

Successfully Navigating the College Application Process:

Assisting your students through the rocket science of university admission

Five things students need to know about college admission

- ▶ They can be accepted.
- ▶ They are more than test scores
- ▶ They are in charge
- ▶ They are unique
- ▶ They are not alone

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What are college admissions officers
looking for in an applicant?

A Rigorous high school curriculum

- ▶ AP, IB and Honors courses taken
- ▶ Course sequences completed?
- ▶ Courses that show passion for chosen major
 - ▶ Independent projects outside of the classroom
 - ▶ Inquiring mind
- ▶ Grades that show strong effort and an upward trend
 - ▶ Which course to choose? Honors or regular?
- ▶ Ability to persevere

Solid scores on standardized tests

- ▶ The scores should be consistent with high school performance
- ▶ Practice before the test (just like a musician wouldn't just go on stage without practice)

A well written essay

- ▶ Provide insight into a student's unique personality, values and goals
- ▶ Outline how they will contribute to the college campus
- ▶ Essay should be well written
- ▶ Use authentic voice
- ▶ If the student struggled or had a bad semester, talk about it in the essay

Extracurricular Activities

- ▶ Passionate involvement in a few versus lukewarm involvement in many
- ▶ Demonstrated leadership and initiative
- ▶ Show commitment and determination
- ▶ Highlight special talents that contribute to the college's student life program
- ▶ Highlight ability to work well with others (73% from admissions officer survey)
- ▶ Community service (includes helping the family/taking care of siblings)
 - ▶ Highlight specific projects
- ▶ Work experience

Personal characteristics that contribute to a diverse and interesting student body

- ▶ Skills and talents
- ▶ Interests
- ▶ Geographic diversity
- ▶ Program interest
- ▶ Ability to pay (1/2 of institutions according to NACAC report)

Demonstrated intellectual curiosity

- ▶ Experience in personal study projects outside of class
- ▶ Ability to think and work independently
- ▶ Creativity

Demonstrated enthusiasm to attend the college

- ▶ Visit the campus
- ▶ Contact and stay in contact with your admission officer
- ▶ Demonstrate desire to enroll if accepted
 - ▶ Early decision
 - ▶ Give insight as to why they want to be at that college
- ▶ DO NOT USE THE WRONG SCHOOL NAME IN YOUR APPLICATION (essay, short answer questions, etc.)

Letters of recommendation that give evidence of integrity, special skills, positive character traits and an interest in learning

- ▶ Ask teachers who know them well
- ▶ Not just about academic strengths but also about qualities the student displays in class (leadership, initiative)

What is Holistic Admission?

- ▶ Building the class
- ▶ Less emphasis on academic metrics
- ▶ Making admission more personal
- ▶ Harvard considerations:
 - ▶ Growth and potential
 - ▶ Character and personality
 - ▶ Contribution to the Harvard Community

Pointers to remember

- ▶ Connect with your colleges
- ▶ Know your chances
- ▶ Take application instructions seriously
 - ▶ Only send documents they require
 - ▶ Send them in format requested
 - ▶ Do not go over word counts for essays or short answer questions
- ▶ BUT send what they request on time and well done
- ▶ Need to stand out amongst 1000s and 10,000s applicants
- ▶ If given the option to send in something “special” do so!
- ▶ Be smart in social media
- ▶ Sometimes legacies matter, sometimes they don't

It's not really rocket science - it's just
about putting the best student applicant
forward

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