

# AMHERST

## *Fifty-Eighth Annual Report to Secondary Schools*

### A Note from the Dean on the Class of 2008

Amherst has, for 58 years, presented comprehensive and detailed data on our applicant, accept and matriculant pool with the hope that secondary school guidance counselors can make reasonable inferences about individual students' places in Amherst's applicant pool. Additionally, we share that report with families, students, our alumni and the media.

We received 5,489 applications for the Class of 2008, accepted 1,136, and matriculated 428. Women account for 47 percent of the class, fully 35 percent are students of color, and 6 percent are non-U.S. citizens. Our students hail from 347 different secondary schools, and two were home schooled.

The academic credentials of the entering class are arresting, indeed. Because average SAT and ACT 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 2008 is 1443, and the average composite ACT score is 31. 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. In fact, I believe that the Admission Committee here truly earns its money when it is able to recognize academic potential that is not necessarily reflected in standardized testing.

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 five-year tenure here are the habits of mind of Amherst students: They are curious, comfortable, even exhilarated in the world of ideas, remarkably aware of the world around them, 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 decision or early action, I see enormous pressure being exerted on young people to conclude the college search process prematurely, and with that pressure has come a concomitant tendency to strategize rather than search. This trend commingles with a bewildering and contradictory array of early decision or early action plans, the net effect of which is to make a complex process ever more confusing. I find the narrow and shallow institutional self-interest that is driving these trends genuinely galling. So what does Amherst do? We simply pledge to take no more than 30 percent of our 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 genuinely “need blind” admission and to meet the full need of all admitted students. In addition, for the last five years, we have eliminated the loan component of financial aid 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.

Before introducing the admission staff here at Amherst, I would like to share a sort of parable with you and ask that you remind yourselves of its lesson as you make your way through this process. About a decade ago, while working at a different but equally competitive college, I received a telephone call from a parent whom I had counseled through a long and discouraging wait list process. She asked if I remembered her, and I did. In fact, I remembered her and her son quite well, as it had been one of those situations where I had actively advocated and rooted for her son as the Admission Committee made its way through a limited number of spaces available on our wait list. I naturally asked her how her son had done and whether he had been happy at the college he ultimately attended. She replied that he had had a wonderful experience and was now at medical school. I was, of course, not at all surprised, as it was a college all three of my own children actively investigated

and one that I had come to admire. She then got to the point of the call. She hoped that I could find time to interview her daughter. As it turned out, I was able to honor her request. She thanked me, and in words that haunt me still, concluded by saying that she did "not want to make the same mistake that she had made with her son." It took me a moment to realize the import of her words, and when I did, I realized how sad and perverse this process can become. Apparently, her son's admission experience was a "mistake" not because his college experience hadn't been both enriching and successful by any definition imaginable, but because the college he attended was insufficiently prestigious.

I share this story often when I speak with parents throughout this country and have discovered that its lesson, which seems to me to be entirely self-evident, on occasion needs to be spelled out more clearly, and I do that now. Our children or our students are not trophies to be displayed to admiring neighbors, nor are they expensive, late model automobiles to be parked conspicuously for all to see. Rather, they are living, breathing human beings going through a perplexing process at a vulnerable time in their young lives, and I ask that you remind yourselves of that from time to time. I can assure you that I and my staff will be reminding ourselves as well.

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 **Demisha Lee**; Assistant Dean **Meg Caddeau**; Admission Fellows **Eli Bromberg**, **John Quigley** and **Julian Michael**.

Finally, and as always, 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*

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## The Admission and Financial Aid Staff for 2004-05

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Tom Parker, *Dean of Admission and Financial Aid*

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### Admission

Katharine Fretwell, *Director of Admission/  
Senior Associate Dean*

Kathy Mayberry, *Senior Associate Director/  
Associate Dean*

Michael Hawkins, *Associate Dean*

Demisha Lee, *Associate Dean*

Cate Zolkos, *Associate Dean*

Meg Caddeau, *Assistant Dean*

Eli Bromberg, *Admission Fellow*

Julian Michael, *Admission Fellow*

John Quigley, *Admission Fellow*

Nancy Ratner, *Admission Counselor*

Constance Broughear, *Admission  
Processing Assistant*

Mary Carlson, *Staff Assistant*

Jean Clark, *Director of Admission Information  
Systems*

Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil, *Admission  
Information Coordinator*

Donna Eaton, *Campus Visit Coordinator*

Susan Geissler, *Staff Assistant*

Flora Chamlin, *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, *Dean/Director*

Kathleen Gentile, *Senior Associate Dean*

Michael Ellison, *Associate Dean of Admission  
and Financial Aid*

Joan Millett, *Financial Aid Counselor*

Nancy Robinson, *Student Employment  
Coordinator*

Pamela Guyott, *Department Secretary*

Kelly Martula, *Student Records Assistant*

## First-Year Students in the Class of 2008

September 15, 2004

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### A Snapshot

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#### Student Background Profile

53% are men; 47% women  
44% are receiving scholarship and grant aid  
35% indicated they are students of color  
(149 students)  
16% Asian-American (67 students)  
5% African-American (22 students)  
7% Latino/a (32 students)  
< 1% Native American (2 students)  
6% multi-ethnic (26 students)  
11% are first-generation college students  
12% are children of alumni  
6% are non-U.S. citizens  
Students hail from 40 states, D.C., and 14 countries

#### Student Academic Profile

87% finished in the top 10% of their class  
(of those with reported rank)  
19% are valedictorians  
(of those with reported rank)  
30% were admitted through Early Decision  
Mean SAT scores: verbal 722, math 721  
Mean ACT score: 31  
Secondary schools represented in the class: 349

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	Men	Women	Total
Applied	2538 (46%)	2951 (54%)	5489
Accepted	547 (48%)	589 (52%)	1136
Enrolled	227 (53%)	201 (47%)	428

For the Class of 2008, 336 students applied under the Early Decision option; 127 students were enrolled.

### Statistics for the Past Decade

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Year	Number of Applicants	Number of Students Accepted	Number of Students Enrolled
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%)
2002	5238	957 (18%)	412 (43%)
2003	5631	1001 (18%)	413 (41%)
<b>2004</b>	<b>5489</b>	<b>1136 (21%)</b>	<b>428 (38%)</b>

### Rank in Class

	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
Top 10th	2197 (77%)	617 (90%)	200 (87%)
Second 10th	375 (13%)	44 (6%)	20 (9%)
Third 10th	156 (5%)	12 (2%)	4 (2%)
Top 31st-50th	102 (4%)	13 (2%)	5 (2%)
Total Number of Ranked Students	2852 (52%)	686 (60%)	229 (54%)
Total Number of Unranked Students	2637 (48%)	450 (40%)	199 (46%)

### Distribution of College Board SAT I Scores

VERBAL	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
750-800	1351 (31%)	496 (50%)	159 (42%)
700-749	1158 (26%)	255 (25%)	106 (28%)
650-699	880 (20%)	143 (14%)	66 (17%)
600-649	570 (13%)	85 (8%)	43 (11%)
550-599	263 (6%)	21 (2%)	9 (2%)
500-549	112 (3%)	2 (%)	0 (%)
450-499	44 (1%)	0 (%)	0 (%)
200-449	25 (1%)	0 (%)	0 (%)
Mean	697	731	722
Mid 50%	650-760	690-780	680-770
MATH	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
750-800	1116 (25%)	454 (45%)	144 (38%)
700-749	1358 (31%)	283 (28%)	121 (32%)
650-699	992 (23%)	142 (14%)	70 (18%)
600-649	542 (12%)	88 (9%)	38 (10%)
550-599	247 (6%)	31 (3%)	8 (2%)
500-549	94 (2%)	3 (%)	1 (%)
450-499	40 (1%)	0 (%)	1 (%)
200-449	14 (%)	0 (%)	0 (%)
Mean	696	727	721
Mid 50%	650-750	690-780	680-780

### Distribution of ACT Scores

ACT Composite	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
34-36	110 (15%)	52 (36%)	9 (19%)
30-33	337 (44%)	59 (41%)	26 (55%)
24-29	268 (35%)	32 (22%)	11 (23%)
21-23	31 (4%)	2 (1%)	1 (2%)
Below 21	12 (2%)	0 (%)	0 (%)
Mean	30	32	31
Mid 50%	28-32	30-35	30-33

### Secondary School Representation

	Public	Private	Parochial	Home School
Applied	3587 (65%)	1506 (27%)	375 (7%)	21 (%)
Accepted	726 (64%)	345 (30%)	61 (5%)	4 (%)
Enrolled	254 (59%)	143 (33%)	29 (7%)	2 (%)
Number of Schools Represented in the class	217 (62%)	103 (30%)	27 (8%)	2 (%)

### Geographical Distribution of Those Matriculating

New York	93	New Hampshire	5	Idaho	2
Massachusetts	47	Minnesota	5	Alaska	2
California	37	Michigan	5	West Virginia	1
New Jersey	22	Wisconsin	4	Oregon	1
Connecticut	22	Georgia	4	Montana	1
Florida	18	South Carolina	3	Mississippi	1
Maryland	17	North Carolina	3	Iowa	1
Illinois	17	Hawaii	3	Delaware	1
Pennsylvania	12	D.C.	3	Arizona	1
Maine	9	Vermont	2		
Virginia	8	Tennessee	2	International Students	7%
Texas	8	Rhode Island	2	New England	20%
Colorado	8	New Mexico	2	Middle Atlantic	35%
Washington	6	Missouri	2	Midwest	11%
Ohio	6	Louisiana	2	South-Southeast	10%
Indiana	6	Kentucky	2	West-Southwest	17%

### Financial Aid

	2004 (Class of 2008)	2003 (Class of 2007)
Accepted students who applied for scholarship and grant aid	766 (67%)	638 (63%)
Accepted students who demonstrated need for scholarship and grant aid	391	397
Of those, accepted students awarded scholarship and grant aid	391	397
Total amount offered	\$10,643,928	\$9,070,300
Average amount offered	\$27,222	\$22,847
Matriculating students who received scholarship and grant aid	190	204
Total amount	\$5,106,282	\$4,970,700
Average amount	\$26,785	\$24,366
Percent of class receiving scholarship and grant aid	44%	49%

### Fall Transfer Students

	Men	Women	Total
Applied	86 (50%)	87 (50%)	173
Accepted	17 (52%)	16 (48%)	33
Enrolled	10 (67%)	5 (33%)	15

Six transfer students enrolled in the spring of 2004; 11 transfer students enrolled in the fall of 2003.

## Senior Major Distribution for the Class of 2004

<b>Single Majors</b>		Chemistry and Russian	1	German and Theater & Dance	1
American Studies	3	Chemistry and Spanish	1	Greek and Russian	1
Anthropology	6	Classics and Religion	1	History and Law, Juris- prudence & Social Thought	1
Asian Languages & Civilizations	6	Computer Science and Economics	3	History and Philosophy	1
Biology	17	Computer Science and Fine Arts	1	History and Political Science	2
Black Studies	2	Computer Science and Mathematics	2	History and Psychology	1
Chemistry	7	Computer Science and Philosophy	1	Interdisciplinary and Law, Juris- prudence & Social Thought	1
Classics	3	Computer Science and Physics	1	Latin and Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought	1
Computer Science	6	Computer Science and Political Science	1	Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought and Political Science	3
Economics	33	Computer Science and Psychology	1	Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought and Psychology	3
English	31	Computer Science and Theater & Dance	2	Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought and Spanish	4
Fine Arts	7	Economics and English	1	Mathematics and Music	1
French	3	Economics and Fine Arts	1	Mathematics and Physics	2
Geology	7	Economics and French	3	Music and Philosophy	1
German	1	Economics and History	1	Music and Political Science	1
History	28	Economics and Law, Juris- prudence & Social Thought	4	Music and Russian	1
Interdisciplinary	1	Economics and Mathematics	1	Philosophy and Physics	1
Latin	1	Economics and Philosophy	1	Political Science and Psychology	1
Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought	26	Economics and Political Science	4	Political Science and Spanish	4
Mathematics	4	Economics and Psychology	2	Psychology and Spanish	2
Music	4	Economics and Spanish	1	Religion and Spanish	1
Neuroscience	8	Economics and Women's & Gender Studies	1	Sociology and Spanish	1
Philosophy	8	English and Fine Arts	3	<b>Total Double Majors</b>	<b>130</b>
Physics	3	English and French	2	<b>Triple Majors</b>	
Political Science	24	English and Geology	2	Black Studies, Political Science and Spanish	1
Psychology	34	English and Greek	1	Chemistry, Independent Scholar and Neuroscience	1
Religion	2	English and History	1	English, Mathematics and Philosophy	1
Russian	3	English and Interdisciplinary	2	<b>Total Triple Majors</b>	<b>3</b>
Sociology	5	English and Music	1	<b>Total</b>	
Spanish	6	English and Philosophy	2	<b>Class of 2004 Graduates</b>	<b>428</b>
Theater & Dance	1	English and Psychology	4		
Women's & Gender Studies	5	English and Religion	2		
<b>Total Single Majors</b>	<b>295</b>	English and Sociology	1		
<b>Double Majors</b>		English and Spanish	3		
American Studies and Economics	1	English and Theater & Dance	2		
American Studies and Spanish	1	English and Women's & Gender Studies	1		
Anthropology and English	1	Fine Arts and French	1		
Anthropology and French	1	Fine Arts and Political Science	1		
Anthropology and Geology	1	Fine Arts and Psychology	1		
Anthropology and Psychology	1	French and History	4		
Anthropology and Sociology	1	French and Interdisciplinary	1		
Asian Languages & Civilizations and Economics	1	French and Law, Juris- prudence & Social Thought	1		
Astronomy and Physics	1	French and Political Science	1		
Biology and Fine Arts	1	French and Psychology	2		
Biology and Geology	1	German and History	1		
Biology and Physics	1	German and Spanish	1		
Biology and Psychology	1				
Black Studies and Psychology	1				
Chemistry and Fine Arts	1				
Chemistry and Music	1				
Chemistry and Neuroscience	1				

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