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Direct Admission: Make this enrollment strategy work for you

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Session Topics

1. Market environment surrounding Direct Admission
2. Models/Types of Implementation
3. Tips for Success
4. Institutional Outcomes
5. Conversation and Q/A

What is Direct Admission?

Steps in the Process

- Allows the institution to bypass the application
- Make an admit offer based on GPA and/or other criteria
- Offer an estimated merit award
- Student to complete an onboarding form (i.e., application)
- Submit a high school transcript
- Add the student to your funnel as an admit



Direct Admission

A National Conversation

- Common App, Niche, EAB, and others are offering services to help colleges automatically admit students
- There are an increasing number of state programs
- Lots of focus within Higher Education Media
- There is recognition from all sides that an application can be a barrier
- Some studies are saying that it doesn't boost enrollment

Direct Admissions Boosts Applications, but Not Enrollment

Large-scale study finds that guaranteeing free, simplified admission increases college applications from minoritized, low-income and first-gen students, but cost still deters them from enrolling.

By [Susan H. Greenberg](#)



August 23, 2023



Is Direct Admission Legitimate?

Also, **most of the colleges embracing direct admissions are not the most competitive** or even somewhat competitive in admissions. So these institutions are not those that are featured in certain newspapers' reports every year on how hard it is to get into the Ivy League.

Inside Higher Ed, January 29, 2023



Tradition holds that students must submit an application before a college will consider them for admission. But what if the script were flipped so that colleges could offer a spot to qualified students who hadn't even applied?

Chronicle of Higher Education, January 27, 2022

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/congrats-you-didnt-apply-but-we-admitted-you-anyway>

Eric Hoover | February 13, 2023



THE CHRONICLE
of Higher Education

Congrats! You Didn't Apply, but We Admitted You Anyway.

New experiments are short-circuiting the admissions process. Here's why they matter.

Navigating New Competitive Realities

Challenges and Opportunities by Market Segment

Elite Privates (4%)

n=45, SAT=1520, Net Price=\$37K

- Soaring demand
- Able to meet full financial need
- Working to improve socio-economic and racial/ethnic diversity

Flagship Publics (5%)

n=60, SAT=1290, Price=\$19K

- Increasingly selective
- Growing non-resident population
- Facing state-imposed constraints on tuition
- Working on aid for middle class students

Stable Privates (8%)

n=95, SAT=1350, Net Price=\$31K

- Unable to match elite levels of need-based aid
- Increasing selectivity and maintaining price
- Concerned about lower priced flagship publics

Selective Publics (5%)

n=57, SAT=1280, Price=\$17K

- Stealing share from privates
- Growing non-resident population
- Investing in research and athletics to build national reputation

Regional Privates (49%)

n=573, SAT=1135, Net Price=\$22K

- Unsustainable discounting
- Innovative recruitment
- Declining student quality
- Working to improve student success

Regional Publics (29%)

n=344, SAT=1090, Price=\$13K

- Tied to regional demographics
- Declining student income
- Laboratories for student success

Direct Admission

What Students are Saying

80%

of respondents said that they would be more interested in a college which offered acceptance without applying

20%

of juniors reported that they are already aware of direct admissions

“

Being offered admission to one school—even before I applied—made me think: **maybe I am good enough, maybe I do deserve to go to college.** So that made me try harder – and I’m doing better in school. And that made me broaden my horizons.

Class of 2023 Student,
Participant in Niche’s Direct
Admissions™ Program

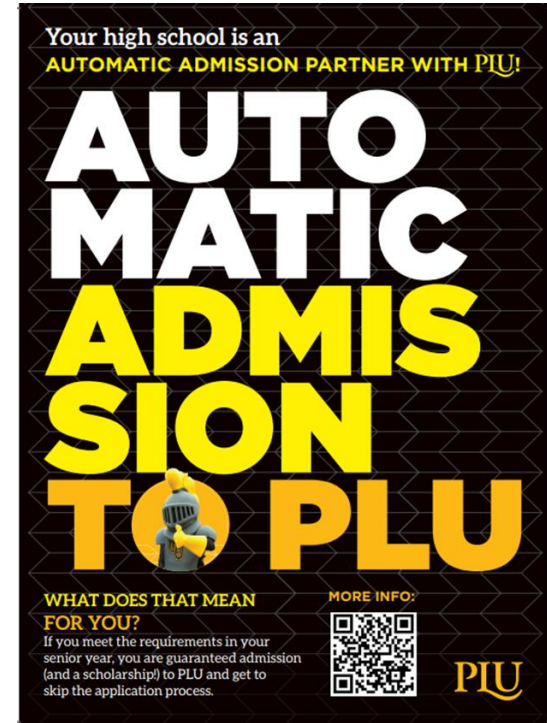
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2023 Niche Spring Survey of Juniors

Automatic Admission

The Origin Story

- It all started with a Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) challenge during a zoom meeting
 - 44th in the nation for FAFSA filing at 43.8% of seniors
 - 42nd in the nation for post-secondary attainment rate - 62.8%
- We were the first to try - in a quick pilot with the Bethel School District in spring of 2021
- We formalized the program for year two
- We grew the program in year three
- We are now onto year 4....





Your high school is an
AUTOMATIC ADMISSION PARTNER WITH PLU!

AUTO MATIC ADMIS SION TO PLU

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR YOU?
 If you meet the requirements in your senior year, you are guaranteed admission (and a scholarship!) to PLU and get to skip the application process.

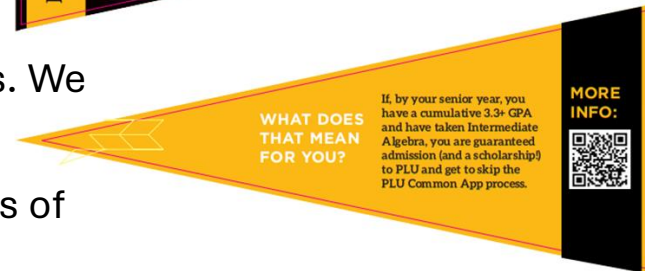
MORE INFO:

Automatic Admission

Lessons Learned

- This concept is hard for adults on- and off-campus to understand
 - Does this mean we are open enrollment?
 - Do these students share an affinity?
 - Are we accepting a lower caliber of student?
 - Did they earn it?
- We started with 1-year MOUs and DSAs. Too much work and didn't allow us to use this as motivation for younger students. We now have 3-year agreements.
- District and school counselor support matters to the success of the program
- Families and students are so grateful and appreciative



Automatic Admission Program

The Details

- PLU has partnered with 41 school districts throughout Washington
 - A 3-year Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are signed
- Seniors need to have a 3.3 or higher cumulative GPA and have taken Intermediate Algebra to be included on the data file
- Students then get to skip the application process. They fill out a simple “Acceptance Form”. This is when they become an applicant in our system.
- All eligible students will also be offered an academic scholarship worth at least \$23,000 per year.

www.plu.edu/admission/aapinfo

Automatic Admission Program

Communication

- AAP students have their own communication flow that includes email and direct mail until they fill out the acceptance form.
 - A series of 3 email messages
 - A congratulations mailing
 - A mailing to the 'parents of'
 - A postcard
 - Any other prospect emails we may send - such as invites to campus events
- Once they fill out the acceptance form they join our regular applicant comm flows.

www.plu.edu/admission/aap

Automatic Admission Program

The Data

Year	Districts	High Schools	Prospects (not inquiries)	Forms/Apps Received	Deposits/Enrolled
Fall 2021	1	5	No Data Share	28	12
Fall 2022	11	35	3511	275	55
Fall 2023	29	100	5135	575	117
Fall 2024*	41	132	7510**	701*	150*

*as of 5.20.24
 **data from 33 districts

Automatic Admission Program

Class of 2027 AAP students

\$18,779

Average EFC

36.8%

253 PLU Bound

22.6%

Yield

63.2%

Students of Color

60.7%

First Generation
College Students

3.69

Average Weighted
GPA

Automatic Admission Program

What is Working?

- District Administration and School relationship growth - it is a true partnership
- Simplification of process
- Opt-Out districts
- 3 Year MOUs and DSAs - allow for earlier recruitment
- Checking in with data and information consistently
- As the relationship matures, the process gets smoother and we are able to launch earlier
- Intentional marketing and outreach does drive behavior:
 - Visits and engagement
 - Mail
 - email

Automatic Admission Program

What is Challenging?

- Ongoing Education - a variety of programs with different criteria
- Opt-In Districts
- Getting clean data from a district
- Local authority state - no consistent process
 - Transcripts
 - Interpretation of laws/data security
- Success in areas beyond our backyard
- It takes lots of communication - currently around 623 district/building contacts

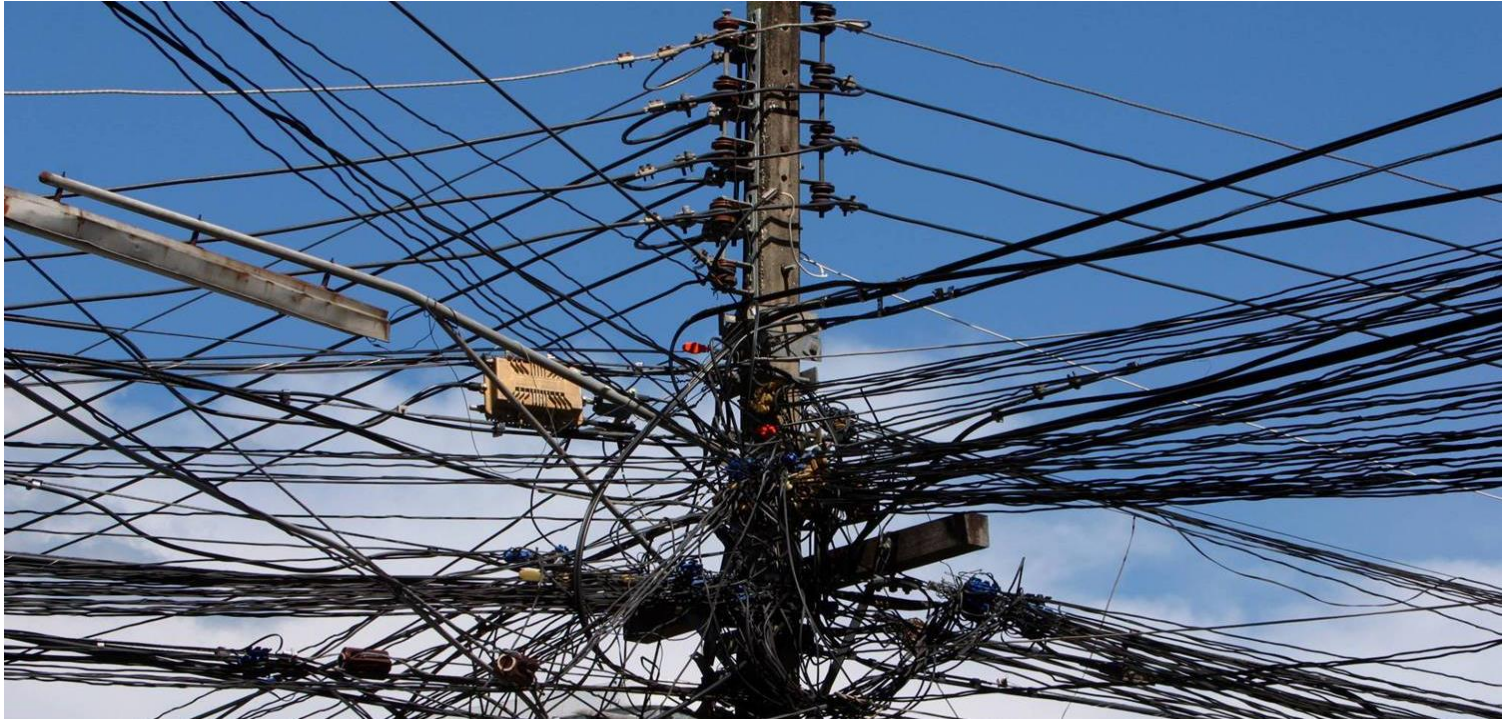
Direct Admission

What the Process *Should* Look Like



Direct Admission

What the Process *Does* Look Like



Why Consider Direct Admission?

Benefits



- Extremely effective funnel growth strategy
- Bypass the application as a barrier to entry
- Get offers out to qualified candidates
- Viable substitute/addition to Senior Search
- Test-optional admission made it possible
- Establish a competitive advantage

HCU – Direct Admission for Fall 2023

Fall 2023 Freshmen by App Source

Source	Apps	% of Total	Complete Rate	Completed Apps	Admit Rate	Admits	Deposit Rate	Net Deposits	Yield Rate	Enrolled
ApplicationU	33	0.3%	21.2%	7	21.2%	7	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Apply Texas	5,455	42.8%	66.8%	3,642	55.1%	3,006	8.7%	262	8.3%	250
Greenlight	115	0.9%	92.2%	106	99.1%	114	4.4%	5	4.4%	5
High F+ DA	80	0.6%	61.3%	49	53.8%	43	7.0%	3	7.0%	3
Niche DA	1,055	8.3%	66.2%	698	59.9%	632	8.1%	51	7.1%	45
RaiseMe DA	36	0.3%	47.2%	17	44.4%	16	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
EAB (EZ) App	5,670	44.5%	55.9%	3,171	49.5%	2,804	13.9%	390	12.7%	356
Slate	305	2.4%	53.1%	162	44.3%	135	23.0%	31	20.0%	27
Total	12,749		61.6%	7,852	53.0%	6,757	11.0%	742	10.2%	686

Direct Admission generated 1,286 Apps, 691 Admits, and **53 Enrollees**

HCU – Direct Admission for Fall 2024

Fall 2024 Freshmen by App Source

Source	Apps	% of Total	Completion Rate	Completed Apps	Admit Rate	Admits	Deposit Rate	Net Deposits	Yield Rate	Enrolled
Apply Texas	3,625	28.8%	59.4%	2,154	80.5%	1,733	13.1%	227	8.3%	144
Carnegie Apps	165	1.3%	33.3%	55	81.8%	45	15.6%	7	6.7%	3
Common App	2,467	19.6%	73.5%	1,814	84.8%	1,539	9.2%	142	4.1%	63
Common App DA	821	6.5%	87.2%	716	93.2%	667	8.4%	56	4.2%	28
EAB / EZ App	654	5.2%	37.9%	248	80.2%	199	14.6%	29	7.5%	15
Global DA	39	0.3%	66.7%	26	100.0%	26	3.8%	1	0.0%	0
Greenlight DA	200	1.6%	100.5%	201	100.0%	201	1.0%	2	1.0%	2
Niche DA	2,049	16.3%	65.7%	1,346	92.3%	1,242	9.8%	122	5.0%	62
Slate	2,148	17.1%	51.4%	1,103	82.3%	908	22.1%	201	13.5%	123
Total	12,578		61.2%	7,696	85.6%	6,587	11.9%	787	6.7%	440

Direct Admission generated 3,109 Apps, 2,136 Admits, and **92 Enrollees** (YTD)

The background is a solid blue color with a faint, semi-transparent image of a hand holding a pen over a document with musical notes. The text is centered in a bold, dark blue font.

Questions and Conversation

Thank you!



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