

THE 2015 INSIDE HIGHER ED SURVEY OF
**College & University
Admissions Directors**

A study by Gallup® and *Inside Higher Ed*

SCOTT JASCHIK & DOUG LEDERMAN

EDITORS, INSIDE HIGHER ED

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INSIDE
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Inside Higher Ed
1015 18th Street NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036
t 202.659.9208

GALLUP

Gallup
901 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004
t 202.715.3030

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FOREWORD

Increasingly, higher education institutions in America are rethinking their admissions and recruiting practices to draw students who will be a good fit with their institutional culture.

This study, part of a series of surveys of key campus leaders by *Inside Higher Ed* and Gallup, explores important questions about higher education admissions and recruiting policies and procedures as perceived by those grappling with key issues. Among the questions addressed by the study:

- What undergraduate student populations are the focus of recruitment efforts?
- Do institutions admit students from some subgroups in spite of lower academic performance than those typically admitted? Should they?
- Should standardized test scores (such as SAT or ACT) be optional for students applying to a college or university?
- Did colleges meet their enrollment goals this year?
- Are institutions losing potential applicants because of concerns about student debt?
- How common are pathways programs for international students?
- Have high-ranking university officials tried to influence admissions decisions on certain well-connected applicants?
- How concerned are admissions directors about their ability to consider race and ethnicity in admissions with the Supreme Court preparing to hear another case on affirmative action? What steps might institutions take if the Supreme Court does ban the use of race in admissions decisions?
- To what extent do colleges seek disciplinary records on applicants?
- What do admissions directors think of some of the new admissions approaches being tried at certain colleges?
- Are public institutions seeking more out-of-state students as a response to budgetary challenges?
- Are two-year institutions experiencing competition with for-profit colleges and universities?
- Are two-year institutions enrolling more students who typically might attend four-year colleges?

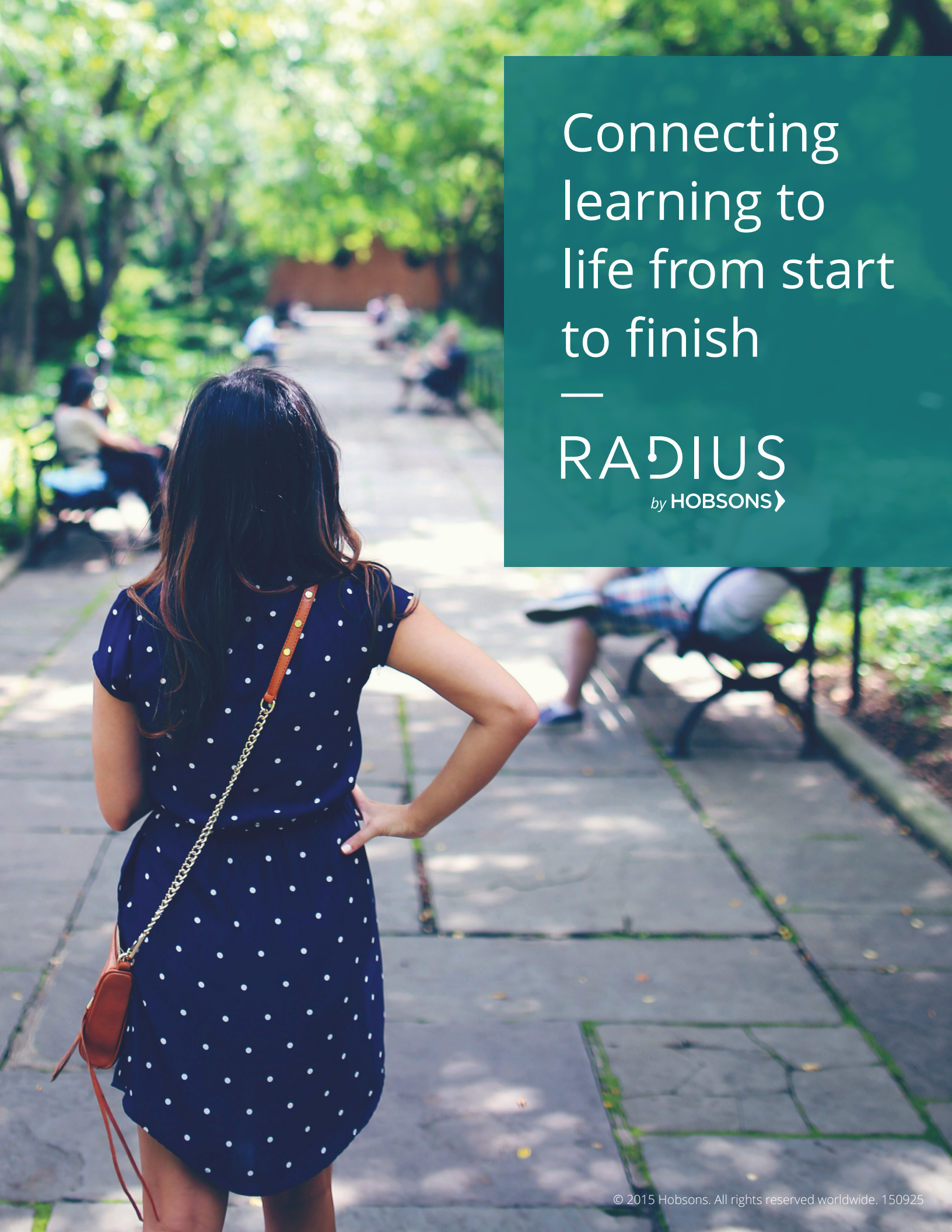
SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS

Some of the specific findings from the study include:

- Six in 10 admission directors (61 percent) strongly agree that they are very likely to increase their full-time undergraduate recruitment efforts and 47 percent strongly agree they are likely to increase the recruitment of transfer students.
- Twenty-eight percent of admissions directors say admitted minority applicants and athletes at their institution have lower grades and test scores on average than do other applicants.
- Half of admissions directors say minority students (52 percent) and veterans (50 percent) should be given preferential treatment in admissions decisions.
- Nearly one-third of admissions directors (32 percent) say their institution currently has a pathways program for international students and 37 percent say it is a key part of their recruitment strategy.
- About one in four admissions directors say they have received pressure from various high-ranking administrators or trustees to admit applicants who were well-connected politically and otherwise. Forty-four percent agree such pressure is never appropriate, but 33 percent disagree.
- Admissions directors are divided on whether standardized test scores should be optional. Forty-one percent agree they should be optional and 44 percent disagree.
- Half of admissions directors (51 percent) said they were very concerned about meeting their enrollment goals for the 2015-16 academic year. Fifty-eight percent say they did not meet their goals.
- Three-quarters of admissions directors, 76 percent, think their institution is losing applicants because of concerns about student debt. Those working at private colleges are much likelier than those at public institutions to say this.
- Most admissions directors, 73 percent, consider student debt under \$30,000 to be a reasonable amount to accumulate in a four-year period. Admissions directors at private nonprofit colleges are more likely than their public college peers to endorse higher debt levels.
- While no admissions directors say their institution has falsely reported standardized test scores or other admissions data to groups that produce college rankings, an overwhelming majority (92 percent) believe other institutions have done so.

SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS (cont.)

- Admissions directors are generally not overly concerned about their college's ability to consider race and ethnicity in admissions as the Supreme Court prepares to consider another case on the issue -- 39 percent are either very or somewhat concerned. Seven in 10 have not had any discussions about how they might handle admissions differently if race is banned from consideration.
- The majority of admissions directors, 59 percent, say institutions should ask all applicants to report all disciplinary or legal infractions. Sixty-one percent say they seek disciplinary records on applicants.
- Admissions directors are more likely to describe a series of new approaches to admissions as bad rather than good ideas, including allowing applicants to decide what materials to submit, having applicants submit a two-minute video and two examples of high school work, or having applicants submit four research papers on pre-selected topics that are graded by faculty members.
- Most admissions directors at public institutions say their universities are seeking more out-of-state students. However, only one in five report facing political or public scrutiny for those efforts.
- Admissions directors at two-year institutions are about equally likely to say they have seen a decrease as to say they have seen an increase in enrollment of students who normally would attend four-year institutions. Two in three say their institution is experiencing at least some competition from for-profit institutions in all fields and programs.



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METHODOLOGY

The following report presents findings from a quantitative survey research study that Gallup conducted on behalf of *Inside Higher Ed*. The study’s objective was to learn the practices and perceptions of senior-level college and university admissions and enrollment officers related to recruitment policies, admissions procedures, financial aid and education policy.

Gallup education consultants developed the questionnaire in collaboration with Scott Jaschik and Doug Lederman of *Inside Higher Ed*. Specialty colleges, namely Bible colleges and seminaries with a Carnegie Code classification of 24, and institutions with enrollment fewer than 500 students were excluded from the sample.

Gallup conducted the survey from August 3-25, 2015. Gallup sent invitations via email to 2,575 admissions directors and enrollment officers, with regular reminders sent throughout the field period. Gallup collected 264 completed Web surveys, yielding a 10 percent response rate. Respondents represented 107 public institutions, 151 private institutions and five institutions from the for-profit sector.

Data are not statistically adjusted (weighted). Some sectors do not have data reported due to low N sizes. Sector groupings are determined based on the 2010 Carnegie Code for the institution. The survey is an attempted census of all admissions directors/enrollment officers using the most comprehensive sample information available. However, gaps in coverage of the sample, along with the participation rate, mean the results from this sample represent the views of those who participated in the survey and cannot, with a high degree of confidence, be projected to the broader population of admissions directors.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls. In some cases, reported frequencies may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. “Don’t know” and “Refused” responses are excluded from the results.

Total Participation by Sector

All Institutions by Sector					Public		Private Nonprofit		
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	For-Profit*	Doctoral / Master’s / Baccalaureate	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master’s	Bacc.	Assoc.*
TOTAL N	264	107	151	5	61	42	71	64	2

*Data are not reported for these groups due to small sample size.

Note: The total sample size includes one institution that could not be categorized as public, private nonprofit or for-profit due to missing sample information.

Four public institutions and 15 private nonprofit institutions could not be categorized by highest degree offering due to missing sample information.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FOCUS ON RECRUITMENT

Admissions directors were asked to reflect on different student groups and whether they were likely to increase their efforts to recruit those groups. The directors surveyed are most likely to say they will increase recruitment of full-time undergraduates (61 percent) and transfers (47 percent). Slightly fewer strongly agree they will push recruitment of out-of-state students (39 percent), minority students (36 percent) and international students (36 percent). About one-quarter strongly agree they will increase recruitment efforts for full-pay students (28 percent), students recruited with merit scholarships (27 percent) and first-generation college students (25 percent). Admissions directors are least likely to strongly agree they will increase recruitment of veterans, older students, online students and part-time undergraduates.

Admissions directors at public institutions are a bit more likely than those at private institutions to indicate they are increasing efforts to recruit minority students, first-generation college students, veterans and part-time undergraduates. Private institution admissions directors are more likely than those at public institutions to say they are increasing recruitment of full-pay students.

Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about undergraduate applicant populations.

This year at my institution, I am very likely to increase my recruitment efforts for the following populations of undergraduate applicants to my institution:

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Full-time undergraduates							
%5 Strongly agree	61	58	64	63	53	63	68
%4	26	29	24	25	33	21	24
%3	8	8	8	7	10	10	6
%2	2	2	3	2	3	4	0
%1 Strongly disagree	2	3	1	3	3	1	2
Transfer students							
%5 Strongly agree	47	46	49	63	20	49	48
%4	26	23	27	26	17	30	27
%3	14	19	12	11	31	7	12
%2	9	8	8	0	23	7	10
%1 Strongly disagree	4	3	4	0	9	6	3

FOCUS ON RECRUITMENT (cont.)

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Out-of-state students							
%5 Strongly agree	61	58	64	63	53	63	68
%4	26	29	24	25	33	21	24
%3	8	8	8	7	10	10	6
%2	2	2	3	2	3	4	0
%1 Strongly disagree	2	3	1	3	3	1	2
Minority students							
%5 Strongly agree	36	42	31	41	41	25	42
%4	35	31	37	32	32	41	32
%3	24	22	25	22	24	25	22
%2	5	4	6	5	3	10	2
%1 Strongly disagree	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
International students							
%5 Strongly agree	36	33	37	41	21	44	34
%4	24	22	26	33	8	24	29
%3	21	20	22	15	28	16	26
%2	10	15	7	9	21	9	6
%1 Strongly disagree	9	11	8	2	23	7	5
Full-pay students							
%5 Strongly agree	28	22	31	20	21	34	30
%4	23	21	26	25	14	26	28
%3	26	30	25	39	18	23	25
%2	14	13	13	8	25	12	12
%1 Strongly disagree	8	13	5	8	21	5	5

FOCUS ON RECRUITMENT (cont.)

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Students recruited with merit scholarships							
%5 Strongly agree	27	29	27	39	4	28	24
%4	33	31	34	31	35	34	41
%3	26	24	28	22	30	25	27
%2	4	6	3	3	9	6	0
%1 Strongly disagree	9	11	8	5	22	7	8
First-generation college students							
%5 Strongly agree	25	33	19	23	49	17	22
%4	34	37	33	37	38	38	30
%3	32	25	37	35	10	36	33
%2	7	2	9	4	0	7	12
%1 Strongly disagree	2	2	2	2	3	1	3
Veterans/military personnel							
%5 Strongly agree	21	30	14	23	44	15	16
%4	31	34	28	37	31	35	19
%3	30	28	31	35	15	28	31
%2	16	7	22	5	10	21	26
%1 Strongly disagree	3	0	5	0	0	1	9
Students older than 24							
%5 Strongly agree	18	19	17	13	28	23	9
%4	21	27	16	21	38	13	18
%3	30	33	28	38	21	27	27
%2	12	13	13	17	8	13	13
%1 Strongly disagree	19	8	28	11	5	23	33

FOCUS ON RECRUITMENT (cont.)

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Online students							
%5 Strongly agree	17	16	18	15	19	24	12
%4	24	32	16	27	41	14	17
%3	16	21	13	17	22	14	10
%2	15	15	15	19	11	19	14
%1 Strongly disagree	27	16	37	23	8	31	48
Part-time undergraduates							
%5 Strongly agree	15	24	9	11	40	10	6
%4	10	15	6	11	20	8	4
%3	29	32	27	34	28	26	26
%2	19	15	22	19	10	25	17
%1 Strongly disagree	27	15	36	25	3	31	48



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APPLICANT ADMISSIONS

Admissions directors generally do not believe members of certain groups are admitted to their institutions with lower grades and test scores than their other students. Of a list of eight groups that may get special consideration for admission, admissions directors are most likely to say athletes (28 percent) and minority students (28 percent) had lower grades and test scores, on average, than other students typically admitted. They are less likely to say veterans (17 percent), children of alumni (12 percent), international students (12 percent), full-pay students (9 percent) and men (8 percent) and women (2 percent) had lower grades and test scores than other admitted students.

Private college admissions directors are more likely than public university admissions directors to say minority students, children of alumni and full-pay students tended to have lower grades and test scores than other students who attend.

Many institutions admit some applicants who apply with lower grades and test scores than those typically admitted. For the following groups, do your institution's admitted applicants, on average, have lower grades and test scores than do other applicants?

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Athletes							
% Yes	28	31	27	35	18	34	20
% No	72	69	73	65	82	66	80
Minority students							
% Yes	28	23	31	23	15	34	26
% No	72	78	69	77	85	66	74
Veterans							
% Yes	17	18	16	20	15	18	16
% No	83	82	84	80	85	82	84
Children of alumni							
% Yes	12	4	15	4	7	18	15
% No	88	96	85	96	93	82	85
International students							
% Yes	12	9	14	9	9	15	13
% No	88	91	86	91	91	85	87

APPLICANT ADMISSIONS (cont.)

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Full-pay students							
% Yes	9	3	12	4	0	11	16
% No	91	97	88	96	100	89	84
Men (for gender balance)							
% Yes	8	4	10	2	11	8	13
% No	92	96	90	98	89	92	87
Women (for gender balance)							
% Yes	2	1	3	0	0	2	5
% No	98	99	97	100	100	98	95

When admissions directors were asked if they feel institutions like theirs *should* admit applicants from specific groups even if they apply with lower grades and test scores than other applicants, half say minority students (52 percent) and veterans (50 percent) should be given preferential treatment. Thirty-seven percent say athletes should get special consideration and 32 percent say children of alumni should as well. Admissions directors generally do not think men and women should be admitted with lower grades and test scores to try to achieve gender balance.

Private college admissions directors are more likely than public college admissions directors to believe some minority students and children of alumni should be admitted with lower test scores and grades. Public university admissions directors are more inclined to say some veterans should get that consideration.

In your opinion, should institutions like yours admit some applicants from the following groups even if they apply with lower grades and test scores than other applicants?							
All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Minority students							
% Yes	52	46	56	42	48	53	60
% No	48	54	44	58	52	47	40
Veterans							
% Yes	50	57	45	60	48	47	45
% No	50	43	55	40	52	53	55

APPLICANT ADMISSIONS (cont.)

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Athletes							
% Yes	37	35	39	38	27	42	39
% No	63	65	61	62	73	58	61
Children of alumni							
% Yes	32	22	37	21	27	35	44
% No	68	78	63	79	73	65	56
International students							
% Yes	25	21	26	22	20	31	20
% No	75	79	74	78	80	69	80
Full-pay students							
% Yes	22	20	23	14	29	22	27
% No	78	80	77	86	71	78	73
Men (for gender balance)							
% Yes	20	19	21	14	27	19	22
% No	80	81	79	86	73	81	78
Women (for gender balance)							
% Yes	18	16	19	12	26	17	21
% No	82	84	81	88	74	83	79

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PATHWAYS PROGRAMS

Admissions directors were asked to respond to a series of questions relating to pathways programs for international students, which combine academic coursework and English language coursework to help prepare them. Nearly one-third of admissions directors (32 percent) say their institution currently has a pathways program, including 50 percent of those working at public institutions and 20 percent of those from private colleges.

For those admissions directors working at universities that have a pathways program, 37 percent say their pathways program is a key part of their institution's recruitment strategy. For those directors indicating their institution does not have a pathways program, 30 percent say they are considering implementing such a program.

Pathways programs sometimes refer to formal units in which students have not yet been admitted to the college itself. However, some institutions use the term for less formal efforts to help international students already enrolled.

As you may know, pathways programs are a combination of academic coursework and English language coursework designed to prepare international students for degree programs in the United States.

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Does your institution currently have a pathways program?							
% Yes	32	50	20	60	39	33	8
% No	68	50	80	40	61	67	92
Is your pathways program a key part of your applicant recruitment strategy?*							
% Yes	37	40	n/a	37	n/a	n/a	n/a
% No	63	60	n/a	63	n/a	n/a	n/a
Are you considering implementing a pathways program at your institution?***							
% Yes	30	29	30	n/a	n/a	40	24
% No	70	71	70	n/a	n/a	60	76

* Asked only of respondents who indicated their institution has a pathways program (n=71).

**Asked only of respondents who indicated their institution does not have a pathways program (n=143).

n/a: Not reported due to small sample sizes.

PATHWAYS PROGRAMS (cont.)

Relatively few admissions directors, 13 percent, believe fabrication of international applications are a prevalent problem at their institution.

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Are fabrications on international admissions applications a prevalent problem at your institution?							
% Yes	13	18	10	18	19	10	11
% No	87	82	90	82	81	90	89

INTERNAL PRESSURE TO ADMIT APPLICANTS

A recent investigation found the then-president of a major university had intervened with admissions officers on decisions regarding applicants who were well-connected politically and otherwise. Admissions directors were asked whether they had ever been pressured to admit certain applicants by influential people associated with their university. About one in four admissions directors say senior-level administrators (24 percent), trustees or board members (22 percent) or development office representatives (26 percent) had tried to influence decisions on certain candidates. Reports of such pressure are more common at private rather than public institutions, and at four-year rather than two-year institutions.

As you may know, an investigation this year revealed cases in which the then-president of the University of Texas at Austin intervened with admissions officers on the decisions involving applicants who were well-connected, politically and otherwise.

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Have senior level administrators tried to influence you to admit some applicants?							
% Yes	24	18	29	20	17	33	25
% No	76	82	71	80	83	67	75
Have institution trustees or board members tried to influence you to admit some applicants?							
% Yes	22	11	29	15	3	36	21
% No	78	89	71	85	97	64	79
Have development office representatives or big donors tried to influence you to admit some applicants?							
% Yes	26	15	32	22	3	38	32
% No	74	85	68	78	97	62	68

INTERNAL PRESSURE TO ADMIT APPLICANTS (cont.)

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
It is never appropriate for a president, a board member or a high-ranking official to lobby on behalf of an applicant.							
%5 Strongly agree	30	46	20	46	46	16	19
%4	14	14	12	11	22	13	13
%3	23	20	26	19	19	26	26
%2	22	12	29	19	3	33	24
%1 Strongly disagree	11	7	14	5	11	13	18
Responding to pressure from high-ranking officials to admit certain applicants, in moderation, is a reasonable way to promote financial support for my institution.							
%5 Strongly agree	6	3	8	4	3	7	11
%4	19	8	27	5	13	28	28
%3	27	22	29	21	25	34	26
%2	15	19	12	23	9	9	11
%1 Strongly disagree	33	48	24	46	50	21	23

ADMISSIONS PRACTICES

Forty-four percent of admissions directors strongly agree and an additional 36 percent agree that merit scholarships are an appropriate use of their institution's financial resources. However, most admissions directors strongly disagree (62 percent) that they are prioritizing a student's ability to pay in making admissions decisions because of the recent financial downturn.

Admissions directors are divided on whether standardized test scores should be optional for students applying to their institution -- 41 percent agree they should be optional and 44 percent disagree.

Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following items.

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Merit scholarships are an appropriate use of our institution's financial resources.							
%5 Strongly agree	44	49	41	53	40	39	45
%4	36	33	38	36	27	39	35
%3	12	14	11	10	23	14	8
%2	5	4	5	2	10	4	5
%1 Strongly disagree	3	0	5	0	0	4	6
Standardized test scores (such as SAT or ACT) should be optional for students who apply to my institution.							
%5 Strongly agree	27	16	32	10	29	25	34
%4	14	21	10	28	8	10	11
%3	15	13	16	10	21	13	18
%2	23	27	20	26	25	19	25
%1 Strongly disagree	21	22	22	26	17	32	11
Because of the financial downturn, we are prioritizing an applicant's ability to pay in making admissions decisions.							
%5 Strongly agree	3	2	2	0	8	1	3
%4	6	1	9	2	0	6	15
%3	13	4	19	4	4	19	18
%2	16	11	19	11	8	18	23
%1 Strongly disagree	62	82	51	84	79	56	41

STUDENT ENROLLMENT GOALS

Admissions directors were commonly concerned about meeting their institution's new enrollment goals for the 2015-16 academic year -- 51 percent said they were very concerned and another 31 percent were moderately concerned. High levels of concern were more common among admissions directors at two-year public colleges (63 percent) than among admissions directors at four-year public colleges (38 percent).

Admissions directors' elevated concerns seem appropriate given that the majority, 58 percent, say their institution did not meet their enrollment goals for the 2015-16 academic year prior to May 1. This includes 80 percent of those at community colleges, 61 percent of those at private baccalaureate colleges, 54 percent at private doctoral or master's institutions and 47 percent at public four-year institutions.

Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following items.

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Thinking back, please indicate how concerned you were about meeting your institution's new student enrollment goals for the 2015-16 academic year:							
% Very concerned	51	47	54	38	63	53	57
% Moderately concerned	31	35	28	40	28	26	29
% Not too concerned	12	13	11	17	8	9	13
% Not concerned at all	7	6	7	5	3	13	2
Did your institution meet its new student enrollment goals this year prior to May 1, 2015?							
% Yes	42	42	42	53	20	46	39
% No	58	58	58	47	80	54	61

STUDENT DEBT

An area of increasing concern for recent graduates, prospective students, and parents are the sometimes huge amounts of debt college students can accumulate when working toward a degree. Seventy-six percent of admission directors believe their institution is losing prospective applicants because of concern about student loan debt. The concern is much greater among those at private institutions (87 percent) than those at public ones (57 percent). Admissions directors at public two-year institutions (43 percent) are less likely to see debt as an issue affecting their potential student pool.

When asked what is an appropriate level of debt to accumulate toward a four-year degree, most admissions directors give a figure of \$30,000 or less, with the most common levels being between \$10,000 and \$20,000 (26 percent) or between \$20,000 and \$30,000 (34 percent). Private college admissions directors are more likely to endorse higher debt levels -- 37 percent think debt of \$30,000 or greater is reasonable, compared with 9 percent of those at public institutions.

Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following items.

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Do you think that your institution is losing potential applicants due to concerns about accumulating student loan debt?							
% Yes	76	57	87	69	43	84	89
% No	24	43	13	31	57	16	11
In your opinion, what is a reasonable amount of loan debt from all sources for an undergraduate student to accumulate over a four-year period?							
% No amount of loan debt is reasonable	1	2	0	2	3	0	0
% Under \$5,000	2	5	0	2	11	0	0
% \$5,000 to less than \$10,000	10	22	2	16	32	0	3
% \$10,000 to less than \$20,000	26	37	20	40	32	16	29
% \$20,000 to less than \$30,000	34	25	41	28	19	44	40
% \$30,000 to less than \$40,000	17	7	24	10	3	24	21
% \$40,000 to less than \$50,000	6	1	9	2	0	11	5
% \$50,000 or more	4	1	4	2	0	4	2

POLICY

Rankings of colleges put out by various organizations receive a lot of media attention and can be an important tool for prospective students and parents when choosing where to apply. As such, there is a temptation for colleges to provide information, including false information, to achieve a higher ranking. Admissions directors are convinced that many colleges succumb to this temptation, as 92 percent believe other institutions have provided false information on average test scores or other admissions data to groups doing college rankings. However, admissions directors are near unanimous in saying their own institution has not provided false information.

Recently there have been academic scandals involving higher education institutions falsely reporting standardized test scores or other admissions data to groups that do college rankings.

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Has your institution falsely reported standardized test scores or other admissions data?							
% Yes	<1%	0	1	0	0	0	2
% No	100	100	99	100	100	100	98
Do you think other higher education institutions have falsely reported standardized test scores or other admissions data?							
% Yes	92	87	95	91	84	98	92
% No	8	13	5	9	16	2	8

One statistic that may be of special interest to certain prospective students is the percentage of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender students who are enrolled. However, most admissions directors, 67 percent, do not believe institutions should include voluntary questions on applications asking about sexual orientation or gender identity.

In your opinion, should higher education institutions add a voluntary question on their admissions application about sexual orientation or gender identity?							
% Yes	33	31	36	38	21	37	36
% No	67	69	64	62	79	63	64

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear another case that challenges the use of race and ethnicity in college admissions, with the ruling likely to be issued next spring. Most admissions directors are not concerned that their institution will lose the ability to take race, ethnicity or gender into account when deciding to admit an applicant, with just 39 percent very or moderately concerned. Those working at public four-year colleges (43 percent) and private colleges (42 percent) are much more concerned than those working at two-year institutions (13 percent), which generally have more open admissions policies.

Relatively few admissions directors say there have been discussions -- let alone action -- at their institution about how they would handle admissions if race or similar factors were to be banned from consideration. Six percent of admissions directors say their institution has a plan for how to handle admissions if the Supreme Court bars affirmative action, and another 23 percent say they have had discussions on how they might handle race-neutral admissions. Those at four-year public institutions are most likely to report having discussed a plan or having already devised one.

As you know, the Supreme Court is currently considering a case which could scale back the ability of colleges and universities to consider race and ethnicity in admissions decisions.							
All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
How concerned are you that colleges may lose the ability to consider race, ethnicity and gender in admissions decisions, financial decisions, or programs?							
% Very concerned	12	13	12	19	3	14	10
% Moderately concerned	27	22	30	24	10	34	26
% Not too concerned	29	23	32	22	23	26	44
% Not concerned at all	32	43	25	36	63	26	21
As of right now, what, if anything, has your institution done to address the possibility that the Supreme Court might restrict or ban the consideration of race in admissions?							
% My institution has made a specific plan for how it will handle admissions if the Supreme Court limits or bans considering race in admissions.	6	15	2	16	0	2	2
% My institution has had discussions on how it might handle admissions differently.	23	24	22	28	0	24	23
% My institution has not yet had discussions on how it might handle admissions differently.	71	61	76	56	100	75	74

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (cont.)

Among a range of possible approaches colleges could take to ensure race-neutral admissions, directors are most likely to agree that their institution would place more emphasis on first-generation status in the review process (29 percent strongly agree or agree), give more consideration to applicant socioeconomic status (27 percent) and use non-cognitive measures (31 percent) to evaluate applicants. Very few believe their institution would drop standardized test requirements, admit a certain percent of the top-ranking students from every high school in the state, or drop preferences for alumni children in response to a potential Supreme Court ban on affirmative action.

It is important to note that on these items the percentages of respondents who did not have an opinion are substantial, ranging from 37 percent to 50 percent across the six items. This high level of no opinion suggests that college officials have not given much thought to how they might alter their processes if affirmative action is severely limited by the Supreme Court.

Thinking about this case, using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following items.

If the right of colleges and universities to consider race and ethnicity in admissions decisions is scaled back, our institution will:

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Place more consideration on first-generation status in the review process.							
%5 Strongly agree	12	16	10	13	33	12	8
%4	17	12	20	15	0	22	19
%3	35	30	36	31	11	36	35
%2	13	12	13	13	11	12	13
%1 Strongly disagree	24	30	21	28	44	18	25
Place more consideration on applicants' socioeconomic status in the review process.							
%5 Strongly agree	11	16	8	15	25	10	8
%4	16	12	17	13	0	20	14
%3	22	20	22	21	13	22	22
%2	18	10	22	10	13	24	22
%1 Strongly disagree	34	41	30	41	50	25	34

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (cont.)

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Adopt the use of non-cognitive measures in the admissions process.							
%5 Strongly agree	10	12	9	13	13	4	14
%4	21	18	23	18	0	24	23
%3	32	18	37	18	25	35	39
%2	13	10	14	13	0	22	9
%1 Strongly disagree	25	41	16	38	63	15	16
Drop standardized test requirements.							
%5 Strongly agree	5	0	8	0	0	7	8
%4	7	4	9	5	0	7	11
%3	16	11	19	13	0	20	21
%2	22	19	22	16	29	22	24
%1 Strongly disagree	50	66	42	66	71	44	37
Adopt a policy to admit a top percent of students from every high school class in our state.							
%5 Strongly agree	5	11	2	11	14	0	5
%4	4	2	4	0	14	5	5
%3	17	30	12	33	14	14	11
%2	18	7	24	6	14	25	23
%1 Strongly disagree	56	50	58	50	43	57	57
Drop preferences for alumni children.							
%5 Strongly agree	3	6	1	7	0	0	3
%4	5	9	3	7	17	5	0
%3	20	20	19	21	17	14	26
%2	26	14	32	17	0	30	38
%1 Strongly disagree	46	51	44	48	67	52	33

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (cont.)

Affirmative action programs are generally used to increase the representation of African-American and Hispanic students at a college or university since those students tend to be underrepresented in institutions of higher education. However, Asian Americans are one minority group that tends to achieve well academically and perform well on standardized tests, and as a result can be proportionally overrepresented at higher education institutions. As a result, it is possible that some institutions may hold Asian-American applicants to higher standards than applicants of other races.

Essentially no admissions directors say this occurs at their institution, but 43 percent believe it does occur at some colleges. Private college admissions directors (51 percent) are more likely than their public college peers (33 percent) to say this occurs at some colleges.

As you may know, some Asian American groups have alleged that Asian American applicants are held to higher admission standards than all other students.

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Based on what you know or have heard, do you believe that some colleges are holding Asian American applicants to higher standards?							
% Yes	43	33	51	32	38	46	55
% No	57	67	49	68	62	54	45
Does your college hold Asian American applicants to higher admission standards than all other applicants?							
% Yes	< 1	0	1	0	0	0	0
% No	100	100	99	100	100	100	100

APPLICANT DISCIPLINARY RECORDS

Admissions officers often take into account a wide variety of information about a student when deciding to admit him or her. In addition to high school grades, standardized test scores and extracurricular activities, colleges may also want to review a student’s disciplinary record to make sure he or she does not have any issues that might indicate potential problems. However, seeking out disciplinary information may violate a student’s privacy, and, depending on the nature of the incident, may put the student at a disadvantage compared with a student with no disciplinary issues.

Fifty-nine percent of admissions directors favor a liberal reporting standard on disciplinary records, saying all incidents should be disclosed. Another 36 percent favor a limited approach that would only ask, for example, about recent incidents or violent incidents. Just 5 percent say colleges should not ask any questions about a student’s past history of discipline in school.

In terms of what colleges and universities are doing, 61 percent of admissions directors surveyed say their college seeks out disciplinary information on applicants, including 40 percent of those at public institutions and 77 percent of those at private institutions. Nearly nine in 10 admissions directors at two-year public institutions say their institution does not seek out such information.

Most of those working at institutions that collect such information appear likely to continue to do so, as only 9 percent say they are reconsidering their policy. A little less than half, 43 percent, say admissions officers are provided training as to how to properly evaluate such information.

As you may know, some colleges are considering applicants’ high school disciplinary records in the admissions process.

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master’s / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master’s	Bacc.
Does your college seek information, either from applicants or their high schools, on whether applicants have a disciplinary or legal record?							
% Yes	61	40	77	60	11	81	79
% No	39	60	23	40	89	19	21
Is your college re-considering whether such information is an appropriate criterion?*							
% Yes	9	11	8	12	0	5	13
% No	91	89	92	88	100	95	87
Are admissions officers at your institution provided with special training on how to evaluate disciplinary or legal information?*							
% Yes	43	47	41	47	50	42	42
% No	57	53	59	53	50	58	58

APPLICANT DISCIPLINARY RECORDS (cont.)

	All Institutions by Sector			Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
What, if anything, do you think institutions should ask about recent disciplinary or legal infractions?							
% Institutions should not ask any questions about applicants' disciplinary or legal infractions.	5	11	1	9	15	3	0
% Institutions should significantly limit the scope of disciplinary or legal infractions that they ask applicants about [for example: only recent incidents or violent incidents].	36	46	30	43	54	25	33
% Institutions should ask all applicants to report all disciplinary or legal infractions.	59	43	68	48	31	72	67

*Asked of those whose colleges seek applicants' disciplinary records.

NEW APPROACHES TO ADMISSIONS

Some colleges are experimenting with new approaches to admissions that move away from the typical reliance on high school grades and standardized test scores. However, those approaches do not seem to be very appealing to most admissions directors. For example, 74 percent do not believe it is ever appropriate for institutions to consider applicants without requiring a high school transcript. Those working at two-year public institutions are alone in showing majority support for that approach, at 58 percent.

In recent years, a number of colleges have adopted options for applicants that are radically different from traditional approaches.

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Do you think it is ever appropriate for institutions to consider applicants without requiring a high school transcript?							
% Yes	26	31	20	17	58	22	15
% No	74	69	80	83	42	78	85

The survey asked admissions directors for their thoughts on some of the novel approaches being tried at certain institutions. Although none of these approaches are evaluated positively, the one getting the most support is a policy that has applicants submit four research papers on pre-selected topics that are graded by the faculty. Twenty-three percent of admissions directors say this is a very good or good idea and 45 percent say it is a bad or very bad idea.

A combined 16 percent say it is a good idea and 51 percent say it is a bad idea to have students submit a two-minute video and two examples of high school work for their application. The approach with the worst review is to have applicants decide on their own what materials to submit -- 5 percent say this is a very good or good idea and 78 percent say it is a very bad or bad idea.

Following are some approaches colleges are taking to admit students that do not require applicants to submit high school transcripts or test scores. For each approach, please indicate whether you think it is a very good idea, a good idea, a neither good nor bad idea, a bad idea, or a very bad idea as a new way to admit students.

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
Applicants submit four research papers on topics selected by the college, which are graded by college faculty members.							
% Very good idea	4	4	4	2	9	7	2
% Good idea	19	20	19	22	15	23	10
% Neither good nor bad	33	36	32	38	35	24	40
% Bad idea	29	23	31	19	29	31	31
% Very bad idea	16	17	14	19	12	14	17

NEW APPROACHES TO ADMISSIONS (cont.)

All Institutions by Sector				Public		Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral / Master's	Bacc.
A two-minute video of the student and two examples of his/her high school work.							
% Very good idea	2	1	2	2	0	1	2
% Good idea	14	14	14	14	16	17	9
% Neither good nor bad	33	28	36	25	38	36	32
% Bad idea	31	29	33	33	22	29	42
% Very bad idea	20	27	15	26	25	16	16
Applicants themselves decide what materials to submit in their application.							
% Very good idea	1	2	1	2	0	1	0
% Good idea	4	3	5	3	3	6	5
% Neither good nor bad	17	14	17	17	12	13	20
% Bad idea	37	32	40	33	32	49	31
% Very bad idea	41	48	37	45	53	31	44

OUT-OF-STATE ADMISSIONS

Many colleges and universities are facing tremendous financial pressure, with public colleges in many states seeing their state support diminish. As such, public institutions often seek to offset the loss of revenue by admitting out-of-state students who pay higher tuition than in-state students.

Sixty-eight percent of admissions officers at public institutions say their college has sought more out-of-state residents in recent years, including 90 percent of those at four-year institutions. These efforts have been successful, according to 86 percent of admissions directors.

Those efforts could be controversial, however, as many within the state might believe public institutions in that state should primarily serve students from the state. Nevertheless, admissions directors report the efforts have not been highly controversial, with only 21 percent saying their institution is facing increased scrutiny for admitting more out-of-state students.

As you may know, in recent years some public institutions have significantly increased their admission of out-of-state students, including international students.

	All Public	Public Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Public Assoc.
In recent years, has your college sought more out-of-state students?*			
% Yes	68	90	38
% No	32	10	62
Have your college's efforts to seek more out-of-state students been successful?***			
% Yes	86	85	n/a
% No	14	15	n/a
Is your college facing political or public scrutiny over admitting more out-of-state students?***			
% Yes	21	23	n/a
% No	79	77	n/a

* Asked only of respondents at public institutions.

** Asked only of respondents at public institutions that have sought more out-of-state students (N=69).

n/a: Not reported due to small sample size

OUT-OF-STATE ADMISSIONS (cont.)

Most public institution admissions officers believe out-of-state students are important for their tuition revenue, and say they would not decrease out-of-state admissions if state governments provided more funds. Over all, 57 percent strongly agree or agree that out-of-state students are essential to their institution for their tuition revenue, including 71 percent of those at four-year public institutions.

Meanwhile, 67 percent strongly disagree or disagree and 14 percent strongly agree or agree that they would decrease out-of-state admissions if they received more state funds.

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.			
	All Public	Public Doctoral / Master's / Bacc.	Public Assoc.
Out-of-state students are essential to my college for their tuition revenue.*			
%5 Strongly agree	31	43	9
%4	26	28	24
%3	17	20	15
%2	10	7	18
%1 Strongly disagree	16	3	33
If state legislatures provided more funds, my institution would be likely to decrease out-of-state admissions.*			
%5 Strongly agree	9	13	n/a
%4	5	7	n/a
%3	19	20	n/a
%2	28	28	n/a
%1 Strongly disagree	39	32	n/a

* Asked only of respondents at public institutions.

n/a: Not reported due to small sample size.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

With increasing concerns about student debt, community colleges can be a viable alternative for students who do not have the means to afford four-year college tuition or do not want to take on loans to pay for it. Admissions directors at community colleges are slightly more likely to say there has been a decrease (41 percent) rather than an increase (34 percent) in the enrollment of traditional-college-age students at their institution – those who in the past may have gone directly to a four-year institution.

In the last year, has your institution seen an increase, a decrease or seen no change in the enrollment of “traditional” students who in the past might have enrolled at public or private four-year colleges or universities?*	
% Increase	34
% Decrease	41
% No change	25

* Asked only of respondents at two-year institutions.

What percent increase in the number of “traditional” students has your institution seen in the last year?***	
1% to less than 5% increase	n/a
5% to less than 15% increase	n/a
15% to less than 25% increase	n/a
25% or greater increase	n/a

*** Asked only of respondents at two-year institutions who indicated their institution has seen an increase in the number of “traditional” students who in the past might have enrolled at public or private four-year institutions (n=10).

n/a: Not reported due to small sample sizes.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES (cont.)

In addition to competing with four-year universities for students, community colleges continue to compete with for-profit colleges and universities, some of which have faced enrollment and regulatory problems. And while few admissions directors at two-year colleges say for-profit institutions are providing a “great deal” of competition for them -- either in selected programs or across all fields and programs -- a majority say for-profit institutions are providing “some” competition.

Is your institution experiencing a great deal, some, or only a little competition with for-profit colleges and universities to enroll students in some selected programs, such as health care or information technology?*	
% A great deal	11
% Some	62
% Only a little	27

* Asked only of respondents at two-year institutions.

Is your institution experiencing a great deal, some, or only a little competition with for-profit colleges and universities to enroll students across all fields and programs?*in the last year?**	
% A great deal	11
% Some	56
% Only a little	33

* Asked only of respondents at two-year institutions.

Nearly all admissions directors at two-year colleges, 98 percent, say their institutions have some highly competitive programs, and are unanimous in saying these programs require certain grades in prerequisite courses to gain admission. Sixty-two percent of two-year-college admissions directors with competitive programs say these programs admit less than half of applicants, including 18 percent who say they admit less than a quarter of applicants.

Are there any programs at your institution, such as nursing or automotive technology, for which admissions is highly competitive? *	
% Yes	98
% No	2

* Asked only of respondents at two-year institutions.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES (cont.)

For programs which are highly competitive at your institution, are students required to achieve certain grades in prerequisite courses to secure admission to the program? **	
% Yes	100
% No	0

* Asked only of respondents at two-year institutions.

For students who meet basic requirements for admission into highly competitive programs at your institution, what percent of applicants do you admit? **	
% Less than 25%	18
% 25% to less than 50%	44
% 50% or more	38

** Asked only of respondents at two-year institutions who indicate they have highly competitive programs (n=34).

President Obama has unveiled a proposal for free community college tuition. However, most admissions directors at two-year institutions, 59 percent, say this discussion has not generated increased interest in attending community college in their area. All admissions directors surveyed believe there are students in their area who would benefit from community college but who do not enroll because they do not have the means to pay for it.

Has the recent discussion about offering free community college generated increased interest in your area in attending community college? *	
% Yes	41
% No	59

* Asked only of respondents at two-year institutions.

Do you believe there are potential students in your area who could benefit from community college who do not enroll because of lack of funds? *	
% Yes	100
% No	0

* Asked only of respondents at two-year institutions.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your age?	Overall %
Under 30	2
31 to 40	26
41 to 50	27
51 to 60	31
61 to 70	13
70 and older	1

What is your gender?	Overall %
Male	55
Female	45

How many years have you served as the chief admissions officer at this institution?	Overall %
Less than 6 months	2
6 months to less than 3 years	33
3 years to less than 5 years	17
5 years to less than 10 years	24
10 years or more	25

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHICS (cont.)

How many years have you served as an admissions or enrollment management officer at any institution?	Overall %
Less than 6 months	0
6 months to less than 3 years	5
3 years to less than 5 years	7
5 years to less than 10 years	22
10 years or more	66

What proportion of the applicants for full-time undergraduate admissions do you typically admit to your college or university?	Overall %
Less than 20%	4
20% to less than 50%	23
50% or more	73

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