



**INSIDE**  
HIGHER ED

2019 Survey of  
**College and University  
Admissions Officers**

A STUDY BY INSIDE HIGHER ED AND GALLUP

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# THE 2019 *INSIDE HIGHER ED* SURVEY OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

A study by Gallup and *Inside Higher Ed*



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# FOREWORD

This study addresses important questions about admissions and recruiting policies and procedures as perceived by college leaders grappling with these issues.

Among those questions:

- Did institutions meet their enrollment goals for the current academic year?
- Which undergraduate student populations are the focus of admissions recruitment efforts?
- Are colleges seeking more out-of-state students, and have their efforts been successful?
- How are colleges responding to decreases in the enrollment of international students?
- How are concerns about student loan debt and the value of a college education affecting college admissions?
- What impact have recent scandals in college admissions had on the image of higher education, and are colleges taking steps to assure applicants and families about the fairness of the admissions process?
- Do admissions directors believe colleges should be able to consider gender and race in admissions decisions? How common is it for colleges to take into account those applicant characteristics?
- In light of the Harvard affirmative action lawsuit, do admissions directors think athletic talent and legacy status should be considered in admissions decisions?
- Do admissions directors expect colleges to abandon requirements for SAT or ACT scores?
- How concerned are admissions directors about increasingly competitive admissions at public universities?
- Are admissions waiting lists growing too long, and are colleges using them to avoid rejecting certain applicants?
- Are admissions directors satisfied with the digital tools their college uses to communicate with applicants and to predict whether they will enroll, if admitted?
- What factors are affecting community college admissions?



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# SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS

More than half of admissions directors say their institution did not meet their enrollment goals by July 1, 2019, and just 37 percent did so by the traditional end of the admissions period on May 1.

Other specific findings from the study include:

- Most admissions directors say they were very (54 percent) or moderately (32 percent) concerned about meeting their institution's new student enrollment goals for the 2019-20 academic year.
- As in previous years' surveys, admissions directors are most likely to agree their college is increasing its efforts to recruit full-time undergraduate students (80 percent) and least likely to say the same about part-time undergraduates (39 percent). More than three-quarters, 77 percent, say they are increasing efforts to recruit minority students.
- Sixty-five percent of admissions directors say their college has sought more out-of-state students in recent years, and 76 percent of these admissions directors say their college's efforts have been successful.
- There has been a decline in the percentage of admissions directors who say out-of-state students' tuition is essential to their college — 42 percent currently agree this is the case, down from 48 percent a year ago and 55 percent in 2016.
- A majority of admissions directors, 58 percent, are concerned about maintaining their enrollment of international students. Since last year, the percentage of admissions directors strongly agreeing or agreeing their college needs to increase scholarship offers to international students to maintain their enrollment levels has increased from 42 percent to 51 percent. There has been no meaningful change in the percentage considering using commission-paid agents to recruit international students.
- For a third consecutive year, the percentage of admissions directors who believe their institution is losing potential applicants because of concerns about accumulating student debt is 80 percent or higher. More than nine in 10 private college admissions directors hold this view.
- Private college admissions directors are increasingly likely to see higher levels of student debt as reasonable. This year, 46 percent believe debt of \$30,000 or greater is reasonable, up from an average of 35 percent from 2014 through 2018.
- About six in 10 admissions officers say the recent, well-publicized "Varsity Blues" admissions scandal has hurt the image of the colleges that admitted the students and that of higher education, generally. However, very few admissions directors think the scandal has hurt their own institution's image.
- Admissions directors are more likely to agree (51 percent) than they are to disagree (16 percent) that they are concerned people have lost faith in the fairness of the admissions process at U.S. colleges.
- In light of news reports about parents giving away guardianship of their children so the children would qualify to receive more financial aid, about eight in 10 admissions directors (79 percent) think the requirements under which parents are allowed to give away guardianship of their children should be made stricter.

## SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS (cont.)

- The majority of admissions directors (60 percent) think colleges should be permitted to consider race and ethnicity, among other factors, in college admissions. Private institution admissions directors are more likely than their peers from public sector institutions to say their college considers race and ethnicity, among other factors, in admissions (47 percent vs. 9 percent).
- More than half of college admissions directors (54 percent) say their college requires applicants to submit standardized test scores. Of those who currently require standardized tests, 63 percent indicate it is likely their college will require them 10 years from now — a drop from last year, when 76 percent said this.
- A majority of admissions directors (58 percent) strongly agree or agree they are worried about the trend of some public universities becoming as competitive in admissions as elite private institutions. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) think this increased competitiveness threatens efforts to diversify student bodies at these institutions — an increase from 58 percent last year.
- Most college admissions directors (81 percent) indicate that applicants admitted from their college's waiting list make up less than 5 percent of their college's first-year class.
- Admissions directors' concerns about higher education's public image remain higher than they were four years ago. More than 90 percent agree that higher education needs to do a better job explaining the value of earning a college degree. Also, about two-thirds believe that media reports of unemployed or underemployed college graduates and public discussion of student debt are discouraging students from considering higher education.
- Close to nine in 10 admissions directors say their college uses digital communication tools to interact with students. More than half use digital tools that predict the likelihood of potential students applying to and enrolling in their college (if admitted). Admissions directors who use these tools are largely satisfied with them.
- As community college enrollments continue to decline, admissions directors at those institutions are most likely to say competition from other higher education institutions, public discussion that degrees and certificates do not help people get ahead economically, and insufficient marketing are reasons for those declines.



# METHODOLOGY

This report presents findings from a quantitative survey research study Gallup conducted on behalf of *Inside Higher Ed*. Gallup sent invitations via email to 5,252 admissions directors and enrollment managers, with regular reminders sent throughout the Aug. 13-28, 2019, field period. Gallup collected 336 web surveys, yielding a 6 percent response rate. Respondents represented 148 public institutions, 185 private nonprofit institutions and three institutions from the for-profit sector.

## Total Participation, by Sector

	All Institutions, by Sector				Public			Private Nonprofit		
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	For-Profit*	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.	Assoc.*
Total N	336	148	185	3	45	49	54	94	72	3

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

Note: System offices and specialized institutions are categorized by sector but not by highest degree offering. Consequently, in some tables, percentages for subgroups (e.g., private doctoral/master's and private baccalaureate) may appear inconsistent with the total for the entire group (e.g., all private institutions).

Some sectors do not have data reported due to low sample sizes. Sector groupings are determined based on the 2018 Carnegie Classification for the institution.

Gallup education consultants developed the questionnaire in collaboration with Scott Jaschik and Doug Lederman of *Inside Higher Ed*. Specialty colleges — namely Bible colleges and seminaries with a Carnegie Classification of 24 — and institutions with an enrollment of fewer than 500 students were excluded from the sample. Each responding institution is represented only once in the results. If multiple respondents from the same institution completed the survey, the highest-ranking official's survey was retained.

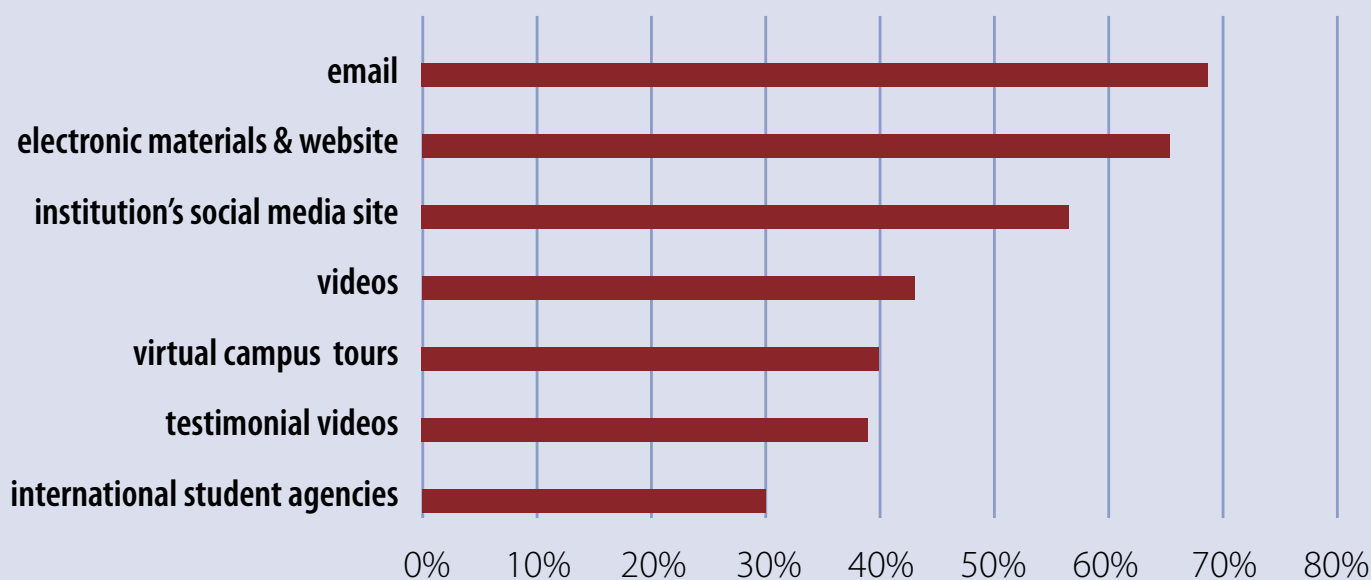
The survey is an attempted census of all admissions directors or enrollment managers using the most comprehensive sample information available. Gallup statistically weighted data to correct for nonresponse, matching the obtained sample to targets for all U.S. colleges and universities from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database. Gallup weighted the sample based on institutional control (public or private/nonprofit), four-year or two-year degree offerings, student enrollment, and geographical region. Therefore, the weighted sample results can be considered representative of the views of admissions directors at colleges nationwide.

The following sections present the findings of the survey. In some cases, reported frequencies may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. "Don't know" and "Refused" responses are excluded from the results unless otherwise indicated.

# Navigating the New World of International Student Recruitment

The current political climate in the United States is causing colleges and universities to become increasingly concerned about recruiting and retaining students from other countries, according to the findings of a new survey titled "Policies and Practices in Enrollment and Student Affairs." The survey was conducted in March 2017, by Maguire Associates of Concord, Mass., exclusively for the TOEFL® Program.

## Tactics institutions are using for outreach to international students:



## Another thing to consider is the current political environment ...

About  
**50%**  
of current  
international  
students are  
concerned about  
recent U.S. political  
developments

Yet, only  
**29%**  
of U.S. institutions  
are concerned  
about attracting  
international  
students

And, only  
**16%**  
of U.S. institutions  
are concerned  
about retaining  
them

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## DETAILED FINDINGS

# STUDENT ENROLLMENT GOALS

As in past years, the majority of colleges are not meeting their enrollment goals by the traditional end of the admissions period. Thirty-seven percent of admissions directors say their college met its goals by the May 1 admissions date, which is similar to the 38 percent who met their goals in 2018 and 34 percent in 2017. Another 11 percent of admissions directors say their institution met their goals prior to July 1, while 52 percent indicate they did not meet their institution's enrollment goals prior to that date.

Private baccalaureate colleges are least likely to say they met their enrollment goals by May 1 (29 percent), though another 18 percent met them prior to June 1. As in previous years, public doctoral colleges are most likely to say they met their institution's enrollment goals prior to May 1, though the 45 percent of admissions directors at those institutions who report doing so this year is nine percentage points less than in 2018, when 54 percent reported meeting their goals by that date.

The 86 percent of admissions directors who say they were very (54 percent) or moderately (32 percent) concerned about reaching their institution's enrollment goals this year is similar to results from previous years. Only 4 percent of admissions directors are not at all concerned about meeting their enrollment goals.

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Did your institution meet its new student enrollment goals this year prior to May 1, 2019?</b>								
<b>Did your institution meet its new student enrollment goals this year prior to June 1, 2019?*</b>								
<b>Did your institution meet its new student enrollment goals this year prior to July 1, 2019?**</b>								
% Yes, prior to May 1, 2019	37	36	38	45	36	33	44	29
% Yes, prior to June 1, 2019	7	4	11	9	3	3	5	18
% Yes, prior to July 1, 2019	4	4	3	5	9	3	5	2
% Not prior to July 1, 2019	52	56	47	40	52	61	46	52
<b>Thinking back, please indicate how concerned you were about meeting your institution's new student enrollment goals this year, that is, for the 2019-20 academic year.</b>								
% Very concerned	54	60	47	41	54	66	54	47
% Moderately concerned	32	32	32	31	41	29	25	36
% Not too concerned	10	7	14	20	5	5	11	14
% Not concerned at all	4	1	7	8	0	<1	10	3

\*Asked of those whose institution did not meet its new student enrollment goals prior to May 1, 2019

\*\*Asked of those whose institution did not meet its new student enrollment goals prior to June 1, 2019

# FOCUS OF RECRUITMENT

As in past years, admissions directors continue to say they will increase recruitment efforts for full-time undergraduates and minority students. Eighty percent of admissions directors strongly agree or agree that they are very likely to increase recruiting efforts this year for full-time undergraduates. Seventy-seven percent say the same about minority students.

About two-thirds of admissions directors indicate their college will make greater efforts to recruit first-generation college students (68 percent), and slightly more, 72 percent, will increase recruitment focus for transfer students. Half or slightly more say out-of-state students (57 percent), veterans and military personnel (52 percent), students older than 24 (51 percent), online students (51 percent), and students recruited with merit scholarships (50 percent) are very likely to be more of a recruitment focus for their institution.

Colleges are less likely to increase their focus on recruiting international students (45 percent), full-pay students (44 percent) and part-time undergraduates (39 percent).

Public college admissions directors are more likely than private college admissions directors to say they will likely increase their efforts to recruit first-generation students, veterans and military personnel, students older than 24, online students, and part-time students. Community college admissions directors are primarily responsible for driving the recruitment of students older than 24 and part-time students. More than seven in 10 admissions directors at these colleges strongly agree or agree they are very likely to increase recruitment efforts for students older than 24 and part-time students.

Admissions directors from private institutions are more likely to say they will increase their efforts recruiting transfer, out-of-state, merit scholarship, international and full-pay students.

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

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Full-time undergraduates</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	61	60	62	52	70	58	70	55
%4	19	16	21	27	21	12	20	21
%3	16	18	14	21	6	23	10	19
%2	2	4	<1	0	2	6	0	1
%1 Strongly disagree	2	1	2	0	1	2	1	5

## FOCUS OF RECRUITMENT (cont.)

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

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Minority students</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	51	52	51	51	45	55	57	44
%4	26	26	26	24	35	24	28	25
%3	19	17	20	26	21	15	13	28
%2	3	3	2	0	0	5	2	4
%1 Strongly disagree	1	1	<1	0	0	2	1	0
<b>Transfer students</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	50	53	46	50	72	47	56	34
%4	22	13	33	31	18	6	32	33
%3	20	25	15	20	8	33	11	22
%2	5	6	3	0	1	10	2	4
%1 Strongly disagree	3	3	3	0	1	4	0	6
<b>First-generation college students</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	41	51	30	38	43	57	38	26
%4	27	22	33	35	26	18	34	32
%3	27	22	33	26	29	19	24	38
%2	3	4	3	0	2	5	2	4
%1 Strongly disagree	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	0
<b>Out-of-state students</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	32	29	36	49	37	21	40	32
%4	25	15	35	27	29	7	33	40
%3	23	23	23	19	22	24	24	20
%2	11	17	3	3	5	26	2	3
%1 Strongly disagree	9	16	2	3	6	23	1	4

## FOCUS OF RECRUITMENT (cont.)

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

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Veterans/military personnel</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	29	38	18	22	34	42	24	14
%4	23	21	25	35	28	16	31	17
%3	34	30	38	36	33	28	35	40
%2	11	8	14	6	5	10	9	22
%1 Strongly disagree	3	3	4	0	0	4	1	8
<b>Students older than 24</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	31	40	19	18	19	53	24	13
%4	20	22	16	20	29	20	16	15
%3	24	25	21	39	32	20	25	15
%2	13	9	19	16	12	5	21	17
%1 Strongly disagree	13	4	24	7	7	2	13	40
<b>Online students</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	29	29	29	27	23	31	36	20
%4	22	26	17	20	23	28	22	5
%3	25	32	14	22	34	34	13	17
%2	7	8	7	15	10	5	6	7
%1 Strongly disagree	17	6	33	16	10	2	22	51
<b>Students recruited with merit scholarships</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	27	19	35	24	34	9	41	28
%4	23	23	23	31	27	18	23	24
%3	36	39	33	38	24	49	30	37
%2	7	10	4	5	9	12	4	5
%1 Strongly disagree	7	9	4	2	6	13	2	6



## FOCUS OF RECRUITMENT (cont.)

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

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>International students</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	24	21	26	26	23	19	30	23
%4	21	18	25	20	23	14	32	19
%3	32	31	32	46	34	27	26	38
%2	12	15	8	8	13	18	6	11
%1 Strongly disagree	12	15	9	0	7	22	5	9
<b>Full-pay students</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	26	25	27	36	19	25	28	26
%4	18	12	24	11	24	9	20	29
%3	35	33	36	38	33	32	37	31
%2	11	14	7	12	14	14	11	4
%1 Strongly disagree	11	15	6	3	10	20	4	10
<b>Part-time undergraduates</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	28	42	11	12	16	57	12	11
%4	11	14	6	12	17	14	9	0
%3	26	24	28	32	26	22	30	23
%2	14	11	17	12	28	5	17	17
%1 Strongly disagree	22	8	38	32	13	2	32	49

The percentage of admissions directors who strongly agree or agree that their college will increase recruitment efforts of full-time undergraduates has remained consistently around eight in 10, while the 77 percent of admissions directors who agree they are focusing efforts on minority students is a six-point increase from 2018 (71 percent) and is the highest measured to date (the item was first asked in 2013).

The roughly half who say they will increase efforts for students recruited with merit scholarships, online students, out-of-state students and students older than 24 is also similar to recent years.

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- Access to Earlier Engagement with Students
- Increase impact of Financial Aid on Student Decisions
- Drive Behavioral Change to Enhance College Readiness
- Improve yield and retention rates

## Student Benefits

- Stay Motivated, On Track
- Early Transparency Into Financial Assistance
- Discover The Right College

## Admit Rate

RaiseMe Students

84%

General Applicant Pool

60%

## Academic Excellence

84%

of micro-scholarship earners felt more motivated to get better grades

## Extracurricular

62%

of micro-scholarship earners felt more motivated to take on leadership roles

## College Discovery

61%

of micro-scholarship earners felt more motivated to visit a college campus or attend an info session

*\*among graduated seniors in the class of 2018 using RaiseMe*

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RaiseMe is bringing the key players together to pave the path to student success. To date, over 2 million high school students have earned over \$5 billion in micro-scholarships from over 300 higher education partners, and counting.

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*RaiseMe gave me an idea about the financial commitment schools had for students; as a low-income, first-gen student, it allowed me to obtain a scholarship to my university and successfully build a portfolio that reflected my accomplishments.*

Amy, University of Chicago



# OUT-OF-STATE ADMISSIONS

Declining numbers of college-age students and declining state higher education revenues have led many colleges — 65 percent according to the reports of admissions directors — to increase their recruiting of out-of-state students. In previous years' studies, the percentage saying their college has attempted to admit more out-of-state students has ranged between 58 percent and 66 percent.

More than three-quarters of admissions directors at private and public four-year colleges say their college has sought more out-of-state students. Only 40 percent of community college admissions directors say the same.

Regionally, at least seven in 10 admissions directors in the Northeast and Midwest say their college has sought more out-of-state students, compared with less than six in 10 admissions directors at Southern or Western colleges.

Most admissions directors at colleges that have sought more out-of-state students say their efforts have been successful (76 percent), though the current percentage is down from previous years (between 81 percent and 85 percent). Public doctoral university admissions directors are somewhat more likely than their peers to say their institution's out-of-state recruitment efforts have been successful.

Seeking higher out-of-state enrollments can be controversial, as many state taxpayers believe public institutions should primarily serve in-state students. Relatively few admissions directors who have sought increases in out-of-state enrollment, 9 percent, report that their college has faced scrutiny over admitting more out-of-state students. The percentage of admissions directors saying their college has faced scrutiny has been consistently below 10 percent in the four years the question has been asked.

As you may know, in recent years some public institutions have significantly increased their admission of out-of-state students.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>In recent years, has your college sought more out-of-state students?</b>								
% Yes	65	57	74	87	79	40	79	78
% No	35	43	26	13	21	60	21	22
<b>Have your college's efforts to seek more out-of-state students been successful?*</b>								
% Yes	76	75	76	84	71	n/a	76	74
% No	24	25	24	16	29	n/a	24	26
<b>Is your college facing political or public scrutiny over admitting more out-of-state students?*</b>								
% Yes	9	20	0	36	12	n/a	0	0
% No	91	80	100	64	88	n/a	100	100

\*Asked only of respondents whose institutions have sought more out-of-state students (n=207)

n/a=Not reported due to small sample size

## OUT-OF-STATE ADMISSIONS (cont.)

Forty-two percent of admissions directors strongly agree or agree, and 34 percent strongly disagree or disagree, that out-of-state students are essential to their college for their tuition revenue. The majority of community college admissions directors disagree, while the majority of admissions directors at other types of colleges agree. Also, about one in three admissions directors at colleges in the South and West agree out-of-state students are essential for their tuition revenue, compared with half of those in the Midwest and six in 10 of those in the Northeast.

Fewer admissions directors say out-of-state students' tuition is essential to their college than said so in the past. The current 42 percent agreeing with the statement is down from 55 percent in 2016 and just under half in 2017 (49 percent) and 2018 (48 percent).

More admissions directors continue to disagree (53 percent) than to agree (26 percent) that their institution would be likely to decrease out-of-state admissions if their state legislature provided more funds. Among public college admissions directors, 45 percent disagree and 31 percent agree with this statement.

The 26 percent of admissions directors who agree their college would decrease out-of-state admissions if they had more state revenue is modestly higher than the percentages measured in past surveys, with the previous high being 21 percent in 2017.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Out-of-state students are essential to my college for their tuition revenue.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	26	17	39	44	20	10	40	40
%4	16	14	19	15	36	5	17	23
%3	23	26	18	22	25	27	19	13
%2	9	10	9	14	5	10	11	8
%1 Strongly disagree	25	33	15	5	14	48	12	16
<b>If my state legislature provided more funds, my institution would be likely to decrease out-of-state admissions.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	15	18	10	27	27	10	9	12
%4	11	13	7	10	10	15	11	5
%3	21	25	15	26	15	30	11	18
%2	16	14	20	26	21	6	14	22
%1 Strongly disagree	37	31	47	11	27	40	55	43

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & PATHWAYS PROGRAMS

International student enrollment at U.S. colleges continues to increase, but the rate of growth has slowed considerably in recent years, according to the latest government figures. The majority of admissions directors remain concerned about maintaining international student enrollment levels — 58 percent are concerned, which is essentially unchanged from 57 percent a year ago. Concern is similar among public and private college admissions directors.

A number of factors may explain the slower growth of international student enrollment, including the high cost of U.S. tuition and increasing competition from colleges in other countries for international students. Some also believe President Donald Trump’s “America First” policies and rhetoric could deter international students from wanting to come to the U.S. to study. More than three-quarters of admissions directors (76 percent) are sympathetic to this view, strongly agreeing or agreeing that the policies and rhetoric of the Trump administration have made it more difficult to recruit international students. The results on that question are also similar to last year.

Turning to possible approaches for maintaining international enrollment, a slim majority of admissions directors strongly agree or agree that their college will need to increase scholarships to international students to maintain enrollment levels, and that pathways programs will become more important to U.S. higher education in the current environment. Admissions directors are reluctant to consider employing commission-paid agents to recruit international students — 38 percent strongly agree or agree, but 45 percent strongly disagree or disagree they are open to using such agents.

Compared with a year ago, admissions directors appear more open to offering financial aid to international students. The 51 percent who strongly agree or agree their college will need to increase scholarship offers to international students is up from 42 percent a year ago. There is no meaningful change in the percentage who are considering using paid recruiters.

**As you may know, the number of new international students in the U.S. dropped this year. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.**

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>I am concerned about maintaining the same number of international students in the years ahead that my college has attracted in recent years.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	34	34	34	30	29	39	34	33
%4	24	24	23	29	28	21	32	17
%3	19	19	20	26	22	15	18	20
%2	16	17	16	16	14	18	13	17
%1 Strongly disagree	7	6	8	0	6	7	3	14

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & PATHWAYS PROGRAMS (cont.)

As you may know, the number of new international students in the U.S. dropped this year. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>The policies and rhetoric of the Trump administration have made it more difficult to recruit international students.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	52	54	51	67	40	57	55	45
%4	24	19	29	22	24	15	27	31
%3	12	12	10	11	19	9	8	14
%2	5	4	5	0	0	7	6	5
%1 Strongly disagree	7	11	4	0	17	12	4	5
<b>Pathways programs will become more important to U.S. higher education in the current environment.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	18	19	18	12	15	24	20	13
%4	33	38	27	33	46	35	31	20
%3	33	27	38	30	32	23	36	45
%2	10	9	11	21	0	9	7	16
%1 Strongly disagree	6	7	6	4	8	7	6	5
<b>My college will need to increase scholarships to international students to maintain enrollment levels.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	25	24	26	26	19	27	31	20
%4	26	21	29	36	28	10	28	29
%3	21	22	21	14	30	20	21	22
%2	12	11	13	11	9	13	13	15
%1 Strongly disagree	16	21	12	12	14	30	7	15
<b>The current challenges in international recruitment make me more open to using commission-paid agents in recruiting.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	22	22	22	9	25	n/a	25	19
%4	16	14	17	26	17	n/a	20	16
%3	18	20	15	26	27	n/a	18	13
%2	9	5	12	4	5	n/a	12	10
%1 Strongly disagree	36	39	33	36	25	n/a	24	41

n/a=Not reported due to small sample size



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & PATHWAYS PROGRAMS (cont.)

The percentage of admissions directors who indicate their college has a pathways program, which combines academic coursework with English language coursework in preparation to enter a degree program, has been relatively stable since the Inside Higher Ed survey first asked about it in 2014. Currently, 32 percent say their college has a pathways program, including half of those working at public doctoral institutions and 17 percent of those at private baccalaureate colleges.

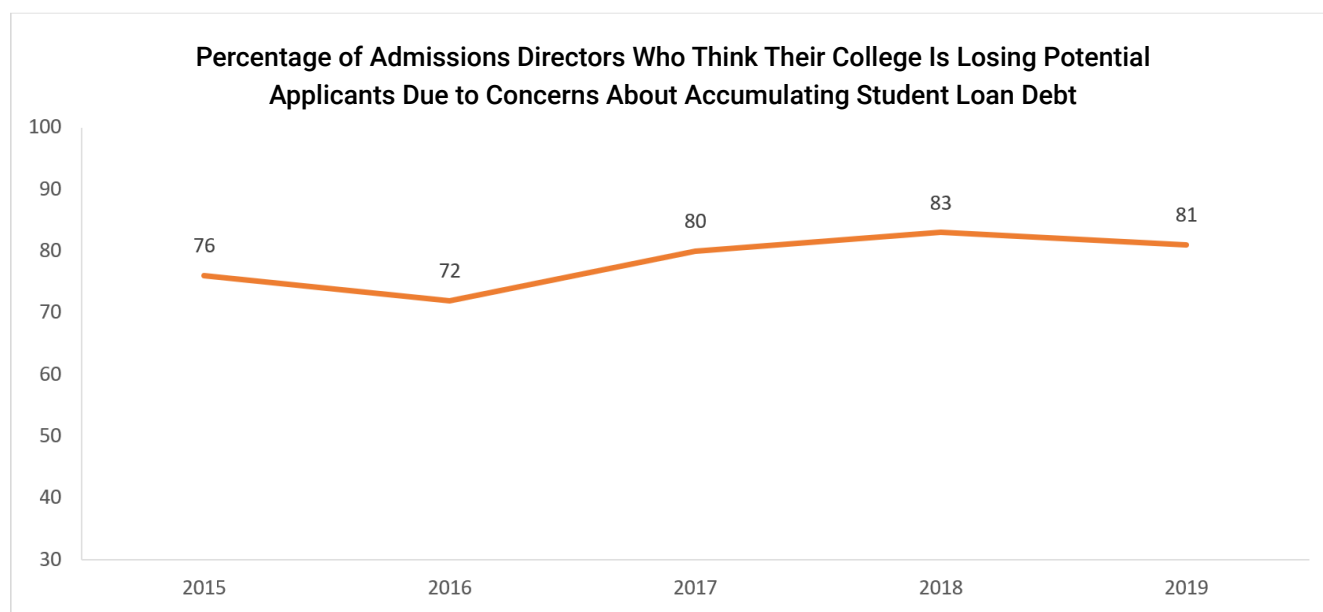
Relatively few admissions directors at colleges without pathways programs — 13 percent — say their college is considering implementing a pathways program.

As you may know, pathways programs for international students — often run by an outside provider or a separate office within an institution — are a combination of academic coursework and English language coursework designed to prepare international students for degree programs in the United States.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Does your institution currently have a pathways program?</b>								
% Yes	32	38	27	50	27	39	38	17
% No	68	62	73	50	73	61	62	83
<b>Are you considering implementing a pathways program at your institution?*</b>								
% Yes	13	12	14	n/a	24	n/a	19	7
% No	87	88	86	n/a	76	n/a	81	93

\*Asked of those who indicated their institution does not have a pathways program (n=187)  
n/a=Not reported due to small sample size

# STUDENT DEBT

More than eight in 10 admissions directors, 81 percent, think their institution is losing potential applicants due to concerns about accumulating student loan debt. The percentage holding this view has been at or above 80 percent the last three years after being below that mark in 2015 (76 percent) and 2016 (72 percent).



Private college admissions directors (91 percent) continue to be much more likely than those at public colleges (72 percent) to say student loan debt discourages potential applicants from considering their institution.

## STUDENT DEBT (cont.)

Average student loan debt for college graduates now exceeds \$30,000. Admissions directors believe that average amount is too much debt — only 29 percent consider debt amounts greater than \$30,000 to be reasonable. Rather, 17 percent consider debt of less than \$10,000 reasonable, 21 percent consider debt of \$10,000 to \$19,999 reasonable, and 33 percent say debt of \$20,000 to \$29,999 is reasonable.

Private college admissions directors are increasingly likely to see higher debt levels as reasonable. Currently, 46 percent believe student debt of \$30,000 or greater is reasonable, up from 36 percent a year ago, as well as the average of 35 percent from 2014 to 2018. In contrast, 16 percent of public college admissions directors consider debt of \$30,000 or more to be reasonable.

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Do you think that your institution is losing potential applicants due to concerns about accumulating student loan debt?</b>								
% Yes	81	72	91	79	79	67	88	94
% No	19	28	9	21	21	33	12	6
<b>In your opinion, what is a reasonable amount of loan debt from all sources for an undergraduate student to accumulate over a four-year period?</b>								
% No amount of loan debt is reasonable	3	4	1	0	7	4	2	0
% Under \$5,000	5	9	0	1	3	12	0	0
% \$5,000 to less than \$10,000	9	15	2	9	9	19	1	3
% \$10,000 to less than \$20,000	21	27	14	28	29	26	12	16
% \$20,000 to less than \$30,000	33	30	37	44	43	22	46	32
% \$30,000 to less than \$40,000	18	9	30	11	4	10	27	33
% \$40,000 to less than \$50,000	9	5	14	6	3	5	11	13
% \$50,000 or more	2	2	2	0	3	2	1	2

# ADMISSIONS SCANDALS

A well-publicized admissions scandal, known as “Varsity Blues,” illuminated the ways that some wealthy parents are defrauding colleges and universities to secure admissions to elite schools for their children. The majority of admissions officers (60 percent) say the scandal hurt the image of the colleges that admitted the students “a fair amount” or “a great deal.” More public college admissions officials (70 percent) than private college directors (48 percent) say it hurt those colleges’ image at least a fair amount.

Nearly as many admissions directors say the scandal hurt higher education generally (58 percent) as say it hurt college coaches and athletes (61 percent); however, very few of these leaders say the scandal hurt their own institution. More than seven in 10 admissions directors say the scandal did not hurt their own college’s image.

**As you know, earlier this year federal prosecutors indicted dozens of parents who paid money to get their children admitted into elite institutions. In some cases, the parents paid coaches to get their child admitted as a recruited athlete even though the child was not a competitive athlete in the coach’s sport.**

**To what extent do you think the scandal has hurt the image of each of the following?**

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master’s/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master’s	Bacc.
<b>The colleges that admitted the students</b>								
% A great deal	17	20	13	20	15	22	10	11
% A fair amount	43	50	35	28	35	60	41	28
% Not very much	34	25	43	44	42	16	43	48
% Not at all	6	4	9	8	8	2	7	13
<b>Higher education generally</b>								
% A great deal	13	16	10	18	15	16	9	13
% A fair amount	45	40	51	37	44	40	49	51
% Not very much	38	39	37	37	34	41	38	35
% Not at all	4	5	2	8	7	4	3	1
<b>Your college</b>								
% A great deal	<1	<1	0	2	0	0	0	0
% A fair amount	2	1	3	2	2	0	3	3
% Not very much	27	27	27	36	30	24	31	22
% Not at all	71	72	70	59	68	76	66	75

## ADMISSIONS SCANDALS (cont.)

As you know, earlier this year federal prosecutors indicted dozens of parents who paid money to get their children admitted into elite institutions. In some cases, the parents paid coaches to get their child admitted as a recruited athlete even though the child was not a competitive athlete in the coach's sport.

To what extent do you think the scandal has hurt the image of each of the following?

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Collegiate coaches and athletes</b>								
% A great deal	14	18	10	13	5	25	8	8
% A fair amount	47	47	47	36	38	54	52	41
% Not very much	33	31	35	39	53	20	31	44
% Not at all	6	4	7	12	4	2	9	7

Nearly two-thirds of admissions directors (65 percent) strongly agree or agree the indictments of parents revealed that applicants admitted as athletes have too many advantages over other applicants. About half (51 percent) strongly agree or agree they are concerned that people have lost faith in the fairness of the admissions process at U.S. colleges.

Forty-two percent of admissions directors say their college has taken steps to assure applicants and their families about the fairness of the admissions process at their college.

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>The indictments revealed that applicants admitted as athletes have too many advantages over other applicants.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	28	29	27	16	22	34	22	20
%4	37	38	36	32	34	41	28	48
%3	23	21	25	30	30	16	33	21
%2	9	11	7	21	8	10	9	6
%1 Strongly disagree	3	1	6	0	4	0	7	5

## ADMISSIONS SCANDALS (cont.)

Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>I am concerned that people have lost faith in the fairness of the admissions process at U.S. colleges.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	13	13	12	7	10	16	7	15
%4	38	37	38	44	22	41	35	40
%3	34	32	36	34	30	33	38	34
%2	13	13	11	8	31	8	15	8
%1 Strongly disagree	3	4	3	7	8	2	4	2

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>In the past few months, has your college taken steps to assure applicants and their families about the fairness of the admissions process at your college?</b>								
% Yes	42	44	40	50	23	n/a	45	39
% No	58	56	60	50	77	n/a	55	61

n/a=Not reported due to small sample size



## ADMISSIONS SCANDALS (cont.)

Recent news media reports uncovered the practice of some parents giving guardianship of their children away so that their children will be eligible for more financial aid. Eleven percent of admissions directors say they have directly heard of parents in their community giving away guardianship to gain a financial aid advantage for college.

In light of this scandal, at least three-quarters of admissions directors — across sectors and highest degree offered — think the requirements under which parents are allowed to give away guardianship should be made stricter. More than one-third (37 percent) say their college will scrutinize applications more closely as a result of the controversy.

It is unclear whether media coverage of these guardianship cases will discourage other parents from trying the same thing for their child or encourage a wave of copycat activity. A plurality of admissions directors (45 percent) think media coverage of the issue will result in more parents attempting to give up guardianship to try and get more financial aid; 17 percent say it will result in fewer parents attempting to give up guardianship of their children. Thirty-eight percent predict no change.

News organizations revealed this summer that some wealthy parents are giving guardianship of their children away so their children will be eligible for more college financial aid.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Should the requirements under which parents are allowed to give away guardianship of their children be made stricter?</b>								
% Yes	79	78	79	75	78	79	77	79
% No	21	22	21	25	22	21	23	21
<b>Have you directly heard of any parents in your community giving away guardianship of their child in order to gain more financial aid for college?</b>								
% Yes	11	12	11	4	17	12	12	9
% No	89	88	89	96	83	88	88	91
<b>As a result of this controversy, do you expect your college will give more scrutiny to financial aid applications in the future?</b>								
% Yes	37	29	44	51	38	21	49	40
% No	63	71	56	49	62	79	51	60
<b>Do you think media coverage of parents giving away guardianship of their children to gain more financial aid will result in:</b>								
% More parents attempting to give up guardianship of their children to try and get more financial aid	45	51	38	42	40	57	37	37
% Fewer parents attempting to give up guardianship of their children to try and get more financial aid	17	16	16	15	24	13	19	15
% There will be no change	38	33	46	43	36	29	44	49

# AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Affirmative action programs in higher education continue to be the subject of legal challenges, with a lawsuit filed against Harvard University being one of the most well-publicized. The suit claims that Asian-American applicants are often denied admission despite having higher test scores and grades than applicants who are accepted.

Sixty percent of admissions directors believe colleges should be able to consider race, among other factors, in admissions decisions. More private than public institution admissions directors believe colleges should be able to consider race and ethnicity in admissions (67 percent vs. 55 percent), but public doctoral admissions directors are most likely to say this (79 percent).

Over all, 27 percent of admissions directors say their college considers race and ethnicity in admissions decisions, but most of these are from private institutions where nearly half (47 percent) say their college considers race and ethnicity; only 9 percent of public institution admissions directors do.

There is a strong relationship between a college's practice on considering race and whether the admissions director at the college supports doing so. Ninety percent of admissions directors at colleges that consider race in admissions believe colleges should be able to consider race, compared with 38 percent of admissions directors at colleges that do not consider race in admissions.

Fewer admissions directors say that colleges should be able to consider gender than race in admissions decisions, though a majority (55 percent) still say gender should be a factor. Again, more private than public institution admissions directors believe colleges should be able to consider gender in admissions (63 percent vs. 47 percent).

Over all, 18 percent of admissions directors say their college considers gender, among other factors, in admissions decisions, including 33 percent of those at private institutions and 5 percent of those at public institutions. Again, admissions directors at colleges that consider gender in admissions are much more likely to support the practice than those at colleges that do not take gender into account, 98 percent to 43 percent.

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Should colleges be permitted to consider race and ethnicity, among other factors, in college admissions?</b>								
% Yes	60	55	67	79	50	51	66	69
% No	40	45	33	21	50	49	34	31
<b>Should colleges be permitted to consider gender, among other factors, in college admissions?</b>								
% Yes	55	47	63	68	47	42	62	65
% No	45	53	37	32	53	58	38	35
<b>Does your college consider race and ethnicity, among other factors, in admissions decisions?</b>								
% Yes	27	9	47	28	14	1	47	47
% No	73	91	53	72	86	99	53	53

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (cont.)

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Does your college consider gender, among other factors, in admissions decisions?</b>								
% Yes	18	5	33	14	9	0	32	32
% No	82	95	67	86	91	100	68	68

The survey asked perceptions of the defense that Harvard University presented in the lawsuit, which has yet to be decided by the courts. Although more than four in 10 admissions directors do not have an opinion on Harvard's defense, those who do tilt toward believing it offered a good defense. Forty percent of admissions directors with an opinion about the Harvard case strongly agree or agree that the university offered a good defense of affirmative action in the lawsuit it faced. Twenty-four percent strongly disagree or disagree. More private institution admissions directors than public college admissions directors agree (44 percent vs. 36 percent).

Harvard's practice of considering legacy status as one admissions factor has been scrutinized in the context of the lawsuit. Admissions directors are about as likely to disagree (35 percent) as they are to agree (36 percent) that colleges should be able to consider legacy status in admissions decisions. Private institution admissions directors are more likely than public institution directors to agree (51 percent vs. 21 percent).

College admissions directors are also divided on whether colleges should be able to consider athletic talent in admissions decisions — 37 percent agree they should, while 33 percent disagree. Private institution admissions directors are more likely to agree than disagree (45 percent vs. 25 percent), while their peers from public institutions are more likely to disagree than agree (40 percent vs. 30 percent).

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (cont.)

As you may know, Harvard University is facing a lawsuit over allegations its admissions process discriminates against Asian-American applicants.

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Harvard University offered a good defense of affirmative action in the lawsuit it faced.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	11	7	14	10	n/a	n/a	12	18
%4	29	29	30	23	n/a	n/a	29	27
%3	37	34	39	40	n/a	n/a	34	47
%2	11	10	10	14	n/a	n/a	11	6
%1 Strongly disagree	13	19	7	13	n/a	n/a	13	2
<b>Colleges should be able to consider legacy status (relationship to alumni) in admissions decisions.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	13	7	19	4	10	6	20	20
%4	23	14	32	13	25	10	35	35
%3	30	30	29	39	25	30	20	37
%2	16	23	7	11	12	32	10	4
%1 Strongly disagree	19	25	13	32	29	22	15	5
<b>Colleges should be able to consider athletic talent in admissions decisions.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	12	5	19	13	7	2	20	17
%4	25	25	26	31	28	22	24	28
%3	31	30	31	32	33	29	31	30
%2	11	15	7	17	11	16	8	6
%1 Strongly disagree	22	25	18	6	21	32	17	19

n/a=Not reported due to small sample size

# STANDARDIZED TESTING

The majority of college admissions directors, 54 percent, say their institution requires applicants to submit SAT or ACT standardized test scores. This is nearly identical to the 53 percent who said this in 2018.

The percentage of admissions directors who say their institution requires standardized test scores varies greatly by institution type. Twenty-four percent of community college admissions directors say their college requires applicants to submit test scores, compared with nearly nine in 10 of those at public four-year colleges. Fifty-one percent of private baccalaureate admissions directors indicate applicants to their college must submit test scores, as do 74 percent of admissions directors at private doctoral or master's institutions.

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Does your college require applicants to submit standardized test scores from the SAT or ACT?</b>								
% Yes, requires SAT or ACT test scores	54	48	61	87	88	24	74	51
% No, does not	46	52	39	13	12	76	26	49

The debate over standardized test requirements took greater prominence when the University of Chicago last year said it would no longer require applicants to submit test scores. As seen on the following page, 57 percent of admissions directors strongly agree or agree that the University of Chicago's decision to drop the standardized test score requirement for applicants will encourage other colleges to do the same; 18 percent strongly disagree or disagree.

Twenty-two percent of admissions directors at colleges that have a standardized test requirement strongly agree or agree they have been prompted to reconsider their college's policy in light of the University of Chicago decision — five points higher than the 17 percent who agreed last year.

About one-third of admissions directors (32 percent) at colleges requiring standardized test scores strongly agree or agree that they are open to dropping the requirement but face opposition from administrators at their college; 35 percent agreed with this last year.

Concerns persist among admissions directors about gaps in standardized test scores by race and ethnicity. About three-quarters of admissions directors (77 percent) strongly agree or agree they are concerned about the persistent gaps in test scores by race and ethnicity. Fifty-eight percent strongly agree or agree that the emphasis by parents and students on average test scores discourages students from applying to colleges at which they could be admitted and thrive. This is similar to the 62 percent who agreed in 2018. Admissions directors at colleges that require standardized test scores are much less inclined to agree that the emphasis on average test scores acts as a deterrent to applying (46 percent) than admissions directors at colleges without such a requirement (72 percent).

# STANDARDIZED TESTING (cont.)

Last year, the University of Chicago joined other colleges that have in recent years dropped the requirement that applicants submit SAT or ACT scores.

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>The change by the University of Chicago is likely to encourage other colleges, including elite colleges, to drop standardized test requirements.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	18	18	18	12	14	21	19	17
%4	39	37	40	40	45	34	37	37
%3	25	25	26	26	29	23	30	24
%2	12	12	11	15	4	14	11	13
%1 Strongly disagree	6	7	5	8	8	7	3	9
<b>The announcement by the University of Chicago is prompting my college to reconsider its standardized test score requirement.*</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	8	9	7	2	11	n/a	3	14
%4	14	11	16	19	9	n/a	13	11
%3	26	32	21	22	23	n/a	23	21
%2	19	14	23	32	11	n/a	24	20
%1 Strongly disagree	34	34	33	25	46	n/a	36	33
<b>I am open to dropping our college's standardized test score requirement, but administrators or faculty members at my college are opposed to doing so.*</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	12	4	19	0	9	n/a	16	22
%4	20	23	18	20	25	n/a	19	12
%3	28	33	24	33	27	n/a	21	31
%2	18	15	20	19	12	n/a	20	23
%1 Strongly disagree	22	24	20	28	26	n/a	25	12
<b>The persistent gaps in the average SAT and ACT scores by racial and ethnic group concern me.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	43	40	46	30	44	41	42	45
%4	34	36	32	52	26	37	33	32
%3	14	13	16	7	19	12	15	19
%2	5	4	6	5	7	2	9	4
%1 Strongly disagree	4	7	1	6	4	8	1	1



## STANDARDIZED TESTING (cont.)

Last year, the University of Chicago joined other colleges that have in recent years dropped the requirement that applicants submit SAT or ACT scores.

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>The emphasis on colleges' "average test scores" by parents and students discourages many students from applying to colleges at which they could be admitted and thrive.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	24	23	26	23	21	24	24	23
%4	34	34	35	38	29	34	30	41
%3	27	26	27	19	40	23	34	20
%2	12	13	10	18	9	14	10	13
%1 Strongly disagree	3	4	2	3	1	5	2	3

\*Asked of those whose college requires applicants to submit standardized test scores (n=182)

n/a=Not reported due to small sample size

## STANDARDIZED TESTING (cont.)

About half of admissions directors think it is at least somewhat likely that most colleges will continue to require applicants to submit standardized test scores. Forty-nine percent say it is very (8 percent) or somewhat (41 percent) likely that the tests will be required for applicants to most U.S. colleges 10 years from now. Admissions directors at private institutions (54 percent) are somewhat more likely than those from public colleges (44 percent) to think it is likely standardized test scores will still be required for applicants to most colleges.

Sixty-three percent of admissions directors at colleges that have standardized test requirements think their college is very (19 percent) or somewhat (44 percent) likely to require them 10 years from now. Since last year, the percentage of admissions directors who predict their college is likely to require test scores in 10 years has dropped significantly, from 76 percent. The shift is apparent among admissions directors at both private and public colleges.

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>How likely do you think it is that, 10 years from now, standardized test scores will be required for applicants to most U.S. Colleges?</b>								
% Very likely	8	9	6	16	2	10	7	8
% Somewhat likely	41	35	48	48	42	30	49	48
% Not very likely	35	38	33	33	39	39	32	29
% Not likely at all	16	18	13	3	16	22	13	15
<b>How likely do you think it is that, 10 years from now, standardized test scores will be required for applicants to your college?*</b>								
% Very likely	19	24	13	24	15	n/a	19	7
% Somewhat likely	44	34	54	56	38	n/a	45	65
% Not very likely	21	21	21	11	27	n/a	17	28
% Not likely at all	16	21	12	8	20	n/a	19	0

\*Asked of those whose college requires applicants to submit standardized test scores (n=182)

n/a=Not reported due to small sample size

# COMPETITIVE ADMISSIONS AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Students in some states report being rejected by top public flagship universities in their states despite their strong grades and test scores. Fifty-eight percent of admissions directors strongly agree or agree that they are worried about the trend toward some public universities becoming as competitive in admissions as elite private institutions. This includes 64 percent of public institution admissions directors and 51 percent of private institution directors.

Nearly two-thirds of admissions directors, 65 percent, strongly agree or agree that the increased competitiveness at public institutions threatens efforts to admit diverse student bodies at those institutions. That is an increase from 58 percent in last year's survey. Just 16 percent strongly disagree or disagree in the current survey.

As in 2018, admissions directors were asked to evaluate two possible approaches to ensure greater access to public universities for in-state residents. Similar to a year ago, a majority of admissions directors (56 percent) strongly agree or agree that public flagships should guarantee admissions to students who complete certain requirements at community colleges for one or two years.

Fewer admissions directors, 37 percent, strongly agree or agree that public flagships turning away many qualified in-state residents should reduce out-of-state admissions to below 10 percent. Nearly as many — 32 percent — strongly disagree or disagree with this approach. This represents a modest shift from last year, when 32 percent agreed and 38 percent disagreed.

**In recent years, admissions to public universities — especially but not exclusively to state flagships — has become much more competitive. In California and other states, students with top grades and test scores report being rejected by top public universities in their state that a few years ago would have admitted such applicants.**

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>I am worried about the trend of some public universities becoming as competitive in admissions as elite private institutions.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	24	24	23	20	6	32	26	19
%4	34	40	28	41	30	43	23	32
%3	16	14	20	17	23	9	21	20
%2	17	16	18	20	19	14	18	15
%1 Strongly disagree	9	7	11	2	22	2	11	14

# COMPETITIVE ADMISSIONS AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES (cont.)

In recent years, admissions to public universities — especially but not exclusively to state flagships — has become much more competitive. In California and other states, students with top grades and test scores report being rejected by top public universities in their state that a few years ago would have admitted such applicants.

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>The increased competitiveness of public universities threatens efforts to admit diverse student bodies at those institutions.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	29	30	28	32	21	33	33	24
%4	36	36	37	41	40	33	34	34
%3	19	18	21	6	22	19	16	30
%2	11	13	9	17	9	13	9	7
%1 Strongly disagree	5	4	6	4	8	2	8	6
<b>Public flagships turning away many qualified applicants should guarantee admission to students who meet certain requirements at community colleges for one or two years.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	37	47	24	18	10	68	26	20
%4	19	17	23	31	24	11	27	18
%3	27	24	30	26	38	19	24	40
%2	9	7	12	15	15	2	10	11
%1 Strongly disagree	8	4	12	10	13	0	13	11
<b>Public flagships that are turning away many qualified in-state residents should bring out-of-state admissions down to below 10%.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	16	13	19	9	2	18	23	15
%4	21	24	18	15	13	31	19	13
%3	31	29	34	27	28	29	33	36
%2	17	18	15	24	25	13	12	19
%1 Strongly disagree	15	17	14	24	32	8	13	17

# WAITING LISTS

Waiting lists are used by colleges as a safeguard to meet enrollment goals in the event that accepted students decide not to enroll, and it provides a chance — albeit a longshot — for students to gain admittance should a spot open up.

Most admissions directors (84 percent) say that their college's waiting list equaled no more than 20 percent of the number of admitted applicants, and 10 percent say their waiting list represented 21 percent to 50 percent of the number of admitted applicants in the most recent admissions year. Just 6 percent maintain a waiting list that represented more than 50 percent of total admitted applicants. Private college admissions directors are more likely than their public college peers to report their most recent waiting list was 21 percent to 50 percent of the number of admitted applicants.

Admissions directors confirm that many students on their waiting list rarely gain admission. Eighteen percent say they admitted no students from their college's waiting list in recent years. Sixty-three percent say less than 5 percent of their first-year class included applicants from the waiting list, and 19 percent say more than 5 percent of the class were admitted from the waiting list.

Many applicants and counselors report that greater numbers of applicants than in the past are being placed on admissions waiting lists at a wide range of higher education institutions. Some colleges place more students on waiting lists than the total number of students they enroll in a first-year class.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>In the most recent admissions year, my institution's waiting list equaled:</b>								
0% to 20% of the number of admitted applicants	84	95	77	n/a	n/a	n/a	83	75
21% to 50% of the number of admitted applicants	10	3	15	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	13
More than 50% of the number of admitted applicants	6	2	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	11
<b>In recent years, my college has admitted from the waiting list:</b>								
No students	18	20	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	15	25
More than 0% but less than 5% of my college's first-year class	63	63	63	n/a	n/a	n/a	71	51
More than 5% of my college's first-year class	19	17	20	n/a	n/a	n/a	13	24

n/a=Not reported due to small sample size

## WAITING LISTS (cont.)

Admissions directors are more likely to strongly agree or agree (49 percent) than they are to strongly disagree or disagree (24 percent) that college waiting lists have grown too long, but last year the agree-disagree gap was larger, 61 percent to 18 percent.

A majority reject the notion that their college uses waiting lists in part to avoid rejecting strong applicants. Just 23 percent strongly agree or agree they do this, while 64 percent strongly disagree or disagree, exceeding the 54 percent who disagreed in 2018. The results are similar when admissions directors were asked whether their college uses waiting lists to avoid rejecting students with connections to the college – 18 percent agree and 67 percent disagree.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>College waiting lists have grown too long.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	32	30	33	26	n/a	n/a	35	32
%4	17	23	13	30	n/a	n/a	16	10
%3	28	32	24	21	n/a	n/a	29	17
%2	12	10	14	14	n/a	n/a	10	16
%1 Strongly disagree	12	5	15	8	n/a	n/a	10	25
<b>My college uses waiting lists in part to avoid rejecting strong applicants.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	10	6	12	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	6
%4	13	9	15	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	17
%3	13	13	13	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	18
%2	17	12	19	n/a	n/a	n/a	23	17
%1 Strongly disagree	47	60	40	n/a	n/a	n/a	47	42
<b>My college uses waiting lists to avoid rejecting applicants who have connections to the college.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	7	2	10	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	12
%4	11	6	13	n/a	n/a	n/a	16	10
%3	15	8	18	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	27
%2	14	12	15	n/a	n/a	n/a	19	9
%1 Strongly disagree	53	72	44	n/a	n/a	n/a	46	42

n/a=Not reported due to small sample size

# IMAGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Admissions directors widely believe that higher education needs to do a better job explaining the value of a college degree. Ninety-one percent agree with this statement, including 59 percent who do so strongly. In the four years the item has been asked, the level of agreement has not been below 87 percent.

Admissions directors also believe the public does not understand the value of a liberal arts education — 68 percent strongly disagree or disagree that prospective students understand the value, and 66 percent believe the same about parents of prospective students.

Many admissions directors strongly agree or agree that news reports of underemployed or unemployed college graduates and public discussion of student debt are discouraging students from considering higher education. More than two-thirds (68 percent) agree with each of these ideas. The level of agreement with each is up significantly from 2016 when they were first asked. In that survey, 56 percent agreed that media reports of unemployed or underemployed graduates discouraged students, and 54 percent agreed that public discussion of student debt did.

A slim majority, 53 percent, also agree that public discussion of student debt is discouraging students from considering their college; 21 percent disagree. The percentage agreeing with this item is also higher than in 2016 (47 percent).

Private college admissions directors (73 percent) are more than twice as likely as their public college peers (34 percent) to say discussion of student debt has discouraged students from considering their college.

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

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Higher education needs to do a better job of explaining the value of earning college degrees.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	59	61	56	53	52	66	52	61
%4	32	31	33	40	28	30	32	35
%3	7	6	7	5	15	4	11	2
%2	1	1	2	2	2	0	4	0
%1 Strongly disagree	1	1	2	0	2	0	2	2

# IMAGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION (cont.)

Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about higher education.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Media reports of college graduates who are unemployed or underemployed have discouraged students from considering higher education.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	26	25	27	15	20	30	29	26
%4	42	38	47	47	27	40	38	52
%3	22	27	16	25	34	24	19	14
%2	8	9	7	13	13	6	11	4
%1 Strongly disagree	2	1	3	0	6	0	3	4
<b>Public discussion of student debt has discouraged students from considering higher education generally.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	25	21	29	8	17	26	32	27
%4	43	45	40	39	36	49	29	48
%3	22	21	23	36	28	15	32	15
%2	9	11	6	16	20	7	4	8
%1 Strongly disagree	2	2	2	0	0	3	2	2
<b>Public discussion of student debt has discouraged students from considering my college.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	23	10	37	10	8	11	39	37
%4	30	24	36	23	29	23	32	37
%3	26	33	19	42	26	33	24	14
%2	11	17	6	20	15	16	4	8
%1 Strongly disagree	10	17	2	5	22	18	1	3



## IMAGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION (cont.)

Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about higher education.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Parents of prospective students understand the value of a liberal arts education.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	1	1	1	3	2	0	3	0
%4	6	6	6	0	5	8	6	5
%3	27	22	32	27	22	21	32	34
%2	47	50	44	62	50	46	41	45
%1 Strongly disagree	19	21	16	9	21	25	19	17
<b>Prospective students understand the value of a liberal arts education.</b>								
%5 Strongly agree	<1	<1	1	0	2	0	0	1
%4	4	3	4	4	7	1	4	6
%3	28	25	31	30	23	25	31	28
%2	47	52	41	53	43	55	43	39
%1 Strongly disagree	21	20	23	12	26	19	23	26

# DIGITAL TOOLS IN THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Technological advances have given admissions directors new tools to aid in their recruitment of, and planning for, new classes. The vast majority of admissions directors, 88 percent, say their college uses digital communication tools, such as chat boxes or social media, to interact with applicants or potential applicants. Among those who do, 69 percent are satisfied and 31 percent are dissatisfied with the way their college interacts with potential applicants using these digital communication tools. Community college admissions directors are more likely to be dissatisfied than satisfied, 53 percent to 46 percent.

Just over half of admissions directors say their college uses digital tools that predict the likelihood a student will apply and enroll if they are admitted. Community college admissions directors are much less likely to use such predictive tools, with 27 percent indicating they do. Close to three-quarters of admissions directors at private baccalaureate colleges use such tools.

Admissions directors who use tools to predict the likelihood of students applying and enrolling are largely satisfied with those tools, with 77 percent indicating their satisfaction.

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Does your college use chat boxes, social media or other digital communication tools to interact with applicants or potential applicants?</b>								
% Yes	88	88	88	84	91	88	91	86
% No	12	12	12	16	9	12	9	14
<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your college interacts with potential applicants using digital forms of communication?*</b>								
% Very satisfied	8	7	10	18	9	3	9	10
% Satisfied	61	50	73	67	56	43	80	65
% Dissatisfied	26	36	16	16	26	46	12	23
% Very dissatisfied	5	7	2	0	9	7	0	2
<b>Has your college used tools that predict the likelihood that a potential applicant will apply and, if admitted, enroll at your college?</b>								
% Yes	53	40	67	63	54	27	65	74
% No	47	60	33	37	46	73	35	26
<b>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the tools your college has used to predict the likelihood of a potential applicant applying and, if admitted, enrolling?**</b>								
% Very satisfied	15	13	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	25	10
% Satisfied	62	68	59	n/a	n/a	n/a	44	72
% Dissatisfied	20	18	21	n/a	n/a	n/a	25	16
% Very dissatisfied	3	1	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	3

\*Asked of those whose college uses digital tools to interact with potential applicants (n=258)

\*\*Asked of those whose college uses digital tools to predict the likelihood of a potential applicant applying (n=173)

n/a=Not reported due to small sample size

## DIGITAL TOOLS IN THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS (cont.)

Admissions directors are mostly satisfied with the approaches their college uses in four aspects of the admissions process. Seventy-nine percent indicate they are satisfied with their direct communication with potential applicants, including digital and nondigital communication. Fewer, but still around two-thirds, are satisfied with their college's approach to giving students a clear path to enrollment and graduation (67 percent), marketing (62 percent) and promoting their college's academic programs (61 percent).

Private college admissions directors are more satisfied than public college directors in all four areas, largely because of lower satisfaction levels among those working at community colleges.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the approaches your college uses in the following areas?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.
<b>Direct communication with potential applicants (including digital and nondigital)</b>								
% Very satisfied	16	9	25	14	12	7	26	23
% Satisfied	63	66	60	78	65	63	59	62
% Dissatisfied	20	24	15	9	22	29	14	15
% Very dissatisfied	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
<b>Giving students a clear path to enrollment and graduation</b>								
% Very satisfied	17	11	24	19	8	10	21	28
% Satisfied	50	45	56	53	47	42	61	50
% Dissatisfied	29	40	17	28	38	43	14	20
% Very dissatisfied	4	5	3	0	7	5	4	2
<b>Marketing</b>								
% Very satisfied	11	7	16	12	3	6	18	14
% Satisfied	51	50	54	58	65	42	55	50
% Dissatisfied	27	30	25	22	22	35	22	29
% Very dissatisfied	10	14	6	8	10	17	5	7
<b>Promoting our academic programs</b>								
% Very satisfied	8	5	12	9	2	5	10	12
% Satisfied	53	49	58	59	56	43	65	47
% Dissatisfied	32	37	28	30	38	39	22	37
% Very dissatisfied	6	9	3	3	4	13	3	4

# COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Community college enrollment has declined in each of the past eight years. Community college admissions directors are most likely to see four factors as behind the declines nationally. These are competition from nonprofit colleges and universities (88 percent), public discussion that college degrees and certificates do not help people get ahead economically (83 percent), competition from for-profit colleges (80 percent) and insufficient marketing (80 percent).

Majorities of community college admissions directors also believe that students' desire to attend institutions where they can earn bachelor's degrees (77 percent), student fears about borrowing (67 percent) and reputation for poor degree completion rates (58 percent) are factors in two-year college enrollment declines in the U.S. Less than half view lack of desirable programs (43 percent) or tuition rates (40 percent) as factors.

<b>Many community colleges continue to struggle with enrollment. Please indicate whether you think each of the following is or is not a factor in struggles with enrollment at community colleges nationally.*</b>	
	<b>% Yes, is a factor</b>
Competition from nonprofit colleges and universities	88
Public discussion that college degrees and certificates do not help people get ahead economically	83
Competition from for-profit colleges	80
Insufficient marketing	80
Prospective students want to go to colleges where they can earn bachelor's degrees	77
Student fears of borrowing	67
Reputation for poor degree completion rates	58
Lack of desirable programs	43
Tuition rates	40

\*Asked of admissions directors at community colleges

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES (cont.)

When asked about enrollment struggles at their own institution, community college admissions directors generally see the same factors at play that are driving the national declines. They most commonly cite competition from nonprofit and for-profit colleges and public questioning about the value of college degrees as factors.

They are somewhat less likely to believe reputation for poor degree completion rates is a factor in their own college's enrollment challenges (50 percent) than in national declines in community college enrollment (58 percent).

Please indicate whether each of the following is or is not a factor in struggles with enrollment at your community college.*	
	% Yes, is a factor
Competition from nonprofit colleges and universities	88
Competition from for-profit colleges	84
Public discussion that college degrees and certificates do not help people get ahead economically	82
Prospective students want to go to colleges where they can earn bachelor's degrees	79
Insufficient marketing	79
Student fears of borrowing	64
Reputation for poor degree completion rates	50
Tuition rates	43
Lack of desirable programs	43

\*Asked of admissions directors at community colleges

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES (cont.)

While community colleges have suffered from enrollment declines in recent years, the declines at for-profit colleges have been steeper. Community college admissions directors are largely split as to whether their institution is gaining students from among those who might have gone to a for-profit college in the past — 41 percent strongly agree or agree this is occurring, while 37 percent strongly disagree or disagree. Last year, 37 percent agreed and 26 percent disagreed.

Community college admissions directors widely agree they are worried about decreased regulation of for-profit colleges under the Trump administration — 84 percent agree, including 63 percent who do so strongly.

Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about for-profit institutions.*	
<b>As many for-profit colleges have seen enrollments drop, my community college has gained some of those who might have gone to a for-profit in the past.</b>	
%5 Strongly agree	8
%4	33
%3	22
%2	26
%1 Strongly disagree	11
<b>I am concerned about decreased regulation of for-profits under the Trump administration.</b>	
%5 Strongly agree	63
%4	21
%3	6
%2	2
%1 Strongly disagree	8

\*Asked of admissions directors at community colleges

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES (cont.)

Community college admissions directors believe that many of their students are interested in opportunities to transfer to four-year institutions. In fact, more than nine in 10 agree this is the case, including 57 percent who do so strongly.

As they have been in the past, admissions directors at public two-year colleges are most positive about programs offered by public (compared with private or for-profit) institutions in their area to encourage community college students to transfer. Seventy-nine percent strongly agree or agree local public institutions have good programs. That compares with 71 percent who believe local private institutions have good programs to encourage transfer students from community colleges, and 25 percent who believe for-profit colleges do.

The gap in perceptions about public versus private institutions' transfer programs has narrowed, as fewer community college admissions directors agree that public institutions in their area have good programs now than did so in 2017 (90 percent) and 2018 (86 percent).

**Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about transfer students.\***

<b>Many prospective students at my community college are interested in opportunities to transfer to four-year institutions.</b>	
%5 Strongly agree	57
%4	35
%3	6
%2	2
%1 Strongly disagree	0
<b>Public institutions in my area have good programs to encourage community college students to transfer.</b>	
%5 Strongly agree	35
%4	44
%3	16
%2	5
%1 Strongly disagree	0
<b>Private institutions in my area have good programs to encourage community college students to transfer.</b>	
%5 Strongly agree	25
%4	46
%3	16
%2	12
%1 Strongly disagree	1

\*Asked of admissions directors at community colleges

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES (cont.)

Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about transfer students.\*

**For-profit institutions in my area have good programs to encourage community college students to transfer.**

%5 Strongly agree	6
%4	19
%3	20
%2	33
%1 Strongly disagree	22

\*Asked of admissions directors at community colleges



# INSTITUTION AND PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your age?	% Overall
Younger than 30	<1
30 to 39	26
40 to 49	33
50 to 59	24
60 to 69	16
70 and older	<1

What proportion of the applicants for full-time undergraduate admissions do you typically admit to your college or university?	% Overall
Less than 20%	7
20% to less than 50%	16
50% or more	76

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