

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admission Inside the States

MORE REPORTS on this year's first-year classes keep rolling into *CB*'s editorial offices. Here's a snapshot of schools in various states.

Connecticut's Average Scores Rise. The U. of Connecticut enrolled its largest freshman class ever with 5,200 new students. Total undergraduate enrollment reached 23,000, 18,000 of whom will be at the Storrs campus. The Class of 2019 at Storrs posted an average SAT score of 1233, up from 1212 five years ago.

Framingham State Students Are Mostly From Massachusetts. About 95 percent of new students at Framingham State U., founded in 1839 as the first Normal School in the country, came from in-state Massachusetts. In-state tuition at Framingham is \$8,700; out-of-state \$14,780.

Grand Valley State Class Smaller. With 4,155 first-year students, Grand Valley State U. in Michigan was 71 freshmen fewer than

last year. But they traveled from 50 nations to enroll. Freshman average high school GPA was 3.56; ACT median score, 23. Most new students were undecided about their major, but those who declared favored nursing, biomedical sciences and business.

Kent State Expands Advising and Support Services. Kent State's freshman-to-sophomore year retention rate reached a record of nearly 82 percent. "In the last three years, we have built on staff dedication to student success by improving academic advising, expanding support services and co-curricular experiences and encouraging students to enroll in and pass at least 15 credit hours per semester so that they will graduate in four years," Todd Diacon, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, told the *Sidney Daily News*. "These efforts and others have lifted our retention and graduation rates to record highs."

This is good news to the 6,300 new stu-
continued on page 2

New Admissions Requirements in the States

Colorado's Changing Standards. The Colorado Board of Education has altered some of its requirements for high school graduation in 2021. The board retained the ACT scores of 18 on English and 19 on math for high school graduation. But it eliminated science and social studies standards.

However, four-year colleges across Colorado have already raised their admission standards starting with the Class of 2019. Some 40 percent of current Colorado high school students do not meet the new admissions requirements, Fort Lewis C. admissions director Andy Burns told *DurangoHerald.com*.

About a third of current Fort Lewis freshman must take some kind of remediation, particularly in math and composition. Fort

Lewis is piloting a Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI) program for students who meet certain standards such as a good high school GPA, even if they don't have the test scores, so these students can enroll in regular general education credit-bearing courses.

"SAI is new to Colorado, but it's not new in the country," said Barbara Morris, Fort Lewis provost. "It has shown good results in other states, and we're showing good success in small numbers. A little bit of extra structure can be very helpful. And research has shown that SAI can be helpful for all remedial students."

Charleston's Top 10 Percent Admissions. The C. of Charleston will start a Top 10
continued on page 4

New College Coalition Promises Improvement of the Admissions Process

A GROWING NUMBER OF COLLEGES, 80 at last count, have banded together to create a free platform of online tools to streamline and personalize the college application process, especially for low-income students. The schools, with graduation rates of at least 70 percent, range from Amherst to Yale. Called the Coalition for Access, Affordability and Success, the group says its planning tools are scheduled to be ready for use beginning January 2016. Many of the schools will accept applications through the portal beginning Summer 2016.

"This free platform will allow high school students to assemble and share a digital portfolio with counselors, teachers and mentors, which will hopefully alleviate some of the angst that college applications can generate," Chris George, St Olaf C. dean of admissions and financial aid, told a U. of Minnesota publication. "And because students will be able to add multimedia elements such as images, audio recordings and videos to this platform, it will provide us with new information to assist us in our holistic review of each applicant."

Students will be urged to begin using these tools beginning with their freshman year of high school and develop them over time.

"It's sort of revolutionary," Ann McDermott, director of admission at the C. of Holy Cross, told *telegram.com*. "We haven't changed the way students apply to colleges in a long time."

continued on page 4

INSIDE

- Profiles Among the Privates
- Tracking Federal Dollars
- New Test Optionals
- News You Can Use

ADMISSION INSIDE THE STATES

continued from page 1

dents enrolling this fall. This class posted the school's highest high school GPA for an incoming class at 3.35; and they scored an average 23 on the ACT. Total Kent State enrollment reached 41,200 students, including 3,000 international students from 103 nations. Some 28,500 students attend at the Kent Campus.

NC Wilmington's New Class Includes Transfer Students. The U. of North Carolina Wilmington welcomed 2,025 new freshman and 1,425 transfer students from 28 states and 34 countries. The transfer students came from 243 universities and 103 community colleges from across the nation.

The Ohio State Class Includes Students from 20 Nations. The Ohio State U. received 45,921 applications for this academic year and recruited a new class of about 7,000 students. Their average ACT score was about 28.9. Nearly 63 percent of the students graduated in the top 10 percent of their high school class. The male-to-female ratio is about 50/50. International students hail from 20 nations, according to *The Lantern*.

Ohio U. Enrollment Continues to Grow. Ohio U. enrolled its third record-breaking class in a row, with 4,423 first-year students, 1 percent larger than last year, Craig Cornell, senior vice provost for strategic enrollment management, told *The Post*. It is the ninth straight year that total enrollment rose. "Our goal has never been significant growth at any level," Cornell told the paper. "We've benefited from the fact that students are choosing us and they're choosing us at very good rates...."

Rutgers U. Applications Increased 11 Percent. Rutgers U. in New Jersey, now part of the Big Ten, welcomed the largest class since its founding in 1766, with 8,100 new first-year students across all its campuses statewide. Courtney McAnuff, vice president for enrollment management, told *Rutgers Today* that the university received over 37,000 applications this year, an 11 percent increase over last year. Approximately 6,550 of the first-year students enrolled in classes at the New Brunswick campus and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences school. More than 200 members of the Class of 2019 were the valedictorian or salutatorian of their high schools.

At New Brunswick/RBHS, 64 percent of new students placed in the top 20th percentile of their classes. Their average SAT score is 1875, an 18 point increase over last year. Rutgers now hosts 84 Presidential Scholars who boast an average SAT of 2305. This is the first semester of the new Honors College at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, and it enrolled 530 students with an average SAT

score of 2160, about 600 points higher than the state and national average. Rutgers also enrolled about 4,450 transfer students.

Southern Illinois Edwardsville Admits Students From Missouri. The Class of 2019 at Southern Illinois U. Edwardsville reached about 2,100 students, 275 of whom are from Missouri. At welcoming ceremonies they learned about the university's values of "Excellence, Wisdom, Inclusion, Citizenship and Integrity."

SUNY Geneseo Winds Up With Large Class. Some 1,353 new students were admitted to the State University of New York (SUNY) Geneseo from a pool of 9,188 applicants. The new class, which is "significantly larger" than last year's, includes 32 valedictorians and salutatorians, is 37 percent male and 63 percent female and is 21 percent "multicultural."

Tennessee Has Academically-Talented Class. The U. of Tennessee welcomed 4,722 new students from 46 states and 13 nations. About 85 percent hail from Tennessee and 18 percent are minority students. Half of the new students posted a high school 4.0 GPA; the entire class, 3.89. Some 12 percent is enrolled in the UT honors program. And 95 percent of incoming in-state freshman qualified for the state's HOPE scholarship, while 31 percent of

the class qualifies for Pell grants. UT has made \$87 million in recent campus improvements.

Vermont Reaches Out-of-State. The U. of Vermont enrolled the fewest freshmen from Vermont in the school's history, according to vtcynic.com. Only 20 percent of the Class of 2019 is from the state, down from 24 percent last year and 33 percent in 1995. *The Burlington Free Press* noted this is the lowest percentage of all state flagship universities. The universities of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Maine, Connecticut and Massachusetts have out-of-state populations ranging from 20 to 44 percent. The in-state population at Vermont State U. is 80 percent. Some 2,400 new students matriculated at UVM this fall, coming from 40 states and 18 countries and 16 percent are first-generation college students.

Wisconsin Enrollment Higher Than Last Year. The U. of Wisconsin-Madison matriculated 6,270 new freshmen, with 3,617 coming from in-state. Also, 1,269 transfer students arrived on campus. Overall, the Class of 2019 includes students from all 50 states and 123 countries. Total UW-Madison enrollment reached 43,405, up slightly from last year. Total undergrad enrollment grew to 29,583. African-American, Hispanic/Latino and Southeast Asian-American students make up 10 percent of the class. ■

Admissions Profiles Among the Privates

Lewis & Clark Has a "Classzilla." Lewis & Clark C. in Oregon enrolled its largest freshman class of 656 students, its "classzilla" as administrators call it, which is anywhere from 60 to 100 more than usual. That's because its normal yield of between 14 and 15 percent grew this year to a little over 16 percent. About 50 of the students were admitted through the school's new Early Decision program.

Lisa Meyer, admissions dean, told *oregonlive.com*. that this meant the college, located in a wooded section of Portland, was forced to hire more faculty and staff, plus increase Internet capacity, bus and food services.

Miami Legacies. According to the *Miami Student*, 32 percent of students in the Class of 2019 at the U. of Miami in Florida are legacies. "Overall, 13 percent of first-year students have a parent, 11 percent have a sibling and the other 8 percent have extended family members who attended Miami," the paper reported.

Princeton OK's Gap Year. Some 35 of students accepted at Princeton this year chose to take a gap year. Princeton enrolled 1,319 new students this fall, 38 percent of whom came from California, New Jersey and New York. About 59 percent hail from public high schools. The Class of 2019 includes 177 international

students from 51 nations, or 13 percent of the new class, up from 11 percent last year.

Stanford's Recruits Include Engineers. Engineering is the interest area of 36 percent of the first-year class enrolled in Stanford U. in California this fall, while 23 percent will study natural sciences and 17 percent will pursue the humanities. Stanford welcomed 1,722 new first-year students and 15 transfer students from 49 states and 66 nations. Nearly 33 percent are from California and 15 percent are first-generation students.

Tufts Creates Its 160th Class. Tufts U. in Massachusetts attracted 19,062 applicants to its 160th undergraduate class, offered admissions to 16 percent of them, and matriculated 1,360 students, for a 44 percent yield. International students represent 14 percent of the class. A third of the class is non-Caucasian.

The Class of 2019 includes 57 National Merit Scholars and 47 high school valedictorians, with mean SAT scores of 713 in critical reading and 723 in math. This year, Tufts budgeted a record \$18.5 million for need-based grants.

Lee Coffin, dean of undergraduate admissions, told *TuftsNow*, "This is a class with intelligence and personality." ■

Tracking the Federal Dollar

Protecting Student Borrowers. Late last month, the U.S. Dept. of Ed announced two final regulations to protect students and help borrowers. The first is aimed at the proliferation of campus debit and prepaid cards offered to students in exchange for monetary benefits to the college or university. Currently, about 40 percent of all college students fall under this category. The department estimates that nearly \$25 billion in Pell grants and Direct Loan program funds are annually released to students at institutions using these accounts. Under this new regulation students will be able to freely choose how to receive their federal student aid refunds and will no longer be forced to pay excessive fees to access their student aid using the college sponsored card.

The other change is to the Revised Pay As You Earn (REPAYE) option that expands the repayment option to allow 5 million more Direct Loan borrowers to cap their monthly student loan payments at 10 percent of their annual income allocated per month, without regard to when the borrower first obtained their loans.

Pell Abacus. Students who qualify for free or reduced school lunch now have their own college cost calculator to help them seize the opportunity of financial aid at more than 5,000 colleges and universities, the Pell Abacus. Low-income students can “get net price estimates quickly without answering detailed financial questions that would require a parent or tax form.”

“We’re removing some of the key barriers preventing low-income students from exploring their full range of college options,” Abigail Seldin, vice president at ECMC, told *The Christian Science Monitor*. See, https://pell.collegeabacus.org/pell_pages.

Six Month Student-Loan Grace Period Ends. The six-month student-loan grace period after graduation before recent college grads enter repayment of their federal student loans has expired for millions of students. The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators is offering students help in examining repayment options.

“No student should default on his or her student loans due to financial distress,” said Justin Draeger, the organization’s president. “It’s important that borrowers are aware of all options available to ease the burden of monthly student loan payments and stay on the path of full repayment.” For more information, see, www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/student_borrowers_tips_2015.pdf.

More FAFSA Changes? Following President Obama’s executive action last month to allow the use of prior-prior year (PPY) income information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) is calling for additional changes.

The group wants to see the FAFSA further simplified to require only basic personal identifiers and demographic information and questions necessary to determine the applicant’s dependence status. Applicants would then be steered down one of three paths based upon their receipt of certain federal means-tested benefits and their tax filing status. The process would weed out questions about certain financial resources for those applicants who are highly unlikely to have those resources so that students with the highest need would be presented with the fewest questions. NASFAA will continue to work with policymakers to promote these changes. *CB* will keep you updated.

Income Share Agreements. Income Share Agreements (ISA), which allow organizations to fund college expenses in exchange for a return on part of a student’s future earnings for a fixed period after college, have been around since the 1950s. But they got new life in 2002 with the founding of Lumni, a for-profit company that offered ISAs to South American students. Other companies have followed. ISAs are essentially stocks invested in students as a way of combating student debt.

But a study from the American Institutes For Research (AIR) concludes that ISAs are “unlikely to aid most poor students...” AIR found that “current lending criteria would prevent most students from receiving an ISA.” Those criteria are for “students who are high ability, attend prestigious institutions or major in lucrative fields of study...” It recommends that firms which offer ISAs loosen their criteria.

“The idea of ISA is a good one, in theory,” said Matthew Soldner, an AIR senior researcher. “But their potential to help those most in need is unlikely to be realized without some fundamental rethinking about who actually gets the benefits.” ■

New Test Optional Colleges

Catholic U. in Washington DC joined the list of test optional schools. Its student newspaper editorialized, “This is a good thing for many reasons.” Catholic U. recruited its largest first-year class since 2010, with 910 new students, a 9.6 percent increase over last year. “We have even a larger membership in our honors program, so it’s not like we just opened the flood gates,” Thaddeus Green, associate dean of undergraduate studies, told the paper.

U. Mass. Lowell made the SAT/ACT score optional. Also, Salem State U. in Massachusetts will not require test scores. But students with a 3.0 or higher GPA are “encouraged to submit their test scores as it will assist with academic placement....”

And, the C. of Idaho also declared itself to be test optional. “The admissions committee has always prided itself on providing holistic application review” the college said. ■

COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

Step Up to College: Philadelphia’s Guide to the College Preparation, Application, Admission & Financial Aid Processes is a 66-page guide published by Philadelphia Futures, a nonprofit organization that “provides Philadelphia’s low-income, first-generation-to-college students with tools and resources and opportunities necessary for admission to and success in college;” 42,000 copies of the guide, the 26th

edition, were distributed to every public, charter and parochial high school in the city. See, www.philadelphiafutures.org.

The Quality of a College Degree: Toward New Frameworks, Evidence, and Interventions by Debra Humphreys, Heather McCambly and Judith Ramaley; AAC&U; member price, \$12, non-member price, \$20. See, www.aacu.org.
The Good, The Bad, & I’m Ugly?: My Stories

As An Uncool Undergrad by Ryan Schocket; Createspace; ISBN: 151232230X; paperback; 270 pages; \$9.46.

Who Benefits from SAT Prep? The fall 2015 issue of *The Review of Higher Education* includes an article, “Who Benefits from SAT Prep?: An Examination of High School Context and Race/Ethnicity.” It finds among other things that “not all students benefit equally from SAT prep; gains associated with SAT prep appear to be driven by East Asian American participation in private courses.” ■

NEW REQUIREMENTS

continued from page 1

Percent program for admissions for seven nearby counties. SAT or ACT scores are still required, but they will not be part of the evaluation considered in admission which will be automatic for those in the top 10 percent of public high school classes.

Massachusetts' New Math Standards.

Beginning this fall, Massachusetts students who hope to enroll in state universities will be required to have completed four years of high school mathematics, including a math class during their senior year. Currently, 65 percent of Massachusetts high schools require four years of high school math, up from 23 percent in 2008. Carlos Santiago, Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education, said "The new minimum admissions standards are an effort to increase students' college readiness and meet the needs of the state's growing high-tech sector."

Texas Offers Free Online Courses. The U. of Texas system is now the largest public university system to offer free, college-quality courses for open enrollment online, designed for high school students to get a head start on college. While the MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) such as pre-calculus, human geography, sociology and engineering don't actually earn students college credits, most are specifically designed to help them pass the AP or CLEP tests for credit.

But the Texas MOOCs aren't only for high school students. Anyone, anywhere in the world, is able to enroll.

"Now, universities are moving to someday be able to offer an entire freshman year for free, online. By offering MOOCs, the UT system hopes to give high school seniors a chance to knock out basic college courses ahead of university enrollment, speeding their graduation and cutting their costs," *The Houston Chronicle* noted. ■

NEW COALITION

continued from page 1

She added that traditional admissions procedures "don't allow for a lot of individuality," are "too complicated when it comes to financial aid" and can be "heartbreaking" when financial aid problems thwart a talented student.

To keep abreast of the Coalition's work, see www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org.

The Coalition Not Without Critics

Frank Bruni, writing in *The New York Times* on October 18, pointed out that "the country's most selective colleges are dominated by students from affluent backgrounds." He wondered how the new application process would reduce inequality and increase access and whether it would be more effective to adopt less complicated admissions strategies.

Nationally, 38 percent of undergraduates receive federal Pell grants. The percentage of Pell students at the nation's most elite colleges is considerably smaller. At the U. of Virginia, the number is just 13 percent. At Columbia U. that number recently increased to 21 percent. Bruni had older data. (Yale U. just released statistics for its Class of 2019 indicating that nearly 19 percent qualified for a Pell grant, a 43 percent increase over the Class of 2017.)

But, "such low percentages largely reflect the flawed education and support systems that too many underprivileged kids in this country encounter," Bruni wrote. And he added, "Any rethinking of the status quo of admissions is terrific. The same goes for any spotlight on the dearth of diversity at many exclusive schools. I just hope the members of the coalition accomplish more, in the end, than merely illuminating education's inequities." ■

Minority Surge. About 26 percent of U.S. freshmen this fall are students of color, up from less than 20 percent in 2013.

Homeless Students. A report in *The DePaulia* in Chicago noted that there are at least 58,000 college students who could be officially classified as "homeless." And 51 percent of students who live off campus and not with relatives had incomes below the poverty line.

Not surprisingly, student homelessness has something to do with college housing costs, which between the 1994-95 and 2013-14 school years increased 14 percent at public two-year institutions, 54 percent at public four-year institutions and 44 percent at private four-year institutions. ■

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

2015 National Report Card. Recent results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that 36 percent of fourth graders were at or above the proficient level in reading, while 34 percent of eighth graders were proficient or better in reading, a two-point drop from 2013. But both scores were sharply higher than 1990.

Meanwhile, 40 percent of fourth graders were proficient or above in mathematics this year, down two points from 2013, while only 33 percent of eighth graders were proficient or better in math, also a two-point decline.

Ontario Online. The Canadian province of Ontario has launched a new online education portal that gives Ontario postsecondary students access to 13,000 accredited online college and university courses. Ontario is investing \$72 million over the next five years to support eCampus Ontario. All of Ontario's 45 publically-assisted colleges offer online courses through the portal. Hundreds of the courses are transferable between these schools.

Bennington Recruits KIPP. Bennington C. in Vermont is partnering with the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), which runs 180 charter schools in 20 states. By 2018-19, Bennington will admit up to eight KIPP students and will meet "all of their demonstrated financial aid." Overall, about 20 percent of Bennington's students are Pell grant eligible. Also, Bennington has dropped its application fee for everyone.

Missing Out. There is a 30 percent college enrollment gap between high-and low-income students, a number that remains basically unchanged since 1975, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

ESEA Reauthorization Debated. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund, New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and other civil rights activists have expressed concern that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that is making its way through the U.S. Senate and House has dangerously weakened the authority of the federal government oversight and ability to hold states accountable for eliminating education inequities.

Race a SAT Predictor. A new long-term analysis of SAT scores among applicants to the U. of California found that race and ethnicity have become stronger predictors of SAT scores than family income and parental education levels. The study by a U. of California at Berkeley researcher also found that socioeconomic factors could not be linked in a major way to high school grade-point averages.

The UC Berkeley researcher, Saul Geiser, speculated that one possible explanation is the growing rates of "intense segregation" in high schools. He concluded that the SAT is a poor predictor of whether students will graduate from UC, especially for black and Latino students.

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