

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admissions Watch

Are Things Looking Up?

ONLY HALF of the 206 admissions officials surveyed in August by Hanover Research for *Inside Higher Education* said that they expected to enroll more students this fall than last year. Only 32 percent of the colleges reported that they met their enrollment goals by May 1. Of the remaining 68 percent, only 16 percent met their goals by June 1 and of the remaining group (84 percent of the total), only 8 percent had met their enrollment goals by July 1.

Yet, as colleges and universities opened this fall for face-to-face learning, many reported things were looking up.

Alvernia Welcomes 500 to Class of 2025. Alvernia U., a Franciscan-based community in Reading, Pennsylvania, enrolled more than 500 first-year and transfer students on campus this fall, the second straight year it eclipsed 500 new students.

Students of color make up about 32 percent of the new class, while scholar athletes account for 37 percent. Some 21 percent of the class are first-generation college students. Nearly 70 percent are from Pennsylvania, while 21 percent hail from the greater mid-Atlantic region. International students arrived from Brazil, Canada, Ghana, Ireland and Saudi Arabia.

About 64 percent of the new students live on campus. The average high school GPA of new students was 3.5. Their average SAT score was more than 1080. About 10 percent were members of the National Honors Society.

Bates Hands Out \$10 Million in Aid. Bates C. in Maine, a rigorous liberal arts school founded in 1855, welcomed 555 students to its Class of 2025. About 17 percent of those who applied were offered admission. Bates yield was 43.8 percent. It awarded grants of \$10 million to 36 percent of the class, with an

average grant of \$53,660. About 10 percent of Bates new students received Pell Grants.

Women account for 54 percent of the new class, while students of color make up 27 percent and first-generation college students 12 percent. International students account for about 10 percent of the new class. Bates has been test optional since 1984. But for those who submitted results, the middle 50 percent posted scores ranging from 710-743 on that SAT Evidence Based Reading and Writing section, 720-760 on the SAT Math portion.

Columbia Drew Over 60,000 2021 Apps. Columbia C. and the School of Engineering and Applied Science in New York City attracted 60,551 applications in 2020-21, 51 percent more than the previous year. Columbia admitted 2,358 students, 186 more than in 2019-20. Despite being test optional, the average SAT score for the Class of 2025 increased for the third consecutive year to 1535. About 19 percent of the class is Pell Grant-eligible, a 2 percent growth. The number of international students fell by 3 percent to 13 percent.

Connecticut Attracted More than 38,000 Apps. The U. of Connecticut received a record number 38,000-plus applications. UConn enrolled about 3,700 first-year students at its Storrs campus this fall. About 60 percent are Connecticut residents, while the rest come from 42 states and 17 countries. Almost 1,800 first-year students enrolled at its regional campuses in Hartford, Stamford, Waterbury and Avery Point. They were joined by 660 transfer students at Storrs from other colleges.

About 46 percent of the incoming Storrs class is made up of students of color. The new class includes 73 valedictorians and 88

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Financial Matters

FAFSA Available October. Next year's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) became available October 1. But just 20 percent of parents know this, while 51 percent think that the form is available year-round. Most families can finish it within an hour. About 86 percent of first-time, full-time students in public four-year colleges are granted aid.

Meanwhile, a survey from Discover Student Loans found that 29 percent of parents never talked to their child about FAFSA applications, which gives families access to federal financial aid, the largest source of help to pay for college. Another 22 percent only discussed the form once or twice. So for the last cycle, it is not surprising that the same survey found that 31 percent of parents who planned to complete the form had not done so by May 2021, a month before its June deadline.

"When it comes to financing a college education, the earlier families can start saving and having those discussions, the better," said Manny Chagas, vice president of Discover Student Loans. "The same goes for the FAFSA. Applying early can give families opportunities for federal, state and institutional aid like grants and scholarships and some schools award financial aid on a first-come, first-serve basis."

To get started, <https://studentaid.gov>.

Student Borrowers Owe \$1.5 Trillion. Some 43 million borrowers hold \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt. About 6.9 million students, or

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LOOKING UP?

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salutatorians. And 554 first-year students earned a spot in UConn's highly competitive Honors Program.

Cornell Admitted 8.7 Percent to the Class of 2025. Cornell U. in Upstate New York received 67,380 applications to its Class of 2025, 16,000 more than the previous year. Cornell admitted 5,836 students of whom 3,750 enrolled this fall, according to WRVO 89.9 Public Media. More than 34 percent of the new students identified as members of underrepresented minorities, up 7.3 percent from the Class of 2024. First-generation students account for 19.4 percent of the class. Women account for 55 percent of the new class.

Illinois Largest First-Year Class. This fall, 8,303 first-year students enrolled at the U. of Illinois Urbana Champaign, the most in school history. However, the number of black students fell from 8.7 percent in 2019 to 6.9 percent in 2021. The number of Latino students fell from 14.9 to 13.3 during the same period.

There was a noticeable growth in the number of students coming from California, Texas, Florida and Georgia, said Andy Borst, director of undergraduate admission. The U. of I. also attracted more international students, particularly from India. Borst added, "How we managed the pandemic with our testing initiatives was noticeable to many of our students."

Lewis & Clark's Largest Class. Lewis & Clark C., founded in 1867 in Portland, Oregon, was down about 100 students last year. But it recruited 700 students for its Class of 2025, surpassing its old record of 654 in 2015. Students of color account for 28 percent of the new class.

"I think we are demonstrating to prospective students that even in a COVID scenario, you can still be taking classes and be on campus," said Eric Staab, vice president for admissions and financial aid.

Loyola Chicago Apps Up 42 Percent. First-year applications to Loyola U. Chicago were up 42 percent. That resulted in 2,865 students enrolling this fall, Paul Roberts, vice president for enrollment, told *The Phoenix*, bringing enrollment back to where it was in 2019.

Northwestern Attracts Over 48,000 Apps. More than 48,000 students applied and almost 2,100 new students enrolled this fall at Northwestern U. in Evanston, Illinois. Applications were up 20 percent over last year. NUs admit rate fell to 7 percent. Some 60 percent of those admitted, enrolled. The

Too Few Seats in California

The shortfall of seats in the UC and California State U. System could nearly double from 73,000 students in 2018-19 to 144,000 in 2030, according to a study by the College Futures Foundation.

However, Cecilia V. Estolano, chair of the UC Board of Regents, said that she will make expansion one of the board's top three priorities. Meanwhile, state legislators pledged to expand UC and CSU by 22,000 seats next year. "Every member, at every town hall, hears from their constituents about some kid in their neighborhood who has like a 4.5 and can't get into Berkeley or UCLA. It's just like, 'What's going on?'"

Berkeley. To complicate matters, a California court ordered UC Berkeley to "suspend any further increases in student enrollment" beyond 2021 levels until it complies with court orders over expanded land use objected to by residential neighbors. In 2017-18, Berkeley enrolled 40,955 students. It planned to increase that number to 44,735 by 2022-23. ■

new students also make up the school's most diverse class. More than half identify as African American, Hispanic/Latino/a/x, Native, Indigenous, or first-generation and/or low income. More than 20 percent received Federal Pell Grants. And 10 percent come from over 80 countries.

"Northwestern is one of fewer than 20 institutions nationwide that combine need-blind admissions with a commitment to meeting families' full financial need through loan-free aid awards," said Chris Watson, dean of undergraduate enrollment and associate vice president for student outreach.

Oklahoma's Most Diverse Class. The U. of Oklahoma welcomed 4,595 freshmen to its Class of 2025, 38 percent from minority groups, 2.5 percent more than last year, and 25 percent first-generation students.

"The Class of 2025, the largest, most diverse, most academically successful freshman class in university history, reflects Pillars 2, 3 and 4 of the Strategic Plan: prepare students for a life of success, meaning, service and positive impact; make OUs excellence affordable and attainable; and become a place of belonging and emotional growth for all students, faculty, staff and alumni," a university spokesperson observed.

Portland Rebounds. The U. of Portland expected 950 new students this fall, 150 more than last year. Among them were more first-year's and international students.

Reed Enrolls 500 New Students. Reed C. in Oregon brought in 500 new students com-

pared to last year's 340. About 90 percent of students who deferred last year also enrolled this fall, according to Milyon Trulove, vice president and dean of admissions and financial aid. Domestic students of color make up the largest cohort of first-year students.

Rockhurst Freshmen from 10 Nations. Rockhurst U. welcomed 400 new students this fall, 50 percent from the Kansas City area. Other students came from 16 different states and 10 different countries, including Canada, Serbia, Italy, Mexico and Zimbabwe. The average high school GPA for the new students was 3.66, higher than last year's 3.65. About 40 percent of incoming class identifies as members of underrepresented races or ethnicities.

Virginia's Yield is 41 Percent. The U. of Virginia received a record-breaking 48,011 applications for this fall and welcomed 3,918 members of the Class of 2025 to campus, 41 percent of whom identified as racial minorities. Another 730 undergraduates were transfer students. The new student yield rate, including transfers, was 41 percent.

Some 64 percent of the Class of 2025 comes from Virginia, while the rest traveled from 49 states and 91 different countries. Some 13 percent are first in their family to go to college. And 58 percent of new students have at least one parent with a graduate degree, 13 percent are legacy students. About 26 percent identify as Asian or Asian American, an increase of 9 percent over last year. Black students account for 9.1 percent of the new class, while 7.2 percent identify as Hispanic, Latino, Latina or Latinx.

Wagner Students Hail from 18 Countries. Wagner C. in Staten Island welcomed 360 members to its Class of 2025. They hail from 23 states and 18 different countries. Their average high school GPA was 91, average SAT 1175 and average ACT, 26. Wagner also welcomed 125 transfer students.

Yale Received 49,000-Plus Apps for the Class of 2025. More than 49,000 students applied to Yale's Class of 2025, 9.5 percent more than last year. A record-setting 1,789 first-year students reported on campus this fall, including 335 students who deferred last year.

Another 26 students were admitted through transfer, including eight U.S. military veterans and 14 who began their educations at a community college. Students come from 48 states and 67 foreign countries. A record-high 131 students applied to Yale through Quest Bridge, the national non-profit organization that connects high-achieving, low-income students with selective colleges. ■

Impacting Admissions

Students Seek Schools Requiring Vaccines. According to a survey by Tallo, 68 percent of Gen Z students were likely to attend a college that requires vaccines for enrollment, and about that same percent have already been vaccinated. Some 75 percent reported that they would attend a college that requires masks on campus.

AI Chatboxes Help Admissions Offices Answer Questions. Interactive AI chatboxes, or voice-based interactive interfaces, are appearing in admissions offices across the country. They are capable of going through thousands of enrollment documents to find the answers to questions that students ask. When the request is too complex, they can hand off the question to a human.

They're also available 24-hours-a-day for international student questions. Students are familiar with this technology via Alexa or Siri that they may use at home.

Burned Out. The American Psychological Association describes burn out as “physical, emotional or mental exhaustion accompanied by decreased motivation, lowered performance and negative attitudes towards oneself and others.”

Obviously, the past two years have been highly stressful for many people, including students. For example, at The Ohio State U., the number of students who reported feeling burned out dramatically rose from 31 percent two years ago to 71 percent in April 2021.

Like many other schools, Ohio State operates a counseling center to provide mental health services. But according to *The Heckinger Report*, OSU has created a mental health checklist for students that encourages them to build healthy habits and healthy coping mechanisms, find local mental health care, grow and maintain their support systems and avoid waiting for help.

The U. of Wisconsin advises students to establish healthy coping mechanisms, but also urges them to participate in a 30-day meditation challenge through the Healthy Minds Innovations app.

Students Ignore E-mails. According to a report, “Overcoming the Student Communication Challenge,” by Ready Education, 54 percent of e-mails sent to college students are ignored, in part, because of the number they receive, but also because of their reliance on other electronic communications.

College Searchers. According to its annual Student Sentiment Research by Eduventures, current high school students are showing “a

greater preference for digital communication with admissions offices. Students seem to have embraced text messaging, live chat and even social media interactions with admissions over the past year.”

“While many admissions offices prepare to send staff back on the road, we predict that personalized outreach will become even more important than ever before, digital communication is here to stay and the need for community engagement will only grow.”

Eduventures concludes that, “Enrollment offices have always known to evolve with the changing tides of the market. Old models utilizing ZIP code targeting and ‘boots on the ground’ support leave great-fit students under recruited. Today’s landscape requires, and students deserve, a more strategic approach. With the normalization of advanced machine learning and exploratory analytics, enrollment leaders can now identify new opportunities and more efficiently target their efforts.”

When to Go Remote? About 65 percent of the nation’s college campuses planned to reopen as usual this fall, according to a survey from Liaison International. Less than half of them require vaccines for students or faculty. But many are making contingency plans.

For example, Northern Illinois U. and its faculty union agreed to push their remote instruction button when and if the campus test positivity rate hits 8 percent. At that point any instructor may choose to teach online. NIU never reached that level of transmission during the 2020-21 academic year, which ended with about 70 percent of courses online. Weekly test positivity averaged 1-2 percent last year. This fall semester, about 70 percent of classes will be in-person and 30 percent will be online.

At least 1,000 colleges and universities have imposed a mask mandate in their classrooms and buildings. Even with vaccines required, Stanford is also requiring students to be tested weekly, while many schools that don’t have a plan for COVID testing of students, faculty and staff, have set up sanitation stations and so forth.

Rice U. in Texas started before the school year with an initial period of online instruction while the Delta variance was active. It hoped to resume in-person classes when things calm down.

Institutions that are resisting the mask or vaccine mandate seem to follow the nation’s current political divide, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Some are prevented from doing so by state law. However, about 70 percent of students in schools with no mask mandate told a TimeMD survey that they plan to wear a mask on campus anyway.

In some highly publicized cases, professors whose requests to teach online were denied by their university, have resigned rather than jeopardize their health. ■

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

The College Wellness Guide: A Student's Guide To Managing Mental, Physical, And Social Health On Campus by Casey Rowley Barneson; The Princeton Review; ISBN: 978-0-593-45039-0; \$15.99.

Strengthening Emergency Aid Programs: Lessons from the CARES Act and the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund from mdr. Find it at www.mdr.org/publications/

strengthening-emergency-aid-programs.

Paying For College: Everything You Need to Maximize Financial Aid and Afford College, 2021 Edition, by Kalman A. Chany, Penguin/Random House; ISBN 978-0-525-57009-7; \$22.99.

The Trouble with Passion: How Searching for Fulfilment at Work Fosters Inequality by

Erin Cech, U. of California Press, ISBN: 9780520303232, \$29.95 for ebook. A U. of Michigan sociology professor explores how following your passion can lead to underpaid and overworked white-collar labor force while reinforcing class, race and gender segregation, as well as financial inequity.

The Best 387 Colleges: In-Depth Profiles, Ratings & Lists To Help Find the Right College For You, 2022 Edition, by Robert Franek, The Princeton Review; ISBN 978-0-525-57082-0; \$24.99. ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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about 40 percent of undergraduates, receive some kind of Pell Grant.

In June, the U.S. Senate eliminated support for a “Workforce Pell,” that would cover students enrolled in short-term, non-degree and non-credit programs. Nearly half of these programs train workers in healthcare and mechanical fields. About 87 percent of those taking healthcare certificate programs are women.

Michigan Extends Go Blue Guarantee.

The U. of Michigan extended its Go Blue Guarantee of four years of free tuition for qualifying Michigan residents at its Dearborn and Flint campuses.

Meanwhile, Michigan’s “Futures for Frontliners” and “Michigan Reconnect,” programs that offer eligible students a free education for an associate degree at a community college or skills certificate, kept enrollment up at some Michigan community colleges. At Grand Rapids C. C., for example, the two programs have helped boost FAFSA applications this year by 26 percent.

Minnesota Commits \$35 Million to Help STEM Students. Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz allocated \$35 million in federal American Rescue Plan funds to create a new college

grant program to help state students who seek two- and four-year degrees in healthcare, STEM, education, business, industry and public service. The aid will begin next fall, according to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.

Black College Graduate Earnings. According to a new study and analysis from Student Loan Hero:

- Black millennials (25 to 29) with a bachelor’s degree earn 22 percent less than other degree-holding millennials, \$44,498 versus \$56,731.
- Black millennial students and their families borrowed 35 percent more than their fellow students.

Latinx Borrowing. Latinx students account for 20 percent of Pell Grant recipients. They have accumulated an average of \$30,000 in federal and private loans. And 12 years after graduating, the median Latinx borrower still owes 80 percent of his/hers debt.

Free Tuition for Low-Income Students.

Grace C., in Winona Lake, Indiana, offers a tuition-free education to low-income students in the state. Hundreds of admitted students qualify, and many have already made plans to attend Grace, said Mark Pohl, president.

North Carolina C.C.s Tuition Free.

Several North Carolina community colleges have used free tuition and other financial offers to lure students back into the classroom. These offers came on top of a state law that provided financial assistance to 58 community colleges for 2021 high school graduates from low- and middle-income families. As a result, for example, applications to Forsyth Technical C. C. surged by more than 829 over last year by the end of August. Last year, enrollment at North Carolina community colleges plunged by 11 percent.

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

York’s Environmental Horticulture

Major. York C. in Pennsylvania now offers an Environmental Horticulture major that helps students “gain the skills and knowledge necessary to manage fruit, vegetable, nursery and/or greenhouse production systems. Students will acquire knowledge and experience in key areas of ecology, economic botany and taxonomy, soil science and plant nutrition, plant propagation, pest management, landscaping and economics and business.”

Hobart and William Smith to Add 12

Sports. Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Upstate New York will add 12 sports to its 23 existing sports program. New sports include men’s and women’s Alpine skiing, baseball and softball, women’s bowling, men’s swimming and diving, men’s and women’s indoor and outdoor track and field and men’s and women’s volleyball. HWS launched a varsity esports team this fall.

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

Bucknell Dedicates \$30 Million to Student

Aid. Bucknell U. in Pennsylvania has dedicated \$30 million of a \$40 million gift from an alumni to support unrestricted, need-based financial aid. The Pascucci Family Scholarship “will allow us to enroll and retain top students and will ensure that a Bucknell education is a possibility for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds,” said Lisa Keegan, vice president for enrollment management.

Cornell’s Freeway Scholarship.

Cornell C. in Iowa has expanded its Iowa Promise Scholarship to include a \$30,000 award to students from five surrounding states, those who could “hop on a freeway for an easy trip to campus.” That brings its students’ total cost below that which they would pay at their own state universities. ■

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

California C.C.s Now Require Ethnic

Studies. The California C.C. Colleges Board of Governors recently mandated that graduates must have taken a three-unit semester or four-unit quarter class in African American studies, Asian American studies, Latinx studies or Native American studies as part of their general education requirements.

“As the largest and most diverse system of higher education in the country, we have an opportunity to break down barriers to equity,” said Pamela Haynes, Board of Governors president.

Certificates Gain Popularity.

Half of all those with a college degree also earned a non-degree certificate in a particular skill area, according to a Strada-Gallup Education Survey taken this summer.

“Combos are the name of the game,” asserts Holly Zanville, co-director of the Program on Skills, Credentials and Workforce Policy at George Washington U. “We also think there are some innovative projects underway to embed or couple 21st-century skills with

traditional degrees or associate and bachelor degrees.”

Some 70 percent of those with an associate degree and non-degree credentials said their education made them an attractive job candidate versus 43 percent of those with a degree but no non-degree credentials.

Transfer Enrollment Decline.

Spring transfer enrollment (from institution to institution) at community colleges declined 16.3 percent, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. That was true regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or age.

At public four-year colleges, transfer rates for black students declined by 6.2 percent, for white students only 2.8 percent. Latinx and Asian American transfer students grew by nearly 2 percent.

Comings & Goings.

In 2025, Yale U. will close Yale-NUS, the liberal arts college it operates with the National U. of Singapore. The Chinese university plans to merge it with its existing University Scholars Program. ■

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