EZ College Consulting

Dear Ayse,

This report is a personalized consulting service for you. It does not include any generic recommendations. In other words, it is prepared based on your needs regarding your applications to colleges in especially in the east cost. I prepared this report with respect to your educational background as well as your future educational plans. The main aim of the report is very simple. I would like to contribute to the brainstorming that you must undertake during this process, rather than only providing you with specific directions regarding application steps and procedures. This report will also contribute to the holistic approach that is essential to making the best decisions regarding college applications. As an education consulting company, we provide and believe in personalized consulting through sessions that lead to better brainstorming and, accordingly, better decisions made by the student him/herself. In this report you will find several sections covering the topics of (1) transcript evaluations, (2) SAT scores and their evaluation, (3) extracurricular activity and its evaluation, (4) the schools that best match your profile, (5) scholarship opportunities, (6) technical application procedures and The Common Application platform, (7) time management, and (8) special talents (language and art skills, etc.)

After our three conversations on the phone with you and with your parents, I came to the conclusion that you do not need a full service on college consulting. You and your parents are very familiar with the application procedures however there are crucial steps and without an experienced mind you may make some mistakes. That is the reason why I am writing (and created) this Road Map Report. Majority of the students who think college applications seriously do not need a complete guidance. It is simply wasting money. (I am excluding international applicants since the overall educational system in the country can be very confusing for millions of foreign applicants). There are two major issues you and your family are facing now. The first issue is about the "stress" which is very noticeable. The negative consequences of such stress include a bad decision-making. Further, it is very common that the conflict level between the parents and children increase as the college application due dates approach. I have another Turkish student from North Carolina and "he" and his father are in a "deep fight". I am acting like a "soother" and "peacekeeper" between them besides the college counseling service. The second issue that I have realized is about "decision making". Everybody wants the best choice however confusing mass information and unprofessional recommendations from ordinary people (with college degrees) put students and parents very uncomfortable position. This is also highly correlated to the stress that you are experiencing. With this report (and with our future conversations), we will try to make the best decisions for you. On the other hand, beside lowering the stress, and boosting the effective decision-makings process, we will complete your personal statement. Like millions of college applicants you are struggling to express yourself with only 650 words. Further, personal statements do not have specific "format" and I am very sure this also confuses you a lot. I have particular format to show the students' passion and unique characteristics (as well as future plans and academic strengths) that will distinguish you

from the other applicants. I do not mean that it is going to be perfect however we will have something convincing. Lastly, I believe that this report will improve your motivation toward the SAT exam that you will be taking for the last time. I know that you have few days left for the exam date, however I am pretty sure that you will receive higher scores especially at the math portion of the exam.

I would like to start with your transcript evaluations, which will be the primary criteria for the college admissions. Although each college has its unique algorithm to distinguish the applicants, especially top schools will look at the details of your high school transcripts (9th, 10th and 11th grade transcripts) first. In your case, they will definitely look beyond your weighted and unweighed grade point averages (GPA). In other words, they will look at the quality of the classes that you have completed. Specifically, they will evaluate the advanced placement (AP), dual enrollment (early college), and honors classes. With respect to those classes you have an impressive transcript. AP Biology AP Chemistry, AP US History, AP Literature, AP Lang (Now), AP Calculus (Now), AP Computer Science (Now) and other early college courses will distinguish you a lot. Further, I see from my notes, that you are taking (have taken) Intro to Engineering Design, Digital Electronics, Principals of Engineering, Computer Integrating, Engineering Design and Development classes. Let me compare you with my other student with 1460 SAT from NC. He has taken only one AP class by now. He hit 800 on SAT Math portion however his transcript pulls him down. Your transcript is superior. My only concern if I am not mistaken that you are in the top eight percentile among seniors in your school. Your school should be a competitive one. Some top colleges may only prefer top 3 percentile. I did not do an extensive search about this percentile issue however it is a reality. Without applying, you never know your admissibility.

Let's continue on to your SAT scores. You have taken the SAT two times and your super score is 1450. This places you in the top 98nd percentile nationally out of the 1.8 million students who took the SAT last year (We do not have the accurate scores for this year). This is also very impressive. However, we are not thinking ordinary colleges for you. Your scores will distinguish you but believe me you are not only competing with domestic students but also with international applicants. Let me give you an example from Cornell University. International students make up about 22.0% of the student body at Cornell. Best students from China, India, South Korea, France, Germany, etc. are also applying especially with 800 SAT Math scores. Further, as I will briefly explain in the below paragraphs, diversity is a richness and even affects the ranking of the colleges. You also have some advantages as a Turkish American. Anyway…I would like to focus on the details on your SAT scores. Your highest math score is 720 and your preferred major is "computer science". Although 1450 sounds really good to me, 720 in math portion may give a designated officer a "pause" during your SAT evaluations. Computer science (and related majors) at those top schools requires superior math-logical skills and I assume you already know this reality. I want you to focus on the Math portion of the upcoming SAT in October. You are already studying with different sources (e.g.,

Princeton Review) and you do not need any additional recommendation on SAT preparation. If you hit 760 on Math your chance to those top schools (including Cornell) will increase dramatically. Do not worry you still have chance. Your English portion at SATs is fine. It shows the balance. Besides excellent math skills, you will need language skills (writing and reading) during your college education. On the other hand, while I prepare those reports for the students (and families) I always emphasize that the students are not racehorses. We do not want to cause psychological disorders on anybody. You are going to a very good school.

The third criterion of admissions is the extracurricular activities that you have completed during your high school years. This criterion has more subjectivity since there are a variety of activities in which students participate that can be considered extracurricular activities. After evaluating your resume, I can say that you are in top 3 percent of my students that I have consulted last 8 years. Your resume is very impressive. You might wonder why you are not in the top 1 percent of my students with respect to extra curricular activities (and skills that they had). Some of my students were able to speak four different languages fluently. Some had study abroad experience for years. Some had serious publications. On the other hand, I want you to know that the schools that you are interested in are receiving similar resumes. However, I do not think every single student has a resume like you have. Let's go into the details in your resume and extra curricular activities. Internships, activities and volunteer activities are well balanced. You kept yourself very busy. Schools like that. From my previous experiences, I can easily say that Olympiad, and Robotics are extremely important words and they will take the attention of the evaluators. They may even call you for an interview and believe if they call, they will definitely ask you about the Robotics and Olympiads. Beside those two words, student association of "Women in Science & Engineering, (WISE)" is something very unique. I have never heard a student club like WISE from my other students. It also shows your consistency and leadership. Schools will also like your early connections with universities including University of Connecticut and University of New Heaven. You might want to add couple more volunteer activities under the cultural centers title. I am sure they are organizing activities including community blood drive, tutoring children after school and donating non-perishable food to a food bank.

Your skills in your resume show that you are not an ordinary student. Those programming, language, machining and software titles are very conclusive. They highly qualify you for computer science programs. You can even find a well-paid job now. However if I were you, I would add the level of your knowledge next to some titles. Like, how much do you know Java and Python; advanced, intermediate? Lastly, at the time your are completing your The Common App questions, you may want to enter your activities separately. In other words, instead of uploading your resume alone, you can also enter activities with more details manually.

Another advantage of you as a college applicant is being Turkish American. We will highlight this portion in your personal statement. Your resume also underlines your diversity. Schools like the diversity. They believe in the richness of contribution of that diversity. Graduate programs at Massachusetts Institute of Technology have 2878 international students and this represents the 42 percent of all graduate students. You also speak two languages.

I would like to stress the importance of time management. We are in September and you still have time to prepare your documents and apply to these schools that I have picked for you. However, I should note that all of the schools also accept applications through "early action" and "early decision" options. The due dates for such applications are either October 15th or November 1st. In short, many universities accept their students very early and the acceptance rates for those early applicants become very high. Students also have more of a chance to get better scholarships through those types of admissions. Early action applications are non-binding applications. However, early decision applications are binding, and if you prefer this option and if the school accepts your application, you should go there. You have to decide carefully. On the other hand, all of the schools that I chose for you also have regular admission deadlines, mostly in January. You should start preparing the documents for those schools now. I am very sure that you can complete your applications before October 15th. Your SAT scores can go to those schools a little later. Lastly, if you prefer early action and early decision admission types, you will receive the results (acceptance-denial) in December or January. The schools will give you sometime to decide whether you prefer them or not however be ready for the due date conflicts. Some schools will ask you to decide soon though you will want to wait some other schools' decisions on scholarships. It may not be as smooth as you expected.

Although different application platforms exist, I recommend that you use "The Common Application" when you are applying to the universities that I have picked for you. This platform makes things very simple. It has a very user-friendly functionality. You will submit almost all documentation (personal statement, reference letters, etc.) through this system. It is free to use; however, there will be an application fee for each of these universities. More than 700 academic institutions accept applications through The Common Application platform (https://www.commonapp.org). You can contact to your counselor at your school and s/he will help you to finalize the steps. You can also reach me after completing the sections. I can look at them. International applicants are struggling a lot with "The Common App" however I am very sure, you will not have any problem. At this point I have to highlight one important thing regarding reference letters. You may get 3 reference letters from your teachers. Please make sure that you receive one letter from your math teacher, one from a science teacher. The other one can also be from another math teacher. You can add more reference letters from other institutions where you worked. Your parents can even write one for you. Some schools limits the number of reference letters. Another important thing that since your teachers are writing tens of reference letters each year it is very normal them to submit a very "generic" letters

for every student. In other words, they can submit an ordinary reference letter that does not highlight your real capacity. <u>Your father or mother</u> can talk to them and this shows how serious you and your family for the college applications. This simple act works amazingly. They redesign the letter with more details about you.

I would like to continue with the scholarship opportunities. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available for US citizens and permanent residence. However it is a need-based scholarship. Simply they will look at your parent's financial strength. I assume since your father is an engineer, he makes a little bit more that the average income level. Accordingly, the amount that you may receive from FAFSA can be a little low. However I definitely want you to apply for this scholarship. For need based scholarship title, I have a bad news for you. No merit aid or athletic scholarships are awarded at Cornell; all grant aid is need-based. This sentence is from Cornell's web page. You can find out more about their policy from the link here. Good news about Cornell is here. You can do your own search for the other schools however you better know that without a complete application you never know how much you will get. That is why I highly recommend students to apply several colleges.

You would like to study computer science and related majors. You can narrow down your choices (concentration areas) during or after your college education. To me it sounds perfect. You are very precise and extremely ready for the program. However you better know that one out of three college students change their majors during their college educations in US. I see the future of the market. Artificial intelligent and machine learning are the paradigm shifts we are experiencing. At the time of your college graduation such technologies will be used extensively. While I was choosing the schools for you I have filtered the schools with respect to the computer science program rankings. This was one of the most important criteria to select the schools.

Let's see the schools that I have picked for you. You can, of course, add more schools or change the ones that I have picked. Those are my recommendations. You and your family will finalize the list. After the acceptance letters you will have more difficult times to choose the "best match" school. I know that you really want Cornell with acceptable reasons however I highly recommend not to underestimate the other schools. Applying ten schools are absolutely fine since we do not know that scholarships that you will receive. Scholarship amounts will lead you and your family for the final decision.

Let's apply and best match (if you hit 760 in math portion at upcoming SAT)
Cornell University. Ranked 6 among the best computer science schools. Reading and Writing 650-750, Math 680-780. You have chance to be admitted however if they deny you, the reason, most probably will be your SAT's math score. Acceptance rate is around 11%.

Let's apply
Princeton University. Ranked 8 among the best computer science schools. Reading and Writing 690-790, Math 710-800. Princeton ranked number 2 in overall among national rankings. You do not have to add this school in your list however you still have chance to be admitted. Let me share the alumni list of this school here. Always remember that the college will also give you enormous network opportunities.

Best match
Georgia Institute of Technology. Ranked 8 among the best computer science schools. Reading and Writing 640-730, Math 680-770. This school is a little far from your house but has a famous computer science program. You might want to add it to your list. They may give you a serious scholarship. The SAT averages of accepted students are a little lower that the other schools that are closer to your house.

Let's apply
Columbia University. Ranked 13 among the best computer science schools. Reading and Writing 700-790, Math 710-800. Another Ivy League College. Low chance.

Best match and safe…
University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Ranked 20 among the best computer science schools. Reading and Writing 550-650, Math 580-680. This is also going to be your safe school. Since you SAT scores are far above the average, they may give you a good scholarship.

Best match
New York University. Ranked 30 among the best computer science schools. Reading and Writing 620-720, Math 630-760. This is a very good school and you have high chance to be accepted. This school also has an amazing alumni list. Do not only focus on the celebrities but also the educators, scientists, politicians, researchers, etc.

Safe school
Penn State University, University Park. Ranked 30 among the best computer science schools. Reading and Writing 530-630, Math 560-670. This also can be your safe school. Their campus is fascinating. I have placed some students there and all are very happy.

Best match and safe school
Boston University. Ranked 49 among the best computer science schools. 590-680, Math 630-740. Another best match and safe school. Let me remind you, we do not know how much scholarship they will give you. And for many schools you will narrow down your choices with respect to the available financial aid after receiving your acceptance letters.

Beside, you can even bargain with the schools. You can show your scholarships from the other schools and ask for price match. This worked for several of my students. t.

Safe school
University of Connecticut. Ranked 82 among the best computer science schools. Reading and Writing 550-650, Math 570-690. Another safe school. This school raked 64 nationally. I know that you also consider this school since you already have some connections. Please do not think that this school is ranked far behind the other schools. Top 100 schools offer very similar education and it is all up to the students' capacity to be productive.

Besides the above listing, I have some "Computer Engineering" schools rankings. I know that you also want the engineering part of the computer major.

Let's apply
Carnegie Melon University. Ranked 2 among the best computer engineering schools. Reading and Writing 660-750, Math 720-800. You do not have to add this school in your list. But it is still your decision.

Safe school
University of Washington. Ranked 11 among the best computer engineering schools. Reading and Writing 540-660, Math 580-710. Very good school though it is a little far from your home. You can get serious scholarship since your SAT scores are above the average.

Best match
Georgia Institute of Technology Ranked 7 among the best computer engineering schools.

Obviously the rankings are very parallel between Computer Science and Computer Engineering schools. After all they are the same schools.

Those schools have serious educational history (average 150 years old). Millions of students (not only in US but also around the world) cannot even dream being a student at the above-mentioned schools. You can also add two more local schools into your list like University of Hartford. It is only 15 minutes away from your high school (However, you better know it is ranked 211 among national universities by USNews. You are too much for this school). I assume you have realized that some schools' names are in bold font. Those are my priorities, like a second filter. Lastly, all of the schools that I picked for you are listed in "The Common App".

I know that your parents also support you for the schools in Florida although you have some question marks. University of Florida and Florida State University are the two best colleges in Florida with reasonable cost. You can easily get acceptance with significant

scholarships. Schools are great and the weather is perfect especially between September and April. We can talk about those schools if you add them into your list.

In conclusion, you were a very good student with clear goals with passion. I am very sure you will be very successful at any college that you will attend. I think the same for your future career. Focus on your SAT exam in October and be in touch.

Good luck.
Erkan Acar, PhD
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