

Mercy High School



Class of 2026
Junior College Kick-Off

Mercy Counseling Staff and Roster

Mrs. Holly Bennetts, Class of 2026, A-C

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Agenda

- State of College Admissions
- How Colleges Make Decisions
- Deciding where to apply/enroll
- The Mercy Process
- Resources
- Questions


Mercy Philosophy

Our Belief...

The college adventure should be an exciting time for every family

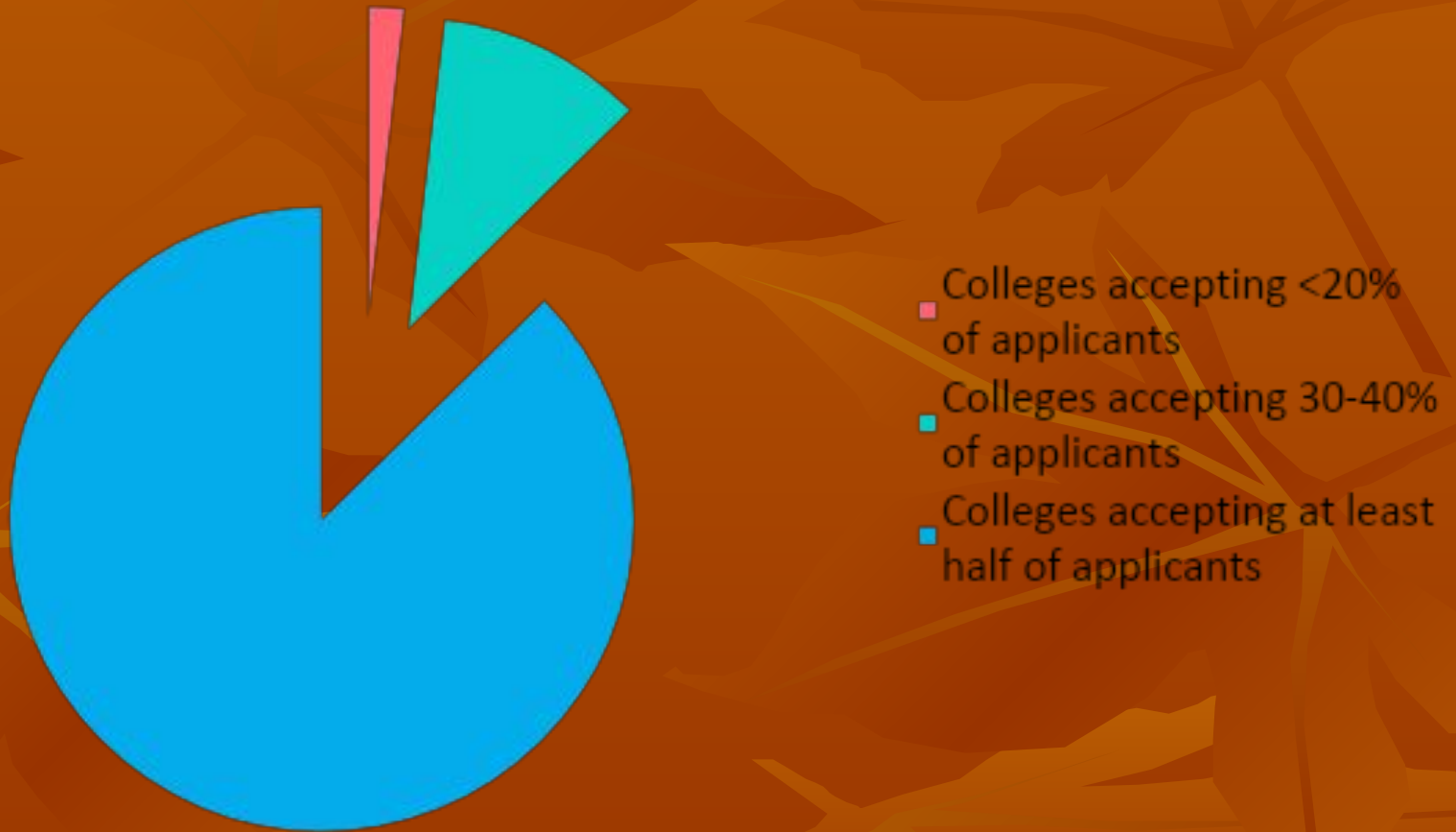
Our Approach...

Finding right fit and encouraging student ownership of the college search and application process

The background of the slide is a solid orange-brown color, overlaid with a pattern of stylized, darker orange-brown leaves. The leaves are of various shapes and sizes, some with prominent veins, creating a textured, autumnal effect.

STATE OF COLLEGE ADMISSIONS/HOW COLLEGES MAKE DECISIONS

State of College Admissions



State of College Admissions

The Truth:

- 80% of colleges accept more than half their applicants
- Over half accept more than two-thirds of their applicants
- Roughly 40 highly selective schools accept less than 20% of their applicants
- For the past 2 years, roughly 30% of colleges filled their class filled their class on May 1

Takeaways:

- Create a balanced college list
- Great college experiences happen everywhere

Factors in the College Admissions Process

What do colleges consider?

- Grades/Transcript
- Strength of Curriculum
- Test scores***
- Activities
- Essays

Common Data Sets

The weighting of various factors at colleges/universities as well as enrolled student information is not secret. Google a school's name and Common Data Set to learn more.

Common Data Set Reports **ENROLLED**
first-year students

Please note private schools may not disclose as much information.

U of M Common Data Set

C7 Relative importance of each of the following academic and nonacademic factors in first-time, first-year, degree-seeking (freshman) admission decisions.

C7		Very Important	Important	Considered	Not Considered
C7	Academic				
C7	Rigor of secondary school record	X			
C7	Class rank				X
C7	Academic GPA	X			
C7	Standardized test scores		X		
C7	Application Essay		X		
C7	Recommendation(s)		X		
C7	Nonacademic				
C7	Interview				X (see note below)
C7	Extracurricular activities			X	
C7	Talent/ability			X	
C7	Character/personal qualities		X		
C7	First generation		X		
C7	Alumni/ae relation			X	
C7	Geographical residence			X	
C7	State residency			X	
C7	Religious affiliation/commitment				X
C7	Racial/ethnic status				X
C7	Volunteer work			X	
C7	Work experience			X	
C7	Level of applicant's interest			X	

Note regarding interviews: Some applicants to Music, Theatre and Dance and some applicants to the College of Engineering may be interviewed

MSU Common Data Set

C7 Relative importance of each of the following academic and nonacademic factors in your first-time, first-year, degree-seeking (freshman) admission decisions.

	Very Important	Important	Considered	Not Considered
Academic				
Rigor of secondary school record		X		
Class rank			X	
Academic GPA	X			
Standardized test scores			X	
Application Essay	X			
Recommendation(s)			X	
Nonacademic				
Interview			X	
Extracurricular activities		X		
Talent/ability		X		
Character/personal qualities		X		
First generation			X	
Alumni/ae relation			X	
Geographical residence		X		
State residency			X	
Religious affiliation/commitment				X
Racial/ethnic status				X
Volunteer work			X	
Work experience			X	
Level of applicant's interest		X		

Common Data Set - Test Scores

(Xavier University)

Submitting SAT Scores
Submitting ACT Scores

Percent	Number
14%	167
26%	316

For each assessment listed below, report the score that represents the 25th percentile (the first-time, first-year population scored at or below) and the 75th percentile score (the

Assessment	25th Percentile	50th Percentile	75th Percentile
SAT Composite	1120	1200	1300
Writing	530	600	658
SAT Math	530	590	640
ACT Composite	22	26	29
ACT Math	20	24	27
ACT English	22	25	29
ACT Writing	n/a	n/a	n/a
ACT Science	23	25	28
ACT Reading	23	28	32

Common Data Set - GPA

(Xavier University)

Score Range	Percent (Students who submitted scores)	Percent (Students who did not submit scores)	Percent (All enrolled students)
Percent who had GPA of 4.0	37.41%	19.77%	27.43%
Percent who had GPA between 3.75 and 3.99	19.74%	17.89%	18.69%
Percent who had GPA between 3.50 and 3.74	13.35%	19.48%	16.82%
Percent who had GPA between 3.25 and 3.49	12.97%	13.71%	13.39%
Percent who had GPA between 3.00 and 3.24	10.15%	14.72%	12.73%
Percent who had GPA between 2.50 and 2.99	5.83%	13.56%	10.20%
Percent who had GPA between 2.0 and 2.49	0.56%	0.87%	0.73%
Percent who had GPA between 1.0 and 1.99	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Percent who had GPA below 1.0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Totals should = 100%	100.01%	100.00%	99.99%

Transcript

The transcript is used to help an admissions office understand how the student arrived at their GPA.

- Courses taken and individual grades earned
- Patterns in course selection (rigor)
- Trend in grades

Colleges want to know how prepared is the student to be successful at their institution. The more selective the college, the more important the strength of the transcript becomes.

Important CDS Sections

All of these are in section C and represent first-time, enrolled students:

- Factors in admission (C7) (where is testing)
- Testing required (C8A) -this could change
- % of incoming class submitting scores (C8)
- Middle 50% Testing (C8)
- Middle 50% GPA (C11)

If your daughter is above the middle 50% increased chance for merit money

Strength of Curriculum

Core Classes/College Prep	Non-Core Classes
Math	PE
English	Art
Science	Music
World Language	Religion*
History	Computer Science *
Religion*	NCAA Non-Approved Courses



STANDARDIZED TESTS

ACT & SAT

Standardized Testing

- Testing policies will vary by institution.
- The best resource for learning about a college's testing policy is the college's website.
- Many colleges have a “test-optional admission policy.”
- Some colleges have a “test-free” policy.
- Some colleges will require the ACT/SAT.
- It is your daughter's responsibility to confirm a college's testing policy.

Which Test is Best - ACT or SAT?

- We recommend students plan to test.
- Colleges want the test the student performs best on.
- At this point your student has had 1 PreACT and 2 PSAT opportunities.
 - Practice exams can help determine which test to take.
- Majority of our students prefer the ACT.

When Should a Student Test?

- Begin taking 2nd semester of 11th grade
- Multiple attempts of the ACT and/or SAT may be recommended
- Fairtest.org
 - List of 2,000+ test-optional and test-free colleges

Test Registration and Reporting

- Students/Parents register for the tests through test websites (act.org- ACT, collegeboard.org- SAT)
- Always release your scores to Mercy High School (231-005)
- Recommend you do not release scores on test day because of test-optional admissions

Test Prep

Mercy does not endorse any specific test prep company. It is important for the student to speak with the person providing the prep to make sure there is a connection. The most important aspect of the application is the transcript, so focus should be on Mercy classes as students prep for tests.

Essays

1. The Essay has job to do:
 - Humanize the application
 - Hear your student's voice and personality
2. Many colleges don't need an essay
3. Some schools have supplemental essays
 - Why this school, this program, etc.
4. The essays should sound like your student.
5. Take the pressure off this piece.

Activities

- Activities show commitment to something in your life.
- Should be used to demonstrate what you like to do in your free time.
- College is about academics - the activities show that you will be involved in something outside the classroom.

The Leadership Myth

- Starting a club is not the only way to show leadership!
- Initiative, internships, jobs, tutoring, volunteer work.
- Some colleges want to see you engage at a deeper level to demonstrate a skill set.

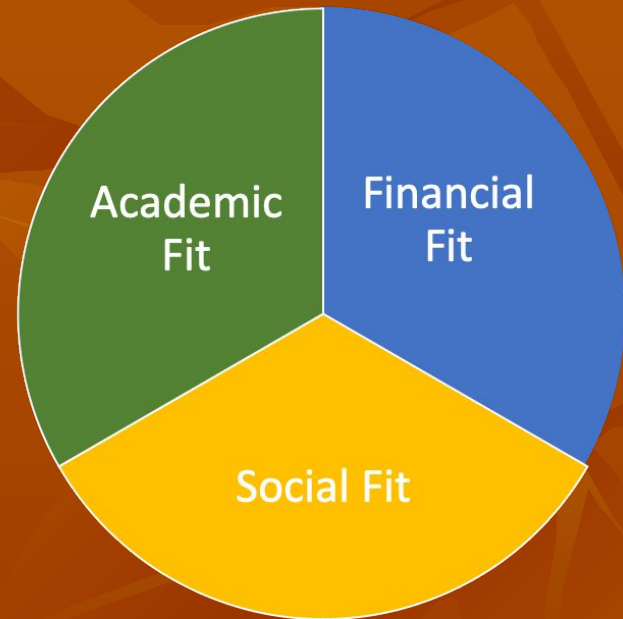


DECIDING WHERE TO APPLY/ENROLL

Choosing the Right Fit School

Is it the right ACADEMIC fit?

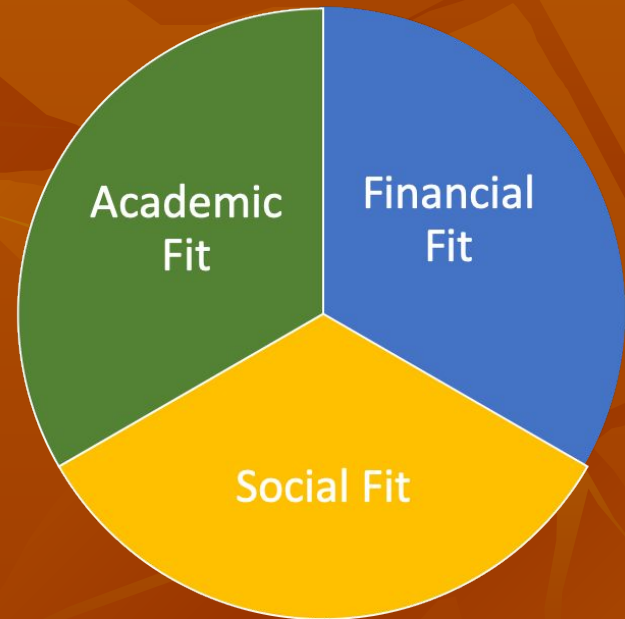
- Does it have your programs?
- Will you be challenged academically?
- Opportunities in the classroom? (research, study abroad, etc.)
- Student to teacher ratio
- Class size
- Are most of the classes taught by professors or TAs?
- Will it academically prepare you for a career you want?



Choosing the Right Fit School

Is it the right FINANCIAL fit?

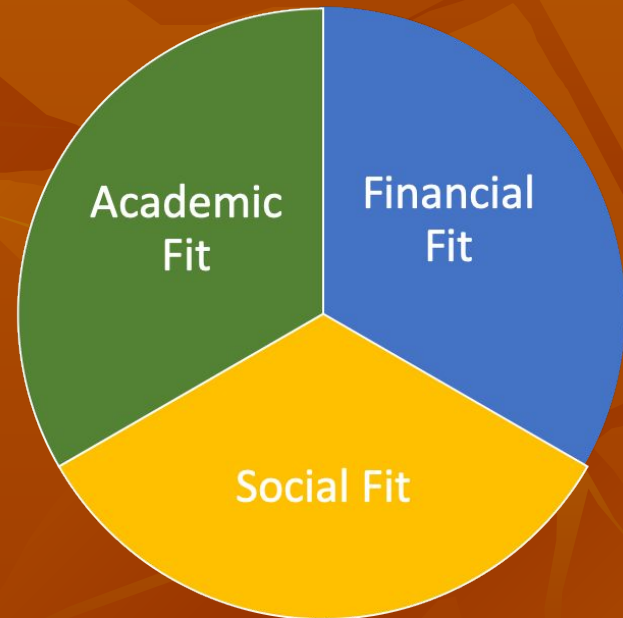
- Do you have the right aid and scholarship package that works for your family
- Are there ways to decrease tuition through opportunities?
- What will it cost year #1 compared to year #4?
- This is an investment, but think about investment vs debt.
- Different tuition programs?



Choosing the Right Fit School

Is it the right SOCIAL fit?

- School Size?
- What % of students live on campus? commute?
- What do students do when they are not in class?
- What do students do on the weekends?
- Does the campus have Greek Life?
- Is there diversity on campus?
- How is the food?
- What clubs are popular?



Campus Visits

- Visits are happening virtually and in-person at schools
- Make it Official
 - Contact the Admission Office/sign-up online
- Best time to visit -
 - What works for your family
 - Strongly encourage to visit before you commit to a school
- Can't visit in person - visit virtually at <https://www.appily.com/> or SCOIR
- Amazon Prime TV has a show called “The Campus Tour” check the segments out on Prime TV

Information to Consider

- Student graduation rates
- Retention 1st to 2nd year
- Internship opportunities
- Job Placement
- Graduate School Placement (including Med, Law, etc)
- Programs for undecided students
- Ability to change major
- Average Financial Aid/Merit Package



MERCY PROCESS

SCOIR

SCOIR /score/

Irish Gaelic Verb: to exit, retire, or transition from one phase to another.

- College Planning Program
 - College Search
 - College Lookup
 - Virtual College Visits via Appily
 - Statistical & Historical Data
 - Career Planning - Career Discovery Assessment
 - Application Management System for Counselors

Junior Family College Planning Meeting

- Occur November - February
 - Schedule through PTC Fast
 - Email sent after meeting to sign up for 1st Semester, sent in January to sign up for 2nd semester.
- To Prepare for Meeting:
 - Students complete College Survey on SCOIR (required)
 - Parents complete College Survey/Brag Sheet on SCOIR

Future Programming

- Course selection geared toward college list
- Essay writing assistance
- Meetings at student request (as needed)
- Presentation/May 2025 - (for rising seniors) to help them organize & prepare for applying
- Presentation/August 2025 - (for seniors) application nuts & bolts & the Mercy process
- Individual student check-in meeting in September of senior year
- Senior parent meeting - In September/Mercy Parent Night

Independent Educational Consultants

Mercy counselors are skilled and prepared to help your student navigate the college journey.

Does my family need one....

No, However...

Independent Educational Consultants

Why might you want to hire?

- IEC's are able to work one on one on the students/families schedule.
- A third party not related to student or school to manage process.
- We like to know if you are using someone
 - Mindful of “too many cooks in the kitchen”

Questions to ask an IEC

- How do you learn about Mercy?
 - How classes are scheduled, when AP/Honor is available?
- What is your experience?
- Are you a member of HECA or IECA (associations for Independent Educational Consultants)
- Are you a member of MACAC or NACAC (associations for college, high school and access admission professionals)



RESOURCES

Financial Aid and Scholarships

- FAFSA after October 1* of senior year
CSS Profile (if required) after October 1 of senior year
- Complete the Net Price Calculator - on college's website
- Students should build scholarship applications into the college application process
- Create a Going Merry account
 - Think Common App for scholarships
- Visit www.collegedata.com to get estimates of need based aid & merit aid for the schools you are looking at

Resources you should use!

- Accreditation
- College Navigator - National Center for Education Statistics
- LinkedIn
- Big Futures - College Board
- www.collegedata.com
- NACAC- www.nacacnet.org
- Common Data set for schools (google Common data set University of XYZ)

Resources you should use with caution!

- College Confidential
- Most ranking agencies (even the popular ones like US News & World Report)
- Reddit
- Grapevine (I heard....)

What you can do...

- Take a deep breath
- Support your student and let them drive the process (but you can drive the car)
- Ask questions your student may not ask (safety, cost, opportunities)
- Set one night a week to discuss college plans
- Have the money talk and be specific
- Reach out to Counseling for assistance
- This is a marathon not a sprint

Fast Facts

- Average student applies to 6-8 schools
- Most students need one (or no) teacher letters of recommendation
- Most applications open up August 1st
- Look at Honors Colleges at State Schools
- Each student will have their own timeline



Questions and Comments