

Read this before mailing a college application

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You're ready to submit your applications, and at this point, except for the waiting, the worst is basically over. However, the way you submit the student's paperwork is just about as important as what's being submitted, assuming it's going in the mail, otherwise, simply press submit on the Common App.

Recommended order:

- (1) The application;
- (2) The essays, attached to the application unless there are specific instructions to the contrary;
- (3) Your resume (you do have one, don't you?), stapled together, but not to the application or the essays;
- (4) A special essay titled, *Why I Must Attend the University of ---*, or *We All Know What XYZ U Has to Offer the World, Here's What I Have to Offer XYZ*; paper clipped to the resume.

Attach a large paper clip to all of the above to ensure everything stays in the proper order and send the entire package Priority Mail with signature confirmation. Whew!

Sometimes there are electronic pitfalls such as: the transmission could arrive incomplete, get garbled with your name on the "address" line and all the rest of your information pushed down, out of place, never to be processed. If anything goes wrong, it will not be acceptable to the school, and an otherwise qualified applicant will be called out on strikes before they even get up to bat.

The following actually happened to one of my students. He applied in the fall over the Internet, but not the Common App, received an email confirmation and shortly thereafter received a hard copy acknowledging that his application would be processed. No reason for concern, yet.

The following April, the college sent out letters of acceptance and rejection. His friends, who had all applied around the same time but not online, received their notices, but he didn't. He called the admissions office, but alas, it was too late. They politely informed him there had been an unfortunate computer glitch at the time he applied, and his application was among several dozen that were permanently lost. The family was devastated. How could such a thing could happen? Well, accidents do occur. Learn from this and act accordingly.

Another submission problem all families need to be aware of is if for any reason you can't meet the application deadline, the student, not the parent, must call the school in advance and give them a valid reason. They will almost always extend it two or three weeks. However, it is strongly advisable that you ask for a written or email confirmation and take note of the person who granted the extension. Leave nothing to chance.

OK. You've prepared all your paperwork, completed all requirements, checked and re-checked everything, mailed all the applications and have confirmations showing proof of receipt. Take a deep breath, but don't get too comfortable. It's time for the student to prepare for their interview.

For over 35 years, noted financial advisor, Reecy Aresty, has helped thousands of high school and college families to obtain the American Dream; a superior education at a cost far less than they ever dreamed possible. He is the author of the highly acclaimed admissions and financial aid manual, ***How To Pay For College Without Going Broke***. For further information on admissions and financial aid, please visit: www.paylessforcollege.com.