

# **When To Reach for a “Reach” School**

# What is a “Reach” school?

- Any college/university that you apply to that you are below either the published GPA or the SAT/ACT scores from the previous year’s applicants
- Any college/university that accepts less than 20% of their applicants (aka “Far Reach”)

# How Do I Know The Published GPA and ACT/SAT Scores?

- 1) Common Data Set
- 2) The College's Individual Class Profile
- 3) Various Websites
  - Naviance
  - CollegeData.com
  - College Scorecard
  - Big Future- College Board

# **Most Competitive Admission Colleges for 2017-2018 Admission Year**

- 1) Stanford – 4.29%
- 2) Harvard – 4.59%
- 3) Princeton – 5.49%
- 4) Columbia – 5.5%
- 5) Yale – 6.3%
- 6) US Naval Academy – 6.5%
- 7) MIT – 6.7%
- 8) Brown – 7.2%
- 9) Duke – 8%
- 10) UPENN – 8.4%
- 11) Northwestern – 8.4%
- 12) Univ of Chicago – 8.7%

# **Most Competitive Admission Colleges for 2017-2018 Admission Year**

- 13) Swarthmore – 9.1%
- 14) Johns Hopkins – 9.9%
- 15) Dartmouth – 10.1%
- 16) Vanderbilt – 10.3%
- 17) Cornell – 10.3%
- 18) USC – 13%
- 19) Georgetown – 14.5%
- 20) Tufts – 14.8%
- 21) UC Berkeley – 15.2%
- 22) UNC-Chapel Hill – 16% (Out-of-State)
- 23) Notre Dame – 22.3%
- 24) UVA – 26.5%

# What Is All The Fuss About?

- 1) Prestige
  - 2) Future Success
  - 3) Reputation
  - 4) Legacy/Alumni
- ***US News College Rankings***

## **Why Does the *US News* College Rankings Get a Lot of Attention?**

- Because they are what the public views as the indicator of how “good” or prestigious a university is
- If a university is ranked high in *US News*, it must mean that graduates get good jobs right away after they graduate
- In today’s competitive culture we put so much value on what the “best” or “success” means

# How Does *US News* Calculate Their Rankings?

- Outcomes (35%) (up from 30% in 2018)
  - Social Mobility (5%)
  - Graduation and Retention (30%)
  - Graduation rate performance (8%)
- Faculty Resources (20%)
- Expert Opinion (20%) (down from 22.5% in 2018)
- Financial Resources (10%)
- Student Excellence (10%) (down from 12.5 in 2018)
- Alumni Giving Rate (5%)



# Why Is The College Admissions Process Unfair Sometimes?

- Admissions favor the wealthy as well as students who have strong academics and very special talents
- Sometimes, admission officers cannot say “No” to prospective students. They also will encourage anyone to apply.
- It favors “ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances”
- More and more admissions offices are on a “need-aware basis”

# Why Is The College Admissions Process Unfair Sometimes?

- The college admissions process sometimes separates applicants by major
- The college admissions process favors applicants who can visit campus
- The college admissions process favors students who apply Early Decision (if applicable)

# **The Best Way To Deal With Unfairness**

- 1) Donate enough \$\$\$ to get your name on a building
- 2) Be ranked the top athlete in your sport in the country
- 3) Invent something and get a patent for it
- 4) Be best buds with the President or Director of Admissions


# The Best Way To Deal With Unfairness (Take 2)

- Pray
- Research (Common Data Set; School Profile)
- Know what to expect financially  
[Net Price Calculator](#)
- Know admission standards if applying under a specific major
- Have a balanced and flexible list of backup schools THAT YOU WANT TO GO TO!

# What Does A “Balanced” College List Look Like?

College	Delivery Type	Office Status	Student Status	Common App Status	Type	WL	DF	Interest	Expect	Result
<a href="#">Cornell Univ</a>		Pending	-	Not in list	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">Drexel Univ</a>		Pending	-	Not in list	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">James Madison Univ</a>		Pending	-	N/A	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">UMD College Park</a>		Pending	-	N/A	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">Pennsylvania State Univ</a>		Pending	-	N/A	RD			Medium		Unknown
<a href="#">U of Pittsburgh</a>		Pending	-	N/A	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">Syracuse Univ</a>		Pending	-	Not in list	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">Wake Forest Univ</a>		Pending	-	Not in list	RD			Low		Unknown

# What Does A “Balanced” College List Look Like?



College	Office Status	Student Status	Common App Status	Type	WL	DF	Interest	Expect	Result
<a href="#">Bowdoin Coll</a>	Pending	-	Not in list	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">Covenant Coll</a>	Pending	-	N/A	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">Stanford Univ</a>	Pending	-	Not in list	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">U of Texas Austin</a>	Pending	-	N/A	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">Wheaton Coll IL</a>	Pending	-	N/A	RD					Unknown

# What Does A “Balanced” College List Look Like?

College	Office Status	Student Status	Comm on App Status	Type	WL	DF	Interest	Expect	Result
<a href="#">Gordon Coll</a>	Initial materials submitted	-	N/A	EA					Unknown
<a href="#">James Madison Univ</a>	Pending	-	N/A	ED					Unknown
<a href="#">Pennsylvania State Univ</a>	Pending	-	N/A	RD					Unknown
<a href="#">Coll of William &amp; Mary</a>	Pending	-	Not in list	RD					Unknown

# Strategy When Applying To (Far) Reach Schools

- Grades and scores need to be competitive
- Pick a couple to apply to (don't just apply to every one thinking your chances of getting in to one of them is higher)
- Find your "hook"
- Show demonstrated interest
- Be very particular about the essay(s) and get them proofread at least twice (Go to College Essay Academy!)
- Be very intentional about letters of recommendation



# **Strategy When Applying to (Far) Reach Schools**

- Keep playing that instrument or sport
- Do something in the community that makes a difference
- Have very productive summers
- Always apply EA and strongly consider ED
- Grow in responsibility and leadership
- Complete Net Price Calculator

# **So When Do You Reach for a “Reach” School?**

- If you are close to the lower end of the mid-50%
- If you understand the culture and personality of the school
- If you are willing to put 100% effort into the application process (no stealth apps)
- If you have a good “hook”
- If you have prayed about it and feel that God is leading you in that direction

# Helpful Resources

- [DC Guidance on Twitter](#)
- [Educated Quest Blog](#) (educatedquest.com)
- [The College Solution](#) (thecollegesolution.com)
- [Ivy Wise College Admissions Blog](#)  
(blog.ivywise.com)
- College Essay Guy (collegeessayguy.com) also  
@CollegeEssayGuy on Twitter