

# College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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## Admissions Watch

# Colleges Regroup Post Pandemic

WHILE THE PANDEMIC and its impact still linger, colleges are making every effort to return to some semblance of normalcy. Here is the roundup for 2023. Happy New Year.

### EARLY APPS

**Brown Admits 13 Percent Early.** Approximately 6,770 students applied Early Decision to Brown U. in Rhode Island, 10.2 percent more than last year. About 13 percent, or 879 of them, were accepted. That is the smallest percentage since Brown's ED program began.

Another 19 percent of students were deferred to Regular Decision and 68 percent were denied admission. Only 3 percent of those who applied to Brown's Program in Liberal Medical Education were accepted. Sixty-two QuestBridge students were admitted as well.

Sixty-two percent of admitted students applied for need-based financial aid, up from 57 percent last year. Public high school graduates accounted for 53 percent of those admitted, while 47 percent attended independent or parochial schools.

New students also represent 50 nations, with the most coming from Canada, China, the United Kingdom, Brazil, South Korea, Turkey and Ukraine. The largest group of admitted domestic students hail from the South, according to *The Brown Daily Herald*.

**California State Apps Climb.** Applications to the California State University System reached 828,004 for Fall 2023, including those from 630,000 first-time students and about 200,000 transfer students, according to *The Sacramento Bee*. However, enrollment at CSU's 23 campuses this fall was only 458,000

students, down from 477,000 last fall.

CSU Chico, where enrollment dropped 10 percent last year, in part because of the toll taken by wildfires in Butte County, saw first-year enrollment increase this year by 4.5 percent. Cal Poly Humboldt (formerly Humboldt State U.) recorded an 86 percent increase in applications during the last year, following dramatic decreases.

"Humboldt's polytechnic designation and the new academic programs that are launching next fall are definitely a draw for prospective students and their families this year," Peggy Metzger also told the *The Sacramento Bee*.

**Dartmouth ED Apps Up 14 Percent.** Dartmouth U. in New Hampshire attracted more than 3,009 Early Decision applications and accepted 578 students into its Class of 2027, or a record low 19 percent. Another 47 QuestBridge students were admitted. Over the past three years, Dartmouth ED applications are up 45 percent. About 17 percent of accepted applicants come from low-income households.

International students hail from 44 nations. Students of color make up 41 percent of admitted applicants and 15 percent are first in their families to attend college. Legacy students make up 14 percent of Dartmouth's incoming Early Decision class, according to thedartmouth.com.

"What you see in the early returns on the Class of 2027 are an expanding socioeconomic, geographic, racial and international identity that continues to create an entering class that really represents the 21st century," said Lee

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## Financial Matters

**Higher Ed Gains in \$1.7 Trillion Spending Bill.** The U.S. Congress passed and President Biden signed a 4,000-page, \$1.7 trillion omnibus spending bill designed to keep the federal government open until next September. Higher education was one of the beneficiaries.

The maximum Pell Grant has increased by \$500 for 2023-24 to \$7,395 per year, a 7.2 percent increase. That comes on top of a \$400 increase last year. The bill also includes \$1.2 billion, a 5 percent increase for TRIO, which assists 800,000 low-income and first-generation students get into college and succeed. Historically Black Colleges and Universities received \$1 billion, an increase of \$137 million or 15 percent.

The once vilified special "Earmarks" for projects favored by individual members of Congress have been redefined as "community project funding." Various colleges and universities will receive \$429,587,000 for new facilities and renovations, laboratories and academic programs.

Overall, U.S. defense funding reached \$850 billion, a 10 percent increase, while non-defense discretionary spending increased to \$772.5 billion, up by 5.5 percent.

**Financial Aid Offers.** The U.S. Dept. of Education distributes \$112 billion in grants and loans each year. It asked the Government Accounting Office to review the information in financial aid offers from colleges to prospective students.

The GAO reviewed the information from 176  
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## COLLEGES REGROUP

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Coffin, vice provost for enrollment and dean of admissions and financial aid. "It's a multi-dimensional cohort of compelling individuals."

**Georgia's 26,000 Early Action Apps.** The U. of Georgia, playing for its second straight national championship in football, received a record 26,000 Early Action applications for the Class of 2027. Applications were up 21 percent from last year. Some 8,200 students were admitted early. Others were deferred to the Regular Decision cycle. Admitted students posted an average GPA of 4.26, SAT score of 1435 and ACT 33.

"The students we've admitted are resilient, accomplished and committed to being the difference in their communities in the future," said Barkley Barton II, director of undergraduate admissions.

**Harvard Accepts 722 Early Action.** A pool of 9,553 students applied Early Action to Harvard C. and 722 of them were admitted. Deferred students will be considered again in the Regular Action cycle this winter and receive notification on March 30. Harvard will cover the full cost for students from families earning below \$75,000.

African American students constitute 14.4 percent of the admitted class, Asian Americans 29.1 percent, Latinx 8.4 percent and Native Americans and Native Hawaiians make up 1.7 percent of the admitted group. International students comprise 14.1 percent of those admitted. More than 14 percent of admitted students are first in their family to go to college, while 10.8 percent of the students are eligible for federal Pell Grants.

**Notre Dame REA Apps Up 15 Percent.** The U. of Notre Dame in Indiana received 11,163 Restrictive Early Action applications for the Class of 2027, 15 percent more than last year. Admission was offered to 1,701 of those students. Restrictive Early Admission means that students can apply to ND's non-binding application process, as long as they do not apply Early Decision to another school with a binding ED program.

**SUNY Apps Up 110 Percent.** After the State U. of New York opened a two-week fee-waiver window during which students could apply free to up to five SUNY campuses, applications for Fall 2023 rose more than 110 percent year-over-year, from 97,257 to 204,437, as of late November.

More out-of-state students also are expected to apply to SUNY this year. That's because SUNY launched an out-of-state tuition match option with Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts,

Vermont, New Hampshire, Illinois and California. Accepted students from those states will pay their own state's tuition and fees at a SUNY school. Thus far, applications from out-of-state students are up nearly 80 percent for Fall 2023.

SUNY Interim Chancellor Deborah F. Stanley said, "Campuses will now be working to ensure that students choose a SUNY school for their academic pursuits, providing them with guidance and financial aid assistance, when necessary."

The State U. of New York is the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the United States. More than 95 percent of all New Yorkers live within 30 miles of any of SUNY's 64 colleges and universities. This year, 50 percent of full-time New York undergrads paid zero dollars for tuition at SUNY, with student aid.

**Tennessee EA Apps Up Dramatically.** Early Action applications to the U. of Tennessee soared 43 percent for the Class of 2027. Nonetheless, Tennessee officials plan to fashion a smaller class this year than the current record 6,846 first-year students. As of November 1, UT received 8,483 Early Action applications, 25 percent from in-state.

**Unity in Maine Sees Dramatic Increases.** Unity C. in Unity and New Gloucester, Maine, enrolled 1,900 new students this fall, bringing full-time enrollment to more than 4,638 students, up from 540 a decade ago. Some 4,470 of them are enrolled in Unity's distance education arm.

"We do not simply take our courses and put them online," said distance education executive director of enrollment management Denise Young. "Unity College distance education courses are designed to be experiential, which means our students are getting hands-on experience right in their own area of the country."

Observers credit Unity's growth to a more than 50 percent cut in tuition. Today, tuition averages \$13,000 a year compared to \$28,000 in 2018. Students come from all 50 states. Unity emphasizes study of the environment

and natural resources and bills itself as "America's Environmental College." Popular majors include animal health and behavior, conservation law, marine biology and sustainable aquaculture.

**Williams Admits Fewer ED.** Williams C. in Massachusetts drew 943 Early Decision applications for the Class of 2027. It admitted 255 of them, down 6 percent from last year. Williams deferred 144 students for reconsideration during the Regular Decision process, Liz Creighton, dean of admission and student financial services, told *The Williams Record*. She expects to receive an additional 10,000 to 15,000 applications for the Regular Decision process.

Last year, Williams received 14,305 RD applications and accepted 1,048 of those students. Williams enrolled 577 students to its Class of 2026, the most in college history. Williams is extending its test-optional policy through the 2025-2026 admissions cycle.

**Yale Admits 66 QuestBridge Scholars.** The first new members of Yale's Class of 2027 are 66 students admitted through the QuestBridge program. Yale also admitted 776 other applicants from an early pool of 7,744, the second largest early group in school history.

Some 67 percent was denied admission, while 21 percent was deferred for consideration in the Regular Decision round. Yale meets 100 percent of demonstrated financial need, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

**P.S. QuestBridge's National Numbers.** The QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship program received applications from more than 17,900 students and 5,613 were selected as finalists. A record-high 1,755 students received a match to one of the 48 QuestBridge partner schools.

"This record-breaking result further motivates us to help outstanding students obtain the top education that they deserve," said Ana Rowena Mallari, QuestBridge's co-founder and CEO. ■

## More on the Class of 2026

**Chicago's 84 Percent Yield.** A total of 37,526 students applied to the U. of Chicago's Class of 2026, down from 37,977 the previous year. UChicago accepted 2,041 students, or 5.4 percent of the applicant pool, a record low. In the end, 1,729 students choose to enroll, or 84.7 percent. The U. of Chicago posted the second highest yield among the nation's elite universities, according to the *Chicago Maroon*. Its 84.7 percent yield only trailed MIT's 85 percent.

Hispanics/Latinos make up 22 percent of

the new class. Twenty-two percent are Asian and 14 percent are African American. About 84 percent of the class took part in community service activities in high school, and 67 percent were varsity athletes.

SAT scores of accepted students ranged from 1020 to 1600 with a middle 50 percent of 1510 to 1560. ACT scores ranged from 20 to 36, with a middle 50 percent of 34 to 35. UChicago has not required standardized tests since 2018. ■

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**

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representative colleges and universities and assessed them against 10 best practices from the Dept. of Education and a commission comprised of 22 federal agencies.

GAO found that, “Most colleges are not following best practices for providing clear and standard information in their financial aid offers.” About two-thirds of colleges “follow half or fewer of the 10 best practices.” No college in its study followed all 10 recommendations.

The GAO also found an estimated 91 percent of colleges “do not include, or understate, the net price in their aid offers.”

The GAO recommended that Congress consider legislation requiring colleges to provide students with financial aid offers that follow best practices for providing clear and standard financial aid information.

**Paying for College Transparency Initiative.** Leaders from 10 higher education associations representing college presidents, financial aid officers and admissions and school counselors have formed a task force called “Paying for College Transparency Initiative” to tackle the issue of improving “clarity, accuracy and consistency of student financial aid offers.”

Schools often use different terminology and standards when providing this information to students and families, which can inadvertently make an inherently confusing process even more difficult, the group said at its announcement.

The task force is chaired by Peter McPherson, president emeritus of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. He said, “We know that there is interest all around in making financial aid offers more clear and transparent for students, from lawmakers, advocacy groups and institutions themselves. Despite the appetite for change, there has not been much change.

“By bringing together the leaders from associations that represent institutional stakeholders, and gathering input from practicing financial aid administrators, students and parents, we hope to change that.”

**Bucky’s Tuition Promise.** Since its 2018 inception, 4,888 Wisconsin students had their tuition and fees paid for by Bucky’s Tuition Promise, a privately-funded initiative. This year, another 937 freshmen and transfer students at the U. of Wisconsin-Madison are beneficiaries of the program.

Students from families earning \$60,000 or less are eligible. (Bucky is a badger, the school’s mascot.)

**Colby-Sawyer Slashes Tuition.** Colby-Sawyer C. in New Hampshire slashed its undergraduate tuition by 62 percent this year. Next fall, instead of coming up with \$46,000, students will pay \$17,500 in tuition. Since 100 percent of its students currently receive financial aid, the new rates probably will not affect them too much. It is both a transparency and marketing issue.

Future students will not be scared off by the higher price, although some affluent families enjoy the prestige of a higher price, a phenomena sometimes called the “Chivas Regal” effect.

**Cornell Boosts Student Aid.** In Fall 2023, all Cornell U. students who receive aid will receive an additional \$500 to \$1,500, thanks to the success of the university’s “To Do the Greatest Good” fund-raising campaign. Students will see the increase, as well as a corresponding reduction in student contributions, work-study expectations and loans.

“President Pollack and Cornell have made increasing affordability and broadening socioeconomic diversity in the student body a central focus,” Jonathan Burdick, vice provost for enrollment, told the *Cornell Chronicle*.

**Massachusetts Higher Education Funding.** Per student higher education funding in Massachusetts decreased by about \$2,500 per student between 2001 and 2020. At the same time, students were confronted with a \$6,500 increase in tuition and fees to attend public colleges and universities, according to the coalition Higher Ed for All.

That is one reason why Massachusetts recently enacted a 4 percent surtax on those earning more than \$1 million a year (Millionaire’s Tax), which is designed to help fund education and transportation. Higher Ed for All wants most of that money targeted to colleges and universities.

Massachusetts’ 2023 fiscal year budget allocates more than \$190 million for higher education financial aid and fee waiver programs, a nearly 25 percent increase over last year. That number includes expansion of the MASSGrant Plus program, a “last-dollar” grant. The fiscal 2023 budget also includes \$15 million financial aid increases for UMass students, *MetroWest Daily News* reported.

**Dayton Aids First-Generation Students.** The U. of Dayton announced the Kessler Scholars program, funded with a \$1 million grant. Students from families earning \$50,000 or less must apply to the UD Sinclair Academy and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid by February 1. “There are nearly 100 degree pathways in the UD Sinclair Academy so students know exactly which classes to take,” said the *U. of Dayton News*. ■

**COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF**

*Reimagining the Student Experience: How colleges can help students connect, belong, and engage. The Chronicle of Higher Education; 72 pages; \$199. Find at the Chronicle Store, Chronicle.com.*

*Commencement: The Beginning of a New Era in Higher Education* by Kate Colbert, Joe Sallustio and Elvin Freytes. Silver Tree Publishing; ISBN-13: 978-1948238403; 558 pages; \$31.99 paper. Based on the insights of 100 university presidents.

“Faculty Diversity and Student Success Go Hand in Hand: So Why are University Faculties So White?” From The Education Trust. See, [www.EdTrust.org](http://www.EdTrust.org).

**MyPromiseTool.org** is a searchable database of Promise programs nationwide. College Promise is a national, non-partisan, non-profit working to improve affordability, economic and social mobility, equity and inclusion and reduction of student debt. See, [www.CollegePromise.org](http://www.CollegePromise.org).

**Mental Health Support.** Counselors can now consult [Counselr@antennagroup.com](mailto:Counselr@antennagroup.com), a text-based mental health support platform. It features licensed counselors 24/7/365. Students can use it to manage and reduce mental health issues.

“**How to Navigate Uncertainty,**” a six-part series, explores new models of Higher Education.

See, Glenn Llopiá’s profile in *Forbes*. (Author of *The Age of Personalization: Why Standardization Fails in the Age of “Me.”*)

Also, see, <http://ageofpersonalization.com/>. ■

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

**Teacher Anxiety during COVID.** According to a new study, “Teacher mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic,” published in a recent *Educational Researcher*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Educational Research Association, U.S. teachers were 40 percent more likely to report anxiety symptoms than healthcare workers, 20 percent more likely than office workers and 30 percent more likely than workers in other occupations.

Those who taught remotely were 60 percent more likely to report feelings of isolation than their in-person peers. Female teachers were 70 percent more likely to experience anxiety than male teachers.

**Law School Stats.** U.S. law schools enrolled 116,723 JD students in 2022, down from 117,501 in 2021. Forty-six law schools enrolled more students in 2022 than 2021, while 150 enrolled fewer students.

**Fewer Require GRE.** According to *Science*, only 3 percent of the 50 top-ranked U.S. universities required prospective students to submit Graduate Record Exams general test scores in 2022, down 84 percent since 2018. The test was designed by the Educational Testing Service to measure verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking and analytic writing skills, and costs students \$220.

**Alternative Routes.** In September 2022, there were more than 10.7 million job openings and only 5.8 million unemployed people looking for work. That means some companies are deemphasizing the need for a college degree.

For example, more than 100,000 people in the U.S. have completed Google’s online college-alternative program in fields such as digital marketing and project management, and more than 150 companies now use the program to hire entry-level workers, according to a recent article in *The Wall Street Journal*.

**e-Learning.** The e-Learning market is expected to reach \$1 trillion by 2028, according to Global Market Insights. This includes spending on Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Digital Twins, the Metaverse (including digital avatars and NFT art for use in the Metaverse and other Web3-based virtual environments), Internet of Things, Blockchain, Cloud, Gamification and Chatbots.

A Global Roadmap to 2030 adopted by the UNESCO Higher Education Conference in Barcelona, Spain, in 2022 called for an accel-

ation of the Digital Transformation to enhance the student learning experience, promote engagement and improve student outcomes.

Virtual Reality, for example, can create immersive, interactive, engaging and safe learning environments in a variety of academic fields such as astronomy, engineering, design, healthcare, emergency response and veterinary medicine where students can explore and interact with virtual objects and scenarios.

Students can also take VR field trips to historical sites, distant museums, other planets, or underwater exploration. Some universities are already employing these technologies, but most are in the infant stages and will be striving to transform their classrooms and student experiences to “keep up.”

**Who Disappeared During COVID?** What demographic groups were most affected by the pandemic? First-generation student enrollment plunged by 20 percent, underrepresented minority students enrollment fell by 11 percent, middle-income student enrollment

dropped by 7 percent and low-income student enrollment declined by 3 percent, according to Eduventures.

**Comings and Goings....** UCLA acquired two new sites that belonged to Marymount California U. in Rancho Palos Verdes and San Pedro, for \$80 million.

Mercy C. crafted a “Teach-Out Agreement.” with Cazenovia C. in Central New York. Founded in 1824, Cazenovia announced recently that it will close. Therefore, it negotiated “teach-out agreements” with multiple institutions. Mercy C. in Dobbs Ferry, New York, will welcome many of the students in Fall 2023. Cazenovia students in good standing can transfer without losing credits or time towards graduation, and can take classes at one of Mercy’s three campuses or online.

“Mercy is committed to helping their students along their educational journeys,” said Tim Hall, Mercy’s president.

**Purdue Resumes SAT/ACT.** Purdue U. announced that it again will require prospective students to submit their SAT or ACT scores, beginning Fall 2024. ■

## CURRICULUM CAPSULES

**Counting Credentials.** A new report from Credential Engine, “Counting U.S. Postsecondary and Secondary Credentials,” found that postsecondary educational institutions issue 350,412 degrees and certificates each year. Massive Open Online Course providers issue 13,014 course completion certificates, micro-credentials and online degrees from foreign universities.

Non-academic providers award 656,505 badges, course completion certificates, licenses, certificates and apprenticeships. In addition, secondary schools award 56,179 diplomas, alternative certificates and high school equivalency diplomas.

**Five B.A. Fields Attract Half of Student Growth.** Over the past decade, only five academic areas have attracted more students: health, computer and information science, engineering, biological/medical sciences and business/management, according to Eduventures.

These fields attract 49 percent of those who received bachelor’s degrees in 2021 versus only 41 percent in 2012.

Over the past decade, demand for graduates with bachelor’s degrees in business and financial operations expanded by 44 percent, management by 42 percent, computer/mathematics

by 33 percent, healthcare by 15 percent and engineering by 10 percent. All jobs grew by 10 percent during this period.

**Kalamazoo Research and Creative Projects.** Kalamazoo C. in Michigan received a \$250,000 donation to support faculty-advised student research and creative projects. Students receive stipends, materials and essential project-related travel assistance through the fund.

**DePaul Nursing.** DePaul U. in Chicago, “the nation’s largest Catholic U.,” received a \$2 million commitment for nursing scholarships for students enrolled in its School of Nursing.

“I found DePaul’s nursing education to be outstanding as well as inspiring,” Susan Hadem Schoenholz, who with her husband donated the funds, told *DePaul Newsline*. “Compassion, commitment and competence are intrinsic to the profession, and DePaul strives to instill all three in its graduates.”

This year, DePaul “relaunched” its Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The program received 1,000 applications for 35 spots. “The BSN option is the more traditional option for becoming a registered nurse.” ■

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