



The Princeton Review Best 386 Colleges July 2020 Administrator Survey

About the Survey

[The Princeton Review](#)[®] surveyed administrators at colleges and universities featured in *The Best 386 Colleges: 2021 Edition* (Penguin Random House, August 18, 2020) about their fall reopening plans.

Conducted online from July 1 to July 22, 2020, the 11-question survey asked the administrators if and when their schools would reopen in the fall and whether their classes would principally be in-person, online, or hybrid. The survey also had questions about fall enrollment patterns, and changes in campus protocols and facilities due to COVID-19. Respondents were additionally asked to rank issues they believe their administrators will find most concerning in the year ahead, and to rank the same list of issues according to which they believe their students will find most concerning. At least 77% of the respondents answered every question on the survey.

Administrators from 179 colleges and universities (46% of the 386 schools in the book) completed the survey. The 179 schools (130 private and 49 public schools) are located in 38 states. The total undergraduate enrollment at the 179 schools last year was 1,339,707 students. The 386 schools in the book comprise about 14% of the nation's 2,800 four-year colleges.

A summary of survey findings and a report on the survey's 11 questions, answer choices, and the percentages of respondents that selected each answer choice appear below.

Available for interviews is Rob Franek, The Princeton Review Editor-in-Chief and lead author of *The Best 386 Colleges*. Information on the book, the college rankings in it, and The Princeton Review's survey of 143,000 students attending the colleges in the book is [here](#).

Note: Colleges are continually reviewing, and, as needed, revising their reopening plans as well as their COVID-19–related campus policies and protocols.

Findings Summary

Based on surveys the college administrators submitted to The Princeton Review between July 1 and July 22.

Fall 2020 reopening:

- 99% of respondents said their schools would reopen with at least some student attendance on-campus
- 67% said the majority of their fall classes would be principally hybrid (in-person and online)
 - 21% said in-person, 12% said online
- 96% said their fall term will begin by September 15

- 82% said it will end by December 15
Within that cohort 31% said the term will end by November 30
- 93% said their schools instituted COVID-19 related protocols and facility changes in classrooms and labs, residence halls, and dining halls

Enrollment (compared with fall 2019):

- 42% projected their fall 2020 enrollment to be "about the same" as fall 2019
- 39% said it is trending down
Within that cohort, 19% said "down 2 to 4%"; 20% said "down 5% or more."
- 19% said it is trending up
Within that cohort, 9% said "up 2 to 4%"; 10% said "up 5% or more."

Enrollment of first-year, in-state students (compared with fall 2019):

- 80% said the percentage of their first-year, in-state students was about the same
- 14% said it was higher
- 6% said it was lower

Issues expected to be of highest concern on campuses in 2020-21:

Respondents were asked to rank four issues according to which they perceive will be of highest concern among their administrators, and which will be of highest concern among their students. The four issues, briefly stated, were: "academic and campus life funding shortfalls," "financial aid reductions," "social distancing," and "social justice." Based on a weighted analysis of the respondents' ranked answers:

- "Social distancing: maintaining health and safety on campus" was perceived to be the administrators' highest concern. It had a weighted average score of 3.7 (out of 4).
Next was "academics and campus life...possible funding shortfalls" with a score of 2.3.
- "Financial aid: meeting families' economic needs, given reduced resources" was perceived to be the students' highest concern. It had a weighted average score of 2.8.
Next was "social distancing" with a score of 2.6.

Spring 2021 outlook: majority of classes:

- 39% said their spring classes will likely be primarily hybrid (down from 67% expected for fall)
- 38% said in-person (up from 21% expected for fall)
- 1% said online (down from 12% expected for fall)
- 22% chose the answer "other" (to be decided).

Findings Report

Answer choices selected by the highest percentage of respondents are underlined.

1) Is your college/university reopening for any on-campus student attendance this fall?

<u>99%</u>	<u>Yes</u>
1%	No

2) (If reopening) When will your fall term begin?

4% On or before August 15
91% August 16—September 15
5% September 16—October 15
0% After October 15

3) When will your fall term end?

0% On or before November 15
31% November 16—November 30
49% By December 15
20% December 16—January 15

4) If open for fall on-campus attendance, are the majority of courses being offered in-person, online, or hybrid?

21% In-person
12% Online
67% Hybrid

5) Did your college/university institute COVID-19 related protocols or facility changes on campus with respect to residence halls, dining halls and classrooms / labs?

Residence Halls
94% Yes
6% No

Dining Halls
94% Yes
6% No

Classrooms and Labs
97% Yes
3% No

6) As of June 30, what extent has your student enrollment for fall 2020 changed in comparison to that of fall 2019? (We understand that enrollment data will not be available until after your census date.)

10% Significantly up (5% or more)
9% Somewhat up (2 to 4%)
 Combined indicating up: 19 %
42% About the same
19% Somewhat down (2 to 4%)
20% Significantly Down (5% or more)
 Combined indicating down: 39%

7) What percentage of students in your predicted incoming first-year class live in the state in which your college/university is located?

6%	Less than 10%
12%	11—20%
19%	21—40%
21%	41—60%
<u>23%</u>	<u>61—80%</u>
12%	81—90% "
7%	More than 90%

Combined: 42% said more than 60% of their first-year class were in-staters

8) How does the percentage of in-state students for your current fall 2020 compare to the percentage of in-state students for your fall 2019 enrolled first-year class?

14%	Higher
<u>80%</u>	<u>About the same</u>
6%	Lower

9) Please rank the below priorities for your administration in the coming academic year, with 1 being the most important. (We understand that all of these are important issues and that schools can address several or all at the same time.)

10) Please rank the below in terms of priorities for your students in the coming academic year based on the information you have available. (We understand that all of these are important issues and that schools can address several or all at the same time.)

Question 9 and 10 each listed these priorities to rank:

- Academics and campus life:
addressing funding shortfalls and possible reductions in programs and services
- Financial aid:
meeting students' and families' economic needs given reduced resources
- Social distancing:
maintaining health and safety on campus
- Social justice:
addressing inequalities due to racism and effectuating change

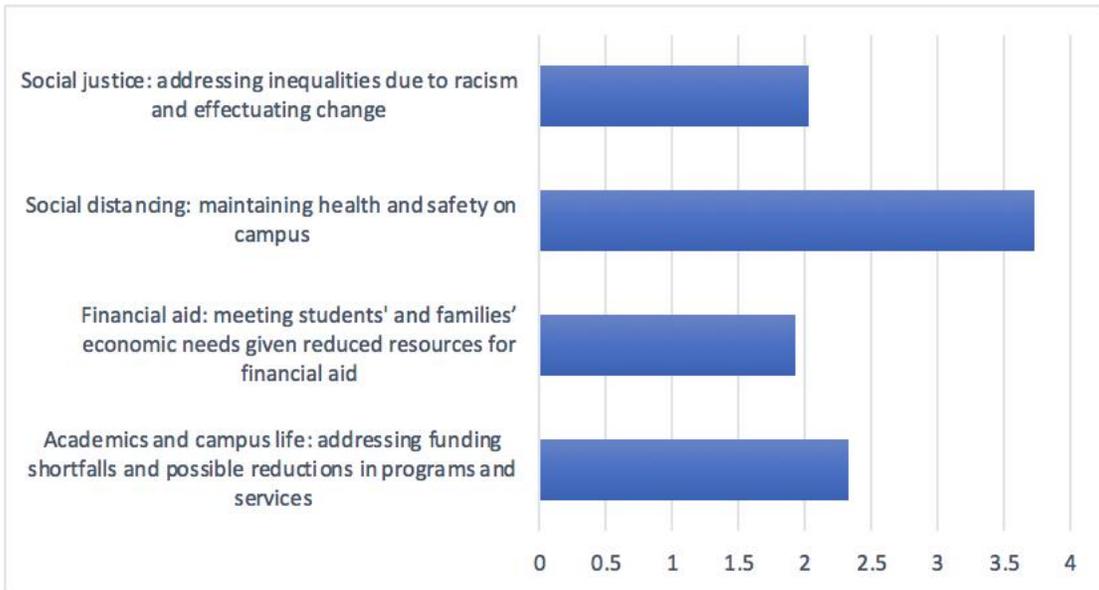
The respondents' ranked answers for each question were converted to scores using weighted averages a 4-point scale with 4 indicating the highest importance and 1 the least.

The priority that received the highest average score in in the rankings of administrator concerns was "social distancing" which had a weighted average score of 3.7.

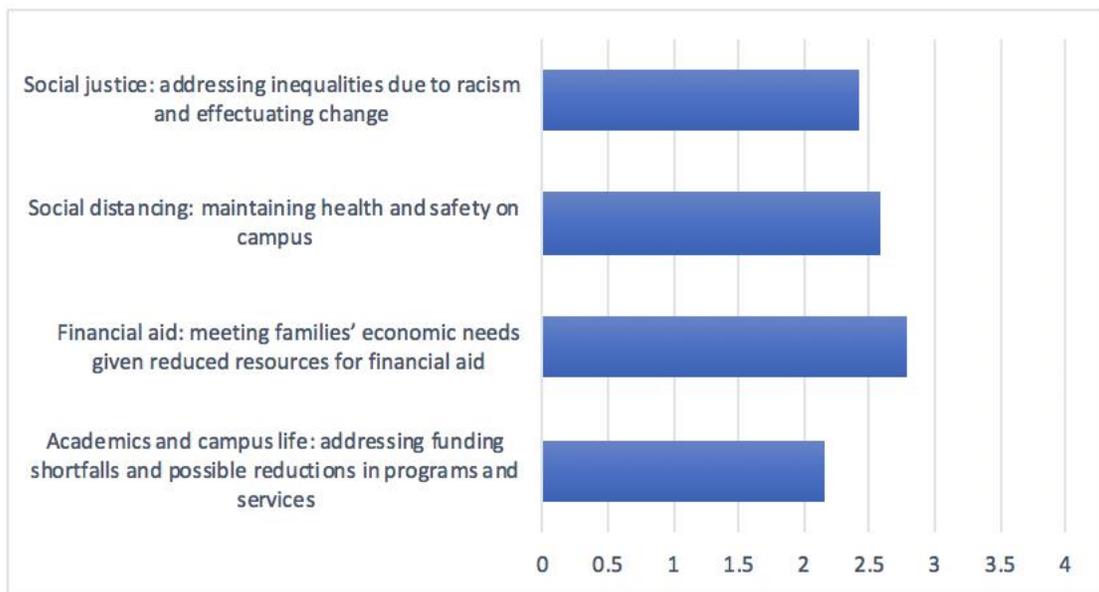
The priority that received the highest average score in in the rankings of student concerns was "financial aid" which had a weighted average score of 2.8

The following bar charts show the weighted averages for each answer and answer choice.

Administrator Priorities



Student Priorities



11) For spring 2021, do you expect to have the majority of classes be in-person, online hybrid, or other?

39% Hybrid

38 % In-person

1% Online

22% Other (Respondents choosing this answer generally indicated "To be decided.")

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