

 THE RESEARCH AGENDA

Optimizing Away Summer Melt: How Search Engine Optimization May Reduce Summer Melt at Highly Ranked U.S. Institutions of Higher Education

By Z.W. (Zach) Taylor

This study sought to understand the relationship between undergraduate yield and an institution's internet presence. Data were collected from 2018 *U.S. News & World Report* national university rankings, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Database (IPEDS), and summer 2018 (June–August) SEMrush data, a web metrics database housing institutional (.edu) search and traffic information. Results demonstrate, when controlling for institutional characteristics, organic keywords/search-engine optimization ($p < 0.001$) predicts undergraduate yield as well as overall number of undergraduate applications ($p < 0.001$) and better than undergraduate admission rate ($p < 0.05$). Implications for research and practice are addressed, in addition to implications for theory regarding online academic capitalism and summer melt.

The U.S Department of Education defines summer melt as a phenomenon in higher education where postsecondary students “leave high school with plans to attend college and never arrive at any college campus that fall” (O'Connor 2018, para. 3). Similarly, Harvard University defines summer melt as “the surprisingly common scenario in which high-school graduates apply, are accepted, and say they plan to enroll in college—but don’t”

(Harvard University 2018, para. 2). Other researchers have elaborated on Harvard's definition, asserting summer melt involves students who “have taken the SATs, been accepted to a college of their choice, applied for and received financial aid” and still do not attend any college in the fall (Vedantam 2018). Recently, education researchers have examined this phenomenon with various reports claiming 8–40 percent of low-income

students (Castleman and Page 2014) and 33 percent of all prospective postsecondary students (O'Connor 2018) experience summer melt, meaning the student has applied and been admitted, as well as applied for and been awarded aid, but these students do not enroll in any institution in the fall.

Subsequently, research has explored how to reduce summer melt, including providing counseling to students over the summer (Castleman, Arnold, and Wartman 2012; Castleman, Page, and Schooley 2014) and text messaging students over the summer (Castleman and Page 2014) to increase these students' likelihood of attending college in the fall. In a randomized controlled trial, Georgia State University recently used a chatbot named Pounce to reduce summer melt. Their findings indicated a 12.1 percent summer melt rate among students who had access to the chatbot, whereas there was a 15.4 percent summer melt rate among students in the control group (Supiano 2018). Although their results were focused on the summer melt of Georgia State students specifically, Georgia State's use of the chatbot has influenced many other institutions across the country to adopt similar technologies, including West Texas A&M University, Arizona State University, and the University of Memphis (Cortez 2018). However, researchers of summer melt have not investigated perhaps the most powerful communication tool available to postsecondary institutions: The internet and an institutional (.edu) website.

Since the 2002 Pew internet & American Life Project found 74 percent of college students used the internet for four or more hours (Jones 2002), Internet use among college students has become ubiquitous. According to the most recent national data, 98 percent of college-aged students (ages 18–29) use the internet on a regular basis (Pew Research Center 2018). During the college exploration process, the internet has been found to be the most popular source of college information for prospective students (Areces, *et al.* 2016; Burdett 2013; Daun-Barnett and Das 2013; Ford 2011; Goff, Patino, and Jackson 2004; Simões and Soares 2010).

As internet technologies have advanced, powerful internet analysis tools have emerged which can mea-

sure a specific website's internet size, popularity, and cost through meta-analysis of the Google's Analytics database (SEMrush 2018). In short, tools such as SEMrush can measure how large and how popular an institutional website is (Alsmadi and Taylor 2018, 2019), additionally measuring how much an institution invests in online advertising and search results placement. With this in mind, this study sought to learn how admission yield—as a proxy for summer melt—is related to institutional website characteristics such as size, popularity, and cost to better understand the role of institutional websites in the phenomenon known as summer melt.

Research Question

This study engages with data from multiple sources employs multiple regression analyses to answer one research question related to summer melt: *After controlling for institutional variables, do institutional website characteristics influence admission yield and summer melt?*

By answering this question, researchers and practitioners will better understand how institutional websites may influence summer melt and how institutional websites can be improved to reduce summer melt and increase postsecondary degree attainment in the United States.

Method

Sample

The research team decided to examine highly-ranked U.S. institutions, as extant research has demonstrated that institutions who move up in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings receive more applications the next year (Luca and Smith 2013) and admissions outcomes (such as admission rate and yield) are responsive to movements in the rankings (Bowman and Bastedo 2009; Meredith 2004). The decision was made to examine highly-ranked U.S. institutions, specifically institutions ranked in the top 100 of the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, as these institutions are often wealthier, publish larger institutional websites by the number of individual webpages on the website, and could leverage their internet prowess to recruit students (Alsmadi and

Taylor 2018, 2019; Taylor, *et al.* 2018), possibly reducing summer melt. As a result, this study considered *U.S. News* national ranking an influential factor in a student's choice to apply to certain institution, as well as representative of institutions with a rich volume of data that may influence student choice and summer melt, such as first-year retention rate, financial resources, six-year graduation rate, and full-time faculty percentage.

Data Sources

The research team gathered data from three sources: 2018 *U.S. News & World Report* national university rankings, 2017–2018 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data, and SEMrush data between May 2017 and August 2017, the months representing the summer melt period.

Regression Model

To explore relationships between summer melt and institutional characteristics, I needed to calculate the approximate summer melt of each institution. From the IPEDS database, I located undergraduate application variables including total number of undergraduate applications, undergraduate admission rate, and undergraduate students enrolled. These variables were used to calculate institutional admission yield by dividing an institution's undergraduate applications by the number of enrolled undergraduate students that year. As a result, the regression model's outcome (y) variable is this calculation of summer melt, with all other IPEDS, SEMrush, and *U.S. News* variables serving as predictor (x) variables.

Variables

In the regression model, the research team included four categories of institutional variables: undergraduate application variables (IPEDS), institutional characteristics (IPEDS and *U.S. News*), *U.S. News* national university ranking metrics, and institutional website characteristics (SEMrush). Institutional characteristics included sector (public and private), overall *U.S. News* national university ranking, and endowment size.

U.S. News national university metrics included overall score, predicted graduation rate, over/under perfor-

mance, alumni giving rank, alumni giving rate, graduate retention rate, six-year graduation rate, first-year retention rate, peer assessment score, faculty resources rank, full-time faculty percentage, faculty percentage with Ph.D. or terminal degree, student selectivity rank, first-year undergraduates in the top 10 percent of their high school class, first-year undergraduates in the top 25 percent of their high school class, and financial resources rank.

Institutional website characteristics measured by SEMrush included organic keywords (in keywords), web traffic (in website hits or visits), advertising cost (in dollars per month), website volume (in webpages), backlink volume (in hyperlinks), and adword volume (in adwords). As these internet variables may be new to some readers and researchers, a detailed description of each variable is included below:

- **Organic Keywords:** Organic keywords are the number of unique keywords or search terms bringing internet users to an institutional website per month (*i.e.* performing a Google search for “Harvard economics” and clicking on www.economics.harvard.edu in the search results). Organic keywords measure both internet popularity and the degree of search engine optimization, as websites that are better search engine optimized experience higher levels of organic keywords resulting in website visits (Alsmadi and Taylor 2018, 2019; SEMrush 2018; Taylor, *et al.* 2018; WordStream 2018).
- **Web Traffic:** Web traffic is the average number of users visiting an institutional website per month. Web traffic is a measure of internet popularity (Alsmadi and Taylor 2018, 2019; SEMrush 2018; Taylor, *et al.* 2018).
- **Advertising Cost:** Advertising cost is the total price paid by institutions to link organic keywords to internet search results placement each month. Website administrators can purchase certain search terms (*i.e.* online M.B.A.) and ensure their website is featured higher on the list of search results than websites who did not purchase the search term across multiple search engine platforms, such as Google or Bing. Advertising cost is a measure of internet investment

(Alsmadi and Taylor 2018, 2019; SEMrush 2018; Taylor, *et al.* 2018).

- **Website Volume:** Website volume is the number of unique webpages linked to an institution's website (*i.e.* www.harvard.edu/faculty linked on www.harvard.edu). Website volume is a measure of internet size (Alsmadi and Taylor 2018, 2019; SEMrush 2018; Taylor, *et al.* 2018).
- **Backlink Volume:** Backlink volume is the number of institutional hyperlinks published on websites outside of the institutional domain (*i.e.* www.harvard.edu published on usnews.com/best-colleges). Backlink volume is a measure of internet popularity (Alsmadi and Taylor 2018, 2019; SEMrush 2018; Taylor, *et al.* 2018).
- **Adword Volume:** Adword volume is the number of adwords purchased by the institution each month. Unlike organic keywords, adwords are specific search terms purchased by the institution which results in a paid advertisement published alongside a list of internet search results. Also, unlike organic keywords and advertising cost, websites only pay for adwords if the internet user clicks on the advertisement (Alsmadi and Taylor 2018, 2019; Google, LLC 2020; SEMrush 2018; Taylor, *et al.* 2018).

Findings

Table 1 (on page 37) displays descriptive statistics of website characteristics by institutional sector (public and private) and ranking quartile per 2018 *U.S. News & World Report* national university rankings.

Data demonstrate public institutions are more internet visible and popular by organic keywords, web traffic, and website volume, whereas private institutions have higher backlink volumes and purchase more adwords. In turn, 4th quartile institutions are more internet visible, Internet popular, and spend more on paid advertising techniques than lower ranked peers across all quartiles and website metrics.

Table 2 (on page 38) displays results of the regression analyses. Controlling for total undergraduate applications, undergraduate admission rate, institutional sector, *U.S. News & World Report* ranking, endowment, and

all *U.S. News* ranking metrics, this study finds several relationships between admission yield and other variables.

Among application variables, relationships exist between yield and total undergraduate applications ($p=0.002$) and undergraduate admission rate ($p=0.035$). This study found no statistically significant relationship between admission yield and sector, *U.S. News* national university ranking, or institutional endowment. Considering individual *U.S. News* national university ranking metrics, this study discovered relationships between *U.S. News* overall score ($p=0.048$), predicted graduation rate ($p=0.047$), peer assessment score ($p=0.050$), and faculty percentage with Ph.D. or a terminal degree ($p=0.021$).

Answering the Research Question

Answering this study's primary research question, organic keywords ($p=0.006$) and adword volume ($p=0.018$) predicted admission yield nearly as well as total undergraduate applications ($p=0.002$). With a t value of 2.83, this study demonstrates highly-ranked institutions with more organic keywords experienced a higher rate of undergraduate admission yield. Inversely, with a t value of -2.42, this study demonstrates highly-ranked institutions who purchased more adwords (specific search terms purchased by the institution) experienced lower rates of undergraduate admission yield.

Discussion and Conclusion

As the first study of its kind to analyze how search engine optimization could be related to the phenomenon of summer melt and admission yield, this study yields several important findings for strategic enrollment management, institutional marketing and communication, and competition within the higher education marketplace.

Logically, undergraduate admission rate was found to be related to admission yield, as exclusive institutions are highly desired: When students are offered admission to exclusive institutions, students often seize the opportunity and enroll, resulting in a higher admission yield (Bowman and Bastedo 2009; Meredith 2004). However, for elite institutions of higher education such as Harvard, summer melt may be more of an indicator of admission yield and a competitive measure of institutional

TABLE 1 ► Descriptive Statistics of Institutional website Characteristics by Sector and Ranking Quartile* (n=100)

Institution Type	Organic Keywords	Web Traffic	Advertising Cost	Website Volume	Backlink Volume	Adword Volume
Public (n=45)						
Mean	8,972,796	15,015,000	9,501,975	1,166,524	7,242,822	16,111
SD	7,116,273	11,764,318	7,456,711	1,368,024	5,932,122	47,332
High	40,000,000	63,300,000	33,000,000	9,062,392	26,000,000	320,098
Low	61,660	933,331	561,111	817	315,000	6
Private (n=55)						
Mean	6,933,621	10,846,833	6,467,273	968,031	7,962,491	21,619
SD	7,558,811	11,397,870	6,806,043	1,233,497	12,289,181	32,665
High	35,000,000	61,680,662	26,600,000	5,699,017	68,600,000	134,055
Low	62,707	767,500	388,889	831	137,000	24
4th Ranking Quartile						
Mean	12,378,667	20,587,001	11,566,667	1,807,384	14,936,000	29,660
SD	8,667,399	16,574,745	7,908,104	1,470,959	15,426,678	35,584
High	35,000,000	61,680,662	26,600,000	5,699,017	68,600,000	123,190
Low	3,433,338	5,266,871	2,244,644	468,775	2,500,000	350
3rd Ranking Quartile						
Mean	6,731,133	10,012,000	6,519,889	789,843	6,140,400	13,638
SD	5,525,656	8,268,602	5,907,624	677,396	5,662,537	16,961
High	21,600,000	27,500,000	22,500,000	2,967,892	16,800,000	67,860
Low	61,660	1,566,681	1,097,292	817	326,000	81
2nd Ranking Quartile						
Mean	8,838,600	15,091,033	9,751,111	1,224,398	6,540,360	22,506
SD	8,337,432	13,946,941	8,461,881	1,744,775	6,273,405	63,415
High	40,000,000	63,300,000	33,000,000	9,062,392	20,800,000	320,098
Low	650,893	767,500	561,111	66,233	137,000	6
1st Ranking Quartile						
Mean	3,456,600	5,200,000	3,493,889	407,788	2,937,800	10,757
SD	2,593,209	3,633,036	2,618,509	314,908	3,656,121	27,054
High	10,000,000	13,339,300	8,433,944	1,187,742	13,700,000	134,055
Low	62,707	88,337	388,889	831	264,000	44

Source: U.S. News & World Report (2018)

* Quartile Rankings

- 4th — Institutions ranked 1–25
- 3rd — Institutions ranked 26–50
- 2nd — Institutions ranked 51–75
- 1st — Institutions ranked 76–100

attractiveness. It is likely that many students who apply to highly-ranked *U.S. News* colleges and universities do not melt away in the summer: These students apply to multiple institutions and “shop” during the summer.

As a result, many undergraduate applications used to calculate admission yield in this study may represent the same student, applying to multiple institutions, and summer “shopping” rather than summer melting. How-

TABLE 2 ► Regression Analyses Predicting Undergraduate Admission Yield of the Top 100 Nationally-Ranked U.S. Institutions of Higher Education

Undergraduate Admission Yield	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t
Undergraduate Application Variables				
Total Undergraduate Applications	-0.0003023	0.0000934	-3.24	0.002 ^b
Undergraduate Admission Rate	-0.2597890	0.1209578	-2.15	0.035 ^a
Institutional Characteristics				
Public	2.6966530	3.5055900	0.77	0.444
U.S. News National University Ranking	0.0221142	0.0988738	0.22	0.824
Endowment	-6.04e-11	1.96e-10	-0.31	0.759
U.S. News National University Ranking Metrics				
Overall Score	0.9903274	0.4910625	2.02	0.048 ^a
Predicted Graduation Rate	1.9853130	0.9813006	2.02	0.047 ^a
Over/under Performance	2.3405400	1.2687000	1.84	0.069
Alumni Giving Rank	-0.0031846	0.0424160	-0.08	0.940
Alumni Giving Rate	0.1128357	0.2738023	0.41	0.682
Graduate Retention Rate	0.0275905	0.2195113	0.13	0.900
Six-Year Graduation Rate	-1.9009600	1.0967230	-1.73	0.087
First-Year Retention Rate	-1.5558810	0.8632192	-1.80	0.076
Peer Assessment Score	-8.0070810	4.0130550	-2.00	0.050 ^a
Faculty Resources Rank	0.0383369	0.0380009	1.01	0.316
Full-Time Faculty Percentage	0.0866972	0.1958291	0.44	0.659
Faculty Percentage With Ph.D. or Terminal	-0.4605861	0.1953351	-2.36	0.021 ^a
Student Selectivity Rank	0.1425656	0.0888811	1.60	0.113
First-Year Undergraduates in Top 10%	0.3807287	0.2123892	1.79	0.077
First-Year Undergraduates in Top 25%	-0.1176369	0.3500443	-0.34	0.738
Financial Resources Rank	0.0389113	0.0407406	0.96	0.343
Institutional website Characteristics				
Organic Keywords (in keywords)	1.93e-06	6.84e-07	2.83	0.006 ^b
Web Traffic (in hits)	-3.35e-07	3.28e-07	-1.02	0.310
Advertising Cost (in dollars)	2.33e-07	1.95e-07	1.19	0.237
Website Volume (in webpages)	-4.53e-06	3.57e-06	-1.27	0.208
Backlink Volume (in hyperlinks)	2.68e-07	1.90e-07	1.41	0.164
Adword Volume (in adwords)	-0.0001352	0.0000559	-2.42	0.018 ^a

Source: U.S. News & World Report (2018); SEMRush (2018); IPEDS (2017-2018)

^a 0.050

^b 0.010

^c 0.001

Notes

■ R²: 0.76

■ Adjusted R²: 0.67

ever, institutional website search engine optimization—measured by organic keywords—predicted admission yield nearly as well as application variables and better than every U.S. News national university ranking metric. As a result, search engine optimization could be viewed

as “lemonade,” or a technological tool for institutions to help “cool” summer melt and remain competitive in the higher education marketplace by increasing an institution’s admission yield.

Search engine optimization, however, may be expensive and such competitive tactics to improve admission yield could further stratify the U.S. higher education system, most notably among the highest-ranked institutions per *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. Institutions with the financial resources to search engine optimize their website may hold an unfair advantage over less-wealthy institutions looking to increase their yield and reduce summer melt. Interestingly, this study also found paid adword volume was inversely related to admission yield at a statistically significant degree ($p=0.018$). In this case, institutions of higher education may want to reroute funding away from paid adword techniques and toward the search engine optimization of their website in order to increase student engage-

ment with their website, perhaps reducing summer melt and increasing their admission yield.

Ultimately, given its limitations, this study should begin a discussion surrounding the roles paid internet advertising and website quality play in ensuring students admitted in the winter or spring actually enroll and attend classes in the fall. Future research should continue to examine student-level characteristics (see: Castleman and Page 2014, 2015) to better understand summer melt, paying especially close attention to minoritized, low-income students. Thus far, education research has explained how text messaging and summer college counseling may satiate summer melt, yet the search engine optimization could be the lemonade higher education needs.

AUTHOR NOTE

The author would like to thank Dr. Izzat Alsmadi from Texas A&M University-San Antonio for his guidance and mentorship.

References

- Alsmadi, I., and Z. W. Taylor. 2018. Examining university ranking metrics: Articulating issues of size and web dependency. In *ICCBD Proceedings of the 2018 International Conference on Computing and Big Data*, 73–77. Available at: <doi.org/10.1145/3277104.3277111>.
- . 2019. Does size matter? An evaluation of institutional internet ranking metrics. *Technology & Resources in Education*, 1–24. Available at: <doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3441943>.
- Areces, D., L. J. R. Muñiz, J. S. Álvarez, Y. de la Roca, and M. Cueli. 2016. Information sources used by high school students in the college degree choice. *Psicothema*. 28(3): 253–259. Available at: <doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2016.76>.
- Bowman, N. A., and M. N. Bastedo. 2009. Getting on the front page: Organizational reputation, status signals, and the impact of U.S. News and World Report on student decisions. *Research in Higher Education*. 50(5): 415–436. Available at: <doi.org/10.1007/s11162-009-9129-8>.
- Burdett, K. 2013. How students choose a college: Understanding the role of internet based resources in the college choice process (doctoral dissertation). University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Retrieved from: <digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsedaddiss/153/>.
- Castleman, B. L., K. Arnold, and K. L. Wartman. 2012. Stemming the tide of summer melt: An experimental study of the effects of post-high school summer intervention on low income students' college enrollment. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*. 5(1): 1–17. Available at: <doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2011.618214>.
- Castleman, B. L., and L. C. Page. 2014. A trickle or a torrent: Understanding the extent of summer “melt” among college-intending high school graduates. *Social Science Quarterly*. 95(1): 202–220. Available at: <doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12032>.
- . 2015. Summer nudging: Can personalized text messages and peer mentor outreach increase college going among low-income high school graduates? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*. 115: 144–160. Available at: <doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2014.12.008>.
- Castleman, B. L., L. C. Page, and K. Schooley. 2014. The forgotten summer: Does the offer of college counseling after high school mitigate summer melt among college-intending, low-income high school graduates? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. 33(2): 320–344. Available at: <doi.org/10.1002/pam.21743>.
- Cortez, M.B. 2018. Universities deploy chatbots to aid students in the admissions process and beyond. *EdTech*. March 9. Retrieved from: <edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2018/03/universities-deploy-chatbots-aid-students-admissions-process-and-beyond>.
- Daun-Barnett, N., and D. Das. 2013. Unlocking the potential of the internet to improve college choice: A comparative case study of college-access web tools.

- Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*. 23(1): 113–134. Available at: <doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2013.805708>.
- Ford, W. G. 2011. Evaluating the effectiveness of college web sites for prospective students. *Journal of College Admission*. 212: 26–31. Retrieved from: <eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ939063>.
- Goff, B., V. Patino, and G. Jackson. 2004. Preferred information sources of high school students for community colleges and universities. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. 28(10): 795–803. Available at: <doi.org/10.1080/10668920390276957>.
- Google, LLC. 2020. *Set a Budget That Works for You*. Mountain View, CA: Author. Retrieved from: <ads.google.com/home/pricing/>.
- Harvard University. 2018. *Strategic Data Project: Summer Melt*. Retrieved from: <sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/summer-melt>. Cambridge, MA: Center for Education Policy Research.
- Jones, S. 2002. *The Internet Goes to College*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center.
- Luca, M., and J. Smith. 2013. Salience in quality disclosure: Evidence from the U.S. News college rankings. *Journal of Economics & Marketing Strategy*. 22(1): 58–77. Available at: <doi.org/10.1111/jems.12003>.
- Meredith, M. 2004. Why do universities compete in the ratings game? An empirical analysis of the effects of the U.S. News and World Report college rankings. *Research in Higher Education*. 45(5): 443–461. Available at: <doi.org/10.1023/B:RIHE.0000032324.46716.f4>.
- National Center for Education Statistics. 2018. *IPEDS: Use the Data*. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from: <nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>.
- O'Connor, P. 2018. Summer melt: Why one third of college-bound students don't make it to campus in the fall. *Homeroom*. June 4. Retrieved from: <blog.ed.gov/2018/06/summer-melt-why-college-bound-students-dont-make-it-in-the-fall/>.
- Pew Research Center. 2018. *Internet/Broadband Fact Sheet*. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from: <pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/>.
- SEMrush. 2018. *Dashboard*. Retrieved from: <semrush.com/dashboard/>. Boston: Author.
- Simões, C., and A. M. Soares. 2010. Applying to higher education: Information sources and choice factors. *Studies in Higher Education*. 35(4): 371–389. Available at: <doi.org/10.1080/03075070903096490>.
- Supiano, B. 2018. You can help make sure freshman show up. Here's how. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. February 18. Retrieved from: <chronicle.com/article/You-Can-Help-Make-Sure/242567>.
- Taylor, Z. W., J. Childs, I. Bicak, and I. Alsmadi. 2019. Is bigger, better? Exploring U.S. News graduate education program rankings and internet characteristics. *Interchange: A Quarterly Review of Education*. 50: 205–219. Available at: <doi.org/10.1007/s10780-019-09366-0>.
- U.S. News & World Report. 2018. U.S. News & World Report announces the 2018 best colleges. Retrieved from: <usnews.com/best-colleges>. New York: Author.
- Vedantam, S. 2018. Summer melt: Why aren't students showing up for college? *NPR*. June 18. Retrieved from: <npr.org/2018/06/18/621023537/summer-melt-why-arent-students-showing-up-for-college>.
- WordStream. 2018. *Organic Keyword: What Is an Organic Keyword?* Retrieved from: <wordstream.com/organic-keyword>. Boston: Author.

About the Author



Z.W. (Zach) Taylor

Z.W. (Zach) Taylor is a Ph.D. candidate at The University of Texas at Austin, graduating in May 2020. His research interests include lin-

guistics in higher education, particularly pre-college information targeting first-generation college students and English-language learners. His work has been published by the *Community Col-*

lege Journal of Research and Practice, *Journal of College Student Development*, and *Higher Education Quarterly*, among others.