

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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CB's Spring Admission Round-up

MORE THAN 1.5 million students are planning to enroll in the 4,000 plus U.S. colleges and universities this fall. According to some reports, at least 20 percent of them sent off seven or more applications, chiefly to the most competitive schools, even though application fees can reach \$50.

According to an April 22 *Washington Post* story, the nation's most selective colleges received 31 percent of all applications, but will enroll only 18 percent of all freshmen. In fact, between 2002 and 2006, the average public and private four-year college or university received 24 percent more applications. In part, that results from mass marketing on the part of colleges and the ease of electronic submissions through vehicles such as the Common Application.

Multiple applications also mean multiple choices for many qualified students. But the ease of applications may be about to meet the difficult reality of paying for college, especially while the economy is still experiencing hard times. A sense of uncertainty about the entire process still prevails.

In this issue, *CB* brings you some of the post-April 1 admit numbers left in the wake of what may be the largest pool of students and the most competitive admissions season ever.

Berkeley. The U. of California, Berkeley, attracted a record 50,375 applications for the class of 2014, and accepted 12,915 of them. Because of state funding cuts, fewer California applicants were admitted this year compared to last year, 9,420 for 2010-11 versus 11,200 for 2009-10. The campus hopes to enroll 4,100 students for fall 2010, and an additional 950 next spring. About 200 students were placed on Berkeley's wait list.

Brown. Brown U. in Providence, Rhode Island, admitted a little over 9 percent of its 30,136 applications, or 2,804 students to its class of 2014. Last year, it admitted 11 percent, but applications for this fall shot up by about 21 percent, according to a statement issued by James Miller, dean of admission. Admitted students from California, Massachusetts and Illinois led the parade, and 53 percent of them were women. Brown also admitted international students from 81 nations. About two-thirds of the students will receive financial aid.

Butler Swamped. Butler U. in Indianapolis was the darling of this year's NCAA Division I basketball championship, although it lost to Duke by only two points. Still, its admissions office was swamped with inquiries from prospective students for next year. The web site of the small university of some 4,000 students crashed twice during the run-up to the championship game. "It's been surreal," Tom Weede, vice-president of enrollment, said.

Butler notes it is also a serious academic school. Even its star players attended classes on the very day of the big game.

Chicago. The U. of Chicago attracted 19,370 applications this year, 42 percent more than last year. That drove down its acceptance rate from 27 percent last year to 18 percent or 3,560 students for the class of 2014.

Cornell. Cornell U., in Ithaca, New York, received 36,337 applicants and accepted 18 percent, down from 19 percent a year ago, according to *The Cornell Daily Sun*, which has been in publication since 1880. The Ivy League school admitted 33 percent 11 years ago.

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New Research on Getting In

ARE COLLEGES MORE SELECTIVE TODAY? No, according to a new study by Stanford professor of economics Caroline M. Hoxby. In fact, all these application numbers may be just an illusion. Since 1955, the number of high school graduates has risen by 131 percent, while the number of students in college has jumped by 297 percent, Hoxby claims. As a result, she says, 90 percent of today's colleges are actually *less* selective than they were back then. It is only at the elite 75 to 100 colleges that the numbers game has tightened dramatically. Also, now, students from all across the world are willing to apply and travel to these brand name schools. In the 1950's and 60s, students made more localized decisions.

What's the best strategy for getting accepted to the college of your choice?

According to a recent report from the Center for Public Education, "Chasing the College Acceptance Letter," the answer is rather straight forward: Take more difficult and higher level courses, particularly in math and science. The study found that completing trigonometry instead of stopping at Algebra II increased the chance of being accepted from 52 to 57 percent. Students who completed pre-calculus boosted their chances to 79 percent.

The report concluded, "If students are well prepared in high school by earning the right credentials, they will get into a good college." Find the report at www.centerforpubliceducation.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx. ■

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SPRING ADMISSIONS

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Dartmouth. Applications to Dartmouth C. in Hanover, New Hampshire, rose by 3.5 percent this year to a record high 18,778. It accepted 2,165 or 11.5 percent of applicants, a drop from 12.5 percent accepted last year. In December, the Ivy League college accepted 461 of 1,600 applicants through its early decision process. Dartmouth put 1,740 students on its list.

Nearly 40 percent of accepted students were valedictorians and almost 12 percent were salutatorians. The mean SAT scores for admitted students were 733 Critical Reading, 741 Math and 740 Writing. The class is split evenly between men and women. About 44 percent are students of color. And 7 percent are international students. About half of the class will receive financial aid. The college covers 100 percent of aid for students from families earning less than \$75,000.

Maria Laskaris, dean of admissions and financial aid, told the *Dartmouth News*, "Our applicant pool has grown by nearly 80 percent over the last decade... making the process of selecting students for Dartmouth much more complex."

Duke. This year Duke, in Durham, North Carolina, (this year's NCAA basketball champ) received 26,770 applications for the class of 2014 and accepted 3,372. This year's acceptance rate of 14.8 percent made for the most selective class in the school's history. Early Decision accounted for 602 of the students, and led to 150 fewer regular admits. Duke wait listed an astonishing 3,382 applicants. "The admissions rate and selectivity rate is going to keep declining," Michael Schoenfield, vice president for public affairs and government relations, told the *Duke Chronicle*.

Duke's Trinity College of Arts and Sciences attracted 3,059 of the accepted students, while the Pratt School of Engineering drew 913 students. Duke is aiming for a smaller class of roughly 1,705 students so it can provide more adequate campus housing.

Duke has received 6,000 more applications over the past two years, putting stress on the admissions review system. "It's an incredible workload," Christoph Guttentag, dean of undergraduate admissions, told the paper. "Over two years we have had a 30 percent increase in applications with no additional staff."

Technology is changing the traditional "fat vs. thin" letters that students used to check for in their mailboxes. Duke's 23,445 admissions decisions went online on March 29 at 6 p.m. and by the next morning, 85 percent of applicants had viewed their letters online.

G.W. George Washington U. in Washington D.C. received 21,135 applications, a 6 percent increase over last year. It accepted 6,655 or

31.5 percent of the students, down from 36.5 last year. GW expects to field a first-year class of 2,350 students, Kathryn Napper, executive dean for undergraduate admissions, told the *GW Hatchet*.

Harvard. According to the *Harvard Crimson*, e-mails went out with good news to 2,110 of the 30,489 applicants to Harvard C.'s class of 2014. That translated into a record low 6.9 percent acceptance rate, down from 7 percent last year. The 30,000 applications was an increase of 5 percent this year over last.

Asian-American students accounted for 18 percent of the new class, African Americans for 11 percent, Latinos for 10 percent, Native Americans for nearly 3 percent. International students make up 9 percent of the accepted students, who hail from 79 countries. Over 52 percent of the admitted students are males. Harvard educates about 6,700 undergrads and enrolls a total of 20,000 students. Its endowment totals \$26 billion, making it the richest university in the nation.

According to Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid William R. Fitzsimmons, the number of applicants seeking degrees in engineering and applied science is on the rise. Ever since Harvard established an independent

Snapshots of Other Colleges

Binghamton. Binghamton U. in New York attracted 27,132 applications, and accepted 10,681.

Columbia. Columbia U. in New York drew 26,178 applications, and accepted 2,397.

Emory. Emory U. in Georgia, received 15,549 applications and accepted 4,444.

Iowa. The U. of Iowa fielded 16,795 applications, and accepted 13,098.

Ithaca. Ithaca C. received 13,100 applications, the second most in school history. It admitted about 8,500 and hopes to enroll about 1,650.

Pomona. Pomona C. in California received 6,767 applications and accepted 980.

SUNY-New Paltz. New Paltz drew 14,785 applications, and accepted 5,301.

Swarthmore. Swarthmore C. in Pennsylvania received 6,040 applications and admitted 957.

U. Texas-Austin. Texas received 31,078 applications, and accepted 14,251.

UW. The U. of Wisconsin-Madison accepted 13,842 of its 25,344 applications.

Washington and Lee U. W&L received a record 6,588 applications, passing last year's record of 6,222. It expects to enroll between 455 and 475 first-year students.

Wesleyan. Wesleyan C. in Connecticut attracted 10,656 applications and admitted 2,125.

Williams. William C. in Pennsylvania attracted 6,633 applications and admitted 1,202. ■

School of Engineering and Applied Sciences three years ago, applications have surged by 68 percent. During the same period, all Harvard applications increased by a comparatively low 11 percent. "There are lots of people who have this outdated stereotype of Harvard as pretty much humanities and social science," Fitzsimmons said.

More than 60 percent of the new students are eligible for financial aid. The average financial aid award totals \$40,000.

Johns Hopkins. Johns Hopkins U. attracted 18,455 applications, an increase of 14 percent over last year, and the eighth straight record year. It admitted 20.4 percent of these, down from 26.7 percent last year. According to Daniel G. Creasy, associate director of admission, accepted students hail from 49 states and 58 nations.

MIT. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also in Cambridge, accepted 1,611 or 9.7 percent of its 16,632 applicants for its 2014 class. In 2003, MIT's acceptance rate was 16.4 percent. Early admissions applications for this year increased 13 percent to 5,684, while 590 were admitted early action. MIT boosted its wait list by more than half to 722. Last year, MIT admitted 80 from its wait list.

Northwestern. Northwestern U. in Evanston, Illinois, admitted 23 percent of its applicants, down by 4 percent from last year, from a pool that grew by 9 percent.

Penn. The U. of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia admitted 3,830 students or 14.2 percent of its 26,938 applicants, down from 17.1 percent last year, Dean of Admissions Eric J. Furda told *The Daily Pennsylvanian*. Penn expects to enroll 2,420 new students in the fall.

Tim Lear, director of college counseling at Pingry School in Martinsville, New Jersey, told the student paper that when students and parents read about the lower acceptance rates nationwide, "the instinct will be to panic." But he added, "I think the wiser approach is for students and counselors to take a step back and evaluate why they are applying to certain schools."

But Michele Henrandez, a private counselor, told the newspaper, when these students panic and see how hard it is to get in, it will result in more students "flooding all the top colleges" with even more applications next year.

Princeton. Princeton U. attracted 26,247 applications, up by nearly 20 percent. It accepted 2,148 students for an 8.18 admit rate, down from 9.79 last year.

Rocky Mountain C. In Billings, Montana, Rocky Mountain C. boosted applications by 69 percent over the past two years from 717 in 2008 to 1,215 in 2010. Why? RMC president

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Tuition Discounts and Other Financial Aid Matters

TUITION TABS

Huge Tuition Discounts in 2008. The average discount rate for first-time, full-time freshmen for fall 2008 was a surprising 42 percent, an “all-time high,” according to a report released by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). The group based its conclusion on a study of 355 independent institutions. The increase in discounting was driven by the economic upheavals that became a crisis in the fall of 2008. To offer those discounts, many institutions implemented salary freezes, hiring freezes, staff reductions and other cuts.

Public Tuition Rising. Tuition at the U. of California could increase by as much as 30 percent in 2010. But it’s going up in other states as well. The U. of Washington expects to increase tuition by 14 percent to make up for a \$21 million cut from the state legislature. Public tuition in Florida and Nevada is expected to increase between 10 and 15 percent, according to CNNMoney.com.

Florida Sticker Shock. It’s sticker shock for parents enrolling in Florida’s prepaid College Plan this year. According to the *Miami Herald*, “there’s a rapid, jaw-dropping increase in the prepaid price tag—with one tuition category costing more than four times what it did just a year ago.” Measure that against the projected cost of in-state college education in Florida in 18 years: \$225,307!

Meanwhile, tuition is going way up next year at Florida colleges. Both the Florida House and Senate have called for an 8 percent increase at all state universities. The schools then have the option of asking students to pay even more which may result in an increase as high as 15 percent. And according to the *Miami Herald*, most major universities plan on invoking that option.

Illinois Soars. Amid a state budget crisis, rumors raged that tuition for new freshmen could soar to 20 percent. But Interim President Stanley Ikenberry told the *Champaign News Gazette* that it was more likely to be between 9 and 9.5 percent. By state law, the tuition freshmen pay remains unchanged for all four of their years at the university.

Ithaca Tuition Increase. Tuition will increase 4.8 percent at Ithaca C. to \$33,630 for the 2010-11 school year. That’s double the nation’s 2.6 inflation rate for the past year. Total cost including room and board will reach \$45,944.

Miami U. Merit Aid. Beginning this fall, Miami U. in Ohio will guarantee financial aid awards of \$6,500 to Ohio residents with test scores of at least 30 on the ACT or 1330 on the SAT Critical Reading and Math sections and a high school grade-point average of at least 3.7. Top students with slightly less stellar scores will receive less money. MU will award \$9,000 to out-of-state freshmen with those achievement numbers, and slightly less to other top students.

WPI. Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts will increase tuition and fees by 3.4 percent to \$38,700 for the 2010-11 academic

year. WPI’s first-year class of 2009 was the largest in school history. And it set a new record for applications this winter. An average of 90 percent of WPI graduates found employment or entered graduate school within five years of graduation.

FINANCIAL AID FLASH

Students Altering Plans. Nearly two-thirds of 1,000 teens ages 12-17 surveyed in a Junior Achievement/Allstate Foundation survey said that they had changed their college plans because of the economy, up from 55 percent last year. Also, 41 percent said they are working more to pay for college, 37 percent are going to school closer to home, 21 percent will attend community college and 15 percent may delay school for a year or longer.

And while 88 percent say they plan on getting a college scholarship to help pay tuition, nationally only 66 percent received some kind of financial aid in 2007-08. But 83 percent say their parents are saving for their college and 53 percent of teens are saving to help meet costs.

Evaluating Financial Aid Offers. Kiplinger, known for its personal finance newsletter and website, has created a tool to help families evaluate the financial aid offers. See, www.kiplinger.com/tools/college-financial-aid-letter.

Pell Expansion. Funds reallocated under the new direct lending law are expected to extend Pell grants to 800,000 additional students over the next 10 years. Also, the grant is expected to increase to \$6,000.

Debt Update. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the median amount of student loan debt of B.A. degree recipients in 2007-08 at public four-year colleges was \$17,700. At private four-year colleges, it was \$22,375. The default rates rose from 5.2 percent in 2006 to 6.7 percent in 2007.

AND THIS MONTH’S SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

Active Duty. Spouses and dependents of U.S. active duty troops are eligible for 500 college scholarships worth \$3,000 each courtesy of ThanksUSA. The program was started in 2005 by two Virginia school-girls, and is now supported by corporations, foundations and individuals. Last year, it awarded 200 scholarships. But support is growing, so this year it’s up to 500. Applications are available at www.ThanksUSA.org and are being accepted through **May 15**.

Multicultural Dreams. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co. (MassMutual) offers 27 \$5,000 scholarships to students of African/American, Asian/Pacific or Hispanic descent. Minimum requirements include a 3.0 on a 4.0 GPA scale. For more information, see www.hsf.net/massmutual.aspx.

Tylenol Scholarship. Paying for college shouldn’t give you a headache. Apply by **May 14** for a Tylenol Scholarship of \$5,000 and \$10,000 aimed at enhancing the medical professions. See, Tylenol.com/Scholarship. ■

SPRING ADMISSIONS

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Mike Mace said a target campaign of students west of the Mississippi was one big reason. The school bought lists of students who had test scores similar to the current students, then contacted those students by mail and e-mail. Professors also contacted potential new students and their parents. "It was a very scientific approach," Mace explained. RMC hopes to expand its enrollment from 877 students to 1,200.

Smith. Smith C. in Massachusetts fielded a record number of applications this year. It admitted 158 students through Early Decision, about one quarter of its new class, Debra Shaver, director of admission, told *The Sophian*.

Stanford. Stanford U. in Palo Alto, California, accepted 2,300 students, including the 753 admitted in December through its early action program, from its record high 32,022 applications for the class of 2014. That was a record low 7.2 percent, making it the second most selective program in the nation, edging out Yale. About 20 transfer students will be admitted, while 998 are on the wait list.

"Stanford has been exceedingly fortunate to attract a simply amazing group of applicants from all over the world," said Richard Shaw, dean of admission and financial aid.

Tufts. It was also tough to get into Tufts this year. The Massachusetts school fielded 15,437 applications, the school's third largest pool, and admitted 24.5 percent of them. About 32 percent of those accepted are students of color. About 91 percent were in the top 10 percent of their high schools. About 38 percent of accepted engineering students are women and 54 percent of accepted applicants applied for financial aid, according to the *Tufts Daily*.

Tulane. Administrators at Tulane U. estimate it "received more applications than any other

private university in the nation," according to the *Tulane Hullabaloo*, outranking "sister schools" Vanderbilt, Duke and Emory. In fact, 43,834 students applied to Tulane. Jeff Schiffman, associate director of admission, said that Tulane's free application may have attracted many students. "Another reason is that extra interest in public and community service," Schiffman said.

U. Cal. When all was said and done, The U. of California received 82,056 California applications, and nearly 71.6 percent of applicants were offered admission to at least one of its nine campuses. Last year, 72.5 percent were offered admission and in 2008, that figure was 75.4 percent. Seven campuses (all except UCLA and Merced) created wait lists, on which 10,700 students were placed. "The competition for space this year was incredible," Susan Wilbur, UC's director of undergraduate admissions, told *The Los Angeles Times*. UC hopes to enroll 32,000 first-year students in the fall.

UCLA accepted only 21 percent of in-state applicants. UC Berkeley admitted 24.5 percent of in-state students. UC San Diego admitted 36.8 percent of in-state students while UC Merced admitted 78 percent.

The UC system accepted 9,552 out-of-state and international students, up 25 percent from last year. These students pay higher tuition and will help fill UC's budget gaps.

Offers of admissions for Latinos rose from 22.2 percent of the admitted group last year to 23.3 percent this year. African American offers rose from 4 percent last year to 4.2 percent. Offers to Asian Americans rose from 34.9 percent of the class last year to 35.4 percent. White students made up 33.1 percent of last year's admitted students, and fell to 30.6 percent this year.

Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt in Tennessee attracted 21,817 applications for 1,600 spots in the class of 2014, an increase of 13 percent over last

year. Its admit rate slid from 18.9 percent in 2009 to 16.3 percent. Applications were up by 25 percent from minority students and 35 percent from international students, according to insidevandy.com.

Villanova. This year, 14,367 students applied to Villanova U. in Pennsylvania, and 5,998 of them were offered a place in the class of 2014. That translates into a 41 percent admissions rate, down 5.3 percent from last year, Stephen Merritt, dean of enrollment management, told *The Villanovan*. The school is planning for a class of 1,630 students. It hopes that 20 percent of those represent minority backgrounds. About 53 percent of the new first-year accepted students are female. Villanova said it expects to continue using the SAT and ACT because applications came from 3,000 different high schools and the tests help in the evaluations. The middle 50 percent of accepted students scored 1290-1400 on a 1600 scale.

Virginia. The U. of Virginia fielded 22,516 applications for the class of 2014. Greg Roberts, dean of admissions, told *The Cavalier Daily* that 7,964 of those were in-state applicants. Offers of admission were extended to 6,907 students, 600 more than last year. The acceptance rate for in-state students was 42.4 percent, for out-of-state students just 24 percent. UV hopes to enroll 3,240 first-year students. The middle 50 percent scored between 1300 and 1480 on the reading and math SAT tests. And nearly 94 percent were in the top 10 percent of their high school classes.

Wash U. Washington U. in St. Louis drew nearly 25,000 applicants this year, a record, and admitted about 20 percent, the same as last year. It expects to enroll about 1,500 first-year students in the fall. Julie Shimabukuro, director of admissions, told *Student Life*, "The admission decisions this year were the most challenging in the University's history."

Yale. Yale U. in New Haven, Connecticut, accepted 1,940 students from an applicant pool of 25,869, 134 fewer than last year. Because it admitted fewer students, its 7.5 percent acceptance rate remained the same as last year. It wait-listed 932 students, 21 percent more than last year. "Last year, we ended up taking only seven students from the wait list," Jeff Brenzel, dean of undergraduate admissions, told the *Yale Daily News*. ■

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CB'S BOOKSHELF

Transition of Youth and Young Adults with Emotional or Behavioral Difficulties; 384 pages; ISBN 978-1-55766-963-6; \$34.95. *Think College! Postsecondary Education Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities* by Meg Grigal and Deborah Hart; 344 pgs; ISBN 978-1-55766-917-9; \$39.95. (Both from Brookes Publishing.)

The Princeton Review's Guide to 286 Greenest Colleges from the Princeton Review & US Green Building Council; profiles environmental literacy programs, use of renewable energy, recycling and conservation programs and so

forth. A free Guidebook Profile is available at www.princetonreview.com/greenguide or www.usgbc.org/campus.

The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities Are Reshaping the World by Ben Wildavsky (Princeton U. Press); ISBN13: 978-0-691-14689-8; \$26.95.

People Are Talking About... "In 500 Words or Less," a new documentary film chronicling the application process of four college applicants. Guide for talking with parents also available. For info see www.in500wordSORless.com. ■

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