

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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COLLEGE BOUND Begins its 27th Year!

Financial Outlook Impacting Admissions

- Pell grants are now the government's largest education program.
- Private student debt soars to \$150 billion.
- Scholarship and grant money drop last year.

Unfortunately, this is the news greeting counselors, admissions officers and parents this fall as the new college admissions season gets underway. A number of reports were released recently on these financial topics as well as news of what individual colleges are doing to breach the financial aid gap. Here is what *CB* gathered.

Pell Grants Problems? The Pell Grant program, launched in 1972 to assist low-income students, has become the federal government's largest education program, costing \$36 billion a year and more than half of all federal education spending. Because of "exploding costs, loose eligibility standards, lax oversight, and poor results," the John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy in Raleigh, North Carolina, has called for a program overhaul, including tighter eligibility and minimum academic entry standards.

The study charges that even though the Pell program was intended for low-income students, 60 percent of all college students (9.6 million) now receive Pell Grants, including many from "solid middle-class families." Since 2008, the number of Pell recipients has risen by more than 50 percent. Yet only about 50 percent of Pell recipients graduate within six years. Slightly more than 68 percent of non-Pell students graduate in that time.

"The mark of success seems to be how much more money the program provides, rather

than whether the recipients are prepared for college, staying in school and graduating," said Jane S. Shaw, president, Pope Center. "This is the wrong way to help needy students and the wrong way to measure success."

Private Student Loans. Students owe more than \$150 billion in outstanding private student loan debt, according to a new report from U.S. Senate and House committees. That's far less than the federal student loan debt, but nothing to sneeze at. So Congress recently launched a study and found that the private student loan market grew from less than \$5 billion in 2001, exploded to \$20 billion by 2008 and collapsed back to \$6 billion in 2011.

During that time, private lenders dispersed money directly to students and reduced the involvement of the colleges. "As a result, many students borrowed more than they needed to finance their education." In addition, lenders made riskier loans.

What's happened since the financial crash? In 2008, 67 percent of lenders required a co-signer. But by 2011, that number had increased to 90 percent. And 90 percent of lenders now require a statement of need from the college.

In 2008, some 42 percent of for-profit students took out private loans (at higher rates than federal loans), while only 14 percent of all undergrads did so. Currently, 850,000 student defaults on private loans exceed \$8 billion.

Upper-Middle-Income Loans. Students from families earning between \$94,000 and \$205,000 have the largest increase in loan borrowing, according to a recent report in *The*
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Inside Irish Universities

Editor's Note: The meaning of "studying abroad" has expanded in recent years from a semester or two in a foreign country to enrollment full-time in an overseas university. Earlier this year, Mary Ann Willis, CB Advisor, decided to see for herself what all the student interest was in getting a degree from Irish Universities. Here's her report:

Earning a degree abroad isn't for everyone. Students who study in one of the seven public universities in the Republic of Ireland, for example, should have grounded notions and career road maps. Unlike America, where most declare majors after two years, in Ireland students generally study what they signed up for. Self-motivation and independence are required. But Irish opportunities are golden, and the costs, even with a few transatlantic flights, are bargains compared to some upper-end U.S. universities. And while merit aid is generally not available, U.S. federal loans may be applied to study in Ireland.

Irish colleges are transitioning to an online application system. But demonstrated interest is not an admissions factor, and extra-curricular activities generally are not considered. Differential degree pricing, just catching on in the U.S., is common here, as are paid co-operative experiences. These sibling institutions have similarities and distinct differences. Students,
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FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

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Wall Street Journal, which noted that this group accounted for about 26 percent of the 2010 student loan debt, up from nearly 20 percent in 2007. The amount borrowed also rose significantly faster than lower-income students. The paper speculated that the pattern could make it harder for colleges and universities to keep pushing their tuitions higher.

Scholarships Fall? The average amount of scholarship and grant money fell by 15 percent during the 2011-2012 academic year, according to a study, "How America Pays for College," from the student loan provider Sallie Mae. The average undergrad was awarded \$6,077 in grants and scholarships in 2011-12. That fell from \$7,124 the previous year.

"During the deepest valleys of the recession, schools were trying to maintain a certain level of [financial aid]," Justin Draeger, president of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, told *The Wall Street Journal*.

Just as disturbing, as a result, students and families borrowed 17 percent more last year; \$5,551 in 2011-2012 compared to \$4,753 in 2010-2011. Also, the percentage of families assuming student debt jumped to 34 percent in 2012 from 25 percent in 2008-2009. And the average family contributed \$5,955 from their own income and savings in 2011-2012, down from \$6,664 in 2010-2011.

Parents' Savings. However, some 45 percent of parents have saved more than \$5,000 per child, up from 40 percent last year. The majority of them are using 529 college savings plans, according to the sixth annual State of College Savings Survey. A total of 30 percent of parents of college-bound students own a 529 plan. Other strategies: 24 percent of parents surveyed ask family and friends to contribute to a college fund instead of material gifts. See, www.collegesavingsfoundation.org.

What Does "Affordable" Mean? That's the question investigated by the Institute for Higher Education Policy in its recent report "Is College Affordable? In Search of a Meaningful Definition." The answer is that it depends on economic conditions and marketability of a degree. But the report recommends that:

- The pricing and financial aid systems should be simplified and made more transparent and predictable.
- Students and families need greater understanding of monetary and non-monetary benefits of postsecondary education.
- Student loan programs should carry adequate protections for borrowers.
- Both grant aid and subsidies provided through the tax code should be better targeted on disadvantaged students. For the report, see

Inside Financial Aid Offices

Cornell U. Shrinks Aid Guarantee. However, beginning fall 2013, Cornell U. will no longer provide loan-free aid to all students from families earning \$60,000 a year or less. The move comes after a decade of expanding loan guarantees. For those from families earning between \$60,000 and \$75,000, loans will be capped at \$2,500 a year. For those from families making between \$75,000 and \$120,000, loans will be limited to \$5,000 a year. Meanwhile, Cornell's endowment grew by 20 percent between June 2010 and 2011, to \$5.35 billion. But that is still down from its \$6.1 billion high before the 2008 crash.

Dayton Increases Aid. The U. of Dayton hands out \$92 million in school-based aid to 90 percent of its undergraduates, assistance that is separate from state or federal aid, according to a recent report in the *Dayton Daily News*. "We don't ever want to become a university where only the elite are able to attend," said Kathey McEuen Harmon, dean of admission

www.ihep.org.

Federal Actions This Summer. It's election season, and both parties claim they help students more than the other. Fortunately, both parties got together this summer to insure interest rates for federal student loans remain at 3.4 percent, at least for one more year.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Dept. of Ed has streamlined its website www.StudentAid.gov. The update is to make it easier for students "to navigate the financial aid process and make informed decisions about paying for college." It can also "help students manage their loan payments after they graduate so they avoid falling into default," said Education Secretary Arne Duncan. For further info, see: www.youtube.com/federalstudentaid.

STATE FINANCIAL NEWS

States Increase Aid Levels. Despite several years of cascading budget cuts at the state government level, states have managed to increase financial aid for students to about \$11 billion or by nearly 3 percent. According to a report this summer by the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, state need-based grants grew by about two percent and 23 states increased merit-based aid. States providing the most aid were California, New York, Georgia, Texas, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Tennessee.

College Pays Off for California. Higher education pays off for more than just the students who gain degrees, according to a group of organizations ranging from the California Civil Rights Coalition to the California Chamber of

and financial aid. "It's really about being open to as diverse a community as possible."

Dayton also recently opened its China Institute in the Suzhou Industrial Park, about 75 miles from Shanghai. Students can do applied research and product development for industries in the complex, home to a third of the world's Fortune 500 companies.

MIT Increased Student Contributions. Low-income students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will be expected to contribute \$6,000 a year toward their education, an increase of 36 percent.

Monmouth Plugs Gap. Because the Illinois Monetary Assistance Program (MAP) ran out of scholarship funds for this year in March, Monmouth C. in Galesburg launched its MAP Assistance Replacement Fund for Illinois students. The scholarship is good for one year and will provide students with \$4,500 of assistance. ■

Commerce. Both the increase in tax revenue of graduates and reduced cost for social welfare programs are two of the obvious benefits, the group argued. For every dollar California invests in getting a student through college, the net return on investment is \$4.50, or a 450 percent return. Graduates of the U. of California and California State U. contribute \$12 billion a year to the state.

Kentucky Student Borrowing at Record. Kentucky college students set a record when they borrowed \$1.2 billion in 2010-11. That means the average student will have to repay \$200 a month for 10 years just to retire one year's borrowing. The good news is that after a generation of school reform, "we have achieved a college-going culture with our students," Ted Franzeim, at the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, told Kentucky.com. The bad news is the debt. "Basically, student debt is growing faster than the economy," he said. "As student debt increases, there's less money available to grow the economy."

Michigan Colleges Recruit Out-of-State. A demographic slump among Michigan high school students has led Michigan's public universities to recruit more out-of-state students, who pay higher tuition. But that also means more incentives, according to the *Detroit Free Press*. For example, Eastern Michigan U. is giving in-state tuition rates to the children of any alumni. Other Michigan universities are bolstering their financial aid offers. Last year, about 20 percent of students came from outside of Michigan, up from 16 percent the previous year. About 34 percent of students at the U. of Michigan came from outside the state. ■

IRISH UNIVERSITIES

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if they live on campus, live in “self-catered” housing. (University College Dublin offers a meal-plan option residence hall.) Yet international students who meet deposit deadlines are generally guaranteed on-campus housing.

SEVEN IRISH OPTIONS

Ireland’s proximity to Europe makes it an affordable jumping-off place for travel. Irish cities sprawl along rivers and farmlands, blending ancient and modern in a cozy urban rambling style. At an Irish university, you’re never far from the countryside or the water. Here is a snapshot of the seven universities.

Trinity College Dublin. Older than Harvard (founded 1592), TCD is encircled by Dublin. It touts strong science programs, especially in genetics. According to Jane Ohlmeyer, vice provost for global relations, “the quality of undergraduate education here is as high as at Yale.” Students are globally engaged. Dublin’s theatres, libraries and pubs are integral to a TCD education. (Bram Stoker and Oscar Wilde were students here.) The BESS program (Business, Economics, and Social Sciences) is the program closest to a U.S. liberal arts degree. For more info, see <http://www.tcd.ie/>.

University College Dublin, the second oldest of the group (1854), is nestled on 365 suburban Dublin acres. With the look and feel of an American campus, UCD enrolls more than 24,000 students, 20 percent of whom come from 110 different countries. Its curriculum may be the most flexible offered in Ireland. UCD will offer a gap-year option this fall. The business program is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. UCD also has the only veterinary school in Ireland. An Ad Astra Academy with a separate application and scholarship possibilities is designed to attract and care for talented academicians, performing artists and athletes. Enrolled students may earn their way into this program. For more info, see, <http://www.ucd.ie/>.

Dublin City University is the youngest Irish University (1980), located on a compact 85-acre campus and a short ride from the airport or city center. It was the first Irish university to offer INTRA (similar to a U.S. co-op program.) As a tech-oriented university, DCU was designed to make sure that Ireland has a tech-savvy work force. Of just under 9,000 full-time students, only about 10 percent live on campus. Most of its international students are from China and India. See, <http://www.dcu.ie/>.

National University of Ireland, Maynooth, is a 45-minute train ride from Dublin, and located near Ireland’s Silicon Valley. With a blend of the medieval and modern, Maynooth is the only Irish university not located in a city. The hamlet of Maynooth also is home to Carton House—a resort whose history goes back 800 years. This university was founded as a



Mary Ann Willis

seminary and today every staff member teaches. It offers an Equine Business program. International students represent 80 countries and compose about 12 percent of the student population. See, <http://www.nuim.ie/>.

National University of Ireland, Galway, is just a ride away through rich farmland. This is a dual-language campus (Gaelic and English). It features Ireland’s newest engineering building. Established in 1845, NUI Galway is divided into five colleges: Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies; Business, Public Policy and Law; Engineering and related fields; Health fields—medicine, nursing, and health sciences; Science. The college is framed by the hills of Clare and a river. The city center is a 15-minute walk from campus. With a population of about 100,000, the city center includes the Irish National Language Theatre and a phenomenal music scene. <http://www.nuigalway.ie/international/>.

University of Limerick is a modern, pristine campus, nestled close to the Shannon River. The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance is located here, as is the Blas International Summer School of Irish Traditional Music and Dance. A relatively new (1972) and mid-size university, Limerick has a stand-alone Business School and required co-op program. Limerick enrolls about 12,000 undergraduates including roughly 1,000 international students. Courses of study include Business, Education, Science, Engineering, Health Sciences and Arts, Humanities and Social Science. A student can take classes not related to his or her major on a pass-fail basis. See, <http://ul.ie/>.

University College Cork is located in Ireland’s second largest city. A short walk from campus places you in the center of the city. A campus with a traditional main gate snug up to a river complete with willow tree and bridge, UCC is steeped in tradition. Yet it was an early devotee of sustainability and has been recognized for its efforts. Four areas of study are: Arts; Celtic Studies and Social Sciences; Business and Law; Science, Engineering and Food Science; and Medicine and Health. Founded as Queens College (1845), UCC took its current name in 1908. About 3,000 international students from 100 countries are an integral part of the 20,000-student body. See, <http://www.ucc.ie/en/>.

Irish higher education requires students to take charge of their own learning adventure. This isn’t the land of in loco parentis. But if a student is focused with a clear educational path, Irish universities offer amazing opportunities. For more information on costs, campuses and applications in general, see <http://www.educationireland.ie/>. ■

Mary Ann Willis is Director of College Counseling at Bayside Academy in Daphne, Alabama. She was part of a counselor’s tour sponsored by Education in Ireland. She wrote a fuller description of Cork at <http://uccinternational.wordpress.com/2012/04/16/ucc-from-a-college-counselor-perspective/>.

BOOKSHELF

Hot off the press to start the new year:

Profiles of American Colleges 2013, 30th edition; index of college majors and facts and figures for more than 1,650 four-year colleges; also pro-

vides free online access; from Barron’s; ISBN: 978-0-7641-5; \$28.99; www.barronseduc.com.

The Complete Book of Colleges 2013 Edition; “The Mega-Guide to 1,627 Colleges and Universities;” ISBN: 978-0-307-94492-4; \$26.99; and, *The Best 377 Colleges 2013 Edition;* with a list of the 150 “Best Value Colleges”;

ISBN: 978-0-307-94487-0; \$23.00; both from The Princeton Review. For both guides, see www.princetonreview.com.

The Student’s Advantage: Your Guide to Getting the Most Out of School and Creating a Fabulous Future, Wayne Ince; ISBN: 978-1-477-44510-5; \$19.95; www.themotivators.net. ■

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

Asian & Pacific Islanders. The Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund is offering scholarships to first-generation students attending the City C. of San Francisco, Coastline Community C., DeAnza C. and South Seattle Community C. Amount: \$2,500-\$5,000. *Deadline:* October 12. See www.afiapf.org.

National Hispanic Caucus. The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators is launching the John S. Martinez Leadership Scholarship of \$3,000 to be awarded to 11 public high school students headed for college. *Deadline:* September 14. See: www.nhcsl.org.

American Indian Scholars. Using \$100,000

from the Walmart Foundation, the American Indian College Fund will distribute 16 scholarships to first-generation college students. Only 13 percent of Native Americans hold a bachelor's degree, versus 28 percent of the general population. The American Indian College Fund provides an average of 3,500 students a year with scholarships. To find out more, visit www.collegefund.org.

Hispanic STEM Scholarships. The National Hispanic U. in California is awarding up to 12 scholarships in STEM math and science fields for a two-year degree. The scholarships are funded by the National Science Foundation. Many NHU graduates then go on to study at nearby San Jose State U. For more: www.NHU.edu/STEM. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Jewish Studies. Muhlenberg C. in Allentown, Pennsylvania, will offer a new major in Jewish Studies beginning next fall. The school has had a minor in the subject since 1988. "The field of Jewish studies is dedicated to the critical analysis of Jewish texts, ideas, culture and historical experience within the broader context of the study of the humanities," said Hartly Lachter, one of the program's professors.

Latin American Studies. The U. of West Virginia has created a Latin American Studies Program to help its students take advantage of expanding relations with the region. The liberal arts college anticipates "that this offering will be beneficial not only to students studying in the arts and sciences, but those in engineer-

ing and business majors who may want to focus their careers on this growing region," said Angel Tuninetti, chair of the Department of World Languages.

Entertainment Business. The Los Angeles Film School, a creative arts college, has begun offering a Bachelor of Science in Entertainment Business.

"A degree in entertainment business is a natural extension for students who want to build on the technical and creative skills they've learned in our associate's degree program," said Diane Derycz-Kessler, president. "And with our talented, award-winning alumni, our business students will have a great network of industry professionals to tap into." ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Summer Melt. How do colleges combat summer melt, when students pay their deposits but fail to enroll in fall? According to Scott Willyerd, Dick Jones Communications, every school has a different strategy. But here are some case studies.

York C. in Pennsylvania makes over 20 different contacts with students after they have submitted their deposits, according to Steve Neitz, assistant dean for enrollment management. Meredith C., a woman's college in North Carolina, uses "snail mail, email, social media, postcards, family letters and different sized communications to keep in touch with students and family throughout the conclusion of the recruitment cycles," says Danny Green, vice president for enrollment.

Some schools have moved the fall orientation to the summer. For example, Albright C. in Pennsylvania broke up the large advisement programs and began mini-academic orientation organized by program of study. Birmingham-Southern C. in Alabama scuttled its one-day summer orientation and replaced it with three sessions focused on the overall transition to campus life. This year, 100 percent of committed students participated.

The U. of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, calls students who lag behind in steps on the registration site. And alumni stage "send offs" for new students from select cities.

English Summer. While the Olympics enjoyed a glorious summer in "Merry Old England," the

Testing Tabs

ACT Results Show Students Improve, Slightly. Sixty percent of the 2012 high school graduates are at risk of not succeeding in college and career. That's the latest report from the ACT. More than a fourth (28) percent did not meet any of the four benchmarks—English, math, reading and science. Only 25 percent met all four. The good news is that the percentage of graduates who met or surpassed the ACT benchmarks in math (46 percent) or science (31 percent) increased for the third year. Readiness in English and reading has remained flat over the last five years.

ACT had a record number of test takers—1.66 million or 52 percent of the high school graduating class.

Science Report Card. Meanwhile, according to the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress report, "Science in Action: Hands-On and Interactive Computer Tasks," the nation's 4th, 8th and 12th graders can conduct scientific experiments, but many cannot explain the results. The report revealed that only 53 percent of 12th graders were enrolled in a science course and only 28 percent wrote a report on a science project at least once a week.

"So it's tragic that our students are only grasping the basics and not doing the higher-level analysis and providing written explanations needed to succeed in higher education and compete in a global economy," said David Driscoll, chairman of NAEP's governing board. ■

nation's universities were digesting some somber news. Applications for admission by English students dropped 10 percent, according to the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. Almost 48,000 fewer students applied. Total English applications numbered 430,775. The largest decline was among students over the age of 23. The decline was only 2.6 percent among 18 year olds.

LAST WORD. Now this will likely be debated, but *Newsweek* released its 2012 picks for the most beautiful college campuses: Pacific Union C. in California; Santa Clara U. in California; Chapman in California; Point Loma Nazarene U. in California; Bucknell U. in Pennsylvania; Occidental C. in Los Angeles; Loyola Marymount U. in L.A.; U. of California—Santa Barbara; U. of San Diego and Connecticut C. ■

COMING UP: Where the presidential candidates stand on higher education issues. And the annual Greene Report on trends to watch in the year ahead.

Have a Great School Year!