

Reframing College Admissions



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

- Admissions File: Demographic Information, Transcript / Test Scores, Recommendations, Essays, Extra Curricular Activities, Interview Notes, Portfolios, High School Report
- Candidates Sorted: Alphabetical, Geographical, Major or School Within University, Academic Index Groupings, Special Categories, order which application was received
- Individual or Teams of Readers work collaboratively, sometimes in conjunction with computer generated data or screenings to make recommendations to admissions committee



FORMULA VS. JUDGEMENT



- The formula approach generally includes high-school GPA or rank and possibly test scores
- Judgmental (holistic) approach usually implies a review of the applicant's entire file, including the complete application, essays, recommendations, and other information

FORMULA

- **Curriculum Quality** Exceptional (with at least 5 or more AP courses) 7 points Strong (with several honors or AP courses) 5 Above average (exceeds core minimums) 3 Average college-prep curriculum 2 Below average (minimal core completed) 1 Poor (deficiencies in core requirements) 0
- **Course Load** 5 or more core courses each year 5 points 4.75 to 4.99 courses each year 3 4.50 to 4.74 courses each year 2 4.00 to 4.49 courses each year 1 fewer than 4.00 courses each year 0
- **Senior Year Courses** Strong 3 points Average 1 Weak 0
- **SAT Scores** 1400-1600 5 points 1200-1390 4 1000-1190 3 900-990 2 700-890 1 690 or below 0
- **Scholastic Awards and Achievements** Exceptional (numerous recognitions) 5 points Above average (several recognitions) 3 Moderate (in at least one area) 2 None identified 0

JUDGEMENT

- Essay (up to 5 points for exceptional writing, judged on the basis of content, style, and originality)
- Personal achievement (up to 5 points, based on evidence of persistence, character and commitment to high ideals, and level of awards. In addition, points may be added if there is evidence of barriers overcome, significant employment while maintaining academic excellence, service to school and community, evidence of having taken advantage of opportunities, displaying maturity, and evidence of being a self-starter and role model).
- Geography (up to 5 points for coming from an underrepresented school.)
- Strength of school (up to 5 points from a highly competitive school.)
- Background characteristics (up to 5 points for first generation going to college, underrepresented minority, interest in major that attracts the opposite sex, such as males in nursing or females in engineering.)
- Alumni relationships (up to 5 points)

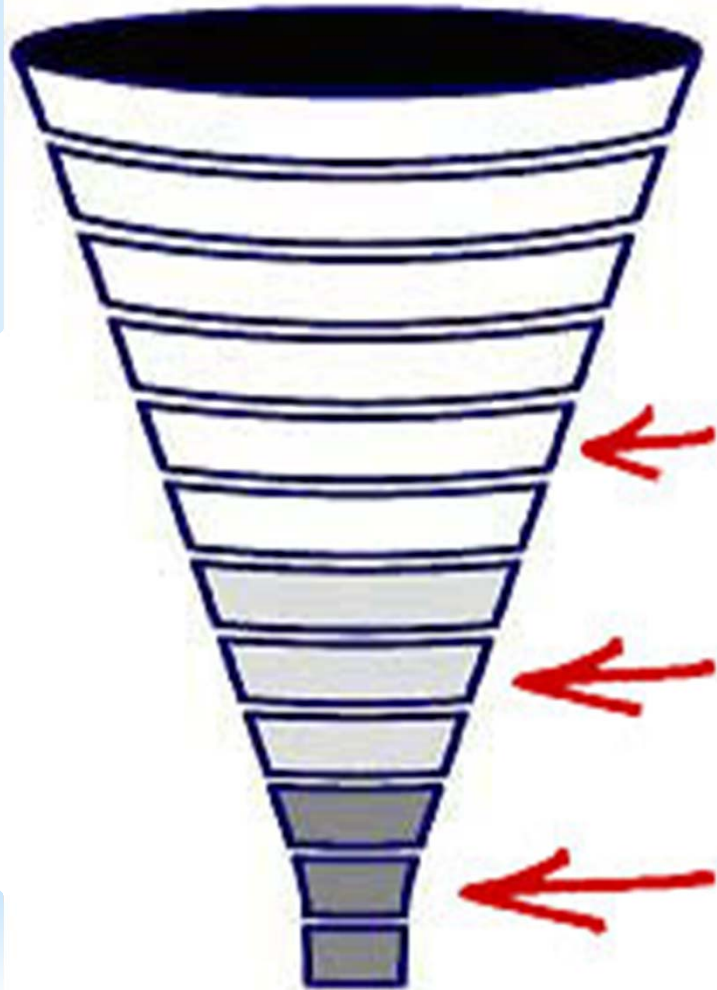
Admissions Index Chart

TEST SCORES		GPA																				
ACT	SAT	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.0
36	1600	142	140	139	137	135	133	132	130	128	126	124	123	121	119	117	116	114	112	110	108	107
35	1580	140	138	137	135	133	131	130	128	126	124	122	121	119	117	115	114	112	110	108	106	105
34	1530	138	136	135	133	131	129	128	126	124	122	120	119	117	115	113	112	110	108	106	104	103
33	1460	136	134	133	131	129	127	126	124	122	120	118	117	115	113	111	110	108	106	104	102	101
32	1410	134	132	131	129	127	125	124	122	120	118	116	115	113	111	109	108	106	104	102	100	99
31	1360	133	131	130	128	125	124	123	121	119	117	115	114	112	110	108	107	105	103	101	99	98
30	1320	131	129	128	126	124	122	121	119	117	115	113	112	110	108	106	105	103	101	99	97	96
29	1280	129	127	126	124	122	120	119	117	115	113	111	110	108	106	104	103	101	99	97	95	94
28	1240	127	125	124	122	120	118	117	115	113	111	109	108	106	104	102	101	99	97	95	93	92
27	1210	126	124	123	121	119	117	116	114	112	110	108	107	105	103	101	100	98	96	94	92	91
26	1170	124	122	121	119	117	115	114	112	110	108	106	105	103	101	99	98	96	94	92	90	89
25	1140	122	120	119	117	115	113	112	110	108	106	104	103	101	99	97	96	94	92	90	88	87
24	1100	120	118	117	115	113	111	110	108	106	104	102	101	99	97	95	94	92	90	88	86	85
23	1060	118	116	115	113	111	109	108	106	104	102	100	99	97	95	93	92	90	88	86	84	83
22	1030	117	115	114	112	110	108	107	105	103	101	99	98	96	94	92	91	89	87	85	83	82
21	990	115	113	112	110	108	106	105	103	101	99	97	96	94	92	90	89	87	85	83	81	80
20	950	113	111	110	108	106	104	103	101	99	97	95	94	92	90	88	87	85	83	81	79	78
19	910	111	109	108	106	104	102	101	99	97	95	93	92	90	88	86	85	83	81	79	77	76
18	860	109	107	106	104	102	100	99	97	95	93	91	90	88	86	84	83	81	79	77	75	74
17	820	108	106	105	103	101	99	98	96	94	92	90	89	87	85	83	82	80	78	76	74	73
16	770	106	104	103	101	99	97	96	94	92	90	88	87	85	83	81	80	79	76	74	72	71
15	720	104	102	101	99	97	95	94	92	90	88	86	85	83	81	79	78	76	74	72	70	69

Classroom Performance				Test Scores		Strength of Course Work	
Academic Achievement Rating	GPA	Class Rank (0–50% to 4-yr coll.)	Class Rank (51–100% To 4-yr coll.)	SAT I (V + M)	SAT II: Subjects (Sum of highest 3)	No. of Academic Semesters 10–12 grade	Program Rigor (in relation to what's available)
5	3.9+	Top 2%	Top 10%	1500 +	2100+	32+	Most demanding
4	3.8	3–5%	10–20%	1400–1490	1950–2090	30–31	Very demanding
3	3.7	5–10%	20–30%	1300–1390	1800–1940	27–29	Demanding
2	3.5–3.6	10–25%	30–50%	1200–1290	1600–1790	24–26	Average
1	Below 3.5	Bottom 75%	Bottom 50%	Below 1200	Below 1600	Below 24	Weak

Academic Qualities Rating	
5	Extremely impressive and clearly demonstrated intellectual qualities.
4	Strong intellectual activity. Much evidence that candidate is fully engaged in learning.
3	Shows some intellectual depth, initiative, and curiosity.
2	Demonstrates routine academic interest and activity.
1	Little evidence of seeking intellectual challenges, either inside or outside the classroom.

ADMISSIONS FUNNEL



Applicants

Admits:

Early/Regular Decision

Recruited Athletes

Legacies

Under Represented

Minorities

Majors

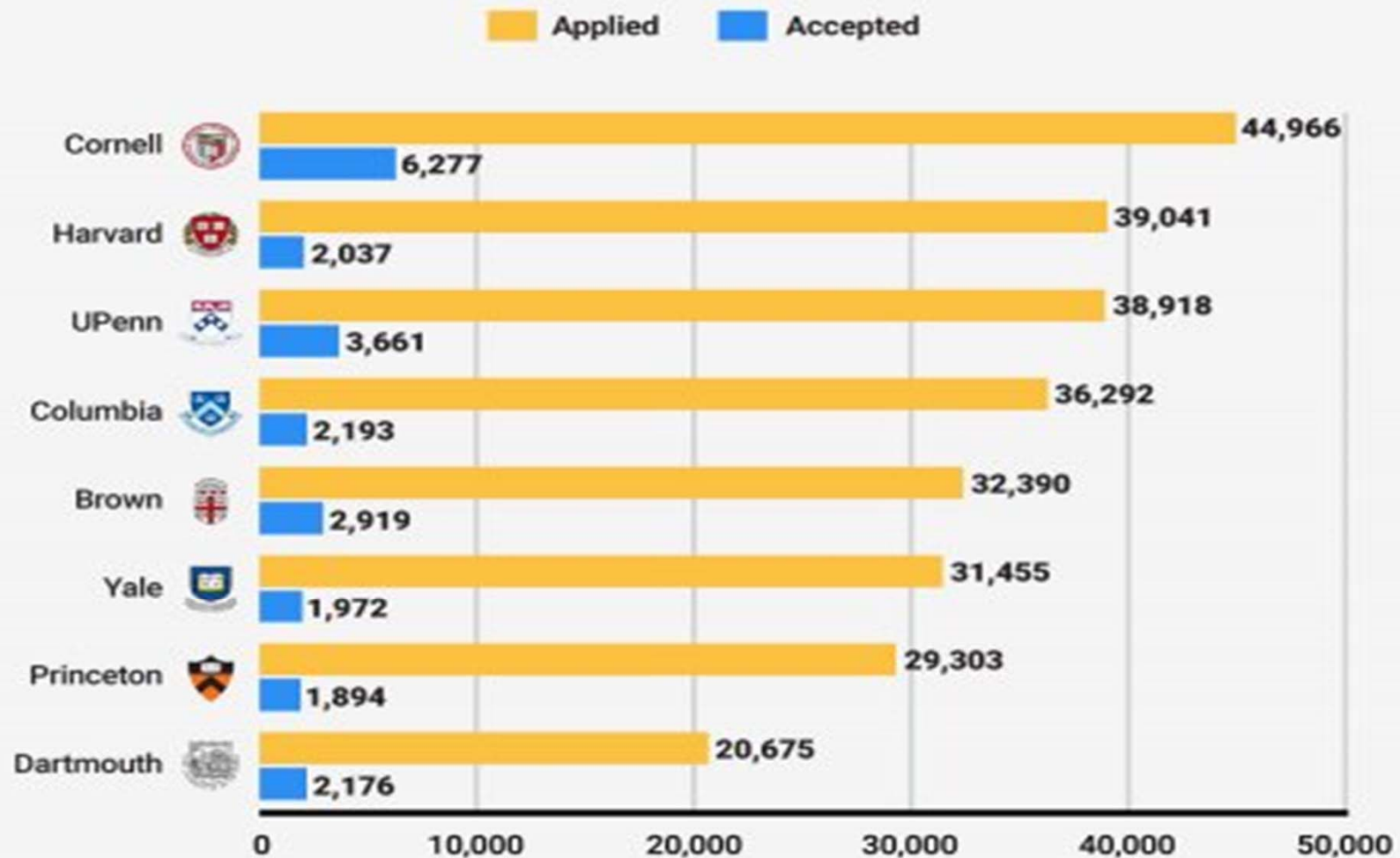
Male/Female

Geographic Location

Freshmen Class Size

First Year Class

IVY LEAGUE ADMISSIONS, CLASS OF 2020



WW-P ACCEPTANCES 2014-2016

College	Applied	Accepted	College	Applied	Accepted
Boston College	172	25	Johns Hopkins	294	28
Brown University	245	13	Lehigh	200	37
California Tech	64	8	MIT	168	19
California, Berkeley	256	50	Michigan	463	86
Carnegie Mellon	437	116	Northwestern	212	14
Case Western	198	70	UPENN	415	15
Chicago	206	14	Princeton	361	32
Columbia	320	9	Rice	114	12
Cornell	487	58	Southern California	142	22
Dartmouth	109	9	Stanford	121	3
Duke	236	23	Tufts	178	17
Georgetown	104	8	Vanderbilt	92	13
Harvard	158	5	Wash Univ. St. Louis	129	11
			Yale	157	10

A SHIFT IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS



A new movement is trying to refocus admissions away from purely individual academic achievement and toward something you can't measure with aptitude tests and a resume padded with public service points: real concern with others and the common good.



More than 140 key stakeholders in college admissions, including almost 100 college admissions deans, have now endorsed a new report from the *Harvard Graduate School of Education* that calls for fundamental changes in the admissions process — changes, they hope, that will mitigate the current rivalry, stress, and inauthenticity that accompany many college applications.

TURNING THE TIDE RECOMMENDATIONS



- An increase in equity and access for economically disadvantaged students
- A reduction of undue academic pressure in high school
- Emphasis on authentic community service and engagement with the public good

COALITION FOR ACCESS APPLICATION



COALITION for ACCESS,
AFFORDABILITY, and SUCCESS

WHY THE COALITION MEMBER SCHOOLS STUDENTS COUNSELORS, TEACHERS,
MENTORS, & CBOS

Coalition Expands
Access with New
Eligibility Criteria ►

49 Colleges and
Universities
Accepting the
Coalition Application
this Fall ►

The Coalition
Partners with
Up Next.
Learn more ►

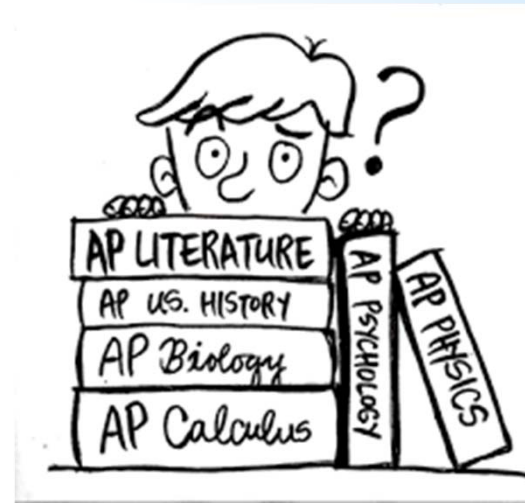
MAKING COLLEGE
AFFORDABLE
AND
ACCESSIBLE
FOR ALL STUDENTS

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY OF ACTIVITIES



Admissions offices should send a clear message that numerous extracurricular activities or long “brag sheets” do not increase students’ chances of admission. Applications should state plainly that students should feel no pressure to report more than two or three substantive extracurricular activities and should discourage students from reporting activities that have not been meaningful to them. Applications should provide room to list perhaps no more than four activities or should simply ask students to describe two or three meaningful activities narratively. Applications should underscore the importance of the quality and not the quantity of students’ extracurricular activities. Admissions offices should define students’ potential for achievement in terms of the depth of students’ intellectual and ethical engagement and potential.

OVERLOADING OF AP COURSES



Admissions offices should convey to students that simply taking large numbers of AP courses per year is often not as valuable as sustained achievement in a limited number of areas. While some students can benefit from and handle large numbers of AP courses, many students benefit from taking smaller numbers of advanced courses. Too often there is the perception that these students are penalized in the admissions process.

DISCOURAGE OVERCOACHING



Admissions offices should warn students and parents that applications that are “overcoached” can jeopardize desired admission outcomes. Admissions officers, school counselors and other stakeholders should remind parents and students that authenticity, confidence, and honesty are best reflected in the student’s original voice. Admission officers should consider inviting students (and families) to reflect on the ethical challenges they faced during the application process.

REDUCING TEST PRESSURE



Admissions offices should work to relieve undue pressure associated with admission tests (SAT and ACT). Options for reducing this pressure include: making these tests optional, clearly describing to applicants how much these tests actually “count” and how they are considered in the admissions process, and discouraging students from taking an admissions test more than twice. Colleges should tell students that taking the test more than twice is very unlikely to meaningfully improve students’ scores. Colleges should also be asked to justify the use of admissions tests by providing data that indicates how scores are related to academic performance at their particular institution.

EXPAND THINKING ABOUT “GOOD” COLLEGES



Admissions officers and school counselors should challenge the misconception that there are only a handful of excellent colleges and that only a handful of colleges create networks that are vital to job success. It is incumbent upon parents to challenge this misconception as well. There is a broad range of excellent colleges across the country, and students who attend these colleges are commonly successful later in life in the full array of professions. There are many paths to professional success, and students and parents should be far more concerned with whether a college is a good fit for a student than how high status it is.

CONTRIBUTION TO ONE'S FAMILY



The admissions process should clearly send the message to students, parents and other caregivers that not only community engagement and service, but also students' family contributions, such as caring for younger siblings, taking on major household duties or working outside the home to provide needed income, are highly valued in the admissions process. Far too often there is a perception that high-profile, brief forms of service tend to count in admissions, while these far more consistent, demanding, and deeper family contributions are overlooked. Students should have clear opportunities to report these family contributions on their applications.

ASSESSING STUDENTS' DAILY AWARENESS OF AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO OTHERS



The admissions process should seek to assess more effectively whether students are ethically responsible and concerned for others and their communities in their daily lives. The nature of students' day-to-day conduct should be weighed more heavily in admissions than the nature of students' stints of service.

- Is meaningful and sustained
- Enables them to work on a collective activity that takes on community challenges
- Includes authentic experiences with diversity
- Involves time and space for intentional reflection and gratitude

BEST COMMUNITY SERVICE PRACTICES



- Start with interests and preferences, consider service opportunities that overlap with a passion
- Revisit how students spend time after school - the student may want to take some of that time to find a service opportunity
- Stress service that is local, skill-building, and emotionally and ethically engaging
- The more a student is personally invested in the work, the more sustainable that work is likely to be

COMMUNITY SERVICE RESOURCES



www.volunteermatch.org/

www.dosomething.org/us

www.nationalservice.gov/vcla

www.state.nj.us/state/programs/dos_program_volunteerism_form.html

www.westwindsornj.org/volunteer_opportunities_main.html

www.plainsboronj.com/328/Current-Volunteer-Opportunities

CLOSING THOUGHTS



"Education happens across a spectrum of settings and in infinite ways, and college has no monopoly on the ingredients for professional achievement or a life well lived." - Frank Bruni