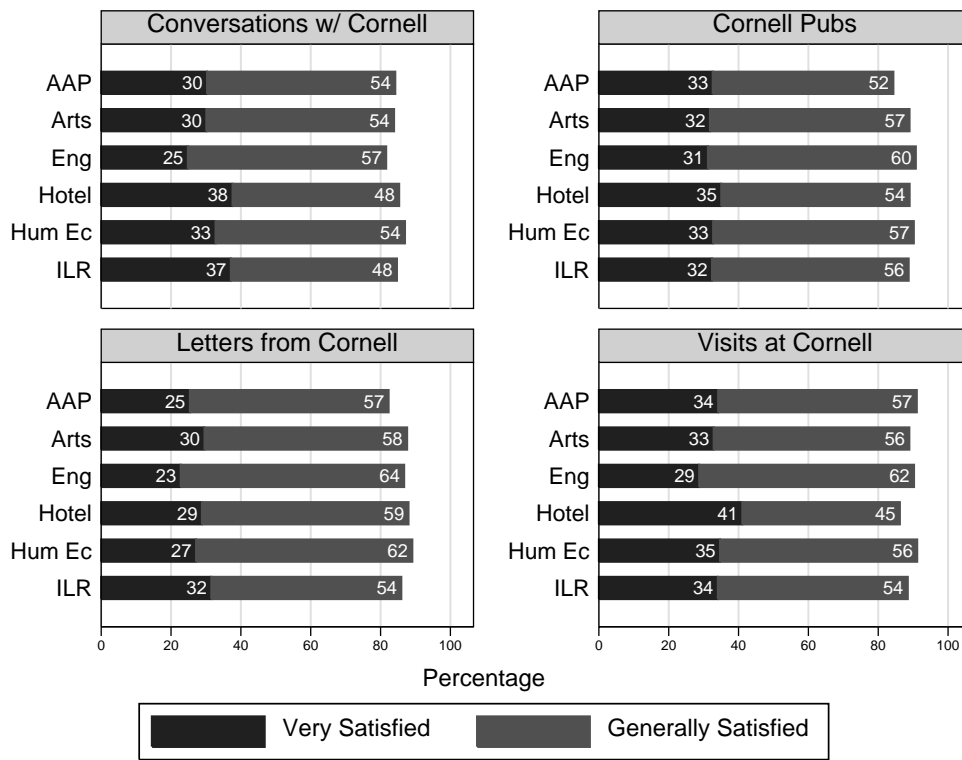


There are some variations by race in levels of satisfaction with received information (see Figure 6.2). Parents of Asian American students are least likely to be “very satisfied” with conversations, and with parents of international students they are among the least likely to be “very satisfied” with publications, letters or campus visits. In contrast, parents of under-

represented minorities are more likely than parents of other students to be “very satisfied” with campus visits, letters from Cornell, and conversations with faculty and staff (Figure 6.2, and Appendix Table A-30.a through A-30.d).

Satisfaction with received information also varies by college, with parents of students in the College of Engineering being least likely to be “very satisfied” with any of the four sources of information. Parents of students in the Hotel School are somewhat more likely than parents of students in other colleges to be “very satisfied” with campus visits and with conversations with faculty and staff (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3. Parents’ Satisfaction with Information from Conversations, Publications, Letters and Visits; by College



**C. Satisfaction with Information on Various Topics**

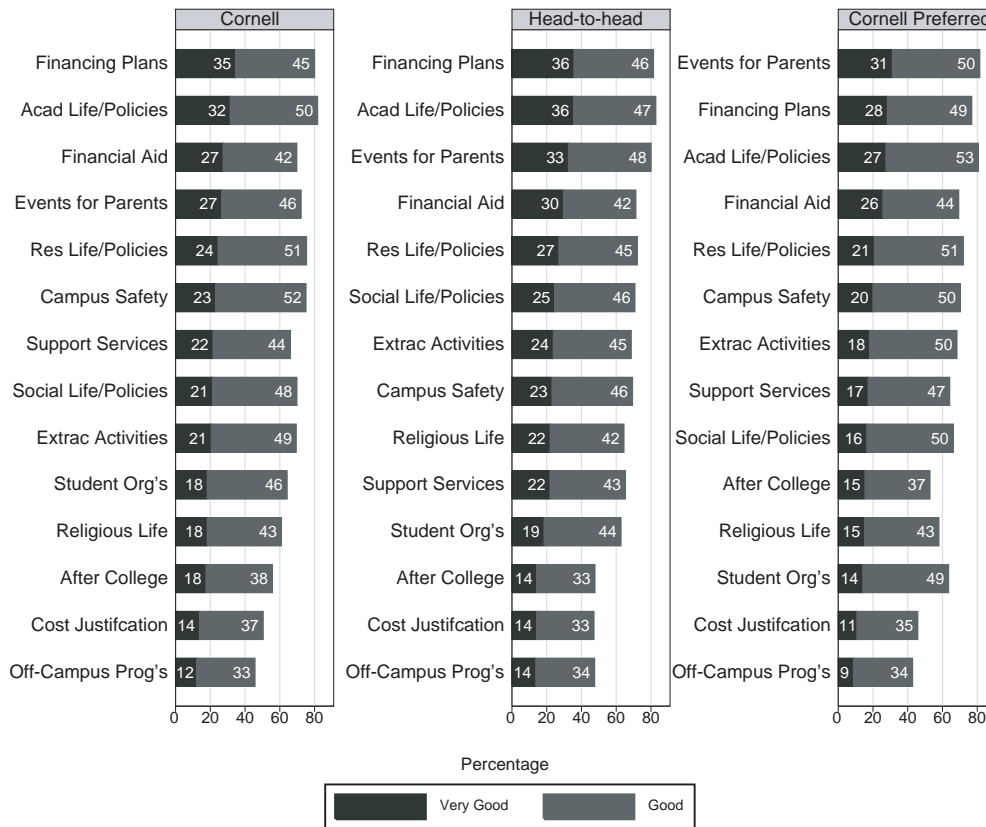
The 2002 Parents Survey included the following item, “For each of the following topics, how would you rate the information that your child’s college/university has provided *directly to you* as a parent?” Fourteen domains were queried.

Satisfaction levels with respect to the fourteen domains are graphed by norm group in Figure 6.4. Within each panel of the graph, the domains are listed in descending order of the percent of parents indicating that they rate the information as “very good.”

Across institutions, the five domains with the largest share of parents rating the information as “very good” are: financing plans (installments, pre-pay, etc.); academic life and policies; financial aid; events for parents; and residential life and policies.

For three of these five items (financing plans, academic life & policies, and residential life & policies), Cornell’s parents’ ratings figure between the rating of parents in the two norm groups considered here. For one item—information on financial aid—there are no significant differences between norm groups in the ratings of information on that domain. Finally, for one of these top five items—information on events for parents—Cornell does slightly worse than norm group institutions in the rated quality of information. Only 27% of Cornell parents rated this information as “very good,” as compared to 33% of parents in group of our closest competitor institutions, and 31% of parents in the group of institutions which Cornell generally wins out against in admissions (Figure 6.4, Appendix Table A-5.i).

Figure 6.4 Cornell Parents’ Rating on Information Provided by College/University, by Topic and Norm Group



Regarding the other nine domains, Cornell does slightly better than norm group institutions in the rated quality of information concerning information about life after college. Eighteen percent of Cornell parents rated this information as “very good”, as compared to 14 or 15% among the other institutions examined here (see Appendix Table A-5.e). Cornell also does well on information about campus safety. The remaining measures are consistent with generalized measures of satisfaction: parents of Cornell students rate information more favorably than parents of students in institutions which tend to be less often favored in

admissions, but somewhat less favorably than parents of students in institutions against which we compete more directly.

Figure 6.5 Parents' Rating on Information Provided by College/University, by Topic and Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship

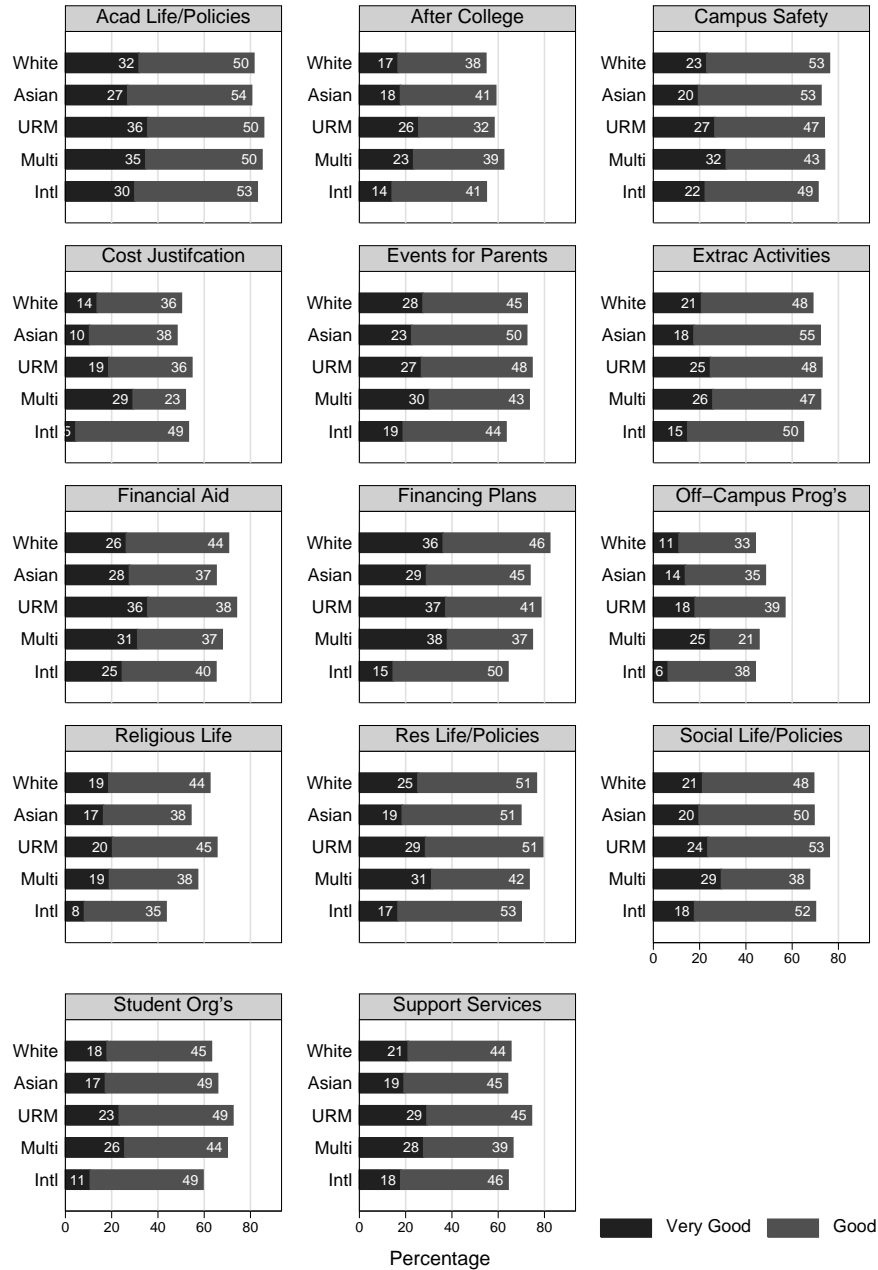
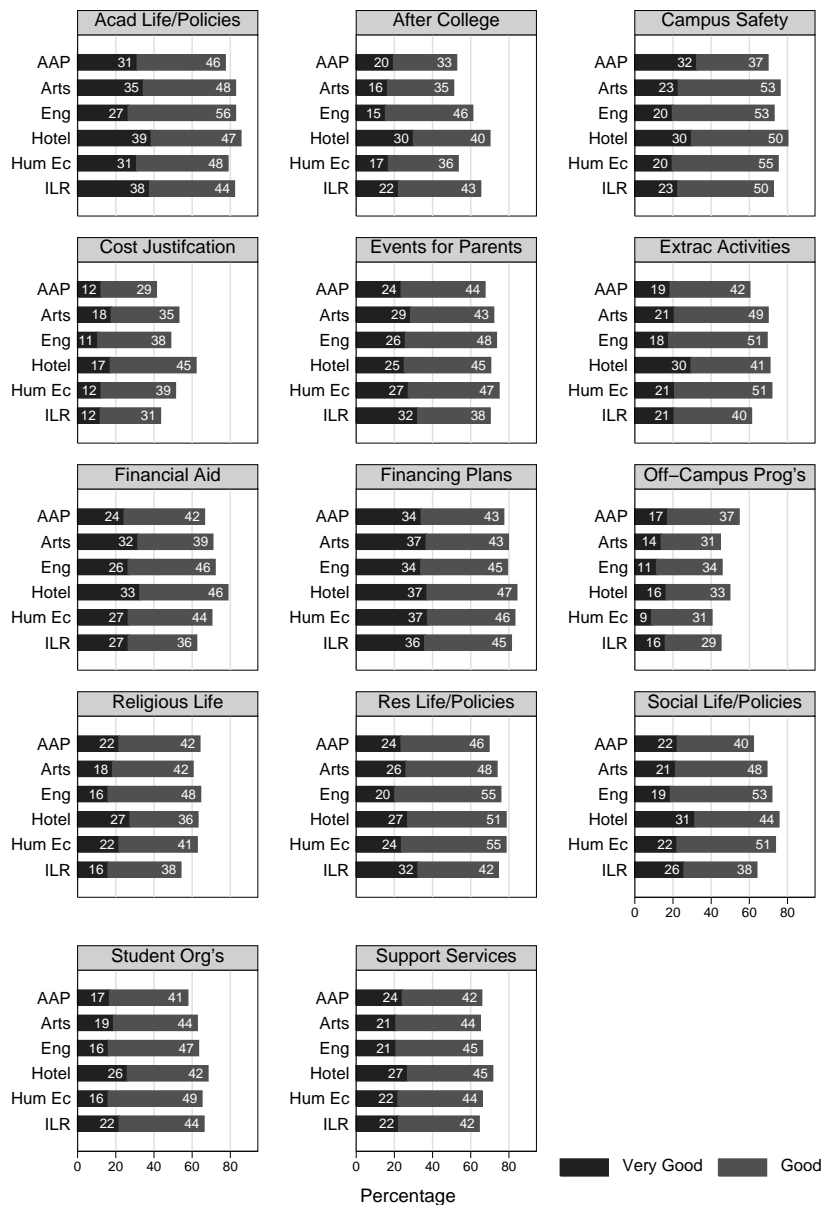


Figure 6.5 compares information ratings for each item by race of Cornell students. Among the five racial/ethnic/citizenship categories considered here, the proportion of parents rating information as “very good” on twelve of the fourteen domains is lowest among parents of international students. (The two exceptions are the domains of academic life & policies and campus safety, for which a smaller percentage of parents of Asian American students rate

the information with the highest marks.) And on eleven of the fourteen domains, parents of Asian American students are less likely than parents of other American students to rate information as “very good.” (Here the exceptions are information on: life after college, financial aid, and off-campus programs—items for which parents of white students are slightly less likely than parents of Asian American students to give their highest ratings.)

Comparisons by college echo earlier findings in patterns of overall satisfaction: In general, parents of students in the Hotel School are most likely to give received information their highest marks, whereas parents of students in the college of Engineering are among those least likely to do so.

Figure 6.6 Parents’ Rating on Information Provided by College/University, by Topic and College at Cornell



## D. Summary

---

- Almost all parents receive information from Cornell publications, but there are substantial differences by race and college in the likelihood of obtaining information from campus visits and/or conversation with Cornell staff and faculty. (See Figure 6.1, page 42.)
- While, in general, parents of underrepresented minority students are at least as satisfied as parents of white students with the information that they receive from Cornell sources, parents of international students and parents of Asian American students tend to be slightly less satisfied with received information. (See Figure 6.2, page 43.)
- In general, parents of Cornell students rate information more positively than parents of students in institutions which tend to be less often favored in admissions, but somewhat less favorably than parents of students in institutions against which we compete more directly. However, Cornell ranks lower than both norm groups regarding information on events for parents (see Figure 6.4, page 45 and Appendix Table A-5.i). Cornell is perceived more favorably than both norm groups regarding information on what graduates do after college (Figure 6.4, page 45 and Appendix Table A-5.e).
- Parents of international students tend to be least likely to rate information as “excellent” (see Figure 6.5, page 46).



## 7. COMING TO CAMPUS

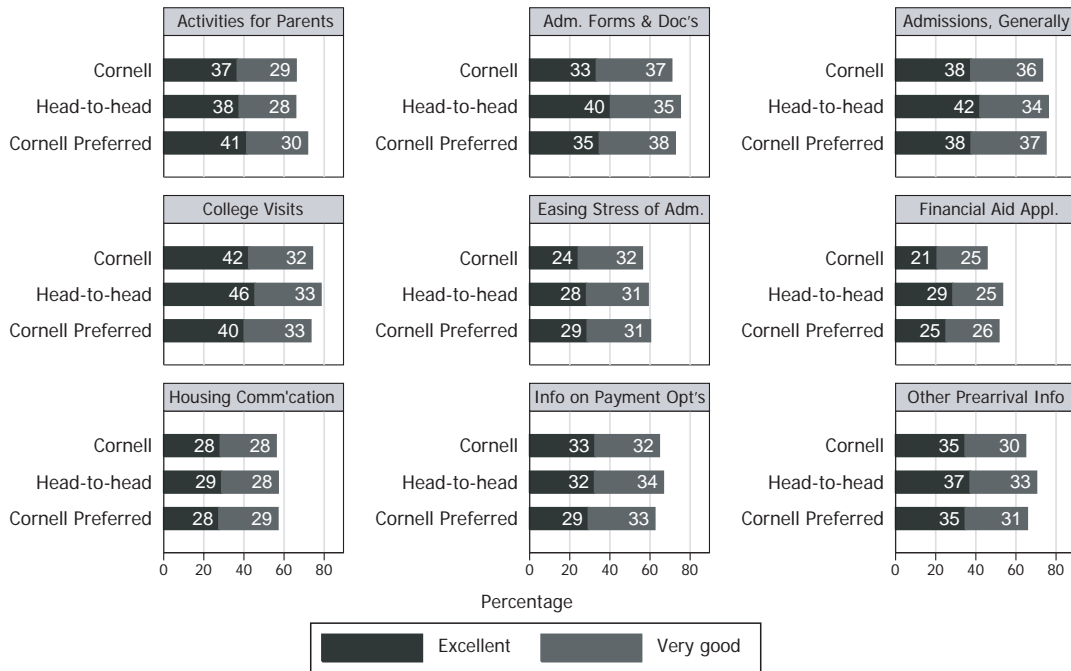
The Parents Survey core instrument included two questions to be answered by parents of first year students only. The first asked parents to “rate your child’s college/university in the following areas” where the areas included four aspects of the admissions process (the admissions process generally, admissions forms, college visits, and easing the stress of the admissions process) and five items describing the period between admissions and fall enrollment (the financial aid application process, communication about housing, information about payment options, other pre-arrival communication, and orientation activities for parents).

Because these questions were targeted for parents of first year students only, analyses of this information are limited to a considerably smaller sample: only 668 of the 3,019 respondents to Cornell’s survey were parents of first year Cornellians (see Table 1.1).

### A. Institutional Comparisons

Figure 7.1 illustrates the percent of parents rating admissions-relevant processes as “very good” or “good” at Cornell as well as for the two norm groups considered in this report.

Figure 7.1 Rating of Admissions, Cornell and Norm Groups



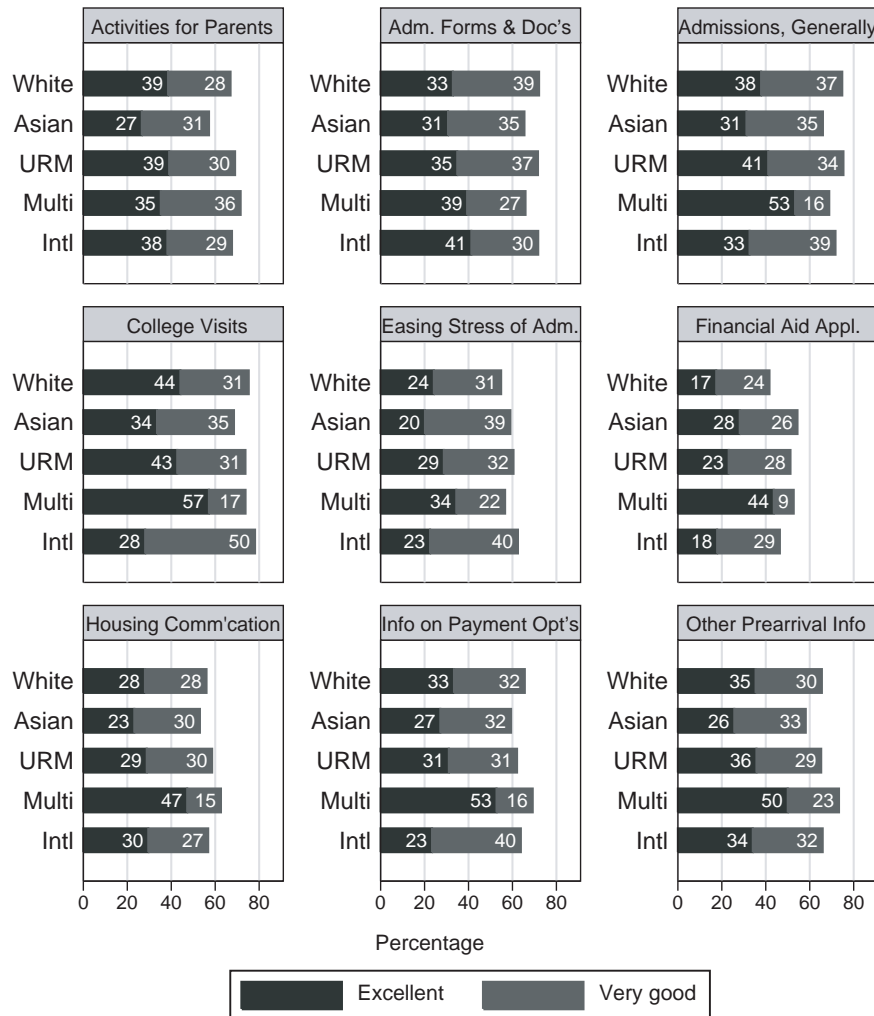
There are four domains in which there are statistically significant differences between Cornell and the two norm groups considered here. For each of these items, Cornell is considered less favorably than are norm group institutions. These domains are: arrival/orientation activities for parents, admissions forms and documents, easing the stress of admissions, and the financial aid applications process. For example, 33% of Cornell’s parents report that admissions forms and required documents were “excellent” as compared

to 35-40% of parents in the two other norm groups considered here. Similarly, only 21% of Cornell parents rated the financial aid applications process as “excellent,” as compared to 25-29% of parents in norm group institutions. In no aspect of the admissions and enrollment process did Cornell do significantly better than the average in the comparison groups.

**B. Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship and Rating the Admissions Process**

Because statistical significance is a function of sample size (as well as the magnitude of a difference), fewer of the within Cornell comparisons are significant when the sample is limited to parents of first year students only. So while Figure 7.2 echoes some of the patterns in other chapters—for example, in finding that parents of Asian American Cornellians are less favorably disposed towards Cornell than parents of other students—none of the differences are statistically significant within the small sample of parents of first year students only. The lack of statistical significance should not lead one to conclude there are no racial differences in views on admissions. Rather, one may merely conclude that we are lacking evidence that there are differences.

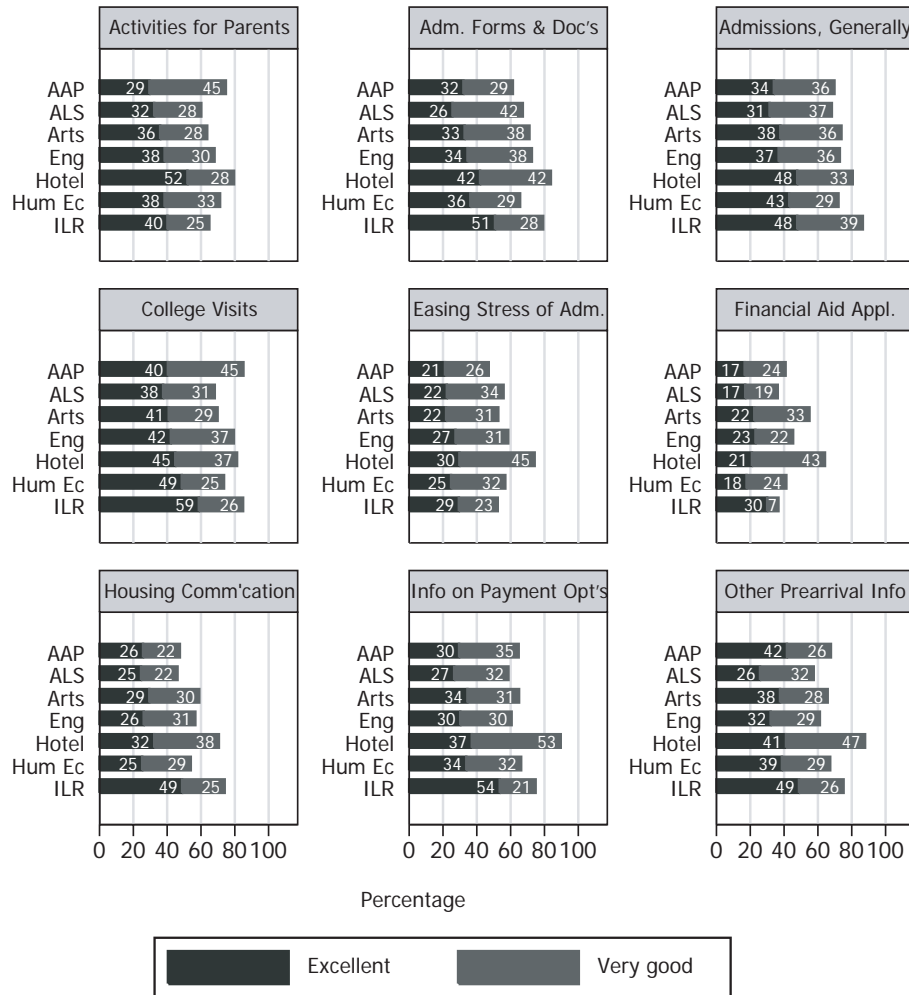
Figure 7.2 Cornell Parents’ Rating of Admissions, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship



**C. Rating the Admissions Process by College**

As in the case of understanding race (section B above), the smaller sample sizes available for issues relating to admissions make intra-institutional comparisons difficult. While the nine small graphs below suggest familiar patterns such that parents of Hotel students and parents of ILR students tend to rate aspects of Cornell more favorably than parents of students in other colleges, by and large the differences are not statistically significant.

Figure 7.3 Cornell Parents' Rating of Admissions Information, by College



There is one exception: there are significant differences by college in ratings of the information about payment and billing options made available to parents between admission to Cornell and enrollment. On this item, 54% of parents of students in ILR and 37% of parents of students in the Hotel School rate the information as “excellent”, while 34% or fewer of parents in other colleges do so.

**D. Summary**

---

- Compared with parents from norm group institutions, Cornell's parents rate many aspects of the admission process less favorably. (See Figure 7.1, page 49.)
- The biggest disparities between admission process ratings of Cornell parents and parents in the two norm groups considered in this report are in the following domains: the financial aid application process, admission forms and documents, and easing the stress of admissions.

## 8. PAYING FOR COLLEGE

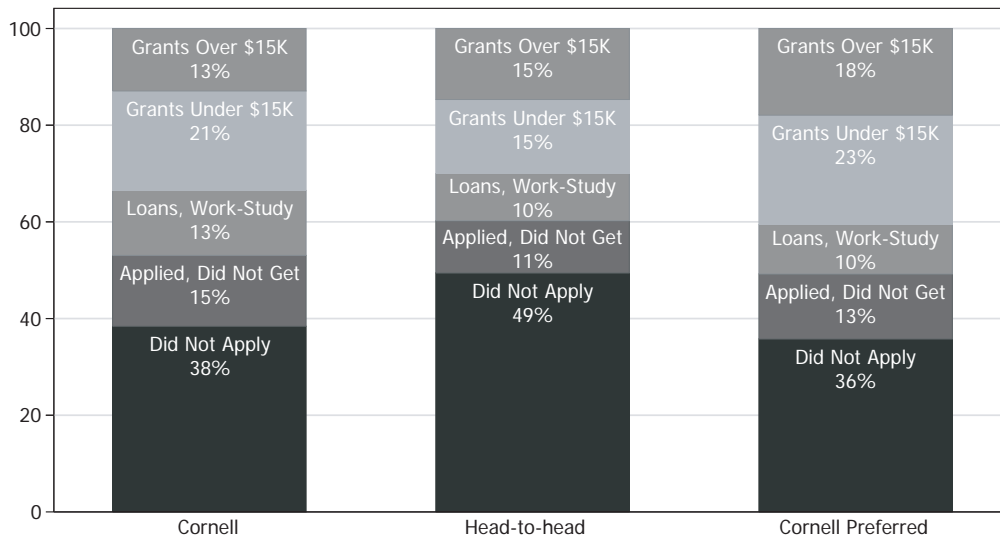
The 2002 Parents Survey focused on the ways in which parents finance their children’s education. These measures include: financial aid status, parents’ indebtedness to pay for their children’s college education, a subjective measure of the overall financial impact on the family of sending their child to college, a subjective measure of whether or not their children’s college experiences were worth the financial impact, and a series tapping whether or not students had to forego activities available at their institution because of a lack of money.

We note that in Chapter 2, “A Profile of Cornell Parents,” the median level of annual family income for Cornell parents (in the range between \$100,000 and \$125,000) was reported as slightly lower than the median income of parents of students in Head-to-Head institutions and approximately equal to the median income of parents of students in Cornell Preferred institutions (e.g. Figure 2.1, page 13).

### A. Financial Aid

Thirty-eight percent of Cornell parents did not apply for financial aid. Consistent with differences in the distribution of income (Figure 2.1, page 13), this proportion is somewhat smaller than the percent of parents who did not apply at the “Head-to-head” institutions, and is more comparable to the share that did not apply affiliated with the “Cornell preferred” schools.

Figure 8.1 Financial Aid Status, Cornell and Norm Groups



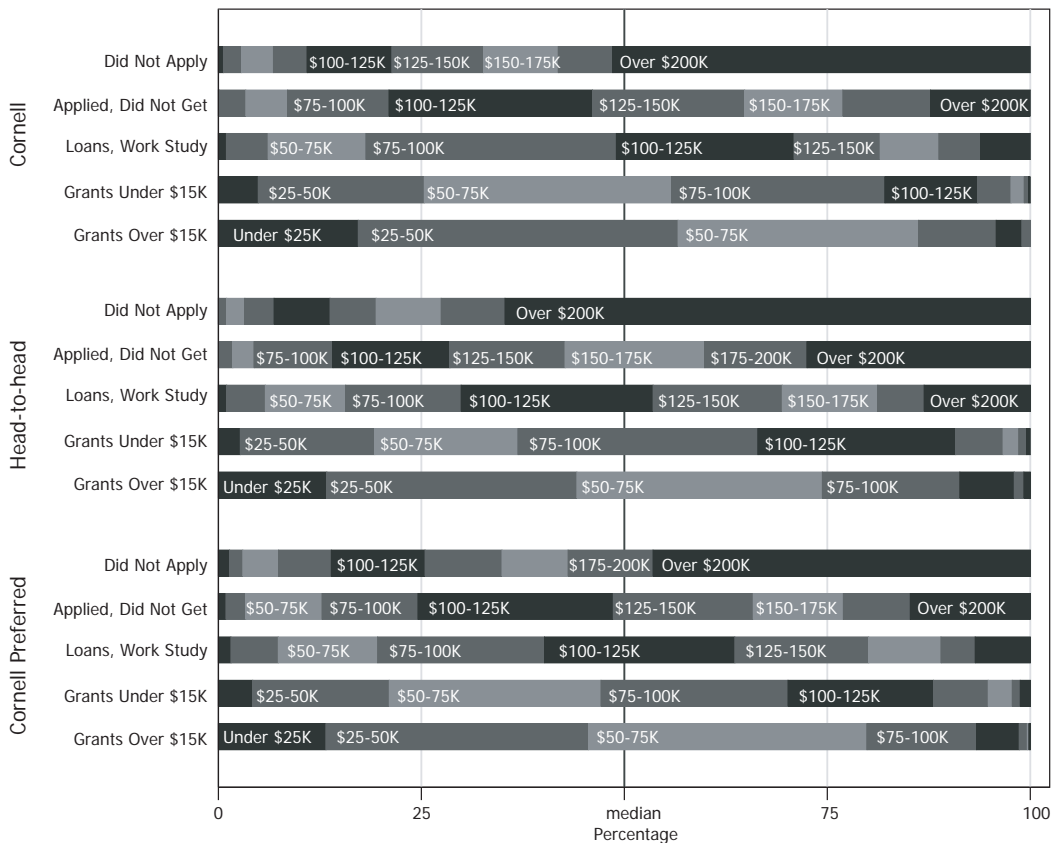
A total of 34% percent of Cornell parents receive aid in the form of grants, and this compares to 30% and 41% among the two norm groups (see Figure 8.1). These figures imply that 55% of Cornell’s financial aid applicants received grant aid. (This estimate results from dividing 34% by 62%—the proportion of all parents who applied for aid.) This share is substantially smaller than the 59% and 64% of financial aid applicants who receive aid at

our two norm groups. This disparity is partly attributable to the fact Cornell’s applicants for financial aid are more likely to be denied aid: 15% of our applicants do not receive aid, as compared to 11-13% across the two norm groups.

Figure 8.2 presents the distribution of income within each of the five financial aid status groups, by Cornell and the two norm groups. The top bar of this figure (Cornell, Did Not Apply for financial aid) indicates that the median annual income for this group is just over \$200,000. (This median line intersects the bar within the “Over \$200K” bar.) The median for the “Did Not Apply” group at Cornell is apparently lower than the median for the “Head-to-head” and higher than the median for the “Cornell Preferred” norm group.

Among those who applied for aid but were denied, the median family income is between \$125,000 and \$150,000 for Cornell parents—a figure that is slightly higher than the median income of those denied aid at institutions against which we tend to compete favorably, and substantially lower than the median in the range of \$150,000 to \$175,000 among parents who are denied aid at institutions with which we compete more directly (see Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2. The Distribution of Family Income by Financial Aid Status, Cornell and Norm Groups



The median annual income of Cornell parents that receive only “self-help” aid (loans and work-study) is close to \$100,000. This is lower than the median income of self-help families at the two norm groups considered here.

Similarly, in the two groups of grant recipients, Figure 8.2 indicates that the median income of Cornell parents in those groups is lower than the corresponding medians in the two norm groups. Among recipients of grants less than \$15,000, the median income is between \$50,000 and \$75,000 for Cornell, but between \$75,000 and \$100,000 among parents in the other two norm groups. Among those receiving even greater levels of grants, the median annual income is less than \$50,000 at Cornell, but is between \$50,000 and \$75,000 for the two norm groups.

Figure 8.3. The Distribution of Financial Aid Status by Income Group, Cornell and Norm Groups

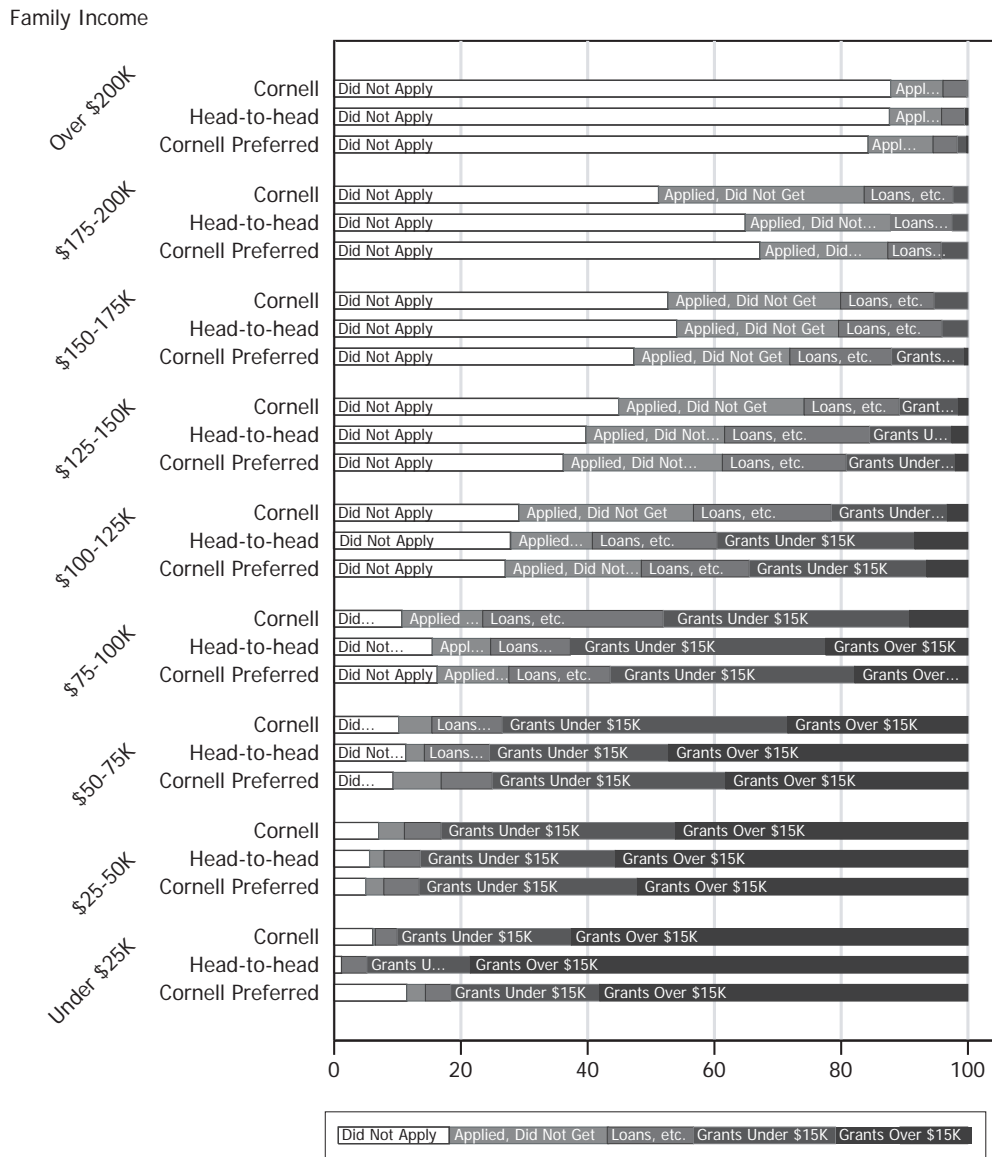


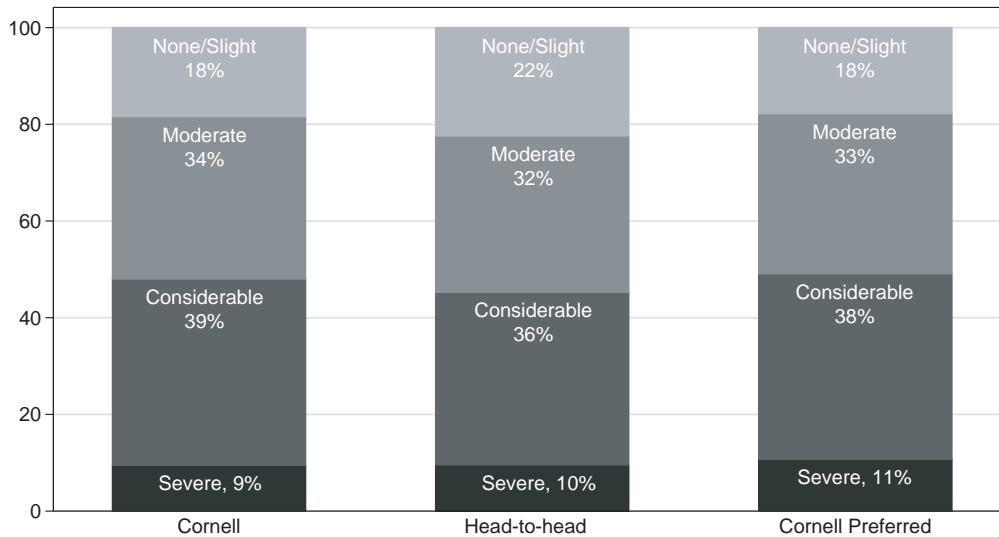
Figure 8.3 examines the relationship between income and financial aid in more detail, focusing on cross-institutional differences in aid receipt within income brackets. This figure suggests that families earning less than \$125,000 a year are less likely to receive grants in

excess of \$15,000 at Cornell than they are at other institutions. Indeed, for every income group with the exception of the very lowest income bracket (with earnings of less than \$25,000/year), a smaller proportion of parents receive any grants.

**B. Financial Aid and the Perceived Financial Impact of Paying for College**

The differences in financial aid awards described above might suggest that Cornell’s parents would be more likely to report substantial economic distress as a consequence of sending their child to college. In fact, differences in subjective determinations of the overall financial impact are relatively small between Cornell and the norm groups (Figure 8.4). Nine percent of Cornell’s parents report that paying for college has had a “severe” impact and an additional 39% report that the impact has been “considerable.” This compares to 10-11% percent and 36-38% among parents associated with the two norm groups considered here. Parents at the institutions against which we compete most directly in admissions are slightly more likely to report that sending their child to college has had a minimal impact on their family finances.

Figure 8.4 Perceived Financial Impact of Paying for Child’s Education, Cornell and Norm Groups

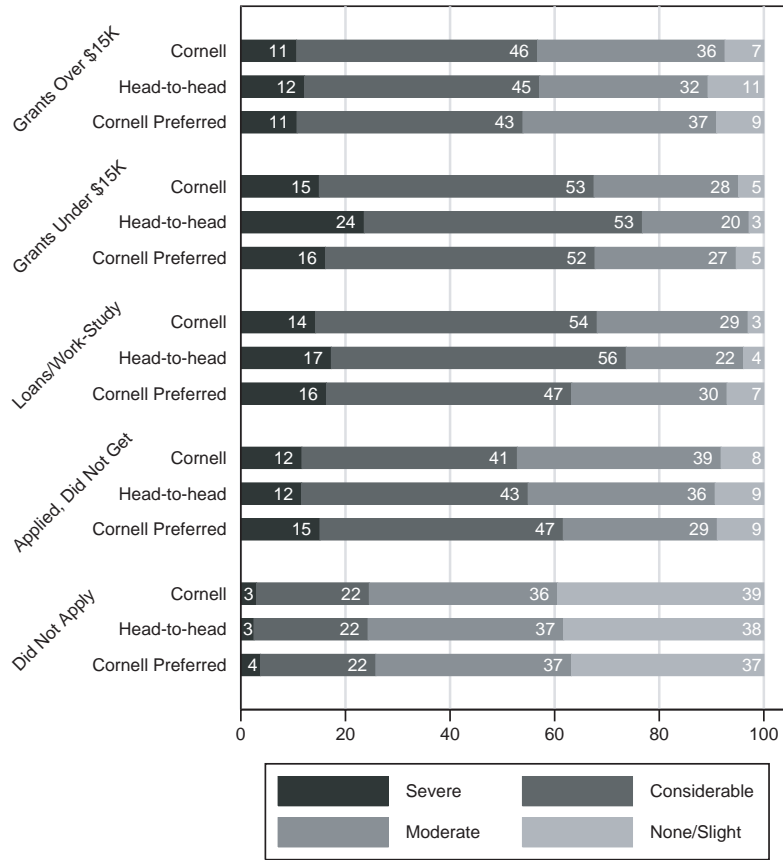


While there are large differences in the level of impact by financial aid status—with those not applying for aid reporting the lowest levels of impact—cross-institution differences are also relatively minor within the five financial aid status groups, as shown in Figure 8.5. Indeed, within each financial aid status group, Cornell’s parents are least likely to report that the impact of paying for college has been “severe.”

Figure 8.1 indicates that Cornell’s parents were slightly more likely than other parents to apply for financial aid but get rejected. The data in Figure 8.5 suggest that those who were rejected for aid at Cornell experience slightly less hardship than those who were rejected for aid at other institutions. Forty-seven percent of Cornell’s rejected aid applicants indicated that the financial impact of sending their child to Cornell has been “moderate” or “none/slight.” This compares to 38-45% of rejected aid applicants in the norm groups.



Figure 8.5. Perceived Financial Impact of Paying for Children's Education by Financial Aid Status, Cornell and Norm Groups



### C. Sources of Funding to Pay for College

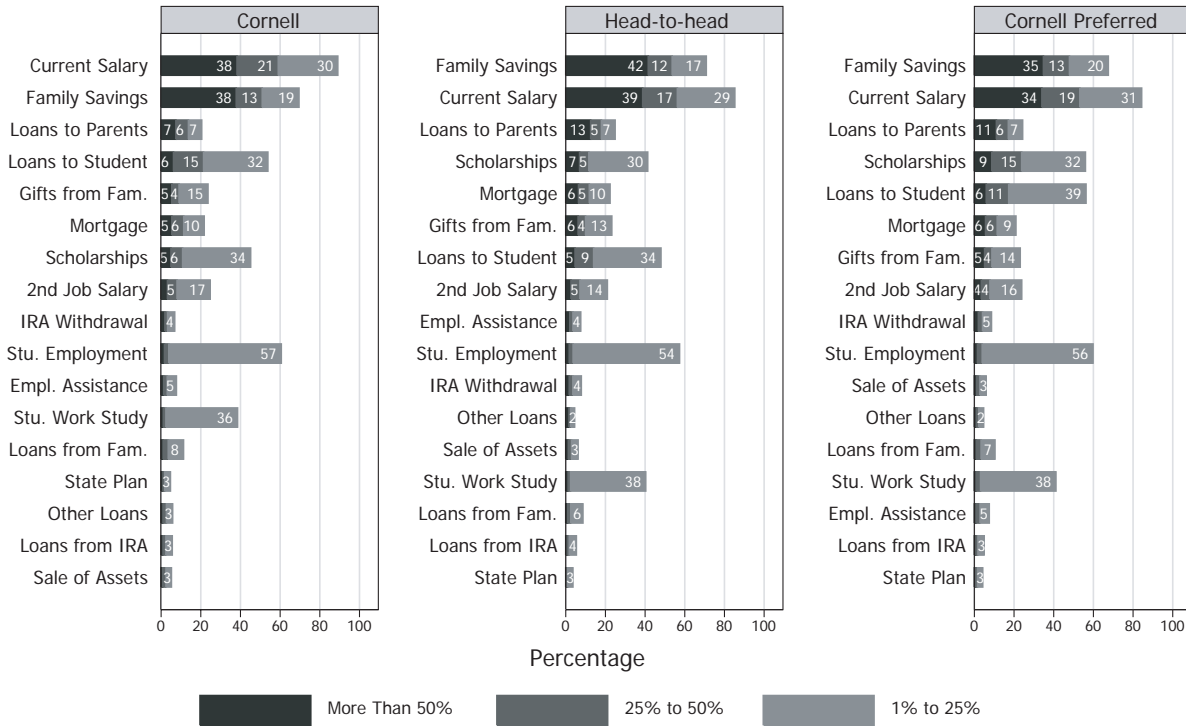
The 2002 Parents Survey asked parents to describe the sources of funds they drew upon to finance their children's education *this past academic year*. Seventeen different domains were listed on the survey instrument, including such diverse sources as family savings, salary from a second job, sales of assets (such as real estate), and state-sponsored college savings plans.

The two largest sources of funds for financing college were clearly family savings and income from parents' current salaries (see Figure 8.5). At Cornell, 38% of parents reported that their salary covered more than 50% of their costs, and only 11% indicated that they did not use this source of funds. Similarly, 38% of Cornell's parents reported that they used family savings to meet more than 50% of their children's educational costs, and only 30% did not draw on family savings at all.

Other sources of funding were substantially less likely to constitute a majority of the funds required for education, and this varies across institutions. Consider, for example, the role of student scholarships and loans to parents. At Cornell, 45% of parents reported that their children received some scholarship money, but only 5% reported that scholarships meet more than 50% of their educational costs. These figures are higher at other institutions, where between 42% and 56% of parents reported that their children received scholarships,

and 9-13% reported that scholarships meet at least half of the total cost of education. At Cornell, only 7% of families used loans to pay for more than 50% of their child’s education.

Figure 8.6. Sources of Funds to Pay for Education, Cornell and Norm Groups



Similarly with loans to parents, 20% of Cornell’s parents (but 24-25% of parents in the two norm groups) reported drawing on loans, but only 7% of Cornell’s parents (as compared to 11-13% of parents in the two norm groups) used loans to meet more than half of their educational costs.

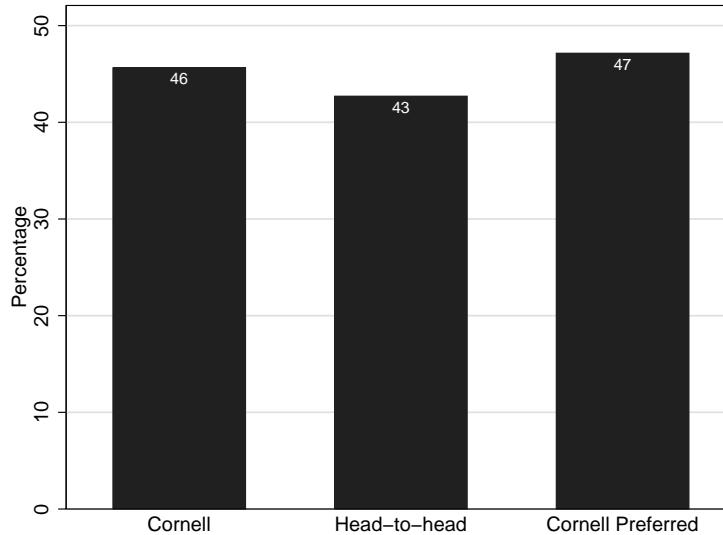
A majority of parents across institutions indicated that their children bore some of the cost of their education. More than a third of students provide income through work-study, and over half apply earnings acquired during vacation periods towards their education costs. More than half of students also receive student loans. However, in the vast majority of cases, the student’s contribution represents less than a quarter of the total cost of their education.

**D. Education-related Debt**

Parents were asked to estimate “how much money you have borrowed *so far* to pay this child’s college education” excluding loans which are sole the responsibility of their child. The eight categories on the instrument ranged in value from zero to over \$50,000.

The majority of parents across institutions and 54% of Cornell’s parents reported that they have accumulated no education-related debt (see Figure 8.7), though this figure is somewhat smaller than the 75%-80% of parents who reported that they did not draw on parent loans to pay for college *last year*.

Figure 8.7. Parents with Any Debt Associated with Child's Education, Cornell and Norm Groups



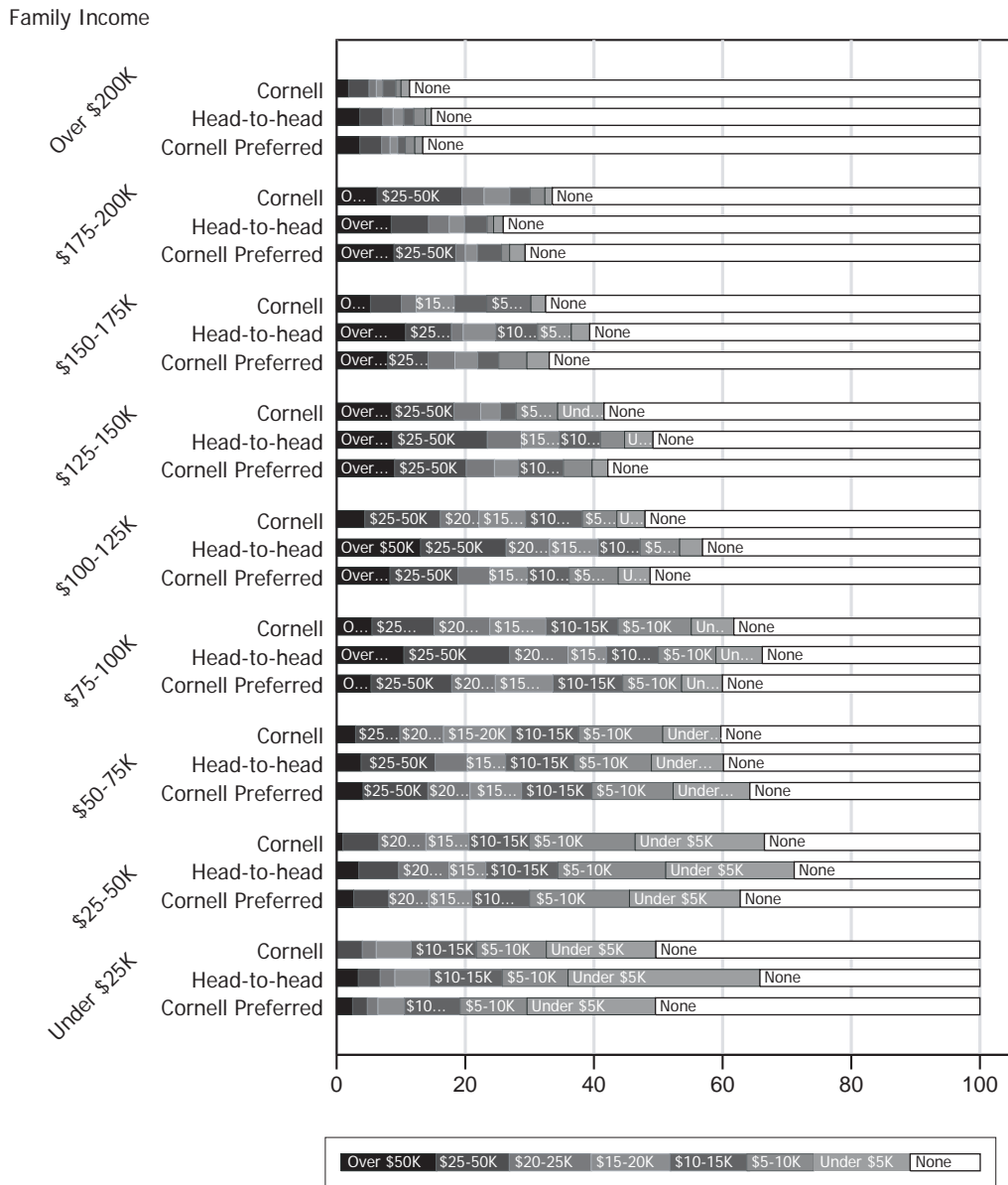
The level of debt might be characterized by calculating the mean. (Note: the respondents to this survey were parents of students at different stages at Cornell—from freshman to senior—and thus the figures for reported debt do *not* correspond to the expected debt at the completion of college.) The values in Table 8.1 were calculated by using category midpoints (e.g. parents who reported \$5,000-9,999 in loans were assigned a value of \$7,500). These figures suggest that Cornell parents, on average, carry less education-related debt than parents at norm group institutions.

Table 8.1. The Estimated Mean Value of Parents' Education-Related Debt (in \$), Cornell and Norm Groups

Norm Group	Estimates for All Parents		Estimates for Parents with Some Loans	
	Mean Debt	Standard Deviation	Mean Debt	Standard Deviation
Cornell	8,689	14,896	20,225	16,829
Head-to-head	10,069	17,258	24,755	19,203
Cornell Preferred	9,816	16,370	21,969	18,242

The level of debt is strongly associated with family income, as illustrated in Figure 8.8. At Cornell as well as at norm group institutions, over 80% of parents with annual incomes over \$200,000 have no education-related debt. In contrast, only approximately 40% of parents with annual incomes less than \$100,000 report no parent loans. Parents in middle-income categories are more likely than parents at either end of the income distribution to carry debts of \$25,000 or more. Consistent with the estimates in Table 8.1, parents of students at Cornell are somewhat less likely than other parents to carry very large education-related debt, even once we look within income categories.

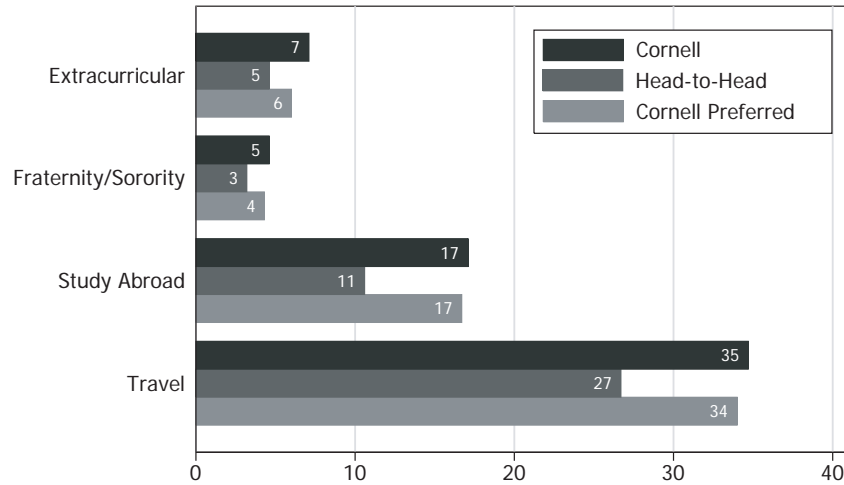
Figure 8.8 Education-related Debt by Income Category, Cornell and Norm Groups



**E. Foregone Experiences**

One measure of financial hardship in college might be an account of college experiences foregone because of lack of funds. The 2002 Parents Survey instrument asks parents if their children have had to forego any one of seven different experiences available at college *due to a lack of money* (see Appendix Table A-26). By and large, the prevalence of such foregone experiences is low, with a minority of parents reporting money as a barrier for each of the seven domains. Still, there were statistically significant differences across institutions for four of these experiences. In all four instances (see Figure 8.9), parents of Cornell students were among those most likely to report that their children had foregone some experience because of monetary concerns.

Figure 8.9 Foregone Experiences, Cornell and Norm Groups



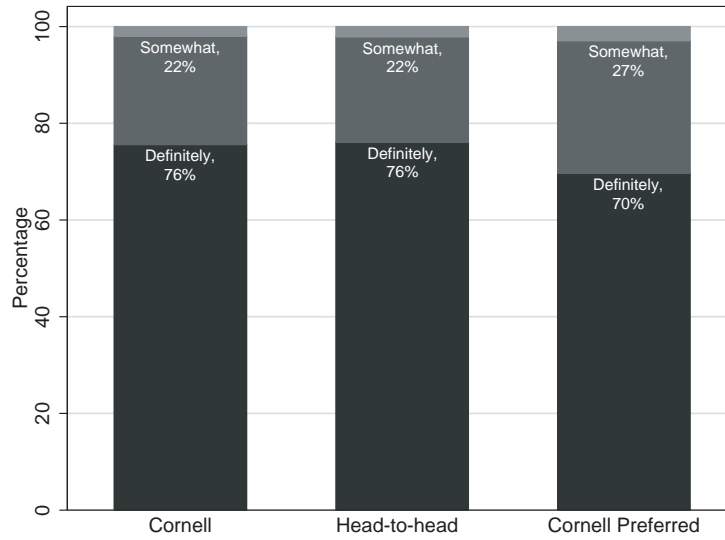
**F. Assessing the Value**

The Parents Survey included the following question: “Has your child’s experience at this institution been worth the impact on your family’s finances?” Parents were asked to mark the one of the following three statements which came closest to describing how they feel:

- **Yes, definitely.** The benefits of attending this institution out-weight whatever financial sacrifices that our family has had to make.
- **Somewhat.** I have sometimes doubted whether the benefits of this institution will be worth the financial sacrifices
- **No, definitely not.** I feel that the benefits of attending this institution will not be worth the financial sacrifices that our family has had to make.

Across institutions, approximately three quarters of parents report that their children’s educational experiences were “definitely” worth whatever financial impact, and that percentage was slightly higher at Cornell than at institutions against which we compete favorably in admissions (see Figure 8.10).

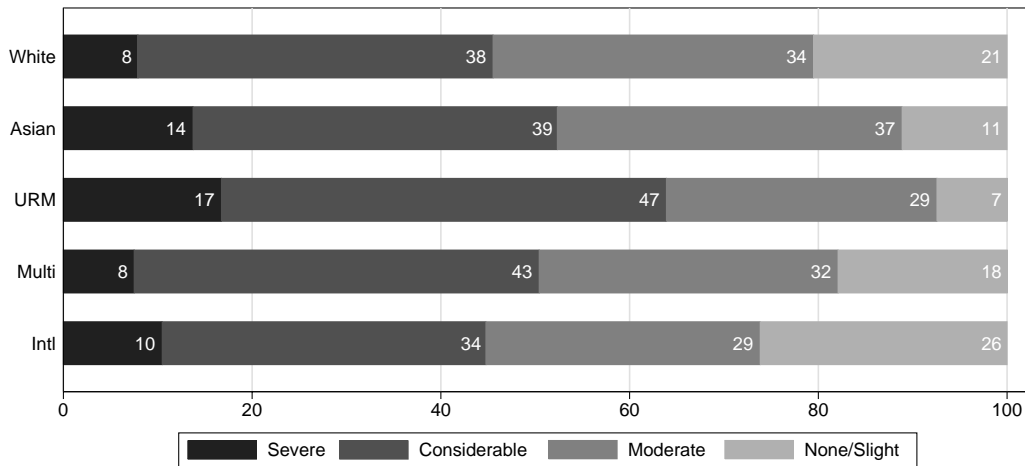
Figure 8.10. Was Child’s Educational Experience Worth the Financial Impact?, Cornell and Norm Groups



**G. Race, Ethnicity and Citizenship**

Given the strong linkages between race and wealth in American society, it is not surprising to find strong differences by race in parents’ assessments of the financial impact of sending their children through college. In particular, parents of white students are less than half as likely as parents of underrepresented minority students to report that college has had a “severe” impact on their family finances (see Figure 8.11). Only 7% of parents of underrepresented minority students reported that the impact was minimal, as compared to 11% of parents of Asian American students, 21% of parents of white students, and 26% of parents of international students.

Figure 8.11. Perceived Financial Impact of Paying for Child’s Education, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship at Cornell



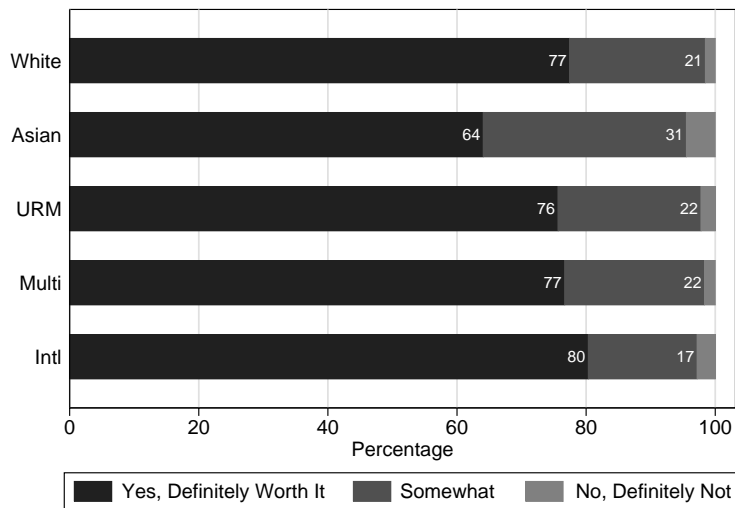
Part of the felt severity of impact may represent the existence of a substantial debt load. As shown in Table 8.2, nearly two-thirds of parents of underrepresented minority students are carrying an educational-expense related debt, compared to only 40% among parents of white students and less than 30% among parents of international students. However, while debt is more common among parents of underrepresented minority students, their debt levels—with a mean of \$19,823 among those with some debt—are slightly lower than the levels of debt among other parents.

Table 8.2 The Estimated Mean Value of Cornell Parents’ Education-Related Debt (in \$), by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship

Race, Ethnicity, Citizenship	Estimates for Cornell Parents			Estimates for Cornell Parents with Some Loans	
	Mean Debt	Standard Deviation	% with Debt	Mean Debt	Standard Deviation
White	8,891	16,041	40.5	23,204	18,423
Asian	11,488	16,543	57.5	20,830	17,368
URM	12,544	16,742	64.6	19,823	17,282
Mutli	11,778	18,159	50.4	24,197	19,419
Intl	5,773	14,446	28.9	23,444	20,918

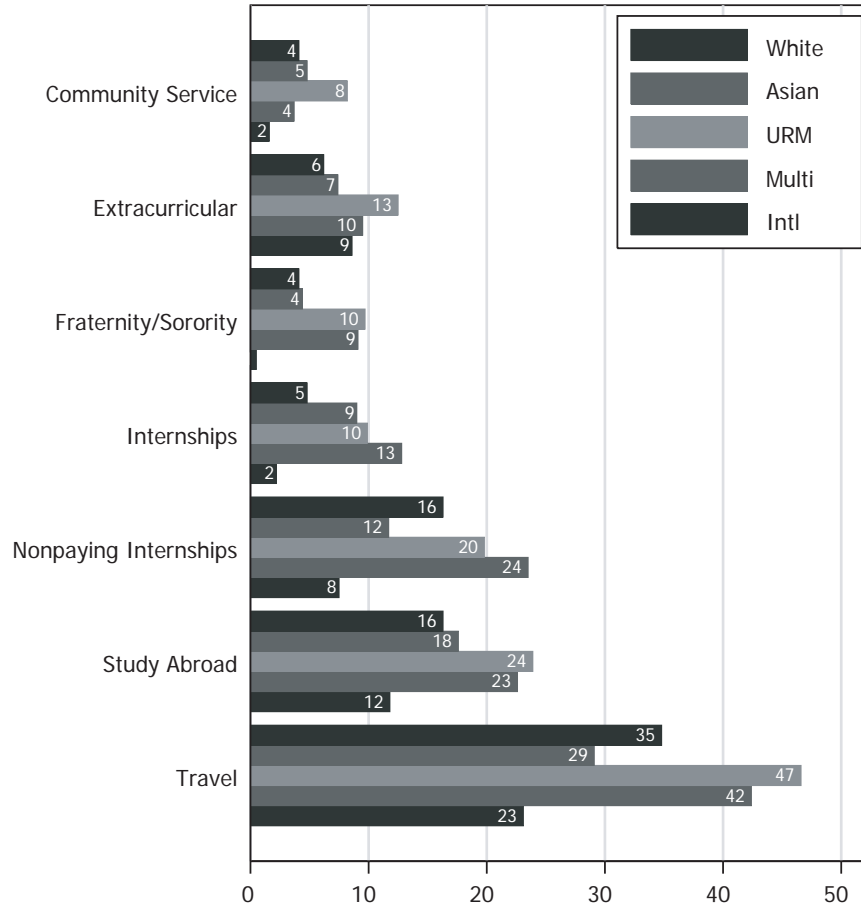
Even with considerable race-associated disparities in financial impact and in the likelihood of carrying debt, parents of underrepresented minority students were not significantly less likely than parents of white students to report that their child’s educational experience was worth the financial impact (see Figure 8.12). Mirroring the results from questions tapping overall satisfaction (Chapter 3), it is parents of Asian American students who stand out as being *least* likely to be sure their investment was worth while. Parents of internationals are most likely to report that their children’s education was “definitely” worth the financial impact.

Figure 8.12. Was Child’s Educational Experience Worth the Financial Impact?, by Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship at Cornell



Yet parents of underrepresented minority students were much more likely than other parents to report that their children had had to forego certain college experiences because of a lack of money (see Figure 8.13) These experiences include: community service, extracurricular activities, fraternities or sororities, study abroad and travel more generally. International students were least likely to report that money excluded them from these activities.

Figure 8.13 Foregone Experiences, by Race at Cornell



### H. College Differences in Financing a Cornell Education

Despite different fee structures across different colleges at Cornell, there were not statistically significant differences by college in parents’ assessments of the financial impact of sending their children Cornell (see Appendix Table A-24).

However, there are differences by college in both the extent and magnitude of parental debt associated with paying for college. Parents of students in Human Ecology and in the College of Arts and Sciences were most likely to have debt, with 48% and 47% carrying debt respectively. Only 40% of parents of students in the College of Arts, Architecture and Planning report debt. Among parents who have education-related debt, the highest levels are found among parents of students in the Hotel School, where the mean debt is \$24,487. This is approximately 25% more than the mean debt of \$18,178 carried by parents of students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

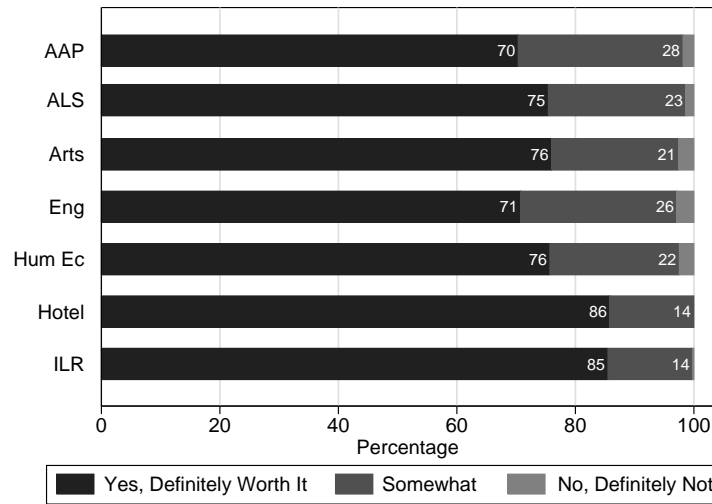


Table 8.3 The Estimated Mean Value of Cornell Parents' Education-Related Debt (in \$), by College

College	Estimates for Cornell Parents			Estimates for Cornell Parents with Some Loans	
	Mean Debt	Standard Deviation	% with Debt	Mean Debt	Standard Deviation
ALS	7,782	13,750	45.2	18,178	15,900
AAP	7,321	13,115	40.3	19,234	14,925
Arts	9,257	15,430	46.6	21,341	17,061
Eng	8,624	14,842	44.8	20,518	16,741
Hum Ec	8,799	14,885	47.9	19,103	16,868
Hotel	10,362	17,649	44.3	24,487	19,769
ILR	8,365	14,498	45.6	19,329	16,563

There are also significant differences across colleges in assessments of whether or not their children's educational experiences were worth the investment (see Figure 8.14). Notably, 85% of parents of students in ILR and 86% of parents of students in the Hotel School reported that they assessed the outcomes as "definitely" worth the financial impact. Approximately three-quarters of parents in the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Human Ecology also reported positively—a figure that is roughly equivalent to the proportion across norm group institutions (and see Figure 8.10). Only 70% of parents of students at two colleges at Cornell—Engineering and Art, Architecture and Planning—reported this highly positive assessment of their investment.

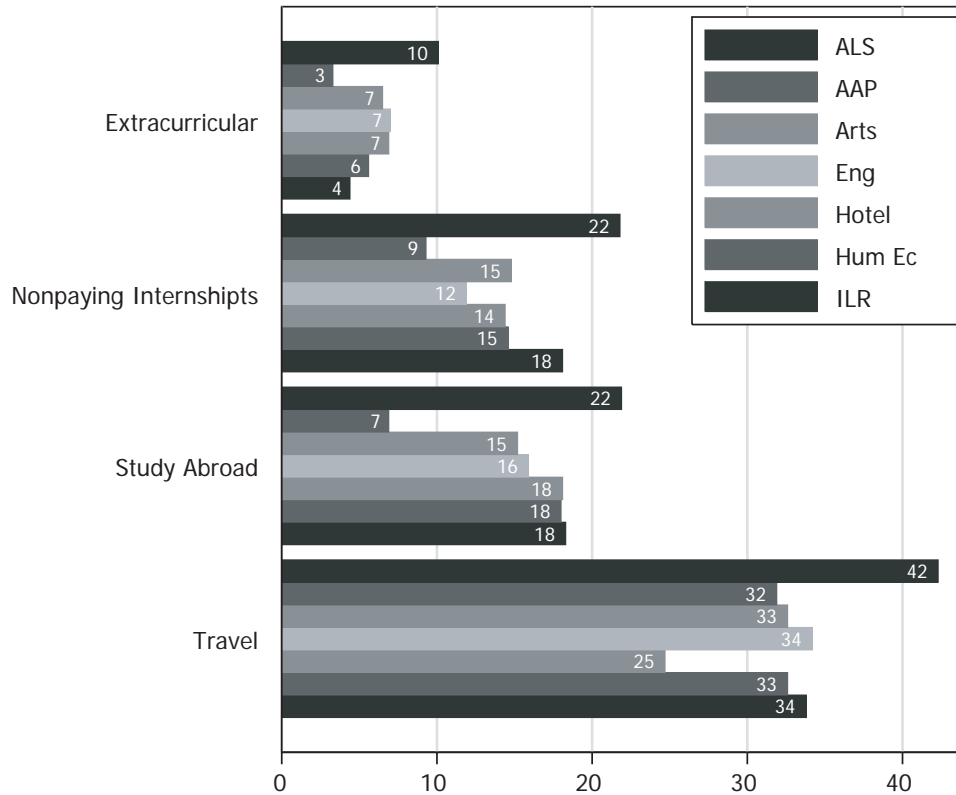
Figure 8.14 Was Child's Educational Experience Worth the Financial Impact?, by College at Cornell



Hotel School and ILR parents were also relatively unlikely to report that their children had foregone extracurricular activities due to a lack of money (see Figure 8.15). Parents of students in Art, Architecture and Planning were least likely among Cornell parents to report that their children missed out on extracurricular activities, as well as nonpaying internships, and study abroad. In contrast, parents of students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are the most likely among Cornell's parents to report that their children had to

forego extracurricular activities, nonpaying internships, study abroad and travel more generally because of financial considerations. Parents of students in the Hotel School were least likely to report that their children had foregone opportunities to travel.

Figure 8.15 Foregone Experiences, by College at Cornell



**I. Summary**

---

- The median income of grant recipients is lower at Cornell than the median for the two norm groups (Table 8.2, page 63).
- Within every income category excepting the very lowest, a smaller proportion of Cornell parents receive grants than the proportion in our norm groups (Figure 8.3, page 65).
- Even with this variation in financial aid, cross-institutional differences in subjective impressions of the financial impact of paying for college are minor. Indeed, within each category of financial aid status (large size grants, smaller grants, loans, etc.) Cornell parents are less likely than parents of students at other institutions considered here to indicate that the financial impact of paying for college has been “severe” (Figure 8.5, page 57).
- The largest share of the expense of college is paid for by parents with savings and with earnings from current employment. Most students contribute to the costs of college, but

their contributions tend to meet far less than half of all expenses (Figure 8.6, page 53-58).

- Cornell parents have slightly lower levels of education-related debt than their counterparts at other schools (Table 8.1, page 59).
- Parents in middle-income categories are more likely than very rich and very poor parents to incur debt as part of sending their children to college (Figure 8.8, page 60).
- Cornell parents are slightly more likely than parents of students at norm group institutions to report that their children have to forego some experience at college due to financial constraints (Figure 8.9, page 61).
- Cornell parents are as likely or slightly more likely than parents of students at norm group institutions to report that their children's experiences at college are "definitely" worth the financial impact (Figure 8.10, page 62).
- Parents of underrepresented minorities at Cornell are more likely than other parents to report that paying for college has had a "severe" impact on family finances, more likely to carry education-related debt, and more likely to report that their children have had to miss out on college experiences because of money. However, they are more likely to report that their children's experiences at college are "definitely" worth the financial impact. (See Figure 8.11, page 62; Figure 8.12, page 63; and Figure 8.13, page 64.)
- Parents of Asian American Cornellians are less likely than other parents to report that their children's educational experiences were worth the financial impact (Figure 8.12, page 63).