Wait-Listed or Waiting: What to Do?

Rebecca M. Sparrow

Cornell Career Services
January 24, 2014
Understand the Context

• Rolling admissions.
• Timing of interview invitations.
  – Sent in “lots” at three different times: late summer, late fall, end of January. Right now, you care about this final “lot.”
• Impact of the “traffic rules.”
The Traffic Rules: Upcoming Important Dates

• February: medical schools can see where else their own accepted applicants are accepted.
• March 30: schools must have accepted exactly as many applicants as they have spots in the incoming class.
• April: schools can see where all applicants to their school have been accepted.
• May 15: applicants must relinquish all but one acceptance.
You Need to Know

• Medical schools still have interviews to grant.
• Nationally, only about 20% of applicants are accepted into more than one school. (I.e., it is not common to get into many schools!)
• It is common for Cornell students to gain admission off the waitlist.
The Time Is Now

• Communicate with the schools that have not rejected you...
  – to get an interview.
  – to get off “Hold” status.

• Later communications can help you...
  – get from “Interviewed” to “Accepted” status.
  – get off the waitlist to “Accepted” status.
Why Is the Time Right?

• In February, schools will know their competition for accepted applicants and will issue final interview invitations.
And What Should You Communicate?

• If you’re waiting:
  – Communicate your status (e.g., whether you’ve had any interviews or whether you have any acceptances) and inform school of your level of interest. Ask for the school’s consideration of offering you an interview.
  – Inform schools of new information about you that might increase their interest level, either directly or through supplemental recommendation letters from new letter writers.
And What Should You Communicate?

• If you’re wait-listed:
  – Let schools know where they stand on your ranking list. E.g., if you would accept their offer over any others (especially if you already have an offer) they need to know this.

• This becomes increasingly important after May 15.
Sample Future Communications

- March 15: lots of movement happens, as schools make decisions to fill the class.
  - Send updates on your status to schools where you are still a contender.

- March 30: more movement occurs with final acceptances issued to balance offers with class size.
  - Send updates in April to capitalize on the movement.
Sample Future Communications

• April: schools construct wait lists, given their knowledge about where applicants have acceptances.
  – Follow up with your most desired schools.

• May 15: spots open up as candidates turn down “excess” offers.
  – If on the wait list, communicate your strong desire to have a spot in the class.
  – If still on “hold,” communicate your strong desire to move to the wait list (and then, of course, to a spot in the class).
Sample Future Communications

- Throughout the summer: schools continue to turn to wait-listed candidates, as accepted applicants accept other schools offers from their wait lists or ask for deferrals.
  - Keep your most desired schools informed of your status.
Create a Back-Up Plan

• Consider other opportunities during the spring:
  – Jobs.
  – Internships.
  – Graduate School.

• View the slides online from last fall’s session on *Increasing Your Chances of Admission With a Gap Year*. 
Questions?