

# College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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## Admissions Watch

**Alabama A&M's "Growth Not Accidental."** Alabama A&M U. received over 15,000 undergraduate applications for the Class of 2027, 30 percent more than last year. It admitted 9,757 of those students. AAMU also received a 16 percent increase in transfer applications. "This growth is not accidental," said Braque Talley, vice president for student affairs. "A&M appeals to students from all backgrounds and provides a rich living, learning experience."

**Columbia 2027.** Columbia C. and the Fu Foundation School of Engineering in New York City admitted 2,246 students to the Class of 2027.

**Elon's Commitments.** Elon U. in North Carolina received 1,700 commitments for its Class of 2027, more than last year's 1,692 new students, Greg Zaiser, vice president for enrollment, told the Elon News Network.

Minority students make up 19 percent of the new class, first-generation students account for 11 percent and 12 percent identify as part of LBGQT communities. Seven percent of new students come from other nations.

Their top major interests? Psychology, biology, business analytics, marketing and sports management. Elon primarily drew new students from North Carolina, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania.

**Hampshire C.'s "Unconventional Curriculum" Attracting New Students.** Hampshire C., now an "experimental Amherst school," will welcome more than 300 students this fall, its largest incoming freshman class in five years. Several are transfer students from the New C. in Florida, self-described as a "community of free thinkers." It currently is involved in a political controversy. Hampshire is matching the tuition for any New C. students who wish to transfer.

About a third of new students are people of color, 37 percent are eligible for Pell Grants and 8 percent come from other nations. Hampshire "offers an unconventional curriculum" that emphasizes "student-driven learning, hands-on experience in close collaboration with educators."

**Harvard's Admitted Students Receive Calls.** About 84 percent of students who were offered admission to Harvard C. joined its Class of 2027, according to the *Harvard Gazette*. Admitted students received recruiting phone calls and emails from current students in the Undergraduate Admissions Council, Undergraduate Minority Recruitment Program, Harvard Financial Aid Initiative, Harvard First Generation Program and Harvard College Connection.

About 53 percent of the new class is made up of women. Asian Americans make up 29.8 percent of the Class of 2027, African Americans 14 percent, Latinx students 11 percent and Native Americans and Native Hawaiians 2.3 percent. International students constitute 15 percent of the new class.

Nearly 30 percent of the new students plan to concentrate in the social sciences, 16 percent in computer science and engineering, 30 percent in the natural sciences, 16 percent in the humanities and 7 percent is undecided. Some 60 percent of enrolling students applied for financial aid and 24 percent come from families earning less than \$85,000 a year.

**Loyola U. Maryland Projects Large 2027 Class.** Loyola U. Maryland plans to admit its most diverse new class this fall. As of early June, it had received more than 1,160 deposits from first-year students. Students of color make up about 40 percent of the incoming cohort. The Class of 2027 also is projected to

*continued on page 2*

## Financial Matters

**Per-Student State Funding Finally Exceeds Great Recession Levels.** For the first time since 2008, state per-student-funding levels have increased. According to the latest State Higher Education Finance report, public higher education appropriations increased 4.9 percent beyond inflation last year. For the 10th straight year, education appropriations have increased, rising \$932 per full-time equivalent students from 2020 to 2022.

SHEF attributed the increase to three things: increasing state commitments to higher education funding, a sharp decline in full-time equivalent enrollment and generous federal stimulus funding.

The group also reported that full-time equivalent enrollment has declined for 11 straight years to 10.31 million in 2022, down 11.6 percent from its peak in 2011. Also, inflation-adjusted net tuition revenue decreased 5.8 percent in the last five years. However, total education revenue increased 2.4 percent from 2021 to 2022, "reaching an all-time high of \$17,393 per FTE." Find the full report at <https://sheeo.org>.

**More Free Community College Programs.** About 30 states currently support some kind of tuition grant program, according to the Campaign for Free College Tuition. Some of these programs are expanding. For example, this year Massachusetts budgeted \$20 million to expand its free community college program to include any student over 25 without a degree.

*continued on page 4*

## INSIDE

- Enrollment Trends
- The Counselor's Corner
- Curriculum Capsules
- News You Can Use

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## ADMISSIONS

*continued from page 1*

be the third largest in school history. About 21 percent of the new students are Pell Grant eligible. Incoming students boasted a GPA of 3.69.

**Marquette U. Attracts More Diverse Students.** Marquette U. in Milwaukee received 1,938 commitments from students who want to join its Class of 2027, as of the May 1 National Decision Day. About a third of those who committed identify as students of color. First-generation college students make up over 23 percent of the incoming class.

Marquette increased its class size but held true to its “commitment of academic excellence.” Students in the new class posted a 3.56 GPA. Their average SAT score is 1269, average ACT score 27.7. Almost 15 percent of the new class has been accepted into Marquette’s Honors Program. New students will come from 43 states, three territories and 13 countries.

**Maryville’s Deposits Increase Nearing Cap.** Maryville C. in Tennessee, founded in 1819 and integrated since its earliest days, has received deposits from 336 first-year students from 20 states and six nations, on its way to its cap of 350 new students. The scenic liberal arts school, on the edge of the Great Smokey Mountains, is still accepting applications, according to Alayne Bowman, vice president for admissions and financial aid. It also admitted 36 transfer students.

Maryville has increased its digital visibility, focusing on its new hospitality major. Since the beginning of the year, Maryville has seen engagements on Facebook increase by 62 percent and on Instagram by 173 percent, according to the *dailytimes.com*. These digital campaigns have resulted in “hundreds of forms submitted to the admissions office for more information,” according to the paper.

**New Hampshire’s High Performers.** The Class of 2027 at the U. of New Hampshire’s Durham campus will arrive with the highest average GPA in school history, 3.66. Among them are seven valedictorians. The class includes students from 43 states, 14 nations, 10 veterans and 72 recruited athletes.

“UNH has invested significantly in student success over the last year,” said Wayne Jones, provost. “Among several new initiatives are a robust residence life curriculum and the new Institute for Student Success, designed to holistically guide students through the transition to UNH and offer ongoing support to their journey. We’ve also invested in additional mental health counseling services as well as an academic advising program to better individualize the guidance available to the student.”

About 94 percent of 2021 UNH grads were employed or furthering their education within seven months of graduation, and 86 percent found jobs in fields related to their majors. More than half stayed in New Hampshire.

**Ohio U. Accepts on Rolling Basis.** Ohio U. received more than 25,000 applications for the 2023-24 academic year, more than last year, Candace Boeninger, vice president for enrollment management, told *thepostAthens.com*. OU accepts students on a rolling basis. “Since our admission processes and guidelines are the same, we expect our volume of admitted students to be fairly similar to recent years,” she said.

**Pennsylvania’s Regular Decision Peaks.** More than 59,000 students applied during the Regular Decision cycle for the U. of

Pennsylvania, the most in history. Penn did not release the number of students who were admitted, but for the Class of 2026, it admitted 3,554 students from the 54,588 applicants for an acceptance rate of 6.5 percent.

**Vermont Boasts Affordability.** About 40 percent of incoming Vermont students will pay no tuition this fall at the U. of Vermont, according to *Vermont Business Magazine*. That’s the result of several affordability initiatives, Moses Murphy, UVM’s director of admissions, told the magazine.

This year, Vermont’s admission rate was 60 percent. First-generation college students make up 11 percent of the new class. International students increased by 37 percent and hail from 23 different countries.

About half of the class comes from outside of New England. ■

## Enrollment Trends

**Current Term Enrollment Estimates.** Community college enrollment grew slightly this spring, up 0.5 percent or 22,000 students from a year ago, after large declines in the two previous years.

But the number of undergraduates at public and private nonprofit four-year institutions is still declining, however, at a slower rate, -0.5 percent and -0.2 percent, respectively, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Meanwhile, the number of graduate students fell by 68,000, or -2.2 percent from Spring 2022.

“Total postsecondary enrollment remains well below pre-pandemic levels, down about 1.09 million students, and about 1.16 million undergraduates alone, compared to Spring 2020.” On a positive note, “Freshmen grew 9.2 percent from Spring 2022, building on a similar increase reported last year.” Community colleges accounted for the majority of spring freshman, 53.9 percent. The community college freshman class is now 7.0 percent larger than in Spring 2020.

**Hispanic Gains.** Over the past few decades, Hispanic students have made impressive educational gains. Overall, Hispanic population in the U.S. swelled from 14.6 million in 1980 to 62.1 million in 2021, according to the U.S. Census. Hispanics now make up 18.7 percent of the total U.S. population and are the nation’s second largest “minority” group.

In 1996, only 58.2 percent of the Hispanic population ages 25 to 29 graduated from high school. By 2021, that number increased to 88.5 percent.

In 2005, about one third of Hispanic people ages 25 to 34 had taken some classes in college, but fewer than 1 million had earned a

bachelor’s degree or higher. By 2021, over half of young Hispanic people had some college, and 2.2 million had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher, an increase of 145 percent. In 2021, 2.4 million Hispanic students were studying in college.

**Law Schools Are Back.** In 2022, for the first time in seven years, law school admit rates increased, according to “Legal Education Data Deck: Key trends on access, affordability and value” from AccessLex Institute. Some 56 percent of applicants were women, 42 percent were men. However, the acceptance rate for men was 71 percent, while it was harder for women at 68 percent.

The median grant award for full-time students received a big increase, up from \$13,500 in 2013 to \$23,000 in 2021. The number of law school graduates using loans to finance their education decreased from 87 percent in 2004 to 71 percent in 2016. Graduate debt rose to \$141,400 in 2016.

Those who passed the Bar Exam had a median salary of \$80,000 in 2021.

**P.S. Pacific Union C. Highest in Ten Years.** The theme this year at Pacific Union C. is “Revival.” And for the first time in 10 years it has the “highest number of new students enrolled this spring, increasing each quarter of this year.” Retention rates are also up. And commitments for next fall are the highest they’ve been in five years.

Kharolynn Pascual Smith, director, cited the enrollment’s team’s “intentional approach in seeking out and cultivating potential students for whom PUC could be a good fit.” Pacific Union is a private liberal arts college in Angwin, California, and sponsored by the Seventh-Day Adventists. ■

# AI Comes to Admissions?

Has the use of artificial intelligence (AI) come to college admissions offices around the country? So far, not really. But OneOrigin, a company that sells and markets Sia, a program that can review a large number of applicant transcripts and condense their information for admissions officers, is used in at least 22 higher education institutions.

The program can rapidly analyze data from tens of thousands of applications that some schools receive each year, speeding up and making less burdensome the decision process for admission personnel.

David Hawkins, chief education and policy officer for the National Association for College Admission Counseling, told *Inside Higher Education* that AI helps on the “labor-intensive” tasks but that it is “only as good as the directions you give it and the quality control you exercise on the back end.” AI’s use is likely to spread rapidly, but professionals will be in-charge, at least for now.

**Augusta Enrollment and Scholarships Increase.** Enrollment at Augusta U. in Georgia increased by 2.3 percent over last year, 17.8 percent since 2015, according to Brooks Keel, president. Augusta currently educates about 5,136 undergraduates in 145 academic programs, including several new animation programs.

AU plans to introduce 25 new programs in the next five years. It also expanded its need-based scholarships \$11.9 million since 2020.

**Middlebury Sends First-Year Students to Denmark.** In an effort to address over-enrollment and housing issues, Middlebury C. in Vermont is offering incoming first-year students a chance to spend their first semester in Copenhagen at the DIS: Study Abroad in Scandinavia program. Middlebury hopes that 32 members of the Class of 2027 will take the classes that are aimed at immersion in intellectual and cultural activities with two Middlebury professors.

**Minnesota’s Direct Admissions Program.** Beginning in 2022, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education coordinated a pilot program of direct college admissions. This year the program expanded to include 23,600 seniors from 129 high schools across Minnesota considered for “proactive admissions” at 55 colleges and universities. The first two years of the program cost the state \$1 million.

“By making sure students know all their options and waving the cost to apply to college, we are removing barriers and making higher education accessible for more students than ever across the state,” said Governor Walz.

**Korean U.s Consider Violence Records.** Twenty-one universities in South Korea announced that they will consider school violence records in the regular admissions process for the 2025 school year. Admissions officials are looking for histories of bullying or other types of violence in high school. Also, student athletes, who in the past received admissions privileges, will need to submit their school violence histories, if any.

**Online Learning Skyrockets.** During the pandemic year 2020, about 46 percent of U.S. college learners studied entirely online, while another 28 percent took some courses remotely. In 2021, 60 percent of college students took some online classes, while 30 percent took all their courses online, according to forbes.com.

About 8.5 million U.S. students took online courses at public higher education institutions. And, 2.7 million enrolled in online courses at private schools including 800,000 through for-profit schools. There are currently about 422 colleges and universities that are primarily online, about 11 percent of the total.

**Wisconsin Promotes Access for Rural Students.** Rural and small-town students from Wisconsin and Minnesota are receiving new attention from the U. of Wisconsin and STARS, Small Town and Rural Students College Network. About 16 other colleges and universities such as Yale, USC, Brown and Columbia participate in the far-reaching network.

“... The data points indicate that they [rural students] don’t take advantage of higher education as much as their urban and suburban counterparts,” Jennifer Blazek, Emerging Leaders Program director, told badgerherald.com.

Network programming will include visits from college admissions teams, workshops on the college search process, assistance in finding financial aid and scholarships and programs for high school counselors. ■

## TUITION TABS

**Delaware Tuition Increases 5-Plus Percent.** The U. of Delaware increased tuition by 5 percent, costs of dorms by 5 percent, and the cost of a meal plan by 9 percent. Yearly in-state tuition will increase \$670 to \$14,040, while out-of-state tuition will jump \$1,790 to \$37,680, according to the newarkpostonline.com.

“When 45 percent of your revenue is tuition-based, we’ve got to have a vigorous, multi-year strategic enrollment plan,” said Dennis Assanis, president. “Obviously, we’re taking a holistic view of all student populations to be able to do that.”

UD’s enrollment plan targets an undergrad-

uate population that decreases by 1 percent, a graduate population which increases by 15 percent and an overall student population growth of 2 percent.

**Haverford to Cost 6.4 Percent More.** Students at Haverford C. outside Philadelphia will pay a total cost of \$86,540 for the 2023-24 school year, up 6.4 percent from last year. The increase is about double the school’s normal 3-4 percent increase, according to haverfordclerk.com, but less than peer colleges Swarthmore C. and Williams C.

“The increase in tuition by and large isn’t having an impact on students on financial aid,

because we meet full demonstrated need,” said Jess Lord, vice president.

**Illinois State Increases Tuition 2.7 Percent.** Illinois State U. in Normal will cost students \$27,047 next school year, 2.7 percent more than this year. Tuition increased only 1.9 percent but housing is going up by 4.5 percent. “Setting tuition and fees is always a complex exercise,” Aondover Tarhule, interim president, told pantograph.com. “But the impact of employee wage increases and the minimum wage law, increase in financial aid, inflationary increases in operational expenses and deferred maintenance and capital projects highlight the importance of the university’s goal of balancing fiscal accessibility for current and future students.” ■

## CURRICULUM CAPSULES

### Adelphi's Museum Studies Certificate.

Beginning this fall, Adelphi U. in New York will offer an interdisciplinary, 22-credit Museum Studies Certificate program for current and future undergraduate students. The program is open to students from any major and will prepare them for a career in a variety of cultural institutions or for graduate study.

"Our program offers exciting opportunities for hands-on and real-life experiences within a network of Long Island and New York museums, historic houses, galleries, conservation labs or cultural institutions," said the co-directors.

### South Dakota State Offers Two New Education Majors.

South Dakota's Board of Regents approved South Dakota State U. to offer two new education majors; a Bachelor of Science in elementary education and a B.S. in special education.

"The demand for educators is higher than ever," Board of Regents executive director Brian Maher told [brookingsregister.com](http://brookingsregister.com). "Our universities want to provide more students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the classroom and prosper in South Dakota."

### Stockton's Esports Management BS.

Stockton U. in New Jersey announced a new Bachelor of Science degree in Esports management. Students will take interdisciplinary courses including those from the School of Business, including hospitality, tourism and event management, accounting, finance, management, marketing and computer science. Students will also be required to have an internship. Esports is projected to be a \$5.48 billion industry by 2029, with 17,000 jobs globally.

### Susquehanna Creates Two New Majors.

Susquehanna U. in Pennsylvania announced a new major in entrepreneurship and corporate innovation beginning Fall 2023. Students will "develop the skills to start a business enterprise or thrive as an entrepreneurial thinker in an established industry." In addition to a variety of marketing courses, students also engage in one-on-one mentorships with the business school's entrepreneur-in-residence, build and launch businesses, qualify for start-up funding and participate in consulting projects.

Susquehanna is also launching a new real estate major, also beginning this fall. "Through program coursework and guaranteed internships, students majoring in real estate will be in

a position to make strategic decisions to advance their professional career as a commercial real estate investor, developer or broker," said James Pomykalski, a professor in the program.

### Washington & Jefferson to Offer New Nursing Degree.

Washington & Jefferson C., founded in 1781 in Pennsylvania, announced a new Bachelor of Science in Nursing program that will enroll its first students in Fall 2024. Students will benefit from a clinical partnership with Washington Health System one mile away from the W&J campus.

W&J has a long history of training health professionals and says, "Our highly customized and intellectually engaging student exper-

ience develops professionals of uncommon integrity to lead in an ever-changing world." According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, job growth for nurses is outpacing other occupation in the U.S.

### Xavier Plans New Medical School.

Xavier U. in Ohio is building the nation's first Jesuit C. of Osteopathic Medicine. It is scheduled to open in 2027. It expects eventually to bring about 600 students to its campus. "With nationwide predictions of growing physician shortages in the coming years, we applaud Xavier's effort to grow and attract top-tier talent locally so that health care organizations can serve their mission to improve the health of this community," Deborah Hayes, CEO of The Christ Hospital Health Network, told [Cincinnati.com](http://Cincinnati.com). ■

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### Common App to Hide "Race Box."

Anticipating a June 2023 Supreme Court ruling against the continued use of race as a criterion for college admission, the Common App will give colleges an option to hide the box where students indicate their race. That way admissions officers will be shielded from any charge that they are violating the law.

Colleges may be able to gain that information in other ways, such as student essays or teacher recommendations, not to mention the zip codes. The Common App is used by more than 1,000 colleges and universities.

### Quality College Courses for Title I High School Students.

The National Education Equity Lab is linking over 100 Title I high schools with quality online courses from dozens of colleges and universities, including Harvard, Yale, Stanford and Wharton. It also is making a special effort to include courses from Historically Black Colleges and Universities such as Morehouse C., according to [diverse-education.com](http://diverse-education.com).

### U. of Houston Test-Optional.

In extending its test-optional policy for applicants for Fall 2024, the U. of Houston, Teri Longacre, dean, noted, "We're able to evaluate and admit students who may not be good standardized test takers, but do quite well in their courses."

**New Reports.** Two new reports have been released by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*; *Reimagining the Student Experience: How colleges can help students connect, belong, and engage*. Print; (\$199.00). And, "Who are the Rural Students?" An "Explainer." Download. Both available at <https://store.chronicle.com>

### Comings and Goings.

Canisius C. in Western New York State is now Canisius U. "This achievement reflects the work of so many Canisius to expand our academic programs and provide greater opportunities for students to access our transformative education," said Steve K. Stoute, president. ■

### FINANCIAL MATTERS

*continued from page 1*

Illinois included as much as \$100 million to expand its college grant program. Minnesota included a free college tuition program for students from families earning \$80,000 or less. New Mexico provides full tuition funding for any student in need of "last dollars." So does Tennessee.

Colorado expanded its limited college tuition program targeted to health care workers and other in-demand professions.

But as Richard Vatz, a professor at Towson U. in Maryland, pointed out to the *Capital-Star*, "free" is not free, it is taxpayer funded.

### Interest on Federal Loans Hit 5.5 Percent.

Inflation is having an impact on federal student loan rates, which will increase from 4.99 percent to 5.5 percent for undergraduates this next school year. It's the first time since 2019 that undergraduate interest rates have been so high. Graduate student borrowing rates will increase from 6.54 percent to 7.05 percent. Experts still say that families are better off with federal rather than private loans because of better interest rates and flexible repayment options. ■

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