

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Election 2012

Presidential Candidates on Admissions

EDITOR'S NOTE: Election 2012 is heating up and it looks like another close one. But amidst all the rhetoric, what are the two candidates' positions on higher education, admissions and financial aid? Over the last 27 years, CB has provided the positions for each Presidential election. (See Back Issues.) So here is what the current Presidential candidates have to say.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

"President Obama made college more affordable by doubling funding for Pell Grants, increasing the number of recipients from 6 to 9 million students since 2008. He achieved this in part by eliminating the middlemen from the college-loan program, taking away billions of taxpayer dollars that were going to the banks instead of students.

"The President created and extended the American Opportunity Tax Credit, worth as much as \$10,000 over four years of school. The college tax credit is expected to have helped an estimated 9.4 million students and families in 2011.

"The President signed a new law that makes it easier for students to pay back their federal college loans. Starting in 2014, new borrowers will pay no more than 10 percent of their disposable income, and the President recently proposed accelerating this benefit for current students. The law also allows any remaining debt to be forgiven after 20 years. Those engaged in public-service professions such as teachers, nurses or members of the armed forces—will have any remaining debt forgiven after 10 years, if they make their payments on time.

"President Obama is investing in com-

petitive grants to reform community colleges, supporting partnerships between community colleges and employers to provide pathways to good jobs."

For more info, see <http://www.barackobama.com/record/education?source=primary-nav>.

GOVERNOR MITT ROMNEY

"Mitt Romney believes that the long-term strategy for getting America's economy back on track is ensuring a world class education for American students. Global competitiveness begins in the classroom. In order to achieve this goal, students must have the skills to succeed in the workforce, ensuring that the promise of opportunity in this country remains strong.

"During his time in Massachusetts, Mitt promoted access to higher education for students. He proposed the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, providing a four-year tuition-free scholarship to any state institution for any Massachusetts students that scored among the top 25 percent in their school. Mitt also defended the requirement that high school students pass a rigorous test to graduate and saw students and educators respond to heightened accountability with dramatically improved performance.

"Part of an opportunity society is rewarding hard work and success. Mitt believes education is a key to the American dream, and students must be encouraged to pursue that dream and work hard to achieve it. Post-secondary education cannot become a luxury for the few; instead, all students should have the opportunity to attend a college that best suits

continued on page 2

THE GREENE REPORT

Outlook for the Coming Year

WHAT'S LIKELY TO UNFOLD during this year's college admissions cycle?

Here are our seven favorite words to describe this year's trends, phenomena and tendencies to anticipate. (They all happen to end in "ty", strangely enough) But they are: Complexity, Uncertainty, Diversity, Generosity, Alacrity, Incredulity and Perplexity.

COMPLEXITY: The admissions process has remained as complicated and difficult to navigate as ever. Despite, or perhaps in part due to, the fact that the Common Application has been adopted by more of the selective colleges, including more public universities, application writing is as confusing as ever. Even for the Common App schools, we see many colleges with a variety of supplements, some with additional essays, some without.

There are arts and athletic and international supplements. Some colleges have their own forms, others take the Common App special supplements. An increasing number of high schools are filing their recommendation forms and reports online, but others are not. Then there is the Universal College Application, the colleges that use their own online applications and the College Board's Score Choice program.

The result: Students must check each college's policy as they submit score reports in order to abide by the individual college's

continued on page 3

INSIDE

- Fall Enrollment Inside the States
- Scholarship Scoops
- Financial Aid Update, A Testing Tab and News You Can Use

Fall Enrollment Inside the States

Arkansas State. The number of new freshmen at Arkansas State U. in Jonesboro jumped by 7.3 percent over last year, to 1,676. This year's freshman class posted an average 23 ACT score. At the same time, Arkansas State attracted 7.2 percent more transfer students. Total enrollment reached 13,893. Enrollment of international students hit an all-time high of 856, an 8.6 percent increase over last year. The number doesn't include international students enrolled in the English as a Second Language program. "Given that ASU graduated or certificated almost 4,000 students and increased admission standards, these figures are heartening," Chancellor Tim Hudson said.

Bethel U. The College of Arts & Sciences at Bethel U. in Minnesota enrolled 2,793 students this fall, including 658 freshmen and 166 transfer students. "Retention was particularly good this fall, with 91 percent of last year's non-graduating students returning," said Dan Nelson, vice president for admissions, financial aid and retention. That was up from about 90 percent last year.

Bowling Green State U. Enrollment dropped by 1.5 percent at Bowling Green State U. in Ohio, to 19,697. However, according to the *Toledo Blade*, the enrolled students are taking more credit hours in order to complete their degrees on time.

Illinois Down. The number of students enrolled in eight of Illinois' 12 public universities fell this fall. Eastern Illinois in Charleston was down 6.9 percent; Southern Illinois U. in Carbondale and Northern Illinois in Dekalb dropped by about 5 percent. However, the

flagship U. of Illinois saw an increase. State student aid fell from \$387 million to \$371 million this year.

"The costs are up and aid is down and family income is languishing," Blair Lord, Eastern Illinois U.'s vice president for academic affairs told *The State Journal-Register*. "Getting to college is getting to be a challenge."

Indiana Record. Indiana University enrolled 102,067 at its seven campuses, 77 more than last year. The flagship Bloomington campus enrolled 42,133 students; I.U. Purdue U. Indianapolis (IUPUI) enrolled 30,451; I.U. South Bend attracted 8,490 students; IU East enrolled 4,186; IU Kokomo drew 3,719; IU Northwest 6,184; and IU Southeast attracted 6,904 students. The stats do not include IUPUI Fort Wayne, which are counted by Purdue U.

Memphis. The U. of Memphis enrolled more than 22,365 students, down slightly from last year's 22,725. In fact, enrollment is down at every Tennessee four-year institution and community college. Memphis also reached the limit of the Pell money it can receive. "There was always a limit on the Pell [Grant]," said Betty Huff, UM's vice president of enrollment services, "but ...effective May of this year, we were no longer able to do that. It's absolute." Some 45 percent of UM students receive Pell support.

Plattsburgh State. For the seventh straight year, Plattsburgh State U. (State U. of New York Plattsburgh) admitted fewer than half (45.6 percent) of applications. One quarter of the new students come from ethnic minority groups. More than 100 are international students from 60 nations with the top five China,

Japan, Canada, Ethiopia and Korea. Some 40 percent of the new students won merit awards.

SUNY Canton Record. SUNY Canton shattered application records for the third straight year with more than 6,000 applications. The school expected to enroll 4,000 students this fall for the first time in school history.

"There's a reason why our numbers continue to increase each year," said David M. Gerlach, a university vice president. "We continue to add more in-demand, career-oriented bachelor's degrees, we have a new athletic facility, a new residence hall and a student-first approach to everything we do."

Texas Tech. For the fourth straight year, Texas Tech U. reached record enrollment, with 32,611. Of those, 26,583 are undergraduates. This year, TT accepted less than 50 percent of first-year applicants. "Our SAT scores may be up by about 10 percent," interim president Lawrence Schovanec told the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*. And graduation rates are up. "We're getting more people in, but we're turning them out faster," said Chancellor Kent Hance. "That's what we need to do, and that's what we want to do."

Toledo. The U. of Toledo enrolled 21,500 graduate and undergrad students at all of its campuses, a 2.1 percent decline over last year. Part of the explanation is implementation of higher standards. "While this year's class is a bit smaller," UT's president Lloyd Jacobs told the *Toledo Blade*, "it is also better prepared for the rigors of a college education." He added that, "Traditionally, students who apply for admission late in the summer are among the least likely to return the following year, let alone earn a degree. This year, we stopped enrolling students July 31."

Vermont. Two colleges in Bennington, Vermont, set enrollment records this fall. According to the *Bennington Banner*, Southern Vermont C., a private college once known as Saint Joseph C., enrolled 600 students, including 175 freshmen and 75 transfer students. The college plans to boost enrollment even further in coming years.

Bennington C. enrolled 700 students this semester, including 200 freshmen and 15 transfer students. "We experienced a period of growth just after we went co-ed in 1969, but I believe enrollment leveled off at around 600 students," an official told the paper. ■

2012

continued from page 1

their needs. Whether it is public or private, traditional or online, college must be available and affordable."

For more info, see <http://mittromney.com/issues/education>. ■

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

Aeronautical Engineering. NASA's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate will grant 20 undergraduate and five graduate scholarships of \$15,000 or more for summer study to students in aeronautical engineering programs or related fields. *Deadline:* Jan. 14, 2013. See, <http://nasa.asee.org/>.

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure College Scholarship Program. Since 2001, the Komen program has distributed scholarships "to help students who would find attending college to be a significant financial burden due to the loss of a parent or guardian to breast cancer or their own breast cancer diagnosis at age 25 or younger." The award amounts to \$10,000 a year for up to four years to attend a state university in pursuit of a baccalaureate degree. Recipients are selected based on scholastic achievement, community service, financial need and demonstrated leadership

potential. *Deadline:* Oct.15. For more info, see <http://ww5.komen.org/ResearchGrants/CollegeScholarshipAward.html>.

Don't Forget to Think Local. *The New York Times* will award eight high school seniors up to \$7,500 annually to attend any nationally accredited four-year college. The program is open to current high school seniors attending a public, parochial or private school in New York City. *Deadline:* Oct. 26. See, www.NYTimes.com/scholarship.

Meanwhile, in New Jersey, the state legislature will award \$10,000 to five New Jersey students who have performed exceptional acts of heroism. The Dana Christmas Scholarship for Heroism honors a student who risked her life to help others in the Seton Hall U. dorm fire. *Deadline:* Oct. 15. See, <http://www.hesaa.org/Pages/GrantsandScholarshipsDetails.aspx>. ■

OUTLOOK*continued from page 1*

stance on this, even though the Common App, for example, asks that students report their highest section scores for the SAT or the ACT. We still should note the gradual increase in schools adopting test-optional admissions policies, though there are many variations of such programs. Some require interviews, research projects or graded papers in place of testing; others look for a particular GPA or class rank (though if you attend one of the many high schools that do not provide a rank).

Students are also confused as to whether to take the SAT, ACT and/or SAT Subject Tests. Which colleges require or recommend which, and in which combination? More students are taking SAT and ACT, as well as Subject Tests, to cover all their bases and to see which works better for them, leading to more prep time, more weekends given up and more registration and reporting costs. Should we add mention of the financial aid application process, priority or preferred deadlines for scholarship consideration, or need-blind versus really need-blind and full-need funding? How about Early Action, Early Decision, Early Decision II, Early Notification, Rolling Admission, Restrictive Early Action and Immediate Decision, among others? Folks, it's not getting any easier for our students to apply to college.

UNCERTAINTY: Due to a number of forces—a rise in the high school graduating population, an increase in international applications, stronger student qualifications across a wide range of public and private high schools and a search for (OK, even an obsession with) highly-recognized selective private and public colleges—it has become harder to get into the more selective schools. More students are applying to more colleges, in part to try to counter the unpredictability (there's another “ty” word) in the admissions process. Colleges are facing huge increases in application numbers, and in many cases reduced staff and budgets to manage the pool. With less time to meet students on the road or during on-campus interviews, and more applications to read, the admissions process has become less personalized in more instances.

Thus, there is a great deal of uncertainty: on the part of students, who don't know where they will get in; and on the part of colleges, which don't know which students are likely to attend if they are admitted. Enter the binding Early Decision programs and the rise in the use and length of Waiting Lists, among other enrollment management strategies.

DIVERSITY: Colleges are still seeking a diverse applicant pool. Despite challenges to affirmative action, particularly a public university issue, we are still seeing colleges reaching out to underrepresented student populations, including ethnic and racial minorities, students from geographic regions that have not typically sent many applicants and first-generation college attendees.

The Center for Student Opportunity, for example, features a list of many colleges expanding their outreach efforts to bring students to campus for multicultural events and to educate students about what they have to offer in terms of programs and financial assistance (www.csopportunity.org).

GENEROSITY: In addition to the need-based financial aid that the federal government, states and colleges are putting on the table, often in the face of budget challenges and decreased legislative support, there



Matthew and Howard Greene

is still an amazing amount of non-need-based aid awarded by colleges. This discounting can surprise, and sometimes unsettle, families. But it can also mean the difference between attending and not attending a college, or balancing the total cost of attendance between public and private options.

We encourage many students to build into their college list appropriate institutions that might offer them scholarships based on academic or other qualifications. We don't anticipate this trend slowing down too much this year. That is despite that fact that many colleges probably

can't afford to keep discounting this deeply for too much longer.

ALACRITY: A word we wouldn't encourage students to use in their college essays, but one that captures how quickly and early the application process is starting for some students. By the first week of September this year, we have heard from three students who had received invitations to apply to Fordham University, the University of Denver and Southern Methodist University via “priority” applications. These so-called “Snap Apps” are becoming ubiquitous, and are adding to the confusion and, sometimes, cynicism on the part of families. Websites and other guidelines don't mention or spend much time discussing these strategies, and families (and counselors) are unsure as to whether they improve admissions odds, signal any higher chance for admission or represent some new kind of admission plan. Do they conflict with Restrictive Early Action programs?

So many students head into senior year convinced they will (in fact, they must!) apply Early somewhere (they just have to figure out where). We spend a lot of time counseling students that there is a longer time frame for the admissions process which will serve many of them better. Nevertheless, the pressure is on to move the fall forward and to make commitments when often students are far from ready to do so.

INCREDULITY: “Do they really want me?” “Is this a scam?” “Is this college education really worth it?” There is a rising sense of skepticism on the part of students and parents who are not only mystified by such a complicated admission process and college landscape, but also wary of taking on too much debt, spending time applying to and visiting campuses where they don't have much chance for admission or studying for a four- (or six-) year degree that will not lead to gainful employment.

As strong supporters of a liberal arts education, we do our best to make the case for a broad-based curriculum as the foundation for many careers. But given the economic downturn, many families are with good reason asking tough questions about the cost and trajectory of degree programs. With the addition of the net price calculators, colleges must be ready to answer those questions and provide real data, plans, financial aid counseling and career services for prospective and current students.

PERPLEXITY: Ultimately, some families are overwhelmed by the choices and challenges of today's college admissions process. They will seek reassurance in one or more of the many rankings guides, looking for some quantitative measure to gauge the quality of the education they are considering. Or they will listen to the advice of a trusted friend, uncle, mentor or neighbor who has something good to say about a particular school. Perhaps they will put most emphasis on the best deal they can put together, and not even apply to colleges that

continued on page 4

FINANCIAL AID UPDATE

Cal Grants Cut. In June, the California Student Aid Commission cut Cal Grant awards by 5 percent. The grants fund items such as tuition, textbooks and living expenses. Cal Grants may encounter further cuts this year, depending on the state's financial condition.

Concordia Cuts Tuition. Next school year, Concordia U. in St. Paul, Minnesota, will cut \$10,000 from undergraduate tuition to \$19,700. "In resetting our tuition to a price last seen a decade ago, we are responding to the concerns of students and families who feel our nation's colleges have become unaffordable," said Rev. Tom Ries, Concordia's president.

Iowa U. Foundations Target Scholarships. The Iowa Board of Regents is asking the university foundations in the state to "focus more money on educating the student, rather than on buildings," said President Craig Lang in a recent *Des Moines Register*. This summer, the Regents voted to eliminate tuition-funded scholarships over five years. The plan is to shift the burden onto the university foundations. Last year, the foundations for the U. of Iowa, Iowa State U. and the U. of Northern

Iowa raised \$305 million, but "officials have said much of that money is restricted for specific uses not for scholarships."

NYU's Banner Year. New York U. doubled the amount of financial aid funds it raised last year. It brought in \$120 million to help students. "Financial aid is the university's top fundraising priority," said a university spokesman. Within the past five years, there has been a national increase of \$8 billion awarded as financial aid and scholarships for undergraduates.

Northwestern's Aid Rises with Tuition. Financial aid at Northwestern U. has nearly doubled since 2006, according to the *Daily Northwestern*, now reaching \$118 million, an 11.4 percent increase from just last year. This academic year, 51 percent of students, not including athletes, will receive aid. Michael Mills, the associate provost for university enrollment, told the paper that the increase is the result of tuition hikes, the admittance of more low-income students and the economy. This year, 708 students were given aid comprised of grants rather than loans, up 200 students since 2008. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

One in Five U.S. Households Owe Student Debt. The number of households owing student debt doubled over the last two decades, rising from 15 percent in 2007 to 19 percent in 2010. This is according to a new report from the Pew Research Center which noted that "40 percent of households headed by someone younger than age 35 owe such debt." But the increase is seen in nearly "every demographic and economic category, as has the size of that debt." The average debt went from \$23,349 in 2007 to \$26,682. See, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org> for the report.

U.S. News Top Schools. Who tops *U.S. News & World Report's* 2013 list of top schools? Not many surprises. Best National U.'s, in order: Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia and U. of Chicago, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford, Duke, U. of Pennsylvania, California Institute of Technology and Dartmouth.

Best National Liberal Arts C.'s: Williams, Amherst, Swarthmore, Middlebury, Pomona, Bowdoin, Wellesley, Carleton, Haverford, Claremont McKenna and Vassar.

But there are some surprises among "Up-and-Coming Schools." National U's:

George Mason, U. of Maryland-Baltimore County, Drexel, Arizona State, U. of Central Florida and U. of Southern California. "Up-and-Coming Schools," Colleges: Allegheny, U. of Richmond, Hendrix, Roanoke and Davidson.

Top Community Colleges. The Aspen Institute has released a list of its top 10 community colleges, in alphabetic order: Brazosport C. in Texas, Broward C. in Florida, Sante Fe C. in Florida, C. of Ouachitas in Arkansas, Kingsborough C.C. in New York, Lake Area Technical Institute in South Dakota, Santa Barbara City C. in California, Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical C., Walla Walla Community C. in Washington and Western Kentucky Community and Technical C.

Sports Success Spurs Apps. *The Journal of Sports Economics* confirms what many people believe: a university's success on the playing field positively impacts student applications. In a recent article, Devin G. Pope and Jaren C. Pope wrote that a school that has a stellar year in basketball or football on average receives up to 10 percent more SAT scores. Males, African American and out-of-state students and high school sports players are more likely

OUTLOOK

continued from page 3
look too expensive.

International candidates will seek shelter in a recognized name and location, rather than reaching out for great colleges and universities that have less of a presence in Europe, Asia or South America. Social media influences, from Facebook to YouTube to Twitter, will shape opinions and preconceptions, in ways beyond the control of the institution. Faced with such trends, the increasingly overburdened school counselor or college official will try to reduce families' confusion. And when asked why things are this way, must say, "I really don't know..." ■

Howard and Matthew Greene are independent educational consultants, and authors of the Greenes' Guides to Education series, among other titles. Their most recent book is College Grad Seeks Future. See, www.howardgreeneassociates.com.

Testing Tab

Only 43 Percent College Ready. That was the headline the last week of September as the College Board released *The SAT Report on College & Career Readiness for the Class 2012*. "This report should serve as a call to action to expand access to rigor for more students," said College Board President Gaston Caperton. "Our nation's future depends on the strength of our education system. When less than half of kids who want to go to college are prepared to do so, that system is failing. We must make education a national priority and deliver rigor to more students."

The benchmark score for readiness is 1550 which means a 65 percent likelihood of achieving a B- average or higher during the first year of study at a four-year college. The report also noted though that students who complete a core curriculum and enroll in honors and/or Advanced Placement programs perform better on the SAT.

More than 1.66 million students in the class of 2012 took the SAT, the largest class of SAT takers in history. Among the test takers: 45 percent were minority students, 36 percent noted the highest level of their parents' education as a high school diploma or less. Underserved minority students accounted for 46 percent of first-generation college goers. For more info, see www.collegeboard.org. ■

to be influenced.

P.S. COLLEGE BOUND'S National Admissions Trends Survey is in the works. Colleges that haven't received a survey should drop us a note at collegeboundnews@gmail.com. ■

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