



The Secret to College Admission (It's Not Straight A's)

Alex Lee
October 31, 2015



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Is it...

- 2400 SAT or 36 ACT
- 4.0 GPA – Valedictorian
- 5 extracurricular activities

???



Not necessarily.

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**Here are a few stories you may
have heard about...**



Anonymous Story from the 2013-2014 Application Season

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- Salutatorian from class of 400+ students
- Vice President of a Local Youth Group
 - Secretary of the Math League
- Plus “tons” of other extracurriculars



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- **Rejected by Columbia, Princeton, Cornell,
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Story of Michael Wang

James Logan High School (CA)

- 2230 SAT + 36 ACT (perfect)
- 4.67 Unweighted GPA – Salutatorian
 - 13 AP Credit Tests
- Debate Team – National District Qualifier
- First Place Finish in AMC 12 – National Math Competition
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So what does it take?



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Good grades & test scores

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Law of Diminishing Returns

- If you can pull up those scores with a fair amount of work, go for it! But if you have to work to the bone for 20 more points on the SAT, that time can be better spent elsewhere.

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- Strategically – The extracurricular activities you are involved in will be the backbone of your essay. Assuming your peers have the same test scores, what you do in addition to that is what sets you apart.

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- Unique – Ivy League admissions officers read thousands of essays about students “volunteering in a hospital”. They also read many applications where the students has perfect test scores, plays a string musical instrument, plays a racquet sport, is involved in a club, and wants to be a doctor. Standout from the rest by forming a *story* that is *unique*.



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Original Background...	Applied As...
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Captain of Badminton Team	Not a focus
Board Member of Asian Club	Not a focus
Plays the Piano	Musical Theater
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- Accepted early admission to Harvard.



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- If you play a musical instrument, consider starting your own YouTube channel, whether its performing or giving lessons.
- Instead of a racquet sport, consider something dramatically different like parkour! You could even be a parkour instructor as a high school student.



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- There were two essays:
- Common App: Basically, write about anything related to you.
- Cornell Supplement: Describe two or three of your current intellectual interests and why they are exciting to you. Why will Cornell's College of Arts & Sciences be the right environment in which to pursue your interests?

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- Cornell Supplement: One interest is Astronomy (duh) but he recognizes to do research in astronomy, it requires funding so he wants to minor in Business to learn how to manage a team and finance his research.



Tying It All Together

- Passionate about astronomy.

+

- Recognizes importance of business.

=

- Major astronomy & Minor business



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▪ **Interdisciplinary Study**



Stratton Advantage

- Seattle-based college admissions consulting firm with start-to-finish counseling.
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- For questions or to schedule a free 30-minute consultation, email alex@strattonadv.co



Thank you!

Questions?

