

Emotional Motivators

Categorizing and
understanding the influence
of feelings and emotions in
college selection



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Emotional Motivators

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 2 |
| BACKGROUND | 3 |
| MAJOR FINDINGS | 4 |
| DETAILED FINDINGS | 5 |
| KEY TAKEAWAYS | 23 |
| NOTES ON THE DATA | 28 |
| STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES IN GROUPS | 30 |
| ABOUT LONGMIRE AND COMPANY | 31 |
| OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES | 32 |
| JOIN OUR SUMMER/FALL 2018 STUDY | 33 |
| CONTACT INFORMATION | 34 |

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INTRODUCTION

Prospective students need facts and information but their college selection decision is most often going to hinge on how they feel about their chosen college – and those they rejected.

Most colleges experience this in every recruiting cycle. They hear students say, *“I enrolled here because it felt like home.”* Or, *“I loved the campus atmosphere.”* Or, *“I felt like I belong here.”*

What colleges don’t know is exactly what makes students feel this way.

What makes the campus feel like home? What makes for a great campus atmosphere? What makes students feel like they belong?

This study explored how students feel and, more importantly, uncover why they feel that way to provide a deeper understanding of how they arrive at their college selection decisions. The actionable insight yielded from this study gives colleges greater control over their conversations with prospective students, better ability to craft sharper mass marketing messages and more direction to design highly productive campus visit experiences.

Joining in this nationally co-sponsored study were four-year public and private not-for-profit colleges and universities across the United States.

Thirty-two institutions joined in the study by providing lists of students from their fall 2017 pools of inquiries, applicants, admits and enrolled students.

Invitations to complete an online survey were emailed to students in late summer and early fall of 2017. The project yielded over 13,000 survey responses.

Responses from public institution pools accounted for 60% of the sample while 40% originated from private institution pools.

The margin of error on the total sample is +/- 0.86 at the 95% confidence level.

The survey instrument contained 30 questions and captured 149 data points.

In addition to quantitative data, the survey captured qualitative data relating to topics such as what colleges can do to better understand and react to the feelings and emotions of prospective students and how students feel after having both positive and negative experiences with colleges.

A CO-SPONSORED STUDY

METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

Longmire and Company's work in higher education is founded on our belief that the conversations (and communications in any form) between prospective students and the colleges that they are considering can be much richer.

When that happens it is more fruitful for both the college and prospective student. The college better understands the student's needs, preferences, motivations and fears. And with that understanding, the college can present its value propositions based upon what the student perceives as being valuable.

One of the ways Longmire and Company helps colleges have richer conversations is by gathering market data (through co-sponsored studies such as this) to better understand how prospective students think, feel and behave during the process of making their college selection decision.



MAJOR FINDINGS



Two-thirds of prospective students believe that it is important that colleges attempt to understand their feelings and emotions during their college selection process. However, only about one-in-four say that colleges attempted to understand their feelings and emotions.



Four-in-ten students say that their feelings about their chosen college were the primary driver in their decision. About an equal percent said they made their decision primarily on facts. The remainder said their college selection decision was made equally on the basis of facts and feelings.



Less than one-quarter of students said that the colleges they most seriously considered talked to them about their feelings and emotions and how they would influence their college selection decision.



Students offered many suggestions for colleges to better understand the feelings and emotions that will impact a student's college selection decision. The most common suggestion? "Just ask me!"



80% of prospective students experienced anxiety about the college selection process. Nationally, only 37% of students say that a college asked them about, addressed or attempted to relieve their anxiety.



80% of prospective students say that a college looks more attractive to them if it addresses the issue of anxiety and attempts to alleviate it.



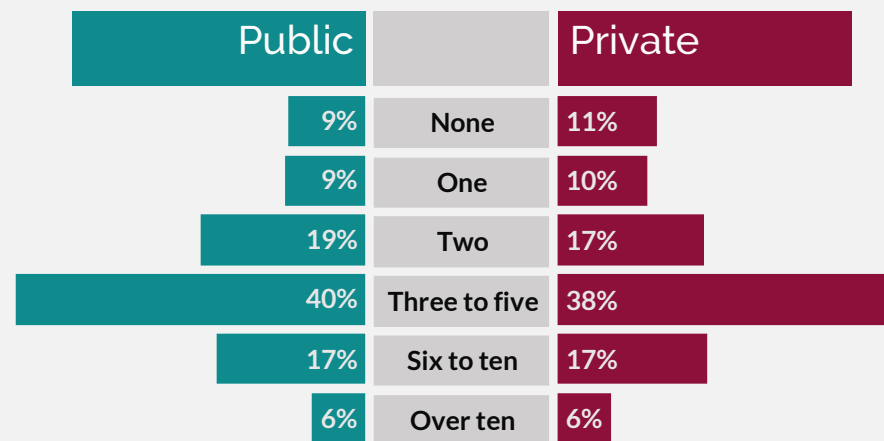
A student's psychographic profile is a predictor of what they will most want in a college and the feelings and emotions they are most likely to experience during the college selection process.



DETAILED FINDINGS

THE CAMPUS VISIT

NUMBER OF CAMPUSES VISITED



Because students visit many campuses in their college search they become quite opinionated and discriminating in terms of the campus visit experience. Approximately 50% of students visit three or more campuses during their college selection process.

BEST TIME OF YEAR TO VISIT?



Students who have been through the process advise future prospective students to visit campuses in the fall for two reasons: 1) they will have the opportunity to interact with other students who are currently enrolled and 2) they will have more time to make their college selection decision.

HOW MUCH DO COLLEGES TRY TO DESIGN CAMPUS VISITS TO APPEAL TO STUDENT FEELINGS / EMOTIONS?

49%
Public Schools

50%
Private Schools

Answered: "Very much"

Approximately 50% of students believe that colleges try to design their campus visit experiences to appeal to the feelings and emotions of prospective students. Do they believe that colleges are successful in this attempt? Data presented later in this report would suggest not so much.



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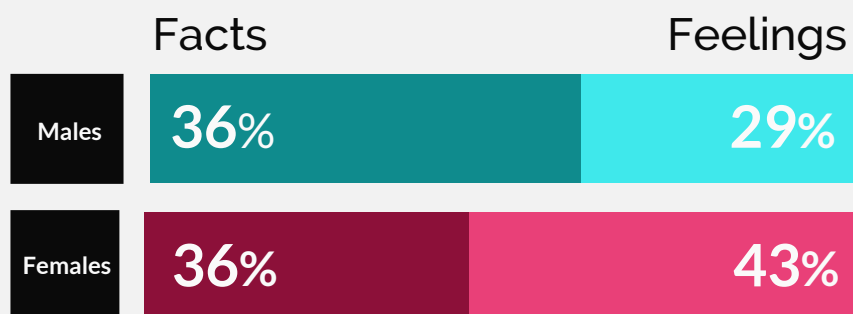
HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?



Note: Institutions that co-sponsored this study received a comprehensive report showing specific experiences that prospective student had with their college and how those experiences made the student feel. This enabled the institution to gauge whether the planned experiences were having the intended effect on student feelings and emotions.

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

WHICH HAD MORE INFLUENCE OVER WHY YOU CHOSE YOUR COLLEGE?



Students need facts and information to make their college selection decision but for many students their final decision will be driven more by how they feel about the college. 43% of females said their feelings about their chosen college were the primary driver in their decision.

For many students (35% of males and 21% of females) the college selection decision was based in equal measure on facts and feelings.

IMPORTANCE OF COLLEGES ATTEMPTING TO UNDERSTAND STUDENT FEELINGS / EMOTIONS?



64%
Public Schools



67%
Private Schools

Answered: "Very much"

Two-thirds of prospective students believe that it is important that colleges attempt to understand their feelings and emotions during the college selection process.

Unfortunately, only about one-in-four students said that colleges attempted to understand their feelings and emotions.

HOW MUCH DO COLLEGES ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND STUDENT FEELINGS / EMOTIONS?



24%
Public Schools



24%
Private Schools

Answered: "Very much"

STUDENT ADVICE TO COLLEGES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THEIR FEELINGS / EMOTIONS

“ I would encourage them all to have an interview with the student and to put them in contact with current students who can give them emotional support.

“ Colleges need to understand how much anxiety students feel about the college selection process.

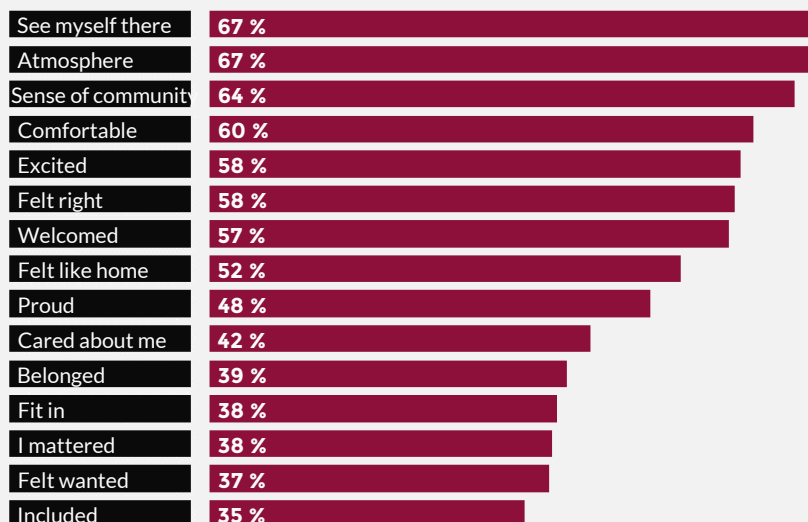
“ Invest the time to make an effort to understand each student; Personalized support staff.

“ Get to know the prospective students you're talking with and be genuine with them.

Students offer many suggestions on how colleges can understand the feelings and emotions they experience during the college selection process.

For example, they encourage colleges to put them in touch with other students who can provide emotional support. They want colleges to acknowledge the anxiety they feel. They want large schools to ease their transition from a small town. They have a desire to be served well emotionally regardless of school size.

FEELINGS ABOUT THE CHOSEN COLLEGE



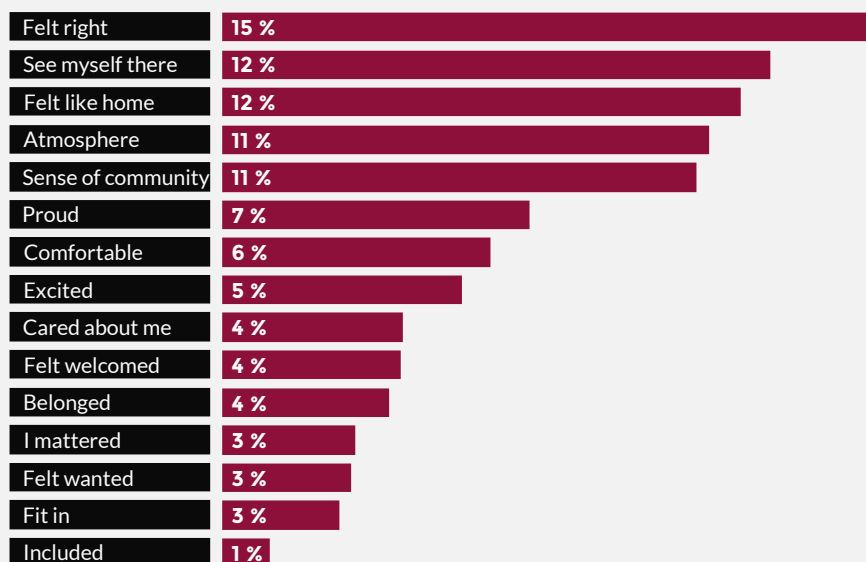
In a series of focus groups that contributed to the development of the quantitative survey instrument for this study, students were asked to articulate the dominant feelings and emotions they associated with their chosen college.

15 key feelings and emotions emerged ranging from “it just felt right” to “I fit in.”

Participants in the national study were asked to identify any and all of these feelings and emotions they associated with their chosen college.

Not surprisingly, students associated multiple feelings and emotions with their chosen college.

SINGLE STRONGEST FEELING

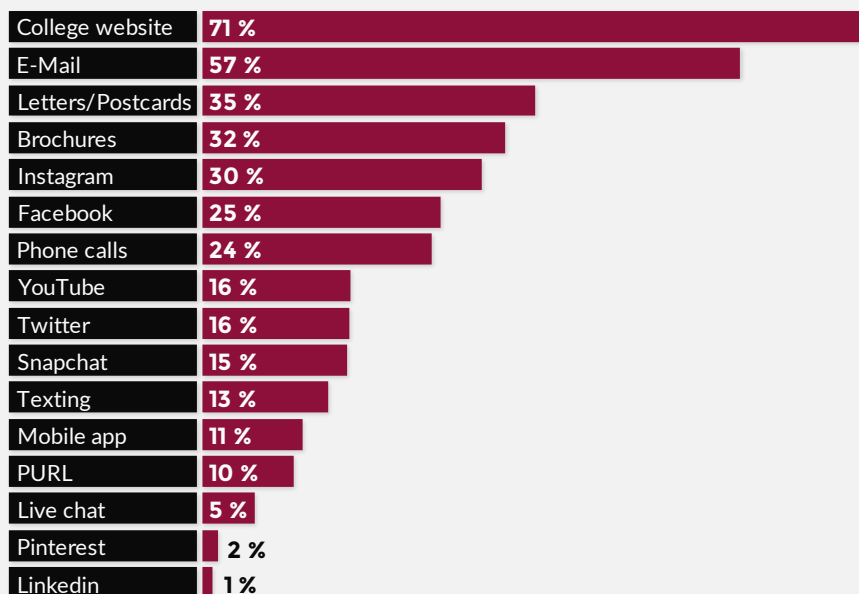


Students were also asked to identify the single strongest feeling they associated with their chosen college. No single feeling dominated the list.

This suggests that because a prospective student's dominant feeling cannot be assumed it is incumbent on the college to try to extract enough information from and about the student to predict and act on what will likely to be the dominant feeling.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

TOP CHANNELS TO FORM / GROW EMOTIONAL CONNECTION



Consumers develop relationships and emotional connections to products and brands over time through a variety of communication channels. The same holds true for a college and its prospective students.

Prospective students were asked to identify the communications channels through which they formed and strengthened their emotional connection to their chosen college prior to enrolling.

Among 16 common print and electronic channels of communication presented in the survey, the top three channels that were most effective in causing students to form or strengthen their emotional connection to their chosen college are the college's website (71%), e-mail (57%) and letters/postcards (35%).

DEALING WITH EMOTION

DID ANY COLLEGE TALK TO YOU ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS?

20%
Public Schools

24%
Private Schools

Answered: "Yes"

How are colleges dealing with the feelings and emotions of prospective students? For the most part, they aren't. Less than one-quarter of students said that the colleges they most seriously considered talked to them about their feelings and emotions and how they would influence their college selection decision.

Students offered many suggestions to colleges to better understand the feelings and emotions that will impact a student college selection decision.

Very simply, they suggest just asking. More specifically, they suggest the use of anonymous surveys, asking students more penetrating and relevant questions on the campus visit survey, being more empathetic and providing more resources that deal with the anxiety and stress of college selection.

DEALING WITH ANXIETY

DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANXIETIES ABOUT THE COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS?

80%
Public Schools

78%
Private Schools

Answered: "Yes"

Eight in ten students say they experienced anxiety during the college selection process. That's not surprising given that college selection is one of the most important decisions they will make in their young lives.

However, no more than 40% of students said that a college attempted to find out about, address or alleviate any anxieties they may have had.

DID ANY COLLEGE ASK ABOUT, ADDRESS OR ATTEMPT TO ALLEVIATE YOUR ANXIETY?

34%
Public Schools

40%
Private Schools

Answered: "Yes"

IF YES, HOW DID IT AFFECT YOUR VIEW OF THE COLLEGE?

78%
Public Schools

82%
Private Schools

Say it made the college more attractive

Prospective students welcome the opportunity to talk with someone at the college about things that concern them. Approximately 80% of prospective students said that it made the college more attractive to them if someone associated with the college attempted to find out about and alleviate their anxieties.

PSYCHO- GRAPHICS

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

Psychographics, conceived decades ago, is the study and classification of people according to their attitudes, aspirations and other psychological criteria. It has been used as a component in predicting consumer buying behavior. Longmire and Company has long utilized psychographics in our other products for the purpose of helping colleges better understand prospective students and enriching their conversations and communications with those students.

The Emotional Motivators survey included questions that captured the student's personality traits, what he or she most wanted in a college and the feelings and emotions he or she experienced during the college selection process.

Four distinct personality profiles emerged from the analysis. The profile groups were then tested to determine associations with what students in each personality profile most wanted in a college and their feelings and emotions during the college selection process.

Warm and Trusting

| ● Self Description | ● What they want in a college | ● Emotions during college selection |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm • Easygoing • Emotional • Compassionate • Trusting • Imaginative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career-oriented • Social • Affordable • Great Location • Fun • Friendly • Accommodating • Exciting • Values • Safe • Personal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried • Rushed • Overwhelmed • Emotional • Confused |

Spontaneous Extrovert

| ● Self Description | ● What they want in a college | ● Emotions during college selection |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous • Risk-taker • Social • Extroverted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party school • Sports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excited • Humbled • Empowered • Satisfied • Involved • Proud |

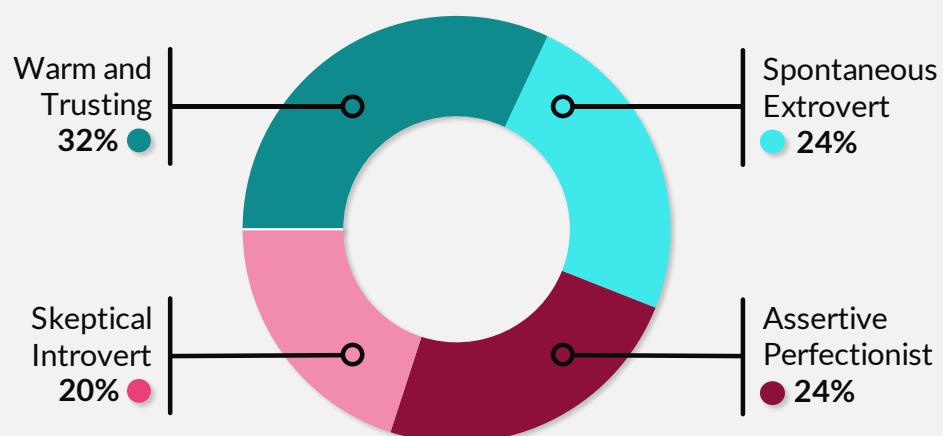
Assertive Perfectionist

| ● Self Description | ● What they want in a college | ● Emotions during college selection |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertive • Ordered • Perfectionist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse • Liberal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angry • Uninvolved • Suspicious |

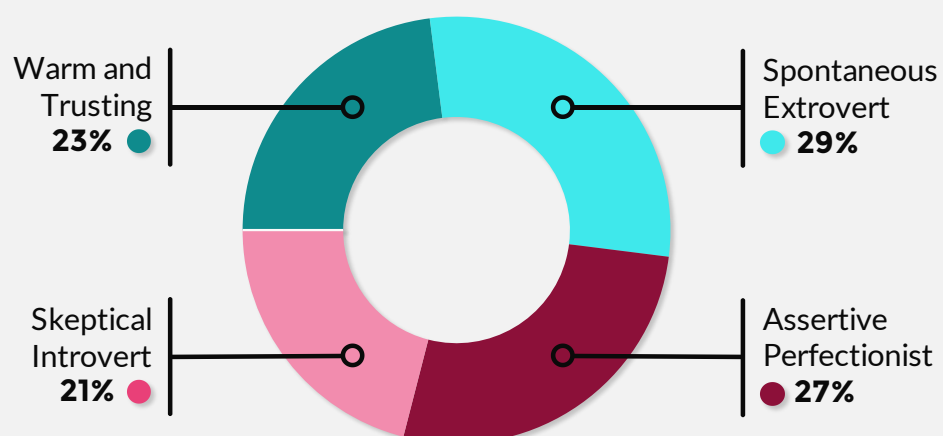
Skeptical Introvert

| ● Self Description | ● What they want in a college | ● Emotions during college selection |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skeptical• Introverted• Private | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prestigious• Challenging• Well-known | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easygoing• Controlled• Efficient• Comfortable• Fun |

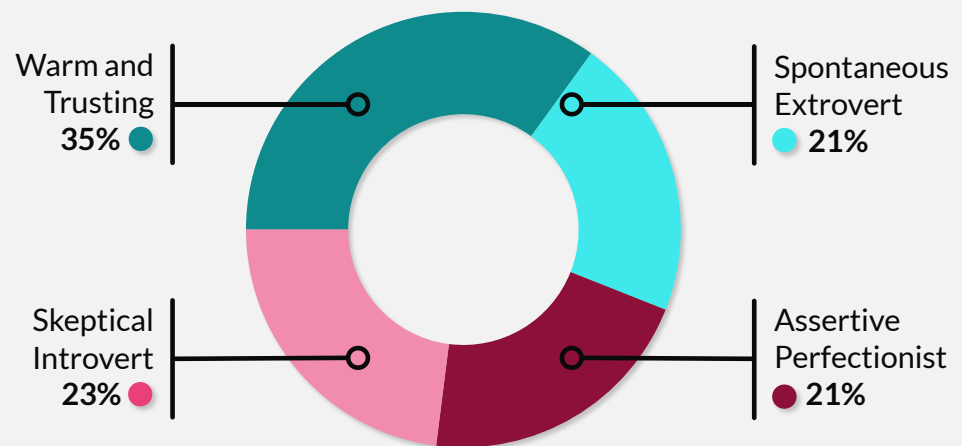
PSYCHOGRAPHICS – PROFILE DISTRIBUTION FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS COMBINED



PSYCHOGRAPHICS – PROFILE DISTRIBUTION FOR MALES



PSYCHOGRAPHICS – PROFILE DISTRIBUTION FOR FEMALES



INFORM AND INVOLVE CURRENT STUDENTS



Conversely, a lack of connection to current students makes prospective students feel lonely, disconnected, unwelcomed and stressed.

IDENTIFY THEIR PASSION AND IMMERSE THEM IN IT

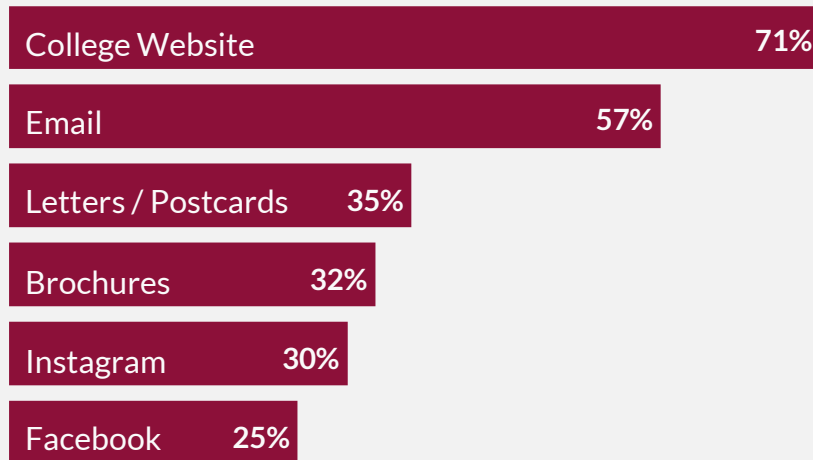


Every student is passionate about something. The key is uncovering their passion and immersing them in it whether it is on your campus, in conversation or through any other form through which you communicate with them.

Whether you are dealing with 2,000 students or 200,000, methods should be instituted (e.g., surveys, emails, applications, interactions with parents, etc.) to extract information about their passions and forge a direct connection with them and your institution.

EXPLOIT AND INVEST FURTHER IN THE TOP THREE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Top channels to form/grow your emotional connection.



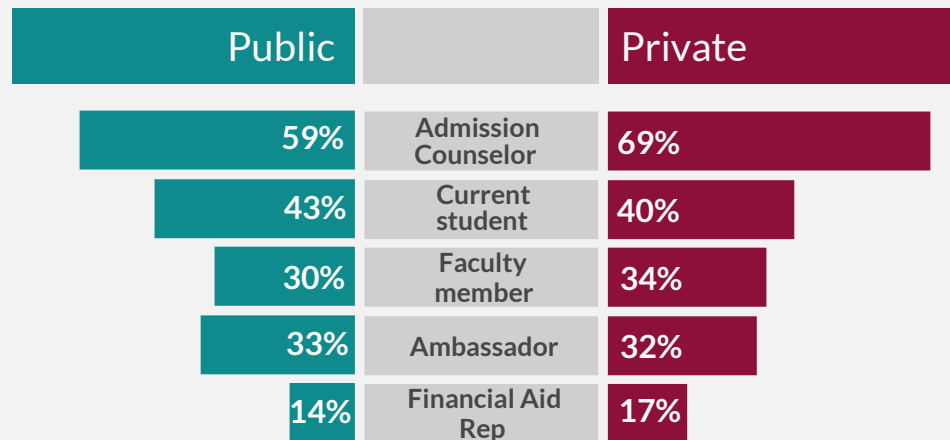
Students say that a college's website, its e-mails and the letters and postcards it sends to them are most responsible for the formation and strengthening of their emotional connection to the college. This is true for students bound for the smallest and largest colleges.

This suggests that the top three should be the first to receive a fresh analysis by the college to determine their level of effectiveness and opportunity for improvement in connecting with prospective students emotionally.

Students say they visit a college's website to obtain information but, more than that, they say want to see and feel a reflection of themselves in images and videos of current students, the campus, the facilities, the extracurricular activities and more.

TRAIN ALL
CUSTOMER-
FACING STAFF TO
PROBE FOR,
DISCUSS AND
ALLEVIATE
STUDENT
ANXIETY

With whom did you have conversations about your stress and anxiety?



Any and all representatives of the college that come in contact with prospective students must be sensitized to the fact that 80% of students are experiencing anxiety and stress about college selection. And they must be informed that students look more favorably on colleges that recognize this and attempt to find out about, address and alleviate their anxieties and stress.

CATEGORIZE PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND CUSTOMIZE THEIR EXPERIENCE



Psychographics

Capture data from individual students that will enable you to leverage the power of psychographic analysis to predict what students will most likely want in a college and the feelings and emotions they will most likely experience during their college selection process. This will enable you to customize your communications and enhance your interactions with students on both a large and small-scale.

NOTES ON THE DATA

Study Co-Sponsors - Publics

BINGHAMTON
UNIVERSITY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



EASTERN
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



NDSU NORTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN INDIANA



Study Co-Sponsors - Privates



DREW



GUILFORD
COLLEGE



LEE  UNIVERSITY



OGLETHORPE



Susquehanna
UNIVERSITY



THE UNIVERSITY
OF TAMPA



WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES IN GROUPS

Data and charts in this report are segmented by whether the student is bound for a four-year public or private college or university. A thorough statistical analysis was performed to uncover statistical differences in subgroups such as males and females, geography, public vs. private-bound students and other segments that were available in the record level data provided by co-sponsoring institutions.

While statistical differences in groups were found, in most cases they did not signal a practical difference.



ABOUT LONGMIRE AND COMPANY

ABOUT LONGMIRE AND COMPANY

Longmire and Company, founded in 1986, has worked with over 500 public and private four-year institutions throughout the United States.

Our work centers on yield and conversion by providing enrollment managers and higher education marketing professionals with the tools, information, products and training they need to grow and control enrollment.

Longmire and Company is regularly invited to present at national enrollment and admissions conferences (NACAC, ACT and others) as well as a number of higher education state and regional conferences throughout the year.

The work of Longmire and Company has been reported in numerous media outlets such as the Chronicle of Higher Education, U.S. News and World Report, University Business Magazine, Fortune, CBS MoneyWatch and others.

At Longmire and Company, we believe that the conversations between prospective students and the colleges they are considering can be much richer and more fruitful for both.

Everything we do is predicated on that belief.

OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

INTERACTIVE COUNSELOR TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Our on-campus Interactive Training Workshops dramatically improve the performance of counselors and staff in areas such as effective communication with students and parents, applying creative entrepreneurship to their jobs, validating past and planned actions against outcomes and discovering and leveraging the motivations of students (and themselves).

YIELD ENHANCEMENT

Our Yield Enhancement System (YES) gathers critical information from students at a crucial point in their college selection process - after they have applied. YES is a tool to understand how individual students will make their college selection decision - and how you can best present the value propositions of your institution.

CUSTOMIZED NON-MATRIC STUDIES

Our Admitted Student Research is a cost-effective, fully customized and turn-key solution for any institution wanting to understand why their admitted students did or did not enroll. It is complimented by our analysis and recommendations for areas that can be fixed, changed and improved.

SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT

If you don't measure it, you can't manage it. Our service quality assessments are industry-fresh and reflect the current customer service demands and expectations of students and parents both pre- and post-enrollment.

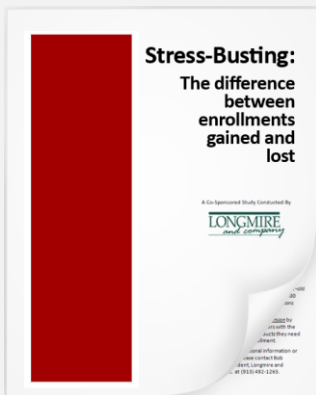
NATIONAL CO-SPONSORED STUDIES

Higher education marketing professionals and enrollment managers are continually faced with new and changing market conditions about which they need actionable data and insight quickly. Longmire and Company co-sponsored studies fill the need.

Through our annual studies we are able to explore topics of critical interest to participating institutions. By participating, co-sponsoring institutions obtain information about their pools of prospective students and how their data compares to colleges around the country. These studies are designed to produce individualized actionable information for each co-sponsor.

JOIN OUR SUMMER/FALL 2018 STUDY

2018 CO-SPONSORED STUDY



In the summer and fall of 2018 Longmire and Company will conduct our latest national higher education study, "Stress-Busting: A new way for any college to differentiate itself in an area that prospective students (and parents) will like and value."

This study will uncover ways in which colleges can isolate and respond to the varieties of stress and anxiety experienced by prospective students (and parents) during the college selection process – even for very large pools.

We invite you to join the study as a co-sponsor. As a co-sponsoring institution you can capture data that's unique to your college and will provide you with actionable data and insight into important, impactful changes you can make to all forms of your communications, campus visit experiences, customer service, processes and more.

CONTACT INFORMATION



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