



KEY CONCEPT: INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

Each year, every college and university determines various goals--geographic, demographic, curricular, or extra-curricular--that drive admissions decisions. For example, large state schools may determine that they need to admit more out-of-staters. A liberal arts school may be losing oboe and viola players in the college orchestra and needs to replace those musicians. A college may have a new data science major and is keen on recruiting students who have expressed interest or shown experience in data science. We are not privy, unfortunately, to what these institutional priorities are, and what may be important to one college one year could drastically vary the following year.

Institutional priorities are at play when it comes to which qualified applicants are accepted and which ones aren't. When you hear about one kid getting into a particular college and another one that doesn't, please remember about institutional priorities. If you'd like to understand more, I highly recommend Jeff Selingo's book "Who Gets In and Why" (as well as his latest book "Dream School.")

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: STEVENS INST OF TECHNOLOGY

- Location: Hoboken, NJ
- # of Undergrads: 4,070
- Acceptance Rate: 46%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 11:1
- Returning Freshmen: 93%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 29%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- East Coast technical institute that's just across the river from Manhattan (the views!!).
- Strong engineering & STEM programs; business and arts/music programs are through a tech lens.
- Students work hard, engage in hands-on work, but are very supportive of each other.
- Lots of individualized attention from professors. Tutoring readily available.
- Students are connected to faculty advisors during the summer before freshman year.
- Called a "hub for future innovators." 95% do a co-op for a semester; Manhattan often taps students to work on real-world projects. All have a final capstone design project.
- Accelerated BS/MD program with NJ Medical School.
- 30% in Greek life.
- Recognized for mental health efforts.
- Located in a great college city, and proximity to NYC offers all sorts of opportunities; campus is a 7 minute walk to the train station and ferry.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: RHODES COLLEGE

- Location: Memphis, TN
- # of Undergrads: 1,936
- Acceptance Rate: 49%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 9:1
- Returning Freshmen: 91%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 36%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Progressive Southern liberal arts college in the heart of Memphis. Great for pre-med students.
- Challenging academic environment with small class sizes and personal attention from professors.
- Strong programs in the natural and social sciences, with well-regarded programs in business (one of the few LACs with this major), biology, psychology, and neuroscience.
- Music business program certificate.
- Great support for women in STEM. Professors want students to publish.
- Great research opportunities. Paid research fellowships at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital; acceptance rates to med school are twice the national average.
- Tight-knit, supportive community. 35% in Greek life (though it's fine if you're not in it).
- Right across from a 138 acre park; Memphis offers great live music and barbecue!

THOUGHTS FOR SOPHOMORES...

Intentionality is the name of the game in college admissions these days. Sophomore year is a key year for establishing a strong academic record so that you're set up to take the classes during junior year that are right for you. If you want to take AP or honors classes during junior year, you'll need high enough grades so that your teachers recommend you for those classes. Establishing solid study habits now will allow you to do well in increasingly rigorous classes.

Now is the time to make a solid plan regarding extracurriculars as well. Colleges are looking for depth, not breadth. Think about the activities that make you happiest. How can you deepen what you're doing right now? How can you gradually move into leadership positions? How will you spend the next two summers gaining experience that could help explain why you're a great candidate for certain majors (this is especially important for business, engineering, and science majors)? Start to think about the story you will tell colleges. You'll want to tell a coherent, authentic story about who you are.

THOUGHTS FOR JUNIORS...

You are midway through your junior year. Let's think about your time in high school so far:

- How are you spending your time? Are you spending it on things you love doing or on things you think you *should* be doing? Being authentic to who you are pays off: you'll feel more satisfied when you're participating AND you'll be better able to write about your experiences in your college applications. Authenticity always shines through.
- Are there ways to have even more impact on your community? Are there ways to show even more leadership? Showing that you are a consistent, thoughtful, and committed member of your community will help admissions officers picture you as a productive member of their college community.
- Can you keep building relationships with your teachers? Go after school for extra help. Let them get to know you as a student and as a person. With lots of grade inflation out there in a test optional world, letters of recommendation help admissions officers get a sense of who you are as a student and how you'd be on their college campus.
- Keep working at your classes. See if you can bring that C to a B or that B to an A. The time and effort you put in right now will pay off.
- And make sure that you have a productive (and fun) summer coming up. Follow your interests. Solidify the story you plan to tell in your applications. And plan to dedicate some real time to personal statements and college applications. I promise that front-loading the work will make your senior year waaaaay less stressful.

THOUGHTS FOR SENIORS...

This month will be a busy and intense one, with many colleges releasing their decisions. As you hear from the colleges you applied to, be careful about just going on the name or ranking (remember that rankings have nothing to do with the quality of the education. Really!). Let yourself take the time to sift through ALL of your options and make an informed decision; there's no rush (you have until May 1).

Now is the time to do some serious research. First, rethink about what you want in your college because things might be different from when you applied. Create a spreadsheet where you can compare certain factors that are important to you (eg, how collaborative it is, opportunities for research or internships, your financial awards). Dig into the majors that seem interesting to you (remember, 75% of college students change their majors at least once, so you want to be sure that there are a few majors that could work). And dig into the general education requirements. How stringent are they? Would you be taking classes that seem interesting and exciting? The more deliberate you can be with your research and decision making, the more informed your decision will be, AND the more likely you will end up at the right place FOR YOU. Remember that come February of your freshman year in college, you will be there on your own. We want you to be somewhere WHERE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU BELONG, not somewhere where your parents or friends thought you should go.

Take advantage of admitted student days that will come up in April. Narrowing down your choices and attending admitted student days at a few colleges can give you important information, namely about the other students who were accepted. Can you see yourself being friends with who you meet? What is the college's vibe like when you're on campus? And think about the practicalities, such as how you would get to particular colleges.

If you're waitlisted, I strongly suggest heading to the Common Data Set (Google it with the college name). Look at the past few years to see how many students were put on a waitlist and how many were eventually admitted. Note any trends. If only a few dozen have gotten in off waitlists, it's probably best to move on and select another college. If you accept a waitlist, be sure to place a deposit at your current top choice. And remember, it feels great to be wanted! Spending too much time hoping and waiting for a pie in the sky keeps you from getting invested in what could be great options for you!

**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 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!



www.mgsed.com | marisa@mgsed.com
914-217-9984