

What I See From My Side: Useful Criticism From Across Both Sides of the Desk

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We Often Don't Say What We Feel



Why Are We Doing This Session?

- Provide a venue for cross-desk conversations.
- To raise points of contention that arise across the desk.
 - And, to provide thoughtful solutions.
- To take the perspective of the other side to understand why things are done the way they are.
- To allow for growth and improvement on each side.



Structure

1. Frustration & Solution Forum

- A. Present the Frustration
- B. Provide the solutions
- C. Collect audience ideas

2. Candid Questions From Across the Desk



HS Counselor Frustration #1

- Missing Item Emails
 - Why are these sent?
 - Application completion is critical to a successful process
 - Erosion of trust between families and counselors
 - Causes and Panic and “Emergencies” in high schools.
- Solutions for Colleges:
 - Include language such as “this is a general email to any student whose application may be currently incomplete” and include information such as “we are processing large volumes of information currently and your documents may be in a queue for processing”
 - Wait until processing is caught up before applicants are emailed.
 - Up to 20% of documents processed last year were duplicates...
 - Audience?



Admission Officer Frustration #1

- Missing Items
 - Incomplete Applications do not move to readers.
 - Application completion is critical to a successful process
 - Files sit incomplete which may be detrimental.
 - HS Counselors have a lot of work in a short window of time, human error
- Solutions for High Schools:
 - Consider bringing on board a member of the school or staff committee who can monitor/track the sending of documents during busy season.
 - Double check deadlines and sent items.
 - Create an auditing system for teachers and rec letters.
 - Audience?



HS Counselor Frustration #2

- Highly Selective Schools Encouraging Everyone to Apply
 - Some colleges want to increase selectivity to become more desirable, or have a higher rank since the public values selectivity.
 - Setting unrealistic expectations for students.
 - Misuse of the term “holistic” when talking about selection.
- Solutions for Colleges:
 - Be candid about selectivity – expound faith in school counselors.
 - Work closely with counselors to share how competitive the applicant pool is
 - Educate school counselors on which students who may be below profile may be admitted.
 - Be transparent – the process is not random.
 - Audience?



Admission Officer Frustration #2

- Lunch Visits
 - Colleges view them as ineffective and a poor use of time
 - HS's do not want to disrupt their school day
 - Basic solution to high volumes of visitors
- Solutions for High Schools:
 - Offer schools to come together as groups (4 colleges at lunch).
 - Provide a yearly college fair, or series of mini-fairs.
 - Offer the college the visit, and if nobody shows up have a discussion, or ask in advance what would be most useful for the admission officer if there is no interest.
 - Offer a broader program for 9/10th students and let them be involved.
 - Audience?



HS Counselor Frustration #3

- Your school visit is boring and it sounds like all the others.
 - It's not worth it for students to miss class for someone reciting a website
- Solutions for Colleges:
 - Actively train admission staff to create exciting visits involving discussion
 - Tell student stories – everyone loves a good story teller.
 - Connect students with graduates of their high school currently at your institution
 - Counselors – speak up and provide guidance for a visit prior to it happening, and offer media if needed.
 - Audience?



Admission Officer Frustration #3

- Lack of clarity on HS Profiles and unclear policies.
- Saying the high school policy is “if asked” when we’re asking directly on the Common App. Actively leaving information blank placing the additional burden on the college.
- Solutions for High Schools:
 - Be Honest – colleges will value your honesty, above anything.
 - Actively obscuring information will a professional reputation and that of the school.
 - Build a personal brand of honesty, even if it means having hard conversations.
 - Audience?



Frustration #4

- The other side doesn't know when my busy season is.
 - Our work cycles are seasonal and they often work opposite each other – they are designed this way.
- Solutions for Colleges and school counselors:
 - Plan ahead and set reminders accordingly. Step out of your bubble.
 - Think about the schedule of the other side while planning – it's not all about you!
 - Acknowledge constraints and be flexible, where possible.
 - Don't use dealbreakers, like "I can only do... "
 - Adjust contact expectations and discern critical email/calls from casual
 - Work ahead of the curve, where possible.
- Audience?



Candid Questions From Across the Desk



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Thank you! Questions?

CONTACT ME AT:

Name
Institution/School
Website
Email
Social Media



Thank you! Questions?

CONTACT US AT:

Speaker 1, Email
Speaker 2, Email
Speaker 3, Email
Speaker 4, Email

