

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admissions Watch

2021 Year-End News

Bucknell's Admissions Podcast Hits 15,000 Downloads. Bucknell U.'s College Admissions Insider podcast has logged more than 15,000 downloads by prospective students and their families of its 26 episodes over its first-year. According to northcentralpa.com, the biweekly podcast "helps demystify the college admissions process" and answers questions commonly addressed to the office of admissions. Popular episodes include: "Inside the Mind of An Application Reader," "What 9th and 10th Graders Can Do Now to Prepare to Apply."

The podcasts can be downloaded on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, Overcast, Buzzsprout Embed Player and Google Podcasts.

Lewis & Clark Expands Financial Aid. Lewis & Clark C. in Portland welcomed 677 new students and 41 transfers this fall. Some students were attracted by the Oregon school's new data science minor, new minor in health studies offered in its new Center for Community Global Health and new financial aid opportunities. The average debt load for students graduating from Lewis & Clark is \$21,500, substantially lower than the national average.

"The college managed the pandemic really well, and we made sure our prospective students were informed of that," a Lewis & Clark admissions officer told *Oregon Business*.

Maine Attracts Out-of-Staters. The U. of Maine, founded in 1868, enrolled 2,225 first-year students this fall, 8 percent more than last year and the fourth-largest incoming class in school history. According to the *Bangor Daily News*, UMaine enrolled a total of 11,989 students, 2.1 percent more than last year. The increase was fueled by 4,524 out-of-state students, 150 percent more than

in the Fall 2009. The number of students of color has grown from 7.3 percent in Fall 2009 to 15 percent this semester.

"It is a fantastic time to be a Black Bear with new investments and opportunities coming to our flagship campus," said Joan Ferrini-Mundy, UMaine's president. "We are pleased more students are choosing the comprehensive, success-focused educational experience we provide at the University of Maine."

Missouri College Enrollment Down 2 Percent. Enrollment at Missouri colleges has fallen 14.6 percent over the past five years, and is down 2.6 percent this fall compared to last year, according to the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development. The state's flagship U. of Missouri-Columbia's enrollment has dropped 5.5 percent since 2016.

NYU Abu Dhabi Campus Attracts Students from 85 Nations. This fall, NYU Abu Dhabi enrolled 530 students from more than 87 countries in its Class of 2025. They were selected from a pool of more than 17,300 prospective students. The yield was 74 percent. The new students speak 75 different languages. This is the 12th year of its operations and total enrollment is more than 1,800 students.

Oregon Schools Set Records. Both the U. of Oregon and Oregon State U. set enrollment records this fall. The U. of Oregon enrolled 4,617 new students, 17 percent more than last fall, Roger Thompson, vice president for student services and enrollment management, told *The Register Guard*. Domestic minority students make up 36 percent of the first-year class. The Class of 2025 came in with the highest high school GPA scores, 3.73. Overall,

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Financial Matters

FAFSA Drop. The number of high school students filling out the 2020-21 Free Application for Federal Student Aid fell by nearly 10 percent from 2018-19 to 68 percent of high school students. The number one reason? Families don't think that they qualify for scholarships. In fact, nearly 75 percent of students who did not get scholarships didn't even apply.

Perhaps on the positive side, borrowing to finance a college education fell by 12 percent for the 2020-21 academic year, according to Sallie Mae. But only 38 percent of the families and students it surveyed had talked about their options after students graduate, or evaluated possible career paths and incomes.

FAFSA Verification Reform. Each year, between 17 and 21 million students complete the FAFSA. However, "a significant portion of these students cannot receive their aid without completing an additional, lengthy process called verification to confirm that their FAFSA application is accurate. This requires students to complete complicated forms and provide multiple types of supporting documents that are then reviewed for discrepancies and to recalculate the Expected Family Contributions."

According to the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), this "places a greater burden on both students and institutions during the financial aid application process." To examine this

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YEAR-END NEWS

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enrollment at the U. of Oregon climbed to 22,298, 2.2 percent higher than last fall.

"This was the first class ever in the history of the University of Oregon where they could not visit," Thompson told the paper. "They had to be primarily interacting with us through a remote, virtual way... I think there was a pent-up energy—students were ready to get back to being in full swing..."

Oregon State U. set an all-time enrollment record, and remains the biggest public university in the state. More than 34,000 students enrolled this fall, 2.2 percent more than last year. Some 3,974 first-year students, 13.5 percent more than in 2020, enrolled this fall.

Penn State Down Regionally. Penn State's University Park campus, which turns away hundreds of qualified students each year, enrolled 47,560 students this fall. However, all of PSU's regional campuses posted enrollment losses.

Pomona Attracted 11,000 Apps. More than 11,000 students applied for Pomona C.'s Class of 2025, a school record. That was up from 10,388 who applied to the Class of 2024. The California college admitted 772 students, compared to 895 students last year, for a record-low acceptance rate of about 6.5 percent. Pomona admitted fewer this year because 83 students from the Class of 2024 deferred their enrollment to Fall 2021.

In the end, 469 new students enrolled as part of the Class of 2025. Little more than 49 percent identify as domestic students of color. Only 13 percent of the Class of 2025 is a first-generation student, compared to 21 percent who joined the Class of 2024.

Princeton's Selectivity. According to *The Daily Princetonian*, the acceptance rate for the Class of 2025 was only 3.98 percent. The acceptance rate for the Class of 2024 was 5.5 percent of the applicant pool.

Reed Apps Were Up 27 Percent. Reed C. in Oregon received 5,647 applications for the Class of 2025, 27 percent more than in 2020. "For a while it looked like liberal arts were going out of style," Milyon Truelove, Reed's dean of admissions and financial aid, told *Oregon Business*. "But now more than ever students are looking for the flexibility offered by liberal arts colleges. Liberal arts result in higher satisfaction, and ability to move around in their careers."

Reed has benefited by online meetings and digital recruiting events. "Sometimes no one would attend these events when they were in person. Now we get 20 or 30 prospective students showing up. Online has helped us tell

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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practice more closely, the two organizations just released a new report, "The Burden of Proof: Impact of and Solutions for FAFSA Verification."

The report asked questions such as: "Why, proportionately, does FSA verify more FAFSAs than the IRS audits tax returns?" "Is the burden of broader verification necessary when well-targeted verification can achieve better results?" And, "Why are students of color disproportionately selected for verification?"

To view the entire report and its recommendations, see, www.ncan.org or www.nasfaa.org.

NYU Now Covers 100 Percent of Student Need. New York U.'s new first-year class is the first to receive enough financial aid to meet 100 percent of demonstrated need. The average aid package has increased to \$50,000, up by \$11,000 since last year, according to nyunews.com.

Ohio State Aims for Debt-Free Graduates. The Ohio State U.'s new president, Kristina M. Johnson, announced plans to make OSU a debt-free institution.

The "Scarlet and Gray Advantage" will help students cover the cost of their higher education through a combination of federal, state and university financial assistance. Students will also be expected to pursue work opportunities and, when possible, make family contributions.

Students must fill out the FAFSA, commit to graduating within four years and participate in financial literacy programs, among other requirements. OSU seeks to raise \$800 million over the next decade to fund the scholarships. The program begins next fall with 125 low- and middle-income, first-year students.

Currently, nearly half of OSU's graduates leave school with an average debt of \$27,000.

our story better. It has helped us increase our visibility and talk to more people," Truelove told the magazine.

EARLY EARLY APP NEWS

Virginia Early App Record. The U. of Virginia received a record 3,442 Early Decision applications, 17 percent more than in 2020, and 31,152 Early Action apps for the Class of 2026, 7 percent more than last cycle. Increased applications came from all demographic groups, except Native Americans. First-generation applications increased by 29 percent, while legacy apps grew by 2 percent. UVA also received 3,251 international applications, according to *The Cavalier Daily*.

Dean of Admissions Gregory Roberts told the paper that he thought the increase was due to the return of in-person recruiting and in-person tours and open houses. ED decisions

Johnson said that forces students to make "life-narrowing choices." She argues that students who need to take out loans often pursue degrees that will help them pay off debt rather than exploring their passions. "As a land-grant university, we have an obligation to address those obstacles and to open up new opportunities wherever we can," Johnson said.

The Columbus Promise. The city of Columbus, Ohio, is making tuition free for the next three classes of high school graduates from its public schools (the state's largest system) to attend Columbus State C.C. The Columbus Promise covers tuition and fees for up to six semesters, plus a \$1,000 per year scholarship for food and travel, according to WCMH-TV.

Williams Eliminates Summer Earning Requirement. Williams C. in Massachusetts no longer requires its students' summer earnings to be part of their financial aid calculation. The change will lower the average family contribution by \$6,000 over a student's four years on campus.

Maud S. Mandel, Williams' president, told students, "The Summer Exploration Initiative will provide students the chance to spend summers doing research, engaging in internships, serving their communities and exploring pathways they otherwise might not." She added that Williams also is exploring whether it can become a no-loan school again.

Yale Changes Financial Aid Structure. Yale U. announced three reforms to its financial aid system. First, Yale is reducing or eliminating its student income contribution for the 54 percent of students who are on financial aid. Second, Yale will finance the tax paid by international students on scholarships. Third, Yale will also subsidize childcare costs for students with dependent children. ■

will be released in mid-December, while EA decisions will come in mid-February. Those not accepted early will be placed in the Regular Admissions pool.

Yale Posts Second-Largest Early App Pool. Yale U. in Connecticut logged-in 7,313 Early Action applications for the Class of 2026, the second largest number in school history, 8 percent behind last year. Yale's EA pool is still 27 percent larger than in 2019. Last year, 10.5 percent of EA applicants were admitted. Yale saw an increase in applications from every demographic group, and a large bump among international students. The Ivy League school remains test-optional. Its office of admissions is pleased with the expanded virtual contact it continues to make with both domestic and international students, as well as the resumption of in-person meetings. ■

Who Gets In, Who Stays?

Where Have All The Male Students Gone? One million fewer men filed college applications for the 2021-22 school year; 3,805,978 women compared to 2,815,810 men. In the 2020-21 academic year, the number of men attending U.S. colleges and universities continued its fall to 40.5 percent of the student body, according to the National Student Clearinghouse.

Men account for 71 percent of the 1.5 million fewer students who are enrolled compared to five years ago. And while 65 percent of women who started a four-year university in 2012 graduated in six years, only 59 percent of men left school with a degree.

“What I see is ... a kind of hope deficit,” Ed Grocholski, senior vice president at Junior Achievement USA, told the *Wall Street Journal*. He believes men are hampered by lack of guidance, an atmosphere of anti-intellectualism and a belief that college degrees just don't pay off.

Who Wants to Graduate? According to a *Washington Post*-Ipsos poll, nearly 90 percent of minority teens ages 14 to 18 said that graduating from college is “very” or “fairly” important. It found that 88 percent of Hispanic teens and 75 percent of white teenagers said that graduating from college was important.

Poll results also showed that 73 percent of Asian teens, 63 percent of Hispanic teens, 59 percent of black teens and 55 percent of white teens said that getting a four-year college degree is worth the cost.

And in another poll conducted by the ECMC Group, only 48 percent of the 1,000 high school students it surveyed said that they thought it likely they would attend a four-year institution. That number fell from 71 percent last year.

Incomplete. Nationally, two-thirds of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who enroll in community college do not earn a degree within three years. Of course, some transfer to four-year institutions. But others have employment and family responsibilities, and financial stresses. Research shows they often need support to make it to the next stage.

In Chicago, an organization called One Million Degrees provides some of that support. U. of Chicago research showed that high school students who applied for OMD support were 73 percent more likely to graduate from community college in three years.

This fall, ODM is expanding its services in partnership with the Colorado Department of Higher Education to help low-income adults attend and graduate.

Recruiting First-Generation Students. In a survey of nearly 11,000 senior high school students who will be first-generation college students conducted by NICHE, a company that matches students to colleges, 97

percent said they wanted e-mails from colleges that are recruiting them, while 94 percent wanted mail outreach, 82 percent wanted text messages, 59 percent wanted video calls and 57 percent wanted phone calls.

In fact, while all college-bound students want these kind of contacts, in-person interactions appear to be more important to first-generation students. The survey found that it was important for colleges to tell stories about diversity and how their first-generation students are thriving on campus.

Also, first-generation students were more willing to consider campuses in small towns, rural areas and online colleges than those whose parents had gone to college. Some 56 percent of non-first-generation students said they would not consider an online college, but only 39 percent of first-generation students ruled out online colleges. And first-generation students were twice as likely to consider enrolling in a two-year college.

Native Americans Still Left Out. Less than 10 percent of Native Americans received their associates degree, while only 16 percent earn a bachelor's degree or higher, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. And American Indian/Alaska Natives make up only one percent or less of full-time professors at U.S. colleges and universities.

Would Admission Lotteries Promoting Fairness Work? Some reformers who are disturbed by what they see as inequities in how students are admitted to college have advocated for a lottery system. Colleges and universities would set their minimum requirements, such as grade-point averages. Students would apply to the schools of their choice. After sorting out those who meet the minimum requirements, the college would hold a lottery to designate who would be offered admission to its new first-year class. That sounds fair, doesn't it?

However, a study published in *Educational Researcher* in October suggests the system would lead to less equitable outcomes. The study by Michael N. Bastedo, associate dean of education at the U. of Michigan, and Dominique J. Baker, a researcher at Southern Methodist U., performed several thousand simulations. They found that the number of low-income students and students of color admitted to selective universities actually would plunge. In some of their simulations, as few as two percent of the entering class at the hypothetical selective college was composed of low-income or students of color. And by using GPA as a criteria, the number of men also fell to as low as one-third. The number of white and Asian students increased.

“Our findings show that systematic inequalities in GPAs and standardized test scores will be baked into the results of the lotteries,” Bastedo explained. ■

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

The Hidden Curriculum: First Generation Students at Legacy Universities by Rachel Gable; Princeton University Press; ISBN: 9780691190761; \$27.95. Features “in-depth interviews with students at Harvard and Georgetown” on being the first in the family to go to college. Listed in *Forbes* as one of the top

books in higher education published in 2021.

Equitable Value Explorer. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Value Commission has launched a new web tool for measuring racial composition, net cumulative price, completion rates, number

of Pell Grant students and median earnings 10 years after enrollment at more than 4,000 colleges and universities. The Equitable Value Explorer also allows users to compare how much greater or smaller earnings are for graduates from other schools for different “earning thresholds,” including economic mobility. The site is also aimed at policy makers.

Find the new tool at <https://equity.postsecondaryvalue.org>. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

States Target Career Technical Education.

In an attempt to reengage millions of students who stopped-out of their education during the pandemic and to plan for future economic development, several states have redesigned their career and technical education (CTE) programs using funds from the overhauled Carl D. Perkins Act and COVID relief funds.

Delaware, for example, announced last month that it is spending \$16 million to expand workforce programs to reach 80 percent of high school and 50 percent of middle school students to build interest and skills in health care, information technology, tourism and other economic areas expected to grow in the state. The program will include internships. But unlike the old vocational programs, students will not be directed into nonacademic tracks and will experience the same academic rigor as peers. One reason is that most jobs of the future will require a high degree of literacy to interact with systems driven by artificial intelligence.

Harvard Removes Study Abroad Program from China. Harvard's Study Abroad Program is moving out of mainland China to Taiwan,

according to *The Harvard Crimson*. "Given the condition they provided, we really couldn't run the program with the quality that we are hoping to deliver to our students," Jennifer Liu, director of the Harvard Beijing Academy, told the paper.

Law School Boom. Applications to law schools across the nation grew by 13 percent during the last cycle, the largest in a decade. The LSAT scores of applicants were also higher than in the past, with unprecedented increases in the median scores. "A strong LSAT score, which previously almost always guaranteed you a ticket to a top law school, isn't enough anymore," said Kaplan's Jeff Thomas, executive director of legal programs.

Admissions officers at 78 percent of the 90 law schools surveyed by Kaplan also said they expect this year's pool to be as large as or larger than in 2021. They say it will be a competitive year with more applications and fewer scholarship dollars to meet need.

Nursing Enrollment Surged in 2020. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), student enroll-

ment in baccalaureate nursing programs rose by 5.6 percent in 2020. Overall, 251,145 students were studying in undergraduate and graduate nursing programs.

"With the pandemic ushering in a period of unprecedented change and innovation in higher education, schools of nursing moved decisively to adapt their programs to ensure a steady supply of nurses needed to join the fight against COVID-19," said Susan Bakewell-Sachs, chair of AACN's board of directors.

Despite demand, thousands of qualified nursing applicants are being turned away from four-year colleges and universities. In 2020, 80,521 qualified applicants were not accepted due primarily to a shortage of clinical sites, faculty and resource constraints. ■

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

Middlebury Adds \$5 Million to Preserve Need-Blind Admissions. Middlebury C. in Vermont is using \$5 million of a \$10 million husband and wife alumni gift to "preserve and strengthen need-blind admissions for domestic students...." The donors said, "We want to ensure that financial circumstances are not a barrier to attendance. That's critical for individual students and because of the contributions Middlebury students will make to their communities, locally and globally."

Montana Serves Up Aid, First-Come, First-Served. Some 300 students a year at the U. of Montana will receive \$500 to \$4,000 assistance, on a first-come, first-served basis, thanks to the Payne Family Impact Scholarship.

"When it comes to paying for school, too often Montana families find themselves caught in the middle of a financial gap where aid is hard to come by and the cost of tuition is out of reach," said UM president, Seth Bodnar.

Notre Dame's \$50 Million Gift for Financial Aid. The U. of Notre Dame in Indiana received a \$50 million gift, the largest of its kind in university history. Harry Fath and his wife Linda targeted the money to his alma mater exclusively for undergraduate financial aid. Financial aid has been the university's top fundraising priority for more than three decades. Nearly 70 percent of ND students receive financial assistance, averaging \$50,500. ■

Happy Holidays and New Year!

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Affirmative Action Affirmed Again. In a case filed in 2014, a federal judge ruled that the U. of North Carolina may continue to consider race as a factor in its undergraduate admissions. U.S. District Judge Loretta Biggs said that UNC "has met its burden in demonstrating that it has a genuine and compelling interest in achieving the educational benefits of diversity."

In Fall 2021, UNC enrolled about 20,000 undergraduate students, 56 percent of whom are white, 13 percent Asian American, about 10 percent Hispanic and 8.5 percent black.

Students for Fair Admissions, which brought the case, said that it would appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

More Colleges Struggle. College enrollment has fallen by 7.8 percent over the past two years. According to CNBC, about half of the country's postsecondary institutions felt a 3.2 percent drop in student enrollments this fall. "In the last 50 years, we've seen nothing close to the steep decline in enrollments over the last two years," said Doug Schapiro, executive director of the National Student Clearinghouse.

"About 29 percent of our student population are first-generation Americans and most of them work full- or part-time," Martha Parham,

vice president of public relations at the American Association of Community Colleges, told CNBC. "The pandemic decimated the service industries and lower socio-economic groups were more negatively impacted."

"Those hit hardest by the pandemic are now thinking about how to get back into the labor market, not school," added Maria Flynn, CEO of Jobs for the Future. "I expect that dynamic will continue into 2022."

As a result, all but the top universities are facing financial challenges due to lost tuition. One such school is Bloomfield C. in New Jersey. And several schools have shut down. Judson C. in Alabama, Becker C. in Massachusetts and Concordia C. in New York have been forced to close. More are expected to follow.

Stanford Extends Test-Optional. Stanford U. extended its test-optional policy to include the Class of 2027 and transfer applicants. "We recognize the ongoing challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, including limited access to admission testing worldwide, and as a result, we are extending this year's test-optional policies," the Office of Undergraduate Admission announced, according to *The Stanford Daily*. ■

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