

Exploring the Future of College Admissions

In fall 2023, the [Urban Institute](#), in partnership with the Association for Undergraduate Education at Research Universities ([UERU](#)) and the Center for Enrollment Research, Policy and Practice (CERPP) at USC Rossier, launched [a national research-practice partnership](#) to examine the changes in the demographics of college admissions. Since the launch of the project, the Association of Institutional Research ([AIR](#)), The American Association of Colleges and Universities ([AAC&U](#)) and the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities ([USU](#)) have joined as partners.

While the Supreme Court's (SCOTUS) ruling in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina* drew national attention, they are just one of several major events likely to reshape admissions. The COVID-19 pandemic had already [shifted demographic patterns](#) of applicants and admits. Delays in the rollout of the redesigned FAFSA further disrupted access [particularly for high schools serving large shares of students of color](#). And 2023 brought a wave of state and institutional anti-DEI policies, eliminating race-conscious scholarships, hiring practices, and diversity offices which has only increased due to federal mandate. [Our preliminary analysis](#) of data collected last fall suggests the confluence of these events may be shifting historical demographic patterns of applicants, admits and enrollees.

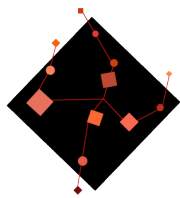
These developments highlight the need for stronger data on admissions. Currently, no national data exists on applicants and admits by race or income. The Trump administration has [proposed](#) expanding the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) this fall with a new component, the Admissions and Consumer Transparency Supplement (ACTS). "Selective" four-year colleges would be required to submit six years of data disaggregated by race and sex for applicants, admits, and enrollees for a large number of variables such as income, test scores, GPA, Pell eligibility, parents' education, and financial aid. While ACTS promises greater transparency, [experts warn](#) of significant risks of quality and misinterpretation issues given the short time frame for implementation, a lack of standard definitions for the proposed data, and the staffing constraints at the Department of Education. This project provides an opportunity for participating institutions to share a subset of standardized data that can be used to assess the validity of findings from the Department of Education.

As such the **primary objectives of this partnership between 4-year schools and researchers is to 1) understand changes in the demographic profile of applicants, admits, and enrollees using standardized data, 2) catalog changes in admissions policies and practices, and 3) collectively explore new and innovative models of admission practices.**

Participation in the project will **be kept confidential** and consists of three activities:

- Providing aggregate administrative data on applicants, admits, and enrollee for Fall 2018 through Fall 2025
- Completing a survey and/or interview about your enrollment management practices (i.e., admissions, recruitment, financial aid, student success).
- Attending invite-only convenings of senior enrollment leaders to discuss research findings and their implications for individual institutions and the field, collectively.

If you are interested in learning more about this study, please contact Bryan Cook (admissionsresearch@urban.org) or Julia Michaels (julia.michaels@colostate.edu)



**Association for
Undergraduate Education
at Research Universities**

**USC
Rossier**

School of Education
*Center for Enrollment
Research, Policy,
and Practice*