MGS EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING

Design your path to college

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2026



IT'S APPLICATION TIME!

For many of you, you've submitted an Early Decision and several Early Action applications by now. Congratulations! It can be a grueling process for many students, and many start to feel like they are limping towards the finish line. So once you've submitted, take some time to celebrate what you've done.

And once you've reveled in this big accomplishment, plow ahead and complete the rest of your applications. Waiting until winter break in December to complete everything is often a great way to ruin your vacation. Begin thinking about whether you might want to apply Early Decision 2 in January just in case your ED college doesn't come through. Putting in the time now to complete those applications will pay off, I promise.

And two more things: 1) As you're about to submit your applications, please don't make last minute edits to essays. These last minute edits are often not well thought out, and the risk of typos is high! 2) Pleeeaaasssseee don't start applying to additional colleges just because you hear of other people applying or because a college keeps emailing you about applying (hello, Northeastern!) or because they have no supplemental essays. All you're doing is giving colleges more applications, which means that their acceptance rates continue to plummet. Do everyone a favor and stick to your original list!

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIV

- Location: Cleveland, OH
- # of Undergrads: 5,286
- Acceptance Rate: 27%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 9:1
- Returning Freshmen: 93%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 78%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Located in an area that's home to over 50 cultural and educational institutions
- Top programs in engineering, business mgmt, pre-architecture, and music; one of the few polymer science majors; fantastic direct admit nursing program
- No need to declare major when applying, and very easy to change majors
- "Think Box" is a 7 story state-of-the-art maker space
- Great for pre-med students with 4 hospitals nearby, including the Cleveland Clinic; research opportunities abound (81% of students conduct research)
- All schools have experiential learning opportunities, including co-ops
- Required to live on campus for first 2 years; 80% of undergrads stay on campus
- Many outdoorsy activities: hiking, mountain biking, beach on Lake Erie
- Greek life significant but focused more on philanthropy than on partying
- Showing demonstrated interest through visits is important!

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

- Location: Pittsburgh, PA
- # of Undergrads: 19.845
- Acceptance Rate: 58%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 13:1
- Returning Freshmen: 92%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 9%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Excellent engineering, nursing, pre-med, and PT programs
- Known for philosophy and Slavic studies programs
- ROLLING ADMISSIONS (Apply as early as you can; if you get in, you'll know that you're going to college early in the season, and that helps reduce stress!).
- Co-ops for engineering students
- Housing guaranteed for first years; good off-campus options
- Campus is next to a 460 acre park
- Coursework is intense but manageable
- 52% of students participate in research
- Career Center provides an excellent internship guarantee pgm
- Great public transportation makes exploring the city easy and fun
- It's a large university made to feel small, and students really feel their PittPride!

HOW TO THINK ABOUT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Colleges consider student activities for a number of reasons:

1. To see how students balance school work with their other interests
2. To see what students will bring to their college communities
3. To see how students are making an impact on their world.

It used to be that colleges wanted well-rounded students who did a bunch of different activities. Now colleges want to see depth over breadth. They want to bring in students who have invested time in a few activities that they are authentically passionate about. Seeing how students spend their time in high school sheds some light on applicants' values and interests; students' activities give admissions officers insight into how they will get involved on campus. Remember that admissions officers are looking to admit future classmates, friends, and roommates.

When students fill out the Activities List on the Common Application, they have to indicate the amount of time that they have spent on each activity. Spending just a little time on a large number of activities is not what colleges are looking for. Colleges prefer seeing students focus on a handful of activities that are meaningful to them and that show how they may be having an impact on their world (and local impact is viewed most favorably)

So find a few things that speak to you and that bring you deep satisfaction. Please don't participate in activities just for college applications. Do them because you really want to do them! Kids who follow their passions often end up being able to tell a cohesive story about who they are.

PLEASE FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO OTHER FAMILIES WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM MY APPROACH AND PERSPECTIVE!
(They can subscribe on my website)

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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