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Uva college at wise admission requirements

For generations, the two figures have signaled whether a student can hope to get into a top university: his standardized test scores and his G.I.A. Over the past 15 years, though, these lodestars have come to mean less and less. Sat has been redesigned twice during that time, making it difficult for admissions staff to assess, for example, whether last year's uptick in average scores was the result of better students or just a different test. Moreover, half of U.S. teens currently graduate from high school with an A-level average, according to a recent study. With the number of applications at record highs, highly selective colleges are forced to make impossible choices, specifying a fixed number of positions for a growing group of students who, each year, are harder to distinguish using these two age-old indicators. Eighty percent of U.S. colleges accept more than half of their applicants, but at the country's most selective schools, there's something of a merit crisis: When test scores and GPAs hold little influence, the admissions office is looking for other figures , definitely more subjective. Each year, professional associations represent college admissions officers ask their members about the top factors they consider when making decisions about applications. A person's high school score, test scores, and strength still top that list. But other criteria are playing a bigger role than before: the proven interest of students in enrolling at a particular school, as measured by their visits to campus or what they say in their application materials, among other things , is very important. In addition, admissions officers at about half of the organizations surveyed said the applicant's solvability was at least some important number in the filing decisions. You can't go to a college fair anymore and say you have the scores and you're in, said Eric J. Furda, dean of admissions at the University of Pennsylvania. While the applicant's high school test scores and high school test scores still carry considerable weight in admissions decisions at Penn, there are more than 40,000 applicants in the enrollment cycle that ends this spring, those numbers are what Furda calls snapshots of students' lives - scores from a few years of high school , or how a person performs the test on a specific day. Furda encouraged his admissions advisers to balance the absolute achievement of scores and test scores with what he called the candidate's relative growth and trajectory. Our evaluation process looks at where they are right now and what we can expect from them once they arrive on our campus, Furda said. Take, for example, candidates from private high schools or top public schools. We expect them to have test scores and high scores, he said. It's a certain one. So another way for us thinking about merit for applicants is, what did they do with the opportunity they were given? How far did they go during their high school journey? Applicants will have a much harder time taking action under such guidelines than if admission guarantees were clearly cut as received a 1500 on the SAT and an average score of 3.8. It's never quite as simple, but Furda noted that the admissions system has changed dramatically over the past few decades: For high school graduation classes in 1991, Penn accepted nearly half of its applicants. This year it only accepted 8 percent, a record low. Applying to university has become much more stressful in the intervening years and it only becomes so, as test scores are high and GPAs become less certain than acceptable indicators. These days, applicants and their parents demand absolute admissions, said Furda, who every April responds to complaints from rejected applicants who compare their academic backgrounds with those accepted students they know. The problem for Penn and other top colleges is that as test scores and candidate scores increase, the ability to distinguish between them becomes more difficult than ever, if not impossible. The challenge comes as Penn and other selective colleges are under pressure to increase their enrollment of low-income and first-generation students. Any changes they make to their admissions policy, particularly the way they weigh test scores and scores, will inevitably be noted by competitors but also by less selective schools. The admissions process is what it is due to the top colleges, said Jon Boeckenevstedt, vice president of admissions management and marketing at DePaul University. They have the influence to change it. Indeed, when I told an admissions principal at an Ivy League school that I'd heard that a selective college could drop its standardized testing requirements in the coming months, his response was one of relief. That would give me an opening to follow, he said. We can't be the first. Some colleges, however, don't have to wait on their colleagues and instead are proactive coming up with different frameworks. We're not trying to find some formulas that take 11,000 applicants and line them up from Number 1 to No. 11,000, said Andrew B. Palumbo, dean of admissions and financial aid at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. If that's the case, one of our students can create a computer program and take us out of a job. We're trying to figure out the best fit. Worcester, which this spring allowed in 42 per cent of applicants, is one of many colleges that no longer require SAT or ACT scores, a decision in 2007 that was surprising to science the school's technical focus. But Worcester put its students through a project-based curriculum for four years, and to succeed in such an environment, Palumbo said, must demonstrate that once on campus, they can apply skills that standardized tests do not measure very well, if any-- such as the ability to work as a team, communicate and solve problems quickly. More than 1,000 colleges nationwide have come to a similar conclusion about standardized tests, having dropped them as an admissions requirement. That number includes even some selective facilities like George Washington, Wake Forest and Wesleyan. There are good arguments in support of these schools' decisions: for example, standardized test scores are highly correlated with family income. However, schools that minimize test scores often trade an unfair measure for others. Proving interest has become a common concept among admissions deans in recent years, but it's too likely to be correlational to wealth- traveling for college visits isn't free. And one of the best indicators of interest is applying early decisions, a process that favors applicants who often don't need to worry about comparing financial aid offers from multiple schools. That said, different doesn't necessarily mean better. Even if the new university emphasizes certain measures of candidate excellence, there is an uncomfortable underlying truth that remains unchanged: When schools have anywhere from a few hundred to several thousand positions chosen from tens of thousands of applicants, a good number decide who will be at their own. After receiving your letter of recommendation, you may find yourself wondering if the college admissions assistance program actually works. The company's website claims that among CAA participants surveyed from high school graduation class in 2009, 98 percent of them were accepted by either of their top college options, and 90 percent planned to pursue a proposed CAA career. The website also points out that the average financial aid award offer is over \$22,241 and 95 percent of students said they would recommend caa to friends. So how exactly does caa work? The company provides unlimited training via e-mail and phone. Coaches are available from 7:00 .m to 10: .m. Central Time. Through this service, you can get answers to questions about academic and test skills, career coaching and college selection. You can request assistance with preparation for sat, ACT or PSAT. You can also request feedback on app reviews and essays, financial aid apps and award letters, and more. The CAA ad claims that its coaches are experts in the field of university planning. The company also points out that before coaches are hired, all candidates are screened and have to have a thorough background check. Each trainer have at least one bachelor's degree, so you know that they went through the university process. In short, on the surface, CAA seems like a perfect solution for people who are overwhelmed or afraid to miss out on once-in-a-lifetime educational opportunities. But in some cases, caa's legitimate services have been overshadowed by its marketing tactics. Here are the basics: THE CAA hopes you'll be intrigued by the letter you received from the company enough to attend the free workshop to learn more details. If you go, you'll listen to a speaker outlining the challenges of college admissions. After the program ends, a CAA representative will offer to sign you up for the service, which costs about \$2,000. If you don't shock stickers, you can by sales tactics. Some attendees say the CAA uses high-pressure sales pitches that push people to commit to on-site service. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) of Fort Worth, Texas, reported so -- it gives the CAA a C-rating, mostly for complaints about the CAA's marketing practices. Since BBB's filings for the company opened in October 2007, it has documented numerous complaints relating to the CAA [source: Better Business Bureau]. Page 2 According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the average cost for a college student in terms of tuition, fees and room and board at a four-year institution was \$19,362 in the 2007-2008 school year [source: NCES]. It's just for one year's education. Many students have to turn to some form of financial aid to afford university. If there is only one type of financial assistance, the application can be easy. Maybe you want to walk into the financial aid office, fill out a few forms, write an essay and they want to cut you a check. But there are many types of financial support. Even a quick look at the many scholarships available makes it clear that no two options are exactly the same. Advertising The process of applying financial support can be overwhelming. Should you apply for a scholarship? Would a grant be a better option? What about student loans? With all the options, paperwork and competition for every dollar available, it's easy to get discouraged. But with the right concentration and effort, you can improve your chances to get the money you need to go to school. We've put together five tips, listed in non-specific order, that can help you find financial support. It all started with a small study, Content We don't talk about school workouts, although those are also important things. Before applying for financial aid, it's a good idea to do some research. There are dozens of scholarships and grants available to students. Everyone has their own set of requirements and rewards. Some are not linked to any particular college or university - anyone can apply. Many organizations have specific programs available only to students of that school. There are many resources on the Web, such as Scholarship.com, that can point you in the right direction. It is important to attention to the requirements of each scholarship or grant. In some cases, money from the program can be used for any costs that students may experience. Others have strict guidelines on how students can spend money. Some scholarships or grants are student-only based on financial need. Others go to students who show qualities such as leadership or community service. Advertising students do not have to reimburse money from scholarships or grants. That makes them an attractive alternative to student loans, which must be reimbursed with interest later. That also means it can compete to get certain scholarships. But don't let that discourage you. Continue researching, because sometimes you can find a perfect scholarship for your needs that others have ignored. An application for free student assistance (FAFSA) is a federal financial aid request in the United States. Upon completion of the FAFSA, students become candidates for several federal programs, including Pell Grant. While not all students meet the fafsa requirements - the program is primarily based on a student's financial needs - many other scholarship programs require students to complete the FAFSA in advance. In fact, some private organizations require students to be denied federal aid before they will consider them for a scholarship. Filling fafsa can be confusing. You'll need your most recent tax information. If you are a dependent, you will need parental or guardian support while filling out the form. You'll also want to make sure your form doesn't have an error before submitting it. It is best for high school students to apply in their senior year as close to January 1 as possible. But don't sign or submit forms before that date. Advertising One thing to keep in mind is that you'll need to re-apply for the FAFSA every year you're at school or as long as you want to remain eligible for help. The federal government has a form of extension that is not quite as extensive as the original form. Once you've completed the FAFSA and done your homework, it's time to apply for financial support. You should only apply for programs for which you are eligible. Pay attention to scholarship and grant requirements. In some cases, grants or scholarships may only be awarded to a student without any other financial assistance. If you plan to use multiple programs to fund your higher education, you may need to skip those programs. Complete all application forms and make sure you don't make mistakes. Keep your documents neat and organized - a dirty application can cost you a scholarship. If the app requires an essay, write an original piece that is thoughtful and will make a good impression. Be sure to pay attention to the deadline and submit your documents in time. Ads Avoid sending redundant or related material when apply. Applying for financial assistance is not a right to test the philosophy better. Sometimes, you may feel lost when you look at your options for financial assistance, and for good reason. There are many programs, each with their own set of rules and deadlines, which will be very surprising if you do not find it complicated. That's why you should never hesitate to ask for help. Most high schools have mentors that can help students sort through financial aid options. You can also check with a financial aid adviser from the university you want to apply to. Asking questions can save you a lot of time and further frustration down the road. Ads Check to see if there's a Web page for the help you're looking for. For example, students and parents working on the FAFSA form can visit the official website to access FAQs and help guides. Some scholarships and other grants also have websites that can answer your questions. You should never hesitate to ask about a scholarship program that seems fishy to you. There are many scam artists targeting students who are looking for financial support. Unfortunately, the scholarship you care about can be a fraud. Ask the counseling staff or check with the Better Business Bureau if you encounter a scholarship that sounds suspicious. Focus and create a neat app that can go a long way. Keep in mind that your application serves as your first impression with financial aid officials. A clean, organized app that shows you're serious about your education. If you send a torn, stained or unorganized application, it sends the wrong message. While a neat application won't necessarily assure you that the scholarship you're hoping for, a dirty one can remove you from consideration. Make sure that everything you submit is understandable and accurate. This can help your application overcome the original cut. Advertising Always remember that sending an app in as soon as possible the permission request will give you a better shot at getting the best financial support. As time goes on, colleges and private institutions will award scholarships and grants to students. The longer you wait, the less likely you are to get the help you need. With some research and care, you can find programs tailored to your financial and academic needs. Keep in mind that a little hard work can help you pay for a portion -- or maybe even your entire education. For more on college financial aid, invest some time in the links on the next page. University is really an investment - of time, energy and (you guessed it) money. Learn some tips for repaying student loans at HowStuffWorks. BusinessWeek online. The Inside Track to College Cash. May 25 in 2005. (December 30, 2009) Kalman. 5 Financial support tips. Careers & Colleges. 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