

## Opening Activity

There are 20 fictional profiles of university applicants on the board. Acting as members of an admissions committee with a limited number of available seats, your task is to rank the applicants in the order you would admit them, assuming that only five students can be accepted.

Use the criteria the provided on the board – such as academic achievement, socioeconomic status, first-generation status, extracurricular involvement, special circumstances, and application submission time – to guide your decisions. Work individually first (3 minutes), then compare and justify your rankings with the students sitting next to you (1 or 2; 4 minutes). Finally, participate in a whole-class discussion to examine similarities, differences, and the values underlying different prioritization choices.

There are no right or wrong answers; the goal is to find out how different priorities and assumptions influence decision-making.

1. List the criteria you used (or were shown) to prioritize applicants. Which criteria did you personally give the most weight, and why?
  2. Did you and your partner come up with the same order for the candidates? If not, what differences were noticed, and what were the underlying values?
  3. What if test scores are highly correlated with family income and access to test prep resources? How will this impact whether test score use as the dominant standard is “fair”?

4. Involvement in extracurricular activities can be considered a plus in the application process. Could this requirement ever harm certain applicants?
  5. Think about “first-come, first-served” or the time of submission of applications. What are the underlying values here, and whom could this criterion disadvantage?
  6. Do you believe it might be possible to create a value-free system for college admissions? Why or why not?
  7. In what ways might goals related to efficiency, such as predicting academic success or college graduation rates, conflict with goals related to equity, such as accessibility and equality of opportunity?