

EDUVENTURES' STUDY REVEALS WHAT COLLEGE STUDENTS WANT FROM THEIR EDUCATION

Eduventures Identifies Key Drivers of Educational Value

(Boston, MA) December 12, 2006 - Average debt burdens assumed by graduating college seniors more than doubled from 1993 to 2004, and tuition rates continue to climb. As tuition and student debt loads continue to climb, incoming students are beginning to critically question their return on investment (ROI) and universities are scrambling for answers.

To help universities respond to questions on educational ROI, Eduventures, the leading research and consulting firm for the education industry, has published a new report, *Key Drivers of Educational Value: The Emergence of Educational ROI*. The report, based on a survey of 6,200 enrolling freshmen, provides answers to the questions about what students value most in a college education. Unquestionably, the leading drivers of educational value among freshmen are professional preparation (72%), strength of the academic program (62%), and affordability (47%), all of which were ranked as "very important."

Professional Preparation

The importance of professional preparation as the leading value driver was consistent across all levels of academic preparation- respondents who scored below 1,000 on the SAT were nearly identical in the value they place on professional preparation as those who scored in excess of 1,500. A range of professional-related programs and services were viewed as valuable to respondents, including 1) access to internships, 2) quality of career office, and 3) placement record with employers, respectively.

Academic Strength

The academic program sits at the heart of every college experience, and college-bound students preparing to enter full-time, four-year institutions recognize the importance of the academic work in which they are about to engage. The results show that students value "close interaction with faculty" and "experiential learning" more than "honors programs" and the development of smaller "learning communities." Taken together, the leading academic value drivers suggest student interest in a relatively dynamic learning model in which students "roll up their sleeves" and work closely with faculty.

Affordability

In the aggregate, nearly half of all respondents indicated a "school's cost to attend" was "very important" in considering where to apply, with the number rising to 74% when also including respondents who rated the category "important." In light of continuing upward trends in tuition prices and student debt levels, it comes as little surprise that enrolling students place affordability among the top three value drivers.

Of note, placing emphasis on affordability is not limited to students of low to moderate means. Although the data shows relatively more value placed on affordability among students of lower socioeconomic status, it is also true that more than half of students whose families earn in excess of \$150,000 per year believe affordability is "very important" or "important" when assessing the schools to which they will apply.

"Although students are interested in such outcome measures as placement record with graduate schools, access to internships, and expected earning potential, enrollment managers tend to measure their success only around such inputs as academic profile, yield, number of students enrolled, and net revenue," said Jim Quinn, senior analyst for Eduventures' Learning Collaborative for Enrollment Management. "Enrollment managers who can close the gap - by collecting and marketing information that speaks to the programmatic and outcome measures of greatest importance to students - will attract desirable students, while leading the profession toward a more sustainable and student-centered set of performance measures."

These findings are from Eduventures' recent report, *Key Drivers of Educational Value: The Emergence of Educational ROI*, analyzing responses from more than 6,200 enrolling freshmen. The full report, available exclusively to members of Eduventures' Learning Collaborative Program for Enrollment Management, contains a wealth of information about what prospective students, by various segments, look for in a college education, including academics, technology, diversity and other experiences, and how enrollment managers can shape their recruitment efforts against these educational values. For more information on this report or Eduventures' Learning Collaborative programs, contact Tony Bernez at tbernez@eduventures.com or (617) 532-6084.

About Eduventures

For more than a decade, Eduventures has been the most trusted name in the education market for research, consulting services, and peer networking. Its clients include senior administrators and executives from leading educational institutions and companies serving the K-12, higher education, and corporate learning markets, as well as decision-makers in government agencies and the investment community.