

## Case Western Reserve University Alumni Admission Ambassadors

### Alumni Interview Information for Alumni Admission Ambassadors – 2016-2017

#### Overview of Alumni Interviews – The Basics

##### **Before the interview**

Students request alumni interviews through the Undergraduate Admission website. These requests are received by the admission office. Alumni interviewers log on to the Alumni Admission Ambassador Portal at [go.case.edu/portal/alumni](http://go.case.edu/portal/alumni) to claim students to interview. The page will have a list of students who have requested interview in their area. The alum may claim students to interview by selecting them in the portal.

The alumni interviewer will contact the student to introduce himself/herself and arrange the interview. If the student does not reply within a few days, the alum should notify Christine DeSalvo at [christine.desalvo@case.edu](mailto:christine.desalvo@case.edu).

Interviews should be arranged for a place and time mutually convenient for the Alumni Admission Ambassador and the student – suggest a location(s) to the student. Suggested locations for interviews include coffee shops (like Starbucks), libraries where talking is allowed, or other public places that are quiet enough for a serious conversation. Interviews should not take place at the home of the alumni interviewer or the student. We recognize that some metropolitan areas are quite large and there may be students who live relatively far from you, but still in the same general metro area. Please do not let this hinder your selection of students – it is acceptable to ask the student to come closer to your area (as opposed to you going to his/her area) if that is more convenient for you. Even if he/she has to travel a bit to get to you, it is still closer than a trip to Cleveland and it may be the best we can offer at the time.

Bring the student's contact information to the interview in case you need it for any reason.

##### **During the interview**

Interviews should include just you and the student. Parents are welcome to join the interview at the end if there is time and if they have questions for you. The interview itself should last about 25-35 minutes, followed by a brief conversation with the student's parents if they are there. The total time should be approximately 45 minutes.

Interviews should be conversational and a two-way exchange of information, rather than a rigid question-answer format.

Gather information on the following areas during the interview: academic profile and curriculum, academic and extracurricular interests, leadership experience and potential, personality and personal qualities, and interest in CWRU. Feel free to jot down some notes to help you remember the student, but avoid writing the whole time; it may be disruptive to the conversation. Allow time for the student's questions at the end of the interview

##### **After the interview**

Complete the interview evaluation online within one week of the interview. To submit your report, go back to the student's name in the portal under your interview assignments. Select the student's name and then select "submit report" to bring up the online form. (You may need to scroll down within that small box to see the "submit report" button.) Once submitted, this report will immediately be included in the student's file. We strongly recommend completing the interview evaluation as soon after the interview as possible to aid your memory and to be sure it is received in time for application review.

Follow up with the Alumni Admission Ambassador Coordinator (Christine DeSalvo, [christine.desalvo@case.edu](mailto:christine.desalvo@case.edu)) regarding any unresolved questions you or the student may have. The student's admission counselor will reach out to the student to address any outstanding issues.

## Alumni Interviews – The Detailed Information

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS FOR INTERNAL ALUMNI ADMISSION AMBASSADOR USE ONLY (Not to be shared with prospective students)**

### **What are Alumni Interviews?**

The Alumni interview is a one-on-one exchange between an Alumni Admission Ambassador and a prospective student. While not required, it can be an important part of the admission application, and students should be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to interview. The interview is not transactional: it is a meaningful conversation requiring thought and reflection. While there is common structure and a consistency of general areas that should be discussed, it is not formulaic, and conversation should flow somewhat organically. There is a delicate balance that must be struck, between putting a student at ease enough for them to open up and be comfortable to share experiences and ask questions, while at the same time helping the student to understand that this interaction provides additional context in the admission evaluation.

### **Why offer Alumni Interviews?**

This question needs to be answered from both the perspective of us as a university, and that of the student. For the student, the interview provides an opportunity to bring the application to life, to express himself/herself and highlight aspects of his/her candidacy that don't necessarily fit neatly into the boxes of the Common Application, and to get an individualized perspective on the university. Additionally, the interview represents a seriousness of purpose with regard to the college search, and reflects a level of interest that is a positive in the admission process. For CWRU, the interview provides an opportunity to better understand an individual candidate, which will help us to make better admission decisions as we become increasingly more selective. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to appeal directly to areas of interest a student has, encouraging him to more strongly consider CWRU as a college choice.

### **Who should interview?**

Any student who has an interest in CWRU, whatever that level of interest is.

### **Who conducts interviews?**

Any Alumni Admission Ambassador who desires to do so. (As well as all of the professional staff in admission.)

### **When are Alumni Interviews offered?**

Open season generally begins in August of the senior year, and runs through the application deadline in January. There really isn't one ideal time to interview, but it should definitely be encouraged whenever a family can fit it into their schedule. Since the interview is part of the application review, it should ideally be done before or soon after the application deadline.

### **Where are Alumni Interviews offered?**

Alumni interview students in or near a candidate's hometown. Ideal locations are coffee shops, libraries where talking is allowed, or other "neutral" territory. Alumni interviews should not take place in the home of the alum or the student.

### **How to complete an Alumni Interview**

How alumni conduct interviews should be consistent to the degree practical and possible, from alum to alum.

Begin by setting the tone: give the student an idea of what to expect, and establish rapport. In the first part of the interview, you're working to understand the worlds in which the student lives: school, community, home; the people who are major players: teachers, friends, counselors, family members; and the things that are important: academically, extracurricular, goals and ambitions, etc.

You want to get a sense of a student's level of seriousness when it comes to academics. What kinds of courses are they taking? What courses do they enjoy, and why? Which ones are more difficult, or less stimulating? How does the student learn best? Tell me about a really good teacher you've had—what made them a good teacher for you? What have you read recently, either for class or outside of class? If the student brought a transcript, go ahead and take a minute to look it over and return it to the student. Offer encouragement over successes, and don't be shy to ask about any rough spots.

Next, you want to get a sense of how the student fits into the community. What extracurriculars are meaningful? Any the student would like to continue or start in college? Is the student a leader, and if so, how would they describe their leadership style? Ask follow up questions about the activities if the student does not elaborate.

At this point, it may be a good time to ask some questions that will help us to understand his/her reflective side. What's home like – any brothers or sisters? How would you compare yourself to your siblings? What are your friends like? How are you similar/different from your friends?

Next, begin to transition to the college search – what's important to you in selecting a college? How did you learn about CWRU? Was there anything in particular that drew them to investigate us further? We should not be asking students what other colleges they are considering. If they volunteer the information on their own, that's fine.

Somewhere in here is when you should have the pieces formulated enough to begin to make your case for CWRU. Tie the areas of their interest to programs or opportunities at CWRU. Subtly emphasize advantages we may have over the competition (without speaking negatively about other institutions). Help them to envision themselves here on our campus. This should naturally lead to questions, but if not, prompt them for questions: about the admission process, the university in general, etc.

At the end, you should have talked a lot less than the student. This is about creating the space for them to help us get to know them better and see them as a stronger candidate for admission.

Every interview should last about 30 minutes, never less than 25 minutes and rarely more than 35. After this 30-minute one-on-one, you may bring the parents (or whomever accompanied the student, if applicable) into the conversation should they be interested. Recap the conversation, hitting the highlights of what you and the student discussed, including complimenting something about the student that stands out, mention the general questions from the student that you had addressed, and provide an opportunity for the parents to ask you questions. Encourage the student to follow up with you or their territory admission counselor with any questions. Leave them with a clear idea of next steps (deadlines coming up, visiting campus, events they may want to attend, etc.)

## **How to process the Alumni Interview after it happens**

It is important to write your report as soon after the interview as possible, preferably the same day, while the interaction is still fresh in your memory. Submit the report through the portal as explained above.

Your interview report should highlight the insights you derived from the conversation. You should cover the academics, extracurriculars and personal qualities, student's future plans, and level of interest in CWRU. You may write in narrative or use bullet points – the report does not have to be fancy as long as you convey your ideas clearly. In general, you should be able to complete the report in approximately 15 minutes or less time.