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**“Distinguishable writings for admissions office to remember out of crowd, Low scores of SAT & academic achievements, but other advantages make admissions possible”**

**Former Dean of Admissions at an American university, Mr. Lee Stetson.**

There are so many questions for the students preparing for study abroad as well as their parents. The curiosity over admissions office grows stronger as they are concerned which kind of application form has been regarded highly and how the admissions are determined.

We asked Lee Stetson, 30 years of former dean of admissions at University of Pennsylvania, and a current vice-president of Global Education consulting company, GEO (picture).

**Q. How is an application evaluated?**

**A.** Admissions officers will review and compile notes on each part of the application – coursework, extracurricular activities, guidance counselor report, teacher recommendations, and essays – and make a preliminary recommendation – admit, unclear, or deny. This process can take anywhere from 20 to 40 minutes depending on the contents of the application. Once all applications files are read, they are presented to a committee including a senior decision maker and representatives of the programs that a student is applying to. A final decision will be made in this setting.

**Q. Can students with low scores in SAT and academic achievements get into Ivy League schools? Why does a student with a perfect SAT score get declined from an admission?**

**A.** Without reviewing an application in its entirety, it is impossible to determine which factor did or did not contribute to the student’s lack of success in the application process. Many students make the mistake of focusing on just one element of their application, usually academics. While academic achievement is certainly an important factor during the evaluation process, schools are also looking for students to demonstrate impact and accomplishments beyond the classroom. They want to know about more than just the

statistics. Thus, it is possible that this student did not successfully demonstrate their unique interests and how they would bring diversity to the university. As more students apply, and present excellent GPAs and testing, it will become even more important for a student to devote equal time and attention to each section of the application.

**Q. Which part of the application is regarded as most important?**

There is no single most important part of an application. In fact, the biggest disservice a student can do for themselves is focus exclusively on one area. Admissions officers consider each part of an application completely, thoroughly evaluating the statistics, guidance counselor and teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities and essays. A student who has strong numbers could be denied because they have mediocre essays and recommendations, and a student who has excellent recommendations and essays could be denied because their academics are not strong enough. A student needs to keep in mind that an admissions officer reviews several hundred applications and needs a compelling story that distinguishes an applicant to remember them out of the crowd.

**Q. Tell us about the interview process.**

Colleges and universities *may* encourage a personal interview. These interviews may be conducted by a college admissions officer or an alumnus representative of the school. They are usually provided as an opportunity for information exchange and should not be seen as purely evaluative. In preparation, a student should treat this experience as a conversation and the setting should be relatively relaxed.

Be able to talk about your genuine interests and why that school would be a great fit for you. It is always a good idea to acknowledge the interview after it is completed with an email or a hand-written thank you note.

Sample questions that *could* be asked during an interview:

Why are you looking for a college or university?

What do you expect to get out of your educational experience?

What are your potential academic interests?

Have you been thinking of different universities and colleges?

If admitted to those different universities, what will you choose to study and how would they each meet your academic and personal needs?

Tell me more about how you determine on how each college or university is of interest to you? Why do you specifically want to attend [insert school]?

**\* The explanations above have been clearly and carefully translated according to Korean implication in the article published. If there were any particular areas in the article translated different to the original copy, it would merely be the order of the structure that some of the sentences were translated in order to fit the limited number of words in the article, for example, “the biggest disservice students can do for themselves is focus exclusively on one area,” Mr. Lee Stetson had replied would be translated in Korean as, “Essay focused exclusively on one area won’t benefit a good evaluation.”**