College Admission and Disability

Rob Bahny
Director-Office of Accessibility
The Admissions Office

• What is it?
  – The salesforce and gatekeepers for the college

• Why is it important?
  – They determine whether you can attend the colleges to which you apply

• Who are they?
  – From the Vice President down to the newly minted Admissions counselor, they put the butts in the seats.
How do I apply to college?

It depends on what type of college to which you are applying.

1. Highly selective
2. Selective
3. Open admission
Highly Selective

• Application (Common App)
  – Usually includes a fee and essays

• Transcripts

• SAT/ACT scores and AP scores

• Recommendations

• Interview

• Early Deadlines- Nov 1- Dec-1 at the latest
Selective

- Application
  - Common App or school app, possible fee.
- Short Essay
- Transcript
- SAT/ACT scores, some schools waive
- Recommendations
- Later deadlines Jan-Mar or Rolling
Open Admission

- Application and fee
- Transcript
- Usually rolling admissions though some programs like the Health Sciences have deadlines and more stringent application requirements.
- Community Colleges
Does My Disability Help Me Get In?

No

Colleges may not, by law, consider your disability as a factor in making an admission decision. Don’t go off your IEP or 504 to impress Admissions. Bad advice.
Should I mention my disability is my essay?

Again, your disability will not help you gain admission to a college so unless your disability is a source of strength or you have an inspirational story because of it, leave it out.

Reasons:

1. Stigma
2. Sympathy is not an admission strategy.
3. Likely to backfire, especially if you are a borderline candidate.
Interviews

• Some colleges, especially competitive ones are going to want to talk with you before deciding whether to admit you.

• Preparation is key, especially if you’ve never done this before.
  – Don’t have your parents in the background coaching you through. It reflects badly on you.
IEP’s and 504’s in College

• Don’t send them to the Admissions Office
  – UNLESS- The college you are applying to specifically asks you to do so for the LD Support Program.
• Are not in effect in college, you must apply for services through the disabilities office separately once you’ve committed to attend the college.
• Colleges operate under the ADA and a different subpart of Sec 504 law.
Where should I attend college?

- It’s all about fit. Put your ego aside and choose the college that is right for you. Flunking out of the wrong college is one of the worst things that can happen to you. And it happens!!!!!

- How do I know if it’s a fit?
  - Research, research, research, research, research, research.

- Visit and meet with the key people.
  - Disabilities Office is a key.
  - Do you like the person you’d be working with?
  - Can I get the accommodations I feel I need?