

## Legacy Admission Scenario 2 Performance Task

Boston College

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AAA is a moderately selective liberal arts college. Although the college has a distinguished history, it also seeks to strengthen its commitment to liberal education and to preparing students for graduate education or professional studies. The major institutional priorities related to student learning include:

- Raise funds for three major building projects that would further support student learning
- Build on the college's tradition of academic rigor by expanding the learning goals to include 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, especially those that incorporate technology-infused environments
- Support student development through expanding the college's technological infrastructure and enhancing internship opportunities
- Increase the diversity of the student body with respect to race/ethnicity and socio-economic status

Recently, the issue of legacy admissions preferences has become a controversial topic with the publication of a book that argues that America has effectively become an *inherited meritocracy*, as children of families with greater means have greater advantages on the road to success. A student group at AAA College has started a movement advocating for a fairer student selection process; in particular, it argues for the elimination of preferences for legacies in admissions. The student newspaper presented data collected from a student survey that indicates the student body's strongly negative views on legacy admissions. The local newspaper has also highlighted the issue of legacy preferences by presenting comparative data across similar institutions, showing that AAA College has a somewhat higher rate of legacy admissions.

As an outstanding student working for the Institutional Research office at AAA college, you were invited to a meeting with the President of AAA College, Dean of Admissions, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Advancement, and the Chief Diversity Officer. The VP for Advancement presented the annual financial report, which indicates that, on average, about 15% of annual revenues come from private contributions, including donations. She asserted that eliminating legacy preferences could substantially reduce revenues -- and the resulting benefits

for both students and faculty. The VP for Student Affairs framed eliminating legacy preferences as an academic issue, arguing that diversity enhances the undergraduate experience for all students. The Chief Diversity Officer presented it as a moral issue with regard to the long-term health of society.

All stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees, are expecting an official statement by the college on the topic. Your task is to produce a draft memo that the President and relevant parties will discuss before the meeting with the Board of Trustees. It should:

1. Clearly state your recommendation regarding the elimination of preferences for legacy applicants.
2. Discuss why the alternative position is less desirable for the College.
3. Justify your position (for one alternative over the other) by drawing on, as appropriate, the following set of documents, *and only this set of documents*.

## Resource Library

### A. AAA College Board of Trustees Member List on Website



College  
ESTABLISHED IN 1827

### Board of Trustees, Administration, and Officers

| No | Title      | Name               | Occupation/Profession               | Organization/Company     |
|----|------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1  | Chair      | Cody Wilson '79    | Chief Executive Officer             | Corporation              |
| 2  | Vice Chair | Jacob Moore '78    | Founder                             | Investment Company       |
| 3  | Secretary  | Wyatt Davis '82    | Executive Vice President of Finance | Financial Firm           |
| 4  | Trustee    | Maxwell White '84  | Chief Investment Officer            | Investment Bank          |
| 5  | Trustee    | Kathryn Brown '68  | District Attorney                   | District Attorney Office |
| 6  | Trustee    | Garrett Martin '67 | President                           | Private University       |
| 7  | Trustee    | Jalen Carter '89   | Partner                             | Law Firm                 |
| 8  | Trustee    | Trevon Hall '65    | Chief Executive Officer             | Construction Company     |
| 9  | Trustee    | Luke Young '12     | Founder                             | Performing Arts Company  |
| 10 | Trustee    | Dylan Clark '63    | Chief Legal Officer                 | Health Organization      |
| 11 | Trustee    | Asia Wood '18      | Medical Resident in Training        | Medical School           |
| 12 | Trustee    | Jake Mitchell '04  | Founder                             | Consulting Firm          |
| 13 | Trustee    | Cole Smith '88     | Vice President of Finance           | Investment Bank          |
| 14 | Trustee    | Megan Lewis '63    | President                           | Non-Profit Organization  |
| 15 | Trustee    | Bradley Jones '74  | Chief Human Resources Officer       | Investment Company       |

B. Common Data Set Comparative Institution Profile**Common Data Set Initiative**

Data provided by each college for college guidebooks

**FIRST-TIME, FIRST-YEAR ADMISSION**

| School Name                                  | AAA College  | College B  | College C  |
|--|--|--|--|
| Endowment                                    | \$368 Million  | \$851 Million  | \$412 Million  |
| U.S. News and World Report Ranking           | 36   | 38   | 51   |
| Current # of Students                        | 2,283  | 3,678  | 2,382  |
| Demographic Composition                      |  |  |  |
| Race / Ethnicity                             | 57% White, 27% Non-White, 16% International  | 74% White, 20% Non-White, 6% International   | 65% White, 22% Non-White, 13% International  |
| Academic Standing                            |  |  |  |
| Average SAT Math/Verbal Score                | Avg:1340<br>75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile: 1420<br>25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile: 1260 | Avg:1332<br>75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile: 1420<br>25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile: 1250 | Avg:1302<br>75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile: 1360<br>25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile: 1230 |
| Average High School GPA of Admitted Students | 3.81   | 3.68   | 3.55   |
| % in Top Tenth of Graduating Class           | 68%  | 60%  | 48%  |
| Level of Selectivity                         |  |  |  |
| Acceptance Rate*                             | 34%  | 31%  | 49%  |
| Total Number of Applications                 | 6,720  | 10,251   | 5,941  |
| Total # of Admitted First-Year Students      | 2,292  | 3,178  | 2,894  |
| Total # of Enrolled First-Year Students      | 645  | 975  | 606  |
| % of Admitted Students with Legacy Status    | 17%  | 10%  | 22%  |

\* Acceptance rate is the percentage of students who were admitted after they applied to the college.

C. AAA College's 2017-2018 Annual Report to Board and Externals**AAA College: Annual Report 2017-2018****Admissions**

The following table shows AAA College admissions policies, listing all considered factors and their importance in admissions decisions.

**AAA College Admissions Policy**

| <b>Academic</b>                  |                |           |            |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
|                                  | Very Important | Important | Considered | Not Considered |
| Rigor of Secondary School Record | •              |           |            |                |
| Class rank                       | •              |           |            |                |
| Academic GPA                     | •              |           |            |                |
| Standardized test scores         |                | •         |            |                |
| Application Essay                |                | •         |            |                |
| Recommendations                  |                | •         |            |                |
| <b>Nonacademic</b>               |                |           |            |                |
|                                  | Very Important | Important | Considered | Not Considered |
| Interview                        |                | •         |            |                |
| Extracurricular activities       |                | •         |            |                |
| Talent/Ability                   |                | •         |            |                |
| Character/Personal Qualities     | •              |           |            |                |
| First generation                 |                |           |            | •              |
| Geographical residence           |                |           | •          |                |
| State residency                  |                |           |            | •              |
| Religious affiliation/commitment |                |           |            | •              |
| Racial/ethnic status             |                |           | •          |                |
| Volunteer Work                   |                | •         |            |                |
| Work experience                  |                |           | •          |                |
| Level of Applicant Interest      |                |           | •          |                |
| <b>Special Considerations</b>    |                |           |            |                |
|                                  | Very Important | Important | Considered | Not Considered |
| Alumni/relation                  |                | •         |            |                |
| Leadership                       |                |           | •          |                |
| Athletic                         |                | •         |            |                |

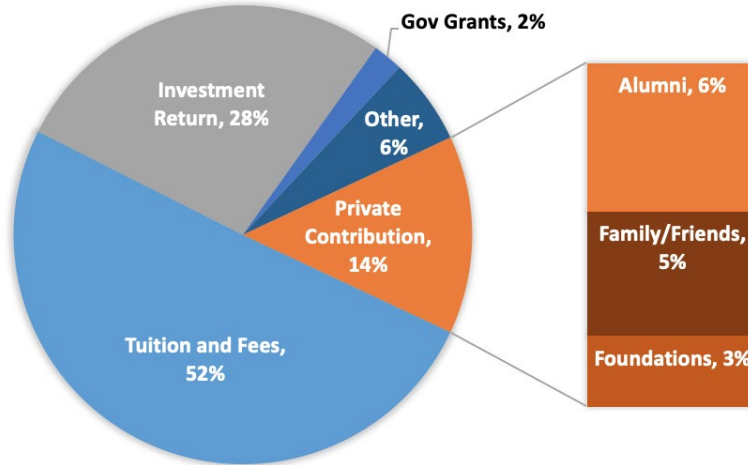
D. Annual Externally Audited Financial Report of AAA College

**Annual Financial Overview**

*Annual Revenues*

AAA College ended the academic year with an annual revenue (both operating and non-operating activities) of \$145 million, from which \$20 million was received from generous private contributions. Our supporters have had a significant impact, for which AAA College is grateful. The revenue sources are shown in the following pie chart.

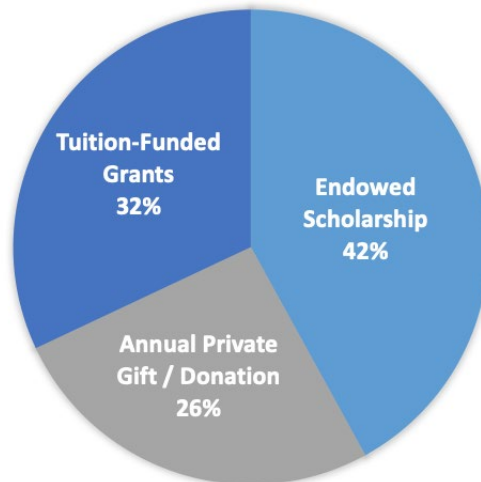
**CORE ANNUAL REVENUES (TOTAL: \$145 MILLION)**



*Sources of Institutional Student Aid*

This academic year, a total of \$13 million was used for institutional financial aid in the form of need-based scholarships and grants. Non-federal, institutional student aid covered 79% of tuition, on average, for 54% of incoming first-year students. The pie chart presents the breakdown of the non-federal institutional sources for student aid.

**SOURCES FOR NON-FEDERAL, INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT AID (TOTAL: \$13 MILLION)**



E. Excerpt from bestseller book, Dream Hoarders**CHAPTER 4: INHERITING CLASS**

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The biggest effects seem to be when legacy status is combined with hefty donations. It seems invidious to pick out specific examples, but there's little choice when colleges refuse to share their data. So, let's look at the family of one of the most generous alumni of a highly selective university. The alumnus graduated from university in 1955 and the university's law school in 1958. He became a wealthy real estate businessman and is one of his alma mater's biggest donors; in 1985, the university's indoor athletic facility was renamed in his honor. All three of the alumnus's children went to the same university. By 2009, five of his six college-age grandchildren followed suit.

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F. Letter from AAA College alumnus

Dear President of AAA College,

It is with great regret that I learned yesterday that my son has been rejected from AAA College. Before letting go of the family dream of a third-generation legacy, I thought it was only right to state the reasons why rejecting my son was a grave mistake on your part. As an alumnus of AAA College, I have been making major donations throughout the last 15 years, based upon an understanding that loyalty operates as a two-way street. For a college so dependent on alumni donations, betraying this relationship by not accepting someone as academically competitive as my son has lost you an alumnus who has always been happy to contribute to helping AAA College achieve its laudable goals. It goes without saying that I will think twice (or more) before making any donations in the future.

John Wallace '81

*J. Wallace*

G. Excerpt from a Newspaper Opinion Section

# The Daily Telegraph

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No. 10,951

THURSDAY, April 11, 2018

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**OP-ED**

## **Legacy Admissions: The Real Affirmative Action**

BY NEVAEH JONES

**A**ffirmative action has been long under assault by some for providing undue advantage to students of color who may not have the same academic credentials as white students who are competing for the same places. However, it is hard for their opponents to understand that white students have some inherent advantages that give them competitive edge over students of color. Statistics show legacy applicants have a higher chance of getting accepted into universities. The fact is that students who fit into the categories are most likely white. While affirmative action for minorities at least give a chance for minorities to surmount the obstacles they face, legacy admissions only further reinforces a system that advantages white students. If anything, preferences in legacies in admission is a form of affirmative action that undercuts the laudable goal of achieving diversity in college admissions.



## H. Student Newspaper Article w/ Student Survey Data

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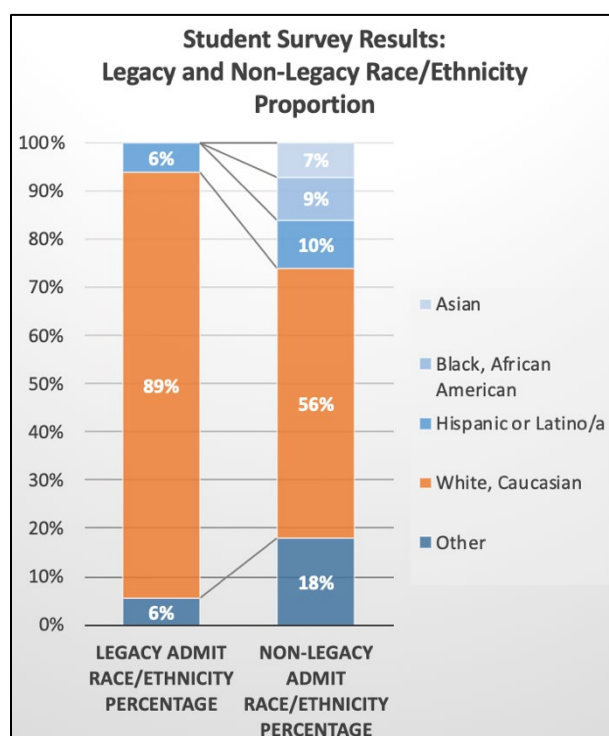
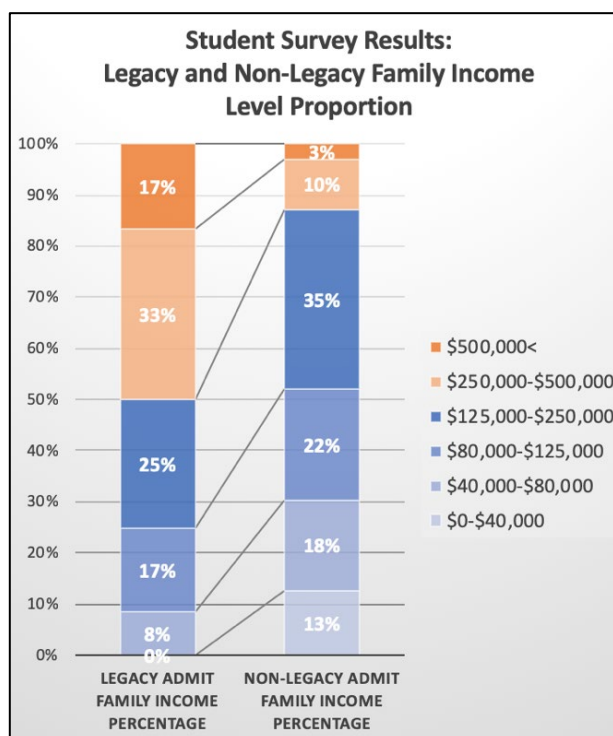
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## STUDENT VOICE

## Student Survey Results: Time to Eliminate Preferences for Legacies in Admissions

BY JORDAN BYNES



As a student newspaper with an obligation to report student opinions on important issues, we carried out a student survey regarding legacy admissions. We received a total of 360 student survey responses – including 54 self-described legacy admits. 78% of the surveyed students support the elimination of preference for legacies in admissions. The survey results also shed light on the flawed admissions process of AAA College. Only one conclusion is tenable: admissions preferences for legacies should be eliminated. The

survey results show that in every way, legacy admissions reduce diversity and equitable education opportunities, which goes against the priorities of AAA College in recruiting a diverse student body.

Major findings from the student survey indicate drastic income differences between general and legacy admits, indicating a huge economic gap. In terms of race and ethnicity, legacy admits are 89% percent white, which is significantly higher than 56% of general admits. For a college desiring greater diversity,

there seems to be lack of consideration for socioeconomic and racial equity. 78% of the students who answered the survey indicated that it is time for AAA College to eliminate preference for legacy in admissions.

It is disheartening to recognize the reality that AAA College hasn't made much effort to recruit a more diverse student body. It is long past time for the college to take immediate steps in ensuring a fairer, brighter future for students of all socioeconomic and racial status.