



SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENTS IN MAKING AN INFORMED COLLEGE DECISION

THE MEFA INSTITUTE

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UMass Boston

College applications slide, especially for low-income students

BY MEGAN CERULLO

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Applications
up at
selective
colleges

Admission
rates drop at
selective
colleges

CBSN



CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

WHAT'S THE COST OF DELAYING COLLEGE DURING PANDEMIC?

**PANDEMIA:
LATINOS IN CRISIS**
SUNDAY 9PM & MIDNIGHT ET
[cbsnews.com/pandemia](https://www.cbsnews.com/pandemia)

LIVE
CBSN

00:07 / 04:59



CC



APPLYING TO COLLEGE DURING COVID

What's different?

- Testing policies
- Ability to visit campus
- ???

What's the same?

- Importance of high school transcript
- Need to make an *informed* decision
- ???

**TRANSCRIPTS
ARE STILL
MOST
IMPORTANT
TO
ADMISSION
COUNSELORS**

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Grades in All Courses	220	74.5	15.0	5.5	5.0
Grades in College Prep Courses	220	73.2	16.8	5.9	4.1
Strength of Curriculum	219	62.1	21.9	8.7	7.3
Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	221	45.7	37.1	12.2	5.0
Essay or Writing Sample	220	23.2	33.2	24.1	19.5
Student's Demonstrated Interest	218	16.1	23.9	28.0	32.1
Counselor Recommendation	218	15.1	40.4	26.6	17.9
Teacher Recommendation	219	14.2	40.2	26.5	19.2
Class Rank	220	9.1	29.1	34.1	27.7
Extracurricular Activities	219	6.4	42.9	32.0	18.7
Portfolio	219	6.4	11.9	26.9	54.8
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	219	5.5	18.3	35.2	41.1
Interview	219	5.5	16.4	28.3	49.8
Work	217	4.1	28.6	36.9	30.4
State Graduation Exam Scores	218	2.3	8.7	18.8	70.2
SAT II Scores	216	1.9	5.6	14.8	77.8

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

**DOES
VISITING
CAMPUS
HELP OR
HURT
INFORMED
DECISIONS?**

Visiting a college campus is a time-honored tradition. While it can provide useful and helpful information, it can also unleash a flood of emotions, obscuring facts and clouding judgment



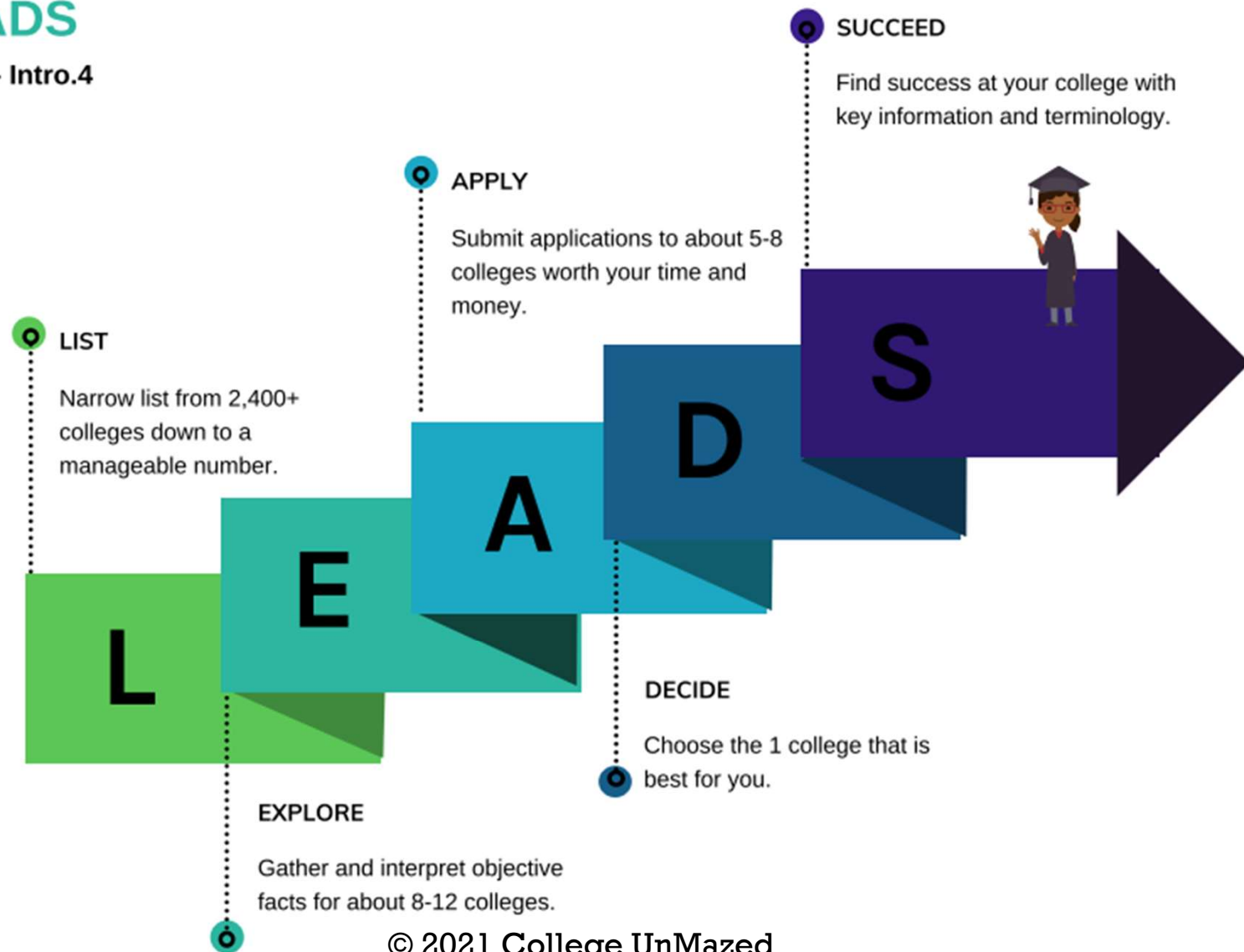
Cardio tour guide

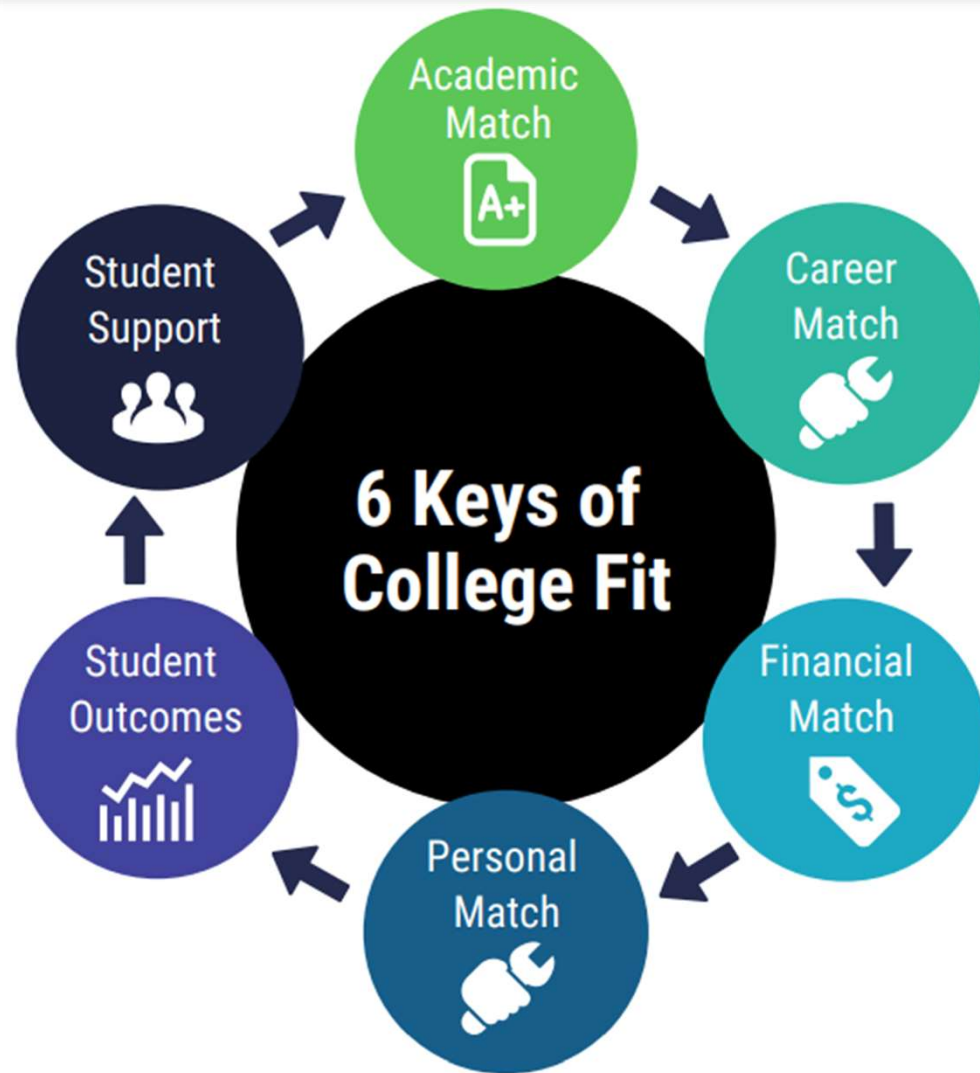
THE SOLUTION

Using the LEADS process can help structure the college choice problem to include both objective facts and emotions...

LEADS

Figure- Intro.4





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WHY DID WE DEVELOP LEADS PROCESS?

Far too many students choose a college with limited fact-based information. For example:

What is “demonstrated interest”?

- a. **When you contact a college or university to gain more information about them (e.g. campus visit, contacting admissions, etc.)***
- b. When you talk to your friends and family about which schools you want to apply to
- c. When you review the websites of colleges you are interested in
- d. When you talk to your high school counselor about applying to certain colleges
- e. Not Sure

Demonstrated interest is a factor in the admission decision-making process at some colleges. Private colleges are more likely consider demonstrated interest as a factor in the admissions process than public colleges. Prospective students can demonstrate interest by interacting with the college in a variety of ways, including visiting the campus and contacting admission office personnel by phone or email.

FACT: Many colleges use demonstrated interest when making admission decisions (non-academic factor)

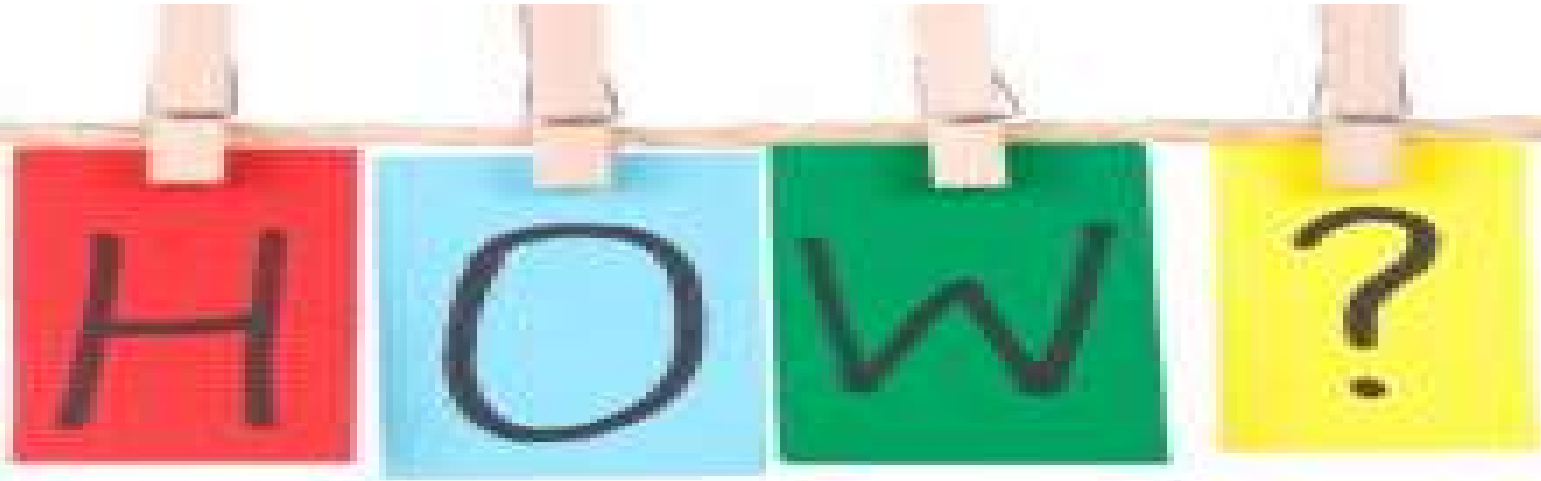
Want to test your own College Knowledge? Visit www.collegesanity.com

COMMON DATA SET

- Some colleges participate in the **voluntary** Common Data Set initiative to ease their own reporting burdens
- There is no reliable central place to find this – you just need to do a web search for the college name and “common data set”. For example: *University of Massachusetts Amherst Common Data Set*

C7 Relative importance of each of the following academic and nonacademic factors in first-time, first-year, degree-seeking (freshman) admission decisions.

C7		Very Important	Important	Considered	Not Considered
C7	Academic				
C7	Rigor of secondary school record	X			
C7	Class rank		X		
C7	Academic GPA	X			
C7	Standardized test scores	X			
C7	Application Essay		X		
C7	Recommendation(s)		X		
C7	Nonacademic				
C7	Interview				X
C7	Extracurricular activities		X		
C7	Talent/ability		X		
C7	Character/personal qualities		X		
C7	First generation		X		
C7	Alumni/ae relation			X	
C7	Geographical residence			X	
C7	State residency			X	
C7	Religious affiliation/commitment				X
C7	Racial/ethnic status			X	
C7	Volunteer work			X	
C7	Work experience		X		
C7	Level of applicant's interest		X		



- How can we promote informed college decision
 - We can encourage students and families to be exploratory and planful by attending to the 6 Keys of College Fit while following LEADS process
 - We can also help them be informed consumers by recognizing common myths about college

A key assumption is that there are many good colleges for each student to choose from. At the same time, there are, in fact, some choices that are better than others for each individual and their circumstances

Developing a List

Identifying Colleges and Gathering Information

- Primary Task – identify a reasonable # of colleges to explore more deeply
- Keys of Focus
 - Academic Match (has desired degree and learning options)
 - Career Match (has majors of interest)
 - Personal Match (location, size, special mission, etc)
- Notice cost is not included here – it's very important, of course, but premature at this stage because good options may be excluded
- Encourage people to explain their personal preferences:
 - Why do you think a small college is better than a large one?
 - Do you think smaller communities of learners do not exist on large campuses??? Large communities connected to small colleges?

The screenshot shows the COLLEGE Navigator search interface. It includes fields for 'Name of School' (with a placeholder 'Type name of school here'), 'States' (a dropdown menu with 'No Preference', 'Alabama', and 'Alaska' selected, and a 'Use Map' button), 'ZIP Code' (with a 'Miles from' dropdown), 'Programs/Majors' (a 'Browse for Programs' button), 'Level of Award' (checkboxes for 'Certificate', 'Associate's', 'Bachelor's', and 'Advanced'), 'Institution Type' (checkboxes for 'Public', 'Private non-profit', 'Private for-profit', '4-year', '2-year', and '< 2-year'), 'MORE SEARCH OPTIONS' (a section with various filters), 'Tuition & Fees' (a dropdown for 'Maximum' and a 'State you live in' dropdown), 'Undergraduate Student Enrollment' (a dropdown for 'Minimum' and a 'Maximum' dropdown), 'Housing?' (checkboxes for 'Yes' and 'No'), 'Campus Setting' (checkboxes for 'Rural', 'Suburban', 'Town', and 'City'), '% of Applicants Admitted' (a dropdown for 'Minimum' and a 'Maximum' dropdown), 'Test Scores - 25th Percentile' (dropdowns for 'SAT Reading/Writing', 'SAT Math', and 'ACT Composite'), 'Varsity Athletic Teams' (checkboxes for 'Men' and 'Women'), 'Extended Learning Opportunities' (checkboxes for 'Distance learning only', 'Weekend/evening', and 'Credit for life experience'), 'Religious Affiliation' (a dropdown for 'No Preference'), and 'Specialized Mission' (a dropdown for 'No Preference').

Explore your List more deeply

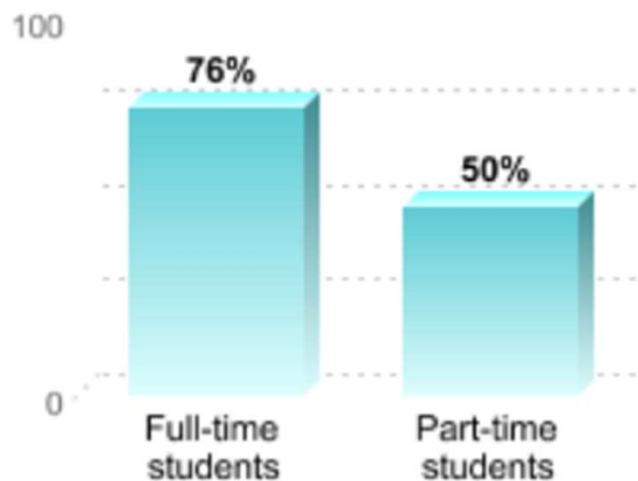
- Primary task is to identify 8-12 or so colleges to more strongly consider
- Five Keys of College Fit are examined:
 - Academic Match (test scores, GPA, selectivity) – Navigator, CB, Scorecard
 - Financial Match (net price vs. sticker price, debt of graduates) – Navigator, Scorecard
 - Personal Match (diversity, living arrangements) Navigator, college website/visit
 - Student Outcomes (retention and graduation rates, debt/salary info) Navigator, Scorecard
 - Student Support (e.g., disability, writing center) college website/visit



Student Outcomes:

How supported and satisfied are Freshmen?

RETENTION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME STUDENTS PURSUING BACHELOR'S DEGREES



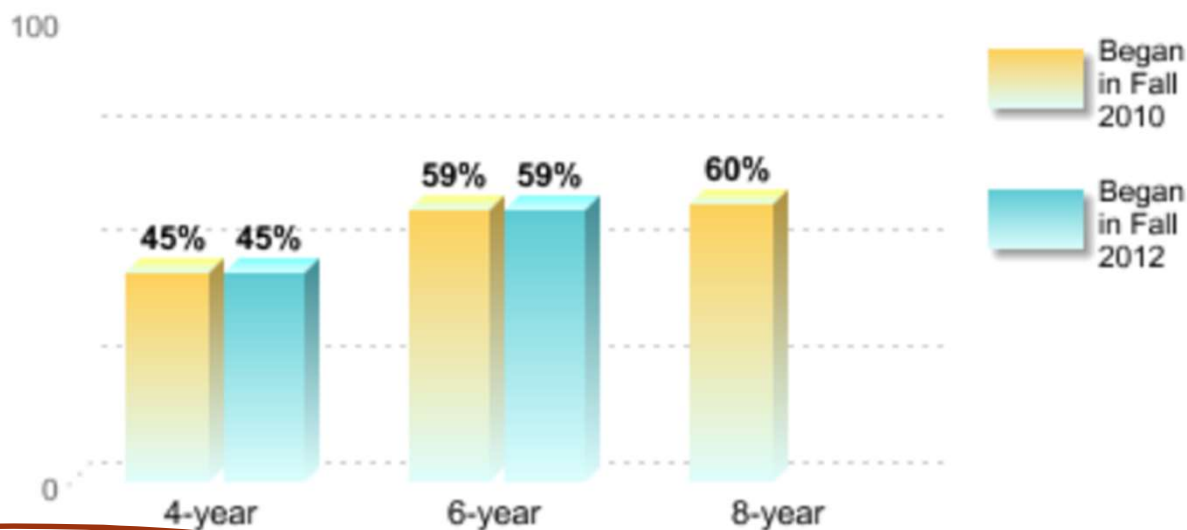
Percentage of Students Who Began Their Studies in Fall 2017 and Returned in Fall 2018

You will find this under the Retention and Graduation Rates section

Student Outcomes:

How many students make it to graduation?

GRADUATION RATES FOR STUDENTS PURSUING BACHELOR'S DEGREES



Percentage of Full-time, First-time Students Who Graduated in the Specified Amount of Time and Began in Fall 2010 or Fall 2012

You will find this under the Retention and Graduation Rates section

Academic Match:

How likely am I to have close interactions with professors?

Campus setting:	City: Large
Campus housing:	Yes
Student population:	7,186 (5,044 undergraduate)
Student-to-faculty ratio:	15 to 1

You will find this right up at the top of the page

Academic Match:

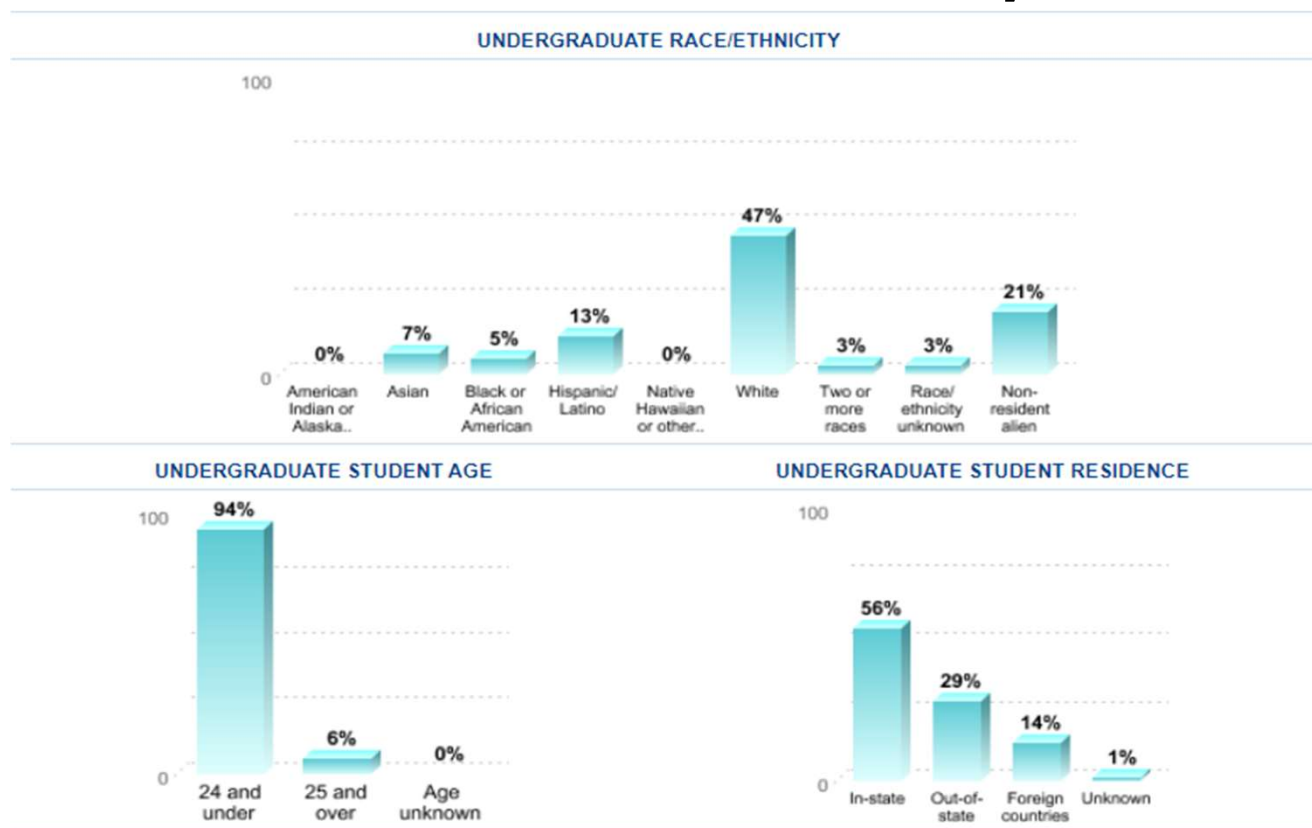
How many other students are in the major(s) I am interested in?

▼ PROGRAM	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR	MASTER	DOCTOR	UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE	POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE
Area, Ethnic, Cultural, Gender and Group Studies						
Asian Studies/Civilization	-	1	-	-	-	-
Disability Studies	-	-	-	-	-	1
Category total	-	1	-	-	-	1
Biological And Biomedical Sciences						
Biochemistry	-	4	-	-	-	-
Biology/Biological Sciences, General	-	51	-	-	-	-
Marine Biology and Biological Oceanography	-	0	-	-	-	-
Radiation Biology/Radiobiology	-	3	-	-	-	0
Category total	-	58	-	-	-	0

You will find this in Programs/Majors section

Personal Match:

How diverse is the student body?

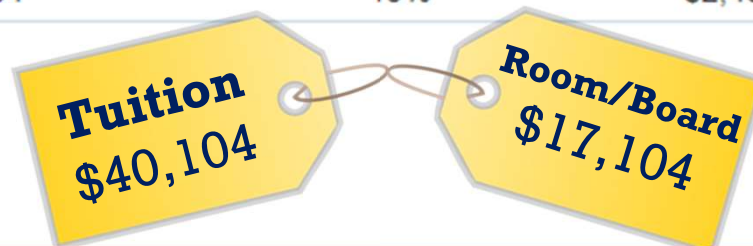


- Age data are reported for Fall 2017.
- Residence data are reported for first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates.

You will find this in Enrollment section

Financial Match - How much will it cost to attend this college?

TYPE OF AID	NUMBER RECEIVING AID	PERCENT RECEIVING AID	TOTAL AMOUNT OF AID RECEIVED	AVERAGE AMOUNT OF AID RECEIVED
Any student financial aid ¹	1,027	97%	—	—
Grant or scholarship aid	1,024	97%	\$20,196,115	\$19,723
Federal grants	321	30%	\$1,677,734	\$5,227
Pell grants	321	30%	\$1,581,734	\$4,928
Other federal grants	25	2%	\$96,000	\$3,840
State/local government grant or scholarships	230	22%	\$486,774	\$2,116
Institutional grants or scholarships	1,023	97%	\$18,031,607	\$17,626
Student loan aid	649	61%	\$6,321,011	\$9,740
Federal student loans	640	60%	\$3,833,070	\$5,989
Other student loans	134	13%	\$2,487,941	\$18,567



You will find this in Financial Aid section – Also Review Net Price Section

Financial Match - How much will it cost to attend this college?

AVERAGE NET PRICE FOR FULL-TIME BEGINNING STUDENTS

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who were awarded grant or scholarship aid from federal, state or local governments, or the institution.

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Average net price	\$33,981	\$34,378	\$34,606

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who were awarded Title IV aid by income.

AVERAGE NET PRICE BY INCOME	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
\$0 – \$30,000	\$26,767	\$27,589	\$27,344
\$30,001 – \$48,000	\$29,289	\$29,056	\$27,079
\$48,001 – \$75,000	\$29,924	\$30,433	\$30,079
\$75,001 – \$110,000	\$33,096	\$32,330	\$33,535
\$110,001 and more	\$36,486	\$36,247	\$37,194

AVERAGE NET PRICE FOR FULL-TIME BEGINNING STUDENTS

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who were awarded grant or scholarship aid from federal, state or local governments, or the institution.

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Average net price	\$33,197	\$33,105	\$34,561

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who were awarded Title IV aid by income.

AVERAGE NET PRICE BY INCOME	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
\$0 – \$30,000	\$25,715	\$27,748	\$28,457
\$30,001 – \$48,000	\$26,970	\$28,938	\$29,224
\$48,001 – \$75,000	\$29,491	\$28,986	\$29,611
\$75,001 – \$110,000	\$32,242	\$29,343	\$28,727
\$110,001 and more	\$35,349	\$34,267	\$34,508

You will find this in Net Price section



U.S. Department of Education

Net Price Calculator Center

Financial Match - How much will it cost to attend this college?

Search for Schools' Calculator

What does Net Price mean?

Net Price is the amount that a student pays to attend an institution in a single academic year AFTER subtracting scholarships and grants the student receives. Scholarships and grants are forms of financial aid that a student does not have to pay back.

What is a Net Price Calculator?

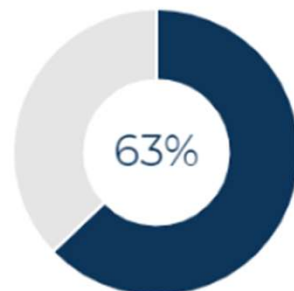
Net price calculators are available on a college's or university's website and allow prospective students to enter information about themselves to find out what students like them paid to attend the institution in the previous year, after taking grants and scholarship aid into account.

<https://collegecost.ed.gov/net-price>



Student Outcomes - What is the average salary of graduates?

Graduation Rate ⓘ



Salary After Completing ⓘ

Salary after completing depends on field of study.



Average Annual Cost ⓘ

Cost includes tuition, living costs, books, and fees minus the average grants and scholarships for federal financial aid recipients.

\$30,469

Psychology, General - Bachelor's Degree

71

NUMBER OF GRADUATES ⓘ

71

MEDIAN TOTAL DEBT ⓘ

\$27,000

MONTHLY LOAN PAYMENT ⓘ

\$280/mo.

MEDIAN EARNINGS ⓘ

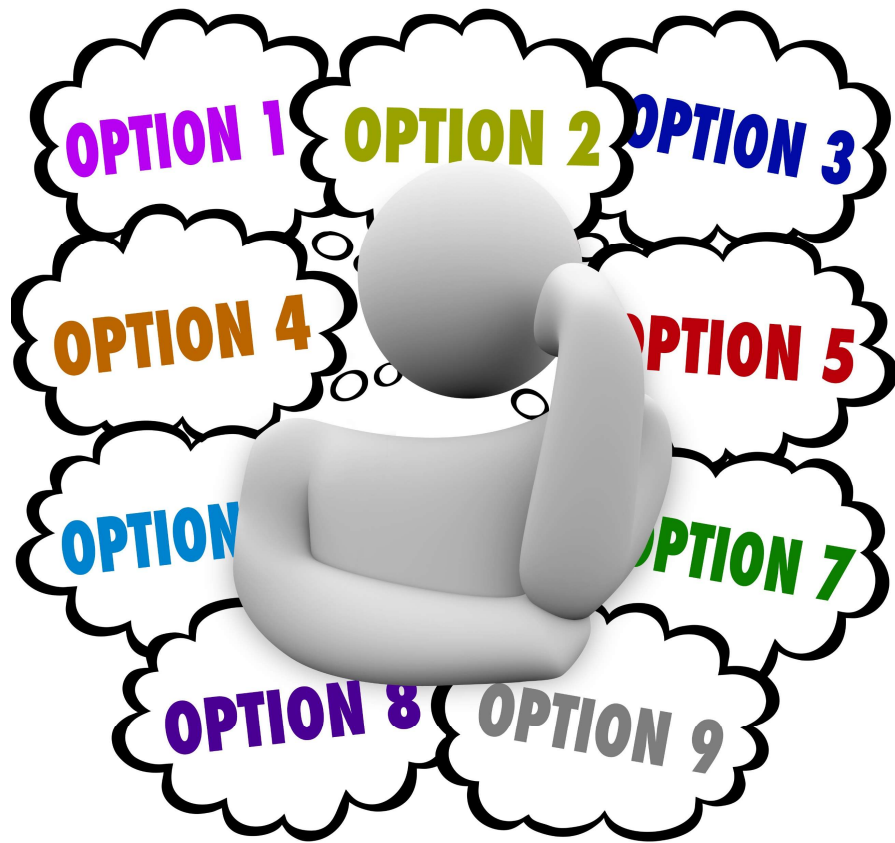
\$37,400

MONTHLY EARNINGS ⓘ

\$3,117/mo

You will find this in the Fields of Study section of the Report Card

Apply: Critique and Prioritize



- Primary task is to identify those colleges worth your time and money to apply to, and then craft successful applications
- All Six Keys of College Fit are subjectively rated, and combined with your chances of being accepted to make an informed decision about where to apply.

Decide: Compare Offers and Commit

- Primary task is to find the college (of acceptances) to commit to and attend
- Re-evaluate 6 Keys and Overall Fit, but with different perspective as chances of admission are no longer a factor
- With Award Letters, more accurate cost estimates are (finally) possible
- Desirability is now a primary consideration – and a need to own responsibility for the reasoning behind the decisions
 - If you really want to attend a particular college because of the Greek life, or the lazy river...



Succeed: Successfully Transition into College



- Primary task is to successfully integrate into college – financially, socially, and academically
- This is accomplished with planning to, for example:
 - Identify what is required to renew scholarships
 - Understand how advising works and how to get needs met
 - Plan to participate in social activities to get most of college experience, joining clubs and activities for example



**“The college I choose determines
the next four years of my life”**

*Students can and do transfer from one
college to another, all the time*





**“I have to decide on a major before
I get to college”**



*Knowing what you want to study can be
helpful, but it's OK if you aren't sure*



“There is only one college that is right for me”

There are many good colleges to choose from





“A college education is not worth the money”

People with a Bachelor's degree earn about \$1,000,000 more than people with high school diploma



**Invest
In your
Mind**

THANK YOU!

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