

# College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

Vol. 34, No. 9

May 2020

## Admissions in a Changing Landscape

*Editors Note:* As *CB* went to press, yields, summer melts and enrollment trends were up in the air because of COVID-19. Even the opening of colleges throughout the country was in doubt. But here is the story thus far.

**American Admits 38 Percent.** American U. in Washington D.C. received 20,072 applications for the Class of 2024, the most in university history. American admitted 7,526, or 38 percent of those students. Andrea Felder, assistant vice provost for undergraduate admissions, attributed the increased applications to her department's work with community-based organizations and high schools to recruit underrepresented students and to eliminating an optional supplemental essay on the school's application. Almost 40 percent of admitted students belong to a minority racial or ethnic group. American hopes to matriculate about 1,800 students this fall.

**Chicago Admits 6 Percent.** Among the admitted students to the U. of Chicago, there are a quarterfinalist and finalist on teen "Jeopardy," a creator of two modern operas and Oman's Woman of the Year. The U. of Chicago attracted 34,400 applications to the Class of 2024, a slight decrease from last year, and admitted 6.2 percent of those students, James Nondorf, dean of admissions, told *chicagomaroon.com*.

Average SAT score for admitted students was 1518, the average ACT was 34. Some 99 percent of admitted students placed in the top 10 percent of their high school class. According to Nondorf, 274 admitted students are first-generation college students and 156, from "small towns or little rural areas all around the world."

While students may be disappointed to miss out on campus visits this spring, Nondorf said,

"It's easy to focus on things you didn't get to do. Don't worry. You have plenty of time to [experience campus] over the next four years. Take advantage of the opportunities you do have, appreciate the opportunities you do have."

### Davidson Admits 19 Percent Amidst "Crisis."

Davidson C. in North Carolina posted an acceptance rate of 19 percent. According to the *Davidson Factfile*, that was up from last year's rate of 18.1 percent. But since the economic crisis has accompanied the health crisis and many parents have lost their jobs since they filed the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance that creates problems for Davidson's financial aid process.

"How do I verify that somebody has lost their position or that their wages have been severely cut?" asked Christopher Gruber, vice president and dean of admission and financial aid. "Then how do I know when those things go back into play? This is what all colleges are talking about right now: What do we do right now in the absence of firm documentation?"

**Georgetown Accepts 15 Percent.** Georgetown U. attracted 21,318 first-year applications, down 3 percent from last year, and admitted 3,309 to the Class of 2024 for an acceptance rate of 15 percent, up 1 percent from last year, Charles Deacon, dean of undergraduate admissions, told the *Hoya*. "All of the top 20 *US News* universities had application declines of 5-10 percent this year so we are in that range," Deacon told the paper. "We believe affordability is the primary issue as the total cost approaches \$80,000." He added that, "Students on the waiting list could have a greater chance than usual if the yield does

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## What are the Enrollment Scenarios for Fall?

COVID-19 may mean hard times for colleges next fall. An analysis of the impact of the virus on the upcoming school year by the consulting firm McKinsey & Company considers three scenarios: The first scenario studies the situation if the COVID-19 is contained in the next two or three months. The second scenario is more pessimistic and sees the virus lasting for several months in some regions of the country. The third and most extreme scenario examines what would happen if the virus continues to spread.

**Optimistic Outlook.** Under the first scenario, domestic students will be able to return to class for Fall 2020 semester. Restrictions will remain for some international students. "Courses with a high level of hands-on components, such as clinical practicums, labs and performing arts will be particularly disrupted, and students in these fields may have to delay graduation to fulfill requirements."

(Yet, Cornell U. professor Kim Weeden estimates that given the close quarters of on-campus students, 99 percent of them could be infected with the virus in three steps.)

**Other Measures.** With the second and third scenarios, "most schools will be exclusively online through 2020 and into 2021." However, "almost half of U.S. colleges and universities had no formal online-education programs in 2018." Study-abroad programs will be canceled through 2021. The incoming

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## CHANGING LANDSCAPE

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decline and we will be keeping in touch with them throughout April.”

**GW Admits 38 Percent.** George Washington U. in Washington D.C. fielded 26,804 applications for the Class of 2024, about 1 percent fewer than last year, and offered admission to 10,374 students through its Early and Regular Decision rounds, for a seven-year low admission rate of roughly 38.7 percent. GW hopes to enroll a first-year class of 2,250 students, excluding transfers.

“We anticipate the changing landscape of COVID-19 increases the likelihood of wait list activity,” Ben Toll, dean of undergraduate admissions, told the *GW Hackett*. As many as 5,000 students are on this year’s wait list.

**Lehigh Admits 32 Percent, Sees Recruiting Uncertain in the Future.** Lehigh U. in Pennsylvania attracted 12,400 applications, down from last year’s 15,649 apps. Lehigh admitted 32 percent for the Class of 2024, the same as last year, Bruce Bunnick, director of admissions, told *The Brown and White*. Lehigh’s Path to Prominence plan calls for expanding the student body by 1,000 students within the next 10 years.

“We did build a little bit more of a class through our two rounds of Early Decision,” Bunnick told the paper. “And we actually made a few more offers of admission in the Regular Decision round to give us the assurance that this year, in terms of the application volume, will simply be a small blip on the radar screen, and then we’ll be able to increase by next year.”

Sarah Bombard, senior associate director of admissions, told the paper that the unprecedented nature of the coronavirus makes college recruiting uncertain in the foreseeable future.

**Michigan State Plans for Increased Enrollment.** Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Michigan State U. is planning for an increase in enrollment. As of April 1, 44,837 students had applied and 33,231 accepted, up from 31,518 students last year. Also, more transfer students applied. Deposits are up, according to John Ambrose, director of undergraduate admissions, although international deposits were down “slightly.” MSU enrolled 8,570 new undergraduates in Fall 2019.

**Middlebury Admits 8 Percent More.** Middlebury C. in Vermont received 9,165 applications for the Class of 2024, the third most in school history. Middlebury offered admission to 2,228 students, for an acceptance rate of 24 percent, eight points higher than last year. Students who applied during the Regular Decision round were admitted at a rate of 21.5 percent. Students of color make up 38 percent

## California Down From Last Year

The U. of California system overall received 172,099 freshmen applications for Fall 2020, 5.4 percent fewer than in 2018. Here’s a look:

*UC Berkeley* attracted 87,393 first-year applications and admitted 14,336, or 16.4 percent. It received 19,072 transfer applications, and admitted 4,868, or 26 percent.

*UC Davis* drew 78,092 first-year applications and admitted 30,508, or 39.1 percent. Davis received 17,150 transfer applications and admitted 9,842, or 57 percent.

*UC Irvine* received 95,566 first-year applications and admitted 25,394, or 26.6 percent. It received 21,789 transfer applications and admitted 44 percent.

*UCLA* attracted 111,306 first-year applications, and admitted 13,747, or 12.4 percent. It received 24,105 transfer applications and admitted 22 percent.

*UC Merced* received 25,417 applications

and admitted 18,456, for an admit rate of 72.6 percent. Merced also received 3,940 transfer applications and admitted 52 percent of them.

*UC Riverside* received 49,590 applications, and admitted 27,886, for an admit rate of 56.3 percent. Riverside also received 12,535 transfer applications and admitted 68 percent.

*UC San Diego* received 99,125 applications and admitted 32,005 students, for an admit rate of 32.3 percent. It also received 19,283 transfer applications and admitted 56 percent.

*UC Santa Barbara* received 93,442 applications and admitted 27,719, or 29.7 percent. It admitted 51 percent of transfer applicants. First-year ACT scores ranged from 26-31.

*UC Santa Cruz* received 55,868 first-year applications and admitted 51.5 percent. It drew 11,791 transfer applications and admitted 61 percent. ■

of those admitted, international students who come from 65 countries account for 10.5 percent of the admitted pool. Middlebury hopes to enroll between 725-740 first-year students this fall. “We’re doing our best to account for any sort of fluctuation that we might experience this year,” said Nicole Curvin, dean.

**ND Expects to Admit from 1,777 Student Wait List.** The U. of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, fielded 21,270 applications for the Class of 2024, 4 percent fewer than last year. ND invited 3,507 students, 100 more than last year because of the virus crisis, to join its community. Some 15 percent of the class was admitted Early Action.

Students were selected from all 50 states and 80 nations. Some 36.6 percent of those admitted are students of color. The middle 50 percent SAT score ranged from 1432-1540, the middle 50 percent ACT score was 33-35. Standardized test scores were up 9 percent. ND admitted 231 QuestBridge students. Of the admits, 15.2 percent are legacy students. ND expects them to comprise about 21 percent of the incoming class, since they post a higher yield.

Notre Dame hopes to enroll 2,050 first-year students in the Class of 2024, and expects to admit as many as 50 to 150 students from its 1,777 student wait list, according to Don Bishop, associate vice president. “We think families are going to keep adjusting their personal decisions throughout the summer,” Bishop said.

**“Uptick” in Vanderbilt Acceptance Rate.** While there was a decrease of 591 application from last year, Vanderbilt accepted more students, from 2,088 to 2,907, according to the *Vanderbilt Hustler*. It noted those admitted presented the highest test scores of the previous four year. The ACT middle 50 percent ranged from 34-36. The SAT middle 50

percent for Reading and Writing was 740-780.

**Wellesley Admits Students in “Challenging Times.”** Students from 1,023 high schools in 49 states were admitted to Wellesley C. from 6,627 applications. International citizens represent 12 percent of those accepted, 57 percent are domestic students of color. Average SAT score: 1445; ACT: 32. Overall, 19 percent of the applicants were accepted in “these challenging times,” said Joy St. John, dean.

**Wesleyan Admits 19 Percent, But Notes There is No Yield Prediction in a Pandemic.** Wesleyan U. in Connecticut fielded 12,752 applications for the Class of 2024, slightly fewer than last year, and admitted 2,531 students or 19.8 percent, up from last year’s 15.8 percent. Some 59 percent of new students are female. Almost half of those admitted are students of color (including international students), up from 44 percent last year. Wesleyan will provide financial aid to about 45 percent of admitted students and hopes to enroll about 785 students this fall.

“There are no yield prediction models that account for pandemics of this type,” Vice President Amin Gonzalez told the *Wesleyan Argus*. “So it’s hard to know right now, what’s going to happen with enrollment in the weeks ahead.”

**West Virginia Admits from 20 Nations.** West Virginia U. admitted 14,000 students from 48 states and 20 different countries. It held its first-ever Virtual Decision day on April 4, and 1,827 students participated. “We know students are still making decisions even after indicating that they would like to attend WVU, which is what makes this program so important,” said George Zimmerman, executive director of recruitment. ■

## ENROLLMENT SCENARIOS

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class of first-year students will start college without an on-campus orientation.

According to the McKinsey study, students and faculty will struggle to adapt to online coursework. If current students are dissatisfied with their digital offerings, they could decide to go elsewhere. “Lower-income students will suffer disproportionately” since they are less likely to have high-speed Internet access, and face more financial challenges. (According to another study, nearly 50 percent of all public high school students have never attended a single online or virtual class.)

At the same time, colleges face “much less predictable yield rates,” particularly if first-year students decide to take a gap year or attend somewhere closer to home. “There could be a rebalancing of students between schools. Specifically, schools that are more affordable and those that have strong, well-developed online learning infrastructure could see enrollment rise.”

The online option has financial implications. “Because online programs have traditionally been cheaper, universities already are facing calls to refund portions of regular tuition.” At this point, “The only certainty is uncertainty,” the consultants concluded.

**One-in-Four May Change College Choice.** According to an Eduventures survey of 7,100 high school seniors conducted in March and April, “College-bound high school seniors across the country are experiencing an unprecedented disruption in their lives... Their choice of and transition to college has been thrown into turmoil.” One-in-four students “believe that the pandemic may cause them to change their college choice.”

About half of the students are worried the pandemic may delay their enrollment. And a third of students have already experienced a loss of family income.

## COVID-19 IMPACT

Colleges and universities across the nation are suffering huge economic repercussions as a result of the COVID-19 virus outbreak. “The math is not pretty,” Robert Kelchen, an expert in college finances at Seton Hall U., told National Public Radio. Almost all colleges are experiencing a decline in revenue and incurring added expenses for items such as online learning.

“For some colleges, this is an existential threat that means they’ll have to close,” said Dominique Baker, professor of education policy at Southern Methodist U.

Others are taking a hit, but will survive. For example, the U. of Wisconsin-Madison estimates a \$100 million loss, or about 3.2 percent of the university’s \$3.1 billion budget, after dorms were emptied, classes

were moved online and students were told to stay away. But that is only if things return to normal by June, a timeline still up in the air. The financial loss includes reimbursing the majority of students who were forced out of their residence halls, according to the *Wisconsin State Journal*. “My expectation is there’s going to be a number of schools going out of business as a result of this,” Chancellor Rebecca Blank told the paper.

The U. of Michigan estimates the virus could cost up to \$1 billion by the end of the year. “I don’t think there’s any scenario under which its business as usual on American college campuses in the fall,” Nicholas Christakis, a Yale sociologist, told NPR. The big question is how many students will show up at all.

Even Bowdoin C. in Maine, with a \$1.74 billion endowment, expects to lose more than \$8 million by the end of the semester. According to Doug Cook, Bowdoin administrator, a strong endowment does not equate to a strong cash flow.

## COLLEGE ADAPTATIONS

### Colleges Connect “Virtually” With Prospective Students.

Normally in April, 3,000-4,000 students and their parents visit the U. of Nevada. Given the health emergency, Nevada, like many others, has replaced campus visits with virtual ones, according to Steve Maples, director of admissions. Students and their parents can also connect through weekly Facebook Live or Instagram Live chats on the Nevada admissions social media accounts. “This process is ever-evolving and we’re doing everything we can to connect with students and their parents,” Maples said. See, [unr.edu/visit](http://unr.edu/visit)

**Beloit Adopts Module-Based Semester.** Beloit C. in Wisconsin is moving to a module-based semester this fall that allows students to tackle just two courses in shorter bursts of time, as opposed to four-plus courses over four months. “Even if we have to switch to or from remote learning mid-module, that stretch will only affect two of your total units for fewer than seven weeks of the time,” Eric Boynton, provost, wrote students. “The shortened unit-completion time also allows those of you who face a travel ban in September to arrive on campus in time to start fresh for the second module.”

**Centre C. Goes to Block Schedule.** Centre C. in Kentucky will adopt “block” scheduling for the Fall 2020 semester. This approach divides the normal academic term of 13 weeks in four courses into two blocks of two courses, each six weeks plus two days long. “From a student perspective, taking only two courses at a time means less mental shifting among subjects, which should reduce stress and help both first-year and current students easily transition into a new academic year,” said associate dean Alex McAllister. ■

## COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

“EASE Handbook for Community Colleges: Encouraging Additional Summer Enrollment;” free download at <https://www.MDRC.org>.

*Promising Practices for Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine;* National Academies Press; ISBN-10: 0-309-49824-4; [www.nap.edu/catalog/25585/promising-practices-for-addressing-the-underrepresentation-of-women-and-science](http://www.nap.edu/catalog/25585/promising-practices-for-addressing-the-underrepresentation-of-women-and-science).

edu/catalog/25585/promising-practices-for-addressing-the-underrepresentation-of-women-and-science.

“Survey of Deans of Engineering: Evaluation of Use of Distance Learning” by Primary Research Group, Inc. in New York; ISBN 978-1-57440-636-8; PDF \$135; order a copy

at <https://www.PrimaryResearch.com>.

*The College Stress Test* by Robert Zemsky, Susan Shaman and Susan Campbell Baldrige; Johns Hopkins Press; 168 pages, 46 graphs; ISBN: 13 978-1421437033; \$36.50

*College Admissions Cracked: Saving Your Kid (and Yourself) from the Madness* by Jill Margaret Shulman; 320 pages; Hatchet Book Group; ISBN 13: 978-0316420549; \$12.99 ■

## FINANCIAL MATTERS

**Appealing Financial Aid Decisions.** The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators has partnered with SwiftStudent to create a new free website to help students to file appeals to their financial aid awards using different type of templates. See, <https://formswift.com/swift-student#>.

**\$6 Billion in Emergency Student Aid.** Congress voted to extend \$14 billion in

emergency aid for postsecondary institutions and their students as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Students are to receive \$6 billion of that amount. College students are ineligible for the \$1,200 checks the federal government sent to more than 100 million Americans. But they can receive money through their colleges as long as their expenses are related to COVID-19, such as food, housing, healthcare and

childcare costs, technology and course materials, which they document. The Dept. of Ed suggested a cap of \$6,195 per student, which is the equivalent of a maximum Pell Grant. The money is supposed to be prioritized towards students with the greatest need. Colleges and universities have a year to distribute the student grants.

### Ohio Schools Waive Application Fees.

The U. of Akron adjusted several admissions regulations to provide flexibility for students who may not be sure whether or not to go to college in fall, or if they should enroll somewhere closer to home, according to the *Akron Beacon Journal*. Akron will not require standardized tests for admissions this fall, pushed back deadlines, waived application fees and is offering virtual meetings with admissions counselors. "We want all the students and parents to feel confident they're making the right choice," said Kim Gentile, director of admissions. Kent State U waived its app fee and extended its application deadline to June 1.

### New Jersey Extends Financial Aid Deadline.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy announced that the application deadline for college financial aid has moved from April 15 to June 1 for returning students. The deadline for new college students remains September 15. More than 85,000 New Jersey college students attending in-state colleges received financial aid this year. ■

## TESTING TABS

**ACT Test-at-Home Option.** ACT announced it will offer a "flexible schedule of summer 2020 test dates and test-at-home options for Fall/Winter 2020. SAT is considering the test-at-home option as well, if schools are not open.

"Our mission compels us to provide as many opportunities as possible for students to take the ACT test, particularly now as other admission information, such as grades, courses and GPAs, maybe missing or partial," said Marten Roorda, ACT CEO.

However, some counselors are worried about pressuring students to take high stake tests while they are trying to readjust to many other learning problems and options.

**More Colleges Going Test Optional.** As *CB*

went to press, an increasing number of colleges were going test optional. Some for next year, others for the foreseeable future. The U. of North Carolina system, for example, will no longer require the SAT or ACT for applicants. A pilot program at three North Carolina universities showed no statistical difference in academic performance between those students who did not submit test scores and those who were admitted under the regular admission standards.

**Trinity U.** in Texas declared it will go test optional for three years, beginning Fall 2021.

**Roanoke C.** in Virginia announced that standardized test scores will now be optional for all students. **Claremont McKenna C.** in California adopted a test-optional policy, saying it would not accept at-home tests. ■

learning spaces for nursing and engineering students. The degree will help address a shortage of nurses across the country.

"The healthcare industry continues to change dramatically, transforming roles and creating opportunities for nurses that didn't exist even just a few years ago," said President Stuart Rabinowitz. The healthcare industry is Long Island's largest private-sector employer, accounting for 17 percent of private sector jobs.

### Kennesaw State U. Offers a New Degree.

Kennesaw State U. in Georgia will offer a Bachelor of Business Administration in Hospitality Management beginning Fall 2020. The hospitality industry employs approximately 10 percent of the U.S. workforce, and is the fifth largest employer in the state of Georgia. Kennesaw State U. offers 150 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees to 38,000 students on its two Atlanta campuses. ■

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## CURRICULUM CAPSULES

**Albertus Magnus Adds Gen. Health Sciences Major.** Albertus Magnus C. in Connecticut has added a B.S. in General Health Sciences. Graduates "will be prepared to assume roles as health and wellness professionals in private business and industry, community organizations, government and healthcare settings. The program includes instruction in personal health, community health and welfare, nutrition, epidemiology, disease prevention, fitness and exercise and health behaviors.

**BC's Human Centered Engineering Program.** Boston C. announced a new Human Centered Engineering Program, which will integrate liberal arts with a rigorous engineering curriculum "to confront challenges in the areas of health, energy and the environment." In keeping with the school's Jesuit mission, the program will educate students to "design cutting-edge solutions to improve the quality of human life through technological advancements in these critical areas."

**Denison Rebrands Political Science.** Denison U. in Ohio has rebranded its old political science major as Politics and Public Affairs. The old major description was too narrow, and "didn't fit with our conception of the liberal arts," said Andy Katz. The new major will have three tracks: International Affairs, Policy Analysis and Government and Legal Affairs. Students can also design their own track.

**Finlandia's Four New Options.** Finlandia U. in Michigan's Upper Peninsula is offering two new B.S. degrees in psychology and biology and two new minors beginning Fall 2020, expanding upon the program's current B.A. curriculum. The new minors at FinnU are in military science and global studies.

**Hofstra Offers Nursing Degree.** Hofstra U. on Long Island, New York, will offer a B.S. degree in nursing, beginning Fall 2021. Hofstra is also building new \$60 million state-of-the-art laboratories, classrooms and

Production: Design|Americom; Salsedo Press, Inc. COLLEGE BOUND is published monthly, ten times a year. Inquiries should be directed to P.O. Box 6536, Evanston, IL 60204; 773-262-5810. Annual subscription: \$59 in North America, \$69 for international orders, including airmail postage. See, [www.collegeboundnews.com](http://www.collegeboundnews.com)  
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