

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Colleges and COVID-19: Updates

HOW ARE COLLEGE STUDENTS responding to the challenge of COVID-19? The pictures of young people recklessly partying tell only part of the story. Actually, a recent Harris Poll suggests that members of Gen Z are covering up with masks and social distancing more than older adults.

"Much behavior around preventing COVID-19 has become strongly politicized, so there may be negative reactions to younger people's eagerness to comply in some circles," said Anna McAlister, professor of psychology at Endicott C. in Massachusetts, "Personally, I see young people showing great maturity in their behavior, which should be viewed as a contribution to public health, rather than a political statement."

An Axios/College Reaction poll found that only 12 percent of students say they have gone to a party. But 50 percent have gathered with

friends without masks. Some 49 percent have dined in a restaurant or gone to a bar. And 42 percent know someone who has contracted COVID-19 on campus.

In retrospect, 51 percent of college students say it was wrong for their college to allow students back on campus. Add to that, the dissatisfaction with the online learning experience. Some 60 percent of students say that they "learned less" online compared to traditional classrooms.

By the end of September, more than 48,300 COVID-19 cases were reported at 37 major universities around the nation. That said, colleges and universities are on the front line of the COVID-19 fight in many states. What will happen in Fall 2021 is anyone's guess. But here is a snapshot of how some schools have responded this fall to the unprecedented challenge.

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Will COVID Impact the Class of 2025?

The world-wide pandemic has not deterred this fall's high school seniors who are struggling with remote learning, online counselors, closed testing centers and other restrictions as they prepare to apply to college for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Students are taking virtual college tours, attending virtual college fairs, connecting virtually with admissions officers at prospective schools, all the while shoring up their grades and activities.

At Princeton U. in New Jersey, for example, prospective students are taking virtual tours of the campus, participating in Zoom information sessions with admissions officers and current students and conducting online interviews. *The Daily Princetonian* also reports that

Princeton has suspended Early Admissions and its standardized test requirement this year. It's a similar story at many other schools.

Meanwhile, enrollment figures are actually up in some places. Others are down. What will this mean for the admit rates next year? Time will tell. Here's more on applications this fall.

Undergraduate Enrollment Falls by 2.5 Percent. According to preliminary numbers from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, undergraduate enrollment was down this fall by only 2.5 percent. Graduate enrollment increased by 3.9 percent compared to last year. That computes to an overall decrease in postsecondary enrollment.

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Presidential Candidates on Higher Ed

Another presidential election is upon us, and several states have already begun voting. As *CB* has for presidential races in the past, it puts a spotlight on what the candidates say about higher education.

President Donald Trump, Republican: This re-election year, President Trump and the Republican Party chose to re-adopt their 2016 Platform. On higher education, it says, in part: "Federal control over higher education puts Washington in the middle of issues that have always been the responsibility of institutions and States. They also increased compliance costs on institutions, forcing colleges and universities to consider raising tuition or shifting resources away from student services."

Therefore: 1) "Repeal onerous higher education regulations;" 2) "Allow Pell Grants to be used year-round" and with "more flexibility;" 3) "Shift to community colleges and technical institutions. Over 50 percent of recent college grads are unemployed or underemployed, working at jobs for which their expensive educations gave them no training. It is time to get back to basics and to higher education programs directly related to job opportunities;" 4) "No federal college loans; just ensure private loans;" 5) "Increase access to higher education with savings accounts."

Former Vice President Joseph Biden, Democrat: Joseph Biden has endorsed the

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CLASS OF 2025

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ment of 1.8 percent, far smaller than feared last spring when colleges began planning for fall classes.

Community colleges showed the greatest loss, 8 percent. Private nonprofit four-year institutions saw a 3.8 percent decline. Public four-year institutions only decreased by .4 percent. But there was some variety there, as urban institutions increased slightly while rural schools fell by 4 percent.

Butler Welcomes 1,140 New Students.

Butler U. in Indianapolis welcomed 1,140 first-year students on campus for in-person learning, although the freshmen were given an option for remote learning. All those on campus were required to take a temperature check and a COVID-19 test before moving into dorm rooms. Students were advised to pack lightly in the event circumstances change during the semester and they have to return home. Once moved in, new students participated in orientation to “make sure the first-years feel welcome.”

Dallas First-Year Class Unified.

The Class of 2024 at the U. of Dallas posted high school GPAs averaging 3.84 and 27 on the ACT. Some 20 percent of the new class is made up of first-generation students, while 19 percent speak multiple languages. The top areas of interest are business, biology, psychology and politics. “Many freshmen expressed that studying the same texts in core classes has unified the class at a time of social distancing,” according to udallasnews.com.

Dickinson College. At Dickinson C. in Pennsylvania, chartered in 1783, 18 percent of the Class of 2024 has chosen to defer their start until Spring 2021. Before Dickinson announced that fall classes would be delivered online, 597 first-year students accepted Dickinson’s offer of admission. After the college announced on July 15 that it would go remote this fall, 107 students postponed their enrollment, 31 of them until Fall 2021. The deferrals should not have a negative impact on the acceptance rate for applicants to the Class of 2025, Cathy Davenport, dean of admissions, told *The Dicksonian*.

Georgia State’s Largest Freshman Class.

Georgia State U. welcomed 5,200 freshmen to its Atlanta campus and an additional 2,500 freshmen at GSU’s Perimeter campuses.

Hillsdale’s Most Talented Class.

Hillsdale C. in Michigan calls its new freshman class “the most accomplished in Hillsdale’s history.” Hillsdale admission rate dropped to 36 percent. Matriculated freshmen come in with an average ACT score of 31 and average GPA

Yale Defers

Last year, Yale U. deferred 51 first-year students originally accepted into the Class of 2023. This year, however, with Yale going remote in the fall, 341 students previously accepted into the Class of 2024 elected to take a gap year.

However, “the admissions office has no plans to reduce the number of admissions offers in the coming year, despite the large group of postponing students who will join the Class of 2025 next fall,” said Mark Dunn, director of outreach and communications. Only 8 percent of the new students have a Yale legacy affiliation, compared to 12 percent last year.

Yale’s Class of 2024 is the most diverse in school history, with 55 percent identifying themselves as members of a minority group, and 19 percent as first in their family to attend college. Also, for the third year in a row, more than 20 percent of the incoming class qualifies for a federal Pell Grant. Additionally, 59 percent of the newly enrolled students received a need-based Yale financial aid award. ■

of 3.9. Some 71 percent of the Class of 2024 hails from out-of-state.

“The more we stand rooted in the idea of classical liberal arts and the principles of the Western tradition... I think Hillsdale is certainly going to attract students who believe in those things,” said Zachary Miller, an admissions counselor.

C. of Holy Cross New Students Speak 21 Languages.

The C. of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts welcomed members of the Class of 2024 and kicked off the fall semester with students engaged in remote learning. The annual First-Year Student Convocation was held virtually with 735 students from 33 states and 10 countries. In addition to English, students speak 21 different languages. And they enter Holy Cross with plenty of service experience with organizations ranging from Habitat for Humanity to the Special Olympics.

“Connection is an important theme for us as we enter a fall semester unlike any in the 177-year history of the college,” said Rev. Philip L. Burroughs, S.J., president.

U. of Holy Cross Enrollment Up.

The U. of Holy Cross in New Orleans posted a 3.4 percent increase in fall enrollment. This semester, 1,136 students appeared on campus. Founded in 1916, Holy Cross offers 50 programs and a 10:1 student/faculty ratio. It’s most popular programs are in nursing, business, education, counseling and health services.

Michigan Admitted 25 Percent. This year,

65,899 students applied to the U. of Michigan. UM admitted 17,054 for an admit rate of 25.8 percent. This fall, 7,188 of them matriculated. The median high school GPA for the Class of 2024 was 3.9, while the middle 50 percent range for the SAT was 1380 to 1550, for the ACT, it was 32 to 35.

Approximately 69 percent of undergraduate classes are being taught remotely, while 31 percent are being taught in-person or as hybrid classes. According to the *Michigan Daily*, approximately 66 percent of incoming freshmen who were surveyed by the paper planned to be on campus during the fall, taking at least one in-person class. A little more than 31 percent told the paper that they were somewhat or very comfortable attending house parties amid the pandemic.

Mount Union U. Opens In-Person.

The U. of Mount Union in Ohio, founded in 1846, welcomed 600 freshmen in late August. “This year will be filled with all things new,” Jeffrey Breese, vice president for academic affairs and provost, wrote in a letter to new students. “Some will be challenging and at times it may seem overwhelming, but I assure you, it is nothing you can’t handle.” Mount Union reopened for in-person learning in accordance with the Responsible Restart Ohio plan implemented by Governor Mike DeWine.

Washington C. Washington C. in Maryland conducted its convocation for the Class of 2024 on Zoom and Facebook.

Northwestern Switches to a Virtual Fall and Reduces Tuition.

Northwestern U.’s president Morton Schapiro apologized to angry first- and second-year students and their parents for having to shut down residence halls and fraternity houses just nine days before their move-in date because the number of COVID-19 cases was rising in the Chicago suburbs. NU said it needed extra rooms in case it needed to quarantine students who are on campus.

Only third- and fourth-year students are permitted to return to campus to take in-person classes and live in residence halls. To ease the pain for students required to stay home, NU is cutting tuition by 10 percent. It will also allow first-year and transfer students to defer their studies for a year. If all goes well, all NU students will be back on campus for the winter semester beginning in January.

Rice Enrolls Nearly 1,000.

This spring, Rice U. in Texas admitted 2,346 students, 10 percent of its applicants. About 40 percent of the new students come from Texas, 50 percent from states outside of Texas and 10 percent of admits are international students. This fall, Rice is offering hybrid instruction of both in-person and online courses. ■

Looking Ahead

NACAC Calls for Optional Test Scores. The National Association for College Admission Counseling is urging public colleges and universities to make standardized test scores optional during the 2021-22 admissions cycle. NACAC noted that more than 90 percent of the world's total enrolled learners in 194 countries (1.6 billion students) face disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yet, more than 100 public colleges and universities continue to require students to submit SAT or ACT scores. Nearly 1,600 colleges and universities have waived standardized tests requirements for 2020-21.

Test-Optional. Georgetown U., for example, has waived this standardized testing requirement for undergraduates who have been unable to sit for the test. Georgetown plans on reinstating the test in the future. Most colleges in Virginia have made the same decision.

Best Student Loan Refinance Lenders. Forbes Advisor has published a list of "Best Student Loan Refinance Lenders."

"Since the federal government has allowed federal loan borrowers to take a pause on loan repayments until December 31, and set interest rates at 0 percent during that time, borrowers should not refinance federal loans. Instead, they should use our list to consider their options for refinancing private loans, or to research their options when the government's COVID-19 student loan relief ends," said Brianna McGurran, a Forbes Analyst. See, www.forbes.com/advisor/loans/best-student-loan-refinance-lenders/.

Princeton Review's No. 1s. The Princeton Review's most recent survey of 143,000 students at 386 colleges yielded No. 1 college results in 62 categories including: "Happiest Students," Kansas State U.; "Best Professors," Mt. Holyoke C. in Massachusetts; "Best-Run Colleges," Elon U. in North Carolina; "Most Beautiful Campus," U. of Richmond in Virginia; "Most Politically Active Students," Pitzer C. in California; "Most Conservative Students," C. of the Ozarks in Missouri; "Most Liberal Students," Sarah Lawrence C. in New York. To see the entire list of "number ones" in 62 categories, see, www.PrincetonReview.com/cms-content/B386Number1s.pdf.

Campus Car Tours. While many colleges around the nation continued recruiting via virtual campus tours, the U. of Southern Indiana in Evansville went mobile with campus car tours. Five visiting families

used their cars to follow the sixth auto with the campus guide, who stopped in front of significant buildings and gave the normal tour points via Zoom audio. Tours took about 45 minutes. Normal walking tours resumed in July with social distancing.

Return of Affirmative Action? The California State Assembly has passed and in November California voters will vote on Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5 that will return affirmative action policies to higher education in California by giving preferential treatment to minorities.

After passage of Proposition 209 in 1996, which banned affirmative action in public education and employment, California higher education institutions experienced decades-long declining enrollment among black, native and indigenous students.

Also, the California Faculty Association, which represents more than 29,000 tenured-line instructional faculty, lecturers, librarians, counselors and coaches at California State U.'s 23 campuses, is also calling for free tuition for black and indigenous students, a mandatory ethnic studies course for all students and removal of armed campus police, to be replaced by "community accountability and transformative justice" programs.

Advice for Seniors. A blog by Meagan O'Connor, Entrepreneur-in-Residence at Kaplan offers advice on various issues such as "Planning for When You Don't Know the Plan," and "Should I Take a Gap Year?" She can be found at <https://boostbykaplan.com/blog>.

U. of Iowa Conducts Hawkeye Visit Days. At the U. of Iowa, as at many other colleges, there are no in-person tours scheduled this fall. Instead, there are virtual Hawkeye Visit Day Programs with students going to "breakout rooms" to learn more about individual colleges. The admissions office noted it is common for the events to attract students from 20-30 states. Brent Gage, associate president for enrollment management, told *The Daily Iowan* that also the goal is to provide as much flexibility as possible.

Washington State U. is providing experts to help students and parents file for financial aid this month. The events, via Zoom, are offered four times in October, part of College Goal Washington. Spanish speaking experts are also available. For info, see, www.vancouver.wsu.edu. ■

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

"The Post-Pandemic College," a new report from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. "Leading experts examine how the pandemic will shape higher education." \$129. Bulk orders and licensing available. The report focuses on such issues as enrollment outlook and online trends. See, <https://store.chronicle.com>.

The College Conversation: A Practical Companion for Parents to Guide Their Children Along the Path to Higher Education by Eric J. Furda and Jacques Steinberg; Viking; ISBN:9781984878342, \$28.

The Best 386 Colleges, 2021 Edition by Rob Franek; Penguin Random House, ISBN-13:978-0525569725; \$24.99. Results based on The Princeton Review's survey of 143,000 students at 386 colleges.

"The Next Enrollment Challenge, How to Recruit for Fall 2021;" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*; \$69; <https://store.chronicle.com/products/the-next-enrollment-challenge>.

Find Your Right Direction: The Israel Gap Year Guide by Phyllis Folb; Redwood Publishing;

\$9.99 (paperback); ISBN-10:1952106621.

The Social Capital Foundation Survey of the 150 Best Universities in the World 2020-2022; see, <https://www.socialcapital.is/rating/>.

Who Gets In and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions by Jeffrey Selingo; Scribner; \$25.20; ISBN-10:1982116293.

Emotional Wellness. Wiso, an emotional self-care application that connects students with others having similar concerns, was ranked No. 1 by Google Play for 2019 for Social Impact and Best 5 apps for 2019 for Personal Development. It is currently used by 20,000 students. ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Boston College. Boston C. received \$1.7 million in a federal Students Support Services grant to assist low-income, first-generation students and students with disability to help them stay in school and graduate.

Rider Slashes Tuition. Rider U. in New Jersey announced that it will reduce tuition by 22 percent next school year (from \$45,120 to \$35,000) and that nearly all students will enroll in internships. “This strategy reduces the trajectory of Rider’s high tuition, high discount pricing model, which was ballooning to unrealistic levels, but it does not change our commitment to generously awarding financial aid and scholarships,” said Drew Aromando, vice president of enrollment management.

Cleveland State Free Semester. Cleveland State U. announced a “2-for-1 Tuition Promise,” in which students who earn a 2.75 GPA or better in the fall of 2020 will be able to enroll in Spring 2021 tuition free.

Houston Tuition-Free for Students from Families Earning Less than \$65,000 per Year. The U. of Houston’s Cougar Promise financial aid program will cover all tuition for students from families earning less than \$65,000 a year. Students from families earning less than \$125,000 a year also will get tuition support.

“By expanding our financial support program to reduce financial barriers, we will help more students fulfill their dreams of earning a college degree,” said President Renu Khator.

Chicago Forgives Student Debt. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced, as part of her “Fresh Start” initiative, that the City Colleges of Chicago will forgive debt for students who left the system over the past 10 years in good academic standing. The program will allow these students to complete their degrees or certificates debt-free and is likely to impact 21,000 students. The Mayor’s office reported that about 51 percent of the students are black and 31 percent are Latino.

“No Chicagoans should be forced to fall so far behind while pursuing the very thing that can propel them to a stable middle-class lifestyle and out of poverty,” Lightfoot said. “When they’re not able to excel, we all lose.”

Nebraska Tuition Free for Some. The U. of Nebraska announced that it will guarantee free tuition to Nebraska students from families at or below the median household income of the state, or about \$60,000. An estimated 1,000 students are likely to benefit.

“We know families are struggling right now,” said President Ted Carter. “We are

rethinking every dollar. They are, perhaps, rethinking higher education. We want [them] to know the U. of Nebraska is here for [them].”

Nebraska at Kearney In-State Tuition for Out-of-State. Meanwhile, The U. of Nebraska at Kearney announced the New Nebraskan Scholarship that beginning next year will offer in-state tuition prices to all out-of-state, undergraduate students. Those students will pay \$209 per credit hour, like their Nebraska peers.

“Many students and their family from outside Nebraska will now find that their education is more affordable than the options they may be looking at in their home state,” said UNK Chancellor Doug Kristensen.

Students Don’t Anticipate Big Debt. A survey by MoneyRates.com suggests that student borrowers don’t know what they’re getting into. Only 6.5 percent of 18- to 20-year-olds believe their debt will ever exceed \$70,000. However, twice as many people end up with that amount of student debt.

Florida Atlantic Promises Some Debt-Free Graduation. Florida Atlantic U. in Boca Raton says 89 percent of low-income, first-generation students leave college without a degree. FAU is attacking the problem with the Kelly Strul Emerging Scholars Program that provides scholarships and support for first-generation students and their families. The program is currently accepting applications.

Dartmouth Adds \$40 Million for Financial Aid. Even though Dartmouth C. anticipates a \$100 million revenue drop in the coming year related to the pandemic, and has frozen wages, cut five athletic teams and other measures, it has pledged to add more than \$40 million to help students with financial aid.

“Our commitment to making sure no Dartmouth family must choose between their child’s education and living expenses is unwavering,” said President Phil Hanlon. “Despite the economic pressures on the college, we will support our students through these difficult times.”

SCHOLARSHIP SCOOPS

Penn State’s Engineering Scholars. Pennsylvania State U. received a \$15.5 million commitment to create the A. James Clark Scholars Program to support high-achieving engineering students with significant financial need. Ten Clark Scholars will be chosen each year, for a total cohort of 40.

Children of Marines and Navy Corpsmen. Over 2,750 children of Marines and Navy

corpsmen in need of financial aid will be awarded more than \$8.5 million in academic scholarships from the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation. For more information, see, www.mcsf.org.

Hope Engineering Scholarships. Hope C. in Michigan received a multiyear grant of nearly \$1 million from the National Science Foundation to provide scholarships and supplemental programs for students who plan to pursue a degree in engineering. “There is a national demand for engineers and we have capacity and desire at Hope to produce high-quality engineers,” said Courtney Peckens, a Hope engineering professor. ■

COLLEGES AND COVID-19

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A SNAPSHOT OF CAMPUS TRENDS

The State U. of New York at Oneonta went to remote learning after only one week of the fall semester when 105 students tested positive. That number grew to over 600. Temple U. in Philadelphia switched to remote instruction for two weeks after 103 students tested positive. Temple’s cases grew to over 448.

The U. of Iowa reported over 1,900 cases since fall classes began. The U. of Wisconsin-Madison, quarantined several residence halls and Greek houses and switched to remote instruction for two weeks after COVID-19 positive tests reached 20 percent, over 2,800 cases. UW closed common study spaces, including its libraries and student center. Kansas State U. recorded more than 2,200 students who were quarantined.

Indiana U. quarantined 30 of 40 Greek houses because of the rapid spread of the virus. IU’s positivity rate reached 8.1 percent during the first weeks of September.

Georgia C., which enrolls about 7,000 students, reported that it had 474 COVID-19. The U. of Alabama recorded 2,729 cases. Northeastern U. threatened to rescind admissions of 115 freshmen who answered an Instagram, saying they planned to party when they got on campus. The U. of Connecticut, Purdue and Syracuse suspended students who violated group gathering rules.

Indeed, colleges and universities are now the hotspots in nearly every state. Of the 50 college towns surveyed by the Associated Press near the end of September, James Madison U., the U. of Georgia, Florida State U. and Indiana U.-Bloomington posted the highest rates.

Gavin Yamey, a physician who directs Duke’s Center for Policy Impact in Global Health, told Bloomberg news, “It has been a debacle, a national catastrophe, and in many ways you could consider it the third wave. The third wave is the university reopening wave. It was a self-inflicted national wound.” ■

MORE ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Denison-Columbus Connection. To promote diversity on campus, Denison U. extends financial aid to 25 high-achieving students from the Columbus (Ohio) City Schools each year so they can attend tuition free. The Denison-Columbus Alliance works through the “I Know I Can” college access program.

Ecole Polytechnique’s First All English Class. Ecole Polytechnique Paris graduated its first Bachelor of Science class delivered exclusively in English. The interdisciplinary program in science, anchored in the humanities, began three years ago with an international class. Some 70 percent of students, all of whom also became proficient in French, have gone on to study at MIT and Stanford.

Vermont C.C. Thrives. Since 2016, seven Vermont colleges have either merged or closed their doors, including Burlington C., Southern Vermont C. and Green Mountain C. According to the *Boston Business Journal*, more small colleges in New England are likely to merge or close in 2020 “as the industry continues to face a shrinking population of college-aged students.”

However, as the C. C. of Vermont celebrates its 50th anniversary, it is on the way to becoming Vermont’s second-largest institution of higher education and has become a feeder school of nontraditional students to the U. of Vermont.

Willamette Absorbs Northwest College of Art. Willamette U. in Oregon, founded in 1842 and the oldest university in the western United States, has made the Pacific Northwest College of Art one of its independent colleges. “Together, this combination will amplify the Northwest as a cultural and economic hub for the arts and innovative leadership,” said Stephen Thorsett, Willamette president.

London Crowned World’s Leading University City. The QS World University Rankings

has named London as the world’s leading University City. A total of 115 programs at London higher education institutions achieved a top-50 position for their subject.

London’s top ranked programs included Social Policy & Administration at London School of Economics and Political Science; Art & Design at the Royal C. of Art; Architecture/Built Environment at The Bartlett School of Architecture, University C. London; and Education at UCL Institute of Education, University College London.

Other cities with a high number of top-50 programs include Paris (43), Los Angeles (43), Tokyo (46), Seoul (50), Beijing (59), New York (65) and Boston (69).

The Hardest Colleges to Get In by State. The February 27 *USA Today* article, “Hardest colleges to get into in any state,” is long, but

includes statistics of use on number of applicants, median SAT score, annual net cost of attendance and admission rate.

Not Worth It? Another survey of 3,000 students from universities across the nation found that 74 percent of undergraduates feel they have overpaid for their education by an average of 57 percent. The survey conducted by TestMax, a law school test prep company, also found that 50 percent of all law students say that knowing what they know now, they would not likely have chosen law school.

“How America Pays for College.” Families spend roughly \$30,000 a year to send a child to college, 14 percent more than last year, concluded a new report from Sallie Mae, which polled 2,000 students and parents in April. A quarter of that total comes from scholarships and grants, another 25 percent from borrowing and loans. The remainder comes out of the family’s pocket. ■

California: Outdoors and Online

California Deferrals. While the number of deferrals at the 23 campuses of the California State U. is greater than most years, they are not as large as feared by administrators during the summer. For example, at CSU Northridge, deferrals were granted to nine incoming first-year students, 55 transfer students and 200 international students. Administrators had been warned to expect a 20 percent decrease in enrollment this fall due to COVID-19. Instead, 33,000 students, or about 3.4 percent more than expected, enrolled in the fall.

Meanwhile, CSU Stays Virtual. California State U. announced that instruction will remain primarily online through this academic year, in part, because the virus continues to spread in California. CSU will continue to reduce populations in campus housing.

Chancellor Timothy P. White noted that since CSU announced it was going online

three-and-a-half months before the start of the new academic year in fall, thousands of faculty and staff have participated in professional development and the quality of CSU’s online courses have been enhanced. And training will continue to make faculty “even more effective in virtual space.”

White also said that the early decision enabled students and families to plan ahead. That resulted in strong fall enrollment numbers across the system’s 23 colleges, “with a few exceptions.”

Stanford U. Closes Campus to the Public. Stanford U. closed much of its campus to the public in an effort to keep students safe. The decision “...allows the university to increase the availability of outdoor classroom and social spaces that are needed because of the State guidance,” said Stanford president Marc Tessier-Lavigne. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Colorado State’s Accelerated Programs. Colorado State U. announced a new Accelerated Programs initiative, through which students can graduate by the end of their third year. More than two dozen degree programs are participating. “It’s an option for motivated students to make steady progress towards their degree and graduate in less than four years,” said CSU Summer Director Anne Van Arsdall.

Grambling’s Cloud Computing Degree. At Grambling State U. in Louisiana students will learn to become cloud computing experts who

can build and maintain cloud infrastructures. In 2019, there were an estimated 50,248 cloud computing jobs in the U.S. Gambling graduates will be prepared to be “cloud architects” or “cloud consultants.”

Laredo C. Offers Homeland Security Studies. Laredo C. in Texas will offer a one-semester certificate, a two-semester certification and an Associate of Applied Science in Homeland Security Studies degree beginning Spring 2021. The program will be delivered in a hybrid format. Students interested in Homeland Security, customs and

border protection, border patrol, immigration and customs enforcement and the Federal Emergency Management Agency will benefit from this program.

Ohio U.’s School of Art + Design’s eCampus in Interior Architecture. Ohio U. now offers a fully online program designed for full- and part-time “students who excel in the virtual classroom environment” and who have a “passion for study and interior design.” Students earn a BFA. The program is a “response to this 21st-century reality by harnessing technology and leveraging the idea of the virtual studio.” Graduates are ready to work in studio practice, showroom management, sales and marketing. ■

GRADUATE NEWS

Top MBA Programs. WalletHub recently rated the nation's top MBA programs based on 10 indicators, including cost and quality. The average MBA graduate earns \$150,000 a year. Its top 10 are: Stanford U.; Harvard U.; U. of Pennsylvania (Wharton); U. of Chicago (Booth); MIT (Sloan); U. of California-Berkeley (Haas); Northwestern U. (Kellogg); U. of Southern California (Marshall); Columbia U. and Yale U.

MBA-Bound. The online publication *Poets&Quants* launched a free interactive site for those seeking admission to highly-ranked MBA programs. "Once you share your background and goals, you can sit back and watch as our readers and our experts provide valuable feedback on your candidacy. They'll assess your odds of getting into your first-choice school and give you specific advice on how to improve your odds and whether you should apply to other schools." See <https://poetsandquants.com/mba-watch/>.

RIT/Syracuse 3+3 Law. Rochester Institute of Technology in New York and Syracuse U. College of Law have entered a partnership to establish a 3+3 year law degree program which allows RIT students to complete their law degree a year early. Students will receive a 50 percent Law School scholarship.

Xavier Launches Speech Pathology Master's. Xavier U. of Louisiana now offers a Master's degree in speech-language pathology "to produce professionals who are clinically competent as defined by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) to meet the needs (such as prevention, identification, treatment) of individuals who are currently experiencing communicative disorders or differences...."

Howard STEM Scholarships. Howard U. in Washington, D.C., received a \$10 million donation to establish the Karsh STEM Scholars Program that will cover four years of tuition, room and board, for income-eligible students

who want to pursue a Ph.D. in a STEM field.

Hiring Slows. According to a new study by BestColleges, 63 percent of business leaders who actively hire college graduates are halting or slowing down their recruitment as a result of COVID-19. Before the pandemic, over half of businesses nationwide directly recruited college students and/or recent graduates.

However, 25 percent of businesses are shifting their recruitment of college students to only targeting graduates from specific academic majors. But 74 percent of business leaders who actively recruit college students think the quality of online education has improved due to COVID-19. See the entire study at www.bestcolleges.com/blog/survey-hiring-students-post-COVID/.

Grads' Bulletin Offers Job Advice. New Grads' Bulletin is a Q&A program started in partnership with the U. of Arizona and has now gone national. Career coach Sadie Troup answers questions of recent grads and points to resources and strategies. See, www.rewriteyourcareer.com. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Greek Retreat? According to a September 17 article in the *Washington Post*, "... Hundreds of students at more than a dozen elite colleges and universities nationwide have cut ties with their fraternities and sororities over the past three months, saying the organizations with histories of sexual assault and white exclusivity are out of line with the growing demands for social justice."

The *Post* added, "The movement, however, has met resistance from national organizations, university administrators and some students, who have pushed for change and increased efforts to expand diversity as an alternative to dismantling Greek life altogether."

Campus Censorship? According to a recent report from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, 87 percent of colleges block users from access to over 1,800 items on social media pages such as Facebook or Twitter. The report said colleges use "secret filters [to] automatically remove comments mentioning political figures, corporate partners, sports teams, faculty members and even emoji."

"The majority of top public colleges and universities use a blacklist of secret words, created by Facebook, to automatically censor comments on university social media pages."

FIRE added that, "Colleges also compile customized lists collectively banning more than 1,800 words and phrases: from profanities to posts referencing matters of local and national concern, campus controversies, criticism of colleges' corporate partners or sports teams and even the weather."

"There's no social media exception to the First Amendment," said Adam Steinbaugh, the report's author. "Government actors cannot sanitize public discourse—whether it's President Trump blocking Twitter critics or American colleges filtering dissent."

Beyond Zoom. A year ago, few students and instructors had ever heard of Zoom. But after the pandemic forced most colleges and universities to switch to remote learning, Zoom appears to be the most popular tool for gathering learners together. But Zoom has the drawback of limited student engagement.

Some learning technologists are exploring virtual reality tools for enhanced learning, and believe it is the real future of remote classrooms. For example, imagine students sitting in a VR version of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre while they discuss one of his plays. Adept Reality, a subsidiary of the Glimpse Group, worked last summer with Sacred Heart U. to conduct VR classes.

Learning Disabled. Only 20 percent of students with learning disabilities who start college graduate. That's why Perry LaRoque founded Mansfield Hall, an innovative college support program, and Virtual Hall, an online college support platform to bring educational specialists and coaches directly to college students. See, www.mansfieldhall.org or www.virtualhall.org. ■

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

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Clinton/Sanders compromise plan of 2016: "Free College for All from Families Earning Less than \$125,000."

Georgetown U.'s Center on Education and the Workplace analyzed this plan. It concluded the Biden approach would cost \$49.6 billion in the first year, with \$33.1 billion covered by the federal government and \$16.5 billion by the states under the proposed 2-to-1 match. In 10 years, the total price tag would reach \$683.1 billion.

Georgetown's CEW also concluded that the benefits of Biden's free college would be substantial. But based on the fact that more students with college degrees would earn more from higher-paying jobs, tax revenue would start to outpace the annual cost of free education within 10 years. ■

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