

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

CAAP INTERVIEW MANUAL
2007-2008



INTERVIEW LOGISTICS

- You should expect to receive interview requests *via email* beginning in mid September through December 15th.
- Interview assignments will be emailed to you by Virginia McCormack: CAAP@conncoll.edu. Virginia will assign interviews based on the level of commitment you indicated on the CAAP Registration Form.
- It is assumed that as an “active” CAAP interviewer you will meet with your assigned students and complete the write-ups. It is *not* necessary to reply to the interview assignment email.
- Within a week of receiving the interview assignment you should contact the prospective student and arrange a meeting.
 - Suggested interview locations: coffee shop, library, home or work
- Interview write-ups should be completed in a timely fashion. Please refer to the sample interview write-ups and guidelines that follow.
- Submit interview write-ups by email to CAAP@conncoll.edu with the following subject header: Last Name, First Name (Date).
- The interview assignment email sent to from the CAAP@conncoll.edu address will read as follows:

Dear CAAP Interviewer,

You are assigned to interview the following student. Please contact and meet with him or her within the coming week. Your interview write-up should be submitted as soon as possible by email to CAAP@conncoll.edu with the following subject header: Last Name, First Name (Date). Please do not reply to this email unless unforeseen issues arise and you cannot complete the interview. For general interview questions please contact Dan Pearson (daniel.pearson@conncoll.edu).

Thank you for your time and continued commitment.

Full Name: Suzanne Smith

Nick Name: Suzy

Address Line 1: 10 Camel Way

City: New London

State: CT

Zip: 06320

Email: GoCamels@aol.com

Phone: 860-444-4444

Current School: Somewhere High School

Academic Interests: English, Political Science

Extracurricular Interests: Community Service, Soccer, and Reading

CAAP INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

I. General Responsibilities

Like all members of the admission staff, it is your responsibility to know as much as possible about Connecticut College. The greater your knowledge about the institution, the greater your resources for answering the myriad of questions that arise during and after an interview. No one knows everything there is to know about the College; you should be open to new sources of information, interesting anecdotes that tell a story well, or a new “take” on a familiar theme. At all costs, please avoid “canned” responses, as they are generally flat and sound insincere, and often times the answer sounds the same at all of the colleges a prospective student visits.

Interviewers must have the ability to discuss Connecticut’s educational philosophy, general education requirements, various academic requirements, various academic departments and interdisciplinary Centers, and general information regarding opportunities for off-campus study. There are many features of this institution that make Connecticut College “distinctive” within our peer group of New England liberal arts colleges, and you should be able to discuss these characteristics in depth.

Applicants to Connecticut College typically overlap with the same colleges: Vassar, Middlebury, Trinity, Bates, Colby, Bowdoin, Wesleyan, Tufts, Skidmore, Brown, Boston College and Hamilton lead our list of admission “rivals.” Accordingly, a recitation of the “virtues of a small college” will not win us any points. While true, saying we have “a good student-faculty ratio” will not move us out of such a pack. What, for example, is it about Connecticut’s small class size that makes us special? The viewbook and the College website are two fantastic resources to help you identify Conn’s new and distinguishing features!

You must also be familiar with policies related to admission and financial aid, including requirements and deadlines. Please refer to our **supplemental application** available on the admissions website (<http://www.conncoll.edu/admissions/>) for further details.

II. Evaluation versus Public Relations

Although the interview is not a required part of our admission process, it is strongly encouraged. An interview serves two functions in the admission process: public relations and evaluation. Each function carries equal weight. As an evaluative tool, the interview provides the admission committee with a personal dimension that may not be evident in a student’s written application, high school transcripts, or recommendations. You have met the student “up close and personal,” and we look to an interview write-up to provide thoughts and observations about a student’s interests, motivations, personality, and mutual appropriateness for Connecticut College. Objectivity is critical, even as you come to like or dislike individual candidates.

Strong emphasis must also be placed on the public relations aspect of the interview. You should never, however, view an interview as an attempt to overtly “sell” Connecticut College. The students’ sense of you will shape their lasting sense of the College.

The most successful interviews combine these two functions. In fact, an interesting *conversational* interview with the appropriate level of intellectual challenge is the best public relations appeal we can make about Connecticut's strengths as a highly selective college. Personal attention and a sincere interest in someone as an individual, combined with thought-provoking questions, reflect most favorably on the Connecticut College community. Ideally the interview experience will be a nice give and take conversation between you and the prospective student. While it is good to keep in mind certain questions you may want to ask, it is important to be flexible in how you shape the overall interview. For example, if you and your student discover a mutual interest, allow it to be explored fully. It is better to let the conversation take its own course as opposed to abruptly interjecting your next question. If you don't get around to finding out what all of their classes are for their senior year, that's not the end of the world. That information will be included in their application. What is more valuable to the admissions process during the interview is to ensure that you are gaining some insight into who that prospective student really is, aside from what we'll see on their application.

III. Faultless Customer Service

There is a guiding tenet in our office: students and their parents are our "customers" and deserve "faultless customer service" during their time with us. It is our task to convey the important message that as an individual, each person is important in our process of selecting a freshman class. People are attracted to small liberal arts colleges because of our traditional emphasis on the individual. We must prove that we are interested in each student **as a person** and are, therefore, willing to listen, to answer questions candidly, and to find out what is important to them. Accordingly, each and every student should leave an interview feeling as if they have given us their very best, even when the contrary is true.

IV. Objectivity and Sensitivity

Objectivity can sometimes be an elusive thing. You are human and certainly have interests, assumptions, and biases that will fight to surface. However, it is imperative that you be conscious of your role as an authority figure and avoid arrogance and pre-judgment. The interview should not be a chance for the interviewer to vent personal dislikes, angers, or problems, nor should it serve as an attempt to pass judgment beyond the analysis necessary for written evaluation. Chances are you will interview some students who you may not like. While it's important to document instances of valid concerns or reservations, it is in no way appropriate to be disrespectful in an interview write up. And of course, all evaluations **must** be supported by actual evidence rather than mere conjecture.

V. Just one part of a bigger puzzle...

It is important to remember that an interview is only one of many sources of information we consider before making an admission decision. Your evaluation may or may not be supported by other compelling evidence in a student's file. Occasionally, our decision does not coincide with your "read" of the applicant. This is a normal part of the process and does not adversely reflect your interviewing skills or our faith in you as a member of our staff. If you are curious about any individual decision we make, please see me and I will be happy to explain our thinking to you.

VI. Questions

Students may have questions for you about their candidacy or about your experiences at the College. Focus on the latter as much as possible and remember to remain candid but positive. Listen to the questions being asked and answer as concisely as possible, but also be prepared to “read between the lines.” For example, if someone asks you, “Is housing guaranteed?” you should respond with more than just a “yes.” This vague question can be a starting point for a conversation about roommates, life at a residential college, theme housing, etc. A student may not always be savvy enough to ask a question that directly elicits such responses. Help them out when you can. If a student or their parents ask specific questions about their candidacy, it is imperative that you do not provide a definitive answer either way. Usually you can deal with this question effectively by saying something like “while I can’t provide any kind of guarantee, based on my conversation with your son/daughter, I think he/she will be competitive for admission.” In saying this, you are reassuring their anxieties without making any sort of promise.

Balancing the need to be positive with the desire to be candid is a delicate proposition. By no means should you fabricate an answer to any question. However, be mindful of the fact that a student will often exaggerate any negatives you might present; it is important to always present a **balanced** picture. Furthermore, if you are asked a question that you do not know the answer to, it is perfectly fine to admit that you do not know and that you will either go and ask one of the admission reps in the office, or will email them within a few days.

You will find a list of commonly asked questions on the admission website (<http://www.conncoll.edu/admission>).

VII. Parents

While the primary focus of every interview is always the student, parents certainly play a significant role in the college selection process and must be acknowledged before and after an interview. Be sure to introduce yourself to parents, indicate the approximate length of the interview, and offer to spend some time answering their questions after the interview. Parents should feel part of the admissions process and not just as chauffeurs for their children.

VIII. A Few Rules to Keep in Mind

1. Never tell an applicant or a parent in any absolute sense of his or her chances for admission. Our guidelines shift from year to year and predictions are tricky and can come back to haunt us later.
2. Each prospective student should leave the interview feeling positive about the interview experience. You should never demonstrate in attitude or words any sense that an applicant has done poorly. Reserve such commentary for your evaluation, but make sure to substantiate your claims and do so in a constructive and respectful manner.
3. Keep things positive. Do not air your personal grievances about faculty, departments, or aspects of the curriculum during an interview.

4. Your role is to find out about the student you are interviewing and to contribute personal experiences in response to questions or to briefly illustrate an idea; do not monopolize the conversation. In general, two-thirds of an interview should feature the student as speaker.
5. No one is familiar with all aspects of Connecticut College. It is better to say “I don’t know” and volunteer to find an answer than to respond incorrectly to a question.
6. The Class of 2012 is not the Class of 2011, nor are the admission parameters going to be exactly the same. A college and its students evolve over time; follow the guidelines put forth by the Admission Office for this year, not your own sense of your classmates’ admissibility.

THE INTERVIEW

A good interview should resemble a conversation, with appropriate levels of give-and-take between each participant. An interview is not an interrogation nor is it a monologue or a yes-no volley. Every candidate should feel comfortable and sense your openness and warmth. You will gain more insight into students if you are successful in encouraging them to relax and present themselves as naturally as possible.

Begin every interview with the understanding that this individual may be nervous about speaking alone with a stranger who is evaluating him or her for admission to a highly selective college. You can relieve some of this nervousness by being relaxed and friendly and by starting the interview with questions the student can easily answer. Students are usually able to talk about their extracurricular interests or summer experiences with relative comfort; these are good subjects for the early part of the interview.

A structured interview is most productive, but this does not imply that stiff or unnatural questions are necessary. Your goal is to develop a conversational style, as a comfortable exchange is more enjoyable than a strict question and answer format. Above all, realize that there is no right or wrong answer in an interview. Project a sincere interest in each person with whom you speak; listen carefully and ask questions that show you have appreciated what has been said. To create a comfortable but structured interview, you must be relaxed, capable of putting the student at ease, and flexible enough to bend if the situation calls for it.

You should consider the following guidelines:

1. Start with questions that the students can easily answer. This will calm the student's nerves and make you seem more approachable. Never start an interview with penetrating questions to which a student will not be able to readily respond.
2. Be sensitive to differences in people, noting educational as well as family backgrounds, and try to avoid topics that might prove difficult or painful.
3. **Never** unduly push a student to respond.
4. Allow for relaxed silence if the student needs time to reflect before speaking, but change the topic when silence proves discomforting.
5. Be flexible. Do not insist on pursuing a given format if a good discussion is evolving. Do not, however, allow the interviewee to control the conversation to the point where you are left with little substantive information on which to make an informed evaluation of the candidate.
6. Find out what you want to know without diminishing a student's freedom to talk spontaneously about his or her interests. Questions phrased in the form of a statement (Tell me about...) are frequently productive. Avoid "yes" and "no" exchanges wherever possible.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following sample questions offer some ideas about progressing through an interview. You will develop your own favorite questions as you begin your job, but it is often helpful to have a variety of questions in mind before an interview begins. Shy or quiet students may require a fair amount of questioning to reveal their interests. Don't be bound, however, by your set of standard questions. A good interviewer responds to the candidate, asking questions which are prompted by real interest in the prospective student. Let your curiosity guide you.

I. Learning About the Student's Interests

- * Are there any specific activities or extracurricular interests you plan or hope to pursue in college?
- * Why are these of interest to you?
- * What have you done in these areas before? Have you participated during high school or in your community?
- * What do you gain from this interest?
- * Are you a different or better person because of the time you have committed to this interest?
- * What are your friends like? How would they characterize you?
- * What have you done during the summers? Do you spend much time with your family? Do your parents or siblings have special interests you share with them?

II. Learning About the Student's Academic Abilities, Experiences, and Attitudes

- * Tell me about your interest in... How does this shape up for you as a potential major in college?
- * What has been your favorite course or subject area in high school? Why? Did your teachers in this subject influence you in any way?
- * How would you rate your academic strengths and weaknesses? Are you better in some subjects than others? Do you know why?
- * What classes are you taking this year? Do you find your courses challenging?
- * How would your teachers characterize you? Do some teachers see you differently than others?
- * How would you rate yourself as a writer? What was the most challenging writing assignment you have faced?
- * When and where do you find yourself most stimulated intellectually?

III. Seeking Ideas and Opinions; Challenging the Student (GENTLY Please!)

- * What things would you like to do at some point in your life? If you could reach any goal what would it be?
- * Is there an issue about which you feel strongly? What is your opinion, and why do you feel that way?
- * Would you change anything about your school if you could become principal? What if you were mayor of your town?
- * If you could educate the American people on one important issue, what issue would you choose and why?
- * What sets you apart as an individual in your school?

- * Do you have any heroes? What do you admire about these people and why?
- * Is there anyone in your life who has influenced you a great deal? In what ways?
- * What might you do with a year off between high school and college?
- * Is there anything you hope to improve about yourself over the next few years?
- * How have you changed personally and intellectually since you've started high school?
- * If you could have a day of your own without academic work, how would you plan your time and what would you do?

IV. Summing Up

- * Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you hoped we would?
- * Do you have any specific questions about Connecticut College that you'd like me to address?
- * Is there anything about you in particular that you'd like me to pass on to the Admission Committee?

EVALUATING THE CANDIDATE

We appreciate your candid evaluation of the student as we read the application for admission. Be honest and fair to the candidate. Most prospective students have strengths and weaknesses. By providing **specific** examples from your conversation, you will present a more convincing evaluation.

As you listen to the student you will begin to assess his or her strength as a candidate for admission to Connecticut College. **Be careful!** Listen with an open mind and do not prejudge your interviewee based on your first impressions. If you conclude early in the course of an interview that this student is not a strong candidate, you may miss particular strengths which might emerge as he or she becomes more relaxed. The opposite may also happen. If a student makes a great first impression, you may not listen as carefully for information about the strength of his or her course selection. You should use the time with the student to gather information and impressions, and *then* sift through these impressions after he or she is gone.

Even when it becomes painfully clear to you that a student is not a strong candidate for admission (and this does happen), the student should leave the interview feeling like he or she has had a fair opportunity to present personal experiences and that you were genuinely interested in hearing about these experiences. This skill is the truest test of an excellent interviewer.

Your evaluation should include your impressions of this candidate as both a student and as a person. It is helpful to jot down a few notes about your conversation before you begin your formal write-up. Use the information you've learned about this student to describe his or her academic achievement and intellectual curiosity. Assess the way in which the candidate approaches academic and extracurricular interests. Think about how the student might fit into the Connecticut College environment and classroom.

Be assured that your report will be considered carefully in the selection process and that it carries equal weight with interviews done by counselors. Interview reports frequently substantiate impressions gained from other parts of the application and may add important details to our evaluation. Furthermore, in some cases, the interview can turn the tide for students who are on the "bubble" (their admission decision could go either way). It is important that you approach each evaluation with care and attention. Your perspective as a Connecticut College alum is very valuable, particularly with regard to such intangible characteristics as intellectual curiosity, motivation, and open-mindedness.

THE EVALUATION REPORT

The interview evaluation is an important part of an application file because it records a candid personal assessment of a student that is often unavailable in other parts of the written application. An evaluation should provide the reader with your observations and judgments, but it must also provide enough information about the conversation to support your conclusions. In most cases, the evaluation fits neatly into the pattern already established throughout an application. When an evaluation stands at odds, it is vital that sufficiently complete reporting is provided so the Admissions Committee can make independent judgments. In addition, your written commentary should support and enhance your numerical ratings.

The written report will be easier to produce if you keep the following structure in mind as you put your evaluations into words:

I. Overall Impressions: Judgments about quality of mind, ability to articulate, preparation for Connecticut College, independence, energy, and personal contribution.

II. Academic Achievement and Intellectual Qualities: Include student's curiosity and interests in your report on the quality of academic program and performance. It is important to include your evaluation of the student's preparation for the demanding education offered here, which includes course load and quality of courses. Academics are an important part of the interview. You are not simply judging character.

III. Personal Qualities: Comment on spark, energy, tolerance, openness, self-knowledge, humor, and perspective.

IV. Extracurricular Involvement: Student's leadership, initiative, engagement, commitment to activities, and reasons for particular choices. Include follow-through in activities as well.

*Be sure to **substantiate** your impressions about a candidate with **facts** presented in the interview. Quote the student where appropriate. Avoid generalizations and pejoratives, and be specific in your observations.*

DEFINITIONS OF INTERVIEW RATING CATEGORIES

Academic Achievement

Without necessarily asking for specific grades or standardized test scores, you must determine the student's overall academic preparation for Connecticut College. Quality of academic program (including Advanced Placement classes, honors and accelerated classes, or local college and university courses) forms the core of this category. Of course, you need to inquire about the opportunities available, and a student must always be evaluated in the context of his or her school and community. As much as possible, this category should reflect what the student has accomplished as measured by objective information.

Intellectual Curiosity

This category measures intellectual strength, intrinsic interest in learning, excitement about ideas, a questioning attitude, involvement in intellectual discussion, breadth of views, and interdisciplinary thinking. Consider a student's willingness to go beyond requirements and to learn and grow both in and out of the classroom.

Commitment

Intrinsic motivation, the ability to extend oneself, desire to be challenged, effort, discipline, persistence, a passion for one's work, and productive follow-through should all be reflected in this category. Depth of interest and a seriousness of purpose regarding one's own college education should also be included here. The quality of the student's commitment to academic and non-academic areas should be reflected here.

Extracurricular

The extracurricular category measures the tangible record of success outside of the classroom. A record of leadership, responsibility, initiative, and developed abilities and talents all figure prominently here. There are several major areas that this category might represent: school governance, publications, athletics, community service, music, drama, or significant job or home responsibilities. Your evaluation should take into consideration depth of involvement and level of contribution. It should also reflect your sense of this candidate's likely degree of involvement in student life at Connecticut College. A long extracurricular resume is not always the key to this part of your evaluation; multiple clubs and activities that seem inconsequential to the candidate is not what we are seeking. One activity done well and with passion counts for a lot. Remember, we want a well-rounded freshman class, not necessarily 500 well-rounded individuals.

Personal

Your comments should reflect the candidate's integrity, compassion, open-mindedness, sense of humor, independence, leadership qualities, social and emotional maturity, and sensitivity to differences of others. You do not necessarily have to "like" someone in order to offer a positive personal evaluation. A high rating indicates that you feel this student would make a positive contribution to the College.

Overall Rating

The overall rating is not an average of the preceding categories, but rather should reflect your overall impression from the interview. Generally, academic achievement carries the most weight.

Remember that each candidate is being judged against a tough standard (the “average” Connecticut College applicant), and we are attempting to measure overall excellence.

Additional Notes

While it is important for you to focus on and evaluate excellence, please do not lose sight of **potential**. You are, after all, dealing with 17 and 18 year-olds, many of whom have not yet demonstrated excellence and should not be asked to live up to the expectations of someone who has already had the advantage of a Connecticut College education. Do not lose sight of what you were like as a high school senior.

In addition, we must consider factors of background (socioeconomic, ethnic, educational) as we evaluate a student’s level of achievement in relation to our standards of excellence. A student who has overcome significant obstacles or disadvantages in educational opportunity and has achieved relative to environment may be evaluated more positively, even though the level of achievement may not be at the “average” level.

Remember that we are one of the most selective colleges in the country; not all applicants with outstanding characteristics can be admitted.

You will provide a rating for each category. Your numerical ratings should mirror the tone of your written assessment.

INTERVIEW RATINGS

The following standards will help define our rating system and should help yield equity from each interviewer from the first interview to the last.

<u>RATING</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1	OUTSTANDING: Exceptional, very unusual candidate. The candidate is extremely well-prepared candidate; he or she has far exceeded the expectations of any high school environment. They candidate would make significant contributions to the Connecticut College community.
2	EXCELLENT: Quite impressive. The candidate would add and contribute to life at the College. Student is very well-prepared, and others would benefit from the presence of this student.
3	ABOVE AVERAGE: Clearly strong and above average for our applicant pool.
4	AVERAGE: Qualified and may contribute but not particularly distinctive on the whole within our pool. There is room for growth and potential. May be appealing for some reasons, less so for others.
5	BELOW AVERAGE: Not particularly impressive. The student could probably do the work, but he or she would make little contribution to the academic and social environment. Perhaps under-prepared and would not benefit from the quality of education available.
6	WEAK: Offers very little evidence of academic or personal motivation and achievement.
7	POOR: Incapable of Connecticut's work, expectations, or demands. Often inadequately advised by guidance counselor; insufficient preparation to succeed at any of the most selective colleges.
0	BOOM/BUST: Might set the world on fire at college or might fail completely. This should not be used frequently. This rating should be reserved for those who would be a "3" if you make one set of assumptions or a "7" of you make another set. You'll recognize a boom/bust when you see one.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

Student: Madeline Smith

High School:

Date: July 21, 2006

Interviewer Name:

Thank God for a good chatterbox. At the end of a fairly talkative day, along came Madeline. Wind her up and away she went. Happily, her chatter was engaging and purposeful.

Madeline is a bright-eyed, articulate, poised young woman. She seems to be very connected to her Indian heritage and we had an interesting conversation about the role of ethnicity in the United States. Her family emigrated from India in 1960, so her perspective is that of a first-generation American. In many ways, she is your typical, suburban teenager from New Jersey, but the scent of India remains with her. Mom and Dad are both doctors educated in India and it sounds like they promote Indian culture at home, but offer Madeline a fairly wide berth concerning her Americanization. She had some funny comments regarding dating and her parents' expectations; her perspective was mature and thoughtful.

English and history are her main interests, but she admits that she's soft on the math/science side. "It just proves that math skills are not genetic!" Her curriculum sounds good with several IB and AP courses. I'm curious about her college search: she seems like she could aim higher than she is based on what she told me, but the list is filled with less selective places. She saw Wesleyan and CC today, and visited GW and American last week. Tomorrow it's off to UNH. Huh? Her list is enormous and she says she's leaning towards liberal arts colleges over urban schools, but it's early.

I like Madeline. She would add a shot of verve to campus and would be a strong presence in Unity House.

Academic Achievement: 3

Extracurricular: 4

Personal: 2

Intellectual Curiosity: 3

Commitment: 4

Overall: 4

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

Student: Joe Tucker

High School:

Date: July 1, 2006

Interviewer Name:

Ever have one of those interviews where you realize that the 17 year old sitting in the chair across from you is way smarter than you are? That was my experience with Joe. Wow. This kid is bursting with knowledge and loves to talk. He informed me that sometimes people get annoyed with him, “because I ask too many questions.” Joe is an individual who thrives on learning. His IB curriculum isn’t challenging nor fulfilling enough, so he takes it upon himself to “learn about new things I’m interested in.” This kid is literally like a sponge for information

Two examples of what he’s learned about on his own: photography and marine biology. First, photography: Joe thinks black and white photography is beautiful. “It really captures the essence of what you’re photographing. It’s very pure and simple, but beautiful at the same time.” Joe not only has begun experimenting with his own photography, but has built a dark room in his basement (with the permission of his parents, of course). Second, marine biology: Joe LOVES everything that has to do with the ocean. We had a mini trivia segment to the interview where I learned that shark pups will attack one another inside the womb if they feel threatened by their siblings. I also learned that a mantis shrimp can grow to be quite sizeable and can break human fingers if given the chance. Joe has learned none of this in school, taking it upon himself to pursue the things he is interested in. And the best part is, he’s totally sincere about all of it. He is just this wonderfully smart kid who loves to learn. Not to mention, very socially adept and interesting to speak with. Joe docents at the Mystic Aquarium and claims that he can spend upwards of 45 minutes speaking with people about various sea creatures – I don’t doubt it.

Basically, Joe is a catch for us. Incredibly smart and an active learner, this kid has it going on. I’m worried we’ll lose him to an Ivy, because yes, he is that good.

Academic Achievement: 1

Extracurricular: 1

Personal: 2

Intellectual Curiosity: 1

Commitment: 1

Overall: 1

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

Student: Sarah Becker

High School:

Date: July 5, 2006

Interviewer:

While Sarah's accomplishment will shine on paper, in person, I was less than impressed. She is a nice girl, with some good commitments, but nothing that really stands out. If she were visibly passionate about some of the things she does, that would be one thing. But the number of bland and generic "yeah" and "it's pretty great" comments throughout this interview left me wanting more.

Sarah is getting ready to leave for a two week trip to Sweden and Denmark to play in a big soccer tournament with other teams from across the world. For someone who has played soccer her entire life and who wants to play in college and is even considering D1, you think this would be pretty exciting. When I asked Sarah if she was looking forward to the trip she replied with a "yeah, it should be pretty cool." Then when I followed up with where she was going in Sweden and Denmark she replied with, "I'm actually not sure." Not exactly an answer typical of someone who is truly excited about taking a big trip. While Sarah has a lot to offer: fairly good academics, solid athletics, and even some other involvements with community service and foreign language clubs, she doesn't seem particularly excited about any of it. Instead, she's very nonchalant, to the point of actually detracting from her appealing involvements. I had to ask her several times if she did anything else besides soccer before she finally said, "oh yeah, I do stuff with community service," without elaborating. At which point, I then had to turn to the informational sheet and ask her about specific interests she had listed.

Like I said, Sarah will appear to have a lot to offer on paper, and I suspect she's a pretty good soccer player. But with no apparent spark or real energy associated with any of what she does, I'm not all that convinced she would make that great of an impact on our campus.

Academic Achievement: 4

Extracurricular: 2

Personal: 5

Intellectual Curiosity: 4

Commitment: 5

Overall: 5

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

Student: Tyler Johnson

High School:

Date: August 10, 2006

Interviewer:

Tyler is an aspiring actress who too perfectly fits the actress type. She was outgoing, friendly, a tad too proud, but eventually lacking in depth. All that she seemed interested in discussing was her interest in fantasy literature, particularly Harry Potter. As an avid Harry Potter fan myself, I tried to give Tucker the opportunity to focus our conversation around her books, both to make her a little less uneasy and to allow her the chance to discuss something she felt more assured in her knowledge of. Unfortunately, Tyler was incapable of having even a remotely intellectual conversation about those books and she left me feeling thoroughly disappointed with her scholastic and intellectual abilities.

As someone who spends a fair amount of time smiling goofily at himself, I feel somewhat hypocritical making the next criticism, but I couldn't help wondering if Tyler has the ability to speak seriously about any topic whatsoever. She insisted on laughing throughout the length of our interview, several times actually bouncing in her chair. Now, I accept that she is an energetic young woman, but when that energy prevents her from carrying on an intelligent conversation, one which contains more than just short exclamations of joy, her excitement has gotten in the way of more important things.

Tyler partially redeems herself by stepping onstage. She has performed in a number of plays, often choosing (so she claims) what she feels are the more challenging yet less prestigious roles. Even with a strong contribution to the theater department, though, she still brings very little to the College that could not be found in many other applicants

Academic Achievement: 5

Extracurricular: 4

Personal: 5

Intellectual Curiosity: 5

Commitment: 4

Overall: 5