

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admissions Watch

FSU ED Profile. Florida State U. only offers Early Decision for Florida residents. Students admitted ED to its Class of 2028 posted median high school GPAs ranging from 4.3 to 4.6, median SAT scores from 1360-1460 and median ACT scores of 30-33, according to FSUNews.com. Students who applied Regular Decision will be notified of results on February 15, with Rolling Decisions beginning in April.

Georgetown Accepts 10 Percent EA. Georgetown U., in the nation's capital, attracted 8,584 Early Action applications, 4.7 percent more than last year. Georgetown admitted 881 EA students, or about 10.3 percent, 1.5 percent fewer than last year. The McDonough School of Business posted the lowest acceptance rate, 9.4 percent. Georgetown's College of Arts and Sciences accepted 9.9 percent.

The mid-50 percent of SAT math scores of admitted EA students ranged from 730 to 790, while the mid-50 percent of verbal scores ranged from 730 to 780. The mid-50 percent of ACT scores fell between 32 and 35. Admitted students ranked in the top 4 percent of their high school class.

Charles Deacon, dean of undergraduate admissions, told *The Hoya*, "We have always had a policy that says we will not favor Early Action, because we think the pool is slightly balanced toward the most successful, more affluent students who are ready earlier."

Georgia Direct. By early January, nearly 12,000 Georgia high school students had taken advantage of the U. of Georgia System's direct admissions program, Georgia Match, to accept a spot at one of the system's 23 participating colleges and universities. Last October, 132,000 students received a letter from Governor Brian Kemp inviting them to participate in the program. (See GAfutures.

org.) More students are expected to participate next year when the program has a full admissions cycle.

"It's incredible what we are doing," Regent Jose Perez told capital-beat.com. "We're chasing students and trying to bring them in."

James Madison Up 78 Percent Over 2021. James Madison U. in Virginia attracted 40,232 undergraduate applications for its Class of 2028 by January 15. That is 7 percent more than last year, 25 percent more than in 2022 and 78 percent higher than in 2021! Early Action applications accounted for 26,935 of that total number. Top academic interests include exploratory biology, nursing, psychology, marketing, finance, pre-medicine and pre-law.

"JMU continues to show that we are an institution to watch in terms of commitment to academic excellence and athletics," said Melinda Wood, associate vice president for access and enrollment management and director of admissions. She also praised JMU's "student-focused, hands-on approach to learning" and "a strong campus community that is known for its supportiveness."

Marquette Up 20 Percent Over 2020. Marquette U. in Milwaukee attracted nearly 18,000 applications for its Class of 2028, 20 percent more than in 2020. Applications from Arizona, Colorado and Washington soared by over 30 percent. Jesuit high schools sent 1,100 applicants, 10 percent more than last year. Decisions will begin this month.

"In the spirit of *cura personalis*, we approach each admissions cycle with the recognition that no two cohorts are the same, nor are any two students," Brian Troyer, associate vice provost for enrollment management and dean of undergraduate admissions told *Marquette Today*. "Our Admissions team takes great
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Financial Matters

FAFSA Error Could Push Back Deadlines. "This year's long awaited Free Application for Federal Student Aid includes a mistake that could cost students \$1.8 billion in federal student aid," National Public Radio reported in January. "In a nutshell: the U.S. Education Department's FAFSA math, for deciding how much aid a student should get, is wrong," NPR reported.

The tables used in the Student Aid Index to calculate aid were based on three-year-old data that did not take into account recent inflation, which increased by 18.32 percent since April 2020.

The mistake makes students and families appear to have more income than they really do, "and that means they would get less aid than they should. And not just federal financial aid, but also all sorts of state and school-based aid."

According to the Department of Education, the redesigned, simplified 2024-25 FAFSA form "ensures 610,000 more students from low-income backgrounds receive Federal Pell Grants. Additionally, Pell recipients will receive more aid, with nearly 1.5 million more students receiving the maximum Pell Grant."

IMPACT

DOE "is really behind and telling colleges they won't be getting any financial aid data (until March)...," according to NPR.

"The polite way to say it is, 'wow.' I mean, I was shocked," Brad Barnett, financial aid director at James Madison U., told NPR.

As *CB* goes to press at the end of January, the DOE announced that more than 3.1 million
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ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Fall 2023 Undergraduate Enrollment Grew 1.2 Percent. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, undergraduate enrollment at the nation's colleges and universities increased by 1.2 percent, the first increase since the pandemic.

Community college enrollment grew by 118,000 students or 2.6 percent. Public and private four-year institutions recorded increases of 0.6 percent, +38,000 and +16,000 students respectively. Undergraduate enrollment increased among all ethno-racial groups except whites (-2.0 percent) and Native Americans (-1.0 percent.)

Freshman enrollment increased by 0.8 percent, +18,000 students. Most of that was at community colleges. There was no growth among freshmen 20 years old and younger. Their enrollment remains 5.3 percent below

2019 levels.

Declining Male Enrollment. Males account for 42 percent of traditional-age college students at four-year institutions, down from 47 percent in 2011. However, in two-year colleges, males account for 49 percent of students ages 18 to 24, up from 48 percent in 2011.

According to the Pew Research Center, only 39 percent of male high school graduates in 2022 are currently enrolled in college, down from 47 percent in 2011, compared to 48 percent of women enrolled today.

Californians at UC. In response to public and political demands, the U. of California System enrolled a record number of Californians in Fall 2023. That meant that UC enrolled a reduced number of students from other states and countries.

California undergrad enrollment rose to 194,571 students or 83.4 percent of the enrolled fall total. The first-year class reached 42,058 students, 5 percent larger than the year before. UC San Diego enrolled the largest first-year class in the system with 5,547 students.

Asian American students made up 36.3 percent of all UC undergraduates, Latinos 26.2 percent, white students 20.3 percent, black students 4.6 percent. The number of undergraduates receiving Pell Grants rose to 77,487 in Fall 2023.

ADMISSIONS WATCH

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pride in living out Marquette's mission each year as we blend science and art to enroll a class one student at a time."

MIT Admits 5.2 Percent EA. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology received 12,563 Early Action applications for its Class of 2028, and admitted 661 students or about 5.26 percent of the pool. That's up from 4.72 percent last year. Some 8,052 applicants were deferred to the regular round, while 3,251 were rejected. Results for the Regular Decision pool and deferred applicants are March 14.

Tennessee Receives More Than 49,000 EA Apps. The U. of Tennessee received 49,248 Early Action applications for its Class of 2028 and admitted 17,500 students. Some 10,394 of apps came from out-of-state. Admitted EA students posted a high school GPA of between 4.12 and 4.5, and scored between 28 and 32 on their ACT. The deadline for the Regular Decision applications was December 15, by which time 57,278 students had applied. UT will notify applicants of the results in late February.

Tufts Sets Records. Tufts U. in Massachusetts received more than 34,400 applications for its Class of 2028. Tufts' School of Arts and Sciences fielded more than 25,000 applications. Its School of Engineering received more than 7,500 apps, the most in school history. More than 7,000 first-generation students applied, a 6 percent increase. Applications from international students grew by 12 percent, and account for 25 percent of this year's applicant pool. Tufts is test optional, but 45 percent submitted scores. Tufts has already enrolled 30 students through QuestBridge. ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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lion students already had successfully filed the FAFSA forms. They will be eligible for \$114 billion in federal financial aid this year. DOE also said that it will begin sending Institutional Student Information Records to colleges and universities the first half of March and that students will also be able to make corrections to their form starting the first half of March.

However, many financial aid experts worry that colleges may not receive student records until April, even May, and that universities may be forced to push back their traditional May 1 student commitments to June or even July. That is yet to be seen.

"This is devastating," Angel Pérez, president of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, told *Inside Higher Ed*, "for the students the FAFSA is supposed to help and for the institutions that have been waiting for this information."

FAFSA Check-Ins. Students can check the status of their FAFSA, by going to studentaid.gov. They will need to provide their Federal Student Aid ID to see whether or not their form is complete. Or students can consult the

DePaul Retention. Retention of new first-time, full time, degree-seeking freshman at DePaul U. in Chicago hit 87 percent, an increase of 3 percent over last year.

Iowa Attracts More International Students. After more than a decade of declining enrollment of international students, Iowa's public universities are attracting them again. According to the Iowa Board of Regents Fall 2023 Enrollment Report, all three of the state's regents universities saw international enrollment increased by 352 students.

The U. of Northern Iowa attracted 20.7 percent more students from overseas. Iowa State U. saw an 11.3 percent increase, while international enrollment at the flagship U. of Iowa increased 3.2 percent. In part, these increases are the result of direct recruitment, including virtual recruiting sessions.

Kentucky Leads Enrollment Race. Kentucky ranked first among states in enrollment growth between 2022-23 with an increase of 5.5 percent, according to the National Student Clearinghouse.

Lycoming's Direct Admissions. Lycoming C. in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, is offering direct admissions to local students from Lycoming County with a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher. It is also sponsoring an Instant Decision Day for local students. They will be automatically eligible for scholarships, ranging from \$25,000 to \$36,000 per year. ■

Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

The student may see several status updates such as "processing, process successfully, missing signatures or action required." Some students may be "selected for verification," which means the student may have to submit additional documentation.

Colleges where a student is accepted send out award letters in April. The student then will sign the letter and send it back. Once enrolled, the school will handle the disbursement of funds.

Biden Accelerates Federal Loan Cancellations. The Biden Administration announced that the U. S. Department of Education is canceling some student loans six months ahead of schedule. Borrowers who enroll in the new SAVE repayment plan who originally borrowed \$12,000 or less to attend college and have been making payments for at least 10 years will be eligible.

In this round, the loans of 73,600 borrowers will be forgiven, totally \$4.9 billion. Overall, this brings total loan forgiveness approved by the Biden Administration to \$136.6 billion for more than 3.7 million former students. ■

State Financial News

State-Sponsored Student Financial Aid. The National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs released its 53rd Annual Survey Report on State-Sponsored Student Financial Aid, which found:

- In the 2021-22 academic year, states awarded almost \$14.9 billion in student financial aid. That was about a 1 percent increase in today's dollars, but a decrease of about 6.4 percent in constant dollars. Last year, the states awarded \$14.8 billion.
- State aid in the form of grants accounts for 87 percent of the allocated funds, a slight increase. About 73 percent was needed-based.
- California, Texas, New York, Virginia, New Jersey, Washington, Illinois and Pennsylvania accounted for 68.7 percent of all aid.

Idaho Launches LAUNCH. Next Steps Idaho, LAUNCH is a new grant program for Idaho students attending one of Idaho's colleges or universities. It is expected to especially help first-generation college students. Launched by Governor Brad Little, the program began taking applications in October and will close applications on April 15, according to *The Arbiter*. Already, more than 12,000 high school seniors have submitted or started applications. In 2016, *Education Week* ranked Idaho 31st in the nation for student achievement. By 2021, the state had risen to number 17 in the nation.

Illinois Tuition Holds Steady. The Board of Trustees of the U. of Illinois system voted to hold undergraduate tuition steady for next year at all three of its campuses. Tuition will remain unchanged for the seventh out of the last 10 years.

For in-state students, undergraduate tuition at the flagship Urbana-Champaign Campus will remain at \$12,712 a year, at the Chicago Campus \$11,178 a year and at the Springfield Campus, per credit-hour rates will remain at \$321.50.

However, the cost for room and board will increase by 5 percent at the Chicago and Urbana-Champaign campuses. More than 67 percent of Illinois undergraduate students receive some kind of financial aid, and more than half pay less than \$3,000 per semester, according to the university.

"Few things we can do have a more positive impact on the working families of Illinois than holding down the cost of a life-changing college education," said Tim Killeen, president of the system.

Massachusetts Increases Aid. The MassGrant Plus program received \$62 million in new funding for students attending state community colleges, universities and the U. of Massachusetts. The grant will cover the full cost of tuition and fees for Pell Grant-eligible students plus provide \$1,200 for books and supplies. It will not cover housing costs.

Middle-class students from families earning between \$73,000 and \$100,000 a year could have their tuition and mandatory instructional

fees cut in half. Most of the 11,000 undocumented college students in Massachusetts can apply for financial aid to a new state program, according to [axios.com](https://www.axios.com).

Ohio Colleges Lose Money on Dual Enrollment. According to a state auditor, about half of Ohio colleges lose money on their high school dual enrollment programs. The analysis was based on 2022 data. When all expenses were taken into account, such as academic advising, tutoring, admissions support, library services and marketing costs in addition to instruction, only 16 out of the state's 31 public higher education institutions made money. Revenues cover between 72 percent to 85 percent of dual-enrollment costs at a typical community college.

In Fall 2023, Ohio community college enrollment rose 4.4 percent over the previous year, and 40 percent of that growth came from dual enrollment students. Nationally, dual enrollment has doubled in the last 10 years, according to the Community College Research Center at Columbia U.'s Teacher College.

New Jersey Requires FAFSA to Graduate. New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy just signed legislation requiring high school students to complete the FAFSA in order to graduate. Only 59 percent of the Class of 2023 completed the form. About a dozen states already require students to file the FAFSA to graduate.

"Without filling out important applications, students could unknowingly be leaving money on the table that could have enabled them to pursue higher education," the governor said.

Washington Ranks First in Need-based Aid. Washington guarantees grants to families making up to 100 percent of the median family income. Half of households qualify, receiving \$11,339 in aid. It now ranks first in the nation for providing need-based financial aid, reports the NASSGAP.

Wisconsin Mandates Financial Literacy. Starting with the high school Class of 2028, Wisconsin students will need a half-credit in financial literacy to graduate. The course will cover topics such as budgeting, debt, loans, insurance and general cost-of-living information.

P.S.

Yale Pairs Aid Recipients with Personal Counselors. Beginning next academic year, Yale C. will assign a personal financial aid counselor to each undergraduate receiving aid in order to speed responsiveness and efficiency of its financial aid system. During their four years, this person will serve as the student's primary contact at the Office of Undergraduate Financial Aid. ■

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

City of Intellect: The Uses and Abuses of the University by Nicholas B. Dirks; Cambridge U. Press; ISBN: 9781009394437. History of Dirk's years as Chancellor of the U. California Berkeley, "decades of nuanced reflection on the university's true meaning...topics such as free speech and campus safe places, the 'humanities' contested future, and the real

cost and value of liberal arts learning... a passionate *cri de coeur* for structural changes in higher education that are both significant and profound."

Global Higher Education Market to Surge. According to the "Global Higher Education Market 2024-2028" report from

ResearchAndMarkets.com, this market is expected to grow by more than \$74 billion over the next four years. Technology-based course delivery is the prime mover of this growth. Summary available on [GlobeNewswire.com](https://www.globenewswire.com).

Applying to Jesuit Colleges. *US News* has compiled profiles of 17 Jesuit colleges and universities. See, www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/applying/articles/a-guide-to-jesuit-college. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Demographic Cliff. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the current demographic decline began 17 years ago. In 2007, the number of births in the country hit an all-time high. But then the Great Recession hit and fertility rates declined. The national birth rate plunged by almost 23 percent between 2000 and 2022, dropping from 14.3 births per thousand people to 11.1. Thus, the traditional college-age population in the U.S. will shrink dramatically beginning in 2025, lasting until 2037.

Recent Grads Fail Job Interviews. According to a recent survey by Intelligent.com of 800 U.S. managers, directors and executives who do hiring, recent college graduates are failing at their job interviews. More than half of those surveyed said that Gen Z job candidates have trouble making eye contact. Many also dressed inappropriately for in-person interviews and ask for unreasonable salaries given their lack of experience. During virtual interviews, 21 percent of employers said that some candidates refused to turn on their cameras for the interview.

If they are hired, two-thirds of employers reported that Gen Z employees are unable

to manage their workloads, miss assignment deadlines and are frequently late for work. Some 63 percent of employers think Gen Z employees feel entitled, while 58 percent say they get offended too easily and are unprepared for the workforce.

Employers also noted that their youngest employees lack professionalism, do not respond well to feedback and have poor communication skills. Some 47 percent of employers said that they had fired a recent college grad. As a result, about 60 percent of employers say they are willing to offer more benefits and higher pay to attract older workers.

Confidence Declining. Over the past decade, public confidence in higher education fell from 57 percent to 36 percent, according to Gallup. Two-thirds of high school students think they will be just fine without a college degree.

“For three generations, the national aspiration to ‘college for all’ shaped America’s economy and culture, as most high school graduates took it for granted that they would earn a degree,” Douglas Belkin wrote last month in the *Wall Street Journal*. “That consensus is now collapsing in the face of massive student debt, underemployed degree-holders

and political intolerance on campus.”

He added that college culture has resisted change to the digital revolution and shifting job market. “The misalignment between universities and the labor market is compounded by the failure of many schools to teach students to think critically.”

Last year, an Intelligent.com survey of 800 companies found that 45 percent intend to eliminate bachelor degree requirements for some positions in 2024. Instead, some employers are adopting skill-based hiring.

Military Academies May Continue Using Race in Admissions. A federal judge ruled that the U.S. Military Academy at West Point may use race as a factor in its admissions policies. That is because race conscious admissions may further compelling government interests. But the judge said his ruling was provisional and will be reviewed once more data is forthcoming. A similar decision was made in December protecting race conscious admissions at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Florida Sets High School Graduation Record. More than seven out of every eight Florida high school students graduated in the 2022-23 academic year, a new state record. Several subgroups also set records, including students with disabilities who graduated at an 85 percent rate, up from 80.6 percent in 2018-19. Black students graduated at an 83 percent rate, while Native Americans graduate at an 85 percent rate, and 87 percent of Hispanics also graduate, according to floridapolitics.com. ■

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

Skidmore and Cornell Join QuestBridge. Skidmore C. and Cornell U., both in New York, are the newest partners (52 total) to join QuestBridge, the national nonprofit out of California that connects the nation’s most exceptional youth from low-income backgrounds with scholarships at leading institutions of higher education.

QuestBridge estimates that 30,000 talented low-income students nationally are academically qualified to attend the nation’s best colleges each year. But the majority of students do not apply to a single selective school. The QuestBridge National College Match program seeks to overcome that gap by matching top students with top schools.

Spelman Receives \$100 Million Gift. Spelman C. in Atlanta received \$100 million donation from longtime trustee Ronda Stryker, heir to the medical technology company, and her husband William Johnston. Three quarters of the money will go to scholarships. “This gift is a critical step in our school’s mission to eliminate financial barriers to starting and finishing a Spelman education,” said Helene Gayle, president.

HBCU’s \$100 Million Gift. The Lilly Endowment, based in Indianapolis, gave the United Negro College Fund \$100 million, the largest in UNCF history. Michael Lomax, president of the UNCF, said the money will go into an endowment for 37 Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The Lilly gift will increase the endowment of each of the colleges by \$2.7 million. In some cases, that will double the size of the institution’s endowment.

Health Care Diversity after Affirmative Action. In the wake of the Supreme Court’s decision to end affirmative action in college admissions, the Association of American Medical Colleges is “mobilizing resources towards new scholarship programs.” And for the first time, AAMC is trying to involve itself in K-12 education. That’s because AAMC notes “disparities begin as early as kindergarten....”

The AAMC recently released enrollment data showing “a promising increase in medical school diversity.” It will be watching whether or not this trend continues after the end of Affirmative Action. ■

Reasons for Optimism

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America released a recent survey of 130,000 young people in nearly 3,500 clubs around the country. It found that 75 percent expect to continue their education beyond high school.

About 47 percent want to pursue a STEM career and 52 percent said that they know the steps a student needs to take to have a science-related career. However, among this group, only 51 percent fifth through 12th graders thought they were on track to graduate.

Despite the stresses of the pandemic, about two thirds of these young people said it was “very true” or “sort of true” that they can stay calm when stressed, and half of them know how to calm themselves down. Some 64 percent believe it is “very true” that they can accomplish most things if they try their best and don’t give up when they face trouble. ■

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