

# Insider's Guide to the Admission Committee



## ADMISSION CASE STUDY PLYMOUTH SHORES UNIVERSITY *“INDAGATE FINGITE INVENITE”*



# Case Study Objectives...



- Understanding “Holistic Review”
- Plymouth Shores University – Profile
- Applicant Review and Discussion – Small Group
  - Dorri Johnson
  - Henry Watanabe
  - Marcela Castillo
- Committee Review and Discussion of all applicants – All Participants
- The Committee Vote – Admit, Waitlist, Deny

# Holistic Review – Some Factors



- Student's and family's demographic profile
- GPA – grades in the context at this student's high school, grade trend and pattern, particular academic strengths
- Curriculum – Honors, AP, IB, dual enrollment
- Test Scores – SAT, ACT, Subject Tests
- Letters of Recommendation – Counselor, teachers, others
- Required Essays including supplemental essays and prompts
- Interview and Demonstrated interest
- Intended major
- Extracurricular activities – sports, clubs, internships, etc.
- Other factors and obstacles

# Plymouth Shores University – Mission



“To educate students and cultivate their capacity for lifelong learning, to foster independent and original research, and to bring the benefits of discovery to the world with a commitment to social justice and service to others.”

- Founded in 1826 located in Sunberryport, MA
- Four-Year private, liberal arts research university with professional schools of Business, Medicine, and Engineering along with over 200 majors, minors, and programs in the liberal arts.

# Plymouth Shores University – Profile



- 6,276 Undergraduates (53% Female and 47% Male)
- Students come from 50 states and 85 countries
- 28% Ethnic Diversity
- 82% Live on campus all four years
- 15:1 Student-to Professor ratio
- NCAA Division I (Men and Women's Lacrosse. Men and Women's Track and Field) – all other sports are NCAA Division III
- *Indagate Fingite Invenite* - Explore, Dream, Discover

# Plymouth Shores University – Admission



- Applications
  - 19,300 Students Applied
  - 7,011 Students Admitted (36.3% Acceptance Rate)
  - Early Action and Regular Decision
  - PSU Does not offer Early Decision
- Admitted Student Profile
  - GPA Mid 50% Un-weighted: 3.49-3.92
  - SAT Composite Mid 50% (Superscore): 1380-1480
  - ACT Composite Mid 50%: 29-32
  - Interviews are available and encouraged
- PSU Admission Committee is Need Aware

# Candidate Review Form



Student Profile	Academic Factors	Activities
Background Family Legacy Sex/Ethnicity Essay Counselor Rec Teacher Rec Interview Obstacles	GPA SAT/ACT/Subject tests AP and Honors Core Courses School type and profile Grade trends	Resume Leadership Persistence Summer

# File Review – Points to Ponder



- How does the student's academic profile compare to PSU's admitted student profile?
- How will the student contribute to the PSU community?
- How does the student express a genuine interest to attend PSU?
- What are the student's strengths and weaknesses?



# File Review – Dorri Johnson



- Review Dorri's application and make notes on the Candidate Review Form
- Discuss Dorri's credentials in your small group
- Discuss Dorri's credentials with the entire group

# Dorri Johnson – Highlights



- White/Female, Dual Citz. Australia, Parents advanced degrees
- 3.79 GPA un-weighted (2.80, 3.30, 3.92 and 12<sup>th</sup> – 3.50)  
5 Honors classes and 2 AP classes – *Demanding Curriculum*  
Diagnosed with ADD in 10<sup>th</sup> – on medication and uses Learning Ctr.  
ACT 31\*; SAT 1180 (English 650, Math 530) \*extended time
- Communications & Journalism Major
- Blog (Designer), School Newspaper, Yearbook (Editor-in-Chief)
- Essay about her masks and the girl behind them
- Recs – Counselor doesn't know her well, Strong teacher rec
- Campus Tour, HS Visit, local PSU Preview Day, college fair
- Supplement – met admission counselor, interview, solid “Why PSU”

# File Review – Henry Watanabe



- Review Henry’s application and make notes on the Candidate Review Form
- Discuss Henry’s credentials in your small group
- Discuss Henry’s credentials with the entire group
  
- Who gets your “admit” vote – Henry or Dorri?

# Henry Watanabe – Highlights



- Asian/Male, Japanese spoken at home, Parents advanced degrees
- 3.36 GPA un-weighted (3.00, 3.09, 3.71 and 12<sup>th</sup> – 3.80)  
5 Honors, 4 APs, Dual Enrollment – *Very Demanding Curriculum*  
Disciplinary Action (plagiarism) in 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
SAT 1410 (Engl 610, Math 800) – Subject Tests Math 1 & Math 2 800
- Computer Engineering Major
- The Computer Club (President), Robotics Club, Internship – IT Dept.
- Essay – developed speech recognition app to help grandmother
- Recs – Counselor explained DISP. Strong Teacher Rec
- Campus Tour, college fair, interview
- Supplement – Impressive interview, explains DISP, solid “Why PSU”

# **File Review – Marcela Castillo**



- Review Marcela's application and make notes on the Candidate Review Form
- Discuss Marcela's credentials in your small group
- Discuss Marcela's credentials with the entire group
  
- Now who gets your Admit vote? Is it Marcela?

# Marcela Castillo – Highlights



- Hispanic/Female, Spanish spoken at home, Parents divorced
- 3.05 GPA un-weighted (3.33, 2.42, 3.08 and 12<sup>th</sup> – 3.67)  
3 Honors, 5 Aps (4 in senior year) – *Demanding* Curriculum  
Aunt died which affected Marcela’s 10<sup>th</sup> grade – rebounded in 11<sup>th</sup>  
ACT 29 and SAT 1440 (English 750, Math 690)
- Public Health Policy/Pre-Law Major
- San Diego Division Runner of the Year, Com. Service, Internship
- Essay – inspired by her aunt’s battle with cancer
- Recs – Counselor says Marcela’s GPA not indicative. Strong T-Rec
- Campus Tour, local PSU Preview Program, high school visit
- Supplement – Strong interest by Track coach, confusing “Why PSU”

# Committee Group Discussion



## How do you decide?

- Highest GPA in the strongest curriculum?
- Best test scores?
- Demonstrated the most interest?
- Best extracurricular activities?
- Most examples of leadership?
- Best essay and “Why PSU?” supplement?
- Best letters of recommendation?
- Not as bad as the others?
- Best fit for Plymouth Shores University?

## **Dorri Johnson**

San Francisco, CA

White/Australian Female

3.79 Unweighted GPA

2 AP and 5 Honors

ACT 31 SAT 1180

Communication &  
Journalism

Not applying for FinAid

ADD in 10<sup>th</sup> grade

Blogger, school  
newspaper, yearbook  
Essay – masks and the  
girl behind them

Campus Visit, Local PSU

Preview Day, HS Visit,  
Interview, College Fair,  
contact with PSU

Admission Counselor  
through E-mails

## **Henry Watanabe**

Irvine, CA

Asian/Male

3.36 Unweighted GPA

4 AP and 5 Honors

Dual Enrollment

SAT 1410

800 – Math 1 & Math 2

Computer ENGR

Not applying for FinAid

Computer Club,  
Robotics, Internship at  
Aerospace Corp.

Essay – Developed  
speech recognition App  
for Alzheimer's patients

Plagiarism – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Campus Visit, College  
Fair, Interview

## **Marcela Castillo**

Rancho Bernardo, CA

Hispanic/Female

Parents Divorced

Legacy - Aunt

3.05 Unweighted GPA

5 AP and 3 Honors

SAT 1440

Public Health & P-Law

Apply for FinAid

Community Service, SD  
Div. Runner of the Year,  
Internship

Essay – How she was  
affected by her aunt's  
battle with cancer

Campus Visit, Local PSU

Preview Day

Interest by PSU Track  
Coach



# Committee Group Discussion



- Is it better to get a “B” in an AP/Honors class or an “A” in a regular class?
- Are test scores more important than grades?
- Can a strong essay make up for weak academics? Can a weak essay overshadow solid academics?
- Hooks – what they are, how to leverage them?
- Demonstrated interest – when can it help?
- How can “fit” be conveyed?
- Is an applicant who has not faced adversity at a disadvantage?
- What types of disciplinary actions are forgivable?

# Time to Vote



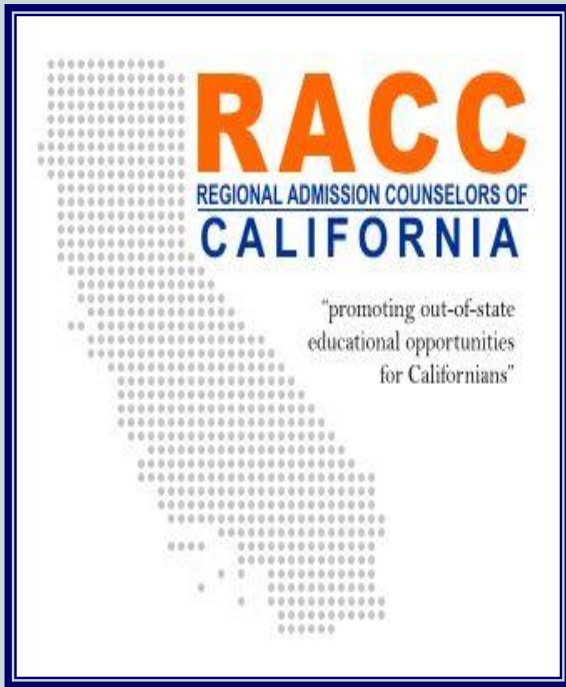
- Everyone gets one vote
- Cast your vote to Admit – Dorri, Henry, or Marcela
- Everyone gets one vote
- Cast your vote to Deny
  
- This means that the student who was not offered admission and was not denied admission is on the Waitlist.

# Time to Reflect



- As you reviewed and discussed the applicants, what were some specific factors that tipped the scale in your admission decision – positively or negatively?
- Were there factors that you initially felt were important but ended up not being crucial in your final vote?
- Did your votes match the decision of the Committee?
- How did you feel about voting to deny a student?
- What lessons did you learn about the admission process?
- Compare your final admission decisions with those of your own student or your parents.
- Students – what will be your “tag” in the admission process?

# THANK YOU!



**PRESENTED BY  
YOUR FRIENDLY  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ADMISSION COUNSELORS**