

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Editor's Note: With this issue, *COLLEGE BOUND* begins its 32nd year of publishing. Our first issue in September 1986 focused on admissions trends. *CB* reported that applications were up, with multiple applications skyrocketing. (And this was before the Common App.) Some colleges were reporting more out-of-state applications (this was a new trend then). Others expressed concern about the validity of standardized tests. The most expensive college: Bennington. Tuition: \$13,970.

Class of 2021 Arrives

Butler Apps Up 13 Percent. Butler U. in Indianapolis fielded 14,638 applications, a 13 percent increase over 2016. Over the past two years, Butler has seen more than a 40 percent increase in first-year applications, in part due to its Top 10 basketball teams and its entry into the Big East Conference.

In late August, Butler welcomed 1,065 members of the Class of 2021, which includes 36 high school valedictorians, 11 salutatorians and six National Merit Finalists. About 22 percent of the new students ranked in the top 10 percent of their high school class. Their average GPA was 3.8. Some 57 percent came from outside of Indiana, while 16 percent are U.S. students of color or international citizens. The most popular intended majors are pre-pharmacy, exploratory studies and biology.

Coast Guard Welcomes "Swabs." The U.S. Coast Guard in New London, Connecticut, welcomed 297 men and women into the Class of 2021, who are initially called "swabs." Some 34 percent of the new class is made up of women, while 35 percent are under-represented minorities.

Colorado C. Admits 15 Percent. Colorado C. welcomed 519 new members of the Class of 2021, plus 31 transfer students. The new class was culled from 8,222 applicants, for a 15 percent admit rate. Over 26 percent are students of color. The new class includes 48 QuestBridge students. Some 51 percent

receive some form of financial aid. In preparation for the new school year, all new students read *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine, who visited campus last winter and returned to speak with new students.

Fairfield U. Celebrates Its 75th Anniversary. Fairfield U. in Connecticut attracted its largest application pool ever at around 11,000 students who applied for 1,000 spots. This fall, 1,025 students enrolled in the Class of 2021, down from last year's 1,143 students. About 20 percent are minority students, while 58 percent of the class is female.

Harvard Majority Minority. It's a Harvard milestone and perhaps a harbinger of things to come. The majority of students accepted into its first-year class are not white. African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Americans and Native Hawaiians account for 50.8 percent of Harvard's Class of 2021, up from 47.3 percent last year.

Middlebury Hosts Largest Class. Middlebury C. in Vermont, known for its rigorous liberal arts learning, welcomed its largest class in years. As of May 1, some 644 students declared that they would join another 107 students already accepted early, for a 43 percent yield. The percent of new students receiving Pell Grants rose to 15 percent, while 28 percent of the Class of 2021 will be students of color.

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THE GREENE REPORT

IN SEPTEMBER 1986, Howard Greene wrote his first column for *COLLEGE BOUND*. The topic: Strategies for advising students. His number one recommendation: Throw the net as wide as possible. Sound advice today, as it was then. Below is the 2017 column by Howard and Matthew Greene called "The Voice of Reason."

LET'S MAKE A CHALLENGING STATEMENT: Students are not always right. Oh, and neither are parents. Neither are counselors, of course, but sometimes we might know a little something about the college landscape and admissions process that might be of some use to the families we work with.

Now, we are generally very student and family-directed advisors. We try to promote adolescent growth and development through an educational planning and college admissions process that is fraught with stress, uncertainty and complexity. Our goal is for students to take the lead in their decision process, and to guide them as they make choices that will be integral to their own future well-being.

Sometimes, as most experienced counselors know, that requires confronting students, and their parents, when they have misconceptions or mistaken assumptions about colleges or the admissions process, and presenting a "voice of reason" in what is often an emotional and confusing situation.

Several emerging and continuing trends have made this counseling role ever more

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CLASS OF 2021

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Notre Dame's Mission: "A Force For Good." The U. of Notre Dame attracted a record 19,566 applications, a 35 percent increase, and admitted 3,702, for an admit rate of 18.9 percent. This fall, 2,052 members of the Class of 2021 matriculated on the South Bend campus. Some 54 percent of the enrolling class received a Notre Dame scholarship averaging \$36,000 per student with demonstrated need.

Don Bishop, associate vice president of student enrollment, said, "We wanted to really engage students more than just recruit them. We've tried to state what we're looking for. We've been more forceful in being a force for good in the world. There's a unique mission at Notre Dame."

Occidental Hits Record High. Occidental C. in California received a record high 6,760 applications to the Class of 2021, 5.6 percent more than last year. About 70 percent of "Oxy" students receive financial aid. One in five are Pell Grant recipients, one of the highest percentages among top-ranked liberal arts colleges.

Rice Students Score High. Rice U. in Houston received 18,063 applications this year and admitted 16 percent. Of those, 1,049 students matriculated in August. Some 42 percent of incoming students posted perfect academic records in high school, while 75 percent scored above 1450 out of 1600 on the SAT. A little over half of the new students

come from Texas, while 112 students hail from 20 foreign nations.

St. Mary's Record Pool. St. Mary's C. in South Bend, Indiana, attracted a record 1,829 applications this year and admitted 1,430 students, including one who danced in the Royal Ballet of London, plus 30 transfer students, according to *The Observer*, which serves students at both St. Mary's and nearby Notre Dame. About 20 percent of the new class belong to underrepresented groups, while 22 percent of the incoming class have relatives who've attended the college.

"This is one of our strongest classes with an average GPA of 3.8," said Sara Dvorak, director of admission. She added that in addition to academic quality, the admissions department looks for students with proven integrity. "They have been involved in community service, they have been leaders in their school, church or community and they have learned how to manage their time."

Smith's Attracts Record Numbers. Smith C., the all-women's school in Massachusetts, attracted a record 5,432 applications, a 3 percent increase over last year and 21 percent jump since 2013. That included a record 1,408 international students from 108 nations, 5 percent more than last year. Smith also received 544 Early Decision applications.

"Social media has changed admission recruitment," said Audrey Smith, vice president for enrollment. "Prospective students

learn about college online—from engaged students who talk about their experiences in the classroom, their individual work with faculty and their social lives on campus. It's a great time to be at Smith!"

Tulane Boosts Minority Enrollment. Tulane U. in New Orleans experienced a big jump in minority enrollment this fall. Students of color make up 22 percent of the incoming class, up 16 percent from three years ago. The Class of 2021 also includes 96 international students. This year, Tulane attracted a school record 35,605 applicants, 35 percent more than in 2015. Tulane admitted 21 percent of them, down from 26 percent last year.

"Our messaging focused on three things: the academic quality of the institution, the world-class faculty and the unparalleled research [opportunities]," said Satyajit Dattaagupta, vice president for enrollment management.

"We need to ensure that Tulane attracts the best and brightest from every segment of our society," said Tulane president Mike Fitts.

West Point's New Cadets. This summer, 1,230 cadets, chosen from a pool of 13,000 applicants, reported for classes at the United States Military Academy at West Point. The new class includes 301 women and 207 African-American cadets, historic highs. The class also includes 121 Hispanic, 108 Asian, 14 Native American students, a dozen international students and seven combat veterans. ■

What's Up in the States?

Georgia Bulldogs Are Mostly From Georgia. The U. of Georgia welcomed more than 5,800 freshmen to its Class of 2021. About 87 percent of the new students (Bulldogs) hail from Georgia.

U. of Hawaii Sees Increase in Enrollment. The U. of Hawaii Maui College saw a "slight uptick" in enrollment for Fall 2017 with 3,318 students enrolling. This is up from 3,298 last year. Administrators credit a new tool, Hawaii's Promise Scholarship, which awards students up to \$3,000.

Maine's Recruitment Policy Pays Off. Last year, responding to a 9 percent decrease in high school graduates, the U. of Maine offered admissions to students from other states at the same price that they would pay in their home state. The strategy worked, and 1,000 new students from as far away as California are enrolling in the U-Maine this fall.

UC Irvine Reads Many. In mid-summer, the U. of California Irvine withdrew its offer of admission to 499 students because of poor senior grades and other problems with tran-

scripts and basic requirements. The review was sparked by the fact that about 850 more freshmen than expected had accepted UCI's offer of admission.

Not surprisingly, an uproar ensued and the university agreed to readmit students on a case-by-case basis. Of the first 214 appeals of students who had transcript-related problems, 112 were readmitted. Students with poor senior grades were not automatically readmitted. About 7,100 freshmen were accepted and planned to attend in the fall.

Virginia Bicentennial Class. The U. of Virginia, which this year celebrates its bicentennial, received 36,781 applications, up 13.6 percent from last year's record high, for 3,725 spaces in the first-year class. The mean SAT score was 1388 and 89.4 percent were in the top 10 percent of their high school class. Some 1,247 of the students identify as coming from a minority group. And 486 students are Pell Grant recipients

Washington In-State Destination. The U. of Washington admitted 59 percent of in-state applicants this year, and enrolled its largest in-state

freshman class ever, with 4,450 Washington students. About 15 percent of Washington's Class of 2021 is made up of Hispanic/Latino, African-American, American Indian or Hawaiian/Pacific Island students. Nearly 38 percent come from families where neither parent graduated from college. While fewer international students applied this year, more accepted an offer of admissions. As a result, no one from the wait list was admitted, because the yield was higher than normal.

Wisconsin Attracts International Students. Nearly 40 percent of U.S. colleges and universities received fewer applications from international students this year compared to last year, according to wisnews.com. But the U. of Wisconsin at Madison hauled in 900 more applications than last year, a 14 percent increase to 7,186. And 5 percent more made their deposits on time. Some officials attribute the increase to the fact that Wisconsin joined the Common Application. In 2015, UW regents lifted the limit on the number of international and out-of-state students, while committing to at least 3,600 Wisconsin residents in each freshman class. Tuition and fees for a full-time international undergraduate hit \$33,838 last year, compared to \$10,488 for in-state students. ■

“The Voice of Reason”

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important. The profusion and emphasis on early application plans; the proliferation of different tests; test dates and score reporting and usage options; skyrocketing college costs and multiple financial aid and scholarship pathways; and the rise in the assessment of “demonstrated interest” in the admission decision process, are just a few of them.

As families continue to get bogged down in the minutiae of these and other aspects of college admissions, they often do not have the facts straight about policies and procedures.

Though information is increasingly available, from high school counseling offices, college admissions offices, testing organizations, state and federal government websites, and not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, as with many areas of life today, too much information can lead to paralysis, feelings of being overwhelmed, and a search for guidance and a pathway through the maze. Sometimes this even leads to students saying, “Please, just tell me what to do!”

Counseling and advising being as much art as science, we tread the narrow path between telling, suggesting and questioning. Cards may be put on the table. Prodding is usually necessary. We have noticed increasingly that a lot can be accomplished by making clear the facts at hand.

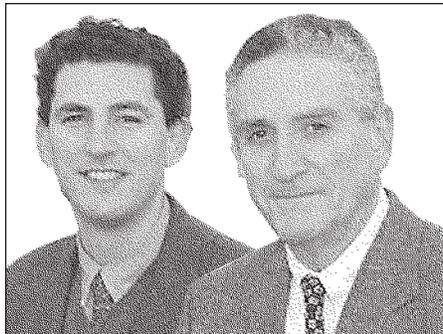
APPLY EARLY (OR NOT)

“I know it’s always better to apply early,” says a student. “Really? Early what?” This leads to a discussion of the variety of early plans, what an Early Decision commitment means, the fact that many colleges do not offer ED, while others offer two deadlines, others priority deadlines, others Restrictive Early Action, and so on.

Then one can turn to individual circumstances and qualifications, the fit of the colleges and universities in question for the student’s goals and interests, and whether a particular early plan might be advisable. Oh, and the voice of reason says, “Actually, it’s not always better to apply early, and here’s why...”

Has a student really evaluated his or her college options? Visited carefully? Is he or she just trying to get the process over with? How many transfer students have we seen who applied early for the wrong reasons or without careful analysis?

Telling families stories about other students who have been through the process and what happened with them can be a very helpful way to make the conversation more real and memorable.



Matthew and Howard Greene

TESTING OPTIONS

Testing is another confusing area that needs a lot of explanation and advice. Many students are now prepping for multiple tests, simultaneously, very early in their high school years. Families don’t understand Score Choice, Super Scoring, Test Optional, SAT versus ACT, Subject Tests, AP, IB.

Basic factual information about all of these areas needs to be presented early in the high school years and repeated constantly. When parents sign up students for ACT plus SAT prep early in 10th grade because “it’s always

better to start early and get it over with,” the voice of reason needs to explain why that just might not be the best approach. When a tutor suggests that a student take the SAT in August before 11th grade and “just focus on the Math, then we’ll have you focus on the verbal stuff,” well, you know what to do.

LET’S TALK

As we’ve long advocated, starting the counseling process earlier is usually better, when done in an age/grade-appropriate fashion, in order to set out a planning timeline and de-stress the admissions process as much as possible. Is visiting some colleges and interviewing when available important to show interest? Yes, sometimes it is. Here’s when and where you should do it. Is it wise not to apply to colleges with high sticker prices since we can’t afford it? Actually, let’s talk about need-based and non-need-based aid and scholarships, priority deadlines and preparing to file financial aid forms as early as possible.

There are many instances where playing the voice of reason becomes an essential role for the counselor, perhaps none more so than when a student has visited a college and is making a decision to commit ED, or to choose an institution in April after having been admitted. Lousy tour guides, rainy days, weird food and reactions to seemingly random details like hills, clock towers, mascots, names of schools (really), can have outsized effects on college decisions. The voice of reason brings the conversation back to student goals and interests, academic programs and extracurricular offerings, broader assessments of a college’s culture, personality, and environment, and the things we might have perspective on that can truly help a student make the best decision. ■

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

COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

Which College Has... The most accessible professors? Colby C., according to *The Best 382 Colleges, 2018 Edition*, by Robert Franek (Penguin Random House/Princeton Review Books); ISBN 9781524710224; \$24.99; The best college dorms? Scripps College. The best campus food? U. of Massachusetts Amherst. The best health services? U. of Wisconsin. Most beautiful campus? U. of San Diego.

Happiest students? Vanderbilt U. Most politically active students? Columbia U. Best college town? Tulane U. Students who love their college? Virginia Tech.

Selling Hope and College: Merit, Markets and Recruitment in an Unranked School, Alex Posiecznick (Cornell University Press); ISBN-978-1-501709821; \$19.95.

Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream, Sara Goldrick-Rab; (University of Chicago Press); ISBN-13: 978-0226404349; \$27.50.

Practice for Life: Making Decisions in College, Cuba, Jennings, Lovett and Swingle; (Harvard U. Press); ISBN: 9780674970663; \$35.

Love the Journey To College, by two-decade COLLEGE BOUND subscriber, Jill Madenberg, and her daughter Amanda; 240 pages; (Post Hill Press); ISBN 9781682613498; \$15. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

More Go Test-Optional. Students applying to Hanover C. in Indiana will no longer have to submit their SAT or ACT test scores, beginning this fall. Hanover joins 950 other test-optional schools. In 1969, Bowdoin C. in Maine was the first to go test-optional.

Dominican C. of Blauvelt, a liberal arts school just 17 miles outside of New York City, has also gone test optional as of fall 2018. "There's more to the admissions process than the SAT or ACT on a Saturday morning," said Joseph Ahlstrin, director of admissions. "It's all about their programs, how they've done from freshman to senior year, the trend that they're on and how they might assimilate to campus. It brings more of a holistic approach than just looking at a number."

Not All Good Jobs Require Degrees. The U.S. economy supports more than 30 million good jobs that don't require college degrees, according to new research from the Georgetown U. Center on Education and the Workforce. Its research shows that good jobs "continue to grow, but they are changing from traditional blue-collar industries to skilled-service industries. A gain of 4 million good jobs in skilled-service industries, such as financial services and health services, has more than offset the 2.8 million good jobs lost

in manufacturing.... Although the economy has shifted, workers without a B.A. still comprise 64 percent of all workers."

Anthony P. Carnavale, lead author of the report, said, "Even though there have been big losses, manufacturing still provides the largest number of good jobs."

The report also found that the growth of good jobs has been greatest for workers with an associate's degree. And the report concluded that "whites still have the largest share of good jobs, but that share has declined. Latinos have a smaller share, but have seen the most growth. Blacks have the smaller share and have seen only slight growth." Also, men have grabbed 70 percent of these good-paying jobs. California, Texas and Florida have the largest number of good jobs for workers without a degree, while Wyoming, New Jersey and Maryland provide the largest share.

Demographic Dip Hits Small Colleges. Last year, over 18 million students enrolled in higher education, a hefty number. But that was 2.4 million fewer students than were enrolled in the fall of 2011, the most recent peak year, according to the National Student Clearinghouse. The downward trend is not likely to reverse for several years. When it does, many of the new students will come from

low-income families and from homes where parents have not gone to college, and who will need more financial aid. The demographic dip has hit small private colleges particularly hard.

Tenure Decline. In 1975, 45 percent of faculty at public and private colleges and universities was tenured or tenure-track. By 2014, that number had fallen to 29 percent. Part-time adjunct professors who earn, on average, much less than half the salary of tenured professors with few benefits, make up the bulk of the nation's higher education teaching corps.

And according to *The Wall Street Journal*, several states have introduced legislation to eliminate tenure altogether.

P.S. PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT... "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" in the September *Atlantic Monthly*. ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Student Loan Interest Rates Move Higher. New federal student loans disbursed from July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018, will rise from last year's 3.76 percent interest rate to 4.45 percent.

Meanwhile, the average variable rate on a private student loan is now 7.81 percent, while the average fixed rate stands at 9.66 percent, according to LendEDU. More than 1.4 million students a year use private student loan debt to bridge the gap between college and other aid. Currently, about 60 percent of undergraduates leave college owing on average \$28,400 per borrower.

"Students are put in a tough spot," Michael Brown, research analyst at LendEDU told cnbc.com. "With tuition cost continuing to rise, federal loans won't cut it, so some are forced to take private student loans, where interest rates are high right now."

Oregon Promise. The Oregon Promise, which began last year, is subsidizing tuition at the state's 17 community colleges for recent high school graduates. After accounting for federal financial aid and other scholarships, students receive up to \$3,400 per year, the average annual tuition at state community colleges. The state's higher education commission has requested \$39.7 million to fund an expanded program over the next two years. But Oregon is facing a \$1.4 billion revenue shortfall, so the exact numbers are uncertain. ■

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CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Loyola New Orleans' Computer Science B.S. And Food Studies Program. Beginning this fall, Loyola U. New Orleans will offer two Bachelor of Science degrees in computer science and computer science with a focus on game programming. The new degrees "are designed to prepare students for a dynamic, high-growth field with an ever-increasing presence in New Orleans and around the world," said Ralph Tucci, professor of mathematics and computer science.

Meanwhile, Loyola's College of Arts and Sciences launched a new interdisciplinary food studies program. Students can pursue a major designed around food policy, commerce and culture. Loyola's program, located in one of the world's premier food capitals, offers classes in history, sociology, natural sciences, environmental sciences and other fields that examine food production, distribution and consumption.

Wellesley's New Statistics Minor. Wellesley C. in Massachusetts is offering a statistics minor as a more focused area of study within

students graduate and enter an increasingly data-driven world, the opportunity to study statistics past the introductory level is crucial," said Cassandra Pattanayak, lecturer in Quantitative Reasoning and Mathematics.

Environmental And Urban Studies. The U. of Chicago has added an urban studies track to its environmental studies major. "Chicago became a hub of economic activity because of our natural landscape and geographic setting, and understanding those connections between the social, natural and physical realms of human activity is critical to the future of sustainable, livable cities," Sabina Shaikh, director of the program, told *The Maroon*.

Webster Adds Chemistry. Webster U. in Missouri has added a B.S. in chemistry. Students are instructed in the theories and applications of organic, inorganic, analytical, physical and biochemistry. "The program includes significant laboratory work, allowing students to become proficient in the skills necessary to succeed in the chemical career." ■

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