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COLLEGE-BOUND SCRAMBLE FOR SPOT



Tribune photos by MICHAEL SPOONEYBARGER

Andrea Horne was one of 20 students on the floor in a USF Law and Business class Thursday. Admissions demand will keep rising, experts say.

Freshman enrollment caps have fine-tuned a crop of applicants who say no state school is a "safety" school.

By ADAM EMERSON The Tampa Tribune

TAMPA — What's an A student to do? The University of South Florida was once considered a backup school for many top college-bound seniors who braced for rejection from the University of Florida or Florida State University.

But students such as Gabby Rodriguez are sure of nothing these days. Despite earning a 4.3 weighted grade-point average at Tampa's Jefferson High School, Rodriguez, 17, fears she will be edged out of her preferred colleges by competitors with GPAs that reach a stratospheric 6.0.

"I told my mom: A 4.3 is no longer that great," she said, revisiting the uncertainty she felt when applying to UF, FSU and USF.

As she awaits answers from those universities, she is researching the radiology program at Hillsborough Community College, a school neither she nor her college-driven classmates pictured themselves attending.

Now, however, Florida's 11 public universities are capping the number of freshmen they will accept, limiting the backup options for even the brightest students. Admissions officers throughout the state are

See HIGHER PRESSURE, Page 6 Community colleges use caps in marketing.



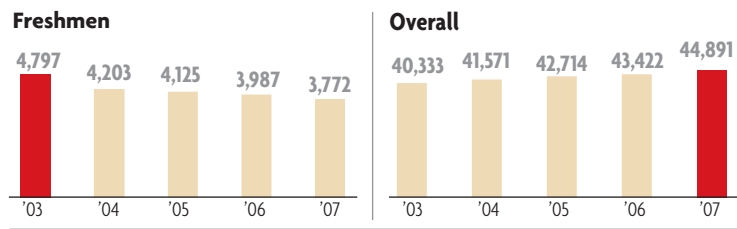
I wouldn't be able to get into USF now, and I was an honors student." DANA PINES Jefferson High School guidance resource specialist



This just puts that much more pressure on us." GABBY RODRIGUEZ Jefferson High senior, on the prospects of rejection

SHIFTING ENROLLMENT

Rising admission standards at the University of South Florida have led to a 21 percent drop in the number of freshmen who have enrolled on the first day of fall classes since 2003. Overall enrollment has grown by 11 percent in that time, however, because of an increased number of transfer and graduate students.



Tribune graphic; Source: University of South Florida

Bush Veto Threatens Water Projects

BILL AUTHORIZES MILLIONS FOR LOCAL, STATE WORK

By BILLY HOUSE The Tampa Tribune

WASHINGTON — Despite a presidential veto threat, the Senate this week may send to the president's desk a more than \$20 billion federal water-projects bill authorizing tens of millions of dollars for the Tampa Bay area.

Included is a \$6.25 million authorization for a project to boost Hillsborough County's ability to provide reclaimed water to its customers, in part by using abandoned phosphate mines to capture and store wet-season rainfall.

An additional \$12.9 million would be authorized to improve navigation along one of Tampa Bay's main shipping channels.

And about 50 other Army Corps of Engineers projects would be authorized for the Bay area and across

See WATER PROJECTS, Page 6

Bill includes \$2 billion for Everglades.

Famed Adventurer Missing

Millionaire adventurer Steve Fossett, the first person to circumnavigate the globe in a balloon, was missing Tuesday after he vanished while piloting a single-engine plane over rugged terrain in Nevada. Fossett, 63, took off Monday morning to scout locations where he might be able to break the land-speed record, his latest quest. The Chicago commodities trader has been trying to break records for years.

He earned fame in 2002 when he became the first person to fly around the world alone in a balloon.

Two years ago, he became the first person to fly solo around the world in an airplane without refueling.

He also has climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and competed in the Iditarod dogsled race, the Ironman Triathlon and in the 24 Hours of Le Mans auto race.

A wire report



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Think Scorching August Broke The Record? Well, Almost

PINELLAS, HILLSBOROUGH WETTER

By NEIL JOHNSON The Tampa Tribune

TAMPA — August in Hillsborough County, always hot and wet, was hotter and wetter this year. Weather service temperature readings confirm that the month just ended was the hottest August in 66 years and the second hottest August since

Tampa records began in 1890. The average daily temperature last month was 84.9 degrees, just above the 84.4 degrees in August 1951 and only a bit below the all-time August record of 85.1 degrees in 1941.

The normal average temperature — the sum of the high and low each day, divided by two — is 82.7 degrees.

What's more, Pinellas and Hillsborough counties recorded above-normal rainfall for the month, even though other counties in the Tampa Bay area

received lower than average rain for the month and all Florida counties remain below average for the first eight months of 2007.

See SIZZLING AUGUST, Page 7 Rain increases flow on the Hillsborough River.

RELATED STORY, Page 10 Felix is ashore, and serious problems are cropping up.

Keyword: Rain, to see an interactive map of Bay area rainfall on our Weather Dog blog.



TODAY'S HIGH 92

TODAY'S LOW 76

Sunshine will dominate today, with only a 20 percent chance of showers. Thursday's and Friday's forecasts are much the same.

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