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Dear Editors / Interviewers,

Enclosed is the just-published new edition of our book: THE BEST 382 COLLEGES - 2018 Edition (Penguin Random House / Princeton Review Books, August 1, 2017, $24.99). We send it with thanks to all of you who've had interest in it and its rankings and who report on higher education topics.

A note re the book's backstory – how it came to be, and why it's truly a one-of-a-kind.

It began 26 years ago, when The Princeton Review (known for helping millions of students up their chances of *getting in to* colleges via its score-boosting SAT/ACT prep) launched a project to help teens and parents deal with a college application conundrum that for many remains as tough as either test: Deciding *which colleges* to apply to.

College shopping isn't like buying a car (though at some schools the cost of attendance *does* rival a Lamborghini). Yet in some ways, given the purchasing experience, it is. You read reviews and ratings, ask around, winnow a list, go out for a few test drives (kick the tires!), then pick the one that best suits your purposes and pocketbook. Savvy shoppers get all the intel they can from people who've bought models on their "maybe" list. In the end, customer feedback is often *the most valuable* factor informing a choice (or preventing a *really expensive* mistake).

The Princeton Review project in 1992 was to create a better guide for college shoppers (especially those who couldn't travel to many campuses for "test drives"). Not another phone book of college profiles. Not a mega-list of schools ranked 1-to-whatever for academics. But a resource that could give people deeper and broader "intel" about colleges than any other.

Initially, the company chose 250 colleges it deemed academically outstanding and collected data (admission requirements, deadlines, etc.) from the school administrators to craft profiles. Then, with permission of the administrators, it conducted on-campus surveys of about 100 enrolled students per school (*i.e. the school's customers)* -- 30,000 students in all. The survey covered what teens or parents might ask on a campus tour -- from h*ow accessible are the profs* to *how's the food?* It also covered awkward-to-ask but important-to-know issues. *Did you get financial aid? What's the campus political climate? Gay-friendliness?* The company then converted that rich data into school profiles and ranking lists of "top 20" colleges in the book in 62 categories that included academics but went way beyond that.

Three million+ student surveys, and 26 years later, the combo of annually updated school data and student survey-driven ranking lists continues to make this yearly "Best Colleges" guide a singular resource. It's bigger now. The Princeton Review has added several colleges to the guide (and dropped some). **The average number of surveyed students per school has more than tripled from 100 to over 350 (137,000 in all for this edition).** And The Princeton Review now makes much of the information in the book available via its site (www.princetonreview.com/best382).

Our attached news release on this new edition names schools that finished #1 this year on high interest ranking lists (flip to p. 39 in the book to see the full ranking list chapter). Also attached: a one-pager on the rankings, and other reporter resources including lists of facts about The Princeton Review "best colleges" ranking lists' impact over the years in popular culture (from references in quiz show questions to salutes from politicians, comedians and cartoonists).

Available for interviews, Robert Franek, the book's author (he's also Editor-in-Chief at The Princeton Review – see bio attached), can discuss:

- **how The Princeton Review tallies these rankings and trends he has seen over the years in admissions**
- **which colleges finished first this year in categories that matter the most to parents -- and to students**
- **local deets: colleges in your* area in the book and how they fared on the survey**
- **findings of The Princeton Review's 2017 "College Hopes & Worries Survey" of 10,000 applicants & parents this year** https://www.princetonreview.com/press/college-hopes-worries-press-release
- **advice for college shoppers in your audience: how to find a personal "best-fit" college, get in to it, and get aid from it**

Thanks for considering.

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*See end note in the attached release for instructions on how to access a password-protected area on Princeton Review's site exclusively for use by members of the media. At it you can custom search the Princeton Review ranking lists by state/city/college and download other collaterals for stories.