

第六届巡展“申请讲座”实录——上海站  
2014 Application Q&A Workshop – Shanghai

*Host:* Claire Du, Director and Founder of China Liberal Arts College Tour  
*Colleges:* Swarthmore, Vassar, Whitman, Williams

General Q&A 统一问答

**1. Q: How do schools evaluate SAT scores? Do schools look at components? How important are standardized tests?**

*Whitman:* Every college is different, and value differently. What's more important is for students to fit the school.

*Williams:* Test scores are only one component, recommendation letter from teachers and other materials are also important. We also want to see your motivation, what passion you bring in the classrooms. Standardized test scores are important but only one piece of information.

*Swarthmore:* Who you will be as a community member is the most important thing which cannot be revealed through a 2200 in SAT because it doesn't tell the AOs who you are and what you will bring to the community.

**Q: 学校看标化成绩时，是着重看总分还是各项分数？标化成绩有多重要？**

*Whitman:* 每一所学校标准不同，对标化成绩的看法也不同，而且招生官们看到的申请材料中也不只有分数。我们更加关注申请材料中的其他材料，因为我们能从中看到更能体现出学生在成绩之外的个性特质。

*Williams:* 标化考试成绩重要，但只是申请材料的一部分，申请材料中还有文书，活动，推荐信等等。推荐信也是很重要的，因为你的老师是最了解你的学习生活的人之一。推荐信中可以体现出你的学习的激情，在课堂中的表现，还有对其他同学的影响。

*Swarthmore:* 学校更看重申请学生来到学校后是否能融入群体，而这样的能力是 2200 或是 2300 的 SAT 成绩中无法体现的。招生官们希望看到在课堂之外事业个怎样的人，你能为学校这个集体带来些什么。

**2. Q: Some students have an obsession of high scores, sacrificing essay time to get 5 more points in TOEFL. How to spend time better?**

**Vassar:** Standardized tests evaluate reading and writing skills and tell school whether you are ready for the amount of work in college. However, English studies are not limited in school. Read books, and practice writing out of class.

**Q:** 很多学校要求 100 分的托福分数，所以有些学生努力了两个月终于把 95 分提高到了 100 分。还有一些学生有高分情结，用本可以修改文书的时间复习托福，把 100 分提高到了 105 分。这样安排时间是否值得？

**Vassar:** 虽然入学后学校会提供写作以及阅读课，但我们还是希望学校在入学前就有支持他们大学学习的英语基础，而托福成绩正是英语能力的证明，因此托福成绩达标非常重要。当然，学校不会仅仅从托福成绩评估申请学生的语言写作能力，申请材料中所有与语言能力相关的材料都会被列入考查范围。英语语言学习并非仅限于在课堂学习，读书也是很好的学习方式。

### 3. Q: What is fit? How can Chinese students know if they fit into the campus?

**Whitman:** To figure out what school fits you is a complex process. Individuals in the school in the past have created a culture, and current students and faculty possess that particular culture. While you show who you are through your essays and recommendation letters, you can know the school's culture through extracurricular activities and other traditions.

**Swarthmore:** Being admitted is more important to Chinese families, rather than whether the school is a fit. Choosing a college is to live and learn as a part of the community for four years, like purchasing a home. You won't buy a house just because you like the name of the street or a building. Access to information through the Internet or other ways and find if you like the experience.

**Q:** 习惯于应试教育的中国学生很少有考虑过要如何融入校园，或是什么样的学校会更适合自己。对于中国学生的选校问题有什么建议吗？学校又是怎样判断申请的学生是否适合自己的呢？

**Whitman:** 这是一个非常复杂的问题。校园文化是由每一位学生代代积累下来的，并渗透在校园学习生活中。在校学生和教职员工也传承了这样的校园文化，因此学生可以通过校园文化判断自己是否适合这个学校。学校也可以通过学生写的文书，老师为他写的推荐信等判断学生是否适合学校。

**Swarthmore:** 相比较进入一个适合自己的大学，中国学生和中国家长更想要拿到名校的录取通知书。但是要注意的是，大学是你在未来四年内学习，生活的

地方，选择一所大学更是选择一种生活方式，一个家。你当然不会单单因为喜欢房子的名字或是地址就买下这套房子。因此在选择大学的时候一定要多多查找学校信息，了解在学校能为你提供的学习，生活体验。

#### **4. Q: What are the factors when looking for a fit school?**

*Williams:* Examples are: settings, whether the school is remote from cities or suburban, size, community, etc. Each school has a unique curricular opportunity, residential life, and curriculum.

*Vassar:* Watch YouTube videos, contact current students if don't have the chance to tour or take a summer program.

*Claire:* Be aware of what you want: e.g. do you want bigger lecture halls, or more attention?

**Q:对选校有什么建议吗? 在寻找适合自己的学校时, 学生应该关注哪些东西?**

*Williams:* 学校的地理位置很重要。有些学校在郊区，或是离城市较远，都会给带来不同的学习生活体验。学校的大小也是决定了学校的特色，比如文理学院一般都比较小，学生较少，所以更有集体意识。不同的学校也有不同的课程设置，寝室生活，都是选校时应该纳入考虑的。

*Vassar:* 如果没有机会去拜访学校或是参加夏校，可以通过看网上的学校介绍视频，或是与在校学生交流了解学校。

*Claire:* 我觉得在选校时应该想清楚自己想要什么。有些人喜欢在大讲堂上课，有些人喜欢小班教学，要根据自己的喜好选择。

#### **5. Q: Chinese students feel they do not have enough time for extracurricular activities, and panic because they are not well rounded. Is it ok to have just one or two interests but devote years of time?**

*Swarthmore:* Quality over quantity. Do activities in school or out of school that are meaningful, and tell which activities have helped you to grow. Demonstrate what impact you have had, the world around you.

*Williams:* Some applicants have more than one or two, others less, but it does not matter. We want to see applicants learning intellectually, socially and personally thought the activities they've done and predict how you will come and take advantage of all the opportunities in college. Schools want to know what can you show from the

demonstrated activities and why you've chosen what you've done, and information can be given through the additional information column in common app. We don't want all the students to stay in the library, so be active outside the classroom.

*Vassar:* There is no checklist. Schools evaluate applicants in a holistic way, and we don't want all students to be theater students or science students. That's why Activities don't have perfect formula.

**Q:**很多中国学生都因为课业压力大，没有足够的时间做课外活动。大家都觉得学校想要全方位发展，样样精通的学生，但是大多中国学生只有精力参加一两个活动。学校究竟想要看到怎样的活动呢？

*Swarthmore:* 质量比数量更重要。我们想要看到不管是校内校外，你做的有意义的活动，或是帮助你成长的活动。我们关注学生的课外活动是因为想从中了解学生所在的环境，还有你对周围的人的影响。

*Williams:* 我们知道有些学生课外活动非常多，另外一些因为时间有限，参加的活动较少。我们希望学生能通过课堂外的活动得到心智的成长，不希望学生们每天都呆在图书馆，因此在评价申请学生的活动时更注重学生从活动中学到了什么，或是展现了哪些兴趣爱好。Common Application 申请表格里就专门设置了一栏信息为学生提供机会详细解释说明课外活动，这是一个很好的平台。

*Vassar:* 很多人想知道学校想要学生做什么样的活动，然后根据学校的要求完成一个活动清单。其实学校也不想要单一的学生群体，不想要所有学生都做有关戏剧的活动，或是做科学实验。没有所谓的完美活动表。

**6. Q: 10 years ago, volunteering became very popular, but for many it is only a show, for example for 10 days only 2 are spent on teaching. How to expand activities into essays that truly articulate one's passion and aspirations? What kinds of qualities you are looking for in an essay? Are there tips for Chinese students?**

*Swarthmore:* One AO only has 20-30 minutes to read all of one applicant's material. Though for LACs there are fewer applicants, meaning more attention spent on each. Write about whatever you would like to share. How you write about it is also tricky, because you want the reader feel like you two just had a conversation in person. Your essays are windows into your experiences and thoughts. Write about things not already in application, and think about what contribution you will bring.

**Whitman:** It hard to find the theme or main idea of your essay. Ask people who you know and trust to read your essay, and check whether what you want to express is expressed.

Authenticity is key, don't copy others ideas.

Avoid dialogue because they are very ineffective.

**William:** Do not hinge on that essay. AOs are sympathetic readers, friendly nice people, who are looking for reasons to admit you.

Express what you want, who you are, what motivates you, also your city, neighbor, all the factors that make you who you are. Talk about what you think about each day, what video games you play, why are you doing what you do? AOs want to know how you will behave flying half way around the world.

For “why” essays, do not copy things on the website. It can only show excellent research skills but nothing about yourself.

**Vassar:** Be authentic with the language you use. You should sound as though you are saying it, because AOs pay attention not to the complex use of English but the English proficiency that shows you are prepared to take on courses in college. Your PS is an important one page, but college studies require essays of several pages and you have to convince AOs that you have the potential, if not ability to prosper academically and socially. A PS is not an interview. Even if you want to be creative, it is still an essay. Proof read and read it out loud.

**Q:** 十年前志愿者活动非常流行，后来大家都跟风去做志愿者。但是很多同学做的志愿者活动更像是作秀，10天的支教活动只有2天在真正的支教，其他时间都在游玩。这样的活动就没有什么意义。联系到文书，要怎样把活动写进文书才能体现自己对活动的热情呢？招生官想从申请学生的文书中看到什么？有没有中国学生应该注意的问题？

**Swarthmore:** 每位招生官都只有 20-30 分钟看一位申请学生的所有资料，所以要在这仅有的时间内让招生官了解最多的东西。文理学院的好处就是申请的人数少，所以招生官可以花更长的时间阅读每个学生的材料。文书是唯一的让学生自由展示的机会，就写一写你最想跟他人分享的东西，然后其他申请材料中没有提到的东西。写作的方式也需要注意，因为文书是展现给招生官你的个性特质的最好的窗口，最好的文书能让招生官看完感觉像是和面对面你进行了对话，深入了解了你的想法，还有你能为学校带来些什么。

**Whitman:** 找一个好的主题写文章真的很难。其实可以请一些你熟悉的，信任的人读你写的文章，检验一下你想表达的思想是否都已经表达出来了。还有一点很重要，那就是真实性。我们不希望看到抄袭的文章，或是别人代笔写的文章。



有些人非常喜欢写对话，但是很多时候对话还有其他有创意的文法都不如普通的来的有效。有时八句对话才能表达一句句子的意思，不如精简语言。

**Williams:** 招生官并不是想通过文书来为难大家，他们其实是有同情心的读者，想要从你的文书中找到应该录取你的理由，了解你是一个怎么样的人，有哪些兴趣理想，还有影响了你的生活环境。你的生活中的这些细节都向招生官展示了你飞过半个地球来到学校后的会有的表现。

**Vassar:** 关于“为什么选择了这个学校”的文章，请不要复制网上找到的内容，因为这样除了能够展示你有高超的查找资料技能以外不能展示任何跟你自己相关的特点。写文书的时候语言也需要注意，一定要符合自己的风格。有些人喜欢用复杂的高端词汇语法，当你在文书中的语言一定要跟你平时用的语言相符，因为文书应该相应体现出你的个性。文书中用的语言就应该是平常你使用的语言，就像是你平常说出来的话。当然要注意语法和拼写，但是并不需要用多少华丽的辞藻，只要能展示出你有最基本的英语交流水平就够了。你的文书只有一页长，但是到大学你要写很多更长的论文，因此学校也想要通过你的申请材料看出你有能力完成这样的学术要求。你的个人陈述是一篇短文章，而不是面试。你可以有创意，但是还是需要注意文章的规范。一定要好好检查语法和拼写错误。一个办法是把文章读出来，这样就可以有效地进行检查。

## **7. Q: What are secrets of the decision making process of the admin committee? How do you process? How are conflicts resolved?**

**Whitman:** It depends. Generally, one person is responsible for one area, and writes a summary of thoughts for each applicant. A second person does the same. Then, the admission committee discusses, argues, and vote for the decision.

**Q:** 可以透露一点招生办公室的秘密吗？你们是怎样做决定的？

**Whitman:** 每个学校情况都不一样。一般都是以位招生官负责一块地理区域，比如一位招生官负责中国。招生官在阅读完一份申请材料后会写一份总结评论，看看学生是否适合学校，然后会有第二位招生官再阅读这份资料。最后招生办公室会召开会议，讨论并投票决定录取结果。

## **Questions from Audience 观众问答**

### **1. Q: How can applicants be authentic, and how do we know if we are authentic?**

*Whitman:* Ask best friends, cousins and parents to check.

**Q:** 要怎样才能确保申请材料体现了一个真实的自己?

*Whitman:* 可以让身边了解到你的人，比如好友，家人等等帮你查看你的文书。让最了解你的人看看，这些资料中描述的人与他们平时接触的你是否是一样的。

### **2. Q: What do you put more emphasis on in all the application information?**

*Whitman:* We want to see strong interdisciplinary interest, and like strong community members who can give more passion to the group.

*Williams:* In LACs most classes are seminars so it is important to have the eagerness to participate in a collaborative environment, inside and outside the classroom.

**Q:** 申请材料中有很多信息，招生官们最注重哪些?

*Whitman:* 我们最看重申请学生是否有多个领域的兴趣，还有他在一个群体中的表现。我们的学校是一个紧密联系的群体，因此希望有各样有激情的人可以为群体带来更多的活力。

*Williams:* 我们学校的课大多是以讨论的形式展开的，因此我们需要积极参与讨论，愿意与他人合作学习的学生。不管是课上还是课外，我们希望我们的学生都能在群体中奉献出自己的力量。

### **3. Q: Do schools like weird kids?**

*Swarthmore:* What does weird mean, and who defines what that is? Based on who gets to determine weirdness, there are different standards in different contexts.

*Claire:* There are all sorts of weird people, just be what you are. It's fine to be weird, but you have to have good manners, and remember not to be careless or selfish.

**Q:** 听说有些学校很喜欢奇怪的学生。是这样吗?

**Swarthmore:** 奇怪本来就是一个相对的评价。到底谁来决定谁奇怪，谁不奇怪呢？每一个人的标准都不一样，因此一个人是否奇怪都是根据不同的评价标准而改变的。也许你觉得奇怪的人，学校并不觉得奇怪呢。

**Claire:** 世界上有很多奇怪的人，不过也不许需要为了博眼球而把自己变得很奇怪，展示出真实的自己就好了。只要你的奇怪不是因为缺乏礼貌，或是自私，怎样都可以。

#### 4. Q: How can applicants write “Why” essays?

**Williams:** Williams don't have “Why” essays, but “Why” essays are set for applicants to learn about the experience, opportunities available in that college, imagine what they will be in that college, and explain why they are eager to join.

**Swarthmore:** Don't list texts. Understand what we have, explain what will you do with them when you are here, and why it's right for you.

**Vassar:** LACs are similar and different, don't copy paste information. Be sure to distinguish between schools.

**Claire:** This question is also asked in interviews. Know what are you interested in that particular college, whether it is a particular professor, or the CS major, and be specific.

#### Q: 在“为什么选择这个学校“的文书中，怎样表达对大学的喜爱更好?

**Williams:** 威廉姆斯没有“为什么选择威廉姆斯”的文书题目，但是这样的文书题目旨在让申请学生了解大学为他们提供的生活，机会，带领他们想象他们在大学中会经历的事，然后回答为什么这样的生活令他们向往。

**Swarthmore:** 不要简单罗列事实信息，而是要理解这些信息背后，学校能为你带来什么，你又会会在学校里怎样生活。只有知道了这些，招生官们才能知道学校是否真正适合你。

**Vassar:** 我们这些学校作为文理学院，有很多相似之处，也有很多不同之处，关键是你如何看待这些差别。记住不要写一篇文章套用所有的学校，然后修改一下文中学校的名字。这是非常不明智的。



**Claire:** 有时候面试也会问到这个问题。应该去认真做一些功课，了解为什么你特别喜欢那一所也许是喜欢某一位教授，也许是学校的计算机科学很好，总之要有具体的理由。

### 5. Q: Why liberal arts education, how is it going to benefit me more?

**Williams:** Both education systems are excellent. Your choice should depend on your goals, aspiration, and career development. Class experience is very different. In LACs you have access to more than one or two subjects, but also can learn in-depth. If you want to be an engineer, do you want to be immersed in passionate engineers, or do you have other academic interest? Answer those questions to make your choice.

**Swarthmore:** LACs don't offer pre-professional education because schools want to train critical, creative interdisciplinary thinking. The future is not predictable, so people cannot prepare for everything. Some jobs might not exist now.

**Whitman:** People in LACs wish to have a dynamic small group conversation, argue and getting out more. Education in LACs is not outcome based and straight lined.

**Vassar:** Undergraduate experience in LACs is exciting because everyone is working towards a common goal: a bachelors' degree. This is a unique American experience.

**Q:** 在美国的那么多学校中，为什么我应该选择文理学院呢？文理学院有什么优势？

**Williams:** 所有的学校都很好，但选择终究取决于你的理想和职业选择有关。首先文理学院与大学的课堂就不一样，文理学院是讨论式的因此课堂很活跃内容也很深入，大学有很多课都是大讲堂的形式，不会有那么多需要积极参与的部分。如果你想成为工程师，愿意和一些志同道合喜欢工程的同学一起学习就可以去大学。如果想要和有着各式各样的兴趣的同学在一起，那文理学院就是很好的选择。

**Swarthmore:** 大学的教育更加偏向职业准备，而大多职业是没有办法是先准备的，比如设计苹果手机的工程师在大学里一定没有学过“设计苹果手机”这门课。学校能做的是培养学生的批判性，创造性思维。职业和大学学习不一定要完全相关，因为很多时候未来是无法准备的。

**Whitman:** 文理学院的学生希望能够在小的团队中，相互之间进行充足的沟通，辩论，并且在这个过程中学习、收获到更多的东西。博雅教育永远都不是结论英雄，也从来不是单一或枯燥的。享受这个过程更为重要。

**Vassar:** 文理学院提供的本科学习非常好，因为在这四年内你接触到的人都是和你一样想要拿到本科学位的人。这是一个非常好的经历，很独特。