

# **College Aspirations and How to Combat the Summer Melt**

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## **Abstract**

The national decrease of college enrollment in the United States today is a critical problem, and a lack of college awareness is the greatest barrier to remedying this crisis. This problem leads to an increase in Summer Melt, which occurs when students enrolled in college drop out before ever arriving on campus. This phenomenon is racialized and most prominently impacts Black and first-generation college students. I assert that there are two primary factors that push students into Summer Melt: their parents' educational status and the development of a student's soft skills. Proactive outreach, AI support, and accessible college mentorship are three critical supports to combat Summer Melt and to aid in creating community college awareness. A national increase in both retention rates and graduation rates in higher education institutions is in every school's best interest, and the supports highlighted in the paper are widely applicable and wield high success rates.

**Keywords:** AI, Enrollment, Low-Income, Outreach, Soft-Skills