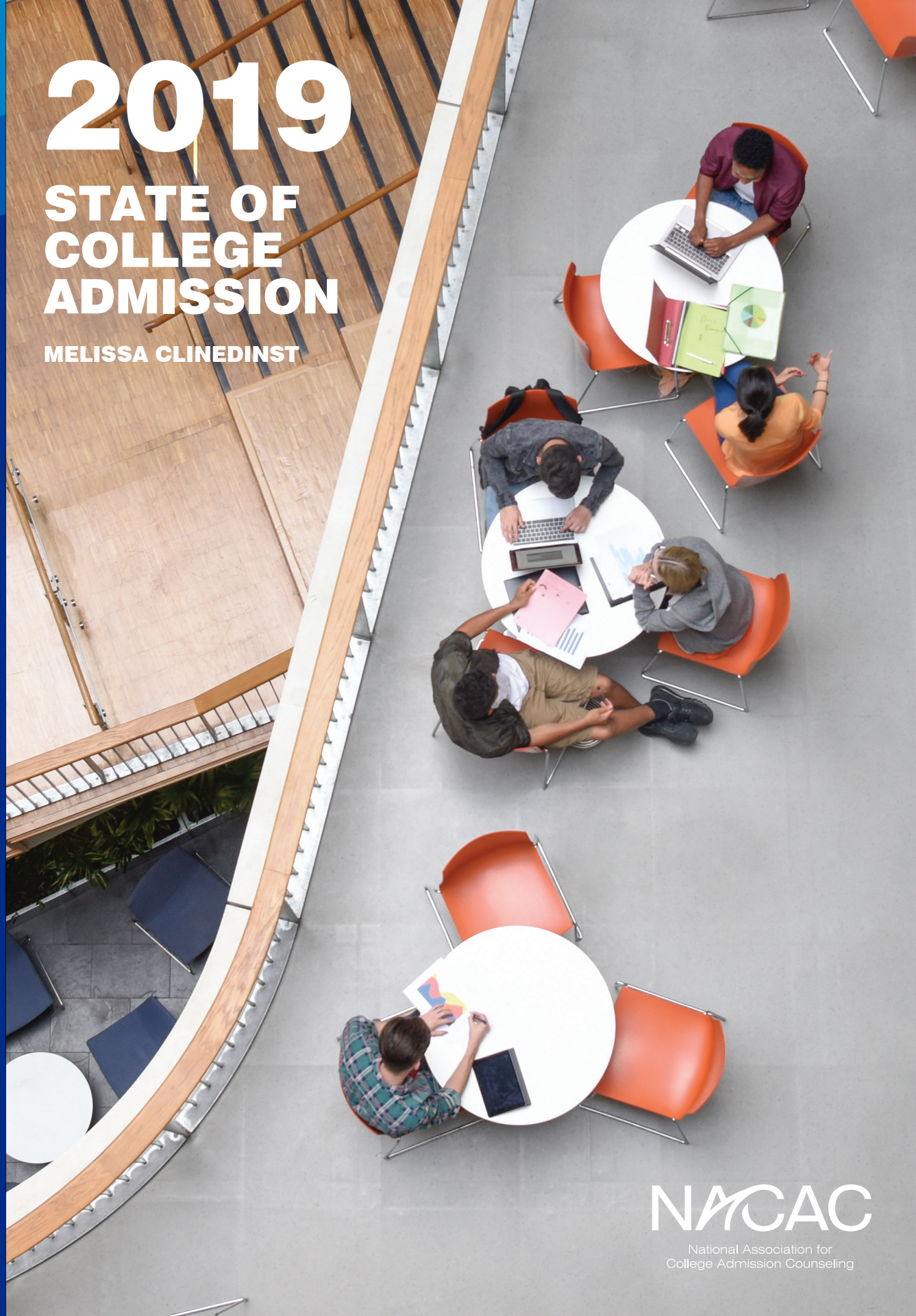


# 2019

## STATE OF COLLEGE ADMISSION

MELISSA CLINEDINST



**NACAC**

National Association for  
College Admission Counseling

# Acknowledgments

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) wishes to acknowledge the following individuals and groups for their contributions to this report.

Most importantly, NACAC would like to thank the secondary school counselors, admission officers, and institutional research staff who gave their valuable time to participate in the annual Admission Trends Survey and Counseling Trends Survey. The report would not be possible without the data collected from these surveys.

The association also appreciates the US Department of Education and the Higher Education Research Institute for publicly sharing the education data they collect.

The authors of the report wish to thank the following members of the NACAC staff for assistance with survey development and administration, and with reviewing, editing, designing, and promoting the final report: David Hawkins, executive director for educational content and policy; Joyce Smith, chief executive officer; John McGrath, deputy chief executive

officer; Shanda Ivory, director of communications, publications and technology; Pam McKeta, associate director of communications for digital and print media; Mary Stegmeir, assistant director of content and marketing; Ashley Dobson, senior communications manager, content and social media; and Sarah Cox, associate director of editorial and creative services.

Special thanks to Pooja Patel, former NACAC research associate, for her contributions to survey development and administration.

# Executive Summary

Highlights from the *2019 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 2019 report also includes information about applications from international and transfer students.

## College Applications

The increase in the number of colleges to which each student applies continues an upward trend, which is reflected in college reports of increased application volume.

- **Growth in Application Volume Continues:** Between the Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 admission cycles, the number of applications from first-time freshmen increased 6 percent and international student applications increased by 7 percent. Transfer applications were up 2 percent overall, but public colleges experienced an average 1.7 percent decline in transfer applications while private colleges had a 4.7 percent increase.

- **Colleges Accept Two-Thirds of First-Time Freshmen Applicants, on Average:**

The percentage of applicants offered admission at four-year colleges and universities in the United States—referred to as the average selectivity rate—was 66.7 percent for Fall 2017. The national average acceptance rate has increased from a low of 63.9 percent in Fall 2012.

- **Average Yield Rate for First-Time Freshmen Holds Steady After Long Decline:**

The average yield rate for Fall 2017 was nearly identical to Fall 2016 (33.7 percent and 33.6 percent, respectively). Over the past decade the average yield rate has steadily declined from 48 percent in Fall 2007.

- **Transfer Acceptance Rate Slightly Lower than Freshmen Rate; Yield Much Higher:**

Among institutions that enroll transfer students, average selectivity for Fall 2018 was 61 percent, compared to 66 percent for first-time freshmen. However, more than half (52 percent) of transfer applicants who were admitted ultimately enrolled, compared to only 27 percent of freshman admits.

- **International Student Acceptance Rate is Low; Yield Slightly Higher than First-Time Freshmen:**

At institutions that enroll first-time international students, the Fall 2018 admit rate for this population (52 percent) was lower than the rate for both transfer and first-time freshmen students. The average yield rate for international students was 29 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.

- **Top Recruitment Strategies:**

Colleges employ a broad range of strategies when recruiting high school students. Sending email, maintaining institutional websites, and hosting campus visits were the primary means by which colleges recruited first-time freshmen for the Fall 2018 admission cycle. Four other factors—high school visits, direct mail, and outreach to both parents and high school counselors—were each rated as considerably important by at least 50 percent of colleges.

- **Early Decision and Early Action Activity Increases:** Between Fall 2017 and Fall 2018, colleges reported an average increase of 11 percent in the number of Early Decision applicants and 10 percent in ED admits. The number of Early Action applications increased by 10 percent and the number of students accepted through EA increased by 9 percent.
- **Wait List Activity Increases; Likelihood of Wait List Acceptance Remains Low:** For the Fall 2018 admission cycle, 43 percent of institutions reported using a wait list. From Fall 2017 to Fall 2018, the number of students offered a place on an admission wait list increased by 18 percent, on average. Institutions accepted an average of 20 percent of all students who chose to remain on wait lists.
- **Admission Offices Identify Grades, High School Curriculum, and Test Scores as Top Factors for First-Time Freshmen:** The top factors in the admission decision were overall high school GPA, grades in college preparatory courses, strength of curriculum, and admission test scores. Among the next most important factors were the essay, a student's demonstrated interest, counselor and teacher recommendations, class rank, and extracurricular activities.
- **Student Background Information:** Nearly one-third of colleges rated first-generation status as at least moderately important in first-time freshmen admission decisions. About one-quarter of colleges considered high school attended, race/ethnicity, and state or county of residence as either moderately or considerably important.
- **Student-to-Counselor Ratio:** According to US Department of Education data, in 2016–17 each public school counselor (including elementary and secondary) was responsible for 455 students, on average.
- **College Counseling Staff in Secondary Schools:** For the 2018–19 academic year, 29 percent of public schools reported employing at least one counselor (full- or part-time) whose exclusive responsibility was to provide college counseling, compared to 48 percent of private schools.
- **Time Available for College Counseling in Secondary Schools:** Some differences exist between the duties and activities of counselors employed at public schools versus those who work at private schools. On average, public school counselors spent 19 percent of their time on postsecondary counseling in 2018–19, while their private school counterparts spent 31 percent of their time on college counseling.

### 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.

### 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.

# 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 in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all of the jobs (99 percent) created since 2008—the most recent recession recovery—have gone to workers with at least some college education.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, as of 2018 fewer than half of all adults age 25 and older had obtained at least an associate degree and only 35 percent obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>4</sup> 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.

## State of College Admission Report

The *2019 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. The report covers the recruitment strategies that colleges use to attract prospective students and the process by which candidates are evaluated for admission. Information about application volume and admission rates are provided for first-time domestic freshmen, as well as transfer and international students. 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.

## 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 annual 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. NACAC's CTS for the 2018–19 academic year was distributed in May 2019 to 15,997 secondary school counseling offices. NACAC received 2,345 responses.

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. NACAC received 447 responses to the 2018–19 ATS.

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Carnevale, A.P., Jayasundera, T., and Gulish, A. (2016). *America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots*. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

<sup>3</sup> Ma, J., Pender, M., Welch, M. (2016). *Education Pays 2016: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society*. College Board: Washington, DC.

<sup>4</sup> US Census Bureau. (2019). *Educational Attainment in the United States: 2018*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

# 01

## Chapter 1 College Applications

Each year, US colleges and universities receive hundreds of thousands of applications from first-time domestic students, transfer students, and international students. Results of recent NACAC Admission Trends Surveys indicate that the number of applications has continued to increase across four-year colleges.

### Application Volume

Results of the 2018–19 Admission Trends Survey indicate that the average number of applications increased for each group of prospective students between the Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 admission cycles.

Applications from first-time freshmen increased by 6 percent, on average, and applications from international students increased by 7 percent. Transfer applications were up 2 percent overall, but public colleges experienced an

average 1.7 percent decline in transfer applications while private colleges had a 4.7 percent increase.<sup>1</sup> Applications for each group of prospective students also had increased from Fall 2016 to Fall 2017, by 6 percent, 2 percent, and 7 percent, respectively.

According to the Higher Education Research Institute's *The American Freshmen* report series, 36 percent of first-time freshmen applied to seven or more colleges

during the Fall 2017 admission cycle. Since Fall 2014, the percentage of freshmen applying to seven or more colleges has fluctuated between 35 and 36 percent. Since Fall 2013, more than 80 percent of first-time freshmen have applied to at least three colleges each year (see Figure 1).

Increases in application volume have created a growing burden on admission office staff who evaluate prospective students

### PERCENT CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BETWEEN FALL 2017 AND FALL 2018



Transfer  
2%



First-time freshmen  
6%



International  
7%

<sup>1</sup> Independent t-tests indicated there were significant differences in percent change in applicants and control for both international ( $t(203) = -1.9, p < .01$ ); and transfer students ( $t(273) = -2.3, p < .05$ ).

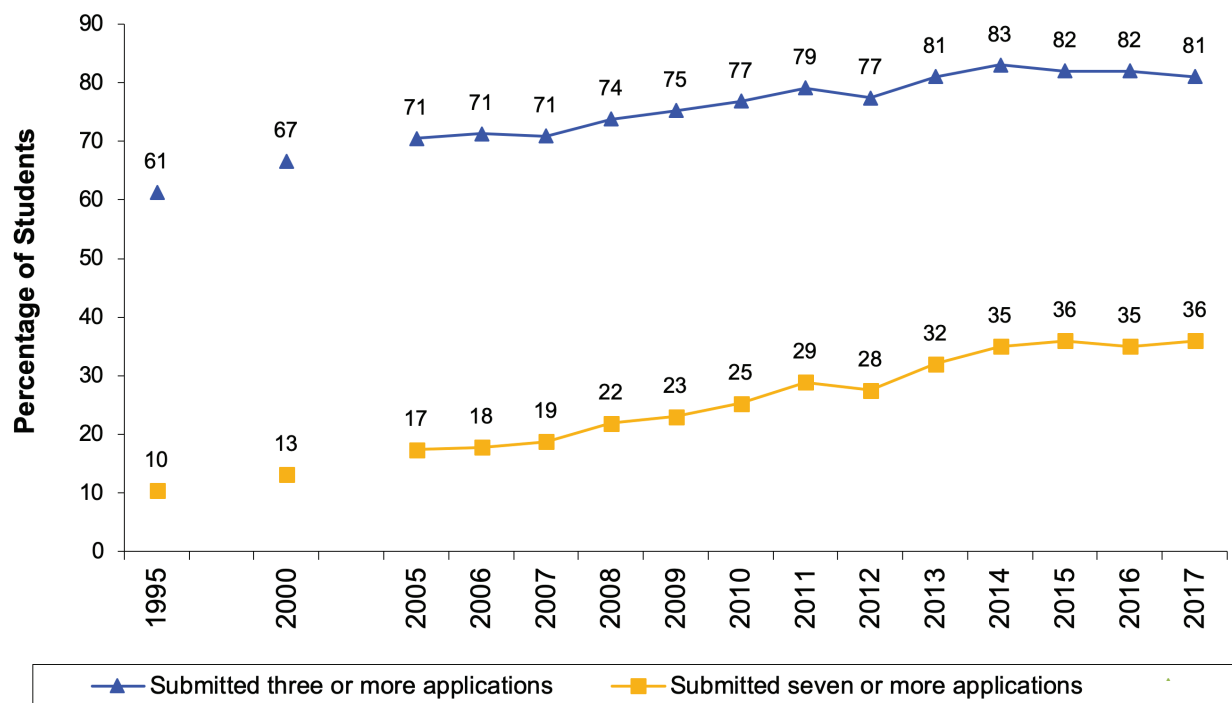
for admission. According to Admission Trends Survey results, the average number of applications for each admission office staff member (excluding administrative staff) for the Fall 2017 admission cycle was 1,035 for public institutions and 461 for private institutions. The number of applications per admission officer grew as applicant selectivity and enrollment size increased (see Table 1).

### Acceptance and Yield Rates

The acceptance rate for a college or university is defined as the percentage of applicants who are offered admission. Institutions with lower acceptance rates are considered more highly selective, meaning a smaller number of applicants are admitted. The selectivity of US postsecondary institutions ranges from acceptance

rates of fewer 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 at 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.

FIGURE 1. INCREASES IN FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN APPLICATION SUBMISSION: 1995 TO 2017



SOURCE: Stolzenberg, E.B., Eagan, K., Aragon, M.C., Cesar-Davis, N.M., Jacabo, S., Couch, V., and Rios-Aguilar, C. (2018). *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2017*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA.

Eagan, K., Stolzenberg, E.B., Zimmerman, H.B., Aragon, M.C., Sayson, H.W., & Rios-Aguilar, C. (2017). *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2016*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA.

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

TABLE 1. APPLICATIONS PER ADMISSION OFFICER, FALL 2018

	N	Mean
<i>Control</i>		
Public	67	1,035
Private	133	461
<i>Enrollment</i>		
Fewer than 3,000 students	105	315
3,000 to 9,999	52	771
10,000 or more	41	1,377
<i>Selectivity</i>		
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	53	1,026
50 to 70 percent	69	605
71 to 85 percent	60	474
More than 85 percent	20	335

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 ( $t(198) = 5.1, p < .001$ ); enrollment ( $F(2, 195) = 35.5, p < .001$ ), and acceptance rate ( $F(3, 198) = 6.5, p < .001$ ).

Correlation (Pearson) applications per admission officer and: enrollment .578,  $p < .01$ ; acceptance rate -.326,  $p < .01$ . Correlation (Spearman's rho) applications per admission officer and public control .456,  $p < .01$ .

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

TABLE 2. APPLICATIONS AND ENROLLMENT, BY SELECTIVITY: FALL 2017

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	19.2%	12,492	36.5%	21.3%
50 to 70 percent	33.4	6,108	31.0	32.3
71 to 85 percent	28.8	5,625	24.6	33.4
More than 85 percent	18.6	2,771	7.9	13.0

$N = 1,599$

SOURCE: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2017–18). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Center. Washington, DC: NCES. [Includes Title-IV participating, four-year public and private not-for-profit, degree-granting (primarily baccalaureate) institutions in the US that enroll first-time freshman and are not open admission.]



### ***First-Time Freshmen***

According to data collected by the US Department of Education, the national average acceptance rate for first-time freshmen across all four-year institutions in the US was 66.7 percent in Fall 2017, up from a low of 63.9 percent in Fall 2012. The average acceptance rate at private institutions was about 6 percentage points lower than the average rate at public institutions (64.9 percent versus 70.3 percent).

The most selective four-year colleges—defined as those accepting less than half of all applicants—received 37 percent of all Fall 2016 applications but enrolled only 21 percent of first-time undergraduate students. Nearly two-thirds of first-time, full-time freshmen (65 percent) were enrolled in institutions with selectivity rates

between 50 percent and 85 percent (see Table 2).

For the Fall 2017 freshman class, the average yield rate among four-year colleges and universities was 33.7 percent, nearly identical to the Fall 2016 rate of 33.6 percent. Over the past decade the average yield rate has steadily declined from 48 percent in Fall 2007.

### ***Transfer and International Students***

Among 2018–19 Admission Trends Survey respondents that accept transfer students, the average acceptance rate for transfer applicants was slightly lower than for the first-time freshmen population (61 percent compared to 66 percent). However, the yield for accepted transfer students was much higher (52 percent compared to 27 percent).

A similar analysis of institutions that accept international students showed that first-time international students are accepted at a lower rate (52 percent) than both transfer students and first-time freshmen. The yield rate for international students was 29 percent, indicating they were only slightly more likely to enroll than accepted first-time freshmen applicants (see Table 3).

### **Application Fees**

Results of the Admission Trends Survey indicate that 71 percent of four-year, not-for-profit colleges had an application fee for the Fall 2018 admission cycle, which averaged \$50. Public colleges were more likely to report having an application fee than privates (91 percent versus 57 percent), but no difference was found in the average fee amount.<sup>2</sup> Larger enrollment sizes and lower acceptance rates were associated with higher average fees.<sup>3</sup>

TABLE 3. KEY STATISTICS FOR TRANSFER AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSION: FALL 2018

<b>Transfer</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Transfer Selectivity Rate	310	60.6%
Overall Freshman Selectivity Rate for Institutions with Transfer Students	314	65.5%
Transfer Yield Rate	310	52.1%
Overall Yield Rate for Institutions with Transfer Students	314	26.6%
<b>International</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
International Selectivity Rate	227	51.7%
Overall Freshman Selectivity Rate for Institutions with International Students	307	65.6%
International Yield Rate	230	28.5%
Overall Yield Rate for Institutions with International Students	307	26.7%

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

<sup>2</sup> Chi-squared test control and application fee ( $X^2(1) = 41.0$   $p < .001$ ;  $\phi = .363$   $p < .001$ ).

<sup>3</sup> Pearson correlations for application fee amount and: enrollment (.295), acceptance rate (-.498),  $p < .01$ .

# 02

## Chapter 2 Recruitment and Yield Strategies

### Recruitment Strategies by Prospective Student Group

Results of NACAC's 2018–19 Admission Trends Survey indicate that institutions use a wide variety of recruitment methods to connect with prospective students. Contacting students through email and engaging with them through the institution's website or by hosting campus visits were the most important recruitment strategies that colleges and universities used for first-time freshmen. An additional four factors were each rated as considerably important by at least half of survey respondents. They were high school visits (63 percent), direct mail (50 percent), and outreach to parents and high school counselors (55 percent and 54 percent, respectively) (see Table 4).

### Early Decision

Twenty-five percent of respondents to NACAC's 2018–19 Admission Trends Survey offered Early Decision (ED). Private colleges were more likely than public institutions to offer Early Decision programs (37 percent compared to 5 percent), as were selective colleges.<sup>1</sup> More than half (56 percent) of the most selective colleges (those accepting fewer than 50 percent of applicants) had an Early Decision application option. (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 2018 admission

to ED colleges were received through Early Decision. The proportion of all applications received through ED increased with the admission selectivity rate and yield rate.<sup>2</sup>

As expected, colleges with Early Decision policies reported a higher acceptance rate for their ED applicants as compared to all applicants (61 percent versus 49 percent). Given the binding nature of Early Decision policies, the average yield rate for Early Decision admits was 90 percent, substantially higher than the average yield rate for all students admitted to ED colleges (25 percent) (see Table 5). Colleges with lower total yield rates tended to admit a greater percentage of their ED applicants compared to those with higher yield rates.<sup>3</sup> More selective colleges tended to have higher ED yield rates.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chi-squared test for Early Decision policy and: institution type ( $X^2(1) = 55.8$ ,  $\Phi = .366$ ),  $p < .001$ ; Correlation (Spearman's Rho) for Early Decision policy and acceptance rate ( $-.371$ ),  $p < .001$ .

<sup>2</sup> Correlation (Pearson's R) for percent of apps received through ED and: acceptance rate ( $-.333$ ); yield rate ( $.439$ ),  $p < .01$ .

<sup>3</sup> Correlation (Pearson's R) for institutional yield rate and ED acceptance rate ( $-.617$ ),  $p < .01$ .

<sup>4</sup> Correlation (Pearson's R) for institutional selectivity rate and ED yield ( $.727$ ),  $p < .01$ .

TABLE 4. PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO VARIOUS RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2018

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Email	215	88.4	10.2	1.4	—
Hosted Campus Visit	215	85.1	13.5	1.4	—
Website	215	78.6	19.5	1.9	—
High School Visit	214	63.1	30.8	6.1	—
Parents	215	54.9	30.7	14.0	0.5
High School Counselor	214	54.2	36.9	8.4	0.5
Direct Mail	214	50.0	32.7	15.0	2.3
Social Media	215	47.4	42.8	9.8	—
College Fairs	213	44.1	38.5	16.4	0.9
Text Messaging	212	34.4	31.1	21.2	13.2
Online Advertising	214	25.7	38.8	25.7	9.8
Community-Based Organizations	214	20.6	44.4	32.2	2.8
Test-Optional Policy	210	11.9	12.4	10.5	65.2
Conditional/Provisional Admission Program	212	9.0	19.8	30.7	40.6
Alumni	212	7.1	45.3	43.9	3.8

—No respondents chose this option.

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.



**56%**

OF SELECTIVE COLLEGES  
OFFERED EARLY DECISION

Between Fall 2017 and Fall 2018, colleges reported an average increase of 11 percent in the number of Early Decision applicants and 10 percent in ED admits. In a prior survey, colleges also had reported increases in ED applications and ED admits between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 (4 percent each).

### Early Action

Thirty-eight percent of four-year colleges offered Early Action plans, according to results of the 2018–19 Admission Trends Survey. Colleges with lower yield rates were more

likely to offer Early Action.<sup>5</sup> Forty-six percent of colleges with yield rates lower than 30 percent used Early Action.

For Fall 2018, 45 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 64 percent). Unlike Early Decision, Early Action did not provide a significant benefit to institutions in terms of yield



**46%**

OF COLLEGES WITH LOW  
YIELD RATES OFFERED  
EARLY ACTION

rates. The average yield rate for EA admits was nearly identical to that of the overall applicant pool (25 percent and 24 percent, respectively) (see Table 6).

From Fall 2017 to Fall 2018, the number of Early Action applications increased by 10 percent and the number of students accepted through EA increased by 9 percent, on average. Colleges also had reported average increases in EA applications and EA admits between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 (9 percent and 10 percent, respectively).

TABLE 5. KEY STATISTICS FOR EARLY DECISION COLLEGES: FALL 2018

	N	Mean Percent
Applications Received through Early Decision	100	5.6
Early Decision Selectivity Rate	98	61.1
Overall Selectivity Rate for Institutions with Early Decision Policies	104	49.3
Early Decision Yield Rate	84	89.6
Overall Yield Rate for Institutions with Early Decision Policies	104	25.4

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

<sup>5</sup> Correlation (Spearman's Rho) for Early Action policy and institutional yield rate (.254),  $p < .001$ .

## Wait Lists

For the Fall 2018 admission cycle, 43 percent of institutions reported using a wait list. Private institutions were more likely than public colleges and universities to maintain a wait list (48 percent compared to 34 percent). Both colleges with lower enrollments and those with lower acceptance rates also were more likely to use a wait list.<sup>6</sup> Eighty-two percent of the most selective institutions (accepting fewer than half of all applicants) maintained a wait list.

Institutions reported placing an average of 10 percent of all applicants on the wait list for the Fall 2018 admission cycle, and an average of 50 percent of waitlisted

students opted to remain on the wait list. Colleges with lower acceptance rates placed a greater proportion of students on wait lists, on average.<sup>7</sup>

Institutions admitted an average of 20 percent of all students who chose to remain on wait lists. Selective colleges were least likely to admit students from a wait list.<sup>8</sup> Only seven percent of students who accepted a wait list spot at the most selective colleges (those accepting fewer than half of all applicants) were ultimately admitted. The average number of students offered a position on a wait list increased by 18 percent between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 and by 12 percent between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017.



THE MOST SELECTIVE COLLEGES ADMITTED ONLY 7 PERCENT OF WAITLISTED STUDENTS

TABLE 6. KEY STATISTICS FOR EARLY ACTION COLLEGES: FALL 2018

	N	Mean Percent
Applications Received through Early Action	112	45.3
Early Action Selectivity Rate	106	73.1
Overall Selectivity Rate for Institutions with Early Action Policies	161	63.9
Early Action Yield Rate	106	25.4
Overall Yield Rate for Institutions with Early Action Policies	161	23.7

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

<sup>6</sup> Chi-squared test for wait list policy and: institution type ( $X^2(1) = 8.8$ ,  $\Phi = .144$ ),  $p < .01$ ; Correlation (Spearman's Rho) for wait list policy and institutional acceptance rate (-.402), enrollment (-.196),  $p < .001$ .

<sup>7</sup> Correlation (Pearson's R) for institutional acceptance rate and percentage of applicants waitlisted (-.196),  $p < .01$ .

<sup>8</sup> Correlation (Pearson's R) for institutional acceptance rate and percentage admitted from wait list (.443),  $p < .01$ .

# 03

## Chapter 3 Factors in Admission Decisions

There is no definite plan or specific combination of factors that will guarantee a student admission to their 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 class 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. Institutional characteristics, such as enrollment size and acceptance rate, also impact the importance of admission factors.

### Factors in Admission Decisions: First-Time Freshmen, Fall 2018 (see Table 7)

- Academic performance in high school has been the most important consideration in

freshman admission decisions for decades. Seventy-five percent of colleges rated grades in all high school courses as considerably important, and 73 percent rated grades in college prep courses as considerably important. Strength of curriculum was rated considerably important by more than 60 percent of colleges and nearly half gave admission test scores (ACT/SAT) considerable weight.

- A second set of factors were most often considered to be moderately important. These factors tend to provide insight regarding the personal qualities and interests of students, as well as offer more detail on academic performance. They include 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, on average by a small percentage of institutions, likely because most of the factors are relevant only to a small subset of colleges. They included subject test scores (AP, IB), portfolios, SAT II scores, interviews, state graduation exams scores, and work experience.

### Factors in Admission Decisions for First-Time Freshmen: Change Over Time (see Table 8)

The relative importance of many admission decision factors have remained remarkably stable over the long term. Notable exceptions include the declining importance of class rank and interviews.

While academic performance has remained the most important consideration for colleges, in recent years, specific changes in the top factors have become evident. For many years, grades in college prep courses had been rated as the top factor in admission decisions, followed

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2017

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

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

by strength of curriculum, admission test scores, and grades in all courses (overall GPA). However, for the past three admission cycles (2016, 2017, and 2018), the percentage of colleges rating grades in all courses as considerably important has matched or surpassed grades in college prep courses.

Class rank has become much less important over the past decade. For each admission cycle from Fall 2016 to Fall 2018, only 9 percent of colleges rated class rank as considerably important, compared to 23 percent in 2007.

### Factors in Admission by Institutional Characteristics for First-Time Freshmen, Fall 2018

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

#### *Institutional Control*

- Private colleges placed relatively more importance on the essay/writing sample, the interview,

counselor and teacher recommendations, demonstrated interest, extracurricular activities, and work.

- Public colleges valued admission test scores more highly than private institutions.

#### *Enrollment Size*

- Smaller colleges gave comparatively more weight to the interview, teacher and counselor recommendations, and demonstrated interest.
- Larger colleges tended to place more value on admission test scores.

TABLE 8. PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING “CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE” TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2007 TO FALL 2018

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Grades in College Prep Courses	80%	75%	87%	83%	84%	82%	82%	79%	—	77%	71	73
Grades in All Courses	52	52	46	46	52	50	52	60	—	77	81	75
Strength of Curriculum	64	62	71	66	68	65	64	60	—	52	51	62
Admission Test Scores	59	54	58	59	59	56	58	56	—	54	52	46
Essay or Writing Sample	26	27	26	27	25	20	22	22	—	19	17	23
Class Rank	23	19	16	22	19	13	15	14	—	9	9	9
Counselor Recommendation	21	20	17	19	19	16	16	17	—	15	11	15
Demonstrated Interest	22	21	21	23	21	18	20	17	—	14	16	16
Teacher Recommendation	21	21	17	19	17	15	14	15	—	11	7	14
Interview	11	11	7	9	6	7	8	4	—	5	4	6
Extracurricular Activities	7	7	9	7	5	7	10	6	—	8	4	6
Work	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	—	3	2	4
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	7	8	7	10	7	5	8	7	—	7	4	6
State Graduation Exams	4	4	3	4	4	2	3	4	—	2	2	2
SAT II Scores	6	7	5	5	5	4	6	5	—	2	7	2
Portfolio	—	7	8	6	7	5	6	7	—	6	5	6

—Data are not available.

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Surveys, 2007-08 through 2018-19.



TABLE 9. PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF INFLUENCE TO STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FALL 2018

	N	Considerable Influence	Moderate Influence	Limited Influence	No Influence
<i>FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN</i>					
High School Attended	221	4.5	19.0	32.1	44.3
Race/Ethnicity	219	6.8	17.8	16.9	58.4
State or County of Residence	220	4.1	22.3	17.3	56.4
First-generation Status	220	5.5	25.5	20.9	48.2
Ability to Pay	221	1.2	4.2	13.7	81.0
Gender	221	3.2	10.4	18.6	67.9
Alumni Relations	220	0.9	11.8	35.0	52.3

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

### **Selectivity**

- Institutions that were more selective placed more emphasis on grades in college prep courses and strength of curriculum.
- More selective colleges also rated more highly the essay/writing sample, counselor and teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities, and work.

(See Appendix Table B.1. for a correlation matrix of statistically significant associations.)

### **Student Characteristics as Contextual Factors in Admission Decisions for First-Time Freshmen, Fall 2018 (see Table 9)**

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 little importance to these characteristics, there are some findings worth noting.

For example, nearly one-third of colleges (31 percent) rated first-generation status as at least moderately important in first-time freshmen admission decisions. About one-quarter of colleges considered high school attended, race/ethnicity, and state or county of residence as either moderately or considerably important (24 percent, 25 percent, and 26 percent, respectively).

Interesting differences also were found in the relative importance given to these factors based on institution type. Data provided on the NACAC 2018–19 Admission Trends Survey allowed for comparison by institutional characteristics.

### **Institutional Control**

- Private institutions gave greater consideration to race/ethnicity,

gender, high school attended, alumni relations, and ability to pay when evaluating applications.

### **Enrollment**

- Alumni relations and ability to pay were rated as having more influence in admission decisions for smaller colleges.
- Larger colleges gave greater consideration to state or county of residence and first-generation status.

### **Selectivity**

- When evaluating applications, institutions that were more selective placed more emphasis on each of these student characteristics—race/ethnicity, gender, first-generation status, state or county of residence, high school attended, alumni relations, and ability to pay.

(See Appendix Table B.2. for a correlation matrix of statistically significant associations.)

# 04

## Chapter 4 School Counselors: Academic and College Counseling

### Introduction

Using data from NACAC's 2018–19 Counseling Trends Survey and the US Department of Education, this chapter explores student-to-counselor ratios and college counseling activities.

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 process. Counselors serve an important role in advising students as they progress through secondary school

and prepare for college. Pre-college counseling generally includes activities that help students meet requirements for postsecondary attendance, pursue challenging courses, and navigate the college admission process.

### Student-to-Counselor Ratios

According to the US Department of Education, in 2016–17 each public school counselor was responsible for overseeing 455 students, on average,<sup>1</sup> which exceeds the 250-to-1 maximum ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).<sup>2</sup> Student-to-counselor ratios also vary widely by state. Only two states—New

Hampshire and Vermont—had ratios below ASCA's recommended threshold. The states with the highest number of students per counselor included Arizona (905), Michigan (741), Illinois (686), California (663), Minnesota (659), and Utah (648).

(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.3.)

Taking into account part-time staff, results of NACAC's 2018–19 Counseling Trends Survey indicated the average overall student-to-counselor ratio for public secondary schools (ending in grade 12) was 263-to-1. Data regarding the extent to which college advising is part

<sup>1</sup> US Department of Education. (2018). *Common Core of Data State Nonfiscal Survey Public Elementary/Secondary Education: School Year, 2016–17 Version 1a*. Washington, DC: NCES. Note: Calculation includes all students and counselors in the state (pre-kindergarten, elementary, and secondary counselors) except for adult education.

<sup>2</sup> American School Counselor Association. (2016). *The role of the school counselor*. Alexandria, VA: ASCA.

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

of counselors' job responsibilities showed the average student-to-college counselor ratio was 309-to-1.<sup>3</sup> Public institutions assigned substantially more students to each counselor. There also were significant differences in the student-to-counselor ratios by enrollment size (see Table 10).

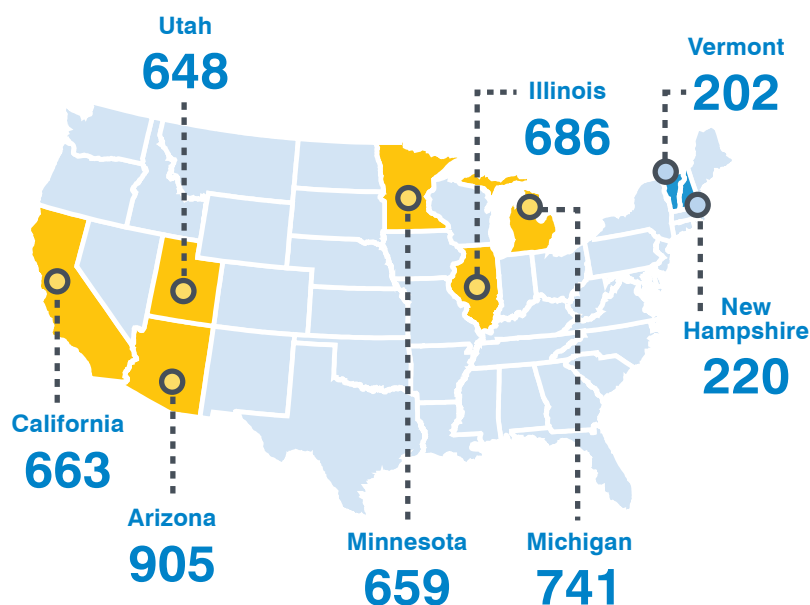
Notably, 48 percent of private schools reported that they employed at least one counselor (full- or part-time) whose sole responsibility was to provide college counseling for students, compared to only 29 percent of public schools. Schools with higher student-to-counselor ratios also were less likely to have a counselor whose duties were dedicated to college counseling.<sup>4</sup>

### 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 (20 percent)
- Choice and scheduling of high school courses (23 percent)
- Personal needs counseling (26 percent)
- Academic testing (13 percent)
- Occupational counseling and job placement (7 percent)

### STATES WITH HIGHEST AND LOWEST RATIOS



- Teaching (5 percent)
- Other non-guidance activities (6 percent)

However, the division of time among these tasks differs significantly based on school characteristics. For example, the counseling staff at private schools spent an average of 31 percent of their time on college counseling, while counselors at public schools

spent only 19 percent of their time on that task. Counselors at schools with more students eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch spent less time on postsecondary admission counseling than counselors whose schools served more affluent populations (see Table 11).

(See Appendix Table B.4 for a correlation matrix of significant associations for time spent on various job responsibilities and school characteristics.)

<sup>4</sup> Chi-squared test for exclusive college counselor and institution type ( $X^2(2) = 44.0, V = .141, p < .01$ ; Correlation (Spearman's Rho) for exclusive college counselor and students per counselor ( $-.388, p < .01$ ).

TABLE 10. AVERAGE STUDENT-TO-COUNSELOR AND STUDENT-TO-COLLEGE COUNSELOR RATIOS, BY SCHOOL TYPE AND ENROLLMENT, 2018–19

	Students per Counselor	Students per College Counselor
<b>Total</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>309</b>
<i>Type</i>		
Public	274	319
Private	192	244
<i>Enrollment</i>		
Fewer than 500 students	203	224
500 to 999	291	339
1,000 to 1,499	302	369
1,500 to 1,999	316	409
2,000 or more students	375	477
<i>Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)</i>		
0 to 25% of students eligible	243	300
26 to 50%	277	328
51 to 75%	285	331
76 to 100%	244	272

SOURCE: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2018–19.

NOTE: Independent t-test indicated significant difference by control in both students per counselor ( $t(2,195) = 7.4$ ) and students per college counselor ( $t(2,187) = 4.7$ ),  $p < .01$ . Correlation (Pearson R) for enrollment and: students per counselor (.537), students per college counselor (.464),  $p < .01$ .

TABLE 11. PERCENTAGE OF TIME COUNSELING STAFF SPENT ON VARIOUS TASKS, BY SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS: 2018–19

	Postsecondary admission counseling	Choice and scheduling of high school courses	Personal needs counseling	Academic testing	Occupational counseling and job placement	Teaching	Other non-guidance activities
<b>All Schools</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
<i>Type</i>							
Public	18.5	23.7	27.2	13.3	6.9	4.6	5.8
Private	30.6	15.9	22.4	12.8	5.4	8.0	5.5
<i>Enrollment</i>							
Fewer than 500 students	20.6	18.9	25.4	14.1	7.5	7.1	6.3
500 to 999	21.4	22.0	27.0	14.1	6.4	3.8	5.2
1,000 to 1,499	19.3	26.7	27.7	11.8	6.3	3.0	5.2
1,500 to 1,999	17.4	27.7	29.0	11.7	5.5	3.3	5.4
2,000 or more	17.5	32.3	27.0	9.8	5.4	2.8	5.1
<i>Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)</i>							
0 to 25% of students eligible	26.5	19.6	25.1	12.2	5.7	5.8	5.1
26 to 50%	18.4	23.5	27.1	13.2	7.2	5.0	5.5
51 to 75%	18.0	23.6	25.8	14.7	6.9	4.8	6.2
76 to 100%	17.1	23.8	27.9	13.4	7.2	4.3	6.3
<i>Students per Counselors</i>							
100 or fewer	20.5	19.6	27.4	11.6	7.4	7.1	6.5
101 to 200	22.3	20.6	26.2	12.5	6.7	6.3	5.4
201 to 300	19.5	23.3	26.9	13.9	6.7	4.3	5.4
301 to 400	18.5	25.5	26.2	13.2	6.7	3.9	6.1
401 to 500	18.5	23.3	28.1	14.1	6.6	3.9	5.6
More than 500	19.4	22.8	24.5	16.9	5.5	4.4	6.4

SOURCE: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2018–19.

NOTE: Independent *t*-test showed difference by school type in percentage of time spent on postsecondary counseling ( $t(2194) = -15.4$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Correlation (Pearson *R*) for percentage of time spent on postsecondary counseling and percentage of students eligible for FRPL ( $-.254$ ),  $p < .01$ .

## Appendix A. Methodology

The *2019 State of College Admission* report primarily uses data collected from two annual NACAC surveys: Counseling Trends Survey (CTS) and Admission Trends Survey (ATS).

### Counseling Trends Survey

The purpose of NACAC's annual 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 May 2019, NACAC distributed the 2018–19 academic year CTS to a school counseling office staff member at 15,997 secondary schools ending in 12th grade. The list of counselors was purchased from MDR Education. The survey was administered online using SurveyMonkey. Responses were collected through June 2019.

NACAC received 2,345 responses to the survey. Table A.1. provides a comparison of the characteristics of NACAC CTS respondents to those of all public and private secondary schools in the US (ending in grade 12). NACAC survey respondents were 85 percent public, 6 percent private non-parochial, and 10 percent private parochial, making the sample slightly over-representative of public schools and under-representative of private, parochial schools. Among public

TABLE A.1. NACAC 2018–19 COUNSELING TRENDS SURVEY SAMPLE COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL<sup>1</sup> 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	2,345	33,062	1,191	26,579	130	1,996	224	4,487
% of Schools			84.9	80.4	5.5	6.0	9.6	13.4
<i>Total Enrollment</i>								
Mean Enrollment	840	548	904	615	489	225	473	300
<i>Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility<sup>1</sup></i>								
Percentage of Students Eligible	49.1	—	54.7	44.1	12.7	—	18.1	—

<sup>1</sup> All schools that include grade 12.

—Not available for private schools.

SOURCES: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2018–19.

US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Common Core of Data (CCD)*, “Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey”, 2016–17 v.2a, 2017–18 v.1a.

US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, “Private School Universe Survey (PSS)”, 2015–16.

schools, NACAC respondents had a greater percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. NACAC survey respondents reported 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. In 2014, NACAC began incorporating questions related to the admission process for prospective transfer and

international students, in addition to continuing to track trends for domestic first-time freshmen.

For the 2018–19 administration of the Admission Trends Survey, the questionnaire was divided into two parts—one set of questions was sent to university admission offices and another set to institutional research (IR) offices. Both portions were administered online using SurveyMonkey. The IR portion of the survey was e-mailed in March 2019 to 1,069 IR contacts at four-year postsecondary institutions that were members of NACAC. In August 2019, the admission office portion of the survey was sent to all 1,263 NACAC-member four-year colleges. Admission offices also were asked to provide additional data if the IR portion had not been submitted. At the time of the survey, NACAC member institutions represented 78 percent of all

four-year nonprofit, baccalaureate degree-granting, Title-IV participating institutions in the US that admit first-time freshmen and are not open admission. Colleges that meet these criteria represent the type of institutions that the survey is designed to include. NACAC received 447 responses, for an overall response rate of 35 percent. Of the 447 responses, 326 institutions submitted completed surveys (both admission and IR sections) and 121 submitted just the IR portion. All responses were utilized in the analyses.

As shown in Table A.2, NACAC 2018–19 ATS respondents had slightly lower acceptance rates compared to all colleges, and private college respondents had lower yield rates when compared to the national average. NACAC survey respondents also had larger undergraduate enrollments.

TABLE A.2. NACAC 2018–19 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
<b>N (%)</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>1,611</b>	<b>169 (38%)</b>	<b>531 (33%)</b>	<b>278 (62%)</b>	<b>1,238 (68%)</b>
<i>Total Full-Time Undergraduate Enrollment</i>						
Mean Enrollment	6,787	5,263	13,225	10,671	2,750	2,594
<i>Selectivity and Yield (Percents)</i>						
Mean Selectivity	64.2	66.7	67.7	70.3	62.1	64.9
Mean Yield	27.8	33.7	33.2	33.4	24.6	33.9

NOTE: Data for all colleges was drawn from the 2017–18 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) using the following criteria: US location; four-year, not-for-profit; baccalaureate degree-granting; Title IV-participating; enrolls full-time first-time freshmen; not open admission.

SOURCES: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2017–18). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Center. Washington, DC: NCES.

## Appendix B. Tables

TABLE B.1. CORRELATION MATRIX BETWEEN PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO SELECT ADMISSION DECISION FACTORS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2018

	Total High School GPA	Grades in College Prep Courses	Strength of Curriculum	Admission Test Scores	Essay/Writing Sample	Interview
Private	-.028	.043	.062	-.272**	.288**	.448**
Enrollment	-.035	-.108	.123	.284**	.018	-.360**
Acceptance Rate	.102	-.219**	-.293**	-.025	-.304**	-.030
Yield	-.102	-.202*	-.261**	.165*	-.092	-.117

	Counselor Rec.	Teacher Rec.	Demonstrated Interest	Work	Extra-curriculars
Private	.345**	.307**	.362**	.140*	.161*
Enrollment	-.195**	-.217**	-.324**	.102	.053
Acceptance Rate	-.249**	-.242**	.063	-.385**	-.364**
Yield	-.316**	-.304**	-.105	-.152	-.168*

NOTE: Pearson R and Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were calculated. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19

TABLE B.2. CORRELATION COEFFICIENT MATRIX BETWEEN INFLUENCE OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2018

	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	First-generation	State or County of Residence	High School Attended	Alumni Relations	Ability to Pay
Private	.182**	.155*	.092	-.115	.258**	.375**	.299**
Enrollment	.034	.055	.210**	.334**	.072	-.176*	-.146*
Acceptance Rate	-.388**	-.372**	-.422**	-.295**	-.208**	-.262**	-.150*

NOTE: Pearson R and Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were calculated. \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.



TABLE B.3. PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT-TO-COUNSELOR RATIOS, BY STATE: 2016–2017

State	Total Enrollment	Counselors	Students
Alabama	744,930	1,786	417
Alaska	132,737	324	410
Arizona	1,123,137	1,241	905
Arkansas	493,447	1,296	381
California	6,309,138	9,522	663
Colorado	905,019	2,482	365
Connecticut	535,118	1,165	459
Delaware	136,264	330	413
District of Columbia	85,850	168	511
Florida	2,816,791	5,824	484
Georgia	1,764,346	3,784	466
Hawaii	181,550	634	286
Idaho	297,200	553	538
Illinois	2,026,718	2,955	686
Indiana	1,049,547	2,112	497
Iowa	509,831	1,239	411
Kansas	494,347	1,041	475
Kentucky	684,017	1,552	441
Louisiana	716,293	1,822	393
Maine	180,512	563	321
Maryland	886,221	2,376	373
Massachusetts	964,514	2,349	411
Michigan	1,528,666	2,063	741
Minnesota	875,021	1,328	659
Mississippi	483,150	1,116	433
Missouri	915,040	2,645	346
Montana	146,375	475	308
Nebraska	319,194	837	381
Nevada	473,744	975	486
New Hampshire	180,888	822	220
New Jersey	1,410,421	3,824	369
New Mexico	336,263	699	481
New York	2,729,776	7,525	363
North Carolina	1,550,062	4,212	368
North Dakota	109,706	361	304
Ohio	1,710,143	3,822	447
Oklahoma	693,903	1,582	439
Oregon	578,947	1,162	498
Pennsylvania	1,727,497	4,534	381
Rhode Island	142,150	340	418
South Carolina	771,250	2,147	359
South Dakota	136,302	353	386
Tennessee	1,001,562	2,992	335
Texas	5,360,849	12,123	442
Utah	659,801	1,019	648
Vermont	88,428	438	202
Virginia	1,287,026	3,563	361
Washington	1,101,711	2,207	499
West Virginia	273,855	729	376
Wisconsin	864,432	1,992	434
Wyoming	94,170	275	343

SOURCE: US Department of Education. (2018). *Common Core of Data State Nonfiscal Survey Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey: School Year, 2016–17 Version 1a*. Washington, DC: NCES.

TABLE B.4. CORRELATION COEFFICIENT MATRIX BETWEEN TIME SPENT BY COUNSELING DEPARTMENTS ON VARIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES AND SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS, 2018–2019

	Postsecondary Admission counseling	Choice and scheduling of high school courses	Personal needs counseling	Academic testing	Occupational counseling	Teaching	Other non-guidance activities
Private School	.237**	-.236**	-.133**	.008	-.118**	.081**	-.005
Enrollment	-.060**	.263**	.024	-.103**	-.090**	-.143**	-.045*
Percent Eligible for FRPL	-.254**	.104**	.061*	.055*	.098**	-.069**	.064**
Students per Counselor	-.075**	.088**	-.006	.060**	-.036	-.081**	.017

NOTE: Pearson *R* and Spearman's *Rho* correlation coefficients were calculated. \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

SOURCE: NACAC Counseling Trends Survey, 2018–19.

# 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, included in NACAC's *Code of Ethics and Professional Practices*.<sup>1</sup>

## Standard application plans

**Regular Decision:** Students submit their applications by a specified deadline and are notified of a decision within a clearly stated period of time.

**Rolling Admission:** Students apply at any time after a college begins accepting applications until a final closing date, which may be as late as the start of the term for which they are applying. Students are notified of a decision as their applications are completed and are reviewed.

## Early application plan

**Early Action (EA):** Students apply by an earlier deadline to receive a decision in advance of the college's Regular Decision notification date. Students will not be asked to accept the college's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1.

## Restrictive early application plans

**Early Decision (ED):** Students commit to a first-choice college and, if admitted, agree to enroll and withdraw their other college applications. Colleges may offer ED I or II with different deadlines. This is the only application plan where students are required to accept a college's offer of admission and submit a deposit prior to May 1.

**Restrictive/Single Choice Early Action (REA):** Students apply to a college of preference and receive a decision in advance of its Regular Decision notification date. Colleges place certain restrictions on applying under other early application plans. Students admitted under Restrictive Early Action are not obligated to accept the college's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1.

<sup>1</sup> NACAC's *Code of Ethics and Professional Practices* is available online at: [nacacnet.org/cepp](http://nacacnet.org/cepp).



**NACAC**

National Association for  
College Admission Counseling