

Hanover Research Survey Reveals How Admitted Students Make Enrollment Decisions in 2026

The report provides higher education institutions with key insights into the changing needs of college-bound students.

ARLINGTON, VA, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Hanover Research (Hanover), a leading provider of data and insights to colleges and universities, has released its sixth annual 2026 National Admitted Student Survey: A Report on the State of U.S. College Admissions. Based on Hanover's survey of nearly 1,000 students admitted to U.S. institutions for the 2026–27 academic year, the report examines admission trends and decision drivers including perceived degree value, financial concerns, college preparedness, communication preferences, and channels used during the college search process.



"Our research shows that in 2026, students continue to see value in earning a degree, but affordability and confidence in an institution's long-term stability are playing an increasingly important role in their enrollment decisions," says Paul Gibson, senior managing director at Hanover Research. "This year's survey explores these shifts and gives higher education leaders insight into what students value, where they encounter barriers, and how they want to engage with institutions so colleges and universities can meet the needs of today's students."

The key findings include:

- The perceived value of a college degree has increased compared to 2025
- Financial concerns are a top reason for deciding not to enroll
- Institutional stability factors into application decisions

- Students decide to enroll based on a combinator of affordability and fit
- AI is now a trusted part of the college search journey
- Social media communication preferences vary between graduate and undergraduate students
- Students feel less prepared for college than they did in 2025

“Our 2026 National Admitted Student Survey helps higher education institutions move beyond assumptions and understand what is actually driving student behavior at a critical point in the enrollment journey,” says Sid Phillips, chief growth officer at Hanover Research. “The data in this report provides evidence institutions need to understand student decision-making. With that visibility, leaders can refine recruitment and communications strategies, address enrollment barriers, and build a compelling value proposition that wins over more students.”

To access the full report, [click here](#).

About Hanover Research

Founded in 2003, Hanover Research is a global research and analytics firm that delivers market intelligence through a unique, fixed-fee model to more than 1,000 clients. Headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, Hanover employs high-caliber market researchers, analysts, and account executives to provide a service that is revolutionary in its combination of flexibility and affordability. Hanover has been named a Top 50 Market Research firm by the American Marketing Association and the Insights Association. To learn more about Hanover Research, visit www.hanoverresearch.com.

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