

College Application Insights

*Chat with the Counseling Office & Hobart & William Smith
Colleges Admissions Representative Ms. Susan Willard*

October 6, 2020 @ 12:30pm

Maximizing the Virtual Visit

- Register in advance, and make sure the school has your name and contact information. This makes sure you get credit for demonstrated interest!
- Let the college rep know if you are interested but cannot attend the visit.
- Be prepared, have questions and at least basic knowledge about the college.
- Cast a wide net with the schools you are meeting with because of travel restrictions, uncertainty in this process. Virtual visits are allowing many new colleges to “travel” to your school for a visit this year, so take advantage of that.
- Use the chat feature to ask questions publicly or privately with the rep. Having a discussion on a virtual platform can be difficult, but using the chat feature makes sure your voice is heard.
- Have your video on if at all possible, mute yourself unless you are talking to the rep/group, try not to be late and look engaged!
- Ask about how COVID has effected their institution and the application process.

How Has COVID Effect the Application Process?

- Make sure to demonstrate interest with colleges you are interested in through virtual visits, interviews, visiting campuses safely and communicating directly with the rep for our school.
- 2021 graduates are not going to have their chances at admission effected by the 2020 graduates who have chosen to defer!
- Many colleges are loosening requirements for testing all together, or for this academic year only. This presents new opportunities for students to apply to schools where they might not have had the test scores for before!
- We understand the academic challenges all of you have faced with COVID and will review your transcript with that in mind. Just make sure you control the things you can, and do your best with the things that are not in your control. Resiliency and resourcefulness is very important to many colleges.
- Many new college are offering interviews so take advantage of that. This brings a human element to the process that is really exciting.
- Use the new Common App supplementary question to talk about how these past few months have effected you academically, emotionally and personally. It's all about the tone of what you write. If you don't feel you have anything important to share in this regard than it isn't necessary to submit this!

Making Caring Common Pledge

- More than 360 college admission deans from across the country signed this pledge to prioritize self-care and care for others during the pandemic
<http://www.makingcaringcommon.org/>
- **Here are the five pillars of that pledge:**
- **Self-Care.** The deans recognize that many families during this time are struggling to get by and that a wide range of students are dealing with stresses of many kinds. The statement encourages students to take care of themselves.
- **Academic Work.** While the deans emphasize that students' academic work matters to them during the pandemic, they also recognize that many students are facing obstacles to academic work. The deans underscore that they will assess academic achievements in the context of these obstacles, and mainly base assessments of academic achievement on work before and after this pandemic. They further state that no student will be disadvantaged because "of their school's decisions about transcripts, the absence of AP or IB tests, their lack of access to standardized tests (although many of the colleges represented here don't require these tests), or their inability to visit campus."

Making Caring Common Pledge

- **Service and Contributions to Others.** The deans express that they value contributions to others and service during this time for those who are in a position to provide these contributions. They emphasize that they are not looking for extraordinary forms of service or leadership during the pandemic. They don't want to create a "pandemic service Olympics." They are looking for contributions that are authentic and meaningful, including contributions that respond to the many needs created by the pandemic.
- **Family Contributions.** The deans recognize that many students have family responsibilities, including supervising younger siblings, caring for sick relatives, or working to provide family income that can impede their capacity to engage in school and other activities, and that these responsibilities may have increased during this time. They view substantial family contributions as very important and encourage students to report them in their applications.
- **Extracurricular and Summer Activities.** The deans convey that no student will be disadvantaged for not engaging in extracurricular activities during this time, and they state that students will not be disadvantaged for lost possibilities for summer involvement, including lost internship opportunities, summer jobs, camp experiences, classes, and other types of meaningful engagement that have been cancelled or altered.