



Tufts Alumni Admissions Program



## **TAAP Interview Report: Samples and Critiques**

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This document contains ten examples of TAAP interview reports. The sample reports are actual reports that have been submitted to the admissions office. Each report is evaluated based on how helpful the report would be to the application reader and the admissions committee. Suggestions are given for each to indicate how the report could be enhanced.

Guidelines for interview report writing can be found on page 12 of the *TAAP Member Handbook* and page 14 of the *TAAP Chairperson Handbook*.

## Report 1

On meeting Gabe, his maturity and confidence are instantly apparent. He projects the air of someone who is ready to be in college.

Gabe's parents are both clinical social workers, and his mother has been somewhat actively involved in his college search; she accompanied him (and his sister before him) on college visits, met with his college counselors, and so on. He has taken her views into account (her criteria differ somewhat from his, though he assures me that she 'loves Tufts'), but clearly his preferences are primarily driven by his own opinions. He strikes me as a very independent young man.

Although he recognizes that his goals may evolve as he becomes exposed to new things, his current career goal is to become a physician - specifically, to enter the emerging field of adolescent medicine. His reasons for choosing this subfield are grounded in personal experience with his pediatrician, as well as the recognition that teenagers are faced with a variety of health issues that neither pediatrician nor family doctors are necessarily equipped to address. He believes that adolescents' doctors must also be counselors in order to adequately treat the health of their patients, and is drawn to the opportunity to provide such counsel.

Academically, he has taken on a challenging science curriculum; he emphasized that his AP Biology course is infamously challenging. He has also consistently pursued opportunities in singing, musical theater, and art; in fact, he identifies his advanced studio art class as his favorite. He is clearly intrinsically interested in both sciences and the arts.

Because he has taken two science courses in both his junior and senior years (and remains committed to the balance that the arts provide to his coursework), he has only taken minimal foreign language coursework, and does not show the same enthusiasm for this subject that he does for others. However, he did say that one of the first things that attracted him to Tufts beyond the raft of objectively similar schools was its explicit emphasis of a global perspective; my sense is that Gabe wants very much to experience more of the world than he has to this point.

Personally, Gabe is engaging, articulate, and friendly; he is confident without being brash. His reasons for liking particular courses, teachers, and activities show thoughtfulness and introspection. The questions he asked me show that he's interested in many aspects of the college experience; he asked smart questions about both academic and social life.

Gabe's a good kid with an impressive level of maturity. He explicitly values balance in his life in both his coursework and social life. I suspect that he would be good for Tufts; I am quite confident that Tufts would be good for him.

## **Critique of Report 1**

**Overall:** A lengthy, but superb report.

Throughout the interview report the interviewer provides contextual information that will help the reader in understand Gabe's interests and choices. At the conclusion of each topic, the interviewer offers an opinion or impression. This editorial approach reveals a great deal about Gabe as a person and as a student that would not necessarily translate in the paper application. The report details Gabe's academic, career, and extracurricular interests as well as a bit about his college search process.

### **Most helpful section of the report:**

In the third paragraph, Gabe's interest in medicine is explained. Many students are interested in pre-med at Tufts, but often cannot articulate why. The interviewer was able to help distinguish the student's interest and goals from other students in the pool. The final two paragraphs contain the summary impressions of the candidate. This particular summary is useful because the impressions illuminate the student's character- they do not summarize him in terms of accomplishments, activities or interests already mentioned. The interviewer chose to comment on his maturity and thoughtfulness as opposed to reiterating his potential future in medicine or dedication to the arts.

### **Suggestions for improving this report:**

Though filled with valuable information the report is a little long. Tightening up the language and being careful not to repeat oneself can keep reports from being too long.

## Report 2

I was very impressed by Hope based on her definition of her goals, her formulation of a series of sometimes harsh steps for achieving them, and her firm grasp on reality. I've interviewed kids for a few years now and feel that Hope is the strongest candidate I've seen.

Hope wants to be a surgeon and has selected Tufts because of its premedical program. Tufts is her first choice of the four colleges to which she has applied. She became interested in Tufts long ago because it is essentially a local college. Being interested in a specific undergraduate field, she has looked into the programs offered at each school to which she has applied and speaks quite knowledgeably about them. She is not as familiar as she wants to be with Tufts' offerings. Hope has not visited Tufts nor the other area colleges to which she applied, despite having a car at her disposal. She asked astute questions about the campus and living accommodations which could best be answered by a visit; I strongly urged her to do so.

This applicant is third in a class of around 140, plays half a dozen instruments in the band, is drum majorette, in the student council, class this and class that, is looking forward to an upcoming band trip to Disneyworld, and thoroughly enjoys all her activities. She is outgoing, volunteering information without being asked, and conveys a deep sense of pride mixed with overabundant enthusiasm. She has taken advantage of the limited courses and extracurricular activities offered at her school. She regrets the school offerings are not more extensive but recognizes the fiscal and other problems faced by her town's education system. Her only complaint against the school is the extreme conservative policies of its management.

Hope lived for a year and a half in Japan where her stepfather was posted with the military. She could have talked for the entire interview time about her experiences there, so enthusiastic was she.

This applicant is the oldest in a large, blended family, all of whom support her lofty goals. Her family needs financial assistance to get her through college, and she has applied for both Tufts and private scholarships. An uncle who is a former professor at Yale is researching private financial support for her. Hope works several days a week, including Saturday, at the Army base commissary. She says it is not the most exciting work, but it pays more than other places she could work, places where there would be more of her age group. She knows how much she needs to accumulate for college. To save even more money, she is about to take her car off the road and cancel her insurance. It is this dogged, hard working approach to finances that cause me to state that Hope is the most realistic student I have interviewed.

## **Critique of Report 2**

**Overall:** An excellent report

The admissions committee knows the candidate well after reading this report. The interview report begins with a strong opening sentence which sets a positive tone. The report includes an accurate description of Hope's enthusiasm for learning and her activities and a clear description of Hope's determination in and out of school. The application reader better understands Hope's curricular and extracurricular choices after reading the report. This report nicely follows the recommended format. It is concise and informative.

### **Most helpful sections of the report:**

In the third paragraph, the writer makes editorial comments about Hope as a person and reveals Hope's mature perspective on her education. Similarly, in the final paragraph the interviewer provides the report reader with insight regarding Hope's determination and gives clear examples of how Hope achieves a goal.

### **Suggestions for improving the report:**

The second to last paragraph mentions that Hope has lived abroad. The reader will likely be provided with this information in the application itself. The interviewer could have elaborated on Hope's enthusiasm regarding life in Japan. For example, where did she live, what was her schooling like, how did she adjust to cultural differences, did she bring back any Japanese customs, etc.

### Report 3

I met Lily at a Starbucks. She seems like she's very qualified on paper, but her interview was less than satisfying. She's visited Tufts twice - once last April and again a couple weeks ago - and she said she likes that the students are academically focused but also like to have fun. She responded to every question I asked her pretty vaguely.

She spent last summer with a host family in France on a program with her high school. She says she still occasionally talks to her host family. She was vague about what she got out of the experience. She said she learned about the culture, but she was not specific at all, even when I tried to ask her specific questions. She said the biggest difference between how she lives and her host family was that the French town does not have window screens.

She is very active on the debate team in high school. She said she does congressional debate, so I asked her what kinds of things she debates. She said bills. She seemed very excited, just not in any particular direction.

She wants to study international relations at Tufts. I asked her what kinds of issues she's interested in, and generally why she wants to do IR. She said she wants to help people, then off-handedly threw out that she's interested in Darfur.

She said she may also want to double-major in English because she loves reading. I asked her what she likes to read. She said everything. I asked her what she's reading now. She said she has a whole stack of books. She said she went through a Russian literature phase, she likes reading biographies, and she often takes whatever her mother is reading. But absolutely nothing specific.

She said she may want to study abroad in London. Why London? Because she loves Jane Austen and the independent music scene. She went on vacation there recently, and she loved how everything she studies is right there.

She helped start an online music magazine about British music, and she hopes to continue working on it even in college. She may want to write about the arts for one of the student publications at Tufts, too.

Lily came across as someone who probably has great grades, test scores and activities, but in the interview she came across as someone who is spread incredibly thin, and who doesn't put very much of her time or effort into any one thing.

### **Critique of Report 3**

**Overall:** A good documentation of a tricky conversation.

From reading the report, the application reader can feel the interviewer's frustration. The activities discussed would be available to the reader either on the Common Application or as part of a resume. The vagueness of Lily's answers gives the reader a sense of her commitment to and level of interest in her various activities. Providing the questions and prompts the interviewer used in attempt to draw more detail from Lily helps the reader understand the opportunities she was given to articulate passions. The interview report reflects the "average" rating.

#### **Most helpful section of the report:**

The report is a list of examples of missed opportunities. The sections about her trip to France and her potential double-major in English are the most helpful because they are detailed in both what the interviewer asked and in Lily's responses.

#### **Suggestions for improving the report:**

As mentioned above, the report is a listing of examples which begins to run a little long at the end. Fewer examples could have been used, saving the interview a little time. One possible strategy for drawing more detail out of Lily is asking more creative, open-ended questions. For example "if you had a free day, how would you spend it" or "is there anything about you that isn't in your application." Trying a different style of questions might have encouraged Lily to say more, but perhaps not.

## Report 4

Charles is an extremely serious young man who is by his own admission a “workaholic.” Since he ranks first in his class, this description is not surprising. He also describes himself as “quite-measured in what I say,” and this was evident in the answers to all my questions. He always thought about each question and then answered in a way that addressed the positive and negative sides of each issue. An example of this was his response to my question about having an absent father. Charlie’s father moved the family to the States from Hong Kong four and a half years ago because he was working for an American toy company and seeing little of the family. Two years after the move, he changed jobs and ended up back in Hong Kong with the family in New Jersey. Charles sees his father about once every three months for varying periods of time. Charles says that this has been difficult because his father wasn’t around when he needed his advice, but (ever philosophical) he added that it was also a positive experience that made him more mature and independent.

When I asked Charles what he does for relaxation, he had difficulty answering. I think this stems from his total interest in math and science. Therefore, his extracurricular activities are the math club and science league and occasional tutoring in math and science. Tennis is the one nonacademic activity that consumes a good deal of his time, and he was the MVP varsity player last year. He also plays Chinese chess, but only with his brother because no one else understands the Chinese characters on the game board. He is very close with his brother, a junior who coincidentally is ranked first in his class. Charles feels his brother is more well-rounded than he, with greater outside interests.

Charles enjoys school, but regrets that his school is so small that it cannot offer a greater variety of math and science courses. Although he is taking engineering drawing, he is not totally convinced he wants to be an engineer. He likes Tufts because it offers strong liberal arts as well as engineering. His sole criterion in selecting colleges was curriculum. Charles has applied to every Ivy except Dartmouth, as well as MIT, Stanford, and Hopkins. He has only seen Princeton and Columbia. He has no first choice because that way he feels he won’t be disappointed on April 15 with whatever rejections he receives.

Charles is an interesting candidate. Personally, I would like to have seen a little more humor and joie de vivre, but I cannot fault him for being serious and pragmatic. He is bright and honest with a no-nonsense approach to life.

## **Critique of Report 4**

**Overall:** A very good, professional report

A tight, concise report where little prose is wasted but which gives the admission committee a clear understanding of the applicant's determined and serious personality. Helpful, well documented insight into the family relationships. The second paragraph does detail the student's activities, but provides context- that the student is serious about math and science. The report reflects the impressive rate.

### **Most helpful sections of the report:**

The summary paragraph is extremely helpful to the reader as it provides an honest impression of the student as someone who perhaps lacks a little extra spark, but has definite strengths that will benefit him as a student.

### **Suggestions for improving the report:**

Math and science are clearly important to the student and must have been discussed during the interview. The interviewer could have provided more information regarding what it is about math and science that inspires the student or what types of projects the student has completed.

## Report 5

Adam comes across as an exceptionally intelligent, focused and organized student. He strikes me as a classic overachiever, but has a friendly and approachable personality.

Following is a summary of our meeting:

### Family:

- Lives with mom and dad
- 1 younger brother
- Parents encouraged him to look at Tufts

### Academics:

- Currently taking 3 AP courses
  - AP Calculus
  - AP Spanish
  - AP Physics
- Also taking English (Shakespeare) and Business Law
- He has found AP Physics to be very challenging; there is a lot of homework; but he loves the subject matter which includes kinematics, Newton's Laws and calculations of 'work'.
- It seemed that his favorite courses presently are Spanish and English. Spanish has been a long time interest of Adam's and he is hoping that Tufts has a strong Spanish program. Adam's interest in English is more variable depending upon what he is reading. This year he enjoys Shakespeare's plays. Last year he did not enjoy 20th Century American novelists as much.
- Spanish and math are his favorites
- He believes he is a good writer, especially creative writing.
- Adam is a high honors student (greater than 3.75 gpa) at Wilton High School, which is consistently rated as either the number 1 or number 2 high school (academically) in the State of CT (my statistic and statement, not Adam's). Adam is a top notch student.

### Activities:

- Adam has an incredibly rich and diverse life outside of his academics. You have a copy of all of his activities that he sent with his application. If you need more information, please let me know. Suffice it to say that Adam is involved in a combination of charity, leadership and extra curricular activities that are quite impressive. These include:
  - Future Business Leaders of America
  - Peervention
  - Hebrew Tutor
  - Founder, Broadway Bracelets
  - American Cancer Society
  - Amnesty International
  - Key Club
  - Writer for local paper
  - Choral Department, Wilton High School
- The outside activities that Adam took particular pride in are
  - Madrigal Choir, a select Men's Choir that travels on music trips and has one many major awards; and
  - Teaching Hebrew to a student with ADD who is trying to prepare for a Bar Mitzvah

Why Tufts:

- Parents recommended it and then he saw it and fell in love with it
- He loves the campus
- Does not feel as strongly about any other school; considered several others and went back for second visits at all of them, finally down-selecting Tufts
- Likes everything about it; very interested in Spanish, Psychology, Tufts Daily and WMFO

If I were to describe Adam after our brief meeting, I would describe him as focused, persistent, organized and creative. He is likeable and takes pride in his sense of humor as well.

Adam would be an outstanding addition to Tufts next year.

## **Critique of Report 5**

**Overall:** A lengthy and fairly unhelpful report

The format of the report is such that the information about the student is presented without context or depth and more like a list. The suggested topics of discussion for interviews were clearly utilized (i.e. family, academics, extracurricular activities, why Tufts), but not explored or if they were explored they are not in the interview report. Nearly every piece of information about the student can be easily found in the application. The impressions at the very beginning and end would be helpful if the text in the middle supported these summary statements.

### **Most helpful section of the report:**

The discussion of Adam's opinions of his courses is helpful, but limited. Further discussion of why he enjoys Spanish and which Shakespeare plays he likes and why would have been even better.

### **Suggestions for improving the report:**

Interviewers should refrain from listing the student's courses and activities. This information is in the application and thus a waste of time for both the interviewer and application reader. Initially asking for this information in the interview can be a good way to start a conversation about the student's interests and passions. Classes and activities should be used as a starting point to find out what the student is really like. The impressions gained from the ensuing conversation will be the most useful to the application reader.

## Report 6

- Jennifer is an only child and has traveled extensively through Europe with her parents. Her father is an international businessman and her mom is an artist. Mom does a great deal of volunteer service for a local women's shelter and Jenn joins her once a week. Jenn elaborated on the value of such experience; she is very perceptive and has learned a great deal about the hardships many women face in our society.
- Jenn has taken the most challenging curriculum available at her school. She also has taken additional courses during the summer at a variety of institutions (e.g. Phillips Exeter Academy and the Tufts summer program for High School students in Talloires, France).
- Jenn has been involved with art since she was a young girl. She has worked mostly with pen and ink, but enjoys photography as well. Jenn's art work has been shown in local galleries. She wanted the admissions committee to know that she dedicates an extraordinary amount of time on her art work; upon requesting the definition of "extraordinary" she said she can spend an hour to 10 hours a day (particularly during the summer) on drawing.
- Jenn is also an athlete of note. She has played varsity basketball since the ninth grades- now that is unusual! Jenn was selected as an All-League player as a junior and has played in the Empire State Games. Jenn also run cross county and track. She did not elaborate on her ability as a runner.
- Jenn knows Tufts well. She has former classmates that attend Tufts presently.
- Jenn seems to feel Tufts would be a good match for her. She mentioned an interest in the 5 year program with the Museum School of Fine Arts and really likes Tufts' interdisciplinary approach. Jenn definitely did her homework before applying to TU.

In summary, Jennifer is articulate, humble and engaging. She moved from topic to topic easily and I thoroughly enjoyed the conversation. The hour seemed to fly by. From my perspective, she is what you are looking for; she will contribute to Tufts, in and out of the classroom. Jenn's a doer with just the right amount of enthusiasm.

## **Critique of Report 6**

**Overall:** A good/well-rounded report.

The bullet-style of reporting serves to highlight various aspects of the applicant's life. The interviewer begins by discussing Jenn's family background, followed by her academic program and achievements. The interviewer provides examples of her most significant activities and a listing of a few other activities, thus showing the admissions committee the level of her involvement. While only the summary impressions provide some insight into her involvements, the report paints a picture of Jenn as a well-rounded applicant.

### **Most helpful sections of the report:**

The reader is able to better understand Jenn's connection to community service because of the information about the mother's philanthropy. The summary statement provides the overall positive impression the interviewer had of the student and her enthusiasm, something that may not translate on paper.

### **Suggestions for improving the report:**

The interviewer notes Jenn's summer academic work. The reader will be aware of the summer programs Jenn completed and so this information is unnecessary. Information about why Jenn pursued these programs would be helpful, particularly her motivation for doing summer courses or the reason she pursued certain subjects. Similarly, the listing of activities is redundant as this information will be found on the Common Application or a resume. It would be more helpful for the reader to learn more about why Jenn plays basketball, what she loves most about the game, how it challenges her, etc. than listing Jenn's other involvements.

## Report 7

Maya is an extremely extroverted and pleasant young lady. She walked right up to me with a big smile, looked me in the eye and gave a hearty hello. Her enthusiasm filled the law school atrium we were sitting in. I asked her what she was generally looking for in an undergraduate experience and she talked about “faculty-student relations.” She wants to surround herself with mentors that will treat her as a “learner” and “allow for opportunities for her to grow into a leader.” She seemed to want to develop close relationships with her professors. She then said that she sees herself as being a “northeast kid.” When pressed to explain what she meant, Maya responded that she likes to be “laid back and take things in stride” and yet be “structured and focused” at the same time. She clarified things further by stating that, having grown up in Florida, she realizes that she loves the anticipation and newness that comes with the changing of the seasons. With a touch of humor, she also added that she prefers autumn and winter fashion.

Maya said that her parents would like her to go to a college with a decent Jewish population and coupled with her attending a Jewish Day School with a Judaic Studies program, our conversation led to her beliefs and what Judaism meant to her. She had a thoughtful and open way of thinking on this topic. She said that she considered herself more spiritual than religious and that though her Jewish background is dear to her and essential in who she is, yet she is open to being challenged and welcomes debate and discourse on such matters.

Maya mentioned a few other things during our conversation. She volunteers at a local firehouse as an Emergency Medical Technician, which required some 200 hours of extensive training. Sitting in that firehouse surrounded by people much older and very different from her on the weekends doesn't seem to bother her one bit. She rather seemed quite positive about her experience there. Interestingly, she knew all about the TEMS program already. Also Maya talked about her strong desire to explore and experience the international community. She has already been to Israel with her high school and expressed her hope in studying abroad while an undergrad. When another Tufts alum came by, I asked Maya if she had any questions for her and Maya asked her about the “female” bonding at Tufts and a sense of sisterhood there. They had a nice short conversation on that topic.

Overall, I would have to say that Maya is an excellent candidate for Tufts and I would highly recommend her based on the hour or so we spent together. She appeared thoughtful, enthusiastic about life and learning, and very well-rounded. She had confidence, was friendly and mature.

## **Critique of Report 7**

**Overall:** A well written report

The report nicely blends specific information and impressions of the candidate as well as shedding light on different aspects of Maya's personality. It is clear the interviewer was able to sustain the conversation through asking follow-up questions. The interviewer is able to introduce the reader to Maya the person through telling about not only what Maya said but how she said what she said. This is achieved through comments such as "with a touch of humor" and "she rather seemed quite positive about her experience."

### **Most helpful sections of the report:**

The first paragraph is helpful because it paints a picture of Maya; it gives you some general information about her personality that will help the reader put Maya's essays and activities into context. The second paragraph is helpful because the impressions of Maya's faith and how she thinks about religion and spirituality can provide insight into the type of student Maya is- thoughtful and open.

### **Suggestions for improving the report:**

The report covers a few areas well, so it is likely that the interviewer did not report everything. A brief sentence or two about Maya's academic interests or career plans and how they originated would be appropriate.

## Report 8

I had the pleasure of meeting with Tracey for her interview for Tufts. She is a pleasant, honest and hard working person who has many interests and is very involved in the activities in which she participates. She is one of the few students who doesn't have a laundry list of activities that they are peripherally involved in so that it will look good on the college application. Nor does she feel that she needs to defend this lack of over-activity. She prides herself on being independent and open to new and different people and she is quite aware of her strengths and weaknesses.

Academically she is accomplished as she is taking 6 courses including many Advanced Placement courses. These courses are in different areas rather than concentrated in one showing her broad interests and academic talent. She has not shied away from difficult courses as reflected in her taking of AP physics without having taken Calculus.

Aside from academics, Tracey is completely involved in crew training from September through June nearly everyday. Though the actually rowing occurs only in the fall and spring, the team trains almost daily in the off season, keeping quite busy. She is very interested in continuing the rowing at Tufts. Her other main interest is her art. She finds this to be her emotional outlet. Much of her work is in 3 dimensional mediums like metal work, sculpture and clay. She told me that she had sent a small portfolio of some of her work along with her application.

Tracey has used her summers to their full capacity both working and traveling to give her broad experiences. She has traveled extensively with People to People in Australia and Japan as well as with her parents to many European countries. She has also spent the last five summers working as a counselor at summer camp.

Her one concern about her application is that she does not do well on standardized tests and that her SAT's are a poor reflection of her actual abilities.

I found her to be a well rounded student-artist-athlete who would fit into Tufts with no problem.

## **Critique of Report 8**

**Overall:** A not very helpful report

This report contains very little information that would not be found in the application. The student's activities and courses are easily found on the Common Application and Secondary School report, respectively. Though we encourage interviewers to make editorial comments about the student, many of the comments in this particular report do not offer anything new or any impressions of who the student is as a person. Evaluations of the academic program should be left for the admissions reader.

### **Most helpful section of the report:**

The comments in the first paragraph about Tracey's feelings regarding her fewer but deeper approach to extracurricular activities are helpful. This will show the reader that she is purposeful in how she spends her time and that is why there are fewer activities than some.

### **Suggestions for improving the report:**

Tracey's art is something that could potentially help her stand out as an applicant. Information about her artistic inspirations, when she began sculpting, or who her artistic mentors are would provide more depth. The reader will be aware of Tracey's summer activities. What the reader won't know is what she experienced while traveling, what she learned or what kind of influence the trip has had on her life. Elaborating on one or two interests or experiences will be more beneficial to the reader than a list of activities.

## Report 9

Julia sets the bar pretty darn high for the rest of the '06 candidate pool. She brings an extremely impressive package to the table, and yet the most impressive thing about this candidate is her unassuming demeanor and her refreshing outlook on life and school and the world around.

Get this: she's a high school senior who actually spends time marveling at the fact that she attends a Quaker school that is somehow populated by only four Quaker teachers and two Quaker students. A graduating class of 95, with just a single Quaker among them, and yet administrators still preach and practice Quaker principles, and students are required to attend a weekly Quaker meeting. It's something to think about, Julia allows. And she clearly has. In fact, she's come to regard the Quaker meetings as a highlight of her week.

There's no irony here, to a young woman like Julia. She doesn't think of herself as a Quaker, but she's grabbed on to some of the Quaker principles like a lifeline. "A lot of kids hate it," she says of the 45-minute assembly in which students are required to sit in silent contemplation and reflection, and then encouraged to speak out on anything of interest or moment. "I tell my friends outside the school about it, and they think you can just read, or do your homework, or listen to your iPod, but they're really strict about that. You really have to sit and think, and I find myself looking forward to it. It's one of my favorite things about the school."

One of the things Julia thinks about, in these moments of quiet reflection and in others of her own making, is what it means to believe in something bigger than herself, what it means to have faith, what it means to be a religious person. She wrote about it in her personal essay on the Common Application, and she elaborated on it in our visit. The child of a Jewish mother and a Greek Orthodox father, Julia grew up with a toe in several different cultures (she's made several visits to the Czech Republic to visit her mother's side of the family), and developed her own ideas on faith and religion. She wasn't raised to believe any one thing. Her faith, she says, takes root in family and friends and honesty and integrity and all those good things. She'd love it if everyone could just pay attention to each other, and to the common ground we all share, instead of focusing on our differences and setting ourselves apart. Embracing faith, she maintains, is about being the best person she can be, about setting goals and rising to meet them.

Her success in this area is evident on the tennis court, and Julia has been in close touch with the Women's Tennis coach at Tufts, who appears very much interested in adding Julia to her team. No wonder. This is a kid who sees what she wants and reaches for it. She's put herself through all the usual, high-achieving high school paces (volunteering, tutoring, band, club activities), but she's always made time for tennis. It's front and center, year-round. She's coached by her dad, a former professional player, and her eyes light up when I ask her if he's like Earl Woods (Tiger's dad) or Richard Williams (Venus's dad) or other famous parent-coaches who have been variously overbearing in guiding their children's careers.

To be fair, Julia gets some of her competitive streak from her mother, who has lately competed in marathons and triathlons and has reinforced for Julia what it takes to achieve a goal, but the abiding influence in her athletic career has been her father.

“It’s been the best thing for me to have my dad as my coach,” Julia says. “He knows me inside-out, he knows what it’s like to compete, he knows what it’s like to be a kid. It’s been great for our relationship, and great for my tennis.”

Julia’s got a 15-year-old sister who won’t go near a tennis court, but her father makes quality time for both daughters. “It’s not like we compete for his attention or anything like that,” Julia says. “He spends time with me doing stuff that doesn’t have anything to do with tennis, and he spends time with my sister doing whatever she’s interested in.”

Already, Julia’s tennis racket has taken her all over the world. (Her favorite place to play? Monte Carlo.) And these days she’s not sure where it might take her after college. She won’t rule out the idea of seeing what life is like on the professional tour (yes, she’s that good!), but she’s also thinking she’d like to be a veterinarian, or maybe a doctor. Tennis doesn't define her, she says. It's just something she loves, something she's good at, and at a school like Tufts she's hoping to discover and nurture whatever it is that will define her going forward.

This is a tremendous candidate. Julia’s a blue-chip tennis player, a focused and determined student, an engaged and engaging young woman who seems to move about with a quiet confidence that would certainly light her career on the Hill and enrich our campus community. She has my highest recommendation.

## **Critique of Report 9**

**Overall:** A superior report

This report combines editorial comments on the discussion with nice anecdotes that really make Julia come alive. Certainly we will know that she attends a Quaker school, but the report lets the reader know what it truly means for Julia to be part of her school community and how she has embraced the traditions with maturity and grace. Julia's application will provide a great deal of information about tennis, but maybe not the role tennis has played in Julia's relationship with her father. The report is long but it provides the reader with a truly personal account of this young woman that accurately reflects the "outstanding" rating.

### **Most helpful section of the report:**

Though the entire report has value, the most helpful sections are the editorial comments throughout but particularly in the opening and closing. These comments aid the reader in getting to know Julia's character.

### **Suggestions for improving the report:**

The report runs long, but this is forgivable because none of the information feels superfluous.

## Report 10

Hannah is a reserved young woman who can be very articulate when she has something to say. Clearly, the mere idea of participating in this interview unnerves her, but it is easy to be impressed with her determination to overcome a natural shyness and do well.

Hannah becomes most animated when the conversation steers to topics which allow her to share her creativity. She brought along a portfolio of photos of her wonderful ceramic pottery and her enthusiasm for the work can be contagious.

But what most excites Hannah about her artwork is her ceramics instructor. Hannah is amazed at how someone she describes as tiny in stature can still fill a room with her gregarious personality. By her own admission, Hannah fits the former description and she clearly admires the latter qualities which do not come naturally to her. Once again, Hannah's determination to develop some of those characteristics is quite impressive.

Hannah has visited her brother (a current Tufts senior) each of the last three years and is very comfortable with what Tufts has to offer. She is most attracted to the feeling of a real campus while having access to the cultural amenities of Boston. Hannah feels that an appreciation of art is lacking in Las Vegas (which is an uninformed observation, I might add, but I suppose what teenager thinks their home is complete?) and is very excited about the prospect of having access to the many museums and galleries of the Boston area. One of Hannah's dreams is to one day run such an institution of her own.

Hannah is intrigued with the MFA program but seems to be more interested in exploring her options as a part of a liberal arts program. Just as she found a passion for ceramic pottery, she recognizes that there may be other paths which might be fulfilling for her and would like to explore them.

Overall, Hannah is a thoughtful but soft-spoken young woman. She certainly isn't the most impressive potential student you'd meet and it is doubtful that she will make some extraordinary contribution to the fabric of the student body. However, Hannah would be a solid addition to the campus and would do well at Tufts.

## **Critique of Report 10**

**Overall:** A good report that adds depth and context to the student's interests

The report writer concentrates on one aspect of the applicant- Hannah's interest in art. There are general impressions of Hannah at the beginning and at the end of report but the majority of the rest of the report helps the reader understand just how enthusiastic Hannah is about her art and where it may take her in the future. The fact that very little other than art is included in the report reveals a great deal about the role art plays in her life. This can be helpful when the application reader is attempting to determine the student's dedication to different activities.

### **Most helpful section of the report:**

The most helpful element of the report is how the interviewer describes Hannah as shy and reserved but implies she is self-aware when discussing why Hannah likes her art teacher so much. This is a trait that would likely not have a place in the application itself. The initial description of Hannah also enhances the contrast when the enthusiasm pours out when speaking about her art.

### **Suggestions for improving the report:**

The report could be improved by included by including a short section relating to Hannah's thoughts on her high school academic work; for example something about her choice of classes or a self assessment of her ability to write. The interviewer also could have asked Hannah about what artists have most influences her work or what artist she most admires.