6 Prime Steps to Building a Strong Profile

The Application process (Insert link >> https://undergrad.yocket.in/blog/applying-to-universities-3/what-after-act-sat-9) is a long, long rabbit hole. Once you step foot, there’s a trail of things-to-do that follow. However, this is a fun rabbit hole. It is going to lead you to a brighter future, albeit the process is a bit fatiguing. Also, you are going to experience butterflies in your stomach while in this hole (literally).

While the acceptance rate of your favourite school is somewhere between 4.8% to 92.9% (Yes, you read it right), the competition of getting financial aids and scholarships is heating up every year. Furthermore, you need a good profile to get a seat into your desired course, especially for those trying for Engineering and Technology courses, where the minimum requirements for international students is usually the hardest to achieve.

The following is a guide to help you stay well above the waters-

1. Extracurricular Activities-

Universities and Colleges in the U.S. stress upon the all-round development of students, and not only the academic achievements. Pursue your passion or do a course, online or offline. The quality of your achievements matter and not the quantity. Therefore, taking up a lot many activities is a risk that will make you fall short of time to pursue regular studies. Make a timetable for academics and non-academics alike. Study for your SAT (Insert link >> https://undergrad.yocket.in/blog/sat-preparation-guide-1) along with taking up some certificate course online (MOOC) on edX (Insert link >> https://www.edx.org/) or Coursera (Insert link >> https://www.coursera.org/?authMode=signup) or take up taekwondo classes and participate at competitions. Do not forget to study for your sophomore or senior year courses as well. High school demands you to juggle in between various activities. This may sound fatiguing but, to be honest, these will be the years that you would miss somewhere down the line in life. So make sure you perform academically and non-academically well and take up only those activities (read: troubles) which you would truly enjoyed dealing with.

2. Academic Record-

This should be on point! No matter how many tantrums you hear at your home regarding this, academic profile is truly the first thing that the admissions committee would eye (do not consider yourself as an exception). STOP PROCTRASTINATING and make a routine to study at least a couple of chapters or so daily, in each subject, well before your examination dates. Telling from experience, this is the foremost thing that is going to help you stay above the waters. And if the exam dates are close by and you have no clue about the things being taught at school, the ship has sailed. Your only hope now is to utilize your time well and hone your memory skills. Tip: watch videos online (See: Khan Academy (Insert link >> https://www.khanacademy.org/)) to better grasp the ideas you do not understand and make detailed notes (not so detailed if you are short of time). The visuals will not only help you remember better but also save your time on reading hefty books.

3. Internships-

If you have free time on your hands (e.g. during summer vacations), why not intern somewhere? Work experience makes your College Applications shinier and give you an edge over other applicants. It also helps you get better internships and job offers later. Your market value increases and if not, it further shows that you have an experience of a working space (it is kind of a big deal). You also get the benefit of getting an LOR not only from your teachers but also from your boss at work (yay!). Make sure you intern at a space you are comfortable in. It will be better if the job relates to the field of study you are interested in. This way, you will not lose interest in the job, you will get a hands on practice, and more importantly, it will help you gauge your interest in the field. Showing a sincere and disciplined behaviour is a plus point, so make sure you have a good rapport with your co-workers, managers, and the boss.

4. Show Your Goodwill-

Work with an NGO, not only for the sake of the College Application but also for the sake of being altruistic. Even if you don’t get to go to a college abroad (just sayin’), the brownie point for doing selfless deeds are unmatched, trust me. Universities in the U.S. appreciate students involved in community services. This will provide you another angle of edge over the others. It is recommended that you take it up for about 6 months. You can do it for short hours too, if you have less time at hands.

5. Letters of Recommendation-

Your LoRs can make things even more flowery if you have a good rapport with the recommender. The recommender could be your favourite teachers (teaching the course you are interested to pursue), your past employers or your Dean/Principal. Universities usually require 3 LoRs. Some recommenders might ask you to Draft Your Own LoRs (Insert link to article ‘How to Draft Letters of Recommendation’). Make sure the LoRs describe you and your skills/work in a positive tone. They should be about 500 words long. Make the most out of them.

6. Statement of Purpose-

This can either make it or break it. Talk about your interest in the major, why you chose it, how it will help you in your career, why did you choose the particular college for it, etc. Also mention about your academic achievements and projects that you might have taken up, related to the course you applied for. A Statement of Purpose (Insert link >> https://yocket.in/blog/university-application-process-4/all-about-sop-18) is all about you passion, dedication, and inspiration behind your next step. Therefore, make sure to be good enough with your words so as to sway the admissions committee off their feet.

Good luck!