



2016 newsletter  
www.THEshortLIST.org

Meet  
Some  
of Our  
Clients

THE SHORT LIST'S  
success stories:  
**Dartmouth  
Thailand**



### Client Empowerment (Rural):

# Natt

#### The Environmentalist

Natt spent much of his life commuting between Bangkok and Hong Kong, two cities populated by skyscrapers and dense traffic.

One of Natt's favorite pastimes was taking walks with his father and their dog. It was on the trail behind his home that Natt felt most at peace.

Natt was amazed at the abundance of opportunities to explore nature when he arrived at his US boarding school freshman year. At the end of his sophomore year, he jumped at the opportunity to spend his entire junior year in the school's environmental program. He lived on a separate campus and took interdisciplinary courses that covered all aspects of environmental science. His program explored the political, social, and ethical considerations of environmental policy. The deeper he delved, the more connections he made across all the disciplines. He wrote an extensive research paper on the environmental economics of the fishing industry. He



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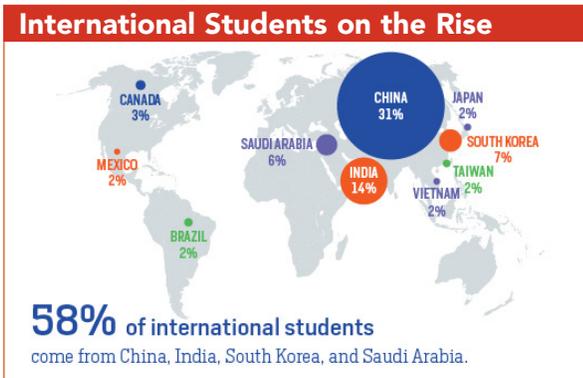
# Greetings from THE SHORT LIST

## Letter from Our Founder

**2016 marks The Short List's 15th anniversary;** it also marks a watershed moment in the college application process, for several reasons.

When we launched The Short List in **2001**, there were **12 million students** in colleges and universities in the United States. This year that number will soar **above 24 million**. More than **1 million international students** are enrolled in US universities, a staggering **139% increase** since 1991.

In addition to the number of students applying, the application process itself has undergone a dramatic evolution. **Most students apply using the Common Application. Nearly 620 colleges accept it, more than triple the number that did in 2001.** To accommodate this rapid growth, the **Common Application has slowly stripped away many elements** of the application that help students stand out from the crowd.



Source: Institute of International Education

More than **80 schools have said, "enough is enough," and introduced a rival application that allows students to personalize their applications** in ways never seen before. Colleges using the new application include **the most selective schools in the country**. 2016 also introduces **a redesigned SAT and new scoring for the ACT**.

Concerned parents and students understandably have many questions about these changes. Our role as counselors becomes even more vital as we guide students through the process and help them understand how to use different applications to their advantage.

In this newsletter, we **highlight a few students who just completed the process, and how The Short List guided them when choosing an urban, suburban, or rural school**. We helped them understand how to best present themselves in the application process in a way that would yield the greatest chance for acceptance.

**The Short List College Fund continues to grow and help underprivileged students research, visit, and gain admission to college.** We hope you will read the latest updates on the Fund and **consider giving to help more students** pursue their dreams. As always, thank you for your support.

We're filled with optimism about what 2016—and the next 15 years—will bring for The Short List and the students we are privileged to help.

— **Bill Short, Founder and President**

THE SHORT LIST'S

success stories: **The George Washington University** England **Reduced Stress (Urban):** *Connie***The Equestrian**

Originally from England, Connie attended high school in the United States, just outside New York City, when her parents' work moved them across the Atlantic. We had worked with Connie's older brother, so she was somewhat familiar with the process. She liked the idea of the US liberal arts curriculum, but she also missed England, her extended family, and friends and wanted to explore schools in both the US and England.

Connie took a rigorous course load in high school; joined various activities, including her school's championship field hockey team; and became a leader in a service organization working with homeless individuals in New Jersey and New York City. However, Connie's true love is riding. She spent most afternoons and summer days at her local stable, which Connie



affectionately calls "the barn." During her junior year, Connie's family helped her buy a 10-year-old horse named Homer that everyone believed could never be trained. Connie spent countless hours with Homer, showing him affection, grooming him, and building trust. Homer gradually allowed Connie to ride him, a feat that astonished everyone at the barn.

The Short List helped Connie research schools with flexible pre-veterinary or pre-medicine programs. She considered schools as far as away as California and as close as New York City. She knew she wanted an urban environment so she could secure internships at local hospitals and enjoy cultural offerings. She also wanted a school where she would either be able to come home to visit Homer or where she might eventually be able to board him close to the school. England slowly fell out of consideration as she narrowed her list down to urban schools on the East Coast in the

US. We encouraged Connie to visit the schools to determine the right fit.

Connie's last college visit was to The George Washington University in Washington, DC, a school mostly known for social sciences, including government, international relations, and political science. However, The George Washington University Hospital sits right next door, a real benefit for this urban school. The school is also on a direct train line to Connie's hometown and Homer. None of this was lost on Connie when she sent The Short List a text that read, "I love this school, and think I want to apply Early Decision!"

The next weeks were spent writing essays, completing her supplement, and submitting all the required documents. We also showed Connie how to build a relationship with the school even before submitting her application. It all paid off when Connie received her Early Decision acceptance. She says she got the best of everything: an urban school, strong science programs, a nearby hospital, and an easy train ride back to Homer.

THE SHORT LIST'S

success stories: **Bryn Mawr College****Unique Approach (Suburban):** *Genesis***The Pianist**

Genesis attends a public high school in New York City made famous by the TV movie *From Homeless to Harvard*. Her school does not have a college counseling office, so The Short List has been providing pro-bono services to her school for all of our 15 years. Each year, we help students research schools; take them on college tours; and provide help with test prep, applications, and filing for financial aid. Most of the students are children of low-income, immigrant single parents and will be the first in their family to attend college. Their families never ask where their child will go to college, but rather how they will ever be able to afford college. Genesis' situation was no exception.

Genesis will graduate at the top of her class. She is one of the most determined students we have come across, a personality trait that apparently was born in her. Genesis grew up loving church music. She begged her mother to buy a piano but was always told there was no money in the family budget. Imagine Genesis' surprise when she opened

her Christmas gift one year and discovered a keyboard. She learned how to play by watching YouTube artists until she finally felt confident enough to approach her church's music director, who saw her potential and invited her to practice with the church band. Genesis worked hard to learn the music by ear. The church wanted to support her efforts and one day showed up at her home with a piano. Genesis now plays twice a week for her 1,400-member congregation.

Genesis also took a local college psychology course during her junior year of high school, and she began to understand how music could be used in therapy. She wanted to find a school that would give her the chance to continue studying psychology but also to learn how to read and study music. Ultimately, she wanted to find a way to combine the two interests.



Having grown up in New York, Genesis also wanted to experience life outside the big city but stay close enough that she could easily travel home to visit family.

The Short List took Genesis to visit 10 suburban schools. We saw her incredible potential and pushed her to reach for the stars. She had fallen in love with Bryn Mawr College, one of the sister schools to the Ivy League. She loved the empowering all-women environment, the emphasis on the social sciences and arts, and partnership with other nearby elite colleges. She gambled and applied Early Decision. Six weeks later, Genesis sent a simple text: "OMG, I got in!" Bryn Mawr too saw her great potential by offering her a scholarship. It is not difficult to understand the burden the scholarship lifted and the opportunity that Genesis now has in front of her.

THE SHORT LIST'S  
success stories: **New York University**

Hong Kong



## Total Happiness (Urban): *CAMERON*

### The Music Producer

Cameron was certain about two things when he contacted The Short List in the fall of his senior year: he wanted to pursue his passion for music production and he wanted to attend an urban university. Having grown up in Hong Kong, with family in France and Spain, Cameron felt it was important to study on a multicultural campus with access to a bustling city. As an accomplished musician, Cameron also wanted a university with a vibrant music scene both on and off campus.



Music technology is such a unique program that Cameron was having trouble finding schools that met all his criteria.

The Short List knew Cameron had to be strategic in his approach. He had a full schedule between his International Baccalaureate curriculum and extracurricular activities, including his DJ work and performing. Cameron was finding it difficult to devote the necessary time to preparing for the SAT or ACT, so we connected him with The Short List Test Prep Division, which introduced him

to strategic tools for taking the test.

Cameron was unable to travel from Hong Kong to the US to visit college campuses, so he began to doubt whether he would be accepted. The Short List looked for other ways he could make connections that would demonstrate his interest. We coached Cameron on how to reach out to admissions staff and relevant academic departments. We also helped him identify admissions receptions being held locally, and prepped him to speak with each area representative. One college very quickly stood out: New York University. Cameron was certain NYU was his school.

The Short List helped Cameron prepare and submit his Early Decision application and required materials to NYU while also preparing applications for other schools on his list. He was overjoyed when he received an Early Decision acceptance to NYU's prestigious music technology program; he emailed The Short List to say, "I can't wait to attend NYU! I just want to say thank you for the whole process and the time you spent with me. I was stressed out, and I 'over-thought' a lot. Thank you for calming me down every single time. I wouldn't be accepted to NYU without you!"

THE SHORT LIST'S  
success stories: **Columbia University**

USA



## Future Success (Urban): *Meg*

### The Social Enterprising MBA

When Meg was a college senior in suburban Ohio, she submitted an application to join a tutoring program in Boston. At the time two things motivated her: she wanted to be a teacher, and she wanted to live in a big city. She traveled to Boston for the final round of interviews and spent a day student teaching. The day was challenging. She found herself losing patience with the students when they did not understand the concepts she was trying to explain. She began to question whether teaching was the right fit for her, and the interviewers agreed. She did not move forward with the program.

Trying to figure out where to turn next, Meg thought back to her summer internship at a progressive private school doing

data analysis to help teachers better understand standardized test scores. She transformed a stack of papers containing five years' worth of data into an interactive dashboard visualizing student progress year over year. She had used her analytical skills to benefit the students' education—a cause about which she cared deeply. She decided to look for opportunities that would help further her analytical skills and applied to one of the country's top consulting firms in New York City.

Over the next three years, she performed analyses that helped solve complex problems for corporations. She enjoyed her experiences working for the consulting firm but couldn't stop thinking about her dream to work in education. She

contacted The Short List to share her hope of finding an MBA program that would continue to expand her analytical skills but also allow her to focus on social enterprise and education.

The Short List helped Meg research top MBA programs that had strong missions in both areas. We encouraged her to visit each school, as we worked with her to refine her story in both her essays and interviews. Columbia University in New York City emerged as the clear leader. She wanted access to the organizations that interested her the most, and being a subway

ride away would make that possible. She decided to apply to Columbia Early Decision.



Just before Thanksgiving, Meg wrote to us with great news: "I got accepted into Columbia! They actually asked me to do the January start date and complete the 16-month program; same program, different timeline." Meg gave her notice at work and six weeks later passed through Columbia's gates determined to graduate from her MBA program with real-world experience under her belt that would help her make an even bigger difference in the field of education.

THE SHORT LIST'S

success stories: **Natt**

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ended the year determined to explore colleges with strong environmental programs.

The Short List helped Natt discover a number of rural East Coast schools that would allow him to pursue his environmental passion and give him access to the great outdoors. He toured campuses and narrowed the list down to a select few, with Dartmouth standing out. Dartmouth "Green" goes beyond the school's moniker and colors. At Dartmouth, Natt discovered a campus deeply committed to the environment. Most students begin their Dartmouth experience on a freshman orientation outdoor trip. All students use the College's unique quarter D-Plan to explore their interests both in and outside the classroom. Natt began to see himself as a member of this close-knit community, so he decided to

apply through their binding Early Decision program.

Natt wanted to write a unique essay for his applications, and he initially worried more about creativity than content, missing the opportunity to tell his environmental story. The Short List encouraged him to focus more on communicating his message, detailing his unique junior year, and connecting the dots for the admissions committee. We prepped him to do the same with his activity list and his interviews. Natt also asked his teachers and counselor to communicate the same message in their reference letters.

Dartmouth got Natt's message loud and clear and offered him a spot in the class of 2020.

Natt has already started stocking up on his "green" Dartmouth merchandise.

## The Short List College Fund



**Proud College Fund graduates.**

As we celebrate our 15th year, The Short List continues to make giving back to the community a top priority.

**The Short List College Fund**, our non-profit arm, helps low-income students minimize the financial burdens of researching schools, developing a focused strategy, completing applications, and locating scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study. We have provided **pro-bono services to inner-city public schools** since our earliest beginnings. One year ago the Fund was granted **non-profit status, so all contributions are now tax-deductible.**

To learn more about **The Short List College Fund Program** or to make a **tax-deductible** contribution, please email us at [fund@theshortlist.org](mailto:fund@theshortlist.org).

Beginning  
in 2016

A Redesigned  
**SAT**

## The New SAT and ACT

Beginning this spring, the SAT will combine Critical Reading and Writing into one section now called Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, including an optional essay. Reading follows a similar format to the ACT, while Writing will require students to reference a reading passage to support their written arguments. The Math section

will touch on elementary functions of trigonometry and pre-calculus.

The ACT will continue to provide students with scores from five sections, but will combine the scores from Math and Science into a single STEM score, and the Reading and Writing scores for an overall ELA (English Language Arts) score.

The Short List's Test Prep division, led by Dave Travis, a Harvard-educated 20-year test prep veteran, specializes in the SAT, ACT, SAT Subject, AP, and IB tests. Our team of Ivy League-educated tutors ensures all students receive the best test prep assistance possible.

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