

AMHERST

Fifty-Fifth Annual Report to Secondary Schools

A Note from the Dean on the Class of 2005

Bill Wilson, the legendary Dean of Admission at Amherst from 1946 until 1972, and for whom the Office of Admission here is named, began over half a century ago to report to the secondary school community on the composition of classes entering the College each fall. By presenting comprehensive and detailed data on each entering class, Bill hoped to allow secondary school college counselors and guidance officers to make reasonable inferences about individual students' places in the Amherst applicant pool. Because the sheer number of secondary schools represented in our applicant pool and class (there are 330 different secondary schools represented in the Class of 2005 alone!) has grown virtually exponentially over the last 50 years, we now distribute this report more broadly and make it available to all of our visitors. I am proud to have inherited this tradition from Bill and his successors and pleased to pen this, the *Fifty-Fifth Annual Report to Secondary Schools*. I do hope you find it helpful in your college planning.

We received 5,175 applications for the Class of 2005, the third largest number in the College's history. While the popular press has focused on the growth in applications to the nation's most competitive colleges and universities, an equally important phenomenon has gone largely unreported, and that is that the applicant pools are not only considerably larger but also considerably stronger. This phenomenon owes itself largely to self-selection among students applying to Amherst and similar institutions. I would estimate that fully 80% of our applicants could not only do the work here, but do the work exceedingly well. The process of selecting a class of 430, therefore, is a humbling and daunting one, indeed. There are evenings in February when I have to work quite hard at repressing my own high school credentials! Daunting and humbling as it is, however, I continue to be heartened and impressed by the care, sensitivity,

and sense of mission that my colleagues here bring to this task.

Last year, slightly more women than men entered Amherst. This year, we have experienced the opposite, with 225 men and 205 women. Fully 34% of the class are students of color, and an additional 4% are non-U.S. citizens. California has replaced Massachusetts as the second largest state in the entering class. Californians now account for 14% of the class. That should make our first snowfall interesting!

Equally arresting to me are the academic credentials of the entering class. Because average SAT scores, rightly or wrongly, tend to be the *lingua franca* of academic quality, or the closest thing we have to a common standard or means of comparison, I will quickly observe that the average composite SAT score for the Class of 2005 is 1402. I urge you, however, to dig more deeply into the table, which exhibits the range of SAT scores for applicants, admits, and matriculants. I hope those data reassure you that the admission process here is far from simplistic or crudely formulaic.

To my way of thinking, what lies behind, or perhaps accounts for, such statistics is more important. What has struck me thus far in my tenure are the habits of mind of Amherst students: They are curious, comfortable and even joyous in the world of ideas, and deeply committed to the values of a diverse community. Fascinating to me also is the degree to which they are deeply interested in the admission process itself – an interest that I suspect grows out of their knowledge that the content and context of their education in a small community such as ours grows as much out of myriad interactions with fellow students as out of more formal classroom instruction.

While there is much to celebrate in these data, I must say that I continue to be disheartened by several trends in the profession. Because a growing number of the nation's most competitive and prestigious colleges

and universities are taking close to or more than half of their class early, I see enormous pressure being exerted on young people to wrap up the college search process prematurely, and with the pressure has come a concomitant tendency to strategize rather than search. I find the narrow and shallow institutional self-interest that is driving this trend genuinely galling. So what does Amherst do? We simply pledge to take no more than 30% of our class early. I was pleased to learn that Stanford, too, has chosen to swim against the tide, and I applaud their position of taking no more than 25% of their class early. I am disturbed also by an increasing tendency to “leverage” financial aid or to use it as a part of a tuition income maximization model of greater or lesser sophistication. To see leveraging replacing a focus on access in the distribution of financial aid is certainly disheartening. Again, what is Amherst’s stance? We continue to practice need-blind admission and to meet the full need of all admitted students. In addition, for the last two years, we have eliminated the loan component of financial packages for low-income students and significantly reduced it for middle income students. Of course, it is far easier for a school with Amherst’s considerable

means to take the high road in awarding aid, but I do believe access has been one of Amherst’s core values (if not *the* core value) since its founding as a college for “indigent and pious” young men. You will have to make up your own minds as to our piety!

I hope that I or a member of my staff will have the opportunity to meet you or to renew conversations this year. To that end, allow me to introduce this year’s staff: Director of Admission/Senior Associate Dean **Katie Fretwell**; Senior Associate Director/Associate Dean **Kathy Mayberry**; Associate Deans **Michael Hawkins**, **Cate Zolkos**, and **Joy St. John**; Assistant Dean **Meg Caddeau**; Admission Fellows **Ruza Afram**, **Katie Famous**, and **Chris Kuipers**.

Finally, let me thank you for all past and future kindnesses. Should your travel bring you to Amherst, please do not hesitate to visit with us.



Tom Parker
Dean of Admission and Financial Aid

The Admission and Financial Aid Staff for 2001-02

Tom Parker, *Dean of Admission and Financial Aid*

Admission

Katharine Fretwell, *Director of Admission/
Senior Associate Dean*
Kathy Mayberry, *Senior Associate Director/
Associate Dean*
Michael Hawkins, *Associate Dean*
Joy St. John, *Associate Dean*
Cate Zolkos, *Associate Dean*
Meg Caddeau, *Assistant Dean*
Ruza Afram, *Admission Fellow*
Katie Famous, *Admission Fellow*
Chris Kuipers, *Admission Fellow*
Nancy Ratner, *Admission Counselor*

Constance Broughear, *Admission
Processing Assistant*
Mary Carlson, *Staff Assistant*
Jean Clark O’Brien, *Information
Systems Manager*

Melissa Makepeace O’Neil, *Admission
Information Coordinator*
Cindy Dumais-Holubowich, *Campus
Visit Coordinator*
Susan Geissler, *Staff Assistant*
Flora Josephs, *Administrative Assistant to the
Dean of Admission and Financial Aid*
Linda Loven, *Reference Secretary*
Linda Rodriguez, *Admission Assistant*
Judith Trzcienski, *Data Entry Coordinator*

Financial Aid

Joe Paul Case, *Director of Financial Aid*
Kathleen Gentile, *Associate Dean*
Michael Ellison, *Assistant Dean*
Pamela Crouse, *Department Secretary*
Joan Millett, *Financial Aid Counselor*

First-Year Students in the Class of 2005

September 17, 2001

A Snapshot

Student Background Profile

52% are men; 48% women
44% are receiving scholarship and grant aid
34% indicated they are students of color
(148 students)
12% Asian-American (51 students)
10% African-American (41 students)
8% Latino/a (36 students)
5% multi-ethnic (20 students)
14% are first-generation college students
10% are children of alumni
4% are non-US citizens
12% have indicated that English is not their
first language
Students hail from 40 states, DC, and 14 countries

Student Academic Profile

83% finished in the top 10% of their class
(of those with reported rank)
18% are valedictorians
(of those with reported rank)
35% plan to pursue science or math
23% plan to pursue humanities
26% plan to pursue social sciences
6% plan to pursue arts or foreign language
30% of the class were admitted through
Early Decision
Mean SAT scores: verbal 705, math 697
Mean ACT score: 29
Secondary schools represented in the class: 330

	Men	Women	Total
Applied	2432 (47%)	2743 (53%)	5175
Accepted	466 (48%)	507 (52%)	973
Enrolled	225 (52%)	205 (48%)	430

For the Class of 2005, 317 students applied under the Early Decision option; 131 students were offered admission.

Statistics for the Past Decade

Year	Number of Applicants	Number of Students Accepted	Number of Students Enrolled
1991	4408	1080 (25%)	439 (41%)
1992	4572	952 (21%)	395 (42%)
1993	4302	991 (23%)	423 (43%)
1994	4823	976 (20%)	418 (43%)
1995	4836	943 (19%)	422 (45%)
1996	4682	922 (20%)	431 (47%)
1997	5210	1039 (20%)	434 (42%)
1998	4491	1030 (23%)	440 (43%)
1999	5194	997 (19%)	428 (43%)
2000	5352	1041 (19%)	434 (42%)
2001	5175	973 (19%)	430 (44%)

Secondary School Representation

	Public	Private	Parochial	Other
Applied	3197 (62%)	1593 (31%)	371 (7%)	14 (%)
Accepted	597 (61%)	327 (34%)	46 (5%)	3 (%)
Enrolled	256 (60%)	152 (35%)	22 (5%)	0
Number of Schools Represented in the Class	212 (64%)	99 (30%)	19 (6%)	0

Rank in Class

	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
Top 10th	1890 (75%)	484 (89%)	176 (83%)
Second 10th	370 (15%)	41 (8%)	25 (12%)
Third 10th	133 (5%)	10 (2%)	5 (2%)
Top 31-50th	97 (3%)	8 (1%)	5 (2%)
Total Number of Ranked Students	2526 (49%)	544 (56%)	211 (49%)
Total Number of Unranked Students	2649 (51%)	429 (44%)	219 (51%)

Distribution of College Board SAT I Scores

VERBAL	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
750-800	1092	404	139 (33%)
700-749	1215	243	117 (28%)
650-699	1154	168	84 (20%)
600-649	719	93	48 (11%)
550-599	390	39	27 (6%)
500-549	163	9	6 (1%)
450-499	64	1	1 (%)
200-449	42	0	0
Mean	682	719	705
Mid 50%		670-770	660-760
MATH	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
750-800	888	303	109 (26%)
700-749	1368	304	133 (32%)
650-699	1279	180	97 (23%)
600-649	744	100	46 (11%)
550-599	343	54	29 (7%)
500-549	139	12	6 (1%)
450-499	53	3	1 (%)
200-449	25	1	1 (%)
Mean	681	707	697
Mid 50%		660-760	660-750

Geographical Distribution of Those Matriculating

New York	99	Washington	4	Rhode Island	1
California	59	Alabama	3	Tennessee	1
Massachusetts	53	Georgia	3	Utah	1
Connecticut	23	Michigan	3	Total US	411
New Jersey	23	Wisconsin	3	International	19
Pennsylvania	16	Hawaii	2		
Maryland	13	Kentucky	2		
Virginia	13	Louisiana	2	International Students	4%
Florida	12	Oregon	2	New England	22%
Minnesota	10	South Carolina	2	Middle Atlantic	36%
Illinois	9	Indiana	1	Midwest	8%
Maine	9	Kansas	1	South-Southeast	10%
Ohio	7	Montana	1	West-Southwest	19%
District of Columbia	5	Nebraska	1	Total	100%
Texas	5	New Mexico	1		
Vermont	5	Nevada	1		
Colorado	4	Oklahoma	1		
North Carolina	4	Puerto Rico, Possessions,			
New Hampshire	4	APO	1		

Financial Aid

	2001 (Class of 2005)	2000 (Class of 2004)
Accepted students who applied for scholarship and grant aid	617 (64%)	621 (59%)
Accepted students who demonstrated need for scholarship and grant aid	408	413
Of those, accepted students awarded scholarship and grant aid	408	413
Total amount offered	\$7,693,838	\$8,677,490
Average amount offered	\$21,344	\$21,011
Matriculating students who received scholarship and grant aid	191	211
Total amount	\$4,482,938	\$4,787,424
Average amount	\$23,470	\$22,689
Percent of class receiving scholarship and grant aid	44%	48%

Fall Transfer Students

	Men	Women	Total
Applied	87 (47%)	99 (53%)	186
Accepted	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	6
Enrolled	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5

Three transfer students enrolled in the Spring of 2001; five transfer students enrolled in the Fall of 2000.

Senior Major Distribution for the Class of 2001

Single Majors					
American Studies	7	Classics and Philosophy	1	History and Political Science	1
Anthropology	8	Computer Science and Economics	5	History and Psychology	1
Asian Languages and Civilizations	8	Computer Science and Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought	1	History and Religion	1
Biology	27	Computer Science and Mathematics	1	History and Sociology	1
Black Studies	2	Computer Science and Music	1	Interdisciplinary Studies and Music	1
Chemistry	6	Computer Science and Neuroscience	1	Interdisciplinary Studies and Political Science	1
Classics	3	Computer Science and Physics	3	Interdisciplinary Studies and Russian	1
Computer Science	4	Computer Science and Political Science	1	Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought and Philosophy	1
Economics	24	Computer Science and Psychology	1	Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought and Political Science	1
English	52	Economics and English	3	Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought and Spanish	3
European Studies	1	Economics and European Studies	1	Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought and Women's & Gender Studies	1
Fine Arts	9	Economics and Fine Arts	1	Mathematics and Physics	1
French	3	Economics and French	3	Mathematics and Theater & Dance	1
Geology	8	Economics and Geology	1	Music and Psychology	1
German	1	Economics and History	4	Philosophy and Physics	1
History	20	Economics and Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought	2	Philosophy and Religion	1
Interdisciplinary Studies	5	Economics and Music	1	Political Science and Russian	1
Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought	22	Economics and Physics	1	Political Science and Spanish	3
Mathematics	3	Economics and Political Science	2	Political Science and Women's & Gender Studies	1
Music	5	Economics and Psychology	2	Psychology and Religion	1
Neuroscience	13	Economics and Sociology	1	Psychology and Sociology	1
Philosophy	6	Economics and Spanish	6	Sociology and Spanish	1
Physics	2	English and Biology	1	Total Double Majors	133
Political Science	22	English and Classics	1	Triple Majors	
Psychology	32	English and Fine Arts	2	European Studies, Fine Arts and French	1
Religion	4	English and French	3	French, Interdisciplinary and Philosophy	1
Sociology	8	English and Music	2	Computer Science, Music and Physics	1
Spanish	6	English and Philosophy	1	Mathematics, Physics and Theater & Dance	1
Theater & Dance	4	English and Political Science	1	Total Triple Majors	4
Women's & Gender Studies	2	English and Psychology	3	Total	
Total Single Majors	317	English and Religion	1	Class of 2001 Graduates	454
Double Majors		English and Russian	1		
Anthropology and English	1	English and Spanish	2		
Anthropology and Fine Arts	1	English and Theater & Dance	4		
Anthropology and Sociology	1	Fine Arts and History	1		
Anthropology and Spanish	2	Fine Arts and Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought	1		
Anthropology and Theater & Dance	1	Fine Arts and Psychology	1		
Asian Languages & Civilizations and Fine Arts	1	Fine Arts and Religion	1		
Asian Languages & Civilizations and Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought	1	Fine Arts and History	2		
Asian Languages & Civilizations and Political Science	1	French and Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought	1		
Biology and Fine Arts	1	French and Political Science	7		
Biology and Philosophy	1	French and Psychology	2		
Black Studies and Political Science	1	French and Spanish	1		
Chemistry and Economics	1	French and Theater & Dance	1		
Chemistry and English	1	German and Political Science	1		
Chemistry and French	1	History and Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought	1		
Chemistry and Neuroscience	1	History and Mathematics	1		
Chemistry and Psychology	1	History and Neuroscience	1		
Chemistry and Spanish	1				
Classics and Economics	1				
Classics and English	1				

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