Beef Up Your Application Tips

Think it's too late to beef up your college application since the deadline is right around the corner? Think again. At this point in the admissions process, you may not be able to enroll in more rigorous courses or drastically improve your grades overnight, but you can perform some last minute tips to help enhance that application.

Keep it neat. Presentation is crucial. If you don't have the option to fill out the application online, be sure to keep the paper application as neat as possible. You should print an extra copy of the application to use as a rough draft. Be sure to use black ink and your best penmanship. If your handwriting is illegible, you will need to type your application.

Read the directions. Different applications may have different directions. Don't assume anything. Carefully read through each application and call the school if you have questions.

Be clear and concise. Make sure your answers are to the point. Don't ramble. Have someone read over your answers to see if your wording can be condensed.

Focus on accomplishments/extracurricular activities. While your academic record is crucial for admission, there's not much you can do to change your transcript at this point. Therefore, on the application, you should really highlight your accomplishments and involvement in activities to help you stand out from all the other applicants with similar GPAs and test scores. Focus on your leadership positions rather than just listing all the clubs in which you have been a member. Talk about how you raised money for your favorite charity or how you led your high school football team to a state championship.

Make it unique. Some applications allow you to be more personable than others. If allowed, try to make your application unique so it's memorable to admissions officers. Include personal tidbits about yourself. For example, if you have had a personal hardship, talk about how you persevered. If you are into art, include a small piece of your artwork, such as a painting. If you love to write, insert a poem you have written.

Edit your essay. The college essay should be well-written and should offer insight on the kind of person you are. Once you have decided on a topic, you should make an outline of the points you want to cover and then write a rough draft. You will edit and rewrite that draft multiple times before you have the final essay. Be sure to have others proof the essay for you. There should be zero grammatical mistakes. It's okay to recycle your essay among different schools if the topic is relevant, but remember to change the names of any schools referenced accordingly.
Proof your application. Check your application to make sure you have:

• Answered all of the questions.
• Not overlooked any mistakes.
• Signed and dated the application.
• Had your parents sign the application, if you are under 18.
• Included the application fee.

After you send in your application, be sure to follow up with the college to ensure they received your complete application since transcripts, test scores, and letters of recommendation are often sent separately.