English Transcript for *Santa Clara University*

We're back with Becky Konowicz, director of international admission at Santa Clara University. And now we're going to hear a little bit about how Santa Clara goes through their application evaluation process. Now we want to really pick your brain about how you read an application, how you decide who's accepted and who's not accepted. How you evaluate the students, To begin with can you tell us how many applications does Santa Clara receive, and how many spaces are available in a first year class. >> Santa Clara right now for the Fall of 2014 has receive 15,000 applications for undergraduate admission And our goal is to achieve a freshman class of 1,300 students. Currently out of those 15,000 applications there are just under 700 international student applications. And what Santa Clara means by international students is students who have a foreign passport. They do not have access to a US passport. And so we have students from all different curriculums around the world, including international students in the United States. So that's, that's how we define international student. So, now that we know about the requirements, and a little bit about the application numbers. Can you walk us through the evaluation process from the time an international application is complete until the decision is made. And maybe you could also include a little bit about who is making the decision. >> I'd be happy to. At Santa Clara, I kind of lead this initiative. And so the best way to think about it is three pools of students. You have the clearly denied students, the clearly admissible, and then the majority of students fall in the middle. And so a clearly denied student will have two people evaluate them. So myself and maybe one other admission counselor. The reason is we really believe we want, if we're going to deny a student, that two people have touched the file, read the file, and given that student a chance, to come to agreement. A clearly admissible student is the same way. Usually reviewed by two people. In many instances it may just be myself. And we move the file along. But again, those two populations are a small population in Santa Clara's applicant pool, those 15,000 applications. It's a very small group that kind of meet those two criteria of clearly denied, clearly admissible. Especially in the international. Pool of 700, because there's many nuances within international. We have to understand the curriculum that they were educated in, we have to understand their background, their story. So majority of international students get reviewed by me, maybe one other admission counselor. And then maybe even a committee to make that decision, because there's, there's some strengths in the application and there's some weaknesses that we have to, as a as a group, come to a consensus on. >> So, here's the big question, how does Santa Clara decide who's excepted and who's denied? >> Yeah. I think for this purpose is to explain to our international student, it may be easier to start with who do we deny. And so you can work on your application and take this advice as you're working on applications. First and foremost we have to look at the English proficiency, because Santa Clara does not offer an ESL program, we do not offer a bridge program for English proficiency. So you have to meet our English proficiency minimum. So that would be the first hurdle. >> Mm-hm. >> So we would deny a student who does not meet our English proficiency. The second piece of our evaluation would then look at your academic profile. So we're looking at the curriculum you were educated in. Does it match the level of knowledge we expect for the course of study? So if you're choosing to apply to our school of engineering, we need to see students who have achieved the calculus level in math. To be competent for those first year classes of engineering. And so we're going to look at your curriculum to see if you've achieved calculus level. We also will look at standardized testing like the SAT or the ACT in that math section to

say, okay, in your curriculum, maybe you studied a little bit of calculus. But your SAT score would confirm to us that you do have the math competency to handle our engineering program. So, we'll look at your academics in holistic way, where we look at the courses you've taken, the marks you've retrieve, achieved, and then the standardized testing and how that complements that. Last up but not least we're going to look at kind of what makes you you. How. What are you going to contribute to our community that is different? So you have got the English proficiency. You have the grades. This is that area where students are clearly admissible or are in the majority of the middle. The last piece is a character assessment from the letters of recommendation. Are you the type of student who is engaged in the classroom to you teacher enjoyed teaching you. We also look for are you committed to the community you are part of, do you do anything extra. Whether it's working on an NGO or an orphanage, or have you traveled often with your family. And, and you've decided to maybe do something unique and gain a new skill, like scuba diving, and that's out of your element. We're looking for that background we also look for students who are going to be risk takers. To travel maybe 3,000 miles to come live in a completely new country in a completely new environment and new culture for four years, takes somebody who's, who's mature and ready to jump on that risk. And so we look for those characteristics, again, in those letters of recommendation. In the extracurricular activities, or the stories you tell us in your essay. So that, that holistic review becomes really important to us, beyond just the grades and the standardized testing. >> Thank you for that information. Now, statistically, when a student looks up Santa Clara on a website like College Board, they're going to see that Santa Clara has a 51% acceptance rate. Can you put that into perspective for a student? What does a 51% acceptance rate actually mean? >> Yeah, great question. I think there's a lot of pieces that go into that statistic. You know, best way to think of it is, a majority of the students who apply to Santa Clara are admissible. They meet our basic criteria. They have the academic profile of, of strong grades and certain SAT scores. >> Mm-hm. >> But we can't admit everybody, we don't have enough space. >> Right. >> And so that's where that acceptance rate comes into play, and so part of the evaluation is looking again, holistically to find the best fit students. >> Mm-hm. >> We're looking to make sure our Courses are well-fed. So do we have enough students applying to engineering, do we have enough students applying to arts and sciences and business? Sometimes we're more popular in one area than another. So we have to balance that all out. And so that 51%. Acceptance rate, there is more behind that. And again, many students don't realize that that accept, acceptance rate, many students may not complete their applications. And so it actually is smaller if you think about students who really compete. Submit all documents and can be reviewed. And so those are the students that we're focusing in on. But naturally, being a university in California where we're located in Northern California, we attract highly competitive students. Who are also applying to some of the top universities in California, and so that applicant pool at Santa Clara that you may fall into is highly competitive just based on the others who are applying. And so 51% somebody might say, oh I have a one in two chance to apply. Well, that depends if you are already competitive in our pool. Do you have profile that is, already puts you. In, to be a competitor in Santa Clara's pool. >> So you touched on this a little bit already. But, how likely is it for an academically qualified student to be denied at Santa Clara? And if a student was academically qualified, why would they possibly be denied? >> So we see this often with international students where in their national curriculum they are highly academic competitive. And may have achieved entrance into their national universities based on one exam result. >> Mm-hm. >> But applying to Santa Clara we don't may, base our sole decision on your academic profile. So for

example, I can tell you stories of an international student who has applied and they're Extra supplemental writing section. They might have mentioned wanting to go to school near Los Angeles, and we're not located near Los Angeles. And so when we're viewing that application, and I have to make a decision to take a highly academic student who thinks we're near Los Angeles. Or a highly academic student who understands that we're close to Apple, Google, Facebook and San Francisco, I'm going to take the student who knows our location. >> Mm-hm, hm. >> Because my impression of the student who doesn't know we're, where we're located, is that they don't truly want to be in Northern California. They want to be in Southern California with Los Angeles. So in the end I'm trying to admit students, who I also believe want to come. >> Mm-hm. >> And not only understand our location, but understand our missions and our values. So some international students who are academically talented, may give the impression in their application, that they're only looking on ranking, >> Mm-hm. >> Or they're only looking on the program, >> Mm-hm. >> But they don't realize at a campus like Santa Clara, you're more than your rank, you're more than your academic program And so, the students who stand out are academically qualified and really understand the university that they're applying to. >> So, you've mentioned this idea of fit, a lot. Fit between university and student. A question that I get from a lot of my international students is, well, how can they tell. So how can Santa Clara tell if a student is a good fit or not? >> I think what international students don't realize is we use the class prior, as a good indicator, and so for example, at Santa Clara, our freshman and sophomore retention rate is 95%. That does include our international students. They all come back and they're happy. And so we use their profiles as an example for what we're going to look in next year, not just academically, but again this idea of fit. We love our international students who may try out for a Varsity sport team, because we know they're joining a community. Or an international student who has demonstrated in their application. That they've worked with their community in a different and unique way, or an international student who has written an essay that has really captured their voice. And their story of perseverance, or of success after they've worked on something that was a failure. Those are key characteristics that we see as perseverance, determination, that will get them through that tough cultural shock of freshmen year to sophomore year. >> Mm-hm. >> We know our resources can be successful, but if a student, doesn't want that help, doesn't want to use those resources, when they get to our campus. That's that 5%, we don't want to see leave. >> Mm-hm. >> We're trying to get to 100% stay. >> Mm-hm. >> And so as you think about fet, and you think about opportunities on a campus. We're trying to look on the other direction of is the student going to take advantage of those opportunities on our campus. Do they show key characteristics that we have seen in previous international students as being the right characteristics for us. >> So how, if at all, does the application and evaluation process, differ for international students then it would for a US citizen like me. >> There are two key differences. And the one big difference for an international student compared to a US citizen is, the needleware process. Santa Claire does not offer any financial aid to international students. So at the time of application an international student does have to demonstrate the ability to cover the funds of what it costs to attend Santa Clara. The second big difference is the English proficiency. If you language of instruction in secondary school is not in English, then we do require that proof of English proficiency through an exam. But those are the only two differences in our evaluation of an international student, from a US citizen. >> So, I was hoping that you could address a popular myth for us. Many students will come to me and say, US universities have quotas, or limits, to the number of students that can be accepted from a, a single country. Can you talk

about that for us? >> Absolutely, I'd love to, because I do hear this myth as well, especially being a California university. We do not have any quotas. We do strategically plan our recruitment because we do know that we want to go out and meet students who are more likely to come to California. More likely to consider and be open minded to a Jesuit University mission. >> Mm-hm. >> Education, and then we also think about recruiting students who, for the programs that we do offer. We know we offer engineering and business that might be more popular in certain regions of the world than others. But we do not have any quotas. We try and reflect the community that we're located in. >> Mm-hm. >> And so again, being in California, we're very diverse as a state. >> Mm-hm. >> We're very diverse with immigrants, and so we try and keep our campus. A reflection of that diversity that we have in our backyard. >> So, looking at the data, research tells us that smaller schools like Santa Clara, will value the quantitative parts of the application. And so, grades and test scores and pieces like that. But that as a smaller school, you're also putting emphasis on the qualitative parts of the application. Things that you mention, the essays and letters of recommendation. How does Santa Clara balance the quantitative and the qualitative? >> To be honest I think that's a constant struggle Because you, you do want to put students in front of faculty who can achieve at that academic work that the faculty wants. So our number one driving force is, can we put. The students in front of faculty who love to learn, who can excel at a high level, and will want to be that partner in the classroom with a faculty member. But we are more than just a classroom experience. We have Division I sports where people, student athletes have gone on to play professionally and so we know we need cheerleaders. And we need fans in those events. We also offer neat opportunities with engagement with our community. >> Mm-hm. >> So community service work philanthropy work, NGO work, so we're looking for students to fill those roles on campus. We also know we need student leadership positions like an International Student Orientation leader. Or, a resident assistant, and so there's a university campus is a highly complex organization and students run many of it. All of us administrators are there for students, and so opportunities to engage with students outside the classroom is a thriving part of a medium-sized university. And so, balancing the academics with the, other aspects of an application are very important to Santa Clara. because we need to make sure we have that balance represented on our campus. >> Mm-hm. >> And students only, don't only come for the class room experience, but for the whole Part we also find that our alumni engagement is so high, because their most memorable experience is experience outside of the classrooms. Those times that they did research with a faculty member that led them to their dream you, you know, graduate school admission offer, or that time they had an internship With another Santa Clara Alum at Google, that led them to their job, first job opportunity. Those are the moments, yes you have to learn in the class room and learn the academic skills, the discipline, >> Mm-hm. >> But much of what, especially I see my international students thriving on. >> Mm-hm. >> Is those soft skills you learn outside the classroom. >> Mm-hm. >> And so we begin looking for that in the application process so we can attract and recruit international students who are ready to gain those soft skills. >> And we'll be right back to hear from Becky about each of the application pieces. [BLANK_AUDIO]