2018 Cost of Recruiting an Undergraduate Student Report

Benchmarking data for recruitment and admissions costs and enrollment staffing levels for four-year colleges and universities, based on a poll of campus officials.
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SEE PAGE 15 FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS
HOW MUCH ARE YOU SPENDING ON MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT COMPARED TO YOUR PEERS?

One measure of enrollment efficiency is benchmarking your costs against like institutions. Do you spend more or less than peer colleges and universities to enroll students?

This report provides benchmark data from undergraduate officials from a broad selection of four-year private and public colleges and universities. Campus enrollment staff participated in a poll during fall 2017 to provide this data.

Cost of recruiting data provide a key benchmark for return on investment

While every institution is unique, these benchmarks should provide insight into how much return on investment your campus has on its marketing and recruitment dollars. In particular, the results on page 6 can help you compare your spending to institutions of the same type and size. If you are spending more, you may have issues related to efficiency, market penetration, or enrollment strategy that are impacting your ability to optimize your enrollment. If your results are below these benchmarks and you are missing your goals for class size or composition, you may not be investing enough to be fully competitive.

See additional data on budgeting, resource allocations, and recruiting specific populations such as transfer students and international students

This year’s report contains recruiting cost benchmarks for undergraduate students. For the first time, these figures also include costs without personnel costs in addition to total costs (see page 7).

Beyond these costs, it is also illuminating to know how peer institutions plan to spend their budgets. The results on pages 9-10 provide useful breakdowns of budget items, listed by public and private institutions.

Finally, in recognition of the growing importance of transfer students to overall enrollments, this report has added the cost to recruit a single transfer student (see page 11).

HOW DO YOU TURN BENCHMARKS INTO STRATEGY?
ASK OUR ENROLLMENT EXPERTS.

The enrollment strategists at Ruffalo Noel Levitz have helped four-year public and private institutions use their resources more effectively to meet these enrollment goals—growing enrollment, shaping enrollment, recruiting for specific majors, breaking into new markets, to name just a few.

As you look at these benchmarks and wonder how to translate them into strategic action, ask for a consultation.

• Visit RuffaloNL.com/Consultation
• Call 800.876.1117 and ask to speak with our enrollment strategists
**BENCHMARK SNAPSHOT: KEY DATA FROM PARTICIPANTS**

All values are median; see the following pages for additional data by percentile groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of recruiting...</th>
<th>Private institutions</th>
<th>Public institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A single undergraduate</td>
<td>$2,357</td>
<td>$536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A transfer student</td>
<td>$302</td>
<td>$32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An international student</td>
<td>$735</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staffing levels**

Average number of new undergraduates enrolled per full-time-equivalent enrollment staff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of FTE student employees used in student recruitment/admissions per institution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Budgets**

Reported recruitment budget changes for 2017-18 compared to previous year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Decreased</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Privates</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publics</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top 3 marketing activities most likely to have budget increases** (see page 9 for more details)

**PRIVATE**
- Digital marketing
- Transfer recruitment
- Student search (list purchases)

**PUBLIC**
- Digital marketing
- Transfer recruitment
- Admissions events
## COST OF RECRUITING A SINGLE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT

2017 results with a comparison to 2015 data*

### 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRIVATE</th>
<th>PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>$2,357</td>
<td>$536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th PERCENTILE</td>
<td>$1,619</td>
<td>$354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th PERCENTILE</td>
<td>$3,283</td>
<td>$967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRIVATE</th>
<th>PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>$2,232</td>
<td>$578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th PERCENTILE</td>
<td>$1,418</td>
<td>$407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th PERCENTILE</td>
<td>$3,617</td>
<td>$775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2015 data taken from our 2016 Cost of Recruiting an Undergraduate Student Report.

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Four-year private institutions spend **3x more** than four-year public institutions to recruit a single student.

BENCHMARK YOUR COSTS USING OUR WORKSHEET

You can quickly calculate your own costs for recruiting and compare them to these benchmarks. See page 14.
### COST TO RECRUIT A SINGLE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT IN 2017 BY ENROLLMENT SIZE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Percentile</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Smallest Third in Enrollment Size</th>
<th>Middle Third in Enrollment Size</th>
<th>Largest Third in Enrollment Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Percentile</td>
<td>$1,619</td>
<td>$1,872</td>
<td>$810</td>
<td>$1,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>$2,357</td>
<td>$2,723</td>
<td>$1,774</td>
<td>$2,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th Percentile</td>
<td>$3,283</td>
<td>$4,590</td>
<td>$2,836</td>
<td>$3,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Percentile</td>
<td>$354</td>
<td>$582</td>
<td>$235</td>
<td>$355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>$536</td>
<td>$1,149</td>
<td>$491</td>
<td>$441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th Percentile</td>
<td>$967</td>
<td>$2,174</td>
<td>$657</td>
<td>$594</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in parts 1 and 2 show the quartiles of the distribution of recruitment cost per undergraduate student in 2017 overall and by the 33rd and 67th quantiles of institution enrollment size.

**SMALL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS SPEND 2-3 TIMES MORE TO RECRUIT STUDENTS THAN THEIR LARGER COUNTERPARTS**

As the data above show, public institutions in the bottom third reported spending double or triple the amount that middle- and large-sized public institutions spent.

**DEFINITION OF ENROLLMENT SIZE**

To determine differences by enrollment size, four-year institutions with total enrollments below the 33.3rd percentile for enrollment size were classified as “small,” while institutions with enrollment sizes above the 66.7th percentile were classified as “large.” For four-year private institutions, the 33.3rd percentile for total enrollment size was 1,673 and the 66.7th percentile was 2,992. For four-year public institutions, the 33.3rd percentile for total enrollment size was 8,683 and the 66.7th percentile was 17,144.
Looking at costs and staff sizes through the correct lens

The benchmarks in this report are based on final new-student enrollment counts (i.e., cost per new student enrollee), a more reliable metric for measuring institutional effectiveness and efficiency than comparing budgets and staff sizes to the number of student applications.

For example, a cost-per-applicant metric can mistakenly signal that an institution generating numerous “soft” applications (applicants who are unlikely to enroll) is more efficient, when in fact the institution may be less efficient by generating the softer applicants. Note that a soft applicant pool is also sometimes described as an “overly inflated” applicant pool.

The reason why RNL uses enrollment as a benchmark is because that represents the ultimate goal of an institution and is the more accurate method for tracking the impact of its marketing and recruitment expenditures.

This table shows the recruitment cost distribution without personnel costs. Smaller institutions tended to spend significantly more than middle-sized institutions or the largest ones. Note that, overall, the median of the distribution of the percentage of total recruitment costs due to personnel is 49.5 percent for private institutions and 62.0 for public institutions. These percentages did not vary by institution size within sector.
STAFFING BENCHMARKS: STUDENTS PER FTE EMPLOYEE AND NUMBER OF FTE STUDENT EMPLOYEES WORKING IN ENROLLMENT

The following two tables provide benchmarks on staffing levels related to enrollment. These tables examine full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees. This FTE figure includes the total number of full-time and part-time enrollment employees using the following formula:

1) The number of employees working full-time; and 2) The number of part-time employees, expressed as fractions of full-time (e.g., half-time = 0.5 and quarter-time = 0.25).

For example, an office with 20 full-time employees and 12 students who work an average of 10 hours per week (0.25 of full-time) has 23 FTE employees (20+3).

Number of new undergraduates in 2017 for each FTE employee in undergraduate recruitment or admissions in 2016-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Percentile</th>
<th>FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS</th>
<th>FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>SMALLEST THIRD IN ENROLLMENT SIZE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Percentile</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th Percentile</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The median of this ratio did not differ among institution size within sector. However, a positive trend of students per FTE employee with institution size does appear for both sectors.

The next table examines the number of FTE student employees used in undergraduate recruitment/admissions.

Number of FTE student employees utilized in undergraduate recruitment or admissions in 2016-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Percentile</th>
<th>FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS</th>
<th>FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>SMALLEST THIRD IN ENROLLMENT SIZE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Percentile</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th Percentile</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The median number of FTE student employees for small private institutions was significantly smaller relative to medium or large private institutions. In addition, a positive trend of student employees with institution size appears for both sectors.
BUDGET CHANGES AND ALLOCATIONS

For the following three items, respondents discussed items related to their overall marketing and recruitment and how they allocate their recruitment activities.

First, respondents answered how their budgets for the 2017-18 cycle changed compared to 2016-17, and also the 2016-17 budget compared to the previous year.

Percentage changes in budget for recruitment and admissions each of the last two years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>25TH PERCENTILE</th>
<th>MEDIAN</th>
<th>75TH PERCENTILE</th>
<th>25TH PERCENTILE</th>
<th>MEDIAN</th>
<th>75TH PERCENTILE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional marketing</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital marketing</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student search (purchased lists)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website development and maintenance</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions travel</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions events</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International recruitment</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer recruitment</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For four-year privates, nearly one in three said they had a budget decrease for the 2017-18 year, compared to just 7 percent of four-year publics. About one in four private and public institutions said their budgets would increase, while the largest majority across both sectors said their budgets would stay the same.

The next table shows the approximate percentage allocated to eight specific marketing and recruitment activities.

Regarding website development and maintenance, the low allocations may be because this activity does not come from the admissions budget.
Traditional marketing was by far the largest allocation for private institutions and slightly ahead of admissions travel for public institutions (although not by a statistically significant amount). However, for the next question, respondents indicated whether they anticipated changes to their allocations for these activities, and traditional marketing was the area where the largest number of respondents expected a decrease.

**Anticipated changes to activity allocations in the next 12-14 months**

**NOTABLE AREAS OF INCREASE**
(Percentage of respondents who indicated an increase)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIVATE</th>
<th>PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital marketing</td>
<td>Digital marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer recruitment</td>
<td>Transfer recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student search (purchased lists)</td>
<td>Admissions events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website development/maintenance</td>
<td>Admissions travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions events</td>
<td>Website development/maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional marketing</td>
<td>Student search (purchased lists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International recruitment</td>
<td>International recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions travel</td>
<td>Admissions travel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTABLE AREAS OF DECREASE**
(Percentage of respondents who indicated a decrease)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIVATE</th>
<th>PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional marketing</td>
<td>Traditional marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions travel</td>
<td>International recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International recruitment</td>
<td>Admissions travel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The contrast between digital and traditional marketing shows the shift occurring in student marketing and recruitment. While 61 percent of public institutions and 55 percent of private institutions said their allocations for traditional marketing would remain the same, nearly one in four public campuses and 15 percent of private ones said it would decrease. Contrast that with 60-70 percent of campuses saying their digital marketing would increase.

It is also notable that travel and international recruitment were both listed as top items for decreases, although one in three public institutions said their travel budgets would increase.

Finally, 40 percent of public and private institutions indicated that transfer student recruitment would increase. We interpret this increase as institutions realizing that, as the traditional student market flattens, institutions will look more aggressively to grow their transfer student enrollments.
**COST OF RECRUITING A SINGLE TRANSFER STUDENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Percentile</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
<th>SMALLEST THIRD IN ENROLLMENT SIZE</th>
<th>MIDDLE THIRD IN ENROLLMENT SIZE</th>
<th>LARGEST THIRD IN ENROLLMENT SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Percentile</td>
<td>$96</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$98</td>
<td>$103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>$302</td>
<td>$235</td>
<td>$312</td>
<td>$319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th Percentile</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$817</td>
<td>$855</td>
<td>$940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Percentile</td>
<td>$1</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$9</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>$32</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$46</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th Percentile</td>
<td>$135</td>
<td>$236</td>
<td>$116</td>
<td>$98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the median, there were no significant differences in cost to recruit a transfer student by size of institution. It is interesting to note, however, that the smallest public institutions had a median of $0 compared to $236 for the smallest private institutions.

**COST OF RECRUITING A SINGLE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Percentile</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
<th>SMALLEST THIRD IN ENROLLMENT SIZE</th>
<th>MIDDLE THIRD IN ENROLLMENT SIZE</th>
<th>LARGEST THIRD IN ENROLLMENT SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Percentile</td>
<td>$2</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>$735</td>
<td>$99</td>
<td>$735</td>
<td>$1,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th Percentile</td>
<td>$3,707</td>
<td>$1,421</td>
<td>$3,700</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Percentile</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$8</td>
<td>$114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$1,209</td>
<td>$325</td>
<td>$286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th Percentile</td>
<td>$1,278</td>
<td>$3,874</td>
<td>$549</td>
<td>$917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY TAKEAWAYS AND OBSERVATIONS

These benchmarks provide a useful method for analyzing the cost to recruit a student compared to your institution. As you review and compare your institution’s metrics to these benchmarks, here are recommendations to keep in mind:

1) **Look for red flags if you are not meeting your enrollment goals and are in the bottom of cost or staffing metrics.**
   These benchmarks are particularly useful if your institution is struggling to meet its enrollment. If you are not meeting your goals, start with these two metrics:
   - Take a look at Section 2 featuring the cost to recruit a student by institution type and size (page 6). If you fall at or below the 25th percentile in recruitment cost, you may be underfunding your recruitment efforts.
   - Examine Section 4 (page 8) and see how your new student-per-FTE staff member ratio compares for your sector. If you are at or below the 25th percentile, you may be understaffed and not have the human resources you need to bring in your class.

2) **If your costs or staffing levels run high compared to peers, look for ways to increase efficiency.**
   Meeting your enrollment goals but running in the higher levels for cost to recruit a student? You likely could be more efficient in three key areas:
   - **Building demand more strategically**—Informing list purchases with more targeted data, as well as multichannel campaigns that reach students across a wide variety of print and digital mediums, can make your outreach more focused on students who are a better fit.
   - **Cultivating applications more logically**—Increasing applications can decrease efficiency if you build pools of applicants who are not likely to enroll. You need to use data to know precisely the characteristics of applicants who will enroll at your institution.
   - **Optimizing your yield to increase ROI**—Do not overlook strategies such as marketing to admitted students or strengthening financial award communications so you can push more admits to enrollment—and not waste your hard-earned recruitment dollars.

3) **Take transfer student recruitment seriously if you plan to increase their enrollment.**
   With more institutions looking to increase their spending on transfer students, you will need to stay out in front of the competition. Create campaigns that target transfer students specifically from markets that will feed into your enrollment pipeline.

4) **Break down where you spend your recruitment dollars.**
   Section 5 (page 9) provides a quick method to benchmark your marketing and recruitment allocations. It also provides an opportunity to dive into your budget and analyze which activities have the greatest impact on enrollment, so you can allocate your budget more strategically.

5) **Diversify your marketing and recruitment portfolio.**
   While more institutions are making a smart move to increase their spending on digital marketing, this effort needs to be balanced. Finding a smart balance among traditional outreach and digital marketing will produce the most efficient and effective method to recruit students while managing costs.

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**TURN BENCHMARKS INTO ACTION. TALK WITH AN RNL ENROLLMENT STRATEGIST.**

Benchmark data can be illuminating, but it is also the first step toward a stronger enrollment strategy. You still need a thoughtful analysis of your institution’s goals, market, mission, competitors, academic programs, and other key factors.

Over the last 45 years, Ruffalo Noel Levitz has partnered with more than 3,000 institutions to help them articulate realistic objectives and create action plans to reach them. Talk to us about a consultation to learn how we can partner with you.

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© 2018 Ruffalo Noel Levitz | 2018 Cost of Recruiting an Undergraduate Student Report
Here is how our participants provided the data and how you can compare your institution.

This report is compiled from a survey of four-year public and private institutions about their costs for recruiting undergraduate students (see pages 14-15 for details on participants). Follow these instructions below to calculate your own cost of recruiting a student to benchmark your institution.

1) Determine your total approximate budget for undergraduate recruitment and admissions for 2016-17, rounded to the nearest thousand dollars.

   Budget components should include direct recruitment and admissions costs only, including:
   • All costs incurred by the recruitment/admissions office or other offices associated with undergraduate recruiting and admissions, including recruitment marketing but excluding general institutional marketing, general website maintenance and development, and grants and/or scholarships;
   • Staff salaries, prorated, for all full- or part-time employees working with undergraduate recruitment or admissions, including temporary or work-study employees and estimates of prorated salaries for supervisors who have additional responsibilities outside of undergraduate recruitment and admissions;
   • Capital costs (equipment, if any);
   • Supplies;
   • Travel (if any);
   • Recruitment publications;
   • Advertising related to recruitment;
   • Web and electronic communications costs related to recruitment;
   • Consultant services (if any);
   • CRM cost; and
   • Any additional expenses related to recruitment and admissions not named.

2) List your total number of new, undergraduate students who enrolled in all terms between January 1 and October 1, 2017 (e.g., spring, summer, and fall terms of 2017).

   Include all new first-year, transfer, full-time, part-time, online, on-campus, international, and adult undergraduate students in 2017

3) List your total number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees, including student workers, who worked in the undergraduate recruitment or admissions office during the 2016-17 academic year.

4) Calculate the cost of recruiting a single undergraduate:

   Total budget in #1 / Total new undergraduates in #2

5) Calculate the number of new enrolled students to staff:

   Total new undergraduates in #2 / Total FTE staff in #3

This same approach was used to create parallel benchmarks for transfer students and international undergraduate students, based on 2017 enrollments and the proportion of 2016-17 budgets relevant to these students.
ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS AND METHODOLOGY

Data in this report reflect responses from 126 nonprofit four-year colleges and universities that collectively enrolled more than 1 million students. Respondents participated in the Ruffalo Noel Levitz national electronic poll of undergraduate recruiting costs between October 17 and November 7, 2017. The poll was emailed to enrollment and admissions officers at accredited, degree-granting institutions across the United States.

To save time completing the poll, respondents were given the option to estimate all outlays and to calculate approximate employee benefits as a percentage of salary. Respondents were also given this hint: The total budget figure requested is usually the sum of the admissions/recruitment office budget, including events and any costs associated with recruiting and admissions that are covered by departments outside the admissions office such as marketing and communications.

Standard descriptive statistics (such as sample means) were used to analyze the results of the poll for central tendency and variation. Due to the relatively small sample size, the results should read as indicators.
FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS
Alvernia University (PA)
Andrews University (MI)
Augustana University (SD)
Aurora University (IL)
Austin College (TX)
Avila University (MO)
Azusa Pacific University (CA)
Bay Path University (MA)
Becker College (MA)
Bethel University (MN)
Bluffton University (OH)
Bryan College (TN)
Caldwell University (NJ)
California Baptist University (CA)
Cazenovia College (NY)
Chaifetz College (OH)
Cleveland Institute of Art (OH)
Converse College (SC)
Defiance College (OH)
Desales University (PA)
Dickinson College (PA)
Dominican University of California (CA)
Elms College (MA)
Friends University (KS)
Gardner-Webb University (NC)
Guilford College (NC)
High Point University (NC)
Hood College (MD)
Hope College (MI)
John Brown University (AR)
Johnson & Wales University (RI)
Juniata College (PA)
Kentucky Mountain Bible College (KY)
Keystone College (PA)
LaGrange College (GA)
Lee University Online (TN)
Liberty University (VA)
Manhattanville College (NY)
Marian University (IN)
Marist College (NY)
McNally Smith College of Music (MN)
Mercyhurst University (PA)
Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (WI)
Missouri Valley College (MO)
Mount Aloysius College (PA)
Mount Mary University (WI)
Nebraska Methodist College (NE)
Norwich University (VT)
Oklahoma Baptist University (OK)
Oral Roberts University (OK)
Pace University (NY)
Patrick Henry College (VA)
Pennsylvania College of Art & Design (PA)
Reed College (OR)
Robert Morris University (PA)
Rockhurst University (MO)
Rollins College (FL)
Saint Norbert College (WI)
Shaw University (NC)
Southern Adventist University (TN)
Southwestern Assemblies of God University (TX)
Spelman College (GA)
St. Edward's University (TX)
St. John's College (NM)
St. Louis College of Pharmacy (MO)
Stratford University (VA)
Susquehanna University (PA)
Texas Wesleyan University (TX)
The Catholic University of America (DC)
University of Bridgeport (CT)
University of Redlands (CA)
University of the People (CA)
Ursuline College (OH)
Utica College (NY)
Villa Maria College of Buffalo (NY)
Viterbo University (WI)
Wilkes University (PA)
Wilmington College (OH)
York College of Pennsylvania (PA)

FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
Arizona State University (AZ)
Augusta University (GA)
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania (PA)
California State University-Chico (CA)
College of Coastal Georgia (GA)
Colorado State University-Pueblo (CO)
East Carolina University (NC)
Eastern Kentucky University (KY)
Florida Atlantic University (FL)
Florida Gulf Coast University (FL)
Indiana University Northwest (IN)
James Madison University (VA)
Keene State College (NH)
Minnesota State University, Mankato (MN)
Mississippi State University (MS)
Missouri State University (MO)
Missouri University of Science & Technology (MO)
New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJ)
North Carolina State University (NC)
North Dakota State University Main Campus (ND)
Penn State University Park (PA)
Portland State University (OR)
Salisbury University (MD)
Shawnee State University (OH)
Southeastern Louisiana University (LA)
State University of New York College at Geneseo (NY)
State University of New York College at Plattsburgh (NY)
The University of Akron, Main Campus (OH)
University of Arkansas at Little Rock (AR)
University of Central Oklahoma (OK)
University of Colorado Denver (CO)
University of Delaware (DE)
University of Maryland (MD)
University of Minnesota Morris (MN)
University of North Georgia (GA)
University of Northern Colorado (CO)
University of Pittsburgh at Bradford (PA)
University of Tulsa (OK)
Virginia Military Institute (VA)
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VA)
Western Kentucky University (KY)
Western State Colorado University (CO)
Western Washington University (WA)
ABOUT RUFFALO NOEL LEVITZ

Ruffalo Noel Levitz is the leading provider of higher education enrollment, student success, and fundraising solutions. More than 1,900 colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations rely on RNL for advanced analytics, personalized engagement, and industry-leading insights to achieve their missions. The firm is distinguished by its powerful portfolio of solutions focused on the entire lifecycle of enrollment and fundraising, assuring students find the right college or university, graduate on time, secure their first job, and give back to support the next generation. Ruffalo Noel Levitz conferences, research reports, papers, and articles help clients stay on top of current trends.

Learn more and request a free consultation

Our enrollment management solutions cover the full spectrum of student recruitment and retention, including search, application, financial aid, student success, and strategy development. Contact us for a free consultation with our enrollment management experts.

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