

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admissions Watch

Challenging Admissions Season

James Madison Early Pool Up 40 Percent. James Madison U. in Virginia received 18,533 Early Action applications to the Class of 2026, 40 percent more than a year ago. The dramatic leap is attributed to JMU's decision to join the Common Application, which now includes more than 900 colleges and universities. That decision led to a 106 percent increase in EA apps from first-generation students and a 49 percent increase of EA apps from ethnic minorities.

"It has taken tremendous collaboration and teamwork to ensure careful evaluation and consideration of each applicant given the dramatic increase in Early Action applications," said Melinda Wood, director of admissions.

MIT Early Admits Record Low. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology received 14,781 early applications for the Class of 2026, and admitted 697 students for a record low acceptance rate of 4.7 percent. Slightly more than 64 percent of applicants were deferred to be "reconsidered without prejudice" in Regular Action, while 26.8 percent were turned away.

Chris Peterson, assistant director of admissions, told *The Tech* that admitted students were "united by a shared standard of rigorous academics, high character and a strong match with MIT's mission to use science, technology and the useful arts to make the world a better place."

Notre Dame Admits 17 Percent of Early Apps. The U. of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, received 9,687 Restrictive Early Action applications for the Class of 2026, a record high, up from 7,744 last year, and admitted 1,675 applicants or 17.3 percent of the pool.

Some 10 percent more first-generation, low-income and students of color were admitted early. ND admitted 86 QuestBridge scholars. It deferred consideration on 1,599 students, or 16.5 percent of the early pool.

Notre Dame is currently test-optional, and 50 percent of its early applicants did not submit standardized test scores. Test-optional students accounted for 30 percent of those who were accepted.

Now it's on to Regular Decision. ND has received 26,500 regular applications, up 12 percent from last year's 23,642 apps, according to *The Observer*.

NYU Tops 105,000 First-Year Applications. New York U. received more than 105,000 applications for the Class of 2026, 5 percent more than last year's record number. "We understand that this is another particularly challenging admissions season for many families, and we are both humbled and delighted that NYU continues to be the first choice for such a diverse and talented cohort of college-going students," said MJ Knoll-Finn, senior vice president.

St. Francis Exchanges Guns for Admissions. In an effort to help hard-pressed urban students turn around their lives, and a sign of the times, St. Francis C. in Brooklyn is offering local residents who have a high school degree or a GED the chance to attend college at no cost, if they turn in a gun. The surprising offer is an extension of St. Francis' successful Post-Prison Program that has already graduated students who were formerly incarcerated. The students receive financial aid and scholarships, counseling and access to mentors. Everyone

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Financial Matters

Graduates Sue 16 Elites Schools. Five college graduates sued 16 U.S. universities in federal court accusing them of colluding to limit financial aid to undergraduate students. The defendants said the universities, which are members of the 568 Presidents Group, a consortium that discusses financial aid principles, are in violation of U.S. antitrust laws. The class action suit seeks triple damages for financial aid recipients who attended the schools since 2003. *CB* will keep you posted.

Inflation Threat. In today's "fragile enrollment environment," as Richard Garrett, Eduventure's chief research officer at *Encoura* calls it, inflation is a dangerous threat. As colleges seek to hold prices down to attract students and prevent financial erosion from high tuition discounting, inflation threatens to pull the rug from beneath their efforts.

Garrett points out that in the 1970s, inflation soared by 65 percent and college answered with huge tuition increases, without any bottom line gains. In the 2020s, large tuition hikes are likely to drive away families that are already skeptical about the price/value benefits of traditional college. And it could sink other schools that already are financially struggling. Add to that damage from the pandemic, and the decade is off to a sour start.

NEW COLLEGE INITIATIVES

Central Florida's Tuition Assistance for Company Employees. Students at the U. of Central Florida who are also employees of

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CHALLENGING ADMISSIONS

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involved with the program hopes the gun-turn-in expansion will “save lives.”

“We work with anybody who has contact with the criminal justice system from an arrest to a short time in jail to 25 years in an upstate prison,” explained Emily Horwitz, a criminal justice professor. St. Francis is “guided by a Franciscan mission where we try to help those who might otherwise not be suited for college,” she told New York TV station PIX 11 News.

Tufts Applications Grow Nearly 12 Percent.

Tufts U. in Massachusetts attracted more than 34,000 applications to the Class of 2026, 12 percent more than last year. Applications from first-generation students grew by 23 percent over last year, and 66 percent over two years ago. They comprise 19 percent of the applicant pool. Students of color account for 52 percent of the U.S. applicant pool. Tufts selected 24 QuestBridge scholars through its Early Decision 1 program. Applications from international students were up 29 percent, up 76 percent over 2020. They comprise 22 percent of the applicant pool.

JT Duck, dean of admissions for the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering, told *TuftsNow* that the elite school uses several tactics to help students learn more about Tufts including interactive student and faculty panels, information sessions and tours, mock classes, art portfolio reviews and chat sessions with current students, in addition to the in-person tours of the past summer and fall.

“We want to make sure that high-achieving students from all backgrounds, and all parts of the country and the world, know about the opportunities available at Tufts.”

P.S. On the Class of 2025

Baylor Class of 2025 Means Smaller Class Next Year.

In fall 2021, 4,200 freshmen enrolled at Baylor, an increase from the previous record year of 3,700 set in Fall 2020. According to Mary Herridge, senior director of undergraduate admissions, the normal class size at Baylor admits is 3,300 to 3,600 students. Herridge said the university is aiming to accept the typical class size of around 3,300 to 3,600 students.

Pitt’s 2025 Class Largest Ever. Some 4,927 students enrolled in the U. of Pittsburgh’s Class of 2025, making it the largest first-year class in school history. Pennsylvania residents accounted for 2,897 members of the new class.

“The University of Pittsburgh welcomed a larger-than-expected Fall 2021 first-year class of 4,927 students to the Pittsburgh campus—a record number as a result of higher-than-projected yield of students from Pennsylvania. ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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six companies— Bon Secours Mercy Health, Chipotle, Discover, Taco Bell, Target and Waste Management—will receive tuition assistance paid for by their employer.

The partnership is one of many facilitated by Guild Education, whose technology platform allows the nation’s largest employers to offer strategic education to their employees.

Concordia ‘s FAFSA Fridays.

Concordia U. in West Virginia is devoting Fridays during February and March to help its students, local community college students and high school students, fill out their FAFSAs in one-on-one workshops. “We want to ensure that the student receives the most free money for college that could be available to them and that they don’t miss important FAFSA deadlines,” said Tammy Brown, director of financial aid.

Dartmouth Goes Need-Blind for International Admissions.

Dartmouth C. in New Hampshire extended its long-standing need-blind admissions policy to include international students. It is now one of only six institutions in the U.S. to offer need-blind admission to all undergraduate applicants, while meeting 100 percent of demonstrated need regardless of citizenship. The others are Harvard, Princeton, Yale, MIT and Amherst C. The policy change comes as a result of an anonymous \$40 million gift to Dartmouth’s “The Call to Lead” campaign, the largest scholarship gift in the Ivy League school’s 253-year history.

Ferris State Housing Scholarship.

Ferris State U. in Michigan announced two scholarships for new freshmen and transfer students. Beginning Fall 2022, students could receive up

to \$4,000 if they live on campus and attend a virtual financial aid workshop.

Goshen’s Free Tuition. Goshen C. in northern Indiana is offering a tuition-free education to Indiana residents who qualify for financial aid. Students need to be admitted, file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid before April 15, and qualify for the maximum federal and Indiana need-based aid. High school grads and transfer students are eligible.

“We’re excited to be able to offer this new program that removes additional barriers for students who want a transformative college education,” Dominique Burgunder-Johnson, vice president for marketing and enrollment, told *Inside Indiana Business*.

Goshen C. was the first U.S. higher education institution to conduct an exchange program with China.

The Waterbury Promise.

The U. of Connecticut Waterbury, the city of Waterbury and its public schools announced the “Waterbury Promise” that will provide \$5,000 per year to students who have a strong academic record and enroll in the U. of Connecticut campuses at Storrs, Waterbury, Hartford, Stamford or Avery Point.

Western Michigan Funds “An Ecosystem of Financial Aid.”

Thanks to a new \$550 million Empowering Futures Gift from the WMU Foundation over the next 10 years, 1,350 students will attend Western Michigan U. tuition-free, receive low-cost housing in a new Living Learning Community and stipends for internships.

In the 2022-23 academic year, 340 students from Michigan families who earn \$50,000 or less will receive support. In subsequent years, 600 students will benefit. ■

SUNY Revitalization

New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced her plan to revitalize SUNY, the State University of New York. “My family’s life was changed because my father was able to afford a college education. New York must have a statewide world-class public university system that can change lives for the next generation of students,” Governor Hochul said.

“We must seize this moment to revitalize SUNY, lifting up students from a broad and diverse range of backgrounds while at the same time transforming the institution into a global, 21st century educational leader.”

Among the governor’s goals are “increasing enrollment by one third to over 500,000 students, with enrollment and completion rates reflecting the state’s diversity; preparing hundreds of thousands of people for in-demand jobs and upwardly mobile careers...doubling

sponsored research, startups and patents so that SUNY can catalyze economic innovation and good jobs all across the state.”

The SUNY revitalization strategy targets transforming the Stony Brook and Buffalo campuses into global research institutions; revitalizing the Albany and Binghamton campuses into nation-leading research and teaching universities; growing enrollment through developing institutional specialization; streamlining application and financial aid processes; simplifying and improving SUNY’s transfer process; jobs accelerators to build bridges between education and work; identifying and removing obstacles that hold students back; funding minority-serving institutions and becoming a leader in adult learning opportunities. The plan includes helping each campus in the system become the “best version of itself.” ■

New Enrollment Trends

Fall 2021 Enrollment Continues Decline. According to the January 2022 “Current Term Enrollment Estimates, Fall 2021” from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Fall 2021 enrollment was 2.5 percent lower than in Fall 2020. Undergraduate enrollment declined by 3.1 percent, or 465,300 students, from last year.

The largest numerical drops were at public four-year institutions that lost 251,400 students or -3.8 percent. The steepest declines were at private for-profit four-year colleges, -11.1 percent. Community colleges lost 161,800 students or -3.4 percent.

Freshman enrollment stabilized over 2020, up 0.4 percent or 8,100 students. However, the Fall 2021 freshman class was 9.2 percent smaller (213,400 fewer students) compared to pre-pandemic enrollment in Fall 2019.

Lost Gains. “The gains that we’ve made in reducing class-based and racial inequality are being wiped away,” Awilda Rodriguez, professor at the U. of Michigan Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education, recently said in the *Washington Post*.

Meanwhile, the paper noted, “the United States has fallen from third to 12th since 2000 among the 38 member nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in the proportion of its population aged 25 to 34 with degrees, behind Canada, Korea, Russia and others.”

Additionally, China’s university enrollment has increased six-fold since 2000 to about 45 million students, according to World Education Services.

Four States Account for 50 Percent of Decline. A *Forbes* magazine analysis of enrollment data found that California, New York, Ohio and Texas accounted for 50 percent of the national decrease in college enrollment between Fall 2019 and Fall 2021. California accounted for 26 percent of the loss, or 247,132 students; New York lost 94,932 students, or 10 percent of the national decline; Ohio saw a decrease of 64,288 students, or 7 percent of the national deficit; while Texas lost 62,722 students, or roughly 7 percent of the total.

The other states with the most student enrollment decline were Washington, 53,065 fewer students; Michigan, 52,041 fewer students; Pennsylvania, 40,929 fewer students; Illinois, 40,332 fewer students; New Jersey, 35,116 fewer students; and Massachusetts, 31,772 fewer students.

Together these 10 states accounted for 77 percent of the two-year enrollment loss, “far larger than their 45 percent share of total national

2021 enrollment.” Only four states experienced student growth, New Hampshire, 41,740 more students; Utah, 17,312 more students; Arizona, 9,173 more students; and Nebraska, 97 more students.

Recruitment Dilemma. “The biggest challenge facing enrollment managers now,” Gil Rogers, executive vice president at PlatformQ Education, wrote in *Inside Higher Education*, “is that they are being pulled in two different directions. On the one hand, they understand the value of digital engagement as a tool in their toolkit. On the other, they are under pressure to return to what their leadership deems ‘normal,’ all while being asked to make up for the Great Resignation.

“Furthermore, after two years of diminishing returns on their attempt to replicate in-person experiences virtually, they are beginning to understand that a hybrid approach is less about virtual events and fairs and more about meaningful content,” noted Rogers. “This is not too dissimilar to pre-pandemic when we understood that the right content at the right time via the right medium is what moves the needle.”

ENROLLMENT IN THE STATES

Missouri Enrollment Declines. Enrollment in Missouri public institutions of higher education has tumbled 15.6 percent since 2016, falling from 246,999 five years ago to 211,176 enrolled this year. In addition to problems associated with the pandemic, Missouri’s high school population is declining and college costs keep going up.

However, about one-third of the state’s higher education institutions recorded enrollment increases between 2020 and 2021. For example, the U. of Missouri in St. Louis experienced a 9.5 percent increase in enrollment from 2021 to 2022, increasing from 13,874 to 15,189 students last fall. Also, Northwest Missouri State U. in Maryville posted an 8.3 percent increase in Fall 2021.

Western Nevada Native American Enrollment Up by 22 Percent. Enrollment of Native American students jumped 22 percent this semester at Western Nevada C. Native Americans constitute only 1.7 percent of Nevadans. However, they make up about 2.14 percent of WNC’s 3,528 students.

“It’s a really good time to be Indigenous and attend college—that’s a fact,” Lorraine Plympton, a Wahoe Tribe member, told nevadaappeal.com. “There is opportunity for Native students to get financial assistance ...with the Native Fee Waiver for Nevada Tribes and the Native First Scholarship....” ■

COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

Reopening Campus, How to Do It Safely and Successfully, The Chronicle of Higher Education; April 2021; \$129. Order at <https://store.chronicle.com/products/reopening-campus>.

Building Students’ Resilience: Strategies to support their mental health, The Chronicle of Higher Education; \$179. Order at <https://store.chronicle.com/products/student=mental->

[health-new-challenges-new-solutions](https://store.chronicle.com/products/student=mental-health-new-challenges-new-solutions).

“Building High-Quality School Counseling Programs To Insure Student Success” by Mandy Savitz-Romer & Tara P. Nocola; Harvard Graduate School of Education; Brief No. 21. See, https://annenbergbrown.edu/sites/default/files/EdResearch_for_Recovery_Brief_21.pdf.

To University and Beyond: Launch Your Career in High Gear by Mande Heller Adler and David Teten; Jossey-Bass; 160 pages; ISBN-10: 1119757924; \$19.95; a step-by-step guide based on interviews with dozens of professionals who work with students.

Leadership Matters: Confronting the Hard Choices Facing Higher Education by W. Joseph King and Brian C. Mitchell; Johns Hopkins University Press; ISBN: 9781421442440; \$34.95. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Supreme Court to Review Race-Conscious Admissions, Again. The U.S. Supreme Court again has agreed to look at affirmative action in college. It will review these policies at Harvard and the U. of North Carolina. The challenge comes from a group known as Students for Fair Admissions. It charges that the two schools have quota-like racial-balancing policies that artificially raise standards for Asian American applicants, in violation of federal civil-rights laws.

Both a Boston-based U.S. District Judge and a federal appeals court have sided with the schools. Now the highest court in the land will review their decisions, and will consider more than 40 years of precedents allowing some consideration of race in admissions. It has already ruled against rigid quotas. The Court has allowed schools to use consideration of race to assemble a diverse student body.

Who Graduates the One Percenters? In a 2019 report, *Wealth-X* listed 20 colleges whose alumni ranked among the richest 1 percent of Americans. They included (in reverse order of most wealth), the U. of Miami, Boston U., U. of Virginia, UCLA, U. of Michigan, Notre Dame, Princeton U., University of Texas at Austin, Cornell University, U. of California Berkeley, Yale, U. of Chicago, U. of Southern California, Northwestern U., MIT, New York U., Columbia U., U. of Pennsylvania, Stanford U. and Harvard University.

NC State Attacks Student Homelessness. After studying the problem of homeless students on campus, Mary Haskett, a NC State professor, was shocked to find that 10 percent of the student body had experienced homelessness. “A lot of people are surprised. You don’t think of college students as experiencing homelessness, but it’s actually a significant concern,” she told CBS17.

Now NC State has launched two programs to aid students who struggle with homelessness or food insecurity. HOST (Housing Options for Students Today) makes temporary housing available in the homes of community volunteers until the university can locate permanent housing for those students.

The second program features a partnership between the City of Raleigh, the National League of Cities, 50 campus departments and more than 30 community groups to help students identify existing resources through an online hub to address their nutritional needs.

Gen Z Student Housing. Gen Z students are the most digitally engaged students to step on campus. That means they are looking for housing that fits their needs in the digital world.

“Gen Z is more independent in their learning style, but they want to be in a communal space, not isolated—the concept of being ‘alone together,’” explained Paul Wuennenberg, a principal at KWK Architects.

Wi-Fi and networking are necessary starting points in designing their student housing. Shopping online also is the norm, so universities need to have ways of receiving their packages and keeping them safe 24/7. Gen Z students need more studios and micro units in residence halls. They want more opportunities to cook for themselves and for gaming.

“I think the combination of wanting privacy, having fewer people share restrooms and the desire for maximizing value will encourage these types of units,” Wuennenberg said.

Montclair’s Direct Admissions. Montclair State U. joined a Common App program that proactively guarantees college admissions for qualified applicants from New Jersey. In January, 3,000 New Jersey students were offered direct admission. ■

TESTING TABS

SAT Goes Digital. The College Board announced that its Scholastic Aptitude Test will be administered entirely digitally, next year for international students, and by Spring 2024 for U.S. domestic students.

“The digital SAT will be easier to take, easier to give, and more relevant,” said Priscilla Rodriguez, vice president of college readiness assessments at the College Board. It will also be easier to insure security, it claims.

The length of the test will be shortened from three to two hours. Last year, the SAT dropped the essay section that it added in 2016 and that extended the test to four hours.

The new test also will rely on “adaptive testing,” in which the computer program adjusts the difficulty of the test’s later questions based on how well a student answers initial questions.

Students will be able to use their own laptops to take the test, or use school computers. Additionally, students will be able to use calculators in the math section.

Results will be available within days instead of weeks. About 1.5 million students took the SAT in 2021, 1.3 million took the ACT. Both numbers were down because of the pandemic. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Houston’s Early Childhood Program. Beginning Fall 2022, the U. of Houston-Clear Lake will offer a bachelor of science in early childhood with a pre-kindergarten-grade 3 certification.

“The Texas Education Agency came up with this degree because they recognize the importance of those early years, and the necessity of having teachers who are well-prepared to teach this age group,” said Shauna Graves, UH-Clear Lake early childhood education professor. “Teachers who have this degree will be highly qualified to teach these grades.”

Quachita Baptist’s Engineering B.S. Quachita Baptist U. in Arkansas will offer a new bachelor of science degree in engineering as early as Fall 2022.

St. Louis’s Medical Cannabis Science Certificate Program. The St. Louis University School for Professional Studies has launched a medical cannabis science and therapeutic management certificate program. This follows the school’s 2020 launch of a cannabis science and operations certificate program, which has

proven to be “the most successful program in SPS’s history,” enrolling 300 students from 35 states and Puerto Rico.

“There is a great need for healthcare professionals, social workers, caregivers, law enforcement, etc. to have a better understanding of how cannabis affects the human body,” said John Buerck, interim dean of SPS.

Graduate Programs

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN). Mercy C. of Health Services in Des Moines, Iowa will offer a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) beginning Fall 2022. The program will be a hybrid of online and in-person classes for baccalaureate-prepared nurses and will take as little as a year-and-a-half to complete. See, www.mchs.edu/msn.

WashU’s Online MBA. Washington U. at St. Louis has launched an online MBA degree program that looks at business “through the lens of a digitally driven business landscape.” ■

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