Highly Selective Colleges
Agenda

- Review PowerPoint
- Great Sorting Game
- Mock Admissions
- Questions
What is a highly selective college?

- Typically, if a school admits fewer than 50% of applicant pool it’s considered “selective.”
- The Most selective schools admit fewer than 30%.
- Many “Ivies” admit 15% or less of applicants.
Highly Selective Colleges

- There is no doubt these institutions represent the most competitive and sought after higher educational experience in the country.
- But there is considerable skepticism as to the assumption that one MUST attend an Ivy league school to be successful, fulfilled, or happy.
- Before you jump into this highly competitive arena, do some soul searching to see if the quest for an Ivy league school is truly the appropriate path to take. The benefits may be wonderful, but the emotional cost may be great.
Data from the 2012 Admission Trends Survey of NACAC

- Explaining some of the numbers that contribute to growing selectivity:

- New slides have not yet been created by NACAC to include in this presentation, but we may reference some changes from this material.
Actual and Projected Numbers of High School Graduates, 1974-75 to 2020-21

2012-13
Private = 284,820
Public = 2,912,480
Total = 3,197,300

NOTE: Line indicates where actual numbers end and projections begin.
Average Number of Applicants, by Institution Type

SOURCE: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) online Data Center. U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Each year of data includes four-year, not-for-profit, baccalaureate degree-granting, Title IV-participating colleges in the U.S. that provided current year admission data. Open admission institutions are excluded. The n varies from 1,194 to 1,264 institutions.
Average Acceptance and Yield Rates

SOURCE: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) online Data Center. U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Each year of data includes four-year, not-for-profit, baccalaureate degree-granting, Title IV-participating colleges in the U.S. that provided current year admission data. Open admission institutions are excluded. The n varies from 1,194 to 1,264 institutions.
Percentage of Colleges Reporting Increases in Early Decision and Early Action Applications, 2002 - 2011

Early Decision and Early Action Acceptance Rates, 2004 - 2011

Factors Showing Most Change in “Considerable Importance” Rating: 1993 to 2011

Percentage of Colleges Attributing Importance to the Influence of Student Characteristics on the Evaluation of Factors in the Admission Decision: Fall 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Considerable or Moderate Importance</th>
<th>Limited Importance</th>
<th>No Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-generation status</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school attended</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State or county of residence</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni relations</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to pay</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State of College Admission 2012

Applications Per Admission Officer, by Acceptance Rate Category: 2005 - 2011

What causes these trends?

- Population bubble.
- Online applications
- More foreign applicants
- Students applying to more colleges
  - In 2012 25% submitted 7+ applications
- Use of the common application
  - [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
  - Be aware of supplements for each school
Some Trends & Statistics (from 2000 and 2014)

- Brown: 30,432 apps admitted 2,619 (8.6%)
  583 were admitted early
  16,808 apps & 16% admit in 2000

- Dartmouth: 22,416 apps admitted 2,252 (11.5%)
  ED admission rate 27.9%
  10,188 apps & 21% admit in 2000

- Harvard: 34,295 apps admitted 2,023 (5.9%)
  ED admission rate 21%
  18,691 apps & 10.5% admit 2000

- Stanford: 42,167 apps admitted 2,138 (5.07%)
  748 through EA.  958 Waitlisted
  18,363 apps & 13% admit in 2000
# Examples of Highly Selective Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amherst College</th>
<th>Brown University</th>
<th>Caltech</th>
<th>U of Chicago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbia University</td>
<td>Cornell University</td>
<td>Dartmouth College</td>
<td>Duke University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown University</td>
<td>Harvard University</td>
<td>Harvey Mudd College</td>
<td>U of I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIT</td>
<td>U Michigan Ann Arbor</td>
<td>Northwestern</td>
<td>U N. Carolina @ Chapel Hill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## More highly selective schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>U of Pennsylvania</th>
<th>Pomona College</th>
<th>Princeton University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notre Dame U of Pennsylvania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice University</td>
<td>Stanford University</td>
<td>Swarthmore College</td>
<td>University of Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington U St. Louis</td>
<td>Wellesley College</td>
<td>Wheaton College</td>
<td>Williams College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Flagship Public Universities

- Receiving record numbers of applications.
- As a result, becoming more competitive.
- Out of State process is often QUITE SIGNIFICANTLY more competitive than for those applying from in-state.
- Make a note that admission averages as printed in resource guides may not be as accurate for our students applying from out-of-state.
- EARLY APPLICATIONS MAY BE HELPFUL!
- BE PATIENT! Will often hold out-of-state decisions until later in admission cycle to give in-state students “first shot.”
Rolling/regular/selective VS. Highly competitive

- At a selective school, like Illinois Wesleyan, admission is done on at least a modified rolling basis and candidates are held up to an admission standard goal as opposed to being compared to one another.
- The schools identify what they are seeking and students are admitted or denied based on those standards.
Highly Selective Admission

- At a most highly competitive school candidates are compared to each other and read in a competitive pool. Institutional priorities will be considered:
  - Special Talents
  - Development issues
  - Diversity - religious, geographic, ethnic
  - Gender balance
  - Balancing academic program enrollments
Things that don’t matter much to Harvard, Stanford, Princeton or Duke

- Class Rank- that’s okay, we don’t have one.
- Reported GPA- they recalculate it
  - You do still need to earn good grades in challenging courses.
- Perfect test scores
- Lots of trophies for chess, mathletes, etc
Diverse Admission Plans Explained:

- Non-restrictive Application Plans:
  - Regular Decision
  - Rolling Admission
  - Early Action

All have May 1 reply date for student
Restrictive Admission Plans – Allow colleges to limit students from applying to other early plans:

- **Early Decision**
  - Commitment required
  - Must reply by date specified (prior to May 1)

- **Restrictive Early Action**
  - No early commitment
  - May wait to reply until May 1
WHAT IS THE COMMON APPLICATION?

- The Common Application is a not-for-profit organization that serves students and member institutions by providing an admission application – online and in print – that students may submit to any of our over 500 members.

- www.commonapp.org

Do not confuse it with others that attempt to charge you for the same services!!!!
Recommendations

- These are key and verify other portions of the application.
- Teacher recommendations should speak to how a student performs in class, intellectual ability, willingness to be a cooperative learner, etc.
- **Should request teacher recommendations by October 1st. Be sure to give the teacher a deadline 2 weeks prior to the actual deadline!**
- **Students will need to complete the blue Falcon Information Sheet for a counselor recommendation. Can be turned in with their transcript requests, at least 10 school days prior to the actual deadline. (Beware of holiday breaks).**
All of the Ivies and most of the schools listed previously all award financial aid on the basis of need. There are NO merit-based scholarships.

Most of these schools have an Early Decision/Early Action plan which might make admission easier, but not by much. Students need to realize the enormous commitment and ED application demonstrates.
ALL students who apply to several of the most selective schools need to have appropriate mid-range and safety schools. Students need to find mid-range and safeties which have similar academic and social ambience as the most selective schools and apply to one of them as well. Biggest mistake is applying to a safety they don’t want to attend!
Steps A Student Can Take To Be An Effective Self-Advocate @ SelectiveColleges

- Maintain a rigorous, realistic, and well-balanced academic program throughout the senior year.
- Assume leadership roles in school and community service activities.
- Strategize effectively with regard to standardized tests.
Strategies Continued

- Research and Select college options with great care to making good matches.
- Make sure to include safe, mid-range, and reach schools. (consult your counselor for assistance in this area.)
- Decide wisely regarding early action and/or early decision applications.
More Strategies

- Understand the importance of writing an outstanding, error free application with original, well-drafted/crafted and genuine essays.
- Take the lead in building relationships with admission officers. Make use of the high school visit, college fairs, campus visits and area-wide receptions. Maintain contact with these admission people, and follow up on interviews.
More Strategies

- Get a reasonable number of outstanding and supportive recommendations.
- Submit supporting documentation of any special admission categories. i.e. art portfolio, musical tape, examples of creative writing.
- Explain any challenges the admission office should take into consideration.
- Continue to update the application with important new information, even after the application deadline.
Final Strategies

- Make sure to take advantage of any opportunity to do an interview.

- If deferred (EA/ED) or waitlisted, ask for your school counselor’s assistance.
What parents can do to assure this is not a destructive experience for students

- Make sure your child (and you) have researched a real range of college options
- If you visit, visit a range of schools— not just the impossible ones
- That midrange schools match dream schools
- Help your child understand the unpredictability of the process and prepare for possible disappointment
Parent role

- Absolutely avoid comparison with siblings, cousins, and friends of children.
- Have financial discussions with your child about what is affordable so there are no surprises if a financial aid package isn’t what you expect.
- Affirm that you will be proud of your child no matter what the outcome!!!!!!!
Resources for PowerPoint

- **Mary Lee Hoganson** - College Admission Consultant, University of Chicago Laboratory H.S. and Homewood-Flossmoor High School, Past President NACAC
- **Sue Biemeret** - College Consultant, Stevenson High School
- Slides from Naviance.com
- Slides from NACAC admissions trends survey
CONGRATULATIONS!

- You have talented and motivated students who will be wonderful additions to many excellent schools!