HIGHLY SELECTIVE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

“How do I apply and get accepted to a competitive college or university?”
What is a Highly Selective School and What is a Holy Grail?

- Colleges and Universities considered “The Best” of what higher education has to offer
- A college or university that admits fewer than 50% of the applicants is “Selective”
- A college or university that admits fewer than 30% of the applicants is “Highly Selective”
- Colleges and Universities that are the focus of national and local attention are considered “Holy Grail”
WHAT SCHOOLS ARE CONSIDERED HOLY GRAIL?

- **Round One: The Ivy League**
  - Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Penn, Princeton, Yale

- **Round Two:**

- **Round Three:**
  - University of Illinois
What do these schools look for in their applicants?

- High School Courses
  - “Most Challenging” courses available (Multiple AP Classes - English, Math and Science are most common)

- Grades
  - Transcript should include multiple A’s which will result in a high GPA and class rank
WHAT DO THESE SCHOOLS LOOK FOR IN THEIR APPLICANTS?

- **Test Scores**
  - SAT and SAT Subject Tests *often required*
  - Each school has different requirements so it is very important to check **EACH** school’s admission requirements
  - High SAT and ACT scores are common
  - It is recommended **NOT** to send every score-Only forward your best
- **AP Scores**
What do these schools look for in their applicants?

- **Extra-Curricular Activities**
  - Leadership and depth of involvement
  - *Quality* of activities over quantity
  - Activities out of school are valuable

- **Essay**
  - Very important component of application
  - Looking for writing ability, creativity, values, critical thinking, knowledge
  - Make sure the essay *answers the question*
WHAT DO THESE SCHOOLS LOOK FOR IN THEIR APPLICANTS?

- **Recommendations**
  - Very important component of the application
  - Should explain your performance in class, intellectual ability, overall school performance

- **Geographic Distribution**
  - Holy Grail schools want the student body to represent the country and overseas so they will only select certain percentages from each state

- **Interest**
  - Holy Grail schools look at your interest: your attendance at informational sessions, visits to the campus, communication with a college representative, connect via social media
What can I do to help my admission?

- Understand your competition
- Do your homework
- Develop an alternative—“Do not put all your eggs in one basket.”
- Apply Early Decision?
Admissions Statistics

- 26,000 Public High Schools across the U.S.
- Each school has students in the top of their class
- This means over 260,000 “superstars” are all applying to the same schools
- The “best” student can become “typical” in the Holy Grail applicant pool
HOW WILL I AFFORD A HOLY GRAIL COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY?

- **CSS Profile** - Many colleges and universities require this financial aid form to assist in awarding private grants and scholarships. This form allows you to include “special circumstances” that can be factored in your financial aid decision
  - Complete the form on collegeboard.com
  - Begin completing after Oct. 1
  - Research the priority filing date for your colleges and universities
  - $25 initial fee and $16 fee for each additional college you send the profile (fee waivers available)
What about the FAFSA?

- While you may be required to complete the CSS Profile, you still need to complete the FAFSA to receive Federal Student Aid.

- **FAFSA - Free Application for Federal Student Aid**
  - Begin completing Oct. 1
What else do I need to know?

- Many Ivy League schools do not issue merit-based financial aid. All financial aid is need-based (Based on family income)
- Although price tags appears large, they usually have a higher income bracket to make more students eligible for financial aid
- Understand your options and commitment when applying Early Decision
- Questbridge
What Holy Grail schools do WBHS grads attend?

- Cornell University
- Georgetown University
- Northwestern University
- Princeton University
- Stanford University
- University of Chicago
- University of Illinois
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Pennsylvania
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

- 14,282 Undergraduates
- Students from over 50 states and 120 nations
- 30% of students with multicultural backgrounds
- Located in Ithaca, New York on 745 acres
- More than 60% of our students receive financial aid.
- Seven undergraduate colleges and schools; 4,000 courses; 100 academic departments; nearly 80 undergraduate majors.
- Has the second largest Greek fraternity and sorority system in North America
- More than 110 research centers, institutes, and laboratories
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

- 7,595 Undergraduates
- Located in Washington, DC
- Founded by John Carroll
- Strong concentration on Liberal Arts
- 76% live on campus
- Georgetown has a very nationally respected Law Program

Applications Received: 19,505
Accepted: 3,384
Percent Accepted: 17.35%
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

- 8,216 Undergraduates
- Functions on quarter system
- Guaranteed freshman housing
- Member of the Big Ten
- Prefer 4 years of each academic area for admission
- Campus located on Lake Michigan
- Notable programs: Medill School of Journalism and the School of Music, Theatre, and Communications programs
- Avg. class: 20 students, introductory classes may have 100 students and popular classes may have 500 students
- 1/3 of student body comes from IL

Applications Received: 33,674
Accepted: 4,416
Percent Accepted: 13.11%
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

- 5,391 Undergraduates
- Undergraduate student to faculty ratio: 6:1
- Students from more than 98 countries
- 98 percent of undergraduate students live on campus
- Average financial aid: $35,713
- American minorities make up approximately 37 percent of the undergraduate student body
- Located in Princeton, New Jersey
- 99% of students were in the top 10% of their high school class
- SAT score (25/75 percentile): 1400-1600
- ACT (25/75 percentile): 31-35

Applications Received: 26,641
Accepted: 1,983
Percent Accepted: 7.44%
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

- 7,032 Undergraduates
- Functions on the quarter system
- Liberal Arts concentration
- 95% of students live on campus
- Curriculum most important in admission decision
- 50% of the student body come from the top 2% of their graduating class
- 7:1 student/teacher ratio
- Campus is located near the Sierra Nevada Mountains and San Francisco

Applications Received: 42,167
Accepted: 2,145
Percent Accepted: 5.09%
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

- 5,703 undergraduate students
- Located in Hyde Park-Chicago
- Undergraduate college offers 58 majors and 28 minors
- Functions on the Quarter System
- More than 80 Nobel Prize awards were given to individuals associated with the University
- President Obama is still considered a member of the faculty
- 44 Rhodes Scholars
- 80% of classes have 25 or less students
- 50% of students have scored between 30-34 on ACT Exam
- Awarded $75 million in financial aid and scholarships

Applications Received: 30,188
Accepted: 2,521
Percent Accepted: 8.82%
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

- 33,624 Undergraduates
- Functions on the semester system
- 66% of freshmen level classes have 25 students or less
- Located in central IL-approximately 2.5 hours from WB
- 60% of freshmen ranked in the top 10% of their graduating class
- Member of the Big Ten
- Two-300 count essays required for admission
- ACT scores differ depending on college

Applications Received: 34,277
Accepted: 22,471
Percent Accepted: 65.56%
University of Notre Dame

- 8,462 Undergraduates
- Catholic School (83% Catholic)
- Prefer 4 years of each academic area for admission
- Freshmen required to take seminar writing-intensive class
- 85% live on campus, no Greek system
- Large focus on Athletics
- Located in South Bend, IN, approximately 2 hours from WB
- President Obama spoke at 2009 Commencement

Applications Received: 19,502
Accepted: 3,652
Percent Accepted: 18.73%
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

- 11,548 Undergraduates
- Located in Philadelphia, PA
- Founded by Ben Franklin
- Strong concentration on Liberal Arts
- 59% live on campus
- Admitted students tend to be in top 5% of graduating class
- Notable programs: Wharton School of Business
- Students heavily involved in politics and large focus on athletics

Applications Received: 35,866
Accepted: 3,718
Percent Accepted: 10.37%