

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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News from NACAC

What About Those Wait Lists?

LAST YEAR, guidance counselors attending the National Association for College Admission Counseling annual meeting were vocal in lamenting the prevailing use of wait lists by colleges trying to shape their classes for this fall. So this Fall, NACAC decided to look at the current state of wait lists by surveying colleges in order to provide guidance at its annual meeting in Denver.

Among its findings: nearly 45 percent of four-year colleges now use wait lists. But between 2007 and 2010, colleges admitted fewer than one-third of the applicants from their wait lists. While students hope to be moved off a wait list in May or June, the survey found that 29 percent of schools take students from their wait lists in July and 13 percent in August. The more selective colleges place more students on wait lists. Of particular interest: Only 16 percent of colleges consider ability to pay when placing a student on a wait list, but 38 percent of colleges use ability to pay when admitting students off of the wait list.

Further, counselors had complained that students pulled off a wait list had to make a snap decision without enough information about financial aid, among other things. The Assembly at the convention voted to urge colleges to give students accepted off the wait list at least 72 hours to commit to the school.

The Common App Changes. Beginning August 2013, the Common Application will upgrade to a new generation known as the CA4, according to Rob Killion and Scott Anderson who led a NACAC session on The Common Application. Why? The current form is six years old and the volume of users has

nearly doubled, up from 381,000 in 2007 to 660,000 last year. School membership has grown from 315 schools to 488.

One change was the talk at NACAC—the removal of the “free-choice” essay. Replacing it will be four or five rotating topics posted in March of the previous year. Also, the new version will feature fewer questions per screen, students will see relevant questions only, a sidebar will provide help for each question and there will be at-a-glance progress checks. The essay length will remain the same 250-500 words. For info on other features, see www.commonapp.org.

At the same time, Killion and Anderson presented some other interesting stats: For the 2011-12 school year, the Common App fielded 663,000 unique applicants, a 15 percent increase from the previous year, and 2.78 million applications, a 16 percent increase. On average, each applicant had four applications. The numbers varied from over six per applicant at independent schools and over five from public schools in New England to a little over four in independent schools and about three in public schools in the South. Public schools, though, account for 72 percent of all applicants. And 55 percent are female and 58 percent white.

Penn's New Essay. Speaking of essays, people were also talking about The U. of Pennsylvania, which has added a second required essay to its Common Application supplement. The new question requires demonstration of creative skills. This year's question asks students to respond to a quote
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The Latest News on College Pricing

THE COLLEGE BOARD released its annual “Trends in College Pricing” and “Trends in Student Aid” at the end of October and the news is decidedly mixed. *The good news:* The tuition increases at public four-year colleges and universities are smaller in 2012-13 than in recent years. *The bad news:* So is the financial aid.

“From 2008-09 to 2010-11, grant aid and tax benefits increased rapidly enough to cause the average net prices to decline, even in the face of tuition increases,” the report said. But, it added, the net price paid by full-time students enrolled in public four-year colleges “increased measurably for 2012-13.”

The average tuition and fees for in-state students at public four-year colleges and universities increased from \$8,256 in 2011-12 to \$8,655 in 2012-13. But the College Board estimates that with grants, tax credits and deductions, the average net price is just over \$2,900. Meanwhile, the sticker price for out-of-state tuition for students at public institutions rose by \$883 or 4.2 percent, from \$20,823 in 2011-12 to \$21,706 in 2012-13. Tuition and fees at private nonprofit four-year colleges and universities rose by \$1,173 or 4.2 percent from \$27,883 to \$29,056 in 2012-13.

As far as aid is concerned, full-time undergraduate students received an average of \$13,218 in financial aid, including \$6,932 in grant aid from all sources and \$5,056 in federal loans.

For the complete reports, see, <http://trends.collegeboard.org/>. ■

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Early Enrollment Numbers Mixed

LAST YEAR, college enrollment hit an all-time high, with nearly 23.9 million young adults in college or graduate school. So how has enrollment shaped up this fall? Here are more early returns.

Alfred Holds Steady. Alfred U. in Western New York attracted its second largest freshman class in its history; about 615 new students. About a quarter of new students are from out-of-state. Last year, it attracted 3,300 applications. Alfred notes that nearly all graduates land jobs and 94 percent are working in their field of study.

But Georgia System Declines. Fewer students enrolled in schools of the University System of Georgia this year than last. According to *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the decline comes after more than a decade of "record setting enrollment."

This year, the Georgia system enrolled 312,600 students, a 1.1 percent decline. Officials pointed to the struggling economy and reduced award payouts for some recipients of Georgia's HOPE scholarships. Also, higher standards have weeded out students who need too much remedial help in English or math.

Enrollment drops of more than 10 percent were recorded at Fort Valley State U., Bainbridge, Georgia Perimeter, East Georgia State and Gordon State colleges.

However, several state colleges recorded increases including Darton State C., Georgia Tech, Southern Polytechnic and Georgia Gwinnett. The problem is that the decline comes during a year in which the state budget cut \$54 million, with another \$54 million coming next year. That means cuts in higher education personnel and programs.

Ithaca's New Record. Ithaca C. in New York drew a record number of applications for this year; 13,820. According to the student newspaper, *The Ithacan*, the college hoped to enroll between 1,600 and 1,650 freshmen this year.

Kansas Taps Legacies. Nearly one fourth of the students at the U. of Kansas had a parent or grandparent who attended the university, according to the Pew Center on the States. And after four straight years of enrollment declines, KU is hoping to enroll even more legacies, "We have a tradition here of families sending their kids back to the hill," said a KU alumni spokesman. "It's something the university values."

In fact, a 2010 survey by the National Association for College Admission Counseling found that 35 percent of all public colleges say they give some importance to "alumni relations" in their admissions decisions. However, the U. of California System ended legacy

preferences in 1996. The same is true for Georgia's public universities and Texas A&M.

Michigan Admits Fewer Freshmen. The U. of Michigan attracted a record 42,544 applicants for this year, thanks in part to the Common Application, which UM started using two years ago. But by design, its freshman class is the smallest since 2008. "This is the second straight year that we have intentionally admitted fewer students to our entering class," said Ted Spencer, associate vice provost and executive director of undergraduate admissions. Some 6,171 first-year students enrolled, 80 fewer than last year, says the *Michigan Daily*.

"The applicant pool among non-residents has ballooned," the university provost Philip Hanlon told the paper. "In fact, we expect the applications for residents to go down as the demographics of the state shift." The new class comes from 1,900 high schools, 46 states and 60 countries. UM enrollment for all programs reached 43,426, a 1.7 percent increase over last year.

Missouri Goes International. In Missouri, Southeast Missouri State U. in Cape Girardeau saw enrollment grow for the 17th consecutive year, to 11,132, a 2.4 percent increase over last year. However, due to smaller high school classes, freshmen enrollment is down, slightly. But total international enrollment is up to 811 students, compared to 705 last year.

Ohio Trends. Several colleges across Ohio posted enrollment declines this fall. At the same time, some schools saw increases. For example, Tiffin U. attracted its largest first-year class, of 447 students. Overall, it enrolled 7.4 percent more students. It also attracted more international students from Australia, Brazil, Germany and Venezuela. Nearby Heidelberg U. enrolled 345 new freshmen, its fifth largest first-year class.

Texas Up. The U. of Texas at Austin enrolled its largest freshman class in school history and the second largest total enrollment. It fielded about 8,000 first-year students, up by about 900 over last year. The increase is expected to put a strain on the system, which will need to add course sections and "redirect resources for years to come."

Meanwhile, enrollment in several East Texas colleges and universities is booming. According to the *Longview News-Journal*, LeTourneau U. saw first-year student enrollment jump from 363 last year to 450 this year. The U. of Texas at Tyler grew by about 6 percent this fall, with 660 new students, and total enrollment growing by 2.5 percent. Enrollment at East Texas Baptist U. in Marshall saw a

Tuition at Top Schools

While talking about aid, what is it trying to match? Last month, *Forbes* highlighted the sticker prices among its latest list of top schools: Princeton U., \$53,934; Williams C., \$57,141; Stanford U., \$57,755; U. of Chicago, \$59,950; Yale U., \$58,250; Harvard U. \$56,000; U.S. Military Academy, free if admitted; Columbia U., \$59,208; Pomona C., \$55,319; Swarthmore, \$55,895; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, \$55,270; U. of Notre Dame, \$55,257; Amherst C., \$56,898; Bowdoin C., \$56,540; Washington and Lee U., \$54,843; Wellesley C., \$55,300; U. Pennsylvania, \$57,360; California Institute of Technology, \$54,090; Brown U., \$56,150; Vassar C, \$57,385 and Wesleyan, \$58,371 per year. ■

slight increase, with 25 additional new students for a total of 450 freshmen.

Utah's Dip. Overall enrollment at public colleges in Utah declined for the first time in four years. According to *The Salt Lake Tribune*, enrollment declined by 1.6 percent or about 2,700 students. The eight schools in the system enrolled 171,292 students, 15 percent more than were enrolled in 2008. The biggest drops came at three open-admissions institutions: Utah Valley U., Dixie State C. and Salt Lake C.C. However, Southern Utah U. recorded a modest gain, despite tougher admissions standards, as did Weber State U. and Snow C.

"In some areas, it's capacity," Dave Buhler, Commissioner of Higher Education, told the paper. "Students haven't been able to get all the courses they need so they don't go forth on their education this year. I am not alarmed by it. In [full-time equivalence] we are dead even [with last fall]. This is something we won't want to see continue if we want to have an educated workforce."

Meanwhile, enrollment at private Brigham Young U. climbed by one percent to 33,336, and stayed flat at Westminster C. with 3,355 students. Both schools recruit most of their students from out-of-state.

Washington Up. Thanks to about a thousand more international students on campus this year and 250 more in-state students, enrollment is up at the U. of Washington's Seattle campus. UW attracted 20.5 percent of its Seattle students from out-of-state and nearly 13 percent from other nations.

In fact, enrollment is up at half of Washington's four-year institutions, according to *The Chronicle*, a local news source. More than 350 additional students enrolled this year at Washington State U.'s four campuses. And 800 more are enrolled at UW's three campuses. Eastern Washington U.'s enrollment increased by 450. ■

WAIT LISTS

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from Philadelphian Ben Franklin: "All mankind is divided into three classes: those that are immovable, those that are movable, and those that move." Penn asks, "Which are you?" Last year, Penn fielded 31,000 applications. The new question will probably reduce that number. "We're not sure what the responses will be," Eric Furda, dean of admissions, said, "but we hope that it is going to open up a range of opportunities for students."

Admission Strategies Surveyed. *Inside Higher Education* released some of its findings from a survey of admissions officers this fall to see what recruitment practices were in play. Some of the highlights: About 44 percent said they are very likely to increase recruitment efforts of transfer students and minority students. And 54 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they will increase their recruitment of "full-pay" students, while 63 percent will place more emphasis on recruiting international students in the coming year.

One surprising finding: Forty-two percent of admissions directors stated a "reasonable" debt for a four-year program would be \$20,000-\$30,000. Those in the public sector said less than \$20,000 was the maximum "reasonable" debt load. For more information on the survey, see <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/survey>.

TIPS GLEANED FROM NACAC SESSIONS

On Reaching Rural Students. Jennifer Kincaid, Greenhill School in Texas; Dawn Brown-Piatt, Centre College in Kentucky; and Rick Sciacca, La Veta School District in Colorado examined the challenges facing first-generation and rural students in the admission process. They noted that rural students, in particular, often face "geographic isolation, a lack of role models and limitation in their coursework and extracurricular activities."

But the presenters had suggestions for high school counselors faced with these obstacles. For example, to provide role models, counselors can host alumni events for students to learn from former classmates. They can also set up an alumni Facebook group for older students to mentor younger ones. And they can organize a college visit program for parents.

To break down the geographic isolation, counselors can help students connect with individual colleges electronically and team up with other area high schools for programs. A top priority is to insure that students have access to standardized testing centers.

To accentuate student coursework and extracurricular activities, counselors in rural schools need to provide some context for the opportunities they do have and illustrate these in the school profile and letters of recommendation. Also, students may need help describing their leadership activities in local communities. Counselors can also find out about and encourage students to participate in summer STEM and leadership programs.

What should admission counselors do? Reach out to rural and first-generation students to help them learn about the process of applying to schools, provide a greater awareness for entire communities, organize regional counselor breakfasts or lunches and use Skype for interviews.

On Going It Alone. What happens when students don't have "helicopter" parents, let alone a supportive parent? Answering this question were Richard P. Alvarez at the City University of New York; Nancy Caine, St. Augustine High School in California, Fran Cubberley at the Delaware County Community College in Pennsylvania and Lisa Sohmer, Garden School in New York.

They listed the reasons some students face the college admissions process alone: Language barriers, cultural differences, parental self-doubt, financial issues, the lack of a college-going culture at school, peer pressure to avoid college or a parent that is in military service, incarcerated, absent or deceased.

Among the statistics they cited: Approximately 100,000 high schools students are in foster care. Single parents make up 8 percent of active military families and there are some 800,000 military families in the U.S. About 1.7 million children have a parent who is incarcerated.

The speakers noted programs that can help schools and families, in particular, Camp College sponsored by the New York State and other affiliates of NACAC and the AVID Program which reaches out to parents and provides information and resources.

On "Grit" Matters. What is "grit?" Something an increasing number of colleges say they are looking for in their applicants. In fact, Angela Duckworth, assistant professor of psychology, the U. of Pennsylvania, has created a "Grit Scale" so that students and others can describe how they react to obstacles in their path.

Duckworth defined "grit" as perseverance and a passion for long-term goals. Grit entails working strenuously toward challenges, maintaining effort and interest over several years despite failure, adversity and plateaus in progress," she said. Some schools are making it formally part of their "holistic" measure of applicants.

People were talking about, for example, Mount St. Mary's C. in Los Angeles which has created Portmont College, a program that can be used to identify students who think they can't go to college, but who have "grit," and with on-line courses, discover their "core capabilities" and abilities to attend college. See, <http://portmont.la.edu>.

Further Resources

NACAC updated its *Fundamentals of College Admission Counseling* which includes three new chapters on ethics, college choice and using data. These additions make this textbook the source for college admission counseling professionals.

Also, NACAC webcast the keynote speaker at its annual meeting and made several educational sessions available on line for a fee. For both resources, see, www.nacacnet.org. ■

BOOKSHELF

Exam Schools: Inside America's Most Selective Public High Schools by Chester E. Finn Jr. and Jessica A. Hockett (Princeton University Press; 255 pages; \$24.95). It considers the lessons to be drawn from Boston Latin, Bronx Science and other academically selective public high schools

and identifies 165 such institutions in 30 states, with in-depth profiles of 11.

The Journal of Sports Economics confirms what many people believe: a university's success on the playing field positively impacts student applications. In a recent article, Devin G. Pope and Jaren C. Pope wrote that a school that has a stellar year in basketball or football, on average, receives up to 10 percent more SAT scores.

Certain demographic groups (males, African American students, out-of-state students and high school sports players) are more likely to be influenced by a school's sport success than other students.

"How Much is Your College Degree Worth?" Jordan Weissmann examines Census Bureau records to find a few answers in October's *The Atlantic Monthly*. See, <http://www.theatlantic.com>. ■

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Roger Williams Initiative. Roger Williams U. has launched an “Affordable Excellence Initiative” aimed at improving the school’s affordability and its graduates’ marketability. The Rhode Island university is freezing tuition at \$29,976, with a guarantee it will stay frozen for four years. Since the university offers both professional and liberal arts curricula, it seeks to increase liberal arts grads’ marketability by encouraging them to minor in one of these professional programs. The same cross-over goes for students in the professional programs.

“...America has stated very clearly that it requires higher education to be both more effective *and* more affordable,” said Donald J. Farish, president of Rogers Williams.

Debt Continues to Climb. Two-thirds of college seniors who graduated in 2011 had student loan debt. And according to a new

report from the Institute for College Access and Success, those who had loans racked up an average of \$26,600 in debt, a 5 percent increase over 2010 grads.

Debt levels also varied according to the states where students attended four-year institutions, with higher debt concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest. New Hampshire led the way with an average debt load of \$32,440, followed by Pennsylvania and Minnesota. Students attending college in the West and the South had lower debt levels, with Utah, Hawaii and California leading the low debt states.

Paying off debt continues to be a challenge in the current job market. The unemployment level for 2011 grads remains at 8.8 percent, down slightly from the 9.1 percent in 2010. Among those who want full-time jobs, 19 percent were working part-time or had dropped out of the job market. And nearly 38 percent

of those working full-time were working at jobs that did not require a college degree, with depressed wages.

Albright Expands Aid. Albright C. in Pennsylvania is making a promise to prospective freshmen: If they attend, all of their financial aid needs will be met. The promise will be filled through federal and state aid programs, grants, federal student loans and work-study jobs. In the past, Albright met the full need of about 70 percent of families, Greg Eichhorn, vice president for enrollment management and dean of admission, told the *Reading Eagle*. Albright expects to add about \$3.8 million to its financial aid budget. That will bring the pot to a total of \$30 million to cover its 1,600 undergraduates.

A Trend to Watch. This year, the Virginia529 College Savings Plan’s prepaid tuition option is being offered in semester increments instead of one-year contracts, according to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Coral Reefs. Nova Southeastern U. in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, has opened its new Center of Excellence for Coral Reef Ecosystems Research, the only one of its kind in the nation.

“By opening this state-of-the-art facility, NSU is taking a leadership role in Florida’s marine science research and helping boost an important multibillion-dollar coral industry that employs thousands of South Floridians and sustains many small businesses,” NSU President George L. Hanbury II said.

Cornell’s New Integrated Business Minor. Beginning spring 2013, four of Cornell U.’s colleges will jointly offer a new Business@Cornell minor, according to the *Cornell Chronicle*. The minor is designed to provide students in other subject areas exposure to business concepts. The University-wide Business Minor will require courses in statistics and microeconom-

ics and 12 credits in introductory courses in management, marketing, financial accounting and finance. The courses can be completed in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Graduate School of Management, School of Hotel Administrations and the IRL School.

Health Sciences. DePaul U. in Chicago has launched “The Alliance for Health Sciences,” a “deep collaboration” with Rosalind Franklin U. of Medicine and Science, which operates five graduate schools, including pharmacy and physical therapy.

The Alliance will offer an interdisciplinary approach to liberal studies at DePaul with the inter-professional health care model at Rosalind Franklin; expand research opportunities and faculty collaboration across colleges and disciplines; create new programs; and provide early-admission pathways into

Rosalind Franklin’s professional programs in medicine, pharmacy, podiatric medicine, physical therapy, physician assistant studies and pathologist assistance studies. These will be available for freshmen enrolling in fall 2014.

STEM Transfers. Eckerd C. in Florida is trying to take the shock out of “transfer shock” that many community college STEM students feel when they enter a four-year college, resulting in lower grades than their fellow upper-level students. Eckerd’s Quantitative Excellence in Science and Technology Scholars program offers academic and social support and a new peer-tutoring program, as well as seven scholarships of up to \$8,000 annually.

Louisiana’s New Option. Louisiana 11th and 12th grade high school students are now eligible to take college courses for credit at more than 40 colleges and universities in the state. For more information about the program see, <http://louisianaconnect.org>. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

National Writing Results. The National Assessment of Educational Progress released its first computer-assessed writing scores for students in grades 8 and 12. It found that 75 percent of these students performed at or above the Basic Achievement level, which means that they have at least partial mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to communicate clearly in writing. Only three percent of both 8th and 12th graders performed at Advanced level, while 24 percent performed at Proficient level.

Why a College “Fit” Is Important. More than half of the students who transfer from a four-year higher ed institution to a two-year college never return to the four-year school, states a report from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. It found that:

- Within six years, 14 percent of the first-time students who started at a four-year institution in the fall of 2005 subsequently enrolled in a two-year institution outside the summer months.
- 28 percent of the reverse transfer students

returned to a four-year school, but a different institution.

- 71 percent stayed in the two-year institution only one term.
- By the end of six years, two-thirds of reverse transfer students had not earned a four-year degree or were enrolled at a four year school. For more information about this study, visit www.studentclearinghouse.org.

People are Talking About. In Jersey City, New Jersey, the 140-year-old Saint Peter’s C. has become Saint Peter’s U. The Jesuit-run university grants degrees in 45 majors, five masters, and two doctoral programs. ■

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