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Students from Korea are traveling to the US in greater numbers every year. College and University options in America are varied and numerous and these US schools are looking for increasing numbers of international students. Additionally, American colleges and universities are becoming more selective as the applicant numbers grow and the competition for space in the entering class is more difficult to predict. The challenge for these prospective students is to both gather helpful and correct information regarding entrance requirements to these schools, and understand more fully how to make their application stand apart from applicants with equal academic qualifications. As more students submit perfect GPAs and test scores, to succeed, a student will need to spend more time on demonstrating their goals and accomplishments through essays and extracurricular activities. How should the student deal effectively with this dynamic?

Much information is available on college websites and in guidebooks that try to answer the questions that a student may have. Secondary school counselors provide helpful and timely advice. Their offices usually have available books and periodicals which have much data and information about both the colleges and the search process; and the counselors' own experience with previous students allows them to provide thoughtful guidance based on historical data. Beyond these resources, there are independent counseling services, provided by individuals who can augment the flow of information and allow additional one on one counseling opportunities. The best of these services are provided by those who have admissions committee experience, evaluating and presenting applications for admissions. These experts can enrich the process and help to demystify the many aspects that students and parents should know. The use of these resources should lead to a more successful college admissions result.

All research on this subject in my experience of over 40 years in US admissions has shown that the more time the student invests in the college preparation process the more likely the result will be favorable. Students should begin as early as their sophomore year in secondary school to investigate the information they will need. Students should develop a personal inventory of their goals and desires for their college experience. What fields of study they may pursue; which locations seem most interesting; what student body size best fits them. They should also visit schools if possible, investigate websites, gather literature, and talk to other students about their views.

Entering their junior year, a student should focus on continuing their high school studies in a challenging curriculum. Admissions officers consider students' coursework within the context of what is available to a student at their school. So it is not necessary to pursue AP classes or college classes outside of the classroom unless a student has a genuine passion for the subject. Additionally, students should ensure that their out of school activities are as varied and as challenging possible. Summertime should be used to find personal growth opportunities as these experiences can help a student develop their personal qualities and skills. For example, one could enroll in a leadership program, study at an international university, or engage in a meaningful job or community service. The junior year should also allow for developing the list of target schools to be explored. Standardized testing should be undertaken at this point as well. Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) preparation tutoring could be utilized to allow for a student to

maximize their test performance. If possible, the summer can be used for campus visits in the US.

Applications to colleges and universities in the USA are made during the fall of senior year. Depending on the type of application program, colleges announce admissions decisions in mid-December or early spring of senior year and by May 1 most applicants must accept the college of their choice and will know where they will be spending their undergraduate years.

The entire admissions process is a matching one: students finding the best fit for themselves and colleges enrolling students who should flourish in their particular environment. While the college search experience will be a family one, the final decision should be primarily the student's preference. After all, he or she will be the person experiencing the exciting and rewarding days of college. Meeting and studying with students from varied walks of life and backgrounds will be satisfying in many ways. Students will meet other students who will become their friends for life. Faculty will become academic and personal mentors who should help stimulate students' intellectual growth. Hopefully this entire experience will be a positive one leading to a rewarding career and successful future.

It is important to approach the college and university search with enthusiasm and a positive attitude. There is a school for every student. Diligent research and effort will assure a successful outcome.