
Improve your son or daughter's chances of getting into a better college

Spring 2010

Dear Parents and Student:

This year's college admissions results are turning out to be more selective than ever, not only for students who applied to private universities, but also to those opting for top tier state schools and smaller liberal arts colleges. Many well qualified students were denied admission or placed on "wait" lists. More aggressive recruiting by colleges in this economic downturn, a jump in applications from minority students and a boost in the number of students filing more applications to find the best financial aid offers have contributed to this situation. Additionally, record numbers of California students are applying to eastern, midwestern and southern schools due to severe educational budget cuts in that state.

I retired several years ago as the Director of College Guidance with 34 years experience in teaching (English) and college admissions counseling. For the past nine years, I have been assisting students in local public and private schools (including Wissahickon, Germantown Academy, Upper Dublin, and CB East) and can provide parental references attesting to the effectiveness of my counseling. For example, last year some of my students earned acceptance into Penn (Wharton), Princeton, NYU (Stern), M.I.T., Cornell, Yale, Duke, and Penn State (Honors Program). Other admissions included Boston University, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, U. Michigan, Syracuse, Swarthmore, Johns Hopkins, Villanova, Bucknell, Gettysburg, U. Pittsburgh, George Washington, Vanderbilt, Boston College, Lafayette, Northwestern, U. Maryland, and U. Colorado.

In 2008, the cost of attending a 4 year public university – after financial aid-equalled 28% of a median annual income: a 4 year private university, 76%.

With an investment this great, it makes sense to seek professional advice.

Avoid costly false-starts in choosing the right college and major course of study.

Provide an opportunity for your son or daughter to receive ongoing assistance in choosing and writing effective short responses, essays and application supplements.

Discover ways to improve your son or daughter's chances of completing college in four years.

(Fewer than 50% of students graduate in under 5 years)

Mistakes, missed deadlines, and poorly written essays are often responsible for college rejection letters.

Many schools, unfortunately, do not maintain sufficient staff in the guidance office to provide extensive individual counseling to assure entrance into the best schools commensurate with the student's ability and academic record.

My approach is to take on a very limited number of students. I begin the process with an intensive interview with both the parents and student. The student's academic history (including SAT scores, class rank/grade point average, extracurricular activities, volunteer work and personality traits) will be evaluated in detail.

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During the initial interview the following will be accomplished:

- Develop a timeline listing critical steps and dates (final SAT I exam, application deadlines)
- Select an initial target list of schools based on the student's ability and academic interests
- Discuss the pros and cons of applying for 'early decision' or 'early action'
- Specific instruction on how to develop a comprehensive Activities Sheet
- Learn what is successful (and what is not) in writing college essays and short responses

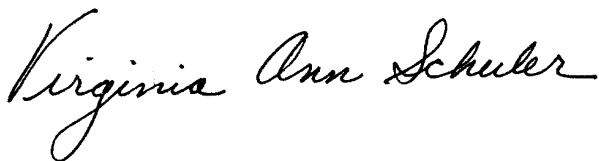
If you decide to continue, you will receive the following:

- A computerized pre-formatted Activities Sheet
- Help in choosing the best essay topics and suggestions on how to start writing
- Fine tuning of your essays (grammar, usage, effective point of view and conclusion)
- Suggestions on how to secure effective letters of recommendation from teachers, employers, etc.
- Selecting 'safety', 'likely' and 'reach' schools
- Developing a realistic list of colleges to which you will apply
- Deciding which campuses to visit
- Coaching on making a good impression in the college interview
- Phone and e-mail answers to numerous questions that will arise during the application process

Unlike most independent college consultants who charge a pricey flat fee, my services are calculated on an hourly basis. The total cost generally ranges between \$400 and \$800, depending on the number of essays a student has to write and how many corrections are needed. This fee can be compared favorably to an SAT Prep course and offers one on one tutoring.

Good luck in your college search. The college application process can be a daunting one, especially the first time you go through it. The procedure requires considerable advanced planning. If you have questions, please contact me as soon as possible since timing is critical.

If you decide not to proceed at this time, please keep this letter on file should you elect to seek assistance at a later date.



Virginia Ann Schuler
College Counselor