



The Payoff of College Applications

Lily Morgan, Senior
NEWS EDITOR

January, February, March: the three longest months for a senior in high school.

Every time I open Instagram, I am bombarded by congratulatory posts for my peers who've been accepted into and committed to their top-choice school. Congrats to my girly on Blank University, sending my bestie off to Blank College, University of Blank got a good one! Retreating from social media, I mechanically log into my applicant status portals, having done so enough times that each username and password is ingrained into my fingertips. But the same screen pops up over and over, imploring me to wait patiently until decisions are released in March.

So I comply and wait, along with the millions of teenagers itching to receive

an acceptance letter, anxiously anticipating the fateful day in mid- to late-March that will determine our futures. I have been waiting for this moment for nearly eighteen years, having spent almost my entire life preparing for college applications. Reflecting back on the countless hours spent studying, evenings passed completing assignments, and days wasted writing and rewriting essays, I ask myself: was it all worth it?

Recently, after wishing away the past four years of high school and praying for March to come quicker, I came to the realization that this is it. High school is almost over, and soon, I will have to say goodbye to my friends, pack up my things, and leave the town I've loved (and hated) for nearly

eighteen years. This realization brought with it a wave of fear: fear of the future, fear of living on my own, and fear that I might lose touch with my close friends. But the most crippling fear of all was the fear that my hard work won't pay off. College admissions have gotten so competitive that good grades and test scores no longer ensure a spot in a school. Students are required to meet with alumni for interviews, write dozens of essays showcasing their best writing and brilliance, and bulk up their résumés with jobs, extracurriculars, and volunteer experience. But still, even after achieving the requirements-- the GPA, the test scores, the recommendations-- students find themselves at the mercy of an admissions officer, sit-

ting somewhere in a stuffy office and a tweed jacket, skimming through their seventieth application of the day.

Students who are qualified for certain schools may be rejected by an admissions officer who didn't like their writing style or wasn't impressed by their hobbies or believed their interview reflected poorly on them. So, if that's the case, if a biased stranger finds fault in what I believe was a perfectly adequate application, was it all worth it?

I'd like to think it was, because even if I don't get into my dream school, the last twelve years truly have molded me into the person I am today. Through my schoolwork and academics, I have learned how to learn, study, and budget my time. Through my extracurriculars, I have learned what hobbies I enjoy and how to refine

my skills independently. And through my work and volunteer experience, I have learned how to cooperate with others and behave as an employee, skills that will benefit me for the rest of my life. Many of the decisions I've made over the past twelve years may have been influenced by my hope to one day attend a top-tier university, but the learning experiences those decisions have provided me with have been invaluable in every aspect of my life.

So yes, I do believe it was all worth it, because ultimately, the boxes we had to check to complete our applications have set us up for success in the future. So for the next month, whenever you're feeling anxious about the decisions weighing over you, just remember that you have done everything in your power to achieve your goals, and try to enjoy the time we have left together.



A Take on Positivity

Alexis Earp, Sophomore
FEATURES EDITOR

My last article was a review of 2019, and it was kind of a downer. At least, that's how I remembered it. To find some of the year's major events, I did a lot of research. It was page after page of intense information, and I felt like my article was tainted by the weight of everything I saw. Looking back, the article actually isn't that negative. I would even say that it has a generally positive tone, but the reason that I thought it was so negative was because of all the heartbreaking stories I found while writing it. Having access to so much information is amazing, but it's frustrating when most of it is sad. I honestly had a lot of trouble coming up with an idea for this article, but I thought that this time, I would focus on the positive.

One great source for news is The Happy Broadcast. Created by Mauro Gatti, it features positive news stories from across the world, as well as cute illustrations for each one. The Happy Broadcast website features links to other sources that report these stories. Though this should not become your sole source of news, it is an easy way to find out about good things that are happening. They have a website, an Instagram account, and a

Facebook page.

Researching your interests is an awesome way to bring some joy into your daily routine. I think moths are really fascinating. Most people probably see moths as those annoying bugs that eat clothes, but they're actually really cool (and there is more than just one type of moth). Did you know that there is a National Moth Week that takes place in July? I found that out when I was looking up random moth facts last summer. I also found out that the wings of the Madagascan Sunset Moth, which are red, orange, blue and green, were used to decorate jewelry in the 1800s. I know that most people don't feel the same way about moths, but for me, learning about this was fun. Others might look for fun facts about their favorite sport, flower, or genre of music. This information may not be relevant to your schoolwork or career, but if it makes you happy, taking the time to learn more is worth it.

In addition to researching fun facts, looking at pictures is also a quick way

to make yourself smile. For some, this might be looking at pictures of kittens, puppies, and other animals. Others may have to go no further than their camera



roll to see pictures of their friends, family, or that one really beautiful sunset from last week. Watching videos that make you laugh is another awesome use of time. Have you ever seen a cat on a Roomba? I highly recommend those videos. Even though these would be considered by some to be a waste of time, as long as you manage your time well, there's no harm in taking a few minutes to look at something you enjoy.

This article is all over the place, and kind of cliché, but these methods for bringing more positivity into life work for me. They might not work for everyone, but here's the thing: I want the main takeaway from this article to be that you should surround yourself with and do things that make you happy. That is going to look different for every one of us, and that's okay. Writing this article made me smile. While it might not be my best or most original writing, it made me happy, and that's really the point, isn't it?

Coronavirus Update

Sophia Piper, Junior
NEWS EDITOR

On Friday, February 7th, Wuhan Central Hospital announced that one of their doctors had died from novel coronavirus (now COVID-19). Dr. Li Wenliang had been treating coronavirus patients previously and had contracted the virus during this time. Li had been one of the earliest whistleblowers about the illness, posting messages to his medical affiliates right after the virus broke out in December. However, the Wuhan police force immediately told him to take down his messages, saying that they were "rumor-mongering." Li was just one of several medical professionals silenced by the Chinese government in an attempt to prevent widespread panic.

Due to his efforts in treating and spreading knowledge of the virus despite being silenced, many Chinese citizens were furious about Wenliang's untimely death. China's social platform, Weibo, was flooded with messages such as "I want freedom of speech" and "Wuhan government owes Dr. Li Weinlang an apology." However, these messages were soon deleted from the platform thanks to China's heavy censorship.



Dr. Wenliang's death is just one of 2,600 from COVID-19 thus far. It has infected around 70,000 people as of February 24, with an approximate death rate of 2% (though this varies greatly by age group). The death rate for young and middle-aged adults is only around 0.2 to 1%. It is mostly seniors and people who are already ill who have a higher chance of dying (15%). Additionally, the United States has done a great job containing any cases of COVID thus far, having sent 21 back to



South China Morning Post

their original countries and keeping the 14 infected American citizens in isolation. However, the outbreak has been affecting other countries much more severely. Travel bans are in place and will probably remain in place until the virus is considered under control. It's hard to tell how long this will be, but until more information is released, it is important to stay alert, not panicked.

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