

September 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I hope your school year is off to a good start. Here in Evanston, we wrapped our “Wildcat Welcome” orientation program yesterday, and today marks the first day of classes. Despite continued challenges and uncertainties, our Admissions team felt so much joy in seeing our newest students [march through our iconic Arch](#) last week as they began their journey here together.

### **Regional connections & visiting options**

Like many, we’re adjusting to a hybrid approach this fall: we are each in the office part of the week and undertaking a mix of virtual and limited in-person outreach travel. Last year, we piloted a modified regional outreach model, where multiple team members collaborated as contacts and readers for a particular region—we’ll continue with those regional teams this year having confirmed that this new model brought more staff perspectives to recruitment and reading in a particular geographic area. We expect it will also foster more consistency over time. And like last year, one of your regional team’s members will serve as an **individual point of contact** for you and your students; **you can find those assignments [here](#)**. If you have questions for your regional contact or want to explore ways for your students to learn more about Northwestern in this hybrid landscape—an in-person visit, a virtual session, a national college fair, or one of our many online programs—please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Our information sessions, admissions “office hours,” and student panels [continue online](#). In July, we **resumed [on-campus tours](#)** that are modified in length, limited in space, and primarily outdoors to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible. In the event your student cannot secure a tour spot when they plan to visit, their options are: 1) check the tour registration periodically to see if someone has canceled, and/or 2) show up and hope there’s a cancellation so they can join a tour. We’re working very hard to hold the line on our tour size for safety reasons, so if our staff is particularly firm about our no walk-ins policy, please understand they are just doing their job. We also have **a robust self-guided tour** (with a QR code to let us know you’ve done a self-guided tour, which helps us tailor our communications and understand our visitor activity), and our tour guides will be available around our registration tent to answer questions and offer student perspectives for all visitors. We also encourage prospective students to register for **[Purple Preview Conversations](#)**—they’re another great way to connect one-on-one with a current undergraduate.

### **Application trends & first-year class profile**

Our [quarter-system](#) means a later start to fall courses than many, and thus a late class census—we therefore won’t have an official Class of 2025 profile to share for another several weeks. But here are some broad numbers to help you support your students’ college-list-building in the meantime:

- We reviewed nearly 48,000 applications for the current first-year class
- Our admit rate was 7% for an incoming class of roughly 2,090
- We admitted around half of our incoming class through Early Decision
- We saw over 9,000 secondary schools represented in last year’s applicant pool

In terms of demographic makeup, **the Class of 2025 will be the most diverse to date**, representing over 80 countries and historic numbers of students who identify as Black, Hispanic or Latino/a/x, Native or Indigenous, and/or first-generation college, as well as students who will receive federal Pell Grants. **It is also the first class with over 50% BIPOC-identifying students.** Here’s a rough demographic breakdown of our first-year class, should it prove helpful to your students as they build their college lists:

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|---------------------------------|---|
| ○ 17% Hispanic or Latina/o/x    | ○ 10.5% international students          |
| ○ 2% Native or Indigenous       | ○ 21% Pell-grant recipients             |
| ○ 24.5% Asian American          | ○ 15% first-generation college students |
| ○ 12% Black or African American |   |
| ○ 52% White                     |   |

Our commitment to college access is as strong as ever, with the expectation that undergraduates will receive over \$250 million in aid for the coming year. As always, our admissions process is need-blind for domestic applicants, and **we meet 100% of demonstrated financial need without loans**. For more information about affordability, you can visit our [website](#), where you'll also find a [list of campus and community resources](#) that support students beyond financial aid.

### **Application updates**

Our Early Decision (ED) deadline will remain November 1 this year, and our Regular Decision (RD) deadline will be January 3. If you have students considering ED, my blog from last year, "[Understanding Early Decision](#)," contains a good amount of advice that is still relevant this fall. Our [financial aid calculators](#) are great tools for all prospective students but can be especially useful for families weighing an ED commitment.

**We will remain test optional** for the coming admissions cycle and expect to announce next year's testing policy in early 2022. For information and guidance on standardized testing, please refer to our [online FAQs](#).

Last fall, we launched a series of videos called "[Applied Learning](#)," which features our admission directors in dialogue about broad topics ranging from application essays to holistic review to financial aid. I invite you to revisit these and share with students if you think they'll be helpful.

Finally, I wanted to **point you toward [a message for seniors](#)** I recently shared on our blog. At the heart of this post is the reassurance that our Admissions team will read their applications with a sensitivity to all the challenges that have shaped their academic and extracurricular pursuits these past 18 months, even as things progress toward a tenuous new normal. As you've probably come to expect from me if you've read my earlier updates, the post also includes a reminder that the college process demands **a sense of optimism** for all they'll learn about themselves and the world in the years ahead, along with some encouragement to keep sight of this optimism as senior year kicks into high gear.

I hope you'll begin the year with a spirit of optimism, too. My staff is here to partner and support your work however we can.

Warmly,

Liz Kinsley, PhD  
Associate Dean & Director of Undergraduate Admission