

Navigating the College Admissions Process

Carlisle High School

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Tonight's Goals:

- **Mark your calendars** – We will discuss an overview of **what** your student should do and **when** as they prepare for the admissions process
- **What matters?** – We will discuss the most important factors used by admissions counselors in evaluating prospective students' applications
- **The Selective College Landscape** – we will discuss the unique features of the highly selective college admission experience



Suggested General Timeline

Semester Two of Sophomore Year

- Continue career research
- Begin standardized testing preparations
- Investigate potential college majors
- Intensify college research
 - Tools
 - Suggested links

**Remember recommendations are general and vary greatly for each individual's situation



Semester One of Junior Year

- PSATs
- Continue standardized testing preparations
- Solidify testing schedule/calendar and begin testing if appropriate
- Continue research into potential careers and college majors
- Meet with college admissions representatives in the McGowan Counseling Center
- Attend college fairs
- Narrow down which colleges you plan to visit



Semester Two of Junior Year

- Take SAT and/or ACT at least once
- Continue college research process and narrowing selections
- Visit colleges
- Make contacts with various college offices and personnel
- Plan ahead regarding letters of recommendation
- Consider registering for NCAA
- Start scholarship search



First Semester of Senior Year

- Repeat SATs/ACTs as necessary
- Take SAT Subject Tests if necessary
- Request letters of recommendation
- Complete applications
- Attend financial aid night
- Schedule interviews as necessary
- Visit campuses again
- Apply for scholarships
- Obtain FAFSA PIN



Semester Two of Senior Year

- Complete your FAFSA and other financial aid forms as necessary
- Continue to apply for scholarships
- Notify the McGowan Counseling Center if mid-year grades and forms are required
- Get accepted and celebrate!
- Review financial aid packages
- Make final decision, pay deposit by May 1st, and schedule placement tests



Some important criteria emphasized by the majority of admissions offices:

- High School Transcript
- High School Profile
- Standardized Test Scores
- Extracurricular Involvement, Leadership, Community Service, Special Talents
- Rigor of Course of Study
- Geographic considerations
- Financial considerations (need blind vs. need sensitive/need aware)
- Individual institutional metrics (unpublished)



Selective College Admissions

Understanding the
Landscape



What is a “selective” college?

The 100 most selective colleges accept as few as 6.1% of applicants (Harvard), and as many as 32.2% of applicants (William & Mary).

There are only 26 colleges that accept fewer than 15% of applicants.

--US News and World Report



However, about 99% of news stories about how tough it is to get into college refer to this very small sub-set of highly selective colleges.



The reality?

There are over 2000 four-year colleges in the US. On average, these colleges accept 65% of the applicants.



How is “selectivity” computed?

It is simply the number of students who are offered admission divided by the number who apply.

BUT— is it really that simple?



Colleges “Manage” Selectivity

The more who apply, the more can be rejected.

- ✓ “Fast Track” Applications
- ✓ Free Applications
- ✓ No Essay Applications
- ✓ VIP Applications

All are designed to increase the number of applications without increasing acceptances.



Admissions from the College Perspective

What are its goals and needs?

- Balance their budget—
Increase revenue
- Increase their rankings in
publications like USNWR
- Beat their competition.



How Do They Choose?

Highly selective colleges choose a freshman class as a whole.

They have far more qualified candidates than they can accept.

Just because you are *qualified* does NOT mean you will be offered admission.



When they choose the students they will admit, what are their goals?

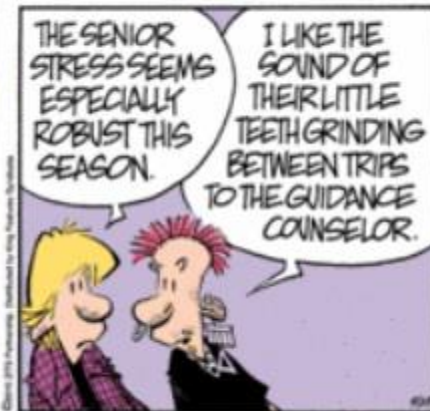
- Students who will meet institutional needs (which is different than looking for the 500 “best” students to admit).
- They are looking for diversity
 - Ethnic
 - Gender
 - Academic interest: major
 - Geographic: “home town”
 - Extracurricular interest
 - Athletic ability
 - Ability to pay



Highly selective colleges don't look for "well rounded" students. They look to admit a "well rounded" freshman class.



Zits



Rather than trying to be
“what they want,” look for
colleges who want who
you are.

There is NO research that suggests
that attending one of these 100
colleges gives you any long
term advantage over
attending a less selective
college, SO LONG AS YOUR
EFFORT TO LEARN AND
IMPROVE YOURSELF IS STRONG.



What do they look at?

(In order of importance)

- Grades in College Prep Courses
- Strength of Curriculum
- Test Scores (SAT or ACT)
- Essays
- Demonstrated Interest
- Class Rank
- Counselor Recommendation
- Teacher Recommendation
- Subject Tests Scores (AP)
- Interview
- Extracurricular Activities
- State Exam Scores (PSSA/Keystone)
- Work experience

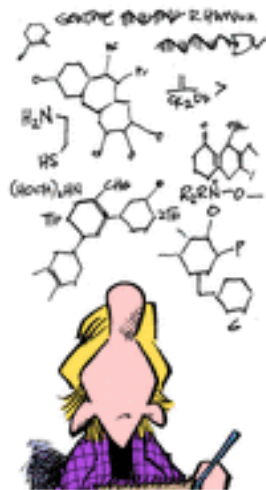
--Source: NACAC



General Advice

- Work Hard
- Develop a passion for something and pursue it.
- Broaden your search.
- Take responsibility for your education. Be engaged. Be active. Be passionate.

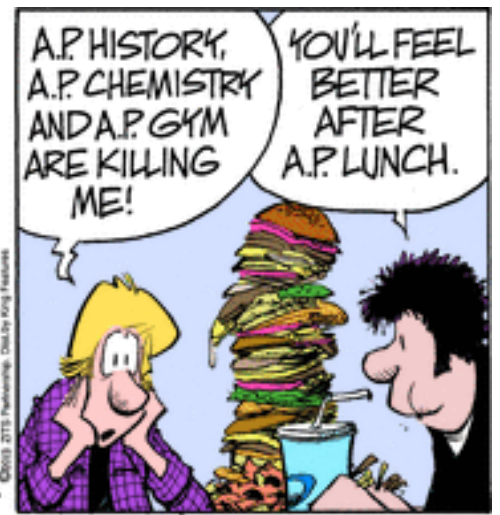




...96... 97... 98... 99...



Scott and Bob Gowenlock



General Advice

- Don't be a point counter. Good grades are important, but the focus should be on learning.
- Challenge yourself. Don't be afraid to take a course that will be a struggle for you. No one... NO ONE... gets through life without failure.

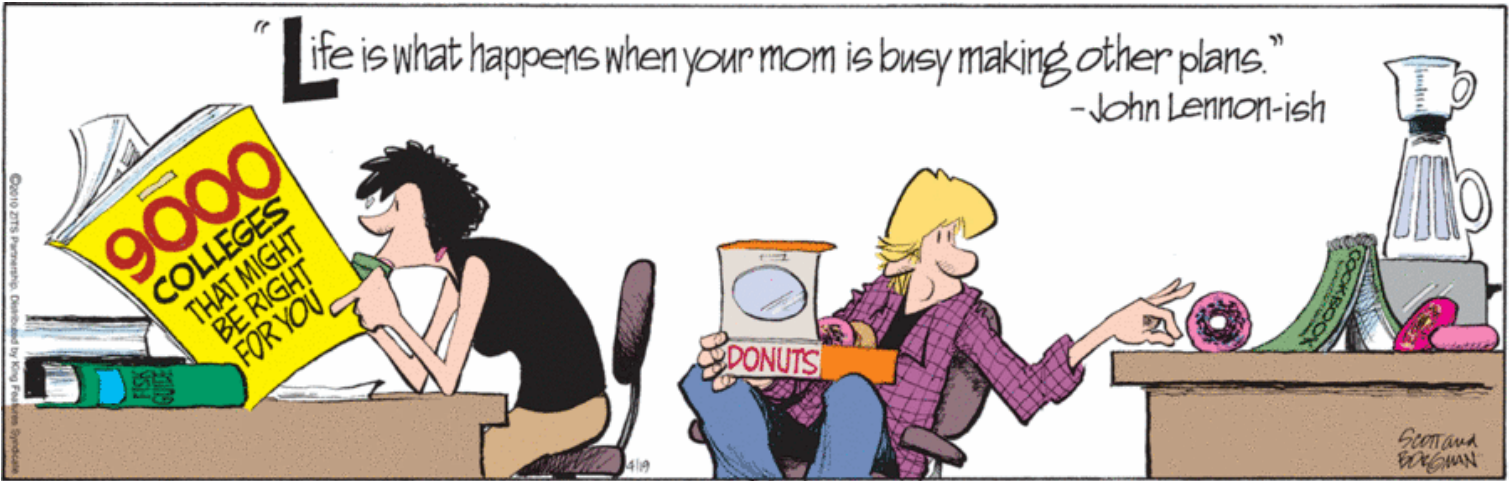


General Advice

- Participate in activities you love, and participate fully.
- Make an impact.
- Have Fun!
- Don't put all your eggs in one basket.
- Apply to a range of schools where you feel you fit.
- Don't make an emotional decision. Make an informed CONSUMER decision.



"Life is what happens when your mom is busy making other plans."
- John Lennon-ish



Highly Selective Colleges
cannot guarantee you a
good education!

A good education is a
cooperative effort
between the college
and YOU!

