



5 non-answers to “Why this school?”

With each school you add to your college list, you'll need to have a good answer to the question, “Why are you applying here?” While you're not going to that school yet, you're considering spending time and money to apply. And many schools will ask you about your motivation for choosing them as a way of gauging whether or not there's a chance you'll actually accept an offer of admission.

Here are five non-reasons students sometimes cite when asked about their interest in a particular college. If any of these are on your list, it's time to dig deeper and find different answers (or different schools).

1. “It’s a good school.”

This is the most overused and vague reason you can cite. There's no agreed upon standard for measuring the quality of a college (US News rankings are about as scientific as Miss America rankings). Why is this a good school for you? Focus on the “you” part and you'll be on your way to a much better answer.

2. “You can’t beat the connections after graduation.”

I have never once met a college graduate who was handed a job just because of an alumni connection. Do some schools have widespread, vibrant alumni groups? Of course. But connections are a product of the work you do to earn them, not the name of the school you attended. Here's a [past post](#) with more information.

3. “It has a good (insert major here) program.”

This is more defensible than #1, but you'll still need to go further than “good.” What makes it good? Compared to what? And why is that good for you? Show that you've done some comparison shopping and learned what the program looks like at other colleges, too. That will help you be more specific about the strength you perceive of this particular school's offering.

4. "Because I want to go to medical school/law school/business school..."

Don't assume that just because a college is prestigious that it will catapult you to a top medical, law or business school. The name of the undergraduate college you attend will have very little to do with your admission to graduate school. Your success as an undergraduate student, however, and your willingness to take advantage of what your college has to offer, will have everything to do with admission to graduate school. More information [here](#) and [here](#).

5. Anything that serves as a cover for the real reason.

Yes, there are legitimate and not-so-legitimate reasons to be interested in a college. But this is your process. You're the one who will spend four years at whatever college you end up attending. So be honest about your real reasons. If the real reason you're interested in a school is because you're afraid to go too far away from home, not because it has a good business program, say so. Be honest about it. Sometimes your thinking becomes clearer when you verbalize things like this. And it's better to put the real issues on the table than it is to hide behind non-reasons for picking your schools.

Want more expert admissions advice from Kevin? Check out his blog at wiselikeus.com.

