

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admissions Watch

BC Admitted 16 Percent. Boston C. attracted a record-high 40,477 applications for its Class of 2026, and only admitted 16 percent of them. That was half of the number of five years ago. Admitted students who submitted standardized test scores posted an average 1510 on their SAT, 34 on the ACT.

“AHANA” (African, Hispanic, Asian and Native American) students make up 42 percent of the admitted pool. International students hail from 82 countries and account for 9 percent of admitted students, while 11 percent are first generation.

Grant Gosselin, director of undergraduate admission, credited the “conversion of two key policy decisions” for BC’s strong showing. One is implementation of an Early Decision program three years ago. This year, ED students make up half of the incoming class. The other was its adoption of a test-optional admission plan during the last two cycles. “In the end, BC is getting more ‘best-fit’ students than ever in our applicant pool, who see themselves as aligning with BC expectations and values.”

BU Attracted 80,000 Apps. Boston U. received 80,794 applications for 3,100 openings, nearly 7 percent more than last year. BU accepted 14 percent of the students who applied, down 4 percent from last year. Half of the class was chosen via Early Decision.

Admitted students come from the top 6 percent of their high school classes, posted an average 3.95 GPA and average SAT of 1491 and ACT of 34. However, only 54 percent of applicants actually submitted standardized test scores since BU remains standardized test-optional. International students account for 24 percent of the new class, coming from 87 nations. Students from underrepresented groups make up 21 percent of its new class, while 13 percent are the first in their family to go to college.

According to *BU Today*, new students include someone who developed an app to detect Parkinson’s disease in facial photographs, another who interned on an upcoming “Star Wars” installment and one who crafted a peer tutoring program for potential high school dropouts.

U. of California Santa Barbara Saw Five Percent Increase in Apps. About 111,000 freshmen applied to the U. of California Santa Barbara, a five percent increase from last year, according to KCBX. It expects to enroll 5,000 new freshmen in the fall.

Cal Poly Pomona Topped System. California State Polytechnic U., Pomona received the most applications of any school in the 23-campus CSU System, 49,624 first-year applications, 21 percent over last year. Part of the reason is that the California State U. System eliminated its SAT or ACT requirement. However, transfer applications decreased by 11 percent from last year, particularly from community college students.

In fact, 22 of the 23 CSU campuses recorded increases in freshman applications. San Diego State, for example, posted a record-setting 76,928 applications, up 14 percent over last year. It also saw fewer transfer applications from community college students. Most experts attributed these transfer declines to the fact that community colleges suffered the largest enrollment drops during the pandemic due to COVID’s impact on low-income families.

Charleston Fielded 12 Percent More Apps. The C. of Charleston fielded 22,522 freshman applications for Fall 2022, 12 percent more than last year. The South Carolina school experienced a 9 percent increase in applica-

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Financial Matters

Biden Administration Forgives More Federal Loans. As *CB* reported last month, the Biden Administration further deferred federal student loan payment until August 31. Repayment has been on pause since March 2020. According to *Forbes*, about 43 million people are paying back federal student loan debt.

But many students are holding out hopes that President Biden will cancel their debt altogether. The administration moved in that direction in April when the U.S. Dept. of Ed announced that 40,000 borrowers under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program will see “immediate debt cancellation.” These are people who have been paying their debt for 10 years.

“Student loans were never meant to be a life sentence,” said Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “Today, the Department of Education will begin to remedy years of administrative failures that effectively denied the promise of loan forgiveness to certain borrowers enrolled in IDR [income-driven repayment] plans.”

The administration also canceled \$7.8 billion in federal student loan debt for 400,000 borrowers with disabilities via a data-sharing initiative between the Social Security Administration and the Education Department. Other steps to remedy administrative problems are forthcoming.

New FAFSA Applications Rebound. According to the National College Attainment Network (NCAN), FAFSA applications from high

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ADMISSIONS WATCH

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tions from underrepresented students, and from 70 different nations.

Cornell U. Admitted a “Talented and Diverse” Class. Cornell U. in Ithaca, New York, admitted 4,908 students to its Class of 2026 through Regular and Early Decision cycles. Cornell no longer releases its acceptance rate or the number of applicants until mid-summer. Last year, 67,830 applied to its Class of 2025 and 5,836 were admitted, for an admit rate of 8.7 percent.

Duke Fielded 50,000 Apps. Duke U. in North Carolina received the most applications in school history. Some 50,002 students applied. Duke offered admission to 3,085 of them including 850 who were admitted Early Decision. Duke meets 100 percent of demonstrated financial need of all admitted students. This year that will amount to about \$134 million in need-based financial aid, with an average grant of \$54,000.

“We noticed in particular their commitment to their communities and to the environment,” said Christoph Guttentag, dean of undergraduate admissions.

Illinois Sets New School Record. The U. of Illinois at Urbana Champaign attracted more than 63,000 applications for Fall 2022. That’s 33 percent more than last year and a new school record. One reason is that all Illinois state public universities shifted their portals to the Common App, Andy Borst, director of undergraduate admissions, told the news-gazette.com.

“We plan to intentionally reduce the size of the incoming first-year class by 600 enrolled students in order to maintain our undergraduate enrollment within the bounds of campus resources,” he told the paper. In 2021, the Big 10 university enrolled 8,303 freshmen, its largest first-year class. “We are also becoming more representative of our state, admitting more students who are first generation, low-income or historically underrepresented,” he added.

Lehigh Accepted 36 Percent of Apps. Lehigh U. in Pennsylvania received a total of 15,161 applications across all three of its admissions rounds, and accepted 5,507 students or about 36 percent. That is 10 percent lower than last year, Bruce Bunnick, director of admissions, told *The Brown and White*. Lehigh hopes to enroll about 1,500 new students this fall.

More than 38 percent of admitted students are from historically underrepresented domestic backgrounds. International students account for 19 percent of this year’s application pool, 4 percent more than last year. Lehigh will remain test-optional for the Class of 2027.

Middlebury Received Most Apps in History. Middlebury C. received 13,028 applications for its Class of 2026, the most in school history. The Vermont college admitted 1,502 students through Regular Decision, to join another 438 students who were admitted early. The pool of students of color increased from 47 percent last year to 52 percent this year. Middlebury will remain test-optional for at least one more year. Middlebury expects to enroll about 640 students in September and another 120 in February 2023.

“We received applications from students who are creative and engaged and already exploring ways to address the world’s most challenging problems, a skill that is at the core of Middlebury’s mission,” said Nicole Curvin, dean of admissions.

She added that Middlebury’s access and equity efforts include the Student Ambassadors Program, which reaches students in rural, lower-income or multi-ethnic areas who otherwise might not have heard of the school. Middlebury plans to award about \$18.8 million in need-based financial aid to roughly 47 percent of incoming students.

Northeastern Also Has Record Pool. Northeastern U. in Boston fielded a record-large pool of 90,989 applicants. It was only able to admit 6,179 of them, or about 6.7 percent, down from last year’s 18 percent, according to *The Huntington News*, the school’s independent newspaper. The enrollment target for the Class of 2026 is about 2,500 students, 1,000 fewer than normal, in part because of past overcrowding. Northeastern’s application spike came in the second year the university’s test-optional policy.

Southern Cal Admissions Officers Devote 30,000 Hours To Reviewing Apps. The U. of Southern California attracted 69,000 applications this year and admitted 8,198 students, just under 12 percent. The university said that its 65-person Office of Admission team put in more than 30,000 hours reading and reviewing applications during its selection process.

About three-out-of-four admitted students identify as black, Latinx, Native American, Asian and Pacific Islander or multiple ethnicities. California accounted for 38 percent of admitted students, followed by New York, Texas, Washington, Illinois and Florida. The number of international students rose to 18 percent. China, India, Canada, South Korea and Brazil sent the most students.

The average unweighted high school GPA of admitted students is 3.91, a school record. USC is need-blind in its admissions process and this year will award more than \$460 million in financial aid.

“We’re seeing some of the university’s long-term efforts towards access and inclusion

pay off,” said Kedra Ishop, vice president for enrollment management. “Financial aid and a holistic approach to our process are key to that success.”

TCU Apps Up 2.6 Percent. Texas Christian U. won’t release its official application numbers until this fall. However, Heath Einstein, dean of admission, told tcu360.com that the school received 2.6 percent more applications than last year when the Texas school received 19,782 applications for the Class of 2025 and admitted 54 percent.

But because “the entering first-year class in Fall 2021 was larger than anticipated, we intentionally admitted fewer students for Fall 2022,” Einstein said. Over the past 10 years, TCU’s undergraduate population has grown by 24 percent, from 8,229 students to 10,222.

Washington U. Has Record-Low Acceptance Rate. Washington U. in St. Louis admitted 3,598 applicants to its Class of 2026, for a record-low acceptance rate of 10 percent. About 94 percent of admitted students ranked in the top 10 percent of their high school class, up from 88 percent last year. About 16 percent of the admitted students are Pell Grant-eligible, while 13 percent are first-generation. Some 7 percent come from rural communities. African American and Hispanic students each make up 16 percent of the admitted pool.

This year, all students were admitted under a new need-blind admissions policy. “It’s wonderful to be able to look at an application, evaluate that student, make the decision, and have the discussion on what that student has achieved and what that student has accomplished, without worrying about whether or not we’ve overspent our financial aid budget,” said Ronne Turner, vice provost of admissions & financial aid.

William & Mary Have Record Year. The C. of William & Mary in Virginia attracted 18,080 applications for its Class of 2026. That’s 3.5 percent more than last year, and a school record.

Williams Waitlists 2,241 Students. Williams C. in Massachusetts received 15,321 first-year applications for its Class of 2026 and admitted 1,048 through the Regular Decision process. They join 255 students admitted through Early Decision. Williams posted an 8.5 percent admit rate, down from last year’s 8.8 percent.

Williams also admitted 18 transfer students. Another 2,241 students were waitlisted. However, in the past five years, only 25 students have been admitted from its waitlist. This is the second year that Williams has been test-optional. ■

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school seniors grew nationally by 4 percent through the end of March. Completion rates are actually up 20 percent in Alabama and Texas as a result of new laws that require high school seniors to complete the form or explicitly opt out in order to graduate.

"I'm actually quite optimistic about high school senior FAFSA completion right now," Bill DeBaun, senior director of data and strategic initiatives for NCAN, told forbes.com. "It's entirely possible that the Class of 2022 actually winds up being close to pre-pandemic levels of FAFSA completion."

But FAFSA Renewals Tumble. However, as of the end of March, the FAFSA renewal rate among currently enrolled college students was down 12.3 percent from last year. Among low-income Pell Grant students, the renewal rate plunged by 15.6 percent over last year.

"At the end of May 2020, we started ringing the alarm bell because we had 250,000 fewer renewals from the lowest income level," Bill DeBaun added. "Right now we're down 420,000 renewals from that level, so we're just seeing a massive drop here."

That could mean that these students are giving up on their current education pursuits and may not re-enroll this fall.

U. of California Ends Tuition for Native Americans. Californians who are members of federally-recognized Native American, American Indian and Alaska Native tribes will have tuition and fees waived, according to *The California Globe*. "The University of California is committed to recognizing and acknowledging historical wrongs endured by Native Americans," said Michael V. Drake, president of the system. About 500 Native Americans are enrolled as undergraduate students.

Kentucky Lowers Tuition and.... Kentucky lowered its out-of-state tuition rate with the goal of boosting enrollment after the pandemic. Its General Assembly also allocated an additional \$80 million annually for Kentucky postsecondary education institutions. And the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education reports that all state four-year institutions have achieved 80 percent retention rates, with the exception of its Historically Black Colleges and Universities, where the retention rate is 70 percent.

Purdue Receives \$25 million for Honors College. Purdue U. in Indiana received an alumnus gift of \$25 million to rename The John Martinson Honors C. The gift will be used to support "undergraduate research, new scholarships, creative activity, leadership and professional development, global and community engagement and innovative

pedagogies." The Honors College is Purdue's first interdisciplinary, residential academic college and currently enrolls more than 2,700 students.

The gift will help "equip our graduates with the research and entrepreneurial skills they need to lead in a new era of unprecedented global change," said Rhonda Phillips, dean.

Vermont High School Students Can Count on Two Year Degree. The J Warren & Lois McClure Foundation announced end of April that it will cover tuition and fees as well as books, transportation and other costs for an associate degree at the Community College of Vermont, after federal and state aid. It builds on the Early College Program at CCV which has 12 locations and online learning options and 11 associate degree programs. For more info see, www.mcclurevt.org.

Whitman C. Provides New Scholarship. As a result of a \$10 million gift, 500 students from Washington state can receive a new four-year scholarship to meet full financial need. It begins Fall 2023.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Lincoln C. Looks for Angel. Lincoln C. in Lincoln, Illinois, just north of the 16th president's hometown of Springfield, was founded in 1865. The small, four-year, predominantly African American liberal arts institution has survived world wars and the Great Depression, but is scheduled to close in May unless it can raise \$50 million. Enrollment has declined below 700 during the pandemic and it was recently hit with a damaging ransomware attack.

But its students haven't given up. They're reaching out to alumni, prominent personalities and foundations for help. "This place has something that catches you," Miguel Reyes, a senior from Puerto Rico, told the *Chicago Tribune*. "It just feels magical. If people were to experience what we have experienced, they would understand. This is a place where a lot of people found themselves."

Richard Vedder, an Ohio U. professor who studies the economics of education, told the *Tribune* that many colleges and universities nationwide are suffering. "The ones that are really on the margins, I expect more of them to fail in the next few years."

Marymount California U. to Close. This August, Marymount California U. will permanently close, due to declining enrollment, rising costs and the impact of the pandemic. "This is an extremely sad day for Marymount and for the legacy and traditions lost, both for our campus community and the local Palos Verdes area we have called home for more than 50 years," said Brian Marcotte, MCU president. ■

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

Best Value Colleges 2022. The Princeton Review project named the public and private colleges that have earned the highest ROI (Return on Investment.) The 2022 rating resulted from a survey of 650 institutions. Best value overall: U. of California Berkeley. The list includes 209 schools including nine that are tuition free. To access the lists, see, <https://www.princetonreview.com>

The Community's College: The Pursuit of Democracy, Economic Development, and Success by Robert L. Pura and Tara L. Parker; Published by the American Association of Colleges and Universities; ISBN: 9781642674255; \$35; see, <https://www.aacu.org>.

New Website Resource. AccessScholarships.

com is a new source launched by 2020 college graduate Ayden Berkey. The website is free and works in partnership with other organizations providing lists of scholarships.

NACAC College Openings. As it has done for the last 34 years, NACAC (National Association for College Admissions Counseling) posts a daily updated list of its member colleges and universities that are still seeking students for this fall. Over 300 schools listed openings at end of April. See, www.nacacnet.org. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

OneGoal Boosts College Graduation Rates in Illinois. OneGoal, a national nonprofit dedicated to closing the degree divide in the U.S., has made “significant impact on college enrollment, persistence and graduation rates among Chicago Public Schools students from low-income communities,” according to a new analysis of 7,000 students conducted by the U. of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab.

The OneGoal three-year program uses a cohort model to navigate the college transition. Students spend one class period every day during the 11th and 12th grade exploring college options, completing applications and financial aid paperwork. After they’re in college, the students continue to receive remote, one-on-one support.

The U. of C. study found that high school graduation rates among OneGoal Fellows increased by almost 16 percent, with 99 percent of program participants graduating from high school.

OneGoal increased the students’ college enrollment by over 7 percent at a “match institution.” The OneGoal Fellows graduated from college at a rate of 28.49 percent compared to non-Fellows who graduated at a rate of 20.28 percent.

Washington State College Enrollment Plummetts, Especially Among Men.” A recent *Seattle Times* report found that college enrollment at Washington state colleges fell more steeply than the national average despite the Washington College Grant Program, “one of the most generous financial aid programs in the country.”

About 60 percent of Washington’s students enroll in college within a year after high school, 6 percent below the national average. Washington’s 34 community and technical colleges have experienced an enrollment decline since 2010, when the Great Recession began to fade and jobs began returning. Then it plunged by 24 percent since 2019. The state’s four-year college enrollment has fallen nearly 7 percent since 2019, for a combined loss of 60,000 students.

What is driving the decline? “We didn’t have a college-going culture to begin with, and the pandemic has made it worse,” Paul Francis, executive director of the Council of Presidents, which represents Washington’s five public universities and The Evergreen State College, told the paper.

“The state of Washington is historically a working class place,” U. of Washington historian Margaret O’Mara told the *Times*,

with good paying jobs in timber, agriculture, aerospace and Pacific shipping. “There’s still a very significant chunk of our workforce that is doing blue-collar work.” And the job market is “hyper-charged.”

Men especially are finding alternatives to college, a “national problem.” Men account for only 40 percent of this year’s class at the U. of Washington’s Seattle campus, and 39 percent of new students at The Evergreen State C. In the state’s community and technical colleges, men make up only 42 percent of students system-wide.

Grades, Test Scores Still Tops. Ninety-three percent of Americans state that high schools grades should be at least a minor factor in admissions decisions, 61 percent say they should be a major factor. That is according to a new report from the Pew Research Center. At the same time, 39 percent of Americans state

standardized test scores should be a major factor; 46 percent a minor factor. And 19 percent believe community service involvement should be a major factor in admissions. For other findings, see, <https://www.pewresearch.org>.

Michigan State U. Won’t Require ACT or SAT for Five Years. What began as a pilot program in the COVID-19 pandemic, will continue for the next five years as school officials evaluate retention and graduation rates, according to *Advance Local*. Last fall, 50 percent of enrolled freshmen did not submit test scores. Of those who did, the ACT composite score was 23-29; the SAT score was 1100-1310. The freshman profile though included a GPA of 3.5-4.0.

“At the end of the day, we want students who want to be with us, who want to study with us, and who believe we’ll offer them something of value to their career and ultimately to their lifestyle and quality of life,” said John Ambrose, executive director of admissions. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Indiana Wesleyan Launches Engineering Program. Noting that architecture and engineering occupations are expected to grow 3 percent in the next seven years, Indiana Wesleyan U. announced it will offer a new engineering program focusing on civil engineering, computer engineering, design engineering, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering. The program begins Fall 2022.

North Carolina A&T Expands Engineering. North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State U., the nation’s number one university in graduation of black engineers, received \$35 million from the state legislature to enroll more top engineering students and create “world-class” research facilities. The investment will “expand our capabilities to prepare talented and highly competitive students in engineering, computer science and related disciplines,” said Chancellor Harold L. Martin, Sr. New students will benefit from \$2.5 million in additional financial aid.

SUNY Oswego Integrative Professional Studies Degree. A “new integrative professional studies degree will allow students to focus on topics that best align with their personal or professional journeys,” according to the university’s announcement. The degree is tailored to each student but focuses on communication skills, data analysis and project management; digital skills, self-management, and social structure and systems.

Some Two-Year Programs “Hot.” Meanwhile, in a recent *Washington Post* article, “What College Enrollment Trends Say about the New Economy,” Aaron Brown, author of *The Poker Face of Wall Street*, pointed out that several postsecondary education sectors are seeing strong growth.

For example, enrollment in two-year agricultural science degree programs rose 41 percent in 2021. Construction management grew by 18 percent. And blue-collar technical fields are up an average of 7 percent.

Brown noted that these are not “vocational” or “trade school” programs that teach basic job skills to the unskilled. Rather, they provide advanced instruction, theory and business skills so students can move up to management jobs or start their own businesses. These students are “taking positions that in the past would likely have been held by four-year college graduates without specific training.”

Brown added that, “as college costs soar and the demand for these graduates languishes, it’s not surprising that their numbers are dwindling.... Running a business or managing a team of people engaged in technical work may represent a form of education that is as valuable to society as a four-year degree in literature or sociology. Of course, society needs both, but maybe we overinvested in the latter and underinvested in the former.” ■

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