

## **OLP Updates Its Class Rank Policy**

Class rank; a mathematical summary of a student's academic record compared to their classmates, was once a major component in the college admission process (The College Board). However, times have changed. According to a recent report by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), more than half of all high schools no longer report student rankings. High schools across the country have moved to eliminating rank because it unfairly penalizes some students and is a poor measure of student achievement.

In small private schools, students may be separated in class rank by a few hundredths of a point. The gap between a student ranked second and one ranked 14th can be miniscule (The New York Times). Although it isn't a very good measure of student success it is highly desired by colleges and universities because of their use of a formula that produces the yearly college rankings. The popular US News and World Report (USNWR) uses "student selectivity" as one of the factors that determines how well a college/university is ranked (US News). In fact, this indicator is given 12.5% of the college/university's total score. Specifically, colleges/universities are awarded points for the number of students that they admit in the top 10% and top 25% of their high school class. Therefore, every time a college/university accepts a student below the 10% or 25% cut off they risk lowering their overall rank on the USNWR.

When a high school does not report rank a student can then be excluded from the USNWR evaluation, therefore, making them a less "risky" candidate and improving their chance of being admitted.

As a result, many colleges and universities across the country are stating that fewer students are reporting a high school rank each year. For example, at Vanderbilt, 57 percent of those who applied for admission this year did not have a class rank. Last year, 51 percent of the applicants at Swarthmore and at the University of Massachusetts had no class rank, as did 42 percent of applicants to the University of Oregon. (The New York Times)

Without rank, colleges and universities are forced to look more closely at a student's application. Due to the selectivity of our admissions process, the challenging nature of our curriculum, and the high caliber of our student body, we believe that the cumulative weighted grade point average is the most significant indicator of a student's academic performance. It is our hope that with the establishment of this new policy students from OLP will be evaluated based on their overall achievements, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Suggested articles:

Class Rank & College Admission - The College Board

<https://professionals.collegeboard.com/guidance/applications/rank>

High Schools Are Doing Away With Class Rank - The Washington Post

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/07/13/high-schools-are-doing-away-with-class-rank-what-does-that-mean-for-college-admissions/>

Schools Avoid Class Ranking - The New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/05/education/05rank.html?ex=1299214800%26en=223efcce010d3ea5%26ei=5088%26partner=rssnyt%26mc=rss&r=0>

How US News Calculated the 2015 Best College Rankings

<http://www.usnewsuniversitydirectory.com/undergraduate-colleges/methodology-bc.aspx>