

## College Admissions: Ⓢ Not Complicated, But Not Simple

(NAPSA)—The college admissions process is neither predictable nor random, according to a study by the College Board summarized in *Admissions Decision-Making Models*, a resource for admissions professionals, by Gretchen Rigol.

Even if you have all the characteristics a college is looking for, that doesn't mean you're certain to get in, Rigol explains, because "supply and demand" often enters the equation. When a college receives many more qualified applications than it has seats available, admissions decisions become very hard to make.

Recomputing students' grade-point averages is one way that colleges "standardize" information so that they can compare students from vastly different backgrounds fairly. "Because there is no uniformity in the way that high schools compute GPAs, many institutions recalculate it," Rigol explains. Grades achieved in Advanced Placement (AP) and other challenging programs may be used to "weight" a GPA, while the grades earned in non-college prep courses may be eliminated.

Some colleges go a step further and compute an "academic index"

for each applicant—a measure that takes into account GPA, class rank, and/or test scores. An academic index is a useful tool for identifying applicants who are most like the students who've succeeded at that college or university in recent years.

Who decides who gets in?

At some colleges, each application is individually read by the admissions staff, working singly or in teams. At other institutions, applications are computer-sorted into groups that are accepted, declined or routed to individuals or committees for additional review. Rigol says "the decision to reject an application typically involves more steps than a decision to accept."

"When you think about it," says Renee Gernand, the College Board's senior director for College Planning Services, "students make decisions about colleges in much the same way. You can use the [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com) College Search feature to sort through the thousands of colleges in the U.S. and come up with a manageable number to investigate in depth," she says. "Then you read the colleges' view-books or visit their campuses to find out more about them."