



**College Admission Evening
with Sharon Lack
(Sharon Lack Associates – www.sharonlack.com)
Coordinated for Charles Armstrong School Alumni
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Sharon Lack (SL) Overview: How do schools actually assess applications?

- Reviewer will look at where applicant went to school.
- Reviewer may know school. Otherwise s/he will look at school profile to see what the school offers.
- Reviewer will look at applicants' transcript.
 - Look at rigor. To what extent have you taken advantage of what is offered?
 - Look at GPA.

Armstrong Question: What if you are dyslexic? You “know” grades will be lower if you take the AP classes.

- Take the AP classes in the subjects you really enjoy.
- And...in the special information box/additional information section (in 150 words) say I really wanted to take this harder class because I love the subject or I love this teacher. I know I could have taken an easier class and gotten a better grade, but I didn't want to.
 - Also say: here is how I learn best.
 - Armstrong kids should say they went to a school for students with learning differences (and that they then applied to and succeeded at this rigorous high school).

SL Overview: How do you prepare for college admission in the choices you make during high school?

- Look at how many “buckets of interest” you have and how deep they are.

- Seniors who start new activities in the fall of senior of year doesn't make any sense. It won't help and don't forget, that applying for college is an AP class you didn't sign up for so you are going to be crazy busy.
- Be who you want to be. Don't try to fit the college. Find the college that fits you.

SL Overview: ACT vs. SAT

- Start early on the process of requesting extra time. Note: you have to use the extra time accommodation in the classroom to get it for the standardized tests.
- ACT is harder to get accommodations, but try for both.
- Really look carefully at the last page of your application for accommodations. Make sure it is compelling.
- If you are declined, appeal. Ask again.
- Do everything in advance.
- If you get accommodations from the College Board it goes to everything they administer including the Advanced Placement tests.
- Everything goes through the resource person at your high school. Make friends with this person.

SL Overview: Test Prep

- Junior year: get a little bit of test prep/tutoring for October PSAT. Then put tutoring aside and focus on classwork until January. Then gear up with more tutoring before March SAT and April ACT.
- You can't do everything. Better to focus on grades than an increasing test scores just a bit.
- FAIRTEST.org – over 850 colleges and university that do not require test scores for undergraduate admissions.
- Some schools who don't use testing might even read the essay first.

Armstrong Question: Who does good test prep for kids with learning issues?

- AJ Tutor locally is really strong and has a range of tutors. Tell them what you need. Private probably better than group.

Armstrong Question: How many schools should we apply to?

- Do your homework in advance. Apply to schools that you want to attend not schools you think you should apply to.
 - 2 reach schools/quality over quantity
 - 2 possible
 - 2 safety
 - And UC
- Do less reach schools, but go to visit the reach ones you really want to and meet a professor. Take initiative to talk to them. Hopefully they will add a note to your file.

Armstrong Question: What about a GAP year?

- EXCELLENT idea. For any kid. Will not hurt. Consider a Gap Year in 3 ACTS.
 - Take a college level course. Get a good grade.
 - Then explore something you'd like, a passion.
 - And, get some work experience.
- Easier to do the application as a high school senior and defer. But, of course, sometimes interests will change during the gap year.

Armstrong Question: What is most important thing for an LD student?

- Finding a school with your “peeps”.
- What do I need to be happy for four years?

SL Overview: What should Juniors be doing now?

- List your possible schools.
 - Consider in your academic preferences (art history).
 - Consider your personal preferences (you like to ride horses).
 - If you don't see enough of your preferences on the list then grow the list.
- If you want to demonstrate interest, you have to reply to the emails. *Parents: these are emails that are coming to the students. Tell your students to check their emails and reply.*
- To demonstrate interest, go to the information sessions.
- Do as much as possible over the summer.
 - You can do your personal statement.
 - You can get organized.
 - Essays are out before The Common App.

SL Overview: An Interview

- Usually great for LD students.
- Alumni interviews don't count for much, but still do them. Maybe you'll find an advocate.
- On campus interviews are better.
- Ask for an interview.
- It is hard, they think they are walking into a room and being judged. And they probably are. We as parents have to give them the confidence to know who they are and what they want.

Armstrong Question: If you are going to hire an outside counselor, when do you recommend that we do that?

- A check-in mid-way through sophomore year, because there is time to tweak.
- You can even tweak during junior year.
 - If you get excited about something.
 - You can use time differently.

Armstrong Question: What's hardest part?

- Time goes fast.
- Staying on top of it.

Armstrong Question: What about legacies?

- Parents as alums you can ask "What does Legacy mean here today?"
- You can tell if it is important to a school if they ask on the application.

Resources Sharon Likes:

- Colleges that Change Lives
- The Insiders' Guide to College
- The College Finder
- College Admission: From Application to Acceptance, Step by Step by Robin Mamlet and Christine VanDeVelde
- Julie Lythcott-Haims
- Denise Clark Pope
- Global On-Line Learning Academy. Great resource because you can go at your pace.
- The Human Side of Dyslexic. 142 interviews with real people.
- Major Decisions by Wintergreen Press.

SL Nuggets:

- All schools have to have support services. Of course, the questions are: how good are they and what do you need?
- Proof your transcript. There can be errors.
- Have a few choices that don't require testing. And choose a few schools that don't require a supplemental essay.
- Around May 4th all college counselors get a list of the schools that are still filling their freshman class.
- There are about 140 Boarding schools with 5th year programs. There is website that helps you choose and this can be a good way to transition.