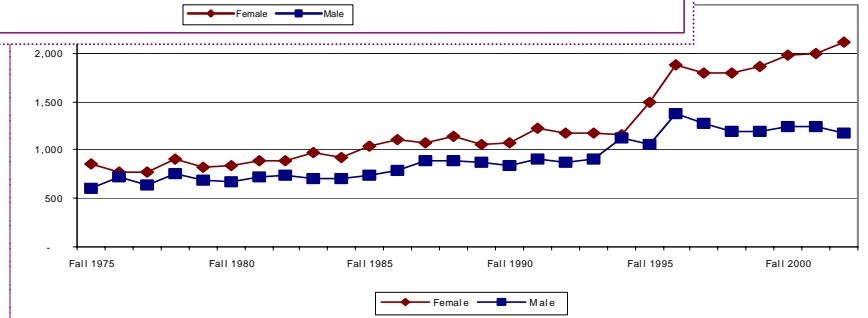
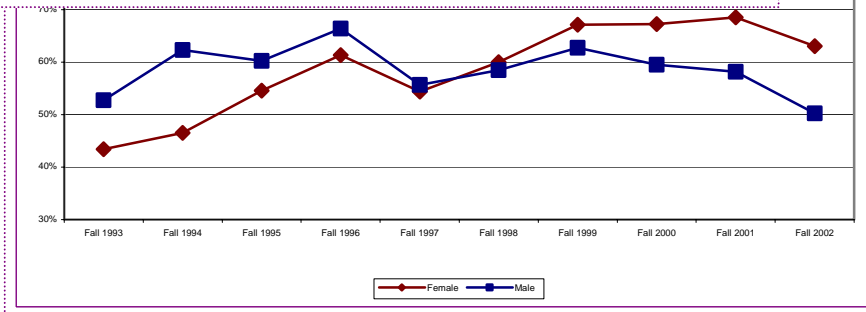
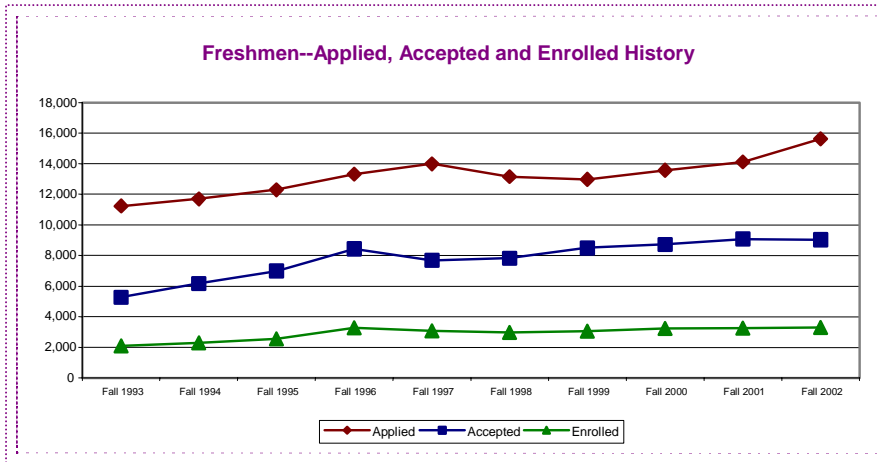


OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY  
 FRESHMEN AND TRANSFERS:  
 FALL 1993 TO FALL 2002



July 2003



## James Madison University Freshmen and Transfers: Fall 1993 to Fall 2002

### Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine ten-years of information and identify trends about the nature of new undergraduate students at James Madison University. Data from several sources were compiled into historical views designed to increase confidence in a common understanding of entering students at JMU. Foremost among these findings about entering freshmen from fall 1993 to fall 2002 are:

- The University grew significantly and maintained a reputation for selectivity.
- Enrolled freshmen increased 58%, from 2,082 to 3,283.
- Interest in attending JMU, as measured by the number of applicants, increased in roughly equal measure for both men and women. Overall, freshman class applications increased 39%, from 11,223 to 15,639.
- Acceptance rates increased from 47% to 58%.
- The acceptance rate for women in the freshman class climbed and surpassed the rates for men. Acceptance rates by fall 2002 were 63% female and 50% male. Only 36% (1,167) of the fall 2002 freshman class was male and, by headcount, the lowest number enrolled since fall 1995.
- For minorities, enrollment gains with Asian or Pacific Islanders and Hispanics were offset by loss of African-Americans. Non-white students (non-resident aliens included) declined from 14% to 11% of the entering freshman class. Applications for Asians or Pacific Islanders increased from 643 to 957 (49%), Hispanics increased 247 to 427 (73%) and African-Americans from 725 to 762 (5%).
- Out-of-state enrollment varied between 30% and 38% with a ten-year average of 34%. Out-of-state acceptance rates increased over the period, surpassing in-state rates.
- SAT combined scores continued to be “selective” compared to JMU peers. However, they declined from 1,186 to 1,165. The decline was associated with the increase in women with lower math scores than men and with the increase of out-of-state students with lower SAT combined scores.
- Results from the annual *Freshman Survey* revealed some trends consistent with the female increase in the freshman class. These included an increased emphasis on family and social interests and a decreased interest in a vocational philosophy of education.

Foremost among these findings about transfers from fall 1993 to fall 2002 are:

- Enrolled transfers increased 38%, from 467 to 646.
- Each year, about eight percent more women than men were accepted. However, lower yield rates for women resulted in gender parity in enrollment beginning in fall 1998.
- Numbers by minority groups are small and trends difficult to discern. Although applications increased in proportion with whites, non-white acceptance rates were lower resulting in lower enrollments from fall 1999 to fall 2002.
- Students from in-state institutions benefited the most from increased transfer enrollment.
- By fall 2002, the majority of transfers (40%) came from two-year in-state schools, 30% from four-year in-state schools, and 30% from out-of-state schools.

**James Madison University Freshmen and Transfers:  
Fall 1993 to Fall 2002**

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## Introduction

James Madison University changed a lot over the past ten years. Every member of the JMU community holds a unique perspective and interpretation of this change. For many, this perspective is incremental; the latest information is incorporated with one's existing perspective to create a new view of what the institution is all about.

One also needs to "take a step back" and examine information in historical perspective. From year-to-year, limited information and perspective require individuals to make assumptions that help them understand their community. Over time, errors in assumptions lead to problems like confusion, discord and bad decisions. Likewise, the magnitude of change from one year to the next gets lost in the fuzziness of memories. Historical perspective brings clarity to direction and magnitude of change. It reworks assumptions into facts. It helps make "all together one."

The purpose of this study was to examine ten-years of information and identify trends about the nature of new undergraduate students at JMU. Some of the information has been published annually in the Statistical Summary (Office of Institutional Research) and in the Student Development News, Freshman Survey (Office of University Planning and Analysis). The historical views that follow are designed to increase community confidence in a common understanding of undergraduates entering James Madison University.

## Organization of Results

Compilations of historical entering student data are presented in three sections:

- Section I: Common Freshman Measures
- Section II: Entering Freshman Survey
- Section III: Common Transfer Student Measures

**Section I: Common Freshman Measures:** Section I displays ten-year histories of data about first-time freshmen that are common to higher education in the United States. This is the kind of standard/well-defined information collected under state or federal mandate, or voluntarily provided to private sources like *U.S. News & World Reports*. Most of this information comes from the student specific admissions data files created for the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV). The SCHEV admissions files were first developed and submitted in fall 1993.

The common demographic values examined are:

- All students;
- Sex;
- Ethnicity; and
- Residence (in-state, out-of-state).

The common admissions statistics examined by each of the demographic values are:

- The number of applicants;
- The number of students accepted;
- The number of students enrolled;

- The acceptance rate;
- The yield rate; and
- SAT scores.

**Section II: Entering Freshman Survey:** Section II displays results from ten-years of the annual *Freshman Survey*. Each year, staff in the Division of Student Affairs, University Planning and Analysis send a survey to incoming freshmen requesting responses to questions about their decision to attend college and, more specifically, JMU; their experiences in high school; and their attitudes and beliefs. This information is unique to JMU and gives additional perspective to the data in Section I. Some of the questions have changed over time and only those with sufficient history and value to this study are used.

Historical results from 23 of 39 questions asked in fall 2002 are included. They are organized into four subsections:

- Questions About the Freshman's Family and Their Personal Values
- Questions About the Freshman's High School Performance and Activities
- Questions About the Freshman's College Values
- Questions About Freshmen Choosing JMU

**Section III: Common Transfer Student Measures:** Section III displays ten-year histories of data about transfers to JMU that are common to higher education in the United States. The section is similar to Section I in that the transfer data are collected under the same state mandates and by the same computer programs that collect the freshman data. Transfer data are also examined like the freshman data with two basic exceptions. First, transfer analyses examine the additional demographic value of the type of institution last attended by the transfer (in-state two-year, in-state four-year, or out-of-state). Second, there are no SAT scores or other common/standardized test scores available.

## Admissions Quality Indicators

**Admissions at JMU:** At risk of simplifying a complicated process, the strength of a student's high school program and their success in that program are primary in the admissions decision. Every applicant's high school transcript is examined in detail. This transcript detail is critical in identifying those applicants who are likely to succeed at JMU. Success in standardized tests like the SAT or ACT is secondary in the process.

However, the transcript detail is not standardized nationally and is likely to differ by locality. It does not exist in a historical data set and would be most difficult, if not impossible, to compile for analysis or peer comparison.

**SAT scores:** SAT is one of the few nationally standardized measures of scholastic aptitude used for undergraduate admissions in the United States. Analytical enterprises--public and private--for profit, politics, or philanthropy--have and will continue to request SAT scores in views just like those presented in this study. Because SAT scores were recentered in 1995, all analytical timelines for SAT scores in this study begin in fall 1995 instead of fall 1993.

**Acceptance Rates:** The acceptance rate is also a common indicator of an institution's selectivity and likely to be requested internally and externally for institutional comparisons. It is the number of accepted

students divided by the number of applicants; the percent of applicants accepted. For institutional research purposes, it is important that the operational definition of “applicant” means that the prospective student provided sufficient information and a decision to admit or reject him or her was made.

***Yield Rates:*** The yield rate is the number of enrolled students divided by the number accepted; the percent of accepted students who enrolled. It is less commonly requested or used for institutional comparisons. However, it is very important to admissions operations. Yield estimates help determine how many students to accept in order to enroll the appropriate number of students for academic and other resource capacity.

**Section I: Common Freshman Measures**

**All First-Time Freshmen:** The numbers of applied, accepted and enrolled first-time freshmen increased significantly from fall 1993 to fall 2002 (Chart 1). Applications increased 39% (from 11,223 to 15,639). Accepted freshmen increased 71% (from 5,285 to 9,048). Enrolled freshmen increased 58% (from 2,082 to 3,283).

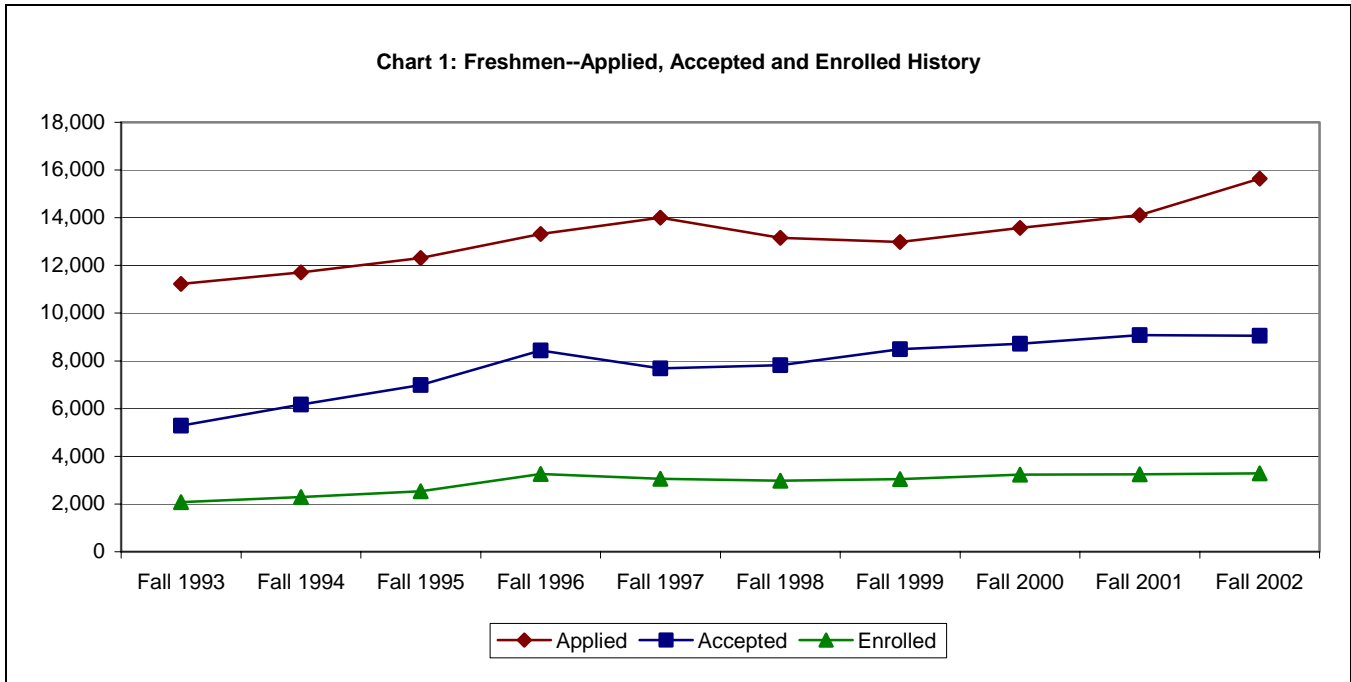
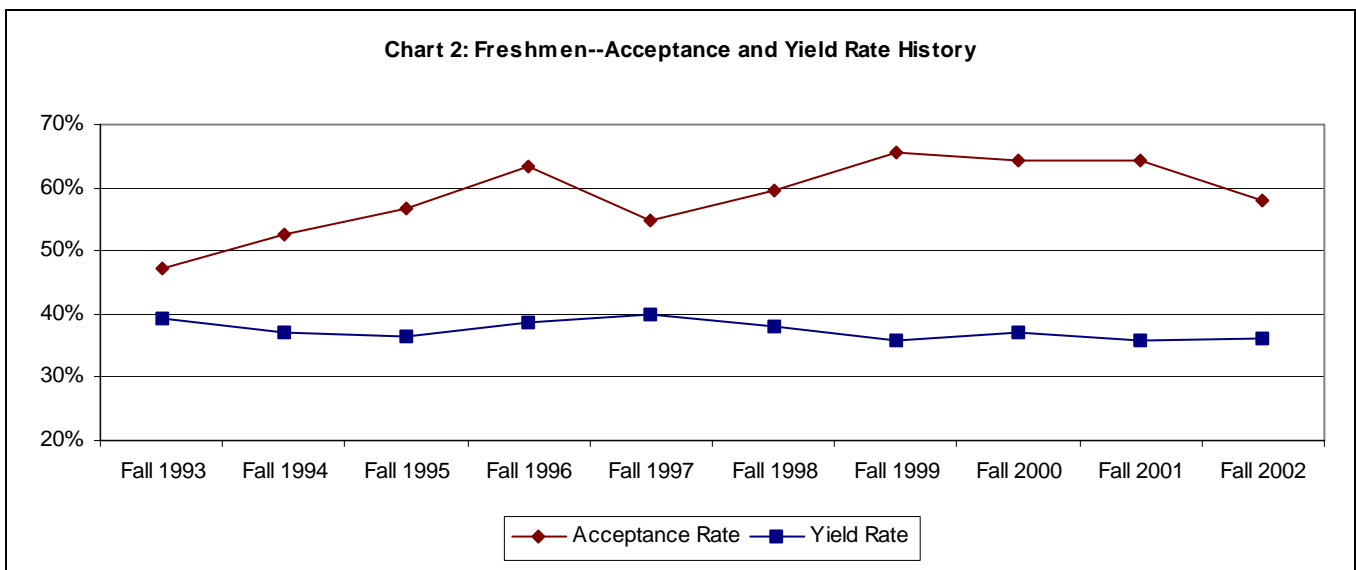
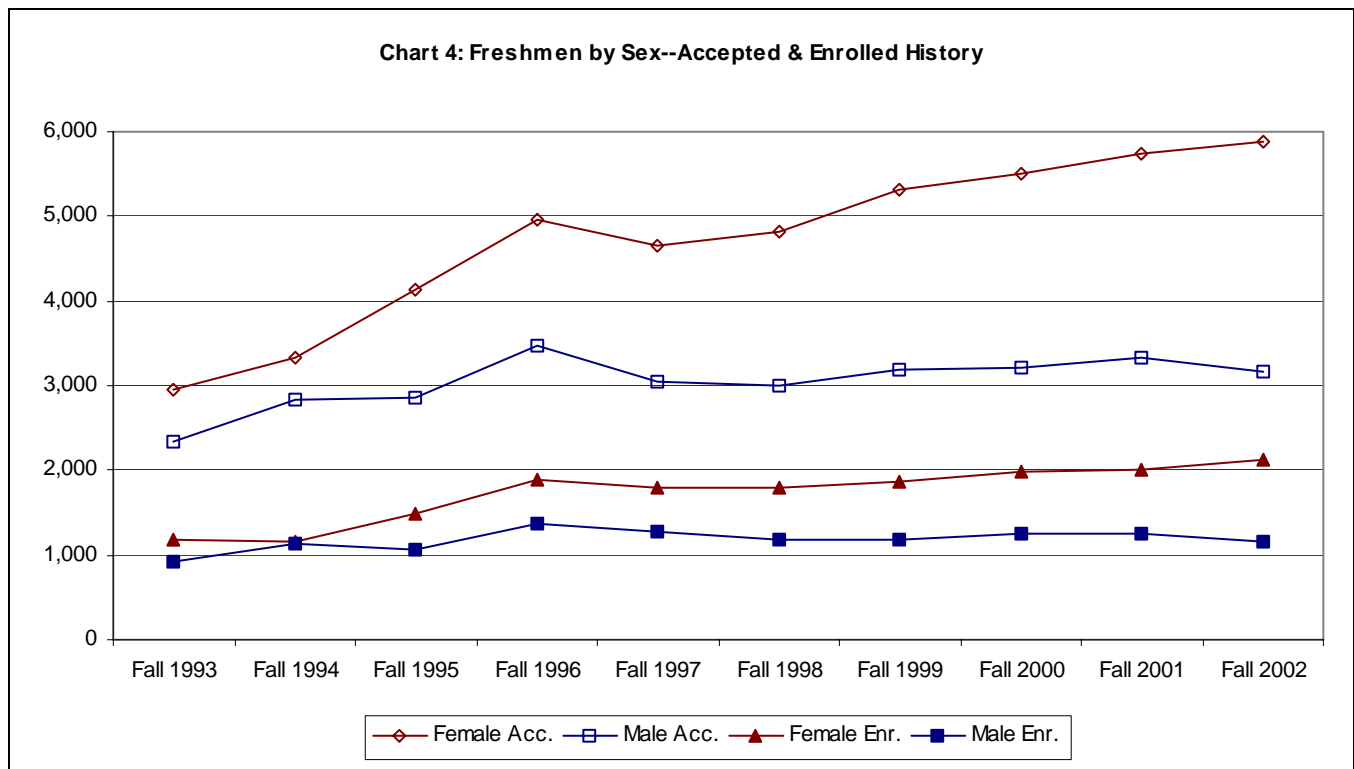
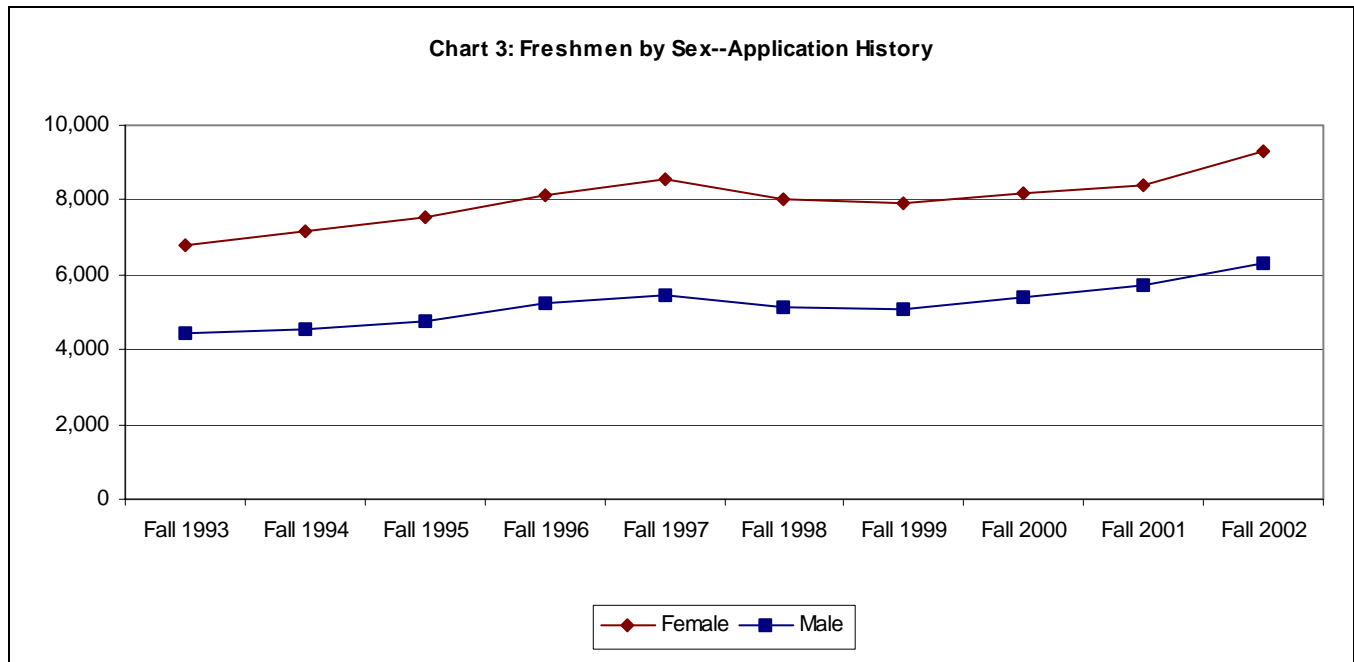


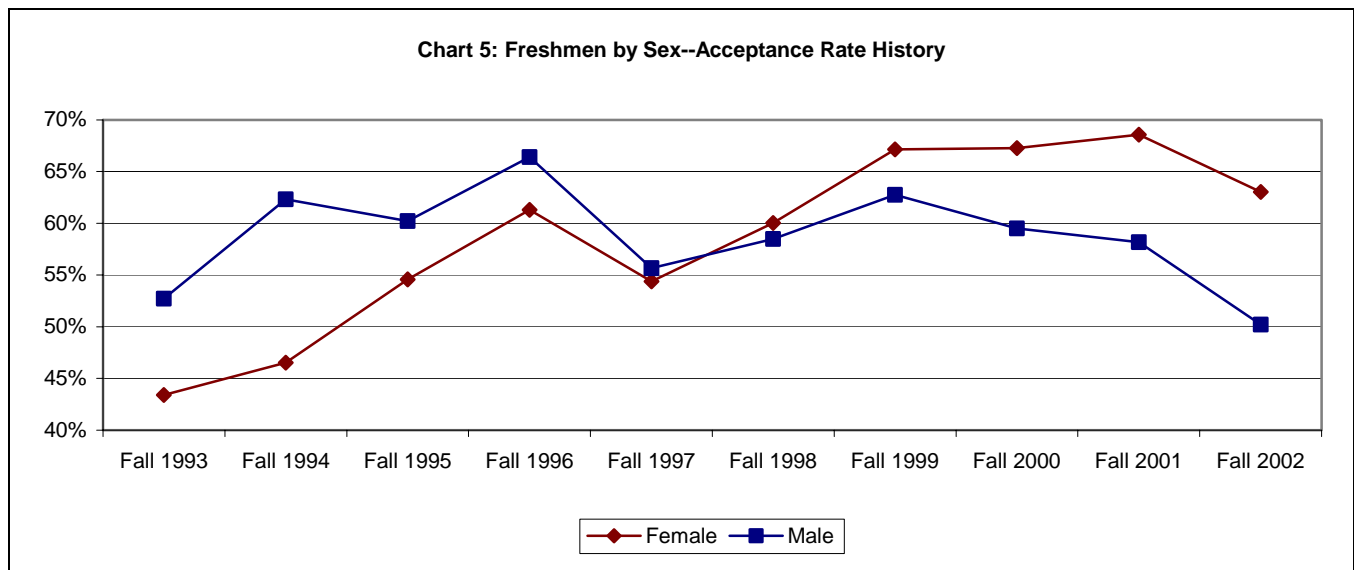
Chart 2 shows that acceptance rates generally increased while yield rates may have declined. From fall 1993 to fall 2002, the acceptance rate increased from 47% to 58%. The acceptance rate had a ten-year average of 59% and a high of 65% in fall 1999. The ten-year average of the yield rates was 37%.



**Freshmen by Sex:** Interest in attending JMU, as measured by number of applicants, increased for both men and women. Applications increased 37% for women and 43% for men from fall 1993 to fall 2002. However, the percentage of males in the entering freshman class declined from a high of 49% in fall 1994 to 36% in fall 2002. Note the similar relationship between the sex curves in the application history (Chart 3) and the divergent relationships in acceptance and enrollment (Chart 4).

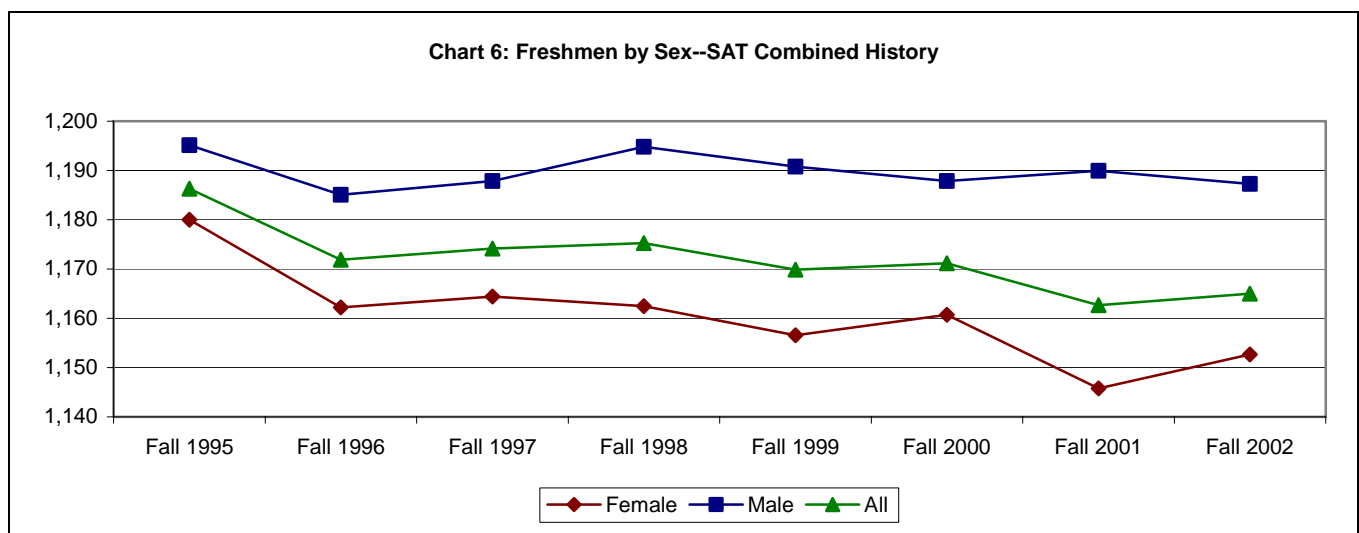


The acceptance rate for women climbed and surpassed the rates for men. Acceptance rates for women increased almost 20 points over these ten years while the rates for men declined slightly. In Chart 5, note how the curve for females crosses the curve for males. Fall 2002 was the lowest year for males with only 50% accepted compared to 63% women accepted. Despite the greatest number of male applicants ever, fall 2002 had the lowest number accepted (3,170) since fall 1998 and the lowest number enrolled (1,167) since fall 1995 (Charts 3 & 4 above).

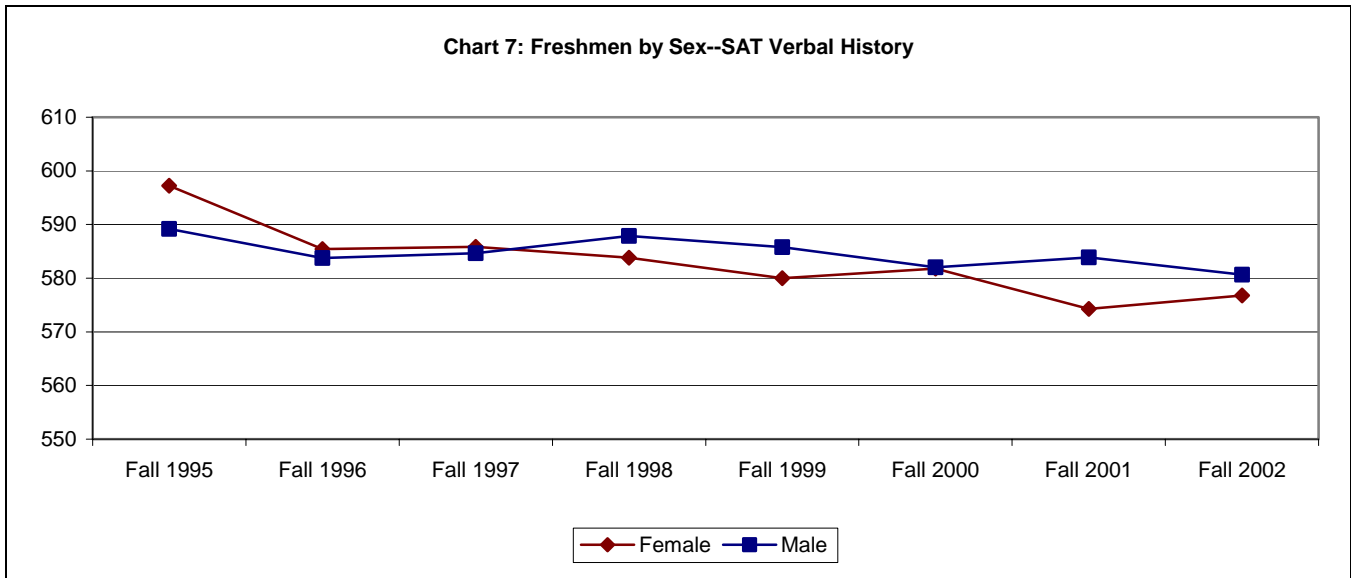


The yield rate history fluctuates, making trends difficult to discern. The ten-year average yield rate was 39% for men and 37% for women.

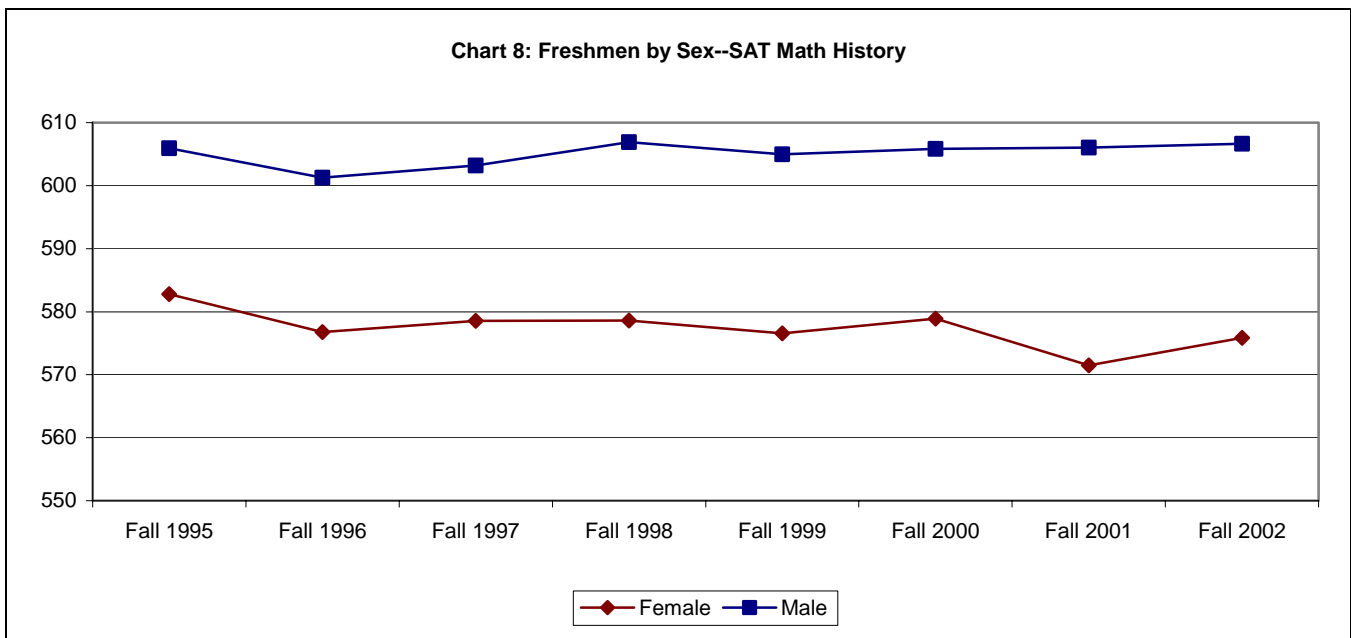
The timeline for SAT analysis begins with recentered scores in fall 1995. Chart 6 shows that since 1995 the average SAT combined score for all enrolled freshmen declined 21 points (from 1,186 to 1,165). The female average declined 21 points (from 1,180 to 1,153) compared to males, which declined eight points (from 1,195 to 1,187).



The average SAT verbal scores declined for both sexes (Chart 7). Females dropped 20 points (from 597 to 577) and males eight points (from 589 to 581).



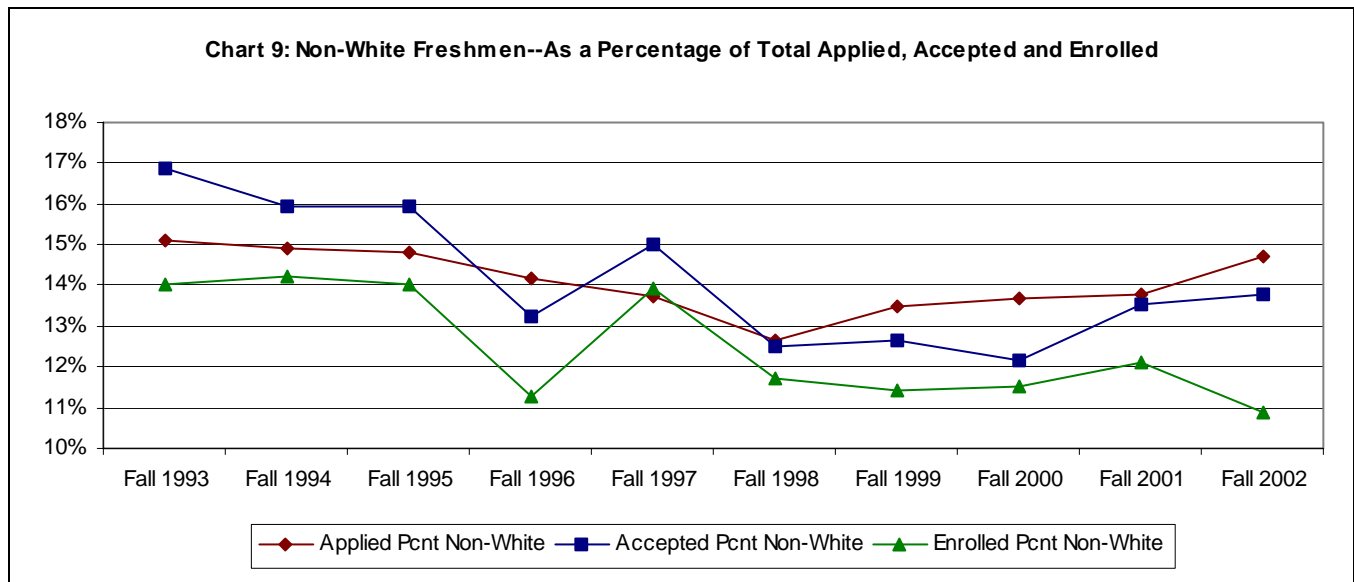
The average male math score (Chart 8) gained one point (from 606 to 607). Female SAT math scores declined seven points (from 583 to 576).



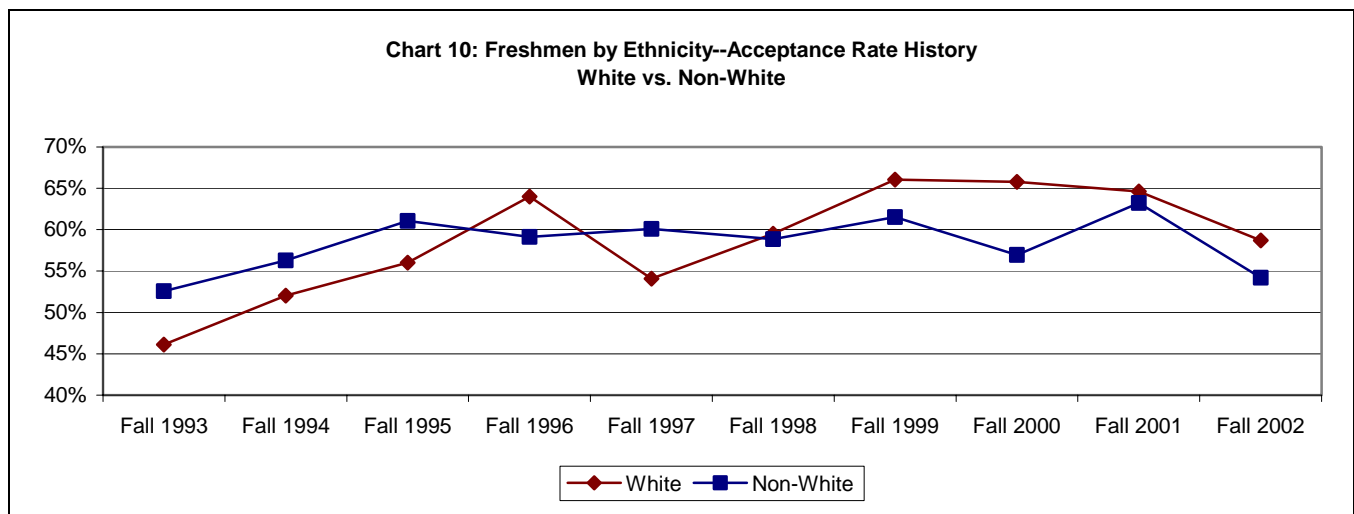
A spot check of the SAT distributions for all fall 2002 applicants was made to see how the results for enrolled students compared to the entire pool of applicants. For all applicants, the fall 2002 distributions of SAT verbal scores were the same by sex. For SAT math and SAT combined, the distributions of scores for males were at least equal to, if not greater than, those of females. All of the distributions were normal.

**Freshmen by Ethnicity:** In this analysis, “non-white” refers to ethnic minorities and non-resident aliens. Unknown ethnicity is not included. Prior to fall 2000, “unknown” students were reported as “white.” This anomaly will slightly overstate “white” statistics prior to fall 2000.

Overall, the entering freshman class grew 58% from fall 1993 to fall 2002. But, non-white class members grew 22%, from 292 in fall 1993 to 357 in fall 2002. As a percentage of all applicants, non-whites declined slightly from fall 1993 (15%) to fall 1998 (13%) and then returned to 15% in fall 2002. The percentage of non-white accepted students declined from 17% in fall 1993 to 14% in fall 2002. Enrolled non-whites declined from 14% in fall 1993 to 11% in fall 2002 (Chart 9).

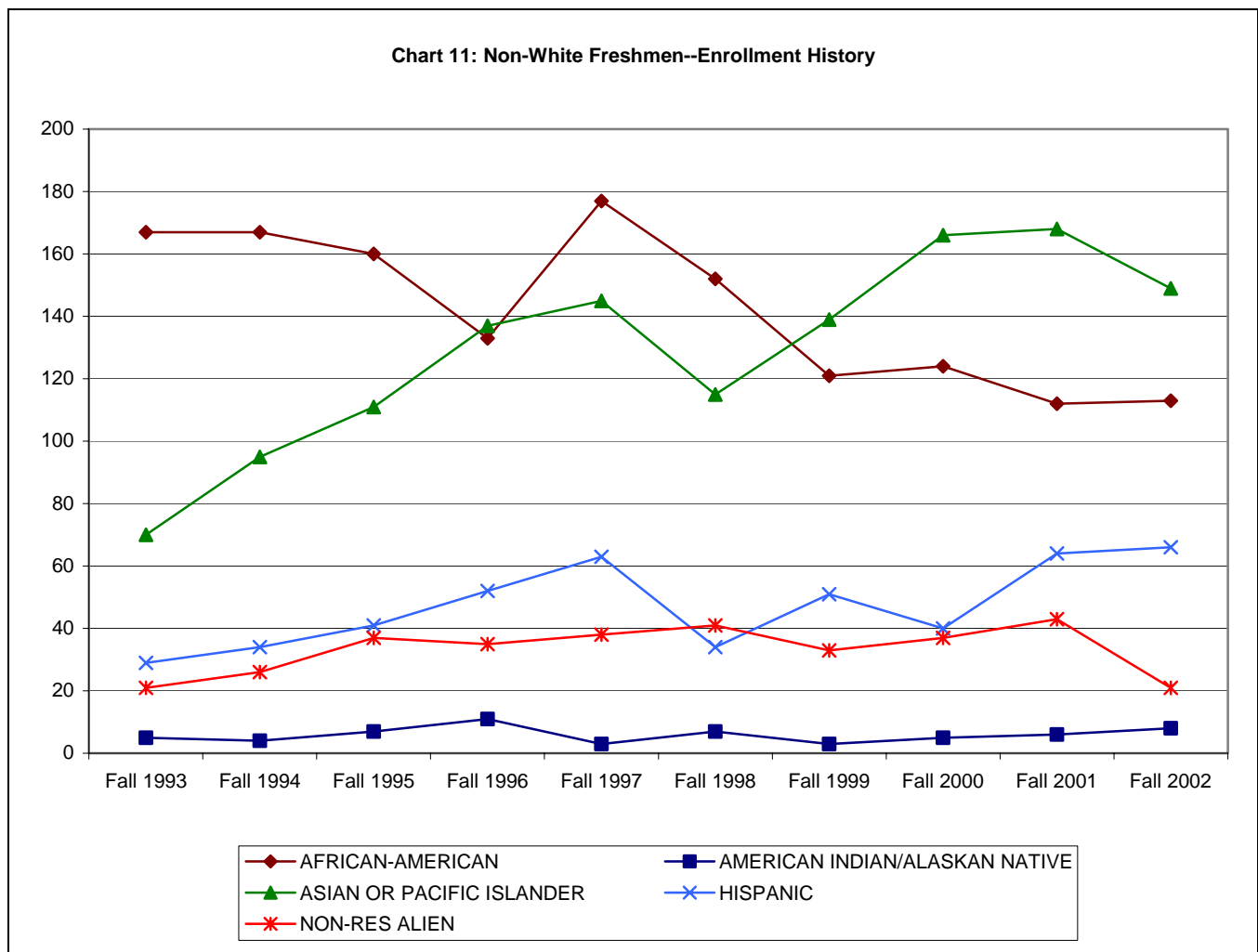


The acceptance rates for non-whites also declined compared to whites. In fall 1993, the acceptance rate for non-whites was 53% compared to 46% for whites. In fall 2002, these positions switched to 59% for whites and 54% for non-whites (Chart 10).



From fall 1993 to fall 2002, applications for Asians or Pacific Islanders increased from 643 to 957 (49%), Hispanics increased 247 to 427 (73%) and African-Americans from 725 to 762 (5%). Trends in acceptance rates are difficult to distinguish, but it appears that the rates for African-Americans were either flat or in decline while Asians or Pacific Islanders and Hispanics increased. Yield rates were either flat or in decline for all ethnic groups including whites.

Asians or Pacific Islanders became the largest minority group on campus in fall 2001. Their enrollment doubled from 70 in fall 1993 to 149 in fall 2002 (Chart 11). Hispanic enrollment also doubled from 29 to 66. African-Americans declined from 167 to 113. Non-resident aliens doubled from 21 in fall 1993 to 43 in fall 2001. In fall 2002, non-resident alien enrollment (21), appeared to be set back from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. American Indian/Alaskan Natives continued to enroll in small numbers (between three and eleven).



SAT combined scores for all ethnic groups appear to decline or remain the same. Groups with small enrollment tend to fluctuate, mitigating against trend analysis. The high scores in Fall 2002 went to White (1,172) and Asian or Pacific Islander (1,154) while African-American had the lowest (1,019).

**Freshmen by Residence:** Between fall 1993 and fall 2002, in-state applications grew from 6,534 to 9,393 and out-of-state grew from 4,689 to 6,246 (Chart 12). Out-of-state applications declined slightly as a percentage of total applicants, from 42% in fall 1993 to 40% in fall 2002.

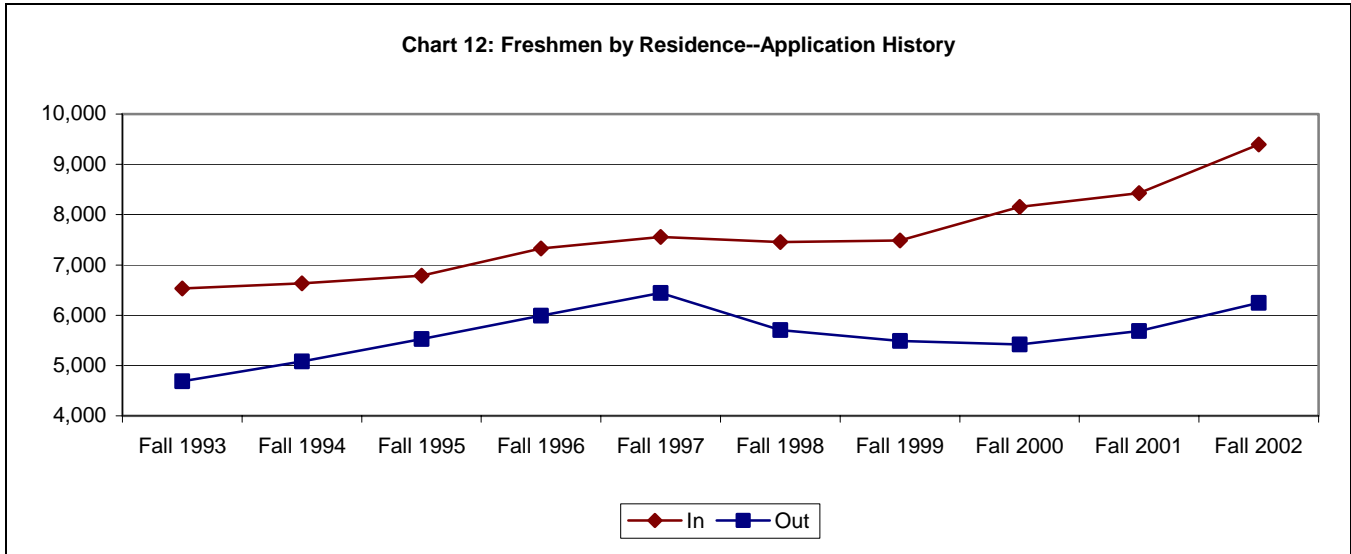
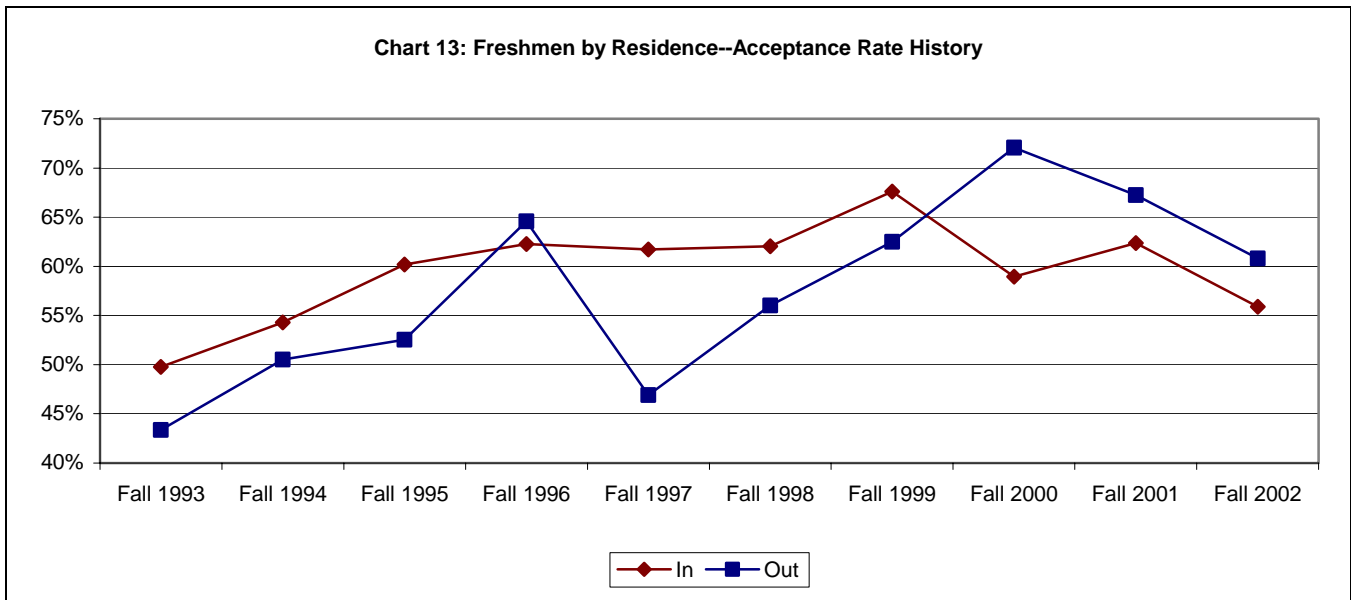


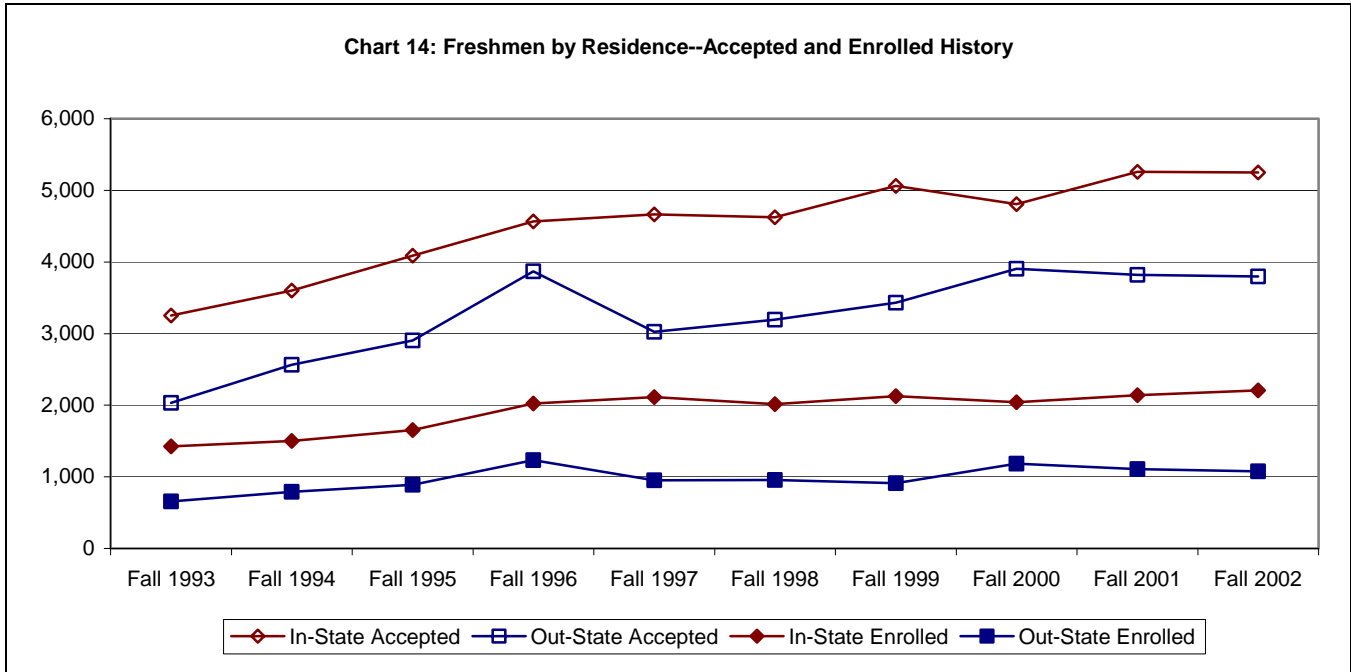
Chart 13 shows the out-of-state acceptance rate increased from seven points below the in-state rate in fall 1993 (43% out, 50% in) to five points above in fall 2002 (61% out, 56% in).



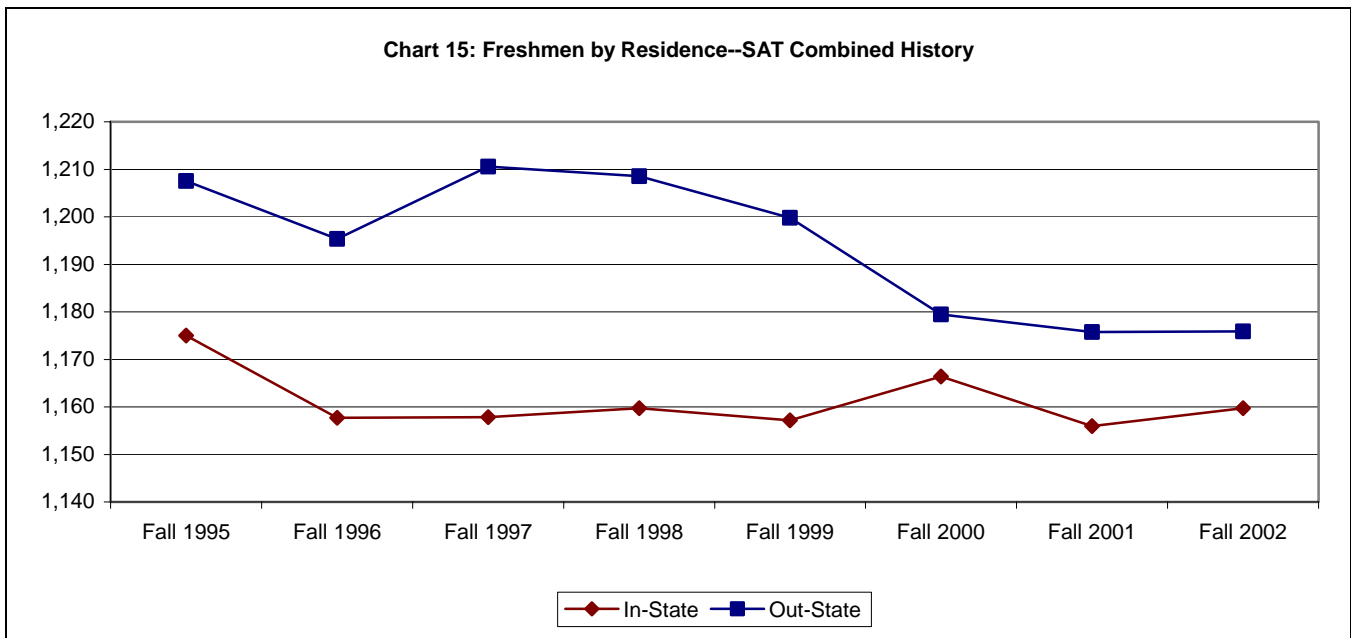
Yield rates for both in-state and out-of-state freshmen decreased slightly. The in-state yield rate moved from 44% in fall 1993 to 42% in fall 2002. The out-of-state yield was 32% in fall 1993 and 28% in fall 2002.

The percentage of enrolled out-of-state freshmen varied without trend from a high of 38% in fall 1996 to a low of 30% in fall 1999. The ten-year average for enrolled out-of-state freshmen was 34%.

Chart 14 shows the growth in accepted and enrolled students by residence in and out-of state. Enrolled in-state freshmen increased from 1,426 in fall 1993 to 2,205 in fall 2002. Out-of-state enrollment increased from 656 to 1,078 during the same ten-year period.



The average SAT combined decreased for both in-state and out-of-state enrolled freshmen (Chart 15). From fall 1995 to fall 2002, the average SAT combined dropped 32 points for out-of-state students and 15 points for in-state students. Despite the drop, out-of-state students continued to have higher scores in fall 2002 (1,176 out-of-state, 1,160 in-state).



**In-State Freshmen by Region:** No trends appeared for in-state freshmen enrollment by Virginia regions. Over the ten-year period, 46% of all JMU in-state enrolled freshmen came from Northern Virginia. In fall 2000, 35% of all students attending Virginia four-year public institutions came from Northern Virginia. Map 1 and Table 1 show the percentage of JMU in-state freshmen by region. Table 1 also compares JMU to the percentage by region of all enrollments at Virginia four-year public institutions in fall 2000 (map and Virginia statistics from “2000-01 to 2005-06 Enrollment Projection for Virginia’s State Supported Colleges and Universities,” State Council for Higher Education in Virginia, June 7, 2001, page 5.)

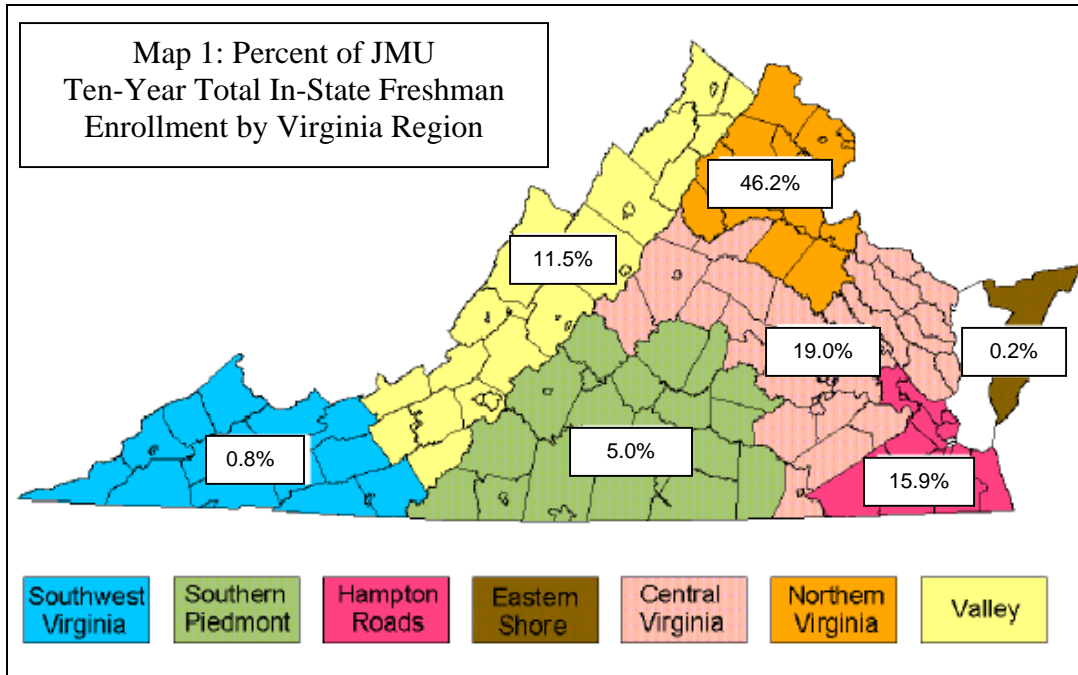


Table 1  
 Percent of JMU Entering Freshmen vs. Total Enrollment  
 At Virginia Four-Year Public Institutions by Region

Region	Southwest	Southern Piedmont	Hampton Roads	Eastern Shore	Central Virginia	Northern Virginia	Valley	Unknown
JMU 10-Years	0.8%	5.0%	15.9%	0.2%	19.0%	46.2%	11.5%	1.4%
Virginia Four-Year Publics Fall 2000	2.9%	5.0%	23.5%	0.4%	23.0%	35.1%	10.0%	Not included.

## Section II: Entering Freshman Survey

### Questions About the Freshman's Family and Their Personal Values

**Father's Highest Level of Education and Mother's Highest Level of Education:** The responses to these questions are generally consistent with national studies on gender in higher education. Nationally, total fall enrollment by sex was roughly 50/50 in 1979, with the percentage of women increasing since then. Roughly, the offspring of students from the mid 1970's to early 1980's would be freshmen in the early 2000's.

The percentage of mothers with a college degree (baccalaureate) increased from 32% to 38% between fall 1993 and fall 2002. The gain came from a decrease in the percentage of mothers with some college or less (from 41% to 34%). The percentage of mothers with some graduate school or greater was steady over this period, ending at 28% in fall 2002. Fathers also increased in the percentage with a college degree (from 27% to 33%). However, this increase came from the decline in the percentage of fathers with some graduate school or greater (from 46% to 39%).

**Percentage of Costs of Attending JMU Paid Directly by the Student and His/Her Family:** "80%-100% of the total costs" appear to decline from 75% in fall 1993 to 68% in fall 2002. The lowest range of responses, "0%-19% of the total costs" increases from 7% to 11%. None of the other responses exceeded ten percent across the ten-year period.

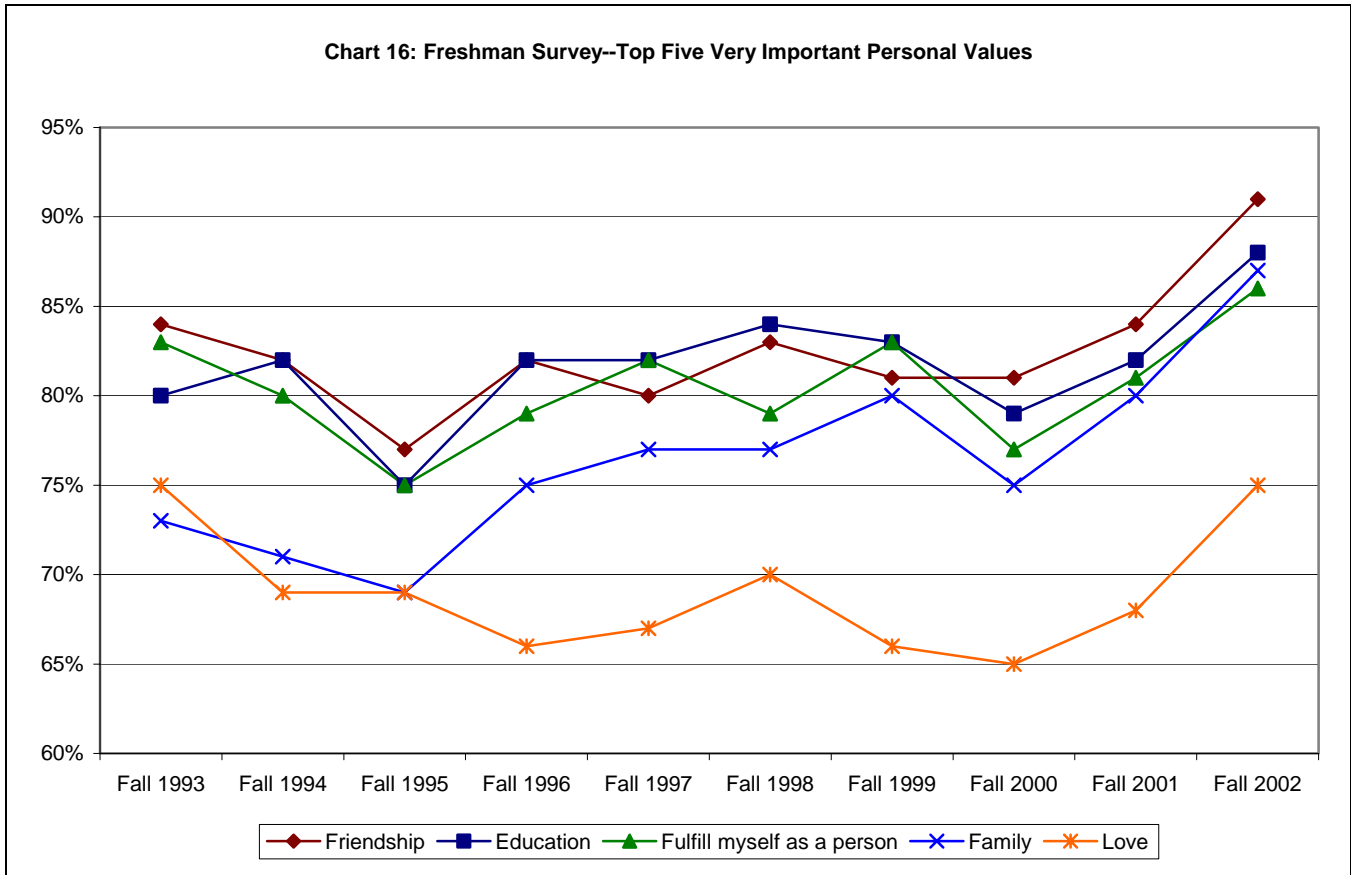
**Religious preference:** No trend appeared in religious preference. The ten-year average of the response rates were:

- 1) Protestant--35%
- 2) Roman Catholic--30%
- 3) Jewish--3%
- 4) No religious preference--13%
- 5) Other religion--13%

**Political Preference:** No trend appeared in student political preference. The ten-year average of the response rates were:

- 1) Middle-of-the-Road--44%
- 2) Liberal--32%
- 3) Conservative--24%

**Very Important Personal Values:** The top five responses to this question are plotted in Chart 17. Of the top five, "Family" gains in relative position, increasing from 73% in fall 1993 to 87% in fall 2002. Table 2 shows the ten-year average response rate and is sorted descending by ten-year change. It is interesting note that all responses increase over the last two years like the top five do in Chart 16. The average gain is 14 points from Fall 2000 to Fall 2002.



**Table 2  
Ten-Year Change in Very Important Personal Values**

Value	Fall 1993	Fall 2002	10-Year Average	10-Year Change
Patriotism (24 point gain after 9/11/01)	24%	43%	21%	19%
Creativity	37%	54%	42%	17%
Living a clean, moral life	48%	63%	50%	15%
Doing things for others	47%	62%	47%	15%
Family	73%	87%	76%	14%
Having children	37%	48%	38%	11%
Privacy	29%	39%	29%	10%
Money	26%	36%	28%	10%
Work	26%	36%	27%	10%
Contributing to societal change	22%	32%	22%	10%
Contributing to international understanding	19%	28%	17%	9%
Education	80%	88%	82%	8%
Friendship	84%	91%	83%	7%
Religion	34%	40%	34%	6%
Fulfill myself as a person	83%	86%	81%	3%
Love	75%	75%	69%	0%
Being close to nature	20%	19%	18%	-1%

**Accomplishments Indicated as Essential:** Table 3 shows the beginning, ending, ten-year average and ten-year change in values for responses to this question. The accomplishments are listed by 10-year average in descending order.

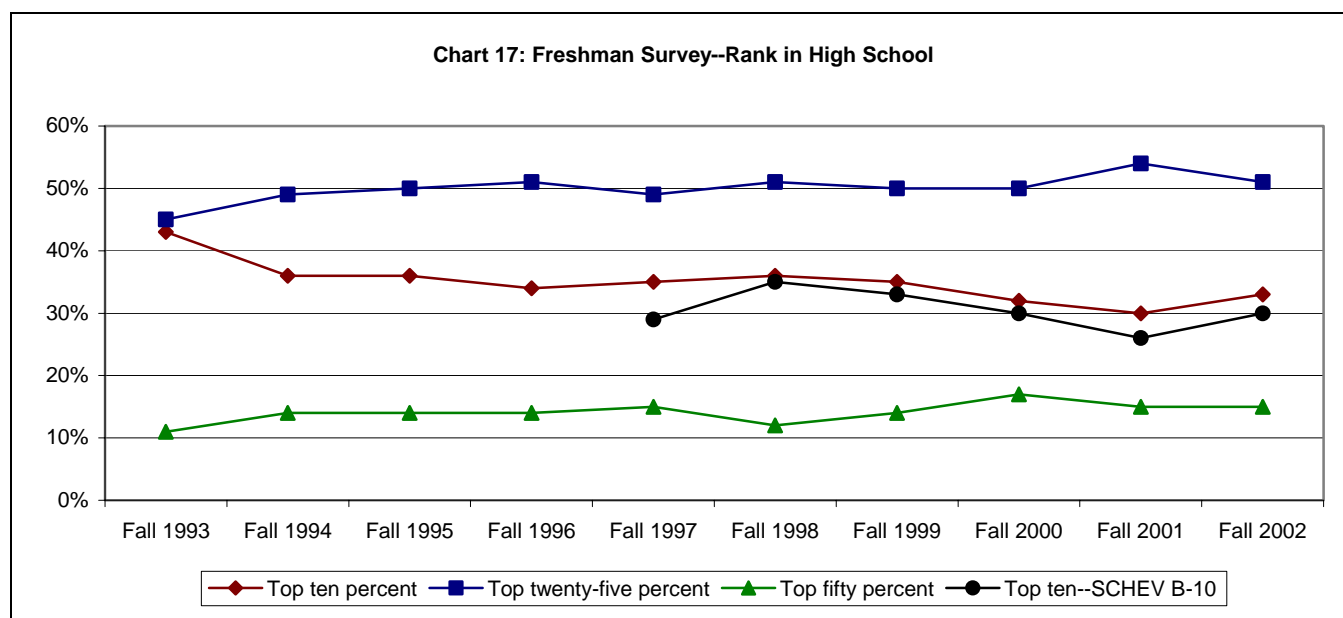
Table 3 Accomplishments Indicated as Essential				
Value	1993	2002	10-Year Average	10-Year Change
Raising a family	41%	46%	46%	5%
Receiving a liberal arts education that is of high quality and very diversified	42%	36%	37%	-6%
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	30%	27%	28%	-3%
Becoming an authority in my field	37%	21%	28%	-16%
Helping others who are in difficulty	27%	28%	27%	1%
Being very well off financially	22%	25%	27%	3%
Being admitted as a graduate student at a prestigious university	28%	22%	24%	-6%
Promoting racial understanding	29%	20%	22%	-9%
Developing a global perspective	24%	20%	21%	-4%
Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field	21%	13%	16%	-8%
Being successful in a business of my own	14%	13%	14%	-1%
Keeping up to date with political affairs	22%	11%	13%	-11%
Influencing social values	19%	10%	13%	-9%
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts (acting, dancing, etc.)	13%	7%	9%	-6%
Having administrative responsibility for the work of others	10%	7%	9%	-3%
Participating in a community action program	11%	8%	8%	-3%
Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, decorating, etc.)	8%	7%	8%	-1%
Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.)	11%	6%	7%	-5%
Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	10%	4%	7%	-6%
Influencing the political structure	9%	5%	5%	-4%
Making a theoretical contribution to science	5%	3%	4%	-2%

Responses to these questions fluctuated a lot more than the question about important personal values. Also, there is no upturn in the last two years to this question. So, accomplishment trends were more difficult to identify and most of them ended the ten-year period lower than they began.

Of the top five accomplishments, “Raising a family” is the highest and increases slightly from 41% in fall 1993 to 46% in fall 2002. The second highest response, “Receiving a liberal arts education...” may have declined from 42% to 36% over the same time period. “Becoming an authority in my field” declines the most of all responses to this question, from 37% to 21%.

## Questions About the Freshman's High School Performance and Activities

**Approximate High School Rank in Graduating Class:** The number of freshmen ranked in the top ten percent of their graduating high school class declined from 43% to 33% (Chart 17). Data submitted to the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia since fall 1997 (the SCHEV B-10) generally agrees with the self-reported survey data.



**Average Grade in High School:** Responses to this question showed a clear trend toward more A's. Students reporting grades in the A range increased from 43% in fall 1993 to 53% in fall 2002. Grades in the B range decreased from 55% to 47%. Fewer than three percent per year responded C+ or C.

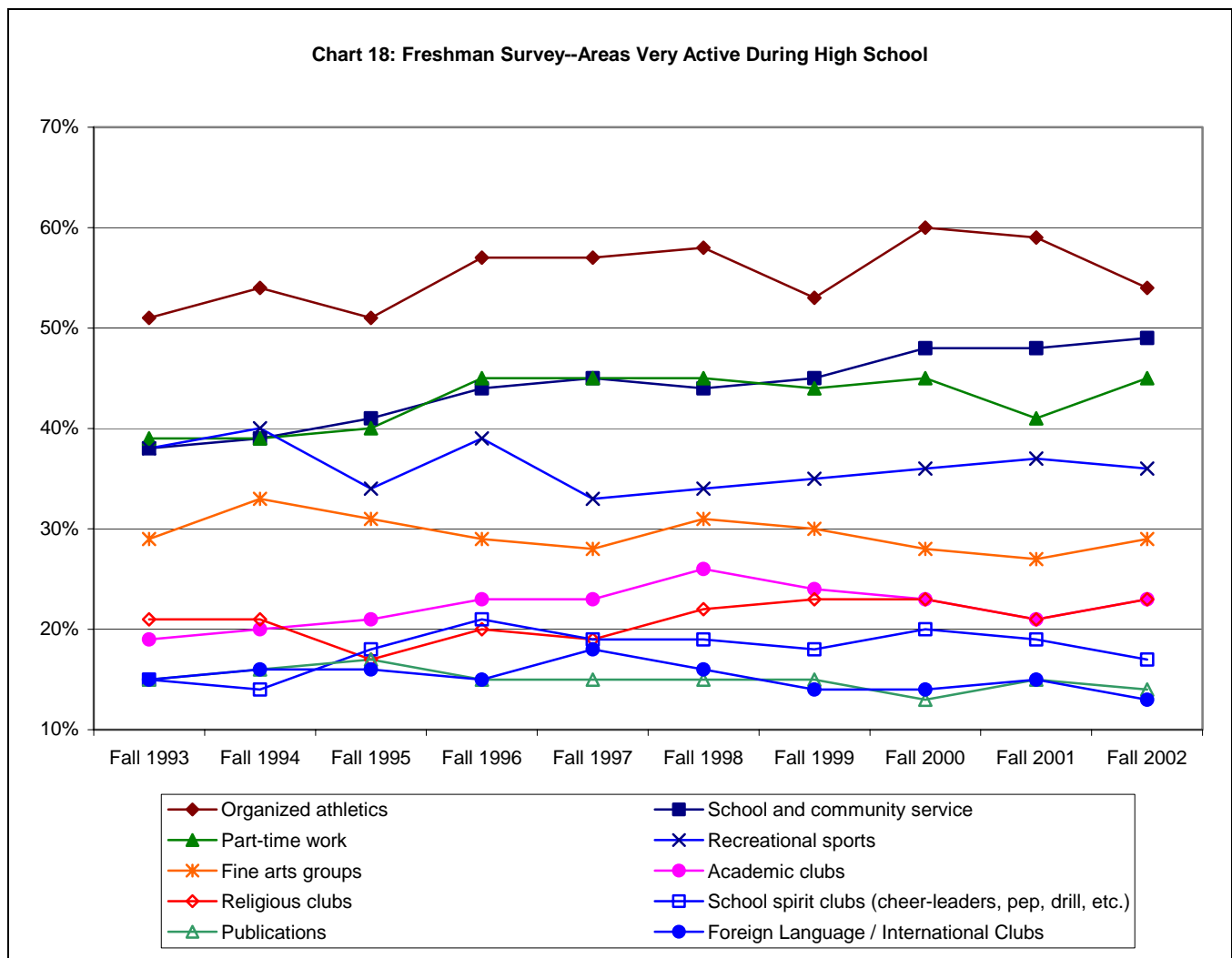
**Areas Very Well Prepared from High School:** Some of the response options to this question were expanded in fall 2001, like "Reading and Composition" into "Reading" or "Composition." In these cases, only eight-year histories are possible for trend examination (fall 1993 to fall 2000).

- 1) "Reading and Composition" was the area most well prepared for from high school. The trend was flat and the eight-year average response was 60%.
- 2) "History, social sciences" followed as the second best area with an eight-year average of 54%.
- 3) "Mathematical skills" declined from the second to third position, dropping from 54% to 48% from fall 1993 to fall 2002.
- 4) "Science" was in the fourth position with a ten-year average of 44%.
- 5) "Musical and artistic skills" held the fifth position with an eight-year average of 35%.
- 6) "Study habits" climbed from seventh to sixth position, increasing from 26% to 33% over the ten-year period.
- 7) "Computer skills" had the greatest increase in preparedness from high school and moved from eighth to seventh position. Responses increased from 17% in fall 1993 to 31% in fall 2002.
- 8) "Foreign languages" declined slightly from 34% in fall 1993 to 30% in fall 2002 (from sixth to eighth position).
- 9) "Vocational skills" stayed in the ninth position, but more than doubled from 11% to 24%.

**Need for Special Tutoring or Remedial Work:** An increase in need for help with Foreign Languages and Mathematics is consistent with the decline in preparedness with these subjects in high school (above). The need for help in Mathematics increased from 26% to 29% and in Foreign Languages from 17% to 26% from fall 1993 to fall 2002. No trends were evident in the other four responses, which had ten-year averages of:

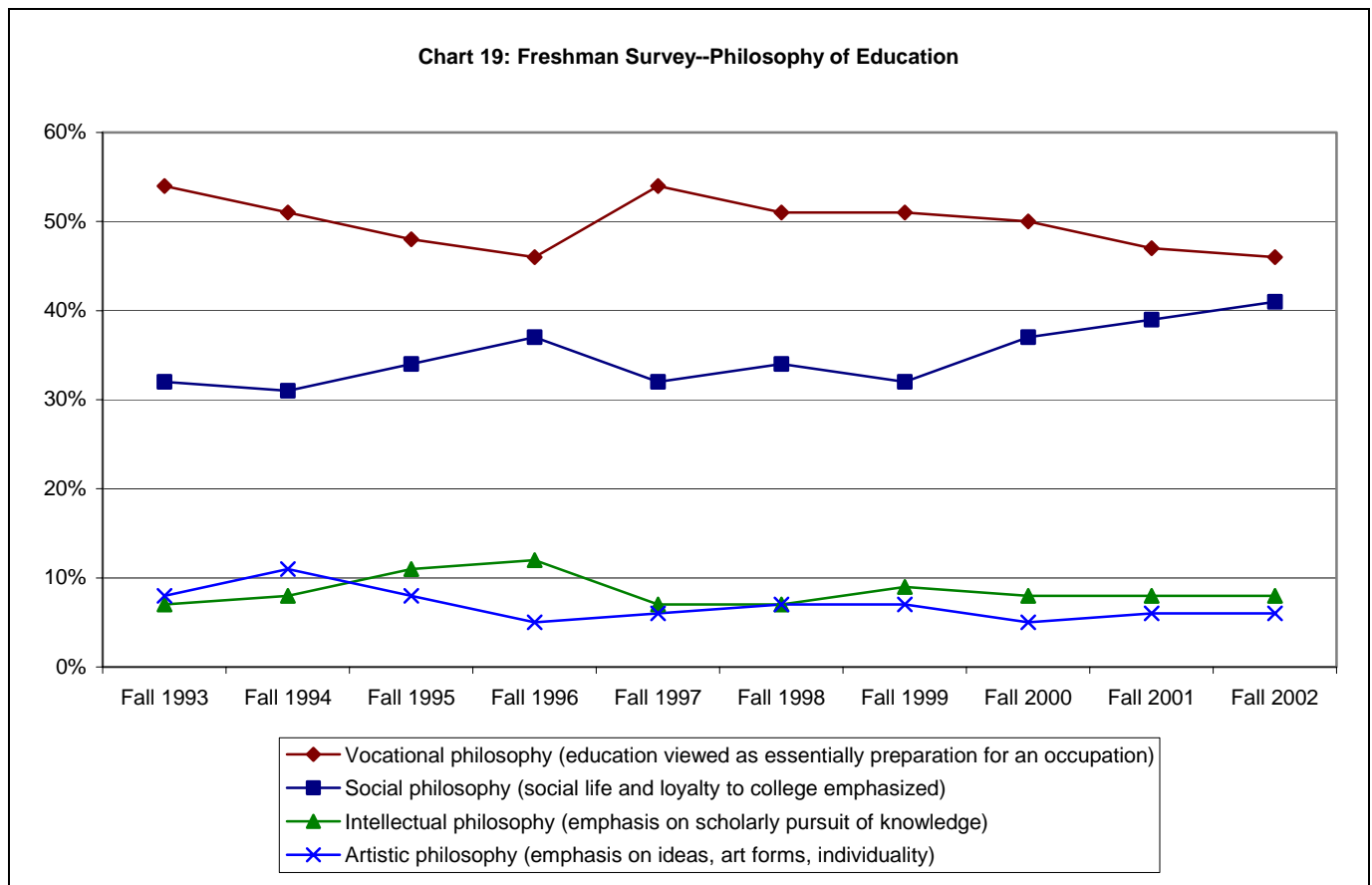
- 1) Science--17%
- 2) English--9%
- 3) Reading--5%
- 4) Social Studies--5%

**Areas Very Active During High School:** “Organized athletics” was the most frequent area of high school activity with a ten-year average response of 55% and no clear trend. “School and community service” activities is the clearest and greatest trend, increasing from 38% in fall 1993 to 49% in fall 2002. “Part-time work” increases from 39% to 45%. “Academic Clubs” may also be on the increase, moving from 19% in fall 1993 to 23% in fall 2002. “Part-time work” increases from 39% to 45%. “Academic Clubs” may also be on the increase, moving from 19% in fall 1993 to 23% in fall 2002. Chart 18 plots all of the responses.



### Questions About the Freshman's College Values

**Philosophy of Education:** From fall 1993 to fall 2002 the majority of students reported a "Vocational philosophy." However, the response rate declined from 54% to 46% while "Social philosophy" increased from 32% to 41%. Intellectual and artistic philosophies held steady with ten-year averages of nine percent and seven percent respectively (Chart 19).



**Highest Academic Degree Respondents Intend to Obtain:** If any trend existed in response to this question, it was a slight increase in "Baccalaureate degree" with corresponding slight decrease across "Professional degree" and "Doctoral degree." The ten-year average for responses in descending order were:

- 1) Master's degree--47%
- 2) Baccalaureate degree--22%
- 3) Professional degree--16%
- 4) Doctoral degree--14%
- 5) Specialist degree--2%

**Reasons Considered Very Important in Deciding to Attend College:** Of the top five responses to this question, the clearest trend is the decline in “Be able to get a better job;” from 85% in fall 1993 to 75% in fall 2002. A slight increase may also exist in “Learn more about the things that interest me.” The ten-year average of responses to the top five questions were:

- 1) Learn more about the things that interest me--80%
- 2) Be able to get a better job--80%
- 3) Meet new and interesting people--75%
- 4) Be on my own and make my own decisions--70%
- 5) Gain a general education and appreciation of ideas--68%

**Anticipated Outcomes Percentage of Respondents Who Feel There is a Very Good Chance They Will Do Each of the Following:** Of the top five anticipated outcomes, the clearest trend is a large decrease in the percentage who expect to live in a coeducational dorm (from 68% to 52%). The most stable timeline is “Make at least a B average.” 80% or more of all of the freshman classes believed they would get a baccalaureate degree. There may be a slight decline in the percentage of students who anticipate they will be satisfied with JMU. Out of all 21 possible responses, the anticipation of joining a social fraternity, sorority, or club declined the most (from 34% to 17%). The ten-year average of responses to the top five questions were:

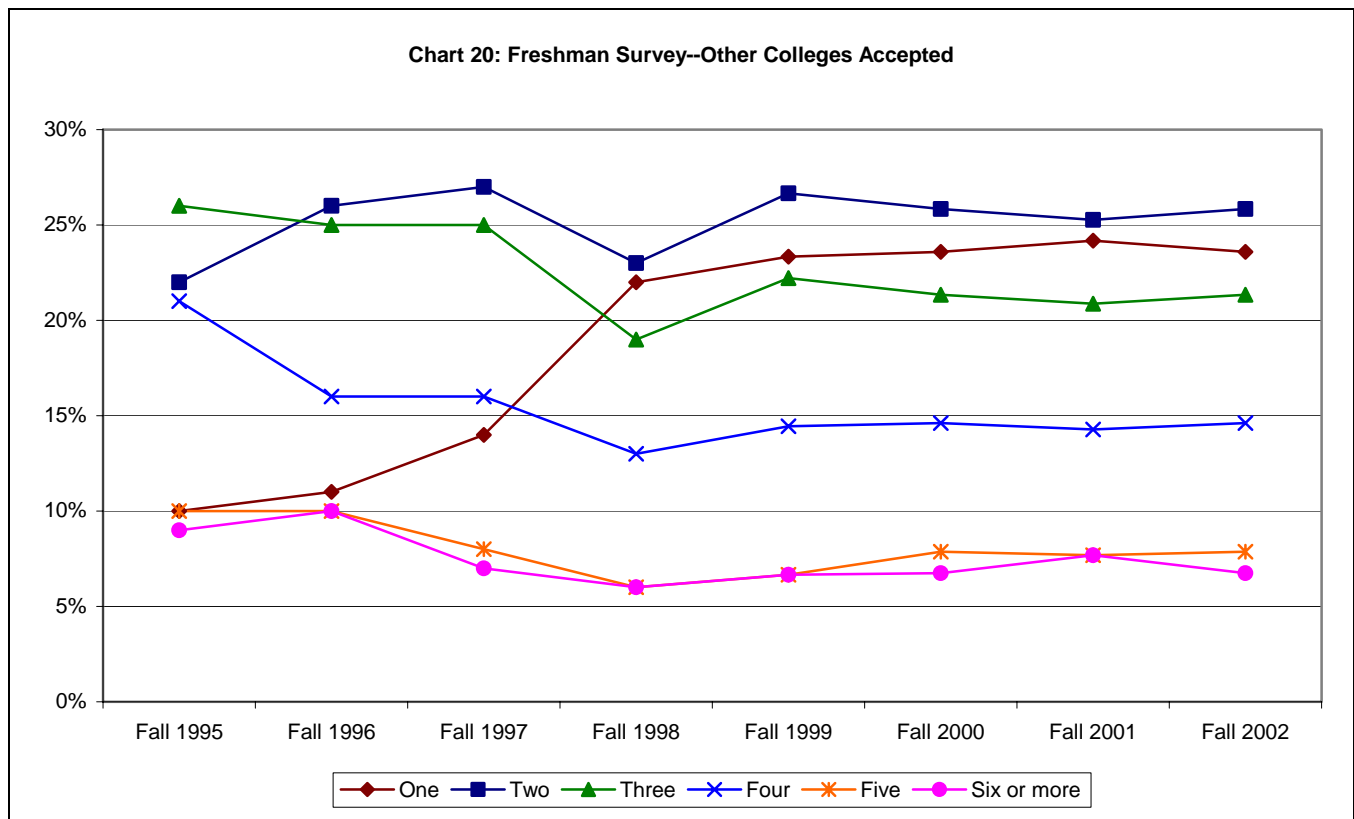
- 1) Get a baccalaureate degree--85%
- 2) Be satisfied with JMU--82%
- 3) Find a job after graduation in the field for which you were trained--76%
- 4) Make at least a B average--73%
- 5) Live in a coeducational dorm--66%

**Questions About Freshmen Choosing JMU**

**Number of Other Colleges to Which the Freshman Applied:** The timeline for this question was fall 1995 to fall 2002. No trends appeared in the number of other colleges to which entering freshmen applied. The eight-year average of responses to this question were:

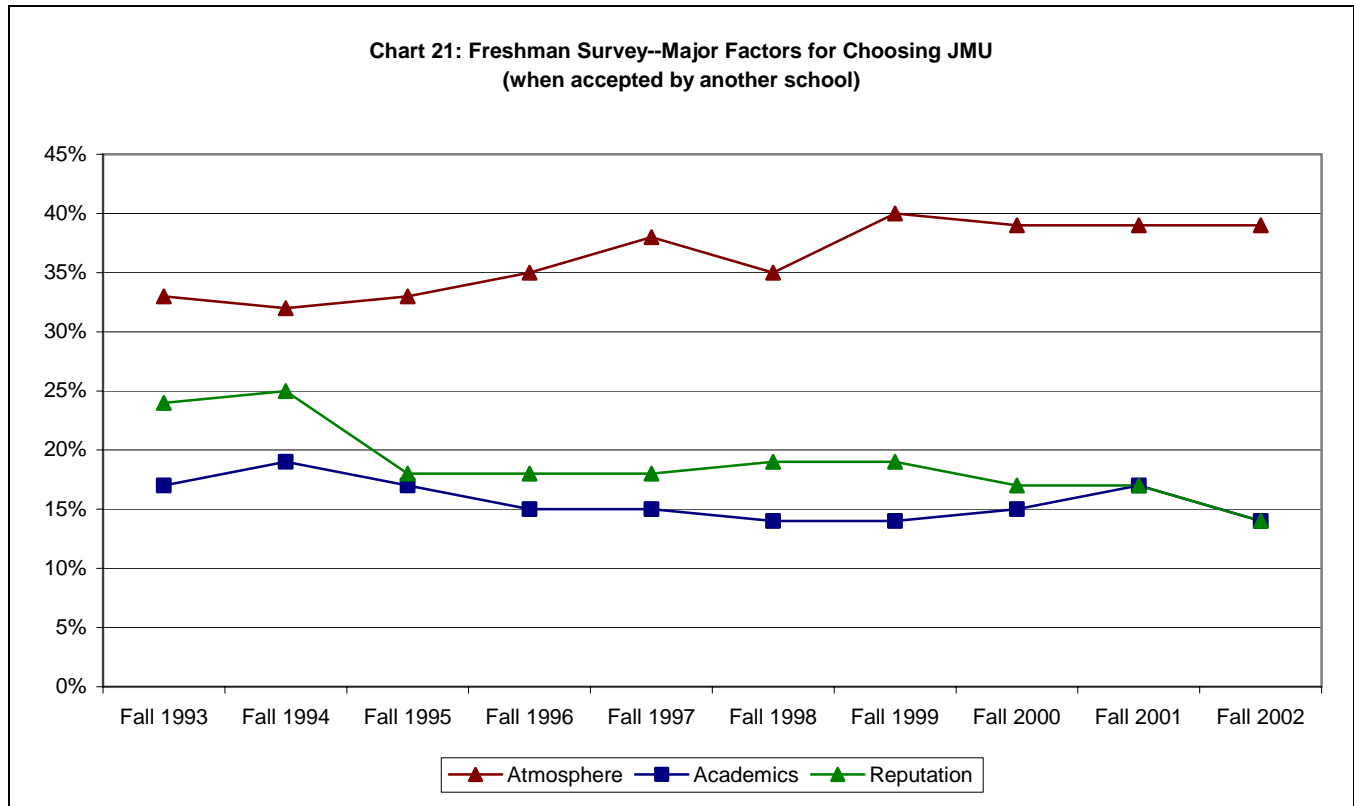
- 1) Three--21%
- 2) Two--18%
- 3) Four--17%
- 4) Six or more--16%
- 5) Five--12%
- 6) One--11%
- 7) None--5%

**Number of Other Colleges Where the Freshman was Accepted:** The timeline for this question was fall 1995 to fall 2002. Chart 20 shows an increasing percentage of freshmen were accepted to only one or two other colleges while the number accepted to three or more decreased. The percentage accepted to only one other school increased from ten percent in fall 1995 to 24% in fall 2002. The percentage accepted to four schools dropped from 21% in fall 1995 to 15% in fall 2002.



**JMU as Choice Among Other Colleges:** The number of entering freshmen for whom JMU was their first choice held steady between fall 1993 and fall 2002. The ten-year average for first choice was 72%, second choice was 22% and third choice was six percent.

**Major Factors at JMU Which Led Respondents to Come to This University (Respondents Who Were Accepted at Other Schools):** The most frequent responses to this question were atmosphere, academics and reputation (Chart 21). Atmosphere increased from 33% in fall 1993 to 39% in fall 2002. Reputation declined from 24% to 14%. Academics had a 16% ten-year average response.

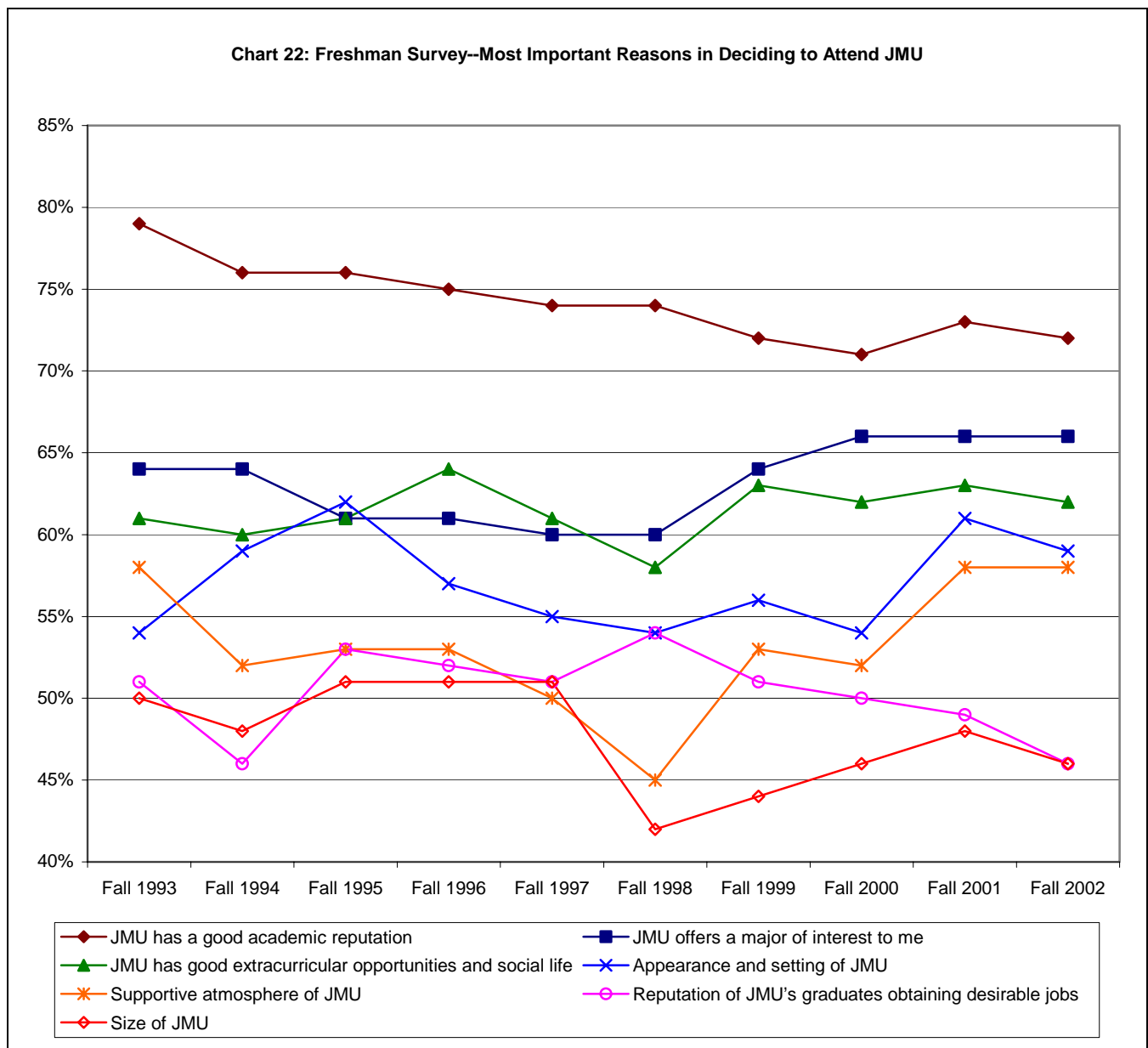


**Emphases of JMU (Percentage of Respondents Who Believe that JMU Places a Significant Emphasis on the following):** Responses to this question varied a lot and no trends were clear. The ten-year average of responses to this question were:

- 1) Development of academic/scholarly/intellectual qualities--59%
- 2) Relationships with other students, student groups and activities--55%
- 3) Personal growth/self-awareness--52%
- 4) Personal relevance and practical value of your courses--38%
- 5) Development of vocational and occupational competence--32%
- 6) Development of esthetic, expressive, and creative qualities--32%
- 7) Being critical, evaluative and analytical--28%

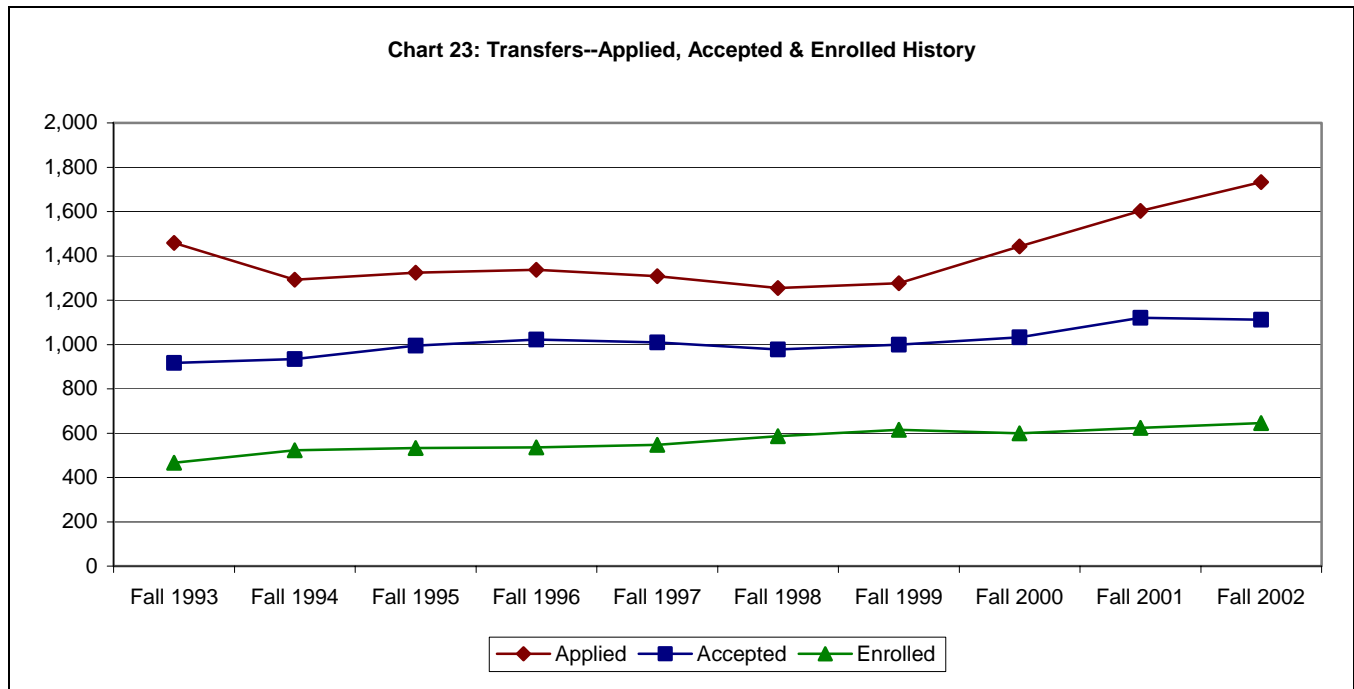
**Reasons Considered Very Important in Deciding to Attend JMU:** The top seven responses are plotted in Chart 22. The most frequent response and clearest trend was the decline in “JMU has a good academic reputation” from 79% in fall 1993 to 72% in fall 2002. The ten-year average of the top seven responses to this question were:

- 1) JMU has a good academic reputation--74%
- 2) JMU offers a major of interest to me--63%
- 3) JMU has good extracurricular opportunities and social life--62%
- 4) Appearance and setting of JMU--57%
- 5) Supportive atmosphere of JMU--53%
- 6) Reputation of JMU’s graduates obtaining desirable jobs--50%
- 7) Size of JMU--48%

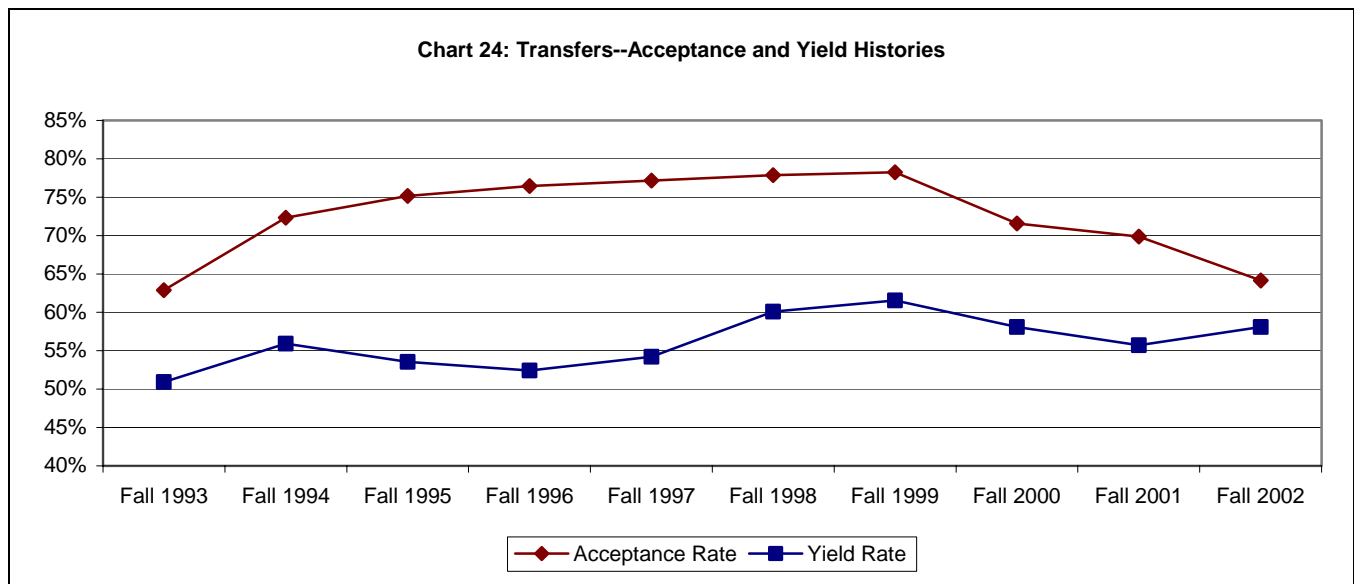


**Section III: Common Transfer Student Measures**

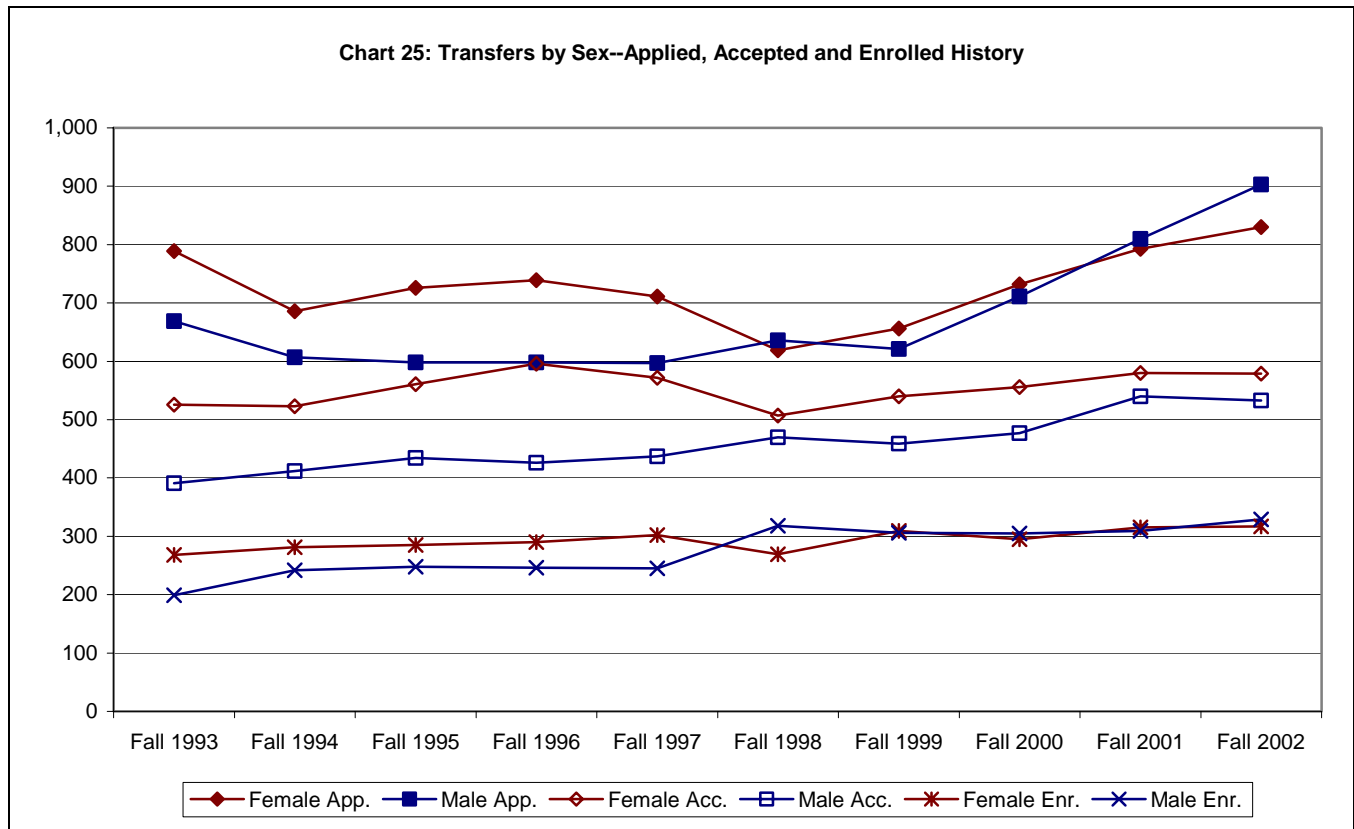
**All Transfers:** From fall 1993 to fall 1999, applications for new transfers to JMU were flat and averaged 1,322 per year (Chart 23). A sharp increase in applications occurred from fall 1999 (1,277) to fall 2002 (1,733). The number of new transfers accepted increased from 917 in fall 1993 to 1,112 in fall 2002. Enrolled transfers increased 38%, from 467 in fall 1993 to 646 in fall 2002.



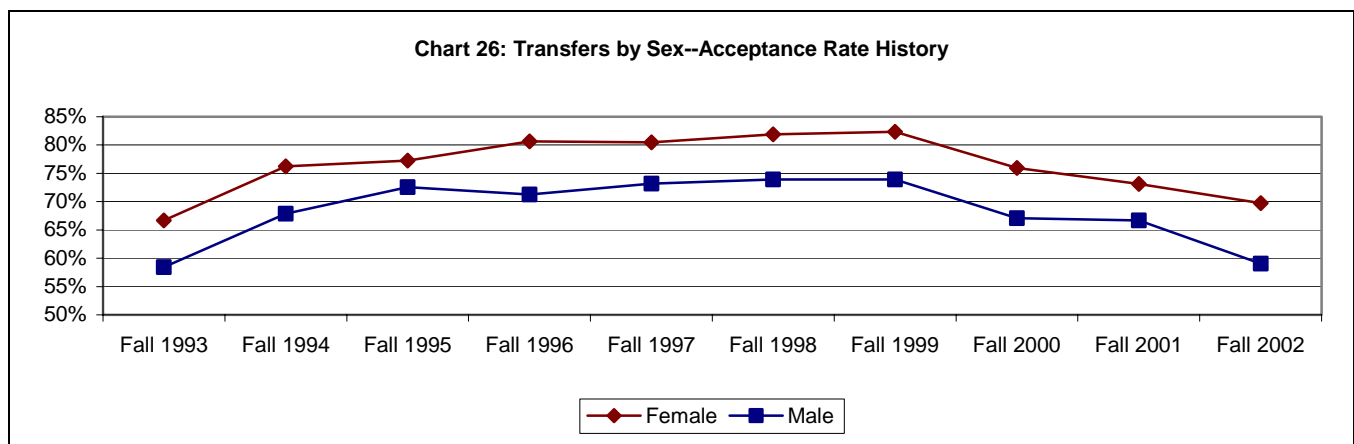
Transfer acceptance rates increased from 63% in fall 1993 to a high of 78% in fall 1999. Then, they declined to 64% in fall 2002 (Chart 24).



**Transfers by Sex:** Chart 25 shows that the trends for applied, accepted and enrolled new transfers are far less disparate by sex than they are for first-time freshmen. Females outnumbered males in all three of these statistics from fall 1993 to fall 1997. However, the number of applicants and the number of enrolled students by sex are roughly equivalent from fall 1998 to fall 2002. Enrolled female transfers grew from 268 in fall 1993 to 317 in fall 2002. Males grew from 199 to 329.

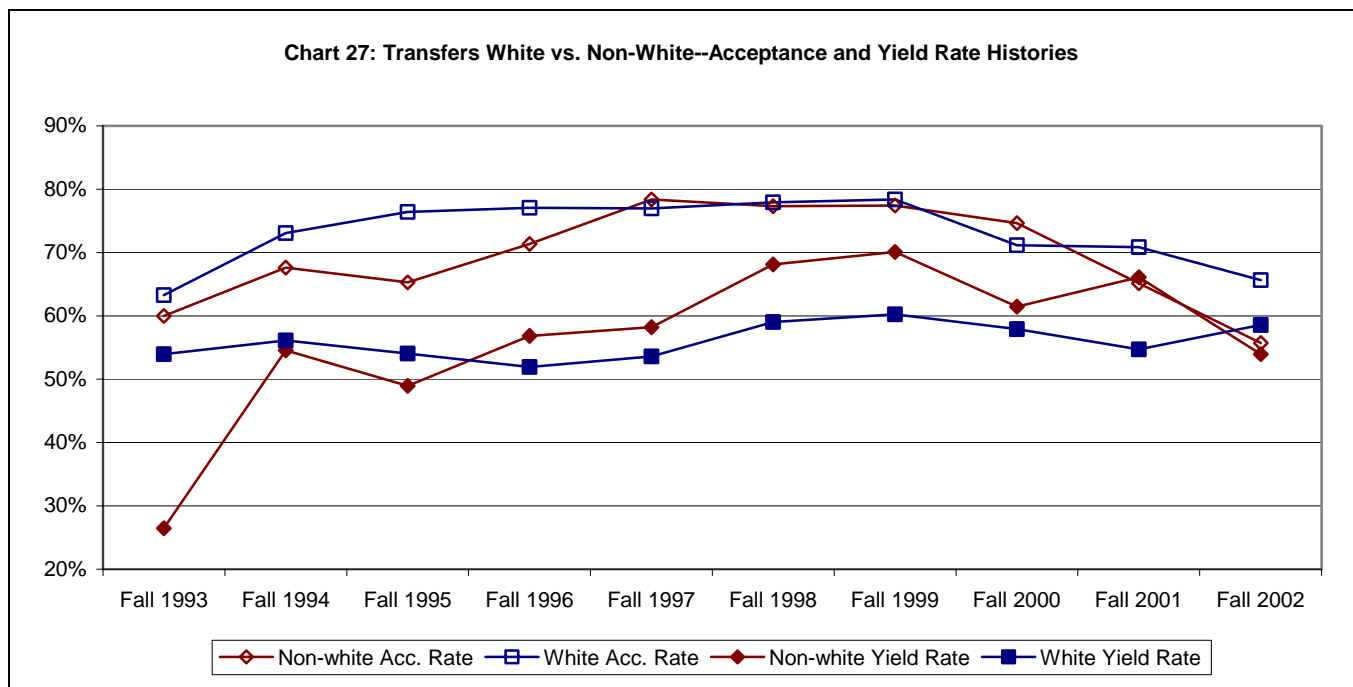


More females were accepted than males each year, but the difference was consistent over time (Chart 26). The ten-year average of acceptance rates was 76% for females and 68% for males. An average of eight percent more females than males were accepted each year.



**Transfers by Ethnicity:** Trends in admissions data by ethnic group were difficult to distinguish because the numbers were small and fluctuate. Instead, Table 4 shows admissions statistics for each ethnic group and for all non-whites together. These statistics are the ten-year averages of applied, accepted and enrolled transfers (numbers per year), the ten-year acceptance rate and ten-year yield rate. Unknown ethnicity is not included. African-American and Asian or Pacific Islanders were the two largest transfer ethnic groups with roughly equal statistics over the past ten years. The ten-year acceptance rate was 69% for non-whites and 73% for whites. Ten-year yield rates were 57% and 56% respectively.

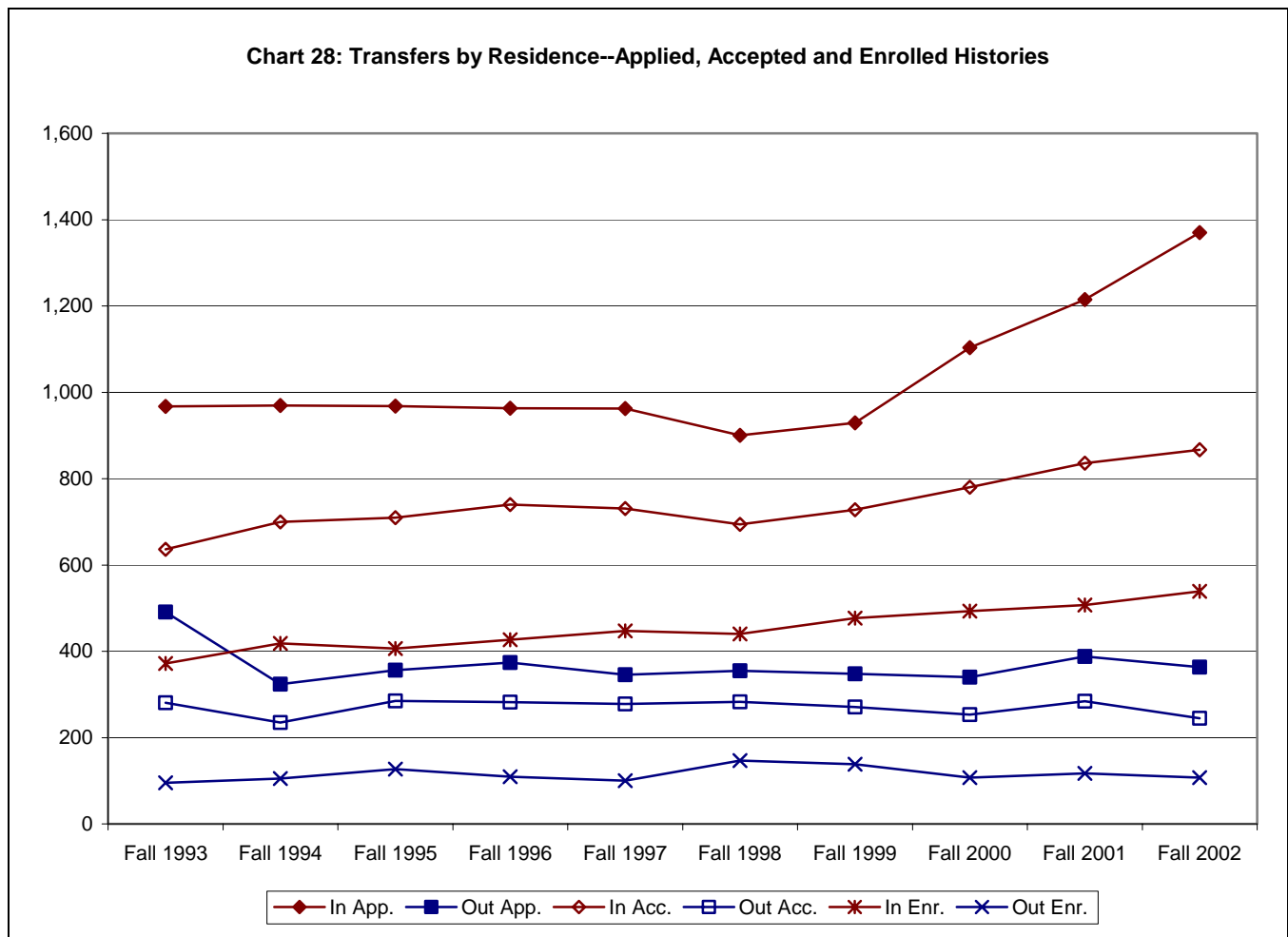
ETHNICITY	Applied/ Year	Accepted/ Year	Enrolled/ Year	10-Year Acceptance Rate	10-Year Yield Rate
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	53	35	19	65%	54%
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE	4	3	2	72%	75%
ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER	53	33	16	63%	50%
HISPANIC	29	18	11	61%	64%
NON-RES ALIEN	30	28	18	92%	63%
ALL NON-WHITE	168	116	66	69%	57%
WHITE, NON-HISPANIC	1,214	883	494	73%	56%



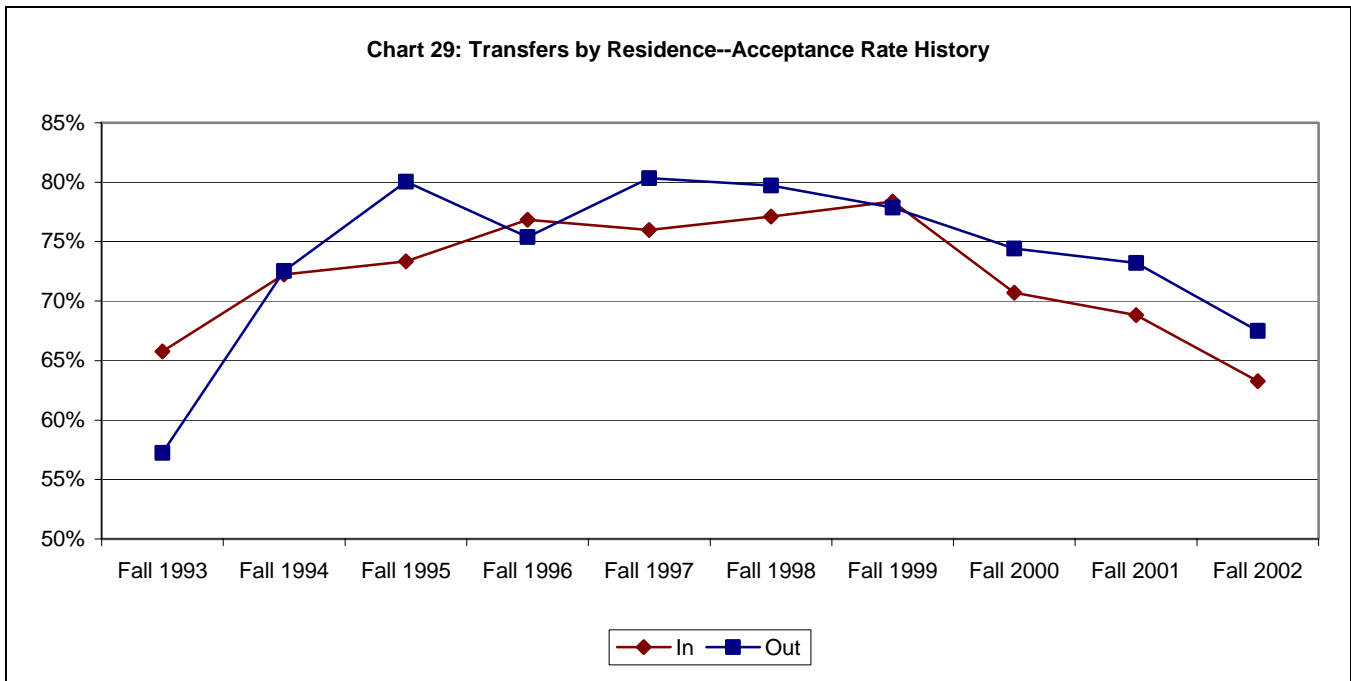
Transfer applications for both whites and non-whites increased about 28% from 1999 to fall 2002. However, non-white enrollment did not grow in the same proportion as whites across these years

because acceptance and yield rates decreased more for non-whites than for whites (Chart 27). The acceptance rate for non-whites dropped ten points more than whites, from 77% in fall 1999 to 56% in fall 2002. The acceptance rate for whites across the same years dropped from 78% to 66%. Fall 1999 was the high point across this ten-year period for non-whites with 96 students enrolled. Their numbers dropped to 68 by fall 2002. White transfer enrollment increased from 519 in fall 1999 to 543 in fall 2002.

**Transfers by Residence:** Chart 28 shows that most of the increase in applied, accepted and enrolled transfers came from in state. Transfer applications from in-state students increased from fall 1999 to fall 2002 while the numbers for out-of-state students remain steady from fall 1993 to fall 2002. In-state applicants grew from 929 in fall 1999 to 1,370 in fall 2002. The ten-year average of out-of-state applicants was 369. In-state transfer enrollment grew from 372 in fall 1993 to 539 in fall 2002. The ten-year average enrollment for out-of-state transfers was 115.



Like the overall acceptance rates, acceptance rates by residence rise and then fall over the ten-year period. Chart 29 shows that these rates are generally close, with out-of-state rates slightly higher for most of the years. The ten-year average of acceptance rates was 72% for in-state transfers and 74% for out-of-state.



**Transfers by Last Institution Attended:** SCHEV admissions data includes a field identifying the type of institution last attended by the transfer student. Values for this field are: 1) in-state two year institutions, a.k.a. Virginia Community College System and Richard Bland Community College; 2) in-state four-year institutions; and 3) out-of-state institutions (two and four-year). The data is not sensitive to multiple institutions attended, only the last institution attended.

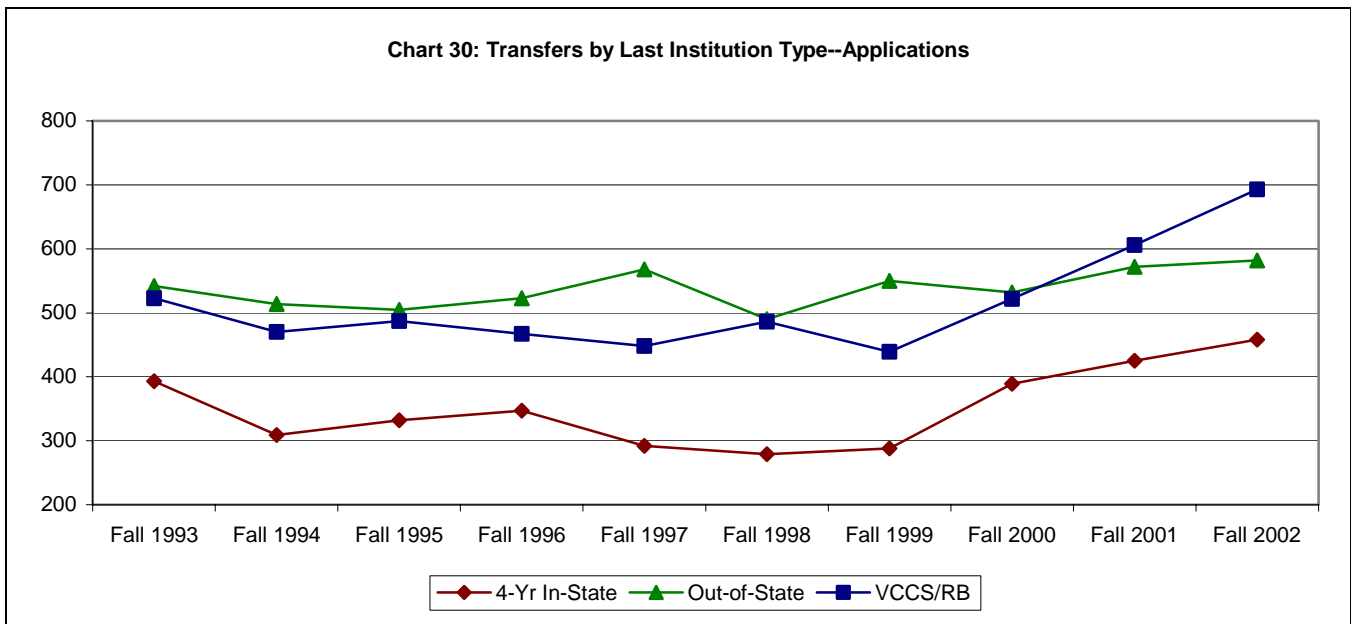


Chart 30 shows a generally flat trend for all three last institution types from fall 1993 to fall 1999 and an increasing trend from fall 1999 to fall 2002. However, the relative positions of VCCS/RB and out-of-state transfers switch between fall 1999 and fall 2002 because of a greater increase in VCCS/RB

applicants. From fall 1999 to fall 2002, VCCS/RB applicants increased from 439 to 693 (254 net), out-of-state increased from 550 to 582 (32 net) and four-year in-state increased from 288 to 458 (170 net).

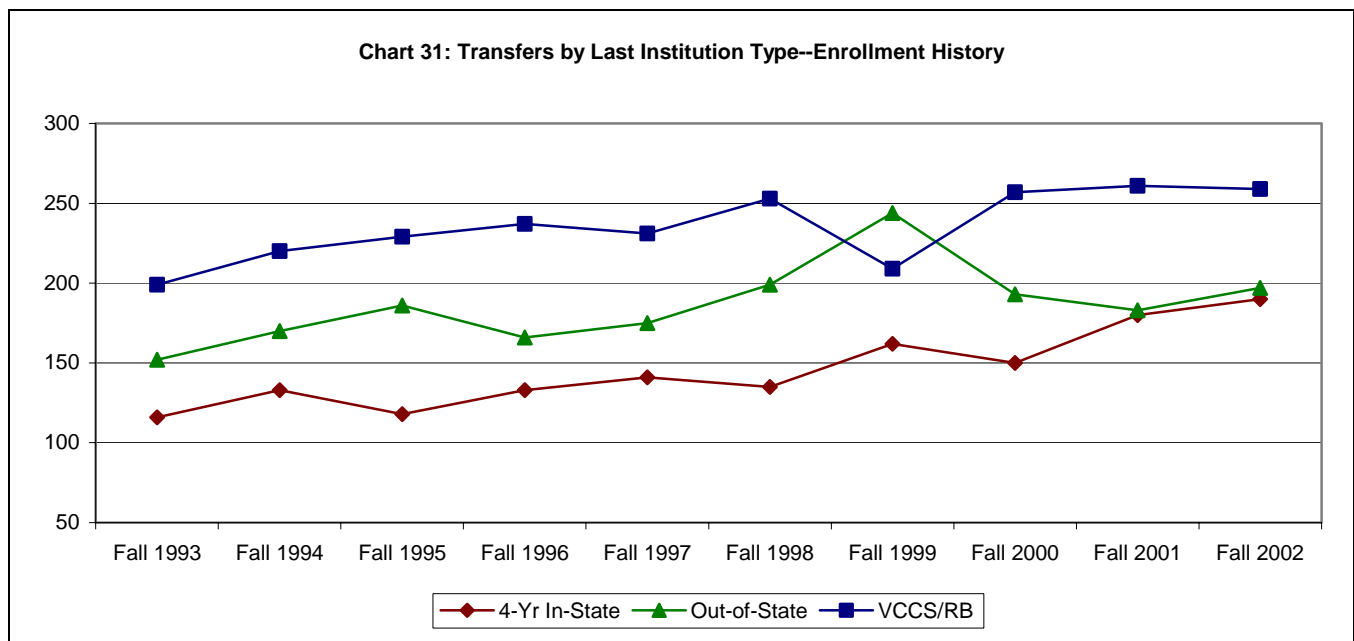
Acceptance rates by last institution type were also similar to overall acceptance rates; rising through the first half of the ten-year period and then falling to levels near those at the beginning of the period. Acceptance rates are very close for all three last institution types across the ten-year period. The ten-year average of the acceptance rates were:

- 1) VCCS/RB--73%
- 2) Four-year in-state--73%
- 3) Out-of-state--72%

However, the yield rates for transfers from VCCS/RB and four-year in-state schools are greater than those from out-of-state schools. The yield rates result in higher enrollment of transfers from in-state schools. The ten-year average of the yield rates were:

- 4) VCCS/RB--64%
- 5) Four-year in-state--58%
- 6) Out-of-state--48%

Chart 31 shows the enrollment history of transfers by last institution type. Transfers from VCCS/RB were the largest group and increased from 199 in fall 1993 to 259 in fall 2002. Transfers from out-of-state institutions increased from 152 to 197 over the same period. Transfers from four-year in-state schools began with the lowest enrollments, but were almost equal to transfers from out-of-state schools by the end of the ten-year period (growing from 116 in fall 1993 to 190 in fall 2002).



**Transfers by Associate Degree:** Table 5 displays the number and percentage of VCCS transfers who entered with associate degrees. VCCS Transfers with associate degrees grew from 94 (40% of VCCS transfers) in fall 1996 to 121 (47%) in fall 2002. Small numbers and only seven data points make trends difficult to discern.

Year	Fall Transfers	VCCS Transfers	Associate Degree Transfers	Percent Associate Degrees from VCCS
Fall 2002	646	259	121	47%
Fall 2001	624	261	129	49%
Fall 2000	600	257	133	52%
Fall 1999	615	209	105	50%
Fall 1998	587	253	115	45%
Fall 1997	547	231	78	39%
Fall 1996	536	237	94	40%

## Discussion

### First-time Freshmen

The number of applied, accepted and enrolled first-time freshmen increased significantly from fall 1993 to fall 2002. Applications increased 39%, accepted freshmen increased 71%, and enrolled freshmen increased 58%. Overall, the freshman class grew from 2,082 to 3,283. This growth was an important contribution to Virginia's higher education capacity. Likewise, *U.S. News & World Reports* continued to describe JMU as "More selective," an important factor in JMU's rank as the top public Master's institution in the southern region. However, growth came with mixed messages about the quality of the entering students and with significant changes in the nature of the student body.

**Quality Indicators:** The overall increase in applications serves as the single-most practical indicator that the University has maintained its reputation as a desirable undergraduate institution. The number of prospective college students who want to attend JMU continues to increase. However, the quality of the admitted pool is not as strong as it used to be due to the need to admit a larger portion of the applicant pool to yield larger freshman classes.

An institution's acceptance rate is one indicator of freshman class selectivity. Lower acceptance rates infer greater selectivity. JMU's acceptance rate increased from 47% in fall 1993 to 58% in fall 2002. The highest rate (least selective year) was 65% in fall 1999. Using fall 2001 data compiled by *U.S. News & World Reports*, JMU's acceptance rate ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out-of 24 peer institutions. If the 47% rate from fall 1993 could have been maintained, JMU would have ranked third in its peer group for this measure.

Another common indicator of selectivity is the average SAT combined score. Between fall 1995 and fall 2002, JMU's average SAT combined decreased from 1,186 to 1,165. Two trends in the data were associated with this decline. The first trend was the increase in women--accepted and enrolled--who averaged lower SAT math scores than men. By fall 2002, the average SAT math score was 31 points higher for males than females. The second trend was the increase in out-of-state students with lower SAT combined scores. Over the past eight years, the average SAT combined score for out-of-state students dropped 32 points compared to 15 points lost from in-state students. By fall 2002, the out-of-state average was 1,176 and the in-state average was 1,160.

Because *U.S. News & World Reports* collects SAT scores at the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentiles, peer comparisons are a little difficult to make. JMU ranked about fifth of 20 peers that reported SAT scores in fall 2001. Despite the declining trend, the current SAT scores still indicate selectiveness.

Other quality indicators from the *Freshman Survey* gave mixed views of freshman quality. The percentage that ranked in the top ten-percent of their high school class decreased from 43% to 33% between fall 1993 and fall 2002. However, class rank statistics are also under the influence of a trend within high schools to discontinue the statistic. This includes the Fairfax County School District, one of the largest in the state.

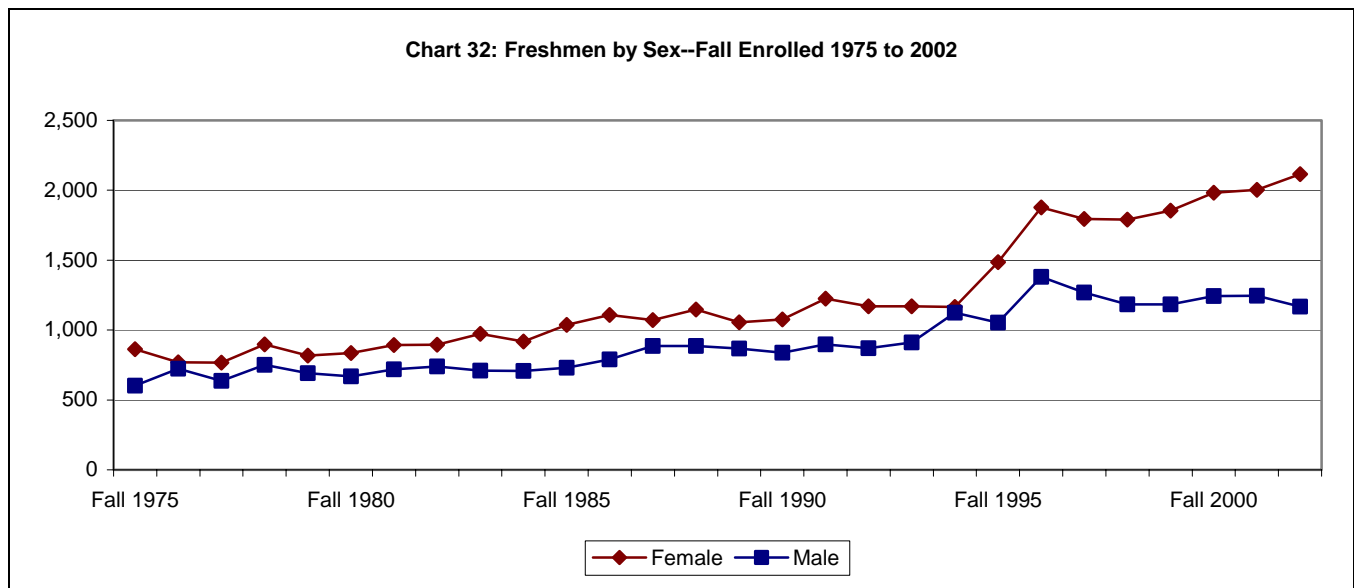
The percentage who reported in the *Freshman Survey* that their average grade in high school was in the A range increased from 43% to 53%. This positive indicator was associated with the increase of freshman women in annual analyses of the *Freshman Survey*. Within specific skills, students reported

increased preparation in study habits, computer skills and vocational skills. There was also a decline in the percentage that was very well prepared in Mathematics and a slight decline in Foreign Languages preparedness. Again, decline in preparation in Mathematics was associated with the increase of women with lower SAT math scores. Finally, the number of freshmen who applied to other colleges was steady, but an increasing percentage of freshmen were accepted to only one or two other colleges while the number accepted to three or more decreased.

Quality indicators outside of the data in this report and commonly used in college ratings are also likely to be affected by the growth of women in the freshman class. These are the rate of freshmen returning for their second year and the six-year graduation rate. Historically, women have fared better in both of these statistics than men and JMU has been high among its peers. The fall 2001 data collected by *U.S. News & World Reports* ranks JMU in a tie for third in its peer group for both the freshman retention rate and six-year graduation rate. The current trend for accepting more women is likely to keep JMU high in these quality indicators. However, this gender disparity creates a significant change in the nature of the student body that should be considered along with trends in quality indicators.

**Changing Student Body:** The most important freshman trend was the increase in acceptance rates of women over men. Application trends indicate that male interest in JMU has increased on the same par as female interest. However, acceptance rates for women increased almost 20 points over the past ten years while the rates for men declined slightly. In fact, the total number of undergraduate males may decline in the near future if this trend continues. In fall 2001, JMU ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> amongst its 24 peers with 38% male in the freshman class. The weighted proportion of males in the peer group was 43% in fall 2001. In fall 2002, the proportion of males in the JMU freshman class slipped again to 36%.

Chart 32 shows the entering freshman history by sex from fall 1975 to fall 2002. Clearly, the current disparity in enrollment by sex began in the mid-1990's and represents a significant change in the nature of JMU.



Every year, the results of the annual *Freshman Survey* are published in JMU's Student Development News and response variance by sex is noted for some questions. For example, women report receiving A

grades in high school more often than men in these analyses. Other areas that vary by sex include questions of values, accomplishments, reasons for attending college and philosophy of education.

The growth of women in the freshman class was associated with trends in the *Freshman Survey* questions that also vary by sex. For example, analysis of the annual survey has found that men are more likely to adopt a vocational philosophy of education and this historical study found that the response rate to this question declined over the past ten years. Women tend to hold a social philosophy of education and the response to this question has increased over time.

The beauty of the *Freshman Survey* is that it bridges the arguments for diversity from theory to facts. By extrapolating these gender trends into the classroom, one can imagine the valuable influence of diversity, or the lack thereof, on opportunities for thought and discussion. For example, this study suggests that JMU students are talking more about family and social issues, and less about concerns for employment and the economy than they did ten years ago. A similar shift has likely occurred in research and other topics of student choice.

Similar diversity issues also existed in the decline of non-white students over the past ten years. African-American freshman enrollment dropped from 167 in fall 1993 to 113 in fall 2002. Overall, non-white enrollment decreased, from 14% in fall 1993 to 11% in fall 2002. The increases in Asian or Pacific Islanders and in Hispanic freshmen helped to buffer the overall decline of minority students.

Again, the annual analyses of the *Freshman Survey* include some statements regarding the different responses to questions by ethnicity. Unfortunately, the small number of minorities and fluctuation in their data mitigates against the ability to link trends from this historical study to results in the annual reports.

The geographic representation of freshmen was basically steady from fall 1993 to fall 2002. The ten-year average enrollment for out-of-state freshmen was 34%. This percentage varied from 30% to 38% without trend over the ten-year period. Within Virginia, 46% of the in-state freshmen came from the Northern Virginia region.

**Transfers:** Ten-year transfers trends revealed different dynamics than those for entering freshmen. Total applications were basically flat from fall 1993 to fall 1999 and then climbed 36% from fall 1999 to fall 2002. Acceptance rates climbed through the middle of this ten-year period and then fell to near the fall 1993 level. The increase in transfer applications that began in fall 2000 provided a larger pool from which JMU was more selective. Enrolled transfers increased 38%, from 467 to 646 across the ten-year period.

Transfer admission trends by sex were generally in parity. In fact, parity by sex improved in the number of transfers applied, accepted and enrolled from fall 1998 to fall 2002. Acceptance rates for women averaged eight points higher than men on an annual basis and the difference was consistent over the ten-year period. Roughly 15% more women than men enrolled as transfers from fall 1993 to fall 1997. The numbers enrolled by sex were roughly equal from fall 1999 to fall 2002. Again, the larger applicant pool enabled greater selectivity and gender parity beginning in fall 1999.

Ethnic trends in transfer admissions are difficult to distinguish because the numbers are small and fluctuate from one-year to the next. African-Americans and Asian or Pacific Islanders were the two largest minority groups with roughly equal admissions statistics. Their average ten-year enrollments were 19 and 16 respectively. From fall 1999 to fall 2002, the applicant pool for non-whites increased 28%, the same growth as whites. However, both the acceptance and yield rates for non-whites fell more than the rates for whites after fall 1999. The results were fewer non-white transfers in fall 2002 (68) than in fall 1999 (96).

Transfer residence was associated with the increase in applications that began in fall 2000. The bulk of the application increase between fall 1999 and fall 2002 came from in state. Trends in the number of out-of-state students applied, accepted and enrolled were basically flat across the entire ten-year period. Acceptance rates for out-of-state students rose slightly higher than rates for in-state applicants, but were offset by lower yield rates in the last three years of this ten-year period. The net effect was flat enrollment out-of-state and a 13% in-state increase from fall 1999 to fall 2002.

Trends in the last institution type of in-state transfers showed that applications and enrollments from Virginia two-year institutions and Virginia four-year institutions increased in similar proportions. Acceptance rates were similar over the ten-year period, averaging 73% for both types of in-state institution. The majority of transfers enrolled over the ten-year period came from Virginia two-year institutions (40% in fall 2002). Transfers enrolled from Virginia four-year institutions began the ten-year period with 116 in fall 1993, compared to 152 from out-of-state institutions. By fall 2002, enrolled transfers from Virginia four-year institutions (190) were almost equal to transfers from out-of-state institutions (197).

## Conclusions

James Madison University grew rapidly over the past ten years. Overall, it maintained the image of a selective institution. The number of applications grew significantly and it continued to receive high ratings by companies like *U.S. News & World Reports*.

However, the institution is challenged to attract more applicants with stronger credentials. Competitive applications from men and African-Americans are in particular demand.

Transfer admissions over the past ten years paint a different picture. The diversity and number of qualified applicants improved by sex, with parity in transfer enrollment by sex from 1998 forward. Students coming from Virginia two-year and four-year institutions benefited the most from the transfer enrollment increase. Non-whites continued to express interest with an increase in applications, but fewer acceptable minority transfers were found.

JMU is less diverse in gender and ethnicity than it was ten years ago. This change may already be visible to the JMU community in ways including classroom discussions, decline in majors more preferred by males, distribution of funding for intercollegiate athletics, student organizations and student services, diversity of elected student leaders, and preparation for non-traditional occupations.

If the acceptance criteria and admissions process remain relatively unchanged, it is difficult to say when and how JMU will change. The infrastructure for higher education in Virginia may not keep up with the

growth of its high school graduates and the diversity of qualified applicants may increase. Meanwhile, other variables like the quality of K-12 education and competition in post-secondary education services are also likely to change. JMU could remain a highly regarded institution, but achieve less in some of its defining characteristics than others.

Planning for change is also possible. The defining characteristics of the University drive the planning process and ultimately the admissions process. All areas of the institution have the opportunity to establish goals and objectives to achieve these characteristics. Selectivity and diversity are not mutually exclusive characteristics. This study shows there is room to grow for both. But they should be examined within the context of all 29 defining characteristics, especially where relationships exist between them. Limited resources dictate that, by planning or passive consequence, some of the 29 characteristics will be a higher priority than others.

The Office of Institutional Research will continue to study JMU in historical perspective. Having painted this picture of “who came to JMU,” the next step will be an examination of “what happened to students while they were here.” The study is envisioned as a compilation of data from fall headcount, student course enrollment, financial aid, and degrees conferred collected since fall 1992. Details of the study parameters are being planned. Please contact Dr. Frank Doherty, Director or Chuck DeHart, Assistant Director with suggestions or questions.