

Sarcasm and Suggestions: College application thoughts and advice from a graduating senior

REBECCA BUCKWALTER

Read 'em and weep can be literal around this time of year, as seniors receive letters, packages, and packets from their institutions of choice. Some NCSSM students experience some of the more negative ramifications of competition and tradition. Not only can you suffer rejection or the dreaded waitlist placement, but also, at NCSSM, students often affix letters of acceptance, and, occasionally, a letter of rejection -upside down- or waitlist -sideways-- in the hallway next to their door. To most, letter posting seems a harmless tradition and one that communicates the giddiness and excitement that follows a successful college application, but to those who have received the thinner letters, the waitlist and rejection letters, it is a painful reminder of their own disappointment.

Instead of lending value and worth to the significance of selecting a college - you can only go to one, remember - it makes the application process a competition against roommates, hall-mates, and peers,

and sometimes sours it for others. The only thing worse than being rejected from a school - and often, the more prestigious, the more fickle the school- is the daily reminder that your neighbor was more fortunate.

It is difficult to move on from rejection when each trip down the hall brings you past the letter that you wish you had received, with some-

one else's name on it. Now that I've delivered my coup d'état against the tradition of letter posting, a few thoughts on college applications. If you would not go to a school, do not apply there. Apply to schools that you like - two safeties, two matches, two reaches - and that are appropriate to your goals and will allow you room to grow and develop! Remember that teachers will weary of filling

out forms (and their work may show it), and your own performance on the individual applications will wane. Do not fill out ten or fifteen mediocre applications; put your heart into five or six!

industrial gray"? Cornell is excellent, but can you handle the isolation and weather in Ithaca?

Two final college application tips: don't get lazy, and don't be afraid to go all out. If

you're serious about your applications, make the effort to compile a good resume -include dates and details from ninth grade on-- and include it when you can. Don't ever surrender an optional essay or recommendation. Take every chance to express yourself and give admissions officers

more reasons to say, "Halleluiah, a keeper! Give this one whatever she/he needs to come!"

Next year, when you have your five or six acceptances and hefty financial aid, enjoy your success with friends and family and by all means, share the good news - but don't paper the hallways. People will know where you've been accepted (especially if they

live on your hall). Remember that sometimes it just comes down to luck. Was the admissions officer having car trouble? No coffee that morning? Was yours on the bottom of the stack?

If you're not accepted, you don't need a reminder that someone else had better luck. College is about the next four years of your life, not letting everyone know about how "delighted and pleased" Deans XYZ are to have accepted you. NCSSM (and plenty of other high-schools) should make the effort to remember as well as remind us that college isn't about a brand name, it's about education - a point we seem to have dropped when we picked up the habit of posting letters and measuring success by columns of numbers marked "Applied," "Accepted," and "Waitlisted."

Remember that twenty-two acceptance letters plastered to your doorframe are useless if the twenty-third letter is a rejection from the place of your dreams.

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On the Student

Improvement Group this year, a major concern and topic of discussion was the fact that students often neglect to find a college that matches their own interests in favor of one with high name recognition or popularity. If a school is known for its humanities and you'd like to be a chemist or an engineer, don't apply. Yes, MIT is prestigious, but what about its campus, done in "45 shades of

An Afternoon of Science and Math Talents

LUCIE GUO

The day felt extraordinarily stifling; it was mid-afternoon of the ninth. The campus seemed quiet at first glance with many students frantically studying for the upcoming APs, but inside the ETC was one of the

most spectacular displays of the year of NCSSM students' artistic talents. The afternoon began with the end-of-the year Choral and Orchestral concert and finished off with the Celebration of Dance show. The orchestra performed pieces such as Variations on a Theme of Haydn by Brahms,

the first movement of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, and a violin concerto by Mozart.

The chorale sang pieces such as Flower of Beauty and Te Quiero - two beautiful a cappella love songs. Another piece was Flander's Field, a song full of melancholic dissonance that brings back the human toll of World War I and the unfulfilled dreams of its victims. There were also others such as Sifuni Mungu, which was accompanied by percussion, Song of the Sea, which was accompanied by a woodwind quartet, Erev Shel Shoshanim - a poignant portrait of the Israeli desert - and a lively jazz piece called Old Georgia Brown accompanied by the Jazz ensemble.

Mr. Scott Laird, the director, told everyone that within the course of the year, the chorale has developed a strong sense of community. This, he believes, comes from the various strengths of its members as well as the differences amongst them. It is also a result of the group's ability to accept such differences instead of having to point fingers. There is much talent amongst the group; the choral program of NCSSM this year has been extremely successful.

Immediately following the musical events was the Celebration of Dance show put on by the NCSSM Dance Ensemble. Along with other dance groups in NCSSM such as Hip Hop Seminar and Dance Team, Dance Ensemble put together a few brief dances ranging from lyrical to hip-hop to Fosse.

"It was fabulous!" said Nichole Caviness, a spectator of Sunday's show. "The only thing I would have wanted to change was to make the show longer!" As it turned out, the performance turned out to be only about 30 minutes long. Even though the performance was brief, as many people agreed, the quality of the show was exceptional.

"I was very happy with the show. It was exciting to see something we've worked hard on for so long come together like that," said Lauren Jackson, a dedicated member of the Dance Ensemble. Christine Taxis, the adult sponsor of the group, agreed that this year's work has been incredibly rewarding. "The dancers this year brought such diverse talents to Dance Ensemble; different experiences, different fortes, different inspiration. The best aspect of sponsoring Dance ensemble

was watching that unique talent amass into great dancing."

The group believed that the performance was a big success. In addition to hearing the applause from the audience, Taxis believed, what was truly invaluable was "seeing each and every performer dance from their heart."

"The drive and determination of NCSSM students never cease to amaze me," Taxis continued, "the group's success is the result of strong leadership as well. One dancer in particular, Morgan Rush, really stepped up to the plate, helped to choreograph, organize, and motivate."

The future is bright for the music and the dance of NCSSM. All are invited next year to indulge in the artistic opportunities at Science and Math by enrolling in Chorale, orchestra, or any other music course! Participating in musical and artistic extracurricular activities is a great way to let one's talent shine. When Lauren Jackson was asked if she were planning on continuing to perform with Dance Ensemble next year, she exclaimed with "definitely!" The Dance Ensemble's next performance will be during Air Band in May.

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