College Counseling

Suggested Timeline for the College Process

Grade 9

- Work hard in classes, become involved in extracurricular activities, discover areas of personal interest
- Keep in mind that freshman year grades DO matter to colleges, and they ARE used in the calculation of the GPA
- Students & Parents may attend the "College Counseling Preview Night" for freshmen and sophomores at Academy (March)
- Possibly take the SAT Subject Test if enrolled in Honors Algebra 2 & Precalculus (early June)
- A small handful of students enrolled in Advanced Biology may opt to take the SAT Subject Test when this is a primary academic interest and/or area of strength (early June)

Grade 10

- Continue to work hard in all of your classes and be involved in activities, arts, athletics
- PSAT at Columbus Academy (mid-October); review your score report in mid-December
- Understanding Financial Aid for College – evening program for parents at Academy or Columbus School for Girls (October)
- Attend the NACAC Columbus College Fair at the Greater Columbus Convention Center (February)
- Students and Parents are invited to attend the "College Counseling Preview Night" at Academy (March)
- Sign-up for campus college visit day-trip with the College Counseling Office (April)
- Academic Planning Conferences for students and parents with College Counselors (April)
- Take AP exams, if applicable (May)
- Possibly take the SAT Subject Test if enrolled in Honors Algebra 2 & Precalculus or Advanced Precalculus (early June)
- In rare cases, students enrolled in Advanced Chemistry may opt to take the SAT Subject Test when this is a primary academic interest and/or an area of strength (early June)
- Do **not** take your first SAT until **next** fall or winter at the very earliest

Grade 11

- College Counseling Junior Class Meetings (first quarter)
- Meet with college representatives visiting Academy during your free periods (Sept. through Nov.)
    - List available on bulletin board with each week's visits posted on College Counseling door
- Students and Parents are invited to attend the Columbus Suburban College Fair at Otterbein University (September)
- PSAT at Academy (October) – this is the one that "counts" for National Merit selection/honors
- Understanding Financial Aid for College – evening program for parents at Academy or Columbus School for Girls (October)
- SAT or ACT in December or January for the first time, take again in March, April, or May, take SAT Subject Tests in June
- Students and Parents attend "Grade 11 College Night" at Academy (November)
- College Counseling Class (third quarter) and regular meetings with your college counselor
    - Class topics include the basics of the college search process, standardized testing, creating a resume, practice college interviews, writing the college essay, do's and don'ts of college applications, financial aid, requesting teacher recommendations, and more
    - Regular meetings with your college counselor will address a range of topics including individual planning process, creating a student's college list, athletic recruiting, financial aid, and suggestions and ideas for summer activities
- Attend the NACAC Columbus College Fair at the Greater Columbus Convention Center (February)
- Schedule campus tours (end of Feb) and then visit college campuses over spring break
- Take AP Exams (May)
- Write your college essays and continue to visit college campuses (May, June and July)
- Summer: Attend Academy's Common Application Workshops before school begins (early-mid August)

Grade 12

- *PARENTS (only):* Attend Senior Parent College Night at Academy (late August)
- Meet with college representatives at Academy (Sept. through Nov.)
- College Counseling Senior Class Meetings (first quarter). Work on applications and getting necessary materials to colleges.
- Continue to meet with your college counselor as you prepare your college applications and supplemental materials
- Take the ACT in September and/or the SAT in October
- Understanding Financial Aid for College – evening program for parents at Academy or Columbus School for Girls (October)
- *PARENTS:* file financial aid paperwork via FAFSA and CSS Profile (Oct/Nov. for EA/ED apps, January for Regular apps)
- Choose a college or university by May 1st

Books and Periodicals

Students and Parents are encouraged to explore these resources

Books:

Fiske Guide to Colleges, Edward Fiske
Colleges That Change Lives, by Loren Pope
College Unranked, Lloyd Thacker
Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges, Frederick E. Rugg
The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College, Jacques Steinberg
Harvard Schmarvard, Jay Mathews
The Game of Life: College Sports and Educations Values, Bowen & Schulman
Barron's Profiles of American Colleges
Princeton Review's The Best 379 Colleges
The Insider's Guide to the Colleges, Yale Daily News Staff
I'm Going to College, Not You!
A collection of essays edited by Jennifer Delahunty, Dean of Admissions, Kenyon College
Creative Colleges: A Guide for Student Actors, Artists, Dancers, Musicians and Writers, Elaina Loveland

Periodicals - with good "college admission" sections or education writers:

Inside Higher Ed (author Scott Jaschik is recommended)
The Chronicle of Higher Education (author Eric Hoover is recommended)
The Atlantic Monthly
The New York Times – "The Choice" Blog is archived at http://thechoice.blogs.nytimes.com
The Washington Post (author Jay Mathews is recommended)
US News & World Report (however, be cautious of those rankings!)

Who to follow on Facebook and Twitter?

NACAC, Eric Hoover, John Lawlor, CommonApp, College Board, ACT, Chronicle, DeanJ@UVA Admissions, ACCIS

Plus... various colleges and universities, some athletic conferences, The NCAA

Follow Columbus Academy College Counseling @Vikings2College

Columbus Academy School Profile 2019-20

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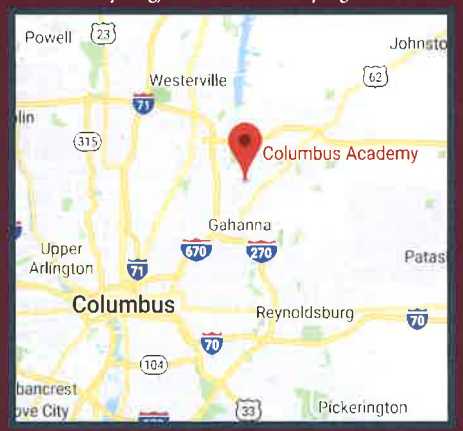


Columbus Academy
4300 Cherry Bottom Rd.
Gahanna, OH 43230

This is the Academy Experience.

About Columbus Academy

Founded in 1911, Columbus Academy is a coeducational school enrolling 1,153 students from our 3-Year-Old Explorers to Grade 12.

Academy offers a challenging liberal arts, college preparatory program. Located on a 231-acre campus nine miles northeast of Columbus, the school draws a diverse student body of 420 students in grades 9 through 12, from a 25-mile radius in central Ohio

Approximately 23% of the student body receives financial assistance to help with the cost of tuition.

Columbus Academy is fully accredited by the Independent School Association of the Central States (ISACS), the Ohio Department of Education, and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

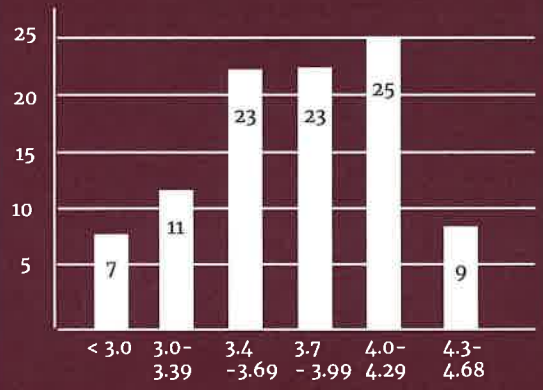
By the Numbers

50 Community service hours logged by 100% of graduates

20% Average of graduates who plan to compete in intercollegiate athletics

100% Give a junior speech in front of 400+ people

Class of 2020 GPA Distribution 98 students



Students are graded on the following scale:	
A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69

Our traditional grading scale allows for a 10-point differential within each letter grade.

Columbus Academy does not rank its students.

GPAs are calculated using all graded courses earned at Academy.
- no additional weight added for standard college-prepatory courses
- 10% additional weight added for "Advanced" cources
- 15% additional weight added for "Honors" courses

Prerequisite criteria must be met for entry to Advanced and Honors courses.
Advanced courses typically are accelerated versions of the college-preparatory courses.
Honors courses are those in which the syllabus is designed predominantly to prepare students for a college-level, external examination.
(Courses that cover two years' worth of material in one year are also included)

Weighted grade-point averages (WGPA) are reported on transcripts and documents sent to colleges and scholarship agencies.

Class of 2019 College Enrollments & Acceptances

Typically 100% of Columbus Academy graduates enroll at four-year colleges and universities. One or more members of the Class of 2019 will attend colleges/universities in ***bold italics.***

Agnes Scott College
Allegheny College
American University
Arizona State University
Azusa Pacific University
Babson College
Baldwin Wallace University
Bates College
Belmont University
Beloit College
Bentley University
Biola University
Boston College
Boston University
Bowling Green State University
Brown University
Bucknell University
Butler University
Capital University
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Centre College
Chapman University
Claremont McKenna College
Clark Atlanta University
Clemson University
Coastal Carolina University
College of Charleston
College of William & Mary
Colorado College
Columbus College of Art and Design
Cornell University
Denison University
DePaul University
DePauw University
Dickinson College
Drew University
Duke University
Elon University
Emory University
Flagler College
Florida Atlantic University
Florida Institute of Technology
Fordham University
Freed-Hardeman University
Furman University
Georgetown University
Georgia State University
Gettysburg College
Grinnell College
Hamilton College – NY
Hanover College
Harvard College
Hillsdale College
Hiram College
Illinois Institute of Technology
Illinois Wesleyan University
Indiana University at Bloomington
Kalamazoo College
Kansas State University
Kent State University
Kenyon College
Lewis & Clark College
Lipscomb University
Loyola Marymount University
Loyola University Chicago
Loyola University Maryland
Maryland Institute College of Art
Marymount Manhattan College
McGill University
Miami University, Oxford
Michigan State University
Montclair State University
New Jersey Institute of Technology
New York University
Northeastern University
Northwestern University
Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences
Ohio Northern University
Ohio University
Ohio Wesleyan University
Otterbein University
Pace University, New York City
Pennsylvania State University
Pepperdine University
Princeton University
Providence College
Purdue University
Reed College
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rice University
Rollins College
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
Rowan University
Rutgers University-New Brunswick
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
School of Visual Arts
Sewanee: The University of the South
Southern Methodist University
Spelman College
St. Lawrence University
St. Olaf College
Stanford University
SUNY College at Geneseo
Swarthmore College
Syracuse University
Temple University
The College of Wooster
The George Washington University
The New School – Parsons School of Design
The Ohio State University
The Ohio State University - Newark
The University of Akron
The University of Arizona
The University of Montana, Missoula
The University of Texas, Arlington
The University of Texas, Austin
The University of Texas, Dallas
Trinity College, Ireland
Tufts University
Tulane University
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, Riverside
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of California, Santa Cruz
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado at Boulder
University of Dayton
University of Denver
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of Illinois
University of Indianapolis
University of Kentucky
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of Notre Dame
University of Oregon
University of Otago
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Puget Sound
University of Redlands
University of Richmond
University of Rochester
University of San Francisco
University of South Carolina
University of Southern California
University of St Andrews
University of Tennessee
University of Toledo
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin, Madison
Valparaiso University
Vanderbilt University
Villanova University
Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Tech
Wake Forest University
Washington and Jefferson College
Washington University in St. Louis
West Virginia University
Whittier College
Williams College
Wofford College
Wright State University
Xavier University
Youngstown State University

Graduation Requirements (Minimum Credits)

English ..... 4 credits
Mathematics ..... 3 credits
(through Algebra 2)
Science ..... 3 credits
Fine Arts, Music, ... 1 credit
Performing Arts
Language of 1 language .... 3 credits
(OR 2 of 2 languages) ..... *(4 credits)*
History ..... 3 credits
Physical Education .... 3 semesters
Health ..... 0.5 credits
Ethics & Character ..... 0.5 credits

Additional Requirements

Public Speaking ..... 0.25 credits
(Junior Speech)
Community Service ..... 50 hours
Senior Project ..... 75 hours
(May of Gr. 12)

columbusacademy.org
614.509.2311
CEEB/ACT Code: 361525

HONORS COURSES/AP PREPARATION

Please note: Columbus Academy does not offer Advanced Placement (AP®) courses. However, AP® examination preparation is offered in all Honors and many Advanced courses. The designation "AP®" is not included on the transcript for those respective courses. See columbusacademy.org/courses for additional details.

2019 AP® EXAMINATION RESULTS

Total Exams	374
Students taking exams	198
Students with scores of 3 or above	340
Number of AP® Scholars	79

Students typically take AP® exams in the following subject areas:

Biology	English Language & Comp	Physics 1
Calculus AB & BC	English Literature & Comp	Physics C: E&M and Mechanics
Chemistry	U.S. History	Spanish Language & Culture
Chinese Language & Culture	Latin	Statistics
Comparative Gov & Politics	Macro Economics	U.S. Government
Computer Science	Music Theory	World History

National Merit Scholarship Results

From our class of 2019, 16 students (16%) were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation: Commended Students and Semifinalists, 11 of whom advanced to become National Merit Scholars.

Class of 2019 Standardized Test Scores

SAT® Reasoning	Mid 50%	Mean
EBRW	620-700	660
Mathematics	600-730	665
SAT®	1230-1420	1325

ACT® Average	Mid 50%	Mean
Composite	26-32	29

SAT® Subject Tests	Mid 50%	Mean
Biology–Ecology	660-770	699
Biology–Molecular	630-760	717
Chemistry	510-760	678
English Literature	700-700	700
Math Level II	740-800	759
Physics	750-790	769
U.S. History	550-670	636
World History	710-710	710

Factors in College Readiness and Success

Non-Academic Factors

Dispositions

Definition: Internal characteristics that distinguish a person's predominant outlook or characteristic attitude

Examples:
- Personality
- Temperament
- Values
- Attitudes

Habits of Mind

Definition: "Habits of thought & action that help people manage uncertain or challenging situations…" [supporting] thoughtful and intelligent action" (Costa & Kallick 2000)

Examples:
- Metacognitive skills
- Creative thinking
- Study attitudes
- Outcome expectations
- Intellectual curiosity
- Appreciation for diversity
- Leadership
- Positive self-concept

Executive Functioning Abilities

Definition: Foundational skills that allow individuals to effectively navigate daily tasks, including the ability to "orient, plan, program responses & verify & modify performances" (Denckla 1996)

Examples:
- Study habits
- Reasoning
- Long-term goal setting
- Realistic self-appraisal
- Decision-making
- Self-control
- Goal commitment

External Resources

Definition: External factors that the individual may be able to access to support college readiness/success

Examples:
- University fit
- Financial stability
- Institution intervention
- Family beliefs about education
- Support person

College Knowledge

Definition: Explicit & implicit knowledge required for college success; essentially knowing how to "do" college

Examples:
- Knowledge of college requirements, placement test policies & tuition costs
- Understanding of the structure of college
- Ability to recognize the systemic requirements & norms

Academic Factors

Definition: Factors explicitly targeted in formal education

Examples: Subject matter knowledge, high school grades, standardized test scores, etc.

techcrunch.com

Engineering vs. Liberal Arts: Who's Right--Bill or Steve?

Contributor

When students asked what subjects they should major in to become a tech entrepreneur, I used to say engineering, mathematics, and science—because an education in these fields is the prerequisite for innovation, and because engineers make the best entrepreneurs.

That was several years ago.

I realized how much my views have changed when the *The New York Times* asked me to write a piece for its "Room for Debate" forum this week. The paper wanted me to comment on the divergence of opinion between Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. In a speech before the National Governors Association on Feb 28, Gates had argued that we need to spend our limited education budget on disciplines that produce the most jobs. He implied that we should reduce our investment in the liberal arts because liberal-arts degrees don't correlate well with job creation. Three days later, at the unveiling of the iPad 2, Steve Jobs said: "It's in Apple's DNA that technology alone is not enough—it's technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the result that makes our heart sing, and nowhere is that more true than in these post-PC devices".

Because I am a professor at the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University, and given all the positive things I say about U.S. engineering education, *The Times* assumed that I would side with Bill Gates; that I would write a piece that endorsed his views. But, even though I believe that engineering is one of the most important professions, I have learned that the liberal arts are equally important. It takes artists, musicians, and psychologists working side by side with engineers to build products as elegant as the iPad. And anyone—with education in any field—can achieve success in Silicon Valley.

Here is what I wrote for *The Times*.

> It's commonly believed that engineers dominate Silicon Valley and that there is a correlation between the capacity for innovation and an education in mathematics and the sciences. Both assumptions are false.
>
> My research team at Duke and Harvard surveyed 652 U.S.-born chief executive officers and heads of product engineering at 502 technology companies. We found that they tended to be highly educated: 92 percent held bachelor's degrees, and 47 percent held higher degrees. But only 37 percent held degrees in engineering or computer technology, and just two percent held them in mathematics. The rest have degrees in fields as diverse as business, accounting, finance, health care, and arts and the humanities.

> Gaining a degree made a big difference in the sales and employment of the company that a founder started. But the field that the degree was in and the school that it was obtained from were not a significant factor.
>
> Over the past year, I have interviewed the founders of more than 200 Silicon Valley start-ups. The most common traits I have observed are a passion to change the world and the confidence to defy the odds and succeed.
>
> It is the same in business. In the two companies I founded, I was involved in hiring more than 1000 workers over the years. I never observed a correlation between the school of graduation or field of study, on one hand, and success in the workplace, on the other. What make people successful are their motivation, drive, and ability to learn from mistakes, and how hard they work.
>
> And then there is the matter of design. Steve Jobs taught the world that good engineering is important but that what matters the most is good design. You can teach artists how to use software and graphics tools, but it's much harder to turn engineers into artists.
>
> Our society needs liberal-arts majors as much as it does engineers and scientists.

But I need to acknowledge the difficult reality: that employment prospects are dim for liberal-arts majors. Graduates from top engineering schools such as Duke are always in high demand. But PhDs in English from even the most prestigious universities, such as UC-Berkeley, can't get jobs. The data I presented above were on the background of tech-company founders—those who made the transition into entrepreneurship. Most don't. And, as you can note from Bill Gates' speech, there is a bias against liberal arts and humanities.

Angelika Blendstrup is an author and a lecturer who holds a PhD in Bilingual Bicultural Education from Stanford. She says that her liberal-arts background is "great for writing papers or PhDs, but it would be better to have studied engineering and have a choice of jobs".

Charles River Venture Partner emeritus, Ted Dintersmith, on the other hand, received a PhD in Engineering from Stanford. But he also studied liberal arts. Ted says "It doesn't have to be either/or—I double-majored in Physics and English, and never regretted combining two such different disciplines".

So there is no black and white here. We need musicians, artists, and psychologists, as much as we need bio-medical engineers, computer programmers, and scientists.

My advice to my students—and to my own children—is to study what interests them the most; to excel in fields in which they have the most passion and ability; to change the world in their own way and on their own terms. Once they master their domain, they can find the path to entrepreneurship. They can then come up with creative ways of solving the problems that they have encountered, and apply their ideas to other fields where their knowledge adds value. Maybe they can team up with the hard-core engineers who develop the clunky, inelegant, over-engineered products that Bill is famous for; maybe work with Steve to create the next iPhone or iPad.

You can read more views and witness the lively debate on the New York Times web site.

Editor's note: Vivek Wadhwa is an entrepreneur turned academic. He is a Visiting Scholar at UC-Berkeley, Senior Research Associate at Harvard Law School, Director of Research at the Center for Entrepreneurship and Research Commercialization at Duke University, and Distinguished Visiting Scholar at The Halle Institute for Global Learning at Emory University. You can follow him on Twitter at @wadhwa and find his research at www.wadhwa.com.

2013–2014 EDITION

COLLEGES THAT CHANGE LIVES

40 SCHOOLS THAT WILL CHANGE *THE* WAY YOU THINK ABOUT COLLEGES

LOREN POPE

Author of *LOOKING BEYOND THE IVY LEAGUE*

REVISED BY HILARY MASELL OSWALD

Getting Beyond the Hype

(or Why You Can Relax and Enjoy Your College Search)

Let's begin by agreeing that college should change your life.

It's a catchy idea (and not a bad book title), so hang on to it for a minute and contemplate: What does it mean to find a college that changes your life?

The answer depends on you, but for all college-bound teens, the idea of a transformative college experience is an invitation to be bold. Don't fall for Ivy worship. Don't listen to the blather about "best" schools whipped up by the rankings game. Don't let your older friends' descriptions of frat parties and football games define what college should be for you.

Be bold. Set your expectations high.

It won't be easy. The national conversation about higher education is obsessed with outcomes: What do you *get* for your four (or five or six) years in college? A little piece of paper that says you did what the college told you to do? A bigger paycheck? An entrée into grad school? A photo op with the college president?

This question makes sense in light of how expensive a college degree is. But it misses an essential point: College isn't just about the end result. It's also about the means, the process, the path you take to earn your degree, whom you meet, and who inspires and mentors you. If the path is right for you, you'll get the piece of paper, the bigger paycheck, the acceptance to grad school, the

photo op with the president, and more—you'll be a sharper, wiser, and better-prepared adult.

To find a life-changing college, you must pay attention to *how* a college educates its undergraduates. Scratch the surface of the Ivies, their clones, and most large universities, and you'll be surprised at what you find. Undergraduates are generally ignored. There are few rewards for teaching, so professors do little of it. If they do, you'll see them only behind a lectern. At a large state university, your adviser won't know much about you, except that you need to register for Biology 102 next semester. If you can't get a course, even if it's necessary for other classes you must take, you'll just have to wait until the next time it's offered. There's little chance anyone will advocate for you, and when the time comes to find a professor to guide you toward your next steps—graduate school, a job, a year as part of a volunteer corps—you'll have a hard time finding anyone who knows you well enough to give advice or write a letter of recommendation on your behalf.

Dr. William Deresiewicz, a writer and former Yale professor of English, wrote in *The American Scholar* in 2008, "There are due dates and attendance requirements at places like Yale, but no one takes them very seriously. Extensions are available for the asking; threats to deduct credit for missed classes are rarely, if ever, carried out. In other words, students at places like Yale get an endless string of second chances."

The Ivies inculcate feelings of security and entitlement. "Getting through the gate is very difficult, but once you're in, there's almost nothing you can do to get kicked out," Dr. Deresiewicz writes. Students conflate their success (or supposed success) with their worth and value, so failure is terrifying.

Therein lies the rub: "[I]f you're afraid to fail, you're afraid to take risks, which begins to explain the final and most damning disadvantage of an elite education: that it is profoundly anti-intellectual. This will seem counterintuitive. Aren't kids at elite schools the smartest ones around, at least in the narrow academic sense? Don't they work harder than anyone else—indeed, harder than any previous generation? They are. They do. But being an

intellectual is not the same as being smart. Being an intellectual means more than doing your homework."

Dr. Deresiewicz's coup de grâce is a condemnation of professors at Ivies and their ilk: "Throughout much of the 20th century, with the growth of the humanistic ideal in American colleges, students might have encountered the big questions in the classrooms of professors possessed of a strong sense of pedagogic mission. Teachers like that still exist in this country, but the increasingly dire exigencies of academic professionalization have made them all but extinct at elite universities."

The former professor is not the only one to bemoan the quality of education at big-name schools. Every so often, an administrator at an Ivy or a flagship public university publicly confesses his or her institution's sins: We aren't paying attention to undergraduates; we are graduating people who aren't any sharper or inspired than they were when they arrived here; we've sacrificed learning at the altar of research.

Then these contrite administrators point to liberal arts colleges and say, "We need to be more like them." The Ivies and large universities are great places to go to graduate school (after all, their focus is on grad students!), but for the very best undergraduate education, seek out a small liberal arts college.

Here's why. The colleges in this book have one primary mission: educate the undergraduate. Each appeals to a slightly different type of teenager, but they all share a mission to raise students' trajectories and develop thinkers, leaders, and moral citizens.

The little-known truth is that these colleges have been on the cutting edge of higher education for decades. Many of them have outperformed most of the rankings sweethearts in the percentages of graduates who become America's scientists and scholars. Their students have won Fulbrights, Rhodeses, Goldwaters, Watsons, and other prestigious postgraduate scholarships far out of proportion to their sizes and selectivity. And their graduates get accepted to medical, dental, law, and graduate schools at rates that far outpace the national averages.

These colleges not only equip their students to live full lives,

but they also work their magic on a wide range of students. The list includes colleges for the venturesome, the do-it-yourselfers, those who need structure or nurture or both, the late bloomers, the naïfs, and those who need a second chance.

Every one of these catalytic places will push and stretch you beyond what you think possible; they'll let you slip and slide and they'll help you find your footing, but they won't let you hide from your potential or yourself.

Almost all of them accept more than half of their applicants, and they attract strikingly different kinds of kids. Their programs range from the choose-your-own-adventure challenges of Marlboro and New College to the prescribed, no-electives approach of the Great Books curriculum at St. John's.

Their power is in how they teach. The focus is on the student, not the faculty; he is heavily involved in his education. There are no passive ears; students and faculty work so closely together, they even coauthor publications. Teaching is an act of love. Students and professors develop a mentor relationship in class, and professors become students' hiking companions, intramural teammates, dinner hosts, and friends. Learning is collaborative rather than competitive; values are central; community matters. These colleges are places of great coherence, where the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

It is these circumstances that develop leaders, people who can land on their feet, who are bold and imaginative, and who can see the big picture.

These colleges are places where people will listen to you. Not because all of your ideas are brilliant. (They're not.) Not because people are pandering to you. (They're not.) People—professors, peers, administrators—will listen to you because it's an essential part of learning. So many institutions of higher education in this country expect you only to listen—as you sit in a class of hundreds of students. But doesn't it make you wonder how students in these classes test their own ideas?

It's a powerful thing to present your idea to an expert and hear,

"Yes, you're on to something!" or "No, I don't think you've got much to stand on. Let's talk about a different route." That's the stuff of life. And when you must get your own job, you won't last long if the only thing you know how to do is present someone else's ideas.

So let these schools inspire you. Dare to imagine your college years as a billion interactions that draw out your talents, ignite new passions, challenge your assumptions, nurture your hopes, and teach you how to own your place at the table when you're done.

WHY YOU CAN (AND SHOULD) IGNORE THE RANKINGS

Imagine that someone asked you to rate NFL, NBA, NHL, and MLB teams on one scale. Are the Colts better than the Yankees? How would you convert triples to fourth-down conversions or breakaways to free throws?

You couldn't—no one could. Yet when publications rank colleges and universities, they're essentially engaging in this kind of absurdity. How can anyone measure what happens in a small philosophy class in Hoboken against what happens in a large Biology 101 lecture in Portland? And where does the individual student's growth come into play?

No matter the absurdity, publications make these comparisons all the time, based on criteria dreamed up by their editors, many of whom never talk to an administrator, professor, or student before crowning champions and runners-up. Statisticians measure mostly input factors—incoming students' SAT scores and class ranks, selectivity, professors' salaries—many of which are totally irrelevant to education. They know nothing about what happens to young minds and souls in the four years of college. Judging the quality of a college by the grades and scores of the freshmen it admits is like judging the quality of a hospital by the health of the patients it admits. What happens during the stay is what counts.

Rankings have fallen over the edge of misleading into the sea of

ridiculousness. You can find out which are the best "jock schools" and which are "dodgeball targets," places characterized by "reefer madness" or "palatial dorms." Every year, the media report on the biggest party school. (Doesn't it make you wonder exactly how that's determined? Is someone measuring students' average blood-alcohol levels on a series of Saturday nights?)

So why do we pay attention? Rankings proliferated in the absence of clear research about the effects and value of higher education. Statistics like SAT scores and professors' salaries are much easier to quantify than life-changing classes or personal epiphanies. And college is expensive. We want the best outcome, the best return on our investment, and the rankings make it seem so easy. But they jinx college choices year after year because they don't—they can't—tell *you* what's best for *you*.

You have better options for evaluating the power of a particular college's teaching, though not all colleges participate. One is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, pronounced "Nessie," like the Loch Ness monster). Each year, NSSE randomly surveys freshmen and seniors at four-year colleges across the country to find out how often they participate in activities that research has shown are linked to learning, such as studying, continuing class discussions outside class, receiving prompt feedback from professors, and using opportunities for collaboration with faculty. It also assesses how well the college uses its resources to get students engaged in these activities. NSSE allows schools to compare their results with those of similar colleges, so schools know how they are faring.

The other tool is the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), a three-part test that asks students to answer realistic problems that require them to assess the value and importance of various pieces of information. Researchers evaluate students' written responses to the problems and "assess their abilities to think critically, reason analytically, solve problems and communicate clearly and cogently," the CLA says. The assessment measures students' growth over time and compares results across schools.

NSSE and CLA don't release their reports to the public, but if

your prospective colleges participate—and many in this book do—you can ask to see the results. They're far better measures of a college's efficacy than the rankings.

WHY SELECTIVITY IS JUST SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Thanks to ranking systems that give high marks to schools for refusing admission to the majority of applicants, we've been taught that selectivity equals value or prestige or rigor. That's bunk.

But lots of people—and colleges—buy it. When colleges report their acceptance rates, they calculate those rates based on all of the students who sent in *any part* of the application. That calculation makes their prospective pool bigger and their resulting acceptance rate lower. If you have a pool of one hundred applications and you accept twenty of them, you're more selective than if you have a pool of fifty applicants and you accept twenty of them.

This method is misleading because students don't always complete their applications. Here's an example: Emma uses the Common App to apply to six colleges. She sees that Awesome College allows her to apply for free, so she checks Awesome College's box because she figures, "Why not?" But Awesome College has a supplement, which Emma doesn't finish because she wasn't very interested in Awesome College in the first place, and she's tired of writing essays about which character from her favorite book is most like her.

But Awesome College still counts Emma as an applicant, even though there's no way she could have actually gotten in because she didn't finish her application. See the problem?

So for this book, every college has recalculated its acceptance rates based on its pool of completed applications. In each chapter, you'll also find admitted students' average high-school GPAs on a 4.0 scale and the standardized test scores for the middle 50 percent of accepted students. (The reported SAT ranges are math and critical reading scores combined and don't include writing.) Those

numbers give you a much better understanding of your chances of admission *if you actually finish your application.*

Better still, admissions officers at these colleges won't toss out your application if you have lower-than-desired test scores or you don't fit their academic profile perfectly. They're eager to know you and figure out if you'll succeed at their college, and they're willing to take chances on students who show potential and curiosity. And as of 2011, thirteen of them are test optional, which means that they don't require standardized test scores for admission: Agnes Scott, Clark, Denison, Earlham, Goucher, Guilford, Juniata, Knox, Lawrence, Marlboro, McDaniel, St. John's, and Ursinus. (Homeschooled students still might have to submit scores; check with the colleges that interest you.)

These schools' philosophy is countercultural, and the implications are huge: Your SAT score, your class rank, and your GPA do not determine your fate! That's good news for teenagers who haven't hit their academic strides, and it's also important news for those who have. In interviews with more than a thousand students at these colleges, I found both types of students. The late bloomers said that with patient guidance and gentle nudges from faculty members, they discovered their own talents and passion for learning. And students who were academic rock stars in high school gushed that these schools taught them how to think and take smart risks.

In short, you don't have to be one of the jittery millions of students anxiously fattening résumés to impress some high-status school that won't do nearly as much for you as the catalytic college that really wants you.

WHY A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL

"Liberal arts" has nothing to do with a college's political bent or its sculpture program. It refers to an educational philosophy that embraces the value and importance of studying core academic subjects, typically comprising the humanities (literature, history, fine

arts, languages, religion, and philosophy) and the sciences (natural sciences, math, and social sciences).

The ancient Greeks dreamed up the idea of liberal learning. Sons of wealthy families studied such things as logic and astronomy, not trades, as the lower classes did. The Greeks saw this education as essential to society: These young men would grow up to debate laws in the assembly, hold sway over their communities, lead their fellow citizens during wartime, and influence ideas of beauty and goodness. Their education was a cultural inheritance expected to cultivate their intellect and their virtue. "Liberal" refers to these young men's freedom, political and economic, to get such an elite education.

Liberal arts colleges today depend on the same philosophy: Citizens ought to be educated in ideas and ways of knowing that aren't tied to doing one particular job. And even though the liberal arts tradition is more than 2,500 years old, it's more practical today than ever.

Liberal learning teaches students to investigate and understand the world: microorganisms and macroeconomics, the essence of a poem and the validity of political rhetoric, theories of chemical reactions and reactions to artistic expression. It builds nimble minds and creates independent thinkers.

It also builds the skills employers say they want. In 2009, as the economy sank into a recession, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) commissioned a survey of 302 private-sector employers to ask what they valued in employees. When asked where colleges should place the most emphasis,

- 89 percent said effective oral and written communication;
- 81 percent said critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills;
- 79 percent said knowledge and skills applied to real-world settings;
- 75 percent said connections between choices or actions and ethical decisions;
- 71 percent said teamwork and the ability to collaborate;
- 70 percent said the ability to innovate and be creative.

They might as well have written the marketing material for liberal learning.

If the first decade of the new millennium taught us anything, it's that the world is a wild, raucous place where almost anything can happen. And in such a place, nobody can tell you precisely how your career will go. Nobody can give you the facts you need to do your job ten years from now because nobody knows what your job will be ten years from now. A liberal education gives you skills you will always need to be an adaptive learner, an effective communicator, and a sharp-idea generator.

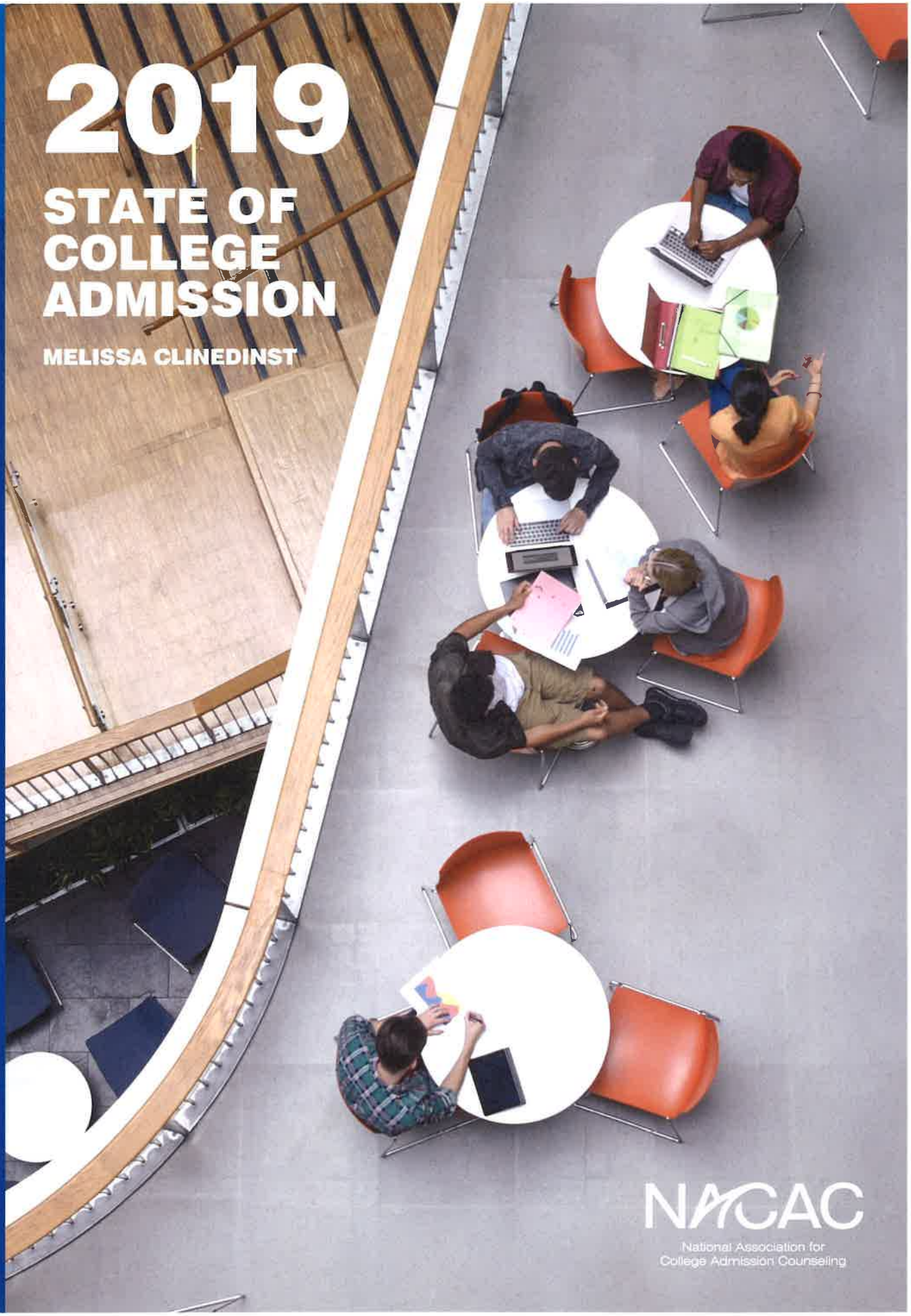
And then there are the personal benefits of liberal learning in the information age. Our digital idolatry has cost us focus. It has turned communication into fleeting 140-character messages and status updates of little consequence. It has diminished our need and ability to contemplate. It has unraveled the definition of community and allowed us to define friendships by clicks of a mouse. Of course, you can be a liberal arts student and love technology. None of these schools calls you to be a Luddite. But the richness and depth of your learning will enhance the things that this era of ubiquitous information and social media might cost us: patience, intimacy, an appreciation of nuance, a desire for truth, a sharp eye, and a tender heart.

It sounds lofty, but a liberal education doesn't just prepare you for work. It prepares you for life and all the things life comprises. It teaches you how to tell the truth from the slop. It equips you to vote, make good choices, influence your community, raise your kids, take smart risks, and keep learning long after the days when you're reading books simply because a professor put them on a syllabus.

Emerson wrote, "'What will you have?' quoth God. 'Pay for it and take it.'" These are places eager and eminently able, if you are willing to pay with hard work, to empower you to take it all—and carry it with you the rest of your life.

2019 STATE OF COLLEGE ADMISSION

MELISSA CLINEDINST



NACAC
National Association for
College Admission Counseling

Executive Summary

Highlights from the *2019 State of College Admission* report include findings related to the transition from high school to postsecondary education in the United States, gathered primarily through NACAC's annual Admission Trends Survey and Counseling Trends Survey. The 2019 report also includes information about applications from international and transfer students.

College Applications

The increase in the number of colleges to which each student applies continues an upward trend, which is reflected in college reports of increased application volume.

- **Growth in Application Volume Continues:** Between the Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 admission cycles, the number of applications from first-time freshmen increased 6 percent and international student applications increased by 7 percent. Transfer applications were up 2 percent overall, put public colleges experienced an average 1.7 percent decline in transfer applications while private colleges had a 4.7 percent increase.

- **Colleges Accept Two-Thirds of First-Time Freshmen Applicants, on Average:** The percentage of applicants offered admission at four-year colleges and universities in the United States—referred to as the average selectivity rate—was 66.7 percent for Fall 2017. The national average acceptance rate has increased from a low of 63.9 percent in Fall 2012.

- **Average Yield Rate for First-Time Freshmen Holds Steady After Long Decline:** The average yield rate for Fall 2017 was nearly identical to Fall 2016 (33.7 percent and 33.6 percent, respectively). Over the past decade the average yield rate has steadily declined from 48 percent in Fall 2007.

- **Transfer Acceptance Rate Slightly Lower than Freshmen Rate; Yield Much Higher:** Among institutions that enroll transfer students, average selectivity for Fall 2018 was 61 percent, compared to 66 percent for first-time freshmen. However, more than half (52 percent) of transfer applicants who were admitted ultimately enrolled, compared to only 27 percent of freshman admits.

- **International Student Acceptance Rate is Low; Yield Slightly Higher than First-Time Freshmen:** At institutions that enroll first-time international students, the Fall 2018 admit rate for this population (52 percent) was lower than the rate for both transfer and first-time freshmen students. The average yield rate for international students was 29 percent.

Recruitment and Yield Strategies

College admission offices use a variety of strategies to recruit prospective students, particularly those who would be likely to attend if admitted. Colleges are broadening their recruitment efforts to bring in more transfer and international students.

- **Top Recruitment Strategies:** Colleges employ a broad range of strategies when recruiting high school students. Sending email, maintaining institutional websites, and hosting campus visits were the primary means by which colleges recruited first-time freshmen for the Fall 2018 admission cycle. Four other factors—high school visits, direct mail, and outreach to both parents and high school counselors—were each rated as considerably important by at least 50 percent of colleges.

- **Early Decision and Early Action Activity Increases:** Between Fall 2017 and Fall 2018, colleges reported an average increase of 11 percent in the number of Early Decision applicants and 10 percent in ED admits. The number of Early Action applications increased by 10 percent and the number of students accepted through EA increased by 9 percent.

- **Wait List Activity Increases; Likelihood of Wait List Acceptance Remains Low:** For the Fall 2018 admission cycle, 43 percent of institutions reported using a wait list. From Fall 2017 to Fall 2018, the number of students offered a place on an admission wait list increased by 18 percent, on average. Institutions accepted an average of 20 percent of all students who chose to remain on wait lists.

Factors in Admission Decisions

The factors that admission officers use to evaluate applications from first-time freshmen have remained largely consistent over the past 20 years. Students' academic achievements—which include grades, strength of curriculum, and admission test scores—constitute the most important factors in the admission decision.

- **Admission Offices Identify Grades, High School Curriculum, and Test Scores as Top Factors for First-Time Freshmen:** The top factors in the admission decision were overall high school GPA, grades in college preparatory courses, strength of curriculum, and admission test scores. Among the next most important factors were the essay, a student's demonstrated interest, counselor and teacher recommendations, class rank, and extracurricular activities.

- **Student Background Information:** Nearly one-third of colleges rated first-generation status as at least moderately important in first-time freshmen admission decisions. About one-quarter of colleges considered high school attended, race/ethnicity, and state or county of residence as either moderately or considerably important.

College Counseling in Secondary Schools

Access to college information and counseling in school is a significant benefit to students in the college application process. For many students, particularly those in public schools, college counseling is limited at best. Counselors are few in number, often have large student caseloads, and have additional constraints on the amount of time they can dedicate to college counseling.

- **Student-to-Counselor Ratio:** According to US Department of Education data, in 2016–17 each public school counselor (including elementary and secondary) was responsible for 455 students, on average.

- **College Counseling Staff in Secondary Schools:** For the 2018–19 academic year, 29 percent of public schools reported employing at least one counselor (full- or part-time) whose exclusive responsibility was to provide college counseling, compared to 48 percent of private schools.

- **Time Available for College Counseling in Secondary Schools:** Some differences exist between the duties and activities of counselors employed at public schools versus those who work at private schools. On average, public school counselors spent 19 percent of their time on postsecondary counseling in 2018–19, while their private school counterparts spent 31 percent of their time on college counseling.

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2017

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Grades in All Courses	220	74.5	15.0	5.5	5.0
Grades in College Prep Courses	220	73.2	16.8	5.9	4.1
Strength of Curriculum	219	62.1	21.9	8.7	7.3
Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	221	45.7	37.1	12.2	5.0
Essay or Writing Sample	220	23.2	33.2	24.1	19.5
Student's Demonstrated Interest	218	16.1	23.9	28.0	32.1
Counselor Recommendation	218	15.1	40.4	26.6	17.9
Teacher Recommendation	219	14.2	40.2	26.5	19.2
Class Rank	220	9.1	29.1	34.1	27.7
Extracurricular Activities	219	6.4	42.9	32.0	18.7
Portfolio	219	6.4	11.9	26.9	54.8
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	219	5.5	18.3	35.2	41.1
Interview	219	5.5	16.4	28.3	49.8
Work	217	4.1	28.6	36.9	30.4
State Graduation Exam Scores	218	2.3	8.7	18.8	70.2
SAT II Scores	216	1.9	5.6	14.8	77.8

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

by strength of curriculum, admission test scores, and grades in all courses (overall GPA). However, for the past three admission cycles (2016, 2017, and 2018), the percentage of colleges rating grades in all courses as considerably important has matched or surpassed grades in college prep courses.

Class rank has become much less important over the past decade. For each admission cycle from Fall 2016 to Fall 2018, only 9 percent of colleges rated class rank as considerably important, compared to 23 percent in 2007.

Factors in Admission by Institutional Characteristics for First-Time Freshmen, Fall 2018

The top four admission decision factors for first-time freshmen are consistent across all types of institutions. However, institutional characteristics determined the relative level of importance assigned to some admission factors.

Institutional Control

- Private colleges placed relatively more importance on the essay/writing sample, the interview, counselor and teacher recommendations, demonstrated interest, extracurricular activities, and work.
- Public colleges valued admission test scores more highly than private institutions.

Enrollment Size

- Smaller colleges gave comparatively more weight to the interview, teacher and counselor recommendations, and demonstrated interest.
- Larger colleges tended to place more value on admission test scores.