

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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The Economy Impacts Admissions

AS *CB* WENT TO PRESS THIS MONTH, 165,000 students in California and 190,000 in England were turned away from college doors. After two decades of encouraging students worldwide to obtain a college degree, the dream for many is elusive. The economic turmoil of the last few years has not only impacted a student's ability to pay tuition, but attend college at all. Amidst this scenario, some colleges and families are finding new ways to fund an education. Here's a roundup of some of the news this summer.

Colleges Hold On. The long recession has many colleges digging even deeper this fall to make cuts and balance their budgets. The U. of New Hampshire system is cutting 200 jobs and increasing costs for students at its Durham campus by 8.7 percent. Other colleges are cutting departments that fail to attract students or generate enough revenue. The U. of Illinois, for example, just eliminated its 56-year-old Institute of Aviation.

Indeed, colleges and universities dependent upon state support feel the pinch in particular. As many as 35 states are battling budget deficits, while 13 have cut their state higher education budgets by at least 10 percent. And 11 states have put a cap on the number of students they can educate at their flagship universities. For example, California public universities enrolled 165,000 fewer students in 2010-11 than the previous year. And states are struggling to make up the \$9 billion of federal stimulus assistance that ran out this summer.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities issued an eight-page "State Outlook" in July, which included the percentage change of state support for four-year public universities that ranged from a 21 percent

decline in Colorado to two percent in Indiana. Smaller regional state colleges face "especially tough fiscal challenges," the report said. To check on a state, see, www.aascu.org/policy.

Debt Deal Spares Most Student Aid. However, the much heralded "debt deal" passed this summer by Congress and signed by the President did not harm most federal student aid programs, as aid advocates feared. The deal raised the nation's debt ceiling and will lead to federal borrowing of \$4 trillion. Yet the deal also set aside \$17 billion of that money over the next two years to fund the Pell Grant program, which according to a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* "has doubled in cost the last three years and faces a multi-billion dollar deficit." The maximum Pell Grant for the 2012-13 school year will remain fixed at \$5,550.

The big loser? Graduate student loans, which had kept interest rates low for students, will lose their federal subsidies. One advocacy group estimated that could cost the average graduate school borrower an average of \$7,000 in extra interest payments. The budget deal also means an end for interest rate reductions for those who pay their debts on time.

Congress had previously cut the LEAP program (Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership) which returned money to the states to fund needy students. According to the Congressional Budget Office, that will amount to a \$21 billion savings over 10 years.

Student aid advocates now shift their worries to the fall 2011 budget cuts under consideration by the new Congressional supercommittee charged with making \$1.5 trillion in cuts from future budgets. If that commit-

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Fall Admissions Watch

AS COLLEGES welcomed freshmen this fall, in spite of hurricanes, earthquakes and economic pressures, they painted a profile of who got in last spring and who the students are.

Brandeis Gears Up. One student documented the impact of climate change in Nepal. Another won the 2010 New York State men's fencing championship. A third is a survivor of the war in Sudan. They are among the 860 incoming first-year students at Brandeis U., selected from 8,900 applicants, the most in Brandeis history, according to *BrandeisNOW*. More than 90 percent graduated in the top quarter of their high school class; 70 percent received financial aid.

Bryn Mawr's Class International. Bryn Mawr C. welcomed 364 students to the Class of 2015. And the 126-year-old college is beginning a new 360-Degree program whereby students take two-to-four courses to become an expert on a "dynamic issue of our time." One topic, for example, is "The Economics of Energy." The new class includes students from 35 states and 39 countries. In fact, 25 percent of students at Bryn Mawr are international. "We want to be a global college, with students that think globally," Jenny Rickard, dean, told the *Bryn Mawr-Galdwyne Patch*.

Notre Dame Freshmen Service Oriented. From the 16,500 applications this year, some 2,000 new freshmen and 154 transfer students enrolled in Notre Dame U. for the fall

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ECONOMY IMPACTS

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tee cannot reach an agreement, all education programs automatically lose 6.7 percent of their funding. However, because of previous congressional action, Pell Grants are now protected from such across-the-board cuts.

"If students didn't have access to federal funds, there would be a large percent of them that would not, could not, afford to go to school," said Clint Carlson, Jackson State U.'s vice president, in the *Anniston Star*.

Student Debt "Too High." That's the judgment of ordinary Americans polled by a COUNTRY Financial survey. More than 80 percent said that the average level of student loan debt, \$29,000, is too high. And 26 percent in this survey said that college was not worth the cost. However, 66 percent of members of Gen Y, ages 18 to 29, reported that they thought saving for their child's college education is more important than saving for retirement.

Loan Bubble? Standard & Poor's downgraded the U.S. credit rating this summer. Now, word comes that Moody's rating agency has issued its own warning about student debt, which is on course to exceed \$1 trillion this school year. Moody's cautioned, "Unless students limit their debt burdens, choose fields of study

that are in demand and successfully finish their degrees on time, they will find themselves in worse financial positions and unable to earn the projected income that justified taking out their loans in the first place."

But the Recession Hasn't Slowed Student Enrollment Overall. According to a new report from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, recent hard times have not markedly affected student enrollment in general over the past few years. The study, "National Post-Secondary Enrollment Trends: Before, During, and After the Great Recession," found enrollment actually grew by nearly 7 percent from 2006 to 2010, increasing from 1.997 million students to 2.135 million.

However, the enrollment rates at community colleges are somewhat surprising. In 2006, 42 percent of traditional-age students attended community colleges, a number that increased by 9 percent in 2009. Yet, in 2010, the number of traditional-age students entering the two-year institutions took a sudden dive by 5 percent. During this period, the South enrolled the most first-time students, followed by the Midwest and the West. The Northeast enrolled the least.

The study also posted 2008-09 retention and persistence first-to-second year student rates. (Persistence rates describe students who re-enrolled in some postsecondary insti-

tution; retention refers to re-enrollment in the same school.) The 2008-09 retention rate for four-year public colleges was nearly 80 percent, while the persistence rate was nearly 90 percent. The 2008-09 retention rate for two-year public colleges was 64 percent, while the persistence rate was 74 percent. And the retention rate for four-year private colleges was 81 percent, the persistence rate was 91 percent.

These persistence rates are more encouraging than the retention rates. While it may mean students were possibly mismatched with their initial choice (or could not afford their selection), many continue their education uninterrupted somewhere else, instead of simply dropping out.

College Pays Off. That's what *The New York Times* business writer David Leonhardt argued in an article this summer. He called the 20th century the "American Century" because high school became universal. Leonhardt also noted that we are having the same debate today as in the past about the worth of a college education, noting though that only 33 percent of young people earn a four-year degree, while another 10 percent earn an associates degree. Yet, he pointed out, the returns on a degree have soared, worth 83 percent more income to those with a college degree than without. ■

FALL ADMISSIONS WATCH

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semester. (The applicant pool was the largest in history.) The average student ranked in the top two percent of his or her high school class.

According to Don Bishop, associate vice president, "When we were looking at who was admitted, we looked at what Notre Dame cares about in addition to brilliant academics. We looked at leadership, the desire to serve." About 90 percent of the new students volunteered or performed service work in their community.

Oregon Class Most Diverse. For the first time, more than 100,000 students are expected to enroll at Oregon's seven public universities. The director of admissions at the U. of Oregon, Brian Henley, told *The Republic* that "This won't be our largest freshman class, but it is likely to be the most academically prepared and most diverse."

Saint Mary's Figure Skater and Black Belt. These were some of the achievements of entering freshmen at Saint Mary's C. in South Bend. The class of 396 freshmen also included a Civil War re-enactor, a student who raised \$8,000 for diabetes by riding her bike 100 miles through Montana and another who volunteered as a pallbearer for the homeless. The class was selected from 1,453 applications, the largest pool in St. Mary's history.

Twelve were valedictorian; 43 percent in the top 10 percent of their high school class.

Making Students Welcome in Dayton. For two years in a row, the U. of Dayton had the largest incoming class since the Vietnam War era with about 1,050 new students, according to the *Dayton Business Journal*. In all, 10,000 graduate and undergrad students enrolled this fall with 1,000 international students. The majority—50 percent—of these international students are from China.

Wabash Literally Rings In the Year. Each year, the president of Wabash C. in Indiana rings in a new class with the same bell used by the college's first president. This year, the bell tolled for 295 young men. President Patrick White urged them to "set as your goal the wise, virtuous, and generous life embodied in the Gentleman's Rule and the Wabash mission." Among the new students: a novelist of two books, a national champion weightlifter and a four-time cancer survivor.

SOUTHERN REPORTS

William & Mary Includes Legacies. A record number of students, 12,800, applied to the nation's second oldest college this year, and about 1,490 enrolled. Thirty of them are a cohort from a joint-degree program with the U. of St. Andrews in Scotland. Some 28 percent of the first-year class is made up of students

of color, 6 percent consists of international students, 10 percent is first-generation and 8 percent legacies. Nearly 80 percent finished in the top 10 percent of their high school class. The SAT middle 50th percentile is 1240-1450. And 165 scored a perfect 800 on at least one section of the test.

Carolina Firsts. About 18 percent of the incoming class at the U. of North Carolina is first-generation, according to *The Daily Tar Heel*. A campus organization has formed for students who are the first in their families to attend a four-year college to provide support and help students adjust to campus life.

The U. of South Carolina is preparing for its largest freshman class, about 4,500 students. Average SAT scores of the new students: 1198, up 10 points from last year. The *Times & Democrat* predicted the Columbia campus could top 30,000 students for the first time.

Georgia Sees Increase. The U. of Georgia is welcoming a record number of 5,500 freshmen this fall, a 10 percent increase, the yield of 18,000 spring applications. (Applications are up 50 percent since 2003 and 95 percent took Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes.) Average freshmen high school grade-point average: 3.8; SAT critical reading and math scores: 1254; ACT: 28. ■

Welcome to the Internet Generation

CB begins the year with a look at reports about this year's students.

They've Always Known the Internet. Each year, Beloit C. releases a profile of the nation's new college first-year class called the "Beloit College Mindset List." What's up with the Class of 2015? Most of them were born in 1993, just as the Internet changed the way information is stored and exchanged. The first President they knew was Bill Clinton. From their point of view, "Dial-up," Woolworths and the Sears "Big Book" are antiques. Other notables: The Supreme Court has always had two women justices. References to LBJ are not presidential, but to sportsman LeBron James. And there has never been a communist party in Russia during their lifetime. Music has always been available via free downloads. Grownups have always been arguing about health care. To view the entire list, go to: www.beloit.edu/mindset/2015/.

Not College Ready. Unfortunately, only 25 percent of 1.62 million students from the high school class of 2011 who took the ACT are ready to succeed in college. "The ACT results continue to show an alarmingly high number of students who are graduating without all the academic skills they need to succeed after high school," ACT said. To improve the situation, the testing organization recommended: early monitoring and intervention; setting essential standards for students; common expectations; clear performance standards; rigorous high school courses; and that states and schools make data-driven decisions on how to improve. To find the report, www.act.org/readiness/2011/.

Women Value College More. According to the Pew Research Center, more women are enrolling in college than men. And "they also have a more positive view than men about the value higher education provides," it reported mid-August. "Half of all women who have graduated from a four-year college give the U.S. higher education system excellent or good marks for the value it provides given the money spent by students and their families," the report said. Only 37 percent of male graduates agree. More women than men were also likely to say college was "very useful" increasing their knowledge... but also more likely to question "the affordability of college." See, www.pewsocialtrends.org.

Pell Grants Vital. Nearly 80 percent of students who attend community college had family incomes of less than 150 percent of the poverty

threshold of \$20,000 for a family of four, and 60 percent were below the poverty line. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, the maximum Pell Grant of \$5,500 only covers 29 percent of a student's nine-month school budget. AACC also reports that 37 percent of all Pell recipients attend community colleges, the largest of any grant sector. Two-year colleges have seen Pell payments from students increase 21 percent since 2009-10. "We've seen a dramatic surge in enrollments throughout the community college system due to the economic recession," said Dr. Walter G. Bumphus, president and CEO of AACC. Find the policy brief at www.aacc.nche.edu.

Most Don't Know Fin Aid Facts. Seven out of 10 teenagers with just a high school diploma do not know the basic facts about applying for financial aid, says a new survey from Public Agenda. It concluded that such knowledge gaps "could be fatal" when it comes to going to college.

"One Degree of Separation: How Young Americans Who Don't Finish College See Their Chances for Success," found that fewer than half nationally who enter college earn a degree. Only 26 percent of these students could identify what a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is. Only 40 percent see their job as a "career." And 57 percent said there were other ways to succeed besides through a degree.

Further, 90 percent of both high school students and college graduates said that students have to borrow too much money to go to school. Only 37 percent of high school grads strongly agree that accumulating debt to go to college is worth it. To view the report, go to: <http://publicagenda.org/files/pdf/one-degree-of-separation.pdf>.

More Hispanic Students Head to College. In a single year, the enrollment of Hispanic students in college "surged" 24 percent, according to a report released end of August by the Pew Hispanic Center. The number of 18-24-year olds attending college reached 12.2 million, increasing by 349,000 from 2009-10. Using Census Bureau data, Pew said, "young Hispanics for the first time outnumbered young blacks on campus, even though young black college enrollment has also grown steadily..." In 2010, 38 percent of all 18- to 24-year-old blacks were enrolled in college, up from 32 percent in 2008. From 2009-10 there was an increase of 88,000 young black students and 43,000 young Asian Americans. But there was a decrease of 320,000 young non-Hispanic white students. ■

THE COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

People Are Talking About: *Higher Education? How Colleges are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids—And What We Can Do About It*, by Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus; published by St. Martin's Griffin; includes their own list of top 10 colleges; ISBN: 978-0-8050-8734-5; \$14.99; see www.stmartins.com

Guides Hot Off the Press. *Barron's Guide to the Most Competitive Colleges*, Seventh Edition; 85 of "America's most competitive colleges described in detail"; 1,145 pages; ISBN: 978-0-7641-4599-5; \$23.99; www.barronseduc.com.

The Princeton Review's *The Best 376*

Colleges, 2012 edition; includes "100 best value colleges list" and 62 rankings; (most satisfied with financial aid, Swarthmore C.); 825 pages; ISBN: 978-0-375-42839-5; \$22.99; www.princetonreview.com.

10 Best College Majors for Your Personality, second edition; over 55 descriptions of majors for six personality types; by Lawrence Shatkin; ISBN: 978-1-59357-863-3; \$17.95.

And *College Major Quizzes* by John Liptak; 226 pages; ISBN: 978-1-59357-867-1; \$14.95; both from www.jjist.com.

Sierra Magazine posted its fifth annual ranking of the nation's "Coolest Schools,"

saluting "the efforts of U.S. colleges that help solve climate issues and operate 'sustainably,'" the magazine said. Top of the list: U. of Washington; Green Mountain C.; U. of California, San Diego; Warren Wilson C. and Stanford U. See www.sierramagazine.com.

Preparing for College. *Study Smart, Study Less*, by Anne Crossman, focuses on successful study habits; 122 pages published by Ten Speed Press; ISBN 978-1-60774-000-1; \$10.99; see www.tenspeed.com.

Toward College Success: Is Your Teenager Ready, Willing, and Able? by P. Carol Jones and Patricia Wilkins-Wells (Langdon Street Press, 2011); ISBN: 978-1-936782-08-6; \$14.95; www.langdonstreetpress.com. ■

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

British Students Scramble. Applications were up by 10,000 for admission into British universities to more than 707,000, a new record. But because the government puts strict limits on the number of slots that could support, as many as one third of candidates will fail to secure a seat. Colleges face government imposed fines for each student they recruit beyond government quotas. Part of the strain comes from students who might have deferred admission for a year who are rushing to enroll

before the cost of a degree soars from 3,290 pounds to as much as 9,000 pounds. "Going to university is a competitive process and not all those who apply are accepted," one administrator told *The Telegraph*.

More Saudis Graduating from US Colleges. This June, 3,000 students from Saudi Arabia graduated from U.S. colleges with the aid of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program. Currently, 43,500 Saudi Arabian students are

studying in the U.S. "This is a memorable day for both countries," said the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S., Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir. "The choice to study in the U.S. should undoubtedly expose students to new ideas and strengthen the exchange between both countries."

Fewer Admitted in Taiwan. Taiwan's Admission Committee announced that the nation's college admissions rate fell to its lowest level in six years, in part because 6,000 fewer openings were available and a higher calculus cut-off score eliminated less competitive students. ■

NEW CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Over the summer, a number of colleges announced new programs and majors.

Lehigh International Internships. Lee Iacocca, the iconoclastic former chairman of Chrysler Corporation, is now helping his alma mater Lehigh U. expand its international work-abroad opportunities for students. The program resulted from two questions Iacocca asked himself: "How do you go about building global leadership" and "How do you demonstrate to people from different worlds that their commonalities are greater than their differences."

The Lee Iacocca International Internships program will enable students to work full-time in companies across the globe.

Interdisciplinary Environmental Degree. Loyola U. New Orleans launched new interdisciplinary degree majors in the environment; a B.S. in Environmental Science with a concentration in biological sciences; a B.A. in Environmental Studies with a concentration in

the humanities and a B.A. in Environmental Studies with a concentration in social sciences.

"Having this degree program, especially in New Orleans, is vital because it allows our students to understand important environmental issues and to participate in environmental scholarship and hands-on practical experiences that will contribute to the region's recovery and long-term viability," said the program's director, Paul Barnes.

Agriculture Sustainability Degree. This fall, UC Davis launched a new interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science degree in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems. "This is an exciting addition to the college that reflects a change in how we think about food and agriculture," said Neal Van Alfen, dean.

New Major in Chinese. The interest in Chinese language and culture has grown steadily at the U. of Rhode Island and now students will be able to earn a bachelor of arts degree in Chinese, according to the uni-

versity's news department. The university will also encourage students to take a second major with Chinese, such as engineering or business, with international career opportunities in mind.

Nation's First Degree in Chemical Microscopy. North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, will begin awarding a degree in "chemical microscopy," or "the use of light and electron microscopes, microchemical tests and spectroscopy to solve problems in the forensic, pharmaceutical, environmental sciences and government and military fields." Students will work alongside research scientists at nearby Hooke College of Applied Sciences which boasts a 40,000-square-foot learning center.

Degree in Health and Wellness. Canisius C. in Buffalo, New York, will offer a new undergraduate degree in health and wellness to prepare students in personal health and fitness. It has also introduced undergraduate programs in operations research and computational science. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Dream Acts Enacted. The governors of California and Illinois signed modified versions of the "Dream Act" this summer, creating privately-funded scholarship funds for undocumented students who gain admission to college.

California Governor Jerry Brown signed a law that allows undocumented students to win privately-funded scholarships. He also indicated that he favors using state monies to fund state scholarships for undocumented students. "I'm committed to expanding opportunity wherever I can find it," Brown said at the signing.

In Illinois, Governor Pat Quinn signed a law which permits students who have at least one undocumented parent, attended high school in

the state for at least three years and earned a high school degree to be eligible for private scholarships to either private or public colleges. The Illinois law also requires high school counselors to train in ways to help undocumented students find ways to pay for college. And it allows the families to participate in Illinois' two college tuition savings programs.

Limelight on Tuition Hikers. Which colleges are the biggest tuition boosters? That's what the U.S. Dept. of Ed wanted to know. So this summer it created a list of the top 5 percent of colleges and universities with the sharpest rates of tuition increase over a three-year period. These schools have been asked to explain why they surpassed others in charging

students more tuition.

At the top of the list? Arizona State U. which increased tuition 38 percent from \$4,971 in 2007-08 to \$6,844 three years later. In fact, all Arizona public universities made the list. So did Georgia State U., with its 46 percent jump, and Alabama State U., that increased tuition by 43 percent. To see the schools on the list, go to: <http://collegecost.ed.gov/catc/Default.aspx>.

Bans on Frats/Sororities. A number of colleges are clamping down on fraternities and sororities. Princeton U. first-year students are now prohibited from joining campus fraternities and sororities or participating in "rush" activities. Upper division students will be allowed to join the Greek organizations. However, Princeton will continue to withhold recognition for such groups. ■

HAVE A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR!

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