



Thousands of students told us how they feel about **personalization** from Colleges

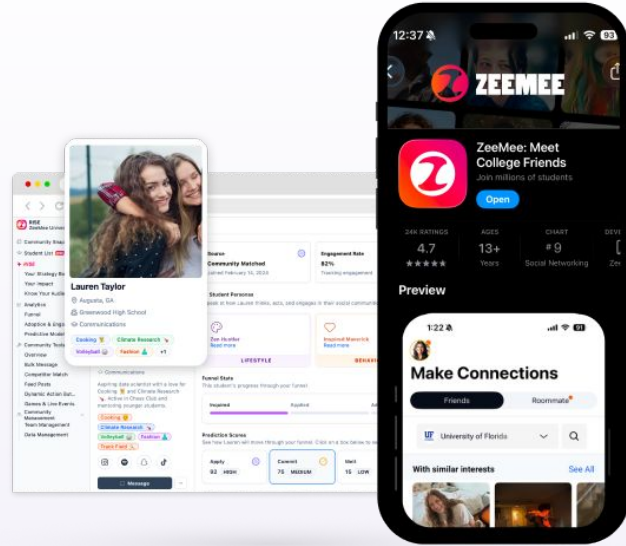
Insights from our **Gen-Z** audience



About



We help millions of students navigate their college selection journey and choose the place that is right for them, as well as giving access to the most unique data and interactive tools, to help colleges drive students through the enrollment funnel.



300+ college partners | **2.6M** students
Top 10 social app | **4.7★** App Store rating

Backed by a team with over 200 years of enrollment experience.



Our Student Pulse Surveys

Every month we ask students some of the most important and burning questions related to their college admissions process.



This month:

What's **preferred** and what isn't when it comes to personalization from colleges?



As institutions increase personalization across email, digital ads, and direct communication, student expectations are rising.

However, personalization works best when it aligns with student expectations, making it important to understand how and when students want to experience it.



TLDR;

Students **love it** when you personalize communications using information they have provided.

But, it can be perceived negatively if they don't know where the personalized data came from.

The most effective personalization is grounded in transparent, self-reported student data.



From our students...

"What feels thoughtful & genuine?"

"They sounded like they really cared, and most of the messages were from actual people, it wasn't an automated message"

"They wrote to appeal to my interests, like hiking opportunities near campus. Or community clubs to join"

"They included my name, sent me a birthday message, program-specific and interest-specific info"





Takeaway #1

Personalization is **effective** when it's meaningful & based on what students share

- **69%** of students reported receiving messages that felt personalized.
- Personal touches like using a student's name or referencing student-provided data such as intended major, interests, or essays help students feel recognized as individuals.



Takeaway #2

Personalization
from unknown
sources can feel
intrusive

- Survey responses indicated feelings of annoyance, overwhelm, and distrust when students felt their information came from unknown sources.
- Students noted discomfort with ads following them online, frequent emails, and messages referencing information they don't remember sharing.



Takeaway #3

Transparency
builds **trust** with
students

- **65%** said explaining how their contact information was obtained would make outreach feel less uncomfortable; another **21%** said it might help.
- Students appreciate when colleges clarify data sources like testing organizations, fairs, profile pages, or databases.





Takeaway #4

Preferred communication channels and frequency are clear



- **Preferred Channels:** Text, ZeeMee DMs, and Email
- **Less-preferred channels:** Phone Calls and Social Media DMs
- **63%** said outreach feels excessive if it occurs daily - weekly or bi-weekly is preferred.
- Even helpful communication can be perceived negatively if overused or sent via undesired channels.





Takeaway #5

Genuine outreach
balances
relevance and
subtlety



Outreach is effective when it comes from a real person, provides relevant information, and is tied to what the student has shared.

“They actually took the time to know me and my interests”



Takeaway #6

Outreach can
directly impact
student interest

- **36%** of students said they have lost interest in a college because its communication frequency, while 15% said maybe and 49% said no.
- With over **half of the students** reporting being negatively influenced (yes + maybe), outreach strategy plays a critical role in shaping perception and maintaining student interest.





Strategic Recommendations



Recommendation #1

Differentiate outreach for prospects vs. inquiries

Treat prospects and inquiries differently.

For prospects, start with introductory messaging that focuses on the university and builds awareness. Once a student engages, shift to more personalized, relationship-driven communication to create a more genuine connection.

Recommendation #2

Use self-reported and relevant student information

Avoid referencing information students didn't explicitly share with you.

The top 3 areas that students are comfortable with colleges referencing are intended **major**, **interests**, and **GPA** or test scores.

ZeeMee supports this approach by using data students have shared themselves, helping personalization feel more transparent and aligned with their expectations.

Recommendation #3

Limit outreach frequency to prevent overload

63% of students said daily outreach feels excessive; weekly or bi-weekly is preferred.

Implement communication cadence rules to prevent over-contacting prospective students.

Recommendation #4

Prioritize transparency about data sources

65% of students said explaining how their info was obtained makes outreach feel less intrusive.

Include a brief explanation of how a student's information was collected at the start of communications.

Recommendation #5

Focus on preferred communication channels

Email, text, and ZeeMee DMs, are top choices; social media DMs and phone calls are least preferred.

Ensure your messaging is optimized for both email and SMS.

For SMS, clearly identify yourself so students immediately know who the message is from.

ZeeMee DMs are another effective way to connect with students and drive responses in a convenient, engaging channel.

Find out how you can personalize your Marketing using self-reported interests and info shared directly by students on ZeeMee

sales@zeemee.com

