College students and their data: What they expect of institutions

Students Expect Data to Transform College Experience.
Can Colleges Deliver?
Survey methodology

This Ellucian Survey, conducted by Wakefield Research, defined personal student information as any data a school manages about a student, from application to meal plan.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

© 2016 Ellucian Company L.P. and its affiliates
Overview:

From application to graduation, U.S. students give colleges an incredible amount of their personal data, and they both want and expect schools to use that data in a way that optimizes their college experience and career.

Today’s college students grew up online, and tend to be much more comfortable than other generations with a public approach to sharing their personal information.

In understanding ways students can maximize success and mobility throughout their academic journey, this study highlights the need for schools to leverage student information to provide a streamlined approach from application to graduation and beyond by enhancing academic services, financial processes, student life and career processes.

When students are asked to pick an industry best able to use their personal information to improve their experience, a college or university ranks #1 (42%) – ahead of a doctor’s office (23%) and a financial company, such as a credit card or bank (12%).
STUDENTS “GIVE TO GET”

Perhaps because they are “digital natives,” college students aren’t completely satisfied with how schools are currently using their information. Just like with an app, they prefer to ‘give to get’ when it comes to their personal information. In fact, students feel colleges should use MORE of their personal information to improve their experience before, during and after graduation. Interestingly, a higher percentage of males felt that colleges should use more of their personal information than female respondents.

83% 72%

BUT...ONCE IS ENOUGH. STUDENTS EXPECT EFFICIENCY.

While students will provide colleges with plenty of personal data, modern students (93%) expect they should only have to provide their personal information to their institution once. More than half (53%) strongly agree, a lesson for institutions of higher education as they try to make the most of student data.

93% Agree 40% Agree Somewhat
53% Strongly Agree 6% Disagree Somewhat
1% Strongly Disagree

7% Disagree
6% Disagree Somewhat
Getting in:

From the earliest stage of the lifecycle—the application—students are willing to share wide-ranging information. In addition to grades, tests scores, and housing preferences, more than half share:

- **57%** Personal accomplishments
- **53%** Future dreams and goals

**STUDENTS WILLING TO SHARE EVEN MORE TO GET IN**

74% of college students would have even provided colleges some unusual personal information if it could have improved their chances of getting in.

- **42%** Favorite Food And Drink
- **33%** Shoe Size
- **42%** Favorite Clothing Store
- **23%** Least Favorite Childhood Photos
- **35%** Pets’ Names
- **39%** Favorite Binge-Watching Tv Shows
- **30%** Most “Liked” Social Media Moments
Almost all (98%) respondents said they want their school to use their personal information to focus on the core mission of the institution: improve academic, financial, and career processes.

The survey found some variance in gender expectations around use of personal information. Women have slightly higher expectations than men.

While both think schools should make better use of personal data, women are demanding (64%) schools use personal data to improve graduation tracking, registering for classes and scheduling time with academic advisors versus the 50% of male students.

It’s not just making life easier, women are also looking for more from schools when securing financial aid (66% female students versus 50% of male students).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACADEMIC</th>
<th>FINANCIAL</th>
<th>CAREER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Requirements (62%)</td>
<td>Financial Aid (61%*/59%**)</td>
<td>Internships (61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising (53%)</td>
<td>Payment Of Tuition Etc (58%)</td>
<td>External Job Interviews (53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Selection &amp; Registration (59%)</td>
<td>Job Application On Campus (52%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

refers to federal financial aid 61%*
refers to institution-based financial aid 59%**
FOCUS ON THE GOAL.

Students (98%) most expect colleges and universities to use their data to help them in their academic goals:

FINANCING MATTERS.

A majority of students (97%) also want to improve their college financial processes, including:

- Tracking graduation requirements and progress: 62%
- Selecting and registering for courses: 59%
- Scheduling academic advising sessions: 53%
- Checking my grades: 51%
- Securing federal financial aid: 61%
- Securing institution-based financial aid: 59%
- Paying tuition, housing or dining fees: 58%
Don’t forget about career development.

Expectations about the use of data extend beyond graduation day. 97% of college students want their school to use their personal information to improve their career preparation process.

This includes:

- Finding internships and work study programs: 61%
- Navigating or securing job interviews: 53%
- Learning how to build a professional network: 49%
Expectations beyond academics – a boost for student life.

In addition to academics, almost all (95%) students believe their personal information should be used to improve some other aspects of their college experience, including student life. However there is less agreement on how and where.

Aspects of student life that were more popular among students surveyed include:

- 49% Obtaining Student Health Care
- 46% Securing Housing
- 44% Joining Student Organizations
- 44% Staying In Touch With Faculty
- 46% Getting Advice On Paying Off Debt

Some students are surprisingly willing to have their data used for other purposes such as:

- 42% Receiving offers from local bookstores, retailers and restaurants
- 34% Getting tickets to campus events such as sports games and concerts

However, the key is to know which student has which preferences to accommodate student needs.
Staying in touch

Even after a student graduates, some see their data as an opportunity for colleges to stay in touch and develop ongoing alumni support. Almost all (98%) respondents agreed that they would provide their school information in exchange for post-graduation support, but opinions vary on the need:

- **58%** Personal Email
- **56%** Mobile Phone Number
- **53%** Job History Or Salary
- **50%** Home Address
- **47%** Work Email
- **46%** Hobbies And Interests
Great expectations

The ever-increasing growth in data access, sharing, and technology is dizzying. Yet for higher education, it carries hope of continually improving the student experience.

Eighty-two percent of students believe that better use of student information will transform the college experience in ten years. Higher education institutions who share this expectation and seize the moment will remain competitive, while deepening student engagement and success.
Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

© 2017 Ellucian Company L.P. and its affiliates