



THE EDUCATION CONSERVANCY

WE ADMIT...GUIDANCE FROM THOSE WHO DO

Applying to college does not have to be overwhelming! The following principles and guidelines can help make the college admission process more manageable, more productive, and more educationally appropriate. This guidance is offered by the Education Conservancy, a group of admission professionals committed to calming the commercial frenzy by affirming educational values in college admission.

Principles

These guiding principles are relevant for parents, students, counselors and admission deans:

- Education is a process, not a product. Students are learners, not customers.
- The benefits and predictors of good education are knowable yet virtually impossible to measure.
- Rankings oversimplify and mislead.
- A student's intellectual skills and attitude about learning are more important than what college a student attends.
- Educational values are best served by admission practices that are consistent with these values.
- College admission should be part of an educational process directed toward student autonomy and intellectual maturity.
- Colleges can be assessed, but not ranked. Students can be evaluated, but not measured.
- Students' thoughts, ideas and passions are worthy to be engaged and handled with utmost care.

Student Guidelines

An admission decision, test score, or GPA is not a measure of your self-worth. And, most students are admitted to colleges they want to attend. Knowing this, we encourage you to:

- Be confident! Take responsibility for your college admission process. The more you do for yourself, the better the results will be.
- Be deliberate! Applying to college involves thoughtful research to determine distinctions among colleges, as well as careful self-examination to identify your interests, learning style and other criteria. Plan to make well-considered applications to the most suitable colleges. This is often referred to as "making good matches."
- Be realistic and trust your instincts! Choosing a college is an important process, but not a life or death decision. Since there are limits to what you can know about colleges and about yourself, you should allow yourself to do educated guesswork.
- Be open-minded! Resist the notion that there is one perfect college. Great education happens in many places.
- Use a variety of resources for gathering information. Seek advice from those people who know you, care about you, and are willing to help.
- Be honest; be yourself! Do not try to game the system.
- Resist taking any standardized test numerous times (twice is usually sufficient).
- Limit your applications to a well-researched and reasonable number. No more than six should be sufficient, except in special cases.
- Know that what you do in college is a better predictor of future success and happiness than where you go to college.

Parent Guidelines

An admission decision, test score, or GPA is not a measure of a student's worth. And, parents should always be mindful of the behavior they are modeling for their children. Knowing this, we encourage you to:

- Recognize that gaining admission to college is merely one step in a process of education that will include your student attending a college where she or he can maximize talents and growth. Emphasize the education.
- Resist doing for your students what they are capable of doing for themselves.
- Allow your child to take responsibility for his or her own part of the college application process. Be involved in the process, but do not try to control it.
- Resist relying on rankings and college selectivity to determine the most suitable colleges for your child.
- Realize that researching, selecting, and applying to colleges does not have to be an expensive process.
- Resist attempts to turn the process into a status competition. Develop a healthy, educationally based, and family-appropriate approach to college admissions.
- Consider that gaming the system may not only diminish your child's self-confidence, it may also jeopardize desired admission outcomes.
- Listen to, encourage and believe in your child. Do not use the term "we" as in "we are applying to...."
- Discuss the idea of education as an ongoing process, and how selecting a college might be different from buying a product.
- Love them enough to let them demonstrate the independence you have instilled in them.
- Keep this process in perspective. Remember that student skills, self-confidence, curiosity, and desire to learn are some of the most important ingredients in quality education and successful college admissions. Do not sacrifice these by overemphasizing getting into the "best" college.

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