



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NACCAP & CCCU
2025 MARKET RESEARCH
January 2026

What the Market is Telling Us: Strategic Insights for the Future of Christian Higher Education

Research Led & Presented By



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FOREWARD

Jessica Mireles, Founder & President, JM Partner Solutions

When the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) first commissioned comprehensive market research in 1986, the world looked very different. Christian institutions faced questions about faith and fit, but families generally trusted that a Christian education was a sound investment in character formation and community.



When I began my career in admissions in 1991, recruitment was narrow and linear. We spoke almost exclusively to high school seniors. Parents were largely peripheral. Guidance counselors were gatekeepers, not partners. Communication meant phone calls and a single print mailing—there was no email, no CRM, and no sustained, multi-channel flow of messages over time.

By 2000, the landscape had begun to shift, and the CCCU commissioned a second major study to understand growing concerns about cost, expanding student choice, and the early impact of the internet on how families discovered and compared colleges. In 2009, amid a global recession, the CCCU commissioned a third study, this time much larger in scope, to understand how rising costs and changing attitudes were affecting Christian higher education. The insights helped member institutions design clearer financial aid communication, improve parent engagement, and refine messages around value and outcomes.

Today, sixteen years later, families think differently about college. In 2009, despite real challenges, 75% of Americans believed college was very important. Today, that number has dropped to just 35%. Trust in higher education has eroded, and college choice is now shaped by digital first impressions, heightened scrutiny of affordability and return on investment, and shifting cultural attitudes toward faith and politics. Meanwhile, students have more tools than ever to self-research and more voices telling them where they do and do not belong.

With this backdrop, the North American Coalition for Christian Admissions Professionals (NACCAP) and the CCCU collaboratively commissioned my team to revisit this research in 2025. They recognized that the moment called for both historical continuity and fresh perspective and believed that my experience as a consumer of the 2000 and 2009 studies—while serving as chief enrollment and marketing officer at Vanguard University—alongside Pamela Lee’s role as a lead researcher for the 2009 study, uniquely positioned our team to steward this important work.

The 2025 NACCAP/CCCU Market Research revisits our previous studies and updates and modernizes them in scope and methodology. The JMPS team listened to prospective students, parents, admitted students, enrolled students, alumni, and guidance counselors; we studied

conversations across social media; and we analyzed student-level data for admitted students who did and did not enroll at member schools.

Our goal was not only to understand perceptions of Christian colleges today but also to chart a course forward. The findings that follow offer both encouragement and challenge, proof that Christian colleges continue to change lives, and evidence that we must communicate value more clearly, meet students where they are, and recommit to the mission that has sustained Christian higher education for generations. We believe this research is equally critical for presidents and boards as they imagine the future of their institutions, helping them navigate the real tension between mission, Christian worldview, and market realities in a world where higher education continues to evolve.

We are grateful to the more than 60 collaborating institutions and our research sponsors that made this work possible, and we look forward to working toward the future together.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 research initiative is the most comprehensive study of Christian higher education since 2009. JM Partner Solutions, in partnership with the North American for Christian College Admission Professionals (NACCAP) and the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), conducted surveys spanning eight audiences, focus groups of guidance counselors, a competitive landscape analysis, and social-listening analysis to understand the motivations, perceptions, and decision drivers of families considering Christian colleges.

Collectively, these data show that interest in Christian colleges remains strong, but decision-making has become more pragmatic.

Students discover colleges through peers, then evaluate them online. Parents are deeply involved in research and funding decisions. Cost perceptions are the primary barrier at every stage, yet aid packages often exceed expectations when students apply.

Career outcomes are a top priority, but confidence in Christian colleges' career preparation is uneven. Community and faith continue to be powerful differentiators when they are experienced authentically. Advocacy declines after graduation when connection fades.

The report that follows summarizes these findings, offers detailed insights for each stage of the journey, and suggests actions that can help Christian colleges respond.



MARKET RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The 2025 study employed a mixed-methods approach to capture a 360-degree view of Christian higher education today. Building on earlier research cycles, the methodology combined survey research, focus groups, secondary data analysis, and social-listening analysis.

Individual reports were written for each of the seven research elements and are available to the NACCAP and CCCU member institutions that participated in this project. Collectively, these methods triangulate perceptions and behavior across the college-decision funnel, providing a rich evidence base for the insights and actions that follow.

PROJECT GOALS

The 2025 NACCAP/CCCU research initiative was designed to provide campus leaders with actionable, sector-wide insight into the forces shaping enrollment, value perception, and long-term sustainability in Christian higher education. While the project encompassed many questions and audiences, institutional leaders consistently prioritized clarity in several key areas. This study therefore focused on the following core goals:

- Understand cost perceptions, affordability barriers, and the role of financial assumptions in early decision-making
- Evaluate the perceived value and return on investment (ROI) of Christian higher education
- Assess how faith identity, mission fit, and spiritual distinctives influence student and parent interest
- Identify the messages, channels, and digital behaviors that most effectively reach mission-fit students and their parents
- Map how students and parents move through the enrollment funnel and where institutions lose them
- Examine demographic and cultural shifts shaping demand for Christian education
- Assess the factors that strengthen or undermine student experience, belonging, and persistence
- Understand alumni perspectives, advocacy, and engagement patterns across generations
- Equip institutional leaders with forward-looking insights to guide strategic decisions in enrollment, marketing, pricing, and investment

RESEARCH COMPONENTS

This wide-ranging market research project created a comprehensive view of awareness, perceptions, and expectations of Christian colleges and universities. More than 60 NACCAP and CCCU member institutions participated in the research, providing historical institutional data and lists to recruit representative survey respondents and focus group participants from. The following survey audiences and secondary research components were included in the project:

- **Inquiry Student Survey** – A national survey of 1,390 prospective first-year, transfer, and adult learners planning to attend college in Fall 2026 or Fall 2027. Respondents were drawn from institutional inquiry lists, a national student panel, and ZeeMee.
- **Post-Enrollment Survey** – A survey of 1,036 admitted first-year, transfer, and adult learners who made their college decisions for Fall 2025, capturing insights from prospects who didn't inquire, inquiries who didn't apply, and applicants who did and did not enroll.
- **Parent Survey** – A survey of more than 400 parents of prospective students who plan to attend college in Fall 2026 or Fall 2027. To qualify, either the parent or student had to be actively considering at least one Christian college or university. Respondents were recruited from lists provided by schools and a national panel.
- **Alumni Survey** – A survey of over 1,500 alumni, both recent (graduated <10 years ago) and older alumni were recruited from institutions' alumni databases.

Voices from more than
4,000 participants



- **Guidance Counselor Focus Groups** – Four virtual focus groups with 30 high-school counselors recruited from participating schools' lists.
- **Social Media Listening** – JM Partner Solutions collaborated with the Social Media Listening Center (SMLC) to analyze more than 1 million posts across TikTok, Instagram, X, Reddit, and other platforms.
- **Competitive landscape analysis** – Data from over 100,000 students admitted to member institutions provided benchmarking and yield analysis as well as insights into where lost admits enrolled.

Collectively, these methods triangulate perceptions and behavior across the college-decision funnel, providing a rich evidence base for the insights and actions that follow.

KEY THEMES

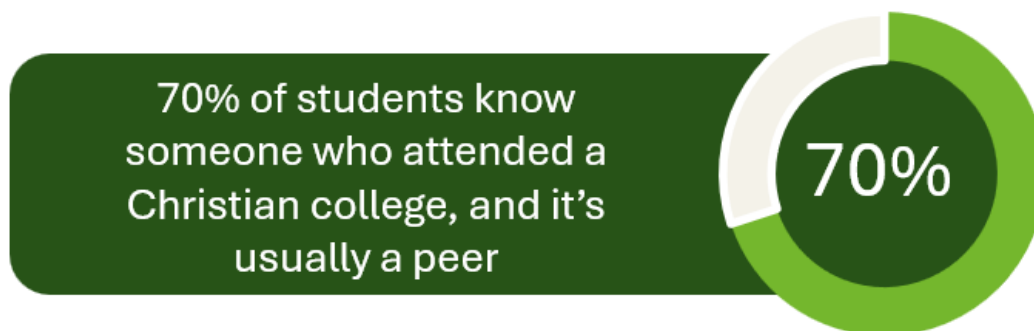
The research surfaced nine core insights that run through the student to alumni lifecycle. Each finding is supported by data across multiple sources. In the sections that follow, we unpack these findings in detail and illustrate how institutions can respond.

- 1. Students are most often introduced to Christian colleges through their peers.**
70% of students say they first heard about Christian colleges through friends.
- 2. Research now happens passively and digitally long before institutions engage.**
62% of inquiry-stage students use Google search and 59% use a college's website.
- 3. Parents are decisive partners throughout the college journey.**
75% of parents and students say they research colleges together, and 75% of inquiry students say their parents are influential in where they enroll.
- 4. Cost is the primary reason students disengage at every stage of enrollment.**
50% of inquiry students say Christian colleges feel too expensive and 43% of admitted students to choose another school.
- 5. For students who apply, affordability often looks different than expected.**
45% of enrolled students report receiving more financial aid than expected and 58% say their Christian college offered a better aid package than other schools.
- 6. Career preparation and practical outcomes are a top priority in college choice, but confidence in Christian college outcomes is low.**
91% of students report preparing for a successful career or graduate school is very or extremely important, yet only 26% strongly agree that Christian colleges prepare students as well as non-religious institutions.
- 7. Community is the most consistent and credible differentiator for Christian colleges.**
61% of post-enrolled students cite faith-based culture and 35% cite a sense of community as key reasons they chose their institution.
- 8. Lived faith builds trust, while politicized perceptions create distance.**
70% of inquiry students want a Christian college with clear lifestyle expectations. At the same time, students, parents, and alumni consistently signal that they want faith to be lived and formative rather than aligned with political ideology.
- 9. Advocacy weakens when connection fades after graduation.**
While alumni report strong satisfaction with their academic and spiritual experience, younger alumni are far less likely to advocate or give: only 17% of younger alumni have donated, compared with 60% of older alumni.

THEME 1: STUDENTS ARE MOST OFTEN INTRODUCED TO CHRISTIAN COLLEGES THROUGH THEIR PEERS

Awareness of Christian colleges usually begins through personal networks rather than institutional marketing. Among Fall 2025 enrolled students, approximately 70% report knowing someone who attended a Christian college, and 76% say that person is a peer. This indicates that peer relationships, not institutional messaging, are the dominant social entry point into awareness. Social listening confirms that peer-generated content, especially day-in-the-life videos, residence hall posts, team photos, and chapel moments from friends, drives awareness. These posts are rarely framed as “college search” content, yet they make Christian colleges feel familiar and relatable. Credibility comes from proximity, not polish. Content shared by friends, former classmates, teammates, and alumni carries more weight than official messaging. Faith, community, and campus culture resonate most when they appear naturally within peer stories rather than formal positioning.

Institutions that recognize this pattern are amplifying student-led storytelling instead of replacing it. Elevating these voices and encouraging authentic storytelling aligns with how awareness forms today.



What this looks like in practice

- Activate current students and alumni as ambassadors to share lived experiences to get the word out on social media.
- Encourage and amplify student-created content that addresses common concerns such as cost, academic rigor, campus culture, dorm life, and faith expectations.
- Encourage current students to share their campus with prospective students with “bring a friend to campus” events.



THEME 2: COLLEGE RESEARCH NOW HAPPENS PASSIVELY AND DIGITALLY LONG BEFORE INSTITUTIONS ENGAGE

While awareness forms socially, evaluation begins deliberately. 62% of inquiry-stage students use Google search and 59% use a college's website to learn more. Parents follow a similar path: 75% use the college's official website, while 70% use Google to research colleges. Counselors confirm that institutions with unclear, incomplete, or hard-to-find information often fall out of consideration early, even when students might otherwise be a strong fit.

Students scan websites for clear answers to practical questions around cost, majors, outcomes, and fit, then form early judgments based on what they find. If information is unclear, buried, or inconsistent with peer narratives, many students disengage quietly without requesting information or applying. Parents need the same clarity: they are verifying costs, return on investment, campus safety, and the likelihood of their child thriving. The decision journey begins long before institutions know a student is interested, and digital channels determine whether peer awareness becomes serious consideration.

What this looks like in practice

- Treat the website as a primary recruiter, not a secondary resource. Put majors, scholarships, outcomes, and cost front and center so value is clear at a glance.
- Simplify cost and aid pages using net-price calculators, real examples, and plain language that shows families what they will actually pay.
- Ensure key information appears accurately in Google and AI search results. Use concise, fact-based content that answers common student and parent questions and optimize pages for search engine visibility.
- Expand digital tools (virtual tours, interactive program finders, chatbots) to give families relevant answers on demand.



PERCENT RESEARCHING VIA GOOGLE

Student 62%

Parent 70%

PERCENT RESEARCHING VIA COLLEGE'S WEBSITE

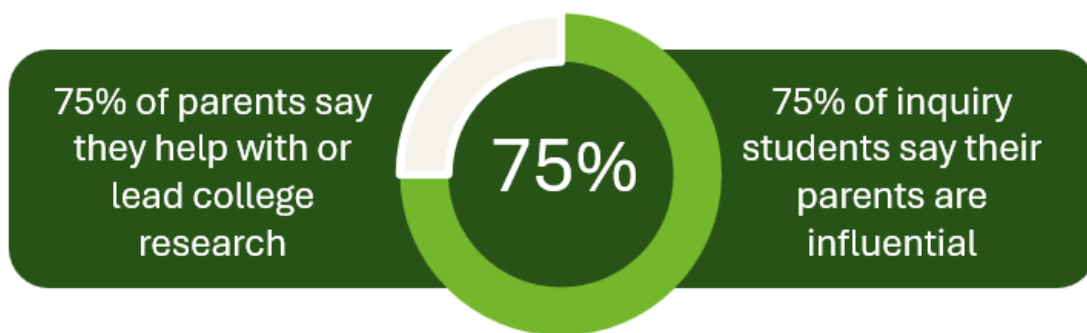
Student 59%

Parent 75%

THEME 3: PARENTS ARE DECISIVE PARTNERS THROUGHOUT THE COLLEGE JOURNEY

College choice is rarely a student-only decision. Three-quarters of parents report that they research colleges with their child or lead the research, and three-quarters of inquiry students say their parents are at least somewhat influential in where they enroll. In fact, 52% of inquiry students stated their parents have steered them towards or away from certain colleges or universities, on par with 2009, when it was 59%.

This influence manifests at multiple stages. Parents, more than students, focus on affordability, academic quality, and safety. Cost assumptions cause students to drop out early, but those assumptions often reflect family budget discussions. Parents help determine which schools feel financially viable, academically credible, and personally safe. Counselors emphasize that ignoring parents in communication strategies is a mistake; most are actively researching and shaping decisions.



What this looks like in practice

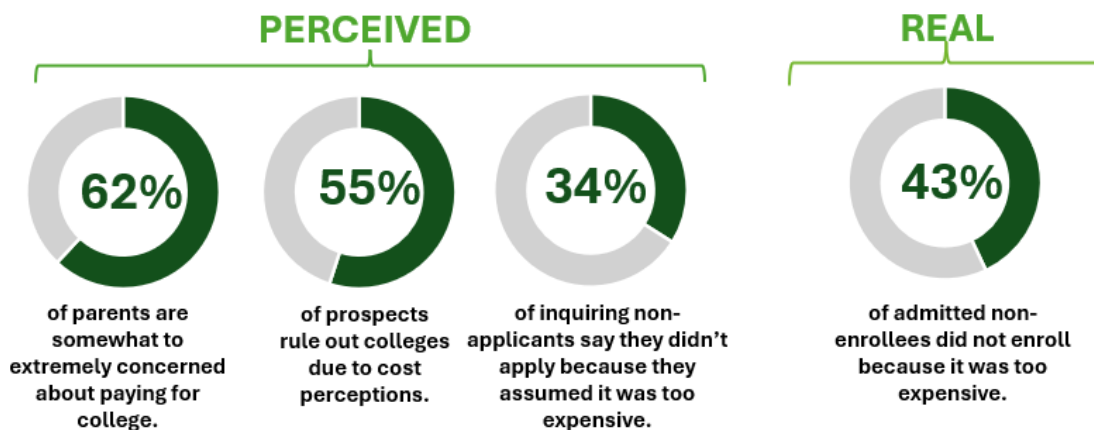
- Include parents as a distinct audience in recruitment and marketing campaigns, with tailored messages about affordability, academic reputation, safety, and career outcomes.
- Provide parents with personalized cost and aid calculators and targeted webinars that explain financial aid, majors, and ROI.
- Encourage joint campus visits and offer parallel information sessions for parents and students.
- Build digital resources (FAQ pages, video explainers) that address parent questions and are easy to find via search.



THEME 4: COST IS THE PRIMARY REASON STUDENTS DISENGAGE AT EVERY STAGE OF THE ENROLLMENT FUNNEL

Cost is the biggest barrier for students today. Fifty-five percent of inquiry students have ruled out a college because of cost, up from 35% in 2009. Half of inquiry students say Christian colleges feel too expensive; they cite cost as their top concern. These assumptions often form before students have any contact with the institution.

Affordability concerns, perceived or real, drive attrition at every stage: 24% of students who never inquired assumed Christian colleges were too expensive; 34% of those who inquired but did not apply did not do so because of cost assumptions; and 43% of admitted students who did not enroll cite cost or insufficient aid as the reason.



Families equate “private” with “unaffordable,” especially when compared to public universities’ lower sticker prices. Counselors note that scholarships can make Christian colleges competitive, but families are deterred by sticker shock and unclear ROI. Parents and students often lack clarity on net price, available aid, and the true cost of attendance. As a result, many disengage quietly rather than requesting information.

What this looks like in practice

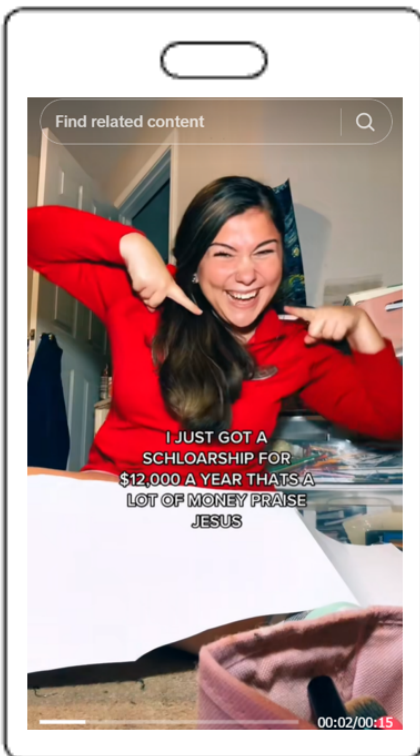
- Use net-price calculators and example scenarios prominently on your website and in communications. Provide side-by-side comparisons to public and private competitors.
- Lead with transparent net-price information early in the funnel. Communicate typical aid packages, scholarship opportunities, and cost comparisons in ways that families can quickly understand.
- Train admissions teams to address cost perceptions directly and proactively when speaking with students and parents.
- Partner with high-school counselors to demystify aid processes and highlight hidden value (e.g., four-year graduation rates, job outcomes, lifetime earnings).

THEME 5: FOR STUDENTS WHO APPLY, AFFORDABILITY OFTEN LOOKS DIFFERENT THAN EXPECTED

Students who make it through the funnel often find that Christian colleges provide better financial support than expected. Forty-five percent of enrolled students say their financial aid offer was more than expected, and another 39% say it met expectations. When compared with other colleges, over half (58%) of enrolled students say the Christian college offered a better aid package, making financial aid a meaningful differentiator in their decision to enroll.

These findings illustrate a disconnect: initial cost perceptions deter many students who never learn that aid packages are competitive or superior. Families who persevere through the application process often discover that Christian colleges can be more affordable than public or secular private alternatives.

What this looks like in practice



- Include parents as a distinct audience in recruitment. Tell success stories early: share testimonials from current students and parents describing how aid packages exceeded expectations and made attendance possible.
- Provide side-by-side comparisons of net cost and aid packages across institution types. Use plain language and visual tools to illustrate differences.
- Ensure financial aid communications are personalized and proactive. Reach out to admitted students with clear breakdowns of their offers and invite questions.
- Encourage current students to explain and provide context on sticker price vs net price on social media.
- Use social media and peer networks to highlight examples of students who overcame cost barriers through scholarships and grants.

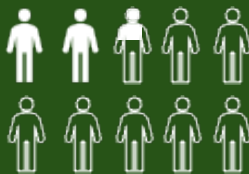
“They’ve done so much to help me. The scholarship offers were great!”

THEME 6: CAREER PREPARATION AND PRACTICAL OUTCOMES ARE A TOP PRIORITY, BUT CONFIDENCE IN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE OUTCOMES IS LOW

Students today are more practical than ever before. They want outcomes from their education. In fact, preparing for a successful career or graduate school is very or extremely important to 91% of students, the highest rated attribute in the college decision process. Parents echo this concern with 94% stating career outcomes are very or extremely important. However, only 26% of inquiry stage students strongly agree that Christian colleges prepare students just as well as nonreligious colleges for careers. Counselors also express concerns about academic depth, STEM and research opportunities, and career preparation at some Christian colleges.



91% of students rate career or graduate school preparation as very or extremely important.



26% of inquiry students strongly agree that Christian colleges prepare students as well as nonreligious colleges.

This gap reflects both perception and communication. Alumni report strong spiritual and personal formation, but some note weaker development of professional networks and career pathways. Social listening indicates that posts about internships, professional networking, and job placements are relatively scarce compared with posts about community and faith.

Prospective students, parents and counselors all want proof of return on investment. Christian colleges have robust career development programs, but they must show how faith, academics, and professional preparation intersect.

What this looks like in practice

- Publish career outcome dashboards with job placement rates, graduate school acceptance rates, and average starting salaries by program. Use real stories and data to illustrate the range of fields where alumni thrive.
- Highlight alumni success stories, especially those in non-ministry roles, to demonstrate diverse career pathways.
- Build robust alumni student career networks and mentorship programs. Encourage alumni to volunteer as career advisors and connect students with internships and job opportunities.

THEME 7: COMMUNITY IS THE MOST CONSISTENT AND CREDIBLE DIFFERENTIATOR FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES

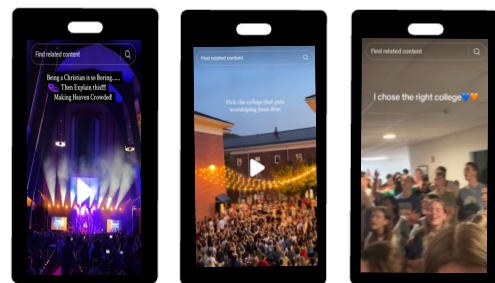
Across all audiences, community emerges as the most durable strength of Christian colleges. Among post-enrollment students, 61% cite a faith-based culture and 35% cite a sense of community and belonging as key reasons they chose their institution. Small classes, caring faculty, and supportive peer networks create an environment where students feel known and valued. Parents frequently connect Christian institutions with safety, support, and a place where their child will be known. Alumni describe lifelong friendships and mentorship as defining aspects of their experience. Counselor focus groups reinforce that students who thrive in close-knit, values-aligned environments tend to be well-served by Christian institutions. Social listening shows community as the most common theme in positive posts, appearing across conversations about academics, athletics, faith, and campus life.



Community does more than create a positive atmosphere; it strengthens perceived value. When students feel a strong sense of belonging, they are more likely to persist, succeed, and recommend their institution. Community also mediates other concerns. Students who experience authentic community are more forgiving of cost and more confident in outcomes.

What this looks like in practice

- Use student voices to showcase community: highlight friendships, faculty relationships, and shared experiences in marketing and social media.
- Invite parents to witness community during campus visits and through online events featuring student panels.
- Build and promote alumni networks that extend community after graduation, sustaining a sense of belonging and fostering advocacy. Engage alumni as ambassadors.



“I want to see that the college is not only academically strong, but also fosters a welcoming environment.”

THEME 8: LIVED FAITH BUILDS TRUST, WHILE POLITICIZED PERCEPTIONS CREATE DISTANCE

Faith is a defining attribute of Christian colleges, but how it is expressed matters. In the inquiry survey, 70% of students said they want a Christian college with clear lifestyle expectations. Social listening shows that faith-related content performs best when it showcases worship, service, and campus traditions. Students, parents, and alumni consistently signal that they want faith to be lived and formative, not aligned with partisan ideology or restrictive policies.

Tension arises when Christian identity is perceived through a political lens. Controversies around social issues appear in social data, but they are often tied to specific institutions; broad narratives about Christian colleges seldom go viral. Families respond most positively when institutions lead with mission, values, and lived community rather than taking positions on political debates. Clear communication about chapel requirements, lifestyle expectations, and opportunities for spiritual growth helps students self-select and prevents misunderstandings.

70% of inquiry students want a Christian college with clear lifestyle expectations

70%

What this looks like in practice

- Emphasize lived expressions of faith in marketing and digital content: show worship services, prayer groups, service projects, and mission trips.
- Put community at the core of social presence by prioritizing content that shows relationships in action and encouraging current students to share real-life content that reflects how community shows up every day.
- Clearly explain faith requirements and lifestyle expectations on websites and in communications so families can make informed decisions.

Communicate this to counselors as well so they can identify students who would thrive at Christian institutions.

- Avoid partisan messaging and focus on mission, shared values, and how faith integrates with academics and community life.
- Provide platforms for students and alumni of diverse backgrounds to share how they live their faith on campus.



THEME 9: ADVOCACY WEAKENS WHEN CONNECTION FADES AFTER GRADUATION

Alumni generally feel positive about their Christian college experience. Their Net Promoter Score (NPS) is 30.7 when asked if they would recommend attending a Christian college or university, with 54% of alumni as promoters and only 23% as detractors. However, advocacy and giving decline sharply among younger alumni. Only 17% of alumni under 35 have donated to their alma mater, compared with 60% of older alumni. Two-thirds of younger alumni (65%) say they cannot afford to give right now, but younger alumni are also less likely to be satisfied advocates for their institutions, citing lack of connection and lack of belief in the direction the school is headed as barriers to engagement. When alumni feel less connected, they are less likely to recommend their alma mater (NPS drops to 10.9, with only 43% promoters and 32% detractors).

Advocacy is strongly correlated with student satisfaction and current sense of connection. Alumni who had positive student experiences and feel connected today are four times more likely to volunteer or give. The research confirms that long-term support cannot be achieved through solicitation alone; it requires sustained community and meaningful engagement.



Alumni rate their likelihood to recommend their university a 7.9 out of 10

Highly likely (9 or 10) to recommend their alma mater

67%

40%

Older alumni

Young alumni

What this looks like in practice

- Extend community beyond commencement. Create alumni chapters, mentoring programs, and regional gatherings that sustain relationships and provide opportunities for involvement.
- Offer debt-sensitive giving programs (e.g., microdonations, monthly giving at accessible levels) that acknowledge financial constraints of younger alumni.
- Engage alumni early: invite young graduates to serve on advisory boards, lead virtual events, or share career stories with current students.
- Communicate impact clearly. Show alumni how their gifts and volunteer efforts directly support students and programs.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 NACCAP/CCCU Market Research affirms both the enduring relevance of Christian higher education and the urgency of adapting how its value is communicated and experienced. Interest remains strong, but trust is earned differently than in prior generations. Students and families now evaluate colleges earlier, more independently, and with sharper focus on affordability, outcomes, and lived experience. Misperceptions—particularly around cost and career preparation—often shape decisions before institutions have the opportunity to engage.

At the same time, this research confirms that Christian colleges retain distinctive strengths that matter deeply when they are experienced and articulated with clarity. Community, faith, and personal formation continue to draw students and sustain long-term loyalty. When institutions align authentic student voices, transparent financial narratives, and credible outcomes, they compete effectively and fulfill their mission with confidence. The path forward is not one of reinvention, but of disciplined alignment—translating insight into action, mission into meaning, and collective learning into coordinated leadership.

NEXT STEPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Research alone does not change outcomes; sustained action does. The findings of this study point to a set of strategic opportunities that require coordinated leadership and, for many institutions, experienced external support to execute effectively.

Institutions gaining traction are clarifying how they are discovered and evaluated—bringing affordability, academic offerings, outcomes, and faith commitments into focus at the earliest stages of the search process. They are addressing cost transparently, elevating authentic student and alumni voices, and strengthening how career outcomes are communicated across the student lifecycle. Many are also committing to ongoing listening through targeted follow-up research and social insight to remain aligned with a rapidly evolving market.

Moving from insight to implementation requires alignment across enrollment, marketing, financial aid, advancement, and academic leadership. As part of this research initiative, **JM Partner Solutions is available to support participating institutions through focused institutional briefings or strategy sessions**—such as board, cabinet, or senior team discussions—**designed to help leaders interpret the research findings** in the context of their campus’s goals and current realities, **at no additional cost**. These sessions are intended to support shared understanding, informed discussion, and thoughtful prioritization.

JM Partner Solutions also stands ready to work alongside NACCAP and CCCU institutions as a strategic partner for those seeking external support—helping leaders translate research into action through deeper analysis, targeted research, and hands-on implementation with clarity, confidence, and mission fidelity.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

This research reflects not only shared insight, but shared responsibility. It was jointly commissioned by NACCAP and the CCCU in service of their respective memberships. This study reflects a shared commitment to strengthening Christian higher education across both organizations.

We are grateful for NACCAP's leadership and its willingness to assume additional administrative coordination in support of participating campuses. Working alongside CCCU, this partnership strengthened the execution, reach, and practical application of the research and models the kind of cross-association leadership required in this moment for Christian higher education.

ABOUT JM PARTNER SOLUTIONS

JM Partner Solutions is a higher education advisory firm that partners with colleges and universities to strengthen enrollment, marketing, and institutional strategy. We work alongside campus leaders during moments of transition and complexity—providing research, insight, and execution support that helps institutions move from understanding to action. Our work is grounded in data, shaped by mission, and focused on helping institutions translate insight into aligned strategy and sustained action amid an increasingly complex enrollment environment.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research was led by Pamela Lee, M.A., M.B.A., Vice President for Market Research & Insights at JM Partner Solutions, in collaboration with the JMPS research team. Pamela brought deep continuity, rigor, and sector expertise to this work, having also served as a lead researcher on the original 2009 CCCU market research initiative. Her leadership ensured both methodological integrity and meaningful longitudinal insight across the two studies.

The Steering Committee provided strategic guidance, oversight, and input throughout the research process. Steering Committee Members:

- Pamela Lee, M.A., M.B.A.: VP for Market Research & Insights, JM Partner Solutions (Steering Committee Chair)
- Angie Richey, Ph.D.: President, Life Pacific University
- Phil Cook, Ph.D.: President, Lee University
- John Chopka, Ph.D.: VPEM, Messiah University
- James Steen, Ph.D.: VPEM, Houston Christian University
- Amanda Slaughter, M.A.: VPEM, Bethel University (IN)
- Scott Shoemaker, Ed.D.: Chief Enrollment Officer, Point Loma Nazarene University
- Jeff Clawson, Ph.D.: Director of Memberships, Grants, and Research, CCCU
- Andrew Wright: Director of Research and Analytics, NACCAP

We extend our sincere thanks to David Hoag, President of the CCCU, and Phil Cook, then President of NACCAP, for their leadership and vision in recognizing the importance of this research and supporting its advancement on behalf of the sector.

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR SPONSORS

This research was made possible through the generous support of partners who believe in the future and vitality of Christian higher education.

CORNERSTONE SPONSOR



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[Caylor Solutions](#) is a higher education marketing agency specializing in branding, marketing strategy and creative services that help faith-based institutions attract mission-fit students and grow enrollment. From website redesigns and CMO consulting to digital campaigns and generative AI training, they deliver custom solutions that engage the right audiences and deliver measurable results.

To learn more please contact: info@caylor-solutions.com



[DegreeSight](#) is a modern degree planning and audit platform that empowers students and advisors to plan, track and complete degrees on time. With automated transcript evaluation and powerful transfer tools, DegreeSight streamlines the enrollment experience, especially for transfer and adult learners, while helping institutions improve retention and graduation outcomes.

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[ZeeMee](#) is the #1 community app for college-bound students, helping millions connect with peers, find roommates, engage with campus life and interact with colleges. With nearly 300 partner institutions and students returning to the app multiple times a day, ZeeMee sits on the largest set of behavioral data in higher education and has proven to double application rates, cut melt in half and more than triple yield for students in their ZeeMee community - making it a proven driver of enrollment success.

To learn more please contact: Tyler Groepper, Senior VP of Sales at tyler@zeemee.com or support@zeemee.com

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[Clark Higher Ed](#) is an enrollment marketing agency focused exclusively on higher education, helping colleges generate qualified leads, improve funnel conversion, and drive enrollment growth through integrated digital marketing strategy and campaign management.

To learn more please contact: hello@clarkhighered.com



[FaithSearch Partners](#) is a premier executive search firm that helps faith-based institutions in higher education, healthcare and nonprofits identify and secure mission-aligned leaders who drive lasting impact.

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