

Naviance proves useful, seniors refuse benefits

Statistics provide realistic perspective on college admissions

by **Christine Chang**

When Naviance was launched for the first time at MVHS last year, hardly anyone took it seriously. For many students, it simply translated into an additional test of patience during the registration process and another reason for Running of the Bulls to be dubbed Waiting of the Bulls.

But the real uproar came in May when every senior was required to disclose to Naviance their GPA, the colleges they applied to, and the colleges that accepted or rejected them. To many seniors, the new graduation requirement blared, "Fork over that confidential information or be stranded here forever!"

It was almost like blackmail.

But as this year's seniors embark on the notorious application process, Naviance has proved to be a valuable tool. But since most applicants still opt for more commonly used search engines such as Collegeboard or Princeton Review to determine their "reach" and "safety" schools, Naviance's resources have often been overlooked. As opposed to the holistic range of data provided by national college search engines, Naviance centers on localized statistics because it contains an archive of average GPAs in correlation with college acceptances from MVHS's own class of 2009. For every college MVHS students were accepted to last year,

Naviance displays the average GPA of students accepted along with the GPA of the Naviance account user so they can easily be compared. Through this system, students can gain a clearer view of how they compare statistically to last year's class.

While many argue that Naviance's statistical approach fosters the stereotypical MVHS mentality of succeeding by means of grades and scores, the information it provides is undeniably essential in guiding students come application time. A survey conducted by El Estoque of 33 students showed that about one-third of a random pool of seniors made changes to their college lists or narrowed down possibilities after browsing through statistics on Naviance.

For seniors, applying to colleges has proven to be a stressful and sensitive topic.

Naviance is a reliable resource that provides straightforward background information to prevent seniors from using the "shotgun approach," or applying to a large number of low-acceptance rate schools and leaning more on luck than on competency. Rather than overlooking Naviance as just another network of college information, students should start taking advantage of its insightful guidance. The program is tantamount to a stuntman's hand-eye coordination when aiming to shoot the apple set atop a fellow associate's head. So for the sensitive ones who disapprove of Naviance for publicizing those acceptance and GPA statistics, look at it from another angle. How would you like to miss the apple?

NAVIANCE TOOLS

How students can take advantage of Naviance:

"About Me": Take a personality type survey to decide on potential majors; use the resume builder for Secondary School Reports and teacher recommendation letters; construct your own Game Plan

"Colleges": Search up fast facts on colleges' acceptance histories of MVHS students; keep up to date on application and financial aid deadlines; get a brief summary of colleges by Fiske Guide

"Careers": Find out what knowledge and skills are required for a myriad of careers; discover what kind of tasks members in any field do; analyze wages by state and percentile
