

NORTH STAR





► The Full Picture

With thousands of highly qualified students applying to American colleges and universities on a yearly basis, these institutions are often faced with a talented applicant pool that exceeds the number of slots they have for admission. In such a competitive process, students must have more than grades, test scores, and activities that are merely “good enough.” The truth is, most students who apply to top schools are “good enough” to be admitted, but only a small percentage of them receive acceptance letters.

As a program that helps students go from students whom schools can admit to students whom admissions officers want to admit, North Star recognizes that admissions officers are human beings who want to admit students they’re truly excited about meeting after reading their applications. By utilizing a strong network of Due West Council members – professionals with previous admissions experience, Due West guides students towards creating application stories that are both compelling and memorable.

Stories that will stand out among those of thousands of other qualified applicants.

► How Does it Work?

North Star is effective because it leverages Due West’s expertise and relationships to help students approach the admissions process strategically. Due West Council members will meet with students and their counselors at the beginning of the process to identify each student’s most compelling application story, or what we refer to as the application angle. After, these former admissions officers review every single essay that students write. Meanwhile, counselors will take advantage of Due West’s comprehensive knowledge of colleges and universities to help build a school list that gives students the greatest chance of getting into the best possible program. With added strategic guidance on everything from interviews to applying for financial aid, North Star removes the guesswork from the process while also making sure students put together the best application possible.

What are the details?

North Star is open to students from June through December of the year they will apply to college – from the end of junior year through the fall of senior year.



Students also have free access to Due West’s application courses, workshops, and presentations. There are no minimum requirements to be part of North Star, but students and families must recognize that the student will be required to complete a significant amount of work over the course of the program. Due West helps students work best when students themselves take ownership of this process.

Case Study

Student at International School in Beijing

Having received average grades and standardized test scores, the Student needed direction in the college application process. We helped the student express her unique cultural identity, mixed heritage, and personal interests to craft an alluring application story.

Before Working at Due West

- Student was interested in art, but unsure of how to pursue his interests further, especially during breaks
- Student was unsure about how to describe her unique interests and cultural background as she targeted colleges
- GPA: 3.68
- SAT : 700 Math / 600 CR / 760 W
- SAT II : 800 Math / 630 Physics
- Activities
 - Designer, Student Charity Organization
 - Marie Walsh Summer Art Program
 - Columbia Summer Art Program
 - Tennis athlete
 - Figure drawing class participant
 - Summer program in oil painting and writing

Due West Difference

- By making use of the expertise of a former Tufts admissions officer, Due West counseled the student on the value of exploring multiple personal identities in both her writing and speech.
- Due West transmitted a comprehensive understanding of the personality of various schools, developing an individualized college list
- By preparing her through rigorous mock interviews, We guided the student as she navigated an overwhelming interview process

Our Results

Accepted by Tufts University

- The Student learned how to eloquently communicate her intellectual engagement with array of personal interests, including blogging, singing, and music history.
- Despite the fact that her GPA and SAT scores were well below the admitted average, the Student received an Early Decision offer to Tufts University.

Student at Local School in Guangdong

Although the Student had a solid profile in math and science, he lacked direction. We helped the student sculpt his application story in order to face tough competition in the college application process.

Before Working at Due West

- The core pieces of the Student's application—his standardized testing, course rigor, grades, and activities—all made him a great candidate for top STEM schools and programs.
- However, the student struggled with figuring how to go about applying to dream schools, how to tell his story, and how to set himself apart from other applicants.
- SAT : 800 Math / 750 CR / 710 W
- SAT II : 800 Math / 800 Physics
- 740 Chrimistry
- TOEFL: 111
- Activities
 - Award-winning National Debater
 - Programming Intern
 - Model United Nations
 - Cornell University: The Business World

Due West Difference


- Over the course of several meetings, Due West helped uncover the Student's stories, passions, and motivations, which allowed us to successfully guide him on how to craft a unique application angle around his interest in computers
- For the Student to be admitted into Duke from his school, his essays would need to be exceptional. Due West helped the Student brainstorm an essay that would help show who he really was as a person.
- Due West made sure that the Student registered for as many interviews as possible, and that he would be able to talk about his application story with clarity and poise.

Our Results

Accepted by Duke University

- The student was able to find the best program for his interests in engineering and computers
- He identified programs and schools that really fit his academic needs and personality
- In the end, his understanding of the college application process led to his ED admission to Duke's Electrical and Computer Engineering Program





Breaking down the program

1. Parent and Student Orientation

An introduction to the Aurora Program and working with Due West.

2. SL: School List Research

The first college list discussion; Due West will teach you how to think about schools by starting broadly and eventually narrowing your list.

3. AE: Application Angle Advisor

A Due West Council (DWC) member, one of Due West's former admissions officer, will meet with you and your counselor to help determine what your admissions angle should be.

4. SL: Early School Selection and School List

The second college list discussion: You'll begin to narrow your list and select a school or schools for Early Action/Early Decision.

5. AE: Common Application Review and Personal Statement Brainstorm

Your counselor will introduce the Common Application and brainstorm your Personal Statement with you.

6. AE: Essay Feedback Review

After one of our DWC members edits your personal statement and offers suggestions for improvement, you and your counselor will meet to go over the DWC's notes together and discuss how to improve your essay.

7. AE: Early School Supplemental Brainstorm

You and your counselor will brainstorm essay topics for your early school(s) supplement(s).

8. IC: Interview Guru 1 and Common Application Review

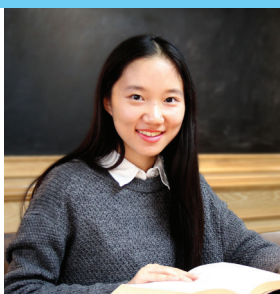
The first session on preparing for the college interview. Additionally, your counselor will point out areas to make improvements on your Common Application forms.

9. MF: Early School Submission Review and Financial Certification

You and your counselor will review your entire application before submitting, while a Due West parent coordinator discusses financial certification requirements with your parents.

10. SL: Finalize School List and Parent Update Discussion

You and your counselor will agree on your final list of schools, and Due West will discuss your progress with your parents.



11. AE: Regular Decision Calendar Review and Brainstorm Group 2 Essays

Your counselor will review the calendar for the rest of your application work, and you will brainstorm your supplemental essays for your second group of schools.

12. AE: Essay Writing Progress Report 1

The second opportunity to discuss your writing strengths and weaknesses with your counselor.

13. IC: Interview Guru 2

The second session on preparing for the college interview.

14. AE: Brainstorm Group 3 Essays and Adjust School List

Brainstorm your next group of supplements and potentially adjust your school list based on late developments, including changes in GPA, testing, or competitions.

15. AE: Brainstorm Group 4 Essays and Early School Update Letter

Brainstorm your final group of supplemental essays and discuss sending an update letter to your early school(s).

16. AE: Essay Writing Progress Report 2

The final session to discuss your essay writing strengths and weaknesses.

17. SD: North Star Program Review and Parent Update

An opportunity to review your work through the North Star Program and update your parents on your progress.

18. SD: Post-Submission Support

To provide assistance with update letters and other questions after all applications have been submitted.

19. IC: Interview Guru 3

The final session on preparing for the college interview.

20. SD: Post-Decision Support

To help you evaluate your college options and address any concerns after decisions have been released.

Sample North Star Calendar

Junior Year

June - July

Start to construct school list. Begin work on college applications, including the Personal Statement.

Senior Year

July

Execute summer programs. Continue work on college applications. Finish Personal Statement and begin supplemental essays. Settle on Early Decision school(s).

August

Complete first round of applications, including all supplemental essays for Early Decision school(s).

September

Gather school forms, finalize recommendation providers, and continue work on application essays. Decide on final school list (you may add schools later). Begin interview preparation.

October

Continue interview prep and complete last round of supplemental essays. Consider adding a few reach school based on new testing developments.

November - December

Submit all applications (by early November). Continue work on additional schools, if applicable. You're almost done!

December

Continue interview preparation, and request interviews as appropriate.

January-March

Continue admissions interviews, and prepare update letters to schools as needed.

April-May

Decide which school to attend.

June-August

Prepare to begin college!

Add-Ons

In order to support students with more particular needs, Due West developed Add-Ons that seek to address more specific needs.

Athletics

Interested in DI or DIII sports? Due West will help you navigate the athletic recruitment process

Arts

Do you have a talent in music, arts or an interest in dance or architecture? Have your work reviewed and improved with Due West's arts experts before submitting to colleges


Schools

Are you interested in applying to more than 10 schools? Add schools to your Due West list: price depends on whether or not the school requires additional essays



North Star Reach is another option, suitable for some students.

Student Testimonials



"I know that other companies have star counselors. But after working with Due West, I cannot say who is the best because everyone is the best. People are working together and I didn't feel like I was working with just one person. I feel like everyone here has been friends to me. They give me a lot of advice and I can talk to them about their own expertise."

——Student at a local school in Beijing

"Due West starts at very different point [for essays]—instead of trying to pinpoint the interests of an admissions officer, we started with what's within me. Due West asked me about stories from my life that I feel most strongly about, picked out some ideas, and gave me advice on how to polish those stories, feelings, opinions and experiences into essays."

——Student at local school in Guangdong

"Before I worked with Due West I felt like college applications would be torture for me, that the pressure would kill me. But it was not, and it did not. I am really thankful for all the efforts and the things I learned and the people that helped me."

——Student at Western Academy of Beijing

"Due West was helpful in helping me come up with the best idea for my essays, rather than just giving me a topic to write or really specific instructions. DW gave me more room to think about my essays from different perspectives and learn how to edit!"

——Student from International School in Beijing



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