



THE COLLEGE
WOMAN'S CLUB
OF WESTFIELD



College Admissions in the COVID Landscape
What Do Colleges Want?

September 24th, 2020



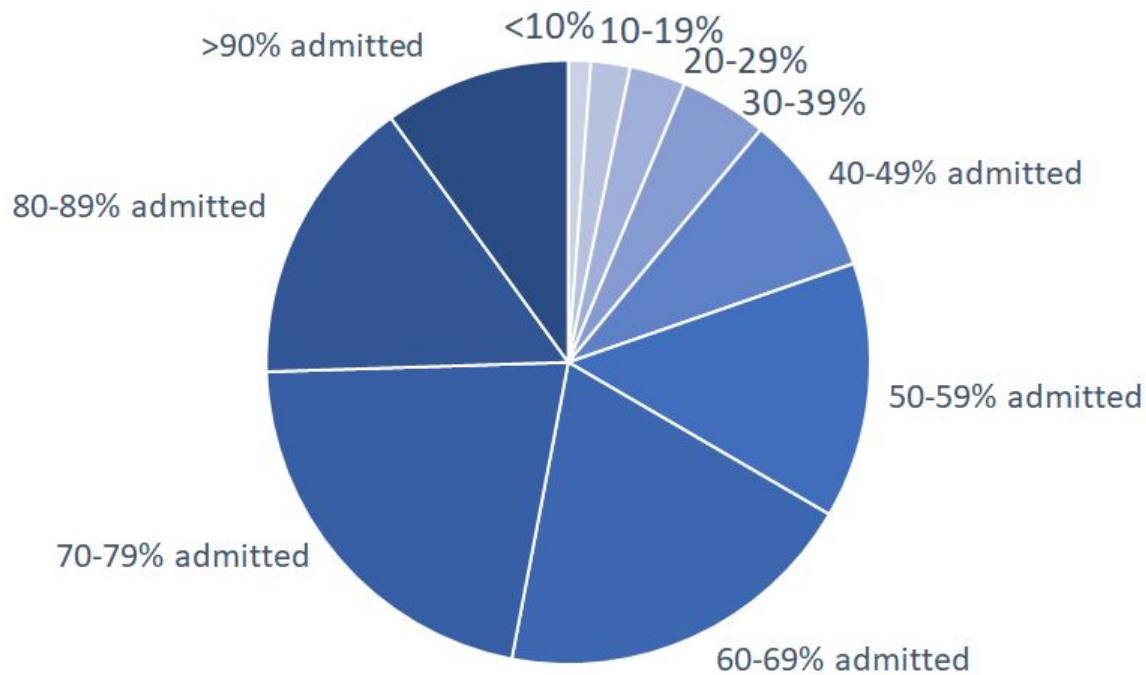
Introductions

Speakers tonight:

- **Anne Wargo**, President, College Woman's Club of Westfield
- **Susana MacLean**, President, MacLean College Counseling
- **Tim Lear**, Dean of College Admissions, Pingry School



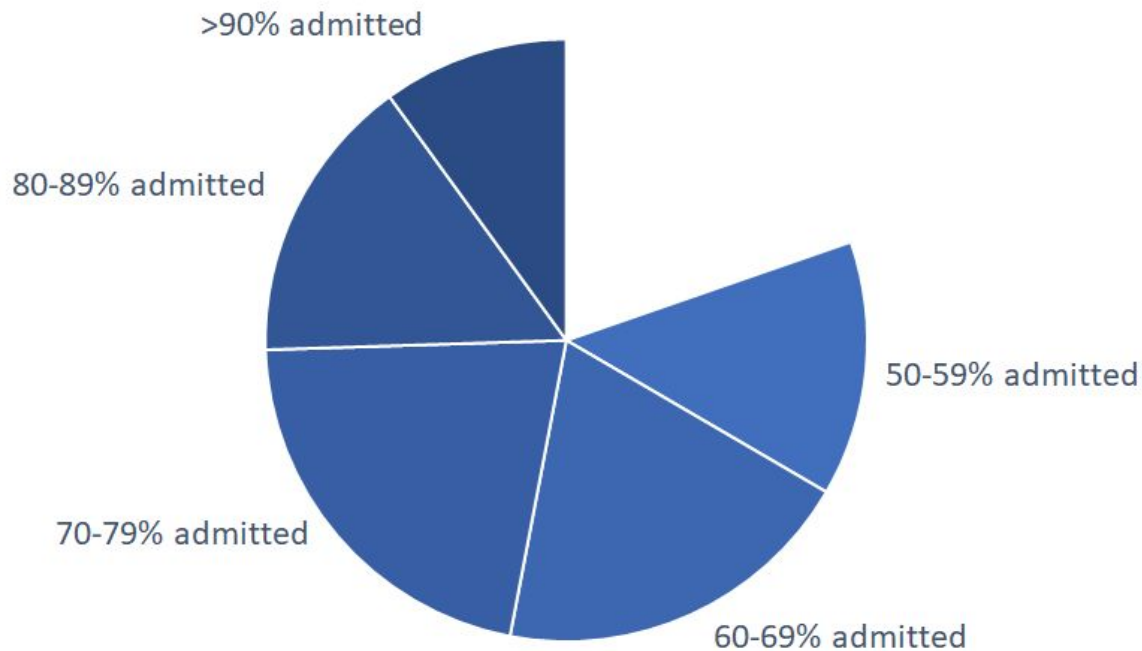
Most Colleges Accept Most of Their Applicants



Pew Research analysis, 2017 data



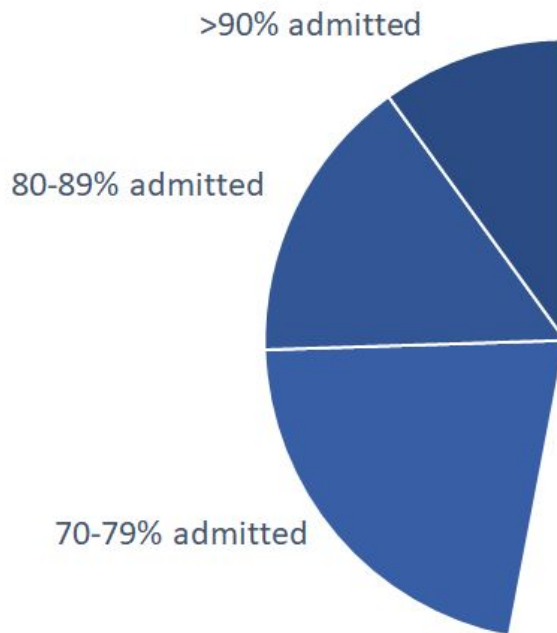
Most Colleges Accept Most of Their Applicants



Pew Research analysis, 2017 data



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Agenda

- What do colleges want?
- How can students prepare for college admission?
- How are things different during COVID?

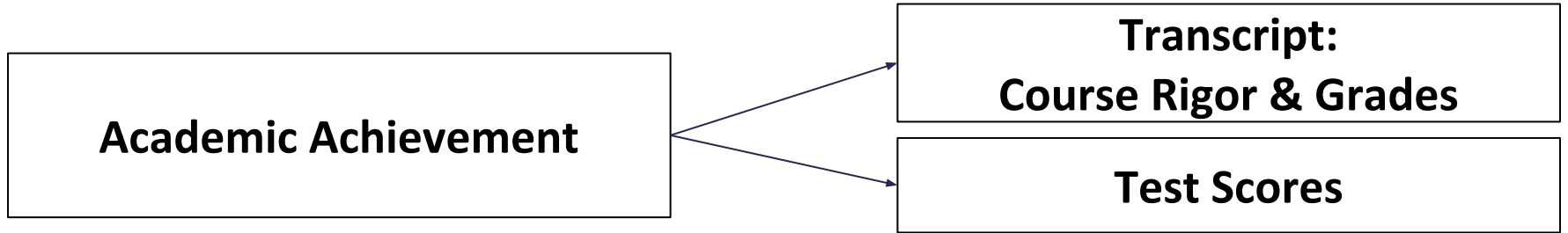
What Do Colleges Want?

Colleges want to build a community, a well-rounded group of individuals.
There is no single, right, type of applicant.





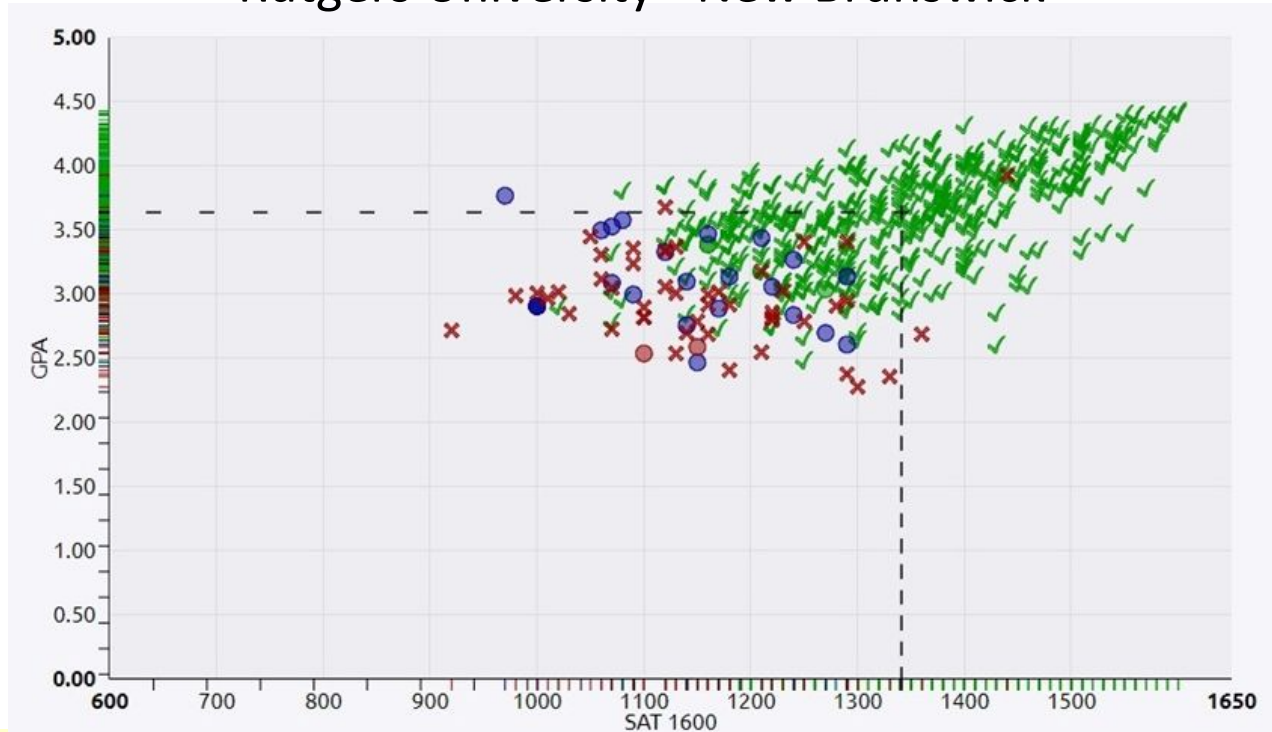
Pre-COVID: What Did Colleges Want to Know About Students?



Pre-COVID: Academic Achievement



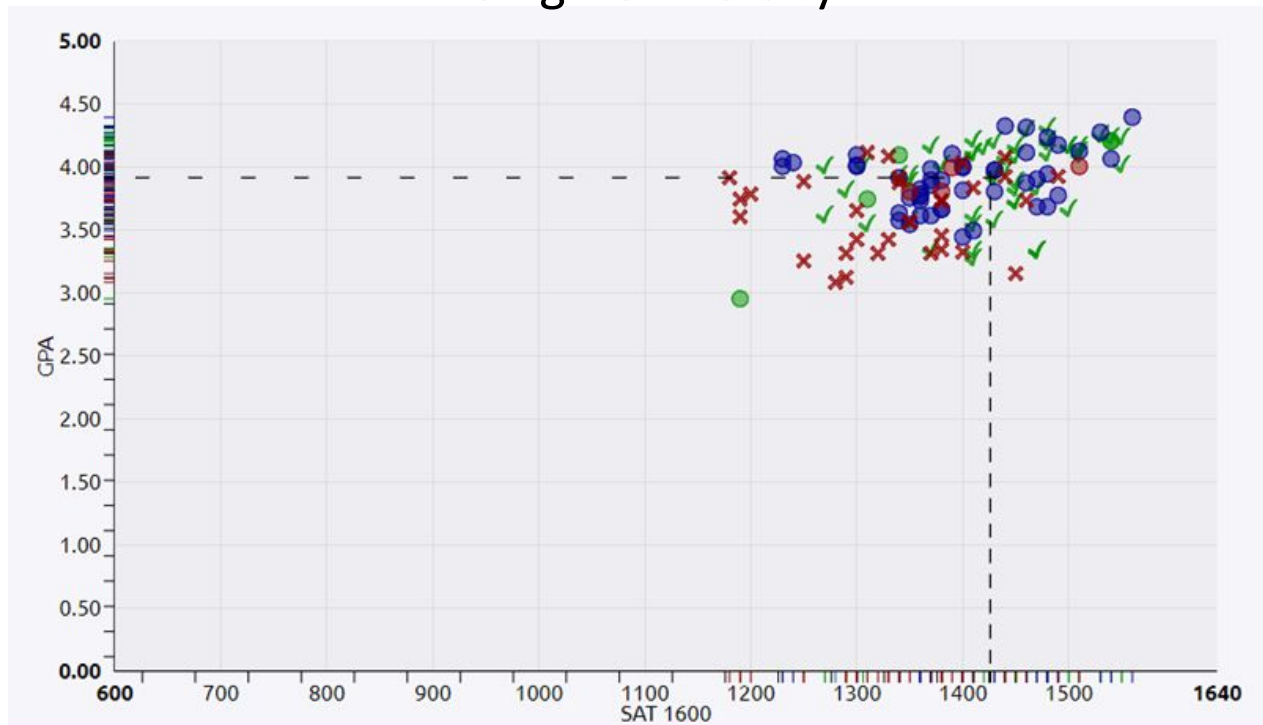
Rutgers University - New Brunswick



But Academics Don't Always Tell the Whole Story

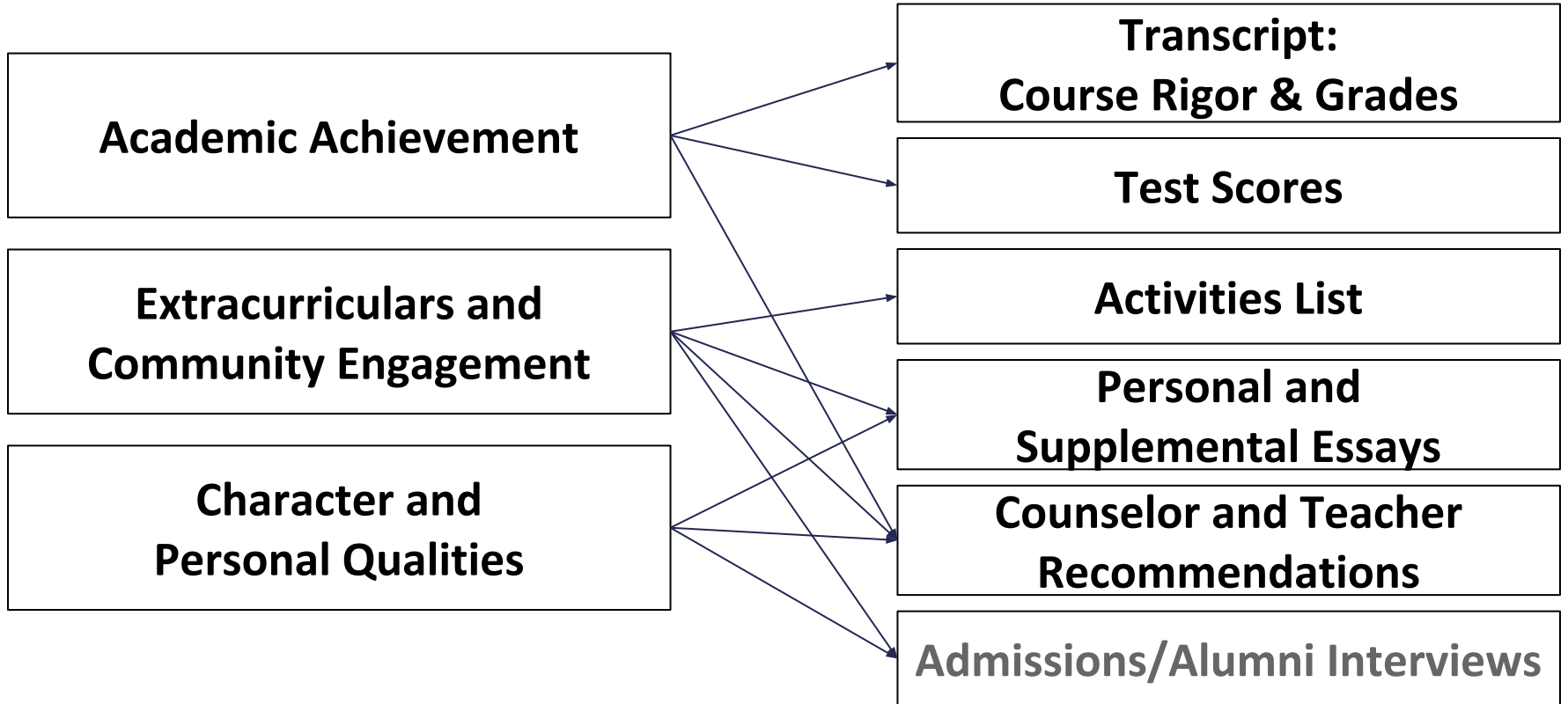


Lehigh University





Pre-COVID: What Did Colleges Want to Know About Students?





Extracurricular and Community Engagement

- School clubs
- Athletics
- Community service
- Paid work
- Special talents in the Arts or STEM
- Summer activities and programs
- Internships
- Job shadowing
- Family responsibilities
- Hobby or interest
- Self-directed learning
- Research



Character and Personal Qualities

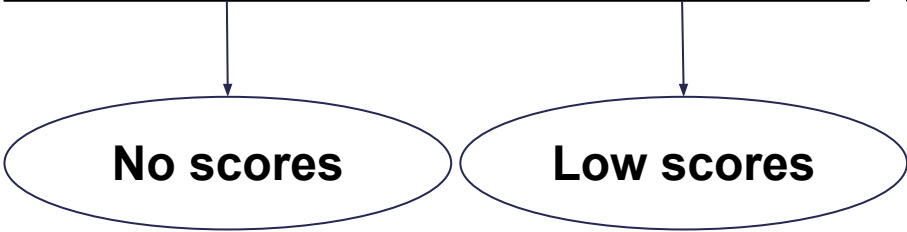
- Intellectual curiosity
- Passion
- Initiative
- Responsibility
- Leadership
- Maturity
- Individuality
- Resilience
- Kindness
- Likeability



How Did COVID Change Things?

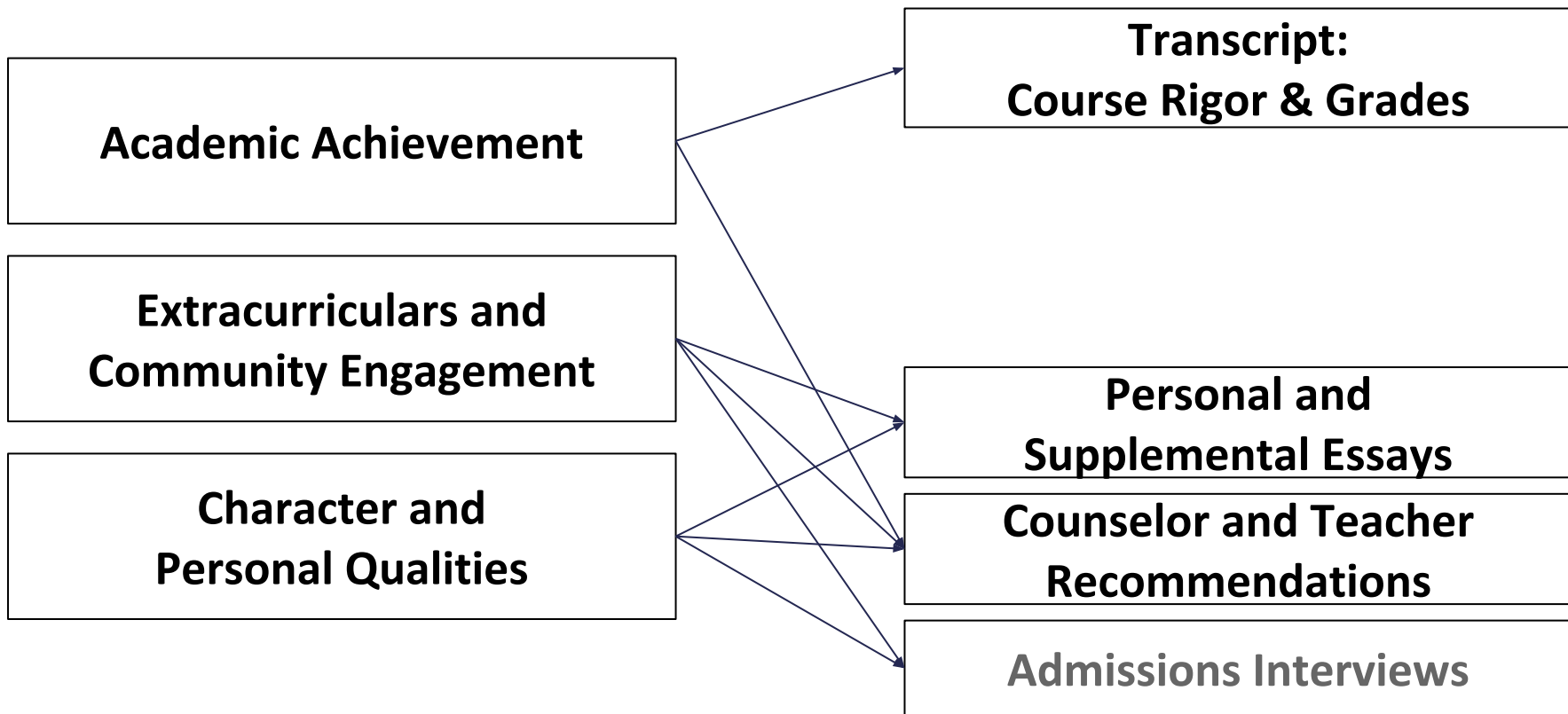
Standardized test cancellations

Cancelled extra-curricular activities





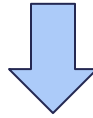
During-COVID: What Do Students Have to Show Colleges?





During COVID: Standardized Testing Requirements Are Changing

- Many colleges and universities, including the most selective, are **test-optional** this admissions cycle.
- The University of California and California State systems are **test-blind** as of a recent court order.



- If you have scores, only submit them to a college if they strengthen your application, preferably at or above the median of admitted students.
- If you have no scores, only consider testing **if** you consider the conditions safe, and you believe you will score well.
- Otherwise, apply test-optional.

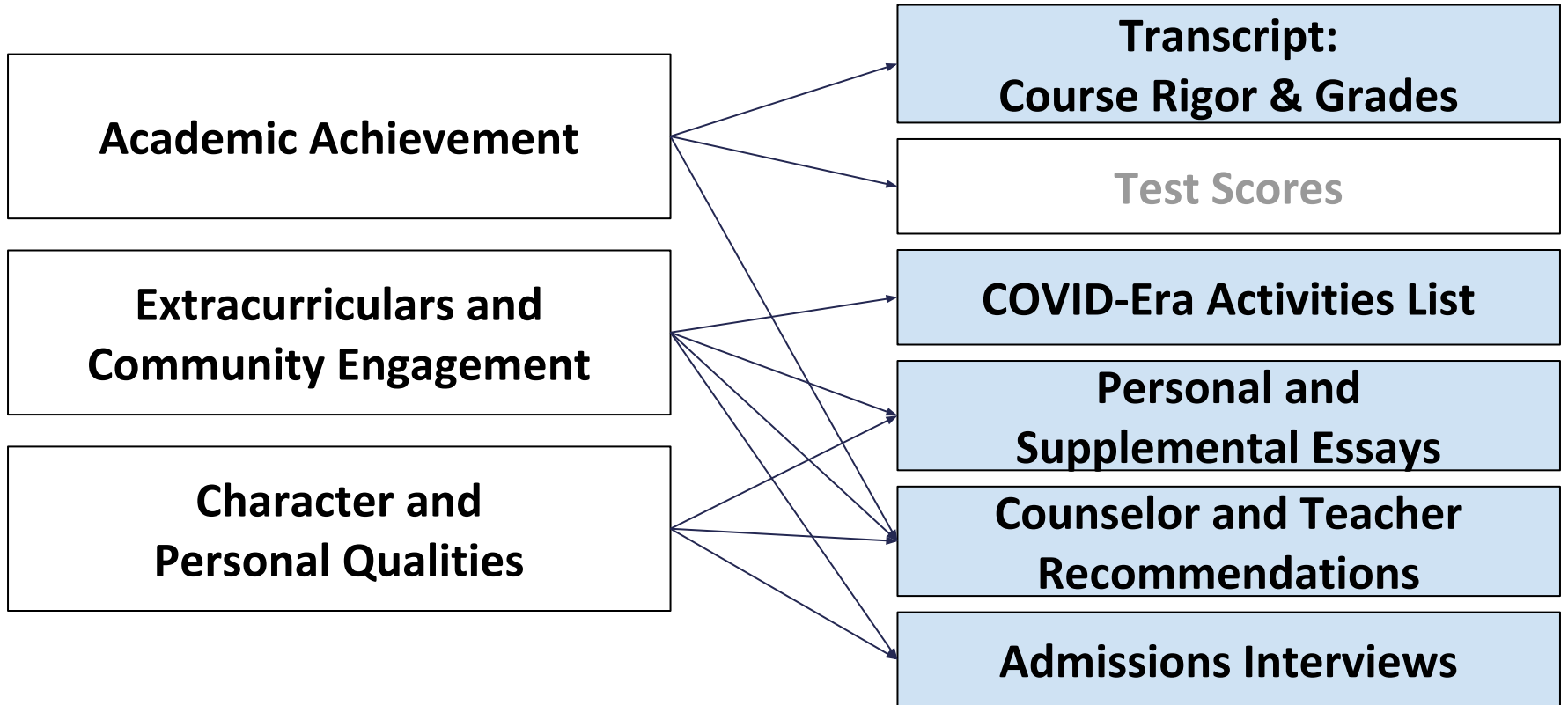


During COVID: Change Your Approach to Activities

- Modify current activities
 - Shift to online
 - Work on your own
 - Work with others while socially distanced
- Try something new
 - Musical instrument
 - Foreign language
 - Programming language
 - Blog Writing
 - Engineering or craft project
 - Art or photography
 - Reading challenge



During COVID: Other Parts of Student Applications Matter More





During COVID: Getting to Know Colleges Is Different

- In-person admissions visits and events are cancelled.
- Recorded and virtual, live campus tours, events, information sessions, video and text chats with current students are now offered.
- Admissions reps want to meet students virtually and answer questions.
- Mid-sized and smaller college reps are eager to interview applicants.
- High school students should use their networks to contact current college students for information.
- Families should assess how a college treated students during the pandemic and take that into account in selecting schools.



So How Can Students Prepare for College Admission?

Don't

- Contort yourself into what you think colleges want.
- Take a course load so heavy that you are always stressed and unhappy.
- Participate in many extracurricular activities, briefly and superficially, just to pad your resume or,
- Give up on activities during COVID.
- Focus single-mindedly on leadership titles.
- Take on or continue activities that don't interest you.



So How Can Students Prepare for College Admission?

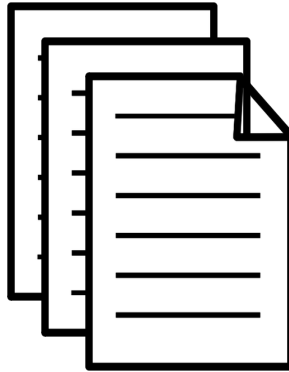
Do

- Take the most challenging classes where you think you can earn an A, and are certain you can earn a B+.
- Contribute to classroom discussions thoughtfully.
- Explore different activities to find what you enjoy.
- Deepen your involvement in your favorite interests through volunteering, work, and self-directed learning.
- Exhibit leadership by taking initiative, solving problems, helping others, starting something new.
- Be a positive presence in your school and community.



It Will All Come Through in Your Application

- An academic record that demonstrates your strengths and interests.
- Interesting, thoughtful essays that reveal your personality.
- An activities list that reflects your passions and priorities.
- Counselor and teacher recommendations that describe you as a contributor in the classroom, school, and community.





Questions

Moderator

- **Anne Wargo**, President, College Woman's Club of Westfield

Panelists

- **Tim Lear**, Dean of College Admissions, Pingry School
- **Susana MacLean**, MacLean College Counseling



Contact Us

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To join the **College Woman's Club of Westfield**, go to:

<https://cwclubwestfield.org/join/#myaccount>