The class of 2015 may be smaller than last year’s, but it’s plenty brainy.

Students accepted to the incoming Class of 2015 average in the top 9 percent of their high school graduating class (compared to last year’s top 11 percent), typically boast an A- GPA, and have SAT scores of 1993—a solid 29 points higher than last year’s class. And that’s without factoring in the University Honors College students, who rank in the top 3 percent of their class and have an average SAT score of 2184.

“These students are stronger based on their admissions credentials,” says Kelly Walter, assistant vice president and executive director of admissions. “They’re bright, talented, and our hope is that they will make invaluable contributions to BU.”

Calling this the “single most competitive year ever,” Walter says the University received a record 41,760 applications and accepted 19,905 (48 percent) of those students. The goal is to have 4,000 freshmen enroll in the fall.

Last year’s freshmen chose BU at a higher rate than anticipated, which led to an unusually large class (4,400 students) and more recently to the University’s decision to admit 10 percent fewer students this year.

In addition to their academic power, incoming freshmen come with an impressive array of life experiences, according to Walter. One student created an iPad application, another raised $430,000 for the colon cancer Strides for Life walk, and another worked as an oyster farmer on Martha’s Vineyard.

Students were admitted from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The greatest number of accepted students this year are from New York, followed by California and Massachusetts. (Last year, Massachusetts led the way.)

Incoming international students could represent as many as 107 countries and about 13 percent of the class, Walter says. China continues to field the largest number of applicants, but a growing number are applying from Korea, India, Canada, and Turkey.

Following past trends, this fall’s entering class will have more women, about 60 percent, than men, at about 40 percent.

And BU continues to draw a racially diverse mix of students: 22 percent of acceptance offers were sent to Asian students, 10 percent to Hispanic or Latino students, and 5 percent to African American students.

Leslie Friday