

Ode to the Class of 2020...what a long, strange trip it's been.

This year, our 24 seniors had stellar results. As a cohort, they received over \$3,750,000 in Merit Aid offers and all of the numbers are not in. Several of our students received full-ride scholarships to colleges like Vanderbilt, Villanova, Fordham, Howard, Wake Forest and Washington College

Every year, getting into the most elite and well-known colleges becomes more challenging. Universities to which admission used to be a near guarantee are now very selective. To receive acceptances to recognized colleges and universities students need to focus on their grades, work toward high standardized-test scores, show dedication and uniqueness in their extracurricular activities, and receive meaningful teacher and counselor recommendations. It is becoming more HOLISTIC (excuse the overused term).

This year our students were accepted to these institutions:

Auburn University, Belmont University, Boston College, Boston U, Bucknell U, Cabrini, Case Western, Clemson University, College of Charleston, William and Mary, Cornell University, Elon University, Florida Inst Tech, Fordham*, George Mason Honors, George Washington U, Georgetown, Georgia Tech, Harvard University, Howard University*, Ithaca College, James Madison, Lafayette, Lehigh University, Loyola, MIT, Miami University, NC State Engineering, Penn State Engineering, Perdue, Rensselaer Polytech, Stevens Institute, The Ohio State U, University of Tampa, Towson Honors, Tufts University, University of Calif-San Diego, University of Calif-Santa Barbara, Univ Central Florida, University of Chicago, Univ of Colorado Boulder, Univ of Delaware, Univ of Denver, Univ of Florida, Mary Washington, UMBC, Univ of Maryland Engineering & Computer Science, University of Miami,, Univ of Michigan, UNC Chapel Hill, Univ North Florida, U Pitt, Univ South Carolina Honors, Univ Vermont, Univ of Virginia, Vanderbilt Univ *, Villanova Univ *, Virginia Tech, Wake Forest Univ *, Washington College *, Worcester Polytech *Denotes full scholarship

As an aside, we are thrilled to note that each of our students who applied to the University of Maryland, College Park were accepted, keeping our long track record of success for that institution at an all-time high.

Trends that we noted this year included:

- The request for many more school-specific essays and supplemental essays required at many of the larger state schools.
- Large, public schools gave the less merit aid this year due to funding issues and to an increased number of in-state applications.
- Some notoriously stingy programs awarded merit scholarships after the initial acceptance was sent, rather than including those offers in the acceptance letter; this left some students momentarily disappointed.

- Private schools and smaller liberal arts colleges offered excellent merit aid awards this year. With all-in costs above \$60,000/year, these schools needed to make strong offers in order to attract the most qualified students.
- BRAND NAME schools (those that everyone has heard of and in which many may have interest) changed up their admissions game in order to attract more diversity by removing testing requirements, offering more need-based aid, and lowering merit awards.
- Standardized testing has been in the spotlight. An overall feeling that the more wealthy a family/school district, the more tutoring can be afforded, and thus, better the test scores from those students. But we know that the testing also shows an ability to perform at a high level and is a good indicator of future success, is needed for honors programs and merit aid- this is also true for subject tests.
- So now we see a 2021 trend moving to temporary test optional schools.. by removing the testing gateway to entry, more students will apply. And this will make all other parts of the applications exponentially more important.
- Legacy became less of an advantage this year. For universities like Duke, UVA, and University of Michigan it no longer matters who in your family attended; unless they bought a building, you are on the same playing field as everyone else.
- Social Media has taken a front seat in the admissions show. Looking at a potential students social profile is not only allowable, it is suggested.
- Recruited athletes had their Spring season stolen from them. Stay tuned as more unfolds like: no extra year of eligibility at the Ivies AND students who reach out now will have an advantage, especially if they have strong academics behind their athletics.

So, what happens for the class of 2021? This is left to be seen. We do have indicators for the future and would love to discuss them with you if you would like.

Thank you for entrusting us with your children. We love what we do and it shows.

Stay happy, healthy and safe.

Regards,