Students, alumni, and administrators agree:

Data-driven communications make a difference
## Methodology

### 500 🎓
**College students, ages 18+**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Four-year</th>
<th>Two-year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 502 🧥
**Alumni, graduated within the last five years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Four-year</th>
<th>Two-year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 300 📱
**Administrators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Four-year</th>
<th>Two-year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey fielding was managed by Wakefield Research via email invitation and online survey among U.S. college students, alumni, and administrators between July 19 and August 2, 2018.

The margin for error for results is +/- 4.4 percentage points for the college students and alumni samples and +/- 5.7 percentage points for the administrators sample at the 95% confidence level.
Personal connections with applicants can lead to increased enrollment—and future donations

97% of admissions and recruitment administrators... agree that students who have a more personalized recruitment process are more likely to enroll.

97% of advising administrators... agree that students who had a personalized recruitment experience are more likely to be engaged with their college.

98% of advancement administrators... agree that alumni who had a personalized college experience are more likely to donate.
Communication weighs heavily in the enrollment decision

87% of students who received personalized communications during their application process agree that it was an important factor in their choice of school.

48% of students who applied to multiple colleges decided against attending a school because of poor communication during the application process.
### Students are supplying the data, but how is it being used?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Data students supply when applying</th>
<th>Data students see used in recruitment materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intended majors</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career goals</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans to apply for scholarships or loans</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities they participated in during high school</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing preferences</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs or internships in high school</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus organizations they want to join</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time jobs or internships desired</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study abroad interest</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Students are supplying the data, but how is it being used?
- Data students see used in recruitment materials
- Data students supply when applying
# Students crave advice...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advising services that students think present the greatest positive impact on success</th>
<th>Guidance on career options</th>
<th>Regular updates on academic progress</th>
<th>Proactively scheduled appointments or check-ins with their advisor</th>
<th>Access to a portal or site for viewing degree progress</th>
<th>Connections with relevant student groups or faculty members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>69%</strong></td>
<td><strong>25%</strong></td>
<td><strong>19%</strong></td>
<td><strong>19%</strong></td>
<td><strong>19%</strong></td>
<td><strong>13%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics students say advisors cover</th>
<th>Coursework or grades</th>
<th>Career goals</th>
<th>Financial information</th>
<th>Current student life</th>
<th>Personal experiences or interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>69%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
<td><strong>46%</strong></td>
<td><strong>32%</strong></td>
<td><strong>24%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students report that they often have to re-submit personal info for:

- 54% Degree programs
- 51% On- or off-campus housing
- 38% Applications for campus internships
- 35% Joining a student organization
- 33% Dining plan

70% of students have had to submit their personal information three or more times during their first year of school.

...but often struggle to get it

Students report having to talk to up to four people to answer an advising question.
Attending college is a significant life milestone, connecting alumni with their alma mater for life

Many are still involved with their colleges:

- 41% attend social or athletic events
- 26% network with other alumni
- 24% are members of their alumni associations
- 22% volunteer at college-sponsored events
- 19% donate money
- 13% participate in prospective student interviews; mentor students

89% would be more likely to take advantage of post-grad opportunities if they involved the groups or activities they participated in while in college

20% report not being involved with their alma mater post-graduation
Alumni who donate do so with the best of intentions

Reasons for giving include:

- Enjoying their experience as a student: 51%
- Receiving continuous personalized communications since graduating: 44%
- Knowing where their donations are headed: 44%
- Paying it forward for financial support received: 42%
- Request was directly associated with a personal cause or interest: 30%
- To keep up with peers: 22%
- It came with a gift: 21%
Affordability is only one factor in the donation decision process

Why alumni don’t give:

- Don’t feel they can afford to give: 57%
- Unsure about how their donation would be used: 26%
- Want to give back in other ways: 24%
- No donation opportunities that interest them: 16%
- Process is inconvenient or confusing: 10%
- Their peers don’t donate: 10%

43% of alumni report not receiving any requests for donations in a typical month.

51% who receive requests say ≤10% have anything to do with their interests or campus activities.
Schools could take better advantage of alumni's willingness to give

85% of alumni agree they would donate more often if they knew their money was funding organizations or initiatives with which they were involved as a student.

Alumni could be persuaded to donate, if provided the proper motivation:

- **49%** Details about where the donation would go
- **33%** Knowing the donation would go to a cause or interest they had while in school
- **32%** Getting a gift, like tickets to a game, in return
- **14%** Seeing peers donate
- **13%** Continuous personalized communication

Answers from those who have not donated.
Administrators are using tools to improve engagement, but it’s not enough

61% of enrollment, advising, and advancement administrators are using software that helps track and improve engagement with students.

Administrators face obstacles when it comes to updating communication strategies, including:

- Lack of time to evaluate such programs’ efficiency: 26%
- Lack of centralized information: 21%
- Too many disconnects in the system: 17%
- Lack of resources: 11%
- Aversion to change among staff and leadership: 11%
- Lack of system capabilities: 10%

More than 1/3 of student advisors spend 20+ hours per week manually communicating with students.
Administrators still need more data

95% of advisors... wish they had access to more complete and up-to-date information on students’ financial, academic, and student life data.

95% of advancement officials... believe they would have a better relationship with alumni if they had access to more data across the student lifecycle.

87% of administrators... think their colleges and universities will not be able to stay competitive without integrating their data across departments in the next five years.
Administrators want to use CRM because they understand the power of personalized information

95% of administrators believe such a system would be beneficial

45% cited inter-departmental visibility as the top benefit of implementing a CRM system

Followed by:

- 37% Greater process automation or efficiency
- 25% Increased monetary donations
- 24% Increased number of applications

Answers from those who don’t have a CRM at their institution
Administrators will need to overcome obstacles to access much needed data

Data that administrators think would help them better serve students and alumni:

36% Course performance
30% Course registration
29% Interest or participation in student orgs
28% Major and/or minor area of study
26% Tuition and financial aid
23% Communication history with other departments
12% Housing information

Top obstacles institutions face in acquiring CRM:

- Lack of support from senior leadership: 46%
- Lack of funding: 39%
- Lack of technical resources to maintain the system: 29%
- Organizational culture does not value data: 23%
- Not enough student data collected: 20%
- Departmental data silos: 19%

Answers from those who don’t have a CRM at their institution.
Today’s connected students are driving a new experience on campus

They share a lot of personal information and expect a personalized experience across all areas of the student lifecycle—admissions, advising, and advancement—in return.

Institutions that personally connect with applicants can look forward to increased enrollment. And students are more likely to get the most out of their college experience—from classes and clubs to housing and financial aid—if data is used to inform conversations. When students enjoy their experience, they become alumni who donate to their institution, especially when they receive requests that relate back to their interests.

The integration of data across departments to tailor communication with students and alumni is vital to improving the student experience as well as long-term student loyalty and future giving.
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Ellucian provides student information systems (SIS), finance and HR, recruiting, retention, analytics and advancement software solutions. With more than 1,400 institutions subscribing to Ellucian’s cloud services and SaaS offerings, the company is one of the largest providers of cloud-based solutions in higher education. Ellucian also supports the higher education community with a range of professional services such as application software implementation, training, education, and management consulting.

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