

INITIAL NEWS ABOUT THE SUPREME COURT DECISION

The news that colleges have been anticipating for the past few months finally arrived: the Supreme Court has struck down racial and ethnic preferences in college admissions. But as John Roberts wrote, "Nothing...should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant's discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise." This statement is already leading to complexities and some confusion. Will colleges add new essay prompts or adjust existing ones to get at applicants' lived experiences? There's not doubt that the college essay will be a vehicle for students to talk about the adversity they've faced. And many colleges, luckily, will be focused on how they will identify and recruit and enroll students, with many developing plans to target specific high schools and community organizations.

You can be sure that I will be attending numerous webinars with experts in the field over the next few weeks to better understand the implications of this decision.

TERM TO UNDERSTAND: MERIT AID

Merit aid is a real option for families who will not qualify for need-based aid. Depending on the college, merit aid can be awarded to top students or it can be used to entice students to attend. Highly selective colleges typically do not offer merit aid because they don't need to (students are knocking on their doors), but many other selective schools offer significant amounts of merit aid. Google the Common Data Set and a particular college to figure out what merit aid is offered; here's the formula for you data wonks: $H2An / (H2a - H2c)$. Just a few stats: Macalester recently awarded an average of \$17K to 58% of non-need undergrads; Case Western awarded an average of \$24K to 78% of non-need undergrads. Bottom Line: There is money out there for families that don't qualify for need-based aid!

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

- Location: Winston-Salem, NC
- # of Undergrads: 5,472
- Acceptance Rate: 21%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 11:1
- Returning Freshmen: 94%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 14%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Located just outside the Research Triangle, Wake is committed to academics and athletic
- Small campus fosters a sense of community
- Ensures personalized, one-on-one experiences with professors with small class sizes
- Known for academic intensity; the nickname is "Work Forest"
- Excellent research opportunities; excellent community service opportunities
- Popular majors: communications, political science, business
- Half of students study abroad. New Wellbeing Center has great fitness facilities
- Work hard, play hard mentality; Wake Wednesdays are a popular party night
- Social scene centers on Greek life; fraternities and sororities have specific sections of dorms set aside for them. Student Union makes an effort to bring in other social options
- Lots of spirit: Students "roll the Quad" after big athletic wins (covering trees with TP)
- Common complaint is that it's not very diverse or politically active.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: DAVIDSON COLLEGE

- Location: Davidson, NC
- # of Undergrads: 1,983
- Acceptance Rate: 14%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 9:1
- Returning Freshmen: 95%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 10%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Supportive, friendly, tight-knit community with intense academics. 20 min from Charlotte
- Known as *the* liberal arts college of the South; known for Center for Interdisciplinary Studies
- Honor code is the cornerstone and breeds trust, respect, and collaboration; tests are un-proctored and self-scheduled. Students embrace the idea of learning for learning's sake, and many highlight the depth and diversity of intellectual discourse
- Professors take time to develop personal relationships with students
- Most students engage in community service through the Center for Civic Engagement
- Social life takes place "down the hill" where senior apts, frats, and eating houses (sororities without any "rush") are located. Work hard, play hard culture, but parties are open to all.
- Students feel affection for caring townspeople
- Freshmen live together and are matched by personality type.

TIMELINE FOR JUNIORS...

Congratulations on getting through one of the most intense years of high school! I hope you are taking the time to catch up on sleep and Netflix!

I'd be remiss to not tell you that summertime is a key time to get a jumpstart on your college applications. Here is an ideal timeline for making real progress before school starts in August/September:

JULY:

- Start filling out the easy components of the Common Application (eg, the Profile, Family, and Education parts). Anything you do on college-specific applications will NOT roll over when the Common App opens on August 1.
- Continue prepping for any final SATs/ACTs you'll be taking.
- Complete a solid draft of your Personal Statement. Tell a great story and then explain why it's meaningful to you. Colleges want to know who you are, so be authentic and specific!

AUGUST:

- Complete the Activities List on the Common Application. Please don't write your statements directly on the Common App; doing them well requires a great deal of tinkering and editing!
- Figure out what Supplemental Essays will be required (look at the Common Application for these) and begin writing them.

If you can get significant work done on the Personal Statement, the Activities List, and some Supplemental Essays, you will be sitting pretty once senior year starts!



SENIORS: MAKING THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

Congratulations on your graduation from high school! I hope you are taking time to RELAX and rejuvenate! As you think about making the transition to college, make sure that you're thinking about a few key things:

- Check your college email and portal consistently. You don't want to miss anything!
- Understand and complete the class registration process. Shoot, if you can, for a variety of classes (one writing heavy, one quant, one for your possible major, one just for fun).
- If you need accommodations, call the Center for Disabilities and arrange for them.
- Sign a FERPA waiver (usually found on your college website) so that your parents can access your educational records.
- Sign a HIPAA waiver and obtain a medical power of attorney. With each of these documents, you name your parents as agents so that they can communicate with doctors on your behalf.
- If you see a therapist or psychiatrist, figure out if you can continue seeing them at college. Continuity of care can be important when you first arrive at college and experience some bumps! Different states have different regulations, so figuring this out can be tricky.
- Find the Health Center. It's good to know where it is before you need it. Locate the nearest Urgent Care, too, just in case (including one that's open 24 hours).
- Think about how you want to decorate your dorm room. You need less than you think you need! Really!
- Figure out if you're waiving the college health insurance; submit your current health insurance info if you are.

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I help students and their families navigate the college admissions process while decreasing confusion and stress. 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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