

College Admissions Teams Brace for Changes as COVID-19 Continues to Weigh on Parents, Prospective Students

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Tallo survey of college admissions offices finds vast majority still remain concerned over lack of in-person interactions and continued campus closures, despite “overdue” shift to remote marketing.

MOUNT PLEASANT, S.C.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- For college recruiters, the challenges of COVID-19 and the national spotlight on issues of racial inequity have forced many to reevaluate how they attract and interact with potential students and their parents, according to a new survey from **Tallo**, the nation’s premier online platform for connecting students with opportunities.

“For decades, the college recruitment process has hinged on in-person tours and admissions events, and recruitment efforts have had to change dramatically this year to address the challenges posed by COVID-19,” said Casey Welch, CEO and Co-founder of Tallo. “These changes come as no surprise, but they have forced recruiters to reevaluate how to effectively connect with this generation and keep them interested in the possibilities of higher education.”

How colleges respond to the challenges created by COVID-19 continues to be a top-of-mind issue for prospective students and their parents. The vast majority (25 of 30) of admissions staff in the survey said they “fear(ed) that the parents of prospective students will lose interest in [their] college or university if [they] fail to open or remain open during the spring semester due to COVID-19.”

An inability to travel -- either to meet with students or for students to come on campus -- continues to make it hard

to build real connections, according to the recruiters. With that said, one recruiter at a liberal arts college noted: "It's been long overdue that we expand our virtual visits/tours, and this has allowed us to do [that]. Now a perfect model would be a little bit of both."

"Everyone has done an amazing job rising to the challenge of recruiting during a pandemic with creativity and positivity," said Cari Brooks, Director of Student Services at Clemson University. "I'm particularly proud of our online visit events, because before this, virtual recruitment wasn't a part of our strategy. But here we are, hosting them regularly, and in some ways, I feel that we honestly connect with students better in the virtual world. We've turned this crisis into an opportunity to meet prospective students where they already were -- online -- and where they expect us to be."

In addition to COVID-19, the impact of this year's social movements is dominating recent conversations about college admissions best practices. Seventy percent of recruiters agree that their college has implemented higher standards around diversity and inclusion due to social unrest around the country and over 85% feel that their university is working to help end structural racism in higher education. Fully 93% also believe that racial and ethnic diversity is clearly reflected in the recruitment materials used by their admissions team. This is critical for many Gen Z students, as one in four **previously reported** that they have decided not to apply to a college because they feared being treated unfairly due to their gender, ethnic or racial identity.

"Diversity and inclusion were major themes in 2020 for **Gen Z**, so it's encouraging that college recruiters are keyed in to advancing the priorities of prospective students," said Welch. "This year will be a turning point in a lot of ways, and the high expectations students have when it comes to higher education are without a doubt pushing us in a more positive and inclusive direction."

This survey was conducted by Tallo from December 14-28, 2020. More results are available at <https://tallo.com/blog/tallo-data-college-recruitment-2020/>.

About Tallo

Over one million talented individuals use **Tallo** to create digital portfolios to showcase their skills and accomplishments, connect with post-secondary institutions and companies, and access customized career pathways and financial assistance guidance. Companies, colleges, and governmental entities work with Tallo to develop strategies to micro-target and connect with the Tallo community and build their future workforce pipeline. Tallo helps its partners understand Gen Z and Millennial talent, take a strategic approach to cultivate new and existing talent, and focus on quality matches with candidates who are the right fit. For more information, visit www.tallo.com.

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