

# The Latest Trends in College Admissions

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# Overview

After Mrs. Bedrosian spent a week at the Summer Institute for College Admissions (SICA) in Boston, which was sponsored by the College Board and Harvard College, this slideshow will share the salient points learned from a week of workshops with other college counselors, admissions counselors, and Deans of Admissions at various colleges and universities.

This information will help guide our Villa Jems and families through the planning and application process.

# Selecting a College & the Search Process

- Admissions stressed the importance of good fit and what the student will bring to the community once they attend. Admissions is trying to build a class, just as students are trying to find their place for the next four or so years.
- Good academic fit means the student will be appropriately challenged and offer much to the classroom environment.
- They are also looking for students who are invested in the college community and what they will do once they graduate from that particular college.
- Since this is probably the most competitive time in college admissions, it is important for the student to make it very clear that their “hook” will be in the selection process.

# The College Essay or Personal Statement

- Remember your audience! This is the student's opportunity to share her personality to the admissions office.
- Remember not to share too much....admissions wants to see how the student will positively add to the community.
- The student needs to remember to be herself! Who is the person beyond the data, the classes, and even the letters? How does the student perceive herself? How does she communicate her personality, interests, and so forth?

# The Numbers (GPA/test scores) vs. Supplemental Information

- From Harvard to University of Virginia, the Deans of Admissions stressed that the GPA & the test scores are not the end all in the admissions process. Of course they want the student to be successful at the college level, but is the level of their courses & how they performed in those courses that plays the major role in the application process.
- Mrs. Bedrosian took part in case studies of actual Harvard applicants, and each case study told a story of the student. Some high schools did not even report GPA or rank; the major question that was asked was: “Do they have the ability to do the coursework well here at the college? Is the student a life-long learner?”
- State schools do have a different approach because they receive a large number of applications and need to follow mandates outline by the states, such as UTexas Austin, UVA, and Penn State.

# Letters of Recommendation

- Whether it is the teacher or counselor letter, these letters are taken into serious consideration in the application process.
- How does the student perform in the classroom?
- What anecdotes can the counselor or teacher share that will help the admissions committee get a full picture of this student?
- It is so important for the student to build relationships at the school and maintain positive connections at Villa. The admissions counselors can see that through the letters, the essay, and even the evaluation form completed by the teachers on the next slide.



# Interviews, Visits, Building Connections to the College

- One of the major factors that impact admissions are the connections the student makes with the individual college admissions counselors, the college, faculty members, and so forth.
- When the college representatives perceive that there will be a successful personality connection and match to the college, it can actually make the decision.
- When a faculty member feels that the student will positively impact their department, they will advocate for that student. Humanities, the arts, and STEM professors were discussed at length.
- Always be mindful of the student's presence on social media; it can actually negatively impact admissions.



# Summer Programs, Specialty Programs & College Courses

- In every conversation with admissions, they stressed the importance of seeing how a student will perform at the college level.
- They also stressed the importance of how a student spends her time OUTSIDE of the classroom. Have they done a summer pre-college program? Have they done a college course online or at a college?
- Has a student had experience in their intended major (if they have one), such as engineering, nursing, STEM, and humanities? The colleges are currently seeing low enrollment numbers in the humanities versus STEM majors.
- Is the student more than just math/science or humanities? Are they well-versed and interested in a variety of disciplines?

# The “Hook”-How does a student stand out?

- The word “hook” was used on a regular basis during SICA. How does this student stand out? It’s not the test scores or the GPA; it’s the human being behind the application. What will this student bring to the campus and for the college in the future?
- Colleges are also very interested in service and serving the community at large; giving time to others and reaching out to others is something most colleges look at in the application process.

# Financial Aid-What do you need to know?

- FAFSA becomes available October 1st; make sure to ask the financial aid offices when there are questions. They will help you.
- Make sure to fill out all forms required by EACH institution (CSS profile, institution forms, etc.), as they are all different. Submit everything on time.
- Here are some links that will help in the process:

<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

<https://www.pheaa.org/college-planning/fafsa/help-events.shtml>

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>

<https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>

# Family & Parent Responsibility-You are the support system!

- The SICA faculty stressed the importance of the family supporting the student throughout the process.
- The student should be communicating with admissions and advocating for themselves throughout the process.
- The family can help with conversations, financial aid, but they are there to consult and support the student.
- Find a “college free” zone and a weekly check-in time, as a family, to keep this process fun & exciting. We want to try to reduce the stress and worry.

# A Special Note Regarding Highly Selective Colleges...

For schools with lower acceptance rates (<20%) additional factors come into play:

1. It's not just the numbers!
2. Other connections/fits to the university's needs are vital.
3. Interviews are VERY important-please prepare & practice.
4. In all close calls, the ties go to "nice" people. They want people who will take part in a positive community.

# Closing Remarks

- Finding the good fit university for a student is the most important part of this process.
- It is always good for a student to ask admissions questions, do the research about programs and mission statements, and utilize every part of the application to enhance the experience for the admissions committee as they read through the student's application. They want to see the student come alive!
- These topics will be covered over the course of each academic year in the classroom with student, in counseling meetings, and during evening programs at Villa.