COLLEGE ADMISSIONS EVENING





TONIGHT'S AGENDA:

- *Welcome!*
- The College Admissions Game
- Welcome to our panelist, Lauren Sciocchetti, Vice President of Enrollment Management, Mary Baldwin University
- College Admissions at Conestoga
- Q&A

SCAN QR CODE TO ASK A QUESTION!



WHAT WE'LL COVER

1

Finding the right fit

Build a list that yields options

2

The test-optional world

What it really means for you

3

How to stand out

Plus final thoughts

Tonight you'll see how admission offices think and review applications.

STUDENT VS. PARENT ROLE

Students

- Engage in this process
- Take time to identify what is important to you
- Then think about who YOU are and where YOU will be your best self

Parents

- Be open minded
- Encourage your student to be the one that talks!
- Make a plan to minimize conflict/stress
- Address realities early



THE PROCESS

- No two individuals are alike
- Plan specific goals tailored to your strengths, interests, and needs
- Put your plan in action

BUILD WITH FIT, NOT FAME

S

Size

Small or large? Where will you be seen?

L

Location

How far from home? City, suburb, or rural?

A

Academics

How do you learn best?

Do they have my program?

M

Money

What can your family afford?

SLAM: a tool for building a list that yields options.

S: SIZE

- Student body size: small, mid-size, or large
- Involvement: clubs, athletics, arts, and more
- Extrovert or introvert: what helps you thrive?
- Belonging: a place that knows your name

BELONGING

Where can I be seen and recognized?

L: LOCATION

- Distance from home: drive, train, or fly?
- Setting: city, suburb, small town, or rural
- Travel costs: trips home add up
- Cost of living: housing and daily expenses vary

ASK YOURSELF

Where will I feel at home?

A: ACADEMICS

- How do YOU learn best?
- Do you want four years of keeping your head above water?
- Learning differences: look for schools that support you
- Highly selective schools: still about fit, not just the name

MYTH

"Go to the best college you can get into."

Not a good strategy.

M: MONEY

- How much has your family saved?
- How much will the student contribute?
- Cost of attendance, cost of living, and travel
- Grad, med, or law school? Plan and save for that too

THE FORGOTTEN PIECE

Talk about it as a family now.

TOOLS, TRICKS & VISITS

Tools

- Scoir
- Net price calculators on each college's website
- Posted admit ranges
- Ask admission reps the questions you care about

Tricks

- Call financial aid for a pre-read
- Respond to emails
- Click links on the website based on what you care about
- Personalize your responses

Visits

- In person or virtual
- Notice how it feels: not just size, location, academics but butterflies

BUILD A BALANCED LIST

Likely

Your profile is above the typical admitted student.

Target

Your profile is within the typical admitted range.

Reach

Your profile is slightly below, or the school is highly selective.

It's okay to have all levels on your list. Hidden gems: look beyond the names you already know.

WHERE TESTING STANDS TODAY

Required

Some schools have gone back to requiring scores.

Optional

Many schools remain optional. Some have been for years, believing scores don't predict college success.

Test blind

Scores aren't considered at all.

Most schools went test optional during the pandemic, when students couldn't access testing. Some are returning to requiring testing; many are not.

WHAT "TEST OPTIONAL" REALLY MEANS

TEST OPTIONAL

It truly means optional.

You won't be looked at differently for not sending scores.

- Submit if your scores are within or above the school's posted range
- Scores below the range can hurt you
- Find ranges on each college's website
- Scores can also help you build your list and find specialized programs
- Note: some colleges require scores for specific majors even if they are test optional

HOW ADMISSION OFFICES REVIEW

Know yourself

What are you good at?

What do you like?

Where are your passions?

Know the process

How do we review?

Be curious about how applications are read.

Listen to colleges

What are they looking for, and what are they talking about? What you learn should be reflected in your supplemental essays.

Big picture thinking: your whole story matters.

WAYS TO STAND OUT

Demonstrated interest

Visits, emails, and conversations with admission

Essays

Including the optional essays

Recommendations

Ask now, so they're thinking about you when writing

Showing up

You don't have to be the leader. Be the person who shows up consistently.

AUTHENTICITY WINS!

- We can tell when an essay is AI-written
- Go deep on what matters to you
- Passion projects show who you are
- **Impact** matters more than a long résumé
- Everyone has a different story
  - Grand plans
  - Small but meaningful experiences

EXAMPLE

The "jelly of the month club" essay
A small experience with real impact.

BACK TO THE M IN SLAM



- Parents: where did you go to school? Is "the best college you can get into" really the prize?
- Have the real conversation now, not after applying Early Decision
- Run the net price calculator, and call financial aid for a pre-read

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Fit over fame

Size, Location, Academics, Money

Test optional means optional

Submit only when your scores are in range

Be authentic and consistent

Go deep, and keep showing up

Start the money conversation now

Before you apply, not after

YOUR NEXT STEPS

1. Build your list – use SLAM
2. Run net price calculators and call financial aid
3. Visit, in person or virtual
4. Ask teachers for letters (see back of sheet). We will discuss specifics in your post HS planning meetings

FINAL THOUGHTS

Plan ahead

Do research first and only apply to schools that are a good fit

Use SLAM

Use your local schools to assess what feels right

Don't overstress

Take time to enjoy your senior year

You will find your home

I promise!!!

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