

# College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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## Early Admissions Watch

**Brown Admits 22 Percent Early.** Brown U. received 3,170 Early Decision applications for the Class of 2021, and admitted 695 of them or about 22 percent. Sixty percent of applicants were deferred and 18 percent were rejected, Logan Powell, dean of admissions, told *The Brown Daily Herald*. He said nearly 60 percent of the class will be admitted through the Regular Decision applicant pool. “We don’t admit students because they represent a certain part of a profile, we admit students because we have faith they will do exceptional things here and after they graduate,” Powell said.

Of admitted students, 411 checked off “female” and 284 checked off “male” on the Common Application. About 53 percent of admitted students applied for financial aid. Some 36 percent are members of underrepresented racial minorities, the highest number in Brown’s history. Admitted students also come from 39 nations. And, 13 percent are the first in their families to go to college. “That’s the piece that really stood out to all of us,” Powell told the paper. “It was such a remarkable growth in the number of applicants.”

**Columbia’s ED Apps Up 16 Percent.** Columbia U. in New York City received 4,086 Early Decision applications, up 16 percent from last year.

**Cornell Early Apps Up By 10 Percent.** A record 5,384 students applied Early Decision to Cornell’s Class of 2021, 10.3 percent more than last year. The Ivy League school admitted 25.6 percent of the applicants, fewer than last year. Just slightly more than half of the admitted students are women, and 14.4 percent are international students. Students of color account for 35 percent of the newly admitted students. Legacy students make up 23.3 percent of the early admits and athletes account

for 13.4 percent. Jason Locke, associate vice provost for enrollment, told *The Cornell Daily Sun* that early applications have increased by 78 percent over the past decade.

**Dartmouth’s “Record Pool Of Talent.”** The number of students who applied Early Decision to Dartmouth C. for the Class of 2021 rose by 3.7 percent to 1,999. Of them, 555 were admitted. The admitted students include 26 who applied to Dartmouth through the college’s partnership with QuestBridge. The early admits will make up 47 percent of the incoming class.

“The numbers are impressive,” said Lee Coffin, vice provost of enrollment. Coffin told *Dartmouth News* that this year’s application pool showed significant increases in both academic quality and socioeconomic diversity.

Some 92 percent of the admitted students are in the top 10 percent of their high school classes, up from 90 percent last year. The mean SAT scores rose 33 points to 1468, and the mean ACT composite is 32. Some 31 percent are students of color, while 8.3 percent are international students from 22 countries. More than 10 percent are first-generation college students. Legacies make up 16 percent of the new class. Also, 52 percent have applied for financial aid, up from 48 percent last year. At least 11 percent are eligible for federal Pell Grants.

**Duke’s Record Early Pool.** Duke U. attracted a record 3,516 Early Decision applications, 2 percent more than last year, and admitted 861, or 24.5 percent into its Class of 2021. Among the accepted students were 36 QuestBridge applicants. Students of color make up 41 percent of the admitted pool, while international students comprise 7 percent. Early admits will account for about 50 percent of the new class,

*continued on page 2*

## Enrollment Trends

**High School Graduates Level Off.** Between 1999 and 2013, the percentage of high school graduates grew by 30 percent. But for the next seven years, the number of high school graduates is not expected to grow at all, and will likely decline this school year, even as the percentage of high school students earning diplomas rises, according to a new report released by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. The largest declines will come in the Midwest and Northeast, while the West will see slight increases and the South will see significant and steady increases. The report also predicts sharp declines in private school graduates.

“Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates” also shows that white student graduates are increasingly being replaced with large number of Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Island graduates. “We are moving toward a time when nearly half of all high school graduates will be students of color,” said Joe Garcia, WICHE president. Read the entire report at [www.wiche.edu/knocking](http://www.wiche.edu/knocking).

**Princeton’s Pell Numbers Grow.** This year, 21 percent of the students in Princeton U.’s Class of 2020 are eligible for Pell Grants, one of the highest percentages among the nation’s most selective colleges and universities. That’s up from 7.2 percent for the Class of 2008. In fact, 60 percent of Princeton’s Class of 2020 received some form of financial aid, compared with 52 percent in the Class of 2008.

“Socioeconomic diversity is critical to the  
*continued on page 2*

## INSIDE

- Enrollment Trends
- Curriculum Capsules
- International Affairs
- And News You Can Use

## EARLY ADMISSION WATCH

*continued from page 1*

Christoph Guttentag, dean of undergraduate admissions, told *The Duke Chronicle*.

### Georgia Attracts Record Early Applications.

The U. of Georgia fielded a record 15,800 Early Action applications this year, a 10 percent increase over last year. UGA is set to accept 8,059 of them.

### Georgia Tech Early Apps Up 5 Percent.

Early Action applications to the Georgia Institute of Technology increased significantly to over 15,700 students. Among Georgia residents, early applications are up 25 percent over the past six years. The school also reported that its freshman-to-sophomore retention rate hit an all-time high of 97 percent. The average ACT score of early applicants is 32, and most have taken nine AP/IB college level courses in high school. EA applicants will be

## What To Do After Early Rejection

Most students who apply early to elite colleges are disappointed. They are either rejected outright or deferred. If deferred, a student is automatically recycled into the regular admissions pool. But students should send a note to the admissions office confirming they are still interested in attending.

If rejected, students need not despair because they have already done much of the work that can be applied to an application to another school. In *U.S. News and World Report*, Brian White recently urged the students to explore options.

1) **"Broaden your reach."** Students should "consider the aspects that most drew you to this institution. List them and use this list as a guide when choosing other colleges." For example, students "might consider a top regional school instead. While the name recognition may be less immediate, you may gain a stronger alumni network at that regional university."

2) **"Strengthen your pitch."** Look back at your early application. Where were the weaknesses? "If you aren't sure, ask a guidance counselor or mentor to help evaluate your materials." Then address those weaknesses. Perhaps the students need to submit new test scores. Or they can submit fall senior year grades.

3) **"Don't give up."** Students have already completed an entire college application, and can use most of this material to reapply to another school. But they need to "keep going and maintain a positive attitude." Most students end up at a college that they enjoy and where they learn much. If they post an impressive record and are dissatisfied, they can always try to transfer. ■

notified of admissions decisions on January 14. Undergraduate Admissions also expects about 255 new transfer students to enroll this spring.

**Harvard's Admits 14.5 Percent Early.** Early Action applications to Harvard C. rose by 5 percent to 6,473. Of those, 14.5 percent were offered admission, down from last year's 14.8 percent. Asian American applicants represent 21.7 percent of admitted pool, while African Americans make up 12.6 percent, Latinos 8.8 percent. Women account for 48 percent of the new students. First-generation college students make up 8.7 percent of the admitted class.

Early admission "appears to be the 'new normal' now as more students are applying early to Harvard and peer institutions than ever before," said William R. Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions and financial aid. "At the same time, we have continued to stress to applicants, their families and their guidance counselors that there is no advantage in applying early to Harvard. The reason students are admitted, early or during the Regular Action process, is that their academic, extracurricular and personal strengths are extraordinary."

### Illinois Returns To Early Admissions.

After a two-year hiatus, the U. of Illinois has resumed its Early Action option. This year, UI received 22,000 early applications, and accepted 13,804 for next fall. Another 4,000 were deferred and will have to wait until February to learn their fate. About two thirds of the 22,000 applicants are from Illinois, which means that in-state applicants have rebounded from a couple of down years.

"A lot of emotions run high with the immediate reactions," said Andrew Borst, director of undergraduate admissions. In an e-mail to high school counselors, Borst wrote a word of caution to unhappy parents and students who were deferred or rejected. "Please help us remind students and parents that yelling does

## ENROLLMENT TRENDS

*continued from page 1*

University's mission," Princeton president Christopher L. Eisgruber said. "To achieve excellence, we must draw upon the talents of students from all backgrounds. And to serve society, we must help bridge the economic gaps that divide our country and our world."

**Texas Tech Women.** Texas Tech U. celebrated the fact that the number of women on its campus has grown from 268 of the 919 people in the original Class of 1925 to 13,107 of the 29,237 undergraduates on campus in 2015. TT now "provides a welcoming environment for women through learning communities for women in science and engineering and other resources."

"I think that a big part of it is reaching back to our admission statement about providing access

not change decisions." In fact, he noted that admissions decisions are rarely overturned, he said, except in cases where new information is provided that might have changed the original decision, such as a family illness. Grading information from a student's senior year will not reverse the decision. But UI will consider new ACT scores for students on the deferred list during the next round of decisions.

**Penn's ED Rate Is 22 Percent.** A total of 6,147 students submitted Early Decision applications to the U. of Pennsylvania, 7 percent more than last year. And 1,354, or 22 percent, were accepted. New students hail from 46 states and 44 nations. Last year, 55 percent of Penn's 2,445 first-year seats were taken by ED students.

**Princeton Accepts 15 Percent EA.** Princeton U.'s Early Action applications rose by 18.3 percent over last year to 5,003. Admitted students come from 42 states and 45 countries. About 11 percent are international students and 43 percent are from "diverse backgrounds." About 14 percent are the first in their families to go to college, while 16 percent are Princeton legacies.

"The academic and personal strengths of these admitted students are extraordinary," said Janet Rapelye, dean of admission. "The Early Action process this year was especially challenging given the depth of the applicant pool. The admission rate was 15.4 percent."

**Yale Admits 17 Percent Early.** This fall 5,086 students applied Early Action to Yale U., 9 percent more than last year. Yale announced that 871 of them were admitted, for an admit rate of 17.1 percent. Additionally, 53 percent of applicants were deferred to the regular pool, while 28 percent were denied admission.

Yale also offered admission to 48 students through the QuestBridge National College Match Program, according to *Yale News*. ■

to students, one student at a time," said Taylor Love, admissions counselor. "... A big part of why we do what we do is either because we had someone who helped us along the way or we didn't have someone help us along the way, and we want to be that someone for someone else."

**Mexican Students Headed For Illinois.** The U. of Illinois has signed an agreement to strengthen ties with Mexico. The partnership could eventually bring as many as 2,000 undergraduates from Mexico to the three U. of Illinois campuses as a part of the university's efforts to diversify international student enrollment and increase its global impact. Part of the agreement also would send Illinois researchers to work with the Dept. of Health in Mexico City to study diabetes and obesity, both major health problems in Mexico. ■

# Financial Affairs

**FAFSA Filers Enroll.** Ninety percent of high school seniors who completed the FAFSA proceed directly to college versus only 55 percent who don't complete the federal financial aid form. But according to the National College Access Network, which just completed a study of the 2015 high school graduating classes from 68 U.S. cities, the FAFSA completion rate in those cities drastically varies from as low as 25 percent to as high as 68 percent. NCAN also found that completion rates do not correlate with city population size or poverty rates. The average FAFSA completion rate among the 68 cities was only 48 percent for the Class of 2015.

Of the 3,480,130 U.S. high school graduates in 2013-14, only 1,530,949 of them completed the FAFSA before graduating. That means "students are leaving billions of dollars of federal, state and institutional aid on the table each year because we don't ensure that they fill out the FAFSA in a timely way," the report concluded. One additional note: the FAFSA form now can be submitted during the fall of senior year.

**Boston U's Four-Year Aid Guarantee.** Boston U. Financial Assistance has launched a BU Assurance program, which "certifies that any financial aid students received from the university during their first year will be guaranteed throughout the rest of their undergraduate time at BU." Current upperclassmen will also be folded into the program.

"We want to increase our retention rate. We want students to stay," said Julie Wickstrom, director of financial assistance. "If we're not able to commit to this, we know we're going to lose students. From the operational perspective, that hurts the bottom line of the university, too." The program has a new March 1 FAFSA deadline.

**Lycoming College.** Lycoming C. in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, has joined with the nonprofit Strive for College "to strengthen college opportunities for low-income, first-generation college students, who make up 16 percent of our student body." The average six-year graduation rate at private four-year institutions for low-income students is 52 percent; for first-generation students the rate is 48 percent. "Adding Strive's services to the retention programs we already have in place will continue to help more of these students graduate and enter the job market," said Mike Konopski, vice president. Strive for College has a program called "I'm First!" that features student videos, blogs and advice, including a collection of YouTube videos, stories from first-generation college students and graduates. See, [www.ImFirst.org](http://www.ImFirst.org).

**Dept. of Ed Loan Counseling Experiment.** The U.S. Dept. of Ed has launched a financial aid counseling experiment with 51 two-and-four-year colleges and universities across the country. They will test the effectiveness of requiring loan counseling more often than the current required one-time entrance and one-time exit counseling. The various colleges and universities have chosen to use one of three options: the Dept. of Ed's loan counseling tool (FACT), third-party counseling services or their own institutionally developed counseling.

The experiment will enable the Department to determine what types of additional counseling are most effective in boosting repayment outcomes and their impact on helping students manage their debt. Participating colleges range from Arizona State U. to the U. of Pittsburgh.

**HUD's Education Navigators.** The U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded \$2.5 million to nine public housing authorities across the country so they can hire "Education Navigators" to help low-income students and their families apply for federal student aid for college and other postsecondary educational opportunities. The program is formally called The Resident Opportunities and Self Sufficiency (ROSS) for Education Program and it will operate in Chicago; Phoenix; High Point, North Carolina; Los Angeles; Milwaukee; Prichard, Alabama; Seattle; Rome, Georgia; and Philadelphia. "Achieving the dream of a college education is becoming more of a reality for hundreds of students living in HUD-assisted housing," said HUD secretary Julian Castro.

**Californians Say Affordability "A Big Problem."** According to a survey released last month by the Public Policy Institute of California, 57 percent of residents say affordability is a big problem. In contrast, only 15 percent of Californians say that the quality of higher education is a big problem. Some 72 percent agreed with the statement that the price of a college education keeps students who are qualified and motivated from going to college. And 67 percent say state funding for California's colleges and universities is inadequate.

**Ranking 529 Plans.** Savingforcollege.com recently released its Quarterly Rankings for the top performing 529 plans. The District of Columbia, Tennessee and New York topped the list. (See the website for complete details.)

While 529 plans are popular methods for saving for college, there are several other ways families can set aside money for the future. To help students and parents better understand their options, The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators has prepared a variety of resources, including a chart that compares different savings plans, resources that explain how students may be able to get credit for training or prior learning and a guide that outlines the federal tax benefits available for higher education. For info see, [www.nasfaa.org](http://www.nasfaa.org).

**Canadian Universities More Affordable And Accessible.** Canada plans to introduce a fixed student contribution to determine eligibility for financial assistance to the Canada Student Loans Program. This is part of what the Canadian government calls its commitment to strengthening the middle class and helping those who work hard to join it. Beginning in 2017, students will only be expected to provide a fixed contribution of between \$1,500 and \$3,000 per academic year (based on their family income and family size). ■

## COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

*Plan and Finance Your Family's College Dreams: A Parent's Step by Step Guide from Pre-K to Senior Year* by Peter Mazareas and John A. Hupalo; Peterson's; ISBN: 978-0-7689-4080-0; \$16.95.

*The Great Mistake: How We Wrecked Public Universities and How We Can Fix Them*

by Christopher Newfield; Johns Hopkins University Press; ISBN 9781421421629; \$32.

*Paying for College Without Going Broke, 2017 Edition*, Penguin Random House/Princeton Review Books by Kalman A. Chany; ISBN-13: 978-110192042; \$21.99. ■

## CURRICULUM CAPSULES

**Gardner-Webb's Criminal Justice Major.** Gardner-Webb U. in North Carolina will offer a new bachelor's of science degree in Criminal Justice Administration beginning Fall 2017. The program will integrate the university's liberal arts interdisciplinary education with knowledge in social, political, domestic and global criminal justice issues. "Our program will provide students a unique opportunity to study cybercrime, homeland security, terrorism and intelligence that incorporates science and technology in investigative strategies," said Bobbie Cox, associate professor of criminal justice.

**Dancing in Nevada.** The U. of Nevada, Reno will offer a bachelor's of arts degree in dance, beginning Fall 2017. According to Cari Cunningham, associate professor of dance, the new program will offer students a rigorous balance of theory and practice to courses in dance technique, choreography, history and production.

"The opportunity to create choreographic work and see it come to life on stage has always been very rewarding for students in our program, and this experience is built into the degree," Cunningham said.

**Wagner's Civic Engagement Minor.** Wagner C. on Staten Island in New York City has long promoted civic engagement among its students and faculty. Now it is introducing a new Civic Engagement minor that allows students to focus a substantial portion of their studies on the theory and practice of educating what Wagner president Richard Guaracsi calls "the civic professional."

"The Civic Engagement minor helps students develop a civic identity and provides future employers with concrete evidence of student commitment and experience in civic engagement. Students will also gain a better understanding of social responsibility and social justice, and acquire multicultural civic skills," the college says. ■

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

**SEEK STEM.** SEEK (Summer Engineering Experience for Kids) operates 15 programs around the nation including some camps designed only for girls. "I think we spent so much time doing the whole testing thing that our children are coming out ill-prepared with the most basics and fundamentals," said Karl Mack, former director of the National Society of Black Engineers.

**Women Become Majority in Law Schools.** Women now make up the majority of students in U.S. law schools. For the first time, they have 50 percent of the seats held at accredited U.S. law schools, according to the American Bar Association. This year, 55,766 women are studying for a jurist doctor degree compared with 55,059 men. Female students make up more than 51 percent of the first-year class.

But the 50 percent threshold can be misleading. Law School Transparency has released data that shows many of the women wound up attending lower-ranked schools.

According to *The New York Times*, "That undercuts their employment possibilities and their earning potential since higher-ranked schools generally have better track records for placing their graduates in full-time, long-term jobs requiring a law degree."

Overall, law school enrollment remains flat, after falling more than 30 percent since 2010. Meanwhile, women have earned 57.1 percent

of all college degrees, but were lagging behind in applying to law school.

**Minnesota Stops Screening For Felonies.** The U. of Minnesota will no longer screen prospective students for felonies on their application. However, U. of M. will continue to ask prospective students if they have ever been convicted of sex offenses or if they have been disciplined by previous schools for academic dishonesty. And student housing applications will continue to inquire about a student's criminal history. The new policy begins Fall 2018.

"There is no real evidence, when you look at this nationally, that when felons are admitted to the campus that there is any kind of threat to the campus itself," Bob McMaster, U. of M vice provost, told *The Pioneer Press*.

**Wisconsin Green Bay's Snap Notifications.** The U. of Wisconsin Green Bay is using Snapchat to deliver instant acceptance notifications. The lucky students will see an image of the UWGB mascot, cartoon balloons and monster-green text welcoming them. They won't have to wait for their snail mail notification that will also arrive, except a little later.

**Elmhurst President Delivers Good News.** Elmhurst C.'s new president Troy D. VanAken jumped into action late this fall by personally delivering Early Admissions acceptance

## International Student Assessment

How well do U.S. 15-year-old students stack up against international competition in science, math and reading? In 2015, average scores of students in 73 international education systems, including all 35 member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in science literacy ranged from 556 in Singapore to 332 in the Dominican Republic. The U.S. average of 496 was slightly above the average of OECD countries at 493. Education systems with scores similar to the United States included Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, Poland, Portugal, Norway, Austria, France, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Spain and Latvia.

The percentage of top-performing 15-year-old students in science literacy ranged from 24 percent in Singapore to 0 in 10 education systems. In the United States, 9 percent of 15-year-old students scored at proficiency level and above, slightly above the OECD average of 8 percent. But about 20 percent of U.S. 15-year-old students scored below the proficiency level of 2.

The average scores in reading literacy ranged from 535 in Singapore to 347 in Lebanon. The U.S. was not measurably different than the OECD average (493). But 20 percent of U.S. 15-year-olds scored below the proficiency level 2, on par with the OECD countries.

In mathematics, average scores ranged from 564 in Singapore to 328 in the Dominican Republic. The U.S. average score of 470 was lower than the OECD average of 490. The U.S. average was similar to Hungary, the Slovak Republic, Israel, Croatia and Argentina. In 2015, 29 percent of U.S. 15-year-old students scored below the proficiency level 2.

Since the PISA test was first given in 2009, U.S. scores have not changed much in science and reading literacy. But the mathematics literacy score in 2015 was lower than that of 2009 and 2012. ■

notices to students at nearby Illinois high schools. He presented each admitted student with a "Bluejay Box" that contained their letter of acceptance and scholarship offer, an Elmhurst C. skullcap, a "pop-up" snow-cube and other items.

"That's so cool!" one York High School senior gushed. "At first I thought I'd been called to the office because I was in trouble or something." ■

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