

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Best wishes to all of you for a very happy 2023!

I have loved working with all of my students and families this past year, and I can't wait to help my juniors and sophomores navigate the whole college process in 2023 (I still have some room if you're looking for support). I frankly feel quite honored to be in this role. I am constantly inspired by my students' resilience and tenacity; they truly give me great hope for the future. Huge gratitude, too, to my peers and colleagues who pass along incredible knowledge and wisdom as we try to make sense of college admissions these days!

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS NEWS

- In keeping with the current mass confusion about the test optional world, the University of Maryland recently announced that they will remain test optional through 2025 (remember that in my December newsletter I reported that Purdue is now requiring scores). We will be looking closely (and hoping that colleges will be more transparent with this data) to see how many college acceptances came from test optional applications. The overriding trend is that test scores are important if you are applying to STEM, engineering, or business programs. Going test optional is seems to be a real option if you're applying to just about anything else.
- Tucked away in the massive spending bill passed last week is a bit of good news: beneficiaries of 529 plans can now roll unused funds into Roth IRAs tax and penalty free. Parents who set up these accounts cannot take advantage of this rollover option, and the 529s have to be set up 15 years prior. And beneficiaries can only rollover a lifetime amount of \$35,000. Even with these restrictions, hopefully parents will now have greater peace of mind in case their kids don't go to college or money is left over in their accounts.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

CARLETON COLLEGE

- Location: Northfield, MN
- # of Undergrads: 2,069
- Acceptance Rate: 16%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 10:1
- Returning Freshmen: 95%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 8%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Known as the best liberal arts college in the Midwest; students are engaged and revel in their quirky, creative sides; they have a real sense of adventure and curiosity
- Science programs are among the best anywhere; many go on to receive PhDs
- The arts flourish with highly regarded music and arts programs
- Distribution reqs ensure that Carls are exposed to rigor and depth in many subjects
- 800 acre arboretum (known as the Arb) is a great place to explore right on campus; environmental studies students have own their wilderness field station
- Seniors complete a comprehensive project, known as "Comps"
- Heavy workload (on the trimester system) breeds a climate of diligence and solidarity
- No Greek system; social life is relaxed and informal; Carls make their own fun
- Traditions abound (Frisbee toss during orientation, cookie house, iced quad)
- Div 3 sports include Ultimate Frisbee, which has won national championships.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

- Location: Minneapolis, MN
- # of Undergrads: 39,000
- Acceptance Rate: 70%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 17:1
- Returning Freshmen: 93%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: ?

INTERESTING FACTS:

- A great alternative to UMichigan and UWisconsin
- Abundance of academic choices; known for engineering, business, theater
- 38% of classes have less than 20 students; professors are known to be approachable
- Highly regarded honors program
- Undergrad Research Program provides scholarships for research and helps find internships; huge study abroad program
- 23% live on campus; loads of activities available on campus, but most social life takes place off campus; only 12% go Greek; downtown areas of Twin Cities are easily accessed by bus or light rail
- Underground tunnels connect campus buildings, but bring your down jacket!

FOR JUNIORS: COLLEGE VISIT CHECKLIST

Now's the time to visit colleges (well, once students are back on campus)! You can print this checklist of things to do and things to ask from my website:

www.mgsed.com/free-resources

COLLEGE VISIT CHECKLIST

COLLEGE NAME:

LOCATION:

SIZE:

ADMISSIONS CONTACT:

NAME:

EMAIL:

PHONE:

THINGS TO DO:

- Take a campus tour
- Eat at a cafeteria
- Visit the library
- Talk with the admissions office
- Read the bulletin boards
- Read the campus newspaper
- Sit in on a class
- Visit the Student Center
- Visit dorms and other housing
- Check out recreational facilities
- Talk with students
- Tour the neighboring town/city
- Check out an off-campus hangout
- Listen to the campus radio station
- Visit the bookstore

THINGS TO ASK A CURRENT STUDENT:

- Why did you decide to go here?
- What are your 3 favorite things about this college?
- What surprised you when you first arrived?
- What are 2 things you would change if you could?
- Who are 3 people who helped you the most your first year? How did you meet them?
- What was your most uncomfortable experience your first year? How did you get comfortable?
- How do you get around campus/town?
- How did you meet your closest friends?
- What do you do in your free time?
- How would you describe the social scene?

RATE THESE:

The people I met	1	2	3	4	5
The dorms	1	2	3	4	5
The classrooms, studios, labs	1	2	3	4	5
The campus	1	2	3	4	5
The neighboring city/town	1	2	3	4	5
The social vibe	1	2	3	4	5
The food	1	2	3	4	5
The safety on campus	1	2	3	4	5
The COVID response	1	2	3	4	5

WHAT I LOVE ABOUT THIS PLACE:

WHAT I REALLY DON'T LIKE ABOUT THIS PLACE:

CAN I PICTURE MYSELF HERE?

YES!!!

NO WAY!!

NOT SURE!

THOUGHTS FOR SENIORS ABOUT...

Denials:

Many selective colleges note that they have to deny highly qualified students each year. There are so many factors that go into these decisions, and many of them are completely out of students' control (remember institutional priorities which we are not privy to and which change year-to-year). If you've been denied to one of your favorite schools, take the time to process and even grieve that news. But remember that rejection is part of life, and learning to deal with rejection with resilience at a young age will actually serve you well in the long run. Trust me on this. Then I want you to get up again and think about all of the other options you're going to have (that wise, balanced list just about assures that you'll get into about 40% of the colleges on your list). The option that seems least likely right now might just be the one that sings out to you in April!

Deferrals:

Many students are surprised when they learn that they weren't admitted or denied, but deferred. Being deferred means that your application will be reviewed once more with the regular decision applicants. So what should you do if you're deferred? First, you can talk with your guidance counselor to see if they'd be willing to call the college to find out why exactly you were deferred. Then you can try to address whatever was raised. Second, in mid-January, you can submit a letter of continued interest. This is where you convey yet again how there's a real fit between you and the college. Be specific, earnest, and to the point. And please note that you should follow directions from the college; if they say that you don't need to do anything, then don't do anything. But if they open the door to a letter, take the opportunity!

ED2:

Early Decision 2 (ED2) is tricky for many students, especially in this age of deferrals. Many students don't have a second top choice, and if they were deferred, they want to wait and see if that deferral could change to an admit. Colleges do not report on the difference in acceptance rates between ED1 and ED2, so it's hard to know how likely it is to be admitted through ED2. Some people believe that the ED2 pool is smaller, which could mean greater acceptances. Know that you often can switch from regular decision to ED2. For many, ED2 is a real toss-up. So, sleep on it, make a decision, and then don't look back. And revel in the fact that you're done applying to college!

I help students and their families navigate the college admissions process. I empower students to figure out who they are and where they belong, and I provide structure, insight, and enthusiasm as they apply to colleges that are the best fit academically, socially, and financially. Contact me for a 30 minute complimentary session to learn more!



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