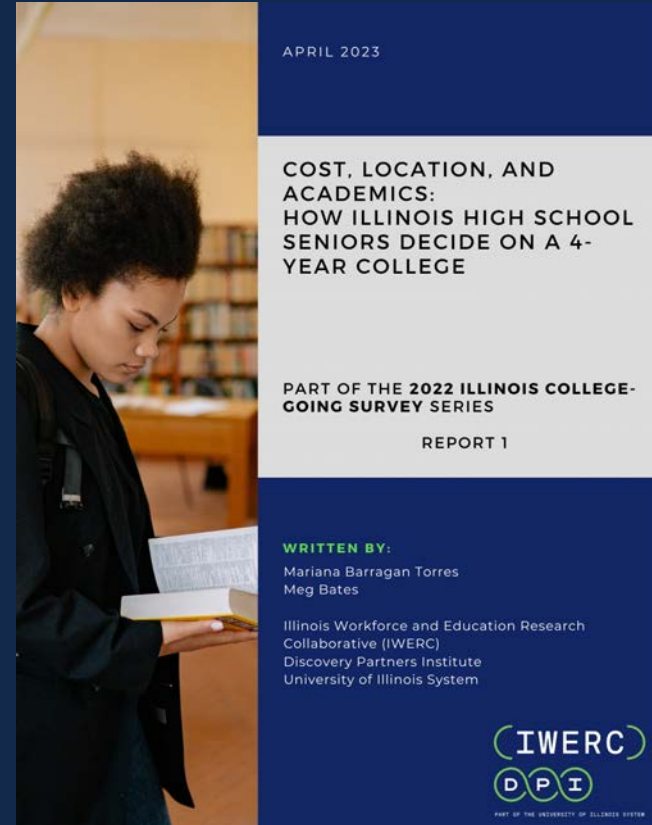


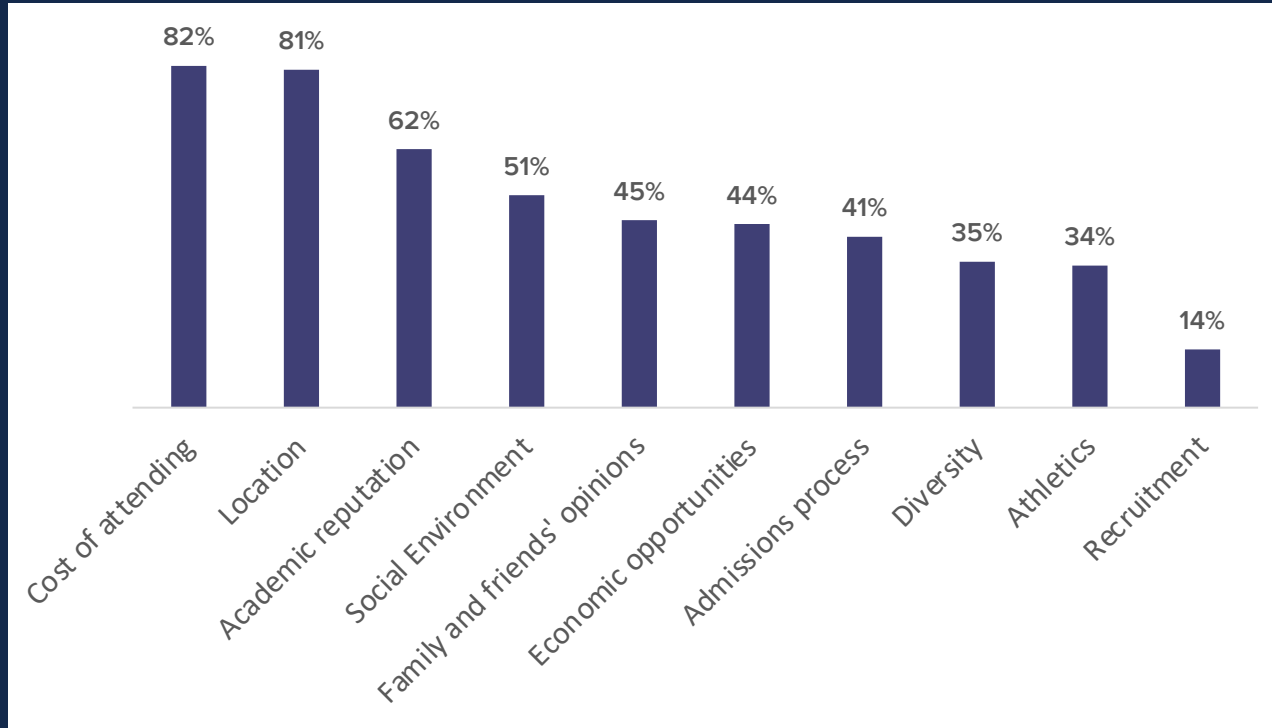
Key takeaways for:

Cost, location, and academics:
How Illinois high school seniors
decide on a 4-year college.

By Mariana Barragan Torres & Meg Bates

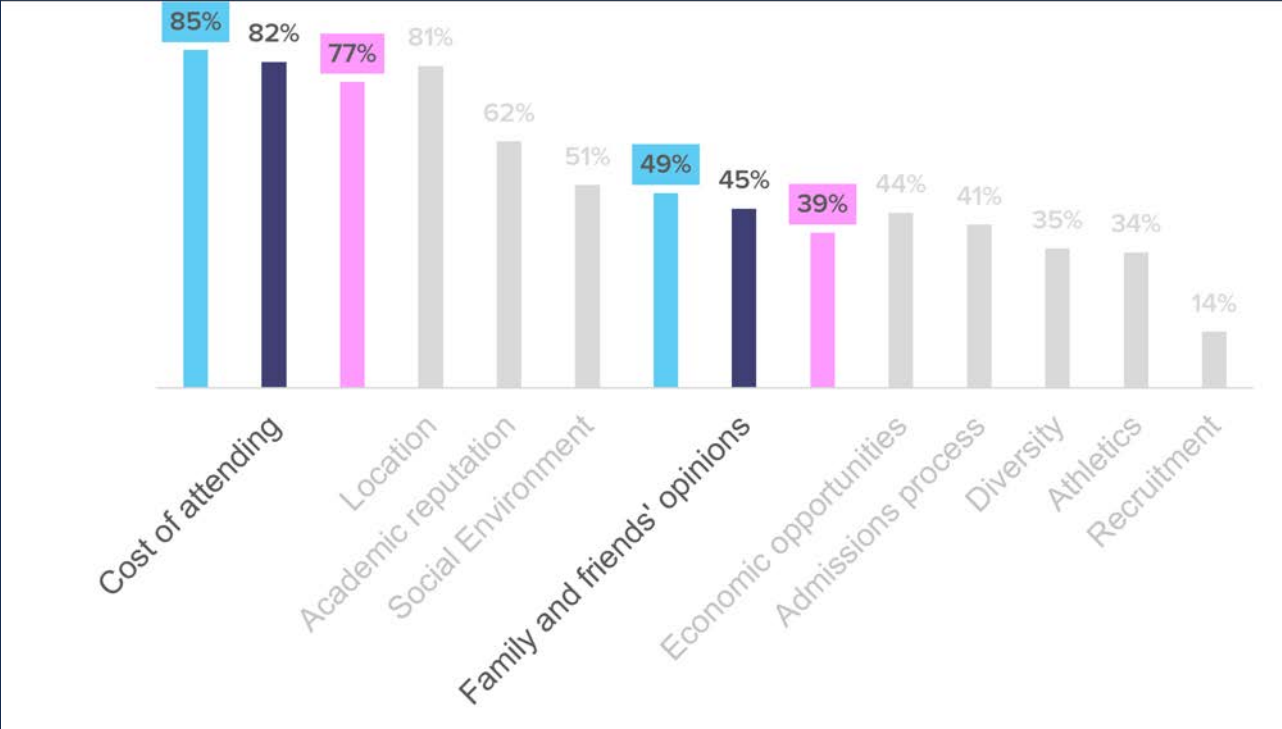


Finding #1: The **general factors** that *most* 4-year college-goers consider are cost, location, reputation, and social environment.



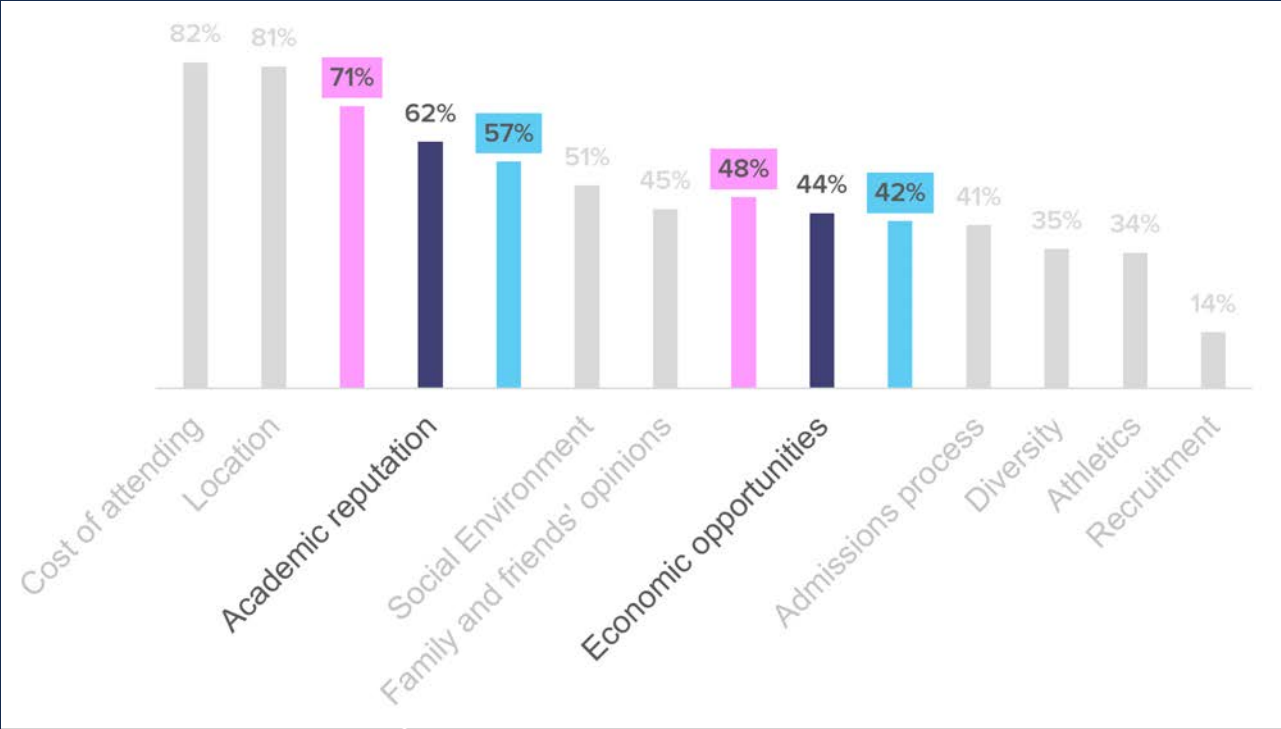
NOTE: Respondents could select all that apply to all colleges they *considered*.

Stayers are significantly more likely to consider cost and family and friends' opinions than **leavers**.



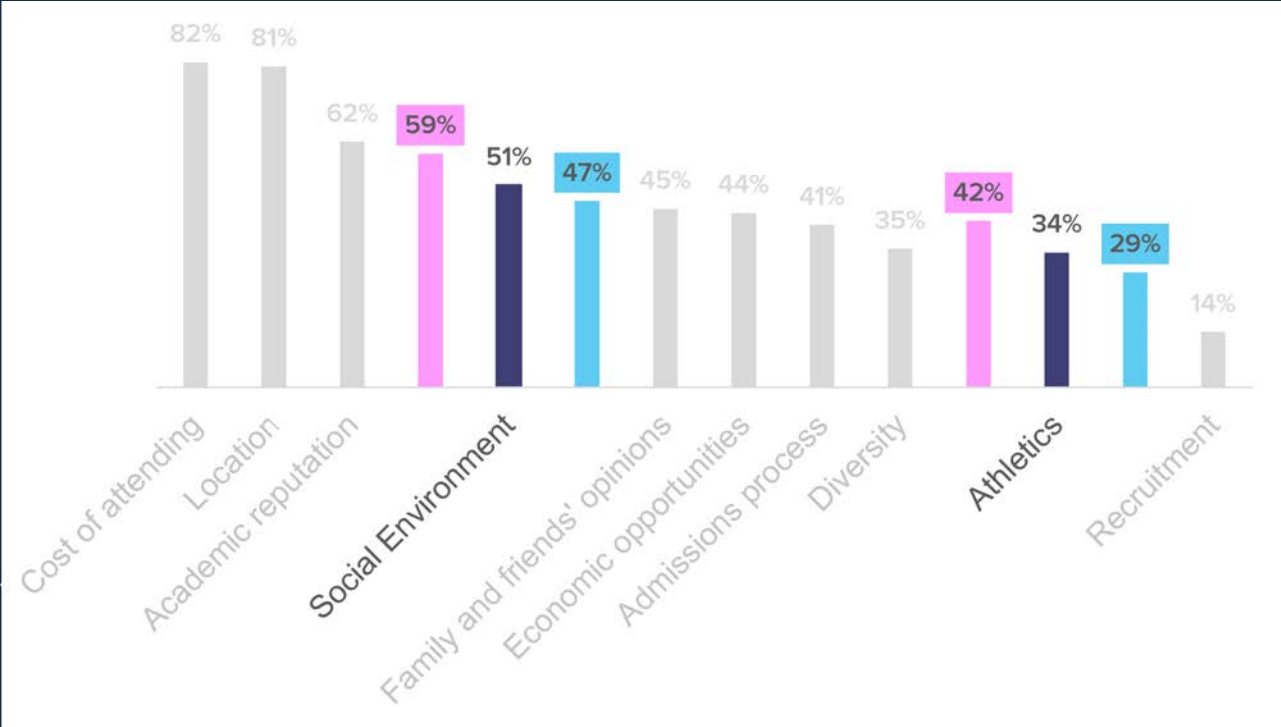
NOTE: Respondents could select all that apply to all colleges they considered.

Leavers are significantly more likely to consider academic reputation and economic opportunities than **stayers**.



NOTE: Respondents could select all that apply to all colleges they considered.

Leavers are also significantly more likely to consider social environment and athletics/extracurriculars than **stayers**.



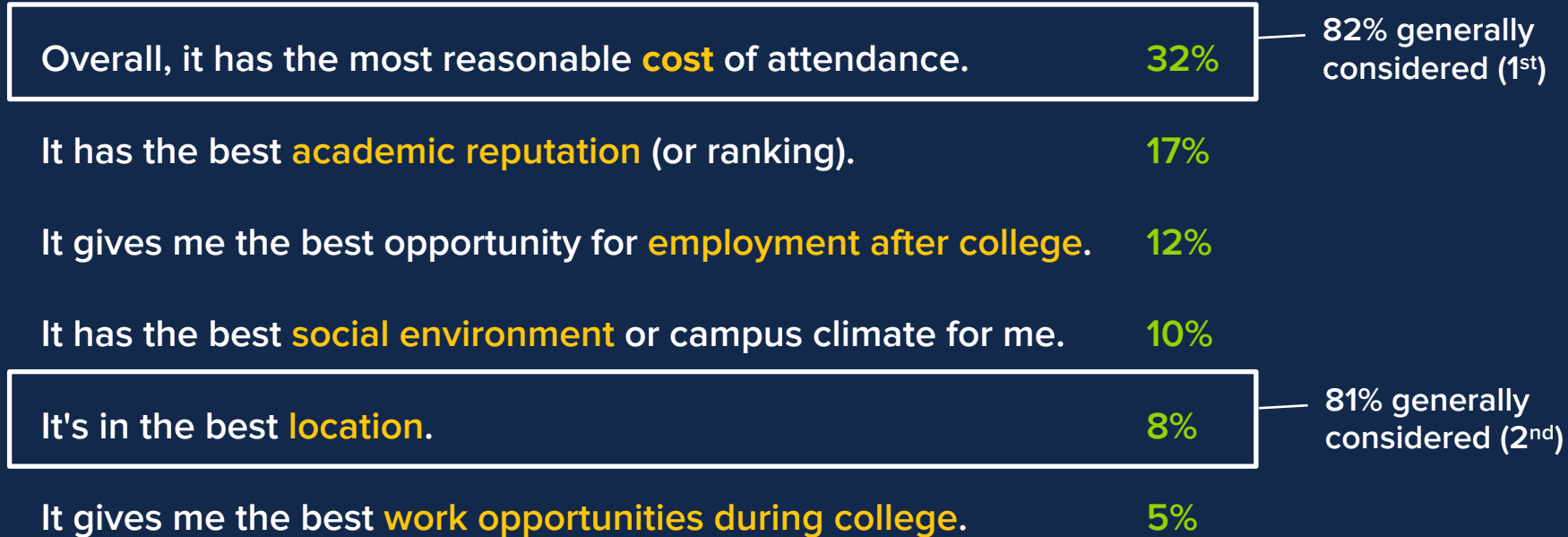
NOTE: Respondents could select all that apply to all colleges they considered.

Finding #2: The **single decisive factor** that the biggest proportion of 4-year college-goers consider is cost.

Overall, it has the most reasonable cost of attendance.	32%
It has the best academic reputation (or ranking).	17%
It gives me the best opportunity for employment after college .	12%
It has the best social environment or campus climate for me.	10%
It's in the best location .	8%
It gives me the best work opportunities during college .	5%

*Respondents could only select one for the college they *chose*; responses under 5% deleted (7 additional prompts)

Cost appears to maintain its importance as a factor in the final decision, while **location** seems to diminish in importance.



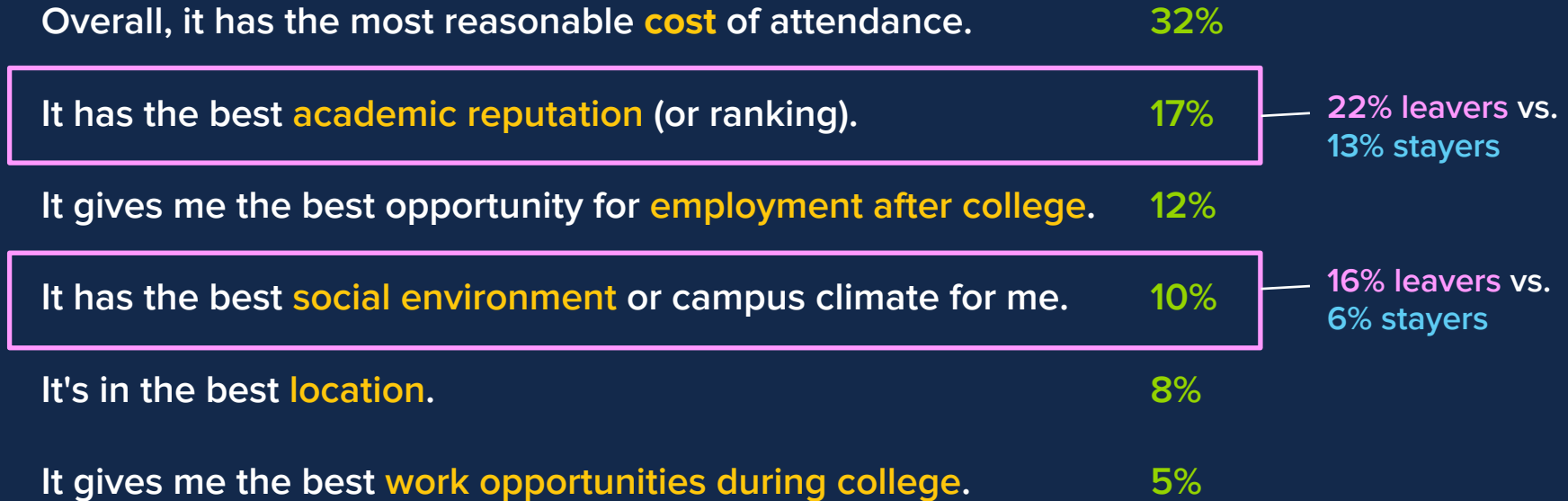
*Respondents could only select one for the college they chose; responses under 5% deleted (7 additional prompts)

Stayers were more likely to cite a decisive factor of cost or work opportunities during college.

Overall, it has the most reasonable cost of attendance.	32%	37% stayers vs. 24% leavers
It has the best academic reputation (or ranking).	17%	
It gives me the best opportunity for employment after college .	12%	
It has the best social environment or campus climate for me.	10%	
It's in the best location .	8%	
It gives me the best work opportunities during college .	5%	7% stayers vs. 3% leavers

*Respondents could only select one for the college they chose; responses under 5% deleted (7 additional prompts)

Leavers were more likely to cite a decisive factor of academic reputation or social environment.



*Respondents could only select one for the college they *chose*; responses under 5% deleted (7 additional prompts)

Critical Point:

Leavers and stayers care about similar issues (like cost), but weight them differently in decision-making.

Finding #3: Both **leavers** and **stayers** agreed—albeit with a large gap—that Illinois colleges had the better cost of attendance.

Percent selecting Illinois colleges as superior on each factor.

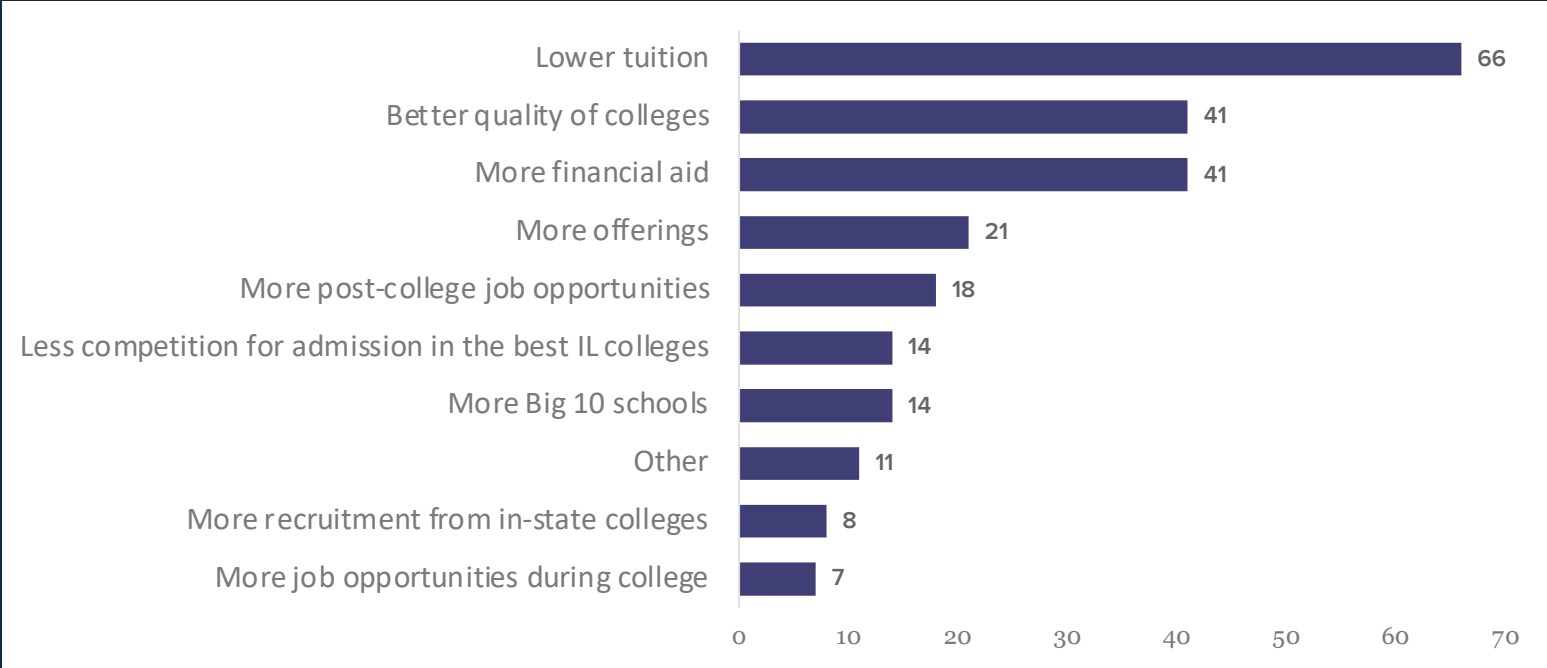
	Leavers	Stayers
Cost of attendance	55%	92%

On all other factors, however, the students' choices to leave or stay aligned with their opinions of Illinois colleges. All differences were significant.

Percent selecting Illinois colleges as superior on each factor.

	Leavers	Stayers
Cost of attendance	55%	92%
Academic reputation	13%	61%
Economic opportunities	12%	67%
College location	18%	74%
College social environment	10%	72%
College diversity	28%	68%
Athletics/extracurriculars	16%	59%
Recruitment process	24%	75%
Likelihood of being admitted	49%	92%
Family and friends' opinions	32%	90%

Finding #4: **Leavers** expressed that **cost-related issues**, as well as better **college quality**, could have encouraged them to stay.



Critical Point:

While **leavers** may weigh cost less than **stayers**, cost could still be a great lever for keeping students in-state, especially as most **leavers** go to neighboring states.

Finding #5: A sampling of responses shows how decision-making factors varied significantly by **race/ethnicity** and **region**.

White students were most likely to consider athletics/extracurriculars and family/friends' opinions.

They were least likely to consider diversity.

Latinx students were least likely to consider social environment.

Black students were most likely to consider diversity, and least likely to consider family/friends' opinions.

Chicago students were most likely to consider diversity.

Suburban/Collar and downstate students were more likely to consider academic reputation and social environment.

More from the report...

- All findings by race/ethnicity and region
- Detailed responses about each factor considered
- Specific colleges chosen and considered
- Information about recruitment, financial aid, and modality of attendance



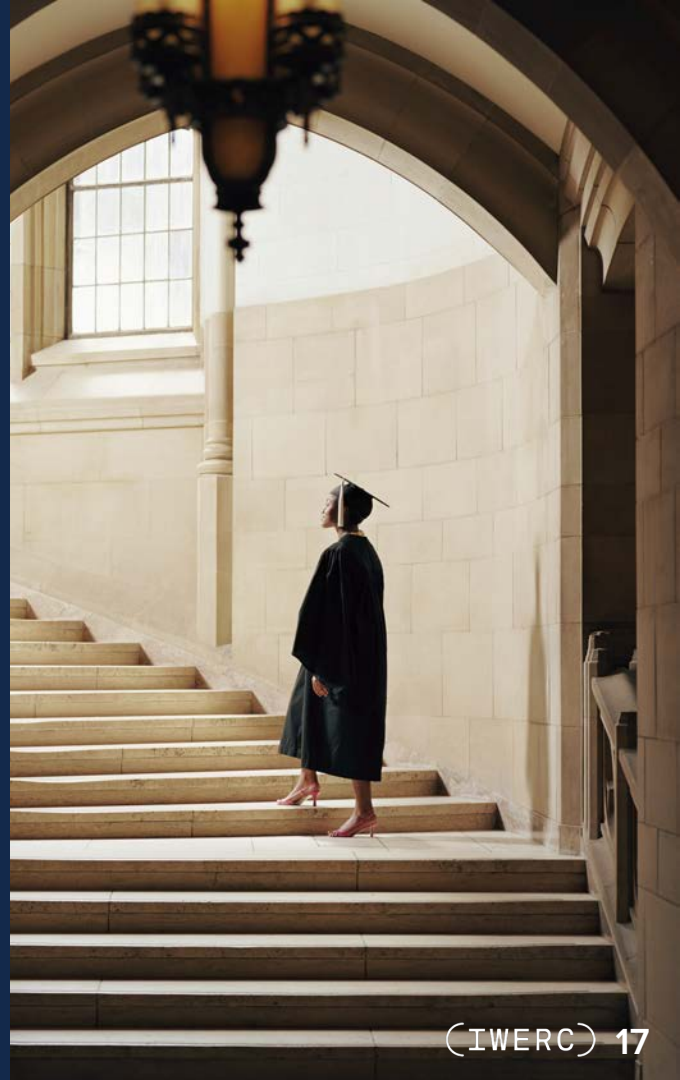
Summary of Findings:

[1] Most 4-year college-goers *consider* **cost, location, reputation, and social environment** in college decision-making. **But:**

- **Stayers** are more likely to *consider* cost and family/friends' opinions.
- **Leavers** are more likely to *consider* academic reputation, social environment, athletics/extracurriculars, and economic opportunities.

[2] 4-year college-goers make a *final college decision* largely based on **cost**. **But:**

- **Stayers** are more likely to *decide* based on cost and opportunity to work during college than **leavers**.
- **Leavers** are more likely to *decide* based on academic reputation and social environment than **stayers**.



Summary of Findings:

[3] Both leavers and stayers agreed—albeit with a large gap—that Illinois colleges had the better **cost** of attendance. On all other factors, however, the students' choices to leave or stay aligned with their opinions of Illinois colleges.

[4] Leavers expressed that **cost-related issues**, as well as better **college quality**, could have encouraged them to stay.

[5] Decision-making patterns also differed by race/ethnicity and region.

