

Purple Pack Goes Green: A look at Westhill's Ivy League Data

The Westword takes a look at Ivy League matriculation data and what the community has to say

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The Ivy League, composed of schools such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, is the country's premier academic traditions.

The colleges, combined, receive well over 200,000 applicants annually. Despite the immense application interest, only about 21,000 people receive admission.

In the past seven years, 118 of these students are graduates from our very own Westhill.

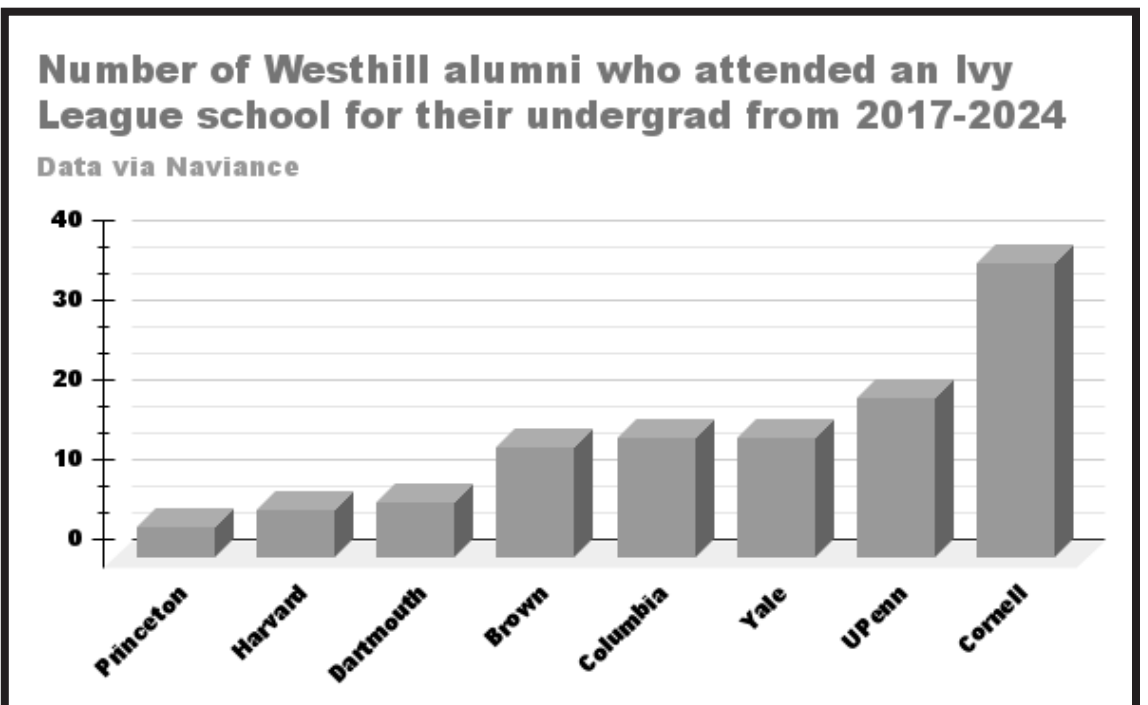
These universities did not start off this selective however. In the past 20 years, Ivy League

acceptance rates have dropped substantially, with the largest drop being Cornell, from 30% to 7.5%.

The Westword talked to senior class advisor Mrs. Carley Grant to see if she thought the amount of her kids going to Ivy Leagues has been trending downward in recent years.

"I have a few [Ivy League kids]. I feel like every year I have a handful that go off to Ivies, so I feel like no, I think it's been pretty steady," Mrs. Grant said.

According to *ivyscholars.com*, the main



Graph by Eugene Caibal ('25)

reason for these substantial drops is due to a massive increase in applicants. Now, while there are universities with lower acceptance rates, the "Ivies" have a lot of prestige due to their reputation as selective institutions, lengthy history and a wide variety of programs.

For example, Harvard University was established in 1636 according to *oldest.org*. To give some perspective, that is over 140 years before American Independence. This lengthy history allowed them to showcase their

academics and prove that their alumni go on to lead successful careers.

Focusing now on Westhill, as mentioned previously 118 graduates have joined these prestigious institutions in the past seven years, according to the career readiness platform Naviance. The majority - 31 percent of the graduates went to Cornell, while only 3.4 percent—four graduates—went to Princeton. These numbers parallel the actual acceptance rates, as Cornell has the highest relative to the other Ivies, while Princeton is more selective.

"It's a little hard to tell, with the sample sizes being so small, but it seems to be fairly random. I don't think there's any particularly discernible pattern as far as I can tell. I think I have to say, the last couple of years it's probably been a little less than normal," Mr. Chandan Sarkar, a Computer Science teacher at Westhill, said.

This was seen between the class of 2024 and 2022. The class of 2022 had four graduates go to Ivy Leagues, while the class of 2024 had three graduates. While not a drastic decrease, it does show that the trend seems to be decreasing slowly.

Dr. Lisa Forbes, Social Studies Department head, said: "It's kind

of hard to say, but I think that if the student is really interested in going to a particular school, the student has to exhibit [to the university] extreme interest in the school"

Dr. Forbes argues that a student has to be proactive with "having the school know who they are, and that they really wanna go there."

The Westword also talked with students such as Sahil Salihnur ('25), who has committed to MIT, on his tips to get into a top 25 college such as an Ivy League.

"To get into a top 25 college, you have to not only take advantage of the opportunities you have at school, whether it be clubs or classes, but find and make your opportunities outside of school. You can have a 4.0 and rigorous classes, but so will half the applicants at these top schools; you have to differentiate yourself by finding opportunities outside of school like summer programs and research," Salihnur said.

Overall, Westhill has had a fairly successful alumni group with several people going to Ivy League institutions in the past few years. Key tips that no one should forget is to: be yourself, highlight your strengths, and never forget to work hard.



Blair Arch at Princeton University. Photo via Creative Commons