

Meet Your New Community College Learner

Insights from EAB’s survey of over 2,700 prospective community college students

As an increasing number of recent high school graduates choose not to pursue higher education, it becomes crucial for community colleges to understand the aspirations of these students. EAB’s team conducted a survey of over 2,700 high school students who expressed interest in attending community college after graduation. The survey aimed to understand their goals, motivations, and readiness for college.

Here are five trends to know about the next generation of community college learners:



Flexible Options Are Increasingly Important

56% of all students considering two-year colleges want at least some of their courses offered online.

Recommendation

Center online options in recruitment and admissions communications.

22% of two-year prospects cite flexible scheduling as a top attribute they want in their college experience.

Recommendation

Offer courses and programs in multiple formats, at multiple times.



Affordability Persists As a Top Concern

58% of students list affordable tuition as one the top three attributes that they are looking for in a college.

Recommendation

Emphasize your manageable tuition rates and the low/no out of pocket costs most students pay once aid is applied.

65% of students said college costs (tuition, fees, etc.) are among their top three searches on college websites.

Recommendation

Make sure cost information is easy to find and simple to understand.



Students Need a FAFSA Support System

13% Only 13% of students who are only considering attending community college have received FAFSA completion encouragement from a college representative.

Recommendation

Empower all student success professionals to promote FAFSA completion, even if they aren't financial aid experts. Use technology to identify students who need additional FAFSA support.

30% of two-year prospects shared that their parent or guardian did not help them complete their FAFSA.

Recommendation

Understand that your college may be the primary FAFSA guide for some students and infuse FAFSA completion conversations into information sessions, open houses, and recruitment events.



Career-Motivated But Feeling Unprepared for College

24% of students name getting a job after graduation as one of their top concerns about attending college.

Recommendation

Center alumni testimonials and opportunities to connect with recent alumni throughout the academic journey.

44% of students would choose a two-year option to help them prepare academically for a four-year college.

Recommendation

Invest in academic supports like tutoring, supplemental instruction, bootcamps, and co-requisite options.



Students Aren't Maximizing Their College Search Process

10% Community college prospects are 10% less likely than four-year prospects to attend in-person college visits during their search process (38% vs. 48%).

Recommendation

Invest in virtual tours and ways to connect with students who are unable to come to campus.

25% of students who are only considering attending community college don't start their college search until their senior year of high school.

Recommendation

Simplify and tech enable onboarding processes to help students have a shortened enrollment on-ramp.



EAB

Download the insight paper to explore more findings from our survey
pages.eab.com/Supporting-Gen-P-Insight-Paper