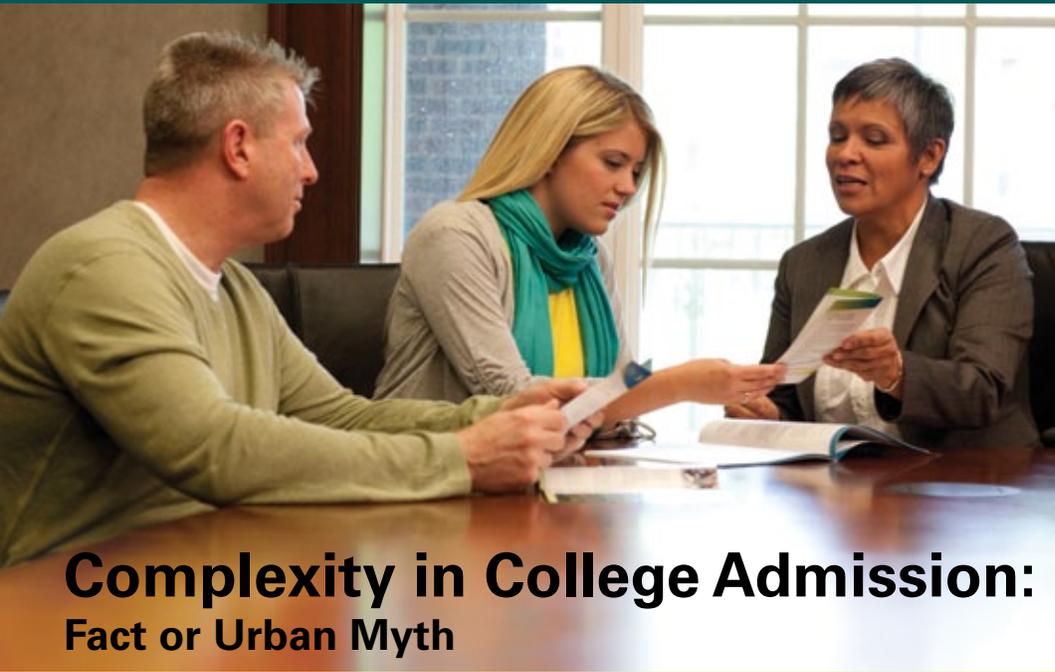


*Research Findings of Parent and
Student Perceptions of Complexity
in College Admission*

*Commissioned by the Task Force
on Admissions in the 21st Century*



Complexity in College Admission: Fact or Urban Myth

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Research Findings of Parent and Student
Perceptions of Complexity in College Admission
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October 2010

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Introduction

In September 2007, the College Board formed the Task Force on Admissions in the 21st Century in response to a request from the Guidance and Admission Assembly Council (GAA Council) to more closely examine the high-school-to-college transition process. Each spring, at the conclusion of the college admission cycle, there is much discussion in the media and professional circles about the problems experienced by all involved in the transition.

Students and parents complained about the lack of transparency in the process; the confusing nature of the application process; how difficult it was to secure good information about college choice and how the outcomes were unpredictable and sometimes appeared to defy logic. School counselors expressed similar concerns regarding process and outcomes, and they empathized with their students. Colleges and universities lamented the increased pressure to review a growing number of applications from students who appeared to be filing larger numbers of applications. The students also seemed to be driven to a higher level of self-promotion beyond what was required in the application process, as a response to exert more control over what they (the students) perceived to be an increasingly complex, unpredictable and opaque process.

The GAA Council was concerned that these conditions were a potential threat to access to higher education for all students. The intent of this study is to determine which part or parts of the application process are complex and cause the most significant levels of confusion and anxiety for students. The intent is also to determine if outcomes vary across subgroups of the college-bound population.

For 18 months, the Task Force on Admissions in the 21st Century examined many factors and influences that make up the secondary-school-to-college transition. The

topic of complexity came to the forefront throughout the discussions. The outcome of the task force was an overarching framework for the profession to approach solutions as a profession “at its best.” It held that the school-to-college transition should be seen as a learning opportunity, “At its best, admission is about ‘fit’ between student and institution.” Anything that interfered with that process, including unnecessary complexity, was undesirable and a barrier to access.

The task force also set forth seven action commitments, including the need to create professional development materials that addressed 10 core areas of concern, among them “complexity in the admission and financial aid process.”

A research design was developed to explore the basic elements of the actual college application process (as distinct from financial aid, which was being explored by a separate and simultaneous quantitative research effort). The focus of the research, described in detail in the following section, was to measure student and parent perceptions of the complexity of the process and to segment the research group by geography, level of family experience with postsecondary education, race/ethnicity and income. This report contains the finding of this first phase of the research.

The results of the research will be used to inform the profession — principally admission officers and school counselors — and help shape the responses to the needs of students and their parents with a clearer understanding of their experience with the school-to-college transition process. The findings provide a better understanding of which student and parent subgroups find the process the most complex and why, and how it can be made less complex to remove potential barriers to access to higher education for all students.

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this research is to better understand how complicated or confusing the college application process is for students applying to college; to determine if this process is more complicated for various subgroups; and to examine its impact on college access and enrollment.

The study surveyed high school **students** who applied to college and the **parents** of students who applied to college to examine the following:

- Usefulness of resources provided by high schools to assist with the college application process
- How complicated it was to decide to which colleges students should apply
- How confusing various aspects of the college application process were (e.g., submitting test scores, completing the application form, knowing who to ask if they had questions)
- Whether students completed additional tasks as part of the college application process (e.g., writing essays, interviews) and how difficult these tasks were for students
- Who students and parents turned to for help if they had questions about the college application process
- How stressful the college application process was
- Whether there were any differences in perceptions of the college application process based on the type of school to which students applied (e.g., public or private school)
- Whether there were any differences in perceptions of the college application process among subgroups of interest (e.g., first-generation students, low-income students)

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center retained the independent market research firm of Anderson, Niebuhr & Associates Inc. to conduct the research.

Executive Summary

This section of the report provides a summary of the core findings of the research, organized by the eight core areas from the student and parent questionnaires. Key supporting data tables, charts, graphs and additional commentary can be found in the following section of this report.

I. Getting Information About Colleges

- **Seventy percent of all high schools offered classes or seminars to students to help explain the college application process**, although about one-third did not. These types of classes were even more common in the western region of the country. Of those **students** who attended such a class, most found it helpful in clarifying the college application process.
- **About three-quarters of parents reported that their child's high school offered presentations or seminars to parents to explain the college application process to them.** Of those **parents** who attended such a presentation, most found it helpful, especially lower-income parents and parents whose child applied to five or more colleges.

II. Application Process: General

- **The decision as to which colleges students would apply was generally made by the student, or jointly between the student and the family. Fifty-seven percent of students** were more likely to think that they were completely in control of the decision, whereas 50 percent of **parents** were more likely to think that it was a joint decision.
- **Sixty-one percent of first-generation college students were the most likely to believe that the decision as to where to apply to college was made entirely on their own.** In addition, lower-income **parents** were more likely to believe that the decision of where to apply to college was made entirely by their child.
- **Deciding where to apply to college was moderately complicated for students; difficulty regarding where**

to apply appeared to increase as students added more and more schools to their lists. The decision was also slightly more difficult for those in the western region compared to those located elsewhere.

- **About half of students completed a common application form when applying to college, and this form made the process notably simpler for most who used one.**
- **Knowing how to send test scores and high school transcripts to colleges was fairly clear to students.** However, those **students** in the western region found these tasks slightly more confusing.

III. Application Process: Schools to Which Students Applied

- **On average, students applied to about four colleges or universities.** About one-third applied to five schools or more, while a similar percentage reported applying to only one or two.
- **Students most frequently applied to public schools and in-state schools, with considerably fewer applying to private schools and out-of-state schools.** First-generation students were more likely to apply to in-state and public colleges; those from high-income families were more likely to apply to out-of-state and private colleges.
- **There was greater variability regarding the size of schools to which students applied, although a majority reported applying to large schools.**

IV. Application Process: Features of the Application Process

- **Overall, most respondents indicated that applying to college was a fairly simple process for students.** However, **parents** of children who applied to five or more schools indicated that the process was slightly more complex for their children.

- **Most students completed all their application materials online**, with very few completing forms on paper.
- **When asked about specific aspects of the college application process, most students found them to be fairly clear to understand**, most notably knowing how to find and complete application forms, knowing application deadlines, knowing if they took the right high school classes for admission, knowing what materials were required to apply and if they submitted all required materials.
- **Knowing how admission decisions were made was the most confusing aspect of the college application process for respondents**, followed by being able to find information they needed on college websites and knowing who to contact at the college if they had questions. However, it should be noted that all of these were still fairly clear to respondents.
- **A majority of respondents reported that writing essays and getting letters of recommendation were required as part of their college application process.** More **students** from the eastern region, compared to those elsewhere in the country, indicated that they wrote essays and obtained letters of recommendation as part of their application process. Regardless of location, most said these tasks were fairly simple for them.
- **A sizeable number of students also applied for admission to specific colleges within a university.** Interviews with admission staff and submitting samples of high school course work were less common. When asked how complicated these additional tasks were, most rated them as relatively simple.

V. Application Process: By School Type and Size

- **Overall, applying to college appears to be a clear and simple process for most students, regardless of their income level, geographic location or first-**

generation status. There were, however, differences based on the type of school to which students applied (e.g., public or private, small or large).

VI. Sources of Help During the College Application Process

- **Students relied most heavily on their parents and high school counselors for help with the college application process.** However, **students** of first-generation status and lower-income **students** were *less* likely to receive help from their parents compared to **students** who had at least one parent who attended college. First-generation and lower-income **students** were also more likely to receive a lot of help from other resources, such as high school counselors and teachers (39 percent versus 25 percent), and friends, (27 percent versus 17 percent) during the process.
- **About half of parents believed that they provided a lot of help to their child during the college application process.** However, about 2 in 10 believed that they provided only a little help to their child.
- **When parents had questions about the college application process, they most frequently visited the college's website;** about half spoke with their child's school counselors or talked to college admission staff. Of those who utilized these resources, most found them helpful. Lower-income **parents** were more likely to talk to their child's high school teachers compared to those who earn more. Higher-income parents were more likely than other parents to visit a college's website and to talk to college admission staff.

VII. Overall Perceptions of the College Application Process

- **Overall, it was moderately stressful for students to apply to college.** The more colleges **students** applied to, the more stressful the experience was for them. **Parents** appear to have slightly underestimated how stressful the college application process was for their children.

- **The primary stressor for students regarding the college application process was different applications having different requirements.** Other **students** said that being worried about deadlines and trying to balance applying to college with typical high school life are stressful to them.
- **A sizeable majority of students and parents were confident that they or their child applied to the right colleges,** with those in the midwestern/southern region expressing the highest level of confidence.
- **When specifically asked how the college application process could be simplified, respondents most frequently said that the process was already easy and self-explanatory.** Some **students** mentioned it would be helpful for colleges to provide better instructions or step-by-step guides, and to make their websites more informative and user-friendly.

VIII. Parents' Experiences with the College Application Process

- **In general, the college application process was fairly simple for parents.** However, lower-income **parents** reported slightly greater confusion about the process.
- **College-educated parents were split on their perceptions regarding whether the college application process has become simpler or more complicated since they themselves applied.** However, **parents** who had children enrolled in private schools were more likely to believe that the process had become more complicated.

- **While relatively simple, the college application process was moderately stressful for parents.** The more colleges their child applied to, the more stressful **parents** perceived the process to be. **Parents** in the midwestern/southern region experienced the least amount of stress. The most frequently mentioned stressors for parents were financial in nature (e.g., application fees, FAFSA).

IX. Demographic Summary

- **At the time of this survey, most respondents reported that they or their child had already been admitted to a college or university.** Even though a sizeable majority of first-generation and lower-income **students** reported that they had already been admitted to a college, they were less likely to have been admitted compared to their counterparts who had wealthier parents and who were *not* first-generation students.
- **Most students and parents were using the Internet daily or at least a couple of times a week,** although lower-income **parents** and those parents with first-generation students accessed it less frequently.
- **Roughly half of respondents reported that they or their child was a first-generation student.** About one-quarter reported a parental household income of less than \$40,000.
- **Nearly all respondents reported taking the SAT®;** considerably fewer had taken the ACT.

Research Method

Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High school seniors who have applied to and are planning on enrolling in a four-year college in the fall.• Parents of high school seniors who have applied to and are planning on enrolling in a four-year college in the fall and who helped their child at least a little with the application process.• Populations split into eastern, western and midwestern/southern regions.
Number of Completed Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 600 student surveys (200/region)• 300 parent surveys (100/region)
Response Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students overall: 82 percent• Parents overall: 81 percent
Data Collection Dates	March 10 through April 27, 2010
Data Collection Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Telephone data collection.• Respondents were mailed a letter from the College Board to inform them about the purpose of the study.• Quotas set to ensure representation from lower-income/first-generation respondents.
Questionnaire Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anderson-Niebuhr developed the questionnaires in consultation with the College Board representatives.• Separate surveys designed for student and parent respondents.• Pretest surveys conducted with both parents and students.
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Descriptive statistics were compiled for closed-ended questions.• Open-ended questions were coded and grouped for reporting.• Comparisons were conducted to analyze differences in responses based on the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whether respondent is a parent or student• First-generation student status• Number of schools to which student applied• Geographic region• Whether the student attended a public or private high school• Student's GPA• Parental income• Comparisons were also conducted to analyze differences based on the types of colleges to which students applied:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public or private institution• Small (fewer than 4,000 undergraduates), medium (4,000 to 9,999 undergraduates) or large (10,000 undergraduates or more)

Note: Comparisons were conducted excluding "don't know" responses.

Summary of Findings

This section of the report presents selected findings based on **student** and **parent** responses. Results are displayed in figures, followed by bulleted points describing the main findings.

Selected statistically significant differences are reported in tables in this section under the heading *Other Findings*.

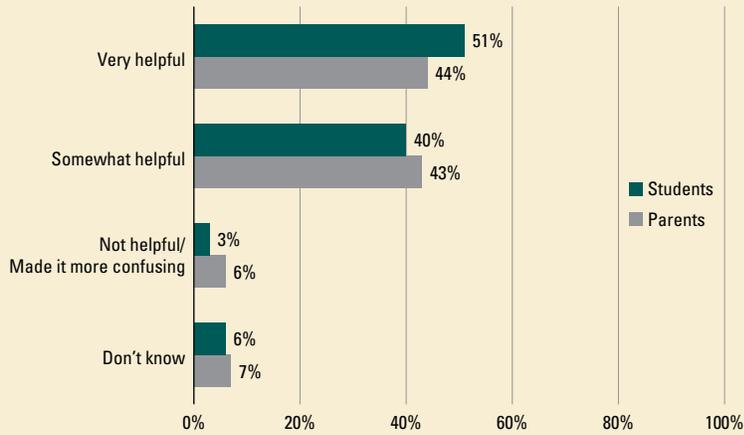
The full data set can be accessed on the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center website.

I. Getting Information About Colleges

One of the primary goals of the research was to determine at what stage of the application process students and parents believe complexity or difficulty begins to manifest itself. In addition, the research was interested in determining if there were actions or activities that either diminished or elevated feelings of anxiety. An early stage of the process was to gather information about college choice and the application process. This section of the report suggests that when offered, programs designed specifically to provide such information are regarded as extremely valuable and helpful. Schools that offered even basic information sessions were given high praise by respondents.

Overall, 70 percent of students said that their high school offered a class or seminar to teach students how to find information about colleges and universities and how to apply for admission.

Figure 1. How Helpful High School Courses or Seminars Were in Clarifying the College Admission Process



Q2. (Students)/Q2. (Parents) How helpful or not helpful was this class in clarifying the college application process to you [your child]?

Base: Respondents whose [child's] high school offered classes or seminars about the college admission process. Students: N = 410; Parents: N = 217

- Among those respondents affiliated with a high school that offered classes or seminars about the college application process, most **students** and **parents** said that these classes were *very* or *somewhat helpful* to them or their child.
- Very few respondents said these classes were *not helpful* or that they made the college application process *more confusing*.

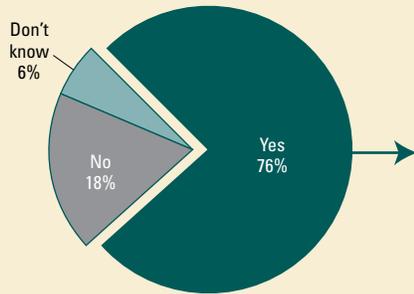
Other Findings — Parents

Parental Income

	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
	% Very helpful		
How helpful high school seminars explaining the college application process were to their child	63%	49%	40%

- **Parents** who earned less than \$40,000 annually were the most likely to have said that high school classes or seminars explaining the college application process were *very helpful* for their child.

Figure 2. Whether High Schools Offer Presentations or Seminars for Parents About the College Application Process



Q3. (Parents) Does your child's high school offer any informational presentations or seminars **for parents** about how to find information about colleges and universities, and how to apply to colleges for admission?
Base: Parents: N = 300

Percentage of Parents Attending Such a Seminar and How Helpful It Was to Them

Percent of respondents attending	Percent of Respondents (N = 228)*
% attended	64%
How helpful the seminar was to them...	Percent of Respondents (N = 145)**
Very helpful	55%
Somewhat helpful	38%
Not helpful/Made it more confusing	6%
Don't know	1%

Q4. (Parents) Did you attend such a presentation or seminar?
*Base: Parents whose child's high school offered an informational presentation for parents about the college application process.
Q5. (Parents) How helpful or not helpful was this seminar or presentation in clarifying the college application process to you?
**Base: Parents who attended an informational seminar about the college application process.

- Three-quarters of **parents** said that their child's high school offers presentations or seminars for **parents** about the college application process.
- Nearly two-thirds of **parents** whose child's high school offered such seminars attended; and, of those who did, more than 9 in 10 found the experience *very* or *somewhat helpful*.

Other Findings — Parents

Parental Income

	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
	% Very helpful		
Helpfulness of presentation about the college application process for parents	75%	67%	37%

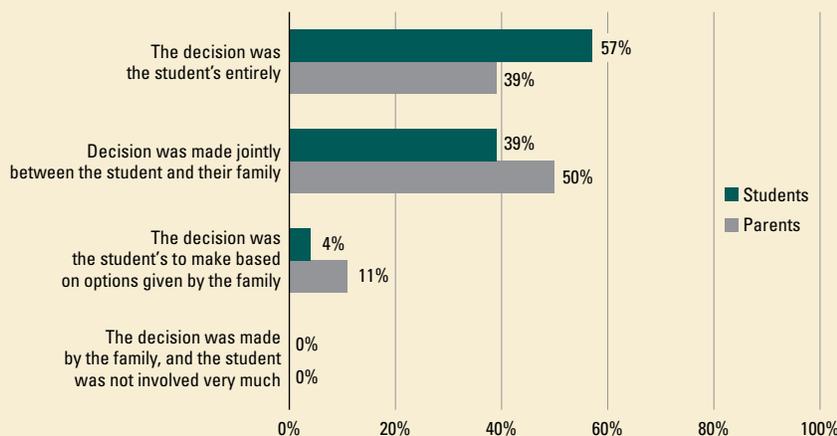
- **Parents** whose children had a GPA of less than 3.25 and those who earned less than \$75,000 were more likely to have found these presentations to be *very helpful* in clarifying the college application process.

II. Application Process: General

The actual process of choosing which schools to apply to — how many and where — was a core focus area of the research. Was complexity found in the early stages of college selection or decision making about where to apply, or did it manifest itself later on in the actual process of filling out and submitting applications and other records (standardized test scores, etc.)? The research was also interested in determining who (student, parents, others) played a role in helping to decide how to navigate this portion of the process and in determining if there were differences among the respondents based on that variable. The findings here suggest that students feel a high degree of ownership of the process but that parents express a higher level of interest and ownership of the process than students afford them. **Irrespective of the level of involvement of parents, both groups did *not* think the process of determining where to apply, or how many schools to apply to, was very complex.**

The research also explored the physical process of submitting applications and other required information. **The findings suggest that there is almost universal use of some form of a “common application” or electronic version of such application instrument that diminishes potential complexity.** Colleges and universities also received high marks for developing clear, concise and easy-to-access information on their websites regarding the process. There was some variation in these findings based on type of secondary school attended by the student.

Figure 3. How Families Make Decisions Regarding to Which Colleges or Universities Students Should Apply



Q3. (Students)/Q6. (Parents) Please tell me which of the following statements most accurately describes how the decision was made about which colleges and universities you [your child] would apply to.
Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- When asked how decisions were made in the family about which colleges or universities students should apply to, more than half of **students** said the decision was entirely their own; about 4 in 10 said the decision was made jointly by themselves and their parents.
- Conversely, half of **parents** said that the decision about where their child should apply was a joint decision; fewer said the decision was their child’s entirely.
- Relatively few **parents** and **students** said that the decision about where to apply to college was made by the student, with options given by the parents; not a single respondent said the decision was made exclusively by the parents.

Other Findings — Students

First-Generation Status

	1st-Generation Student	Not a 1st-Generation Student
% choice was student’s entirely		
How the decision of where to apply to college was made	61%	51%
% choice was made jointly by the student and the family		
How the decision of where to apply to college was made	36%	43%

- **Students** who are of **first-generation** status are more likely to have said that the decision of where to attend college was entirely their own. In contrast, more respondents who were **not first-generation students** said the decision was made jointly by themselves and their family.

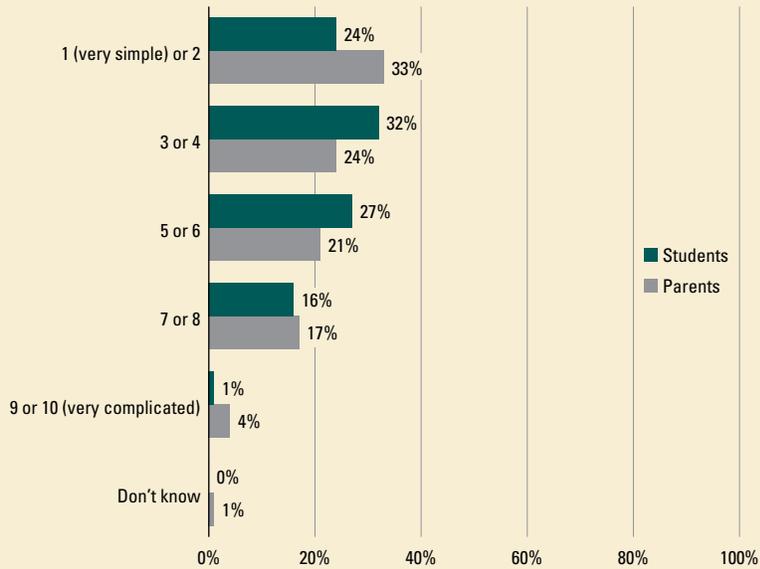
Other Findings — Parents

Parental Income

	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
% Choice was student’s entirely			
How the decision of where to apply to college was made	46%	44%	32%

- **Parents** who earned less than \$75,000 annually were more likely to have said the decision of where to attend college was their child’s entirely.

Figure 4. How Complicated It Was for Students to Decide *Where* to Apply to College



Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Students	4.21 (2.13)	4.00
Parents	4.02 (2.54)	3.00

Q4. (Students)/Q7. (Parents) Overall, how complicated or not complicated was it for you [your child] to decide which colleges or universities to apply to? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very simple" and 10 being "very complicated."
Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (very simple) to 10 (very complicated) how complicated it was for students to decide where to apply to college.
- In general, both **students** and **parents** believed that it was fairly simple for students to decide where to apply to college, with more than half of respondents giving a complexity rating of 4 or less.
- However, 17 percent of **students** and more than 1 in 5 **parents** gave a rating of 7 or higher on the complexity scale.
- On average (mean), both **students** and **parents** rated the complexity of deciding where to apply to college at just over 4 on the scale of 1 to 10.

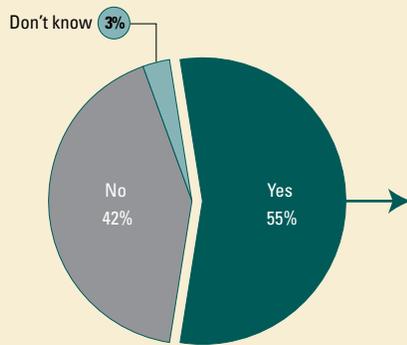
Other Findings — Students

Geographic Region

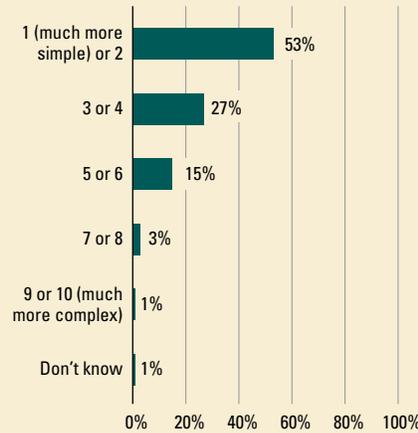
	Eastern	Western	Midwestern/Southern
	Mean (standard deviation)		
How complicated it was to decide where to apply to college	3.98 (2.07)	4.52 (2.04)	4.12 (2.24)

- The decision of where to apply to college was considered more complicated among **students** living in the **western** region compared to those in the **eastern** region.

Figure 5. Whether Students Completed a Universal or Common Application Form



Whether a Universal or Common Application Form Made the Application Process More Simple or More Complex



Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Students	2.76 (1.88)	2.00

Q5. (Students): When applying to colleges and universities, did you ever complete a *universal or common application form*, which is a single application form that you could submit to multiple colleges or universities?
Base: Students: N = 600

Q6. (Students): Did having a universal application form make the application process more simple or more complex? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being much more simple and 10 being much more complex.
Base: Students who completed a common application form: N = 330

- Just over half of **students** said that they completed a universal or common application form when applying to colleges or universities.
- Of those who did, a sizeable number of students indicated that having a common form made the application process more simple, with a mean rating of 2.76 on a scale of 1 (much more simple) to 10 (much more complex).

Other Findings — Students

Number of Colleges to Which Students Applied

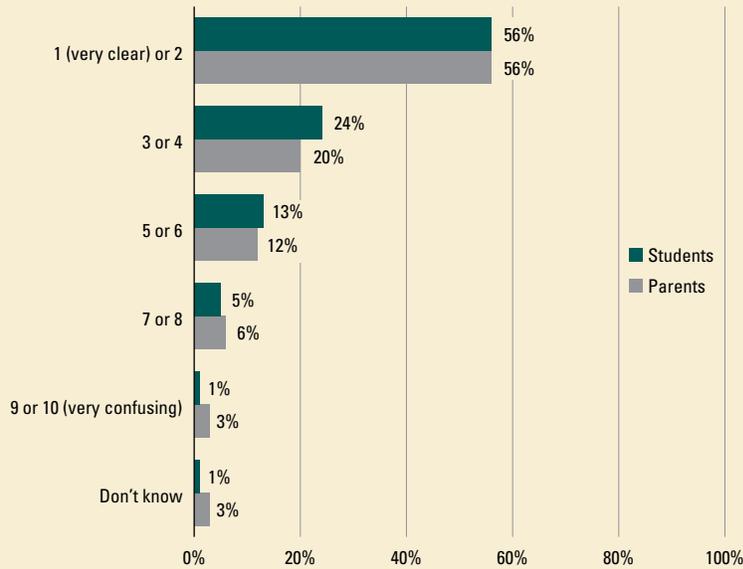
	1–2 Schools	3–4 Schools	5+ Schools
	% Yes		
Completed a common application form	42%	51%	72%

Student's GPA

	3.24 or Lower	3.25–3.74	3.75 or Higher
	% Yes		
Completed a common application form	45%	60%	62%

- The more colleges to which **students** applied, the more likely it was that they completed a common application form; those with a GPA of 3.25 or greater were also more likely to have completed such a form during the application process.

Figure 6. How Confusing It Was for Students to Know How to Send SAT® or ACT Scores to Colleges or Universities



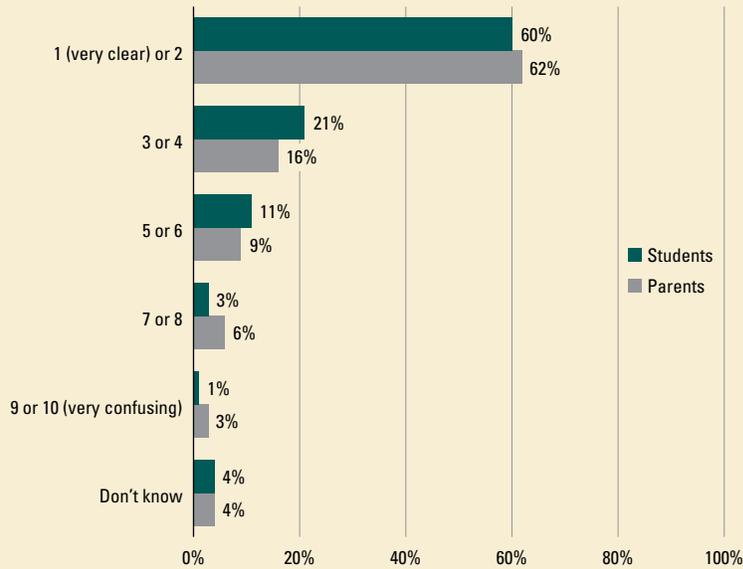
Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Students	2.69 (1.94)	2.00
Parents	2.80 (2.25)	2.00

Q7a. (Students)/Q8a. (Parents) Overall, how confusing or not confusing was it for you [your child] to do the following? Please use a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being “very clear” and 10 being “very confusing”: Knowing how to send test scores, such as SAT or ACT scores, to colleges?

Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- Overall, a majority of **students** and **parents** believed that the process of knowing how to send SAT and ACT scores to schools was clear. More than half in each group gave a rating of 1 or 2 on a 1 (very clear) to 10 (very confusing) scale, with mean ratings of 2.69 and 2.80, respectively.

Figure 7. How Confusing It Was for Students to Know How to Send High School Transcripts to Colleges or Universities



Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Students	2.47 (1.89)	2.00
Parents	2.61 (2.26)	2.00

Q7b. (Students)/Q8b. (Parents) Overall, how confusing or not confusing was it for you [your child] to do the following? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “very clear” and 10 being “very confusing”: Sending high school transcripts to colleges? Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- In addition, most **students** and **parents** reported that knowing how to send high school transcripts to colleges or universities was clear, with about 6 in 10 of both students and parents giving a rating of 1 or 2 on a scale of 1 (very clear) to 10 (very confusing) (Figure 7). Mean ratings were 2.47 and 2.61, respectively.

Other Findings — Students

Geographic Regions

	Eastern	Western	Midwestern/Southern
	Mean (standard deviation)		
How confusing it was to send high school transcripts to colleges	2.24 (1.80)	2.91 (2.05)	2.29 (1.76)

- **Students** in the **western** region reported the most confusion regarding how to send their high school transcripts to colleges.

Other Findings — Parents

Type of High School Child Attends

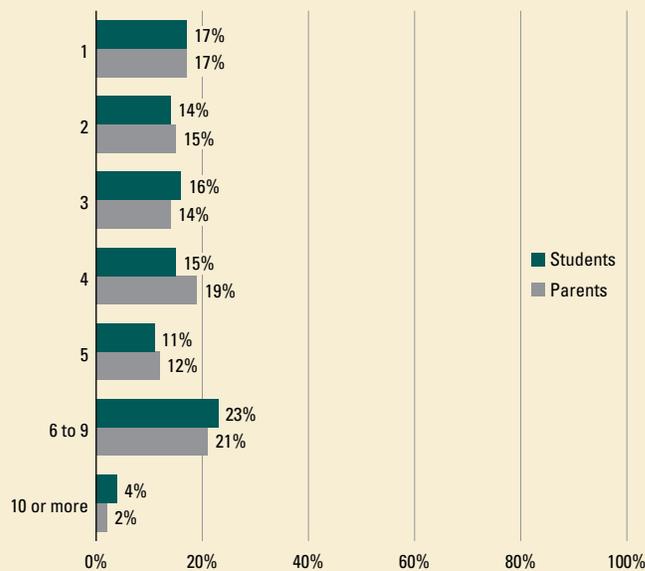
	Child Attends <i>Public</i> High School	Child Attends <i>Private</i> High School
	Mean (standard deviation)	
How confusing it was for their child to send high school transcripts to colleges	2.71 (2.35)	1.82 (1.29)

- **Parents** whose children attended **public** school reported that their children were more confused about how to send their high school transcripts to colleges compared to **parents** whose children attended **private** school.

III. Application Process: Schools to Which Students Applied

The purpose of this research was to discover whether or not there were different levels of confusion or complexity based on student preferences for school type (public or private), whether or not geography played any role (in-state or out-of-state selections) and if size of institution mattered. These findings were stratified by parental income, with some interesting outcomes.

Figure 8. Number of Colleges or Universities to Which Students Applied

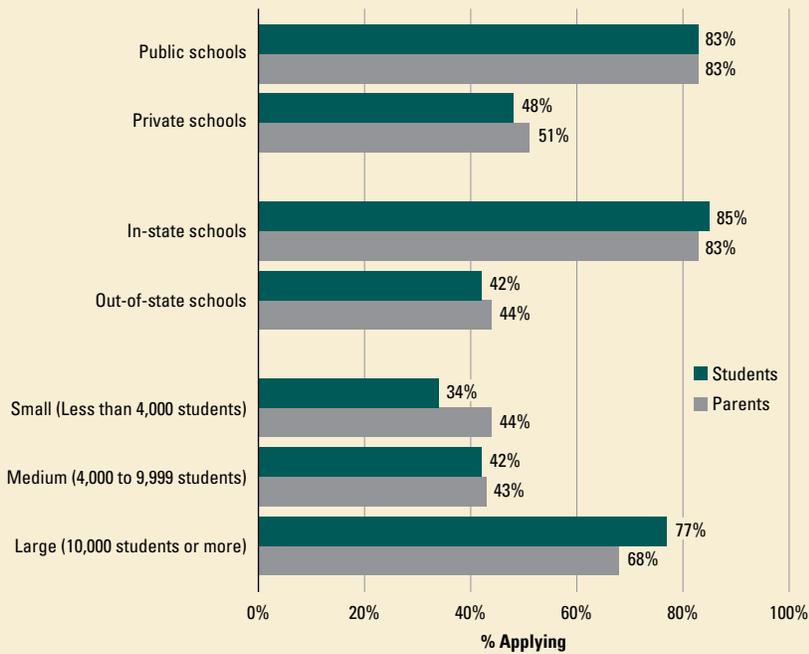


Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Students	4.15 (2.56)	4.00
Parents	3.95 (2.32)	4.00

Q8. (Students)/Q9. (Parents) How many four-year colleges or universities have you [has your child] applied to?
Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- As shown above, the number of colleges or universities to which students applied is quite varied. Approximately one-third of **students** and **parents** reported that they or their child applied to five schools or more. However, a similar percentage reported applying to only one or two schools.
- The average number of schools to which respondents applied was approximately four.

Figure 9. Types of Schools to Which Students Applied*



Q9. (Students)/Q10. (Parents) Please tell me the names of these colleges and universities [to which you/your child] applied; if more than three, please pick your [their] top three choices.

Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

*Respondents could name up to three schools. Schools mentioned were coded based on in-state vs. out-of-state status, public vs. private status, and institution size (based on number of undergraduates enrolled).

- About 8 in 10 **students** and **parents** reported applying to at least one public school; about half reported applying to at least one private school.
- In addition, more than 8 in 10 respondents reported applying to at least one in-state school, while about half as many reported applying to at least one out-of-state school.
- More than two-thirds of **students** and **parents** reported applying to at least one large school; more than one-third reported applying to small- and medium-sized schools.

Other Findings — Students

First-Generation Status

	1st-Generation Student	Not a 1st-Generation Student
% Applied to School Type		
In-state college	92%	77%
Out-of-state college	30%	56%
Public college	87%	79%
Private college	41%	57%

- **First-generation students** were more likely to apply to in-state colleges and public schools; more **students** who were **not of first-generation** status applied to out-of-state and private colleges.

Type of High School Attended

	Attend <i>Public</i> High School	Attend <i>Private</i> High School
% Applied to School Type		
In-state college	88%	71%
Out-of-state college	39%	66%
Public college	86%	68%
Private college	46%	66%

- **Students** attending **private** high schools were more likely than those attending **public** high schools to have applied to out-of-state schools and private colleges; **public** school students were more likely to have applied to in-state and public colleges.

Parental Income

	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
% Applied to School Type			
In-state college	92%	88%	78%
Out-of-state college	29%	37%	56%
Private college	39%	52%	52%

- The **greater** their parents' income, the more likely it was that students applied to out-of-state and private colleges.

Other Findings — Parents

First-Generation Status

	1st-Generation Student	Not a 1st-Generation Student
% Applied to School Type		
Out-of-state college	38%	50%
Medium-sized college	52%	36%
Large-sized college	63%	74%

- More **parents** of students who are **not of first-generation status** reported that their child applied to out-of-state and large-sized schools.

Geographic Region

	Eastern	Western	Midwestern/Southern
% Applied to School Type			
Private college	58%	40%	59%
Small-sized college	53%	34%	49%
Medium-sized college	53%	32%	46%
Large-sized college	58%	79%	71%

- **Parents** living in the **eastern** and **midwestern/southern** regions were more likely to have said their child applied to private colleges and to schools of small and medium size.
- In addition, **parents** in the **western** and **midwestern/southern** regions were more likely than those in the **eastern** region to have reported that their child applied to large-sized schools.

Type of High School Child Attends

	Attend <i>Public</i> High School	Attend <i>Private</i> High School
% Applied to School Type		
Out-of-state college	42%	63%
Public college	86%	71%
Private college	48%	74%

- **Parents** of children who attended **private** high schools were more likely to have said their child applied to out-of-state and private schools.

Parental Income

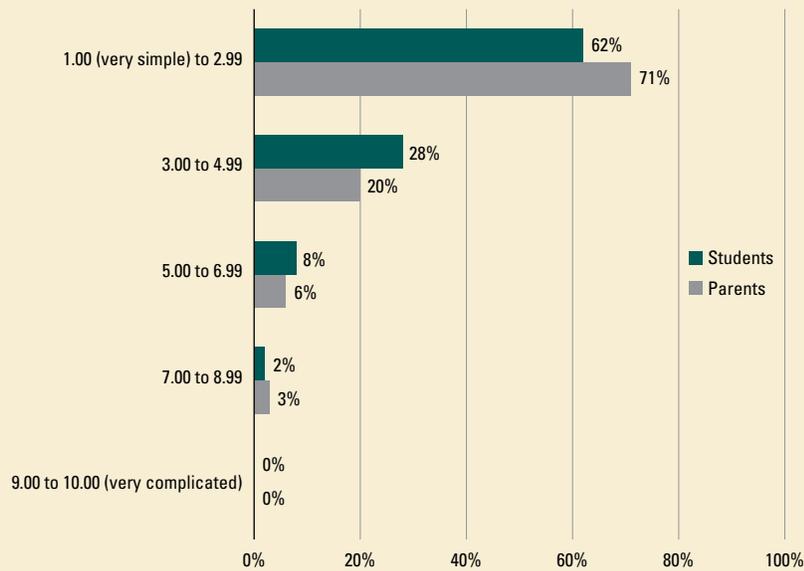
	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
% Applied to School Type			
Out-of-state college	37%	36%	52%

- **Parents** who earned at least \$75,000 annually were the most likely to have said that their child applied to out-of-state schools.

IV. Application Process: Features of the Application Process

The actual component parts of the typical application process (essays, recommendations, interviews, etc.) are examined in this section. The purpose of this research was to determine if any one or a combination of factors appeared to create more difficulty or confusion, and for whom. This section also examines the broader array of tasks that are usually benchmarks for determining if an applicant has a clear understanding of the process (knowing how admission decisions are made, knowing what materials are required for applying, knowing deadlines, etc.) and how it will unfold through its many stages.

Figure 10. Overall Complexity of Applying to Colleges*



Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Students	2.61 (1.49)	2.33
Parents	2.37 (1.58)	2.00

Q10. (Students)/Q11. (Parents) Overall, how complicated or not complicated was it for you [your child] to apply to this college? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very simple" and 10 being "very complicated."

Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 294.

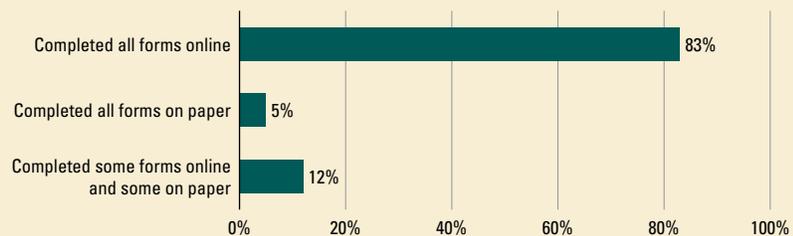
*Ratings are averaged across all colleges/universities named and rated by respondents. Respondents could rate up to three colleges. "Don't know" responses were excluded from analyses.

- In a series of questions, respondents were asked to name up to three colleges or universities to which they (or their child) applied. In addition, respondents were asked to rate how complicated or confusing various aspects of the college application process were for each school named. Because respondents could provide ratings for more than one school, a mean value was calculated for each item, averaging ratings across all schools mentioned.
- Overall, applying to college appears to be a fairly simple process, with **students** and **parents** giving mean complexity ratings of 2.61 and 2.37, respectively, on a scale of 1 (very simple) to 10 (very complex).

Other Findings — Students vs. Parents

- **Students** perceived that it was more difficult to apply to college overall compared to **parents**.

Figure 11. Use of Online Versus Paper Application Materials*



*Based on responses to Q11. (Students) How did you complete the application form for this school?
Base: Students: N = 594

- More than 8 in 10 **students** reported that they completed all application forms online (Figure 11).
- About 1 in 10 completed application forms or parts of forms both online and on paper; few completed forms entirely on paper.

Table 1. How Confusing Aspects of the College Application Process Were (1 = very clear to 10 = very confusing)

Task	Students		Parents	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Knowing how admission decisions are made	3.32 (2.15)	3.00	3.64 (2.60)	3.00
Being able to find information they needed on a college's website	2.68 (1.67)	2.33	2.24 (1.53)	2.00
Knowing who to contact at the college if they had questions	2.62 (1.77)	2.00	2.47 (1.78)	2.00
Knowing if all required materials were submitted	2.53 (1.72)	2.00	2.20 (1.56)	1.67
Completing the application form	2.39 (1.45)	2.00	2.21 (1.50)	1.83
Knowing what materials were required to apply	2.31 (1.57)	2.00	2.04 (1.45)	1.50
Knowing if they/their child took the right high school courses	2.11 (1.47)	1.67	1.98 (1.52)	1.00
Knowing application deadlines	1.94 (1.42)	1.00	1.77 (1.52)	1.00
Being able to find the application form	1.82 (1.12)	1.33	1.81 (1.28)	1.00

Q12. (Students)/Q12. (Parents) Thinking about when you [your child] applied to [college name], please tell me how confusing or not confusing the following were to you [your child]. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very clear" and 10 being "very confusing," or tell me if it did not apply to you.

Base: Students: N = 583–600; Parents: N = 280–295

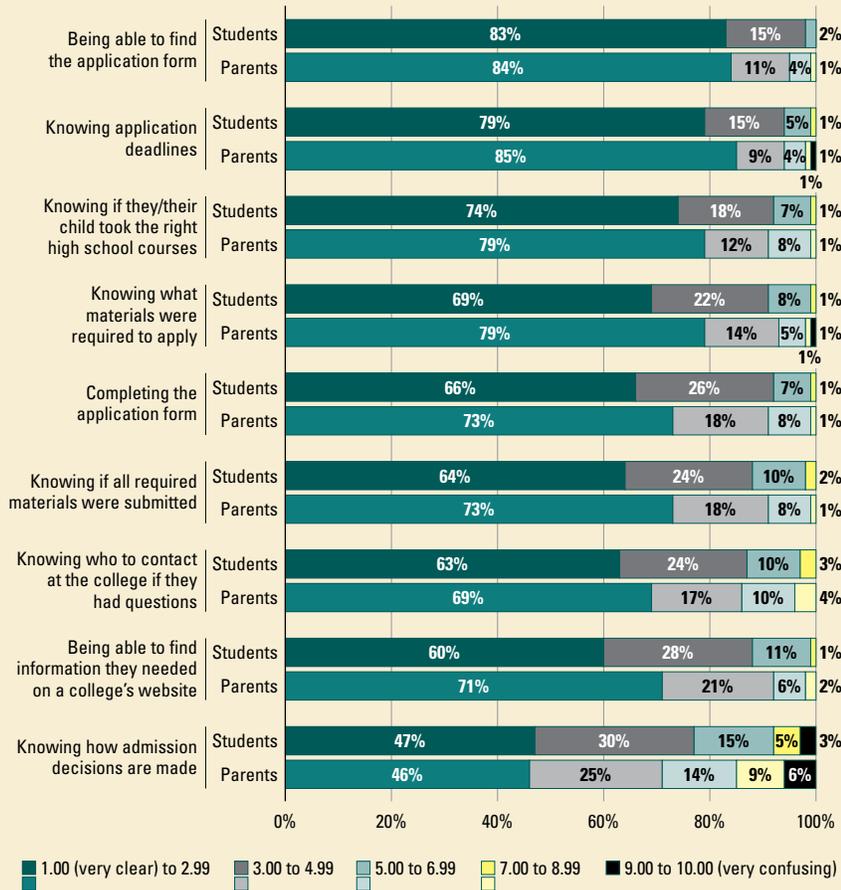
*Ratings are averaged across all colleges/universities named and rated by respondents. Respondents could rate up to three colleges. "Don't know" responses were excluded from analyses.

- Respondents rated how clear or confusing various aspects of the college application process were on a scale of 1 (very clear) to 10 (very confusing). The table above summarizes results using means and the following figure summarizes the data using frequencies.
- In general, both **students** and **parents** believed that most aspects of the college application process were clear. Being able to find the application form and knowing application deadlines were the clearest aspects to respondents.
- The aspects of the college application process most confusing to respondents were:
 - Knowing how admission decisions are made
 - Being able to find the information they needed on the college's website
 - Knowing who to contact at the college if they had questions

However, it should be noted that in all of these cases, the mean rating is low, suggesting that all these tasks are generally clear to respondents.

Complexity in College Admission: Fact or Urban Myth

Figure 12. How Confusing Aspects of the College Application Process Were*



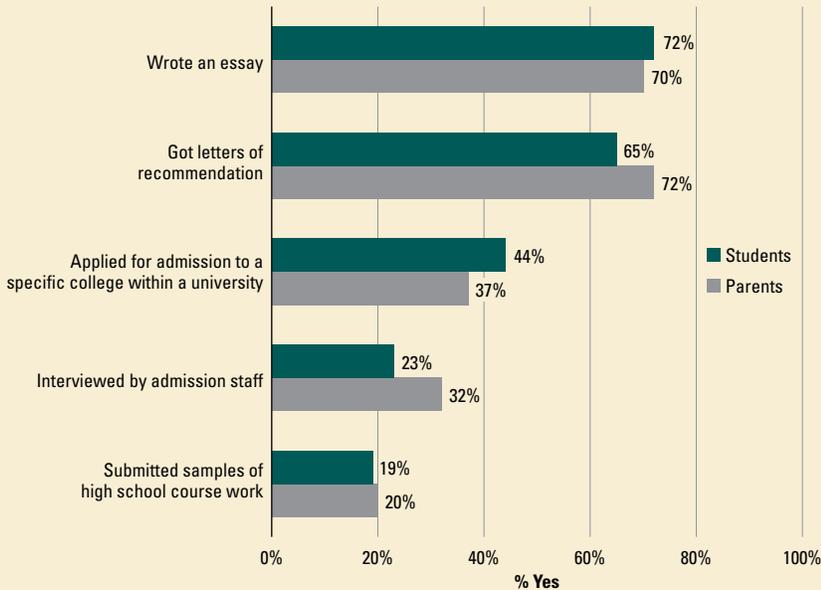
Q12. (Students)/Q12. (Parents) Thinking about when you [your child] applied to [college name] please tell me how confusing or not confusing the following were to you [your child]. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very clear" and 10 being "very confusing," or tell me if it did not apply to you.

Base: Students: N = 583-600; Parents: N = 280-295

*Ratings are averaged across all colleges/universities named and rated by respondents. Respondents could rate up to three colleges. "Don't know" responses were excluded from analyses.

- Again, most aspects of the college application process were very clear to respondents, with a majority having a rating between 1 and 2.99 on a scale of 1 (very clear) to 10 (very confusing).
- The one exception to the above is knowing how admission decisions are made, where fewer than half of **students** and **parents** had an average rating between 1 and 2.99. Eight percent of **students** and 15 percent of **parents** had a rating of 7 to 10.

Figure 13. Percentage of Students Completing Various Tasks as Part of the College Application Process*



*Based on responses to Q13. (Students)/Q13. (Parents) Next, I'm going to ask you if you [your child] completed certain tasks as part of applying to [college name]. We only want to know if you [your child] did this as part of *applying for admission to [college name]*, not if you [your child] did these tasks as part of applying for scholarships or financial aid.
Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- Respondents were then asked if specific tasks were required as part of the college application process (Figure 13). About 7 in 10 **students** and **parents** reported that writing an essay was part of the college application process.
- In addition, roughly two-thirds in each group said that letters of recommendation were required, and more than one-third said that applying to a specific college within a university was required as part of the application process.

Other Findings — Students

Students' GPA

	3.24 or Lower	3.25–3.74	3.75 or Higher
% Did task as part of the college application process			
Wrote an essay	51%	57%	68%
Got letters of recommendation	49%	54%	62%
Applied for admission to a specific college within the university	25%	36%	44%

- **Students** who were the most likely to have written essays as a part of the college application process were those who:
 - Applied to the most schools
 - Lived in the eastern region
 - Attended a private high school
 - Had a GPA of 3.75 or higher

- In addition, **students** who were the most likely to have asked for letters of recommendation as part of the application process were those who:
 - Were *not* of first-generation status
 - Applied to the most schools
 - Lived in the eastern region
 - Attended a private high school
 - Had a high GPA

- Those **students** who were **not of first-generation status** and those with **higher GPAs** were the most likely to have applied for admission to a specific college within a university.

Other Findings — Parents

Parental Income

	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
% Child did task as part of the college application process			
Submitted samples of high school course work	25%	27%	7%

- The **parents** who were the most likely to have said their child wrote an essay as part of the college application process were those whose child:
 - Was *not* of first-generation status
 - Had applied to at least three schools
 - Lived in the eastern or western regions
 - Had a higher GPA

- The **parents** who were the most likely to have children who asked for letters of recommendation were those whose child:
 - Applied to at least three schools
 - Lived in the eastern region

- Those **parents** who reported having an income of less than \$75,000 and those whose children were of first-generation status were the most likely to have said their child submitted high school course work as part of the college application process.

Table 2. How Complicated Additional Tasks Associated with the College Application Process Were* (1 = very simple to 10 = very complicated)

Task	Students		Parents	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Write an essay	3.50 (2.05)	3.00	3.14 (2.12)	3.00
Apply for admission to a specific college within the school	2.64 (1.85)	2.00	2.33 (1.86)	1.67
Submit samples of high school course work	2.49 (1.62)	2.00	2.26 (1.72)	2.00
Have an interview with admission staff	2.45 (1.78)	2.00	1.92 (1.56)	1.00
Get letters of recommendation	2.25 (1.55)	2.00	2.27 (1.74)	1.67

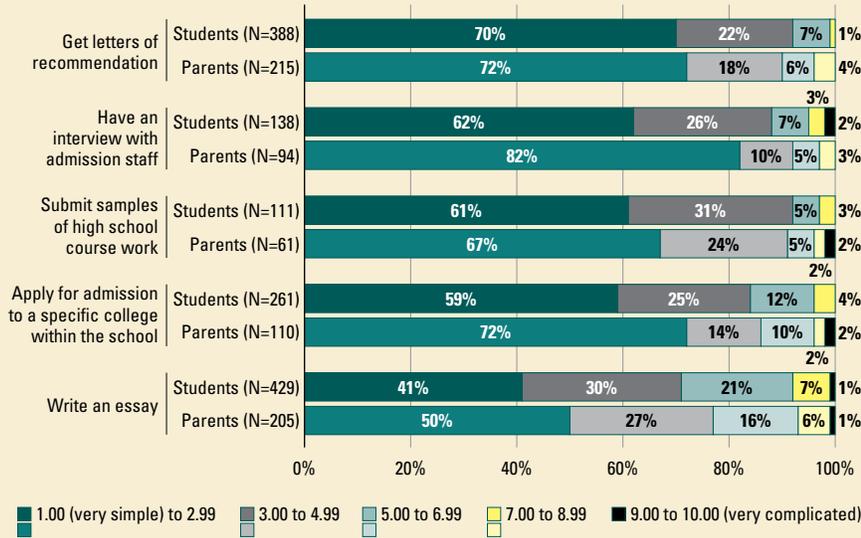
Q13b. (Students)/Q13b. (Parents) Overall, how complicated or not complicated was it for you [your child] to do this? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very simple" and 10 being "very complicated."

Base: Respondents who completed (or whose child completed) each task. Students: N = 111–424; Parents: N = 61–215

*Ratings were averaged across all colleges/universities named and rated by respondents. Respondents could rate up to three colleges. "Don't know" responses were excluded from analyses.

- Respondents who completed (or whose child completed) various tasks as part of the college application process were asked to rate how simple or complicated these tasks were on a scale of 1 (very simple) to 10 (very complicated). The table above summarizes results using means, and the following figure summarizes the data using frequencies.
- Writing an essay received the highest complexity rating among **students** and **parents**, with mean ratings of 3.50 and 3.14, respectively. However, given this rating is relatively low, writing an essay still appears to be a relatively simple process.
- All other tasks surveyed received mean complexity ratings of less than 3.00, suggesting that they were simple to do.

Figure 14. How Complicated Additional Tasks Associated with the College Application Process Were*



Q13b. (Students)/Q13b. (Parents) Overall, how complicated or not complicated was it for you [your child] to do this? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very simple" and 10 being "very complicated."
 Base: Respondents who completed (or whose child completed) each task. N's vary (see chart).
 *Ratings were averaged across all colleges/universities named and rated by respondents. Respondents could rate up to three colleges. "Don't know" responses were excluded from analyses.

- With the exception of writing an essay, a majority of the respondents rated the various tasks they completed during the college application process as being simple, with a rating between 1.00 and 2.99 on the scale of 1 (very simple) to 10 (very complicated).
- Although writing an essay was the most complicated task students completed, more than 7 in 10 had a complexity rating between 1.00 and 4.99 for this task; and fewer than 1 in 10 had a rating of 7 or higher.

Other Findings — Students

Type of High School Attended

	Attend <i>Public</i> High School	Attend <i>Private</i> High School
	Mean (standard deviation)	
Apply for admission to a specific college within the university	2.55 (1.80)	3.52 (2.01)

- **Students** who attended **private** high schools were more likely than those in **public** schools to have found the process of applying for admission to a specific college within a university to be more complicated.

Other Findings — Parents

First-Generation Status

	1st-Generation Student	Not a 1st-Generation Student
	Mean (standard deviation)	
Submit samples of high school course work	2.67 (2.01)	1.67 (0.96)

- **Parents** whose child was a **first-generation student** said it was more confusing for their child to submit samples of high school course work to colleges compared to those whose child was **not of first-generation status**.

Type of High School Child Attends

	Child Attends <i>Public</i> High School	Child Attends <i>Private</i> High School
	Mean (standard deviation)	
Get letters of recommendation	2.32 (1.77)	1.61 (0.79)

- **Parents** whose child attended **public** high school indicated it was more difficult for their child to get letters of recommendation compared to those whose child attended **private** high school.

Parental Income

	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
	Mean (standard deviation)		
Apply for admission to a specific college within the university	2.34 (1.64)	3.16 (2.42)	2.01 (1.60)

- **Parents** who earned **between \$40,000 and \$75,000** reported that it was more difficult for their child to apply for admission to a specific college within a university compared to those who earned **\$75,000 or more**.

V. Application Process: By School Type and Size

Once choices are made about where to apply, are there differences in the complexity of the process by type and size of school selected? This section looks at the same tasks as did the previous section on general complexity, stratified by size and type of institution.

Table 3. How Complicated It Was Overall to Apply, by School Type and Size* (1 = very simple to 10 = very complicated)

School Type**	Students		Parents	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Public	2.55 (1.54)	2.22	2.26 (1.51)	2.00
Private	2.51 (1.54)	2.00	2.31 (1.76)	2.00
School Size	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Small (<4,000 undergraduates)	2.45 (1.70)	2.00	2.02 (1.62)	1.00
Medium (4,000 to 9,999 undergraduates)	2.67 (1.66)	2.25	2.52 (1.88)	2.00
Large (10,000 or more undergraduates)	2.55 (1.29)	2.35	2.32 (1.35)	2.00

Q10. (Students)/Q11. (Parents) Overall, how complicated or not complicated was it for you [your child] to apply to this college? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very simple" and 10 being "very complicated."

*If a college was mentioned by more than one respondent, the average rating for that college among all students or parents was used in analyses.

**For-profit schools were excluded from this analysis.

- For **students**, there were no statistically significant differences regarding how complicated it was overall for them to apply to college based on school type or size. Applying to college appears to be fairly simple for both public and private schools, and schools of various sizes.
- For **parents**, there were no statistically significant differences in their perception regarding how difficult it was for their child to apply to college based on school type.

Other Findings — College Size

- **Parents** did believe it was slightly simpler for their child to apply to a **small** school compared to a **medium**-sized school.

Table 4A. How Confusing Aspects of the College Application Process Were, by School Type Among *Students**
(1 = very clear to 10 = very confusing)

Task	Public		Private	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Knowing how admission decisions are made	3.19 (1.86)	3.00	3.44 (2.06)	3.00
Knowing who to contact at the college if they had questions	2.52 (1.60)	2.00	2.50 (1.66)	2.00
Knowing if all required materials were submitted	2.52 (1.50)	2.23	2.60 (1.79)	2.00
Being able to find information they needed on a college's website	2.50 (1.39)	2.33	2.68 (1.65)	2.40
Completing the application form	2.24 (1.19)	2.00	2.29 (1.33)	2.00
Knowing what materials were required to apply	2.24 (1.38)	2.00	2.37 (1.49)	2.00
Knowing if they took the right high school courses	2.02 (1.34)	1.75	2.27 (1.55)	2.00
Knowing application deadlines	1.91 (1.15)	1.52	2.15 (1.71)	1.50
Being able to find the application form	1.78 (0.99)	1.50	1.89 (1.23)	1.50

Q12. (Students) Thinking about when you applied to [college name], please tell me how confusing or not confusing the following were to you. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very clear" and 10 being "very confusing," or tell me if it did not apply to you.

*If a college was mentioned by more than one respondent, the average rating for that college among all students was used in analyses. For-profit schools are excluded from this analysis.

- This table summarizes how clear or confusing various aspects of the college application process were for **students** based on if they were applying to a public or private school.
- The data suggests that most aspects of the college application process were equally clear, regardless of if students were applying to a public or private institution.

Other Findings — Public vs. Private Colleges

- It was slightly more confusing for **students** when applying to a private school to know if they took the right high school courses required for admission and to know application deadlines, compared to when applying to a **public** school.

Table 4B. How Confusing Aspects of the College Application Process Were by School Type Among Parents*
(1 = very clear to 10 = very confusing)

Task	Public		Private	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Knowing how admission decisions are made	3.57 (2.30)	3.00	3.58 (2.58)	3.00
Knowing who to contact at the college if they had questions	2.48 (1.61)	2.00	2.24 (1.81)	1.50
Knowing if all required materials were submitted	2.28 (1.55)	2.00	2.04 (1.64)	1.00
Being able to find information they needed on a college's website	2.22 (1.43)	2.00	2.19 (1.56)	2.00
Completing the application form	2.12 (1.34)	2.00	2.14 (1.61)	1.50
Knowing what materials were required to apply	2.04 (1.47)	1.67	2.12 (1.67)	1.50
Knowing if their child took the right high school courses	1.91 (1.34)	1.50	2.07 (1.66)	1.00
Being able to find the application form	1.84 (1.28)	1.50	1.71 (1.26)	1.00
Knowing application deadlines	1.66 (1.12)	1.00	1.86 (1.64)	1.00

Q12. (Parents) Thinking about when your child applied to [college name], please tell me how confusing or not confusing the following were to your child. Please use a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being "very clear" and 10 being "very confusing," or tell me if it did not apply to you.

*If a college was mentioned by more than one respondent, the average rating for that college among all parents was used in analyses. For-profit schools are excluded from this analysis.

- This table summarizes **parents'** perceptions regarding how clear or confusing various aspects of the college application process were for their children displayed by the type of college to which their child applied.
- Similar to students' perceptions, most **parents** believe the steps required to apply to college are fairly clear for both public and private institutions; there were no statistically significant differences in **parents'** perceptions based on school type.

Table 5A. How Complicated Additional Tasks Associated with the College Application Process Were by School Type Among Students* (1 = very simple to 10 = very complicated)

Task	Public		Private	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Write an essay	3.37 (1.70)	3.00	3.21 (1.80)	3.00
Apply for admission to a specific college within the school	2.51 (1.45)	2.33	2.12 (1.25)	2.00
Submit samples of high school course work	2.48 (1.35)	2.00	2.44 (1.65)	2.00
Have an interview with admission staff	2.43 (1.70)	2.00	2.41 (1.68)	2.00
Get letters of recommendation	2.07 (1.19)	2.00	2.31 (1.44)	2.00

Q13b. (Students) Overall, how complicated or not complicated was it for you to do this? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very simple" and 10 being "very complicated."

*If a college was mentioned by more than one respondent, the average rating for that college among all students was used in analyses. For-profit schools were excluded from this analysis.

- As shown above, most additional tasks required as part of the college application process were simple for **students**, regardless of whether students were applying to a public or private institution.

Other Findings — Public vs. Private Colleges

- **Students** indicated that it was slightly more complicated to apply to a particular college within a university when applying to a **public** rather than a **private** school.

Table 5B. How Complicated Additional Tasks Associated with the College Application Process Were by School Type Among Parents* (1 = very simple to 10 = very complicated)

Task	Public		Private	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Write an essay	3.09 (2.00)	2.71	3.12 (2.18)	2.50
Submit samples of high school course work	2.58 (1.87)	2.00	2.25 (1.98)	1.00
Apply for admission to a specific college within the school	2.24 (1.55)	2.00	1.99 (1.52)	1.00
Have an interview with admission staff	2.22 (1.95)	1.00	1.89 (1.48)	1.00
Get letters of recommendation	2.20 (1.56)	2.00	2.47 (2.02)	2.00

Q13b. (Parents) Overall, how complicated or not complicated was it for your child to do this? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very simple" and 10 being "very complicated."
 *If a college was mentioned by more than one respondent, the average rating for that college among all parents was used in analyses. For-profit schools are excluded from this analysis.

- This table summarizes **parents'** perceptions regarding how difficult various tasks were for their children when applying to college. No statistically significant differences were found between public and private schools.

Table 6A. How Confusing Aspects of the College Application Process Were by School Size Among *Students**
(1 = very clear to 10 = very confusing)

Task	Small (<4,000 undergraduates)		Medium (4,000–9,999 undergraduates)		Large (10,000 or more undergraduates)	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Knowing how admission decisions are made	3.47 (2.30)	3.00	3.16 (1.83)	3.00	3.21 (1.60)	3.00
Knowing if all required materials were submitted	2.63 (2.07)	2.00	2.43 (1.46)	2.00	2.59 (1.23)	2.50
Being able to find information they needed on a college’s website	2.57 (1.74)	2.00	2.54 (1.51)	2.33	2.62 (1.25)	2.63
Knowing who to contact at the college if they had questions	2.39 (1.90)	2.00	2.63 (1.57)	2.33	2.50 (1.32)	2.32
Knowing what materials were required to apply	2.28 (1.70)	2.00	2.38 (1.49)	2.00	2.23 (1.08)	2.00
Knowing if they took the right high school courses	2.19 (1.72)	1.10	2.15 (1.38)	2.00	2.06 (1.20)	1.88
Completing the application form	2.14 (1.38)	2.00	2.37 (1.42)	2.00	2.33 (1.05)	2.19
Knowing application deadlines	2.14 (1.76)	1.00	1.93 (1.31)	1.50	1.95 (1.03)	1.71
Being able to find the application form	1.89 (1.38)	1.00	1.81 (1.07)	1.50	1.82 (0.95)	1.65

Q12. (Students) Thinking about when you applied to [college name], please tell me how confusing or not confusing the following were to you. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “very clear” and 10 being “very confusing,” or tell me if it did not apply to you.

*If a college was mentioned by more than one respondent, the average rating for that college among all students was used in analyses.

- This table summarizes how clear or confusing various aspects of the college application process were for **students** based on the size of the colleges and universities to which they applied.
- None of the differences were statistically significant, suggesting that college application procedures are equally clear to **students** regardless of institution size.

Table 6B. How Confusing Aspects of the College Application Process Were by School Size Among Parents*
(1 = very clear to 10 = very confusing)

Task	Small (<4,000 undergraduates)		Medium (4,000–9,999 undergraduates)		Large (10,000 or more undergraduates)	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Knowing how admission decisions are made	3.30 (2.54)	3.00	3.50 (2.40)	3.00	3.91 (2.31)	3.78
Being able to find information they needed on a college’s website	2.13 (1.59)	1.50	2.15 (1.47)	2.00	2.29 (1.37)	2.00
Knowing who to contact at the college if they had questions	2.11 (1.80)	1.00	2.25 (1.63)	2.00	2.68 (1.59)	2.33
Knowing if their child took the right high school courses	2.07 (1.71)	1.00	1.89 (1.43)	1.00	1.96 (1.28)	1.50
Knowing if all required materials were submitted	2.03 (1.70)	1.00	2.14 (1.63)	1.56	2.29 (1.41)	2.00
Knowing what materials were required to apply	2.03 (1.70)	1.00	2.20 (1.74)	2.00	1.99 (1.20)	1.67
Completing the application form	1.95 (1.53)	1.00	2.31 (1.64)	2.00	2.18 (1.23)	2.00
Knowing application deadlines	1.88 (1.71)	1.00	1.59 (1.12)	1.00	1.73 (1.13)	1.33
Being able to find the application form	1.68 (1.31)	1.00	1.80 (1.48)	1.00	1.88 (1.01)	1.67

Q12. (Parents) Thinking about when your child applied to [college name] please tell me how confusing or not confusing the following were to your child. Please use a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being “very clear” and 10 being “very confusing,” or tell me if it did not apply to you.

*If a college was mentioned by more than one respondent, the average rating for that college among all parents was used in analyses.

- This table summarizes **parents’** perceptions regarding how clear or confusing various aspects of the college application process were for their children. In general, regardless of institution size, **parents** perceived it to be a fairly simple process for their children.

Other Findings — Public vs. Private Colleges

- **Parents** believed it was slightly more difficult for their children to know who to contact at a college if they had questions when applying to a **large** school compared to a **small** school.

Table 7A. How Complicated Additional Tasks Associated with the College Application Process Were by School Size Among Students* (1 = very simple to 10 = very complicated)

Task	Small (<4,000 undergraduates)		Medium (4,000–9,999 undergraduates)		Large (10,000 or more undergraduates)	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Write an essay	2.99 (1.75)	3.00	3.40 (1.86)	3.00	3.46 (1.47)	3.27
Submit samples of high school course work	2.52 (1.70)	2.00	2.27 (1.29)	2.00	2.57 (1.43)	2.17
Have an interview with admission staff	2.06 (1.58)	1.75	2.70 (1.73)	2.44	2.58 (1.67)	2.00
Get letters of recommendation	2.30 (1.50)	2.00	2.18 (1.44)	2.00	2.11 (0.96)	2.00
Apply for admission to a specific college within the school	1.92 (1.27)	1.00	2.62 (1.50)	2.33	2.34 (1.30)	2.00

Q13b. (Students) Overall, how complicated or not complicated was it for you to do this? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “very simple” and 10 being “very complicated.”
*If a college was mentioned by more than one respondent, the average rating for that college among all students was used in analyses.

- This table illustrates how simple or complicated it was for **students** to complete additional tasks required by the college application process based on the size of the institution to which they applied.
- In general, it was fairly simple for **students** to complete most tasks, regardless of institution size.

Table 7B. How Complicated Additional Tasks Associated with the College Application Process Were by School Size Among Parents* (1 = very simple to 10 = very complicated)

Task	Small (<4,000 undergraduates)		Medium (4,000–9,999 undergraduates)		Large (10,000 or more undergraduates)	
	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Write an essay	2.75 (2.04)	2.00	3.17 (2.14)	3.00	3.43 (2.06)	3.00
Submit samples of high school course work	2.07 (1.84)	1.00	2.31 (1.72)	1.50	2.68 (1.99)	2.00
Apply for admission to a specific college within the school	2.06 (1.65)	1.00	2.02 (1.56)	1.50	2.18 (1.43)	2.00
Have an interview with admission staff	1.68 (1.20)	1.00	2.23 (2.00)	1.00	2.39 (1.97)	2.00
Get letters of recommendation	2.46 (2.08)	1.50	2.35 (1.92)	1.50	2.15 (1.30)	2.00

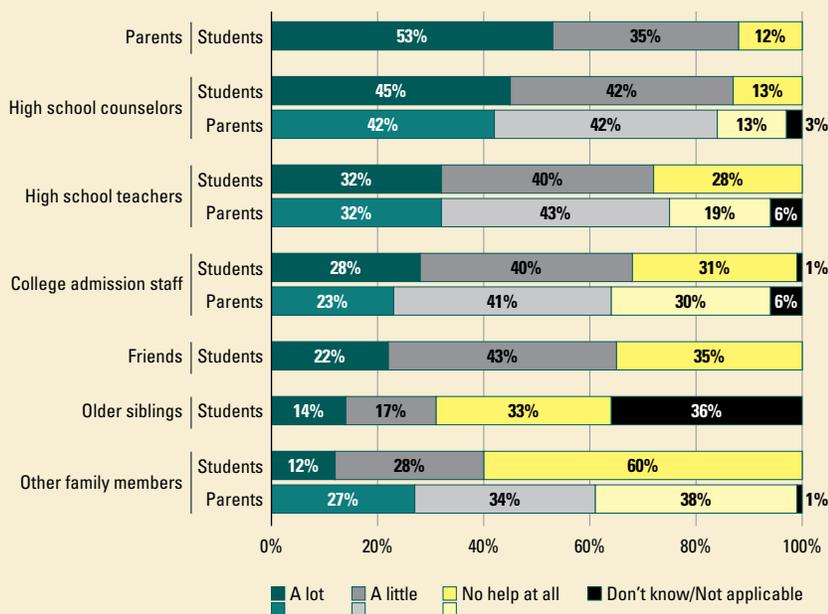
Q13b. (Parents) Overall, how complicated or not complicated was it for your child to do this? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “very simple” and 10 being “very complicated.”
 *If a college was mentioned by more than one respondent, the average rating for that college among all parents was used in analyses.

- This table summarizes **parents’** perceptions about how simple or complicated it was for their children to complete various additional tasks associated with the college application process based on school size. No significant differences emerged, suggesting that **parents** perceived these tasks to be equally simple for their children to do, regardless of the size of school to which they were applying.

VI. Sources of Help During the College Application Process

Counseling students regarding college choices and process was a significant area of interest in the research. In this context, “counseling” refers to all manner of help provided by many different parties, not just secondary school counselors. This section also focuses more on the role of parents in the process and the degree to which they sought advice and counsel and from whom. The results were stratified accordingly, as well as by income and first- or second-generation status.

Figure 15. How Helpful Various People Were to Students During the College Application Process



Q14. (Students)/Q14. (Parents) Now thinking about *all* the colleges to which you [your child] applied, how much did these people help with completing the application and making sure all the required materials were submitted?
Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- More than half of **students** said their parents gave them *a lot* of help during the college application process, with an additional one-third saying their parents gave them *a little* help.
- In addition, about one-third or more of **students** said their high school counselors and teachers provided *a lot* of help during the application process.
- More than one-quarter of **parents** said their children’s high school counselors and teachers, as well as other family members, offered *a lot* of help when their children were applying to college.

Other Findings — Parents vs. Students

- Significantly more **parents** than **students** said that other family members provided *a lot of help* to students during the college application process.
- **Students** were more likely than **parents** to have said that other family members and their high school teachers provided *no help at all* during the college application process.

Other Findings — Students

First-Generation Status

	1st-Generation Student	Not a 1st-Generation Student
% Helped a lot		
Parents	46%	62%
High school teachers	39%	25%
Friends	27%	17%

- **Students** who were **not of first-generation status** were more likely than those who were first-generation students to have said their parents provided *a lot* of help during the college application process.
- Conversely, **students** who were of **first-generation status** were more likely to have said that high school teachers and their friends helped them *a lot*.

Number of Colleges to Which Their Child Applied

	1–2 Schools	3–4 Schools	5+ Schools
% Helped a lot			
College admission staff	36%	27%	23%

- **Students** who applied to only **one or two schools** were more likely to have said that college admission staff helped *a lot* during the college application process.

Other Findings — Students (Cont'd)

Parental Income

	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
% Helped a lot			
Parents	47%	52%	58%
High school counselors	51%	46%	40%
High school teachers	42%	32%	22%
Friends	31%	18%	17%
Older siblings	30%	20%	16%

- The greater their parents' income was, the more likely it was that **students** said their parents helped them *a lot* during the college application process.
- Conversely, the lower their parents' income was, the more likely it was that students said their high school counselors and teachers, friends and older siblings provided *a lot* of help to students.

Other Findings — Parents

First-Generation Status

	1st-Generation Student	Not a 1st-Generation Student
% Helped a lot		
High school counselors	50%	37%
High school teachers	42%	28%
College admission staff	34%	17%

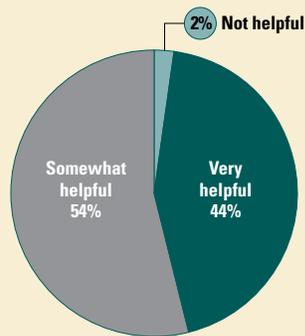
- More **parents** of **first-generation** students said that high school counselors and teachers, and college admission staff, helped their child *a lot* during the college application process.

Parental Income

	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
% Helped a lot			
High school counselors	57%	54%	27%
High school teachers	40%	51%	21%
College admission staff	29%	37%	16%

- **Parents** who earned less than \$75,000 annually were the most likely to have said their child received *a lot* of help from their high school counselors and teachers, and college admission staff, during the application process.

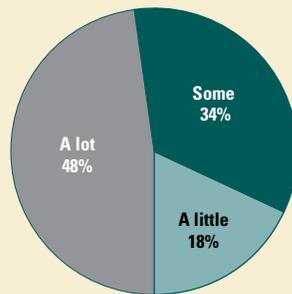
Figure 16. Helpfulness of College Admission Staff



Q15. (Students) How helpful or not helpful were college admission staff to you when completing your applications?
Base: Respondents who said that they received a lot or a little help from college admission staff to make sure they had all the required materials submitted. Students: N = 410

- Among **students** who received at least a little help from college admission staff during the application process, more than 4 in 10 said they were *very helpful*. Few **students** said their assistance was *not helpful* to them.

Figure 17. Parents' Perceptions Regarding How Much Help They Provided Their Children During the College Application Process*



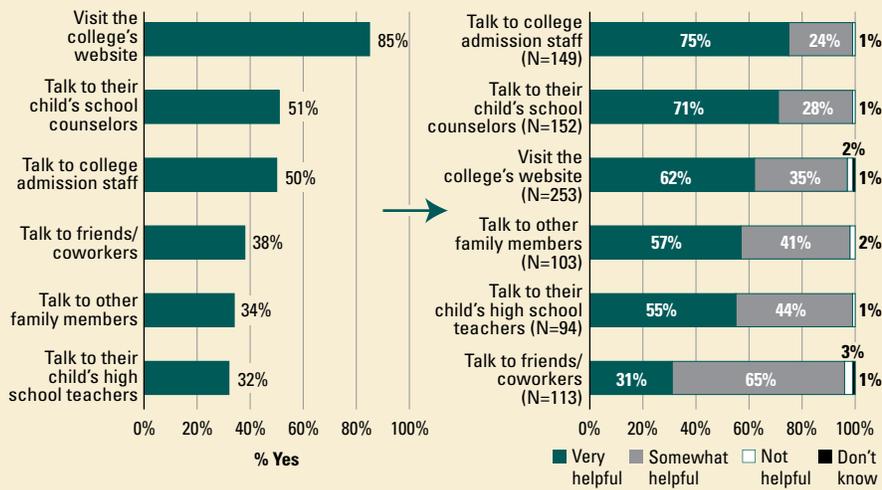
QS4. (Parents) How much help or guidance have you provided your child with the college selection and application process?

Base: Parents: N = 300

*Asked as a screening question; respondents who said "none at all" were screened out of the survey. Data displayed in the graphic reflect only the responses of those parents who screened in and completed the survey.

- Among **parents** surveyed, nearly half said that they helped their child *a lot* while they were applying to college, and an additional one-third said they provided *some* help.
- About 2 in 10 **parents** believed that they offered *a little* help during the process.
- It should be noted that in order for **parents** to be surveyed at all, it was required that they reported providing at least a little help to their child during the college application process.

Figure 18. Resources Used by Parents if They Had Questions about the College Application Process **Perceived Helpfulness of Resources Used by Parents**



Q15. (Parents) If you had questions about the college application process, what resources did you use to get information?
Base: Parents: N = 300

Q15b. How helpful or not helpful was this in answering your questions?
Base: Parents who used a given resource. N's vary (see graphic).

- **Parents** were asked which resources they had used if they personally had questions about the college application process.
- More than 8 in 10 respondents said they visited the college's website. Of those who did so, most said the information provided on the website was *very* or *somewhat helpful* to them.
- In addition, about half of **parents** said that they spoke with either their child's school counselors or college admission staff if they had questions. Of those respondents who had such contact, more than 7 in 10 said that these people were *very helpful* when answering their questions.

Other Findings — Parents

Parental Income

	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
	% Yes		
Visited the college or university's website	77%	79%	96%
Talked to college admission staff	43%	36%	61%
Talked to child's high school teachers	39%	43%	23%

- **Parents** who earned **\$75,000 or more annually** were the most likely to have visited a college's website or talked to college admission staff if they had questions about the college application process. They were the least likely to have talked to their child's high school teachers.

Parental Income (Cont'd)

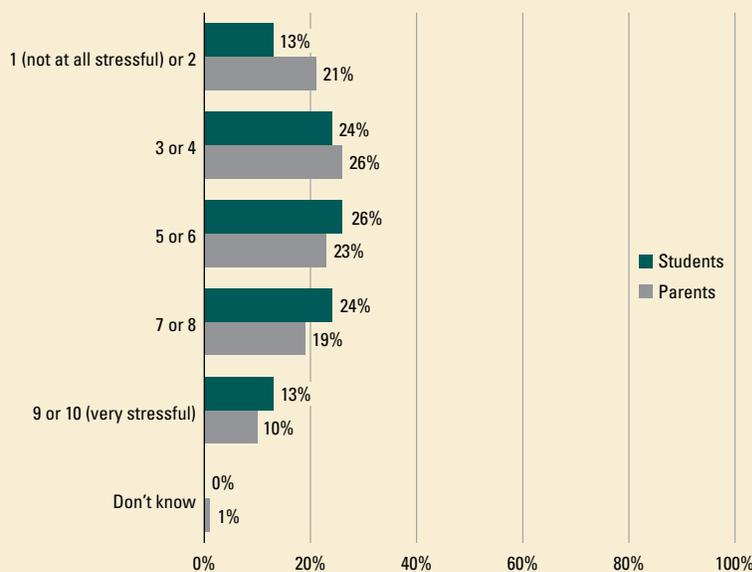
	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or More
	% Very helpful		
Talked to child's high school counselors	78%	79%	58%

- **Parents** who earned **less than \$75,000 annually** were more likely to have said that speaking with their child's school counselors about the college application process was *very helpful* to them.

VII. Overall Perceptions of the College Application Process

Notions of complexity are often associated with such emotions as stress and confidence. The research sought to separate the notions of process complexity — taking steps to complete a process — from the emotions that taking such steps may have engendered. The outcomes of the research suggest that while the process was not deemed to be terribly complex, it generated an emotional response — stress. Students were asked to define which parts of the admission process generated the highest levels of stress on their part. Both students and parents were asked the penultimate question: With hindsight, how confident are they that they made the right choices in the application process? They were also asked to give advice to colleges and universities about how to make the college application process less confusing.

Figure 19. How Stressful It Was for Students to Apply to College



Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Students	5.53 (2.56)	5.00
Parents	4.90 (2.71)	5.00

Q16. (Students)/Q17. (Parents) Overall, how stressful or not stressful has the college application process been for you [your child]? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "not at all stressful" and 10 being "very stressful."
 Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- Overall, the college application process was moderately stressful for students (Figure 19). On average, **students** rated the stressfulness of the college application process as a 5.53 on a scale of 1 (not at all stressful) to 10 (very stressful). In addition, more than 6 in 10 **students** gave a stressfulness rating of 5 or higher.

Table 8A. Why Students Thought the College Application Process Was Stressful or Not Stressful for Them

Reason*	Percent of Respondents
Stressfulness rating of 1 (not at all stressful) to 5	
N = 304	
Was not complicated/All information needed in one place/Process was self-explanatory	32%
Waiting for the answer was the stressful part/Not knowing if they would be accepted	15%
Different applications have different requirements/Difficult to gather all the required items	14%
Worried about deadlines/Difficult to meet deadlines	12%
Had help with their application (teachers, school counselors, parents, college students)	12%
Very time consuming/Hard to balance with work, school and extracurricular activities	11%
Unsure about which college to attend/Wanted to pick the right college and major	6%
Already knew where they wanted to go to school/Applied to few colleges	6%
Technology issues/Website not updated/College did not get materials submitted electronically	5%

Q17. (Students) Why did you give this rating [regarding how stressful the college application process was for them]?

Base: Students: N = 600

*Respondents could offer more than one response. Only responses mentioned by at least 5 percent of respondents are shown.

- After students rated how stressful the college application process was for them, they were asked to explain why they gave the rating they did.
- Among **students** who gave a stressfulness rating of 1 (not at all stressful) to 5, more than 3 in 10 said they gave this rating because *the process was self-explanatory and not complicated*.
- About 15 percent of these **students** said they gave the rating they did because *waiting for the answer is the stressful part* or because *different applications having different requirements* was stressful for them.

Table 8B. Why Students Thought the College Application Process Was Stressful or Not Stressful for Them (Cont'd)

Reason*	Percent of Respondents
Stressfulness rating of 6 to 10 (very stressful)	
N = 296	
Different applications have different requirements/Difficult to gather all the required items	34%
Worried about deadlines/Difficult to meet deadlines	26%
Very time consuming/Hard to balance with work, school and extracurricular activities	18%
Waiting for the answer was the stressful part/Not knowing if they would be accepted	16%
Unsure about which college to attend/Wanted to pick the right college and major	15%
Decision determines the future or profession	7%
Applied to multiple schools at once	6%
Technology issues/Website not updated/College did not get materials submitted electronically	5%

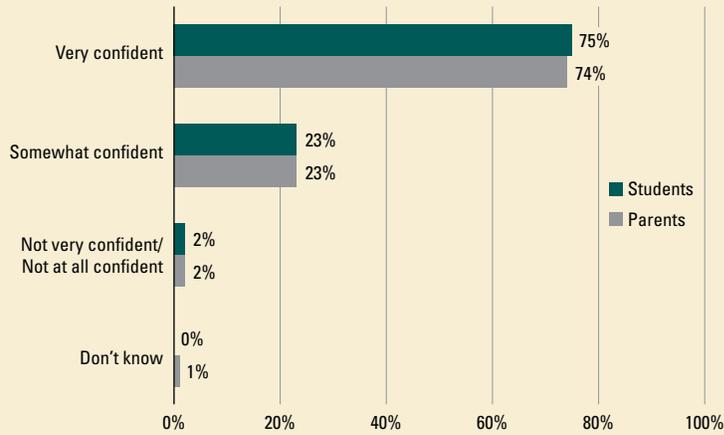
Q17. (Students) Why did you give this rating [regarding how stressful the college application process was for them]?

Base: Students: N = 600

*Respondents could offer more than one response. Only responses mentioned by at least 5 percent of respondents are shown.

- Among **students** who gave a stressfulness rating of 6 to 10 (very stressful), about one-third said they gave the rating they did because *different applications having different requirements* was stressful.
- In addition, about one-quarter said that *worrying about deadlines* was stressful for them; and about 2 in 10 said *balancing the college application process with school and other activities* was stressful.

Figure 20. How Confident Respondents Are that the Student Applied to the Right Colleges and Universities



Q18. (Students)/Q20. (Parents) Overall, how confident or not confident are you that you [your child] applied to the right colleges and universities?
Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- About three-quarters of **students** and **parents** are *very confident* that they or their child applied to the right colleges and universities.
- Very few **students** or **parents** said that they are *not confident* that they or their child applied to the colleges or universities right for them.

Other Findings — Students

Geographic Region

	Eastern	Western	Midwestern/Southern
	% Very confident		
How confident respondents are that they applied to the right colleges for them	72%	71%	82%

- **Students** in the **midwestern/southern** region are the most likely to be *very confident* that they applied to the right schools for them.

Other Findings — Parents

Geographic Region

	Eastern	Western	Midwestern/Southern
	% Very confident		
How confident respondents are that their child applied to the right colleges for them	76%	62%	83%

- **Parents** in the **eastern** and **midwestern/southern** regions were more likely to be *very confident* that their children applied to the right schools.

Table 9. Respondents' Suggestions About Making the College Application Process Less Confusing for Students

Response*	Students	Parents
Better instructions/Step-by-step guides/Clear checklist	15%	9%
Improve college websites/Make websites more user-friendly/Better information on websites	14%	10%
Use a common application/Have everything in one place or on one website	10%	7%
Better communication between colleges and students, parents, high school staff/Better or more timely notification when items are missing	9%	11%
Support tools (telephone hotline, online chat, online forum)	6%	4%
Clearer deadlines/Longer deadlines	6%	2%
Make the application shorter/Less personal questions	5%	6%
More school representatives to help go over process/More college fairs/Workshops at colleges/Peer mentoring from college students	5%	5%
Teach application process in high school/Teach application process earlier/More help from school counselors	3%	5%
Nothing/Process is easy or self-explanatory	24%	31%

Q19. (Students)/Q21. (Parents) Taking everything into consideration, what do you think colleges and universities could do to make the college application process less confusing for students.
Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

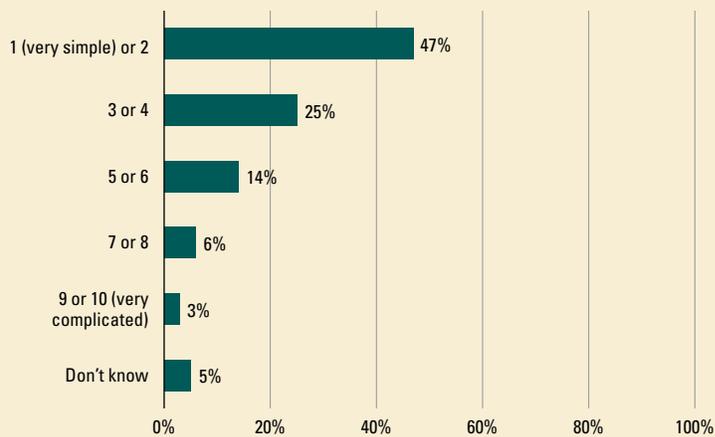
*Respondents could offer more than one response. Only responses mentioned by at least 5 percent of respondents in either group are shown.

- Respondents were asked what they thought colleges and universities could do to make the college application process less confusing for students.
- Among both **students** and **parents**, the most frequently mentioned response was *the process is self-explanatory and does not need to be changed*.
- About 15 percent of **students** said that *better instructions or checklists and better and more user-friendly information on college websites* would be helpful.

VIII. Parents' Experiences with the College Application Process

While the primary focus of the research was on student perceptions of the process, the role of parents was a correlating factor. This section focuses on parent perceptions of the process exclusively. Here the outcomes were stratified by generational, income and education levels. Perhaps the most interesting outcomes are associated with their perception of whether or not the process had become more or less complex, given their educational and other (older child) experiences.

Figure 21. How Complicated the College Application Process Was for Parents

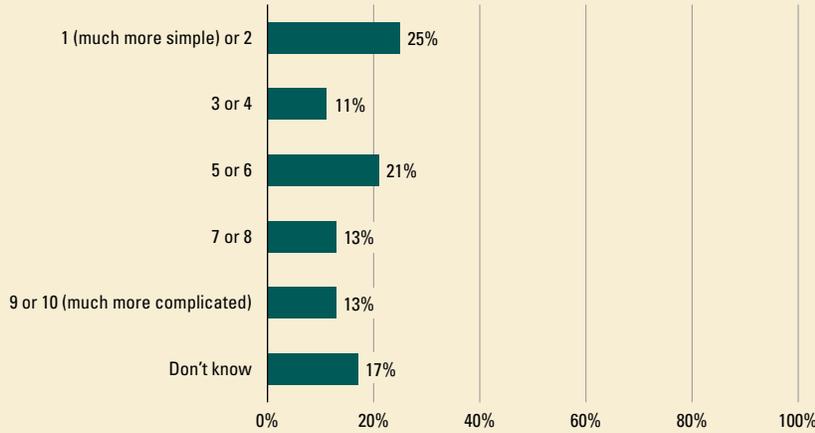


Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Parents	3.09 (2.26)	3.00

Q16. (Parents) Next, please tell me how complicated or not complicated the college application process was for *you*. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "very simple" and 10 being "very complicated."
Base: Parents: N = 300

- **Parents** were asked to rate how complicated or not complicated the college application process was for **them**.
- On average, the college application process was relatively simple for **parents**, with respondents giving a mean rating of 3.09 on a scale of 1 (very simple) to 10 (very complicated). Moreover, nearly half gave a rating of 1 or 2.
- However, about 1 in 10 parents gave a rating of 7 or higher.

Figure 22. Whether College-Educated Parents Believed the Application Process Had Become More Simple or More Complicated



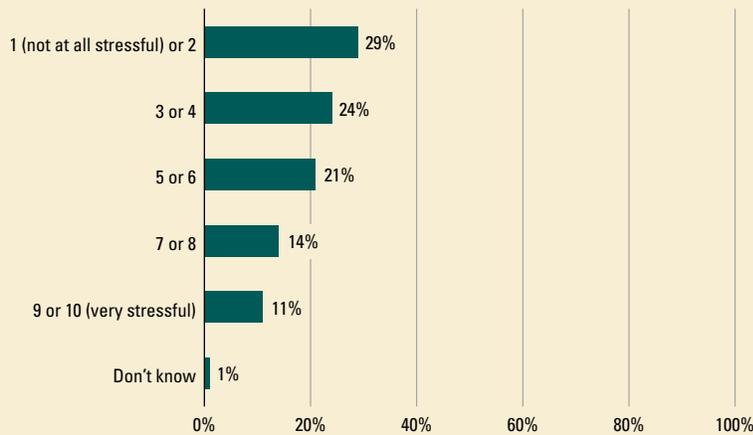
Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Parents	4.86 (3.09)	5.00

Q27. (Parents) Thinking back to when you applied to college, do you think the college application process has become more simple or more complicated? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "much more simple" and 10 being "much more complicated."

Base: Respondents who have a four-year college degree. Parents: N = 128

- **Parents** who had at least a four-year college degree were asked if they believed that the application process had become simpler or more complicated since they applied to college.
- Respondents were split in their opinions regarding if the application process had become more complicated, with a mean rating of 4.86 on a scale of 1 (much more simple) to 10 (much more complicated).
- One-quarter of these **parents** believed that the process was much simpler now (rating of 1 or 2); however, a similar percentage believed that it had become more complicated (rating of 7 to 10).

Figure 23. How Stressful the College Application Process Was for Parents



Group	Mean (standard deviation)	Median
Parents	4.45 (2.80)	4.00

Q18. (Parents) Overall, how stressful or not stressful has the college application process been for *you*? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all stressful” and 10 being “very stressful.”
 Base: Parents: N = 300

- **Parents** were also asked to rate how stressful the college application process was for **them** (Figure 23). **Parents** found the process to be moderately stressful, with a mean rating of 4.45 on a scale of 1 (not at all stressful) to 10 (very stressful).
- Nearly 3 in 10 respondents gave a stressfulness rating of 1 or 2; in contrast, one-quarter gave a rating of 7 or higher.

Table 10A. Why Parents Thought the College Application Process Was Stressful or Not Stressful for Them

Reason*	Percent of Respondents
Stressfulness rating of 1 (not at all stressful) to 5	
	N = 211
Students responsible for everything/Parent did not help much	22%
Was not complicated/All information needed in one place/Process was self-explanatory	20%
Worried about deadlines/Difficult to meet deadlines	9%
Someone else helped with application (teachers, school counselors, college students)	9%
Application fees too high/Financially stressful/FAFSA stressful	8%
Different applications have different requirements/Difficult to gather all the required items	8%
Unsure about which college their child should attend/Wanted their child to pick the right college and major	7%
Waiting for the answer was the stressful part/Not knowing if child was accepted	7%
Very time consuming for child/Hard to balance with work, school and extracurricular activities	5%

Q19. (Parents) Why did you give this rating [regarding how stressful the college application process was for them]?

Base: Parents: N = 300

*Respondents could offer more than one response. Only responses mentioned by at least 5 percent of respondents are shown.

- After rating how stressful or not stressful the college application process was for **them**, **parents** were asked to explain their rating.
- Among those **parents** who gave a rating of 1 (not at all stressful) to 5, more than 2 in 10 said they gave the rating they did because *their child was responsible for everything* or because they found the process *uncomplicated and self-explanatory*.

Table 10B. Why Parents Thought the College Application Process Was Stressful or Not Stressful for Them (Cont'd)

Reason*	Percent of Respondents
Stressfulness rating of 6 to 10 (very stressful)	
	N = 87
Application fees too high/Financially stressful/FAFSA stressful	24%
Unsure about which college their child should attend/Wanted their child to pick the right college and major	16%
Very time consuming for child/Hard to balance with work, school and extracurricular activities	14%
Never been through process before/Child is a first-generation college student	14%
Waiting for the answer was the stressful part/Not knowing if child was accepted	10%
Stressful in general/Overwhelming	10%
Worried about deadlines/Difficult to meet deadlines	8%
Different applications have different requirements/Difficult to gather all the required items	8%
Applied to multiple schools at once	6%
Decision determines their child's future or profession	6%
Students responsible for everything/Parent did not help much	6%
Applications were unclear or confusing	5%

Q19. (Parents) Why did you give this rating [regarding how stressful the college application process was for them]?
Base: Parents: N = 300

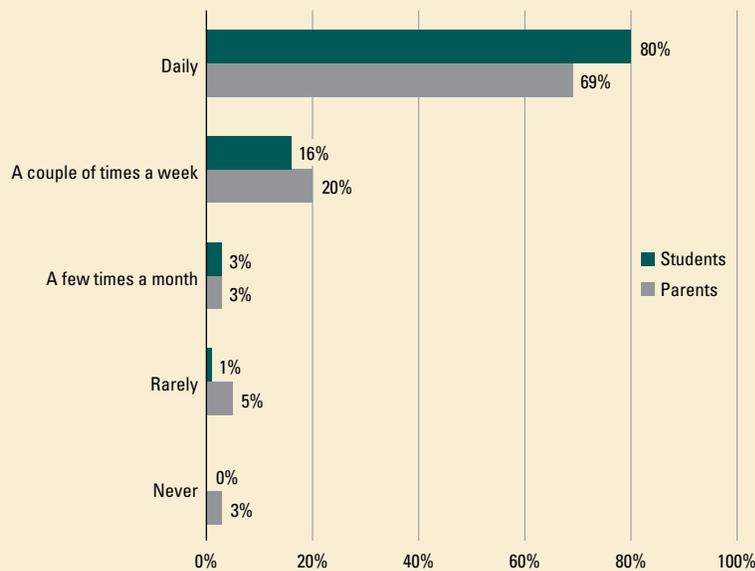
*Respondents could offer more than one response. Only responses mentioned by at least 5 percent of respondents are shown.

- Among **parents** who found the college application process more stressful (rating of 6 to 10), the primary reason was *application fees and other financial issues*.
- Roughly 15 percent of these respondents rated the experience as stressful because of the following:
 - *Unsure about which college their child should attend/Wanting their child to pick the right college*
 - *Difficult for child to balance the college application process with school and other commitments*
 - *Parents were new to the process (child is a first-generation student)*

IX. Demographics

This section provides vital information regarding the demographics of this research's sample populations. Key demographics are highlighted.

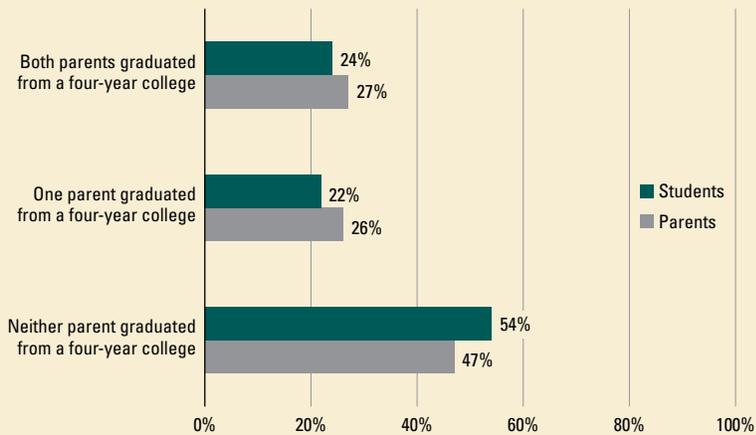
Figure 24. How Frequently Respondents Accessed the Internet



Q21. (Students)/Q23. (Parents) How frequently do you access the Internet?
Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- Eight in 10 **students** said that they accessed the Internet on a *daily* basis, while 16 percent said they did so *a couple of times a week*.
- About 7 in 10 **parents** accessed the Internet *daily*, and an additional 2 in 10 did so *a couple of times a week*.
- About 1 in 10 **parents** said that they accessed the Internet *a few times a month or less frequently*.

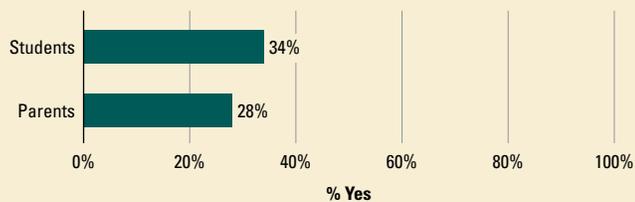
Figure 25. Educational Attainment of Parents*



*Based on responses to Q24/Q25. (Students) Did your [father/mother] graduate from a four-year college? or Q26/Q28/Q29. (Parents) Did [you/your child's father/your child's mother] graduate from a four-year college? "Don't know" responses were treated as no responses.
Base: Students: N = 600; Parents: N = 300

- More than half of **student** respondents were first-generation college students; slightly fewer **parents** indicated that their child was a first-generation student.
- Approximately one-quarter of **students** and **parents** reported that both parents had four-year college degrees.

Figure 26. Whether First-Generation Students Have Older Siblings Who Have Been Through the College Application Process*



Q26. (Students) Do you have any older brothers or sisters who have graduated from, or are currently attending, a four-year college?
Q36. (Parents) Have any of your other children graduated from, or are currently attending, a four-year college or university?
*Includes only respondents who were first-generation college students [had a child who will be a first-generation college student].
Base: Students: N = 318; Parents: N = 142

- Among respondents who were first-generation college students (or whose child would be a first-generation college student), roughly 3 in 10 **students** and **parents** indicated that there is an older sibling who had already been through the college application process.

Table 11. Student Demographics

Type of High School Student Attends	Students (N = 600)	Parents (N = 300)
Public school	88%	86%
Private school	11%	12%
Home school	1%	2%

Student's Anticipated Major Field*	Students (N = 600)	Parents (N = 300)
Life sciences	19%	14%
Physical sciences	17%	17%
Social sciences	17%	11%
Business	16%	14%
Medical sciences	11%	13%
Liberal arts	10%	9%
Education	8%	10%
Communications	4%	6%
Undecided	9%	6%

High School GPA	Students (N = 600)	Parents (N = 300)
2.99 or less	11%	6%
3.00 to 3.24	13%	13%
3.25 to 3.49	12%	10%
3.50 to 3.74	19%	21%
3.75 to 3.99	19%	19%
4.00 or greater	18%	14%
Don't know	8%	17%

Standardized Tests Taken	Students (N = 600)	Parents (N = 300)
% taking SAT	98%	97%
% taking ACT	48%	61%

Combined SAT Score	Students (N = 457)	Parents (N = 138)
Mean SAT score (std. deviation)	1574 (306.50)	1529 (351.09)
Median	1570	1540

Combined ACT Score	Students (N = 237)	Parents (N = 76)
Mean ACT score (std. deviation)	24.37 (5.23)	25.08 (5.93)
Median	24.00	25.00

*Respondents could offer up to two responses. Only responses mentioned by at least 5 percent of respondents in either group are shown.

- More than 8 in 10 respondents indicated that the student attended a public high school. About one-quarter of **students** and 2 in 10 **parents** reported a GPA of 3.24 or less, while one-third or more reported a GPA of 3.75 or greater.
- Nearly all respondents reported taking the SAT, with a mean score in the mid-1500s. Considerably fewer reported taking the ACT; those who did had a mean score of 24 to 25.
- The prospective college majors for respondents (or respondents' children) were varied.

Table 12. General Demographics

Parents' Household Income	Students (N = 600)	Parents (N = 300)
Less than \$20,000	10%	6%
\$20,000 but less than \$40,000	18%	18%
\$40,000 but less than \$75,000	23%	26%
\$75,000 but less than \$150,000	21%	27%
\$150,000 or more	8%	12%
Don't know	18%	1%
Refused	2%	10%
Gender of Respondent	Students (N = 600)	Parents (N = 300)
Male	42%	32%
Female	58%	68%

- Roughly one-quarter of respondents reported a household parental income of *less than \$40,000*. About 3 in 10 **students** and 4 in 10 **parents** reported a household income of *\$75,000 or more*.
- Nearly 6 in 10 **student** respondents were female; more than two-thirds of **parent** respondents were female.





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