



Cost Tops List of Factors Determining College Choice

Nationwide, 60% of Americans Consider Cost and Only 7% Consider Institutional Prestige to be Important When Making a College Decision

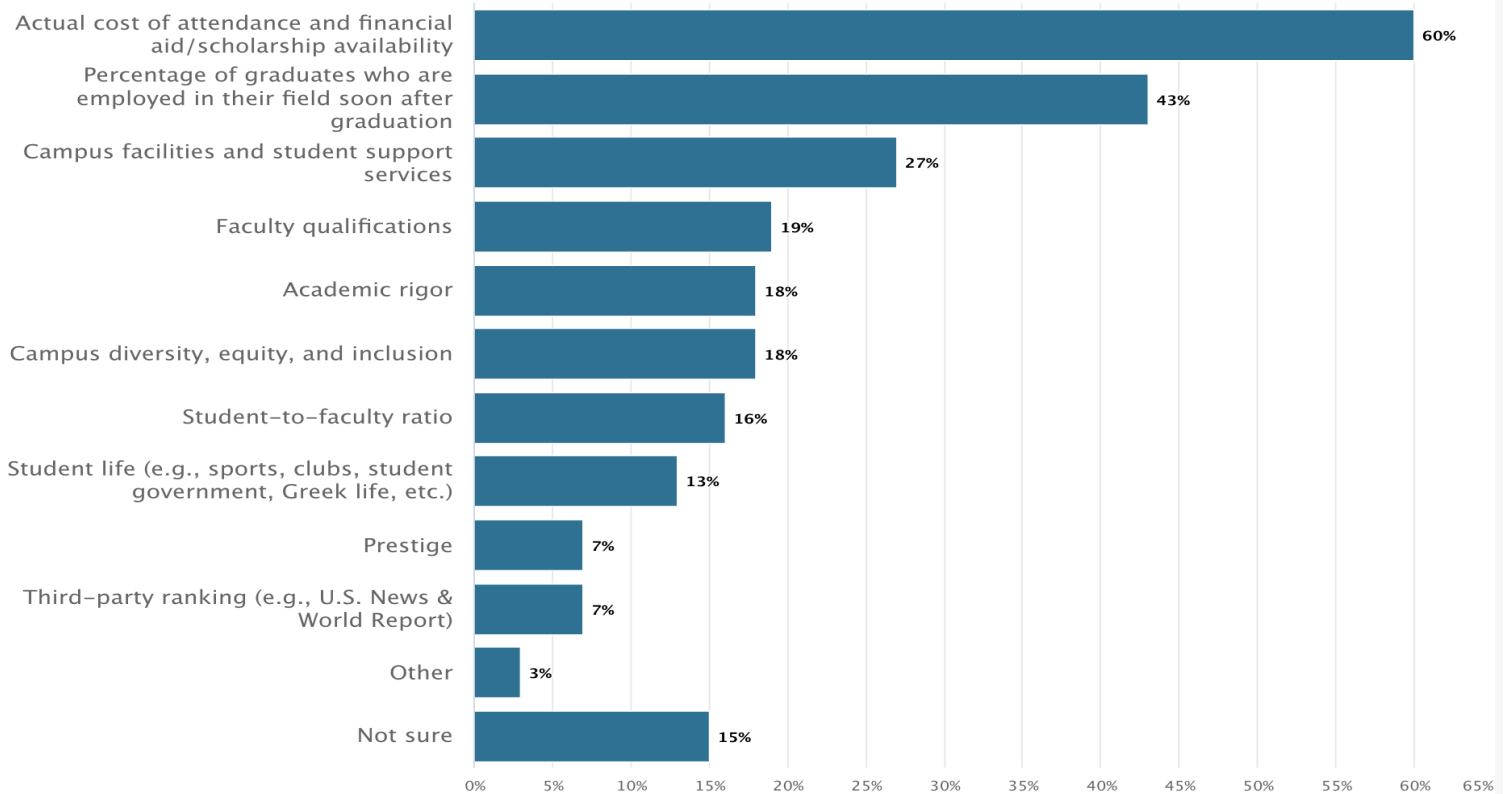
Aug. 9, 2021 (Seattle, WA) - According to a new survey from BestColleges.com, 60% of Americans agree that the actual cost of attendance at an institution (including financial aid and scholarship availability) is one of the most important factors to consider when choosing a college to attend. Other factors considered to be important by Americans include the percentage of graduates employed in their field soon after graduation (43%) and campus facilities and student support services (27%). Only 7% of Americans said that a college's prestige is an important factor when making a choice.

Click here for more information:

<https://www.bestcolleges.com/research/americans-believe-cost-of-college-matters-more-than-prestige/>

"As the cost of college has significantly increased over the last few decades, so too are the number of Americans forced to make cost the deciding factor when choosing which college to attend and weighing the potential return on their investment," said Melissa Venable, Ph.D., Education Advisor for BestColleges.com. "Attending a prestigious institution may be attractive, but the reality is that it's not as important as other factors. We found that college decisions are being made with more practical factors in mind, such as cost and employment potential."

Most important factors to consider when choosing a college to attend



*Respondents selected at least one and up to three options.

When asked about the potential benefits of earning a college degree, nearly half (45%) of Americans agree that securing employment and having a career are important outcomes. Other potential benefits considered to be important by Americans include developing specific skills in their field (43%) and maximizing earnings and income potential (41%).

While prestige may not be considered important in determining school choice, Americans do believe graduating from a prestigious college can further enhance earnings and income potential (44%) and the development of a professional network (33%). Still, 14% nationwide believe there are no benefits to graduating from a prestigious school over another type of school. Survey respondents define the prestige of a college or university by a number of factors, most importantly the percentage of graduates who are employed in their field after graduation (32%), academic rigor (29%), and faculty qualifications (26%).

Over a third of Americans (39%) believe a degree from a prestigious institution is one of the best ways to achieve success in someone's life or career. Additionally, 39% also agree that earning a degree from a prestigious school is worth any additional investment of time, resources and energy that may be required. However, an overwhelming majority (62%) of

Americans agree that doing so is not a path that is accessible to most communities or student populations due to social, cultural, or economic barriers.

"While attending a prestigious school may have some benefits, this shouldn't be the primary consideration. Prospective students should determine their list of wants and needs, particularly related to career development, and do the research to find schools that will support their journey from enrollment to graduation and beyond," said Dr. Venable.

Methodology

BestColleges.com commissioned YouGov PLC to conduct the survey. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov PLC. The total sample size was 2,663 adults. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all U.S. adults (aged 18+). Fieldwork was undertaken on July 14-16, 2021. The survey was carried out online and meets rigorous quality standards.

About BestColleges.com

BestColleges.com empowers students to make smarter educational decisions and find schools that best fit their needs through proprietary research, user-friendly guides, and hundreds of unique college rankings. As a trusted education advisor, they also provide a wide array of college planning, financial aid, and career resources to help students realize life goals and overcome educational challenges as they prepare for careers after college.