



# The Gen Z Mental Health Crisis. What Students are Saying and How Your Enrollment Office Can Help

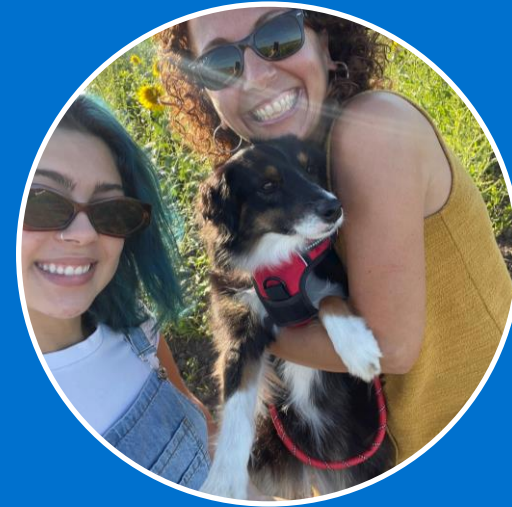
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Head of Marketing and Brand  
ZeeMee

*Raquel Bermejo, Ed.D.,*  
Associate VP for Market Research  
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# Your Presenters Today



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# Agenda



Our study



How are students feeling?



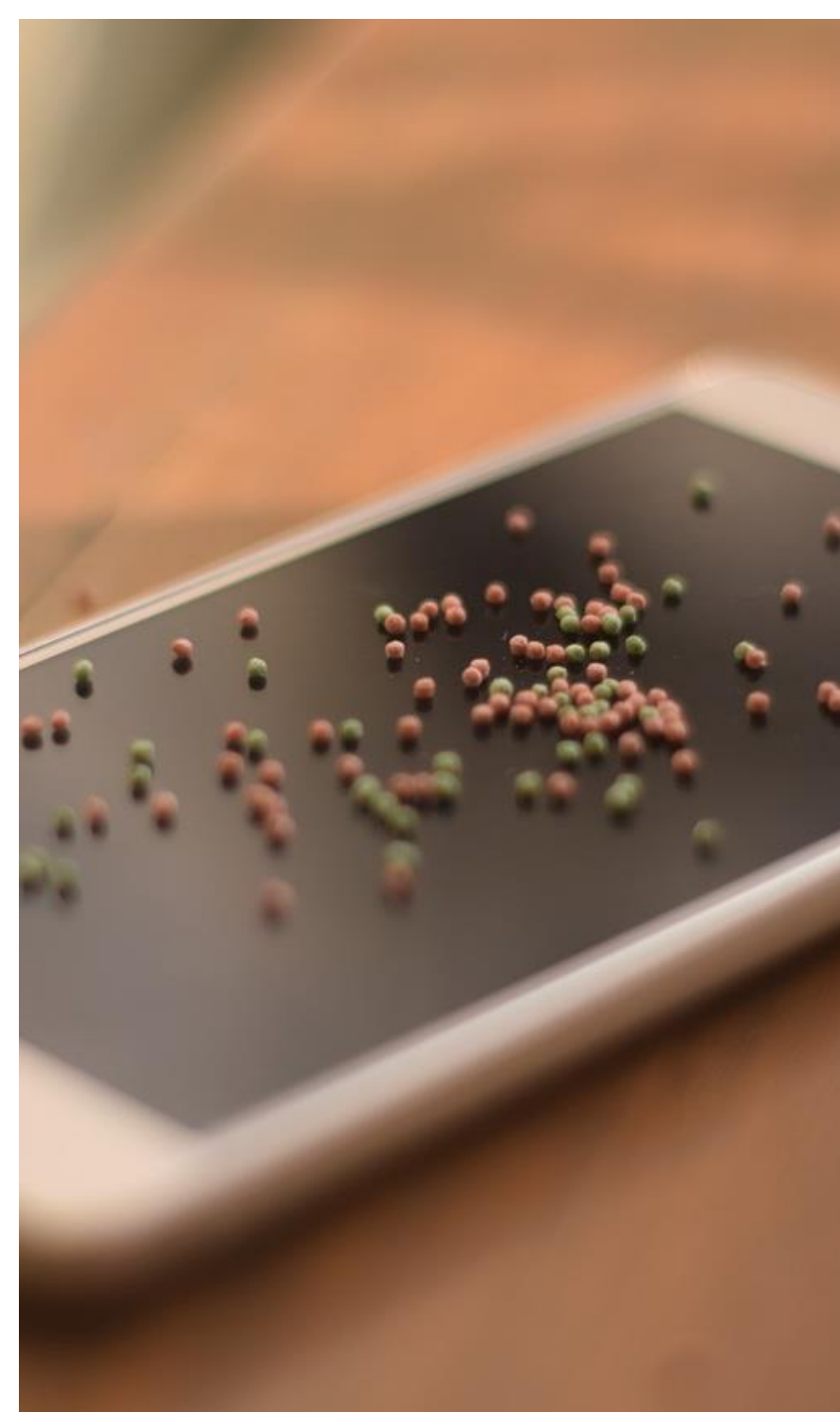
Students' feelings about college planning



Students' feelings about college life



Best practices



# Our Study



# Study demographics

9,395 students in 12th grade have been surveyed so far

American Indian	3%
Asian	11%
Black	28%
Hispanic	19%
Native American	1%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say	2%
White	52%

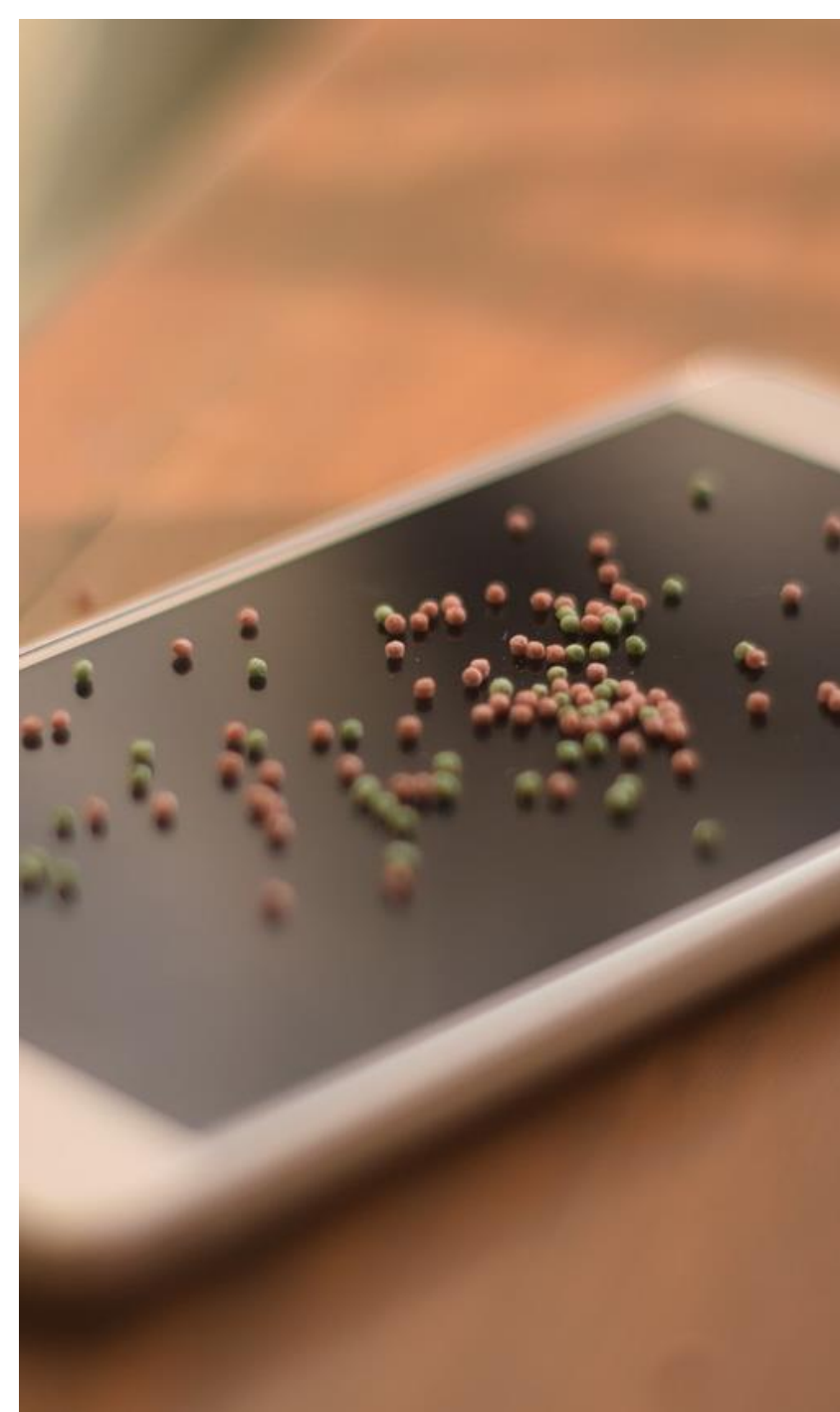
First generation	40%
Continuing generation	60%

Male	48%
Female	43%
Non-binary/third-gender	6%
Prefer to self-describe	1%
Prefer not to say	2%

Student-athlete	32%
Not a student-athlete	68%

# How Are Students Feeling?







# How are students feeling?

In 2022, high school counselors and parents of prospective students told RNL in separate studies that their students' mental/emotional health was the most pressing issue.

Nearly 70 percent of college presidents identified student mental health as among their most pressing issues

Pulse Point Survey of College and University Presidents on COVID-19: 2020 Fall Term Survey, American Council on Education, 2020.

More than three-quarters of bachelor's degree students who have considered dropping out in the past six months cite emotional stress as the reason

Ray, J. (2021, July 21). 2020 Sets Records for Negative Emotions. [news.gallup.com](https://news.gallup.com).

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death of young persons aged 15-24 in the US

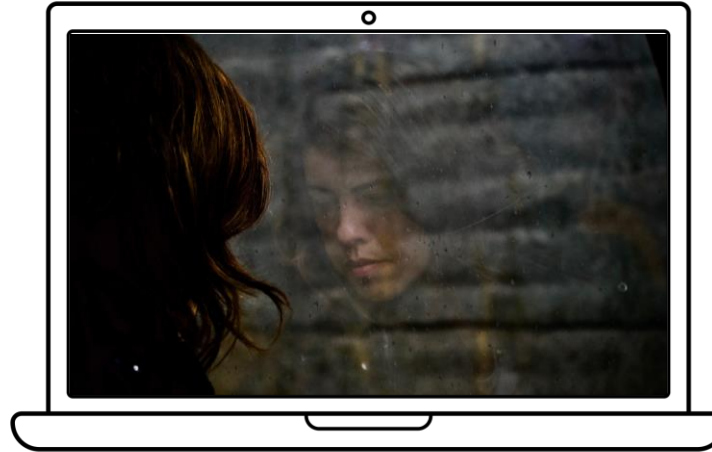
National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System



# What 9,000+ 12th graders told us about their feelings



**86%** are often stressed  
**31%** stress most of the time



**82%** feel anxious very often  
**34%** feel anxious most of the time



**73%** worry often  
**22%** worry most of the time

# Students' Feelings About College Planning



# Feelings about college planning

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78%



Not knowing if they will be able to pay for college

70%



Forgetting to submit a required form or document

58%



Doing an admissions interview

57%



Not knowing if they will "get in"

# Feelings about college planning

RNL & ZeeMee (2023).  
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56%



Not knowing when they are going to hear if they "got in"

52%



Financial aid and scholarship app process

47%



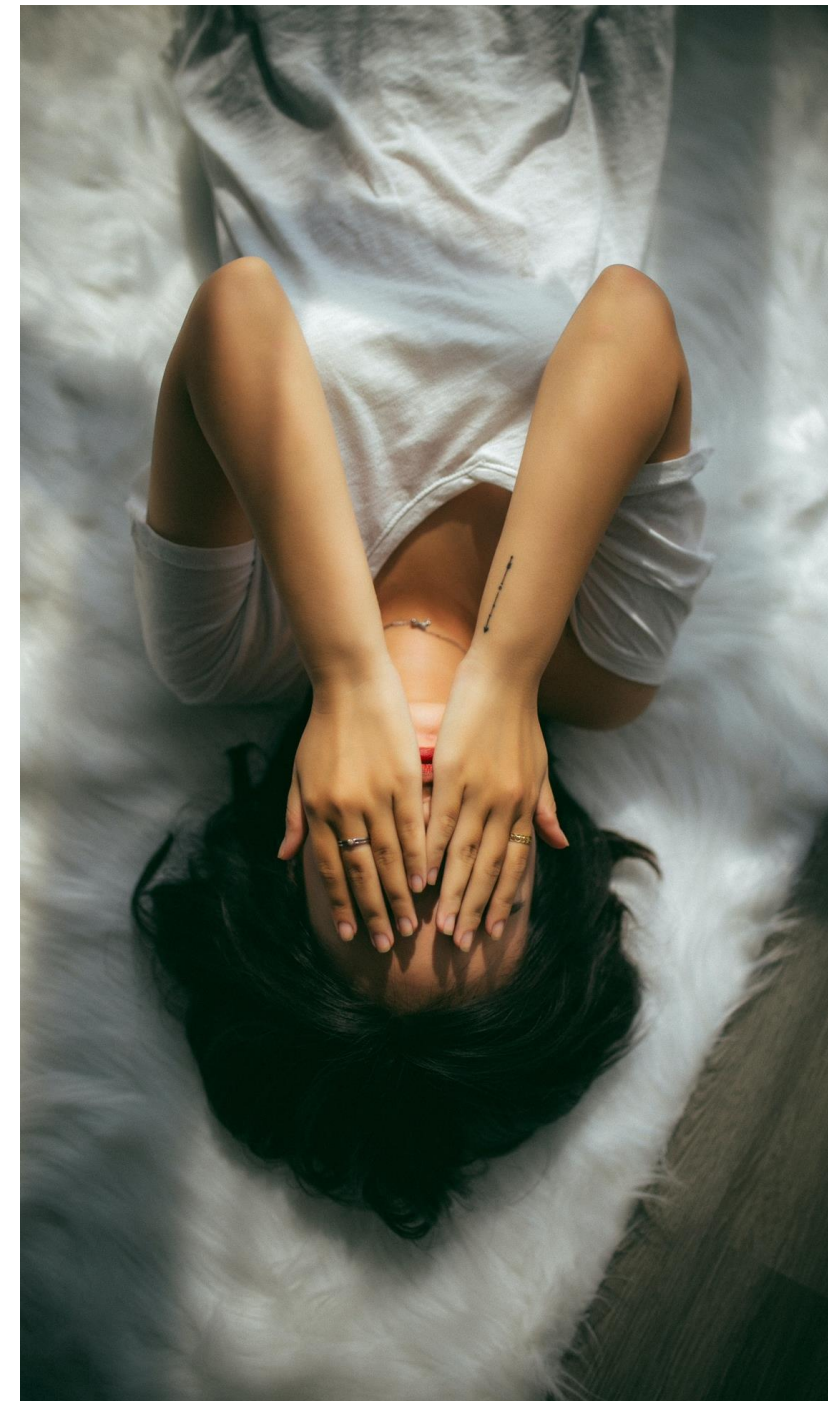
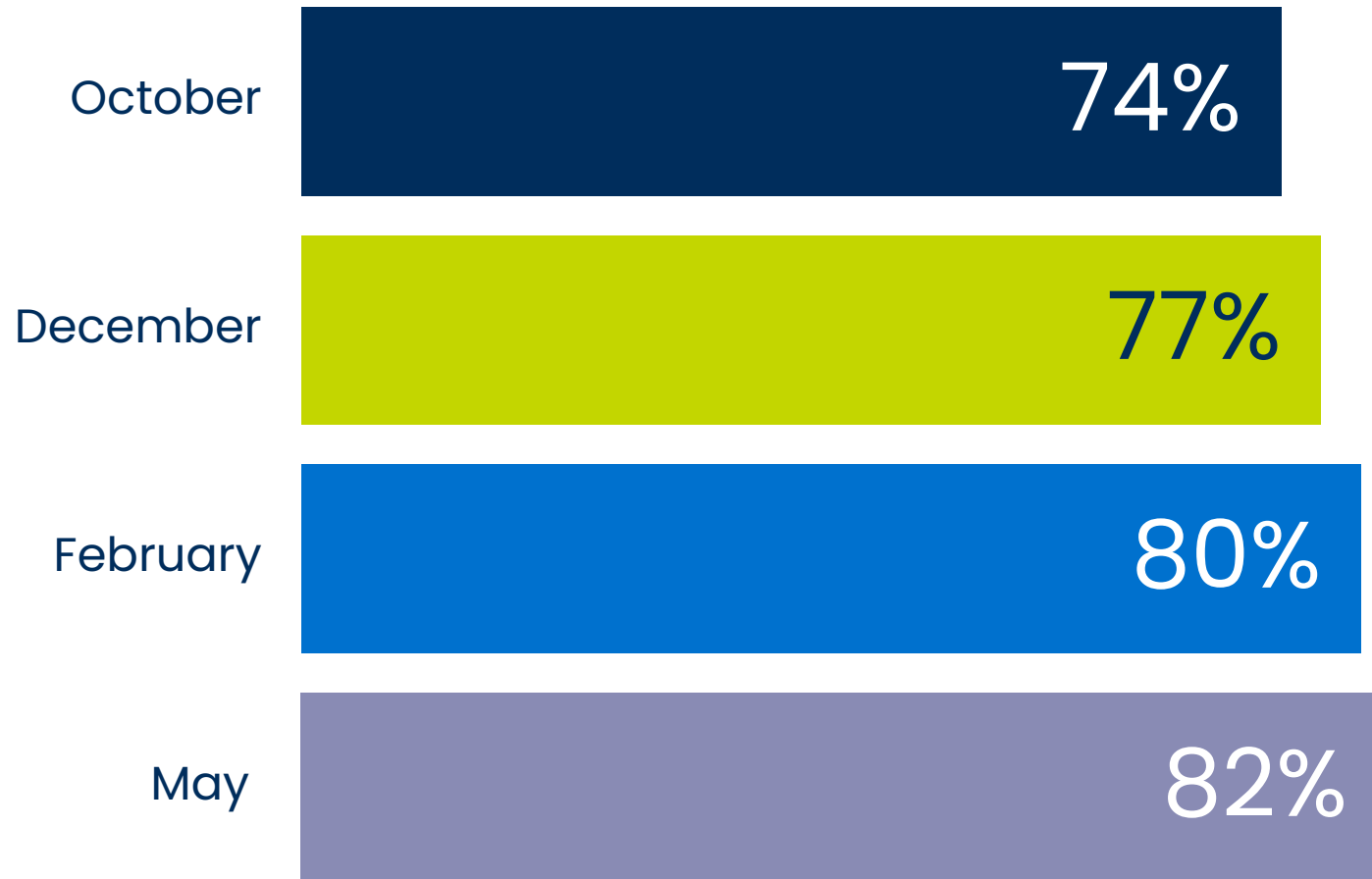
Financial aid forms and FAFSA

44%



Writing an admissions essay

# Their financing stress grows as the deposit time approaches



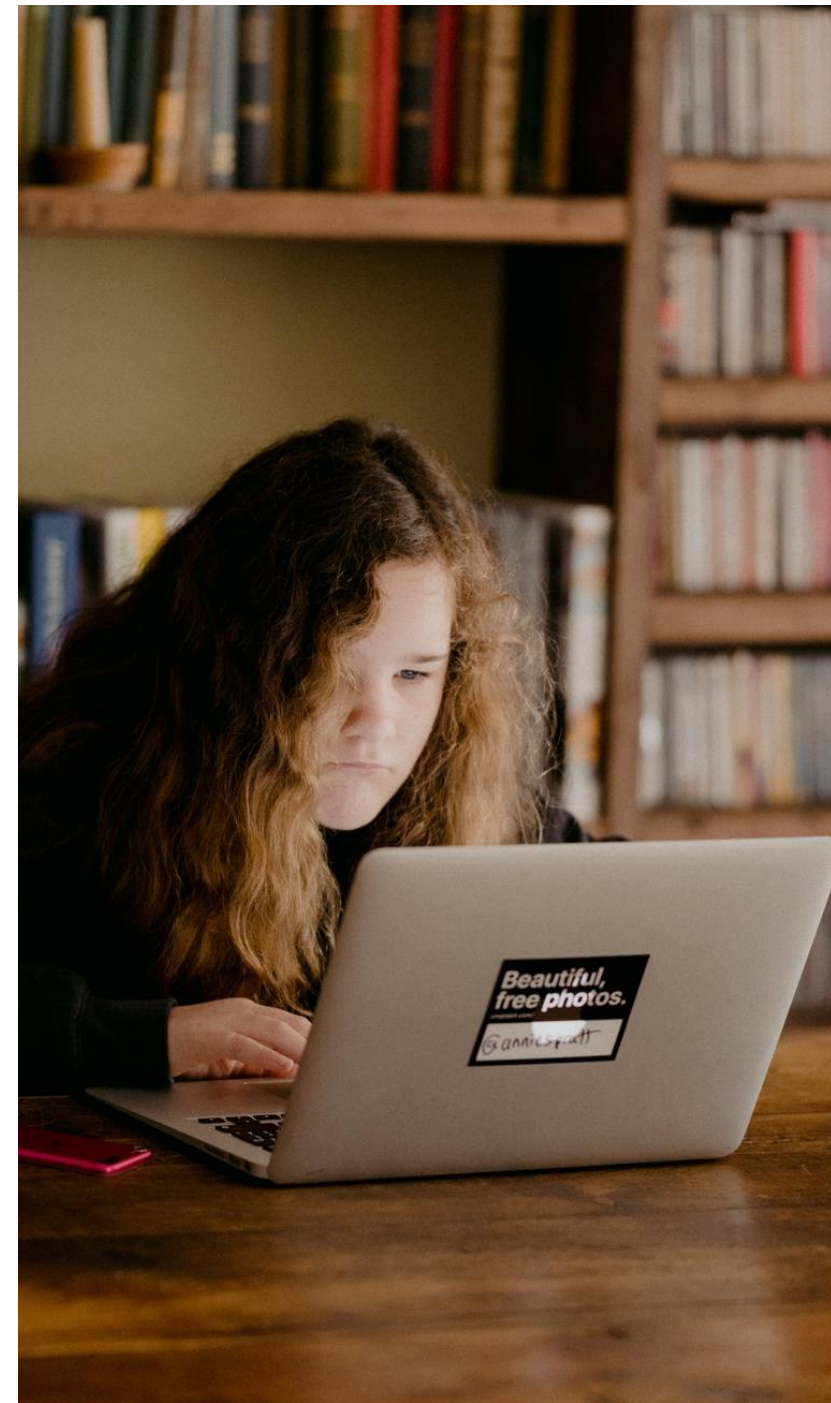
# Financing stress is stronger for first-generation students

Continuing-  
Generation  
Students

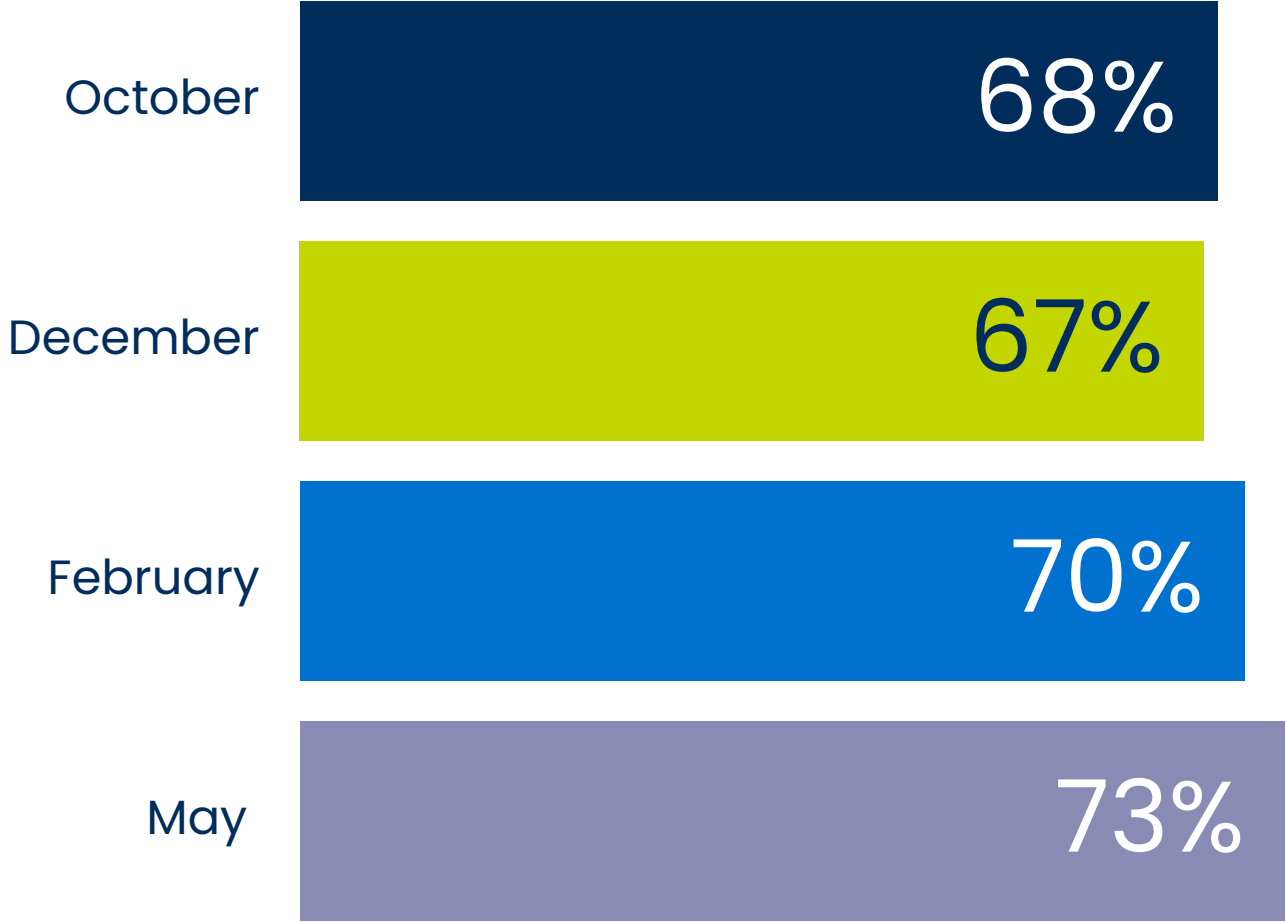
73%

First-Generation  
Students

81%



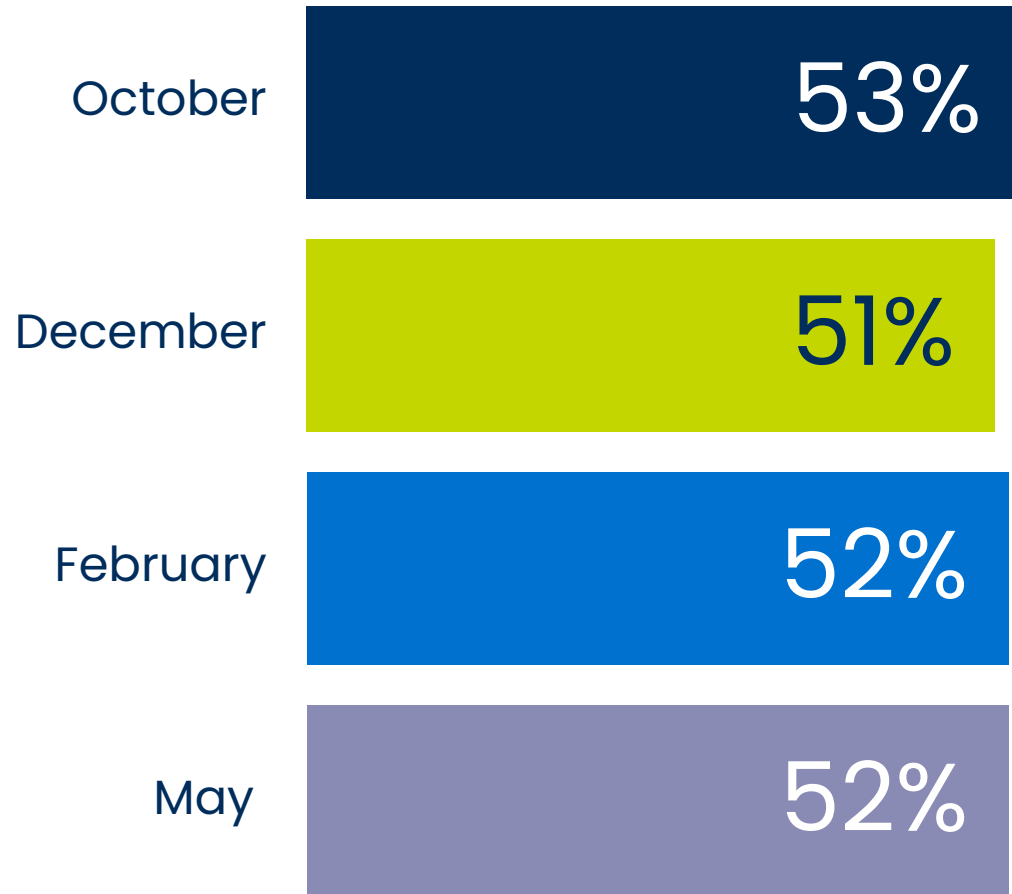
# Forgetting to submit a required form



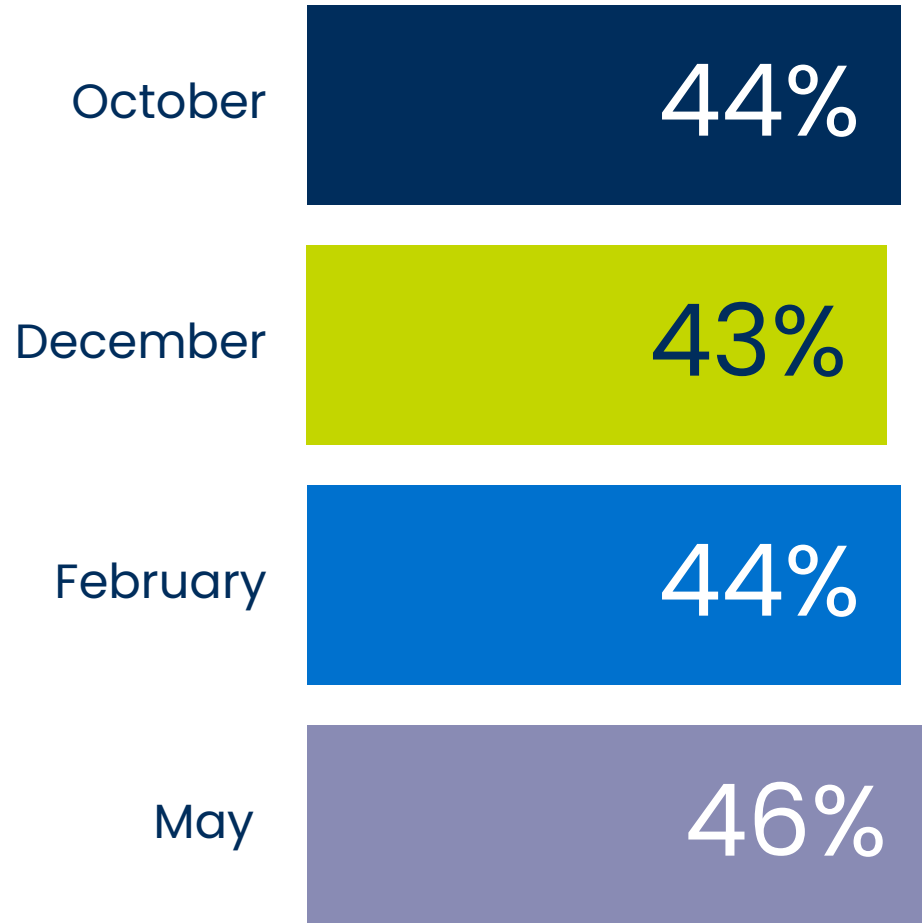
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# Understanding how they qualify for financial aid and scholarships



# Writing an essay



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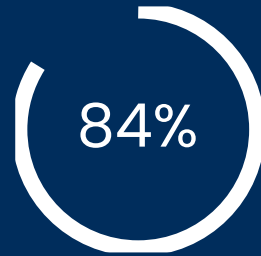
understanding-process  
missing-deadlines  
paying-the-bill  
deadlines  
choosing-classes  
financing  
getting-answers  
housing  
debt  
rejections  
application-form  
registering  
FAFSA  
waiting  
next-steps  
testing  
document  
transportation  
pressure-from-parent

# Students' Feelings About College Life





## What are students excited about?



Meeting new friends



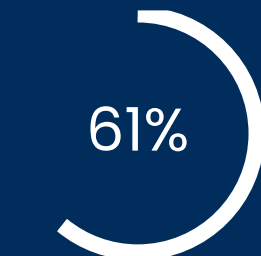
Going to new places



Finding themselves



Having a good time



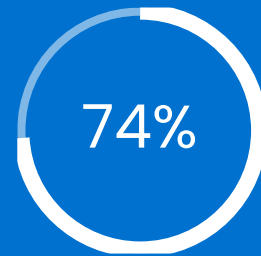
Taking new classes



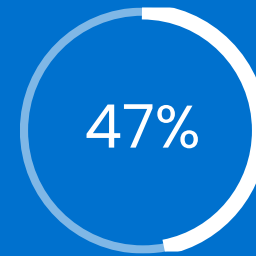
Not living with their families



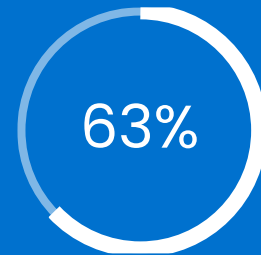
# What are students worried about?



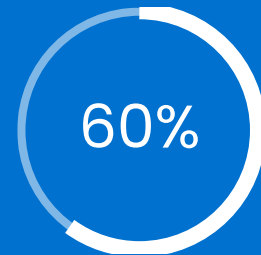
Grades



Not fitting in

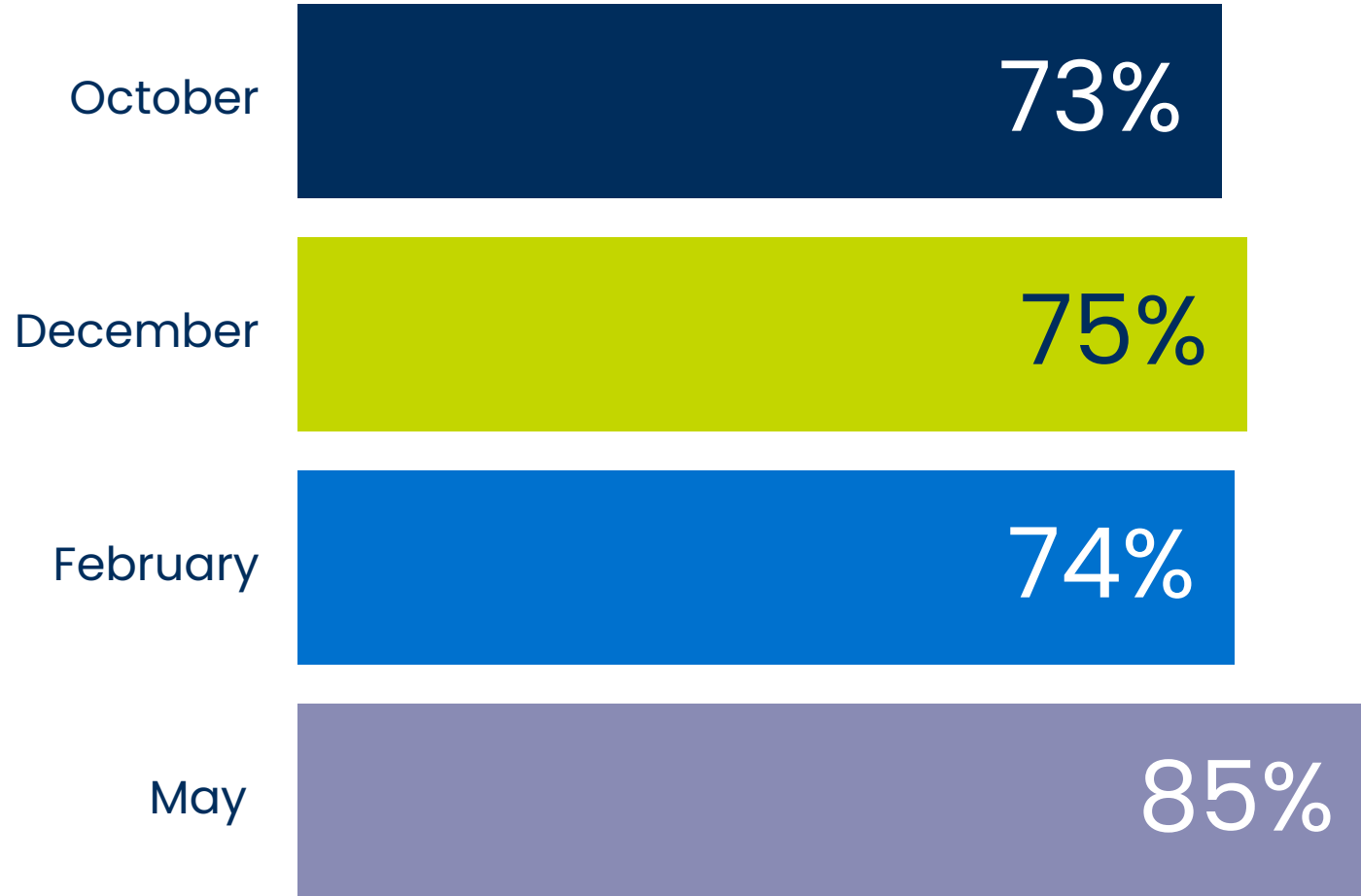


Not having enough money

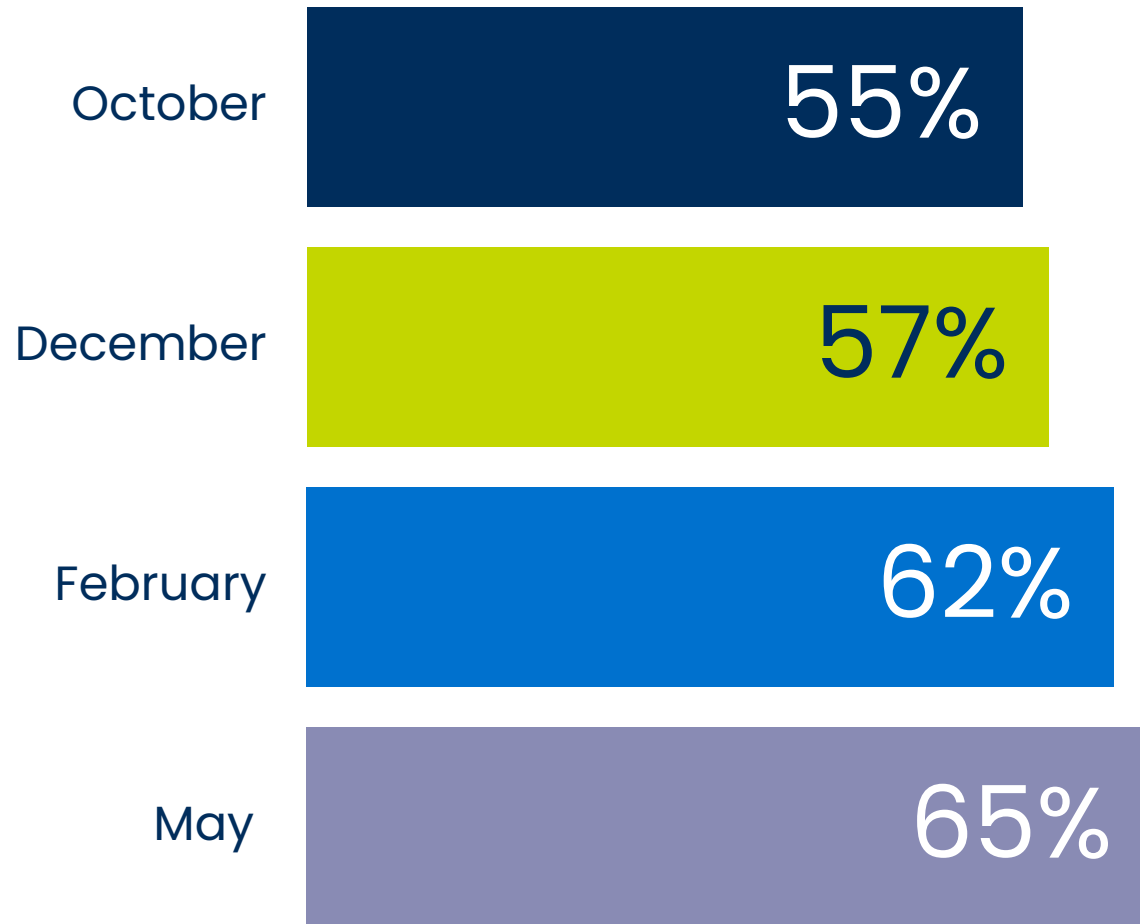


Having a hard time making friends

# Grades



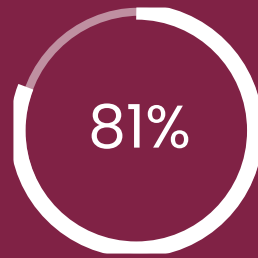
# Having a hard time making friends







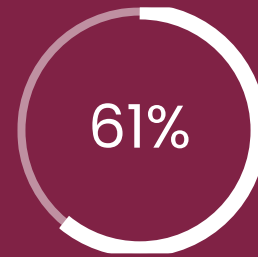
# What are students stressed about?



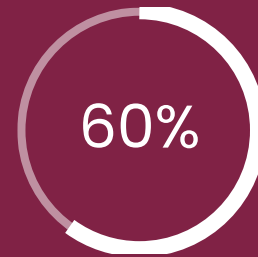
Peer pressure



Mental health

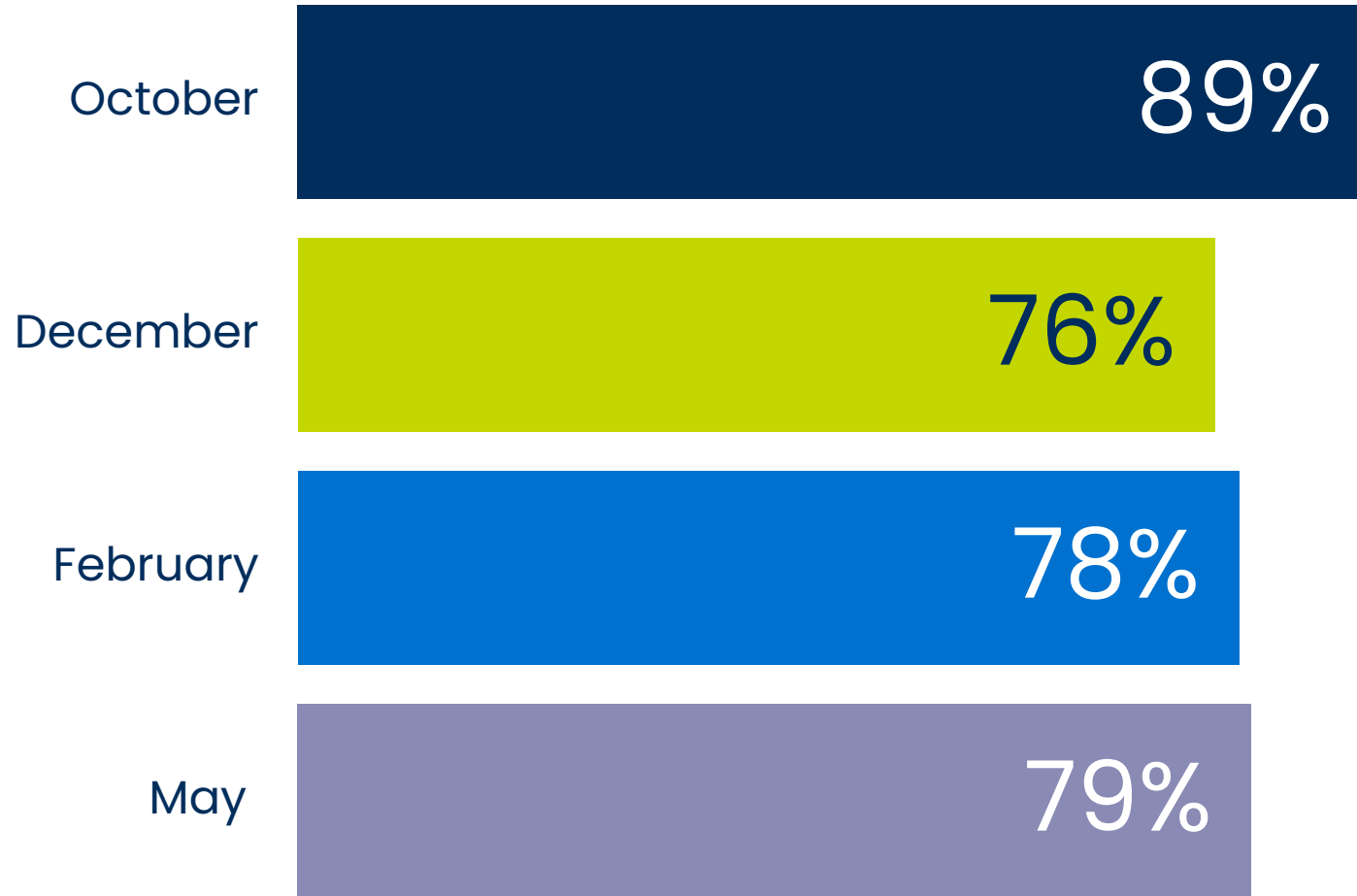


Reaching out when they need help



Safety

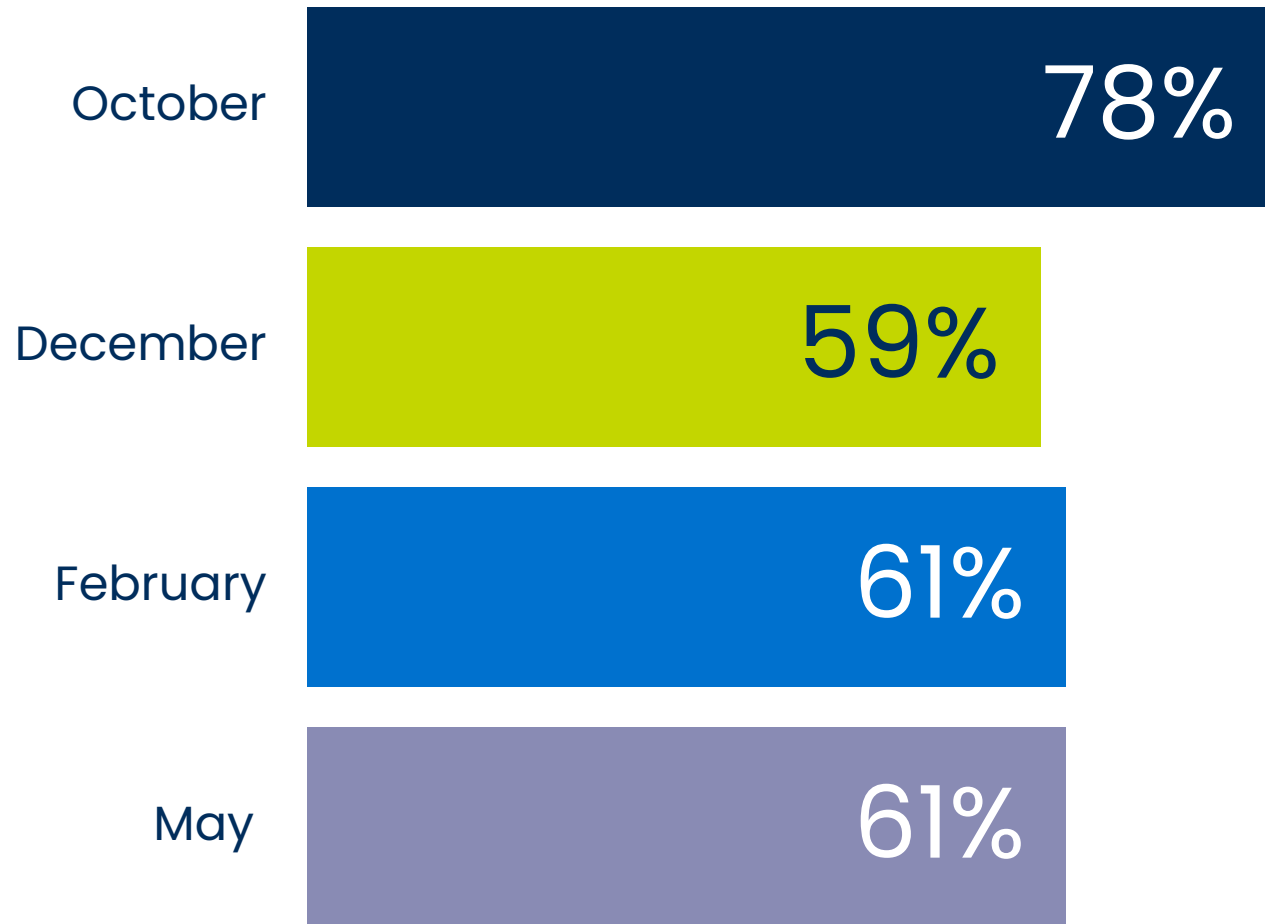
# Peer pressure



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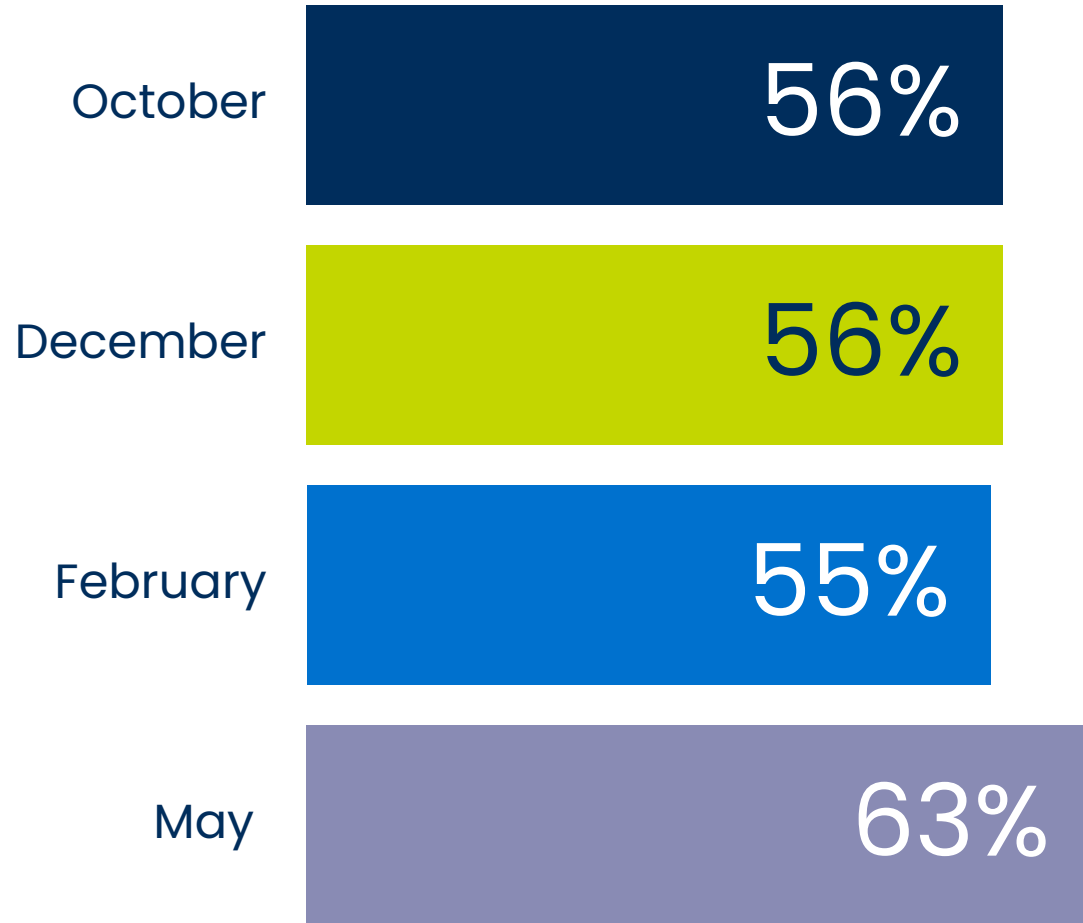
# Reaching out when they need help



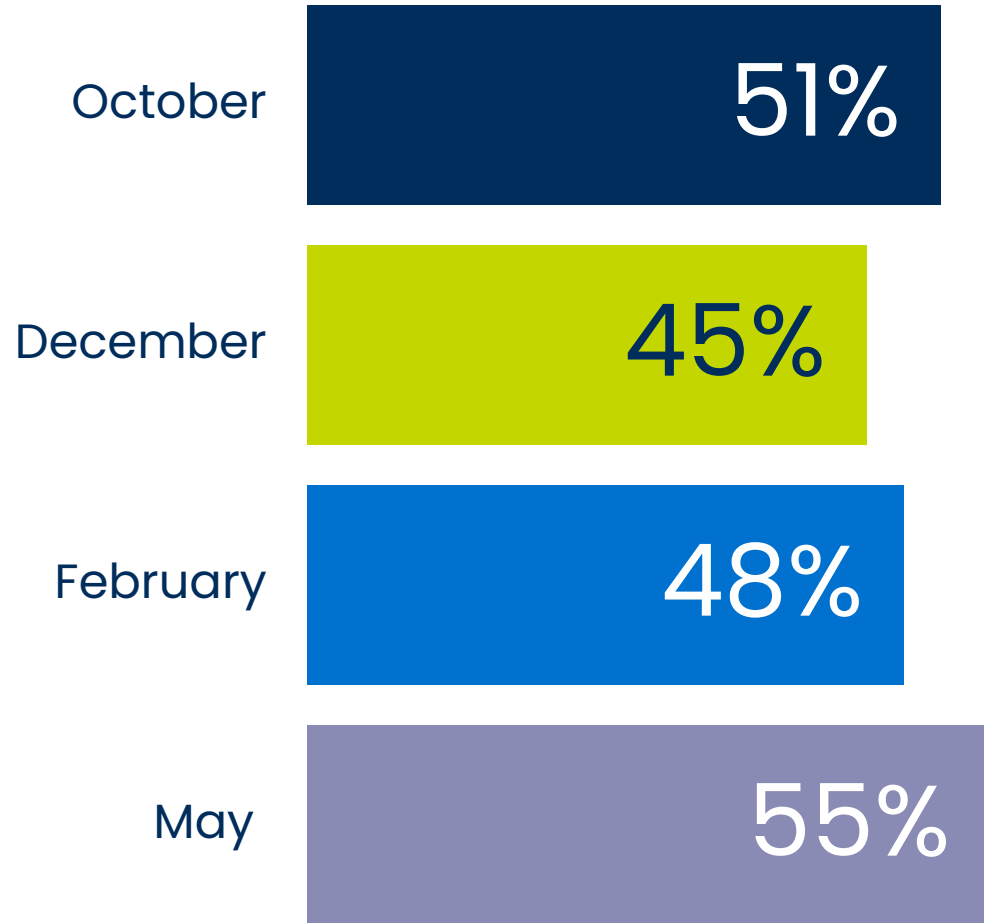
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# Safety



# Mental health

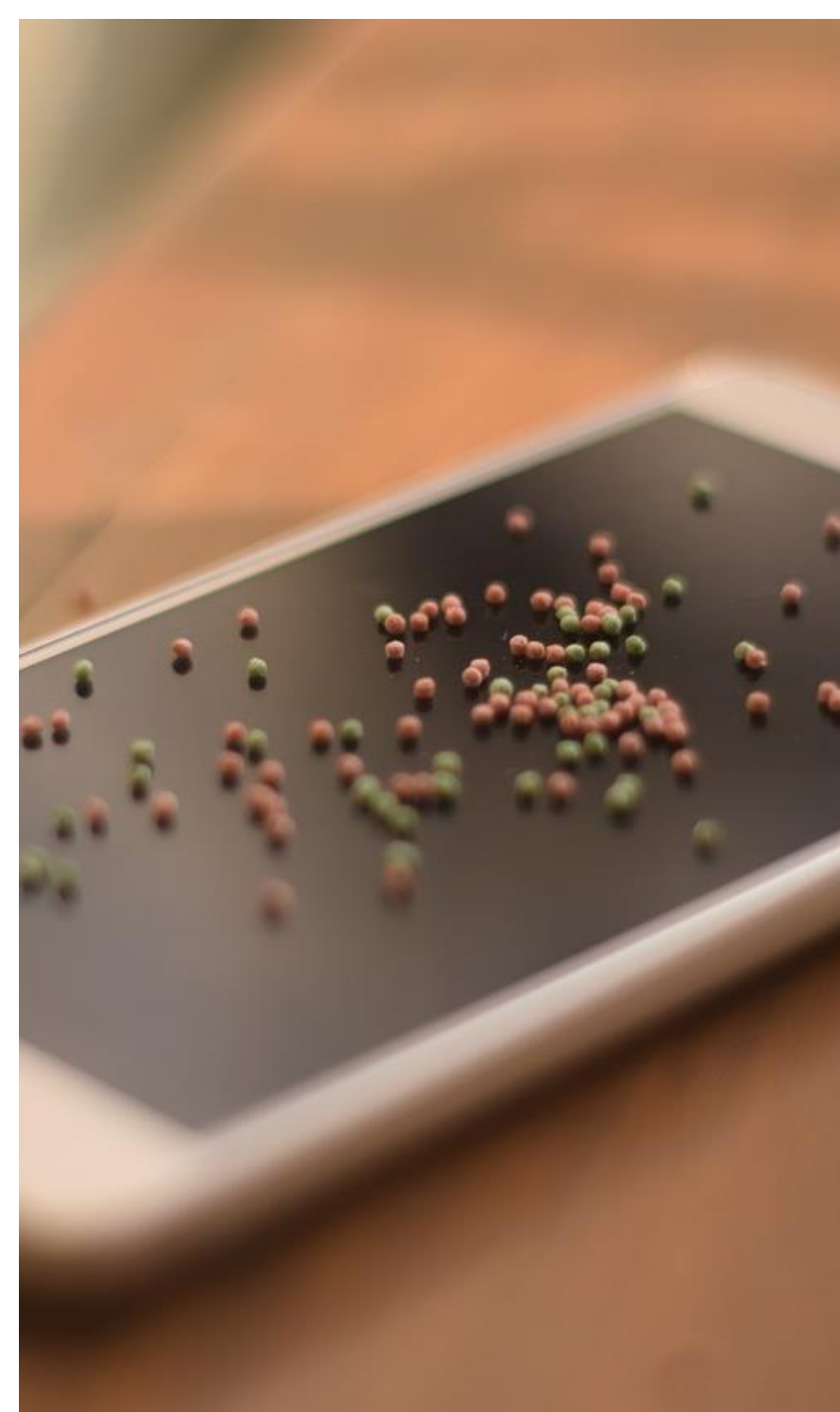


RNL & ZeeMee (2023). College Planning and Emotions. Ruffalo Noel Levitz.





not-being-smart-enough  
mental-health bad-grades  
being-homesick disappointing-my-family  
understanding-timeline  
school-shootings feeling-lonely  
registering-for-classes not-fitting-in  
reaching-out-for-help safetycrime  
failing peer-pressure violence getting-depressed  
not-finding-the-right-college finding-support



# Best Practices to Communicate With Students





# Best Practices to Communicate With Students

- **Affordability** 

Start the conversation early and continue it throughout the entire process.

Make sure financing and affordability conversations are understandable by students (acronyms, terms, steps, forms, etc.)

- **Deadlines reminders** 

Use technology to remind students of upcoming deadlines, missing documents, and other information needed each step of the way.



# Best Practices to Communicate With Students

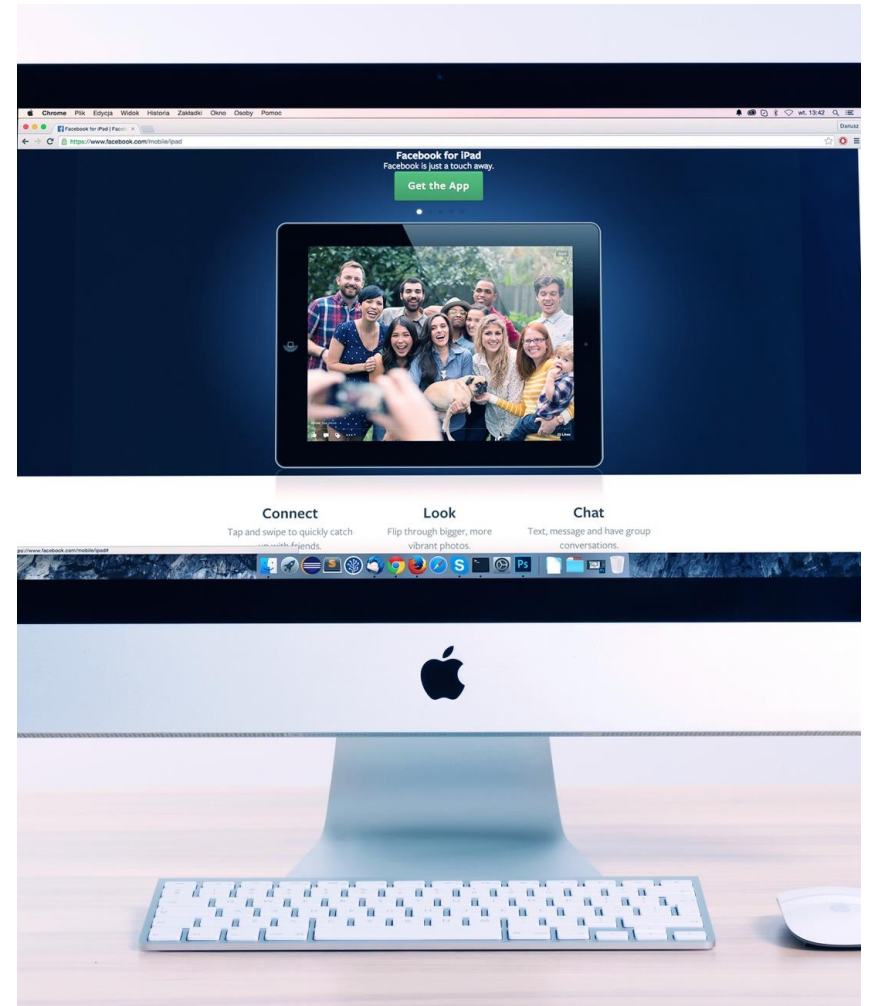
- Website 

Ensure your website is comprehensive and up-to-date

Be upfront about your admission requirements (essay, interview, test policy), don't assume, actually include statements about each required portion of the application to your institution. Fake news does exist in admissions and if you don't own your story, others will.

- 12th grade is key 

That's when it all happens! Communicate often and clearly.



# Best Practices to Communicate With Students

- **Yield and summer engagement**



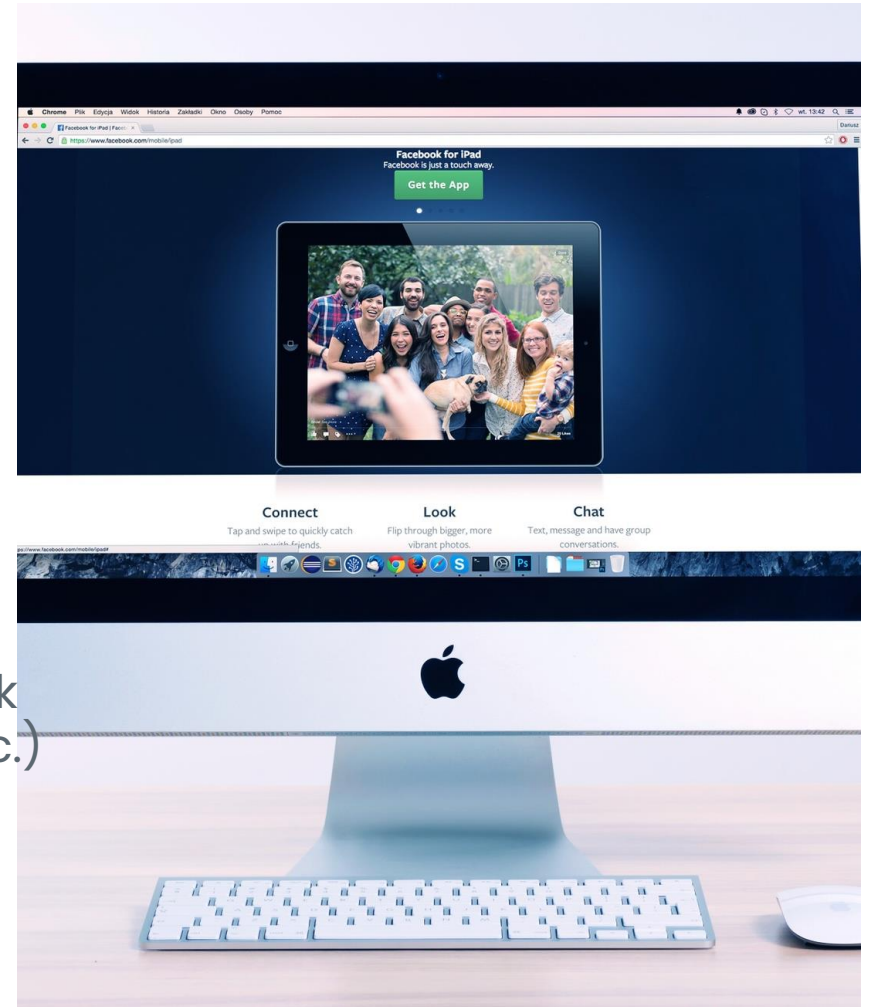
Continue to engage students, by communicating about the experiences that both excite and worry them.

Clearly explain what their options are for academic, health, social, and other types of support on campus.

- **Assess where students are when they arrive on your campus**



Understand where they are, what worries them, and what risk factors they are dealing with (social, academic, financial, etc.) First-year student assessments, first-year programs, and advising are a perfect way to get a pulse right away.



# Best Practices to Communicate With Students

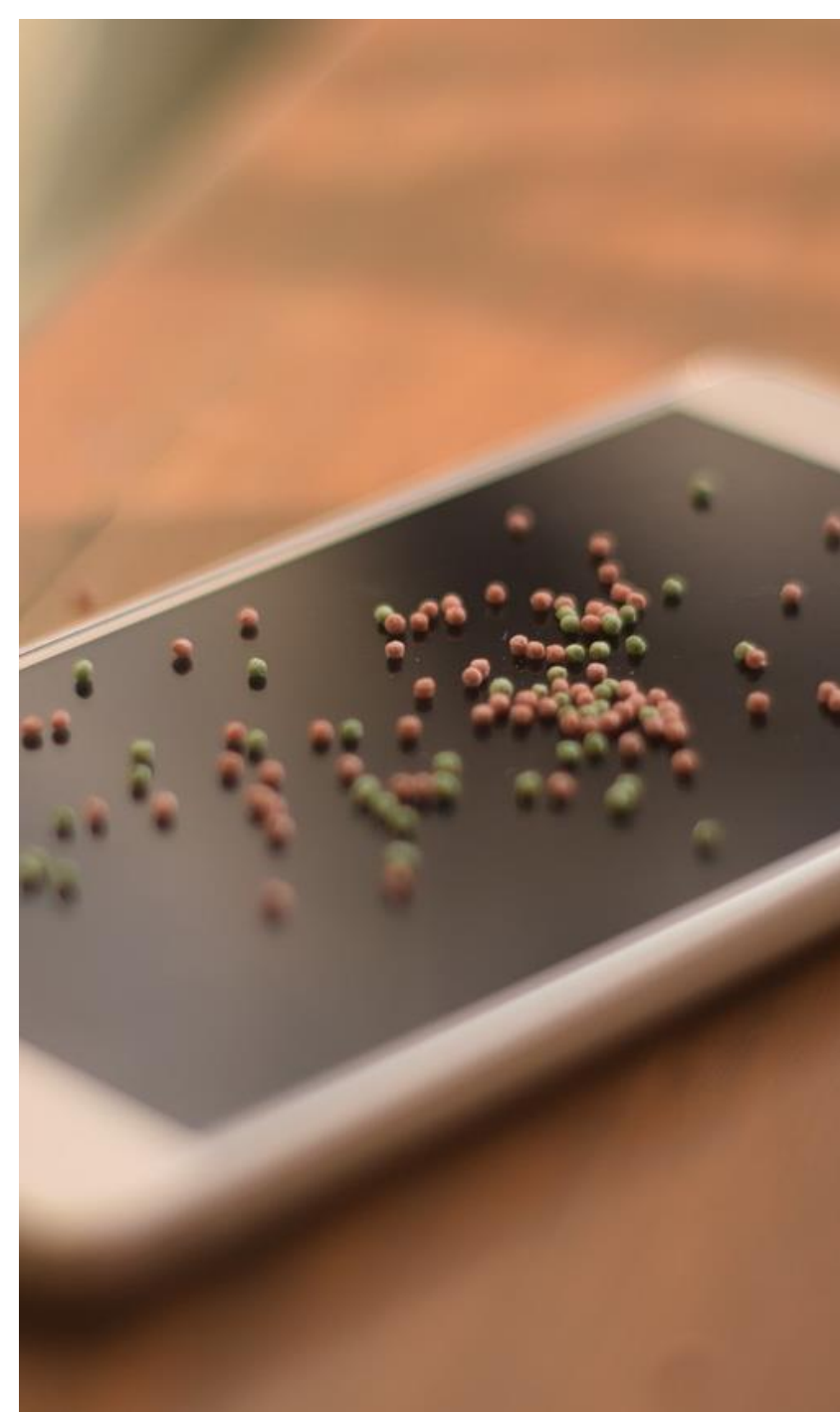
- **Community** 

Invite prospective students to be part of a community and meet other prospective students who are interested in the same institution long before they think about applying.

- **Social media** 

Use social media to engage students with fresh, authentic content about the topics and issues that are key to their interests. Don't make it all about your brand.

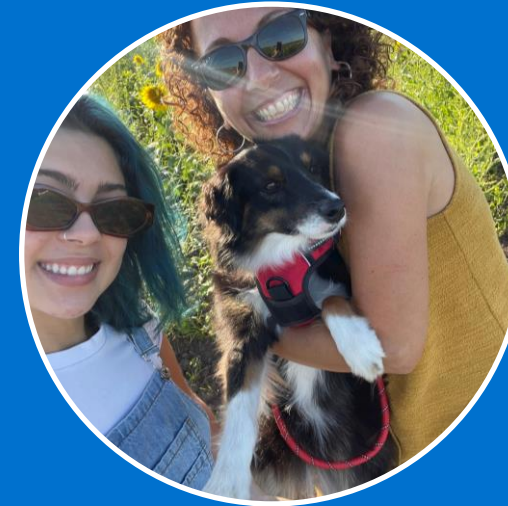




# Want to stay in touch?



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