The Student College Search Experience: 2020-21
Today’s Presenter

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Sources

> 2021 Survey of Juniors
  ○ 7,129 responses
  ○ 441 from your region (WPA)

> 2021 Senior Enrollment Survey
  ○ 19,277 responses
  ○ 1,152 from WPA

niche.bz/research
Some Key Themes

1. Misinformation about test-optional and test-blind is hurting students.
2. Students are starting their search early and casting a wider net now, but less so in your region.
3. Campus visits are declining rapidly.
4. The rubber band is snapping - students want to go farther from home.
5. High published costs are closing doors to students.
Insight #1

Misinformation about test-optional and test-blind is hurting students.
What it means

> More than \( \frac{2}{3} \) of colleges are test-optional/blind

> 78% of students in WPA (75% nationally) believe that not submitting will hurt them

> 78% took a standardized test
  > 39% submitted to all colleges
  > 11% to most colleges
  > 12% to just a few colleges

> Survey of IECs - majority still encouraging students to take a test
Insight #2

Students are starting their search early and casting a wider net now than before, but less so in your region.
### Beginning Active Research Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WPA</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Junior Year</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Junior Year</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall of Senior Year</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring of Senior Year</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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</table>
## What it means

### Applications Submitted

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>WPA</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</table>
Insight #3

Campus visits are declining rapidly
## What it means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visits Taken</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
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<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>18%</td>
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<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What it means

> (Early Results from our fall senior survey)

> 84% of WPA seniors say they’re comfortable with in-person events and visits
  > 77% for US

> 42% of WPA seniors have never visited a campus and 82% say they will visit a campus this year
  > Half have US have never visited a campus and only 71% say they will visit a campus this year
Insight #4

The rubber band is snapping - students want to go farther from home
What it means

- The desire to enroll within an hour from home has decreased
- 34% want to enroll 2-4 hours from home, and 21% want to enroll 4+ hours away
- Can’t only own your backyard, back to 2 pronged recruiting
Insight #5

High published costs are closing doors to students
What it means

> 75% of WPA students eliminated colleges based on the total published cost
  ○ 73% of US students did

> Half of students in WPA would only consider applying to colleges under $40,000 per year

> Higher tolerance than the US as a whole
  ○ 50% consideration is at $30,000 per year
Communicating With Students
Email’s influence

> 47% of WPA students said that their enrollment was influenced by emails from colleges
  > 51% for the US

> 99% said that email is the preferred outreach method
  > 85% find even weekly email acceptable
BUT...
17% reported that the emails felt very personalized and relevant.
What is important to talk about

> Scholarships (93%)
> Ranking (63%)
> Distance from home (50%)
> Intercultural services (35%)
> Fine and performing arts (34%)
> Alumni network (34%)
> LGBTQ services (31%)
> Athletics (21%)
> Religious affiliation (14%)
How influential were other channels?

- Mail - 44% found it influential (43% US)
- Video chats - 33% (34% US)
- Texts - 24% (25% US)
- Phone calls - 23% (23% US)

- Email was the only outlier for WPA compared to US
Daily Social Media Usage Over Time
Social Media Usage and Likelihood to View or Engage with College Accounts

- YouTube
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Reddit
- ZeeMee

Legend:
- Use
- View
- Engage
What Content Do Students Want to See on Social Media

- Updates On Deadlines and Events
- Campus Life
- Classrooms and Academics
- High Quality Photos and Videos
- Current Student Takeovers
- Interactions With Followers
- Students That Look Like Me
- Fine and Performing Arts
- Athletics

- I would rather not see this
- Not important to see
- Neutral
- Important to see
- I need to see this
About Niche...

By supporting over 27 million students and families, Niche is changing how colleges and universities connect with students and build their future classes.

We enable our 1,900+ partners to build genuine connections that nurture interest into visits, applications, and enrollment.
Partnering with Niche

Market Where the Students Are

> Help students discover your school on the #1 college search platform
> Highlight what makes your school unique

Claim Your Profile

Modern Enrollment Marketing

> Niche Audience Remarketing
  > Reach students who are actively searching on the platforms they use most
  > Drive traffic from your Niche Profile back to your website

> Niche Inquiry & Prospect Solutions
  > Connect with Niche for an initial analysis of your inquiries & prospects

Additional Resources & Research
Enrollment Insights Blog [niche.bz/insights](niche.bz/insights)
Q&A

Survey results and more: niche.bz/insights

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