

### English Transcript for *Purdue University: Part 3: The Evaluation Processes*

We're back with Brian Priester, Assistant Director of International Undergraduate Recruitment for Purdue University. And now we're going to really pick Bryant's brain about the evaluation process at Purdue and what they look for when reviewing undergraduate applications for admission. So, Bryant, to begin with- >> Mm-hm. >> Let's talk about the numbers. >> Okay. >> How many spaces does Purdue have in a first year class? And how many applications did Purdue receive to fill those spaces? >> When I like to talk about spaces, I think it's important to think about, in terms of working with international undergraduate students coming to United States. It requires a whole level of services in terms of, you know, reporting information to United States government for cross cultural programming and just for the, you know, general things to make sure that our students, you know, are successful in the four years they're at Purdue because as I mentioned earlier, students who are ultimately coming to Purdue are there for four years. So, the university has generally decided that, you know, Purdue will probably have between 1,200 to about 1,300 international undergrad full-time degree freshmen every year. And that's based on availability of services to making sure that we offer a robust international orientation for our students which is over four days, and connecting our students with Lafayette Purdue University, and just, you know, everything in general that sort of comes with studying in the United States. >> Mm-hm. >> To go further, last year we received about 12, 13,000 international undergraduate applications for admission to Purdue. So we have a very large, you know, application pool, of you know, many great students, you know, from around, not only around the world, but also, you know, many international students who are studying in the United States. >> And so, obviously you have a lot of work to do. If you're getting, you know, I, I mean, over, well over 10,000 applications. >> Right. >> For, you know, less than 2,000 spaces. >> Absolutely. >> So now that we know about the requirements, . >> Mm-hm. >> Now that we know [LAUGH] about the numbers, maybe you can walk us through the evaluation process. >> Absolutely. >> You know, for international applicants. >> Right. >> So, beginning with the time that the application is complete. >> [INAUDIBLE]. >> Until the decision is made and maybe you can include a little bit about how- >> Right. >> You know, the application is reviewed or who is reviewing the application. >> Absolutely. And I was going to say that I don't review all the applications [LAUGH] that are applied at Purdue. I, I mean, we work with a whole team of people to review applications. Obviously it takes multiple people just to open the mail. >> Mm-hm. >> You know, I mean, the delivery people, you know, who come from around the world, many of us, many of us know them on a first name basis just based on the volume of mail that we receive. However Purdue's process, it, it relies a lot on more and more technology and act, and at this point it's actually, you know, students are able to apply completely without using any paper. So, if you think about the entire, you know, application process that we've done because right now, everything can be submitted on the common applications, the transcript, the recommendation, and the application itself. You can pay the fee online. So, there's nothing technically a student would have to mail, you know, to Purdue. I tell students that just because you press Submit on common application, that does not mean your application will be automatically reviewed the next day. Because imagine several hundred thousand people submitting in the same 24 hour time period. >> Mm-hm. >> So, it requires us to go back and, and make sure that, you know, everything that's submitted matches, you know, the person's record. >> Mm-hm. >> Obviously there're many students with similar names, you know, we've had triplets and quadruplets apply with very similar names. >> Mm-hm. >> As

well as students with even similar birthdays that may be off a day or two so we have to make sure that we have, you know, the most accurate record. Even though records, even though we get many students, you know, who apply you know, at the same time. >> Mm-hm. >> Once application is completed they're submitted to the counselor. So our counselors who review the applications, they actually review by school. So we have a counselor who reviews all of the applications for the college of engineering, someone from the, the school of, the college school of education, someone from management, college of science, et cetera. So all of the dif, individual schools Purdue also have undecided program for students who want to apply and they don't, they haven't selected a major yet, that's our exploratory studies program and so they can still come to Purdue without choosing a major. So, so stud, so we're reviewing application based on I guess the requirements for a particular program or school at Purdue. >> Just a follow up on, on something that you mentioned. The idea of applying as an undecided major. >> Right. >> I have a lot of students who will come into my office or they'll email me and ask, is it okay if I apply undecided? There's a lot of students who feel like applying undecided would be a negative in their application. Does applying as an undecided student have an effect on the, the application from a student? >> It has no effect on their application. We want students, we prefer students to apply for the majors of programs that they generally are interested in. And if a student does not have it, cannot sort of decide at the time of application that's what the program is designed for. >> Mm-hm. >> For them to do that. And they can still, and they're still on track to graduate within four years in general. I mean, there're, obviously there're special situations [LAUGH] and I don't want to [LAUGH] say that that has never happened but it sort of depends on how long the student takes to decide on, on what they want to study. And the program, the program's specific to our program and I'm pretty sure it's indemet to others. >> Mm-hm. >> A lot gives students, students will take special classes or have some sort of interaction with professional staff to help them make that decision, because not all students, you know, depending on their age, know what they want to do for the rest of their lives, you know, obviously, you know, I, I don't know if I want to be, if I want to work in this field for the rest of my life. You know, I enjoy what I do now but, you know, we want students to understand that you know, college is a time for self discovery, it's a time for education and, and having that flexibility, it should not be perceived as a negative. It is, wh, I, I always tell students the purpose of college is to help you figure out the best way to achieve your educational goals. So, if that's what you need, please take that option. >> That brings us to the big question. >> Mm-hm. >> So how does Purdue decide who is accepted and who is denied? >> I think the, the first sort of step is when we review an app, when looking at an application is, all of our non-US citizens and, and permanent residents, they're required to they're, they're required to de, have to demonstrate English proficiency. >> Mm-hm. >> And for this year, students can have, can choose any means of doing that if they want to take the SAT, the TOEFL, the IELTS, A Levels, et cetera, they will have to demonstrate English proficiency so, and mainly the reason we do that is because we, we want to make sure that students are able to interact in the classroom and while on campus. And at, and at Purdue University on our main campus, we do not offer English as a second language classes or services. So our students really have to come to campus ready to interact with the students you know, around them. After that, generally, you know, it, we do use a holistic sort of view in terms of reviewing things. >> Mm-hm. >> But at the same time to be, to be, I guess, a little bit more realistic. >> Mm-hm. >> Students who are interested in the science you know, engineering technology, math, you know, even business courses. They will have to have a strong background in math, they have to have a strong background in

science, I think that is fair to say. >> Mm-hm. >> With the overwhelming number of applications that we receive, students who are below average, you know, in science courses or math courses, and want to study engineering, that's not a realistic expectation that we will ultimately accept them. >> Mm-hm. >> Even looking at the grand scheme of things, with such a competitive and large application pool. And you know, every, every program is different. We have more flexibility where students may not need to have more rigorous study of math but I, but knowing that a lot of the students who apply, that's their sort of interest or that's what they select as a major- >> Mm-hm. >> That's what students need to keep in mind. >> According to College Board, Purdue has a 60% acceptance rate overall, so from, from all applicants. But things might be a little bit different for international students. >> Mm-hm. >> So, can you give us a sense of what it means to have a 60% acceptance rate specifically as it applies to international students? >> Absolutely. So, in general Purdue is a public university in the State of Indiana and, and the majority of our students are from Indiana. The way it relates to international students is, you know, having 12, 13,000 International applications each year for freshmen, we sort of have to balance that with just the number of spaces available for international students. Just in terms of being able to have campus services specifically for international students so that everyone can, so that, you know, the system's not sort of overburdened with you know, advising, you know, with government regulations and programming, et cetera. >> Mm-hm. >> So, over 12,000 or so applications, we probably admit about 4,400, 4,500 students per year. In general why students are really not admitted to Purdue generally has to do with English proficiency it has to do with students, I guess their their interest major is incongruent with their high school performance. >> Mm-hm. >> And the last one has to do with timing. >> Mm-hm. >> Many students, you know, we encourage students to apply as early as possible, especially for more competitive majors and many students who apply late and the program is closed, we're unable to admit them to their major. >> Mm-hm. >> So, those generally are the big three. You know, in my five years of experience at Purdue why students have not been admissible to our campus. >> So, Bryant, how likely is it that an academically qualified student would be denied at Purdue? And if an academically qualified student were denied, why might that be? >> I would say that many of it can be for many different situations but in terms of academically qualifications, Purdue does take generally a, we take an overview of everything, you know, I mean, we do look at the, the, the letters of recommendation, and we do look at the the essay. >> Mm-hm. >> I mean, if a student writes, you know, a completely, you know, obtruse essay or, you know, there's something that just seems completely divergent from, you know, just the letter grade. That could be a deniability at Purdue. Timing is also an issue as well. >> Mm-hm. >> And also English proficiency. So we do have very strict English proficiency requirements and students have to meet our minimums. And you know, I have to have you know, conversations with students who would say, I am one point off or my subscore is one point off. But, I mean, when you have such a large competitive pool- >> Mm-hm. >> That's where we draw the line. >> Mm-hm. >> And sometimes you know, we have to put these things into context not only for students but also for counselors. >> Mm-hm. >> And that's why I spent, as I mentioned earlier, many weeks of the year traveling, to tell students face to face, this what we're looking for if you're interested in a school such as Purdue University. >> Mm-hm. Yeah. And then you can probably also add parents to that list as well, so. >> Absolutely. Absolutely. >> Certainly. >> And I try to talk to students as early as possible. You know, I mean travelling, you know, earlier in the application process we give students to opportunity to retake tests, you know, or, you know, if a student you know, may want to resubmit, you know, certain things that's okay with us,

you know? It's part of my job is being a counselor, is to counsel students about you know, being the most successful in the application process at Purdue. >> Mm-hm. >> And also at the same time you know, I may have to say you know, based on what you submitted so far, leaving high school, you may not be, be admissible at this time. But as you know, we admit transfer students, you know, and also at Purdue we admit graduate students. So there're many avenues for students to receive a Purdue degree overall. >> Mm-hm. >> And we talk through these things as well. >> I'm trying to, to drill down on this a little bit more. >> Mm-hm. >> How much does Purdue emphasize the fit between the student and the school when evaluating an application? >> I really maintain that, you know, many of our students who are applying for, you know, are really technical majors such as, you know, engineering and science and such. They've done their homework about Purdue. We're very lucky to have a large alumni base contacts about making sure that students understand the fit. A part of my job as well is to connect students with alumni in their country as I mentioned in all the weeks I travel, I visit alums in virtually all of the cities that I've been to. And I put students in contact with alums who are very serious so that they can give their own perspective, you know, based on their based on you know, them being on campus and now returning to their home country about what they can sort of expect in the type of classroom. >> Mm-hm. >> And I sort of see my role you know, at Purdue as to, to help students understand that fit. Some students, you know, who are very lucky, they just, they get this gut feeling and they know that this is the place that they want to be. >> Mm-hm. >> Other students, they sort of need a, a more data management approach, you know. >> Mm-hm. >> So I help them put in contact with advisers, I give them our plans of study so they would know what classes that they have to take, you know, I get them in touch with, you know, Career Services- >> Mm-hm. >> So that they know, well these are the types of companies that will recruit an international student if you're coming to Purdue. So, to me it's about giving them sort of the full circle experience, you know, to help them determine fit. You know? And, you know, and, and as I've said before, you know, perhaps, you know, you need more, to some students, maybe you need more of a personalized approach. Someone who can, you know, watch you a little bit more. You know, in terms of making sure that, you know, you're doing the things that you do, because being on a large campus, the expectation is if you need something you ask us. >> Mm-hm. >> Rather than, you know, someone emailing or contacting you asking you if you've done this. >> Mm-hm. >> So, trying to put things in perspective that well, to give students that sort of sense of expectation. >> So I want to get your take on a popular myth then. >> Mm-hm. >> Is, you know, we hear about a lot. >> Mm-hm. The idea that a school will have a quota. >> Mm-hm. >> Or a limit- >> Mm-hm. >> To how many students can be accepted or will be accepted from a particular country. >> Right. >> Or from a particular high school. >> Right. >> At Purdue, do any such quotas or limits exist? >> I think the best way to answer that question being a, an admissions professional- >> Mm-hm. >> If you talk to any professional in U.S.- >> Mm-hm. >> We're about creating the most diverse academic class that there is. Because, being a part of college is being a part of, interacting with people from different backgrounds, countries, socio-economic status. >> Mm-hm. >> So all these things are factors. And it's really about building a class of people to study, to interact, to graduate with, to, to help achieve their educational goals. >> Mm-hm. >> With that being said- >> Mm-hm. >> You know, we don't specifically pull out all the applications from a particular high school and say that we're only going to do this. Because we do review applications in order of completion. >> Mm-hm. >> At the same time, we, we want to take the strongest application possible. Which would any internet, which would any hi, institute, eh, higher education institution would want to

do. >> Mm-hm. >> So that's the way I, I sort of frame it. There's no set number. >> Mm-hm. >> You know, but we do want to have diversity within our pool. >> Mm-hm. >> But, you know, that does not come as, at I guess diminish in quality. We will not accept any student, regardless of wherever they come from, or whatever background if we don't feel like they can physically do what is necessary to graduate within four years at Purdue. I think that's fair to say. >> So looking at the, the data that is out there about how universities evaluate applications. >> Mm-hm. >> The data tells us that larger schools like Purdue- >> Mm-hm. >> Value the quantitative parts of the application, meaning, you know, grades and test scores. >> Mm-hm. >> More so than the qualitative parts of the application. >> Mm-hm. Mm-hm. >> You know, say, essays and letter of recommendation things of that nature. Is that true at Purdue? And if so, how do you balance the quantitative side and the qualitative side when evaluating an application? >> Right. I would say that categorically that is true. We have to do more on the quantitative side of things because most of our students are studying in the sciences. You know, or business. >> Mm-hm. >> Obviously it, it matters more in the application process. But the qualitative side does matter more. It becomes increasingly important closer towards the, the end of the application cycle. As I mentioned, timing is really important, especially you know, in early February or so, where there may be a very limited number of spaces left in majors. >> Mm-hm. >> In order to make those final decisions, that's where the qualitative aspect becomes increasingly important. And that's why we are scrutinizing purpose statements and recommendations, and other things in order to see who should we really admit at this point when they applied in the application process. So, it does matter, you know. >> Mm-hm. >> and, the way I tell students, do not short change yourself if you apply earlier, because that doesn't nec, that, because it could have a bearing depending on many different factors, you know, in the application process. >> Great. Okay. Thank you. >> You're welcome. >> All right. All right. We're going to take another quick break, but we'll be back in just a minute to hear more from Bryant.