The Dynamic Duo: Successfully Balancing In-Person & Virtual Recruitment Strategies

Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 2pm ET/1pm CT

Johanna Trovato
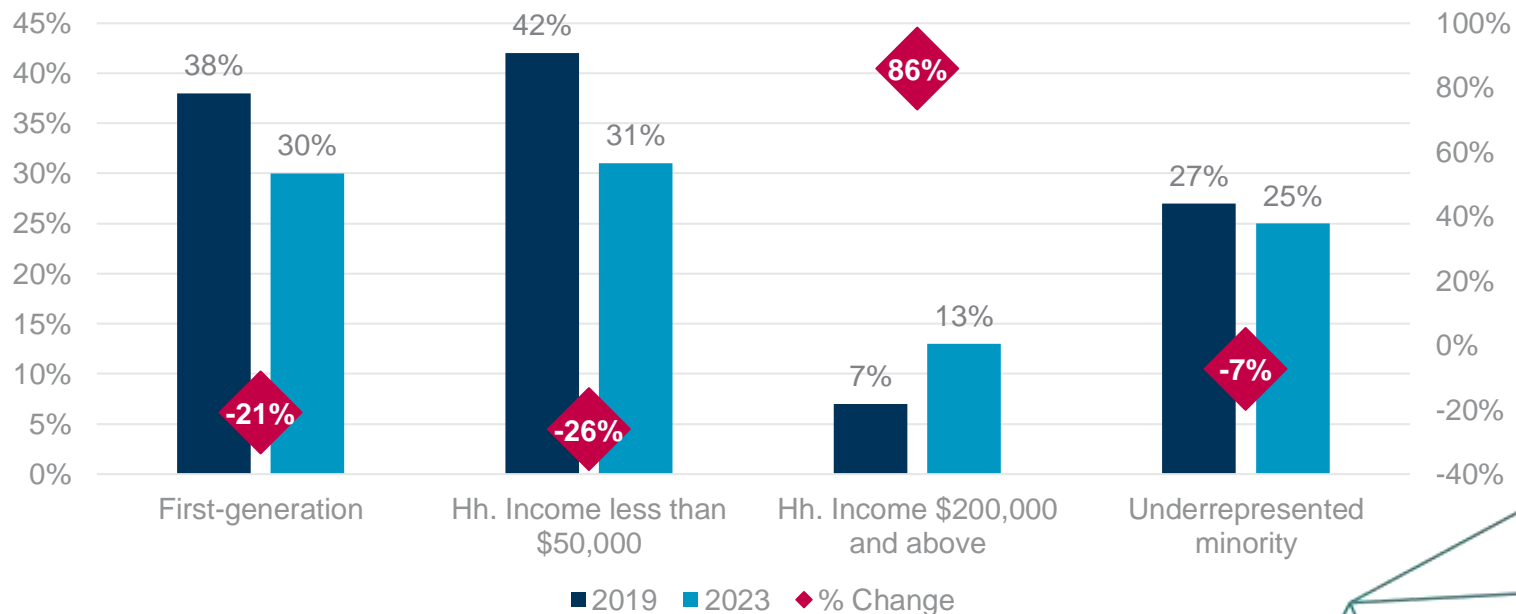*Eduventures
Principal Analyst*

Jason Stevens
*Vice President,
Digital Solutions*
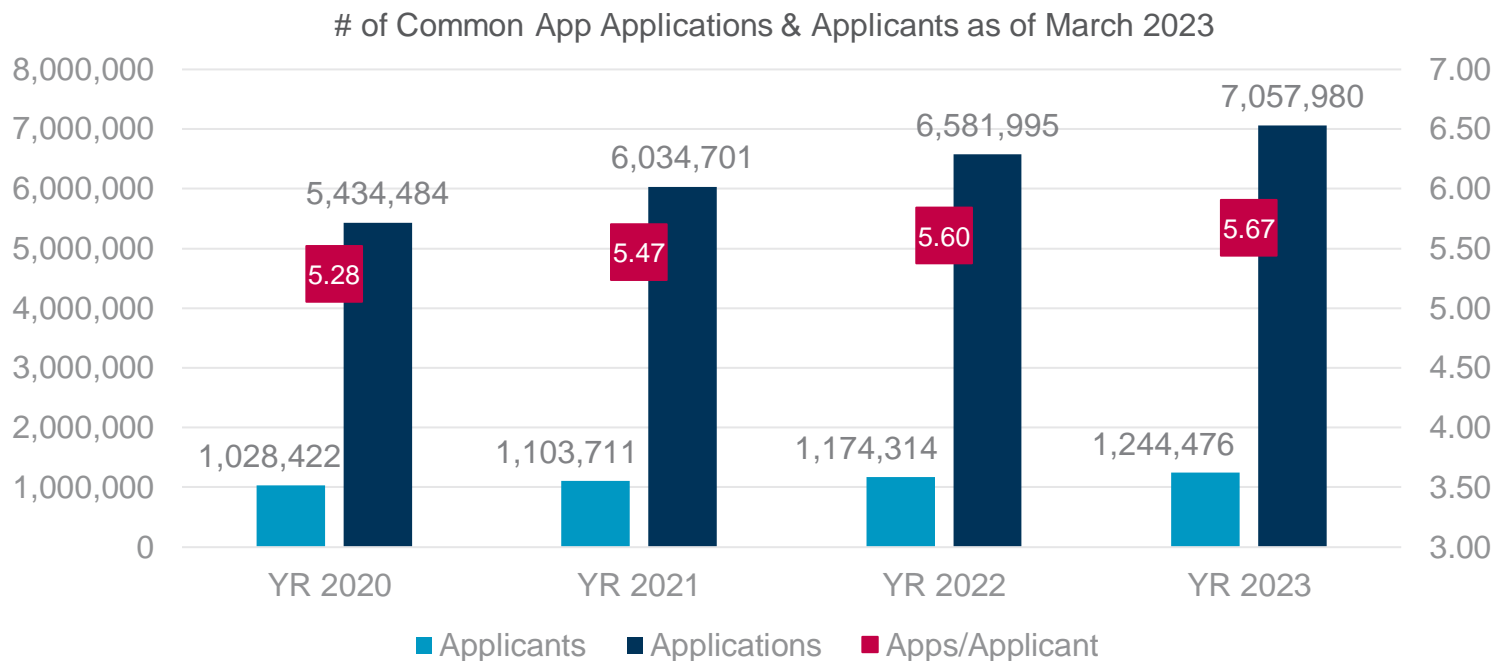
The Recruitment Environment is Constantly Changing

Changes in Student Demographics

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF STUDENTS IN PROSPECTIVE STUDENT RESEARCH SAMPLES 2019 AND 2023

Source: Eduventures Prospective Student Research 2019 - 2023

Changes in Number of Applications

**DESPITE OVERALL ENROLLMENT DECLINE, STUDENTS ARE APPLYING TO MORE SCHOOLS**

of Common App Applications & Applicants as of March 2023

	YR 2020	YR 2021	YR 2022	YR 2023
Applicants	1,028,422	1,103,711	1,174,314	1,244,476
Applications	5,434,484	6,034,701	6,581,995	7,057,980
Apps/Applicant	5.28	5.47	5.60	5.67

■ Applicants ■ Applications ■ Apps/Applicant

Source Common App: Deadline update: first-year application trends through March 2023

encoura
where informed decisions begin

Changes in How Students View Campus Visits

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS WILL STILL VISIT—BUT MAY NOT BE FOR WHY YOU THINK

Best Sources of Information While Narrowing Application List
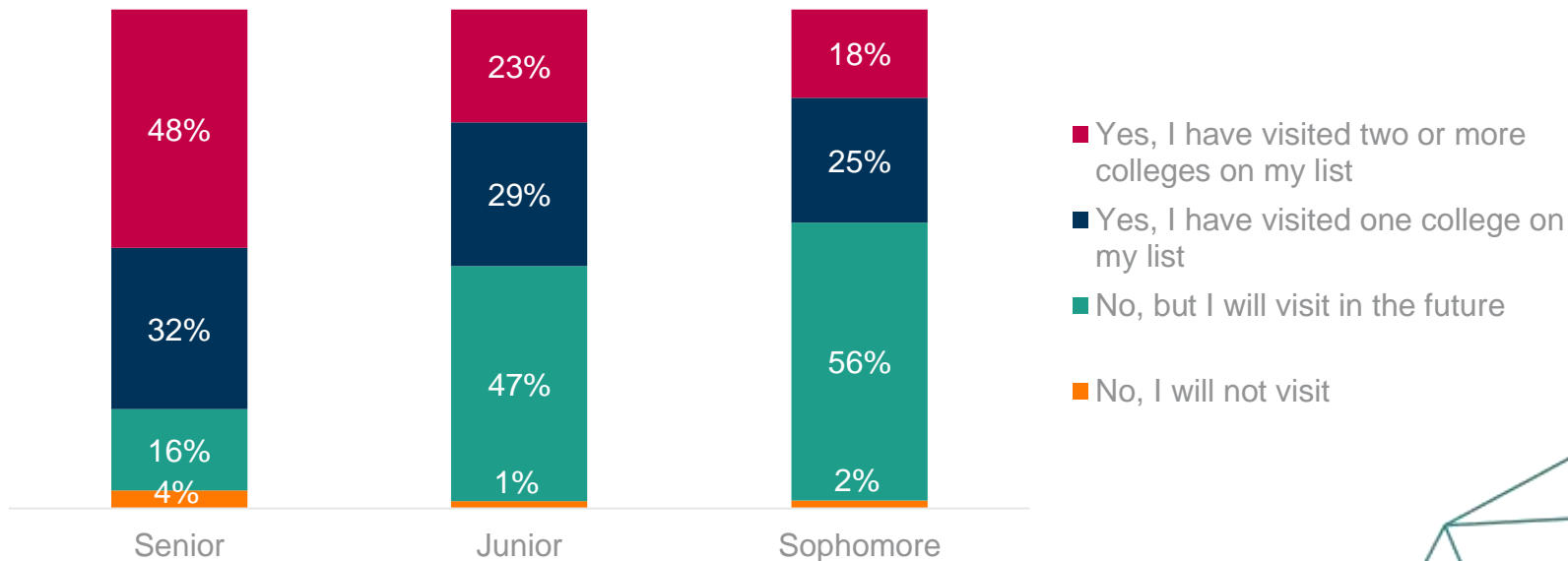

Legend: 2019, 2023
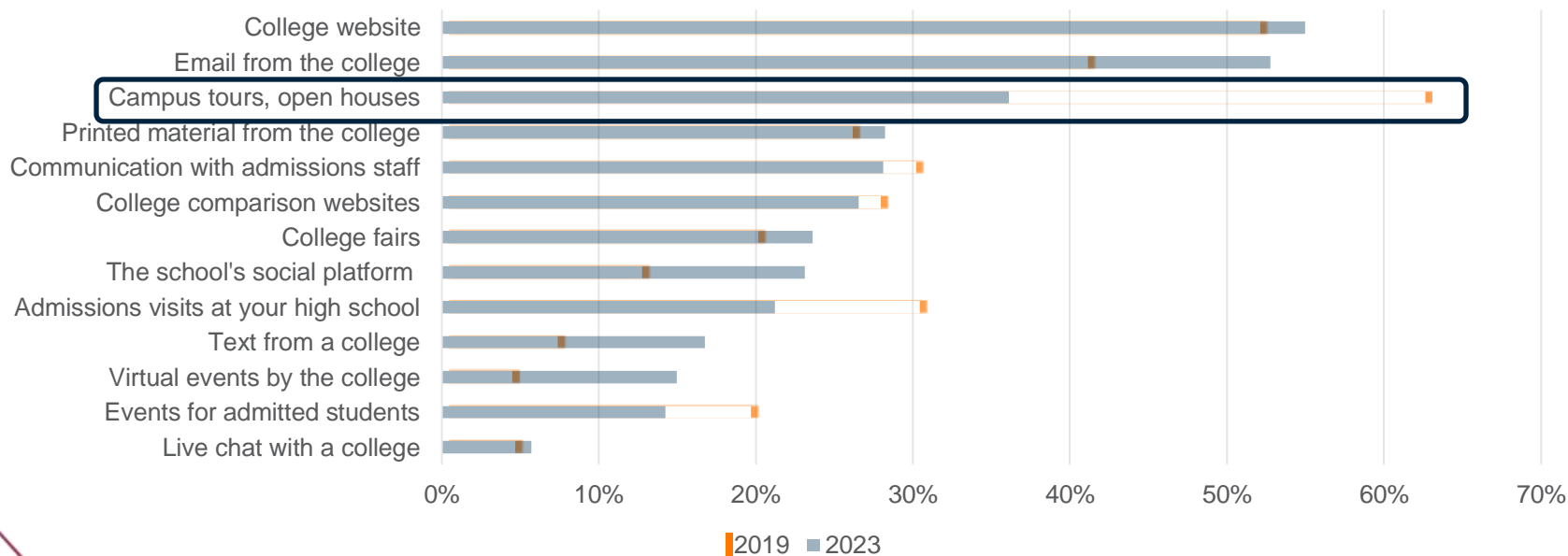
Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research 2019 and 2023
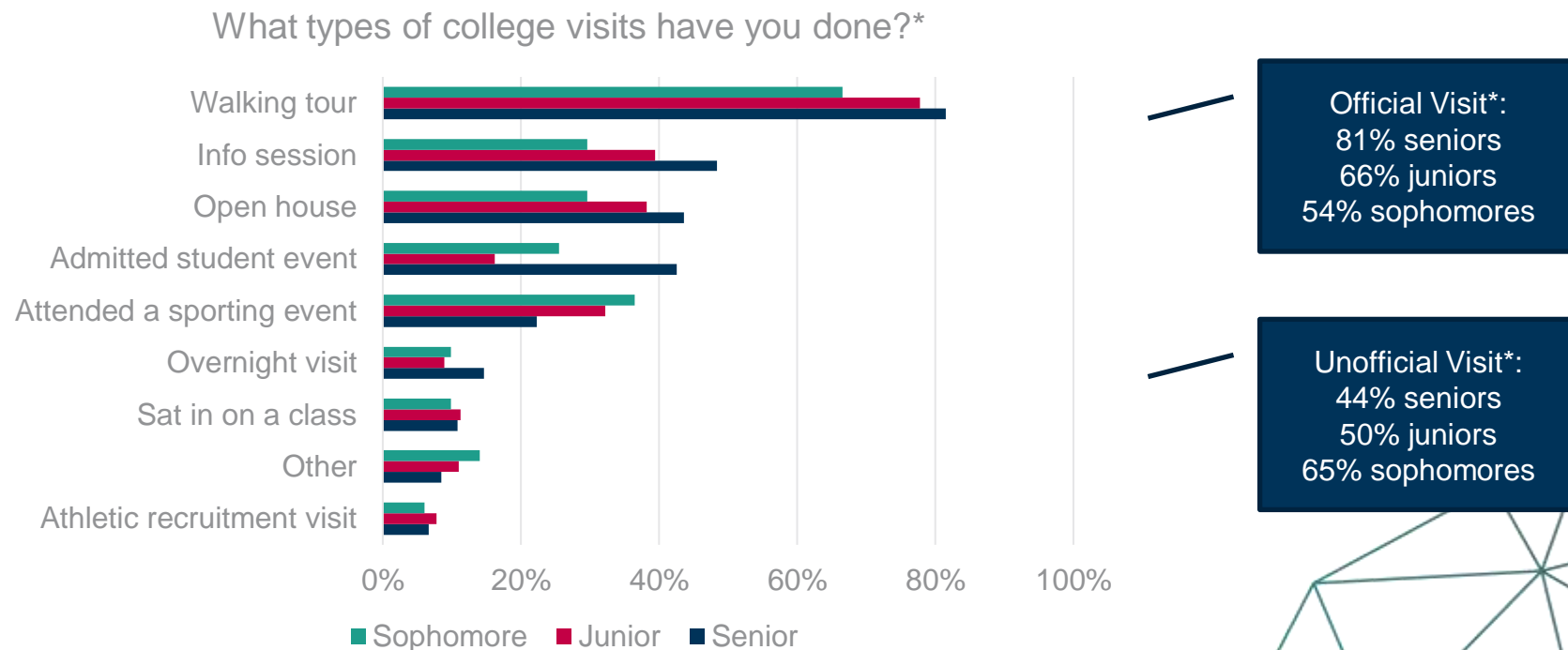
Most Students Still Intend to Visit

NEARLY HALF OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS HAD VISITED MORE THAN ONE COLLEGE BY SPRING

Have you visited one or more colleges you are interested in?

	Senior	Junior	Sophomore
Yes, I have visited two or more colleges on my list	48%	23%	18%
Yes, I have visited one college on my list	32%	29%	25%
No, but I will visit in the future	16%	47%	56%
No, I will not visit	4%	1%	2%

encoura®
Eduventures®
Research

Many Campus Visits Happen Off-Radar

WALKING TOURS OF THE CAMPUS ARE MOST POPULAR

What types of college visits have you done?*

Official Visit*:
81% seniors
66% juniors
54% sophomores

Unofficial Visit*:
44% seniors
50% juniors
65% sophomores

Categories (top to bottom):
- Walking tour
- Info session
- Open house
- Admitted student event
- Attended a sporting event
- Overnight visit
- Sat in on a class
- Other
- Athletic recruitment visit

Legend: ■ Sophomore ■ Junior ■ Senior

X-axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%

*Among students who had visited a campus

encoura
Eduventures
Research

Seniors Rate the Website and Email Higher Than Visits

Best Sources of Information While Making Enrollment Decision

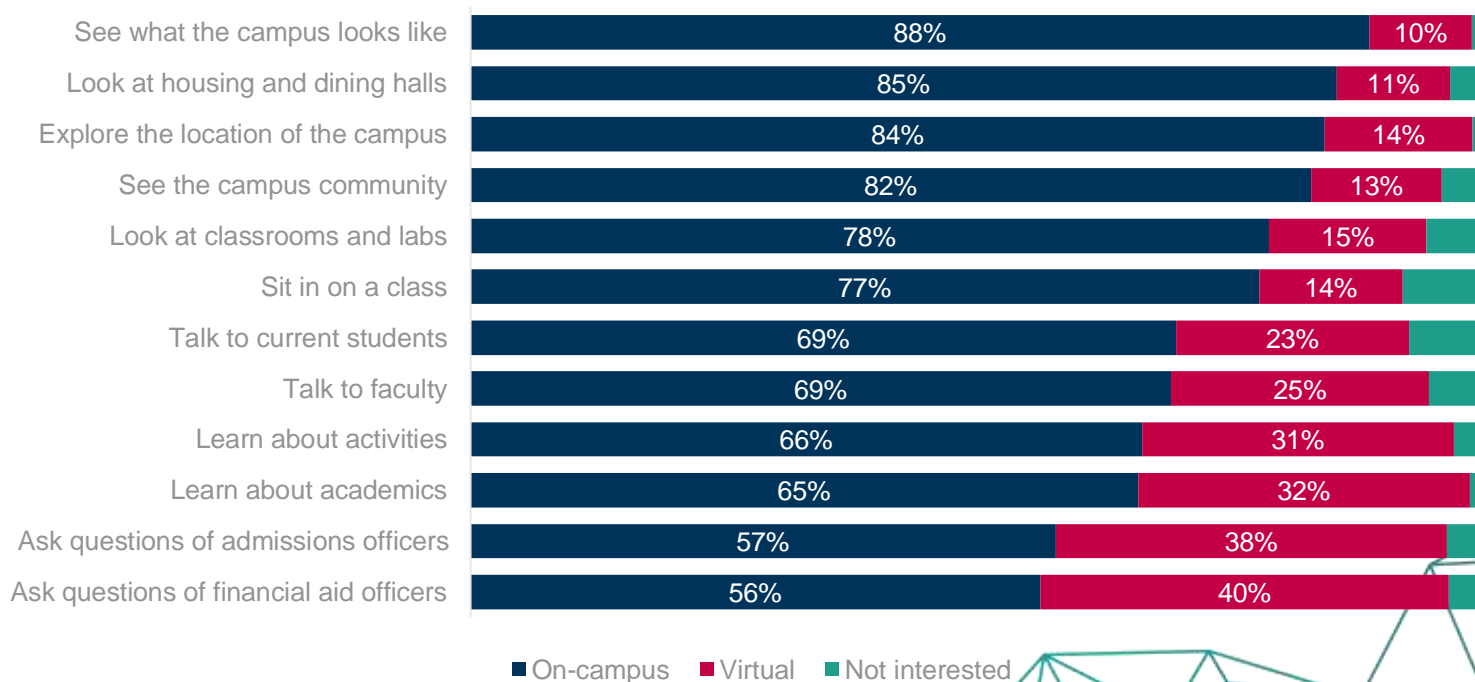| | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% |

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

■ 2019 ■ 2023
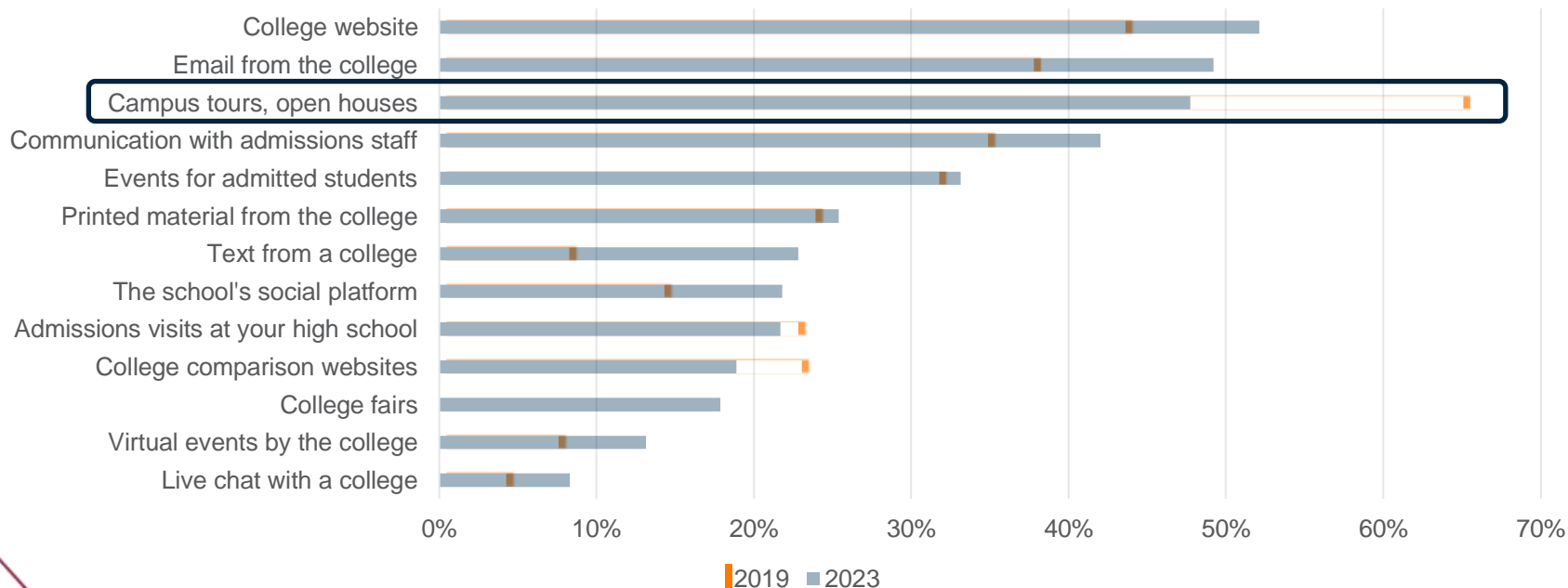
Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research 2019 and 2023

Factual Information Can Be Conveyed Virtually

**STUDENTS REPORT THEY FAVOR ON-CAMPUS INTERACTIONS, BUT MOSTLY TO ASSESS FIT.**

Please select which of these you prefer to do on-campus or virtually

	On-campus	Virtual	Not interested
See what the campus looks like	88%	10%	
Look at housing and dining halls	85%	11%	
Explore the location of the campus	84%	14%	
See the campus community	82%	13%	
Look at classrooms and labs	78%	15%	
Sit in on a class	77%	14%	
Talk to current students	69%	23%	
Talk to faculty	69%	25%	
Learn about activities	66%	31%	
Learn about academics	65%	32%	
Ask questions of admissions officers	57%	38%	
Ask questions of financial aid officers	56%	40%	

■ On-campus ■ Virtual ■ Not interested

Flipping the Traditional Strategy: The Power of Digital

Students Explore Colleges Through the Institutional Websites and Social Presence

Have you done any of the following before applying to a college or university?
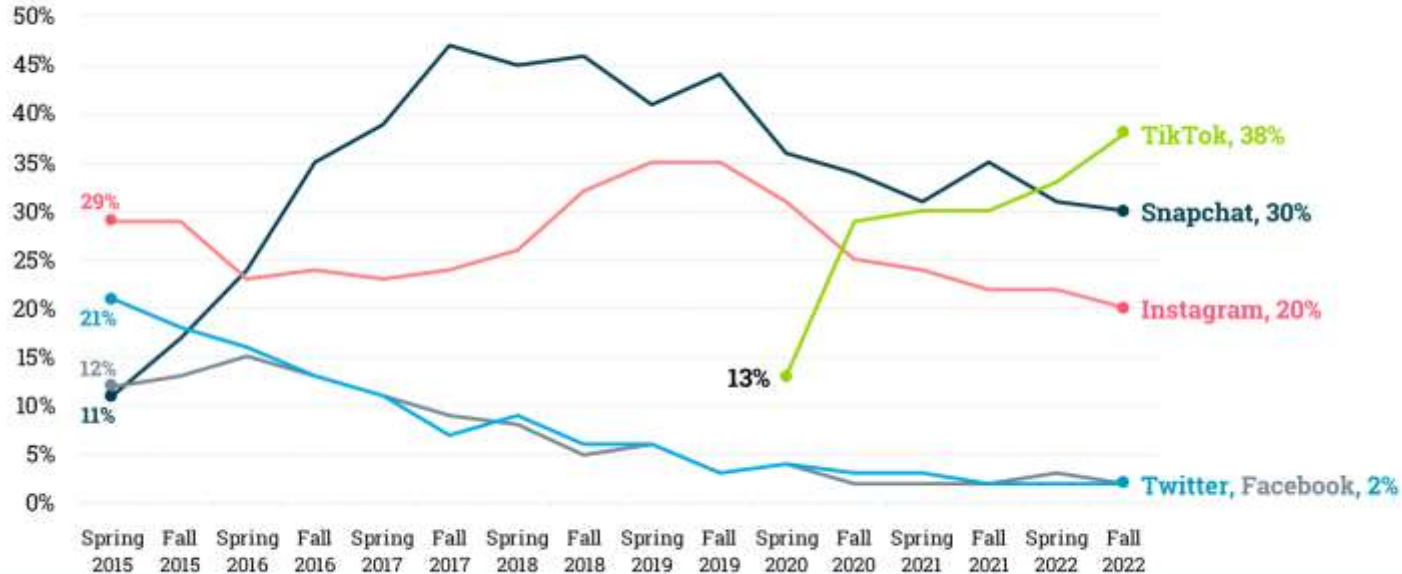
Source: 2023 Student Sentiment Research
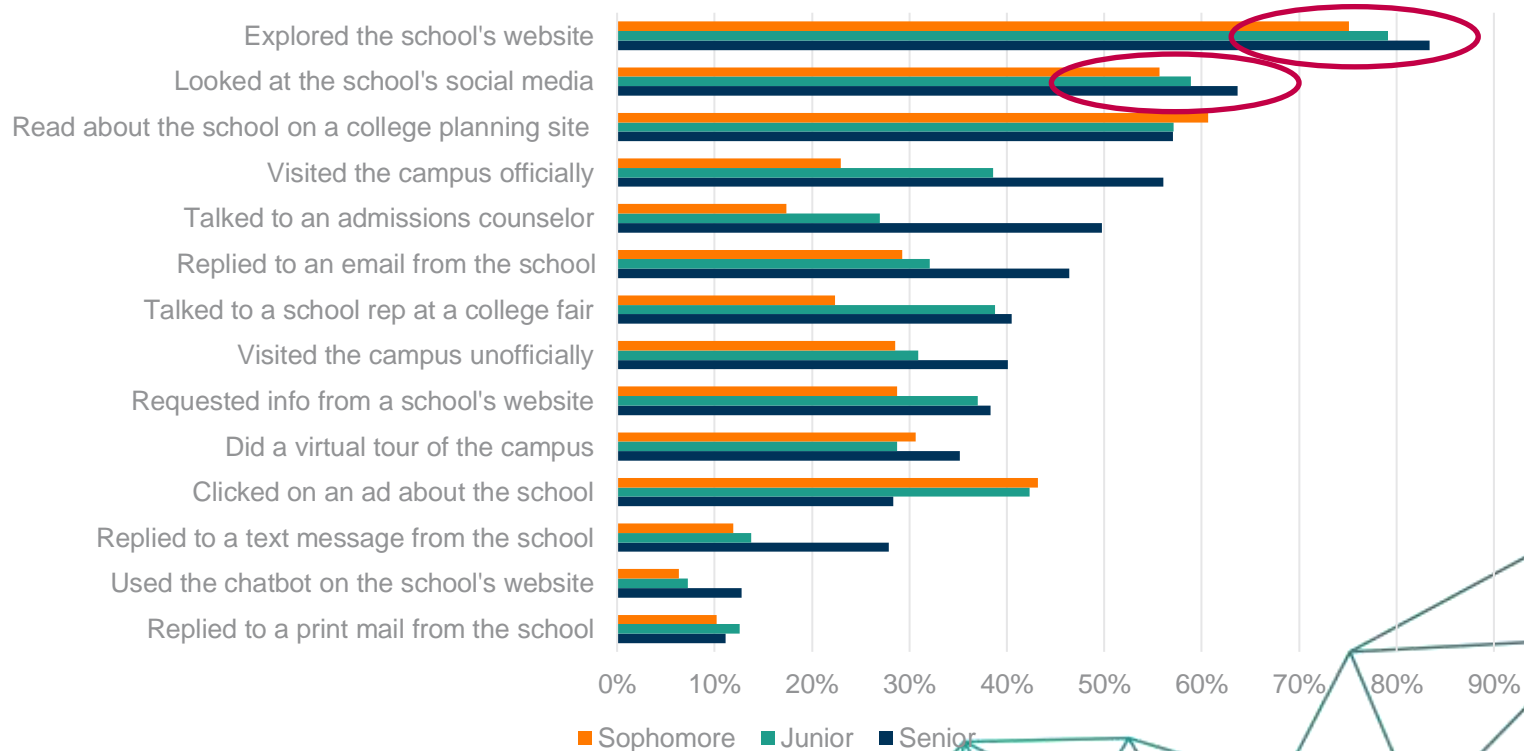
Where are Today's Students Spending their Time?

TIK TOK HAS BECOME THE TOP SOCIAL PLATFORM AMONGST GEN-Z

US Teens' Favorite Social Platform

marketing charts

- TikTok, 38%
- Snapchat, 30%
- Instagram, 20%
- Twitter, Facebook, 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, Fall 2022

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

October 2022 data based on a survey of 14,500 US teens with an average age of 15.8 and an average household income of $66,497

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

Student Perceptions of College Ads Are Increasingly Positive

ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF PROSPECTS HAVE NOTICED COLLEGE-SPONSORED ADS ON SOCIAL OR THE WEB

Perception of Ads Among Student Who Noticed Ads

	Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	2019	2023	2019	2023	2019	2023
Annoying	14%	7%	18%	10%	30%	16%
No reaction	44%	42%	57%	36%	52%	48%
Helpful/Informative	43%	51%	25%	54%	18%	36%

■ Helpful/Informative ■ No reaction ■ Annoying
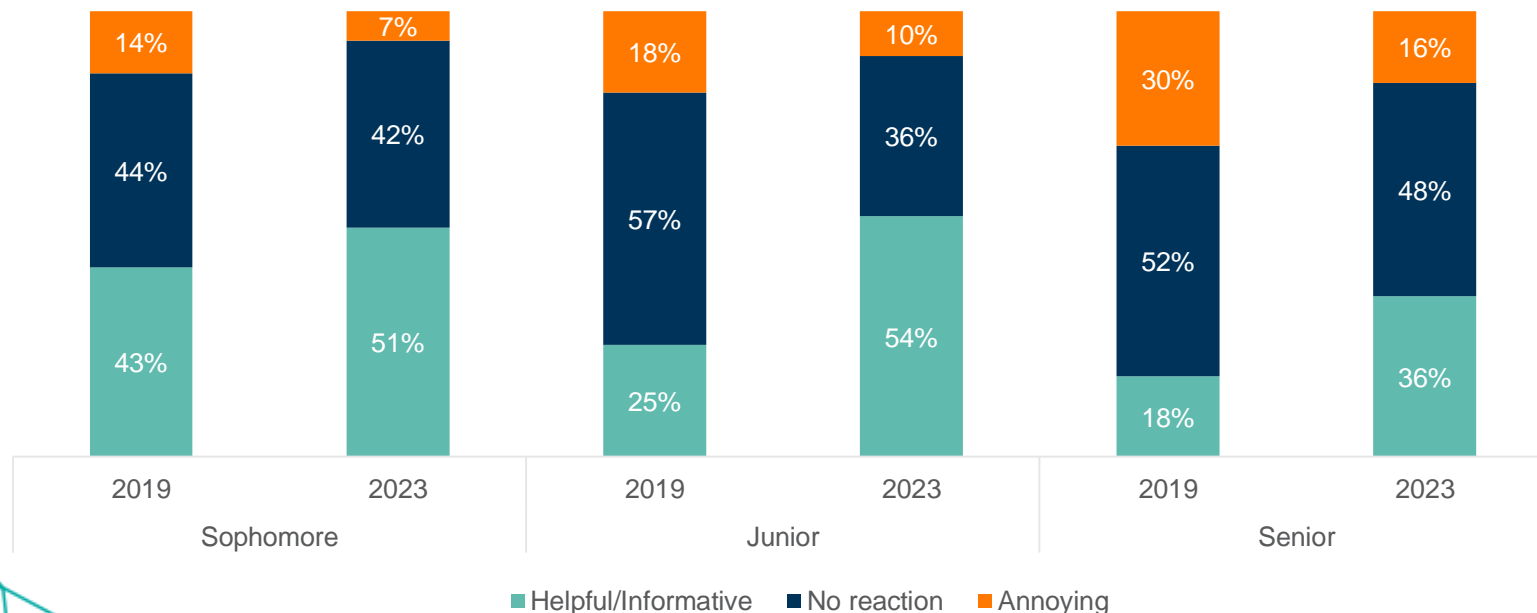
Source: 2023 Student Sentiment Research

Students Prefer Video and Picture in College Search

TIKTOK IS A FAVORITE, BUT ITS FUTURE IS UNCERTAIN

Social Platform Use in College Search
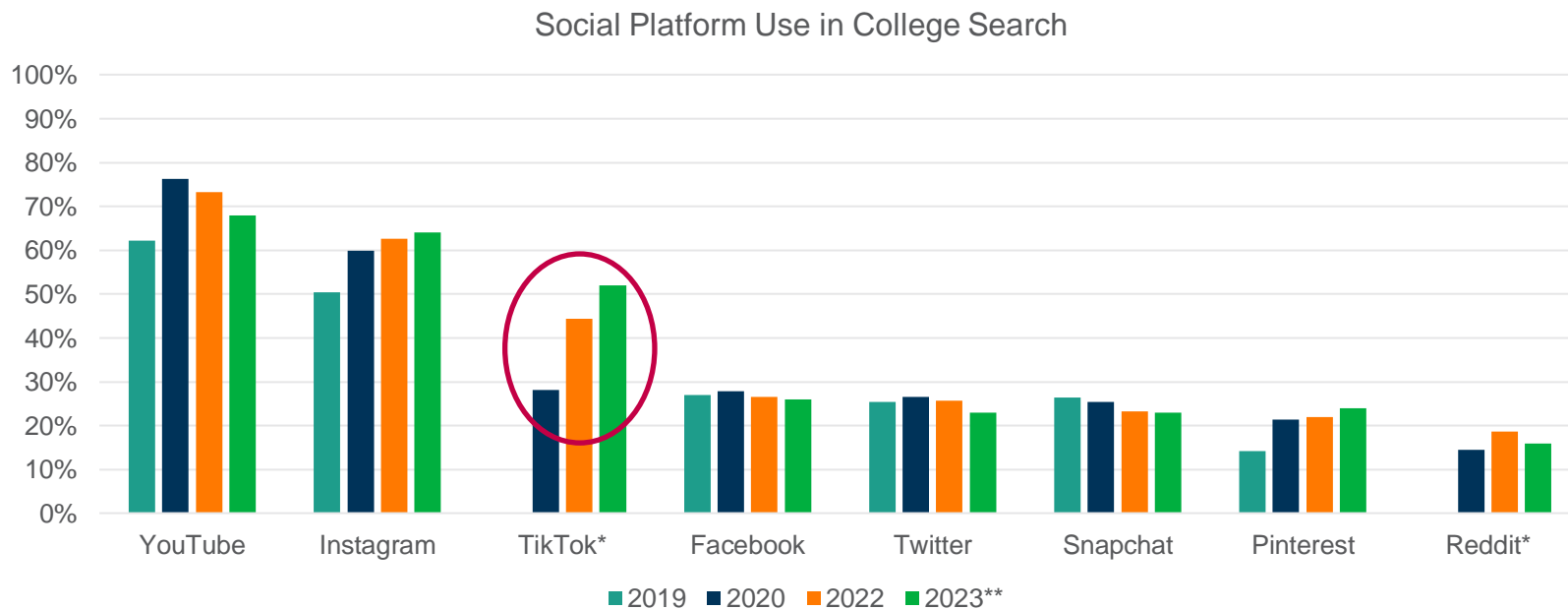
Source: Eduventures Student Sentiment Research
*Platform not included in 2019 research

Students Don't Use Social Platforms in a Vacuum

ONLY 1% OF STUDENTS WHO USED SOCIAL PLATFORMS IN THEIR SEARCH REPORTED THEY ONLY USED TIKTOK

Most Common Combinations of Platforms Used in College Search

Combination	Percentage
YouTube & TikTok & Instagram	7%
YouTube & Instagram	6%
YouTube	4%
TikTok & Instagram	3%
Instagram	3%
Facebook & YouTube & TikTok & Instagram	3%
YouTube & TikTok	2%
Twitter & YouTube & TikTok & Instagram	2%
Facebook & Pinterest & Snapchat & YouTube & TikTok...	2%
Snapchat & YouTube & TikTok & Instagram	2%
Pinterest & YouTube & TikTok & Instagram	2%
Facebook & Snapchat & YouTube & TikTok & Instagram	2%
Facebook & Snapchat & Twitter & YouTube & TikTok &...	2%

Students who used TikTok most often also used Instagram (84%) or YouTube (82%), often in combination with other platforms.

encoura
Eduventures
Research

Implementing a Successful Digital Strategy

Strategy: Engage Students on Top Platforms to Drive them to Your Website and/or Landing Pages

Landing Page Example

Drives prospective students to a landing page to view video (with an apply or visit CTA).

This video could also be repackaged as a YouTube short with a visit CTA.

Direct to Website Examples

Uses urgency messaging with a date to remind students to act.

Strategy: Engage Parents on Top Platforms to Get Them Involved in the Enrollment Process
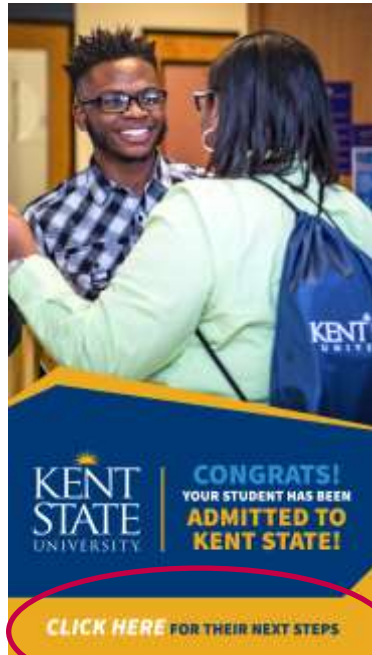
Let parents know what's next for their admitted students.

Remind parents that their child needs to act (can do this throughout the funnel).

Solution: Target the Entire Household Residential Targeting

RESIDENTIAL TARGETING ENGAGES STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

What is Residential Targeting?

Reach students and their families at home on their most-used devices.

Benefit: Proven Success

- Involves students and their families at home and on-the-go.

Team Benefit: Includes Parents/Guardians

- Studies show parents want to hear from colleges.

Our clients have seen **5x more engagement** *with this family outreach strategy.*

97% of parents/guardians are open to communication *directly from colleges**

*Source: Eduventures

What Makes a Good Social Presence?

ACCORDING TO STUDENTS, INSTITUTIONAL SOCIAL PLATFORMS THAT IMPRESSED THEM (17%) HAD THE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

- Shows the campus community

- Shows student life

- Is engaging

- Is real/authentic

- Better yet, it's run by the students

- Helps students see themselves at your school

> I really like the look of their student body. It all seems like everyone has a place and fits in.

> On Instagram they really engage with the undergraduates and provide information on there. They also allow current students to their Instagram and oncoming ones get to interact and actually speak with these current students so you know its not biased or anything.

> The social media made the campus seem alive and vibrant. Most college social media feels very formal and neatly organized. [This school's] social media is engaging.

Source: 2023 Student Sentiment Research

What Are Examples of a Good Social Presence?

STUDENTS PRAISED THESE INSTITUTIONS FOR THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA, AMONG OTHERS
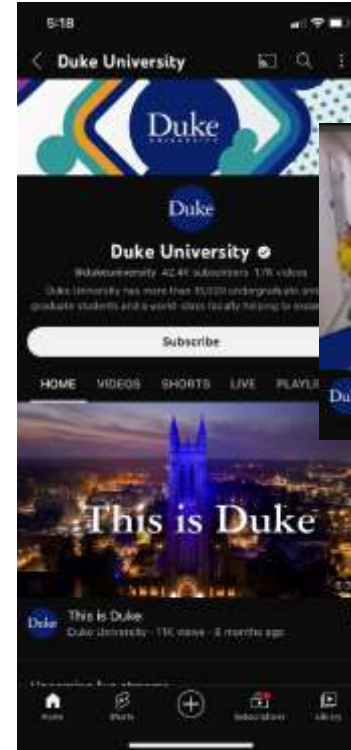
What Makes a Powerful Ad?

KNOWING YOUR GOAL HELPS ADS STAND OUT TO GEN Z AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS

Engage Prospects:
- Show students they belong on your campus and/or in specific colleges

Drive Applications:
- Highlight why your institution is above the rest

Improve Yield + Reduce Melt:
- Ads should support students throughout the enrollment process
- Ads should also involve families

Remember: Your ads should always drive a clear action you want the viewer to take.

Engaging Prospects

This video uses stills, which were animated to show student involvement through academics, etc.

Solution: Implement a Digital Campaign That Drives Action

OMNI-CHANNEL CUSTOM AUDIENCE CAMPAIGNS REACH STUDENTS ON TOP PLATFORMS

What is a Custom Audience Campaign?

Further engages a select group of prospective students who have shown interest.

Client Example: Uses Degree Outcomes

Segmented messaging that uses the Eduventures Student Mindsets delivers a *CTR & Engagement nearly 4x that of non-segmented campaigns.*

What Makes a Good Website?

ACCORDING TO STUDENTS, INSTITUTIONAL WEBSITES THAT IMPRESSED THEM (20%) HAD THE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

- Easy to navigate

- Well organized

- Nice layout/design

- Very informative

- Shows pictures of the campus and real students

> I love how everything is formatted and how the information is easy to understand. It's very important to have the information necessary for applicants and for it to be easily understandable!

> Their website gave insight into what the campus looked like, what their ROTC programs had to offer, and the way they worded certain parts of the website almost seemed like they were speaking directly to me.

> The website was easy to navigate and pleasing to look at. I had no issues finding the information I needed compared to the websites of some other schools.

Source: 2023 Student Sentiment Research

What Are Examples of a Good Website?

**STUDENTS PRAISED THESE WEBSITES, AMONG OTHERS**
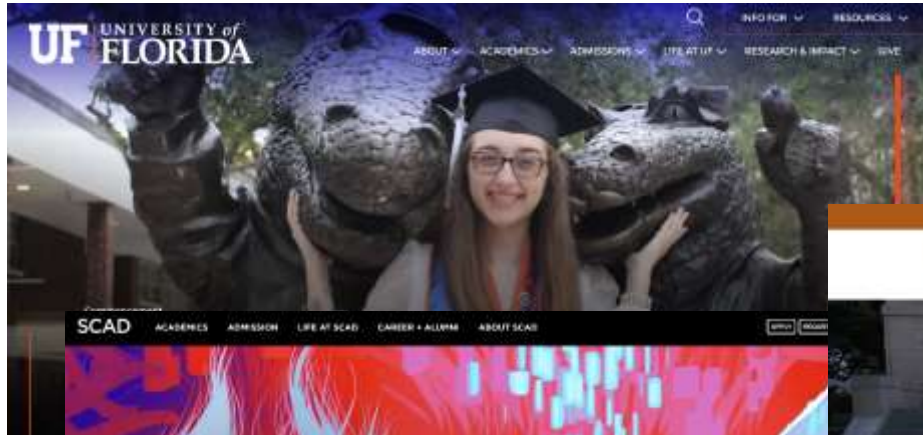
Strategy: Use Landing Pages to Drive Specific Enrollment Goals

LANDING PAGES HELP SPECIFICALLY TARGET THE TOP OF THE FUNNEL

Focus yours on a single goal with a clear CTA:

- Increase campus visits

- Start/complete the application process

- Share specific college events

- Get students to act after watching a video view

  from your digital ad

Remember: Your homepage has several ways to engage and your landing page has one.

Top of Funnel
Your Ad on Social

Landing Page
Specific Info

Campaign Goal
"Conversion"
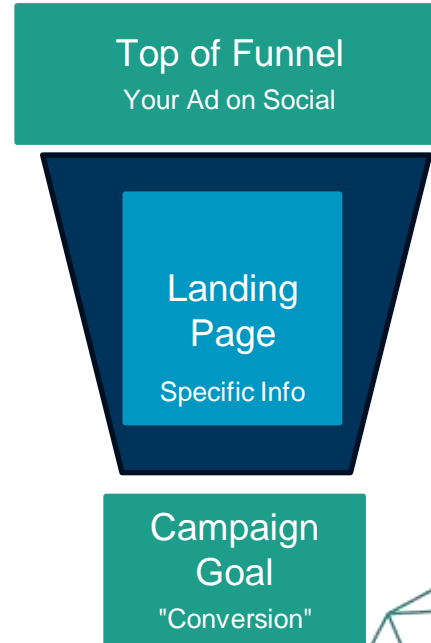
Success Story: Louisiana State University Shreveport (LSUS)

The Challenge

Expand to new markets to advertise their programs and differentiate their brand.

Digital Solutions Used

- Keyword Retargeting
- Residential Targeting
- Geofencing
- TikTok

The Results

In first 6 months, **new market applications increased 130%**
109% increase in applications from minority students from prior year
10% increase in total application pool
Students excitedly approached recruiters in response to digital marketing

In Summary

Key Takeaways

- The recruitment environment continues to shift—institutions must adapt with the changing tides

- Student search is now largely happening in the digital space, increasingly on social platforms, but campus visits are still desired by students

- Visits should focus on the experience while digital sources provide the information students are seeking

- A good institutional social presence is characterized by engaging and authentic content that shows campus life and community, but social media also serves as a platform for advertising that drives engagement to your website

- Persona-based messaging and corresponding landing pages is critical to drive higher engagement

- Your website is a crucial reference tool for students and should be informative, organized, and easy to navigate
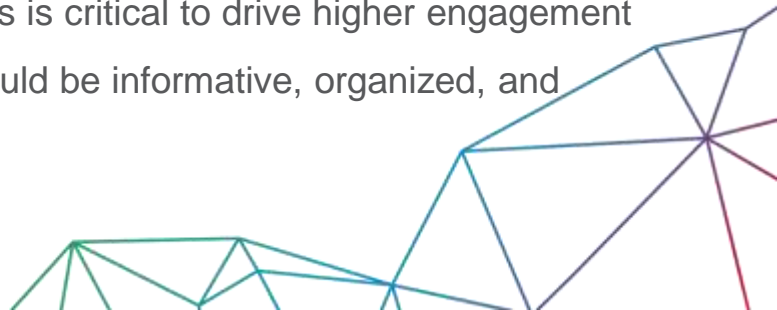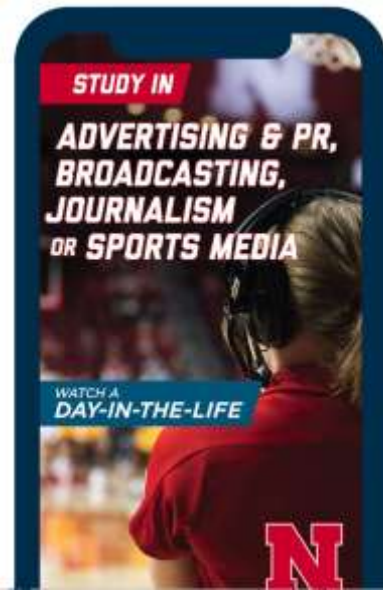
Additional Resources

Effective Video Solutions to Boost Student Engagement

Schedule a meeting with a member of our Digital Solutions team to discuss how we can help you identify new opportunities to reach prospective students.

encoura.org/digital-video-showcase

Featured Keynotes

EDUVENTURES SUMMIT
encoura
2023
HIGHER ED REMASTERED

June 14-16, 2023
BOSTON, MA
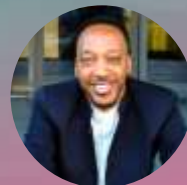
Jose Andres
Chef, Restaurateur, Humanitarian

Paul LeBlanc
President, Southern New Hampshire University

Trabian Shorters
Founder & CEO of BMe Community, Social Entrepreneur, and Author

Joy Moore
Executive Director of the Pine Manor Institute for Student Success at Boston College

Explore the Agenda
& Register

encoura®
where informed decisions begin

Thank you.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Johanna Trovato   **Jason Stevens**
Eduventures Principal Analyst   *Vice President, Digital Solutions*
(e) johanna.trovato@encoura.org   (e) jason.stevens@encoura.org

ENCOURA.ORG