

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

Vol. 28, No. 3

November 2013

Tuition Tabs

Where Tuition is Up, Where It is Kept at Bay

YES, TUITION IS UP. But, the increase is not as much as in the past, according to the College Board's "Annual Trends in Higher Education" released end of October. Yet, it notes, while increases in the cost of college may have slowed, so has grant aid. The result: Families are indeed paying more. "The grant aid students receive from federal and state government and from their institutions is no longer growing fast enough to keep net prices from increasing," the College Board noted. "As a result, the net price students actually pay for college—after accounting for grant aid and tax breaks—is rising...."

Tuition for in-state students at public four-year colleges increased 2.9 percent this year from the 2012-13 school year, the "smallest one-year increase since 1975-76," the report said. Adjusted for inflation the increase is 0.9 percent. However, at the same time that federal grant aid has declined, family incomes

have not recovered from the recession. Sixty percent of students earning bachelor's degrees in 2011-12 from the "first public or private nonprofit college in which they enrolled," graduated with debt, on average \$26,500. Loan borrowers increased over the last decade by 69 percent. For more info, see www.trends.collegeboard.org.

Private College Tuition Up Less. The nation's private, nonprofit colleges and universities posted the lowest tuition increase in almost four decades, 3.6 percent, according to the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. This is only the second time in four decades that the tuition increase for private colleges has stayed below 4 percent. At the same time, institutional student aid budgets at private colleges increased an average 6.9 percent for 2013-14.

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Online Admissions Hits a Few Snafus

AS *CB* WENT TO PRESS, the U. of North Carolina Chapel Hill and Duke U. were among those colleges forced to extend their Early Admissions deadlines as a result of technical problems with the Common Application. UNC extended its Early Action deadline by a week and a couple hundred students did not make that deadline. "We'll be working with those students on a case-by-case basis to extend the deadline," said Ashley Memory, UNC senior assistant director of admissions.

Meanwhile, Duke extended its deadline to November 8, to "give the schools a little more breathing room and just to give everybody a

little more time to make sure everything turns out," Christoph Guttentag, Duke's dean of undergraduate admission told News 14 Carolina.

However, Harvard U. decided not to extend its deadline. But, C. of William & Mary, Columbia U., Cornell U., Dartmouth U., Northwestern U., Tufts U., the U. of Chicago and Yale U. did extend deadlines. In fact, *The Washington Post* was reporting that by November 1, 42 colleges were extending their deadlines.

Both Princeton U. and Tufts U. will allow students to apply via the Universal College

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THE GREENE REPORT

Calming the Application Process

IN OUR TWICE PER DECADE cleaning out of our large steel filing cabinets, we were amused to find copies of our old newsletters. Dating to the close of the last century, these read like some kind of archeological evidence of a by-gone admissions era, though certainly one in great flux. It's hard to believe that 1999 was only 14 years ago.

We identified some important trends in our old *Educational Choices* newsletter, which we printed on stock paper and put in the snail mail. These included the rise in Early Decision and Early Action application plans and numbers, increasing numbers of high school graduates, the colleges requiring three "SAT II's" and more students trying out that weird test from the Mid-West, the ACT.

However, the most striking difference, and one with much current import, has to be our discussion of the "many ways to apply to college."

In those days, we fielded many questions about which was the best way to apply to college. "Did mailing paper copies have more of an impact by showing more interest and personality?" "Should the applications be typed? If so, where the heck can I find a typewriter?" "Is it true that I can now 'download' applications from a college's website?" "Aren't paper copies safer?"

In 1999, we listed other new options for

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ADMISSIONS WATCH

Albright C. Boosts Enrollment by Meeting Need. Faced with declining enrollment, Albright in Reading, Pennsylvania, increased its financial aid for incoming freshmen to better meet their needs. The result: A record enrollment with 685 new students. Albright developed a new plan to meet 100 percent of need beginning with the Class of 2018. “The overwhelming costs issue forces students and their families to make decisions based on cost rather than academic programs, reputation, residential experience or fit,” Greg Eichhorn, vice president, said.

Brown U.’s Yield Up for Fifth Year. While Brown U. aimed for a freshman class of 1,500 this year, 1,537 enrolled, with its yield rate increasing from 53 to 58 percent, according to *The Daily Herald*. That means admissions may be harder for the class of 2018. “The trajectory

is upward,” said James Miller, dean of admission. “So we will probably be more cautious next year in terms of the number of admissions.”

Students applying to Brown’s Class of 2018 are to complete a revised Brown supplement to the Common Application which is designed to be shorter than in years past with fewer short answer responses and one fewer essay question. “It takes a while to apply to college,” Dean Miller told the *Daily Herald*. “We want to make sure we’re asking people to use their time wisely.”

Legacies Count at Cornell U. Fifteen percent of Cornell U.’s entering freshmen are the children or grandchildren of those who attended Cornell, according to the *Cornell Daily Sun*. “This does not mean that every legacy applicant is admitted,” Jason Locke, a Cornell administrator, said. “Every applicant

is evaluated on his or her own merits and within the context of a very large and talented applicant pool.”

Largest Class in 164 years. Reflecting a trend seen at other regional public universities this fall, Eastern Michigan U. enrolled more freshmen than at any time since it was founded, with 2,595 freshmen enrolling at the Ypsilanti campus. The GPAs and ACT scores were higher: Average GPA was 3.24, up from 3.18 in 2012. ACT scores increased to 22, up from 21. The University’s Honors College doubled its freshman enrollment.

Lewis U. Posted Record Applications, then Enrollment. For the first time in its history, Lewis U. in Illinois, had a wait list. It ended up with its largest freshman class in history with 750 new students. Spurring interest in the Catholic university, according to officials, is a new Science Center and increased interest in its nursing, psychology and sports management programs. Also of interest: A new Aviation Academy at the Lewis Chicago regional site with classes in Air Traffic Control Management and Aviation Administration.

Skidmore’s Multilingual Website. This year, Skidmore C. in New York experienced a 17 percent increase in applications from international students. “We translated our web pages to Chinese and Spanish and it really helped to increase our numbers,” Mary Lou Bates, dean of admissions and financial aid, told *Saratoga Today*. The school targeted its outreach into South America, Europe and China. Overall, Skidmore saw a record number of applicants for its 2017 class of 650 students. ■

TUITION TABS

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“Nearly 8 in 10 students who earned a bachelor’s degree from a four-year private institution did so in four years, graduating with manageable debt and prepared to succeed and contribute to the workforce and society,” said David L. Warren, NAICU president.

NEW ATTEMPTS TO KEEP TUITION AT BAY

Grand Canyon U. Freezes Tuition for Sixth Year. Annual tuition rates remain at \$16,500 for all students at GCU in Phoenix this year. But according to the university, the average student pays \$7,800 per year, with academic, athletic and transfer scholarships. Students pay an average of \$6,500 for room and board. The university has also invested in new classrooms and dormitories, new laboratories, a new student union and library as well as new academic programs. “We have made it a point to keep our tuition costs affordable while providing a private, high-quality, Christian education,” said Brian Mueller, president.

Ohio Northern Promise. Ohio Northern U. announced a new initiative designed to reduce tuition, lower student debt and help students graduate in four years. The new promise will lower tuition from 2013–14 rates by 20 to 25 percent; offer a four-year graduation guarantee for most undergraduate programs to help lower student debt; offer internships, capstone courses, field experiences, study abroad and experiential learning opportunities; and “sustain the university’s excellent record of job placement and graduate and professional school admission rates.” Since 2006, the average job placement rate within six months of graduation for ONU students is 93 percent.

“The conventional high-tuition and high-financial aid model is not working today and is no longer sustainable,” said Daniel DiBiasio, president. “This is a way forward that seeks to make a quality education more available to the best students we can attract. It’s all about affordable excellence.”

The Prescott Plan. Prescott C. in Arizona has lowered its undergraduate tuition costs by nearly 12 percent, effective Fall 2014. Tuition is currently \$28,320 a year for on-campus undergraduates. It will drop to \$24,960 a year. Some merit aid was also reduced and the financial aid process simplified. Prescott is known for its small classes and environmental studies. Little known, perhaps, is that it has scholarships for mountain biking.

Wayne State Extends Tuition Break. In an effort to attract more out-of-state students, Wayne State U. in Detroit has announced that students from all the states surrounding the Great Lakes and those from Ontario will pay nearly the same tuition as in-state residents of Michigan. This includes students from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York who can receive the Great Lakes Tuition Award. In-state undergraduates currently pay \$11,097 for a 30-credit hour load. Students will also be eligible for merit-based scholarships.

School officials note that Michigan has faced state budget cuts for colleges and declining enrollment of high school graduates. Since 2009, WSU has had a 9 percent decline in enrollment to 27,897 students. The thinking behind the in-state offer is “it’s another opportunity to expose more to Wayne State and attend a major research university,” said Matt Lockwood, WSU spokesman. ■

ONLINE ADMISSIONS

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Application. According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, in recent years the Universal College Application’s membership had fallen from about 80 colleges to just 33. But with the recent problems for the Common Application, that number increased to 37.

The Common Application announced it is posting daily updates about technical improvements of its website. For more info, see www.commonapp.org.

Government Shut Down College Navigator. Another obstacle to the college admissions process this fall was the temporary shutdown of the popular College Navigator, a tool operated by the Dept. of Education that helps families figure out college costs. In turn, some students have migrated to a new on-line program called College Abacus, a free one-stop shop. It calculates the net price at three schools selected by students. More schools can be entered, three at the time. Students can log into College Abacus via Facebook, Google-plus or Twitter. ■

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students. One was College Link, where students could fill out a college's own application on a computer disk, print it out and mail it in. Another was ExPan, a College Board software package accessed at school guidance offices to facilitate electronic filing. Apply was a CD-ROM (remember those?) with 600-plus applications to be filed electronically or printed and mailed. And, last, but, as we now know, certainly not least, was the new Common Application, which at that time was printed or received in hard copy and mailed in, sometimes along with a college supplement. With 191 members, the Common Application, the first generation online system, launched in 1998-99.



Matthew and Howard Greene

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

Paper copies, snail mail, CD-ROMs and other competitors are in the dustbin of application history. The last one standing is the fourth generation, completely web-based Common App, launched this year with 517 members. Certainly there are a few other options. The large majority of colleges and universities are now on the Common App and use their own or outsourced online applications. The Universal College Application has just 37 members today, and while there are some specialized priority application options or selective organizations such as QuestBridge that handle apps for some groups of students, the Common App is clearly the starting point for any student considering selective private and, increasingly, public institutions.

Even before its recent technological problems, the Common App sent regular emails that updated the astronomical increases in student users, applications filed, forms uploaded and so on. But counselors have had to handle quite a few confused and stressed out parents and students trying to navigate this relatively new web-based application system, with its multiple hidden menus and college-specific supplemental questions. As such, we've begun to wonder just how "common" is the Common Application?

Unfortunately, the process that was supposed to make college applications easier, more standardized and streamlined has morphed into a Rube Goldberg-esque adventure in cyberspace. Let's not even begin to talk about students trying to understand how to connect to their high school's Naviance system or to their ACT or SAT score reporting. Sadly, just as we are experiencing historic demographic and geographic shifts in the college-bound population, with more students from areas of the country which haven't historically sent many students to selective colleges, and students whose parents did not attend college, or who did so in another country, we are continuing to erect barriers to their easy access.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

When we are working with any parent or student, from international students to Americans from lower-income or higher-income backgrounds, we find them identifying many of the same challenges and concerns in the application process. "Why must things be so complicated and confusing?" "If it's a 'Common App,' why all the supplements?" "Why can't we print out a draft to work on?" "Is there really a limit of 20 colleges?" "Are we supposed to file 20 applications?" "And how about those essay topics? No open topic? What do 'they' want us

to write about?"

We are also concerned about some of the other unintended consequences of the rapid move to electronic applications and a standardized process including the crowding, and crowding, effects of massive increases in application numbers; the loss of personal attention in the application process, with a necessary move to reliance on test scores and GPA in place of a more individualized evaluation of the candidate; and the shutting out of non-traditional students who have trouble coping with such a complicated and high-tech system.

Isn't there another way? There is at least one other model we could look at: the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service in the U.K. (UCAS). Now, no system is perfect, but somehow the British universities manage to admit students who are limited to five applications, and who write one essay, which is geared specifically toward their academic interests and why and how they would pursue them in college. Though Oxford and Cambridge have some additional requirements, as do fine arts or other highly specialized programs, the system is remarkably straight forward compared to the Common App. Would it work in the U.S.? Not perfectly--the U.S. higher education system is far larger and more diverse, and our political system is different--but perhaps we can draw some lessons from it.

LET'S LOWER STRESS

We believe in the original goals of the Common Application system. But: let's make it easier for students to apply to a reasonable number of selective colleges that require one essay and at least one recommendation letter. Let's lower stress on overworked and confused students, and increase access and decrease barriers to college entrance. Some colleges have no supplemental questions and are accepting the "basic" Common App as their only application. That helps. And the Common App system doesn't have the authority to coordinate the many disparate parts of our complex admission process, including two different financial aid systems and two different major standardized testing programs, which should be better integrated.

However, in an odd "Back to the Future" way, we, and many students and parents, have begun to wonder whether we shouldn't return to the days of filling out one hard copy application for each college. Since that's not about to happen, how about the Common App members coming together, and agreeing on, say, two essays, one creative, and one focusing on the student's academic and extracurricular goals and interests, and eliminating the rest of the supplements? That, and let's limit the total number of apps to ten, with one Early Decision and one Early Action allowed. Let's just simplify things for our students and parents who are under such great stress. ■

Howard Greene and Matthew Greene are independent consultants with Howard Greene and Associates, based in Westport Conn.. They are also the authors of several books on college. See, www.howardgreeneassociates.com.

Editor's Note: People are also talking about... *The App Generation: How Today's Youth Navigate Identity, Intimacy and Imagination in a Digital World* by Howard Gardner and Katie Davis; ISBN: 10: 0300196210; \$25; see, www.yale.edu/yup. ... "As Interest in the Humanities Fades, Colleges Worry," in *The New York Times*, Oct. 31; <http://www.nytimes.com>.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

What are the Hottest Careers? According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, jobs in “professional and business services” have grown the most in the last year. Noting these recent trends, the U. of San Diego Extension has published its fifth annual edition of “Hot Careers for College Graduates.” The top five: software developers, applications; software developers, systems software; market research analysts; accountants and auditors; network and computer systems administration. Of note in the top 18: elementary and middle school teachers, financial analysts and human resources specialists. Missing this year: health care positions.

Yet, Fewer Graduate With Computer Degrees. Fewer U.S. students graduate with degrees in computer and information technol-

ogy than 10 years ago, according to a new study from CareerBuilder and Economic Modeling Specialists. Even though the number of computer and IT jobs grew 13 percent nationally from 2003 to 2012, the number of U.S. students earning computer and IT degrees declined by 11 percent during that same period.

Meanwhile, health degrees climbed by 112 percent from 2003 to 2012, liberal arts and humanities degrees increased by 47 percent, engineering degrees 37 percent business, management and marketing degrees jumped by 33 percent and education degrees grew by 18 percent.

Choosing the Wrong College. Many students are either under-qualified or over-qualified for the college that they choose,

according to the National Bureau of Economic Research. About 28 percent of students in the study who started at a four-year college could have gone to a more challenging institution, while 25 percent of the students were under-qualified for the college they chose, according to the study, “The Determinants of Mismatch Between Students and Colleges.”

The question is, “Why?” According to the study, most of the fault falls with students themselves rather than admissions offices. Financial worries proved to be the main factor. Students from economically secure families were less likely to be undermatched. Other factors included geography. Some students do not live close to a well-matched public institution. And students who take more time off between high school and college also were more likely to be undermatched.

Public College Enrollment Down in Ohio.

As colleges watch for the impact of new demographic shifts, Ohio is one of the first states to report a decline in enrollments among public universities, according to the *Columbus Dispatch*. After a spike in enrollment in 2007, enrollment dropped in fall 2012 nearly six percent and another two percent this year. Ohio has 13 four-year institutions and declines in enrollments are a result of a drop in high school graduates, reductions in financial aid and changes in certain colleges as they moved from the quarter system to semesters.

The Fading American Dream? In 1986, 68 percent of Americans said that going to college was a big part of the American Dream. But, according to an October *Washington Post*-Miller Center Poll, only 52 percent now think so. Also, more than three-quarters of those polled say it has become more difficult to pay for college, and over 50 percent say colleges are not preparing students for today’s economy.

LAST WORD: Saving Costs Less Than Borrowing. Saving for college through 529 savings accounts when their child is young cost parents half as much as borrowing to pay for college later, according to research from T. Rowe Price, an asset management company.

“People underestimate the potential for market growth,” said Stuart Ritter, a T. Rowe Price vice president. He added that financial aid is typically not free money. “Substitute financial aid with the words, ‘massive debt.’”

P.S. Looking for news for the latest trends about online learning? Check out www.onlineunews.com on the latest trends. ■

For subscription information see
www.collegeboundnews.com
or call 773-262-5810.

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

Scholarship for Terrorism Studies. Starting this fall, students at Washington C. in Maryland may apply for a \$1,500 tuition scholarship for the study of political violence and terrorism. The Veryan Beacham Scholarship can be used in various disciplines. One scholarship winner this year is attending the U. College of Cork to study political violence in Northern Ireland.

New Scholarship Program. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation has announced a new College Scholarship Program worth \$30,000 per year to attend a four-year undergraduate

college in any area of study with personal advising about making the transition to college. *Deadline:* Nov. 5. See, www.jkcf.org.

Juilliard Announces New Classical Music Scholarship. Incoming classical music students may apply for a new scholarship to cover the full cost of tuition, room and board and “an annual stipend for enrichment and developmental activities.” The Kovner Fellowship Program at Juilliard will begin with 25 students the first year and increase to 52 annually. For info see, www.juilliard.edu. ■

CURRICULUM AFFAIRS

Chicago’s Columbia C. Creates New Department. Fiction, poetry and creative nonfiction are now part of a new Creative Writing Department at Columbia C. in Chicago. It will be housed in its School of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In the past, Fiction Writing was part of Fine and Performing Arts.

Husson’s Legal Studies B.S. Husson U. in Maine is offering a new Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies with a Pre-Law concentration through the school’s College of Business. Although the American Bar Association does not recommend any particular majors or courses for undergraduate education prior to law school, it does articulate a set of core skills and values important to a pre-law education. These include analytic and problem solving skills, critical reading skills, writing skills, oral communication and listening skills, research skills, public service and the promotion of justice.

“Our new Legal Studies Pre-Law program teaches students to think like lawyers,” said Margaret Campbell, School of Legal Studies. “This can be an important competitive advantage for graduates interested in pursuing their education and succeeding in law school,”

Rollins U. to Offer New Business Majors. “Students increasingly want to learn the tools and skills to help make their aspirations for social change successful and sustainable,” said Chrissy Garton, director of social innovation at Rollins U. in Florida. To that end, Rollins has created two new majors. One is business with management concentration that will emphasize “sustainability” and “social responsibility.” The second major is social entrepreneurship and business that will emphasize “entrepreneurial skills and current economic, political, cultural and environmental issues.” ■

Production: Design|Americom; Salsedo Press, Inc. COLLEGE BOUND is published monthly, ten times a year. Inquiries should be directed to P.O. Box 6536, Evanston, IL 60204; 773-262-5810. Annual subscription: \$59 in North America, \$69 for international orders, including airmail postage. www.collegeboundnews.com
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