

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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New Year Roundup of Financial Affairs

Who Gets Ed Tax Benefits? Families of college students are eligible for a variety of federal tax benefits. The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 provided two kinds of tax credits: the Hope tax credit and the Lifetime Learning tax credit, which are subtracted from initial taxable income. The Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 added a tuition and fees deduction, which are subtracted directly from taxes owed. And, the 2009 American Opportunity Tax Credit modified the Hope credit for 2009 and 2010.

According to a new report, "Federal Education Tax Credits" from the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2007-08, 47 percent of undergraduates received an education tax benefit, compared to 27 percent who received a federal Pell Grant. Tax benefits reduced the average amount of college expenses for these families by an average of about \$700 or 5 percent.

The report found that among dependent undergraduates, 56 percent from low-middle-income and 63 percent of high-middle-income families received education tax benefits. That compares to 48 percent from high-income and 29 percent from low-income families who received them. And low-middle-income and high-middle-income families received higher average amounts in education tax benefits than those from high-income and low-income families.

Record Aid Requests. Like many colleges across the nation, the C. of the Canyons, a California community college has received a record number of financial aid requests this year. The California school fielded nearly 10,000 aid requests at the start of the school year. Three years ago, requests stood at 4,000.

Lines to meet with financial aid workers were long. "To have a line out the door for this long," Tom Bilbruck, COC's director of financial aid, told the-signal.com, "it's not what we are used to." Bilbruck also emphasized the importance of filing early for aid.

Debt Unmanageable? Young adults fear that college is becoming unaffordable. In a poll of 872 individuals ages 18 to 34 conducted by Lake Research Partners, nearly 75 percent said that college graduates face unmanageable amounts of student-loan debt. Fewer than one in three reported earning more than \$30,000 during the previous year. Some 36 percent said they had lived at home with their parents at some point during the past 12 months. And nearly one third said they have a debt of \$10,000 or more.

Yet another poll of young people, conducted by Generation Opportunity, found that 27 percent say the bad economy and lack of jobs will force them to delay paying off student loans and other debt. "The heart of the matter here is that young Americans need jobs in order to repay any debts, including student loans, and to plan for the future," said Paul T. Conway at Generation Opportunity and former official at the U.S. Dept. of Labor.

Illinois Pre-Paid Problems. The College Illinois program fund has a 30 percent shortfall, according to a new audit. As a result, it has stopped accepting new contracts until the Illinois Student Assistance Commission submits a new report to the governor and legislature on how to fix the 13-year-old, \$1.1 billion program. More than 30,000 Illinois families hold contracts for more than 50,000

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Early Admissions Watch

THE NATION'S ELITE COLLEGES were among the first to send out Early Action/Early Decision letters to anxious students last month. Below, *CB* takes a quick look at some of the early benchmarks.

Columbia Attracts Fewer Apps. Columbia U. in New York City fielded 3,088 Early Decision applications for the Class of 2016, nearly 6 percent fewer than last year. The accepted students were from 40 states and 32 countries and plan to study 90 different disciplines in the liberal arts and engineering, according to *Bwog.com*. The Ivy League school filled about 44 percent of its new class through ED.

Dartmouth Up. Dartmouth C. received 1,800 Early Decision applications for this fall, a 2.6 percent increase over last year, and admitted 465 of them. They will make up about 40 percent of the new class. *The Dartmouth* reported the rise in early applications "reflects a five-year growth trend at the College."

Duke's Record. Duke U. admitted 648 of its record 2,641 Early Decision applicants, *Duke's Chronicle* reported, including 526 students to Trinity College of Arts and Sciences and 122 to the Pratt School of Engineering. The newly-admitted students account for 38 percent of the Class of 2016 which is expected to reach 1,705 students. About 30 percent of the new

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EARLY ADMISSIONS WATCH

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admits are minority students, while 7 percent hail from other nations.

Harvard Returns. Eighteen percent of the 4,231 early applicants to Harvard have been notified of their early admission to the Class of 2016. Another 2,838 applications were deferred to the regular admissions decision cycle, while 546 were denied a place, according to *The Harvard Crimson*. Dean of Admissions William R. Fitzsimmons previously told the paper that the quality of this year's pool was "very, very high quality" and that his office set a particularly high bar this year for early admission.

Long Beach Popular. Applications to California State U. Long Beach for fall 2012 increased by nearly 10 percent over last year. This fall, CSULB attracted 54,086 applications, an increase of 4,848 more than last admissions season. Long Beach also received 21,046 transfer applications. Last year, Long Beach ranked sixth in the nation for most applications.

"Unfortunately," said CSULB President F. King Alexander, "we have a state legislature that will only allow a small fraction of these students to attend our campus because they would rather incarcerate than educate California's citizens."

NYU ED. New York U. attracted 7 percent more Early Decision I applications this year or 3,182 students, said the nyunews.com. The numbers reflect a 3 percent increase for the NYC campus and a 55 percent increase for NYU Abu Dhabi. Last year, 2,968 applied. NYU changed part of its application for the Class of 2016 so that students who applied to both campuses needed to indicate their primary and alternate choice. Also, this year's applicants could apply directly to a Liberal Studies Program which has a Core Program and a Global Liberal Studies.

Ohio ED Apps Rise. *The Columbus Dispatch* reported late last month on a number of colleges in Ohio with Early Decision applications this fall. Miami U., for example, had twice as many high school seniors commit to it for next fall. In 2010, Miami received 466 early-decision applications. This year, it received 913 early-decision applications. "No school has topped a 30 percent increase, let alone a 96 percent increase like ours," Michael Kabbaz, associate vice president, said. Why the upswing? Miami told the *Columbus Dispatch* it increased its high school visits, number of admissions counselors and spent \$500,000 on advertising. Miami accepted 75 percent of the early applicants, down from last year's 80 percent.

Other Admissions News

Free iPads2. Belmont Abbey C. students who are accepted and pay a deposit will receive a free iPad2. The college, located in North Carolina, anticipates it will buy 400 iPad2s at a cost of \$400 each, or a total of \$200,000. The college will also give students a code to allow them to buy apps at half price. Lucas Lamadrid, vice president, said that this is a way for the college to show it cares about students' education and is willing to invest in them.

Videos Welcome. The U. of Dayton now permits applicants to submit a video essay rather than a written one. "The college application is something that is so steeped in tradition and ritual," Kevin Schultz, assistant director of university marketing and digital innovation, told the *Dayton Daily News*. "We kind of like to flip things on their head." Dayton received over 20 video essays by December. Students can also enter their video in a contest and the 10 best, voted by faculty, students and staff, will win scholarships ranging from \$4,000 to \$40,000.

Facebook and Admissions. Nearly 80 percent of colleges have an admissions-specific presence on Facebook, up from 66 percent in 2010, according to Varsity Outreach, a New York-based company that creates customized Facebook communities for colleges. Nearly all (97 percent) schools use e-mail blasts to promote their Facebook presence. A majority of schools are using current students to

Other ED apps in Ohio: Denison U., with a January 15 deadline, is 22 percent ahead of last year. Kenyon C., with a mid-January deadline, is down five percent from the same time last year, but had a record number of early-decision applications last year, 405, "so we're feeling really good about how things will shake out," Jennifer Delahunty, dean of admissions, told the paper.

Princeton Priorities. Princeton U. attracted 3,443 applicants to its new Single Choice Early Action program and admitted 726 of them, or about 21 percent. According to *The Daily Princetonian*, these students will make up between 31 and 36 percent of the Class of 2016. Half of the admitted class is female, 13 percent legacies and 10 percent first-generation college students. Fifty-six percent attended public schools, 64 percent applied for its "no-loan" financial aid and 23 percent of admitted students want to study engineering.

Stanford Down. In December, Stanford U. sent out acceptance letters to 755 students admitted through its Restrictive Early Action program, the MenloParkPatch.com reported. Some 5,880 students submitted early applications, down from last year's record of 5,929.

help manage their Facebook presence. And 90 percent of the schools are "happy with the results of their Facebook presence."

Maine Seeks Students. "After a decade of decreasing enrollment, the UMaine system has launched an aggressive campaign to attract more local and out-of-state students," reads the subhead of a December *Portland Press Herald* story. Over the past decade, enrollment in the system has fallen 9 percent. The U. of Southern Maine led the way with an 18 percent drop. Meanwhile, enrollment at nearby Southern Maine Community C. has soared by 163 percent since 2002. However, the number of Maine high school graduates began to decline last year. The goal of the UMaine system is to increase enrollment by 6 percent by 2015.

More Aid at Berkeley. The U. of California Berkeley unveiled a plan to bring financial relief to more middle-class students from families earning between \$80,000 and \$140,000. Starting next fall, 4,000 additional students will receive grants of \$3,000 to \$12,000, depending on income. The total cost of an in-state student now stands at \$32,600 a year, including room and board.

"As a public institution, we feel strongly that we need to sustain and expand access across the socioeconomic spectrum," UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau told the *Los Angeles Times*. ■

More than 28,000 regular applications were anticipated by January 1.

Yale Says "Yes." Yale U. said "yes" to 675 of it 4,304 Early Action applicants, according to the *Yale Daily News*. The lucky ones represented a 15.7 admissions rate for the early New Haven seekers. Another 2,394 students were deferred for regular decision, while 1,180 were denied a place in the Class of 2016. ■

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

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students, according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

Tuition Rebates in Canada. Some 310,000 students, or the majority of post-secondary students in the Canadian province of Ontario, will receive 30 percent tuition rebates in time to apply them to their second semester, according to the *Brandon Sun*. Rebates will range from \$730 to \$1,600 depending on family incomes. "We're removing significant financial barriers for families who are under financial stress," Colleges and Universities Minister Glen Murray told the paper. Dalton McGuinty, "the self-proclaimed education premier" made the idea the centerpiece of his Liberal party campaign platform. ■

Sneak Preview of CB's Survey Results

ONCE AGAIN, CB is conducting its survey of admissions officers on the stats and trends for the fall admissions season. (More complete results of CB's 26th annual admissions trends survey will begin running next month.) But we thought some of the advice might be helpful sooner, rather than later. So here's what admissions officers in colleges and universities across the nation, large and small, have to say to high school seniors.

ADVICE FOR 2012

What do admissions officers advise college-bound students?

"Proofread your essays." *Claremont McKenna C.*

"Think carefully and be thoughtful with the admissions essay." *Elon U.*

"Apply for admission and submit all necessary documentation as early as possible. The priority due date for applications is April 1." *Georgia Southern U.*

"Apply early." *Husson U.*

"Apply early and complete the application as soon as possible." *U. of Dayton.*

"Complete your application as soon as possible and make sure to show interest in the colleges to which you apply." *New College of Florida.*

"Get your application in early. Don't let cost be a deciding factor. Look at financial aid." *Longwood. U.*

"Apply by appropriate deadlines." *U. of Maryland—College Park.*

"Be prepared. College is very different from high school!" *Trinity Washington U.*

"Visit campus." *Duquesne U.; Illinois Wesleyan U.*

"To understand fully what each of the colleges to which they will apply makes each college distinctive. Additionally, they should know themselves thoroughly—how they learn best and interact with others—in

order to match college characteristics with their own." *Dickinson C.*

"Work on the following skills: Writing skills, community service work, challenging course schedule, extra-curricular involvement." *Thomas More C.*

"Take challenging courses when offered at your high school, and at minimum, take core curriculum all four years. Get involved after school in activities that are meaningful to you. Apply early! Visit campus. Get to know your admission counselor." *Kalamazoo C.*

"Apply to schools that will be a good fit for you, and make sure you have several good options in your selection set. You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take: apply for all the scholarships you think you might have a remote shot at getting." *Lawrence U.*

"There are many excellent colleges and universities in the U.S. and almost everyone is admitted and attends a school that is right for them and where they have terrific post-secondary experiences. So take the long view, and have confidence that it will work out in the end!" *Middlebury C.*

"Spend time looking for colleges and universities that are the right fit for you and your educational goals. General guidelines: apply to eight schools, four that are a good fit, two reach schools and two good possibility schools." *Bucknell U.*

"Take advantage of opportunities to meet your regional representative. We value each opportunity to get to know our applicants." *Lafayette C.*

"We take a holistic approach to reading applications: GPA, rigor of classes, SAT/ACT, letters of recommendation, personal statement, supplemental extra curriculars." *Santa Clara U.*

"Distinguish your application by highlighting why you are a good fit for U-M." *U. of Michigan*

"Get to know us. Join our mailing list." *Harvey Mudd C.*

"Pick colleges where you will thrive." *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.* ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Foreign Language Payoff. Knowing a second language could mean 20 percent more pay, according to one new study. Perhaps that's why foreign language study is on the upswing. The study of Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese and Korean all increased by 15 percent over the past five years. However, only 9 percent of Americans are bi-lingual, compared to about 50 percent of Europeans.

Fewer Interested in Science. At a time when many experts say that the sciences are crucial to national economic well-being, fewer U.S. high school students say they have any interest in studying these subjects. According to a Harris Interactive poll for the U. of Sciences, 49 percent of students say they are not interested in careers in science or health care. That's an 8.9 percent increase over last year.

However, the poll revealed some interesting changes in science stereotypes. Some 60 percent of young women grades 9-12 said they are "definitely" or "probably considering" careers in health care or the sciences. And 47 percent of African American and 37 percent of Hispanic students say they are definitely considering such a career.

New Education Graduate School. The International Institute for Restorative Practices Graduate School in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, teaches educators how to make K-12 schools safer and saner places to learn. Restorative practice gives students responsibilities, with high expectations, and holds them accountable.

Forensic Minor. Loyola U. Maryland is reconfiguring current courses offered in nine

departments into an interdisciplinary forensic minor. "Effective communications, interdisciplinary approaches and analytic reasoning will be put to the test within the minor itself so that the ultimate goal here is the pursuit of the truth, which is what a criminal investigator is going to do and what a student who is studying at a Jesuit institution is going to do," explained David Rivers, director of the minor.

Liberal Arts Preparation. Liberal arts college graduates say they feel well prepared for life after school. Three quarters of liberal arts grads rated their college experience highly for preparing them for their first job, compared to 66 percent who attended public flagship universities, according to a poll conducted last summer by the Hardwick Day consulting firm.

And nearly 90 percent of the liberal arts college grads said they found a mentor while in college, compared to 66 percent of grads from public universities. ■

ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Who Stays in School? Full-time students are more likely to show “persistence” and re-enroll one term to the next, according to a new study from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. In fact, 92.5 percent of full-time students persist term to term, while only 84.7 percent of all students do so. And 71 percent of part-time students continue term to term.

Using data from 3,300 institutions, the center also found that nearly 8 percent of students attended more than one institution in 2010-2011. And nearly 56 percent of mobile students attend a combination of two- and four-year institutions.

“Persistence rates can be especially tricky,” said Donald Hossler, executive director of the center. “A student may inadvertently be counted as a drop-out when in fact he or she is enrolled in another institution. This is, however, not the 1960s, and our students are not dropping out. Our data allows for this

discrepancy, as it can track a student from one institution to another. Thus, we have found that most college students persist in their education, to the tune of 84.7 percent of all students.”

New U. S. Guidance on Race. Last month, the U. S. Dept. of Ed and the Dept. of Justice issued “guidance” on how postsecondary institutions “can voluntarily consider race to further the compelling interest of achieving diversity,” replacing its 2008 guidelines.

In part, the new directive reads: “When an institution is taking an individual student’s race into account in an admissions or selection process, it should conduct an individualized, holistic review of all applicants. That is, the institution should evaluate each applicant’s qualifications in a way that does not insulate any student, based on his or her race, from comparison to all other applicants. An institution may assign different weights to different diversity factors based on their importance to

the program. Race can be outcome determinative for some participants in some circumstances. But race cannot be given so much weight that applicants are defined primarily by their race and are largely accepted or rejected on that basis.” For more details see, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/rschstat/guid/raceethnicity/index.html>.

More Students Abroad. After a downturn related to global economic conditions, 270,604 U.S. students took courses for credit outside the U.S. in 2009/10, an increase of 4 percent. Some 53 percent of the campuses surveyed by the Institute of International Education and the Forum on Education Abroad said that the number of students studying abroad increased in 2010/11. At the same time, 30 percent noted a decrease in the number of students they sent overseas, while 27 percent saw no change. China, the fifth most popular destination, attracted 14,000 students. About 4,000 studied in India. Western Europe remains the top destination. Mexico attracted fewer students than in the past, probably due to the violence of its drug war. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Grad Job Market. Slow but steady growth, that’s what Michigan State U.’s annual Recruiting Trends survey predicts for this year’s college grads. The nationwide survey of 3,300 employers predicts that hiring will grow by 4 percent for all degree levels. But those with undergraduate degrees may actually see a 7 percent increase in hiring. The strongest demand will be for graduates with degrees in engineering, computer science, accounting, agricultural sciences and agricultural business, and selective sciences. The market should look better than in past years for those with degrees in communications, public relations, marketing, finance and economics. Overall, 42 percent of employers said they plan to hire this year.

Productivity Matters. The Lumina Foundation has launched a new web site on college “productivity” to help in the effort “to dramatically increase the numbers of college graduates.” The website will include reports and news as well as resources from other organizations about ways to help students complete college, make institutions more cost effective and track news on college funding and scholarships. See, www.collegeproductivity.org.

Racial Divide on Dream Act. Nearly 80 percent of California Latinos approve of the state’s recently passed Dream Act that allows undocumented immigrants to apply

to and receive financial aid at state colleges and universities. However, only 30 percent of California whites hold the same view, according to a survey commissioned by the U. of Southern California.

The same poll found that after a decade of tuition increases at the 10 U. of California campuses (tuition and fees \$13,200) and the 23 Cal State campuses (tuition and fees \$6,521), 49 percent of California voters consider the universities not very affordable or not at all affordable.

Half of Foster Kids Quit. Fifty percent of the nation’s 500,000 foster kids won’t graduate from high school and 94 percent of them will not finish college, notes a recent AP report. One reason is that foster kids are moved from school to school as they are assigned new families, and either fall behind or lose faith that the work they do in one school will matter. “Many of these children are strong, resilient, smart and hard-working,” said Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana. “But we treat them as if they are broken.” A 2008 law requires that children remain in the same school after they are relocated with a new foster family. But the law is widely ignored. Some law makers want to strengthen that law so education is counted in the calculation about the child’s welfare.

Few Teens Smoke. It’s not an admissions issue, per se, but there’s some good news about

the smoking rates of young people. According to a new U. of Michigan report, “Monitoring the Future,” the number of teens who smoke fell from 12.8 percent to 11.7 percent. Smoking declined among 8th, 10th and 12th graders. Overall, both cigarette and alcohol use by teens are at historic lows (the survey began in 1975).

But, Nora D. Volkow, director, National Institute on Drug Abuse, noted, “That said, the teen smoking rate is declining much more slowly than in years past, and we are seeing teens consume other tobacco products at high levels.” More teens continue abuse of hookahs, small cigars, smokeless tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs.

Scholarship Scoops. In order to publicize the new net price calculators required to appear on college web sites, the U.S. Dept. of Ed has launched a video competition for high school students. Deadline: January 31. The prize: \$1,500. For info about The College Net Price Calculator Video Challenge, go to <http://netpricecalc.challenge.gov/>.

And Escuchame Inc., a virtual bilingual “Community of Smart Latinas,” has assembled a list of 350-plus scholarships for Hispanic and Latino/a students. Go to <http://escuchame.org/resources>. Access to the scholarship page requires free registration. The list is regularly updated. ■

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