

A Note from the Dean on the Class of 2010

My last two reports to secondary schools began with what I termed admission parables, the first being “the parable of the wait listed mother” and the second, “the parable of the college president and the twins.” I had planned to continue that tradition this year, but a recent development in the small but important world of highly selective admission is certainly worthy of comment and obligates me to defer the telling of that third parable until next year.

Harvard, Princeton and the University of Virginia have recently announced — with much media fanfare — that they will be abandoning their Early Decision or Early Action programs beginning with the Class of 2012. The shared impetus for taking this action was the contention that early programs depressed the socio-economic composition of entering classes and exacerbated the tremendous but disproportionate anxiety that attends the entire admission process. I applaud their decision. Having said that, I must take issue with the rationale. Early programs in and of themselves do not depress socio-economic diversity, nor do they further contribute to the general anxiety. What does accomplish these things is the abuse of early programs, and by abuse I mean accepting half or more of a class early and implicitly or explicitly promulgating the impression that applying early is a distinct advantage in the admission process.

Amherst has for many years refused to take more than 30% of its class early. In fact, we took only 28% of the Class of 2010 early. Nor do we actively promote our early program. Quite the contrary, we explicitly counsel parents and students to be cautious about applying early to Amherst. In short, we ask them to fall in love with Amherst rather than to strategize. We have formally simulated taking more than 30% of our class early, and it is clear from our findings that such action would depress the socio-economic diversity of our entering classes. We will, therefore, continue with our self-imposed cap of 30%. Since 20% of the Class of 2010 are Pell Grant recipients or Pell eligible, we are confident that we have achieved proper balance with our Early Decision Program.

There is a more subtle but perhaps more important reason, however, to celebrate Harvard, Princeton and the University of Virginia’s decision. All three could well experience some decrease in perceived (and I underline perceived) selectivity and therefore suffer in the truly degrading race to turn down ever more students. Again, I applaud their courage and leadership. I have often mused that the only logical next step in this silly way of measuring our success is for one or another of the most highly compet-

itive colleges or universities to confess in a slightly amended version of MacDuff’s feigned declaration to Malcolm in Macbeth that, “there is no bottom to the cistern of [our] lust [for selectivity],” and consequently to accept no students at all, declare victory, and force, in this Mad Hatter scenario, a rival institution the following year to turn down not only all their applicants, but also some number that hadn’t even applied! To be serious, though, selectivity rates do not inhabit classrooms or dormitories — students do. It is my hope that Harvard, Princeton and the University of Virginia’s decision will begin to undermine the enshrinement of the admit rate as THE key admission criterion and usher in a much more dignified, insightful and substantive discussion about the point or purpose of highly selective admission. In short, let’s all stop talking about how many students we turn down and start talking about whom we admit and why we admit them and how such decisions are part of a larger and more inspiring educational vision.

In addition to my growing impatience with the fetishizing of admit rates, I continue to be disturbed 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, which almost inevitably results in staggering debt levels for students. 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 seven 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.

Enough of my ranting. Now on to the Class of 2010 at Amherst. We received 6,142 applications for the Class of 2010, the second largest number the college has ever received: We accepted 1,144 and matriculated 433. Women account for 51% of the class, fully 39% are students of color, and 6% are non-U.S. citizens. Our students hail from 361 different secondary schools, and two were home schooled.

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 2010 is 1417, and the average composite ACT score is 31. The academic credentials cited above are certainly arresting, but I urge you 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 is at its best 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 seven-year tenure here are the habits of mind of Amherst students: They are curious, comfortable, even buoyant 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.

I hope that I or a member of my staff will have the op-

portunity to meet you or to renew conversations on the road. 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, Demisha Lee, Joy St. John and Cate Zolkos; Assistant Deans Eli Bromberg, Nancy Ratner and Darren Reaume; Senior Admission Fellow John Quigley; Admission Fellows Tiffani Hooper and Alexandra Hurd; and Admission Counselor Elaine Brighty.

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

The Admission and Financial Aid Staff for 2006-07

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*
Demisha Lee, *Associate Dean*
Joy St. John, *Associate Dean*
Cate Zolkos, *Associate Dean*
Eli Bromberg, *Assistant Dean*
Nancy Ratner, *Assistant Dean*
Darren Reaume, *Assistant Dean*
John Quigley, *Senior Admission Fellow*
Tiffani Hooper, *Admission Fellow*
Alexandra Hurd, *Admission Fellow*
Elaine Brighty, *Admission Counselor*
Susan Brulotte, *Admission Processing Assistant*
Mary Carsten, *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, *Secretary to the Dean of Admission
and Financial Aid*
Debbie Fuller, *Reference Secretary*
Linda Rodriguez, *Admission Assistant*
Judith Trzecienski, *Data Entry Coordinator*

Financial Aid

Joe Paul Case, *Dean/Director*
Kathleen Gentile, *Senior Associate Dean*
Michael Ellison, *Associate Dean of Admission
and Financial Aid*
Michael Albano, *Financial Aid Counselor*
Nancy Robinson, *Student Employment
Coordinator*
Pamela Guyott, *Department Secretary*
Kelly Martula, *Student Records Assistant*

First-Year Students in the Class of 2010

September 14, 2006 } A Snapshot

Student Background Profile

49% are men; 51% women
 52% are receiving scholarship and grant aid
 39% indicated they are students of color
 (167 students)
 11% Asian-American (46 students)
 10% African-American (43 students)
 12% Latino/a (52 students)
 6% multi-ethnic (26 students)
 16% are first-generation college students
 13% are children of alumni
 6% are non-U.S. citizens
 Students hail from 38 states, D.C., 19 countries

Student Academic Profile

86% finished in the top 10% of their class
 (of those with reported rank)
 18% are valedictorians
 (of those with reported rank)
 28% were admitted through Early Decision
 Mean SAT scores: verbal 711, math 706
 Mean ACT score: 31
 Secondary schools represented in the class: 363

	Men	Women	Total
Applied	2,763 (45%)	3,379 (55%)	6,142
Accepted	534 (47%)	610 (53%)	1,144
Enrolled	212 (49%)	221 (51%)	433

For the Class of 2010, 393 students applied under the Early Decision option; 123 students enrolled.

Statistics for the Past Decade

Year	Number of Applicants	Number of Students Accepted	Number of Students Enrolled
1996	4,682	922 (20%)	431 (47%)
1997	5,210	1,039 (20%)	434 (42%)
1998	4,491	1,030 (23%)	440 (43%)
1999	5,194	997 (19%)	428 (43%)
2000	5,352	1,041 (19%)	434 (42%)
2001	5,175	973 (19%)	430 (44%)
2002	5,238	957 (18%)	412 (43%)
2003	5,631	1,001 (18%)	413 (41%)
2004	5,489	1,136 (21%)	428 (38%)
2005	6,281	1,176 (19%)	431 (37%)
2006	6,142	1,144 (19%)	433 (38%)

Rank in Class

	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
Top 10th	2,322 (75%)	564 (90%)	217 (86%)
Second 10th	435 (14%)	41 (7%)	26 (10%)
Third 10th	186 (6%)	13 (2%)	5 (2%)
Top 31st-50th	113 (4%)	8 (1%)	3 (1%)
Total Number of Ranked Students	3,093 (50%)	629 (55%)	252 (58%)
Total Number of Unranked Students	3,049 (50%)	513 (45%)	181 (42%)

Distribution of College Board SAT I Scores

VERBAL	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
750-800	1,445 (30%)	436 (45%)	135 (38%)
700-749	1,176 (24%)	220 (23%)	84 (23%)
650-699	1,056 (22%)	171 (18%)	65 (18%)
600-649	637 (13%)	96 (10%)	52 (14%)
550-599	304 (6%)	34 (3%)	16 (4%)
500-549	148 (3%)	15 (2%)	8 (2%)
450-499	77 (2%)	0 (%)	0 (%)
200-449	46 (1%)	0 (%)	0 (%)
Mean	693	723	711
Mid 50%	650-750	680-790	670-770

MATH	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
750-800	1,291 (26%)	380 (39%)	120 (33%)
700-749	1,364 (28%)	254 (26%)	105 (29%)
650-699	1,102 (23%)	163 (17%)	68 (19%)
600-649	613 (13%)	109 (11%)	38 (11%)
550-599	292 (6%)	52 (5%)	18 (5%)
500-549	142 (3%)	10 (1%)	7 (2%)
450-499	51 (1%)	4 (%)	4 (1%)
200-449	34 (1%)	0 (%)	0 (%)
Mean	693	714	706
Mid 50%	650-750	670-780	660-760

Writing	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
750-800	1,112 (23%)	350 (37%)	98 (29%)
700-749	1,366 (29%)	270 (29%)	109 (32%)
650-699	1,072 (22%)	171 (18%)	71 (21%)
600-649	654 (14%)	90 (10%)	39 (12%)
550-599	334 (7%)	41 (4%)	14 (4%)
500-549	146 (3%)	12 (1%)	6 (2%)
450-499	61 (1%)	2 (%)	2 (1%)
200-449	36 (1%)	0 (%)	0 (%)
Mean	687	715	705
Mid 50%	640-740	670-770	660-760

Distribution of ACT Scores

ACT Composite	Applied	Accepted	Enrolled
34-36	157 (16%)	57 (32%)	16 (21%)
30-33	439 (45%)	72 (40%)	32 (43%)
24-29	331 (34%)	46 (26%)	24 (32%)
21-23	31 (3%)	3 (2%)	2 (3%)
Below 21	26 (3%)	1 (%)	1 (1%)
Mean	30	31	31
Mid 50%	28-33	29-34	28-33

Secondary School Representation

	Public	Private	Parochial	Home School
Applied	4,058 (66%)	1,656 (27%)	403 (7%)	23 (1%)
Accepted	706 (62%)	355 (31%)	80 (7%)	3 (%)
Enrolled	252 (58%)	144 (33%)	35 (8%)	2 (%)
Number of Schools Represented in the class	221	109	31	2

Geographical Distribution of Those Matriculating

Alabama	1	Maryland	12	South Carolina	1
Alaska	1	Massachusetts	43	Tennessee	2
Arizona	1	Michigan	4	Texas	15
California	39	Minnesota	9	Vermont	3
Colorado	7	Missouri	5	Virginia	13
Connecticut	27	Montana	1	Washington	8
DC	1	Nebraska	1	Wisconsin	5
Florida	26	New Hampshire	2		
Georgia	3	New Jersey	31		
Hawaii	1	New Mexico	1		
Illinois	16	New York	79	New England	19%
Indiana	1	North Carolina	2	Mid-Atlantic	32%
Iowa	1	Ohio	12	Midwest	12%
Kentucky	3	Oregon	4	South-Southeast	12%
Louisiana	2	Pennsylvania	16	West-Southwest	18%
Maine	5	Rhode Island	3	International	6%

Financial Aid

	2006 Class of 2010	2005 Class of 2009	2004 Class of 2008
Accepted students who applied for scholarship and grant aid	795 (70%)	792 (67%)	761 (68%)
Accepted students who demonstrated need for scholarship and grant aid	501	501	469
Of those, accepted students awarded scholarship and grant aid	501	501	469
Total amount offered	\$15,362,546	\$13,927,206	\$11,479,267
Average amount offered	\$30,664	\$27,799	\$24,476
Matriculating students who received scholarship and grant aid	225	203	180
Total amount	\$7,400,623	\$5,637,045	\$4,732,534
Average amount	\$32,892	\$27,769	\$26,438
Percent of class receiving scholarship and grant aid	52%	47%	43%

Fall Transfer Students

	Men	Women	Total
Applied	81 (50%)	81 (50%)	162
Accepted	15 (54%)	13 (46%)	28
Enrolled	9 (53%)	8 (47%)	17

Eight transfer students enrolled in the spring of 2006; 11 transfer students enrolled in the fall of 2005.

Senior Major Distribution for the Class of 2006

Single Majors		Black Studies and Women's &		Independent Scholar and	
American Studies	4	Gender Studies	1	Political Science	1
Anthropology	7	Chemistry and German	1	Interdisciplinary and Political	
Asian Languages/Civilizations	5	Chemistry and Law, Jurisprudence		Science	2
Biology	26	& Social Thought	1	Latin and Law, Jurisprudence	
Black Studies	3	Chemistry and Spanish	2	& Social Thought	1
Chemistry	8	Classics and Political Science	1	Law, Jurisprudence & Social	
Computer Science	6	Computer Science and Economics	1	Thought and Political Science	2
Economics	21	Computer Science and		Law, Jurisprudence & Social	
English	30	Mathematics	2	Thought and Psychology	6
European Studies	1	Computer Science and		Law, Jurisprudence & Social	
Fine Arts	7	Theater & Dance	1	Thought and Spanish	2
French	6	Economics and French	1	Mathematics and Physics	3
Geology	9	Economics and German	1	Mathematics and Political Science	1
History	19	Economics and History	2	Music and Neuroscience	1
Independent Scholar	1	Economics and Law, Jurisprudence		Music and Philosophy	1
Interdisciplinary	10	& Social Thought	2	Music and Physics	2
Law, Jurisprudence &		Economics and Mathematics	6	Music and Women's & Gender	
Social Thought	16	Economics and Music	1	Studies	1
Mathematics	2	Economics and Political Science	5	Philosophy and Psychology	1
Music	2	Economics and Psychology	8	Political Science and Psychology	2
Neuroscience	10	Economics and Spanish	2	Political Science and Religion	1
Philosophy	7	English and Fine Arts	3	Political Science and Sociology	2
Physics	6	English and History	1	Political Science and Spanish	4
Political Science	27	English and Law, Jurisprudence		Psychology and Sociology	1
Psychology	19	& Social Thought	1	Psychology and Spanish	1
Religion	6	English and Mathematics	3	Psychology and Theater & Dance	2
Sociology	3	English and Music	5	Psychology and Women's &	
Spanish	9	English and Philosophy	1	Gender Studies	2
Theater & Dance	4	English and Psychology	1	Sociology and Spanish	1
Women's & Gender Studies	2	English and Russian	1	Sociology and Women's &	
Total Single Majors	276	English and Spanish	2	Gender Studies	1
		English and Theater & Dance	1	Total Double Majors	151
		English and Women's &			
		Gender Studies	1	Triple Majors	
Double Majors		European Studies and French	3	Computer Science, Political	
American Studies and English	1	Fine Arts and French	1	Science and Psychology	1
American Studies and French	1	Fine Arts and History	1	French, Law, Jurisprudence &	
American Studies and History	1	Fine Arts and Political Science	1	Social Thought and Psychology	1
Anthropology and English	1	Fine Arts and Psychology	1	History, Mathematics and Physics	1
Anthropology and French	1	Fine Arts and Russian	1	Total Triple Majors	3
Anthropology and Sociology	2	French and History	5		
Asian Languages/Civilizations		French and Neuroscience	1	Total Class of 2006 Graduates	
and English	1	French and Political Science	5	430	
Asian Languages/Civilizations		French and Psychology	3		
and Fine Arts	1	German and Philosophy	1		
Asian Languages/Civilizations		History and Interdisciplinary	1		
and History	1	History and Law, Jurisprudence			
Biology and Economics	2	& Social Thought	1		
Biology and Psychology	1	History and Physics	1		
Biology and Spanish	1	History and Political Science	3		
Biology and Women's &		History and Psychology	1		
Gender Studies	2	History and Religion	1		
Black Studies and English	1	History and Russian	1		
Black Studies and Fine Arts	1	History and Spanish	1		
Black Studies and Spanish	1				

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