

# GAME OF APPS

LEARN THE STRATEGIES & INSIGHTS TO  
ELEVATE YOUR APPLICATION  
AND MAKE IT EXCEPTIONAL.



KRISTEN MOON, MBA

# GAME OF APPS



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Win at the college admissions game!

Go from a generalist to a specialist and stand out on your application. Avoid the curse of being well-rounded.



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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The college admissions process can be a daunting task for both students and parents. The process takes time and effort and involves research, research, research. The student must know the university they are applying to "inside out." How else will they highlight in their application how they are a good fit and how they can add value to the university? Parents often want to help and guide their children through this process, but are short on time and lack the experience needed. This is where Moon Prep comes in. We work with families to bring structure to the process. We not only help students produce a well-written and cohesive application, but also provide them with strategic ways to strengthen their application. This book was written to give insight into the application process and how to leverage this knowledge in the student's favor.

“

**Knowledge can be obtained through research and effort. This knowledge can then be used as a competitive advantage. The college admissions process is no different.**

”

*—Kristen Moon,  
Moon Prep LLC  
MoonPrep.com*





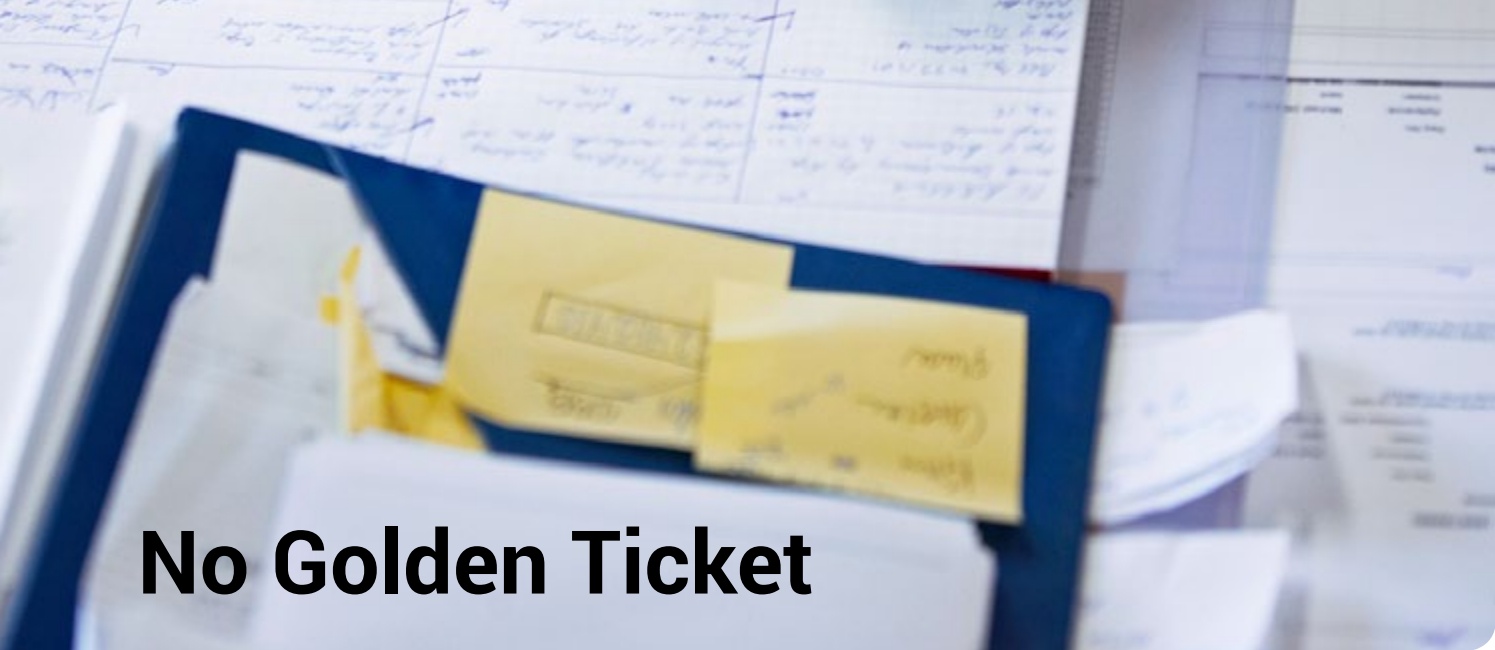
## The admissions process is not transparent

### INTRODUCTION

If you are in the race to get into the best educational institutions in the country, you have probably been talking about this to a number of people around you. And chances are that you are getting a whole lot of solicited and unsolicited opinions and advice from practically everybody. Now, one ‘opinion’ that you are likely to come across with irritating frequency is that applying to these top rated colleges is pretty much

like ‘rolling the dice’. Since admission rates are dramatically low for these institutions, many people view it as a ‘hit or miss’ for applicants. We have all heard of the student with a near-perfect GPA, top test scores, and athletic trophies filling the shelves, who is denied admission to the Ivy Leagues. Yet another student with a lower GPA is accepted! The admissions process is not transparent.





# No Golden Ticket

There is no way around it, the statistics can be intimidating. Admission rates are in the single digits for many of the highly competitive universities. Being the valedictorian of your high school class does NOT give you the golden

ticket for admission. In fact, there are nearly 2.5 more valedictorians than the number of open slots at Ivy League universities!

## The hard facts

- ▶ **Over 4,000 universities in the USA**
- ▶ **Over 16,000 universities worldwide**
- ▶ **Over 37,000 high schools across the USA**
- ▶ **37,000 valedictorians**
- ▶ **8 Ivy League Universities**
- ▶ **2.5 times more valedictorians than the number of open slots at Ivy League universities**



# Acceptance Rates

Let's take a look at the published numbers by 4 Ivy League universities. These numbers are very similar for all the Ivy League schools. The rejection rate is >90%!

| University | Total Apps Received | Total Apps Accepted | Acceptance Rate |
|------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Harvard    | 34,950              | 2,158               | 6.2%            |
| Princeton  | 27,189              | 2,282               | 8.4%            |
| Yale       | 27,282              | 2,006               | 7.4%            |
| Columbia   | 34,929              | 2,419               | 6.9%            |

## 2015 ADMISSION RATES

Since the selection process at the Ivy League, as well as other top-tier colleges, is so competitive and intimidating, many students feel tremendous anxiety and view the process as out of their control. They see strong students fail to gain admission and wonder what they can do to increase their odds. There is a high level of uncertainty about the application process and what exactly the top schools look for in a candidate.

So, is this really true? Is it really a random chance that results in you getting that much awaited 'Welcome' letter? And, if so, there isn't really much you can do to skew your chances in your favor, is there?

Thankfully, gaining admission into the best of the best colleges is NOT entirely a lucky draw like many folks assume. There is, on the contrary, quite a logical and reasonable explanation for

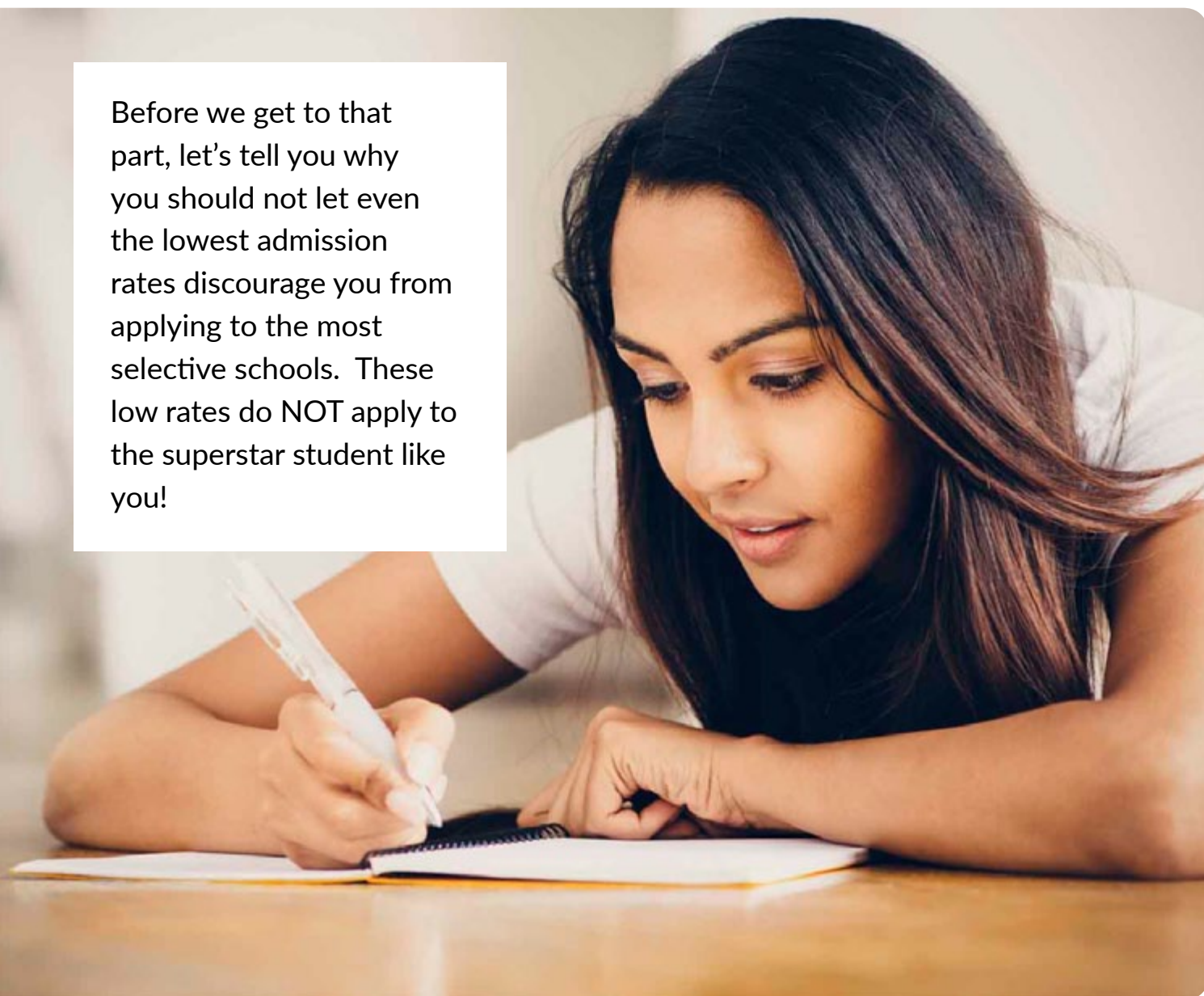


why admission rates are so low at top-tier universities. More importantly, you can definitely do something to ensure that YOUR chances of admission are far, far higher than the abysmally low average admission rate for the college.

for the most selective schools in the country may not apply to you? Would you believe it if we said that there are things you can do right NOW to strengthen your application and stand out from the crowd?

What if we told you that the single digit admissions rates that are published

Before we get to that part, let's tell you why you should not let even the lowest admission rates discourage you from applying to the most selective schools. These low rates do NOT apply to the superstar student like you!





## CHAPTER 1:

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# Superstar vs. Well-rounded

The fact is that the best colleges get to sustain their reputation in the marketplace by turning out exemplary graduates year after year. To do that, they need to sort through the thousands of applications they get every year, to find the best prospective students, those who are most likely to do extraordinary things later in life. After all, which college wouldn't want to brag about having a Mark Zuckerberg or a Barack Obama among their alumni?



What happens is quite simple. The best contenders among the applicants, the ones who truly stand out as superstar students, are evidently more likely to get admission than the students who have a set of good credentials but nothing that indicates genius in a particular area. The latter set is often called well-rounded. They may do very well in life, but the chance that they will really outshine their peers and get acclaim (which will be shared by the college) is far lower.



So when the clash is between these superstar students and the well-rounded students at admission time, the superstars win hands down.

## Superstar Students

In college admission jargon, superstar students are often referred to as ‘angular’, ‘pointy’, or ‘spikey’ students. These terms are synonymous. These are the students who have excelled in one particular area. They have demonstrated a deep interest and talent in a specific area, an academic niche, and have worked to take this interest further. In short, these students are passionate about something and this passion is exemplified through their academics as well as their extracurricular activities.



Evidently, you want to be a superstar student, not just a well-rounded student. Let us see what it takes to be a superstar:

## Monica vs. Mark

Let’s take a look at superstar student, Monica. Monica has an artistic talent and has significant accomplishments in her academic niche. She has taken three college level classes in art history, worked with a college professor to publish a paper titled “The Golden Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer”, had her work critiqued by well-known artists, held a solo show at a reputed gallery, won national awards for her artwork, had her artwork and story published in local newspapers, and created a popular blog that demonstrates her love and passion for art. As you can see, this superstar student would stand out from Mark, a student who merely says ‘I love art and I want to major in art’, yet is unable to demonstrate how he has pursued and excelled in this field.





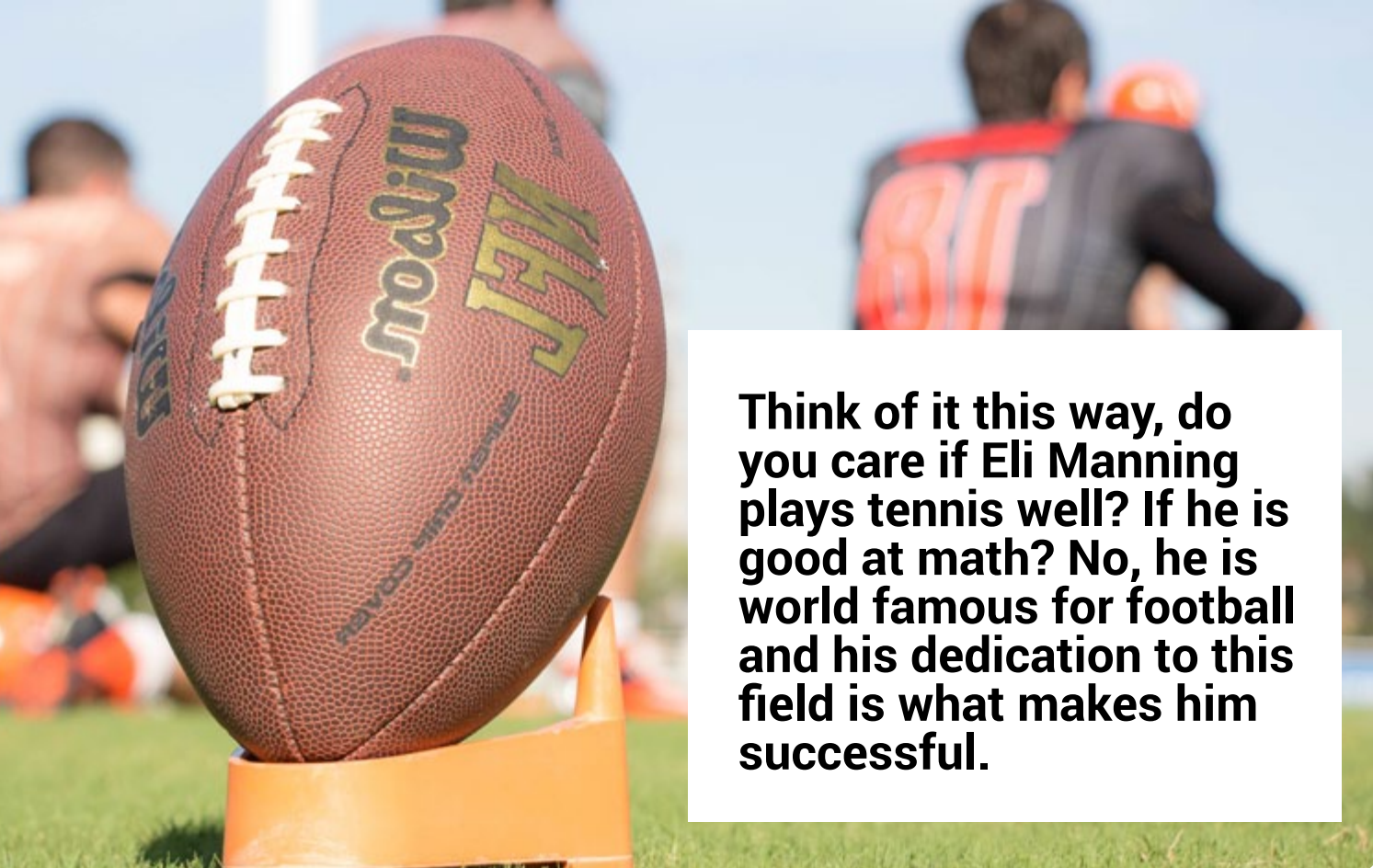
## Show, don't Tell...

Now, a college that views Monica's application is in no doubt about where her interests lie and they also know that she has the drive to pursue her interests further, which makes it far more likely that she will make a name for herself in this field. All the components of Monica's college application will help to tell a cohesive story of Monica the artist—teacher recommendations, counselor recommendations, essays, personal statements, extracurricular activities, and academic pursuits. These are prime examples of what makes Monica an 'angular' or superstar student. Monica is able to 'show' and not merely 'tell' that her passion is art.

Your interest can lie in practically any field or academic area. What is important is that you can show that you have already started investing enough time to pay the special

attention that is required to utilize this talent to make you a superstar. In contrast, the well-rounded student strives hard to achieve great scores in every core area to prove how proficient he/she is. That's good, isn't it? Well, no! There is a major flaw in this line of thought.





**Think of it this way, do you care if Eli Manning plays tennis well? If he is good at math? No, he is world famous for football and his dedication to this field is what makes him successful.**

## **The Curse of Being Well-rounded**

Colleges look at a variety of aspects when they are sorting through applications. These include academic prowess, a love of learning, leadership, sports skills, musical talents, extracurricular activities, regional/national awards and recognitions, and more. Students work diligently to perform above average in ALL of these areas to ensure that they present impressive credentials to colleges. This strategy backfires in most cases because the student comes across to the admissions officers as mediocre

in all fields and does not shine in any one field.

We have been told by our parents, teachers, and guidance counselors that it is good to be well-rounded. But the reality is that it makes you one among thousands of applicants who have all followed exactly the same strategy, working hard on their weaknesses to make sure they present a reasonably good record across all areas. You are a 'jack of all trades and a master of none'.





## Jack of all trades, master of none

### Specialist vs. Generalist

Colleges seek specialists: individuals who are so driven by one aspect or one field that they are enthusiastic about devoting their entire time and attention to achieve outstanding results in that area. By choosing different (superstar) students with passion, drive and demonstrated skills in different areas, the college builds a class that is well-rounded yet made up of students who may not be well-rounded. A well-rounded student is basically a generalist: one who does well in every aspect

but not exceptionally well in any. A generalist does not fit in anywhere in this selection strategy. What you need to focus on is to develop this special area of interest and to take on extracurricular activities that support this so that you are a superstar student, even if this does mean you are less than great in some areas. Becoming an 'angular' student may make you unbalanced but it improves your likelihood of standing out among the thousands of other applicants.



## 10,000 hours

Malcolm Gladwell is a Canadian journalist, speaker, and author of many best sellers. Among my favorites are *Outliers*, *Blink*, and *The Tipping Point*. Below is what he has to say about the 10,000-hours rule.

The university wants to know that you are willing to put in consistent, sustained effort in your chosen field

until you achieve the kind of success that makes you stand out among your peers. 'Angular' students demonstrate that they have the direction, the groundwork and the passion to do exactly this and that is why they are preferred candidates for any university. It's not easy! And that is precisely the reason why these students stand out.

“

**The 10,000-hours rule says that if you look at any kind of cognitively complex field, from playing chess to being a neurosurgeon, we see this incredibly consistent pattern that you cannot be good at that unless you practice for 10,000 hours, which is roughly ten years, if you think about four hours a day.**

”

*—Malcolm Gladwell*



## CHAPTER 2:

# Low admission rates do not apply to Superstar Students

From our example above, we saw that Columbia University received 34,929 applications for the incoming class of 2015. Of these, let's estimate that 6,000 applicants are not qualified with the credentials that this college typically requires. About 1,500 of the applicants are our superstar students with proven skills and passion in specific fields. The rest are all strong students who have painstakingly maintained great scores across all areas—the generalists. Now, the college accepted 2,419 students, in total.

### Columbia University

34,929 applications

6,000 not qualified students

1,500 superstar students

27,429 well-rounded/generalists

This example shows that there are far fewer superstar students, compared to the well-rounded, generalist students. This superstar category

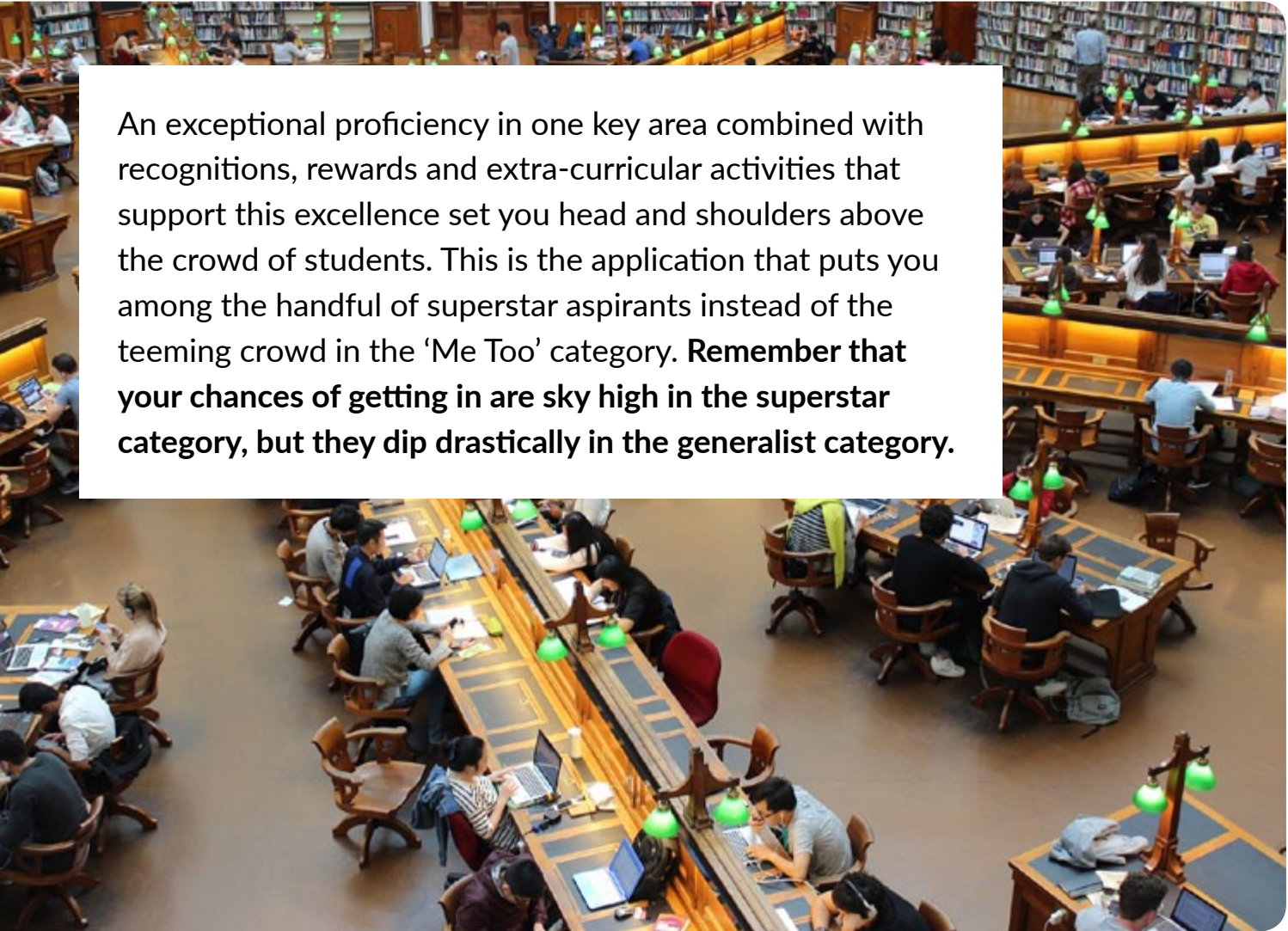


stands out significantly from the crowd. Columbia, as well as other highly selective colleges, might accept 90% or greater from the superstar category. Columbia's acceptance rate for 2015 was a mere 6.9%. As you can see, 6.9% does not apply to the superstar student.

Remember how everyone is telling you about maintaining great grades in all areas to increase your chances

of getting into the top colleges? Well, forget that!

Yes, that's right. Getting good scores all round is NOT what you want to be focusing on because this is what places you right alongside thousands of other applicants with virtually identical profiles. Of course, you need to show academic excellence across areas to get into the top colleges but here is the thing:



An exceptional proficiency in one key area combined with recognitions, rewards and extra-curricular activities that support this excellence set you head and shoulders above the crowd of students. This is the application that puts you among the handful of superstar aspirants instead of the teeming crowd in the 'Me Too' category. **Remember that your chances of getting in are sky high in the superstar category, but they dip drastically in the generalist category.**





## CHAPTER 3:

# Show me the Money



Universities are business outfits that do make profits. Wait! Weren't you thinking they were non-profit organizations created to nurture curious young minds? Non-profit only means that the profits the university makes are not distributed to shareholders like in a company.

## Sources of income for universities:

### Fees collected from students

Financial support from the government

Endowments established by various trusts/ individuals

Donations from alumni

This means they do have cash flowing into the entity on a regular basis just like any other business, but they are not bound to pay profits out in a specific way.

Universities enjoy another very useful distinction from conventional businesses too—they do not need to have a fixed 'price tag' (the fee) for their 'product' (the diploma) that applies to all their 'customers' (the students). They can and do have differential pricing, meaning that student A may be enrolled in the exact same program as student B but she may be paying half the fee. The reality is that in many universities, the bottom 50% of the class pays the tuition for the top 50% of the class. I don't know about you, but I do not want to pay anyone else's tuition!



## Merit Aid

Merit Aid, often called institutional aid or scholarships, that comes directly from the university is likely the largest source of aid for potential students. Universities pick and choose who they want to give scholarships to. They also select how much they want to give each student. Many universities offer full-rides to the best and brightest applicants—the superstar students. Unlike need-based aid, merit aid is often not dependent on family income or assets. Universities are fighting over the superstar students and many are willing to pay just to have them attend their college. Superstar students often do not pay the same tuition as the rest of the class.



## Student A vs. Student B

Remember that it is Student B's fee that is funding student A's education. Student A is the superstar student and student B is not. The university needs enough Student Bs paying enough fees to make up for the fee gap that the Student A preferential fee structure creates. When will Student Bs be willing to pay big fees? When the university is a highly reputed one that adds a brand value to its graduates. Exclusivity enhances the university's ability to charge high fees. The university is deemed elite and exclusive when it has a stringent selection process, meaning that they are able to reject a good proportion of their applicants without impacting their profits.

Being a superstar student not only gets you accepted into the selective university, but it also gets you scholarships (merit aid).





## ATTENTION!

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This can work to your advantage if you know what makes student A so special that the university is happy to just have her on their roster though she is not contributing to their profits. Evidently, the university believes that she can add immense value to them in the long term. A superstar student who goes on to achieve great things is an excellent advertisement for the university and these students help the university attract even more freshmen with great talent. This is why Student

A gets preferential treatment with her fee structure.

There is an important lesson in here for you: Dedicate your time and effort to becoming a superstar student. Hone your skills and highlight your achievements, awards, and activities on your application. Tell a cohesive story that sets you apart from the masses. Then, you stand a great chance to enjoy the best of the university's preferential fee structure too.



## CHAPTER 4:

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# Understanding University Rankings

When you are short listing your college choices, what do you look for? Rankings are one of the first things that help you narrow down the list,

right? So universities that rank among the top are the best ones? They are certainly the ones that appeal to the best students and also to the maximum number of students. There is no way around it, rank matters and universities know it.

Let's look at this from the university's viewpoint. If you are applying to a university that is ranked, then you must help their rank. There are two criteria that are very important when it comes to rank: yield and standardized test scores.

## Two Critical Components

### YIELD

Yield refers to the actual number of accepted students who enroll at the college. A college that is top notch needs to present a sustained high yield rate. A drop in the rate sends out signals that something may be wrong with the college, which is not great for its future enrollments. To sustain this rate, the college needs to maintain its attractiveness to the maximum number of students and rankings help a lot in this area. If you are an accepted student and decide to attend the college, yield goes up. This, in turn, helps rank.

### TEST SCORES

Standardized test scores also come into play when universities are ranked. If you have an SAT/ACT score higher than the university average, your score raises their average. This will help their ranking. The reverse also holds true. If your SAT/ACT score is lower than their average, you bring down their overall score down. In this case, you are considered a liability for the college.



Universities do not want to risk lowering their rank. They are constantly trying to improve their rank. That's why they prefer to enroll students whose test scores are better than their current average. If your credentials can help here, you have a better chance of admission. The next line-up of preferred students consists of those who match the university's average scores because, while they don't improve the score, they don't lower it, either. Basically, the more value you add to the university and its reputation/rankings the higher your chances of gaining admission.

Let's take a look at some of the popular ranking sources.

**U.S. News & World Report**

**Forbes**

**Shanghai Rankings**

**Payscale**

US News & World Report is one of the most popular sources for ranking universities. Colleges eagerly wait to see where they fall on this coveted list. Most students pay close attention to this ranking, yet few know how the ranking is actually calculated.

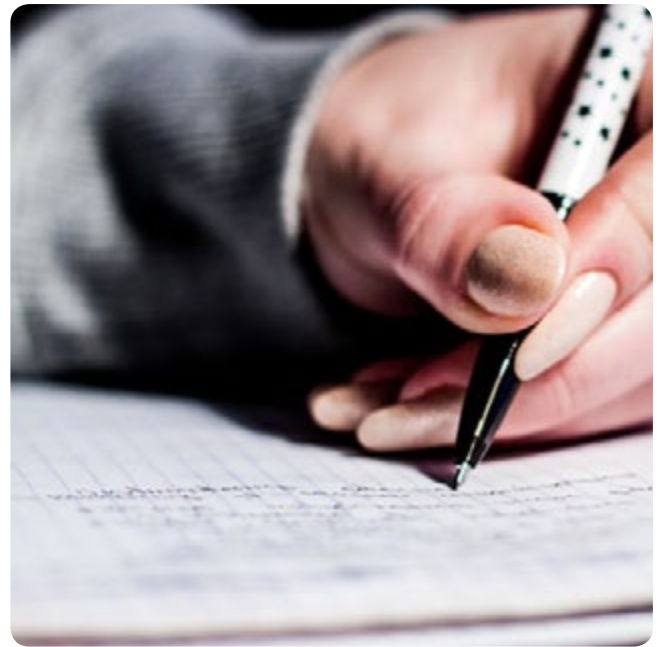
For US News & World Report, approximately 75% of the data that is used to rank universities comes from two sources: (1) the latest freshman class and (2) the financials for the university.





## Freshman Class

The GPA and standardized test scores from the incoming freshman class are taken into account. This data only tells us how difficult it is to gain admission, but fails to tell us about the quality of the education you receive while there.  
Fault # 1.



## Financial Data

The second criteria are the financial data. This includes the university's endowments, faculty size, and the value of the physical property owned by the college. Once again, this fails to tell us about the quality of the education a student receives.  
Fault # 2.

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**Are you surprised to see that 75% of the ranking is made up of these 2 components? Well, the remaining 25% of data that is used to calculate rank might surprise you as well.**

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The remaining 25% that is used to calculate the university rank comes from the personal opinions of the admission directors and deans who make up the advisory board. So this component is not exactly objective either. What we are telling you is that a university's rank is not an accurate measure of the real value that you can gain if you complete your education there. The rank does not actually tell you anything about the faculty or teaching quality or the value of

the degree in terms of your career prospects or the pay you can hope to garner as a graduate.

However, knowledge is power and the better you understand how university rankings work the better you can use this to your advantage. You CAN use what we have told you here about rankings. The more you can help to increase the university rank, the better your chance of getting accepted.



## CHAPTER 5:

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# Timing your Application

There are typically four ways of applying to a university: Early Decision, Early Action, Restrictive Early Action, and Regular Admission.

## Early Decision vs Early Action vs Restrictive Early Action

| ED   | EA  | REA  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• binding</li><li>• ED to only 1 college</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• nonbinding</li><li>• EA to unlimited colleges</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• nonbinding</li><li>• EA only to public universities. No ED</li></ul> |



## Early Decision (ED)

Early Decision, ED, is the most restrictive of the options and therefore increases acceptance odds the most. Yield comes into play here. Remember, yield effects university rankings and universities are constantly trying to improve their rank. Yield is the percentage of admitted applicants who accept the university offer of admission. Higher yield benefits the colleges. Thus, it makes sense that ED increases the odds of acceptance the most—it is binding. The university knows if an applicant is accepted, they must attend.

### ED Guidelines:

- Applicants apply early (typically in early to mid-November) to their first choice college.
- Applicants receive an admission decision early (typically by mid-December).
- If accepted, applicants agree to attend the college and must withdraw all other applications.
- Applicants can apply to only one college ED.
- Applicants may apply to other colleges under regular admission (RA).

## Early Action (EA)

Early Action, EA, is non-binding. Since it is more lenient than ED, it affects admissions odds less.

### EA Guidelines:

- Applicants apply early and receive an admission decision early (typically in January or February).
- Applicants are not required to accept admissions offer.
- Applicants can apply to numerous colleges EA.
- Applicants may apply to other colleges under regular admission (RA).



## Restrictive Early Action (REA)

Restrictive Early Action, REA, is similar to EA in that it is non-binding. Applicants may not apply to any colleges under ED, but may apply to public universities under EA.

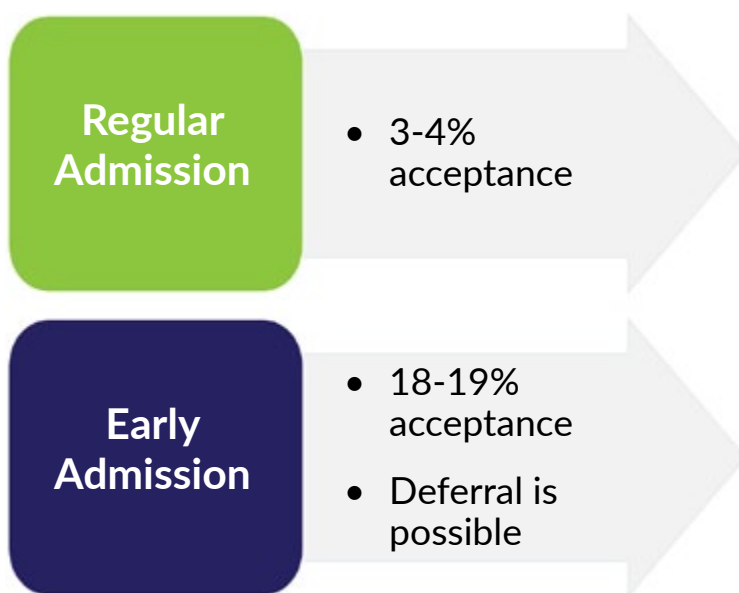
### REA Guidelines:

- Applicants apply early and receive an admission decision early (typically in January or February).
- Applicants are not required to accept admissions offer.
- Applicants may not apply to any colleges under ED, but may apply to public universities under EA.
- Applicants may apply to other colleges under regular admission (RA).

None of the early application options detailed above bars an applicant from taking part in the regular admission process. A large benefit of applying early is that it often increase your odds of acceptance dramatically. Applying early not only shows demonstrated interest but also aids the university in increasing their yield, thus helping their rankings.

## Example—Harvard

Applicants who apply to Harvard early can either be accepted, denied, or deferred. Deferred applicants will go into the pool with regular applicants, thus getting a second chance at admittance with the benefit of an extra semester worth of grades and extracurricular activities. A whole semester to work on improving and strengthening the application. If an applicant has a clear first choice college that offers early admission options, the odds of admission could be greatly increased by applying early. The Harvard numbers below are a perfect example of this.



## CHAPTER 6:

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# Pop Quiz—True or False

**FALSE:** Colleges look for well-rounded individuals.

**TRUE:** Colleges want a well-rounded class, but look for superstar students to make up that class. They look for ‘angular’ candidates who demonstrate excellence in a particular field or area. This shows dedication and commitment.

**FALSE:** Don’t opt for an Early Decision application, as it restricts your choices severely.

**TRUE:** Yes, Early Decision is restrictive—applicants can apply to only one college under the ED application process. If an applicant does their homework and knows for sure they wish to attend their top choice university, then ED can help their odds of getting accepted. Another benefit of applying early is the deferral



option. Instead of being rejected outright, a candidate might be deferred. This will give them an extra semester to improve their grades and strengthen their candidacy.

**FALSE:** Colleges want to see a high GPA, so take the easy courses to get a high score.

**TRUE:** Colleges pay close attention to the rigor of the courses students take. Rigor and class rank are weighted more heavily than GPA. An A at one high school might not carry the same weight as an A at a different high school. Colleges know this and for this reason, they pay close attention to Advanced Placement (AP)/ International Baccalaureate (IB) scores and SAT subject test scores. Colleges want to see students challenge themselves. This demonstrates a love of learning, maturity, and ambition.



**FALSE:** If I am valedictorian I can pretty much go to any Ivy League college I want.

**TRUE:** There are over 37,000 high schools across the USA. That means 37,000 valedictorians, maybe more since nowadays some high schools have more than one valedictorian representing their graduating class. With only 8 Ivy League universities, the number of valedictorians is more than 2.5 times the number of open slots. What this means is that these highly selective universities turn down students who are perfect on paper all the time. Being valedictorian is great, but it's definitely not enough to warrant admission at the most selective colleges in the country.

**FALSE:** In order to receive merit aid or institutional aid I need to be lower income.

**TRUE:** There are many universities who only distribute aid on a need-based system. Eligibility for need-based aid is based entirely on the assets and income of the prospective student and their family. Factors such as GPA, test scores, or athletic ability have no bearing on need-based

aid. There are many universities who distribute merit aid that is not need-based. Merit aid is at the discretion of the university. They can distribute their money however they like. Many universities will distribute merit aid to a superstar student to attract them to their college, regardless of their asset/income situation.

**FALSE:** Students should pay close attention to university rankings. If a university is not ranked as a top contender then a student should not waste time applying.

**TRUE:** There are over 4,000 universities worldwide. Relatively few are even ranked. It would be quite the chore to rank all 4,000. The ones that are ranked form a small subset of the many universities that exist. Take the rankings 'with a grain of salt'. What is more important is to know that universities value their rank and the more you can help increase the rank, the better your odds of admission. It's a game, but if you know the rules you can use it to your advantage.





Stack the chips in your favor

## CHAPTER 7:

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# Stack the Chips

There is no definitive formula that determines which applicants are accepted and which applicants are rejected. The admissions team at each university is made up of people. There is a human element to the admissions process. This human element leads to inconsistency. Therefore, it is vital for applicants to understand the process, be familiar with the criteria that affect the university's ranking, and know what the university values. In order

to win at the application game, an applicant must stack the chips in their favor. Now that you have a good idea of how the process works, you can leverage that to your advantage.

### Let's recap what we learned so far:

- Better to be a specialist than a generalist. Universities want a well-rounded class made up of



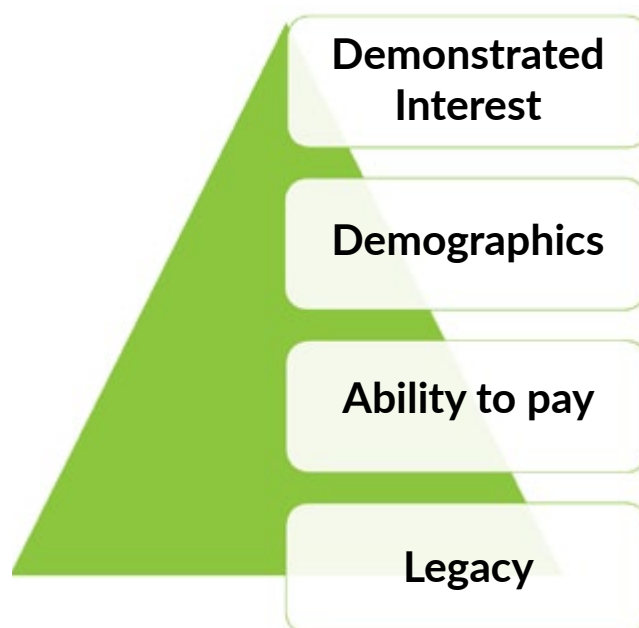
superstar, angular students. Don't fall prey to the curse of being well-rounded.

- Show, don't tell. Don't just say you want to major in "X" or you want to be "Y", demonstrate what you have done to pursue your interest. Take it to the next level.
- Low acceptance rates do not apply to superstar, angular students.
- The sticker price does not equal net price when it comes to university tuition. Universities will often lower tuition for superstar students.
- Rankings matter—tremendously—to the university. The more you can help their rankings, the higher your chance of admission.
- The timing of your application is important. Acceptance rates are often higher for early admission applicants. You also have the added benefit of a deferral option instead of an outright reject.

## Additional Factors

When completing your applications, it's important to view all the questions and essays as a whole. They all must tell a coherent story of who you are and why you are a good fit for the

university. Admissions staff read applications for 9 to 10 hours per day, sometimes spending only 10 minutes per application. Your application must stand out and shine among the masses. When researching a university, there are other factors to take into consideration. These factors can also help to tip the scales in your favor.



## Demonstrated Interest

Every university wants to feel like they are your top choice. No one likes to feel like a second or third choice. Applicants need to demonstrate their interest. Remember, show—don't tell.



## Ways to demonstrate interest:

- Apply early. Early Decision is the most restrictive, but also affects your chances of admission the most. Since it is binding, it shows you are certain you want to attend the university. Every university likes to feel like they are your number one choice.
- Visit the college, walk the campus, and interact with the faculty. Make sure to fill out an 'information card' for each university you visit. Let the admissions staff know you made the effort to visit.
- Connect with an admissions representative, ask questions and show your interest.
- Connect with an alumni and do an informational interview.

## Demographics

Universities pride themselves on being inclusive institutions. In order to get the well-rounded class they desire, the class must be diverse. If you belong to a minority, this factor might affect your admission. Perhaps you will be the first in your family to go to college if admitted. If you are from the southeast and only 5% of the student body is from this area, then you are helping to contribute to the well-rounded class the university seeks. Most universities strive for a 50/50 balance between male/female classmates. If a school has only 30% male, then a male applicant might be looked on more favorably. While it is questionable to what degree these factors will tip the odds in your favor, it is wise not to ignore them completely. Research the universities you are applying, get to know their demographics, and how you can use them in your favor.



## Ability to Pay

Need-blind is a term used to describe a college admission policy in which the university does not consider an applicant's financial situation when deciding admission. The university will meet the need if the applicant is accepted. Not all universities are need-blind. There are many universities who are need-aware. If you are applying to need-aware universities, the ability to pay can be used in your favor. A need-aware university might reject an applicant if they do not have the ability to pay. From the university standpoint, they figure why accept this candidate if we are not prepared to offer them a scholarship to attend. Therefore, the candidate is rejected outright. A candidate who can pay the tuition will

receive preferential treatment over a candidate who cannot pay. When narrowing down your college choices, make sure you know if the university is need-blind or need-aware.

## Legacy

Legacies are often accepted at twice the rate as other candidates. So who is considered a legacy? A legacy typically means that your parents attended the universities. Often, sibling or grandparents do not count towards legacy status. Parents who attended the graduate school might not count as legacy either. Accepting legacies build loyalty to the college. When applying to universities, be aware of the criteria they use to determine legacy and use this policy to your advantage.

**Make sure you know if the university is need-blind or need-aware.**







## The specialist stands out

# CONCLUSION

The admissions process is not a perfect system. It is fallible, as most systems are. The good news is that the more familiar an applicant is with the admissions process, the university, and the criteria that come into play, the more they can use these factors to their advantage. Just as a candidate wants to stand out in a job interview or be the star employee at their company, an applicant wants to stand out on

their application. No one strives to be mediocre. We all want to be the superstar. Moon Prep holds the belief that the specialist stands out. To be a specialist it takes patience, dedication, and commitment. These three qualities are not often seen and that is precisely why they stand out.

