

Perceived Barriers to College Application and Enrollment for New Students

By: Travis G. Carter

tcarter187@radford.edu

(540) 238-5859

DSN-770

Perceived Barriers to College Application and Enrollment for New Students

By: Travis Carter

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Bruce Parsons

Spring 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Parsons", written over a solid black horizontal line.

Dr. Bruce Parsons
Thesis Advisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Holly Cline", written over a solid black horizontal line.

Dr. Holly Cline
Thesis Committee Member

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen Sullivan", written over a solid black horizontal line.

Ms. Kathleen Sullivan
Thesis Committee Member

Abstract

The competition for college enrollments has increased drastically since the turn of the century. For-profit, not-for-profit, trade schools, and community colleges represent a small sample of the many different options that have become available to students. As colleges continue to grapple with overwhelming debt loads and competition, being creative, innovative and inviting in the application process has become more important than ever before. This mixed methods study aims to explore the different ways colleges may or may not be creating barriers to application and enrollment for students.

Interest questionnaires were sent out to students at a Virginia private college and a public university along with different offices of administration at the private college. Upon receipt of the responses, interviews were conducted with willing participants and follow-up design workshops were held on each individual campus. Upon completion of an Affinity Cluster and Persona Profiles, the on-campus workshops included a new method titled Truth About Lies and concluded with an Alternative Worlds workshop with the result being a prototype developed for use by colleges into the future.

The design-thinking workshops worked towards the creation of a new-age, student-friendly college application. Including different types of students from public and private, plus larger and smaller schools was important in the creation of an equitable and efficient application. Including administrators, it helped to capture the important elements necessary of any college application. All three populations were instrumental in the deconstruction of traditional applications and ultimately, their redesign.

Acknowledgments

There are no words, no phrases, no expressions that can truly encompass the depth of my gratitude to my amazing wife, Sarah. For 11 years (and so much longer than that), you have been the constant, unwavering force that has kept me grounded, that has kept me pushing forward even when I felt like giving up. You have been my heart, my soul, my strength. When I struggled to believe in myself, you were there—encouraging, lifting, loving. You have given so much of yourself—sacrificed your time, your energy, your dreams—so that I could chase mine. You have kept our family together through every challenge, every hardship, with grace and love that I could never fully repay. You raised our beautiful daughters while supporting my work, doing the hard and quiet work that often goes unnoticed. But I see you, Sarah. I see everything you’ve done, and I am so deeply thankful for every moment of love, patience, and sacrifice you’ve given. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine. I could not have done this without you, and I will carry that truth with me for the rest of my life.

To my sweet and precious daughters, Molly and Katherine, you are the reason I am able to smile every single day. You are the reason I get out of bed each morning, even when the weight of the world feels too heavy. You are the reason I fight through the hard days, because I want to show you that no matter the obstacles, with love and perseverance, we can achieve great things. You have filled my life with more joy than I ever dreamed possible. These past nine years with you both have been the happiest and most fulfilling of my life. I never knew that a heart could hold so much love until I became a father to you. I hope, one day, you’ll look back and know that what matters most in life is not how long it takes or how hard the journey may seem, but that with dedication, love, and the support of those who love you, you can accomplish anything. You are my heart, my world, and everything I do is for you. I hope I am setting an example for you to always chase your dreams, no matter how big, and to never give up on the things that matter most—each other and the love that binds us.

To my family and friends—those who stood by me, encouraged me, prayed for me, and shared in the ups and downs of this journey—I am forever grateful for each of you. Whether you helped with my research, asked how I was doing, or simply offered a listening ear, you have been a vital part of this process. To Amy and Mom, your endless belief in me has been a constant source of strength. You both have always been there, lifting me up when I faltered, and reminding me of the importance of believing in myself. Wayne, your example of determination and resilience in your own educational journey has shaped so much of who I am today. You have taught me the value of hard work and perseverance, and I am so thankful to have had you beside me through this entire journey.

To the incredible faculty at Radford University, words cannot express my gratitude for your guidance and support. To Dr. Holly Cline and Kathleen Sullivan, you both were a shining light in the moments when I doubted myself. Your belief in me—your constant encouragement and kindness—kept me going when I thought I couldn't take another step. You both gave me the confidence to move forward, and I will forever cherish your positive influence in my life. Dr. Bruce Parsons, you have been more than just an advisor; you have been a mentor and a quiet force that helped me through the darkest moments. Your support, your calm encouragement, and your belief in my potential have meant more to me than words can express. When I wanted to give up, you never let me. You always reminded me that I was capable of more than I believed, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

And to my father, who is no longer here, I wish you could be here to see this moment. I wish you could witness the man I've become, thanks to your endless love, support, and wisdom. You were the one who always believed in me, even when I couldn't believe in myself. I can still hear your voice telling me, "The older you get, the harder it is to complete," and now I understand what you meant more than ever. I've learned that it's not about how long it takes, or how hard the road is—it's about how you finish. And because of you, I've made it this far. Your belief in me, even from beyond the grave, still gives

me strength. I carry your love with me in everything I do. I hope, as you look down on us from above, you know that I have done my best to make you proud, and I always will.

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Acknowledgments.....	4
Table of Contents.....	7
List of Figures.....	9
Introduction.....	10
Purpose	13
Definition of Terms.....	14
Literature Review	16
Methods	23
Results.....	33
Discussion.....	59
Works Cited.....	68
Appendix A.....	72
Appendix B	73
Appendix C.....	74
Appendix D	75
Appendix E	76
Appendix F	77
Appendix G.....	78

Appendix H.....	79
Appendix I	80
Appendix J	81
Appendix K	82
Appendix L.....	83
Appendix M.....	84
Appendix N.....	85
Appendix O.....	86
Appendix P	87
Appendix Q.....	88
Appendix R	89
Appendix S	90
Appendix T	91
Appendix U.....	93
Appendix V.....	169

List of Figures

- Figure 1—First-Generation/Pew Research Statistics
- Figure 2—Research Proposal Sequence of Events
- Figure 3—Convenience Sample/Professional Staff
- Figure 4—Public University Questionnaire Sequence
- Figure 5—Private University Questionnaire Sequence
- Figure 6—Sample Affinity Cluster from The University of Cambridge
- Figure 7—Completed Affinity Cluster
- Figure 8—Word Cluster Count
- Figure 9—Word Cluster and Groupings
- Figure 10—Affinity Cluster Divided Into Persona Profiles
- Figure 11— “How Much Hal” Persona Profile
- Figure 12— “Programs for Priscilla” Persona Profile
- Figure 13— “Location Lawrence” Persona Profile
- Figure 14— “Family for Felicity” Persona Profile
- Figure 15—Likert Scale Feedback-Email Follow-Up (averages and total counts)
- Figure 16—Alternative Worlds In Action
- Figure 17—Alternative Worlds Brainstorming Results
- Figure 18—Alternative Worlds Application Draft

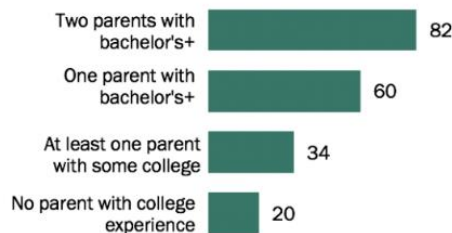
Introduction

A college education has never been more important than in today's competitive job market. A college graduate can expect to have greater earnings, fewer unemployment gaps, and more opportunities than workers without degrees (Lacey & Crosby, 2004). First-generation college students from all backgrounds face an uphill climb in their preparedness and motivation to attend college. Forty-one percent of African American students and 61% of Latino students are classified as first-generation, whereas only 25% of white and Asian American students fit into this classification (The Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2021). For college administrators looking to build and sustain enrollment, first-generation students are an important demographic representing one-third of all college students. According to the Pew Research Center (Figure 1), first-generation students are 26-40% less likely to attain a college degree than students who do not identify as first-generation college students.

Figure 1-First Generation/Pew Research Statistics

Adults with parents who are college graduates are more likely to attain a bachelor's degree

% of adults who have completed at least a bachelor's degree, among those with ...



Note: Based on adults ages 22 to 59 with known parental education. "Some college" includes those with an associate degree, certificate, and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2019 Survey of Household Economics and Decisionmaking.

"First-Generation College Graduates Lag Behind Their Peers on Key Economic Outcomes"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

College administrators continue to search for the best way to cultivate applications from first-generation applicants and overcome obstacles in the process. The likelihood of enrollment for a first-generation student depends on a multitude of factors, none of which are singularly more important than cost. A vast majority of students take total cost into consideration when making a college choice, including, but not limited to tuition, room and board, and transportation costs to and from the school (Mishra & Gupta, 2021). Indirect costs also present a large barrier at some institutions, such as the cost for application fees, standardized test scores, and transcript submission (Alvarado & López Turley, 2012).

This study centered on two institutions, one public and one private. Outside of convenience, these schools were selected for different reasons relating to size and affordability but also possess similar characteristics for comparison. The biggest difference in the two samples was their size, both in geography and population but also in their academic offerings. While the private institution is a traditional liberal arts institution focusing on programs such as Biology, Business, and Humanities; the state university offers more programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The outcome of this study focused on the barriers to application and enrollment, so it was vitally important for the research to gauge student populations from institutions with similar profiles relating to academics, diversity, selectivity, and student life. It's believed that many of the students involved in this research have submitted applications to both institutions so an apple to almost apple comparison will better inform the results of the research.

Understanding each unique situation and motivations of a college student before receiving an application and ultimately an enrollment deposit is something colleges and universities wrangle with daily. The options available to students outside of a traditional college education grow with each passing day. Since 2010, colleges have seen a decline in enrollment by an average of 1.67% per year

(Bustamante, 2019). A significant contributing factor to this downward trend in enrollment is the education obtained by parents or guardians, as illustrated in Figure 1 above. The research presented here was looking for ways to increase college applications from first-generation students, which directly impacts enrollment figures.

Purpose

Using design-thinking strategies, this study investigated whether colleges are creating obstacles for prospective students during the application and enrollment process. This study identified potential barriers and proposed ways to streamline the process of removing those barriers. Additionally, this study examined perceived barriers that may prevent otherwise qualified students from applying and enrolling.

The college application process should involve ways to remove barriers to access for students instead of creating them. This study's goal was to identify what are the most common barriers for students and specifically which barriers served as the greatest detriment to a college receiving applications from students. Stakeholders for this research were comprised of a diverse group of enrolled students from all backgrounds, along with college administrators, high school counselors, enrollment consultants, and parents.

Definition of Terms

Affinity Cluster: a graphic technique for sorting items according to similarity (Luma Institute, 2012).

Alternative Worlds: a way of using different perspectives to help generate fresh ideas (Luma Institute, 2012).

Enrollment Consultant: a paid advisor that works with higher education institutions to maximize enrollment figures.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): an application used by the federal government to determine eligibility for educational financial assistance.

First-Generation College Student: a college student that did not have a parent/guardian obtain a college degree.

GAI (General Artificial Intelligence): a hypothetical type of artificial intelligence that possesses the ability to understand, learn, and perform any intellectual task that a human being can.

Generation Z: the generation commonly known as zoomers; a demographic of individuals born between the years of late 1990's to the early 2010's.

Interview: a technique for gathering information through direct dialogue (Luma Institute, 2012).

Legacy: a student with ties to an institution based on a family member's previous attendance at the institution.

Likert Scale: a unidimensional scale that researchers use to collect respondents' attitudes and opinions.

Persona Profile: an informed summary of the mindset, needs, and goals typically held by key stakeholders (Luma Institute, 2012).

Social Capital: the relationships created among a group of people that live and work together.

The Truth About Lies: a written technique used to solicit unfiltered, honest, and comprehensive data from a research group.

Underalignment: required courses for college admission that aren't offered at a particular high school.

Undocumented Student: a student in the country that doesn't not possess the proper paperwork for citizenship requirements.

Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG): a grant designed to assist Virginia residents who attend accredited, private, nonprofit colleges and universities in Virginia.

Literature Review

College access is a popular topic in our media and political landscape. How to provide access and remove barriers to an affordable college education remains at the forefront of debate at dinner tables and political aisles across the country. In 2023, many topics of affordability and access centered on how to provide a free education for students seeking a post-secondary education. Many other factors come into play that impact access to a quality education for many people. Student debt continues to climb while wages and college enrollments continue to decline. A quality education remains a viable path to success for the majority of high school graduates.

Affordability

Based on income levels, studies have shown that lower-income categories of students entertain fewer college alternatives as compared to middle and upper-income students. Furthermore, indicators also show that a key factor influencing decisions for students is the availability of financial aid because of the increasing costs in postsecondary education (Mishra & Gupta, 2021). The Pell Grant program is a federal legislative initiative created out of the desire to provide equal, affordable opportunities to lower-income students. As part of the original legislation, a cost of education benefit in the amount of \$2,500 would have accompanied the Pell Grant but this portion of the plan never materialized (Alexander, 2011). Many undocumented students present as first-generation students, and affordability is a key concern. One solution with proven results was enacted in fall 2012 at Metropolitan State University in Denver where the board of trustees lowered the in-state tuition rate for undocumented students to a rate \$4,600 less than the rate for out-of-state students. The state of Colorado subsequently passed an in-state tuition law known as the ASSET Bill. From 2012 to 2013, during the enactment of the ASSET Bill,

in-state enrollment of undocumented students increased from 237 to over 500 with many of those students choosing MSU Denver (Thangasamy & Horan, 2106).

Geographic Location and State Requirements

Many other factors contribute towards college enrollment and application behaviors beyond cost. International undergraduate students frequently make college selections based on geographic proximity to their home. Additionally, higher education institutions further away from home can present financial challenges for expensive educational opportunities at home and abroad (Mishra & Gupta, 2021). Almost 50% of first-generation students surveyed indicated they chose their college based on the desires of their parents (Hottinger & Rose, 2006). In the United States each state offers differing approaches to high school graduation requirements, with math being at the forefront. In the past 10 years, Florida has removed Algebra 2 as a graduation requirement while conversely, Arizona increased their requirements to include Algebra 2. In Virginia, an emphasis has been placed on work experience and career readiness at the expense of graduation requirements (Stoker et al., 2018). Some courses needed for high school graduation and college entrance are not offered at several schools throughout the country. This phenomenon, known as underalignment, is prevalent in schools represented predominantly by students of color and is a contributing factor in why admission rates for these students can be lower at top institutions (Rodriguez, 2018).

College Recruitment Strategies and Enticements

In the cut-throat world of college recruiting, many institutions are making attempts to think outside of the box in their efforts to recruit and retain students, in addition to the more traditional recruitment tactics. For years, a heavy emphasis on marketing alone was enough for colleges to hit enrollment goals. While marketing continues to play a vital role in the success of an institution, the

narrative has expanded and now begs the question, “what exactly are colleges marketing?” In 2016, Northern Michigan University expanded its program offerings to include the nation’s first four-year degree centered on marijuana. When asked to consider such a new program, President Fritz Erickson countered with, “why not” (Field, 2018). It’s decisions like this that make colleges stand out amongst their peers and offer an opportunity to capitalize on the unique and growing interests of Generation Z.

The use of digital recruitment techniques continues to grow in the world of college recruitment. Unlike previous generations who were forced to pile into a car and visit a school if they wanted a first-hand look at the campus, today’s students have an assortment of digital tools available to get a closer look at campus life. Many colleges implement social media strategies as part of their overall recruitment plan, but it remains unclear how much overall influence social media plays in students’ decision to apply and/or enroll at an institution (Constantinides & Stagno, 2013). Even without proven influence in college decision-making discussions, schools are adding to their digital collection, not subtracting from their offerings (Martin, 2015).

Many schools place a priority on the student life experience on campus. While academic programs and faculty interaction are still highlighted on college campuses, new structures and all-you-can-eat food have found their way into the recruitment arena. The University of Central Florida is located near Universal Studios, Disney Land, and SeaWorld. As a student at UCF, a student can receive discounted offerings to those theme parks simply based on their enrollment at the University. Along a similar theme, students at New York University receive free and discounted admission to some of the world’s most prestigious museums. If that’s not enough for students, the fun factor has been bridged into a master’s program in Themed Experiences. Fine dining is offered at High Point University through their campus steakhouse, Prime 1924. The University bills not only an upscale dining experience, but an opportunity for students to develop business and social etiquette skills (DeGeurin, 2019).

Motivation, Support, and Preparedness

Proper motivation and support are instrumental in the pursuit of higher educational goals. First-generation students, when compared to second-generation students and beyond, typically do not have the same support structure in their scholarly pursuits. The influence of a college-pursuing friend, or multiple friends encouraging the pursuit of college aspirations can keep a student on track and in tune with deadlines, requirements, and other critical information (Alvarado & Lopez, 2012). Psychological preparation is an important aspect to consider when determining college readiness. Low self-esteem, while in pursuit of higher education, can be exacerbated when the students do not have a support structure from parents who know how to prepare their student for college properly. In many cases, parents of first-generation college students will not properly understand or fully support their students' desire to obtain a higher education (Hottinger & Rose, 2006).

The reputation of a college matters to administrators and prospective students alike. Generally speaking, the reputation of a college is built over the course of several years and includes academic data, perceived prestige, and postgraduate outcomes. For prospective students, social media can play a distinct role in gathering information, but Wohn et al. also indicate other social capital factors play an important role in college aspirations (Wohn et al., 2013, p. 434.) Faculty and staff, along with their academic credentials, play a pivotal role in the college search process. These factors are considered heavily and top the selection criteria of many students along with the perceived financial implications (Mishra & Gupta, 2021). For students in Chicago, low graduation rates can be attributed to a lack of preparation in the college search. Without knowing the prestige of a college, students seek out institutions that are not a good match for their credentials. This can be a direct result of low social capital and poor academic guidance offered by counselors and peers (Nagaoka et al., 2009).

Even timelines can be problematic for prospective students unfamiliar with the college search process. Students rely on their guidance and college counselors for access and assistance in college attainment. In California alone, the ratio of guidance counselors to students is 1000 to 1. The ideal ratio, according to the American School Counselor Association is 100 to 1 or less (Johnson et al., 2010). Many students begin the search process early in their high school careers. However, first-generation students often do not decide to attend college until much later in their high school years. As a result, the academic preparedness window necessary for a fruitful college experience pursuit has closed and college choices are limited (Fallon, 1997).

A college education, and access to it, is an important tool for a successful career for many students. Variables such as cost, location, prestige, and support play pivotal roles in the ability of first-generation students to pursue these goals. Numerous studies have followed the path to enrollment for students and studied those barriers, but a deeper look is required to identify the barriers to application as a starting point. In evaluating all the barriers to enrollment, we used design-thinking strategies to determine if these are also barriers to application for students.

Design Thinking in Higher Education

As colleges across the country continue to innovate their recruitment strategies toward new students, design thinking methods are increasingly being integrated into their approach. According to Grots and Creuznacher (2018), design thinking involves a variety of strategies used to move projects forward with innovation from multiple stakeholders. Moreover, it helps to ask the right questions and potentially identify potential answers. A typical design thinking session has been described as a cycle to include: empathy, defining the problem, creating ideas and collaboration, prototyping, and testing (Murtell, 2021).

Panke (2019) used a design thinking session to answer four pertinent questions. 1) What are the characteristics of design thinking that make it particularly fruitful for education? 2) How is design thinking applied in different education settings? 3) What tools, techniques and methods are characteristics for design thinking? 4) What are the limitations or negative effects of design thinking? The results yielded many fascinating points, particularly of interest is the research related to higher education. Design thinking in higher education is still predominantly applied in marketing, business, or entrepreneurship studies. However, she advised its application continues to grow across numerous subject areas. Banter et al. (2020) concluded design thinking sessions provide leadership opportunities for students that may not be as engaged as others. Their session focused on design thinking methods to enhance an undergraduate leadership program at Georgia Southern University. Their research findings also indicated students who normally would not give feedback were given a voice through these workshops.

Many universities are using design thinking workshops in classroom situations and workshops as problem solving measures (Matthews & Wrigley, 2017). The research remains limited in how colleges and universities are using design thinking in the recruitment activities aimed at new students. Individual programs more commonly use design thinking to recruit current or prospective students than as a campus-wide initiative to recruit new students. Matthews and Wrigley (2017) used their research to provide preliminary mapping of some business programs in higher education that include design thinking in their offerings.

Colleges and universities across the country continue to invest in research to shed light on how and why college students arrive at their decision to apply and ultimately enroll at an institution. The general research on prospective students and their preferences and behaviors is limited in scope. In addition, the design thinking research in this area has been more focused on individual programs and

even their recruitment to specific programs after enrolling at an institution. Enrollment professionals across the country are constantly searching for answers to declining enrollments and applicant pools at their institutions. While there is ample research centered on this topic, the industry professionals continue to look for honest answers from students that offer detailed information relating to those declines. The research found in this proposal will specifically target self-imposed barriers implemented by institutions and examine methods by which those barriers can be eased or removed altogether based on individual student feedback.

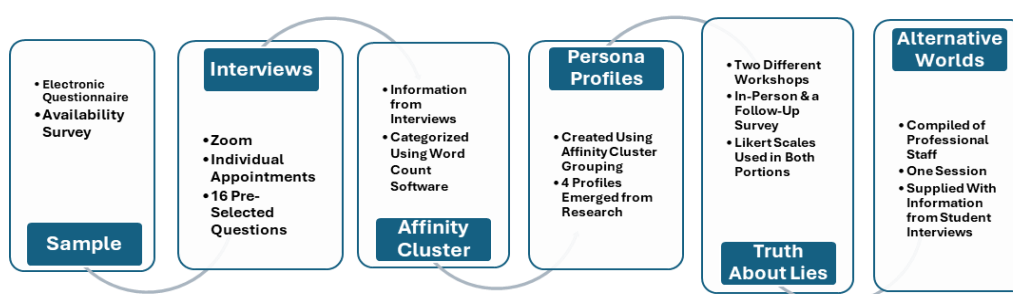
This study reframes the issue of obstacles in the college application and enrollment process as an opportunity for innovation and improvement. By employing design-thinking strategies, the research shifted focus from identifying barriers alone to understanding how these challenges can be transformed into solutions that enhance accessibility and inclusivity. The study's goal was not only to reveal the most common and detrimental barriers but also to inspire colleges to adopt practices that prioritize equitable access for all students. By engaging a diverse group of stakeholders, this research highlighted the collective responsibility of educational institutions and their communities to reimagine the application process as a pathway to opportunity, rather than a series of obstacles.

Methods

Sample

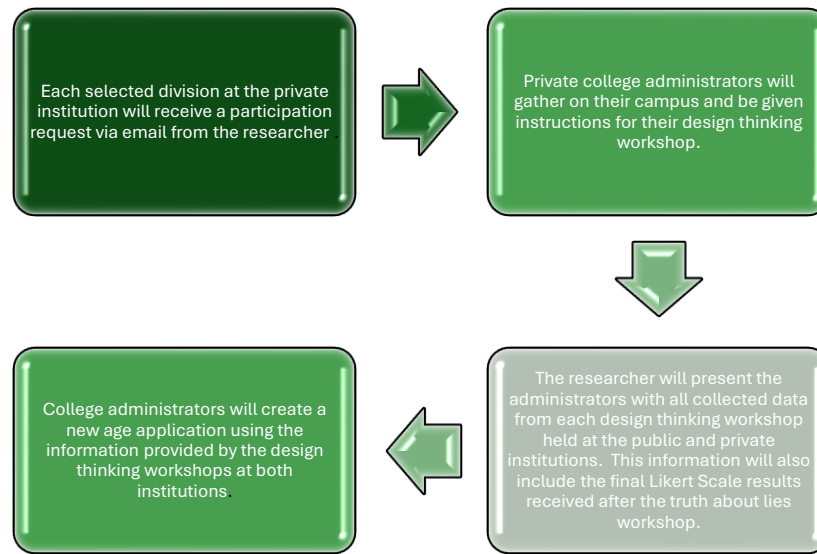
This purposive study compared and contrasted two different-sized institutions of higher learning using multiple design thinking strategies. The first is a private, not-for-profit liberal arts college in Virginia and had a total enrollment under 1,000 students. The second was a not-for-profit public university located in Virginia and boasted a total enrollment under 7,000 students. The student participants were selected via random sample from both institutions using an electronic questionnaire to solicit participation in the study. At each institution, the expectation was to have participation from up to 20-25 students, and preferably no less than 15. The target group was first year, non-transfer students. Age, sex, or race did not disqualify a person from participating in this study. Initially, the research was going to focus on first-generation populations of first-year students. However, the random sample results did not return only first-generation populations. The entire sequence of this study can be followed in the graphic below (Figure 2).

Figure 2-Research Proposal Sequence of Events



Using a convenience sample from two local colleges, college administrators and other personnel from the private college were also incorporated in the study (Figure 3).

Figure 3-Convenience Sample/Professional Staff



These participants were selected from different offices across campus which have an impact and/or interest in the recruitment of future students. The offices used to recruit these participants came from the following offices and/or divisions: Office of Admission, Dean of Students, Provost, Student Success, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Athletics, Institutional Research, and the Registrar. These offices were strategically selected because of the nature of their work with students, oftentimes they communicate with a student long before the student's arrival on campus. Because of these interactions, the employees in the requested divisions brought unique insight to the college's application but also the thought process of individual students as they make their journey from prospect to applicant, to college student. In addition, many of the employees of these divisions can share insight into historical trends and previous methods used by the college. Each office consists of at least two employees and up to 20. All told, the pool of potential employees that received a request was almost 60 people. To keep the design-thinking portions manageable from a participant standpoint, ideal circumstances allowed for the participation of at least one person from each office listed above, but no more than three from any individual office. The grand total of participants from the private college staff

should be at least 12, but not to exceed 17. Understanding the small nature of a private school and its workforce, the probability was high that some offices will choose not to or be unable to participate. For this reason, the number of people requested from each office was set up to encourage multiple participants from each division across campus to compensate for those absences. Each individual office was sent an email to all staff asking for participation in January 2024.

Student participants were recruited to participate via email using an electronic questionnaire. The questionnaire for the public university (Figure 4) and the private college (Figure 5) began with the explanation of the research and the process it entails. The results have been stored electronically for the researcher to reference and for immediate access when necessary.

Figure 4-Public University Questionnaire Sequence

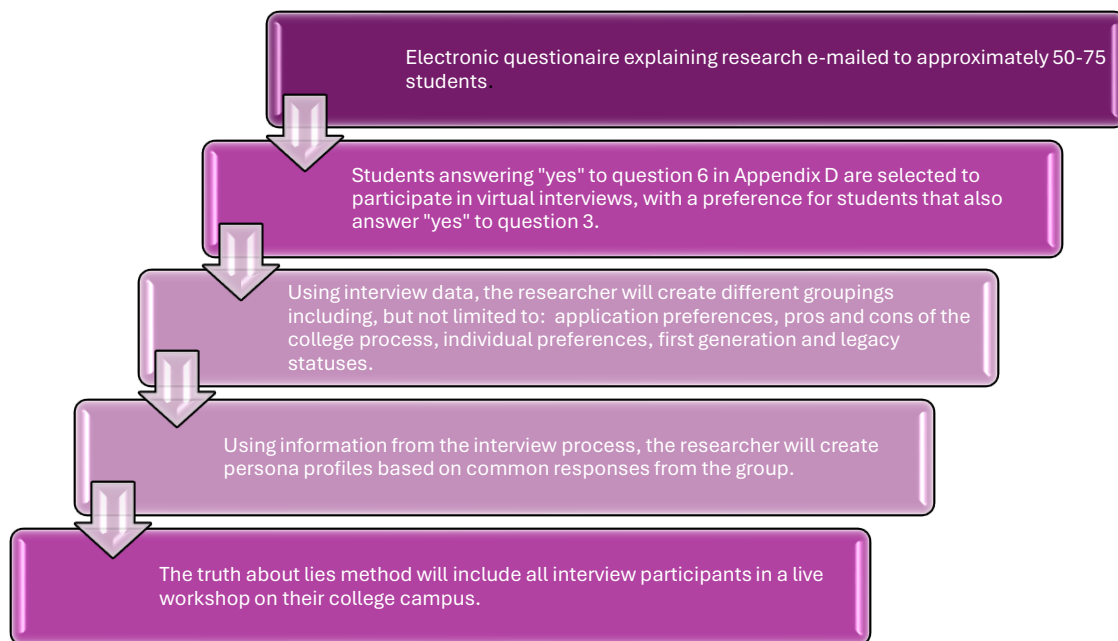
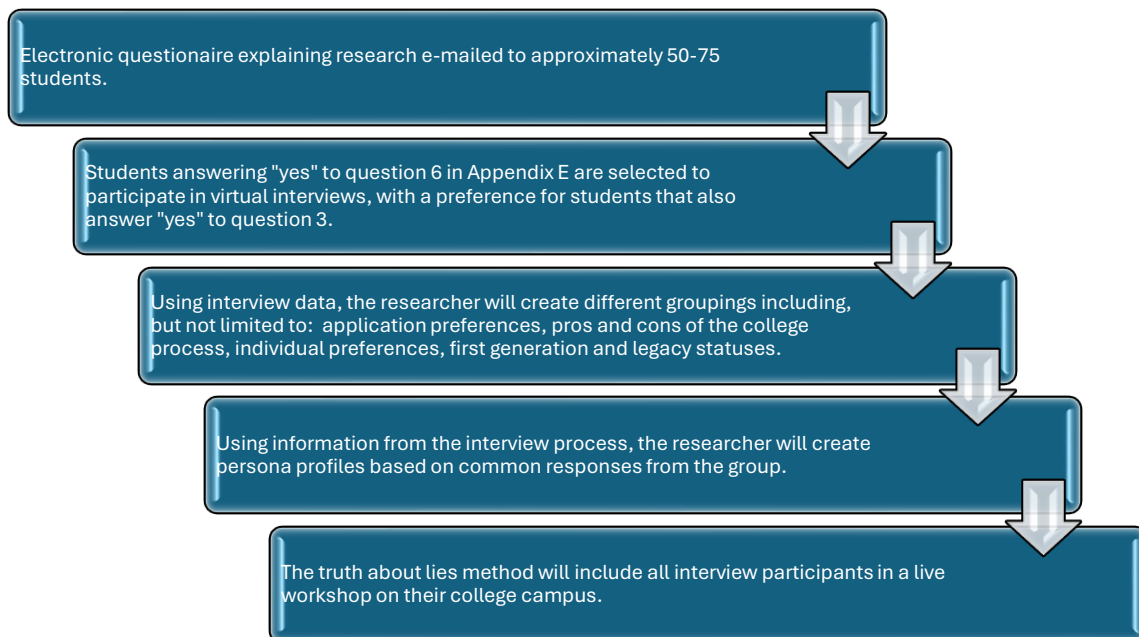


Figure 5-Private University Questionnaire Sequence



Part One

Interviews

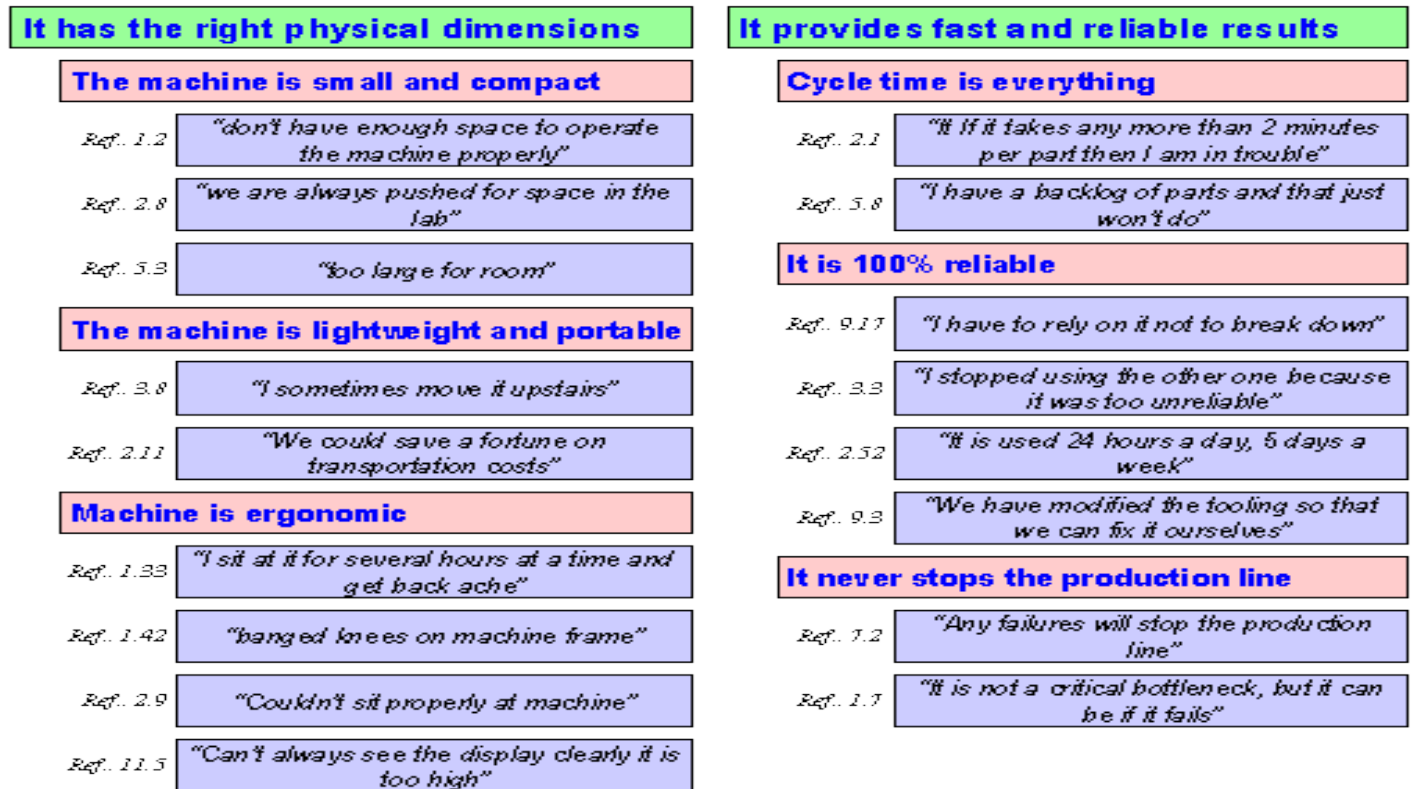
After collecting information from the electronic questionnaire, the researcher invited a group of students from each institution to participate in separate virtual interviews over a Zoom session. Those students were identified based on a “yes” answer to question six on the questionnaire in Appendix D & E. Students selected identified fall/spring 2022 in their answers, along with a “yes” to question three in Appendix D & E. Questions for the interviews were designed to solicit pertinent information useful to the research including initial college search thought processes and individual preferences. Further questioning alluded to any perceived barriers by the participants such as confusing terminology and suggested likes and dislikes about the process. As it related to the interview and enrollment process, two questions specifically asked participants, “What barriers did you encounter during the application/enrollment process?” Many students may not have been aware what an actual barrier to

application or enrollment was, by asking these direct questions students were able to give feedback based on their unique perceptions. Other interview questions solicited historical information relating to first generation status and time to complete applications. Additional elements included in the line of questioning were thought-provoking questions that encouraged the participants to reflect on their process and required more than a simple yes or no answer. Interview question 15 (Appendix N), simply asked students to explain their college search process. By design, this question was open-ended and offered no prompts to students, instead focusing on their own thoughts and reflections on their college search process. This question was also purposely inserted towards the end of the list of interview questions in the belief that students would reflect on what they had already been asked and inject that line of thinking into their answers. Interviews did not last longer than 20 minutes and were conducted over a two-week timeframe in February 2024. Each session was recorded using a professional subscription to Zoom’s virtual meeting platform. The research team provided access for the participants to access the link.

Affinity Clustering

Once interviews were completed, the researcher compiled data using an affinity cluster to create different sub-groupings. These sub-groupings presented a range based on application preferences and timelines, indicated application and enrollment preferences, attractions to colleges, turn-offs by other colleges, individual preferences, and first-generation statuses. As illustrated in the example below (Figure 6), sub-grouping preferences, timelines and other elements together allowed the researcher to visualize and prioritize commonalities in the research. Visual displays provided better organization and sorting of numerous individual thought patterns.

Figure 6-Sample Affinity Cluster from The University of Cambridge



Sample Affinity Cluster provided by the Institute for Manufacturing at the University of Cambridge

<https://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/research/dmg/tools-and-techniques/affinity-diagrams/>

Once completed, the researcher used the aggregate of all data collected to move forward with other design thinking workshops. This data compilation also took place during the February 2024 timeframe by the student researcher. It was estimated that this process would only need four to seven days to complete.

Persona Profiles

The researcher used compiled data to create persona profiles of the different students involved in the research. A persona profile was needed for many different types of students. Those potential students included, but were not limited to; first generation students, students who are driven by academic program of interest, students that made selections based on specific attributes of a particular college, students that arrived at a college out of personal convenience or preference, and other data points that were gleaned from the interview questions. Persona profiles are a powerful way to make data more meaningful. Each created profile was a fictional character that is represented by the individual(s) through research. The motivations, tendencies, and behavior of the subject were the result of a useful persona profile created by the researcher. By applying faces and other details to the findings, visual insights provided by the research created a more lasting impression on the reader (Luma Institute, 2012). In the latter portion of March 2024, persona profiles were completed to share with campus partners the next phase of the design thinking workshop. One to two weeks were necessary to complete all the necessary profiles.

Part Two

The Truth About Lies

Truth About Lies was a new design thinking method created to elicit honest and straightforward feedback that was necessary for this step in the research. This method included two different workshops, with each workshop being conducted with a separate audience of students, one from the private college and one from the public university. Students were given a form for each school they considered during the application and enrollment process (Appendix G). Students were given as many

forms as needed to properly accommodate for the number of schools they expressed interest in during their application and enrollment process, but no more than seven. On each form, the student was told to write the name of the college/university in the top blank. Each student indicated only one school in the enrolled column. The applied column contained as many schools as needed, but again, less than seven in total.

Students were then asked a series of questions related to their college search process. These questions were not printed on the individual sheets because the researcher believed seeing this information before the process unfolded may improperly cause influence, anxiety, or hesitation from the respondents. The questions asked were the following:

- 1) As it relates to the school indicated, what/why did you tell your high school guidance counselor/teachers why you're not applying/attending this school?
- 2) As it relates to the school indicated, what/why did you tell your closest friends why you're not applying/attending this school?
- 3) As it relates to the school indicated, what/why did you tell your parents why you're not applying/attending this school?
- 4) As it relates to the school indicated, what/why did you tell your college admissions counselor why you're not applying/attending this school?
- 5) As it relates to the school indicated, what/why did you tell yourself why you're not applying/attending this school?
- 6) As it relates to the school indicated, what/why did you post to social media why you're not applying/attending this school?

Upon completion at each school, the students were asked to go back through their answers and use a Likert Scale (Appendix H) to rank their answers. The Likert Scale was only given to each audience

after the initial information had been entered. Using the completed Likert Scale responses for each student population, the researcher compiled all answers and sent a follow-up email approximately one week after each session to both student populations asking them to use another Likert Scale (Appendix I) to rank all responses provided by the researcher based on importance in their own process of deciding whether to apply/attend a college or university.

Alternative Worlds

College administrators wonder how to obtain new information about student populations and how to best to use it to augment and improve their recruitment processes. The research approach was not only to identify potential barriers to application and enrollment process, but also how to remove them. Using the information provided by two different campus populations assisted administrators from the private school in creating an application that removed potential barriers, was more inclusive and efficient, and streamlined access for all students. While there was ample research on student application preferences, tendencies, and behaviors, there was little research on the topic of how an application was created for a specific college or university, and why? Using student preferences and feedback to inform a new application created by college administrators provided a unique opportunity to revamp, improve, and streamline the college application process.

Using the feedback provided by students at both the public and private institutions, the college administrators at the private institution were tasked with understanding the focus of the research approach and were asked to create a new application for admission for the intentional benefit of modern-day students. Popular themes presented via the research included many common elements of current college application processes. Outside of vital personal contact information, potential information to be included in a new application may or may not include: essays, references, resumes,

personal statements, self-reported grades and test scores, hobbies, legacy status, academic area of interest, and other volunteered information by the applicant.

This application creation happened approximately three weeks after the final on campus truth in lies session and approximately one week after the final emailed Likert Scale results are received by the researcher. An approximate timeline for this portion was during the early to mid-April 2024 timeframe. Due to professional conflicts, this session occurred on campus during the afternoon, weekday hours.

Internal Validity

Potential threats to internal validity were a concern at the onset of this research. With the private college campus group, diffusion of treatment could be present. At a small institution, after receiving a request from the researcher to participate there is a strong possibility of the participants communicating about what to expect in this research. Ultimately, the diffusion of treatment never occurred, and the validity of this group was preserved. The researcher implemented the use of a blind copy feature on all email requests to prevent or minimize the contamination of the group.

Maturation was another threat to this research; however, the researcher believes there was little that could be done to assuage this potential occurrence. The passing of time is valuable to the campus partners of the private institution, and it did affect how they see the college application/enrollment process now that they are removed from college themselves. More so, as college employees, they have a unique outlook on how the process may benefit from change. Students at each institution on the other hand only reflected on their college search process and were impacted by their process alone. As more time progresses away from their search process, their maturation is natural and to be expected. The timing of the research was critical to receiving fresh perspectives since their college search process occurred in the past 12 months.

Results

Participants

Using a list of enrolled, first-year students from each institution the electronic questionnaire (Appendix D & E) was sent to 1,216 students at the public university and 190 students at the private college. Upon receiving questionnaire feedback from students and identifying a group of students fitting the parameters of the research proposal, another email (Appendix F & G) was sent to each student providing additional details for preferred interview times and other application information. The questionnaire was sent to identify a student's enrollment status, enrollment date, how they completed their application and what method was used. The results of the electronic questionnaire allowed the researcher to identify student targets that met the ideal research criteria, first-time, first-students that had recently enrolled in the private college or university in the past year. From the emails sent, the group selected for virtual interviews was paired down to 28 students at the public university and 18 students at the private college indicating a willingness to participate in the research. Additional emails were sent to keep each participant knowledgeable about the timeline and research process (Appendix H). In total, 11 students from the public university and 10 students from the private college participated in the virtual interviews. From there, seven students from the public university and seven students from the private college participated in the Truth About Lies workshop.

In the Alternative Worlds workshop, 17 employees were requested to participate via email (Appendix T). Due to an unforeseen death in the researcher's family, the research was postponed a couple of days and once the session was convened, nine different employees participated in the session. The employees in this session represented the Office of Admission, Financial Aid, Dean of Students, Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Title IX, Athletics, Registrar and the Provost's office.

Interviews

The interview portion was conducted over a one-week period in early December 2023 via Zoom. All participants used the Zoom software, except for one student from the public university who was unable to get their camera to work. However, the questions were sent to the student via email and the student completed them and immediately returned their answers. No interview conducted was more than 15 minutes, as many students were very matter of fact in their responses. Numerous interviews lasted between 7-10 minutes as the participants were not very willing to be transparent about their college search process. This can be attributed to several factors including not being familiar with the interviewer, lack of confidence in their personal reasons influencing their search process and simply losing interest in the interviewer's research topic.

The interviews proved beneficial in identifying individual beliefs, potential barriers, and the decision-making impacts of the college application and enrollment process. The range of answers varied among the 21 students, but financial implications and academic programs were two of the most popular discussion points among participants. The word bubble and chart (Figure 13) represent the more popular responses from the combined interview process. The size of each bubble reflects the use of each term during the interview process and the chart indicates the number of times each word was counted during the 21 interviews.

Each student was asked about perceived barriers and the majority of those interviewed indicated they did experience a barrier to application or enrollment. In total, 13 out of 21 of the students interviewed indicated they experienced a barrier of some kind. The barriers described by students included financial burdens (including the FAFSA), enrollment deposit requirements, complicated jargon, essay requirements, providing required transcripts and parental information as part of the application. Of those that did indicate barriers, the perceived barriers were not always related to

the application or enrollment process. “Student H” indicated advising was the only improvement she would make to the enrollment process; however this perceived barrier did not prevent her from enrolling at the university. Many of the interviewees hinted at terminology, jargon, or complex instructions used in the application process as a potential barrier, even if many of them didn’t directly identify a particular term or phrase. “Student K” said, “the layout needs to be better” as one of the reasons she didn’t like the application process.

In addition, she also mentioned “needing better clarity on the actual instructions of the enrollment process” as a barrier. Beyond that barrier, she also indicated she didn’t want to write long essays as part of the application and that is why she decided not to apply to other colleges that interested her. “Student K” didn’t specifically say jargon or terminology, but one can deduce that ‘clarity’ implies there were things she didn’t understand on the application.

“Student T” also cited the explanation around financial aid and the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG) as how the institution could improve the application process. He indicated the explanations he received during the enrollment process were insufficient and didn’t meet his needs as a new, first-generation student. Furthermore, “Student T” also indicated the adjustment process presented another barrier to him, not just during enrollment but also as a potential retention risk.

“Student A” cited the FAFSA as a barrier to enrollment, suggesting the college she is currently attending may not have been her top choice. She also indicated admissions jargon such as early decision and early action, and their differences (binding and non-binding, respectively) were confusing to her, although she didn’t specifically list them as barriers to application or enrollment. However, she did list the FAFSA as a potential barrier in her search process, even if she was able to navigate it eventually through the help of her family and specifically her older sister who attended William & Mary.

Improving the application and/or enrollment process at each institution doesn't constitute a barrier in all situations, but it does continue to show the uncertainty and confusion that centers around the application and enrollment processes and in many cases can include jargon and/or terminology that end up being a barrier for students and their families even if they do not initially indicate it as a barrier. One outlier from the interviews was "Student E" who indicated the essay was a barrier she encountered during the application process. She was not a first-generation student and most of her answers were succinct and to the point. One bit of advice she would give to herself retroactively was to "not worry so much." A deeper probe into her initial answer regarding the essay could have revealed whether it was truly a barrier or an inconvenience.

Not to be overlooked in the confusion surrounding terminology and jargon is the essay for many students, which can be perceived as a barrier because they simply aren't willing to put in the time for that additional step as "Student E" partially indicated. In addition, they may not have confidence in their ability to submit a worthy essay for review by the institution. The perceived essay barrier and the length of college applications were cited by 5 students in their interviews. Also, two other students listed transcripts as a barrier which could indicate they didn't perceive their academic performance as worthy of admission into the institution. One additional point of consideration is nine students applied to more than five colleges as part of their process, this could be an indication of either lack of confidence in their top option(s) or casting a wide net. An obvious barrier for many students which may not be indicated in some replies is the financial aid/cost barriers, as indicated by "Student S" in his answer to the question "Why did you decide not to enroll at other colleges?" Of the 21 interviews conducted, 15 students referred to financial aid in some capacity and 10 students specifically referenced cost in their replies when discussing their application/enrollment process.

Affinity Cluster

In completing the Affinity Cluster, it became apparent very quickly the overarching themes provided by the students. The Affinity Cluster (Figure 7) is derived straight from the interviews conducted with the students from both institutions. With an abundance of information provided from interview transcripts, the researcher concluded a grouping of information would be the best way to organize direct thoughts and ultimately to organize like-minded responses. In total, nine different categories emerged from the interview portion.

Figure 7-Completed Affinity Cluster



Zoom allowed the researcher to collect transcripts of the interviews and enter those transcripts into software inside Microsoft Excel to generate word counts for each topic or phrase presented by the

interviewees. While many different thoughts were presented, it was easy to see that the cost of an education, academic programs, and location were the main themes presented by the group. To assist with the groupings, a word cluster count (Figure 8) was created using the interview transcripts and an excel spreadsheet.

Figure 8-Word Cluster Count

Word	Count
Program	31
Website	22
Major	18
Accepted	16
Family	12
Location	11
FAFSA	11
Financial	10
Aid	10
Submit/Submitting	10
Expensive/Inexpensive	9
Money	8
Sister/Brother	8
Fit	8
Cost	7
GPA	7
Distance	6
Early	6
Decision	6
Transcript	6
Requirements	6
First	5
Generation	5
Sport	4
College	3
Application	3
Week	3
Legacy	2
Deposit	2
Small	2
Campus	2

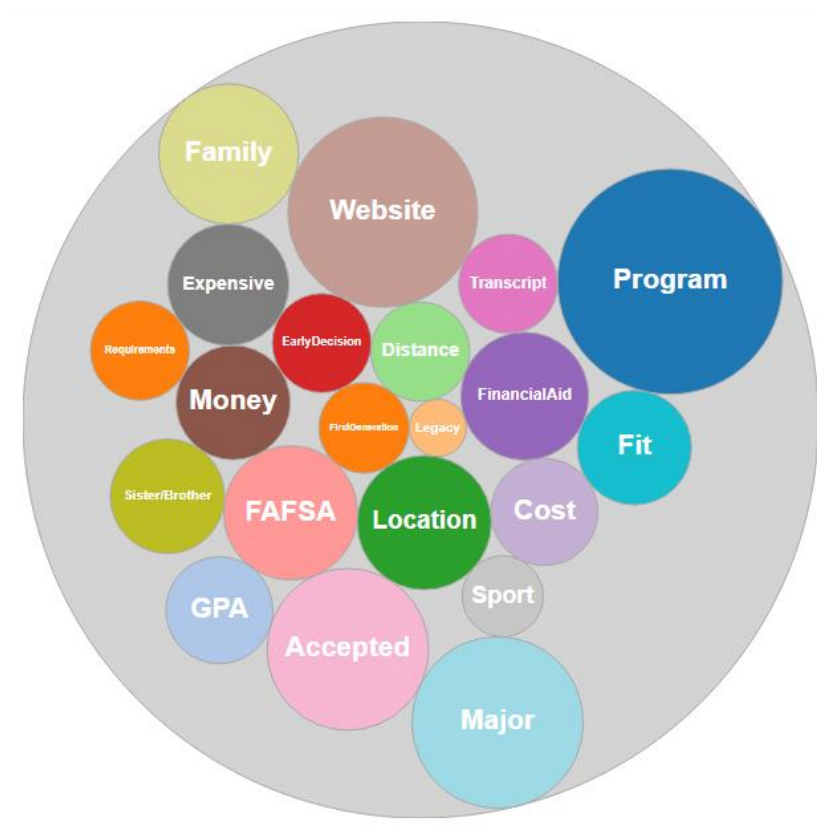
In this cluster, words used more commonly by the interviewees were counted and compiled with other like statements. The results were then placed in a word cluster template using Microsoft Word which enabled the research to group, count, and complete a word bubble for the ideas presented. The larger the circle, the more frequently that idea was used during the interview process. Using the groupings in the word cluster (Figure 9), the four main ideas derived from the student interviews were the following:

- Family/Sibling/First Generation Student/Legacy was used 27 times in the interviews.
- Location/Distance was referenced 17 times.
- Cost/Financial Aid/Money/FAFSA was mentioned 45 times throughout the interviews.
- Academic Programs were referred to 47 times by students in the interviews.

It's important not to lose focus on other aspects of the interview process that were mentioned in significant numbers by the students, such as: institutional websites, accept/admit status, application submission/process and college fit among others. Student rationale indicated many different reasons to eliminate a college from consideration. Location or family/friend influence has a significant impact in a student's college choice as indicated by the word cluster above. For college admission officers and administrators, what is sometimes lost in the discussion of location is the financial implications of traveling to and from a campus, which can be cost-prohibitive for many students and families as indicated by Mishra and Gupta (2021). Using the results from the word cluster, cost and academic programs towered above other results, and in many cases the attraction of a new and exciting program can be hard for a student to pass up. Students are being recruited by institutions of higher learning with new and exciting academic programs like the one Field mentioned at Northern Michigan University centered around marijuana (2018). Beyond that, DeGeurin pointed to colleges using academic and co-curricular programs using other enticements like internships, free admission to unique academic

experiences, and even bridge maters's programs upon graduation (2019). With all the information provided, the researcher determined the interview feedback and the results of the word cluster indicated the overarching themes arising through the interview process with the students related to the four basic areas mentioned above. These four themes were at the forefront of most students' minds when going through this interview process and ultimately when they were making decisions about their college enrollment.

Figure 9-Word Cluster and Groupings



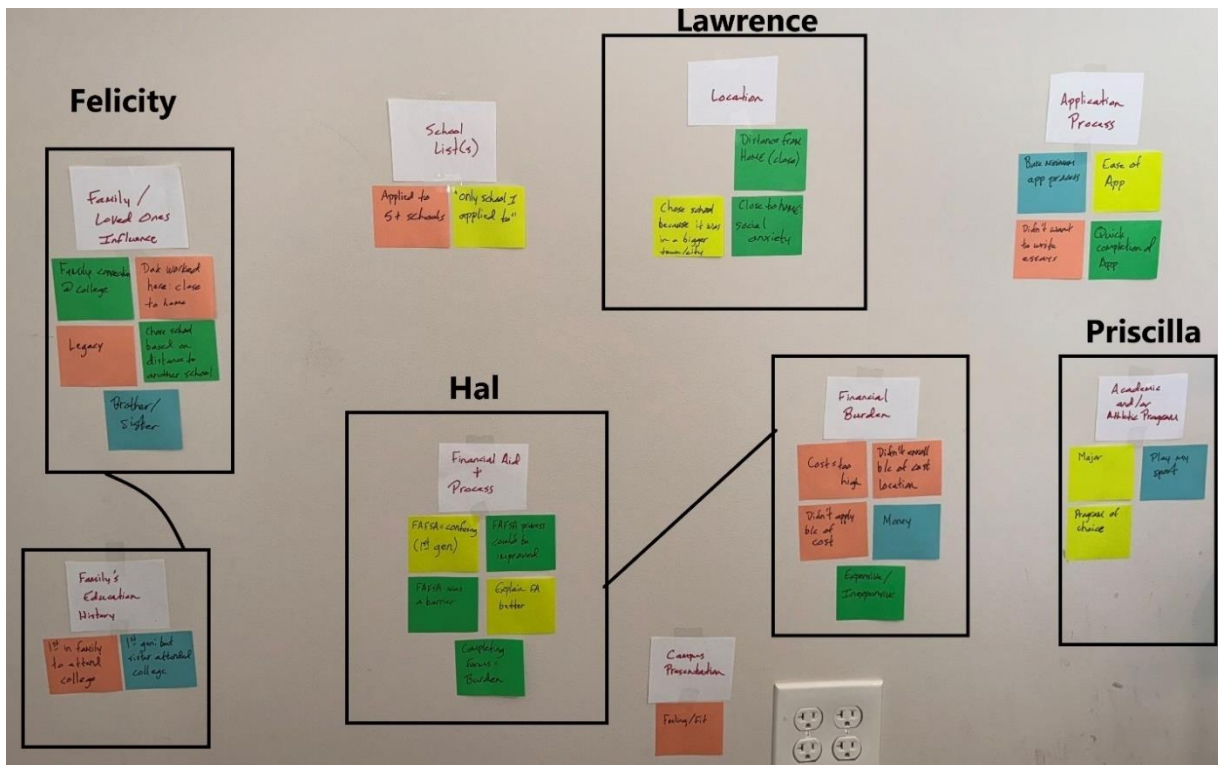
Word	Count	Word	Count
FirstGeneration	5	GPA	7
Legacy	2	Requirements	6
Sister/Brother	8	Submit/Submitting	10
Family	12	EarlyDecision	6
Location	11	Website	22
Distance	6	Transcript	6

FAFSA	11	Accepted	16
FinancialAid	10	Deposit	2
Cost	7	Sport	4
Money	8	SmallCampus	2
Expensive	9	CollegeApplicationWeek	3
Major	18	Fit	8
Program	31		

Persona Profiles

Using the results of the affinity cluster and the word counts from the interviews, four different persona profiles were created. With the information contained in the Affinity Cluster, the researcher grouped similar statements and responses into the four profiles. The four profiles were settled upon by using the information from the word count and word bubble inputs. When grouping the different responses, the totals for the academics, financials, location, and family were the ultimate majority when all phrasing was consolidated into the selected categories. Only after the information was compiled and grouped were each one named for the next step in the research (Figure 10).

Figure 10-Affinity Cluster Divided into Persona Profiles

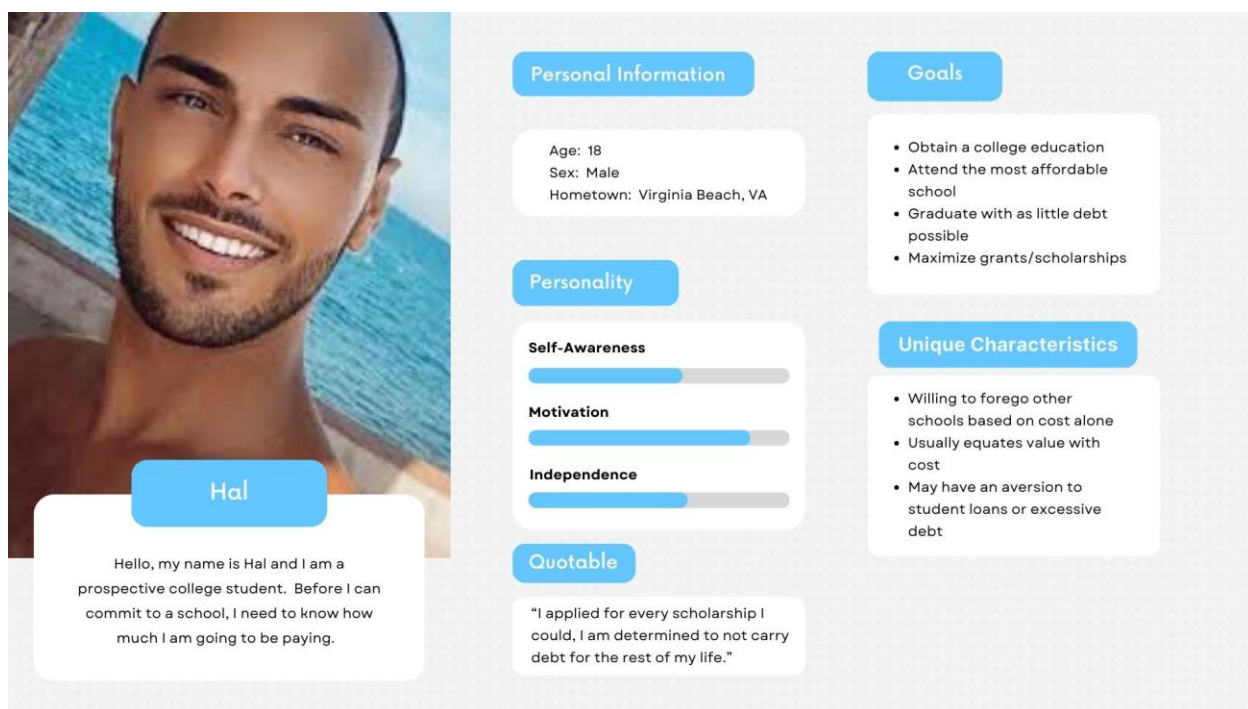


Each profile represents one of the main themes derived from the interviews and the affinity cluster. Using images from artificial intelligence, the profiles created were “How Much Hal” (Figure 11), “Programs for Priscilla” (Figure 12), “Location Larry” (Figure 13), and “Family for Felicity” (Figure 14). All images used for the Persona Profiles are AI originated and are not a likeness of any individual.

How Much Hal’s profile (Figure 11) centers on the cost of an education. He is looking to obtain a college degree at the lowest cost possible. Hal is looking to maximize all the free-money opportunities which include grants and scholarships. He has applied for many different scholarships in hopes of offsetting the cost of his education. He is also willing to forego the prestige or perceived value of another school to keep his bottom line manageable. One of Hal’s main objectives is to graduate with as little debt as possible. It’s believed that Hal’s strongest personality traits are his motivation, in this case

his motivation to take on as little debt as possible. His decision-making centers around the outlay of finances to achieve his academic goals. Conversely, his self-awareness is his weakest characteristic. By not realizing the opportunities available to him and basing everything on cost, he remains unaware of what he is passing up at other institutions. Hal's profile is symbolic of the many students that look to maximize their financial opportunities before committing to a school. Throughout the interview process students consistently said they did or did not apply to attend a school based on the high cost or the financial aid award offered at other schools.

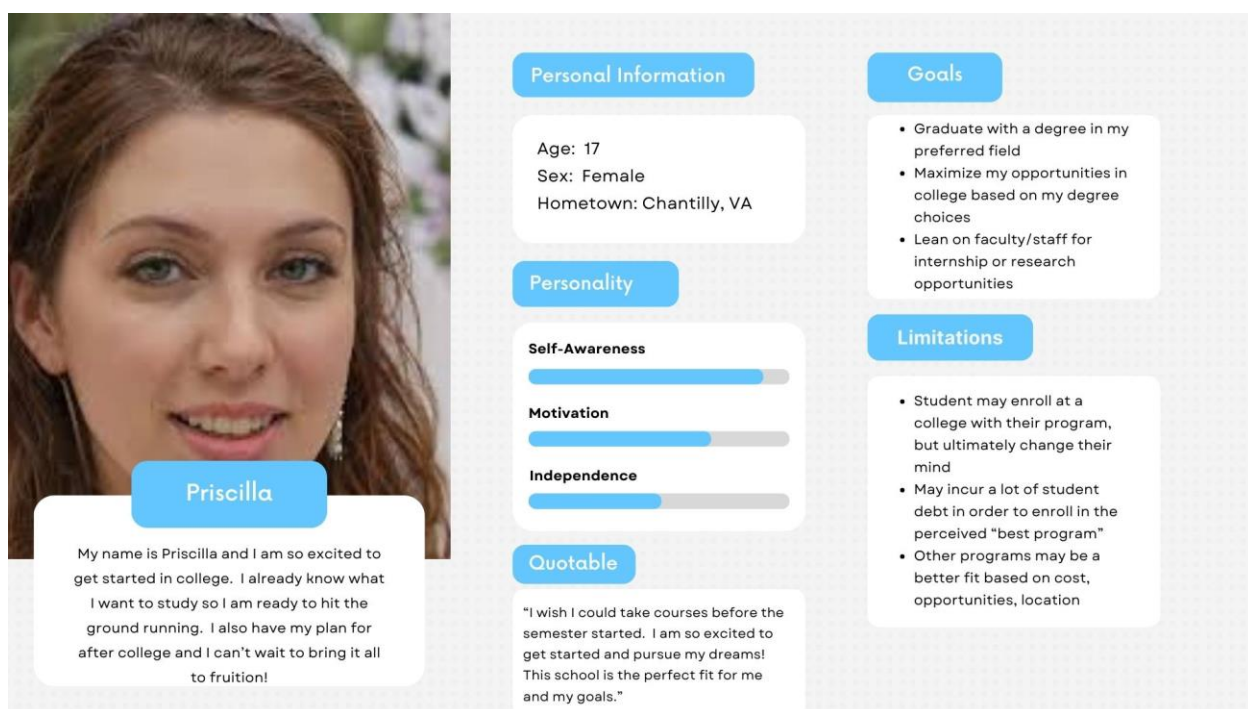
Figure 11-“How Much Hal” Persona Profile



“Programs for Priscilla” (Figure 12) is focused solely on her academic program of choice. Priscilla arrives at her chosen institution with incredible self-awareness, knowing from the day she enrolls what she wants to study and her perceived academic and life goals. She isn’t blindsided by costs or opportunities but has a singular focus on academic and life pursuits. Priscilla, like many other students,

understands her goals, but is oblivious to how quickly desires and pursuits can change. She doesn't have any problems leaning on other people for advice or direction, sometimes at the risk of her own independence. Priscilla arrives at an institution highly motivated in her pursuit and firmly believes the academic opportunities she pursues will provide life opportunities upon graduation. What Priscilla lacks in foresight, she makes up for it in preparedness and excitement about life's new path.

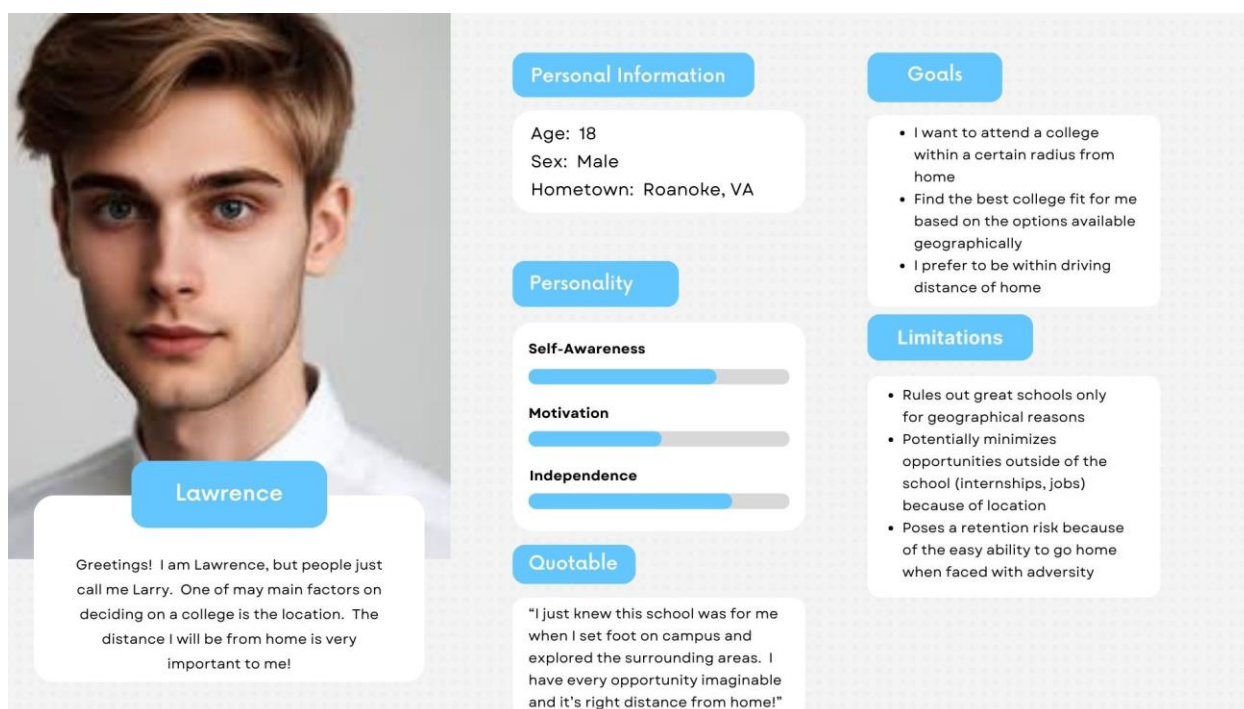
Figure 12-“Programs for Priscilla” Persona Profile



“Location Lawrence”, or Larry (Figure 13), as he is known to his friends ended up at his college based on its location. In many instances that is because it's close to his hometown. However, Larry may also venture from home to get away from what he has known for the past 18 years, as long as it's within a predetermined driving distance. An independent streak runs through Larry, and he doesn't mind venturing out on his own when needed and making the decision that's in his best interest. Larry also has an incredible amount of self-awareness which may lead him to think he needs a support structure

nearby when deciding on his college choice. While his motivation to get outside of his comfort zone isn't as high as his peers, he makes up for that in his desire to attend and graduate from college. Larry could enroll at a college that doesn't offer his program or fit inside of his cost parameters, that's how important location is in his decision-making process. For school administrators, Larry can be seen as a retention risk because of his ability to drop everything and go home on a moment's notice.

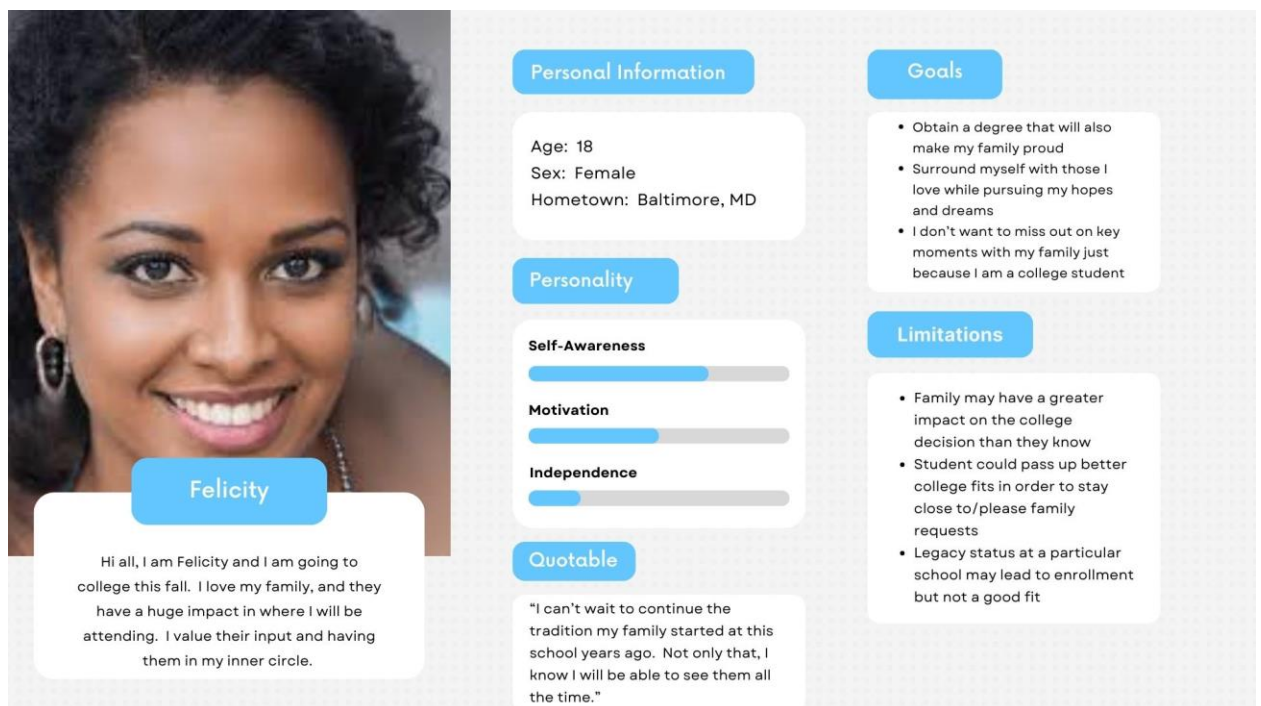
Figure 13-“Location Lawrence” Persona Profile



“Family for Felicity” (Figure 14) is a unique personality, her motivation is derived from her relationship with her family. Self-awareness is her strongest attribute because she knows what's important to her and where her support structure lies. Felicity aspires to receive a college education but relies on the support and connection from her family. That doesn't mean she is averse to going away to college, but her decisions are heavily influenced by her family as well. Like Larry, she could also be seen as a retention risk because of her devotion to loved ones and their potential priority over her academic

pursuits. Exhibiting strong self-awareness and motivation in her academic pursuits, she doesn't have a lot of independence due to the reliance upon her family structure. Felicity may also have legacy status at an institution which could have an impact on her college selection. Passing up academic programs and more affordable options are no issues for Felicity as her family input and status have a significant influence on all her academic solutions.

Figure 14-“Family for Felicity” Persona Profile



Truth About Lies

This research method was a new technique developed by the researcher. There's no historical precedent for how to conduct or interpret this method. The research method was designed to collect candid and honest feedback from students at the public university and the private college surrounding their own college search, application, and enrollment process. In February 2024, over the course of two days spanning one week seven students from the public university and seven students from the private college participated in the new method on their own campus. The duration of each session was slightly over an hour. At the onset, participants seemed to understand the session once instructions were provided. There were some questions on the clarity of the instructions, but that was to be expected considering the secretive nature of research method. Once the participants received the additional clarity they were seeking, the session continued seamlessly throughout its duration. Student participants at each institution completed a form for at least two colleges from their own search which was a great assistance to the research. As expected, some students were more detailed in their replies than others. Specifically, some students used the same generic answer for each question across different schools in their search process. However, most participants were thoughtful in their responses and were not simply eager just to complete the exercise. By having a smaller group and having them interact with each other organically while we awaited the rest of the participants, it put everyone at ease and encouraged fuller participation from the group.

Approximately one week after the in-person session, each student was contacted via email to complete a follow-up form using the feedback from the Truth About Lies session. Students were asked to use a Likert Scale to rank the level of importance of 42 different feedback options from the in-person session. With 1 being "important" and 3 being "not important", 16 responses were received from the students who indicated they were willing to participate in the in-person sessions. One student from

each institution did not show up for the on-campus portion but were still asked to participate in the follow-up request. The responses for each statement were counted and averaged to give a fuller picture of how students responded to each statement (Figure 15). Responses to the Likert Scale were grouped according to common themes. For example, “campus feel” and “how I felt while on campus” would be grouped into the same category. Upon completion of the groupings, Figure 19 includes all answers received from students and in parenthesis the Likert Scale replies from the on-campus sessions (Appendix R) were counted and then an average of the count was presented after the parenthesis. For example, when speaking about “Academic Fit” 13 students responded with a ‘1’ which means it was important to them in their process. A ‘2’ indicated they were indifferent about the topic, and a ‘3’ meant it wasn’t important to them at all. For “Academic fit” there was an average of 1.19 in the student response, indicating this theme was very important to the students. Based on the feedback received, the most important themes to students were “Campus feel (1.06)”, “Campus visit (1.13)”, “Academic fit (1.19)”, “The people encountered on campus (1.19)”.

Figure 15-Likert Scale Feedback-Email Follow-Up (averages and total counts)

Academic fit. (13, 3, 0) 1.19	School is too big. (11, 2, 3) 1.50	Timeliness of school replies. (10, 4, 2) 1.50
Ability to commute to campus. (7, 4, 5) 1.88	School is too small. (7, 6, 3) 1.75	Interactions with the admission counselor at the school. (10, 3, 3) 1.56
Received my decision after I had decided on another school. (1, 11, 4) 2.19	School is "too artistic". (2, 6, 8) 2.38	Belief system on campus. (5, 6, 5) 2.00
Proximity to home. (9, 4, 3) 1.63	School doesn't respond quickly enough. (10, 3, 3) 1.56	My own family's health issues. (7, 7, 2) 1.69
Ability to live on campus. (13, 2, 1) 1.25	School is in a high crime area. (7, 7, 2) 1.69	School is located on/near an interstate. (1, 8, 7) 2.38
Cost was too expensive. (11, 4, 1) 1.38	Number of people I know enrolled at the school. (1, 5, 10) 2.56	My ex attends the school. (1, 3, 12) 2.69
Diversity on campus. (11, 3, 2) 1.44	Already have friends on campus. (1, 5, 10) 2.56	The party scene. (1, 6, 9) 2.50
Location in a city. (2, 9, 5) 2.19	The food at the school. (10, 6, 0) 1.38	Political atmosphere on campus. (3, 7, 6) 2.19
Location in a rural setting. (6, 8, 2) 1.75	The amount of chaos on campus. (4, 9, 3) 1.94	My parents like/dislike the school. (4, 7, 5) 2.06
Location is out of state. (3, 3, 10) 2.44	Ability to play a sport. (3, 3, 10) 2.44	Perception as a preppy/rich kid school. (2, 6, 8) 2.38
Need for a safety school. (7, 6, 3) 1.75	A religious school. (1, 3, 12) 2.69	Apply just to see if I can be admitted. (6, 2, 8) 2.13
Campus feel. (15, 1, 0) 1.06	Campus life/activities. (13, 3, 0) 1.19	
The people encountered on campus. (13, 3, 0) 1.19	Campus visit. (14, 2, 0) 1.13	
Campus upkeep/maintenance. (10, 5, 1) 1.44	Campus tour. (12, 4, 0) 1.25	
Prior knowledge/reputation of the school. (6, 6, 4) 1.88	Weather at campus location. (6, 10, 0) 1.63	

Alternative Worlds

In an afternoon session on the campus of the private college, administrators and staff members (Figure 16) from several different divisions including Dean of Students and Residence Life, Title IX, Diversity, Athletics, Admission and Financial Aid, Registrar, and Innovation.

Figure 16-Alternative Worlds in Action



The research goal was for the campus constituents to work together to create a new college application. Specific instructions were given to work together in this process, but also to use the information provided by current students to aid their creation. The researcher shared information from the interviews that informed the word cluster and information from the “Truth About Lies” session. This information was presented in full to the campus partners since no names were present on the research documents. The team spent approximately the first 30 minutes of the session reviewing the “Truth About Lies” results (Figure 17).

Figure 17-Alternative Worlds Brainstorming Results

DO TWO THINGS AT ONCE:

1. Gather core information: (1) remove barriers, but (2) ask enough for an app to be a commitment and to be able to do data analysis, manage operations, do communications, etc.
Some compromise between the Common App and the current Request More Information
2. Spice it up, visually and whatnot. Affinity: personalizing, the app as sales tool, etc. Depart from the linear, let the app evolve as the student proceeds.

Early thoughts:

The core app would consist of name, student type (FTFY, tran), current school, and self-reported GPA (the very simplicity of this could be a nice novelty)
BUT we need enough basic info to make the app an app (not equivalent to an inquiry form)
Gather information toward tailor-make as much as possible without making the app itself too long & onerous

“Do you want to use this information to begin your application?”

See Gary’s drawing.

THEN offer optional additional app options

Something VR and/or AI

Questions that double as selling points and veer off into

Touch upon scholarships, etc. at the app stage (don’t wait until the admit stage) Question: Why are the app and admit stages still so (artificially) separated?

App changes depending on the student’s responses

Have you visited or plan to visit?

VR application process ...

Some details: Requiring a SSN

Academic response (not necessarily an essay) to anticipate academic needs

Maybe ask: “Which of the following support resources to you think you will need?”

Which of the following careers might you be interested in? (Make the choices VERY broad)

Short question: Describe career goals

Some kind of essay to gauge resiliency in order to get a head start on adapting our support system to them

After submitting app, receive immediate feedback

Minimalism, with additional optional components

Quick choice questions covering stuff we might normally ask them

Are interested in learning more about ...

Once the group reached a comfort level in their assignment, they spent the next 45 minutes of their session brainstorming how to approach their assignment and decided on the key identifying characteristics of the student as items that would always be required on a college application. However, they also had extensive discussion on how that information could be ascertained. For example, embracing the normalcy of GAI in society, the group was convinced that a new-age application will eventually be able to segment itself based on the inputs received from the student as they work their way through to completion. In doing so, the application could capture a student's information from a transcript or another form of identification. Several participants indicated the need for this new application to also be able to double as a recruitment tool. One example included a student completing a certain section of the application and then receiving a prompt touting an offering by the institution. For example, a student could enter four years of varsity soccer on their application and then receive a video greeting by the head coach touting the soccer team's most recent accolades. Another example was a student indicating their intended area of study and then receiving a listing of the most recent distinguished graduates in that field and what their current professional title and achievements include.

They also touched on sequence, the importance of details, and many other variables they felt were important in the process. Afterwards, the team began their design discussions on the actual makeup of a new application. A reminder was once again delivered that their application should incorporate the research provided and there is no wrong answer to how a new age application should look. The design team had very fruitful and passionate discussions about the makeup of a new age college application. Their result minimized what many college applications already look like and instead allowed the applicant an opportunity to provide more personal information as part of their application, while also receiving personalized information from the college. However, the team also wisely realized there is certain information college's need from applicants to move their application forward for a

decision. The team's application consisted of approximately six pages with different prompts in each section. They also included a parent page but didn't circle back to that discussion due to time constraints. Their concept is very rough with one person agreeing to "jot" down the ideas on paper (Figure 18) to capture the creativity of the group in the setting. Figure 22 contains a mock-up of how an intelligent, segmented application would function and how each section would build on the next section. The opening of the application would capture a student's primary interests which are not limited to academics. Through a series of rotating pictures, the institution would also be simultaneously marketing what it offers in these areas to students. Page two focused on biographical information for the applicant while continuing with the rotating pictures. Page three asked about past academic performance while page four moved on to the proudest personal achievements for the student during their high school experience. Students would have the option to upload a transcript on page five or if they didn't have that document they would be rerouted to step six where they would be asked in some capacity about their grades and/or high school academic performance. In the following pages the group continued deliberations on whether to include a parent page as part of the application, but they didn't reach a conclusion on what that page would include and how it would interact with the rest of the application. The final pages of the application would be tailored to each student based on how they completed the application up to that point and the information they provided would then funnel different prompts/pictures/requirements to the final page(s) of the application.

Figure 18-Alternative Worlds Application Draft

What ~~are~~ ^{is one thing} you ^{are} interested in ~~for~~ ^{for your college} experience?

(fill this out in VR) ~~(click here)~~

this Athlete answered this way
Photo

Photo

Classroom Student
this person answered this way

student hanging out in clubs
Photo

①

Name

Email

address

Phone

3 photos with where they are from
tailored to IP address location

& interests

②

What is your high school GPA

What ~~was~~ are ^{are} your favorite courses in high school?

Photo
show in
Graduate
who had
2.7 GPA

Photo
current
~~student~~
~~with~~
~~high~~
high school 2.5

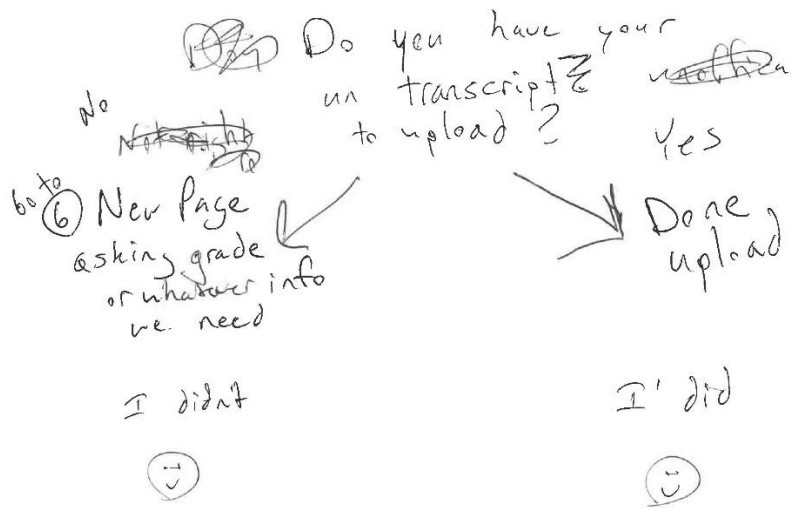
Photo

③

What's something you are proud
of about your high school
experience?

3 answers

④



5

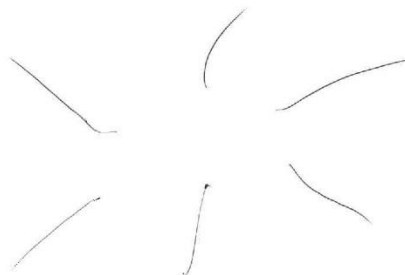
Parents

GA

~~Go from~~
Fanned from last
slide
interactive question
asks for more

7

What is
~~the~~ ~~which~~ one of these that
connects the most
with you?



8

Final page
acknowledging ~~the~~ payment &
submission
images tailored
to
individual answers
earlier

9

Discussion

The results of this study offered insights into how students applying and enrolling at an institution perceived the college application and enrollment process. Using multiple design thinking methods, the findings highlight both the complexities and commonalities of the participants' experiences. This section will explore the broader implications of the results, how they align with existing research, and potential areas for future research.

Sample Size and Student Contact Lists

The student contact list was robust for both institutions and students indicated a high level of interest in assisting in the research from the onset. However, as more information became necessary and the requests became more involved for the students, participation waned over the life of the research and resulted in a significant limitation to the research. The desire was to have at least 15 students participate in all facets of the research from each institution. The sample size for each institution shrunk to 10 and 11 students for each institution through the interviews and then shrunk even more through the Truth About Lies session to 7 for each institution. Another limitation in the research is the amount of time proposed for each Zoom interview. In the interest of time and encouraging participation, the researcher wanted to limit the amount of time each student spent in the interview and because of the total amount of questions presented, this negated any potential follow-up questions which could have presented greater detail into each student's processes and specifically, perceived barriers to application.

Student Perceptions and Perceived Barriers

Most students who participated in the research indicated they did not experience substantial barriers in their processes, but there are some key areas that could benefit from improvements. Many

substantial barriers for students exist in the application and enrollment stages but the research indicates students define barriers differently and they are also impacted differently by their own perceptions. One student may perceive a long drawn-out essay as a barrier while another student may consider it to be an inconvenience. Another important takeaway is for institutions to continue to find ways to adapt to all barriers, perceived or not and meet a student and their family at their comfort level, not where assumptions and society at large indicate. Financial Aid, FAFSA, and application instructions were a few recurring themes highlighted by students throughout the research. For many colleges, there is no easy way around the financial aid portion of enrollment. Schools that rely heavily on federal and state funding have their hands tied and simply have no way around simplifying the process. However, colleges would be well-served based on research to provide better training and resources for students including detailed expectations and outcomes and more assistance from those departments on campus for students and families. Beyond financial implications, research suggested there are more steps colleges can take to simplify the application and enrollment process for its students. Higher education institutions must continue to find ways to deliver innovative academic programs and blend those offerings with advanced technology offerings and support for its students and families.

Using information from the interviews, students also indirectly indicated that exercises taking up significant amounts of time or involved processes were perceived as barriers to application. For many colleges, there are aspects of the application and enrollment process that are non-negotiable, such as biographical or academic information. For colleges that have flexibility, removing more involved components like the essay, family, and organizational involvement presents an opportunity to streamline the application process which may curry favor with students who are looking for a quick and easy way to complete an application. Several students also indicated in their interviews “the most memorable part of the application process” was to submit their application signifying an end to the

process. They weren't asked to expand on these statements, but there appears to be a correlation between the simplicity of an application and finishing the process. The main conclusion the research draws from the interview process is that the format and questions used were not especially successful in drawing conclusions about the specific barriers to application. The interviews were more useful in determining specific barriers to enrollment, but that information could also be viewed as personal preference more than actual barriers.

Word Counts and Phrasing

The Affinity Cluster was completed with the help of the word count tool. This software inside of Microsoft made quick work of analyzing and digesting the transcripts of each interview completed. The interview questions broadly touched on the barriers to application and enrollment, but they didn't allow for expansion of thought. Many of the students responded to questions with one-word answers and the design of the interviews didn't allow for a lot of follow-up discussion. However, the succinct nature of the interviews did allow for easy tracking in the Affinity Cluster and revealed what has historically been important for students and families, cost, academic programs, and location. The phrase "website" had a high number of mentions by students as well. In looking more closely at the word "website," it was determined that its usage was frequently mentioned in conjunction with "why you decided to apply to a college/university" and "what can the college/university do better". It was never mentioned as a barrier to application or enrollment by anyone during their interview.

Information gleaned from the Affinity Cluster proved very useful in completing the Persona Profiles for the four different types of personas identified through the research. With four different themes emerging as the most common topics mentioned by the interviewees, four Persona Profiles were created to reflect the common topics and their unique characteristics. "How Much Hal," "Programs for Priscilla", "Family for Felicity", and "Location Larry" represent the themes derived from

the Affinity Cluster. Each profile image was created using artificial technology and the greater details of each persona were derived from the interview questions and answers from each student. Each profile accurately presents a personality, and the unique characteristics of that archetype are created by molding the quotes, ambitions, concerns, and traits of the individuals who identify with each archetype. Unfortunately, the results of the persona profile did not bring the research any closer to determining what barriers to application exists for the groups used in the research. The profiles provide useful information on what barriers may exist for enrollment, but the data presented indicates more personal preferences on enrollment decisions than outright barriers. With more precise information in the interview process, the Persona Profiles could have provided exact information relating to goals and limitations.

New Research Method and Initial Impressions

The new Truth About Lies technique was revealing, but also incomplete. The technique itself proved to be useful and would likely generate additional information with small tweaks to the approach. Completing this research technique in person encouraged honest feedback without allowing shortcuts. Setting aside an expected amount of time also proved beneficial since each participant had the time commitment in mind before the exercise began. Conducting this research technique in a digital format would have allowed students to rush through the questions and given generic answers for each question. By doing this in person, the students weren't predisposed to the nature of the questions or the format of the exercise.

The follow-up email to students after the Truth About Lies in person session validated some of the assertions made in the Persona Profiles and the Affinity Cluster. Based on average rankings, the statements "Academic Fit", "Campus Feel", "Campus Visit", "Campus Life/Activities" and "People Encountered on Campus" were answers which averaged 1.19 or less. These answers indicate they are

the most important factors of the college search, application, and enrollment process after all other research was completed. Interestingly, the only mention of cost in the follow-up survey received an average ranking of 1.38, which was identical to the average ranking of “The Food at the School”. Cost was an important part of the process for 11 students, but 5 of them also indicated they were indifferent to cost, or it wasn’t important to them at all. Through their other responses, students also indicated location wasn’t as important to them as previously thought during the earlier sessions nor was the family aspect. When considering the family aspect, the two questions asked were “My Own Family’s Health Issues” and “My Parents Like/Dislike the School” and each answer received an average response of 1.69 and 2.06 respectively. In fact, it appeared that students are indifferent to how their parents view their school of choice. Research still indicates that cost, academic programs, and location are significant factors in the college search, application, and enrollment process. The follow-up questions in this research would indicate students find other factors of the search process as more important, but the findings contrast with what they indicated in earlier portions of the research.

New-Age Application Creation

The Alternative Worlds session yielded results that were informative to the research but also veered away from the stated goals given to the participants. In this session, more attention was paid by the team in how to recruit students based on their feedback, rather than solely on how to improve or alter the application process based on the feedback of the students. The application would start as most applications would asking for the student’s interests along with biographical information. The group didn’t have a ton of information to work from since the students didn’t indicate the application was a barrier in any fashion. However, rather than work from what the group may have identified as perceived deficiencies, they instead chose to enhance to application from a recruitment angle. They spent time discussing how to include virtual reality and AI elements into the form which would create a

greater affinity to the college or university for the student. Their efforts may yield the intended results, but they weren't part of their directive from the researcher. Their rough concept of an application is very creative and incorporates a lot of useful ideas for institutions to consider, such as interactive answers that would rely on a knowledge library to generate the next question for the student based on their previous response.

The group also discussed a parent's section of the application, which could be considered off-track or very insightful. Many students receive assistance from parents when completing a college application. By incorporating parents into the application, the group is addressing a topic that has previously been considered taboo but is also embracing the reality of how students and families operate in the 21st century. Many colleges also evaluate students based on an unofficial transcript and the application they created removes a barrier that many schools create on their own, the requirement for an application to be received with an official transcript. Before submitting their application, the last couple of pages consist of ways for the institution to get to know the student on a more personal level. Their design is highly interactive and additional questions or tasks are subject to the inputs received by the student on previous pages. Also realizing their own interactions with a college application, the group stated their desire was to create a shorter application for the student but also one that contributes more information to an admission office on each campus. In completing their work, they veered away from the instructions given to them, but successfully mocked up an application that could have legitimate impacts on how admission office administer applications and receive information in the future.

Summary and Previous Literature Correlation

Previous literature and research highlight the evolving recruitment techniques for institution of higher learning. Beyond new techniques being employed by colleges and universities, the evolving

recruitment process has not strayed away from what has been perceived as successful for numerous decades. In the 21st century, students have a greater stake in their enrollment options than ever before. Institutions are providing creative options in their academic programs while slowly reducing academic requirements to attract new students and meet their own budget demands. The PELL Grant program continues to grow and is leveling the playing field for students in their pursuit of a college education. Of the students who participated in this research, over half applied to more than five colleges, indicating students have more options than ever. The overall impact of the research was useful and provided helpful insight into how students apply and evaluate their college search process and final selections. The overall direction of the research did not follow the anticipated route but did present a compelling case into what students find important, unimportant, and what has no overall bearing on their processes. The goal of the research was to identify barriers to application and enrollment for students during the college search process. Some barriers were identified, but the scope of the research ended up providing more information regarding the choices and mannerisms of college students and how they evaluate their options, rather than what they perceive to be an obstacle in seeking out what they desire in a certain college or university. This study was successful in exposing the short attention span of today's students and their desire to travel the path of least resistance in their college search process. As students indicated their preferences not to complete essays, submit transcripts, or complete long college applications they inadvertently exposed their own self-inflicted barriers to application or enrollment. In short, colleges aren't creating barriers to application or enrollment beyond their own control. In fact, they are going to great lengths to make the application and enrollment process easier than it's ever been. But the growing demands of the student population and the emergence of new options has forced colleges to adapt to student preferences and demands.

The research indicates the biggest obstacle for most students continues to be the cost of a college degree. Colleges are making great strides to make their offerings more attractive to students and families while also providing creative ways to attract new students. However, when finances get tight for families and federal and state assistance programs are reduced or go away entirely, colleges and universities will struggle to meet enrollment goals because the glaring obstacle for many students will continue to be how to afford a college education. The findings in this study confirm that making a college education affordable remains the most difficult barrier for colleges and universities to overcome.

Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights into how students perceived the college application and enrollment process. It highlights the complexity of student experiences and how they're influenced by barriers like cost and other factors such as personal preferences for an easier experience during the application process. The research also revealed that many students seek a simpler, quicker path to application, and institutions will need to adapt to these preferences while recognizing that barriers are often defined by each individual student.

Several lessons emerged, especially regarding the interview design. Future research could benefit from more flexible, open-ended interview formats and follow-up questions to uncover more robust insights into a student's concerns. Also, future researchers should consider practicing their interview techniques in advance of their interview sessions to ensure maximum comfort and effectiveness. Practicing interview techniques alone and with a partner could be beneficial to the outcome of future research and elicit more honest and candid answers from the subjects. Additionally, methods like the Truth About Lies session proved useful but could be refined for more impactful

feedback. Future studies could explore or even enhance other research methodologies to improve the quality of student responses.

While analyzing the Truth About Lies method it was reasonable to speculate that this approach could be completed in a reverse scenario as well. For example, while also emphasizing the secrecy behind the method, the researcher could have asked contradictory questions that would have forced the students to confront their own contradictory answers and then reflect on why they answered the way they did but also compel them to explain why their answer may have been true or untrue. Altering the research method to force students to share their answers in a public group setting where others could influence their responses could have elicited more engaging replies.

Exploring barriers faced by specific groups, such as first-generation or low-income students, would provide valuable insights into the unique challenges they face. Another option would be to investigate how simplifying applications and incorporating modern tools, like Artificial Intelligence or virtual reality, could streamline the process and enhance student engagement.

Cost remains one of the most significant barriers to college access, and further research on financial aid strategies, internal communications, and the impact of family influence on decision-making would be beneficial. Additionally, investigating how institutional efforts to simplify applications and provide digital resources impact enrollment rates could offer valuable insights for admission professionals and college administrators.

In conclusion, while this study provided key insights into the college application process, future research can build on these findings by refining methodologies, exploring demographics in greater detail, and testing innovations in application design and financial support to better meet the needs of students and families.

Works Cited

Affinity diagrams. (n.d.). Retrieved March 16, 2023, from

<https://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/research/dmg/tools-and-techniques/affinity-diagrams/>

Alexander, F.K. (2011). Maintenance of state effort for higher education: “Barriers to equal educational opportunity in addressing the rising costs of a college education.” *Journal of Education Finance*, 36(4), 442–450.

Alvarado, S. E., & López Turley, R. N. (2012). College-bound friends and college application choices: Heterogeneous effects for Latino and White students. *Social Science Research*, 41(6), 1451–1468. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.05.017>

Banter, J., Egan, J., Hayes, K., & Phillips, B. (2019). Using design thinking as a student-centered approach to enhance an undergraduate leadership program. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 19(3), 69–73. <https://doi.org/10.12806/v19/i3/a2>

Bustamante, J. (2019, June 7). *College Enrollment Statistics [2020]: Total + by Demographic*. EducationData. <https://educationdata.org/college-enrollment-statistics>

Constantinides, E., & Stagno, M. C. (2013). Higher education marketing: A study on the impact of social media on study selection and university choice. In P. Tripathi (Ed.), *Marketing strategies for higher education institutions: Technological considerations and practices* (pp. 128–147). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

- DeGeurin, M. (2019). *Lazy rivers, mountain climbing, and all-you-can-eat meal plans: 11 colleges with enticing perks*. Insider. <https://www.insider.com/list-of-colleges-with-the-best-perks-and-amenities-2019-7>
- Fallon, M. V. (1997). The school counselor's role in first generation students' college plans. *The School Counselor*, 44(5), 384–393.
- Field, K. (2018). How do rural colleges attract students? Safety and scenery, to begin with. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 65(4), 1.
- Grots, A., & Creuznacher, I. (2018). Design thinking: Process or culture? In *Design thinking for innovation: Research and practice* (pp. 183–191). essay, SPRINGER.
- The Postsecondary National Policy Institute. (2018). *First-Generation Students – Fact Sheets*. Pnpi.org. <https://pnpi.org/first-generation-students/>
- Hottinger, J. A., & Rose, C. P. (2006). First generation college students. In L. A. Gohn & G. R. Albin (Eds.), *Understanding college student subpopulations* (1st ed., pp. 115- 134). NASPA.
- Johnson, J., Rochkind, J., Public Agenda. (2010). *Can I get a little advice here? How an overstretched high school guidance system is undermining students' college aspirations*. In Public Agenda. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508672.pdf>
- Lacey, J. N., & Crosby, O. (2004). Job outlook for college graduates. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, 48(4), 14–27.
- Luma Institute. (2012). *Innovating for people: Handbook of human-centered design methods* (1st ed.).

- Martin, C. M. (2015). *Social media engagement and collegiate recruitment: An examination of the use of social networks in the college recruitment and student choice processes* [Master's thesis]. <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1093&context=diss>
- Matthews, J., & Wrigley, C. (2017). Design and design thinking in business and management higher education. *Journal of Learning Design*, 10(1), 41. <https://doi.org/10.5204/jld.v9i3.294>
- Mishra, N., & S. L Gupta. (2021). Factors and influences contributing to the college/university selection: A study of private higher education institutes (HEIs) in Oman. *TEM Journal*, 10(2), 908–915. <https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM102-53>
- Mitchell, T. (2021). *First-generation college graduates lag behind their peers on key economic outcomes*. Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2021/05/18/first-generation-college-graduates-lag-behind-their-peers-on-key-economic-outcomes/>
- Murtell, J. (2021). *The 5 phases of design thinking*. American Marketing Association. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from <https://www.ama.org/marketing-news/the-5-phases-of-design-thinking/>
- Nagaoka, J., Roderick, M., & Coca, V. (2009). Barriers to college attainment: lessons from Chicago. *The University of Chicago*. <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/barriers-college-attainment-lessons-chicago>
- Panke, S. (2019). Design Thinking in education: Perspectives, opportunities and challenges. *Open Education Studies*, 1(1), 281-306. <https://doi.org/10.1515/edu-2019-0022>

- Rodriguez, A. (2018). Inequity by design? Aligning high school math offerings and public flagship college entrance requirements. *Journal of Higher Education*, 89(2), 153–183.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2017.1341757>
- Stoker, G., Mellor, L., Sullivan, K. (2018). Trends in algebra II completion and failure rates for students entering Texas public high schools. REL 2018-289. *Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest*.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED580929.pdf>
- Thangasamy, A., & Horan, D. (2016). Lowering the cost barrier to higher education for undocumented students: A promising university-level intervention. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 15(2), 113–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2015.1066252>
- Wohn, D. Y., Ellison, N. B., Khan, M. L., Fewins-Bliss, R., & Gray, R. (2013). The role of social media in shaping first-generation high school students' college aspirations: A social capital lens. *Computers & Education*, 63, 424–436. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2013.01.004>

Appendix A (private college staff email)

<Employee name>,

I am Travis Carter and I am a current graduate student at Radford University. Currently, I am in the process of completing my master's thesis and my research is centered on barriers to college application and enrollment for high school students. It is my belief that you may be able to assist me with this pursuit.

My plan is to organize a group of diverse stakeholders across the Randolph College campus that will include representatives from the Office of Admission, Dean of Students, Provost, Student Success, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Athletics, Institutional Research, Registrar, and Accessibility Services. For each willing participant, I will be using information compiled through interviews with Randolph College and Radford University students to inform the design-thinking workshop.

Upon completion of these interviews with students, the information will be used to complete separate design thinking activities known as an Affinity Cluster and a Persona Profile. Once this has been completed the group will be assembled in person to participate in a design-thinking workshop that will last no longer than 90 minutes.

As an employee and administrator of Randolph, you are being asked to participate because you can provide specific insight that would benefit my research. If you have an interest in participating, please contact Travis Carter at tcarter187@radford.edu. I look forward to your response and hope you will partner with me on this important research topic.

Kind regards,

Travis G. Carter

Appendix B (private college student email)

<Student name>,

I am Travis Carter and I am a current graduate student at Radford University. Currently, I am in the process of completing my master's thesis and my research is centered on barriers to college application and enrollment for high school students. It is my belief that you may be able to assist me with this pursuit.

My plan is to organize a group of diverse stakeholders across the Randolph College campus to include first year students from any location inside the United States. For each willing participant, I will begin by sending an electronic questionnaire via email and for those selected by conducting an interview via Zoom to last no more than 20 minutes.

Upon completion of the interviews, I will use the information to complete separate design thinking activities known as an Affinity Cluster and a Persona Profile. Once this has been completed the group will be assembled in person to participate in a design-thinking workshop that will last no longer than 90 minutes.

As a student at Randolph, you are being asked to participate because you can provide specific insight that would benefit my research. If you have an interest in participating, please contact Travis Carter tcarter187@radford.edu. I look forward to your response and hope you will partner with me on this important research topic.

Kind regards,

Travis G. Carter

Appendix C (public university student email)

<Student name>,

I am Travis Carter, and I am a current graduate student at Radford University. Currently, I am in the process of completing my master's thesis and my research is centered on barriers to college application and enrollment for high school students. It is my belief that you may be able to assist me with this pursuit.

My plan is to organize a group of diverse stakeholders across the Radford University campus to include first year students from any location inside the United States. For each willing participant, I will begin by sending an electronic questionnaire via email and for those selected by conducting an interview via Zoom to last no more than 20 minutes.

Upon completion of the interviews, I will use the information to complete separate design thinking activities known as an Affinity Cluster and a Persona Profile. Once this has been completed the group will be assembled in person to participate in a design-thinking workshop that will last no longer than 90 minutes.

As a student at Radford, you are being asked to participate because you can provide specific insight that would benefit my research. If you have an interest in participating, please contact Travis Carter at tcarter187@radford.edu. I look forward to your response and hope you will partner with me on this important research topic.

Kind regards,

Travis G. Carter

Appendix D (electronic questionnaire for public university students)

1. Are you a current undergraduate student? Yes No
2. When did you enroll at your institution? Fall/Spring 202____
3. Is this the first college you have ever attended? Yes No
4. Did you complete your college application or did someone else complete it for you? If someone else, what is the relationship of the person? _____
5. How did you apply to this college?

Website Common App Paper Application On-Site Application
6. Are you willing to participate in a virtual interview as part of this study?
 - If yes, are you available during the week of _____? If so, select the times that work best for your schedule.

Appendix E (electronic questionnaire for private college students)

1. Are you a current undergraduate student? Yes No
2. When did you enroll at your institution? Fall/Spring 20____
3. Is this the first college you have ever attended? Yes No
4. Did you complete your college application or did someone else complete it for you? If someone else, who? _____
5. How did you apply to this college?

Website Common App Paper Application On-Site Application

6. Are you willing to participate in a virtual interview as part of this study?
 - If yes, are you available during the week of _____? If so, select the times that work best for your schedule.

Appendix F

Good afternoon <name>,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research. If you could please complete the following survey via the link included below, it will help move the process along.

Once again, many thanks for taking time out of your schedule to participate.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd6DCMs5qXQ3nHxI5OqI1DHZiCJNtafchPChS5JzwML9JNgc/viewform?usp=sf_link

Kindest regards,

Travis Carter
MFA Graduate Student-Radford University

Appendix G

Good afternoon <name>,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research. If you could please complete the following survey via the link included below, it will help move the process along.

Once again, many thanks for taking time out of your schedule to participate.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdYbAaZM9BlbhMXs0pY30IjA32TFuasrfX5qn7mHHccPy-x0w/viewform?usp=sharing>

Kindest regards,

Travis Carter
MFA Graduate Student-Radford University

Appendix H

Hello <name>,

Thank you for your willingness to assist me in my research. I am still waiting for a couple more replies to the questionnaire. Once I have enough people to begin my research, I will be reaching out again to schedule virtual interview times.

Once again, many thanks for your assistance and you can expect to hear about the next steps early next week.

Kind regards,

Travis G. Carter
MFA Graduate Student-Radford University

Appendix I

Good morning <name>,

I trust you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving break and were able to spend some time with family and friends. On the link below is a “When2meet” calendar for the next weeks. Ideally, I would like to schedule your interview prior to the end of December. I realize with exams and other commitments that will take some juggling, but I am also committed to only taking up about 15 minutes of your time. Once you have entered your available times, I will schedule your interview and send you the Zoom link.

Once again, many thanks for your willingness to participate and I promise not to monopolize all of your time as we head down the stretch of your fall semester. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

[Please Click Here To Designate Your Availability For a Virtual Interview!](#)

Kindest regards,

Travis G. Carter
MFA Graduate Student-Radford University

Appendix J

Hello ,

Thank you for your quick reply and I look forward to meeting with you virtually on at . There's nothing you need to do to prepare for our meeting, just be present and honest. The meeting will be recorded via Zoom.

Many thanks once again for your willingness to participate. I look forward to "seeing" you on at .

Here is the Zoom link for our meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89753846112?pwd=knKl1aiQiifalBhQaLajSd1Wezlza8.1>

Kindest regards,

Travis G. Carter
MFA Graduate Student-Radford University

Appendix K

Good morning ,

I hope you had a great weekend! I am writing this morning to see if we can reschedule our meeting. Unfortunately, we weren't able to meet on at but I do have some availability this week.

Are you open to rescheduling and assisting me with my research? I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with you and promise not to take up more than 15 minutes of your time.

I look forward to hearing back from you regarding your availability. Outside of Tuesday, I have availability each day this week.

Kind regards,

Travis

Appendix L

Good afternoon <name>,

I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in my research and making time in your schedule for the virtual interview prior to your winter break. As I mentioned in the interview, the final step in my research is to conduct an in-person session on your campus. If possible, your continued participation would be incredibly valuable to my research.

I have reserved **Quillian Conference Room on the 3rd floor of the student center for January 24th at 4:30 p.m.** to finalize this portion of this research. As I previously mentioned, I don't think this portion will take more than an hour, if even that long. I hope you will be able to make it. Please reply to this email and let me know either way and if that time isn't convenient for you, I can extend the room reservation into the evening to accommodate your schedule.

Many thanks once again for your assistance and I look forward to hearing back from you!

Kindest regards,

Travis G. Carter
MFA Graduate Student-Radford University

Appendix M

Good afternoon <name>,

I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in my research and making time in your schedule for the virtual interview prior to your winter break. As I mentioned in the interview, the final step in my research is to conduct an in-person session on your campus. If possible, your continued participation would be incredibly valuable to my research.

I have reserved **room 170 in McConnell Library for January 23rd at 3 p.m.** to finalize this portion of this research. As I previously mentioned, I don't think this portion will take more than an hour, if even that long. I hope you will be able to make it. Please reply to this email and let me know either way and if that time isn't convenient for you, I can extend the room reservation into the evening to accommodate your schedule.

Many thanks once again for your assistance and I look forward to hearing back from you!

Kindest regards,

Travis G. Carter
MFA Graduate Student-Radford University

Appendix N

Dear <name>,

Thank you for taking time to participate in my research method for my thesis. As a follow-up to our session conducted on <date>, please answer the following questions using the Likert Scale included in the link below. Please be mindful that the rankings should be used accordingly:

1=Important To Me
2=I Am Indifferent/Not Applicable
3=Wasn't Important At All

[Click Here To Complete Final Research Step!](#)

This is the last portion of my research and I greatly appreciate your time and effort in assisting my research efforts.

Sincerely,

Travis G. Carter
MFA Graduate Student-Radford University

Appendix O (Interview questions)

1. Why did you decide to apply to your college?
2. What could the university or college do to improve the application process?
3. What could the university or college do to improve the enrollment process?
4. What did you like or dislike about the application process?
5. What barriers did you encounter during the application process?
6. What barriers did you encounter during the enrollment process?
7. Did you apply to other colleges/universities?
 - a. If yes, how many?
8. Why did you decide NOT to apply to other colleges that may have interested you?
9. What, if any, terminology was used by colleges during your search process did you find confusing or did you not understand?
10. How long did it take you to complete your college's application?
 - a. How did that compare to any other colleges?
11. What was the most memorable experience in your college application process?
12. Why did you decide to enroll at your college?
13. Why did you decide NOT to enroll at other colleges?
14. Are you the first member of your immediate family to attend college (neither parent nor guardian graduated from college)?
 - a. If no, did you parent/guardian graduate from college?
 - b. If yes, was it a 2-year or 4-year college?
15. Explain your college search process.
16. If you could go back in time and deliver a note from today to you when you arrived on campus your first day, what would it say?

Appendix P (Truth About Lies college search form)

School Name

☐ Apply

☐ Attend

Question 1: _____

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: _____

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: _____

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: _____

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: _____

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: _____

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Appendix Q (Likert Scale)

- 1- 100% true
- 2- Mostly true
- 3- Somewhat true
- 4- No truth whatsoever

Appendix R (Email and Likert Scale for post Truth About Lies follow-up)

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking time to participate in my research method for my thesis. As a follow-up to our session conducted on <date>, please answer the following questions using the Likert Scale below. This is the last portion of my research and I greatly appreciate your time and effort in assisting my research efforts.

Sincerely,

Travis G. Carter

Appendix S

Outcome 1: _____

1-Was important to me	2-I am indifferent	3-Wasn't important to me at all
-----------------------	--------------------	---------------------------------

Outcome 2: _____

1-Was important to me	2-I am indifferent	3-Wasn't important to me at all
-----------------------	--------------------	---------------------------------

Outcome 3: _____

1-Was important to me	2-I am indifferent	3-Wasn't important to me at all
-----------------------	--------------------	---------------------------------

Outcome 4: _____

1-Was important to me	2-I am indifferent	3-Wasn't important to me at all
-----------------------	--------------------	---------------------------------

Outcome 5: _____

1-Was important to me	2-I am indifferent	3-Wasn't important to me at all
-----------------------	--------------------	---------------------------------

Outcome 6: _____

1-Was important to me	2-I am indifferent	3-Wasn't important to me at all
-----------------------	--------------------	---------------------------------

Appendix T

Good evening <staff name>,

Many thanks once again for your willingness to assist my research tomorrow morning. This is my last step and needless to say, I am excited to be nearing the finish line and also spending time with you tomorrow during this final exercise.

For context, your assignment tomorrow will be to work as a group to design a “new-age college application.” There is no right or wrong way to do this. I will bring paper, pens, and anything else you may need and will also log into the computer in Quillian if you prefer to use technology. I wanted to share some information that may help your efforts tomorrow or even any brainstorming you may do beforehand.

I have completed workshops with Radford and Randolph students in the past two months and I have asked them a number of questions as it related to their application and enrollment process during their senior year in high school. The feedback was interesting. And while I feel like I knew some of it as an enrollment professional, there was also some enlightening information that I found useful. I won’t give you any of my thoughts on it because I would prefer you to generate your own opinions. It may not be earth-shattering information to you, but I hope you will review it nevertheless.

Here is the excerpt from my thesis regarding your workshop:

Alternative Worlds

Private college administrators wonder how the information provided by two different campus populations may assist admission professionals in creating an application that will remove any potential barriers, is more inclusive and efficient, and will also streamline access for all students. Using the research provided by students at both the public and private institutions, the college administrators at the private institution will create a new application for admission for the intentional benefit of the modern-day student. This new application will be designed using the feedback received from students participating in design thinking workshops at each institution. Taking into consideration the most popular themes presented via the research, this new application may incorporate many common elements of current college application processes. However, based on the research, it may also completely revamp the conventional college application to include items essential for processing and tracking only. Outside of vital personal contact information, potential information to be included in a new application may or may not include: essays, references, resumes, personal statements, self-reported grades and test scores, hobbies, legacy status, academic area of interest, and other volunteered information by the applicant. This application creation will happen approximately three weeks after the final on campus truth in lies session and approximately one week after the final emailed Likert Scale

results are received by the researcher. An approximate timeline for this portion is during the early to mid-April, 2024 timeframe.

I will bring more information for you to have at your fingertips tomorrow morning. Thanks again and I look forward to your assistance.

Best regards,

Travis G. Carter
MFA Graduate Student-Radford University



Randolph College

School Name

☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

Wanted to go to the U.S. and liked the environment and fit my academic needs

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

The environment was nice and I wanted to leave PR.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

Close to my dad and a nice environment

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

Everything clicked here and the environment was nice

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

I wanted to leave PR. and the people were welcoming. Also cost was good

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

Did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	--------------	---	---



Interamericana de Puerto Rico

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

Did not want to stay in Puerto Rico
~~Did not want to stay in Puerto Rico~~

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

Did not want to stay in the P.R.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

Wanted to leave PR.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

Did not have an admissions counselor

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	--------------	---	---

Question 5:

Leave PR, wanted to grow someplace else

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

Did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	--------------	---	---

Universidad de



Sagrado Corazon

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

it did not fit with what I was academically interested in

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 2:

Too artistically focused

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 3:

Wanted to leave PR and too artistically focused

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 4:

I Applied somewhere else

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 5:

Leave PR, didn't want to be stuck there

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 6:

Did not post

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5



Bridgewater College

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

Heard back from them way after applying
And did not totally match with what I wanted to
academically pursue

Question 2:

They answered too slow

Question 3:

Took long to get back to me

Question 4:

Did not have a counselor

Question 5:

These people took too much time
to respond and didn't like there science program

Question 6:

Did not post



Randolph College.

School Name

☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

It is the first college my aunt studied from our family.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

I didn't tell them anything.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

Because I would have a year scholarship.

1		3	4	5
---	--	---	---	---

Question 4:

College was helpful and had relationship with my family through my aunt.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

It is the best distance between me and my family.

1	2	3		5
---	---	---	--	---

Question 6:

I didn't post on social media.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---



Longwood University.

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Because I wanted to live on campus.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 2: I don't like to study here.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 3: I don't like it here.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	--------------	---	---

Question 4: Financial issues.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Town is small and I want to live in a bigger city.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I didn't post on social media.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---



Wellesley College.

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: I didn't enrolled.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 2: I like to go, but I can't.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	--------------	---	---

Question 3: If I enrolled, I couldn't pay tuition.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I didn't talk to them.

1	2	3	4	5
---	--------------	---	---	---

Question 5: It is too far from my family.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	--------------	---

Question 6: I didn't post on social media.

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---



Randolph College

School Name

☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

tennis & Take 2 program

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

the community was very welcoming and the campus is pretty

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

everyone is super friendly

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

attending

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

good change of pace, campus in the mountains I could go hiking

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

committed for tennis

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



George Mason University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: too close to home / would have to commute

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: did not want to live with parents

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: did not want live at home

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: _____

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: admission counselor did not reach out didn't want to live at home

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: didn't post to social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Burliford College

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: too expensive

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: too expensive & out of state

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: their tennis team lost to Randolph when I visited Randolph

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: too expensive

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: didn't like their campus

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: didn't post to social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



James Madison University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: lack of diversity & too expensive

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: lack of diversity, possibility of getting hate crime

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: too expensive, lack of diversity

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: counselor did not reach out

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: too PWI for me

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: didn't post to social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



VCU

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: campus was in the city

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: didn't really call my name / knew too many people going there

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: didn't like their campus, lack of safety

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: admissions counselor ~~didn't~~ didn't reach out

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I don't like the city

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: did not post to social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Earlham College

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: too expensive & out of state / middle of nowhere

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: middle of nowhere and the students were very quirky

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: too expensive & out of state

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: too expensive

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Student body was too weird. Think theater kids to the max

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: didn't post to social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



University of Mary Washington

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: safety school, didn't feel like I belonged

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: tennis coach never replied to my email

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: they wanted me to go here. I didn't feel a connection to this school.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: didn't talk to admissions counselor

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: only applied to see if I would get in, never saw myself here

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: didn't post to social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Randolph College

School Name

☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1: I'm attending because when I visited this college, it felt like a perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 2: I didn't tell them anything.

1		3	4	5
---	--	---	---	---

Question 3: I'm attending because when I visited this college, it felt like a perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I'm attending this college because it feels like the perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I'm attending because when I visited this college, it felt like a perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I didn't post anything on social media.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---



Randolph College

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: I'm not attending because when I visited Randolph College, it felt like a perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 2: I didn't tell them anything.

1		3	4	5
---	--	---	---	---

Question 3: I'm not attending because when I visited Randolph College, it felt like a perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I didn't talk to them.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I'm not attending because when I visited Randolph College, it felt like a perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I didn't post anything on social media.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---



University of Lynchburg

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

I'm not attending because when I visited Randolph College, it felt like a perfect fit.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

I didn't tell them anything.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

I'm not attending because when I visited Randolph College, it felt like a perfect fit.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

I didn't talk to them.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

I'm not attending because when I visited Randolph College, it felt like a perfect fit.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

I didn't post anything on social media.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Bluefield College

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: I'm not attending because when I visited Randolph College, it felt like a perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 2: I didn't tell them anything

1		3	4	5
---	--	---	---	---

Question 3: I'm not attending because when I visited Randolph College, it felt like a perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I didn't talk to them

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I'm not attending because when I visited Randolph College, it felt like a perfect fit.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I didn't post anything on social media.

	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---



Randolph College

School Name

☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1: The location, programs, people and cost were all perfect.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: I felt like it was the only school on my list where I felt welcomed and could picture myself.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: The scholarship I recieved was an indicator that something was right, and I just felt very comfortable there.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: The financial aid was wonderful, and the whole environment was exactly what I was looking for.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: It was the only place I could truly see myself thriving.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: It's pretty and a perfect fit for my dreams!

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



University of Mary Washington

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Though my second choice I found
financial aid was better and the people and programs more attractive
at my top choice (RC)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: I wanted to be closer to a friend
at my top school (RC) and further from home and old
classmates.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: The cost was comparable to my other
top choice, and it had a few better perks than UMW. Phys.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I had been offered better financial
aid at another school.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I didn't want to have so much
proximity to old classmates from high school.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: Didn't post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Stienandoah University

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: The proximity to home was too close, and I wasn't sure about attending a religious school.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: It worried me ~~to~~ to go into private religious environment again, and it just wasn't the right fit.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: The programs and opportunities just weren't exactly what I was looking for.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I had been offered better financial aid at another school.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I didn't want to live in Winchester, or go to a religious college.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: Didn't post.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Mary Baldwin University

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: They didn't have ^{enough} programs I was interested in, and the maintenance was poor.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: The school was sketchy in terms of facilities (food, dorms) and maybe too small and quiet.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: It felt too small and suffocating, and I was worried the programs weren't right for me.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I didn't talk with a ~~counselor~~ counselor.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: The vibes are scary and too small and sad.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: Didn't post.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Randolph College

School Name

- ☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

Affordable, locations in mountains, pretty architecture, had engineering major, had track + field team, and take-2 curriculum.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

Did not post on social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Virginia Tech

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

"Safety" School

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

~~Small~~ School too large

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

~~Same as 1 and 2~~ Same as 1 and 2

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

Did not speak to VT admissions

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

Same as ~~FP2~~ 1 and 2

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

Did not post on social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



James Madison University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: "Safety" School

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: School too large

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Same as land 2

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Did not speak to admissions at JMU

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Same as 1 and 2

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: Did not post on social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Christopher Newport University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Did not have engineering major and was not in the "mountains" region of VA

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: School too large

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Same as 1 and 2

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Same as 1 and 2

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: Did not post on social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Roanoke College

School Name

☒ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1: Did not have engineering major

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: Same as above

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Did not speak to admissions at RC

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: Did not post on social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Bridgewater College

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: "Safety" School

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: Same as Q1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Same as 1

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: Did not post on social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Radford University

School Name

☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

I loved the campus and it fit my needs.

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 2:

It hit every box I wanted and I loved visiting.

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 3:

Love the campus/good variety of majors/good food options.

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 4:

I loved the campus and felt it fit socially and academically for me.

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 5:

I liked the ambiance.

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Question 6:

Put Radford University in class of '27 in my Instagram

~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

Bio so potential
Roommates didn't
think I was contacting
them for no reason.

27 | Page



Mary Washington

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

It was abit to small for me ~wasn't a fan
of the surrounding
area.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

It was to small.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

It was to small ~ a bit to close.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

It was to small and so not the entiorment
I was looking for

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

To small.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

I don't post on socials.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



JANU

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

1 Question 1: It was too big and felt a bit chaotic.

~~1~~ 1 2 3 4 5

2 Question 2: It seemed like there was too much going on for me to focus.

1 2 3 4 5

1 Question 3: I wasn't feeling it ~ too chaotic.

1 ~~1~~ 2 3 4 5

1 Question 4: N/A

~~1~~ 1 2 3 4 5

1 Question 5: Too chaotic.

~~1~~ 1 2 3 4 5

1 Question 6: I don't post on socials.

~~1~~ 1 2 3 4 5



UVA Wise

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

1 Question 1: It was too small and too far away.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1 Question 2: Hadn't visited campus yet & was super tiny and far.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1 Question 3: Hadn't visited & super small.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1 Question 4: N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1 Question 5: Hadn't seen it in person.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1 Question 6: I don't post on socials.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Radford

School Name

☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

i told no one

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

its beautiful

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

mem - the place was good courses
dad - its a good looking college that accepted me

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

this school is far enough to be me and my parents
went visit often, look nice, good courses

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

i did not tell

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

So i could see other people
in radford on snapchat



liberty

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: I told no one

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: didn't tell them why

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: mom- doesn't feel right for me
dad- christina and cefew

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: looks bad, bad feed, christina cefews

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: i did not tell

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



George Mason

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

I told no one

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

didn't tell them why

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

i was wait listed then denied
and they both knew

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

i got wait listed so i changed

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

i did not tell

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



VCU

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

i told no one

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

too close to home

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

i was waitlisted so i did not

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

i got waitlisted, too close to home

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

i did not tell

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



regent

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: i told no one

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: bad food

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: mom - i did not want to
dad - christain

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: christain school, ~~bad~~

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: i did not tell

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



An Norfolk State

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

i told no one

1 ☒ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☒ 5

Question 2:

didn't tell them

1 ☒ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☒ 5

Question 3:

mom - i forgot
dad - i forgot

1 ☒ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☒ 5

Question 4:

N/A

1 ☒ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☒ 5

Question 5:

too close to the sea (my mom would want to go to the beach every visit)

4 ☐ 1 ☒ 2 ☐ 3 ☒ 4 ☐ 5

Question 6:

i did not tell

1 ☒ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5



Radford University

School Name

- ☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

for the media production program + campus

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

liked the campus + ~~liked~~ the friendly vibe & programs

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

I don't remember

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

liked campus, programs, people were nice to me

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

posted that I was attending + my major & potential minor

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Ithaca College

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: too expensive & 7 hours away

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: too far away and too cold!

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I don't remember

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: too cold, too expensive, didn't resonate enough to pursue scholarships necessary to attend

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: nothing

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Elon University

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

too expensive

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

too expensive, what a shame

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

I don't remember

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

too expensive, felt kind of snobby (I was salty about financial aid)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

nothing

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



American University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: they waitlisted me :((& too expensive)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: just didn't enjoy my time there

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I don't remember

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: kind of hated it there

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: nothing

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Virginia Commonwealth University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: didn't like the vibe of the film program

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: the tour guide was kind of snobby about other majors, I got scared I'd be trapped on 1 track

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I don't remember

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: didn't like the city campus, rude tour guide + rigid rules

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: nothing

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Syracuse University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

they waitlisted me: 6 + 7 hours away

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

too far

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

I don't remember

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

vibe was not good enough to pursue when waitlisted

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

nothing

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Christopher Newport University

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: program wasn't solid enough for me

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I don't remember

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: It just didn't feel like a place I could imagine myself in

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: nothing

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Radford University

School Name

- ☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: Good opinions by people I know

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Fell in love with campus + programs

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Was in love with Radford

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I loved my roommate, I knew the president of the Honors college, it was close to home, and I thought I'd be truly comfortable here

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: ~~Just thought it would be fun to~~ join the RU Snapchat

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



William + Mary

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: was too distracted during tour

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: distracted + couldn't get dorm room pictures

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Didn't tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I didn't get the time to soak in the college +

I couldn't get an
idea of the dorm
room

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Longwood University

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: Too far, not enough diversity

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Worried about health issues + distance

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Already picked Radford

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: was worried about not being ^{close} to home to take care of my
+ homesickness parents, and it
was maybe too small

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---




Randolph Macon College

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: ~~Did not tell anyone~~ Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: wasn't interested, dorms were dirty

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Already Picked Radford

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: wasn't invested, threw it out

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Wingate University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: School is surrounded by interstate

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: it's an interstate school, can't go anywhere, assisstant / attendant was rude / disrespectful

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Didn't tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Interstate school, my ex was considering it too

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Radford University

School Name

- ☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: Good opinions by people I know

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Fell in love with campus + programs

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Was in love with Radford

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I loved my roommate, I knew the president of the Honors college, it was close to home, and I thought I'd be truly comfortable here

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: ~~Just thought it would be fun to~~ join the RU Snapchat

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



William + Mary

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: was too distracted during tour

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: distracted + couldn't get dorm room pictures

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Didn't tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I didn't get the time to soak in the college + I couldn't get an idea of the dorm room

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Longwood University

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: Too far, not enough diversity

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Worried about health issues + distance

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Already picked Radford

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: was worried about not being ^{close} to home to take care of my
+ homesickness parents, and it
was maybe too small

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Randolph Macon College

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---

Question 2: ~~Did not tell anyone~~ Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Wasn't interested, dorms were dirty

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Already Picked Radford

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Wasn't invested, threw it out

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Wingate University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Did not tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: School is surrounded by interstate

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: it's an interstate school, can't go anywhere, assisstant / attendant was rude / disrespectful

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Didn't tell anyone

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Interstate school, my ex was considering it too

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I did not post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Radford University

School Name

☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

^{no one}
told ~~me~~ ~~no one~~ ~~no one~~ ~~no one~~ ~~no one~~

1 2 3 4 ~~5~~

Question 2:

I liked the campus, academics seemed good

1 2 3 4 5

Question 3:

I liked the campus (especially how small it is)

1 2 3 4 5

Question 4:

I liked the campus and the tour impressed me

1 2 3 4 5

Question 5:

Small, diverse, party enough but not too much, good food choices

1 2 3 4 5

Question 6:

didn't post, only posted a brief picture of a wine glass with radford logo and said "going to college", Snap Story to see funny activities, bio to gain friends

1 2 3 4 5



Roanoke College

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: told no one

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: when visiting I didn't take the campus

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: I didn't see anything or anyone that peaked my interest

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: didn't personally like the college

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: Everybody looked the same and it felt dull, online police reported had high amounts of rape and sexual assault

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: didn't post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



West Virginia University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: told no one

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: was nervous of the party scene
given the point I was in my life at the time

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: I was scared of getting into alcohol
(it happened to my brother, he failed classes and dropped out)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: I was going to take a gap year, and
unenrolled

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I was afraid I would dive down the path of drugs as it
was nothing new to me

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: didn't post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



William + Mary

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: told no one

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: online information didn't appeal to me (academics)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: it didn't interest me

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: no interaction

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: nobody ever hears about William and Mary/boring

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: didn't post

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Radford

School Name

- ☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

Price

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

one friend attending

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

Price + location

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

Class size

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

Close to River and military
base

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

wanted to celebrate my
decision and achievement

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



macy washington

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

Price

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

Break appeal

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

Price

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

Gave off a brot Rich Person
School Vibe

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



OLD Dominion

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: City Size

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: NO FRIENDS ATTENDING

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: DID NOT HAVE EXACT MAJOR
OF CHOICE

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: TO MUCH CITY

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: NO SUPPORT SYSTEM

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



montana state

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: LOGISTICAL REASONS

1	✓	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: TO FAR AWAY

1	✓	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: LOGISTICAL / TRAVEL

1	✓	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: N/A

1	✓	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: COULD NOT HAVE ALL THE THINGS I WANTED

1	2	✓	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: N/A

1	✓	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---



SMU

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

POLITICAL REASONS

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

too many people, don't like
going there

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

to. Bib

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

too many people on opposite
political spectrum

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

N/A

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



GMU

School Name
☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

size

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

not accepted

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

size

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

n/a

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

to big

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

n/a

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



West Virginia

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

OUT OF STATE COSTS

Question 1:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Radford University Carillon

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

1 Question 1: I didn't tell them I wasn't attending

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: It was too close to home

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4 Question 3: It was more centered around pre-med — People who want to become doctors or work as a nurse in college

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4 Question 4: I had talked to one about whether I should go to Radford or RUC, and she told me RUC ~~was not pre-med~~ only has nursing + pre-med, not EMS club, and I chose Radford

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2 Question 5: Most of my classmates from my nursing class in high school were applying there, and I didn't like many of them

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1 Question 6: I didn't post my decision on social media

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

27 | Page

I had been interested in RUEMS since that time she told me about it, and wanted to go to a place where that was possible, so I declined RUC



James Madison University

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

1 Question 1: I didn't tell them I wasn't attending
1 2 3 4 5

Question 2: It was too close to home

4 1 2 3 4 5

Question 3: It was too expensive and close to home

2 1 2 3 4 5

Question 4: I had no interaction with an admissions counselor here

1 1 2 3 4 5

Question 5: It was too close to home—would make more sense to live at home, and I wanted to get away & live my own life

1 1 2 3 4 5

Question 6: I didn't post my decision on social media

1 1 2 3 4 5



Radford University

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

my best friend applied
and got in, then dropped out
↑ right before 1st Semester

2

Question 1:

Because of their nursing program and smaller classes, as well as my best friend going to be there — wide range of majors (She was business)

1 2 3 4 5

4

Question 2:

Because my best friend was ~~was~~ applying here — we were going to be roommates

1 2 3 4 5

1

Question 3:

They have a really good nursing program, smaller classes, it's pretty, nice dorms, and my best friend was going to be there

1 2 3 4 5

1

Question 4:

Their nursing program is really good, smaller classes, minor I am interested in, class sizes are good, and it has more opportunities for me to grow + learn

1 2 3 4 5

4

Question 5:

It's far enough away from home that I can live my life and be a college student, but I could always go back on some weekends if I wanted, their nursing program is really good, + my bestie would be there

1 2 3 4 5

5

Question 6:

I am proud to say I'm here for any college in general and want to show off my accomplishments — graduating high school + getting into college

1 2 3 4 5



Randolph College

School Name

☐ Apply
☒ Attend

Question 1:

Attended because I won a fine arts scholarship/distance from home.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

It would be good to put distance between me + my past.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

They have a yoga class which is good for my mental health.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

I enjoyed being away from home into a new place where I had opportunity

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

It's away from my home and my decisions are mine + I can't be told otherwise

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

Because in my town nobody has heard of it.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Wesleyan College

School Name

- ☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

Not attending because I didn't know much about the college.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

It was one of the choices at a college fair I attended.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

Never got to visit

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

No Communication w/ advisor ever.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

Was just a consideration.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

I didn't post anything

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



University of The Cumberland

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

Not attending because I don't share the same beliefs

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

They offer Gender Studies which I was interested in at the time.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

Because it didn't feel right for me.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

I have chosen a different school.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

The school looked super old w/ chalkboards, I didn't like it.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

I didn't post anything

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Carson Newman

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

Not attending because I don't share the same beliefs

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

They would have failed me for not going to church if I went (CNor Lee)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

because I don't want to, it's not for me (they attended.)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

I don't share the same beliefs, I've chosen a different school.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

I am not giving into what my foster parents want, this is my choice, not ^{theirs} theirs. ^{theirs} There's.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

I didn't post anything.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Roan College

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1:

Not attending because of crime rates in that city (Memphis, TN).

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2:

It seemed extremely formal/private school & I wouldn't like it.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3:

It would have been in a dangerous part of town.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4:

~~Was here:~~ I chose a different school, sorry.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5:

This looks like it's for rich kids, I would feel out of place.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6:

I didn't post anything

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



UTC

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Not attending because the city looked Shady/dangerous

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: They have a huge pool and Waterslide.

1	2	3	4	5
---	--------------	---	---	---

Question 3: Foster parent told me I got rejected.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: Was rejected, no advisor reached out.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: The city around this college is scary.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I didnt post anything.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Tennessee Tech

School Name

☒ Apply
☐ Attend

Question 1: Not attending because it seemed isolated

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 2: My foster family said it was a good school.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 3: Foster parent told me I got rejected.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 4: both was rejected, no advisor reached out.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 5: I want to be in the city.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Question 6: I didn't post anything.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Travis Carter-MFA Graduate Student: Final Research Request

Regarding your college search, application, and enrollment process. Please answer each section below using the following scale:

- 1=Was Important To Me
- 2=I Am Indifferent/Not Applicable
- 3=Wasn't Important At All

* Indicates required question

1. Your Name (First and Last) *

2. Academic fit. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

3. Ability to commute to campus. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

4. Received my decision after I had decided on another school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

5. Proximity to home. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

6. Ability to live on campus. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

7. Cost was too expensive. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

8. Diversity on campus. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

9. Location in a city. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

10. Location in a rural setting. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

11. Location is out of state. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

12. Need for a safety school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

13. Campus feel. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

14. The people encountered on campus. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

15. Campus upkeep/maintenance. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

16. Prior knowledge/reputation of the school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

17. School is too big. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

18. School is too small. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

19. School is "too artistic". *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

20. School doesn't respond quickly enough. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

21. School is in a high crime area. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

22. Number of people I know enrolled at the school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

23. Already have friends on campus. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

24. The food at the school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

25. The amount of chaos on campus. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

26. Ability to play a sport. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

27. A religious school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

28. Campus life/activities. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

29. Campus visit. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

30. Campus tour. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

31. Weather at campus location. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

32. Timeliness of school replies. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

33. Interactions with the admission counselor at the school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

34. Belief system on campus. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

35. My own family's health issues. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

36. School is located on/near an interstate. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

37. My ex attends the school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

38. The party scene. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

39. Political atmosphere on campus. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

40. My parents like/dislike the school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

41. Perception as a preppy/rich kid school. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

42. Apply just to see if I can be admitted. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3

Was ☐ ☐ ☐ Wasn't Important At All

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

