

College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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Admissions Watch

Cornell Admits Hail from 114 Countries. Cornell U. in Upstate New York admitted 4,994 students to its Class of 2027, 3,324 of whom were Regular Decision candidates. Students come from across the United States and 114 countries, according to the *Cornell Chronicle*.

“The online and virtual opportunities have shown themselves quite successful in helping the admitted students begin to develop their own sense of belonging and connection to Cornell,” Shawn Felton, executive director for undergraduate admissions, told the paper.

Dartmouth Posts New Record. Dartmouth C. in New Hampshire attracted a record-breaking 28,842 applications for the Class of 2027, 2 percent more than last year. It admitted 1,173 Regular Decision students, who will join 578 Early Decision admits and 47 QuestBridge students. About 56 percent of admitted students attended a charter or public school, and 444 of the admitted students rank first or second in their class.

“The admitted cohort... [is] literally drawn from around the world, and from a rainbow of socioeconomic backgrounds, points of view, ethnicities and geographies,” Lee Coffin, vice provost for enrollment and dean of admissions and financial aid, told *The Dartmouth*.

Dartmouth will allocate \$149 million in undergraduate financial aid next academic year, an increase from the current \$135 million. Students will graduate without loans. Dartmouth is one of seven U.S. institutions that are 100 percent need-blind in admissions and that meets 100 percent of demonstrated need, regardless of citizenship.

Denison Receives Most Apps in History. Denison C. in Ohio received roughly 14,500 applications for the Class of 2027, a 19 percent increase over last year and the most in school history. About 1,600 of those applications were Early Decision, a 43 percent increase over last

year. It admitted just over 2,400 students, or about 17 percent, down from last year’s 22 percent. Denison expects 620 of these students to enroll this fall.

“It’s tough because there are students who we would have admitted two, three, four years ago, that we won’t have space to admit this year just because we have an influx of applications, and they’re really strong,” Drew Riley, assistant vice president and director of admission, told *The Denisonian*. “I think there is a self-selection factor where the students who end up choosing Denison really buy into the value of Denison and increasingly we are not anybody’s backup school.”

Duke Accepts 16 Percent of ED. More than 49,469 applicants applied to the Duke U. for the Class of 2027. Some 800 students were admitted Early Decision from 4,880 ED apps, the second most in school history. The ED acceptance rate was 16.4 percent. Another 2,148 students were accepted through the Regular Decision cycle.

Duke expects to provide \$140 million in need-based financial aid to undergraduates, up from \$134 million last year. The average grant offer is about \$58,000, up from last year’s \$54,000, according to *Duke Today*.

Harvard Graduates 80 Percent Debt-Free. Harvard C. attracted 56,937 applications for the Class of 2027, and admitted 1,942 students, including those from Early Action. Over 14 percent of the class are international students and 8 percent are dual citizens. African Americans make up 15.3 percent of the new class, nearly 30 percent are Asian Americans, 11.3 percent are Latinx. Women make up 53 percent of those accepted.

Nearly one-in-four Harvard undergraduates come from families earning \$85,000 or less per year. About 55 percent of Harvard
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Financial Matters

California Receives More Aid Applications. More than 450,000 California students filed the FAFSA this year, 17 percent more than last year according to the California Student Aid Commission. Nationally, almost 43 percent of the high school Class of 2023 completed the form, as of March. The COVID Class of 2021 filed 190,000 fewer FAFSA forms. The recent increase was fueled by a new California law that mandates high school seniors to complete the FAFSA or Dream Act application.

The U.S. Dept. of Ed said in March, “The redesigned FAFSA form is the most ambitious and significant redesign of the federal student aid application and delivery in decades, and will significantly simplify how students, parents and other educational stakeholders use the FAFSA starting this year.”

Colorado Boulder Doubles Size of CU Promise. The U. of Colorado Boulder is expanding the size of its CU Promise program, doubling the number of Colorado resident students “with significant financial need who are eligible for free tuition and fees for the 2023-24 academic year” to about 3,500 students.

Ithaca Commitment. Ithaca C. in New York expanded its Ithaca Commitment, which includes a four-year financial forecast for every undergraduate student to increase transparency, and a cap that limits how much students’ direct costs rise each year. For students who came in Fall 2023, that is 3.5 percent each year during their four year undergraduate
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ADMISSIONS

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undergraduates receive financial aid and over 80 percent of the Class of 2022 graduated debt-free. Harvard's average parental contribution is \$13,000 annually.

Lafayette Admits 30 Percent. Lafayette C., founded in 1832 in Easton, Pennsylvania, received 9,866 applications for its new class, the second highest on record, but a slight drop from last year's 10,495 apps. Still, over the past five years, applications have increased 10 percent. The college accepted 3,032 of those students for a 30.7 percent acceptance rate. About half of the class, 363 students, already finalized through the Early Decision cycle.

"Lafayette trends show, historically, we will have a one-year spike to a record level, then a slight regression the next year or two," Forrest Stuart, vice president of enrollment management, told *The Lafayette*. "Then, we spike again."

"These application numbers are another sign that many outstanding students want to be part of this hard-working, highly motivated and very caring community," President Nicole Hurd wrote the paper.

Lehigh Celebrates 50 Co-educational Years. Lehigh U. in Pennsylvania attracted 18,414 applications for the Class of 2027, and offered admission to 5,246 of those students, for an admit rate of 28 percent. Lehigh saw a 26 percent increase in its binding Early Decision rounds, a 47 percent increase in applications to its College of Health and a 38 percent increase in applications to its intercollegiate interdisciplinary programs.

"...another historic first, Lehigh received more applications from women than men for the first time ever, especially meaningful as we celebrate 50 years of co-education at Lehigh..." Dan Warner, vice provost for admissions and financial aid, told *Lehigh News*.

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts 'Drives' Deposit Increase. Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts has experienced a 35 percent increase in first-year deposits compared to last year, Jana Bowyer, director of student enrollment operations, told *The Online Beacon*. She added, "So many people think enrollment consists of a friendly face telling you about the school, and then there isn't much that goes into it. So much of what drives enrollment consists of a handful of data tracking, marketing, brand awareness and so many other aspects."

MIT Accepts More Apps. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology received 26,914 applications, 20 percent fewer than last year, and admitted 1,259 students to its Class of 2027.

MIT's acceptance rate was 4.68 percent, higher than last year's 3.96 percent, but lower than the pre-pandemic acceptance rate of about 7 percent.

NYU Attracts 120,000 Apps. New York U. drew applications from nearly 120,000 students for first-year admissions, 13 percent more than last year. It admitted 8 percent of those who applied to its New York City campus. Admitted students posted a median SAT score of 1540. Next fall, the entering class of about 5,700 first-year students will have no racial or ethnic majority. Some 19 percent are first in their family to attend college and 20 percent are Pell Grant recipients. They will arrive from all 50 states and 86 countries. NYU both sends more students to study abroad and educates more international students than any other U.S. college or university.

"As we look toward a future under new legal directives around diversity in higher education, NYU continues to demonstrate that selectivity and an exceptionally talented student body are not mutually exclusive to upholding values of diversity and access which so deeply enrich a university education," said Jonathan Williams, associate vice president of undergraduate admissions.

Saint Anslem Attracts 3,000 Apps. Saint Anslem C. in New Hampshire attracted over 3,000 applications for the Class of 2027, and has already enrolled 400 first-year students for the fall semester.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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study. Additionally, the Ithaca Commitment lets entering students take one free online course before arriving on campus.

"This allows our students and their families to know the total maximum cost up front of their college education so that there are no surprises along the way," according to Laurie Koehler, vice president for marketing and enrollment strategy.

Minnesota Assists Former Foster Care Students. Minnesota's Fostering Independence Grants are the first of its kind in the nation to

NACAC's College Openings 2023 is Open

The National Association for College Admission Counseling is once again sponsoring its College Openings Updates. Now in its 36th year, the listings are "a voluntary listing of NACAC member postsecondary institutions that are still accepting applications from prospective first-year and/or transfer students for the upcoming fall term." The list of colleges is updated daily. See, <https://www.nacacnet.org/college-openings-update/>. ■

"This is slightly higher than last year, due to an increase in applications," Julie Lanman, director of admissions told the *Saint Anslem Crier*. There is still room for new students. She added, "Every institution has its own unique set of challenges. At Saint Anslem, we work diligently each year as a community to plan and adapt our programs, recruitment and enrollment practices to meet the demands of prospective students while staying aligned with our mission as a Catholic Benedictine college."

Vanderbilt Creates Waitlist Amidst Rising Yields. Vanderbilt U. in Tennessee received 47,120 applications for its Class of 2027 and accepted 2,645 of those students for an admit rate of 5.6 percent. Doug Christiansen, dean of undergraduate admissions, told *The Vanderbilt Hustler* that the university has begun accepting fewer students due to a rising yield rate of admitted students.

Christiansen added that about 8 percent of the Class of 2027 will come from its waitlist, according to the school to which they applied, and, in some cases, their intended majors. He also emphasized that Vanderbilt is "truly optional" when it comes to standardized tests, but sometime next year will consider whether that policy will remain beyond the Class of 2028. More than 200 students were admitted to the Class of 2026 off its waitlist.

Last year, 16.6 percent of transfer applicants were admitted. Vanderbilt students come from 152 different countries. ■

pay former foster care students for the full cost of attending college. Since the "last dollar" program began last semester, 485 college students have received state funding at a cost of more than \$2 million, according to Minnesota Public Radio. Only about 54 percent of students in foster care graduate from high school, far below the 89 percent rate for all students.

So Goes Harvard, So Goes America. Attending Harvard C. will cost students 3.5 percent more next academic year, about \$79,450, up from the current \$76,763. However, about 25 percent of families will not have to contribute to tuition, room or board. Students from families making under \$85,000 annually also will receive a \$2,000 stipend for initial costs.

Villanova Receives \$20 Million for Posse Scholars. Villanova U. in Philadelphia received a \$20 million gift from the Bancel Philanthropies to support students from the Posse Foundation, a college access, success and youth leadership development program. It is the largest gift to fund scholarships in the history of the university. The gift will cover the undergraduate education of 50 Posse Scholars over the next five years. ■

Enrollment Trends

Chicago Releases Common Data for Class of 2026. The U. of Chicago released its first-ever Common Data Set administered jointly by the College Board, *U.S. News & World Report* and Peterson's, according to the *Chicago Maroon*. Chicago was one of only a handful of elite institutions that previously declined to complete the CDS.

For the Class of 2025, the U. of C. received 17,513 applications from men compared to 20,445 applications from women. But it admitted 1,254 men and only 1,206 women. The factors that it rated as "very important" are application essays, recommendations, extracurricular activities, "rigor of secondary school record," "talent/ability" and "character/personal qualities."

Dual Enrollment. About 15 percent of first-time community college students are dual enrollment high school students, according to Brookings. Most dual enrollment students go on to enroll in college immediately after high school. About half of them enroll in community college. DE students are more likely to enroll in and graduate from college than their non-DE peers.

One of the main barriers to DE enrollment is cost. These students are not generally eligible for federal financial aid. Racial gaps in DE programs "shrink considerably when state or local agencies cover the cost of DE tuition."

Florida State Retention Hits 99 Percent. A record 99 percent of the first-year undergraduates who started at Florida State U. last fall returned for this spring semester. According to the U.S. Dept. of Ed, the most recently recorded average retention rate from first-to-second fall for all colleges and universities was 82 percent. For the four past years, FSU has posted a six-year graduation rate of 85 percent.

One reason for the high retention rate is an "Engage 100" course, required for the first time in Fall 2022. It "places first-year students into small, immersive, mentor-guided academic cohorts that help them find support and community as they transition to FSU."

Oregon C. C. Enrollment Begins to Rebound. Enrollment at Oregon's 17 "pandemic-battered" community colleges is starting to rebound, "but not necessarily among the same student groups they served before," according to *The Oregonian*. While enrollment at community colleges nationwide dipped by about 16 percent, it plunged by 26 percent in Oregon.

"It's looking better everywhere," John Wyckoff, deputy director at the Oregon Community College Association, told the paper.

However, at Portland C.C., where this year's increase was marginal, students are taking fewer classes and full-time-equivalent enrollment is actually down 3.2 percent from last year. English-language learners and apprentices are some groups driving the small enrollment gain.

At Rogue C.C., where enrollment fell by more than a third during the pandemic, enrollment is up by 22 percent among high school seniors taking dual enrollment classes. The college has also seen its highest retention rate in five years among Hispanic students.

(Meanwhile, tuition for new undergraduates will increase 4.4 percent at Oregon State U. This fall it will rise by 3 percent for out-of-state students.)

Japan's Enrollment Crisis Warning for U.S.? Over the past three decades, the number of Japanese college-age students has plunged by nearly half, from 2 million in 1990 to about 1.1 million. That has led

to "steep drops in enrollment" and "Japanese universities are significantly lowering their standards to fill seats." The Japanese experience may be a warning signal of what may be in store for U.S. colleges and universities, according to a recent issue of *The Hechinger Report*, a nonprofit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education.

Some 40 percent of private universities in Japan and 179 public universities are not filling their government-allocated enrollment quotas. Between 2000 and 2020, 11 Japanese universities shut down and there were 29 mergers, compared to only three in the previous 50 years.

In the U.S., colleges and universities will face a 10 percent drop in the number of high school graduates between 2026 and 2037, according to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. Others predict a more than 15 percent decline in the number of 18-year-olds. In Japan, 81 percent of 18-year-olds pursue higher education.

In the United States, that figure has dropped from 70 percent in 2016 to 62 percent currently, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and closures and mergers are already taking place.

TRANSFERS MADE EASY

Heidelberg's Open Transfer for C.C. Students. Heidelberg U. in Tiffin, Ohio, launched a new program to "simplify the pathway for transfer students to earn their bachelor's degree without all the barriers and stress." The program helps them graduate in "approximately two years."

Tony Bourne, vice president for enrollment management and marketing, said, "We feel if you graduate from an accredited associate's degree program, you've done your part."

Holyoke C.C. and Western New England U. Simplify Transfer Process. Holyoke C.C. and Western New England U. signed a joint admissions agreement that will simplify the transfer process for eligible students to complete their education.

"Students experience such a nurturing atmosphere here at HCC," said Christina Royal, HCC president, "and we are so grateful that Western New England recognizes that and helps to create a supportive environment for transfer students...."

Indiana Pennsylvania Forms Partnership with Harrisburg Area C.C. Indiana U. of Pennsylvania signed a dual admissions agreement with Harrisburg Area C. C., whose students will receive automatic acceptance. Since 2015, 484 students have transferred to IUP to complete their academic studies, including 170 dual enrollment high school students.

"IUP is pleased to establish this partnership with HACC," said Michael Driscoll, IUP president. "This agreement helps us to provide key services, support and access that these qualified students need and deserve to meet their educational needs."

Wyoming Makes Transferring Easier and More Affordable. The Wyoming Transfer and Pokes Transfer commitments help both Wyoming residents and out-of-state transfer students with a 3.0 GPA to gain entry to the U. of Wyoming with scholarship support.

"Students are not required to have already earned their associate degree," said Wendi Vanlandingham, UW director of transfer relations. ■

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Miami U. Test-Optional Through 2026.

Miami U. in Ohio announced that it will remain test-optional through the Spring 2026 semester. This year, about 50 percent of applicants asked the university to use their test scores in the decision-making process. But Brent Shock, vice president of student enrollment management and success, said, "In reality, the test score was always one small part of the criteria that we use to admit students."

West Virginia U. Permanently Test Optional.

West Virginia U. has become the first public higher education institution in the Mountain State to permanently adopt a test-optional admissions policy, according to wvutoday.edu. "... We have an obligation to remove any barriers that may deter those interested in higher education," said George Zimmerman, assistant vice president for enrollment management.

However, the college's PROMISE Scholarship still requires SAT or ACT results.

WVU joins the more than 1,800 institutions that are test-optional or test-free, according to FairTest, the National Center for Fair and Open Testing.

One Third of College Presidents Are Women.

According to *The American College President, 2023 Edition*, a survey conducted by the American Council on Education, only 33 percent of presidents at the nation's colleges and universities are women, up about 10 percentage points from 2006. And 72 percent of presidents identified as white.

Also, on average, presidents first aspired to their role by the time they were 45 years old, applied when they were almost 50 and were appointed to their first presidency at close to age 52. Women aspired to the position of president an average of 3.3 years later than men.

"At a time when the sector is simultaneously managing complex issues such as ongoing fallout from COVID-19, troubling demographic trends and declining public trust in higher education, diverse leadership is essential to addressing the challenges and opportunities ahead," said Ted Mitchell, ACE president.

NAEP Reading Scores Dip. Reading scores for the National Assessment of Educational Progress for grades four and eight each fell three points since the last test was administered in 2019. "Average scores for both grades were not significantly different in comparison to the first reading assessment in 1992."

COMINGS AND GOINGS

College Closings. Due to declining enrollment and significant debt, Finlandia U., founded in 1896 by Finnish immigrants in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, announced that it is closing at the end of the academic year, after 127 years. Students will be able to complete their studies at Northern Michigan U., Marquette.

Iowa Wesleyan U. and Cardinal Stritch U. in Wisconsin announced they are closing.

Merger Plans. Meanwhile, Lewis U. and St. Augustine C. in Illinois, each of which was "established to meet the needs of underserved communities," announced their plan to merge.

The Fitch Rating, released last December, says the outlook for higher education in 2023 is "deteriorating," thanks to rising costs and wages and sluggish enrollment. And, 27 percent of college presidents surveyed in the most recent *Inside Higher Ed* Survey of College and University Presidents said their college should consider a merger within the next five years.

What's in a Name? Unity C. in Gloucester, Maine, founded in 1965 as Unity Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences and later as Unity C., has renamed itself Unity Environmental U.

Its new mission is to provide "quality education and experiences that produce outstanding environmentally competent professionals and inspire individuals from all walks of life to stewardship and sustainable ecosystems." ■

COUNSELOR'S BOOKSHELF

From *The Chronicle of Higher Education*:

1. *The Future of Gen Z: The Next Generation of Students*;

2. *Recruiting and Retaining Students in a Challenging Market: Creating a Sense of Belonging for Students*;

3. *Building Tomorrow's Work Force: What employers want you to know*;

All three items above are available at <https://store.chronicle.com>.

Short Changed: How Advanced Placement Cheats Students by Annie Abrams; Johns Hopkins University Press; 240 pages; ISBN-13:978-142-144-6295; \$24.95. The book examines the AP's development in the 1950s. The author argues, "The program's commitment to standardized testing no longer reflects its original promise of delivering meaningful college-level curriculum to high school students."

Top 50 Best Value Colleges. The *Princeton Review* released its 2023 list of the 50 best value public colleges. In order, here are the top 25: Georgia Institute of Technology, U. of Virginia, U. of California-Berkeley, City U. of New York-Baruch C., U. of California-Los Angeles, U. of California-Santa Barbara, U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, U. of California-San Diego, U. of California-Irvine, U. of Michigan-Ann Arbor, U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

U. of Florida, William & Mary, Texas A&M U.-College Station, U. of Texas at Austin, North Carolina State U., U. of California-Davis, U. of Washington, State U. of New York-Binghamton U., Purdue U.-West Lafayette, Florida State U., Virginia Tech, U. of California-Riverside, Missouri U. of Science and Technology, State U., State U. of New York-Stony Brook University. ■

CURRICULUM CAPSULES

Duquesne Adds Four Engineering Programs. Beginning Fall 2024, Duquesne U. in Pittsburgh will offer new undergraduate degrees in mechanical engineering, environmental and energy engineering, systems engineering and engineering physics. This fall, students can gain early access to the four-year programs through the general engineering first-year coursework. Duquesne will rename its science school, the School of Science and Engineering. "We're also really focused on practical skills for students and helping students to get jobs that are in high demand, but also ones that will better society," said David Dausey, provost.

Harvard and Stanford Revise H.S. Math Recommendations. Stanford revised its high school math curriculum recommendations for prospective students to emphasize conceptual math courses such as algebra, geometry and trigonometry, while deemphasizing applied alternatives such as data science and statistics, according to *The Stanford Daily*. However, it's still welcomes "preparation in skills related to statistics, data science and calculus." Harvard has made similar recommendations. ■

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