

Junior Night -College Panel

Agenda with notes 3/1/18

College representatives in attendance: CPCC, ECU, Gardner-Webb & USC

Evaluation of applicants

- Course selection/grades
 - How important is the rigor of courses in a student's schedule? How does your school view dual enrollment compared to AP courses in your admissions decision?
While you don't have to take every AP class available to you, we look for students that challenge themselves within available courses at their school. Student success in an achievable course load is preferred to lower performance in more advanced courses.
 - Do you recalculate GPA or take GPA directly off transcript?
SC: We recalculate GPA. If you are taking honors, AP, IB, dual enrollment classes, your GPA may go up. Students taking standard level courses may see their GPA go down.
GW: We accept weighted GPA off of the transcript.
ECU: We accept unweighted GPA off of the transcript.
- Test scores
 - How important are the ACT and SAT?
ECU: Students must take one or the other. The highest math and the highest verbal are taken to create the highest possible composite.
GW: The tests are not required but are considered if the test has been taken.
SC: We will superscore your SAT, but we will not superscore your ACT. Academics are considered first, then other holistic factors. Many scholarships are based on test scores. Confirm that test scores are sent to the correct university, as some confuse schools with similar names and have scores sent to the wrong institution.
 - Do you encourage students to take SAT subject tests?
No, no schools present encourage these tests.
- Holistic Review
 - In what ways do extracurricular activities and volunteer work help a student's application?
ECU: For us, these come into play when perhaps test scores or GPA are not the student's strength. We are not looking for many activities, but longevity and dedication to a few key activities.

SC: The application captures this information, so be sure to brag. Consistent membership is the key, as is leadership within the club.

CP: These are not considered for admission, but they are considered when reviewing eligibility for scholarship.

- What makes an essay really stand out for an admissions officer?

SC: Steer clear of generic statements, such as “wanting to be a Gamecock”. The better the grammar, the higher likelihood of having your essay considered. Be yourself.

ECU: We do not require an essay. If you opt to complete one, be sure to proofread. And we can tell when your mom writes the essay.

GW: We have a scholarship program that has an essay. Be aware that the school monitors for identical essays.

- Who should write students’ letter(s) of recommendation?

ECU: Teachers and counselors with whom you have a relationship.

SC: We do not accept these unless applying to the Honors College. Teachers and community members that know you are recommended. Avoid relatives. We have a guidance counselor form that, while not required, is highly recommended.

College application

- What are the benefits and differences between the types of applications?

ECU: Rolling admissions at ECU. Honors college applications are submitted earlier than the rest. Scholarship deadline is in January and must be admitted prior to applying for the scholarship. Application deadline has been extended to March 31st this year, typically March 1 is the deadline.

GW: Rolling admissions and is kept open until August of the upcoming school year.

SC: NOT rolling admissions. Decisions are not binding. Early decisions may be reconsidered up until May 1.

CPCC: Applications are always received – there is no cutoff. For admittance in a particular program, there may be prerequisite courses.

**It is recommended that families review college/university websites for full details associated with the application process.*

- What does it mean to be waitlisted or deferred?

Sometimes a letter is received by a student that they have been waitlisted or deferred.

ECU: the application falls just outside of the class that we are trying to create. Should space open up, your application may be reconsidered. At times, it means that the admissions office is unsure and students are encouraged to reach out to the admissions office to reassert their interest in the program.

SC: Deferred indicates continued evaluation. Waitlisted indicates that space is no longer available but admission could be offered if space opens up.

- How does being out-of-state or in-state affect the chances of an applicant?
SC: As a “state flagship”, the main priority is to provide access to in-state students. Programs exist to facilitate additional space for out of state students.
- Is there a separate application for applying to the honors college/program?
ECU: Yes. Once you are selected to apply for Honors college, specific test scores/GPA are required to be considered for honors college. The application consists of essays and recommendations. Special scholarships and other features are available.
SC: There is an additional application, including essays and recommendations. Enrolled students can create their own major. Additional money is available for undergraduate research and study abroad.
GW: Yes. There are minimum SAT/ACT scores. Essays are included and may include diverse topics to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their personality and creativity.

Financial Aid

- Should students apply for financial aid even if they don’t think they’ll qualify for aid?
Yes, across the board.
- What kinds of merit or need-based scholarship opportunities are offered?
ECU: Once admitted, there is an “awards portal”. You complete one application and the school matches you up with scholarships for which you may be eligible.
GW: Once admitted, students are provided with a scholarship, from \$5k to \$17k. One “full ride” and four full tuition scholarships are also provided each year.
SC: Test scores and high GPA are the most important factors in earning scholarship money. There is no additional application for most scholarships. If you meet the qualifications, you will receive the scholarship. Need-based scholarships are awarded according to your FASFA.
CPCC: \$1500 per semester for a full time student. Scholarships are awarded through the Financial Aid office, whose web site can be found with a simple web search. Many students do not take advantage of this opportunity, paying through Pell Grants or out of pocket.
MICS offers a financial aid presentation each fall for seniors and the presentation is posted on the MICS website.

Post-secondary success/miscellaneous

- What academic support is available to students who may struggle in their classes?
CPCC: The academic learning center is available on all campuses and supports the core curriculum. Many students do not take advantage of this opportunity.
ECU: Small group and large group tutoring is available at no cost. Individual tutoring is available at a cost. The Tutoring Center is available and professors are able to view student participation in the service.

GW: A free Tutoring Center is available. Classes have a 13:1 student to teacher ratio, which allows students greater individualized help directly from the instructor.

SC: We identify typical classes in which freshmen struggle and add TAs to those classes to provide small group study sessions as an extra support. We also have tutoring centers and writing centers.

- What programs/supports do you offer for students with disabilities?

GW: We have the NOEL program, as well as an ASL major, which results in a relatively higher enrollment of individuals with hearing impairment.

SC, ECU and CPCC: We offer student support services for students with disabilities. You should seek them out and self identify in advance of the semester, as they are not aware that you may have unique needs.

- What is one of the top reasons that freshmen are not successful in their first year of college?

CPCC: Being the “social butterfly” tends to be a challenge. Choosing to study instead of party is a feature of a successful freshman year.

ECU: Time management, due to the relatively low amount of time in the classroom and the requirement for extensive study time outside of the classroom. The general rule is that for every hour of class time, you will need to spend two hours studying outside of class.

GW: Social dynamics associated with leaving home and acting out of the norm.

SC: Needing help and not admitting it. Instead, admit it and go to the tutoring center. High school is a little bit easier than college, so be honest with yourself and get help proactively before you are failing classes.

- Why is visiting the college campus so important?

ECU: There is only so much you can see on a website. You will be there for four years and need to have a sense for what it will be like living on that campus.

GW: It’s all about “can you picture yourself there”. Be sure to eat in the cafeteria – if you don’t like it the first time, you may not like it for another four years.

SC and CPCC: When you go on a tour, after the “official” tour, talk with a student. Your tour is going to be fabulous, so seek out an authentic perspective from someone that is NOT the tour guide.

Questions from audience

What advice do you give when a student doesn’t know what to do with their future?

SC: One of the top five major choices is always “undecided”. Many schools have programs designed to assist students in this situation.

ECU: The average college student changes their major three times, and it is feasible for a student to establish a major as late as the end of the sophomore year.

GW: Take a variety of courses and play to your strengths.

When is it a good time to visit?

ECU: We are open for visits year-round, but we recommend when classes are in session.

GW: Monday- Friday and set Saturdays in the fall.