



2022 Wisr Virtual Communities Enrollment Yield Report

Measuring the impact of peer-to-peer
connections and virtual community on yield

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Overview

About Wisr Virtual Communities (Wisr)

Wisr is a digital platform that allows colleges and universities to create private, university-branded networks for their prospective and admitted students. This type of virtual engagement space is a critical tool in recruiting Gen Z students, who have a desire for personal connection and authentic information about their future academic home.

Wisr makes it easy for students to “find their fit” by allowing them to join general and niche communities, explore relevant discussion threads, and connect with their peers, including student ambassadors. Engagement with Wisr is also a top predictor of yield among partners.

Finally, through a powerful combination of user analytics, automated emails, and EAB-led training, enrollment leaders can leverage Wisr to maximize staff efficiency and scale student communication throughout the recruitment cycle.

About Enroll360

Enroll360 is EAB’s next-generation recruitment ecosystem, designed to deliver marketing campaigns that are responsive, personalized, and precisely timed. Through a tailored partnership of best-in-class marketing and enrollment solutions, our goal is to facilitate as many right-fit matches as possible between prospective students and your school.

About This Report

Each year, EAB publishes a Wisr Yield Report that aims to shed light on how Wisr Virtual Communities drive impact at our partner colleges and universities. We work with over 80 schools across the country, including a mix of public, private, and selective institutions. This report examines a subset of those partners.

Among other key findings, we learned:

- ▶ A student who joins Wisr is 3.5x more likely to deposit than a student who does not join Wisr.
- ▶ Passive engagement, such as viewing or reacting to user-generated content in Wisr, is an indicator of intent to deposit.
- ▶ Students who deposit connect with fellow admitted students at a higher rate than students who do not deposit.

Introduction

Gen Z has changed the college search process, thus challenging colleges and universities to adapt their recruitment strategy.

Prospective students have new standards and expectations when it comes to finding their college fit. They:

- Rely heavily on self-service tools to access information on demand.
- Place high importance on guidance from peers and family.
- Desire a sense of belonging and personal connection before stepping foot on campus.

Simultaneously, the higher education space has experienced foundational shifts that continue to make it challenging for institutions to engage and enroll students.



For more insights on Gen Z, download our recent white paper: **"Gen Z's Evolving Enrollment Journey."**

[GET THE WHITE PAPER →](#)



The gap between high school graduation and college enrollment is widening as Gen Z grapples with skepticism toward the value of a college education and concerns around cost.

-4.6% Decrease in College Enrollment Rate from 2010 to 2020¹



Competition for students has continued to grow as prospects are considering a wider set of institutions at every stage of the funnel.

7 Average number of applications submitted per student in 2021²



Staffing issues across enrollment offices have presented new recruitment challenges that will have a lasting effect.

35% of higher ed employees say they are likely or very likely to look for a new job in the next year³

As student expectations evolve, as competition increases, and as staffing shortages linger, it is critically important for enrollment leaders to adopt student-savvy and scalable practices to meet the needs of today's students, better predict yield, and mitigate melt.

Although enrolling the class of 2026 presented challenges, innovative enrollment leaders embraced the accelerated adoption of technology brought on by the pandemic and implemented digital strategies like Wisr to stand out amongst the competition and maximize staff efficiency.

1. EAB Analysis of American Community Survey Data, McKinsey and Co. (2021), "COVID-19 and education: The lingering effects of unfinished learning."

2. 2022 National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Report.

3. CUPA-HR Higher Education Employee Retention Survey, May 2022.

Methodology

In July 2022, EAB compiled data from sixteen partnering colleges and universities to evaluate the impact that Wisr Virtual Communities had on student yield. Participating institutions provided students' deposit status and dates that were matched with Wisr application behavioral data.

The study includes a broad array of institutional types—public and private; large, medium, and small; urban and rural—with historical yield rates (IPEDS 2020) ranging from 8% to 62%. The institutions cited collectively accepted more than 154,758 incoming first-year students.

Reference Figure:
Participating University Yield Data

Partner School	Type	Location	Size	2020* IPEDS Yield Rate
Partner School 1	Private, 4-year	Midwest	Small	10%
Partner School 2	Private, 4-year	South	Small	11%
Partner School 3	Private, 4-year	Northeast	Small	19%
Partner School 4	Private, 4-year	South	Small	11%
Partner School 5	Private, 4-year	Midwest	Small	19%
Partner School 6	Private, 4-year	Northeast	Medium	8%
Partner School 7	Public, 4-year	West	Medium	11%
Partner School 8	Public, 4-year	Northeast	Large	20%
Partner School 9	Private, 4-year	South	Small	15%
Partner School 10	Private, 4-year	Midwest	Small	23%
Partner School 11	Public, 4-year	Northeast	Medium	15%
Partner School 12	Private, 4-year	Midwest	Small	18%
Partner School 13	Private, 4-year	South	Medium	40%
Partner School 14	Public, 4-year	West	Large	19%
Partner School 15	Private, 4-year	Northeast	Medium	8%
Partner School 16	Private, 4-year	Northeast	Medium	62%

* Last recorded IPEDS Yield Data

2022 Wisr Yield Results

1.

Students Who Join Wisr Are More Likely to Deposit

Consistent with historical findings, our 2022 analysis supports the fact that students who join Wisr are more likely to deposit.

3.5x

Students who joined Wisr before depositing were 3.5x more likely to deposit than students who did not join Wisr

When taking a deeper look at the impact that Wisr had on underserved communities and their propensity to yield, data supports the finding that students of color who join Wisr are more likely to deposit than students of color who do not join Wisr.

Among partners who provided data specific to students of color, these were the average yield rates¹:

46%

Average Wisr yield rate for students of color who joined Wisr before depositing

11%

Average non-Wisr yield rate for students of color

“

The most predictive action a student can take to enroll is to join Wisr.”

Evan Moore,

Senior Associate Director
of Marketing of Communications
at Colorado State University



1. Students of color are defined as any student who did not identify as White, other, or elected not to respond.



For partners that provided data specific to Black/African American admitted students:

- **43%** Average Wisr yield rate for students who joined Wisr before depositing
- **10%** Average non-Wisr yield rate



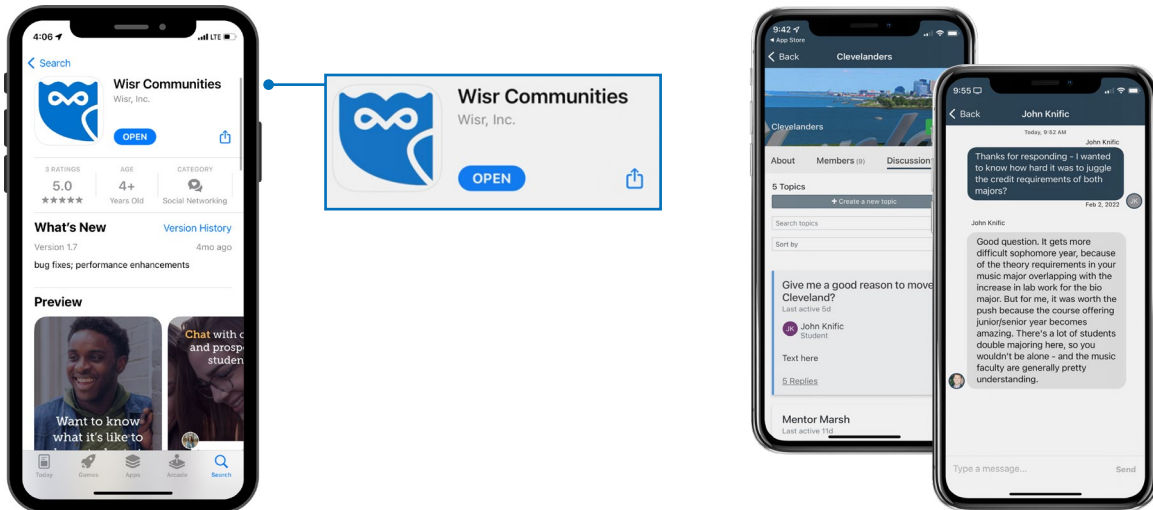
For partners that provided data specific to Hispanic admitted students:

- **33%** Average Wisr yield rate for students who joined Wisr before depositing
- **12%** Average non-Wisr yield rate



Wisr has a meaningful impact on reaching and engaging students of color, in particular students who identify as Black/African American.

Another strong indicator of likelihood to deposit is related to accessing Wisr via the Wisr Communities iOS mobile app. Since its release in February 2022, EAB has consistently recorded higher engagement and increased deposit rates among students who have the mobile app compared to non-app users.



168%

more chats compared to non-app users

26%

more discussion topic creation compared to non-app users

19.5%

greater deposit rate compared to non-app users

Of the sixteen schools that shared their 2022 yield data, all of them saw significantly higher yield rates for Wisr users compared to non-Wisr users, reporting 37%–96% yield rates.

Partner School	Type	Location	Size	2020* IPEDS Yield Rate	2022 Yield Rate from University Data	2022 Wisr Cohort Yield Rate	2022 Non-Wisr Cohort Yield Rate	Multiplier**
Partner School 1	Private, 4-year	Midwest	Small	10%	12%	83%	7%	11.29
Partner School 2	Private, 4-year	South	Small	11%	13%	92%	9%	10.14
Partner School 3	Private, 4-year	Northeast	Small	19%	14%	61%	6%	9.42
Partner School 4	Private, 4-year	South	Small	11%	11%	79%	9%	9.08
Partner School 5	Private, 4-year	Midwest	Small	19%	16%	95%	14%	6.98
Partner School 6	Private, 4-year	Northeast	Medium	8%	10%	59%	9%	6.77
Partner School 7	Public, 4-year	West	Medium	11%	12%	77%	12%	6.59
Partner School 8	Public, 4-year	Northeast	Large	20%	15%	96%	15%	6.20
Partner School 9	Private, 4-year	South	Small	15%	15%	86%	16%	5.28
Partner School 10	Private, 4-year	Midwest	Small	23%	17%	96%	20%	4.89
Partner School 11	Public, 4-year	Northeast	Medium	15%	16%	60%	13%	4.55
Partner School 12	Private, 4-year	Midwest	Small	18%	15%	69%	16%	4.44
Partner School 13	Private, 4-year	South	Medium	40%	35%	96%	25%	3.89
Partner School 14	Public, 4-year	West	Large	19%	20%	69%	18%	3.83
Partner School 15	Private, 4-year	Northeast	Medium	8%	10%	37%	10%	3.81
Partner School 16	Private, 4-year	Northeast	Medium	62%	40%	80%	31%	2.56

* Last recorded IPEDS Yield Data
 **Multiplier=Wisr Yield/Non-Wisr Yield



Takeaways:

- Wisr is an impactful tool to drive deposits and reduce melt.
- Students who download and engage in the mobile app are more likely to deposit.
- Joining Wisr is an impactful indicator of a student’s intent to deposit. Students who join Wisr before depositing tend to be an institution’s “maybes,” who still require additional outreach and support to make their decision.
- Students who join Wisr after depositing tend to be an institution’s “community seekers,” looking to build community once they have deposited.



Actions:

- Partner schools should regularly promote Wisr to admitted students who have not yet joined. In addition to email invitations, schools should promote their Wisr site across marketing channels, including their .edu, social media accounts, and print materials.
- Schools should also conduct proactive outreach to students who have joined Wisr to ensure they are engaged in the community. This will mitigate the risk of students feeling “disconnected” from your institution, even after making their deposit decision.

2.

There Is a Correlation Between Passive Engagement and Intent to Deposit

Admitted students can engage with Wisr in a multitude of ways. Consistent with historical findings, data supports the fact that the more engaged a student is in Wisr, the more likely they are to deposit.

In 2022, EAB took a closer look into Wisr user engagement—both active and passive—to understand trends in different types of activities a student engages in and the corresponding likelihood to yield.

- Examples of “Active” Engagement: Chats Initiated, Chats Sent, Discussion Post Replies, and Discussion Topic Created
- Examples of “Passive” Engagement: Chats Read, Communities Joined, and Discussion Topics Viewed

Overall, Wisr site engagement is consistent with the 1-9-90 concept where about 1% of users will generate new content, about 9% of users will engage with existing content, and approximately 90% of users will silently view, but not actively respond.¹



Wisr students who deposited were **2.9x** more engaged than Wisr students who did not deposit.

Example of Wisr View Count Compared to Reply Count for Various Communities

topic_name	community	view_count	reaction_count	reply_count	activity_count_in_range	community_total_in_range
Roommate	Housing Hub: Halls, Roommates, and Dining	2886	0	370	3256	14808
Welcome Weekend!	Welcome to BearU	2325	0	240	2565	13501
Looking for friends	Introduce Yourself	1536	0	160	1696	14808
Hike anyone?	Life outside the classroom	1554	0	37	1591	14808
Transfer group chat	Transfer Bears	1164	0	36	1200	13501

Rows 1-5 of 1191

12%

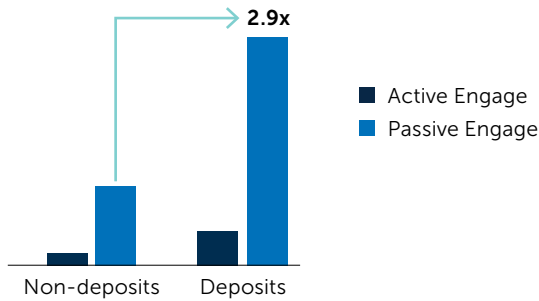
of overall engagement on Wisr is “active,” which includes proactive discussion creation and outreach

88%

of overall engagement on Wisr is “passive,” which includes consuming discussions and chats

Source: Forbes, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2017/12/12/the-1990-model-a-new-approach-to-b2b-influencer-marketing/?sh=1a9ba1781431>

When looking at passive versus active engagement by deposit status, we saw that deposited students engage in passive activities at a much higher frequency than non-deposits.



Regardless of deposit status, students in Wisr engage in passive activities the most frequently.



Takeaways:

- Passive engagement is a strong indicator of intent to deposit.



Actions:

- Partner schools should monitor passive engagement and continue to push discussion topics and build content for students to view, etc.
- Partner schools should also maintain healthy content threads driven by their student ambassadors, campus partners, and admissions staff to capture admitted students' attention and make positive impressions that drive yield.

The screenshot displays the Bear University Wisr interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the university logo and search options. Below this, a 'Communities' section lists several groups: 'Common Interests: Outdoor Adventure and Travel' (941 members), 'International Students' (135 members), and 'Introduce yourself- Welcome to the new school'. A 'Hiking' post is visible, mentioning participation in social activities. A detailed event post for 'Feel Good Friday' is highlighted, featuring a calendar icon, the event title, a description of the event's purpose (promoting mental health and social connectedness), the date and time (Friday, April 5th, 2:00PM - 3:00PM ET), and the location (Bear field).

3.

Students Who Deposit Connect with Fellow Admitted Students at a Higher Rate than Students Who Do Not Deposit

Wisr is a secure place for prospective and admitted students to join identity/interest-based communities, engage in discussions with current and future students, and stay up to date on campus events. One of the most impactful features of Wisr is the ability for admitted students to make 1x1 connections with other admitted students, current students, and staff.

When researching the impact that connections had on deposits, our data showed that admitted students who made at least one connection or engaged in at least one chat with another Wisr user had a higher likelihood to deposit. In particular, deposited students were **2.7x** more likely to have made at least one connection with another Wisr user compared to non-deposits.

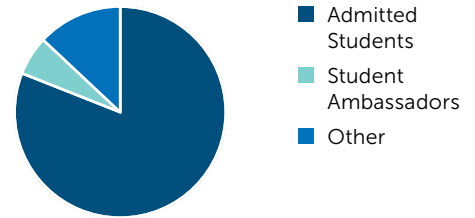
In 2022, deposited students made more connections per user compared to non-deposited students. In particular, students who deposited (either before or after joining Wisr) were more likely to connect with other admitted students. While admitted students did connect with student ambassadors, they were more likely to connect with future classmates:

- **81%** of deposited students' connections were with other admitted students.
- **72%** of non-deposited students' connections were with other admitted students.

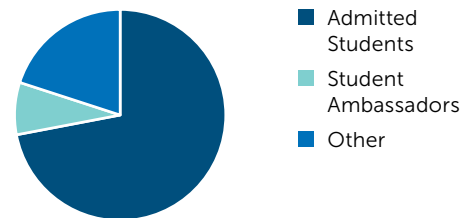
2.7x

Deposited students were 2.7x more likely to have made at least one connection with another Wisr user compared to non-deposits.

Deposited Students



Non-deposited Students



Takeaways:

- Depositing students have a greater interest in using the 1X1 connection feature in Wisr to connect with fellow admitted students in comparison to student ambassadors or staff. This solidifies the importance of creating a safe and secure space for your admitted class to engage with one another.



Actions:

- Schools should prioritize creating spaces for admitted students to develop connections based on interests, identity, and academic plans. Facilitating virtual connections in a safe and secure manner gives all students the opportunity to cultivate a sense of belonging and increase the possibility that they will deposit.
- Partner schools should monitor their Wisr data to understand connection trends and focus efforts on those students who have not yet made 1x1 connections.

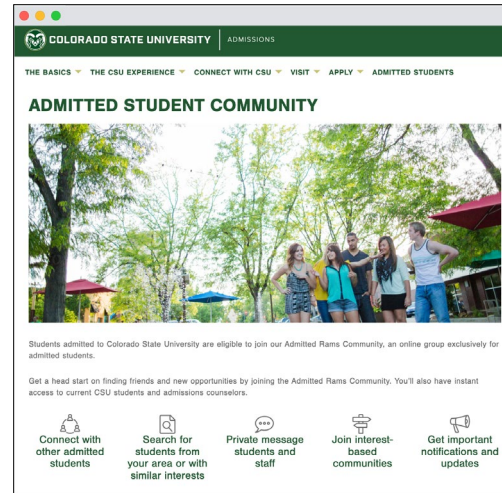
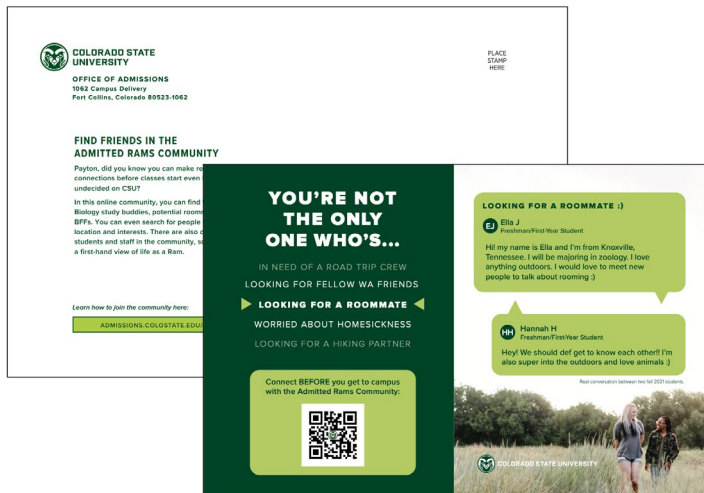
Case Study #1

How Colorado State University Uses Wisr to Foster Peer-to-Peer Connections and Reach Key Audiences

Colorado State University (CSU) is large public four-year institution located in Fort Collins, Colorado

CSU partnered with EAB's Wisr Virtual Communities to create the "Admitted Rams Community" because they needed an enrollment solution to help increase yield and support diversity and access. They were in search of a solution that would help admitted students find their academic home and build community among peers. They were also looking to better engage specific cohorts of students.

CSU leveraged the Admitted Rams Community powered by Wisr (CSU ARC) to fill gaps that traditional marketing solutions could not support. CSU's ARC provided a safe and secure place for students to come together in different ways and connect with one another. It also provided a way for students to get answers to important college-related questions. CSU promoted ARC early and often in their enrollment cycle and leaned into the opportunity to help students connect on interests and identity and build a sense of belonging.



Impact:

5,100+

admitted students joined CSU's ARC

45%

of admitted students who joined CSU's ARC deposited

#1

Wisr was CSU's number one predictor of yield

In addition to being the strongest predictor of yield, Wisr also allowed CSU to better connect with non-White and out-of-state students. These student groups represented a greater percentage of the Admitted Rams Community compared to the overall student body.



Wisr Provided CSU the Opportunity to Engage Students Who Were Outside of Their Local Geography

- **60%** of the admitted students who joined CSU's ARC were from out of state, which is nearly 2x their currently enrolled out-of-state population of 31%.

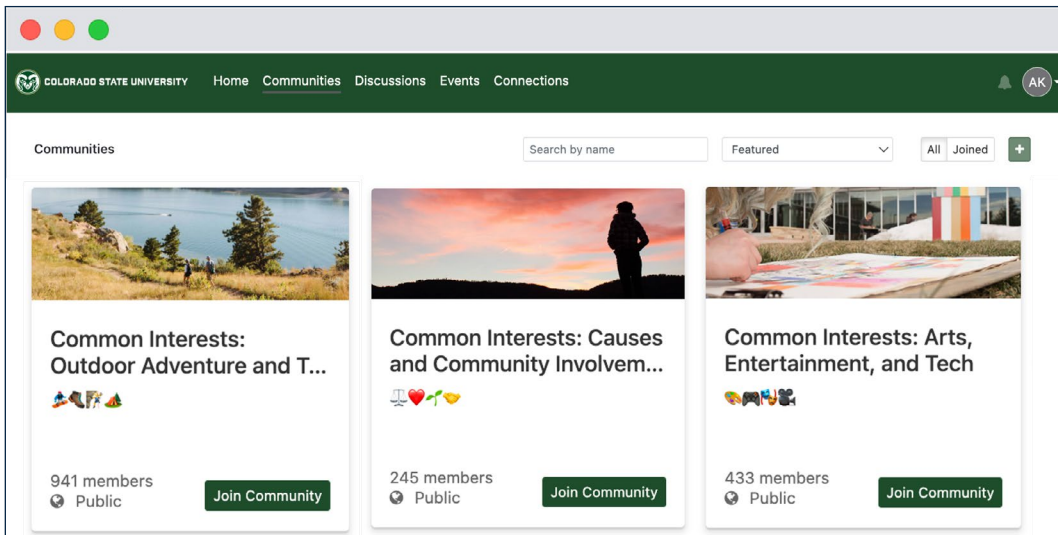


Wisr Also Provided CSU the Opportunity to Increase Engagement Among a More Diverse Pool of Students

- **31%** of admitted students who joined CSU's ARC were non-White, which is 3% greater than their traditional rate of deposited students who identify as non-White.

Beyond the Numbers

In addition to strong engagement and yield outcomes, students who connected within the Admitted Rams Community formed deep friendships and were able to show up to the first day of school feeling connected to CSU.



Case Study #2

How One School's Peer-to-Peer Network Improved Yield Results for Admitted Students

A small private four-year institution located in Florida

This school partnered with EAB's Wisr Virtual Communities to create an "Admitted Students Network." They wanted to give students a place to learn more about their school and engage with their peers - both student ambassador and fellow admitted students.

This partner empowered their student ambassador team to proactively connect with admitted students through 1x1 outreach. Each week, their student ambassadors had dedicated time to engage in discussion posts aligned to their institution's messaging and communication plan. Much of this work was focused in the summer months as a melt mitigation strategy.

Admitted Students Who Joined the Admitted Students Network Yielded at Higher Rates than Students Who Did Not

- **92%** of admitted students who joined the Admitted Students Network deposited.
- **10x** higher yield rate for admitted students who joined the Admitted Students Network compared to students who did not.

The Admitted Students Network Helped to Drive Deposits

- **27%** of admitted students joined the Admitted Students Network before depositing.
- When taking a closer look at this cohort and possible impact Wisr had on driving deposits, admitted students who joined the Admitted Students Network before depositing were **8.3x** more likely to yield compared to those who did not join.

Impact:

10x

higher yield rate for admitted students who joined the Admitted Students Network compared to students who did not.

12x

higher yield rate for Black/African American students who joined the Admitted Students Network compared to students who did not.

OUTCOME: Joining a virtual community had a positive impact on an admitted student's likelihood to deposit.

The Admitted Students Network Supported Traditionally Underserved Students

- There was a **73%** yield rate of Black/African American students who joined the Admitted Students Network vs. a 6% yield rate for admitted students who identified as Black/African American who did not join the Admitted Students Network.


Even Passive Engagement Within the Admitted Students Network Was a Strong Predictor of Yield

- Data and analytics provided by the Wisr Admin Dashboard provided Admission team members with information about their incoming class. They noticed that regardless of deposit status, incoming students were more likely to be passive engagers (viewing or reacting to shared content) than active engagers (creating posts, replying to posts, making connections) within the Admitted Students Network.
 - › On average, for every 1 active engagement a user initiated, they took 11 passive engagement actions.
 - › Students who joined the Admitted Students Network before depositing were more engaged after they made their deposit.
 - * **4.5x** more passive engagement after depositing
 - * **2.7x** more active engagement after depositing



Compared to users who signed up after they deposited, students who joined Wisr before depositing tended to be the most engaged overall.

The Admitted Students Network




Powered by 

E-mail

Password

[Sign in with email](#)

Join your Class of 2026 peers and current Bear University students

 Explore Bear University	 Connect with other students	 Keep up to date
Talk to second, third, and fourth year students and ask the questions most important to you. Majoring in everything from religion to biochemistry, peer mentors want to help you explore the possibilities at Bear University.	Learn more about the Class of 2026! Start to make friendships before orientation weekend, find other students in your city, potential roommates, and get excited about starting at Bear University.	Stay on top of upcoming activities, scholarship applications, and decision deadlines with our weekly calendar. Talk with our friendly staff about FAFSA requirements, campus visits, and orientation.

Conclusions

The past few years have brought foundational shifts in higher education that have made it considerably more challenging for schools to engage and enroll students. In response, many institutions have embraced new digital platforms to meet the elevated standards and expectations of Gen Z. These digital tools have opened alternative channels of communication to prospective and admitted students while also making enrollment teams more effective and efficient.

For many institutions, Wisr was a critical investment during the global pandemic—a time of uncertainty regarding in-person connectedness and recruitment activities. As institutions return to pre-pandemic practices, the use of Wisr Virtual Communities continues to be a benefit to students who have a desire for personal connection and authentic information. Wisr also allows institutions to create and share niche content that supports student engagement at scale.

Similar to historical findings, this year's analysis revealed strong and direct correlations between Wisr adoption and an admitted student's propensity to yield. EAB findings reveal that students who joined Wisr before depositing were 3.5x more likely to yield in comparison to students who did not join Wisr. More specifically, Wisr had a meaningful impact on reaching and engaging students of color, with our analysis revealing that students of color who joined Wisr before depositing yielded at 4.2x higher rates than students of color who did not join Wisr.

Engagement within Wisr is also a top predictor of yield among our partners. More specifically, we found that deposited students were more likely to take part in passive engagement vs. active engagement within the Wisr platform (11:1). Importantly, Wisr gives institutions the opportunity to monitor that passive engagement in order to better predict yield. These data insights are also used by our partners to inform a focused content strategy that captures students' attention and makes a positive impression to drive yield.

Peer connections within Wisr are also a strong indicator of yield. We found that deposited students made more connections per user and were more likely to connect with other admitted students when compared to non-deposited students. These findings support the idea that students who join Wisr are looking to connect with other admitted students and build community. Given the predictive power of connections, Wisr allows our partners to monitor connection data, which helps them identify students who may not be developing an affinity to their institution.

EAB's 2022 Wisr Yield Study solidifies the importance of creating a safe and secure space for your admitted students to engage with one another. Schools that provide this kind of space not only help their admitted students feel welcome on campus but they also will be able to maximize staff efficiency, stand out among their competition, and yield more students.

- ▶ If you would like to learn more about the Wisr platform, please [contact us](#) to speak with an enrollment expert.
- ▶ Subscribe to our [Enrollment Blog](#) for the latest insights.

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Transfer Marketing

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