

We are in an era of information explosion. However, asymmetry of this information has brought many advantages to students who have access to reliable resources, enabling them to consistently excel and outachieve. The following Q&A is compiled based on years of experience.

Q: Is it necessary to use an admissions consultant? As far as we know, my child's classmates rarely use such services.

A: American universities have utilized a “holistic approach” in evaluating a student’s competitiveness. Affirmative action in the United States is increasingly evident in college admissions, making admission for Asian Americans more challenging. Enhancing one's extracurriculars and soft skills (non-academic strengths) is considered the key pathway to success.

There have been several significant changes in college admissions practices in recent years. Standardized test scores have become optional for more and more schools. The College Board tried to introduce, in vain, an Adversity Score a few years ago. Both the ACT and SAT now offer Super Scores. Colleges, in their efforts to improve rankings, have been strategically expanding their applicant pools to deflate their acceptance rates. In response, students are casting wider and wider nets to increase their chances of admission, which, in turn, has led to a decrease in the time admission office staff spend on each student's application materials. These changes, along with insights revealed by Students for Fair Admissions’ case against Harvard, affirm the importance of applicants' extracurriculars and non-academic strengths.

One of the significant values of a high-quality admissions consultant is to enhance the soft skills of the applying students, laying the foundation for their future success.

Regarding the "your child's classmates rarely use admissions consultants" myth: it's quite possible that your child's classmates haven't told your child the whole story. We’ve found that a considerable number of our former students’ classmates employ consultants.

Q: Can PAPE guarantee a student’s acceptance by an Ivy League school?

A: Any promise of guaranteeing admission to a dream school is misleading, and intentionally deceptive. The acceptance rate for Ivy League schools is only 3-8%. The harsh reality is that the vast majority of students cannot get into Ivy League schools—most importantly, these schools are also not suitable for every applicant.

One of PAPE’s primary tasks is to help students find the college that best suits them. In addition, PAPE aims to cultivate long-lasting good habits in students, laying a solid foundation for their future success.

Q: My child is already in XX grade. Is it too late to begin college consulting?

A: It's all relative. Engaging high-quality consultation in tenth grade can be considered "late" compared to starting in eighth grade, but it is still considered earlier than starting in eleventh grade. In any case, your child will be applying to college sometime in the future, whether in a few years or in a few months. High-quality consultation will undoubtedly enhance your child's competitiveness in the application process and increase the chances of your child getting into his/her dream school.

Q: In general, when should a student start using an admissions consultant?

A: It depends. All things considered, especially the cost, beginning consultation in eighth grade is generally considered the most suitable time. However, in the sixth or seventh grade, appropriate high-quality consultation can help your child avoid unnecessary detours. It's about not "falling behind at the starting line."

Q: Based on your experience, what are common issues that parents and students have during the college admissions process before starting with PAPE?

A: The common issues we've seen can be summarized in the following ten bullet points:

1. Admissions consultants vary a lot in consulting quality. Some parents blindly pursue the an admissions consulting firm's scale.
2. Before signing a contract, parents often talk to a sales rep of the admission consulting firm. After interacting with the consultants, parents often find themselves hugely disappointed, leading to a high turnover of consultants for the students.
3. Some admission consulting firms find it more profitable to charge less so as to sign up more students, compromising the quality of consultations.
4. During busiest times of application season, it becomes challenging to get in touch with a consultant in a timely manner.
5. Overly confident, some students dismiss the idea of admission consultation, while the parents are anxious unilaterally. So-called of "the emperor not being in a hurry, but the eunuch is."
6. Failing to achieve "know oneself and know the enemy," the student mistakenly thinks that excellent academic performance alone can open the doors to elite schools.
7. Parents have limited understanding of the student's overall situation or have difficulties in communicating effectively with the student.
8. Parents do not have a thorough understanding of the rules of the American college admissions game, often relying on hearsay.
9. The student's motivation and the parents' execution capability are both questionable.
10. The student and his/her parents mistakenly believe that none of the student's classmates are engaged in consulting services.

Q: Some admission consulting firms claim to have many former college admissions officers working for them. Does this give them an advantage?

A: The college admissions process in the United States is not some indecipherable code. An individual who worked in the admissions office of a college a few years ago, or even last year, is not in the loop of the latest admission "secrets" of that college. Additionally, there are many staff members in an admissions office, including those who answer phones and organize files. Referring to all of them as "admissions officers" might be an exaggeration.

As alumni, though our admissions consultants have conducted alumni interviews for both Princeton and Penn, we have never claimed to be "interviewing officers" for Princeton or Penn. Being practitioners, we have successfully guided our four children into MIT, Columbia, Wharton, and Harvard, with the latter three being admitted through EA/ED. The first one was admitted early to Stanford (EA) and later admitted through regular application to MIT and Harvard. All four continue to excel in their respective fields.

We hope that by applying the same approach and method, we will not only guide your child into his/her dream school but also lay the foundation for his/her their future success in the professional world!

Q: How can parents start? As a parent, I lack the bandwidth to assess my child's current competitiveness.

A: It's precisely because parents lack bandwidth in assessing their child's current competitiveness, that it's become imperative for parents to understand the market and the realities of competition. Time waits for no one.

PAPE provides objective feedback to parents based on the information provided by the students.

Only Serious Inquiries Are Welcome!