

English Transcript for *University of Pennsylvania: Part 3: The Evaluation Processes*

We are back with Jordan [UNKNOWN] from The University of Pennsylvania and now that we know little bit about the application process. Jordan is going to speak to us about the evaluation process. Jordan, to begin, can you tell us, how many spaces does Penn have in an incoming first year class? And how many applications does Penn receive to fill those spaces? >> Sure, so Penn has about, a class of about 2400 students each year. This year, we received over 35,000 applications. >> Mm-hm. >> And of those I, I would over 6000. Came from international students. >> So you've told us about the requirements. >> Mm-hm. >> You've told us about the numbers. >> Yes. >> Now can you explain to us the process, maybe beginning with when an international application is completed, until the decision is made. And maybe you can talk a little about who's actually making that decision. Sure. So, at Pen, we have a real commitment to attracting the most talented, diverse group of students that we can in any given year, that's meeting Pen's priorities and I include that last part because I think it's important for students to always remember That there's a part of this process that they're not going to be able to control. That there's, you know, university has its institutional priorities and whether it is, you know, finding, you know, female students for the next class of our viper program or finding You know talented students in fine arts. You never know what that's going to be. I use the silly example sometimes that let's pretend that all of the flute players graduated from the Penn band this year we would be on the lookout for talented flute players who wanted to join the Penn band and if you don't play the flute. There's not much that you can do about it at, at this point. >> [LAUGH] >> So, it's usually never that specific. >> Sure. >> But it's that same concept of the final piece to this. >> Mm-hm. >> Which leads to the unpredictability. Of selective admissions is that it's not just about what a student presents but it's also about what Penn is looking for at that moment. And so what we're doing is we're trying to take the number of spaces we have. The number of applications we have received and put together the best possible combination of a class for Penn at that moment. So in selective admissions well, yes, each decision is individual It's really the collective class that we always have to keep in mind. And so, you're looking away at turning away countless talented, qualified students every year. Not because they were any better or worse than another student, but because when we looked at the opportunity of a class that we had to put together And how they might challenge each other and grow with each other, and the different talents and experiences that they had, we made the decision that was right for Penn at that moment. And so I'd like to remind students that, you know, of the over 35,000 applications we'll receive. Upwards of 85% of those students tend to be academically qualified and so this process comes down to so many other things. We're asking the question of what would you be like at Penn and what do you want to get out of this experience and what do you see yourself giving back. So what kind of impact Would you have on campus. What's the value added of bringing you to this university? We get to those questions though, obviously, after we first ask the question of, would we be setting you up to succeed academically? And so once we've answered that question and we feel confident that a student Would be able to handle the academic rigor of Penn. Would be able to learn in this classroom, you know, small class size environment. Then we're getting to that more intensive discussion of what will that individual bring. So, obviously, this is a very intense complicated process that could never be decided by one individual. We'll use a community process and all applicants are discussed by multiple members of our staff and with the idea in mind of okay, how would we see this person as part of this class. >> Jordan,

you have touched on this a little bit but just to ask the direct question. How does Penn decide who to accept and who to deny? So, the, the, the reality is is that it's very you know, we're people on the other side of this. So just like the students are putting so much thought and work, you know, we're on the other side very much appreciating all of the achievements that they've had to this point. And what we're trying, our job is is to try to understand how that would translate at A. where does Penn, where Penn wants to go and B. where they want to go. An so the decision is based on many different factors. And students will always ask the question of what piece matters more, how much weight do you give this. I like to describe it sometimes with the analogy of you know, a scale that's calibrated at zero. And with each piece of the application that we're reviewing, the scale starts to tip. And a well done application is always going to be tipping in favor of the student. And so, little silly things like spelling errors, or whatever it might be, they're not going to make a student's decision, obviously, but they do have small waves of, of that scale and how it might balance. Bigger things like your academics, your essays and what it is that you want to contribute and how well you're articulating what it is that you want to do at Penn. They have more, obviously, weight on that scale. But for every student it's different. For some students like an extreme academic talent. Other students it might be an extreme athletic talent. For most people, it's some sort of combination of many, different talents that lead to Ultimately shifting that idea of a scale into yes, we can see this person in the class. >> Mm-hm. >> At Penn it gets a little bit more complicated though because we have the four undergraduate schools and several coordinated dual degree programs. So each of the four undergraduate schools is looking for the same basic thing. But then there maybe something specific like an engineering with love for you, obviously to have strength in physics for a something quantitative, whether it is business and the Wharton School or engineering, math and is important and in nursing, the commitment to the sciences and a commitment to the field of nursing is important. In the college we like students who are open to the idea of discovery, the idea that there are so many different paths, you know to, any end result and being open to really finding their passions and exploring and also diving deeper into things that might be unknown to them. According to the College Board. >> Mm-hm. >> When you look at, at the College Board website. >> Mm-hm. >> On Penn's profile, Penn has a 13% over all acceptance rate. >> Mm-hm. >> Which puts it the, you know, highest category. >> Mm-hm. >> For selectivity. >> Mm-hm. >> Can you put a 13% acceptance rate? >> Mm-hm. >> Into perspective? The students watching this? >> You know, over time, and especially in recent years with the growth of applications, I've seen, the numbers looks scarier and scarier, I know, to a student every year. But the reality is that the same things that lead to success in this process haven't changed. And so despite increased numbers it doesn't mean that we're looking really for anything different. It doesn't mean that different students are being successful. What our hope is that With these increased numbers comes an increase in, you know, the diversity of the students who are applying, and who are considering applying to the United States. I can say from experience that in the last several years that has been a tremendous change internationally. That students are applying from more and more places. Students are applying from different cities. Students are applying, not from international schools only but also from local state school or national school systems and that's a really exciting change because it allows Pen and other institutions To have a campus that's really reflective of the world. So some of the growth and some of the increased hype and statistics, it comes from students who are sending off several different applications. And many students applying to many more places than they used to. But without the thoughtfulness that's required to really be successful in the process.

And so definitely with every application that you send it need to be intentional. You need to have a reason why you're applying there specifically. And it can't be, you know, a prestige based thing. I, I joke with students that you can't simply take US News and World Report and apply to the top 25 institutions. because they're all so different and there's no way that you would be successful. So really the numbers are misleading. The numbers definitely don't tell the whole story. And there's always so much more behind that, that it still, you have to be yourself. You have to seek out institutions that match what it is that you're looking for. And you, your chances are still the same as any other year. >> Mm-hm. Joy, you previously mentioned that, you know, an estimate of probably 85% of applicants depend, are academically qualified. >> Mm-hm. >> So, how likely is it that an academically qualified student would be denied by Penn. And why would that be? >> It's very likely. I've never run the specific statistics but it's incredibly likely because that's just the reality of our applicant pool. You can imagine that students applying to highly selective institutions. They're pretty self selective in the process. So they're asking the questions of, okay Really am I this kind of student, can, is this the kind of, you know, environment I'm interested in? And so, we say a lot of times that we could probably fill our class four or five times over with students who have perfect SAT scores or perfect grade point averages, but that's not the kind of community that we're trying to create here. I think it would kind of be a really Frightening and boring university that ever tried to that, of just taking everybody who got great test scores. because it's, it's about so much more. People's con, contributions come in so many different ways. And the academic indexes only allow us to understand The potential likelihood of academic success here. It doesn't hep us understand innovations that might, you might find in a free search or a laboratory or achievements that you might have in music, a sport, a fine arts program, in Kelly Raider's house. Whatever it might be that you get involved with. And so that's why it's, it's frustrating, I think, for students, It's because it's easy to focus on the quantitative piece because that's measurable, but it's only one small part of this bigger process. >> Jordan, an idea that you've alluded to is the sense of fit or match between university and student. >> Mm-hm. So In the evaluation process, how much does Penn emphasize fit, and how can you tell who might be a good fit? >> Yeah. >> And who might not be a good fit? >> Yeah, the question of fit comes up a lot, and you hear it overused in my opinion. And it's tough because It's a little bit more complicated than the idea of just trying to, this, the sense of fate. >> Mm-hm. >> I think that what we're really trying to get at is why. >> Mm-hm. >> Did you find [INAUDIBLE] and I know that that seems silly and it seems simple. >> Mm-hm. >> But it's sometimes amazing to me how, how many students haven't really thought that out. >> Hm. >> And you can tell in their application. >> Mm-hm. Whether we're asking it in a essay question or in an alumni interviewer might ask it students just don't have that sense of excitement or that sense of you know a reason why they've intentionally filled out this application and gone through all this work. And so, I think then it's much more important for a student to have a answer to that, that's thoughtful, that's it's kind of the answer that shouldn't apply to every school that you apply to. >> Mm-hm. >. Every school should have a slightly different variation of what it is that makes you excited about that place. What it is that makes you see yourself there. When students have the fortunate opportunity to visit campus, I tell them to go to Locust Walk and just take a second and close your eyes or just look around and do that gut check. You know, how does this feel to you? Can you see yourself here? And even if you're not able to visit campuses It's important to talk to people, to go through websites, to attend presentations when you can. To find out is to get at that information that's going to help you be able to do that gut check. And I think that that's that fit moment, you know, the

idea of this is why, this is how I can see myself here, this is what makes me excited about it. So I would define fit, I think, a little bit differently. But that's what I think it really is. And, and we can't really answer that for you. I mean, a student is going to have to answer that themselves about what it is on their end. And our end, it's going to mean a bunch of different things. It's going to mean, how many classes, how many spaces do you have in the School of Engineering? How many students are we looking to enroll in nursing this year? What kind of a diverse class can we bring to campus from all over the world. So on our end that might be a little bit different but that's not something that a student needs to worry about when they're applying. >> Jordan, I was hoping you could address a popular myth that I hear all the time. Does Penn have quotas or limits about the number of students from a single country that must be accepted, or that can be accepted? >> Right. We get the quota question all the time. Not just internationally, but domestically as well. I understand, you know, students' anxieties over it. And it's a real concern they have, that they're in direct competition with people from their own school, their hometown, and their country, whatever it might be. And the answer is absolutely no. So there's never any quotas. I mean it could happen that you know, all of the students who apply from a certain school in a year get accepted and it could also happen that no students from that school get accepted for several years, and there's no rhyme or reason behind it, simply going back to that idea of a combination of a class that we're trying to put together. What I would say is Penn has a commitment to bringing a diverse international class. And so when you look at Penn's numbers, because we have about 10,000 undergraduates. Last year the incoming freshmen class was about 14% international. Of that, it, you know, obviously, so that means that it's a fairly, relatively large number. But within that, the real story is, at an undergraduate, we have students coming from 109 different countries and representing a 133 different cultures and citizenships and so, it's really For us it's much more about putting together this class that's reflective of the true diversity of the world and the academic talent that exists all over the world than it is about any particular quotas. We'll be back in just one minute to hear more about the University of Pennsylvania. [BLANK\_AUDIO]