

College Admissions 2021



Annenberg Hall,
Harvard

WHAT COLLEGES (usually) LOOK FOR:

- Grades, Rigor of Coursework,
~~and Test Scores~~

(note that spring semester's grades won't be factored in and maybe not this fall's. That puts more emphasis on freshman through fall of junior year. If you need to explain any grade anomalies or trends, use the "Additional Information" space.

DECISION METRICS DURING COVID

Indeed, students' applications may be missing not only SAT and ACT scores, but also a semester or two of grades, since schools switched to pass/fail grading when they went online, or closed altogether. Schools will also have to make do without a semester's worth or more of extracurricular activities — sports, band, theater, volunteering and anything else that would help distinguish applicants from one another.

NPR – “How the Coronavirus Has Upended College Admissions 8/12/2020

IN A NORMAL YEAR,

*“ . . .most highly intelligent and
qualified students get rejected. In order
to get admitted, you’re going to need to
show that you’re not just smart, but
special, too.”*

-USA Today, “Here’s what it really takes to get into
the Ivy League these days,” April 26, 2017

Special
VS

Stereotype



Asian Stereotypes

- Academic focus
 - Math
 - Sciences – Physics, Biology, Chemistry
 - Computers/coding
 - Anything/everything STEM

Asian Stereotypes

- Music
 - Piano
 - Violin
 - Viola
 - Cello

Asian Stereotypes

- Sports
 - Tennis
 - Table Tennis
 - Badminton
 - Swimming
 - Track

Asian Stereotypes

- Extracurricular Activities
 - Chess
 - Orchestral Music
 - Robotics
 - Math & Science Olympiads



How do
you stand
out from
the crowd?

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR:

- Grades, Rigor of Coursework, and Test Scores
- Passion

“While your grades are important, depth of extracurricular activities and evidence that you’re not just an encyclopedia or test-taking machine are equally important. Admissions wants to see that applicants are human!”

--MIT Student

“Take the mitochondria...”

-- Stanford Student

Find Your Passion

- **The Arts**
 - Art Museums
 - Dance companies
 - Theatres
- **Biology & Medicine**
 - Institute for Systems Biology
 - Kaiser Permanente
 - UW Summer Teen Program
- **Business**
 - DECA
 - Washington Business Week

Find Your Passion, cont.

- Computer Science
 - Teen Hackathons
 - Coding Clubs
- Engineering/Architecture
 - Washington Aerospace Scholars
 - ACE Mentor Program
- General Science/Environmental Stewardship
 - Pacific Science Center
 - Lake Washington Watershed Internship
 - Bellevue Parks Well-KEPT program
- Law
 - JSA
 - Debate
 - ACLU
 - Unemployment Law Project

What can you do while
socially distanced?

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR:

- Grades, Rigor of Coursework, and Test Scores
- Passion
- Genuine School & Community Involvement

*“ ‘Assuming all factors are equal
(such as GPA, SAT/ACT scores, and
rigor of curriculum), then
community service details are an
important decision-making factor.’
“*

*“Tie-breaking nature of community service”
according to admissions officers:
Private 4-year colleges – 61%
Public 4-year colleges – 53%*

Forbes, April 5, 2018

GET INVOLVED!

Find and develop your passions through civic engagement & volunteering

- <http://www.kirklandwa.gov/Assets/Parks/Parks+PDFs/Where+to+Care+Guide.pdf>
- School clubs
- Most not-for-profits
- Local (or farther away) colleges. (*Though taking part in a program at an elite school will NOT improve your chances of being admitted.*)
- Internships online.
- Find a mentor to guide independent studies/projects.

“It doesn't seem like colleges look for a long list of activities so much as they look for a few to which you're really committed. Definitely emphasize depth over quantity.”

--University of Southern California student

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR:

- Grades, Rigor of Coursework, and Test Scores
- Passion
- Genuine School & Community Involvement
- Interpersonal Skills and Values

“I connected really well with the interviewer. I don’t know how much weight was given to her comments, but making a positive impression on the interviewer could not have hurt.”

--Duke University Student

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR:

- Grades, Rigor of Coursework, and Test Scores
- Passion
- Genuine School & Community Involvement
- Interpersonal Skills and Values
- EA/ED

According to [Business Insider](#), the Early Decision/Action acceptance rates for the class of 2021 show how much better ED/EA applicants' chances are:

Brown: 21.9% compared to 9%

Columbia: N/A for early decision/action;
regular acceptance rate was 6.04%

Cornell: 25.6% compared to 12.5%

Dartmouth: 27.8% compared to 10.4%

Harvard: 14.5% compared to 5.2%

U Penn: 22.0% compared to 9.2%

Princeton: 15.4% compared to 6.1%

Yale: 17.1% compared to 6.9%

However,

- Stanford emphasizes athletes and other special groups in EA.
- MIT emphasizes women, as it tries to achieve a 50/50 balance
- Be aware of how each school uses its EA/ED selection.

ADMISSIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Some schools will select more students from ED lists.
- Some will defer more students to make sure they have access to the maximum information.
- Colleges that allowed more gap years will have fewer openings in 2021

IF YOU ARE DEFERRED: Be sure to follow up with expression of commitment and additional information.

ADMISSIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Look For New Approaches

- Bowdoin – impromptu video questions
30 seconds to think; 2 minutes to answer in real time.

ADMISSIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC

What Colleges Care About

- [Care Counts in Crisis: College Admissions Deans Respond to COVID-19](#)

--A Project of the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b7c56e255b02c683659fe43/t/5ef9bf0b67d0746239a5b429/1593425675919/FINAL+Statement_+TTT+Deans+20200629.pdf

ADMISSIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC



With fewer parameters to consider, look for more emphasis on:

- Pre-pandemic grades
- Pre-pandemic activities and how you continued pursuing passions
- Personal skills and values
- Your fit & commitment to the college
- Recommendations
- Essays

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR:

- Grades, Rigor of Coursework, and Test Scores
- Passion
- Genuine School & Community Involvement
- Interpersonal Skills and Values
- EA/ED
- Essay

*“Essays are the one place where you
actually get to insert your own
personality into your application,
so make sure to put
a lot of time into them.”*

--USC Student

"My grades prevented me from being immediately discarded, but I think ultimately the main things that got me through the admissions process were teacher recommendations and college essays."

--Harvard Student

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR:

- Grades, Rigor of Coursework, and Test Scores
- Passion
- Genuine School & Community Involvement
- Interpersonal Skills and Values
- EA/ED
- Essay
- Recommendations

■ *“...grades and test scores are a must up until a certain point. At that threshold, whatever it may be, you have to be able to differentiate yourself...”*

--U Penn Student



TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- How long have you known the student and in what context?
- What are the first words that come to your mind
- to describe this student?
- In what grade level(s) was the student enrolled when you taught him/her?
- List the courses in which you have taught this student, including the level of course difficulty.

Teacher Recommendations, Cont.

RATING LEVELS FOR RESPONSES:

- No Basis
- Below Average
- Average
- Good (above average)
- Very good (well above average)
- Excellent (top 10%)
- Outstanding (top 5%)
- One of the top few I've encountered (top 1%)

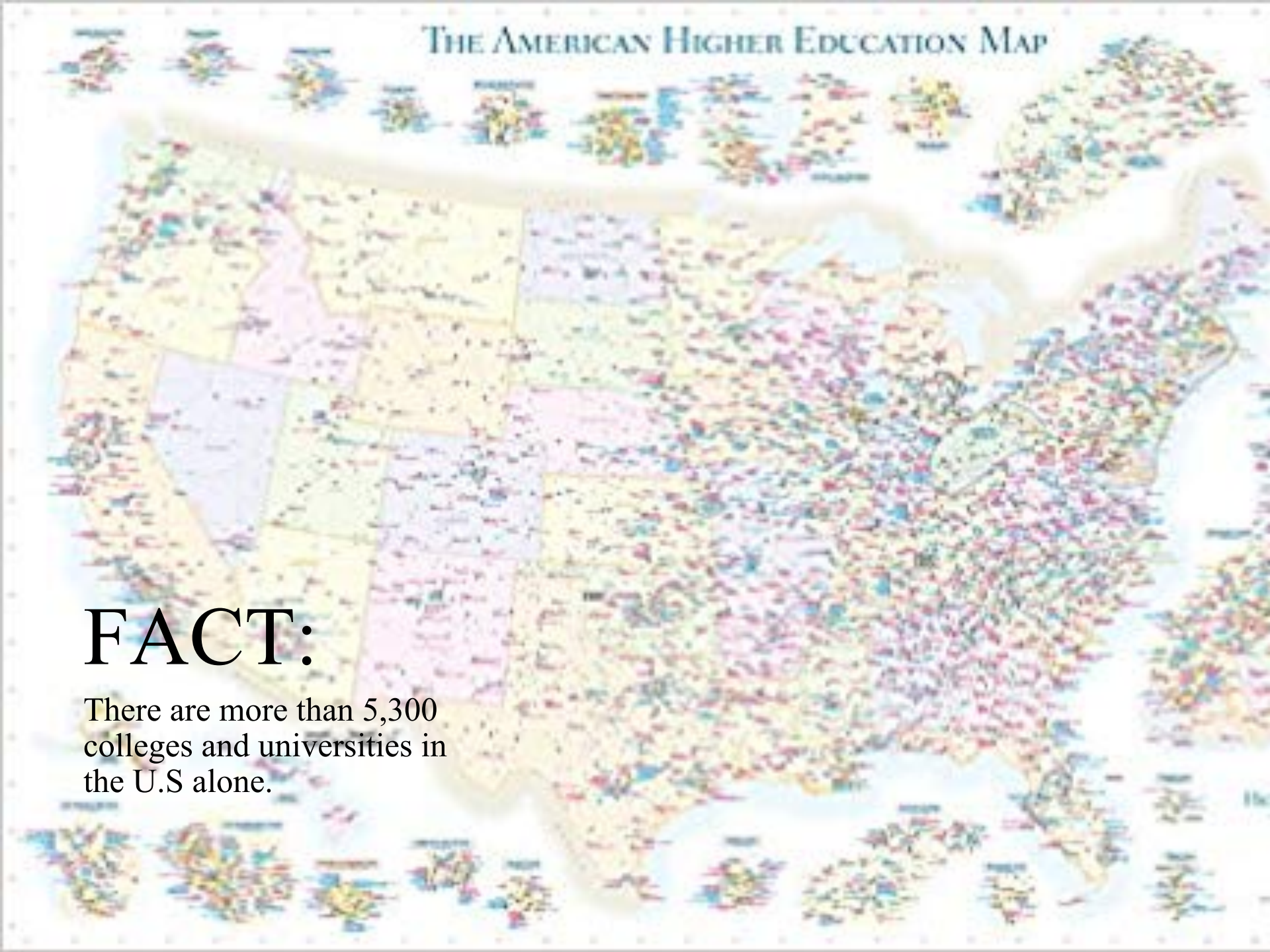
TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS, CONT.

- Academic achievement
- Intellectual promise
- Quality of writing
- Creative, original thought
- Productive class discussion
- Respect accorded by faculty
- Disciplined work habits
- Maturity
- Motivation
- Leadership

THE AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION MAP

FACT:

There are more than 5,300 colleges and universities in the U.S alone.



SO HOW DO YOU CHOOSE?

- Bragging rights?
- Best education for career choice?
- Appealing research opportunities?
- Alumni Network/Contacts?
- Location (Close to home or future job)
(or City vs. suburb vs. small town)
- Size (Personal connection with staff vs. wide range of opportunities)
- Cost (Public vs. Private; grad school plans?)

What you should look for in a college:

- A good fit academically (~~test scores~~)
- Majors/ programs
- Admission requirements
- Size
- Location
- Campus climate/values
- Available activities

Take the time to really know the colleges you're applying to.

SUCCESS IN BUSINESS

- Education of 2019 Fortune 500 CEOs

1. **Wal-Mart – Douglas McMillon**

BS in Business Administration – University of Arkansas

MBA in Finance – University of Tulsa

2. **Exxon Mobil – Darren Woods**

BS in Electrical Engineering – Texas A&M

MBA – Northwestern, Kellogg School of Management

3. **Apple, Inc. – Tim Cook**

BS, Industrial Engineering – Auburn

MBA – Duke, Fuqua School of Business

4. **Berkshire Hathaway – Warren Buffett**

BS, Business Administration – U Nebraska, Lincoln

MS, Economics – Columbia University

ONLY TOP 10 CEO TO EARN BACHELOR'S DEGREE AT AN IVY LEAGUE COLLEGE

5. Amazon – Jeff Bezos

BS, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Princeton

WHICH UNIVERSITIES CAN CLAIM THE MOST FAMOUS SCIENTISTS?

1. University of Tokyo
2. Dartmouth
3. University of Toronto
4. Duke
5. Imperial College, London
6. University of Edinburgh, UK
7. University of Paris, France
8. King's College, London
9. University College, London
10. ETH Zurich, Switzerland
11. Princeton
14. MIT
15. Harvard

From *Interesting Engineering*, 7 January 2017

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

--BEGINNING OF HIGH SCHOOL

Make sure your child knows the parameters.

- Financial Situation
- What (generally) it takes to get into college
- What the priorities are
- And that this is THEIR journey, through which you will support them.

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

--DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Listen to your child – They own this.
- Don't micro-manage the process.
- Offer help and support.
- Establish deadlines, and check in.
- Don't make it more stressful than it is already
- Don't “package” your child.

STUDENTS RESPONSIBILITIES

-- FROM THE START OF HIGH SCHOOL

- You have four years to build a resume
- Find (or at least narrow the choices on) your passions
- Establish a reputation with counselor, teachers and others
- Establish excellent study habits/a solid transcript
- Learn how you will be evaluated by teachers and others.

STUDENTS WHO SUCCEED:

- Own their process.
- Are passionate, motivated, determined.
- Put in the effort; don't take shortcuts.
- Show compassion & caring for others.
- Favor humility over arrogance.
- Aren't afraid to ask for help.

WHAT WILL YOUR APPLICATION INCLUDE?

- Fully completed accurate forms.
- Grades (transcript sent by schools)
- ~~▪ Test scores (sent by testing services)~~
- Awards
- Activities
- Essays & supplemental essays
- Teacher evaluation(s)
- Counselor's Statement

TAKE AWAYS:

- Keep up your grades
- Focus on learning
- Be involved in the classroom
- Explore your passions.
- Get involved with your community – depth, not breadth.
- Be a good person – Your personal integrity and how you treat others matter!
- Deeply explore your college choices.
- Create an essay that shows your strengths and personality in an engaging, authentic way.



GOOD LUCK!

Activities

Art

9, 10, 11, 12

Year

8 hr/wk, 46 wk/yr

Continue

Private instructor for 3 classes of 8 3rd graders, Art Is Us, Pacific Northwest (weekend multimedia art classes for elementary students)

Inspired 8 & 9 yr olds to love of art: introduced famous artists & techniques using, discussions, prints, demonstrations, and hands-on projects.