

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Fall Enrollment Trends “First Look”

New Students Down 16 Percent. The number of first-year undergraduate students enrolled in the nation’s colleges and universities fell by 16 percent compared to last fall, while graduate enrollment increased nearly 2 percent, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Overall, 2020 undergraduate enrollment decreased by 4 percent.

Last month, NSCRC released preliminary stats that were much more positive.

“With more data, the downward trends identified in September’s “First Look” report appear steeper...,” said Doug Schapiro, executive director. “Most strikingly, freshman students are by far the biggest decline of any group from last year, with a decrease of 16.1 percent nationally and a 22.7 percent drop in community colleges in particular. First-time students account for 69 percent of total drop in undergraduate enrollment.”

American Indian and Native Alaskan students suffered the sharpest decline of all racial/ethnic undergraduate students at -10.7 percent, followed by black students, -7.9 percent, white students, -7.6 percent, Hispanic students, -6.1 percent and Asian students, -4.0 percent. A double-digit drop continued for international undergraduates, -13.7 percent. And male undergraduate enrollment fell by three times the rate of female enrollment, -6.4 percent vs. -2.2 percent.

The Midwest suffered the most undergraduate enrollment loss at -5.7 percent, followed by the West, -3.9 percent; South, -3.6 percent and Northeast, -3.4 percent. Only Nebraska, New Hampshire, Utah, Vermont and West Virginia enrolled more undergraduates compared to last fall. States with the largest drop were Rhode Island, -15.8 percent; New Mexico, -10.6 percent and Michigan -9.7 percent

Alma’s Athletes. Alma C. in Michigan welcomed 434 students to its Class of 2024. Alma students hail from 15 states and 13 countries. Over 70 percent of the new class intends to play a sport during their time at Alma, a new record. The class is also the most diverse in the college’s 134-year history, with 21 percent coming from racially or ethnically diverse backgrounds, up from 18 percent last year.

“This is something we’ve been working toward for several years, through strategies like the Detroit Future and the Detroit Promise programs...,” said Jeff Abernathy, Alma president.

Anderson Enrollment Increases. Anderson U. in South Carolina, a Baptist-affiliated school, saw its freshman class increase from 700 last year to 750 this year. Overall enrollment rose from 3,600 to more than 3,900.

California Enrollment Up by Over 10,000. The U. of California system enrolled 119,054 freshmen at its nine campuses, up from 108,178 last year. Latinos make up 36 percent of the total, Asians 35 percent, whites 21 percent and blacks only 5 percent. About 45 percent of students are the first in their family to attend a four-year university.

C. of New Jersey Students Speak 51 Languages. Kathryn Foster, president of The C. of New Jersey, welcomed students from the Class of 2024 in a virtual convocation. “You are here because we have unqualified confidence that you belong here and will add tremendous value to our community,” she said.

CNJ’s new class is 27 percent first-generation and fluent in 51 different languages including Korean, Arabic, Hungarian, Hindi

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COVID-19 CAMPUS UPDATE

ACCORDING TO a fall survey of 300 admissions officers, conducted by Kaplan, only 4 percent gave higher education across the nation as a whole an “A” for the job it did in opening colleges and universities during the pandemic this fall. Another 36 percent gave higher education a “B,” while 51 percent of the 300 admissions officers surveyed gave the nation’s colleges a “C,” 9 percent gave it a “D” and 1 percent, an “F.”

One admissions officer told Kaplan, “I think that too many tried to reopen in person without enough safety precautions in place. Too many students got sick, and then if those universities closed and switched online, then those students potentially spread the virus even more when they moved back home.”

Isaac Botier, Kaplan’s executive director of college admissions programs, said, “What college admissions officers are telling us in the survey is that there is a lot of room for improvement in multiple areas, from education delivery to communication to safety procedures. ... And many shared plans on how they’ll be making improvements in the coming weeks and months.”

Adjusting Income to Reflect COVID. This year’s FAFSA asks for 2019 pre-COVID tax information. But what should parents do if their situation was adversely affected by the pandemic?

The Federal Student Aid Office’s website
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“FIRST LOOK”

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and Yoruba. Fifteen were high school class presidents, 403 were high school team captains and 23 are karate black belts. More than 65 percent of TCNJ's enrolled students participated in some service organization such as Meals on Wheels.

Columbia Engineering 50 Percent Female.

Columbia U.'s Engineering school matriculated 348 future engineers, half of whom are women. The new class hails from 44 states and 33 nations. Almost 20 percent are first in their families to pursue higher education.

“So much is different this year,” said James J. Valentini, dean of Columbia C. “Your classmates are spread throughout the world, your classrooms will be checkerboards of individual student images on the display of an electronic device, you'll engage in a community that lives in virtual space rather than on the terra firma of the College Walk. Yet with the loss of these traditional forms there must be, and will be possibilities.”

Loyola U. Chicago Enrolls Fewer Freshmen.

Loyola U. Chicago enrolled 500 fewer freshmen than last year, bringing its Class of 2024 to 2,137 students.

Illinois System Sets Record Enrollment.

Total undergraduate enrollment at the U. of Illinois Urbana-Champaign fell by 350 students this fall from last year's record. The class of first-year students declined by about 1.8 percent to 7,530 students, while 277 students deferred entry, compared to 60 in a “typical year.”

Meanwhile, the freshman class size at the U. of Illinois Chicago plunged by about 20 percent to 3,541 students. However, UIC enrolled 17,800 graduate students, an increase of 9 percent. About 42 percent of graduate students are fully online. And 2,000 graduate students delayed admission this fall. The number of graduate students taking online classes from China increased by 3.9 percent.

At Eastern Illinois U., the number of international students declined by 21 percent from 332 last fall. The first-year class at Northern Illinois U. increased by 8 percent to 2,047 students. Total enrollment at NIU increased to 16,769.

Southern Illinois U. reported that new student enrollment soared by about 31 percent, although total enrollment fell by 2.8 percent. International student enrollment fell by 2.6 percent. “The American consulates were not open in many countries. Students were not able to go and get the visas even though they had been admitted,” said Meera Komarraju, SIU provost.

Freshman enrollment at Illinois State U.

Florida Test Problem

According to the *Orlando Sentinel*, Florida is the only state in the nation where state colleges still require traditional incoming freshmen to submit a SAT or ACT score. That is leading to problems during the pandemic. Administrators from several Florida colleges petitioned the Board of Governors to temporarily waive the requirement. But so far, it has not acted.

As a result, at the U. of Central Florida, the state's largest university “where enrollment just surpassed 72,000 students, applications are down 21 percent and 50 percent fewer students have submitted SAT scores compared with last year.”

Overall, enrollment at UCF actually increased by nearly 4 percent, including a larger freshman class of about 4,165 students, up from 3,792 in 2019.

At Florida State U. applications are down by 32 percent compared to 2019. “College nights and face-to-face school visits are not happening and while all of us are doing virtual recruiting, I think students have more pressing concerns than applying to college right now,” John Barnhill, associate vice president for academic affairs, told the paper. FSU has pushed back its priority deadline to December 1. ■

was down by about 500 students compared to last fall when ISU set a record. Total freshman enrollment reached 3,353 students. Graduate student enrollment increased by 4 percent.

In the entire U. of Illinois System, enrollment reached 90,343, a new record for the eighth year in a row. However, undergraduate enrollment dipped by 177 students to 58,258, according to Tim Killeen, president. He attributed the strong numbers to the fact that U. of I. scientists developed an innovative COVID-19 saliva test used by its students.

Iowa Dips. The U. of Iowa's Class of 2024 enrolled 456 fewer students than the Class of 2023, or 4,530 students.

Marquette Hit Hard. The COVID virus has hit hard at Marquette U. in Milwaukee. According to the *Marquette Wire*, Provost Kimo Ah Yun told the Academic Senate that the university is 424 students short of the budget target for the current fiscal cycle, including 363 fewer first-year students, 24 fewer transfer students and a drop of 37 continuing students. She also said that Marquette expects a smaller cohort for the Class of 2025, as many as 250 fewer than the pre-COVID-19 numbers. The Class of 2022 had a record-breaking 2,162 students. Among other problems, she said the university faces a “demographic cliff” which the pandemic has accelerated.

North Carolina System Sets Record Enrollment. A record 242,464 students enrolled this fall in North Carolina state colleges and universities, the third consecutive year of record-breaking numbers. Enrollment this year was up by 1 percent or 2,483 more students.

UNC-Chapel Hill welcomed 30,092 students, including its largest class of new transfer students. Michael Davis, associate director for admissions, told the *Daily Tar Heel* that part of this year's enrollment increase resulted from the creation of Carolina Away, a virtual program for incoming students.

UNC started the fall semester on campus, but was forced to switch to online learning when cases of the virus broke out. But Davis does not think the pandemic will impact the Class of 2025. “We are certainly going to continue trying to attract and recruit incredible students that will help us achieve the type of diversity and inclusive community that we aspire to build.” He noted that UNC did not have “a huge number of students” who chose to defer enrollment this year.

Southern Cal's Most Diverse Class. The U. of Southern California offered admission to 9,600 students, 2,000 more than last year. Some 36 percent of them accepted the offer, down by about 2 percent from last year. USC granted about 75 requests for deferred enrollment. Over 22 percent of USC's 3,460 freshmen are the first in their family to go to college. Some 31 percent of the new class is white, 27 percent is Asian or Asian-American, 17 percent is Latino and 6 percent is black. Some 44 percent come from California. The number of international students fell from 15 percent in 2019 to 12 percent in 2020.

Wisconsin's Second Largest Class. The U. of Wisconsin-Madison welcomed its second largest first-year class in university history, 7,306 students. In part, that is because UW admitted more students than in any year since the Great Recession because of uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

Nearly 75 percent of Wisconsin applicants were admitted, compared to 58 percent of out-of-state applicants. Little more than a half of the new students come from Wisconsin, another 10 percent from Minnesota as part of a reciprocity program and about 7 percent are international students. UW's yield, which was above 40 percent in 2014, fell to just 28 percent in 2020. This year, 150 new students deferred admission compared to the normal 70.

Also, for the next two years, the U. of Wisconsin-Madison is allowing students to opt out of submitting SAT or ACT scores because there are fewer test sites available. It has also suspended campus tours in favor of online tours. ■

COVID-19 CAMPUS UPDATE

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suggests families fill out the FAFSA, then contact the school where the student plans to attend to discuss changes in family income. "It is something we do every year..." Bernard McCree, director of financial aid at Kutztown U., told readingeagle.com.

McCree said since the pandemic, the number of these requests has tripled. Other experts say parents should call a college financial aid office if they need help filling out the FAFSA.

COVID Costly to Universities. The pandemic has cost colleges and universities millions over the past few months. For example, the U. of Wisconsin spent almost \$12 million on testing, \$3 million on mask distribution, over \$18 million on other PPEs and \$7 million on online classes. Altogether, UW spent \$41 million on pandemic expenses. Despite all of that, UW-Madison was forced to shut down on-campus activity for two weeks this fall.

Latinos Struggle. According to the Pew Research Center, when the pandemic hit last March, 40 percent of Latinos reported that they or someone in their household took a pay cut, and nearly 30 percent said they had lost their job. That compares with 27 percent and 20 percent of all U.S. adults, respectively. Those numbers ultimately had impact on Latino college enrollment.

For example, at El Paso C.C. in Texas, where 84 percent of undergraduates are Hispanic or Latino, enrollment this fall dropped 23 percent among first-time students.

Also, in this time of remote learning, only a little more than 50 percent of Hispanics in one poll said that they own a desktop or laptop computer, and 61 percent said they had access to broadband to use computers.

Idaho Students Apply Free. Idaho high school students can apply to as many of Idaho's public colleges and universities as they choose, at no cost, through a Direct Admissions letter on the Next Step Idaho website. "This year's high school seniors haven't had a typical high school experience because of COVID-19, but there are many opportunities waiting for them," said Byron Yankey of the state board of education.

RECRUITING VIRTUALLY

New Hampshire Livestreams Tours. The U. of New Hampshire has started to livestream tours on Instagram. UNH plans to engage interested students and their families with virtual open houses, virtual tours, admission office hours, virtual fairs and even one-on-one meetings with admissions counselors.

"Our admissions staff is even more accessible now through chat, text and increased opportunities to schedule individual Zoom meetings. While COVID-19 has created a great deal of stress, I believe some of the changes in admissions have been for the positive for students as

we have adapted quickly to respond to the needs of students and their families in their college search and application process," said Tara Scholder, admissions counselor.

UNH supports the decision of schools that are switching to "pass or fail" grades. It urges students to "still take full course loads, do as well as they can and take courses pass/fail based on advice from teachers and school counselors."

Roanoke College Tours. Roanoke C. in West Virginia is continuing limited in-person tours, but mostly offering online tours as well.

Stevenson U. Virtual Future. Stevenson U. in Baltimore County, Maryland, has set up virtual tours with audio, held virtual meetings and interviews with students and virtual counselor calls, virtual open houses and virtual transfer Tuesdays for transfer students.

"Having to utilize the virtual realm as much as possible during this time has just added another touchpoint to our recruitment process that we will continue to use in a post-pandemic world," said Alyssa Dahle, a senior specialist in the office of admissions. See, stevenson.edu/admissions-aid.

Tulane's "Ask the Dean." According to the *Tulane Hullabaloo*, the Office of Undergraduate Admission "has developed a plethora of virtual events prospective applicants can attend to gain an understanding of what Tulane is like." These include virtual tours, trivia nights related to the college application process and "Ask the Dean," where students can ask questions directly to Satyajit Dattagupta, vice president of enrollment management and dean of admission.

"The only silver lining about COVID is that it's kind of forced us to be a little more creative with our virtual [offerings]... We're meeting thousands of students virtually that we typically wouldn't have," Dattagupta said. "The honest truth is that, I think applicants are very scared right now; they don't know what college will look like in the future, a lot of them had thought they'd visit campus and be out at these events, so were trying to meet students where they are and trying to show some empathy and work with them."

Virginia Tech Test Optional. "Since we moved online [with tours] several months ago, we've catered to over 5,000 visitors," said Virginia Tech's Juan Espinoza, director of undergraduate admissions. (VTU has gone test optional.)

Oakton Counseling First-Year Students. Oakton C.C. outside of Chicago enrolled 6,800 students for the Fall semester, but that was an 11 percent enrollment decline compared to fall 2019. However, its counseling services are busy. "This fall [our counselors] are doing a support group for our first-time college students...providing a space for them to check in and process the issues that come up." ■

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

The Next Enrollment Challenge, a report from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*; \$69; <https://store.chronicle.com/products/>.

Human Work in the Age of Smart Machines

by Jamie Merisotis, president and CEO of the Lumina Foundation; RosettaBooks; ISBN-13: 9781948122627; \$25.99.

UninterruptED, "is designed to mitigate the

learning loss and opportunity gap caused the pandemic."

OppNet "...provides underrepresented young people with support tools and training they need to thrive in college and careers." Free "to any first-generation student and young person of color..." See, <https://opportunitynetwork.org/uninterrupted/>. ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Moody's Downgrades Education Sector. Moody's Investors Service, the financial rating agency, has downgraded the credit outlook for higher education sector from stable to negative. It predicted that in fiscal 2021, universities will face disruption in "enrollment, state support, endowment income, philanthropy and research grants."

\$180 Billion in Student Aid. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 85 percent of all first-time, full-time undergraduates at four-year schools received financial assistance from various governments and private funders in 2018. Government grants that do not need to be paid back averaged about \$3,700 per full-time undergraduate. Private and institutional grants amounted to almost \$6,000 per students.

A 2020 study, "The Effect of Financial Aid on Low-Income, College Ready Students," by two MIT researchers and one Harvard U. researcher (Angrist, Autor and Pallais), is based on a randomized study that awarded 4,000 scholarships from the Susana Thompson Buffet Foundation to Nebraska students between 2012 and 2016. It found:

1. The scholarships boosted bachelor's degree completion by more than 8 percentage points. The aid increased the portion of students who earned a B.A. in six years from 63 percent to 71 percent.

2. "Award effects on B.A. completion are especially high among students who are tradi-

tionally under-represented in higher education."

3. Financial aid "does little to increase degree completion among students who target community colleges."

Find the complete study at: <http://seii.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SEII-Policy-Brief-2020-09-Angrist-Autor-Pallais.pdf>

"Free College Movement." The Education Trust issued a new report, "A Promise Worth Keeping: An Updated Equity-Driven Framework for Free College Programs." It cited the Washington (state) College Grant "as a model for other states.

The report found: There are eight more statewide programs than there were three years ago; most programs are limited to just covering tuition, not fees, books and living expenses; just a third of the statewide programs provide four years of tuition and include bachelor degree programs; only two states have designed free college programs specifically for adult and returning students; half of free college programs exclude undocumented students or students who are incarcerated.

See, <https://edtrust.org>.

Charm City Promise. Loyola U. Maryland has launched the Charm City Promise that offers to cover the tuition gap for Pell students who graduated from Baltimore public, charter or Catholic high schools. The four-year value of each scholarship will exceed \$200,000.

"We are thrilled to be able to provide the stu-

dents of Baltimore with greater accessibility toward a Loyola education," said Eric Nichols, vice president for enrollment management.

Middle-Class Mobility. A recent study from the Brookings Institution, "Middle-Class Mobility," measures the extent to which middle-class children are economically better off than their parents. The study found:

- Middle-Class Mobility varies substantially across colleges;

- Colleges with high Bottom-to-Top Mobility do not necessarily have high MCM and vice versa;

- Selective four-year colleges have the highest rates of MCM, followed by nonselective and highly-selective four-year colleges, then two-year and for-profit colleges;

- Public and private four-year colleges have similar average MCM;

- Selective four-year colleges are the workhorses of upward mobility for the middle class, accounting for 34 percent of middle-class enrollment, 50 percent of spending on middle-class students and 43 percent of MCM.

Find the full report at: www.brookings.edu/research/opportunity-engines-middle-class-mobility-in-higher-education/. ■

How Long It Takes

How Long Does It Take Grads to Find a Job? Prior to the pandemic, a majority of college graduates were able to find a job in their field of study. Among those who did, 50 percent had a job offer in-hand before walking across the stage to claim their diploma, and nearly 90 percent had a job in their chosen field within six months of graduating.

Other college graduates found it harder to start their careers. Less than 10 percent of people in this category had a job offer before graduation. And 30 percent of these grads took two years or more to begin their long-term career.

Among those who did not find a job in their field of study, one-in-five found a job in the business world despite not holding a business degree. And 18 percent found work in engineering and technology. Medical work, retail jobs and education positions rounded out the list of top jobs found by those who did not find a job in their field of study.

The GCU survey also found that men are 13 percent more likely to have a job after college in their chosen field of study. And among those who find a job in their field of study, men are 12 percent more likely to have the job offer before leaving college. The first job out of college for 40 percent of women was not in their field of study, compared to just 27 percent of males whose first job was not in their field of study.

Some 88 percent of those who studied engineering and technology found a job in the same field. However, only 37 percent of liberal arts graduates found a job in their chosen field. ■

TUITION TABS

Tuition Discounts. Earlier this year, the National Association of College and University Business Officers reported that before the coronavirus pandemic hit, 366 private, non-profit colleges and universities reported an estimated 53 percent average institutional tuition discount rate for first-time, full-time, first-year students in 2019-20, and 48 percent for all undergraduates, both record highs.

The "2019 NACUBO Tuition Discounting Study" shows that nearly 89 percent of all first-year undergraduates received institutional grant aid which covered on average almost 60 percent of the published tuition and fees.

Did the strategy work? Over the past four years, first-year undergraduate enrollment increased at 46 percent of the institutions that participated in the study, but decreased at about 47 percent of the institutions.

"Even before the COVID-19 crisis, private colleges and universities were significantly discounting tuition and fees, and some institutions were struggling with enrollment and

net revenue, said Ken Redd, senior director of research and policy analysis at NACUBO.

Hendrix Cuts Tuition 32 Percent. Hendrix C. in Arkansas announced that it is cutting tuition by 32 percent, from \$49,140 to \$33,000.

"Hendrix has one of the most generous financial aid programs in the country," said Ellis Arnold, president. "Nevertheless, we know that there are students who would thrive at Hendrix but don't apply because they're concerned about the published price."

Houghton Cuts Tuition. Houghton, a "Christian college" in Western New York cut its annual tuition to \$15,900, before scholarships. Houghton also recently raised \$41 million for student scholarships to fulfill its historical mission.

According to Shirley Mullen, president. "Houghton College is about meeting students where they are and empowering them to transform the trajectory of their lives beyond anything they could imagine." ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Endicott Launches New Programs. Endicott C. on Massachusetts' Atlantic Ocean coast, with additional sites in Boston, has launched several programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A new Masters in Healthcare Management and B.S. in Healthcare Management are designed to meet the needs of one fast-growing field. Also new are a B.S. in Expressive Art Therapy and B.A. in Performing Arts and certificate programs in Online Teaching and Learning, and in Gender and Sexuality in Education, International Education Administration and Social Justice Education.

Florida International Partners with Antigua C. of Medicine. Graduates of American U. Antigua C. of Medicine can now pursue a Master of Public Health at FIU's Stempel C. of Public Health. The agreement allows graduates of Stempel to receive priority admission consideration at Antigua's medical school.

Gordon State's B.S. in Health and Wellness. Beginning Spring 2021, Gordon State C. in Georgia will offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Wellness. Students will be eligible for careers in non-clinical health fields, such as in fitness centers, hospitals, corporations, schools, government and non-government agencies.

Kutztown and Johnson Sign Transfer Agreement. Students who graduate from Johnson C. outside of Scranton, Pennsylvania,

with an associate degree in applied science in computer information technology, are guaranteed admission into Kutztown U.'s B.S. program in information technology.

Lawrence Jazzes Up. The Conservatory of Music at Lawrence U. in Wisconsin now offers a Bachelor of Musical Arts in Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation. "Built on the strength of a nationally recognized jazz program that has been earning honors since the 1970s, the new degree...is built to accommodate a wide range of music making," Lawrence announced.

Missouri-St. Louis Adds Two Majors. The U. of Missouri-St. Louis added a new major in Computing Technology and another in Business Administration with an emphasis on Entrepreneurship. "We are thrilled to launch these new degrees in St. Louis to help address the region's growing need for highly trained technology professional and entrepreneurs," said Kristin Sobolik, provost and executive vice chancellor.

Nevada State Offers Degrees in Interdisciplinary Data Science. Nevada State C. will offer both a B.A. and B.S. in Data Science. The degrees will allow students to pursue careers such as data analyst, operations manager, database administrator and software engineer. The western region of the U.S. is expected to see a nearly 25 percent growth in data science related occupations.

Best Agricultural Schools. Lawnstarter, a Texas company that matches consumers with lawn and outdoor services, released its list of the best agricultural degree programs. Here are the top 10:

U. of Florida C. of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Texas A&M U.; North Carolina State U. C. of Agriculture and the Life Sciences; Purdue U.; Michigan State U.; U. of Wisconsin-Madison; Iowa State U.; Cornell U. C. of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State U.; and The Ohio State U. Find the full list at: www.lawnstarter.com/blog/studies/best-worst-colleges-agricultural-studies/.

Humanities Face Cuts. As students turn to practical, income-generating majors, in part to help them pay for four years of high tuition, the humanities are experiencing sharp declines. Once the core disciplines at U.S. colleges and universities, the humanities accounted for only 12 percent of all degrees granted, according to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (as of 2015, the most recent year for which cumulative data is available). Programs in philosophy, history, foreign languages, religion, theater, American Studies and anthropology are but a few of the options that have been cut by colleges and universities across the nation.

But the liberal arts has its defenders. The liberal arts teach essential skills, they say, such as critical thinking. For example Eric Boynton, provost and dean of Beloit C. in Wisconsin, told the *Chicago Tribune*, "I actually think the world is in crisis, and what the world needs is a liberal arts-trained population." ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Educators Education Gap. "With only 60 percent of educators having received professional development training in the use of technology," according to the Varkey Foundation, the "biggest issue [during the pandemic] is, ironically, the education gap for educators," said Ryan Herbst, chief device strategist at UnifiedCommunications.com. "...We've seen and encourage administrators to create online collaborative spaces where teachers can help each other by sharing best practices, what's working and what's not."

Herbst also urges schools to develop a "video-first culture... to ensure educators and students stay connected."

Affirmative Inaction. "Despite the myth that affirmative action gives black and Latino students an unfair advantage, these students

are still underrepresented at the nation's selective colleges and at two- and four-year public colleges and universities in the vast majority of states," says The Education Trust.

"At the nation's 101 most selective public colleges: 60 percent have seen a decrease in percentage of black students since 2000. And 65 percent have seen the percentage of Latino students enrolled grow slower than the Latino population since 2000."

In "Beyond Words," The Education Trust said, "it is time for public college presidents to take substantial anti-racist action to match their soaring rhetoric and for policymakers to support them."

Common App Drops Disciplinary Report. The Common Application, used by over 900 colleges and universities, will no longer

require applicants to report whether they were cited for a disciplinary violation in their high school. Last year, more than 1.1 million prospective students used the Common Application to submit over 5.5 million college applications.

"The school discipline box has kept many talented students of all races from even applying to college because they didn't think they would get in," said Jenny Rickard, president and CEO of the Common Application.

Test Optional. Currently, 55 percent of all four-year colleges are test-optional, an increase of 37 percent compared to last year. Schools going optional include: Fordham U. in New York and Spelman C. in Atlanta. ■

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