



All the Wisdom and None of the Junk: Secrets of Applying for College Admission and Scholarships

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The book's tone is frank but encouraging, and students and parents who use it will be better informed about how to put forth a stellar application packet.

Katy Craig and Katie Kramer's *All the Wisdom and None of the Junk* demystifies the college application and scholarship search process.

This book brings clarity to the application writing process. Published by the Boettcher Foundation, which awards scholarships to thousands of students, its authors—one is the foundation's president and CEO, the other its director of strategic initiatives—have extensive experience with the processes used to select scholarship and other award recipients.

They begin with advice on achieving patience and calm during the scholarship-seeking process and on establishing support systems with educators and family members. The rest of the book deals directly with completing the typical application, whether it is the Common Application, the Boettcher Scholarship, or an institution-specific application.

Some tips discussed include: set a professional tone when describing accomplishments, present yourself well in short answer and essay formats, follow directions, and respond completely to questions and writing prompts. Another helpful feature is a table that outlines what students should be working on from the fall semester of their freshman year to the spring semester of their senior year.

The book is practical and easy to follow, but its organization buries the most substantial aspects of its message. Its ten parts afford equal weight to less consequential portions of the book, including the authors' note and acknowledgements. The authors' impressive credentials are obscured as well, reserved for the back though they are one of the book's strongest selling points.

The strength of the book rests in the authors' decision to "show" readers how to produce strong sections of the application rather than simply telling them they need to accomplish this. They do this with numerous annotated responses from actual applications.

For instance, in a sample used to show readers how to maximize opportunities around activities lists, their examples range from less competitive and competitive to highly competitive responses, with comments to showcase their benefits or shortcomings, such as "Nice leadership position" or "Aggressive and judgmental."

Although these samples are crowded with text and include numerous lines that flow to annotated comments, italic, shaded, and bold fonts are used to help the reader navigate them. The book's tone is frank but encouraging, and it will leave the students and parents who use it better informed on how to put forth a stellar application packet.

All the Wisdom and None of the Junk is a useful resource for students, parents, and guidance counselors.

KAAVONIA HINTON (November 7, 2017)

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