



ZeeMee Provides a New Platform to Enhance College Applications

Since its launch in 2015, ZeeMee has grown rapidly as a platform for students to enhance their college applications by showcasing their personalities, interests, and talents, much as they would on social media. This year 221 schools have partnered with the company, providing a place on their applications for students to upload ZeeMee profiles they have created free of charge. The company says that for other colleges, applicants can provide a link to their ZeeMee profiles in the “Additional Information” section of the application.

ZeeMee brings applicants to life for admissions officers. Students use it to share short videos and a small amount of text alongside pictures of activities they enjoy and the people, places, and things that play an important role in their lives. A ZeeMee profile is a digital resume that can function like an interview, a portfolio, or a friendly conversation. Applicants are urged to keep them very short since admissions officers don't have time to view long ones, but a ZeeMee profile can potentially convey quite a lot about an individual's personality and passions in as few as 90 seconds.

Owen Knight, an admissions counselor at Tulane University, explains that stories are what make the greatest impression on him, the same as they do on all the rest of us. Certainly, the transcript and test scores alone provide an inadequate sense of what an applicant is really like. Application essays and letters of recommendation have traditionally helped him and other admissions officers get a sense of the person behind the numbers, but ZeeMee profiles take the humanizing process much further by giving him a sense that he is having a conversation with the applicants. In the past, Knight says, he would sometimes look at applicants' Facebook pages not for signs of trouble, but to get a sense of who they were as people. ZeeMee profiles spare him that effort, and make the process more enjoyable for him, and hopefully for the applicants themselves.

Applicants are told that creating a ZeeMee profile should feel like fun rather than work and should take no more than 45 minutes to create. The platform is integrated with Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, making it easy to upload the type of digital material they are accustomed to working with all the time. A typical ZeeMee profile tells the student's story by showcasing four or five of his or her passions with visual materials, usually enhanced with a small amount of text and a bit of music if they wish.

This year no colleges require candidates to use ZeeMee, but some schools have indicated that they may favor applicants who take the time to create these profiles. Many test-optional schools are said to be considering making ZeeMee use mandatory next year.

At a conference in November of the Independent Educational Consultants Association, some consultants expressed uncertainty as to whether ZeeMee will ultimately benefit students or just mean applicants have one more hoop to jump through. However, the way ZeeMee is catching on so quickly suggests that a feature of this type was destined almost inevitably to find its way into the application process. For a generation of “digital natives,” it seems a natural evolution. Fears that wealthy parents will hire professionals to craft videos for their children seem unwarranted as their teens embrace the challenge with such apparent ease.

Perhaps ZeeMee is the Common Application’s answer to the new Coalition Application’s “locker.” The Coalition application got off to a weak start this year with only a handful of schools using it, but is sure to take off in future years, so younger students would be wise to save materials that can potentially be attached to their applications one way or another. These materials include written and pictorial documentation of their favorite activities and proudest achievements.

For more information about how to use ZeeMee and to see samples, check out www.ZeeMee.com.