



## The Common Application continues to lead....

The Common Application has a big lead and continues to dominate; however, the Coalition has prompted some changes in the Common Application and colleges who have their own institution-specific applications:

- Increasing priority on "college access"
- Self-reporting of courses and test scores instead of transcripts
- Acceptance of non-traditional activities such as family responsibilities and self-initiated hobbies and activities
- Inclusion of non-traditional documents, like video and personal web sites
- Deadlines that match traditional ED, EA, and RD dates

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## Counselors Speak!

- What applications are your students using?
- As a counselor, do you advise using one application platform over the other?
- Are your teachers familiar with both applications and do they find one more user-friendly than the other?
- Do you find that students are uploading more videos, pdf's, and other documents?
- Are you students avoiding applying to schools with one application type or another?

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## Recommendations, Recommendations, and more Recommendations!

- What makes a recommendation work?
- How can we coach teachers to write recommendations that work?
- How do we advise students to communicate with teachers about recommendations?
- How can we help teachers manage all the recommendations?
- How can we as counselors advocate for teachers?

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## Teacher Recs: Conventional Wisdom

- Ask in the spring of the junior year
- Ideally, two core teachers who know the student's academic work well
- At least one recommendation should come from a subject area related to the student's interests/career aspirations
- At least one recommendation should be from a teacher in a class where the student excelled or did well

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## The hallmarks of a great teacher rec

- Specific examples and anecdotes that demonstrate familiarity
- Focus on academic performance, skills, and habits of scholarship
- Context (e.g., one of the best in the class, student took on challenge, showed remarkable progress, extended learning beyond the curriculum)

### When teacher recs go astray

- Lack of specific examples or anecdotes, "generic"
- Redundant and irrelevant content: citing student's extra-curriculars, grades, courses
- Too much focus on personality at the expense of describing the student's knowledge, academic skill set, or habits of scholarship
- Late or not at all

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## What students can do to help teachers

- Provide in a letter, email a summary of what the student learned and accomplished in the class.
- Explain to teacher why this particular rec is important
- Communicate future plans and where student intends to apply
- Provide instructions for next steps...which app, when, how to submit

### And what students should avoid

- Selecting teacher recommenders for the wrong reasons
- The "drive-by" request--ask, never heard from again
- Or heard from too much--stalking!

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### Counselors Speak! The big questions...

- How can we coach teachers to write recommendations that work?
- How do we advise students to communicate with teachers about recommendations?
- How can we help teachers manage all the recommendations?
- How can we as counselors advocate for teachers?

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### Demonstrate Interest, Interest, Interest!

- Why do colleges track “demonstrated interest”?
- How can students demonstrate interest?
- Is it possible to demonstrate too much interest?
- How can high schools help connect students with colleges?

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### For the colleges it's all about yield

- Colleges evaluate student interest in order to predict yield
- Colleges question whether “stealth applicants” are seriously considering their college
- Colleges also want to retain the students they enroll; students who know the college are better bets for retention
- Beyond the numbers are humans making admission decisions

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### How students can demonstrate interest

- Early applications (or at least not last minute submissions)
- Carefully crafted supplemental essays
- College visits
- Emails and phone calls to admission offices
- Social media
- High school visits from college representatives

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### High school visits from admission reps--bingo!

- Often the visiting college rep is the human who will read your school's applications
- Reps often provide students with their email, offering an opportunity for students to demonstrate further interest
- Students can “over do” the demonstration—it's called stalking!
- Developing a relationship with the assigned representative helps counselors help students
- Other opportunities to develop relationships with admission representatives: college fairs, counselor visits to colleges, WACAC and NACAC, committees

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### Counselors Speak! Helping students reach out!

- Are students aware of the importance of demonstrated interest?
- How do students learn how to research colleges?
- How do high schools publicize college visits, college fairs, and other admission events?
- How do counselors prepare students for attending local info sessions?
- What are the challenging logistics of college visits?

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## Decisions **Decisions, and more Decisions!**

- Early Decision I
- Early Decision II
- Early Action
- Restrictive Early Action
- Regular Decision
- Deferrals
- Wait Lists

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## The truth about Early Decision

Early Decision is a great deal for colleges.

- Early decision guarantees yield, an important statistic in rankings.
- ED allows colleges to assemble the foundations for their incoming classes. They can then use regular decision to fill gaps and round out their classes.
- Colleges can manage the process and plan for the incoming classes.

Early Decision offers two benefits to students:

- Applicants can finalize the college process by the end of the first semester and reclaim their lives.
- ED offers better admission chances to highly selective colleges.

Students and families have to know. They have to start early to apply early.

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## Digging deeper into the statistics....

Comparing early deadline admission rates with regular deadline admission rates is not really comparing apples to apples because some applicants are expected to apply early. These include:

- Legacies
- Athletes and special talents
- Questbridge applicants

But the ED advantage to many colleges is undeniable.

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## Decision Trend #1: More are going early...

- More colleges are adopting early deadlines and accepting more applicants via early deadlines.
- Boston College is implementing ED, replacing its EA program. This change comes in response to a 54 percent increase in EA applications. Anticipates filling 40% of its class though ED I & ED II.
- Northwestern's ED applications were up 9% this year; expects to fill about 54% of class via ED.
- At Rice University, ED applications were up by 39% from previous year.
- Notre Dame: REA applications were up by 17%

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## Decision Trend #2: Colleges want more diversity

Colleges are admitting more students from traditionally under-represented applicant groups. These qualified students are often accepted early decision.

- Northwestern: About 54 percent of admitted ED students are from under-represented backgrounds or outside the U.S. About 20 percent are anticipated to qualify for a Federal Pell Grant.
- Rice: 55 of 408 accepted applicants were Questbridge students.
- Notre Dame: Number of admitted first-generation students was up 16 percent; students of color up by 15 percent. 34% of REA admitted students are students of color or international students. Number of QuestBridge Scholars doubled.
- Cornell: 39.8 percent are students of color, which include African American, Asian American, Native American, Latinx and bi-multicultural students.

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## Just how hard is it to get into an Ivy or Ivy-ish?

Let's look at Cornell's admitted ED applicants:

- Cornell admitted 1,395 out of 6,159, or 22.6 percent of the early decision applicants for the Class of 2023
- 39.8 percent are students of color, which include African American, Asian American, Native American, Latinx and bi-multicultural students.
- 22.1 percent were legacy students — who the University said should apply early decision to show their commitment.
- 13.5 percent were athletes.
- 12.3 percent were international students.

If none of the admitted applicants overlap categories (which some certainly do), these groups account for 87.7% of ED admits, leaving about 168 slots for other applicants!!!!

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### Decision Trend #3: More Deferrals

- Some colleges have traditionally deferred the majority of its "early" pool: Harvard (72%), MIT (65%), Yale (55%), and Georgetown (88%).
- Some colleges defer only a few from the early pool: Stanford, Vanderbilt, Northwestern, for example. This year, Notre Dame deferred 19% of its pool, and Cornell, 24.3%.
- Some schools, like the University of Michigan, use large number of deferrals to control class size. Colleges without ED may also defer especially strong candidates who may view their college as a "safety," waiting to see if the applicant withdraws after ED notifications.
- UW-Madison moved up notification of EA applicants, also seems to be deferring students with less rigorous coursework.

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### What does this mean for counselors?

- Students who are applying to highly selective colleges need to start exploring earlier in order to take advantage of early deadlines.
- Families need to understand financial aid and use financial aid calculators before applying Early Decision.
- Students who over-reach with their early decision choice may find their odds significantly reduced at their second and third choices. There are risks in over-reaching!
- Mid-year reports become increasingly important as more colleges defer. First semester grades count!

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### Counselors Speak! How do we help families navigate the many options in college admissions?

- What is the counselor's role in helping students and families with their list of colleges and their understanding of the admission process (and not just application completion)?
- When and how is this information best communicated?
- How do counselors stay informed of the complexities and trends in college admission?
- How can counselors use the school report to help colleges evaluate applicants?
- Does the school profile matter?

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### Join us for counselor chats!

Join us for our monthly "drop-in" counselor chat about all things college-related. These informal chats are from 1 to 2 on one Thursday of every month. You can come in and out during the hour as your schedule permits. We introduce a few timely, seasonal topics, but all college-related questions and discussions are welcome. Our goal is to share information and support each other as we help students navigate the increasingly complex process of applying to college.

Thank you for joining our session today!

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