

## The Interview

It is encouraged that you meet with the person who makes decisions regarding your application. Sending application materials prior to the interview allows the admissions official a chance to review your information and prepare individualized material for the interview. Interviews also show admissions officials that you are serious about this institution and well-prepared. Common questions officials ask during the interview include:

- Why are you interested in this institution?
- What is your best academic subject? What is your worst?
- Do you have a major in mind? If yes, why that particular field?
- How did you hear about this institution?
- What qualities or assets will you bring to this school?
- What do you like to do when you are not studying?
- How would your friends describe you? (List three adjectives)
- What books have you read lately? Movies have you seen?
- Tell me a little bit about yourself.
- Who is your favorite person and why?
- What was your favorite part of high school?
- What other schools are you considering?

Tougher questions you should also be prepared for:

- Do you think your high school education has been relevant in today's competitive world?
- Who has been the most influential person in your life and why?
- How do you define success?
- Describe an issue in your community that needs immediate attention. What would you recommend to improve the situation?
- What is your definition of leadership? How would you describe your individual leadership style?
- If you were given a million dollars and were told to spend it on a pressing societal problem, which would you choose and how would you spend the money?
- If you could interview/meet/dine with anyone, living or dead, who would you choose and what would you discuss?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
- What do I need to know about you in order to make an informed admissions decision?
- If I focused on one part of your application, what would you prefer that part to be and why?

## Tips for a Good Interview

- Relax as much as possible, be yourself, and remember the interview is not designed to stress you.
- Prepare for the interview. Know yourself and your audience. Be aware of your credentials and be prepared to ask questions.
- Listen to what the official says, pay close attention to questions, and do not be afraid to ask for clarification.
- Be honest, admit weaknesses and focus on what you have learned from any mistakes.
- Do not feel obligated to rush, take your time and pause when necessary so that you may provide sincere, thoughtful, and intelligent responses.
- Remember to sit up straight; good posture and eye contact indicate interest.
- Bring a resume and/or data sheet with you.
- Dress appropriately in clean, comfortable clothing, business casual is encouraged.
- Introduce yourself and shake hands with the official. Most students do not do this. Taking this step allows officials to view you as confident and mature.

## The Admissions Viewpoint

Here are 5 easy ways NOT to get admitted to a competitive college from the Case Western Reserve University's (CWRU) Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

**Mistake #1:** The more lines in the water, the more fish you catch. Application forms are similar enough to trick you into a "done one, done 'em all" frame of mind. In fact, you have to put so much of yourself into a serious application that it is easy to spread yourself too thinly. Grades suffer from all the attention given to application. Essays lose their zest. Forms show signs of poor preparation. Admissions officers can tell a serious application from the other kind. Don't let a shotgun approach cost you admission to one or more of your top schools.

**Mistake #2:** Tell us more than we want to know. Trust us. We know what we need to know. The application is a highly-evolved document designed to gather the information we need to make well-informed decisions. Each question has a purpose. Three lines allocated to a response means we expect a three-line reply. Please don't subject us to a multimedia barrage. Send us only what we ask for. At best, the extra stuff is ignored at worst, it can obscure the better parts of your application.

Mistake #3: Live by the number. If you knew how many GPAs above 3.8 we see, it would scare you. It scares us! But then we start looking past the numbers. We take a long, thoughtful look at the qualities (more than quantity) of your work, extracurriculars, and/or community involvement. And don't kid yourself, we read the essays. Those required essays are your best chance to express yourself. Answer the required questions thoughtfully or write some creative and effective prose. Convey your sincere interest in the school, engage the reader, and you seize the advantage.

Mistake #4: Play limbo with the deadlines. Colleges have application deadlines, but we really expect to receive your material well in advance. The average application file contains 25 sheets of paper. Many parts arrive at different times and from different sources. Compiling the file, entering the information, and forwarding it for review takes time. An application that comes in on deadline-or just before or after-faces many risks. A last-minute application can reflect badly on you. Are you a procrastinator, or does this 11<sup>th</sup>-hour application just mean a lack of interest?

Mistake #5: Coast to the finish line. The most dangerous element of the senior year is "senioritis". Symptoms of a bad case include lower grades and a slackening interest in activities or your job. The most advanced form of the disease occurs when all is well through the first half of the senior year, but then the bottom falls out. One thing to keep in mind: not everyone coasts during the senior year. Stopping short of the finish line cannot help your chances for admission. The worst-case diagnosis is withdrawal of a previous offer of admission.

Source: The Counselor's Corner, College Bound, Reprinted with permission of *CAMPUS NEWS*, Case Western Reserve University.