

# College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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## Admissions Watch

**Bowdoin Admits 13 Percent ED.** Bowdoin C. in Maine attracted 13,200 applications for its Class of 2028, 20 percent more than last year and the most in the college's history. About 270 of the 2,005 students who applied Early Decision I and II were admitted, a rate of 13.5 percent.

Claudia Marroquin, senior vice president and dean of admissions and student aid, told the *Bowdoin Orient* that the increase in applications was likely due to Bowdoin's strong financial aid program and need-based approach to both domestic and international students.

This year, her admissions office switched to a team-approach in which two admissions officers read and discussed each application together.

**Brown Attracts More Than 48,000 Apps.** Brown U. in Rhode Island received 48,881 applications for its Class of 2028. That impressive number was down 5 percent from last year. Of those, 6,244 were binding Early Decision applications. Brown welcomed 898 of those ED applicants, the most in school history.

"We are thrilled with the quality of the applicant pool and honored to learn more about these incredible students as we continue the Regular Decision process," said Logan Powell, associate provost for enrollment and dean of undergraduate admission.

Beginning with the Class of 2029, Brown will be need-blind for all international students.

**Connecticut Applications "Skyrocket."** More than 56,700 students have already applied to the U. of Connecticut's Class of 2028, the first time the school surpassed 50,000 apps. Applications to the flagship Storrs campus increased 18 percent in the past two years. UConn expects about 19,000 under-

grads on its Storrs campus in the fall, about 70 percent Connecticut residents.

**Florida State Tops 76,000 Apps.** Florida State U. received 76,748 applications for its Class of 2028, and admitted 16,748 students from across the nation and 48 countries around the world. Admitted students posted an ACT composite average of 31 and SAT score of 1390. About 88 percent of admitted students rank in the top 10 percent of their high school class. Twenty-one percent of those admitted are first in their family to go to college. The top three areas of interest of admitted students are business, engineering and biological science. FSU expects to enroll about 6,000 first-year students for Summer/Fall 2024.

**Miami Admits 900 More Than Last Year.** The U. of Miami in Florida received 2,000 more applications this year than last and admitted 900 more students. As of late February, it has 90 more committed students than last year, according to *The Miami Student*.

**Middlebury's Boasts Third Largest Pool.** Middlebury C. in Vermont received 12,540 applications for its Class of 2028, 6 percent fewer than its record-setting applicant pool last year, but its third largest ever. Middlebury accepted 425 students through its largest-ever pool of Early Decision I applicants.

In the wake of last year's Supreme Court decision, Middlebury said, "We remain interested in the lived experience of students applying to Middlebury."

Dean of admissions Nicole Curvin added, "Our time spent off-campus is focused on regions where there is demographic growth, Title I high schools (those with largely low income student populations) and students with diverse lived experiences, including regions

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## Financial Flash

**Commitment Deadline Pushed Back by FAFSA Troubles.** Many colleges and universities around the country are pushing back their traditional May 1 commitment deadline due to delays in the Department of Education's critical financial aid data reporting associated with the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The "simplified" form is expected to make available \$1.8 billion more in student aid.

For example, The Citadel, DePaul U., Morgan State U., Old Dominion U., Rutgers U., Sweet Briar C., U. of Virginia, Virginia Tech and William & Mary have nudged their dates back a couple of weeks to June 1. So have Arizona State U., the U. of Arizona, U. of California, California State U. Others are likely to follow.

However, most schools are still waiting to make their decision and are holding onto their May 1 commitment date, pending future developments.

The National Association for College Admissions Counseling has opened a website to track delayed deadlines similar to its Last-Minute Openings site it publishes each spring. See, [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org).

## FINANCIAL MATTERS

**Cal State to Hike Tuition/Expand Grants.** Next fall, tuition at campuses in the California State U. System will increase by 6 percent. About a third of new revenue will be dedicated towards expanding grants to fund the full cost of tuition and living expenses for students in need. About 87 percent of Cal State students

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## ENROLLMENT TRENDS

**Duke De-emphasizes Essays Because of AI.** Duke U. in North Carolina no longer gives numerical ratings to student essays or standardized test scores, according to Christoph Guttentag, dean of undergraduate admissions. The change comes because of the difficulty in determining if an essay is AI-generated. However, Guttentag said that the essay and test scores will still be considered.

“Essays are very much part of our understanding of the applicant, we’re just no longer assuming that the essay is an accurate reflection of the student’s actual writing ability,” he explained.

**Goddard Goes Virtual.** Beginning next academic year, Goddard C. in Vermont is shutting

### ADMISSIONS WATCH

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like the South and Midwest.”

Middlebury also announced that it will increase the cost of attendance next year by 3.5 percent to \$86,850, according to *The Middlebury Campus*.

**Richmond’s Record-breaking Numbers of Apps.** The U. of Richmond in Virginia received 16,000-plus applications for its Class of 2028, 6 percent more than last year and 40 percent more than five years ago, according to *UR Now*. Early Decision or Early Action apps accounted for 1,200 of the applications, 14 percent more than last year. Richmond’s class size target is about 840 students.

“This is the fifth consecutive year of growth,” Melissa Falk, dean of admissions, told the paper. “We begin as early as the ninth grade in terms of cultivating and informally reaching out to students. We think about our academic profile and who might be a good fit for our program.”

**Virginia Tech Attracts 52,000-Plus Apps.** Virginia Tech received a record high 52,365 first-year applications for Fall 2024, 11 percent more than last year. The average high school GPA of applicants was 4.07. In-state applications totaled 20,610, up 4.5 percent from last year. Out-of-state applicants increased by 12 percent. Some 5,059 applicants came from international students.

The pool includes 8,059 first-generation college students. The target for the new class size is 7,085 students. Virginia Tech’s total enrollment is expected to rise slightly above 31,000 undergraduate students.

“This once again affirms that the university’s growing global reputation makes it a top destination for students,” said Juan Espinoza, interim vice provost for enrollment management. ■

down its on-campus operation. Facing declining enrollment, the small liberal arts school announced in January that it will become an exclusively online college. In 2022, it enrolled 320 residential students. Two-thirds of students already are enrolled online.

**Iowa C.C. Enrollment Down Slightly.** “This year, we saw credit enrollment level off, down .3 percent from last year,” Amy Geiske, Iowa Department of Education, told RadioIowa. She added, “This past year over 52,000 high school students enrolled in joint enrollment...a 5.6 percent increase....” High school enrollment accounts for 45 percent of the state’s total C.C. enrollment.

**Lyon Retention Hits 92 Percent.** Lyon C. in Batesville, Arkansas, enrolled 558 students during the Spring 2024 semester, up 27 percent from a year ago. First-year, first-time retention from Fall 2023 to Spring 2024 hit a record 92 percent.

**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.

**New York’s Direct Admission Initiative.** New York Governor Kathy Hochul proposed that students from her state who graduate in the top 10 percent of their class receive automatic admissions to campuses within the State U. of New York (SUNY) and City U. of New York (CUNY) systems. She also proposed legislation to require all high school seniors to complete the FAFSA.

**Pacific U. Guarantees Graduate Admission to First-Year Students.** Pacific U. in Oregon launched Pacific Priority that allows students to gain conditional admission to one of its 10 graduate programs at the same time they are admitted as undergraduates. Graduate options include three doctoral programs, four health profession programs and three master’s programs in education.

**South Carolina Guaranteed Admission.** Beginning this application season, almost any South Carolina high school student who places in the top 10 percent of his/her class is guaranteed admission to the U. of South

## SAT Digital

Beginning this month, the SAT will only be available digitally. The new test will be shorter and adaptive, with questions changing based on student responses. Last year, more than 300,000 students took the digital version. Students still can take the ACT digitally or in paper form. ■

Carolina’s Columbia Campus. Standardized test scores remain optional.

“Despite their high rank in high school, a significant number of remaining students may not believe they will be accepted at USC. We want them to know they are competitive and we welcome them to the state’s flagship university,” said Scott Verzyl, vice president for enrollment management and dean of undergraduate admissions.

“As our state’s flagship university, USC has an obligation to be accessible to South Carolinians,” added Thad Westbrook, chair of the USC Board of Trustees.

**SUNY Poly and Herkimer C.C. Dual Admissions.** The State U. of New York Polytechnic Institute (SUNY Poly) and Herkimer County Community College (Herkimer C.) reaffirmed their agreement to concurrently admit Herkimer students to SUNY Poly, guaranteeing a “seamless transfer experience,” if they earn their associate degree with requisite requirements.

**Western Pennsylvania Dual Enrollment Up.** Dual enrollment has grown by as much as 33 percent at Western Pennsylvania community colleges over the last decade, according to the post-gazette.com in Pittsburgh.

Nationally, dual enrollment rose 13 percent last year according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Dual enrollment began in 1955. Today, 82 percent of high schools offer some form of dual enrollment or credit opportunities. Thus, a third of high schoolers are dually enrolled every year.

Dual enrollment doesn’t just help high school students earn associate degrees or jump start a four-year degree, or save money and time. According to U. of Pittsburgh professor Eboni Zamani-Gallaher, “Dual enrollment participation at the community college level helps them to stave off what has been this long looming enrollment cliff....”

**Wisconsin’s Enrollment Increases.** Fall 2023 enrollment for the U. of Wisconsin System hit 161,322 students, with increases at UW-Madison, UW-Green Bay, UW-Platteville, UW-Stevens Point and UW-Whitewater. The U. of Wisconsin System hopes to keep driving higher student numbers through the rollout of its Direct Admissions program, in which 10 of its 13 universities are participating. ■

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**

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receive partial or full coverage through grants and aid.

“The fact is tuition as the price of admission is not what keeps students away from CSU,” said trustee Julia Lopez. “Almost nine out of 10 students get some sort of tuition grant, but it’s other costs.”

**Carroll Offers Aid Guarantee.** In response to this year’s FAFSA financial reporting problems, Carroll C., a liberal arts school in Montana, announced an aid guarantee for prospective students. Carroll’s proactive solution is an “Estimated Cost of Attendance” report for prospective students and their families. It includes a guaranteed amount of Carroll C. gift aid that offers “a reliable source of financial aid assurance during these critical decision-making months.”

Nearly 100 percent of Carroll’s students, who mostly come from the Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies, receive comprehensive aid packages, combining need-based and merit-based support.

**Southwestern University Creates Its Own SUFEEF.** As a result of the FAFSA delays, Southwestern U. in Texas created its own financial aid form called SUFEEF. Other colleges appeared to be following its lead. “FAFSA delays have compounded the stress inherent in selecting a college. Our response has been to take control of the financial aid process to offer enhanced support for families,” said Tom Delahunt, vice president for enrollment services.

**Cleveland Jewish Family Services Help Middle Class Students.** The Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland expanded its College Financial Aid Program to help students from middle-income families. A \$4 million gift will allow it to make student grants of up to \$5,000 over four years.

**DePauw’s \$200 Million Transformation.** DePauw U. in Greencastle, Indiana, attracted a \$150 million anonymous gift and another \$50 million in matching support. The new money will ensure “that our core academic programs and offerings are extraordinary in every way,” said Lori S. White, president.

DePauw’s strategic plan calls for directing the funds towards its College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, School of Business and Leadership and its Creative School, which launches in Fall 2024 and will “champion innovation and collaboration” in technology, arts and media cultures. A good proportion of the funds will also go to scholarships and financial aid.

**The Temple Promise.** Temple U. in Philadelphia launched the Temple Promise, a last-dollar financial aid grant program aimed at Philadelphia County residents whose family earned \$65,000 or less in adjusted gross income. “Temple Promise will be transformational for both the university and the city by providing more students with an affordable path to a college degree and reducing the burden of debt,” said Richard Englert, Temple’s president.

**Vanderbilt Expands No-Loan Program.** Vanderbilt U. in Tennessee increased its full-tuition scholarship program to include students from families whose annual income is \$150,000 or less.

Also, Opportunity Vanderbilt awards greater than full tuition to include housing, food, travel and other college expenses.

**College Endowments Increased 7.7 Percent.** Higher education endowments at 688 colleges and universities surveyed by NACUBO (National Association of College and University Business Officers) increased by 7.7 percent between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2023. The assets of the 688 institutions in this year’s Commonfund Study of Endowments total \$839.1 billion.

During that period, the colleges withdrew \$28.4 billion from their endowments, an 8.4 percent increase over the year before. Of that amount, 47.7 percent went to student financial aid, 17.5 percent to academic programs including research, 11.1 percent to endowed faculty positions and 7.4 percent maintenance of campus facilities.

**SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS**

**Midwestern Higher Education Compact Financial Aid Resources.** Students looking for scholarships and grants might turn to their state resources.

Here are links for financial aid information and state scholarships and grants in the 12 Midwestern states served by the MHEC at [www.mhec.org/sites/default/files/resources/Website-Listing-of-State-Scholarship-and-Grants-in-MHEC-Region.pdf](http://www.mhec.org/sites/default/files/resources/Website-Listing-of-State-Scholarship-and-Grants-in-MHEC-Region.pdf). For example,

*Illinois financial aid:* [www.isac.org/students/during-college/types-of-financial-aid/](http://www.isac.org/students/during-college/types-of-financial-aid/); [www.isac.org/students/during-college/types-of-financial-aid/scholarships/](http://www.isac.org/students/during-college/types-of-financial-aid/scholarships/);

*Indiana financial aid:* [www.in.gov/che/state-financial-aid/](http://www.in.gov/che/state-financial-aid/);

*Iowa student financial aid:* <https://educate.iowa.gov/higher-ed/financial-aid/>; <https://educate.iowa.gov/higher-ed/financial-aid/scholarships-grants/>;

*Kansas student financial aid:* [www.kansasregents.org/students/students\\_financial\\_aid/](http://www.kansasregents.org/students/students_financial_aid/);

*Michigan student aid:* [www.Michigan.gov/mistudentaid](http://www.Michigan.gov/mistudentaid). ■

**COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF**

**World University Rankings 2024.** The United Kingdom and U.S. institutions dominate the top 10 rankings of World University Rankings 2024, but “longitudinal analysis shows that the overall position of the UK and U.S. is declining relative to other higher education systems.

China is edging closer to the top 10.... One of the reasons for the waning performance in the U.S. and the UK is falling levels of research funding relative to other countries.”

The top 10: U. of Oxford, Stanford U., Massa-

chusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard U., U. of Cambridge, Princeton U., California Institute of Technology, Imperial C. London, U. of California, Berkeley and Yale U. Browse the full results at [www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/world-ranking](http://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/world-ranking).

*Wasted Education: How We Fail Our Graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math* by John D Skrentny; The University of

Chicago; ASIN: BOCBCSTWJ2; \$30 cloth.

*Tracking Transfer: Community College and Four-Year Institutional Effectiveness in Broadening Bachelor’s Degree Attainment* by Velasco, Fink, Bedoya-Guevara, Jenkins & LaViolet, Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. The report explores why only about a third of C.C. students transfer to a four-year institution and why fewer than half of those who transfer earn bachelor’s degree within six years of C.C. entry. For more info, see, <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/press-releases/new-reports-all-backgrounds-transfer.html>. ■

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

**Social Media in Admissions.** According to Kaplan's 2023 survey of college admissions officers, 67 percent believe that checking out an applicant's social media posts on apps such as Facebook is okay. But only 28 percent have done so. Also, a recent Gallup survey found that 51 percent of U.S. teenagers report spending at least four hours per day using a variety of social media apps. See, Kaplan.com.

**Detecting ChatGPT Plagiarism.** Faculty at Northwestern U., the U. of Texas at Austin and Vanderbilt U., among others are holding off on using the AI-detector tools from Turnitin and other companies. Turnitin, for example, claims it has a plagiarism detection rate of about 85 percent. Professors say they don't want to falsely accuse students of plagiarism and are waiting for more accurate tools to be developed.

"The real takeaway is that we should assume students will be able to break any AI-detection tools, regardless of their sophistication," said two Australian researchers who also conducted AI-detection experiments.

**Mississippi U. for Women Name Change.** The famed Mississippi U. for Women in Columbia, founded in 1884 and coeducational since 1982, will now be known as Wynbridge State University.

"Wynbridge creatively pairs the Old English word for 'W,' using it as a 'bridge' that connects past, present and future W graduates," said Amanda Clay Powers, dean of library service and co-chair of the renaming task force.

The Mississippi legislature must codify the change into state law. The university was desegregated in 1966 and is home to 2,227 students.

**Test-Optional.** Both Cornell and Vanderbilt universities announced that they will extend their test-optional policies for another year. Texas Tech U. will remain test-optional through Fall 2025 as it continues to evaluate its policy. The U. of Missouri and its various campuses will also remain test optional through next fall.

"Of institutions in the Southeastern Conference and the Big Ten that have announced plans for Fall 2024, only Purdue, the U. of Florida, the U. of Georgia and the U. of Tennessee are requiring test scores, according to UM (U. of Missouri) officials," according to *The Columbia Missourian*.

Meanwhile, Dartmouth U. has reinstated a standardized test requirement for its Class of 2029 "Standardized test scores are an important predictor of a student's success in Dartmouth's curriculum," a faculty study group found.

### FINAL CHAPTERS.

**Texas A&M to Close Qatar Campus.** The Board of Regents of the Texas A&M U. System voted to shut down its Qatar campus in 2028. It opened in 2003. Heightened instability in the Middle East is one apparent cause of the decision.

**The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Closing.** The nation's oldest museum and art school is closing its college. Alumni include Impressionist Mary Cassatt and illustrator Maxfield Parrish. The Academy's museum and K-12 program will continue operation. It's bachelor's and master's degree programs will close at the end of the 2024-25 school year. ■

## Do Colleges Deliver a Better Economic Future?

The HEA Group, a research and consulting agency focused on college access and success, recently performed an analysis of the U.S. Department of Education's College Scoreboard to evaluate the earning outcomes of approximately five million former students 10 years after they initially enrolled at 3,887 institutions of higher education.

Its February 2024 report, "Ensuring a Living Wage Through Higher Education," found that former students at the vast majority of U.S. colleges earn more than the federal poverty line of \$14,580 a year, 10 years after initially enrolling.

However, at 18 institutions, most former students earn below the poverty line. And at another 162 institutions, former students earn just above that poverty line 10 years after they initially enrolled.

The federal government uses a standard of 150 percent of the federal poverty line, measured at \$21,870 a year, for eligibility in some of its programs. This study found that 8 percent of institutions show their former students fail to earn more than that 150 percent standard 10 years after they initially enrolled. Many of these former students may have to rely on government programs.

If a person earns \$15 an hour and works a full-time schedule for 50 weeks throughout the year, he or she will earn an annual salary of about \$30,000. But out of the 3,887 institutions, 852 or 22 percent show that the majority of their former students earn just above this threshold. In fact, the majority of former students who attended 1,022 higher education institutions fail to earn as much as a typical high school graduate 10 years after they enrolled.

The researchers point out that the standard of living varies from state to state and county to county, and economic conditions and job availability vary. But these statistics are troubling.

To download report, see: [www.theheagroup.com](http://www.theheagroup.com). ■

**Elmhurst's Micro-Credentials.** Elmhurst C., a respected liberal arts school outside of Chicago, like a growing number of higher education institutions, now also offers micro-credentials. Also known as digital badges or certificates, "these short-term, specialized programs are designed to address specific industry needs and provide practical skills for immediate application." ■

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## CURRICULUM CAPSULES

**Arizona State's Applied Military Veterans' Studies.** This spring, Arizona State U. is expanding its popular veterans' studies certificate program, launched in 2022, to a bachelor's degree program in applied military and veteran studies.

The Kentucky Center for Veterans Studies at Easter Kentucky U., which was established in 2010, was one of the first of its kind, according to *Inside Higher Ed*. Other programs are at the U. of California, Irvine, U. of Missouri at St. Louis, Virginia Tech U. and Saint Leo U.

They educate both veterans and non-veterans about the rewards and difficulties of being a returning military veteran. In 2021, 610,000 veterans nationally used those college benefits.

**C. of Saint Benedict/St. John's U. New Finance Major.** Students at the C. of Saint Benedict and St. John's U. in Minnesota can now major in finance, rather than simply economics, accounting or mathematics. Students will study the "role of money, investments, financial institutions and markets in the broader economy as well as how individuals, corporations and government can engage with, influence and react to financial markets."

"We've developed a broad set of options to study finance, giving students the flexibility to focus in areas that align most with their intellectual interests and also preparing them for their futures," said Parker Wheatley, chair of the economics department.

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