

# Review of Class Rank



**PRESENTATION  
TO THE  
PINE-RICHLAND SCHOOL BOARD  
FEBRUARY 22, 2010**

**JEAN M. WHALEN**


Omission of Class Rank:



**HELPFUL OR HURTFUL?**

# Overview



- **CURRENT POLICY**
  - **HOW COLLEGES SELECT STUDENTS**
  - **MATRICULATION DATA**
  - **COLLEGE ADMISSIONS SURVEY**
  - **HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY**
  - **SUMMARY**
  - **FINAL SUGGESTIONS**
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# Current Policy



## Class Rank

“Class rank is determined by ordering students based upon a cumulative GPA calculated using final grades earned for PRSD courses. Class rank is not reported on the student’s transcript unless requested by parents. Parents make the request by completing the Inclusion of Rank Transcript Request Form that is available in the Guidance Office.” Program of Studies 2009-2010

# How Colleges Select Students



1. GPA (transcript)
2. Rigor of curriculum (high school profile)
3. SAT/ACT/Subject test scores (if recommended)
4. Essay
5. Letters of Recommendation
6. Class Rank (absolute or place within decile)
7. Resume
8. Interview
9. Specific department requests

# Matriculation



**2006, 2007- RANK**

**VS.**

**2008, 2009- NO RANK**

# Comparison of Past Classes



## Class of 2006

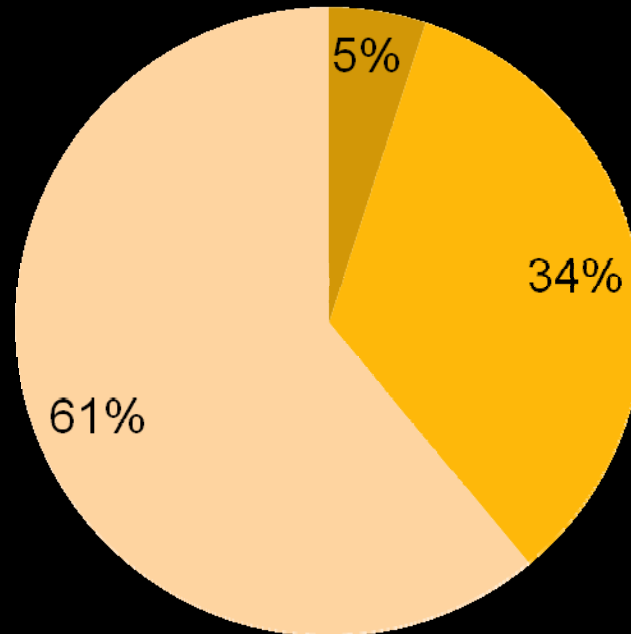
- Top 100 Best Liberal Arts Colleges - 13/261; 5%
- Top 100 National Universities - 89/261; 34%
- All Other Colleges and Universities - 159/261; 61%

# 2006



## Matriculating Students

■ Top 100 Liberal Arts   ■ Top 100 National   ■ All Other



# Comparison of Past Classes



## Class of 2007

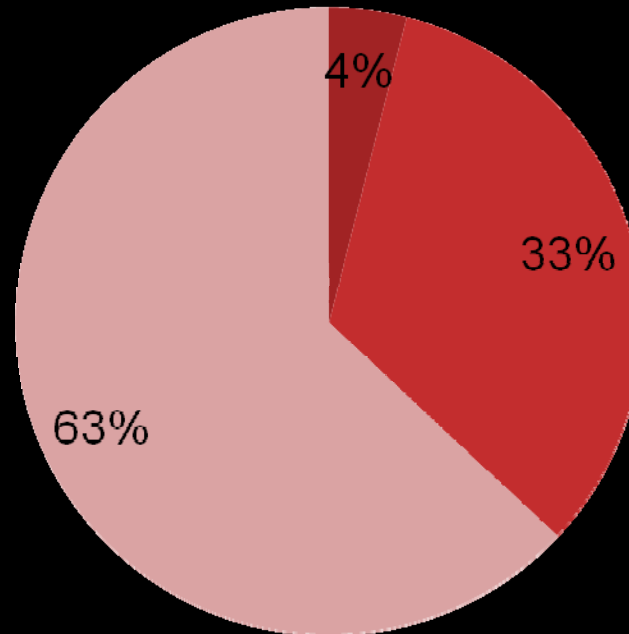
- Top 100 Best Liberal Arts Colleges - 13/311; 4%
- Top 100 National Universities – 103/311; 33%
- All Other Colleges and Universities - 195/311; 63%

2007



## Matriculating Students

■ Top 100 Liberal Arts   ■ Top 100 National   ■ All Other



# Comparison of Past Classes



## Class of 2008

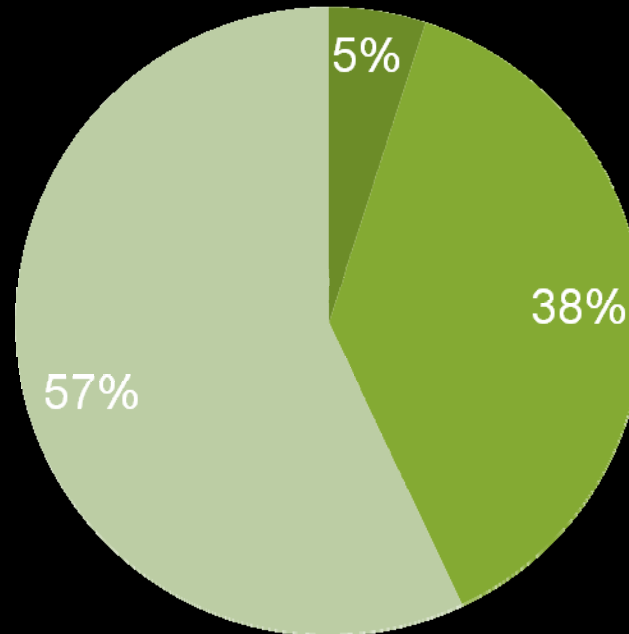
- Top 100 Best Liberal Arts Colleges - 15/300; 5%
- Top 100 National Universities – 114/300; 38%
- All Other Colleges and Universities - 171/300; 57%

2008



## Matriculating Students

■ Top 100 Liberal Arts   ■ Top 100 National   ■ All Other



# Comparison of Past Classes



## Class of 2009

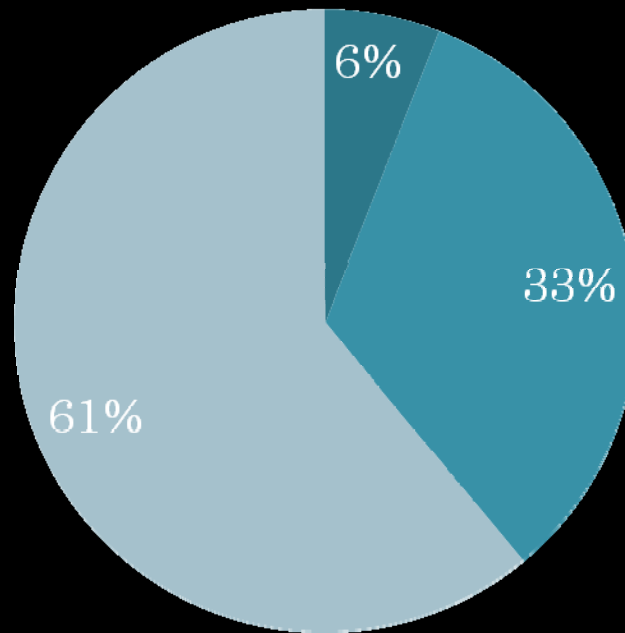
- Top 100 Best Liberal Arts Colleges - 18/306; 6%
- Top 100 National Universities – 101/306; 33%
- All Other Colleges/Universities- 187/306; 61%

# 2009

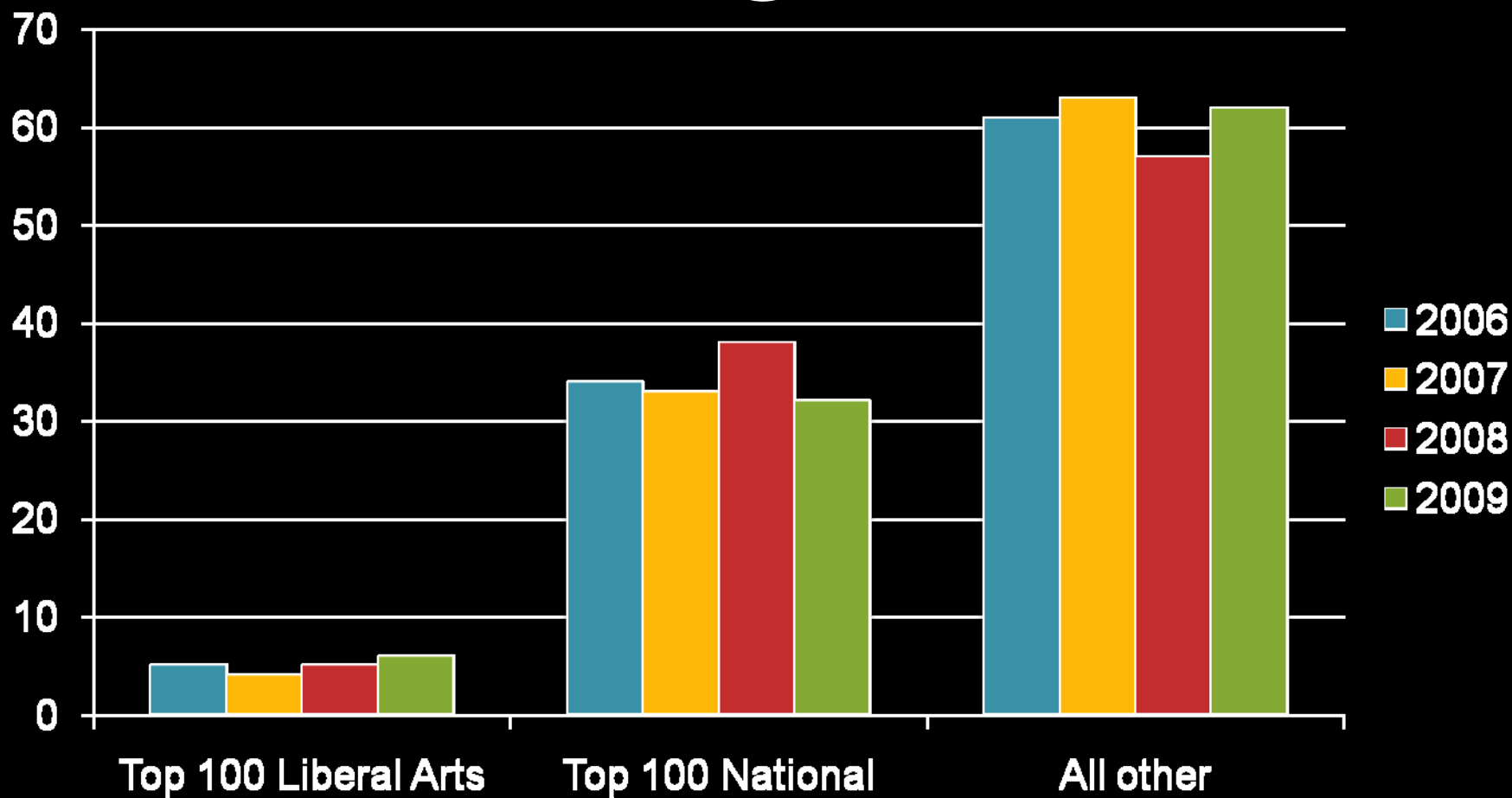


## Matriculating Students

■ Top 100 Liberal Arts   ■ Top 100 National   ■ All Other



# 4 Year Comparison



# College Survey



\* Denotes Top 100 Liberal Arts or National University

\*Allegheny College

\*Bucknell University

\*Carnegie Mellon Univ.

\*Case Western University

\*Clemson University

\*Colgate University

\*Dickinson University

\*Duke University

\*Gettysburg University

\*Miami University of Ohio

\*Notre Dame

Ohio University

\*Penn State

\*UNC-Chapel Hill

\*University of Pittsburgh

\*University of Richmond

\*Virginia Tech

Westminster

# Survey Questions



1. How do you review applications of students that do not report rank? Is the focus on GPA, high school curriculum, test scores, etc?
2. Are students penalized by not reporting their rank?
3. US News and World Report states that colleges use class rank as an important criteria in admission. Can you define what you consider class rank? Specific number within a graduating class, (1-360), decile ranking within a group, (1st decile), etc?

# Survey Results



1. Applicants are reviewed holistically. Focus on curriculum, grades, test scores, recommendations.
2. Without Rank: 100% of respondents reported that students would not be penalized.
3. If absolute rank is not provided, decile, quintile or quartile ranking works well. It is helpful to see where a student generally falls within his/her class.

# Local High School Results



Local high schools that do not report rank:

- North Allegheny High School
- Hampton High School
- Fox Chapel High School
- Quaker Valley High School
- Mt. Lebanon High School
- Upper St Clair High School
- Shadyside Academy
- Ellis School for Girls
- Sewickley Academy

# Summary



**OMISSION OF CLASS RANK:  
HELPFUL OR HURTFUL?**

# Absolute Rank Helps:



- Students in the top 1%-2% of the class
- Colleges
  - quickly assess an applicant
  - marketing tool
  - school selectivity
  - admitted freshman profile statistics
  - ranking within popular magazines

# Absolute Rank Hurts:



## Students

- with the highest GPA's
  - by creating an intense and competitive atmosphere
  - by encouraging limited course selection to improve GPA rather than broaden curriculum
- who are high achievers
  - ranking fails to recognize students that stretch into a variety of high school courses
- who are average and appear not ready for college based on their rank in class
  - 3.425 = 174 = bottom 50%

## Our high school programs

- creates an environment where Honor and AP classes have greater value
- high school departments that offer enrichment and career courses which are valued by college admissions counselors

# Final Suggestions



- Continue to showcase our students' achievements on the high school profile
- Provide a more extensive percentile rank or GPA distribution on the profile
- Help students increase their SAT and ACT scores
- Discuss current grading to incorporate A+, A-
- Examine the current weight of mid-term & final exams, i.e. method for assessment
- Emphasize the importance of letters of recommendation
- Survey parents, students and community members