



2017 newsletter
www.THEshortLIST.org

Meet
Some
of Our
Clients

THE SHORT LIST'S
success stories:
**Johns Hopkins
University**

Hong Kong



Client Empowerment:

Gwyneth

The Researcher

Gwyneth was in 9th grade and living in Hong Kong when we worked with her older sister. She developed an interest in attending boarding school because she



felt her local high school lacked the curriculum to support her growing scientific interests. We helped her apply to a handful of U.S. boarding schools, while also researching opportunities to explore her interests in summer programs.

Gwyneth spent the summer after 9th grade at Brown University in a course titled "Exploring Infectious Diseases: Are We Safe?" This one course would change the direction of her life. She made the transfer to an elite East Coast boarding school at the start of 10th grade so she could pursue the beginning of a career in biomedical research.

She joined Science Club for Girls and the Psychology Club. These two clubs motivated her to look for other

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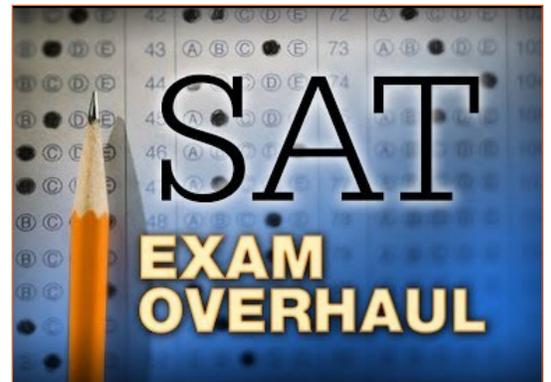
Greetings from THE SHORT LIST

Letter from Our Founder

The Class of 2017 experienced **more changes in the college admissions** process than any graduating class before them, including changes in testing, applications, and financial aid processes, as well as deadlines.

Just as the **ACT saw more participants than the SAT** for the first time in history, the College Board introduced a completely **revamped SAT**, reducing the three-part exam to two parts and making the essay optional. Scoring also **dropped from 2400 to 1600**. The ACT's five-part exam responded by offering two sub-scores to compete against the SAT, including an optional essay.

Confusing matters more, **scoring for the PSAT**, the test juniors take to determine National Merit Scholars, **dropped from 2400 to 1520**, no longer included writing, and **required students also to take the SAT** before they could be considered **for final Merit Scholar awards**.



Meanwhile, an organization called **Coalition for College Access** attempted to introduce a **rival application** to the Common Application, which had been the sole universal application in the country since the 1970s. The Coalition **started with 93 member colleges**, but **ended up with just three active members**. Students who started with the Coalition application discovered halfway through the process their schools were no longer participating.

The **U.S. Government moved the filing date for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to October** from January, allowing families to supply two years of tax returns. Unfortunately, most **schools weren't in a position** to offer financial aid packages that early. FAFSA also **eliminated the controversial "access to FAFSA position"** that, unbeknownst to students, **communicated their entire list of schools and order preferences to all colleges**. Schools had secretly relied on this information to determine their position on a student's college list before rendering a decision. Without this information, many more **universities began offering Early deadlines**, creating heightened anxiety for everyone.

The **Short List guided our clients through the many changes** with personalized assistance and strategic advice. This newsletter shares the stories of how several students navigated the process to a successful end. **We thank them and the entire Class of 2017 for facing this "new" process with grit and determination.**

— **Bill Short, Founder and President**

THE SHORT LIST'S

success stories: **Princeton University**

Switzerland

**Reduced Stress: Sam****The Rower**

Sam was born in the U.S. but has lived abroad most of his life. His family established roots in Geneva, and he became a dual citizen of the U.S. and Switzerland.

Sam came to The Short List as a dedicated student with a solid academic profile. He was involved in a variety of extracurricular activities and active within his school community. As a talented rower, he hoped to join an elite crew team in college. What Sam needed most was help managing the application process from abroad, especially given his demanding school and rowing schedules.



The Short List looked for ways to reduce the pressure of the application season for Sam. Part of that process was helping

Sam order his priorities clearly so he knew what to focus on in evaluating and applying to schools. Being recruited by an elite rowing program was certainly Sam's ambition

but was not as important to him as finding the best school to support his love of math and science.

The Short List helped Sam develop a balanced list of colleges that offered the

academic programs he desired. We also walked him through the necessary steps to build relationships with college coaches, helped him understand the NCAA recruiting rules, and identified specific ways he could advocate for himself both with coaches and admissions. We also helped him map out an application strategy to stay on top of deadlines.

Sam spent the summer before his senior year earning a spot on and competing with the Swiss Junior National Team, and he shared this achievement with the coaches at his target schools. The Princeton crew coach, in particular, expressed clear interest in Sam based on both his academic achievements and his rowing capabilities. Sam knew Princeton University

offers one of the U.S.'s top math and science programs and top rowing programs. He also recognized admission to an Ivy League school is never guaranteed, even as a recruited athlete. The Short List recommended he apply Restricted Early Action to affirm his interest and demonstrate his commitment.

Six weeks after submitting his application in November, Sam was one of just 700 students offered early admission to Princeton University. He will study in the School of Engineering and Applied Science and row with Princeton's nationally ranked crew team. We are thrilled to have helped Sam achieve his academic goal and fulfill his dream of rowing at an elite college level.

THE SHORT LIST'S

success stories: **Barnard College**

Dominican Republic

**Unique Approach: Alexandra****The Triplet**

Alexandra is a triplet, lives in the Dominican Republic, and has older siblings attending college and graduate school in the U.S. When she began working with The Short List at the start of her junior year, she was determined to carve her own path through the process. She knew she wanted to attend college in the U.S., but that was the extent of her certainty in the college search process. In working with Alexandra we were very impressed with her energy, her engagement in the community, and her passion for life.

Alexandra grew up participating in political rallies and events, and world affairs were a regular topic at family dinners. She helped edit and produce two award-winning films for an advocacy film festival. She attended a

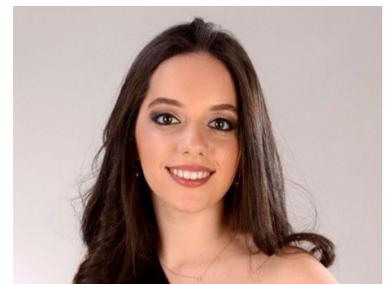
summer course in international relations at Brown University, returning home determined to continue exploring the subject in college. As we helped her research majors for college, it became clear she wanted to find a way to combine international relations with her political and film interests, so we encouraged her to consider Barnard, one of Columbia University's four undergraduate colleges. Barnard offers exactly what she was looking for: a vibrant campus where she could study political science, international relations, film studies, and human rights in an empowering environment.

Alexandra had some concerns about applying to Barnard. Her older sister attends Barnard and her family spends a lot of time in Manhattan. She wanted to be sure she would not miss the opportunity to break out on

her own by staying too close to her family. Her test scores presented another concern—they were not as strong as she would have liked despite her solid academic record. The Short List recognized Alexandra is bright, accomplished, and very determined, and felt she would be able to overcome these concerns if she really wanted to attend Barnard. She just had to find a way to communicate her passion for the school and the unique qualities she would bring to their next matriculating class.

The Short List worked with her to craft an application that highlighted her strengths and the interests that set her apart. She had an impressive resume with a wide range of experiences. We helped her identify the themes that threaded all of her activities together to tell the school a cohesive, distinctive story. We

also showed her how to develop a relationship with her colleges. It was exciting to see Alexandra's confidence grow throughout the process.



Alexandra decided to apply Early Decision to Barnard and eagerly awaited their decision. December arrived, and she was thrilled to receive an early acceptance. We are confident she will continue to forge her own path as she pursues her passions over the next four years.

THE SHORT LIST'S
success stories: **Skidmore**



Total Happiness: *Greg*

The Natural Leader

Greg attends a small private K-12 school in Buffalo. The Short List worked with Greg's two older sisters and profiled Maddie when she started Harvard in 2011. Greg's parents contacted The Short List early in Greg's high school years to help him prepare for the college admissions process.

We recognized Greg's leadership potential right away. He was a three-sport athlete who knew everyone in his grade, but he was frustrated his class was "made up of cliques and no one would step outside of their comfort zone." We encouraged him to run for sophomore class vice president to help create the united school community he envisioned.

Rather than taking the traditional fall class field trip, Greg requested sophomores stay on campus to participate in activities he designed to help them expand beyond their friend groups. Later in the year, they worked together on walk-a-thons and school fundraising events. He got them to agree to donate the \$2,000 raised to the maintenance workers who worked tirelessly to keep the school running during one of Buffalo's roughest winters.

We helped Greg continue to explore opportunities that would develop his natural



abilities in bringing people together. He was elected Spirit Captain his junior year, led pep rallies, organized holiday celebrations, and motivated students to attend sporting events. The school had stopped including the younger classes in these events, but Greg decided to invite them again, going against the student government's vote initially but winning them over as they began to see the entire school come together.

Senior year, the student government designated Greg its "Member at Large," the officer who most represents the students' opinions. Greg organized weekly lunches with different groups of students to hear their concerns and ideas. He suggested revisions to the school charter to increase the student voice, recommended

lockers be organized by class to create unity, and proposed student advisories change every year to help minimize the influence of cliques.

Greg wanted to find a college that would similarly encourage his leadership. One of the first schools he visited was Skidmore College, where his sister Caroline is now a sophomore. Despite other schools we recommended, he kept returning to Skidmore in our conversations.

We helped him put together an Early Decision application that highlighted his many contributions, and his effort was rewarded with an acceptance letter six weeks later. We have no doubt Greg will flourish as a leader at Skidmore, particularly when the school's tagline is "Creative Thought Matters."

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

Hong Kong



Future Success: *Ethan*

The Community Organizer

Crossroads Group, a partner organization that provides writing assistance to students in Hong Kong, introduced us to Ethan when he was a high school freshman. He was a serious student in school and a member of the Boy Scouts outside of school.

He had an opportunity to travel to Nepal with the Boy Scouts to work on a Habitat for Humanity build. The work was tough, dirty, and not at all what he expected, but he had a great trip leader who sat the scouts down when they began complaining and explained the significance of their work for the village. His leader's words had an enormous impact on Ethan.

Ethan returned to school eager to join his school's Habitat for Humanity Club. He expected weekly builds and trips but soon discovered the Club was mostly focused on fundraising. He advocated for trips knowing they would help build new membership. He used their Halloween Haunted House and Christmas Gingerbread House fundraisers to educate younger Club members about the real mission of Habitat for Humanity. Ethan finally convinced the Club to fund a trip to Cambodia and will lead this year's trip to Indonesia. Ethan also chose to join his school's annual service trips, traveling to India, Vietnam, and the Himalayas over the course of his sophomore, junior, and senior years. These trips exposed him to the realities of extreme poverty and social injustice.

Back in Hong Kong, Ethan worked toward his Eagle Scout rank. His Eagle project was to build a supply room for a local orphanage. He decided to stay with the Scouts to mentor younger members after achieving his Eagle. It seemed Ethan was committed to improving the lives of others in every way possible.

During the nearly four years we worked with Ethan, we helped him plan numerous college visits. As his passion for community service became evident, we recommended Cornell University's College of Human Ecology, whose mission

is "to improve lives by exploring and shaping human connections to natural, social, and built environments." Ethan and his father traveled to Ithaca almost as an afterthought, but Ethan's identity is so grounded in service that we weren't surprised he fell in love with Cornell.

Ethan worked hard on his application and The Short List made sure every word connected the dots of his story. He also wrote a supplement so clearly directed to the College of Human Ecology that we weren't surprised when he received a Cornell Early Decision acceptance. Sometimes a school is better because of a student, and sometimes a student is better because of the school. In Ethan's case, we believe both will be true, and the world will also be better as a result.



THE SHORT LIST'S

success stories: *Gwyneth*



Continued from page 1

science programs to support her growing interests. The Short List helped her find two selective summer programs. She spent part of the summer at Emory University studying "Infectious Diseases: Causes and Cures" and the other half on an eco-service trip to Fiji.

When she returned to boarding school for her junior year, Gwyneth decided to join the BioEthics Club to further explore the issues she had been researching over the summer. We spent a good part of the year exploring colleges with great science research programs. She used her breaks to visit schools, speak with faculty, and meet with staff who could tell her about their research initiatives. As a result of this discovery process, she applied to the University of California's Rosetta

Institute of Biomedical Research where she took a fascinating summer course on immunology working in labs alongside grad students and professors researching infectious diseases.

Gwyneth worked hard to earn top grades and test scores that would allow her to apply to any school in the country. It was clear to Gwyneth no other school could match Johns Hopkins University for exactly what she wanted to do with her life, so she applied through their binding Early Decision program. We weren't surprised when Gwyneth was offered a coveted spot in the Class of 2021. We have no doubt we will be reading about Gwyneth and her amazing scientific discoveries some day.

The Short List College Fund



Bill Short and proud College Fund graduates.

In **September 2003** our Founder entered a **New York City public school** for a two-month counseling assignment. **Nearly 14 years later**, he still **provides counseling** to each senior class at the school, with special attention given to those students who are most committed to attending college.

Each year, **students mentored** through this program have been accepted to some of the **nation's top schools**, including Harvard, Brown, Middlebury, Colby, Chicago, NYU, Villanova, Smith, Franklin & Marshall, Stanford, DePauw, Washington

& Lee, Dartmouth, and Mount Holyoke.

To help position these students for success, **The Short List has promised to pay for every student's textbooks** as long as they remain in college. This offer is made possible through the **generation donations of people like you** who contribute to The Short List College Fund, a non-profit extension where every donation is **100% 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**.

The Short List on the Road



International Dates

- **February**
Hong Kong, Shanghai, Seoul, Sydney
- **March**
Vancouver, Canada
- **May**
St. Petersburg, Moscow
- **June**
Berlin, Warsaw
- **July**
Reykjavik, Lisbon, London
- **November**
Paris, London

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