

## **Writing Effective Recommendations**

### **Counselor Recommendations:**

School counselor recommendations give the admission counselors a sense of the whole student. Using anecdotes is a wonderful way to show admission counselors the student's attributes.

Some common talking points are:

1. Personal qualities and development
2. Academic program
3. Academic development and achievement
4. Co-curricular participation/commitment
5. Out of school activities
6. Special circumstances
7. Limitations or disabilities
8. Reaction to challenges, setbacks, criticism
9. Strengths and weaknesses
10. Evidence of leadership, membership, citizenship
11. Extraordinary accomplishments/achievements
12. Respect/reputation among faculty/peers
13. Potential or reservations

Sometimes, we have students who are still discovering their potential or we may have some reservations about their success at a particular college. Although we do not want to be negative, it is equally important to relay those messages to admission counselors.

Counselors should also be aware of what to avoid when writing recommendations. To ensure a genuine recommendation please avoid the following:

- a. Generalizations
- b. Activity List
- c. Neutrality
- d. Ambiguity
- e. Repetition