

Deepening the Investigation Into the College Decision-Making Process

# COLLEGE CHOICE STUDY 2023

WHAT FACTORS DRIVE STUDENTS' CHOICES



***“Degree Helps Get A Good Job”***  
regains top spot in this year’s study

In 2023, the pivotal factor influencing college choices, “Degree Helps Get a Good Job” has once again claimed the top spot, regaining its position from “Majors of Interest.” Against the backdrop of economic uncertainty, concerns regarding job security are on the rise.



High School seniors are strategically aligning their educational paths with industries or professions that exhibit resilience in the face of economic downturns.



Advent, in partnership with Dr. Darin White, the executive director of the Samford University Center for Sports Analytics and Chair of the Entrepreneurship, Management & Marketing Department, has conducted the College Choice Study and Student-Athlete College Choice Study annually since 2016. These are some of the findings from 2023.

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## Healthcare-Related Fields on the Rise

Notably, **21% of entering females** express an intention to major in healthcare-related fields—possibly influenced by a heightened awareness of healthcare’s societal impact and evolving gender dynamics. **44%** of entering males plan to **major in business**.

### “Value for the Price” is incredibly important to the male demographic.

Male students are increasingly expressing concern about their post-graduate income. With **student loan debt** on the rise and the recognition of **escalating living expenses**, students view their education as a critical investment that should yield a competitive and fulfilling career.

#### POST PANDEMIC TRENDS

### “In-Person Learning” and “Academic Facilities” gain ground.

Both “Commitment to in-person teaching” and “Hands-on learning opportunities” have secured places in the Top 10 for incoming females. After a notable dip, the ranking of “Academic Facilities” is trending toward pre-COVID norms, signaling a shift as students reintegrate into face-to-face learning.

Dr. Darin White, the executive director of the Samford University Center for Sports Analytics and Chair of the Entrepreneurship, Management & Marketing Department, has conducted the College Choice Study and Student-Athlete College Choice Study annually since 2016. During the summer and early fall of 2023, an electronic survey was developed and sent via email to incoming college freshmen in all parts of the United States. The survey contained items measuring the impact of 31 drivers, 20 of which have been tracked by Advent since 2016. Eleven additional items were included in the 2021 study, following the Pandemic This year’s survey generated 608 total responses.



## “Strong Athletic Teams”

saw the most significant increase since the study’s inception, **leaping 26%**, the largest increase among all determinants.



## “Quality of Social Life”

has experienced a significant increase since 2016. Students, increasingly attuned to the impact of social interactions on mental health, are prioritizing environments that foster genuine connections. This underscores a holistic view of the college experience.