

English Transcript for *Montgomery County Community College: Part 3: Piece-by-Piece Evaluation*

We're speaking with Dennis Barrera, Assistant Director of Admissions at Montgomery County Community College. Dennis has already told us a lot about community colleges and about Montgomery County Community College, and now we're going to speak with him a little bit about the pieces of the application. >> Right. Happy to help. >> Great. So Dennis, a requirement at many colleges and universities is testing, specifically the SAT or the ACT. As you've told us, Montgomery County Community College does not require students to submit SAT or ACT scores, but what if a student does send you those scores? How are they used in your process? >> They can actually be very helpful. Although not a requirement, they can be used to waive certain sections of the placement test. For example for the SAT, if a student scores a 520 on the math SAT, we waive the math placement test and place that student into freshman level introductory math. The same goes with the English, as well as the reading sections of the test. It's about 500 in each, in each section. We also have waivers for the ACT. We've even put in place waivers, maybe not pertaining to, international students but for the PSAT. Any university credit that was that was at the college level, but earned at another institution, can also waive certain sections of the placement test. So it can actually accelerate the enrollment process, and can be very helpful that way. >> So we've already talked some about TOEFL and IELTS scores, and they do seem to be important in the evaluation process of Montgomery County Community College. So, can you again tell us how do you use TOEFL and IELTS scores when you're reviewing a student for admission? >> Right. What we do is we take the scores, and then you can see this on the application as well, is you'll see the different bands of where a score would fit and exactly what kind of level of ESL we would prescribe for that student. It could start off with something very basic to something more of an intermediate level to something that's even more advanced. And even if the student's score or earn a score high enough, they could be waived of ESL completely all together, but it helps us communicate with the student, and let them know that they may need, perhaps a semester or 2 of ESL before they can enroll in the Associates Degree Program, or to let the students know that no ESL will be required at all, and they can simply enroll in freshman level English courses. Another key thing to that I should mention is, it, the [UNKNOWN] are not required if the student is from a country where English is the official language. It's also not required for many of our transfer students, because they can usually come on campus, take the placement test, and that will satisfy the testing requirement for English. >> During these interviews when we're talking to schools that use a selective admission process, we ask about things like essays and letters of recommendation and activity lists and some of those pieces that are required by those colleges or universities. Montgomery County Community College does not require any of those pieces. If a student submits any of that information would it be considered and why or why not? >> It we would probably keep it in a student file, but we real, really wouldn't look at that as a piece of You know, admissions criteria, and this goes to the whole mission of community colleges is this to be that resource, to be that option for anyone that has that basic educational requirement and really just has the willingness to learn. It's different from a lot of institutions out there, that as I said before where you'll put all of these different pieces together to show that you're smart enough to succeed in their institution or that you prescribe to a like philosophy that they do, and you're a fit for their institution. As we become this option for a lot of students who just have this willingness to learn. We become something that says that yes, you can achieve you can achieve your dreams. You can receive a good quality education and meet

your own goals. >> Similarly, does the college factor demonstrate an interest into the admission decision? The demonstrated interest is really seen throughout the application process and it can help, it really helps the students just complete the necessary parts of their application. It can take time to bring this paperwork together, but really that's the only time it's really helpful, just the ease of enrollment. So, we have had some students, they'll They'll visit our campus on a tourist visa. We'll give them a campus tour and then they'll begin to assemble the different parts of their application. If they're proactive enough, they'll take their placement test rather than submit a TOEFL or an ELS. We'll always keep that on file and when they're ready to maybe go back after their vacation, they're ready to come back and roll register for classes, and start their first semester. Those that are really proactive show that demonstrated interest, that ease of enrollment is, just happens so much faster. >> So Dennis a lot of students are probably watching this interview, and saying It, it seems too easy. What would you say to those students? >> It almost is. I would say to those students that this is your opportunity to really understand the different dimensions that go with college admissions. Change your perceptions, it doesn't necessarily have to be this anxious process of getting your grades together, sitting for all these tests of English and math and reading. Writing these long winded essays of personal conviction Going to, you know, various people to ask for recommendations and assembling all of those together, paying an exorbitant fee and then dealing with the nerve racking of whether or not I was accepted into this institution. You can subvert that system, go into a community college or any institution with an open admissions policy, earn college credit or go through your developmental courses and then earn college credit. Graduate and get to that destination that you were always trying to get to to begin with. Earlier in the interviews I mentioned that we have alumni who are getting their Bachelor's degree who never submitted any of these criteria, but they get the same degree piece of paper, they get the same career resources from these other institutions. And as I said before, they're making their dreams come true. So, change your way of thinking on college admissions. That's what I would tell them. >> We're going to take another quick break and we'll be back for our final portion of our conversation with Dennis in just a second. [BLANK_AUDIO]