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"The Right Fit" brochure

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Beneath the boast of brochures, letters, calls, claims and promises lies a very simple question: which college is right for you? Finding the right fit requires knowing how you measure up to expectations. What are they looking for anyway? To help you sort it out, here is the truth behind the hype: what colleges really look for in applicants.

Program

The most important factor in the admission process for most selective colleges is your academic program. Admission counselors are looking for students who have challenged themselves academically. If your high school offers AP, IB or Honors courses, have you taken some of those courses? Of primary interest to college admission officers is whether or not you are properly prepared to handle the academic challenges you will face at their college. Your daily academic record gives admission counselors insight into your capability to be successful at their institution.

Here are some questions asked by admission officers that you should be prepared to answer:

- What courses have you taken?
- How have you stretched yourself academically?
- If your high school offers Advanced Placement or Honors courses, have you taken some of those courses?
- Have you taken the minimal course requirements of our college (i.e. 4 years of English, 3 years of math, etc.)?
- What's your favorite course, and why?
- Your least favorite, and why?
- What do you consider to be your academic strengths? Weaknesses?

Performance

During the selection process, admission officers will look very closely at your performance in your course work, noting the subjects in which you have excelled

as well as those in which you may have had some difficulty. Selective colleges expect to see solid academic performance in all course work and, the truth be known, a sizeable percentage of their applicants will have performed very well in the classroom. Poor grades in a particular subject or during a certain academic year will often be a topic of discussion in a campus interview or a concern that calls for an explanation in the counselor's recommendation.

Here are some questions asked by admission officers that you should be prepared to answer:

- What is your grade point average?
- What is your class rank (if your school ranks)?
- What scholastic honors have you earned?
- In which courses have you really excelled?
- Where have you fallen short, and why?

Place

Selective colleges place a great deal of weight on the secondary school you attend. Taking into account the school you attend adds context to your course of study and performance. Admission counselors gain knowledge and understanding of secondary schools by visiting the schools and through the school's printed profile. The percentage of graduates who attend 4 year colleges and universities, the students' average performance on standardized tests and AP/IB exams, the colleges and universities where graduates have been accepted and enrolled are all factors considered by admission counselors when ascertaining the quality of a secondary school.

Potential

Most selective colleges still require that you submit SAT and/or ACT test scores for admission purposes. Used in conjunction with your academic course work, performance, and where you go to high school, these scores can assist admission officers in predicting whether or not you can be successful academically

at their institution. While standardized test scores are normally secondary in importance to academic program, you do not want to be "out-of-the-college's-ballpark" in terms of test scores. In other words, if the range of SAT composite scores of students enrolling at a particular college is 1100 to 1600, having a 900 on the SAT sends up a red flag in the eyes of admission personnel and may cause your SAT score to be a primary factor in the decision making process. You can normally see how your test scores compared to the college's overall range by viewing the college's class profile.

Here are some questions asked by admission officers that you should be prepared to answer:

- What are your SAT and/or ACT scores?
- Do you believe your test scores are true indicators of your potential for success? Why?
- How do you feel about your potential to succeed at our college?

Personality

The first four factors we have touched on are very objective: courses taken, grades earned, school attended, test scores received. But colleges are made up of people, not letter grades and numbers. Much of the selection process at selective colleges has to do with looking at the person behind the numbers. Are the college and the student a proper match, personally as well as academically? Normally, college admission officers gain insight into your personality through the college essay or essays, the campus interview, and through the recommendations of the teachers and counselors who know you best.

Here are some questions asked by admission officers that you should be prepared to answer:

- How do you describe yourself?
- What issues are important to you and why?
- What are you passionate about?
- What do you feel you could contribute to our college if you were to enroll?
- What would our college offer to you?

Participation

Colleges are normally interested in those students who are well rounded: students who have performed well academically AND have been involved outside the classroom. When it comes to extracurricular activities, keep in mind that most selective colleges are looking for quality over quantity. Admission counselors would rather see a student who has been committed to one or two activities over a long period of time rather than a student who has been involved in a multitude of activities but for only one year here and two years there. Why? Because the chances are the student who has been committed to an activity for many years will be more likely to continue that activity in college and thereby enrich the college community.

Here are some questions asked by admission officers that you should be prepared to answer:

- What have you done in addition to your studies?
- At school: student government, athletics, publications, service organizations, other?
- In your community: church, social agencies, political or cultural affairs, other?
- How involved were you in these activities?
- What was your most significant accomplishment in high school?

Post Script

While it is important to being alert to what a college is looking for in you, it is just as important to have a clear idea of what you are looking for in a college. Some students find it helpful to make a checklist of things to look for and questions to ask. For example: what courses are offered in your particular field or fields of interest? How competitive is the academic environment? What are the residence halls like? What about social activities? Athletics? Academic and career counseling, health and other student services? And perhaps the most important question: what do current students have to say about their lives on campus and their college experience?

The bottom line: when what you expect of a college fits with what they expect of you, you've found the right place.



Rhodes At-A-Glance

The College

One of America's premier liberal arts and sciences colleges, Rhodes is located in Memphis, Tennessee, and is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church.

The Campus

Quietly nestled in an attractive residential neighborhood, the beautiful campus is composed of 100 wooded acres and 46 Gothic stone buildings. Thirteen Rhodes buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A new \$40-million library was completed and dedicated in 2005.

The Students

There are 1,700 students representing 43 states and six foreign countries. Seventy-seven percent of students live on campus.

The Academic Program

Rhodes offers 24 departmental majors plus seven interdisciplinary majors and 27 minors, as well as numerous options for independent study and study abroad.

The Faculty

Ninety-five percent of full-time faculty hold the Ph.D. or other terminal degree in their discipline.

Student/Faculty Ratio

Rhodes has a student/faculty ratio of 11:1.

Class Size

Rhodes has an average class size of 15 students.

Campus Life

More than 90 student clubs and organizations including campus publications, fine arts clubs, special interest groups, community service groups, and Greek organizations.

Athletics

NCAA Division III athletics offering 10 women's varsity sports, nine men's varsity sports, plus a large variety of club sports and intramurals.

Financial Aid

Rhodes offers one of the largest merit-based fellowship programs per capita in the nation. More than 75 percent of our students receive some form of financial aid—totaling more than \$20 million each year.

To learn more about Rhodes College visit:
www.rhodes.edu



The Right Fit

What Colleges Really Look for
in Applicants

Dave Wottle
Dean of Admissions
and Financial Aid



Rhodes College
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