"But I want to go to *[Insert brand name institution here]*":
Having difficult discussions with your students about
match and fit

The conversation almost always starts out the same way…

Student A: "College is free in my home country so I'm only going to apply to Harvard and Yale."
-C.L IB 43

Parent A: "I sent my kid to this school for a reason"
-Dad of a IB 35 Student

Student B: "I need to attend a 'reputable' school or it'll be nearly impossible to get work back home"
-A.A. AP Capstone Student

Parent B "They've worked too hard not to attend a top 10 school"
-Mom of an high average student

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On having the difficult conversation

-Starts in grade 9

-Consider the model - Comprehensive vs Specialized.

-The nature of international schools

Tips for the conversations:

-Start from a place of cultural humility; there are often cultural considerations you may not be aware of at play in this process

-Encourage self-awareness and honesty on the part of the student and the parent

-Use Data to help support your guidance

RANKINGS

Hot Take: Rankings aren't bad...

...as long as you understand that methodology matter.

(Re)Defining Match v. Fit

Match is based on the student's academic profile- How does the student compare to the average profile of admitted students at the university?	**Fit** describes how well the environment, resources, campus community, teaching styles, etc align with the student's preferences.

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Points to consider when determining MATCH:	Points to consider when determining FIT
● University Academic Profiles (selectivity, competitiveness, how they review applications) ● Incoming average test scores ● Incoming average GPA (transcripts/marks) ● Expected High School preparation (course rigor, type, etc)	● Campus location (climate, distance from home, urban v. rural, proximity to family/friends) ● Class size ● Student body diversity ● Student life facilities and resources (athletics, clubs, identity affinity groups, etc)

The information is out there- the students just have to look!

University of Pennsylvania

CLASS OF 2025 STANDARDIZED TESTING

NYU Abu Dhabi

SAT
1510
(median score
out of 1600)

MATH SCORES
753 in the 25th percentile
800 in the 75th percentile

READING SCORES
700 in the 25th percentile
750 in the 75th percentile

INTERNATIONAL
BACCALAUREATE
39
(median predicted score)

ACT
35
(median score out of
36-point scale)

*Testing data only reflects students who chose to submit the SAT, ACT, or IB to fulfill
NYU's testing requirements.

While testing remained optional for applicants, the middle 50% scores reported by
enrolled students who chose to submit scores were:

34–35
ACT

1510–1560
SAT

TESTING STILL
REMAINS OPTIONAL
FOR 2023-2024!

86%	of enrolling students had reported rank in top tenth of class (not all applicants reported rank)
Middle 50% range for SAT scores:	
690-750	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing
710-790	Math
Middle 50% range for ACT composite scores: 32-35	

University of Virginia

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For FIT the information is out there too, you may need to help your students/families interpret the meaning.

For Example:
- Class size will tell you how much interaction you'll have with your professors

- The number and robustness of the identity-based clubs can be an indicator of students' sense of belonging and inclusion, also look into whether offices dedicated to IDBE work exist on campus

- Prominence of athletics in imagery and website information can indicate its importance in college life

From a university perspective…….

- At a selective/competitive university, match will be what drives the admissions decision. We will not admit students we think will suffer academically, regardless of fit.

- Fit will help contribute to student success, which is great for everyone: universities report on these statistics (graduation rates, student outcomes, etc)

- The belonging a student feels for their institution ties with their future giving- many universities rely heavily on alumni donations and endowments

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- Admissions decisions depend on various factors unique to each school and can be opaque, leading to disappointment for students who focus on these factors

- On the other hand, when students are able to recognize their strengths, interests, and inclinations, and leverage them effectively, they gain a better understanding of what they aspire to achieve in life.

- University counseling in international schools should be personalized, empowering, and recognize students as individuals with unique needs and goals.

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The Values That Drive Our Work

Prioritizing quality over quantity of activities	We urge authentic, meaningful, sustained, and diverse involvement.
Awareness of overloading on course work	Challenging yourself to your ability and maintaining good mental health.
Encourage self-discovery and reflection	Authenticity, confidence, honesty are things valued in the applications.
Expand thinking of what is a "good" college	Redefine good, top 100, or best

On having the difficult conversation

- Process of Self-Discovery to determine fit starts before senior year
- [Junior Project](#) (IACAC Summer 2023 Presentation)
- [Example Lesson](#)
- [Student Example](#)
- Student Directed family meetings
- Integrating skills and interest inventories in counseling delivery

ROLE PLAY: The conversation almost always starts out the same way…

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Discussion Time!

Thank you!