



Princeton Review's 2010 "College Hopes & Worries Survey" Reports on 12,000 Students' & Parents' Application Experiences & "Dream" Schools

- 86% Say Financial Aid "Very Necessary"
- 68% Say Economy Affecting Their Choices
- 66% Report Stress Levels High

- Stanford #1 "Dream School" Among Students and Among Parents

NEW YORK, March 24, 2010, 12:01 AM EDT / PRNewswire / - Some call it "*the other* March madness." It's nail-biting season now through April as college acceptance / rejection and financial aid letters land in family mailboxes.

According to a Princeton Review survey of 9,132 college applicants and 3,042 parents of applicants, stress levels are up and college costs are a major concern this year: 86% of respondents say financial aid will be "very necessary" to pay for college, and 68% report the economic downturn has impacted their college decisions.

However, if cost was not an issue and acceptance a given, the "dream college" students and parents most wish the kids were heading to this fall is Stanford University.

The Princeton Review, an education services company, has conducted its "College Hopes & Worries Survey" since 2003. Findings this year are based on 12,174 surveys completed on paper or online by students and parents from all 50 states and DC. The 15-question survey ran in The Princeton Review book, "Best 371 Colleges" (Random House, July 2009) and on www.PrincetonReview.com from late January to mid-March. All but one question was multiple-choice.

Top 10 Dream Colleges

For the survey's only fill-in-the-blank question, "What 'dream college' do you wish you (your child) could attend if acceptance or cost weren't issues?" respondents wrote in the names of more than 600 institutions from Adrian College to Yale.

The schools most named by students as their "Dream Colleges" were:

- 1/ Stanford University
- 2/ Harvard College
- 3/ New York University
- 4/ Princeton University
- 5/ Brown University
- 6/ Yale University
- 7/ University of California--Los Angeles
- 8/ Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- 9/ University of Southern California
- 10/ Cornell University

The schools most named by parents as their "Dream Colleges" were:

- 1/ Stanford University
- 2/ Princeton University
- 3/ Harvard College
- 4/ Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- 5/ Yale University
- 6/ University of California--Los Angeles
- 7/ University of Notre Dame
- 8/ Brown University
- 9/ University of Southern California
- 10/ New York University

Other Key Findings

Among respondents overall, responding to questions with multiple-choice answers, when asked about:

- How the economic downturn affected their applications:

51% said they were applying to "more 'financial aid safety' schools," 25% to "schools closer to home" to save on travel, and 24% to colleges "with lower sticker prices."

- Stress about applications:

68 % reported stress levels as "high" or "very high" (up 2% from last year).

- Biggest worry:

39% (the plurality) chose the answer "will get into first-choice college, but won't have sufficient funds/financial aid to attend."

- Prime benefit of a college degree:

41% said "a potentially better job and income," 28% said "education and learning," 17% said "exposure to new ideas," and 14% said "training for a specific career."

- Distance from home they'd prefer their ideal college to be:

54% of parents chose "0 to 250 miles," while 64% of students selected answer choices in ranges over 250 miles.

The Princeton Review also asked respondents for advice for next year's applicants. The most common tip from students and parents: "Start early." One mother added "Remember: the choice of college should fit the student, not the parent." One student wrote: "Don't worry. It's been done a million times before by students just as nervous as you."

A complete survey report and samplers of students' and parents' advice are at www.PrincetonReview.com.

The Princeton Review, a leading provider of test preparation and online career education services, is known also for its courses, books, and college and graduate school admission services. Based in Framingham MA, it is not affiliated with Princeton University and not a magazine.

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