



Enrollment Management Seeks “Pointy Students”

Deans of Enrollment Management, as distinguished from Deans of Admission, are tasked with shaping a college class. This means ensuring that students arrive not only from diverse geographic regions and representing a spectrum of cultures and ethnicities, but also that some of those who matriculate each year intend to major in each of the school’s academic departments. It also means the sports teams will have athletes to fill all their positions and the orchestra will have musicians to play all the necessary instruments.

High school should be a time for students to explore and develop their interests and talents, and we all know that deep involvement in a few activities is more meaningful than sporadic and superficial participation in a laundry list of clubs or other activities. Yet, for students seeking admission to the most selective colleges and universities, it is advantageous to figure out especially early on where their talents and interests lie so that they can demonstrate really impressive achievement and commitment to one or two by the time they submit their applications. That’s because colleges are not so eager to have well-rounded students as they are to have a well-rounded class. “Pointy” students are stars of some particular sort, whose presence at the college, it is anticipated, will benefit one particular realm of campus life.

Along with the preferential treatment many admissions offices give to students making Early Decision commitments, this preference for “pointy” student is not necessarily in the best interest of today’s high-striving adolescents, who are being pushed to grow up and know themselves and what they want at an earlier age than ever before.

The positive take-away from the current situation, though, is that when students are rejected by highly selective schools, they can take comfort from knowing that the reason may have had nothing to do with their own qualifications, and everything to do with the slots Enrollment Management was seeking to fill.