

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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THE GREENE REPORT

Three Trends to Watch in the New Year

EDITOR'S NOTE: Once a year, CB asks Howard and Matthew Greene to share their insights about the current admissions process. Below, the two independent consultants, authors of several books on college and CB Advisors describe the top trends they are watching this admissions season.

AMONG THE MANY interconnected aspects of the college admissions process, there are a few we would like to pay some attention to this year.

CHANGES IN STANDARDIZED TESTING

The first, and probably most visible, is the most significant redesign of the SAT in a generation. Set to debut March 2016 (and preceded by a new PSAT October 2015), this will not be your grandparents' Scholastic Aptitude Test. It is designed to more closely mirror a student's academic program, which is expected to align nationally with the Common Core standards. The new SAT will look a lot more like the current ACT.

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Admissions Watch

Early to Dartmouth. A record number of students applied early to Dartmouth C. in New Hampshire, according to *The Dartmouth*. The school received 1,856 applications or 10 percent more Early Decision applications than last year. For the first time in two years, more women than men applied early. In the past, students accepted Early Decision represented 40 percent of the incoming class.

Dartmouth recently began connecting its most recent alumni to new applicants via Skype. The pilot program is targeting areas where there are few alumni, overseas students and applications from military families living abroad, said *The Dartmouth*.

Georgia Early Action. The U. of Georgia received a record 13,300 Early Action applications for next fall. In mid-November, it admitted 7,500 of those applicants, two weeks earlier than normal.

Nancy McDuff, associate vice president for admissions and enrollment management, said, "We always try to stress to Early Action

applicants, that if the admissions decision was 'deferred,' they still have a chance to be a part of the incoming freshman class. In the past few years, we have admitted about half of the students who were initially deferred and then completed part two of the application by January 15. Being deferred, at this point, does not mean that an application is denied. It means we are still considering their application."

Montana Application Week. All seniors at 138 participating Montana high schools filled out at least one college application during the first week of November as part of College Application Week. Last year, seniors at 84 high schools submitted more than 1,700 applications to 18 postsecondary institutions during the targeted week. This year, all Montana University System, private and tribal institutions deferred or waived their application fees during College Application Week. Montana is also paying for the ACT administered to all high school juniors.

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Financial Affairs

Bloomberg Funds College Guidance Effort. Bloomberg Philanthropies announced a new initiative to increase the number of high-achieving, low- and moderate-income students who apply to and graduate from top colleges and universities. More than 50 percent of U.S. high-achieving, low-income students do not apply to a single selective college or university, despite their qualifications, Bloomberg explained. Only 6 percent of students at top colleges and universities are low-income. So Bloomberg Philanthropies is investing \$10 million over the next two years to help as many as 65,000 of these students apply to, enroll and graduate from these top schools. Funds will go to support advisors from College Advising Cops, College Possible and Strive for College, among other things.

Cornell Joins Private College 529 Plan. Cornell C. in Iowa has joined the Private College 529 plan, a pre-paid tuition savings plan that allows participating families to lock in today's tuition rates for future use. The PC529 plan lets families purchase tuition certificates that guarantee student tuition at the current year rate for 30 years from the date of purchase, no matter how much tuition costs rise or what happens in the financial markets. See, www.privatecollege529.com.

UC Five-Year Tuition Plan. The U. of California Board of Regents authorized schools in its system to increase tuition by 5 percent per year through the 2019-20 school year. The actual increase will be determined by the market.

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Enrollment Trends

The 2008 College Cohort. A new report from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center calculated the six-year graduation rate of the first cohort to enter college during the Great Recession. It found that overall, the six-year completion rate for the fall 2008 cohort was 55 percent, a decrease from the completion rate of 56 percent for the fall 2007 cohort. It also observed that these declines mostly occurred among older and part-time student groups. Also, completion rates for students who started at two-year public institutions also fell, while completion rates for students who started at four-year for-profit

institutions declined sharply. The report also noted that eight-year completion rates for the fall 2006 cohort now top 60 percent.

Virginia's Dip. Enrollment in Virginia's public colleges and universities fell below 400,000 students this fall for the first time since 2008. But requests for financial aid have grown by 78 percent since 2011 from 71,043 to 226,700 students. As a result, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia requested that the General Assembly appropriate an additional \$30 million for undergraduate need-based financial aid next year.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

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al amount of increases will depend upon future levels of state contributions. "No one wants to see the price of a UC education increase, but I believe the plan is fair and necessary if UC is to remain a world-class, public-serving university," said Bruce Varner, regents chair.

"Despite the level of public disinvestment, its research and academic reputation have been largely sustained," said UC president Janet Napolitano. "Entire swaths of the California economy—from biotechnology to the wine industry—have sprung from UC research. UC graduates lead the creativity and innovation activities upon which California prides itself."

2014-15 Cost/Debt Totals. The average published tuition and fees for full-time in-state students at public four-year colleges and universities increased by 2.9 percent to \$9,139 in 2014-15, according to new reports from the College Board. Meanwhile, the average published tuition and fees for full-time out-of-state students at public four-year colleges and universities increased 3.3 percent to \$23,958.

However, the average net prices are lower than the published prices, because many students are awarded grant aid from federal and state governments, colleges and universities and other sources.

Over the past decade, the average net tuition and fees at public four-year institutions increased by 32 percent, compared to the 42 percent increase in published prices. At private, nonprofit four-year institutions, the net price fell by 13 percent over the past decade, while the published price increased by 24 percent.

In 2014-15, full-time students at public four-year institutions received an average of \$6,110 in grant aid and education tax benefits. At public two-year institutions, they received \$5,090. And, total annual education borrowing fell by an estimated 8 percent between 2012-13 and 2013-14, following declines of 4 percent and 2 percent in the two preceding years, for a three-year decline of 13 percent. However, about 60 percent of students now leave college

with debt that totals \$27,300, up 19 percent over the past decade.

Quarter Believe Student Loans Will Be Forgiven. Nearly one-in-four Millennials think they won't have to pay back their student loans because they'll be forgiven, according to a new report from Junior Achievement USA. And only one-in-five believe that student loans are still a good investment.

"Rising college expenses and growing student debt are obviously having an impact on Millennials' perception of the value of a college education," said Jack E. Kosakowski, president and CEO of Junior Achievement USA.

Weak Net Tuition Revenue Growth. Net tuition revenue growth for U.S. nonprofit colleges and universities in fiscal year 2015 will be the weakest in a decade, according to Moody's Investors Service. It projects that private universities will have a 2.7 percent net tuition revenue growth and publics will grow by only 1.9 percent.

"Sluggish overall net tuition revenue for this sector is fueled by lingering price sensitivity, a public focus on affordability and flat enrollment," said Eva Bogaty, a Moody's vice president and senior analyst. "Smaller entering classes in much of the country over the next few years foreshadows continued revenue pressure, despite overall stable enrollment."

Bogaty added, "This dynamic is forcing already-struggling schools to offer deeper discounts to potential students. The effects of this discount on net tuition revenue will multiply over the next three years as these students progress through the program."

Strong Endowment Returns. Colleges and universities across the country realized a 15.8 percent return on their investments in 2014. The "Commonfund Study of Endowments" surveyed 426 U.S. colleges and universities and found that the largest endowments posted the highest returns for the fiscal year. Institutions with assets over \$1 billion reported an average return of 16.8 percent. ■

State appropriations for students have declined by 49 percent or \$5,909 on average at four-year schools over the past 15 years. At the same time, tuition revenues increased by 63 percent or \$4,397.

Holistic Health Care Admissions. A new national study coordinated by Urban Universities for HEALTH found health profession programs that use a more holistic approach to admissions increase their diversity without negative impact on academic quality, student performance or student retention. "Half of schools surveyed reported that the average GPA of the incoming class remained unchanged, while 40 percent reported that it increased," according to the survey.

"Our study shows that holistic review is a very promising admissions practice that not only increased access for diverse students but also admitted students who excelled academically and have the right qualities to succeed in the workforce," said Dr. Greer Glazer, dean of the College of Nursing at the U. of Cincinnati.

Fastest Growing College in Washington. The U. of Washington Bothell, the largest of the five university branch campuses in the state, saw student enrollment increase by 10 percent over last year to 4,963 students. The new first-year class totaled 634 students, a 10 percent increase over last year. ■

ADMISSIONS WATCH

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Penn ED Apps Up. Early applications to the U. of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia jumped by 5 percent to an all-time high of more than 5,000. Director of admissions Eric Furda told *The Daily Pennsylvanian* that Penn expects to fill between 45-50 percent of its new class through Early Decision. About 54 percent of the class of 2018 was admitted this way.

The Rose-Hulman Test. Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Indiana wanted to get to know its applicants more deeply. So it devised a personality quiz to determine which students thought they could control their own destiny. Students who are confident that they are in charge of their fate, the kind of students who are more likely to stay at Rose-Hulman and succeed, gain an edge in admissions.

Yale Down Slightly. Early Action applications to Yale U. fell slightly, by 1.2 percent to 4,693, even as diversity of the pool deepened. Early applications have grown by 9 percent overall since 2011, Jeremiah Quinlan, dean of undergraduate admissions, told the *Yale Daily News*.

"I think there's a misconception, especially with Harvard, Yale and Princeton, that if you apply early, you have a better chance," William Morse, a private counselor, told the paper. ■

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David Coleman, an architect of the Common Core, was clear when he took over the helm of the College Board that he wanted the test to be more academic. The rationale was that since students would be expected to prep for any important test, including the SAT, why not make it worth prepping for, and more connected to their everyday learning?

The details of the test are explained on the College Board's website. But some of the important changes likely to impact students and their counselors include a partnership with the Khan Academy to provide the College Board approved, free online preparation materials in order to level the playing field on test prep. We expect many students to take advantage of this, and private tutors and test prep companies to race to access College Board materials, when released, in order to market more personalized and/or higher level test preparation. Students will likely be overwhelmed by a lot of this. And many companies and tutors are likely to be guessing about the test, how to prep for it, and how to predict, read and compare scores.

To that end, we expect the existing trend toward taking the ACT in addition to or in place of the SAT not only to continue, but to increase. The ACT is changing in some minor ways, and more significantly in the Writing section. And it will be reporting scores in more detail. From what we have gathered, the substance of the test, which is tweaked regularly, will not be seeing a radical overhaul. It will become the more predictable and familiar test.

Many tutors and counselors are already counseling students to bypass or not worry a lot about the new PSAT and SAT, but rather to focus on the ACT. With every college accepting the ACT, and most of those that require SAT Subject Tests accepting the ACT in place of the SAT and the Subjects, the less expensive and now widely available ACT is going to see even more popularity.

Another major change likely to give students some trouble will be the new Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing section (aka, the Critical Reading replacement, née the Verbal). Though optional, we think most colleges will require the writing assignment, an extra 50 minutes of analytical, evidence-based writing responding to an important text. Did we say 50 minutes? Of evidence-based writing? Folks, this is not going to be easy. Talk with your English and History teachers about helping to get students ready for this hurdle, if this isn't already an important part of your junior (or sophomore) year humanities curriculum.

Finally, as counselors and admissions officers, we are all going to have a hard time understanding scores on the new SAT (and, to a lesser extent, the ACT). What will they tell us? How comparable will they be? How much more trouble will the test be for international applicants? Students in schools with less challenging curricula? Students with learning disabilities? Or students in schools whose academic program does not hew closely to the Common Core, including independent schools?

EXPANSION OF THE COMMON APP

A second trend unfolding is the likely expansion of the Common Application, accompanied by a search among more selective colleges and universities for alternatives to it. The expansion of the Common App



Matthew and Howard Greene

will be facilitated by the ending of the "holistic admissions" requirement. This means colleges that do not require an essay for admission could become members, dramatically increasing the number of potential Common App members and users, and complicating the process inside the Common App itself for students and counselors trying to figure out which colleges require what.

We were already concerned last year about the proliferation of member questions and writing requirements in the 4th Gen application. This has only worsened this year, with a number of colleges inserting writing requirements that

were not apparent to students until they delved deeply into the college's member questions. Want to increase complexity and decrease access, especially among under-represented student populations?

A related possibility (perhaps response?) is a move away from the Common App by a group of more selective institutions. Still to be firmly defined, it looks like we will see a smaller cluster of more elite schools, which also provide more financial aid and have more stringent application and admissions requirements, create yet another application path. The inevitable questions, if they also stay with the Common App: Which one is better? Which app do they prefer? How does this continue to serve the needs of students?

EARLIER ATHLETIC RECRUITING

The third trend we are watching is the continued shift in athletic recruiting into the early high school and even middle school years. This has been a topic of discussion for some time among the "money" sports of football and basketball at Division I scholarship institutions. Now, we are seeing a rush to early recruiting among more selective private colleges and universities in Division III and the Ivy League. Certain sports, including lacrosse, rowing, soccer and ice hockey, seem to be leading the way here.

We have seen students verbally commit to Ivies and other highly selective schools at the conclusion of ninth grade. For them, it is akin to winning the lottery. But how to handle three more years of high school when the outcome is basically a foregone conclusion? What about the risks of an injury, future poor academic or testing performance, or a decision to drop one's sport? As high performing non-athletic students watch these events unfold, their cynicism and frustration can only grow. Yes, even in D3, students are being groomed for recruiting throughout their high school years.

Much of the "action" of recruiting and admissions might still take place during the summer and early fall of senior year, when recruits are almost universally pushed to apply Early Decision. But by that time, they have attended numerous sports camps hosted by the colleges, played in numerous select tournaments or showcases and gotten to know coaches through campus visits.

We have long talked about athletic recruiting as both a blessing and a curse for prospective students, given the time and personal demands associated with it. But, as the pressure mounts for earlier decision making and intense focus, the balance seems to be tipping more away from the blessing side of the equation. ■

Howard Greene and Matthew Greene are independent consultants with Howard Greene and Associates, based in Westport Conn. They are also the authors of several books on college. See, www.howardgreeneassociates.com.

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Fashion Merchandising at Long Island U. This fall, Long Island U. launched a fashion merchandising curriculum. Students in academic majors from marketing to public relations, management, economics or journalism can combine their major with a fashion merchandising minor to gain the knowledge and skills to work in fashion.

“The fashion industry, which employs more than 4.2 million and accounts for about \$250 billion in 2013 in the United States, is a vibrant job market,” said Professor Abbey Dress of LIU Post’s School of Visual and Performing Arts, where fashion merchandising courses are offered.

LIU’s proximity to New York City’s fashion industry means many jobs and internship opportunities to “interact with masters of the retailing and design universe....”

UCLA Diversity. All U. of California Los Angeles undergraduates are now required to complete a course focused on diversity. “This has been one of my long-standing priorities and demonstrates our strong commitment to expose undergraduates to views and backgrounds other than their own,” said Gene Block, UCLA Chancellor.

Specialized Business Degrees. Responding to a growing demand for specialized business acumen, the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York, is offering four new business majors: management, entrepreneurship, marketing and human resource management.

All business majors participate in internships and take classes in the new \$3.5 million Huether School of Business building. See www.strose.com. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Duquesne Goes Test Optional. Duquesne U. in Pittsburgh is the latest to make SAT or ACT scores optional. Beginning next fall, students who apply to the McAnulty College of Liberal Arts will not have to worry about the tests.

“Across the spectrum, in all geographic and socioeconomic areas, in urban, suburban and rural schools, both private and public, we have had solid applicants who are motivated and academically talented but don’t perform as well as might be expected on standardized tests,” said Paul-James Cukanna, associate provost for enrollment management.

Immigration Reform Implications. What are the implications for colleges stemming from President Obama’s recent immigration decisions? In 2012, the president protected hundreds of thousands of young immigrants known as “Dreamers” from deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Also, 19 states currently allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition. Many private institutions, including NYU, Pomona C., Oberlin C. and others already treat these students as “domestic candidates for admission.” How will other schools and states react? *CB* will keep you updated.

Athletes Graduate at Record Rates. NCAA Division I athletes who entered school in 2007 graduated at a record rate of 84 percent within six years, according to the most recent Graduation Success Rate data. Football players in the Football Bowl Subdivision graduated at

a 75 percent rate, a 4 percent increase. And men’s basketball players graduated at a 74 percent rate, a 1 percent increase over last year’s numbers.

Medical School Records. More students are going to medical school than ever before, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. This fall, 20,343 students enrolled in medical school. And a record 49,480 students applied to med school, a 3.1 percent increase. Of those, 36,697 were submitting their first application.

“In spite of the ongoing partisan debate around the nation’s health care system, it is gratifying to see that increasing numbers of students want to become physicians,” said AAMC president and CEO Darrell G. Kirch, M.D. “However, these results show that our nation must act without delay to ensure an adequate number of residency training positions for these aspiring doctors so they will be able to care for our growing and aging population.”

Student/Faculty Interconnection. College selectivity bears little relationship to student experiences with faculty, according to a new report from the National Survey Student Engagement that draws upon survey results from more than 355,000 first-year and senior students attending 622 U.S. colleges and universities.

The report found that institutions with lower selectivity offer experiences with faculty that are comparable to more selective institutions. ■

International Affairs

More International Students. The number of international students at colleges and universities in the United States increased by 8 percent to a record-high 886,052 students in the 2013-14 academic year, according to “Open Doors 2014,” the annual survey of the Institute of International Education. The number of international students in the U.S. has increased by 72 percent since the year 2000. The number of Chinese students increased by 17 percent this year. Students from China now make up 31 percent of all international students in the United States. Students from India increased by 6 percent, following three years of decline. This increase was driven by enrollment at the graduate level.

Meanwhile, a total of 289,408 U.S. students are studying abroad, a number that has doubled in the last 15 years.

Summer Abroad. Nearly 290,000 U.S. students are currently pursuing their education outside of the country. Many of these students began their foreign adventures while still in high school with a summer language study abroad program, such as the Magellan Study Abroad program based in Los Angeles. More at www.magellanimmersion.com.

EU Austerity. A *Times* (of London) *Higher Education* analysis of funding and enrollment levels from 2008-09 to 2013-14 found that austerity measures in the E.U. countries has had various effects. In England, funding for higher education was down by 35 percent. But for Britain as a whole, student enrollment was up by 9 percent to 1.87 million students.

In the Republic of Ireland, funding was cut by 35 percent, but student enrollment increased by 19 percent to 185,000 students. In Spain, funding was down 15 percent. But the numbers of college and university students rose by 5 percent to 1.3 million.

In Sweden, higher education funding actually rose by 23 percent and the number of students increased by 7.6 percent to 299,000. In Germany, funding increased by 23 percent, and the number of students jumped by 34 percent to 2.6 million.

But in Hungary, funding was down 46 percent and student enrollment decreased by 15 percent to 338,500 students. And in Greece, funding fell by 54 percent, while the number of students still surged by 11 percent to 410,000. University rectors there complained that the drastic cuts have caused “chaos” in many of the country’s universities. ■

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