How Are We Recruiting Now?
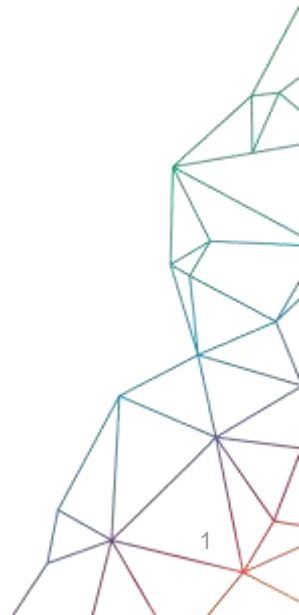# How the Pandemic Reshaped Traditional Student Outreach

Thursday, October 6, 2022

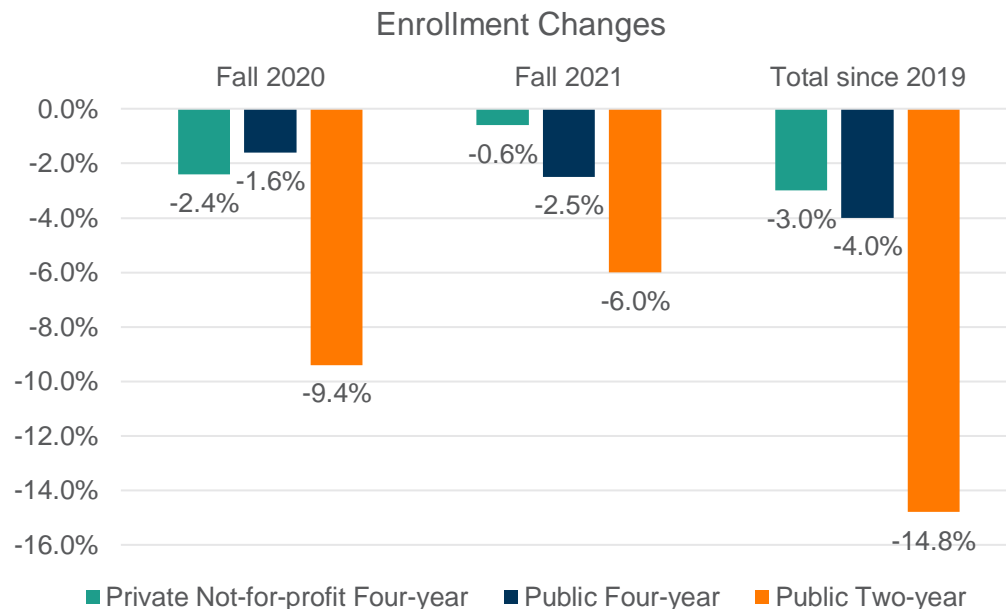**Johanna Trovato**
Eduventures Senior Analyst

Reva Levin
Director of Digital Strategy

The Past Two Years Have Been Tough On Everyone

**The COVID-19 pandemic has altered college search and college recruitment**

- Numbers of applications per applicant are up

- Enrollment is down

- Underserved students are opting out of college at higher rates than before

- On-campus recruitment events have been severely impacted

- Recruitment shifted deeper into the digital space

- *What is next?*

Enrollment Changes

	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Total since 2019
Private Not-for-profit Four-year	-2.4%	-0.6%	-3.0%
Public Four-year	-1.6%	-2.5%	-4.0%
Public Two-year	-9.4%	-6.0%	-14.8%

Source: National Student Clearinghouse

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How Has College Search Behavior Shifted?

Virtual Sources Have Become More Important in Early Search

Best Sources of Information During Initial College Search
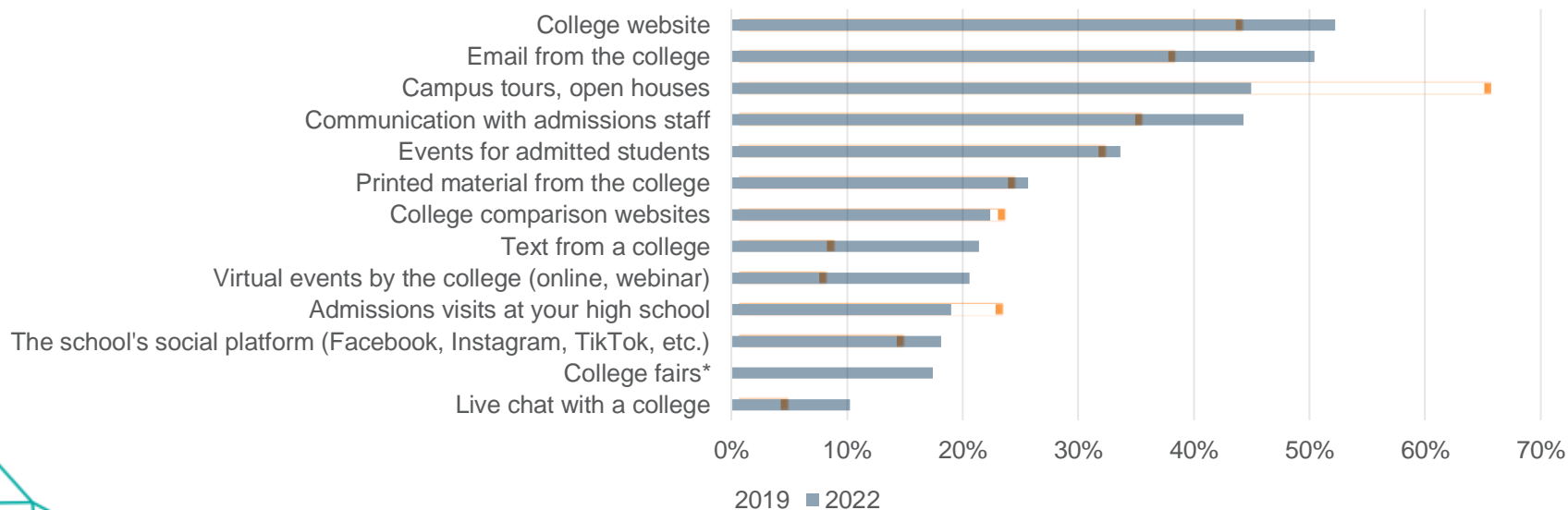

Legend: ■ 2019 ■ 2022

4
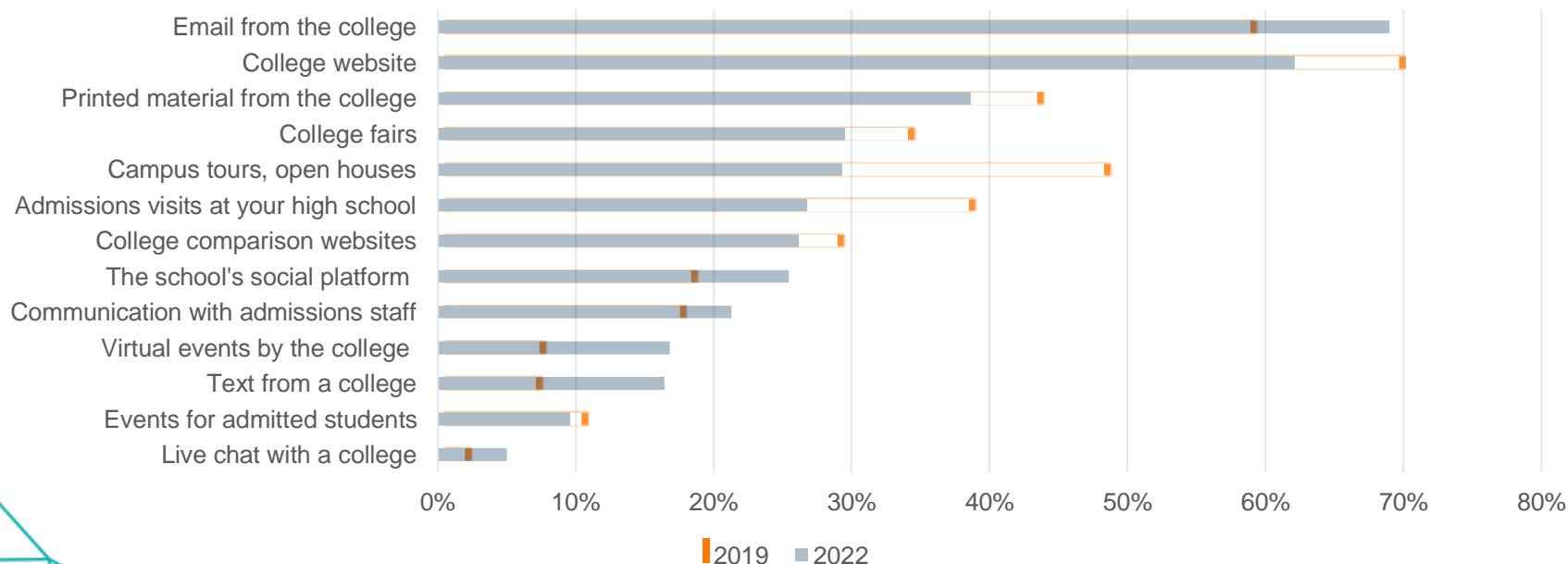
In the Absence of Campus Visits, Students Choose Application Schools Digitally

Best Sources of Information While Narrowing Application List

Categories (top to bottom):
- College website
- Email from the college
- Campus tours, open houses
- Printed material from the college
- College comparison websites
- Communication with admissions staff
- College fairs
- Admissions visits at your high school
- The school's social platform
- Text from a college
- Virtual events by the college
- Events for admitted students
- Live chat with a college

Legend: ■ 2019 ■ 2022

X-axis: 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%

Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research

College Website and Email Are Now More Important in the Enrollment Decision Than Before the Pandemic

Best Sources of Information When Selecting Enrollment School (Seniors Only)

Legend: 2019 ■ 2022

Categories (top to bottom):
- College website
- Email from the college
- Campus tours, open houses
- Communication with admissions staff
- Events for admitted students
- Printed material from the college
- College comparison websites
- Text from a college
- Virtual events by the college (online, webinar)
- Admissions visits at your high school
- The school's social platform (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
- College fairs*
- Live chat with a college

X-axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research

Video Is Still Important But Declined. What Happened?

Which of the following have you done during your college research process?

Watched a video found on a school's website	
Watched a video from a college on YouTube	
Read a student's posts on social media	
Watched a video from a current student	
Responded to a text message from a school*	
Searched for a specific hashtag	
Talked to a chatbot on a school's website*	
Participated in a live chat	
Posted a question to a current student on social media	
Posted a question to a college representative on social media	
Tweeted with a specific hashtag	

■2020 ■2021 ■2022

Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research

Social Media Behavior

Audio-Visual Channels Continue to Dominate Gen-Z Use

Social Platform Use - General

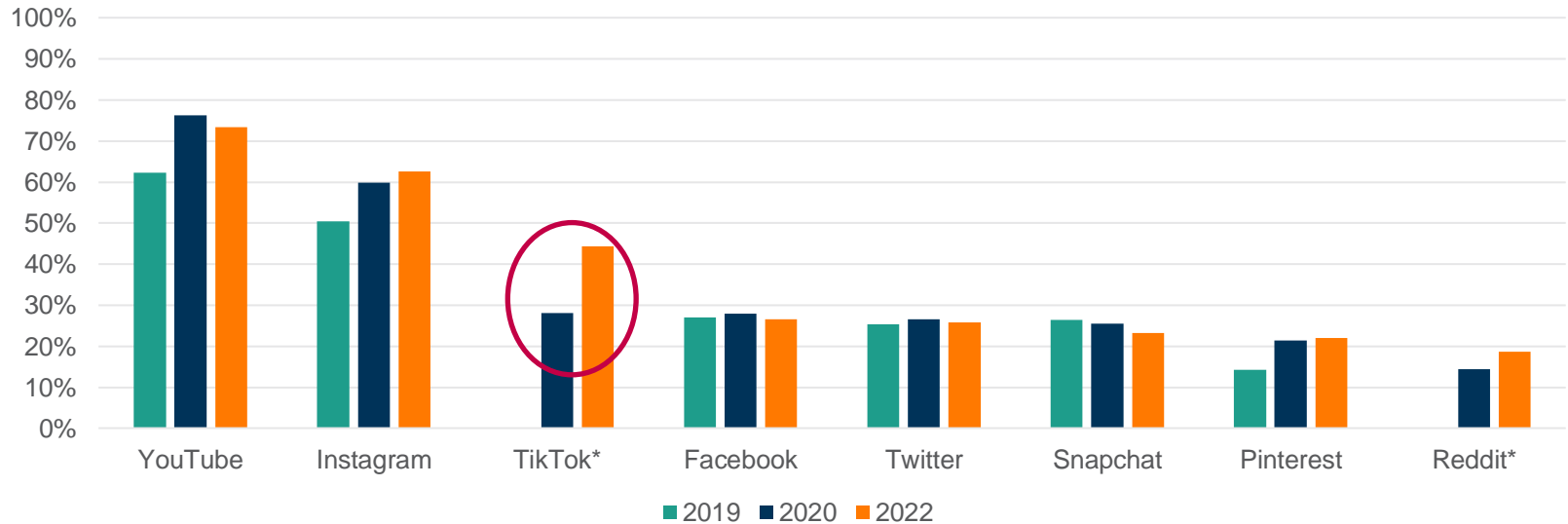Legend: 2019 | 2020 | 2022
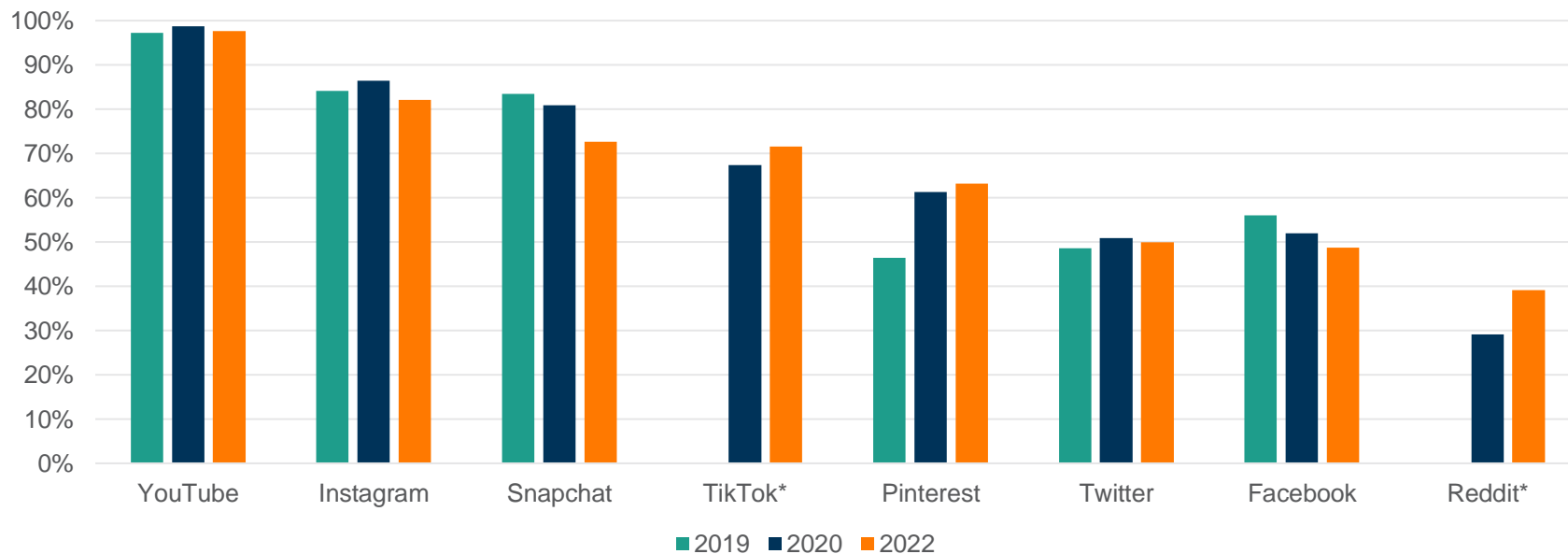
*Question was not asked in 2019
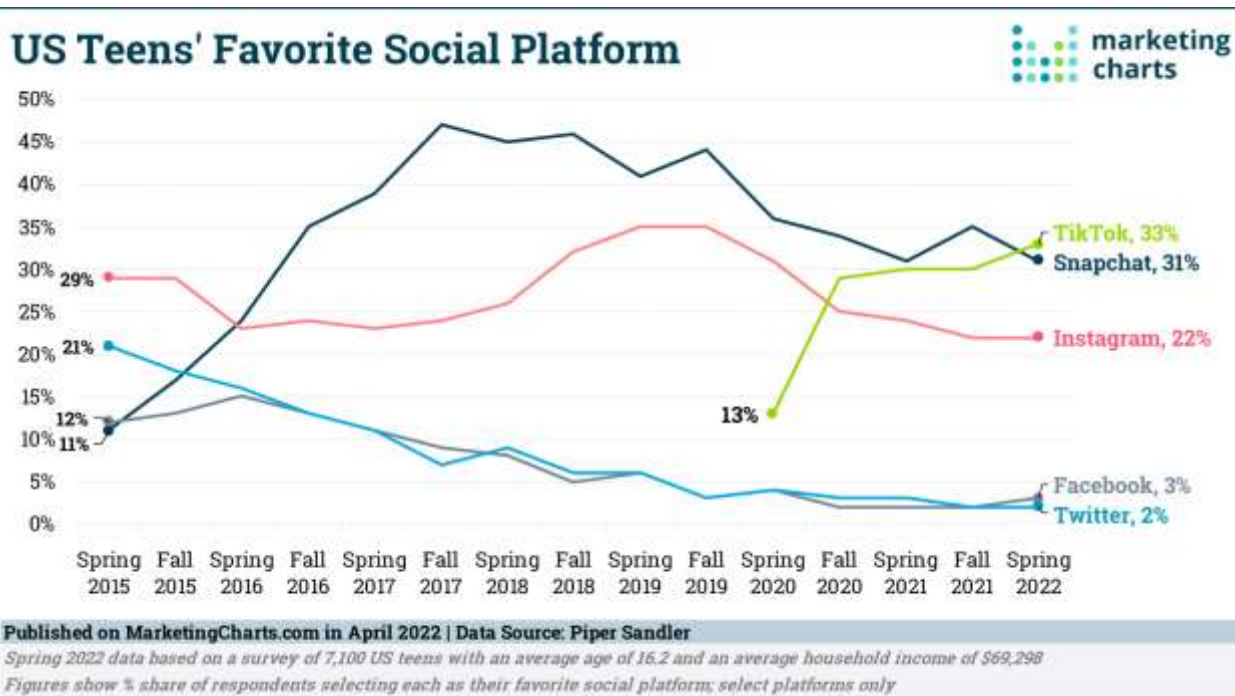
Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research

Students Prefer Video and Picture in College Search

But Brevity May Be Key To Successful Outreach

Social Platform Use in College Search

Legend: ■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2022

Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research

TikTok & Snapchat are Popular Teen Platforms and Both Target & Promote via Video

US Teens' Favorite Social Platform

marketing charts

- TikTok, 33%
- Snapchat, 31%
- Instagram, 22%
- Facebook, 3%
- Twitter, 2%

29%
21%
12%
11%
13%

Spring 2015 | Fall 2015 | Spring 2016 | Fall 2016 | Spring 2017 | Fall 2017 | Spring 2018 | Fall 2018 | Spring 2019 | Fall 2019 | Spring 2020 | Fall 2020 | Spring 2021 | Fall 2021 | Spring 2022

Published on MarketingCharts.com in April 2022 | Data Source: Piper Sandler

Spring 2022 data based on a survey of 7,100 US teens with an average age of 16.2 and an average household income of $69,298

Figures show % share of respondents selecting each as their favorite social platform; select platforms only

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TikTok is a Game Changer

Schools Pay Cents per View

Campaign Group	Start Date	End Date	Delivery Status	Impression Goal	Impressions Delivered	Views	View Rate	Clicks	CTR
TIK - App Gen - UG :: 14762	2021-10-01	2022-02-01	109.32%	500,000	546,596	485,424	88.81%	6,059	1.11%
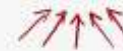
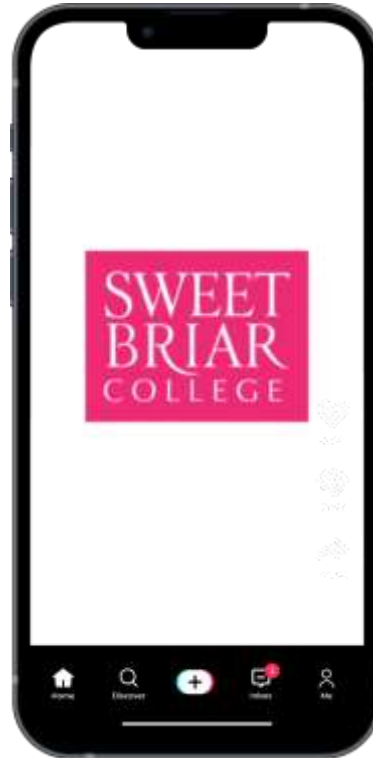Alexa Traffic Rank   Reach %   Pageviews %
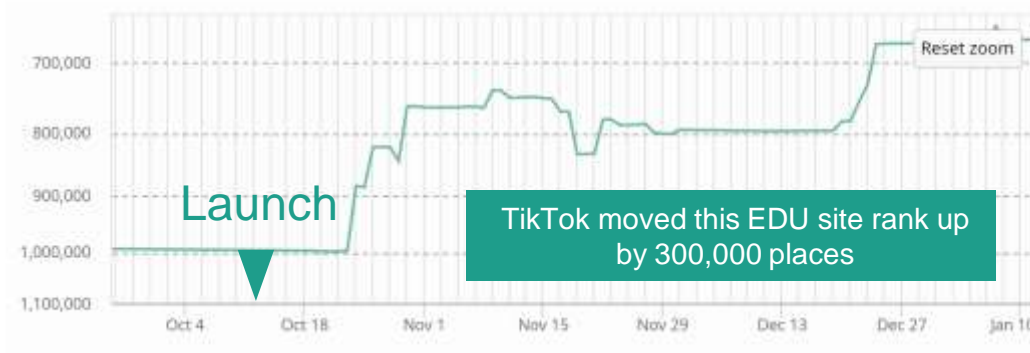
Launch

TikTok moved this EDU site rank up by 300,000 places

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TikTok is Becoming a Top Way to Engage Gen-Z

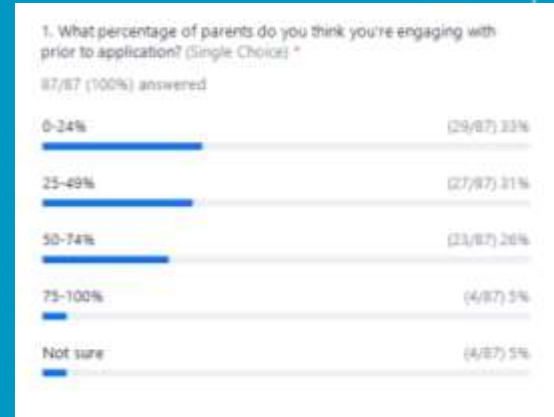# TikTok is Becoming a Top Way to Engage Gen-Z

TikTok is Becoming a Top Way to Engage Gen-Z

Poll

What percentage of parents do you think you're engaging with prior to application?

1. What percentage of parents do you think you're engaging with prior to application? (Single Choice) *

87/87 (100%) answered

0-24%	(29/87) 33%
25-49%	(27/87) 31%
50-74%	(23/87) 26%
75-100%	(4/87) 5%
Not sure	(4/87) 5%

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Reaching Parents Early in the Recruitment Cycle is Critical Now

- 97% of parents/guardians want communication directly from colleges according to a recent Eduventures survey.

- Parent emails are a top request by Encoura partner schools today. These parent emails are meticulously vetted for accuracy through a two-step process of email validation, to ensure the connection can be made.

- Residential Geotargeting of prospects and inquiries is another surefire way to reach parents and their kids in the family home.

- Custom Audience Targeting of Parent/Student records is proven to drive conversion. In a recent test, for every 1 click by a student, parents clicked 4.5 times!

Parents Clicked 4.5 Times

Parent Research Supports Parental Interest in Communicating with Colleges

According to Eduventures' 2021 Prospective Parent Research:

- 52% of prospective parents said they received communications from a college directed at them

- 79% of these parents said they liked that a college reached out to them

- Of those who didn't receive parent-specific communication, 51% would like to

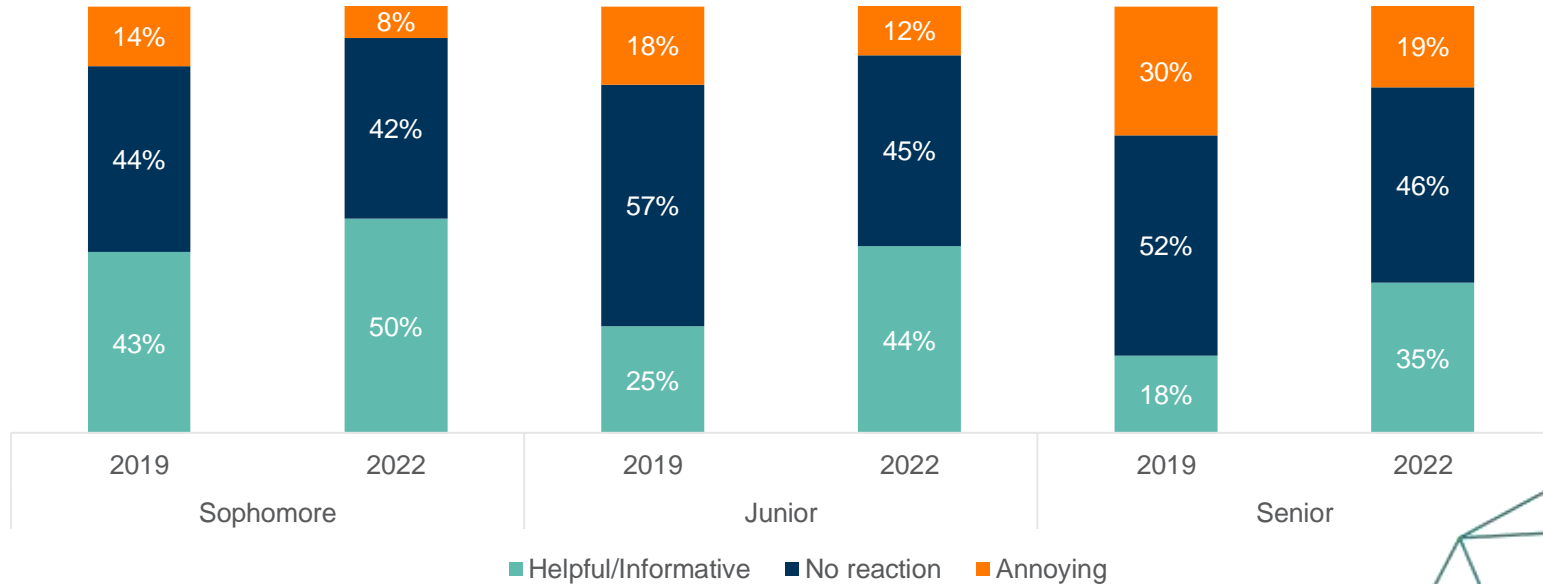- Only 3% believe that colleges should only talk to students
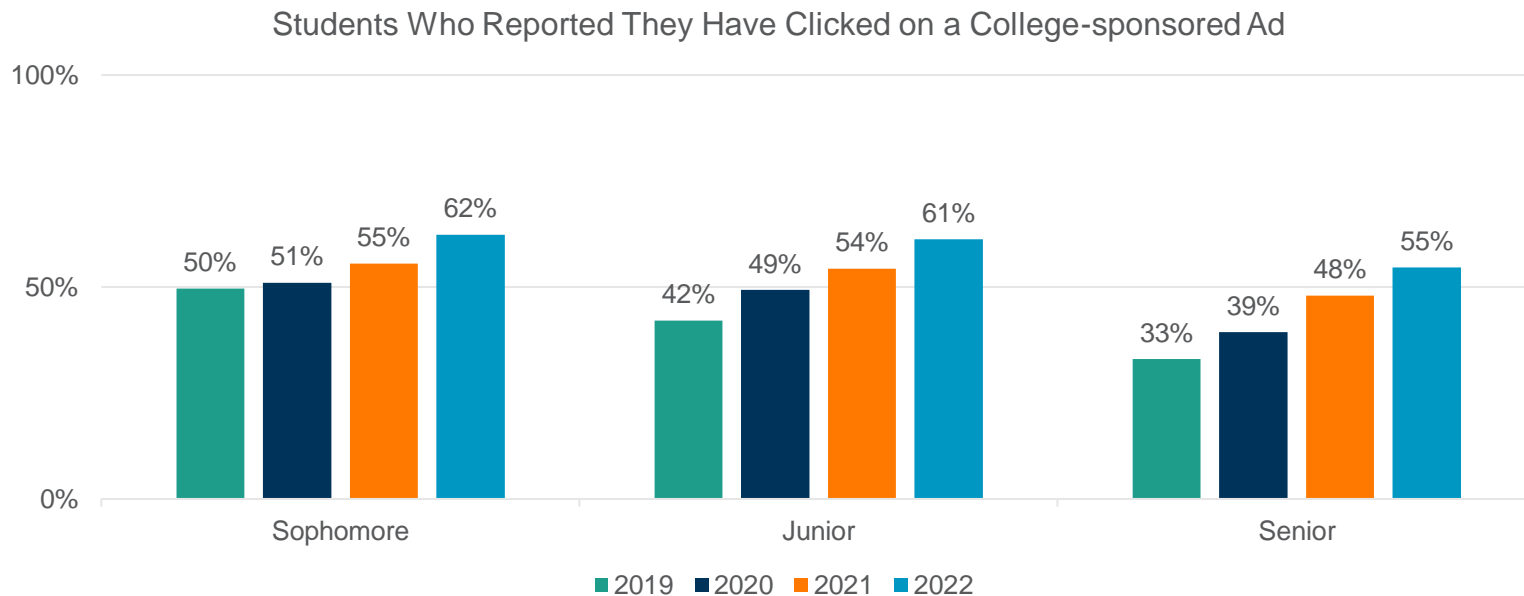
Digital Advertising Perceptions

Student Perceptions of College Ads Are Increasingly Positive

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Perception of Ads Among Student Who Noticed Ads

	Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
Annoying	14%	8%	18%	12%	30%	19%
No reaction	44%	42%	57%	45%	52%	46%
Helpful/Informative	43%	50%	25%	44%	18%	35%

■ Helpful/Informative ■ No reaction ■ Annoying

Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research

Student-Reported Engagement With College Ads Has Increased Throughout the Pandemic

Students Who Reported They Have Clicked on a College-sponsored Ad

Sophomore
- 2019: 50%
- 2020: 51%
- 2021: 55%
- 2022: 62%

Junior
- 2019: 42%
- 2020: 49%
- 2021: 54%
- 2022: 61%

Senior
- 2019: 33%
- 2020: 39%
- 2021: 48%
- 2022: 55%

Legend: ■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021 ■ 2022

Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research

Underserved Students Respond More Positively to College Ads

Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research

22
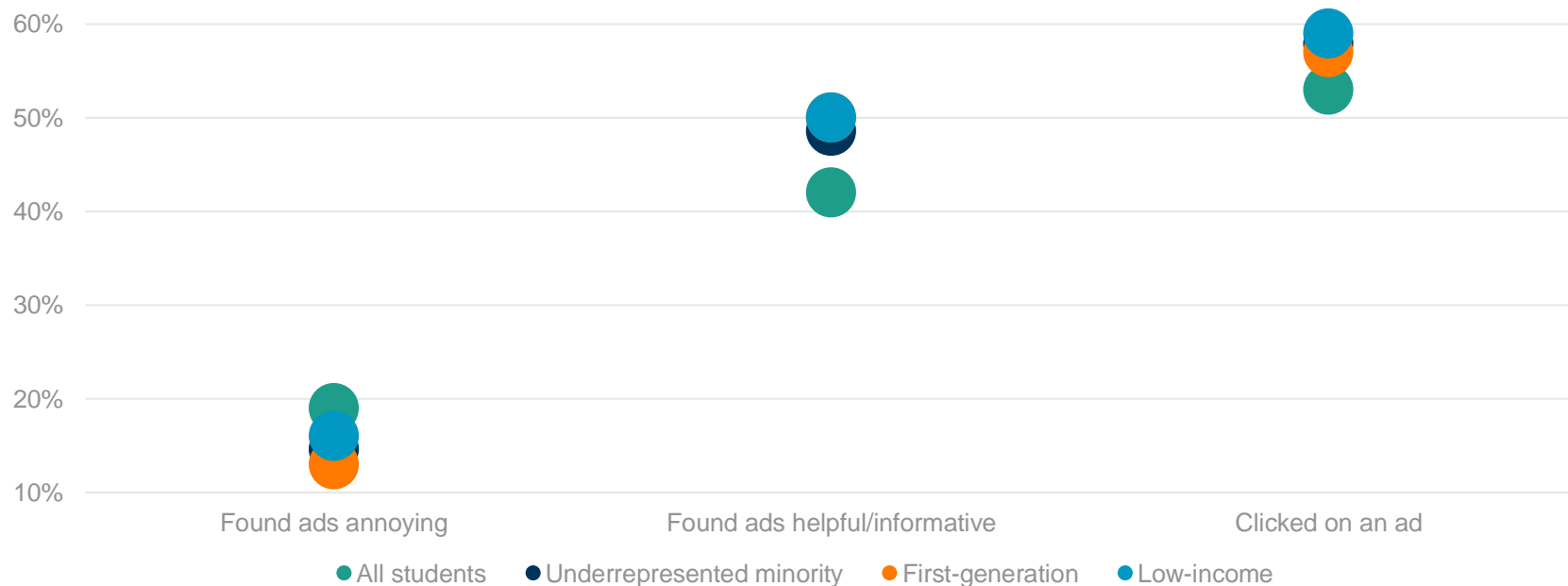
Lookalike Audience Targeting Addresses Gaps, Aids in Shaping

- Male students
- Non-athletes
- Under-represented
- STEM
- High-achieving
- Online
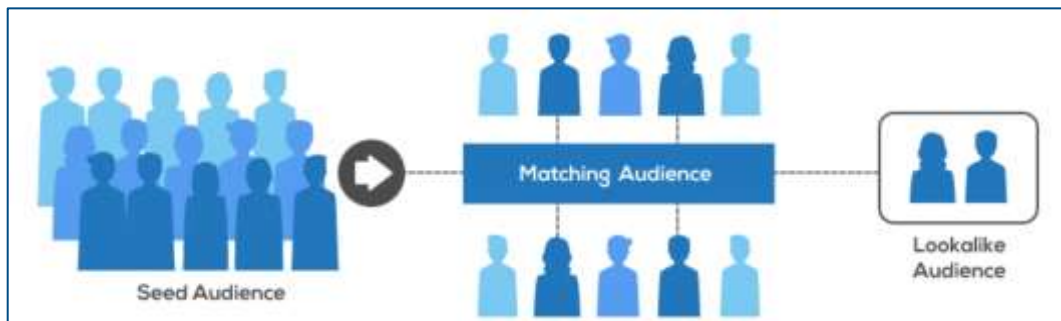
Your seed audience could include graduated students, currently enrolled students, applied students filtered by geography and age.

Lookalike Audience Success: Latinx

- Seed Audience = Latinx graduated students past 3 years plus enrolled students
- Lookalike Audience are teens living within a 40-mile radius of campus
- Animated ads developed in English and in Spanish

⊨ Campaign Group	⊨ Impressions Delivered	⊨ Clicks	⊨ CTR	⊨ Actions
LAL - App Gen - UG :: 16798	13,057	115	0.88%	406

406 Intentional Actions by the Lookalike Latinx Audience in the First 11 Days of this Campaign

admissions_and_aid	255
brand-home_awareness	43
visit_us	106

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Looking Hopefully into the Future

Moving ahead, we should keep in mind that

- Student college search is still largely digital

- Video is important but brevity seems key to success

- Social media use in on the rise, particularly TikTok

- Student perceptions around digital ads have become more positive

- Parents of students are also responding positively to ads they receive

- Digital ads appear useful in reaching underserved student populations

- Students will likely embrace the return to on-campus events, but digital recruitment has become an expectation

Additional Resources and Q&A

Four Digital Marketing Solutions Guaranteed to Enhance Your Enrollment Strategies

When it comes to reaching Gen Z and their households, sending the right message at the right time on the right channel makes all the difference in meeting your enrollment goals.

Learn More

encoura.org/digital-offer/

Four of Encoura's Digital Solutions—along with client success stories—that are proven to work in tandem with your existing marketing and outreach strategies:

Enrollment Goals | Gen-Z & Their Families | Personalize Messages | Search Engine Optimization

Eduventures Admitted Student Research 2022

Thursday, October 20, 2022 at 2pm ET/1pm CT | encoura.org/webinars

Johanna Trovato
Eduventures Senior Analyst

Randolph-Macon College

Engaging Students in a Digital World

[Read More]

The Challenge

Each year, Randolph-Macon College's enrollment team brings in a great class of new students by strategically leveraging their new ideas and partnerships. When the COVID-19 pandemic affected the strategy they were planning on implementing, they stayed true to those strengths. The Randolph-Macon team reached out to Encoura Digital Solutions to meet prospective students where they were, certain that the right messaging on the right channels would bring in another strong class.

Solutions

- Digital Solutions + Implementation + Reporting

- Market Research + Funnel Analysis

Four Digital Marketing Solutions Guaranteed to Enhance Your Enrollment Strategies

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