

BrandRank Releases University Answer Share Index (UASI)-Stanford, MIT Lead as Liberal Arts Colleges Face 'Answer Divide'

CINCINNATI, OH, UNITED STATES, February 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- BrandRank.AI—an industry leader in measuring the "Answer Economy"—today released its inaugural [University Answer Share Index \(UASI\)](#), revealing which colleges and universities dominate—and which are virtually invisible—when prospective students, parents, and guidance counselors ask AI platforms for recommendations.

The comprehensive analysis analyzed thousands of AI queries across 100 decision-critical college search questions spanning six major AI platforms (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Grok, Perplexity, and DeepSeek). BrandRank ran multiple prompts per question to identify the most common answer and average out variability, producing a robust dataset of 600 validated responses that exposes a new form of institutional inequality: the "Answer Divide."

Key Findings:

- Just four universities captured nearly one-third of all AI responses: Stanford (70 mentions), MIT (45), Princeton (38), and Harvard (30) collectively represented 30% of the 600 total responses
- Stanford University leads across all platforms, dominating innovation, career outcomes, and AI readiness categories
- Liberal arts colleges appeared in only 8% of responses despite representing significant top-tier undergraduate education
- Each AI platform shows distinct bias: ChatGPT favors established elites; Gemini surfaces



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teaching-focused institutions; Claude concentrates on Ivies; Grok champions liberal arts colleges

- Midwest universities systematically underrepresented relative to coastal institutions
- Overwhelming US-centric bias—Oxford and Cambridge rarely appear despite world-class reputations

"The college admission funnel is being restructured by AI, and most institutions don't realize it," said Pete Blackshaw, CEO and Co-Founder of BrandRank.AI. "When prospective students ask ChatGPT which college has the best programs or parents ask Claude about financial aid, these queries happen millions of times daily. If your university isn't in the answer, you don't exist. Just as Nielsen measured what America watched, we're measuring what AI recommends—and Answer Share is now more important than rankings."

The research reveals stark platform differences: ChatGPT shows balanced distribution across institution types, Gemini surfaces unexpected choices like Elon University and Georgia State, Claude demonstrates the most conservative Ivy-heavy pattern, and Grok uniquely emphasizes liberal arts colleges like Swarthmore and Williams.

"Each AI platform operates differently—they weight sources, prioritize freshness, and rank content authority in distinct ways," said Hank Hudepohl, Co-Founder and COO of BrandRank.AI. "Universities can't optimize for a single algorithm anymore. They need structured data, consistent messaging across all digital properties, and strategic content placement to show up reliably across all these platforms."

Methodology:

The University Answer Share Index (UASI) analyzed thousands of AI queries across 100 decision-critical college search questions spanning seven categories: Academic Quality & Teaching, Specific Programs, Campus Life, Career Outcomes, Diversity & Values, Financial Considerations, and Trust & Reputation. Questions mirror actual queries from prospective students, parents, and guidance counselors. Each question was run multiple times per platform to identify the most common answer and reduce variability. Responses were systematically documented and analyzed to reveal patterns in institutional visibility, producing 600 validated data points.

BrandRank plans to release the UASI bi-annually to track how institutional visibility evolves as AI platforms refine algorithms and universities optimize for Answer Engine discovery.

Read the full analysis: Pete Blackshaw's detailed blog post about the study findings is available at: <https://www.brandrank.ai/prompted-perspectives-news/what-we-learned-from-the-first-university-answer-share-index>

Explore the interactive study: The complete University Answer Share Index with detailed breakdowns across all 100 questions and hover-over insights is available at: https://brandrankai-dashboard-index.com/university_answer_tracker-4.html

About BrandRank.AI

BrandRank.AI—often called "The Nielsen Ratings of Answer Share"—is a Cincinnati-based SaaS platform that helps Fortune 500 brands and institutions optimize their visibility across AI-powered answer engines including ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity. The company measures performance through AI Visibility, Brand Vulnerability, and Content Readiness metrics. For more information, visit www.brandrank.ai.

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