

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Financial Matters Top News

HIGHER EDUCATION CONTINUES to bear the brunt of national economic woes. Here's a roundup of recent reports showing the economy's influence on admissions and financial aid.

FEDERAL DOLLAR

Pay as You Earn, But Earlier. The Obama Administration announced a new effort to help students reduce monthly payments on their student loans. Legislation passed last year allows student borrowers to reduce their monthly student loan payments to 10 percent of their discretionary income, beginning in 2014. The president's new proposal, announced the end of October, would move that starting date to 2012. This will affect an estimated 1.6 million students. Currently, 36 million people have student loan debt. But fewer than 450,000 participate in the income-based repayment option.

Also, an estimated six million students and recent college graduates will be able to consolidate their loans and reduce their interest rates by 0.5 percent. The president's action will forgive student loans after 20 years instead of the previous 25-year limit. Students can find out if they are eligible by going to www.studentaid.ed.gov/ibr.

Finally, the U.S. Small Business Administration has launched a website to help walk entrepreneurs through the process of reducing monthly student loan payments. Go to www.sba.gov/startupamerica/student-startup-plan.

Know Before You Owe. The U.S. Dept. of Ed and the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau have released a new Financial Aid Shopping Sheet, a draft model financial aid disclosure form. The sheet will help colleges and universities educate students about the type and amount of aid they qualify for and compare aid packages offered by different institutions. The form makes total costs and risks clear

before students enroll by outlining their total estimated student loan debt, monthly loan payments after graduation and additional costs not covered by student aid. The CFPB is asking for feedback. See, <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/students/knowbeforeyouowe/>.

Merit Aid Trends. Fifty-two percent of undergraduates receive some form of grants, on average \$4,900 per student. That's according to a new U.S. Dept. of Ed report, "Merit Aid for Undergraduates: Trends from 1995-96 to 2007-08." In fact, undergraduates received \$62 billion in grant aid from all sources in the 2007-08 academic year.

Of that, \$24 billion was from postsecondary institutions, \$22 billion from the federal government, \$8 billion from state governments and \$8 billion from private sources. Slightly more than 27 percent of all undergrads received a Pell Grant in 2007-08, worth about \$15.5 billion.

However, the proportion of undergraduates receiving merit aid from institutions and states was 14 percent higher in 2007-08 than in 1995-96 when merit scholarships became particularly popular. At the same time, the amount of the merit grant was also \$400 more (in constant 2007 dollars). More students from the high-income group received merit aid in 2007, 14 percent, versus 1995, 13 percent.

But in 1995, need-based institutional grants were more common than merit aid; 43 versus 24 percent in private non-profit colleges, and 13 to 8 percent in four-year publics. By 2007, merit aid exceeded need-based aid by 18 to 16 percent at four-year public institutions.

Students at "moderately selective" institutions received merit aid more often than their counterparts at less selective ones, the study found. The Southeast had the highest proportion of state merit scholarship recipients.

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Enrollment Trends 2011

WHILE SOME COLLEGES report gains in enrollment this fall, others note smaller increases than in recent years or actual enrollment declines, reflecting the depth and duration of the recession, its impact on public universities and the inability of families to pay still increasing tuitions and fees. Here are a few of the enrollment returns this fall, including those from some off the beaten path.

Tops in Their Class. Harvey Mudd C. was one school that saw an increase in applications for this fall, 16 percent. It accepted 600 students from 3,144 applications for admission and 195 students enrolled. Thirty-eight percent were either the valedictorian or salutatorian of their class, 96 percent ranked in the top 10 percent of their class.

Record Enrollment at the Institute for the Deaf. For the fourth consecutive year, Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf enrolled a record number of students. This fall, 1,547 students enrolled at RIT through NTID compared to 1,521 students last year, 1,474 in 2009 and 1,450 in 2008. The prior record was 1,358 students set in 1984, "when a large number of students whose mothers contracted measles during pregnancy—which caused deafness in their babies—came to college," RIT said.

NTID students come from 49 states (no students from Montana this year), Washington, DC and beyond. RIT/NTID employs more than 125 sign language interpreters, 50 classroom

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FINANCIAL MATTERS

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Price Calculators. Colleges receiving federal money were to post a net-price calculator on their web sites by the end of October. This is to help parents figure out the real cost of sending their children to a particular school. The calculator is to provide the estimated cost of attendance including tuition, fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation and personal expenses. It will also subtract grants, such as the Pell Grant, and scholarships. Parents note their income, household size and number of children in college.

New Pell Regulations. According to new Federal regulations that took effect on July 1, students who receive Pell Grants or federal loans such as Direct, Direct Plus and other subsidized federal loans must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA or above and pass 67 percent of the classes attempted to keep their federal assistance. The regulations will prohibit failing students from receiving federal money.

NEW COLLEGE COST INITIATIVES

Affordability Plan. Green Mountain C. in Vermont has announced a new affordability plan that will use a number of strategies and fund sources to meet up to 100 percent of each accepted student's total financial aid. The program begins in January. "We are trying to make private education as affordable as possible," said president Paul Fonteyn. Last year, Green Mountain awarded \$7.3 million in scholarships. Currently, 94 percent of students receive financial aid. Green Mountain was named *Sierra* magazine's "Coolest School" in

2010 for its environmental initiatives.

Discounted Tuition. Wheeling Jesuit U. has created a new Community Connection Grant to help commuter students from West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania attend. "We recognize the challenges that families face in today's economy," said Larry Vallar, vice president for enrollment management, "and we are pleased to keep higher education at a Jesuit institution within reach for area students." See, <http://www.wju.edu/admissions/ccg.asp>.

STATE STRESSES

Stimulus I Runs Out. Meanwhile, almost all of the \$10 billion in federal stimulus money that went to U.S. colleges and universities in recent years has been spent. And now these institutions are raising tuitions, slashing courses and programs and increasing class sizes, according to a review by the Associated Press this fall. For example, California spent \$1.4 billion in stimulus money to cover 30 percent of its higher education costs. In 2010, that shrank to just 1 percent. In 2009, the stimulus money paid for 35 percent of South Carolina's higher ed costs. Last year, it covered less than 2 percent.

Some 35 states have made cuts in their higher education budget since the stimulus money dried up, the AP says. And 13 states made double digit cuts. The result: higher tuition increases, program and course cut backs, and larger classes for students. For example, the U. of Maine system eliminated 20 programs, including Latin, and trimmed employment by 7 percent.

Cuts Are Hurting. Financial stresses are

beginning to take their toll in the U. of North Carolina state system, according to the *Charlotte Observer*. State funding has fallen 15.6 percent this year. Tuitions and fees are up by an average \$400, "while some sources of financial aid are drying up." The UNC system has \$35 million less than last year for grants to needy students, and an estimated 5,500 fewer students received aid.

At the same time, more students are seeking aid because their parents lost jobs. That's forcing students to take out bigger loans at a time when the job market for graduates has tightened. An untold number of others are dropping out. "It's the economy over and over again in ways we just haven't seen in the past," Steve Roberson, dean of undergraduate studies at UNC-Greensboro, told the paper.

In-State Appeals. The number of out-of-state U. of Colorado students who established residency in-state and appealed their out-of-state status jumped by 14 percent between 2008 and 2010. Students' who win their appeal save themselves \$20,000 a year. In-state tuition is \$7,672 versus \$28,850 for out-of-state students. An estimated 9 out of 10 out-of-state students won their appeals.

Tuition Up. As a result of budget cuts, tuition at schools in the U. of Wisconsin system jumped by 5.5 percent this year. At UW Madison, that meant tuition rose from \$7,933 to \$8,592 for in-state students. For out-of-state students, it rose from \$23,183 per year to \$24,342. Since 2001, tuition for in-state students has more than doubled, while out-of-state students are paying almost \$9,000 more a year. ■

ENROLLMENT TRENDS

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"captionists" and hundreds of note-takers to ensure deaf and hard-of-hearing students in mainstream classes at RIT receive the services they need.

More International Students at St. Edwards U. Since 2000, St. Edwards U. in Austin, Texas, has doubled the size of its freshman class from 365 students to 781 this year, the largest freshman class ever. The number of international students increased to 44 and 14 percent of students are from out-of-state.

Attrition Rate Rises. At Occidental C. in California, the attrition rate of students not returning to college this fall rose to 3.54 percent, the highest rate since 2003, according to *The Occidental Weekly*. The rate was nearly double last year's 1.88 percent. The rise is likely due to financial conditions. "We generally have about 78 percent of students graduating in four years..." Victor Egitto, school registrar, told the paper.

California Privates Benefiting from State Budget Cuts. It may seem counterintuitive in a recession, but some private colleges in California are seeing an increase in enrollment as a result of budget cuts at public universities, according to the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*. Earlier this year, the state cut \$650 million from the UC system which led to a 10 percent fee increase and enrollment decreases. At the same time, some private colleges are offering increased financial aid. The number of students applying to Azusa Pacific U. as transfer students doubled between fall 2009 and 2010. The U. of La Verne admitted its largest class ever. Whittier C. told the *Tribune* that it had reached capacity.

MIDWESTERN PUBLICS

Last month, *CB* did a spot check on southern universities. Here is a look at a couple of Midwestern public universities.

Indiana High. Enrollment at Indiana U. and its eight campuses reached "a historic high point," topping 110,000 for the first time, up almost 1 percent. IU snagged a "greater share of Indiana's top high school graduates than ever

before," the school said. Enrollment at IU's flagship Bloomington campus was 42,731. Not far behind was the Indianapolis campus shared with Purdue U., IUPUI, at 30,530, down slightly.

Southern Illinois Down, But Up. Southern Illinois U. saw 1.1 percent fewer students this fall for a total of 19,817. School officials said the drop off came mostly in graduate programs. However, according to SIU Carbondale Chancellor Rita Chen, freshman enrollment is up more than 5 percent at 2,344. The number of transfer students increased as well, as did the retention rate, now at 69 percent.

U. Illinois Record. The Urbana-Champaign flagship campus of the U. of Illinois posted record enrollment of 42,606 students, up 600 from last fall. Undergraduates account for 31,932 of enrollees.

U. of Iowa Diverse. Iowa enrollment held steady by design with 4,565 freshmen, eight more than last year, and said the class was "more diverse than ever," with 14 percent representing minority groups. ■

Student Life

Corporatization of Campus. College students spend an estimated \$36 billion a year on consumer items from clothing to cell phones, according to Re:Fuel, a youth marketing group. That's why corporate interests have descended upon campuses with a variety of campaigns.

According to a recent *New York Times* account, "Companies from Microsoft on down are increasingly seeking out the big men and women on campus to influence their peers." One student noted, "There's a completely different trust level when it's peer-to-peer marketing." But, *The Times* pointed out, "The trend poses challenges for university officials, especially at a time when many schools are themselves embracing corporate sponsorship to help stage events for students."

Student Preferences. Dictionary.com recently surveyed thousands of high school and college students about their attitudes and methods of learning. When it comes time for studying for standardized tests, 70 percent still list "books/study guides" as their number one resource, although nearly 37 percent use "online reference sites and flashcard sites."

When it comes to reading, nearly 60 percent said that "speed reading tips" were most useful for improving their skills. And 47 percent said that learning "vocabulary from popular books" was highly helpful. What foreign languages are they interested in pursuing? About 50 percent said French, nearly 49 percent said Spanish, about 30 percent said Italian, followed by German, 28 percent, and Chinese, 24 percent.

"Survey Fatigue." Today's college students on average answer 10 school-related surveys a year, giving their opinions on everything from the quality of health services, housing and study abroad programs to the intellectual impact of their classes. This is leading to what researchers call "survey fatigue," which means less serious answers and tumbling response rates and questionable results.

Grade Inflation. The percent of "A's" college students receive in their classes rose from 31 percent in 1988 to 43 percent in 2008. To counter the trend, some colleges such as Western Governors U., are replacing professors as graders with adjunct professors who do nothing but evaluate student work. The U. of Central Florida now out-sources some essay test results for computers to grade.

"Pitchers with Professors." Students of age at Eckerd C. in St. Petersburg, Florida, reserve time to hoist a glass of brew or soft drink with their favorite professors during the monthly "Pitchers with Professors" event, which according to a spokesman is always well attended because it is a great way to get to know professors better.

COLLEGE COSTS

Divorced Children. The children of divorced parents receive less financial aid assistance from their parents, according to a study at Rice U. published in a recent *Journal of Family Issues*. Researchers found that these students may end up paying twice as much of their college costs.

What's an "A" in High School Worth? At the U. of Rochester office of financial aid, about \$62, according to Jon Burdick, dean of admissions and financial aid, who analyzed merit aid awards at his school. An Advance Placement course in history nets around \$400 extra. Every 10 point gain on the SAT can garner \$115. And a personal interview with the admissions and financial aid officers can mean another \$3,000. The Rochester calculations can serve as a rule of thumb for families pursuing merit aid at other selective colleges.

College Costs. It's not just students and their families who are concerned about the cost of college. About 75 percent of investors surveyed by John Hancock's Investor Sentiment Index report they worry about the rising cost of college. Yet 88 percent of them say a college education is still worth the price. About 60 percent recommend 529 college savings plans as one of the best ways to save for college.

P.S. NYU Drops National Merit Scholarship. New York U. dropped out of the National Merit Scholarship program because, it says, it does not want to reward students based on standardized tests. The program distributed \$50 million to students nationwide in 2009-10. "We simply do not believe that enrolling a larger number of National Merit finalists is a necessary way for us to attract the most academically qualified freshman class," said Shawn Abbott, NYU assistant vice president.

NYU joins Harvard, Yale and six other Ivy League schools that do not participate in the National Merit program. Nor do the six campuses of the U. of California, the U. of Texas at Austin or Wake Forest U. ■

THE COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

New from U.S. News. Who's on top of the *U.S. News* best colleges list this year? Not hard to guess. Top U.'s: Harvard, Princeton and Yale U. Top Liberal Arts C.'s: Williams, Amherst and Swarthmore C....

World Rankings. The U.S. News Media Group also just released the fourth annual ranking of the "world's best universities." These are based on the QS World University Rankings. Top 10 in the world: U. of Cambridge, Harvard U., MIT, Yale U., U. of Oxford, Imperial College London, University College London, U. of Chicago, U. of Pennsylvania and Columbia U.

Financial Aid 101. The U.S. News University

Directory Portal has a new free college financial aid guide called *Financial Aid 101: Demystifying the Financial Aid Process* which looks at types of aid, school costs and how to apply for federal student aid. See, <http://www.usnewsuniversitydirectory.com>.

India's "Best Colleges." *India Today* partnered with the Nielsen Company to conduct its 14th survey of the "top" colleges in India in six disciplines: arts, science, commerce, engineering, medical and law. The best arts colleges: Lady Shri Ram C. for Women (LSR) and St. Stephen's C. in Delhi, along with Chennai's Loyola College.

See, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/specials/bestcolleges/2011/>.

Best Values. Princeton U. and Pomona C. were named the "best values" for universities and liberal arts colleges respectively, according to *Kiplinger's* annual ranking of schools "that are both academically strong and affordable—our definition of value." See, <http://www.kiplinger.com>.

"Best Business Schools." The U. of Texas-Austin has "the best professors," Stanford U. has "the best career prospects" and Simmons C. has "the greatest opportunity for women," according to the 2012 Princeton Review rankings of the "Best 294 Business Schools." See, www.princetonreview.com. ■

MINORITY AFFAIRS

Finish Higher Ed. A broad coalition of groups ranging from the Boys and Girls Clubs of America to the National Urban League joined the Institute for Higher Education Policy to call for higher college completion rates. It pointed out that currently nearly half of college students do not graduate. However, 97 million U.S. jobs require high-level skills, but only 45 million Americans qualify for those jobs. For more information, go to: www.FinishHigherEd.org.

Jobless? Nearly half of “young men of color” who graduate from high school “will end up unemployed,” according to the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center. Only 26 percent of African Americans, 18 percent of Hispanic Americans and 24 percent of Native Americans and Pacific Islanders have at least an associate degree. See: www.advocacy.collegeboard.org. And this summer, unemploy-

ment number for teens in the nation’s capital reached 50 percent.

Ethnic Equality in STEM. In September, the U.S. Department of Commerce released a study, “Education Supports Racial and Ethnic Equality in STEM,” (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) which found “across all racial and ethnic groups, higher graduation rates are associated with higher shares of STEM workers, and these workers can earn substantial wage premiums over their non-STEM counter-parts, regardless of their background.” The report also pointed out that one in five STEM workers is foreign born, of which 63 percent come from Asia.

Latinos Need More Support. That’s the conclusion of the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center which released a study this fall stating that the college graduation rate

for Latinos will not improve without better middle- and high-school counseling, better access to preschool, additional need-based aid and a simplified financial aid system. The study also noted that California, for example, has the highest Latino population and the worst ratio of students to counselors, 814 students per counselor. See, www.collegeboard.org.

Gender as well as Racial Disparities Persist. That is the conclusion of the American Council on Education this fall that found that while white Americans and Asian Americans attained more degrees than in the past, African Americans and Hispanics made no progress and American Indians earned degrees at lower rates. *Minorities in Higher Education*, ACE’s 24th progress report, also found that “the proportion of young women enrolled in college increased from 32 percent to 46 percent from 1990-2009, an increase of almost three times that of young men (32 to 37 percent).” See, <http://www.acenet.edu>. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

STEM Associate Degrees Earn More. Some 63 percent of graduates who earned associates degrees in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and math) earn more than those with B.A.’s in non-STEM occupations, according to a new report from Georgetown U. Center on Education and the Workforce. At the same time, 47 percent of graduates with B.A.’s in STEM subjects earn more than Ph.D.s in non-STEM subjects. Find the full report at <http://cew.georgetown.edu/STEM>.

Starting Salaries. Some of this year’s graduates who were lucky enough to find jobs found some rewards. For example, the median starting salary for engineers and economists was \$75,000; for math and computer science, \$65,000; for agricultural scientists, \$60,000; for education and psychology grads, \$55,000; and for chemists and humanities grads, \$45,000.

Complete to Compete. About 63 percent of all jobs in 2018 will require postsecondary training, according to a recent report from the National Governors Association. But there is a growing mismatch between the skills these jobs require and the credentials of young Americans seeking them. The report, “Complete to Compete” says that states will have to shift to accountability systems that answer four key policy questions:

1. To what extent are public higher education

institutions meeting the state’s need for an educated workforce and supporting progress toward longer term economic goals?

2. How many students at public institutions are graduating relative to total enrollment?

3. What is the return on states’ and students’ investment in public institutions in terms of

Scholarship Scoops

Stop Hunger. Five \$5,000 scholarships and another \$5,000 matching grants to hunger organizations in the winners’ names, plus 20 \$1,000 grants to other local hunger groups will be awarded in students’ names. Winners will be students who are working to end hunger in their communities across the U.S. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in a K-graduate school. *Deadline:* December 5. Visit www.SodexoFoundation.org.

Hispanic Support. Notre Dame de Namur U., just south of San Francisco, recently received a \$3.2 million federal grant to fund services and scholarships for Hispanic and low-income students. The grant follows a \$2.9 million grant to expand programs for Hispanic students in STEM subjects. NDNU educates 2,000 co-ed students in 21 liberal arts and career prep programs.

Athletic Scholarships Increase. Athletes may now receive up to \$2,000 more each year, according to a new ruling from the NCAA. ■

completed certificates and degrees?

4. How can public institutions demonstrate that efficiency gains are being achieved without sacrificing student learning?

Community College Commission Announced. A new national commission appointed by the American Association of Community Colleges, only the third in the organization’s 110-year history, will take a holistic look at an evolving educational institution. Community colleges currently enroll close to half of all U.S. undergraduates and have experienced double digit enrollment surges in the last few years. The commission is expected to report after 10 months of study.

Stanford@CCNY. A new engineering and science collaboration between Stanford U. and the City C. of New York is coming to New York City. Stanford@CCNY, as it is called, will immediately begin to create an East Coast demonstration site at the City C. for Stanford undergraduates in entrepreneurship, technology management and related topics.

“We believe there is a tremendous potential... to bring Stanford’s curriculum to some of the best and brightest students in New York and to help them go on to make significant economic contributions to New York and New York State,” Stanford president John L. Hennessy said. Eventually, the Stanford applied sciences campus will be located on Roosevelt Island. ■

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