

History of College Admissions in the U.S.

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Higher Education in the U.S.

College admissions is highly complex and nuanced to the particular characteristics, missions, resources, and constraints of colleges and universities themselves.

***Pre-Revolutionary
War***

9 Colonial colleges

Today

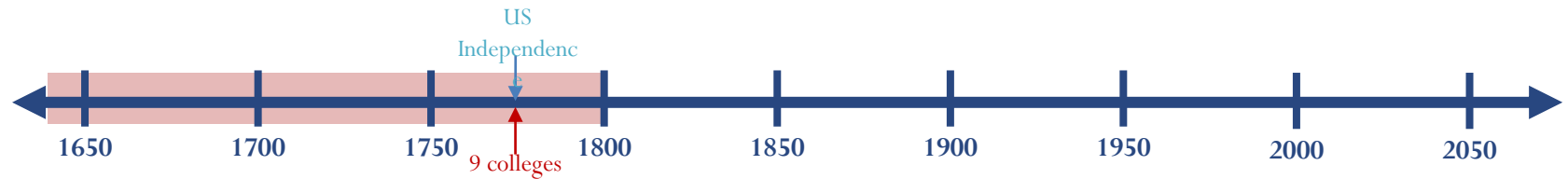
4,500
undergraduate
colleges and
universities

1.4 million faculty

Over 20 million
students



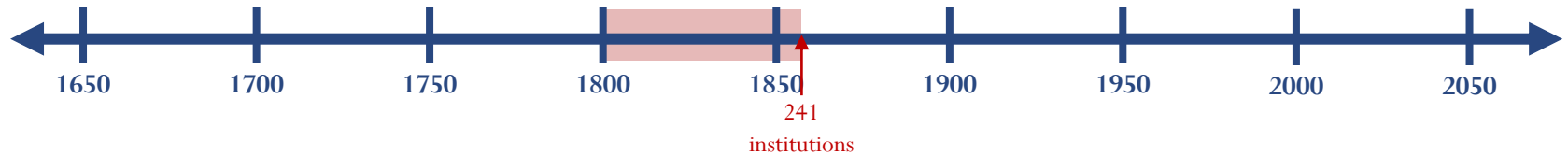
Colonial Era - 1800



- *Almost exclusively reserved for the elite class, sons of wealthy merchants*
- *Students applied to local schools associated with their faith or community*
- *Admissions based on the completion of specific subjects*



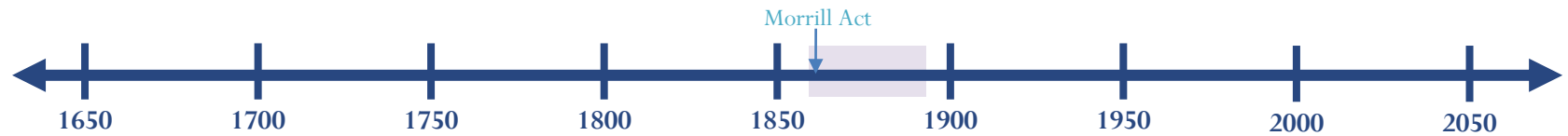
1800 – 1860 Social Status



- *Higher Education as means for developing young men as future leaders in society*
- *Higher education as a social status symbol*
- *Students applied to local schools associated with their faith or community*
- *Admissions criteria lax, remediation commonplace*
- *Student's ability to pay was paramount*



1860 – 1890 Expansion



- *Morrill Act - Significant expansion of higher ed through land-grant institutions*
- *“Open-door policy, tempered by common sense provisions to exclude those clearly unsuited or unready for higher education”*
- *Admissions – review of subjects completed and written or oral examinations, “flexibly graded”*
- *Remediation remained commonplace*
- *Higher education is diverse, but segregated by faith, ethnicity, race, and gender*



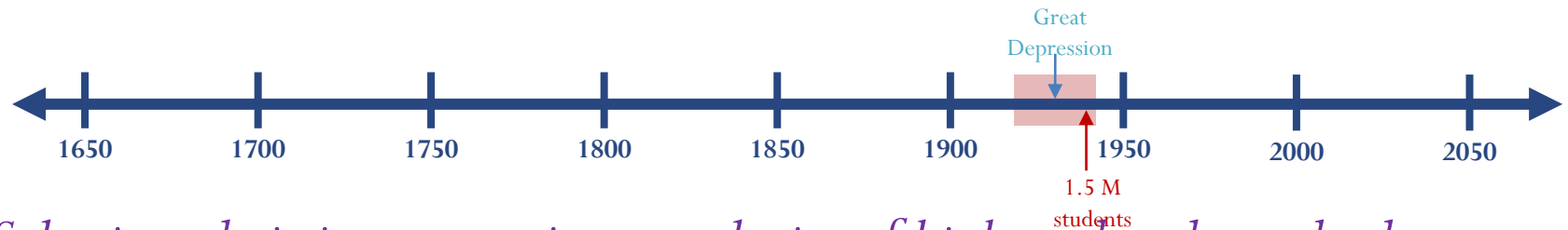
1890 – 1920 Standardization



- *Progressive reform in education – move to standardization and cohesion*
- *American Association of Universities (AAU)*
- *Requiring a high school diploma for admissions*
- *Common entrance exam – College Entrance Examination Board*
- *Advent of intelligence testing - identify academic promise within homogeneity*
- *Harvard – “New Plan” aimed to admit from good public schools – drops Greek & Latin*
- *Selective admissions – growing popularity in higher ed and standard measures*



1920 – 1940 Holistic Admissions



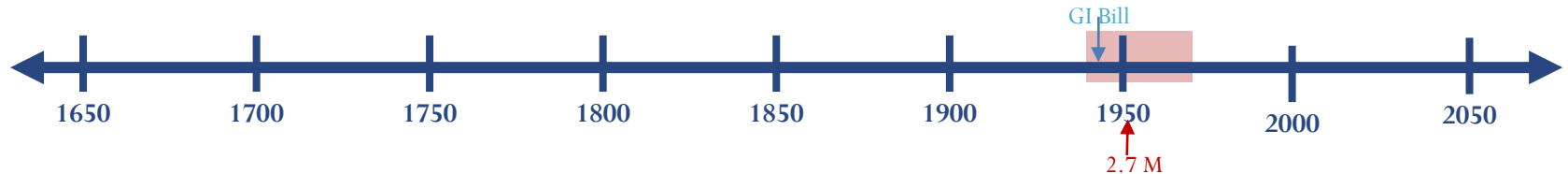
- *Selective admissions –growing popularity of higher ed and standard measures*
- *Introduction of “character” as a selection criteria at the “Big Three”*
- *Anti-Jewish, Anti-immigrant*
- *Uniquely American “holistic evaluation” is formed*
- *Harvard creates scholarship for needy students – need-based financial aid*
- *Great Depression leads to the birth of the admissions profession (recruitment)*
- *Bifurcation of colleges and universities – open-access, selective institutions*



1940 - 1965 Massification

Golden Age

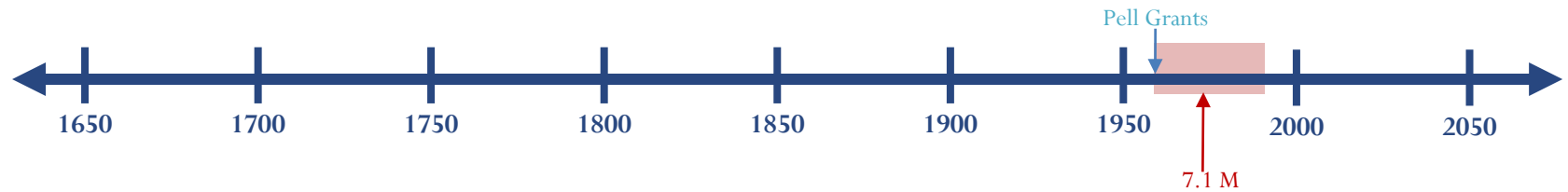
Prosperity, prestige, and popularity



- *Higher education moves from elite to massification*
- *GI – Bill*
 - *Strong interest to support returning veterans*
 - *More efficient and alternate forms of evaluating college readiness*
 - *Advent of for-profit institutions – diploma-mills*
- *National institutions and highly selective institutions*
- *Early admissions practices (Yale 1950s) and fall recruitment to feeder schools*



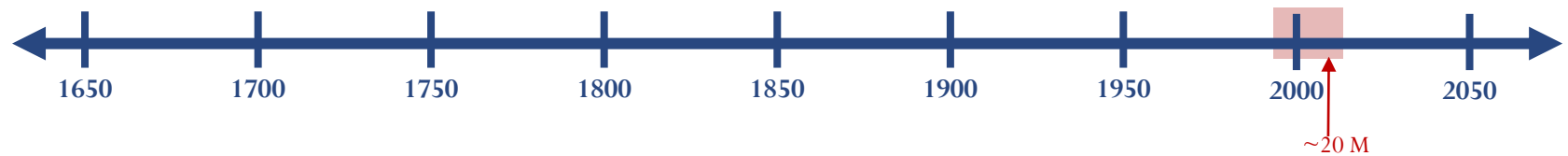
1965-1990 Diversity



- *Increased access to higher education*
- *Pell Grants – support low income families, advent of student loans*
- *Social movements and court hearings*
- *Brown vs the Board of Education; UC Regents vs Bakke; Title IX*
- *Access to high education is widened – diversity reaches some of its highest levels*
- *Analytics – advent of search and increased marketing*



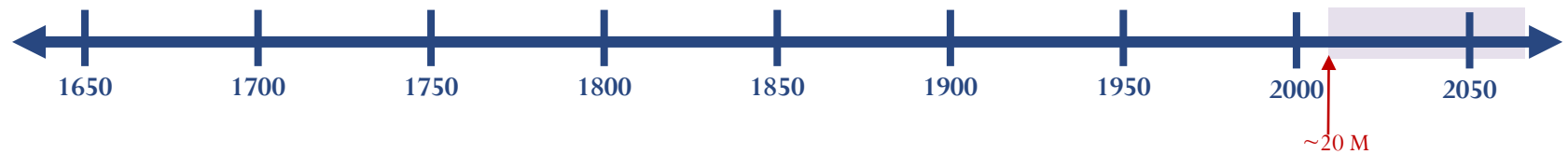
1990 -2013 Competition & Scrutiny



- *Increasing number and increasing diversity of high school graduates*
- *Common Application*
- *Court Rulings and Public Referenda: Hopwood; Grutter v. Bollinger; Fisher I & II*
- *US News & World Report Rankings*
- *Test Optional Movement*
- *Internet and online applications — stealth applicant*
- *Recession*



2014 – Beyond What's Next



- *Alternate measures of academic promise*
- *Increasing international student population*
- *Coalition Application*
- *Social media*
- *Committee-based evaluation*
- *Demographic shifts*



Discussion

- *What implications does the history of our profession have on the future of the profession?*
- *How can policies meant to favor certain populations and exclude others be used to increase access to higher education?*
- *What threats exist to higher education and how might colleges and universities react?*