Shyness and College Admissions

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Shy College Applicants

- How to detect shyness
  - Evaluation concern, inhibition

- Possible interference with college performance

- Strengths and vulnerabilities
Goals for Selection

- Discriminate between temporary inhibition and lack of ability.
- Attend to specifics of accomplishments, goal pursuit. Students may be less self-enhancing.
- Encourage students to talk or write about strengths, goals, values.
How to Predict Achievement?

- 50% to 60% of students at Stanford see shyness as a problem sometimes.
- Shyness may interfere with participation, making friends, assertion.
- Shy individuals are often strong students academically. Studious and disciplined.
- Underestimate their own performance. Often perform when necessary.
Competitive Environments and Shyness

- Competitive environments breed shyness. Encouragement and collaboration reduce it.
- Shyness may be situational and temporary. Confused with lack of motivation.
- Often shy people are highly productive when they find their niches.
- Clubs help, as do acting classes, having a mentor, and volunteering.
Available Options

- Screen for disabling shyness? Recommend getting help before school?
- Anticipate problems. Review strategies and available resources such as Counseling and Psychological Services.
- Discuss benefits of active participation in college life, costs of inhibition.
- Compare aspirations and goals of student with participation.
Recommendations

- Collaborate with other staff in helping shy students connect with others during orientation. Provide education and skills training, if necessary.

- “Interact” is a student-led resource for interpersonal interaction.
Potential Research

- Follow those who appear shy initially to see if performance exceeds expectation.
  - Assess through self-report and behavioral observation.

- Identify and describe characteristics of shy students who succeed in spite of shyness. Shy “hustlers” persist.