

*The Ultimate*

# College Planning Blueprint



*Created by:*

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*The Experts in College Planning  
and Student Success*

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# Introduction

The Ultimate College Planning Blueprint is a road map for college admissions success. With college admissions more competitive than ever, it's important to have a blueprint, a game plan, which will help you become more successful in the college admissions process.

Too many students pursue the college planning process without really understanding the college admissions criteria and how to create a winning game plan that will greatly increase their chances for acceptance into their dream college. Getting accepted to college really comes down to understanding the key factors that college admissions officers look for in a successful applicant. Understanding these factors will not only greatly increase your chances for college acceptance, but can also earn you a lot of money.

The Ultimate College Planning Blueprint outlines the key areas that are important to focus on for college planning and admissions. This blueprint breaks down your college planning strategy into FIVE KEY STEPS. Understanding and implementing these FIVE KEY STEPS is your ticket to a successful college planning game plan, and a greater chance to getting accepted to your dream college!

Are you ready to learn the Ultimate College Planning Blueprint? Let's get started!

In Success and Achievement,

*Dr. Jeffrey Haig*     *Dr. Brian Haig*

On the following pages are the five key areas that college admission officers look at when choosing whom to accept for their next entering class. What are the the crucial factors that make the difference of whether a college applicant will be successful or not? **Let's find out!**

## 5 Key Areas for College Admissions Success

# Strong Numbers

# #1

The **first important factor** when applying to college is to have strong numbers. This means 1) having a high GPA, 2) taking a competitive course load, and 3) earning a solid SAT or ACT score (as it applies). This area is the most important part of your college application.

According to a study conducted by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, “Grades in college preparatory courses and strength of curriculum are considered by colleges to be the top factors admissions officers look for in a successful applicant, followed closely by an applicant’s SAT or ACT score, and then grades in the remaining courses.”

What are the college preparatory courses? These are the core classes including: English, math, science, history, foreign language, and visual and performing arts. Your goal is to do as well as you can in these core classes. And if your goal is to get into a really competitive college, then you should take the strongest curriculum your school offers in each of these areas. Additionally, it’s important to do well in the non-core classes because admissions officers look at these grades as well.

Now let’s discuss the SAT and ACT in more depth. Some colleges are not requiring it, other colleges are making it optional, and there are some colleges making it mandatory. The bottom line is your list of schools may include a colleges that is making it either optional or mandatory, and therefore, trying to get the highest score you can, is recommended, in most instances.

Also, most colleges will equally weigh the SAT and ACT, so make sure you choose the test that is right for you and the one that will get you the best possible score.

## 5 Key Areas for College Admissions Success

# Admissions Essay



# #2

In addition to performing well in your courses, and on the SAT or ACT, the **second important factor** when applying for college is the admissions essay. The admissions essay is your opportunity to go beyond the numbers and share with the admissions committee more about who you are including your interests, passions, and experiences.

Now, there are many different types of admissions essays that you may be required to write. What is important to consider when writing your essay is to really understand each college you are applying to and how you believe you would fit in. More importantly, it's about showing the admissions committee how you can add value to the student body. This is your opportunity to share meaningful experiences, stories, challenges, and triumphs that have shaped who you are, and made you the person you are today.

Remember, the college essay is your opportunity to give a “voice” to your application—so make it count!

## 5 Key Areas for College Admissions Success

# Demonstrated Interest

# #3

The **third important factor** for being successful in the college admissions process is to show a “demonstrated interest” in the colleges you are applying to. Colleges want to know that you, as an applicant, understand what their college is about, and more importantly, that you understand how you would fit into their student body. Remember, colleges are not just accepting students into their entering class--they are accepting future alumni who will be a great representation for their college.

So how do you show a “demonstrated interest” in a college? You need to show in your application that you really understand important factors of the college including its mission statement, core beliefs and values, history and overall vision. Other important steps you can take to show a demonstrated interest is visiting the college, attending an information session, and talking to current students, alumni, and admission officers.

In summary, it's important that you understand each college you are applying to and that you show how you can be a valuable asset to the student body.

## 5 Key Areas for College Admissions Success

# Counselor & Teacher Recommendations

# #4

The **fourth important factor** when applying to college is to have strong counselor and teacher recommendations.

Let's first discuss the counselor recommendation. This recommendation is a report that is sent to each college that includes such factors as your GPA, class ranking or %, and the strength of your curriculum taken. Additional factors in the report may include leadership, motivation, ability to contribute, and a written evaluation. Therefore, it's important that you establish a positive relationship with your counselor so they know who you are and what your passions and interests are. Your counselor can then root for you more and give you a stronger evaluation when you apply to college.

Let's now turn to teacher recommendations. Teacher recommendations are another important factor in the admissions process. Many colleges will require one or two letters of recommendation, and some colleges will accept even more, depending on the program you apply to. It's important to understand that most of your letters of recommendation will need to come from teachers in your core classes—so make sure you do well in these classes, and that you make an extra effort to stand out. These teacher letters of recommendation carry a good amount of weight, so take them seriously.

## 5 Key Areas for College Admissions Success

# Involvement in Extracurricular Activities

# #5

The **fifth important factor** when applying to college is your involvement in extracurricular activities. You don't need to get involved in a lot of extracurricular activities. Just pick two or three that really interest you. It's more important that you get a deeper involvement in the activities you are passionate about, that you take on leadership roles, and that you make a strong contribution.

Examples of extracurricular activities include student government, sports, clubs and organizations, and volunteer opportunities. Remember, it's not about the quantity of extracurricular activities you join—it's about the quality and the depth of involvement in the few passionate activities you do get involved in.



# The Wrap-up!

Applying to college can be an exciting time in your life. But you have to remember there are important, strategic steps you need to take so that you can be as competitive as possible in the college admissions process.

*Remember, follow these simple guidelines for success in the college admissions process.*

- 1.** Always earn the best grades you can while taking the strongest curriculum your school offers. Also, score as high as possible on the SAT or ACT.
- 2.** Bring a voice to your application through your admissions essays.
- 3.** Make sure you understand the colleges you are applying to and how you would be a great fit.
- 4.** Get to know both your counselor and teachers well so that they can be a positive reference.
- 5.** Get involved with a small number of extracurricular activities that you are passionate about, and contribute as much as you can.

We hope you enjoyed the Ultimate College Planning Blueprint!

If you want even more great resources to help in the college planning and admissions process, go to [www.StrategicCollegeConsulting.com](http://www.StrategicCollegeConsulting.com) where we post regular updates on strategies, tips and success stories to help you develop YOUR college planning game plan!

# Learn More!

We are dedicated to helping students and families through the competitive college planning and admissions process. We offer many additional resources to help you become more successful in your college planning and admissions journey:

# 1

We provide FREE insights, strategies, and tips that give a lot of great information on different college planning and admissions topics.

Visit us and learn more at [www.StrategicCollegeConsulting.com](http://www.StrategicCollegeConsulting.com)

# 2

We are the hosts of **The Ultimate College Planning Podcast**, a show dedicated to helping students and families through the competitive college planning and admissions process. The show covers different topics of the college planning process and we also bring in diverse expert speakers to give you the best information on college planning topics from how to get an edge in the college admissions process to how to pay for the continually rising cost of tuition, and much more!

Visit [www.TheHaigTwins.com](http://www.TheHaigTwins.com) or subscribe to our podcast on Apple iTunes.



# 3

Look out for our **Ultimate College Admissions Program**, an in-depth and comprehensive, first-class, college planning and admissions program that you can access online, 24/7, in the comfort of your home. Stay tuned!

# About Us

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*Dr. Jeff & Dr. Brian Haig, are dedicated to helping students and parents navigate the college and financial planning process. With admissions more competitive than ever, we will help students develop a game plan that will maximize college admissions success!*

## Dr. Jeff Haig

Dr. Jeffrey Haig, founder of Strategic College Consulting, completed his BA from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and MBA and Doctorate in Education (on scholarship) from the University of Southern California (USC). Dr. Haig has served on the UCLA Scholarship Admissions Committee for 15+ years as an application reader, District Chair, and has overseen the Orange County regional area. Additionally, Dr. Haig educates families, schools, and organizations at workshops, seminars, schools and corporate events on the extensive and competitive college planning and admissions process.



Dr. Haig is a national education expert and has been featured in many of the top publications including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Boston Herald, McGraw Hill, Huffington Post, and many others. He has been a featured education expert for the Orange County Register, writing on diverse topics of college planning and admissions. Additionally, he is a contributor to media outlets throughout the country on current college planning and admissions news topics. Dr. Haig also hosts a show on Apple iTunes called, “The Ultimate College Planning Podcast,” with his twin brother, Dr. Brian Haig. The show covers a diverse range of college planning topics and also features many of the top education experts from around the country. His educational book, “Unlock Your Educational Potential,” has been greatly received in the United States and internationally, and has helped students to succeed in school to their fullest potential. The book

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won 20 international awards, winning in many of the most prestigious book awards competitions in the country including Disney's iParenting Media, Pinnacle Book Achievement Award, the National Parenting Center of Approval, Family Review, USA Book News and many others. The book has been endorsed by school principals, college professors, superintendents, Olympic gold medalists, parents, students, mayors, and teachers.

A former lead instructor at Kaplan Education (SAT/ACT, Subject & AP tests), Dr. Haig is passionate about education and making a positive difference in students' lives. He has researched, developed and implemented curriculums to help students maximize their educational success as well as taught numerous classes on topics including education, career and personal development. Jeff has taught students at both the domestic and international levels. Dr. Haig is also a college professor where he teaches both business and student success courses on topics including learning strategies, career development, communication, writing, resume development, marketing, and interviewing. He received his college counseling education from the Harvard Institute on College Admissions at Harvard University, the UCLA College Counseling program, and the Summer Institute from the Independent Educational Consultants Association.

An active member of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, the Higher Education Consultant Association, and the Western Association for College Admission Counseling, Dr. Haig has also sat on the education committee for the Irvine, California Chamber of Commerce.

Aside from helping families in the college planning and admissions process, he produced and directed an educational documentary that was featured both nationally and internationally. His film ultimately won 12 international awards, playing in some of the most prestigious film festivals. It was acquired by the Documentary Channel.

Dr. Haig is currently an education consultant, national education columnist, college professor, and 20-time international award-winning author.

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## Dr. Brian Haig

Dr. Brian Haig is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, where he earned his bachelor's degree in neuroscience and graduated at the top of his class. Having earned acceptances to multiple Ivy-League doctorate programs, he then chose to complete his doctorate studies at the world-renowned UCLA.

Dr. Haig received his college counseling education at the UCLA College Counseling Program where he was honored as one of the best, most dynamic, and interesting students in the program.

Additionally, he is a Certified High Performance Coach and has trained in high performance strategies under Growth, the world's leading high performance coaching authority. He also has served on the UCLA Scholarship Admissions Committee for the last ten years as an application reader where he helps review top applicants for UCLA's prestigious scholarship awards.

Co-author of the 20-time international award-winning book, *Unlock Your Educational Potential*, Dr. Haig is the recipient of some of the most prestigious book awards in the country including Disney's iParenting Media Award, Pinnacle Book Achievement Award, the National Parenting Center of Approval Award, Family Review, USA Book News and many others. His book has been endorsed by school principals, college professors, superintendents, Olympic gold medalists, parents, students, mayors, and teachers.



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## Dr. Brian Haig

Dr. Haig is passionate about helping students achieve educational success. He has developed courses, programs, and workshops that have helped students get into the college of their choice, and succeed to their fullest potential. His unique interest is to create programs that inspire, motivate, and empower students for educational success.

Aside from being a college planning and admissions expert, Certified High Performance Coach, and 20-time international award-winning educational author, Dr. Haig enjoys spending time with his wife and two young boys, and is an avid health and fitness enthusiast.