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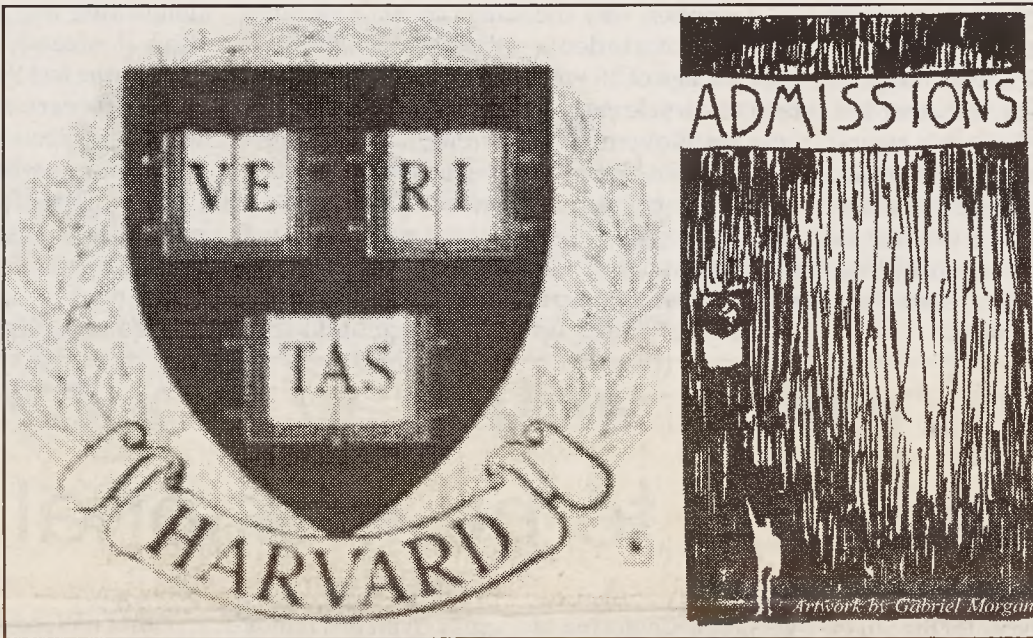
the high LIFE

Volume 83 No. 2

Grimsley High School
801 Westover Terrace
Greensboro, NC 27408

Friday, October 27, 2006

Early admission programs criticized, dropped



Students endure so much pressure as they explore their college options and consider financial aid, loans, and grants. Without early admission, they have more time to ponder their choices.

BY DEAN FOX
Reporter

Harvard College recently announced an unprecedented decision to drop its early action program, effective fall of 2007. This admissions procedure, practiced at a large number of private and public universities, allows students to apply to some colleges twice, once in the early fall with a small number of applicants, and then several weeks later with a larger number if rejected the first time.

"We hope that doing away with early admission will improve the process and make it simpler and fairer," said Harvard Interim President Derek Bok in an interview with the "Harvard University Gazette." "Early admission programs tend to advantage the advantaged," said Bok.

Similar to early action is early decision, a process several colleges and universities also use for admission of new students. However, those students who apply early and receive acceptance

letters must enroll in that particular school; the decision is binding.

Harvard's early action program, though not obligatory, gives unfair advantages to students whose parents earn higher incomes, according to some critics. On the contrary, students from lower-income families often find it necessary to wait until the regular admissions period in order to compare financial aid packages from various schools. However, some do not believe this program truly does advantage

wealthier students, as long as it remains non-compulsory.

"I think that if it isn't binding, early admission isn't really discriminatory because students can choose not to attend schools where tuition is too high," said counselor Shantia Shackelford.

Chances of being accepted to a college or university are greater when a student applies early because the group of applicants is smaller and because applying early implies a student's particular interest in that institution. A disadvantage, however, involves student performance once he or she receives an acceptance letter.

"Students who are admitted early receive what often appears to be a 'free pass' for their second semester, sadly encouraging them to disengage from their academic experience," said Jeremy R. Knowles, interim Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, to the Harvard University Gazette.

Parents often consider it imprudent for their children to apply for early decision since they are unable to commit to a particular school without knowledge of its financial aid opportunities. Even with the non-binding

early action process in place, students with fewer resources find it difficult to take advantage of this opportunity. Application fees for college admission range from \$50 to \$60, and visits to campuses can be expensive as well.

Critics of the early admissions program believe students need as much time as possible to decide where to apply and, once accepted, where to attend; stress is a major factor, so decisions should not be rushed. Without early admissions, students can wait until later in their senior year of high school to decide where to apply. Then, after receiving acceptance and/or rejection letters, they have until May to make their choices. Such a plan allows applicants almost an entire school year to explore their options.

Harvard College's executive board, known as the fellows of the Harvard Corporation, consider the early admissions program discriminatory and urge other schools to eliminate the process as well. Their hope is for all students to have equal chances throughout the admissions process.

NHS tutors help peers increase academic growth

BY ADAM LONG
Reporter

Over 70 new peer tutors, composed of the most academically gifted students on campus, either are aiding teachers who hold tutorials after school or are partnering with struggling students to provide individual assistance.

Scores of peer tutors are volunteering their time as a requirement of the National Honor Society. Involvement is compulsory, so failing to do so is grounds for expulsion from the se-

lective club.

Principal Rob Gasparello is a staunch advocate of the peer tutoring program. While attending an education conference, he and assistant principal Robert Christina discovered a high school in which the entire after-school tutoring program is student-run. Their model served as an inspiration for the tutoring program here.

Membership in the NHS has reached an unprecedented peak. With so many students, many more learners requiring aid in their

studies can find help, a point expressed to the group on its second meeting by the principal.

"We think peer tutoring may be able to reach some students who have not responded to their traditional teacher help," said science teacher Durante Griffin, the NHS advisor.

According to Griffin, approximately 28 teachers currently utilize peer tutors; several have more than one.

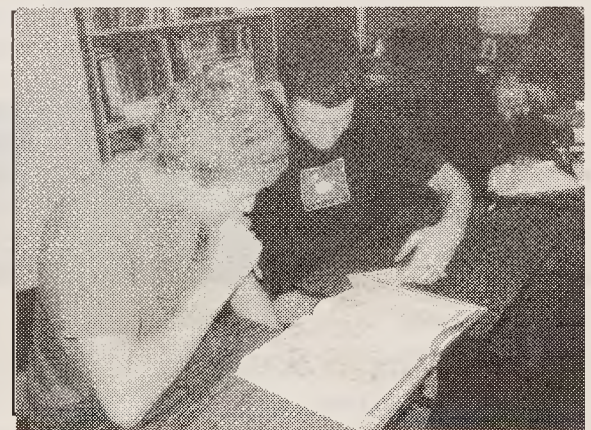
Math teacher Roberta Rohan finds that tutees "benefit

from the relationship [with their NHS peers] as well as the tutoring."

However, Rohan points out that the NHS system does not aid instructors who teach only underclassman courses because they do not maintain contact with seniors who could potentially be tutors.

Fitting the mandatory volunteering into busy schedules was an initial hurdle for many NHS members.

"Time is always a problem for students who are talented and active in so many areas," said Griffin. "No



Senior NHS member J.P. Burwell tutors junior Charles Behrhorst at afterschool peer tutoring.

one has reported to positively affecting me that it has been other students.

President of the NHS Maria Kattmann believes her help is

"I do enjoy tutoring," said Kattmann. "I like seeing the difference it makes."