



Media Contact:
Sarah Brachman
IECA Manager of Communications
sarah@iecaonline.com
703-591-4850 ext. 6971
www.IECAonline.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2013

**Annual Survey Shows Shifting Admission Priorities in College Admission
Rigorous Curriculum and Grades Edge Out Standardized Tests for Top Spots**

Fairfax, VA – IECA released today its annual survey of hundreds of the nation’s premier independent educational consultants, ***Top Strengths and Experiences Colleges Look for in High School Students***. According to CEO Mark Sklarow, the list saw the greatest changes than any time in the more than 20 years the Association has conducted its survey.

Among the [significant changes](#):

- A rigorous high school curriculum landed the number one spot, ahead of grades and SAT/ACT scores. Said Sklarow, “our members indicated that students are best served by taking the most challenging coursework they can manage. While good grades are important, it is even more important that students show they are willing to accept an academic challenge.
- Essays have increased in importance, particularly at smaller, private colleges.
- Also increasing in importance: demonstrated leadership, demonstrated interest in attending, and a college’s desire to create a diverse [geographic, racial, cultural] freshman class. Respondents indicated that “demonstrated interest” was the biggest change, with colleges now monitoring students’ likes on Facebook, followers on Twitter, campus visits, emails and more.
- continued -
- Less important in this year’s survey: letters of recommendation and special and unique talents. However, passionate involvement in a few activities, continued to be a major factor.
- Among the items falling off the “top 12” list entirely: student interviews, being a legacy, and submission of creative applications—like the use of a video.

The complete list can be downloaded [here](#); a summary of what has grown in importance and what has become less important can be downloaded [here](#).

Sklarow cautioned that “Every college is unique, and so each emphasizes something different in its process of reviewing applications. One of the great benefits of hiring an independent educational consultant is their knowledge of such differences.”

About IECA

IECA was founded in 1976 as a nonprofit, professional association of established independent educational consultants. IECA member independent educational consultants are professionals who assist students and families with educational decision-making. Their educational backgrounds, specialized training, campus visitations, and professional experience equip them to help students choose schools, colleges, or programs that meet their individual needs and goals. Membership in the Association requires an appropriate master's degree or comparable training and a minimum of three years of experience in the profession, as well as meeting IECA's professional standards and subscribing to its **Principles of Good Practice**. Members continually update their knowledge and maintain skills through IECA-sponsored meetings, workshops, training programs, webinars, and information exchanges with colleges, schools, programs and other IECs.

###