

## **College Application Study Information for Parents**



### **Purpose of the Research Project**

The purpose of our research project is to understand how students and their families decide which colleges to apply to and how perceptions about the availability of financial aid affect their decisions. We are interested in how students respond to guidance and advice in their decision making, whether or not they apply to college, where they apply, the applications they might send to college, and which colleges admit them.

The goal of this project is to produce academic research papers. Data collected for the project will only be used for research purposes and will not be shared with the College Board or any college admissions offices.

### **What Your Child Will Do in This Research Project**

We ask for your permission for your child to complete two brief surveys. The surveys ask your child for information about high school courses and grades, extracurricular activities, work experience, and expectations about college enrollment. In addition, a random sample of students and families will receive additional information by mail and phone about the college application process. Your child may refuse to answer any of these questions at any time. We are collecting this information for research purposes only.

In addition to the completion of surveys by your child, we ask that you complete the parental survey attached to this mailing.

### **Time Required**

It should take approximately 45 minutes to complete the survey. Students may also choose to participate in a 20 minute telephone interview at the conclusion of the survey period.

### **Compensation**

Students will receive a gift of a \$10 gift card from a choice of vendors for completion of the survey. They do not have to participate in the phone call to receive this gift.

### **Risks**

There are no anticipated risks associated with completing the surveys.

Students who receive additional information about the college application process may be dissatisfied with the guidance or information provided.

### **Benefits**

There is no direct benefit for participation in this research project.

### **Confidentiality**

Your child's participation in this study will remain confidential. Sarah Turner, a professor at the University of Virginia and Christopher Avery, Professor at the Kennedy School of Government, will be working with data that does not identify you or your child. **Your child's answers will not impact any college admissions or financial aid decisions. Your names will not be revealed in any analysis of the data to further protect your privacy.** The raw data, stripped of all identifiers, will remain with researchers for no longer than 10 years in order to analyze the data for future projects.

### **Participation and Withdrawal**

Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary, and your child may skip any questions on the surveys without penalty. **Your child may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.** Your child may withdraw by informing the researcher that s/he no longer wishes to participate (no questions will be asked). The decision to participate or not participate will in no way affect the relationship you or your child has with Harvard University or the University of Virginia.

### **Effect on Admission and Financial Aid Outcomes**

Participating in the project will not affect your admission or financial aid outcomes at any college. Although the College Board, the University of Virginia Admissions Office and the Harvard Admissions Office have provided background information for the project, they will not know which students have been selected for the project.

No one but the researchers for the project will have access to any of the information that your child provides during the course of the project. Therefore, participation in the project cannot affect the outcome of any of your child's applications.

### **Contact**

The Project Directors for this research project are Sarah Turner, University Professor at the University of Virginia and Christopher Avery, Professor of Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. If you have questions about this research, please contact either Professor Turner or Professor Avery.

Sarah Turner, (434) 924-7857, sturner@uvirginia.edu  
Christopher Avery, (617) 496-4063, chris\_avery@harvard.edu

### **Whom to Contact about Your Rights in This Research**

If you have questions about your rights in this study, please contact:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.,  
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences  
One Morton Dr Suite 500  
University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392  
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Telephone: (434) 924-5999  
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu  
Website: www.virginia.edu/vprgs/irb

## Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Who is conducting this project?

The principal investigators are Sarah Turner from the University of Virginia and Chris Avery, Professor at Harvard University and co-author of *The Early Admissions Game*.

The project is funded by a research grant from the Spencer Foundation that enables us to provide monetary gifts to participating students. The College Board, the University of Virginia and Harvard University have agreed to provide information necessary to conduct the study, but this is the only connection between the research project and these organizations.

### 2. How will it affect the outcome of my applications if I participate in the project?

Participating in the project will not help or harm your admission or financial aid outcomes at any college. No one but the researchers for the project will have access to any of the information that you provide during the course of the project. Therefore, **your participation in the project cannot affect the outcome of any of your applications.**

### 3. How will you guarantee the confidentiality of my responses?

We recognize that personal information related to the college application process is very sensitive. For this reason, we pledge not to identify you or any other participating student by name in any writing relating to the project. Once we have completed the data collection process, we will remove your name, home address, and any other information that could identify you from the database used for statistical analysis.

### 4. How was I selected for the project?

The College Board provided a list of Virginia students with SAT scores in the targeted range.

### 5. How will the results of the project be used?

The project is designed to produce academic papers that study the relationships between income, high school history, and college admissions outcomes. The data for the project will be used only for academic research and will not be shared with any college admissions office or the College Board.

## **6. Why should I participate in the project?**

We are eager to build an accurate picture of how students and their families understand the college application and admissions process. By participating in the project, you are increasing the precision of our statistical results, which will improve outreach and education about the college application process and the availability of financial aid.

In addition, students will receive a gift of a \$10 gift card from a choice of vendors for completion of the survey.

## **7. Why am I being paid to participate in the project?**

The monetary gifts are made possible by the research grant that we have received for this project. The money is a token of appreciation for your willingness to participate and for the time that you will invest in the project. We hope that the gift will help to improve the participation rate for students since this improves the validity of the study's results.