

# How College Decisions Are Made

Janet Recchia

Assistant Director of Admissions, Southern California  
Syracuse University

# The College Profile

- Admission types
  - Open Enrollment
  - Competitive
  - Highly Selective
- Learn the acceptance profile
  - Average GPA, SAT, ACT
  - States/Regions
  - Majors offered
  - Deadlines
  - Expanding or new programs

# Types of Application Review

- Holistic vs. formula
- Who Reads your file
  - By region, HS, alpha, major
  - By admission counselor or committee
- How many readers per app?
- Straight Admission vs. Rolling Admission
- Early Decision vs. Early Action vs. Regular Decision

# What is Considered in an Application

- Curriculum
- GPA
- SAT/ACT
- Application
- Recommendation Letters
- Essay/Personal Statement
- Activity Resume/Work Resume
- Level of Interest
- Portfolio/video/examples of work

# Curriculum

- School student attends
- Class rigor
- Where student falls with peers
- Course load

*Have you taken advantage of academic opportunities offered to you?*

# GPA

- Weighted vs. Unweighted
- GPA trends
- GPA tells/supports your story

# Test Scores

- SAT/ACT - Is one preferred?
- Super Scoring
- Writing Section Included?
- Scores consistent with high school performance?
- Test Optional Schools
- SAT II Subject Tests

# Application

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Citizenship
- Demographic information
- Family information - Education history
- Disciplinary issues (if applicable)
- Short Answer



# Recommendation Letters

- How many are required?
- Inside information about applicant's academic ability
- Inside information as member of school and community
- Evidence of integrity, special skills, and positive character traits

# Essay/ Personal Statement

- Set yourself apart
- Demonstrate careful and well-constructed writing
- A strong college essay provides insight into the student's unique personality, values, and goals
- The application essay should be thoughtful and highly personal.
- Discuss an idea or special interest
- Why do you want to come here or what do you hope to accomplish?
- Sometimes more than 1 essay - make them count

# Activity Resume, Work Resume

- Dedication
- Demonstration of Leadership
- Part-time job
- Internship(s)
- Community Service
- Going above and beyond in any area
- Keep track of your activities- hours, years, etc.

# Other Attributes or Awards

- Do not overlook anything special that makes you stand out from the rest of the applicants.
- Include honors, awards, evidence of unusual talent or experience, or anything else that makes you unique.
- Define local and not widely known awards

# Interview & Demonstrated Interest

- If offered... take it!
- Visit Campus
- Meet your admissions counselor
- Attend events in your area
- Introduce yourself