

COLLEGE BOUND

Helpful tips for getting into college and the smartest ways to pay for it.

Volume 2, Issue 4

April 2011



Congratulations to the Class of 2011!

The results are in on a record-setting year... Some numbers. Some perspective. And our Best and Worst Awards from the College Admissions Game.

It's official – 2011 has set a record for the most college applications ever.

A senior trying to get into college this year had more competition than any other year. And that held true whether you were applying to a state university, Ivy League school or a private liberal arts college.

Ivy League schools will admit less than 10% of all applicants for the first time ever (Harvard is now at 6%.) Boston continues to be a choice college town. Over 100,000 students applied to Boston College, Harvard and Northeastern alone! Popular state schools have gotten even more popular. For example, the University of Virginia received over 24,000 applications.

Perhaps the most startling statistic is this: Acceptance rates have plummeted 20% to 36% *in the last five years alone.*

Taking the Ivies as a whole, the acceptance rate has declined by 30% since 2006.

Looked at another way, it's 30% harder for a high school senior to attend Penn or Columbia or Dartmouth than it was for someone who graduated just last spring.

Competition was much harder at liberal arts colleges and state universities as well. Acceptance rates at liberal arts colleges have fallen from 22.8% on average in 2006 to 17.2% in 2011. Claremont McKenna in California has become 36% choosier in the same time period. Amherst will say 'yes' to only 12.6% of applicants this year.

Meanwhile, state university acceptance rates have dipped from 41.6% in 2006 to 34% in 2011. Popular universities such as the University of California at Berkeley will accept only 20% of applicants.

Given the intense competition, I'm very proud of how our students fared. The vast majority got into one of their top two choices, including Ivy League colleges, MIT, Notre Dame, Georgetown,

University of Chicago, and other selective schools.

At the same time, I've witnessed more baffling head-scratchers this year than I can ever remember. Students rejected by Lehigh but accepted at Vanderbilt. In at Stanford, out at Cornell. Waitlisted at William & Mary but invited into the honors program at Boston College. It just demonstrates: in a process controlled by human beings, there's always an element of unpredictability. As you can imagine, the strain and pressure on admissions departments just to read all the applications must be tremendous. And I don't care who you are: when you go 80 days straight reviewing 40+ applications a day, you're bound to make a few mistakes.

I want to congratulate all our students and parents for their hard work and effort. You had it tougher than any class that's come before you. You should be very proud of your accomplishments.

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Spotlight On St. Mary's College



Location: St. Mary's City, MD
Undergraduates: 2,017
Male/Female: 43/57
Entrance Difficulty: Very difficult
Acceptance Rate: 57% of 2,411 applicants
SAT Math Avg.: 610
SAT CR Avg.: 620
SAT Writing Avg.: 620
ACT Composite: 24-29
First-year students returning: 91%
Grad in 4 Years: 71.3%
Cost of Attendance: \$39,058
Avg. Percent of Need Met: 59%
Most Popular Programs:
Biology, English, Economics, Psychology

Fun Facts:

- A small public liberal arts college that looks and feels like a private school along the likes of Mary Washington and William & Mary.
- Beautiful waterfront campus on the shores of the Chesapeake, 70 miles from Washington, DC.
- Designated Maryland's Public Honors College by statute in 1992, it is the state's commitment to providing a residential, liberal arts education as a public trust—available to students of superior potential regardless of their backgrounds and personal circumstances.
- Probably the only college in America where you can take out a sailboat with your library card.
- The varsity sailing team won the 2010 ICSA/APS Team Race National Championship, bringing St. Mary's sailing teams to a total of 15 national championships.
- Even though the school doesn't have a pre-med program, has one of the highest medical school acceptance rates in the country — over 95%.
- In the past two years, three students have worked as White House interns; many other students intern for the U.S. Congress and the Maryland state legislature.
- *U.S. News & World Report 2011* and *Forbes 2010* ranked St. Mary's College of Maryland in the top five public liberal arts colleges in the nation.

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It's Time for the Best and Worst Awards!

I have some awards to hand out, based on everything we've seen in this surprising and unpredictable year. TV rights are still being negotiated. In the meantime, I'm willing to share the winners and losers with you.

Toughest College to Get Into if You Live in the Northeast: Stanford. They unabashedly admit to favoring west coast students over east coasters.

Most Surprising Phone Call: A guidance counselor from a N.J. high school received a phone call from a Princeton admissions officer one day. "Got any smart kids who play the tuba?" the caller asked. "We're looking for a good tuba player."

Best Correspondence: Providence College sends out a terrific series of letters to accepted students and their parents – the best we've seen. From answering common questions to offering helpful advice to making arrangements for you to talk to current students, they've thought of everything. They even sent a congratulations video from the actor John O'Hurley (PC Class of '76).

Fastest Campus Visit: As they pulled into the parking lot to take a college tour, one of our students declared to her parents, "No need to get out of the car. I could never go here."

The Computer Ate Your Acceptance Letter: Penn State and Delaware accidentally sent acceptance notices to applicants who were supposed to be denied. PSU honored their acceptances, Delaware did not.

Clever Way to Say "You're In" Without Actually Saying "You're In": Called a Likely Letter or Love Letter, it's a way

for a college to say, "Your application impressed us" before official acceptances are sent out. Implied in the letter is the message that if you don't mess up and start skipping all your classes, there's likely to be a spot for you in the class of 2015.

Dumbest New Drinking Prank: It's a tossup between vodka-soaked tampons, eyeball shots and putting vodka in an atomizer so it can be inhaled. All show that even really smart college kids can make really stupid decisions. These are dangerous activities and can cause permanent damage. (Parents: something to discuss with your kids before packing them off to school.)

Best Ending Question From an Alumnae Interviewer: Can I adopt you?

Best Fat Envelope: Notre Dame. On the cover of an elaborate welcome package is a photo of the famed golden dome with two simple words: "Welcome Home."

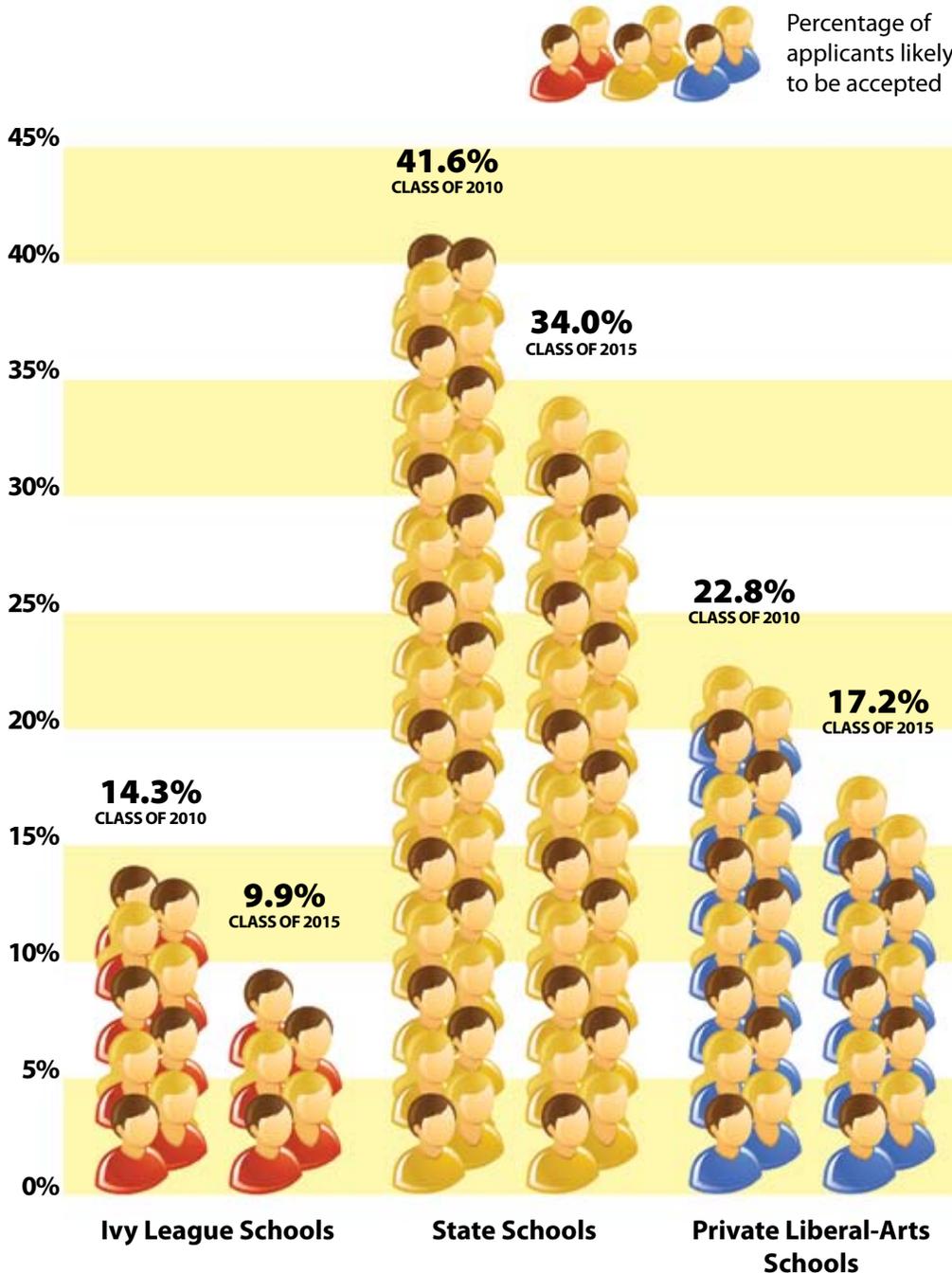
Best Little Sister Reaction to an Acceptance Letter: The big day had arrived. The letter had come in the mail. But big sis wasn't due home from practice for another 4 hours. That's torture for a little sister dying to know what's inside the envelope. When, finally, big sis arrived, opened the envelope, and read the words "Congratulations" from her dream college, little sister jumped into her arms, tears streaming down her face. "You did it! You did it!" she sobbed.

'On Second Thought' Award: The same sister, 5 minutes later, started crying again when she realized the acceptance letter meant big sis would likely be attending college 600 miles away. "I don't want you to go!" she sobbed.

The Incredible Shrinking Admission Rates

Why the Class of 2011 had it tougher than any class that's come before them.

This chart shows how acceptance rates have fallen dramatically in the last 5 years for the three key groups of colleges and universities. The numbers indicate percentages of applicants likely to be accepted.



Percentage of applicants likely to be accepted

News You Can Use

Thinking About Getting a Car for Your Teen?



Kia Soul +

According to a recent issue of *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, two safe and reliable choices that still pass the "cool" test are the Kia Soul + and the Scion xB.

If you're looking to buy a new car, the Kia Soul + has a high resale value (56% after three years). This boxy design earned a Top Safety Pick award from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. At a sticker price of \$15,890 it's cheap to insure and maintain.

If you're not comfortable trusting your 17 year-old with a brand new car, consider the Scion xB from Toyota, recommends *Kiplinger's*. A two-year-old Scion xB with 24,000 miles on it will set you back about \$12,400. With six airbags, plus stability and traction control, safety comes standard on this vehicle. The 5-door hatchback also earned a Top Safety Pick award from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Exciting new major offered at Penn State-Altoona

It's called Rail and Transit Engineering (RTE), and combines civil engineering courses with new, customized courses in rail business, mechanical systems, track, operations, communications, and regulation.

Altoona has always been known as a hub for railroading, so Penn State-Altoona seems like the perfect place for such a unique program.

Apparently, Warren Buffet is a big fan of railroads, so this might be an interesting major to pursue for you engineering wannabes out there.

Source: Newsweek 3/7/11



Ask the Professor

Q: My daughter is taking the SAT for the first time. What are the rules regarding calculators?

A: You're allowed to use just about any standard calculator you would use in school. You are not allowed to use:

- * Models with keypads or models that make noise
- * Models that require an electrical outlet
- * Models that can access the Internet or have wireless or Bluetooth capability
- * Models that have a camera, scanning capability or digital audio/video recording/player capability

Did You Know?



- ✓ For the first time in our country, our student loan debt is now greater than our credit card debt.
- ✓ Student loan debt totals over \$900 billion.
- ✓ Four out of 10 student loans are in default or have missed several payments within the first five years.

College Match Game



Which college did Joe Girardi attend?

- A.) Northwestern
- B.) Ohio State
- C.) Univ. of Illinois
- D.) LSU
- E.) Univ. of Texas

Answer: A.) The Yankees skipper attended Northwestern University, where he played baseball and earned a bachelor of science degree in industrial engineering.



Upcoming FREE workshops

April 14 – 7:30 pm
Clark Public Library

April 28 – 7:30 pm
Bridgewater JCC

There are 2 ways to reserve a seat:
Online: www.myacfa.com
Call: 1-973-467-0101



"A TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND FOOT EXTENSION CORD? YOU'RE STILL NOT GRASPING THIS HYBRID CAR IDEA, ARE YOU MR. HIGGINS?"

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