

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

Vol. 38, No. 9

May 2024

Admissions Watch

More Impacts on Fall 2024

Bethune-Cookman Bucks Trend. While applications around the country decline, a record number of students applied to Bethune-Cookman U. in Daytona Beach, Florida, for Fall 2024. The historically black university reported that as of May 1, 74 percent more students had paid their deposits for the Class of 2028. The university received 13,172 applications.

The university said it recruited “heavily” in the state of Florida, as well as in the Bahamas. This summer it will be recruiting in Georgia as well.

Bethune-Cookman is affiliated with the United Methodist Church. “Our faith-based institution, as well as our student life has really been a driver in terms of why families come to the institution...,” Camaille Shepard, executive director of Strategic Initiatives, told the Central Florida Public Media.

Georgetown Admits 12 Percent. Georgetown U. in Washington D.C. received 26,170 applications for its Class of 2028, and accepted 12 percent of them, according to *The Hoya*. The McDonough School of Business had the lowest acceptance rate, admitting 517 of its 4,554 applicants. The College of Arts and Sciences admitted 1,870 of its 15,704 applicants.

This year, applicants came from all 50 states and 94 countries. The mid-50 percent of SAT math scores of admitted students ranges between 730 and 790, while the mid-50 percent of SAT verbal scores ranges from 730 to 770.

New students stressed they were attracted by “the university’s commitment to social justice...,” said Charles Deacon, dean of undergraduate admissions.

Howard U. Sets Record. Howard in Washington D.C., the nation’s premiere historically black university, received a record 37,000

applications for its Class of 2028, 12 percent more than last year. It admitted about 30 to 32 percent, down from last year’s 36 percent, according to *The Hilltop*.

The average high school GPA of accepted students ranges between 3.58 and 3.65, Andrew Taylor, an undergraduate admission officer, told the paper. Last year’s average SAT score was 1167. About 7 percent of Howard undergraduates come from abroad, with the most hailing from Nigeria, Jamaica, Nepal, the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago. Howard also has a 70 to 30 female-to-male student ratio.

Lehigh Admits from 65 Countries. Lehigh U. in Pennsylvania received a record 20,396 applications for its Class of 2028, 35 percent more than just two years ago. Admitted students come from 49 states and 65 countries. Some 357 qualified for the Lehigh Commitment, which grants them full tuition.

Among admitted students are a published novelist and an intern for the Italian Parliament.

NYU Attracts 118,000 Apps. New York U. received more than 118,000 applications for its Class of 2028, the fewest in 17 years, and accepted about 8 percent of them. Admitted students come from 49 states and 103 nations. It received more than 22,000 Early Decision applications. NYU anticipates that 20 percent of the new class will be first-generation students and another 20 percent Pell Grant recipients.

The NYU Promise guarantees full free tuition for families with a household income of under \$100,000. It also meets 100 percent of demonstrated need. At least 1,000 students in the Class of 2028 will reap those benefits. NYU currently is reviewing whether or not it will remain test-optional.

continued on page 2

Financial Matters

FAFSA Recomputed. Near the end of April, financial aid officers at DePaul U., like others around the country, were scrambling to make up for lost time. “I am happy to report that we began receiving Institutional Student Information Records around March 15 and have continued to see an increase of the system-generated data over the last few weeks,” Karen LeVeque-Szawara, assistant vice president of financial aid, reported to the DePaul faculty.

But, she added, “Though not surprising, given the complications experienced by everyone, our total volume of FAFSA received is over 22,000, which is 27 percent lower than the previous year. We continue to work swiftly to load these records and continue to test our own systems in preparation for full implementation within the next few weeks.”

She also noted that as of April 15, the Department of Education will recompute approximately 40 percent of submitted records that resulted in incorrect Student Aid Indexes.

Meanwhile, on other campuses across the country, such as the U. of Cincinnati, students were being notified of their aid packages. On April 26, Cincinnati sent letters to 50 percent of its admitted first-year students, or about 10,000 people, informing them of their financial aid package. “The remainder of individuals will be notified as data continues to come from the U.S. Department of Education.”

Low-Income/Minority Students Aren’t Filing FAFSAs. According to the National College Attainment Network, the FAFSA snafu appears to have led to a drop in the number of

continued on page 3

INSIDE

- More Impact on Fall 2024
- California Dreaming
- Enrollment Trends
- News You Can Use

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MORE IMPACTS

continued from page 1

Providence College Admits 49 Percent. Providence C. in Rhode Island received 12,519 applications for its Class of 2028, and accepted 6,117 students or about 49 percent.

Rhode Island C. Admits 84 Percent. Rhode Island C. received 5,156 applications and admitted 4,325 students. Its first-year applications rose by more than 12 percent, while acceptances increased by 14 percent. Part of the increase is due to new programs in sports management, cybersecurity, biotechnology and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Its women's basketball team has won four consecutive conference championships and been undefeated the last two seasons. Its Hope Scholarship is a "transformational opportunity for Rhode Island students to earn a high-quality four-year degree, with the last two years tuition-free," according to James Tweed, dean of enrollment management.

Rhode Island School of Design Admits 14 Percent. The Rhode Island School of Design attracted 7,082 applications, fewer than last year, and accepted only 998 students or about 14 percent.

Richmond Received More Than 16,000 Apps. The U. of Richmond in Virginia received a record-breaking 16,000-plus applications for its Class of 2028, up 6 percent from last year.

"This is the fifth consecutive year of growth," Melissa Falk, dean of admission, told *URN* Now. Richmond admitted "an extraordinary class, and obviously we're not done," Falk told the paper in mid-April.

Roger Williams U. Still Accepting Applications. Roger Williams U. in Rhode Island normally admits about 91 percent of its applicants. This year, because of FAFSA delays, the school is still accepting applications and communicating with prospective and admitted students about financial aid options.

Southern California Admits 9.2 Percent. The U. of Southern California received more than 82,000 applications for its Class of 2028, and accepted 7,550 students for an acceptance rate of 9.2 percent, down from last year's 9.9 percent. USC admitted an additional 1,245 students for Spring 2024, according to the *Daily Trojan*. The paper also reported that this year "all students not offered admission will be given the opportunity to sign up for a Trojan Transfer Information Session during the summer..."

Temple Apps Hit Over 39,000. Temple U. in Philadelphia already has received a record-breaking 39,681 applications for this fall. As

California Dreaming

The U. of California released its admissions figures for the Class of 2028. *UC Berkeley* received 125,910 first-year applications. It admitted 14,566 students, for an admit rate of 11.6 percent. The GPA of middle 25 percent-75 percent of admitted students was 4.15-4.29.

UC Davis attracted 94,635 first-year applications and admitted 39,601 students, for an admit rate of 41.8 percent. Davis received 14,747 transfer applications and admitted 9,530 students, for a transfer admit rate of 64.6 percent.

UC Irvine fielded 121,095 first-year applications. It admitted 31,181 students, for an admit rate of 25.7 percent. It received 21,997 transfer applications and admitted 9,545 of them, for a transfer admit rate of 43.4 percent.

The U. of California at Los Angeles drew 145,904 first-year applications. It admitted 12,779 students, for an admit rate of 8.8 percent. UCLA received 23,969 transfer applications and admitted 6,180 of them, for a transfer admit rate of 25.8 percent.

UC Merced received 27,184 first-year applications and admitted 24,016 students, for an admit rate of 88.3 percent. It received 4,037 transfer applications and admitted 2,663 of them, for a transfer admit rate of 66 percent.

UC Santa Cruz attracted 68,821 first-year applications. It admitted 43,159 students, for an admit rate of 62.7 percent. Santa Cruz received 11,193 transfer applications and admitted 7,222 students, for a transfer admit rate of 64.5 percent.

UC San Diego drew 130,841 first-year applications and admitted 32,314 students, for an admit rate of 24.7 percent. San Diego received 19,964 transfer applications and admitted 12,464 of them, for a transfer admit rate of 62.4 percent.

UC Santa Barbara received 110,876 first-year applications. It admitted 30,914 students, for an admit rate of 27.9 percent. Santa Barbara attracted 17,069 transfer applications and admitted 10,302 of them, for a transfer admit rate of 60.4 percent. ■

of mid-April, Temple continued to recruit its Class of 2028. At that time, international applications were up 20 percent.

Out-of-state applications reached the highest mark in university history, including double-digit increases from Georgia at 64 percent, Illinois 49 percent, Washington D.C. 36 percent, New Jersey 12 percent, Maryland 12 percent, New York 12 percent and Texas 11 percent. Applications from the City of Philadelphia also reached an all-time high, thanks in part to the new Temple Promise financial aid grant program.

Temple recruiters also employed on-site admissions decisions for local first-generation and low-income students.

"Applying to college can be overwhelming for students trying to do something no one else in their family has done," said José Aviles, vice provost for enrollment management.

"Shortening that process by providing immediate decisions can create enthusiasm and shape aspirations. I wanted to convey to these students that they can feel comfortable calling Temple home for the next four years."

U. of Rhode Island Still Counting. The U. of Rhode Island fielded 26,800 applications, and is still counting, for its Class of 2028. Last year, it admitted about 70 percent of applicants. URI is "still in the application and FAFSA process," said Dean Libutti, associate vice president for enrollment management.

He told the *Providence Journal* that the school has seen "a growth in applications across many colleges and majors, with engineering, nursing, pharmacy, business and education as particularly popular choices this admission season."

William & Mary Admits 33 Percent. The C. of William & Mary in Virginia attracted 17,787 applications for its Class of 2028, and offered admission to 5,800 students, approximately 33 percent of applicants. Since 2020, William & Mary experienced an applications surge of about 25 percent. The college drew a record number of Early Decision applications in December, 1,586.

Admitted students come from 49 states and 65 nations. According to Tim Wolfe, associate vice president for enrollment and dean of admission, William & Mary expects to enroll about 1,650 students this fall.

William & Mary continues to be test-optional and 30 percent of those admitted did not submit test scores this year. But admitted students who did submit test scores posted 1430-1534 SAT middle 50th percentile and ACT middle 50th percentile of 33-35. Among high schools with class rank, 90 percent placed in the top 10 percent of their classes.

W&M meets 100 percent of demonstrated need of in-state Virginia residents, and last year launched a program to guarantee scholarship aid to cover at least the cost of tuition and fees for all undergraduate Pell Grant-eligible students. Its Lighting the Way scholarship supports selected out-of-state Pell Grant-eligible students.

Final Chapter. Established in 1938, Goddard C. in Vermont announced that it will close its doors at the end of this academic year. Current students can complete their degrees at the same tuition rate through a teach-out with Prescott C. "which shares Goddard's commitment to progressive education." ■

FINANCIAL

continued from page 1

students applying for federal financial aid, especially low-income and minority students. As of April 19, only 32.9 percent of the nation's high school seniors had completed the FAFSA application, 29 percent fewer than the last academic year.

In high schools with substantial minority or low-income populations, the rate of completion fell by 34 percent, compared to 26.3 percent in high-income schools. Studies show that seniors who complete the FAFSA are 84 percent more likely to go to college immediately after graduation.

Another problem that may depress fall enrollment, according to *Forbes*, is that the formulas by which the amount of aid given to students relies on "Consumer Price Index figures from years ago that don't account for recent inflation, leading to lower aid packages for some students."

STATE RESPONSES TO FAFSA PROBLEMS

Maryland Extends Deadline. The Maryland Higher Education Commission extended the deadline for FAFSA and the state's One-App to May 15. The original deadline was March 15. June 15 is the deadline for submitted documentation

New York Requires Universal FAFSA To Increase Access. During the past three years, New York Governor Kathy Hochul has expanded state funding for higher education from \$6.15 billion to \$7.58 billion in an attempt to expand access and upgrade SUNY and CUNY programs.

New York now requires all high school students and their families to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA). The governor claims that last year, New York high school students left over \$200 million in federal aid unclaimed by not filling out the form.

New York also is increasing its minimum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award from \$500 to \$1,000 and increasing the eligibility requirement from \$80,000 to \$125,000. Since its inception in 1974, TAP has provided nearly \$30 billion to more than six million New Yorkers to attend college.

West Virginia Declares Emergency. Governor Jim Justice of West Virginia declared a "State of Emergency" for education because of the issues impacting the FAFSA. According to WSAZ, Justice suspended the requirement for students to complete the FAFSA in order to qualify for the State's largest financial aid programs."

The proclamation means that students can bypass the FAFSA and apply for state funding. Those who apply for the state's promise scholarship by September 1 will receive up to \$5,500 for the 2024-2025 academic year. If a student completed a FAFSA last year and qualified for a need-based grant, they could receive up to \$3,400 for the fall semester.

TUITION AND AID

Sticker Shock. "College is too expensive for most Americans, forcing 38 percent of undergraduates to plunge deep in debt," claims a new survey from the Lumina Foundation. "Sticker Shock: Americans Say College Costs Are Too High—and Unclear," also concluded that, "Nearly three-quarters of student loan borrowers say they've delayed at least one significant life event due to debt. Even small loans, less than \$10,000, cripple families."

Also, "Nearly one-third of enrolled students said they considered leaving school in the past six months due to high costs. About 40 million Americans have some college but no degree." And "More than half of adults say cost is a 'very important' reason for not enrolling or returning to college."

Financial Aid at Elite Colleges. According to Brookings, "elite schools in the top tier also offer the most financial aid; with an average sticker price of nearly \$70,000 per year, students from low-income households only pay 15 percent of that cost."

But Brookings also found that while some "low-income students have been mobilized to apply to stronger performing colleges and to engage in advising to strengthen their applications, institutional admissions and aid, however, has lagged significantly behind—with many high-achieving students still finding a quality and affordable education out of reach."

Brookings concluded, "We encourage higher education institutions to pursue structural solutions to increase socioeconomic representation in America's selective colleges and universities. These should include revisions to existing admissions practices at most elite institutions, like preferences for legacies and children of faculty, which tend to [be privileged] students from more affluent families."

Biden Administration Approves Additional \$7.4 Billion to Student Debt Relief. About 8 million students have signed up for President Biden's Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) Plan, including 4.5 million with a zero dollar monthly payment. That means as of mid-April, one in every 10 federal student loan borrower has been approved for some relief. A total of \$153 billion in loans have been forgiven.

Goucher Nets \$55 Million Gift. Goucher C. in Maryland received a \$55 million gift from one of its alumna, the most in the school's 140-year history. It plans to use much of the money for scholarships. Grants like this also allow 100 percent of its students to study abroad.

"Equity, and inclusivity and academic excellence have been at the heart of Goucher's mission since our founding in 1885," said President Kent Devereaux. Ninety-nine percent of current Goucher students receive financial aid or scholarships of some type. ■

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

Higher Education in 2035: How to understand and prepare for the challenges ahead; The Chronicle of Higher Education; \$149; see, <https://store.chronicle.com/products/higher-education-and-2035>.

The Truth about College Admission: A Family Guide to Getting In and Staying Together,

second edition; by Brennan Barnard and Rick Clark; \$19.95; Johns Hopkins University Press; ISBN-3978-1421436371.

High School Longitudinal Study of 2009: A First Look at the 2021 Postsecondary Enrollment, Completion and Financial Aid Outcomes of Fall 2009 Ninth-Graders, National

Center for Education Statistics; download at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid+2024022&utm>.

New Poll. The Art & Science Group has published a new edition of studentPOLL that focuses on "AI and Academia: Student Perspectives and Ethical Implications." Among the findings: 69 percent of college-bound students have used generative AI and 8 percent used it in the admissions process. See, <https://www.artsci.com/>. ■

ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Undergraduate Degree Earners Decline. The number of undergraduate degree earners fell for the second year in a row in 2022-23, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. The number declined by 73,600 students or -2.6 percent.

However, more students earned a certificate that year than in any of the last 10 years. That number grew by 6.2 percent or 26,900 students. The number of associate degree earners was the lowest in any of the last 10 years.

Fresno State's Direct Admissions. More colleges and universities are launching Direct Admissions programs that automatically admit certain high school students, relieving them of the application stress. About a third of all states have at least one public university that offers the option. Fresno State, part of the

California State U. System, is taking advantage of the option with its "Bulldog Bound" program.

"For us to be able to say to our ninth graders, you can go to college, and you are conditionally accepted into Fresno State," said Misty Her, deputy superintendent of the Fresno Unified School District, where 95 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals, "I cannot tell you the way the kids light up."

Maine's Automatic Enrollment Yields Results. Nearly 300 students who were offered automatic admission to the U. of Maine System this year already accepted that offer. Maine's Direct Admissions program targets students based on their high school grades, standardized test scores and other information it receives from its high schools. Students

accepted into the program can attend any of the state's public colleges and universities, including the U. of Maine.

Transferred Enrollment is up in 2023. Enrollment of transfer students rose across the nation in the fall of 2023 by 5.3 percent over the previous year, for about 63,000 students, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Transfers from two-year to four-year colleges increased by 7.7 percent.

U. of Wisconsin-Green Bay/St. Norbert College Announce Partnership. Beginning next fall, students attending St. Norbert C. in Minnesota will be able to take classes at UWGB in German, Russian, Arabic, Oneida and engineering. They also will be able to earn an accelerated master's degree in athletic training, nutrition and integrated health, sport and exercise, psychology, and eventually, supply chain management with three years at St. Norbert's and two at UWGB.

St. Norbert's also announced 12 new academic programs, including robotics, finance, marketing and supply chain management.

UWGB students can take classes at St. Norbert in French, economics and the school's new engineering physics major.

Both schools announced faculty layoffs. "There's two choices right now in higher education," said UWGB Chancellor Michael Alexander, "...adapt or... face the consequences of not adapting."

Who Gets Off California Wait Lists? "College waiting lists, used by both public and private universities, are kind of admissions purgatory," writes the *San Francisco Chronicle*. So it wanted to know how many students actually get off the wait lists at U. of California campuses.

UCLA, the most selective UC campus, only took 3 percent of its wait list students in 2022. But for Fall 2023, it took 12 percent from its list. In Fall 2022, less than 1 percent of students on UC Berkeley's wait list were enrolled. But for Fall 2023, 24 percent of the students on its wait list were admitted.

So the answer is that it depends on the year, and varies by school or major. But, you can't switch majors in hope of getting into another major, Dale Leaman, executive director of undergraduate admissions at UC Irvine, told the paper. "It's just waiting," he said. "I know it's frustrating for students. I know it's frustrating for parents.... But we are really trying to use this process to provide as many opportunities as possible for students." ■

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TESTING TABS

Test Reinstatement. The California Institute of Technology reinstated its requirement that prospective students submit an SAT or ACT score as part of their application for next year.

A faculty Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admission Policy decided that test scores are "useful information about academic preparedness as part of a holistic consideration of all prospective students," according to *The Caltech Weekly*.

Among the Ivy League, Cornell U. in Upstate State New York also reinstated standardized test scores for all eight undergraduate programs beginning Fall 2026. Cornell remains

test-optional this coming admissions cycle, although according to the *Cornell Chronicle*, "applicants are encouraged to submit SAT and/or ACT test scores this year."

"While it seems counterintuitive, considering these test scores actually promotes access to students from a wider range of backgrounds and circumstances," said Provost Michael I. Kotlikoff. "Our analysis indicates that instituting the testing requirement likely enhances, rather than diminishes, our ability to identify and admit qualified students."

The U. of Texas also announced that it has reinstated standardized test scores for Fall 2025 applicants. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Remote College Advising. CollegePoint is a national initiative that provides remote college advising to high-achieving, low-income high school seniors across the country.

However, getting students to initiate and sustain engagement with remote advisors is challenging. A study of CollegePoint conducted by Brookings "found that 25 percent of students who sign up for the program never met with their advisor, and those who did participate had fairly modest engagement."

Three-Year Programs Coming Soon. Currently, only Brigham Young U.-Idaho and Ensign C. operate accredited three-year college programs. But that is about to change.

This year, the Indiana state legislature

passed a bill that requires all its four-year public colleges to develop three-year degree options.

According to *Inside Higher Ed*, which covered a recent College-in-3 Exchange conference, another creditor, the Higher Learning Commission, announced that it will consider authorizing three-year proposals beginning in September.

Three-year academic programs, which are common in Europe, typically reduce the number of credits needed for graduation from 120 to as low as 90. Three-year programs could help address pressing issues of affordability, student debt and degree completion.

Currently, as many as 25 percent of four-year, first-year students fail to return for a second year, in part because of cost and time. ■