

From the College Panel ...

Panelists from Meredith, ECU, Duke, Wake Tech and UNC-Chapel Hill provided highlights and high points at the annual Senior College Night on Tuesday at Enloe. Here are 10 moments that stood out from the gathering:

- **Rank:** The universities across the board were careful to put rank and GPA in proper context. Dave Worster, the Duke representative, said class rank and GPA are two of a variety of considerations. Meredith's representative, Claire Jones, said the school looks at where an individual stands in relationship to their class (as seen in the school profile), not in a particular rank. ECU's representative, Beth Endsley, said class rank "won't make or break you." Michael Davis of UNC-CH says what is most important to them is how students do when they take on more rigorous courses.
- **Testing:** The schools agreed across the board that they permit superscoring -- the process of taking top scores from various administrations of a test. Wake Tech's Anthony Garnes says the school does not require the SAT or ACT for admissions although it can be useful in placement. Jones recommended that students take the test that best shows off their knowledge. Worster said, "Do not make standardized test-taking an extracurricular activity." Davis said it's important for students to see whether their prospective schools require or recommend additional tests such as SAT subject tests. (At UNC-CH, they're optional.) Schools will indicate on their websites the latest test dates they will accept for early action.
- **Quotas and the "Enloe reputation":** Jones says Meredith looks at both the school profile, which Enloe provides, and the secondary school reports that counselors submit to get a good idea of the uniqueness of a school. Worster said Duke understands that Enloe has a top-notch reputation but made clear that Duke has no quotas on the number of students admitted from a given school or school system. UNC's Davis said the only quota involved in its process is the requirement that the student body be made up of 82% N.C. residents. Endsley said ECU relies heavily on unweighted scores to "even out the playing field."
- **Residency Determination Service (RDS):** Fill this out before you apply to in-state schools or for in-state tuition or grants. UNC-CH's Davis said students who haven't completed RDS before submitting their applications will be considered out-of-state "and that won't bode well for you."
- **Campus visits:** Wake Tech has six campuses, all specializing in different areas, so campus visits are important, Garnes said. Their GPS (Guiding Prospective Students) process helps students get a feel for the campus. Jones at Meredith said it's important for students to visit to see if they can visualize themselves there. ECU's Endsley stressed the importance of the information you can get on an official visit, not just hanging out with friends or siblings. Duke's Worster said prospective students need to look at the East Campus, where first-year students live, as well as the traditional West Campus, when coming to get a vibe of the campus. UNC's Davis said visits are important but students should realize they have no impact on the admissions process.
- **A change in process:** Davis said beginning this year at UNC-CH, students who apply for early action get one of three results: Admission, denial or waitlisting. No one will be

deferred to regular decision. A denial is a denial for the entire cycle, so students can't reapply during regular decision. Students on the waitlist probably won't hear until after the May 1 deadline to accept a college offer. Early action does have its merits, particularly for scholarship and honors program consideration, but schools want students to not rush and turn in something half-baked.

- **Significant stat:** Davis said about 20% of UNC's entering class is made up of transfer students — and of those, 36% came from N.C. community colleges.
- **Importance of essays:** Meredith's Jones recommended writing about "what you're really passionate about, not what you think we want to hear." ECU's Endsley said, "We know if Mom or Dad write it for you." Worster at Duke: "Try to think of the essay as an opportunity, not a hurdle. Take the Duke supplement seriously; we're looking for applicants who know themselves and what the school offers and how they can connect." UNC's Davis: "An essay is not a text message! Use proper spellings, punctuation, etc." Make sure you proofread — there's nothing worse than listing the wrong school in an essay.
- **Alumni connections:** Most schools said it makes no difference to admission whether a prospective student has a relative who is an alum. Worster said Duke will take note of alumni relationships but does not mean students will get priority in admissions, but rather a look that they might not otherwise. "The main consideration is: Are you a compelling candidate?" On the panel, only Duke offered interviews, and not everyone who wants an interview gets one. For that reason, they're an optional part of the process.
- **Key principle?** Each school concluded by stating theirs. At Wake Tech, community with a diverse student body of different ages and stages of life. At Duke, creating unity out of diversity is the "Duke Difference." At Meredith, a smaller community encourages collaboration. At ECU the school's inclusivity and depth of caring are evident, currently in the help extended to the Greenville community affected by Hurricane Florence. At UNC-CH, the institution is proudly public. The school "exists for entire state — how programs send graduates throughout the state."