

Admissions and the University

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EVOKE

About the Ethnographer

BTW 250-D2_06-01 is a junior in Business Administration. Brad Sacher is a junior in Molecular and Cellular Biology. T.J. Culberson-Fehling is a junior in Economics. Kyle Cline is a senior in Electrical Engineering.

We decided to investigate the University admissions process after reading articles in the Chicago Sun Times newspaper. The articles described an unfortunate situation where a young woman who seemed to be well qualified was denied admission to the University. These articles seemed to describe a lot of uncertainty around the admissions process at the University of Illinois. As we discussed ideas of what to investigate, we concluded that perhaps ethnographic research could help everyone in the University community better understand the admissions process.

EXPLORE

Question

What questions is your inquiry contingent upon?

The University of Illinois annually receives over 22,300 applications from high school students hoping to make the University their home for the next 4 years. Of those 22,300 students, only about 7,000 will be granted admission. That means 68 percent of all the high school students that apply to the University of Illinois will be rejected.

We want to find out exactly how the admissions process is conducted and administered.

We want to investigate how external factors such as funding, public relations, and competition between schools affects admissions.

We want to examine current admissions trends and University goals to offer our analysis of the future of University of Illinois admissions.

Plan

How will you go about answering your inquiry?

We will be investigating the admissions process from a variety of sources. We will be interviewing representatives from both the College of ACES and the College of Engineering to model two colleges within the University. We will also be interviewing a high school guidance counselor to get opinions from people involved with admissions from outside the University. If possible, we would also like to interview a representative from the Office of Admissions and Records.

Timeline for Work Distribution:

Week 13

Brad- Contact College of ACES representative, Contact Office of Admissions and Records representative, brainstorm interview questions

BTW 250-D2_06-01- Find more sources and information, Brainstorm interview questions, Find hard copies of the sources

TJ- Contact High School Counselor, Brainstorm interview questions, Analyze Lexis-Nexis article

Kyle- Contacting College of Engineering representative, Contact High School Counselor, Brainstorm interview questions

April 16

The group will finish annotated bibliography and prepare for Monday conference.

Week 14

The group will conduct interviews and write synopsis of interviews.

April 23

Group will meet to finalize rough draft and prepare for Monday meeting.

Week 15

Revise the rough draft section and prepare charts for paper. Also, make visual aides for presentation.

April 30

We will prepare for presentation on May 1.

OBSERVE

What observations, or findings are you encountering in your research?

Here are some of the interview questions we used for the High School Guidance Counselor Interview:

- 1) When does the college you have chosen begin to affect your admission decision?
- 2) Who makes up the selection committee? Who selects these people?
- 3) Is there a link between the amount of applicants or students who get admitted and the amount of funding allocated for each college?
- 4) How do you think the amount of funding available affects how attractive the college is to potential students?
- 5) Do students not apply to a certain college at the U of I because they fear being rejected?
- 6) Besides GPA and test scores, what other qualifications are needed in order to be accepted?
- 7) How much weight is placed on the personal statement and do different colleges weigh it differently?
- 8) How does one get put on a waiting list and why is one put on there?

- 9) What do you usually suggest to students who want to apply to the University of Illinois?
- 10) Has that changed over time?
- 11) Do you have any thoughts as to why this change occurred?
- 12) If you were going to recommend a student to a specific college at the University, what characteristics do you look for in the students for the different colleges?
- 13) If a student really wants to go to the U of I and has their heart set on it, but does not have the greatest test scores or grades, what do you counsel them?

Here are some of the interview questions we used for the College of ACES and the College of Engineering:

Tell me about a general overview of the admissions process to the college of ACES/Engineering? Also about the programs available.

What types of characteristics of an applicant are most important? GPA, ACT, but what else?

Timing important (rolling admissions)?

How many are accepted? Rejected? Wait- listed? How has this changed over the last few years? How has the size of the college changed in the years past?

Who makes up the selection committee? And who selects who these people are supposed to be? Has this differed over time?

Is there a link between applicant trends and acceptance? (i.e does admissions change over years based on extraneous factors such as applicant pool, funding, politics)?

Have there been any recent renovations, major overhauls to the college in the past few years, large grants given? Has this affected matriculation?

What is the most differentiating quality for a student applying to the University?

Files:

[Annotated Bib BTW\[1\].doc](#) (Mon 04/24/2006 0:23)

[BTW Final Annotated Bib.doc](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 3:14)

DISCUSS

Discuss your inquiry, taking care to separate speculation from fact or data

Files:

[Group 1 Final Draft.doc](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 3:07)

[Appendix A.doc](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 3:07)

[BTW Appendix B\[1\].doc](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 3:08)

[BTW Appendix C.doc](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 3:08)

[Group 1 Final Draft.doc](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 3:39)

[btw+appendix+c.doc](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 3:44)

Rough Draft:

Files:

[Group 1 Rough Draft Admissions Process.doc](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 2:43)

REFLECT

Link

Connect with other resources and materials.

(2006). College of Engineering Facts. Retrieved April 16, 2006, from College of Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Web site:

<http://www.engr.uiuc.edu/about/facts.php>

(2006). Future Students. Retrieved April 16, 2006, from Office of Admissions and Records University of Illinois Web site: <http://www.oar.uiuc.edu/future/index.html>

Banwart, W.L. (personal communication, April 12, 2006).

Chaker, Anne Marie. (2006, April 13) Who Got Into College? In an unusually competitive year, some schools sought passion; others went for tuba players. Wall Street Journal, p.D1.

Cragan, J. (personal communication, April 12, 2006).

Litchfield, B. (personal interview, April 12, 2006)

Kim, Christine. (2006, April 7). University tightens admissions. Administration wait-listing 1,121 student this year. The Daily Illini. 5A.

Newbart, D. (2006, March 24). Admission to U. of I. gets tougher [Electronic version]. Chicago Sun-Times, 1-2.

Newbart, D. (2006, April 10). U. of I. goal: Land the world's best students: Agenda aims to boost nonresidents, tuition, reduce enrollment [Electronic version]. Chicago Sun-Times, 12.

Ruffin, Jane. "What counts with college?" The News and Observer. 2006

Implications

Could your findings have broader implications beyond this inquiry?

Through our research, we have concluded that the most important factors in the admissions process are University public relations, competition with other schools around the nation, athletics, and funding allocation. We have presented an overview of the admissions process from the University Office of Admissions and Records, examined the admissions process from both the College of ACES and the College of Engineering, and provided a perspective from those outside the University. Our interviews and investigations have shown that, in the future, the University of Illinois will try to attract more competitive applicants and create the atmosphere of a private institution. The long term implications of this shift should continue to be investigated because they will inevitably have both positive and negatives effects on the admissions process.

