

What College Admissions Officers Are Saying About CCS

January 23, 2009

A note from your Academic Counselor, Mrs. Choplin:

After hearing some students talking in the hall about how they couldn't get into college unless they went to a bigger school, I decided to find out how true or false that could be. Over the past two weeks, I have spoken with admissions counselors from several North Carolina colleges that our students have applied to within the last three years, plus a couple of other schools that students have asked about. With each, I described our school as

- being a private, PreK – 12th grade school with current enrollment of about 300, in our fourth year;
- offering a college preparatory track (based on the UNC system school admissions requirements) for our high school;
- working on accreditation, but not yet accredited by ACSI;
- offering as many honors courses as we can as enrollment allows, but no AP or IB yet; and
- having an athletics program.

Questions I Asked: How do you determine students' acceptances? What do you look for and are our students competitive with students in larger schools? What advice do you have for future applicants? Does accreditation matter?

Remember, CCS students and parents can always call the school of their choice and ask to speak to an Admissions Counselor with any concerns or questions. Most are very helpful, because they do want students (customers!) to enroll at their schools. Don't be afraid to call!

Appalachian State University

Admissions
Office of Admissions
ASU Box 32004
Boone, NC 28608-2004

Email: admissions@appstate.edu
Phone: 828-262-2120
Website: <http://www.appstate.edu>

Admissions Counselor:

"When we review a student's application, high school performance academically, of course, is important. We look at what type of high school they're coming from, and we look at the type of student we've seen in the past from that school.

Being a small private school is not a disadvantage for your students. We look for what opportunities the student had to challenge themselves –what's available at your school as far as honors courses or extracurricular activities and what the student chose to do based on what was available. We do pay special attention to their junior and senior years to see what their choices are.

When we take our initial looks at applications, we check out the GPA and SAT/ACT scores to get an idea of that student academically. We pay attention to the school – for example, we would recognize you as a private school and know that you don't weight your GPA, so that certainly would not penalize your student, but it lets us know that if a student has a 4.0 from your school, that is a major achievement within your grading scale."

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Appalachian State University, con't.

“During the second look, we go more in depth and look for extracurricular interests, clubs, sports, community service, etc. All of these things we find useful in deciding on an applicant’s admission.

By the way, on our website, we have First Connections – a feature for those students who have applied and have created an account – that’s a great way for students to keep up with the process and to see if they are missing any items for admission. For students who have been admitted, they can use First Connections to get a checklist of things to do after they have been admitted. Encourage your students to use this feature!”

East Carolina University

Admissions Office
106 Whichard Building
East 5th St.
Greenville, NC 27858-4353

Phone: (252) 328-6640 (Press 2)
Website: www.ecu.edu/

From the website:

“For the fall 2008 term, we received approximately 16,000 applications from prospective freshman students, and offered 11,000 of those admissions. The mean academic credentials of admitted students this year were:

Unweighted GPA: 3.1/4.0 ---- (*CCS does not weight grades)
Weighted GPA: 3.4/4.0

Admissions Counselor:

“Basically, we look for a strong academic curriculum, mainly the core curriculum that meets state requirements, like the math that’s higher than Algebra II, or two years foreign language, and so on, and either the SAT or ACT. We don’t really don’t compare schools at all, or say this school is better than that school because it’s bigger, or anything like that. We are not looking at your accreditation – we’re looking at the student’s transcript to see if he or she has taken the state requirements.

Some advice for your students is this: if you know you’re interested, go ahead and apply early!! Our school receives more applications every single year, and the competition is getting tougher. Take your SAT/ACT’s early in the fall of your senior year and get those applications in!”

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Meredith College

Office of Admissions
3800 Hillsborough Street
Raleigh, NC 27607-5298

Telephone Number: (919) 760-8581 or
1-800-MEREDITH
Fax Number: (919) 760-2348
E-mail: admissions@meredith.edu
Website: www.meredith.edu/

Admissions Counselor:

"It's been my experience that we take a private, college prep school transcript over other transcripts, any day. We find that they [students] seem to get the best education when they get one-on-one, smaller class sizes and concentrate on the major college prep track classes rather than more random courses, something like Film Appreciation, for example, that you find on larger school transcripts. We do look at the courses and the GPA as a major component, and then, of course, the SAT or ACT – either one meets our requirement--and it is a factor; the higher, the better, of course! But it sounds to me like you are right on track with your school and the courses you are offering."

N. C. School of Science and Mathematics

NCSSM Admissions
1219 Broad Street
P.O. Box 2418
Durham, NC 27715-2418

Email: admissions@ncssm.edu
Phone: (919) 416-2850
Fax: (919) 416-2853
Website: <http://www.ncssm.edu/index.php>

Admissions Counselor:

"NCSSM is a residential high school (650 live here – they are required to live here). We get about 1500 applications and accept approximately 300 per year. It's a very rigorous and challenging curriculum; we are the premier school in the state. The SAT scores of our students are higher than UNC freshman. And, the state has mandated that any student who walks across our stage (graduates) automatically is granted 4-year full scholarship to any UNC system school.

Students apply in their 10th grade year only. We do not accept the PSAT; we accept only the SAT Reasoning I test taken only during the 10th grade year – we encourage them to take the SAT more than once because we take the highest scores from each category. Students are accepted and attend our school for their junior & senior years.

Typically, students who apply here are academically gifted, enrolled in honors or AP courses, taking college courses, etc. We take the holistic approach in evaluating applications – although the biggest portion of our evaluation process is on academics, we like to see our applicants in leadership positions, taking part in community service and extracurricular activities such as student government, clubs, sports, etc. We want well-rounded students, because when they get here, we expect them to take part in clubs and extracurricular activities, too, as well as maintain their academic schedule."

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NC State University

Office of Undergraduate Admissions
NC State University
203 Peele Hall, Campus Box 7103
Raleigh, NC 27695-7103

Phone: 919.515.2434
Fax: 919.515.5039
E-mail: undergrad_admissions@ncsu.edu
Website: www.ncsu.edu

Undergraduate Admissions Counselor:

“We encourage students to take as challenging a course load as they have available to them. We do not disadvantage any student based on the high school they attend. We evaluate the application based solely on what they had available and what they took. Solid GPAs and competitive SAT/ACT scores are factors, too, of course.”

So, does it affect their application that we are in the accreditation process but not yet accredited?

“Not at all. As I said, we evaluate each student’s application based on their school’s curriculum. We do not compare high school to high school. Encourage your students to check out all the information on our website – we have lots of information out there that will answer most of your questions.”

From the NCSU website:

Successful candidates for freshman admission will have completed demanding college prep courses including at least two years of foreign language. We encourage you to take a foreign language and an advanced math course in your senior year of high school. Successful candidates for science, engineering, and technology majors will have strong high school backgrounds in math and science. Many of NC State’s applicants will have honors, AP, or IB classes in high school. The following chart should help you assess the relative selectivity of the various programs.

College and Admission Criteria

Agriculture and Life Sciences, Agriculture Programs - Selective
Agriculture and Life Sciences, Life Sciences Programs - Highly Selective
Agricultural Institute (2-year) - Open**
Design - Highly Selective*
Education - Highly Selective
Engineering - Highly Selective
Natural Resources - Selective
Humanities and Social Sciences - Selective
Management - Highly Selective
Physical and Mathematical Sciences - Highly Selective
Textiles - Selective
First Year College - Highly Selective

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University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

Office of Undergraduate Admissions
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB #2200, Jackson Hall
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-2200

Tel (919) 966-3621
Fax (919) 962-3045
E-mail: unchelp@admissions.unc.edu
Website: <http://www.unc.edu>

Admissions Counselor:

“We evaluate our students within the context of two pools –

1. Their school and what is available to them (to see if they are maxing out in their curriculum or not).
2. There’s also a context of a larger pool – large schools that have a pretty solid AP or IB curriculum.

GPA and competitive, strong SAT or ACT scores can balance out a less rigorous pool. Dual enrollment at local colleges can be a plus. Other things than attending a large school can make a student more academically competitive – for example, some homeschooled students take dual enrollment classes or study for AP exams on their own and take the AP exams, or they also take SAT subject exams over and above the regular SAT Reasoning test.

...We do look at if a student is working outside school in either an occupation or in community service, like volunteering. We look at the impact of what they have been involved in and leadership roles taken; also, there’s sustainability and consistency of these things – not the sheer number of them. Some students suddenly join groups in their 12th grade year when they decide they need to pad their applications. We look at what they have been doing consistently over the course of their high school years.

...If we worried most about accreditation, no homeschoolers would ever go to college. So, of course it will be good when you get accredited, but we really don’t look for that.”

UNC – Wilmington

Admissions Office
601 S. College Road
Wilmington, NC 28403

E-mail: admissions@uncw.edu
Phone: 910-962-3243
Fax: 910-962-3038
Web: <http://www.uncw.edu/admissions>

Admissions Representative:

“Students are not penalized for not taking courses that your school doesn’t offer. We want to see them challenge themselves by taking the highest courses your school offers, such as the honors courses for your school. Your school is following the college prep track, so that isn’t a problem, and we do look to see if your students are reaching past that by taking the extra classes your school offers. We’d rather see, for example, that they are taking that 4th history rather than early release just to get out of school.* Dual enrollment is a positive, too, if they have that opportunity.”

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UNC – Wilmington, cont.

*She is referring to the UNC system minimum college entrance requirements that state a student only has to have two history courses (one must be US History) to get in, but Crossroads requires one history per year that a student is here.

University of Tennessee

The University of Tennessee
Undergraduate Admissions
320 Student Services Building
Knoxville, TN 37996-0230

Phone: (865) 974-2184 (Press 1)
Email: admissions@utk.edu
Website: <http://www.utk.edu/>

Admissions Counselor for NC:

“We look at everything about the student and what is offered at their school. They are competitive as long as they take the courses they are required to take to earn their high school diploma (Note: NC requirements different than Tennessee’s requirements for graduation.). We do admit students with one deficiency, such as an Art or foreign language, so if your school did not teach something like that, we allow for one.

The SAT/ACT scores are getting more and more competitive each year, so encourage your students to take one or the other more than once. Overall, we holistically review students, so anything they do personally to add to their application is important, too, such as volunteer work/community service, sports, etc.

If they do dual enrollment, we give those dual enrollment classes .5 higher when we re-weight the GPA. In other words, we look at all applications and re-weight all the classes using our own formula to put the applicants on the same playing field. So it really doesn’t matter whether your school weights its grades or not – we’re going to even it all out to make it objective.”