

ACCESS AND DIVERSITY IN PROVIDENCE COLLEGE'S ADMISSIONS: A RESEARCH INVESTIGATION

ABSTRACT:

This study takes an in-depth look at the admissions practices of Providence College utilizing a mixed-methodological research design to evaluate how PC can best adapt to the shifting admissions landscape that can no longer employ race-conscious practices. Quantitatively, we analyze anonymized admissions data from the class of 2027. Qualitatively, we conducted structured interviews with administrators from local high schools aiding in the preparation of high school students for the transition to post-graduate life. Our results highlight the assets and challenges of the admissions department as well as our data-driven recommendations to enhance accessibility and diversity without relying upon race-based criteria.

CONTRIBUTORS

Colby Brown, Madison Conley, Abigail Turano

Faculty Advisor

Dr. Brandon Martinez

DATA & METHODS

Our report examines the impact of eliminating race-conscious college admissions. It combines quantitative analysis of Providence College's 2027 class admissions data with qualitative insights from interviews with local high school administrators. Findings include strengths, challenges, and data-driven recommendations for Providence College over five years.

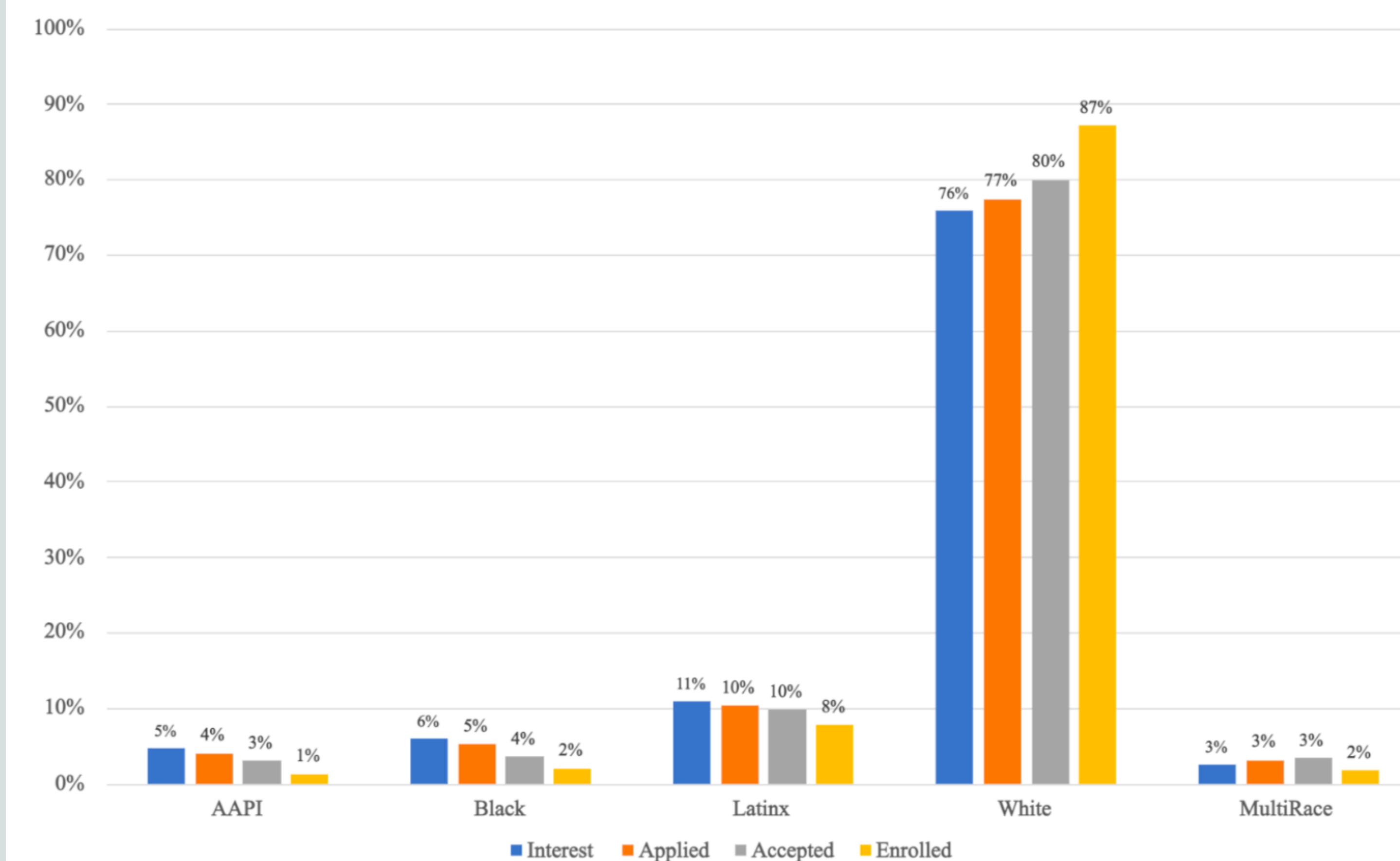
QUALITATIVE

We reached out to the guidance counselors of 12 high schools in the Providence area from three different categories: public (7), private (3), and charter (2). Of these twelve schools, five responded and our final sample consists of guidance counselor interviews from two public, one private, and one charter school. We reported the thematic commonalities and differences found from these interviews below.

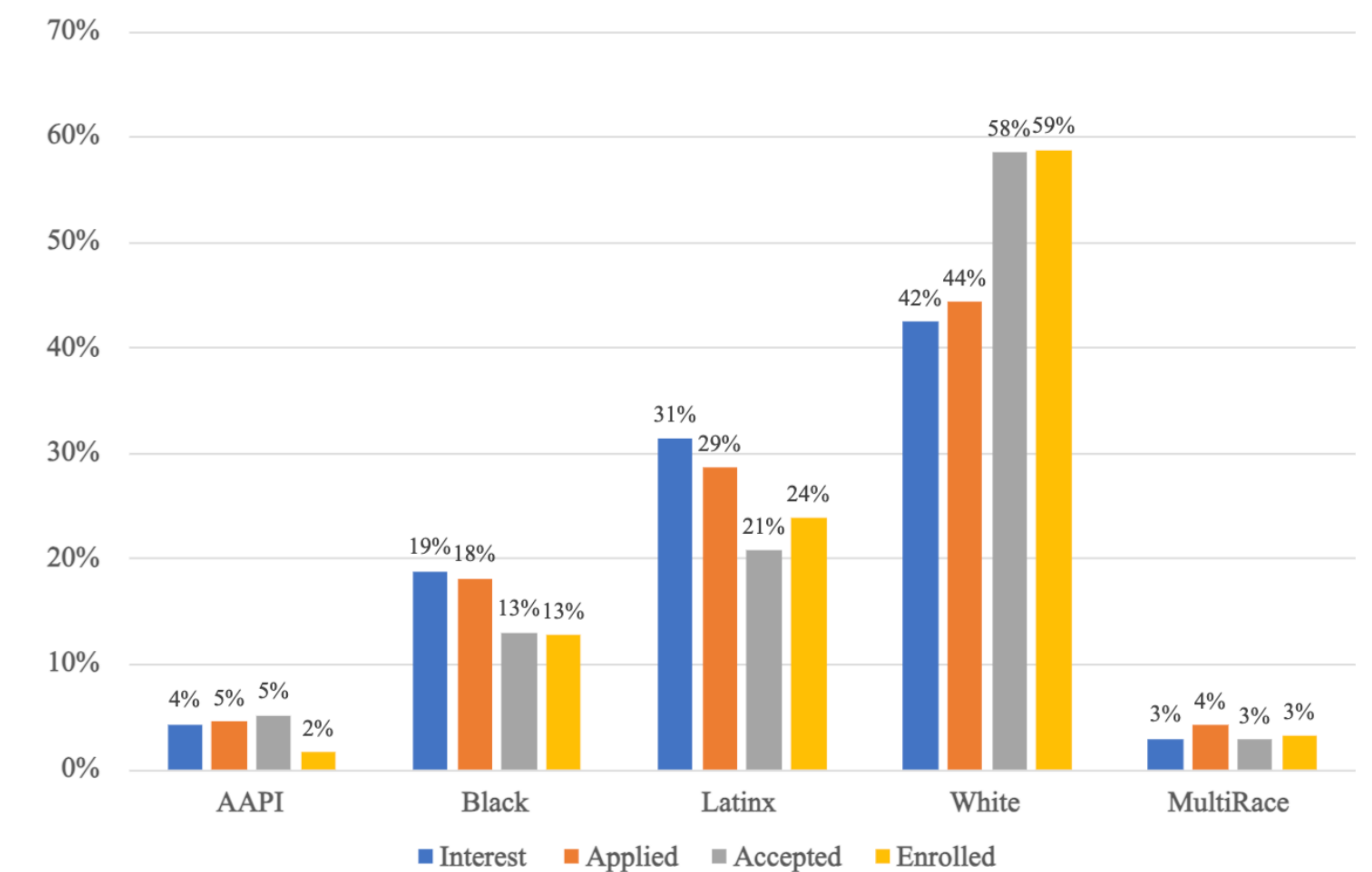
QUANTITATIVE

We utilized anonymized racial demographic data from the applicant pool to analyze trends across three admissions events: campus tours, off-campus high school visits, and virtual events. Graphs illustrate trends across the four main stages of the admissions cycle: interest, application, admittance, and enrollment. Our aim is to identify areas with the most significant diversity and access gaps.

PC Class of 2027 by Race throughout the Application Process



PC Class of 2027 from Providence, RI by Race Throughout the Application Process



ASSETS

- **Private school pipeline**
 - Private schools have a notable affinity and consistent communication with Providence College, viewing admission and enrollment at PC as a viable goal
- **Effective campus tours**
 - Prospective students who take a campus tour are significantly more likely to apply, get accepted, and enroll in Providence College
- **Interest among BIPOC Providence applicants**
 - Accepted BIPOC students from Providence-based high schools enroll at a higher rate than both whites from the same area and BIPOC students from the rest of the nation

CHALLENGES

- **Applicant uncertainty**
 - Many public school students do not consider the possibility of college until their junior year
- **Non-private high school disconnect**
 - Insufficient engagement with high schools that exhibit lower academic achievement
- **Racial disparities in admissions engagement**
 - The positive effects of the campus tours are muted for BIPOC students for applying, getting accepted, and enrolling
- **Transfer troubles**
 - Due to Providence College's curriculum structure with DWC, there is an increased complex barrier when attempting to transfer into this institution

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Additional application component**
 - A supplemental essay question geared at applicant maturity
- **Communication with BIPOC students**
 - With just 24% of Black students enrolled in the class of 2027 taking a campus tour, it is essential to communicate admission events to BIPOC students
- **Early Outreach**
 - Events encouraging early communication like 8th grade information sessions and off-campus visits with current PC students would foster strong communication