



## **Janet Rosier Responds to Student Questions**

(These Questions and Answers Appeared on the Unigo website in 2011 and 2012)

“My parents were laid off after I submitted my financial aid applications, and I’m afraid I might need more aid. Is there anything I can do?”

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

### **Plead Your Case to the Financial Aid Office**

Your family has new information--extenuating circumstances that need to be explained to the Financial Aid offices of the colleges. Be proactive and contact them now, so that they can include this new information in their formula or exercise professional judgment. Your parents should write a letter explaining that they were recently laid off and be specific as to how this will affect their ability to pay for college. Ask the colleges what other information and documents they may want in order to verify your current financial situation. Be sure to follow up to ascertain they have everything they need.

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This week's question from Aimee N. from Baltimore, MD asks:

“I want to help my parents out with my tuition by landing as many scholarships as I can. Where should I start, what do they usually require, and what are some crazy scholarships you know of?”

### **Watch Out For Scholarship Scams**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

When you search for scholarships, make sure that you are not getting scammed. Rule number one is that legitimate scholarships do not charge you money to apply. Even a nominal amount should raise a red flag. If you aren't sure a scholarship is reputable, do a little research. If other students had bad experiences with a company, you may find that information online. The Federal Trade Commission also has very helpful information (<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/scholarship/index.shtml>).

This week's question from Steve A., Decatur City, IA asks:

“High school classes haven’t been that bad, but I’m not sure how I’ll fare in lecture halls with hundreds of other students. How can I stand out to professors and keep from feeling overwhelmed?”

### **Make yourself known and visible**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

Unless you will be attending a small liberal arts college, chances are you will have a few large classes. For big lecture classes, be prepared: do the reading, arrive early, sit in front and take good notes. Introduce yourself to the professor. Resist the urge to skip classes, even if no one notices. If the class also has a smaller lab or recitation, make sure you attend these, even if they are optional. You should also use the professor’s office hours as a time to get questions answered or expand on related topics not covered in lecture.

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This week's question from Tami G., Pine Bluff, AR asks:

“I’ve heard that spending a little time with many extracurricular activities is less attractive than a ton of time with one or a few. If I haven’t found an activity I’m passionate about, how can I still seem like a dedicated individual?”

### **Colleges are not impressed with students who are a mile wide and inch deep**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

One way that colleges get to know you and what you are passionate about is by what you choose to do in your free time. They are not impressed with students who join many organizations but are only superficially involved. You may not love an activity immediately, but you should try to find something where you have the chance to grow as a person and the passion may follow. If you haven’t found a good fit with your school’s clubs, try your local community organizations or those affiliated with area religious institutions. Volunteering your time and helping others may reveal your talents and strengths.

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This week's question from Jamie S., Rutland, VT asks:

“In all of your year working with students, what were some of the most unexpected successes you witnessed – I could use a little pick me up!”

### **The reason I do this: accomplishments that bring me joy**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

A few years ago I worked with a wonderful young lady who, for various reasons, had not been successful in high school. After some persuasion, she went to a college that was not her first choice, but one where she had a chance to grow as a student. After two years at this college she had blossomed-- she had developed study skills, excellent grades and had the chance to become a leader. Having gained new skills, accomplishments and confidence, she transferred to a very competitive college where she is both very successful and happy.

This week's question from Jordan T., Brooklyn, NY asks:

“ Aside from the difference in tuition, what are the benefits & drawbacks of going to a school in-state vs. out-of-state?”

### **Wherever You Decide to Attend, Become Involved**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

Whether you attend college in your home state or away is less important than what you do when you are there. If you stay fairly close to home, the good news is that it is easy to get home. That can also be the bad news. Students who come home many weekends (some every weekend!) do not transition well into college. They are still tied to friends and events at home and are not getting involved at college. Studies show that students who engage in activities on campus-- especially early on-- report being happier and are more likely to graduate.

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This week's question from Allison Williams, Somerville, MA asks:

“ What are some common mistakes students make on their resumes?”

### **Keep Résumés Organized, Concise and Easy to Read**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

When you are crafting a resume for colleges, it doesn't need to list everything you have ever done. Unless you have an extraordinary number of awards or activities, it is good to keep this to one page. For those whose special talent gives them many things to list, it may be a good idea to have a separate résumé for your acting roles or your science awards and presentations. Organize it so that it is easy to read, concisely written and indicates when and for how long you participated in an activity. Make sure it highlights any leadership positions you have held.

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This week's question from Andre Reese, Charlotte, NC asks:

“ What are some tips regarding video admissions essays?”

### **Don't Go Hollywood!**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

While you want your video admissions essay to look good and be clearly audible, you don't want to submit something that has been professionally produced. Just like your written essay the college wants to hear about you in your voice. If this is professionally scripted and shot, it may look polished but feel inauthentic. Know what you want to say and practice in front of a mirror. Have the person filming you practice too. Then relax and let your personality shine through.

This week's question from Daniel Meany, Rutland, VT asks:

“Early, rolling, regular: When should you apply?”

### **Three Different Ways to Apply-- Which is Best for You?**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

Early Decision is binding--actually a contract that you sign where you agree to attend if you are accepted. You can only apply ED to one college. If you are very sure of your first choice college, if you fit the profile of admitted students and if you do not need to compare financial aid offers, ED may be right for you. If a college offers Early Action-- a non-binding early program where the student applies early and hears back early but still has until May 1 to decide- that may be a great way to go. You may receive good news and either be finished with the process, or more focused on where else to apply once you have an acceptance under your belt. If a college offers Rolling decision, get it in and get it in early! Rolling means that the college will evaluate applications as they receive them. Some colleges fill up early- especially state universities. Regular Decision gives you more time to decide, fill out and send in your applications. It is easy to be made to feel that you must apply early. It is a good choice for some students, but not for all students. Take a step back and try and evaluate your own situation so you do what is in your best interest.

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This week's question from Chris Kim, Portland, OR asks:

“How important are standardized test scores compared to other pieces of the application?”

### **Scores Count, But Not As Much as Your Grades**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

Standardized test scores are an important part of your application but they are less important than your grades. Strong grades in a rigorous curriculum are the most important factor that colleges will use to decide admissibility. In fact, how you perform in high school is a much better predictor of how you will fare in college. High test scores and lower grades may sometimes be interpreted as “not performing to ability”. However, high test scores can be important in determining merit scholarships. And for those students who are not testers--those whose scores are not in line with their GPA-- test optional colleges may be a great place to start.

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This week's question from Ashley Banks, White Plains, NY asks:

“Is it OK to have someone proofread your essay?”

### **Proofread Yes, Rewrite, No!**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

The essay is a very important part of your application-it is the only time you are speaking for yourself. It is perfectly fine to have a trusted adult read your essay and give a critique. However, you want to keep this to a minimum--one or, at most, two people. If you have too many people giving you advice, your voice may get lost. The colleges are serious when they say they want to hear your voice in the essay-- not your parent's voice and not your English teacher's voice. The college admissions officers are pretty savvy and can spot an essay that has been overly massaged by others.

This week's question from Peter O'Grady, Newton, MA asks:

“What are the most important components of the application?”

### **All Parts Play a Role in Telling Your Story**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

While your high school record --your grades and the rigor of your curriculum--is the most important factor for admissions, you do want the entire application to be your best work. Every part of the application serves a function and requires your thoughtful attention. Take your time and follow directions. Online applications do not have spell check so you need to proofread all parts. List your extra-curricular activities in the order of importance. Write all of your essays and short answers well in advance so they don't read as if you rushed through them at the deadline.

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This week's question from Darren Kaye, Orlando, FL asks:

“What do students need to know about transferring colleges?”

### **Know What You Want and Need in Your Next College**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

Sometimes students find that they need to transfer. This can happen for many reasons--students did not find the right fit the first time, they choose their college for the wrong reason, they have changed majors, they want to try a more competitive college or they have not been successful at their present college. When you transfer, you will need to make sure you are choosing your next college for the right reasons and will need to articulate this to the admissions office --preferably at an interview. You should also be aware that some of your college credits may not transfer to the new college and it may take a little longer to graduate, especially if you have changed majors.

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This week's question from Samantha Davis, Queens, NY asks:

“What are the most common scholarship scams? How do I avoid them?”

### **If It Sounds Too Good to Be True, It Usually Is**

Janet Rosier | Independent College Admissions Consultant

There are a lot of “do's” and “don'ts” when it comes to searching for scholarships. Don't fall for lines such as “thousands of dollars in scholarships go unclaimed”. Don't pay anyone to find scholarships for you or pay someone who promises to find you financial aid you couldn't get on your own. Don't apply for any scholarship that requires you to pay a fee--even if it is just a few dollars. Do check legitimate sources--the best place to start is your own high school's guidance department. Do check local civic groups. Do check reputable websites. And if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true.

This week's question from Eric Bees, Chicago, IL asks:

“What are the best ways for students with disabilities to find the right college?”

### **You Need to Be Your Own Advocate**

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All students need to try and find a college that is a good fit. Students who have a disability or attentional issue need to consider the services the college offers as part of that fit. I strongly suggest to students who have a disability to make an appointment to meet with the Office of Disability Services when they tour the college. Meet with the director and find out how that office runs and what services they offer. Try and get a sense of how user friendly they are. Not all colleges will have the same level of services--find the college that best meets your needs--that can mean adaptive technology, tutors or other services. Also, and this is crucial, make sure you know how things will be different from the way you have received services in high school. The law that governs disability in K-12 is not the same law that covers adults. Once you are in college you are under the ADA--Americans with Disabilities Act. Become familiar with how they differ and what your rights and responsibilities are. You will need to learn how to be your own advocate so be proactive when you are choosing your college.