

Record 42,742 Apply to Harvard College



Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid William R. Fitzsimmons '67.

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Harvard College received a record-breaking 42,742 applications for admission to the Class of 2022—setting a record for the fourth consecutive year and exceeding last year’s pool by more than 3,000.

This roughly 8 percent increase represents the first time the applicant pool numbers more than 40,000.

Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid William R. Fitzsimmons attributed this increase, in part, to the College's financial aid program. He said affordability was likely a high priority for many applicants.

"I think affordability and accessibility are critical and they become more critical, I think, for more people every year," Fitzsimmons said.

The applicant pool is marked by an increase in students requesting aid from the College, with 75.5 percent applying for financial aid and 25.9 percent requesting an application fee waiver. The increase in these early indicators of economic diversity comes 15 years after the launch of the Harvard Financial Aid Initiative, which aims to make the College affordable for all admitted students, regardless of their income.

Women, making up 50.3 percent of the applicant pool, slightly outnumber men in this year's group.

Applications from certain minority racial groups increased at a higher rate than that of the overall applicant pool. In particular, the College saw an 18.7 percent increase in applications from African Americans and a 14.9 percent increase in those from Asian Americans. These demographic changes come as the College continues to face [legal scrutiny](#) regarding its race-conscious admissions practices.

Fitzsimmons attributed these demographic changes in the applicant pool to changes in the demographics of the country as a whole, as well as to the unique appeal Harvard may hold for minority students in particular.

"If you're interested in African and African American studies, for example, this is an amazing place to be: Harvard and, for that matter, the greater Boston area," Fitzsimmons said.

For Asian American applicants, Fitzsimmons said, "a 14 percent jump in one year is a lot. So, there's certainly, clearly interest in Harvard among Asian American families."

Continuing an [upward trend](#) in students interested in STEM concentrations over the past several years, this year's pool saw a 19.7 percent increase in prospective students who reported they were interested in studying computer science on their applications.

“There’s a lot of excitement out there about technology, computer science, engineering, and the applied sciences, generally,” Fitzsimmons said. “Given that, and given the changes that have taken place here it’s no wonder, in a lot of ways, there’s been such an increase.”

Geographic diversity in the applicant pool increased as well. There were greater numbers of applications from each region of the United States, with significant jumps in applications coming from the South. Applications from international students remained at roughly the same level.

With a record number of applications—and after the College’s [announcement](#) that it will accept fewer students to its regular decision pool for the Class of 2022—applicants may face a particularly competitive admissions process this year. Nine hundred sixty-four students were already [accepted](#) in December during the College’s early action round.

Fitzsimmons emphasized the combined quality and size of the applicant pool, and reiterated his office’s decision to admit fewer students to next year’s freshman class.

“We will be very conservative this year. We will be projecting a yield of somewhere in the mid-80s,” Fitzsimmons said.

Several of the nation’s other top universities saw their applicant pools similarly break records this year. Yale received a record 35,305 applications, an increase of 7.3 percent from last year, according to the Yale Daily News. The Brown Daily Herald reported that Brown received a record 35,368, showing an 8 percent increase. And Dartmouth College received 22,005 applications, a 9.8 percent increase and also a new record, according to the Dartmouth.

Fitzsimmons said these increases may be the result of similar financial aid programs at Harvard’s peer institutions. He said political and economic issues both in the United States and abroad may push families to look at universities with robust financial aid programs.

“In times of anxiety,” Fitzsimmons said, “You want to go to a college that has great financial aid.” The College will notify applicants of their admissions decisions on March 28. Admitted students will have until the national reply date of May 1 to accept or decline the offer.

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