

Applying To the TOP Colleges

For Parents of College Applicants
and Students

Presented By: Dennis M. Jiang

Topics of Discussion

- Introduction
- Why a Top College?
- College Ranking
- Understanding Admission Evaluation Process at the Top Colleges
- Understanding the Basics of College Financial Aid
- Deciding Where to Apply
- Applying to College - Marketing Applicants
- Writing Effective Essays
- Interviewing

Introduction

- It is sometimes very difficult for the parents of excellent students to believe that their kids do not have a sure or easy shot at getting into the best colleges
- Gaining admission to the top colleges is now much more difficult than it was in previous generations, or even just a decade ago.
- Competition is very stiff and the application process is complex.

Why a Top College?

- There have always been good returns on an investment in education.
- This even more true for those who attend the top colleges, given the “winner-take-all” nature of the society and economy in which we live.
- The specific benefits of going to a top-tier institution are numerous:
 - ◆ Greater learning from other students
 - ◆ Greater chance of acceptance to the top graduate programs
 - ◆ Greater career choice
 - ◆ Greater career flexibility
 - ◆ Higher salaries
 - ◆ Greater networking options
 - ◆ The ability to open doors nationally and internationally

College Ranking

- U.S. News & World Report “America's Best Colleges” and “America's Best Graduate Schools” are now the most important source of college rankings. The online version (http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/rankindex_brief.php) provides easy way to search and categorize America’s colleges.
- Other sources: Barron’s Guide to the Most Competitive Colleges; The Fiske Guide to Colleges; and Cass & Birnbaum’s Guide to American Colleges
- Rules to remember when consulting college rankings:
 - ◆ Use rankings primarily to determine the approximate level of a school’s reputation
 - ◆ Note that a ranking of a school is not the same thing as the ranking of each department and program within the school, and some departments and programs within a school will be substantially better than others
 - ◆ Consult multiple rankings, rather than just one, because the consensus view tends to be more valuable than any one ranking

College Ranking (Continued)

<i>Private Universities</i>	<i>Public Universities</i>	<i>Liberal Arts Colleges</i>
Harvard University (MA) *	University of California - Berkeley #	Williams College (MA) +
Princeton University (NJ) *	University of Virginia #	Amherst College (MA) +
Yale University (CT) *	University of California – Los Angeles #	Swarthmore College (PA)
University of Pennsylvania *	University of Michigan – Ann Arbor #	Wellesley College (MA)
Duke University (NC)	University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill #	Carleton College (MA)
Stanford University (CA)	College of William and Mary (VA)	Bowdoin College (ME)
California Institute of Technology	University of California – San Diego	Pomona College (CA)
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Wisconsin - Madison #	Haveford College (PA)
Columbia University (NY) *	Georgia Institute of Technology	Middlebury College (VT)
Dartmouth College (NH) *	University of California – Irvine	Claremont McKenna College (CA)
Washington University in St. Louis	University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign	Davidson College (NC)
Northwestern University (IL)	University of California – Santa Barbara	Wesleyan University (CT) +
Cornell University (NY) *	University of Washington	Vassar College (NY)
Johns Hopkins University (MD)	Pennsylvania State University – University Park	Washington and Lee University (VA)
Brown University *	University of California – Davis	
University of Chicago	University of Florida	

* Ivy League
 # Public Ivies
 + Little Ivies

2005 US Top Schools, Sorted by Overall Score

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Liberal Arts Colleges: Top Schools

Rank	School (State)	Overall score	Peer assessment score (5.0 highest)	Graduation & retention rank	Average freshman retention rate	2003 predicted grad. rate	2003 actual grad. rate	2003 overperf. (+) / underperf. (-)	Faculty resources rank	% of classes under 20 ('03)	% of classes with 50 or more ('03)	Student/faculty ratio ('03)	% of faculty who are full-time ('03)	Selectivity rank	SAI/ACT 25th-75th percentile ('03)	Freshmen in top 10% of HS class ('03)	Acceptance rate ('03)	Financial resources rank	Alumni giving rank	Avg. alumni giving rate
Sorted by: Rank																				
1.	Harvard University (MA)	100	4.9	1	97%	92%	98%	+6	2	73%	13%	8/1	92%	4	1400-1590	90%	10%	8	3	48%
1.	Princeton University (NJ)	100	4.9	1	98%	93%	97%	+4	3	72%	11%	5/1	92%	2	1370-1560	94%	10%	12	1	61%
3.	Yale University (CT)	99	4.9	3	98%	94%	96%	+2	7	75%	8%	6/1	89%	1	1380-1580	99%	11%	2	6	45%
4.	University of Pennsylvania	95	4.6	12	97%	92%	92%	None	1	74%	7%	6/1	89%	7	1330-1510	93%	20%	6	8	39%
5.	Duke University (NC)	94	4.6	7	97%	92%	92%	None	3	72%	6%	8/1	97%	8	1330-1520	88%	25%	10	5	46%
5.	Massachusetts Inst. of Technology	94	4.9	9	98%	93%	92%	-1	15	63%	15%	6/1	88%	2	1410-1560	97%	16%	7	12	37%
5.	Stanford University (CA)	94	4.9	7	98%	92%	94%	+2	13	69%	14%	7/1	99%	6	1340-1560	90%	13%	8	9	38%
8.	California Institute of Technology	93	4.7	24	96%	93%	89%	-4	9	63%	9%	3/1	96%	4	1460-1580	94%	17%	1	16	34%
9.	Columbia University (NY)	88	4.7	12	98%	91%	92%	+1	13	73%	8%	7/1	91%	13	1310-1510	81%	11%	17	18	33%
9.	Dartmouth College (NH)	88	4.4	4	96%	92%	95%	+3	20	56%	9%	9/1	92%	10	1330-1530	84%	18%	11	3	47%
11.	Northwestern University (IL)	87	4.4	9	96%	91%	93%	+2	5	73%	9%	7/1	94%	18	1310-1480	83%	33%	13	25	29%
11.	Washington University in St. Louis	87	4.1	19	96%	86%	89%	+3	6	72%	8%	7/1	91%	8	1320-1480	91%	20%	4	9	38%
13.	Brown University (RI)	86	4.5	4	97%	92%	96%	+4	19	66%	11%	9/1	95%	10	1290-1500	87%	16%	27	9	38%
14.	Cornell University (NY)	85	4.6	15	96%	90%	92%	+2	22	44%	23%	9/1	98%	16	1280-1470	87%	31%	17	15	34%
14.	Johns Hopkins University (MD)	85	4.6	20	95%	89%	88%	-1	25	57%	16%	9/1	99%	24	1290-1470	78%	30%	3	25	29%
14.	University of Chicago	85	4.6	21	95%	89%	87%	-2	12	59%	6%	4/1	95%	24	1300-1510	78%	40%	19	27	29%
17.	Rice University (TX)	83	4.2	16	96%	92%	90%	-2	9	67%	9%	5/1	85%	10	1330-1530	86%	24%	22	14	36%
18.	University of Notre Dame (IN)	80	3.9	4	98%	89%	95%	+6	17	54%	11%	13/1	88%	21	1270-1460	83%	29%	43	2	48%
18.	Vanderbilt University (TN)	80	4.1	30	94%	84%	83%	-1	7	65%	6%	9/1	96%	27	1250-1430	77%	40%	13	30	27%
20.	Emory University (GA)	79	4.0	24	94%	91%	88%	-3	9	67%	7%	6/1	95%	15	1300-1460	90%	42%	15	36	25%
21.	University of California - Berkeley *	78	4.8	26	96%	87%	85%	-2	39	54%	17%	16/1	92%	13	1190-1440	99%	24%	36	109	15%
22.	Carnegie Mellon University (PA)	76	4.3	35	94%	88%	81%	-7	16	65%	9%	11/1	93%	28	1280-1480	72%	38%	22	36	25%
22.	University of Michigan - Ann Arbor *	76	4.6	26	96%	75%	85%	+10	53	49%	16%	15/1	91%	18	26-30	90%	53%	28	120	14%
22.	University of Virginia *	76	4.3	12	97%	84%	92%	+8	39	48%	15%	16/1	96%	26	1230-1430	85%	39%	49	31	26%
25.	Georgetown University (DC)	75	4.0	9	97%	90%	93%	+3	43	58%	8%	11/1	86%	16	1290-1460	83%	23%	36	18	33%
25.	Univ. of California - Los Angeles *	75	4.3	26	96%	84%	87%	+3	39	50%	22%	18/1	90%	18	1160-1410	97%	24%	22	93	16%

2005 Top Schools: Sorted by Peer Assessment Score

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Sorted by: Peer assessment score (5.0=highest)																				
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3.	Yale University (CT)	99	4.9	3	98%	94%	96%	+2	7	75%	8%	6/1	89%	1	1380- 1580	99%	11%	2	6	45%
21.	University of California - Berkeley *	78	4.8	26	96%	87%	85%	-2	39	54%	17%	16/1	92%	13	1190- 1440	99%	24%	36	109	15%
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22.	University of Virginia *	76	4.3	12	97%	84%	92%	+8	39	48%	15%	16/1	96%	26	1230- 1430	85%	39%	49	31	26%
17.	Rice University (TX)	83	4.2	16	96%	92%	90%	-2	9	67%	9%	5/1	85%	10	1330- 1530	86%	24%	22	14	36%
29.	U. of North Carolina - Chapel Hill *	71	4.2	34	95%	77%	83%	+6	50	51%	12%	14/1	97%	33	1190- 1390	70%	37%	28	36	25%
32.	Univ. of Wisconsin - Madison *	66	4.2	43	91%	72%	79%	+7	58	42%	18%	13/1	93%	45	26- 30	55%	65%	49	113	15%
46.	University of Texas - Austin *	58	4.1	62	91%	70%	71%	+1	120	33%	25%	19/1	97%	49	1110- 1350	69%	47%	117	131	12%
18.	Vanderbilt University (TN)	80	4.1	30	94%	84%	83%	-1	7	65%	6%	9/1	96%	27	1250- 1430	77%	40%	13	30	27%
..	Washington University in																			

Understanding Admission Evaluation Process at the Top Colleges

- The four types of admissions cycles:
 - ◆ **Regular Admissions:** is the standard admission evaluation cycle, which requires an applicant to submit the application by a particular deadline (usually in early to mid-January)
 - ◆ **Rolling Admissions:** is an admissions evaluation cycle that allows applications to be reviewed and decided upon as they arrive in the admissions office.
 - ◆ **Early Decision:** is a policy offered by most of the top colleges for students who know what their first-choice college is by the beginning of the senior year. In Early Decision, a student applies to the college under a binding contract early in the fall (11/1-15), is notified several months later of the college's decision, and is obligated to attend the school if admitted. A student applying Early decision to one school cannot apply Early Decision or Early Action to any other school.
 - ◆ **Early Action:** allows a student to apply to a college early and be notified from the school a few months later. It differs from Early Decision in that it is not a binding contract.
- What an application requires:
 - ◆ **A high school transcript:** important, it also shows a student's class ranking and what AP or IB classes taken
 - ◆ **A high school profile:** is provided by the guidance counselor at students' school. The profile contains a description of a high school and its students, the school's course offerings, grading system, and average GPA and SAT or ACT scores, as well as top ten universities of graduated students attending in previous year
 - ◆ **Standardized test scores** (SAT I, SAT II, or ACT): very important
 - ◆ **The written application** (including activity lists, short answers and essays): essays is very important:
 - ◆ **Recommendation letters** from teachers and guidance counselor: important
 - ◆ **An interview:** very important

Understanding Admission Evaluation Process at the Top Colleges (Continued)

- **The Evaluation Criteria:**
 - ◆ **Academic and intellectual potential:** The high school transcript, high school profile, SAT I/II or ACT scores and recommendations together make up a student's academic credentials. Top colleges require that students challenge themselves by taking the most rigorous course load available to them.
 - ◆ **Nonacademic pursuits and talents:** Top colleges are most interested in seeing how students spend their time outside of the classroom and what kind of person they are. If students have a special nonacademic talent, then the level of your accomplishment in that activity can substantially help you gain the attention of admissions officers. Sources are: written application, interview and recommendations
 - ◆ **Personal attributes:** Passion (devotion, dedication to learning), Perseverance (ability to overcome obstacles), Interpersonal skills (leadership, teamwork, cooperation), Creativity (innovation, imagination), Maturity (independence, judgement), Honesty (integrity, honor). Sources are: written application, interview and recommendations
- **The Evaluation Process:**
 - ◆ **First reads:** are the longest and most careful evaluations of candidates; most schools ask their officers to spend between 15 and 35 minutes when acting as the first reader of an applicants folder. Normally the first reader is the regional officer.
 - ◆ **Workcards:** provide information at a glance to the readers who visit the file after the initial evaluation and include information such as rank in class, SAT or ACT scores, an applicant's race or ethnicity and any special status information (e.g., recruited athlete, special talent)
 - ◆ **Readers and Committees:** At some schools, more than two reads occur before a file is either decided upon or sent to committee for further evaluation. *"The regional representative for an applicant's hometown is responsible for representing that student to the admission committee."*
 - ◆ **Rating Systems:** The way in which each school rates its candidates also differs tremendously from school to school. First, the admissions staff calculates a Numeric Index (NI) for each candidate, using an algorithm that takes a student's grades, rank in class, and SAT I and II (or ACT) scores into account. The NI is 1 .. 5, with 5 being the best rating possible. Each candidate also gets a subjective rating, also on 1 .. 5 with 5 being the best score, that is based on his or her cocurricular activities (learning-oriented activities outside of the classroom), interpersonal skills, and extracurricular activities. Another formula is $GPA \times 1000 + SAT\text{-}I + SAT\text{-}II$. For example, $4.0 \times 1000 + 1540 + 790 + 740 + 750 = 7820$. If his or her score ≥ 7360 , a student will be admitted.

Understanding Admission Evaluation Process at the Top Colleges (Continued)

- *“MIT has a very unique culture -- it’s very initiative-oriented. You have to be willing to fail if you want to come here. So we want to find kids with resilience, because everyone gets bumped around here, no matter how smart they are. You’ve got to be tough and resilience to make it here.” -- Marilee Jones, Dean of Admission, MIT*
- *“Enthusiasm for Penn is reasonably important. We ask students in a short-answer essay question how they became interested in us.” -- Lee Stetson, Dean of Admission, University of Pennsylvania*
- *“We treat everyone who has applied as if they want to come to Brown. There are, however, things that can turn is off on a candidate because they signal a lack of care for our application -- a poorly thought out presentation or misspellings, for example.” -- Michael Goldberger, Director of Admission, Brown University*
- Maximizing the impact of your application:
 - ◆ To improve the chance of admission, you must strive to use the three main admissions vehicles (the essays, the recommendations and the interview) to your best advantage to show maturity, sensibility, and academic capability. You must discuss your views in ways that do not offend others and are easily and logically supportable. You should demonstrate that you understand that the general atmosphere of the campus may not be conducive to your particular views and activities. You must be able to “prove,” perhaps through a discussion of one of your extensive extracurricular activities, your brainpower in order to make up for the brilliance not demonstrated in your academic record.
 - ◆ Use the essay as the mechanics of positioning to provide a method for presenting a very clear picture of you.
 - ◆ College applicants are not all the same; your job is to show your uniqueness. By making yourself unique, you also make yourself more memorable. The penalty for failing to capitalize on your strengths and to prepare a powerful application is, all too often, rejection. Schools have plenty of qualified applicants who took the time to study the process and submit a well-written applications. Failure to do these things suggests that you are not able to do so or that you did not take the college application process seriously. In either case, you are unlikely to be viewed as showing high potential.

Understanding the Basics of College Financial Aid

- College costs continue to rise. Most of private colleges raise their cost about 4 - 6% annually.
- About 95% of college financial aid in US is need-based.
- Many colleges now apply carefully honed strategies to attract the students they want.
- A positive aid package can result in, among other things:
 - ◆ A family's financial solvency despite incoming tuition bills from an expensive college.
 - ◆ A student's ability to attend the college of his or her choice regardless of its expense.
 - ◆ A student's freedom from overwhelming financial debt, and
 - ◆ A student's freedom to choose the career he or she wants upon college graduation rather than accepting a position primarily to support loan payments.
- **What is Financial Need?**
- The Higher Education Act of 1965, the law that governs student aid, states that it is the parents' responsibility to educate their children beyond the 12th grade. However, more importantly, the law also states that if a family can demonstrate **NEED**, then the government will assist in paying for such an education.
- The term **NEED** is not to be confused with "NEEDY", which most people think they have to be to qualify for Federal, state and college financial aid.
- It is very important that you know and understand the basic formula to demonstrate **NEED** and how the formula affects you. It is the basic framework that will determine how much aid you will receive at a given college.
 - **COST OF ATTENDANCE - EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION = FINANCIAL NEED**
- The **Cost of Attendance (COA)** includes: tuition, fees and other institutional expenses (such as registration fee or activity fees), room and board, health insurance, books and supplies, transportation, personal expenses and entertainment and miscellaneous costs.
- **The Family Contribution:** is determined by the need analysis methodology prescribed by law for use in calculating a student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC).
- The **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)** is how much money your family is expected to contribute to your college education for one year. Typically, the lower your EFC, the more financial aid you will receive. Factors, such as family size, number of family members in college, family savings, and current earnings (information you provide on the FAFSA) are used to calculate this figure. It must be recalculated every year.

Understanding the Basics of College Financial Aid (Continued)

- **Federal and Institutional Formulas**
 - ◆ Your EFC may vary from one institution to another, and is generally calculated using one or both of the nationally accepted methodologies.
- **Federal EFC Methodology (FM) (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>) (used by public colleges)**
 - ◆ The method for gathering the personal and financial information necessary to calculate your family contribution is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), based on a formula established by the federal government.
 - ◆ Takes into account family income, assets, size of current household, and the number of family members currently attending college.
 - ◆ Determines eligibility for federally-sponsored financial aid such as Pell Grants, Perkins and Stafford Loans, and Federal Work-Study Programs.
- **Institutional EFC Methodology (IM) (used by most of private colleges)**
 - ◆ Used by institutions and organizations to determine a student's eligibility for institutionally-based, private aid programs.
 - ◆ May vary from college to college, but a variety of non-federal formulas.
 - ◆ **CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE (<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp>)** is the financial aid application service of the College Board. a national, 100-year-old, not-for-profit membership association. Many of the member colleges, universities, graduate and professional schools, and scholarship programs use the information collected on PROFILE to help them award nonfederal student aid funds.
 - ◆ Additional factors in a family's financial situation are sometimes considered to determine a student's eligibility for institutional need-based aid.
 - ◆ May be used instead of, or in addition to, the federal EFC to determine eligibility to receive financial aid from college or private funds administered by the college.
- **The EFC is not just your parent's contribution. You and your parents share responsibility for meeting the cost of college.**
 - ◆ For dependent students, your family contribution is the sum of four separate calculations: the contribution from parents' income; the contribution from parents' assets; the contribution from student's income, and the contribution from student's assets.

Understanding the Basics of College Financial Aid (Continued)

Federal Methodology (FM)	Institutional Methodology (IM)
Considers total income of both parents, including child support, payments to retirement plans, and social security benefits	Considers total income of both parents, including child support, payments to retirement plans, and social security benefits
Considers all assets (value of business, savings, stocks, bonds, trusts, etc.), excluding home and farm equity , usually requiring a 3-6% contribution	Considers all assets (value of business, savings, stocks, bonds, trusts, etc.), including home and farm equity , usually requiring a 3-6% contribution
Considers student's income at about 50%, with those earning up to a certain amount exempt from any contributions	Considers student's income at about 50%, with all students required to make a minimum contribution no matter what their income
Considers student's assets at about 35%	Considers student's assets at about 35%
Does not consider siblings' assets	Consider siblings' assets
Does not grant allowances for private school tuition for siblings	Grants allowances for private school tuition for siblings
.....

- **Merit-based Aid** refers to a school's policy on giving out non-need scholarship money. Some merit scholarships are called by name, and may even require a separate application at the time of admission to be considered for them.
- Many of the top colleges do NOT currently grant aid on the basis of merit alone. The entire Ivy League, for example, opposes the idea of merit-based aid on principle.
- Note that some schools that do not give academic merit scholarships (such as Stanford, Notre Dame, and Georgetown) do give athletic merit scholarships.
- Rice, Davidson, Emory, Swarthmore, Vanderbilt, USC, NYU, and DU grant substantial merit-based scholarship programs.
- Apply to at least two schools that grant better financial aid to preferred candidates and where your academic standing places you in the upper 25% of the applicant pool (even better if you fall in the upper 10%).
- Apply for outside merit scholarships

Deciding Where to Apply

- **Choosing the right colleges starts with analyzing yourself.**
- **There are two major errors that many students make when looking at colleges:**
 - ◆ focusing on the “best” colleges rather than those that best fit their needs and goals, and
 - ◆ focusing on one single “perfect” college.
- **Self-evaluation to help you in the college selection process by identifying your needs regarding**
 - ◆ Educational philosophy and academic environment: you can determine what kind of intellectual atmosphere you want, what level of academic difficulty and pressure you are willing to accept
 - ◆ Academic particulars: you can determine what departmental strengths you seek, the level of emphasis on reading or writing you desire
 - ◆ Overall environment and atmosphere, social environment, location, physical features/facilities, and
 - ◆ Future goals
- **Research the schools:**
 - ◆ Look at the information contained in guidebooks to colleges
 - ◆ Get information from the schools themselves: call, write, or email each school to get its brochure, catalog, and application materials
 - ◆ Visit college web sites
 - ◆ Learn when you can meet the school’s traveling representatives
 - ◆ Talk with alumni of each school
 - ◆ Visit the schools: is a important part of your research
- **Creating your final list of target schools: choose five to eight selective universities**
 - ◆ **Three to four stretches:** A stretch is a school at which acceptance is possible but not at all certain. By looking at the statistics on SAT/ACT range, GPA and rank-in-class
 - ◆ **Two to three possibles:** A possible is a school at which you have a better than 50% chance of being accepted.
 - ◆ **One or two safeties:** A safety is a school at which you are almost certain to be admitted.
- **Apply to schools that are know for being generous with financial aid**
- **Apply to similar schools (of comparable academic caliber) for maximum leverage in the financial aid process**

Applying to College - Marketing Applicants

- Marketing yourself - general principles:
 - ◆ Understand how you compare with the competition
 - ◆ Maximizing strengths, minimizing weaknesses:
 - ☞ learn how admissions officers will view your candidacy based upon their expectations of people from your educational and personal background
 - ☞ To improve the chance of admission, you must strive to use the three main admissions vehicles (the essays, the recommendations and the interview) to your best advantage to show maturity, sensibility, and academic capability.
 - ◆ Positioning your application uniquely to attract admission officers with a sharp and clear image that is readily noticed, valued and remembered. By making yourself unique, you also make yourself more memorable.
 - ◆ Different positioning tactics for different schools
 - ☞ Markedly different applications for each school is a lot extra work. Not only would you need to start from scratch when writing each batch of essays, but you also might need to use different recommenders.
 - ◆ The penalty for failing to capitalize on your strengths and to prepare a powerful application is, all too often, rejection. Schools have plenty of qualified applicants who took the time to study the process and submit a well-written application. Failure to do these things suggests that you are not able to do so or that you did not take the college application process seriously.
- Acquiring strong academic credentials:
 - ◆ “The strongest candidates are those who take the most challenging courses, especially in the solid subjects.”
 - ◆ More schools prefer to see great high school grades rather than great standardized test scores. Strong test scores and a poor high school record suggest that he/she is lazy and lacks determination to succeed.
- Shaping your nonacademic profile - extracurricular (school and outside of school) activities:
 - ◆ Depth of involvement, Leadership, Something unusual, Possession of at least two dimensions

Writing Effective Essays

- *“Amherst is a very verbal place -- we’re very committed to the written word. This means that the essay is of utmost importance to the application.” -- Katie Fretwell, Director of Admissions, Amherst College*
- *“It is crucial that applicants allow themselves to be as personal and self-reflective as possible when writing their essays. Avoid writing about something on a superficial level or reasoning to a topic that does not reveal anything special about you.” -- Richard Shaw, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, Yale University*
- Keeping your positioning efforts in mind, sift through your possible topics and choose those that will allow you to establish your most effective themes.
- Your goal is to develop materials that will help you to write stories unique to you, stories that no one but you could tell.
- Plan before writing: think about, outline, and draft your essays before writing them
- Admissions officers are highly familiar with the determinants of success in college and life after college. They will examine your application for convincing evidence of your intellectual ability, your potential as a leader and contributor to your community, your personal characteristics, and your future goals. They want applicants who clearly value learning and education. You need to provide evidence that you make the most of opportunities, whether large or small.
- Allocate substantial time for reorganizing, redrafting, and soliciting the input of others: Remember, “There is no such thing as good writing, just good rewriting”
- The book of *“How to Get Into the Top Colleges”* by Richard Montauk and Krista Klein provides many very good application essay examples.

Interviewing

- *“We take it pretty seriously. The interview report becomes a formalized part of our admissions evaluation and gets a rating.” -- Richard Shaw, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, Yale University*
- Establish Your Objectives
 - ◆ Conveying a good impression
 - ◆ Imparting your strengths
 - ☞ Strong team player, coordination
 - ☞ Strong interpersonal skill, communication and writing skill
 - ☞ Dynamic, creative, and energetic
 - ◆ Demonstrating your knowledge
 - ☞ Your goal is to answer the questions thoroughly, support your profile, and appear interesting as well as interested in the college. It is best if you can also appear confident and at ease during the interview.
 - ◆ Gaining information
 - ☞ Asking questions: Three questions should reflect your concerns about the school.
 - ☞ Gives you the opportunity to show how knowledgeable you are about the college as well as that you are taking a proactive approach to your educational future.
- Prepare yourself by:
 - ◆ Learning the most likely questions, knowing yourself and your candidacy, knowing the school, formulating your own questions
 - ◆ Prepare to answer some tough questions
- Know what to expect from different types of interviewers: admissions officers, alums, students
- Practice via mock interviews

References

- Richard Montauk and Krista Klein, “*How to Get Into the Top Colleges*”, Prentice Hall Press, 2000
- <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/>
- Barron’s Guide to the Most Competitive Colleges
- <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>