

Erin Moriarty, Loyola's Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Explains How the Pandemic Changed College Admissions

A year after the pandemic began, higher education has undergone dramatic changes. COVID-19 has changed classes and transformed admissions, said Erin Moriarty.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, April 8, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The coronavirus has impacted the world in unimaginable ways, many of which will be felt for years to come. Millions of students' educational goals had to be put on hold or revised. To stay in step, universities have had to alter their approach to education. Nowhere is this more evident than in the college admissions process, as explained below by [Erin Moriarty, Loyola University's Dean of Undergraduate Admissions](#).

One of the most prominent ways universities have responded to the pandemic has been the flexibility of admission requirements. Previously, many institutions still required either the ACT or SAT as part of the application for admission. However, due to the restrictions that COVID-19 placed on testing centers, high schools, and their students, many students faced months of canceled test dates. Because of this, applicants were unable to take the test and therefore did not have this information when applying to colleges. In addition, many high school grading policies changed during the abrupt shift to remote learning, allowing for more pass and fail grades rather than the traditional grading scales. For many students, this small change may have altered their grade point average.

College admissions offices ultimately have had to adapt, easing admission requirements to allow for flexibility and accessibility during the pandemic. Without standard qualitative measurements, other aspects of the application process, including personal essays and teacher recommendations, are becoming even more valuable. Admission offices are taking a much more detailed, holistic understanding of each student's application during the review and admission process.

To entice new applicants, many college admissions offices have offered to waive any application fees. In the pre-pandemic world, institutions would not have to waive \$50 or \$100 as an incentive for students to apply. However, these days, application fees can prevent high school students from applying to any given school. And while federal student aid applications have also decreased, it's not because students don't need the financial support; it's because they can't afford higher education at all.

In light of these changes, many universities are hoping to ride out the storm of COVID-19. Some institutions have made these changes permanent, while others are adjusting criteria for the next two years. Still, admission officers aspire to innovate and utilize new technologies as part of recruitment strategies moving forward.

The implementation of virtual recruitment events from individual appointments and interviews to virtual college fairs have provided new ways to communicate with students. By connecting with students virtually, schools are engaging with students prior to a traditional campus visit. This can provide access to colleges students may have otherwise not considered due to the expense or time commitment of a school visit. Opening up more options for students during the admission process has seen an increase in applications for some institutions, especially given the absence of a required standardized test.

The pandemic had changed the admission process and requirements as institutions find ways to adapt given current circumstances. Some changes may be permanent and others temporary, but one thing is certain, colleges understand the need to help students navigate the college and admission process during these unprecedented times.

About Erin Moriarty

[Erin Moriarty, Loyola University Chicago](#)'s Associate Vice President and Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, is passionate about students. She believes strongly in Loyola's mission – to help mold young men and women to become leaders in today's society and to seek God in all things. Outside of work, Erin can be found participating in Pedal the Cause or biking along the shores of Lake Michigan.

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