

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admissions Watch

Early Admissions Shaping Class of 2028

Barnard Draws 1,694 Early Apps. Barnard C. in New York City received a record 1,694 Early Decision applications. It accepted students from 41 states in 29 countries. Ninety percent of accepted students rank in the top 10 percent of their high school class.

Boston U. Admits 1,300 Early Decision. Boston U. received 3,832 Early Decision applications, 4.8 percent more than last year. BU admitted 1,300 students ED, or 34.1 percent of the pool, to its Class of 2028, according to *The Daily Free Press*. The average high school GPA of admitted students was 3.87. For the fourth year in a row, no standardized test scores were required. But 35 percent submitted scores anyway, averaging 1454 on the SAT, 32 ACT. Legacies made up 5 percent of the admitted ED group, although legacy status doesn't count in admissions decisions.

Kelly Walter, dean of admissions, told the paper that "given the Supreme Court's decision last June banning the use of race in admissions, demographic data is not available at this time. BU Admissions will release information about the racial composition of the class only after the class is finalized next May."

Brown Selects 14 Percent ED. Brown U. in Providence, Rhode Island, attracted 6,244 Early Decision applications and admitted 14.4 percent to its Class of 2028, Logan Powell, Brown's dean of admissions, told *The Brown Daily Herald*. The new group is the Ivy League school's largest ED cohort.

Of admitted students, 53.3 percent attended public schools, 35.4 percent private schools, 11.2 percent parochial schools. Female students make up 52 percent of the incoming

ED class. First-generation college students account for 19 percent of admitted students. International students come from 52 countries, led by Canada, China, the United Kingdom, India, South Korea, Peru and Singapore.

Brown acknowledges that those who apply ED are likely to be from more affluent families, and has its own policy under review. Following the Supreme Court's June decision forbidding racial profiling in admissions, Brown did not release a racial breakdown of admitted students, although it is likely to do so once students are on campus.

Brown changed its application to include additional essays. These "four new short answer essay questions allowed us to gain even greater insight into the interests, experiences and aspirations of these prospective students," Powell told the paper.

Columbia Receives Most ED Apps Since 2020. Columbia C. and the School of Engineering and Applied Science in New York City received 6,009 Early Decision applications for the Class of 2028, up almost 5 percent from last year. In 2020, Columbia's ED applications peaked at 6,435.

Dartmouth Admits 17 Percent ED. Dartmouth C. in New Hampshire received a record 3,550 Early Decision applications for its Class of 2028, up 18 percent over last year. But Dartmouth only admitted 606 students, for a record-low 17 percent acceptance rate.

"It was unquestionably the best ED pool I have seen in my eight years at Dartmouth," said Lee Coffin, vice president and dean of admissions and financial aid.

continued on page 2

Financial Matters

FAFSA Finally Available in January. The U.S. Department of Education has made available the simplified 2024 Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA). The form is now available after a long delay. (It has historically been available at the beginning of October.) But this year, it will be easier for families to apply for financial aid.

"...everyone has three fewer months to complete this," Kim Cook, CEO of the National College Access Network, told *Money*. But Cook applauded the FAFSA simplification, which means more students will be able to complete the form correctly and more students will receive the aid for which they are eligible.

The application will be both shorter by half and simpler, with a direct transfer of financial information from the IRS. The form also includes a revamped formula for awarding Pell Grants. That will assist an estimated 600,000 more students. Pell Grants currently assist 6 million low-income students each year. The maximum is worth \$7,395.

A downside of the new form is that families with multiple children in college no longer get a discount, according to *Money*.

Aid for Colleges Improving Rural Graduations. The "Biden-Harris" Administration awarded \$44.5 million to 22 higher education institutions that are seeking to improve rates of enrollment, persistence and completion among rural students. In the nation's rural districts, only 29 percent of individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 are enrolled in higher education. Many of these students face problems

continued on page 4

INSIDE

- Georgia on Their Minds
- Enrollment Trends
- Curriculum Capsules
- News You Can Use

COLLEGE BOUND: Publisher/Editor: R. Craig Sautter, DePaul University; Chief Operating Officer: Sally Reed. Production: Design|Americom WVA.

COLLEGE BOUND is published monthly, ten times a year. Inquiries should be directed to P.O. Box 6536, Evanston, IL 60204; 773-262-5810.

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SHAPING 2028

continued from page 1

A record 22 percent of students will be first in their family to attend college, while 22 percent of incoming students are eligible for a financial aid package that requires no parental contribution. International students come from 47 nations. Dartmouth did not release stats on legacies, but last year 14 percent of admitted ED students were legacies, according to *The Dartmouth*.

Duke Admits Record-Low ED. Duke U. in North Carolina attracted 6,240 Early Decision applications, the most in school history, and 28 percent more than last year, perhaps because of its new financial aid package.

Duke admitted a record-low 12.9 percent of those hopeful applicants. Some 97 students were admitted to the QuestBridge National College Match Program, twice as many as last year. Women account for 54 percent of the ED admits, while 13 percent identify as first-generation students. International students account for 13 percent of the ED cohort. About 35 percent of the admitted students did not submit a standardized test score. Of admitted ED students, 18 percent come from the Carolina's.

"Over half of the students we admitted in Early Decision indicated that they would apply for need-based financial aid," Christoph Guttentag, dean of admissions, told *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Harvard Accepts 629 EA Students. Harvard C. received 7,921 Early Action applications for its Class of 2028 and accepted 629 of those students. Some 15.5 percent of those admitted will be first-generation college students. Over 20 percent had their application fees waived due to financial need.

Students from New England account for 22.3 percent of those admitted EA to Harvard, while 20.8 percent come from mid-Atlantic states, 14.5 percent from the South, 8.4 percent from the Midwest, 17.2 percent from the West. Nearly 17 percent applied from outside the United States.

Johns Hopkins Draws New Talent. Johns Hopkins U. in Baltimore admitted 550 Early Decision I students from 26 nations and 40 states to its Class of 2028. The new cohort includes an award-winning wildlife photographer, an engineer who designed a tech glove to reduce chronic pain and an artist whose music seeks to reduce stigmas around mental health. Others have written and published research, developed top apps, won global competitions and tutored their peers.

Their H.S. counselors described these students as "poised, flexible and resilient." Johns Hopkins calls them "jubilant and curious learners."

In high school, "89 percent held part-time

Georgia on Their Minds

Emory Attracts More Apps This Year. Emory U. in Atlanta fielded 2,704 Early Decision applications, 12 percent more than last year, and admitted 865 ED I students: 705 to Emory College of Arts and Sciences, 364 to Oxford C. Of those admitted, 205 were admitted to both campuses. Emory admitted 85 scholars from the QuestBridge National College Match program, 24 more than last year. However, 4.2 percent fewer students were admitted overall.

In view of the Supreme Courts affirmative action decision, Emory added new essay prompts to its application aimed at exploring applicants' cultural and community backgrounds. This year, 39 percent of students did not submit standardized test scores.

Georgia Admits 9,000 EA. Four-time NCAA Division I football national champion, the U. of Georgia in Athens, attracted 26,760 Early Action applications and offered 9,000 students

early admission to its Class of 2028. It received an 8 percent increase in applications from Georgia residents, 11,500.

In addition to its football prowess, UGA boasts of its 88 percent six-year completion rate and back-to-back Rhodes Scholars in 2022 and 2023.

Georgia Tech Concentrates In-State. Georgia Tech accepted 2,688 of its approximately 7,000 Early Action I applicants, or about one third, according to *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Georgia Tech's EAI is reserved for Georgia students. EA II is open to all other students, with decisions announced in January.

"In recent years, the undergraduate admission office has focused on serving students in our home state," said Mary Tipton Woolley, senior associate director of undergraduate admission. "And that means ensuring students from all corners of the state have the opportunity for a Georgia Tech education." ■

jobs, internships or summer jobs; 58 percent were active in the arts; 62 percent participated in athletics and 46 percent were involved in policy, civic engagement or advocacy work."

Some 23 percent of those admitted to Johns Hopkins will be first in their families to go to college, 62 percent attended a public high school and at home 54 percent speak in a language other than English.

Notre Dame Keeps Focus on Individuals. The U. of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, attracted 11,498 "REA" applications from students who attended 4,600 high schools across all 50 states and 109 different countries That is 300-plus more early apps than last year. ND admitted 1,724 of those students or about 15 percent of the early pool. In the past, about 70 percent of ND's early admitted students eventually enrolled.

About 56 percent of these applicants did not submit standardized scores, up from 37 percent last year. For the fourth admissions cycle, ND did not require standardized test scores, a policy it extended to 2024-2025 applicants.

ND is a diversified community. About a third of the Class of 2027 described their identify as students of color. Its (Father) Hesburgh Center for Civil and Human Rights is internationally respected. So how does ND react to the recent Supreme Court decision?

Micki Kidder, vice president for undergraduate enrollment, told *The Observer* that, "Notre Dame has always and will in the foreseeable future continue with an individualized, comprehensive review of [each student's] application."

Penn Admits Half of its 2028 Class. The U. of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia fielded 8,500 Early Decision applications for its

Class of 2028, 500 more than last year. Penn admitted half of its entire new class, although it did not release its ED admit stats. The future "Quakers" hail from 68 countries and 41 states. This year, Penn removed its \$400 enrollment deposit fee.

Rice Admits 519. Rice U., located in Houston on a 300-acre forested campus, admitted 519 out of the 4,681 Early Decision applicants to its Class of 2028.

Santa Clara Admits 52 Percent EA. Santa Clara U. in California admitted a record 10,841 Early Action applicants, 3.5 percent more than last year. Admitted students come from 3,000 high schools across the globe and posted an unweighted high school GPA of 3.85. Over half of those admitted to the Jesuit university come from outside of California, and 8 percent live outside of the United States. A language other than English is spoken at home by 40 percent of admitted students. Ten are part of SCU's inaugural Posse LA Scholars.

"Our applicants showcase competence and a profound commitment to conscientiousness and compassion. They're drawn to SCU's Jesuit values, the university's innovative programs and its location in the heart of Silicon Valley," said Becky Konowicz, dean.

Williams Committed to Diversity. Williams C. in Massachusetts received 1,068 Early Decision applications for its Class of 2028 and admitted 249 students or 23.3 percent of the pool. Williams deferred another 155 applicants to its Regular Decision round. Last year, Williams admitted 14 deferred Early Decision applicants. Williams also welcomed 11 new students through QuestBridge. ■

New Year Enrollment Trends

Colleges Take “Laissez Faire” Approach” to AI in Admissions. According to a report from Business Wire, Kaplan, Inc. has found that colleges and universities are taking what it calls a hand-off approach to the use of generative AI programs in the admissions and recruitment processes. More than 200 admissions officers were polled.

Kaplan said that 85 percent of admissions officers say they have no rules regulating how prospective students can use GenAI in their essays. Just 9 percent use GenAI detection software. Only 14 percent say they use AI in their jobs or to reach prospective students.

For more info, see, www.kaplan.com.

Beloit Steps Up Recruitment in Wisconsin and Illinois. Beloit C. now guarantees admission and tuition assistance to students with at least a 3.0 high school GPA from four Wisconsin and four Illinois counties. “We want to invite all those people near us to a liberal arts college with a national and global reputation right in their backyard,” said Eric Boynton, Beloit’s president.

California Reconnect. The California Reconnect program has met with early success in re-enrolling adults who left college without earning their degrees. During the first year of the three-year program, about 8.4 percent of the 5,700 former students who were contacted have reenrolled. The program is a collaboration between InsideTrack, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, ProjectAttain! and seven Sacramento-area colleges and universities, including California State U., Sacramento. The program hopes to expand to 13 additional colleges in 2024.

Massachusetts and Tennessee operate similar state-funded reconnection programs, with specific scholarships for returning adult students.

Colorado Says 90 Percent of Livable Wage Jobs Require Postsecondary Credentials. A new report from the Colorado Department of Higher Education says that 90 percent of jobs that pay a living wage require a postsecondary credential.

“We find evidence that as education increases for Coloradans, annual wages also increase across all industry sectors of the state, regardless of the type of credential one completes,” the report concluded.

At the same time, 90 percent of employers say they cannot find the skills they need in Colorado applicants. Currently, there are two available jobs for every unemployed person in the state. But the skills do not match up.

Kansas Sets New H.S. Requirements. Students who graduate from Kansas high schools four years from now will be required to have taken a half-credit course in financial literacy, more STEM and a half credit in a communications class.

Wisconsin Seeks More International Students. The University of Wisconsin System seeks to double the number of international students attending its various campuses over the next five years. According to Jonathan Britz, senior vice president for academic and student affairs, UW is using an international recruiting firm, Shorelight, to find students. Currently, about 4 percent of UW System’s undergraduate students are international. At UW-Madison enrollment of international students is about 10 percent of all students. The UW system total enrollment continues to rebound after the pandemic, but it enrolls 20,000 fewer students than a decade ago.

York Joins Direct Admissions Program. York C., a liberal arts school in Pennsylvania, is now one of nearly 70 other colleges and universities across the nation offering students direct admissions to college based on their high school records. York joins 14 other institutions participating in the Common App’s Direct Admissions Program.

“Direct admissions is about changing the narrative of a college education from one of scarcity to one of opportunity by ensuring students know that college opportunity is an abundant resource, and one that’s available to them,” Jenny Rickard, the Common Apps president and CEO, told the *York Daily Record*.

P.S. Degree Completion Rate Stagnates. For the third year in a row, the number of students who complete their degree in six years remained steady at 62 percent, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. ■

COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

RECENT STUDIES OUT FOR THE NEW YEAR

Diverse College STEM Classrooms Score Better. According to a paper published by the American Educational Research Association’s journal *AERA Open*, all students achieve better outcomes in college science, technology, engineering and math courses when their classrooms have higher numbers of underrepresented, racial-minority and first-generation college students.

While all students do better in these classrooms, the link is even stronger for students who come from underrepresented minority or first-generation families.

“It’s really notable that improving racial and socioeconomic representation leads to benefits for everyone and reduces inequalities at the

same time,” said Nicholas Bowman, a professor at the U. of Iowa and the study’s co-author. See, <http://journals.sagepub.com>.

Generation Z. Gen Z teens believe “Postsecondary education is more necessary than ever,” according to the seventh “Question The Quo Education Pulse Survey.” Other major trends were: “The pressure to take a four-year path is immense; Gen Z teens feel unprepared for life after high school; and postsecondary education is a means to an end—with the end being a career.”

After a two-year pandemic dip, 84 percent of those surveyed plan to attend a postsecondary school at some point.

For the full survey, see, <http://www.questionthequo.org>.

Workforce Development. For the second year in a row, economic and workforce development was the top priority of higher education leaders, according to a report released by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. Last year, economic and workforce development tied with teacher workforce as a top priority.

Among the other top ten priorities: State operating support for public colleges and universities as well as addressing enrollment declines, the K-12 teacher workforce, higher education’s value, college affordability and state funding for financial aid programs.

Other issues in the top 10 include public perception of higher education, college completion/student success and adult/nontraditional student success. Tied for eleventh are FAFSA completion and institutional accountability/effectiveness in higher education.

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

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Bradley “Sunsets” Programs. In order to balance its budget, Bradley U. in Illinois will “sunset” 15 academic programs including business law, ceramics, hospitality leadership, international studies, math education and statistics. Bradley will also eliminate others as stand-alone majors, folding them into other programs as “service units,” including economics, French, mathematics, philosophy and physics.

Bradley’s popular manufacturing engineer technology and public health education programs will continue, according to WMBD Peoria.

Caltech Partners with Khan Academy. California Institute of Technology requires applicants to complete a minimum number of STEM and Humanities courses in high school to prepare for its rigorous curriculum. However, some high schools do not offer classes such as calculus, chemistry and physics.

Thus, Caltech decided to partner with Khan Academy and Schoolhouse to provide free online courses, tutoring and certification for potential applicants. Those who score above 90 on the final test are eligible to apply. Advance Placement or International Baccalaureate exam scores can also be submitted.

Cleveland C.C. Animal Science Tech Program. Cleveland C.C. in Cleveland County North Carolina is in its second year offering an Animal Science Technology Program that leads to either an associate degree or a certificate, both of which can transfer to a four-year university. The program also educates middle and high school students about animal science and career opportunities available in the poultry industry.

Some of the program’s funds help support college career days, animal science days and poultry science judging contest. High school students can jumpstart a career in animal sciences by taking free classes through the school’s Career and College Promise Program, according to the *Shelby Star*.

IU Kelley’s Master of Management Program. Indiana U.’s Kelley School of Business now offers a master of management graduate program to convey fundamental business knowledge and leadership, entrepreneurship, among other skills.

Its summer crash course takes up topics that non-business B.A. students probably missed. The program “was developed with career readiness in mind.” ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

continued from page 1

with reliable transportation, food and housing insecurity, access to healthcare or high-speed Internet.

College Inflation Down to 4 Percent. According to the annual Commonfund Higher Education Price Index (HEPI), inflation for U.S. colleges and universities fell to 4 percent in fiscal year 2023, declining from 5.2 percent in 2022. Still, that rate is twice what it was in 2020, 1.9 percent.

The highest rate of inflation experienced by colleges was in FY1981, 10.7 percent. The HEPI did not fall below 4 percent for 11 years. The lowest inflation rate was recorded after the Great Recession in FY2010, 0.9 percent.

The report said that “the most heavily weighted HEPI, faculty salaries, rose at a rate of 64 percent higher than the five-year average (4.0 percent in FY2023 compared with the 2.5 percent five-year average.)

Louisville Expands Cardinal Commitment. The U. of Louisville committed \$2.4 million to expand its Cardinal Commitment Grants to more Kentucky students so that they can graduate with less student debt. Students with financial need will either receive free tuition coverage or grants ranging from \$2,000-\$9,000.

Tulane Receives \$5 Million for Scholarships. Tulane U. in New Orleans received an anonymous \$5 million donation to expand its Next Wave Scholarship Challenge, a dollar-for-dollar fundraising initiative to help students “regardless of their economic means” and “inspiring more philanthropic support to help us recruit the best and brightest,” according to President Michael A. Fitts.

Virginia Broadens Tuition Program. The U. of Virginia expanded its AccessUVA program covering tuition and fees to all students from Virginia families making \$100,000 a year or less. ■

sources, the C. of Saint Rose in Albany, New York, will close after 103 years. It is the 13th non-profit college to announce it is shutting its doors this academic year. Others include: Lincoln Christian U., Cabrini U., Cardinal Stritch U., Finlandia U., Holy Names U., Iowa Wesleyan U., Madaille U. and Presentation C.

And Occidental C. announced it will no longer consider “legacies” in its admissions. ■

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

“Luckocracy?” Is college admissions at “selective schools” a “meritocracy,” a “rejectionocracy” or “luckocracy,” wondered Jim Jump, semi-retired academic dean and director of college counseling at St. Christopher’s School in Richmond, Virginia. In a recent *Inside Higher Ed* article, he asked is “meritocracy” really a code word for “privilegeocracy?”

Jump wrote, “I wonder if we do students (and the public) a disservice when we talk about college admissions being a meritocracy. In a meritocracy those who are unsuccessful may come to question their self-worth and merit, and in the selective/rejected admissions process, there are far more students who possess merit and deserve attention than will actually receive admission offers. I worry about the message we send those students.”

Multiple Measures of Assessment. The Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness has been studying the use of Multiple Measures Assessment, such as high school GPA that reflect effort in achievement over time. It argues these yield better placement determinations that lead to better student outcomes than a system based on test scores alone.

Since 2016, CAPR has been conducting a randomized controlled trial of MMA in community colleges in the State University of New York.

CAPR found that student outcomes, including college-level math and English enrollment and completion, and that college-level credit attainment, was much more likely for students who participated in MMA than in “business-as-usual” groups. It recommended that colleges should expand access to college-level courses by giving students the highest placement possible. Also, colleges should use a form of MMA that is relatively easy to adopt and that mitigates the risk of lowering a student’s placement.

Most Cited on False Resumes. USDictionary.com compiled a list of colleges most often falsely cited on resumes as having been attended by a job applicant. Here’s the top 10: Harvard U., Stanford U., U. of Washington, U. of Notre Dame, Duke U., U. of California, Los Angeles, U. of California Berkeley, U. of Pennsylvania, U. of Virginia and Amherst C.

Final Chapters. Due to lack of economic re-

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