



COLLEGE BOUND

YOUR APPLICATION MENTORSM

JANUARY 2009

VOLUME III, NUMBER 8

Who got in?

For those of you who read my last newsletter, there were three student case studies:

Student 1: "180"

Student 2: "Shoe Guy"

Student 3 "Swimmer"

The vast majority of the admissions counselors voted on the swimmer; the "180" student received the next most votes and then the "Shoe Guy". However, most colleges would have accepted all of them if they did not have to choose.

NEW ASSOCIATE

Diane Forman, MA, LDT-C

Joins College Bound Mentor

To work with students with

ADHD and/or Learning

Differences. See her advice

at the end of the newsletter.

SENIORS

January is always a time of hope and new beginnings, but this January, in particular sets the stage for change and optimism. Let's take the general optimistic mood and apply it to the waiting game for college.

Financial Aid/FAFSA Forms

Now is the time to get in your FAFSA forms even if you do not think you will qualify for any needs based aid. You will need to have the forms filled out to be eligible for Government subsidized and unsubsidized loans. Additionally, the money is given out on a first come first served basis, so in this case the early bird gets the worm.

Deferrals

Unfortunately, this year's class is among the largest ever and applications are up between 3-19% nationwide. As a result, deferrals are also up and come spring we will also see a lot of wait lists.

However, in keeping with a theme of hope, there are things you can do to improve your chances. If you get deferred and **still** want to go to the school, you can do the following to be considered.

- Write a letter re-expressing interest and reiterating why you are a good match for the school. If this is your first choice, let the college know.
- Send additional information that will make your case, e.g. first marking period grades (if they are consistent or better), awards, additional activities, etc.
- Identify the admissions counselor at the school who handles your region and send periodic e-mails to develop a relationship with them.

Free Parent/Student UPCOMING SEMINARS

**The College Search
in a Down Market:
*Opportunities and
Challenges and How
Take Advantage of
Both.***

February 3, 7:30 pm

**Colleges and Post
Secondary Options
for Students with
Learning Differences
and/or ADHD: *Making
a Successful Transition
from High School to
College.***

March 24, 7:30 pm

**Both are held at the
Scotch Plains Library**

Please send me your letters before they go out for a final review.

Additional Information

If you have **relevant**, additional information (as outlined above). You should also send first marking period grades to the more select colleges. If they are better or consistent with your previous work, send them to all schools on the list.

Admissions offices have piles upon piles of material that they need to sort through and attach to the appropriate college. If the information is relevant, send it, if it is not, then err on the side of caution.

So what constitutes relevant information:

- Scholarships or awards
- Additional leadership responsibilities
- Change in activities
- Articles in the paper highlighting your accomplishments
- National Merit Scholarship

Interviews

I have given most of you a mock interview, but if we haven't done that yet and you are applying to a college that grants interviews, please contact me to schedule one.

If you have not heard from schools that you know do grant interviews, contact your admissions representative and let them know that you have not heard from anyone yet. Given the increase in applications, the availability of alumni interviewers is smaller too. So make sure that you get on a list. Typically alumni interviews are organized by a volunteer alumna/ae, and they don't always capture all of the interviewees.

JUNIORS/SOPHOMORES

January is a great time to take stock of yourself and assess how you are spending your time and energy. It is also a great time to set goals for the coming year to shore up areas of weakness and go deeper into your areas of strength. So how do you know where to focus to prepare yourself for the college application process?

Leadership: Junior year is the year to pursue leadership in whatever you are involved in. If you are an athlete, can you become captain? If you are a journalist, can you become

editor-in-chief? If you are a scout, what do you need to achieve Eagle Scout or the Gold award? Identify what you need to do to achieve your goal and develop a plan.

Academic: Are you challenging yourself enough in your classes? Are you getting the best grades you can, or can a little extra studying help you change that B+ to an A? Set a goal to improve at least one grade.

Standardized tests: Do you do better on the SAT or the ACT? Identify which test works better for your test taking skills. Set a goal to focus on improving either test by the equivalent of 50-100 points in the SAT.

Extracurricular activities: Are you enjoying the activities you are doing? If not, find ones that you love? Are you doing enough? Are you doing too much? Set a goal to get involved deeper in something you love. This can mean taking a leadership position or spending more time practicing an instrument.

Athletics: If you are involved in athletics, figure out if you want to play in college. Junior year is the time to start contacting coaches. Set a goal to identify target schools and send out a letter and athletic resume to the team's coach.

Special talents: Do you have a special talent? Are you a gifted musician, actor or artist? Do you have a facility with languages? Are you a natural entrepreneur? Whatever your talent is, set a goal to pursue it to the fullest and share your talent with others. Take a risk with your talent by auditioning for a state orchestra or choir or entering a writing contest.

Intellectual curiosity: Do you have innate curiosity for a particular topic? Do you find yourself researching topics outside of school? If you have a love a science, identify a way to pursue that further through a summer research opportunity. Develop a plan to learn more.

Financial: Speak with your parents about their financial commitment to your college degree. Understand how much they are willing to pay and what you will need to contribute. Set a goal to understand the financial differences among schools and which schools are in your financial reach. Identify schools that can give merit awards.

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES AND/OR ADHD-TAKE INITIATIVE (Advice from Diane)

SENIORS

Self Advocacy

One of the differences between college and high school is that you must be your own advocate at the college level. You will have to seek the support you need by contacting the Office of Disability Services and making an appointment to receive your accommodations for each semester. It is critical that you are able to express your own strengths and weaknesses and also to know what accommodations will help you in your college level classes. Attend your exit IEP meeting with your parents and practice being your own self-advocate.

JUNIORS

Current Documentation

Now is the time for you to determine whether or not your Psycho-Educational Evaluation is current and includes the necessary testing required for the colleges on your personalized list. Traditionally, the guidelines state that testing has been completed within the past 3 years. However, when visiting college support services this past fall, some of the program directors have changed that requirement to the past 1-2 years.

SOPHOMORES

Standardized Testing

Allow enough time (4-6 weeks) to process the necessary paperwork when applying for testing accommodations for the College Board or the ACT. If you will be applying for accommodations for the PSAT, SAT, SAT Subject Test, or ACT you need to do the following:

1. Go to the College Board website and read through the Student Eligibility Form

<http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html>

2. View the ACT Policy for Documentation

<http://www.act.org/aap/disab/policy.html>

If you haven't already, please call to set up a sophomore or junior consultation.

Phone/Fax 908-789-8566

E-mail: [Lisa @collegeboundmentor.com](mailto:Lisa@collegeboundmentor.com)

www.collegeboundmentor.com

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