

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Early App Talk Continues

NOVEMBER 1 and November 15 deadlines for early applications have passed, and some universities are already painting a picture of what is happening inside admissions offices this season. Northwestern U., for example, reported that Early Decision applications are up more than 25 percent for the class of 2015. About 2,100 ED apps had been counted so far. Northwestern said this is, in part, because it made a commitment to recruiting more students of color and to increasing its commitment for financial aid.

Early Applications Up at Georgetown. Early applications increased by nearly 8 percent this year, according to thehoya.com in

November. The school received 6,609 early applications, a jump from 6,124 last year, for its November 1 deadline. The school has seen Early Action applications increase steadily overall in the past several years, with a slight decrease last year.

Georgetown U.'s peer institutions, however, tended to see a much higher application jump, perhaps because, as Georgetown said, it chose not to "hyper-recruit" this year. For example, U. of Chicago early apps were up nearly 19 percent, MIT 14 percent and Fordham U. 8.

Charles Deacon, dean at Georgetown, said that "the changes in our pool might be more reflective of any changes out there in how
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Scholarship Scoops

THIS MONTH, *CB* noted a larger than usual number of scholarships announced, often sponsored only in certain local areas, or for specific groups. But the news couldn't be more timely.

Comcast Leaders & Achievers Scholarship. The cable company Comcast announced it is now receiving nominations for its 2011 Comcast Leaders and Achievers Scholarship Program which will give \$1,000 to high school seniors for college. For the past decade, \$13.4 million has been given to 13,300 students.

"Each year we look forward to recognizing and rewarding a new class of emerging young leaders with Comcast *Leaders and Achievers* scholarships," said Steve Hackley, vice president of Comcast. "We are proud to recognize students who not only demonstrate strong leadership skills and academic achievement, but those who also give back to their communities...." The deadline for nominations is Dec. 10. See, www.comcast.com/scholarships.

Renewal Scholarships from Mining Company. Alpha Natural Resources opened the application process for its 2011 High School Scholars Awards, 53 renewable scholarships to high school seniors varying from \$1,000 to \$2,500. Alpha will provide applications to 150 high schools in areas surrounding its offices across the nation. The awards will be based on academic performance, leadership and extra-curricular activities, honors and awards, work experience, recommendations, goals and plans
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Financial Worries in the States

STATE NEWS continued to dominate the admissions picture in the last month. Some state universities have had record enrollments. But now there are new concerns.

Aid Pool Running Low in North Carolina. The state lottery and unclaimed property funds have been fueling the grants given to low-income students in North Carolina, according to *The Charlotte Observer*. Historically, these grants do not have to be repaid. But with tuition increases and with more students applying for aid, more than \$210 million was awarded this year to nearly 100,000 low-income and middle-income students. Now Janet Cowell, the state treasurer, has warned that funds could be depleted by 2012. "That means money available for an incoming college freshman for financial aid will not be there by senior year," she said.

Prepaid College Tuition Plan Halts. In 1997, Tennessee began a prepaid college tuition program called BEST, the Baccalaureate Education System Trust. But it was suspended at the end

of November because investment earnings "lagged far behind dramatic tuition increases in recent years," said *The Commercial Appeal*. When the program started, proponents thought tuition would increase annually by 6 percent and earnings on the investments 7.5 percent. In reality, tuition averaged 9 percent and earnings 2.5 percent.

"Can NY Afford Higher Education?" That was the question *Crain's New York Business* asked November 28 as the state universities made budget cuts, reducing departments and programs. SUNY Albany said it planned to eliminate five departments, including French, and 160 full-time faculty members. SUNY Geneseo cut 54 positions and three departments including communicative disorders and sciences. This comes despite record enrollments at the SUNY campuses.

The reason: New York State faces a \$9 billion budget gap. Yet average tuition and fees at four-year colleges in New York is below the national average, at \$5,761 compared to \$7,020
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nationally. The debate is centered on whether to raise tuition, increase out-of-state tuition or continue to cut funding.

Less Aid in Idaho. Last year, the Albertson Foundation began a statewide campaign to encourage more students to attend college in Idaho, according to the *Argus Observer*. The good news is that students heard the call and public universities in the state have reported higher enrollments. The bad news is that state scholarships and other aid programs have lost funding. The aid went from \$10.2 million to \$7.1 million in the past two years. In addition, the Promise Scholarship, created in 2002, dropped from \$600 a year to \$400 a year. "It puts us in the toughest spot because you have a greatly increased demand for our product, for education, and we have fewer resources to deliver it," said board spokesman Mark Browning.

OTHER NEWS FROM PUBLIC U.'S

Colorado Colleges Enroll More Latinos.

Five years after the federal government created the label, "Hispanic Serving Institutions," more Colorado schools are focused on recruiting Latino students, and the efforts are starting to pay off, according to *The Denver Post* last month. In order for a school to become a Hispanic Serving Institution, the college or university must be at least 25 percent Latino—a status that can lead to federal funding.

Latino's make up nearly 10 percent of students attending a four-year public college in the state, according to the Colorado Dept. of Ed. Metropolitan State C. of Denver had a 16 percent Latino population this year, an increase from 13 percent last year. And 28 percent of the entire student body is comprised of students of color, up from 25 percent last year. Judi Diaz Bonaccuisti, associate vice president, attributed the growth to mentoring programs that help students through the admission process.

The U. of Colorado Boulder has also grown its Latino population. This year, CU's Latino enrollment was nearly 7 percent, a jump from 6 percent last year, and overall student of color enrollment was 16 percent, an increase from 15 percent. The university is also strengthening its community partnerships to increase its Latino population.

Higher Ed Numbers Mostly Up in Utah.

Dixie State C., as well as eight other Utah schools, saw a decrease in the rate of enrollment growth this year, said the *Dixie Sun* in November. But still, according to David Roos, executive director of enrollment services, enrollment increased 11 percent, down from the 23 percent growth of last year. A total of 8,755 students enrolled, with 1,828 students in the incoming first-year class and 560 students

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

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for the future and unique personal or familial situations. See, www.alphanr.com.

NAACP Scholarship Programs. The Legal Defense and Educational Fund of the NAACP announced it is accepting applications for The Herbert Lehman Scholarship, named after a former Governor of New York. The scholarship is for high school students and college freshmen who have advanced "the cause of civil rights and/or serving the public interest." The LDF also launched "The Young Scholars Video Diaries," tracking five of the 2010 recipients on their academic journey. For more info see, <http://naacpldf.org/scholarships>.

Hispanic Students Scholarship Awards.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities announced that applications are open through January 28, 2011, for its scholarship program for Hispanic high school seniors. The amounts range throughout the country. And four students will receive a national scholarship award of \$100,000. See, www.rmhc.org.

Scholarships for Students Impacted by Rheumatoid Arthritis.

It started as a pilot program two years ago, but has been so successful that UCB, the biopharmaceutical company, will award 30 scholarships of up to \$10,000 each

to students or family members with rheumatoid arthritis. Students may pursue an undergraduate or graduate degree or trade school program. Deadline: March 18. See, www.reachbeyondra.com/scholarship/default.aspx.

Scholarship Promise to New Haven Students.

Yale U. created a buzz last month when it announced the creation of New Haven Promise, a scholarship program funded mostly by the school that gives full scholarships to high-achieving New Haven public school students to any public college or university in Connecticut. According to *The Yale Daily News*, the scholarship will also include \$2,500 to students who have received other scholarships or who choose to attend a Connecticut private institution, including Yale. To be eligible: Students must be New Haven residents, have a 3.0 GPA in high school, keep a 2.5 GPA in college, show a 90 percent attendance rate and finish 40 hours of community service. See, ournewhaven.org.

Good Neighbor Scholarship.

In a similar move, Northwestern U. recently launched The Good Neighbor, Great University Scholarship Program for students graduating from high schools in Chicago and Evanston, Illinois. Students can receive scholarships up to the full cost of tuition. See, www.northwestern.edu. ■

transferring into DSC.

"The economy has, of course, played a significant role in motivating students of all age groups to come back to school and improve their skill set," said Roos. "With our tuition rate so low, we are seen as a bargain when comparing costs to other Utah schools and institutions of higher learning in the western United States."

The Utah System of Higher Education reported that overall enrollment in the state's schools grew by 8,156 students or 5 percent. Utah Valley U. had an enrollment increase of nearly 14 percent. However, Southern Utah U. saw a slight decrease in students.

Enrollment Boom at UC-Davis.

U. of California Davis made history this year with a student body of 32,290 students, the result, in large part, of the high increase in transfer students, the school revealed in November. The student body size rose from last year's 32,153 students, a 0.4 percent jump. About 2,750 transfer students enrolled, the vast majority coming from California community colleges. This was an increase from 2,219 students last fall. Almost 32 percent of these students are low income, and about 43 percent said that they will be the first in their family to obtain a post-secondary degree. Frank Wada, executive director of undergraduate admissions, explained the enrollment jump as

a product of the UC system's work to increase transfers from community colleges.

In addition, UC Davis enrolled 4,501 new first-year students, a 2 percent increase from 4,412 students last year. Nearly 40 percent of these students said that they were low income and that they would be the first in their family to graduate from college.

Another Year of Record Enrollment at IU.

This year, all of Indiana U.'s campuses across the state have enrollment increases and almost all broke records, according to *Indiana Alumni Magazine's* November/December issue. IU East saw a 15 percent jump, from 2,924 students last year to 3,365 enrolled this year. Flagship IU Bloomington has the most students at 42,464, up 117 students or 0.3 percent from last year. IU-Purdue U. Indianapolis has 30,566 students enrolled, up from 30,383 last year.

Historic Enrollment at UT-El Paso.

The U. of Texas at El Paso also reached record enrollment rates this fall, with 22,106 students, a 5 percent increase from last year, according to KVIA, ABC-TV. UTEP also had its largest-ever first-year enrollment bump, with 4,390 students enrolled, a 10 percent increase. Enrollment has grown steadily since 2002 when 17,232 undergraduate students attended. ■

Stealth Applications

Editor's Note: Each year Dick Jones travels the country visiting colleges. Here he shares with CB readers a trend he has been tracking this fall as he visits campuses.

"WHO ARE YOU?" "AND HOW DID YOU FIND US?" That's what admissions officers are asking students this year as they note the proliferation of "stealth" applications to their schools.

"Two years ago we had a handful of stealth applicants," said Raymond Brown, dean of admissions, Texas Christian U. in Fort Worth. "Last year, we had 14,000 applications and around 3,500 of those were stealth applicants. We're seeing large numbers of stealth apps this year too."

Stealth applicants are persons whose first contact with the institution is an application to enroll. They have not gone through the usual admissions "funnel." Traditionally, students learned about a school through a college fair, high school visit or by receiving mailed literature. They made an inquiry to the college for more information, or visited a campus to get an admissions tour or interview. And finally, they applied.

Today, colleges have made it so easy to apply online that most students do—often without any previous contact at all. John F. Sullivan, dean of admissions, Eckerd C. in St. Petersburg, Florida, said that Eckerd received 35 percent of its applications from stealth applicants in 2009 compared to 15 percent in 2005.

At Messiah C. in Grantham, Pennsylvania, stealth apps are running at just under 17 percent this year. John Chopka, vice president for enrollment management, said, "It is perplexing for admissions officers everywhere to think that one in six applicants is showing up for the first time when they apply."

A PROBLEM FOR ADMISSIONS OFFICES

Why is that a problem? TCU's Ray Brown explains that colleges, especially private colleges, look favorably on students who demonstrate that their school is the right place for the applicant, not a second choice. Since stealth apps have zero history with the institution before applying, it is hard for admissions officers to gauge their true level of interest.

"Colleges want students who want to be at that particular institution," he said. "It does nobody any good to have an unhappy student because often once they are enrolled they are mentally preparing to transfer."

Sewanee: The U. of the South in Tennessee received 698 stealth apps last year representing 25 percent of the applicant pool. In 2005, they received only 193. "For stealth applicants... we don't have much time to build any rapport when this is our first contact," said Lee Ann Afton, dean. "We have to assume that they know enough about Sewanee since we made their college list, but we need to encourage them to visit campus and ask the questions that are important to them."



Dick Jones

ACCOUNTING ISSUES

Still, stealth apps are seen by some as a complication that schools have brought upon themselves. Brown noted that while prospects who "stealth app" were previously unknown to the institution, their arrival is not unexpected. Colleges and universities buy thousands of names of high school students from various sources and reach out to them via e-mail and other means. Many stealth applications come from that pool.

However, not all schools count stealth applications the same way. Western New England C. in Springfield, Massachusetts, hasn't seen an increase because it counts as stealth applicants only those persons outside the universe of names the college has gathered on its own.

"Last year, the total was 132, or less than three percent," said Charles Pollock, vice president.

WEBSITES NOW PARAMOUNT

The trend makes a college's website quality absolutely essential, according to Greg Eichhorn, dean of admission, Albright C. in Reading, Pennsylvania. "You need to make sure people are evaluating and 'shopping' you all the time."

At Gustavus Adolphus C. in St. Peter, Minnesota, stealth apps are running at 20 percent of the applicant pool this year, up by one-half of one percent over last year. David Kogler, associate director of admissions, said, "While we'd like to be able to 'push' communications to these students before they apply; we know that many have had contact unrecorded with us before—online, at college fairs, or through unofficial visits. After all, something about Gustavus interested these students enough to cause them to apply. So, some of our messages have gotten through. Stealth applicants are a problem if you're not confident about the quality of your website. We think ours tells an authentic story."

Stealth apps usually come early in the admissions cycle, Glenn Bozinski, director of admissions, Misericordia U. in Dallas, Pennsylvania, observed. For example, at Misericordia, stealth apps are 26 percent of the total so far this year compared to 22 percent last year. "The better and more comprehensive your website is," said Mr. Bozinski, "the less likely a student is to feel they need the personal interaction of a visit in their early stages of exploration."

STUDENTS TAKE CONTROL

Sewanee's Afton concluded, "Students are redefining how they conduct their college search. There is so much in the media about college admissions, and students are bombarded with publications and e-mails from colleges. Stepping away from the traditional approach is a way to have control over the search. They are tuned in, but have chosen to tune out many traditional approaches."

Dick Jones is principal, Dick Jones Communications, a national media relations service for colleges and universities.

THE BOOKSHELF

Asians in the Ivory Tower: Dilemmas of Racial Inequality in American Higher Education, Robert T. Teranishi; (Teacher's College Press); ISBN 978-0-8077-5130-5; \$31.95; www.tpress.com.

The Lost Soul of Higher Education: Corporatization, the Assault on Academic Freedom, and the End of the American University, Ellen Schrecker; 290 pages; (The New Press); ISBN 978-1-59558-400-7; \$27.95; www.thenewpress.com.

Paying for College without Going Broke, 2011 Edition, Kalman A. Chany and Geoff Martz, foreword by Bill Clinton; 324 pages; (Random

House/Princeton Review); ISBN 978-0-375-42791-6; \$20; www.PrincetonReview.com.

50 Successful Harvard Application Essays: What Worked for Them Can Help You Get into the College of Your Choice, Third Edition, with analysis by the staff of *The Harvard Crimson*; (St. Martin's Griffin); ISBN 978-0-312-62438-5; \$14.99; www.stmartins.com.

EARLY APPS

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students are approaching college applications in the current climate.”

Yale’s Early Applications Stay the Same.

Despite early application increases at many other schools, Yale U.’s numbers remained similar to those from last year, according to *The Yale Daily News* in November. The school received 5,257 early apps this year, down from 5,261 last year—a difference of just four applications. Stanford U. and U. of Pennsylvania, on the other hand, saw early applications increase at 7 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

Jeff Brenzel, dean of admissions at Yale, argued that the university wants to attract consistently strong applicants, rather than see an increase in early application volume. “For the most selective schools in particular, you want to know whether your counts of the most competitive applicants are holding steady or increasing, as distinct from whether more

students with little chance of admission are applying,” he said.

BU ED Apps Stable. Boston U. received 879 ED applications this fall for the Class of 2015, according to *The Daily Free Press*. This is 18 fewer than last year, a 2 percent decrease. “While the number is a decline, that’s really a stable number,” said Colin Riley, a spokesman for BU. Some students speculated that the early numbers may be down at some private universities because of a fear there will not be enough financial aid.

U. of Virginia Adopts Early Action. In 2007, the U. of Virginia joined other institutions in abolishing Early Decision. But last month it announced it was instituting an Early Action program. High school seniors may apply Early Action to the U. of Virginia beginning fall 2011. The deadline will be November 1, 2011 and admission offers will be nonbinding. Other students can still apply under regular decision

by Jan. 1, 2012.

Harvard Mulls Reversing its Early Admissions Policy. Three years ago Harvard eliminated Early Action. But according to *The Harvard Crimson*, the College is studying the issue. “At the moment, we don’t anticipate any changes,” said William R. Fitzsimmons, dean. “But we’re a dynamic institution.”

Roundup of Other Headlines on Early Action. *The Washington Post* reported November 27 that Early Decision applications to the U. of Richmond were up 38 percent to 579 students. “I firmly believe that many, many more families are interested in liberating themselves from the anxiety of having to wait until April 1,” Gil Villanueva, dean, said.

And elsewhere, early applications to Boston C. are up 7 percent and U. of Chicago 19 percent, according to a report in *The New York Times*. Duke and Johns Hopkins were also up 14 percent and Rice up 15 percent. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

A number of colleges recently announced new programs to meet the demand for graduates in “Sustainable” Energy and the STEM fields.

New Major in “Smart Grid” Technology.

This fall, Cincinnati State U. began offering an associate degree focusing on “Smart Grid” technology. The major falls under the power systems engineering technology program. Students will look at the way homes, businesses and industries use electrical power. Larry Feist, chairman of the energy efficiency and renewable energy program, explained that the major gives students both technical skills in an emerging field and specialized knowledge that could apply to long-term changes in electrical systems.

New Major in Sustainability Science.

Furman U. in South Carolina began offering a new major this fall in “sustainability science,” one of the first universities in the world to offer such a program, the university said. Students can earn a B.S. degree through the department of earth and environmental sciences. According to Furman, the only other institution in the U.S. to offer sustainability science is Kean U. in New Jersey. “The sustainability science major prepares students to think more analytically about complete societal issues,” said Angela Halfacre, an associate professor at Furman.

SUNY Canton Offers New Tech Degree.

SUNY Canton now offers an associate degree in general technology, the school announced recently. Upon completion, students can

transfer into a four-year engineering technology program, such as alternative and renewable energy systems, industrial technology management and information technology. “The General Technology degree program allows students to design an individualized program...,” said David J. Wells, dean, Canino School of Engineering Technology.

Creating Interest in STEM.

Saint Leo U. in Florida has created a new minor in engineering for students in any academic major, the university announced this fall. The aim is to strengthen technical and critical-thinking skills and create “more opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics,” the university said. The 18-credit minor can be combined as a sequence with other subjects such as biology or environmental science. The first courses will be available spring 2011.

New College of Design, Engineering and Commerce.

Philadelphia U., founded in 1884, with 3,500 students in 60 undergraduate and graduate programs, announced it is building a new 39,000 square-foot College of Design, Engineering and Commerce to open in fall 2011. The program will integrate various disciplines in engineering and business and focus on teamwork, collaboration and connections with industry partners. “This is happening exactly at a time when innovation is universally recognized as a critical element in our country’s current economic recovery...,” said Ronald G. Kander, dean of the college. ■

P.S. Higher Acceptance Rates for Legacies?

With this year’s application cycle ending soon, the debate over whether or not legacies receive preferential treatment has resurfaced once again, according to the *Orient* in November. In fact, Richard Kahlenberg, author of *Affirmative Action for the Rich: Legacy Preferences in College Admissions*, claimed that 75 percent of the top 100 universities consider legacy status in the application. Almost all of the top 100 liberal arts colleges do as well.

Princeton U., for example, accepted nearly 42 percent of legacy applicants last year, as compared to 9 percent of non-legacy students. U. of Pennsylvania offered admission to nearly 34 percent of legacies in 2008, twice the 16 percent of non-legacy applicants admitted. Bowdoin C.’s Office of Institutional Research looked at data going back to the Class of 1997 and found that 54 percent of legacies were accepted on average over the last 17 years. Thus, the acceptance rate for legacies is 2.15 times as high as the rate for other students.

Scott Meiklejohn, dean of admissions at Bowdoin, told the *Orient* that the average admission rate for students with a legacy for the past three classes is 44 percent. “The level of competition also means that many strong legacy candidates who have turned in very good high school records at excellent schools will not be admitted,” he said. ■

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

(And don’t forget, you can renew your subscription and follow the “Admissions Story-of-the-Day” over the winter break on our home page at www.collegeboundnews.com.)