

7 Movies That Hit Harder Than Any College Brochure Ever Will



Engineering with Empathy



When Parents' Standards Become Children's Burdens



The LNAT 101



Go To College, Get A Job: Really?



MATLAB: A Foundation for Future Scientists and Engineers



Beyond the Classroom: How Passion Projects Shape Your Future



Understanding Restrictive & Single-Choice Early Action at Top U.S. Universities



Editor's Note



If you think your students are choosing between doctor, lawyer, or engineer, think again. The next 5–10 years will witness a professional shake-up powered by five massive forces: an ageing population, AI and robotics, biotechnology, climate change, and the exploration of space and ocean. Careers are being deleted and downloaded simultaneously.

Ageing populations mean fewer clerks shuffling papers in hospitals, but more “longevity counselors” advising seniors on health and housing. Robots may spoon-feed, but humans will still need to design the spoons. AI and robotics are steamrolling routine jobs. Data entry clerks? Out. Telemarketers? Disconnected. Truck drivers? On autopilot. But new gigs are booting up—AI ethics auditors, robot whisperers (a.k.a. maintenance engineers), and human–AI interaction designers. The future résumé may look like it was co-written by a coder and a philosopher. Biotechnology is editing the rules of life itself. Goodbye repetitive lab technicians; hello CRISPR specialists, biofabrication designers, and microbiome engineers. “Cut and paste” will apply not to documents, but to genes. Climate change is retiring coal miners but recruiting carbon capture analysts, renewable energy engineers, and urban planners who design cities that don’t drown. In this economy, green really is the new gold. And yes, space and ocean exploration are no longer science fiction electives. Asteroid mining engineers, space habitat architects, and extraterrestrial lawyers are all on the horizon. (Someone has to settle disputes over Martian real estate!)

For educators, the punchline is serious: we cannot train students for yesterday’s careers. The winning skillset is adaptability, interdisciplinary thinking, and a dash of courage. In short, teach them how to surf the waves of disruption—whether those waves roll in from Silicon Valley, the South China Sea, or Saturn’s rings.

Neeraj Mandhana
Founder & Editor-in-Chief
Aiiyo

Featured Content

7 Movies That Hit Harder Than Any College Brochure Ever Will

Watch Before You Apply!

By Ravisha Maheshwari

5

Engineering with Empathy

How Rochester's Hajim School of Engineering Shapes Student-Centered Innovators

By Brendan Bond

7

Industry Leader Spotlight

Brendon Bond

10

MATLAB: A Foundation for Future Scientists and Engineers

Where Numbers, Logic, and Creativity Come Together

By Praneel Panchigar

11

When Parents' Standards Become Children's Burdens

How Unspoken Expectations Quietly Shape Young Lives

By Soumya Ramaswamy

14

Legends of Admissions

By Sarah Hales

16

Beyond the Classroom: How Passion Projects Shape Your Future

How Students at We-Learn Are Combining Subjects, Hobbies, and Creativity to Build Projects That Stand Out

By Neha Pandit

18

The LNAT 101

Everything You Wanted to Ask but Were Too Afraid to about the LNAT

By Chirag Arya

20

How To Go Beyond "I'm Interested In It" in the Why That Major Essay

Bhupender Bhardwaj

22

Understanding Restrictive & Single-Choice Early Action at Top U.S. Universities

Your Guide to How Early Application Limits Shape College Strategy

By Devesh Lathi

24

School Counsellor of the Month

Jini Varghese

27

Aiyyo's Ranking of the Month

28

Go To College, Get A Job: Really?

When AI Moves the Career Goalposts: A Review of the Latest Research from Burning Glass Institute, USA

By Shrinidhi Rao

31



TALK THE TALK

INDIA'S FIRST PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST BY AIYYO

Aiiyo T3 is a free national public speaking competition for Indian high schoolers (Grades 9 to 12). Submit a 1-minute video, get shortlisted, and join a live Zoom round with a surprise topic. Win a **fully funded Oxford Summer Program** or earn national recognition; this is your stage to speak up, stand out, and be heard.

Registration Window:

August 1 – December 1, 2025

Final Results:

January 26, 2026

Scan to Register



7 MOVIES THAT HIT HARDER THAN ANY COLLEGE BROCHURE EVER WILL

Watch Before You Apply!

By
Ravisha Maheshwari
Senior Editor
Aiiyo



**Ravisha
Maheshwari**

The college admissions journey is often framed in terms of GPAs, SAT scores, personal statements, and career choices, but behind the numbers lies a complex emotional, psychological, and social landscape. For high school students under immense academic pressure, for parents trying to support without smothering, and for counselors working to guide across a spectrum of abilities and ambitions, the right films can provide powerful perspective. The following seven Bollywood and Hollywood movies are not just cinematic masterpieces; they are educational and emotional tools that confront ambition, failure, creativity, inequality, and mental health with unflinching honesty.

1. Admission (2013)

Set inside Princeton's admissions office, Admission follows an officer who questions the strict rubrics used to evaluate applicants. It reveals the reality of holistic admissions, institutional priorities, yield protection, and non-traditional applicant profiles. The film is particularly useful for parents and counselors who may over-rely on formulas or prestige. It reframes what "qualified" means, reminding viewers that personal stories and context often matter more than test scores or school branding.

2. Dead Poets Society (1989)

Set in a rigid preparatory school, this film showcases a teacher challenging his students to think independently through literature and philosophy. For students boxed into narrow definitions of success, it emphasizes the value of creativity and introspection. For parents, it is a reminder that over-structuring a child's future can suppress their voice. It advocates for alternative intellectual paths and validates the liberal arts in an environment that often ignores them.

3. Chhichhore (2019)

Rooted in the JEE-driven culture, this story follows a father recounting his own college failures to his son after a suicide attempt. It reframes failure as a crucial part of growth and underscores the long-term damage caused by defining success through entrance exams. For students conditioned to believe one exam defines their life, this film is both therapeutic and practical. It also offers parents a sharp reminder to detach love from performance.

4. 3 Idiots (2009)

This film dismantles the Indian engineering dream by showing how academic obsession, ranking anxiety, and rigid teaching lead to breakdowns rather than breakthroughs. It challenges the validity of CGPA-centric learning and shows how passion-led education is not only more meaningful but often more successful. It speaks directly to Indian students and families navigating IIT prep culture, coaching pressure, and the belief that job security equals happiness.

5. Taare Zameen Par (2007)

Focusing on an 8-year-old with undiagnosed dyslexia, this film exposes how schools often misinterpret learning differences as laziness or defiance. It urges educators and families to look beyond standard assessments and recognize neurodivergence early. It is essential viewing for parents of students who may be “underperforming” by conventional metrics, and for counselors advocating for inclusive education plans and multi-intelligence evaluations.

6. Legally Blonde (2001)

Elle Woods’ journey to Harvard Law shatters stereotypes about who belongs in elite academic spaces. Without changing herself to fit in, she thrives by using her emotional intelligence, creativity, and tenacity. The film is critical for students who feel out of place due to interests or backgrounds not traditionally validated by admissions officers. It’s also a gentle prod to parents and counselors to stop underestimating non-linear trajectories and unconventional strengths.

7. Nil Battey Sannata (2015)

This film tackles class-based education gaps as a housemaid enrolls in school to inspire her daughter. It offers a grounded, sharp look at first-generation student struggles, economic mobility through education, and how internalized inferiority can derail ambition. It’s essential for understanding what equity really means beyond scholarships or quota seats. For parents and counselors working with students from underserved backgrounds, it clarifies the difference between access and belief.

Conclusion

These films are not academic resources but emotional blueprints for anyone tangled in the pressures of college preparation. Each story offers a lens into real-world struggles that application forms and school brochures often sanitize: learning disabilities, socioeconomic barriers, institutional biases, or mental health breakdowns. Together, they remind us that higher education is not just about getting in, it’s about staying whole while you do.

ENGINEERING WITH EMPATHY

How Rochester's Hajim School of Engineering Shapes Student-Centered Innovators

By

Brendan Bond

Admissions Associate Director, International Admissions
University of Rochester



Brendan Bond

It was 1985 when Donna Strickland '89 (PhD) and her doctoral research supervisor, Gérard Mourou, invented chirped pulse amplification in the field of laser energetics and then 2018 when the pair won the Nobel Prize in Physics for their discoveries. Strickland became the third woman ever to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics, after Marie Curie in 1903 and Maria Goeppert Mayer in 1963. And while this is certainly notable company for the URochester alum to be included with, what is more significant is the time between their discovery and the award of the Nobel Prize, and while there are often delays in research activity, discovery and practical application, the further delay between woman winners in Physics is noteworthy.

Today, faculty and student researchers at the University of Rochester's Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Science, whose Institute of Optics and Laboratory of Laser Energetics helped to drive Strickland's work in optical engineering, are no longer waiting decades for recognition and impact from their work.

Two faculty members, Professor Ehsan Hoque in computer science and Professor Benjamin Castaneda in biomedical engineering, illustrate how Hajim nurtures students not only as engineers, but also as empathetic problem-solvers committed to practical solutions that transform lives.

Professor Hoque's work sits at the intersection of computer science, psychology, and communication. Unlike research in mainstream artificial intelligence, which prioritizes performance and speed, his research is guided by a radical question, "can technology care?" From his early work developing MACH and later to ROCspeak, both AI systems used to coach users on social and emotional skills, to SOPHIE, a virtual patient that trains medical students in difficult conversations.

At Rochester, Hoque found the perfect ecosystem for this interdisciplinary approach to engineering. The Hajim School's openness to collaboration enabled him to partner with physicians, psychologists, and ethicists, bringing systems out of the lab and into real-world trials. For undergraduates, this means that their classroom projects often evolve into national-scale studies that shape education, healthcare, and therapy.

When mentoring, Hoque urges students to ask not only "Can we build this?" but also "Who does this help?" and "How do we know it works?" Rochester undergraduates, he says, stand out for their ability to combine technical depth with emotional maturity, balancing rigorous engineering with a drive to make lives better.

Professor Castaneda's journey is equally inspiring. Trained as an electrical engineer surrounded by a family of physicians in Peru, he chose not to practice medicine but to improve it. His PhD at Rochester introduced him to medical imaging, where he saw the power of ultrasound not only as a diagnostic tool, but as a lifeline for underserved populations.

When he returned to Peru, Castaneda traveled across rural regions to ask a simple question: “What do people need most?” He quickly discovered that the greatest barrier was not equipment, but the absence of trained specialists. His response was characteristically inventive: develop low-cost, rugged ultrasound systems paired with simplified training protocols, enabling even non-specialists in remote villages to provide life-saving imaging.

At the University Rochester, Castaneda now builds on this work by integrating artificial intelligence, engineering, and remote training tools into portable ultrasound devices. The vision is bold: a future where point-of-care ultrasound is as accessible as a stethoscope.

Castaneda’s lab is a hub of hands-on, mission-driven research and what excites him most is how undergraduates bring fresh energy and urgency to global health challenges. As he notes, “they can see their work make a difference almost immediately.”

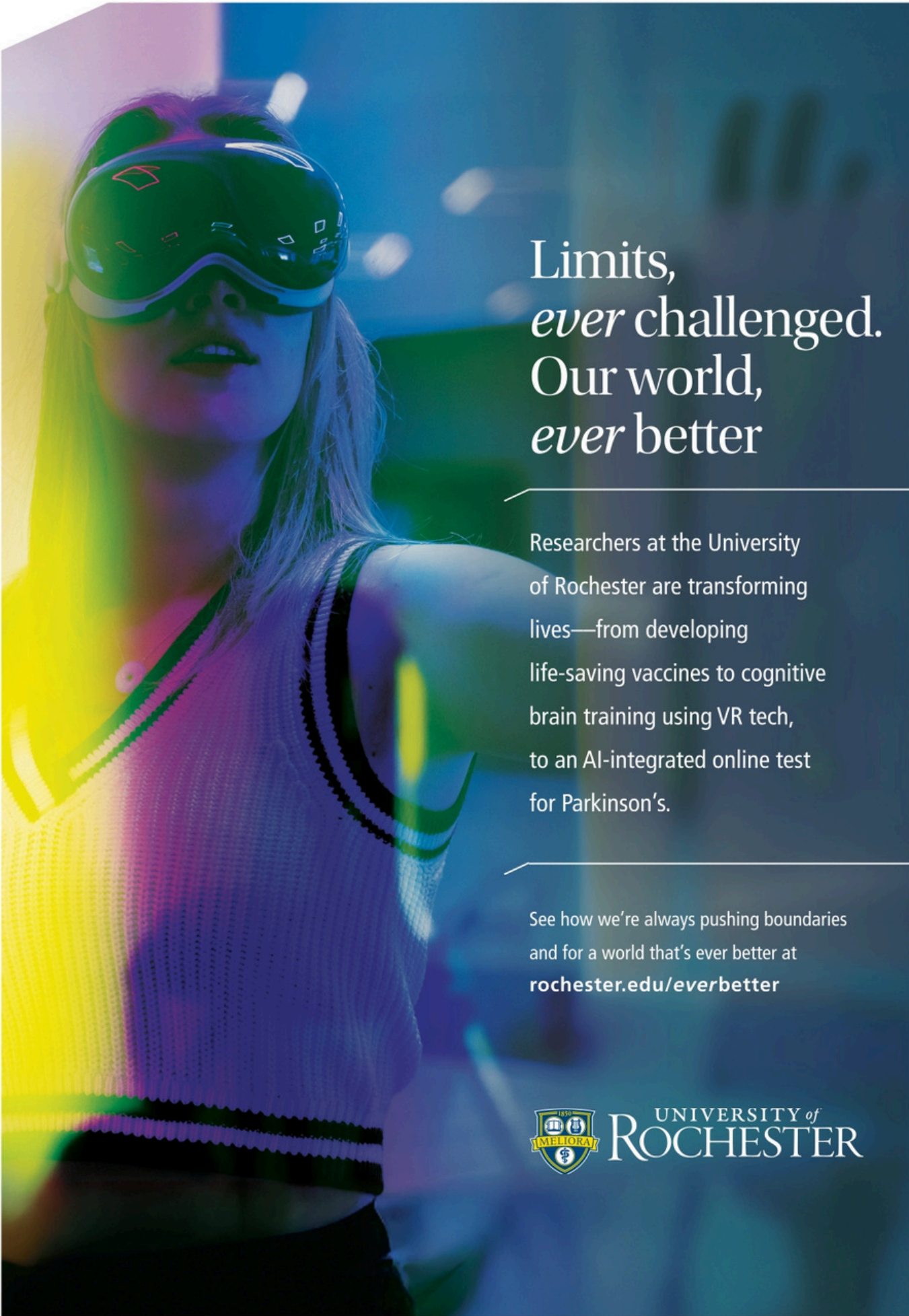
When families think about engineering education abroad, they often focus on rankings, research output, or job placements. Yet the Hajim School of Engineering at the University of Rochester offers something rarer and arguably more valuable: a culture of student-centered learning and innovation that blends technical excellence with human impact.

Hajim is not just training coders; it is shaping the next generation of human-centered innovators who can lead in fields where empathy and engineering converge.

What unites Hoque and Castaneda is not just their research, but the environment that enables it. Both point to URochester’s collaborative culture, where engineering students are encouraged to work alongside medical researchers, psychologists, economists, and educators. Hajim offers undergraduates pathways to engage in cross-disciplinary projects, supported by funding, workshops, and mentorship networks.

This means that a student studying electrical engineering might find themselves working on healthcare delivery in rural areas, while a computer science major could be mapping language in the brain with linguists in a neuroscience MRI lab. The emphasis is always on impact-driven innovation, not research for its own sake.

Hoque captures this spirit best: “The best technology isn’t the smartest — it’s the most useful.”



Limits, *ever* challenged. Our world, *ever* better

Researchers at the University of Rochester are transforming lives—from developing life-saving vaccines to cognitive brain training using VR tech, to an AI-integrated online test for Parkinson's.

See how we're always pushing boundaries and for a world that's ever better at rochester.edu/everbetter



UNIVERSITY of
ROCHESTER



Industry Leader SPOTLIGHT



Brendon Bond

**Admissions Associate Director, International Admissions
University of Rochester**

In this section, Aiiyo brings you insights from counseling trailblazers who have made a significant impact with their work. Through candid interviews, we explore their journeys, passions, and personal philosophies. This month, we sit down with Brendon Bond, Admissions Associate Director, International Admissions University of Rochester, to uncover what drives his success, how he balances the demands of work and life, and the mantra that keeps him moving forward.

What was your college degree?

BA English/Economics at McGill University & MPhil Anglo-Irish Literature from Trinity College, University of Dublin

Your Favorite Book

That They May Face the Rising Sun by John McGahern

Your Comfort Food

Pizza

A School/College you really enjoyed visiting

Cambridge

What's on top of your bucket list?

Skiing in Japan

If you could give one piece of advice to your high school self, what would it be?

Don't worry about what others think

One thing you would most like to change about the world

Global Warming

What inspired you to do what you do?

Stay connected to the international education experience

A secret to balancing work & life

Still working that out

Your Life Mantra

Only worry about what you can control

MATLAB: A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS

Where Numbers, Logic, and Creativity Come Together

By
Praneel Panchigar
MS, Statistics and Data Analytics Graduate
Washington University in St. Louis



**Praneel
Panchigar**

MATLAB, an acronym for Matrix Laboratory, is a high-level programming environment developed by MathWorks. It is designed specifically for mathematical modeling, numerical computation, data analysis, and algorithm development. Built around the concept of matrix manipulation, MATLAB treats even scalar variables as 1×1 matrices, making it exceptionally powerful for handling linear algebra operations. Over the years, MATLAB has become a standard tool in academia, research, and industry due to its wide range of built-in functions and specialized toolboxes for fields such as signal processing, control systems, machine learning, image processing, and computational finance.

Professionals and students in engineering, science, and mathematics commonly rely on MATLAB for its efficiency in solving complex problems through simulation and visualization. Electrical and mechanical engineers use it to model and test control systems. Physicists apply it to simulate dynamic systems and solve differential equations. Financial analysts implement MATLAB for developing predictive models and analyzing market trends. Its applicability extends across disciplines, making it a valuable skill for students pursuing careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields.

For school students, learning MATLAB early offers significant educational and practical advantages. It introduces them to computational thinking—an essential skill in the digital age—by teaching them to deconstruct problems logically and implement algorithmic solutions. MATLAB also serves as an excellent reinforcement tool for mathematical concepts taught in school. When students visualize functions, manipulate matrices, and graph equations using MATLAB, they gain a more intuitive and applied understanding of these topics. Additionally, since MATLAB shares concepts with other programming languages, early exposure provides a smooth transition to languages like Python or C++ that students may encounter later.

The importance of MATLAB becomes even more pronounced in college, particularly in technical disciplines. Many universities incorporate MATLAB into their engineering and science curricula, using it in laboratory courses, assignments, and research. Students use MATLAB to simulate dynamic systems using tools like Simulink, a graphical programming environment integrated with MATLAB. It is commonly employed for signal and image processing, where students analyze and transform real-world data. Furthermore, MATLAB is frequently used in solving numerical problems, performing statistical analysis, and visualizing multi-dimensional datasets. The ability to write clean, modular code using scripts and functions prepares students for the coding standards expected in academic and industry research environments.

Learning MATLAB does not require purchasing expensive software or enrolling in paid courses. There are numerous free and accessible resources available online for students who wish to begin their learning journey. Platforms such as Udemy regularly offer free or low-cost MATLAB courses aimed at beginners. These courses often include video lectures, hands-on exercises, quizzes, and small projects that reinforce key concepts and encourage active learning. Searching for terms like “MATLAB for Beginners” on Udemy can yield multiple introductory courses that walk students through the basics of the programming environment.

Moreover, the official MathWorks website provides valuable free content, including the highly recommended MATLAB Onramp course. This is an interactive, self-paced tutorial designed by the creators of MATLAB to help learners understand core concepts and syntax through real-time coding exercises. In addition, students can access MATLAB Online, a web-based version of the software that does not require installation and offers a 30-day free trial. Some schools may also have institutional licenses that provide students with free access to MATLAB and its toolboxes.

Online platforms such as YouTube also serve as a rich repository of MATLAB tutorials. Channels dedicated to MATLAB education offer video walkthroughs of projects and concept explanations that cater to visual learners. These resources enable motivated students to independently gain a working knowledge of MATLAB, setting them up for future academic and professional success.

In conclusion, MATLAB is a critical skill for students aspiring to enter technical and scientific fields. Its role in education and industry cannot be overstated, and early familiarity with the platform enhances a student's problem-solving abilities, mathematical intuition, and readiness for college-level coursework. With numerous free online learning options available, students can take the initiative to learn MATLAB and gain a substantial head start in their academic careers.



AIYYO JOB SEARCH



If you're an experienced professional in the high school, edtech, or college admissions sector, and you're seeking better pay, meaningful student-focused work, a collaborative team, and the work-life balance you deserve, we're here to help.

At Aiiyo, we specialize in placing talented education professionals in roles where they can thrive, grow, and make real impact. Whether you're dreaming of a leadership role, a more values-aligned team, or just a healthier commute, we'll help you find your fit.

Ready?
Click here to begin.

APPLY NOW



SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY



15,000+
UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS

300+ CLUBS &
ORGANIZATIONS

CONSISTENTLY RANKED IN THE
TOP 10 STUDY
ABROAD
PROGRAMS
U.S. News & World Report

93%
OF RECENT GRADUATES
are employed or enter graduate school, service
programs or the military within six months of
graduation (based on 2022 graduating class).

14:1 STUDENT TO
FACULTY RATIO

#1 Graduate School for Public Affairs
2024 U.S. News & World Report. The
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public
Affairs is also home to undergraduate
social sciences majors.

#1 Best Photojournalism
2023 College Factual

#1 Best Elementary Special Education
2023 College Factual

#3 Best Music Management
2023 College Factual

#4 Best Public Relations and Advertising
2023 College Factual

#6 Best Design and Applied Arts
2023 College Factual

#8 Best Information Science
2023 College Factual

#10 Best Food and Nutrition
2023 College Factual

#11 Best Entrepreneurial Studies
2023 College Factual

#30 Most Innovative Schools
2023 U.S. News & World Report

Applying for Admission

Syracuse University uses the Common Application and Coalition Application, powered by Scoir. You'll apply directly to one of the University's schools and colleges or to a dual/combined program within two colleges.

Application Deadlines*

- > **Early Decision:** November 15
- > **Early Decision II:** January 5
- > **Regular Decision:** January 5
- > **Spring Admission (first-year or transfer):** November 15
- > **Transfer Admission (fall):** July 1

*These are the priority deadlines; however, applications will continue to be accepted on a space-available basis.

Your application is evaluated based on:

- > Academic performance and standardized test scores (if applicable)*
- > Personal essay
- > Recommendations
- > Audition or portfolio (for select programs)

*SAT/ACT scores are not required for students applying for Fall 2024 or Spring 2025 admission.

For more information, visit syracuse.edu/admissions/apply.



WHEN PARENTS' STANDARDS BECOME CHILDREN'S BURDENS

How Unspoken Expectations Quietly Shape Young Lives

By
Soumya Ramaswamy
Parenting & Teen Coach & Founder
Shaping Futures



**Soumya
Ramaswamy**

In countless homes, children grow up under the shadow of their parents' achievements. If the father went to IIT, it feels only natural that the child must aim for the same. If the mother is a doctor, the unspoken rule is clear: medicine is the only worthy path. These expectations are rarely questioned, because love, pride, and family honour are tangled tightly with them. But for the child, they often become an invisible weight carried in silence.

The Silent Contract of Expectation

Children are not always told directly, "You must do this." Instead, the pressure seeps in quietly. It shows up in a raised eyebrow over a test score, a comparison with a cousin who "did better," or a casual remark like, "When I was your age, I managed it without help." Over time, these moments add up, leaving children with an unspoken burden. As one teenager put it, **"It feels like I signed a deal I never agreed to — living their dream so they can hold on to their pride."**

The burden here isn't just about academics. It's about identity. The child feels they are not free to ask, "What do I want?" because their future is already scripted. An unspoken expectation can sometimes weigh heavily than spoken words.

The Cost of Carrying Legacy

When love and approval seem conditional on living up to parental standards, children begin to link self-worth to achievement. Some push themselves to exhaustion, fearing disappointment. Others rebel, feeling suffocated by a future that doesn't feel like their own.

Anxiety, burnout, or withdrawal often follow. A 17-year-old shared, **"Every time I think of choosing differently, I feel guilty, like I'm betraying my parents. But every time I push myself to study for IIT, I feel like I'm betraying myself."** In the race to uphold family pride, children often lose their own voice.

Why Parents Push So Hard

For many parents, the push comes from love and lived experience. They know the doors that an IIT degree or a medical career opened for them, and they want their children to have the same security. They may also fear societal judgment, the whispers of relatives asking why the child "didn't make it."

But what worked as a path to success twenty or thirty years ago may not align with the world today, nor with the child's unique talents. True success now is multidimensional — it comes from aligning passion with skill, not from following a legacy by default.

Parents want to gift their children success, but sometimes the gift comes wrapped in chains.

Healing & Rebuilding: From Pressure to Partnership

The good news is that these cycles can be healed. Here are ways parents can rebuild trust and connection:

- **Acknowledge Expectations Openly:** Instead of letting them linger as guilt, parents can say, “Yes, we hoped for this path, but we also want to hear what feels right for you.” Naming the pressure helps release it.
- **Encourage Exploration:** Invite teens to explore multiple careers, passions, and skills. Let them shadow professionals, experiment, and learn what excites them.
- **Celebrate Effort, Not Just Results:** Applaud persistence, creativity, and resilience. This helps children feel valued for who they are, not just what they achieve.
- **Seek Safe Spaces:** Counselling, coaching, or mentorship can offer a neutral environment where children feel free to share their fears without the burden of family judgment.

As psychologist Dr. Shefali Tsabary reminds us, “When parents project their unfulfilled dreams onto children, the child loses the freedom to discover their own.” The real healing begins when parents see their child not as an extension of themselves, but as a whole person with their own dreams. Healing starts when parents trade control for connection.

Towards a New Legacy

What if true legacy wasn’t measured in institutions, ranks, or titles — but in the freedom and confidence children carry into their future? Imagine a world where children could say, “My parents gave me the courage to choose my own path,” instead of, “I had no choice.” Parents who dare to release control often find their children soar higher than they imagined, not as replicas, but as originals.

Raise children, not photocopies. A legacy of freedom is the greatest pride a parent can give.

A NEWSLETTER FOR

INDIA’S COUNSELING COMMUNITY

DISCOVER THE LATEST IN THE WORLD OF CAREER GUIDANCE AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS. SUBSCRIBE TO OUR FREE NEWSLETTER. DELIVERED MONTHLY, STRAIGHT TO YOUR INBOX AND YOUR WHATSAPP.



Scan to subscribe



LEGENDS OF ADMISSIONS



Sarah Hales

Senior Regional Manager, S.
Asia and MENA
Admissions Office at
University of Cambridge

Sarah Hales brings energy, humor, and a love of adventure to her role in admissions. From being swept into a Jordanian wedding to answering bold questions like "Why shouldn't I come to Cambridge?", she values authenticity and curiosity in every interaction. A seasoned traveler who sees admissions as more than grades, she focuses on matching students' passions with the right course. Whether joking about her "rock icon" dreams or dreaming of life as a travel agent, she embodies Cambridge's spirit: nurturing, sophisticated, and unexpectedly fun.

1. An Unforgettable Travel Memory.

I was once staying at a hotel in Jordan and taking the lift up to my floor after an evening event. A couple of beautifully dressed people got into the lift and it stopped at the mezzanine/event floor where there was a large ballroom. As the doors opened onto this floor, immediately outside of the lift was a large wedding party. I was quickly ushered out of the lift, my male work colleague was hoisted onto the shoulders of some of the wedding party and we were both whisked into the wedding celebrations. It was a fantastic evening and not something I will forget in a hurry!

2. Most unexpected question a student has ever asked you.

I am not sure about unexpected, but the best question a student has ever asked me was 'Why shouldn't I come to Cambridge?' He had clearly thought out all the reasons that he was a good fit but also wanted a very clear understanding of some of the challenges he may face. It showed that he was really considering all of the aspects of his future education.

3. If you weren't in admissions, what job would you secretly love to have?

I love travel! So this role is perfect for me as I get to travel so much with my job. I think perhaps if I wasn't doing this, I would still be planning trips, just maybe for other people as a travel agent. I am also a frustrated rock icon – but if you had ever heard my singing you would realise that I would never succeed in that field!

4. What's a totally random skill you've picked up because of your job?

I can probably talk with confidence about any airport departure lounge in the World! If you ever need to know who has the best airside shopping or which airports have the best food courts, I am your girl.

5. What's one thing you wish students knew about admissions, that they often don't?

It's not just grades – even at Cambridge. There is a lot that we look at in an application and the thing we look most closely at is the 'fit' for the student against the course they have chosen to study. This includes everything from the grades and supercurricular activity to their preferred style of learning and specific areas of interest. Often if we 'reject' a student, it isn't because they aren't bright enough, it is often because we recognise that their style of learning or area of passion do not align with ours.

6. If your college were a person, how would you describe their personality in three words?

Nurturing, sophisticated but unexpectedly fun.

7. What's the most oddly specific club or organization on campus?

We have over 500 clubs and societies from a 3D printing society to an Investment Banking group. However, the ones I would join would be either the Bubble Tea society or the Poached Egg society (they host lots of egg themed events!)

WE TURN YOUR CURIOSITY INTO RESEARCH

JOIN US

At Docent Research, we provide the following facilities for Grade 9-12 Students willing to publish their own research.

- One on One Mentoring
- Expert Guidance
- 12-week program
- Publishing Support
- India Centric Challenges

REGISTER NOW



BIT.LY/DOCENT-APPLY



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: HOW PASSION PROJECTS SHAPE YOUR FUTURE

How Students at We-Learn Are Combining Subjects, Hobbies, and Creativity to Build Projects That Stand Out

By
Neha Pandit
Founder
We-Learn



Neha Pandit

At We-Learn, we've always believed that creativity isn't limited to those who call themselves artists. It shows up in quiet ways, in the shape of a booklet, a mind map, a research question, or a simple personal story.

We've seen more and more students bring their academic goals and personal interests into the studio. Some of them are applying for creative courses like architecture or design. Others are headed towards more conventional career paths. But all of them come here looking to make something that feels more like them, something thoughtful, personal, and real.

What starts as a casual conversation often turns into a project that helps students reflect on what they care about, and how they want to show up in the world.

And sometimes, that project becomes the very thing that sets them apart on a university application.

From Passion To Purpose

One of our students, Nushi, dreams of becoming a veterinarian. She has always loved dogs and wanted to do something meaningful around animal care. During her time at We-Learn, she began exploring ways to combine her passion with real-world impact. That's when she came up with Creature Comforts—a space designed for animal grooming, a clinic, and a rehabilitation centre.

Her idea was simple but powerful: to create a place where animals could be cared for holistically, not just treated when sick. She sketched out service models, researched animal well-being, and even designed the branding herself. "It felt like I was finally building something that brought together my love for animals and my dream of becoming a vet," she said.

When Dance Meets Data

Sonechka is a math student who also happens to love dance, particularly hip-hop. At first, the connection between the two wasn't obvious. But after a few mind-mapping sessions, she began noticing something interesting: geometry was everywhere in movement.

She started analyzing angles, symmetry, and spatial rhythm within choreography. Her final project explored how geometry shows up in the human body during dance and how movement can be mapped, calculated, and designed.

The result was a visual study that was part sketchbook, part research, and completely unique to her. "I started out just wanting to do something with dance," she said. "But now I see math differently too."

From Curiosity To Discovery

When Shreyas, an aspiring biochemist, began his project journey at We-Learn, he mentioned his fascination with how medicines have changed over time. Not just the science of it, but also the way drugs evolved from natural remedies to complex modern formulations. That curiosity was enough for us to start asking questions.

Together, we traced the story of medicine: the origins of ancient healing practices, the breakthroughs of early drug discoveries, and the biochemistry that continues to shape treatments today. What emerged was a passion project that mapped the evolution of drugs and medicine—blending history, science, and future possibilities.

“It helped me see biochemistry not just as formulas in a textbook, but as a living story of how humans have always tried to heal,” he said.

When a Personal Challenge Becomes a Shared Resource

Safwaa came to us with a clear academic direction and that was to pursue psychology. But her starting point wasn’t a textbook or a research paper. It was her own experience with anxiety.

With guidance, she created an illustrated guidebook on anxiety, covering signs, causes, and ways to cope. She kept it simple and accessible, and distributed it to her school library and a few local clinics. It was her way of turning something personal into something helpful.

“I used to think my anxiety was something I had to hide,” she said. “But this made me feel like I could do something good with it.”

Projects That Come From Anywhere

At We-Learn, not every project starts with a subject. Sometimes it starts with a hobby, a question, or just something you enjoy doing in your free time.

We’ve had students, design crockery collections because they love plating food, build language guides inspired by family travel, combine medicine and comics to explain complex topics to kids.

There’s no “right” topic. And there’s no one way a project should look. What matters is that it means something to the person making it.

How We-Learn Supports the Process

Our role isn’t to prescribe ideas, it’s to help students find them. We begin by asking questions: What are you curious about? What do you want to study? What would you create if there were no rules?

From there, we help students, map connections between interests and themes, explore formats (books, illustrations, prototypes, models, etc.), guide them through drafting, design, and iteration, document their work in ways that reflect clarity and intention.

We’ve seen that when students work on something that comes from within — rather than just following a prompt, their projects naturally become more meaningful, more thoughtful, and more memorable.

And that often becomes the part of their application that people remember.

Making Space for the Whole Self

Not every student we work with wants to be an artist. But every student has something worth expressing, an idea, a question, a connection that no one else sees in quite the same way.

By creating space for students to explore those ideas, we’re not just helping them make better projects. We’re helping them see that their interests, their hobbies, and even their academic paths don’t need to be separate from their creative work.

They can be part of the same story. And that story is worth telling.

THE LNAT 101

Everything You Wanted to Ask but Were Too Afraid to about the LNAT

By
Chirag Arya
Founder
AP Guru



Chirag Arya

What is the LNAT?

The Law National Aptitude Test (LNAT) is an admissions test used by certain universities in the UK and a few overseas institutions to select candidates for undergraduate law courses. For an Indian student, the LNAT is not about testing your knowledge of Indian law or legal systems. Instead, it evaluates your aptitude in critical skills such as comprehension, interpretation, analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction. It complements your UCAS application, academic transcripts, and personal statement to give admissions teams an objective measure of your reasoning skills. The LNAT is computer-based, managed by Pearson VUE, and consists of a multiple-choice section (scored out of 42) and an essay section (unscored but reviewed by universities).

Who Should Sit the LNAT?

As an Indian applicant, you must take the LNAT if you are applying to specific undergraduate law programmes at participating universities. This applies regardless of whether you are finishing your CBSE, ISC, IB, or A-Levels. There are no general exemptions. Only in rare cases, such as the absence of a test centre in your city or a medical emergency, might an exemption be possible—and this must be approved directly by the university, not by LNAT or Pearson VUE.

Why Do Colleges Require It?

UK universities receive thousands of international applications each year, many from students with top grades. The LNAT helps them compare applicants fairly across different schooling systems in India, such as CBSE, ISC, and IB. It tests your ability to think critically, analyse arguments, and communicate effectively, skills that are essential for law school success but are not always reflected in board exam scores.

Which Universities Require the LNAT?

For Indian students applying to the UK, universities such as Bristol, Durham, Glasgow, King's College London, LSE, Oxford, SOAS, and UCL require the LNAT for certain law courses. Some overseas institutions also use the LNAT, including OP Jindal, Singapore University of Social Sciences and IE University in Spain. The specific requirement depends on the course code, so you must check the LNAT website and the university's admissions page before applying.

When Should You Take It?

Timing is crucial for Indian students because you need to plan around school exams, board results, and possible travel for test centres. If you apply to Oxford or Cambridge, you must sit the LNAT by 15 October. KCL, LSE, and UCL require you to take it by 31 December. Bristol and Durham require the LNAT by mid-January. Most other LNAT universities have a deadline of 25 January. Late or international applicants can register until late July, but many UK universities will not accept scores submitted after their internal deadlines. Since Indian students often apply for multiple UK universities, you should take the LNAT by October–December to meet all possible deadlines.

Where Do You Register and What Are the Deadlines?

You register online via the LNAT website using Pearson VUE. In India, Pearson VUE operates authorised test centres in major cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Kolkata. Appointments can be booked until 12 noon, two working days before your chosen date. Registration opens on August 1 in the year before your intended entry and testing starts on September 1.

What is on the Test?

The LNAT is two hours and fifteen minutes long. Section A: 95 minutes to answer 42 multiple-choice questions based on 12 argumentative passages, with 3–4 questions per passage. You can review answers within this section. Section B: 40 minutes to write one essay chosen from three prompts. This tests your ability to structure an argument, write clearly, and reach a conclusion. The multiple-choice score is sent to universities; the essay is reviewed for quality of reasoning and written communication.

How Should You Prepare?

For Indian students, LNAT preparation is less about memorisation and more about developing analytical reading and writing skills. The official LNAT website offers a preparation guide, hints and tips, practice tests, and sample essays, all free. Avoid relying on coaching institutes that claim guaranteed score boosts, as the LNAT does not endorse third-party providers. To strengthen your performance: Read The Hindu, The Indian Express, The Guardian, and The Economist daily to improve argument analysis. Practice breaking down editorial pieces into main arguments, evidence, and counterarguments. Write timed essays to build speed and clarity under exam pressure. The preparation guide explains the test's purpose and format, the practice tests simulate the on-screen experience, and the sample essays show the level of argumentation expected. Combine these with exposure to high-quality English writing, particularly on legal, social, and political topics, to get comfortable with the style of arguments you will encounter.

What is Considered a Good LNAT Score?

Section A is scored from 0 to 42. Official LNAT data shows mean raw scores of 22.0 to 24.4. For Indian students targeting competitive UK law schools, you should aim for at least 26–28 to be well above average. For Oxford and LSE, scores in the high 20s or above significantly strengthen your application. Scores above 30 are exceptional and rare. Regardless of your score, a well-structured essay in Section B can be the deciding factor, especially for universities that weigh the essay heavily in admissions decisions.

FOLLOW US ON
LINKEDIN



STAY AHEAD IN THE WORLD OF CAREER GUIDANCE AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS.
FOLLOW US ON LINKEDIN FOR EXPERT INSIGHTS, TIPS, AND THE LATEST UPDATES.
JOIN OUR COMMUNITY AND STAY INFORMED - ONE POST AT A TIME!



Click to Follow



HOW TO GO BEYOND “I’M INTERESTED IN IT” IN THE WHY THAT MAJOR ESSAY



By
Bhupender Bhardwaj
NM Squad

I’ve guided hundreds of students through the “Why this major?” essay, and I’ve noticed something: the interest is always there. In conversation, they brim with energy, their eyes light up when they explain how a psychology experiment changed the way they think about memory, or how debugging code at 2 a.m. felt oddly satisfying. But once they start writing, that enthusiasm often dims. On the page, it collapses into one flat sentence: “I’m interested in it.”

Colleges aren’t looking for interest alone. They want to see where that interest comes from, how it has shaped you, and how you’ve already engaged with it in the real world. In other words, they’re asking -- What’s the story behind your curiosity? Over the years, I’ve found students run into three common traps.

1. Staying in Generalities Instead of Telling a Story

A student once insisted: “I like biology because I care about nature.” And that was it. Polite, but flat. Dozens of other applicants could write the exact same line.

But then, almost as an aside, she told me she had filled an entire notebook with sketches of a frog’s anatomy after a class dissection because she couldn’t get it out of her head. She remembered propping open her laptop at night, bingeing YT animal kingdom lectures because the school textbook felt too thin. Suddenly, the essay came alive. It wasn’t about “liking nature,” but rather about a restless chase. A kid who followed her curiosity past the classroom, who couldn’t look away once she was hooked.

That’s what admissions officers lean into: not a slogan, but a scene.

2. Talking Only About the Future, Ignoring the Past

Another instance: a boy opened his draft with “I want to study computer science because AI is the future.” This is a statement you could easily slap on a windshield sticker.

When I asked what he’d actually done with code, his energy shifted. He described building a rainfall-prediction model using patchy local data, wrestling with inconsistencies, and tweaking it late into the night until the outputs finally made sense. That detail changed everything. Now his essay wasn’t about chasing a buzzword like “AI.” It was about a teenager who had already engaged with the hard, frustrating, and exhilarating process of problem-solving. The throughline was clear: he had tasted the work and wanted more.

The lesson? The strongest essays connect the dots between what you’ve already done and what you hope to do next.

3. Explaining the Subject, Forgetting the Self

I distinctly remember reading an economics essay that sounded like a textbook: supply, demand, elasticity. Perfectly accurate, but impersonal. It could have been written by anyone with an AP study guide.

So I asked her: When did you first feel economics in your own life? She laughed and casually told me about running a bake sale, realizing people bought twice as many brownies after she dropped the price by 10%. That was her “aha” moment. Without realizing it, she had lived the law of demand before she ever had the vocabulary for it.

That one anecdote transformed the essay. Instead of reciting definitions, she was showing how economics shaped her lens on the world.

At its best, the “Why this major?” essay is not a lecture, a list of buzzwords, or a press release about the future. It’s a small, vivid story of how you stumbled into a subject, what kept you hooked, and how you want to keep tugging at that thread. That’s what moves the essay past “I’m interested in it” and makes it unmistakably yours.

UNDERSTANDING RESTRICTIVE & SINGLE-CHOICE EARLY ACTION AT TOP U.S. UNIVERSITIES

Your Guide to How Early Application Limits Shape College Strategy

By
Devesh Lathi
Founder
futurowise



Devesh Lathi

For ambitious high-school seniors, the early application cycle can be both an opportunity and a puzzle. While many universities offer Early Decision or non-restrictive Early Action, a handful of America's most selective institutions use Restrictive Early Action (REA) or Single-Choice Early Action (SCEA). These programs are non-binding—students don't have to commit if admitted—but come with strict limitations on applying early to other private colleges or early decision rounds.

Caltech

California Institute of Technology follows a Restrictive Early Action format. Students may not apply to other private colleges' early programs, whether Early Action or Early Decision. However, Caltech permits applications to public universities with non-binding early options. What makes Caltech's version distinct is the Institute's collaborative and research-focused environment: the admissions office often emphasizes intellectual curiosity and evidence of independent research. Students who are drawn to Caltech's small size and STEM intensity often find REA a clear strategic move.

Georgetown University

Georgetown is unique in the sense that its Early Action program is restrictive, but not single-choice. Applicants cannot apply Early Decision (ED1 & ED2) elsewhere, but they may apply to other Early Action programs at public universities and certain private institutions. Georgetown also has a reputation for preferring a strong demonstration of interest: applying early signals commitment, even though the offer is non-binding. Because the university does not participate in the Common Application, the early deadline also requires careful planning to complete its distinctive application portal.

Harvard University

Harvard's Single-Choice Early Action is one of the most competitive early pathways in the country. Students admitted are not obligated to attend, but they may not apply early to any other private university. Harvard allows exceptions for public university early action programs and for foreign universities. The admissions office stresses that there is no statistical advantage to applying SCEA—yet data show early admit rates are consistently higher than regular rounds. A peculiarity of Harvard's policy is that applicants may apply to an Early Decision II school later if they were deferred or denied in the early round.

Princeton University

Princeton suspended its early program for a few years but reinstated Single-Choice Early Action in 2021. Like Harvard and Yale, Princeton prohibits early applications to other private colleges. What stands out about Princeton's SCEA is the university's clear guidance that early admission is not meant for students who need to compare financial aid offers, since Princeton's generous need-based aid applies equally in both rounds. Students considering Princeton often use SCEA as a way to demonstrate serious interest while preserving flexibility to consider other options in the regular round.

Stanford University

Stanford offers Restrictive Early Action, functionally similar to SCEA. Students may not apply early to other private institutions, but may apply to public universities with non-binding early plans. Stanford emphasizes that its REA round is not designed for those seeking an “advantage,” but rather for students who have the university as their clear first choice. Stanford is unusual in publicly sharing that about 75% of the class is filled in regular decision, so REA applicants should not assume the majority of seats are taken early.

University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame’s early program is called Restrictive Early Action, but unlike SCEA schools, the university is explicit about the pastoral dimension of its admissions review. Notre Dame admits that applying REA is primarily a way to demonstrate strong interest in joining its Catholic intellectual community. Applicants may not apply Early Decision elsewhere, but they can apply early to public universities. One notable peculiarity is that Notre Dame uses REA mostly for its mission-fit evaluation rather than for “locking in” large portions of the class.

Yale University

Yale’s Single-Choice Early Action mirrors Princeton and Harvard’s policies. Applicants cannot apply early to other private institutions, but they may apply early to public or international schools. Yale’s admissions team stresses that SCEA is best suited for students who view Yale as their top choice yet want to keep their options open financially. A peculiar aspect is Yale’s high deferral rate: many qualified students are deferred to the regular round, giving them a second chance while still respecting the SCEA restrictions.

At the most selective colleges in the United States, the early rounds—whether Restrictive Early Action (REA), Single Choice Early Action (SCEA), or Early Decision (ED)—play an outsized role in shaping the incoming freshman class, often locking in nearly half of the cohort before the regular decision pool is even read. At Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Stanford, roughly 50 to 55 percent of the class is admitted through REA or SCEA, meaning that despite these rounds being non-binding, the institutions reward the clear signal of first-choice interest. Notre Dame and Georgetown, while slightly different in their early policies—Georgetown offers a non-restrictive Early Action option, for example—still fill 45 to 50 percent of their classes from early applicants, showing just how much weight colleges place on early commitments. The reason is both practical and strategic: early pools contain many of the nation’s most accomplished students, along with recruited athletes, legacies, and those who have spent months polishing applications, but colleges also benefit from increased yield predictability since early applicants are more likely to enroll if admitted. Statistically, the difference is striking. Harvard, with an overall admit rate hovering near 3.5 percent in recent cycles, has admitted early applicants at rates closer to 12 to 14 percent; Yale’s SCEA round, similarly, has posted admit rates two to three times higher than its regular round. Stanford, the most selective of all, still shows a clear early advantage: though its overall admit rate falls below 4 percent, its early pool sees closer to 8 or 9 percent admitted. Princeton’s numbers mirror this pattern, with nearly half of its class sealed by December. Even at Georgetown, where Early Action is technically non-restrictive, the advantage is evident—early admits are taken at roughly double the rate of regular applicants, and nearly all matriculate. Notre Dame’s restrictive early action round shows a similar story, with nearly half the class finalized before January.

The message behind these figures is clear: early applicants are not just admitted at higher rates, they are functionally competing for a much larger slice of the pie. While the early pools are highly competitive—filled with students who have near-perfect grades, top test scores, and distinctive extracurricular impact—the willingness to apply early itself signals maturity, decisiveness, and strong institutional fit, all of which admissions offices reward. For students considering Harvard, Stanford, Yale, Princeton, Georgetown, or Notre Dame, the early round is no longer a marginal advantage but a central strategy, as much about demonstrating commitment and readiness as it is about securing a statistical edge in the most competitive admissions landscape in the west.

FULL SCHOLARSHIP FOR HIGH-PERFORMING, MIDDLE-INCOME STUDENTS

**NEXT
GENIUS**

**The Next Genius
Scholarship Program**

♦ Since 2014 ♦

The Next Genius Scholarship Program connects **Grade 12** students with full scholarships to pursue an **undergraduate education** at world class **colleges in the US & Europe**. Since 2014, over 300 students have won our scholarships. This year, we will award 200+ scholarships to students from **Bangladesh, India & Nepal**.

Next Genius Scholars graduate from college with exceptional outcomes & often pursue master's programs at prestigious universities like **Harvard, Yale & Columbia** or work at companies like **Google Meta & KPMG**. Visit next-genius.com to learn more.



next-genius.com

SCHOOL COUNSELLOR OF THE MONTH



Jini Varghese
Head of University Guidance
UWC Mahindra College

From unexpected “just ask for the extra grade” moments to secretly wishing for Emma Frost-level telepathy, Jini Varghese has journeyed into university guidance with humor, patience, and an unshakable belief in her students’ potential. As Head of University Guidance at UWC Mahindra College, she is known for balancing rigor with compassion, pushing students to question beliefs, embrace discomfort, and discover their own voice. Whether she’s quietly proud of advice that lands years later or smiling at a Gen Z mantra about the “hot girl healing arc,” Jini brings heart, wit, and clarity to every application, essay, and uncertain step.

1. What’s the weirdest/funniest thing you ever heard a student or parent say?

“I don’t understand what the issue is!! I told my son to just ask the teacher for an extra grade. I’m sure she would give it.”

2. If you had to write a college essay about yourself, what would your topic be?

Questioning or challenging a belief.

3. What’s the most oddly satisfying part of your job that no one ever thinks about?

When a student thanks you years later for advice they didn’t appreciate at the time.

4. What would your “Guidance Counselor Superpower” be if you were in a comic book?

I’d choose Emma Frost’s telepathy!

5. Which fictional character do you think would make a surprisingly great guidance counselor?

Uncle Iroh (Avatar : The Last Airbender)

6. What’s your go-to motivational phrase that even you roll your eyes at sometimes—but it works?

“Hot girl healing arc includes getting stuff done.” - borrowed from my Gen Z daughter’s journal.



The American University of Paris (AUP), Paris

Established in 1962 in Paris. All undergraduate instruction is in English with majors such as International Business Administration Global Communications International and Comparative Politics Computer Science Art History and Psychology. Around 1,200 undergraduates come from 100+ nations with Indians among the largest non-European groups.



Parsons Paris, Paris

Established in 1921 in Paris as the European branch of Parsons School of Design. English-taught bachelors include Fashion Design Art Media and Technology and Strategic Design and Management with studio-based learning. About 300 students study at Parsons Paris with a consistent intake from India's fashion aspirants.

University of Amsterdam (UvA), Amsterdam

Established in 1632 in Amsterdam. English-taught bachelors include PPLE Politics Psychology Law and Economics Communication Science Psychology Economics and Business Economics English track Business Analytics Econometrics Media and Information and various humanities options. About 40% of first-year undergraduates are international, with Indian students featuring strongly in PPLE and Business Economics.



Utrecht University, Utrecht

Established in 1636 in Utrecht. English-taught bachelors include Global Sustainability Science College of Pharmaceutical Sciences and University College Utrecht Liberal Arts and Sciences alongside English Language and Culture. Thousands of international undergraduates enrol each year with steady applications from India particularly in sciences.

TU Delft, Delft

Established in 1842 in Delft. Offers four fully English bachelor programmes which are Aerospace Engineering Computer Science and Engineering Applied Earth Sciences and Nanobiology joint with Erasmus MC. TU Delft hosts over 27,000 students with Indian undergraduates being one of the largest national groups in Aerospace Engineering.



Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam

Established in 1913 with current structure since 1973 in Rotterdam. English-taught bachelors include International Business Administration Economics and Econometrics and International Bachelor Communication and Media plus Liberal Arts at Erasmus University College. Indian students are part of Erasmus' ~31,000 enrolment with high visibility in Business Administration and Economics.

KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm

Established in 1827 in Stockholm. One fully English bachelor is offered which is Information and Communication Technology with most other bachelors taught in Swedish while all masters are in English. KTH has ~14,000 students with strong representation from India in ICT and engineering.



Uppsala University, Uppsala and Visby

Established in 1477 in Uppsala with Campus Gotland in Visby. English-taught bachelors include several Game Design tracks as well as programmes in Energy Transition Sustainability and Leadership and Sustainable Development in Industrial Engineering. About 45,000 students study at Uppsala with increasing numbers of Indians choosing its English options at Gotland.



EMERGING CAREERS 2030

AN EXCLUSIVE WORKSHOP BY
NEERAJ MANDHANA

Join Neeraj Mandhana for a powerful session on **future-ready careers**, coming to cities across the globe.

Discover where the world of work is heading, what skills will dominate, and how to prepare **early for success** in 2030 and beyond.

Don't miss this opportunity to gain clarity and direction from one of India's leading education and career strategists.



Neeraj Mandhana

REGISTER NOW



Dubai
June 14



South Mumbai
August 24



Jodhpur
July 1



Singapore
August 31



Boston
July 19



Mumbai Suburbs
September 21



Pune
August 3



Webinar
October 26

GO TO COLLEGE, GET A JOB: REALLY?

When AI Moves the Career Goalposts: A Review of the Latest Research from Burning Glass Institute, USA

By
Shrinidhi Rao
Chief of Staff
The Burning Glass Institute



Shrinidhi Rao

Picture this: you've just landed your first "serious" job. You're excited, a little nervous, and ready to prove yourself. Day one, you expect to do the classic newbie stuff—drafting simple reports, crunching basic numbers, maybe putting together a PowerPoint no one will actually finish reading. But instead of being handed your first task, your manager waves you over to meet your new teammate: an AI tool that's already done it all. That report? Finished. Those numbers? Analyzed. That PowerPoint? It's in your inbox. Suddenly, there's no "getting your feet wet"—you're expected to swim laps.

That's the kind of workplace shift described in *The Expertise Upheaval*, a 2025 report from the Burning Glass Institute. It's all about how AI is changing the way people learn on the job. Spoiler: it's not just about robots "taking jobs" — it's about the weird ways AI is speeding up some career paths while blocking the usual entry routes for others.

The researchers split careers into two main groups. First, the "Growth Roles." These are jobs like junior lawyers, project coordinators, and marketing assistants—roles where you start off doing straightforward stuff and gradually move into more complex, higher-paid work. Think: a junior lawyer begins by summarizing case files before moving on to actually arguing cases. Or a marketing assistant might start by scheduling social media posts before eventually running full campaigns.

Here's the catch: AI is really good at that "starter" work. If you're a junior lawyer, AI can scan hundreds of cases and draft a legal brief before you've finished your coffee. If you're a marketing assistant, AI can whip up a month's worth of Instagram captions in seconds. That means companies might skip hiring beginners and just bring in people who can handle the tricky, high-level stuff immediately. Translation: getting your first break in these jobs could be a lot harder.

Then there are the "Mastery Roles." These are more technical gigs—data analysts, network administrators, certain engineering jobs—where the hard part is learning a big chunk of skills right at the start. Once you're in, the work doesn't change as much over time. Here, AI is your sidekick. It can teach you faster, help you debug your code, or walk you through complex processes step by step. For example, a beginner data analyst might have needed months to get good at SQL, but now AI can generate and explain queries in minutes.

So what does this mean if you're still in school? For jobs in Growth Roles, you'll need to show up ready to contribute at a higher level right away. That could mean internships where you shadow experts, building your own projects, or even running a small business on the side to prove you can handle responsibility. For Mastery Roles, AI might help you skip some of the long, painful training—but you'll still need curiosity and discipline to keep learning once you get there.

And here's the thing: it's not about avoiding AI-heavy careers. Good luck with that—AI is everywhere. It's about knowing whether the career you want is a "slow climb" type (where the first rungs might be missing) or a "steep start" type (where AI can give you a boost).

The career ladder isn't broken—it just looks different now. Some parts are missing steps, others have built-in escalators. The trick is figuring out which one you're standing on... and being ready to climb, jump, or ride as needed.



Thank You, From Team Aiiyo

Thank you for taking the time to read Aiiyo. We're proud to bring you fresh, thoughtful perspectives—and it's your curiosity and engagement that fuel our work. At the heart of our mission is a desire to elevate the level of conversation around career choice and college admissions, helping readers navigate these decisions with greater clarity and confidence.

If you have any questions, feedback, or would like to contribute to a future issue, we'd love to hear from you—just drop us a line at contact@aiiyo.in. Until next time, stay sharp and stay inspired.

Advisory Board



Bharat Mundra
Advisory Board



Devesh Lathi
Advisory Board



Jesus Lall
Advisory Board



Megan Mankerian
Advisory Board

Operations Team



Neeraj Mandhana
Founder &
Editor-in-Chief



Ravisha Maheshwari
Senior Editor



Bhupender Bharadwaj
Junior Editor



DK
Admin & Logistics



Ritik Jha
Accounts