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College Admission Counseling

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State of

# COLLEGE ADMISSION

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by Melissa Clinedinst, *NACAC Associate Director of Research*

# Executive Summary

Highlights from the 2014 *State of College Admission* report include findings related to the transition from high school to postsecondary education in the United States. The 2014 report also introduces two new chapters to recognize the increasing importance of transfer and international education in the US higher education system. The chapter related to international education covers US students pursuing postsecondary education abroad, as well as students from other countries who pursue secondary and/or postsecondary education in the US. Each section of the report gives special focus to the role of college admission counseling.

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

For nearly two decades, a population wave had fueled record numbers of high school graduates, peaking with the 2011-12 graduating class, and for the first time since the 1990s, enrollment in postsecondary education declined slightly from 2010 to 2012. Throughout these changes, racial/ethnic minorities continue to be underrepresented among both high school graduates and college students.

- **Number of High School Graduates Has Peaked after Two Decades of Growth:** The number of high school graduates in the US reached a peak of 3.45 million in 2011-12 after nearly two decades of steady growth. An estimated 3.41 million students graduated in 2012-13. The number of graduates will fluctuate over the next decade, with a projected 3.39 million in 2023-24. The projected pattern of change in high school graduates varies widely by state and region.

- **Total College Enrollment Plateaus; Trend Varies by Institution Type:** In Fall 2012, approximately 20.6 million students were enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, down slightly for the second consecutive year from 21.0 million in 2010. The 2010-2012 trend represents the first decline since the early 1990s. However, the decline was not experienced across all sectors of postsecondary education. Enrollment at both public four-year and private, not-for-profit, four-year institutions increased slightly during this same time frame, while enrollment at two-year publics and for-profit colleges decreased. Despite this short-term decline in total postsecondary enrollment, longer-term projections from the US Department of Education indicate that the total number of college students is expected to gradually increase from 2013 through 2023 to 23.8 million.
- **Racial/Ethnic Minorities and Low-Income Students Underrepresented in College:** High school completion and college enrollment rates vary substantially by both race/ethnicity and income. Only 52 percent of high school completers from the lowest income quintile transitioned to college in 2012, compared

to 82 percent from the highest income quintile. In 2012, black and Hispanic persons constituted approximately 36 percent of the traditional college-aged population, but they represented only about 30 percent of students enrolled in postsecondary education. Hispanics were particularly under-represented among private and four-year institutions.

## APPLICATIONS TO COLLEGE

The recent growth in applications to four-year colleges continues. The increase in the number of colleges to which each student applies continues a near perfectly upward trend, which is reflected in college reports of increased application volume.

- **Application Growth Continues for Most Colleges:** For 10 of the past 15 years, more than 70 percent of colleges reported year-to-year application increases. Sixty-five percent reported increases for the Fall 2013 admission cycle. Thirty-two percent of Fall 2013 freshman had submitted seven or more applications for admission, an increase of 10 percentage points since 2008.
- **Online Applications Are the Norm:** For the Fall 2013 admission cycle, four-year colleges and universities received an average of 92 percent of their applications online, up from 85 percent in Fall 2011 and 89 percent in Fall 2012.
- **Colleges Accept Nearly Two-Thirds of Applicants, on Average; Slight Decline in National Average Acceptance Rate Stabilizes:** The average selectivity rate—percentage of applicants who are offered admission—at four-year colleges and universities in the US was 64.7 percent for Fall 2013, reversing a slight but steady declines from 69.6 percent in 2003 to 63.9 percent in Fall 2012.
- **Average Yield Rate at Four-Year Colleges Continues to Decline:** The average institutional yield rate—percentage of admitted students who enroll—was 35.9 percent, continuing a downward trend in yield since 2002, when it averaged 48.7 percent.

## ADMISSION STRATEGIES: EARLY DECISION, EARLY ACTION AND WAIT LISTS

Though employed by a minority of institutions in the US, admission strategies like Early Decision, Early Action and wait lists are fixtures of the college admission landscape, likely due to the presence of such policies at America's most selective colleges and universities.

- **Early Decision Activity Holds Steady; Early Action Activity Continues to Increase:** In recent years, a similar proportion of colleges have reported increases in the number of Early Decision *applications* with 56 percent reporting increases for the Fall 2013 admission cycle. Nearly half (49 percent) of colleges reported an increase in the number of students *admitted* through Early Decision. A large majority (78 percent) of colleges reported an increase in Early Action *applications* and a similar proportion (68 percent) reported increases in the number of students who were *admitted* through Early Action.
- **At Colleges with Early Decision Policies, the Gap in Acceptance Rates Continues to Edge Up:** For the Fall 2013 admission cycle, colleges with Early Decision policies reported a higher acceptance rate for their ED applicants as compared to all applicants (64 percent versus 53 percent). Although this 11-percentage point gap is slightly higher than the past two years (6 percentage points for Fall 2011 and 10 percentage points for Fall 2012), it remains below the 14- to 15-percentage point high that was observed in 2008 and 2009.
- **Use of Wait Lists Unchanged; Chances of Wait List Acceptance Rebound:** The percentage of institutions that used wait lists was 43 percent for both the Fall 2013 and Fall 2012 admission cycles. Institutions accepted an average of 30 percent of all students who chose to remain on wait lists, returning the wait list admission rate to about one-third after a decline to 25 percent in Fall 2012.

## FACTORS IN THE ADMISSION DECISION

The factors that admission officers use to evaluate applications have remained largely consistent over the past 20 years. Students' academic achievements—which include grades, strength of curriculum and admission test scores—constitute the most important factors in the admission decision.

- **Admission Offices Identify Grades, High School Curriculum and Test Scores as Top Factors:** The top factors in the admission decision were (in order): grades in college preparatory courses, strength of curriculum, standardized admission test scores, and overall high school grade point average. Among the next most important factors were the essay, student's demonstrated interest, counselor and teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities, and class rank.
- **Student Background Information:** About one quarter of colleges rated race/ethnicity, first generation status, and high school attended as at least moderately important as factors that influence how the main factors in admission decisions are evaluated.

## SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND COLLEGE COUNSELING

Access to college information and counseling in school is a significant benefit to students in the college application process. For many students, particularly those in public schools, college counseling is limited at best. Counselors are few in number, often have large student caseloads and are limited in the amount of time they are able to dedicate to college counseling.

- **Student to Counselor Ratio:** According to US Department of Education data, in 2011-12 each public school counselor (including elementary and secondary) had responsibility for 475 students, on average. NACAC survey data indicated an average high school student-to-counselor ratio, including part-time staff, of 266:1, on average.
- **Time Spent Counseling for College:** On average, public school counselors spent 24 percent of their time on postsecondary counseling in 2013, while their private school counterparts spent 52 percent of their time on college counseling.
- **College Counseling Staff:** In 2013, 32 percent of public schools reported employing at least one counselor (full- or part-time) whose exclusive responsibility was to provide college counseling, compared to 71 percent of private schools.

## THE COLLEGE ADMISSION OFFICE

College admission offices are comprised of individuals who have varied academic and professional backgrounds. The role of senior admission officers is based, in part, on the size and structure of the admission office and resulting scope of responsibility, which is reflected in compensation levels that vary by institution type. Postsecondary admission offices also face different budget realities and costs to recruit.

- **Admission Officer Compensation:** Salaries for all positions vary according to the institution's Carnegie classification, but they vary most widely for higher-level positions. The median salary for a chief admission officer ranged from \$74,206 at associate-granting institutions to \$118,248 at doctorate-granting institutions. Chief enrollment managers earned the highest median salary in 2013-14 at \$134,716.
- **Admission Office Budgets:** Comparing 2013 to 2012, half of colleges reported that their admission budgets remained the same. After a decline in the proportion of colleges with year-to-year budget decreases (28 percent of colleges in 2009 to 16 percent in

2012), 19 percent had decreased budgets for 2013. Almost one-third (31 percent) of colleges reported a budget increase.

- **Cost to Recruit:** On average, colleges and universities spent about \$384 to recruit each applicant for Fall 2013 admission, \$654 to recruit each admitted student and \$2,231 to recruit each enrolled student (when admission staff salaries and benefits were included in the admission office budget). Private colleges and smaller colleges had higher recruitment costs than their counterparts.

## TRANSFER STUDENTS

Students who transfer at least once during postsecondary education comprise a sizable proportion of the college population, and there is a growing appreciation that the transfer process (particularly vertical transfer from two-year to four-year institutions) will be critical to increased baccalaureate degree attainment. As with other pathways to and through postsecondary education, access to quality counseling will be important in ensuring student success.

- **Impact of Transfer Students Varies by Institution Type:** Compared to the 2012-13 academic year, 44 percent of four-year institutions reported an increase in transfer applicants during the previous five years, but nearly one-third (32 percent) reported a decrease. At public institutions, the freshman to transfer ratio for admitted students averaged 5:1, compared to 18:1 for private colleges. The most selective institutions—those accepting fewer than 50 percent of applicants—had the highest average freshman to transfer admission ratio of 25:1.
- **Importance of Transfer Student Recruitment Will Increase:** Despite institutional differences in the relative size of transfer populations, most four-year colleges anticipate that the role of transfer students in the overall recruitment strategy will become more important (58 percent), and less than two percent report that transfer students will become less important.
- **Transfer Acceptance Rates Similar to Freshman; Yield Rates Much Higher:** The average acceptance rate for transfer students was 62.6 percent for the 2012-13 academic year, compared to 64.7 percent for Fall 2013 first-time freshmen. However, more than half (54 percent) of transfer applicants who were admitted ultimately enrolled, compared to only 33 percent of freshman admits.
- **Community Colleges Critical to Four-Year College Transfer Recruitment:** As part of the overall transfer recruitment strategy, 80 percent of four-year colleges reported participating in partnerships with community colleges, and 70 percent held recruitment events on community college campuses. Articulation agreements with community colleges also were common (77 percent).

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The growth of international student enrollment at American high schools, colleges, and universities, as well as increased interest among American students to study abroad, is adding a global dynamic to the work of college counseling and admission professionals. Counselors and admission officers who engage with international students more frequently need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively support them in academic, social, and cultural journeys.

- **Number of Students Pursuing International Education**

**Growing Rapidly:** Between 1975 and 2012, the number of students enrolled in tertiary education outside of their country of citizenship grew from 0.8 million to 4.5 million and is projected to exceed 7 million by 2025. In addition, a growing population of non-US students is enrolled in American high schools—73,019 in 2013. And, the number of US citizens pursuing full undergraduate degrees outside the US grew by 11 percent in 2011-12, the most recent year for which data are available.

- **Small Percentage of High Schools are Actively Recruiting International Students:** Results of NACAC's 2014 Counseling Trends Survey indicate that slightly more than half of US secondary schools have some number of international students enrolled. Fourteen percent of these schools, mostly private, reported that they actively recruit international students, with private agencies representing the most common recruitment strategy.
- **Trends to Watch – International Students at US Community Colleges; Pathway Programs; and National Outbound Mobility Efforts:** International student enrollment in associate's institutions reached its peak in 2008-09 at 95,785, declined through 2012-13, and slightly increased for 2013-14. In Fall 2014, 40 percent of US colleges offered pathway programs (with conditional admission) for international students, 11 percent were developing a program, and 7 percent were considering doing so. A growing number of national governments are implementing scholarship programs and other initiatives to support overseas study by their citizens.

# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

NACAC's *State of College Admission 2014* report provides current and trend data on a number of factors related to the transition from high school to postsecondary education, including the college counseling environment in US secondary schools and the activity of postsecondary admission offices. The 2014 report also introduces two new chapters to recognize the increasing importance of transfer and international education in the US higher education system. The chapter related to international education covers US students pursuing postsecondary education abroad, as well as students from other countries who pursue secondary and/or postsecondary education in the US. In addition to several outside data sources, the information presented in the report includes data gathered through NACAC's annual Counseling Trends Survey and Admission Trends Survey.

## NACAC'S COUNSELING TRENDS SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to collect information from secondary school counselors and counseling departments about their priorities and work responsibilities, particularly in relation to their roles in helping students transition to college; their students' academic options

and experiences; and their practices in communicating with students, parents, and colleges.

In April 2013, NACAC distributed its annual Counseling Trends Survey to a total of 10,000 secondary schools in the US—2,047 public and private schools that are members of NACAC and a random sample of 7,953 public high schools. The list of public high schools was identified using the US Department of Education's Common Core of Data. Each counseling department received a paper survey form that also included a link to an online survey, providing respondents with two options for completing the survey. Responses were collected through the end of June, 2013.

NACAC was able to use a total of 729 responses to the 2013 survey.<sup>1</sup> Table 1 provides a comparison of the characteristics of NACAC Counseling Trends Survey respondents to those of all public and private secondary schools in the US. NACAC survey respondents were 69 percent public; 20 percent private, non-parochial; and 11 percent private, parochial, making the sample over-representative of private schools, particularly non-parochial. NACAC respondents also had a smaller proportion of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch in comparison to all schools (including elementary), and they reported substantially larger enrollments compared to all secondary schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Approximately 500 online responses were not available due to data loss.

**Table 1. NACAC 2013 Secondary School Counseling Trends Survey respondent characteristics compared to national school characteristics**

	NACAC respondents	All schools	NACAC public respondents	All public schools	NACAC private, non-parochial respondents	All private, non-parochial schools	NACAC private, parochial respondents	All private, parochial schools
<b>Total percent of schools</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>69.2%</b>	<b>90.1%</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
<b>Enrollment</b>								
Mean enrollment	901	574	1,030	606	565	104	729	369
<b>Students receiving free and reduced price lunch<sup>1</sup></b>								
Mean percent eligible at participating schools	35.3	55.8	38.8	49.5	6.0	--	8.3	--

-- = Not available for secondary schools only.

<sup>1</sup> Survey respondents were asked to indicate participation in both federal and state-sponsored programs; national data is available for the federal program only. National percentages are for all schools, including elementary.

Note: All NACAC respondent data are from 2012–13. National percentages are from 2011-12.

Sources: Schools and Staffing Survey (2011-2012). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. (Table 1.)

*Digest of Education Statistics*. (2013). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. (Tables 105.50, 205.40 and 203.40).

NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2013.

A few data points in the international education chapter were drawn from NACAC’s 2014 Counseling Trends Survey, which was administered to 10,000 high schools from April through June, 2014. NACAC received 1,360 responses to the 2014 survey, and the characteristics of the respondents were very similar to the 2013 group.

## NACAC’S ADMISSION TRENDS SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to collect information from college admission offices about application volume; the use of various enrollment management strategies, including wait lists, Early Decision, and Early Action; the importance of various factors in the admission decision; and admission office functions, staff, budget, and operations.

NACAC administered its 2013 Admission Trends Survey to 1,241 four-year postsecondary institutions who were members of NACAC, which represented 66 percent of all accredited four-year, not-for-profit,

baccalaureate degree-granting, Title-IV participating institutions in the US. The survey was initially administered online from mid-November to late-December 2013. An invitation to participate, containing a unique web link, was emailed to a representative at each institution. From February to mid-March 2014, the survey was re-issued to those from the original sample who had not yet responded in order to improve the response rate.

NACAC received a total of 352 responses to the survey (a 28 percent response rate), which represented 19 percent of all accredited four-year, not-for-profit, baccalaureate degree-granting, Title-IV institutions in the US. As shown in Table 2, NACAC Admission Trends Survey respondents were representative of all colleges with respect to control (68 percent private survey respondents compared to 66 percent nationally). Colleges in the South were under-represented, and Midwestern colleges were over-represented, particularly among public institutions. Survey respondents also tended to be larger, on average, and to have slightly lower yield rates. Public NACAC survey respondents were slightly more selective than all public colleges.

**Table 2. NACAC 2013 Admission Trends Survey respondent characteristics compared to national college/university characteristics**

	NACAC respondents	All colleges	NACAC public respondents	All public colleges	NACAC private respondents	All private colleges
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>32.4%</b>	<b>34.0%</b>	<b>67.6%</b>	<b>66.0%</b>
<b>Enrollment</b>						
Mean enrollment	6,006	3,896	14,031	7,979	2,310	1,793
<b>Region</b>						
New England	12.5%	8.8%	7.0%	6.4%	15.1%	10.0%
Middle States	19.3	20.1	16.7	17.0	20.6	21.7
South	17.6	24.6	18.4	27.7	17.2	23.0
Midwest	32.1	26.5	34.2	23.1	31.1	28.3
Southwest	4.5	6.9	5.3	9.9	4.2	5.4
West	13.9	13.1	18.4	15.9	11.8	11.7
<b>Selectivity and Yield</b>						
Mean Selectivity	64.7%	64.7%	66.2%	68.7%	64.1%	63.2%
Mean Yield	32.7	35.7	37.2	39.7	30.7	34.3

New England: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island

Middle States: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania

South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota

Southwest: Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

West: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming

Note: Data for all colleges are for 2013-14. The list of colleges was drawn from the 2013-14 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Institutions were selected using the following criteria: US location; four-year, not-for-profit; Carnegie-classified; baccalaureate degree-granting; and Title IV-participating. Of the 1,871 total institutions, 1,269 (68 percent) provided selectivity and yield data for Fall 2013.

Sources: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) online Data Center. (2013-14). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

The purpose of this survey is to collect information from college admission offices about application volume; the use of various enrollment management strategies, including wait lists, Early Decision, and Early Action; the importance of various factors in the admission decision; and admission office functions, staff, budget, and operations.

# Chapter 1

## High School Graduation and College Enrollment

### CONTENTS

- *High School Completion*
- *The Transition from High School to College*
- *College Enrollment*

Assisting students with the transition from high school graduation to college enrollment is at the core of NACAC's mission. In 2013, only 32 percent of all adults age 25 and older had obtained at least a bachelor's degree,<sup>1</sup> yet students' participation in postsecondary education is becoming increasingly important for both individual success and for the economic future of the nation. In 2012, full-time, full-year earners ages 25 to 34 with a high school diploma reported median annual earnings of only \$30,000 compared to \$46,900 for those with a bachelor's degree and \$59,600 for those with a master's degree or higher.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of a 40-year full-time working life, researchers have estimated that the typical bachelor's degree recipient will earn 65 percent more than a high school graduate. Even when considering the full cost of college attendance, careful data analysis shows that obtaining a bachelor's degree is a sound long-term economic investment. A typical student who enrolls at age 18 and graduates with a bachelor's degree in four years will earn enough by age 36 to compensate for both foregone wages and borrowing the full tuition and fee amount. Many factors can reduce this "break-even" age, including attending an in-state college, completing a bachelor's degree in three years, or obtaining grant aid, rather than borrowing the full cost of attendance. The benefits of college are

not solely economic. As a group, college graduates also enjoy higher job satisfaction and are more likely to receive employer-sponsored pensions and health insurance. Other factors that are associated with increased levels of education include lower levels of unemployment and poverty; decreased reliance on public assistance programs; healthier lifestyles; and higher levels of civic engagement, including volunteerism and voting.<sup>3</sup>

## HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

### INCREASE IN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

According to projections published by the US Department of Education, the number of high school graduates in the US reached a peak of 3.45 million in 2011-12 after more than a decade of steady growth. An estimated 3.41 million students graduated in 2012-13. The number of graduates will fluctuate over the next decade, with a projected 3.39 million in 2023-24.<sup>4</sup> The pattern of change in the number of high

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau. (2013). "Educational Attainment in the US: 2013—Detailed Tables." (Table 2).

<sup>2</sup> US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *The Condition of Education 2014* (NCES 2014-083). (Indicator 3, Figure 2).

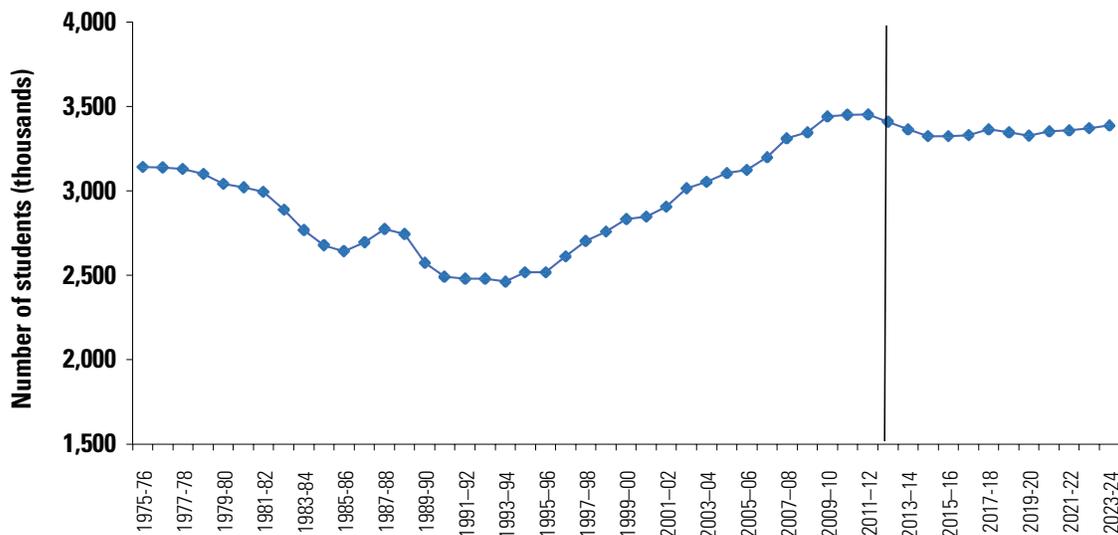
<sup>3</sup> Baum, S., Ma, J., and Payea, K. (2013). *Education Pays 2013: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society*. College Board: Washington, DC.

<sup>4</sup> All data related to actual and projected numbers of high school graduates from: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of Education Statistics*. (Table 219.10 and Table 219.20).

school graduates—illustrated in Figure 1—largely reflects overall changes in the high-school-aged population, rather than increases in the percentage of students completing high school. High school completion rates (at 86 percent of 18 to 24 year olds in 2013) have increased only three percentage points in the past decade and 5

percentage points since the mid-1970s.<sup>5</sup> The projected pattern of change in high school graduates varies widely by state and region. Comparing 2009-10 and 2023-24, regional increases will be seen in the South (10 percent) and West (5 percent), and decreases will be seen in the Northeast (10 percent) and the Midwest (7 percent) (see Figure 2).

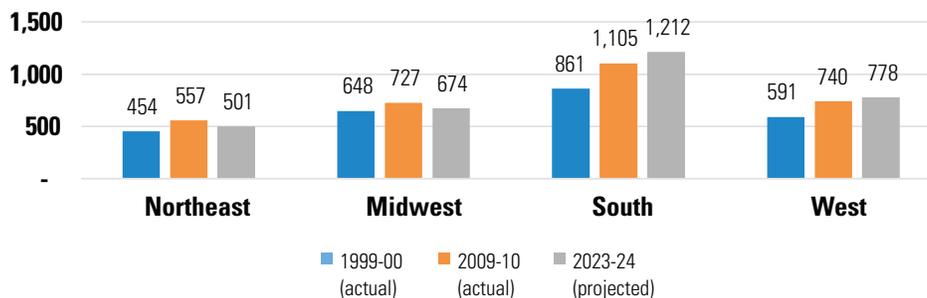
Figure 1. Total number of high school graduates, actual and projected: 1975-76 to 2023-24



Note: Includes both public and private high school graduates.

Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of Education Statistics*. (Table 219.10).

Figure 2. Actual and projected numbers for public high school graduates, by region (in thousands)



Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of Education Statistics*. (Table 219.20).

<sup>5</sup> US Census Bureau. (2013). "The Population 14 to 24 Year Olds by High School Graduate Status, College Enrollment, Attainment, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 1967 to 2013." Washington, DC. (Table A-5a).

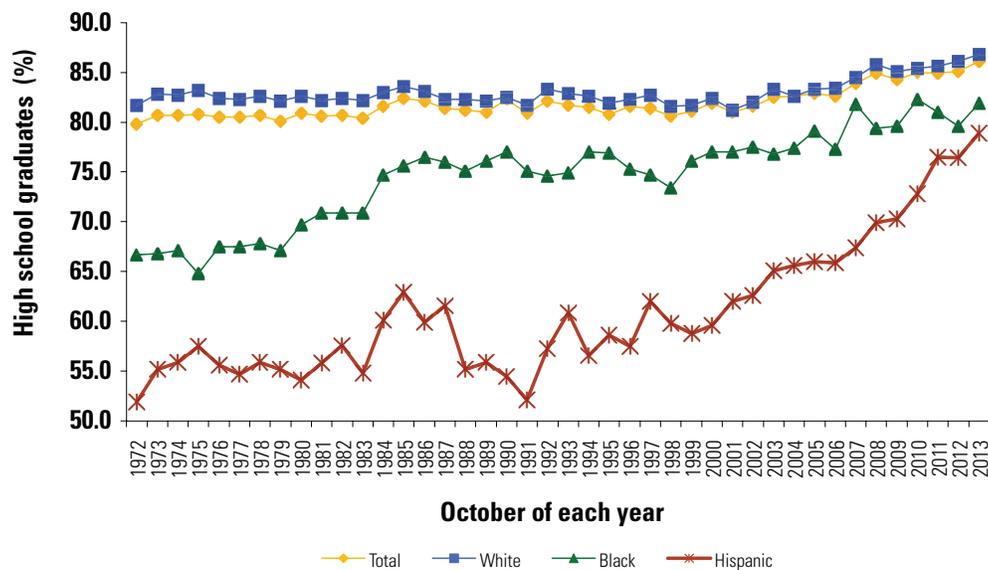
## HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION BY RACE/ ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND INCOME<sup>6</sup>

High school completion rates vary by both race/ethnicity and gender. For example, in 2013, 87 percent of white 18- to 24-year olds were high school graduates, compared to 82 percent of black and 79 percent of Hispanic youth. As shown in Figure 3, the gap between black and white students narrowed considerably between the early 1970s and mid-1980s, from 15 to 8 percentage points. Since that time, the gap has fluctuated from a high of 9 percentage points to a low of three. The gap between white and Hispanic students has decreased slowly and steadily since the early seventies from 30 percentage points to

between 8 and 10 in recent years. In every year since 1972, women have completed high school at a higher rate than men. In 2013—the most recent year for which data are available—the gap was 2.5 percentage points (see Figure 4).<sup>7</sup>

Important differences also exist among students from different income backgrounds. In 2012, the average high school graduation rate among the top income quartile of dependent 18- to 24-year olds was 92 percent. Students in the third quartile fared nearly as well at 88 percent, followed by 83 percent for the second income quartile. The average graduation rate for students in the bottom quartile was only 72 percent—20 percentage points below that of students with the highest family incomes.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 3. Percentage of the population ages 18 to 24 who have completed high school, by race: 1972 to 2013



Note: High school graduates are people who have completed 4 years of high school or more, for 1972 to 1991. Beginning in 1992, they were people whose highest degree was a high school diploma or equivalent. Because of small sample size, American Indians/Alaska Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the totals but not shown separately. Starting in 2003 respondents could identify more than one race. The race data in this figure from 2003 onward represent those who indicated only one race category. Those indicating more than one race are included in the total.

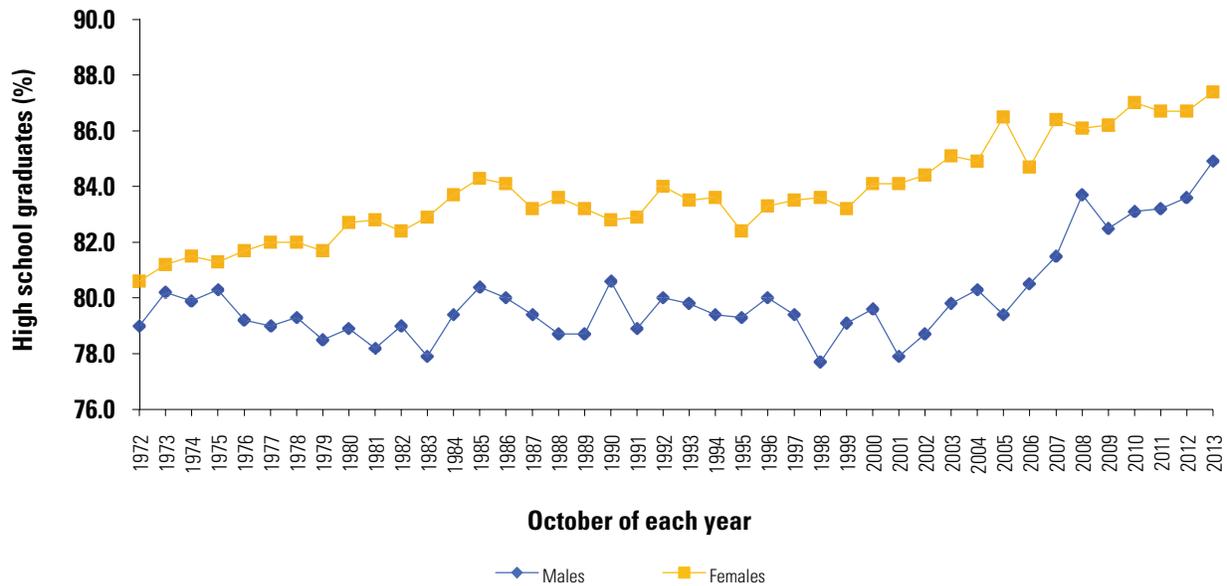
Source: "The Population 14 to 24 Years Old by High School Graduate Status, College Enrollment, Attainment, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 1967 to 2013." US Census Bureau. Washington, DC. (Table A-5a).

<sup>6</sup> High school graduates include both diploma and GED recipients.

<sup>7</sup> US Census Bureau. (2013). "The Population 14 to 24 Year Olds by High School Graduate Status, College Enrollment, Attainment, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 1967 to 2013." Washington, DC. (Table A-5a).

<sup>8</sup> Mortenson, T. (2013). "Unequal Family Income and Unequal Higher Educational Opportunity, 1970 to 2012." *Postsecondary Education Opportunity*, Number 256, October 2013.

Figure 4. Percentage of the population ages 18 to 24 who have completed high school, by gender: 1972 to 2013



Note: High school graduates are people who have completed 4 years of high school or more, for 1972 to 1991. Beginning in 1992, they were people whose highest degree was a high school diploma or equivalent.

Source: "The Population 14 to 24 Years Old by High School Graduate Status, College Enrollment, Attainment, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: October 1967 to 2013." US Census Bureau. Washington, DC. (Table A-5a).

## THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

### COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY, INCOME, GENDER, AND HIGH SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

From the early 1970s through 2012, the percentage of high school completers who go on to college fluctuated but also showed an overall pattern of increase. The college enrollment rate was 67 percent in 2012, the most recent year for which data are available (see Figure 5). As with high school completion, there are persistent gaps in rates of transition from high school to postsecondary enrollment among different groups

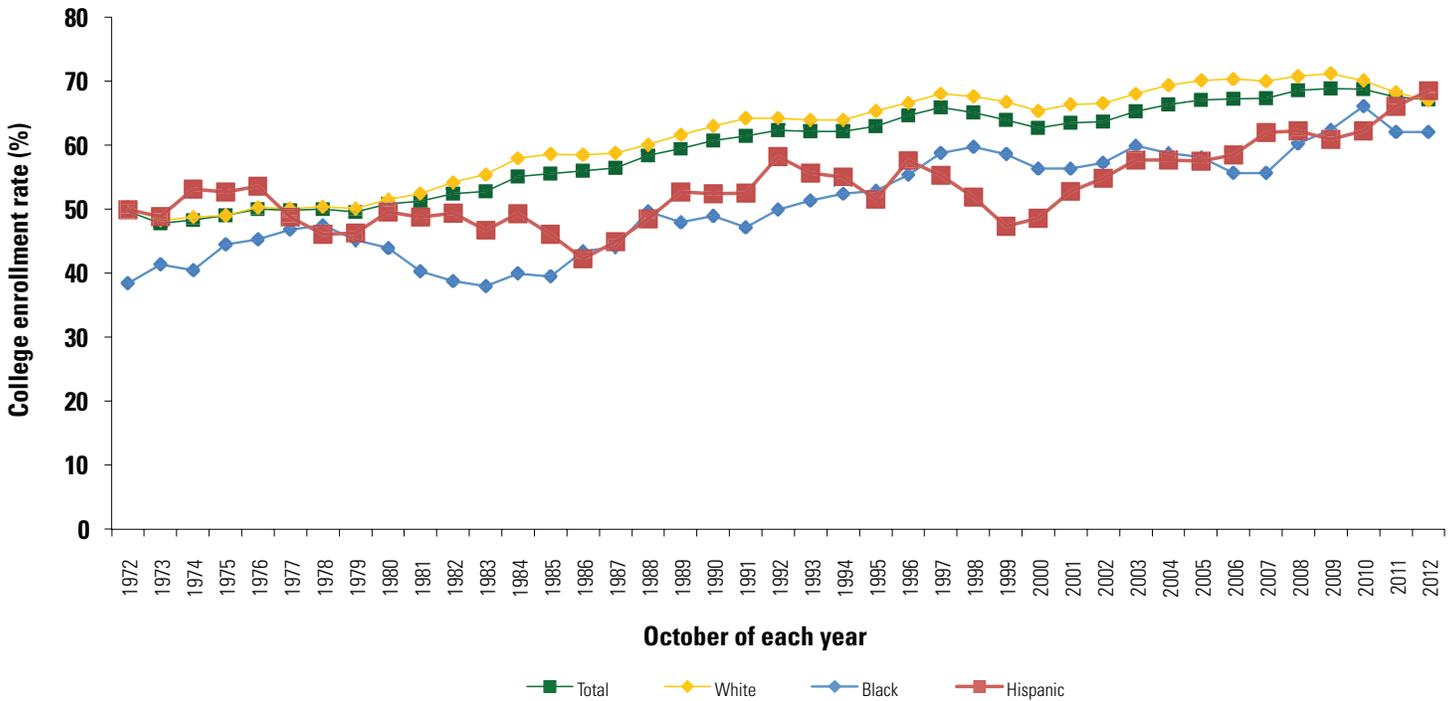
of students. As shown in Figure 5, black students who complete high school are less likely than white students to enroll in college. In the past decade, the gap between the college enrollment rates of black and white students has ranged between 6 and 12 percentage points. Historic estimates of the white-Hispanic gap in college enrollment rates are less reliable due to small sample sizes, but recent estimates indicate the gap is between 8 and 12 percentage points.<sup>9</sup>

Even more dramatic differences are seen among high school completers of different income backgrounds. In 2012, high school completers ages 16 to 24 who were from the highest family income group transitioned directly to postsecondary education at a rate of 82 percent. Students from the middle 60 percent of family incomes continued to college at a rate of 66 percent. Only 52 percent of high school completers from the lowest income quintile enrolled in a two- or four-year college for the fall term following high school completion.

Results of NACAC's Counseling Trends Survey provide further evidence of this pattern. Counselors at schools with the highest

<sup>9</sup> All data related to college enrollment rates of all students and by race/ethnicity, income, and gender from: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of Education Statistics*. (Table 302.10, Table 302.20, and Table 302.30).

Figure 5. College enrollment rates of recent high school completers, by race/ethnicity: 1972 to 2012



Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of Education Statistics*. (Table 302.20).

Note: Enrollment in college as of October of each year for individuals ages 16 to 24 who completed high school during the preceding 12 months. High school completers include both diploma and GED recipients. Data for white and black students exclude persons identifying themselves as two or more races. Three-year moving averages were used to produce more stable estimates.

proportion of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (FRPL)—a proxy for family income—reported lower total college enrollment rates and much lower four-year college enrollment rates for their graduates. Counselors at schools with more students in the FRPL program reported that their schools’ graduates had higher enrollment rates at two-year colleges.<sup>10</sup> In addition, students who graduated from private high schools were much more likely to enroll in postsecondary education immediately after high school than students from public high schools, and they were nearly twice as likely to enroll in four-year colleges (see Table 3).<sup>11</sup>

Since the late 1980’s, women have enrolled in college at a higher rate than men in every year, excluding 1995. The college enrollment gender gap has ranged from a low of 0.3 percentage points to a high

of eleven. In 2012, the most recent year for which data are available, the gap was 10 percentage points (see Figure 6).

## COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

In 2012—the most recent year for which data are available—20.6 million students were enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions.<sup>12</sup> Of that total, 14.9 million (72 percent) were enrolled in public institutions and 13.5 million (66 percent) were enrolled in four-year institutions. Over the past 40 years, the total number of students enrolled in postsecondary education has shown a nearly perfect pattern of steady increase, despite a slight decline between 2011 actual data

<sup>10</sup> Correlation between percent eligible for FRPL and: total college attendance rate (-.403), four-year college attendance rate (-.500), two-year college attendance rate (.311),  $p < .01$

<sup>11</sup> Correlation between private school status and: total college attendance rate (.476), four-year college attendance rate (.702), two-year college attendance rate (-.623),  $p < .01$

<sup>12</sup> US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of Education Statistics*. (Table 303.25).

**Table 3. Mean college enrollment rates of high school graduates at Counseling Trends Survey respondent schools, by school characteristics: 2013**

	Four-year institutions	Two-year institutions	Total college enrollment rate
<b>Total</b>	<b>63.3%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>84.7%</b>
<b>Control</b>			
Public	49.6	29.1	78.7
Private	93.7	4.3	97.9
Private non-parochial	95.0	2.8	97.8
Private parochial	91.1	7.1	98.2
<b>Enrollment</b>			
Fewer than 500 students	64.2	19.9	84.1
500 to 999	67.7	17.0	84.6
1,000 to 1,499	63.2	23.3	86.4
1,500 to 1,999	57.2	29.8	87.0
2,000 or more	56.3	28.7	85.0
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>			
0 to 25% of students eligible	67.6	20.9	88.4
26 to 50%	48.4	31.4	79.7
51 to 75%	35.8	33.1	68.9
76 to 100%	39.8	30.7	70.6
<b>Student-to-counselor ratio</b>			
100:1 or fewer	71.0	17.9	88.9
101:1 to 200:1	72.7	15.11	87.8
201:1 to 300:1	62.4	22.7	85.1
301:1 to 400:1	58.8	24.1	82.9
401:1 to 500:1	52.1	28.4	80.5
More than 500:1	51.5	25.5	77.0

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2013.

and 2013 projections. Enrollment increases are expected to continue through 2023 when an estimated 23.8 million students will be enrolled.<sup>13</sup>

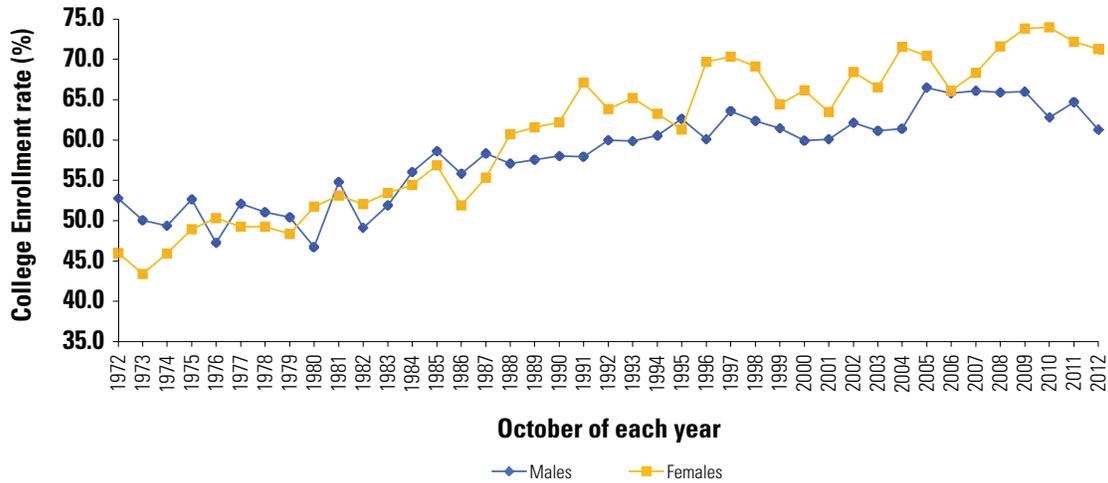
## COLLEGE ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Under-representation of certain groups in postsecondary education is a direct consequence of the different rates of high school completion and transition to college discussed earlier in the chapter. Although minority enrollment in postsecondary education has become slightly more reflective of the national population, some minority groups are

still under-represented. In 2012, black and Hispanic persons constituted approximately 36 percent of the traditional college-aged population, but they represented only about 30 percent of students enrolled in postsecondary education. Hispanics were particularly under-represented among private and four-year institutions. Asian/Pacific Islander enrollment was generally representative of their population share, with the exception of private, two-year institutions (see Table 4). In addition, more women than men have been enrolled in college for the last 35 years, and US Department of Education projections indicate that this gender gap will continue to widen through 2023.

<sup>13</sup> All data related to college enrollment from: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of Education Statistics*. (Table 303.10 and Table 303.25).

Figure 6. College enrollment rates of high school completers by gender: 1972 to 2012



Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of Education Statistics*. (Table 302.10).

Note: Enrollment in college as of October of each year for individuals ages 16 to 24 who completed high school during the preceding 12 months. High school completers include both diploma and GED recipients.

Table 4. Share of enrollment in postsecondary education by race/ethnicity in comparison with age 18 to 24 population share: 2012

	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaska Native
<b>Percent of population ages 18 to 24</b>	<b>56.4%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<i>Percent of all students enrolled in postsecondary education<sup>1</sup></i>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<i>Control</i>					
Public	60.0	13.5	16.5	6.6	0.9
Four-year	64.4	12.0	13.1	7.0	0.8
Two-year	55.0	15.1	20.3	6.1	1.1
Private	61.1	18.7	11.2	5.8	0.8
Four-year	62.5	18.1	10.3	5.9	0.7
Two-year	41.4	27.3	23.5	4.4	1.2
<i>Type</i>					
Four-year or higher	63.7	14.4	12.0	6.5	0.8
Two-year	54.3	15.8	20.5	6.0	1.1

<sup>1</sup> Includes not-for-profit institutions only.

Sources: Digest of Education Statistics. (2013). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. (Table 306.20).

US Census Bureau, Population Division. (2013). "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the US and States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013." US Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

# Chapter 2

## Applications to College

### CONTENTS

- *Application Change Over Time*
- *Selectivity and Yield*
- *The Admission “Interface”*
- *Cost of Applying to College*
- *Gender Trends in College Applications*

## APPLICATION CHANGE OVER TIME

Results of NACAC’s 2013 Admission Trends Survey indicate that most colleges (65 percent) experienced an increase in the number of applications they received compared to Fall 2012. For ten of the past fifteen years, more than 70 percent of colleges reported year-to-year application increases. For 2011 to 2013, the percentage has remained at about two-thirds (see Figure 7).

The application increases documented in the past 15 years are due in part to the increased number of high school graduates—which peaked with the 2012 graduating class (see Chapter 1)—but also to an increase in the number of applications each student submits. Eighty one percent of Fall 2013 freshmen applied to three or more colleges, up from 70 percent in 2003 and 63 percent in 1993. The percentage of students who submitted seven or more applications reached nearly one-third (32 percent) in 2013 (see Figure 8).

## SELECTIVITY AND YIELD

### SELECTIVITY

Selectivity is defined simply as the proportion of applicants who are offered admission, and is usually expressed as a percentage—(number of acceptances/number of applications) x 100. Higher selectivity is equated with lower acceptance rates (i.e. a relatively

small number of applicants are admitted). The selectivity rates of US postsecondary institutions range from acceptance of fewer than 10 percent to more than 90 percent of applicants. Although the mainstream media tends to focus on the most selective colleges, the average acceptance rate across all four-year institutions in the US is nearly two-thirds (64.7 percent), according to most recent data. The national average acceptance rate had been decreasing slightly, from 69.6 percent in 2003 to 63.9 percent. For Fall 2013, private institutions reported lower acceptance rates than public institutions (see Table 5).

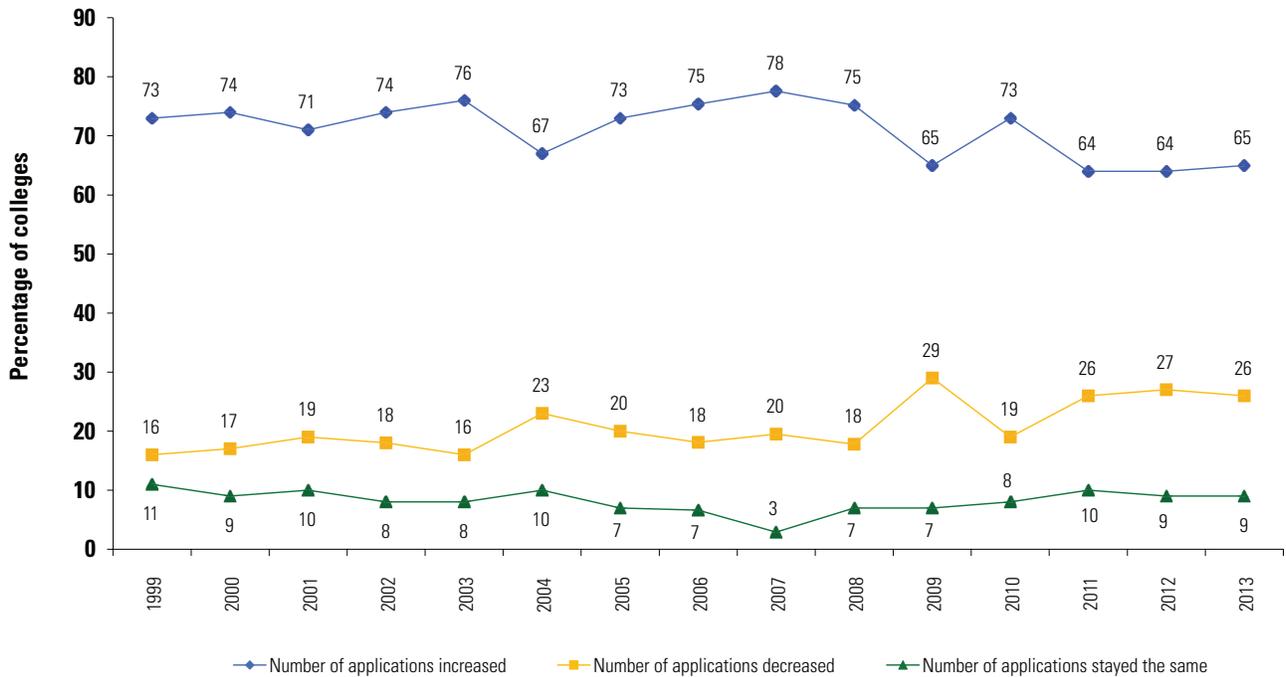
Institutions that accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants are generally considered to be the most selective. On average, this group of colleges and universities receives many more applications per institution when compared to their less selective counterparts (see Table 6). These institutions also are much more likely to offer the Early Decision application option and to maintain a wait list, in part to manage the increased application volume (see Chapter 3).

However, as Table 6 also shows, the most selective colleges as a group received 33 percent of all applications for Fall 2013 admission cycle, though they enrolled only 20 percent of all full-time, first-year undergraduate students studying at in four-year colleges and universities. Most students (70 percent) were enrolled in institutions with selectivity rates between 50 and 85 percent.

### YIELD

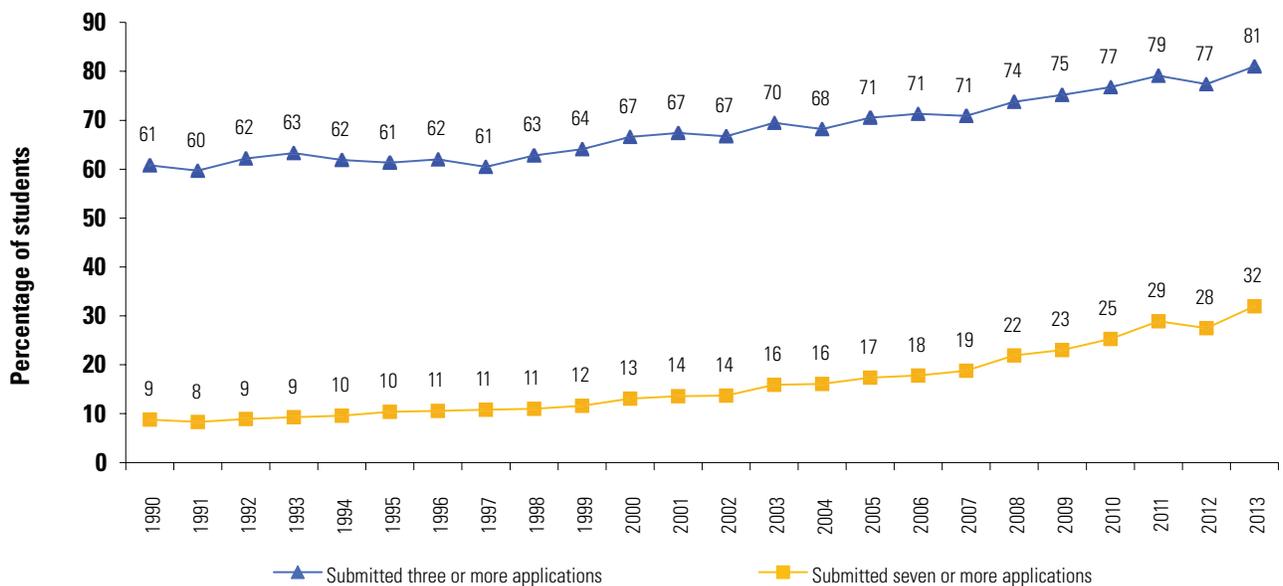
An institution’s yield rate is defined as the percentage of admitted students who decide to enroll—(number of enrollments/number of admitted students) x 100. From an institutional perspective,

Figure 7. Percentage of colleges reporting change from the previous year in number of applications for fall admission: 1999 to 2013



Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 1999–2013.

Figure 8. Percentage of students submitting three or more and seven or more college applications: 1990 to 2013



Sources: Eagan, K., Lozano, J.B., Hurtado, S., Case, M.H. (2013). The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2013. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA. Pryor, J.H., Eagan, K., Blake, L.P., Hurtado, S., Berdan, J., Case, M.H. (2012). The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2012. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, Pryor, J.H., DeAngelo, L., Blake, L.P., Hurtado, S., Tran, S. (2007-2011). The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall. Report years 2007-2011. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Pryor, J.H., Hurtado, S., Saena, V.B., Santos, J.L., Korn, W.S. (2006). The American Freshman: Forty Year Trends. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.

**Table 5. Mean selectivity and yield rates by institutional characteristics: Fall 2013**

	Selectivity	Yield
<b>Total</b>	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>35.7%</b>
<b>Control</b>		
Public	68.7	39.7
Private	63.2	34.3
<b>Enrollment</b>		
Fewer than 3,000 students	64.4	36.4
3,000 to 9,999	65.6	33.6
10,000 or more	64.7	35.6
<b>Selectivity</b>		
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	35.8	40.0
50 to 70 percent	61.3	32.9
71 to 85 percent	77.3	34.4
More than 85 percent	92.3	40.4
<b>Yield</b>		
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	65.4	21.4
30 to 45 percent	64.9	36.3
46 to 60 percent	64.8	51.6
More than 60 percent	61.4	75.9

Note: Data for all colleges are for 2013-14. The list of colleges was drawn from the 2013-14 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Institutions were selected using the following criteria: US location; four-year, not-for-profit; Carnegie-classified; baccalaureate degree-granting; and Title IV-participating. Of the 1,871 total institutions, 1,269 (68 percent) provided selectivity and yield data for Fall 2013.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) online Data Center. (2013-14). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

yield is a very important statistic. Admission office staffs conduct sophisticated analyses to predict yield rates in order to ensure that they will fill their freshman classes with students who are a good fit for their institutions. Admission officers also engage in a variety of outreach efforts to enhance the likelihood that students will attend their institutions.

For the Fall 2013 freshman class, the average yield rate among four-year colleges and universities was 35.7 percent, meaning that only a little more than one-third of all students admitted to a given institution accepted those offers of admission (see Table 5). The average yield rate has declined steadily in recent years from 39.5 percent in Fall 2010 to 38 percent in Fall 2011 and 36.9 percent in Fall 2012. As shown in Figure 8, students are applying to an increasing number of institutions, on average. Consequently, the admission office’s task of predicting yield rates and obtaining target enrollment numbers is more complex.

## THE ADMISSION “INTERFACE”

Although the admission process continues to rely heavily on personal contact and paper, technology is being used in specific ways to make the process more manageable. For example, students use technology to research college options, to contact colleges with admission inquiries and, in most cases, to submit applications. Institutions rely on technology to market to prospective students and to more easily and effectively disseminate information about their institutions and their admission procedures.

## ONLINE APPLICATIONS

For the Fall 2013 admission cycle, four-year colleges and universities received an average of 92 percent of their applications online, up from 85 percent in Fall 2011 and 89 percent in Fall of 2012. Enrollment size was directly related to the proportion of applications received online.

**Table 6. Applications and enrollment by selectivity: Fall 2013**

Selectivity	National share of institutions	Average number of applications	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	19.8%	8,000	32.5%	19.9%
50 to 70 percent	39.6	4,676	38.0	39.7
71 to 85 percent	27.8	4,060	23.2	30.4
More than 85 percent	12.8	2,436	6.4	10.0

Note: Data for all colleges are for 2013-14. The list of colleges was drawn from the 2013-14 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Institutions were selected using the following criteria: US location; four-year, not-for-profit; Carnegie-classified; baccalaureate degree-granting; and Title IV-participating. Of the 1,871 total institutions, 1,269 (68 percent) provided selectivity and yield data for Fall 2013.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) online Data Center. (2013-14). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Larger institutions were more likely to receive applications online. Institutions with higher selectivity rates also received slightly higher percentages of online applications compared to their counterparts (see Table 7).<sup>1</sup>

**Table 7. Mean percentage of applications received online by institutional characteristics: 2013**

	Mean percentage of online applications
<b>Total</b>	<b>92.2%</b>
<b>Control</b>	
Public	93.1
Private	91.8
<b>Enrollment</b>	
Fewer than 3,000 students	91.4
3,000 to 9,999	91.6
10,000 or more	95.2
<b>Selectivity</b>	
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	94.3
50 to 70 percent	93.0
71 to 85 percent	90.3
More than 85 percent	89.8
<b>Yield</b>	
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	92.9
30 to 45 percent	91.1
46 to 60 percent	93.1
More than 60 percent	94.4

Note: Italicized figures should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 institutions per cell)

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

## COLLEGE ADMISSION WEBSITES

Many institutions post admission-related information and services on their websites, making it easier for students to learn about and apply to their institutions. All or nearly all institutions have certain features, including information about campus tours, college cost and financial aid information, detailed admission information, and an online course catalog, detailed admission information and online applications (see Figure 9). In 2013, 87 percent of colleges and universities reported offering information on their websites that is tailored to parents of prospective students. A majority (68 percent) reported that they offer information intended for high school counselors.

Results of recent Admission Trends Surveys indicate that colleges' integration of social media tools continues to grow rapidly. In 2013, 96 percent of respondents reported that they provide links to their colleges' social networking sites (up from 39 percent in 2008), and 48 percent reported offering blogs by current students (up from 42 percent in 2007). Some colleges and universities also have online message boards (30 percent), blogs by admission officers (24 percent), and podcasts (20 percent) (see Figure 9).

## COST OF APPLYING TO COLLEGE

According to US Department of Education data, 86 percent of four-year, not-for-profit colleges had an application fee, which averaged \$42. Public colleges were more likely to report having application fees than privates (94 percent versus 79 percent), as were larger institutions.<sup>2</sup> Larger institutions and more selective colleges tended to have higher fees (see Table 8).<sup>3</sup>

## GENDER TRENDS IN COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

According to US Department of Education data, females, on average, comprised 57.7 percent of applicants to four-year colleges for Fall 2013 admission. They comprised 58.1 percent of accepted students and 55.8 percent of enrolled students. The average acceptance rate for male applicants was slightly lower than the rate for female applicants (63.9 percent versus 65.2 percent, respectively).<sup>4</sup>

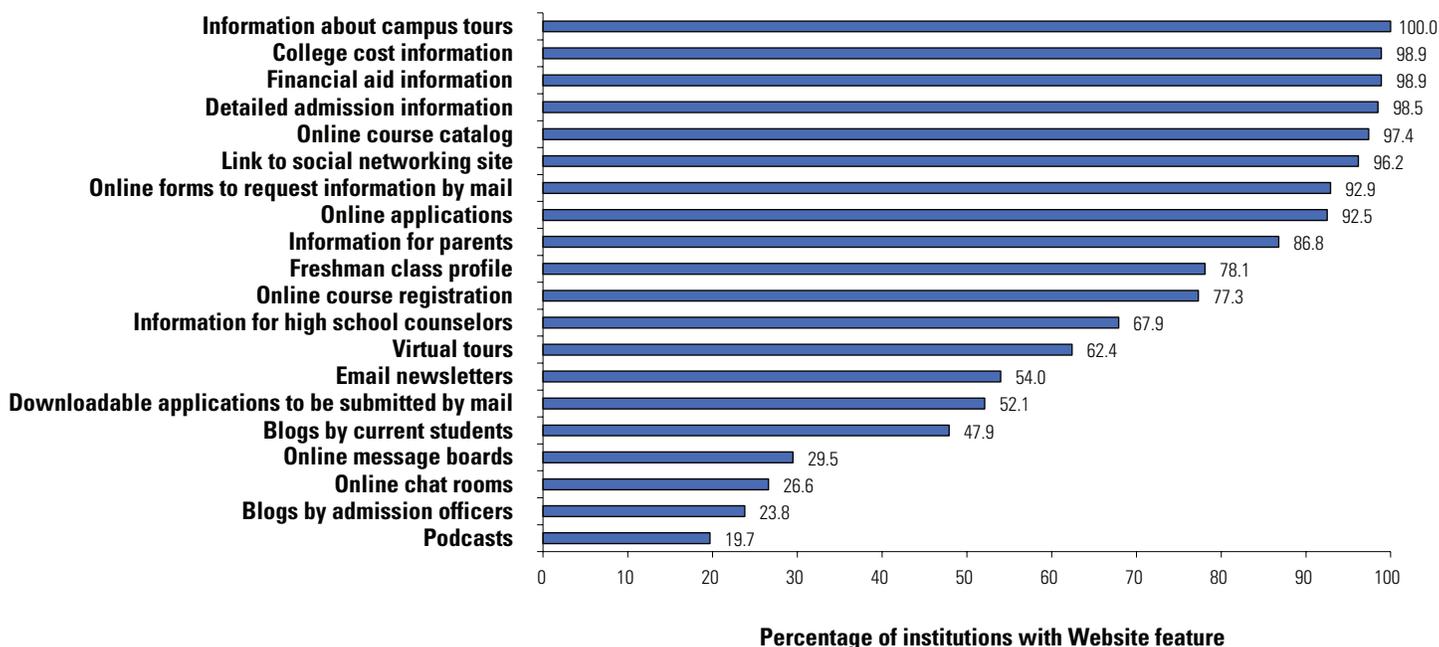
<sup>1</sup> Correlation between percent of online applications and: enrollment (.142), selectivity (.161)  $p < .05$

<sup>2</sup> Correlation between having an application fee and: public college status (-.183), enrollment (.175),  $p < .01$

<sup>3</sup> Correlation between application fee amount and: enrollment (.235), selectivity (.204),  $p < .01$ ,  $p < .01$

<sup>4</sup> Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) online Data Center. (2013-14). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. US location; four-year, not-for-profit; Carnegie-classified; baccalaureate degree-granting; and Title IV-participating.

Figure 9. Features of college admission Websites: 2013



Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

Results of recent Admission Trends Surveys indicate that colleges' integration of social media tools continues to grow rapidly. In 2013, 96 percent of respondents reported that they provide links to their colleges' social networking sites (up from 39 percent in 2008), and 48 percent reported offering blogs by current students (up from 42 percent in 2007).

**Table 8. Percentage of institutions with application fees and mean application fee amounts, by institutional characteristics: 2013**

	Percentage of institutions with an application fee	Mean application
<b>Total</b>	<b>86.2%</b>	<b>\$41.51</b>
<b>Control</b>		
Public	89.8	41.48
Private	84.2	41.53
<b>Enrollment</b>		
Fewer than 3,000 students	83.2	38.72
3,000 to 9,999	90.3	44.01
10,000 or more	95.6	50.90
<b>Selectivity</b>		
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	88.2	49.53
50 to 70 percent	85.7	39.33
71 to 85 percent	86.1	40.97
More than 85 percent	89.7	39.53
<b>Yield</b>		
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	85.8	43.07
30 to 45 percent	88.8	41.65
46 to 60 percent	88.4	38.77
More than 60 percent	81.7	42.88

Note: Data for all colleges are for 2013-14. The list of colleges was drawn from the 2013-14 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Institutions were selected using the following criteria: US location; four-year, not-for-profit; Carnegie-classified; baccalaureate degree-granting; and Title IV-participating. Of the 1,871 total institutions, 1,269 (68 percent) provided selectivity and yield data for Fall 2013.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) online Data Center. (2013-14). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Many institutions post admission-related information and services on their websites, making it easier for students to learn about and apply to their institutions.

# Chapter 3

## Admission Strategies

### CONTENTS

- *Definitions of Early Decision and Early Action*
- *Prevalence of Early Decision, Early Action and Wait Lists*
- *Early Decision in Depth*
- *Early Action in Depth*
- *Wait Lists in Depth*

## DEFINITIONS OF EARLY DECISION AND EARLY ACTION

In 2005, NACAC adopted a set of provisions aimed at clarifying the admission options available to students. The association approved the use of the terms “restrictive” and “non-restrictive” to describe the effect of each type of policy on the choices that students may make in applying to and selecting a college. A summary of NACAC’s revised definitions is included on the next page.

The use of multiple admission plans by colleges and universities often results in confusion among students, parents and college admission counseling professionals. NACAC believes institutions must clearly state policies, and counselors are advised to assist students with their understanding of the various admission decision options. The following information outlines agreed-upon definitions and conditions.

**Non-Restrictive Application Plans:** These plans allow students to wait until May 1 to confirm enrollment.

- **Regular Decision** is the application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction.

- **Rolling Admission** is the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are completed and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction.
- **Early Action (EA)** is the application process in which students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution’s regular response date. Students admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution’s offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1. Under non-restrictive Early Action, a student may apply to other colleges.

**Restrictive Application Plans:** These plans allow institutions to limit students from applying to other early plans.

- **Early Decision (ED)** is the application process in which students make a commitment to a first choice institution at which, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. While pursuing admission under an Early Decision plan, students may apply to other institutions, but may have only one Early Decision application pending at any time. Should a student who applies for financial aid not be offered an award that makes attendance possible, the student may decline the offer of admission and be released from the Early Decision commitment. The institution must notify the applicant of the decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time after the Early Decision deadline.

Usually, a nonrefundable deposit must be made well in advance of May 1. The institution will respond to an application for financial aid

at or near the time of an offer of admission. Institutions with Early Decision plans may restrict students from applying to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate their specific policies in their Early Decision agreement.

- **Restrictive Early Action (REA)** is the application process in which students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Institutions with Restrictive Early Action plans place restrictions on student applications to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate these restrictions in their Early Action policies and agreements with students. Students who are admitted under Restrictive Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1.<sup>1</sup>

For purposes of this report, we continue to categorize early application policies using the Early Decision and Early Action terms, as variances on these two main forms of early application policies are too few for national data collection purposes. Early Decision (ED) is defined

briefly as the application process in which students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. Early Action (EA) is the application process in which students make application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

## PREVALENCE OF EARLY DECISION, EARLY ACTION AND WAIT LISTS

Eighteen percent of respondents to NACAC's 2013 Admission Trends Survey offered Early Decision, and 32 percent offered Early Action. Private colleges were more likely than publics to offer Early Decision policies. More selective colleges were more likely to offer Early Decision, and colleges with lower yield rates were more likely to offer Early Action (see Table 9).<sup>2</sup> For the Fall 2013 admission cycle, 43

**Table 9. Percentage of institutions with Early Decision, Early Action and wait lists by institutional characteristics: 2013**

	Early Decision	Early Action	Wait list
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>32.4%</b>	<b>42.6%</b>
<b>Control</b>			
Public	8.9	26.7	35.6
Private	22.9	35.1	45.8
<b>Enrollment</b>			
Fewer than 3,000 students	23.1	31.5	38.7
3,000 to 9,999	17.4	36.2	52.2
10,000 or more	6.3	25.0	43.8
<b>Selectivity</b>			
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	37.9	29.8	74.6
50 to 70 percent	14.6	36.0	40.4
71 to 85 percent	11.9	32.8	38.8
More than 85 percent	4.6	28.6	14.0
<b>Yield</b>			
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	22.8	45.2	56.0
30 to 45 percent	16.9	20.5	33.7
46 to 60 percent	10.3	10.3	23.3
More than 60 percent	25.0	40.0	41.7

Note: Italicized figures should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

<sup>1</sup> NACAC's Statement of Principles of Good Practice (SPGP). Available online at: [www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies](http://www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies)

<sup>2</sup> Correlation between offering Early Decision and: selectivity (.260), private control (.169),  $p < .01$ ; Correlation between offering Early Action and: yield (-.218),  $p < .01$

percent of institutions reported using a wait list. Both institutions with higher selectivity and those with lower yield rates were more likely to have maintained a wait list (see Table 9).<sup>3</sup>

## EARLY DECISION IN DEPTH

Fifty-six percent of colleges reported increases in the number of Early Decision applications for Fall 2013. The proportion of colleges reporting increases has been similar in recent years, but the percentage reporting decreases (18 percent) is the lowest since 2005. Nearly half (49 percent) of colleges reported an increase in the number of students admitted through Early Decision, and only 17 percent reported decreases (see Table 10).<sup>4</sup>

Early Decision applicants represent only a small portion of the total applicant pool at colleges that have ED policies. Only 8 percent of all applications for Fall 2013 admission to ED colleges were received through Early Decision. As expected, colleges with Early Decision policies reported a higher acceptance rate for their ED applicants as compared to all applicants (64 percent versus 53 percent). This gap is slightly larger than those measured over the past two years. For Fall 2011 and Fall 2012, it was 7.5 and 5.5 percentage points, respectively. Given the binding nature of Early Decision policies, the average yield rate for Early Decision admits was 87 percent, substantially higher than the average yield rate for all students admitted to ED colleges (32 percent) (see Table 11).

**Table 11. Key statistics for Early Decision colleges: Fall 2013**

	Mean
Mean percentage of all applications received at ED colleges through Early Decision	8.1%
Mean percentage of Early Decision applications accepted (ED selectivity rate)	64.0
Mean overall selectivity rate for institutions with Early Decision	53.2
Mean percentage of admitted ED students who enrolled (ED yield rate)	86.6
Mean overall yield rate at ED colleges	31.6

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

**Table 10. Percentage of colleges reporting change from the previous year in the number of Early Decision applications and the number of students admitted Early Decision: Fall 2003 to Fall 2013**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Percentage of colleges reporting change in ED applications</b>											
Increased	43%	37%	58%	63%	49%	49%	47%	38%	55%	50%	56%
Stayed the same	33	18	24	12	19	18	26	25	21	19	26
Decreased	24	45	18	25	31	33	28	38	23	31	18
<b>Percentage of colleges reporting change in students admitted ED</b>											
Increased	30	29	48	47	36	43	65	36	39	47	49%
Stayed the same	44	22	31	16	32	26	30	38	35	31	36
Decreased	26	49	21	38	32	32	5	26	26	22	16

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Surveys, 2003–2013.

<sup>3</sup> Correlation between maintaining a wait list and: selectivity (.395), yield (-.214),  $p < .01$

<sup>4</sup> Results of the survey do not indicate the magnitude of these changes.

## EARLY ACTION IN DEPTH

Results of the 2013 Admission Trends Survey suggest continued increases in Early Action activity. A large majority (78 percent) of colleges reported an increase in Early Action applications and more than two-thirds (68 percent) reported increases in the number of students who were admitted through Early Action (see Table 12).<sup>5</sup>

Forty-two percent of applications to colleges that had Early Action admission policies were received through Early Action (see Table 13). These colleges reported a slight gap in selectivity rates for EA applicants in comparison to the overall applicant pool (67 percent versus 65 percent). Unlike Early Decision, Early Action did not provide a significant benefit to institutions in terms of yield rates. For the Fall 2013 admission cycle, EA colleges reported very similar yield rates for EA applicants compared to the overall applicant pool (29 percent versus 28 percent).

## WAIT LISTS IN DEPTH

According to results of NACAC’s annual Admission Trends Surveys, the percentage of institutions that used wait lists for the Fall 2013 admission cycle was 43 percent. Forty-one percent of colleges and universities reported increases in the number of students who were placed on wait lists, and 33 percent reported decreases. Not since 2007 have more than half of colleges (56 percent) reported increased

in the number of students placed on wait lists (see Table 14). For Fall 2013, 40 percent reported increases in the number of students admitted off of wait lists, but 36 percent reported decreases from last year.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 13. Key statistics for Early Action colleges: Fall 2013**

	Mean
Mean percentage of all applications received at EA colleges through Early Action	42.4%
Mean percentage of Early Action applications accepted (EA selectivity rate)	66.7
Mean overall selectivity rate for institutions with Early Action	65.0
Mean percentage of admitted EA students who enrolled (EA yield rate)	29.1
Mean overall yield rate at EA colleges	27.9

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

**Table 12. Percentage of colleges reporting change from the previous year in the number of Early Action applications and the number of students admitted Early Action: Fall 2003 to Fall 2013**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Percentage of colleges reporting change in EA applications</b>											
Increased	68%	56%	80%	70%	81%	65%	74%	72%	62%	69%	78%
Stayed the Same	22	7	6	18	7	16	7	12	18	18	11
Decreased	10	37	14	12	13	19	19	15	20	14	11
<b>Percentage of colleges reporting change in students admitted EA</b>											
Increased	53	48	73	57	72	60	73	68	64	68	68
Stayed the Same	36	15	7	24	13	24	15	21	23	22	19
Decreased	11	37	20	20	15	16	13	11	13	10	13

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Surveys, 2003–2013.

<sup>5</sup> Results of the survey do not indicate the magnitude of these changes.

<sup>6</sup> Results of the survey do not indicate the magnitude of these changes.

**Table 14. Percentage of institutions reporting change from the previous year in the number of students placed on the wait list: Fall 2000 to Fall 2013**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Increased	48%	40%	48%	52%	--	49%	47%	56%	50%	47%	42%	38%	41%	42%
Stayed the same	29	34	32	34	--	25	26	23	25	17	30	37	26	31
Decreased	23	21	16	14	--	26	27	21	25	37	28	26	33	28

-- Data are not available.

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Surveys, 2000–2013.

Institutions reported placing an average of 10 percent of all applicants on the wait list for the Fall 2013 admission cycle, and an average of 49 percent of wait-listed students opted to remain on the wait list. Institutions admitted an average of 30 percent of all students who chose to remain on wait lists, up from 25 percent in Fall 2012. The most selective colleges—those accepting fewer than 50 percent of applicants overall—admitted an average of only 16 percent of wait-listed students<sup>7</sup> (see Table 15).

The most selective colleges—those accepting fewer than 50 percent of applicants overall—admitted an average of only 16 percent of wait-listed students.

**Table 15. Mean percentage of students admitted off the wait list: Fall 2013**

	Mean percentage admitted
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.5%</b>
<b>Control</b>	
Public	35.2
Private	28.9
<b>Enrollment</b>	
Fewer than 3,000 students	30.1
3,000 to 9,999	30.7
10,000 or more	27.3
<b>Selectivity</b>	
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	16.3
50 to 70 percent	34.5
71 to 85 percent	46.2
More than 85 percent	--
<b>Yield</b>	
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	35.5
30 to 45 percent	21.6
46 to 60 percent	24.7
More than 60 percent	22.9

-- Category included only one institution.

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 institutions per cell).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Correlation between percent admitted from wait list and: selectivity (.419),  $p < .01$

# Chapter 4

## Factors in the Admission Decision

### CONTENTS

- *Factors in the Admission Decision: 2013 Summary*
- *Factors in the Admission Decision: Change Over Time*
- *Factors in the Admission Decision by Institutional Characteristics*
- *Top Factors In Depth*
  - *Grades and Strength of Curriculum*
  - *Standardized Admission Test Scores*
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## FACTORS IN THE ADMISSION DECISION: 2013 SUMMARY

- Grades in college preparatory courses, strength of curriculum, admission test scores, and grades in all courses were considered by colleges to be the top factors in admission decisions. More than 80 percent of all colleges and universities rated grades in college prep courses as considerably important. Nearly two-thirds of colleges (64 percent) rated strength of curriculum as considerably important, and more than half gave the highest rating to admission test scores and grades in all courses (58 percent and 52 percent, respectively). For each of these four top factors, no more than 11 percent of colleges assigned a rating of limited or no importance.
- A second set of factors—essay or writing sample, student’s demonstrated interest, counselor and teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities and class rank—were most commonly rated as moderately important. No more than half of colleges rated these factors in the low to no importance range. For many colleges, these factors provide additional information about students’ academic performance and interests, as well as their personal qualities.

- The student interview and subject test scores (AP, IB), and work experience can add further depth to the admission application. They are used by some colleges to provide information for comparing candidates with similar academic qualifications. Admission officers consider these factors as supplemental to the main academic factors, and as such, rated them with low to moderate importance. In addition, 43 percent of colleges indicated that they do not consider interviews, 30 percent do not consider subject test scores, and 29 percent do not consider work experience.
- SAT II scores, state graduation exam scores, and portfolios were among the lowest rated factors in admission decisions for 2013. A large majority of institutions rated these factors with limited or no importance. SAT II scores are primarily used in highly selective admission, and they are often used for placement rather than admission decisions.

Table 16 shows a complete overview of the relative importance of factors in the admission decision in 2013.

## FACTORS IN ADMISSION: CHANGE OVER TIME

Table 17 illustrates how the percentage of colleges rating various factors in the admission decision as “considerably important” has

**Table 16. Percentage of colleges attributing different levels of importance to factors in the admission decision: 2013**

Factor	Considerable importance	Moderate importance	Limited importance	No importance
Grades in college prep courses	81.5%	10.4%	7.4%	.7%
Strength of curriculum	63.7	24.8	8.1	3.3
Admission test scores (SAT, ACT)	58.3	29.5	10.0	2.2
Grades in all courses	51.5	37.4	8.9	2.2
Essay or writing sample	22.2	37.8	22.6	17.4
Student's demonstrated interest	20.1	34.0	23.9	22.0
Counselor recommendation	15.9	43.9	24.7	15.5
Class rank	15.2	35.3	33.5	16.0
Teacher recommendation	14.1	43.9	28.3	13.8
Extracurricular activities	9.6	40.6	33.9	15.9
Interview	7.8	21.2	27.9	43.1
Subject test scores (AP, IB)	7.5	30.6	32.5	29.5
Portfolio	6.4	9.4	34.3	49.8
SAT II scores	6.0	10.9	23.7	59.4
State graduation exam scores	3.4	10.1	28.4	58.2
Work	2.6	17.1	51.3	29.0

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

changed over time, from 1993 to 2013. Academic performance in college prep courses has been consistently rated as the top factor in admission decisions over this 20-year time frame, with about 80 percent of colleges rating it as considerably important.

During this time-frame, the importance of some admission decision factors has changed, to varying degrees. The percentage of colleges rating admission test scores as considerably important increased from 46 percent in 1993 to 61 percent in 2003, and has hovered around 60 percent since that time. Similarly the rating of grades in all courses increased from 39 percent considerably important in 1993 to 57 percent in 2004. Since 2004, the percentage has ranged from a low of 46 to a high of 54. The proportion of colleges rating demonstrated interest as considerably important increased dramatically between 2003 (when it was first measured), from 7 to 21 percent of colleges, and has remained relatively stable since. The factor showing the most change in importance for admission decisions is class rank, which has declined steadily. For Fall 2013, 15 percent of colleges rated it as considerably important, down from 42 percent in 1993.

## FACTORS IN ADMISSION BY INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The following section highlights differences among various types of institutions. Nearly all institutions attributed some level of importance to each of the factors discussed below, and the relative importance of factors did not differ widely. With few exceptions, colleges viewed four factors—grades in college prep courses, strength of curriculum, admission test scores, and overall grade point average—as the top four factors in the admission decision. However, the institutional characteristics determined, to some extent, the way each factor in the admission process was rated. For a complete comparison of institutions by selected characteristics, see Table 18.

**Table 17. Percentage of colleges attributing considerable importance to factors in the admission decision: 1993 to 2013**

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Grades in college prep/ strength of curriculum <sup>1</sup>	82%	83%	80%	78%	81%	79%	84%	78%	80%	76%	78%	80%	74%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Grades in college prep	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	76%	80%	75%	87%	83%	84%	82%	82%
Strength of curriculum	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	62	64	62	71	66	68	65	64
Admission test scores	46	43	47	48	50	51	54	58	52	57	61	60	59	60	59	54	58	59	59	56	58
Grades in all courses	39	37	41	38	41	44	42	43	45	50	54	57	54	51	52	52	46	46	52	50	52
Essay	14	17	21	20	18	19	19	20	20	19	23	25	23	28	26	27	26	27	25	20	22
Class rank	42	40	39	36	34	32	32	34	31	35	33	28	31	23	23	19	16	22	19	13	15
Counselor recommendation	22	20	19	17	20	16	18	16	17	16	17	18	17	21	21	20	17	19	19	16	16
Demonstrated interest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7	7	15	21	22	21	21	23	21	18	20
Teacher recommendation	21	19	18	19	19	16	14	14	16	14	18	18	17	20	21	21	17	19	17	15	14
Interview	12	12	15	13	11	11	9	11	11	10	9	9	9	10	11	11	7	9	6	7	8
Extracurricular activities/work <sup>2</sup>	6	6	7	6	6	4	5	7	6	7	7	8	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Extracurricular activities	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	8	7	7	9	7	5	7	10
Work	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	3
Subject tests (AP, IB)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6	7	5	7	8	7	8	7	10	7	5	8
State exams	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6	7	6	7	6	4	4	3	4	4	2	3
SAT II scores	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	6	7	5	5	5	4	6
Portfolio	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7	8	6	7	5	6

-- Data are not available.

<sup>1</sup> Beginning with the 2006 survey, grades in college prep courses and strength of curriculum were listed as two separate factors. In previous years, one factor was listed as grades in college prep courses/strength of curriculum.

<sup>2</sup> Beginning with the 2006 survey, extracurricular activities and work were listed as two separate factors. In previous years, one factor was listed as work/extracurricular activities.

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Surveys, 1993 through 2013.

## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

Differences between public and private institutions reveal that in many ways, private college admission is more “holistic” than public college admission. Private colleges considered a broader range of factors in the admission decision, which is likely due, in large part, to differences in application volume.

- Private colleges assigned greater importance than public colleges to many factors other than the top four, including the essay/writing sample, interview, counselor and teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities, portfolios, state graduation scores, and demonstrated interest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Correlations between private college status and attribution of importance in admission: essay or writing sample (.258), interview (.462), portfolio (.248), extracurricular activities (.253), counselor recommendation (.372), teacher recommendation (.345), demonstrated interest (.279), state graduation exam scores (.163),  $p < .01$

Table 18. Percentage of colleges attributing considerable importance to factors in the admission decision by institutional characteristics: 2013 (continued on next page)

	Grades in college prep courses	Strength of curriculum	Admission test scores	Grades in all courses	Essay/writing sample	Demonstrated interest	Counselor rec.	Teacher rec.
<b>Total</b>	<b>81.5%</b>	<b>63.7%</b>	<b>58.3%</b>	<b>51.5%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>
<b>Control</b>								
Public	83.7	57.6	69.8	51.2	14.0	14.1	7.0	5.9
Private	80.4	66.5	53.0	51.6	26.1	23.0	20.0	17.9
<b>Enrollment</b>								
Fewer than 3,000 students	77.6	60.4	51.4	52.1	25.9	24.6	17.4	15.4
3,000 to 9,999	87.0	70.6	71.0	45.6	18.8	17.4	21.7	18.8
10,000 or more	86.7	66.7	66.7	55.6	15.6	6.8	4.4	4.5
<b>Selectivity</b>								
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	82.1	75.0	60.7	47.3	32.1	19.6	25.0	27.3
50 to 70 percent	85.4	65.9	62.9	50.6	21.6	20.2	13.5	10.1
71 to 85 percent	84.8	68.2	54.5	51.5	18.2	16.9	10.6	7.6
More than 85 percent	66.7	40.5	54.8	57.1	21.4	29.3	14.3	12.2
<b>Yield</b>								
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	90.2	80.2	51.6	48.4	25.4	18.3	16.4	13.9
30 to 45 percent	79.5	54.5	68.2	59.1	21.8	15.9	14.8	12.6
46 to 60 percent	62.1	37.9	58.6	42.9	17.2	31.0	17.2	17.2
More than 60 percent	66.7	41.7	66.7	41.7	25.0	33.3	16.7	18.2

Continues.

## INSTITUTIONAL ENROLLMENT

Some of the same differences existed between small and large institutions as existed between public and private institutions.

- Smaller colleges attributed more importance than larger colleges to the interview, counselor and teacher recommendations, demonstrated interest, portfolios, and state graduation exam scores.<sup>2</sup>

## INSTITUTIONAL SELECTIVITY LEVEL

More selective institutions tended to place greater emphasis on many of the factors. Because applicants to the most selective institutions often have similarly high grades and test scores, these colleges use

more information to make distinctions between applicants. As a result, their admission process is more “holistic,” like that of private and smaller colleges.

- More selective colleges attributed slightly greater importance to strength of curriculum and grades in all courses, in comparison to their less selective counterparts.
- Institutions that accepted fewer applicants also placed more emphasis on many factors outside of the top four. These factors included the essay, teacher and counselor recommendations, extracurricular activities, and work.
- The more selective institutions also placed more emphasis on subject test scores (AP and IB) and SAT II scores.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Correlations between enrollment and attribution of importance in admission: interview (-.384), counselor recommendation (-.319), teacher recommendations (-.320), demonstrated interest (-.258), p < .01; portfolio (-.152), state graduation exam scores (-.157), p < .05

<sup>3</sup> Correlations between selectivity and attribution of importance in admission: SAT II scores (.297), other subject text scores (AP/IB) (.206), essay or writing sample (.228), work (.313), extracurricular activities (.308), teacher recommendation (.174), p < .01; grades in all subjects (.124), strength of curriculum (.134) counselor recommendations (.132), p < .05

**Table 18. Percentage of colleges attributing considerable importance to factors in the admission decision by institutional characteristics: 2013 (continued from previous page)**

	Class rank	Extracurricular activities	Interview	Portfolio	Subject test scores (AP, IB)	SAT II scores	State graduation exam scores	Work
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
<b>Control</b>								
Public	23.5	8.1	2.3	2.4	7.1	4.8	2.3	2.3
Private	11.4	10.3	10.4	8.3	7.7	6.6	3.8	2.7
<b>Enrollment</b>								
Fewer than 3,000 students	10.5	9.0	11.2	8.5	6.3	6.4	2.8	3.5
3,000 to 9,999	20.3	11.6	4.4	2.9	10.1	8.8	5.9	0.0
10,000 or more	26.7	11.1	2.2	4.7	6.8	0.0	0.0	4.4
<b>Selectivity</b>								
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	18.2	21.4	14.5	9.3	12.5	10.9	3.6	7.1
50 to 70 percent	12.5	5.6	3.4	4.5	7.9	3.4	1.1	1.1
71 to 85 percent	16.7	9.1	7.6	4.7	6.3	6.2	6.2	1.5
More than 85 percent	16.7	4.8	7.1	9.5	4.8	4.9	2.4	2.4
<b>Yield</b>								
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	14.0	9.8	6.6	5.9	10.8	2.5	3.3	0.0
30 to 45 percent	21.8	8.0	5.7	6.9	3.4	5.8	3.4	2.3
46 to 60 percent	6.9	10.3	3.6	6.9	3.4	6.9	0.0	13.8
More than 60 percent	<i>8.3</i>	<i>25.0</i>	<i>33.3</i>	<i>8.3</i>	<i>25.0</i>	<i>33.3</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>8.3</i>

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

## INSTITUTIONAL YIELD RATE

Institutions with high yield rates are those that enroll most of the students they accept. Although this is an important statistic from an institutional perspective, it is very difficult to generalize about institutions on the basis of yield rates. Very different types of colleges have similar yield rates. For instance, highly selective schools, such as those in the Ivy League, share similar yield rates with large, open-enrollment public colleges.

- Institutions with higher yield rates attributed less importance to strength of curriculum and grades in college prep courses. The

most likely cause of this finding is the behavior of high-yield, non-selective colleges, which accept almost all of the students who apply and enroll large numbers as a result.

- Institutions with higher yield rates also attributed lower importance to some of the other factors, including the teacher and counselor recommendations, and state graduation scores.
- Institutions with high yield rates attributed more importance to SAT II scores.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Correlations between yield and attribution of importance in admission: strength of curriculum (-.333), grades in college prep courses (-.260), counselor recommendation (-.260), state graduation exam scores (-.180)  $p < .01$ ; SAT II scores (.147), teacher recommendation (-.154),  $p < .05$

## TOP FACTORS IN-DEPTH

### GRADES AND STRENGTH OF CURRICULUM

As previously discussed, grades in college prep courses, strength of curriculum, and admission test scores—in that order—are among the top factors that colleges consider in making admission decisions (along with grades in all courses, which rank fourth). Although overall GPA serves as an indicator of a student's academic success in high school, strength of curriculum—and particularly grades in college prep courses—are better indicators of a student's likelihood of succeeding in college.<sup>5</sup> College prep courses—which include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual enrollment, and other advanced coursework—are designed to approximate college-level work. Therefore, participation in a college prep curriculum and performance in the courses can indicate to college admission officers both motivation and ability to succeed in postsecondary education. In fact, results of two major research studies show that students who complete a rigorous high school curriculum are much more likely to complete a bachelor's degree than those who complete a less rigorous curriculum.

A study of the transcripts of high school graduates in 2009 conducted by the US Department of Education indicated that students took more credits, completed more challenging curricula, and earned higher GPAs in high school than previous cohorts. Compared to the class of 1990, graduates in 2009 earned over three additional credits (about 420 instruction hours) during their high school careers, and the proportion of graduates failing to complete a standard high school curriculum<sup>6</sup> fell from 41 percent in 1990 to 25 percent in 2009.<sup>7</sup> The study also showed that students with a more rigorous curriculum scored higher on the math and science National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams. This finding confirms the connection between strength of curriculum and academic performance. Although all students showed gains in credits earned, rigor of curriculum, GPA, and NAEP scores, the study found consistent gaps between different racial/ethnic groups. Black and Hispanic students consistently scored lower on NAEP exams than Asian/Pacific Islander and White students who completed a similarly challenging curriculum.<sup>8</sup>

One reason for the gap observed in the high school transcript study may be that students across the nation do not have equal access to college preparatory curricula. According to results of NACAC's 2013 Counseling Trends Survey, there were important differences among types of schools in both college prep offerings and average enrollments in those curricula (see Table 19).

- Private high schools were only somewhat more likely than public high schools to have offered AP and enriched curricula, but they had a considerably higher percentage of students enrolled in these programs, on average, as well as in IB courses. Public high schools were more than twice as likely to offer dual enrollment, but reported only slightly higher participation rates than privates.<sup>9</sup>
- Larger schools were more likely than smaller schools to offer all four types of college prep curricula, but smaller schools had a greater proportion of students enrolled in both IB courses and dual enrollment programs (see Table 19).<sup>10</sup>
- Schools with higher percentages of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch programs (FRPL) were less likely to offer AP and enriched curricula. The average enrollment in AP and enriched curricula courses was also lower for schools with more students who were eligible for FRPL programs (see Table 19).<sup>11</sup>

### STANDARDIZED ADMISSION TEST SCORES

As reported earlier in this chapter, standardized admission test scores ranked as the third most important factor in admission decisions. About 88 percent of colleges placed considerable or moderate importance on this factor (see Table 16). According to US Department of Education data, an average of 53 percent of enrolled students submitted SAT scores for Fall 2013 admission, and 58 percent submitted ACT scores. At institutions with high yield rates, more freshmen submitted ACT scores and fewer submitted SAT scores in comparison to their lower yield counterparts (see Table 20).

Studies conducted by ACT and the College Board (creator of the SAT) showed an increasing proportion of high school graduates taking each of the exams, relative stability regarding student exam performance, and substantial and persistent gaps between different racial/ethnic groups. More than 1.84 million 2014 high school

<sup>5</sup> Seventy-four percent of respondents to NACAC's 2013 Counseling Trends Survey reported that they weight students' high school GPAs to account for course difficulty.

<sup>6</sup> A standard high school curriculum includes at least four credits of English and three credits each of social studies, mathematics, and science.

<sup>7</sup> US General Accounting Office. (2003). *College Completion: Additional Efforts Could Help Education with Its Completion Goals* (GAO 03-568). Washington, DC.; Adelman, C. (2006). *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion From High School Through College*. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Education.

<sup>8</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *A First Look: 2013 Mathematics and Reading: National Assessment of Educational Progress at Grades 4 and 8*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

<sup>9</sup> Correlation between private high school status and mean percentage of students enrolled in college prep curricula: AP (.409), enriched curriculum (.387),  $p < .01$ ; dual enrollment (-.102), IB (.383)  $p < .05$

<sup>10</sup> Correlation between enrollment and offering college prep curricula: AP (.322), IB (.198), enriched curriculum (.182), dual enrollment (.153),  $p < .01$ ; Correlation between enrollment and mean percentage of students enrolled in college prep curricula: dual enrollment (-.145),  $p < .01$ ; IB (-.423),  $p < .01$

<sup>11</sup> Correlation between percent eligible for FRPL and offering college prep curricula: AP (-.190), enriched curriculum (-.134), dual enrollment (.153),  $p < .01$ ; Correlation between percent eligible for FRPL and mean percentage of students enrolled in college prep curricula: AP (-.290), enriched curriculum (-.346),  $p < .01$

**Table 19. Percentage of schools that offer college preparatory curricula and mean percentage of 11th and 12th graders enrolled by school characteristics: 2013**

	Advanced Placement (AP)		International Baccalaureate (IB)		Enriched curriculum		Dual enrollment	
	% of schools that offer	Mean % enrolled	% of schools that offer	Mean % enrolled	% of schools that offer	Mean % enrolled	% of schools that offer	Mean % enrolled
<b>Total</b>	<b>83.5%</b>	<b>36.3%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>38.9%</b>	<b>87.0%</b>	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
<b>Control</b>								
Public	80.7	29.1	5.5	30.2	85.1	41.4	86.8	17.5
Private	90.0	50.2	4.6	59.4	91.4	64.2	41.5	12.8
Private non-parochial	85.1	55.4	6.5	65.3	88.1	67.1	35.3	9.9
Private parochial	98.7	41.9	--	--	97.5	59.1	52.6	16.4
<b>Enrollment</b>								
Fewer than 500 students	63.8	39.0	1.3	48.7	75.7	48.7	67.8	21.1
500 to 999	90.6	37.7	4.6	57.5	92.6	52.2	66.2	15.3
1,000 to 1,499	96.9	34.3	5.5	45.6	95.5	47.5	78.3	14.6
1,500 to 1,999	98.0	27.1	10.2	47.3	90.2	39.7	86.3	14.1
2,000 or more	100.0	37.3	16.4	11.7	94.9	49.7	88.1	12.3
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>								
0 to 25% of students eligible	89.4	39.2	4.4	48.9	92.1	53.9	77.4	15.8
26 to 50%	83.8	23.5	7.0	23.1	84.1	35.8	86.3	18.8
51 to 75%	72.6	19.5	6.0	13.0	79.3	34.8	86.2	18.3
76 to 100%	68.2	28.8	4.7	26.7	80.3	32.4	85.1	16.1
<b>Students per counselor</b>								
100 or fewer	75.3	38.2	2.8	--	82.2	47.1	65.3	15.8
101 to 200	84.9	42.0	3.3	48.5	84.7	56.4	62.9	19.4
201 to 300	87.3	36.9	4.8	33.5	90.0	48.4	77.4	16.5
301 to 400	83.2	34.2	6.4	29.5	88.5	45.8	79.4	15.4
401 to 500	81.8	29.4	7.3	28.5	92.9	44.8	75.0	18.1
More than 500	84.6	23.3	10.5	60.8	84.2	43.1	78.9	11.8

-- Category included only one institution.

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 institutions per cell). Mean percent enrolled only includes institutions offering the college preparatory curricula.

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2013.

graduates took the ACT, and nearly 1.67 million students took the SAT at least once while in high school. The number of SAT takers has grown slightly for this year as it has for all years since 2007, with the exception of 2013. The number of ACT takers has increased for the 10th consecutive year.

Mean scores on both the ACT and SAT have remained relatively stable over the past ten years. Mean critical reading scores on the

SAT have dipped slightly in the past few years (from 508 in 2005 to 497 in 2014), which may be a result of an increase in the proportion of exam takers that are typically underrepresented in higher education. This group represented 36 percent of all SAT takers in 2014, up from 27 percent in 2009. Significant gaps in exam performance among different racial and ethnic groups have remained consistent as well. Over the last ten years, White and Asian students consistently scored

**Table 20. Mean percentage of first-year students who submitted standardized test scores by institutional characteristics: Fall 2013**

	SAT	ACT
<b>Total</b>	<b>52.8%</b>	<b>57.6%</b>
<b>Control</b>		
Public	51.6	60.7
Private	53.2	56.3
<b>Enrollment</b>		
Fewer than 3,000 students	50.1	58.4
3,000 to 9,999	60.0	53.7
10,000 or more	53.6	61.4
<b>Selectivity</b>		
Accept less than 50 percent of applicants	57.8	52.3
50 to 70 percent	52.0	58.8
71 to 85 percent	53.9	57.3
More than 85 percent	44.8	62.3
<b>Yield</b>		
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	60.1	50.8
30 to 45 percent	48.7	61.8
46 to 60 percent	40.2	66.3
More than 60 percent	42.7	65.5

Note: Data for all colleges are for 2013-14. The list of colleges was drawn from the 2013-14 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Institutions were selected using the following criteria: US location; four-year, not-for-profit; Carnegie-classified; baccalaureate degree-granting; and Title IV-participating.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) online Data Center. (2013-14). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

higher on both the SAT and ACT than their Hispanic, American Indian and Black peers. The gap between White or Asian student scores and Hispanic or American Indian student scores was approximately 50-70 points on the critical reading and mathematics sections of the SAT

and four points on the composite ACT. The gap between mean scores of White or Asian students and mean scores of Black students was about 100 points on the critical reading and math sections of the SAT and five composite ACT points for each of the high school graduating classes from 2007 through 2014.<sup>12</sup>

## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS AS CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

NACAC’s 2013 Admission Trends Survey asked colleges to indicate how various student characteristics may influence how the main factors in admission are evaluated. These student characteristics included race/ethnicity, gender, first-generation status, state or county of residence, high school attended, alumni relations, and ability to pay.<sup>13</sup> As shown in Table 21, institutions attributed relatively little importance to these student characteristics, even as contextual factors. However, they did have some influence on how the main admission factors were evaluated. About one quarter of colleges rated race/ethnicity, first generation status, and high school attended as at least moderately important.

There were some interesting differences in how various types of institutions rated the importance of the student characteristics as contextual factors.

- Private colleges were more likely to attribute some level of importance to alumni relations, ability to pay, and high school attended. Not surprisingly, public colleges gave a slightly higher rating to state or county of residence.<sup>14</sup>
- Larger colleges rated first-generation status and state or county of residence as having more influence, while smaller colleges rated ability to pay and alumni relations more highly.<sup>15</sup>
- More selective institutions attributed more influence to almost all of the student contextual factors, including race/ethnicity, gender, first-generation status, state or county of residence, high school attended, and alumni relations.<sup>16</sup>
- Institutions with lower yield rates also attributed somewhat more importance to some of the student characteristics including, high school attended, alumni relations, gender, first-generation status, ability to pay.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> ACT, Inc. (2014). *Condition of College & Career Readiness*. Iowa City, IA: ACT. The College Board. *The 2014 SAT Report on College and Career Readiness*. New York: The College Board.

<sup>13</sup> In surveys prior to 2006, race/ethnicity, state or county of residence, alumni relations, and ability to pay were listed along with the other academic factors.

<sup>14</sup> Correlation between private college status and influence in evaluation of admission decision factors: alumni relations (.322), ability to pay (.310)  $p < .01$ ; state or county of residence (-.150), high school attended (.146)  $p < .05$

<sup>15</sup> Correlation between enrollment and influence in evaluation of admission decision factors: state or county of residence (.205), alumni relations (-.173), ability to pay (-.229),  $p < .01$ ; first generation status (.139)  $p < .05$

<sup>16</sup> Correlation between selectivity and influence in evaluation of admission decision factors: race or ethnicity (.348), gender (.220), first-generation status (.331), state or county of residence (.227), high school attended (.172), and alumni relations (.206),  $p < .01$

<sup>17</sup> Correlation between yield and influence in evaluation of admission decision factors: high school attended (-.259), alumni relations (-.182)  $p < .01$ ; gender (-.150), first-generation status (-.137), ability to pay (-.161),  $p < .05$

**Table 21. Percentage of colleges attributing different levels of importance to the influence of student characteristics on the evaluation of factors in the admission decision: 2013**

	Considerable importance	Moderate importance	Limited importance	No importance
High school attended	3.3	24.1	33.7	38.9
Race/ethnicity	3.3	21.2	19.0	56.5
State or county of residence	2.6	16.7	28.9	51.9
First-generation status	2.2	25.1	26.6	46.1
Ability to pay	1.9	7.0	17.8	73.3
Gender	1.9	12.3	17.9	67.9
Alumni relations	1.8	18.1	38.7	41.3

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

Although overall GPA serves as an indicator of a student’s academic success in high school, strength of curriculum—and particularly grades in college prep courses—are better indicators of a student’s likelihood of succeeding in college.

# Chapter 5

## School Counselors and College Counseling

### CONTENTS

- *College Counseling Defined*
- *Student-to-Counselor Ratios*
- *Counseling Department Priorities and “Time on Task”*
- *Professional Development and Compensation*

## COLLEGE COUNSELING DEFINED

NACAC’s “Statement on Precollege Guidance and Counseling and the Role of the School Counselor” defines precollege counseling as generally including activities that help students: 1) pursue the most challenging curriculum that results in enhanced postsecondary educational options; 2) identify and satisfy attendant requirements for college access; and 3) navigate the maze of financial aid, college choice and other processes related to college application and admission.<sup>1</sup> Assisting students in reaching their full potential requires the cooperative efforts of school administrators, teachers, community representatives, government officials, parents, and the students themselves, as well as a trained staff of school counselors who are able to facilitate student development and achievement. Of particular importance to student success is access to a strong precollege guidance and counseling program that begins early in the student’s education. Counselors can be significant assets in the college admission process. Students face additional challenges without strong

counselors to help them, which can make the college application and admission process more difficult.

## STUDENT-TO-COUNSELOR RATIOS

According to US Department of Education data, in 2011-12 each public school counselor (including elementary and secondary) had responsibility for 475 students, on average. Counselors at secondary schools had slightly smaller caseloads, serving an average of 418 students. Moreover, these ratios have changed very little over the past 16 years (see Figure 10).<sup>2</sup>

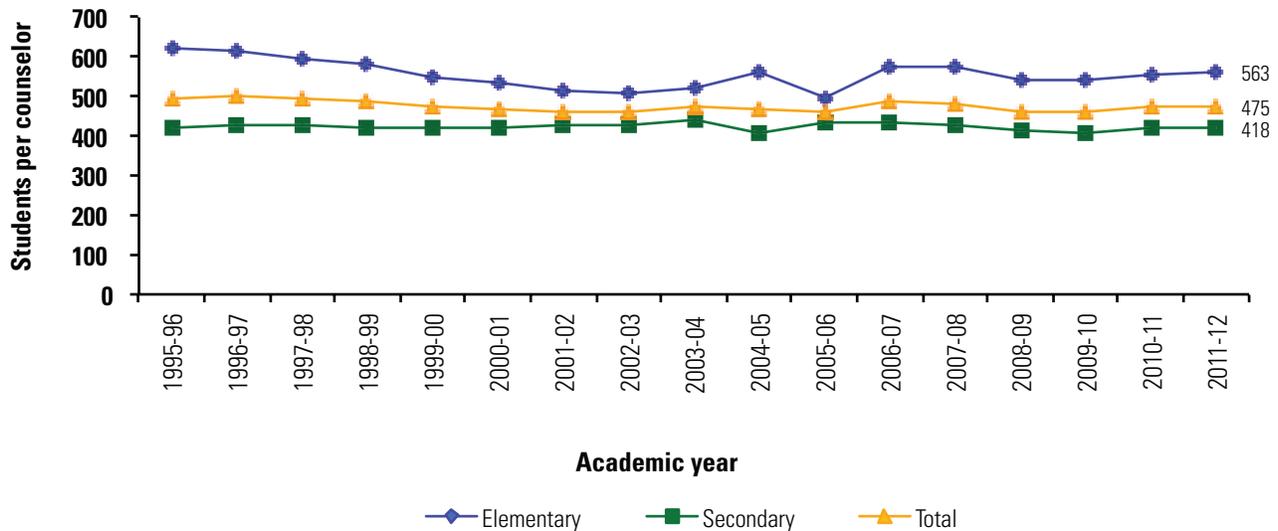
Results of NACAC’s 2013 Counseling Trends Survey, which includes private schools, indicated a high school student-to-counselor ratio, including part-time staff, of 266:1, on average. NACAC’s Counseling Trends Survey also asked respondents to report the number of counselors at their schools based on the extent to which college counseling is part of their job responsibilities, allowing for the calculation of a student-to-college counselor ratio. For 2013, the average student-to-college counselor ratio was 351:1, including part-time counselors (see Table 22).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Association for College Admission Counseling. (1990). “Statement on Precollege Guidance and the Role of the School Counselor.” Available at: [www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies](http://www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies)

<sup>2</sup> In this case elementary is defined as grades K-5, and secondary is defined as grades 6 through 12.

<sup>3</sup> The student-to-college counselor ratio is based on both the total number of counselors who exclusively provide college counseling for students and the total number who provide college counseling among other services for students. As such, it overestimates the focus on college counseling.

Figure 10. Public school student-to-counselor ratios by school level: 1995-96 to 2011-12



Note: For the purpose of these calculations, the elementary ratios include students in grades K-5, and secondary ratios include students in grades 6-12. The total number of counselors is provided only by school level, not grade level.

Source: Common Core of Data. Elementary/Secondary information System (ELSi) tableGenerator. (1995–96 to 2011–12). US Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

## VARIATION IN STUDENT-TO-COUNSELOR RATIOS

According to NACAC’s 2013 Counseling Trends Survey, public schools had higher student-to-counselor ratios than their private counterparts.<sup>4</sup> Public school counselors were responsible for about 70 more students, on average (see Table 22). Larger schools also tended to have higher ratios for both total counselors and college counselors.<sup>5</sup> In addition, 71 percent of private schools reported that they had at least one counselor (full- or part-time) whose sole responsibility was to provide college counseling for students, compared to only 32 percent of public schools. Schools with high student-to-counselor ratios were less likely to have a dedicated college counselor (see Table 22).<sup>6</sup>

US Department of Education data show that public school student-to-counselor ratios also varied widely from state to state. In 2011-12, some states had exceedingly high numbers of students per counselor, including Arizona (863), California (818), Minnesota (766), Michigan (717), and Utah (712). See Table 23 for the public school student-to-counselor ratios for all states.

## COUNSELING DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES AND “TIME ON TASK”

### COUNSELING DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES

On NACAC’s 2013 Counseling Trends Survey, respondents were asked to rank order the importance of four main counseling department goals. As shown in Table 24, “helping students with their academic achievement in high school” and “helping students plan and prepare for postsecondary education” were ranked, on average, almost identically. “Helping students with personal growth and development” and “helping students plan and prepare for their work roles after high school” were ranked third and fourth, respectively. However, important differences were found in how different types of schools ranked the priorities of their counseling departments.

<sup>4</sup> Correlation between private school status and: student-to-counselor ratio (-.181),  $p < .01$

<sup>5</sup> Correlation between enrollment and: student-to-counselor ratio (.326), student-to-college counselor ratio (.327),  $p < .01$

<sup>6</sup> Correlation between student-to-counselor ratio and: having a dedicated college counselor (-.302),  $p < .01$

**Table 22. Mean student-to-counselor ratios and student-to-college counselor ratios, by school characteristics: 2013**

	Mean number of students per counselor	Mean number of students per college counselor
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>Control</b>		
Public	288	368
Private	219	316
Private non-parochial	221	312
Private parochial	215	323
<b>Enrollment</b>		
Fewer than 500 students	203	247
500 to 999	264	345
1,000 to 1,499	304	421
1,500 to 1,999	327	477
2,000 or more students	391	527
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>		
0 to 25 percent of students eligible	267	346
26 to 50%	308	393
51 to 75%	274	358
76 to 100%	243	315

Note: The student-to-college counselor ratio is based on both the total number of counselors who exclusively provide college counseling for students and the total number who provide college counseling among other services for students. As such, it overestimates the focus on college counseling.

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2013.

For example, public schools ranked “helping students with their academic achievement in high school” as the top priority while private schools ranked “helping students plan and prepare for postsecondary education” as most important. Public schools also ranked “helping students plan and prepare for their work roles after high school” more highly than their private school counterparts.<sup>7</sup> Counselors at lower-income schools—as defined by the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch (FRPL)—ranked “helping students plan and prepare for their work roles after high school” and “helping students with their academic achievement in high school” slightly higher than those at higher-income schools.<sup>8</sup> Private schools and those with lower student-to-counselor ratios gave a slightly higher ranking to “helping students with personal growth and development” compared to their counterparts (see Table 24).<sup>9</sup>

### TIME ON TASK

Most counselors have a variety of job responsibilities in addition to college counseling. Results of NACAC’s survey showed that in 2013, high school counseling staff spent an average of 32 percent of their time on postsecondary admission counseling, on average. Counselors in public schools reported spending only 24 percent of their time on college counseling, compared to 52 percent for private school counselors. Also spending more time on postsecondary admission counseling were counselors at higher-income schools and those at schools with smaller total enrollment sizes (see Table 25).<sup>10</sup>

### COUNSELOR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO COLLEGE COUNSELING

Counselors engage in a variety of activities to assist students with the process of applying to college. As shown in Figure 11, the most frequent activities for 2013 included individual meetings with students to discuss postsecondary admission options and hosting college representatives. Fifty-two percent of counselors also reported frequently engaging in electronic communication with students

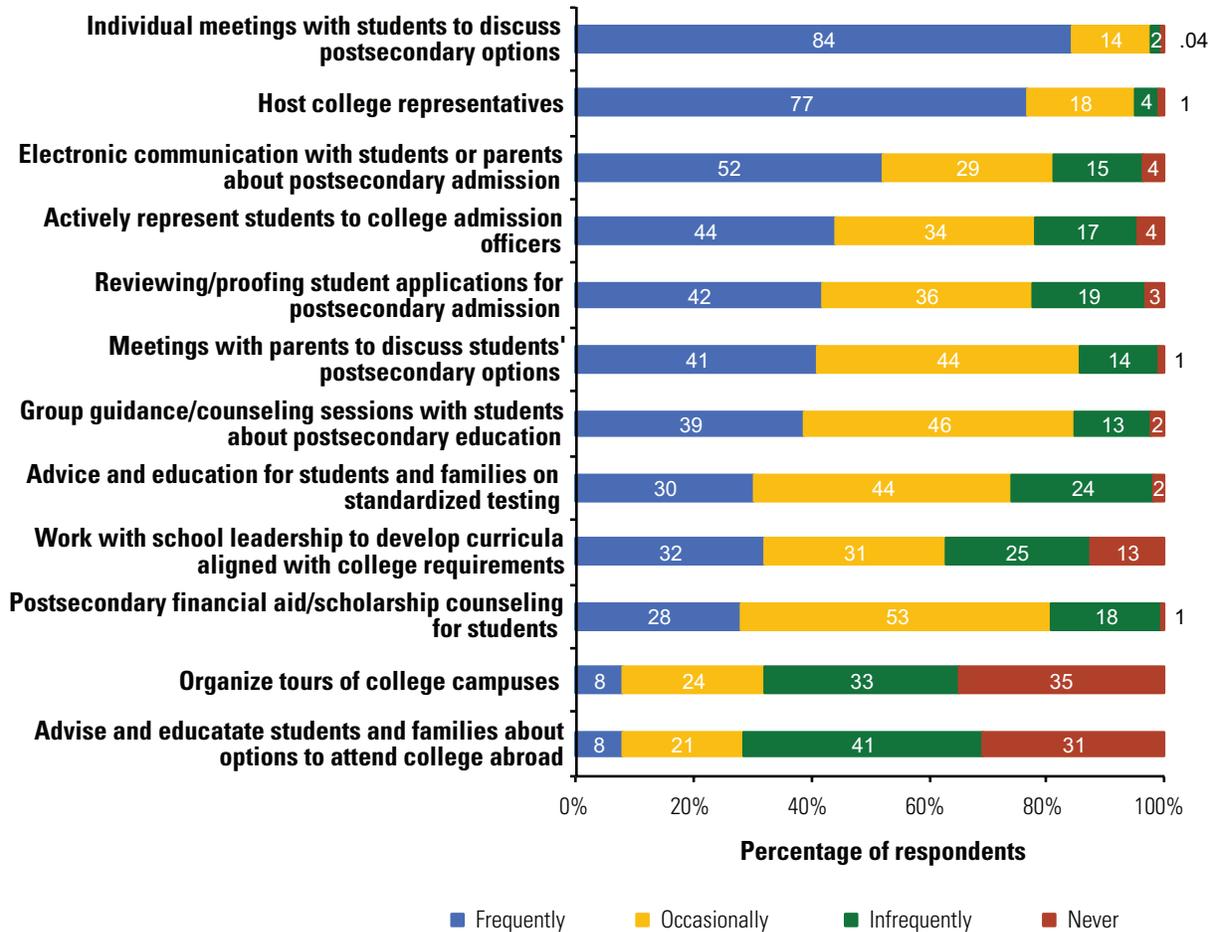
<sup>7</sup> Correlation between public school status and ranking of: “helping students plan and prepare for postsecondary education” (-.377), “helping students plan and prepare for work roles” (.216),  $p < .01$

<sup>8</sup> Correlation between FRPL percent and ranking of: “helping students with their academic achievement in high school” (.118), “helping students prepare for work roles” (.126),  $p < .01$

<sup>9</sup> Correlation between “helping with personal growth” and: private school status (.122), student-to-counselor ratio (-.124),  $p < .01$

<sup>10</sup> Correlation between percent of time spent on postsecondary counseling and: private school status (.606), enrollment (-.139), percent eligible for FRPL (-.280),  $p < .01$

Figure 11. How frequently counselors engaged in activities related to postsecondary admission counseling: 2013



Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2013.

or parents about postsecondary admission. More than 40 percent reported that they frequently engage in the following activities: representing students to college admission officers, reviewing student applications, and meeting with parents.

There are variations in the extent to which students at different types of schools benefit from these services. For example, counselors at private schools reported that they engage more frequently than those at public schools in most of these activities. Financial aid counseling was the only activity that public school counselors engaged

in more frequently than their private school colleagues.<sup>11</sup> Counselors at larger schools spent more time meeting with parents and electronically communicating about admission, and less time reviewing applications and organizing college campus tours.<sup>12</sup> Counselors at lower-income schools engaged less frequently in individual meetings with students and parents, electronic communication with students and parents, hosting college representatives, representing students to college admissions officers, and advising students and families about attending college abroad. However, counselors at lower-income

<sup>11</sup> Correlation between private school status and frequency of: group meetings with students (.188), individual meetings with students (.167), advising families on standardized testing (.298), meetings with parents (.257), electronic communication with students and parents (.390), advising students and families about college abroad (.322), financial aid counseling (-.106), reviewing applications (.351), hosting college reps (.197), working with school leadership (.129), representing students to college admissions officers (.368), providing advice about college abroad (.322),  $p < .01$

<sup>12</sup> Correlation between enrollment and frequency of: meeting with parents (.107), reviewing applications (-.126), organizing college tours (-.144), electronic communication with students and parents (.125)  $p < .01$

Table 23. Public school student-to-counselor ratios by state: 2011-12 (continued on next page)

State	Students	Counselors	Students
Alabama	744,621	1,773	420
Alaska	131,167	323	406
Arizona	1,080,319	1,252	863
Arkansas	483,114	1,530	316
California	6,287,834	7,683	818
Colorado	854,265	2,159	396
Connecticut	554,437	1,103	503
Delaware	128,946	290	445
District of Columbia	73,911	247	300
Florida	2,668,156	5,555	480
Georgia	1,685,016	3,577	471
Hawaii	182,706	627	292
Idaho	279,873	547	511
Illinois	2,083,097	3,132	665
Indiana	1,040,765	1,946	535
Iowa	495,870	1,168	425
Kansas	486,108	1,071	454
Kentucky	681,987	1,496	456
Louisiana	703,390	1,918	367
Maine	188,969	1,097	172
Maryland	854,086	2,345	364
Massachusetts	953,369	2,195	434
Michigan	1,573,537	2,196	717
Minnesota	839,738	1,096	766
Mississippi	490,619	1,106	444
Missouri	916,584	2,573	356
Montana	142,349	452	315
Nebraska	301,296	796	379
Nevada	439,634	886	496
New Hampshire	191,900	808	237
New Jersey	1,356,431	3,870	350
New Mexico	337,225	801	421
New York	2,704,718	6,757	400
North Carolina	1,507,864	3,925	384
North Dakota	97,646	314	311
Ohio	1,740,030	3,673	474

Continues.

**Table 23. Public school student-to-counselor ratios by state: 2011-12 (continued from previous page)**

State	Students	Counselors	Students
Oklahoma	666,120	1,629	409
Oregon	568,208	975	583
Pennsylvania	1,771,395	4,581	387
Rhode Island	142,854	379	377
South Carolina	727,186	1,829	398
South Dakota	128,016	324	395
Tennessee	999,693	2,887	346
Texas	5,000,470	10,821	462
Utah	598,832	840	712
Vermont	89,908	416	216
Virginia	1,257,883	3,338	377
Washington	1,045,453	2,025	516
West Virginia	282,870	740	382
Wisconsin	871,105	1,852	470
Wyoming	90,099	428	210

Source: Common Core of Data. Elementary/Secondary Information System (ELSi) tableGenerator. (2011-12). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

schools provided counseling on financial aid options and organized tours of college campuses *more* frequently than those at higher-income schools.<sup>13</sup> Student with high student-to-counselor ratios spent less time reviewing applications and actively representing students to college admission officers.<sup>14</sup>

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPENSATION

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON COLLEGE COUNSELING

In 2013, 40 percent of high schools reported that counselors responsible for postsecondary counseling were required to participate

in related professional development. However, only 57 percent of schools with this requirement paid all costs associated with the professional development. Thirty-seven percent paid some costs. Private high schools were much more likely than public schools to require professional development of counselors (54 percent and 34 percent, respectively), and they were more likely to cover all associated costs (69 percent and 31 percent, respectively). Schools with lower student-to-counselor ratios also were slightly more likely to both require professional development in postsecondary counseling and to cover all associated costs (see Table 26).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Correlation between percent eligible for FRPL and frequency of: individual meetings with students (-.171), meeting with parents (-.181), electronic communication with students and parents (-.291), hosting college reps (-.175), representing students to college admissions officers (-.123), organizing college tours (.332), financial aid counseling (.253), advising students about college abroad (-.207),  $p < .01$

<sup>14</sup> Correlation between student-to-counselor ratio and: reviewing applications (-.183), representing students to college admission officers (-.112),  $p < .01$

<sup>15</sup> Correlation between requiring professional development related to postsecondary counseling and: private school status (.191), student-to-counselor ratio (-.106)  $p < .01$ ; Correlation between level of cost coverage and: private school status (.367), student-to-counselor ratio (-.103),  $p < .01$

Table 24. Mean ranking of counseling department responsibilities, by school characteristics: 2013 (1 = most important; 4 = least important)

	Help students plan and prepare for postsecondary education	Help students with their academic achievement in high school	Help students with personal growth and development	Help students plan and prepare for their work roles after high school
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Control</b>				
Public	2.1	1.7	2.9	3.4
Private	1.4	2.2	2.6	3.8
Private non-parochial	1.3	2.3	2.6	3.8
Private parochial	1.6	1.9	2.7	3.8
<b>Enrollment</b>				
Fewer than 500 students	1.7	2.0	2.8	3.5
500 to 999	1.8	1.9	2.7	3.6
1,000 to 1,499	2.0	1.7	2.8	3.5
1,500 to 1,999	2.0	1.7	2.9	3.4
2,000 or more	1.9	1.5	2.9	3.7
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>				
0 to 25% of students eligible	1.9	1.8	2.7	3.5
26 to 50%	2.1	1.7	2.8	3.4
51 to 75%	2.0	1.6	3.1	3.3
76 to 100%	2.1	1.6	3.0	3.3
<b>Student-to-counselor ratio</b>				
100:1 or fewer	1.7	2.1	2.6	3.6
101:1 to 200:1	1.9	1.9	2.6	3.6
201:1 to 300:1	1.9	1.7	2.9	3.6
301:1 to 400:1	1.9	1.8	2.8	3.6
401:1 to 500:1	1.7	1.6	3.1	3.5
More than 500:1	1.9	2.0	2.9	3.2

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2013.

Table 25. Mean percentage of time that counseling staff spent on various tasks, by school characteristics: 2013

	Postsecondary admission counseling	Choice and scheduling of high school courses	Personal needs counseling	Academic testing	Occupational counseling and job placement	Teaching	Other non-guidance activities
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
<b>Control</b>							
Public	23.5	23.5	22.0	14.7	6.5	4.4	5.5
Private	52.2	13.2	13.3	9.2	2.8	4.8	4.5
Private non-parochial	57.8	11.3	9.3	9.0	2.3	5.3	5.0
Private parochial	42.0	16.6	20.4	9.5	3.8	4.0	3.6
<b>Enrollment</b>							
Fewer than 500 students	35.2	16.6	16.0	14.8	5.5	5.8	5.9
500 to 999	36.5	18.2	19.8	11.9	5.1	4.0	4.6
1,000 to 1,499	27.5	24.8	21.1	12.3	5.5	3.5	5.3
1,500 to 1,999	22.4	25.6	25.0	13.1	4.9	4.1	4.9
2,000 or more	27.4	24.6	21.9	10.7	5.8	3.9	5.6
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>							
0 to 25% of students eligible	32.1	21.4	20.9	12.0	5.1	4.2	4.3
26 to 50%	20.6	24.3	23.3	15.5	6.5	4.2	5.6
51 to 75%	20.2	22.1	20.3	16.6	7.5	5.9	7.4
76 to 100%	22.9	22.9	20.1	16.5	8.6	3.3	5.8
<b>Student-to-counselor ratio</b>							
100:1 or fewer	38.7	17.1	14.8	12.1	4.4	6.4	6.6
101:1 to 200:1	36.8	17.5	20.7	11.3	4.8	4.7	4.2
201:1 to 300:1	30.5	21.2	20.1	12.1	5.6	4.4	6.1
301:1 to 400:1	27.4	21.8	20.5	15.2	5.8	4.3	5.0
401:1 to 500:1	30.6	21.3	16.4	16.2	5.7	3.9	5.9
More than 500:1	32.7	23.2	16.8	15.4	6.4	1.9	3.7

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2013.

Table 26. Percentage of secondary schools that require college counselors to participate in professional development and that cover professional development costs, by school characteristics: 2013

	Percentage of schools that require professional development	Percentage of schools that cover professional development costs		
		All costs	Some costs	No costs
<b>Total</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>
<b>Control</b>				
Public	34.1	30.5	47.5	22.0
Private	54.4	69.4	26.9	3.7
Private non-parochial	54.3	77.7	20.1	2.2
Private parochial	54.5	54.5	39.0	6.5
<b>Enrollment</b>				
Fewer than 500 students	41.8	50.0	34.3	15.7
500 to 999	41.9	47.8	40.9	11.3
1,000 to 1,499	34.1	35.1	45.8	19.1
1,500 to 1,999	26.9	23.1	53.8	23.1
2,000 or more	52.6	31.6	49.1	19.3
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>				
0 to 25 percent of students eligible	41.5	36.6	44.7	18.7
26 to 50 percent	27.7	28.7	51.0	20.3
51 to 75 percent	33.3	32.9	47.1	20.0
76 to 100 percent	45.6	39.7	36.8	23.5
<b>Student-to-counselor ratio</b>				
100 or fewer	50.7	54.2	31.9	13.9
101 to 200	48.9	53.2	36.7	10.1
201 to 300	40.4	36.3	44.2	19.5
301 to 400	27.3	34.4	47.7	18.0
401 to 500	32.1	39.3	41.1	19.6
More than 500	28.9	36.8	42.1	21.1

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2013.

# Chapter 6

## The College Admission Office

### CONTENTS

- *Admission Office Staff*
- *Budget and Cost to Recruit*

## ADMISSION OFFICE STAFF

The admission office staff typically includes a dean or vice president for admission or enrollment management, middle-level managers or assistant directors, admission officers, and administrative support staff.

### COMPENSATION

Table 27 shows the median salaries for various admission positions according to results of an annual salary survey conducted by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR). Salaries for all positions vary according to the institution's Carnegie classification, but they vary most widely for higher-level positions. For example, although admission counselor salaries are highest at associate's institutions (\$40,073), they vary only somewhat. The median salary for a chief admission officer ranged from \$74,206 at associate-granting institutions to \$118,248 at doctorate-granting institutions. Chief enrollment managers earned the highest median salary in 2013-14 at \$134,716.

## BUDGET AND COST TO RECRUIT

Admission office budgets include funds to cover expenses such as staff salaries and benefits, publications and mailings to prospective

and admitted students, staff travel for recruitment and yield-related purposes, application printing and processing, website maintenance and enhancements, and other activities conducted by the admission department or third-party contractors. Comparing 2013 to 2012, half of colleges reported that their admission budgets remained the same. After a decline in the proportion of colleges with year-to-year budget decreases (28 percent of colleges in 2009 to 16 percent in 2012), 19 percent had decreased budgets for 2013. Almost one-third (31 percent) of colleges reported a budget increase (see Figure 12).

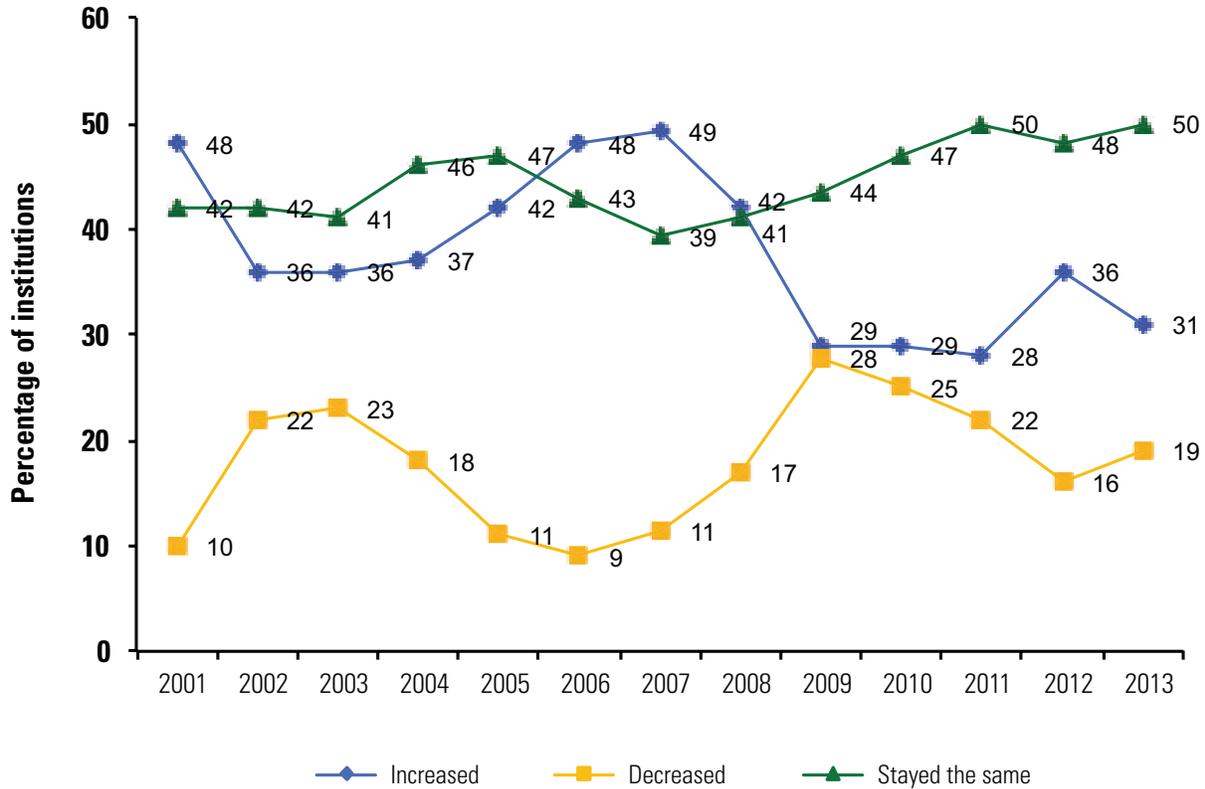
### COST TO RECRUIT

NACAC's 2013 Admission Trends Survey asked institutions to report their total fiscal budget for the Fall 2013 admission cycle. The survey also asked institutions to report the total number of applicants, accepted students and enrolled students, allowing for the calculation of "cost to recruit" figures.<sup>1</sup> In an effort to measure cost to recruit as accurately as possible, the survey also asked institutions to report what categories of expenses were included in the total admission budgets they provided. The percentage of institutions that included each of the expense categories were as follows:

- Admission staff salaries (73 percent)
- Admission staff benefits (55 percent)
- Staff travel expenses for recruitment/yield (100 percent)

<sup>1</sup> Each cost to recruit figure is obtained by dividing the total admission budget by the respective pool of students (applicants, admitted students, and enrolled students).

Figure 12. Percentage of institutions reporting change from the previous year in the admission office budget: 2001 to 2013



Source: NACAC Admission Trends Surveys, 2001–2013.

- Expenses for participation in college fairs and other recruitment/ yield events (100 percent)
- Publication expenses (89 percent)
- Payments made to third party contractors for admission or recruitment/ yield services (94 percent)

Table 28 shows 2013 cost to recruit figures for two sets of respondents: 1) those who included all expense categories except for staff salaries and benefits in their total admission budgets; and 2) respondents who included all of the expense categories, including staff salaries and benefits in their total admission budgets.<sup>2</sup>

For the 2013 admission cycle, an average college admission office spent \$283 in recruitment and office costs for each student who

applied, \$412 for each student who was admitted and \$1,610 for each student who enrolled. When staff salaries and benefits were included, the average cost to recruit figures were \$384 per applicant, \$654 per accepted student and \$2,231 per enrolled student (see Table 28).

As shown in Table 28, the cost to recruit varied widely among different types of institutions. The following examples refer to cost to recruit figures which included all expense categories, including staff salaries and expenses.

- Private colleges spent approximately twice as much as public colleges to recruit applicants, 2.5 times as much for admitted students, and three times as much to recruit enrolled students for Fall 2013.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> About 11 percent of respondents reported data that allowed the calculation of a cost to recruit figure that included all categories except for staff salaries and benefits. Eighteen percent of respondents reported data that allowed the calculation of a full budget cost to recruit figure. All cost to recruit figures were trimmed five percent due to extreme outliers.

<sup>3</sup> Correlation between private college status and cost to recruit (full budget): applicant (.421), admitted student (.576), enrolled student (.692),  $p < .01$

- At every point in the recruitment process—from applicant to admitted student to enrolled student—institutional enrollment size was directly related to spending, with smaller colleges incurring higher costs to recruit.<sup>4</sup>
- On average, less selective colleges spent more to recruit applicants, and institutions with lower yield rates spent more for enrolled students.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 27. Median salaries of admission staff, by Carnegie classification: 2013-14**

	Median salary	Median salary (in dollars) by Carnegie classification					
		Associate's	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctorate-Granting*		
					All Doctorate-granting	Research Universities	Other Doctoral
Admission Counselor	\$36,402	40,073	33,731	35,748	--	37,038	38,438
Deputy Head, Admission	57,064	53,846	52,977	54,735	--	72,475	60,507
Chief Admission Officer	88,080	74,206	79,921	85,797	118,248	--	--
Chief Enrollment Mgmt Officer	134,716	92,776	130,047	135,000	171,652	--	--

\*Carnegie classification categories were reported differently on the CUPA-HR Professionals and Administrators salary surveys. For the positions of chief admission officer and chief enrollment management officer, all doctorate-granting institutions were reported as one category. For the positions of admission counselor and deputy head, admission, doctorate-granting institutions were reported in two subcategories: institutions with high research activity, and all other doctorate-granting institutions.

--Not Available.

Source: College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR). (2013-14). Professionals in Higher Education Salary Survey and Administrators in Higher Education Salary Survey. (Data taken from Executive Summaries of each survey report, available on CUPA-HR website.)

<sup>4</sup> Correlation between enrollment and cost to recruit (full budget): applicant (-.496), admitted student (-.451), enrolled student (-.573), p < .01

<sup>5</sup> Correlation between selectivity and cost to recruit (full budget): applicant (-.294), p < .01; Correlation between yield and cost to recruit (full budget): enrolled student (-.303), p < .01

Table 28. Mean cost to recruit per applicant, admitted student and enrolled student: 2013

	Respondents who excluded staff salaries and benefits from the total admission budget			Respondents who included all expense categories in the total admission budget		
	Mean cost per applicant	Mean cost per admitted student	Mean cost per enrolled student	Mean cost per applicant	Mean cost per admitted student	Mean cost per enrolled student
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$283</b>	<b>\$412</b>	<b>\$1,610</b>	<b>\$384</b>	<b>\$654</b>	<b>\$2,231</b>
<b>Control</b>						
Public	93	145	331	271	382	1,194
Private	349	505	2,102	510	925	3,346
<b>Enrollment</b>						
Fewer than 3,000 students	337	487	1,978	658	1,122	3,722
3,000 to 9,999	159	243	916	387	603	2,381
10,000 or more	69	109	260	184	322	826
<b>Selectivity</b>						
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	149	595	1,261	231	577	1,802
50 to 70 percent	223	358	1,464	445	740	2,524
70 to 85 percent	296	382	1,741	399	501	2,102
More than 85 percent	490	518	2,012	554	791	2,467
<b>Yield Rate</b>						
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	326	448	2,002	426	658	2,916
30 to 45 percent	167	328	1,369	336	699	1,982
46 to 60 percent	534	616	1,309	358	624	1,226
More than 60 percent	68	90	144	365	305	1,434

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

Private colleges spent approximately twice as much as public colleges to recruit applicants, 2.5 times as much for admitted students, and three times as much to recruit enrolled students for Fall 2013.

# Chapter 7

## Transfer Students

### CONTENTS

- *Prospective Transfer Students and Enrollment*
- *Transfer Student Recruitment*
- *Contributions to Transfer Student Success*

Students who transfer at least once during postsecondary education comprise a sizable proportion of the college population, and there is a growing appreciation that the transfer process (particularly vertical transfer), will be critical to increased baccalaureate degree attainment. According to data collected by the National Student Clearinghouse, about one-third of the 2.8 million students who began postsecondary education in Fall 2006 had transferred at least once in the following five years,<sup>1</sup> and almost half (46 percent) of students who completed a four-year degree in 2013-14 had enrolled in a two-year institution at some point in the previous ten years.<sup>2</sup> Research also indicates that the majority of students who are able to transfer vertically—from a two-year to a four-year college—are successful in completing a four-year degree or higher. Four years after transfer, about 60 percent of students who had begun postsecondary education at a community college had earned a bachelor's degree or higher, and twelve percent were still enrolled and advancing toward a degree.<sup>3</sup>

## PROSPECTIVE TRANSFER STUDENTS AND ENROLLMENT

Results of NACAC's 2013 Admission Trends Survey indicate that growth in transfer students is not uniform across institutions. Compared to the 2012-13 academic year, 44 percent of four-year institutions reported an increase in transfer applicants during the previous five years, but nearly one-third (32 percent) reported a decrease.<sup>4</sup> A similar pattern was found in institutional reports of the number of transfer students admitted and enrolled, indicating that, at the institutional level, changes in transfer numbers likely reflect recruitment efforts, rather than overall transfer growth. Not surprisingly, colleges with larger total enrollments were more likely, on average, to report increases in transfer applicants, transfer admits, and admitted transfer students who enrolled (see Table 29).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (2012). *Transfer and Mobility: A National View of Pre-Degree Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions*.

<sup>2</sup> National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (2015). "Snapshot Report: Contribution of Two-Year Institutions to Four-Year Completions."

<sup>3</sup> National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (2012). "Snapshot Report: Degree Attainment."

<sup>4</sup> Results of the survey do not indicate the magnitude of change.

<sup>5</sup> Correlation between enrollment and: percent of colleges reporting increase in transfer admits (.208),  $p < .01$ ; percent of colleges reporting transfer applicant increases (.167), percent of colleges reporting transfer enrollee increases (.166),  $p < .05$

**Table 29. Percentage of institutions reporting change in transfer admission numbers over past five years: 2013**

	Increased	Stayed the Same	Decreased
Transfer applicants	44.0	24.3	31.7
Transfer admits	39.5	31.7	28.8
Transfer enrollees	37.6	29.4	33.1

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

To assess the relative role of transfer students in the admission process, survey results were used to calculate freshman to transfer ratios for applicants, admitted students, and admitted students who enrolled. On average, four-year institutions received 12 freshman applications for each application from a prospective transfer student. For admitted students, the freshman to transfer ratio was 14 to 1, and the ratio for newly enrolled students was 8 to 1. Each of these ratios varied by institutional characteristics, with higher ratios seen at private colleges, as well as those with lower total enrollments, and those with higher transfer selectivity rates (see Table 30).<sup>6</sup>

**Table 30. Mean freshman to transfer ratios for applications, admitted students, and admitted students who enrolled, by institutional characteristics: 2012-13**

	Freshman Applications per Transfer Application	Freshman Admits per Transfer Admit	Freshman Admits who Enrolled per Transfer Admit who Enrolled
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>7.8</b>
<b>Control</b>			
Public	5.3	5.4	3.0
Private	14.8	18.3	10.1
<b>Total Enrollment</b>			
Fewer than 3,000 students	13.5	17.2	9.6
3,000 to 9,999	12.7	14.0	7.4
10,000 or more	5.4	5.5	3.2
<b>Transfer Selectivity</b>			
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	18.2	25.7	15.5
50 to 70 percent	10.0	11.7	6.1
71 to 85 percent	8.4	8.2	4.2
More than 85 percent	9.4	8.7	4.1
<b>Transfer Yield</b>			
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	<i>8.9</i>	<i>14.7</i>	<i>16.9</i>
30 to 45 percent	14.6	17.0	10.0
46 to 60 percent	12.1	15.5	7.5
More than 60 percent	9.2	10.2	5.6
<b>New 2012-13 Transfer Enrollment</b>			
Enrolls fewer than 50 transfers	22.6	30.0	18.3
51 to 200 transfers	11.8	13.2	6.1
201 to 350 transfers	5.3	5.2	2.8
More than 351 transfers	5.0	5.0	2.7

Note: Freshman figures refer to admission of first-time, full-time freshman students for the Fall 2013 admission cycle. Transfer figures refer to admission of all new transfer students during the 2012-13 academic year. Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Correlation between application ratio and: private college status (.381), enrollment (-.225), transfer selectivity (.354), p < .01; Correlation between admission ratio and: private college status (.363), enrollment (-.223), transfer selectivity (.484), P < .01; Correlation between enrollment ratio and: private college status (.319), enrollment (-.198), transfer selectivity (.543), p < .01

For the 2012-13 academic year, the acceptance rate for transfer applicants was very similar to the Fall 2013 rate for first-time freshmen (62.6 percent and 64.7 percent, respectively). However, freshman and transfer yield rates differed substantially. On average, more than half (54 percent) of transfer applicants who were admitted ultimately enrolled, compared to only 33 percent of freshmen admits. Public

colleges were less selective with transfer applicants than their private college counterparts, and they also had higher transfer yield rates. Colleges with larger total enrollments also enjoyed higher transfer yield rates (see Table 31).<sup>7</sup>

Admission Trends Survey respondents reported that, on average, transfer populations on their campuses were roughly evenly divided

**Table 31. Mean selectivity and yield rates for first-time freshmen and transfer students, by institutional characteristic: 2012-13**

	Mean Transfer Selectivity	Mean Freshman Selectivity	Mean Transfer Yield	Mean Freshman Yield
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.6%</b>	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>54.4%</b>	<b>32.7%</b>
<b>Control</b>				
Public	67.7	66.2	61.1	37.2
Private	60.0	64.1	51.3	30.7
<b>Total Enrollment</b>				
Fewer than 3,000 students	63.1	66.7	52.2	32.6
3,000 to 9,999	62.3	62.5	55.2	31.7
10,000 or more	61.4	61.5	59.9	35.2
<b>Transfer Selectivity</b>				
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	33.7	44.5	54.9	31.9
50 to 70 percent	59.6	65.7	52.0	30.5
71 to 85 percent	77.7	74.3	58.5	34.3
More than 85 percent	93.3	87.7	54.4	31.7
<b>Transfer Yield</b>				
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	55.5	66.2	21.9	23.0
30 to 45 percent	61.2	66.1	38.5	22.8
46 to 60 percent	62.2	67.6	54.3	31.0
More than 60 percent	64.8	63.6	71.1	42.4
<b>New 2012-13 Transfer Enrollment</b>				
Fewer than 50 transfers	52.9	61.0	49.1	31.1
51 to 200 transfers	63.9	69.7	51.6	28.5
201 to 350 transfers	73.2	71.2	54.9	34.3
More than 350 transfers	65.7	64.0	61.5	36.3

Note: Freshman figures refer to admission of first-time, full-time freshmen students for the Fall 2013 admission cycle. Transfer figures refer to admission of transfer students during the 2012-13 academic year. Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Correlation between public college status and: transfer yield (.308),  $p < .01$ ; transfer selectivity (-.161),  $p < .05$ ; Correlation between total enrollment and: transfer yield (.221),  $p < .01$

between students who transferred from community colleges and those who transferred from other four-year institutions. However, at public institutions, two-thirds of transfer students had most recently been enrolled at a community college. Larger colleges and those with lower transfer selectivity rates also have higher proportions of two-year college transfers (see Table 32).<sup>8</sup>

## TRANSFER STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Four-year colleges are anticipating that the role of transfer students in the overall recruitment strategy will either become more important (58 percent) or stay the same (41 percent) over the next three years. Public institutions were somewhat more likely than privates to rate transfer students as more important in their recruitment strategies (67 percent and 54 percent, respectively). Very few colleges in any institutional category expected transfer students to become less important (see Table 33).

About two-thirds of institutions begin each enrollment cycle with a predetermined target for transfer enrollment. The smallest colleges—defined as fewer than 3,000 total undergraduates—were much less likely than larger colleges to have a specific transfer enrollment target, as were those with the smallest number of transfer students (fewer than 50) (see Table 34). All colleges admit transfer students during the fall term, and only 6 percent limit transfer enrollment to the fall term. About 90 percent also admit transfers in the spring, 43 percent in the summer, and 18 percent in the winter.

Institutions employed a variety of transfer recruitment strategies. Nearly all respondent institutions (97 percent) had information on their websites about transfer admission, followed by college fairs as the next most common activity (87 percent). Four-year colleges also reported that engagement with community colleges was important to their recruitment strategy. Eighty percent participated in partnerships with community colleges, and 70 percent held recruitment events on community college campuses (see Figure 13). The relative value of these recruitment strategies varied by institutional characteristics. For example, a greater proportion of public colleges than privates utilized college fairs, specialized campus visits, and community college partnerships. Colleges with more selective transfer admission were less likely to engage in each of these recruitment activities, as well as events on community college campuses.<sup>9</sup> Larger colleges—as measured by total undergraduate enrollment—and those with larger transfer populations were more likely to host specialized campus visits.<sup>10</sup> The use of admission counselors that work exclusively with prospective transfer students also was a common practice, with 80 percent of survey respondents reporting this recruitment structure.

**Table 32. Mean percentage of newly enrolled transfer students at four-year colleges who transferred from a two-year institution: 2012-13**

	Mean
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.2%</b>
<b>Control</b>	
Public	66.0
Private	48.3
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	
Fewer than 3,000 students	48.2
3,000 to 9,999	56.4
10,000 or more	64.4
<b>Transfer Selectivity</b>	
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	43.8
50 to 70 percent	53.3
71 to 85 percent	64.9
More than 85 percent	56.7
<b>Transfer Yield</b>	
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	70.6
30 to 45 percent	49.2
46 to 60 percent	56.8
More than 60 percent	51.2
<b>New 2012-13 Transfer Enrollment</b>	
Enrolls fewer than 50 transfers	38.1
51 to 200 transfers	54.1
201 to 350 transfers	64.5
More than 351 transfers	64.5

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Correlation between percentage of transfers from two-year colleges and: public college status (.328), transfer selectivity (-.284),  $p < .01$ ; enrollment (.203),  $p < .05$

<sup>9</sup> Correlation between transfer selectivity and engaging in various transfer recruitment activities: college fairs (-.400), specialized campus visit (.200), community college partnership (.229),  $p < .01$ ; community college events (.169),  $p < .05$

<sup>10</sup> Correlation between hosting specialized campus visit and: total enrollment (.280), new transfer enrollment (.260.),  $p < .01$

**Table 33. Colleges' expectations about how the importance of transfer students to overall recruitment strategy will develop over the next three years, by institutional characteristics: 2013**

	More Important	Stay the same	Less important
<b>Total</b>	<b>57.9%</b>	<b>40.5%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
<b>Control</b>			
Public	67.1	31.7	1.2
Private	53.5	44.7	1.8
<b>Total Enrollment</b>			
Fewer than 3,000 students	55.7	42.7	1.5
3,000 to 9,999	59.4	37.5	3.1
10,000 or more	56.8	43.2	0.0
<b>Transfer Selectivity</b>			
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	40.3	58.1	1.6
50 to 70 percent	67.5	31.2	1.3
71 to 85 percent	60.4	35.4	4.2
More than 85 percent	61.5	38.5	0.0
<b>Transfer Yield</b>			
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	<i>83.3</i>	<i>16.7</i>	<i>0.0</i>
30 to 45 percent	56.5	40.3	3.2
46 to 60 percent	65.1	33.7	1.2
More than 60 percent	47.2	51.4	1.4
<b>New 2012-13 Transfer Enrollment</b>			
Enrolls fewer than 50 transfers	44.8	53.4	1.7
51 to 200 transfers	58.1	39.2	2.7
201 to 350 transfers	61.9	38.1	0.0
More than 351 transfers	65.3	33.3	1.3

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

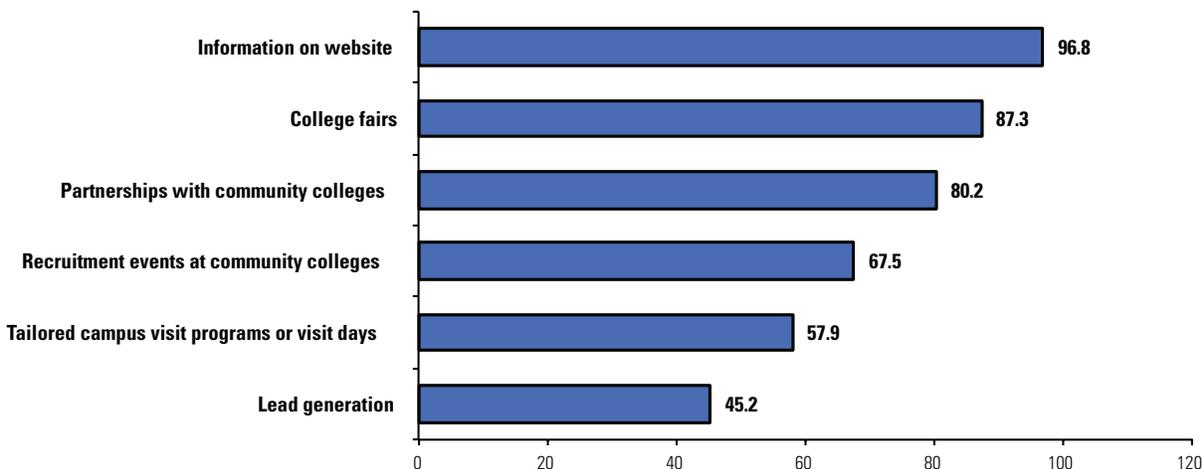
Articulation agreements are an increasingly common way in which both state systems and individual institutions attempt to streamline the process of credit transfer, and they are most often associated with partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions to support vertical transfer. Articulation agreements with community colleges were common among survey respondents (77 percent). Several institutional characteristics were associated with an increased likelihood of participating in two-year/four-year articulation, including public college status, larger enrollment size (both total enrollment and

new transfer enrollment), and higher transfer acceptance rates (see Table 35).<sup>11</sup>

Relationships with community colleges that support transfer also can be quantified in terms of communication across campuses. Forty percent of Admission Trends Survey respondents reported that they have frequent contact with staff members at community colleges, and thirty-five percent reported occasional contact. More than half of public colleges (52 percent) reported frequent communication, compared to 34 percent of privates. Colleges with larger total

<sup>11</sup> Correlation between participation in two-year/four-year articulation and: total enrollment (.166), new transfer enrollment (.209), selectivity (-.293),  $p < .01$

Figure 13. Percentage of institutions offering separate orientation for transfer students, by institutional characteristics: 2013



enrollments and larger populations of new transfer students also were more likely to report frequent communication. College with high selectivity for transfer applicants communicated less frequently with community colleges (see Table 36).<sup>12</sup>

Articulation agreements with other four-year colleges were much less common, though public colleges were twice as likely as privates to participate in these types of agreements (22 percent and 11 percent respectively). Larger colleges also participated in four-year/four-year articulation agreements at a higher rate (see Table 35).<sup>13</sup>

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

The 2013 Admission Trends Survey assessed the degree to which four-year colleges contribute to transfer student success in the following ways: availability of financial aid; predictable and timely assignment of transfer credits; and special programs to integrate

transfer students. A slight majority of survey respondents (53 percent) reported having grant aid that is reserved specifically for transfer students. Other institutions awarded aid to transfer students from funds available to the entire entering class. The most selective institutions—those enrolling fewer than 50 percent of transfer applicants—were somewhat less likely to set aside dedicated grant aid for transfer students (see Table 37).<sup>14</sup>

To support transfer students in making informed decisions about postsecondary education, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of four-year institutions provide a credit transfer evaluation with the admission offer, and another 32 percent provide it prior to registration for the subsequent term. In addition, a large majority of institutions (88 percent) allow transfer students to appeal transfer credit decisions.

Many institutions offer a separate orientation for transfer students. Nearly 90 percent of public four-year colleges offer this opportunity for new transfer students, and nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of private colleges do so. Colleges with larger total enrollments and larger cohorts of newly enrolled transfer students are most likely to offer a separate orientation program (see Table 38).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Correlation between frequency of communication with community colleges and: public college status (.218), total enrollment (.262), new transfer enrollment (.277), transfer selectivity (-.233),  $p < .01$

<sup>13</sup> Correlation between participation in four-year/four-year articulation and: total enrollment (.189),  $p < .01$

<sup>14</sup> Correlation between dedicated grant aid for transfer students and: transfer selectivity (-.149),  $p < .05$

<sup>15</sup> Correlation between offering separate orientation and: total enrollment (.291), new transfer enrollment (.233),  $p < .01$

**Table 34. Percentage of institutions with a pre-determined target for transfer enrollment, by institutional characteristics: 2012-13**

	Percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.5%</b>
<b>Control</b>	
Public	70.0
Private	63.3
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	
Fewer than 3,000 students	59.5
3,000 to 9,999	76.2
10,000 or more	73.8
<b>Transfer Selectivity</b>	
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	64.5
50 to 70 percent	68.4
71 to 85 percent	66.7
More than 85 percent	70.0
<b>Transfer Yield</b>	
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	83.3
30 to 45 percent	66.1
46 to 60 percent	72.9
More than 60 percent	60.3
<b>New 2012-13 Transfer Enrollment</b>	
Enrolls fewer than 50 transfers	48.3
51 to 200 transfers	71.1
201 to 350 transfers	76.2
More than 351 transfers	75.3

Note: Italicized figures should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 institutions per cell).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

**Table 35. Percentage of colleges participating in one or more articulation agreements, by institutional characteristics: 2013**

	Agreement with community college(s)	Agreement with other four-year college(s)
<b>Total</b>	<b>77.0%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>
<b>Control</b>		
Public	90.4	22.4
Private	70.4	11.5
<b>Total Enrollment</b>		
Fewer than 3,000 students	69.5	12.1
3,000 to 9,999	81.5	14.3
10,000 or more	90.9	24.4
<b>Transfer Selectivity</b>		
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	59.7	15.8
50 to 70 percent	82.1	15.1
71 to 85 percent	91.7	15.6
More than 85 percent	80.0	16.7
<b>Transfer Yield</b>		
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	66.7	0.0
30 to 45 percent	72.6	7.0
46 to 60 percent	82.8	16.3
More than 60 percent	76.7	21.7
<b>New 2012-13 Transfer Enrollment</b>		
Enrolls fewer than 50 transfers	56.9	9.4
51 to 200 transfers	77.6	12.7
201 to 350 transfers	85.7	5.6
More than 351 transfers	92.0	23.9

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

**Table 36. Percentage of four-year colleges reporting “frequent communication” with community college staff, by institutional characteristics: 2013**

	Percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>40.3%</b>
<b>Control</b>	
Public	52.4
Private	34.3
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	
Fewer than 3,000 students	31.5
3,000 to 9,999	46.2
10,000 or more	60.5
<b>Transfer Selectivity</b>	
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	30.6
50 to 70 percent	43.4
71 to 85 percent	52.1
More than 85 percent	42.5
<b>Transfer Yield</b>	
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	<i>50.0</i>
30 to 45 percent	27.4
46 to 60 percent	43.0
More than 60 percent	51.4
<b>New 2012-13 Transfer Enrollment</b>	
Enrolls fewer than 50 transfers	12.1
51 to 200 transfers	39.5
201 to 350 transfers	55.0
More than 351 transfers	62.2

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

**Table 37. Percentage of institutions with grant aid that is dedicated for transfer students, by institutional characteristics: 2013**

	Percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.3%</b>
<b>Control</b>	
Public	46.0
Private	56.3
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	
Fewer than 3,000 students	53.9
3,000 to 9,999	60.3
10,000 or more	40.5
<b>Transfer Selectivity</b>	
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	40.0
50 to 70 percent	58.7
71 to 85 percent	58.3
More than 85 percent	56.4
<b>Transfer Yield</b>	
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	<i>66.7</i>
30 to 45 percent	47.5
46 to 60 percent	57.8
More than 60 percent	51.4
<b>New 2012-13 Transfer Enrollment</b>	
Enrolls fewer than 50 transfers	39.3
51 to 200 transfers	59.5
201 to 350 transfers	81.0
More than 351 transfers	47.9

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

**Table 38. Percentage of institutions offering separate orientation for transfer students, by institutional characteristics: 2013**

	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>72.1%</b>
<b>Control</b>	
Public	89.2
Private	63.7
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	
Fewer than 3,000 students	61.5
3,000 to 9,999	80.0
10,000 or more	97.7
<b>Transfer Selectivity</b>	
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	75.4
50 to 70 percent	70.5
71 to 85 percent	85.4
More than 85 percent	67.5
<b>Transfer Yield</b>	
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	66.7
30 to 45 percent	72.6
46 to 60 percent	70.9
More than 60 percent	78.1
<b>New 2012-13 Transfer Enrollment</b>	
Enrolls fewer than 50 transfers	63.2
51 to 200 transfers	63.2
201 to 350 transfers	76.2
More than 351 transfers	90.7

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 institutions).

Source: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2013.

Many institutions offer a separate orientation for transfer students. Nearly 90 percent of public four-year colleges offer this opportunity for new transfer students, and nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of private colleges do so.

# Chapter 8

## International Education

### CONTENTS

- *College Admission Counseling in the Global Context*
- *International Students at US Institutions*
- *US Students Pursuing Education Abroad*
- *Trends to Watch*
  - *International Student Enrollment at US Community Colleges*
  - *Pathway Programs and Conditional Admission at US Institutions*
  - *Increased Demand for English Instruction and Internationally Recognized Curricula*
  - *Other Countries' Efforts to Support Outbound Mobility*
  - *Other Countries' Efforts to Grow International Student Enrollment At Home*

by Lindsay Addington, *NACAC Assistant Director of International Initiatives*  
and Eddie West, *NACAC Director of International Initiatives*

## COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELING IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

American education has historically been defined by local control and a tradition of students undergoing formal schooling close to home. Due to state and local responsibility for education, and the affordability and convenience close proximity affords, the vast majority of students in the US attend their neighborhood elementary, middle, and high schools. Postsecondary educational patterns are much the same. Comparatively few American students cross state borders to pursue higher education, and undertaking degree studies in another country is even more uncommon. For most college counselors, this has meant advising American students on applying to local or regional institutions. And for most college and university admission professionals, this has meant recruiting in-state or neighboring-state students.

However, times are changing, and boundaries are blurring. Myriad factors are influencing student mobility patterns—fluctuating student demographics, decreasing state funding and increasing tuition, and growing interconnectedness between countries to name but a few. Some American students may now find best fit institutions—academically and financially—across the country or even outside the US. Meanwhile, the inbound flow of international students to US institutions continues apace—to colleges, universities, and increasingly high schools as well. All told, US institutions have expanded the scope of their student enrollment activities by initiating or increasing recruitment internationally, and college counselors are working with a more diverse group of students exploring a more diverse set of institutions.

NACAC's 2014 *Career Paths for Admission Officers* survey report stated, "[A]s the emphasis on international recruitment and partnerships in higher education increases, admission leaders will need to become more globally-focused and knowledgeable to

advance themselves and the profession.”<sup>1</sup> Recent trends suggest that secondary school professionals will need to adapt as well. In a 2014 NACAC membership survey of college counselors and admission professionals more than 75 percent of members reported that some of their professional activities involve international education. These findings reflect several student mobility trends affecting the field:

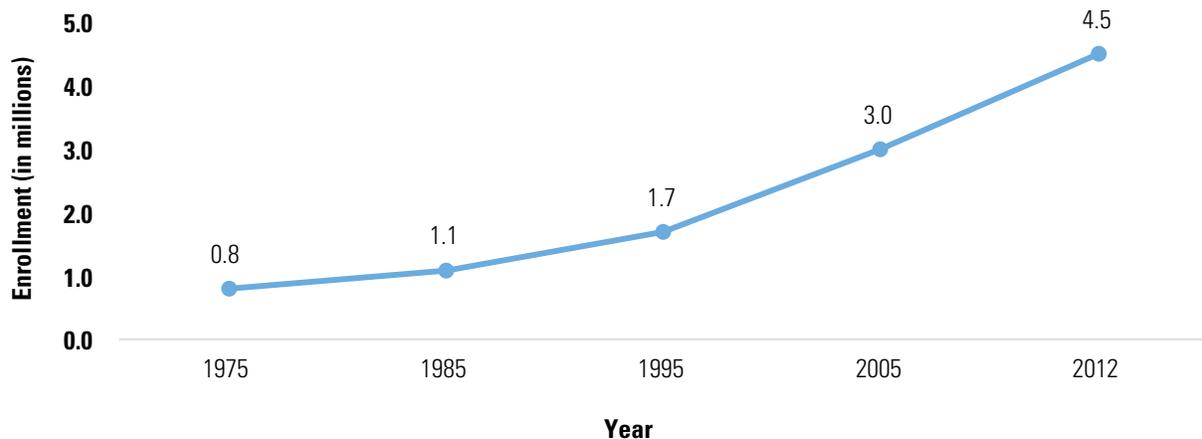
- Between 1975 and 2012, the number of students enrolled in tertiary education outside of their country of citizenship grew from 0.8 million to 4.5 million (see Figure 14). This number has been forecast to exceed 7 million by 2025. The US is the top host country of these internationally mobile students.
- A growing population of international students is seeking high school diplomas at American high schools. In 2013, 73,019 international students were pursuing a secondary-level education in the US, with 48,632 (67 percent) enrolled for a full diploma.<sup>2</sup> The number of international students pursuing high school diplomas more than tripled from fall 2004 to fall 2013, while the number of exchange students grew only 13 percent over that same period (Farrugia, 2014).

- More US citizens are pursuing full undergraduate degrees abroad than ever before. In 2011-12, the most recent year for which data are available, American enrollments in undergraduate degree programs outside the US grew by approximately 11 percent.<sup>3</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT US INSTITUTIONS

US higher education institutions have hosted international students for decades (see Figure 15). However, the majority of international student enrollments have historically been concentrated at a relatively small number of US institutions—largely universities. In the 2013-14 academic year, nearly 70 percent of international students attended just 200 institutions.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, a preponderance of international student enrollment activity occurs in a relatively small number of US states. Nearly forty-three percent of all international students in the US attended institutions in just five states in 2013-14 (IIE, *Open*

Figure 14. Number of Students Enrolled in Tertiary Education Outside Country of Citizenship, 1975-2012



Source: Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), *Education at a Glance 2014*.

<sup>1</sup> Phair, J. (2014). *Career Paths for Admission Officers: A Survey Report*. National Association for College Admission Counseling: Arlington, VA.

<sup>2</sup> Farrugia, C. (2014). *Charting New Pathways to Higher Education: International Secondary Students in the US*. Institute of International Education (IIE). For the remainder of the report, this source is indicated in text as “Farrugia (2014).”

<sup>3</sup> Belyavina, R. & Bhandari, R. (2012). *US Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad*. Institute of International Education (IIE); Belyavina, R., Li, J., and Bhandari, R. (2013). *New Frontiers: US Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad*. Institute of International Education (IIE).

<sup>4</sup> Institute of International Education (IIE) (2014). *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. For the remainder of the report, this source is indicated in text as “(IIE, Open Doors, 2014).”

*Doors*, 2014). According to *Open Doors*, the top five host states of international students at the undergraduate and graduate levels include:

- California: 121,647 (13.73%)
- New York: 98,906 (11.2 percent)
- Texas: 64,277 (7.3 percent)
- Massachusetts: 51,240 (5.8 percent)
- Illinois: 42,527 (4.8 percent)

However, a growing number of institutions—both those with a long history of welcoming international students to campus as well as newcomers to the activity—are taking proactive steps to increase international student enrollment. In a survey of US higher education institutions in Fall 2014, 78 percent of the 280 responding colleges and universities reported that growth in international student enrollment was a result of more active recruitment efforts.<sup>5</sup> “Pull” factors, like these more active recruitment efforts, along with “push” factors in students’ home countries—such as growing demand for higher education, but limited high quality domestic options—have resulted in a record number of international students pursuing academic study in the US (see Figure 15).

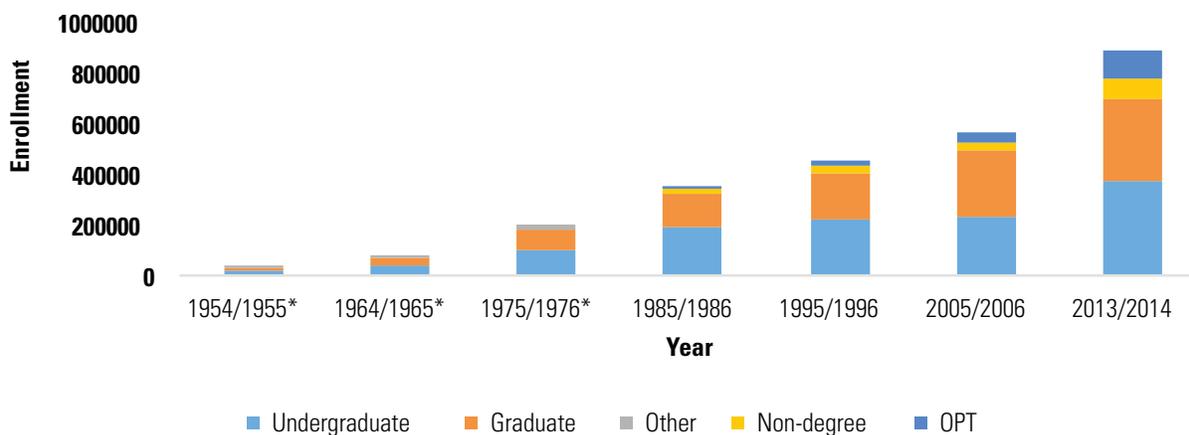
Two organizations issue authoritative reports on international student enrollment in the US—the Institute of International Education (IIE) and the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS). IIE’s annual *Open Doors* report provides institutionally-reported statistics on the number of international students enrolled at the US colleges and universities that participate in the *Open Doors* survey. DHS provides international student enrollment statistics via its quarterly *SEVIS by the Numbers* reports, using real-time data from the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) database, which tracks the status of nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors to the US.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY ACADEMIC LEVEL

### POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

IIE reported that in the 2013-14 academic year a record 886,052 international students were studying in US colleges and universities, representing an 8 percent growth over the previous year (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014). A total of 700,578 international students were pursuing degrees at US institutions at the associates (69,580), bachelor’s (301,144) and graduate level (329,854). By way of comparison,

Figure 15. International Student Enrollment in US Higher Education



Source: Institute of International Education (IIE) (2014). *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*.

\* Before 1979, non-degree and OPT students were counted together in *Open Doors* and identified in separate ‘Other’ category.

<sup>5</sup> Institute of International Education (IIE) (2014). *Fall 2014 Snapshot Survey of International Student Enrollment*.

DHS reported that as of July 2014, 778,808 international students were pursuing academic study in the US at the associates (71,184), bachelor’s (318,899), and graduate level (388,725).

Despite slight discrepancies in enrollment figures, one trend is consistent: The growth in international students in the US is driven to a significant extent by China. A notable shift in Chinese student enrollment began in 2008-09 (see Figure 16), making China the leading place of origin of international students since 2009-10 (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014).

According to *Open Doors*, the top five countries of origin for international undergraduates at US institutions in 2013-14 include:

- China: 110,550/370,724 (29.8 percent)
- South Korea: 36,992 (9.98 percent)
- Saudi Arabia: 26,865 (7.25 percent)
- Canada: 13,916 (3.75 percent)
- India: 12,677 (3.42 percent)

Also according to *Open Doors*, the leading countries of origin by rate of growth, with more than 1,000 undergraduate students enrolled at US institutions, include:

- Kuwait (47.2 percent increase)
- Bangladesh (32.2 percent increase)
- Saudi Arabia (30 percent increase)
- United Arab Emirates (26.3 percent increase)
- Spain (22.9 percent increase)

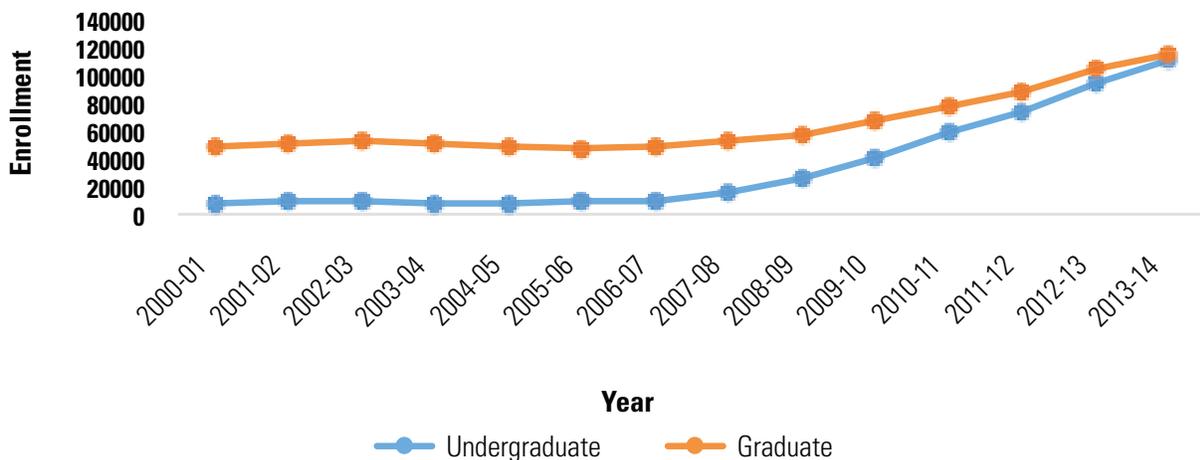
Analysis of enrollment data over time shows that undergraduate international enrollments consistently outpaced graduate enrollments during the second half of the 20th century. However, between 2001-02 and 2010-11, a shift in enrollment by academic level occurred—in aggregate more international students were enrolled at the graduate level than at the undergraduate level (see Figure 17). This shift reverted back in 2011-12, and more recent data show undergraduate enrollments exceed graduate enrollments (370,724 and 329,854, respectively) (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014).

Country-by-country analysis also reveals important dynamics in terms of students’ academic levels. Graduate students from India and Iran who are enrolled at US institutions, for example, far outnumbered undergraduates. In 2013-14, the US hosted 61,058 Indian graduate students and 12,677 undergraduate students. And in the same year, Iranian students in the US numbered 8,254 at the graduate and undergraduate levels, respectively. Conversely, other countries are top places of origin for undergraduate students relative to graduate students. Southeast Asia provides numerous examples (see Figure 18). Many factors influence such enrollment patterns, including domestic educational capacity and a country’s educational priorities and workforce needs. These drivers, and their impact on enrollment, are important to keep in mind when developing an international student recruitment strategy.

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

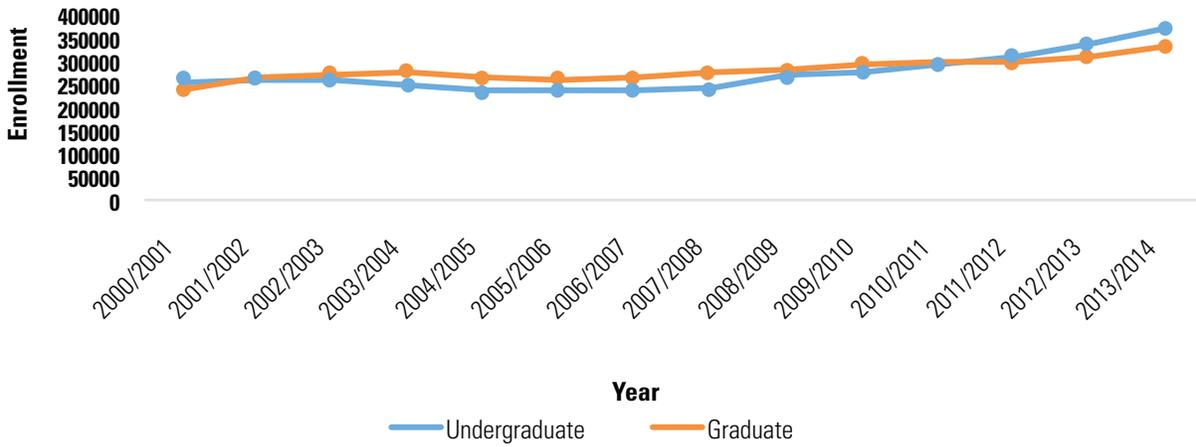
Further analysis of international student enrollment by academic level paints a new picture developing at US secondary education institutions. As international students and their parents explore ways to competitively position themselves and better prepare

Figure 16. . Number of Postsecondary Students from China in the US: 2001-02 to 2013-14



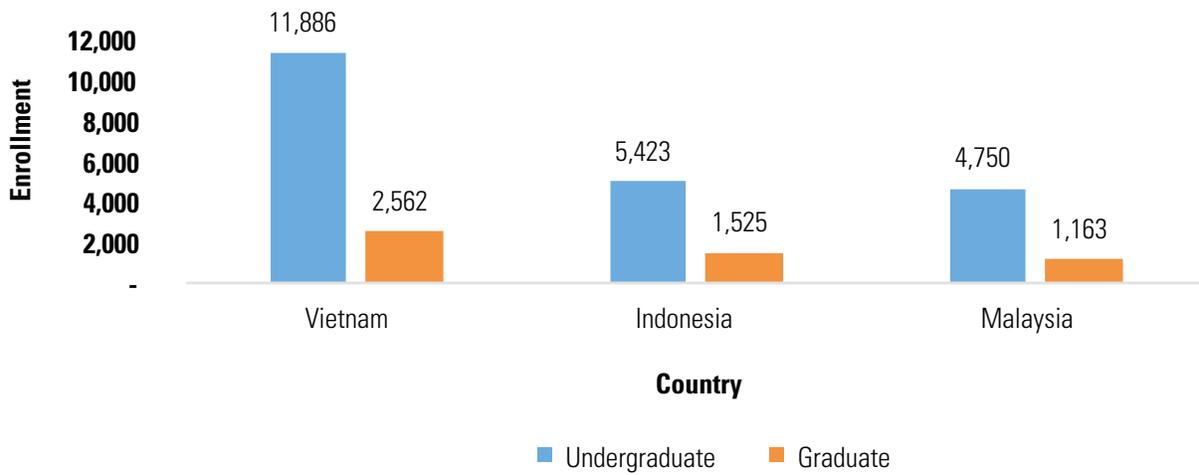
Source: Institute of International Education (IIE) (2014). *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*.

Figure 17. International Student Enrollment Trends, by Academic Level: 2000-01 to 2013-14



Source: Institute of International Education (IIE) (2014). *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*.

Figure 18. Southeast Asian Student Enrollment by Academic Level, 2013-14



Source: Institute of International Education (IIE) (2014). *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*.

for entry and success at US colleges and universities, many are opting to begin their American education at US high schools. IIE’s groundbreaking 2014 report, *Charting New Pathways to Higher Education: International Secondary Students in the US*, documents the number of international students pursuing high school diplomas in the US having more than tripled from Fall 2004 to Fall 2013, while the number of exchange students grew only 13 percent over

that same period (Farrugia, 2014). In 2013, 73,019 international students were pursuing a secondary school education in the US—approximately two-thirds pursuing full diploma studies and the remaining third participating in short-term exchange.

An analysis of countries of origin of international students at US high schools and their host states reveal similarities and differences vis-à-vis postsecondary enrollment data. China and South Korea

are among the top countries of origin at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. Germany, Mexico and Brazil are top countries of origin at the secondary level (Farrugia, 2014), whereas Saudi Arabia, Canada, and India round out the top five at the undergraduate level (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014). It is important to note that secondary-level data are influenced by type of study—direct high school enrollment versus short-term exchange. For example, the majority of students from Asian countries are directly enrolled in high schools as F-1 students, while most students from European countries come to the US to participate in shorter-term exchange programs (Farrugia, 2014).

According to IIE, the top five countries of origin of international students at US secondary schools include:

- China (32.3 percent)
- South Korea (12 percent)
- Germany (9.8 percent)
- Mexico (3.6 percent)
- Brazil (3.1 percent)

Also according to IIE, the top 5 host states of international students at the secondary level in the US include:

- California (17.6 percent)
- New York (7.8 percent)
- Florida (7.6 percent)
- Massachusetts (7.2 percent)
- Pennsylvania (6.3 percent)

The growth in international students pursuing a high school diploma in the US is primarily occurring at private schools. Farrugia (2014) reported that ninety-five percent of international students on an F-1 visa at the secondary level attended private schools. This represents a stark contrast with international student enrollment at the postsecondary level where the majority of international students (65 percent) attended public institutions (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014).

NACAC’s 2014 Counseling Trends Survey revealed that 78 percent of counselors at private schools and 45 percent at public schools reported international students being enrolled at their school (see Table 39). Though a substantial majority (75 percent) of respondents reported no change in the number of international students attending their institution over the last three years, 18 percent reported an increase, more than double the 8 percent reporting a decrease. The percentage of private school counselors reporting increases (38 percent) in international student enrollments was significantly higher than that of public school counselors (11 percent).

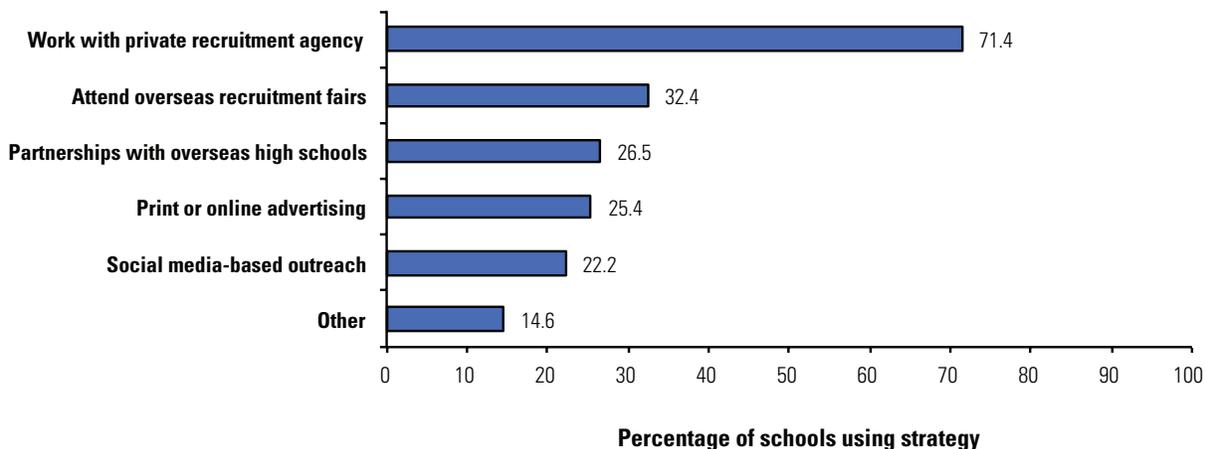
**Table 39. Percentage of secondary schools that have any international students attending, by selected school characteristics: 2014**

	Percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.1%</b>
<b>Control</b>	
Public	45.4
Private	77.9
<i>Private non-parochial</i>	82.8
<i>Private parochial</i>	67.0
<b>Enrollment</b>	
Fewer than 500 students	48.4
500 to 999	52.7
1,000 to 1,499	58.3
1,500 to 1,999	61.2
2,000 or more	53.8
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>	
0 to 25% of students eligible	58.5
26 to 50%	49.4
51 to 75%	38.8
76 to 100%	25.6
<b>Student-to-counselor ratio</b>	
100:1 or fewer	56.0
101:1 to 200:1	50.5
201:1 to 300:1	50.8
301:1 to 400:1	57.3
401:1 to 500:1	58.4
More than 500:1	50.5

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014.

Furthermore, NACAC found that 14 percent of all high schools actively recruit international students. As with enrollment, private schools were significantly more likely to actively recruit international students (45 percent) than public schools (4 percent). Of the high schools that actively recruit international students, working with a third-party recruiter was by far the most prevalent method of student recruitment (see Figure 19).

Figure 19. Percentage of secondary schools using various strategies for international student recruitment: 2014



Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014.

## GLOBAL COMPARISON OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Though the US is host to more international students than any other country—and many American institutions are increasing international outreach and recruitment efforts—US market share of international students is diminishing as global competition rises (see Figure 20). Furthermore, international student enrollment as a percentage of total tertiary enrollment in the US (3.53 percent) is well below the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average (8.38 percent) (see Figure 21). At the secondary level, the percentage of total enrollment is even more negligible, at 0.5 percent (Farrugia, 2014). The relatively low enrollment of international students at US secondary schools, colleges, and universities suggests significant capacity to host more students. Future *State of College Admission* reports will examine whether institutions have set international enrollment goals—or caps—and how these metrics are established relative to domestic enrollment priorities and a desire for diversity among international student nationalities.

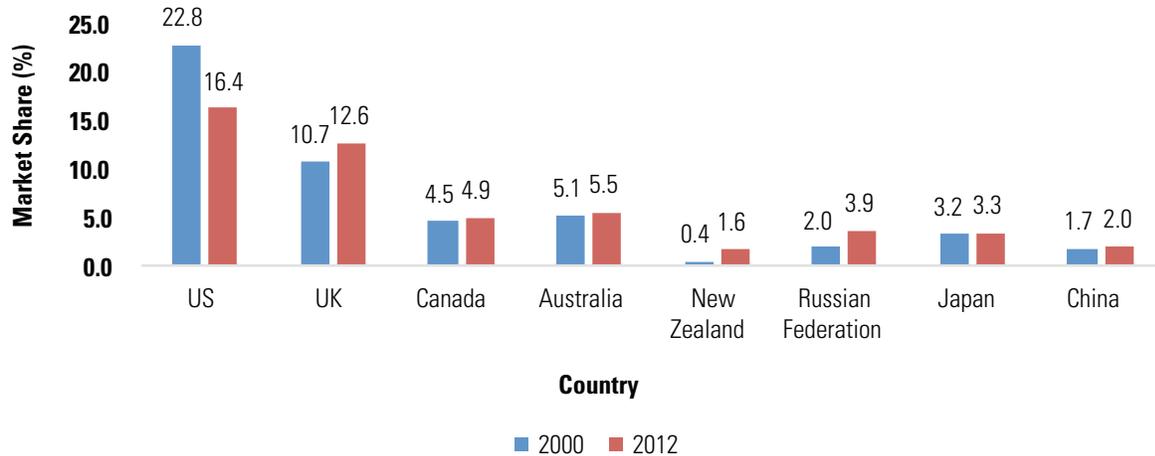
## THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT ON COLLEGE COUNSELING AND ADMISSION PROFESSIONALS

The growth of international student enrollment at American high schools, colleges, and universities is adding a global dynamic to the work of US college counseling and admission professionals. Counselors and admission officers who engage with international students more frequently need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively support them in their academic, social, and cultural journeys.

### IMPACT ON SCHOOL COUNSELORS

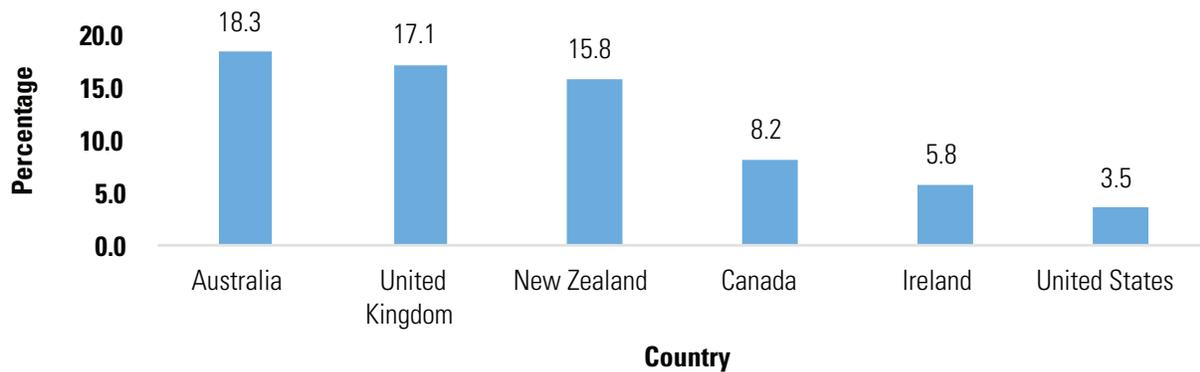
The enrollment of international students at US secondary schools presents counselors the opportunity to work with an increasingly diverse group of students, as well as a new set of professional challenges. Counselors may find themselves responsible for helping international students adapt to a new culture and language,

Figure 20. Trends in International Education Market Shares: 2000 and 2012



Source: Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), *Education at a Glance 2014*.

Figure 21. International Enrollment as a Percentage of Total Tertiary Enrollment: 2012



Source: Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), *Education at a Glance 2014*.

different academic structures and expectations, and a new regimen of extracurricular activities. They may be tasked with evaluating, or at minimum understanding, international students' prior academic work in their home countries, in order to effectively provide college advising services. Additionally, counselors are often expected to engage parents of international students, who often live thousands of miles away and who may not speak English. Further still, they

must help students balance their own expectations with those of parents, and possibly agents, regarding college and university selection. Counselors new to working with international students also must navigate college and university application requirements and admission criteria specific to international students, such as English-language proficiency requirements, which vary from institution to institution.

NACAC's 2014 Counseling Trends Survey found that 79 percent of counselors felt either "slightly" or "not at all" prepared to advise international students on financial aid opportunities for college. Similarly, 69 percent of counselors felt either "slightly" or "not at all" prepared to advise international students on taking an English proficiency exam. Given the increasing presence of international students at US high schools, school counselors are more likely to need training in these elements of the college transition.

### IMPACT ON ADMISSION PROFESSIONALS

The growth of international students at US high schools affects admission professionals as well as institutional recruitment strategies. Recruiting international students is no longer reserved for only those admission officers who travel internationally. Professionals who remain domestically focused in their recruitment efforts are increasingly likely to meet international students when visiting and otherwise engaging with American high schools. It is thus important that they be well-versed in issues pertinent to this population.

The growth of international students at US high schools also represents a strategic opportunity for higher education institutions to recruit international students without crossing borders. However, it is important to recognize limitations to this approach. The number of international students pursuing high school diplomas in the US is dwarfed by the number of students outside the US that are seeking direct admission to American colleges and universities. To put this in perspective, "for every F-1 secondary international student in the US, there are about 7 international undergraduate students, indicating that colleges and universities will continue to need a robust overseas recruitment plan in order to recruit substantial numbers of international students (Farrugia, 2014, p. 5)."

College and university admission offices typically employ a variety of international recruitment strategies, ranging from campus-based recruitment—activities that can be completed from a home campus location, such as utilizing social media—to traveling abroad to meet with students, parents, counselors, and alumni at schools, education fairs, and receptions. As institutions evaluate recruitment and admission strategies, some are choosing to engage with international student recruitment agencies—a topic that has received considerable attention over the last several years. Data from a 2014 *Inside Higher Ed* survey of admission directors found that 19 percent of American higher education institutions use

international education agents and an additional 19 percent are thinking about doing so.<sup>6</sup> NACAC's recent publication, *International Student Recruitment Agencies: A Guide for Schools, Colleges and Universities*, helps institutions assess their readiness to develop or continue partnerships with agencies, and mitigate risks inherent in the activity.<sup>7</sup> It also highlights the resource commitments necessary to undertake agency-based recruitment responsibly.

In addition to the efforts of individual schools, colleges, and universities, American state and regional international recruitment consortia are growing in number and sophistication. There are now approximately 35 such consortia, through which institutions strategically coordinate and collaborate on international student outreach and related efforts. At the national level, EducationUSA—a Department of State-supported network of approximately 400 advising centers around the world—works with US institutions to promote educational opportunities in America and supports international students with the US college/university search and admission process.

Future *State of College Admission* reports will include data to help admission professionals better understand the changing international recruitment and admission landscape, and to assess short and long-term trends.

### US STUDENTS PURSUING EDUCATION ABROAD

In recent years, a growing number of Americans have pursued educational opportunities abroad. According to IIE's 2013 report *New Frontiers: US Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad*, approximately 46,500 US students were enrolled in academic degree programs abroad in 2011-12. Of these students, 42 percent were studying at the undergraduate level. Though this number is a small fraction of the total enrollment of American citizens in US postsecondary education (21,253,000), it represents 5 percent growth in overseas degree enrollment over the previous year (44,403).

The majority of US students (68 percent) pursued undergraduate degree studies in English-speaking countries, and this was reflected in students' top destinations: United Kingdom (6,085); Canada (academic level data not available); New Zealand (2,089), France (1,967), China (1,028), and Australia (1,003). Humanities and social sciences were the most popular disciplines studied at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Jaschik, S. & Lederman, D. (2014). The 2014 Inside Higher Ed Survey of College & University Admissions Directors. Inside Higher Ed.

<sup>7</sup> West, E. & Addington, L. (2014). *International Student Recruitment Agencies: A Guide for Schools, Colleges and Universities*. National Association for College Admission Counseling: Arlington, VA.

<sup>8</sup> Belyavina, R., Li, J., and Bhandari, R. (2013). *New Frontiers: US Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad*. Institute of International Education (IIE).

Despite the increase in US students pursuing degree studies abroad, NACAC found that most high school counselors in the US have not yet felt the effects of this growth. Counselor respondents to NACAC's 2014 Counseling Trends Survey indicated that students infrequently express interest in attending college abroad, with roughly a third (37 percent) reporting that students "never" ask about pursuing post-secondary education in another country and 47 percent reporting that students "infrequently" ask about the same. Students at private schools appeared to be the most interested in degree studies overseas, with 45 percent of counselors reporting their students "occasionally" or "frequently" ask about these opportunities (see Table 40).

Though limited information exists to help understand the motivations of students who do pursue degree studies abroad, the *New Frontiers* report may nonetheless argue a small but sustained shift in the college-going culture of American students. IIE's recently launched Generation Study Abroad initiative aims to significantly increase rates of study abroad participation by American students. While designed primarily to promote short-term overseas learning experiences, this expansive effort—including 450 institutional, organizational, and governmental participants as of November 2014—may inspire US students to consider degree-length overseas study opportunities. Meanwhile, motivated by the growth in American students considering higher education options abroad, *U.S.*

**Table 40. Frequency with which US students ask secondary school counselors for information related to pursuing postsecondary education in another country, by selected school characteristics: 2014**

	Never	Infrequently	Occasionally or Frequently <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>46.5%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
<b>Control</b>			
Public	45.7	46.2	8.1
Private	7.8	47.2	45.0
<i>Private non-parochial</i>	4.2	45.3	50.5
<i>Private parochial</i>	15.8	51.6	32.6
<b>Enrollment</b>			
Fewer than 500 students	47.6	36.3	16.1
500 to 999	35.0	44.7	20.3
1,000 to 1,499	28.6	57.8	13.6
1,500 to 1,999	29.1	57.4	13.5
2,000 or more	23.9	61.5	14.5
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>			
0 to 25% of students eligible	21.0	60.2	18.8
26 to 50%	48.1	46.6	5.2
51 to 75%	58.3	37.2	4.6
76 to 100%	69.3	25.7	5.0
<b>Student-to-counselor ratio</b>			
100:1 or fewer	34.1	35.7	30.2
101:1 to 200:1	31.5	45.8	22.7
201:1 to 300:1	34.8	52.4	12.8
301:1 to 400:1	40.4	49.1	10.4
401:1 to 500:1	44.1	43.2	12.7
More than 500:1	48.0	40.0	12.0

<sup>1</sup> Due to low response for the "frequently" option (2.8 percent), "occasionally" and "frequently" were consolidated for analysis.

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 schools).

*News & World Report (USNWR)* released its inaugural “Best Global Universities” rankings in October 2014. This new focus entails an evaluation of US colleges and universities in an international context. Despite their methodological shortcomings, these new rankings may be indicative of increased interest in college and university options in other countries.

Statistics on short-term study abroad by US college and university students also suggest students’ growing interest in international experiences. In 2012-13, 289,408 US students participated in study abroad, a 2.1 percent increase over the previous year. Over the past two decades, US student participation in short-term study abroad has more than quadrupled from approximately 71,000 students in 1991-92 to current figures (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014).

### EFFECTS OF US STUDENTS PURSUING EDUCATION ABROAD ON COLLEGE COUNSELING AND ADMISSION PROFESSIONALS

Growing interest among American students in pursuing short- and long-term studies abroad impacts college counseling and admission professionals. College counselors require additional tools to effectively counsel a growing population of students considering overseas study options. And for admission professionals, understanding new factors impacting students’ college decision making is critical.

#### EFFECTS ON SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Counselors working with students interested in degree study outside of the US need additional education and training opportunities and access to resources, due to academic calendars, college and university admission criteria, and application processes and requirements that vary by country. NACAC’s 2014 Counseling Trends Survey results demonstrate that, overall, college counselors do not feel adequately equipped with this knowledge, though substantial differences exist between public and private school counselors in terms of self-reported preparedness to assist students. Seventy-nine percent of respondents stated that they either felt “not at all prepared” (51 percent) or only “slightly prepared” (28 percent) to provide information about pursuing degrees abroad (see Table 41).

Counselors also did not feel prepared to assist domestic students with using federal financial aid to attend college abroad. Overall, 73 percent of respondents said they were “not at all prepared” to provide this advice. Eighteen percent said that they were “slightly prepared,” and less than 10 percent reported being “moderately” or “very” prepared in this area (see Table 42).

The growth in students pursuing short-term study abroad experiences while undergraduates suggests that counselors may also need to be better prepared to advise students about US colleges and universities that offer study abroad opportunities. Counselors may require more information from colleges and universities about their study abroad options—and outcomes—to help students make informed decisions. Counselors must also be ready to support students in communicating interest in study abroad during the college search and application processes.

#### EFFECTS ON ADMISSION PROFESSIONALS

Given growing interest among American students in pursuing full degrees and short term studies abroad, US colleges and universities will need to be increasingly mindful of peer institutions in other countries, in terms of both the competitive and collaborative potential they represent. Institutions in other nations, often with government backing and support, are endeavoring to raise awareness of their academic offerings and position themselves as attractive short- and long-term study destinations for American students. In 2014, NACAC found that approximately one-fifth of US counselors reported receiving visits from college admission officers representing institutions outside the US.

With regard to collaboration, a recent report by the American Council on Education found that US colleges and universities are utilizing international joint and dual degrees as a strategy to deepen engagements with institutions abroad.<sup>9</sup> The report noted that US colleges and universities tended to partner with institutions in countries from which large numbers of international students enroll, and that US institutions use these joint curricular ventures as a strategy for recruiting international students. Other top partner countries include leading study abroad destinations for US students, suggesting that partner institutions may have similar expectations of the partnership in terms of recruiting American citizens.

Admission professionals can play a critical role within the college and university environment in providing intelligence to senior leaders and change agents on campus regarding shifts in students’ interests and the factors that influence their college decisions. The information provided by admission officers may inspire curricular changes to make academic programs more globally relevant, and may serve as a catalyst for the development of relevant global partnerships and education abroad opportunities. As change takes time, admission professionals may consider collaborating with education abroad colleagues on campus to provide information to prospective students and their counselors about opportunities to study, intern, or volunteer abroad, as well as information on related outcomes.

<sup>9</sup> Helms, R. (2014). Mapping International Joint and Dual Degrees: US Program Profiles and Perspectives. American Council on Education.

**Table 41. Secondary school counselors' self-reported preparation to provide information or assistance to US students about pursuing postsecondary education in another country, by selected school characteristics: 2014**

	Not at all prepared	Slightly prepared	Moderately or very Prepared <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>51.2%</b>	<b>27.8%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>
<b>Control</b>			
Public	62.5	27.2	10.3
Private	13.9	29.4	56.6
<i>Private non-parochial</i>	9.4	26.8	63.8
<i>Private parochial</i>	24.0	35.4	40.6
<b>Enrollment</b>			
Fewer than 500 students	56.3	23.5	20.2
500 to 999	46.0	28.0	26.0
1,000 to 1,499	45.7	35.5	18.8
1,500 to 1,999	56.8	28.8	14.4
2,000 or more	52.6	29.3	18.1
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>			
0 to 25% of students eligible	41.9	36.2	21.9
26 to 50%	67.9	24.0	8.1
51 to 75%	75.0	18.1	6.9
76 to 100%	65.9	29.0	5.1
<b>Student-to-counselor ratio</b>			
Fewer than 100:1	38.0	27.9	34.1
101:1 to 200:1	40.2	31.7	28.2
201:1 to 300:1	51.5	29.4	19.1
301:1 to 400:1	63.8	23.6	12.7
401:1 to 500:1	66.4	19.0	14.7
More than 500:1	58.6	28.3	13.1

<sup>1</sup> Due to low response for the "very prepared" option (4.8 percent), "very prepared" and "moderately prepared" were consolidated.

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 schools).

## TRENDS TO WATCH

Many factors affect international student mobility and, in turn, the work of college counseling and admission professionals. In addition to the more traditional secondary-to-postsecondary transition, multiple pathways to and through postsecondary education are now available to students.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT US COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The community college system plays a vital role in US higher education. Community colleges educate nearly 40 percent of students in the US, and several institutions are host to large international

**Table 42. Secondary school counselors' self-reported preparation to provide information or assistance to US students about using federal financial aid to attend college abroad, by selected school characteristics: 2014**

	Not at all prepared	Slightly prepared	Moderately or very Prepared <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
<b>Control</b>			
Public	78.6	15.4	6.0
Private	54.2	26.3	19.5
<i>Private non-parochial</i>	49.5	30.7	19.8
<i>Private parochial</i>	64.6	16.7	18.8
<b>Enrollment</b>			
Fewer than 500 students	73.9	16.4	9.6
500 to 999	67.7	20.9	11.4
1,000 to 1,499	76.5	16.8	<i>6.6</i>
1,500 to 1,999	78.3	18.1	<i>3.6</i>
2,000 or more	73.0	16.5	<i>10.4</i>
<b>Free and reduced price lunch</b>			
0 to 25% of students eligible	74.0	17.7	8.3
26 to 50%	81.8	13.2	5.0
51 to 75%	80.9	14.0	<i>5.1</i>
76 to 100%	73.0	19.0	<i>8.0</i>
<b>Student-to-counselor ratio</b>			
100:1 or fewer	62.5	21.9	15.6
101:1 to 200:1	67.6	20.9	11.5
201:1 to 300:1	74.7	16.0	9.3
301:1 to 400:1	79.4	14.5	<i>6.1</i>
401:1 to 500:1	78.9	19.3	<i>1.8</i>
More than 500:1	75.5	18.4	<i>6.1</i>

<sup>1</sup> Due to low response for the "very prepared" option (1.9 percent), "very prepared" and "moderately prepared" were consolidated for analysis.

Source: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low cell size (fewer than 15 schools).

student populations. Houston Community College System, for example, hosted 5,208 international students in 2013-14, placing them in the top 30 of all international student hosts—including doctorate-granting and master's level institutions (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014). International student enrollment at associate's institutions reached its peak in 2008-09 at 95,785 international students, with slight declines in enrollment each year between 2008-09 and 2012-13. In 2013-14, however, international student enrollment at associate's institutions increased, albeit only slightly.

According to *Open Doors*, the top five places of origin of international students at associate's institutions include:

- China (16.8 percent)
- South Korea (11 percent)
- Vietnam (7.4 percent)
- Japan (6.3 percent)
- Mexico (4.3 percent)

Community colleges afford international students and domestic students alike an alternative and often more affordable pathway to achieving a bachelor's degree. In the US this pathway is often facilitated by formalized transfer articulation agreements with four-year institutions. Because the community college model is relatively uncommon in other parts of the world, campus practitioners and affiliated education organizations are undertaking efforts to better explain the role of community colleges in the US and the diverse educational opportunities available to prospective international students at these institutions.

## PATHWAY PROGRAMS AND CONDITIONAL ADMISSION AT US INSTITUTIONS

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in the US serve as another pathway for international students to pursue degree study at US higher education institutions. IIE (2013) reports that as of 2012, 110,870 international students were enrolled in 274 Intensive English Programs (IEPs). This represents an 8 percent increase from the prior year. IEPs include both non-campus-based private language schools, and programs offered directly by colleges and universities. The top three countries of origin of ESL students are also top countries of origin at the undergraduate level, though in slightly varying order.

According to IIE, the top five places of origin of English as a Second Language students in 2012 include:

- Saudi Arabia (33,136)
- China (17,583)
- South Korea (10,403)
- Japan (10,047)
- Brazil (6,659).

For many years, US colleges and universities have offered conditional admission to international students who are academically qualified but do not yet meet the minimum English language requirement for direct admission. Often, conditional admission depends on the ability of an institution to provide students with the necessary English language training to improve language ability to the level necessary to succeed as a degree-seeking student. Once that proficiency is reached, the condition is removed and the student may begin degree studies.

“Bridge” or “pathway” programs are a more recent, and growing, phenomenon that provide students with yet another road to full degree study. IIE's Fall 2014 Snapshot Survey of International Student Enrollment revealed that 40 percent of respondents offer such a program, 11 percent were developing one, and 7 percent were considering doing so. Students who have not met all of the institution's admission requirements may be admitted into a program in which they take a mix of ESL and credit-bearing academic coursework, the latter being applied towards degree requirements once the student matriculates. Though a majority of institutions develop and manage home-grown programs (77.4 percent), some pathway programs are run as nonprofit/for-profit partnerships with third-party providers (15.8 percent).<sup>10</sup> Some US higher education institutions have seen significant growth in their international enrollments as a result of working with third-party providers, while other institutions are experiencing less positive outcomes and are reconsidering their approach.

Future *State of College Admission* reports will examine conditional admission programming, as well as international student admission through these and other pathways.

## INCREASED DEMAND FOR ENGLISH INSTRUCTION AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CURRICULA

A new report informed by research from Oxford University Department of Education's research centre and the British Council states that “there is a fast-moving worldwide shift from English being taught as a foreign language (EFL) to English being the medium of instruction (EMI) for academic subjects such as science, mathematics, geography and medicine.” In addition to an increase in the number of English-medium international schools, programs such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) are expanding their reach to diverse communities in the US and to other countries around the globe. As English has become a dominant global language, EMI is considered to be a “passport to a global world.”<sup>11</sup>

- English-medium international schools educate close to 3.5 million students in 238 countries. As a sector, international schools have generated an estimated \$34.4 billion in economic activity in 2013, compared to \$20 billion in 2009.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Institute of International Education (IIE) (2014). *Fall 2014 Snapshot Survey of International Student Enrollment*.

<sup>11</sup> Dearden, J. (2014). English as a medium of instruction—a growing global phenomenon: phase 1.

<sup>12</sup> Clark, N. (2014). The Booming International Schools Sector. *WES World Education News & Review*.

- The International Baccalaureate (IB) is expanding its reach. The non-profit educational foundation, aimed at developing students' intellectual, personal, emotional, and social skills to help them live, learn, and work in a rapidly globalizing world, currently works with 3,917 schools in 147 countries, offering IB programs to over 1,228,000 students aged 3 to 19 (International Baccalaureate Organization).
- The College Board provides opportunities for students in and outside the US to take AP courses and exams. More than 1,000 schools in 116 countries outside the US participate in the AP Program (College Board, AP Globally).

Another EMI-related development is the growing number of universities in non-Anglophone countries establishing undergraduate and graduate degree programs in English, a primary motivation of which is the desire to enroll larger numbers of international students. Countries with such programs include Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, and Sweden.

### OTHER COUNTRIES' EFFORTS TO SUPPORT OUTBOUND MOBILITY

Several countries actively encourage their citizens to pursue academic study abroad, and provide the financial support needed to do so. National outbound mobility scholarship programs exist largely to enhance the human resource capacity among a country's citizens. Growth trends in international student enrollment at US colleges and universities can in some cases be traced to sending countries' efforts to support outward student mobility. In IIE's *Fall 2014 Snapshot Survey of International Student Enrollment*, 51 percent of responding US institutions stated that the increase in international student enrollment at their institution was a result of the growth of foreign government sponsored scholarship programs. The Brazil Scientific Mobility Program, which began in 2011, and the King Abdullah Scholarship Program in Saudi Arabia, developed in 2005, are two such examples.<sup>13</sup> International student enrollment in the US from Brazil increased by 47 percent between the 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 academic years. Since the introduction of the King

Abdullah Scholarship Program, there have been significant increases in enrollment of Saudi students in the US each year. Between 2004-05 and 2013-2014, student numbers grew from 3,035 students to 53,919 students, a 1,677 % percent increase (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014).

### OTHER COUNTRIES' EFFORTS TO GROW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT HOME

A growing number of countries are beginning to invest more heavily in improving the capacity and quality of education, particularly higher education, domestically. This includes improvements to existing universities, the founding of new universities, and/or the development of branch campuses or education hubs in partnership with elite universities in other parts of the world. This represents a potentially major shift in global student mobility patterns, inasmuch as students in these countries elect to attend universities in their home countries rather than study abroad. Korean student enrollment in the US may illustrate this phenomenon. Though South Korea remains the third-leading place of origin of international students in the US, there have been steady decreases in Korean student enrollment in America over the past several years, including a four percent decline in 2013-14 (IIE, *Open Doors*, 2014). While this trend is driven to a significant extent by demographic change in Korea and the growth in attractiveness of other study destinations (e.g., China), it has also occurred simultaneous to the establishment of the Incheon Global Campus on the outskirts of Seoul. This campus includes undergraduate offerings by the State University of New York at Stony Brook, George Mason University, the University of Utah, and Belgium's Ghent University. As educational investments increase and quality options improve, countries that have not historically hosted many international students may become more attractive destinations in their own right—perhaps particularly to students in neighboring nations. Many countries are also undertaking major funding initiatives, immigration reform, and enhanced marketing and recruitment efforts to attract larger numbers of international students, in some cases as a pathway to permanent residency or citizenship.

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<sup>13</sup> Engberg, D. (2014). The rationale for sponsoring students to undertake international study: An assessment of national student mobility scholarship programmes. DAAD and British Council.