
TOP 10 THINGS COLLEGES WANT

1

A high school curriculum that challenges the student. Students should demonstrate a willingness to challenge themselves with a rigorous program of studies. Academically successful students should include several Honors, and/or Advanced Placement classes.

2

Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend. Grades should show an upward trend over the years. However, slightly lower grades in a rigorous program are preferred to all A's in less challenging coursework.

3

A well-written essay that provides insight into the student's unique personality, values and goals. The application essay should be thoughtful and highly personal. It should demonstrate careful and well-constructed writing.

4

Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative. Depth, not breadth, of experience is most important.

5

Solid scores on standardized tests (SAT, ACT). These should be consistent with high school performance.

6

Special talents or experiences that contribute to a well-rounded student body. Anything that makes a student unique adds to the diversity of the campus.

7

Letters of recommendation from teachers and guidance counselor that give evidence of integrity, special skills and positive character traits. Students should request recommendations from teachers who respect their work in an academic discipline.

8

Demonstrated enthusiasm, often exhibited in an interview, towards attending the college. Colleges want to know, if they offer admittance that the student will choose to go there. Commitment to attending debuted on the list this year.

9

Out-of-school experiences, including work and community service, which illustrate responsibility, dedication and development of areas of interest. Work or other meaningful use of free time can demonstrate maturity.

10

Supplemental recommendations by adults who have had significant direct contact with the student. Letters from coaches or supervisors in long-term work or volunteer activities are valuable; however, recommendations from casual acquaintances or family friends, even if they are well known, are rarely given much weight