Mercy High School



Class of 2028
Junior College Kick-Off

Mercy Counseling Staff and Roster

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Agenda

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

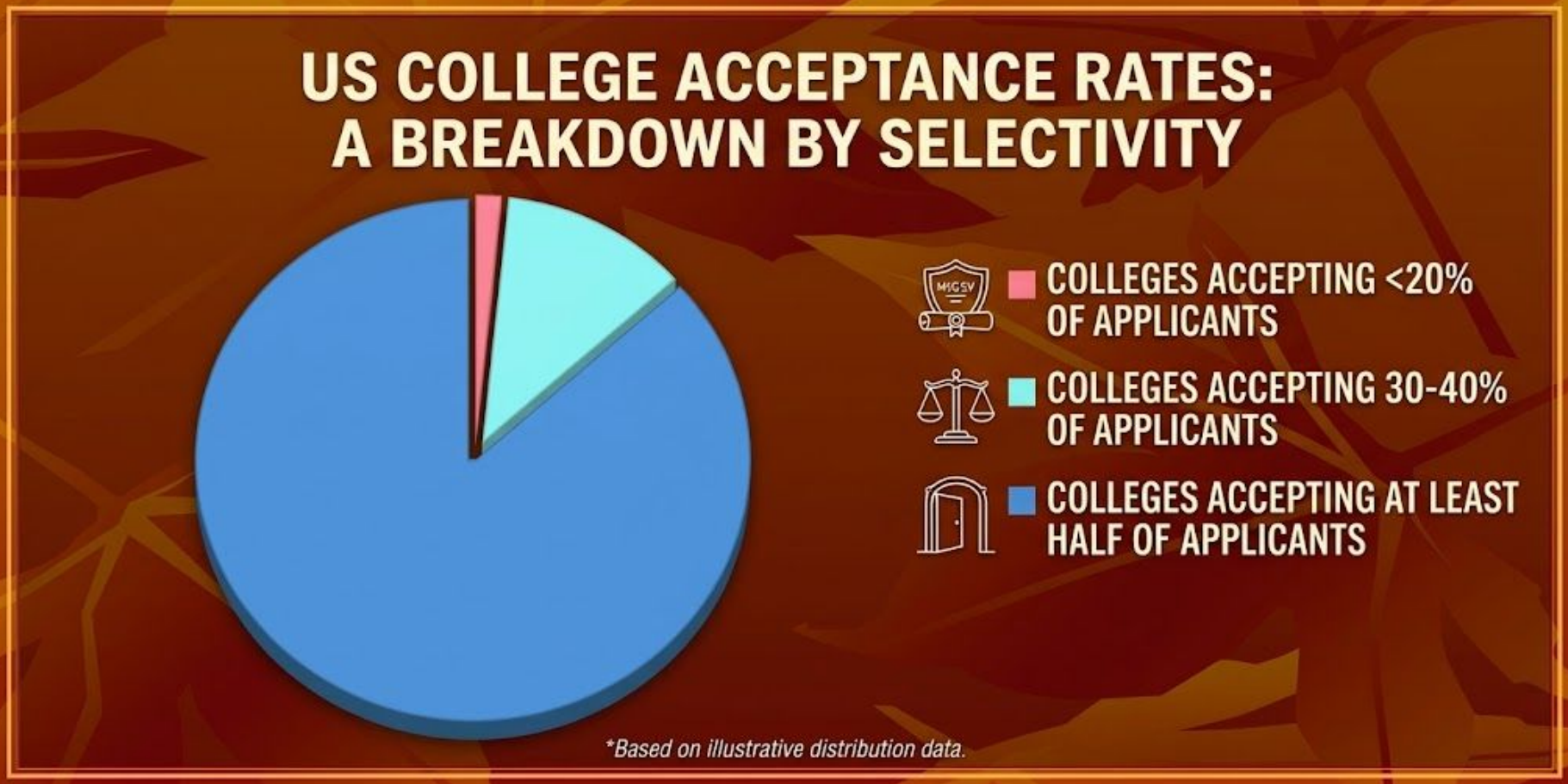
Mercy Philosophy

Our Belief...
The college process is an opportunity for learning and growth

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

STATE OF COLLEGE ADMISSIONS/HOW COLLEGES MAKE DECISIONS

State of College Admissions



State of College Admissions

The Truth:

- 85% of colleges accept more than half their applicants
- Over half (53%) accept more than two-thirds of their applicants
- Roughly 40 highly selective schools accept less than 10% 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

State of College Admissions

- Fewer International Students applying
- Uncertainty around testing
- Demographic Cliff

  Projected a sharp decline with High School Class 2026

  Projected to level with High School Class 2041

  Higher Ed Dive

Colleges Responding by:

- Removal of supplemental essays
- Increased fee waivers
- Extending application deadlines

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 your first-time, first-year, degree-seeking general (not including programs with specific criteria) admission decisions.

Factors	Very Important	Important	Considered	Not Considered
Academic				
Rigor of secondary school record	☒	☐	☐	☐
Class rank	☐	☐	☐	☒
Academic GPA	☒	☐	☐	☐
Standardized test scores	☐	☒	☐	☐
Application Essay	☐	☒	☐	☐
Recommendation	☐	☒	☐	☐
Nonacademic				
Interview	☐	☐	☐	☒
Extracurricular activities	☐	☐	☒	☐

MSU Common Data Set

C7. Relative importance of each of the following academic and nonacademic factors in your first-time, first-year, degree-seeking general (not including programs with specific criteria) admission decisions.

	Very Important	Important	Considered	Not Considered
Academic				
Rigor of secondary school record	☐	☑	☐	☐
Class rank	☐	☐	☐	☑
Academic GPA	☑	☐	☐	☐
Standardized test scores	☐	☐	☑	☐
Application Essay	☐	☑	☐	☐
Recommendation(s)	☐	☐	☐	☑
Nonacademic				
Interview	☐	☐	☑	☐
Extracurricular activities	☐	☑	☐	☐

Common Data Set - Test Scores

(Misericordia University)

	Percent	Number
Submitting SAT Scores	1%	6
Submitting ACT Scores	0%	2

Assessment	25th Percentile	50th Percentile	75th Percentile
SAT Composite	928	1185	1218
SAT Evidence-Based Reading	483	595	633
SAT Math	445	580	595
ACT Composite	26	27	27
ACT Math	26	26	26
ACT English	25	25	26
ACT Writing	na	na	na
ACT Science	26	27	29
ACT Reading	26	27	27

Common Data Set - GPA

(Misericordia 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			10.20%
Percent who had GPA between 3.75 and 3.99			28.50%
Percent who had GPA between 3.50 and 3.74			22.90%
Percent who had GPA between 3.25 and 3.49			11.70%
Percent who had GPA between 3.00 and 3.24			12.50%
Percent who had GPA between 2.50 and 2.99			9.70%
Percent who had GPA between 2.0 and 2.49			3.70%
Percent who had GPA between 1.0 and 1.99			0.00%
Percent who had GPA below 1.0			0.90%
Totals should = 100%	0.00%	0.00%	100.10%

Important CDS Sections

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

- Factors in admission (C7) (testing information)
- 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 at schools that award

Transcript

What Are Colleges Looking For?

The transcript helps admissions offices understand how a student arrived at her GPA and how prepared she is for college-level work.

- Courses Taken (types and patterns of courses)
- Academic Rigor (in context of what Mercy offers)
- Grades Earned
- Grade Trends (consistency, improvement, changes over time)

Colleges want to know whether a student has demonstrated that she is prepared to succeed at their institution. The more selective the college, the more closely the strength of the transcript is likely to be evaluated.

Strength of Curriculum

Core Classes/College Prep	Non-Core Classes
Math	PE
English	Art
Science	Music
World Language	Religion*
History	Computer Science *
Religion* **Honors and AP opportunities based on individual readiness & academic goals.	NCAA Non-Approved Courses

STANDARDIZED TESTS

ACT & SAT

Understanding College Testing policies

Testing policies vary by institution.

- **Test-Optional**: Students may choose whether or not to submit ACT/SAT scores. Check out FairTest for Test-Optional College List.
- **Test-Free/Test-Blind**: Colleges do not consider ACT/SAT scores in admission decisions.
- **Test-Required:** Students must submit ACT/SAT scores.
- Some colleges may have different testing requirements for specific programs or scholarships.

Testing policies can change from year to year.

- Best resource for determining a school's policy is their website.
- Students are responsible for confirming the requirements of each college on their list.

Should My Daughter Take the ACT or SAT?

Our recommendation: Plan to test!

- Having a test score gives students options.
- Colleges do not prefer one test over the other.
- Practice test results can help determine which test to take.
  - Your daughter has had 1 diagnostic ACT and SAT through Compass and 1 PSAT test.
- Students do not need to take both tests.
- Mercy students have historically preferred the ACT.

Junior Year Testing Timeline

Winter—Junior Year

- Review PreACT and PSAT results. Determine which test may be the best fit. Begin Preparation.

Spring—Junior Year

- Take the ACT and/or SAT for the first time. Review scores & identify areas for improvement.

Summer—Before Senior Year

- Continue preparation, if needed. Consider testing again.

Fall—Senior Year

- Complete any final testing attempts. Finalize score submission decisions.

Test Preparation

- Students may improve their scores with additional preparation & familiarity with the test.
- There is no one-size-fits-all testing prep plan.
- Mercy is planning to offer an ACT prep class late winter/early spring in partnership w/ The Student Connection. Details forthcoming.

Test Prep Resources:

- Free ACT Prep: ACT Test Preparation
- Free SAT Prep: College Board SAT Practice & Khan Academy SAT Prep

Registering for Tests & Sending Scores

Registering for the Tests:

- Students/Parents are responsible for registering through the testing websites.
- ACT: act.org
- SAT: collegeboard.org
- Always list Mercy High School so that we receive the test score (School Code 231005)

Sending Scores to Colleges:

- We recommend waiting until students receive & review scores before sending them to colleges.
- For Test-Required colleges, some require “official” scores while others accept self-reported scores.

How Much Does Testing Matter?

- Test scores are one component of the college application process.
- A solid score can complement a student's academic record.
- Test-Optional means Test-Optional
  - In the evaluation the focus is then on the other pieces of the application (transcript, extracurriculars, essays, etc.)

The Essay - What is Its Purpose?

The Essay has job to do:

- Humanize the application.
- Allow Admissions to hear the student's voice and personality.
- Provide insight into what matters to the student.
- Share something that is not evident elsewhere in the application.

A Few Things to Know:

- Not all colleges require an essay.
- Some colleges require supplemental essays (Why this college? Why this major?)
- The essay does not need to be about something extraordinary.
- The essay(s) should sound like the student.
- It is one component of a holistic application review.

Activities & Student Involvement

What are colleges looking for?

- Commitment: Dedication to something outside of the classroom.
- Engagement: How the student chooses to spend their time & what is meaningful to them.
- Leadership: Taking responsibility, showing initiative, & making a difference.
  - Leadership does not always require a title
- Contribution: A student's activities provide insight into how they may contribute to a college community.

Depth over Breadth

What Counts as an Activity?

Activities extend beyond school sponsored clubs!

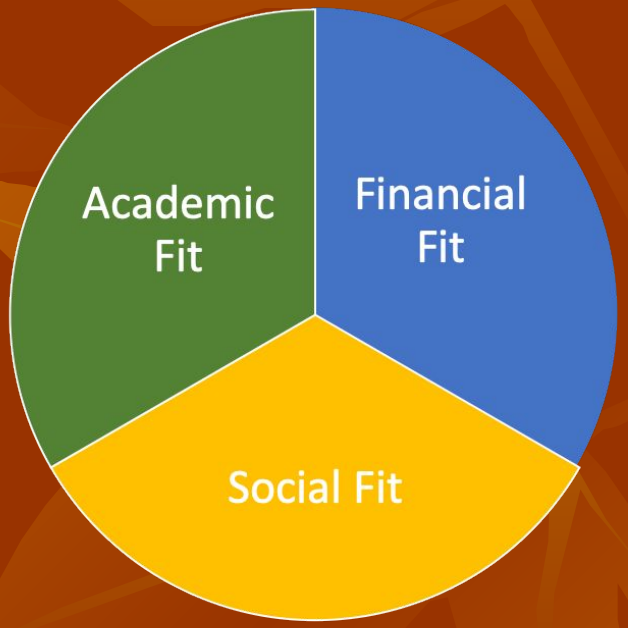
- School Clubs and organizations
- Athletics
- Volunteering & community engagement
- Arts or music
- Employment or work experience
- Family responsibilities
- Personal interests, hobbies, independent projects
- Other experiences that have been meaningful to the student

DECIDING WHERE TO APPLY/ENROLL

Choosing the Right Fit School

Is it the right ACADEMIC fit?

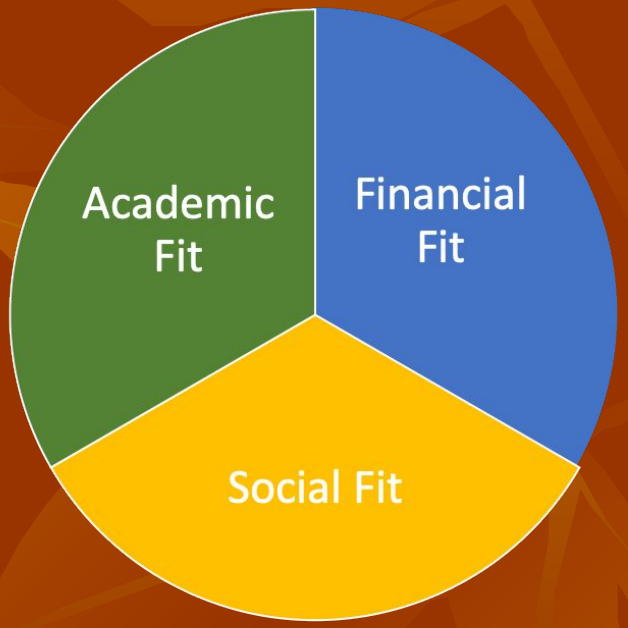
- Does it have your programs?
- Will you be challenged academically?
- Opportunities in the classroom? (research, study abroad, etc.)
- Student to teacher ratio
- Class size
- Are most of the classes taught by professors or TAs?
- Will it academically prepare you for a career you want?



Choosing the Right Fit School

Is it the right FINANCIAL fit?

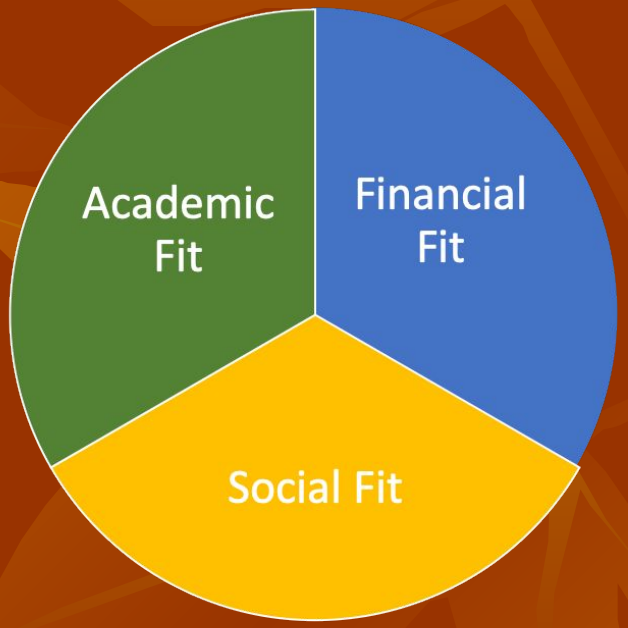
- Do you have the right aid and scholarship package that works for your family
- Are there ways to decrease tuition through opportunities?
- What will it cost year #1 compared to year #4?
- This is an investment, but think about investment vs debt.
- Different tuition programs?



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

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

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 early next week to sign up for 1st Semester. Will resend in January to sign up for 2nd semester.
- To Prepare for Meeting:
  - Students complete Task/Assignment on SCOIR (required)
  - Parents complete College Search/Brag Sheet on SCOIR

Future Programming

- Course selection geared toward college list
- Essay writing assistance (via English - May 2027)
- Meetings at student request (as needed)
- Presentation/Workshop - May 2027 - to help them organize/prepare for applying using the Common App
- Presentation/Workshop -August 2027 - the Mercy process/SCOIR/Common App assistance
- Individual student check-in meeting in September of senior year
- Senior parent meeting - In September/Mercy Parent Night

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
- 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)
- SCOIR Scattergrams

Blogs, authors, etc

- Georgia Tech Admissions Blog
- Jeff Selingo
  - "Dream School"
  - "Who Gets in and Why"
- Notes from Peabody (UVA)
- Compass Test Prep
  - Test Optional, Superscore, comparing tests and more!!

Resources you should use with caution!

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

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.
  - Entire application process
  - Ala Carte'
- 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)

What you can do…

- Take a deep breath
- 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
- Don’t become fear motivated - you set the tone

Questions and Comments