Changing Perceptions on Large Public Universities

THE "BACKUP SCHOOL" MYTH
Welcome

**PRESENTERS**

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Emily Carmichael, Southern California Admissions Counselor, University of Oregon
Sung Ahn, B.A., Greater Los Angeles Admission Counselor, Arizona State University
Agenda

• Introduce ourselves and our institutions
• Overview of the current obsession with rankings
• Discuss opportunities at large public universities
• Discuss data on successful student outcomes
• Final thoughts, action steps, and discussion on finding fit
Saint Mary’s College High School

• Located in Berkeley, CA.

• Saint Mary’s is a coed secondary school made up of 630 students grades 9-12. Senior Class average is 150 students with 1.5 College Counselors and .5 College Counseling Support/Assistant.

• We are comprised of a diverse population of students both socioeconomically and racially.

• Class 2018 matriculation:

- 94% accepted to 4-year colleges.
Tarbut V’Torah
Community Day School

• 528 Students, Preschool – Grade 12
• Upper School Address: 5 Federation Way, Irvine Ca. 92603
• Students come from 115 feeder schools
• Representing 33 cities/communities in greater Orange County
• Average ACT per year varies between 27 – 31

• In the last five years...
• Average senior class: 42 students
• Of the 214 students whom have graduated and matriculated to 4-year schools they have attended 74 different colleges/universities
• Percentage of students per year attending public colleges/universities per year: 47%
University of Oregon

UO First-Year Student Profile (Fall 2017)

• GPA 3.33-3.84 (3.55 average); ACT 22-28; SAT 1100-1290
• 3,863 First-time freshmen
• 51% in-state; 37% out-of-state; 12% international
• 26.8% students of color
• 24.2% first generation
• 87% retention rate (73% national average)
• 56% four-year graduation rate; 72% six-year graduation rate
• 1,196 new transfer students
Arizona State University

- Phoenix, AZ
- 71,828 (59,198 undergraduates)
- 36% non-residents; 64% residents
- Research 1 Institution
- Assured Admissions
- 16 ABOR Courses
- AND 24 ACT or 1180 SAT or 3.0 GPA

ASU: First-Year Student Profile (FS17)

- 3.49/4.0 GPA
- ACT 25
- SAT 1136
- 10,278 First-time freshman (FS17)
- 65.7% In-state; 34.3% domestic out-state, 15.7% international overall
- 44% students of color
- 86.5% Retention 1st-2nd year
- 4,890 Fall transfer class (FS17)
Student and Parent Perceptions

Student perceptions of selective institutions

• Higher quality education
• More one-on-one instruction/support services
• Better career opportunities
• More accomplished students

Student perceptions of non-selective institutions

• Just a “number”/not personalized
• Why did I work this hard to just to go there?
• The feeling of “settling”

Parents can be an even bigger hurdle:

If paying for an expensive private high school, the price of a large public university may also factor in:

“Why did I spend all this money to just go to a public university?”
Selectivity and Quality

- A major misconception seems to exist that **acceptance rates** are a valid means to show “how good” a college or university is in comparison to others.

- Terms like **selectivity** and **quality** are being used interchangeably and many universities are not being considered by students that might be a great fit.

Fact: 80% of all colleges accept more than 50% of the students who apply.

*National Association for College Admission Counseling*
U.S. News and World Report Rankings

- Graduation and Retention Rate, 22.50%
- Reputation, 22.50%
- Faculty Resources, 20%
- Financial Resources, 10%
- Graduation Rate Performance, 7.50%
- Alumni Giving, 5%
- Selectivity, 12.50%

...this preoccupation with enrolling smart students makes little sense, because the emphasis seems to be more on acquiring smart students than on educating them well....

-Alexander Astin Founding Director- Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA

U.S. News Best Colleges Ranking Criteria and Weights: 2017 -
https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/ranking-criteria-and-weights
Where you go is not who you’ll be – Frank Bruni

Fortune 500 Company CEOs - 2014

Top 10 Fortune 500 Company CEOs - 1 Ivy League school.

Top 30 - 5 Ivy League schools

Top 100 – 30 Ivy League (or similar selectivity). 40+ went to public universities with “less luster”.

Top 30 Non-Ivy League - University of Nebraska, University of Kansas, University of Arkansas, University of Minnesota, University of Central Oklahoma, etc.

Bruni’s conclusion - There is no pattern showing that rank, selectivity, reputation etc. of undergraduate institutions guarantee success.
What are the reasons, if different, students pursue out of state public colleges/universities?

• It’s getting harder to get into a UC
• 5 campuses had over 100K applications this year
• Sometimes a major concern with attending a larger out of state school is the presumption that there are a lack of resources
• But, overwhelming it is the “prestige” factor of attending a top 50 US News and World Report school that trumps everything else and limits the amount of students considering out of state public schools
• It’s exactly how Tarbut markets to families...my school is apart of the problem!
• It’s built into what is presumed as “status” in Orange County (i.e., the sweatshirt you wear matters or the car you drive, etc.)
## View from the High School Side

**Where do Saint Mary’s students apply and why?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Colleges</th>
<th>Private Colleges</th>
<th>Out of State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>Merit Award</td>
<td>Receiving instate tuition-WUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>4-year graduation rate</td>
<td>New experiences outside of California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California</td>
<td>Smaller Community</td>
<td>Access to major of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State University</td>
<td>Larger Network</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
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</table>

- New experiences outside of California
- Access to major of interest
- Reputation
What can large publics offer?

- 67.1% 6-year graduation rate; national average is 59%
- 88% post-graduation career/grad placement rate
- 50% participate in internships (44.1% paid)
- Network of 400,000 living alumni
- Residential living-learning programs
- Numerous undergraduate research opportunities
- #1 Most Innovative School in Nation (U.S. News)
- #20 Fine Arts School in Nation (U.S. News)
- #25 Business School in Nation (U.S. News)
- #25 Law School in Nation (U.S. News)
- Top 10 in the U.S. for Silicon Valley Hires (HiringSolved)
- #11 Graduate Education Program in Nation (U.S. News)
- #13 Public Affairs School in Nation (U.S. News)
- #5 Producing Best-Qualified Graduates in Nation (Wall Street Journal)
What can large publics offer?

- Tier 1 national public research university
- The average UO student graduates in four years plus one term
- 25% of students study abroad
- 81% of seniors are engaged in research activity
- 94% of UO graduates are employed or enrolled in an educational program one year after graduation
- 56% of UO students graduate debt-free; 87% graduate with less than the U.S. average debt of $30,100
- Network of 204,000+ living alumni
- One of only 62 AAU (Association of American Universities) institutions
- According to Sierra Club, one of the top 20 Greenest Colleges and Universities
- Ranked #1 in the nation in Sustainable Design, according to America’s Best Architecture and Design Schools 2015
- U.S. News and World Report ranks our College of Education in the top five nationally; Special Education program is ranked #3
- Among the top 25 LGBT-friendly universities, according to Campus Pride
Barrett, the Honors College

• Competitive Admission – Holistic Review
• Average Unweighted GPA 3.78; 4.32 Weighted; 1380 SAT; 29 ACT
• 15:1 Student to Faculty Ratio in BHC
• 719 National Merit Finalists
• 388 National Hispanic Scholarship
• Post-Graduation Outcomes: 43% employment; 51% admitted to grad schools; 6% Volunteer/Other

Post-Graduate Fellowships – Last 5 Years
• ASU #6 producer of Fulbright scholars
• Only public university to have a Churchill, Marshall, and Rhodes scholar in 2017
  • Fulbright: 111; Churchill Scholars: 1
  • Goldwater Scholars: 8; Killam Scholars: 15
  • Marshall Scholars: 2; Rhodes Scholars: 1
  • Truman Scholars: 1; Udall Scholars: 4
  • NSEP/Boren: 13
Robert D. Clark Honors College

- First Honors College west of the Mississippi; second oldest in the nation
- Ranked one of the top 10 public honors colleges in the U.S. by Public University Honors
- GPA 3.74-3.98; ACT 28-32; SAT 1300-1450
- 92% of CHC students receive merit or need-based scholarships
- 1,460 applications for an incoming class of 229 students (Fall 2016)
- Average class size is 15; classes are limited to 19 students
- Every CHC student is responsible for doing original research and producing a final thesis

Post Graduate Fellowships and More

- 10 Goldwater Scholarships received since 2010
- 19 UO students received the Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford University
- 32 Fulbright Scholarships received since 2010
- CHC students received 25 distinguished scholarships from 2011-2017 including: Marshall, Mitchell, Gates Cambridge, Truman, Fulbright, and Goldwater Scholarships
- Top 10 producer: Peace Corps volunteers 15 years running
Student Academic and Financial Fit is Important

ASU Charter

ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.

• Assured Admissions
• 16 ABOR Courses
• AND 24 ACT or 1180 SAT or 3.0 GPA
## ASU Retention by Academic Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>California</th>
<th>Out of State</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>84.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>82.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>77.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>79.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
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<td>69.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>~2.8 - 3.0 GPA</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>67.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>~2.6 - 2.9 GPA</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>61.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 2.6 GPA</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
<td>77.3</td>
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## ASU Retention by Ability & EFC

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very High</th>
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<th>Low</th>
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Action Steps – What Can We Do?

It is imperative that we be mindful of the ways in which we discuss the college search process, and be aware of our own biases.

Ranking & selectivity don’t need to be a starting point in the college search conversation

• Encourage students to remove the word “just” regarding college acceptances/enrollments
• Provide a broader view on successful professionals and the universities attended
• Assist with diversifying a student’s college list (they don’t know what they don’t know)
• Move away from terms such as “fall-back school” or “safety-choice”
Action Steps – What Can We Do?

Begin with the end in mind: attending a post secondary education

- Providing opportunities to educate parents. Coffee with the College Counselor, Attend programs near you (fairs, information sessions)......do the research.
- Happy Student (Emotionally, Socially, Intellectually)
- Finding Fit over “Name”
- Saint Mary’s Alum panel
- Student led discussions with parent support.
- Guiding both student and parent together and then separately.
How do we disrupt this culture on the high school end?

- It starts with education
- We need to demystify presumptions
- Participate in fly-in programs if they are available
- Bring reps from like schools to on-campus events. Let them build a rapport with families and students
- Push back, if possible, on how you market your department to prospective families
- It just takes one success story
Action Steps – What Can We Do?

Discuss Specialized/Unique Programs

Within a given university, students can locate communities that provide the fit they are looking for.

- Talented students wary of less selective institutions can look to Honors Programs and similar groups for the more rigorous academic community they desire.
- Many universities and colleges have offerings for students to match with like-minded peers, whether they be academic, cultural, or otherwise.
Looking Beyond Selectivity - What Comes Next?

Teach and encourage students to look beyond selectivity - to foster exploration and to promote critical analysis of universities and colleges.

Promote the message that increasing access to higher education is something to be applauded, not condemned for.

And last, but certainly not least.....

*Discuss, discuss, discuss!*