

College Beat

While You Wait **By** **Nancy Federspiel**

Most high school seniors have submitted their college applications by now. Most “regular decision” schools had application deadlines in January or early February. The notable exceptions are those applying to Rolling Admissions schools whose deadlines are still open. So, for all those seniors who are done with their applications, what should they be doing now and for the next month and a half? One option is to put all of the college stuff out of sight and out of mind and just enjoy senior year for awhile. Even I think that is not such a bad idea.

But what if you (or your student) are one of those people who can’t just wait idly when so much indecision looms in front of you? What can be done now to keep the momentum moving forward for the big decision that has to be made by the end of April? Here are a few ideas.

One, revisit any school(s) that you received an acceptance letter from through either an Early Action plan or through Rolling Admissions. It is one thing to follow the tour guides numbly around campus after campus when you are shopping for possible apply-to schools and entirely another thing to visit a campus with an acceptance letter in hand. In the latter case your senses are totally tuned in to all that is around you. Every group of people you see, every conversation you overhear, every flyer posted raises questions. Can I see myself fitting in here? Would I get along with these people? Would I like to participate in that activity? This is the time to take the look to that next level.

Two, spend some time now researching scholarship opportunities. Above and beyond the financial aid that is available to you at the institution of your choice there are many merit-based or specialty scholarships out there. Three good places to look for scholarships are your high school guidance office, your local chamber of commerce office and your (or your parents’) professional associations. Often times there are scholarships available for very specific ethnic and/or professional groups that you may not have known existed. For these types of scholarships it is not necessary to know which institution you will actually choose to attend.

Three, check the websites of your top-choice schools one more time and you may find tid-bits of information you hadn’t noticed before. Some schools have merit based scholarships that you have to apply for separately. You may also find recent “in the

news” articles about events or new features at the school that may in some way influence (either positively or negatively) your feelings toward the institution.

The key to feeling good about the ultimate college choice is knowing that you approached the decision in a thorough and thoughtful way. Any additional information that you can gather during this waiting period will help move you closer to the goal.

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