

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

Vol. 36, No. 7

March 2022

Admissions Watch

Forming the Class of 2026

Boston C. Sets Application Record. Boston C. attracted 40,484 applications for the Class of 2026, 36 percent more than for the Class of 2024. That includes a record 4,428 apps for its Early Decision I and II options.

BC also increased the number of QuestBridge scholars it admitted from 50 to 75. This is the second year BC participated in QuestBridge which brings high-achieving, low-income students to campus on scholarship.

Although BC was test-optional for the 2021-2022 admissions cycle, 45 percent of applicants submitted test results, with an average SAT score of 1452 and 33 ACT, according to Grant Gosselin, director of undergraduate admission.

Boston U. Boasts Having Its Largest Pool. More than 6,300 students applied Early Decision to Boston U. for the Class of 2026, 11.5 percent more than last year. Overall, BU fielded a record-setting 80,797 applications for this fall, 6.7 percent more than a year ago. International applications rose 10.8 percent, with applicants coming from 168 countries.

The average GPA of this year's applicants is 3.81, compared to last year's 3.70. BU has been test-optional during the pandemic. This year 43.7 percent of applicants chose to submit standardized test scores. Their average SAT score is 1442, their average ACT is 33.

"How we're going to select the top students, from a pool of applicants with an A- average is a daunting task that lies ahead for me and my team," said Kelly Walter, associate vice president for enrollment and dean of admissions.

Bowdoin Bounces Back. Bowdoin C. in Maine attracted 9,397 applications for the Class of 2026, bouncing back near to its 2019 pre-pandemic record. A total of 536 students enrolled in the Class of 2025, including 39 who deferred from the year before.

"During the pandemic, we shifted everything to virtual high school visits, virtual information sessions, virtual interviews, and virtual chat sessions with students," Claudia Marroquin, dean of admissions, told the *Bowdoin Orient*. "We were able to reintegrate in-person campus tours last summer, but virtual has proven it's here to stay. It's provided us an opportunity to reach students who may never have been able to travel to the College or where we would not have been able to visit, given the fact that we have 15 admissions officers to cover the entire world."

Brown's 50,000 Apps from Every Region. Brown U. in Rhode Island fielded a record-high 50,608 (early and regular) applications for the Class of 2026, 9 percent more than last year. Logan Powell, dean of admission, told *The Herald* that applications rose in every category, from every geographic region and for every area of academic focus.

About 20 percent of the applicant pool is composed of international students, 17 percent is from the South, while 14 percent is from California. First-generation students account for 18 percent of this year's pool, 6 percent more than last year. Admission decisions will be announced on March 31. Brown expects to enroll a new class of about 1,700 students.

When forming the new class, Powell told the paper that, "We think about academic excellence and we also think about diversity of perspective." He added, "If you're a low-income family, if you're a moderate-income family, we want to find a way to make Brown affordable."

Colgate Sees Increase in International Apps. Colgate U. in Upstate New York was the choice of 21,153 applicants for its Class of 2026, 20.6 percent more than last year. *continued on page 2*

Financial Matters

State Higher Ed Support Increases in Inflation's Shadow. State support for higher education increased by 8.5 percent in fiscal year 2022 over the previous year, according to the latest Annual Grapevine Compilation of state spending. Including the \$7.5 billion influx of federal pandemic stimulus funds over the past three years, state spending rose 6.5 percent between 2021 and 2022, and was the largest increase since 2008. Federal stimulus money that went directly to higher education institutions is not included in the calculations.

While those numbers are impressive, they do not include the current 7.5 percent inflation rate. When that is included in the mix, the increase drops to 1 percent.

States that posted a 10 percent-plus rate of funding increase include California, Colorado, Louisiana, Nevada, Oregon and Texas. However, 18 states posted a higher education funding decline between 2021 and 2022.

Grapevine data comes from the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association in collaboration with the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State U. See, <https://education.illinoisstate.edu/grapevine/>.

State Tuition Increases Resume. Over the past 20 years, in-state tuition and fees at public universities skyrocketed 211 percent, while out-of-state tuition soared 171 percent. Tuition at private universities jumped 144 percent. But those increases settled down during the pandemic as most schools couldn't justify making parents pay more for online learning.

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CLASS OF 2026

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percent more than last year. The increase includes 35.8 percent more applications from domestic multicultural applicants, more than a 100 percent increase in applications from students in the West and Southwest regions of the U.S. and a 41 percent increase in international applicants.

Applicants said they were drawn by the Colgate Commitment that eliminates barriers posed by tuition for eligible students, and Colgate's small school setting "with a big school's energy," as one current student put it.

"My colleagues in admissions and financial aid have been and continue to work so hard to be responsive to not just the guests who have visited campus, but also with thousands who, due to COVID concerns or any number of other reasons, have not been able to visit campus," Gary Ross, vice president, told *The Colgate Maroon-News*.

Lafayette Sets New Record. Lafayette C. in Pennsylvania attracted a record-setting 10,480 applications for the Class of 2026. Lafayette expects to enroll as many as 730 students in the fall, according to Matt Hyde, dean of admissions. Some 284 Early Decision students have already enrolled. The acceptance rate was 57 percent, down from last year's nearly 62 percent.

"The pool is deep and powerful...it's at the high-end academically. Students...recognize that it's a selective situation. We are likely to be more selective with this class than we were last year."

Pepperdine Admits "Stellar Students." In Southern California, Pepperdine U. attracted 12,371 applications for the Class of 2026, admissions counselor Katie White informed the *Pepperdine Graphic*. Pepperdine plans to form an incoming class of 900 students.

"In our holistic review, the majority of a student's admission decision is based on academic achievement as demonstrated through unweighted and recalculated GPA, the transcript which shows course rigor and trends," White explained. "We continue to value students with stellar qualifications including outstanding leadership and community service, potential to engage in our unique undergraduate research and study abroad programs and a demonstrated commitment to faith."

The "Union Story." Union C. in New York received 8,436 applications for the Class of 2026. Two years ago, 7,622 applied. Union's Early Action program attracted 3,165 apps this year. Union expects to enroll 570 students this fall.

"We are constantly out there telling the 'Union story,' but there is nothing that can capture how special this place is than for pro-

California Shatters Records

Overall, the University of California received record numbers of applications for first-year students, 210,840 or a 3.5 percent increase according to the *Los Angeles Times* February 24. At the same time transfer applications fell 12.6 percent

UC Berkeley Warns It May Admit Thousands Fewer. The U. of California Berkeley is warning that it may need to cut back on the number of students it planned to admit this year, according to a recent article in *The New York Times*.

That's because a state appellate court ruled that the university must keep enrollment at its pre-pandemic 2020-21 level of 42,347 students because it does not have enough housing for more.

The lawsuit was brought in 2018 by a residents' group, Save Berkeley's Neighborhoods. If that ruling stands, Berkeley will have 3,050 fewer slots for incoming first-year and transfer students. That means Berkeley needs to make about 5,100 fewer undergraduate admission offers. The reduction could cost the school up to \$57 million in lost tuition.

UC Davis Sees Increase in California Resident Applicants. Freshman applications to UC Davis increased 8.7 percent to 94,725.

spective students and their parents to come see for themselves," said Matt Malatesta, vice president.

Virginia EA Update. The U. of Virginia offered admission to 6,243 Early Action candidates out of its pool of 31,143 applicants, for a 20 percent admissions rate, according to *The Cavalier Daily*. Some 45 percent of those admitted identify as students of color, 43 percent as white and 6 percent as foreign nationals. Since Virginia is a public institution, its Office of Undergraduate Admissions has committed to having Virginia residents account for two-thirds of the undergraduate student population.

Vermont Record Amid In-State Decline. The U. of Vermont fielded more than 30,000 applications for the Class of 2026, a school record. However, applications from Vermonters fell by 8 percent, Jay Jacobs, vice provost for enrollment management, told *The Vermont Cynic*.

"We are expecting fewer and fewer Vermont applications from here on out," Jacobs said. "The number of high school graduates is declining in the state of Vermont." At the same time, only about half of Vermont high school graduates enroll in a college program the following fall.

This was the second year that UVM did

Sixty-nine percent of all freshman applicants applying to UC Davis are California residents, a 7.3 percent increase over last year. Among the California resident applicants, 36 percent are from historically underrepresented groups. There were increases among African American applicants (7 percent), Chicano/Latino applicants (nearly 5 percent) and American Indian applicants (55 percent).

UC Santa Cruz Receives Record Number of Applications. Some 77,500 applicants applied to UC Santa Cruz as first-year and transfer students, a 3.5 percent increase, according to the UC Office of the President. Applications from California high school students increased 7.8 percent from the previous year to 53,000. About 24,000 of these applications were from families with low-incomes including those who are the first in their families to earn a four-year degree.

UC Irvine and UC San Diego Applications Also Up. These two UC campuses were up 10 percent over last year. Dale Leaman, UCI executive director of undergraduate admissions, told the *Los Angeles Times* that a larger number of applicants submitted transcripts with "pass/no pass mark" rather than letter grades, complicating the admissions process. ■

not require students to submit a standardized test score, and about half of applicants submitted a score. "I do think that history will look back on this time as a sort of inflection point as it relates to standardized testing," Moses Murphy, director of admissions, told the student paper, with "fewer schools requiring them as a part of the admissions process."

William & Mary C. Shapes Its 329th Class. The C. of William & Mary in Virginia received a record 18,050 freshmen applications for the school's 329th class. Applications increased by 3.5 percent over last year. Early Decision apps were up 5 percent, first-generation students were up 10 percent and students of color were up 7 percent. Part of the increase in applications came from expanding application fee waivers for first-generation and Pell Grant-eligible students.

"Following last year's dramatic increase in applications, we didn't know what to expect going into this year," said Tim Wolfe, associate vice president for enrollment and dean of admission. "Building an entering class from such a large pool of applications won't be easy, and we have many tough decisions in front of us. I'm confident, though, this means we'll have an incredible group of students to welcome to campus this August as the W&M Class of 2026." ■

Research and Recruitment

Half of 18- to 24-Year-Olds Did Not Enroll in College. A survey from Intelligent.com of 1,250 Americans age 18 to 24 found that 51 percent of recent high school grads never attended college. About half of those (49 percent) are high school drop-outs, while 34 percent of respondents said they couldn't afford college and 29 percent said it was a waste of money.

Of those surveyed, 39 percent did not apply to any college for the 2021-22 academic year. About 33 percent applied but were not accepted anywhere, and 28 percent applied and were accepted to at least one school but did not enroll. Pandemic-related uncertainty was one reason 31 percent cited for not going to college, while 29 percent believe that a college education is not required to get a lucrative job.

Respondents say they are turning to other outlets to educate themselves. About 26 percent are learning new skills via YouTube, 24 percent are reading online materials, 23 percent are pursuing internships and another 23 percent are enrolled in certificate programs. To learn more, visit www.intelligent.com.

College Completion Rates. The percent of students who graduate college in six years rose to 62.2 percent last year, a 1.2 percent increase over the previous year, according to a new report "Completing College," from the National Student Clearinghouse. The report covered students entering Fall 2015 through June 2021. The report also found that two thirds of states improved their college completion rates by 1 percent or more. Completion rates increased for Latino and white students, while Asian student graduation rates remain the same. Black students showed the largest increase at 1.9 percent. Find the full report at <https://nscresearchcenter.org/completing-college/>.

Why Students Leave Community Colleges. Despite the well-documented benefits associated with earning a college degree, and the \$120 billion dollars spent annually by the federal government to foster enrollment and persistence in higher education, only 38 percent of students who begin at a community college complete their associate or bachelor's degree within six years of initial enrollment.

Why do community college students leave without earning a degree including some who have performed well academically and made substantial progress towards graduation? A study by three U. of Florida higher education professors/researchers recently published in American Educational Research Association Open found that "tuition and fees, living expenses, and no longer being eligible for financial aid are the factors contributing to early exit for the largest share of students."

The researchers suggest that "targeted supports may be useful in helping students persist or return to college and complete their degree." See, <https://sagepub.com>.

NEW RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

DePauw Boosts International Enrollment. Total enrollment at DePauw U. in Indiana has declined to a record-low 1,724 students, according to *The DePauw*. However, over the past 10 years, the pri-

vate liberal arts school has seen the number of international students increase from 185 to 291.

One reason DePauw attracts international students is that it "does really well on financial aid," said Beth Haymaker, director of international student affairs. DePauw awards similar financial aid to international and domestic students. The only difference is that domestic students also receive federal student aid.

"Compared to many private schools, DePauw provides a diverse and inclusive learning environment for international students to adapt more quickly and easily," Junior Troy Tien Nguyen told *The DePauw*.

Rutgers New Aid Strategy. Rutgers U.-New Brunswick in New Jersey revamped its aid program so that students from families earning \$65,000 a year or less can attend tuition-free. The Scarlet Guarantee, aimed at first- and second-year students, also extends aid on a sliding scale to students from families earning less than \$100,000 that significantly limits their out-of-pocket costs. The program partners with New Jersey's Garden State Guarantee, a new statewide program launched this year that aids third- and fourth-year students. Initially, an estimated 7,600 students are expected to be helped.

Lake Michigan C. "Last Dollar" Aid. Lake Michigan C., with three campuses in Western Michigan, launched a "last-dollar" program to cut tuition barriers for low-income students. "We'll help them identify all the dollars outside of the college. Then the [LMC] Foundation and the general fund will provide support," Trevor A. Kubatzke, president, told the *Herald-Palladium*. He added, "...we wanted to do something to spark enrollment. We know a lot of students after high school take that first job without going to college. Getting those students back through the door when they thought college wasn't sensible is big... We see ourselves as a catalyst for this community."

Paul Quinn C. "Reimagines" the Admissions Process. Paul Quinn C. in Texas may be setting a new precedent, admitting high school graduates and up to two members of their family at the same time. Last month, the Historically Black College admitted 400 Fort Worth high school seniors and two of their family members. Students who are Pell Grant-eligible and have posted at least a 3.0 GPA are eligible.

"In a higher education, we need to take a different model to supporting students through the process," said Michael J. Sorrell, Quinn's president. "It's unrealistic to expect one person to always be the hero. Let's do something different. Let's create depth. Let's give people a broader base as they pull themselves forward and get more people to have hope."

More Test Optional Policies. Nearly 2,000 U.S. institutions of higher education extended their test-optional or test-free admissions policies for this year. The U. of Wisconsin System has extended its test optional policy for the next two academic years. The Kansas Board of Regents also approved a path for qualified students to attend UK without taking the ACT or SAT, if they meet certain high school GPA levels. ■

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

The Future of Gen Z: How Covid-19 Will Shape Students and Higher Education for the Next Decade, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*; \$79, <https://store.chronicle.com/collections/reports-guides/products/the-future-of-gen-z>.

God, Grades and Graduation: Religion's Surprising Impact on Academic Success, Ilana M. Horwitz; Oxford U. Press; \$29.95; ISBN: 0197534147. Horwitz found that intensely religious teens completed more years of educa-

tion, especially Christian teens from working-class and middle-class families. But they often attend lower-quality colleges.

"The Colleges Where Low-Income Students Get the Highest ROI," Anthony P. Carnevale, Ban Cheah, Martin Van Der Werf. See, <https://cew.georgetown.edu/resources/reports>. ■

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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Some schools even offered credits or rebates on items such as housing and meal plans.

But that pause is coming to an end, according to a recent report in Fierce Education. For example, this year The Ohio State U. increased tuition \$112 per semester to cover inflation costs. The U. of Illinois announced a 2 percent increase for the next academic year for incoming freshmen. The U. of Virginia will increase tuition and fees by at least 8 percent over the next two years. And the U. of Delaware which increased tuition in 2021 announced it will increase undergraduate tuition again next year. Yet with inflation increasing 7.5 percent over last year, tuition and fees are almost certain to increase across-the-board.

Charitable Support for Higher Ed Increases after a Pause. Charitable support for higher education increased by 6.9 percent in 2021, according to the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education's Voluntary Support of Education survey, which has been conducted every year since 1957. According to Sue Cunningham, president, there was a surge of alumni giving as well as an influx of gifts to underfunded institutions such as two-year colleges and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Giving to scholarships increased, as the student financial aid was heightened during the pandemic. See, www.case.org.

Defrauded Students Compensated. The U.S. Dept of Ed awarded \$415 million to 16,000 borrowers who were defrauded in various ways including 1,800 former DeVry U. students. The DOE found that the students had fallen victim to "substantial misrepresentations about its job placement rates."

Some 14,000 other borrowers who fell victim to false claims from Westwood C., the nursing program at ITT Technical Institute and the criminal justice programs at Minnesota School of Business/Global University received compensation, as well as 11,900 students who attended institutions such as the Corinthian C.s and Marinello Schools of Beauty.

\$3.75 Billion in Pell Grants Unclaimed in 2021. By not completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, members of the high school graduating class of 2021 left \$3.75 billion in Pell Grants unused, according to a new analysis by the National College Attainment Network. "This stunning increase in financial aid dollars 'left on the table' comes as we are battling historic declines in college enrollment," said Kim Cook, CEO of NCAN. "As a country, we need to work to address this disconnect systematically." ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Alvernia Expands Engineering. Alvernia U. in Pennsylvania has expanded options in its engineering programs, and is offering a Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies. (Alvernia also enrolled its two largest classes in 2020 and 2021.)

Bemidji State Offers Communications Studies Program. Beginning this spring, Bemidji State U. in Minnesota is offering a new 36-credit degree in communication studies. Students explore topics ranging from public speaking to communication in a diverse society and conflict management.

"When you look at surveys about what employers want from applicants, the importance of strong communication skills and ability is off the charts," said John Perlich, an associate professor with the program.

Bemidji State is located on the shores of Lake Bemidji in northern Minnesota, and enrolls about 5,000 students who explore 70 undergraduate and eight graduate areas of study.

Caldwell's Environmental Sciences B.S. Caldwell U., a Catholic school of about 2,000 students in suburban New Jersey, now grants

a bachelor of science in environmental science. The program focuses on the application of biological, chemical and physical principles to the study of the physical environment and solution of environmental problems.

Evergreen State Opens Social Justice Center. In compliance with a Washington state law that requires diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism training, Evergreen State U. has opened a Social Justice Center as "a place of learning, radical wellness and community care for all," said Teresa Saliba, associate vice president.

Niagara Intensifies Nurse Training. Niagara U. in New York is innovating in its nursing program and making it "available to a greater number of students," thanks to a \$400,000 grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation.

Niagara is also putting greater focus on public health needs, and expanding that concept in its nursing curriculum. Niagara's C. of Nursing operates a degree completion program for registered nurses, a four-year bachelor's of science degree and an accelerated B.S. in nursing. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Students' Social Media "Fair Game." Two-thirds of college admissions officers at 247 of the nation's top liberal arts colleges and universities think that an applicant's social media postings are "fair game" as they decide whether or not to admit them, according to a survey by Kaplan. That's a 9 percent increase since 2018.

However, only 27 percent of admissions officers surveyed actually visit applicants' social media accounts. Yet 57 percent of those who looked at students' postings said they had a negative impact on their decisions.

One third of the admissions officers who were surveyed by Kaplan hold firm to the belief that exploring a student's social media postings is "an invasion of privacy and shouldn't be done."

More Latinx Californians are Graduating. A new report from the Campaign for College Opportunity, "The State of Higher Education for Latinx Californians," found that the number of male Latinos graduating in four years from the California State U. system has doubled in the past five years from 9 percent to 18 percent. The number of females rose from 15 percent to 29

percent. However, the report noted that Latinos make up 39 percent of the state's population. Latinos now are the largest racial/ethnic group in the state. The majority of Latinos start college at one of the state's 116 community colleges. The report also called for "equitable placement" of students in English and math courses, with support. And it wants the state to close the racial/ethnic and gender gaps in enrollment, graduation, certificate and transfers.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Arizona Acquires Global Campus. The U. of Arizona announced that it will acquire and operate the formally independent U. of Arizona Global Campus that it helped form in 2020. The independent entity ran into financial, operational and enrollment problems.

Oregon and Lane C.C. Form Partnership. The U. of Oregon and Lane C.C. formed a partnership to make it easier to transfer. The two institutions will work to identify LCC students potentially interested in transferring to UO, placing them in the "DuckLane." ■

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Production: Design | Americom NW. COLLEGE BOUND is published monthly, ten times a year. Inquiries should be directed to P.O. Box 6536, Evanston, IL 60204; 773-262-5810. Annual subscription: \$59 in North America, \$69 for international orders, including airmail postage. See, www.collegeboundnews.com

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