Gen Z's Changing Journey to Enrollment

Understanding students in 2022 amid a culture of continuous change

As universities adapt to consistent, unprecedented changes to the enrollment landscape prompted by the pandemic, Gen Z continues to forge new paths to enrollment, transforming another once-familiar process. Accelerated adoption of technology, new attitudes about testing, and skepticism toward the value of college represent a paradigm shift in recruiting. It is critically important—and extremely difficult—for enrollment leaders to adopt student-savvy and nimble practices to meet the needs of today's students.

Explore this infographic to learn about key findings from our analysis of 5,000 survey responses from recent high school graduates and behavioral data from the 1.5B+ student interactions that EAB analyzes annually.

LESSON 1:
Gen Z relies heavily on self-service tools.

#1
Students ranked college websites as their #1 source when making an enrollment decision

75%
of students attended at least one virtual tour

+26%
Percentage-point increase in students who have taken a virtual tour since 2020

Takeaway: Your web presence is more important than ever.

Your website, virtual tour, search engine optimization, and presence on college search websites play a central role in how students and families will assess your institution.

LESSON 2:
Parents play a more vital role than ever.

+11%
Increase in percentage of students naming parents or guardians in their top five sources since 2020

+50%
Likelihood of a student to apply if their parent responded to an EAB marketing campaign

-23%
First-generation students are 23% less likely to name parents as a top source than non-first-generation students are

Takeaway: Build robust parent communication streams.

Establish multichannel parent communication streams starting in sophomore year. Early parent communication streams can help you lay the foundation for a constructive relationship with key recruitment influencers.

LESSON 3:
Competition for students' attention and interest is intensifying.

7
Average number of applications submitted per student

64%
of students would be motivated to visit a college if offered a $1,000 scholarship to do so

15%
of students applied to a school specifically because it was test-optional

Takeaway: Personalized, responsive marketing can help you win students' attention.

It's increasingly difficult to win students' hearts and minds at every stage of recruitment. Personalized marketing can help you deepen connections with students by delivering the right message, at the right time, through the right channel.

LESSON 4:
Concerns about the cost of college continue to rise.

36%
of students selected their institution for its affordable tuition, up slightly from 35% in 2020

-7%
Percentage-point decrease in survey participants attending college since 2017

21%
of students submitted FAFSA info only for the school they decided to attend

Takeaway: The pandemic exacerbated financial concerns.

Encourage all students to submit FAFSA information to your school, and proactively reach out to students who are likely to qualify for need-based aid who haven't submitted their FAFSA to you. Look for opportunities to articulate your value proposition effectively.

LESSON 5:
Recruitment no longer ends at enrollment.

+8%
Increase in students who chose to enroll at their school because of its "beautiful campus" in 2022

+20%
more college freshmen felt at least somewhat satisfied with their college experience in 2022 compared to 2020

60%
of college freshmen don't feel extremely satisfied or dissatisfied with their college experience in 2022

Takeaway: Students are hungry for experience and connections.

Today's students want a fun and immersive post-pandemic experience from their college. Amp up your communications about the vibrancy of life on your campus.

Learn how Enroll360 can help you engage and recruit Gen Z at **eab.com/enroll360**.

EAB

Explore the full white paper for more data on changing Gen Z perceptions and behaviors.

eab.com/gen-z-enrollment