

Reflection

It may sound cheesy, but ivy day was one of the best days of my life. Although I went into it with really low expectations, I am so humbled to have received acceptances from my top choices. I'm really so grateful and can't wait to see what the future holds!

Takeaways

1. **Develop a consistent theme across your extracurriculars** that goes beyond combining two fields of study. For me, I had an idea I wanted to study public policy and computer science, and chose to hone in on the theme of “engineering for humanity” to develop a connection between the two.
2. **Don't feel pressured to apply early** if you haven't finished polishing your common application or supplemental essays. One of the reasons I chose to apply early to MIT was that they have their own application portal, and I didn't end up starting my common app until November. This provided me some extra time to narrow in on a topic that I felt comfortable writing about and to dive into that to the best of my ability.
3. **Find an unconventional essay topic** that really speaks to who you are. I struggled for the longest time to figure out what I wanted the theme of my essays to be because I never felt like I had a compelling story to tell. For me, the realization was that my essay didn't have to impress the admission officer so much as it had to stick with them.
4. **Utilize each supplement to showcase a unique side of yourself** to the admissions committee. If possible, try to avoid repeating the same topics, especially between your common application essay and the rest of your supplements. For me personally, the topic of my main essay had virtually nothing to do with the rest of my extracurriculars. It was more an attempt to highlight intellectual curiosity.
5. **Pour only as much effort as you need into testing**, even if that means settling for a lower score than you might have hoped for. For the ACT, I set the goal of reaching a 34, and committed to taking it as many times as I needed. Once I hit that bar, there was no need to stress about getting incrementally higher. Even though there will always be what if's, that time can be spent fleshing out extracurriculars and essays.