Informing Students about their College Options: Lessons from *Expanding College Opportunities* for Low-Income, High-Achieving Students

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Low-Income High Achievers

**FAMILY INCOME**
- at or below $41,472

**SAT PERCENTILE**
- Top 10%

**SELF-REPORTED HIGH SCHOOL GPA**
- A- or higher

**ESTIMATED NUMBER OF THESE STUDENTS**
- 25,000 - 35,000
HIGH-INCOME STUDENTS’ PORTFOLIOS OF COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Relatively few high-income students apply to non-selective schools.

High-income students’ applications are well-distributed among reach, match and safety schools.

COLLEGE SELECTIVITY, MEASURED AS COLLEGE’S MEDIAN SAT - STUDENT’S SAT (IN PERCENTILES)
LOW-INCOME STUDENTS’ PORTFOLIOS OF COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

The bulk of low-income students’ applications go to non-selective schools.

Low-income students are less likely than their high-income counterparts to apply to a mix of reach and match schools.

COLLEGE SELECTIVITY, MEASURED AS COLLEGE’S MEDIAN SAT - STUDENT’S SAT (IN PERCENTILES)
Explanations for the Behavior Gap

1. Prohibitive cost of selective colleges
2. Low-income high achieves who apply are not admitted or fail to thrive at peer colleges.
3. Selective colleges could easily recruit low-income high achievers, so they are evidently not trying.
4. Existing counselors could easily guide low-income high achievers, so they are evidently not trying.
5. For cultural reasons, low-income high achievers don’t want to attend peer colleges.
6. Students need better information.
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LOOK INSIDE FOR IMPORTANT COLLEGE APPLICATION INFORMATION!

FRONT VIEW (CLOSED)

ECO MATERIALS  APPLICATIONS  FINANCIAL AID  FEE WAIVERS  MISCELLANEOUS
Expanding College OPPORTUNITIES

Students

About 40,000 high-achievers, most from the bottom 3rd of family income.

Materials

Customized to student’s locality, estimated family income, and high school.

Components

Application Guidance, Net Costs, No-Paperwork Fee Waivers.

Delivery

Mail & Internet, $6 per student including reminders.
## Your Customized College Requirement and Deadline Chart

Use the information in the chart below to stay on top of the college application process!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE NAME</th>
<th>WEB AND MAILING ADDRESS</th>
<th>DEADLINES</th>
<th>APPLICATION TYPE</th>
<th>LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>ESSAYS REQUIRED</th>
<th>TESTS REQUIRED</th>
<th>SAT/ACT TESTING CODES</th>
<th>OTHER APPLICATION COMPONENTS</th>
<th>FINANCIAL AID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duke University</td>
<td><a href="http://admit.duke.edu/">http://admit.duke.edu/</a></td>
<td>Scholarship Deadline: 1/6/2012</td>
<td>Common Application + Institutional Supplement</td>
<td>2 Teacher Recommendations</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>SAT + 2 SAT Subject Tests ACT with writing</td>
<td>515603088</td>
<td>Additional short answer questions are included with institutional supplement. The Universal College Application is also accepted.</td>
<td>3/1/2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emory University</td>
<td>[<a href="http://www.emory.edu/home/admission/Emory">http://www.emory.edu/home/admission/Emory</a> University, Office of Undergraduate Admissions](<a href="http://www.emory.edu/home/admission/Emory">http://www.emory.edu/home/admission/Emory</a> University, Office of Undergraduate Admissions)</td>
<td>Scholarship Deadline: 11/15/2011</td>
<td>Common Application + Institutional Supplement</td>
<td>2 Recommendations</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>SAT ACT SAT Subject Tests Recommended</td>
<td>51870280</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2/15/2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effect of the ECO Intervention on Admissions Outcomes

![Bar chart showing the effect in percentage change for different outcomes: number of admissions offers, admitted to any peer university, four-year graduation rate (max), instructional spending (max), and student-related spending (max).]
Effect of the ECO Intervention on Enrollment Outcomes

- Enrolled in peer university
- Four-year graduation rate at enrolled college
- Instructional spending at enrolled college
- Student-related spending at enrolled college
Key Lessons from the ECO Project

Common Aspirations

Information Differs

Information Matters

Informational Interventions are Cheap

The Relevance, not just Quantity, of Information Matters

Data, Analysis, & Computational Power are Key

Assuming that Interventions must be In-Person is a mistake
A Way Forward

Partner with credible third parties to extend ECO
Serve all low-income high-achievers through the College Board and ACT
Improve targeting & effectiveness with federal data
Test similarly informative interventions on a broader array of students, earlier
Support scientific research on information-based interventions

- Data, rather than financing, is the bottleneck