

College Bound

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Admissions Watch 2022

Early Apps Up Again

THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS applying to U.S. colleges and universities for next fall rose by 13 percent, and the number of applications submitted was up by 22 percent compared to last year, according to a mid-November estimate by The Common Application.

“Applications have certainly rebounded,” Jenny Rickard, president and CEO of The Common Application, told CNBC. She also noted that first-generation students accounted for 27 percent of the total applicant pool. At the same time, about 60 percent of the domestic college applicants came from the most affluent quintile of the nation’s zip codes, while only 5 percent came from the bottom quintile.

Applications Per Student Soar. “We are seeing students apply to so many schools because they saw how hard it was last year,” Christopher Rim, founder and CEO of Command Education in New York told CNBC. “This year, students are applying to 20 to 25 schools.”

Rim added that applying to too many schools is a waste of time and resources for students who are busy with school work and extracurricular activities and for over-worked admissions officers.

Brown Admits Fewest in History. Brown U. in Rhode Island received 6,146 Early Decision applications for the Class of 2026, and admitted 896 of them or 14.6 percent, the fewest in school history. About 25 percent of the ED applicants were deferred to the Regular Decision pool, while 60 percent were turned away outright.

Students of color account for 51 percent of admitted students, up from 48 percent last year. The QuestBridge program contributed 54 students to the new class, up from 45

last year. Some 17 percent of those admitted identify as first-generation college students. The Program in Liberal Medical Education accepted 23 students, or about 3 percent, Early Decision. Only 57 percent of this year’s admitted students said they would apply for financial aid, Logan Powell, dean of admission, told *The Brown Daily Herald*.

California Sees “Crush of Students.” Both the U. of California and California State U. extended their deadlines by one day, due to what the *Los Angeles Times* called “a crush of students” who raced to submit their applications before the traditional November 30 deadline.

Connectivity issues were also blamed for problems students encountered when they tried to submit their work. These caused “real stress for families,” one high school counselor told the paper. “It’s not right, it’s a disservice to students in California who have worked hard and students who don’t have access to college counselors.”

UC campuses attracted more than 249,850 applicants for Fall 2021, 16 percent more than the previous year.

Columbia Collects 6,305 ED Apps. Columbia C. and the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science in New York City reviewed 6,305 Early Decision applications for the Class of 2026. The Ivy League school did not release numbers on who was admitted. But according to the *Columbia Spectator*, the ED acceptance rate for the Class of 2024 was 15.1 percent. Its overall acceptance rate was 6.1 percent.

“We wish these students and their families great joy in the happy news of their acceptance to Columbia,” Jessica Marinaccio, dean of

undergraduate admissions and financial aid, told the student paper.

Dartmouth Fields 2,633 ED Apps. For the second year in a row, Dartmouth C. in New Hampshire received more than 2,600 Early Decision applications. The Ivy League school admitted its first 560 students to the Class of 2026.

Thirty of the students were admitted through the QuestBridge National College Match program that recruits high achieving, low-income applicants. (About 1,650 QuestBridge students applied ED to 45 of the nation’s most selective colleges and universities.)

Of those admitted to Dartmouth, 17 percent are first-generation college students and 16 percent live outside the U.S. Students of color account for 40 percent of the new class. Some 93 percent of those admitted rank in the top 10 percent of their high school class. About 20 percent are projected to graduate as a valedictorian or salutatorian. And 13 percent are Dartmouth legacy students, 22 percent are recruited athletes. About 54 percent of those admitted come from public or charter high schools.

Lee Coffin, dean of admissions and financial aid, noted that again this year the admissions office’s outreach efforts were dominated by virtual resources and that admissions officers did not travel to high schools because of the pandemic. Dartmouth will continue to be test-optional during this admission cycle.

Duke Draws Over 4,000 ED Apps. A lucky 855 students were admitted early to Duke U.’s
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EARLY APPS

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Class of 2026. Duke attracted 4,015 Early Decision applications, and 21 percent were admitted, compared to 17 percent last year.

"They have demonstrated great resilience in challenging times, and they managed to maintain their commitment to academic excellence, extracurricular accomplishment and, most importantly, caring for each other and their community," Christoph Guttentag, dean of admissions, said. "They are particularly ready and inclined to take advantage of all Duke has to offer them."

Emory Accepts More ED. Emory, Georgia's largest private university, received 2,205 Early Decision I applications, and accepted 804 of them. Last year, Emory accepted 769 of its 1,975 EDI apps.

Georgetown Receives Over 8,000 EA Apps. Georgetown U., in the nation's capital, attracted 8,832 Early Action applications to the Class of 2026, 1.4 percent more than last year. Georgetown admitted 10 percent of them, .79 percent fewer than for the Class of 2025.

Georgia Early Apps Set Another Record. The U. of Georgia announced it garnered a record 21,500 Early Action applications for next fall, up from 20,870 a year ago. Georgia sent out invitations to join the Class of 2026 to 8,900 students from 48 states and Washington D.C.

The middle 50 percent of admitted students earned core GPAs of 4.12-4.35, up from last year's 4.00-4.33. The average admitted student took or was taking 8-13 AP, IB or dual enrollment courses. The middle 50 percent of admitted students reported an ACT score of 31-34 and a SAT total of 1350-1500. Recently, UGA posted a four-year completion rate of 72 percent, a six-year rate of 88 percent.

"The students admitted through Early Action have demonstrated outstanding academic ability and ambition, and we are confident they will achieve extraordinary things at the University of Georgia," President Jere W. Morehead said.

Georgia Tech Accepts 2,399 Students EA I. Georgia Tech fielded 6,100 Early Action I applications, and accepted 2,399 students. Tech saw a 44 percent increase in the number of African American students who were accepted.

Johns Hopkins ED I Students are from 21 Countries. Johns Hopkins U. in Baltimore admitted 520 students to its Class of 2026 through Early Decision I. The students hail from 36 U.S. states and 21 nations. Some 17 percent of admitted students are first in their family to go to college, reported Ellen Chow, dean of undergraduate admissions.

Harvard Early Apps

In mid-December, Harvard C. announced that it admitted 7.9 percent of the 9,406 students who applied early to the Class of 2026, a 0.5 percent increase over last year's record low 7.4 percent. According to the *Harvard Crimson*, 681 fewer students applied early this year than last, a decrease of 6.7 percent.

African American students accounted for 13.9 percent of early admitted students, down from last year's 16.6 percent. The percentage of admitted Latinx students increased slightly to 10.5 percent. Asian American applicants accounted for 25.9 percent of those admitted early. The number of admitted international students also increased slightly. ■

About one third will enroll in its Whiting School of Engineering, while the rest will enroll in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences. The remainder of the new class will be selected from Early Decision II, to be announced February 11, and the Regular Decision pool, to be announced on March 18.

Penn Admits 15.6 of ED Apps. The U. of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia received 7,795 Early Decision applications, 2 percent fewer than last year. Penn offered admission to 1,218 students, or about half of the total for its Class of 2026.

According to *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, students of color account for about 52 percent of those admitted, up 2 percent from last year. Female students account for 53 percent of admitted students. Twelve percent of the admitted ED students are international and come from 60 nations. First-generation college students account for 14 percent of the new class, down 2 percent from last year.

"Our admitted students demonstrate many of the values central to the Penn community, intellectual curiosity, collaboration, adaptability and care for others," new Dean of Admissions Whitney Soule told the paper.

Princeton Withholds ED/RD Stats. According to the *Daily Princetonian*, Princeton U. will no longer release its application statistics including the number of applicants, Early Action admission rate, demographics of accepted students or statistics like standardized tests scores.

"We know this information raises the anxiety level of prospective students and their families and, unfortunately, may discourage some prospective students from applying," the university informed the paper. "We believe this decision will help us keep students central to our work and tamp down the anxiety of applicants."

Rice Admits 440 ED. Rice U. in Texas received more Early Decision applications

than last year and admitted 440 of them. An additional 70 students were admitted to the Class of 2026 via QuestBridge. Some 38 percent of admitted students are from Texas, while 15 percent come from outside the U.S. Romero da Silva, dean of admissions, told the *Rice Thresher* that admitted students will make up between 42 and 45 percent of the final class.

Tulane Reduces EA Acceptances. Last year, Tulane U. in New Orleans experienced a 25 percent surge in the number of Early Action students who accepted the university's offer of admission. That meant Tulane was over-enrolled for the 2021-22 academic year.

As a result, Tulane admitted about 1,650 fewer EA applicants this year, according to Tulane's admissions blog, dropping the EA admit rate to about 10 percent for the Class of 2026. Around 55 to 58 percent of the new class will be selected ED/EA.

Vanderbilt Defers "Small Subset" of ED I Applicants. Vanderbilt U. in Tennessee attracted 2,700 Early Decision I applicants and admitted 650 of them, or 24.1 percent to the Class of 2026.

"Something new this year we are doing is deferring a small subset of Early Decision students to regular if they will be competitive in the Regular Decision round," Doug Christiansen, dean, told the *Vanderbilt Hustler*.

Williams Admits 255 Students E.D. Williams C. in Massachusetts received 814 Early Decision applications for the Class of 2026, and admitted 255 students, or 31.3 percent, down from 33 percent last year. About 180 of the applicants were deferred to the spring's Regular Decision pool, while 400 were denied admission, according to Liz Creighton, dean of admission and student financial services. Next year will be the last test-optional admissions cycle.

Yale Admits 800 Early. Yale U. in Connecticut attracted 7,288 Early Action applicants for the Class of 2026, and offered admissions to 800 students. Additionally, 31 percent of those who applied EA were deferred to their Regular Decision pool, and 57 percent were turned away.

Yale also admitted 81 students through the QuestBridge National College Match program. "Just like there's no typical Yale applicant, there's no typical QuestBridge Finalist," admissions officer Corinne Smith told *The Yale Daily News*. "They vary in the types and size of schools, towns and neighborhoods they apply from. The main thing they have in common is that QuestBridge Finalists are high-achieving, low-income students whose family income is typically under \$75,000 per year." ■

2021 Year in Review

CLEARLY, the high point of the 2021-2022 academic year was the return to classroom learning across the nation. Students and professors were excited to be back together, despite restrictions, such as in-class masks that made discussions more difficult.

The low point of this academic year is yet to be played out, as the up-tick of the COVID virus towards the end of the year has led to a, hopefully, temporary return to comprehensive online learning at many colleges and universities.

“Continued Polarization.” *The Business Journals* recently outlined other top 2021 trends. These include “continued polarization of the ‘haves and have-nots’ of higher education.” The publication quoted U. of Tennessee professor Robert Kelchen, who observed, “The wealthiest private universities have done tremendously well and flagship public universities have done really well. State funding has been stronger than expected and enrollment is up. Everyone else is struggling....”

The publication noted endowments at elite universities have soared with the stock market, and many of these schools used profits to expand their financial aid programs. Other trends noted:

- **Test-Optional Policies Expand.** COVID-induced test-optional policies led to record volumes of student applications in 2021, even though total enrollment dipped 3.2 percent since 2020.

- **Online Learning Becomes a Fixture.** Finally, online learning was the big academic winner of the pandemic, with more students experiencing classroom Zooms and universities innovating with new online approaches and tools that have become permanent fixtures for expanding outreach in admissions offices and more academic options for students.

As a result of a year of online experimentation, students have greater flexibility in their learning schedules and modes, and universities have become even more accessible, and, in some cases, more affordable for learners of all kinds.

Community Colleges See Decline in 2021. The U.S. supports 950 community colleges, and most have been plagued with steep enrollment declines during the pandemic. For example, enrollment at the U. of the District of Columbia is down 29 percent since 2019.

“I’ve never seen anything quite like the last few years in community colleges,” Walter G. Bumphus, president and chief executive of the American Association of Community Colleges recently told *The Washington Post*. “The pandemic raised its ugly head in a number of

ways for our colleges. Everybody’s concerned about enrollment, no doubt about it.”

But not every school has been hit as hard. For example, Northern Virginia C. C. only experienced a 5 percent decline since 2019.

“Community college enrollment typically runs countercyclical to the economy, and the current tight labor market offers our students more opportunities for employment than they have experienced in years,” Anne M. Kress, president at Northern Virginia C.C., told the paper.

International Student Enrollment Grew. The Institute of International Education reports that international student enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities rose by 4 percent last fall, following a 15 percent dive last year. Overall, 70 percent of U.S. colleges reported more international students this fall, while 20 percent reported decreases and the other 10 percent remained steady.

For example, the U. of Rochester in New York experienced a 70 percent surge in international students, mostly graduate students. However, obstacles continue, such as visa backlogs and students who are reluctant to study abroad during the pandemic.

For more info, see, <https://iie.org>.

College Athletes Graduated at Record Levels. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, 90 percent of Division I student-athletes are graduating, the highest rate in 20 years. Over the past two decades, the Graduation Success Rates have increased by 16 percent. Men’s football increased 18 percent in the last 20 years and men’s basketball 28 percent. Women’s basketball increased to 94 percent. See, <https://ncaa.org>.

Who Earned Doctorates? According to the annual Survey of Earned Doctorates, released November 2021, the number of doctorate recipients in the U.S. declined to 55,283 in 2020, from 55,614 in 2019. The number declined for all ethnic groups except Hispanics/Latinos.

Woman earned 49 percent or more of doctorates in life sciences, psychology and social sciences, education, humanities and arts and other non-science and engineering fields. They earned a third of physical sciences and earth sciences doctorates, and only a quarter of those in engineering, mathematics and computer sciences.

About 71 percent of those in the science and engineering fields graduate with no debt. However, only half of those in the humanities and arts graduate debt free. For more, see <https://nces.nsf.gov/sed/>. ■

COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

Understanding Academic Freedom by Henry Reichman; “surveys academic freedom’s history and its application in today’s universities;” 248 pages; Johns Hopkins U. Press; ISBN: 9781421442150; \$27.95.

There Is No College in COVID: Selections from the Oregon State University-Cascades COVID-19 Journaling Project; 108 pages; Parafine

Press; ISBN: 9781950843527; \$12.95.

More California Latino Graduates. A new report from the Campaign for College Opportunity, “The State of Higher Education for Latinx Californians,” found that the number of male Latinos graduating in four years from the California State U. system has doubled in the past five years from 9 percent to 18 percent. The

number of females rose from 15 to 29 percent.

However, the report noted that people of Latino descent make up 39 percent of the state’s population. Latinos now are the largest racial/ethnic group in the state. The majority of Latinos start college at one of the state’s 116 community colleges.

The report also called for “equitable placement” of students in English and math courses, with support. And it wants the state to close the racial/ethnic and gender gaps in enrollment, graduation, certificate and transfers. ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Student Loan Repayment Moratorium Extended. In mid-December, President Biden announced that the student loan repayment moratorium is extended until May 1. Repayment was set to restart on February 1. (It has been suspended since March 2020 after passage of the CARES Act during the Trump administration.)

“Meanwhile, the Department of Education will continue working with borrowers to ensure that they have the supports they need to transition smoothly back into repayment and into advance economic stability for their own households and for our nation,” President Biden said.

“We will continue to provide tools and supports to borrowers so they can reenter into the repayment plan that is responsive to their financial situation,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, “such as an income-driven repayment plan.”

Student Borrowing Declines. With declining enrollments during the pandemic, student borrowing from the federal government also decreased. Borrowing fell by \$7 billion, or 8 percent, between the 2020 and 2021 school years, according to the College Board. Per-student borrowing fell by \$324. (However, as of March 2021, almost one fifth of all federal borrowers were in default on their loans.)

Changes Coming to FAFSA. At the end of 2020, Congress took action to simplify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Big changes will take place beginning July 1, 2023, for the 2023-2024 academic year.

For example, the name of the Estimated Family Contribution will change to the Student Aid Index. A student’s SAI could be as low as minus \$1,500, thus allowing a college to identify its very neediest students and award them aid in excess of the cost of attendance.

Colleges also will be required to disclose all elements of the cost of attendance and provide separate allowances for each element, such as housing, meals and transportation. A number of changes also will be made to the criteria for determining independent students and Pell Grant eligibility. The FAFSA will also be simplified.

Colleges Unprepared. However, a study from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and Oracle found that half of U.S. colleges they surveyed had not started preparations for the new student aid requirements. About three quarters of

respondents said their biggest concern was how to handle the shift from Estimated Family Contribution to the new Student Aid Index. And only 40 percent were completely or fairly confident in software providers’ ability to adapt to the policy changes.

“The need for financial aid reform has never been more pressing, with schools and students still grappling with the economic impacts of the pandemic,” said Vivian Wong, Oracle’s group vice president of higher education development. “While these provisions are an important first step in expanding access to education, institutions can’t enact these changes alone—they need the right systems and support in place....”

NEW FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

Arizona Offers Free Tuition To Some In-State Students. Beginning this spring, the U. of Arizona, Arizona State U. and Northern Arizona U. will be required to offer financial aid that covers tuition and fees to admitted,

low-income, in-state students through the Arizona Promise Program.

“The universities for years have had lots of financial aid, but what we’ve done here is passed a state law that requires it,” John Arnold, executive director of the Arizona Board of Regents which oversees the scholarships, told *U.S. News & World Report*.

Polk State Eliminates Student Debt. Using \$1.2 million in COVID-19 federal relief funds, Polk State C. in Florida forgave the student loan debt of 1,300 of its students.

Rice’s Loan-Free Financial Aid. Rice U. in Houston announced that it will award loan-free financial aid to students whose family income is \$140,000 per year or less. Students who come from families earning under \$200,000 will receive scholarships that cover half of their tuition.

“The original goal of the Rice Investment is to invest in the promise of students, regardless of their financial background,” said Anne Walker, assistant vice president and executive director of university financial aid services. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Lake Superior’s B.S. in Data Science. Lake Superior State U. in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula announced a new bachelor of science degree in data science that emphasizes creation, analysis and use of data-driven knowledge to influence decisions of business and policy. Students can concentrate in bio-informatics, business analytics, chemistry informatics, geosystems modeling, health informatics, robotics and spatial analytics.

“This program epitomizes our commitment to social mobility, as data scientists are in high demand and have high entry-level salaries,” said the Lynn Gillette, provost and vice president for academic affairs.

New York Trade Schools Busy. While college enrollments declined, New York trade schools are attracting students. “All our programs are very short term in length,” Christa McHale, director of educational partnerships and workforce development at Erie 1 BOCES, told *spectrumlocalnews.com*. “They’re also very low cost, so students can finish the program in less than a year and be ready and prepared to enter the world of work.”

Rowan U. Plans N.J.’s First Veterinary School. The New Jersey state legislature has allocated \$75 million toward the construction of a new building for Rowan U.’s new School

of Veterinary Medicine, scheduled to open in 2025. The inaugural class will include about 60 students, with the expectation that class size will increase to 90 students. The program will feature a number of undergraduate and graduate programs, a veterinary teaching hospital, as well as internship and residency opportunities for postgraduates. It will also offer doctoral degrees in veterinary medicine.

“We are creating a destination of choice for students who share a passion for animal health and want to pursue careers in veterinary-related studies at all higher education levels,” said Rowan president Ali A. Houshmand. “Our curriculum will emphasize developing career-ready professionals to address shortages of animal healthcare providers in New Jersey and throughout the United States.”

Tuskegee Forges New Path to Med School. Tuskegee U. and Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Alabama signed an agreement paving the way for qualified Tuskegee students to receive guaranteed medical school admissions. The partnership seeks to address the chronic shortage of physicians in rural areas of Alabama, and for medically-underserved rural and minority populations throughout the United States. ■

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