

School Smarts

Get An Edge In College Admissions

(NAPSA)—What are colleges looking for today in identifying the freshman of the future? The complete package.

A growing number of colleges and universities are adopting what they call the “holistic approach” to admissions. They’re looking at the whole applicant and favoring the triple advantage—the students who combine academics with school activities and community service.

Admissions officers consider many factors when selecting each new freshman class. While they still emphasize a challenging curriculum, solid grades and test scores, a strong mix of the three S’s—scholarship, school activities and service—appears to play a more influential role at many schools which want students who can succeed in and out of the classroom.

Developing the all-around student is becoming equally as important as academics or sports, says Rose Rennekamp, vice president of communications for ACT (the company best known for the ACT college entrance and placement exam).

Schools are partnering with companies that promote extracurricular activities and award students for their efforts via national recognition programs. In fact, a growing number of awards are given to students based on their overall package rather than strictly on academics or sports.



Rennekamp cites the Wendy’s High School Heisman (WHSH) program as an honor that specifically recognizes a senior male and female each year who excel in the classroom, in the field of play, and in the community. By simply answering questions on the WHSH application, students gain a sense of what college admissions officers look for.

“I know I was accepted to each university that I applied to based on much more than just my academic achievements,” said Robert Huefner, a freshman enrolled at both Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a 2002 WHSH Award winner. Besides excelling in three sports in high school, he was a National Merit Winner, ranked second in his class, was class president and school newspaper editor and was active in many community-service programs in Peachtree City, Ga.

In the 10 years that the Wendy’s High School Heisman has been given, school administrators have

nominated more than 110,000 seniors for this prestigious award. Besides ranking at the top of their classes academically and excelling in athletics, the 2003 finalists served as role models and leaders in community programs.

Taking these factors into consideration, WHSH and ACT offer a checklist of advice to parents and students on how to become a triple threat and capture the interest of admissions officers. They also point out that students and their parents should start as early as middle school to chart a course for success.

College Admissions Checklist:

- Coursework, grades and test scores matter—take a challenging curriculum and study hard
- Be committed to the extracurricular activities you join—think quality over quantity
- Give Back—volunteer in the community
- Build a summer resume—study a foreign language, volunteer or get an internship
- Cultivate relationships with high school faculty and college admissions officers
- Get recognized—inquire about scholarships and awards that showcase your achievements; for more information on the WHSH, log onto www.wendyshighschoolheisman.com
- Make it a joint effort; students and parents need to work together
- Don’t slack off during your senior year—you’ll be more prepared for college if you continue to work hard through graduation.