

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admissions Watch

Bowdoin's Records Record Apps. Bowdoin C. in Maine received 10,966 applications for its Class of 2027, the most ever. It accepted a total of 850 students, 27 percent of whom are first-generation college students, 54 percent of whom are domestic students of color, and 7 percent of whom are international students. Nine percent of the students came from Maine.

DePaul's Freshmen—51 Percent are Students of Color. DePaul U. in Chicago enrolled a new first-year class of 2,943 students, a slight decrease from last year. Some highlights about its new freshman class: 58 percent enrolled through DePaul's Test-Optional Program, 41 percent are first-generation college students, 51 percent are students of color, 30 percent are from outside of Illinois and 6 percent are international students.

DePaul also welcomed 1,092 new transfer students, 4.6 percent more than last year. Among these students, 76 percent are under 24 years of age, 54 percent are students of color and 12 percent are from out-of-state. DePaul's 813 international students represent a growth of 66 percent over last year. Additionally, DePaul's retention rate for the 2022 freshman cohort is 87 percent, which represents an increase of 3 percent. The retention rate increased by 4 percent for black students and 6 percent for Hispanic students.

Illinois Sets Records. The flagship U. of Illinois Urbana-Champaign welcomed a record-breaking freshman class of 8,325 students. They were selected from 67,398 applicants. About 24 percent are first-generation students. Standardized tests were optional this year, but about 51 percent of enrolling students submitted scores. The average ACT was 31.5, the average SAT was 1418.

Some 1,087 international students traveled from 49 countries. Some 1,462 students

transferred into the university, the most in 10 years. The overall admit rate was 43.7 percent. Illinois' College of Liberal Arts & Sciences admitted 45.5 percent of applicants, while its Computer Science program admitted only 7.5 percent. Total undergraduate student enrollment hit 35,467 students, the most ever, while total enrollment grew to 56,403.

Lafayette Anticipated Supreme Court Ruling. Lafayette C. in Pennsylvania received 9,866 applications for its Class of 2027 and enrolled roughly 700 students, intentionally decreasing its class size of 784 two years ago. International students make up about 7.4 percent of the new class, while 12.5 percent are first-generation students. About 12.5 percent of the new students are Pell-eligible.

"We want to make sure that there's socioeconomic diversity on campus," said President Nicole Hurd, who has worked with underrepresented high schools and families. "I'm incredibly proud of the work we're doing to make this college an engine of opportunity."

Lafayette anticipated the Supreme Court's summer decision on race. "For the fall of '23, we did not look at race at all because we anticipated what the Supreme Court was going to do," said Forrest Stuart, vice president for enrollment management. "It actually worked out fine. We have a very strong applicant pool from low-income students, and we have partnerships across the nation [such as] the Posse program." Twenty-five percent of domestic students from the classes of 2026 and 2027 identify as people of color, the highest rates in Lafayette's history.

Michigan Enrolls 52,000. The U. of Michigan Ann Arbor became the state's largest campus this fall when it enrolled 52,065 students, up 2 percent from 2022. UM Ann Arbor surpassed Michigan State U.'s 51,000

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Financial Matters

Biden Makes Second Attempt at Student Loan Cancellation. After the Supreme Court in June rejected an earlier plan at student loan cancellation, the Biden Administration is trying again. It is using a provision in the Higher Education Act that gives the education secretary authority to waive student loans. It has assembled a committee of outside negotiators to help fashion the plan.

But the second attempt is not likely to be as sweeping as the first one. In June, the court concluded that the education secretary has power "to make modest adjustments and additions to existing provisions, not transform them."

Thus far, the Biden Administration has approved \$127 billion in debt cancellation for nearly 3.6 million borrowers. *CB* will keep you updated.

California State U. Tuition Increases. The California State U. Board of Trustees approved a multi-year tuition increase of 6 percent a year that will take tuition from \$5,742 this year to \$7,248 for the 2028-29 school year. Most CSU campuses also have fees that range from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year. Some of this money will be dedicated to financial aid.

Colorado Offers Free College for Some Engineering Students. The U. of Colorado Boulder is helping low-income engineering students from Colorado to earn their degrees free under an expansion of its CU Promise program. This is the first free college program specific to one academic field, and was made

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ADMISSIONS WATCH

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students. That includes 7,466 first-year students and 1,414 transfer students. New students were culled from 93,745 first-year and transfer applications.

Students of color make up 44 percent of this year's incoming class. The number of African American students increased by 25 percent to 475 students. First-generation students increased by 9 percent, while students from low-income backgrounds increased by 1 percent. More than 50 percent of incoming students hail from Michigan. And, more than 24,000 undergraduates received financial aid, totaling \$350 million this fall.

The number of U.M. Ph.D. students increased by 5 percent to 5,742, but first-year Ph.D. students soared by 32 percent over last year.

"We also strive to make the university accessible to students from all backgrounds," said Erica Sanders, assistant vice provost of enrollment management and executive director of undergraduate admissions, "providing in-person and virtual experiences, travel stipends and fee waivers to ensure that all are able to truly experience the university, either in-person or in their home."

Pitt Fielded 58,000 Apps for 2023. The U. of Pittsburgh attracted a record-breaking 58,000 applications for Fall 2023, Chancellor Joan Gabel told her Board of Trustees. Last year, Pitt received 53,000 applications.

"Our incoming class is the most diverse, the most talented and the most global in university history," she said

However, overall enrollment at the Pittsburgh campus remained relatively stable at 33,771 students. Enrollment at Pitt's regional campuses saw slight declines at the Johnstown and Bradford campuses, while enrollment was stable at the Greensburg campus.

Purdue Manages its Most Selective Class. Purdue U. in Indiana received 72,800 applications for its Class of 2027, up 82 percent since 2013 when the Common App was adopted. Purdue admitted 50 percent of those students. Admitted students posted a high school GPA of 3.78.

Total enrollment at Purdue's West Lafayette campus reached an all-time high of 52,211 students, 39,170 of whom are undergraduates from all 50 states and 120 countries. More than 105,000 students study at Purdue U. across various modalities and locations. For the past 12 years, Purdue has managed to keep its tuition constant, at \$9,992 per year for Indiana residents and \$28,794 for out-of-state students.

QS World University rankings listed Purdue

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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possible by a grant from a local engineering firm, Campos IPC. The program now serves 3,500 students.

"We're really looking forward to having other schools and colleges try to expand this across the university," Keith Molenaar, dean, told LongmontLeader.com.

Oakland Insures "Golden Guarantee."

The Golden Guarantee at Oakland U. in Michigan insures that students with family incomes of \$70,000 or less and assets less than \$50,000 can attend college tuition-free for four years. The program has already helped over 7,700 students with \$44 million in aid. OU also helps students with their on-campus housing costs. But students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible. The FAFSA form for 2024-25 will be available in December 2023.

Wesleyan Eliminates Loans. Wesleyan U. in Connecticut announced that it will no longer include loans as part of its financial aid packages in order to improve affordability and accessibility. It had eliminated them for low-income students in the past, and this development will help middle-class families.

at number 27 overall in the U.S., number 10 among U.S. public universities and number 99 among 1,500 global universities.

Trinity Celebrates its 200th Year. Trinity C. in Connecticut kicked off its 200th academic year by welcoming 592 students in its Class of 2027. They were selected from 6,510 first-year applications, a five-year high. Some 274 students were admitted through Early Decision 1 and 2. Trinity C. remains test optional. The overall acceptance rate for the new class was 33 percent.

Students of color account for 23 percent of the new class, while 16 percent are first-generation students. International students make up 13 percent of the class and traveled from 46 different countries. About 60 percent of the new class is supported by over \$20 million in financial aid.

Washington & Lee Enroll New QuestBridge Scholars. Washington & Lee U. in Virginia welcomed 502 new undergraduate students to its campus. About 24 percent are domestic students of color, while 12 percent are the first-generation in their family to attend college, 10 percent are children of W&L alumni and 20 are QuestBridge Scholars.

"The intelligence, enthusiasm and curiosity [applicants] displayed during the application process are already being demonstrated

"We believe it is important to build a diverse, energetic learning environment comprised of people who think critically and creatively and who value the independence of mind and generosity of spirit," said Amin Abdul-Malik González, vice president and dean of admission and financial aid.

Wisconsin Extends Bucky's Tuition Promise.

The U. of Wisconsin Madison has rolled out a new financial aid program that is an extension of the six-year old Bucky Tuition Promise. The new program, the Bucky Pell Pathway, provides tuition and fees, as well as housing, food, books and other educational expenses for Wisconsin students who are Pell Grant eligible.

Meanwhile, the U. of Wisconsin System, seeking to reverse enrollment declines over the past decade and boost graduation rates, plans to launch a direct admissions program for eligible Wisconsin high school students starting next summer. Ten of the system's 13 universities will participate. UW-Madison, UW-La Crosse and UW-Eau Claire are the exceptions.

"I hope that direct admissions will not only grow enrollment but also streamline the admissions process and help expand the number of Wisconsin residents with a UW degree," said system president Jay Rothman. ■

across campus," Sally Stone Richmond, vice president for admissions and financial aid, told *The Columns*.

Wheaton Returns to Pre-Pandemic Levels.

Wheaton C. in Illinois enrolled 595 students in its Class of 2027, exceeding its goal of 500. The number almost returned to the college's pre-pandemic level of 600 new students, including transfers, Silvio Vazquez, chief enrollment officer, told *The Wheaton Record*.

"Joining the Common App exposed us to more students," Vazquez told the paper, "but also to a much more cluttered environment because students are applying to more colleges than ever before." Wheaton joined the Common App in 2017.

According to the student paper, Wheaton works on an "enrollment funnel," a common approach colleges take to broaden their application pool. In this strategy, a college first narrows down which rising juniors and seniors in high school may be a good fit. The marketing office advertising [hyper-targeted digital marketing] focuses on students that come up during the search process, and then those who inquire about the institution or start applications, receive increasingly specialized attention. By the time students start an application, the enrollment officers are the primary handlers of their cases and will provide individualized assistance." ■

New Ways of Getting In

California Seeks Transfers. The U. of California campuses are seeking more community college transfers. To that end, UC sponsors immersive experiences such as “Journey to UC,” in which potential students experience campus academic and social life and are assured that the UC campuses have resources to make sure they succeed.

According to UC, more than half of the state’s 116 community colleges “tend to be in lower-income, often rural areas...including mountainous far Northern California where geography alone can be a major obstacle to higher education.”

“More than a quarter of our undergrads transfer from a California community college, and a majority of those students have their tuition covered by grants and scholarships,” said Yvette Gullatt, vice president and vice provost for Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs.

Michigan’s Assured Admission Pact. Ten of Michigan’s 15 public universities now guarantee admission to students who posted a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher. The U. of Michigan and Michigan State U. are not part of the agreement.

Michigan Achievement Scholarships of up to \$5,500 also will help boost enrollment. The state is providing \$250 million for scholarships this year, more than double the amount awarded during the 2020-2021 academic year. An estimated 80 percent of students who graduated from Michigan high schools in 2023 are eligible for funding.

“We think that with that affordability and the assurance of being admitted to these universities, it will motivate students to consider enrolling at a public university next fall and we really hope that will turn around enrollment,” said Dan Hurley, CEO of the Michigan Association of State Universities.

Georgia’s Boasts New Direct Admissions. The Class of 2028 will be the first to benefit from the new Georgia Match Program, which offers automatic admission to 120,000 Georgia high school students with at least a “C” to any of the state’s 22 technical colleges or 23 of 26 U. of Georgia System universities.

The U. of Georgia, Georgia Tech and Georgia College and State U. are not participating, since they require standardized test scores and additional information beyond grades.

The student grades were collected by the HOPE Scholarship pro-

gram, which pays for two years of technical college tuition for Georgia students who post a “C” average, and four years of tuition at a four-year university for those who maintain their high school “B” in college.

Idaho was the first state to launch such a program. New York, New Jersey and Minnesota have similar direct admission approaches.

“The letter is going to reach students that never contemplated going to college or applying to college,” Andy Parsons, executive vice president of the Georgia Student Finance Commission, told apnews.com. “And so that’s really the big idea. We want them to know that there’s an affordable public education available to them in Georgia.”

No Supplemental Essay. According to *Forbes*, more than 80 colleges, ranging from Albion C. to Wesleyan U. do not require a supplemental essay for applications such as the Common Application or Scoir. That can lead to reduced stress, applying to a broader range of schools and help level the admissions playing field, the group says. To see the list, go to *Forbes*, October 20.

NY Schools Waived Application Fees for a Month. The State University of New York, the City University of New York and 40 other public and private New York colleges and universities designated October as New York State College Application Month.

During October, these colleges and universities waived application fees. SUNY alone includes 64 colleges and universities, while CUNY is made up of 25 campuses. CUNY also guarantees admission to New York high school graduates at all seven of its community colleges.

Williams Drops Supplemental Essay. In response to the Supreme Court’s decision on race in admissions, Williams C. in Massachusetts has dropped its supplemental essay for 2023-2024 because it may deter potential applicants. Williams has created a committee to review the process.

“At a moment when, more than ever, we are redoubling our commitment to access, we wanted to think long and hard about any part of the process that created barriers for students,” said Liz Creighton, dean of admission and student financial services.

“We’re really taking this longitudinal look at the data because admission data from the past five years is quite different than it was 10 years ago for a whole host of reasons.” ■

COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

Reading for Pleasure. The National Assessment of Educational Progress indicates that teenagers in all groups “lost ground” in reading and math. It also revealed that in 2019-20, just 17 percent of teens said they “read for fun almost every day.” In 2022-23, that number fell to only 14 percent. See, www.naep.com.

Kids & Family Reading Report. A study conducted by *Scholastic* found reading interest and ability continue to decline. After nine years of age, reading enjoyment, frequency

and perceived importance decline and do not rebound. Only 46 percent of youths age 12-17 read for enjoyment in 2022.

Other observations: In 2022, 84 percent of children played video games versus 74 percent in 2018. In 2022, 81 percent used YouTube, 84 percent watched or streamed movies, 45 percent went online for school work and 17 percent listen to audio books. See, www.scholastic.com/readingreport.

The Future of Advising: Strategies to support student success; The Chronicle of Higher

Education, Focuses on institutions that are “using advising to raise graduation rates” and “improve professional development for advisors.” Order from <https://store.chronicle.com/products/the-future-of-advising>. \$179.00.

AI Scholarship Searches. ScholarshipOwl surveyed 6,000 high school and college students and found that 92 percent want to use AI to make the scholarship application process faster; 76 percent want to use AI to help match them with fitting scholarships; 61 percent hope that AI can help them avoid fake scholarships and scholarship scams; only 4 percent were not interested in leveraging AI for scholarships. See, <https://scholarshipowl.com>. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

More Green Graduates. Between 2016 and 2021, 9 percent more students graduated from “green programs” such as environmental science, sustainable agriculture, environmental tourism and marine science, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Additionally, students who study communications, economics, engineering, law and policy can touch on aspects of sustainability and climate change.

Prominent environmental programs can be found at the U. of Washington’s College of the Environment, the Georgia Institute of Technology, Pace U., Duke U., the Pratt Institute, Tuskegee U. and Century C.

Certificate and licensing programs are also growing. For example, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, jobs such as wind turbine service technicians will increase by about 44 percent between 2021 and 2031, making it the nation’s second-fastest-growing occupation.

Miami Dade is Building New Construction Trades Institute. Miami Dade C. in Florida is developing a Construction Trade Institute at its North Campus for students seeking jobs in the growing construction and technology sectors. CTI is an initiative through MDC’s School of Continuing Education and Professional Development and will offer courses and

certificates in HVAC, welding, electrical, building maintenance, project supervision, basic construction skills, data analytics and general contracting, among other specialties. CTI is expected to increase people in the field by 34 percent.

Online Achievement Gap Widened During Pandemic. According to a new report, “From Emergency to Sustainable Online Learning: Changes and Disparities in Undergraduate Course Grades and Experiences in the Context of COVID-19,” published in the October issue of *Computers & Education*, two Cornell U. researchers found that during the pandemic the achievement gap between ethnic minority and non-minority groups grew from about a quarter of a grade lower to almost three-quarters of a grade lower. They speculated on a host of reasons, including lack of resources.

The researchers also recommended that online instructors monitor not only achievement, but also engagement to help identify struggling students.

Certificates Need New Gainful Employment Regulation. The Biden Administration has implemented a new “Gainful Employment Regulation” for for-profit and non-degree certificate programs that requires them to show that graduates can afford their yearly debt payments and that they are making more than an adult in their state who didn’t go to college.

“By implementing measures that ensure both accountability and transparency, the department will take a stand against predatory practices and safeguard the future of students and hard-earned money of taxpayers,” commented the think tank New America.

Veterinary C. Seating Increases. For the first time, first-year veterinarian students top 4,000, according to the American Association of Veterinary Medicine. From 2012 to 2023, the number of students at U.S. veterinarian colleges increased by 37.7 percent, from 2,938 to 4,047. These numbers are expected to continue to increase.

The U. of Georgia C. Veterinary Medicine increased its number of seats from 114 to 150. The U. of Florida C. of Veterinary Medicine increased its number from 119 to 150 students. Louisiana State U. School of Veterinary Medicine increased its numbers from 101 to 131. Lincoln Memorial U. Richard A. Gillespie C. in Harrogate, Tennessee, added 100 new students. ■

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

ACT Declines. About 70 percent of the 1.4 million students in the high school graduating class of 2023 who took the ACT were not prepared for college, according to the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. The Benchmarks set the minimum ACT test scores required for students to have a high probability of success and first-year college courses. The average ACT test score for students from the Class of 2023 was 19.5 out of a possible 36, a 30-year low.

“This is the sixth consecutive year of declines in average scores, with average scores declining in every academic subject,” said Janet Godwin, ACT CEO. “We are also continuing to see a rise in the number of seniors leaving high school without meeting any of the college readiness benchmarks, even as student GPAs continue to rise and students report they feel prepared to be successful in college. The hard truth is that we are not doing enough to ensure that graduates are truly ready for postsecondary success in college and career.”

FYI: New FAFSA Terminology. What was previously referred to as “Expected Family Contribution (EFC)” will now be called “Student Aid Index (SAI).” The Student Aid Index will no longer take into consideration siblings attending other colleges/universities.

Stackable Certificates. Walmart eliminated the college degree requirement for hundreds of its corporate jobs. Lorraine Stromski, vice president for associate learning and leadership, told *Forbes* that industry certifications in subjects such as technical support, cloud technology and data analysis have become increasingly popular.

A report by the Burning Glass Institute found that 46 percent of “middle-skill occupations” and 31 percent of “high-skill occupations” saw a reduction in degree requirements between 2017 and 2019.

And an analysis of the job site Indeed examined 55 million postings, and within those identified around 2,600 different skills that employers sought to fill.

Wyoming Shifts to Competency Learning. Nine Wyoming school districts are the first to receive training in a statewide shift to competency-based and student-centered learning, in which students demonstrate mastery of a subject, rather than being judged by test scores and seat-time. The goal is to move students away from rote memorization to being able to apply what they learn.

Hood C. and Washington C. Each Received \$54 Million for Scholarships. Two Maryland colleges, Hood and Washington, received \$54 million from the Hodson Trust for scholarships. It was the Trust’s final act before dissolving. Washington C. will award the money to students with at least a 3.3 GPA who apply by December 1.

Final Chapters. Since 2016, 91 private colleges have closed or merged, according to a recent CNBC. Most of those ended operation at the beginning of the pandemic. And this trend could accelerate with the next demographic dip in high school graduates predicted to begin in 2025.

Since about 95 percent of U.S. colleges rely on tuition, competition for students has become fierce and some schools are likely to lose out and shut down. ■

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