

# OVERCOMMITTED, UNDER ACCEPTED



With college acceptance rates dropping nationwide, students overcommit to academics and extracurriculars to stand out among large applicant pools

**A**CCORDING TO THE Harvard Crimson, Harvard accepted 3.6% of applicants into the Class of 2026, a record low since the school's establishment.

But it's not just Ivy League schools that are dropping their acceptance rates. University of Florida reported a 22.8% acceptance rate for their Class of 2026, a 10% decline from the previous year.

Due to increasing competition, some students feel pressured to overcommit themselves to a multitude of different clubs, extracurriculars, and internships and take extra courses through FLVS or dual enrollment.

"I think it's becoming more and more competitive and demanding, and that's the bottom line," school counselor Rachelle Francois-Nicholas said. "On one hand, we're saying that students need to have more balance, which is true, but on the other hand, students want to get into these colleges and these universities, and we know the factors that they need to have in order to get in. They're sacrificing balance to get into these schools."

In a casual survey of 865 students conducted by *The Muse* through English classes in January, 46.1% of students who felt overcommitted said they felt the need to do so because they want to look good for colleges, with others attributing overcommitment to parental

and peer pressure, along with fear of failure. This data indicates that students, such as piano senior Sahil Bhandary, feel a need to do as much as they can throughout their high school career to get into prestigious schools.

However, with so many students becoming aware of how to "game the system," as communications junior Faustina Duvigneaud puts it, just committing to a lot of activities is not enough anymore since this has become "the norm."

"More people are starting to become competitive and try(ing) to do more things to stand out," Duvigneaud said. "It becomes less likely to stand out because now everyone's doing the same thing that used to be impressive, making it harder to get into a good college."

35.2% of students surveyed said they spend four or more hours a day participating in extracurriculars outside of school, causing some students to be stretched too thin and making them unable to give their full effort to any activity.

"(Overcommitted students are) not able to perform at the level that they're used to because they have so much going on," school counseling director Olga Middleton said. "So maybe (they) get lower grades than expected, not because they're not capable, but because of the time restrictions."

29.8% of students surveyed said they were taking more than seven classes, including classes taken on FLVS and through dual enrollment. This overcommitment to academics leads to stress during exam season, which was the case for vocal junior Lalima Sharan,



"The college application process is so competitive, and you just don't know who's going to get into certain places anymore," Bhandary said.

**"You feel like you have to be the absolute best."**