



Learn How to Impress College Admissions Counselors

Passion and determination are highly valued in the admissions office. Academics matter a lot, but your students need to find the right balance as they go through high school between hitting the books and pursuing activities outside the classroom that

reflect who they are – and then figure out how to make themselves shine through on their college applications.

Consultants and admissions counselors agree that students should start building their resumes in ninth grade, with an eye toward being able to fill an application with fascinating facts.

Here are three top strategies that have worked for students.

- **Take their studies seriously:** Admissions officers care a lot about academic performance, but grades don't tell them the whole story. They devote much of their time to scrutinizing the course choices students make.

Many students assume they should take every Advanced Placement course available. But getting an A in one or two AP courses that fit your talents is better than B's in a bunch of courses that don't.

Students who attend schools offering just a few AP courses aren't compared with those who have, say, 20 to choose from. Rather, they're judged based on how wisely they choose which advanced courses to take.

- **Show that you're a problem-solver:** The pathways your students take outside of the classroom can give a sense of their ability to solve problems and use their skills in real-world settings.

Even if they are not making money, they will turn heads if they find an internship related to their field of interest or show initiative by starting a club or business or a public service in your community.

- **Highlight your uniqueness and depth:** When listing their activities on applications, be sure to lead off with the most eye-catching and meaningful achievements.

One final, important tip: Students should show sincere interest in the schools they are applying to, including their safety schools. Attend information sessions, book a campus tour – perhaps even arranging for an overnight in the dorm – and spend time on each university’s website.

Thanks to technology, some colleges have started tracking which applicants are interacting with them in a convincing way. Even when they are obviously qualified, failing to show true interest can be a black mark.

This story is excerpted from the U.S. News “Best Colleges 2018” guidebook, which features in-depth articles, rankings and data. Here is a link: <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2017-09-13/learn-how-to-impress-college-admissions-counselors>

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