**Tips for Students When Writing College Essays and Winning Applications**

* Start with a Blank Piece of Paper
* Students should write down everything you want an Admissions Officer to know about you!
* Have your parent do the same thing
* This is not about the “stuff” you’ve done; this is about WHO you are and the lessons you have learned along the way. Students should consider their key personality traits and “signature” characteristics
* Compare student list with parent list and narrow it down to one list.
* Students should identify four to five definitive traits about themselves to share throughout each piece of their application
* The overall goal is for the application to Read Like a Book.
* Come up with 3-5 definitive traits and have this throughout the application and essay
* Be who you are and reveal who you are with some substance

Personal Narrative-Essays

* Non Fiction narrative writing that tells a true story about an event or series of events. The writer should use “I”
* The focus is on you
* “You” questions: Provide personal anecdotes and lessons learned
* “Creative” Questions: Reflect your values, personality, and possibly ambitions. Select 3 items in your bedroom of significant importance to you.
* “Why Us” Questions- Be specific. Do your research. Convey passion for the school.
* Intro- It’s the way you lead the reader into the piece. Images, examples, context
* Through- Take the reader through your story. Use the first person. Use great summarizing and powerful images at the same time.
* Beyond- connect to who you are now and who you want to be. Describe impact on you.

Activities Resume:

* Whatever the college asks is what you do. Put activities in order of importance to “you”. This is what looks best. Whatever is the passion of the student.
* Prioritize. Attach meaning if space allows. Supplemental resume- common app allows one document upload. Use it to articulate what you have done.

Community Service:

* What do you like to do? Do community service in that area. Why are you doing community service? If it is just to look good on application, then don’t do it. It should only be done if it is something you whole heartedly believe in and will continue to do this on the college campus.
* Service trips are fine, but what did you learn from that? How did the experience change you?
* There is no point in doing community service to just check a box? What gift do you want to give to others?

Before you hit Submit:

* Do you make sense on paper?
* Do all of your supporting documents add something new?
* Did you attach a resume detailing your activities, leadership, etc.?
* Did you write with passion?
* Did you individualize every application? (You want them to consider yours independently of others!)
* Do your essays reveal details about you?