



APPLICATION NEWS

- The Common Application reports that 748,118 seniors applied by November 1 to 841 colleges participating in the Common App. That number represents an increase of 26% over 2019–20. AND underrepresented minority applicants increased by 32% over 2019–20, while first-generation applicants increased by 43%! (That increase is most likely a result of the new test-optional world).
- Purdue has just announced that they will be requiring test scores for fall 2024 admissions. I'm not surprised. They are a STEM focused college who has been test-optional in name only; they've always liked their scores. I predict that most colleges will continue to be test optional.
- The Common App has started an exciting Direct Admissions program with 14 schools (including Mercy, Iona, Kean, Montclair State, and Utica). Students have to provide basic biographical and academic information, and colleges will reach out to students with offers. This program should expand access to college for BIPOC and 1st generation students.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

- Location: Bethlehem, PA
- # of Undergrads: 5,098
- Acceptance Rate: 36%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 10:1
- Returning Freshmen: 94%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 7%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Combines the resources of a research institution with the collegial atmosphere of a smaller college. Students are determined to succeed while having fun.
- Consistently strong engineering program and business program with a real emphasis on experiential learning.
- IDEAS: Integrated Design, Engineering, and Science and the Integrated Business and Engineering program are both 4 year honors programs that allow you to get a self-designed bachelors degree. (Lehigh is big on interdisciplinary studies).
- Career services is known for bringing lots of employers to campus.
- First and second years are required to live on campus; students rave about the food.
- Active Greek scene draws 26% of men and 37% of women.
- Div I, known especially for wrestling.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

- Location: Allentown, PA
- # of Undergrads: 2,251
- Acceptance Rate: 62%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 9:1
- Returning Freshmen: 86%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: ?

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Supportive, nurturing atmosphere with an emphasis on community.
- Strong theater BA program, but any student can audition for shows.
- Strong in pre-med and pre-law. Comprehensive science major allows for a sampling of it all. Cutting edge lab equipment. Public health major.
- 3 writing intensive courses required; capstone experience for all majors.
- Academic and career advising are strong.
- Living Writers course brings authors to campus.
- On-campus housing guaranteed; freshmen live together in one end of campus.
- Students rave about the food.
- Greek life exists but is pretty minimal; most social life takes place on campus.

KEY RESOURCES FOR JUNIORS WHO ARE EXPLORING COLLEGES:

Besides the must-have "Fiske Guide to Colleges," there are several other resources that are incredibly helpful for learning more about colleges. They include:

- **College Navigator.** My favorite search engine. Search on majors, geographic areas, selectivity, etc. Find college-level data on such things as net price, popular programs and majors, graduation rates, and campus safety.
- **Common Data Set.** One of the most useful resources on the internet is the Common Data Set (CDS). The Common Data Set is a compilation of standards and data points as defined by the US Department of Education, and most every college posts their Common Data Set data on their website, typically under their Institutional Research page. The easiest way to find the CDS is to Google "Common Data Set + Bard" (or whichever college you're looking at).

The CDS includes a huge amount of data, such as:

- How many students apply and are accepted
 - Test data and GPA data for enrolled students
 - **How many of the accepted students applied test optional**
 - How many are invited to be on a waitlist and then accepted
 - How important certain admissions criteria are
 - How many receive need-based and merit aid
 - Cost of attendance
- **Colleges That Change Lives (www.ctcl.org).** Many students these days are seeking colleges where they can get to know their professors, have meaningful, engaging opportunities, and feel a real sense of community. The 40 Colleges That Change Lives often fit these needs incredibly well. You may not have heard of them, and they may be smaller than you think you want, but they are definitely worth a close look!
 - **The College Admissions Process Podcast** with John Durante. Features conversations with admissions officers at more than 70 colleges. You'll get a sense of the vibe of these colleges, and you might even get some helpful nuggets from admissions officers that can aid with your applications.

THOUGHTS FOR SENIORS:

Here are a few reminders as you close out the application season:

- If you are applying to colleges that care about **demonstrated interest** (check out this website to remind yourself which ones do: <https://www.collegetransitions.com/dataverse/colleges-that-consider-demonstrated-interest>), make sure that you have shown a healthy amount of interest. Visits and info sessions are key, but you could also reach out to your regional rep and introduce yourself and have an interview!
- If you have applied Early Decision, please keep working on other applications! If you are not accepted to your ED choice, you really don't want to be scrambling to **write those other supplemental essays** during the winter holiday break. Trust me on this. Your parents will appreciate it besides!
- **Keep working at your classes.** This is not the time to slack off. Most colleges want to see mid-year grades, and many could rescind offers after receiving low final year grades. Some of the UCs may rescind offers if you get lower than a C.
- The first rounds of decisions are coming soon. Please try to remember that these **college decisions** are more about colleges and their priorities than about you. If you've applied to a balanced list, you should get into at least 60% of the colleges that you applied to. Remember that you want to end up at a college that wants you!
- Think seriously about a **GAP year**. You have one shot at being a college Freshman. Navigating college successfully requires maturity, and a gap year can help you develop that maturity, as well as authenticity (who are you, really?), problem solving, and focus for college. Taking a gap year is a bold and increasingly more common move. Being on the same path / timeline as everyone else really isn't that important!

I help students and their families navigate the college admissions process. I empower students to figure out who they are and where they belong, and I provide structure, insight, and enthusiasm as they apply to colleges that are the best fit academically, socially, and financially. Contact me for a 30 minute complimentary session to learn more!



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