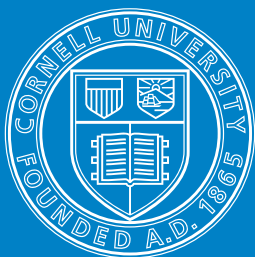


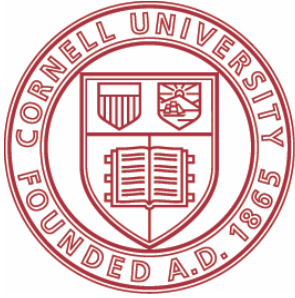
Undergraduate Enrollment Trends

Fall, 2007

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Cornell University
Division of Planning and Budget



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ENROLLMENT TRENDS**

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Context

In Fall 2001, Cornell developed a strategic first-year freshman enrollment plan. This original plan was part of a continuing emphasis on enhancing the selectivity of our undergraduate student population and curtailing growth in order to stabilize overall enrollment.

The purpose of the original plan was to:

- Manage toward longer-term, university-wide, undergraduate enrollment targets of 3,000 fall first-time freshmen.
- Protect individual colleges from under-enrollment as they adjusted admissions strategies to yield their targeted number of incoming fall first-time freshmen.
- Advise and assist colleges to avoid enrolling more than their targeted number of students.

Given previous history of over-enrolling the freshman class and the need for disciplined enrollment targets to accommodate the then new North Campus Residential Initiative, the above plan was initially presented to each of the undergraduate colleges in Fall 2000. After full implementation in Fall 2001, the plan was reviewed and revisions were initiated, starting with the Fall 2003 term. These included increasing the undergraduate enrollment target by 50 students to 3,050 fall first-time freshmen and eliminating all January first-time freshmen.

A key element of the first-year freshman enrollment plan was the construction of conservative admit and yield models¹ and the strategic use of the waitlist². Students admitted from the waitlist are just as strong as students admitted through regular and early decision based on standard, quantifiable measures. Contrary to conventional wisdom, there has been no dramatic drop-off in academic quality when colleges admit from the waitlist. For an institution like Cornell, this is primarily due to our large and strong applicant pool.

¹The admit model is used to estimate the initial number of students each college should admit during the regular decision process to yield the targeted number of matriculating students. The yield model examines relevant characteristics of admitted students and statistically determines the likelihood of enrollment for a given admitted student.

²Because the admit and yield models are predictive tools that approximate enrollment prior to admitted students' acceptance or rejection of Cornell's offer of admission, it is customary to utilize an admission waitlist to guard against over-enrollment. High quality students who are not selected for admission in the regular decision process are carefully vetted to be placed on an individual college's waitlist. It is this pool of students who are offered a place on the waitlist that allows us to address conceivable shortfalls in freshman target enrollments.

Current Challenges

Since the freshman enrollment plan was implemented in 2001, Cornell achieved its freshman enrollment target in three of the seven years. In the other years, the university exceeded its freshman enrollment target by 4 percent or fell short by 1 percent. A major challenge is to continue to maintain a cohesive enrollment management strategies by utilizing more refined admit and yield models. While the 31% increase in admissions applications since 2001 has made the enrollment planning process more complex, Cornell will continue to enhance the methods by which we manage the overall freshman enrollment.

Cornell continues to be challenged by enrollment of underrepresented minority students. Since 2001, the percentage of African-American students had growth with Hispanic American and Native American students remaining relatively stable. In Fall 2007, Cornell enrolled 167 African-American students, an increase of 7 percent since Fall 2001. We will continue to monitor the enrollment of underrepresented minority students, and implement strategies that will improve undergraduate student racial and ethnic diversity at Cornell.

It is imperative that we continue to enhance the diversity of the undergraduate student population while maintaining access to a Cornell education. The gender, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic diversity of the student body continue to receive careful attention. The geographic diversity of the student body is equally important, as it enriches the educational environment.

Undergraduate Enrollment Objectives

For several years, Cornell has had an operational maximum total on-campus undergraduate enrollment target of 13,000 students. While the on-campus undergraduate enrollment has declined from 13,508 in Fall 2001 to 13,213 in Fall 2007, this still exceeds the desired on-campus enrollment of 13,000. Having more than 13,000 undergraduates enrolled on-campus at any one time taxes the physical and human resources of the institution. In addition, significant year-to-year fluctuations create difficulties for both our teaching and infrastructure resources.

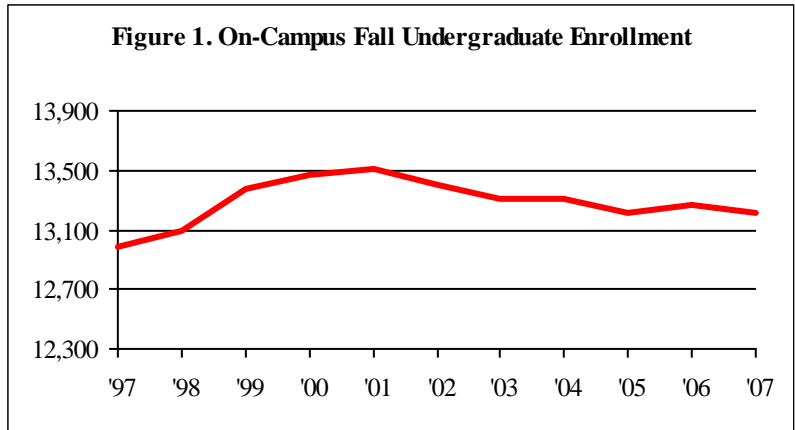
The current enrollment planning process focuses intensely on a first-time freshman enrollment target of 3,050 students. It is especially important to be disciplined about first-year enrollment targets given that all freshmen are housed within the North Campus Residential Initiative.

Undergraduate enrollment consists of different types of students: first-time freshmen, first-time transfers into Cornell, rejoining students, and continuing students. While only a portion of the undergraduate enrollment can be attributed to first-time freshmen arriving in the fall, it has been the major contributing factor. Obtaining more control with regard to the enrollment of first-time freshmen will assist in guiding our enrollment approach toward first-time transfers.

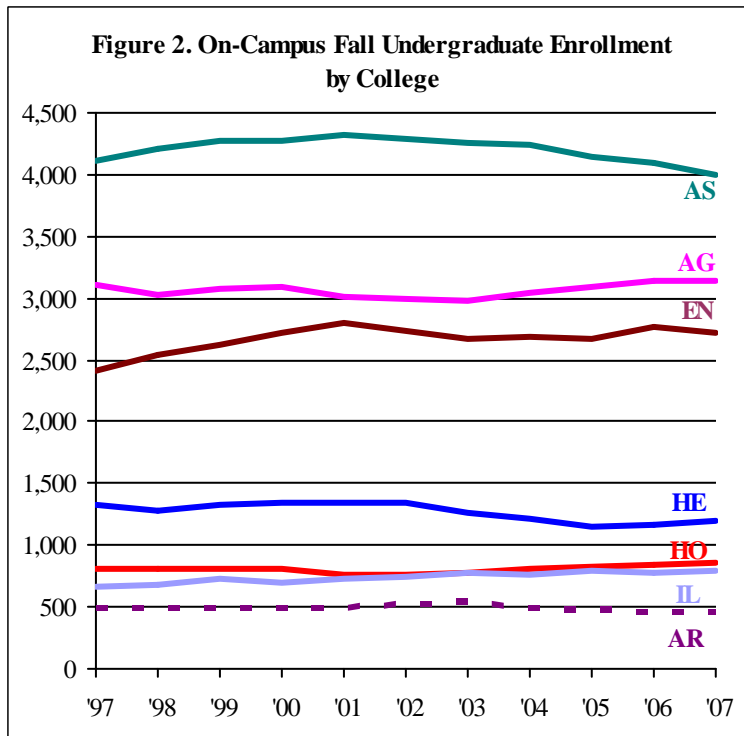
The admit rate from Fall 2006 to Fall 2007 decreased from 25 percent to 21 percent; the yield stayed constant at 47 percent over the same one-year period. As of the sixth week of classes in Fall 2007, Cornell enrolled 3,010 first-time freshmen, 40 students under the 3,050 first-time freshmen target.

Current Situation and Changes over Time

Figure 1 indicates that on-campus undergraduate enrollment increased by 2 percent, or 232 students, between Fall 1997 and Fall 2007 (12,981 in Fall 1997 to 13,213 in Fall 2007). The majority of this increase occurred between Fall 1998 and Fall 1999, before the freshman enrollment management process was implemented. Figure 1 also demonstrates the success experienced in decreasing the operational maximum total on-campus undergraduate enrollment toward the 13,000 students target articulated in Fall 2001.



The Endowed General Purpose Colleges accounted for 57 percent of the increase from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007. Figure 2 displays Arts & Sciences (AS) with 109 less students in Fall 2007 than in Fall 1997; Engineering (EN) with 315 additional students; and Architecture, Art, & Planning (AR) with 37 fewer students currently enrolled than in Fall 1997.



The Contract Colleges accounted for 19 percent total on-campus undergraduate enrollment increase from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007. Industrial & Labor Relations (IL) increased their enrollments by 138 students, Human Ecology (HE) decreased by 122 students, and Agriculture & Life Sciences (AG) increased by 28 students between Fall 1997 and Fall 2007. The remaining enrollment changes occurred in Hotel Administration (HO), with an increase of 55 students, and the Internal Transfer Division's (not pictured though included in the Endowed General Purpose percentage) enrollments, which have declined steadily from 74 students in Fall 1997 to 38 students in Fall 2007.

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Figures 3 and 4 display the first-year freshman enrollment plan initially formulated in Fall 2000 as compared to prior first-time freshman enrollments. As planned, the first-time freshman enrollment decreased from 3,162 in Fall 1999 to 3,054 in Fall 2000. Following the initial Fall 2000 test, Cornell implemented more aggressive measures to assist each of the colleges in staying within 1 percent of their designated targets. However, in Fall 2007, two of the colleges fell below their respective bounds while three remained within the 1 percent target for first-time freshman, as shown in the figures below.

Figure 3 displays fall first-time freshman enrollments from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007 in the three largest colleges. The size of the incoming freshman class in Arts & Sciences decreased 2 percent from 1,006 students in Fall 1997 to 986 in Fall 2007. For Fall 2007, Engineering enrolled 767 freshmen, an increase of 6 percent from Fall 1997. Freshman enrollments in Agriculture & Life Sciences have remained relatively stable, from 626 students in Fall 1997 to 621 students in Fall 2007.

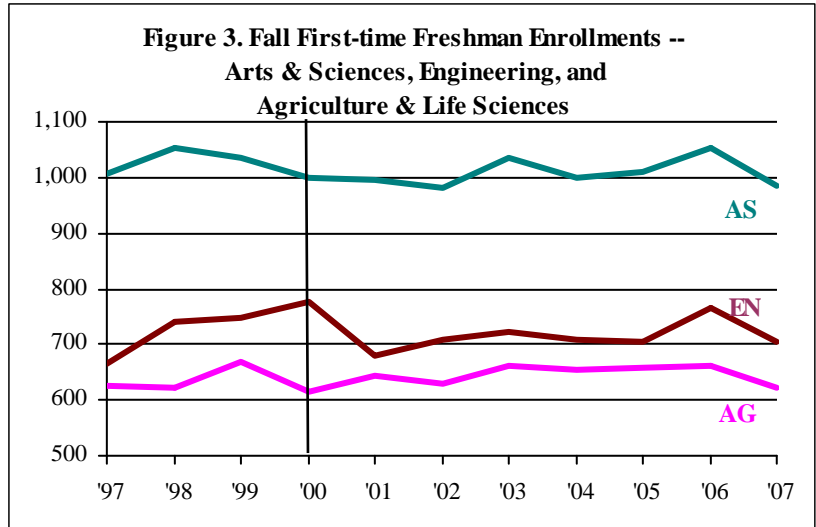
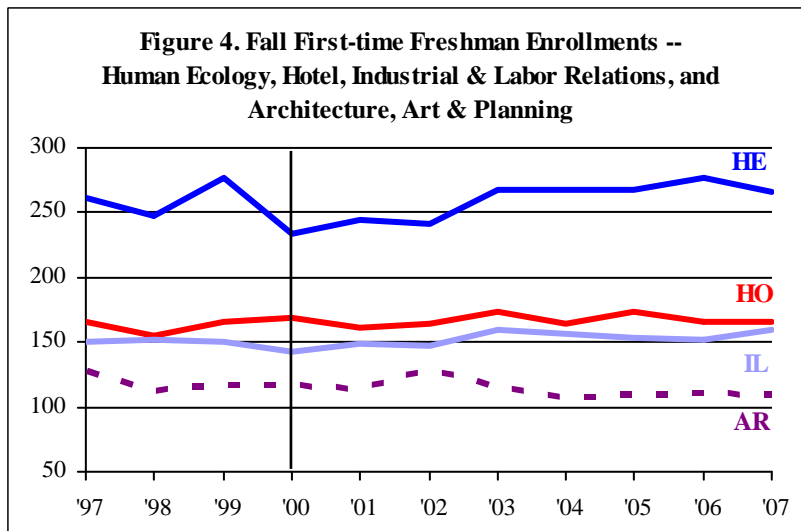


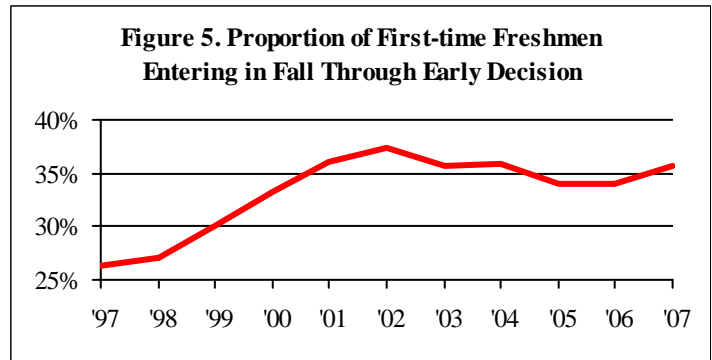
Figure 4 displays fall first-time freshman enrollments from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007 in the other four undergraduate colleges. Industrial & Labor Relations experienced a 6 percent increase in freshman enrollments from Fall 1997 (150 students) to Fall 2007 (159 students). Architecture, Art & Planning experienced a 15 percent decrease in freshman enrollments from Fall 1997 (127 students) to Fall 2007 (108 students) primarily as a result of reducing the number of freshman architecture students with the commencement of the Masters of Architecture I program.



Human Ecology increased modestly by 4 students and Hotel Administration decreased by only one students between Fall 1997 and Fall 2007.

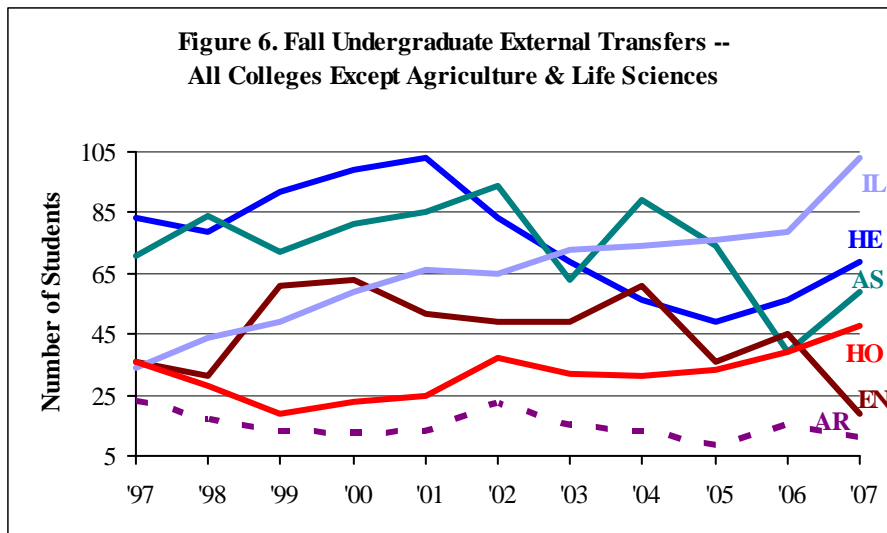
During this time, it should be noted, the fall freshman enrollment target for Industrial & Labor Relations, Hotel Administration, and Human Ecology increased to offset the elimination of the January freshman program.

From Fall 1997 through Fall 2007, Cornell's Early Decision Program (EDP) applications have accounted for between 10 and 13 percent of all applications. For the Fall 2007 entering class, 3,015 of the 30,383 applicants, applied via EDP. The proportion of the entering class enrolled through EDP significantly increased from Fall 1997 to Fall 2002, and then declined in Fall 2005 to 34 percent of the entering class. In Fall 2007, of 3,010 first-time freshmen entering, 1,073 (36 percent) were admitted through EDP (see Figure 5).



External transfers offer another option for maintaining a stable enrollment. Although the enrollment management process for external transfer students is not as regulated as it is for freshman students, there is still careful monitoring of external transfer enrollments. The majority of external transfers to Cornell arrive as sophomores or juniors. It is important to note that Cornell has always had a tradition of enrolling transfer students, particularly in the Contract Colleges; however, Arts & Sciences has also enrolled a significant number of new external transfers. Cornell's tradition in this regard sets us apart from our Ivy peers, some of whom enroll a more modest number of external transfer students or none at all. These students add a rich dimension to the classroom experience and their contributions to undergraduate life at Cornell are deep and varied.

From Fall 1997 to Fall 2007, between 35 and 44 percent of all incoming external transfers annually enroll in Agriculture & Life Sciences. In Fall 1997, this amounted to 209 out of 492 external transfers (42 percent) and in Fall 2007, 238 out of 547 external transfers (44 percent).

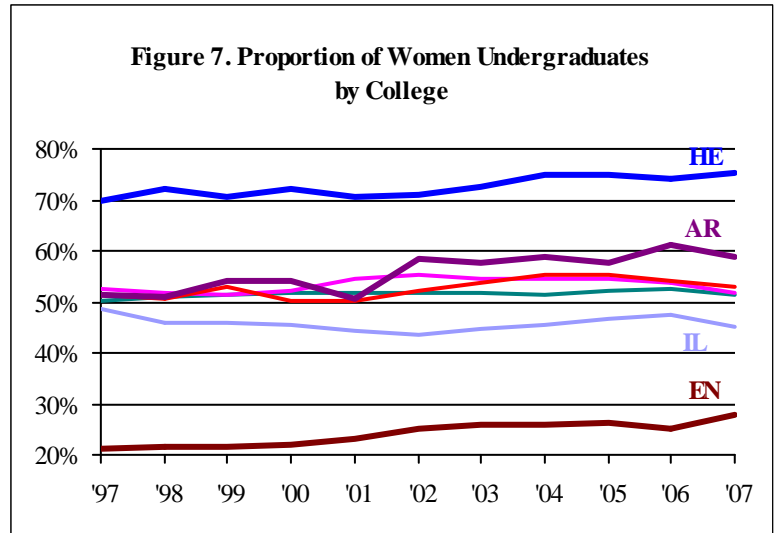


For the other colleges (see Figure 6) the number of external transfers fluctuates from year to year. Industrial & Labor Relations tripled their external transfers from 34 in Fall 1997 to 103 in Fall 2007. Hotel Administration increased 12 students in external transfers between Fall 1997 and Fall 2007. Decreases in

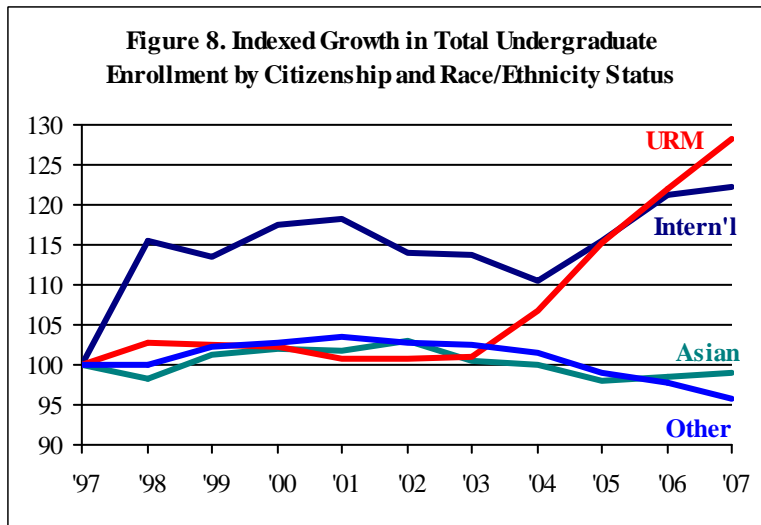
external transfer enrollment from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007 occurred in Engineering (- 17 students), Human Ecology (-14 students), and Architecture, Art & Planning and Arts & Sciences each at -12 students.

Cornell has been making progress on other related areas of undergraduate enrollment. Figures 7 through 10 displays the diversity of the undergraduate student population with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, and geographic distribution.

The proportion of women among the total undergraduate population increased from 47 percent in Fall 1997 to 49 percent in Fall 2002 where it still currently remains. As Figure 7 demonstrates, two of the colleges have distinctly different patterns from the other colleges. The proportion of women among undergraduates in Human Ecology has fluctuated between 70 and 75 percent from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007. In Engineering, undergraduate women have increased steadily from 21 to 28 percent with three of those percentage points occurring between Fall 2006 and Fall 2007. The most significant increase in the proportion of women in any single college occurred in Architecture, Art & Planning with an 8 percent increase from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007.



Starting in Fall 2002, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions began to utilize a new race/ethnicity category to enhance the ability to track underrepresented minorities (URM)³ more



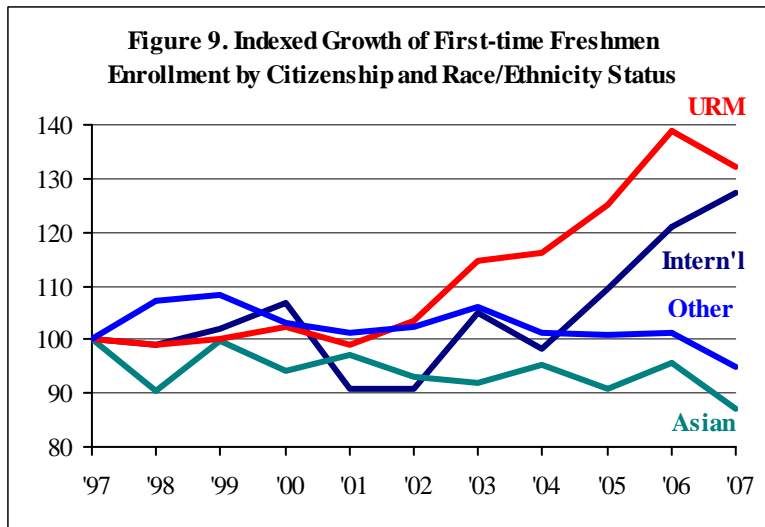
consistently with federal guidelines. These students indicated on their admissions application that they were multi-racial with at least one URM category. Prior to Fall 2002 students who indicated a multi-racial category with at least one URM category were defaulted to “other or not reported.” For total undergraduate enrollment, this new category has increased from 24 students in Fall 2002, to 284 students in Fall 2006. Figure 8 shows the indexed growth of total

undergraduates by citizenship and race/ethnicity status with the URM category significantly increasing due to the new multi-racial category.

³URM: Native Americans, Hawaiian-Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and multi-racial indicating at least one underrepresented category.

The proportion of minorities among the undergraduate population⁴ has grown from 30 percent in Fall 1997 to 33 percent in Fall 2007. Among individual minority groups, the largest increase during this period has been among African American students, growing from 583 in Fall 1997 to 712 in Fall 2007. The proportion of underrepresented minorities (URM) grew by 28 percent from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007 (1,456 to 1,869 students respectively). The largest increase among URM students during this period was among the multi-racial category with an increase of 316 students between Fall 2002 and Fall 2007. Over the 10-year period, decreases occurred in Hispanic Americans (-55 students) and Asian Americans (-24 students), while Native Americans remained relatively constant. For other U.S. citizens (Caucasians and those who elected not to designate race/ethnicity information), enrollments declined 4 percent from 8,745 in Fall 1997 to 8,377 in Fall 2007. Over this same time-period, the enrollment of international students increased significantly from 878 to 1,073 students.

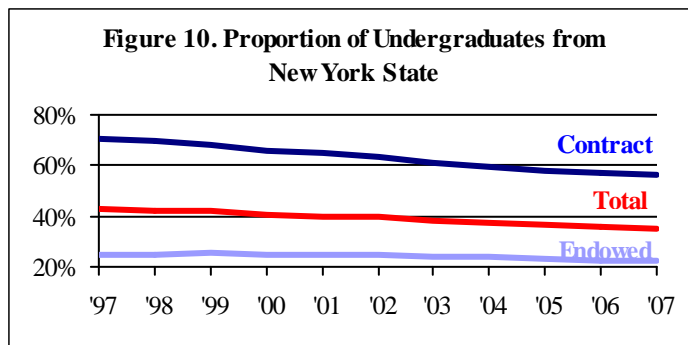
For first-time freshmen, Figure 9 shows the proportion of underrepresented minorities (URM) has grown 32 percent from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007 (349 to 461 students respectively).



With the exception of the new multi-racial category, between Fall 1997 and Fall 2007, the traditional categories of URM experienced the following: African Americans increased 14 percent (20 students) while Hispanic Americans decreased 6 percent (11 students), and Native American remained relatively stable. In the other categories, from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007, Asian Americans decreased 13 percent (71 students) while international students increased from 219 students in

Fall 1997 to 279 students in Fall 2007. Caucasians and those declining to report race/ethnicity declined by 5 percent (1,888 to 1,792 students from Fall 1997 to Fall 2007, respectively).

As part of planned recruitment efforts, the undergraduate student population has become more geographically diverse in both the Endowed and Contract colleges. Although the proportion of undergraduates from New York State has been declining (see Figure 10), they still account for the largest share of students in both the Endowed and Contract colleges. From Fall 1997 to Fall 2007, in the Endowed colleges, proportions from the Mid-Atlantic increased



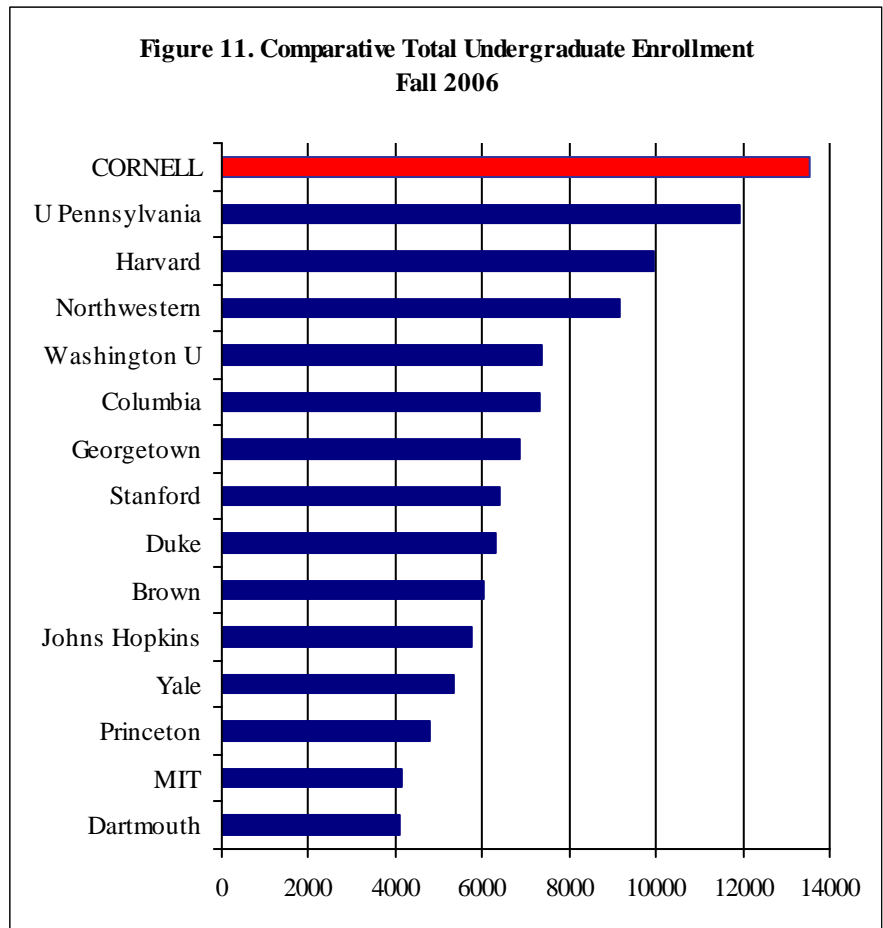
⁴Limited to U.S. citizens and Permanent Residents only; race/ethnicity data is not gathered and reported on international students.

2 percent. The South and West regions increased 1 percent with the Midwest decreased by 1 percent and the Southwest and foreign regions remained stable. During the same time period, enrollment in the Contract Colleges increased from all the remaining regions: Mid-Atlantic (4 percent), New England (3 percent), South, West and foreign regions all 2 percent, and 1 percent in the Midwest and Southwest regions.

Competitor Comparisons

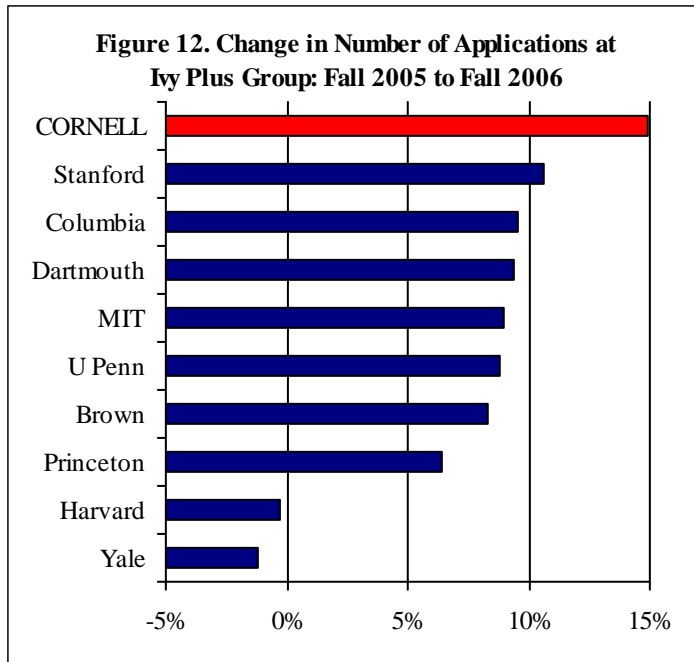
This section focuses on comparisons between Cornell and many of the “admissions overlap group” institutions for which we have a source of comparative data.⁵ As Figure 11 indicates,

Cornell enrolls a larger number of undergraduates than any of our comparators. Typically, freshmen account for approximately a quarter of the undergraduate population. Hence, while Cornell admits roughly 3,050 first-time freshmen or 22 percent of total undergraduate enrollment, our closest Ivy comparator, the University of Pennsylvania, has an entering class of approximately 2,400 or 20 percent of their total undergraduate enrollment. Dartmouth and MIT are admitting closer to 1,000 new freshmen each year and that accounts for a quarter of their undergraduate enrollment total.



⁵Fall 2006 comparative data is the most recent information available. The 2007 data will not be available until late in the spring 2008 semester.

As Figure 12 displays, eight of the Ivy Plus Group (the eight Ivy League institutions plus MIT and Stanford) saw an increase in the number of applications for admission between Fall 2005 and Fall 2006. Harvard stayed relatively stable with a less than 1 percent decline while Yale



experienced a 1 percent decline in applications. Cornell saw a 15 percent increase from 24,452 to 28,098 applications over this one-year period. This increase corresponds with Cornell's accepting the Common Application.

Cornell's admit rate – the proportion of students offered admission divided by the total number of applicants – decreased 2 percent from 27 percent in Fall 2005 to 25 percent for Fall 2006. Of our Ivy Plus Group comparators, seven experienced a decrease in admit rate from Fall 2005 to Fall 2006 while Yale and Harvard experienced marginal or no increases respectively. University of Pennsylvania decreased 3 percent,

while the remaining six institutions declined 1 percent. The changes depicted are often directly and inversely related to the changes in the number of applications displayed in Figure 12 (an increase in applications typically leads to a decrease in admit rates).

Cornell's 25 percent admit rate for Fall 2006 is the highest in the Ivy Plus Group, which otherwise ranges from a low of 9 percent at Harvard to a high of 18 percent at the University of Pennsylvania (see Figure 13). Among Cornell's seven undergraduate colleges, Architecture, Art & Planning had the lowest admit rate (17 percent) with Engineering having the highest (31 percent). Collectively, the Contract Colleges had an admit rate of 26 percent, and the Endowed Colleges' admit rate was 21 percent for the incoming Class of 2011.

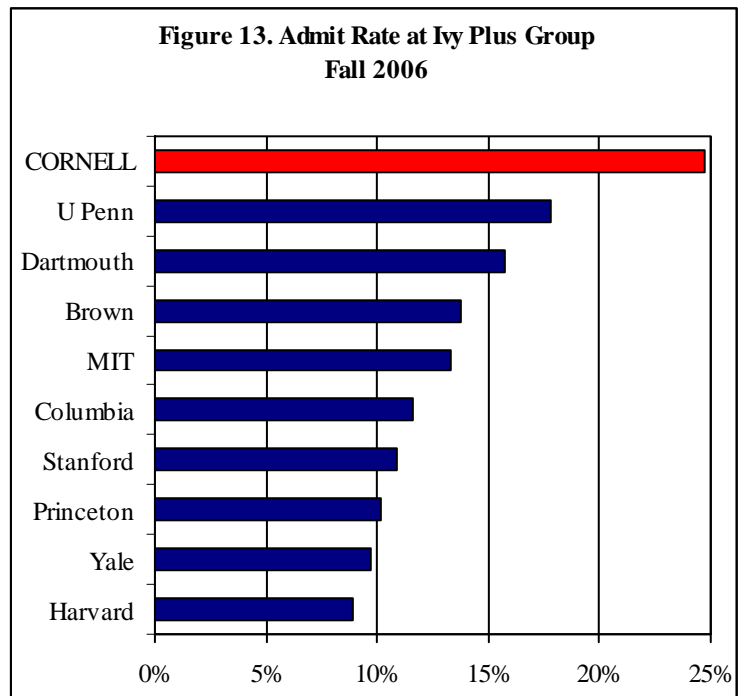
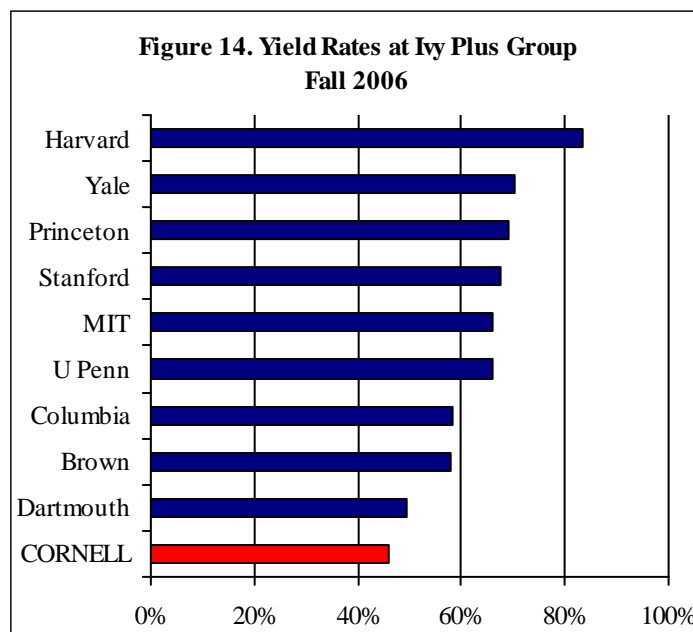


Figure 14 displays the Fall 2006 comparative yield rates – the proportion of students who accept an offer of admission divided by the total number of applicants who were admitted – for the Ivy Plus Group. Between Fall 2005 and Fall 2006, Yale’s yield rate decreased by 2 percent while Cornell’s yield rate decreased by a little less than 1 percent. The highest increase was 2 percent for three of the institutions and the remainder experienced no change. Among these comparators, yield rates for Fall 2006 ranged from 46 percent at Cornell to 83 percent at Harvard.



On the Horizon

Maintaining a stable total undergraduate enrollment is imperative as Cornell continues to enhance the undergraduate experience. The North Campus Residential Initiative’s role in the university’s total undergraduate experience necessitates a greater need to be more disciplined about all aspects of enrollment targets. Managing toward the 3,050 fall, first-time freshman target becomes the goal due to the implementation of the undergraduate enrollment management guidelines.

External transfer applications for fall semester admission increased 6 percent during the period from 1997 to 2007. During this same period, the number of external transfer acceptances increased 15 percent, and yield increased 4 percent, in part through more judicious use of guaranteed transfer programs in several of the colleges. As a result, external transfer enrollment has grown over the past several years. With the fall freshman enrollment plan in place, the need for specific external transfer enrollment targets is critical in order to maintain optimal overall enrollments. A long-range enrollment plan for external transfers that will enhance recruitment efforts and establish enrollment targets by college is being developed. A central part of this plan is the Pathway to Success program, a transfer admissions program funded, in part, from a grant that Cornell received from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. Cornell was the only Ivy League school and one of only eight institutions in the nation to receive this grant. The Pathway to Success program was initiated in June 2006 and it involves a partnership with Monroe Community College and Morrisville State College to increase the transfer of students from these schools to Cornell University.

As part of its continuing goal to provide the nation’s best undergraduate experience at a research university, Cornell is renewing and revitalizing its traditional long-standing commitment to undergraduates. At its heart is one of the most ambitious program innovations ever undertaken by the university: building five House systems for post-first-year students on West Campus.

Currently in operation are the Alice Cook House, Carl Becker House, and Hans Bethe House with William Keeton House currently under construction to open in fall 2008. The remaining house is scheduled to be completed by 2010.

Conclusion

The on-going challenge facing Cornell is to craft and implement strategies that will allow the institution to become an ever-stronger player in the increasingly complex head-to-head competition for high-ability undergraduate students. In particular, it is imperative that we continue to highlight what is distinctive about Cornell to our target populations. In essence, we need to become ever more accomplished in marketing the institution, both to prospective students and the public at large.

Undergraduate enrollments at Cornell remain strong. The institution is in the enviable position of having a large and talented applicant pool making it possible to admit and matriculate a diverse and extremely well qualified student body.