

FCAFA Proceedings - 8 November 2022

Present: Michael Hood (chair), Matt McGann (Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, ex officio), Cate Zolkos (Dean of Admission, ex officio), Gail Holt (Dean of Financial Aid, ex officio), Sonya Clark, Maria Heim, Amy Wagaman, Loretta Alarcon '24, Nicholas Torres '24, Arleth Rodrigues '24, Mia Griffin '24E, Bridget Campolettano (Director of Communications, Admission Office)

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Debrief from last week's mock application exercise

- a. Group appreciated the difficulty of trying to use what we are given in the application materials to make an educated guess (and eventually, admission decision) about how well the student will navigate an Amherst education and take advantage of our resources
 - i. Looking for evidence that a student will thrive at Amherst during the review process
 - ii. Looking for how a student has taken advantage of challenging coursework within the context of their school
- b. Feedback can be very helpful – surveys for admitted students who come to Amherst can help Admission staff get a sense of the student experience here
- c. Admission staff described putting in effort during the review process to tune in to the way students are described and what qualities are highlighted by recommendation writers (especially students who come from underrepresented backgrounds)
- d. Admission staff emphasized Amherst's goal of focusing more on mission than statistics in the admission acceptance process

3. Discussion of Admission Office communications with new Communications Director in the office, Bridget Campolettano

- a. Bridget shared a personal introduction, some of her background in this work, and general information about her position
 - i. One of the first things she's been working on is Admission information on the College website
 - ii. Traditional publications (physical copies in office) as well as email list messages that get sent to prospective students
 - iii. Amherst is characterized by several core values, including intellectual curiosity, diversity, and rigor, but Communications work is about narrowing the lens and thinking critically about how to best describe and portray what prospective students and families should know about Amherst, as an institution and a place
- b. Communications changes and outreach are being geared toward Amherst College Class of '29 (current high school sophomores) so that we can ensure that these materials will be clear, widely accessible, and helpful for these students during their junior year

- c. Admission Staff reiterated some examples from last week about how the Office provides outreach for low-income students
 - i. Discussion of how some Amherst students and alumni feel personally interested in this kind of outreach (especially providing information to prospective students from their areas and communities), and are interested in contributing somehow
 - ii. Discussion of the power of social media, particularly in communicating the affordability of Amherst, and how our Office could help with that
 - iii. Discussion of the portrayal of Amherst on social media, especially during moments in the last few years when Amherst has been trending on Twitter and other social media platforms

4. Overview of upcoming meetings for Admission Staff

- a. Faculty meeting in December where many things related to Admission work (including the Supreme Court decision) will be discussed
- b. Matt followed up with more thoughts about the potential consequences of a ruling against race-conscious Admissions
 - i. Unclear how a prohibitive ruling will practically impact recruitment, outreach, and admission review processes, or how its broadness could impact students once they are on campus
 - 1. Obviously a nationwide issue, not merely Amherst College
 - ii. Discussed how community based organizations seem to be preparing and considering how the ruling could impact their students
 - iii. Other cases considering race-neutral Admissions are consistently troubling