

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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NACAC Hosts 70th Annual Convention

LATE LAST MONTH, more than 6,000 high school guidance counselors, college admissions officers, independent counselors and vendors gathered in Indianapolis for the 70th Annual National Association for College Admission Counseling convention. Here is some of what *CB* saw and heard.

To begin with, a number of new high-tech companies have jumped on the college admissions bandwagon, helping students, counselors and colleges figure out who should go where, how to keep in touch with each other and how to enable both to stay connected with students.

The Washington Post likewise noted the

prevalence of these types of companies, adding it shows “that there is a huge change afoot in how students and colleges find each other. It’s no longer just about the power of big brand names and recruiting visits to favored high schools. Technology is driving the upheaval.”

For example, Libertycreativesolutions.com uses social media, digital media and data analysis as well as “personalized” direct mail to help admissions offices “connect” with students. Youvisit.com takes prospective students on virtual tours of nearly 1,000 college campuses. Played.com is a new college placement website “for the pro-active student athlete.” For a

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Admissions Watch

Connecticut C. Enrolls Top Ten. Connecticut C. enrolled 503 members for the Class of 2018. Students come from 30 states and 20 nations. Half of the incoming students at the progressive college graduated in the top 10 percent of their high school and 85 percent graduated in the top 20 percent.

Also, Connecticut C. is partnering with the Opportunity Network to broaden access for underserved New York City students. OppNet presents colleges with a pool of high performing students from the New York City public schools. It also involves them in workshops, internships and helps prepare them for college success. “This partnership ensures that our students will get the guidance they need from the moment they begin considering Connecticut College until the date they accept their diploma...,” said Jessica Pliska, CEO.

DePauw U. Increases Selectivity. DePauw U. in Indiana enrolled 541 new students, including 37 transfer students. That’s down

from last year’s first-year class size of 677 students. According to *The DePauw*, President Brian Casey said that the university accepted 5 percent fewer students, in part because it increased its selectivity. The average GPA of incoming students was 0.1 higher than last year, at 3.8. The school also decreased the amount of merit aid awarded to applicants with GPA scores lower than 3.5. And to keep its tuition in line with peer schools, need-based aid was also decreased. Casey called the recent admission season, “The most challenging and unpredictable in decades.” DePauw’s net tuition this year rose to about \$18,000.

Grace C.’s Accelerated Degree Attracts New Students. Grace C., a small religious school in northern Indiana, enrolled a record-breaking class of 2,187 students or 15 percent more than last year. New students account for 426 of total enrollment. Many of the students are attracted by Grace’s three-year accelerated

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Financial Affairs

Why Does Tuition Keep Rising? What is the hidden cause of rising tuition? According to a new study by the Education Commission of the States, one of the drivers is price discrimination in the form of tuition discounts.

“In 2008-09, the average published tuition and fee rate for four-year public institutions was \$6,811. But the average net revenue per student was only \$5,564, a difference of \$1,247, or more than 18 percent. This difference is referred to as a tuition discount. Tuition discounting is the practice of awarding targeted financial incentives to students, usually in the form of merit awards or need-based grants. Importantly, the tuition discount is not real money; it is an intentional markdown or revenue foregone....”

“Though the practice has its benefits, if not managed well, it can lead to large increases in costs for the majority of students and dissuade low-income students from enrolling at all.”

To find out more about the report, see “The Progress of Education Reform” at www.ecs.org/per.

Federal Student Loan Default Rate Declines. More than 4.7 million borrowers began repaying federal student loans in FY 2011. But by September 2013, about 650,000 had defaulted on their loans. Still, this was a decline to 13.7 percent compared to 14.7 percent in the FY 2010 cohort, according to the U.S. Dept. of Ed. The decline occurred across all sectors of higher education—public, private and for-profit institutions representing 5,908 postsecondary

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degree program that was launched in 2011 and is available in all 65 majors.

Holy Cross C. Attracts First Gen Students.

Holy Cross C. enrolled 778 students in its class of 2018. About 27 percent of them are African American, Latin American, Asian American or Native American. Nineteen of them come from other nations. About 82 percent of the students ranked in the top 20 percent of their high schools. Sixteen percent are first generation students, while 11 percent are legacies.

Houghton C.'s Increase. Houghton C. in New York enrolled 10 percent more new students this year than last. "We are committed to the increasingly countercultural idea that the mission of a high quality, globally-engaged Christian liberal arts education is more relevant than ever in the 21st century," said Shirley Mullen, president.

Lake Forest C. Enrolls Students from 39

Countries. Lake Forest C. in Illinois enrolled 422 first-year and 74 transfer students from a pool of 2,700 applicants. Forty-six percent of the Class of 2018 comes from outside of Illinois, and from 39 countries. Their high school grade-point average was 3.67, with 50 percent graduating in the top 20 percent of their high school class.

Rutgers U. Increases Number of Out-of-

State Students. Rutgers U. in New Jersey, now a member of the Big Ten conference, enrolled a first-year class of 7,850 students, as well as 4,400 transfer students at its campuses across the state. About 12 percent of the incoming student body comes from out-of-state, 6 percent more than last year, according to *Rutgers Today*. International students come from 100 nations, led by students from China, India and South Korea. The average SAT score was 1808, 310 points higher than the national average. Across the three major campuses, 58 percent of the incoming students ranked in the top 20 percent of their high school.

The U. of Scranton's Class is Its Largest.

The U. of Scranton in Pennsylvania welcomed 1,086 new students, the school's largest first-year class. This year's applicant pool numbered 9,394 students, the second-largest in the school's history. The new class has an average SAT score of 1125. Students of color represent nearly 17 percent of the new class. Some 80 students are legacies.

Thomas More's Class Size Increases.

Thomas More, a Catholic college in Kentucky, welcomed a first-year class of 340 students, one of its largest. According to Kristi Lehmer, executive director of enrollment manage-

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schools across the country.

"While it's good news that the default rate decreased from last year, the number of students who default on their federal student loans is still too high," said Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

The Dept. of Ed has introduced a new financial aid counseling tool to help borrowers manage their debt and repay their loans, and new details on flexible loan repayment plans that allow borrowers to repay loans based on their income. Currently, more than 2.5 million Direct Loan borrowers are enrolled in an income-driven repayment plan. See, <https://www.studentaid.ed.gov/>.

Yet Default Rates Rise in Idaho.

Public four-year universities are bucking the decline in defaults with an increase in the percentage of students defaulting on their student loans, according to the *Idahostatesman.com*. Idaho State U. increased from 13.7 percent to 15 percent for the cohort of students in 2010 to 2011. By 2013, Boise State U. defaults increased from 10 percent to 11.4, still below the national average. The U. of Idaho increased

ment, new students have been drawn by More's new athletic training major, marine biology track, experiential learning requirement and a new textbook initiative which eliminates out-of-pocket costs for textbooks. President David Armstrong said Thomas More C. places a priority on affordability and quality education.

Vassar C. is Now One of the Most Diverse.

Vassar C. in New York was identified recently by *The New York Times* as the most financially diverse college or university in the nation. About 23 percent of Vassar students qualified for Pell Grants from 2012 to 2014.

Washington & Lee U. Awards Aid to 47 Percent of Students.

Washington & Lee U. admitted 239 women and 230 men from a pool of 5,801 applicants. International students come from 18 nations. The average SAT scores for the admitted class topped 700 in critical reading and in math for the first time. The average ACT score was a record 32. Almost 95 percent of the new class completed Advanced Placement courses or the International Baccalaureate degree. W & L also enrolled 29 National Merit Scholars.

A record 47 percent will receive direct financial aid from W&L, averaging \$42,980, none of which comes in the form of loans. And 15 percent of the Class of 2018, or 68 students, will receive a full tuition scholarship as part of the W&L Promise for students whose family income is less than \$75,000, according to *The Augusta Free Press*.

from 7.5 percent to 8.3 percent. But community colleges in the state posted default rates of 20 percent. The reason? According to state officials, students leave school with high debts and end up in low-paying jobs. "Our economy hasn't always been the best over the last few years," said Dan Davenport, student financial aid director at the U. of Idaho.

Borrowing Gap. Half of black college graduates from 2000-2014 report graduating with more than \$25,000 in undergraduate student loan debt. That compares to 34 percent of recent white graduates reporting similar levels of debt, revealing a large borrowing gap between the races, according to the inaugural Gallup-Purdue Index, a joint research effort between Purdue U. and the Lumina Foundation. About 22 percent of black college graduates leave school with no debt, compared to 39 percent of white college graduates.

New State Resources. College-bound students from the Hoosier state can find useful tips and resources at www.CashForCollegeIndiana.org. And Illinois students should check out collegezone.com to learn about the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. ■

Williams C. Aid Matters. *The Williams Record* took a look inside the college's financial aid program this month and reported that 50 percent of the student body receives financial aid. The comprehensive tuition fee is \$61,070. But "the average award is \$47,500, or 78 percent of tuition charges," the paper said.

"Economic diversity is the single most important commitment that the College has to the student body," said President Adam Falk.

The Class of 2018 includes 266 males and 251 females. Of the 6,316 students who applied, 1,150 were accepted. Other stats: 32 students were admitted through QuestBridge, an organization that identifies, high-achieving students from low-income families; 46 students represented 29 different countries and at least eight students were taking a gap year.

Yale U. Boasts of New Diversity.

Yale's Class of 2018 is the most diverse in its history. Among the 1,361 new arrivals, 38 percent are students of color, 14 percent are first-generation college students and 16 percent are Pell Grant recipients, while 12 percent are legacy students, or the sons and daughters of alumni. The freshman class includes students from 56 foreign countries, more than ever.

About 40 percent of the freshmen intend to study science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM). *Of note:* The primary language of 37 percent is one other than English.

P.S. Mercyhurst U. in Erie, Pennsylvania, announced it will omit standardized test scores as a requirement of admission. ■

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fee, it provides students with a “best fit” list of colleges.

Making a splash was chegg.com, based in Santa Clara, California. It touts its own “College Admissions Counselors,” an on-demand service priced at \$24 an hour. It also has an online tutoring portal called InstaEDU priced at 40 cents a minute. Chegg recently acquired zinich.com, which sells the names of students interested in specific schools and sponsors free webinars.

Others included: PrepTalk.com which links recruiters with students via webcasts; CollegeWeekLive.com, featuring live chats between interested students and admissions officers; Uiversity.com that helps schools communicate with students who have not yet made their final decision and BlueFuego.com which creates interactive web pages for colleges.

New Student Survey. Spark451, another college marketing company at NACAC, conducted a survey of 3,000 college-bound students to find their “preferred method of communication.” It found that the majority of students use a college’s website, online applications and email. Fifty-four percent said they used Facebook in their college selection process, followed by Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. Ninety percent regularly use a Smartphone on an everyday basis.

If students have a question, they get their answers from the school website followed by the admissions officer and guidance counselor, in that order. And 81 percent of students applied to at least three schools while 16 percent applied to 10 or more. *Of note:* Students prefer to receive letters. Yes, via the U.S. Post Office. See, www.spark451.com.

Gap Year Interest Increases. To accommodate the increasing student interest in taking a gap year, a number of organizations were at NACAC to announce they are expanding their programs. With Gap Force, founded in 1989, and based in England, students now can volunteer in a marine conservation program in Fiji and the Bahamas or in wildlife protection in Borneo. They can serve as a medical volunteer overseas or in local hospitals. Other programs are in South East Asia or South America. See, www.gapforce.org.

Rustic Pathways, founded 31 years ago, is based in Canton, Ohio. It also provides gap year experiences for one month to nine months in 19 countries. See, www.rusticpathways.com.

And Outward Bound, over 50 years old and based in Asheville, North Carolina, has added new programs in a variety of states and in Costa Rica, Ecuador and Patagonia ranging from 30-day to 85-day courses. (Its also added new programs for veterans and grieving teens.) See, www.outwardbound.org.

Clearing the Air on International Recruiting. Shortly before the conference, NACAC issued a much-awaited publication, “International

Student Recruitment Agencies: A Guide for Schools, Colleges and Universities.” It is a topic that was much-discussed at last year’s convention. The guide is designed to help institutions that use commissioned agents to recruit international students. Among the chapters: “About International Student Recruitment Agencies,” “Legal Requirements and Accreditation Standards,” “Contracts,” “Vetting” and “Signs of Good Practice and Warning Signs.” To download the guide, see www.nacacnet.org/International/Documents/IntlStudentRecruitment.pdf.

What is the Profile of High-Achieving Students? High-achieving “millennials” are likely to be involved in volunteerism and 80 percent expect to attend graduate school. Nearly 21 percent are fluent in Spanish and they are most interested in majoring in medical and health-related fields, sciences, engineering/technology, business and psychology. They expect to work in medicine and health-related fields, sciences, engineering/technology and business. While only 8 percent want to major in the arts, media or entertainment, 14 percent expect to work in those fields. Only 4 percent plan to major in political science, but 10 percent plan to work for the government or in politics. And but 5 percent plan to major in education, although 11 percent plan to work in an education field. These and other stats were released in a survey by The National Society of High School Scholars, an international honor society for students with a GPA of 3.5 and above that was founded in 2002 and is based in Atlanta. It surveyed over 12,000 students and young professionals with nearly 80 percent of respondents in high school. See, www.nshss.org.

PEOPLE AT NACAC WERE TALKING ABOUT...

The Common App Change. The Common Application, used by 549 colleges worldwide, has dropped the requirement that its members conduct a “holistic” review of applications. That means the Common App will no longer require that members use admissions essays or recommendations. “Our membership has said unequivocally that we must do more to increase access,” Paul Mott, the Common App’s acting CEO, told *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. “And this is reducing the barriers to access and pointless friction.” The changes are effective with the 2015-16 admissions cycle.

Goucher C. in the Headlines. Goucher C. in Virginia was in the news for becoming the first college in the nation to create a video application option that is not a supplement. Beginning this application cycle, students can forgo submitting transcripts, test scores or recommendations in exchange for a two-minute video about how they see themselves flourishing in college. “Access to higher education should be about potential and not just previous achievement,” said Goucher President José A. Bowen. “With the Goucher Video App, we want to attract capable, passionate students who want a liberal arts education...” ■

THE COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

What new publications were on display at NACAC?

Ahead of the Curve: What Parents Need to Know to Get Their Kids Into College, Amber C. Saunders; ISBN-10:0768938715; \$14.95. And, *Writing Successful College Applications*, Cynthia

Clumeck Muchnick; ISBN-10:0768938890; \$16.95. Both from Peterson’s at <http://www.petersonsbooks.com>.

If the U Fits by Kevin McMullin and Robert Franek focuses on strategies for completing applications with advice from COLLEGEWISE.

(The Princeton Review, 2014); ISBN: 978-0-804-12471-3; \$14.99.

My College Guide is a publication for “high-achieving, college-bound high school students.” Recent articles include “Paying for College Without Breaking the Bank” and “Study Abroad.” Different issues printed for regions and by grade. For info, see, www.mycollegeguide.org. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

New Bryn Mawr Bio Major. Bryn Mawr C. in Pennsylvania has introduced a new biochemistry and molecular biology major, and an interdepartmental partnership between the biology and chemistry departments. "Biochemistry has really become its own field distinct from chemistry and biology," said chemistry professor Susan White, who led the drive to create the new program.

Belmont C. Sings a New Tune. Belmont C. in Tennessee, which educates 6,900 students, has added a major in music therapy, the only one of its kind in the state. The new field of study will combine classroom work in general education, music and music therapy, as well as a six-month internship. The degree will qualify graduates to sit for the board certification exam. Practitioners use music for a variety of therapeutic purposes, including pain management, pediatrics, geriatrics, psychiatric practice, special education, hospice care and more.

Belmont's other new undergraduate major is in publishing. The school consulted publishing industry executives to create a program that includes literary editing, marketing and publicity. Majors will also participate in a year-long internship. Nashville is the second largest publishing market in the nation.

Aloha Astronomy and Astrophysics. The U. of Hawaii Manoa's College of Natural

Sciences has added a BA degree in astronomy and a BS degree in astrophysics. "Hawaii has some of the best astronomical observatories in the world," said Guenther Hasinger, director of the Institute for Astronomy, referring to Hawaii's array of world-class telescopes.

100 Percent Job Placement. Niagara U.'s College of Hospitality & Tourism, established in 1968, boasts a 100 percent job placement record. Niagara was also the first school in the U.S. to offer a Bachelor of Tourism degree. Now, students can earn a dual degree with a partner university in Bad Honnef, Germany, during a study year abroad. And, the program offers internship possibilities.

Logistics Education. Florida State C. is now offering a Bachelors of Applied Science in logistics, or how to plan, coordinate and ensure that goods and services get from point A to point B. Students learn about subjects ranging from supply chain management, logistics technologies and global operations to financial management, strategic transportation and regulation compliance. They also develop writing and critical thinking skills and apply analytic abilities needed for the complexities involved in this field.

New BA Degree in Nursing. The U. of Illinois will begin offering at bachelor's

degree in nursing at the U. of I's Springfield campus next August. Why? "As Springfield's medical district grows, there is a demand for highly qualified nurses in the area," said UIS Chancellor Susan Koch. The four-year program will be "highly competitive" and provide scholarships.

Business Intelligence and Marketing Analytics. Yeshiva U. in New York City has introduced a new Business Intelligence and Marketing Analytics major this fall. The new curriculum is designed to give students flexibility and options as they design an educational experience tailored to their career interests. "There's a recognition now that we are all entrepreneurs of our own careers," said Moses Pava, dean of the business school. The program will put an "emphasis on communications skills, critical thinking, functional skills, entrepreneurial leadership, professionalism, social responsibility and ethics...." ■

Scholarship Scoops

Updates on Annual Scholarships. The Elks Most Valuable Student scholars graduate from college at a rate of 90 percent, 40 percent higher than the national average. This year's competition for 500 national winners closes Dec. 5. Applicants do not need to be related to an Elks member. For more info, go to www.elks.org/enf/scholars.

And, up to 40 scholarships worth as much as \$40,000 will be awarded again this year by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. Since 2000, the foundation has awarded \$125 million in scholarships to 1,800 students. Deadline: Nov. 4. See, www.jkcf.org/scholarships/college-scholarship-program/.

Lawrence U.'s \$25 million. Lawrence U. in Wisconsin just received an anonymous \$25 million gift, which will go entirely towards an endowed scholarship fund and will eventually allow for the support of 50 scholarship students. Roughly 60 percent of "Lawrentians" receive an average of \$35,600 in merit-based aid each year. "We are an extraordinary place," said Mark Burstein, president, as he noted how the gift will help future students.

Stop Hunger Scholarships. Five national scholarships of \$5,000 each will be awarded to students who are involved in initiatives to stop hunger. Another \$5,000 will be given to an anti-hunger charity of choice. Deadline: Dec. 5. See, <http://sodexofoundation.org/>. ■

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

London on Top. London has the most top rated universities in the world, five of the top global 100, according to QS World University Rankings. Imperial College London ranks second along with Cambridge U., while University College London ties with Oxford U. at fifth. King's College London ranks 16, London School of Economics ranks 71, Queen Mary University of London ranks 98. "These rankings consolidate London's position as the education capital of the world," said Mayor of London Boris Johnson.

Top Entrepreneur Schools. The Princeton Review and *Entrepreneur Magazine* named their top 50 schools for entrepreneurship programs. The top 15 undergraduate programs? Babson C., U. of Houston, Baylor U., Brigham Young U., U. of Oklahoma, Syracuse U., Northeastern U., U. of Southern California, Baruch C. (CCNY), Miami U., Temple U., U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, U. of Dayton, Clarkson U. and Depaul U.

Predictors of Success. The College and Career Readiness and Success Center at the American Institutes for Research has studied characteristics that predict future academic and workplace success.

Not surprisingly, the predictors include: literacy by third grade, good attendance in middle school and achieving a 3.0 or higher GPA in high school.

See www.ccrscenter.org.

Best Dining. Cappex.com surveyed 1.4 million students at 2,000 colleges and universities to find this year's list of "Best College Food." The top 15? Bowdoin C. (ME), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State U., Hendrix C. (AK), St. Olaf C. (MN), Scripps C. (CA), Roger Williams U. (VA), James Madison U. (VA), Culinary Institute of America (NY), California Baptist U., Maranatha Baptist Bible C. (WI), Cornell U. (NY), William Jessup U. (CA), Wheaton C. (IL), Washington U. in St. Louis and St. Norbert C. (WI). ■

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