2015 STATE OF COLLEGE ADMISSION

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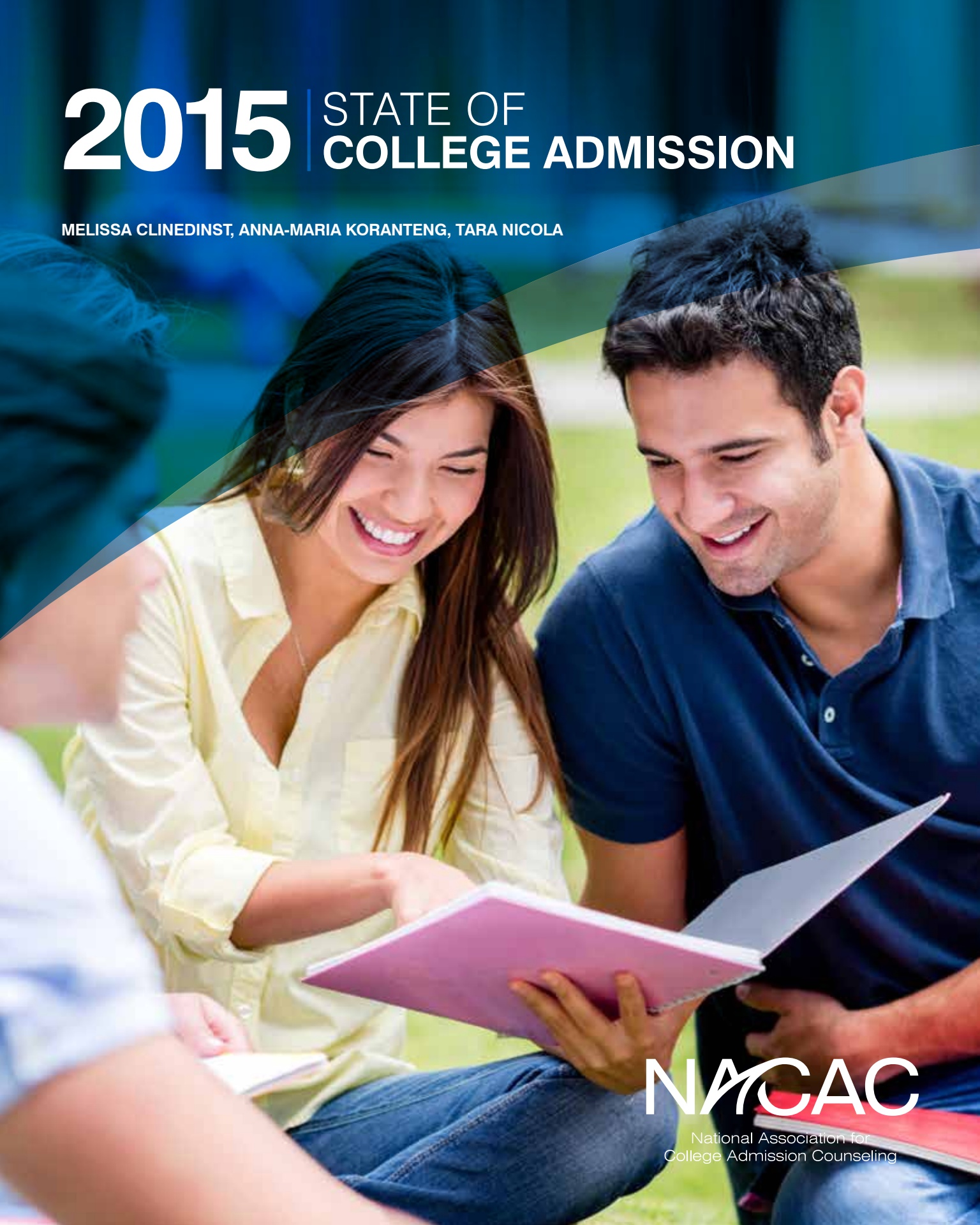

NACAC
National Association for College Admission Counseling

CONTENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Highlights from the 2015 *State of College Admission* report include findings related to the transition from high school to postsecondary education in the United States, gathered primarily through NACAC's annual Admission Trends Survey and Counseling Trends Survey. The 2015 report also includes information about the recruitment and admission process for transfer and international students.

College Applications

The steady increase in the number of colleges to which each student applies is reflected in college reports of increased application volume.

- **Growth in Application Volume Continues:** Between the Fall 2014 and Fall 2015 admission cycles, the number of applications from first-time freshmen increased 6 percent; applications from prospective transfer students increased by 4 percent; and international student applications increased by 23 percent, on average.
- **Online Applications Are the Norm:** For the Fall 2014 admission cycle, four-year colleges and universities received an average of 94 percent of applications online, up from 68 percent in Fall 2007 and only 49 percent in Fall 2005.
- **Colleges Accept Nearly Two-Thirds of First-Time Freshmen Applicants; 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 United States was 65.8 percent for Fall 2014. The national average acceptance rate has edged up from 64.7 percent in Fall 2013, after reaching a low of 63.9 percent in Fall 2012.
- **Decline in Average Yield Rate for First-Time Freshmen Stabilizes:** The average yield rate for Fall 2014 (36.2 percent) increased slightly after a long and steady decline from 48.7 percent in 2002 to 35.7 percent in Fall 2013.
- **Transfer Acceptance Rate Slightly Lower than Freshmen Rate; Yield Much Higher:** Among institutions that enroll transfer students, average selectivity for Fall 2015 was 61 percent, compared to 65 percent for first-time freshmen. However, more than half (55 percent) of transfer applicants who were admitted ultimately enrolled, compared to only 29 percent of freshman admits.
- **International Student Acceptance Rate is Low; Yield on Par with Transfer Students:** At institutions that enroll first-time international students, the Fall 2015 admit rate for this population (34 percent) was much lower than the overall freshman acceptance rate. The average yield rate for international students was 52 percent.

Recruitment and Yield Strategies

College admission offices use a variety of strategies to recruit prospective students, particularly those who would be likely to attend if admitted. Colleges are broadening their recruitment efforts to bring in more transfer and international students.

- **Beyond the High School Graduate:** Nearly two-thirds of Admission Trends Survey respondents indicated that transfer students are considerably important to meeting overall recruitment goals, and almost 40 percent rated international students as considerably important.
- **Top Recruitment Strategies:** Email and institutional websites are the primary means by which colleges recruit transfer and international students. Email and websites are also the top two recruitment strategies for first-time freshmen. However, colleges employ a broader range of strategies when recruiting these domestic high school students. For this group, five other factors were each rated as considerably important by more than 50 percent of colleges in 2015—campus visits, high school counselors, high school visits, direct mail, and college fairs.

- **Early Decision (ED) and Early Action Activity (EA) Increases:** Between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015, colleges reported an average increase of 10 percent in the number of Early Decision applicants and 11 percent in ED admits. The number of Early Action applications and the number of students accepted through EA each increased by 7 percent.
- **Wait List Activity Increases; Likelihood of Wait List Acceptance Is Low:** For the Fall 2015 admission cycle, 39 percent of institutions reported using a wait list. Institutions accepted an average of 32 percent of all students who chose to remain on wait lists. From Fall 2014 to Fall 2015, the number of students offered a place on an admission waitlist increased by 16 percent.

Factors in Admission Decisions

The factors that admission officers use to evaluate applications from first-time freshmen 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 decision factors for first-time international students are similar to those for domestic students, but the transfer admission decision process differs in significant ways.

- **Admission Offices Identify Grades, High School Curriculum, and Test Scores as Top Factors for First-Time Freshmen:** The top factors in the admission decision for the Fall 2015 admission cycle were: grades in college preparatory courses, strength of curriculum, overall high school GPA, and admission test scores. Among the next most important factors were the essay, a student's demonstrated interest, counselor and teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities, and class rank.
- **Top Factor for International Students is English Proficiency Exam Scores:** After English proficiency, the factors for admission decisions with international applicants are remarkably similar to those for domestic students, with one notable exception. A greater proportion of colleges rated the essay/writing sample as considerably important for international applicants, likely because of the additional confirmation of English skills that the essay provides.
- **For Transfer Admission Decisions, College Grades Matter Most:** The only transfer admission decision factors that were rated considerably important by a substantial proportion of colleges were overall GPA at prior postsecondary institution(s) and average grades in transferable courses.

College Counseling in Secondary Schools

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 have additional constraints on the amount of time they can dedicate to college counseling.

- **Student-to-Counselor Ratio:** According to US Department of Education data, in 2013-14 each public school counselor (including elementary and secondary) was responsible for 476 students, on average.
- **Time Spent Counseling for College:** On average, public school counselors spent 22 percent of their time on postsecondary counseling in 2014, while their private school counterparts spent 55 percent of their time on college counseling.
- **College Counseling Staff:** In 2014, 30 percent of public schools reported employing at least one counselor (full- or part-time) whose exclusive responsibility was to provide college counseling, compared to 73 percent of private schools.
- **Counselor Professional Development:** Thirty-seven percent of high schools reported that counselors responsible for postsecondary counseling were required to participate in related professional development. However, only 41 percent of schools with this requirement paid all costs associated with the professional development; 43 percent paid some costs.

INTRODUCTION

NACAC's Mission

Supporting students in the transition from high school to college has been at the core of NACAC's mission since the association was founded in 1937. Given changes in both the national and global economy in recent decades, as well as rapidly shifting student demographics, the role of professionals who assist students in this process has never been more important. Expert projections indicate that 65 percent of US jobs will require some type of postsecondary education by 2020; however, the US will lag by 5 million workers with those credentials if postsecondary attainment rates do not increase substantially.[1] Over 95 percent of jobs created during the recent recession recovery (since 2008) have gone to workers with at least some college education.[2] To the detriment of both individuals and communities, those whose highest degree is a high school diploma are denied the many benefits that college graduates enjoy, including:

- higher incomes and increased lifetime earnings
- lower levels of unemployment and poverty
- decreased reliance on public assistance programs
- increased job satisfaction
- greater likelihood of receiving employer-sponsored pensions and health insurance
- healthier lifestyles
- higher levels of civic engagement.[3]

Unfortunately, as of 2015, only 33 percent of all adults age 25 and older had obtained at least a bachelor's degree.[4] Even more significant, underserved minority groups and students from low-SES backgrounds fall behind in every step of the attainment process: high school graduation, college enrollment, and postsecondary credential completion (see 2015 *State of College Admission Supplement: Student Demographics and Postsecondary Pathways, www.nacacnet.org/soca*).

In recognition of the important role that community colleges have in achieving national postsecondary attainment goals, NACAC has more recently expanded the association's resources, advocacy, and research efforts to serve community college professionals. An increasing number of students are achieving their educational goals at two-year colleges and exploring the two-year to four-year transfer pathway to a bachelor's degree. Transfer also provides an opportunity for students to find success when the first college enrollment experience proves, for whatever reason, to not serve the student well. According to US Department of Education data, more than one-third (37 percent) of all first-time degree seeking students attended a two-year institution in Fall 2014.[5] Almost 40 percent of students who began postsecondary education in Fall 2008 transferred at least once in the following six years.[6] And, contrary to popular belief, many students "reverse transfer," meaning they move from a four-year college to a two-year college.

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1 Carnevale, A.P., Smith, N., and Strohl, J. (2013). *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

2 Carnevale, A.P., Jayasundera, T., and Artem, G. (2013). *America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

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

4 US Census Bureau. (2016). *Educational Attainment in the United States: 2015.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

5 US Department of Education. (2015). *Digest of Education Statistics.* Washington, DC: NCES.

6 Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Wakhungu, P.K., Yuan, X., and Harrell, A. (2015, July). *Transfer and Mobility: A National View of Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2008 Cohort* (Signature Report No. 9). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

Among that same Fall 2008 cohort, more than half of those who transferred from four-year institutions moved to a community college.[7]

NACAC has also expanded its focus to include support for professionals who work with students from outside the US and those who advise US students interested in pursuing postsecondary degrees abroad. 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. In 2013, more than 4 million students enrolled in tertiary education outside of their country of citizenship,[8] and a growing number of non-US students are attending American high schools. In 2015, 84,496 international students were pursuing secondary level education in the US, with 48,632 or 67 percent enrolled for a full diploma.[9] The number of US citizens pursuing full undergraduate degrees reached nearly 47,000 in 2011–12, up 5 percent from the previous year.[10]

State of College Admission Report

The 2015 *State of College Admission* report provides up-to-date information on a number of issues that impact students' transition from high school to postsecondary education, as well as the admission process for transfer students and international students attending postsecondary institutions in the United States. The report covers the recruitment strategies that colleges use to attract each group of prospective students and the process by which candidates are evaluated. The report also includes a chapter dedicated to school counseling in US secondary schools, given the integral role school counselors play in putting students on the path to postsecondary success.

The report is divided into four chapters: College Applications; Recruitment and Yield Strategies; Factors in Admission Decisions; and Secondary School Counseling. Also available at *www.nacacnet.org/soca* is the 2015 *State of College Admission Supplement: Student Demographics and Postsecondary Pathways,* along with a series of topical infographics, data visualizations, and PowerPoint slide presentations.

Methodology in Brief

The information presented in the report primarily includes data gathered through NACAC's annual Counseling Trends Survey and Admission Trends Survey.

NACAC's Counseling Trends Survey (CTS) collects information from secondary school counselors and counseling departments about their priorities and work responsibilities, particularly as they relate to helping students transition to college; and their practices in communicating with students, parents, and colleges. The 2014 survey was mailed to a total of 10,000 US high schools, and 1,360 responses were received.

NACAC administers its annual Admission Trends Survey (ATS) to US four-year colleges that are NACAC members. NACAC collects data related to application volume; application practices; 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 staffing. Since 2014, NACAC has expanded ATS to incorporate questions related to the admission process for prospective transfer and international students. This report utilizes data from both the 2014 and 2015 Admission Trends Surveys. NACAC received 335 responses in 2014 and 687 responses in 2015.

(*See Appendix A: Methodology* for more detailed information about survey administration and data analysis.)

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7 Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Wakhungu, P.K., Yuan, X., and Harrell, A. (2015, July). *Transfer and Mobility: A National View of Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2008 Cohort* (Signature Report No. 9). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

8 Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development. (2015). *Education at a Glance, 2015.* Washington, DC: OECD.

9 Farrugia, C. (2016). *New Pathways to Higher Education: International Secondary Students in the US.* Institute of International Education (IIE), Center for Academic Mobility Research & Impact. Unpublished presentation from 2016 NAFSA Association of International Educators Annual Conference (June 1).

10 Belyavina, R., Li, J., and Bhandari, R. (2013). *New Frontiers: U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad.* New York: Institute of International Education (IIE).

01 COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Each year, US colleges and universities receive hundreds of thousands of applications from first-time domestic students, transfer students, and students from abroad. Results of recent NACAC Admission Trends Surveys[1] indicate that the number of applications is on an upward trajectory at most four-year colleges. Increased application volume is driven in part by steady growth in the number of college applications submitted by each prospective student. While this trend has resulted in more enrollment options for many students, it has also led to declining average yield rates for colleges. More significantly, increased application volume across the four-year college sector complicates the crucial task of predicting yield rates and admitting enough students who will ultimately decide to attend the institution. To some extent, this pattern has created a false impression that it has become increasingly difficult for students to be admitted to college.

Application Volume

Results of the 2015 Admission Trends Survey indicate that the average number of applications increased for each group of prospective students between the Fall 2014 and Fall 2015 admission cycles. Applications from first-time freshmen increased by 6 percent, on average, and applications from prospective transfer students increased by 4 percent. Although applications from international students represented the smallest proportion of all applications received, they increased by 23 percent from Fall 2014 to Fall 2015.

According to the Higher Education Research Institute's

PERCENT CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BETWEEN FALL 2014 AND FALL 2015

Transfer **4.3%**

First-time Freshmen **6.2%**

International **22.9%**

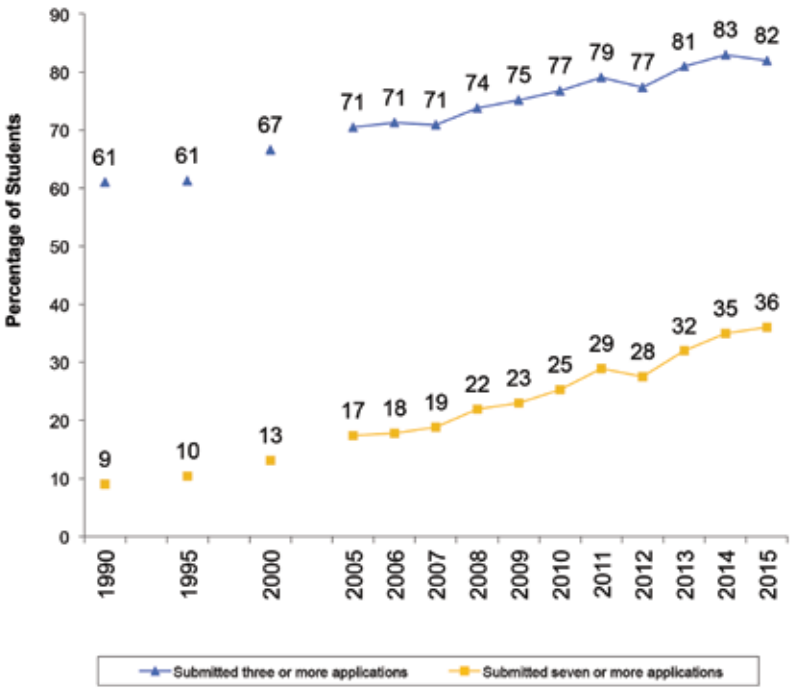
[1] Because not all questions on the Admission Trends Survey are asked yearly, this chapter draws on statistics from the Fall 2013–2015 administrations of the survey.

The American Freshmen report series, the proportion of enrolled first-time freshmen who had applied to seven or more colleges reached 36 percent in Fall 2015, up from 17 percent in 2005 and only 9 percent in 1990. More than 80 percent of first-time freshmen had applied to at least three colleges (see Figure 1).

Online applications, which have become nearly ubiquitous over the past decade, likely also contributed to increases in application volume. For the Fall 2013 admission cycle, four-year colleges and universities received an average of 94 percent of applications online, up from 68 percent in Fall 2007 and only 49 percent in Fall 2005.

Application volume increases have created a growing burden on admission office staff who evaluate prospective students for admission. According to 2015 Admission Trends Survey results, the average number of freshman applications for each admission office staff member (excluding administrative staff) was 914 at public institutions and 411 at private colleges. The number of applications per admission officer increased with both applicant selectivity rates and enrollment size. On average, colleges that enroll at least 10,000 students received four times as many applications per admission officer than those enrolling fewer than 3,000 students (see Table 1).

FIGURE 1. INCREASES IN FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN APPLICATION SUBMISSION: 1990 TO 2015



SOURCE: Eagan, M. K., Stolzenberg, E.B., Ramirez, J.J., Aragon, M.C., Suchard, M.R., and Rios-Aguilar, C. (2016) The American Freshman: Fifty-Year Trends, *1996-2015. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.*

Acceptance and Yield Rates

Selectivity is defined as the proportion of applicants who are offered admission, and is usually expressed as a percentage. Higher selectivity is equated with lower acceptance rates, meaning a smaller number of applicants are admitted. The selectivity rates of US postsecondary institutions range from less than 10 percent to more than 90 percent of applicants. An institution's yield rate is defined as the percentage of admitted students who ultimately enroll in the institution after considering other admission offers. Although yield rates may have little relevance to prospective students, accurately predicting yield is critical to colleges looking to avoid either over- or under-enrollment.

First-Time Freshmen

According to data collected by the US Department of Education, the average acceptance rate for first-time freshmen across all four-year institutions in the US was nearly two-thirds (65.8 percent) for the Fall 2014 admission cycle. The national average acceptance rate has edged up from 64.7 percent in Fall 2013, after reaching a low of 63.9 percent in Fall 2012—the

TABLE 1: APPLICATIONS PER ADMISSION OFFICER

	Mean
Control	
Public	914
Private	411
Enrollment	
Fewer than 3,000 students	316
3,000 to 9,999	661
10,000 or more	1,241
Selectivity	
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	923
50 to 70 percent	593
71 to 85 percent	480
More than 85 percent	327

NOTE: Both admission counselors and mid/senior level admission officials were included in the analyses.

NOTE: Independent t-tests and one-way ANOVAs indicated there were significant differences in the application to admission officer ratio by: control (t (158)= 6.3, p <.001); enrollment (F(2,157)=60.1, p < .001), and selectivity (F(3,156)=6.3, p < .001).

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

year in which the total number of high school graduates reached a peak. For Fall 2014, the average acceptance rate at private institutions was about 4 percentage points lower than the average rate at public institutions.

The most selective four-year colleges—defined as those accepting less than half of all applicants—received 35 percent of all Fall 2014 applications, but enrolled only 20 percent of all first-time undergraduate students. Most students (70 percent) were enrolled in institutions with selectivity rates between 50 percent and 85 percent (see Table 2).

For the Fall 2014 freshman class, the average yield rate among four-year colleges and universities was 36.2 percent. The average yield rate increased slightly from Fall 2013 (35.7 percent) after a steady decline from 48.7 percent in Fall 2002.

Transfer and International Students

Among 2015 Admission Trends Survey respondents that accept transfer students, the average acceptance rate for transfer applicants was slightly lower than for the first-time freshman population (61 percent, compared to 65 percent). However, the yield for accepted transfer students was much higher (55 percent, compared to 29 percent).

A similar analysis of institutions that accept international students showed that first-time international students are accepted at a much lower rate (34 percent) than the

THE AVERAGE ACCEPTANCE RATE FOR FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

Fall 2012
63.9%

Fall 2013
64.7%

Fall 2014
65.8%

TABLE 2: APPLICATIONS AND ENROLLMENT, BY SELECTIVITY

Selectivity	National share of institutions	Average number of applications per institution	National share of applications	National share of full-time, first-time degree seeking undergraduates
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	19.7%	10,678	35.2%	19.8%
50 to 70 percent	36.0	5,860	35.3	36.8
71 to 85 percent	28.9	4,969	24.0	32.4
More than 85 percent	15.4	2,129	5.5	11.0

NOTE: Of the 1,871 total institutions, 1,557 provided selectivity data for Fall 2014.

NOTE: Independent t and Mann-Whitney U Tests, respectively, show there is a significant difference in selectivity ($t(1553) = 3.4$, $p < .001$) and yield ($U = 211093$, $p < .001$) by control.

SOURCE: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2014–15). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Center. Washington, DC: NCES.

overall freshman acceptance rate of 65 percent. However, international students who are accepted are much more likely to enroll than accepted first-time freshmen applicants (52 percent, compared to 29 percent) (see Table 3).

Application Fees

According to US Department of Education data[2], 83 percent of four-year, not-for-profit colleges had an application fee in 2014, which averaged $44. Public colleges were more likely to report having application fees than privates (94 percent versus 78 percent).

Larger enrollment sizes and lower selectivity rates were associated with higher average fees. For example, institutions enrolling 10,000 or more students had an average application fee of $49, and those that accepted fewer than half of all applicants charged an average fee of $52.[3]

[2] US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Center. Washington, DC: NCES.

[3] Independent t-tests and one-way ANOVAs showed there was a significant difference in application fee amount by control ($t(1732) = 4.7$, $p < .001$), total full-time undergraduate enrollment ($X^2(2) = 198$, $p < .001$) and undergraduate selectivity ($X^2(3) = 67.5$, $p < .001$).

TABLE 3: KEY STATISTICS FOR TRANSFER AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSION

Transfer	N	Mean
Number of Transfer Applications Received	510	1,379
Transfer Selectivity Rate	509	61.0%
Overall Freshman Selectivity Rate for Institutions with Transfer Students	518	65.3%
Transfer Yield Rate	510	54.7%
Overall Yield Rate for Institutions with Transfer Students	518	28.8%
International	**N**	**Mean**
Number of International Applications Received	364	863
International Selectivity Rate	358	33.9%
Overall Freshman Selectivity Rate for Institutions with International Students	500	64.9%
International Yield Rate	359	52.0%
Overall Yield Rate for Institutions with International Students	500	28.9%

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

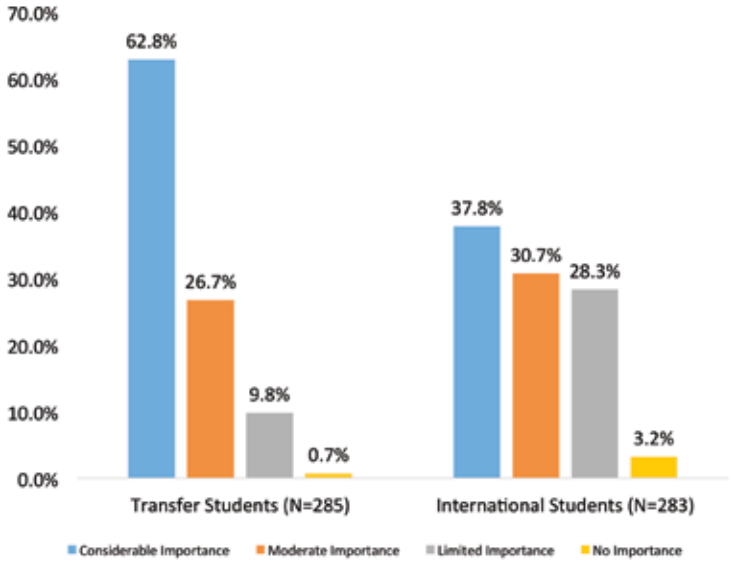
02 RECRUITMENT AND YIELD STRATEGIES

Beyond the High School Graduate

College admission offices use a variety of strategies to recruit prospective students, particularly those who would be likely to attend if admitted. At the same time that the demographics of the college-going population are changing and students are considering a variety of pathways toward a four-year degree, many colleges face increasingly difficult budget realities (see 2015 *State of College Admission Supplement: Student Demographics and Postsecondary Pathways* at *www.nacac.org/soca*). For these and other reasons, more colleges are broadening their recruitment efforts to bring in more transfer and international students. Although some four-year colleges have a well-established history of recruiting transfer and international students, others are just beginning to expand these populations on their campuses.

As shown in Figure 2, nearly two-thirds of Admission Trends Survey respondents indicated that transfer students are considerably important to meeting overall recruitment goals, and only about 10 percent reported that they had little or no importance. Almost 40 percent of colleges rated international students as considerably important to their

FIGURE 2: IMPORTANCE OF PROSPECTIVE STUDENT POPULATIONS IN MEETING INSTITUTIONAL ENROLLMENT GOALS



SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

enrollment goals, and another 30 percent indicated moderate importance for this group.

Recruitment Strategies by Prospective Student Group

Results of NACAC's 2015 Admission Trends Survey indicate that many of the recruitment methods used for traditional domestic high school students are also useful with other populations. For example, contacting students through email and engaging with them through the institution's website were the most important recruitment strategies that colleges and universities used for first-time freshmen, transfer students, and international students. For US high school students, an additional five factors were each rated as considerably important by more than 50 percent of colleges. They were: hosting campus visits, outreach to high school counselors, visiting high schools, direct mail, and attending college fairs. About half of colleges also rated college visits as considerably important

MEAN NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN WHICH COLLEGES RECRUIT

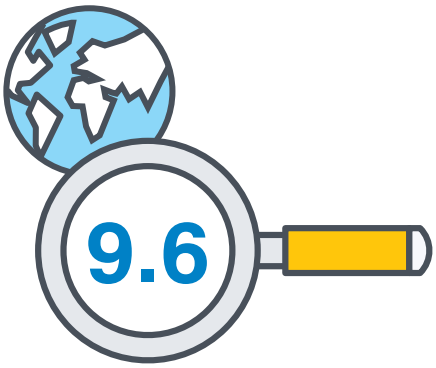


TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING "CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE" TO VARIOUS RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES, BY PROSPECTIVE STUDENT POPULATION

Factor	First-Time Freshmen	Transfer	International (First-Time Freshmen)
Website	84.4%	81.9%	87.7%
Email	82.7	77.3	79.0
Hosted Campus Visit	77.0	49.6	26.3
High School Counselor	60.8	13.8	35.3
High School Visit	58.5	9.5	13.0
Direct Mail	54.6	29.2	9.4
College Fairs	52.5	29.9	20.5
Social Media	38.2	26.6	30.7
Community Based Organizations	16.9	8.6	6.4
Test-Optional Policy	13.9	8.3	9.7
Alumni	12.5	9.4	10.7
Overseas High School Visit	10.0	4.0	23.8
Conditional/Provisional Admission Program	5.1	3.8	9.6
Utilize Agents	—	—	15.9
Partnerships with Overseas Colleges	—	—	15.3
State or Regional Recruitment Consortium	—	—	8.0
Federal Government Support	—	—	13.9

— Question was only asked for international students.

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

49%

OF SELECTIVE COLLEGES OFFERED EARLY DECISION

in recruiting transfer students (see Table 4). A variety of other strategies were used with both transfer and international recruitment, but only email and website were very highly rated. (A complete breakdown of how colleges rated various recruitment strategies by population can be found in Appendix Tables B.1 to B.3.)

The mean number of countries in which colleges recruit is 9.6, and the average number increased with both enrollment size and selectivity.[1] For example, colleges with fewer than 3,000 students recruited in an average of 7.3 countries, compared to 14.6 at colleges enrolling 10,000 or more students. Colleges that accept fewer than 50 percent of all applicants recruit internationally in an average of 16.4 countries.

Early Decision

For purposes of the *State of College Admission* report, early application policies are categorized 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 submit an application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

Twenty-one percent of respondents to NACAC's 2015 Admission Trends Survey offered Early Decision (ED). Private colleges were more likely than public institutions to offer

41%

OF COLLEGES WITH LOW YIELD RATES OFFERED EARLY ACTION

Early Decision policies (29 percent compared to 7 percent), as were selective colleges. (See Appendix C for a detailed description of Early Decision and Early Action policies.)

Early Decision applicants represent only a small portion of the total applicant pool at colleges that have ED policies. Only 6 percent of all applications for Fall 2015 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

TABLE 5: KEY STATISTICS FOR EARLY DECISION COLLEGES

	N	Mean Percent
Applications Received through Early Decision	99	6.1%
Early Decision Selectivity Rate	97	61.8
Overall Selectivity Rate for Institutions with Early Decision Policies	114	51.4
Early Decision Yield Rate	66	86.5
Overall Yield Rate for Institutions with Early Decision Policies	114	26.2

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

NOTE: Chi-squared tests revealed statistically significant associations and weak correlations between Early Decision and: Control ($X^2(1) = 44.2$ $p < .001$; $\phi = .25$ $p < .001$); Enrollment (X^2 (2) =21.2, $p < .001$, $V = .2$ $p < .001$); Selectivity (X^2 (3) =61.5, $p < .001$; $V = .34$, $p < .001$).

[1] An independent one-way ANOVA found a significant difference in the number of countries where institutions actively recruit international students by total full-time undergraduate enrollment size ($F(2)=6.1$, $p < .001$) and selectivity ($F(3)=3.3$, $p < .05$).

applicants (62 percent versus 51 percent). 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 (26 percent) (see Table 5). Between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015, colleges reported average increases of 10 percent in the number of Early Decision applicants and 11 percent in ED admits.

Early Action

Thirty-three percent of four-year colleges offered Early Action plans, according to results of the 2015 Admission Trends Survey. Colleges with lower yield rates were more likely to offer Early Action.

For Fall 2015, 40 percent of applications to colleges that had Early Action admission plans were received through EA. Similar to the pattern with Early Decision, colleges with Early Action accepted a greater proportion of EA applicants when compared to the overall applicant pool (73 percent versus 66 percent). Unlike Early Decision, Early Action did not provide a significant benefit to institutions in terms of yield rates. The average yield rate for EA admits was nearly identical to that of the overall applicant pool (see Table 6). The number of Early Action applications and the number of students accepted through EA each increased by 7 percent, on average, from Fall 2014 to Fall 2015.

THE MOST SELECTIVE COLLEGES ADMITTED ONLY 12 PERCENT OF WAIT-LISTED STUDENTS

Wait Lists

For the Fall 2015 admission cycle, 39 percent of institutions reported using a wait list. Private institutions were more likely than public colleges and universities to maintain a wait list (43 percent compared to 31 percent), as were those with lower acceptance rates.[2]

Institutions reported placing an average of 16 percent of all applicants on a wait list for the Fall 2015 admission cycle, and an average of 41 percent of wait-listed students opted to remain on the wait list. Institutions admitted an average of 32 percent of all students who chose to remain on wait lists. Selective colleges were least likely to admit students from a wait list.[3] Between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015, the average number of students offered a wait list position increased by 16 percent, and the number of students admitted from a wait list increased by 41 percent.

TABLE 6: KEY STATISTICS FOR EARLY ACTION COLLEGES

	N	Mean Percent
Applications Received through Early Action	105	40.2%
Early Action Selectivity Rate	100	72.9
Overall Selectivity Rate for Institutions with Early Action Policies	173	66.0
Early Action Yield Rate	95	25.8
Overall Yield Rate for Institutions with Early Action Policies	173	25.1

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

NOTE: Chi-squared tests revealed a statistically significant association and weak correlation between Early Action and Yield (X^2 (3) =19.8, $p < .001$; V= .20, $p < .001$).

[2] Chi-squared tests revealed a statistically significant association and weak correlation between Wait List and Selectivity (X^2 (3) =86.2, $p < .001$; V= .41, $p < .001$).

[3] The Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference in the mean percentage of students admitted off the wait list and selectivity (X^2 (3)=3.7, $p < .05$).

03 FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS

There is no definite plan or specific combination of factors that will guarantee a student admission to his or her preferred institution. Colleges and universities review many aspects of prospective student applications in order to determine which students will be admitted. In addition to considering the merits of each applicant, most universities also consider the composition of the entering freshmen and transfer classes as a whole, in order to ensure that a diverse group of students with a variety of academic and extracurricular interests will enrich the campus experience. The importance of various factors in the admission decision also differ depending on a student's designation as a first-time freshman, transfer, or international student. While first-time freshmen and international students have similarities in regard to top admission factors, top factors for transfer students are considerably different. Institutional characteristics, such as enrollment size and acceptance rate, also impact the importance of admission factors.[1]

Factors in the Admission Decision: First-Time Freshmen, Fall 2014

- The top admission decision factors for first-time freshmen have been consistent for decades. The No. 1 factor—rated as considerably important by 79 percent of colleges—was grades in college prep courses, followed by strength of curriculum and grades in all courses (each 60 percent), and admission test scores (53 percent).
- A second set of factors were most often considered to be moderately important. These factors tend to provide insight regarding personal qualities and student interests, as well as more detail on academic performance. They included essays or writing samples; teacher and counselor recommendations; student's demonstrated interest; class rank; and extracurricular activities.
- A final group of admission decision factors were given moderate or considerable importance by a small percentage of institutions, likely because they are relevant only to a small subset of colleges. These factors included subject test scores (AP, IB), portfolios, SAT II scores, interviews, state graduation exams scores, and work experience (see Table 7).

[1] While the data in this chapter related to transfer students were drawn from the 2015 ATS, some information concerning domestic and international first-time freshmen is from the 2014 administration of the survey. As ambiguity in the wording of some new 2015 survey questions significantly affected the results concerning admission factors for first-time freshmen, the 2014 figures were reported instead.

TABLE 7: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Grades in College Prep Courses	231	79.2%	13.0%	6.9%	0.9%
Grades in All Courses	229	60.3	31.0	8.7	—
Strength of Curriculum	231	60.2	26.8	10.0	3.0
Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	228	55.7	32.5	7.9	3.9
Essay or Writing Sample	231	22.1	39.0	21.6	17.3
Counselor Recommendation	231	17.3	42.4	27.3	13.0
Student's Demonstrated Interest	231	16.9	33.3	26.8	22.9
Teacher Recommendation	230	15.2	43.5	27.8	13.5
Class Rank	228	14.0	37.7	32.0	16.2
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	227	7.0	35.2	32.6	25.1
Portfolio	229	6.6	10.0	30.6	52.8
Extracurricular Activities	231	5.6	43.3	34.6	16.5
SAT II Scores	226	5.3	8.4	23.0	63.3
Interview	229	3.5	23.1	28.4	45.0
State Graduation Exam Scores	228	3.5	11.0	25.4	60.1
Work	230	0.9	21.3	44.8	33.0

— = No institutions in category.

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2014.

Factors in the Admission Decision: International Students, Fall 2014

- The top factors in admission decisions for first-time international students applying to four-year US colleges were similar to those of first-time domestic students, with the important exception of English proficiency exam scores. Eighty-five percent of colleges rated these proficiency scores as considerably important, followed by grades in college prep courses (77 percent), grades in all courses (64 percent), and strength of curriculum (57 percent).
- The moderately important decision factors also were similar to those for domestic students, with a few exceptions worth noting. Twenty-two percent of colleges rated the essay/writing sample as considerably important for domestic students, compared to 37 percent for international students. For international students, the essay can serve as another indicator of English proficiency in addition to offering information about student experiences and academic interests (see Table 8).

TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN)

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
English Proficiency Exam Scores	184	84.8%	14.1%	1.1%	—
Grades in College Prep Courses	183	77.0	16.4	4.9	1.6
Grades in All Courses	184	64.1	30.4	3.8	1.6
Strength of Curriculum	183	56.8	28.4	9.8	4.9
Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	183	41.0	31.7	18.6	8.7
Essay or Writing Sample	183	37.2	31.1	18.0	13.7
National School Leaving or Graduation Certificate	180	25.6	30.0	23.3	21.1
Counselor Recommendation	182	19.8	34.6	27.5	18.1
Teacher Recommendation	183	19.1	31.1	30.1	19.7
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	181	14.4	27.1	34.3	24.3
Student's Demonstrated Interest	182	13.7	25.8	30.2	30.2
Class Rank	181	7.7	22.7	34.8	34.8
Interview	183	7.7	19.7	30.1	42.6
Portfolio	183	6.6	7.7	25.7	60.1
Extracurricular Activities	180	5.0	26.1	39.4	29.4
SAT II Scores	182	3.8	5.5	28.0	62.6
Work	183	2.2	10.9	33.9	53.0

— = No institutions in category.

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2014.

Factors in the Admission Decision: Transfer Students, Fall 2015

- The factors considered in transfer admission decisions were notably different than those for first-time domestic and international students. The only two factors that were rated as considerably important by a majority of colleges were overall GPA at prior postsecondary institution(s) (83 percent) and average grades in transferable courses (71 percent). Unlike other prospective student populations, these factors can serve as direct evidence of a student's ability to succeed in college-level academic coursework.
- For transfer students, many factors related to high school performance fall to the level of moderate to limited importance, including grades, strength of the high school curriculum, and recommendations from teachers and counselors.
- In contrast to first-time prospective students, 72 percent of colleges rated admission test scores (SAT, ACT) as having limited or no importance in transfer admission decisions (see Table 9).

Factors in the Admission Decision for First-time Freshmen: Change Over Time

Because NACAC only recently began to collect annual data from transfer and international students,

TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: TRANSFER STUDENTS

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Overall GPA at Prior Postsecondary	296	83.4	11.1	3.7	1.7
Average Grades in Transferable Courses	296	70.9	20.6	6.4	2.0
High School Grade Point Average	298	22.8	27.5	35.2	14.4
Strength of High School Curriculum	191	20.4	37.7	—	41.9
Essay or Writing Sample	298	19.8	28.9	21.8	29.5
Articulation with Prior Postsecondary Institution	290	19.3	24.1	27.2	29.3
Grades in College Prep Courses in High School	295	18.0	23.7	35.9	22.4
Teacher Recommendation	294	16.0	28.6	26.9	28.6
Student's Demonstrated Interest	293	14.7	18.1	28.0	39.2
Quality of Postsecondary Institution	291	14.1	32.6	28.5	24.7
Counselor Recommendation	293	12.6	25.9	25.3	36.2
Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	295	6.1	22.0	41.0	30.8
Extracurricular Activities	294	5.4	25.9	41.8	26.9
Portfolio	288	5.2	7.3	19.4	68.1
Interview	293	4.1	15.4	29.4	51.2
State Graduation Exam Scores	289	2.1	2.8	18.7	76.5
Work	291	1.4	17.9	41.2	39.5
High School Class Rank	294	1.0	10.5	31.3	57.1
SAT II scores	295	0.7	3.4	14.2	81.7
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	296	0.3	11.1	36.1	52.4

— = No institutions in category.

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

change in admission factor importance over time is limited to first-time freshmen. Academic performance in college prep courses has been consistently rated as the top factor in admission decisions, with about 80 percent of colleges rating it as considerably important. In fact, ratings of many admission decision factors have remained remarkably stable. Notable exceptions include declining importance of class rank and interviews (see Table 10).

In analyzing these data, however, it is important to focus on the long-term trends for each factor rather than any year-to-year changes, as such differences may be due to variations in the annual survey samples.

Factors in Admission by Institutional Characteristics: First-time Freshmen, Fall 2014

This section highlights differences in the level of importance attributed to admission factors based on institutional characteristics. The results presented below are limited to

TABLE 10: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING "CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE" TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2006 TO FALL 2014

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Grades in College Prep Courses	76%	80%	75%	87%	83%	84%	82%	82%	79%
Strength of Curriculum	62	64	62	71	66	68	65	64	60
Admission Test Scores	60	59	54	58	59	59	56	58	56
Grades in All Courses	51	52	52	46	46	52	50	52	60
Essay or Writing Sample	28	26	27	26	27	25	20	22	22
Class Rank	23	23	19	16	22	19	13	15	14
Counselor Recommendation	21	21	20	17	19	19	16	16	17
Demonstrated Interest	21	22	21	21	23	21	18	20	17
Teacher Recommendation	20	21	21	17	19	17	15	14	15
Interview	10	11	11	7	9	6	7	8	4
Extracurricular Activities	8	7	7	9	7	5	7	10	6
Work	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	1
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	8	7	8	7	10	7	5	8	7
State Graduation Exam Scores	6	4	4	3	4	4	2	3	4
SAT II Scores	5	6	7	5	5	5	4	6	5
Portfolio	—	—	7	8	6	7	5	6	7

— = Data are not available.

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Surveys, 2006 through 2014.

admission factors for prospective first-time freshmen. Lack of variation for transfer and international admission factor ratings prohibited analysis for these groups.

The top four admission decision factors for first-time freshmen were consistent across all types of institutions. However, institutional characteristics determined the relative level of importance assigned to some admission factors.

- Private colleges placed relatively more importance on the essay/writing samples. Public schools gave slightly more weight to admission test scores.
- Larger institutions attributed more importance to strength of curriculum than their smaller counterparts.
- Grades in college prep courses and strength of the high school curriculum were valued more highly by institutions with lower yield rates in comparison with their higher yield counterparts.

(See Appendix Table B.4. for a correlation matrix of statistically significant associations.)

Student Characteristics as Contextual Factors, Fall 2015

Colleges were asked to rate the influence of certain student characteristics—race/ethnicity, first-generation status, high school attended, state or county of residence, gender, alumni relations, and ability to pay—in terms of how they affect evaluation of the main admission factors. Although, for the most part, college admission officers give very little importance to these characteristics, there are some findings worth noting (see Table 11). For example, 22 percent of colleges rated the high school

attended as at least moderately important in first-time freshmen admission decisions. Approximately half of colleges gave at least limited weight to first-generation status when evaluating both first-time domestic students and international students (48 percent and 51 percent, respectively).

In both freshmen and transfer admission decisions, a similar proportion of colleges attributed at least limited importance to alumni relations (51 percent and 49 percent, respectively).

Interesting differences also were found in the relative importance given to these factors based on institution type. Data provided on the 2015 NACAC Admission Trends Survey allowed for comparison by institutional characteristics for each prospective student group—first-time freshmen, transfer students, and international students.

TABLE 11: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF INFLUENCE TO STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS

	N	Considerable Influence	Moderate Influence	Limited Influence	No Influence
FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN					
High School Attended	297	2.0%	20.2%	34.3%	43.4%
Race/Ethnicity	298	3.4	11.1	18.5	67.1
State or County of Residence	297	2.0	7.4	22.9	67.7
First-generation Status	296	2.4	13.9	31.8	52.0
Ability to Pay	296	0.7	4.7	12.5	52.1
Gender	296	2.0	2.4	12.8	82.8
Alumni Relations	296	1.0	8.1	41.6	49.3
TRANSFER STUDENTS					
High School Attended	292	1.4	5.1	25.7	67.8
Race/Ethnicity	294	2.7	9.2	16.7	71.4
State or County of Residence	293	1.7	5.5	18.8	74.1
First-generation Status	290	1.7	11.4	27.2	59.7
Ability to Pay	293	1.0	7.5	40.3	51.2
Gender	293	1.4	2.4	10.6	85.7
Alumni Relations	293	1.0	5.5	11.3	82.3
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN)					
High School Attended	276	3.6	17.4	30.4	48.6
Race/Ethnicity	278	2.5	7.2	14.4	75.9
State or County of Residence	278	2.2	10.1	23.7	64.0
First-generation Status	276	1.8	9.1	22.1	67.0
Ability to Pay	284	20.6	10.3	8.9	60.1
Gender	278	1.8	2.9	12.2	83.1
Alumni Relations	275	1.5	8.0	41.1	49.5

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

Institutional Control

- Private institutions gave more weight to ability to pay, gender, and alumni relations when evaluating the applications of each student group.
- Private colleges were slightly more likely to give greater consideration to race/ethnicity when evaluating first-time freshmen.

Enrollment

- For all three prospective student groups, smaller institutions gave more weight to ability to pay and alumni relations.
- For both first-time freshmen and transfer students, larger institutions placed more emphasis on state or county of residence.

Selectivity

- When evaluating applications from each student group, institutions that were more selective placed greater emphasis on five of the seven student contextual factors—race/ethnicity, state or county of residence, first-generation status, gender, and alumni relations.

Yield

- Ability to pay and alumni relations were given more weight at lower-yield institutions for each of the student groups—first-time freshmen, transfer, and international.

Highlights by Student Group

- Nearly one-third (31 percent) of Admission Trends Survey respondents rated ability to pay as having considerable or moderate influence in admission decisions for prospective first-time international students, compared to only 14.5 percent for first-time domestic students and 12 percent for transfer students.
- For both domestic and international first-time students, 22 percent and 21 percent of responding colleges, respectively, placed at least moderate influence on the high school attended as a contextual factor in admission decisions. High school attended was rated as moderately or considerably important for transfer students by only 6.5 percent of colleges.
- Eighty-three percent of survey respondents considered alumni relations to have no influence in transfer admission decisions, compared to only half for first-time freshmen (domestic and international).

(See Appendix Tables B.5.–B.7. for complete correlation matrices of statistically significant associations.)

04 COLLEGE COUNSELING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Introduction

Using results from the 2014 NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, this chapter explores the different facets of the school counseling profession as they relate to precollege advising, including student-to-counselor ratios, counseling department priorities, college counseling activities, and counselor professional development.

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.[1] School counselors play a key role in assisting students through the transition to postsecondary education. By collaborating with school administrators, teachers, community representatives, government officials, and parents, school counselors can be significant assets throughout the college application and admission processes.

Student-to-Counselor Ratios

According to the US Department of Education, in 2013–14 each public school counselor (including pre-kindergarten, elementary, and secondary counselors[2]) was responsible for overseeing 476 students, on average.[3] Counselors at public secondary schools had smaller caseloads than their primary school counterparts, serving an average of 436 students. As highlighted in Figure 3, these ratios have changed very little over the past 10 years.

Results of NACAC's 2014 Counseling Trends Survey indicated the average student-to-counselor

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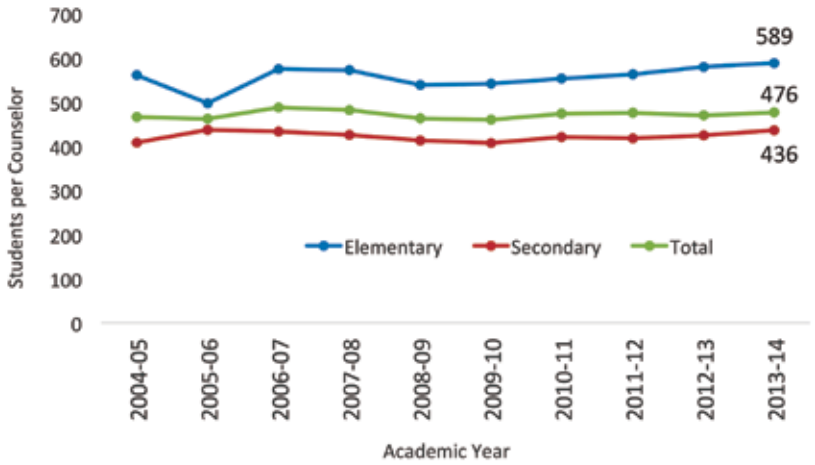
1 National Association for College Admission Counseling. (1990). Statement on Precollege Guidance and the Role of the School Counselor. Available at: *www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies/Documents/RoleofSchlCounsNEW.pdf.*

2 For the purpose of these calculations, elementary school is defined as grades K–5 and secondary as grades 6–12. The number of counselors is provided by school level only.

3 US Department of Education. (2015). *Common Core of Data State Nonfiscal Survey Public Elementary/Secondary Education: School Year, 2013–14 Version 1a.* Washington, DC: NCES.

FIGURE 3: PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT-TO-COUNSELOR RATIOS BY SCHOOL LEVEL: 2004–05 TO 2013–14



NOTE: For the purpose of these calculations, elementary school is defined as grades K-5 and secondary school as grades 6-12. The total number of counselors is provided only by school level, not grade level.

SOURCE: US Department of Education. Common Core of Data State Nonfiscal Survey Public Elementary/Secondary Education: School Years 2004-05 through 2013-14. Washington, DC: NCES.

ratio for both public and private high schools combined, taking into account part-time staff, was 285-to-1. This number exceeds the 250-to-1 maximum ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association.[4] Data regarding the extent to which college advising is part of counselors' job responsibilities showed the average student-to-college counselor ratio was 350-to-1.[5]

Public institutions assigned substantially more students to each counselor. There also were significant differences in the student-to-counselor and student-to-college counselor ratios by enrollment size. Overall, the largest schools had significantly higher ratios than institutions with fewer than 1,500 students (see Table 12).

Notably, while 73 percent of private schools reported that they employed at least one counselor (full- or part-time) whose sole responsibility was to provide college counseling for students, only 30 percent of public institutions had a dedicated college advisor. Schools with high student-to-counselor ratios were also less likely to have a dedicated college counselor.

US Department of Education data show that student-to-counselor ratios vary widely. In 2013–14, only three states—New Hampshire, Vermont, and Wyoming—had ratios below ASCA's 250-to-1 recommended threshold. The states with the highest number of students per counselor included Arizona (941), California (812), Minnesota (743), Michigan (732), and Illinois (700). (A list of average public school student-to-counselor ratios for all 50 states plus the District of Columbia can be found in Appendix Table B.8.)

Counseling Department Priorities

Counseling departments must juggle a number of responsibilities in catering to a diverse population of students. In order to understand the priorities of school counseling departments, survey respondents were asked to rank the importance of four goals:

- Boosting students' academic achievement
- Educating students about postsecondary options and preparing them for the college admission process
- Fostering students' personal growth and development
- Assisting students with preparing for work roles after high school.

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[4] American School Counselor Association. (2016). *The Role of the School Counselor.* Alexandria, VA: ASCA.

[5] 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. Both full-time and part-time counselors were included in this calculation.

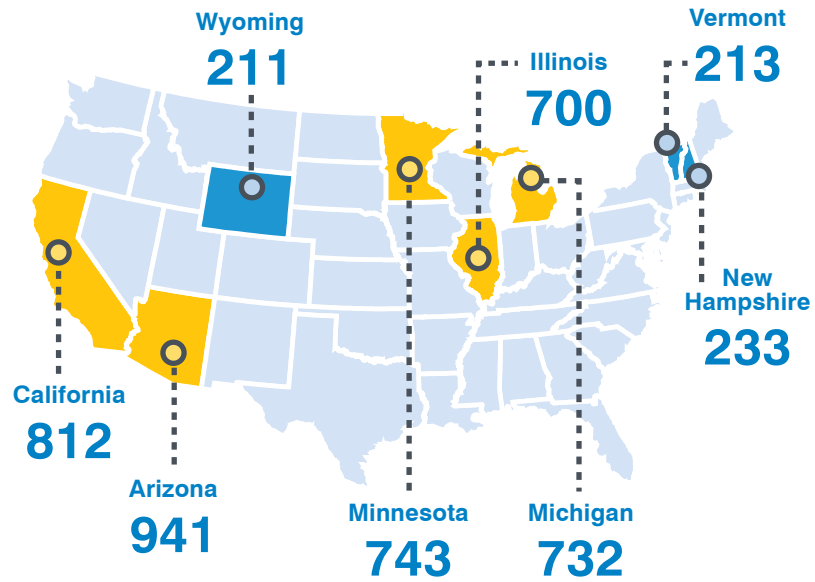
TABLE 12: AVERAGE STUDENT-TO-COUNSELOR AND STUDENT-TO-COLLEGE COUNSELOR RATIOS, BY SCHOOL TYPE AND ENROLLMENT

	Students per Counselor	Students per College Counselor
All Survey Respondents	**285**	**350**
Type		
Public	303	358
Private	222	323
Enrollment		
Fewer than 500 students	214	246
500 to 999	288	361
1,000 to 1,499	306	378
1,500 to 1,999	377	492
2,000 or more students	403	510

NOTE: Independent t-tests and one-way ANOVAs showed there was a statistical difference between the number of students per counselor and: control: $t(1306)=5.6$, $p < .001$; enrollment: $F(4,1309)=30.6$, $p<.001$. There also was a statistical difference between students per college counselor and enrollment, $F(4,1308) = 37.4$, $p < .001$.

SOURCE: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014.

STATES WITH HIGHEST AND LOWEST RATIOS



Overall, survey results indicated that helping students succeed academically and prepare for postsecondary education were the top priorities of most counseling offices. While public school counselors indicated providing academic guidance was their key priority, private school counselors were more focused on postsecondary advising. Public school counselors—especially from low-income schools[6]—also ranked helping students prepare for the workforce more highly than their private school counterparts. By contrast, private school counselors and individuals from institutions with lower student-to-counselor ratios placed a higher emphasis on fostering students' personal development.

[6] The percentage of the student body eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch was used as a proxy for whether the school served a low-income population.

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES

Public Schools

First priority academic achievement; second priority college planning

Private Schools

First priority college planning; second priority academic achievement

Staff Time for College Counseling

Postsecondary admission counseling is one of many functions of school counselors. On average, the time that counselors in secondary schools spend on various tasks breaks down in the following way:

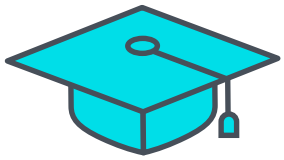
- Postsecondary admission counseling (30 percent)
- Choice and scheduling of high school courses (21 percent)
- Personal needs counseling (19 percent)
- Academic testing (13 percent)
- Occupational counseling and job placement (6 percent)
- Teaching (5 percent)
- Other non-guidance activities (5 percent)

However, the division of time among these task differs significantly based on school characteristics. For example, private school counselors spent more than double the amount of time as their public school counterparts on college counseling. As private schools tend to be small, enrolling fewer low-income students than public institutions, it makes sense that counselors from more affluent schools with small enrollments have more time to devote to college advising.

(A more detailed breakdown of the time counselors spent on these tasks by various school characteristics can be found in Appendix Table B.9.)

PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ON COLLEGE COUNSELING

Public Schools
22%



Private Schools
55%

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 4, the most frequent activities included individual meetings with students to discuss postsecondary admission options and hosting college representatives. Almost half of counselors (48 percent) also reported frequently engaging in electronic communication with students or parents about postsecondary admission. About 40 percent noted that they frequently engage in the following activities: representing students to college admission officers, reviewing students' college applications, hosting group counseling sessions about postsecondary education, and meeting with parents.

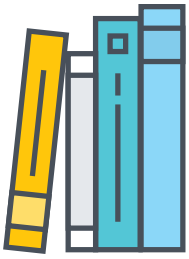
There are variations in the extent to which students at different types of schools benefit from these services. For example, counselors at private schools reported that they engage more frequently than those at public schools in most of these activities, with the exception of financial aid counseling.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

Professional Development

In 2014, 37 percent of high schools reported that counselors responsible for postsecondary counseling were required to participate in related professional development. Private high schools were much more likely than public institutions to require professional development for counselors (54 percent and 32 percent, respectively), and they were more likely to cover all associated costs (70 percent and 33 percent, respectively). Schools with lower student-to-counselor ratios also were more likely to require professional development in postsecondary counseling and to cover all costs. (See Table B.10. for a more detailed breakdown of professional development requirements and costs by various school characteristics.)

37%

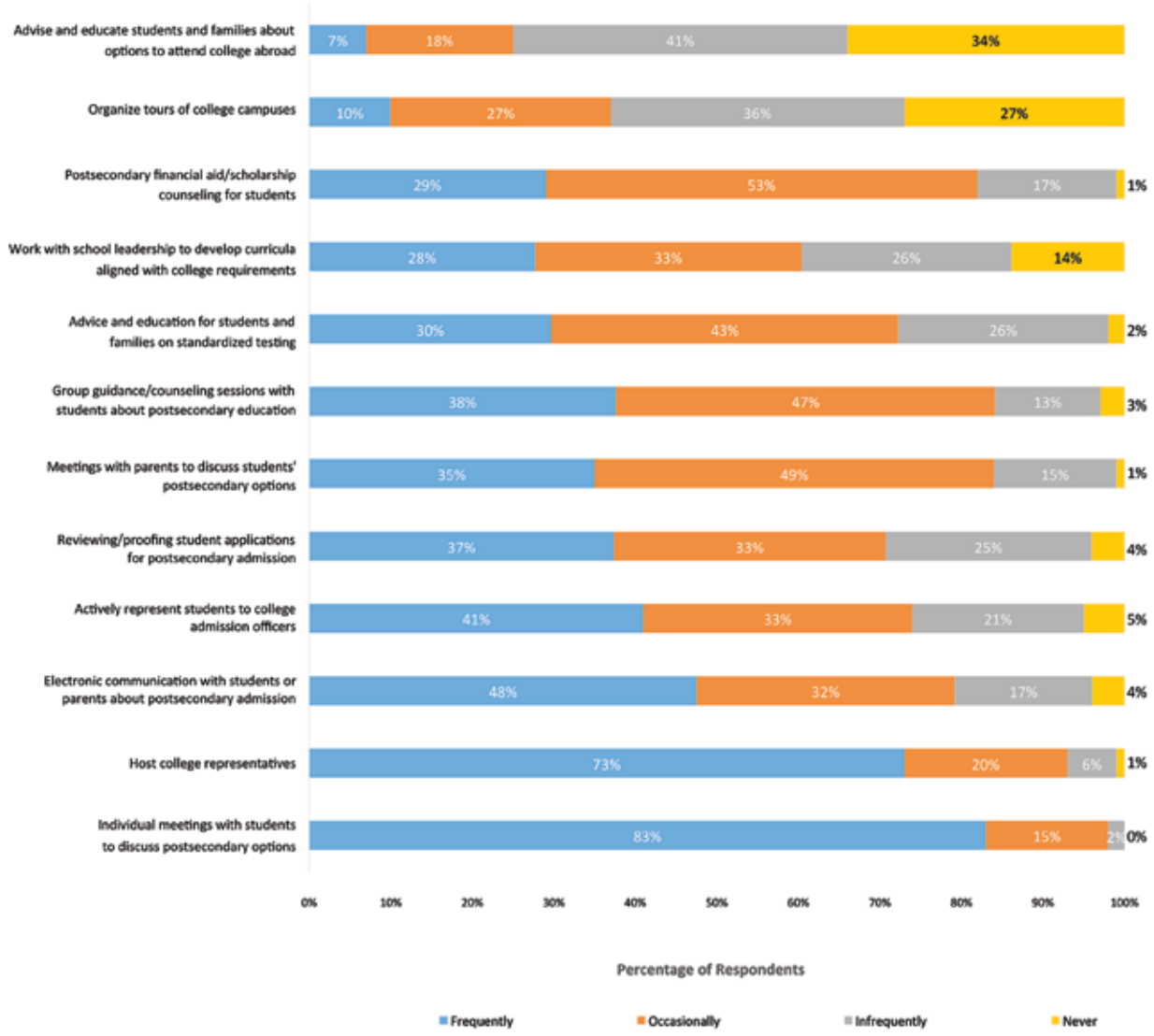
OF HIGH SCHOOLS REPORTED THAT COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELORS WERE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



41%

OF SCHOOLS *WITH THIS REQUIREMENT* PAID ALL ASSOCIATED COSTS

FIGURE 4: FREQUENCY COUNSELORS ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES RELATED TO POSTSECONDARY ADMISSION COUNSELING



SOURCE: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014.

APPENDIX A. METHODOLOGY

The 2015 *State of College Admission* report primarily uses data collected from two annual NACAC surveys: the Counseling Trends Survey (CTS) and the Admission Trends Survey (ATS).

Counseling Trends Survey

The purpose of NACAC's Counseling Trends Survey (CTS) is to collect information from secondary school counselors and counseling departments about their priorities and work responsibilities, particularly as they relate to helping students transition to college; and their practices in communicating with students, parents, and colleges.

In April 2014, NACAC distributed the CTS to a total of 10,000 secondary schools in the United States—2,249 public and private schools that are members of NACAC and a random sample of 7,751 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 was mailed a paper survey form that also included a link to an online survey, providing respondents with two options for completing the questionnaire. Responses were collected through the end of June 2014.

NACAC received 1,360 responses to the survey. Table A.1 provides a comparison of the characteristics of Counseling Trends Survey respondents to those of all public and private secondary schools in the US. NACAC survey respondents were 77 percent public; 16 percent private, non-parochial; and 7 percent private, parochial, making the sample over-representative of public and private, non-parochial schools and under-representative of private, parochial institutions. NACAC respondents also had a smaller proportion of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch in comparison to all schools

TABLE A.1: NACAC 2014 COUNSELING TRENDS SURVEY SAMPLE COMPARED TO NATIONAL SCHOOL POPULATION

	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
N (%)	**1,360**	**41,778**	**1,043 (77.1%)**	**30,668 (73.4%)**	**214 (15.8%)**	**3,560 (8.5%)**	**96 (7.1%)**	**7,550 (18.1%)**
Total Enrollment								
Mean Enrollment	921	704	993	704	617	—	818	—
Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility[1]								
Percentage of Students Eligible	33%	55.8%	43.0%	49.5%	0.7%	—	1.5%	—

— Not available for secondary schools only.

[1] Survey respondents were asked to indicate participation in both federal and state-sponsored programs; national data are from 2011–12 for the federal program only. National percentages are for all schools, including elementary.

SOURCES: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014.

US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2011-12). Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). Public School Teacher and Private School Teacher Data Files. Washington, DC: NCES.

(including elementary), and they reported substantially larger enrollments compared to all secondary schools.

Admission Trends Survey

NACAC conducts its annual Admission Trends Survey (ATS) to better understand admission processes at US colleges and universities. NACAC collects data related to application volume; application practices; 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 staffing. Since 2014, NACAC has expanded ATS to incorporate questions related to the admission process for prospective transfer and international students.

This report incorporates data from the 2014 and 2015 versions of the Admission Trends Survey.

2014 ATS

The 2014 ATS was administered to 1,253 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 in February 2015. An invitation to participate, containing a unique web link, was emailed to a representative at each institution. The survey was re-issued in June 2015 to institutions from the original sample who had not yet responded in order to improve the response rate.

NACAC received a total of 335 responses to the survey (a 27 percent response rate), which represented 18 percent of all accredited four-year, not-for-profit, baccalaureate degree-granting, Title-IV institutions in the United States. As shown in Table A.2, NACAC 2014 Admission Trends Survey respondents were relatively representative of all colleges with respect to control (70 percent private survey respondents compared to 68 percent nationally). Colleges in the West were under-represented, and Midwestern colleges

TABLE A.2: NACAC 2014 ADMISSION TRENDS SURVEY SAMPLE COMPARED TO NATIONAL COLLEGE POPULATION

	NACAC Respondents	All Colleges	NACAC Public Respondents	All Public Colleges	NACAC Private Respondents	All Private Colleges
N (%)	**335**	**1,814**	**99 (30%)**	**579 (32%)**	**232(70)**	**1,235 (68%)**
Total Full-Time Undergraduate Enrollment						
Mean Enrollment	6,050	3,877	14,614	8,389	2,494	1,760
Region (%)						
Northeast	32	30	21	25	36	31
South	23	24	26	26	22	23
Midwest	28	26	33	22	25	27
West	18	21	20	27	17	18
Selectivity and Yield (%)						
Mean Selectivity	64.6	65.5	64.1	67.7	64.8	64.4
Mean Yield	30.5	36.9	38.1	38.0	27.8	36.3

NOTE: Data for all colleges was drawn from the 2014-15 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) using the following criteria: US location, four-year, not-for-profit, baccalaureate degree-granting, and Title IV-participating. Of the 1,814 total institutions, approximately 1,551 (86 percent) provided both selectivity and yield data for Fall 2013.

SOURCES: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2014.

US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2014-15). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Center. Washington, DC: NCES.

TABLE A.3: NACAC 2015 ADMISSION TRENDS SURVEY SAMPLE COMPARED TO NATIONAL COLLEGE POPULATION

	NACAC Respondents	All Colleges	NACAC Public Respondents	All Public Colleges	NACAC Private Respondents	All Private Colleges
N (%)	**687**	**1,807**	**250 (36%)**	**575 (32%)**	**437 (64%)**	**1,232 (68%)**
Total Full-Time Undergraduate Enrollment						
Mean Enrollment	5,978	3,902	11,068	8,491	2,659	1,760
Region (%)						
Northeast	33	29	27	25	37	30
South	20	24	25	27	17	23
Midwest	28	25	26	22	30	29
West	19	21	22	27	17	18
Selectivity and Yield (%)						
Mean Selectivity	65.1	65.8	70.6	68.3	61.6	64.6
Mean Yield	28.8	36.2	33.6	36.9	25.6	35.9

NOTE: Data for all colleges was drawn from the 2014-15 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) using the following criteria: US location, four-year, not-for-profit, baccalaureate degree-granting, and Title IV-participating. Of the 1,807 total institutions, approximately 1,555 (86 percent) provided both selectivity and yield data for Fall 2014.

SOURCES: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2014-15). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Center. Washington, DC: NCES.

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 had a higher yield rate than the private colleges.

2015 ATS

For the 2015 administration of the Admission Trends Survey, the questionnaire was divided into two parts—one half of the survey was sent to university admission offices and the other to institutional research (IR) offices. The survey was e-mailed in March 2015 to admission and IR representatives from 1,380 four-year postsecondary institutions that were NACAC members, representing 76 percent of all accredited four-year, not-for-profit, baccalaureate degree-granting, Title-IV participating institutions in the US. NACAC received 687 responses, for an overall response rate of 50 percent. Of the 687 responses, 208 institutions submitted completed surveys (both admission and IR sections); 131 submitted only the admission office portion of the survey; and 348 institutions submitted only the IR office portion. All responses—including those from universities that only answered one half of the survey—were utilized in the analyses.

As shown in Table A.3, NACAC 2015 ATS respondents were relatively representative of all colleges with respect to control (64 percent private survey respondents compared to 68 percent nationally). All regions of the country were represented. NACAC respondents had lower yield rates, particularly among private colleges, when compared to the national average. Public NACAC survey respondents were slightly more selective than all public colleges.

Statistical Method

After the data were cleaned, descriptive and inferential statistics were generated using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Descriptive statistics–including measures of central tendency and dispersion, such as the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation—provide summary information about the data and highlight patterns. While these figures point out observed differences between sample subgroups, they do not indicate whether these differences occurred merely by chance.

For example, descriptive statistics from the 2014 Counseling Trends Survey showed that, on average, public high schools had a higher student-to-counselor ratio (303-to-1) than their private school counterparts (222-to-1). However, in order to determine whether this gap in the student-to-counselor ratio occurred by mere chance due to the makeup of the sample or reflected an actual *statistical difference,* inferential statistical tests such as the t-test (when comparing two independent groups) and the one-way ANOVA (when comparing three or more independent groups) were utilized. In the case of the student-to-counselor ratio, an independent one-way ANOVA confirmed there was a significant statistical difference by institutional control.

APPENDIX B. TABLES

TABLE B.1: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO VARIOUS RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Website	282	84.4%	12.4%	2.5%	0.7%
Email	284	82.7	14.8	2.1	0.4
Hosted Campus Visit	283	77.0	17.0	4.6	1.4
High School Counselor	283	60.8	33.9	3.9	1.4
High School Visit	282	58.5	32.6	8.5	0.4
Direct Mail	284	54.6	31.7	12.0	1.8
College Fairs	254	52.5	35.6	10.2	1.8
Social Media	283	38.2	42.0	17.7	2.1
Community Based Organizations	278	16.9	36.7	38.8	7.6
Test-Optional Policy	259	13.9	8.9	5.0	72.2
Alumni	279	12.5	31.2	47.3	9.0
Conditional/Provisional Admission Program	272	5.1	18.4	30.5	46.0

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

TABLE B.2: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO VARIOUS RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES: TRANSFER STUDENTS

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Direct Mail	281	29.2%	32.4%	28.1%	10.3%
Website	282	81.9	15.6	2.1	0.4
Email	283	77.3	14.9	5.7	2.1
Community College Outreach/Partnership	284	57.7	23.9	14.4	3.9
Articulation Agreements with Community Colleges	282	50.7	25.5	14.9	8.9
Hosted Campus Visit	284	49.6	31.0	14.1	5.3
College Fairs	281	29.9	32.4	29.2	8.5
Social Media	282	26.6	41.8	27.3	4.3
High School Counselor	261	13.8	10.7	31.8	43.7
High School Visit	262	9.5	12.6	16.4	61.5
Alumni	277	9.4	20.9	53.1	16.6
Community Based Organizations	269	8.6	22.3	48.7	20.4
Test-Optional Policy	254	8.3	6.7	8.7	76.4
Conditional/Provisional Admission Program	265	3.8	14.3	24.5	57.4

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

TABLE B.3: PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO VARIOUS RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN)

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Website	268	87.7	10.4	1.1	0.7
Email	267	79.0	15.4	4.1	1.5
High School Counselor	258	35.3	20.9	24.4	19.4
Social Media	267	30.7	39.3	25.1	4.9
Hosted Campus Visit	262	26.3	17.2	36.6	19.8
Overseas High School Visit	265	23.8	21.1	21.9	33.2
College Fairs	264	20.5	27.3	25.8	26.5
US High School Visit	247	13.0	12.6	26.3	48.2
Alumni	262	10.7	24.4	46.9	17.9
Conditional/Provisional Admission Program	249	9.6	15.7	21.3	53.4
Test-Optional Policy	247	9.7	8.1	6.5	75.7
Direct Mail	267	9.4	13.9	40.4	36.3
Community Based Organizations	250	6.4	14.0	35.2	44.4
Utilize Agents	276	15.9	13.0	21.0	50.0
Partnerships with Overseas Colleges	275	15.3	24.7	27.6	32.4
State or Regional Recruitment Consortium	275	8.0	22.2	30.2	39.6
Federal Government Support	274	13.9	24.8	31.4	29.9

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

TABLE B.4: CORRELATION MATRIX BETWEEN LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE ATTRIBUTED TO SELECT ADMISSION DECISION FACTORS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

	Grades in College Prep Courses	Strength of Curriculum	Grades in All Courses	Admission Test Scores	Essay/ Writing Sample
Private Institution	.04	.04	-.02	-.15*	.23**
Enrollment	.10	.19**	-.02	.12	-.02
Selectivity	-.08	-.12	.005	-.04	-.12
Yield	-.15*	-.21**	-.06	.12	-.05

*NOTES: N=209. Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were calculated. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$*

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2014.

TABLE B.5: CORRELATION COEFFICIENT MATRIX BETWEEN INFLUENCE OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

	High School Attended	Race/ Ethnicity	State or County of Residence	First-Generation	Ability to Pay	Gender	Alumni Relations
Private	.20***	.16*	-.08	-.02	.34***	.23***	.36***
Enrollment	-.02	.05	.22***	.14	-.19*	-.01	-.18*
Selectivity	-.05	-.26***	-.32***	-.23***	-.02	-.34***	-.21***
Yield	-.21***	.01	-.01	.06	-.25***	.07	-.18*

*NOTE: N = 173. Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were calculated. *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05*
SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

TABLE B.6: CORRELATION COEFFICIENT MATRIX BETWEEN INFLUENCE OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS: TRANSFER STUDENTS

	High School Attended	Race/ Ethnicity	State or County of Residence	First-Generation	Ability to Pay	Gender	Alumni Relations
Private	.14	.13	-.13	.04	.38***	.20*	.42***
Enrollment	-.13	.09	.21***	.11	-.22**	-.03	-.25***
Selectivity	-.06	-.28***	-.26***	-.31***	-.10	-.30***	-.22***
Yield	-.09	-.03	-.04	.02	-.20**	.05	-.21***

*NOTE: N = 167. Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were calculated. *** p .< .001, ** p < .0.1, * p < .05*
SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

TABLE B.7: CORRELATION COEFFICIENT MATRIX BETWEEN INFLUENCE OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN)

	High School Attended	Race/ Ethnicity	State or County of Residence	First-Generation	Ability to Pay	Gender	Alumni Relations
Private	.19*	.10	.07	-.03	.37***	.23***	.37***
Enrollment	.06	.13	.10	.16*	-.18*	-.01	-.19*
Selectivity	-.09	-.26***	-.23***	-.37***	-.02	-.35***	-.24***
Yield	-.19*	.01	-.08	.13	-.26***	.09	-.17*

*NOTE: N = 167. Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were calculated. *** p < .001, ** p < .0.1, * p < .05*
SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2015.

TABLE B.8: PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT-TO-COUNSELOR RATIOS, BY STATE: 2013-14

State	Total Enrollment	Counselors	Students per Counselor
Alabama	746,204	1,789	417
Alaska	130,944	301	435
Arizona	1,102,380	1,171	941
Arkansas	489,979	1,275	384
California	6,236,018	7,676	812
Colorado	876,795	2,222	395
Connecticut	546,175	1,135	481
Delaware	131,687	302	436
District of Columbia	78,153	158	494
Florida	2,720,744	5,543	491
Georgia	1,723,909	3,521	490
Hawaii	186,825	625	299
Idaho	295,947	447	662
Illinois	2,063,307	2,947	700
Indiana	1,047,385	1,934	541
Iowa	502,816	1,190	423
Kansas	486,423	1,044	466
Kentucky	674,879	1,523	443
Louisiana	711,491	1,611	442
Maine	183,777	604	304
Maryland	866,169	2,335	371
Massachusetts	955,739	2,281	419
Michigan	1,548,835	2,116	732
Minnesota	850,973	1,145	743
Mississippi	492,586	1,119	440
Missouri	918,288	2,607	352
Montana	144,129	450	321
Nebraska	307,677	783	393
Nevada	451,831	890	508
New Hampshire	184,925	793	233
New Jersey	1,370,295	3,766	364
New Mexico	339,244	758	447
New York	2,732,770	4,381	624
North Carolina	1,499,879	4,040	371

Continues.

TABLE B.8: PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT-TO-COUNSELOR RATIOS, BY STATE: 2013-14 (continued)

State	Total Enrollment	Counselors	Students per Counselor
North Dakota	103,786	341	305
Ohio	1,723,619	3,733	462
Oklahoma	681,848	1,615	422
Oregon	577,275	982	588
Pennsylvania	1,755,236	4,263	412
Rhode Island	142,008	351	405
South Carolina	745,657	1,955	381
South Dakota	130,890	333	393
Tennessee	993,556	2,913	341
Texas	5,152,591	11,079	465
Utah	625,461	915	683
Vermont	88,690	417	213
Virginia	1,273,825	3,344	381
Washington	1,058,936	2,110	502
West Virginia	280,958	743	378
Wisconsin	874,414	1,905	459
Wyoming	92,732	440	211

SOURCE: US Department of Education (2015) Common Core of Data State Nonfiscal Survey Public Elementary/Secondary Education: School Year, 2013-14 Version 1a. *Washington, DC: NCES.*

TABLE B.9: PERCENTAGE OF TIME COUNSELING STAFF SPENT ON VARIOUS TASKS, BY SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

	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
All Schools	**30.1%**	**21.1%**	**19.4%**	**13.3%**	**5.9%**	**5.4%**	**4.8%**
Type							
Public	22.4	23.9	21.7	14.6	7.0	5.4	5.0
Private	55.0	12.0	11.9	9.0	2.6	5.3	4.3
Private non-parochial	60.0	11.0	8.4	8.8	2.1	5.5	4.2
Private parochial	42.9	14.3	20.3	9.5	3.7	4.8	4.6
Enrollment							
Fewer than 500 students	31.7	17.2	16.6	14.6	6.2	7.8	5.8
500 to 999	32.4	19.6	19.7	13.3	5.7	4.4	4.9
1,000 to 1,499	28.1	24.0	21.3	13.1	5.9	3.5	4.1
1,500 to 1,999	24.4	29.0	22.7	10.2	6.0	3.7	4.1
2,000 or more	25.0	27.2	23.0	12.1	5.8	3.6	3.2
Free and Reduced-Price Lunch							
0 to 25% of students eligible	29.4	22.8	21.4	11.9	6.1	4.4	4.0
26 to 50%	20.4	23.7	22.4	15.6	7.2	5.6	5.2
51 to 75%	19.7	23.8	21.9	14.9	7.7	6.8	5.1
76 to 100%	23.4	23.8	18.5	16.3	7.1	4.6	6.3
Students per Counselor							
100 or fewer	38.4	15.8	17.0	11.8	5.5	6.6	4.8
101 to 200	34.2	18.5	19.5	11.5	5.7	6.3	4.4
201 to 300	29.2	22.5	20.5	13.0	5.9	4.7	4.4
301 to 400	25.4	23.9	19.4	14.3	6.7	4.9	5.5
401 to 500	25.4	23.7	19.7	16.0	5.9	4.5	4.8
More than 500	26.2	20.9	17.2	17.8	5.7	4.9	7.2

SOURCE: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014.

NOTE: Independent t-tests and one-way ANOVAs showed there was a statistical difference between the percentage of time devoted to postsecondary admission counseling and: control $t(1242) = -33.1$, $p < .001$; enrollment $F(4, 1222) = 6.81$, $p < .001$; FRPL $F(3, 937) = 29.7$, $p < .001$; students per counselor: $F(5, 1213) = 11.3$, $p < .001$.

TABLE B.10: COUNSELOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	Percentage of Schools that Require Professional Development	Percentage of Schools that Cover Professional Development Costs		
		All Costs	Some Costs	No Costs
Total	**36.8%**	**41.1%**	**43.0%**	**15.8%**
Control				
Public	31.7	32.5	48.0	19.5
Private	53.6	69.8	26.6	3.6
Private non-parochial	56.6	76.8	21.3	1.9
Private parochial	46.8	54.3	38.3	7.4
Enrollment				
Fewer than 500 students	32.7	46.9	39.5	13.7
500 to 999	43.3	49.5	36.7	13.8
1,000 to 1,499	28.4	29.4	47.2	23.4
1,500 to 1,999	37.8	27.0	56.9	16.1
2,000 or more	43.1	23.9	55.6	20.5
Free and Reduced-Price Lunch				
0 to 25 percent of students eligible	36.9	37.2	50.6	12.2
26 to 50 percent	24.1	31.5	47.7	20.9
51 to 75 percent	32.7	34.4	45.9	19.7
76 to 100 percent	50.8	37.3	36.6	26.1
Students Per Counselor				
100 or fewer	52.0	52.3	32.8	14.8
101 to 200	42.1	49.6	38.7	11.7
201 to 300	34.0	40.1	44.1	15.9
301 to 400	27.3	32.8	49.3	17.9
401 to 500	29.9	28.6	53.8	17.6
More than 500	37.8	31.6	40.8	27.6

NOTE: Chi squared tests showed there was a statistical difference between the percentage of schools requiring professional development and: Control X^2 (2, N = 1314) = 48.8, p < .001; Enrollment X^2 (4, N = 1294) = 18.6, p = .001; FRPL X^2 (3, N = 1001) = 31.4, p < .001; Students per counselor X^2 (5, N = 1285) = 28.6, p < .001. Chi squared tests also showed a statistical difference between the percentage of schools that covered professional development costs and: Control X^2 (2, N = 1315) = 142.0, p < .001; Enrollment X^2 (8, N = 1296) = 58.9, p < .001; FRPL X^2 (6, N = 1001) = 18.4, p < .01; and students per counselor X^2 (10, N = 1287) = 28.6, p < .001.

SOURCE: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2014.

APPENDIX C. EARLY DECISION AND EARLY ACTION DEFINED

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 where, 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.[1]

[1] NACAC's Statement of Principles of Good Practice (SPGP). Available online at: *www.nacacnet.org/spgp.*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