

By the Numbers

Focus on the Facts

Office of Institutional
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University of Wisconsin—La Crosse

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Selectivity & Yield: Measuring How Difficult It Is to Get In

Word on the street has it that it's hard to get into UW-L—our students are highly accomplished—the best and the brightest—and competition for admission is fierce! But as with so many areas of higher education, admissions selectivity is rife with anecdotes about that “one student who..”

A recent publication on *The State of College Admissions 2006* from the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) reported that the average selectivity rate for public, four-year colleges & universities is 71% and the average yield rate is 47%. By comparison, UW-L's selectivity rate for the Fall 2006 incoming new freshmen class was 64% and the yield rate was 40% (see chart, next page). This means that even though UW-L is more selective than the average public four-year university, a lower

proportion of the students who are admitted choose to attend than for four-year public institutions on average.

UW-L's lower than average yield rate is likely because students who apply to UW-L are also applying at other competitive institutions. NACAC reports that students tend to apply to more institutions now than they did ten years ago, with more than 70% of students submitting applications to 3 or more institutions. Combined with a lower than average selectivity rate, it's reasonable to speculate that the students who are accepted at UW-L are also accepted at the other institutions at which they apply and therefore have more choices.

Because of UW-L's public status within a statewide system, lawmakers are often concerned not only with the

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Common Admissions Terms

- **Selectivity** — the percentage of students who apply to a college that are accepted
- **Yield** — the percentage of accepted students who attend that college
- **Funnel** — a visual description of the admissions process at selective institutions where more students apply than are accepted and more students are accepted than matriculate
- **Educational Pipeline** — the entirety of students attending school at any level; often used to describe students' progression from K-12 into college

Editor's Note

Recent decisions by some of the nation's more prestigious colleges and universities to eliminate early acceptance practices because they may provide undue advantage to students from higher income levels have spawned a furor of

discussion about just how difficult it is to gain admittance to colleges and universities. Fanned further by controversies over affirmative action and the practice of considering student race and ethnicity in admissions, universities

are under increasing scrutiny about who and how they admit to their hallowed halls.

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UW-L's Office of Admissions can be reached by emailing admissions@uwlax.edu, calling (608) 785-8939, or visiting their web site:

<http://www.uwlax.edu/admissions/>

The National Association for College Admission Counseling report *The State of College Admissions 2006* is available on their website:

<http://www.nacacnet.org/>

For more information on Plan 2008, see the Office of Affirmative Action & Diversity website:

<http://www.uwlax.edu/AAOD/hm/Plan2008Menu.html>

New freshmen profile trend data can be found in the Fact Sheets at:

http://www.uwlax.edu/Provost/universitydata/fact_sheets.htm

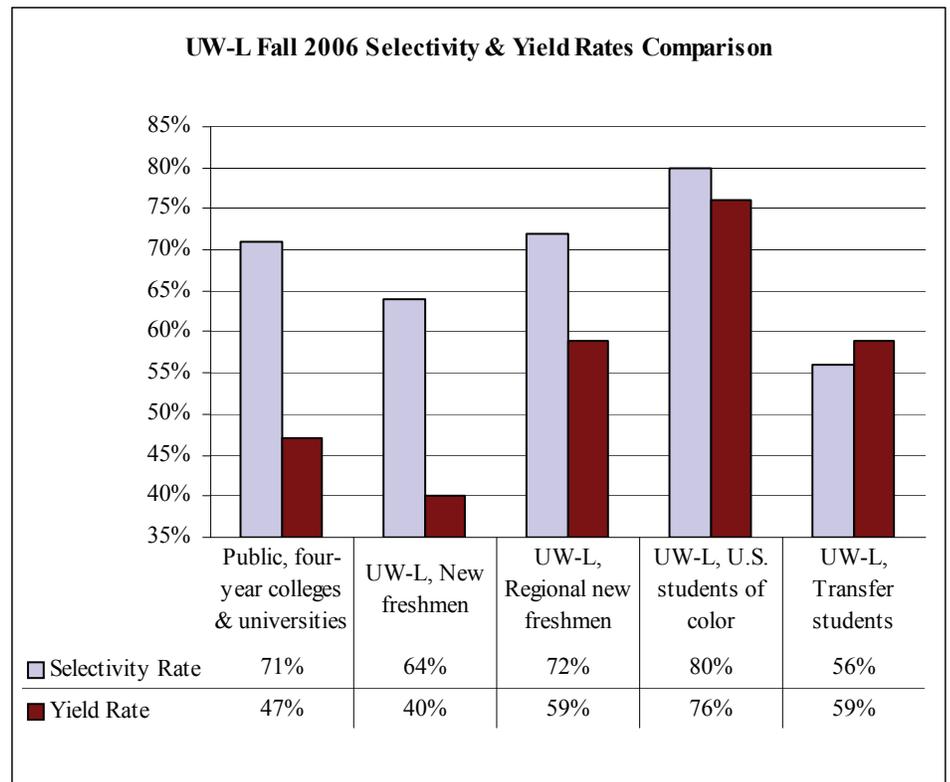
Data on UW-L's annual yield for new freshmen & transfer students is included in the Common Data Set:

<http://www.uwlax.edu/Provost/universitydata/cds.htm>

¹ High schools with mailing addresses in the following cities are considered to be within UW-L's regional Wisconsin draw area: Bangor, De Soto, Galesville, Holmen, La Crosse, Onalaska, Sparta, Viroqua, West Salem, and Westby.

UW-L Admissions Yield (cont.)

general selectivity and yield rates for all applicants, but also for applicants from the region within Wisconsin that UW-L most directly serves. Seventy two percent of applicants from high schools within UW-L's regional draw area¹ were accepted, and of those, 59% enrolled for Fall 2006.



Plan 2008 establishes goals, strategies, and action steps that provide a framework to better fulfill UW-L's mission by diversifying campus populations and curriculum. One of the tenets of Plan 2008 is to increase the number of U.S. students of color accepted to and matriculating at UW-L. For the Fall 2006 new freshmen class, 80% of U.S. students of color who applied to UW-L were accepted; of those, 76% matriculated indicating alignment with the goals of Plan 2008.

Though national comparison data is not available for selectivity or yield rates for transfer students, anecdotal evidence abounds on campus indicating a strong belief that it is easier to get into UW-L as a transfer student than as a new freshmen. Examining selectivity and yield rates for transfer students provides evidence that this may not be the case. For Fall 2006, 56% of students who applied to transfer into UW-L were admitted, and 59% of those enrolled. While admissions criteria for transfer students and new freshmen are by necessity different, the data show that a lower proportion of transfer students are admitted when compared to new freshmen.