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Crucial deciding factors for college-bound students may be catching admission professionals off guard

Poll reveals college admission professionals tend to overstate the importance of brand reputation and understate the importance of academic reputation

VICTOR, NY (Dateline)— When college representatives hang their hats on brand and reputation, they may be missing the mark with prospective students.

According to a recent poll by national educational media company NextStepU (www.NextStepU.com) and Crux Research (www.cruxresearch.com), a market research firm, what college-bound students consider important in the college search process vary significantly from what admission representatives believe students regard as crucial.

In the 10-minute survey, we asked 1,246 prospective college students to rate various considerations when selecting colleges. In contrast, we asked 117 college admissions professionals the same questions.

Various discrepancies were revealed. Prospective students are more interested in the caliber of the faculty and the quality of incoming students than admission representatives believe.

Key Findings

The main deciding factors for college-bound students are different than what admission representatives believe are top of mind. While 70 percent of college admission officials overstated the importance of name recognition and reputation of an institution, only 54 percent of students considered school brand and reputation as extremely important deciding factors.

- Students were more concerned about the reputation of the college faculty, with 85 percent considering it the most important factor in the college search process.
- Students want to know where they stack up against the competition, but only 33 percent of admission representatives believed prospective students considered the current student body.



- Meanwhile, 63 percent of students felt that the graduation and dropout rate were extremely important considerations and 56 percent answered that the selectivity of the college was most important.
- Surprisingly, students are not very interested in online classes or colleges. Only 2 percent indicated that they were extremely or very likely to attend an online college or university.
- College admissions professionals are very optimistic. 67 percent of them say their institutions are in the top 25 percent of all colleges/universities.

Additionally, admission representatives overstated other variables such as college rankings, social life, the effectiveness of social media marketing and closeness to family as important considerations.

NextStepU Editor in Chief Enid Arbelo Bryant says, "Our goal here at NextStepU is to help students prepare for their next step in life. So we need to find out what the discrepancies are during the admissions process and where the communication lapses occur to ensure students and admission representatives are prepared for the process."

For more information, or to see the entire poll, please contact Enid Arbelo Bryant at Enid@NextStepU.com.

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About NextStepU:

NextStepU (www.NextStepU.com) is a national college, career and life planning resource, which reaches more than 4 million readers. NextStepU, publisher of the award-winning NextStepU magazine, also offers custom print publishing, lead generation and interactive planning tools nationwide.

About Crux Research:

Crux Research (www.cruxresearch.com) is a market research firm dedicated to connecting decision makers with customers, inspiring new thinking, and setting new standards for customer service. We focus on delivering insight with the power to drive change by building on a solid understanding of your business and culture.