

TOTAL COLLEGE PLANNING

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www.totalcollegeplanning.com

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What Shy Students Need to Know

March 2008

1st - SAT

Reasoning Exam

Underclassmen—Make plans for a productive summer. Investigate summer programs, jobs, internships, and opportunities to visit college campuses.

Juniors - Continue to work on your initial list of colleges

Juniors—Prepare for spring SAT/ACT exams

April 2008

Seniors - Final acceptance letters should arrive this month

Prepare for AP Exams

Juniors - Visit colleges

12th - ACT and ACT plus Writing

Seniors - compare offers of admission

Seniors - evaluate financial aid packages and explore college funding options

Just be yourself. You hear it from counselors, this newsletter, and Mom. It's good advice. But what if being yourself means being rejected by your favorite college? That's exactly what can happen to someone whose only "deficit" is being reserved. In a society where the extrovert gets the guy, gal or school, the shy student can be left behind.

Admissions officers are looking for students who will contribute to the campus community. Nothing wrong with that. But why does everyone have to be a leader? How can everyone be a leader? The sorority president who organizes a charity fundraiser needs other people to stuff envelopes and run the event to make her idea a reality. And what would the director of a play do without a crew working behind the scenes to carry out his vision?

But the truth is that shy people get lower ratings in the admissions process. A teacher who writes a recommendation letter saying a student has a quiet depth or is insightful but doesn't often share her ideas in class may unintentionally sink that student's application.

Everyone would be better served if admissions officers had a broader perspective as they look for students with something to offer the community. The shy student who rarely speaks in class might be the person who helps classmates with physics homework. The student who doesn't initiate group activities in the residence hall may be the great listener that other students turn to when they need to talk. And what about the student who trembles at the thought of an oral report but writes a beautiful poem for the literary magazine? Don't these students make a valuable contribution to the campus community?

Of course, there's also the possibility that a student who is shy in high school might become

more outgoing and contribute more in college than the student who was very involved in high school and then doesn't join a single organization once in college.

We hear that colleges want racial, ethnic, socio-economic diversity. It would be nice if they also valued diverse personality types. But the preference for extroversion is not likely to change soon. So the question for shy students is whether to embrace your reserved nature or try to change it.

Shy students who feel good about themselves certainly are entitled to decide that they don't need to change. They can use college applications to point out the positive qualities they bring to the campus community.

But the truth is that many shy people struggle with a lack of self-confidence. It may be worth pushing beyond their comfort zone, not just for college applications but to feel more engaged in the world around them.

There are steps that shy students can take, short of a total personality transplant, which will enhance their chances of getting into their first-choice college. Establishing a one-to-one relationship, perhaps by volunteering to tutor a younger child, can be a safe and rewarding way to contribute to your community. Shy students might also ask teachers for help in finding less "threatening" ways to contribute to class. Students who really want to challenge themselves could even take an acting or public speaking class to become more comfortable talking in front of people.

For those who are not ready to venture out of their comfort zone, highly selective colleges may be a tougher admit, but with strong academic records shy students will still have many options.



Focus on Careers: Speech Pathology

Ranked among the top thirty fastest-growing occupations in the U.S., speech and language pathologists work with some of the estimated 46 million Americans who have a communication disorder. Increases in the number of preschool and school-age children referred, as well as our growing aging population, have fueled the demand for speech/language/hearing services. Although speech and language pathologists work closely with other professionals such as audiologists (hearing specialists), physicians, psychologists, and teachers, they are independent professionals who have the opportunity to shape their own careers depending upon their personal interests, education, and experience.

Speech and language pathologists work with individuals with speech, language, and swallowing problems. They may evaluate problems, plan and carry out treatment, and may be involved in research aimed at preventing and/or treating communication disorders. About half of all speech and

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Education and Training

If you are still in high school and considering a career as a speech pathologist, it would be desirable to take rigorous core classes in biology, physics, English, math, and the social sciences, along with electives in public speaking and psychology. Once in college, you'll want to consider majoring in communication sciences and disorders to prepare for a career as a speech pathologist. The goal of this major is to provide an understanding of how humans communicate and the factors that can interfere with the normal process. The major generally includes courses in anatomy and physiology, language development, phonetics, and speech disorders. Some speech pathologists, however, choose undergraduate degrees in education, biology, English, or psychology, following these with a graduate degree in speech and language pathology. To prepare for the graduate program, be sure to include strong foundation courses in oral and written communication as well as elective classes in speech and language in your undergraduate curriculum. Job prospects are also expected to be particularly favorable for individuals who speak a

language pathologists work in schools and universities, teaching language-impaired students how to be better communicators and helping those who stutter to improve their speaking ability.

The other half of the profession either works in hospitals, nursing facilities, and rehabilitation centers helping victims of stroke or brain injuries to regain their communication skills or in research labs studying the cause, diagnosis, and treatment of language problems. Many speech and language pathologists also engage in private practice, and may limit their work to children, adults, or the elderly.

To be successful in this career, you'll need to have a sincere interest in helping people, the ability to interact with people with communication problems, have above average intellectual ability, and character traits such as persistence, resourcefulness, imagination, and tolerance. Also important is your own ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.

second language, such as Spanish, so you might also wish to add advanced classes in foreign language to your undergraduate program.

Most careers in this field require a master's degree. Look for one of the programs at over 240 colleges and universities across the nation that have been accredited by the CAA (Council on Academic Accreditation) for their masters-level offering. CAA Accreditation provides assurance that the academic and clinical experience obtained meets nationally established standards.

Careers in speech and language pathology require a certificate of clinical competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) along with a master's degree. Certification is granted after the graduate degree is completed, a passing grade on the national exam is attained, and a post-masters clinical fellowship (about nine months long) successfully completed. Most states require that speech and language pathologists be licensed and may also have additional requirements. Learn more at www.asha.org.

Focus on Finances: College Costs



Over the last ten years, the average cost of tuition, fees, housing, and food at our nations' colleges has increased 41% at public institutions and 29% at private colleges.

Although costs were higher, undergraduates received 3.1% less last year in federal, state, and institutional aid than they did two years ago. At many institutions, grant aid has been replaced with increasing amounts of loan obligation by students and their families. This trend, however, is being reassessed and changed at some of our most selective colleges.

Through good investments and generous donors, many of our most prestigious universities have found themselves with hefty endowments. For example, the endowments at schools like Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Princeton, the University of Texas, MIT, Columbia, the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania, and even Texas A & M range from \$34 billion to \$6.5 billion. In the past,

these schools have spent, on average, less than 5% of their endowments each year to fund scholarships. Today, many have reacted to pressure to increase their awards. As a result, highly selective liberal arts colleges like Swarthmore, Haverford, Davidson, Amherst, Pomona, and Williams have all recently gone "no loan" - financial aid packages for students at these school will replace loans with grants and work-study awards. They join some of the most prestigious larger universities with similar policies including Harvard, Yale, and Stanford. Dartmouth announced recently that students from families earning less than \$75,000/year will receive full-tuition grants; Brown has a similar policy. Harvard has instituted a tuition cap of 10% of annual family income for middle income families. Stay tuned as more colleges announce changes to their own financial aid policies brought on by the need to compete for the best students. A summary of many of these policies can be found on the finaid site at www.finaid.org/questions/noloansforlowincome.phtm.

Is it Really Harder to Get into College Today?

Once again, colleges are joyfully announcing that they have received record numbers of applications. The media reports this news and generates anxiety among college-bound students and their families. Students react by filing a few more last-minute applications, and so the college application frenzy continues to spiral out of control. Before you get caught up in it, let's step back and consider if it really is harder to get into college today.

While the number of high school graduates continues to grow, increasing by 200,000 per year from 2002 to 2006, the number of spaces at competitive colleges has also increased at a nearly identical rate. So why are families so worried? Although the ratio of students to spaces has remained constant over the last decade, the number of applications to elite colleges has been booming, increasing nearly 19% over the same time period. As a result, it only *appears* to be much harder to win acceptance to a selective college. With more applications, the admissions rate drops, and the odds of acceptance appear to grow smaller.

The numbers, however, don't tell the real story. According to Kevin Carey, research manager at the think-tank *Education Sector*, the rise in number of applications doesn't really affect the law of supply and demand. "When the number of applications grows faster than the number

of applicants, it creates a false sense that admission standards are growing tighter." He uses the example of 20 students, each of whom applies to five schools and is accepted at two. If the same students each applied to ten colleges and still receive two acceptances, the odds of admission seem worse. But the outcome for each student is the same -two acceptances.

So is it really harder to get into college today? If you consider that the 3,500 or so four-year colleges in the U.S. accept, on average, 70% of their applicants, there really is a place at college for every student who wants to attend. Although the Ivies and other "top tier" colleges continue to report lower rates of acceptance, they actually offered admission to 10% more students in 2006 than they did in 2002. What's also true, however, is that admission to selective colleges is significantly more competitive than it was when these students' parents were applying to college. Far fewer students targeted those schools and their admissions standards (grades and test scores) were lower. The moral of this story—select colleges by fit rather than reputation, limit your applications to a reasonable number, and refuse to get caught up in the application frenzy. In the end, you can only attend one college, so one great acceptance is all you need.

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Selecting Next Year's High School Program

Around this time of year, underclassmen are asked to select classes for the next academic year. Resist the temptation to make life easy, and opt for the most challenging program you can handle, while still leaving yourself time to enjoy your high school years. Don't overload on honors and AP; instead build your foundation with solid core courses - if possible, try to include four years each of study in English, math, social studies, science, and foreign language. Fill out your schedule with courses in computers, the humanities (such as music and art), PE, and additional electives such as speech and debate or journalism.

Provide yourself with the greatest number of college options by building your foundation with challenging high school classes. Choose the most rigorous courses available at your

school if they are appropriate for you. That means, select honors and Advanced Placement classes if offered or an International Baccalaureate (IB) Program if available. If you've read this far, you're probably wondering why you should work so hard. Students in honors, AP or IB classes tend to be more focused on their studies; the breadth and depth of discussion is greater, and there are more rigorous demands on students in terms of reading assignments, written and oral work. The payoff for all this additional effort comes in the form of a solid knowledge base, enhanced academic and reasoning skills, and better preparation for college level work. The more challenging curriculum also yields benefits in the form of higher test scores and improved critical reading and writing skills. No matter what you choose to do in the future, you'll need to use these skills for the rest of your life.

Website of the Month: www.financialaidletter.com

Close on the heels of that sought-after college acceptance comes the financial aid letter containing the college's offer of financial support for the newly accepted student. Unfortunately, the complexities of these letters make it difficult for families to accurately assess what is being offered and what the true cost of attendance will be. Luckily, along comes www.financialaidletter.com to the rescue.

Produced as an informational site under the auspices of Ohio State University's Kiplinger Program in Public Affairs, the site offers a letter "decoder" to help families understand the jargon, gives examples of real award letters and explains what they mean, and offers advice on reducing college costs to make your degree more affordable.

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