Portfolios and Pre-screenings and Auditions, Oh My!
Navigating Performing and Visual Arts Admissions

SACAC CONFERENCE

APRIL 16, 2018
Overview of Presentation

➢ Who Are We?
➢ Options for Artistically Driven Students
➢ Counseling Artists on the High School Side
➢ A look from the College Side
➢ Do’s and Don’ts for Students
➢ Tips for Counselors
Multiple pathways to desired outcomes (liberal arts classes still exist)

- Conservatories and Art Colleges
- Conservatories within Universities (“School of”)
- Dual-degree programs
- Colleges and Universities with strong arts programs
- Accrediting Bodies
- Different types of degrees (what they mean)
  - BFA (theater, art, dance)
  - BM (music)
  - BA/BS
  - Certificate and Training programs

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How to Approach Counseling Artists

Step 1: Make decisions about your priorities
➢ Emphasis on arts, academics, both?
➢ Look at performance opportunities, workshops, specializations
➢ Location, size, school environment

Step 2: Visit programs / Meet faculty / Get organized
➢ Make a spreadsheet and keep track of everything
➢ Structure of curricula vary greatly from school to school

Step 3: Create a diverse list
➢ Concentrate on fit and cast a wide net
➢ Relative importance of talent vs. academic achievement in admissions

Step 4: Apply (pre-screening may be required)
➢ Pay attention to deadlines--art programs often have earlier ones!

Step 5: Plan audition tour or on-campus portfolio reviews

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BFA/BM Admission Realities

➢ Programs are typically HIGHLY SELECTIVE
➢ The admission process is HIGHLY SUBJECTIVE
➢ Predictions about a student’s chances of admissions are exceedingly hard to make
➢ Many schools set early deadlines (11/1 or 12/1) for REGULAR admission
➢ A few schools require pre-screenings before granting an audition
➢ Visual Art programs require portfolios for admission
➢ Admissions criteria change from year to year and school to school
➢ Advise students to look beyond rankings
   ➢ Example of “famous” actors
   ➢ BA Programs can often be a great option

➢ Audition requirements vary by school and program
   ➢ “Acceptd”
   ➢ “Unified Auditions” vs. on-campus auditions

➢ Other Components
   ➢ Resume and Head Shot
   ➢ Monologue(s)
   ➢ Song(s)
   ➢ Dance call
   ➢ Interview
Dance and Ballet Admission

Different types of programs and different styles of dance
➢ Ballet, Modern, Contemporary, Commercial Dance
➢ Liberal arts colleges
➢ Conservatories
➢ Colleges that are affiliated with companies

Other Components
➢ Resume and Dance Photos
➢ Ballet technique class
➢ Modern & Master class
➢ Solo performance
➢ Companies and Traineeships
Different pathways (classical, contemporary, orchestral, etc.)

➢ Audition requirements vary by school and program
➢ “Acceptd” and Pre-Screenings

Other Components

➢ Audition requirements and repertoire vary by program
➢ Most music conservatories do not accept Common App
➢ Resume and Repertoire List
➢ Music Theory Tests
➢ Voice Students sing in multiple languages
Visual Art Admission

Structure of Programs
➢ Foundation year vs. applying into specific major

Artist’s Statement

Portfolio
➢ What to include (Depth vs. Breadth)
➢ Slideroom

Portfolio Specific Assignments
➢ Titles (Challenge, Home Test, Scholarship Competition)
➢ Often lots of additional work required
Time-Based Media Admissions

➢ Types of Programs (Animation, Film, Game Design, Interactive Design)

➢ Artist’s Statement

➢ Portfolio
  ➢ What to include (Depth vs. Breadth)
  ➢ Expectations for experience (depends on the school)
  ➢ Slideroom

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BA Programs can be a GREAT fit for many kids!!

➢ Some even offer merit scholarships

Structure “Activities” section so art talents are obvious

Utilize “Additional Information” section

What is an Arts Supplement?

➢ Demonstrates artistic skills to non-audition schools

➢ Components may include:
  ➢ Video/Link
  ➢ Resume
  ➢ Letter(s) of recommendation
  ➢ Slideroom submission
Be proactive!
- Think like an artist
  - Read plays, go to see art, music, and dance
- Seek feedback on your art
- Build a portfolio/repertoire/audition materials
- Start the process early and stay organized
- Visit schools (open houses and program-specific tours)
- Consider summer/pre-college programs, taking classes outside of school

Don’t make assumptions!
- Students don’t have to be professional artists to be competitive for admission
- Academics still matter (and sometimes test scores, too)!
- Do your research
- Don’t just focus on the arts—every experience you have makes you a better artist
For Counselors

- NACAC Performing & Visual Art Fair, National Portfolio Day, Dancing through College & Beyond
- Keep an open mind about studying the arts—they teach so many transferable skills regardless of what career your students end up in
- Partner with teachers at your school
- Consider having arts-specific college programming
- Invite teachers to arts college visits
- Finding a school for an artist is still about finding the best fit!
Thank You!

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