College Guidance for Best “Fit”

Admission Plans that Support Success

Joaquim Hamilton • Timothy Jerome
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College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Workshop Topics

Undermatching and Overmatching
What’s the Issue? What’s the Current Research Saying?

Fit-Focused College Guidance Programs
A Look at Philadelphia Futures’ College Access Programming

The Power of Fit
Empowering Students and Staff with a Fit Mindset

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Mission

Provide low-income, first-generation-to-college students with the tools, resources and opportunities necessary for admission to and success in college.

Vision

Transform lives by breaking down barriers that have historically excluded low-income, first-generation-to-college students from college success.

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Step Up to College Guide
25th Anniversary Edition

Information tailored to the unique needs of students in Philadelphia

Hands-on activities and interactive workbook

Accompanying digital media: new videos and PowerPoint presentations that can be used in student sessions (available at www.stepuptocolege.org)

Follow Step Up to College on social media

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College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
College Access and Success Programming

- Academic Enrichment (SAS)
- College Guidance & Support
- Mentoring (SAS)
- Scholarships & Financial Incentives
- Clubs and Activities
- On-Going College Support

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Understanding the Importance of Fit

Undermatching & Overmatching

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
The Problem: Undermatching

When students choose to attend an institution with academic indicators (e.g. test scores, G.P.A.s) below their own (Bowen et al. 2009).

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Undermatching Research

From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College
Roderick, Nagaoka, Coca, & Moeller
2008

Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America’s Public Universities
Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson
2009

The Full Extent of Student-College Academic Undermatch
Smith, Pender, & Howell
2014

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America’s Public Universities

The Full Extent of Student-College Undermatch

From High School to the Future (Roderick et al. 2008)
- 62% Undermatch
- 105 Participants

Crossing the Finish Line (Bowen et al. 2009)
- 40% Undermatch
- 6,217 Participants

The Extent of...Undermatch (Smith et al. 2014)
- 40.9% Undermatch
- 9,130 Participants

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America’s Public Universities

The Full Extent of Student-undermatch

49.6% Undermatch
Low-Income Students
The Extent of…Undermatch (Smith et al. 2014)

34% Undermatch
Higher Income Students
The Extent of…Undermatch (Smith et al. 2014)

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Causes for Undermatching

- Lack of College-Going Info
- Lack of Encouragement
- Family Income
- Family Level of Education
- Tuition Costs
- Lack of College Planning

Best Fit College

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Dangers of Undermatching

Virginia Cohort of '99 NELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEL A Public</th>
<th>SEL A Private</th>
<th>SEL B Public</th>
<th>SEL B Private</th>
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<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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= 4 Year Grade Rate

= 6 Year Grade Rate

Crossing the Finish Line (Bowen et al. 2009)

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Overmatching

When students choose to attend an institution with academic indicators (e.g. test scores, G.P.A.s) higher than their own (Bowen et al. 2009).
The Overmatching Debate

“Large racial preferences backfire against many and, perhaps, most recipients, to the point that they learn less and are likely to be less self-confident than had they gone to less competitive but still quite good schools.”

Mismatch: How Affirmative Action Hurts…
(Sander & Taylor 2012)

“Opponents of affirmative action have often claimed that race-sensitive admissions policies harm the very minority students they purport to help…data for the ‘99 entering cohorts at the public universities we study offer no support whatsoever for this hypothesis.”

Crossing the Finish Line
(Bowen et al. 2009)
Cautions for Overmatching

- Students enrolling at two selectivity groups higher than their fit.
- Students overmatching academically and mismatching socially.
- Students overmatching academically without consideration of financial fit.

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Understanding the Importance of Fit

Defining Fit
Components of Fit

- Academic Fit
- Social Fit
- Financial Fit

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Academic Fit

- Standardized test scores and GPA fall within an admissible range
- College has appropriate resources/supports to meet student’s needs
- Student has succeeded in equivalent academic coursework in HS
- Student is prepared for the rigor & volume of college work

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Social Fit

- Supports in place to nurture student’s personal development
- Campus life offers meaningful opportunities for socializing
- Climate that is welcoming to LIFG students
Financial Fit

- Completing college with no, low or manageable debt
- College offers appropriate and renewable grant assistance & loans
- No or low (affordable) cash gap after grant and loan assistance

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Understanding the Importance of Fit

Fit Focused College Guidance Programs

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
College Access and Success Programming

- Academic Enrichment (SAS)
- College Guidance & Support
- Mentoring (SAS)
- Scholarships & Financial Incentives
- Clubs and Activities
- On-Going College Support

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Pre-College Program Goals

All students graduate from high school and enroll at post-secondary institution that fits their needs academically, socially, and financially.

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Introductory Stages: 9th & 10th

- General College Awareness
- General College Skill Building
- General College Advising

Completion Stages: 11th & 12th

- Specialized College Admissions Programming
- Individualized College Guidance
- Intensive College Admissions Support

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Introductory Stage Goals

To help students understand at a general level what it takes to be academically and socially prepared for college.

To help them acquire and develop skills and knowledge that will help them to be academically, socially, and financially fit for college.

To acquire College Success Indicator data that will help to inform the completion stages of college guidance.

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
# College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success

## Quantitative Success Indicators
- Attendance (School and SAS/CC Program)
- Work Habits (HW Submission, Planner, Note-taking)
- Grades (School and SAS/CC Program)
- SAT Scores
- Behavior Grades (School and SAS/CC Program)
- Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, and Writing Levels
- Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities and Events

## Qualitative Success Indicators
- Persistence
- Work Ethic
- Proactiveness
- Maturity
- Initiative
- Time Management
- Communication Skills

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Philadelphia Futures
Introductory Stages: 9th & 10th

- General College Awareness
- General College Skill Building
- General College Advising

Completion Stages: 11th & 12th

- Specialized College Admissions Programming
- Individualized College Guidance
- Intensive College Admissions Support

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Completion Stage Goals

All students apply to 4-7 colleges/universities that will fit their needs academically, socially, and financially.

All students successfully enroll at a college or university that best fits their needs academically, socially, and financially.

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Understanding the Importance of Fit

Empowering Students & Staff with Fit

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Thorough, investigative research that uncovers the academic, social and financial characteristics of a college.
Basic Research

Research which is completed by accessing general and easy-to-find information on a college’s website.

Fit Research

Research that is completed by thoroughly reviewing a college’s website from top to bottom and by consulting reliable secondary sources. The information found at the “fit” level is typically more specific, informative and meaningful than the information found at the surface level.
Fit Research Tools

- Philadelphia Futures College Fit Form
- BigFuture.org
- College Navigator
- Naviance
- School Websites

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Empowering Staff with Fit

- Monthly Staff Professional Developments
- College Match Selection Meetings
- Participant Assessments
- Ability Grouping Meetings

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Fit-Focused College Guidance Results

College Guidance for Best “Fit”: Admission Plans that Support Success
Small Group Discussion Topics
Fit and Your College Guidance

1. How are you incorporating fit into your programming/college guidance?
2. How do you/can you create opportunities for student reflection upon academic, social, and financial fit?
3. What college success indicators do you/can you collect to help inform college guidance and college match?
4. Are there any other ways to more intentionally incorporate fit into your programming/college guidance?
PF Closing Recommendations

1. Keep Undermatching/Overmatching Data in Focus
2. Build/Redesign College Guidance and Programming around Fit
3. Define and Collect College Success Indicator Data
4. Find Ways to Empower Students and Staff with a Fit Mindset

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Works Cited


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