

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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New Admissions Initiatives

A NUMBER OF COLLEGES announced this fall that they were starting new initiatives to increase the size of their freshman class and bolster standards for admissions. Here are a few examples:

\$24 Million to Grow MIT's Student Body.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology plans to raise its enrollment over the next three years, with at least 80 new students added in fall 2011. The overall goal is to expand the number of MIT undergraduates by 250 to 4,500 students.

An alumnus, Fariborz Maseeh and his Massiah Foundation, recently gave \$24 million to the Cambridge, Massachusetts, school to

increase the size of its undergraduate student body. The Massiah money will be used also to create a 460-student residence hall that will include a dining hall, indoor and outdoor gathering space and rooms for graduate resident tutors and residential scholars.

"Our world and especially our nation need more MIT graduates," said Maseeh. "We are losing the opportunity to train many qualified and bright minds due to MIT's undergraduate capacity constraints... The economic multiplier on this investment is very high."

MIT began a "Campaign for Students" in 2008 to raise \$500 million to fund more scholarships and fellowships and expand student life

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Enrollment Trends

More Aid to Princeton's Large Incoming Class. Princeton U.'s class of 2014 is the largest in its history. Of the 26,247 applications for this fall, Princeton admitted 2,311 students, or 8.8 percent, the lowest acceptance rate ever.

Of these, 1,313 students enrolled. Among the incoming students, 768 (58 percent) were given some form of financial aid, including \$27 million in scholarships. The average grant was \$35,157. (Princeton's "no-loan" policy was adopted in 2001.) Almost 16 percent of the class, or 208 students, come from low-income families. Additionally, Princeton's first-year class has a record number, 490 students of color, or 37 percent.

Princeton plans to expand its undergraduate student body by 11 percent to 5,200 students by the 2012-2013 school year.

Yale's First-Year Class. Yale C.'s class of 2014 includes 1,344 students, chosen from 25,869 applications. The student backgrounds: 56 percent went to public high school, 11 percent are international students from 58 countries and 36 percent are students of color.

About 59 percent receive need-blind financial aid, with an average grant of \$35,700, or 75 percent of the cost of tuition, room and board and fees.

A Surge at Fresno Pacific. Fresno Pacific U.'s enrollment numbers soared to a record high this fall because of the tough economy and budget cuts at public universities, according to *The Fresno Bee*. The private school enrolled 3,314 students, up from 2,649 last year. Fresno Pacific's enrollment is the largest increase at private institutions across the country, according to Tony Pals, director of communications, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Steve Varis, vice president for enrollment management, Fresno Pacific, explained that one factor affecting enrollment is the budget cuts in California. Some students are having trouble getting into classes or meeting admissions standards at public colleges. With many people returning to school because they were laid-off, there was a 37 percent enrollment

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Financial Aid Flash

Student Debt Continues to Rise. Students who graduated from college in 2009 had \$24,000 in student loans on average, up six percent from the previous year, said a new report from the Project on Student Debt released last month. At the same time, unemployment for recent college grads grew from 5.8 percent to 8.7 percent in 2009.

Students from New Hampshire and the District of Columbia had the most debt, \$29,443 and \$30,033. Students in Utah and Georgia had the lowest. The report also listed high- and low-debt colleges. To make comparisons, state-by-state and among more than 1,000 colleges, see http://projectonstudentdebt.org/state_by_state-data.php.

Tuition Climbs; So Does Financial Aid. State funding and endowments declined in the 2009-10 school year, but college prices climbed in 2010, according to a new report out end of October from the College Board.

Trends in College Pricing 2010 said that the "average price of tuition and fees for in-state students at four-year public colleges in the U.S. is \$7,605 for 2010-11, \$555 higher than a year ago." Private four-year colleges cost on average \$27,293, \$1,164 over last year or a 4.5 percent increase. To access the report, see www.collegeboard.com/trends.

Dept. of Ed Established New Student Aid Rules. On October 28, the Federal government released new rules aimed at strengthening student aid programs and protecting students from misleading recruiting practices.

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ENROLLMENT TRENDS

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jump at the school's degree-completion program aimed at adults.

In addition, Fresno Pacific has less expensive tuition (\$23,640 for full-time students) than many other nearby private institutions. The school also increased its financial aid.

PUBLIC PICTURES

While some question whether colleges are really seeing more applications, the picture at public institutions "speaks a thousand words." States are reporting record numbers of students showing up on their campuses, not always with welcoming arms.

Strong Enrollment Numbers in the State of Northern Lights. The U. of Alaska Southeast's applications and enrollment numbers are growing faster than other schools in the state, according to the *Anchorage Daily News*. Chancellor John Pugh explained that the economy, the increased quality of UAS academics and lower tuition growth all played a role in the enrollment increase. Also, the number of U. of Alaska Scholars, top students from every Alaska high school who are receiving a state-funded scholarship, nearly doubled at UAS this year.

The UA Juneau campus saw a 9 percent rise in enrollment and an 11.9 percent increase in credit hours. The UA system posted an overall 4.2 percent growth in student enrollment, and a 4.9 percent increase in credit hours.

High Enrollment in Arizona. Arizona's institutions of higher education have seen undergraduate enrollment almost double over the last decade, according to a recent *Arizona Daily Wildcat*. Enrollment at the U. of Arizona increased by 12 percent whereas Arizona State U. had a 38 percent rate of growth from 2000 to 2008. While the universities are seeing more students on campus, the most significant growth has been in online classes. For example, the U. of Phoenix, the Arizona-based online school, saw a 17 percent rise in enrollment in the last year.

Enrollment Up with Budget Down in Louisiana. Louisiana universities saw an enrollment increase in the midst of large state budget cuts, according to 2thesdvoate.com. Louisiana State U. attracted a fall enrollment of 28,771 students, a 3 percent or 800-student growth. About 90 percent of the undergraduate increase is in the incoming first-year class, which rose by 700 to 5,481 this fall.

Meanwhile, the U. of Louisiana at Lafayette's enrollment rose 2.5 percent to 16,763 students. The school's increase came from the new incoming class as well as from community college transfers. In addition, Southeastern U. grew to 15,351 students, up 1.3 percent from

FINANCIAL AID FLASH

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For-profit schools now need to provide students with information about their job placement rates and student debt levels.

To receive federal aid, students must have a high school diploma. The new rules, though, enable students to receive aid without a diploma if they complete six credits of college work. This is to curb the increase of "diploma mills" offering to provide diplomas for a fee. Also, if students receive Pell grants, they are to receive their funds in time to purchase books and supplies before the start of classes. For additional info, see, <http://www.2.ed.gov>.

15,160 over last year. McNeese State U. had its highest enrollment ever with 8,941 students.

These enrollment increases caused a housing problem, though. LSU had a housing wait list of about 1,000 students, and UL-Lafayette had one of 500 students. The schools upped the number of students per room and used older dormitories. Officials fear that there will be more problems if budget cuts increase next year.

UCLA Welcomes More Low-Income, Minority Students. This fall, UCLA enrolled more low-income and minority students in its incoming class, according to the *Daily Bruin*. "When we recruit students, we recruit from all walks of life," noted Vu Tran, director, undergraduate admissions and relations.

A recent report, "Undergraduate Access and Excellence at UC," also noted that the percentage of admitted low-income, first-generation and, to some extent, black, American Indian and Latino students has grown across the system in the past several years.

In order to meet the needs of this growing population, the UC system made changes to its financial aid program. It increased the income cap for its Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan, so more students qualify. Students also have financial aid through Cal Grants, Pell Grants and a percentage of the income from increased student fees.

Enrollment Increase at UC Merced. With cutbacks at other campuses in the UC system, students turned to the relatively new UC Merced. Its enrollment is at an all-time high this fall, with 4,381 students enrolled, up 28 percent from last year, according to *mercedsunstar.com*.

Kevin Browne, UC Merced assistant vice chancellor, explained that one reason for the surge was parents and students looked at the school's value, rather than its name recognition. He said that in the case of Merced, students get the discount of the UC school system, as well as a smaller school experience. In 2005, the school opened with 875 students. By last November, the school had received

Planning for College Costs. Parents have changed the way they will pay for their child's education, according to a survey released in October from ApplyWise.com and NextStepU. Only 12 percent of those surveyed said they plan to use a home equity loan to cover college costs, compared to 27 percent in 2008. Twenty-two percent of families said they have saved nothing for their child's college education. Nearly 15 percent have saved between \$10,001 and \$25,000. Almost 44 percent said that government and private student loans will be a source of funding for their child's education. For the complete survey results see, <https://applywise.com/news>. ■

about 12,000 applications with an increase in campus visits.

"Students are choosing Merced over other campuses," he said. "Some students are only applying to Merced. We've just broken 4,300. We have the ability to know our students better than any other UC school. It's an informed choice."

All-Time High Enrollment at UM. The U. of Michigan-Ann Arbor recorded historic enrollment numbers this fall, with a 41,924 student body. The undergraduate student body grew by 3.1 percent and graduate or professional students by 6.7 percent.

The incoming Class of 2014 includes 6,496 students, up 6.9 percent from last fall. The school received 31,613 applications last year, an increase of 5.5 percent from the previous year. The class has an equal number of men and women from over 1,900 high schools, every state and about 70 different countries. Students of color make up 10.6 percent of these students, up from 9.1 percent last year.

New UM students posted an average high school GPA of 3.8, and 13 percent of the students had a 4.0. About one-third of the students had an ACT score between 31 and 36. UM gave \$126 million in "centrally awarded financial aid" this year, while its tuition increases have been among the smallest of Michigan's public universities and the Big Ten.

UMD Has Exceptional Incoming Class. The U. of Maryland announced that its first-year class was the "most academically prepared, talented and diverse" in school history. UMD received over 26,000 freshman applications and admitted 11,676 students (an admissions rate of almost 45 percent). These students had, on average, an A/B+ high school average and completed honors, AP and IB classes in high numbers.

About 45 percent of the incoming students enrolled in the Honors College or College Park Scholars, the university's well-known academic programs. About 38 percent are students of color. The majority of students come from Maryland. ■

News from NACAC 2010

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELING generated news on two different fronts last month—at its annual national conference in St. Louis and with the release of the latest *State of College Admission* report.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: THE STATE OF COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Early apps are indeed on the rise, NACAC confirmed. Mid-month, it released its *2010 State of College Admission* report with findings on the fall class of 2009. Colleges surveyed reported an increase in Early Action applications and admits. But, the “uncertainty in a tight economy seems to have increased some colleges’ reliance on Early Decision and wait lists,” the report said. “...Sixty-five percent of colleges with ED policies reported increases in the number of students accepted through Early Decision, up from 43 percent in 2008 and 36 percent in 2007.” Other findings:

- **Demographic Decline.** Nationwide, the number of high school graduates peaked in 2008-09 when 3.33 million students graduated from high school. In 2009-10, the number was 3.29 million. And the number of graduates will decline until 2014-15. But then by 2018-19, an estimated 3.4 million students will become high school graduates.

- **Increase in Applications.** Applications continue to increase. At the same time, more colleges (29 percent) reported decreases, the largest proportion since 1996.

- **Acceptance Rate Declined.** Slightly. Colleges accepted an average 67 percent of applicants for fall 2009. The yield was an average 43 percent.

- **Online Applications Increase.** Four-year colleges and universities received 80 percent of their applications online, up from 58 percent in 2006.

For a copy of the report, see www.nacacnet.org.

TALK OF THE TOWN

What were the hot topics at NACAC’s national conference September 29-30 in St. Louis? The use of commissioned agents for international recruiting, a survey on the *US News & World Report* rankings (results to come), info on new U.S. Dept. of Ed regulations and how to make use, let alone sense, of social media.

VIP Apps. The hottest issues though centered on “fast-track” applications and what some call “snap apps.” Also, new marketing companies with advanced technology have made it possible for colleges to reach out to more students in unprecedented ways. Students may be told they are being specially selected and urged to apply. Critics charge that this is primarily a college’s attempt to increase the number of applications it receives. Also, students using the Common Application then need to create separate applications. Counselors are faced tracking more paperwork and consoling the “VIP” students when they are rejected by a college they thought wanted them. *CB* will keep you posted on this issue.

How Students Select Colleges. The National Research Center for College and University Admissions surveyed high school students to see how their opinions about colleges vary over time. The major finding was that students know about national public universities when they begin high school. But they become more interested in regional public institutions as they near graduation. The same applies to national private colleges—interest is high at the beginning of high school, but then interest in small regional private colleges increases. The upshot: Regional public institutions and small private colleges should not give up on students if they do not appear interested freshman and sophomore year of high school.

Steps to College. Counselors were also talking about the new online section of the NACAC website that provides articles for students and families on a host of topics about the college admissions process and financial aid. Topics are broken down into the “steps” students might follow in the process. For info, see <http://www.nacacnet.org/PublicationsResources/steps/Pages/default.aspx>.

NEW TOOLS OF THE TRADE

More than 160 companies exhibited at the NACAC conference, representing products and services available on college admissions. Several “new tools of the trade” were announced.

Paying for College. Simple Tuition, Inc. released its “Tuition Adjuster” to help students realize the extent of college debt before they start paying, said the company. The tool is designed to allow families to enter their financial aid award information to get an expected monthly loan payment. Parents and students can adjust the amount they pay to see how their debt will distribute over time.

In addition, Simple Tuition, based in Boston, announced that its “Tuition Coach” is now free. It teaches families how to get the most out of financial aid by giving hints: how not to make mistakes when applying for financial aid, predict and examine how much college will cost, summarize aid options and help increase the amount a student receives. According to Simple Tuition, the tool saves around \$5,500 in cost per year. For more info, see www.simpletuition.com

Admissions Boot Camp. Unigo, a website that features student reviews of colleges, and Aristotle Circle, a company that links parents to resources, said they are creating a series of three-day admissions “boot camps” throughout the country and abroad. The aim is to help students understand how to successfully navigate college searches and admissions. For more info, go to www.unigo.com.

P.S. Sessions from the NACAC conference can be ordered for a fee. See, www.eventarchives.com/nacac/order. ■

THE COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

Finding the Right College for You. Kaplan and *Newsweek* joined forces to create a new guide to highlight “schools that offer special niches and qualities...,” the two companies announced jointly this fall. The guide has 12 ranking groups and the top 25 schools in each one, such as “Most Desirable Urban Schools” (Columbia U., Duke U. and Harvard U.); “Most Service-Minded Schools”

(Davidson C., Marquette U. and Morehouse C.); and “Great Education, Great Tan” (Arizona State U., Pepperdine U. and Pomona C.). Readers can also find articles on the admissions process, including “College: There’s an App for That,” which looks at how social and new media can enhance the admission experience. To order the 168-page guide, go to www.kaptest.com/store

call 1-800-KAP-ITEM.

College Access & Opportunity Guide, 2011 edition, Center for Student Opportunity; 417 pages; (Sourcebooks); ISBN 13-978-1-4022-4404-9; \$24.99; www.sourcebooks.com and www.CSOcollegecenter.org.

Guide to College Majors: Everything You Need to Know to Choose the Right Major, 2010 edition, by the Staff of The Princeton Review; 803 pages; (The Princeton Review); ISBN 978-0-375-42969-9; \$21.00; www.princetonreview.com. ■

NEW ADMISSIONS INITIATIVE

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and academic services. The Messiah Foundation gift put MIT over its fundraising goal.

Stanford and Harvard Begin Random Honesty Audits. Both Harvard U. and Stanford U. will begin random audits of incoming applications for plagiarism and other irregularities beginning this year. The new practice comes in the wake of news revealing some weaknesses in the admissions processes. Stanford will audit a percentage of its approximately 30,000 applications, but the exact number is still undetermined, the school said last month. Those selected to have their application audited will be notified in advance.

Robert Patterson, director of admission, said that Stanford is not the first school in its area to begin this process. "The University of California system already audits," he said. "They use different techniques to conduct these audits, including e-mailing and calling students." He added Stanford does not "hope to catch" students, but "to keep the process fair for all students."

The *Boston Globe* recently reported that Harvard also would start auditing applications this year, recognizing that technology enables some doctoring of a student's documents. The Turnitin for Admissions website, which helps schools detect plagiarism online, did a recent study and found that of 452,964 applications reviewed, there were 1,033,813 matches in

199,683 personal statements. Most came from websites. Currently, 25 universities use the Turnitin service.

Union Members Get College Readiness Program. The Princeton Review and Union Plus, the benefits section of the AFL-CIO, have teamed up to create the College Readiness Program, which will give union members and their families affordable test prep classes. The program is available to 13 million union members and offers classroom, online, undergraduate and graduate test prep classes at a reduced cost. In addition, union families can enroll in a series of six new College Admissions and Financial Aid courses. For more information, see: www.UnionPlusorg/CollegePres.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

More Business Schools Accept GRE. For the first time, *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best Graduate Schools" will include GRE General Test data in its MBA program rankings, according to the Educational Testing Service. Robert Morse, director, data research, announced the change on his blog, citing a *U.S. News'* study that found that more business schools are using GRE scores for admission.

In the past two years, over 50 MBA programs have been added to the growing number of business schools accepting GREs. As of spring 2010, 338 MBA programs accept GRE scores, 33 of which appear in the *U.S. News & World Report* top 100.

California Law Promotes Transferring. This fall, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill 1440, the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act, into law, assuring that graduates from some California community college can transfer into the California State U. system, according to *The Orange County Register*. Mike Uhlenkamp, a spokesperson for CSU, explained that if students come in as transfers, spending only two instead of four years at CSU, this would reduce some of the financial burden on the system and the students.

"Students are moving faster through the system, so that's money saved at both ends—the students save money and the university saves money," he said. "It's going to allow you a more streamlined route to CSU."

Under the law, students who obtain their AA from a community college are guaranteed priority admission into their local CSU campus and to a program that is related to the one they previously studied. All the schools involved expect to save millions of dollars, as well as

accommodate an additional 50,000 students.

States Need to Reform Remedial Education. The Education Commission of the States laid out a plan for how states can help students in remedial classes succeed in college. The report, "Rebuilding the Remedial Education Bridge to College Success," looked at current state policies, analyzed research and held forums with remedial education leaders to create the proposed framework. ECS then argued that reforming remedial education could lead to higher rates of students attending institutions of higher education. States need to "look more carefully at the data they collect, funds they appropriate, ways they assess and place students, instructional models they utilize and the accountability mechanisms they rely on to meet the needs of remedial education students," the report argued.

Not Enough Students College Ready. Meanwhile, ACT reported that high school graduates are "making slow but steady progress at becoming ready for college and career," according to its annual *Condition of College and Career Readiness* report for 2010. The number of ACT test takers increased. But only 24 percent "met or surpassed all four of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, up from 21 percent in 2006 and from 23 percent last year." The percent of graduates ready to succeed in college coursework remains highest in English (66 percent), followed by reading (52 percent), mathematics (43 percent) and science (29 percent).

However, ACT also noted "there is substantial room for improvement." A combined total of 43 percent met either none or only one of the benchmarks. For more info or state scores, see www.act.org. ■

Mary Baldwin C. Creates Early College Program. Mary Baldwin C. is expanding its Program for the Exceptionally Gifted which gives girls of at least age 13 the chance to speed through high school, said *newsleader.com* last month. A new larger program called The Early College Academy, located on the Staunton, Virginia, campus, will provide an accelerated program to 16- and 17-year-old young women who have already graduated from high school.

"In the past, early admissions students would matriculate into the RCW (Residential College for Women) without any additional support..." said Stephanie Ferguson, executive director, Early College Academy. "As such, these underage students would sometimes not fare as well as other groups of students on campus. Now ECA provides a living-learning community for these students who will be able to participate in the best of what both PEG and the RCW campus has to offer."

Indiana's "CollegeGo! Week" Paying Off. Admission officials at Indiana State U. attribute its growth in applications in part to "College Go! Week," a program sponsored by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, which focuses on the low higher education attendance rate in Indiana. ISU enrolled 2,707 "first-years" this fall, up from last year's 2,035, a 33 percent increase, according to the *Indiana Statesmen*. The number of transfer students (790); new graduate students (499); and honors students (224) all went up this year. ISU saw its total student population grow 9 percent, from 10,534 students to 11,494, overall. John Beacon, vice president of enrollment, said, "The attitude of ISU is a positive one, which makes for a more inviting environment for new students." ■

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