

A close-up photograph of a black graduation cap with a tassel, resting on a stack of books. A rolled-up white diploma tied with a red ribbon is placed on top of the cap. The background is dark and out of focus.

BRAND PERCEPTION AND CURRICULUM SURVEY

Prepared for the Evergreen State College

April 2020

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

In the following report, Hanover Research presents the findings of a Brand Perception and Curriculum Survey administered on behalf of the Evergreen State College (ESC).

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Assess ESC' current level of brand awareness among prospective and current college students
- Identify reasons why students choose to attend or not to attend ESC
- Determine prospective students' view of ESC in relation to competitors
- Determine what the key communication channels are among prospective students
- Determine students' perception of ESC in terms of strengths and weaknesses
- Identify areas of improvement for ESC to focus on

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION & SURVEY SAMPLE

- The survey was administered online in February, 2020 using the Qualtrics platform.
- Respondents were comprised of respondents from a contact list and recruited via a panel.
- The analysis includes a total of 561 respondents following data cleaning.
- The data supplement includes the following segments: by modality preference and by county.

RESPONDENT QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be a current or prospective college student at least the age of 16 residing in the United States who have not completed a doctoral or professional degree.

INTRODUCTION

METHODOLOGY

- Sample sizes vary across questions as some questions only pertain to a subset of respondents.
- Conclusions drawn from a small sample size ($n < 20$) should be interpreted with caution.
- For full aggregate results and results segmented by modality preference (no-residency, low-residency, and high-residency) and county, please consult the accompanying data supplement. **No-residency respondents** are those that prefer fully online courses, **low-residency respondents** are those that prefer a mix of on-campus and online courses, and **high-residency respondents** are those that prefer fully on-campus courses.
- Statistically significant difference (95% confidence level) between groups are noted with an asterisk (*).
- After data collection, Hanover identified and removed low-quality respondents.
- “Don’t Know or Not Applicable” responses, and equivalent, are often excluded from the figures and analysis in order to focus on respondents who did express an opinion.
- Question text and answer options marked with † are truncated for clarity and brevity. For the full text, please consult the data supplement.

RECOMMENDATIONS & KEY FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS

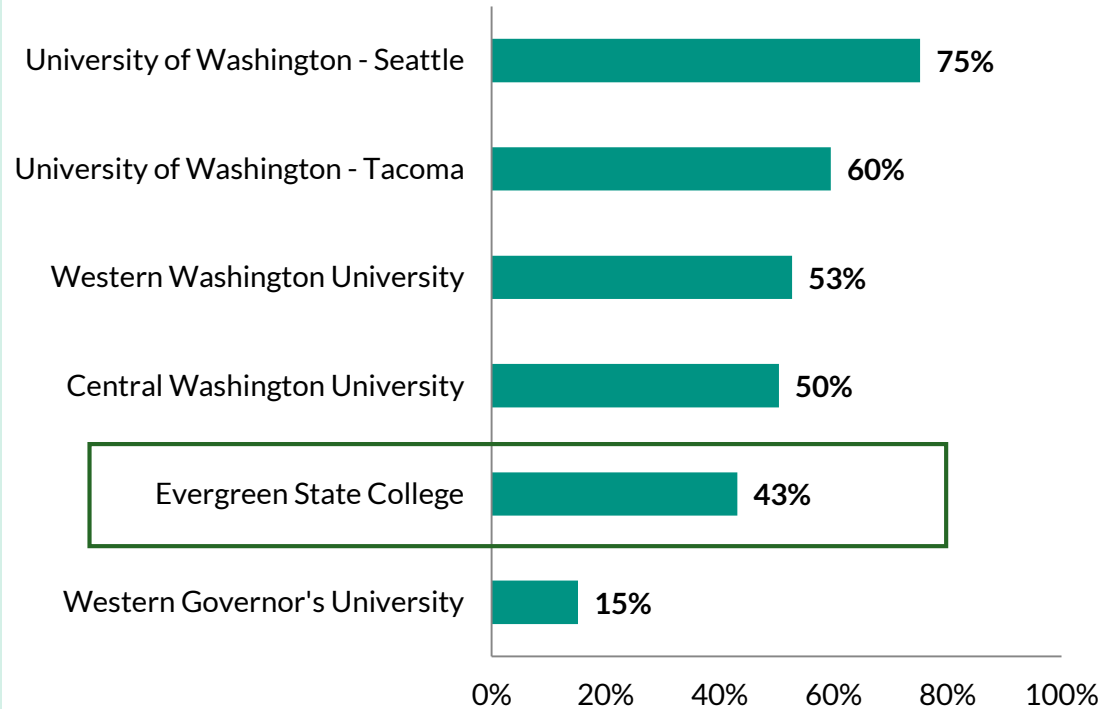
Based on survey results, The Evergreen State College (ESC) should...

- **ESC should consider offering a curriculum that is flexible in format (mix of on-campus and online courses, a low-residency option), particularly in the subject areas of psychology, business and entrepreneurship, and arts design and media technology.** A flexible program format is among the most important factors to students in helping them to decide where to apply. Additionally, more respondents (50%) indicate a preference for hybrid courses over other course delivery formats. Moreover, ESC should focus on providing a flexible delivery format to these three subject areas, where respondents who prefer a mixture of on-campus and online courses report the most interest in these subject areas.
- **ESC should explore expanding marketing and strategic communication methods to increase awareness of the university among prospective students.** Less than half of respondents from the survey indicate that they have not heard of Evergreen State College before. Given that very few respondents (24%) report having seen or heard anything about ESC within the last 90 days, ESC should consider a number of potential outreach efforts to increase awareness of its school. Some suggested outreach efforts include TV commercials (to reach out to the general public), presenting and/or setting up of information sessions at college fairs, and advertising/communicating through social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.
- **When marketing its institution, ESC should focus primarily on the overall value for the cost, academic quality, and financial aid packages/offers.** These are the three most-selected responses by respondents when asked about important factors when deciding where to apply. Additionally, among the top reasons that respondents gave for applying to ESC but deciding not to enroll were because they received a better financial aid package elsewhere and the costs were too much to attend ESC.

KEY FINDINGS: BRAND AWARENESS

- ESC is not as well-known as other public institutions among prospective and current college students. Less than half of students have heard of ESC before the survey (43%) compared to between 50 and 75% who have heard of the Seattle and Tacoma campuses at the University of Washington, Western Washington University, and Central Washington University.
- However, among students who have heard of ESC, the majority have some level of familiarity with the institution. 60% of these students indicate that they are either somewhat or very familiar with ESC.
- Among students who have heard of ESC, most have not seen or heard anything about ESC within the last three months. 76% report not having seen or heard anything about ESC during that timeframe.

Which of the following higher education institutions, if any, had you heard of before this survey? Please select all that apply.



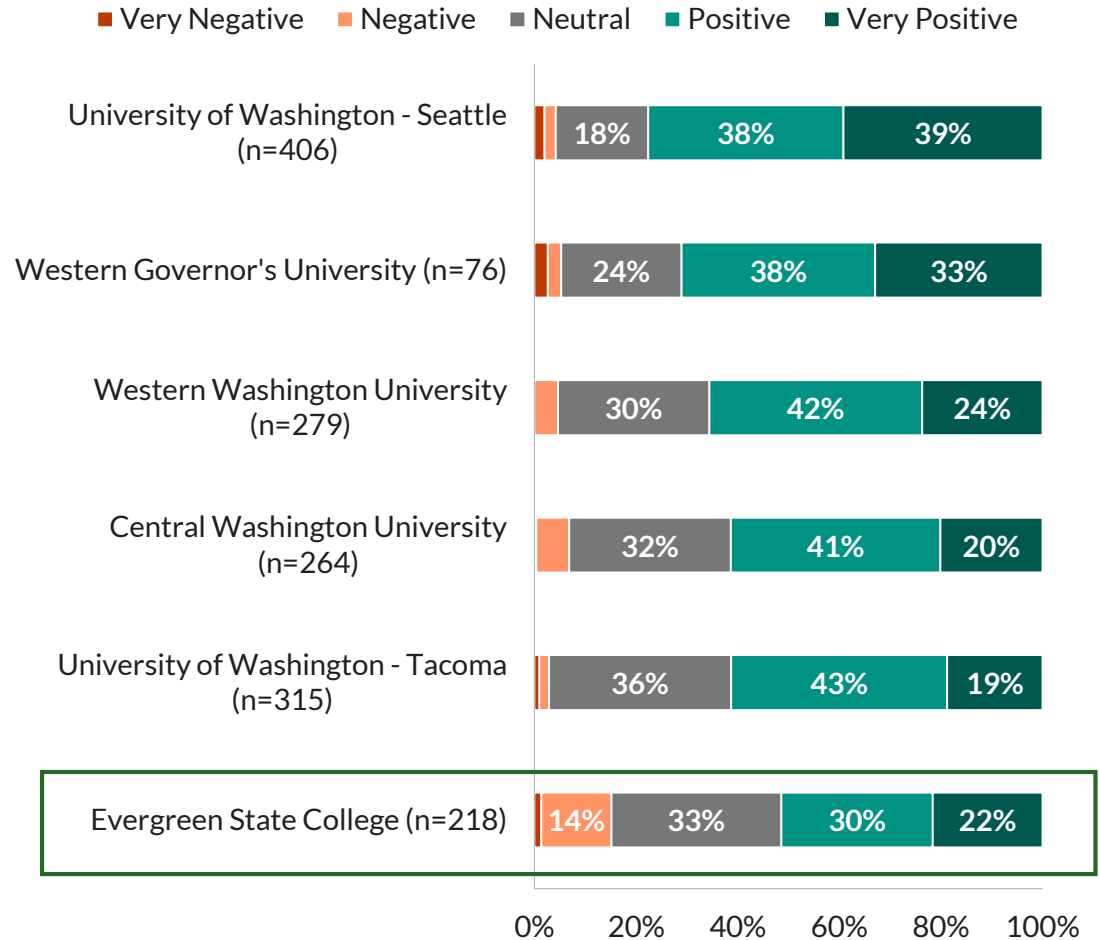
n=561

Note: Totals in the chart above add up to over 100% because respondents were asked to select all that apply.

KEY FINDINGS: BRAND PERCEPTION

- Survey respondents tend to report a less positive impression of ESC compared to its peer public and private institutions. Only about half (51%) of respondents rate their overall impression of ESC as “positive” or “very positive”. In comparison, between 61 and 78% of respondents rate their overall impression of competitor institutions positively.
- Additionally, respondents are not likely to recommend ESC to friends, family members, or colleagues. 61% report that they are unlikely to recommend ESC (rating of <7 on a 10-point scale) while only 14% are likely to strongly recommend ESC (rating of 9 or 10) to friends, family, or colleagues.
 - Of those unlikely to recommend ESC, only a small percent (21%) indicate that their recommendation would change if ESC were to consider adding new academic programming.

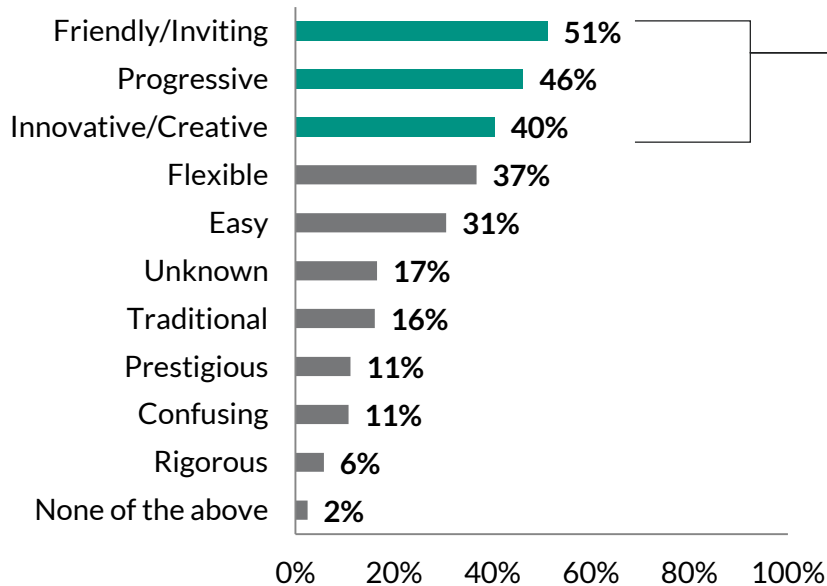
What is your overall impression of each of the following higher education institutions?



KEY FINDINGS: BRAND STRENGTHS

- **Survey results suggest that respondents view ESC as a progressive, innovative, and friendly institution.** Respondents primarily used the following words to describe ESC: friendly/inviting (51%), progressive (46%), and innovative/creative (40%).
- **Further, respondents rate ESC high on these factors.** Between 63 and 72% of respondents rate ESC “a great deal” on innovation/creativity, progressiveness, and friendliness.

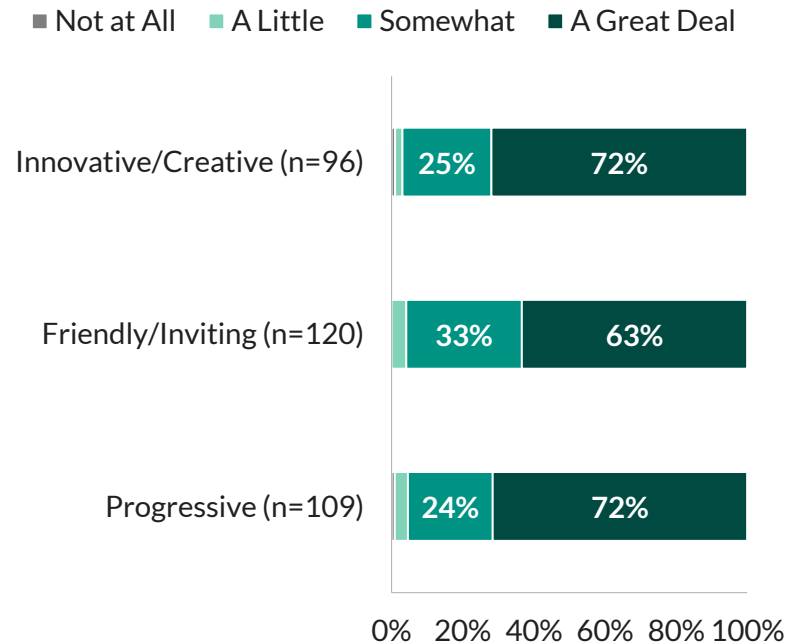
Which of the following words describe Evergreen State College? Please select all that apply.



n=242

Note: Totals in the chart above add up to over 100% because respondents were asked to select all that apply.

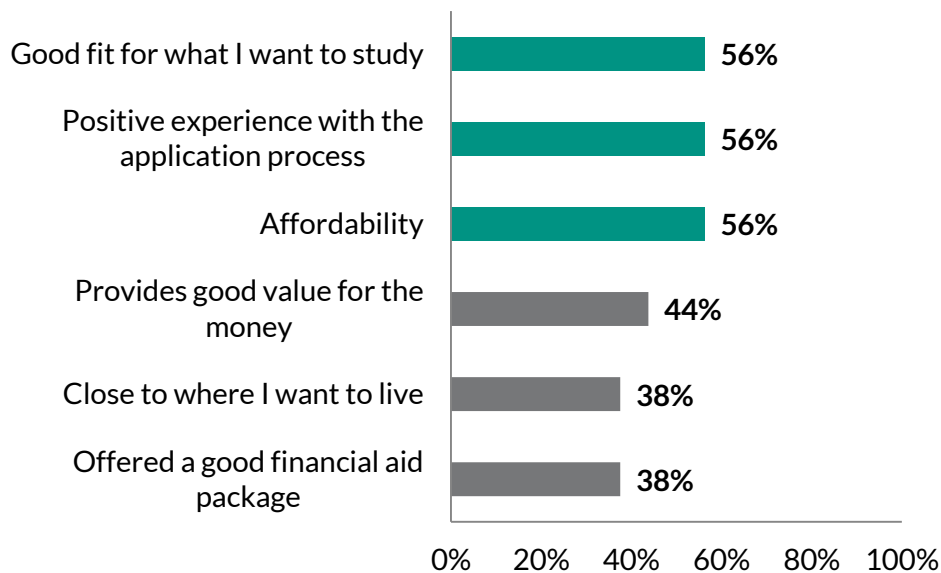
How would you rate Evergreen State College on the following factors?



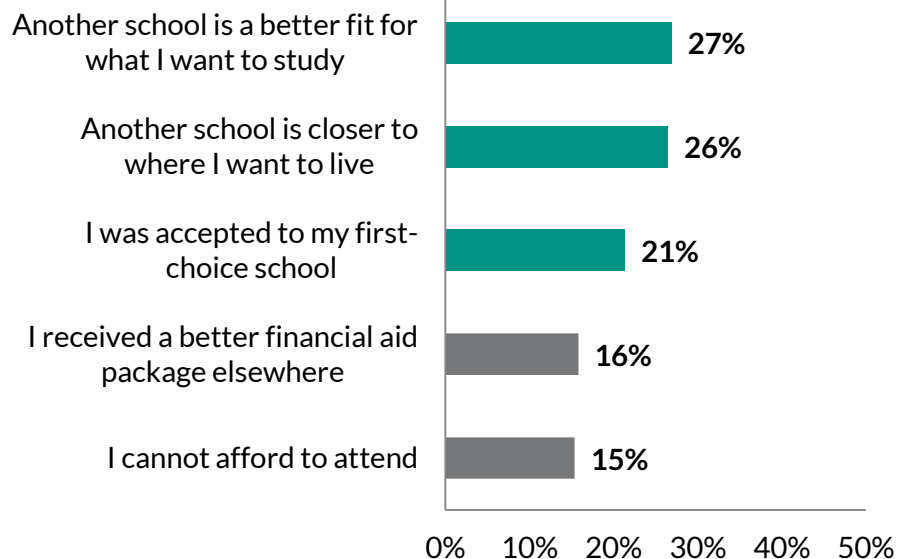
KEY FINDINGS: REASONS FOR ENROLLING/NOT ENROLLING AT EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

- The top reasons students cited as why they enrolled at ESC were the school’s affordability, goodness of fit for what they wanted to study, and the positive experience they had with the application process. 56% of students selected these reasons to explain why they decided to enroll at ESC.
- The top reasons respondents cited as why they did not enroll at ESC were because of location, another school was a better fit for what they wanted to study, and they were accepted to their first-choice school. Between 21 and 27% of respondents selected these reasons to explain why they decided to enroll at another school instead.

Why did you decide to enroll at Evergreen State College? Please select all that apply.



Why did you decide to not enroll at Evergreen State College? Please select all that apply.



n=16 and 234

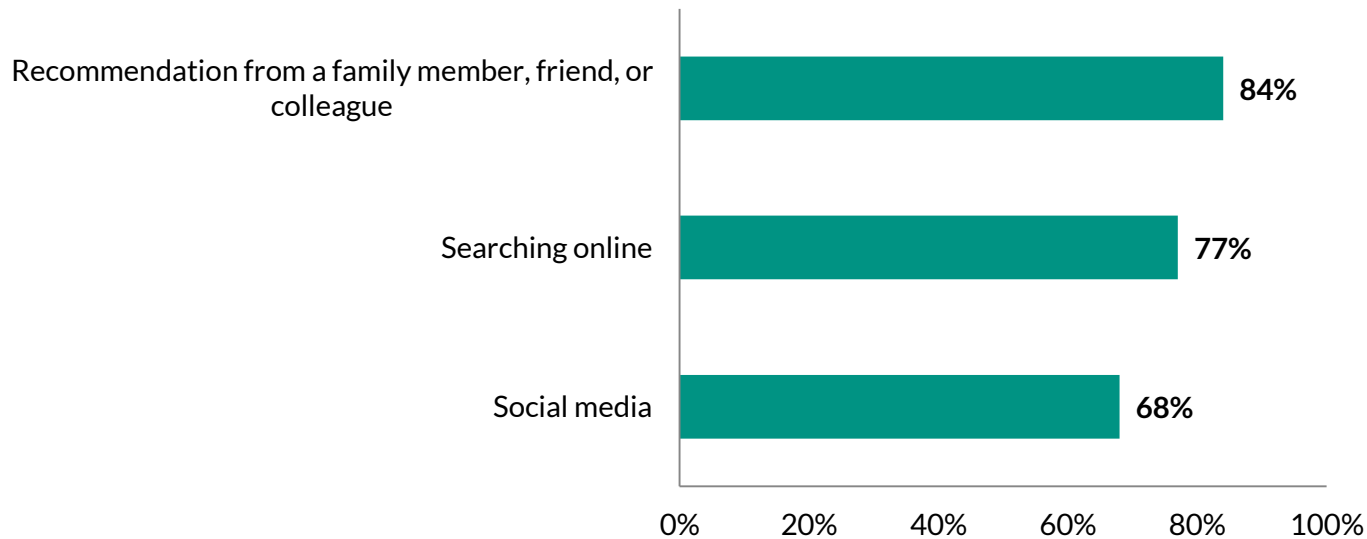
Note: Only the top 6 most selected reasons for enrolling at ESC and top 5 most selected reasons for not enrolling at ESC are visualized. For full results for the latter, see data supplement. Totals in the charts above add up to over 100% because respondents were asked to select all that apply.

KEY FINDINGS: MARKETING/COMMUNICATION

- Of those respondents who have seen or heard anything about ESC with the last three months, **most saw or heard about the institution through social media (43%), online searches (38%), and recommendations from family, friends, and colleagues (34%).**
- **Further, respondents rate what they have seen or heard through these modes of communication fairly positively.** Between 68 and 84% of respondents rate what they have seen or heard through social media, online searches, and recommendations from family, friends, and colleagues as “positive” or “very positive”.

How would you rate what you have seen or heard about Evergreen?

% Positive or Very Positive

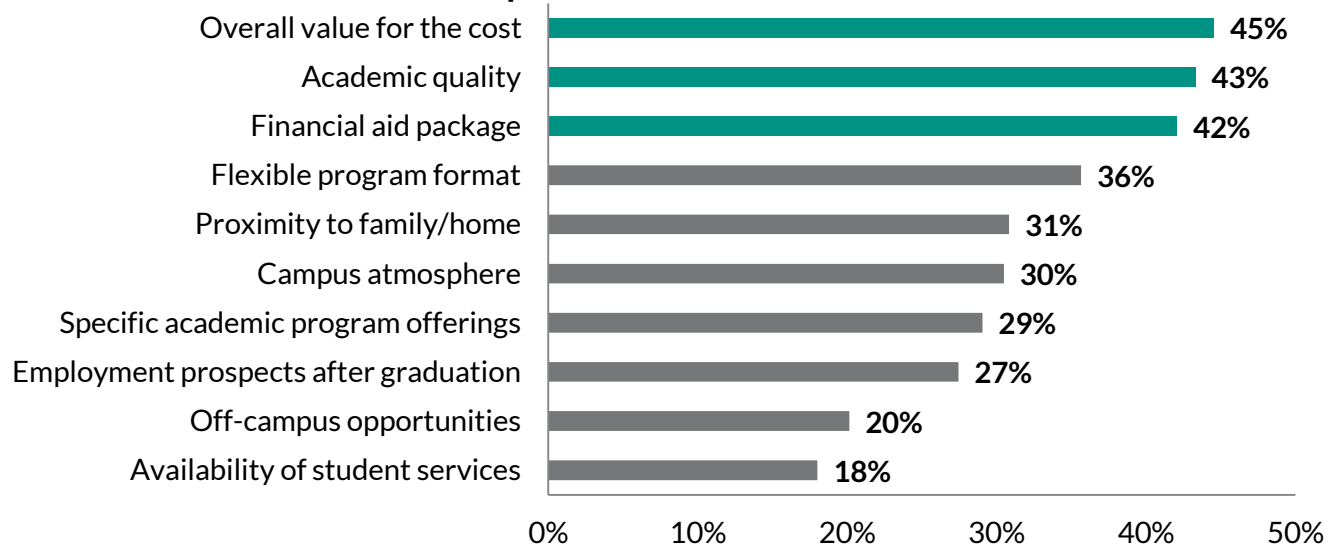


n=19-25

KEY FINDINGS: IMPORTANT FACTORS

- Respondents report that the most important factors when deciding where to apply are academic quality (43%) and value of the program for the cost (43%). Respondents also indicate that financial aid offers (42%) are an important consideration when considering which undergraduate programs to apply to.
- Half (50%) of respondents' preferred delivery format for a degree program is hybrid courses (i.e., mix of on-campus and online courses). A little under a third (30%) preferred format is all online course.

Which of the following factors are most important to you when deciding where to apply for an undergraduate program? Please select up to five options.



n=561

Note: Only the top 10 most selected factors are visualized. For full results for the latter, see data supplement. Totals in the chart above add up to over 100% because respondents were asked to select all that apply.

KEY FINDINGS: SUBJECT AREAS OF INTEREST

- The top three subject areas that students are most interested in studying are **psychology, business and entrepreneurship, and arts design and media technology**. This was true for respondents who prefer on-campus courses (i.e., high-residency), fully online courses (i.e., no-residency), and a mix of on-campus and online courses (i.e., low-residency). The order of preference differed a bit with the most no-residency respondents preferring business and entrepreneurship (35%) while the most low- and high-residency respondents preferring psychology (38% and 35%, respectively).

Which of the following areas would you be interested in studying? Please select all that apply.

	No-residency (n=51)	Low-residency (n=160)	High-residency (n=66)
Psychology	27%	38%	35%
Business and Entrepreneurship	35%	30%	26%
Arts Design and Media Technology	27%	31%	27%
Visual Arts	20%	23%	26%
Food and Agriculture	12%	23%	14%
Integrated Biology and Chemistry	18%	16%	17%
Interdisciplinary Computer Science	24%	14%	9%
Mathematical and Physical Sciences	16%	9%	17%
Culture, Text, and Language in World Societies	10%	16%	12%
Political Economy, Global Studies, and Environmental Justice	12%	13%	15%
Environmental Studies	8%	20%	5%
Literary Arts	6%	11%	14%
Natural Resources Management: Fish, Forest, and Farm	4%	16%	6%
Climate Science and Policy	4%	11%	12%
Organizational Change and Leadership	6%	8%	5%

Note: This table shows how frequently respondents selected different subject areas. Darker shading indicates subject areas that were selected more frequently by respondents while lighter shading indicates subject areas that were selected less frequently. No-residency respondents are those that prefer fully online courses, low-residency respondents are those that prefer a mix of on-campus and online courses, and high-residency respondents are those that prefer fully on-campus courses.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Age (n=561)

16-17	9%
18-19	22%
20-21	16%
22-23	11%
24-25	10%
26-27	12%
28-29	11%
30-39	9%
40-49	<1%
50+	<1%

Employment Status (n=561)

Employed full-time	31%
Student	27%
Employed part-time	23%
Unemployed	11%
Stay-at-home caregiver	3%
Unable to work	2%
Retired	<1%
Prefer not to respond	2%

Gender (n=561)

Female	70%
Male	27%
Other/Non-binary	3%
Prefer not to respond	1%

Are you Hispanic? (n=561)

Yes	19%
No	79%
Prefer not to respond	2%

Race/Ethnicity (n=561)

White	70%
Black or African-American	15%
Asian	11%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2%
Prefer not to respond	6%

Annual Household Income (n=561)

Under \$50,000	41%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	34%
\$100,000 to \$199,999	13%
\$200,000 or more	3%
Prefer not to respond	8%

Urbanicity (n=561)

Suburban area	46%
Urban area	32%
Rural area	16%
Prefer not to respond	6%





Thank you.

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