

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admissions Watch

BU Enrolls Half of Class ED. Boston U. attracted 62,224 applications for the Class of 2023 and admitted nearly 19 percent. This fall, 3,194 students enrolled, 100 more than BU had planned on accommodating. Almost a quarter of the class is comprised of international students representing 53 nations.

The average high school GPA was 3.72. The average SAT score was 1415 and average ACT score was 32. About 31 percent of freshmen identify as white, 20.7 percent as Asian American, 10.8 percent as Hispanic and 7.9 percent as African American. About 17 percent of the new class is Pell Grant-eligible, and 46.6 percent of the class receives some sort of financial aid.

Charleston Pulls from 55 States. The C. of Charleston, “a public sea-grant, space-grant university” in South Carolina, welcomed 2,091 new students to its Class of 2023. The students represent 44 states and 10 countries. The middle 50 percent of freshmen scored between 1080-1260 (in-state) and 1110-1270 (out-of-state) on the SAT.

The class includes 18 valedictorians and 22 salutatorians and eight sets of twins. The most popular intended majors are biology, business administration, psychology, marine biology, marketing, computer science, communication, political science and exercise science.

Delaware Tops 4,000. For the third consecutive year, the U. of Delaware’s first-year class topped 4,000 students on its Newark campus. Of the 4,144 students in the Class of 2023, 1,407 are from Delaware, and are “among the most diverse in the university’s history,” according to the *UDaily*. The class includes 722 domestic underrepresented minority students. The new UD students hail from 32 states in 36 nations. They posted an average high school GPA of 3.8.

“We continue to make excellent progress

in key enrollment areas like diversity, despite some of the downward national enrollment trends,” said Rodney Morrison, vice president for enrollment management.

DePaul’s Largest Class. DePaul U. in Chicago, the nation’s largest Catholic University, recruited the largest freshman class in school history, with 2,627 students. Students of color make up 44 percent of the first-year class, while 33 percent are first-generation students. About 38 percent of the new students come from out-of-state, according to *The Depaulia*.

President A. Gabriel Estaban told an assemblage of faculty and staff that his goal is for DePaul to become one of the top 50 universities, top 10 private, Pell-aid awarded universities by 2030.

George Washington to Decrease Class Size. George Washington U. in Washington DC is reducing its next first-year class by 17.3 percent, as part of a plan to reduce undergraduate enrollment by 20 percent. GW President Thomas LeBlanc’s plan comes in anticipation of a nationwide drop in college enrollment. LeBlanc told the *GW Hachet* that the reduction will help improve the undergraduate experience by prioritizing quality over quantity.

GW’s full-time, on-campus undergraduate enrollment grew by 13.8 percent between 2013 and 2018, the paper reported. In 2018, GW enrolled its largest first-year class in 10 years. GW also hopes to attract a greater share of science, technology, engineering and math majors through increased financial aid incentives, growing STEM majors from 19 percent to 30 percent of the student body.

Mercer U.’s Most Academically-Qualified Class. Mercer U. in Macon, Georgia, welcomed almost 1,000 freshmen to its Class of

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THE GREENE REPORT

The Outlook for 2020

Editor’s Note: As in years past, *COLLEGE BOUND* asked Matthew Greene to highlight a few of the trends he sees this year (and the concerns he has about them). Below is his take for the 2019-2020 admissions cycle.

AS WE APPROACH the first set of early application deadlines this fall, I have been thinking about ways in which the college admissions process has been working at cross purposes to serve the interests and needs of students. There are conflicting trends that on the one hand help students by giving them more options and opportunities, and, on the other, add more pressure, stress and confusion.

1. Early Decision and Early Action. The trends toward the utilization of ED and EA continue to dominate my conversations with students. The general feeling among families continues to be that one has to apply “early something” to get into college, and data from some colleges seems to bear out that the majority—in some cases the vast majority—of accepted students and enrollees applied either ED or EA at the colleges that offer one or both plans. Students love the opportunity, at least in theory, to “get this whole thing over with.”

At the same time, they also are feeling extreme pressure to make a commitment, often before they are ready to, or, for the wrong reasons. And for the many families concerned about comparing need- or merit-based financial offers and the total cost of attendance of a

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ADMISSIONS WATCH

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2023, “the most academically qualified class in university history.” New students posted a 3.92 high school GPA, 1280 on the SAT and 27 on the ACT, according to Stephen Karafa, director of undergraduate admissions.

Minnesota Morris One Third Native American. The U. of Minnesota Morris welcomed 406 new students to its campus this fall, for a total headcount of 1,499 students. The Class of 2023 posted an average ACT score of 25, a number which has been consistent over the past 20 years. American Indian students make up 30 percent of the new class, while Asian, African American and Hispanic students constitute 12 percent. Some 40 percent of the new class are first-generation students, while 37 percent receives Pell Grants.

Students from outside of Minnesota make up 22 percent of the new class, while international students account for 2 percent.

“UMN Morris continues to play a vital role in providing bright students, many from traditionally underserved backgrounds, with access to a rigorous liberal arts education in the public sector,” said Chancellor Michelle Behr.

Simmons Undergrads All Received Aid. The Class of 2023 at Simmons U. in the heart of Boston, with an undergraduate student body of 1,837 women, hails from 29 states and seven nations. The average high school GPA of new students was 3.73, the average SAT score was 1200 and the average ACT score was 26. Simmons admit rate is about 64 percent and 15 percent of admitted students are first-generation, while 31 percent are African American, Latina, Asian American and Native American students. And, 100 percent of the class receives some form of financial aid. Simmons boasts it has a rigorous and contemporary undergraduate program with 60 degree programs. Its graduate school of 2,179 students is co-ed.

Virginia Re-Starts ED. This fall, the U. of Virginia became one of the few public universities to admit students through an Early Decision program. This year’s ED deadline was October 15. Students could also apply Early Action by November 1. Virginia’s Regular Decision deadline remains January 1. This year, U.Va. received 2,157 ED applications for the Class of 2024. (CB will bring you more ED updates next month.)

Virginia used ED once before but abandoned the program in 2007. Last cycle, 40,869 students applied to Virginia and 9,725 were accepted and 3,927 enrolled this fall. Nearly 500 receive Pell Grants. U.Va. meets the full financial need of admitted U.S. students.

Other prestigious public universities that use early admissions programs include the

Enrollment Trends

Student Enrollment Continues to Slide.

New data for 2017-18, released by the National Center for Education Statistics, confirm that the number of students enrolled in higher education continues to decline. The total number of students in U.S. colleges and universities peaked at 29.5 million in 2010-11, and declined to 26.4 million in 2017-18.

The largest over-all enrollment declines took place among for-profit colleges, which dropped by 47 percent. The numbers at community colleges in the nation fell by 23 percent in total enrollment during that time. Part of that explanation involves two-year colleges which transformed into four-year schools.

Meanwhile, total enrollment at public four-year colleges increased by 12.2 percent during that seven-year period. And the number at four-year private nonprofit colleges rose by 5.2 percent. The total number of American colleges and universities that are eligible to award federal financial aid decreased by 5.6 percent, from 6,502 to 6,138 over the past year.

Six-Year Completion Rates. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, only 58 percent of college students who started in 2012, graduated in six years. About 72 percent of private college students graduated during that period and about 62

U. of North Carolina and the U. of Michigan at Ann Arbor, both of which are Early Action. SUNY’s Geneseo and the College of Environmental Science and Forestry use ED, as does the C. of William & Mary.

Yale’s New Class is 51 Percent Domestic Minorities. The 1,554 new students in Yale U.’s Class of 2023 speak more than 60 foreign languages, with 46 percent of the class speaking a language other than English as their first language or in their home. Some 20 percent of students qualify for federal Pell Grants.

More than 17 percent of the class will be the first in their family to graduate from a four-year college, a 75 percent increase over six years. Yale’s new class also includes 100 QuestBridge finalists. And a record 51 percent of the class is made up of U.S. citizens or permanent residents who identify as members of a racial or ethnic group.

SMALL COLLEGES BUCKING TRENDS

Colby-Sawyer’s Enrollment Up by 11 Percent. Colby-Sawyer C., located in the scenic Lake Sunapee Region of central New Hampshire, welcomed 292 new students to its Class of 2023, 11 percent more than last year. Nearly half of the new class is made up of first-generation students. And 100 percent of enrolled students receive some sort of financial aid. Additionally, 44 percent of the new class

percent of public college students got their degrees within six years. Two-year community college and four-year for-profit schools had graduation rates below 40 percent.

“A fundamental reason is that many institutions have not adapted to serve today’s students,” Mamie Voight, vice president of policy research at the Institute for Higher Education Research, told National Public Radio. “Students are more diverse than ever, racially and economically,” she explained. “They’re working part-time and are often struggling financially.”

Demographic Dip Hits Some Pennsylvania Privates.

The long anticipated 5 percent decline in graduating high school students, expected to be most severe in the Northeast and Midwest, is already hitting many Pennsylvania colleges, according to *The Morning Call*.

For example, at the highly-regarded Bucknell U., “the spigot” of students accepting offers of admission “just turned off” a few days before this year’s May 1 deadline, President John C. Brayman told the paper. Instead of admitting the normal 35 students from its wait list, Bucknell dug deep down toward its 100th wait list student to get near its target. It still fell a dozen students short. ■

are recruited student-athletes.

“With more than 51 percent of our students receiving job offers from their required internships in clinical placements, and with a placement rate for 2018 of 99 percent in jobs or graduate school, our enrollment increase shows that students and their families are seeing the value of what we offer,” said Sue Stuebner, president.

Lycoming C. Improves its Academic Profile.

Lycoming C. in Pennsylvania admitted 61 percent of its applicants this last academic year, compared to 72 percent five years ago. This fall’s first-year class is composed of 345 students, 38 percent of whom are domestic students of color and 4 percent who are international students.

Some 25 percent of students ranked in the top decile of their high school class. Lycoming credits this improvement to a number of factors: An increase in experiences outside of the classroom, such as internships or study abroad opportunities and hands-on research. An Outdoor Leadership and Education program enables students to experience nature while honing leadership skills. New majors in biochemistry and neuroscience, and new minors in entrepreneurship and energy studies, were launched. Add to this, new construction, the renovation of facilities and increased access to the latest technologies. ■

GREENE REPORT

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college education, Early Decision seems risky.

As usual, I'm seeing a number of ED/EA plan changes this year, with some colleges moving solely to ED, and others adding to the group of schools offering ED1, ED2 and EA. For example, Boston College dropped Early Action and added ED1 and ED2, Dickinson College dropped Early Action and kept two rounds of ED, Bentley University and College of the Holy Cross added ED2 and Union College added EA. U.Va. added ED. It's great for students to have choice, but isn't there a psychological theory that too much choice can lead to decision paralysis?

2. Priority Deadlines. Another trend to keep in mind, and which families are often unaware of, is the "priority deadline." Typically utilized for "maximum scholarship consideration", or honors or other special program admissions, priority deadlines are cropping up a month or more in advance of regular dates. Families need to explore carefully the admissions and financial aid websites of each college in order to make sure they are meeting these kinds of deadlines, and filing any necessary additional essays or other information required for special programs and opportunities.

3. The Common Application. The CA has done a good job in its current iteration on a number of things, but still remains frustrating and confusing in other areas. I like the fact that some special deadlines are listed in a college's information page within the application. There is a great spreadsheet function ("application requirements") that students and advisors can use to look at all or just that student's colleges' requirements. (Students can find the "application requirements" bubble to click on when they go to their Dashboard on the Common Application, or on the College Search tab on the Common Application.) However, many students don't know about it.

The main application itself? It's fairly easy to complete, though the various drop-down menus and boxes can still challenge a lot of students. But the 150 characters allotted to describe each activity is too short. Yet the main essay length and topics seem just right.

The main challenge for students remains the individual college questions. Not only does this lead to absolute confusion, but a lack of consistency among colleges about what falls into the realm of Application Questions (with boxes for writing) versus Writing Supplement Questions. There are innumerable places for students to have to select major choices, programs and special opportunities of interest. But sometimes essays show up only when particular majors and drop-down menu choices are selected.

I understand why colleges take this approach. But trust me.



Matthew Greene

Students are overwhelmed by all this. Many will continue to avoid applying to colleges that make it too hard to do so, and that includes underrepresented students and those without the time and resources to figure all this out. I am left wondering, and not for the first time, whether we can't agree on an application that is truly common.

That is, *one* question about a meaningful activity back in the mix for everyone. *One* question about intended majors or academic areas of interest. The main personal statement. *One* "top ten" list? OK. *One* favorite book, website, movie, quote, color or stuffed animal? Maybe. And, perhaps, for colleges that want it, a "why are you applying to us and why are we a good match for your goals and interests" question that is clearly present.

I believe, if students knew ahead of time that these were the three or four questions that all colleges wanted to see, and that was pretty much all they had to worry about, they would be much more inclined to go ahead and complete them, one time, and then file where they wanted to.

IMPACT OF THESE TRENDS

I don't see students who refuse to apply to any college that requires supplemental responses. I do see students who drop colleges that ask too much, especially those beyond their top several choices. Yes, Georgetown, MIT and the University of California, as well as many other public university systems, represent fairly unique additional situations, and the Coalition application is a newer option, but I think it's fair to focus on the Common Application on the whole.

Wishful thinking on my part, especially with the trend toward less standardization and less coordination or collaboration in the air. Witness the changes forthcoming in NACAC's Code of Ethics and Professional Practices (CEPP). What are we going to see after Early Decision round 1, or this Spring after the May 1 commitment date, or in subsequent cycles? More scholarship and discounting incentives to lure in students? More aggressive marketing tactics? Less ethical admissions practices, less clarity or less consistency?

Even as we see a positive trend toward promoting the prevalence of character in admissions, deemphasizing testing (more colleges have become test optional or flexible), we are still processing the Varsity Blues scandal, and worrying about the current and future influence of money and unsavory practices in recruiting and enrolling students.

Thus, counselors will need to be more supportive and informative than ever for students and parents, educating them about the complex admissions and scholarship landscape, and helping them navigate what will remain a very complicated and non-standardized process. ■

Matthew Greene is an independent educational consultant and author, working out of Wilton, CT, and New York City.

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education by Nathan D. Grawe, Johns Hopkins U. Press, ISBN-10: 1421424134, \$39.95.

The Years Matter Most: How College Makes or

Breaks Us by Paul Tough, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, ISBN-10: 0544944488, \$19.61. The author asks, "Does college still work? Is the system designed just to protect the privileged and leave everyone else behind? Or can a col-

lege education today provide real opportunity to young Americans?"

Paying For College: Everything You Need To Maximize Financial Aid And Afford College (2020 Edition), by Kalman A. Chany, the Princeton Review, Penguin/Random House, ISBN: 978052556879, \$22.99. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Harvard Cleared of Discrimination. In early October, a U.S. District Judge ruled that Harvard U. does not discriminate against Asian American applicants when it uses Affirmative Action to shape its first-year classes.

Judge Allison D. Burroughs ruled that she found “no evidence of any racial animus whatsoever” and no evidence that any admission decision was “negatively affected by Asian American identity.” The ruling is seen as a victory for those who support Affirmative Action in college admissions.

Community College Students and Technology. The latest annual study from EDUCAUSE’s Center for Analysis and Research looked at how over 10,000 students from 40 community colleges use technology. It found:

- Nearly all c.c. students own smart phones and laptop computers, and more own desktop computers than students at other institutions;
- Although c.c. students find online student success tools useful, fewer are aware of degree planning and mapping tools than four-year students;

• Community college students who are women, those who work, students who are married or in a domestic partnership, and those with dependents are all more likely to prefer learning environments that are mostly or completely online;

• Two-year and AA colleges are doing a significantly better job than other institutions of meeting the needs of students with disabilities who require technology for their academics.

Post-Secondary Trained Workers Dominate Manufacturing. A recent report from Georgetown U.’s Center on Education and the Workforce entitled “Unskilling and Downsizing and American Manufacturing,” says workers with postsecondary education now outnumber workers with a high school diploma or less in the manufacturing industry.

Nearly seven million manufacturing jobs have been lost since 1979 due to automation. During that period, “workers with a high school education or less declined from 79 percent to 43 percent of the workforce.” Meanwhile, workers with some education but no degree grew to 26 percent of the workforce, and those with a bachelor degree grew to 30 percent. Employment in the field is expected to decline 2 percent or by 253,000 jobs by 2027. ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Carthage C. Slashes Tuition by 30 Percent. Beginning next year, Carthage C. in Wisconsin will reduce tuition by 30 percent. The total cost will be lowered from \$45,100 to \$31,500, to “better reflect the amount most students pay after receiving financial aid.”

Carthage President John Swallow said, “Understanding the true cost of college has become unnecessarily complicated. Too often families rule out Carthage based solely on the advertised tuition rate, not realizing that our generous financial assistance makes the college a great fit financially for their students as it is academically.”

UConn Free for Those Under \$50,000. Beginning next fall, students at the U. of Connecticut who come from families that earn

\$50,000 or less will receive free tuition. The Connecticut Commitment will be available to all freshmen and transfer students on all campuses and in all majors. The program will cover the difference between tuition in the aid students receive from other sources such as Pell Grants and merit-based scholarships.

Wooster’s Tuition-Free Guarantee. The C. of Wooster in Ohio announced a “Tuition Free Guarantee” for students who are eligible for the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) and who receive federal student aid. “This means that we are guaranteeing that we will put in enough of our own dollars to cover the significant difference between what the student gets in OCOG and federal grant funding and our total cost of tuition,” said President Sarah Bolton. ■

New Admissions Ethical Code Provisions

Under pressure from the U.S. Justice Department and continuing legal action nationwide, members of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling, representing 1,700 colleges and universities, 2,400 secondary schools and including 1,700 independent college counselors, voted at their annual meeting in Louisville to change several provisions of its ethics code.

The changes:

• Allow colleges and universities to offer incentives such as extra financial aid or improved housing for those who commit through binding Early Decision;

• Allow more aggressive recruitment of students already committed to other schools;

• And allow recruiting of transfer students who were admitted to one school but chose to go somewhere else.

Some participants worried about how the changes will impact financial aid budgets with competition of late aid offers and counter-offers for top students. Some schools may raise their deposit levels to make it harder for students to walk away from commitments. Others worried that students will be attracted by “bells and whistles” rather than “the right fit.” ■

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CURRICULUM CAPSULES

LIU’s New College of Veterinary Medicine. Long Island U. in New York is launching a new College of Veterinary Medicine, one of the only four veterinary programs in the Northeast. It will commence accepting applications for students to begin their Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) for Fall 2020. At full enrollment the college will serve 400 students, with 100 in each graduating class.

eSports Growing. The Ohio State U. will soon launch an esports undergraduate major, joining Becker C. in Massachusetts, Shenandoah U. in Virginia and the U. of California, Irvine, among other U.S. institutions cashing in on the \$1.1 billion and growing market. Dozens of colleges operate competitive esports programs. So do more than 100 U.S. high schools.

Colleges “need to communicate to parents and students that there will be a job waiting

for someone once they earn a degree,” Joni Finney, director of the U. of Pennsylvania’s Institute for Research on Higher Education, told the Associated Press.

Top Engineering Programs. The Bachelor’s Degree Center ranked undergraduate engineering programs based on cost, graduation rate, job placement rate, salary potential and student satisfaction. Here are its top schools:

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford U., Duke U., Georgia Tech, U. of Virginia, U. of Pennsylvania, Princeton U., U. of Michigan, Lehigh U., Vanderbilt U., U. of Illinois, Virginia Tech, U. of Wisconsin, Cornell U., California Institute of Technology, Colorado School of Mines, UCLA, Texas A&M U., Rice U., U. of Florida, Carnegie Mellon U., Johns Hopkins U., U. of California, Berkeley and Purdue U. ■

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