Highlights from Kaplan Test Prep’s 2012 College Admissions Officers Survey

To ensure that students are receiving accurate and up-to-date information on trends in the college admissions process, Kaplan Test Prep annually surveys admissions officers from the top 500 colleges and universities in the U.S. The survey data collected helps guide the tens of thousands of college applicants Kaplan works with each year. Following are the results from this year’s survey. (Numbers in parentheses reflect the findings of identically-worded questions from Kaplan’s 2011 survey of college admissions officers.)

What College Admissions Officers Say About:

- Standardized Testing Policies and Trends
- General Admissions Trends
- Online and Social Networking Issues

On Standardized Testing Policies and Trends

Does your school require the SAT® or ACT®?

- Either the SAT or ACT ...................... 85% (87%)
- Neither ....................................... 11% (7%)
- Other .......................................... 4% (6%)

(If either the SAT or ACT) Does your school have any plans to drop its standardized testing requirement?

- Definitely not ......................... 73% (66%)
- Most likely not ......................... 24% (34%)
- Most likely yes ......................... 2% (0%)
- Definitely yes .......................... 1% (0%)

Is there any advantage to an applicant’s submitting both an SAT and an ACT score, instead of only one score?

- Yes ........................................... 18%
- No ............................................ 79%
- Not sure .................................... 2%

97% of schools that currently require the SAT or ACT for admissions have no plans to drop the requirement.

Has your school seen an increase in the number students who submit AP scores over the past 5 years?

- Yes ........................................... 69%
- No ............................................ 31%

How important are AP scores compared to SAT or ACT scores?

- A lot more important .................. 1%
- Somewhat more important .......... 9%
- Somewhat less important ............ 25%
- A lot less important .................... 56%
- About the same level of importance 9%

On General Admissions Trends

What would you most consider to be an application killer?

- A low overall high school GPA .......... 37%
- Low grades in college prep courses .... 28%
- A low SAT or ACT score .................. 18%
- A light course load ........................ 10%
- Poorly written personal essay or essays 4%
- Offensive or questionable activity found online ........................................ 2%
- Weak letters of recommendation .......... 1%
- Lack of extracurricular activities ........ 1%
Does your school allow students to apply for early admissions?

Yes: ................................................. 64%  
No: .................................................. 36%

(If “Yes” to previous) About what proportion of your early admissions applicants are accepted?

Less than 1 in 10: .......................... 17%  
1 in 10: ........................................ 4%  
2 in 10: ....................................... 7%  
3 in 10: ....................................... 9%  
4 in 10: ....................................... 10%  
5 in 10: ...................................... 12%  
6 in 10: ...................................... 13%  
7 in 10: ...................................... 14%  
8 in 10: ...................................... 8%  
9 in 10: ...................................... 3%  
Almost all: ................................ 3%  

Compared to students who don’t apply early admissions and assuming all other application factors are equal, do they have an advantage?

Yes: ............................................. 44%  
No: .............................................. 56%  

How significant is that advantage?

Very significant: ......................... 14%  
Somewhat significant: ............... 65%  
Not too significant: .................. 19%  
Not at all significant: ............. 1%  

Online and Social Networking Trends

When it comes to visiting applicants’ social networking pages and factoring what you find into the admissions equation, does your school have official guidelines or policies?

Yes: ............................................ 15%  
No: ............................................. 80%  
Not sure: .................................. 5%  

(If “Yes” to previous) What is your school’s policy on social networking sites in the admissions process?

Not permitted to visit applicants’ sites: 69%  
Permitted to visit applicants’ sites, with guidelines or restrictions: .......... 17%  
Permitted to visit applicants’ sites, with no restrictions: ............ 15%  

(If “No” to previous) Is your school considering developing any kind of policy or guidelines concerning social networking sites in the near future?

Yes: ............................................ 11%  
No: ............................................. 74%  
Not sure: .................................. 15%  

Have you ever Googled an applicant to learn more about them?

Yes: ............................................ 27% (20%)  
No: ............................................. 73% (80%)  

Have you ever visited an applicant’s social networking page like Facebook to learn more about them?

Yes: ............................................ 26% (24%)  
No: ............................................. 74% (76%)  

(For those who said “Yes” to Googling an applicant or visiting an applicant’s Facebook page) Have you ever discovered something online about an applicant that negatively impacted their application?

Yes: ............................................ 35% (12%)  
No: ............................................. 65% (88%)  

Do you use any of the following to recruit new students?

Facebook

Yes: ............................................ 87%  
No: ............................................. 14%  

Twitter

Yes: ............................................ 76%  
No: ............................................. 24%  

YouTube

Yes: ............................................ 73%  
No: ............................................. 27%  

Google Plus

Yes: ............................................. 9%  
No: ............................................. 91%  

35% of admissions officers who Googled or visited an applicant’s Facebook page discovered something about an applicant that negatively impacted their application. In 2011, this statistic was only 12%.  

Top 500 colleges and universities as compiled from U.S. News & World Report and Barron’s. For the 2012 survey, 350 admissions officers responded to Kaplan’s telephone polling between July and September 2012. SAT is a registered trademark of the College Board, which was not involved in the production of, and does not endorse this product. ACT is a registered trademark of ACT, Inc, which was not involved in the production of, and does not endorse this product.