



PRESENTATION HANDOUT



High School Students' and
Families' Perceptions of College
Financing: Help Them Turn
Perceptions into Reality!

Your presenters

Darlene Dilley, M.Ed.

Associate Provost for Enrollment Management
Utah Tech University
Darlene.Dilley@Dixie.edu

Raquel Bermejo, Ed.D.

Associate Vice President for Market Research
Ruffalo Noel Levitz
Raquel.Bermejo@RuffaloNL.com

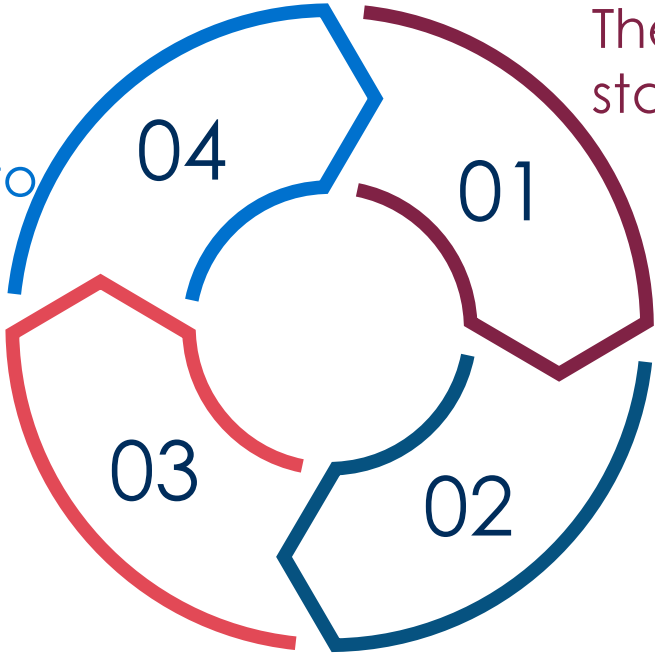
High school students' and families' perceptions of college financing- Help them turn perceptions into reality!



Let's help families and students turn perceptions into reality!



The journey starts at home



Families and college financing



High school students and college financing



The Journey Starts At
Home

Join by Web



- 1 Go to **PollEv.com**
- 2 Enter **RUFFALONL**
- 3 Respond to activity

<https://pollev.com/ruffalonl>

How are families involved?

88% of families

have reviewed students' financial aid award letters and college financing in general



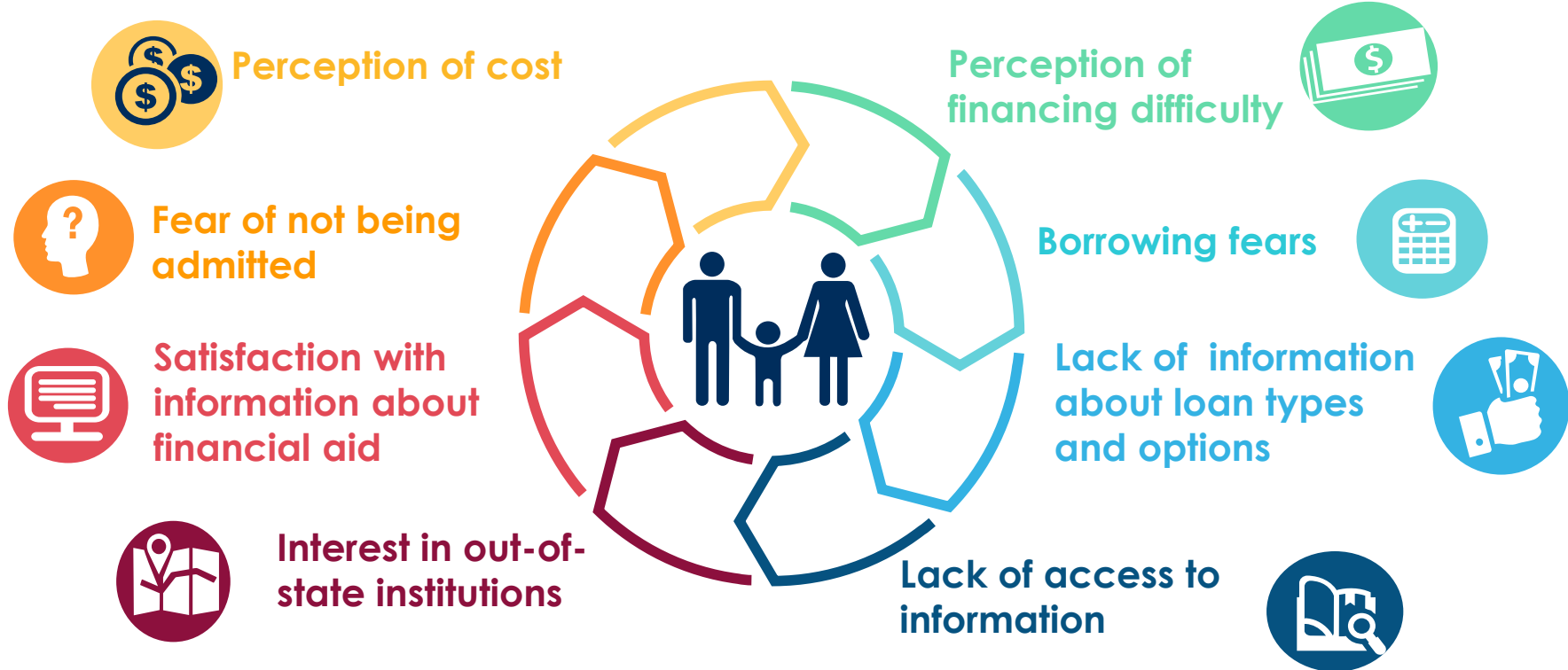
88% of families

are involved in college planning in 11th grade

70% of families

have discussed how they will finance students' college education by 11th grade

Family's support and involvement is related to...



Turning the data into action!

- Gather parent/family contact information early
- Ensure information is sent to students *and* families
- Send the right message, at the right time, to the right audience
- Personalized, transparent, & segmented messaging
- Net Price Calculator
 - Ensure it's user-friendly and a marketing tool
 - Make visible and easily accessible on the website
 - Send link (or QR code) in communication plans and outreach
- Provide road map on how to pay for college for students
- Messaging needs to be simplified and explanatory, especially for students whose parents/families are not involved
- Address borrowing fears by using value language & messaging – long-term investment, ROI, the value of education appreciates over time

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a blue checkered shirt. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand and have their left hand on a laptop keyboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. In the center, the text "High School Students and College Financing" is written in a white, sans-serif font, arranged in three lines.

High School Students and College Financing

On average, 11th graders
are interested in



5 colleges or universities



Asian	5
Black	5
Hispanic	5
White	6

Top Ten Factors to become interested in an institution

11th graders

Availability of major or program of study	51%
Cost: It was affordable enough for me to go there	48%
I liked the location	45%
I believe I would be accepted	34%
Good reputation	34%
I liked the information and communications (emails, ads, mail, etc.) I received	25%
I felt welcome when I visited	21%
My school counselor encouraged me to apply	18%
I attended a college fair and thought this college might be a good fit for me	15%
One of my friends applied there	13%

Top Five Factors to become interested in a college or university by 11th grade

First-Generation

Cost: affordable	48%
Location: I liked the town/city	40%
Availability of major or program of study	40%
I liked the information and communications (emails, ads, mail, etc.) I received	33%
Good reputation	32%

Continuing Generation

Availability of major or program of study	57%
Location: I liked the town/city	51%
Cost: affordable	49%
Good reputation	40%
I believed I would be accepted	39%

Top Five Factors to become interested in a college or university by 11th grade

Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
Cost: affordable 59%	Cost: affordable 53%	Availability of major or program of study 54%	Availability of major or program of study 54%
Good reputation 45%	Availability of major or program of study 46%	Cost: affordable 47%	Location: I liked the town/city 50%
Availability of major or program of study 41%	I liked the information and communications (emails, ads, mail, etc.) I received 43%	Location: I liked the town/city 46%	Good reputation 44%
Location: I liked the town/city 38%	Location: I liked the town/city 32%	I believed I would be accepted 38%	Cost: affordable 40%
I believed I would be accepted 26%	I believed I would be accepted 28%	My school counselor encouraged me to apply 29%	I believed I would be accepted 32%

Top Five Factors to become interested in a college or university by 11th grade

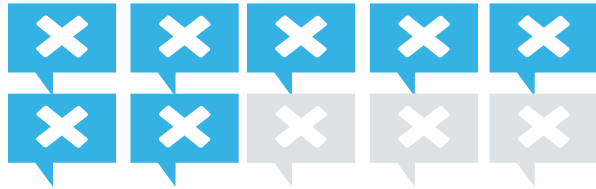
Southwest	West	Northeast	Midwest	Southeast
Availability of major or program of study 50%	Availability of major or program of study 66%	Cost: affordable 47%	Availability of major or program of study 56%	Cost: affordable 54%
Cost: affordable I believed I would be accepted 48%	Location: I liked the town/city 64%	Good reputation 47%	Cost: affordable 48%	Location: I liked the town/city 51%
Location: I liked the town/city 25%	Cost: affordable 47%	Availability of major or program of study 42%	Location: I liked the town/city 46%	Availability of major or program of study 45%
I attended a college fair and thought this college might be a good fit for me 23%	Good reputation I believed I would be accepted 47%	Location: I liked the town/city 39%	Good reputation 33%	I believed I would be accepted 42%
	I believed I would be accepted 36%	I liked the information and communications (emails, ads, mail, etc.) I received 25%	I believed I would be accepted 33%	Good reputation 30%

Join by Web



- 1 Go to **PollEv.com**
- 2 Enter **RUFFALONL**
- 3 Respond to activity

<https://pollev.com/ruffalonl>



70% of 11th graders lose interest in at least one college or university by the end of 11th grade



First-gen	72%
Continuing gen	65%

Asian	82%
Black	73%
Hispanic	68%
White	72%

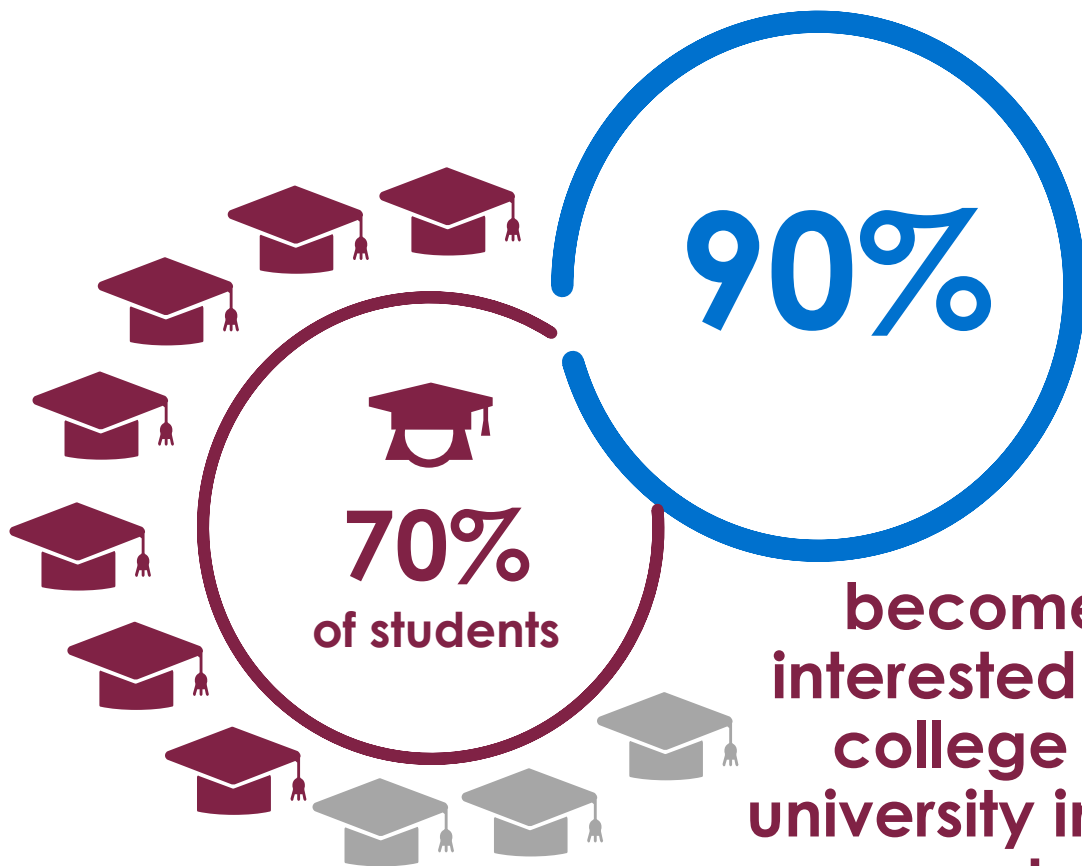
Northeast	59%
Midwest	79%
Southeast	68%
Southwest	82%
West	62%

Involved family	71%
Not involved family	50%

Male	62%
Female	75%

Top Five Factors to lose interest in a college or university by 11th grade

Cost: Too expensive	63%
I thought I was interested, but I learned more and then decided I was not	38%
I was worried I would not be accepted	36%
Location- I did not like the town/city	27%
They did not have my major	26%



applies to
one of
those
“new”
schools

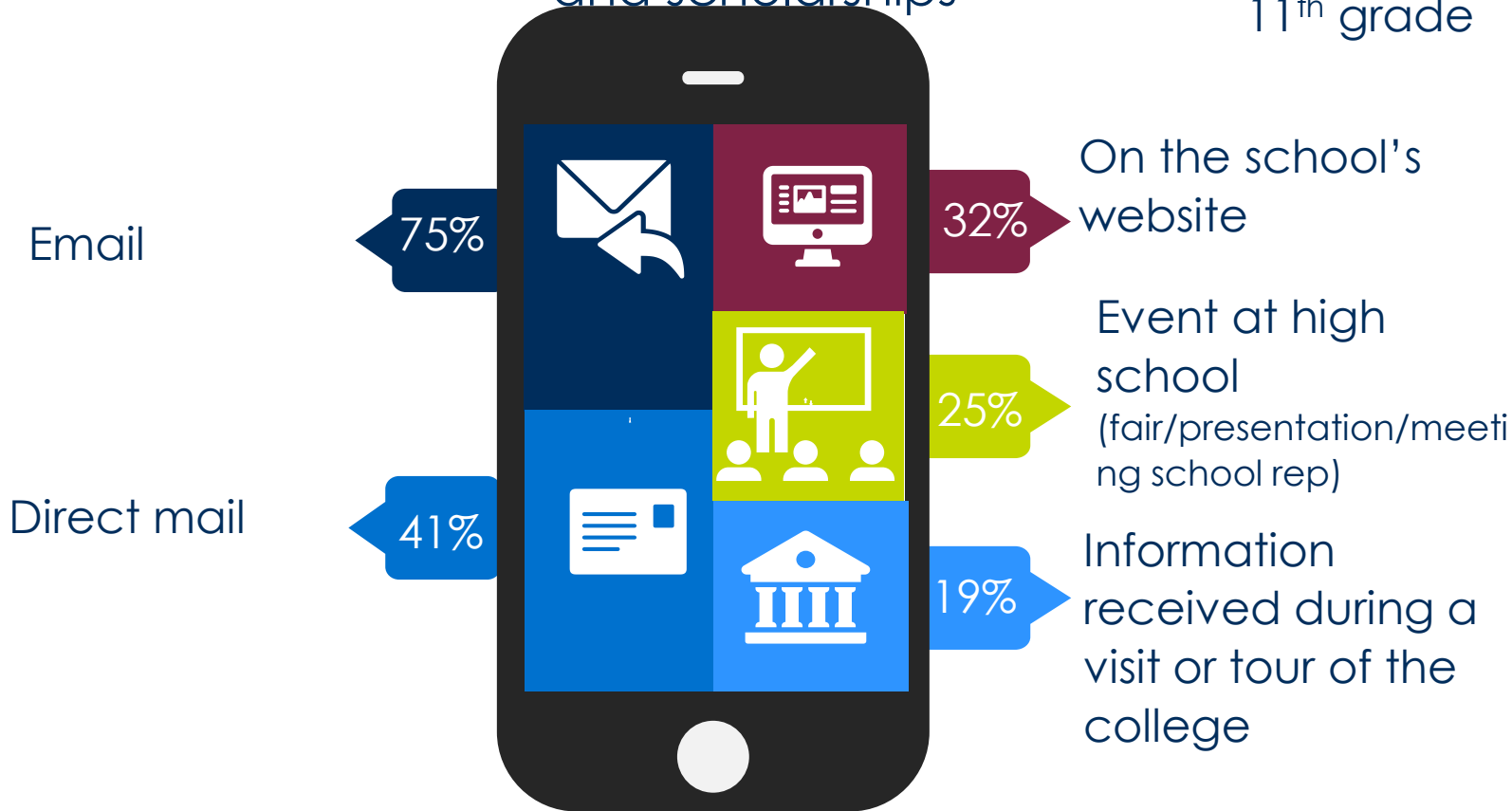
**becomes
interested in a
college or
university in 12th
grade**

Turning the data into action!

- Every factor became more important for 12th graders when applying
- Senior name buys, marketing, and outreach are critical!
- Students applying to 7 schools on average (jumped during the pandemic)
- Affordability rises significantly in importance senior year – Emphasize NPC; Financial Aid/FAFSA; Scholarships, including private, endowed, community opportunities (Scholarship Universe or other search platforms); payment plans
- On-the-spot pre-scholarship awarding during fall events
- Test optional or test blind admissions here to stay at many institutions
 - Communicate your policy clearly and effectively
 - May influence whether or not students apply, especially some underrepresented students
- Visit incentives: swag, bonus scholarships, travel stipend, parking permits, bookstore or other gift cards
- Highlight location including surrounding community and environment. Incorporate off-campus experiences into open house events, and campus visits.

Channels used by institutions to send information about financial aid and scholarships

11th grade



Top five preferred **channels** to receive communication regarding financial aid and scholarships -11th grade



Email

81%



Printed communications and mail

72%



Text messages

67%



Face-to-face

42%



Website

36%

Top five preferred **channels** to receive communication regarding financial aid and scholarships -12th grade



Email

90%



Printed communications and mail

73%



Text messages

71%



Website

34%



Via the Online Student Portal

34%

Top five **sources** of information on scholarships and financial aid - 11th grade



Information learned during an in-person a tour/campus visit

93%



Colleges' or universities' websites

93%



Information learned during a virtual tour

89%



College planning websites

87%



FAFSA website

86%

Top five **sources** of information on scholarships and financial aid - 12th grade



Colleges' or universities' websites

95%



Parents, friends, and/or relatives

91%



Emails, letters, brochures, etc. from colleges or universities

91%



High school counselor

80%



College planning websites

76%

Turning the data into action!

- Catch people when they are listening and where they are listening - Right message, right time, right audience, **right channel**
- Early, robust, integrated, multi-channel marketing & outreach to students, families, high school counselors
- Snail Mail is not dead!!
 - Print materials to homes for students (and families)
 - Ensure budgets monies allocated for strategic marketing collateral
- Email isn't dead either! Still the #1 communication outreach method
- Website – #1 recruitment tool (UX/UI, intuitive, mobile-optimized)
- Texting is key (it's where they are: # of hours of screen time per day for high schoolers - over 7 hours)
- Digital ads & social media – Again, it's where they are!
- Gen Z prefers self-directed tools to research colleges – website, SEO, college search websites (Niche, Cappex, etc), virtual tours

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a blue checkered shirt. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand and have their left hand on a laptop keyboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'Families and College Financing' is centered in white, sans-serif font.

Families and College Financing

What do families want to know?

Academics (programs, majors, minors, etc.)

Admission requirements

The strength of the academic programs (ratings, rankings, etc.)

The cost (tuition, fees, room, board, etc.)

Housing

Application process and timeline

Financial aid and scholarships

What makes the institution different

Account services and paying the tuition bill

Options to finance college education (financial aid, loans, etc.)

66%



68%

Of all families have concerns about borrowing money to pay for college

Believe borrowing concerns are affecting their students' college planning negatively

Planning to borrow -11th grade

86%



Of students in 11th grade are planning to borrow money to pay for college

First-gen	86%
Continuing gen	86%

Asian	97%
Black	83%
Hispanic	85%
White	85%

Northeast	84%
Midwest	91%
Southeast	86%
Southwest	80%
West	89%

Student-athlete	85%
Not a student-athlete	87%

Involved family	86%
Not involved family	71%

Male	89%
Female	82%

Planning to borrow -12th grade

77%



Of students in 12th grade are planning to borrow money to pay for college

First-gen	79%
Continuing gen	73%

Asian	79%
Black	77%
Hispanic	76%
White	79%

Northeast	85%
Midwest	83%
Southeast	74%
Southwest	73%
West	69%

Student-athlete	83%
Not a student-athlete	75%

Involved family	78%
Not involved family	73%

Male	77%
Female	76%

I have a job that helps support my family financially	88%
---	-----

I DO NOT have a job that helps support my family financially	72%
--	-----

Enrolling at a:

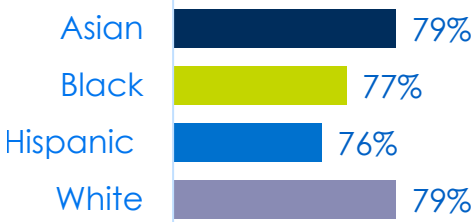
4-year institution	74%
2-year institution	77%

Private institution	78%
Public institution	73%

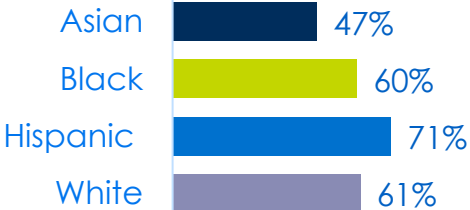
Students' perceptions of borrowing in 12th grade



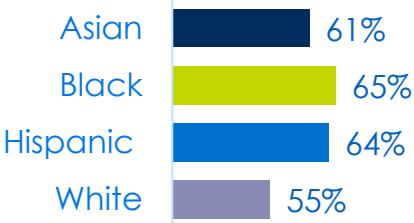
77% plan on borrowing



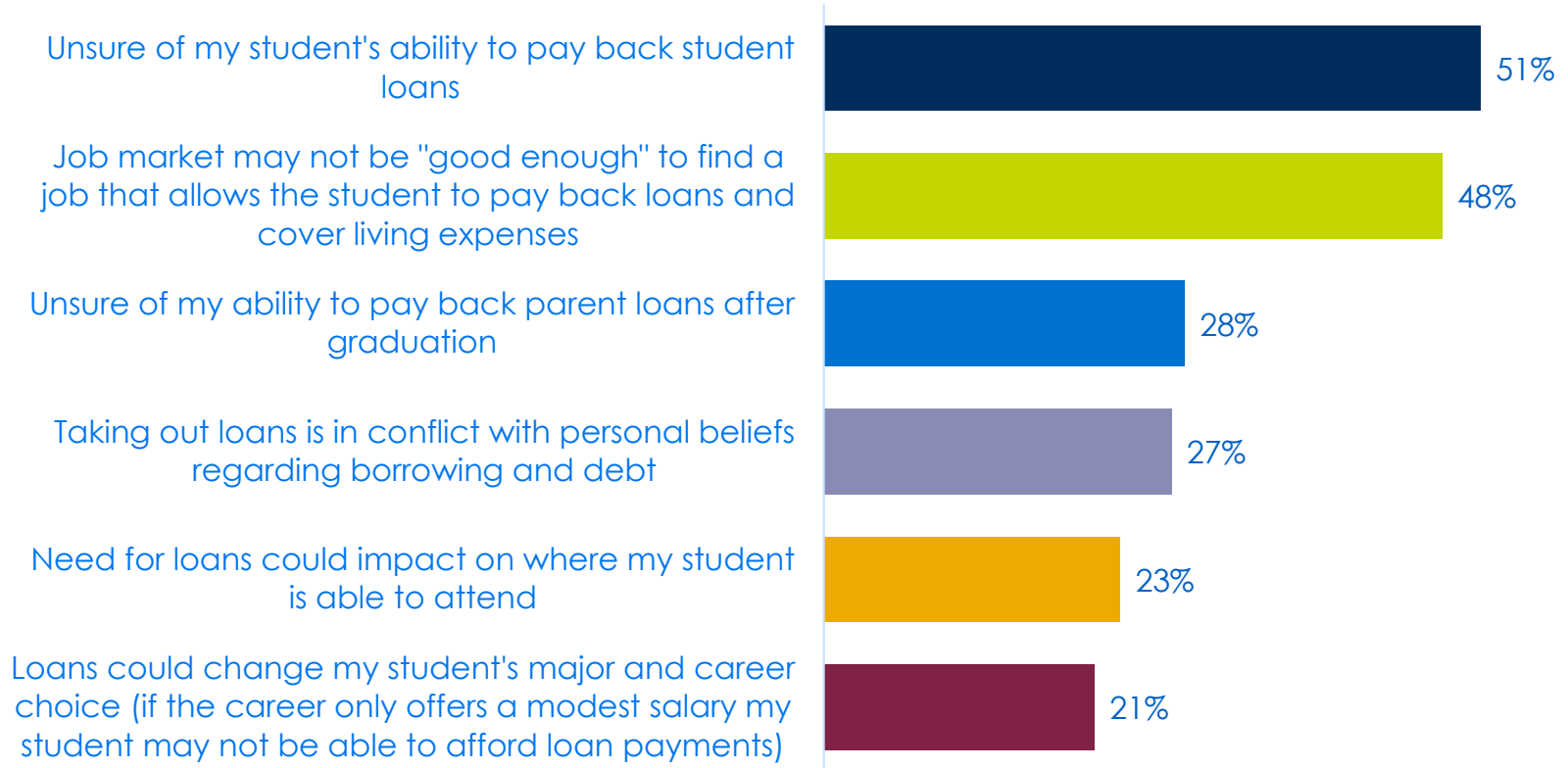
62% have fears of borrowing



60% feel their borrowing fears are affecting their college planning negatively



Borrowing concerns



Join by Web



- 1 Go to **PollEv.com**
- 2 Enter **RUFFALONL**
- 3 Respond to activity

<https://pollev.com/ruffalonl>

Turning the data into action!

- Clearly communicate value (including ROI messaging on academic & co-curricular experiences and outcomes)
- Demystify “cost” and “price”
- Ensure equitable access to information!!!
 - Multi-channel FAFSA filing and scholarship campaigns
 - QR codes (are not dead either!) for NPC, scholarships, virtual tours, etc.
 - Back to snail mail
 - Translate materials & website
- Incorporate diverse student- and family-generated content & testimonials
- Consider GPA only for select merit scholarship awards
- Create videos on the how-to's: file FAFSA, apply for scholarships, pay your bill
- Financial aid award letters
 - Send them out early (before the holiday break in December)
 - Leverage multiple channels for notification
 - Make them easy to read & understand

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a blue checkered shirt. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand and have their left hand on a laptop keyboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. Centered over the image is white text that reads: "Let's Help Families And Students Turn Perceptions Into Reality!".

Let's Help Families And
Students Turn Perceptions
Into Reality!

1. Collect prospective families' contact information early and **use it!**
2. Prioritize the most important topics. Don't hide the important information behind several pages and clicks.
6. As costs continue to increase and campuses remain hungry for net revenue, gaps continue to grow. As a result, campuses will need to provide students and families with new and unique solutions to address affordability.
7. Prospective families do not know your admissions and financial aid lingo. Use "inclusive" language.
8. Remember that the more difficult your application process is, the less equitable it is. Make sure your financial aid application does not put an unnecessary burden on the families and students who need it the most.
9. Educate families on financing options early and often.

Join by Web



- 1 Go to **PollEv.com**
- 2 Enter **RUFFALONL**
- 3 Respond to activity

<https://pollev.com/ruffalonl>

Thank you

Darlene.Dilley@Dixie.edu

Raquel.Bermejo@RuffaloNL.com