

GOT COLLEGE?

Winter Newsletter

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Warm topics for winter...



New got college?
Newsletter Format



Experiences versus
Activity Titles



Why we take a more
practical approach
with students



Small Group Courses
for current juniors—
Registration is OPEN

New Newsletter Format

After 10 years of the same newsletter format, it's time for an update. In addition to our new look, we'll also be including more stories to support what we believe families should know for a clearer understanding of a student's decision-making journey towards college. Happy reading!

Meaningful Experiences versus Activity Titles

Meeting with a sophomore recently, I asked him to explain about what he does as VP of a school club. He replied that his friend started the club simply as a means to "impress" colleges. He had done virtually nothing as VP, and the club had met only once. This led to a discussion of why some colleges ask for activities and what they are looking for. This is such an important topic to expand on....

For colleges that consider activities (not all do), campuses value:

- 1. Engagement.** Colleges value students who are actively involved. Colleges want to know what actions you took while in that activity—and why. Colleges are seeking students who will be engaged on their campuses. And one of the best ways to predict this is by looking at past behaviors. If you can't describe your activity by using verbs or action words, maybe it's time to get engaged in that or another activity.
- 2. Authenticity.** Colleges are trying to get to know students through their activity choices; what are the student's interests, values, soft skills, leadership experiences, etc.? Admission readers want to get to know a student's true self, rather than a façade. Want to really impress colleges? Be authentic.
- 3. Personal growth.** Colleges are looking for students who are willing to step out of their comfort zones just a bit each year—to learn. Remember, college applicants are applying to a job to be a student, someone who learns and grows intellectually and personally. One of our favorite student stories was a gal who had a fear of talking in front of people and peers, yet she joined Toastmasters. She had impressive personal growth from that valuable experience to share on her college applications.
- 4. Learning experiences.** What matters most is what students learn—about themselves, about others, and about the world around them, rather than simply the so-called "impressive title" of an activity. Colleges want to know the significance of an activity or experience. What did you learn?
- 5. Tangible, measurable impact.** Colleges want specifics. Whom did your activity help? How many people? How much money did you raise, exactly? Through which fundraising activities? What was your role? What were you responsible for?

Too much time and money is wasted on students trying to "impress" colleges. Encourage your student to pursue **meaningful** activities. And "meaningful" is unique to each student. On college apps, admission readers will take note. And MORE IMPORTANTLY, it'll do more for your student in the long run by helping to develop a responsible, principled, and thoughtful young adult. That's what helps to make a stand out applicant!

Summer is a terrific time for meaningful experiences. What's your student doing this summer? Need help? Use our free website resource page for [Summer Opportunities](#). We also make individual recommendations/suggestions in a [consultation](#).

Why we take a practical approach

Two parent quotes help to explain this:

- "It's interesting to see how over the past year as we visited schools, that the kid's mindsets change. It truly is very important to visit schools. There is no doubt about it!" (parent)
- "I'd like to say that we really appreciate your guidance and the process you use with the kids. This year, with all of the application/acceptance craziness, we were VERY happy that we had been so careful with the apply list. When the rejection notices started arriving, (our son) had already been accepted into 3 or 4 schools - so it didn't "sting" as much. And being able to choose from seven schools was a good problem to have. Because of the whole process and the preparation you use with the students, it was much easier to help him realize that what you learn is more important than where you learn it." (parent)

This is an uncertain process, with an uncertain outcome, with a teenager in a state of maturing and figuring out who they are. We stress realistic outcome forecasting with students to help manage their expectations. We're conservative with admission chances, because college admissions is becoming increasingly less predictable. We take a long, decision-making process and break it into timely, bite-sized pieces—to help make it less stressful. We don't pay much attention to college rankings, because we firmly believe that what a student does in college is more important than where they go. Our belief in our practical approach has strengthened over 10 years of experience. We've learned that the more engaged a student is in this process, the better the college match is likely to be.

Want to know more about our [Small Group Courses](#) for junior students?

Save \$100 though Jan 6th, so check out course schedules ASAP!

We're happy to chat with you about our college planning services. Simply submit a "[contact us](#)" form through our website.

Happy 2019! ...Celeste and Lynn