

College Bound

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Admissions Watch

Admit Rates Decline at Selective Colleges

AS *CB* WENT TO PRESS, colleges were sending out their letters of decision to students for Fall 2012. At first glance, it appears that many of the selective schools are posting lower acceptance rates than in years past. Here are some of the early returns. More will appear next month and on www.collegeboundnews.com.

Barnard Admit Rate Drops. Only 21 percent of the applicants to Barnard C. in New York City were accepted, according to the *Columbia Spectator*, the lowest rate in school history and the lowest rate among women's college in the U.S. Last year, the admit rate was about 25 percent. But then the college ended up with a higher-than-expected yield—610 students. So Barnard scaled back this year and targeted about 580-590 for next fall.

In addition, Barnard attracted more applications for the class of 2016, nearly 18 percent more than last year. The school has focused on increasing its visibility, with more visits to high schools, open houses, workshops for juniors and publicity ranging from a recent visit by Oprah Winfrey to President Obama's upcoming commencement address in May.

Boston U. Offers January Admission. In response to the large applicant pool at Boston U. this year, it is offering students an optional admission for spring 2013 instead of the fall semester. "Because our pool was so large and so strong, we made a decision to offer a number of students a place in our class, but for January," Kelly Walter, executive director of admissions, told *The Daily Free Press*.

BU received 43,979 applications for fall 2012, a record, and accepted slightly more than

45 percent, a decrease of nearly 4 percent from last year. Its target class is 3,900 students, smaller than last year. Over 500 students committed early decision.

Bowdoin C. Reaches Out. According to *The Bowdoin Orient*, the college is "now reaching out to more high schools," said Scott Meiklejohn, dean of admissions. "A lot of private schools have known about Bowdoin for a while, but there are about 25,000 public high schools from which we've never had an applicant. We're trying to introduce ourselves to those schools...."

The outreach appears to be working. Bowdoin had a six percent increase in the number of high schools represented among applicants and 61 percent of applicants went to public high schools. The college received 6,716 applications. Compared to last year, this was a two percent increase. That included a 13 percent increase from international students, a 29 percent increase from the Southwest, a 22 percent increase from the South and an 18 percent increase from students of color. Bowdoin accepted 802 regular decision students, a 13.8 acceptance rate. Bowdoin wait listed 1,300 students.

Majority of Brown U. Admits Women. California, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Connecticut were the states with the most students admitted to Brown this year. China, Canada, Korea, India and the United Kingdom are sending the most international students. These are a few of the stats released by Brown U. on March 29 when it announced

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New Survey: Student Hopes and Dreams

"WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DREAM COLLEGE?" "What is the toughest part of the application process?" "What is your biggest concern?"

The Princeton Review asked high school students these questions recently to profile the hopes and dreams of those applying to college for 2012.

Dream Colleges: Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, New York U., Princeton, UCLA, Yale, MIT, Brown and U. of Southern California.

Toughest Part of Application Experience: Taking the SAT, ACT, APs (35 percent); completing applications (25 percent); researching colleges (20 percent); waiting for decisions (19 percent.)

How Necessary is Financial Aid? Eighty-six percent said financial aid would be "extremely" or "very necessary." This figure is up from 78 percent five years ago.

Biggest Concern: Will get into first-choice school, but won't have funds or aid to attend (33 percent); won't get into first-choice college (31 percent); will get into college but take on major loan debt (26 percent); will attend a college and not be happy about it (10 percent).

What is Your Stress Level? Seventy-one percent said "very high" or "high," up from 56 percent since 2003, the first year of the survey.

One student in the survey will receive a \$1,000 scholarship in a random drawing. For more details see, www.princetonreview.com/college-hopes-worries.aspx. ■

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SELECTIVE COLLEGES

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it accepted 2,760 students from a pool of 28,742 applicants. That translates into an acceptance rate of 9.6 percent. Ninety-five percent are in the top 10 percent of their high school class; 47 percent are valedictorians or salutatorians. Women represented 53 percent of those admitted, 16 percent are the first in their families to attend college. Fifty-five percent plan to concentrate in the physical or life sciences.

Columbia U.'s Applicant Pool "Second Largest in History." Whether it is the Common Application or not, Columbia fielded 31,818 applications for 1,391 "seats." That was a 21.5 percent increase over the past two years. "This, however, has never been our primary goal," said Jessica Marinaccio, dean.

Columbia C. and the School of Engineering and Applied Science admitted 7.4 percent of applicants or 2,363 students. Some students told the *Columbia Spectator* that the university's Core Curriculum was a "draw" for them.

Cornell U. More Selective. *The Cornell Chronicle* reported that "a tidal wave of high school seniors" attempted to log onto the university's website to see if they were admitted to Cornell U., but "many were disappointed." According to Lee H. Melvin, associate vice provost for enrollment, only 16.2 percent of applicants, or 6,123 students, were selected from 37,812 applications, or a four percent increase in applications over last year. (Last year, 18 percent of applicants were accepted.) This year, Cornell wait listed 3,120 students, more than last year.

Dartmouth Accepts Only 9 Percent. According to *The Dartmouth*, 2,180 students were admitted to the Class of 2016 from 23,110 applications. This was a record low—9.4 percent—compared to 9.7 percent last year and 11.7 two years ago. Of those accepted for fall: 465 ED students and more international students, coming from 49 countries. Forty-six percent of those accepted are students of color, 48 percent are valedictorians.

Earlier this spring, Dartmouth announced that, faced with a \$100-million budget deficit in 2010, it was forced to eliminate its widely-touted "no-loans guarantee policy." Now, entering students in need of financial aid with family incomes over \$75,000 need to take out loans of \$2,500 to \$5,500 each academic year.

Yes, Harvard was More Selective. Only 5.9 percent of the applicants to Harvard C. were admitted this spring, or 2,032 students from 34,302 applicants. About 125 fewer students were admitted compared to last year. Harvard re-instituted its Early Action program and admitted 772 students in December. Among the applicants, 14,000 had SAT critical reading

International Affairs

Irish Ayes. Colleges in the Republic of Ireland have seen a surge in applications from students of the United Kingdom. Because of dramatic increases in fees (from 4,000 to as high as 10,700 Euros) at colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2,500 UK students have sent in their applications to Irish schools, where they only "contribute" 2,500 Euros to their tuition. But these students must have lived in the EU for three of the last five years, according to *The Journal* of Dublin. Also, demand for computer and science classes has grown 64 percent over the past four years.

Reading Bucks Trends in England. In England, the U. of Reading is experiencing one of the largest increases in applications among English universities with international applications increasing by 83 percent. Undergraduate applications for 2012-13 are up 10 percent to 19,733 students compared to 17,872 last year. Fine art and history were popular areas to study. In recent years, Reading has received six applications per opening. Applications from students in England to all universities fell by nearly 10 per cent. Nationally, more men applied than women. ■

test scores above 700 and 17,000 had scores of 700 or higher in math. Also, 3,800 applicants were first in their high school classes. William Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions, was quoted in the *Business Standard* as saying Harvard expects to use its waiting list.

Penn Holds Steady. The U. of Pennsylvania accepted 9.8 percent of its regular decision applications this spring. Penn's overall acceptance rate for the Class of 2016 was 12.3 percent. It admitted a total of 3,846 students, including 97 of the 886 who initially were deferred in Early Admissions, according to *The Daily Pennsylvanian*. About 14 percent of admitted students were "first generation," meaning their parents do not hold a college degree. The target class size is 2,420, Eric Furda, dean of admissions, told the paper. Penn fielded a total of 31,216 applications for fall.

The paper said that Furda noted that students preparing for next year "should focus their energy on researching and applying to several schools that are a good fit for them. With these low acceptance rates, students should make sure they are 'thrilled' about each of their choices."

Miami. While visiting the U. of Miami this spring, *CB* learned that Miami fielded more than 28,000 applications for this fall's class and accepted about 35 percent with the aim of matriculating about 2,000 students. UM uses the Common Application. Its "holistic" approach looks at high school transcripts

first, followed by standardized tests, letters of recommendation, the student essay and extracurricular activities. The average SAT of admitted students' ranges from 1270 to 1400, according to Brandon Gross, assistant director of admissions. Some 80 percent of students receive some part of the school's \$400 million financial aid.

USC Admits Top of Class. This year, the U. of Southern California attracted about 46,000 applications and accepted 8,400 students. Another 1,000 students will receive spring admits. "Most of them will be ranked in the top five to 10 percent in their graduating class," Tim Brunold, dean of admissions, told the *Daily Trojan*. USC's acceptance rate fell to 18 percent from last year's nearly 23 percent. Some 21 percent of students come from traditionally underrepresented groups. And 1,000 are "first generation."

UVA Admissions Stats—"Unofficial" as They May Be. The Dean of Admissions at UVA posted preliminary numbers on the department's blog at the end of March. UVA received 28,272 applications, up from 23,971; 8,788 were from Virginia, 19,484 out-of-state. A total of 7,758 students received offers of admission, down slightly from last year's 7,844. Thirty-nine percent of the offers went to Virginia residents (3,403) and 23 percent to those out-of-state. UVA's mean SAT score was 1395 and nearly 96 percent of those admitted sat in the top 10 percent of their class.

Vanderbilt Apps Increase from all Regions. Vanderbilt U. received a record 28,306 undergraduate applications for fall 2012, or 15 percent more than at the same time last year, university officials announced. Applications from international students increased 32 percent, as did those from every region including the West (29 percent), Southwest (13.5 percent), South (14.6 percent) and the New York area (10 percent). The increases were across all racial categories.

Wash U. Only 4,440 students, or 15.4 percent of the 28,826 applicants, who applied to Washington U. at St. Louis gained admission this year. Decisions were released electronically in March. In 2010, 21 percent of applicants were admitted, but the number of admitted students has been steadily cut since then.

Yale's "Most Competitive Year." The admission rate at Yale declined for the third year in a row, according to the *Yale Daily News*. Yale received 28,974 applications and admitted 1,975 with an acceptance rate of 6.8 percent, down from 7.35 percent last year. In addition, 1001 students were placed on a wait list. Jeffrey Brenzel, dean, said, "We had another extraordinary applicant pool, and another challenging selection process." ■

Community College Update

QUITE FRANKLY, much of the news in the last month has centered on community colleges. These schools have seen dramatic increases in applications over the last few years as many face budget cuts. Here is a roundup of new reports and programs.

ACCESS THREATENED?

Community college has long been an open door for a wide assortment of students including low-income students. But a recent report from the American Association of Community Colleges entitled "Why Access Matters: The Community College Student Body" charges that new federal funding policies that concentrate on college completion are putting community college access at risk. For example, Congress recently eliminated Title IV eligibility for "ability to benefit" students. Community colleges serve about 60 percent of these students, 19 percent of whom are African American and 31 percent are Hispanic.

AACC president Walter G. Bumphus said, "We fear that success indicators focused on degree completion only, will lead to restricting college access to those who are most likely to succeed, not those who need it most." For more info, see www.aacc.nche.edu.

WHO ARE TODAY'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS?

About 41 percent of community college students attend school full time, 59 percent part-time. Some 19 percent of full-time community college students work more than 30 hours or more a week, while 42 percent of part-timers work 30 or more a week. Some 29 percent of full time community college students care for dependents 11 or more hours a week, while 37 percent of part-timers do so.

About 13 percent of full-time community college students go to school in the evening or on weekends, while 40 percent of part-timers take classes then. Some 57 percent of community college students enter with the goal of completing a certificate program; 79 percent want to earn an associates degree and 73 percent want to transfer to a four-year college or university.

But only 45 percent of these students met their goal within six years. Unfortunately, one reason is that 66 percent of community college students need developmental work in at least one area. What other reasons lead community college students to withdraw from college? Some 38 percent say "working full-time," 28 percent need to care for dependents, 19 percent say because they are academically unprepared and 49 percent say that they lack the financial resources to finish.

FINANCING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

If limited financial aid for the community college student is part of the problem, what other assistance is needed? To find out, the Ford, Lumina, Kresge, Open Society and Annie E. Casey Foundations are funding a three-year, \$4.84 million study called "Benefits Access for College Completion."

The project, led by the Center for Law and Social Policy and the American Association of Community Colleges, will target students at Cuyahoga C. C. in Ohio, Gateway Community and Technical C. and Owensboro Community and Technical C. in Kentucky, LaGuardia C. C. in New York City, Northampton C. C. in Pennsylvania, Skyline C. in California, and Macomb C. C. and Lake Michigan C. C. in Michigan.

The project's main objective is to find ways to best direct federal and state financial aid and other existing public support to students to eliminate policy barriers and even to redefine the entire support system

for students so that they are more likely to finish their studies and find gainful employment. Currently, 46 percent of the nearly eight million community college students receive some financial aid.

WHAT LEADS TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUCCESS?

What works, then, when it comes to helping community college students graduate? A new multi-year study from the Center for Community College Student Engagement entitled "A Matter of Degrees" provides some answers at a time when community colleges themselves acknowledge they must dramatically increase their graduation rates. While about 80 percent of full-time community college students enter with the intention of earning an associates degree, only 45 percent of students graduate with either a certificate or associate degree within six years.

The report found seven principles common to successful programs: "A Strong Start" including personal connections; "Clear, Coherent Pathways" to help students move forward toward their degree; "Integrated Support" such as skill development and supplemental instruction related to coursework, rather than referring students to separate services; "High Expectations and High Support" including financial aid; "Intensive Student Engagement;" "Design for Scale" that that expands programs that work and "Professional Development," because personnel need to "re-conceptualize their roles."

The report noted strategies that are working in community colleges such as orientation, academic goal setting, registration before classes begin, fast-track development, intervention and tutoring. Yet, the report noted, only 38 percent of community college students are required to take orientation classes which can help them navigate library or counseling resources, even though research says these type classes make a difference. For more info, see www.cccse.org.

NEWS ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Meanwhile, Sacramento City C. has opened a new building on the campus of the U. of California Davis, becoming the first community college on a UC campus. The 2,000 students at the center pay \$1,000 a year for full-time tuition. For a nominal fee, these students also can use the UC Davis gym and library. "It will give our students a better understanding of the array of hurdles and opportunities before them," said S.C.C. dean Donald Palm.

Borough of Manhattan Community College students can now major in Communication Studies, linked to the Bachelor's in Communication Studies program at Brooklyn C./CUNY. Students will be eligible to transfer to other universities as well.

Maricopa C.C. and the U. of Arizona have signed a new agreement to smooth the way from associate degree to a bachelor's degree. The new "pathway" will provide guaranteed admission into selected UA undergraduate degree programs, pre-transfer admissions counseling and eligibility for scholarships.

And, Valencia C. in Orlando, Florida, was named the best of 1,200 community colleges in the nation by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program which evaluated student learning, degree completion and transfer, equity and employment/learning after college. "Valencia College is a shining example of what really matters in community colleges," the Institute announced. Finalists with distinction were: Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, South Dakota; Miami Dade College in Florida; Walla Walla C.C. in Washington; West Kentucky Community and Technical C. in Kentucky. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Civil Engineering. Beginning this fall, Indiana State U. will offer a new B.S. in civil engineering technology, the first degree of its kind in the state. The program is different than civil engineering, which is more theoretical. Instead, the civil engineering technology program works more in the application area. "They take it from the design to the actual outcome or product," said Robert English, associate dean in ISU College of Technology. "Students majoring in civil engineering technology are the how-to-people, and they are very much needed in this state."

Girls Care About Science. On a related note, according to a new study from the Girl Scout Research Institute although the "majority of

today's girls have a clear interest in STEM, they don't prioritize STEM fields when thinking about their future careers." In fact, 74 percent of teen girls are interested in STEM subjects and the general field of study. Further, 82 percent of girls see themselves as "smart enough to have a career in STEM."

Sadly, "few girls consider it their number-one career option: 81 percent of girls interested in STEM are interested in pursuing STEM careers, but only 13 percent say it's their first choice. Additionally, girls say they don't know a lot about STEM careers and the opportunities afforded by these fields, with 60 percent of STEM-interested girls acknowledging that they know more about other careers than they do about STEM careers.

New at Miami Dade. Miami Dade C. has been cleared by the state to offer two new four-year degree programs: a B.S. in biological science and a B.S. in early childhood education. The additions bring to nine the number of four-year programs at the former community college, which enrolls 175,000 students in two- and four-year programs.

Applied Psychology. This fall, the State U. of New York (SUNY) Canton will launch a new B.S. program in applied psychology. The program is designed to help students find employment in human services fields. The U. S. Department of Labor projects a faster than average growth in this sector, and says that about 54 percent of current jobs are in health care and social assistance industries. Joseph Kennedy, president, said that students can graduate and immediately start their careers. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Record GRE Test-Takers. During hard times, many who can't find jobs return to school. That seemed to be the case in 2011 when a record 800,000 students around the world took the GRE revised General Test, an exam good for graduate school or an MBA. According to the Educational Testing Service that administers the exam, 2011 saw a 13 percent jump. U.S. test-takers increased by nearly 10 percent over 2010, while international test-takers jumped by 25 percent, including a 43 percent leap in India. In part, that is because the number of MBA programs accepting the GRE grew from 450 in 2010 to nearly 800.

Law School Apps Down. Law school officials aren't sure what it means, but applications are down for the second year in a row, according to the Law School Admission Council. As of mid-March, 58,983 students applied to law schools, 14 percent below a year ago. Some officials speculate it is because of the recession—fewer jobs available, lawyers at large law firms laid off, leading to stiff competitions among lawyers already in the market.

Transfer & Mobility. One third of all students transfer at least once within five years. That's one of the findings of the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center's report "Transfer & Mobility: A National View of Pre-degree Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions." That conclusion raises concerns about how carefully students make their initial college choices.

Another conclusion of the report is that part-time and full-time students had similar transfer rates over five years. Also, the major-

ity of transfers occurred in students' second year, although a surprising number transferred in their fourth or fifth year. Over one quarter of all transfers crossed state lines, which, among other things, demonstrates the limitations of institutional and state-based enrollment reporting. To view the entire report, go to www.studentclearinghouse.info/signature/.

\$10,000 Texas Degrees. In his 2011 State of the State address, Texas Governor Rick Perry said he wanted more cooperation between the state's community colleges and four-year universities to help bring down the cost of earning a degree in some programs to at least \$10,000. A year later, that challenge is yielding results.

According to *The Texas Tribune*, the \$10,000 degree is now available from a few community colleges and universities. The paper cited a bachelor's degree in information technology with an emphasis on cyber-security from Texas A&M-San Antonio as an example. And in 2013, a bachelor's of applied science in organizational leadership will be available at South Texas C.

Additional lower cost programs are under design, as are other cost-saving strategies. Given that 60 percent of Texas's K-12 students come from poor families, lowering the cost of college is a new priority, Texas Higher Education Commissioner Raymund Paredes told the paper.

Best Values 2012. Which colleges offer the "best values?" According to *The Princeton Review* and *USA Today*, the top 10 public universities which combine excellence in academics with generous financial aid and relative low

cost are: U. of N. Carolina at Chapel Hill, the U. of Virginia, New College of Florida, State U. of New York at Binghamton, U. of Wisconsin-Madison, C. of William and Mary, U. of Florida, U. of Georgia, U. of Washington-Seattle and U. of Texas at Austin.

The top 10 private colleges are: Williams C., Swarthmore C., Princeton U., Harvard C., Rice U., Pomona C., Washington U. at St Louis, Yale U., California Institute of Technology and Hamilton C.

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

Essay Contest. "What's the one place in the U.S. that truly inspired you?" A hometown? A place visited? A landmark? Mapmaker Rand McNally and *USA Today* want to know and are sponsoring an "America the Beautiful" essay contest for students in 7-12 grades. State winners receive a Barnes & Noble NOOK Tablet and will have their essays published in an eBook. Top prize is a \$1,000 scholarship and trip to Washington, C. **Deadline:** May 14. See, www.bestoftheroad.com/education.

Local Scholarship Funds. Students shouldn't forget to look in their own backyard for little-known scholarships. The Zane State College in Ohio recently announced its Foundation has about \$170,000 in scholarship funds available for students who have high academics, financial need and will attend the college during the 2012-13 year. See, www.Zanette.edu.

New Jersey. N.J. public high seniors are eligible for up to \$5,000 from the ETS Community Action Fund. See www.ets.org. ■

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