

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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THE GREENE REPORT

Taking Time Out Before College

IF YOU'VE WORKED WITH STUDENTS FOR A WHILE, you might share our concerns about students heading to college for all the wrong reasons, or perhaps no reason at all. And you might have similar experiences with students failing to complete or take advantage of their first year, or realizing they want to transfer to a more suitable institution. We have long advocated gap years for students, and have found recently that interest in, and openness to, taking some time out before college has been rising.

The Gap Year Association defines a gap year as: "A semester or year of experiential learning, typically taken after high school and prior to career or post-secondary education, in order to deepen one's practical, professional and personal awareness."

So let's focus on this group of "traditional" college-bound students, and their parents, in our discussion of gap planning. As primary caregivers, and funders, of most of these students' college educations, parents play a significant role in encouraging, or prohibiting, consideration of gap years. Counselors and admissions officers can play an essential role in educating families about gap years, and how they are viewed by colleges.

ADDRESSING FEARS ABOUT GAP YEAR

Many parents express strong fears and doubts. They worry about the cost of gap programs, or about students sitting at home doing nothing productive. They worry that a student will never go to college at all if he or she gets off the path. And, many feel that colleges won't understand why a student chooses a gap year. Was there a problem?

Counselors often share some of those wor-

ries, but conversely, are often the ones who notice students who are burned out, or not socially or academically ready for college or desperate to pursue a passion of some kind before starting college. And admissions officers often see the benefits of students arriving on campus more mature, worldly, focused and excited about college study. Indeed, more colleges are offering programs, providing resources for and expressing openness to gap years.

For example, Dartmouth College says it "fully supports students who wish to take a gap year, or a service year, before enrolling. Many of our students have accomplished great things, expanded their experiences and energized their hunger for learning during a gap or a service year."

Princeton provides funding for international service. And Middlebury admits part of its first-year class for February saying, "The students who enroll here in February typically bring more to their college experience and, as a result, derive more from it...."

CATEGORIES OF GAP YEARS

1. First is a Deferral Year, during which a student who is admitted to a college of his or her choice, puts down a deposit by May 1, and asks to defer entrance for a semester or year, or possibly two years to allow for compulsory military or national service. Families are often not aware that deferring entrance is allowable, and are quite confused by the use of "deferral" in an Early Action/Decision context, so they need to be informed about this concept.

Those deferring may take advantage of college-sponsored, affiliated or recognized pro-

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Financial Matters

Fewer Parents Save For College. Only 70 percent of parents save money for college, down from 72 percent two years ago, according to a recent Fidelity study. Only 29 percent of parents plan to pay the full price of their children's college education, down from 43 percent two years ago. On average, parents now expect to pay about 62 percent of the total cost, down from 70 percent two years ago.

The average in-state tuition, fees and room and board at a four-year public college in 2017-18 was \$20,770, according to the College Board. For out-of-state students, the price tag was \$36,420. At private nonprofit institutions, the average price tag was \$46,950.

How America Pays For College. Meanwhile, Sallie Mae's new report, "How America Pays for College 2018," found that an average family paid \$26,458 for college in 2017-18. "Three quarters of college funds came from sources other than student loans. Nearly half of college costs, 47 percent, were paid out of pocket with parents' and students' income and savings. Scholarships and grants paid 28 percent of college costs, and loans cover 24 percent of college costs." About three in five families use scholarships, grants and parent incomes.

"The data suggests that scholarships, the vast majority of which are issued by the colleges themselves, are one of the most valuable means of helping families pay for college; last year, these funds paid for almost a fifth of the total cost of college," said Julia Clark, senior vice president of Ipsos, an independent global marketing research company. "Still, about a

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FINANCIAL MATTERS

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third of families do not even apply for scholarships, showing that there still is significant opportunities for families to defray the cost of college.”

AID AROUND THE STATES

Dream Fund. Colorado Mountain C. has launched a special financial aid initiative to help “Dreamers” with tuition, fees and books. Currently, 10 students are enrolled in this year’s pilot program. Students agreed to repay 4 percent of future earnings over a maximum period of 60 months after they graduate

Hawaii Gears Up. In September, *CB* reported on the new Hawaii Promise scholarship program. Now, the U. of Hawaii has received a \$39 million federal Gear Up (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grant to help an estimated 25,000 students over the next seven years.

“Our vision is to continue to support middle and high schools with programs that enable students to complete high school, navigate the college application and financing process, enroll in college without the need of remediation and be prepared for living-wage careers,” said Angela Jackson, Gear Up Hawaii project director. “It will also focus on creating stronger career pathway alignment, developing a counseling model for middle school through college and improving financial literacy programs to support low-income students to prepare for and succeed in college.”

Maryland’s SmartSave. At the direction of Governor Larry Hogan, Maryland created a new website to help residents more easily find information about college financing and student debt. The site features material on grants, scholarships, tuition waivers and more.

Pennsylvania Forward Student Loan Program. The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency is launching the PA Forward Student Loan Program, to begin in the 2019-20 academic year, for student borrowers. Students can obtain loans at “an exceptionally competitive fixed-interest rate to fulfill unmet needs after exhausting federal student loans, scholarships, grants, institutional aid and their parents’ ability to help.” Students could save thousands of dollars over the life of a loan.

Rhode2College. The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, founded by Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan, has launched a new program called Rhode2College. The aim is to help Rhode Island students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and also scored well on the 10th-grade PSAT to earn money by completing certain tasks on

the road to college. For example, students can earn money by studying for the SAT through the Khan Academy. Students can earn up to \$2,000 for college.

“Together, we will provide Rhode Island students with resources and personalized learning, while modeling a different approach to financial aid linked to college readiness,” said Governor Gina Raimondo.

Carlow Confronts Nursing Shortage. Carlow

U., a private Catholic school in Pittsburgh, received a \$150,000 grant from Health Resources and Services Administration to provide student loan forgiveness for graduate nursing students who become nurse educators after graduation.

P.S. Working Students. According to a new study by HSBC Bank, nearly 85 percent of college students work while enrolled in school. ■

Admission Watch

Baldwin Wallace Confronts Declining Demographics. Baldwin Wallace U. in Ohio welcomed 607 liberal arts students and 73 Conservatory of Music students to its Class of 2022. While most of its students come from Ohio, a total of 32 states sent students, with Pennsylvania, New York and Florida leading the way.

Scott Schulz, vice president for enrollment management, told *The Exponent* that the diminishing pool of Midwestern high school graduates means BW must find additional ways to attract new students without lowering its standards. “We decided to hold the line, be who we are, keep our academic profile, and stay true to what we represent. We worked to enhance faculty connections with prospective students...hearing personally from the professor is encouraging.”

Boston U. Admitted 22 Percent. Boston U. matriculated 3,620 students this fall into its Class of 2022. They were selected from the largest pool in university history, 64,482 applicants, and 6 percent more than last year. That translated to an admit rate of 22 percent, the lowest in university history.

The average SAT score of new students is 1421 out of a possible 1600. Their average ACT score is 31. Their average high school GPA was 3.71. And 17 percent of the new class comes from underrepresented minority groups. Asian-Americans make up 17.6 percent of the new class, Hispanics, 10.2 percent and African-Americans, 6.3 percent. More than 17 percent come from low-income families.

Students hail from 48 states and 67 countries, with China, India, South Korea, Canada and Taiwan sending the most students.

This year’s yield is 27.6 percent. “Students are seeing and believing and saying yes to all the qualities that make BU a world-class university,” said Kelly Walter, associate vice president and dean of admissions.

Purdue U. Fort Wayne Sees 17 percent Increase. This fall, 2,314 new undergraduate students enrolled at Purdue U. Fort Wayne, nearly 18 percent more than last year. The increase came despite the transfer of its health services programs to Indiana U., the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel* reported. Overall, undergraduate

enrollment rose by 20 percent and graduate enrollment jumped by 28 percent. PUFW students come from 32 states and 49 countries.

School officials said that a new financial aid strategy that broadens the distribution of aid to beginner and transfer students, aggressive recruitment including phone calls to prospective students and a tuition model that supports full-time undergraduate students, contributed to the results.

“We set some very high enrollment goals going into our inaugural academic year as Purdue University Fort Wayne,” Ronald L. Elsenbaumer, chancellor, told the paper. “I’m thrilled that we not only met those goals, but exceeded them.”

Southern Cal Admits 13 Percent. The U. of Southern California received a record 64,000 applications this year, by far the most in USC history. It admitted a record low 13 percent. Some 3,400 of them matriculated this fall, and nearly 780 of them arrived with perfect high school GPAs. Californians make up the largest group of new students.

About 25 percent of the new class identifies as members of underrepresented minority groups, 17 percent is first generation. Two-thirds of all students receive some form of financial aid. China, India, Canada, South Korea and the United Kingdom sent 330 students to USC.

“We’re seeing a remarkably strong match between the students we select for admission and those who decide to join the Trojan family,” said Timothy Brunold, dean of admission.

Wisconsin’s Largest First-Year Class. The U. of Wisconsin-Madison welcomed its largest first-year class, 6,862 new students, and 3.8 percent more than last year. They were drawn from the highest number of applicants ever, 42,741, up more than 7,000 from last year. Wisconsin families sent 3,659 students.

Some 748 of the new class come from underrepresented students of color, or 10.9 percent of the class. The freshman class has 595 international students, who traveled from 43 countries outside the U.S. Total enrollment at UW-Madison grew to 44,413 students, 30,361 of whom are undergraduates. Among them are 1,141 transfer students. ■

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grams such as Princeton's Bridge Year or Tufts' Tisch 1+4 program. Many colleges provide lists of these programs on their websites. That should be a first stop for an admitted student considering a deferral gap year.

2. Another type of gap year is for a student who either didn't get accepted to a college or university that he or she is excited about, or who chose not to apply in the first place. We have worked with many students who needed extra time to recover from physical illness or injury; mental health crises; family challenges such as divorce, illness, death, job loss or moves; or discovery of learning or attention issues. These students need the time and space to build and show their readiness for college.

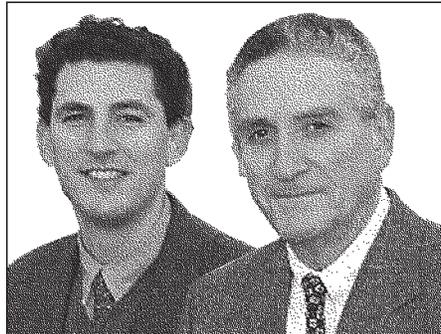
They might choose a highly-structured Post-Graduate (PG) boarding school program, a series of programs, work, volunteer options, local college classes or these in some combination.

3. For students who have been admitted to colleges and have chosen one to attend, they might have nagging doubts about whether to enroll in the upcoming fall. Most colleges will grant a deferral, especially if a student has a plan in place which he or she outlines in a letter requesting the deferral, or in subsequent communications.

With this type of gap year, students can choose activities without regard to their impact on future prospects for college admissions. If students are beginning their college planning with a deferral year option already in mind, they should research college policies on granting deferrals as they build their initial college list.

4. When students do not have a college option in hand, or when they have options they are not excited about, they must plan the year after high school as a chance to grow, explore and improve their chances for admission to a college for the following fall. They might apply to some of the same colleges that didn't admit them first time around. They will likely add new schools to their list.

5. Other impetuses for gap years are initiated by the colleges. More institutions are offering admission mid-year or after a full gap year, encouraging students to enroll in one of their programs or to find another suitable group of activities. But colleges typically stipu-



Matthew and Howard Greene

late that deferral students may not enroll for full-time study at another institution or apply to other colleges. Thus, at some point, typically by December or January, deferral students who change their mind should be advised to announce to a college at which they have placed an enrollment deposit, and which has granted them a deferral, that they are applying to other colleges. In this case, the college will likely withdraw the offer of admission, and ask a student to reapply and show enough interest to be considered a serious applicant anew. By this point, the student may have decided this is

not the right college after all.

A gap year can include many exciting possibilities. Most students will want to break the year into several chunks of time with more or less structured experiences in each. Some will commit full time to a program such as Americorps (America's national service program) or a job. Students can choose to study abroad for a semester or more, travel on their own, secure an internship in an area of interest or take classes part-time at a local community college while working or volunteering in the area. Some students we have worked with have enrolled full-time in an arts-oriented program, such as the American Academy of Dramatic Arts or Berklee School of Music in order to explore a talent and determine whether it will be their major field of interest.

We have had students commit to a high-level athletic endeavor, such as ice hockey, Olympic sailing or a serious tennis academy in order to bring up their athletic skills and prepare for college recruiting. Students have finished novels, joined Broadway level shows, biked across Europe or connected to a year of internships through an organization such as Dynamy. Not all gap year options are super expensive, and many offer financial support.

There is really no end to the possibilities for a gap year. With good foresight students can structure an exciting and productive year that will in all likelihood lead to being readier and more capable for college success. Counselors can play an important role in bringing these kinds of stories and opportunities to the attention of students and parents through website resource lists, college night talks, email communications and personal meetings. ■

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COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

Affordability Ranking. College Consensus is a new college ranking website that "aggregates publisher rankings and student reviews." It's "100 Most Affordable Colleges & Universities of 2018" can be found at www.collegeconsensus.com/rankings/most-affordable-schools/.

The 10 most affordable schools in its ranking, by alphabetical order, are: Alcorn State U., Brigham Young U.-Idaho, Brigham Young U.-Hawaii, Brigham Young U.-Provo,

Dickinson State U., Midwestern State U., United States Merchant Marine Academy, U. of Texas-Permian Basin, West Texas A & M U. and Youngstown State U.

Internships in Demand. According to the National Association of Colleges and the Employers, 62 percent of 2017 college grads had an internship.

One place to find those internships is

InternAlliance.com, an online platform that connects students looking for internships in small-size companies that offer them. It advises college students to begin looking for internships as soon as possible.

Paying for College 2019 by Kalman A. Chany with Geoff Martz; updated and features line-by-line strategies with worksheets to calculate "Expected Family Contributions"; (Penguin Random House, Princeton Review Books); ISBN: 978-0-525-56755-4; \$22.99; see, www.princetonreview.com. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Augusta's Cybersecurity Engineering Program. Augusta U. in Georgia launched a cybersecurity engineering program that integrates cybersecurity principles in design, construction and use of secure systems for both software and hardware.

Additionally, AU will begin two other programs, a BS in cyber operations, and a BS in cyber security. All of the programs meet NSA and Department of Homeland Security specifications for a cyber defense education.

"The demand for highly qualified cyber security professionals continues to grow..." said Gretchen Caughman, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.

Aviation Mechanics. The nation faces a looming critical shortage of aviation mechanics. It's a trade field that keeps the plane safely flying and in which women are a distinct minority. The Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics' (PIA) survey of its own students found that about half of the school's female students explored a different career path before gravitating to aeronautics. And nearly every respondent urged high school guidance counselors to provide their students with more information about trade schools in addition to more "traditional" options.

"The reasons are countless to encourage females of every age and background to seek out and excel in career fields that have been

previously affiliated with male roles," said Suzanne Markle, CEO of Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics. "And if solving a critical labor shortage isn't incentive enough, experts have suggested that encouraging females in fields such as aviation can have significant economic impact."

The Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics was opened in 1927 by Glenn Curtiss and Orville Wright. Today, PIA offers programs in aviation maintenance and aviation electronics.

Christopher Newport's New Neuroscience Degree. Christopher Newport U. in Virginia has begun offering a new BS degree in neuroscience. Students will take courses such as brain and cognition, neurobiology and memory, neuroanatomy and a senior seminar in neuroscience.

Mercy's Clinical Laboratory Science. Mercy C., with campuses in Dobbs Ferry, the Bronx, Manhattan and Yorktown Heights, New York, now offers a clinical laboratory science program. CLS "is a four-year program, with three years of general education, basic and advanced science courses, followed by a clinical year that combines professional internships at regional hospital laboratories with didactic coursework."

"Currently, there is a shortage of trained medical clinical diagnostic scientists available

to staff laboratories and this degree provides a fantastic pipeline to a successful career."

National Louis U. Adds Culinary/Hospitality Tracks. National Louis University in Chicago has absorbed five degree programs from Kendall C. These include: baking & pastry, business, early childhood education and hospitality management. About 800 students will transfer to NUL. "NUL is looking forward to preserving the legacy of Kendall College's well-known programs..." said Nivine Megahed, president, National Louis.

Washington C. & Georgetown Partner In Biomedical Sciences. Washington C. in Maryland has partnered with Georgetown U. Medical Center to send its students interested in a master's degree in a range of biomedical sciences and research to study in the nation's capital. The partnership allows qualified Washington graduates to receive a partial tuition scholarship for any master's program offered by Georgetown's Biomedical Graduate Education.

For pre-med students, this partnership provides an opportunity for additional training before applying to medical school," said Mindy Reynolds, co-chair of the Department of Biology at Washington. "But the breath of the programs also enables our students to launch a career in health-related biomedical science and research. For instance, earning a master's in bioinformatics would prepare a student to do high-level data analysis in a research lab." ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Common Application Merges with Reach Higher. The Common Application, the non-profit that runs a global online admission platform used by more than 800 colleges and universities, has merged with Reach Higher, the college access program launched by Michelle Obama. The merger was announced at this year's annual conference of the National Association for College Admission Counseling. The goal is to increase college access and the number of students who apply to college and to "bring joy to the application process."

"One of the first things we want to tackle is the question of why some students do not complete applications," Jenny Rickard, president and chief executive of the Common Application, told *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

MBA Applications Fall. According to a survey of 1,087 graduate business programs, conducted by the Graduate Management Admission Council, applications to full-time

MBA programs in the U.S. declined at 70 percent of the programs. Harvard's business school recorded a 4.5 percent decline, Stanford's experienced a 4.6 decline and applications to Wharton fell by 6.7 percent.

"With change to the booming economy in the United States and the shortage of managerial talent, many prospective students just can't justify the tuition costs and the lack of flexibility in most MBA programs," said Laura Pogue, dean of the Deming Graduate School of Business at William Howard Taft U., an online school. William Howard Taft has seen enrollment continue to grow, in part because one of its MBA programs costs less than \$6,200.

Teens & Social Media. The social media use by American teenagers has shifted in the past four years since the Pew Research Center last surveyed them. Now, 95 percent of teens have a smart phone or have access to one, up 73 percent. And 45 percent of the teens say they are "online on a near constant basis."

In the Center's 2014-2015 survey, 71 percent of teens reported that they were Facebook users. In the 2018 survey, only 51 percent of teens say they use Facebook. Now, 85 percent of teens are YouTube users, while 72 percent use Instagram, 69 percent use SnapChat and 32 percent use Twitter. The survey found that lower-income teens are more likely to use Facebook. Some 31 percent surveyed feel that social media has had a "mostly positive effect" on people their age. But 45 percent say the impact is "neither positive or negative," while 24 percent feel that it has had "a mostly negative affect."

Private School Advantage? According to CollegeVine, a Cambridge-based mentorship, test prep and admission advisory company, private school secondary students have a 35 percent better chance of being admitted to one of the top 100 colleges and universities. The conclusion is based on data collected from over 2,000 students. ■

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