



I AM YOUR COUNSELOR

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Last Thursday, I closed up my computer for the day at 5:15pm, headed home, and, upon arrival, refreshed my email on my phone, despite the fact that I had checked email just minutes prior. Then, I went outside to enjoy the beautiful spring weather, and when I returned home about 20 minutes later, I refreshed my email again. A lot of college news was hitting the streets Thursday afternoon but, no, I am not an applicant; I am your college counselor.

I try to take advantage of every moment I have with you, starting in junior year, to help empower you with good, accurate information on the qualitative elements of a college and the quantitative (and oftentimes confounding) elements of a college's admissions standards. What I don't want is for you to be surprised by the ultimate outcomes. I know that sometimes, despite my best efforts, while you might intellectually understand what I'm saying, your heart might tell you something different and, without sounding condescending, I totally understand.

I feel the frustration of confusing college news and the exhilaration of exciting news alongside you. Oftentimes, my years of experience give me a perspective that allows me to understand a college decision that makes no sense to you. That does not mean I don't feel your disappointment. That is why I spent time last year and this year helping you and your classmates (and your parents) reframe your expectations when necessary, redefine what success will mean for you, and determine what you truly want (versus simply trying to get into the most selective school).

Sometimes, despite all of the data I have access to, all of the wonderful conversations I have with my admissions colleagues, and some good old-fashioned educated intuition, I get it wrong. It frustrates me, and it energizes me too. In March, when I am busy talking to admissions officers, I love trying to wrap my head around what your options might be, and how I can best advocate for you. There are times when it really helps, and sometimes it doesn't help at all. I, like you, take the good with the bad.

This is a human process. You are a human being, so am I, and so is the admissions officer presenting your case to an admissions committee made up of humans. It is impossible to believe that these decisions don't impact all of us in some way. As the applicant, you might feel that an admissions decision defines you, and as your college counselor, I will try to help you see for yourself that you are so much more than a college decision. Many times, an admissions officer wants to admit you, presents every bit of ammunition you and I have given them, and the admissions committee, for some reason, does not see it, or is unable to admit you due to another institutional goal that takes priority. I have spoken with many admissions officers over the years who were disappointed that they weren't able to admit a student they were advocating for. As you might imagine, the more selective the college, the harder that part is for an admissions officer.

Ultimately, it is up to you, the student, to decide what kind of attitude you are going to have moving forward, once all of the news hits. I spend hours trying to determine how you will feel (much like a parent does) because, truly, I want you to be happy. Sometimes I get it right but I love when I am wrong; when I think a student is going to be upset by their college outcomes, and they surprise me with a terrific attitude and awareness that, while this moment is disappointing, it is not a tragedy, and great opportunity awaits.

As your counselor, I will feel elated when you feel elated. If you feel disappointed, I will too. I will try to help build you up, not break you down, because you deserve to feel affirmed. I am your advocate. I have gotten to know you over the years, I have fought for you, and in a deep, real way, I have carried the feelings that you have shared with me in the hopes that I can ease some of the stress and burden, but also that I can relish in the joy and bewilderment that you will no doubt experience.