Happy New Year to all of my fellow Yale alumni and stalwart ASC volunteers around the world! I hope everyone had a few moments over the last few weeks to enjoy some well-deserved time with friends and family. As we move into 2014 together, I am thankful to be surrounded on all sides by bright, willing, caring and committed colleagues, friends, and interviewers. Not to mention sharp, insightful, and amusing.

As you know, we released our first set of admissions decisions to aspirants for the Class of 2018 a few weeks ago and already have over 200 students who have committed to come to New Haven next fall. I have now been Dean of Admissions for six months and no longer hold the enviable position of having not signed a single denial letter. But, my overall impression of the entire early action cycle was very positive. It has now been three years since Harvard and Princeton (the two schools with which we see the greatest application overlap) returned to the fold to offer Single-Choice Early Action and mirror the admissions programs offered at Yale and Stanford. I don’t want to speak too soon, but there seems to be a sense of normalcy surrounding the landscape of highly selective admissions.

Each year since that change, our early pool has grown by about 5% - mostly from more applications from highly talented first-generation and low-income students. We are now reviewing almost as many applications as we did during the first year that Harvard and Princeton offered only one deadline (4773 vs. 4880, respectively) and there were fewer options to which top students could apply. “Quality”, of course, is very hard to measure in a holistic admissions process and with such an extraordinarily accomplished group of students applying every year, but the decisions being made at the committee table seemed a bit more difficult than they had in the past.

Accordingly, we admitted more students - 735 in total - than we had in each of the past two years. Still, there were thousands of students who were very good candidates and deferred for reconsideration in the coming months. Why not admit more of them you might ask, especially after looking at the early action admit rates of some of our peers? Well, because there were exponentially more students working on their applications to Yale at that very moment and, as you know, bed space in New Haven is limited. In the end, about 90 percent of the students whom we admit early will eventually arrive on campus, and I think it serves Yale and our applicants best if the committee makes sure that less than half of the eventual freshman class applied Early Action.

The committee faces a similarly challenging balancing act when deciding whether or not to defer or deny an application. We strive to give candidates and schools realistic feedback about who should apply early and students’ chances of being considered again in the spring. Most of my friends who are college counselors encourage the admissions office to deny admission to more students so that they can recalibrate their college lists before the next set of deadlines. But what about candidates who don’t have counselors to help them interpret our feedback? And what about their peers who are still thinking about applying to Yale? It is hard for our astute alumni interviewers to make sense of our decisions sometimes, let alone 17-year-olds. I worry that a deny decision, especially when a school has only submitted one early application to Yale, signals that students shouldn’t apply, when in fact it may be exactly that school and that type of applicant whom we are trying to encourage. No one, not even the most seasoned admissions dean, knows where this line should be drawn. For the past few years, the admissions committee has struck this balance by denying about twenty five percent of early applicants.

Meanwhile, students braved the new Common Application and submitted applications in a flurry during the final few days of 2013. And thanks to the incredible work of our operations staff, most of our Regular Decision applicants should now be appearing on ASC Directors screens ready for assignments. As in any year, there are a few issues to sort out and a few stragglng applications to welcome, but my best guess is that we will see somewhere close to 31,000 applications to Yale when all is said and done. Mother Nature seems to understand our plight and has ordered the best possible reading weather in New England for admissions officers—snowy and very, very cold! And while 30,000 is a historic number of applicants to Yale, I feel confident it is an amount that our large, strong, and very capable force of alumni interviewers can handle over the next three months. “Thank you in advance for all of the time and energy that you will be expending on our behalf over the next few weeks. I hope you enjoy meeting our exceptional group of applicants as much as we enjoy reading about them.

Best,
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We know why students choose Yale, but what do they think about New Haven? From Pepe’s to East Rock Park, a new student-created video features Elm City in all of its glory. “New Haven, CT 06520” features Yale’s hometown through the eyes of current students.

Only 4 minutes in length, this video helps to remind us all of the amazing offerings of our fair city. Take a break, sit back, and enjoy a trip through New Haven.

Reminder: February 15 - Submission Deadline for Regular Decision Interview Reports.

Visit our online resources for more information on submitting reports.
ASC Director: A friend of mine who does Yale interviews said that the on-campus interviews “don’t count.” Is that true?

Yale Admissions: This is not true. On-campus interviews are evaluative and conducted by Yale seniors who have received extensive training over the summer. If it is convenient, applicants can choose to interview on-campus, but these are limited in number and first-come, first-served in the summer and fall. We consider on-campus interviews in a similar way to alumni interviews: the interviews provide us with another opportunity to learn more about the students. Students who have done on-campus interviews may also interview with alumni, and these provide an opportunity to update their applications. However, some students may decline to interview again, and consequently, we only consider their on-campus interview report.

ASC Volunteer: There’s a high school senior whom I know who has applied for the class of 2018, and I’m wondering if there’s any way I can help his case? He already has an interview scheduled through the ASC, but is there any way I could conduct a supplemental interview? Is that something that’s done?

Yale Admissions: We do not allow supplemental interviews because we want to make sure that as many applicants as possible are offered an interview. It would be unfair for an applicant to have two interviews when there are many who are not offered one. However, if you feel that you can provide some insight based on previous experiences, then you may submit an extra letter of recommendation. You can then email this letter to the admissions officer in charge of your area, and he or she can then attach it to the application so that the Admissions Committee can read it.

ASC Director: One of our interviewees was deferred EA and asked his interviewer: “Do you have any tips/advice on how I can show the admissions committee my passion for Yale?” How should one respond in such instances?

Yale Admissions: This is a common question from deferred applicants and we allow students to submit a letter of continued interest. Before submitting such a letter, deferred applicants should take some time to think about their reasons for applying to Yale and how they imagine themselves contributing to the Yale community. Admissions officers often suggest that these applicants should submit a letter of continued interest sometime in late January or February so that the student has time to complete other applications and enjoy the holidays. Once an applicant has completed this letter, he or she can email it to their admissions officer so that it can be attached to the application. Please discourage students from submitting videos, songs, or artwork. A simple letter is more helpful to the admissions committee.

ASC Volunteer: After I submit my interview report on February 15, what happens next? When can an applicant expect to hear back from the Admissions Officer?

Yale Admissions: Admissions Committees begin to review Regular Decision applicants from mid-February until late March. We then release decisions to our applicants by the end of March. Admitted students will have until May 1 to respond to their offer of admission.