



**Methodology document**

# 2024 College Brand Index

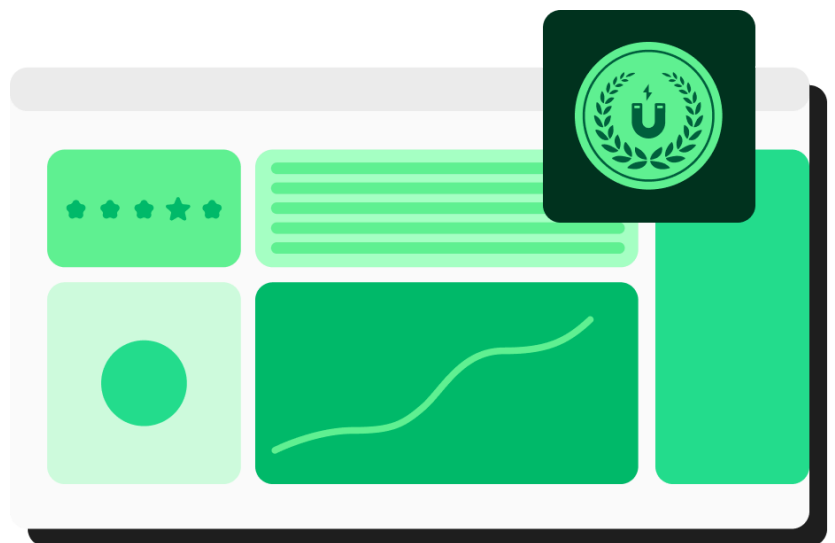
A holistic benchmark to measure the  
attractiveness of every U.S. college brand

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# Overview

The Brand Index is a comprehensive measure of institutional brand perception and engagements, built by leveraging data from the more than 2.2 million students in the CollegeVine recruiting network. This methodology document outlines the process and rationale behind the creation of the Brand Index, providing insights into the data sources, calculation methods, and the factors considered in assessing each institution's brand strength.



# Calculation Overview

The Brand Index is a numerical representation, ranging from 0 to 100, that quantifies a college's brand performance on various dimensions of engagement and perception among its target audience. This index is calculated through a two-part process:

1. **Calculation of Component Indices:** Initial scores are derived from four main metrics—Adjusted Reach, Engagement, Conversion, and Current Student Net Promoter Score (NPS)—each reflecting different aspects of a school's brand interaction and perception.
2. **Overall Brand Index Calculation:** These component scores are then aggregated into the overall Brand Index score through a weighted average, incorporating normalization to ensure scores are comparable and meaningful across all institutions.

There are two adjustments made to the base calculation:

1. **Size Adjustment** - The reach metric is normalized for the first-year enrollment of the institution to better reflect the brand strengths and weaknesses of smaller institutions.
2. **Seasonality Adjustment** - We use a weighted moving average to factor in historical activity when calculating the brand index, and adjust for season variation in student behavior.

# Data Sources and Metrics

The Brand Index utilizes a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collected from the CollegeVine platform, structured around four primary metrics:

## 1. Adjusted Reach

- Description: A measure of institutional brand awareness and reach within the CollegeVine community, adjusted for the size of the institution to ensure fair comparison across schools of different scales.
- Data Source: Engagement metrics from the recruiting network, including students adding a school to their college list, connections made, and views of the institutional profile page (School Detail Page or SDP) Rationale: Measures

## 2. Engagement

- Description: A proxy for the level of interest and positive perception students have towards the school based on the content on their SDP.
- Data Source: Average time users spend on a school's detail page, excluding instances where the user immediately leaves (bounces).

## 3. Conversion

- Description: A measure of how compelling the SDP is for prospective students and how likely it is to drive student action
- Data Source: The ratio of school list additions and unique inbound connection requests to the total views of the school's detail page.

## 4. Current Student NPS\*

- Description: A measure of current student satisfaction and advocacy, providing insight into the lived experiences within the institution – measure how likely current students are to refer an institution to their friends and peers.
- Data Source: Surveys conducted among current students to gauge their satisfaction and likelihood of recommending the institution to peers.

The Brand Index rankings also use institutional data from IPEDS and the [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\)](#) to categorize schools into different segments.

*\*See “What is NPS” to learn more about this metric*

# Weighting and Normalization

The calculation of the Brand Index takes into account the varying importance of each component metric through differential weighting. These weights adjust based on the availability of comprehensive data, particularly regarding Current Student NPS:

- With NPS Available
  - Adjusted Reach - 35%
  - Engagement - 15%
  - Conversion - 20%
  - Student NPS - 30%
- Without NPS - Without sufficient data to calculate a robust measure for current student the weights are rebalanced among the remaining metrics:
  - Adjusted Reach - 50%
  - Engagement - 21%
  - Conversion - 29%

Normalization is applied to ensure that scores are standardized across the board, allowing for a fair and comparable ranking system. This involves adjusting the component scores based on their distribution across all institutions, employing a static coefficient calculation method to maintain consistency and reduce computational complexity.

# Qualitative Metrics

The Brand Index is enriched with qualitative insights that capture the nuanced perceptions and experiences of both students and their parents. These metrics provide depth to the quantitative data, offering a more holistic view of an institution's brand. Sourced from a substantial dataset of 169,344 ratings shared by currently enrolled students and their parents, these qualitative metrics are critical for understanding the multifaceted nature of college brands.

# Student and Parent Ratings

## 1. Overall Satisfaction

- Metric: Student and parent ratings (out of 5) on overall satisfaction with the institution.

## 2. Institutional Quality Perception

- Metric: Ratings (out of 5) on the perceived quality of the institution, encompassing academic rigor, campus facilities, and administrative services.

## 3. Peer Interaction

- Metric: Student ratings (out of 5) specifically focused on their interactions and relationships with classmates.

## 4. Value for Money

- Metric: Both students and parents rate (out of 5) their perception of the institution's value for the tuition and fees paid.

## 5. Career and Future Goal Alignment

- Metric: Student and Parent ratings (out of 5) on how well the institution is assisting students in meeting their future career and personal goals.

## 6. Faculty Relationships

- Metric: Student ratings (out of 5) regarding their relationships with professors and instructors.

## 7. Campus Safety

- Metric: Student ratings (out of 5) on their sense of safety and security on campus.
- Source: Direct responses from students, concerning their personal safety and the institution's efforts to maintain a secure environment.

## Narrative Reviews

In addition to numerical ratings, the Brand Index incorporates narrative reviews from students and parents. These reviews offer detailed testimonials and anecdotes that shed light on specific aspects of the college experience, such as academic programs, campus life, and community engagement.

### Recent/Featured Reviews

- **Description:** Selected narrative reviews that highlight recent experiences or notable insights from both students and parents.

### Decision Regret Metric

#### "Would Choose Again" Indicator

- **Metric:** A binary (yes/no) response from students and parents on whether they would choose the same institution again, given the chance to make the decision anew.

## What is NPS?

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a widely used metric that gauges customer loyalty and satisfaction based on one simple question: "On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend our product/service to a friend or colleague?" Based on their responses, participants are categorized into three groups:

**Promoters (score 9-10):** These are highly satisfied and loyal customers who are likely to recommend the product or service to others, contributing to positive word-of-mouth.

**Passives (score 7-8):** While satisfied, these customers are not as enthusiastic as promoters and are less likely to actively promote the product or service.

**Detractors (score 0-6):** Unsatisfied customers who may discourage others from using the product or service, potentially harming the brand's reputation.

The NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. The score can range from -100 (if every customer is a detractor) to 100 (if every customer is a promoter), with higher scores indicating greater customer satisfaction and loyalty. NPS provides a straightforward metric for organizations to measure and track customer perceptions and experiences over time, facilitating efforts to improve products, services, and overall customer engagement.