



Student Affairs

Degree Search High School Counselor Survey

University of Arizona Degree Search Website High School Counselor Survey

Student Affairs Marketing | February 13, 2013

Executive Summary

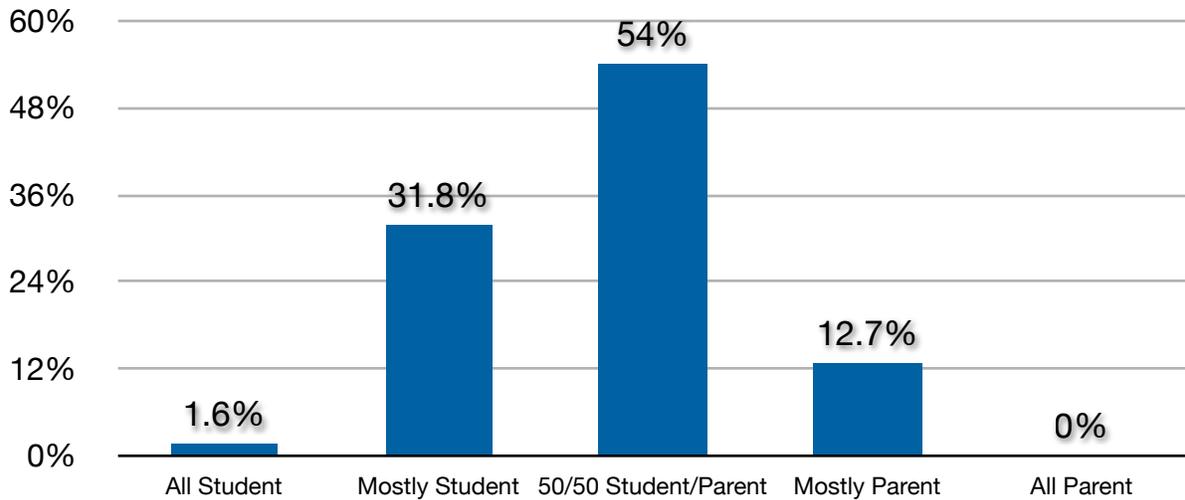
This survey was run between **Jan 9 - Feb 1, 2013**, and was sent out to an email list of high school counselors; response rate was **n=63**.

- Counselors responded that **degree research is typically done by a mix of the student and the parent**.
 - This appears to **vary dramatically** depending on the individual student/parent relationship as well as the demographics of the high school in general (urban, rural, mix of 1st generation college students, etc).
- **Students (54%)** are reported as the party **most often initiating a discussion** about a college major or degree, followed by school professionals (including counselors themselves).
- Although the **majority of parents (31%) take on an active role** or “driver’s seat” in the college preparation conversation, counselors indicated that **this role varies dramatically** and depends heavily on the individual student and parent, as well as the demographics of the high school.
 - Many counselors noted that **parents tend to be the ones asking questions about scholarships**, financial aid, and cost of attendance for various schools.
- **Personal Interest** of the student in a major/degree topic is ranked as the **most important factor (70%)** in the degree decision process by the majority of counselors.
 - Also important is the university offering the degree (48.7%), employment opportunities offered by the degree (47.3%), and admission requirements (44.0%).
 - The least ranked factors include credits and various requirements such as study time, fees, and second language.
- College plans are most often a **topic of discussion during a high school student's junior year (88.1%)**, followed by senior year.
- High school counselors feel that the senior students that they work with generally **choose a major or degree based on their own interest and talents (59.7%)**, and that they select a college to attend based on whether or not it offers their selected major or degree (58.9%).
 - However, many students are still undecided about their majors/degrees (55.5%).
- Counselors also felt that seniors chose colleges to attend **based on cost and scholarship opportunities (62.7%)** before its location and reputation.
- Counselors predominantly utilized **official college websites (80.8%)** when evaluating degrees with students, as well as other websites such as AZ CIS, College Board, and Naviance, and college or high school personnel.
- 59.3% of counselors had heard of Degree Search, and of that amount, 54.3% had used it.

Role of the Parent

High school counselors were asked a series of questions about the role of the parent in a high school student's degree exploration process, based on their experiences in meeting with students and parents on the topic.

Q1: When working with students, who is most likely to have done the research for that student's major?

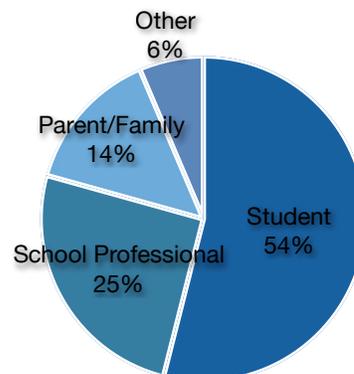


Data Source: Degree Search UA College Advisors Survey 2013

Counselors responded that degree research is typically done by a mix of the student and the parent; based on later free-response feedback, this appears to vary dramatically depending on the individual student/parent relationship as well as the demographics of the high school in general (urban, rural, mix of 1st generation college students, etc).

Q2: Who most often initiates the discussion with you about a student's college major/degree?

Student	54.0%
School professional	25.4%
Parent/family member	14.3%
Other	6.4%



Students are reported as the party most often initiating a discussion about a college major or degree (54%), followed by school professionals (including counselors themselves).

Q3: When meeting with you about a student preparing for college, what role does a parent most often take?

Role of the parent in college preparation discussions:	
Active / Driver	31.0%
Depends / Varies	20.7%
Passive / Support	17.2%
Advisory / Consultant	15.5%
Administrator / Supervisor	15.5%

Data Source: Degree Search UA College Advisors Survey 2013

Although the majority of parents (31%) take on an active or “driver’s seat” role in the college preparation conversation, counselors indicated that this role varies dramatically and depends heavily on the individual student and parent, as well as the demographics of the high school. Many parents also take on a passive support role (17.2%), while others tend to ask a lot of questions and act in an advisory capacity (15.5%), while other still supervise the process and assist mainly with administrative tasks (applications and enrollment).

Many counselors noted that parents tend to be the ones asking questions about scholarships, financial aid, and cost of attendance for various schools. **Note:** Q3 is a free response question -- review raw data for 60 unique responses.

Important Factors

Counselors were asked to rank a series of factors (1-5) based on their importance, from their point of view, in a student's degree exploration and decision process.

Q4-21: From your point of view, please rank the top five (5) factors below in order of importance when choosing a major/degree with your student(s):

Personal Interest	70.0%
University (that offers degree)	48.7%
Employment Opportunities	47.3%
Admission Requirements	44.0%
Average Salary Range	26.3%
Trending Majors	14.0%
Degree Type (BA/BS/BFA)	13.0%
Time Required to Graduate	9.7%
National Ranking of Degree	9.7%
Pre-Major Requirements	7.7%
Other	5.0%
Research Opportunities	4.7%
Math Requirements	4.7%
Additional Fees Required	4.0%
Base Salary Range	2.3%
Credits Required	2.0%
Study Time Required	1.7%
Second Language Requirement	0.0%

Data Source: Degree Search UA College Advisors Survey 2013

Personal Interest of the student in a major/degree topic is ranked as the most important factor in the degree decision process by the majority of counselors (70.0%). Also important is the university offering the degree (48.7%), employment opportunities offered by the degree (47.3%), and admission requirements (44.0%). The least ranked factors include credits and various requirements such as study time, fees, and second language.

'Other' factors noted by counselors as important include school location and cost of tuition, overall campus environment, amount of financial aid awarded, and the student's own skill sets (academic strengths/weaknesses).

Student Attitudes

Counselors were asked about which year of high school students typically discuss college plans with them, as well as about students' general attitudes towards the process.

Q23: College plans are most often discussed during counselor visits when meeting with high school students in their: (check all that apply)

Junior year	88.1%
Senior year	67.8%
Sophomore year	40.7%
Freshman year	12.8%

Data Source: Degree Search UA College Advisors Survey 2013

College plans are most often a topic of discussion during a high school student's junior year, followed by senior year.

Note: respondents could check more than one response; 88.1% of respondents selected 'junior year' in response to this question.

Q24-37: Based on your experiences with counseling college-bound high school seniors about college prep, please indicate approximately how many students' attitudes you feel tend to reflect the statements below:

Q34: "I am choosing a major/degree/college based on my interests and talents."	59.7%
Q28: "I am choosing a college because it offers my selected major/degree."	58.9%
Q27: "I am undecided about my major/degree."	55.5%
Q26: "I may want to change my major/degree down the road."	48.7%
Q24: "I know what major I want to study."	44.9%
Q29: "I am choosing a college before I know what degree/major I want to study."	44.1%
Q35: "I am choosing a major/degree/college based on expectations of a high salary."	44.1%
Q33: "I am choosing a major/degree/college based on my parents' preferences."	37.7%
Q25: "I have no trouble deciding between all the major/degree offerings."	31.4%
Q36: "I am choosing a major/degree based on the amount of work and study time involved."	29.7%

Data Source: Degree Search UA College Advisors Survey 2013

High school counselors feel that the senior students that they work with generally choose a major or degree based on their own interest and talents (59.7%), and that they select a college to attend based on whether or not it offers their selected major or degree (58.9%). However, many students are still undecided about their majors/degrees (55.5%).

"I am choosing a college based on..."	
Q31: ... cost/scholarship opportunities."	62.7%
Q32: ... its location."	60.2%
Q30: ...its reputation."	53.4%

Data Source: Degree Search UA College Advisors Survey 2013

Counselors also felt that seniors chose colleges to attend based on cost and scholarship opportunities (62.7%) before its location and reputation.

Research Resources

Counselors were asked about which research and review sources they typically accessed with students when helping them research majors and degrees, as well as whether or not they had heard of or used UA Degree Search.

Q37-44: When researching degrees/majors with my students, I look mostly to...

College websites (ex. arizona.edu)	80.8%
Other websites	49.2%
College/High School Personnel	35.0%
College Review Sources	28.3%
Other print materials	25.0%
Students' friends/families	16.7%
Other	7.1%
News source(s)	3.3%

Counselors predominantly utilized official college websites (80.8%) when evaluating degrees with students, as well as other websites such as AZ CIS, College Board, and Naviance, and college or high school personnel. Other sources cited by counselors include:

Other websites:		Other college review sources:	
AZ CIS	41.4%	College Board	22.6%
College Board	31.0%	Rugg's Guide	22.6%
Naviance	20.7%	Fiske Guide	19.4%
Kuder	6.9%	Princeton Review	19.4%
		US News	16.1%

Review Q45-49 raw data for additional review sources.

Respondents were asked about whether or not they had heard of UA Degree Search, and of those who had, how many had used the website.

	Yes	No
Q50: Have you heard of the site “degreesearch.arizona.edu”?	59.3%	40.7%
If Yes: Q51: Have you used the site “degreesearch.arizona.edu”?	54.3%	45.7%

59.3% of counselors had heard of Degree Search, and of that amount, 54.3% had used it.

Counselors who had used Degree Search mentioned that they had done so out of curiosity or based on a reference, and visited the site to experiment with the tool as a helpful resource for UA majors. Those who had not used it were either not heavily involved in the individual’s exploration process, or had recommended the site to students. **Note:** Q50 and Q51 are free response questions -- view raw data for unique responses.

Counselor Demographics

High school counselors were asked about their gender, as well as their city and state of residence.

Female	Male
79.3%	20.7%

Arizona	California	Illinois	New Jersey	Texas	Other
67.2%	6.9%	5.2%	5.2%	6.9%	8.6%

Additional Feedback

Additional free-response feedback from advisors was given in Q52 in the raw data appendix.

Appendix A - Raw Data (attached)