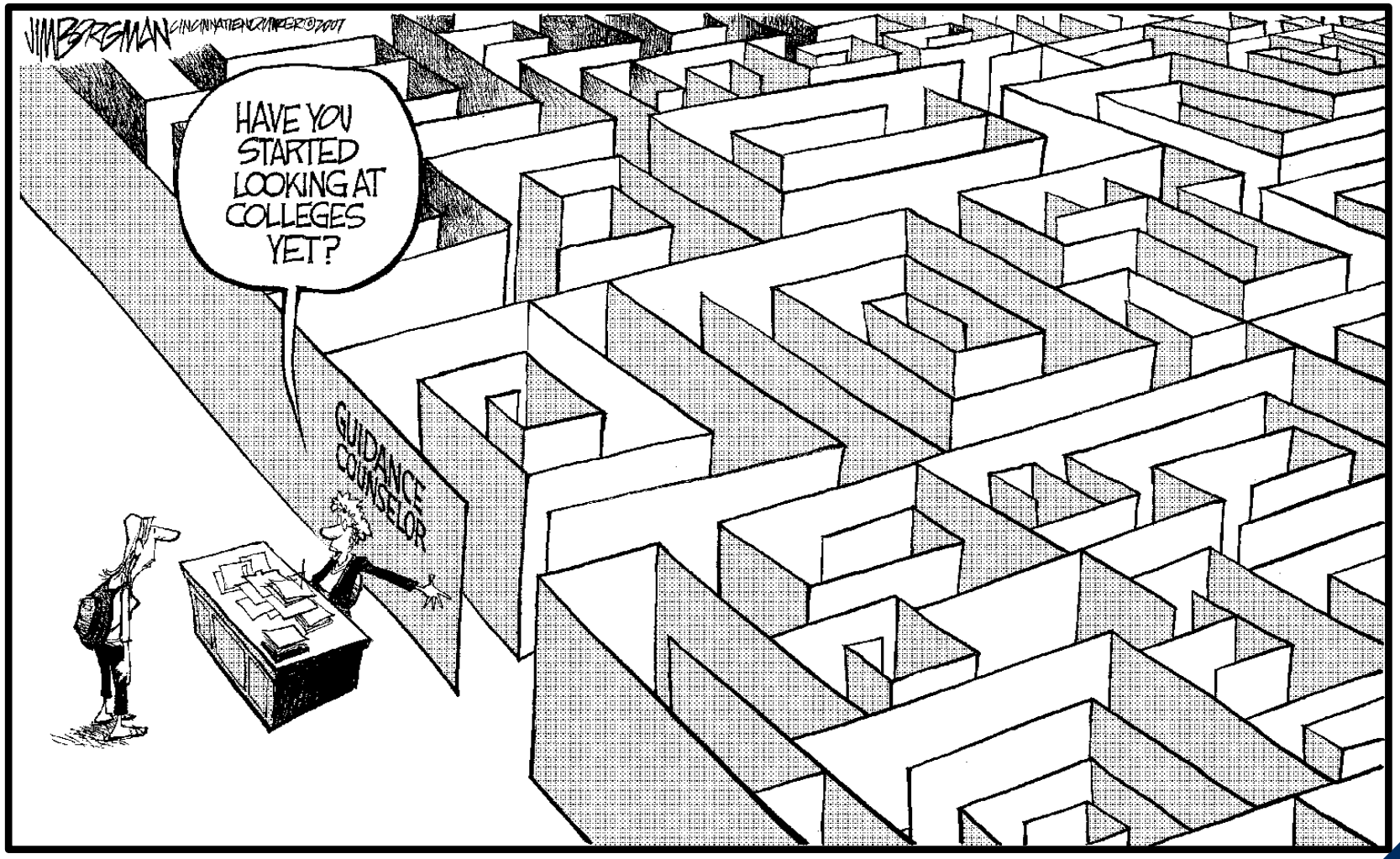
College Admissions 101: Your Checklist

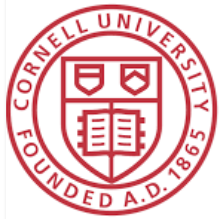
How not to be overwhelmed

Kenton Pauls

ACT

cloud
team
energy
energy
idea
business
document
work
jobs
%50
%10
%10
strategy
idea
success
work
plan
$$$
business
risk
success


JIM BERGMAN CINCINNATI ENQUIRER ©2007
HAVE YOU STARTED LOOKING AT COLLEGES YET?
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR



"Applying to college does not have to be overwhelming!"

The Education Conservancy

Wisdom for Overwhelmed Students…

Remember…

✓**Your self-worth** is not measured by an admission decision, test score, or GPA

✓**Most students get admitted** to the colleges they want to attend.

Guidelines…

✓**Take ownership**: The more you do for yourself, the better the results will be

✓**Be deliberate!**

- Conduct thoughtful research about the distinctions among colleges
- Take care to examine and identify your own interests, learning style, etc.

✓**Be realistic**

- Plan to make well-considered applications to the most suitable colleges (~6 should suffice)
- Choosing a college is an important process, but not a life-or-death decision.
- You can’t know everything about every college…some educated guessing is ok

✓**Be open-minded!**

- Resist the notion that there is one perfect college.
- Great education happens in many places.

Wisdom for Overwhelmed Students…(cont'd)

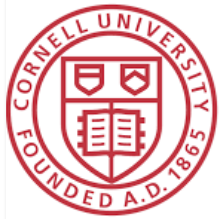
Guidelines…

✓**Use a variety of resources**
- One perspective is a limiting perspective
- Listen to those who know & care about you

✓**Be honest**!
- Do not try to game the system.

✓**Go to class** and work hard to the end
- The best way to prepare for success on the ACT…go to class
- Academic curiosity and rigorous coursework counts
- The best way to demonstrate you're ready for academic success

✓**Be active and serve others**
- Social and emotional qualities and strengths are desirable
- They correlate with academic success



*…**what you do** in college*
is better predictor
of future success and happiness
*than **where you go** to college*

The Education Conservancy

Wisdom for Overwhelmed Family Members…

Remember…

✓ The admission decision is not a measure of your student's worth

Guidelines…

✓ **Financial limitations are real**…name and discuss them early in the process…guard rails, not closed doors.

✓ **Make this an educational process**
- Gaining admission to college is merely one step in process of student can maximize talents and growth
- Help student understand the difference between making an educational choice and buying a product

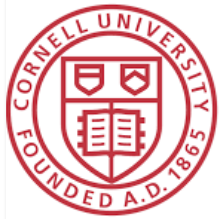
✓ **Release control…though stay involved**
- Resist doing for your students what they are capable of doing for themselves.
- Allow student to take responsibility, even while you stay involved
- Avoid the word, "we" (as in "we are applying to….")
- Let them demonstrate the independence you have instilled in them

✓ **Don't be misled by rankings and selectivity stats –** these should not determine "suitability"

✓ **Don't over-spend**…college selection and applying does not have to be expensive

✓ **Look beyond the name**
- Don't get sucked into a disordered preoccupation with status and brand names of schools
- Work toward developing a healthy, educationally based, and family-specific approach

✓ **Gaming the system isn't worth it** and may cost real harm



Massachusetts Institute of Technology

*Keep the **process in perspective**.*

Your student's skills,
self-confidence,
curiosity, &
desire to learn
are most important…

Do not sacrifice these

by overemphasizing
getting in to the "best" college.

The Education Conservancy

College Financial Aid:
Basics

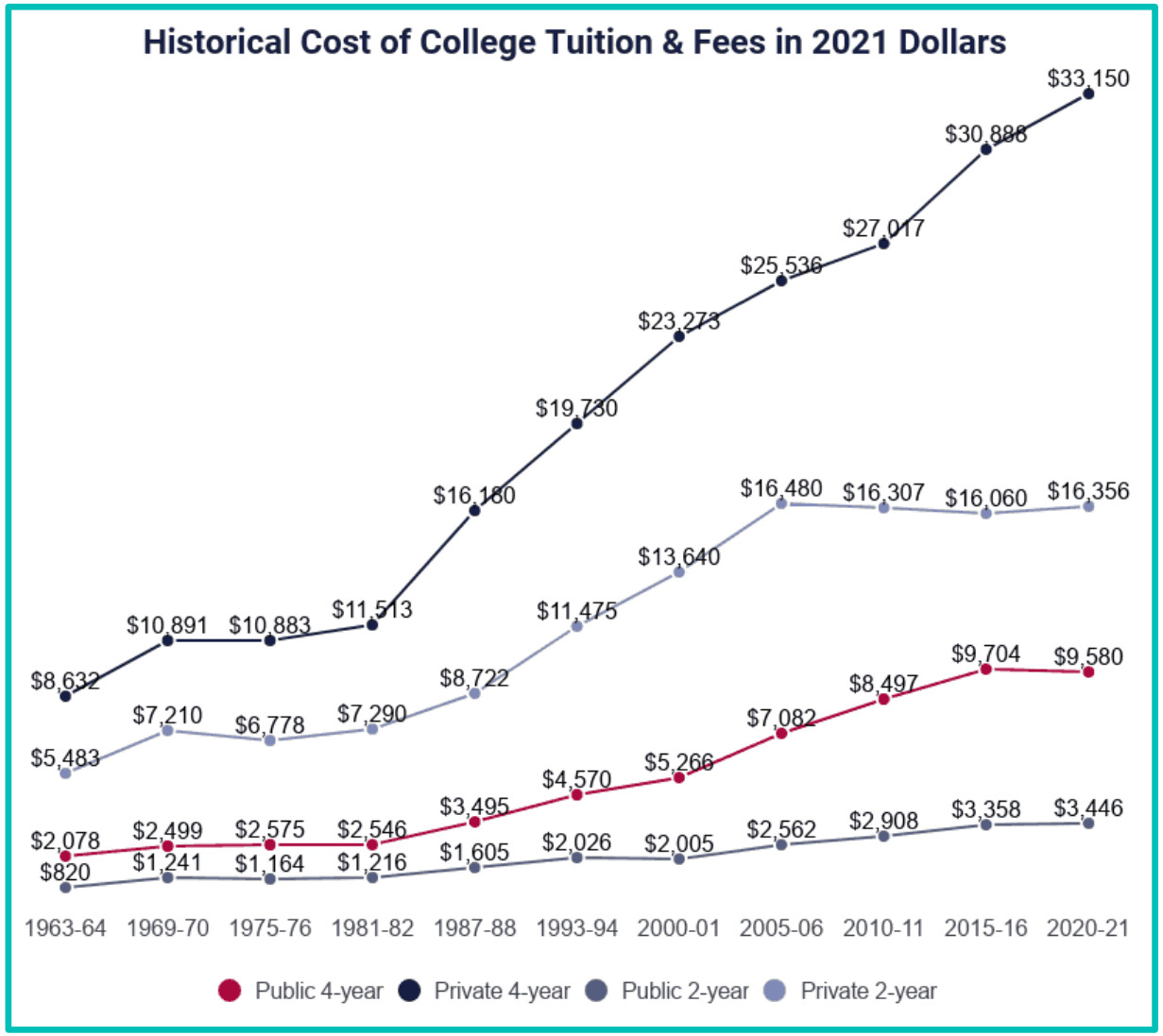
Financial Aid: The Basics

- Filing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the main way schools understand each student's ability to pay
  - "Expected Family Contribution" (EFC) now "Student Aid Index" (SAI)
  - SAI is a standard way to compare each student's financial situation
- **Every** family should file the FAFSA
  - Billions of money is left unused each year by families who don't file but could have/should have
  - Many types of institutional aid (scholarships and grants) require FAFSA filing.
  - Filing FAFSA is not an obligation to pay
  - FAFSA privacy is protected by federal law
- FAFSA filing begins Oct 1st each year (formerly Jan 1st)
- Institutional deadlines aren't standard

Sticker Price ≠ Price You Pay

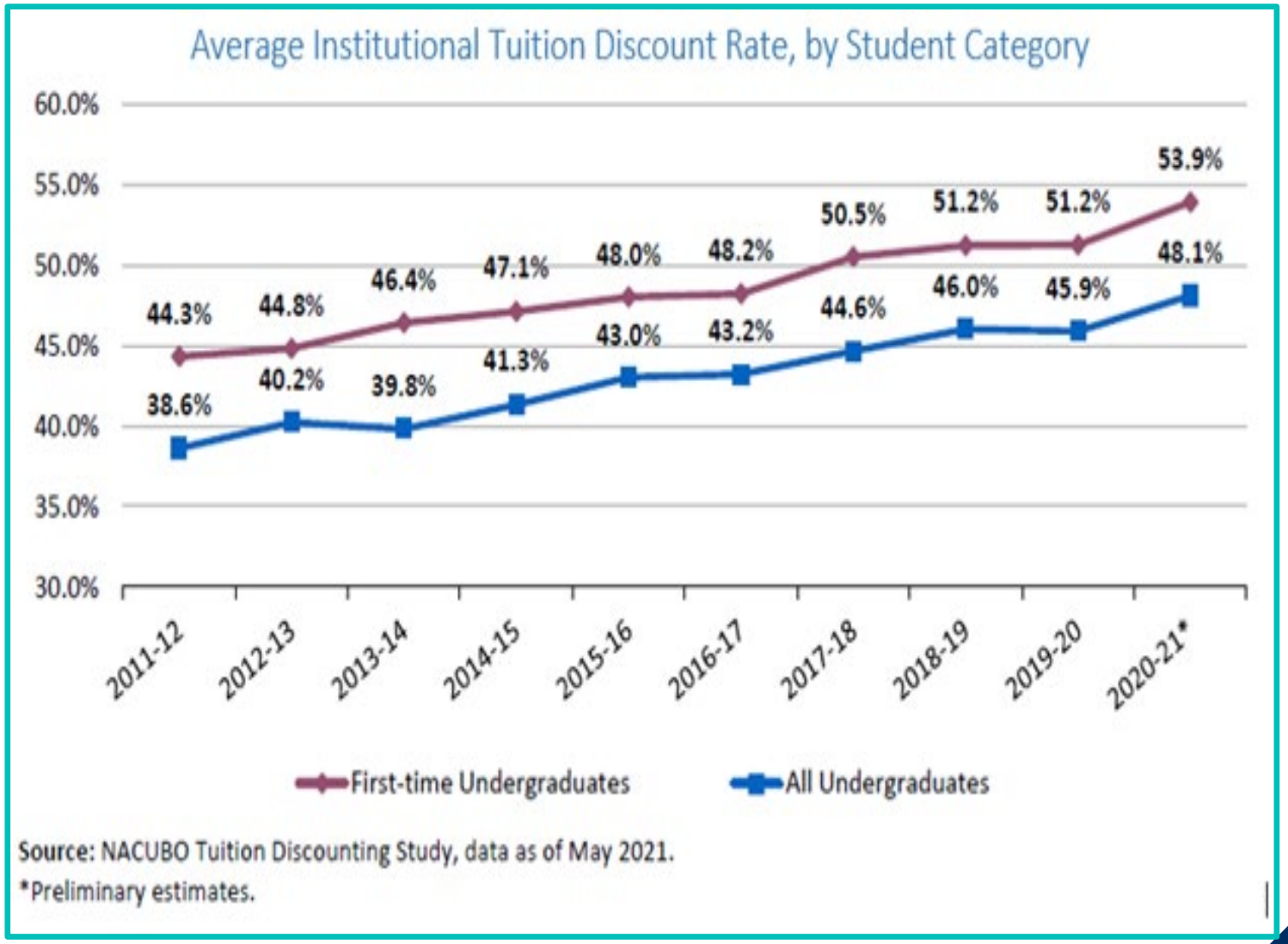
How private college pricing actually works

Sticker Shock



Hanson, Melanie. “Average Cost of College & Tuition” EducationData.org, August 15, 2021, https://educationdata.org/average-cost-of-college

Shocking Discounts



What does this mean?

- **Public 4 yr colleges and universities**
  - Tuition discounting is not nearly as common
  - The sticker price will be more likely the actual price you'll pay

- **Private 4 yr colleges and universities**
  - The price you'll pay will vary (significantly) by institution
  - Your price paid might be very different from the published sticker price
  - Is dependent on personal financial and academic ability factors each student presents
  - Average 2021 tuition at private 4yr: $33,150
    - Average discount rate: 53.9%
    - Net tuition paid by the average enrolled student: $17,868

- Perception vs. reality:
  - It might initially appear that the price of private college is ~3.5X @ public
  - In actuality, the differential is often much less pronounced

Understanding Net Price and Comparing Institutions

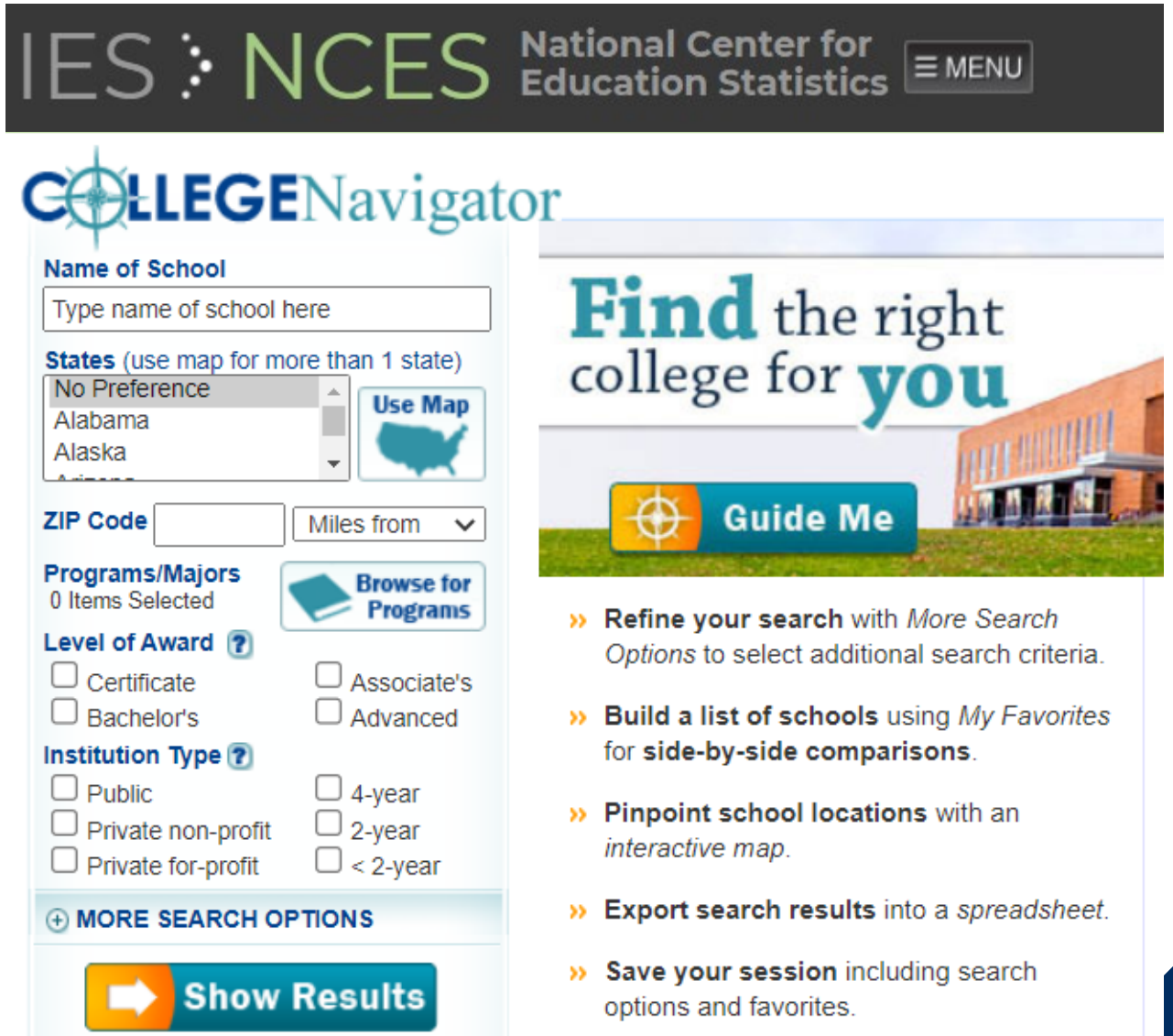
Free Online Tools

Net Price Calculators

- Required (by law) for every college or university website
- Prospective students enter their specific information
  - Financial questions
  - Could also include non-academic special interest information as well
- Output shows the amount of grants and scholarships were received by like-students who attended the institution in the previous year
- Shows the estimated net price a student is likely to pay

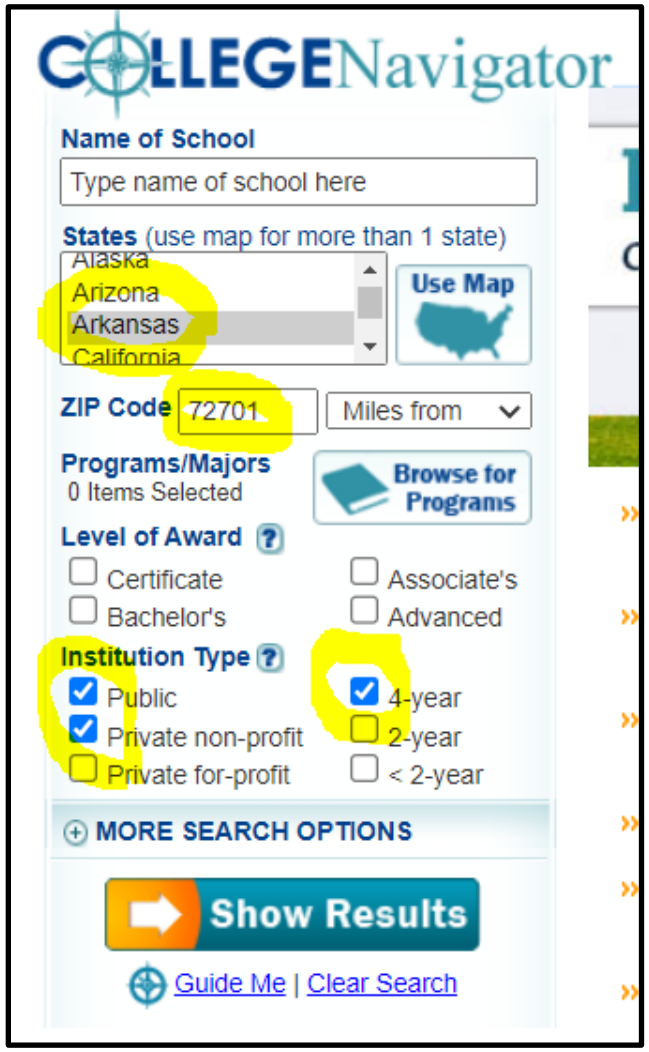
College Navigator

https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/



College Navigator

Search and compare based on data schools report to the US Dept of Ed



University of Arkansas

Administration Bldg 425, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

Added to Favorites

Distance from ZIP:	0.0 miles from 72701
General information:	(479) 575-2000
Website:	www.uark.edu/
Type:	4-year, Public
Awards offered:	Less than one year certificate Bachelor's degree Postbaccalaureate certificate Master's degree Post-master's certificate Doctor's degree - research/scholarship Doctor's degree - professional practice
Campus setting:	City: Small
Campus housing:	Yes
Student population:	27,562 (22,825 undergraduate)
Student-to-faculty ratio:	19 to 1

View on Google Maps

View on Google Maps

IPEDS ID: 106397
OPE ID: 00110800

Expand All | Collapse All

- GENERAL INFORMATION
- TUITION, FEES, AND ESTIMATED STUDENT EXPENSES
- FINANCIAL AID
- NET PRICE
- ENROLLMENT
- ADMISSIONS
- RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES
- OUTCOME MEASURES
- PROGRAMS/MAJORS
- SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS
- VARSITY ATHLETIC TEAMS
- ACCREDITATION
- CAMPUS SECURITY AND SAFETY
- COHORT DEFAULT RATES

FINANCIAL AID

NET PRICE

ENROLLMENT

ADMISSIONS

Undergraduate application fee (2020-2021):	$40

UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS FALL 2020

	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Number of applicants	19,777	8,176	11,601
Percent admitted	78%	76%	79%
Percent admitted who enrolled	31%	33%	29%

ADMISSIONS CONSIDERATIONS	REQUIRED	RECOMMENDED	CONSIDERED BUT NOT REQUIRED
Secondary school GPA	X		
Secondary school rank			X
Secondary school record	X		
Completion of college-preparatory program			X
Admission test scores (SAT/ACT)	X		
TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign language)			X

TEST SCORES: FALL 2020 (ENROLLED FIRST-TIME STUDENTS)

STUDENTS SUBMITTING SCORES	NUMBER	PERCENT
SAT	1,139	24%
ACT	4,187	89%

TEST SCORES	25TH PERCENTILE*	75TH PERCENTILE**
SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	550	640
SAT Math	540	640
ACT Composite	23	29
ACT English	22	31
ACT Math	21	27

NOTES:
* 25% of students scored at or below
** 25% of students scored above

- Data apply to first-time degree/certificate-seeking students.
- Institutions are asked to report test scores only if they are required for admission.

FINANCIAL AID

NET PRICE

AVERAGE NET PRICE FOR FULL-TIME BEGINNING STUDENTS

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who paid the in-state or in-district tuition rate and were awarded grant or scholarship aid from federal, state or local governments, or the institution.

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Average net price	$15,781	$16,263	$16,759

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who paid the in-state or in-district tuition rate and were awarded Title IV aid by income.

AVERAGE NET PRICE BY INCOME	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
$0 – $30,000	$11,447	$12,094	$12,003
$30,001 – $48,000	$13,273	$13,132	$13,690
$48,001 – $75,000	$15,399	$16,336	$16,256
$75,001 – $110,000	$18,653	$18,927	$19,053
$110,001 and more	$19,346	$19,959	$19,897

- Average net price is generated by subtracting the average amount of federal, state/local government, or institutional grant or scholarship aid from the total cost of attendance. Total cost of attendance is the sum of published tuition and required fees (lower of in-district or in-state), books and supplies, and the weighted average for room and board and other expenses.
- Beginning students are those who are entering postsecondary education for the first time.
- Title IV aid to students includes grant aid, work study aid, and loan aid. These include: Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant), Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, Federal Work-Study, Federal Perkins Loan, Subsidized Direct or FFEL Stafford Loan, and Unsubsidized Direct or FFEL Stafford Loan. For those Title IV recipients, net price is reported by income category and includes students who received federal aid even if none of that aid was provided in the form of grants. While Title IV status defines the cohort of student for which the data are reported, the definition of net price remains the same – total cost of attendance minus grant aid.

NET PRICE CALCULATOR

An institution's net price calculator allows current and prospective students, families, and other consumers to estimate the net price of attending that institution for a particular student.

Visit this institution's **net price calculator** finaid.uark.edu/aid-calculator.php

ENROLLMENT

ADMISSIONS

RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

OUTCOME MEASURES

QUESTIONS?

ACT

act.org

Twitter: @ACTStudent
Instagram: @actstudent
Facebook: @theacttest

Kenton Pauls

National Director, Higher Education

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