

Demystifying College Admissions



G/T PARENT ACADEMY
NOVEMBER 30, 2011

Selective vs. Highly Selective



- Traditionally: percent of applicants admitted
 - One-third or fewer = highly selective
 - One-third to one-half = selective
- *USNews*: SAT scores of enrolled (50%), % in top 10% of high school class (40%), and admit rate (10%)
- Truth: The definition depends on the applicant's academic credentials
- In the end, selectivity is measured by the qualifications of the ***enrolled*** student body

High School Courses



- **Take a solid schedule including:**
 - English—4 years
 - Math—4 years
 - Social Studies—4 years
 - Science—4 years (at least two lab sciences)
 - Foreign Language—minimum of 2 years of a modern language
- **AP courses should be taken as appropriate but should not so absorb the student that co- and extra-curriculars are non-existent**
- **Electives should mirror the interest/passion of the student**

The College Application Process



- **Timing: Know each school's application deadline and *beat* it**
 - Pay close attention to deadlines for special consideration (i.e., scholarships, honors programs, etc.) as these may differ from the “normal” deadline
- **Types of deadlines:**
 - Early Decision—binding (all other apps must be withdrawn)
 - Early Action—admission decision conveyed prior to April 1 but deposit not required until May 1
 - Regular Decision—set deadline, admission decision on April 1, deposit required by May 1
 - Rolling Admission—decision given shortly after application completion, deposit required by May 1 or later

Standardized Tests



- **SAT/ACT**
 - Depending on score, take no more than three times
 - Highest score on each section considered (do not have to be from same test administration)
- **General “wisdom”, SAT measures aptitude and ACT measures mastery**
- **SAT IIs (measure mastery of a subject)**
 - Usually required by highly selective schools, often required/suggested by selective schools
 - Take a minimum of number required by school
 - Take immediately following the term in which the course is completed

And What About APs?



- Original purpose was to allow students to skip introductory college courses
- Now often used to garner college credit
 - Generally credit is awarded if student scores a “4” or “5” and a comparable course is offered at the school
 - Frequently used to replace college electives
- Some skepticism among college faculty as to the validity of APs when courses are “taught to a test”

How Is An Application Read?



HOLISTICALLY

(DEFINITION: RELATING TO OR CONCERNED WITH WHOLES OR WITH COMPLETE SYSTEMS RATHER THAN WITH THE ANALYSIS OF, TREATMENT OF, OR DISSECTION INTO PARTS)

Importance of Factors in Acceptance



- Rigor of curriculum
- Grade Point Average
- SAT or ACT Score
- Essay
- Extracurriculars/Community Service
- Recommendations
- Other scores (SAT II or AP)

You Are Your Own Best Consultant!



- Suggested Websites
 - www.collegeboard.com
 - www.college-insight.org
 - www.finaid.org
 - www.fastweb.com
 - www.payscale.com
- New Resource: Net Price Calculator
 - Every college has one on their website
 - Use as a “guide” but only that