

Driving Enrollment Amidst Change:
Exploring College Choice of Out-of-State Students

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Dedication

I want to extend my gratitude to every woman in my life who has recognized our shared strength through our common ambitions and curiosity, as well as limitless possibilities. Our abilities extend to achieving great things alongside powerful and difficult things. You demonstrated that our journey entails tackling the toughest paths while maintaining grace and determination along with strength.

Katie – you serve as my strongest reminder that we can overcome anything through our abilities and determination. You inspire me every day, and I pray you always recognize your strength and limitless capabilities.

Mom – even though you are no longer with me on earth, your love and wisdom along with your continuous belief in me remain my guiding force. You proved to me that there was nothing I couldn't accomplish.

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ABSTRACT

Public universities are facing growing pressure to attract and enroll students from outside their state due to shifting population patterns, increased tuition expenses, and heightened competition among institutions. This study examined the factors behind college choice among first-year out-of-state students at a public four-year institution and analyzed trends between 2020 and 2023. This research utilized the Admitted Student and Parent Interest (ASPI) survey data to identify those key college choice variables that are important during enrollment decisions and assessed how these have changed over time.

This study applied Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) three-stage model of college choice, along with Jackson's (1986) framework of preference, exclusion, and evaluation and evaluated the likelihood of enrollment based on variables such as institutional reputation, student demographics, financial considerations, and campus environment. Logistic regression models showed that academic reputation and program strength were key in the initial college search, but factors like campus surroundings, residence halls, athletic reputation and student life had a greater impact on final enrollment decisions. The financial burden represented by net cost was a barrier to enrollment decisions and indicated how financial aid and perceived value influenced students' ultimate decisions.

The findings underscored that universities must create recruitment plans that emphasize the full campus experience for out-of-state students, through marketing efforts around residential life, extracurricular engagement, and financial aid transparency. By tailoring communication to demonstrate institutional fit and leveraging data-driven outreach techniques, institutions can improve yield rates and attract students from diverse regions.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Colleges and universities achieve growth and sustainability by recruiting and enrolling students from diverse backgrounds. The understanding of student decision-making processes regarding college attendance holds great importance for institutional success. Bergerson (2009) describes the college search process as the student decision-making procedure for determining both the choice to attend college and the final selection of the institution. Student populations experience different decision-making processes for college enrollment, which change over time as society evolves (Jacquette & Curs, 2015; Johnston, 2010; Rossi, 2014). Universities need to continually evaluate and adjust recruitment approaches as student demographics and economic conditions shift.

College enrollment figures have declined during recent years. According to NCES data, U.S undergraduate enrollment numbers decreased from 17.6 million students in 2011 to 15.9 million students in 2021, indicating a 10% decline. A 6% decline in high school graduation rates and a 20% rise in higher education costs have contributed to this trend (NCES 2022). The educational landscape shows transformation as non-traditional student numbers increase amid general enrollment declines (Pew Research Center, 2023). Higher education institutions have increased their recruitment strategies to secure student enrollment in response to heightened competition. Enrollment management teams use multiple outreach strategies, including traditional viewbook mailings and phone calls, as well as social media campaigns and virtual reality tours (Gregory, 2014; Alenazi & Demir, 2019). This intensified recruitment activity has turned students and their families into more selective consumers who require targeted messaging and individualized approaches to meet their needs (Burdett, 2013; Okerson, 2016). Students today must filter through an overwhelming amount of information to choose their college

experiences wisely which affects their future job satisfaction and life quality (Baum et al., 2013; Caumont, 2014; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Facing both increasing tuition costs and reduced state funding, public universities need to improve their recruitment approaches to attract students from other states to meet their institutional goals (Baker et al., 2020; Baum et al., 2013).

Public universities benefit financially from out-of-state students since their higher tuition payments help compensate for shrinking state appropriations (Dotterweich & Baryla, 2007; Ehrenberg, 2020). The economic impact of out-of-state students also extends beyond their tuition payments, since graduates frequently find employment in the states where they study, which helps strengthen local economies and broaden tax revenue bases (Jaquette & Curs, 2015; Zhang, 2007). Attracting out-of-state students serves a dual purpose: it provides financial support for the university, while also establishing a strategic foundation for long-term institutional and state-wide growth. Universities must deliver their distinctive value propositions clearly to draw students from out of state. The decision-making process for college selection ranges from family dynamics and personal attributes, along with institutional reputation and financial aid options (**Table 1.1**). Research also indicates that institutional communication can significantly shape students' perceptions of institutional fit, which is crucial for enrollment decisions (Denson & Bowman, 2015; Clinedinst & Koranteng, 2017).

Public institutions must recognize both the agency of students in the college decision-making process and the significant influence parents have on that journey. Universities aiming to attract students from out of state must effectively demonstrate their institutional characteristics and institutional fit to ensure students not only matriculate but also succeed through to graduation. By embedding persuasive branding into the entire college search process,

universities can boost the enrollment and retention rates of out-of-state students and improve academic success and student satisfaction (Archibald & Feldman, 2010; Lambert, 2014).

Table 1.1
Influences of College Choice

Personal Characteristics		Institutional Characteristics	Institutional Communication	Institutional Fit
Family	Peers			
Family education	Student peer group	Overall cost	Marketing strategies	Student values
Family influence	College or guidance counselors	Financial aid package	Communication with parents	Socioeconomic status
Graduate status	Teachers	Academic reputation	College catalogs	Academic ability
Alumni status	Mentors	Campus life	College viewbooks	Available major
Parental involvement		Selectivity	Web content	Campus culture
Parent role in financing college		College rankings	Social media	Distance from home
		Athletic reputation	Campus experience	Institution Size
			Virtual event	

Statement of the Problem

Public universities must prioritize enrolling out-of-state students to compensate for reduced state funding and explore alternative streams of revenue due to growing enrollment pressures and budget constraints (Cheslock & Gianneschi, 2008; Dotterweich & Baryl, 2007; Ehrenberg, 2020; Kelchen, 2021). Out-of-state students bring financial advantages to institutions while also contributing to diversity and enhancing national recognition (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Jaquette & Curs, 2015; Zhang, 2007). Numerous in-state students select out-of-state schools because of their academic variety and career prospects despite receiving financial rewards to stay in their home state. Data from NCES (2023) indicated that 30% of students who

qualify for state tuition support still chose out-of-state colleges, often due to the perception that these institutions offered higher academic program quality. The Education Commission of the States (ECS) reported that 40% of students attending out-of-state schools selected these institutions because their desired programs were not available in their home states (ECS, 2023). This underscored the challenge that students making decisions about out-of-state institutions require more than just financial incentives to be fully motivated.

Public universities must grasp the primary elements that affect yield and matriculation rates to successfully attract students from outside their state. Prior research has extensively explored general undergraduate choice factors (Bergerson, 2009; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Kinzie et al., 2004; Simmons, 2022; Sulaksono et al., 2021), yet there is still a gap in understanding how out-of-state students perceive institutional fit. Studies specifically examining the decision-making processes of out-of-state students remain limited.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze college choice through the viewpoint of first-year undergraduate students from out-of-state who have recently completed the college choice process and enrolled in a public four-year college. This research aims to determine which college choice variables have the greatest impact on the final college decision over a four-year period. The study uses an exploratory method to determine the key variables that influence students' decision-making process.

This study aims to provide guidance for future analyses into admission and recruitment methods so institutions can better distribute their resources and enhance their outreach to out-of-state students. The research builds upon existing college choice models by investigating the multiple variables that affect decisions made by students from out-of-state (Chapman, 1981;

Furukawa, 2011; Garza & Fullerton, 2018). Previous studies have outlined key stages in the decision-making process: these include choosing to attend college, investigating potential schools, selecting which schools to apply to, and deciding where to enroll (Furukawa, 2011; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). While previous studies have shown that family background, institutional characteristics, and social media influence student choice, a deeper exploration of the decision-making process for out-of-state students remains essential (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Vossensteyn, 2005).

Identifying the factors that universities can actively influence is key to developing more targeted and effective strategies for increasing out-of-state enrollment. Enhanced engagement with prospective students may result from customized marketing strategies, combined with specialized campus experiences and location-specific outreach efforts. Institutions can boost their student recruitment efficiency and yield by reinforcing messaging about college fit through the emphasis on those key variables that students are most influenced by.

Research Questions and Study Design

Gaining insight into what drives students to select an institution outside their home state can help admissions professionals achieve a critical strategic edge. Recruitment strategies for out-of-state students become more effective when informed by a thorough understanding of these motivations. The development of the study's format and methodology as well as the data collection and analysis procedures will be directed by the following research questions, which ensure a comprehensive method for this topic:

1. What factors do first-year out-of-state students at a public four-year institution identify as most important in their college choice?

2. How do the factors identified as most important to college choice by first-year out-of-state students at a public four-year institution change each year?

These questions are designed to explore student experience and the factors that shape the perceptions of college choice. The goal of this study is to investigate the motivations behind why students choose to enroll in a public four-year institution outside their home state and to identify which factors are most influential during the college search process.

Collinsville University (pseudonym), a prominent public research institution in the Southeastern United States, has been chosen for this study. The university's student population exceeds 34,000 undergraduates per year with a first-year class of approximately 6,800 students, of whom 40% (2,800 students) come from outside the state. Researchers will extract information from a four-year collection of online survey data completed by admitted first-year students to understand their views on the college search process. The study will examine responses from both in-state and out-of-state students to analyze residency-based differences in college choice influences. The findings will be used to inform admissions professionals about effective recruitment strategies and to identify ways to tailor these strategies to better attract out-of-state students.

Significance of the Study

In today's competitive college admissions environment, understanding the elements that shape college selection and devising methods to draw students into matriculation is crucial. Prior research on college choice has remained general in scope without delving into the approaches required to draw out-of-state students. This research investigates the decision-making process of out-of-state students during their final college search to determine influential factors which can improve recruitment strategies for the out-of-state student population. Admissions officers who

understand these differences can create better general recruitment strategies and develop specific approaches for attracting out-of-state students. The study seeks to fill this research gap through an analysis of out-of-state students, which can guide university administrators to optimize recruitment approaches to attract these students more effectively.

The outcome of this research extends beyond recruitment and admissions, offering value across multiple stages of the student experience. Staff and faculty who work with students can use these insights to better understand their role in shaping the student experience upon enrollment and improve overall satisfaction. The knowledge gained from this research enables better student retention through personalized and meaningful interactions that match students' needs and expectations. Additionally, this research will enable admissions professionals to refine institutional recruitment and campus experiences, ultimately improving best practices for high-touch outreach and engagement.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework serves as a critical tool for researchers to analyze and interpret data and then examine and understand the research findings (Anfara & Mertz, 2006; Guntur, 2019). To understand what drives out-of-state students to enroll at various colleges – and to identify the elements that shape their college search process – this study employs college choice theory as its guiding conceptual framework. The research applies the integrated college choice models developed by Hossler and Gallagher (1987) and Jackson (1986).

Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) college choice model outlines a three-stage process of college choice: predisposition (influences from external sources), search (personal exploration and evaluation), and choice (final selection of the institution). Jackson's model from 1986 includes three stages which he defines as preferences, exclusion, and evaluation. The decision-

making process manifests in different aspects at each stage, which reveals distinct motivations and behaviors. The conceptual framework used for this research also considers Furukawa's (2011) model, which combines elements from Jackson's (1986) approach alongside Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) model. Within Hossler and Gallagher's broad search stage framework, Jackson's exclusion and evaluation stages serves as integral subsets. This integrated approach provides a more in-depth understanding of college choice by aligning with the study's objective to examine 'choice' and 'evaluation' stages of these individual frameworks. Jackson's research from 1986 alongside Hossler and Gallagher's work from 1987 established the primary stage of college choice as being focused on students' background characteristics along with their personal motivations. Hossler and Gallagher defined their second stage as the "search" which remains broad, while Jackson divided this phase into two distinct stages known as exclusion and evaluation. **Figure 1.1** displays Furukawa's combined model.

These methods have enabled detailed examination of how students choose colleges by aligning with the study's objective to analyze decision-making steps through students' motivations and behaviors. Furukawa's integrated choice approach has been used in research over the last ten years to examine campus visits in college choice (Okerson, 2016), decision-making processes of low-income and high-achieving students (Mothkovich, 2018), and the college selection paths of international students (Katsanos, 2016). This research incorporates multiple models to enable a detailed examination of the college search process, which recognizes two separate phases of exclusion and evaluation and considers an array of possible influences. As the number of higher education institutions continues to grow, it is essential for university officials to understand the diverse decision-making process of students, whose motivations may vary across different groups. By understanding these dynamics, institutions can create

recruitment strategies that focus on actionable and manageable factors, meet prospective students' needs and attract valuable student groups, including out-of-state students who contribute significantly to the university.

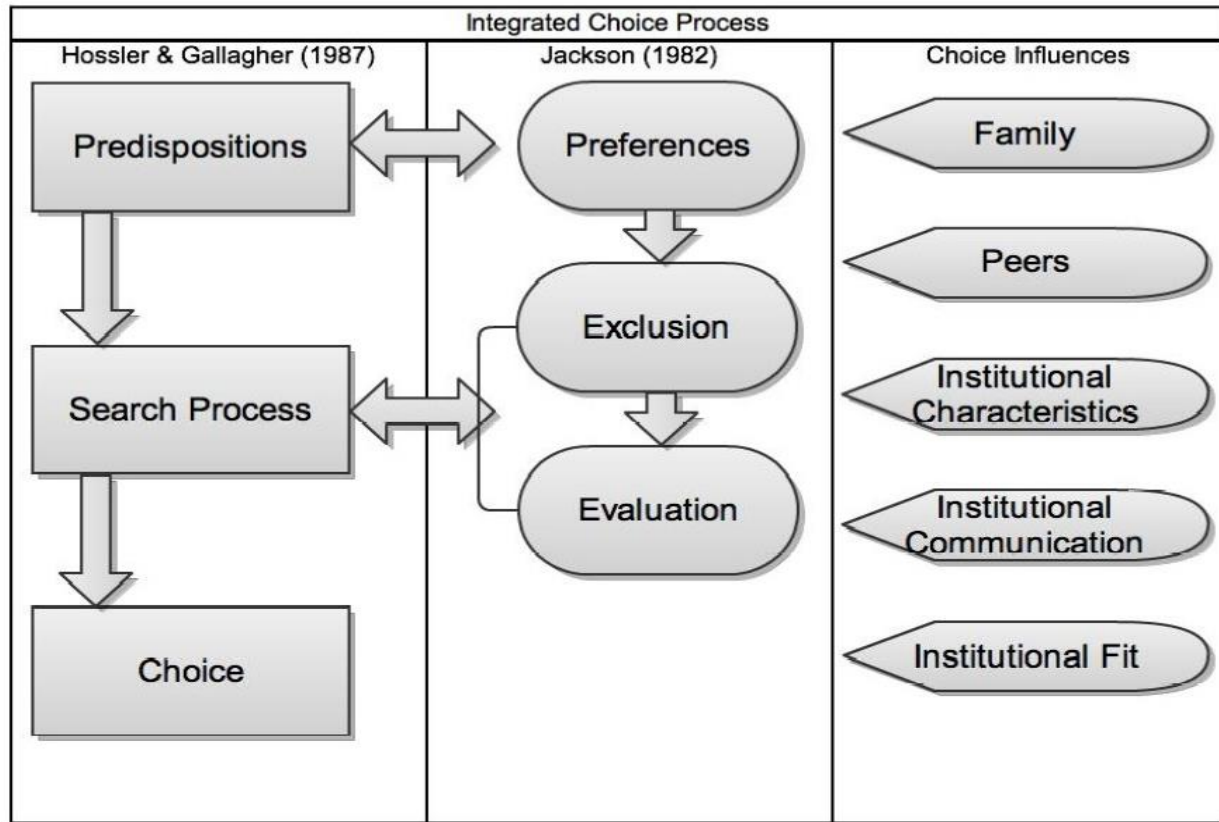


Figure 1.1. College Choice Process Integration

Adapted from "College choice influences among high-achieving students: An exploratory case study of college freshmen," by D. T. Furukawa, 2011

Terminology and Definitions

This study explains its main terms through the following set of terminology and definitions.

Admissions recruiter: A professional working in higher education whose job is to draw in prospective students and encourage them to submit applications to their institution. (Stichter, 2020)

Admitted student: A student classified as a first-year student who has received acceptance from a college or university (NCES, 2020).

Campus visit: An official visit to higher education institutions that includes activities such as campus tours, information sessions, classroom visits, or faculty meetings (Okerson, 2016)

College choice: The methodology students employ to assess their college options and choose their destination involving considerations and decision-making factors. (Iloh, 2018)

College search process: The individualized journey each student undertakes to research and select colleges and universities, which helps them define their preferences and make an informed college choice. (Iloh, 2018)

Enrolled student: A first-year student who has accepted an offer of admission and has committed to attending a specific college or university. (NCES, 2020)

In-state student: A student whose permanent residence is within the same state as the college or university they are attending. (Jaquette & Curs, 2015)

Matriculated student: A first-year student who has officially registered and is attending classes at a college or university as of the census date, which is the 14th day of class. (NCES, 2018)

Out-of-state student: A student whose permanent residence is in a state different from the one in which the college or university they are attending is located. (Peters, 2024)

Prospective student: An individual who is considering becoming an undergraduate student at an institution, particularly one who has either expressed interest in the institution or has been sought out by the institution. (Winter, 2022)

Selective colleges: The U.S. News & World Report's list of top 100 national universities (U.S. News & World Report, 2018).

Viewbook: An important marketing tool produced by a college or university to aid in recruiting prospective students by providing essential information about the institution. (Selingo, 2020)

Yield Percentage: The proportion of students who, after being accepted for admission, choose to enroll at a specific institution. (Selingo, 2020)

Delimitations and Limitations

To ensure the findings of this study are meaningful and applicable, the focus of this study will be on the out-of-state enrollment of first-year students at a large, public, four-year institution. This focus narrows the scope from a broader analysis of all postsecondary institutions. Additionally, this study will be geographically delimited, as this study will use data from one institution for research and findings. The proposed study faces two primary types of limitations: situational and data related.

Situational Limitations

This study will be conducted in the aftermath of an unpredictable period for higher education institutions, specifically in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus pandemic generated possible changes in why students choose institutions and how schools attract

them. COVID-19 no longer poses immediate threats, but its long-term effects on postsecondary education remain unclear. Any major changes in college practices or policies resulting from the pandemic may still impact the generalizability and relevance of the study's findings.

Data Limitations

The study utilized secondary data sources, meaning the data was collected by sources other than the researcher. Chapter Three provided detailed information about the data sources. Because the data used in this study was not collected specifically for this research, there was a natural separation between the research and the data collected. This research limitation necessitates the employment of proxy variables as stand-ins for theoretical constructs in statistical models which may affect how accurately results can be interpreted.

Organization of the Study

This research study consists of five distinct chapters, each serving essential functions for both developing and presenting this research. The initial three chapters of the study present the proposal while describing both the research rationale and methodology. The last two chapters present the research findings and conclusions. The introductory chapter defines the research problem and purpose, presents research questions and study design and demonstrates the study's significance through its conceptual framework, key terms, limitations, in addition to providing essential context for the study. Chapter Two delivers an exhaustive analysis of academic publications concerning both college choice and enrollment motivations. Chapter Three explains the research methodology, which covers detailed discussions on research design, as well as data collection strategies and analytical procedures complemented by statistical assumptions and models. Chapter Four presents the research findings alongside the key outcomes discovered

through the study. Chapter Five analyzes the study's findings to offer practical recommendations for implementation and guide subsequent research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the complex factors that shape college choice by analyzing the reasons students opt to attend out-of-state universities. Understanding the factors that influence these enrollment decisions is essential, as they stem from the interaction between personal circumstances, social influences, and economic conditions. The literature review examines the specific factors students use to evaluate and make these decisions. These factors include academic reputation and program offerings, as well as financial aid options and campus culture. This literature review will offer insights into student decision-making patterns to help institutions recruit and support out-of-state students while improving their recruitment methods to grow a diverse student population. Understanding the detailed variables that drive student decisions enhances educational research while establishing supportive environments that meet prospective students' specific goals and requirements.

Historical Overview of College Choice

College choice models illustrate the variables and stages that influence a student's decision-making process regarding higher education. A deeper understanding of these models enables institutions to effectively position themselves as influential players in the college choice landscape. Research on student college choice, as conducted by Kinzie et al. (2004), started in the early 1950s. During that period, the percentage of high school graduates going on to college remained below 20%, as most students opted for schools close to home. The introduction of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill) in 1944 and President Harry S. Truman's move to broaden community college availability encouraged students to look at colleges beyond their immediate regions. The rising demand for post-secondary education, no longer limited by

location, led colleges to enhance their recruitment tactics and triggered research into student decision-making. (Kinzie et al., 2004)

Researchers have long been interested in understanding what influences a student's college choice and how institutions influence that decision. Enrollment management staff have explored a variety of models that attempt to capture those influences. Holland (1959) was among the first to investigate college choice as a research problem. His findings initially focused on National Merit Scholars, who had a wide array of institutions to consider, and highlighted the importance of institutional popularity and public perception in influencing college decisions. Richards and Holland (1965) expanded this research by analyzing a cohort of 8,200 students who had taken the ACT, categorizing the influences of college choice into four domains: personal, intellectual, social, and influential.

Later researchers built on Holland's early research by attempting to understand the sequence of stages students moved through when evaluating their college choice, and at which point institutional messaging likely had the greatest impact on that choice. Kolter (1976) introduced a marketing framework that divides the process into seven stages: the decision to attend, information search, evaluation of selected colleges, application submission, admission decision, college choice, and enrollment. His model emphasized the role institutions play in a student's final decision-making process and how that role interplays with the types of student preferences and influences identified by Holland. Chapman (1981) built on Kolter's framework by distinguishing between a "search" stage and a "choice" stage, asserting that the characteristics of students and their families are most impactful during the search phase, while external factors from colleges are more influential during the choice phase. Hanson and Litten (1982) condensed the seven stages proposed by Kolter into three key phases. Their model posits that the first stage

involves a student's initial decision to attend college, encompassing interests, planning, and financial aid considerations. During the second stage, applicants must research different educational institutions and financial aid possibilities before arranging application materials. The final stage involves making the decision to apply and enroll, which includes completing the application process, submitting financial aid applications, and comparing scholarship offers before confirming enrollment. Jackson (1986) further explored the first stage, revealing that the presence of peers who are also college-ready significantly predicts higher education enrollment.

Today, researchers largely turn to another influential three-stage model of the college choice process proposed by Hossler and Gallagher in 1987, which attempts to identify which individual and organizational factors most impact students at each phase. Hossler and Gallagher called the initial stage in which students consider going to college the pre-disposition stage. Students reach the second stage called the search phase after deciding to pursue higher education where they collect details and assess institutions. At the choice phase students complete their decision-making on both the decision to attend college and the selection of their preferred institution. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) offered a comprehensive overview of the college choice model through a summary of critical steps within its stages as shown in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1.
Three-Stage Model of College Choice

Model Dimension	Influential Factors		Student Outcomes
	Individual Factors	Organizational Factors	
Predisposition (Stage One)	Student characteristics	School characteristics	College options
	Significant others		Other post-graduation options
	Educational activities		
Search (Stage Two)	Student's initial college values	Institutional search activities	Choice set
	Student search behaviors		Other options
Choice (Stage Three)	Choice set	Institutional courtship activities	Choice

Note. Adapted from “Studying student college choice: A three-phase model and implications for policymakers,” by D. Hossler and K.S. Gallagher, 1987. *College and University*, 62(3), P. 208. Copyright 1987.

While scholars largely affirm the foundational three-stage college choice model proposed by Hossler and Gallagher (1987), some argue that this approach overlooks critical details and influences. Vossensteyn (2005) enhanced the model by exploring the intricate connections among various elements in the college search process, particularly by how price differentiation impacts college choice across different student subgroups. This finding aligns with broader research on how a student's environment influences their college decision-making. In 2006, Perna examined the concept of “habitus” in relation to college choice, highlighting the correlation between individual experiences and decision-making processes. “Habitus” refers to the attitudes and beliefs shaped by an individual's background and experiences (McDonough, 1994). Perna (2006) articulated the concept of habitus as a framework that “conditions an individual's college-related expectations, attitudes, and aspirations” (p. 112). Additionally, a

broader understanding of students' college search experiences emerges when factors like race, ethnicity, gender, and access shape their journey.

In their latest research, Borges (2023) and Le et al. (2018) investigated how social media affects students' college selection decisions. While these models present slight variations, they collectively enhance our comprehension of how high school students navigate the college choice process, providing valuable insights for universities aiming to improve recruitment strategies. Recent studies that focus on the specific factors influencing students at each stage of the college search process show promise (Bergerson, 2009; Borges, 2023; Furukawa, 2011; Le et al., 2018; Mulhern, 2021; Vossensteyn, 2005). Earlier models tend to emphasize the search phase but often lack depth in defining the most significant influences during that phase, primarily investigating what motivates students to pursue higher education in general (Holland, 1959; Kolter, 1976). Consequently, research must continue to explore factors that affect different stages of college selection so institutions can use this data to improve their student recruitment strategies.

As institutions look to expand enrollment and grow national recognition, defining college search influences that are most important to prospective out-of-state students has become crucial. (Jaquette & Curs, 2015). Furthermore, identifying these key influences can help admissions offices tailor their recruitment efforts to attract a broader range of students, particularly those from out-of-state (Baryla & Dotterweich, 2001; Skinner, 2019).

College Choice Key Considerations

In examining college choice models, researchers consistently have identified nine critical areas that play a significant role in shaping students' decisions: family influence, peer influence, school counselors, school rankings, institutional characteristics, selectivity, institutional communication, institutional fit, and campus experience (Furukawa, 2011; Hesel, 2004; Hossler

& Foley, 1995; Johnson & Stewart, 1991; McDonough, 1997; Perna, 2000). Moreover, recent studies over the past decade have highlighted three additional influential factors: social media, location, and cost of attendance (Borges, 2023; Le et al., 2019; Perna & Kurban, 2013; Siji & Parsad, 2013; Suwarno & Murnaka, 2020; Weisser, 2018). Research directed toward out-of-state students requires an understanding of these influences, because institutions must know these factors for effective student recruitment. Colleges can more effectively recruit out-of-state students and develop a welcoming campus environment using customized outreach and support strategies that address the key factors influencing their college choices.

Family Influence

Researchers have conducted multiple studies that demonstrated the essential impact of family involvement throughout the process of choosing a college (Avery & Hoxby, 2004; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2014; Connie et al., 2022; Hossler & Foley, 1995; Litten, 1982; McDonough, 1994; Perna, 2000). The research conducted by Litten in 1982 demonstrated that parental educational background stands out as the most influential factor when parents guide their children in choosing colleges. The decision-making process for out-of-state students tends to carry more weight since it involves moving away from their existing support network which makes guidance from family members essential. The academic accomplishments of a mother serve as a strong indicator of her child's academic achievements and future earnings as demonstrated by research findings (Carneiro et al., 2013).

The likelihood of a student attending a specific college increases significantly when they have at least one family member who attended the same institution, which includes fathers or siblings (Rodriguez & Rosario-Ramos, 2021). The probability of attending college increases by 70% when a student's father graduates and by 90% when a student has a sibling who graduates

(Avery & Hoxby, 2004). Out-of-state students experience reduced anxiety about attending college away from home when they know people at the institution, as familiar connections help boost their confidence in navigating new surroundings.

Children whose parents are engaged in their educational journey have a better chance to pursue higher education according to Connie et al. (2022). Parental involvement from the start reduces their feelings of alienation in choosing colleges and supports their children's choices when they look at distant schools. Reynolds (1981) stressed that universities need to respond to parental concerns since these have a direct impact on their children's college selection process. Institutions need to deliver transparent and supportive information to address the special concerns of out-of-state families regarding distance, safety issues, and relocation costs. More recently, Thomas (2003) identified six key characteristics that parents prioritize when evaluating colleges: campus safety, campus environment, location, cost, program strength, and campus size. Out-of-state students must consider location as a complex factor, including not only the physical distance but also the cultural compatibility and availability of support networks away from their family homes.

Research studies show that ethnicity affects family influence patterns. According to Nora's 2004 study, families played various roles in higher education choices within underserved communities, with Hispanic students receiving stronger family backing as Perez & McDonough (2008) also observed. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) highlighted that Hispanic students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and first-generation college students encounter substantial disadvantages compared to students from non-Hispanic groups. The difficulties become more significant for students from out of state, due to the potential lack of existing support networks in unfamiliar environments.

Perna (2000) corroborated the influence of parental education, finding that parental participation in middle school events correlated with higher college enrollment rates. Moreover, Stewart and Post (1990) observed that traditionally underserved communities are more likely to attend institutions located within a few hours of their parents' homes, suggesting that for out-of-state students, a targeted approach by institutions to recruit students from closer geographic areas may be necessary. These findings were echoed by Niu (2015), who further found that Hispanic and Asian students, but not Black students, were unlikely to choose colleges located in states where their ethnic minority is not substantially represented in the larger population. Niu also argued that high-performing Black and Hispanic students and those with parents who did not obtain a bachelor's degree gained especially large increases in access by leaving their home state. Institutions wishing to effectively support out-of-state students need to understand family dynamics and influences. Colleges that understand family-specific challenges can develop recruitment strategies that effectively address prospective student families' needs and concerns.

Peer Influence

The influence of family remains fundamental, but peer influence nevertheless holds substantial weight in the college selection process for students who attend college outside their home state. Students who are evaluating out-of-state colleges can find peers to be invaluable resources for information and guidance which influence their understanding of various institutions and their college life. The research of Kealy and Rockel (1987) showed that the peer group of high school students greatly shapes their views about the quality of different colleges. The opinions and experiences of peers provide out-of-state students with limited local networks the necessary guidance to connect their home environment with the unfamiliar college landscape they are evaluating.

McDonough (1997) analyzed the role of peer groups in college selection by studying how student organization connections affect student aspirations and preferences. Out-of-state students depend heavily on their peers for understanding campus culture and academic standards since they face an unfamiliar college environment. Kelp Kern (2000) found that students tend to select colleges that match their peers in both institution type (two-year or four-year) and prestige level, which demonstrates that peer networks help establish a sense of belonging before students even start attending their chosen college.

However, according to Hossler et al. (1989), the impact of peer influence varies depending on the specific group. Out-of-state students face significant variability in peer perspectives because their peers come from assorted geographic and cultural backgrounds. Student decision-making processes benefit from these interactions because students evaluate both the benefits and obstacles of attending college in a new location. Studying how cultural and familial factors shape peer influence leads to better understanding of college choice behaviors among students.

The significance of social media impacts rises as students' peer groups grow to encompass online spaces. Out-of-state students commonly utilize social platforms to connect with peers so they can exchange advice and experiences while building relationships with future classmates (Borges, 2023). Online interactions help students overcome their worries about being distant from home while building a community bond prior to their campus arrival. Investigating peer influence mechanics within various demographic categories in online settings can provide valuable insights into how students choose out-of-state colleges (Borges, 2023).

School Counselors

During the college search process guidance and career counselors become essential advisors particularly for out-of-state students who must navigate unfamiliar settings (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2014; Johnson & Stewart, 1991; King, 1996; Kraft, 2023; McCarter, 2023). The study by Johnson and Stewart (1991) which analyzed over 3,500 first-year students discovered that school counselors receive more consultations than parents or teachers throughout the college search process, which establishes them as essential mentors at this point. Out-of-state students facing challenges in college selection can greatly benefit from effective school counseling, which helps them identify institutions that align with their academic and personal goals.

Insufficient career counseling regarding out-of-state financial aid and scholarships contributes to lower college attendance rates among African American, Native American and Hispanic students compared to their share of the general population. The research by Cabrera and La Nasa in 2014 identified socioeconomic status as a vital factor affecting graduation rates from high school and college enrollment among minority students. Inadequate counseling services, often due to high student-to-counselor ratios in schools, as shown in studies by Cabrera & La Nasa (2014), Corwin et al. (2004), and McDonough & Fann (2007), result in students missing out on essential information needed to navigate their college search process.

Counselors are essential providers of information about college options while teaching students how to research schools beyond their state boundaries and helping them understand residency requirements and scholarship possibilities to reduce the costs of attending an out-of-state college (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2014; McCarter, 2023; McDonough & Fann, 2007). Counselors support students with their emotional and social adjustment preparations before moving away from home. High school counselors who build relationships with out-of-state

college counselors help students better understand support services that are available after they begin their college education. The partnership forms a fundamental component of student preparation for their lives after graduation while maintaining their sense of support throughout this transition (McCarter, 2023; Lindstrom et al., 2022). Through effective counseling, students from out of state can acquire the necessary skills to make well-informed decisions and maneuver through the complex college search process with success.

Rankings

Out-of-state students evaluating distant colleges rely heavily on college rankings which also guide the decision-making process for students and their families (Kim & Gasman, 2011; Sulaksono et al., 2021). Students who lack direct experience with certain colleges rely on rankings as essential resources to evaluate institutional quality and reputation. Universities will often use college rankings as promotional assets by displaying them in viewbooks and on their admissions websites to draw prospective students.

A study by Monks and Ehrenberg (1999) demonstrated that institutional rankings affected the institutions' approaches to tuition rates as well as scholarship models and selectivity criteria. Out-of-state students experience this impact more, because they compare the academic value of attending a top institution with the extra expenses of studying far from home. An increase in the number of applications received by institutions was directly linked to changes in their rankings, according to U.S. News and World Report as reported by Reback and Alter (2014). Out-of-state students can use rankings to confirm their decision to apply to schools that seem distant and unfamiliar.

However, rankings are not without their controversies. While students and families often rely on them to guide their college selection process, educators frequently question the

methodologies used to generate these rankings. Espinosa et al. (2014) state that ranking measures lack comprehensiveness and frequently depend on flawed data and assumptions along with the mistaken belief that institutional quality can be fully measured (p. 7). Out-of-state students who use rankings to make college decisions may lack a detailed understanding of how ranking metrics match their personal goals and needs.

Furthermore, a 2014 study by Reback and Alter demonstrated that changes in rankings can reflect demographic shifts in factors such as value, diversity, and lifestyle options. Rankings can unintentionally lead students and families to make misguided college choices by emphasizing certain factors over others, underscoring the need for deeper understanding and individual evaluations of institutional offerings. Out-of-state students, in particular, must recognize that institutions with higher rankings do not necessarily equate to better institutional fit or a supportive environment, especially when considering elements such as campus culture, available resources, and social integration. While college rankings can serve as useful resources for out-of-state students to make informed decisions, students should also assess the comprehensive offerings of each institution to ensure the best personal fit for their needs and goals (Espinosa et al., 2014; Sulaksono et al., 2021).

Institutional Characteristics

The selection process for college enrollment is strongly affected by institutional characteristics, which serve as major considerations especially for out-of-state students exploring new educational environments (Albright & Schwanke, 2021; Brown, 2010; Hesel, 2004; Kuh, 2009; Magolda, 2000; Yost & Tucker, 1995). Litten's research in 1991 demonstrated that the wide range of institutional characteristics makes the process of selecting colleges more complex. Prestige, alongside cost, location, diversity, size, college rankings, and admission rates serve as

major influences in student decisions concerning application and enrollment decisions. These factors become even more crucial for out-of-state students, as they must evaluate not only the college itself but also how well it aligns with their specific needs and circumstances.

Miotto et al. (2020) recognized institutional reputation as a critical element. Through their research, institutional reputation is identified as a critical element to sustain a competitive edge among higher education institutions. Out-of-state students and their families look for strong institutional reputations to ensure educational quality and potential investment returns given higher tuition costs for attending college away from home. Hossler and Litten (1993) discovered that students often look at factors such as the community environment, student body diversity, faculty-student interaction possibilities, campus activity involvement opportunities, safety concerns, and curricular focus on pre-professional and professional fields when choosing their schools. For out-of-state students, these factors are particularly important in finding both a welcoming community and an engaging campus environment in a new location.

Out-of-state students must familiarize themselves with various institutional characteristics to make well-informed college decisions. Students who thoroughly assess these elements can identify educational institutions that match their career objectives while providing necessary support for their overall health throughout their major life transition.

Selectivity

High-achieving students place significant importance on selectivity during their college selection process especially when they are looking at out-of-state options. High-achieving students consider selectivity a crucial factor together with institutional rankings when they decide on their college applications (Andrews et al., 2020; Furukawa, 2011; Hossler & Litten, 1993). Hossler and Litten (1993) identify selective institutions by their reduced admission rates

along with superior student applicant quality. The pursuit of more selective institutions by high-achieving students perpetuates selectivity and intensifies the competition for admission.

The focus on selectivity stems from perceptions about academic excellence and job placement results which data frequently supports. Out-of-state students who attend highly selective schools improve their job market prospects and marketability which makes them attractive candidates for potential employers. Graduates from highly selective institutions often achieve higher job placement and initial salary benchmarks according to research by Andrews et al., 2020 and Wyner et al., 2007.

Carnevale and Rose's 2004 study revealed that students at the top 100 selective educational institutions finish their degrees within six years at a rate of 90%, whereas graduation rates fall to 70% for less selective institutions and only 56% for non-selective institutions. Graduates from selective institutions secured better graduate school placements with 31% success compared to 21% overall, and they also attained higher starting salaries (Carnevale & Rose, 2004). The combination of these findings leads people to view attendance at selective institutions as a calculated decision especially for out-of-state students who dedicate substantial resources to their educational journey. The selectivity of educational institutions is directly linked to both tangible outcomes and perceived benefits for their graduates.

Out-of-state students can develop effective application strategies by understanding the selectivity levels of colleges. Students aiming for selective colleges should prepare academic profiles that meet their strict admission standards. One benefit of attending a selective college includes access to essential networking opportunities that support career growth in industries where personal connections hold significant importance (Espinosa et al., 2014). The emphasis on selectivity shapes both the application decisions of out-of-state students and their perceptions of

the value of their educational experience. Understanding selectivity during college selection helps out-of-state students make decisions that better match their educational and career goals.

Institutional Communication

Institutional communication plays a crucial role in the college choice process, particularly for out-of-state students who may have limited information about institutions located far from home (Chapman, 1981; D'Silva, 2020; Johnston, 2010; Stephenson et al., 2016). Many institutions have adopted marketing strategies like those in the business sector to effectively attract prospective students. Hossler (1999) demonstrated how colleges can leverage software to identify clusters of student characteristics that indicate a predisposition to apply. This data enables institutions to tailor their communications, focusing on majors, organizations, and affiliations that resonate with prospective students.

For out-of-state students, effective communication is essential for addressing unique concerns such as financial implications, distance, and adaptation to a new environment. D'Silva (2020) conducted a study that highlights that the evolution of communication methods is significant; universities are using multiple channels to reach potential students through both print (viewbooks, targeted brochures, handwritten letters) and digital platforms (emails, social media campaigns, online blogs, text messaging). Hartley and Morpew (2008) conducted a content analysis of 48 viewbooks from four-year institutions across the U.S. and identified six recurring themes: campus features, academic and faculty highlights, co-curricular opportunities, admissions and financial aid information, the value of education, and the purpose of higher education. However, focus groups conducted by the Educational Conservancy revealed that many students perceived generic print materials as disingenuous, suggesting that institutions sometimes prioritized application numbers over meaningful engagement (Jaschik, 2007). For

out-of-state students, this engagement is essential; personalized communication can ease anxieties about relocating, building a sense of community, and adapting to the local culture.

To stand out in a crowded market, institutions have started targeting specific student populations, tailoring their communications to create personalized touches (D'Silva, 2020; Mulhern, 2021). This targeted approach, which once focused primarily on student-athletes and high-achieving students (Andrews et al., 2020; Letawsky et al., 2003), is now expanding to include out-of-state students who may feel isolated from the recruitment process. Without personalization, institutional communication can come across as generic and self-serving. Pagano and Terkla (1991) evaluated communication effectiveness at Tufts University and found that, while prospective students were generally satisfied with the admissions process, their parents expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of staff for follow-up questions.

Their findings underscored the importance of ongoing research to improve interactions with prospective students and their families. Kelpe Kern (2000) reiterated the need for evaluating communication services within institutions, especially given the shift towards a market-driven recruitment model. For out-of-state students and their families, understanding which tools and methods resonate will enhance accessibility and influence throughout the college choice process (Stephenson et al., 2016). Open and transparent communication can help build trust and encourage engagement, making out-of-state students feel more welcomed and informed as they navigate their college options.

Institutional Fit

Out-of-state students face unique adaptation challenges, as the multi-dimensional concept of institutional fit plays a crucial role in shaping their overall experience. Astin (1965) explored factors that create a perceived fit between students and institutions, identifying six main

dimensions: intellectualism, aestheticism, status, leadership, pragmatism, and masculinity.

Astin's analysis identified the types of institutions that attract students with strengths in specific areas, laying the groundwork for improving student recruitment strategies. Williams (1986) further refined this analysis, suggesting that admissions offices consider three sets of factors: student characteristics, institutional environment traits, and the outcomes of their interactions. The campus environment is shaped by multiple physical, academic, social, and psychological variables that comprise institutional characteristics. When out-of-state students experience a strong institutional fit it helps them adapt to their new environment while building their sense of belonging and engagement. Higher education institutions work to admit students who are likely to excel, which requires them to clearly present their distinctive traits during all stages of the college selection process from initial exploration through orientation (Bowman & Denson, 2014). Out-of-state students need to know if an institution matches their values and goals to reduce the uncertainties of moving to a new state.

Research findings show that some experts challenge the focus on matching students with suitable institutions despite the established emphasis on finding appropriate matches. A 2010 study by Mattern et al. assessed student-institution fit through analysis of preferences related to institutional settings and sizes as well as how close institutions were to students' homes. Students tend to enroll at institutions that differ from those they identify as their best options. Several factors, including the admissions process, financial considerations, and impressions from campus visits, contribute to this observed difference. Out-of-state students experience intensified impacts from these factors since they generally do not have access to the local knowledge and support systems available to in-state students. Identifying the desired characteristics serves as an essential recruitment foundation, yet concentrating too much on finding the perfect fit may lead

to unrealistic expectations and does not guarantee student enrollment. The research by Vulperhorst et al. (2020) demonstrated that students' ultimate choice of school depends heavily on their interests and perception of fit, but their interests tend to remain broad and changeable. Universities can create a perception of fit for students without needing to perfectly match all of their interests. According to Weisser (2020) student personality emerges as a vital factor when students decide to pursue out-of-state education. Students from outside the state want campuses that match their personal goals, but they also require confirmation that they will receive community support in their new location. Institutions need to convey their unique features while developing relationships that allow students from outside the state to imagine their success in that environment.

Campus Experience

Hebb's 2024 study revealed that the on-campus experience emerged as the primary factor affecting students' final decisions on college selection. This experience holds greater importance for out-of-state students because it provides a way for them to assess their potential for successful adaptation to unfamiliar surroundings away from home. Four-year institutions predominantly organize campus visits and recruitment events to develop prospective students' interest in applying and eventually enrolling (Bowers & Sprott, 2012; Brown, 2010; Hebb, 2024; Hesel, 2004; Magolda, 2000; Okerson, 2016; Schuette, 2024). According to Greenough (2003), students make their final enrollment choices based on insights gained from their on-campus experiences. Out-of-state students who tour the campus in person can overcome their worries about social integration and resource accessibility while learning to navigate their new environment.

Some institutions offer traditional campus experiences with standard tours and information sessions, while others adopt more innovative approaches. Campus visit strategies may include student meetings and classroom tours, along with faculty appointments and academic advising sessions. Additionally, some institutions incorporate more innovative approaches, such as discussions with admissions recruiters, panel presentations, or even overnight stays in residence halls. By adopting a diverse range of campus visit activities, institutions create unique experiences which allow them to distinguish themselves from their competitors (Hebb, 2024; Hoover, 2010; Okerson, 2016). Personalized meetings with faculty members and current students provide out-of-state students with vital perspectives about the campus culture which assists them in visualizing their place within the community.

The yield event stands as a crucial part of the campus experience since it occurs in March and April for admitted students who have not yet decided where to enroll. Yield events allow students to make their enrollment decisions by providing them with an opportunity to visit or revisit the institution (Greenough, 2003). Yield events serve as a crucial tool for out-of-state students because they present a chance to explore the campus environment personally while allowing students to build connections with peers and find resources that help them adjust to college life away from home.

College-bound students can now rely on virtual tours to explore their potential universities especially when they are out-of-state and lack the chance to make physical campus visits (Thompson, 2023). Students residing far from prospective colleges benefit greatly from virtual tours because they enable exploration of campuses and understanding college life without facing the costly and complex logistics of long-distance travel (Pavlik, 2020). Students from other states often lack sufficient time and resources or face difficulties that prevent them from

visiting multiple colleges personally. The costs of travel, combined with time constraints from school or work, and logistical challenges often prevent students from visiting campuses in person. Students can conveniently explore college campuses without travel expenses through virtual tours that they access from their home or wherever they happen to be (Pavlik, 2020; Thompson, 2023). Students who want to visit multiple schools but have scheduling constraints can access these tours at any time.

Technology & Social Media

Technology integration into the college search process has substantially changed the way prospective students collect information and make their choices. The emergence of digital platforms enables students to discover abundant resources for researching educational institutions and understanding their available options. *College Confidential* and *Niche* deliver student reviews and ratings to help them evaluate colleges on various aspects including academics, campus life, and affordability (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2021). These resources offer great value to out-of-state students who need trustworthy information to evaluate colleges because they do not have local knowledge about educational institutions distant from their home.

Colleges now depend on social media as their primary channel to connect with potential applicants. Current students use Instagram and TikTok to create authentic content which allows institutions to display their campus culture (Siji & Parsad, 2023). Social media platforms serve as tools that improve community interaction while offering prospective students valuable perspectives from current students which shape their perceptions (Eli & Hamou, 2022; Sandvig, 2016). Through social media, students from outside the state can view university life which helps them imagine what their future campus experience will be like.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic rise in the popularity of virtual campus tours, which became necessary for students who could not physically visit campuses (Albright & Schwanke, 2021; Thompson, 2023). Prospective students can examine universities from their homes through immersive experiences which display campus facilities and academic programs. Academic research shows virtual tours enhance student interest and application rates thus proving their value during recruitment (Liang et al., 2021; Rohizan et al., 2019; Suwarno & Murnaka, 2020). Future advancements in technology will enable virtual tours to become more engaging and informative, which will enhance the decision-making experience for students.

Data analytics stands as a crucial element to improving recruitment strategies. Colleges use online behavior analysis of prospective students to design marketing strategies that create relevant communications for their target audiences (Delcours & Carmona, 2019). The use of targeted marketing strategies improves student engagement and enhances the success rate of college applications. The use of technology brings about certain difficulties. The large amount of information available to students can create feelings of being overwhelmed which results in challenges when trying to identify trustworthy sources (Bright et al., 2015). Out-of-state students must navigate this complex digital landscape carefully to identify reliable information and make well-informed college choices.

Location

The selection of a college represents a vital choice which determines both academic paths and personal development for students. For out-of-state students, location becomes a critical factor when selecting a college (Jokela, 2009; Weisser, 2018). A major factor in choosing a location is its impact on students' social integration. Students relocating to new regions must navigate unknown social environments, as well as physical spaces. The geographical location of

a college can either support or obstruct their adaptation process. Students attending institutions in lively urban areas gain access to a range of cultural experiences and social activities and networking opportunities which foster stronger connection and engagement. Colleges located in distant or secluded regions sometimes create difficulties for students trying to build social connections, which might result in feelings of isolation or detachment (Czajkowski et al., 2020).

The location plays a vital role in how out-of-state students experience their sense of community and belonging. Moving to a culturally or geographically different location from their hometown enhances college students' experiences through exposure to new perspectives while simultaneously creating a sense of distance from home (Weisser, 2018). The physical distance from home increases the need for students to select college locations that provide an inclusive and welcoming environment which helps them adapt more smoothly and succeed in their studies. The location of a college carries practical implications, including living expenses, resource availability, and employment prospects. Higher tuition fees for out-of-state students necessitate careful financial evaluation of potential colleges (Skinner, 2019). Students at colleges located in low-cost living areas experience reduced financial stress which enables them to dedicate more time to their educational pursuits and additional activities. Institutions situated within metropolitan areas tend to offer superior access to internships and job placement programs which play a critical role in career development (Whisler et al., 2008). The geographical situation of a college reveals its institutional values and characteristics. According to Weisser (2018), urban universities focus on innovation and global engagement, but rural colleges prioritize community service and regional concerns. Students who understand these distinctions can better match their educational path and career objectives to the most suitable institutional environment that supports their personal goals.

Cost of Attendance

The Cost of Attendance (COA) represents all the costs students must cover while attending college which include tuition and fees as well as room and board, textbooks, transportation and personal expenses. Ma and Pender's 2022 analysis shows that attending in-state public four-year institutions costs more than \$27,000 per year while private institutions may require students to pay over \$55,000 annually. The financial burden becomes more intense for out-of-state students who face tuition rates that frequently surpass in-state rates by significant margins. Students need to assess COA thoroughly during their college selection process because these costs have major effects on both affordability and financial wellbeing (Skinner, 2019).

The cost of attendance for public institutions can be affected by state policies. Several southern state public institutions have implemented new policy measures to attract and retain in-state students by offering financial incentives. The *Tennessee Promise* program in Tennessee and the *HOPE Scholarship* in Georgia stand out as leading examples of these state initiatives. Through the *Tennessee Promise* program students receive last-dollar scholarships for community colleges and technical schools tuition and fees while the HOPE Scholarship provides merit-based funding for undergraduate students at public colleges in Georgia (Georgia Student Finance Commission, 2024; Tennessee Promise, 2024). Perna et al. (2020) concluded that educational equity programs require concurrent investment in personnel to effectively support their beneficiaries. Out-of-state students need to understand financial aid and scholarship availability because it determines their capacity to cover tuition and living costs in a new state. The accessibility differences in financial aid programs significantly influence the student and their decision-making process.

For out-of-state students, cost remains a fundamental consideration which affects their perception of an institution's feasibility. Students evaluate institutional affordability based on the availability of financial aid and scholarship programs. A study conducted by DesJardins and colleagues in 2006 followed 80,000 University of Iowa students over a five-year period and discovered that insufficient financial aid packages resulted in the largest negative effect on student enrollment. Avery and Hoxby (2004) observed that financial aid from institutions tends to reduce overall expenses but primarily supports institutional interests instead of fully meeting the needs of students. Out-of-state students must assess their total costs and available scholarships, as this financial awareness plays a crucial role in their enrollment decision.

The perception of COA among students depends heavily on the financial aid provided to them. Financial aid packages offer different types of support such as grants, scholarships, work-study opportunities and loans that each impact student decision-making in unique ways. The 2020 study by Burrs showed that most students do not understand the differences between financial aid types which leads to misunderstandings about their payment obligations. Scholarships and grants offer immediate financial assistance because they do not demand repayment while loans lead to future financial obligations. Students need a detailed understanding of financial aid to properly evaluate their Cost of Attendance.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) functions as the essential entry point for students seeking financial aid. Deneault's (2023) research shows that aid in completing the FAFSA leads to higher enrollment rates and more financial assistance which helps reduce students' perceived COA. Numerous students encounter obstacles that prevent them from fully understanding COA and its consequences. Students who are first-generation college attendees or come from low-income families frequently express feeling overwhelmed when dealing with the

financial details related to their college decisions (Dynarski, 2008; Perna & Kurban, 2013).

Access to essential resources for understanding financial aid options and managing college costs remains limited for these students.

Financial aid offers have complex structures, which can often contribute to students' confusion about their college finances. Students find it difficult to understand their financial aid because award letters use different formats and terminologies. Mandell and Hanson (2009) discovered that students with inadequate financial literacy often misinterpret their financial aid offers, which leads to substantial errors in calculating their out-of-pocket expenses. Students who do not understand their financial aid offers may make poor college choices because they misperceive affordability, which becomes crucial for out-of-state students facing unfamiliar financial systems.

Contextual Considerations

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the college selection process as students now evaluate numerous additional factors before selecting their higher education institutions. Out-of-state students must prioritize these considerations because they face the extra difficulties of long-distance travel from their homes along with financial burdens and the need to adapt to unfamiliar settings. Among the most crucial elements influencing their decisions, three additional considerations stand out: health and safety measures, flexible learning options, and mental health support. All students find these elements important while they become particularly vital for out-of-state students who encounter distinctive logistical and emotional obstacles during their college experience.

Health and safety measures stand as the top priority for out-of-state students (Izumi, 2021) because these students live away from their families which makes the institution's ability

to handle public health crises an essential requirement. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the susceptibility of college campuses to outbreaks because they serve as gathering points for many students (Izumi, 2021). Students from out-of-state need to evaluate the preparedness of colleges for disease outbreaks and their healthcare accessibility. Universities that have on-campus health centers providing vaccinations and mental health support may appear more appealing to students. Steimle et al. (2022) conducted a study involving 398 students from Georgia Institute of Technology showed that more than 70% of the participants worried about how well future pandemics might be handled through existing safety measures. Students who become ill while living far from home require dependable medical services and clear communication channels with their families. Out-of-state students who experience isolation or increased vulnerability from living away from home must take these considerations into account.

The pandemic validated educational flexibility as an essential consideration for out-of-state students. Students are choosing academic institutions that provide both in-person and remote learning opportunities because disruptions from public health issues or personal health needs may arise (Benito et al., 2021; Steimle et al., 2022). An out-of-state student's ability to remain enrolled depends on institutional flexibility which helps them avoid deferral or withdrawal due to health issues. Students can maintain their education at colleges which offer hybrid courses along with asynchronous learning and online resources because they can participate in classes from any location and deal with temporary home returns. Students find the option to transition between physical classrooms and digital learning environments without affecting their academic advancement highly appealing when they need to adjust their timetable or living arrangements rapidly (Lee, 2021; Yee, 2024).

Students also now consider mental health and well-being as key factors when selecting colleges, with out-of-state students placing even greater importance on this aspect. Due to pandemic-related isolation and stress, students recognize the need for robust mental health resources at their institutions and now tend to choose colleges that provide complete support systems (Bersia et al., 2024). Out-of-state students often experience heightened loneliness, stress, and anxiety due to their distance from home, making easy access to mental health services essential for their well-being. On-campus counseling services along with crisis intervention programs and peer support networks help improve student life during college for those who experience isolation in unfamiliar surroundings (Villani et al., 2021). Schools that foster mental health awareness by offering wellness programs and stress-relief activities alongside faculty support provide students necessary coping mechanisms for college life challenges. Virtual mental health resources become especially important for out-of-state students who want to receive support remotely when they cannot visit campus or prefer distance assistance. The mental health support provided by a college is now viewed as an essential component of both academic achievement and student personal growth (Schwartz & Exner-Cortens, 2021).

Selecting a college involves multiple considerations, yet the importance of this decision reaches unprecedented levels in today's post-COVID era. Out-of-state students make choices based on more than academic prestige as they seek to find colleges that provide safe environments with adequate support systems and flexible learning options. Health and safety, along with learning flexibility and well-being, have transformed from optional benefits into necessary components for out-of-state students to achieve a satisfying and successful higher education experience (Bersia et al., 2024; Villani et al., 2021). Students feel secure and

empowered through these elements, which becomes especially crucial for those studying far from home and therefore they represent vital factors in modern college selection processes.

Summary

The chapter examined college choice research while highlighting the complex influences that affect decision-making processes among stakeholders, such as high school students and parents as well as policymakers and admissions professionals. Research that examined college choice demonstrated its intricate nature but often neglected to examine how demographic and socio-economic factors influenced these decisions while examining individual elements.

Out-of-state students encounter unique obstacles, including increased tuition fees and the need to find a suitable institutional fit which together influence their sense of cost accessibility and ability to integrate socially. The impact of location through job opportunities, access, and community engagement adds complexity to students' decision-making processes. Understanding the cost of attendance combined with financial aid availability becomes essential because out-of-state students face more complicated financial situations. One must also recognize the significant influence technology and social media have on forming perceptions and establishing connections. Institutions targeting prospective students need virtual campus tours and focused communication tactics to reach those unable to visit campuses physically. Factors related to campus security combined with learning platform adaptability and mental health support stand out as key components when students evaluate potential colleges.

Research still lacks a clear understanding of which institutional recruitment strategies effectively increase enrollment while aligning with predetermined goals. Choosing a college represents a complex journey shaped by individual preferences, alongside background factors and emotional influences. Institutions should use controllable elements like improving financial

aid clarity and customizing recruitment communications. Researchers need to continue studying the multiple factors that influence how students choose their colleges. Institutions will be able to enhance recruitment strategies to meet prospective students' diverse needs by generating inclusive environments which resonate with every student's personal journey and objectives.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

Chapter three details the methodological processes employed to examine the impact of college choice considerations on out-of-state students. It includes a comprehensive discussion of the selected variables, the design of the analysis, and the notable limitations inherent in the chosen methodology. The primary aim of this study is to explore which institutional characteristics most significantly influence college choice and how those key variables may vary based on demographic variables – specifically residency. This research employs a quantitative approach to identify key factors that can inform institutional recruitment strategies and effectively influence decision-making.

Study Design

The quantitative research focused on expanding knowledge about how out-of-state students make their college decisions. The research investigated essential elements that out-of-state students prioritize in college selection processes through an examination of institutional characteristics, institutional fit, and demographics. The research design utilized statistical analysis methods to analyze and interpret existing survey data, which had been collected by Collinsville University (pseudonym) over the past four years. This study used that dataset as the foundation for its analysis.

Research Questions

The findings from this research will provide answers to the research questions guiding this study:

1. What factors do first-year out-of-state students at a public four-year institution identify as most important in their college choice?
2. How do the factors identified as most important to college choice by first-year out-of-state students at a public four-year institution change each year?

Data Source and Instrument Development

The Admitted Student and Parent Insight (ASPI) survey is a longitudinal survey used by Collinsville University to assess the effectiveness of its undergraduate recruitment strategies and identify opportunities for improvement in the process. Medis (pseudonym), an external higher education consultant firm, developed the survey in 2018 and has offered it as part of its services to each client institution. It is currently used by over twenty different institutions across the country, to both admitted students and their guardians. Historically, ASPI results have informed scholarship recommendations, enhanced campus visit experiences, and shaped critical communication strategies for admitted students. The survey provides both institution-specific results and comparative insights across participating institutions, offering valuable information for understanding evolving student needs and anticipating shifts in first-year enrollment trends. However, while the survey offers comparative data, this information was not available for this research.

Collinsville University adopted the survey for the Fall 2020 admissions cycle. It has been in consistent use each year for the past four years. This research utilized the survey data collected between 2020 and 2023 and each survey is available in Appendix A through D. The ASPI survey aims to discover the variables that influence students' college choice decisions and track those changes over time. The survey follows a logic-driven structure, which may result in variations in length based on responses. It includes 20 mandatory questions, with the possibility of up to 23 additional questions based on logic-driven responses.

The ASPI is organized into four sections: enrollment plans; satisfaction and importance; pricing and financial aid; and communication preferences. In the survey, students are asked to reveal if they choose to enroll or not enroll. All students were asked to name the primary

institution they considered outside of Collinsville. For those who enrolled at Collinsville, the other institution listed represented their second choice. Conversely, for those who did not enroll at Collinsville, the institution that is listed becomes their primary choice. Throughout the survey, respondents are asked to compare various aspects of college choice and how Collinsville University performed against the school listed (who the student or parent/guardian chooses to be) as the main competitor.

The ASPI survey is distributed each summer to all admitted students and their guardian, following the confirmation deadline and prior to the start of the term. The exact distribution date will vary annually based on enrollment priorities and deadlines. Once distributed, the survey remains open for submission for three weeks. Each survey includes a unique code linked to the student's record, which enables detailed analysis across a range of items, including student characteristics, geographic location, and recruitment efforts. This design allows respondents to concentrate on key areas of interest rather than completing a demographic section, which might detract from survey completion.

The survey contains a core set of stable questions, which are used to maintain a multi-year focus and provide historical context. Adjustments can be made each year to improve wording and clarity, while ensuring the framework remains practical and yields useful data. National trends are also evaluated, and questions may be added if needed. Current trends that have led to modification include FAFSA simplification and COVID-19 related concerns. Additionally, each institution is permitted to include up to three customized questions that address their unique institutional areas of focus. The survey is conducted using a software platform, and the survey is administered by email platform.

The combined dataset comprises of all survey responses from all questions over the past four years, reflecting responses in Likert-scale format or ordinal response types. All Likert-scale questions relate to satisfaction and importance concerning institutional characteristics, institutional fit, affordability perceptions, and recruitment satisfaction. These questions were presented using one of the following four answer formats:

- Style 1: Extremely Satisfied (7), Satisfied (6), Somewhat Satisfied (5), Neutral (4), Somewhat Unsatisfied (3), Unsatisfied (2), Extremely Unsatisfied (1)
- Style 2: Extremely Important (7), Important (6), Somewhat Important (5), Neutral (4), Somewhat Unimportant (3), Unimportant (2), Extremely Unimportant (1)
- Style 3: Extremely High (5), High (4), Average (3), Low (2), Extremely Low (1)
- Style 4: Better (3), About the Same (2), Worse (1), Unsure/Not Applicable (99)

Sample Selection and Description of Data

For this research, only data from admitted students will be considered, encompassing both those who plan to enroll and those who have chosen to enroll elsewhere. Guardian surveys will not be utilized. All student-specific identifiers will be removed from the raw data, except for basic demographic information, including race/ethnicity, gender, standardized test scores, core GPA, Pell eligibility status, and residency indicator. Over the years, response rates for this survey have fluctuated between 20.4% and 38.7%. The survey is sent to every admitted student, with the number of participants ranging from 6,381 to 7,187 over the past five years.

The most recent ASPI survey consists of questions organized into four main categories: student enrollment plans, satisfaction and importance, pricing and financial aid, and communications from Collinsville University. The student enrollment plans section includes questions about the number of institutions to which students applied, were admitted, and

confirmed enrollment. It also inquires whether they plan to attend Collinsville University. If they respond affirmatively, the survey asks about their second-choice institution; if not, it asks where they intend to enroll. This section contains six required questions. The satisfaction and importance section asks students to evaluate 18 items related to their satisfaction with and the importance of Collinsville and their second-choice institution. In 2020 to 2022, students were asked to rank the importance of all variables provided. However, in 2023, the survey shifted and had students identify up to 10 items influencing their decision, all related to institutional characteristics and institutional fit. Based on those responses, the survey would prompt up to 10 more questions, asking respondents to indicate the importance and overall satisfaction associated with each selected factor variable. The pricing and financial aid section asks students to rank the overall value and cost of Collinsville compared to their second-choice institution. This section comprises four required questions. The communications section asks students to assess the various recruitment tools used by Collinsville University and compare them with those of the second-choice institution. This section includes three required questions and one optional question, providing an open response field for additional feedback regarding the overall experience with Collinsville University.

Data for this study was obtained directly from Collinsville University via the institution's Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) and downloaded into four separate spreadsheets, each containing raw student response data from the years the ASPI survey was administered. Upon receipt, all fields were carefully reviewed to ensure consistency across the four datasets. The data was then manually merged into a single, consolidated dataset, with particular attention given to maintaining accurate entry dates for each class year. Over time, the college choice questions have varied, containing between 18 and 23 different variables. To ensure uniformity in this

study, only the variables that were consistently used across all four years were analyzed.

Permission to use this data for research purposes can be found in Appendix E.

This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which ensures that research involving human subjects is conducted ethically and in compliance with regulatory guidelines. IRB approval confirms that the study meets ethical standards for participant confidentiality, data security, and informed consent where applicable. Permission to use this data for research purposes can be found in Appendix F.

Independent Variables

The first set of independent variables comprises student demographic variables, including key indicators such as residency status, GPA, standardized test scores, Pell eligibility, gender, and race/ethnicity. This analysis will explore potential differences in these demographic variables and how they intersect with residency in relation to the college choice variables.

The second set of independent variables is based on the college choice variables determined through the ASPI Survey. This survey includes a range of influences on college selection, such as academic reputation, social reputation, liberal arts foundation, residence halls, campus dining options, study abroad opportunities, campus diversity, strength alumni success, athletic reputation, campus surroundings, and recreational facilities. In addition, the survey incorporates items related to a student's personal preferences, including the strength of the chosen academic program, program facilities, net cost, graduate success from their chosen academic program, and availability of practical experiences. For 2020-2022, students were asked to rate all 18 variables. However, starting in 2023, students were asked to select only the 10 most important variables from this list that influenced their decision-making process and rate only

those variables. **Table 3.1** below provides an overview of these 6 demographic variables and 18 college choice variables.

Table 3.1.

Independent Variables

Variable
<i>Student Characteristics</i>
Residency
Academic Performance
Gender
Financial Need (Pell Eligible)
Race/Ethnicity (Underrepresented Minority)
<i>Institutional Characteristics</i>
Academic Reputation
Social Reputation
Liberal Arts Foundation
Residence Halls
Food on Campus
Study Abroad Opportunities
Diversity on Campus
Alumni Success
Athletic Reputation
Campus Surroundings
Fitness Facilities
<i>Institutional Fit</i>
Program Strength
Program Facilities
Program Graduate Success
Net Cost
Practical Experiences

Dependent Variable

This research investigated the student decision to enroll or not enroll at Collinsville University based on responses to questions asked related to the importance of key factors related to the institution. The survey uses the terms ‘deposit’ to indicate enrollment status while ‘non-deposit’ indicates students who have not enrolled. The dependent variable in this analysis is enrollment status (enrolled vs. not enrolled), treated as a dichotomous outcome. The ASPI survey is designed for both groups: those students planning to enroll at Collinsville University and those students who are not planning on enrolling. With this dual focus, the study examines different factors that students perceive as important, as it looked at enrolled and not enrolled groups. The research methodology enhanced comprehension of college choice motivations and exposed decision-making processes which guide recruitment strategy development. The findings of this research will enable the administration of Collinsville University to enhance their recruitment strategies and draw in more students by identifying key areas of focus and eliminating enrollment barriers.

Data Cleaning

Data cleaning was a crucial step in ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the dataset. Before conducting multilevel analysis, data files were merged and cleaned using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 29. Categorical variables related to student characteristics were directly obtained for the data files for the years 2020 to 2023 and transformed into dummy variables before being included in the regression analyses. This process involved creating binary indicators for each category, allowing these variables to be analyzed within the regression model. Once the dataset was prepared, three preliminary analyses were conducted to assess missingness, multicollinearity, and the presence of multivariate outliers. To

create a complete dataset, listwise deletion was also employed to address any records with missing fields. Although this method can reduce the statistical power of multilevel analyses when level two units lack data (Baraldi & Enders, 2010), there were no level two variables found to have missing data.

To investigate multicollinearity, variance inflation factors (VIF) were calculated for each predictor variable using collinearity diagnostics from a preliminary ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. Ethington et al., (2002) suggested that VIF values of 10 or higher indicate problematic multicollinearity, while Aldrich and Nelson (1984) recommend a more conservative threshold of greater than five. Multicollinearity was detected in 2023 for Pell eligible students, so for this year alone Pell eligibility data was excluded from the research.

To identify influential outliers, Cook's Distance was used (Loy & Hofmann, 2013). This measure assessed both the leverage and influence of individual cases on the regression line, indicating extreme values in the multivariate context (Osborne, 2013). When multivariate outliers are identified, decisions regarding their treatment must be made. Common strategies include ignoring, removing, or manipulating (e.g., trimming) these extreme scores. In this study, statistical analyses were performed both with and without identified multivariate outliers to evaluate their impact on regression results, including unstandardized coefficients, standardized coefficients, and significance (Osborne, 2013). These results are shown in chapter four.

Data Analyses

This study employed a quantitative methodology to explore the factors influencing out-of-state students during their college search process and to examine predictors of their enrollment decisions over five years. Utilizing a dataset that includes 18 college choice items and six demographic variables (including residency), the analysis aimed to identify key relationships

and trends among these variables. Descriptive statistics summarized the demographic characteristics and percentages of responses. Binary logistic regression was used to predict enrollment outcomes based on the identified independent variables, as it is appropriate for modeling dichotomous dependent variables (Hosmer, Lemeshow, & Sturdivant, 2013), such as the enrolled/not enrolled classification central to this study. This method also supported the overall aim of the research by identifying the key factors influencing enrollment decisions. By employing these methodologies, the study aimed to derive insights that can inform higher education strategies and enhance understanding of the enrollment decision-making process for out-of-state students.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize and describe the main characteristics of the dataset, providing a clear overview of the ASPI survey data. The analysis illustrated how frequently each college choice factor was selected as important by participants. Additionally, the study contextualized its findings by including demographic characteristics, such as residency and gender, which helped analyze student competition and data trends.

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis

Binary logistic regression was employed to examine how different college choice and demographic variables affected students' likelihood to enroll. The analysis approach used these predictors to model enrollment likelihood which revealed the most influential variables. The regression model provided odds ratios to measure the strength and direction of each predictor's impact on student enrollment decisions. The analysis provided insight into the main factors that guide students when making enrollment decisions.

The research applied a backward conditional regression method, which enabled the analysis to start with all variables included in the model, and then iteratively remove predictors which did not show significance. The backward approach examined all potential predictors together before systematic refinement to achieve full evaluation of potential influences. The process produced statistically significant final models that addressed multicollinearity and overfitting concerns by retaining only the most significant predictors. This technique is particularly valuable in studies where the inclusion of variables is theoretically justified, yet their individual predictive strength remains uncertain, as it ensures that only statistically significant factors contribute to the final model.

Limitations

Recognizing potential limitations remains essential to this study to ensure a balanced analysis of this research. The survey data analysis through quantitative methods provided useful information, but its findings may be influenced by certain constraints. These limitations include response bias, as well as factors involving limited choice, temporal elements, and the interpretation of results.

Response bias occurs when survey participants choose answers they believe to be socially acceptable or favorable instead of providing their actual opinions or experiences according to Wetzel, Bohnke & Brown (2016). The bias emerges when individuals try to meet perceived expectations or when they aim to portray themselves in an advantageous manner. Students in this study might have sorted college choice elements according to their understanding of expected responses instead of their real priorities. These behavioral patterns may distort the data collection process which in turn compromises the research conclusions.

The research incorporated 18 items for college selection choices and six demographic variables but failed to include other critical factors influencing student decisions. Students make enrollment decisions based on dozens of variables, yet this survey has limited choice factors like personal preferences and institutional fit along with campus environment and specific program offerings. While the variables provided may have had substantial impact, the survey fails to capture all critical determinants of student choices because of the missing elements (Chernev, Böckenholt & Goodman, 2015).

The analysis does not account for external temporal elements that could affect college choice, including economic conditions and public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Students' decision-making processes could be influenced by factors that affect their perceptions of college value, safety, and accessibility. The findings of the study may not extend to other contexts or different time periods because it did not consider external influences (Ali, 2020; Taherdoost, 2022).

The study's interpretation is limited by the subjective nature of ranking college choice factors, as individual evaluations vary based on personal preferences and perceptions. The individual criteria respondents used to determine which college choice items were "most important" or "unimportant" varied between participants resulting in inconsistent responses. The subjective nature of the data analysis presents challenges when interpreting results and hinders the ability to reach clear conclusions about factors' relative importance. The ranking system fails to fully represent the complex reasons that drive students to choose certain colleges according to Taherdoost (2022).

Summary

This chapter outlined the data sources, variables, research methods, and data cleaning and analytic techniques employed in this study. The primary data for the research was obtained from the Admitted Student and Parent Insight (ASPI) survey. The analysis focused on a single dependent variable: student enrollment status (i.e., whether students plan to enroll or not) in the first-year class from Fall 2020 to Fall 2023. Independent variables were categorized into two areas: college choice (institutional characteristics and institutional fit) and demographics (including residency, gender, academic performance, financial need, and underrepresented minorities).

To address the research questions, several statistical approaches were used to investigate the research questions. Descriptive statistics summarized the college choice items identified by first-year out-of-state students. To answer the first research question and reveal which elements influenced their decision-making processes, binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to explore the significance of the college choice and demographic variables and understand their interplay.

For the second research question, binary logistic regression analyses were employed to model the likelihood of enrollment based on the identified college choice items and perceived institutional fit and institutional characteristics. This analysis clarified how these elements influenced students' decisions to attend Collinsville University. The independent variables were also checked for multicollinearity to ensure robust results. The findings from these analyses are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the analysis, which examined college choice from the perspective of first-year out-of-state undergraduate students at Collinsville University, who had recently completed the college selection process and made an enrollment decision (deposit or non-deposit). Specifically, this research sought to identify the primary factors influencing their college decisions and how these factors evolved over time. To address this, the study employed the college search model and conducted an in-depth analysis of data collected from an existing college choice survey over a four-year period. This research contributed to the literature by addressing a significant gap in understanding the decision-making processes of out-of-state students and their enrollment outcomes. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What factors do first-year out-of-state students at a public four-year institution identify as most important in their college choice?
2. How do the factors identified as most important to college choice by first-year out-of-state students at a public four-year institution change each year?

To explore these questions, the study analyzed data from the Admitted Student and Parent Interest (ASPI) Survey, distributed by Medis. The survey was administered to all first year admitted students at Collinsville University (pseudonym) over four consecutive years (2020–2023), yielding a total of 18,888 student responses. Since this study focused on enrollment behavior (deposited vs. non-deposited), the dependent variable in all regression models reflected the student's final enrollment decision.

This chapter presents the findings of the study, structured into three sections. The first section details the preliminary data analysis, including data cleaning, checks for outliers, and an assessment of multicollinearity to ensure the validity of the dataset. The second section provides

descriptive statistics, summarizing demographic characteristics of the sample and an overview of the 18 college choice variables identified in the study. The third section examines the key factors influencing college choice among first-year students and how these factors have changed over the four-year period. These findings were derived through binary logistic regression models, first analyzing each year separately, followed by a combined analysis across all four years. Since the dependent variable in all regressions is student enrollment (deposited vs. non-deposited), logistic regression was the most appropriate statistical method for understanding the probability of enrollment based on various college choice factors. This method was chosen over other regression techniques because of its ability to model binary outcomes and assess the predictor variables' influence on categorical enrollment decisions.

Additionally, this study utilized binary logistic regression analysis using the split file method to independently evaluate how residency status affects enrollment patterns. The study centered on out-of-state students, but this required the analysis of in-state student data for valid comparative evaluations. A thorough understanding of in-state enrollment drivers offered essential background to differentiate the specific college choice variables most important to the out-of-state student population. The study conducted separate analyses of both student populations which lead to the identification of out-of-state enrollment drivers while distinguishing them from in-state drivers thereby producing a deeper and more detailed understanding of the findings.

Preliminary Analysis

The dataset underwent comprehensive data cleaning procedures before any analysis took place to achieve accuracy and reliability. The dataset preparation process included filtering out incomplete responses and inconsistent data together with transforming variables for logistic

regression analysis into binary form and assessing multicollinearity through Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values to ensure independent variables were not highly correlated.

Students used a seven-point Likert scale to evaluate the importance of 18 college choice variables in their decision-making process with ratings from 1 for Extremely Unimportant to 7 for Extremely Important according to the initial survey design. Between 2020 and 2022 students rated all 18 variables and 87% of these ratings fell into the important to extremely important categories resulting in a positive skew of the data distribution. The survey format changed in 2023 and required students to select their top 10 variables from 18 choices before rating them with the same Likert scale. This resulted in a negative skew of data, as 8 variables weren't selected at all. The classification of unselected variables as "Not Important (0)", ratings between one and five as "Not Important (0)" and ratings between six and seven as "Important (1)" improved the identification process for vital enrollment factors. Collinsville University collected 18,888 survey responses over four years which reduced to 11,196 valid responses (59.27%) after eliminating incomplete submissions.

When the analysis was conducted on individual years, the 2023 dataset presented multicollinearity issues, leading to the removal of Pell eligibility from that year's analysis. Investigation of the issue revealed that in 2023, all Pell eligible students indicated that they were deposited. This eliminated variability in enrollment decisions and would have distorted the regression estimates. Excluding Pell eligibility for 2023 ensured the model accurately reflected the influence of each factor on enrollment likelihood without the confounding effect.

To align the study with Collinsville University's current recruitment strategy, a new academic performance variable was created by combining high school GPA and composite test scores into a binary classification. Rather than focusing on specific GPA or ACT benchmarks,

the university evaluated applicants based on an overall ‘high ability’ indicator, making a binary model the most effective approach for this analysis. To define this variable, a historical review of the university’s honors program and scholarship tiers over the past four years was conducted. This analysis identified that students who met the mid-range scholarship tier and were accepted into the university honors program had a minimum of a 3.8 GPA and a 30 ACT. As a result, students meeting this combined threshold were categorized as “academically gifted,” while those below this cutoff were classified as “academically strong.” All students accepted at Collinsville University are academically capable, so no additional classifications were needed. This recoding allowed the research to better assess college choice factors influencing student enrollment decisions of this high-achieving, highly sought-after student population.

Multivariate outliers were evaluated using Cook’s Distance, a diagnostic measure that assessed the influence of individual data points on the regression model. Cook’s Distance quantified the extent to which removing a given observation would alter the regression coefficients, making it a useful metric for identifying influential cases. To assess the presence of influential observations, descriptive statistics were conducted on Cook’s Distance values for all cases in the dataset. The results indicated that Cook’s Distance values ranged from 0.00010 to 0.01987, well below the commonly used threshold of 1.0, which would suggest extreme influence (Dhakal, 2017). Given that all values were significantly below this threshold, no individual cases were found to exert undue influence on the regression model. As a result, no cases were removed based on influence statistics.

The analysis of multicollinearity among independent variables involved examination of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values. The evaluation process examined both individual years and the combined dataset from all years. Multicollinearity arises when

predictor variables display high correlation which leads to possible distortion in the coefficient estimates within the regression model. Expert consensus suggests that multicollinearity should be suspected when the VIF exceeds 10 or the Tolerance drops below 0.10 (Field, 2018). Using the continuous variable of high school GPA, the VIF values of all predictors for individual years between 2020 and 2023 stayed between 1.010 and 2.014 while their Tolerance values ranged from 0.496 to 0.990. The VIF values for all predictors for the combined dataset for 2020-2023 ranged from 1.068 to 2.6591 while their corresponding Tolerance values varied between 0.386 to 0.936. The obtained values stayed significantly under the 10-limit proposed by Aldrich and Nelson (1984) which suggests that predictors do not exhibit severe multicollinearity. Additionally, no Tolerance values fell below 0.10, further confirming multicollinearity was not a concern in the logistic regression models predicting student enrollment.

Descriptive Statistics

This section presents descriptive statistics for the survey responses by year, including participant demographic characteristics over the four years of data collection. It also examines the distribution of responses for each of the 18 college choice variables, offering an overview of the key factors students considered when selecting a college. Results are organized to enable comparisons across the years and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dataset (**Table 4.1**).

2020 Analysis

There were 3,196 valid survey responses collected in 2020 with an enrollment rate of 54.32%. The demographic profile, detailed in **Table 4.1**, showed a predominantly female sample (71.28%) with nearly equal representation of in-state (51.78%) and out-of-state

(48.22%) students. Additionally, 33.76% of respondents were identified as academically gifted and 21.84% showed financial need and qualified for Pell Grants. Analysis of college choice factors, as presented in **Table 4.2**, revealed that students placed the greatest emphasis on academic reputation, program strength, net cost, campus surroundings, program facilities, and practical experience, while athletic reputation, liberal arts foundation, and diversity on campus were deemed less important.

2021 Analysis

In 2021, 3,233 valid responses were collected, though the enrollment rate dropped to 42.16%. Demographic data in **Table 4.1** indicated that the sample remained predominantly female (72.60%), but there was a marked increase in out-of-state students, rising to 60.47%. The proportion of academically gifted students declined to 29.45% and financial need decreased, showing Pell-eligible students at 16.80%, with underrepresented minority students comprising 16.39% of the sample. **Table 4.2** shows that while program strength, academic reputation, program facilities, net cost, practical experience and campus surroundings continued to be influential, the importance of campus diversity surged significantly compared to the previous year.

2022 Analysis

In 2022, Collinsville experienced a drop in valid responses to 2,286, while the enrollment rate increased to 47.94%, indicating that enrollment trends may have stabilized. **Table 4.1** demonstrates that females made up 73.14% of respondents while out-of-state students represented 60.50% of the survey participants. The proportion of academically gifted students reached 30.75% and financial need showed that Pell-eligible students increased to 17.02%, while underrepresented minority representation decreased to 12.64%. The evaluation of college

choice variables presented in **Table 4.2** showed that academic reputation and program facilities, along with net cost, campus surroundings, and practical experience continued to be the primary factors. Program strength emerged as a critical factor for 96.02% of respondents, while practical experience became increasingly important.

2023 Analysis

In 2023, the survey received 2,481 valid responses with an enrollment rate of 49.70%. According to **Table 4.1** the demographic data indicates female representation dropped to 68.76% marking the lowest level in four years while academically gifted students increased to 39.74%, which is the highest level documented. The sample included 52.84% out-of-state students and 14.03% students from underrepresented minority students. Financial need showed that Pell-eligible participants decreased to 10.28%. **Table 4.2** shows that core college choice priorities stayed unchanged, but respondents placed greater importance on residence halls and social reputation, which 29.75% and 37.85% of the participants identified as important.

Combined Analysis, 2020-2023

Over the four-year period from 2020 to 2023, there were 11,196 valid surveys, and from this, an average of 48.48% of respondents enrolled, while 51.52% did not. This indicated a nearly even yield rate that underscored the competitive nature of the college decision-making process and suggested stable institutional conversion efforts. **Table 4.1** shows that females made up 71.48% of the survey population while male representation steadily increased to reach 31.24% by 2023. The number of out-of-state students remained high at 55.29% of respondents throughout the survey period but peaked between 2021-2022 with rates surpassing 60% and then declined to 52.84% in 2023. According to four-year data analysis, 33.23% of respondents were considered academically gifted, with a significant rise to 39.74% in 2023 after recording

lower percentages of 29.45% in 2021 and 30.75% in 2022. The representation of underrepresented minority students throughout the period averaged 15.08%, with its minimum level at 12.64% in 2022.

The data from 2020 through 2023 in **Table 4.2** shows that academic reputation (90.37%), program strength (89.05%), and net cost (85.95%) were the top factors that influenced college selection choices for this period. Students continued to value practical experience (79.81%) and program facilities (77.72%) while showing strong support for academic excellence and career readiness. Campus diversity reached its highest level of importance in 2021 at 67.15% but later decreased to 43.40% which showed changing views on inclusivity. The importance of cocurricular opportunities remained steady at 68.10% while residence halls at 71.44% and student research opportunities at 68.75% became more valued, indicating that institutions were putting more effort into enhancing campus life and academic growth. The influence of athletic reputation (52.55%), social reputation (73.62%), and study abroad (60.58%) was moderate during this period which demonstrated the changing equilibrium between academic excellence and student life experiences. The current data demonstrates that, although academic and financial factors continued to be main priorities, students' expectations about campus life and research opportunities, along with social activities, are experiencing an ongoing shift.

Table 4.1 Demographic Data

		2020		2021		2022		2023		Combined, 2020-2023	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Student Enrollment	Deposited	1,736	54.32%	1,363	42.16%	1,096	47.94%	1,233	49.70%	5,428	48.48%
	Non-Deposited	1,460	45.68%	1,870	57.84%	1,190	52.06%	1,248	50.30%	5,768	51.52%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Sex	Male	918	28.72%	886	27.40%	614	26.86%	775	31.24%	3,193	28.52%
	Female	2,278	71.28%	2,347	72.60%	1,672	73.14%	1,706	68.76%	8,003	71.48%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Residency	In-State	1,655	51.78%	1,278	39.53%	903	39.50%	1,170	47.16%	5,006	44.71%
	Out-of-State	1,541	48.22%	1,955	60.47%	1,383	60.50%	1,311	52.84%	6,190	55.29%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Academic Performance	Academically gifted	1,079	33.76%	952	29.45%	703	30.75%	986	39.74%	3,720	33.23%
	Academically Strong	2,117	66.24%	2,281	70.55%	1,583	69.25%	1,495	60.26%	7,476	66.77%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Financial Need	Pell Eligible	698	21.84%	543	16.80%	389	17.02%	255	10.28%	1,885	16.84%
	Not Pell Eligible	2,498	78.16%	2,690	83.20%	1,897	82.98%	2,226	89.72%	9,311	83.16%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Underrepresented Minority	URM	521	16.30%	530	16.39%	289	12.64%	348	14.03%	1,688	15.08%
	Not URM	2,675	83.70%	2,703	83.61%	1,997	87.36%	2,133	85.97%	9,508	84.92%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%

Table 4.2 College Choice Independent Variables

		2020		2021		2022		2022		Combined, 2020-2023	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Academic Reputation	Important	3,079	96.34%	3,081	95.30%	2,186	95.63%	1,772	71.42%	10,118	90.37%
	Not Important	117	3.66%	152	4.70%	100	4.37%	709	28.58%	1,078	9.63%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Alumni Success	Important	2,584	80.85%	2,753	85.15%	1,970	86.18%	669	26.96%	7,976	71.24%
	Not Important	612	19.15%	480	14.85%	316	13.82%	1,812	73.04%	3,220	28.76%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Athletic Reputation	Important	1,594	49.87%	2,074	64.15%	1,551	67.85%	664	26.76%	5,883	52.55%
	Not Important	1,602	50.13%	1,159	35.85%	735	32.15%	1,817	73.24%	5,313	47.45%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Campus Surroundings	Important	2,941	92.02%	3,004	92.92%	2,141	93.66%	1,157	46.63%	9,243	82.56%
	Not Important	255	7.98%	229	7.08%	145	6.34%	1,324	53.37%	1,953	17.44%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Cocurricular Opps	Important	2,607	81.57%	2,803	86.70%	2,027	88.67%	187	7.54%	7,624	68.10%
	Not Important	589	18.43%	430	13.30%	259	11.33%	2,294	92.46%	3,572	31.90%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Diversity on Campus	Important	819	25.63%	2,171	67.15%	1,515	66.27%	354	14.27%	4,859	43.40%
	Not Important	2,377	74.37%	1,062	32.85%	771	33.73%	2,127	85.73%	6,337	56.60%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Fitness Facilities	Important	2,199	68.80%	2,471	76.43%	1,793	78.43%	369	14.87%	6,832	61.02%
	Not Important	997	31.20%	762	23.57%	493	21.57%	2,112	85.13%	4,364	38.98%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Food on Campus	Important	2,131	66.68%	2,422	74.91%	1,757	76.86%	413	16.65%	6,723	60.05%
	Not Important	1,065	33.32%	811	25.09%	529	23.14%	2,068	83.35%	4,473	39.95%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Liberal Arts Foundation	Important	1,172	36.67%	1,552	48.00%	1,112	48.64%	93	3.75%	3,929	35.09%
	Not Important	2,024	63.33%	1,681	52.00%	1,174	51.36%	2,388	96.25%	7,267	64.91%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%

Table 4.2 Continued College Choice Independent Variables

Net Cost	Important	2,963	92.71%	3,033	93.81%	2,166	94.75%	1,461	58.89%	9,623	85.95%
	Not Important	233	7.29%	200	6.19%	120	5.25%	1,020	41.11%	1,573	14.05%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Practical Experience	Important	2,942	92.05%	3,000	92.79%	2,141	93.66%	853	34.38%	8,936	79.81%
	Not Important	254	7.95%	233	7.21%	145	6.34%	1,628	65.62%	2,260	20.19%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Program Facilities	Important	2,930	91.68%	3,034	93.84%	2,178	95.28%	560	22.57%	8,702	77.72%
	Not Important	266	8.32%	199	6.16%	108	4.72%	1,921	77.43%	2,494	22.28%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Program Grad Success	Important	2,858	89.42%	2,967	91.77%	2,117	92.61%	360	14.51%	8,302	74.15%
	Not Important	338	10.58%	266	8.23%	169	7.39%	2,121	85.49%	2,894	25.85%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Program Strength	Important	3,066	95.93%	3,117	96.41%	2,225	97.33%	1,562	62.96%	9,970	89.05%
	Not Important	130	4.07%	116	3.59%	61	2.67%	919	37.04%	1,226	10.95%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Residence Halls	Important	2,543	79.57%	2,734	84.57%	1,983	86.75%	738	29.75%	7,998	71.44%
	Not Important	653	20.43%	499	15.43%	303	13.25%	1,743	70.25%	3,198	28.56%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Social Reputation	Important	2,538	79.41%	2,793	86.39%	1,972	86.26%	939	37.85%	8,242	73.62%
	Not Important	658	20.59%	440	13.61%	314	13.74%	1,542	62.15%	2,954	26.38%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Student Research Opportunities	Important	2,511	78.57%	2,715	83.98%	1,918	83.90%	553	22.29%	7,697	68.75%
	Not Important	685	21.43%	518	16.02%	368	16.10%	1,928	77.71%	3,499	31.25%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%
Study Abroad	Important	2,132	66.71%	2,271	70.24%	1,620	70.87%	759	30.59%	6,782	60.58%
	Not Important	1,064	33.29%	962	29.76%	666	29.13%	1,722	69.41%	4,414	39.42%
	Total	3,196	100.00%	3,233	100.00%	2,286	100.00%	2,481	100.00%	11,196	100.00%

Binary Logistic Regression

This study examined the factors influencing out-of-state student enrollment using binary logistic regression, where the dependent variable (DV) was student enrollment, categorized as deposited (1) or non-deposited (0). The independent variables (IVs) included demographic characteristics and college choice variables. To examine how predictors impacted the outcome differently based on residency status (in-state vs. out-of-state), the binary regression analysis was performed using the split file method. This technique facilitated the creation of separate logistic regression models for in-state and out-of-state students, enabling a direct comparison of predictor effects across the two demographic groups. The analysis was first conducted for each year individually (2020–2023) to assess year-over-year variations in predictor significance. Then, a combined analysis using all four years of data was performed to identify any long-term trends and patterns. By analyzing each subgroup separately within both the yearly and combined datasets, this method revealed unique response patterns and variations in predictor significance that might have been obscured in a fully aggregated analysis.

In all regression models used in this study, each variable was coded in a binary format. The enrollment variable was represented by 1 for the presence of a deposit and 0 for its absence. Residency was captured with in-state students coded as 1 and out-of-state students as 0. Academic ability was measured by assigning 1 to academically gifted and 0 to academically strong. Gender was coded with females as 1 and males as 0. Underrepresented minority students were indicated by 1, with non-underrepresented minority students coded as 0. Financial need was coded as 1 for Pell-eligible students and 0 for those who were not Pell eligible. Finally, for the 18 variables of college choice, a score of 1 indicated that the variable was important towards

enrollment, whereas a score of 0 indicated that the variable was not important towards enrollment.

Additionally, a backward conditional regression method was employed, allowing all variables to be initially considered, followed by an iterative removal of non-significant factors to retain only those that demonstrated statistical significance. Unlike forward selection, which introduced predictors incrementally and might have overlooked key interactions, the backward method ensured that all variables were considered simultaneously before systematically refining the model. As a result, the final models were all significant, reducing issues related to multicollinearity and overfitting, and ensuring that only the most relevant predictors were retained (Ahmed, Vu, Muttaqi, Agalgaonkar, 2018; Vu, Muttaqi, & Agalgaonkar, 2015). Together, the selection of these methodologies improved the clarity and strength of the analysis while offering detailed perspectives on the influence of demographic characteristics on survey responses. This method was appropriate for research with a strong theoretical foundation for including variables, yet uncertain about their individual predictive capabilities, since it allowed only statistically significant predictors to remain in the final model. The logistic regression model used to predict enrollment probabilities followed the equation $\text{logit}(p) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n$ where p defined the enrollment probability, while β_0 served as the intercept and $\beta_n X_n$ represented the regression coefficients for each predictor variable. The model determined enrollment probabilities based on multiple demographic factors and college choice variables.

The statistical significance of each predictor's effect on enrollment was determined using p values, with values at or below 0.05 considered statistically significant. Odds ratios were used to express the strength and direction of each predictor's association with enrollment. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates a positive relationship—meaning students with that characteristic

were more likely to enroll. For example, an odds ratio of 2.4 for URM suggests that URM students were 2.4 times more likely to enroll compared to non URM students. On the other hand, odds ratios below 1 indicate a negative relationship with enrollment. When odds ratios fall below 2, subtracting 1 provides a useful approximation of the percentage change in odds (DeMaris & Selman, 2012). For instance, an odds ratio of 0.75 for URM students suggests they had 25% lower odds of enrolling compared to non-URM students ($0.75 - 1.00 = -0.25$). It is important to note that these interpretations reflect changes in odds, not direct probabilities. While this research often found that the variables of significance did not change from first regression to final regression, their odds ratios and p levels often changed. The stability of these variables reinforced the robustness of the overall model and enhanced the interpretability by confirming that each retained variable meaningfully contributed to explaining enrollment outcomes.

Residency status played a crucial role in the college selection process, as tuition costs differed between in-state and out-of-state students, along with variations in institutional recruitment strategies and state policy requirements. Because residency served as the main distinguishing characteristic of this study, investigating the relationship between residency status and other demographic variables provided a more comprehensive understanding in enrollment trends. For example, out-of-state students frequently considered financial need as important in their college selection process because they had to pay higher tuition fees. The study of Pell eligibility across different residency types shed light on financial accessibility issues and the success of in-state need-based aid programs. Colleges typically used merit-based scholarships to attract talented students from other states. The pattern analysis determined whether high-performing students selected out-of-state colleges based on financial benefits or academic reputation. Recruitment strategies may have also targeted specific demographic groups based on

gender or race/ethnicity, which could influence institutional diversity and affect retention efforts. Given that the study's dependent variable was enrollment (deposited vs. non-deposited) residency served as the logical focal point for demographic analysis. Institutional policies on recruitment, financial aid, and student support services are typically structured around residency rather than interactions between other demographic variables. Therefore, analyzing demographic differences within residency groups provides more relevant insights for institutional decision-making—especially since this population significantly shapes enrollment outcomes and reveals how institutional strategies can impact both diversity and access. This importance was further underscored in the final logistic regression model (2020–2023), which included all students regardless of residency, and showed that out-of-state students were 80% less likely to enroll compared to in-state students. In other words, the odds of enrollment for out-of-state students were about one-fifth those of in-state students, as shown in Appendix H.

Out of State Students

This section examined how different factors affected out-of-state students' enrollment decisions using logistic regression analysis results. The initial full model incorporated all 18 variables of college choice, as well as all demographic characteristics, to create an extensive baseline. Backward conditional regression was then used to reduce the final model until only those variables with statistical significance remained to analyze the most impactful predictors.

Each individual year was analyzed separately (2020 through 2023) to examine annual trends in enrollment predictors. The combined 2020-2023 analysis aggregated four years of data to find long-term patterns in enrollment from out-of-state students. The analysis focused exclusively on predictors that demonstrated statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) which were highlighted and explored in the following sections. **Table 4.3** displays the initial models from

each year together with the combined years and **Table 4.4** contains the final reduced model results. The analysis was followed by narrative descriptions of the findings for each of the four individual years, as well as for the combined period from 2020 to 2023.

Table 4.3 Out-of-State Initial Regression Analysis

	2020		2021		2022		2023		Combined, 2020-2023	
	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value
Academically gifted	.931	.580	.815	.112	.993	.962	1.423	.008	.921	.275
Gender	1.214	.144	1.052	.681	1.080	.581	1.026	.861	1.095	.222
Pell Eligible	.900	.565	1.056	.747	1.135	.510	-	-	1.028	.787
Underrepresented Minority	.554	<.001	.696	.020	.553	.017	1.017	.932	.597	<.001
Academic Reputation	.692	.268	1.223	.572	1.368	.419	.979	.885	1.119	.575
Alumni Success	1.061	.721	.984	.934	.726	.106	.814	.161	.934	.511
Athletic Reputation	1.511	<.001	1.116	.414	1.430	.026	1.776	<.001	1.297	<.001
Campus Surroundings	2.440	.040	1.259	.407	2.273	.017	1.812	<.001	1.928	<.001
Cocurricular Opps	1.138	.438	.989	.952	1.098	.695	1.217	.412	1.046	.679
Diversity on Campus	1.505	<.001	.912	.436	1.101	.472	.940	.764	1.020	.764
Fitness Facilities	1.399	.025	1.188	.283	1.021	.912	.971	.863	1.215	.036
Food On Campus	.871	.299	1.172	.268	1.555	.010	.938	.721	1.098	.261
Lib Arts Foundation	.881	.297	.922	.466	.720	.010	.548	.139	.832	.007
Net Cost	.679	.054	.647	.049	.938	.812	.673	.002	.712	.008
Practical Experience	1.142	.602	.764	.275	.817	.522	1.154	.299	.926	.611
Program Facilities	1.412	.155	.983	.956	2.862	.015	1.264	.125	1.399	.050
Program Grad Success	.809	.303	1.080	.772	1.072	.799	.972	.884	.935	.623
Program Strength	.891	.719	1.285	.572	.362	.015	.923	.553	.741	.157
Res Halls	1.407	.042	2.504	<.001	1.039	.867	1.734	<.001	1.598	<.001
Social Reputation	.954	.775	1.123	.558	.941	.759	1.374	.018	.930	.489
Student Research Opps	1.022	.883	1.056	.739	1.226	.259	1.552	.006	1.048	.606
Study Abroad	.938	.616	.964	.768	1.033	.820	.943	.665	.987	.864
Constant	.177	<.001	.126	<.001	.123	<.001	.206	<.001	.182	<.001

Table 4.4 Out-of-State Final Reduced Regression Analysis

	2020		2021		2022		2023		Combined, 2020-2023	
	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value
Academically gifted			.811	.097			1.429	.006		
Underrepresented Minority	.537	<.001	.682	.012	.564	.019			.603	<.001
Athletic Reputation	1.483	<.001			1.375	.028	1.749	<.001	1.290	<.001
Campus Surroundings	2.498	.003			2.244	.016	1.811	<.001	1.879	<.001
Diversity on Campus	1.470	.002								
Fitness Facilities	1.353	.033	1.312	.056					1.216	.029
Food On Campus					1.604	.002				
Lib Arts Foundation					.755	.016			.847	.009
Net Cost	.674	.045	.666	.058			.679	.002	.710	.007
Program Facilities					2.941	.007	1.287	.088	1.283	.103
Program Strength					.389	.016				
Res Halls	1.352	.055	2.758	<.001			1.690	<.001	1.653	<.001
Social Reputation							1.332	.027		
Student Research Opps							1.541	.004		
Constant	.163	<.001	.213	<.001	.143	<.001	.190	<.001	.155	<.001

2020 Analysis

In 2020, the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients indicated statistical significance for both the initial and final regression models, with $\chi^2(22) = 90.118$, $p < .001$ in the initial model and $\chi^2(5) = 80.115$, $p < .001$ in the final model. This demonstrates that the predictors collectively contributed to both models. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test yielded $\chi^2(8) = 7.989$, $p = .435$ for the initial model and $\chi^2(6) = 2.854$, $p = .827$ for the final model, indicating a good fit in both cases, as the non-significant p-values suggest no substantial difference between observed and predicted enrollment probabilities.

The initial regression model for 2020 identified several significant predictors of out-of-state student enrollment. If students identified athletic reputation as important, they were 51% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.511). Those who prioritized campus surroundings were almost 2.5 times more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.44). Similarly, students who placed importance on fitness facilities (odds ratio = 1.399) or residence halls (odds ratio = 1.407) were about 40% more likely to enroll. In contrast, out-of-state students who identified as underrepresented minorities were 44.6% less likely to enroll compared to their non-URM counterparts (odds ratio = 0.554).

The final regression model retained only the strongest predictors following the backward elimination process. While nothing was removed during the final regression model for 2020, net cost did emerge and show significance. The likelihood of student enrollment remained steady at 48% more likely to enroll for those who valued athletic reputation (odds ratio = 1.483). It increased slightly to 2.5 times for students who prioritized campus surroundings (odds ratio = 2.498). The importance students place on campus diversity emerged as a strong enrollment predictor as they were 47% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.47). Students who gave

importance to fitness facilities or residence halls showed a 35% greater likelihood of enrollment (odds ratio = 1.353). Net cost emerged as a barrier, as students worried about expenses demonstrated a 32.6% lower enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 0.674). Enrollment rates for out-of-state students from underrepresented minorities fell short by 46.3% compared to their non-URM counterparts (odds ratio = 0.537).

2021 Analysis

In 2021, the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients indicated statistical significance for both the initial and final regression models, with $\chi^2(22) = 63.149$, $p < .001$ in the initial model and $\chi^2(5) = 55.52$, $p < .001$ in the final model. This demonstrated that the predictors collectively contributed to both models. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test yielded $\chi^2(8) = 3.853$, $p = .870$ for the initial model and $\chi^2(4) = .994$, $p = .911$ for the final model, indicating a good fit in both cases, as the non-significant p-values suggested no substantial difference between observed and predicted enrollment probabilities.

The initial model of out-of-state student enrollment for 2021 identified residence halls as a notably stronger factor this year. If students prioritized residence halls, they were 2.5 times more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.504). Net cost remained a substantial deterrent, as students concerned about cost were 35.3% less likely to enroll (odds ratio = 0.647). Students who were both out-of-state and underrepresented minorities had a 30.4% lower chance of enrolling than their non-URM peers (odds ratio = 0.696).

Following the backwards conditional method revealed residence halls as the strongest determinant in 2021, showing students who valued these facilities were more than 2.5 times more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.758). The importance of fitness facilities increased and showed a 31% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.312). Net cost proved to be the

largest obstacle, as students who were concerned about costs demonstrated a 33.4% lower likelihood of enrollment (odds ratio = 0.666). The enrollment rates for out-of-state underrepresented minority students were significantly lower than those for non-URM students, with a 31.8% reduced likelihood of enrollment (odds ratio = 0.682).

2022 Analysis

In 2022, the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients indicated statistical significance for both the initial and final regression models, with $\chi^2(22) = 60.462$, $p < .001$ in the initial model and $\chi^2(7) = 53.464$, $p < .001$ in the final model. This demonstrated that the predictors collectively contributed to both models. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test yielded $\chi^2(8) = 8.634$, $p = .374$ for the initial model and $\chi^2(4) = 2.813$, $p = .590$ for the final model, indicating a good fit in both cases, as the non-significant p-values suggested no substantial difference between observed and predicted enrollment probabilities.

The initial regression model for 2022 for out-of-state student enrollment highlighted several significant factors. If students valued athletic reputation, they were 43% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.43). Those who prioritized campus surroundings were more than twice as likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.273). Food on campus emerged as a significant positive predictor for the first time, with students who considered it important to be 55% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.555). Meanwhile, data showed students who valued program facilities were more than 2.5 more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.862). Conversely, students who prioritized a liberal arts foundation were 28% less likely to enroll (odds ratio = 0.72). Net cost remained a barrier to enrollment, with students who were highly concerned about cost being 35.3% less likely to enroll (odds ratio = 0.647). Underrepresented minority (URM) students from out of state showed lower

enrollment rates, with URM students being 44.7% less likely to enroll compared to their non-URM peers (odds ratio = 0.553).

The backwards conditional final model retained all of these key factors but refined their value. The likelihood of students enrolling increased by 38% if they placed importance on the athletic reputation of a program (odds ratio = 1.375). Students who found campus surroundings important increased their enrollment likelihood by more than two times (odds ratio = 2.244). Students who valued food quality had a 60% higher likelihood of enrollment (odds ratio = 1.604). Students who prioritized program facilities were almost three times more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.941). Conversely, students who valued a liberal arts foundation showed a 25% lower likelihood of enrollment (odds ratio = 0.755). URM student status continued to influence enrollment trends since URM students experienced a 43.6% lower enrollment probability compared to non-URM students (odds ratio = 0.564).

2023 Analysis

The 2023 Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients demonstrated statistical significance in both the initial and final regression models showing values of $\chi^2(21) = 120.190$ with $p < .001$ and $\chi^2(8) = 113.319$ with $p < .001$ respectively. The collected predictors demonstrated their contribution through both regression models. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test returned $\chi^2(8) = 12.635$ with $p = .125$ for the initial regression model and $\chi^2(8) = 11.625$ with $p = .169$ for the final model demonstrating good fit since the non-significant p-values show no major discrepancy between predicted and observed enrollment probabilities.

The 2023 initial regression analysis for out-of-state student enrollment showed a change in predictive factors. Students who saw athletic reputation as important were 78% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.776). Students who valued campus surroundings demonstrated a significant

influence on enrollment rates because they were 81% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.812). Students who rated residence halls as essential during the college selection process were 73% more likely to choose to enroll (odds ratio = 1.734). Students who valued social reputation had 37% higher enrollment odds (odds ratio = 1.374), and those who prioritized student research opportunities had 55% higher enrollment odds (odds ratio = 1.552). For the first time, the status of being academically gifted served as a predictor since out-of-state students recognized as academically gifted were 43% more likely to enroll than those who were academically strong (odds ratio = 1.429). Net cost continued to be a deterrent of enrollment, with students indicating this as important, being 32.7% less likely to enroll (odds ratio = 0.673).

The backwards conditional final model showed similar patterns. Students who indicated that athletic reputation was important had a 75% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.749). Students who found campus surroundings important had an increased enrollment likelihood of 81% (odds ratio = 1.811). Students who considered residence halls important showed a 69% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.69), while students who focused on research opportunities demonstrated a 54% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.541). The influence of social reputation was also significant, increasing enrollment likelihood by 33% (odds ratio = 1.332). As with previous years, students who indicated that net cost was important showed a 32.1% decrease in their enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 0.679).

Combined Analysis, 2020-2023

Across the combined years of 2020 to 2023, the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients indicated statistical significance for both the initial and final regression models, with $\chi^2(22) = 151.968$, $p < .001$ in the initial model and $\chi^2(8) = 142.688$, $p < .001$ in the final model. This demonstrated that the predictors collectively contributed to both models. The Hosmer–

Lemeshow test yielded $\chi^2(8) = 3.7002$, $p = .883$ for the initial model and $\chi^2(8) = 4.751$, $p = .576$ for the final model, indicating a good fit in both cases, as the non-significant p-values suggested no substantial difference between observed and predicted enrollment probabilities.

The final combined model from 2020 to 2023 confirmed these results. Students who placed a high value on athletic reputation demonstrated a 29% increased likelihood of enrollment (odds ratio = 1.297). Students who valued campus surroundings as an important factor showed a 88% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.879), making it one of the top predictors of enrollment. Students who saw residence halls important had a 65% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.653). Students who worried about the net cost experienced a 29% decrease in their likelihood of enrollment (odds ratio = 0.710). Students who were URM members demonstrated lower enrollment rates compared to their non-URM counterparts as indicated by an odds ratio of 0.603. Notably absent is program facilities, which was significant in the initial model, but through backwards modeling, its significance was reduced.

In-State Students

This section explored the regression analysis results for in-state students, identifying the key factors that influenced their enrollment decisions. The initial full models incorporated a comprehensive set of predictors, including demographic characteristics and college choice factors, to establish a broad analytical framework. Through backward conditional regression, the models were refined to retain only statistically significant predictors, allowing for a clearer focus on the most influential variables.

The analysis was structured to first examine each year (2020–2023) independently, providing insight into how enrollment predictors varied over time. The final section presents a combined analysis, combining data from all four years to capture overarching trends and long-

term enrollment patterns among in-state students. Only predictors that reached statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) were discussed to ensure that the findings reflect meaningful and reliable influences on in-state student enrollment. The initial models for each year and for all combined years are summarized in **Table 4.5**, while the final model results are presented in **Table 4.6**. Narrative descriptions of the findings for each year follow.

Table 4.5 In-State Initial Regression Analysis

	2020		2021		2022		2023		Combined, 2020-2023	
	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value
Academically gifted	.605	<.001	.627	<.001	.651	.009	1.393	.017	.633	<.001
Gender	1.059	0.648	.885	.366	.743	.078	1.327	.054	.895	.160
Pell Eligible	1.828	<.001	1.816	<.001	1.669	.006	-	-	1.820	<.001
Underrepresented Minority	.514	<.001	.905	.544	.477	<.001	1.265	.203	.608	<.001
Academic Reputation	.973	.931	.918	.775	1.610	.175	1.618	.002	1.133	.481
Alumni Success	1.198	.230	.709	.078	1.167	.528	1.035	.830	1.013	.899
Athletic Reputation	2.095	<.001	1.352	.032	1.452	.031	1.971	<.001	1.580	<.001
Campus Surroundings	.858	.441	1.084	.734	.945	.845	.966	.799	.965	.783
Cocurricular Opps	1.173	.310	.968	.872	.868	.587	.916	.729	1.064	.569
Diversity on Campus	1.212	.141	.888	.439	.811	.249	1.009	.960	.870	.064
Fitness Facilities	1.150	.267	1.472	.012	1.267	.213	1.167	.470	1.254	.008
Food On Campus	1.005	.968	1.058	.722	1.313	.144	1.745	.007	1.060	.505
Lib Arts Foundation	.624	<.001	.685	.005	.711	.039	.367	<.001	.637	<.001
Net Cost	1.154	.526	.840	.516	1.400	.347	1.193	.201	1.076	.629
Practical Experience	1.083	.713	1.270	.391	.755	.372	.883	.405	1.038	.797
Program Facilities	1.002	.992	2.021	.016	1.567	.221	1.283	.126	1.337	.067
Program Grad Success	.767	.211	.792	.377	1.162	.656	.805	.232	.844	.238
Program Strength	1.141	.690	.806	.536	.364	.090	1.296	.073	.839	.416
Res Halls	1.167	.291	1.428	.042	1.491	.060	.621	.002	1.321	.004
Social Reputation	.904	.486	.903	.559	.822	.382	1.355	.043	.889	.229
Student Research Opps	1.167	.308	.929	.700	1.088	.704	.577	<.001	1.043	.678
Study Abroad	.875	.299	.872	.352	1.050	.781	1.144	.383	.912	.267
Constant	1.724	.182	1.567	.203	1.784	.285	.754	.824	1.676	.026

Table 4.6 In-State Final Reduced Regression Analysis

	2020		2021		2022		2023		Combined, 2020-2023	
	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value
Academically gifted	.605	<.001	.635	<.001	.680	.015	1.337	.033	.640	<.001
Gender					.700	.029	1.314	.053		
Pell Eligible	1.832	<.001	1.766	<.001	1.666	.005			1.833	<.001
Underrepresented Minority	.521	<.001			.474	<.001			.609	<.001
Academic Reputation							1.603	.002		
Alumni Success			.645	.013						
Athletic Reputation	2.213	<.001	1.311	.047	1.637	.002	2.004	<.001	1.561	<.001
Diversity on Campus									.857	.038
Fitness Facilities			1.472	.009					1.272	.004
Food On Campus							1.814	.004		
Lib Arts Foundation	.643	<.001	.616	<.001	.699	.018	.363	<.001	.618	<.001
Program Facilities			1.647	.038					1.258	.086
Program Strength							1.299	.062		
Res Halls			1.355	.059	1.781	.002	.635	.003	1.310	.003
Social Reputation							1.345	.044		
Student Research Opps							.579	<.001		
Constant	2.624	<.001	1.056	.821	1.825	.011	1.057	.756	1.436	.011

2020 Analysis

In 2020, the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients indicated statistical significance for both the initial and final regression models, with $\chi^2(22) = 139.737$, $p < .001$ in the initial model and $\chi^2(5) = 126.192$, $p < .001$ in the final model. This demonstrated that the predictors collectively contributed to both models. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test yielded $\chi^2(8) = 6.754$, $p = .563$ for the initial model and $\chi^2(8) = 6.719$, $p = .567$ for the final model, indicating a good fit in both cases, as the non-significant p-values suggested no substantial difference between observed and predicted enrollment probabilities.

The initial regression model for 2020 identified several significant predictors of in-state student enrollment. Financial need emerged as a dominant factor, with Pell-eligible students being 83% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.828). If students prioritized athletic reputation, they were more than twice as likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.095). Conversely, students who valued a liberal arts foundation were 37.6% less likely to enroll (odds ratio = 0.624), indicating that this factor deterred enrollment. The academic ability metric demonstrated a strong influence since students with high academic achievement showed a 39.5% lower enrollment rate compared to their peers (odds ratio = 0.605).

The final regression model confirmed these trends stayed significant even after the model was refined. Students who placed importance on athletic reputation were more than twice as likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.213). Students who qualified for Pell were 83% more likely to enroll than their non-Pell-eligible peers (odds ratio = 1.832). Students who valued a liberal arts foundation maintained a 35.7% lower enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 0.643). The probability of enrollment for academically gifted students was 39.5% lower when compared to those who were academically strong (odds ratio = 0.605).

2021 Analysis

In 2021, the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients indicated statistical significance for both the initial and final regression models, with $\chi^2(22) = 92.094$, $p < .001$ in the initial model and $\chi^2(8) = 84.569$, $p < .001$ in the final model. This demonstrated that the predictors collectively contributed to both models. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test yielded $\chi^2(8) = 2.787$, $p = .947$ for the initial model and $\chi^2(8) = .8450$, $p = .391$ for the final model, indicating a good fit in both cases, as the non-significant p-values suggested no substantial difference between observed and predicted enrollment probabilities.

The initial model of in-state student enrollment for 2021 showed a similar pattern to the previous year. If students valued athletic reputation, they were 35% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.352), though its effect was smaller than in 2020. Financial need remained a strong predictor, with Pell-eligible students being 82% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.816). Students who found fitness facilities to be important were 47% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.472). When program facilities were found to be important, enrollment likelihood increased by over two times (odds ratio = 2.021). Conversely, students who prioritized a liberal arts foundation were 31.5% less likely to enroll (odds ratio = 0.685) and students with high academic ability faced a 37.3% lower likelihood of enrollment than their peers (odds ratio = 0.627).

The final regression model showed slight variations from the initial model, with residence halls removed and alumni success emerging as a significant predictor. Students who valued athletic reputation had a 31% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.311). Financial need proved to be a positive predictor, as Pell-eligible students were 77% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.766). Students who valued a liberal arts foundation demonstrated a 38.4% lower enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 0.616), which confirmed the negative

connection with enrollment. Academic ability stayed as a negative predictor, with academically gifted students showing a 36.5% lower likelihood of enrollment (odds ratio = 0.635). Alumni success became significant for the first time in these regressions, showing that students who valued alumni success were 35.5% less likely to enroll (odds ratio = 0.645).

2022 Analysis

In 2022, the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients indicated statistical significance for both the initial and final regression models, with $\chi^2(22) = 77.886$, $p < .001$ in the initial model and $\chi^2(7) = 64.847$, $p < .001$ in the final model. This demonstrated that the predictors collectively contributed to both models. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test yielded $\chi^2(8) = 5.182$, $p = .738$ for the initial model and $\chi^2(8) = 6.669$, $p = .573$ for the final model, indicating a good fit in both cases, as the non-significant p-values suggested no substantial difference between observed and predicted enrollment probabilities.

The initial regression for 2022 showed that the results of in-state student enrollment reinforced previous findings. If students valued athletic reputation, they were 45% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.452). Financial need remained a dominant predictor, with Pell-eligible students being 67% more likely to enroll than non-Pell-eligible students (odds ratio = 1.669). Academic ability remained significant, as academically gifted students demonstrated a 35.9% lower enrollment rate than their peers (odds ratio = 0.651). Conversely, students who prioritized a liberal arts foundation were 28.9% less likely to enroll, continuing the negative association with enrollment (odds ratio = 0.711).

The final regression model confirmed the persistence of these trends and identified residence halls as a positive predictor of enrollment likelihood. Students who valued athletic reputation showed a 64% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.637), demonstrating

its strong impact on enrollment decisions. Students with financial need demonstrated substantially higher enrollment rates, as they also had 67% greater likelihood of enrolling than their peers who were not Pell eligible (odds ratio = 1.666). For the first time, residence halls showed significance, with students who prioritized housing importance showing a 78% higher enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.781). Conversely, the final analysis also showed that academically gifted students had a 32% decreased likelihood of enrolling (odds ratio = 0.680), which demonstrated academic ability as a negative indicator. Students who placed importance on a liberal arts foundation were 30.1% less likely to enroll (odds ratio = 0.699).

2023 Analysis

The Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients showed statistical significance in both regression models throughout 2020 to 2023 with $\chi^2(22) = 263.527$, $p < .001$ for the initial model and $\chi^2(8) = 255.319$, $p < .001$ for the final model. These results showed that the predictors provided significant contributions to both regression models. The initial model displayed $\chi^2(8) = 10.528$ with $p = .230$, while the final model showed $\chi^2(8) = 12.876$ with $p = .116$ according to the Hosmer–Lemeshow test which demonstrated good model fit through non-significant p-values for both models, suggesting no major difference between observed and predicted enrollment probabilities.

Enrollment numbers for in-state students experienced a significant shift during the year 2023. Students who valued strong athletic programs became almost twice as likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.971), which marked a resurgence of its influential power from prior years. Academically gifted students were 39% more likely to enroll than their academically strong peers, marking a reversal from previous patterns (odds ratio = 1.393). Academic reputation showed that students who placed importance in the overall academic health of the institution had

increased the likelihood of enrollment by 68% (odds ratio = 1.618). For the first time, food on campus was significant, with students being 75% more likely to enroll if they found food important (odds ratio = 1.745). The enrollment likelihood for students who valued a liberal arts foundation decreased by 63.3% (odds ratio = 0.367), maintaining its pronounced negative effect.

The final model demonstrated the same patterns. Students who prioritized athletic reputation were twice as likely to enroll, confirming this as one of the strongest predictors of enrollment for this population (odds ratio = 2.004). Academically gifted students experienced a 34% increase in enrollment likelihood over their academically strong peers (odds ratio = 1.337). Academic reputation continued to show that students who placed importance in this area were 60% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.603). Conversely, students who valued a liberal arts foundation continued having a lower probability of enrollment, decreasing the likelihood of enrollment by 63.7% (odds ratio = 0.363).

Combined Analysis, 2020-2023

Across the combined years of 2020 to 2023, the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients indicated statistical significance, $\chi^2(9) = 255.319$, $p < .001$, demonstrating that the predictors collectively contributed to the final regression model. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test produced $\chi^2(8) = 12.876$, $p = .116$, indicating a good fit, as the non-significant p-value suggested no substantial difference between observed and predicted enrollment probabilities in the final regression model.

The initial model reinforced several long-term enrollment patterns. If students valued athletic reputation, they were 58% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.580), showing a strong four-year effect. Financial need proved to be one of the strongest indicators of student enrollment, as Pell-eligible students demonstrated an 82% increase in enrollment likelihood

compared to their non-Pell-eligible counterparts (odds ratio = 1.820). When students placed importance on fitness facilities (odds ratio = 1.254) and residence halls (odds ratio = 1.321), chances of enrollment increased by 25% and 32%, respectively. Conversely, students who placed importance on a liberal arts foundation showed a 36.3% lower enrollment rate (odds ratio = 0.637), demonstrating that this choice remains a consistent barrier to enrollment. Overall enrollment continued to decline among academically gifted students, who showed a 36.7% lower enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 0.633) until this pattern changed in 2023.

The final combined model from 2020 to 2023 supported the established patterns while also identifying campus diversity as a new significant factor in the final model. Students who gave importance to athletic reputation exhibited a 56% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.561), demonstrating its enduring influence. Pell-eligible students experienced an enrollment likelihood that was 83% higher compared to non-eligible students (odds ratio = 1.833). Academic ability had a negative predictive effect overall, which resulted in a 36% drop (odds ratio = 0.64) in enrollment probability for academically gifted students. The likelihood of enrollment for students who placed importance on a liberal arts foundation decreased by 38.2% (odds ratio = 0.618), continuing the pattern of declining enrollment numbers for such students. Diversity on campus emerged for the first time, showing a decreased likelihood of enrollment for students placing value on campus diversity by 14.3% (odds ratio = 0.857).

Summary

This research investigated college choice variables among first-year students at a four-year public university while examining trends in out-of-state student enrollment. The ASPI Survey data from 2020 to 2023 allowed the research to identify and examine enrollment predictors for both in-state and out-of-state students separately. The residency status proved to be

one of the most reliable predictors of enrollment decisions as students from out-of-state demonstrated a much lower propensity to enroll than their in-state counterparts. According to the full final regression model of the combined 2020-2023 years, out-of-state students exhibited an 80% lower likelihood of enrollment than in-state students (Appendix H). The results underscored the necessity for studying out-of-state student enrollment factors to identify which variables most influence their college choices.

The percentage of out-of-state students enrolled over the years varied between 48.22% in 2020 and 60.5% in 2022, while the average enrollment rate stood at 52.84% during the four-year span. Within the demographic trends, male representation grew slowly while female students continued to outnumber male students regardless of their residency status each year. Female students comprised 71.48% of the total sample throughout the four-year span while male students made up 28.52%. The dataset revealed declining Pell eligibility rates and indicated that more in-state students qualified for financial aid than out-of-state students.

The combined 2020-2023 data regression model revealed that academic reputation, program strength, net cost, and campus surroundings impacted all students but showed residency status-based variations. Notable differences between in-state students and out-of-state students became apparent. Out-of-state students focused on program facilities, together with campus surroundings and net cost during their enrollment choices whereas in-state students generally based their decisions on the availability of financial aid and the quality of on-campus amenities.

Campus surroundings, alongside affordability and residence halls, were primary considerations for out-of-state students when choosing where to enroll. Athletic reputation (odds ratio = 1.29) and campus surroundings (odds ratio = 1.879) each demonstrated substantial positive effects on enrollment likelihood within the institutional environment. Residence halls,

which symbolize on-campus housing, emerged as essential to draw students from outside the state (odds ratio = 1.653). The emerging trends of 2023 highlighted that out-of-state students favored colleges based on their social reputation and research opportunities, which translated into preferences for institutional prestige and academic possibilities. Out-of-state student enrollment rates suffered a 29% decline (odds ratio = 0.71) due to net cost, while these financial considerations did not show significance in importance for in-state student enrollment decisions. Underrepresented Minority (URM) students displayed a 39.7% lower enrollment probability in relation to other student groups as indicated by an odds ratio of 0.603.

The enrollment probability for in-state students increased due to institutional characteristics like athletic reputation (odds ratio = 1.561) and residence halls (odds ratio = 1.310), although the latter impacted out-of-state students more strongly. The enrollment choice of students shows a clear preference for institutions with higher academic standing, which demonstrates how institutional prestige influences student decisions. Students who valued liberal arts curriculum demonstrated a 38.2% lower enrollment rate (odds ratio = 0.618), showing their tendency to choose schools with wider academic options. The 2023 enrollment predictions highlighted campus food services (odds ratio = 1.814) and research opportunities (odds ratio = 0.579) as emerging factors, which reflect growing attention to student life and the desire for academic involvement. Financial need stood as the strongest indicator, as Pell-eligible students were 83% greater likelihood of enrollment (odds ratio = 1.833), but this factor did not have statistical significance among out-of-state students.

Chapter Five expands on these results by interpreting the findings within the context established in Chapter One and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The study's results will be summarized, and the key findings will be discussed in depth, linking them to current trends

and theoretical perspectives introduced earlier. The analysis will explore how factors such as residency status, net cost, academic reputation, and campus surroundings influence student decision-making and will offer recommendations for refining recruitment and retention strategies.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This research examined the factors influencing first-year out-of-state students' decisions to enroll in a public four-year college, tracking these variables from 2020 to 2023. Student responses from a pre-existing dataset were analyzed to identify the main drivers of enrollment choices, and changes in these factors were tracked over time to understand their effects on institutional recruitment approaches. Using both Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) three-stage model of college choice and Jackson's (1986) framework on preference, exclusion, and evaluation, this study investigated the impact of institutional characteristics and financial factors along with institutional fit and demographic variables on enrollment decisions.

The research concentrated on out-of-state college selection but included in-state decisions as an essential basis for comparison. Analysis of in-state students' motivations revealed critical distinctions in the way geographic location, financial circumstances, and cultural background shaped the college search process. The investigation provided a wider understanding of the unique experiences and opportunities that out-of-state students face. The study findings presented a more thorough perspective of college choice behavior by analyzing both in-state and out-of-state student populations. The research aimed to address these specific research questions:

1. What factors do first-year out-of-state students at a public four-year institution identify as most important in their college choice?
2. How do the factors identified as most important to college choice by first-year out-of-state students at a public four-year institution change each year?

This quantitative study analyzed data from the 2020-2023 Admitted Student and Parent Interest (ASPI) Survey which was administered to every first-year admitted student at Collinsville University (pseudonym). The study accumulated 18,888 student responses over four

years, with 11,196 responses remaining valid after completing data cleaning and preparation. Descriptive statistics and logistic regression models were used to analyze structured raw data in evaluating enrollment factors and trends over time.

This chapter summarizes and discusses the research findings for each question examined. The chapter presents implications for university administrators and enrollment management professionals and proposes directions for future research into out-of-state student recruitment and decision-making processes. These findings, while based on data collected from Collinsville University, may reflect broader trends at other institutions with similar student demographics. Analysis of data trends could provide other universities with data-informed recommendations to refine their recruitment strategies to align more closely with the preferences of prospective students from outside the state.

Key Factors in Out-of-State Student College Choice

This first research question aimed to identify the most important factors first-year out-of-state admitted students at Collinsville University considered in their college selection process. The research revealed which elements predominantly affected students' final enrollment choices and how these results matched the final step in Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) model and Jackson's 1986 college choice framework. The final college choices of in-state and out-of-state students hinged on several different factors although both groups gave priority to academic reputation and program strength before considering net cost. Students from in-state institutions focused more on affordability and athletic reputation combined with academic opportunities whereas out-of-state students placed greater importance on campus environment and student life combined with athletic reputation. While all students sought quality academic programs, their

final college choices were shaped by perceived institutional fit, financial feasibility, and institutional characteristics that defined the overall student experience.

Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) model named the *decision* stage as the final phase of college selection where students committed to enrollment after reviewing acceptance letters along with financial aid options and personal needs. During this stage, students shifted from broad institutional evaluations to a concentrated assessment of a narrowed list of potential schools. Jackson (1986) described this stage as evaluation, wherein students analyzed their reduced list of schools to make their choice based on perceived strengths and limitations and overall suitability. This study validated both theoretical models by showing that institutional characteristics—such as academic reputation and campus environment—and elements of institutional fit, including program strength and net cost, played a crucial role in the decision-making process.

The research findings demonstrated that recruitment strategies must target the key factors students considered during their final decision-making process. Collinsville University should emphasize affordability, career success after graduation and clear financial aid information to gain enrollment commitments from in-state students. For out-of-state students, yield rates would likely be stronger if emphasis was placed on campus life, extracurricular activities and financial aid packaging. Applying targeted communication and engagement strategies based on student priorities during the crucial final decision stage would likely improve conversion rates from admitted to enrolled students and boost overall yield rates.

This section lists the main variables shaping out-of-state student college choices using four years of data collected from 2020 to 2023 and concentrates on the integrated final reduced regression models. The research identifies college choice elements that drove enrollment

decisions for students from outside the state and reveals how these priorities contrasted with the criteria used by in-state students. Through this comparative analysis of both student groups, the study reveals separate several elements that guided college selection while explaining how institutional qualities, financial aspects, and campus life helped shape student choices.

Institutional Characteristics: Campus Surroundings and Residential Life

Campus surroundings represented the most significant factor affecting enrollment decisions for out-of-state students and resulted in an 87.9% increase in their likelihood to enroll (odds ratio = 1.879). The physical environment along with geographic location and campus atmosphere likely influenced relocation decisions for out-of-state students. A campus that was visually appealing, had a vibrant student life, was in a desirable setting, and was well-integrated with the surrounding community, provided reassurance that they were making the right choice (Hebb, 2024; Okerson, 2016; Weisser, 2018). Out-of-state students assessed not only institutional quality, but also where they would live, socialize, and establish a new home.

Similarly, residence halls significantly influenced out-of-state student enrollment, increasing the likelihood by 65.3% (odds ratio = 1.653). Unlike in-state students, who may have had housing alternatives, out-of-state students often relied entirely on university housing. Campus residence facilities provide not only accommodation but also social structure, convenience, and a sense of belonging, which are particularly important when adjusting to a new environment (Hebb, 2024; Izumi, 2021; Kuh, 2009). Universities that invest in modern, well-maintained housing with well-established residential communities may be more successful in attracting out-of-state students.

Fitness facilities also played a notable role in enrollment decisions, showing that out-of-state students were 21.6% more likely to enroll when they valued access to quality fitness centers

(odds ratio = 1.216) and in-state students placed nearly equal importance on fitness facilities, with a slightly higher likelihood of enrollment at 27.2% (odds ratio = 1.272). The near-equal importance placed on fitness facilities by both in-state and out-of-state students suggests that comprehensive wellness resources are a key aspect of institutional appeal across student demographics.

For in-state students, neither campus surroundings nor residence halls were as strong of a factor. Campus surroundings were not a significant predictor, and residence halls increased the likelihood of enrollment by 31% (odds ratio = 1.31). Many in-state students likely already had familiarity with the institution and its location, reducing the need for campus aesthetics to play a major role in their decision. Additionally, in-state students have more flexibility in housing choices, including commuting from home or renting off-campus, making residence halls less critical to their final decision (Skinner, 2019; Stewart & Post, 1990).

Institutional Characteristics: Athletic Reputation and Student Engagement

The athletic reputation of an institution resulted in a 29% increase in enrollment likelihood from out-of-state students (odds ratio = 1.29). Students studying from out-of-state found competitive athletic programs created school spirit while offering a ready-made social network. Researchers have noted that students integrate into campus life through structured sporting events and traditions while forming connections (Letawsky, et al., 2003; Magolda, 2000). Universities with prominent athletic programs have the potential to leverage these sports offerings as recruitment tools to bring in students from different states.

For in-state students, the athletic reputation increased the probability of enrollment by 56.1% (odds ratio = 1.561). This finding revealed that while athletics played a significant role for both residency groups, in-state students may have maintained prior loyalty to their school teams

because they grew up attending games or developed cultural ties to the university sports programs. The significance of the impact of athletics on in-state enrollment decisions can be traced to longstanding ties between students and their university teams (Letawsky et al., 2003; Jaquette & Curs, 2015).

Institutional Fit: Academic and Research Opportunities

For out-of-state students, research opportunities were a major factor in decisions, increasing the likelihood of enrollment by 54.1% in 2023 (odds ratio = 1.541). Since these students paid higher tuition rates, and thus likely made larger personal investments for their education, they often sought opportunities that enhanced their individual academic experience and future career prospects. Access to research, faculty mentorship, and hands-on learning was particularly attractive, as it provided a clear return on investment for their educational costs. Institutions that highlight undergraduate research availability and experiential learning pathways often appeal more to out-of-state applicants (Hossler & Litten, 1993; Villani et al., 2021).

For in-state students, research opportunities were a negative predictor of enrollment in 2023, showing that in-state students who placed importance on research were 42.1% less likely to enroll (odds ratio = 0.579). This suggests that in-state students who prioritize research opportunities may be seeking institutions elsewhere that better align with their academic and research aspirations. In contrast, out-of-state students who value research are more likely to enroll, indicating that the institution's research offerings may be a stronger draw for non-resident students than for in-state applicants.

Institutional Fit: Net Cost

The net cost of attendance presented significant challenges for out-of-state students and reduced their enrollment probability by 29% (odds ratio = 0.71), according to the final reduced

regression analysis from 2020 to 2023. The higher tuition fees faced by out-of-state students made affordability a critical factor in their university selection process. Many students rely on institutional scholarships and tuition waivers to support their decision to study at out-of-state universities (Avery & Hoxby 2004; DesJardins et al. 2006). The lack of adequate financial support often leads many out-of-state students to choose lower-cost in-state schools that offer more accessible state-funded financial aid. Net cost was not a significant variable of importance for in-state students.

The combined final reduced regression analysis from 2020 to 2023 showed financial need to be the strongest predictor of enrollment for in-state students with Pell eligibility to have an enrollment likelihood increase of 83.3% (odds ratio = 1.833). This finding aligned with prior research that in-state student enrollment rates are principally driven by financial aid (DesJardins et al., 2006). Schools that want to increase the number of in-state students should maintain their investment in financial aid and tuition assistance programs. While out -of-state students often base their college decisions on various factors such as cost, location, campus experience, and academics, need-based financial aid traditionally favors the in-state student population (Perna, 2020).

Most Important Variables in Out-of-State Enrollment

In this study, the campus environment was the primary determinant of out-of-state student enrollment, as campus surroundings increased the odds of student commitment by nearly two times. The decision-making process placed campus aesthetics along with geographic location and student culture at the forefront of importance. Students who valued on-campus residence halls showed a 65% higher likelihood of enrollment compared to their counterparts (odds ratio = 1.653). Research indicated that out-of-state students used residential facilities for

more than just living space, because these rooms provided them with social integration and a sense of belonging, which made attractive and engaging residential spaces essential for recruiting students (Bowman & Denson, 2014; Weisser, 2018).

The decision of out-of-state students to enroll at an institution remained heavily influenced by financial considerations since higher net costs decreased their enrollment likelihood. Out-of-state students found the academic reputation and campus experience attractive but faced enrollment barriers due to financial burdens. Financial aid played a critical role in in-state enrollment as Pell-eligible students showed an 83% higher enrollment rate (odds ratio = 1.833). The final model showed student life factors to be significant as campus surroundings emerged as a crucial element in drawing out-of-state students. Additionally, athletic reputation contributed to a 29% rise in the likelihood of enrollment in out-of-state students (odds ratio = 1.29), emphasizing the appeal of competitive sports programs and the sense of school spirit they fostered. Bowman and Denson (2014) found that campuses that offered lively environments and communities, with strong traditions and student organizations, along with active social opportunities saw an 88% rise in students from out-of-state students (odds ratio = 1.879), highlighting the importance of a dynamic campus atmosphere in shaping students' college decisions.

Some factors that were significant in earlier models diminished once non-significant variables were removed. While program facilities remained a meaningful factor, academic reputation and program strength no longer had a direct impact on final enrollment decisions. This suggested that while students may have initially considered academic program quality when evaluating colleges, their final decision was driven more by the broader student experience, campus environment, and financial feasibility, as also noted in prior research (Espinosa et al.,

2014). These findings indicate universities that were seeking to increase out-of-state enrollment must emphasize more than just academic prestige. A well-rounded approach that highlights campus aesthetics, high-quality residence halls, and a strong student life culture was more effective in influencing students' final decisions (Bersia et al., 2024; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2021; Villani, et. al., 2021).

In-state students identified financial aid and affordability as their primary concerns which indicated that institutions should focus on scholarships and tuition assistance to sustain strong in-state enrollment outcomes. Schools that customized their recruitment methods to meet the unique needs of different student groups successfully attracted and maintained a student body with geographic diversity (Prach et al, 2024).

Shifts in Enrollment Factors Over Time

The second research question sought to explore changes in factors that influenced first-year out-of-state students when choosing a public four-year college, by examining each year individually. Campus administrators need to understand potential shifts to develop recruitment strategies that can meet the changing needs of students. Between 2020 and 2023 the enrollment choices at Collinsville University showed sensitivity to worldwide events, along with economic fluctuations and shifts in the higher education landscape. Academic reputation and net cost remained constant, while enrollment drivers varied according to external factors and changing student expectations. New trends emerged as prospective students realigned their priorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic effects and shifts in both job markets and educational policies. While in-state students maintained relatively stable preferences, continuing to prioritize affordability, out-of-state students demonstrated more adaptive decision-making patterns, adjusting their choices based on evolving societal and economic conditions.

2020: Campus Surroundings and Net Cost

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 introduced widespread uncertainty in higher education, prompting out-of-state students to prioritize institutional stability, campus environment, and finances (Deneault, 2023; Izumi, 2021). In the initial regression model, athletic reputation emerged as a significant predictor of enrollment, with students who valued reputable athletic programs being 51.1% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.511). This suggested that students gravitated toward institutions with established athletic programs, viewing them as indicators of financial health, school spirit, and a well-rounded college experience, which was consistent with prior research (Bouchet et al., 2017; Finch & Clopton, 2017; Hansen, 2011; Pond, 2020). In the final regression model, athletic reputation was still important, as students were 48.3% more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 1.483), suggesting competitive sports and campus culture significantly influenced enrollment choices during unprecedented disruption.

In the final regression model, the physical campus environment and campus surroundings also significantly influenced enrollment choices for students living out-of-state during this time, making them 2.50 times more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.498). This suggested that, even during remote learning periods, students planned for their future college journey by preferring schools with attractive and interactive facilities. Diversity on campus also emerged as a significant factor in 2020, as it resulted in a 47% increase in enrollment likelihood (odds ratio = 1.47). Student expectations regarding university commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion were likely shaped by the national dialogue on racial and social justice (Ezarik, 2021).

Out-of-state students faced significant enrollment barriers due to net cost which reduced their enrollment probabilities by 32.6% (odds ratio = 0.674). Students became more sensitive to tuition costs, likely due to economic uncertainty which transformed affordability into a decisive

element for enrollment decisions. The combination of job losses and financial struggles within families pushed affordability to become a crucial consideration for students who may have previously looked at out-of-state colleges (Koirala, Nyiwul, & Hul, 2024).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, students preferred affordable college options, making net cost the main factor in enrollment decisions for in-state students with lower tuition and financial aid options. Consistent with prior research, the importance of athletic reputation showed students continued to value school spirit and sports involvement to keep normalcy in an unusual academic year despite limited sports events (Abdeahad & Mock, 2023).

2021: Residence Halls and Fitness Facilities

Students shifted their enrollment priorities towards campus life and on-campus housing as universities resumed in-person learning. The final regression model determined that residence halls were the strongest predictor of out-of-state student enrollment, with students being more than 2.5 times more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.758) when they valued on-campus housing. Findings showed that a year of remote learning led out-of-state students to seek immersive residential experiences which made on-campus housing essential in their enrollment decisions (Hall & Zygmunt, 2021). Additionally, while students may have valued campus surroundings and engagement, they prioritized their residential experience over campus environment when making their final enrollment decision.

Fitness facilities emerged as a significant predictor in 2021, increasing enrollment likelihood by 31.2% (odds ratio = 1.312). Anderson et al. (2024) found that students placed greater importance on access to recreational spaces and wellness resources after experiencing pandemic-related restrictions. Financial barriers continued to deter out-of-state students, reducing their enrollment likelihood by 33.4% (odds ratio = 0.666). While the economy had

begun to stabilize, many families were still hesitant to take on higher tuition costs, particularly when weighing out-of-state expenses (Kuperberg, 2023).

For in-state students, residence halls became an important predictor of enrollment, indicating a desire for on-campus living and social engagement after remote learning. Despite this shift, net cost remained a primary factor, highlighting the importance of affordability and financial feasibility in their decision-making.

2022: Program Facilities and Campus Surroundings

In 2022, out-of-state students on academic and programmatic elements, highlighting a emphasis on institutional resources and campus infrastructure. The final regression model showed that program facilities were the most significant predictor of enrollment, with students being almost three times more likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.941) when they prioritized these resources. This revealed that students prioritized well-equipped learning spaces, research opportunities, and additional academic resources during their final college selection process. The final model also demonstrated that students who valued campus surroundings were more than twice as likely to enroll (odds ratio = 2.244), making this variable a major factor for out-of-state students. Students' interest in academic infrastructure did not diminish the importance of the broader campus setting as a major influence on their decision-making process. Campus food emerged as a significant factor in 2022, increasing enrollment chances by 60.4% (odds ratio = 1.604) according to the final model. Students began prioritizing campus quality-of-life elements like dining facilities and amenities as pandemic restrictions ended. The return to fully in-person college life may have made daily experiences, including access to high-quality food services, more central to students' decision-making (Powell et al., 2021).

Athletic reputation also remained a significant predictor for out-of-state enrollment in the final model, increasing the likelihood by 37.5% (odds ratio = 1.375). With the full return of college sports and packed stadiums, students may have been drawn to institutions with well-established athletic traditions and opportunities for engagement through school spirit and community events. While net cost was a deterrent in the initial regression model for out-of-state students, it was not significant in the final model. This suggested that, compared to previous years, students in 2022 may have been more willing to pay higher tuition if the institution offered quality academic resources and enhanced student experiences (Khan & Hemsley-Brown, 2024).

For in-state students, the university's growing athletic reputation gained importance, likely driven by improved sports performance and increased school spirit. Program facilities also became a key factor, suggesting that in-state students focused on academic infrastructure and access to high-quality learning spaces.

2023: Athletic Reputation and Social Reputation

By 2023, out-of-state student enrollment decisions shifted in the direction of social and extracurricular engagement, with athletic reputation and social reputation emerging as the strongest predictors in the final regression model. King et al. (2020) suggested that students prioritized peer networks, extracurricular involvement, and an active campus culture when choosing a university. The final regression model confirmed athletic reputation had its highest impact across all four years, increasing the likelihood of enrollment by 74.9% (odds ratio = 1.749). The finding showed college athletics became more central in university branding and student involvement, likely thanks to successful athletic seasons, increased media coverage, and renewed interest in live sports events.

The final regression model indicated that the importance of residence halls continued to boost out-of-state students enrollment likelihood, by 69% (odds ratio = 1.69). On-campus living experiences were crucial for out-of-state students because they needed residence halls, which Blimling (2015) regarded as important for social integration and access to campus resources. The final model also revealed that student research opportunities emerged as a key enrollment predictor, by elevating likelihood by 54.1% (odds ratio = 1.541). This finding suggests that when making their final college decision, students seek academic engagement beyond the classroom, prioritizing hands-on research and mentorship opportunities (Gin et al., 2021).

For the first time in this dataset, social reputation emerged as a significant predictor for out-of-state enrollment in the final model, increasing the likelihood by 33.2% (odds ratio = 1.332). This suggested that students placed a higher emphasis on finding a university with established student traditions, an active social scene, and vibrant campus life. Net cost re-emerged as a major deterrent in the final model, with net cost reducing the likelihood of enrollment by 32.1% (odds ratio = 0.679). Rising tuition rates, inflationary pressures, and the expiration of pandemic-era financial aid programs likely contributed to renewed concerns about affordability (Ma & Pender, 2022).

Athletic reputation was the strongest factor influencing in-state student enrollment decisions, which demonstrated the central importance of school spirit and sports engagement alongside fan culture in their college selection process. The social reputation of a school also was a crucial determinant as students prioritized their connections with peer networks and participation in student traditions and extracurricular activities.

Summary of Changing Priorities

Over the four-year period, the out-of-state admitted students from Collinsville University likely altered their enrollment choices due to the impacts of the pandemic and shifts in the economy, alongside changes in college life expectations. Throughout each academic year, enrollment decisions changed slightly even though net cost and campus surroundings continued to hold importance.

From 2020-2023, out-of-state students likely adjusted their enrollment priorities in response to pandemic disruptions, economic shifts, and evolving expectations of college life. Enrollment decisions shifted during each academic year, despite net cost and campus surroundings remaining vital considerations. Campus surroundings and net cost were consistently important variables in the college search process each year, but additional key priorities emerged each year. Students put institutional stability and academic reputation at the top of their priorities during 2020's pandemic uncertainty. Students redirected their attention to residence halls and social activities when face-to-face learning resumed to achieve a complete college experience. The quality of on-campus living facilities and wellness amenities with a focus on fitness centers became essential factors for students by 2021. The academic framework and research possibilities alongside campus food services rose to significance during 2022, as institutions began to showcase academic advantages and experiential learning benefits. The year 2023 marked the rise of athletic and social reputation as primary considerations for students who showed elevated school spirit and preferred campuses with dynamic social atmospheres along with tuition costs re-emerging as a significant issue.

The analysis revealed that, although campus environment and net cost maintained their importance, there were additional considerations that influenced student enrollment that shifted

over time. Schools looking to increase out-of-state student numbers need to consider modifying their recruitment messages and tailor strategies specifically for out-of-state students, and emphasize different aspects like academic resources, housing options, student involvement opportunities, or athletic programs.

Implications for Institutions

Building on both the findings of this study and prior college choice research, these insights have significant implications for institutional policy, recruitment strategies, and student support services. These recommendations are particularly relevant for public four-year institutions like Collinsville University. Administrators must recognize that institutional fit and institutional characteristics are interconnected—while students assess an institution based on how well it meets their individual needs (their institutional fit), campus leadership can actively enhance institutional characteristics to better align with student priorities.

From an enrollment management perspective, transparent and competitive financial aid packages must be prioritized, particularly for out-of-state students (Burrs, 2020). Given that net cost remained a consistent deterrent across multiple years but fluctuated in importance, it is essential to provide students with clear and consistent messaging about available scholarships, tuition incentives, and financial support resources. Evaluating and reshaping targeted merit-based aid programs can help attract high-achieving students who might otherwise enroll elsewhere (DesJardins, 2006).

For out-of-state students, recruitment teams must highlight the total campus experience, emphasizing residential life, athletics, and student engagement opportunities as key enrollment drivers (Bouchet et al., 2017). The increasing importance of residence halls, athletic reputation, and social reputation suggested that outreach strategies should strategically market on-campus

housing options, school spirit, and student organizations to attract students from different regions (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2021; Vulperhorst et al., 2020). Campus leadership should showcase modern, well-maintained residence halls through virtual tours, student testimonials, and personalized housing assignments for admitted students, ensuring that prospective students can envision themselves living and thriving on campus. Marketing materials should also showcase amenities such as updated residence halls, community-building programs, and living-learning communities designed to foster academic and social engagement (Albright & Schwanke, 2021; Brown, 2010; Hossler & Litten, 1993).

Similarly, with athletic reputation emerging as a major enrollment driver, campus leadership and recruitment teams should leverage sports culture to attract out-of-state students. Recruiters can promote game-day traditions, student tickets, and tailgating experiences through targeted social media campaigns, alumni engagement videos, and interactive recruitment events. Providing exclusive game-day visits for prospective students and integrating athletic events into campus tours can help out-of-state applicants connect with the university's spirit and pride (Greenough, 2003; Hebb, 2024; Okerson, 2016; Schuette, 2024).

Beyond athletics, the increasing significance of social reputation suggests that students are looking for a vibrant, socially active campus with diverse extracurricular offerings (Pond, 2021). Recruitment efforts would benefit from highlighting student organizations, leadership opportunities, and cultural events by featuring student ambassadors, social media takeovers, and personalized outreach from current students in similar interest groups (Hebb, 2024; Hoover, 2010; Okerson, 2016). Developing regional alumni networks or virtual peer connections would allow prospective out-of-state students to hear directly from students who made the transition to campus from other states (Rodriguez & Rosario-Ramos, 2021).

Given the emphasis on academic reputation, recruitment efforts should leverage student success stories, high-profile alumni achievements, and national rankings in order to appeal to out-of-state students (D'Silva, 2020). Campus marketing teams can create targeted digital campaigns showcasing career success rates, internship pipelines, and faculty research to reassure students that choosing their institution will provide both a strong academic foundation and a rich social experience. Additionally, recruitment efforts should prioritize enhancing personalized strategies, such as regional events, digital outreach tailored to prospective students' interests, and interactive platforms for admitted students, all aimed at fostering a sense of belonging before students even arrive on campus (D'Silva, 2020; Hartley & Morpew, 2008).

Evaluating campus infrastructure investments that enhance student satisfaction and retention is also essential. The increasing importance of residence halls and campus surroundings, as shown in this study and in related research, suggested that housing quality and social integration was a major influence on students, particularly those from out-of-state. Assessing whether residential halls align with student expectations and investing in modernized, well-maintained housing options would help to address these priorities. Expanding student support networks, mentorship programs, and first-year transition initiatives can enhance institutional fit and improve student retention rates, particularly for students moving from outside the region (Bersia et al., 2024; McCarter, 2023; Skahill, M., 2002).

Limitations

The study took place at Collinsville University, which is a large public institution with an extensive athletic program. This potentially limits how results can apply to universities with different institutional characteristics. The general applicability of study results is constrained by regional variations in enrollment factors, such as home proximity and job market opportunities.

The size of an institution, along with its funding structures and academic programs, influences enrollment choices, which emphasizes the necessity for more comprehensive future studies across diverse institutional types. To extend the usefulness of these conclusions to varied higher educational institutions, further analysis through a comprehensive study across multiple institutions should be conducted.

The research examines enrollment patterns at a particular moment, yet its significance might change due to ongoing influences from economic fluctuations and adjustments in higher education financing or new developments on future student choices. The research took place after the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought about substantial changes to higher education systems. The study's findings may have been affected because the pandemic impacted both student enrollment motivations and institutional recruitment and financial aid strategies. The pandemic's short-term effects have faded but its enduring influence on educational policy structures and student enrollment decisions will persistently guide enrollment patterns in future years (Magatef, Abuhussein, & Ashour, 2024). Extended research, monitoring student enrollment patterns across several years, would generate more extensive data about these changing trends.

The analysis also faced a fundamental methodological challenge, as it relied on secondary data sources. The ASPI survey data was originally gathered for institutional research and not designed for this study, which creates a fundamental gap between the researcher and data collection. Using pre-existing survey questions reduced flexibility in adjusting or increasing variables to gather more detailed interpretations. The research might have depended on proxy variables to measure intricate enrollment motivations which possibly compromised interpretation accuracy. Chapter Two highlighted several additional college choice factors that were not

included in the ASPI survey, further underscoring the limitations of the available data. Additionally, a qualitative study incorporating individual interviews and focus groups could provide deeper, more nuanced insights into the college search process. This approach could stand alone or be used to enhance and expand the quantitative survey in future years. Finally, as mentioned, the survey methodology was revised in 2023, limiting students to ranking only ten factors. This change likely influenced variations in decision-making patterns. To ensure consistency across years, future research should implement standardized data collection procedures.

Opportunities for Future Research

This study's results revealed several potential paths for additional research. A broader analysis of demographic changes that includes all student groups as opposed to just out-of-state students might yield more comprehensive insights into enrollment patterns. Interviews or focus group discussions with students from different backgrounds could reveal information about personal motivations as well as institutional features which may influence student decision-making processes. The inclusion of pre-COVID-19 data would enable researchers to compare changes in student decision-making and financial concerns while examining how institutions adapted their recruitment methods during the Pandemic. Using qualitative approaches like longitudinal interviews with students who experienced college search during and after the COVID-19 pandemic would allow researchers to uncover deeper insights into these changes. Analyzing how the "COVID effect" progresses in higher education provides clarity between temporary disruptions and enduring shifts in student priorities.

Future research could introduce new survey factors. The evolution of institutional recruitment and engagement strategies indicates that new elements like mental health resources,

hybrid learning options, and social media influence will likely gain greater importance in how students make educational choices. Future research including these variables will provide a deeper understanding of current enrollment patterns.

Research that examines multiple institutional datasets could enhance the broad applicability of research conclusions. Exploring regional variations alongside public and private institutional distinctions and diverse tuition models would enhance our understanding of college choice determinants throughout different higher education settings. In addition, the growing importance of athletic and social reputation in 2023 suggested a need for research into how athletics and campus culture impact student engagement and enrollment decisions to inform institutional recruitment strategies.

Conclusion

This study provides valuable insight into the factors driving first-year out-of-state students to enroll at Collinsville University, while also exploring how these motivations compare to those of in-state students. The research showed that students evaluated both institutional characteristics and institutional fit when selecting universities, because they considered how well an institution met their personal needs and goals and then how these interacted with academic reputation or program strength. Out-of-state students started their decision-making process by evaluating cost and program quality but later shifted their focus to residence halls and campus surroundings. In-state students, however, continued to focus on affordability and financial aid along with career opportunities, indicating how college choice developed differently across these residency groups.

The research shows that the college choice evolved each year, based on external factors and shifting priorities. Financial considerations shift over time, while the growing significance of

campus life, athletics, and research opportunities continued to shape this transformation.

University administrators need to monitor enrollment trends and adapt to changing student priorities to maintain competitiveness. Regularly evaluating student preferences would enable admissions recruitment teams to improve their methods, allocate resources efficiently and develop campus experiences that address prospective students' needs.

University administrators, enrollment professionals, and policymakers can utilize these insights to help guide their practical decisions. Universities that improve their financial aid transparency, while improving residential experiences and while broadening student engagement through athletics and extracurricular programs will attract a more diverse student body. Admissions recruitment teams must develop targeted outreach programs that align with current enrollment trends and student interests to effectively address evolving demands.

This study creates a foundational research framework that allows subsequent studies to expand upon its findings. Including multiple institutions in the analysis, along with additional variables, such as mental health services, hybrid learning options, and social media influence, will lead to a more complete understanding of current enrollment trends. Future studies must focus on the persistence of current trends and investigate how universities can sustainably adjust their recruitment approaches according to students' changing expectations. When institutions understand what both in-state and out-of-state students require, they can develop adaptable recruitment approaches that are guided by data analysis. Universities that implement careful strategic planning will experience better enrollment results and higher student satisfaction and retention rates, which together support sustainable institutional success.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A 2020 ASPI Survey

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

How many schools did you apply to?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 |
| ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 | |

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20")

How many admitted you?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 |
| ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 | |

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20")

How many offered you financial aid?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ☐ 0 | ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 |
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 |

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20")

At how many schools did you submit a deposit, register for an orientation, or otherwise express an intent to enroll at the institution?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ☐ 0 | ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 |
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 |

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**"

Do you plan to attend Collinsville University in the fall?*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Still deciding

Logic: Hidden unless: (#5 Question **"Do you plan to attend Collinsville University in the fall?"** AND #2 Question **"How many admitted you?"** is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question **"How many schools did you apply to?"**

We'd now like to ask a few questions about the impact of COVID-19 on your enrollment decision.

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #1 Question **"How many schools did you apply to?"**

Has COVID-19 played a role in your enrollment decision?

- () COVID-19 is the main factor in my decision.
 () COVID-19 has played a role but is not the only factor.
 () COVID-19 has not impacted my decision.

Logic: Hidden unless: #7 Question **"Has COVID-19 played a role in your enrollment decision?"** is one of the following answers ("COVID-19 is the main factor in my decision.", "COVID-19 has played a role but is not the only factor.")

In what ways has COVID-19 impacted your decision?

Check all that apply.

- [] Reduction in ability to pay for college
 [] Need to care for family members diagnosed with COVID-19
 [] Uncertainty about the future
 [] Inability to visit college campuses
 [] Concerns about safety on campus
 [] Desire to be closer to home
 [] Desire to take a gap year
 [] Desire to attend a community college

Logic: Hidden unless: #7 Question **"Has COVID-19 played a role in your enrollment decision?"**

Is there anything else you would like to share about the impact of COVID-19?

(open ended)

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question **"How many schools did you apply to?"** is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #2 Question **"How many admitted you?"** is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

Now we'd like to ask you about your experience with several aspects of Collinsville University and [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'].

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question **"How many schools did you apply to?"** is one of the following answers ("1") OR #2 Question **"How many admitted you?"** is one of the following answers ("1"))

Now we'd like to ask you about your experience with several aspects of Collinsville University.

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question **"How many schools did you apply to?"** is one of the following answers ("1","2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20")

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with Collinsville University from your enrollment experience?*

- () Extremely Satisfied

- Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question **"How many schools did you apply to?"** is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20")) AND #2 Question **"How many admitted you?"** is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

- () Extremely Satisfied
- () Satisfied
- () Somewhat Satisfied
- () Neutral
- () Somewhat Unsatisfied
- () Unsatisfied
- () Extremely Unsatisfied

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

	Extrem ely Import ant	Import ant	Somew hat Import ant	Neut ral	Somewh at Unimpor tant	Unimpor tant	Extremel y Unimpor tant
Academic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Opportunities for student research	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Study abroad opportunities/programs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Residence halls/dorms	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Strength in my program area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Liberal arts foundation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Social reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Food on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Practical experience (internships, clinical placements, etc.)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

And how important were these factors in determining your college choice?*

	Extrem ely Import ant	Import ant	Somew hat Import ant	Neut ral	Somewha t Unimport ant	Unimport ant	Extremel y Unimport ant
Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Graduates of my program achieve professional goals	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Participating on an NCAA team	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of co-curricular opportunities related to my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Attending athletic events	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Fitness and recreational facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Facilities available for my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Alumni are successful and well networked	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Athletic facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Athletic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

How would you rate your satisfaction with Collinsville University related to:*

	Extrem ely Satisfie d	Satisfi ed	Somew hat Satisfie d	Neut ral	Somew hat Unsatisf ied	Unsatisf ied	Extrem ely Unsatisf ied
Academic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Social reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Strength in my program area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Liberal arts foundation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Residence halls/dorms	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Food on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Study abroad opportunities/programs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Opportunities for student research	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Practical experience (internships, clinical placements, etc.)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

How would you rate your satisfaction with Collinsville University related to:*

	Extremely Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Extremely Unsatisfied
Alumni are successful and well networked	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Graduates of my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

achieve professional goals							
Facilities available for my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of co-curricular opportunities related to my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Athletic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Athletic facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Fitness and recreational facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Participating on an NCAA team	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Attending athletic events	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

How would you rate your satisfaction with [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] related to:*

	Extremely Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Extremely Unsatisfied
--	----------------------------	------------------	---------------------------	----------------	-----------------------------	--------------------	------------------------------

Study abroad opportunities/programs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Academic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Social reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Strength in my program area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Liberal arts foundation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Opportunities for student research	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Practical experience (internships, clinical placements, etc.)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Residence halls/dorms	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Food on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Logic: Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

How would you rate your satisfaction with [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] related to:*

	Extremely Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied
Athletic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Facilities available for my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of co-curricular opportunities related to my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Alumni are successful and well networked	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Attending athletic events	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Athletic facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Participating on an NCAA team	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Fitness and recreational facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Graduates of my program achieve professional goals	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

In the next section, we'd like to hear how price and financial aid impacted your college choice.

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

Net price is the cost of tuition and fees at that school, minus any need- or merit-based grants or scholarships that you received from the school or other sources. This can also be thought of as your family's out-of-pocket cost, including any student loans.

- ☐ Collinsville University's net price was higher
- ☐ Same
- ☐ Collinsville University's net price was lower
- ☐ Unsure

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #18 Question "Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?" is one of the following answers ("Collinsville University's net price was higher")

How much higher was Collinsville University net price?*

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ <\$1,000 | ☐ \$3,000-\$4,999 | ☐ \$10,000 or more |
| ☐ \$1,000-\$1,999 | ☐ \$5,000-\$6,999 | ☐ Unsure |
| ☐ \$2,000-\$2,999 | ☐ \$7,000-\$9,999 | |

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #18 Question "Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?" is one of the following answers ("Collinsville University's net price was lower")

How much lower was Collinsville University's net price?*

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ <\$1,000 | ☐ \$3,000-\$4,999 | ☐ \$10,000 or more |
| ☐ \$1,000-\$1,999 | ☐ \$5,000-\$6,999 | ☐ Unsure |
| ☐ \$2,000-\$2,999 | ☐ \$7,000-\$9,999 | |

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

Were you offered a merit award at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

A merit award is one that you received based on your academic or co-curricular qualifications, not your financial need.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #21 Question "**Were you offered a merit award at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

What was the value of your merit award?*

☐ <\$5,000

☐ \$15,000-\$19,999

☐ \$30,000-\$34,999

☐ \$5,000-\$9,999

☐ \$20,000-\$24,999

☐ \$35,000 or more

☐ \$10,000-\$14,999

☐ \$25,000-\$29,999

☐ Unsure

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20") AND #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20"))

Did you file a FAFSA at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: (#21 Question "**Were you offered a merit award at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**" is one of the following answers ("No", "Unsure") OR #22 Question "**What was the value of your merit award?**" is one of the following answers ("Unsure"))

What was the total amount of grant funding that you were offered by [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

Grant funding is received based on your financial need, not your academic or co-curricular qualifications. It excludes any merit awards.

☐ None

☐ \$15,000-\$19,999

☐ \$35,000 or more

☐ \$1-\$4,999

☐ \$20,000-\$24,999

☐ Unsure

☐ \$5,000-\$9,999

☐ \$25,000-\$29,999

☐ \$10,000-\$14,999

☐ \$30,000-\$34,999

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: (#21 Question "**Were you offered a merit award at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**" is one of the following answers ("Yes") AND #22 Question "**What was the value of your merit award?**" is not one of the following answers ("Unsure"))

You shared that you received a merit award of [question('value'), id='83']. In addition to this merit award, how much grant funding were you offered by [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

Grant funding is received based on your financial need, not your academic or co-curricular qualifications. It excludes any merit awards.

☐ None

☐ \$10,000-\$14,999

☐ \$25,000-\$29,999

☐ \$1-\$4,999

☐ \$15,000-\$19,999

☐ \$30,000-\$34,999

☐ \$5,000-\$9,999

☐ \$20,000-\$24,999

☐ \$35,000 or more

☐ Unsure

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

What was the tuition price at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ <\$20,000 | ☐ \$30,000-\$34,999 | ☐ \$45,000-\$50,000 |
| ☐ \$20,000-\$24,999 | ☐ \$35,000-\$39,999 | ☐ \$50,000 or more |
| ☐ \$25,000-\$29,999 | ☐ \$40,000-\$44,999 | ☐ Unsure |

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

How important was tuition price in your choice of college?*

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ☐ Extremely Important | ☐ Neutral | ☐ Extremely Unimportant |
| ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat Unimportant | ☐ Unsure |
| ☐ Somewhat Important | ☐ Unimportant | |

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

How would you describe the overall value for the money of attending Collinsville University?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ Extremely High | ☐ Average | ☐ Extremely Low |
| ☐ High | ☐ Low | |

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

And how would you describe the overall value for the money of attending [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ Extremely High | ☐ Average | ☐ Extremely Low |
| ☐ High | ☐ Low | |

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

If cost were not at all a factor, where would you have chosen to enroll?*

- ☐ Collinsville University
- ☐ [question("option value"), id="192", option="11116"]

Communications

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

In this short final section, we'd like to hear about some of your interactions with Collinsville University.

Communications

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

How was your experience with Collinsville University on the following compared to all other institutions you considered?*

	Better	About the Same	Worse	Unsure/Not Applicable
Mail	()	()	()	()
Email	()	()	()	()
Billboards, Facebook ads or other advertising	()	()	()	()
Website	()	()	()	()
Social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.)	()	()	()	()
In-person campus tour	()	()	()	()
Virtual campus tour	()	()	()	()
Virtual information session	()	()	()	()
Other virtual events	()	()	()	()
Visits to my high school	()	()	()	()

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

How did Collinsville University do on the following compared to all other institutions you considered?*

	Better	About the Same	Worse	Unsure/Not Applicable
Showed interest in me	()	()	()	()
Encouraged me to apply	()	()	()	()
Efficient/organized admissions process	()	()	()	()
Efficient/organized financial aid process	()	()	()	()

Coaching staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Financial aid staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Admissions representatives	☐	☐	☐	☐

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**"

What was your reaction to the "Admit" box you received when you were admitted?

- ☐ Positive
 ☐ Negative
☐ Neutral
 ☐ Unsure/Not Applicable

Communications

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: (#1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20") AND #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20"))

Among institutions where you *declined your offer of admission or withdrew your deposit*, did any ask you to reconsider enrolling?*

- ☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ Unsure/Not Applicable

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #34 Question "**Among institutions where you declined your offer of admission or withdrew your deposit, did any ask you to reconsider enrolling?**" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

Did any of those institutions offer you additional grant or scholarship money to enroll?

- ☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ Unsure/Not Applicable

Logic: Hidden unless: #35 Question "**Did any of those institutions offer you additional grant or scholarship money to enroll?**" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

Please describe these offers in more detail below.

(open ended)

Communications

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**"

Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with Collinsville University?

(open ended)

Thank You!

Appendix B 2021 ASPI Survey

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

How many schools did you apply to?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |
| ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 | |

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more")

How many admitted you?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |
| ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 | |

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more")

How many offered you financial aid, including merit awards and/or grant funding?*

Merit awards are based on academic or co-curricular qualifications, not financial need.

Grant funding is based on financial need, not on academic or co-curricular qualifications.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 0 | ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 |
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |

Logic: Hidden unless: (#2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more") AND #3 Question "**How many offered you financial aid, including merit awards and/or grant funding?**")

At how many schools did you submit a deposit, register for an orientation, or otherwise express an intent to enroll at the institution?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 0 | ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 |
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

Do you plan to attend Collinsville University in the fall?*

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ I'm still deciding |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--|

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: (#2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more") AND #5 Question "**Do you plan to attend Collinsville University in the fall?**"))

College Choice & Motivations

We'd now like to ask a few questions about the impact of COVID-19 on your enrollment decision.

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

Has COVID-19 played a role in your enrollment decision?*

- ☐ COVID-19 is the main factor in my decision
- ☐ COVID-19 has played a role but is not the only factor
- ☐ COVID-19 has not impacted my decision
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

Logic: Hidden unless: #7 Question "**Has COVID-19 played a role in your enrollment decision?**" is one of the following answers ("COVID-19 is the main factor in my decision","COVID-19 has played a role but is not the only factor")

In what ways has COVID-19 impacted your decision?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Reduction in ability to pay for college
- ☐ Need to care for family members diagnosed with COVID-19
- ☐ General uncertainty about the future
- ☐ Inability to visit college campuses
- ☐ Concerns about safety on campus
- ☐ Desire to be closer to home
- ☐ Desire to take a gap year
- ☐ Desire to attend a community college
- ☐ Uncertainty about whether colleges will be fully in-person or not

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #6 Question "**If you plan to attend Collinsville University, what was your other top choice school?**"

If you don't plan to attend or are still deciding, where are you most interested in attending at this time?"

Did you submit standardized test score(s) (ACT/SAT) to [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #7 Question "**Has COVID-19 played a role in your enrollment decision?**"

Is there anything else you would like to share about the impact of COVID-19?

(Open Ended)

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more") AND #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more"))

Now we'd like to ask you about your experience with several aspects of Collinsville University and [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'].

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**" is one of the following answers ("1") OR #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("1"))

Now we'd like to ask you about your experience with several aspects of Collinsville University.

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with Collinsville University from your admissions experience?*

- () Extremely Satisfied () Somewhat Satisfied () Somewhat Unsatisfied
 () Satisfied () Neutral () Unsatisfied
 () Extremely Unsatisfied

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more")

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] from your admissions experience?*

- ☐ Extremely Satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Extremely Unsatisfied
☐ Satisfied ☐ Somewhat Unsatisfied
☐ Somewhat Satisfied ☐ Unsatisfied

College Choice & Motivations

How would you rate your satisfaction with Collinsville University related to:*

	Extrem ely Satisfie d	Satisfi ed	Somew hat Satisfie d	Neut ral	Somew hat Unsatisf ied	Unsatidf ied	Extrem ely Unsatisf ied
Academic reputation (strength/rigor of curriculum)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Social reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Strength in my program area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Liberal arts foundation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Residence halls	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Food on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Study abroad opportunities/programs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Opportunities for student research	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Practical experience (internships, clinical placements, etc.)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Diversity on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

How would you rate your satisfaction with Collinsville University related to:*

	Extrem ely Satisfie d	Satisfi ed	Somew hat Satisfie d	Neutr al	Somewh at Unsatisfi ed	Unsatisfi ed	Extreme ly Unsatisfi ed
Alumni are successful and well networked	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Graduates of my program achieve professional goals	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Facilities available for my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of co-curricular opportunities related to my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Athletic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Fitness and recreational facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more")

How would you rate your satisfaction with [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] related to:*

	Extrem ely Satisfie d	Satisfi ed	Somew hat Satisfie d	Neut ral	Somew hat Unsatisf ied	Unsatisf ied	Extrem ely Unsatisf ied
Study abroad opportunities/programs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Academic reputation (strength/rigor of curriculum)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Social reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Strength in my program area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Liberal arts foundation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Opportunities for student research	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Practical experience (internships,	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

clinical placements, etc.)							
Residence halls	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Food on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Diversity on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more")

How would you rate your satisfaction with [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] related to:*

	Extrem ely Satisfie d	Satisfi ed	Somew hat Satisfie d	Neutr al	Somewh at Unsatisfi ed	Unsatisfi ed	Extreme ly Unsatisfi ed
Athletic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Facilities available for my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of co-curricular opportunities related to my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Alumni are successful and well networked	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Fitness and recreational facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Graduates of my program achieve professional goals	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

College Choice & Motivations

Finally, we'd like to understand how important each of these factors has been in determining your college choice:*

	Extremely Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Somewhat Unimportant	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant
Academic reputation (strength/rigor of curriculum)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Opportunities for student research	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Study abroad opportunities/programs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Residence halls	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Strength in my program area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Liberal arts foundation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Social reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Food on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Practical experience (internships, clinical placements, etc.)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Diversity on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

And how important have these factors been in determining your college choice?*

	Extrem ely Import ant	Import ant	Somew hat Import ant	Neut ral	Somewha t Unimpor tant	Unimpor tant	Extremel y Unimpor tant
Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Graduates of my program achieve professional goals	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of co-curricular opportunities related to my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Fitness and recreational facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Facilities available	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

for my program							
Alumni are successful and well networked	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Athletic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

In the next section, we'd like to hear how price and financial aid has impacted your college choice.

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

Net price is the cost of tuition and fees at that school, minus any need- or merit-based grants or scholarships that you received from the school or other sources. This can also be thought of as your family's out-of-pocket cost, including any student loans.

() Collinsville University's net price was higher

() Collinsville University's net price was lower

() Same

() Unsure

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "**Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**" is one of the following answers ("Collinsville University's net price was higher")

How much higher was Collinsville University's net price?*

() <\$1,000

() \$3,000-\$4,999

() \$10,000 or more

() \$1,000-\$1,999

() \$5,000-\$6,999

() Unsure

() \$2,000-\$2,999

() \$7,000-\$9,999

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "**Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**" is one of the following answers ("Collinsville University's net price was lower")

How much lower was Collinsville University's net price?*

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ <\$1,000 | ☐ \$3,000-\$4,999 | ☐ \$10,000 or more |
| ☐ \$1,000-\$1,999 | ☐ \$5,000-\$6,999 | ☐ Unsure |
| ☐ \$2,000-\$2,999 | ☐ \$7,000-\$9,999 | |
-

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #19 Question "**Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**"

Were you offered gift aid at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

Gift aid includes any need- or merit-based grants or scholarships received from [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] or other sources. Gift aid excludes loans.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Unsure |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|

Logic: Hidden unless: #22 Question "**Were you offered gift aid at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

What was the value of your gift aid?*

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ <\$5,000 | ☐ \$15,000-\$19,999 | ☐ \$30,000-\$34,999 |
| ☐ \$5,000-\$9,999 | ☐ \$20,000-\$24,999 | ☐ \$35,000 or more |
| ☐ \$10,000-\$14,999 | ☐ \$25,000-\$29,999 | ☐ Unsure |
-

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "**Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**"

Did you file a FAFSA at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Unsure |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
-

Pricing & Financial Aid

How would you describe the overall value for the money of attending Collinsville University?*

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ Extremely High | ☐ Average | ☐ Extremely Low |
| ☐ High | ☐ Low | |

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "**Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**"

And how would you describe the overall value for the money of attending [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ Extremely High | ☐ Average | ☐ Extremely Low |
| ☐ High | ☐ Low | |

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "**Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?**"

If cost were not at all a factor, where would you have chosen to enroll?*

- | |
|--|
| ☐ Collinsville University |
| ☐ [question("option value"), id="192", option="11116"] |
-

Communications

In this short final section, we'd like to hear about some of your interactions with Collinsville University.

Communications

How was your experience with Collinsville University on the following compared to all other institutions you considered?*

	Better	About the Same	Worse	Unsure/Not Applicable
Mail	()	()	()	()
Email	()	()	()	()
Physical advertising (billboards, mailings, etc.)	()	()	()	()
Website	()	()	()	()
Social media pages/digital advertising (Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, etc.)	()	()	()	()
In-person campus experiences	()	()	()	()
Online/Virtual campus experiences	()	()	()	()
Online chat with campus representative	()	()	()	()
Visits to my high school	()	()	()	()

How did Collinsville University do on the following compared to all other institutions you considered?*

	Better	About the Same	Worse	Unsure/Not Applicable
Showed interest in me	()	()	()	()
Encouraged me to apply	()	()	()	()
Efficient/organized admissions process	()	()	()	()
Efficient/organized financial aid process	()	()	()	()
Coaching staff	()	()	()	()
Financial aid staff	()	()	()	()
Admissions representatives	()	()	()	()

Communication related to COVID-19	☐	☐	☐	☐
-----------------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

What was your reaction to the “admit” box you received when you were admitted?

- ☐ Positive
 ☐ Negative
☐ Neutral
 ☐ Unsure/Not Applicable

Communications

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: (#1 Question "**How many schools did you apply to?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more") AND #2 Question "**How many admitted you?**" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more"))

Among institutions where you **declined their offer of admission or withdrew your deposit**, did any ask you to reconsider enrolling?*

- ☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ Not Applicable/Unsure

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #31 Question "**Among institutions where you declined their offer of admission or withdrew your deposit, did any ask you to reconsider enrolling?**" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

Did any of those institutions offer you additional grant or scholarship money to enroll?*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

Logic:Hidden unless: #32 Question "**Did any of those institutions offer you additional grant or scholarship money to enroll?**" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

Please describe those offers in more detail below.

(Open Ended)

Communications

Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with Collinsville University?

(Open Ended)

Thank You!

Appendix C 2022 ASPI Survey

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

How many schools did you apply to?*() 1

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |
| ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 | |

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers

("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

How many admitted you?*() 1

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |
| ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 | |

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers

("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

How many offered you financial aid, including merit awards and/or grant funding?*

Merit awards are based on academic or co-curricular qualifications, not financial need.

Grant funding is based on financial need, not on academic or co-curricular qualifications.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 0 | ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 |
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |

Logic: Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers

("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

AND #3 Question "How many offered you financial aid, including merit awards and/or grant funding?")

At how many schools did you submit a deposit, register for an orientation, or otherwise express an intent to enroll at the institution?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 0 | ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 |
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

Do you plan to attend Collinsville University in the fall?*

☐ Yes

- ☐ No
☐ I'm still deciding
-

College Choice & Motivations

We'd now like to ask a few questions about the impact of test-optional policies on your enrollment decision. Test-optional institutions allow students to choose whether to submit standardized test scores (ACT/SAT).

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

What role did an institution's test-optional policy play in your enrollment decision?*

Test-optional institutions allow students to choose whether to submit standardized test scores (ACT/SAT).

- ☐ I only considered institutions where I could apply without submitting a test score
☐ Test-optional policies played a role but were not the only factor
☐ Test-optional policies did not impact my decision
☐ Unsure

Logic: Hidden unless: #7 Question "What role did an institution's test-optional policy play in your enrollment decision?" is one of the following answers ("I only considered institutions where I could apply without submitting a test score", "Test-optional policies played a role but were not the only factor")

In what ways have test-optional policies impacted your decision?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Reduction in stress associated with taking and affording standardized tests
☐ Allowed me to more accurately represent my academic abilities and be on an even playing-field with other students
☐ I received a larger scholarship than anticipated if I had to submit test scores
☐ Made it easier to apply to multiple institutions
☐ Other - write in: _____
-

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #6 Question "If you plan to attend Collinsville University, what was your other top choice school?"

If you don't plan to attend or are still deciding, where are you most interested in attending at this time?"

Did you submit standardized test score(s) (ACT/SAT) to [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
-

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #7 Question "What role did an institution's test-optional policy play in your enrollment decision?" is one of the following answers ("I only considered institutions where I could apply without submitting a test score", "Test-optional policies played a role but were not the only factor")

Is there anything else you would like to share about the impact of test-optional policies?

(open ended)

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more"))

Now we'd like to ask you about your experience with several aspects of Collinsville University and [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'].

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("1")) OR #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("1"))

Now we'd like to ask you about your experience with several aspects of Collinsville University.

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with Collinsville University from your admissions experience?*

- () Extremely Satisfied () Neutral () Extremely Unsatisfied
() Satisfied () Somewhat Unsatisfied
() Somewhat Satisfied () Unsatisfied

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] from your admissions experience?*

- ☐ Extremely Satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Extremely Unsatisfied
☐ Satisfied ☐ Somewhat Unsatisfied
☐ Somewhat Satisfied ☐ Unsatisfied

College Choice & Motivations

How would you rate your satisfaction with Collinsville University related to:*

	Extrem ely Satisfie d	Satisfi ed	Somew hat Satisfie d	Neut ral	Somew hat Unsatisf ied	Unsatisf ied	Extrem ely Unsatisf ied
Academic reputation (strength/rigor of curriculum)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Social reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Strength in my program area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Liberal arts foundation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Residence halls	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Food on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Study abroad opportunities/programs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Opportunities for student research	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Practical experience (internships, clinical placements, etc.)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Diversity on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

How would you rate your satisfaction with Collinsville University related to:*

	Extrem ely Satisfie d	Satisfi ed	Somew hat Satisfie d	Neutr al	Somewh at Unsatisfi ed	Unsatisfi ed	Extreme ly Unsatisfi ed
Alumni are successful and well networked	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Graduates of my program achieve professional goals	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Facilities available for my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of co-	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

curricular opportunities related to my program							
Athletic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Fitness and recreational facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

How would you rate your satisfaction with [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] related to:*

	Extrem ely Satisfie d	Satisfi ed	Somew hat Satisfie d	Neut ral	Somew hat Unsatisf ied	Unsatisf ied	Extrem ely Unsatisf ied
Study abroad opportunities/programs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Academic reputation (strength/rigor of curriculum)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Social reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Strength in my program area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Liberal arts foundation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Opportunities for student research	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Practical experience (internships, clinical placements, etc.)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Residence halls	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Food on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Diversity on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

How would you rate your satisfaction with [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] related to:*

	Extrem ely Satisfie d	Satisfi ed	Somew hat Satisfie d	Neutr al	Somewh at Unsatisfi ed	Unsatisfi ed	Extreme ly Unsatisfi ed
Athletic reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Facilities available for my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of co-curricular opportunities related to my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Alumni are successful and well networked	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Fitness and recreational facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Graduates of my program achieve	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

professional goals							
Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

College Choice & Motivations

Finally, we'd like to understand how important each of these factors has been in determining your college choice:*

	Extremely Important	Important	Some what Important	Neutral	Somewhat Unimportant	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant
Academic reputation (strength/rigor of curriculum)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Opportunities for student research	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Study abroad opportunities/programs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Residence halls	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Strength in my program area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Liberal arts foundation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Social reputation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Food on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Practical experience (internships, clinical placements, etc.)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Diversity on campus	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

And how important have these factors been in determining your college choice?*

	Extrem ely Import ant	Import ant	Somew hat Import ant	Neut ral	Somewha t Unimpor tant	Unimpor tant	Extremel y Unimpor tant
Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Graduates of my program achieve professional goals	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of co-curricular opportunities related to my program	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Fitness and recreational facilities	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Facilities available for my program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Alumni are successful and well networked	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Athletic reputation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

In the next section, we'd like to hear how price and financial aid has impacted your college choice.

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

Net price is the cost of tuition and fees at that school, minus any need- or merit-based grants or scholarships that you received from the school or other sources. This can also be thought of as your family's out-of-pocket cost, including any student loans.

- ☐ Collinsville University's net price was higher
 ☐ Collinsville University's net price was lower
☐ Same
 ☐ Unsure

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?" is one of the following answers ("Collinsville University's net price was higher")

How much higher was Collinsville University's net price?*

- ☐ <\$1,000
 ☐ \$3,000-\$4,999
 ☐ \$10,000 or more
☐ \$1,000-\$1,999
 ☐ \$5,000-\$6,999
 ☐ Unsure
☐ \$2,000-\$2,999
 ☐ \$7,000-\$9,999

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?" is one of the following answers ("Collinsville University's net price was lower")

How much lower was Collinsville University's net price?*

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ <\$1,000 | ☐ \$3,000-\$4,999 | ☐ \$10,000 or more |
| ☐ \$1,000-\$1,999 | ☐ \$5,000-\$6,999 | ☐ Unsure |
| ☐ \$2,000-\$2,999 | ☐ \$7,000-\$9,999 | |
-

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #19 Question "Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?"

Were you offered gift aid at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

Gift aid includes any need- or merit-based grants or scholarships received from [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] or other sources. Gift aid excludes loans.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Unsure |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|

Logic: Hidden unless: #22 Question "Were you offered gift aid at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

What was the value of your gift aid?*

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ <\$5,000 | ☐ \$15,000-\$19,999 | ☐ \$30,000-\$34,999 |
| ☐ \$5,000-\$9,999 | ☐ \$20,000-\$24,999 | ☐ \$35,000 or more |
| ☐ \$10,000-\$14,999 | ☐ \$25,000-\$29,999 | ☐ Unsure |
-

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?"

Did you file a FAFSA at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Unsure |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
-

Pricing & Financial Aid

How would you describe the overall value for the money of attending Collinsville University?*

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ Extremely High | ☐ Average | ☐ Extremely Low |
| ☐ High | ☐ Low | |

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?"

And how would you describe the overall value for the money of attending [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ Extremely High | ☐ Average | ☐ Extremely Low |
| ☐ High | ☐ Low | |

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "Was the net price higher, lower, or the same at Collinsville University than at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?"

If cost were not at all a factor, where would you have chosen to enroll?*

- | |
|--|
| ☐ Collinsville University |
| ☐ [question("option value"), id="192", option="11116"] |
-

Communications

In this short final section, we'd like to hear about some of your interactions with Collinsville University.

Communications

How was your experience with Collinsville University on the following compared to all other institutions you considered?*

	Better	About the Same	Worse	Unsure/Not Applicable
Mail	()	()	()	()
Email	()	()	()	()
Physical advertising (billboards, mailings, etc.)	()	()	()	()
Website	()	()	()	()
Social media pages/digital advertising (Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, etc.)	()	()	()	()
In-person campus experiences	()	()	()	()
Online/virtual campus experiences	()	()	()	()
Online chat with campus representative	()	()	()	()
Visits to my high school	()	()	()	()

How did Collinsville University do on the following compared to all other institutions you considered?*

	Better	About the Same	Worse	Unsure/Not Applicable
Showed interest in me	()	()	()	()
Encouraged me to apply	()	()	()	()
Efficient/organized admissions process	()	()	()	()
Efficient/organized financial aid process	()	()	()	()
Coaching staff	()	()	()	()
Financial aid staff	()	()	()	()
Admissions representatives	()	()	()	()
Communication related to COVID-19	()	()	()	()

What was your reaction to the "Welcome to Campus" box you received when you were admitted?

- ☐ Positive
 ☐ Negative
☐ Neutral
 ☐ Unsure/Not Applicable

Communications

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

Were the communications you received while applying to Collinsville University helpful in guiding you through the application process?*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure/Not Applicable

Logic: Hidden unless: #31 Question "Were the communications you received while applying to Collinsville University helpful in guiding you through the application process?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

What types of communications were most helpful?*

- ☐ Email
☐ Texts
☐ Phone calls
☐ Printed/Mailed materials (Viewbook, material from admissions recruiter, Welcome to Campus box, etc.)
☐ Live events hosted on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok)
☐ Other - write in: _____

Logic: Hidden unless: #31 Question "Were the communications you received while applying to Collinsville University helpful in guiding you through the application process?" is one of the following answers ("Yes", "No")

Please describe your experience with communications in more detail below.

(open ended)

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers

("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers

("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more"))

Among institutions where you *declined their offer of admission or withdrew your deposit*, did any ask you to reconsider enrolling?*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not Applicable/Unsure

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #34 Question "Among institutions where you declined their offer of admission or withdrew your deposit, did any ask you to reconsider enrolling?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

Did any of those institutions offer you additional grant or scholarship money to enroll?*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

Logic: Hidden unless: #35 Question "Did any of those institutions offer you additional grant or scholarship money to enroll?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

Please describe those offers in more detail below.

(open ended)

Communications

Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with Collinsville University?

(Open ended)

Thank you!

Appendix D 2023 ASPI Survey

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

How many schools did you apply to?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |
| ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 | |

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers

("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more")

How many admitted you?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |
| ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 | |

Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers

("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more")

How many offered you financial aid, including merit awards and/or grant funding?*

Merit awards are based on academic or co-curricular qualifications, not financial need.

Grant funding is based on financial need, not on academic or co-curricular qualifications.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 0 | ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 |
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |

Logic: Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers

("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more")

AND #3 Question "How many offered you financial aid, including merit awards and/or grant funding?")

At how many schools did you submit a deposit, register for an orientation, or otherwise express an intent to enroll at the institution?*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 0 | ☐ 7 | ☐ 14 |
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 8 | ☐ 15 |
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 9 | ☐ 16 |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 10 | ☐ 17 |
| ☐ 4 | ☐ 11 | ☐ 18 |
| ☐ 5 | ☐ 12 | ☐ 19 |
| ☐ 6 | ☐ 13 | ☐ 20 or more |

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

Do you plan to attend Collinsville University in the fall?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I'm still deciding

Logic: Hidden unless: (#5 Question "Do you plan to attend Collinsville University in the fall?" is one of the following answers ("Yes") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more"))

What was your other top choice school?

Logic: Hidden unless: (#5 Question "Do you plan to attend Collinsville University in the fall?" is one of the following answers ("No", "I'm still deciding") AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers

("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more"))

Other than Collinsville University, where are/were you most interested in attending?

Logic: Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers

("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

AND #5 Question "Do you plan to attend Collinsville University in the fall?")

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

AND #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers

("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more"))

Now we'd like to ask you about your experience with several aspects of Collinsville University and [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'].

Logic: Hidden unless: (#1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?" is one of the following answers ("1") OR #2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("1"))

Now we'd like to ask you about your experience with several aspects of Collinsville University.

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with Collinsville University from your admissions experience?*

☐ Extremely Satisfied

☐ Neutral

☐ Extremely Unsatisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Somewhat Unsatisfied

☐ Somewhat Satisfied

☐ Unsatisfied

Logic: Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers

("2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9", "10", "11", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20 or more")

AND #6 Question "Select your answer using the drop-downs below.")

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'] from your admissions experience?*

☐ Extremely Satisfied

☐ Neutral

☐ Extremely Unsatisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Somewhat Unsatisfied

☐ Somewhat Satisfied

☐ Unsatisfied

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

Which of the factors listed below were important in determining your college choice?

Select up to 10 factors.

- ☐ Academic reputation (strength/rigor or curriculum)
- ☐ Social reputation
- ☐ Strength in my program area
- ☐ Liberal arts foundation
- ☐ Residence halls
- ☐ Food on campus
- ☐ Study abroad opportunities/programs
- ☐ Opportunities for student research
- ☐ Practical experience (practicums, internships, co-ops, experiential learning, clinical placements, etc.)
- ☐ Diversity on campus
- ☐ Alumni are successful and well networked
- ☐ Out-of-pocket cost to attend the college (after grants and scholarships)
- ☐ Graduates of my program achieve professional goals
- ☐ Facilities available for my program
- ☐ Availability of co-curricular opportunities related to my program
- ☐ Athletic reputation
- ☐ Fitness and recreational facilities
- ☐ Campus surroundings (neighborhood, town, or city)
- ☐ Honors programs
- ☐ Academic support & resources
- ☐ Campus safety
- ☐ Admissions test policy (ACT/SAT)

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #9 Question "Which of the factors listed below were important in determining your college choice?"

Piping: Piped From Question 9. (Which of the factors listed below were important in determining your college choice?)

For the factors you selected, how important was each in determining your college choice?*

	Extremely Unimporta nt	Unimporta nt	Somewhat Unimporta nt	Neutra l	Somewh at Importa nt	Importa nt	Extreme ly Importa nt
--	------------------------------	-----------------	-----------------------------	-------------	-------------------------------	---------------	--------------------------------

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: #9 Question "Which of the factors listed below were important in determining your college choice?"

Piping: Piped From Question 9. (Which of the factors listed below were important in determining your college choice?)

When thinking about Collinsville University, how would you rate your satisfaction with each of those factors?*

	Extremely Unsatisfie d	Unsatisfie d	Somewhat Unsatisfie d	Neutra l	Somewha t Satisfied	Satisfie d	Extremel y Satisfied
--	------------------------------	-----------------	-----------------------------	-------------	---------------------------	---------------	----------------------------

College Choice & Motivations

Logic: Hidden unless: ((#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more") AND #6 Question "Select your answer using the drop-downs below.") AND #9 Question "Which of the factors listed below were important in determining your college choice?")

Piping: Piped From Question 9. (Which of the factors listed below were important in determining your college choice?)

And when thinking about [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116'], how would you rate your satisfaction with each of those factors?*

	Extremely Unsatisfie d	Unsatisfie d	Somewhat Unsatisfie d	Neutra l	Somewha t Satisfied	Satisfie d	Extremel y Satisfied
--	------------------------------	-----------------	-----------------------------	-------------	---------------------------	---------------	----------------------------

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Hidden unless: #1 Question "How many schools did you apply to?"

In the next section, we'd like to hear how price and financial aid have impacted your college choice.

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists. Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more") AND #6 Question "Select your answer using the drop-downs below.")

How did the net price at Collinsville University compare to the net price at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

Net price is the cost of tuition and fees at that school, minus any need- or merit-based grants or scholarships that you received from the school or other sources. This can also be thought of as your family's out-of-pocket cost, including any student loans.

- ☐ Collinsville University's net price was much higher
- ☐ Collinsville University's net price was slightly higher
- ☐ Same
- ☐ Collinsville University's net price was slightly lower
- ☐ Collinsville University's net price was much lower
- ☐ Unsure

Pricing & Financial Aid

How would you describe the overall value for the money of attending Collinsville University?*

- ☐ Extremely High
- ☐ High
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Extremely Low

Logic: Hidden unless: #10 Question "How did the net price at Collinsville University compare to the net price at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?"

And how would you describe the overall value for the money of attending [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

☐ Extremely High
☐ High

☐ Average
☐ Low

☐ Extremely Low

Logic: Hidden unless: #10 Question "How did the net price at Collinsville University compare to the net price at [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?"

If cost were not at all a factor, where would you have chosen to enroll?*

☐ Collinsville University

☐ [question("option value"), id="192", option="11116"]

Did scholarships play a role in your college decision?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Moderately

Pricing & Financial Aid

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

Among institutions where you declined their offer of admission or withdrew your deposit, did any ask you to reconsider enrolling?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Applicable/Unsure

Logic: Hidden unless: #15 Question "Among institutions where you declined their offer of admission or withdrew your deposit, did any ask you to reconsider enrolling?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

Did any of those institutions offer you additional grant or scholarship money to enroll?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Communications

Logic: Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more") AND #6 Question "Select your answer using the drop-downs below.")

In this short final section, we'd like to hear about some of your interactions with Collinsville University.

Communications

Logic: Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more") AND #6 Question "Select your answer using the drop-downs below.")

How was your experience with Collinsville University on the following compared to [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

	Better	About the Same	Worse	Unsure/Not Applicable
Mail	☐	☐	☐	☐
Email	☐	☐	☐	☐
Physical advertising (billboards, mailings, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Website	☐	☐	☐	☐

Social media pages/digital advertising (Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
In-person campus experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online/virtual campus experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visits to my high school	☐	☐	☐	☐
Texting	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online chat with campus representative	☐	☐	☐	☐

Logic: Hidden unless: (#2 Question "How many admitted you?" is one of the following answers ("2","3","4","5","6","7","8","9","10","11","12","13","14","15","16","17","18","19","20 or more") AND #6 Question "Select your answer using the drop-downs below.")

How did Collinsville University do on the following compared to [question('option value'), id='192', option='11116']?*

	Better	About the Same	Worse	Unsure/Not Applicable
Showed interest in me as a person	☐	☐	☐	☐
Encouraged me to apply	☐	☐	☐	☐
Efficient/organized admissions process	☐	☐	☐	☐
Efficient/organized financial aid process	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coaching staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Financial aid staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Admissions representatives	☐	☐	☐	☐
One Stop representatives	☐	☐	☐	☐

What was your reaction to the overall experience when you were admitted?*

- ☐ Positive
 ☐ Negative
☐ Neutral
 ☐ Unsure/Not Applicable

Were the communications you received while applying to Collinsville University helpful in guiding you through the application process?*

- ☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ Unsure/Not Applicable

What types of communication were most helpful?*

- ☐ Email
☐ Texts

- ☐ Phone Calls
☐ Printed Mailed materials (Viewbook, material from admissions recruiter, Welcome to Campus box, etc.)
☐ Live events hosted on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok)
☐ Other - Write In: _____

What was your reaction to the “Welcome to Campus” box you received when you were admitted?

- ☐ Positive ☐ Negative
☐ Neutral ☐ Unsure/Not Applicable

Other than official sources, where did you look for information about colleges to help you make your decision?*

Select all that apply.

- ☐ U.S. News & World Report ☐ College Confidential ☐ College Prowler
☐ Princeton Review ☐ NICHE
☐ Other - Write In: _____
-

Communications

Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with Collinsville University?
(Open Ended)

Thank you!

Appendix E Institutional Approval to Dataset

From: [Rucker, Lauren](#)
To: [Stansell, Laura J](#)
Subject: ASPI Data Request Approval
Date: Monday, December 9, 2024 9:08:32 AM

Hi Laura,

Thank you for your interest in researching out of state college choice using our Admitted Student & Parent Insight Survey. After speaking with our Executive Leadership Team, we have approved your request and are working with the vendor to get this information to you. This dataset will include 5 years of data for all admitted students, as well as some basic demographic information (gender, GPA, test score, residency, race/ethnicity, and academic major). These files have been sent to you through our SFTP account (vault.utk.edu).

If you have any further questions, please let me know.

Go VOLS!

Lauren Rucker



Lauren Rucker

Chief Strategy Officer, Enrollment Management

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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Knoxville, TN 37996

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Appendix F IRB Approval



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

December 19, 2024

James Patrick Biddix
UTK - Coll of Education, Hlth, & Human - Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Re: UTK IRB-24-08586-XM
Study Title: Driving Enrollment Amidst Change: Exploring College Choice of Out-of-State Students

Dear James Patrick Biddix:

The Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) reviewed your application for the above referenced project and determined that your application is eligible for **exempt** review under 45 CFR 46.101, pursuant to Category 4ii: Secondary research for which consent is not required: Secondary research uses of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens, if information, which may include information about biospecimens, is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, the investigator does not contact the subjects, and the investigator will not re-identify subjects.

Your application has been determined to comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Therefore, this letter constitutes full approval of your application (version 1.3) as submitted, including Documents Acknowledged:

- UT ASPI Survey Instrument 2024 - Student-1 - (Version 1.0)
- UT ASPI Survey Instrument 2023 - Student-1 - (Version 1.0)
- UT ASPI Survey Instrument 2022 - Student-1 - (Version 1.0)
- UT ASPI Survey Instrument 2021 - Student-1 - (Version 1.0)
- UT ASPI Survey Instrument 2020 - Student-1 - (Version 1.0)
- ASPI Data Request Approval - (Version 1.0)

that have been acknowledged by the IRB. You are approved to enroll a maximum of 10000 participants. Approval of this study will be valid from 12/19/2024 - 12/18/2027.

Any revisions in the approved application, consent forms, instruments, recruitment materials, etc., must be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subjects or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Approval of this study is valid for three years. If a Study Update Form is not submitted in iMedRIS and approved by the IRB prior to 12/18/2027, the study will be automatically closed by the IRB and no further study activity will be permitted until a

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement
1534 White Avenue Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
865-974-7697 865-974-7400 fax irb.utk.edu

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Study Update Form is received. Please be sure to also submit a Study Closure Request (Form 7) when all research activity, including data analysis, has been completed.

Sincerely,



Lora Beebe, Ph.D., PMHNP-BC, FAAN
Chair

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement
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Appendix G All Variables Initial Regression Model

All Variables Initial Regression Model

	2021		2021		2022		2023		Cumulative	
	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value
Residency	.178	<.001	.207	<.001	.206	<.001	.180	<.001	.197	<.001
Academically gifted	1.372	<.001	1.422	<.001	1.219	.059	1.434	<.001	1.333	<.001
Gender	.913	.309	1.030	.742	1.080	.465	1.143	.182	1.010	.853
Pell Eligible	.680	<.001	.682	<.001	.709	.007	-	-	.683	<.001
Underrepresented Minority	1.854	<.001	1.257	.037	1.955	<.001	.893	.387	1.634	<.001
Academic Reputation	.791	.303	1.040	.857	1.500	.108	1.229	.052	1.124	.369
Alumni Success	1.128	.275	.855	.238	.877	.392	.894	.287	.976	.738
Athletic Reputation	1.795	<.001	1.204	.053	1.441	.002	1.774	<.001	1.435	<.001
Campus Surroundings	1.211	.206	1.164	.384	1.350	.147	1.328	.002	1.242	.027
Cocurricular Opps	1.166	.173	.975	.848	.999	.996	1.038	.831	1.050	.522
Diversity on Campus	1.373	<.001	.898	.247	.987	.905	.977	.858	.956	.362
Fitness Facilities	1.257	.017	1.326	.010	1.162	.251	1.074	.583	1.244	<.001
Food On Campus	.936	.481	1.105	.341	1.404	.006	1.242	.100	1.078	.211
Lib Arts Foundation	.732	<.001	.825	.024	.705	<.001	.445	<.001	.736	<.001
Net Cost	.862	.328	.717	.049	1.100	.654	.861	.101	.853	.106
Practical Experience	1.110	.514	.916	.631	.775	.240	1.019	.848	.976	.818
Program Facilities	1.200	.264	1.464	.071	1.917	.013	1.287	.021	1.365	.006
Program Grad Success	.801	.127	.913	.613	1.146	.517	.881	.332	.894	.253
Program Strength	1.021	.926	.918	.741	.400	.005	1.101	.321	.797	.128
Res Halls	1.263	.030	1.808	<.001	1.271	.117	1.085	.444	1.424	<.001
Social Reputation	.913	.398	.978	.863	.875	.360	1.360	.002	.900	.135
Student Research Opps	1.089	.410	1.039	.755	1.162	.272	.955	.683	1.049	.473
Study Abroad	.918	.340	.921	.376	1.065	.562	1.051	.617	.959	.445
Constant	1.025	.941	.948	.855	.572	.168	1.071	.656	.908	.608

Appendix H All Variables Final Regression Model

All Variables Final Regression Model

	2020		2021		2022		2023		Cumulative 2020-2023	
	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value	Odds Ratio	p value
In State/OOS	0.181	<.001	0.208	<.001	0.207	<.001	0.181	<.001	0.197	<.001
High Ability	1.380	<.001	1.415	<.001	1.199	0.078	1.400	<.001	1.332	<.001
Pell Eligible	0.690	<.001	0.681	<.001	0.705	0.006			0.679	<.001
Underrepresented Minority	1.876	<.001	1.290	0.019	1.969	<.001			1.645	<.001
Academic Reputation							1.231	0.039		
Alumni Success			0.820	0.099						
Athletic Reputation	1.760	<.001	1.205	0.048	1.517	<.001	1.797	<.001	1.411	<.001
Campus Surroundings							1.337	<.001	1.208	0.049
Cocurricular Opps	1.191	0.091								
Diversity on Campus	1.364	<.001								
Fitness Facilities	1.236	0.022	1.351	0.005					1.249	<.001
Food On Campus					1.450	0.002	1.325	0.018		
Lib Arts Foundation	0.727	<.001	0.791	0.003	0.719	<.001	0.432	<.001	0.723	<.001
Net Cost			0.706	0.035			0.858	0.089	0.835	0.063
Program Facilities			1.398	0.067	2.196	<.001	1.311	0.011	1.276	0.015
Program Strength					0.473	0.014				
Res Halls	1.256	0.024	1.837	<.001	1.347	0.047			1.432	<.001
Social Reputation							1.349	0.002		
Constant	0.876	0.438	0.896	0.647	0.781	0.477	1.157	0.275	0.793	0.135

VITA

Laura Janette Stansell was born in Salem, Massachusetts. Throughout her childhood she relocated multiple times between Massachusetts, Maine, South Carolina, and Virginia, eventually graduating from Lynchburg Christian Academy in Lynchburg, Virginia. After high school she attended Liberty University where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Business Finance and Marketing. Laura attended graduate school at Regent University, where she earned a Master of Business Administration and Master of Education. While there, she began working in college recruitment and academic advising. In 2002, she moved to Knoxville, Tennessee and began working for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in Undergraduate Admissions. Her first year she was a ‘road warrior’, and her travel territory included Ohio, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, and Alabama. It was during this time that her interest in out-of-state recruitment began. From there, she moved into campus visits & events, where she served as the Associate Director of Visits & Events, spending close to two decades developing strategy for effective campus visits and events. Laura was admitted to the PhD. in Higher Education Administration program in fall 2015. In 2024, Laura was awarded the Nick Kovalakides Outstanding Member Award from the Collegiate Information & Visitor Services Association (CIVSA), which recognizes one member each year for their devotion and support of the association. At the time of completing her doctorate, Laura served as the Director of One Stop Student Services at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.