

UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS UPDATE - Dec 2020



It's early December 2020 in the midst of a COVID impacted admission process. To date, we have received just under 3,000 first year applications for fall 2021, which is about where we expected to be. Anticipating this applicant pool may behave quite differently, we created weekly application targets of 70% of last year's actual applications. And that is exactly where we have been for the past six weeks.

For example, here are our application targets for this week:

Week Ending	2021 Stretch Goal	2021 70% Goal
Dec 4	3,795	2,657

We are primarily down in applications from Virginia. And across all admission plans.

The breakdown by Admission Plan:

Early Decision/November 1: -16%

Early Action/November 15: -23%

Regular/February 1: -28%

We are a little down and here is why.

From July-December 2019, Admissions welcomed 528 daily visitors to campus, 211 students attended the September open house, 149 attended the October open house, and 131 attended our November open house. Assuming one additional guest for each minimum this totals more than 2,000 guests face to face on campus.

At 2019 fall regional events, we met 25 students in Maryland, 63 students in Richmond, and 52 students in Norfolk, reviewing onsite applications for all but a handful. We met with 1,220 students at their high school for a visit last fall.

Looking ahead to spring, we will miss hosting 223 students plus their guests at a February 2021 open house in the Anderson Center. Like spring 2020, spring 2021 admitted student face to face events will be cancelled. We will miss more than 400 students between our March and April Destination UMW events along with the 50 on-the-spot deposits on those days. Last year, seniors had the opportunity to have engaged with UMW's people and campus face to face through February. We simply have not had the opportunity to engage this year's seniors face to face in the same way.

Getting Started with the Fall 2021 Entering First Year Class

To date, we've admitted just shy of 550 first years who have applied under Early Decision and Early Action. Often, high achieving students apply early and this group is no different. The current academic profile is a 3.9 GPA and a 1264 combined SAT. Keep in mind, that only 25% of our admits have presented scores for consideration. The majority of our applicants and admits this year will likely not provide standardized test scores for review. Additionally, we have extended admission to the Honors Program to 113 applicants.

Undergraduate Admissions Tactical Plan

Each year, we develop a tactical plan with specific strategies to meet new student enrollment targets. It starts by building prospect and applicant pools and ultimately works through the admit and enrollment stages through the first week of classes (add/drop) when much of our work with these students ends.

Here are the main objectives of our annual plan:

Objective 1: Diversify streams and implement effective student search strategy and lead generation tools to increase and cultivate prospects within undergraduate populations.

Objective 2: Maintain number of first year applications (6,000) for fall 2021.

Objective 3: Meet the first year enrollment target.

Objective 4: Recruit and enroll international students.

Objective 5: Develop an exceptional, engaging campus or virtual visit experience that highlight our distinctive features to recruit and enroll undergraduates.

Objective 6: Utilize tele-recruiting to strategically target and influence constituents in the application and enrollment process.

Objective 7: Increase the number of transfer (TR) prospects by 15% to 2000.

Objective 8: Increase the number of applications to transfer programs for the terms outlined in the specific strategies listed below.

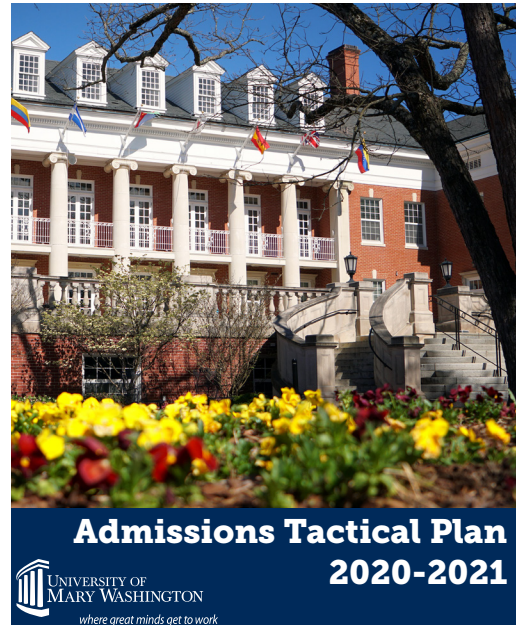
Objective 9: Meet the transfer enrollment targets

Objective 10: Utilize Ruffalo Noel Levitz predictive data to inform recruitment and yield activity

We review our plan weekly to determine progress toward targets and necessary pivots to the plan. In some cases, these involve small tweaks, and at other times, significant tactical changes.

Late application generation: Research indicates this class is delayed, which may mean greater opportunity for regular decision (later applications).

Yield focus: Every student counts. We will not have the opportunity again to host Destination UMW admitted student events to make our case in person. We will be virtually yielding the class of 2021 this year.



Spring 2021 Tracking

We cannot forget that while first years make up the largest portion of new student enrollment, maintaining or over performing in transfer and graduate populations both contribute to the bottom line. Currently, we anticipate spring enrollment will be similar to previous years. Including both first year and transfer populations, we anticipate we will have approximately 150 new students. This includes students who deferred fall 2020 enrollment for various COVID reasons as well as students who have specifically applied for spring starts.

Trends to Watch

The following majors generate the most applications by interest within our pool:

Program	2019 Applications	2020 Applications
Biology	449	389
Pre-Med	420	415
Psychology	424	527
Business	515	748
Education	282	353
Undecided	1,021	869

The Common Application received 8 percent fewer applications through Nov. 2 compared to last year, and 60 percent of its 921 members were reporting application declines. Applications from first-generation students and those eligible for application fee waivers were down 16 percent. Numerous studies have shown that first-generation, Black and Latinx students are not enrolling this year at the same levels as white and Asian students.

Angel B. Pérez, CEO of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, said it was important to look at FAFSA completion rates, which have been falling. "This will create serious challenges this winter when schools are running their econometric models to figure out how much money they need to disburse in financial aid to meet enrollment targets," he said. "A strategic focus on creating FAFSA completion campaigns will be critical to success this year."

From: https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2020/11/16/college-applications-are-decreasing?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=0f8df1e897-AdmissionsInsider_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbc04421-0f8df1e897-199675001&mc_cid=0f8df1e897&mc_eid=039889f0cf