EAB

INSIGHT PAPER

Findings from EAB's Entering Class 2022 Survey

A Snapshot of Priorities, Practices, and Outcomes at the Nation's Enrollment Shops

Enroll360

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Table of Contents

An overview of the survey on which this report is based 4

A note on the structure of this report 5

Six takeaways for enrollment leaders 6

Enrollment leaders' responses to questions on 13 topics

1. Top enrollment objectives 7
2. Goal attainment 10
3. Causes of shortfalls in headcount 13
4. Causes of shortfalls in net tuition revenue 16
5. Impact of COVID on enrollment performance 19
6. Changes to application processes 22
7. Changes to admit criteria 25
8. Changes to financial aid strategy 28
9. Change in number of financial aid appeals 31
10. Reasons for financial aid appeals 34
11. Changes in yield management 37
12. Changes in strategy made this year 40
13. Planned changes in strategy for next year 43

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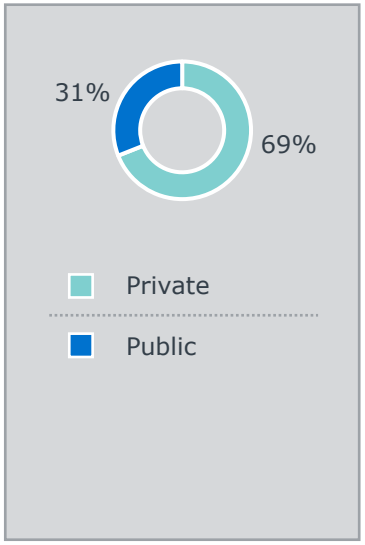
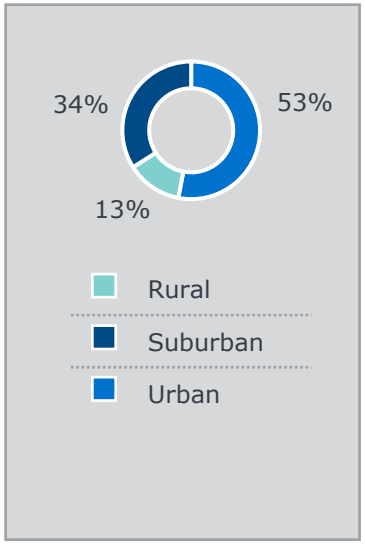
EAB's 2022 Entering Class Survey

Overview of Participating Institutions

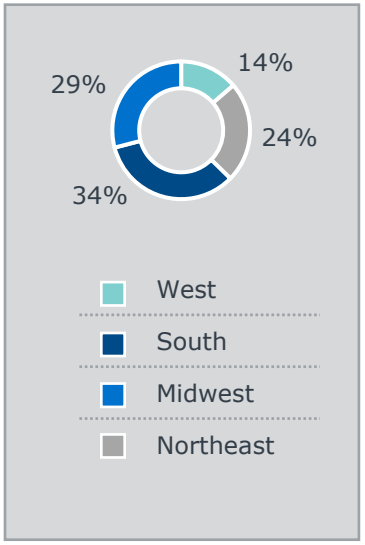
By Type (Control)



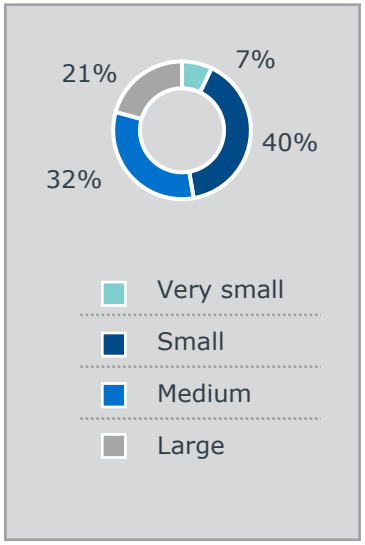
By Setting



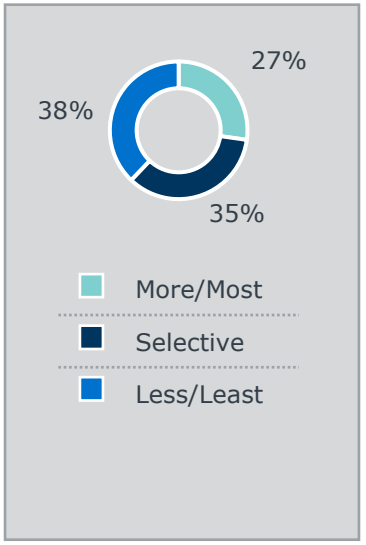
By Region



By Size



By Selectivity



241
participating colleges and universities

Data gathered
September 28 to October 28, 2022

Contextual note: Data collection occurred during the third enrollment cycle of the COVID pandemic

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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A Note on the Structure of This Report

The Data for Each Question Is Cut by School Type, Selectivity, and Size

Example: Question 1, Enrollment Leaders' Top Objectives

One Page for Each School Segment Cut

Indicates data cut by school type (public, private)

Indicates data cut by school selectivity

Indicates data cut by school size

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Six Takeaways for Enrollment Leaders

Summary Observations from the Survey

1 **Missed goals**

More than half of admissions teams missed both their headcount and tuition revenue goals (one notable exception being those at large institutions, which, more often than not, met both objectives).

2 **A drop in applications**

Around a third of schools saw fewer applicants—an especially remarkable finding given that the number of schools students are applying to, on a per-student basis, is increasing.

3 **Intense competition**

The two explanations schools most commonly gave for missing their enrollment goals were related to increased competition from other institutions, in the form of 1) more generous financial aid and 2) expanded admit pools.

Daunting challenges…

4 **Many schools are using more list sources**

Many admissions teams are increasing the number of list sources they are using, this being the second most common strategic change they reported adopting for entering classes 2022 and 2023.

5 **Widespread change to application processes**

A majority of schools made changes to their application processes for entering class 2022, with removal of barriers to application being an especially common focus of their efforts.

6 **Yield is increasingly a battle fought on many fronts**

Admissions teams are simultaneously pursuing a wide variety of approaches to improve yield performance, showing a degree of multifacetedness in this effort that is unusual compared to other core admissions functions.

…being met with a robust response

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Enrollment Leaders' Top Objectives

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Interest in transfers

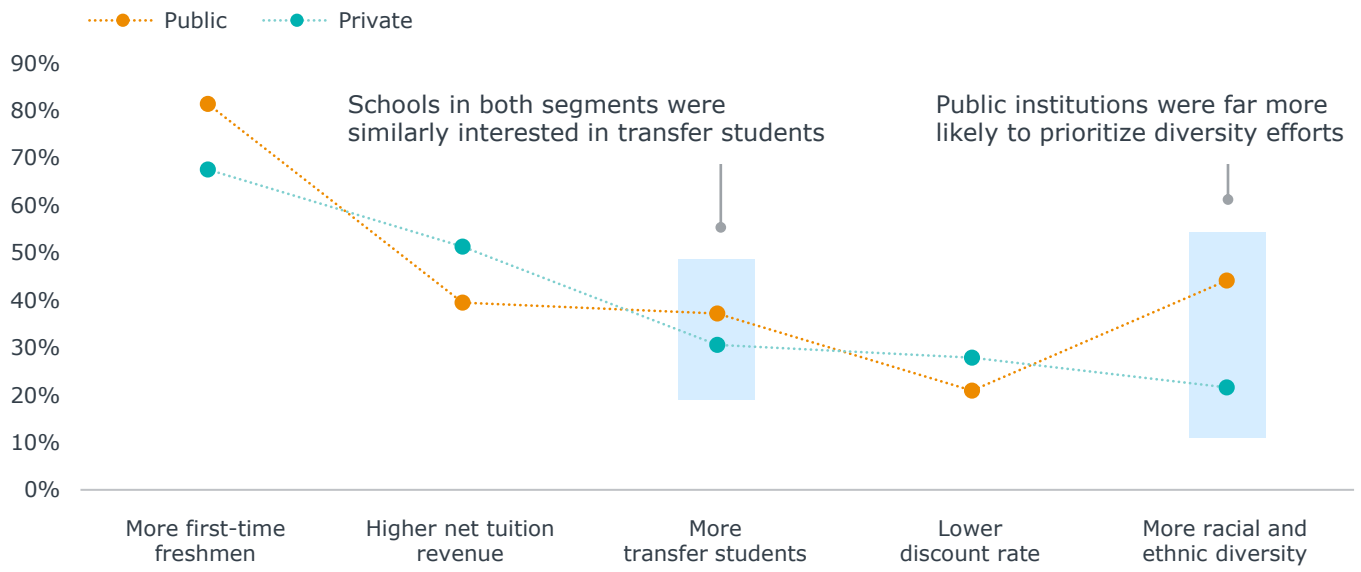
Both public and private institutions placed a similarly high priority on the recruitment of transfer students—a sign of the growing attention this population has received as competition over students heats up.

Differing on diversity

Public institutions were far more likely to prioritize boosting racial and ethnic diversity; it was the second highest priority for publics as compared to the fifth highest for private institutions.

What Were Enrollment Leaders' Top Objectives for Entering Class 2022?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Objectives Cited by at Least 25% of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Objectives Cited by Fewer than 25% of Respondents in All Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Objective)

More students with greater ability to pay (20%)	Higher % international students (7%)
More students in specific academic programs (19%)	Better gender balance (5%)
Higher % in-state students (14%)	Higher SAT/ACT scores (4%)
Higher % out-of-state students (10%)	

1) The question asked: "Considering the list of enrollment objectives and challenges below, please select up to three that were top priorities for your institution for Entering Class 2022."

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Enrollment Leaders' Top Objectives

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Leveraging pricing power

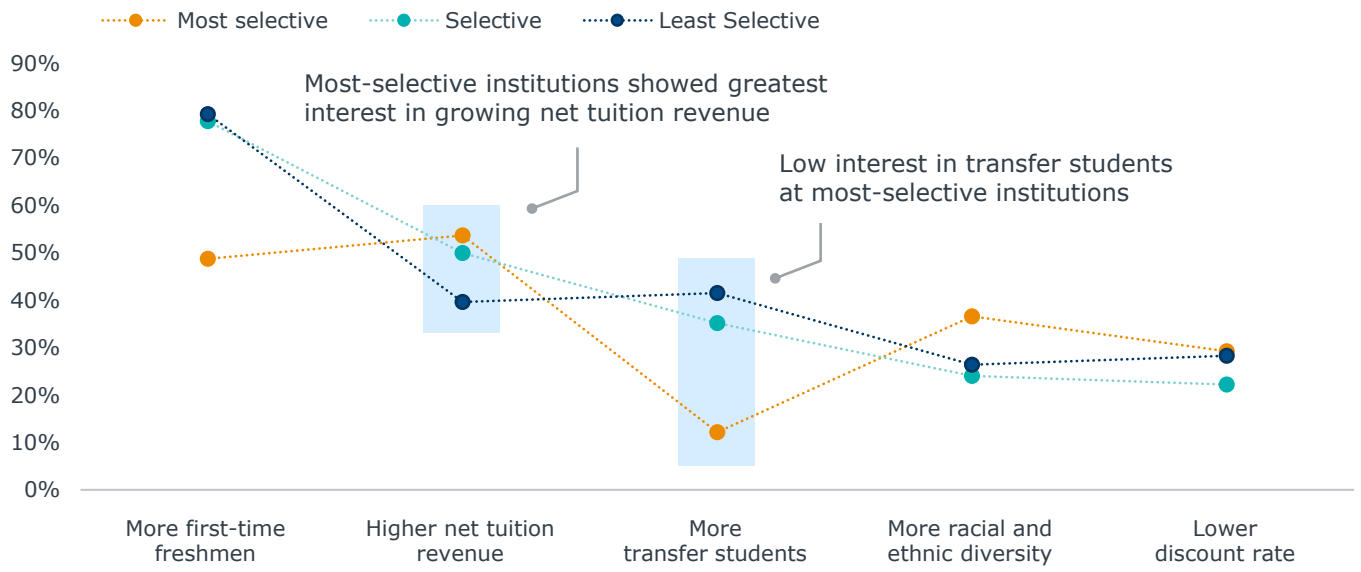
Most-selective and selective institutions were more focused on increasing net tuition revenue than were least-selective institutions, presumably a sign of demand (and pricing power) tracking with selectivity.

Uneven attention on transfers

Highly selective institutions showed markedly lower interest in transfer students. This suggests possible running room for them on this rich source of underrepresented students (the recruitment of whom is a top priority for many highly selective schools).

What Were Enrollment Leaders' Top Objectives for Entering Class 2022?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Objectives Cited by at Least 25% of Respondents in One or More Segments



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Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Enrollment Leaders' Top Objectives

By School Size

Takeaways

A focus on revenue

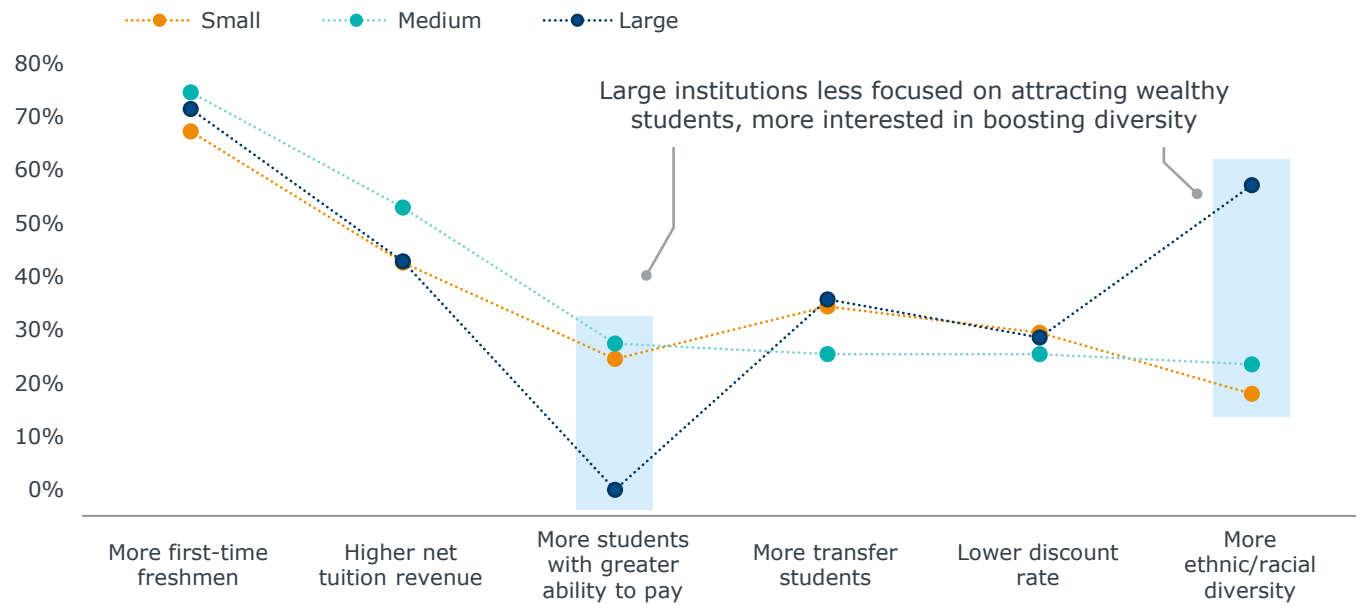
Attracting students with a higher ability to pay was a top priority for more than a quarter of small and medium schools (consistent with their focus on increasing net tuition revenue, the second most commonly cited objective of schools in both segments).

A distinct path for large schools

Large schools differed markedly from their small and medium counterparts, placing a much higher priority on boosting diversity (a goal that was, for large institutions, second only to enrolling more first-time freshmen). Large institutions also showed a correspondingly lower emphasis on attracting affluent students.

What Were Enrollment Leaders' Top Objectives for Entering Class 2022?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Objectives Cited by at Least 25% of Respondents in One or More Segments



Objectives Cited by Fewer than 25% of Respondents in Any Segment
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Objective)

More students in specific academic programs (19%)	Higher % international students (7%)
Higher % in-state students (14%)	Better gender balance (5%)
Higher % out-of-state students (10%)	Higher SAT/ACT scores (4%)

1) The question asked: "Considering the list of enrollment objectives and challenges below, please select up to three that were top priorities for your institution for Entering Class 2022."

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Goal Attainment

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

A tough year

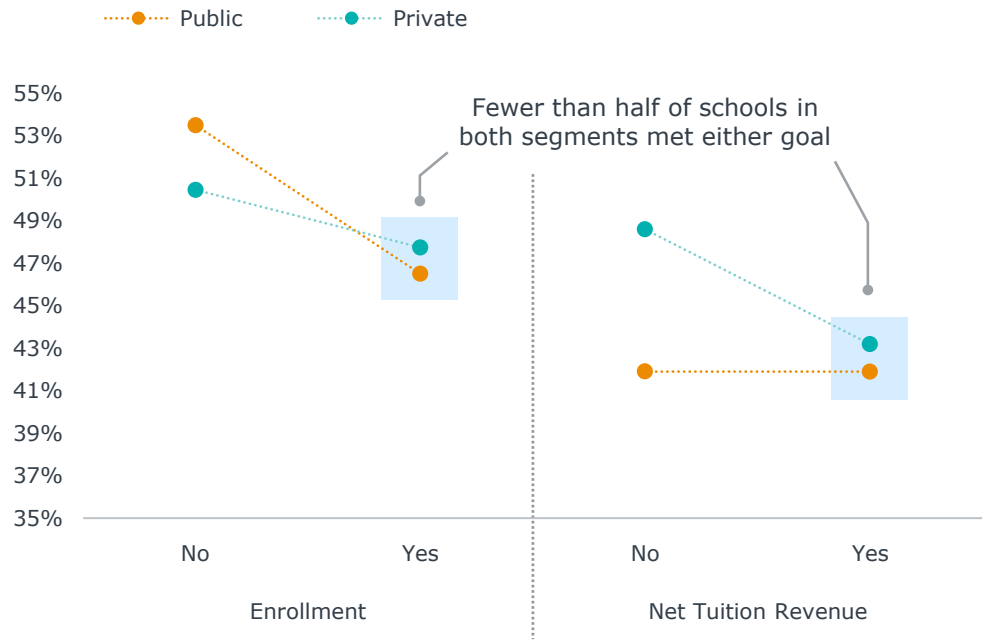
While private institutions fared slightly better than public institutions, schools in both segments had a difficult year, with fewer than half meeting their enrollment or net tuition revenue goals.

Trading revenue for volume

Both public and private institutions missed their revenue goals by a wider margin than their enrollment goals, a probable indication of schools having had to discount more heavily than expected to make their classes.

Did Enrollment Leaders Achieve Their Headcount and Revenue Goals?[1]

Percentage of Schools, by Control



1) The question asked was "Did you achieve your enrollment and net tuition revenue goals?" Values for respondents who reported being unsure are not shown.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Question 2

Goal Attainment

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Prestige wins out

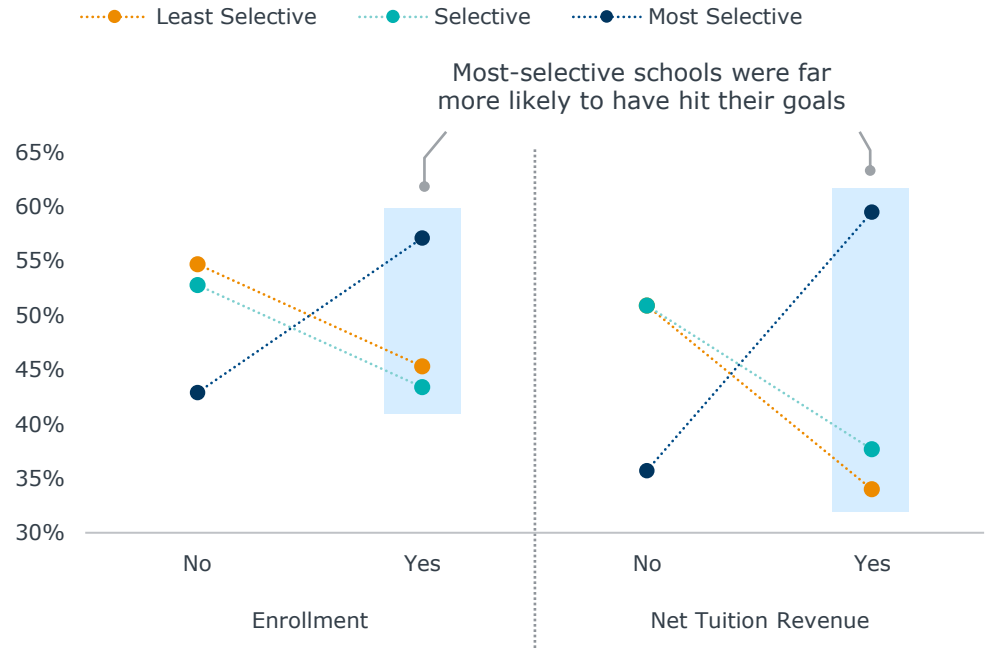
- Most-selective schools performed far better on both enrollment and NTR goals than did less-selective institutions, continuing a broader trend we've seen in recent years (e.g., public flagships demonstrating consist gains relative to other segments).

Darker days for the rest of us

- Schools in both the selective and least-selective categories showed similarly low likelihood to have met either enrollment or NTR goals.

Did Enrollment Leaders Achieve Their Headcount and Revenue Goals?[1]

Percentage of Schools, by Selectivity



1) The question asked was "Did you achieve your enrollment and net tuition revenue goals?" Values for respondents who reported being unsure are not shown.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Question 2

Goal Attainment

By School Size

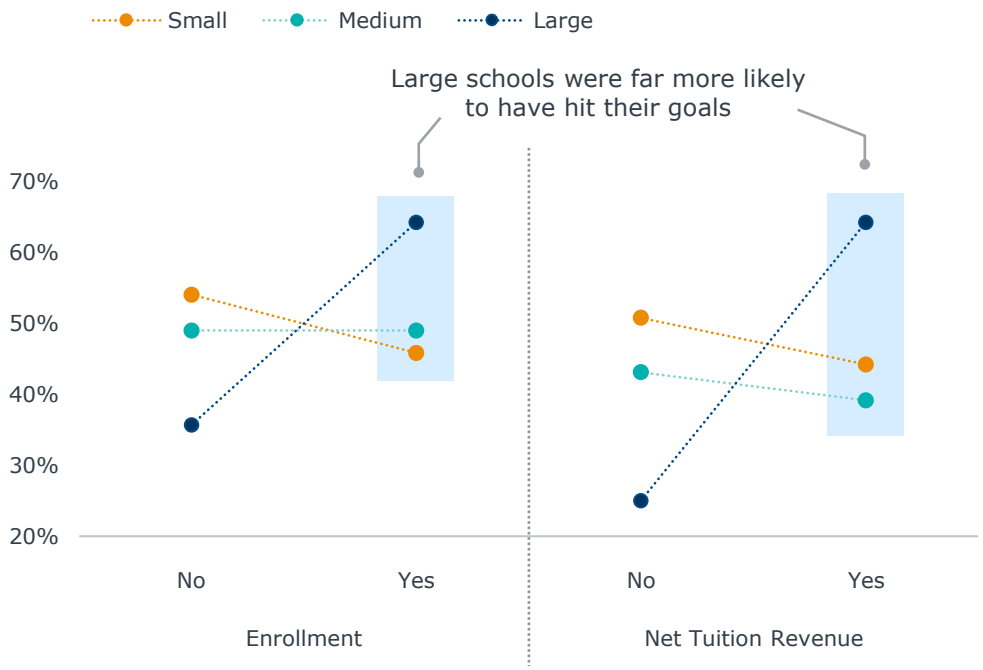
Takeaways

Large institutions fared better

- Large institutions outperformed small and medium institutions by a wide margin, mirroring results seen for schools when cut by selectivity (see preceding page). Some of this effect is likely due to "flight" of students to schools with greater name recognition during the pandemic—a possible result of colleges and students' reduced ability to participate in in-person recruitment activities, on which small and medium-sized schools are especially dependent.

Did Enrollment Leaders Achieve Their Headcount and Revenue Goals?[1]

Percentage of Schools, by Size



1) The question asked was "Did you achieve your enrollment and net tuition revenue goals?" Values for respondents who reported being unsure are not shown.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Causes of Shortfalls in Headcount

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Publics versus privates

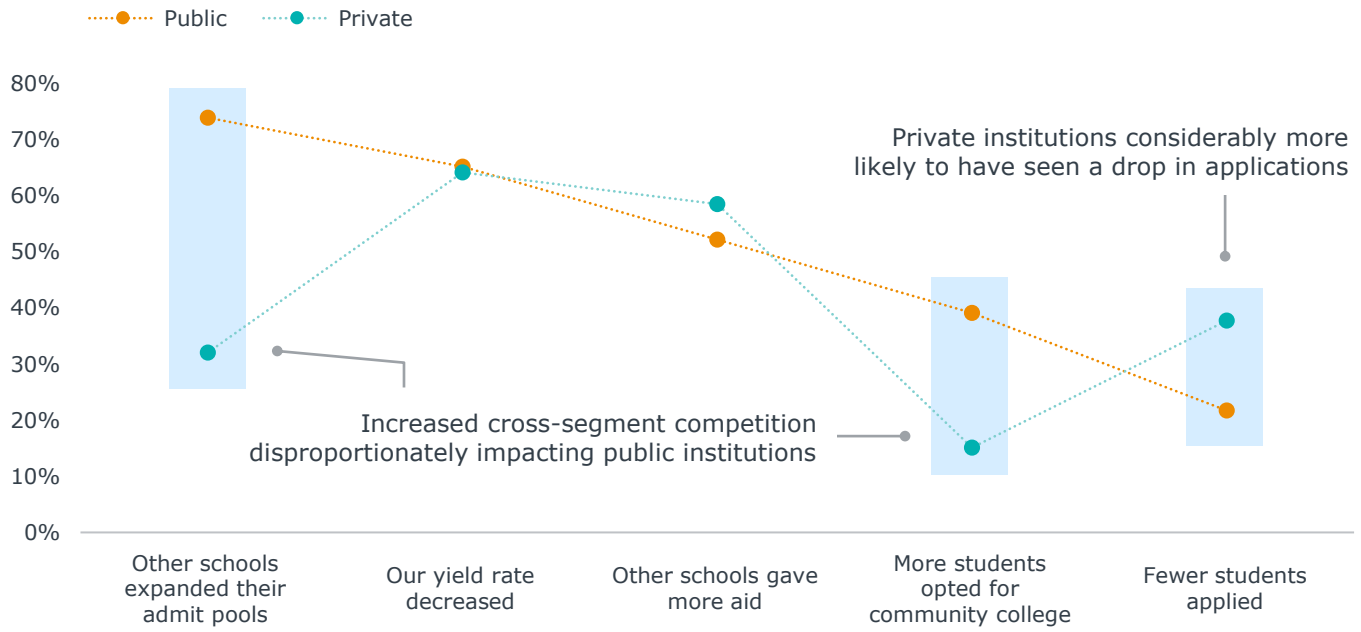
Publics were less likely to have reported reduced applicant numbers but were far more likely to have cited other schools' expanded admit pools as a factor contributing to enrollment shortfalls. It seems likely that the trends are connected, i.e., that private institutions were admitting more students from public institutions' core prospect populations in order to make their classes. The phenomenon of students going "out of segment" also manifested in institutions losing more students to community colleges, a trend that was far more likely to have impacted public institutions.

Application drops

A considerable number of publics and privates saw a drop in applications, likely a combined impact of demographic change, reduced rates of college-going, and the pandemic.

How Did Enrollment Leaders Account for Shortfalls in Headcount?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Factors Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents



Factors Cited by Fewer than One-Third of Respondents in All Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Factor)

Other schools provided earlier awards (17%)	Other (7%)
Free tuition at public schools (15%)	No proxy for missing test scores (1%)
Fewer students were admissible (11%)	

1) The question asked was "What factors would you say contributed to your lower than targeted enrollment goals? (Select all that apply.)" The question was asked only of respondents who said they did not achieve their enrollment goals.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Causes of Shortfalls in Headcount

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Cross-segment competition

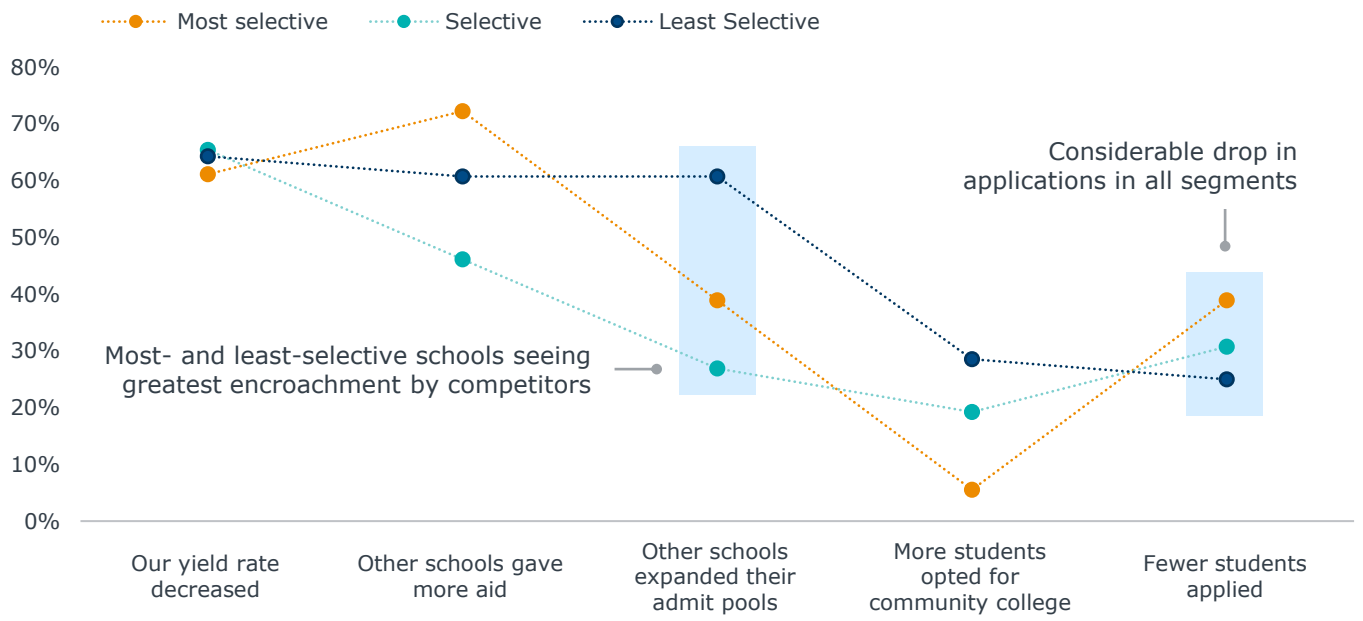
Is appears that applicant and admit pools are increasingly overlapping across school segments. Many institutions in all segments report other institutions' expanded admit pools as an important factor in their enrollment shortfalls. Many also cited other schools' more generous aid offers as a key cause.

Expanded range for selectives?

Schools in the "selective" segment were least likely to report losing enrollment due to other schools' more generous aid awards or expanded admit pools—possibly because they (selectives) were most likely to be the ones discounting aggressively and significantly expanding their admit pools.

How Did Enrollment Leaders Account for Shortfalls in Headcount?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Factors Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents



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Causes of Shortfalls in Headcount

By School Size

Takeaways

Aid played a key role

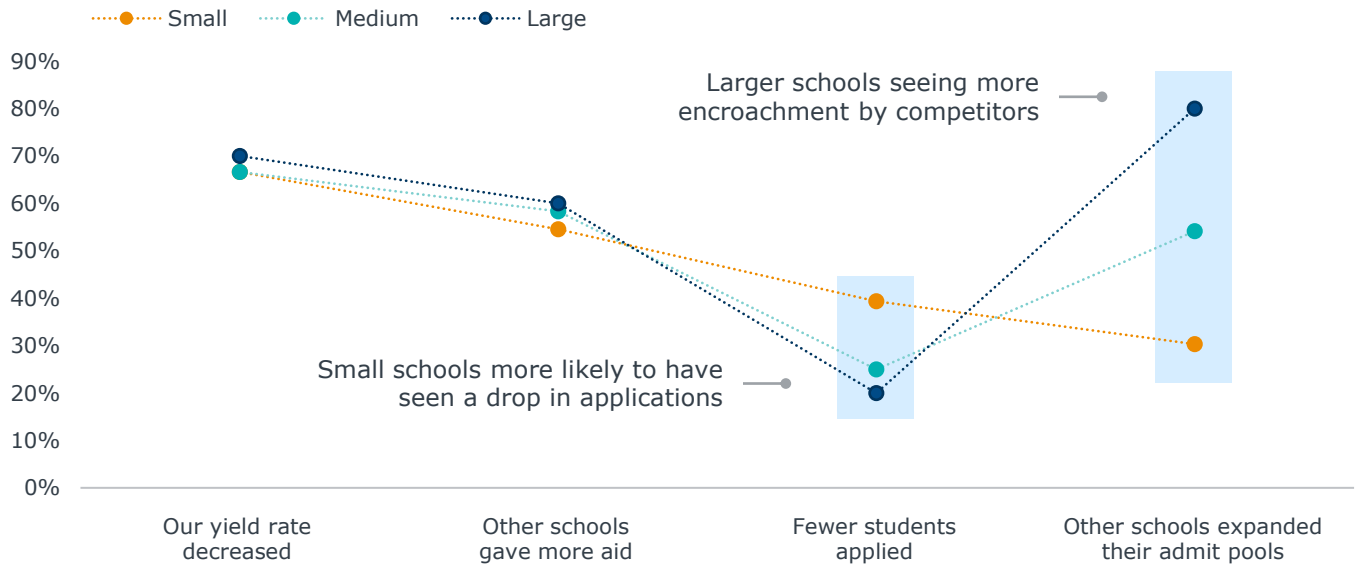
A very similar proportion of schools in all size categories (and a majority in each case) cited other schools' more generous aid offers as a key factor explaining enrollment shortfalls, suggesting pronounced price sensitivity on the part of students.

Differing dynamics on overlap

Schools across the three size categories differed markedly on how much of their enrollment shortfalls they attributed to other institutions' expanded admit pools; for large institutions it was the single most important factor, by a wide margin, while for small institutions it was in fourth place (cited by around 50 percentage points fewer small institutions relative to large schools).

How Did Enrollment Leaders Account for Shortfalls in Headcount?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Factors Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents



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Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Causes of Shortfalls in Net Tuition Revenue

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Encroachment on publics' turf

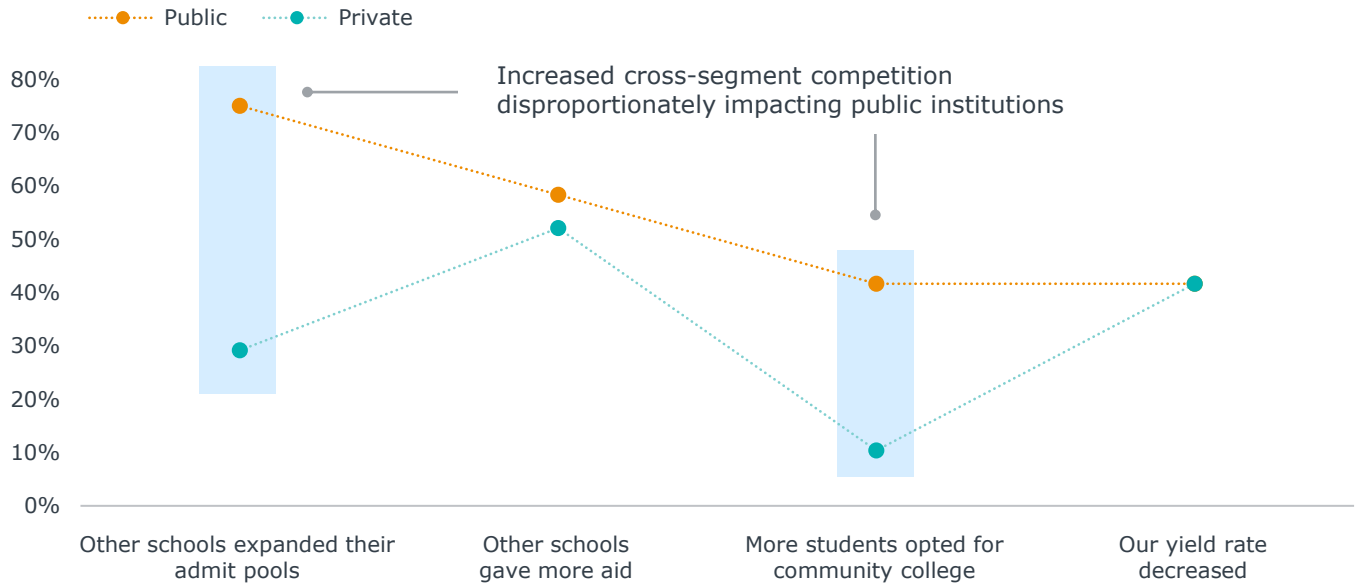
Public institutions were far more likely than privates to cite other schools' expanded admit pools as a key reason for underperformance on net tuition revenue. One possible explanation for this is that privates, which were more likely to have seen drops in their application numbers, were reaching further into public institutions' historical prospect pools for additional enrollment. Another is the "defection" of public institution students to community colleges.

An aid battle for privates

For privates, the number one factor accounting for underperformance on net tuition revenue was other schools' more generous aid offers—a factor far more important for privates than other schools' expanded admit pools.

How Did Enrollment Leaders Account for Shortfalls in Net Tuition Revenue?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Factors Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents



Factors Cited by Fewer than One-Third of Respondents in Both Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Factor)

Fewer students applied (27%)	Fewer students were admissible (12%)
Other (18%)	Other schools provided earlier awards (10%)
Free tuition at public schools (15%)	

1) The question asked was "What factors would you say contributed to your lower than targeted net tuition revenue goals? (Select all that apply.)" The question was asked only of those who said they did not achieve their net tuition revenue goals.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Causes of Shortfalls in Net Tuition Revenue

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Competing on price

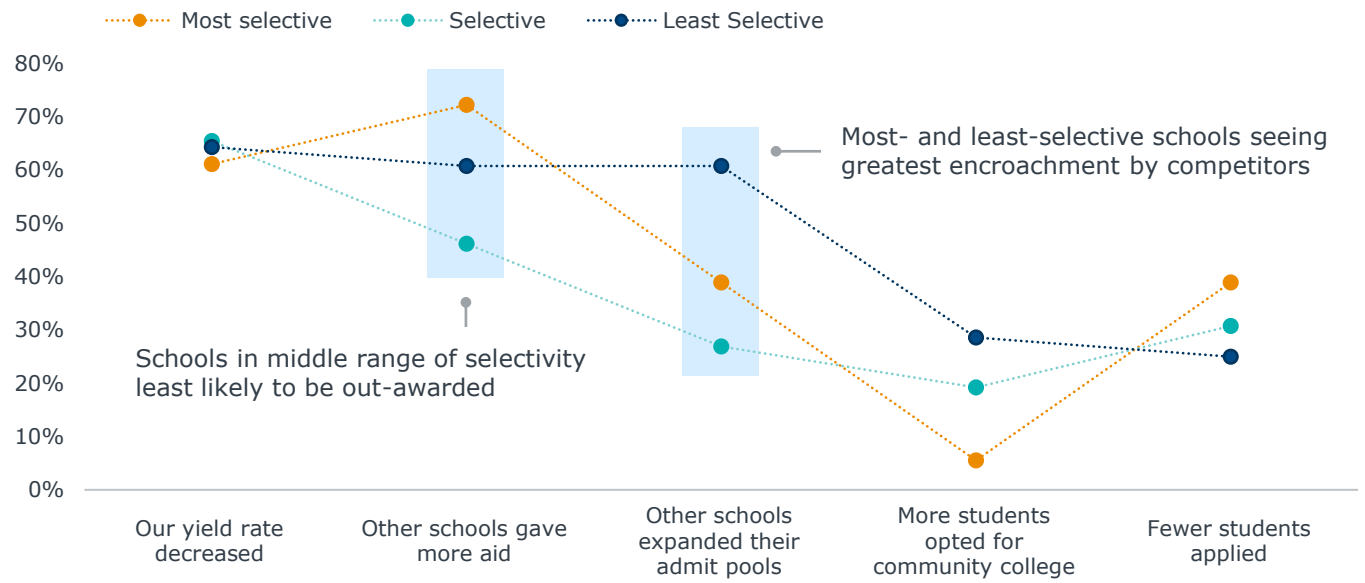
Schools in the middle range of selectivity were least likely to lose net tuition revenue due to other institutions' more generous aid awarding. One likely explanation is that mid-range institutions discounted more heavily than their competitors in other segments.

Increasing overlap in admits

Most-selective and least-selective institutions were considerably more likely to attribute disappointing performance on NTR to other schools' expanded admit pools. One possible inference here is that schools in the "selective" category were the most aggressive in pursuing students who traditionally would have attended schools in the other two segments.

How Did Enrollment Leaders Account for Shortfalls in Net Tuition Revenue?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Factors Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents



Factors Cited by Fewer than One-Third of Respondents in All Segments
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1) The question asked was "What factors would you say contributed to your lower than targeted net tuition revenue goals? (Select all that apply.)" The question was asked only of those who said they did not achieve their net tuition revenue goals.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Causes of Shortfalls in Net Tuition Revenue

By School Size

Takeaways

Dueling discount rates

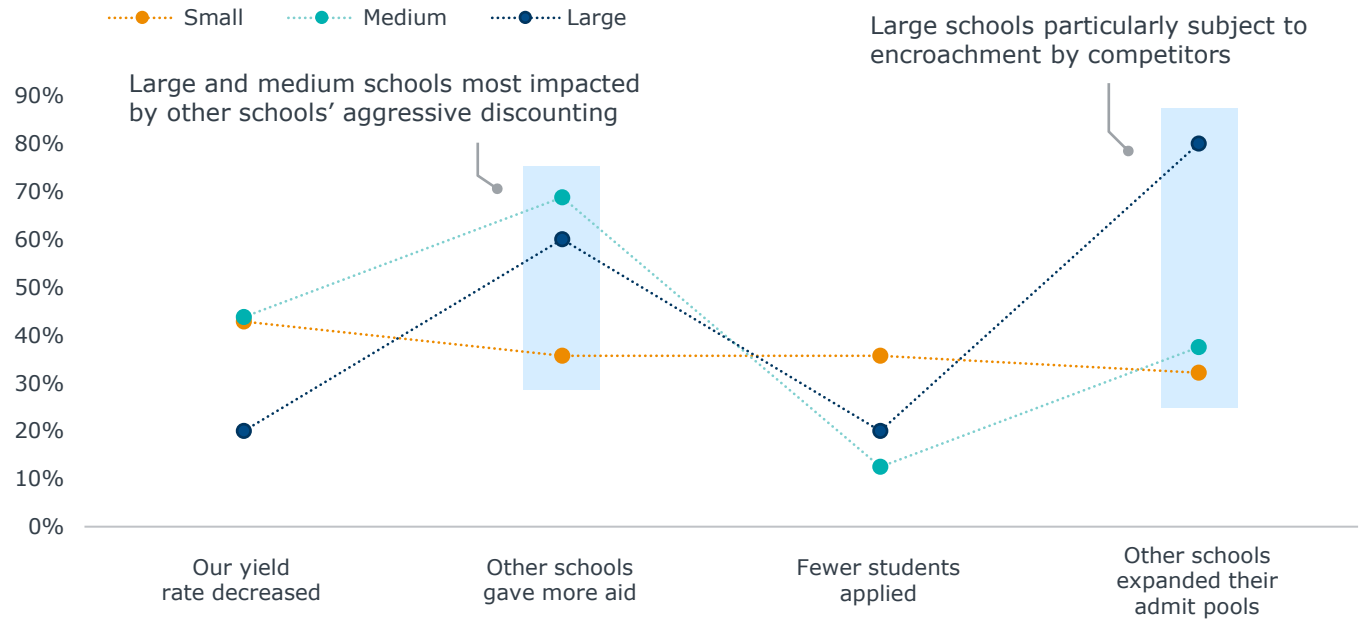
A high percentage of schools identified competitors' more generous aid awarding as an important factor undermining their NTR, this being the first and second most frequently cited cause for medium and large institutions respectively.

Large schools in the crosshairs

A far higher proportion of large schools cited other institutions' expanded admit pools as an important driver of underperformance on NTR. This suggests that large institutions are a primary target in the fight over a shrinking pool of college-goers.

How Did Enrollment Leaders Account for Shortfalls in Net Tuition Revenue?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Factors Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents



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Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Question 5

Impact of COVID on Enrollment Performance

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Shared concerns

A large percentage of public and private institutions rated student mental health and staffing shortages as top pandemic-related impacts on their enrollment performance, with a high level of consensus on these points across the two segments.

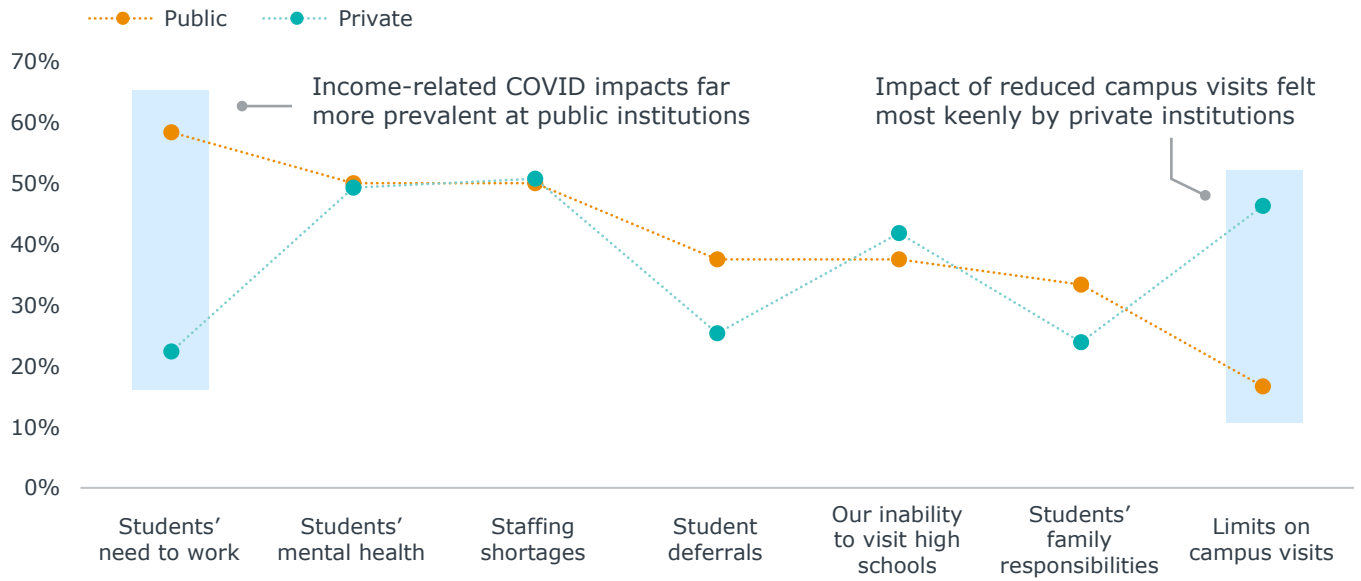
Unique challenges

Public institutions were far more likely than privates to cite students' need to work as a key COVID-related detriment to enrollment outcomes.

Private institutions were far more likely to cite students' limited ability to visit campus as having negatively impacted their enrollment outcomes.

How Did the Pandemic Impact Enrollment Performance?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Factors Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Factors Cited by Fewer than One-Third of Respondents in Both Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Factor)

Student learning loss (19%)	In no way that we can identify (9%)
Travel limitations for students (14%)	Restricted student services (9%)
Other (10%)	Housing changes (8%)

1) The question asked was "Were there any lingering effects of COVID-19 that contributed to missing your goal(s)?"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Impact of COVID on Enrollment Performance

By School Selectivity

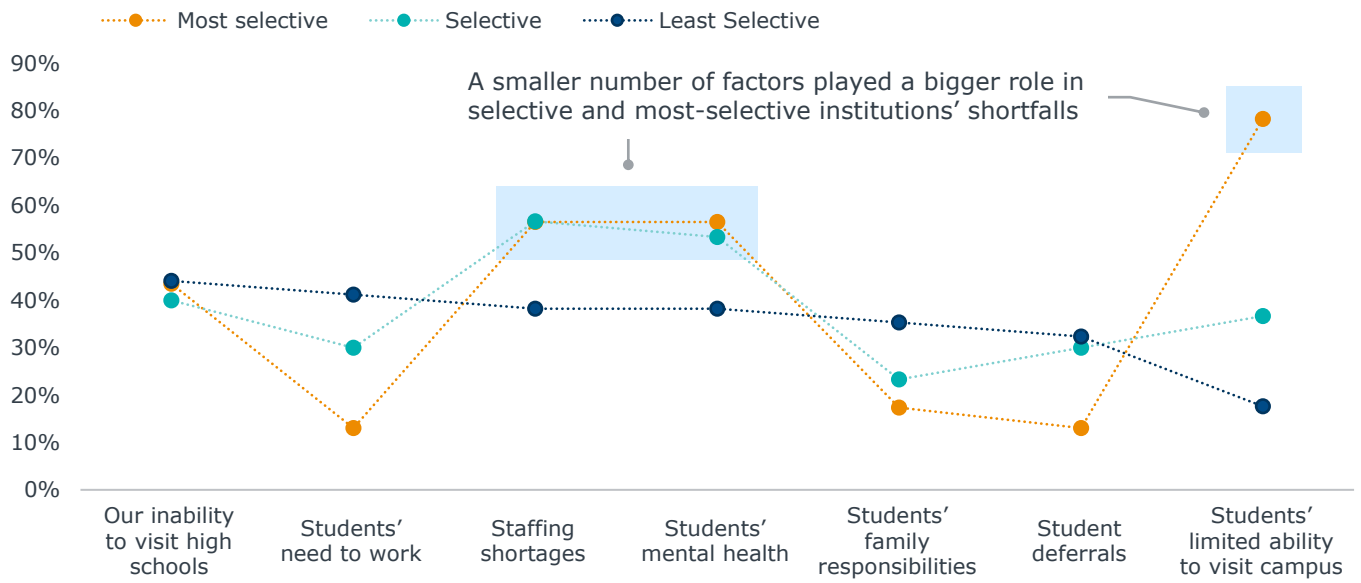
Takeaways

Broad vs. targeted concerns

Least-selective institutions rated a wide range of pandemic factors as having comparable negative impact on enrollment outcomes. The concerns of selective and most-selective schools were more focused, with staffing shortages, student health concerns, and reduced in-person contact with students being particularly widespread concerns.

How Did the Pandemic Impact Enrollment Performance?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Factors Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents in One or More Segments



Factors Cited by Fewer than One-Third of Respondents in All Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Factor)

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Travel limitations for students (14%)	Restricted student services (9%)
Other (10%)	Housing changes (8%)

1) The question asked was "Were there any lingering effects of COVID-19 that contributed to missing your goal(s)?"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Impact of COVID on Enrollment Performance

By School Size

Takeaways

Consensus on mental health

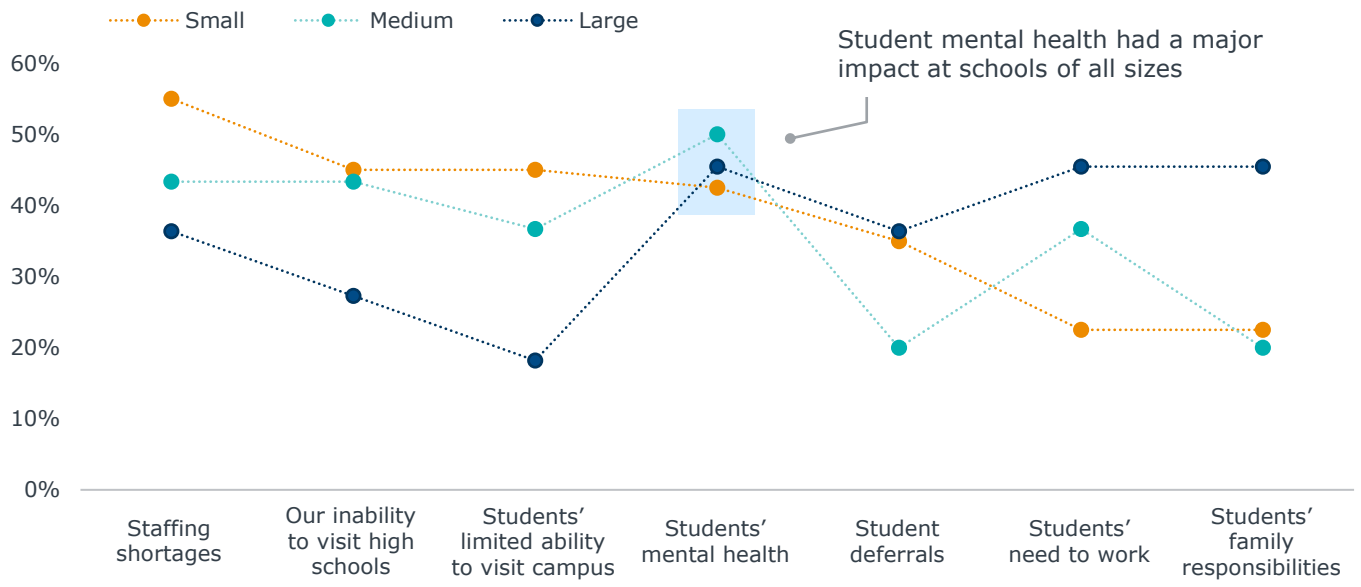
While schools of different sizes varied markedly in terms of which pandemic-era problems most seriously impacted their enrollment performance, a large number of institutions in all categories cited student mental health as a leading concern.

School vs. student factors

Student mental health challenges aside, small and medium-sized institutions were more likely than their large counterparts to cite school-focused, as opposed to student-focused, issues as key COVID-related factors undermining their performance.

How Did the Pandemic Impact Enrollment Performance?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Factors Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents in One or More Segments



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Changes to Application Processes

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

More changes at publics

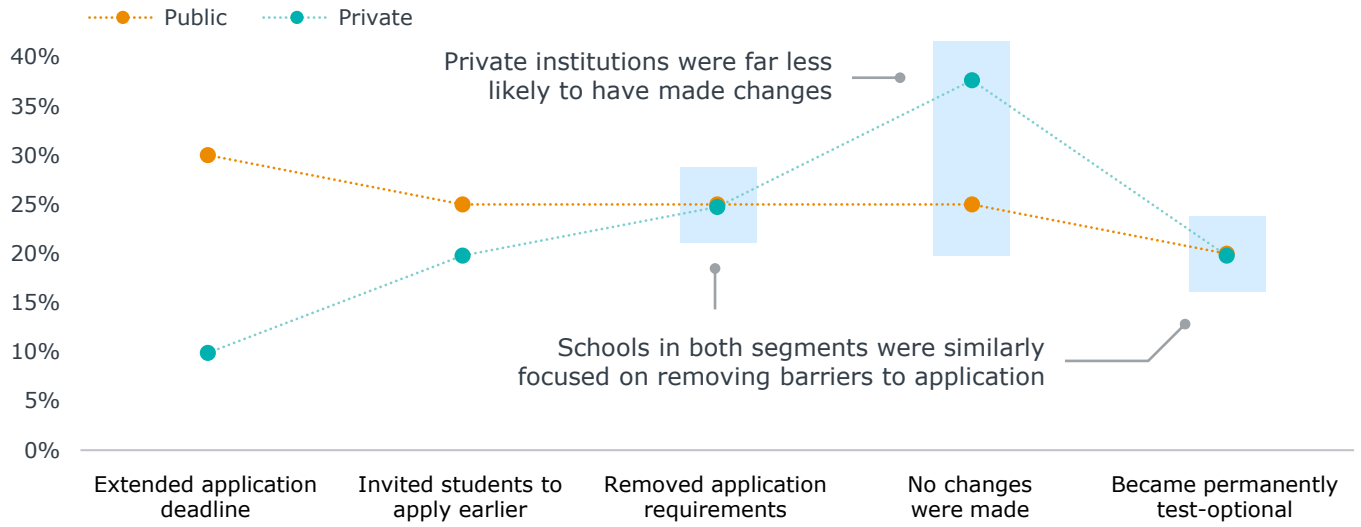
Public institutions were far more likely than their private counterparts to have made changes to their application processes, with extended application deadlines topping the list of most widely adopted modifications.

Removing barriers

While public and private institutions differed widely on many points, they did show consensus on two particular changes—removing application requirements and becoming permanently test-optional.

What Changes Did Colleges and Universities Make to Their Application Processes?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 20% of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 20% of Respondents in Both Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Change)

Sent applications to additional student populations (11%)	Other (4%)
Sent applications to different student populations (8%)	Joined another application coalition (4%)
Added EAB application marketing (8%)	Added application requirements (2%)
Added a CRM-hosted application (7%)	Added an EAB Custom Application (2%)
Joined Common App (nonexclusive) (6%)	Joined Common App (exclusive) (1%)
Expanded early-decision/application programs (6%)	Reinstated test requirement (1%)

1) The question asked was "Which of the following changes, if any, did you make to your application process this year? (Select all that apply.)"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes to Application Processes

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Less selectivity, more change

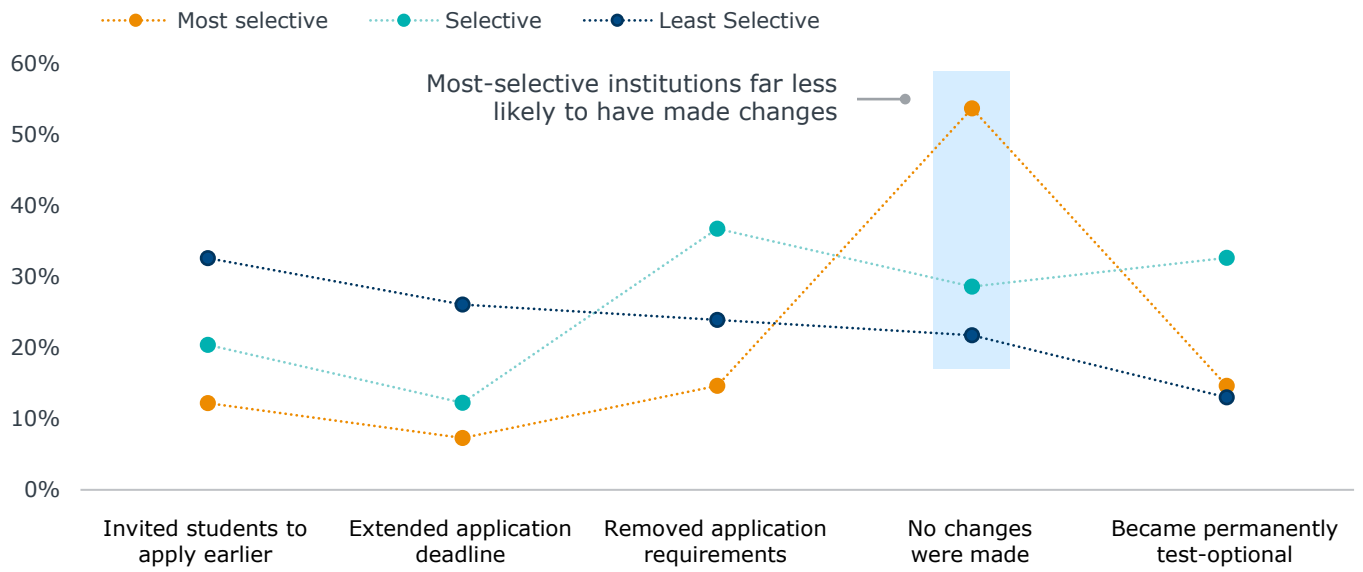
Most-selective institutions were far less likely to have tweaked their application processes. Change was fairly widespread at less-selective institutions, with between 70% and 80% of such schools having adopted modifications.

Differing priorities

Different segments showed different areas of focus in the changes they made, with least-selective schools most commonly making tweaks to application timing and selective schools prioritizing the removal of barriers to application (reducing application requirements and embracing test-optionality).

What Changes Did Colleges and Universities Make to Their Application Processes?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 20% of Respondents in One or More Segments



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Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Question 6

Changes to Application Processes

By School Size

Takeaways

Widespread change

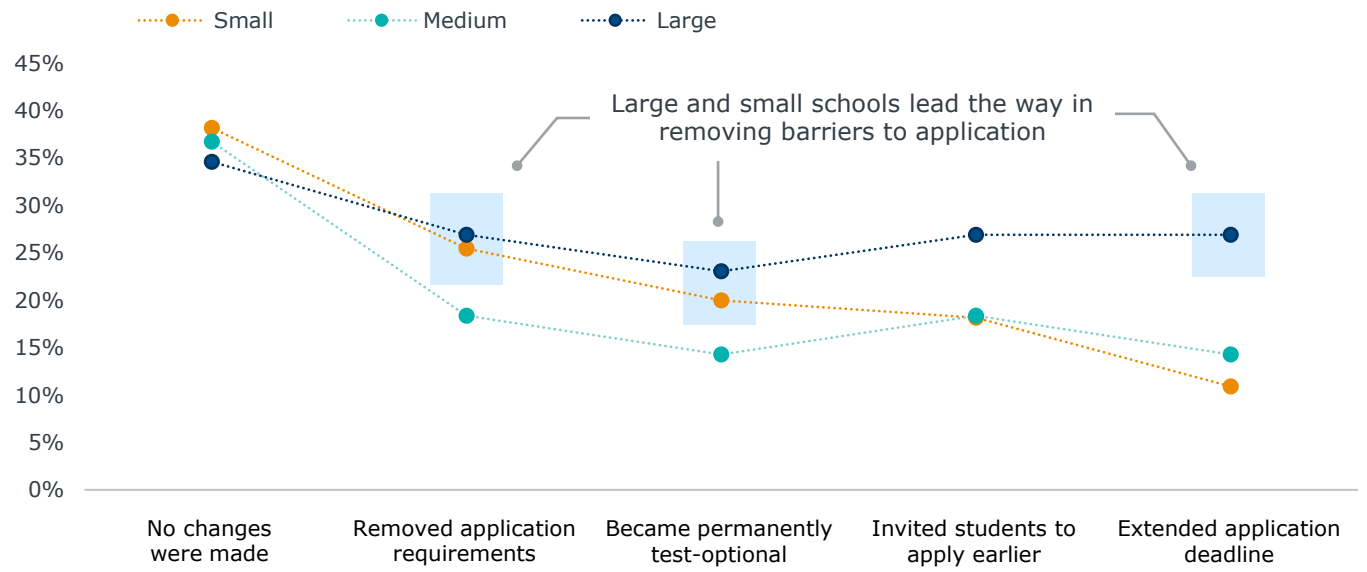
Fewer than half of schools in all segments reported not having made any changes.

Making application easier

Large and small schools were most likely to have adopted changes that make applying easier, such as removing application requirements, going permanently test-optional, and extending application deadlines.

What Changes Did Colleges and Universities Make to Their Application Processes?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 20% of Respondents in One or More Segments



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Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes to Admit Criteria

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Widespread change

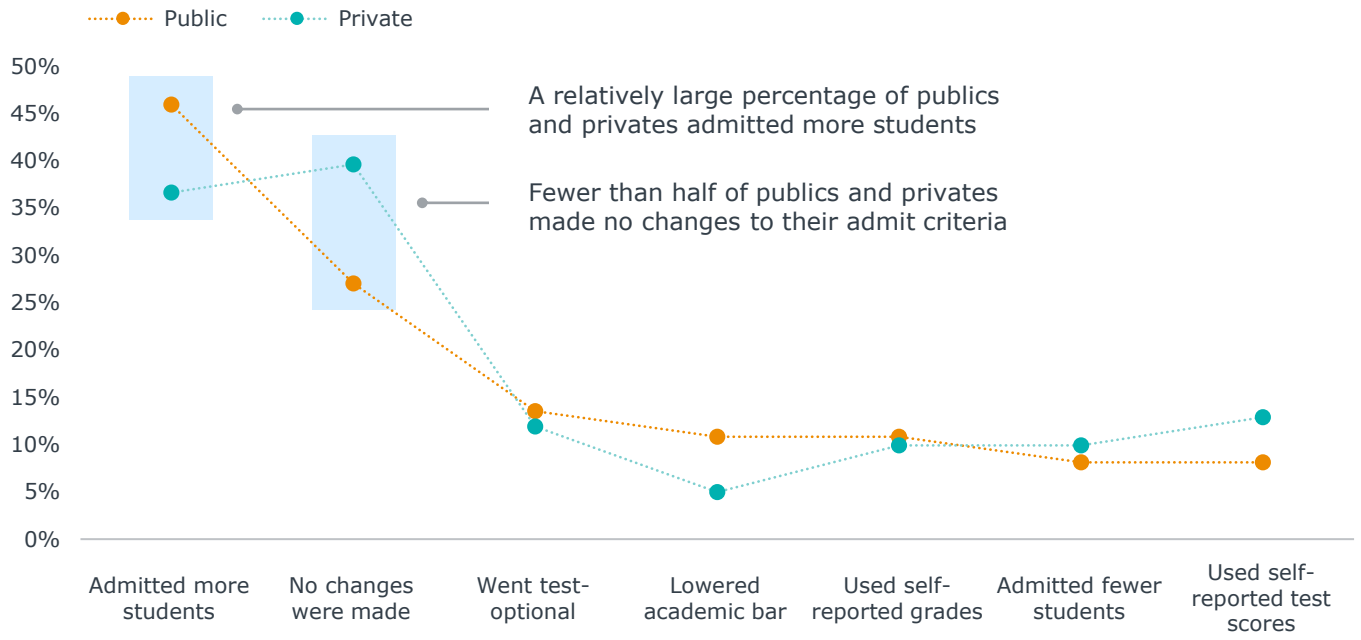
Relatively few institutions in either segment made no changes to their admit criteria (40% of privates and 27% of publics).

Enlarged admit pools

By far the most common change schools reported was admitting more students. At the same time, few institutions reported lowering their academic bar or going test-optional. Other factors that might account for schools' expanded admit pools include increased applicant numbers and reduction in the number of application requirements.

What Changes Did Colleges and Universities Make to Their Application Processes?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 10% of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 10% of Respondents in All Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Change)

Raised academic bar (5%)	Other (1%)
Changed selection criteria (4%)	Reinstated test requirement (0%)

1) The question asked was "Which of the following changes, if any, did you make to your admit criteria this year? (Select all that apply.)"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes to Admit Criteria

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Change at selectives

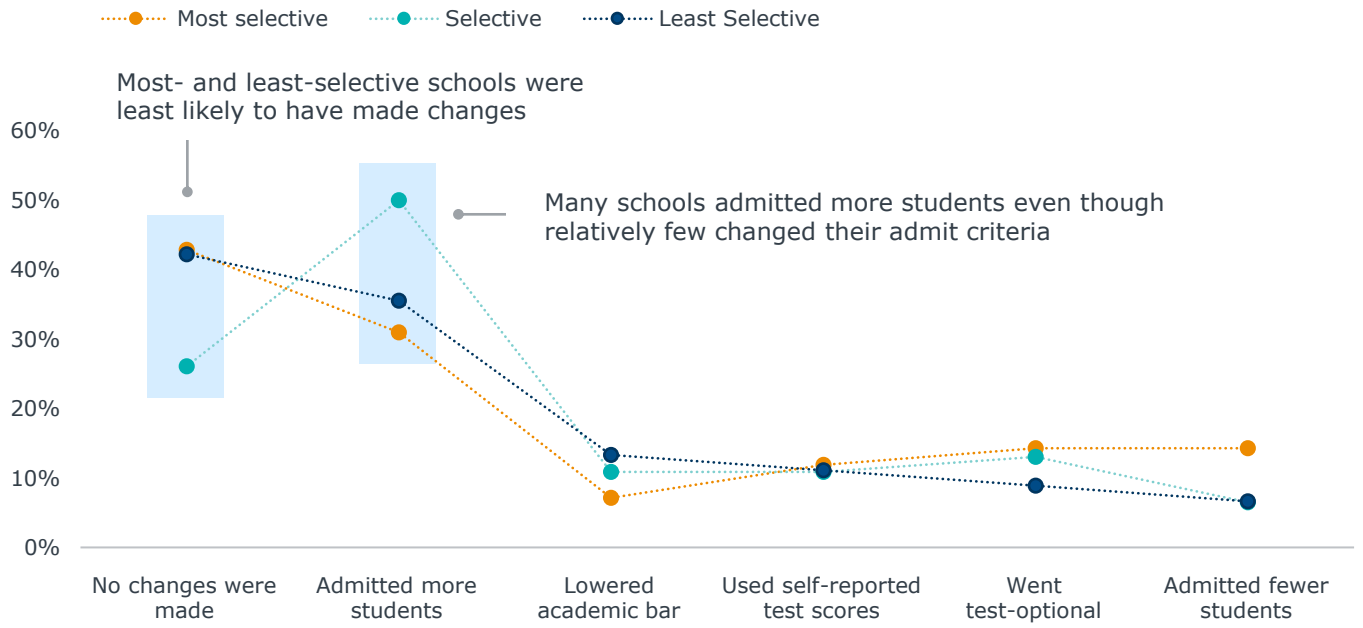
While fewer than half of institutions in any segment made no changes to their admit criteria, change was especially prevalent at selective institutions; only 26% of schools in this category made no modifications.

Enlarged admit pools

By far the most common change reported in all segments was admitting more students. At the same time, few institutions reported lowering their academic bar or going test-optional. Other factors that might account for schools' expanded admit pools include increased applicant numbers and reduction in the number of application requirements. Pandemic-related grade inflation might also account for some of the change, newly qualifying students whose academic performance might previously have made them ineligible for admission.

What Changes Did Colleges and Universities Make to Their Application Processes?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 10% of Respondents in One or More Segments



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Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes to Admit Criteria

By School Size

Takeaways

Considerable variation

Schools of different sizes varied considerably in terms of changes to their admit criteria; while half of small schools made no changes, this was true for fewer than a quarter of large institutions.

Enlarged admit pools

By far the most common change reported at schools of all sizes was admitting more students. At the same time, few institutions reported lowering their academic bar or going test-optional. Other factors that might account for schools' expanded admit pools include increased applicant numbers and reduction in the number of application requirements. Pandemic-related grade inflation might also account for some of the change, newly qualifying students whose academic performance might previously have made them ineligible for admission.

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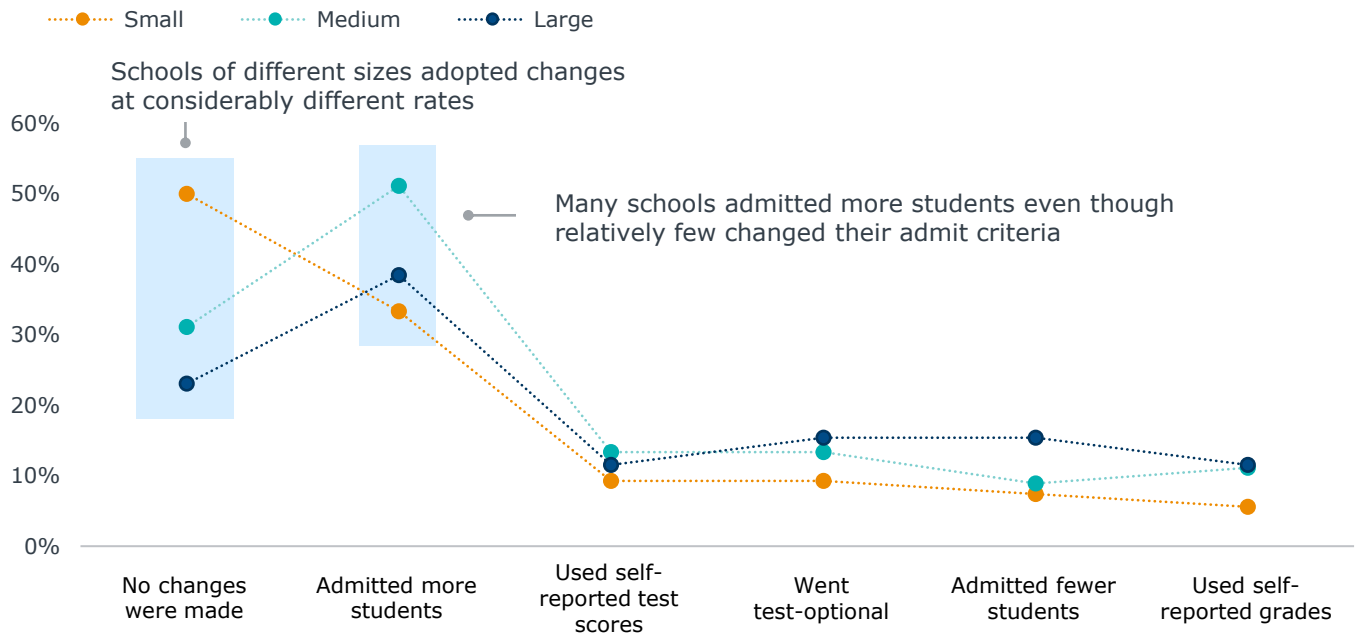

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Changes to Financial Aid Strategy

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Widespread change

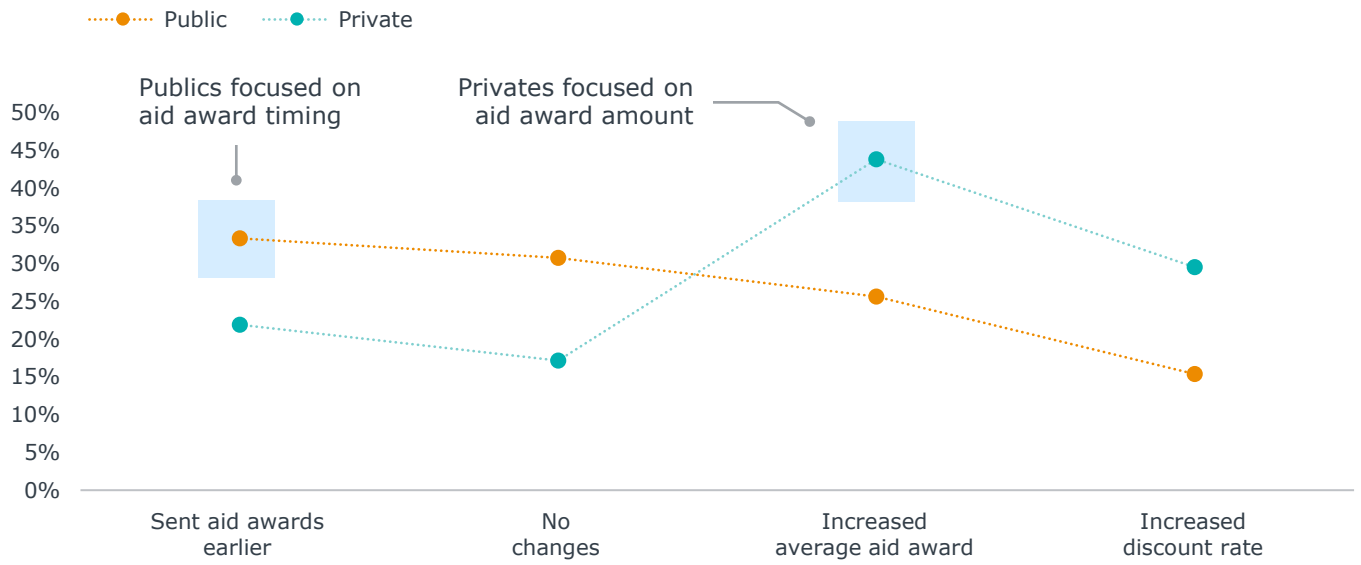
A majority of public and private schools made changes to their financial aid strategy (just 31% of publics and 17% of privates reported making no significant modifications).

Contrasting focus

The focus of public and private institutions' changes to their financial aid strategy differed considerably, with publics focusing primarily on aid-award timing and privates concerning themselves mostly with aid-award amount.

What Changes Did Colleges and Universities Make to Their Financial Aid Strategy?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 20% of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 20% of Respondents in Both Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Change)

Changed physical packaging (15%)	Added merit scholarships (8%)
Lowered discount rate (14%)	Decreased average aid award (7%)
Added financial aid leveraging (11%)	Sent aid awards later (6%)
More family-friendly appeal process (9%)	Discontinued financial aid leveraging (0%)
Other (8%)	Discontinued merit scholarships (0%)

1) The question asked was "Which of the following changes, if any, did you make to your financial aid strategy this year? (Select all that apply.)"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes to Financial Aid Strategy

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Widespread change

A majority of schools in all segments tweaked their financial aid strategy (just 24% of most-selective schools, 17% of selective schools, and 25% of least-selective schools reported no significant changes).

More aid, often earlier

While the most common change for schools in all segments was the same—increasing the average aid award—they differed considerably on other tactics. Selective and least-selective schools were, for example, far more likely to have sent aid awards earlier.

What Changes Did Colleges and Universities Make to Their Financial Aid Strategy?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 20% of Respondents in One or More Segments

Changes Cited by Fewer than 20% of Respondents in All Segments
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1) The question asked was "Which of the following changes, if any, did you make to your financial aid strategy this year? (Select all that apply.)"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes to Financial Aid Strategy

By School Size

Takeaways

Widespread change

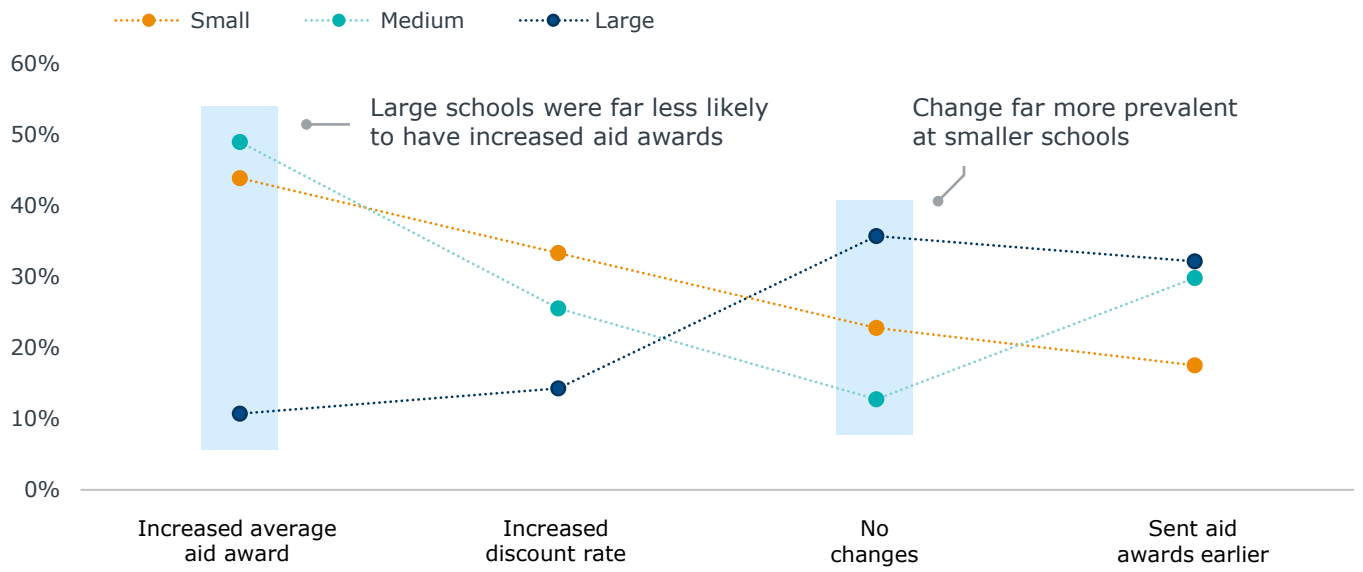
More than half of institutions in all segments made changes to their financial aid strategy, with small and medium-sized schools being especially likely to have done so (87% of medium-sized institutions and 77% of small institutions).

High variation across segments

Small institutions were less likely than schools in other segments to have implemented additional changes over and above spending more on aid (e.g., sending aid awards earlier), while large institutions were far less likely to have boosted their aid awards.

What Changes Did Colleges and Universities Make to Their Financial Aid Strategy?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 20% of Respondents in One or More Segments



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Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Change in Number of Financial Aid Appeals

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Similarity across segments

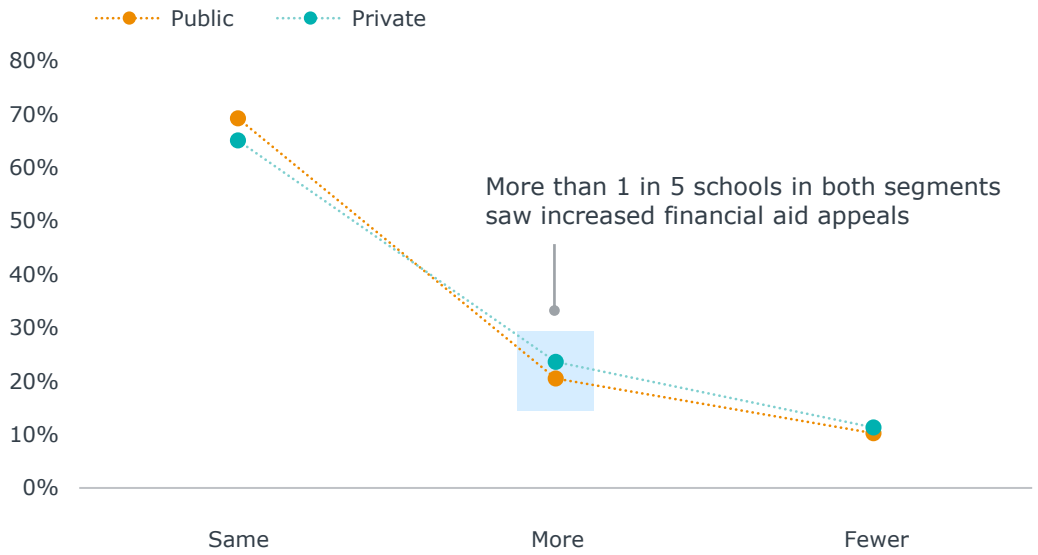
Public and private institutions were very similar in terms of the percentage reporting changes in aid appeals and the directionality of those changes (more versus fewer).

Aid appeals more widespread

A modest proportion of schools in both segments (21% of publics and 24% of privates) saw an increase in the number of aid appeals they received.

Did Schools Receive More Financial Aid Appeals, Fewer, or the Same Number?[1]

Percentage of Schools, by Control



1) The question asked was "In terms of financial aid appeals, did you have more, fewer, or about the same for EC 2022 compared with EC 2021?"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Change in Number of Financial Aid Appeals

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Broad similarities

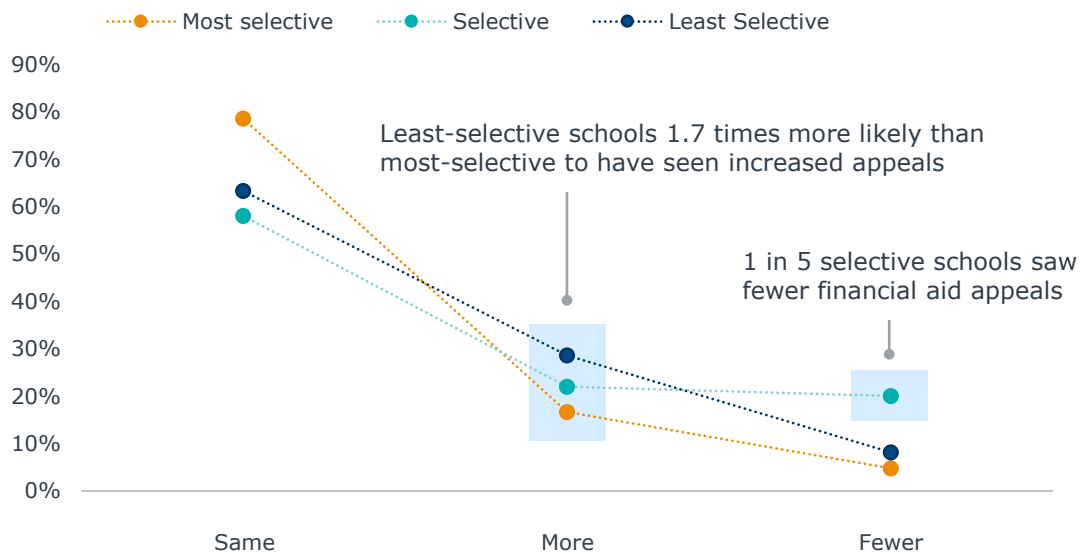
While schools in the different segments were mostly similar in terms of changes they saw in appeals, the extent to which they saw more, fewer, or about the same did vary. Less-selective schools were somewhat less likely to have reported an increase in appeals, while most-selective institutions were most likely to have seen no change.

Mixed fortunes among selectives

Among selective institutions, almost as many saw greater numbers of aid appeals as did fewer (22% and 20%, respectively).

Did Schools Receive More Financial Aid Appeals, Fewer, or the Same Number?[1]

Percentage of Schools, by Selectivity



1) The question asked was "In terms of financial aid appeals, did you have more, fewer, or about the same for EC 2022 compared with EC 2021?"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Change in Number of Financial Aid Appeals

By School Size

Takeaways

Stability at mid-sized schools

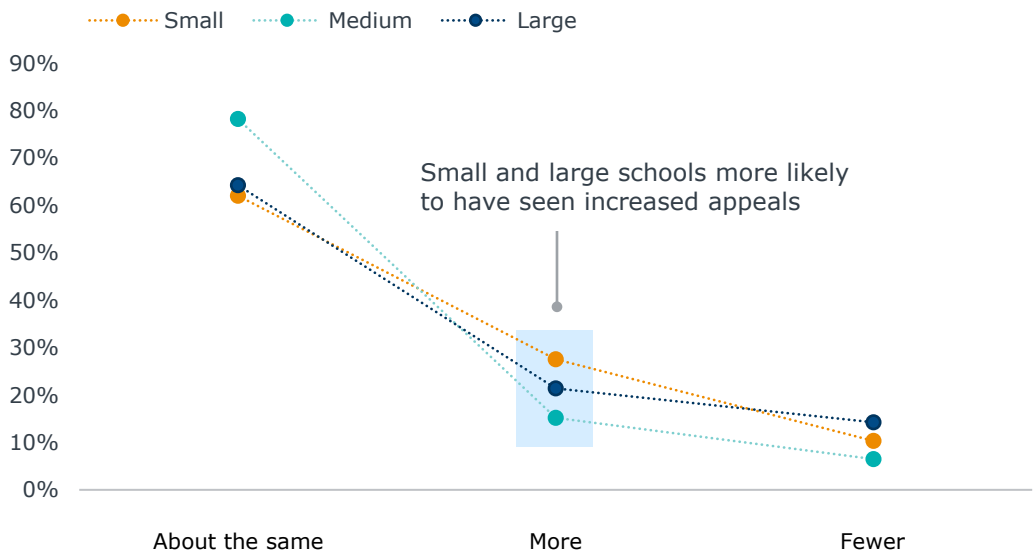
Medium-sized institutions saw the least change in terms of the number of aid appeals they received.

Modest change overall

Modest numbers of schools saw either more appeals (fewer than a third of institutions in any segment) or fewer appeals (fewer than a fifth of institutions in any segment).

Did Schools Receive More Financial Aid Appeals, Fewer, Or the Same Number?[1]

Percentage of Schools, by Size



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Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Reasons for Financial Aid Appeals

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Widespread income concerns

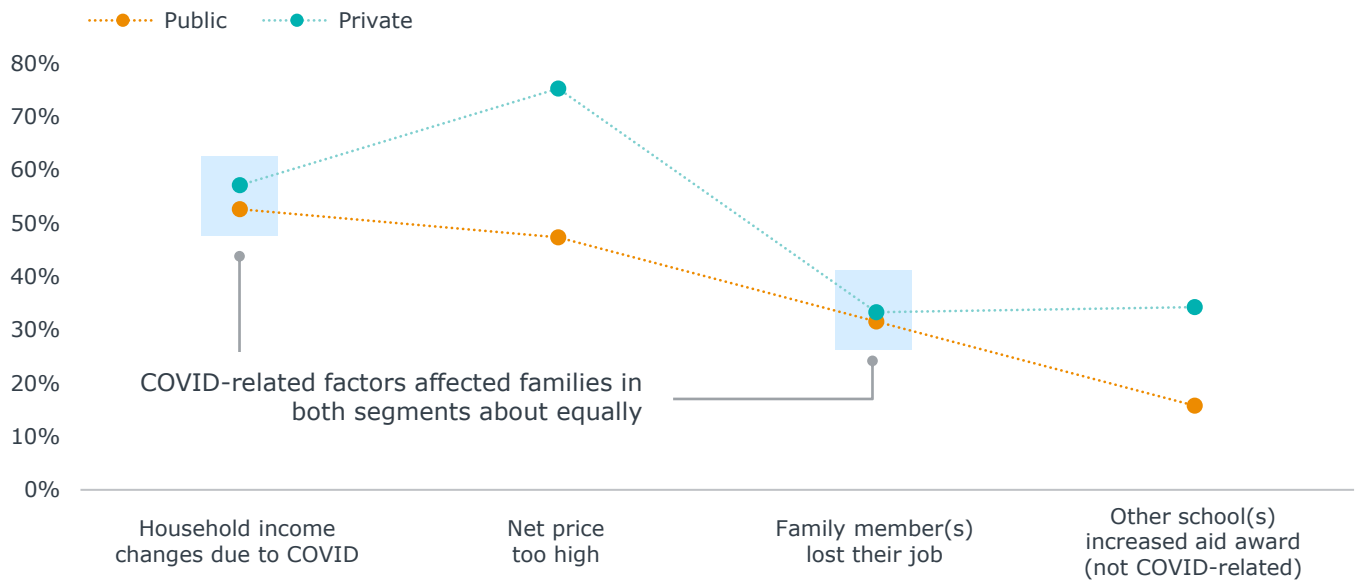
A decrease in household income due to COVID was the number one reason cited for appeals at public institutions and the number two reason at privates.

Price sensitivity at privates

The proportion of private institutions citing price sensitivity as a reason for appeals was 30 percentage points higher relative to public institutions.

What Were the Primary Reasons Families Gave for Their Appeals?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Reasons Cited by at Least 25% of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 25% of Respondents in Both Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Reason)

Changes in family housing situation (22%)	Other schools increased aid (COVID-related) (10%)
Income changes not related to COVID-19 (22%)	Other (4%)
Costs related to accommodation (10%)	

1) The question asked was "What were the primary reasons families gave for their appeals? (Select all that apply.)"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Question 10

Reasons for Financial Aid Appeals

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

High variation across segments

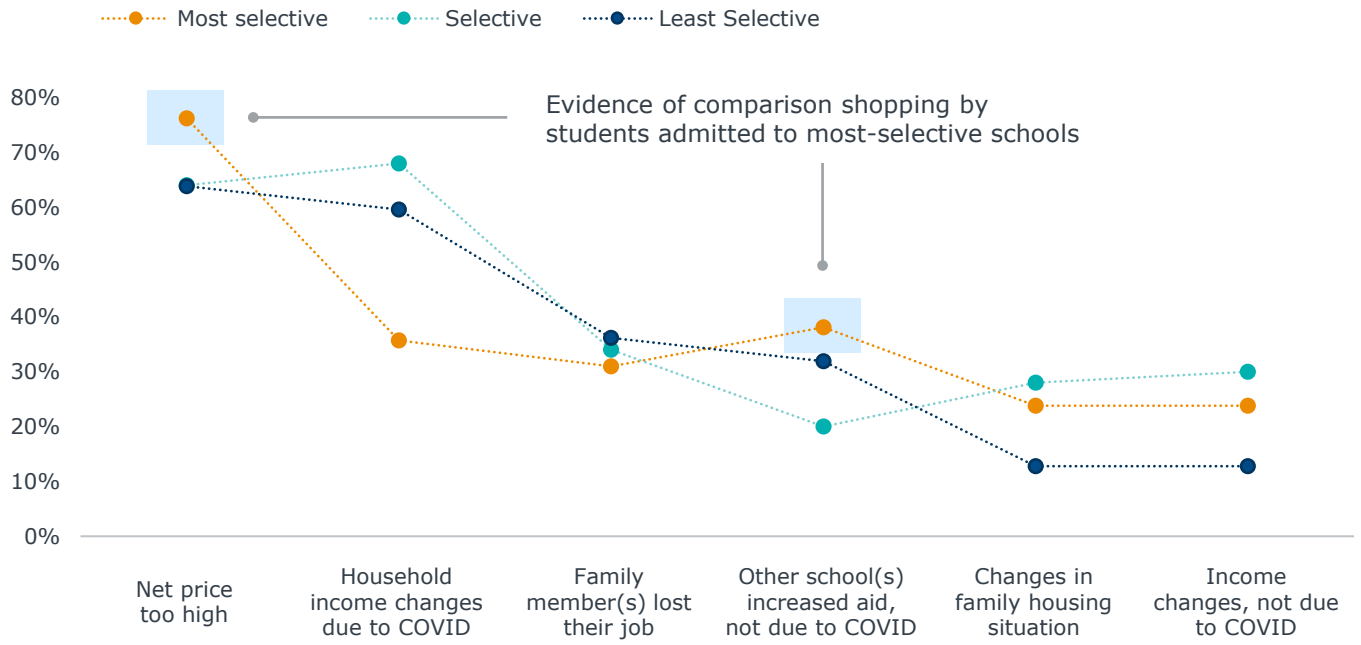
The most common reasons given for aid appeals differed considerably by school selectivity. At the most selective institutions, appeals were especially likely to be institutions focused on net price, while changes in household income due to COVID dominated at selective and least selective institutions.

A point of commonality

One important factor that was cited with about equal frequency across school segments was family members losing their jobs. This stands in marked contrast to the high variation seen across segments where more directly COVID-related reasons for appeals are concerned.

What Were the Primary Reasons Families Gave for Their Appeals?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Reasons Cited by at Least 25% of Respondents in One or More Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 25% of Respondents in All Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Reason)

Costs related to accommodation (10%)
Other schools increased aid (COVID-related) (10%)
Other (4%)

1) The question asked was "What were the primary reasons families gave for their appeals? (Select all that apply.)"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Reasons for Financial Aid Appeals

By School Size

Takeaways

Multiple drivers of appeals

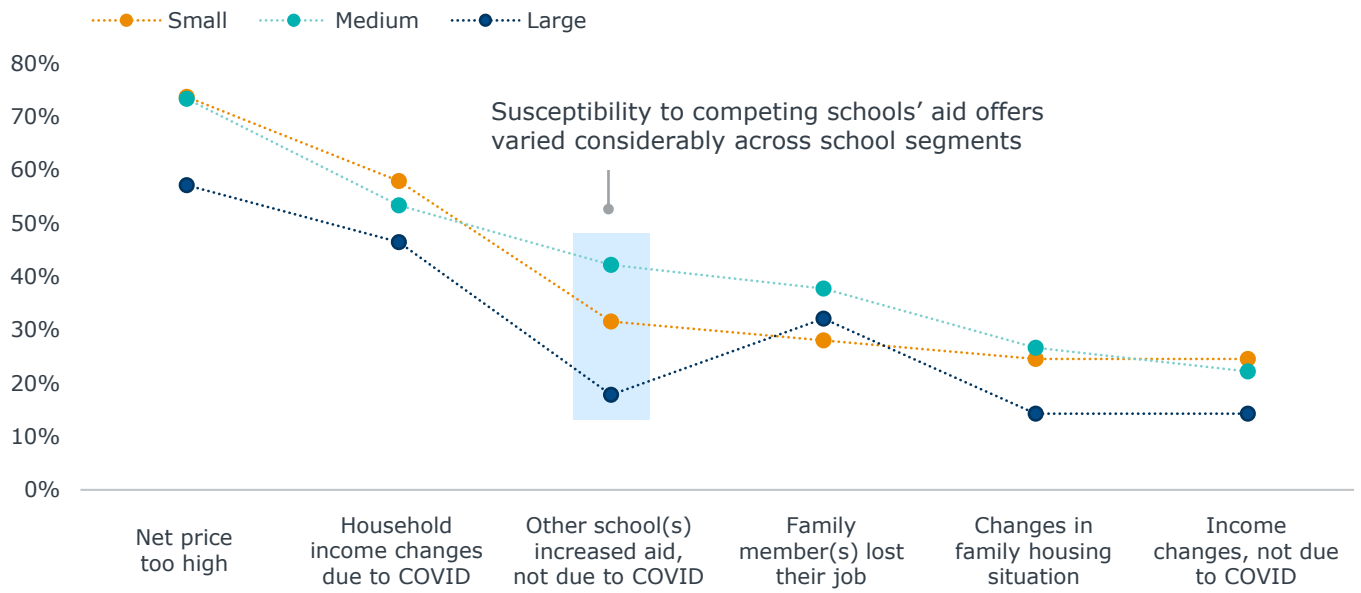
Small and medium institutions were more likely than their large counterparts to cite a wider range of reasons given for appeals.

A squeeze on midsize schools

Medium-sized schools were more vulnerable than were large or small schools to other institutions' aid offers, a possible sign of them (midsize schools) facing increased competition from both small and large institutions.

What Were the Primary Reasons Families Gave for Their Appeals?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Reasons Cited by at Least 25% of Respondents in One or More Segments



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Other (4%)

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Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes in Yield Management

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Lots of change

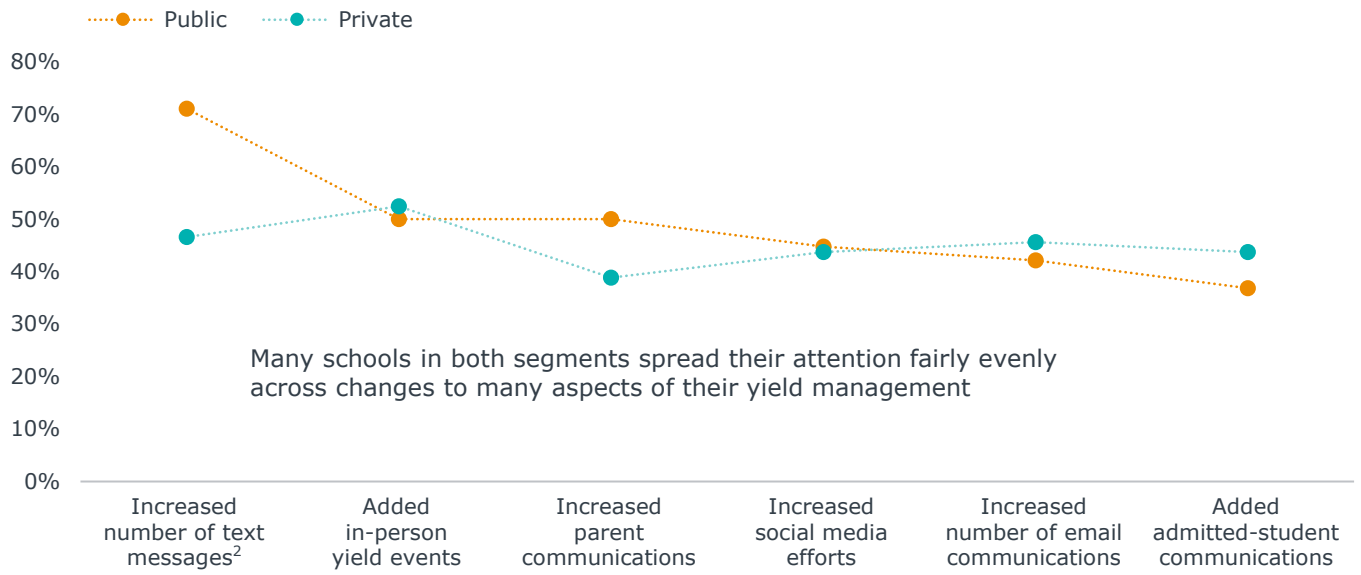
Change in yield activities was both widespread and widely scoped at public and private institutions—a relatively large percentage (>40%) reported making changes to many aspects of their yield management.

An SMS push at publics

Public institutions were considerably more likely than privates to have reported increased use of text messaging.

What Changes Did Admissions Teams Make to Their Yield-Management Approach?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 40% of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 40% of Respondents in Both Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Change)

More phone calls (31%)	New social media initiatives (9%)
More mailed communications (26%)	Added personalized student website/portal (8%)
New virtual yield events (22%)	No significant changes (6%)
New parent communications (14%)	Added text messaging (3%)
More virtual-tour promotion (11%)	Added admitted-student virtual tour (1%)

1) The question asked was "What significant changes, if any, did you make to your yield activities this year? (Select all that apply.)"
2) Forty-two percent of public institutions additionally cited "increased text messaging."

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes in Yield Management

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Considerable variation

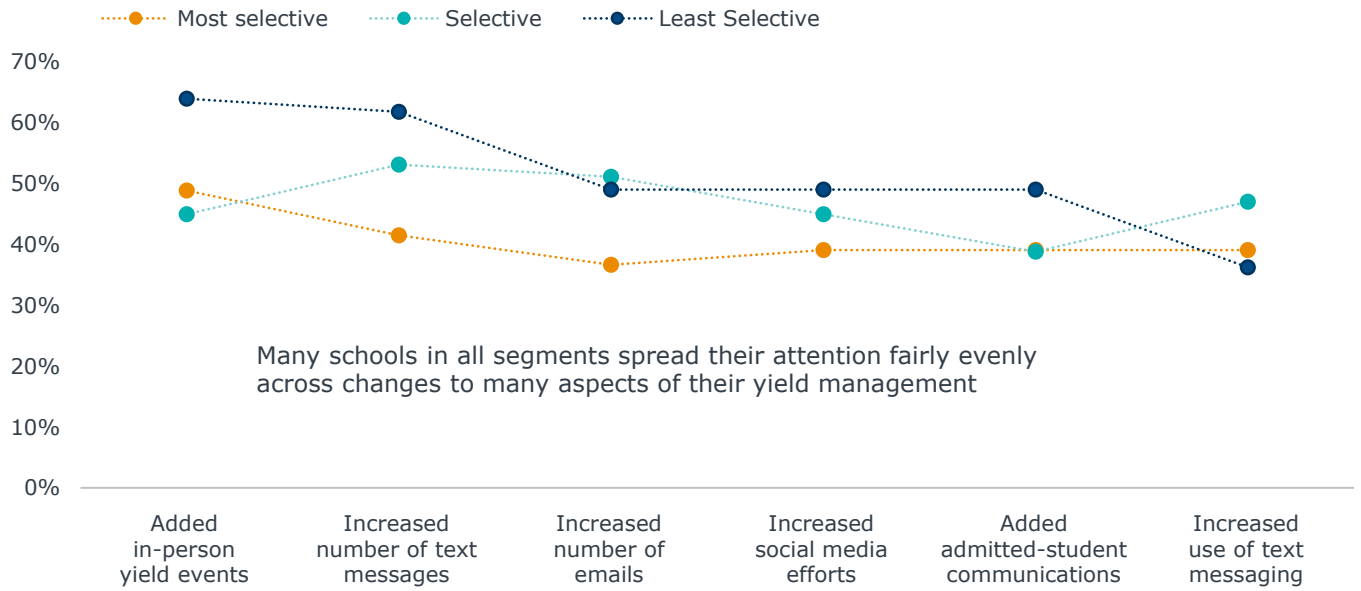
Schools in different selectivity segments varied considerably in changes they made to their yield practices, with gaps of 10 percentage points or more for several tactics.

Low selectivity, high intensity

As might be expected, most-selective schools were least likely to have made changes to their yield practices, while least-selective institutions were most likely to have done so.

What Changes Did Admissions Teams Make to Their Yield-Management Approach?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 40% of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 40% of Respondents in All Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Change)

More phone calls (31%)	New social media initiatives (9%)
More mailed communications (26%)	Added personalized student website/portal (8%)
New virtual yield events (22%)	No significant changes (6%)
New parent communications (14%)	Added text messaging (3%)
More virtual-tour promotion (11%)	Added admitted-student virtual tour (1%)

1) The question asked was "What significant changes, if any, did you make to your yield activities this year? (Select all that apply.)"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes in Yield Management

By School Size

Takeaways

Considerable variation

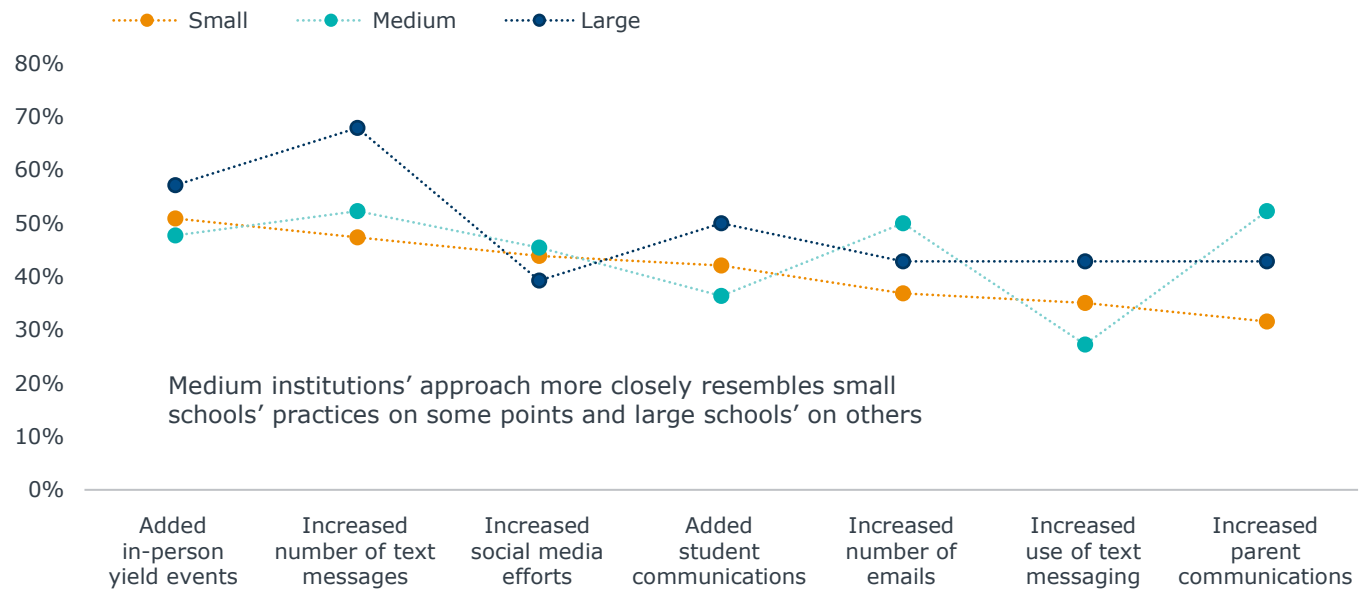
Schools of different sizes varied considerably in changes they made to their yield practices, with gaps of 10 percentage points or more for several tactics.

Differing priorities

The most commonly cited changes, by segment, were as follows: added in-person events for small institutions, increased parent communications for medium institutions, and more text messaging for large institutions.

What Changes Did Admissions Teams Make to Their Yield-Management Approach?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 40% of Respondents in One or Both Segments



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Changes in Strategy Made This Year

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Market-focused privates

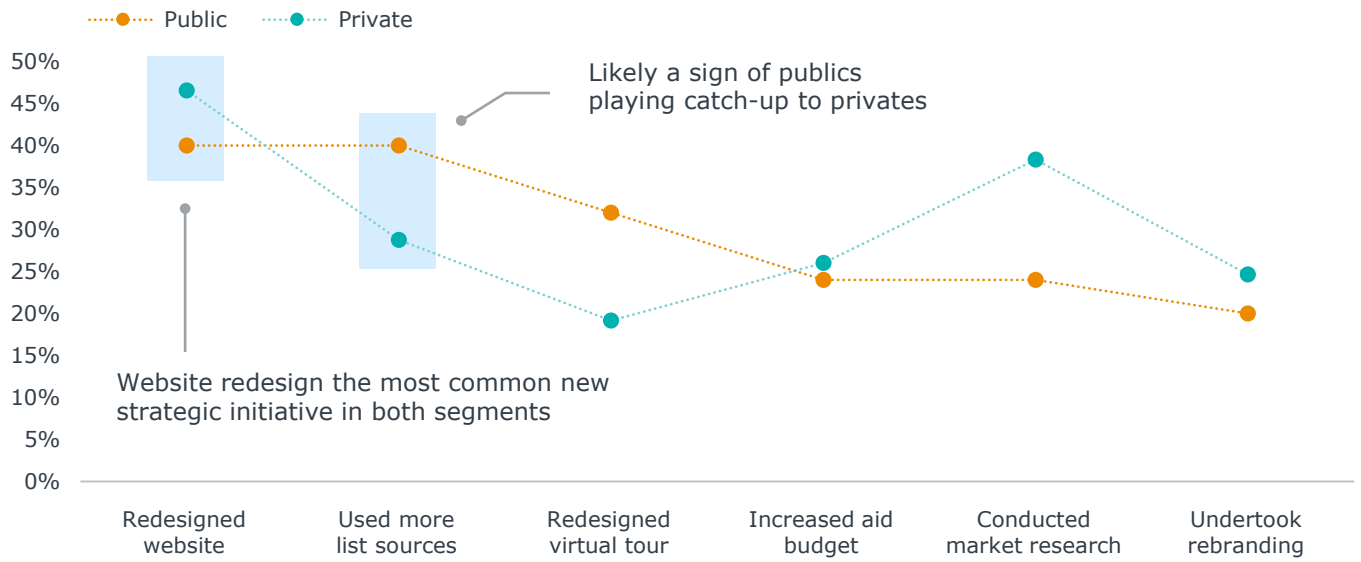
Private institutions were considerably more likely than publics to have initiated market research, this being the second most commonly cited change in strategy for privates.

Keeping it simple at publics

Public institutions were more likely to have prioritized smaller and less complex changes than were their private counterparts.

What Strategic Changes Did Schools Adopt?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 25% of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 25% of Respondents in Both Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Change)

Increased staff size (24%)	Added a virtual tour (10%)
Added social media networking platform (15%)	Decreased staff size (8%)
Decreased aid budget (12%)	Other (6%)
Implemented a new CRM (11%)	

1) The question asked was "We would like to ask about your institution's strategic decisions more broadly. Which of the following changes, if any, did you make this year? (Check all that apply.)"

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Question 12

Changes in Strategy Made This Year

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Selectives especially aid-focused

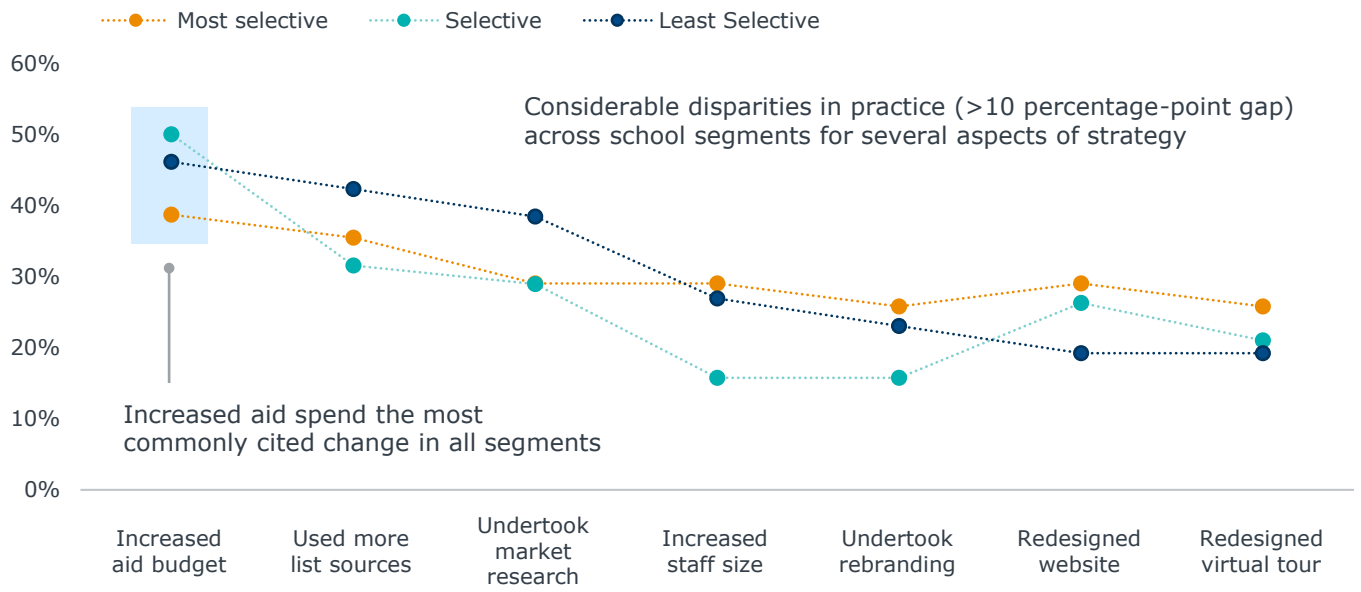
While increased aid budget was the number one change in all segments, this was a particular focus for selective schools; 50% of selectives increased their aid budget, more than any other segment, while only 32% pursued the next most commonly cited change: using more list sources.

A multifaceted effort

Least- and most-selective schools were more likely to have made changes to their strategy than were selective institutions.

What Strategic Changes Did Schools Adopt?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 25% of Respondents in One or More Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 25% of Respondents in All Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Change)

Added social media networking platform (15%)	Added a virtual tour (10%)
Decreased aid budget (12%)	Decreased staff size (8%)
Implemented a new CRM (11%)	Other (6%)

1) The question asked was "We would like to ask about your institution's strategic decisions more broadly. Which of the following changes, if any, did you make this year? (Check all that apply.)"

Source: EAB research and analysis.

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Changes in Strategy Made This Year

By School Size

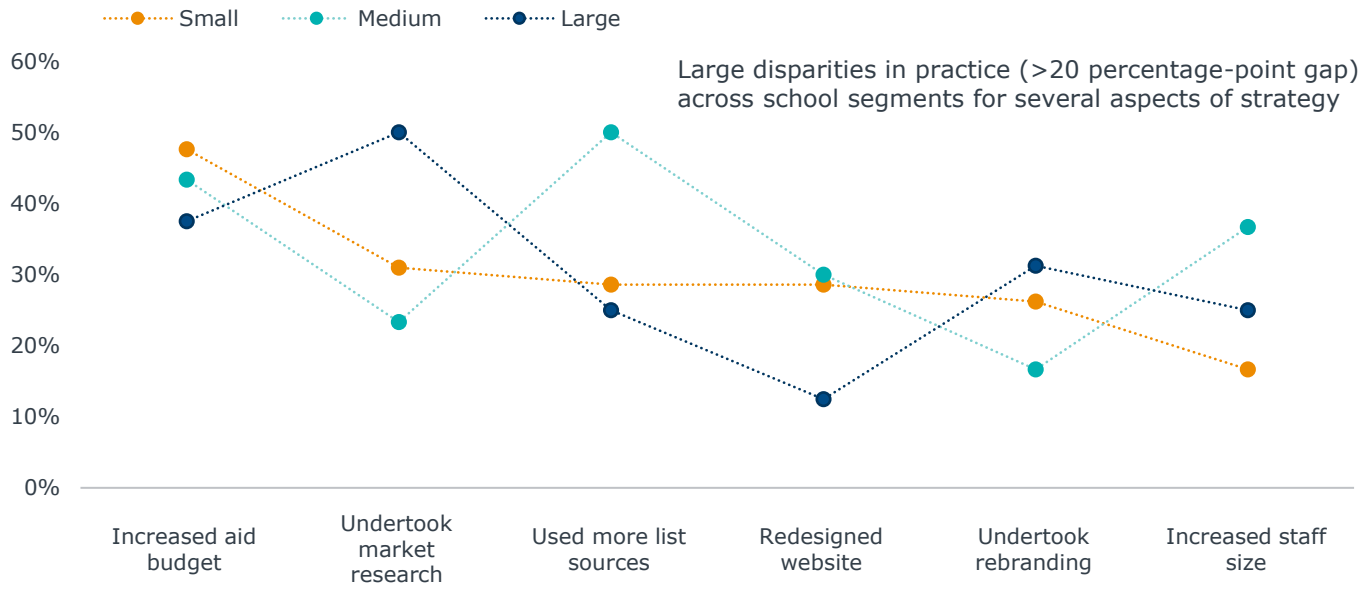
Takeaways

Distinctive segment profiles

Schools in the different sizes of segments differed greatly in the changes to strategy they pursued; small institutions relied more on increased aid spend, medium institutions were most likely to have increased the range of list sources used, and large institutions showed a pronounced emphasis on market research.

What Strategic Changes Did Schools Adopt?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least 25% of Respondents in One or More Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than 25% of Respondents in All Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Change)

Redesigned virtual tour (24%)	Added a virtual tour (10%)
Added social media networking platform (15%)	Decreased staff size (8%)
Decreased aid budget (12%)	Other (6%)
Implemented a new CRM (11%)	

1) The question asked was "We would like to ask about your institution's strategic decisions more broadly. Which of the following changes, if any, did you make this year? (Check all that apply.)"

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Planned Changes in Strategy for Next Year

Public Versus Private Institutions

Takeaways

Varying degrees of focus

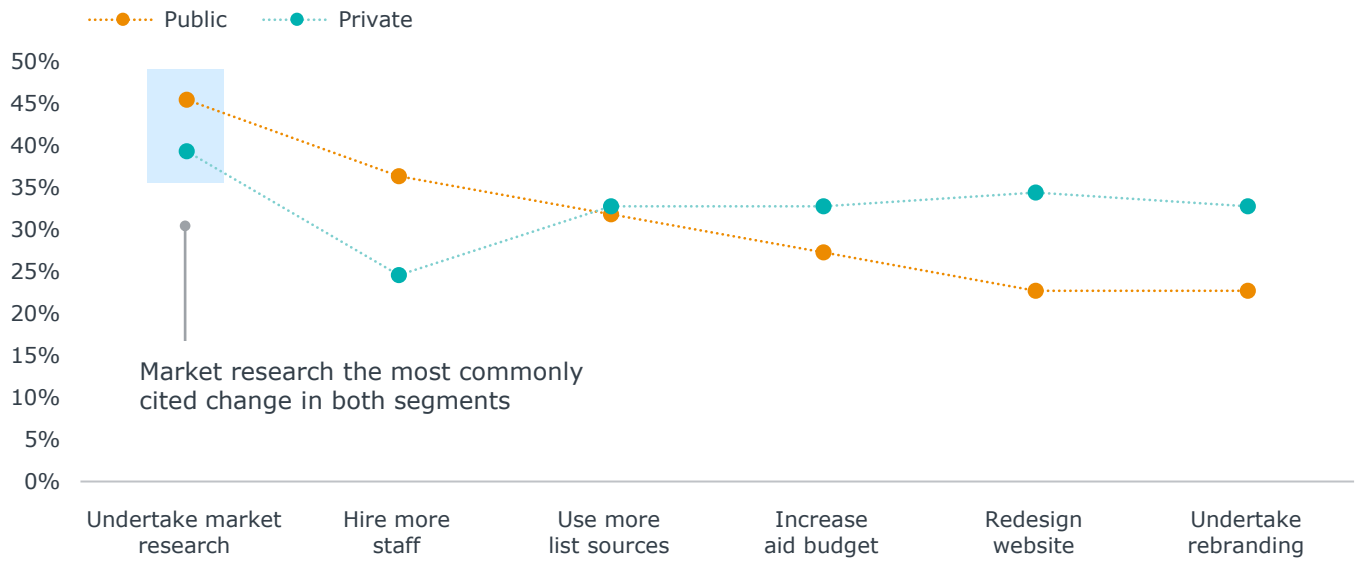
Private institutions' attention was more evenly distributed over a wider range of planned changes than was that of public schools.

Ambitious agendas

Many schools in both segments had ambitious plans for the coming year, encompassing such complex undertakings as website redesigns, rebranding initiatives, and market research.

What Strategic Changes Were Schools Planning for the Following Year?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents in One or Both Segments



Changes Cited by Fewer than One-Third of Institutions in Both Segments
(Number in Parentheses Shows the Percentage of All Respondents Citing the Corresponding Change)

Implement a new CRM (12%)	Add virtual tour (4%)
Redesign virtual tour (12%)	Decrease staff size (4%)
Decrease aid budget (15%)	Other (2%)
Add social media networking platform (10%)	

1) The question asked was "We would like to ask about your institution's strategic decisions more broadly. Which changes, if any, are you planning to make next year? (Check all that apply.)"

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Planned Changes in Strategy for Next Year

By School Selectivity

Takeaways

Points of consensus

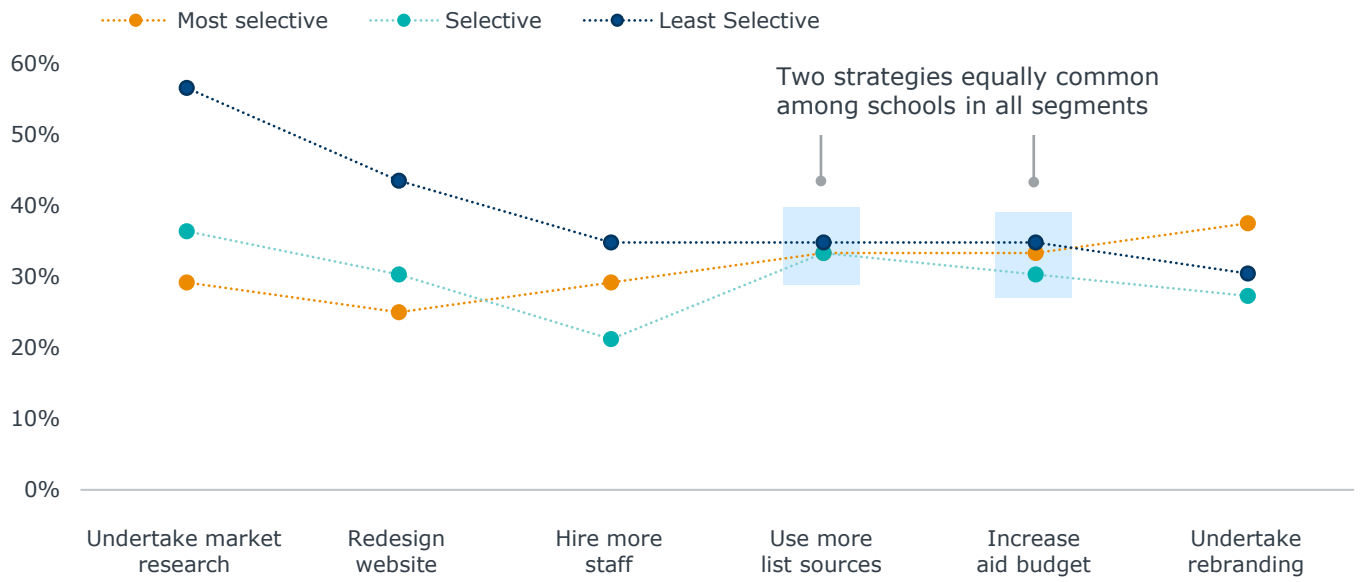
Two changes in strategy were noteworthy for being pursued by about the same percentage of schools in all segments: using more list sources and increasing aid budgets.

Least selective, most active

Least-selective schools were considerably more likely than their more selective counterparts to be planning changes in strategy.

What Strategic Changes Were Schools Planning for the Following Year?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents in One or More Segments



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Planned Changes in Strategy for Next Year

By School Size

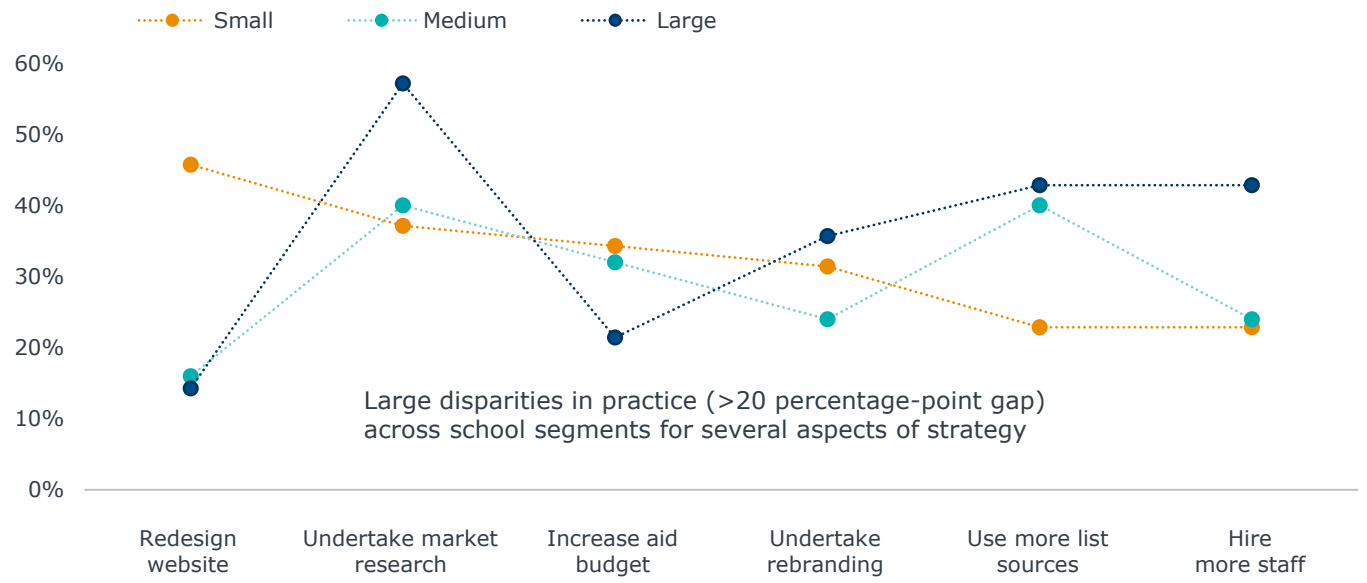
Takeaways

Distinctive segment profiles

Schools in the different sizes of segments varied greatly in the changes to strategy they planned on pursuing. Small institutions were far more likely to be planning website redesigns, while large institutions were considerably more likely to be planning market research and hiring more staff. Medium-sized institutions' plans resembled those of large institutions on some points and those of small institutions on other points.

What Strategic Changes Were Schools Planning for the Following Year?[1]

Percentage of Schools, Changes Cited by at Least One-Third of Respondents in One or More Segments



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