

The college conundrum

Business



You know Rebecca Black's "Friday?" Well the college application process was even more annoying than that. As the culmination of the first eighteen years of our lives, admissions decisions defined 12th grade for me and my classmates. Instead of "what seat can I take?," Rebecca's all too famous quandary, we asked ourselves, "what college can I attend?" Unlike Rebecca, we held no autonomy over our decisions.

The colleges selected us, and as much as their admissions officers alleged that the final assessment was a two-way street, we felt as though we were turning into oncoming traffic. Part One: the essay. Countless hours staring at a comma contemplating whether a semicolon would be more appropriate. To use diction or not to use diction? That was the question. For we would not want our reader to consider us foreigners to grammar, and yet to come off as bland and unoriginal would mean our absolute demise. Normalcy was unadvisable, but anything on the verge of lunacy would not be appreciated either.

Idiosyncrasy was the key. Channel Zooey Deschanel! Part Two: the resume. Make sure we POP! on paper. The colleges weren't going to meet us. Shake our hands. Carry on a dialogue about our achievements.

We had to sound like the greatest thing since sliced bread without appearing cocky. No pretention: that would be our downfall. But humility was a folly as well; who could know us if we didn't brag a bit? Part Three: The supplements. Never mind that we completed the Common App! There were sixteen more essays and short answers for each of us to overanalyze! "Where is Waldo, Really?" Should I give an existentialist rant or take a sassy, sarcastic stance?

Ooh I'll do a rhyme scheme! That's unique! Part Four: the wait. How fantastic! All of the applications were submitted, and now we could just relax, right? Wrong.

As we frantically checked our e-mail accounts and snail mail, we were bombarded by terrifying statistics. On the other side of the room, I catch a whisper: " I heard that Columbia's acceptance rate is at an all-time low." The anguish! And two months to go until decisions are released! Meanwhile, I should be doing physics, but instead I sit in my hard, beige desk hyperventilating ever so slightly. Part Five: Hell Week. For some dreadful, unforgiveable reason, the majority of the nation's most prestigious institutions released their decisions over a seven day period. As my classmates received notifications, there was squealing and sobbing, egoism and envy.

Some avoided school altogether, unable to handle the pressure. Others sat impatiently in French class, constantly hitting refresh on their e-mails. Part Six: the storm after the storm. The reactions. The comparisons.

The biting comments. Affirmative action became the sole pretext for admission. " Why did she get in?" " Oh, she's Hispanic." Schools were bashed for their selectivity. Hatred was ambient, and the high school hallways stank of disappointment. And now? Well, a slow, steady recovery.

We have finally chosen where we will spend the next four years of our lives, and most of us are happy. As we should be! College is a new, beautiful adventure, and any institution of higher education is filled with possibility and opportunity. If only the college application process could be the same

<https://assignbuster.com/the-college-conundrum/>

way. Essays should help us discover new facets of our beings. Scores should not define us, character should. We should not have to force our accomplishments to sound grand; they should stand on their own.

We should not feel a need to publish a novel or begin our own nonprofit; a long-term demonstrated interest in writing or a commitment to community service should be, and is, sufficiently impressive. And most of all, we should not waste away our senior year waiting for news. We must live in the moment, enjoying our final conversations with childhood friends and preparing for the drastic change that awaits us as we leave our safety nets to fly. I hope that the latter is the experience of the Class of 2014, because the former was absolutely miserable.