

## Selected Posts From Celinda Davis' College Corner Blog

**Friday, June 18, 2010**

### [Welcome!](#)

Hey rising juniors,

This is Celinda Davis, aka one of your PCCs! This blog will be your source for junior year/college/standardized testing information!

A couple of things for you to know:

- I will allow comments, because people might have valuable questions or comments that can help the entire class. However, if there are rude or inappropriate comments, I will be forced to close the comments.
- During the summer, I will post every 1-2 weeks; during the school year I will post at least once a week, maybe a little more.
- If you have a question that's a little personal, you can email me or the other PCCs, or Lisa.
- This blog isn't going to decide your criteria for college, or your own final college decision. This will be a "self-help blog", but you're going to have to do some soul searching on your own.

That's pretty much it for now, check in soon for my first topic, which is yet to be determined!

~Celinda Davis

**Monday, July 5, 2010**

### ["Dear Celinda, your academic achievements..."](#)

Hey!

I'm posting, I'm posting! It wasn't an empty promise. I've only done that like TWICE.

Just yesterday, I went through a large portion of the college letters I have been receiving for the past year and a half. 92% went into the disappear-out-of-my-life pile. The other 8% are from colleges that I have on my college list. While I am really glad to clear all that mess out of my

room, the big issue was that stacks and stacks of college letters went ignored for so long, because, let's face it, it's annoying as heck after the first 20. To save yourself from the mass cleaning later on, as well as not missing out on useful information, I urge you to build a system now.

There should be three categories for the summer/fall:

- Colleges that you really, really like, and can see yourself going to
- Colleges that are new to you, and you need more information
- Colleges that you don't want to go to

The third category might surprise you, but it exists because the colleges in all three categories are subject to move about. For example, I had University of Chicago in category three. I hated the idea of that college. But then, I did research, I learned more about it, and I even went on a college visit. Now, it's in category one. Until your spring of Junior year, DON'T throw a letter away. Just get three big boxes, mark the category, and put your letters there. Trust me, it makes life much easier. Another word of advice? Make category two's box the biggest, since there are over 3000 colleges in America!!

If you aren't sure about my system, that's fine. This is just an idea. However, you do need *a* system, so talk to your peers and the other PCCs to see how they are doing it. Think of this as a starting off point on getting a handle on college letters, so you are college smart come spring/your senior year.

## **Thursday, July 15, 2010**

### **[Getting Ready For Junior Year: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly](#)**

So two nights ago, I couldn't sleep at all. It was one of those weird nights where you're really tired, but there is a bunch going through your head, so you get kind of deeeeeeeep. Good news though, I wrote the first draft of a college essay! Fortunately, you guys don't need to worry about that for a year.

For now, let's explore Junior year! I think I'm going to break this up a bit, so first let's look at PE. In a few days, we'll look at Physics, Calc vs. Advanced Topics vs. Stats, the phenomenon that is Mr. Sutton, and anything else I can think of.

#### **Junior/Senior PE**

-For the last three years, PE has stayed pretty much the same. The first thing is that you're with your class (unless you have scheduling conflicts), so you know what your speed is compared to others, as well as knowing how different people would work in a team. The second this is that you know how the days work: switching from running to sports, and back again. However, that's going to change.

First off, now you're going to be in PE with us Seniors (hold the applause)! The new challenge is refiguring your place in PE. Let that sink in because...

Now there is more than one period for PE?? Yeah, there is like three or four now. So, some will run mornings, others in the afternoon. But that's nothing compared to...

No more sports (kinda)??? Yes, instead of sports, now you can go to weights. Now me, I enjoy weights more than sports, because I hate competing. There are also more than one weight workout. If you are not really an athlete, I recommend the general workout. However, knowing you Juniors, that's kind of like telling the Saints that if they are not superbowl champions, they should play peewee football... :]. Anyways, no worries: we still play sports from time to time :D. There is one more change...

Junior/Senior health class? Yep, we're bringing back health class straight from Freshman year. There are some differences though. For one, it's only once a month. Another, it's way more discussion based. Thirdly, it's targeted for our age group 16-18, instead of 13-15.

Anyways, I'll post soon! :]

## **Sunday, August 29, 2010**

### **Tired?**

I kind of feel like I could sleep for the next seven years. I am really tired. And in my tiredness, I am panicking. Is that how you spell it? I can't even spell anymore!!

All summer, I have been Pollyanna, giving you advice and stuff. The other day though, Lisa reminded me that I can vent and panic and be excited and joyous all at once on this blog too. Because this process is insane. There, I said it. It's like Cruella de Ville eating pot brownies injected with steroids. Who in their right mind would create such a convoluted system?? There are like five different tests (PSAT, SAT, ACT, TOEFL, SAT Subject tests...LMAO, PMS, LOL, WTF). Then, there is the Common App. OH JOY! Life got simple! Oh wait, not all colleges are signed up to it. &\*%&#%@(^(^&# it.

Then, forget college. There are SCHOLARSHIPS. College is like buying a house. Really, it's just like that, because it costs the same freaking amount as a house. But that's like ten other things to apply to. What if you don't get them? Do you get the house? I mean college? I want the house/college!!!

But sometimes, I feel so in control of things. Yes, I am filling things out! Yes, I got a recommendation in progress! Yes, I have college visits! NO, I don't have all my college visits! No, I haven't signed up for scholarships!

Okay, deep breath.

Why am I publishing this rant? Because, I want you to know that I am so far from happy go lucky in this process. One reason is that I feel unprepared for it. That's what I want to help you with. The other reason is that I am terrified, and I don't want you to think that I am Pollyanna,

who knows everything. I don't. Did Pollyanna know everything? I actually don't know who she is. Doesn't she sound so darn happy though? Why is she happy? HOW CAN SHE BE HAPPY??? COLLEGE GAHHHH!

I'm going to go sleep now. AGHHHHHHHHH....

## Thursday, September 2, 2010

### I'm going to college on Mars, majoring in the art of sleeping :P

Right now you juniors might feel some pressure being put on you. Your parents and Uni is telling you that college is right around the corner, and you MUST have it all figured out. In fact, the two most common questions you might be asked are:

- 1) Where are you going to college?
- 2) What are you going to major in?

I think those questions are dumb. The first one is dumb because I don't even know where I am going, and I'm a senior. That is a May 1, senior year decision. The answer to number 1: I don't know. The second question is dumb because it varies from college to college, and sometimes people aren't sure what they want to major in. It changes so much for people. In fact, people change it IN college too. So answer to number 2: I'm not sure.

There are some questions you can answer though, that are very important for the college process. Here, I list only 5 of the many.

- 1) What was your favorite vacation?
- 2) Which is better, morning or night?
- 3) If you were stuck on a deserted island and you could only bring three things with you, what would you bring?
- 4) What's your song?
- 5) Will the Bears (football team) have a good season this year? Why?

## Monday, September 13, 2010

Imagine if you will a typical Monday lunchtime. You are just waking up and realizing that you have a whole week of school ahead of you. Face it, it sucks. Then, to put salt in the wounds, you're expected to care about the Brown Baggers and *attend*.

I am now going to tell you to go to them.

You might think I am crazy or sadistic. But truly, one of the things I regret most about junior year was missing out on the Brown Baggers. For example, at least THREE of the colleges on my list came to visit at lunchtime. I wasted time researching colleges because I didn't first go to

Brown Baggers. Below, I debunk common myths of them.

### **1. I'm not going to go to that college, why waste my time?**

First off, very few of you know which colleges you AREN'T going to in the Fall of junior year. Even more importantly however, every college has ten colleges that are a lot like it, they just might be in a different part of the country, have different financial options, etc. The point of the Brown Baggers is partially to look into a certain college, but it is also a chance to find out what you even want from a college. For example, you go to the Brown Bagger for Bradley University (a perfectly wonderful institution!), but you don't like it. Well, WHY didn't you like it? What would you want differently? These questions will be very useful to you when you're actually building a college list.

### **2. Brown Baggers are just for seniors**

If you had a preconceived notion, or you have had a senior tell you this is true, let me just squelch that idea now. If a Senior is applying EA/ED, they need a college list RIGHT NOW. If they are applying Regular, they need a college list by NOVEMBER. Brown Baggers last ALL year. So, it is true that seniors are at Brown Baggers, because they are finalizing their lists and double-checking the ones they have. However, these are for juniors as well. These counselors want juniors to come; their whole spiel is to people just beginning their lists. So, being a junior is not an excuse.

### **3. There is no other students in the room! How embarrassing!**

There is a general philosophy around Uni that dances aren't fun, so people don't go. However, if no one goes, OF COURSE IT WON'T BE FUN. If every student walks by the room saying that no one is there and they don't go in, NO ONE WILL GO IN. And, it is more embarrassing to tell Lisa next spring that you are interested in let's say, oh, Illinois Wesleyan, and there was Brown Bagger that you didn't even look into. When you see an admissions counselor in a classroom and you are interested, go in! In fact, if no else comes, think about ALL the questions you get to ask, and all the personalized information you'll get!

### **4. How come it's places like Knox, Michigan Tech, Reed? I want Stanford/Princeton/Yale/UPenn!**

Thousands of students want to go to these schools. They are big name, prestigious universities for a reason. Now think, even though Uni is an elite public high school, it's in Urbana. If you were a big name institution, wouldn't it make more sense to go to a metropolitan area like CHICAGO or ST. LOUIS, where people all around can drive and meet in the big city? That's the reason why we don't get these schools. It would be a waste of their time to come. However, we are fortunate because we get plenty of schools all around that are VERY cool and have TONS of scholarships. Another thing: some of the happiest and most successful college grads came from small, lesser known schools that matched who they were, not the other way around.

Anyway, sorry this blog is so long. Speaking of great things to attend that you wouldn't think about, tonight the director of admissions from University of Illinois is coming to DCL, room 1320, from 7-8. I highly recommend it because U of I is NOT a back up school, especially in such subjects as Engineering. Also, it is a great institution, and not a failure to leave CU kind of school.

## Wednesday, October 6, 2010

### The Art of Caring

So...I apologize. I haven't written a blog in twelve days. And here is why:

I stopped caring about everything for a while. I didn't care about ANY of my classes (I apologize Mr. Mitchell through Merf, inclusive). I didn't care about being a PCC, hence no blog. I didn't care about the SSAT Tutoring Program, about my own private tutoring, about college apps, about getting into college, about almost ANYTHING. It was a really painful, almost scary experience not to care about things because if you get to a certain point, maybe you won't come back to caring. Maybe I was just going to give up all together. The only reason I didn't stop caring is because I clung onto how much I care about my friends and family. I tried to imagine what it would be like if they just disappeared, and it was incredibly painful.

So, when you are beginning in this process, find a friend, a significant other, a family member, chocolate, or a passion. Something you care a whole lot about. And hold on, especially when the college process gets rough.

Much love and CARE,  
Celinda

## Thursday, October 14, 2010

### The Tale of Two Interviews

Today I was having a meeting with Lisa about essays and the like, when she asked me how my recent college visit went. I told her I loved the college, and listed all the things I did. She then asked me how my interview went. As I began to explain it, she urged me to talk about my own college interview experience and give you pointers for when it is your turn.

University of Chicago:

The day of the interview was nothing short of nuts. See, the interview dude (Sam on the birth certificate) actually had four interviews scheduled that day. I began my day with people telling me we needed to be strategic, planning it so each interview was unique.

...

Let me tell you something. I am a five foot tall, biracial girl. I like the color green, working with kids, giraffes, moose track ice cream, reading, Taylor Swift, tap dance, and I plan to major in History. Tell me, who else fits ALL that? No one? Exactly. We are all unique. No one needs to PLAN how to be unique. You just are unique. Let that lead you.

So, I'm sitting across from him. He is asking me normal questions, such as what school subject am I interested in, when he drops the bomb:

*Why do people climb mountains?*

People climb mountains? OH RIGHT! Wait, what?

Welcome to the wonderful world of zany questions. These are the questions you can't be prepared for. In fact, he probably won't ask that question next year. He might not even ask it next week. When posed with a question like this, don't just blurt out an answer such as:

*They like to...for fun?*

Thank god I didn't, but I almost did. What you should do is let them know that it is a very good question and you are going to think for a minute. Then think about an answer for a few moments. You aren't wasting their time, they like when students are thoughtful.

Overall I answered thoughtfully, with the exception of two questions:

- 1) What obstacles have you had to overcome?
- 2) What book have you read recently in English that you liked? Why?

For both of them, I didn't give myself the time to think. For 1, I just blabbed out something that is an obstacle, but it isn't all that present in my day to day life. For 2, I blabbed out the first book I could think of, which was *Native Son* (African American Lit). While I enjoyed the book, I would have preferred to talk about *A Lesson Before Dying*, which I read last semester.

I walked nervous and jittery out of my first interview, wishing I could reverse time and fix those two questions. Now, I can't tell if it was good or bad, I am not Sam (I am??? :D). I can tell you though that when I went to my second interview, I felt a little more prepared.

Knox College:

This time my interview was part of my whole day at Knox. There were no other Uni kids around to plan an attack on the admissions counselor. Also, I had met the admissions counselor before at a BROWN BAGGER (HINT HINT), so we were already on familiar terms. This interview was better not because the college was better, or because the admissions counselor was better, but because I was better. I was better at interviews.

I walked in, sat down, smiled, and answered her prelim questions:

*What is your GPA? What is your ACT composite?*

Then I settled down and listened and answered. One question she asked me that before would have slipped me up was:

*What three adjectives would your friends use to describe you?*

But I had that one. I answered it. Then, she asked me a question that did slip me up:

*What kinds of activities do you want to do outside of the classroom if you came to Knox?*

Wait...there is a world outside of the classroom? Don't I do homework with that time?

It was then that I realized I wanted to do things outside of the classroom, but I was too preoccupied with the school academically. You LIVE at college; go out and do stuff. I answered I wanted to try radio and return to dancing (I am currently injured).

My favorite part of the interview was getting off topic. We talked about cheesecake. It made me hungry. More though, it brought the human back into applying for college. You juniors are not

robots, you are human. Celebrate that, talk about that, wind up off topic.

So, tips for a FUN and GREAT interview:

- 1) Dress appropriately. You wouldn't hire a person with his pants on the flo. Don't dress like one.
- 2) Take a moment to think about the curveball questions. Thinking about it will make your answer concise and thoughtful.
- 3) Laugh and smile. You are not in front of a firing squad.
- 4) Know that each college interview is different.
- 5) Don't memorize speeches, but do know the basic information pertaining to you (your GPA, your scores, your name...)
- 6) Don't worry about other people ESPECIALLY OTHER UNI KIDS
- 7) Know the basic information about the college (like, if your major is even there)
- 8) Come with questions of your own! They show interest and curiosity.
- 9) Turn off your phone, be professional.
- 10) Remember that you are human, they are human, and that this is a conversation, not an interrogation :]

Ciao,  
Celinda

## Wednesday, December 1, 2010

### Rejection

One of the hardest things humans have to suffer as social beings is rejection. If you have ever been excluded from a game on the playground or been told no by your crush, you know how it feels. Rejection makes you feel like you are not good enough, and you will never BE good enough. Rejection is nothing but a concept, yet it has the power to make you feel little and powerless. It makes you feel embarrassed for trying, makes you afraid to make yourself vulnerable again. It knocks the motivation out of you like a big exhale. Rejection sounds like laughing, cold ironic laughing as you hang your head in shame.

I know because this evening, a scholarship rejected me. It felt like a rug had been taken from under my feet and I was falling without a parachute. All that promise, the promise of getting into my top school with enough money to make sure my parents wouldn't have to worry slipped out of my hands like a pool of water. I watched it slip away, wishing that it was just a dream, just a horrible dream. I reread the email three times exactly, to see if they meant it. They had thanked me for applying, reminding me that not all the finalists make it, to keep at it because I was a competitive student. All I could read was the smack: No.

I felt stupid. I felt like a failure. I felt embarrassed. I thought of the people I had to say *I failed to*. I thought of the brilliant girl who had gotten my spot. I tried to come up with the clear reason I had failed. I cried. I cried a lot. I felt like a stupid loser.

Remember the day you got into Uni? How when you opened the crisp, white envelope and read accepted, didn't you feel brilliant and powerful? I remember. A Tuesday afternoon. I opened it,



read it, and danced right there on the driveway. I felt smart. I felt like a success. I felt proud. I called everyone I knew. I liked the way their gasps of joy sounded in my ear. They sounded like a victory march.

Tonight though, I thought of the sixth grade girl who didn't get accepted into Uni. The girl who would have had my spot. I don't know what she looks like. If she is tall, short, brave, cowardly, mean, nice, my likeness or opposite. All I can imagine was how she felt. How she felt stupid. How she felt like a failure. How she felt embarrassed. I bet she thought of the "brilliant" girl who got her spot. I bet she tried to come up with the clear reason she had failed. She might have even cried. She might have cried a lot. And she might have felt like a stupid loser.

Rejection's a funny thing though, because it holds so much power but it never lasts. Remember that game you had been excluded from or that crush who said no? You might remember, but you still don't feel the scathing burn. You might feel a twinge of sadness, or nostalgia, or even humor. But failure? No, you don't. You won't feel that. Because rejection can't define who you are. It can't because it doesn't have enough strength to define you. Just like sadness can't, or anger, or even happiness. You are you, and it's up to you to write your definition. Rejection's like drinking hot chocolate too soon. It burns, it hurts for a while, but in the morning the bad feeling is gone and all that is left is you once again.

You will be rejected in life, because life is imperfect. Rejections will happen just as much as joys, trials, and tribulations will happen. Next year, when you apply to college, remember that rejections will burn. They might make you cry. But you are smart. You are a success. You should be proud. Because rejections don't mean a thing in the grand scheme of things.

I hope you believe me. If you don't, I pray that you will find your answer to how to deal with life's obstacles. I also hope that you celebrate all your successes, because they matter so much more.

-Celinda :]

## **Saturday, December 25, 2010**

**[Happy Holidays!](#)**

Twas the night before College deadlines  
And all through Uni High  
Not a student was stirring  
Not even those who try  
The essays were written with joy and care  
In hopes that college decisions would soon be there  
The students rested on their deserved winter break  
While eating (Sorry PE!) lots of treats and cakes  
And the other PCCs at home and I at my blog  
Bring college help to clear the mental fog  
When out by the mailbox, there arose such a clatter

I jumped off the couch to see what was the matter  
Away to the window I ran with such speed  
Folks on Cross Country should take heed ;]  
The moonlight made the snow all bright  
Like the school's awful fluorescent lights  
When to my surprise, a car should appear  
Pulling into my driveway to bring good cheer  
With a young sassy woman, here to help  
It must be Lisa, I said with a yelp  
More speedy than Sally her smile it came  
As she shouted colleges by their names  
"Go Beloit, Go Wooster, Go Yale and Vandy  
To Swarthmore, To MIT, To Knox and Bradley!  
From coast to coast From the large to the small  
Apply to them, apply to them, apply to them all!"  
Like a Uni student coming across free food  
Us PCCs were put in the right college mood  
So to the computer all of us flew  
With our college wisdom and dear Lisa too!  
And, in a twinkling, we knew what to write  
Blogs upon blogs to ease the junior's blight  
Smiles and nods were spread all around  
As Collegeboard was searched with a bound  
It was full of college help, from beginning to end  
Test prep, college search, and scores you can send  
A flurry of websites and books that got our back  
And candy brought by Lisa for our snack :D  
Our mind--how it opened! Our hearts beat steady!  
Our breaths, how they calmed, as we were ready!  
Lisa with a smile, us with our grins  
Our voices rose in quite a loud din  
We made our Common App accounts right away  
We thought of what our essays would say  
Our teachers wrote fantastic recommendations  
About how hard we worked on our educations  
And Lisa produced our transcripts with care  
Sending them to those colleges way out there  
With the wink of her eye and the nod of her head  
Made sure we knew we had nothing to dread  
All school year we worked as PCCs  
In order to help make the process a breeze  
As the blog and the work came to a close  
We all stretched our hands and from the couch we rose  
Lisa sprang to her car and gave a wave  
We sighed with relief, knowing we had been saved  
But I heard her exclaim, as she drove out of sight

"Good luck with college, it will be all right."

Happy Holidays everyone!

-Your PCCs

**Wednesday, December 29, 2010**

### **Motivation :D**

Hey Seniors!

I write for the juniors, but I decided I would make a blog to help you out through the last push of college applications :D

Playlist:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btPJPfnesV4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04854XqcfCY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqgHosrqJ8o>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYws8biwOYc>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUvPf\\_zuySA&feature=player\\_embedded#!](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUvPf_zuySA&feature=player_embedded#!)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWDmau1Vbxs>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDK9QqIzhwk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJBHnInDrLY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tJYN-eG1zk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AA90I6ZIBNA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfUYuIVbFg0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IA3ZvCkRkQ>

Motivational Quotes:

"Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: You don't give up."-Anne Lamott

"Hope is a waking dream."-Aristotle

"Hope is necessary in every condition."-Samuel Johnson

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat."-Theodore Roosevelt

"I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."-Christopher Reeves

"Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air."-John Quincy Adams

"Let me tell you the secret that has led me to my goal. My strength lies solely in my tenacity."-  
Louis Pasteur

"What is defeat? Nothing but education; nothing but the first step to something better."-Wendell  
Phillips

"I was always looking outside myself for strength and confidence, but it comes from within. It is  
there all the time."-Anna Freud

"Having once decided to achieve a certain task, achieve it at all costs of tedium and distaste. The  
gain in self-confidence of having accomplished a tiresome labor is immense."-Arnold Bennett

"Courage is fear that has said its prayers."-Dorothy Bernard

GOOD LUCK SENIORS!  
<3 Celinda

PS, if you are still not convinced, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qR3rK0kZFkg>

**Tuesday, January 18, 2011**

### [Celinda vs. the Interview](#)

I have had three official admission counselor interviews and now two alumni interviews for college. Let me tell you one thing. It is supposed to be comfortable. It is supposed to be fun. It is supposed to be a conversation. But one thing doesn't leave your mind: *I hope they like me*. That's what makes interviews nerve-wracking, especially college interviews. Learning from my interview today, I want to explore the different aspects of the interview, how I feel about them, and then possible solutions with dealing with it.

"I'm bragging about myself."

Where is the line between talking about all your talents and strengths and bragging about yourself? Honestly, I was wondering that myself. It's hard for some people to review their strengths and weaknesses and say wholeheartedly "I am a logical thinker" or "I have an innate curiosity of the world". One reason why it is difficult might be that our strengths aren't illuminated 24/7. For example, I could have a curious mind, but I know there could be moments when I couldn't care less. So when I tell the interviewer "Curious mind, right here" I feel like I am lying a bit. Another reason might be because telling someone about our strengths raises their expectations of us. We are scared that they might think "Curious mind, right there" and then discover the mind isn't all that curious.

Solutions: Positive energy is a key factor. For example, the word "failure" is banned in this house. In fact, that is the sole reason I am writing this blog while my mother is out. That's a lie. But a good one. Anyway, positive energy helps. Instead of thinking of all the things you can't do or haven't done, think of all the things you can do or have done. Don't ignore your weaknesses, because they are what make you human, but remember this: the interview is your place to shine. Walk in thinking "Heck yah I'm awesome. Wanna know why?". Then tell them. Tell them why.

Remember though, you are human. Don't lie about what your strengths and weaknesses are.

"How do I show them I want to go?"

Ah yes. The eternal "Why \_\_\_? question. I loathe that question. I often want to scream at the top of my lungs "BECAUSE I WANT TO COME. I HAVE NO RHYME OR REASON FOR THE CHOICES I MAKE". Alas, that's not good enough. (Note: it usually isn't good enough for those annoying math questions that say EXPLAIN. I can't write BECAUSE THAT'S THE ANSWER I PULLED OUT OF MY...HEAD). So, the reason you want to go has to be deeper than that. The question is, why are you putting in the time and effort to apply? I had two reasons to answer that question, and I was astonished that it didn't seem good enough. I think the problem was I didn't articulate it well enough. Half the difficulty with this question is finding the answer. The second half is articulating just why YOU want to go. That's much harder. That's asking for you to be unique. Special. One of a kind. Which you are. All humans are. BUT HOW DO YOU SHOW THIS?

Solutions: Research. Visit the college if you can.\* You can discuss a popular aspect of the college (For example, May Term at Illinois Wesleyan) but bring it back to you. "I want to apply to Ill Wes because of the May Term. I hope to do an internship at a (name of nonprofit) in Chicago during one of the four offered because since I was eight..." is how you deal with this. I thought I did that, but thinking back, I could have made a stronger argument.

"Have I visited?"\*

This one actually got under my skin tonight. I blushed at my other mistakes, but this one I didn't. The question is a reasonable one. They are interested in level of interest, if you have gotten a sense of the campus, the people, etc. However, if you say no, THIS SHOULDN'T be a strike against you, especially if the college you are looking at would be an investment in regards to travel (aka, either coasts, more than 6 hours of driving). An interviewer shouldn't look at you like you have grown a second head. Not all Uni kids have the time, or the means, to travel across the country. Now, if I got into a college in...California for example, I would fly out there. But only after I get in. Never feel bad about not visiting pre-applying. Visit if the school is close though! Solutions: Students might worry about level of interest. What you should do is search their websites, email the admissions counselor, respond to their annoying emails, have them send to you all their special brochures. If you love a school, don't let distance be a stifling factor. Make the love for the college known virtually.

"What am I supposed to do with the curveball questions????"

Good question! (heeheehee). I have a complex, ambivalent relationship with these questions. On one hand, they're fun to answer sometimes. On the other hand, they're hard to answer sometimes! "Why do people climb mountains?" "What motivates you?"...honestly, it's easy to write off admissions counselors as insane. The wonderful thing I have discovered though is that the counselors love these questions. I mean it, they get a thrill out of asking them, not because they are sadistic, but because every answer is unique. Every. Single. One. What motivates you? Why do people climb mountains? The answer is going to give them a little peek into the beauty that lies within your core. That's why they ask them. Doesn't make it easy. Just thrilling.

Solutions: Deep deep deep breaths. Ask for a moment to think. Don't ever give them the answer you think they want to hear. They have no idea what to expect. Surprise them with your honest answer.

This was one part therapeutic, because I am still uneasy and unsure of interviews. I left this one a little shaky, a little upset. Sometimes that's going to happen, no matter which school or job is interviewing you. The problem might be the interviewer and their personality (they're human too), the problem might be you, or there might not be a definitive problem and it might just be an off day. No matter what though, the interview is just part of the great process. Further, you probably did better than you think. I probably did better than I think. It's okay to feel frustration though. I promise.

Tomorrow (hopefully!) I will do a blog about the tests and scores. Thursday, we have the fabulous Revathi blogging. Then (hopefully!) Friday I will write a blog about Financial Aid, in the spirit of FAFSA month.

[btw Seniors, FAFSA!!]

-Celinda :]

## **Wednesday, February 9, 2011**

### **[College Diary: Entry 1](#)**

Hey there Juniors :]

Today, I don't have a college related letter for you. Today, I'm going to start another series that I will intersperse amongst the letter ones. This series will focus more on reflecting my own personal college process, the ups and downs of it. I shall begin with summertime.

Last summer, I was revved. I had this college stuff down. It was June, and I was thinking in my naive little mind of mine "Freedom! Summer! All that time to write blogs and begin applying to college!"

Hahahahahahahahaha, Oh then-Celinda you.

Two things I didn't get last summer: a damn good tan and a good start on applying. In fact, right before I truly began, I screwed myself up. Ah yes, confession time.

So, to begin, it wasn't really my fault. Actually. It was. I decided to sign up for the Common App and do all the prelim stuff. It made sense, I mean, what was I going to do with my time?

(sarcasm). Well, I accidentally signed up as an applicant entering the fall of 2010.

That in itself isn't that sad. However, what is sad was me, frantically emailing Lisa like ten times, freaking out, imagining I had screwed over my ENTIRE college prospects. Yeah...shining moment it was not. I did end up just emailing Common App. They told me to wait, they get rid of all the previous applications to begin the server afresh in August. So, I waited for August.

Whilst I was waiting, I began writing blogs. You can look at my old summer stuff, NOT the best, but hey, it was new.

In August, I began PCC work. FUN STUFF I tell you. I love my fellow PCCs. We ate a lot, had some really deep conversations, and oh yeah, did stuff to get ready for the juniors. We baked cookies. I have a joke for yah: how many PCCs does it take to put an icing "S" on a cookie? You'd be surprised.

Summer came to an end, and soon I will write about the fast, furious fall (alliteration ftw??). In the meantime, I have some exciting blogs coming your way. We are back to the beginning of our PCC contributors, so Ashley will be blogging soon. Adam (and probably Seth) is going to write a blog about why he (they) chose to apply to public schools. I have some more letter stuff coming your way.

Anyway, talk to you soon!  
Celinda