

# **THE COLLEGE MATCH**

**HOW TO PUT YOUR BEST FOOT  
FORWARD**



# INTRODUCTION

- As parents, we all want what is best for our children. We want them to be successful, attend a “good” college and have a wonderful life. But it is important to look at what factors make a college a “good” college for your child. I would like to try to help you understand the competitive nature of the college admissions process so that we can work together to help your child submit applications that will be of the highest caliber.
- The TEAM approach:
  - Student** – must be part of the process – plan, research, evaluate individual strengths and weaknesses
  - Parent**- encourage – be realistic (Naviance)
  - School Counselor** – guide – assist with planning and promoting



# Factors to Consider

- Increase in the number of applications results in lower acceptance rates
  - Columbia – 6.9% (2015), 9.2% (2014)
  - Northwestern – 18% (2015), 23% (2014)
  - Wash U. – 15.4% (2015), 21.2% (2014)
- Increase in the different types of decision plans (E/D, E/D II, E/A, E/A single choice, Priority) creates additional stress and the need to “strategize”
  - Duke accepted 44% of their class E/D



- Sometimes there are reasons behind what appears to be the arbitrary nature of highly selective college admissions
  - Legacy – Mr. Fitzsimmons, the Dean of Admissions at Harvard, recently reported that the college's acceptance rate for legacy was around 30% - which is more than 4 times the regular admissions rate of approximately 6.9%
  - Recruited Athletes - Almost 1/3 of the students accepted E/D at small liberal arts schools are recruited athletes
- Colleges need to “build a class” – diversity, “geographic desirability” special talent (music, art)



# Impressive Candidate vs. Admitted Student

- There is no magic formula.
- College admissions officials at very selective colleges all agree that gaining admission takes more than having stellar academic credentials.
  - Matching the academic profile of admitted students is the first step – but it is not enough. At the top schools, valedictorians and students with perfect scores are often rejected.
  - Intellectual curiosity, great grades and high scores are NOT enough.



# Impressive Candidate vs. Admitted Student

- Admitted students match the academic profile and fall into one or more of these categories:
  - Students who can bring something “special” to the school
  - Students with “exceptional promise”
  - Students who demonstrate “fit”
  - Students who are legacy



# Understanding the Academic Profile

- Colleges review applicants using a holistic approach: objective criteria (transcript, GPA, trend in grades) and subjective criteria (essay, activities, talent, “fit”)
- Naviance – computer based program that allows students and parents to research schools and see the profile of accepted students from Jericho and “the rest of the world”
  - <https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=jericho>



## Subjective Criteria

### How Do You Make Yourself Stand Out?

DEVELOP A PLAN AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE

- The college application should be clear, consistent and logical. It should portray the story of “you” and highlight reasons why you are a good candidate. This takes advance planning and research.

#### • Activities

- Parents and students often ask:
  - What activity looks good?
  - What should I do this summer to stand out?
  - What do the colleges want to see?



# How Do You Make Yourself Stand Out?

- Genuine interest – nothing “looks” good. There needs to be a connection and good “fit” between a student's interests, goals and abilities
- Quality over quantity – find your passion or hook
- Try to find one or two activities that you can pursue enthusiastically which will showcase some combination of character, leadership, determination, intellectual curiosity, genuine interest, creativity, maturity, independence and ability.
- March Madness  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-harke/college-admissions-time\\_b\\_2850652.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-harke/college-admissions-time_b_2850652.html)



# How Do You Make Yourself Stand Out?

- Your interest in business should be reflected in your academic profile and in the contributions you made in your activities –
  - Do you have strong math skills?
  - Have you enrolled in any of the business electives available?
  - Are you Treasurer of a club?
  - Do you handle budgets?
  - Do you solicit contributions for fundraisers?
  - Do you participate and/or compete in Business Clubs and competitions?
  - Do you have a stock portfolio?
  - Have you ever had a part-time job or “internship”?



# How Do You Make Yourself Stand Out?

- Your love of learning should be reflected in the educational opportunities you take advantage of to enhance or supplement your education by maximizing your curriculum and taking advantage of opportunities **outside** of Jericho HS.
- Excellent grades are not enough and do not demonstrate passion in a specific discipline. Earning an A+ in science does not mean you are passionate about science.



# How Do You Make Yourself Stand Out?

- Letters of Recommendation
  - Teachers, counselor, additional if appropriate
  - Good letters highlight student strengths, growth, commitment, talents
  - Quantity vs. Quality

Students need to:

- Provide recommenders with brag sheets
- Pay attention to specific college requirements
- Be sure to follow directions



# How Do You Make Yourself Stand Out?

- Essays
  - Common Application – one essay is sent to all of the colleges. Extremely important – must reflect the student’s voice and be insightful and thought-provoking.
  - Some colleges offer tips for writing essays and display samples
    - Tufts:  
<http://admissions.tufts.edu/apply/essay-questions/past-essays/>
    - College Board:  
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays>



# How Do You Make Yourself Stand Out?

- Supplemental essays – college-specific questions
- Demonstrate to the admissions counselor that you are a “good fit” – research is critical!
- Naviance – Journal  
<https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/main/about-me/>
- Examples: If you are interested in business and math
  - Duke – Match HS courses such as Calculus and Virtual Enterprise with Certificate in Markets and Management, FOCUS program – Modeling in Eco and Social Sciences, Economics major – finance minor, Statistical Science minor, Match love of sports, Engineering Club and fundraising activities to Relay for Life and Duke Engage Program
  - Michigan – Ross – LSA – Economics, Concentration in math with Mathematical Sciences, Organizational Studies, Dual degree option, Ross Habitat for Humanity, Sports Business Assoc.



# How Do You Make Yourself Stand Out?

Be careful – do not just “cut and paste”

- **Northwestern** – Kellogg School for Management is not for undergraduates. Undergrads can get certificate from the school. Many options for undergrads interested in business and math – MENU Program (Math with broad applications , 4 yr BA/MA program, Industrial Engineering and Management major – business and analytical skills, tie camp with Cats in the Classroom, tie love of tradition with primal scream
- **Cornell** – Applied Economics and Mgt (AEM) in the College of Arts & Sciences, School of Hotel Administration, Policy Analysis & Mgt in Human Ecology, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Economics major in College of Arts & Sciences



# How Do You Make Yourself Stand Out?

- **Demonstrate your interest**
  - Visit
  - Correspond *appropriately* with admissions counselors
  - Do your “homework” - investigate academic programs, special opportunities, current research being done by professors, extra-curricular opportunities
  - Make sure that you sign up to receive information
  - Read the blogs, join virtual chats
  - Be prepared for the interview



## How To Help Your Child Stand Out

- Help them develop a plan before their junior year of high school
- Encourage them to become self-advocates
- Help them direct or channel their strengths
- Instill a sense of confidence in them
- Be proud of their accomplishments
- Have realistic expectations

