



Alaska High School Senior Survey

Key Findings Report

Presented 7/22/2020

In May of 2020, the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) conducted a survey of Alaska high school seniors to determine if the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their postsecondary education (PSE) plans. This document highlights the survey's methods and respondents, key findings, and next steps. This document is available for review on ACPE's website: www.acpe.alaska.gov.

Survey Methods & Respondent Information

Contact Information Acquisition: Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) Database

PFD Database Search Parameters:

Date of Birth Range: 2001-2003

Email address listings only

Survey Send Date: May 5-8, 2020

Number of Surveys Sent: 8,703

Number of Respondents: 607 as of May 28, 2020

Key Findings in four subcategories:

Postsecondary Education Planning (PSE)

Impacts on PSE and Admissions Process

Impacts on Distance-Delivered Education

Financial Aid Awareness

Introduction of Respondents

In order to gain a better understanding of our respondents, it was important to ask questions regarding self-identified demographics such as, in which student-related population do respondents identify: *Alaska High School Senior, Recent Graduate, Parent/Guardian*. Additionally, respondents were asked to identify their geographic location within Alaska as well as race/ethnicity information. As indicated below, our survey respondents represent a geographically and ethnically diverse population of Alaskans.

Demographics

While the intent of this survey was to gain information from Alaska high school seniors about how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their PSE plans, ACPE recognizes that some recipients within the date of birth parameters may have been recent high school graduates or parents of seniors. Choices were intentionally included in the demographic information questions to more accurately reflect our respondents. Over 90% of respondents are Alaska high school seniors or recent Alaska high school graduates.

Geographic Information

The 607 respondents offer a geographically diverse representation of 59 cities and village communities across Alaska. Here is a small portion of the Alaskan communities represented in this survey: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Hooper Bay, Juneau, Kotzebue, Kwethluk, Nome, and Utqiagvik.

Key Findings

Postsecondary Education Planning

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 42.11% of respondents planned to pursue PSE in Alaska and 40.46% planned to pursue postsecondary education out-of-state. 10.69% of respondents did not plan to pursue PSE, while the remaining 6.74% indicated "Other" plans. Within the category of "Other", top plans were to join the military or take a gap year.

Overall, respondents indicated a slight shift away from pursuing PSE the fall semester immediately following high school graduation (Fall 2020) or remain unsure of their PSE plans. 33% of respondents indicated their postsecondary plans had changed in some capacity. The largest changes can be seen in the 16.25% not planning to pursue postsecondary this fall (increase of 5.56%) and the 10.18% who are unsure of their plans (increase of 3.44%).

Respondents intending to pursue PSE did not drastically alter their PSE plans either in state or out-of-state. Within Alaska, we see a slight decrease (-1.3%) of respondents planning to pursue an associate's or bachelor's degree and a slight increase of almost 3% for those planning to now pursue an

apprenticeship or certificate program. There is also a slight increase in Alaskans planning to join the military.

The percent of students planning to pursue either an associate's or bachelor's degree out-of-state has remained relatively unchanged. However, there is a slight shift in those now pursuing a bachelor's degree instead of associate's degree.

Of the 16.25% of respondents who do not plan to pursue postsecondary education this fall, 74.68% indicate that this decision is due to uncertainty caused by COVID-19, financial concerns, and/or that this pursuit is currently cost prohibitive.

Impacts on PSE and Admissions Process

Identifying and promoting access to postsecondary programs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in operational shifts at many postsecondary institutions, as well as the way in which prospective students acquire relevant information to finalize their postsecondary options. This survey asked for the ways in which students perceived impacts to the admissions process at various postsecondary institutions. Of the 73.58% of respondents who plan to pursue postsecondary education this fall, they state that admissions processes have been impacted in the following top four ways:

- Required Admissions Test is Waived
- Fewer Services Available
- Delayed Admissions Application Processing
- Shutdown of Campus

Impacts on Distance-Delivered Education

In terms of pursuing distance-delivered PSE options, 27.89% of the respondents stated that COVID-19 changed their interest in pursuing distance-delivered postsecondary education in some manner. Approximately 1/5 (21.37%) of respondents indicated they are less inclined to pursue a distance-delivered option as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

47% intend to stay in Alaska and enroll in an Alaskan distance-delivered program or course offerings and 10.26% will stay in Alaska and enroll in an out-of-state distance-delivered programs/course offerings. 21.37% indicated they would consider moving out-of-state to pursue an out-of-state distance-delivered program.

Financial Aid Awareness

Although 66.77% of respondents indicated they do have a plan to pay for their postsecondary education, 52.82% of respondents stated they still have concerns over how to pay for PSE due to COVID-19.

The following top 5 funding sources were included in respondents' postsecondary education payment plans:

Out of Pocket
Scholarships
Grants
Federal Student Loans
Alaska Student Loans

At the time of taking this survey, 57.41% of respondents indicated that they have already completed their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

55.42% indicated that they are less likely to consider an Alaska state loan program due to COVID-19.

Next Steps

After compiling and analyzing the responses from this survey, ACPE intends on taking a variety of next steps to ensure dissemination of a key findings report. The overarching goal of these action items is to offer postsecondary stakeholders relevant information from which they can build intentional and responsive plans for the upcoming academic year.

- Distribute Alaska High School Senior Survey Report to:
 - Alaska Postsecondary Education Institutions
 - Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED)
 - Alaska Education Stakeholders & Policy-Makers
- Implement targeted outreach campaigns
- Determine planning implications and activities