

F2: Do Letters REALLY Matter?

Saturday, May 4, 9:00am -10:15am



Presenters

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1

Compare perspectives on both sides of the desk on the importance of letters of recommendation in the college admission process.

2

Identify essential elements of a letter of recommendation and how to gather and organize this information.

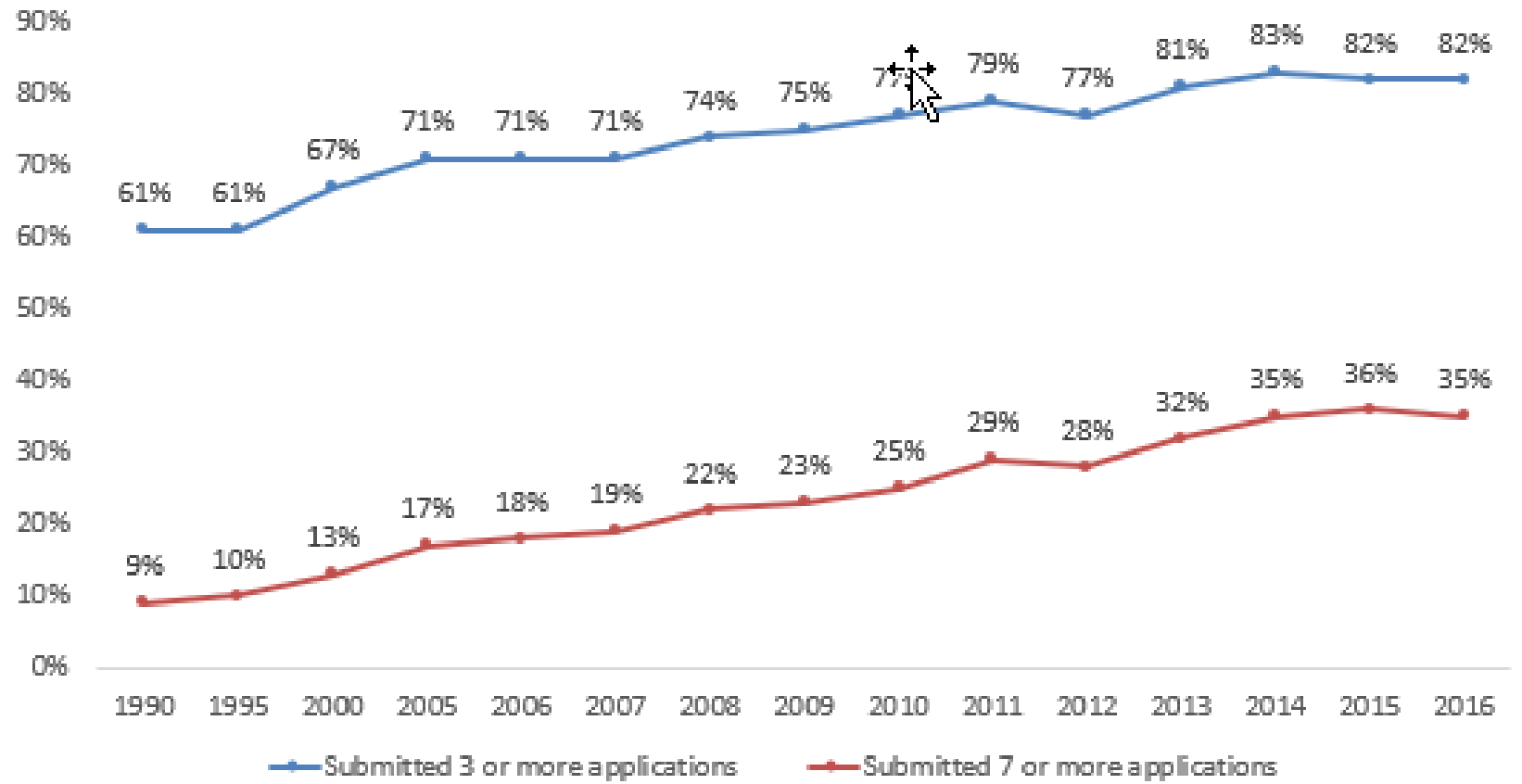
3

Examine best practices for letters of recommendation for various stakeholders in the admission process.

'THE FACTS'

NACAC State of
College Admission
Report

Increases in Student Application Submission: 1990 to 2016 (First-Time Freshmen)



'THE FACTS'

- What is required versus what is allowed?

| Factor | N | Considerable Importance | Moderate Importance | Limited Importance | No Importance |
|----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Grades in All Courses | 173 | 80.9 | 10.4 | 5.8 | 2.9 |
| Grades in College Prep Courses | 171 | 70.8 | 17.5 | 8.8 | 2.9 |
| Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT) | 172 | 52.3 | 30.8 | 14.5 | 2.3 |
| Strength of Curriculum | 170 | 51.2 | 29.4 | 12.9 | 6.5 |
| Essay or Writing Sample | 168 | 16.7 | 36.9 | 20.8 | 25.6 |
| Counselor Recommendation | 167 | 10.8 | 46.1 | 28.7 | 14.4 |
| Student's Demonstrated Interest | 168 | 15.5 | 21.4 | 34.5 | 28.6 |
| Teacher Recommendation | 168 | 7.1 | 46.4 | 29.2 | 17.3 |
| Class Rank | 172 | 9.3 | 27.9 | 36.0 | 26.7 |
| Extracurricular Activities | 169 | 3.6 | 34.9 | 40.8 | 20.7 |
| Subject Test Scores (AP, IB) | 166 | 4.2 | 28.9 | 28.3 | 38.6 |
| Portfolio | 167 | 5.4 | 7.2 | 27.5 | 59.9 |
| Interview | 168 | 3.6 | 14.3 | 29.2 | 53.0 |
| Work | 169 | 1.8 | 17.8 | 41.4 | 39.1 |
| SAT II Scores | 166 | 6.6 | 3.0 | 19.9 | 70.5 |
| State Graduation Exam Scores | 168 | 1.8 | 8.3 | 17.9 | 72.0 |

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2017-18.



HIGH SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE

Padua Academy

- 650 Students, Grades 9 to 12, All Girls
- Average Caseload: 160 students
- 3 Counselors, 1 Director of College Advisement and School Counseling
- Require Questionnaire, Resume - Due in May of Junior Year
- Essay Writing in Junior Year English

Chantilly High School

- 2850 Students, Grades 9 to 12
- Average Caseload: 280 students
- 11 School Counselors, 1 DSS, 1 Career Center Specialist
- Require Counselor Rec Packet - Due in June of Junior Year
- Teacher Training



WILLIAM
& MARY
CHARTERED 1693



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

COLLEGE PERSPECTIVE

William & Mary

- 13 Dean Staff Members
- 15,000 applications
- Require 1 Letter from the School Counselor
- Permit additional letters with no true cap but recommend no more than 2-3 additional letters
- Readers review and consider all letters submitted with application

University of South Carolina

- 22 Admissions Counselors & Regional Representatives
- 30,000 Applications
- Permit 1 School Counselor Letter
- Honors College - Requires 3 Letters (1 counselor, 2 teacher)

LETTERS OF REC: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

College Side

- Explanation of any unique curriculum tracks or choices
- Clarification of any educational gaps or transitions
- Description of any notable personal achievements
 - Not a full recap of resume but any key elements of note
- Discussion of any unaddressed disciplinary action or academic challenges
- Notification of any personal or familial hardships, challenges, or unique situations
- Emphasis on any specific or unique personal qualities
- Notes on any unique or pertinent High School specific elements

LETTERS OF REC: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

High School Side

Counselor summarizes the WHOLE student.

- A counselor can focus on personal setbacks, structural impediments that affected a student's ability to take certain courses, the student's aspirations, hopes, dreams.
- The counselor describes the student within the whole community.
- **All-Encompassing**

Teacher puts the Lens on the Learner.

- A teacher should explain how the student makes an impact in the classroom on them, on their peers and how they react to challenges within the classroom.
- The teacher should focus specifically on academics.
- **Subject-Specific**

LETTERS OF REC: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

High School Side

Style/Organization/Format 'Debate'

Counselor Recommendation for STUDENT NAME

DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES

I

ACADEMIC HISTORY

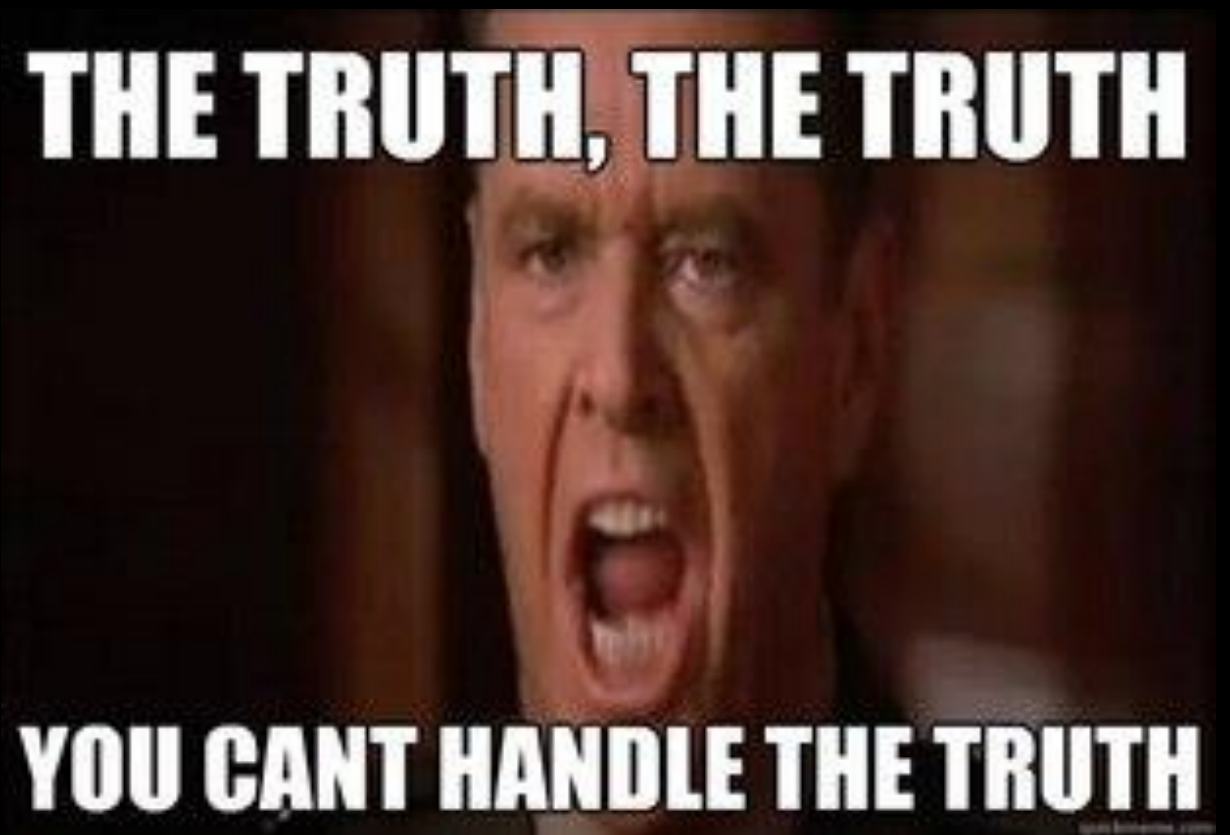
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ACTIVITIES, INTERESTS & AREAS OF IMPACT

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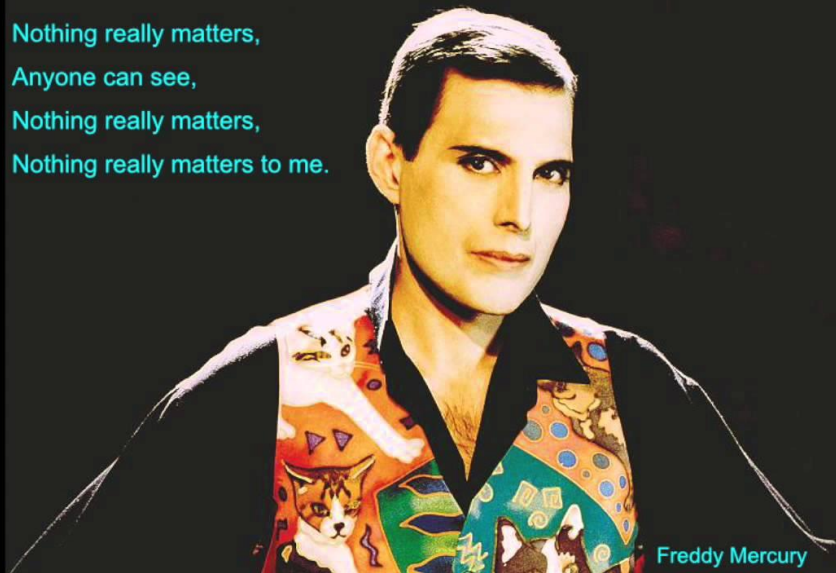
STUDENT SELF-REFLECTION

But Wait...



QUESTIONS?

Nothing really matters,
Anyone can see,
Nothing really matters,
Nothing really matters to me.



Freddie Mercury



THANK YOU
for attending this session!

We'd love to hear from you!

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