

Summer Research Series

Findings Recap

September 2025



Presenter



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Yellow | Green | Orange

The Imaginative and Analytical
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Agenda

- 1 Survey Background**

- 2 College Choice Trends**

- 3 Politics and College Choice**

- 4 AI Use in the College Search**

- 5 Personality in Storytelling**



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Survey Background

Annual Survey of Graduating Seniors

- Held in May; CollegeXpress Audiences
- New to 2025: Rising Students and Parents
- 3,424 Respondents
- Reports by Topic
- Dozens of Demographic and Institutional Breakouts Available in Data Tables



2

College Choice Trends

“I spent a lot of time reading stories about how school X has this and college Y has that, but what really changed was when I found the videos for (the college they picked) and it actually showed those things and like the people who use them that changed my list a lot.” ~ Graduating Senior



3

Politics and College Perceptions

“When I was asking about how the college is going to be supporting students during what I see as a country in turmoil, the person I was talking to sent me a ‘Letter from the Dean’ who talked about his time protesting the Gulf War and how protecting that kind of right was tantamount to the role of colleges. It made me feel a lot better about my son going to (that institution).” ~ Parent



4

AI Use in the College Search

“My teacher keeps telling me stories about how people wouldn’t let him use the internet in school, and now we teach it. He really made a point about how important it was that he learned it on his own even when schools hated it. Probably it is the same with AI.” ~ Rising Student



5

Personality in Storytelling

“I spent a lot of time reading stories about how school X has this and college Y has that, but what really changed was when I found the videos for (the college they picked) and it actually showed those things and like the people who use them that changed my list a lot.” ~ Graduating Senior



Emotion is the driver.
Storytelling the tool.

Perception will always influence the impact of facts.

Did you like the Summer Research Series? We want your input!

- Carnegie will continue its annual reporting and is in the process of adding new audiences and topics to its national research studies.
- Connect with me (jbrickman@carnegiehighered) if you have ideas about what we could explore next year, what is most useful for you as a leader in higher education, and if you have any interest in teaming up on custom research.

Thank You!

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