

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

Vol. 25, No. 2

October 2010

Early Applications Debate Heating Up

COLLEGES ACROSS THE COUNTRY are beginning to report an increase in early applications... already. At George Washington U., for example, over 3,000 students turned in applications early, according to *The GW Hatchet*. Although GW's Early Decision deadline is not until November 2 and Early Decision II and Regular Admission are January 10, some students turned in their applications on the first day of the Common Application's start date.

The New York Times also recently reported that a record number of students have submitted early applications at schools all over the country. College officials speculate that students are worried about getting into college and believe that the earlier they turn in their application, the more likely they are to be accepted. Yet Colin Riley, spokesman at Boston U., told *The Times* that the school would rather have students turn in their application closer to the regular deadline to make their case as good as possible. "... early is not critical," he said. "It doesn't make a difference."

That message hasn't been heard. The BurlingtonFreePress.com noted recently that at the U. of Vermont, 49 percent of applications for fall 2010 were Early Action, up from 14 percent since 2000. Of these, 77 percent were admitted, compared to 70 percent overall. Elizabeth Wiser, admissions director, noted, "We apply the same admissions criteria."

In Indiana, colleges are actually asking students to apply early because of the larger than normal enrollment rates at both the flagship schools and their regional campuses. Purdue U. Calumet, for example, had to close admission for the fall term earlier than usual, according to the post-trib.com. Purdue U. North Central had a 17 percent increase in applications and a 7 percent growth in enrolled

students for this fall. Indiana U. Northwest's student registration spiked 22 percent.

Both Purdue U. West Lafayette and Indiana U. Bloomington have upped their admission standards. Purdue automatically defers students to other campuses if there is not room on the West Lafayette campus. The result was that Purdue Calumet rejected around 10 percent of its applicants, and then recommended students apply to Ivy Tech Community C. The community college, in turn, saw enrollment double at its Northwest Indiana campus last year, growing to 10,000 students from 6,000 in 2008.

OTHER PUBLIC U. ISSUES

The enrollments this fall at other public universities continue to dominate the news.

Engineering Interest Up. Enrollment at Florida State U.-Panama City was up over 10 percent—1,220 students compared to 1,106 last fall, according to newsherald.com. The increase is due, in part, to the 37 percent spike in engineering students and the 22 percent rise in computer science students. Other colleges report seeing increased interest in computer science.

Predictions Surpassed. The U. of Arkansas had "another record enrollment year" with more than 20,700 students, up from 19,849 last year. About 3,458 degree-seeking freshmen enrolled, an increase of 500 over fall 2009. The C. of Education and Health Professions enrolled more students than predicted. The J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering and the Sam M. Walton College of Business also "hit record undergraduate numbers."

Most of the incoming students from Arkansas have support from the Arkansas Challenge Scholarship Program, funded by the state lottery. According to Suzanne McCray, vice provost for enrollment services, these scholarships have contributed to increases in the number of in-state students.

In-migration to Georgia. More than half of the incoming students at the U. of Georgia migrated from another state, according to CBSAtlanta.com. Of the 6,100 new undergraduates, 4,700 are freshmen. And 29 percent of freshmen identify themselves as non-caucasian, up from 22 percent in 2009. The entering freshmen had grade-point averages of 3.83, SAT scores of 1264, up one point from last year. While 35 percent of new students have parents or siblings who attended UGA, 6 percent are the first in their family to go to college.

Numbers Spike in Nebraska. The U. of Nebraska had an enrollment spike this year with nearly 49,900 students attending the school, according to Sioux City Journal.com. The Lincoln Campus enrolled 19,400 undergraduate students, a 2 percent increase. Undergraduate student rates are 3 percent higher at all four campuses and the agriculture college. First-year students were up 3.5 percent.

Diversity Increases. For the first time in its history, less than half of the U. of Texas at Austin freshmen identified themselves as white students, according to a preliminary

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EARLY APPLICATIONS DEBATE

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report from the university. The number of first-time freshmen who identified their ethnicity/race as "white" on admissions information totaled 47.6 percent, compared to 51.1 percent in fall 2009. First-time freshmen enrollment figures increased for Hispanic and "black ethnic/race groups," as well as for foreign students.

Hispanic students, for example, made up a little over 23 percent of the freshmen, compared to slightly less than 20 in fall 2009. The total black student category is a little over five percent compared to less than five percent in fall 2009. The Asian-only category, however, dipped to a little over 17 percent, down from more than 19 percent in fall 2009. According to university officials, the figures reflect changes in the demographics of Texas.

Of the 14,583 first-time freshmen offered admission for fall 2010, 7,275 (50 percent) enrolled. Seventy-six percent of all entering freshmen were automatically admitted under the Texas "Top 10 Percent Law." (FYI, the average ACT score for the entering class was 27, and the average SAT composite score for mathematics, writing and critical reading was 1819.)

AMONG THE PRIVATES

Record International Enrollment.

Kalamazoo C. in Michigan has a record number of international students this fall, the result of a deliberate attempt to make the college campus reflect more of the world's diversity, according to the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. This fall, 12 percent, or 41 of the 343 freshmen are international students, up from just 1.7 percent two years ago. Since the college sends more than 80 percent of its students to study abroad, Eileen Wilson-Oyeleran, president, said, "...we create global citizens by sending our students abroad," but also by "global connections" on campus.

Over-enrollment at Syracuse U. An unusually high acceptance rate at Syracuse U. led to over-enrollment this fall, according to *The Daily Orange*. Last year, 22,925 students applied to Syracuse for fall enrollment, and 13,694 were admitted this spring, making the school's acceptance rate nearly 60 percent this year, a higher rate than most peer institutions, according to Syracuse. The school wanted to enroll 3,300, but 3,467 students accepted an admission offer.

Syracuse's acceptance rate had been slowly decreasing, with the rate at just over 60 percent in 2009 and over 80 percent in 2002. Although some schools keep their acceptance rate lower to increase selectivity, Eric Spina, chief academic officer, said, "Selectivity is not the thing to optimize around. What we want to optimize around is the quality at large of the incoming class."

Four-year Graduation Guarantee Helps Apps. The U. of the Pacific in Stockton,

Community College Matters

Enrollments Up. According to Donald Spell, vice president, Pitt Community C., the economic recession, and increasing tuition rates at other schools, explain most of the enrollment spike at community colleges throughout the country. Pitt, for example, had a historically high summer enrollment, with 3,903 students attending classes. The school received 27 percent more applications for the fall than in June of last year.

Jackson C.C. in Michigan also had record enrollment numbers this fall, according to mlive.com. At the start of school this year, Jackson had 7,826 students registered for classes at its three campuses and online, whereas at the same time last year, 7,778 were enrolled. Officials there state enrollment rates have increased because of problematic local and state economies, and that although Jackson's tuition has gone up, it is still less than the cost of a four-year school.

Community Colleges Go Global. Houston

C.C. was chosen to establish the Community C. of Qatar, that nation's first community college, with graduates of the Qatar school earning a degree from HCC, according to the *Houston Chronicle*. The C.C. of Qatar will use HCC's curriculum and will be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Qatar has developed Education City, a compound outside the capital. HCC joins Texas A&M U., Carnegie Mellon U., Georgetown U., Virginia Commonwealth U., Northwestern U. and Weill Cornell Medical C. in operating programs in Qatar. The region's interest in community colleges has reportedly increased particularly because those schools train the workforce and provide education to a greater percentage of the population.

HCC, in turn, has 6,600 international students enrolled, the most of any U.S. community college. The college has seen increased enrollment in recent years, with spring 2010's numbers climbing over 70,000 students. ■

California, reported a 150-student increase in its freshman class, totaling 1,043 students, a record, said recordnet.com. In spite of its \$34,132 price tag, officials there suggest that the university's promotion of four-year graduation guarantees, as well as financial aid packages including a Cal Grant matching program, made the difference. Applications for fall 2010 soared to 20,000 compared to 15,000 last year. Selectivity then increased. Incoming freshmen had a grade-point average of 3.49.

Transfers Take a Turn. Valparaiso U.'s transfer applications went up 22 percent. Officials there state that this is because many students, who applied to the school as high school seniors, ended up at two-year colleges before applying again to Valparaiso.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS TO WATCH

Foreign Student Enrollment Dips. The world financial crisis led to significant decreases in foreign enrollment at U.S. institutions over the 2008-2009 academic year, said a recent report from the National Science Foundation. In 2008, around 568,000 foreign students attended U.S. universities, with 548,000 studying in the fields of science and engineering.

Foreign graduate enrollment surpasses undergraduate enrollment numbers. The Council of Graduate Schools reported no increase in new foreign graduate enrollment and just a small increase in overall enrollment. With the world economic crisis, reduced funds for student aid and the decreasing value of international currency, students are said to be reevaluating the price of U.S. education versus the benefits of attending programs

at home. Most foreign students come from India, China and South Korea, with Indian and Chinese students making up 47 percent of foreign enrollment.

Law School Applications Surge. Despite the plummeting number of legal positions available in the job market, law schools are seeing an increasing number of applications, according to law.com. Although the number of lawyers decreased by 4 percent last year at the largest 250 law firms in the U.S., law school applications rose 7 percent. Some colleges have seen applications increase by over 30 percent. A Kaplan Test Prep survey found that 52 percent of pre-law students were "very confident" that they could get a job after graduating from law school, but just 16 percent thought the rest of their class would have the same success.

Sarah Zearfiss, assistant dean for admissions at the U. of Michigan Law School, has seen a 20 percent increase in applicants. "I expected to see some increase in applications, maybe 5 or 10 percent," she said.

The increase in LSAT-takers, up 13 percent this year, far exceeds the 3 percent rise in applicants, which implies that many considered law school but decided the risk of not getting a job was too great. The largest growth in applications was seen at public law schools, since they tend to cost less. For example, applications increased 70 percent at the U. of Alabama School of Law, 65 percent at the U. of Maine School of Law and 37 percent at the U. of Illinois College of Law. But there was also an increase at private law schools: Applications to Cornell U. Law School rose by 50 percent, Duke U. Law School by 25 percent and Southern Methodist U. Dedman School of Law by 15 percent. ■

New Curriculum Capsules

A number of colleges are announcing new offerings this fall....

Up in Space. Arizona State U. began offering a B.A. degree in earth and environmental studies through its School of Earth and Space Exploration. The university said the program is in response to the increasing interest in “sustainability” and to companies that want more employees who have a background in “green thinking.” Students study “earth systems science,” including the scientific processes that affect the environment.

Integrative Biology Program. Bryant U. in Smithfield, Rhode Island, is launching a new bachelor of science in biology, uniting it with other disciplines. According to the university, what sets this major apart “is an intensive research program that cuts across disciplines.” Students work one-on-one with faculty mentors to develop a research project. Majors also conduct research abroad including centers in China.

New B.A. in Jewish Studies. The U. of California Santa Cruz is offering a B.A. degree in Jewish Studies this fall. The focus is on Jewish thought, literature, art and history with classes taught in the arts, humanities and social sciences. The program “builds bridges between Jewish culture and the many other cultures that exist in today’s world,” said Georges Van Den Abbeele, dean.

Theater Education Degree. SUNY Potsdam has created a theater education program, the first in the SUNY system. The B.A. degree is a collaboration between the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Education and Professional Studies. Students in the program will train in all aspects of theater from “lighting and stagecraft to performance and directing, as well as design.” In addition, students study pedagogy and teach in local schools. “We are the only undergraduate public institution in New York State that offers theater education leading to a certification in pre-K to 12,” said Jay Pecora, assistant professor of theater and dance. “We offer a real liberal arts education, along with the teacher training that students will need.”

Unique Animal Studies Degree. Eastern Kentucky U. believes that it has a one-of-a-kind animal studies program. Housed in the Department of Psychology, students focus on “non-human animals, their interactions and relationships with people and the mutual influences that humans and non-humans exert on each other’s existence, evolution and history.”

Animal studies majors receive a liberal arts base and concentrate on their particular area of interest. For example, students who want to work in the field of animal advocacy can take classes in journalism and photography. Those interested in writing about nature can take courses in literature. Among the courses are: Animals in History, Animal Ethics, General Zoology and so on.

Two New Environmental Studies. Saint Michael’s C. recently introduced a major in environmental studies. Students pursue courses in natural sciences, social sciences and humanities within the program as well as design a personalized curriculum and research project. Students take courses in environmental problems and environmental studies as well as a senior seminar. They study ecology or sustainability projects abroad and intern at farms and governmental agencies.

Goucher C. is launching an interdisciplinary environmental studies major this fall, too. The program includes two concentrations—environmental science or environment and society.

New College in New Hampshire. Governor John Lynch of New Hampshire gave degree status to the American College of History and Legal Studies which allows the school to grant bachelor’s degrees in history and legal studies. Students will focus on one of four areas: the history of civil rights, the history of urban growth and immigration, the history of American foreign relations and the lessons of American history. The ACHLS is “a senior college” that prepares juniors and seniors for such institutions as the Massachusetts School of Law, where eligible students can earn a law degree in a combined six years instead of seven. For more information, go to www.achls.org.

New Major and Minor at TCU. Texas Christian U. is introducing a major in sports broadcasting and a minor in Spanish for health professions. Sports broadcasting majors must earn at least 37 credit hours and pass introductory courses such as “Introduction to Remote Sports Production” and “Sports Broadcasting.” The minor will enable students majoring in health professions, especially in nursing, to communicate with patients in Spanish. Students are offered two courses focused specifically for the field of health care, as well as electives and service learning. The minor includes study abroad programs, such as the CIEE Summer Community Public Health program in the Dominican Republic.

Double Degree. This fall, the U. at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Houghton C. began offering a double degree that will take seven years, according to *Business First of Buffalo*. With the “3 + 4” program, students who major in biology at Houghton C. for three years can transfer to UB for their fourth year to receive their bachelor’s and begin work on pharmacy study.

Entrepreneurial Engineers. The College of Engineering at Wayne State U. is implementing an Engineering Entrepreneurship undergraduate certificate. Participants take classes from the WSU School of Business Administration, one new engineering class and an entrepreneurial capstone to help them start their own business or work for startup companies. Engineering students with any focus can earn the certificate by taking five required classes. For more information, go to www.wayne.edu. ■

THE COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

Don’t Stalk the Admissions Officer: How to Survive the College Admissions Process Without Losing Your Mind, Risa Lewak; 198 pages; (Ten Speed Press); ISBN 978-1-58008-060-6; \$13.99; www.tenspeed.com.

The Portable Guidance Counselor: Answers to the

284 Most Important Questions about Getting into College, by the Staff of The Princeton Review; 259 pages; ISBN 978-0-375-42936-1; \$14.99; www.princetonreview.com.

Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges 2011, 29th edition, compiled and edited by the College

Division of Barron’s Educational Series; a whopping 1,652 pages profiling 1,650 schools; ISBN 13-978-0-7641-9768-0; \$28.99; from www.barronseduc.com.

Rugg’s Recommendations of the Colleges, 27th edition, by Frederick E. Rugg; 300 pages; (Rugg’s Recommendations); ISBN 978-1-883062-76-7; \$25.95; <http://www.ruggsrecommendations.com>. ■

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

SMART Scholarships. December 1 is the deadline for applications to the SMART Program for scholarships of \$25,000 to \$41,000 a year for undergraduates and graduate students pursuing a degree in science, technology, engineering and math. The program will award 300 scholarships this year totaling \$45 million. See, <http://smart.asee.org>.

AXA Achievement Scholarships. December 15 is the deadline for \$670,000 in scholarships from The U.S. News Media Group and the AXA Foundation. In this program, 52 students, one from each state, plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico compete for \$10,000 awards. In addition, 10 students are selected as national winners and receive an additional

\$15,000. Applicants must demonstrate “drive and determination to reach goals, the ability to succeed in a college environment, and respect for self, family and community.” For more info see, www.axa-achievement.com/.

NASA Offering Aeronautics Scholarship. NASA plans to award 20 undergraduate and five graduate scholarships to students in the field of aeronautics or a related program. Undergraduate students going into their second year of college can get up to \$15,000 per year for two years, as well as the chance to win a \$10,000 stipend for interning at a NASA research center over the summer. Students who have not yet chosen their field can still apply, but by fall 2011 students must

be enrolled in an aeronautical program or in a program in a related area of study. The deadline: January 17, 2011.

“We want more students to pursue careers in aeronautics,” said Jaiwon Shin, an associate administrator for NASA. “By offering these scholarships, we are extending to students not just an opportunity to become familiar with NASA’s research, but also an extra dose of inspiration.”

Book Dollars for Scholars. An interesting twist on scholarships is best-selling author James Patterson’s initiative that will award eight \$5,000 awards, eight \$2,500 awards and 40 \$250 awards in the form of gift certificates to independent bookstores. Students must complete an essay “How has your favorite book inspired you toward what you’d like to do in life?” See www.JamesPatterson.com. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Green is Big Pull for Applicants. Colleges of all kinds are showing off their “green” side through energy-efficient buildings, recycling rates and solar panels in order to attract more students, according to a recent *USA Today*. And according to a 2010 College Sustainability Report Card, from the Sustainable Endowments Institute, 27 percent of institutions were promoting a “sustainability message” during the admission process in 2009. Last year, the percentage rose to 69 percent.

What that means is that American U., for example, included the school’s arboretum and green-certified buildings on campus tours. In addition, the university uses more electronic communication with students to show that they are committed to reducing paper waste.

Colorado State U. calls itself “The Green University” and is constructing “the largest solar power plant on a university campus.” The school is also building battery-powered vans for campus tours.

Undocumented Students Still Apply to College. The DREAM Act may have “stalled,” according to the National Association for College Admission Counseling. But every year, according to NACAC, 65,000 undocumented students submit applications to institutions of higher education. The association’s survey also found that 60 percent of colleges and universities have applicants that are undocumented students. The number of applications from undocumented students is largest at public universities. More than 71 percent of public institutions have received applications from undocumented students. But the majority of private colleges have received

applications from undocumented students as well. Of schools with over 3,000 students, 80 percent of colleges, and about 86 percent of the most elite schools, received applications from undocumented students. Despite the high number of these applications, the lack of financial aid then keeps many students from attending college. NACAC has pushed for the DREAM Act, it says, to allow students to have a secure place to learn.

Computer Science Majors Increase in Number. As some schools have observed, undergraduate students majoring in computer science have grown in number for another year, according to data from the Computing Research Association. In the early part of the decade, the number of computer science majors was decreasing, but now that the government is expecting a growth in the computing job sector, the major has become more popular again. Computer science enrollment has grown by 5.5 percent in 2009 and 14 percent in the past two years.

Unigo Reveals its “Top 10 for ‘10’. Unigo, billed as the largest website for student college reviews, recently released a “Top 10 for ‘10,” its first college rankings. More than 30,000 college students throughout the U.S. contributed to create 10 rankings in 10 unexplored categories. For example, there are lists of the top 10 schools where sports rule and the top 10 schools “where the pursuit of knowledge goes far beyond the classroom.”

“Our goal with these rankings was to present high school students and parents with interesting, authentic insights into the

experiences at these institutions as they begin their college research,” said Jordan Goldman, Unigo’s CEO. See, http://www.unigo.com/articles/top_10_in_2010.

Benefits of Dual Enrollment Programs. A recent report, *Dual Enrollment: A Strategy for Educational Advancement of All Students*, developed by Columbia U.’s Teachers College and Rutgers U.’s Camden Center for Children and Childhood Studies, suggested that dual enrollment in which a student can take college classes while still in high school, has become more prevalent and can help high school students understand the pressures of college coursework. In the past, dual enrollment was intended for academically successful students.

But lately these programs have been helping underrepresented students prepare for college. Because students can see themselves as college students and increase their academic confidence and achievement, many students coming from dual enrollment programs have had more success in college.

The report also looked at the best practices of different programs, including online dual enrollment. It found that state policies play a central role in the success of programs. See, www.blackboardinstitute.com.

P.S. Salve Regina U. in Newport, Rhode Island, and MacMurray C. in Jacksonville, Illinois, joined the ranks of colleges making the SAT and ACT standardized test scores optional. ■

HAVE A GREAT YEAR!

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Production: Design|Americom; Salsedo Press, Inc. COLLEGE BOUND is published monthly, ten times a year. Inquiries should be directed to P.O. Box 6536, Evanston, IL 60204; 773-262-5810. Annual subscription: \$59 in North America, \$69 for international orders, including airmail postage. www.collegeboundnews.com

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