

A New Era of College Admissions**David Hale****Publication Date**

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David Hale

Library Research Award Essay

As an engineer, writing does not come naturally to me. I mention this to first emphasize the importance of the library resources in my studies. For my Multimedia Writing and Rhetoric course final research project, I took full advantage of the library's research to help me construct that from the ground up. The open-ended assignment was to write a research essay and create an accompanying multimedia presentation. My topic was about the effect of online applications on the college admissions process, and to get started I went right to the experts for help.

The day this assignment was given to the class, I logged on to the Hesburgh Libraries site and began to chat with an assistant online. I explained my topic, and asked for guidance to get acquainted with the site and find research materials. After that assistant helped me narrow down my searches, I began browsing the ND catalog through OneSearch and the various online databases. After countless hours navigating through the site and flipping through pages of books, the library began to feel like home. I would not be surprised if a few specific resources became well-acquainted with the feeling of my eyes searching them for even a single line that would strengthen my research.

When all was said and done, my 13 page paper pulled from 17 different sources that I could not have found without the Library's help. The ability to scan and print library resources, whether physical or digital, assisted in my ability to highlight, annotate, and truly dissect these works. Throughout this process the key to my success lied in the help from librarians. Our class met twice with Dr. Randal Harrison, one of the technologies librarians. I saw the opportunity to take advantage of his help and expertise, so I would talk to him after class and pick his brain for

help on finding resources for my essay. He was the one who pointed me in the initial direction of browsing OneSearch and narrowing down what it was I was looking for to key terms. I chose this topic in part because there are no papers to be found on it, so I could truly make it my own. I was curious about how online applications have affected the college admissions process, so I set out to compile various other sources and try and investigate that prompt. With the help of Dr. Harrison and other librarians who I would meet with, I was fascinated to discover that despite a few flaws these online applications had undeniable positive implications for students applying to college. What started off as a course assignment turned into a passion of mine: it was something that grabbed my attention, and left me excited to get to the bottom of the topic and formulate a convincing argument..

Most of my science and math classes gave me the opportunity to meet in the library. I had taken advantage of reserving rooms throughout the semester before this project was assigned. I never would have guessed that the greatest use of these group study rooms would be in my research paper. I had the idea to interview a student for this paper; since no one had really researched this topic before, so I decided to investigate for myself. I interviewed a few freshmen as primary sources to see how online applications affected their application experience. Finding a good space to do this was difficult, so I went back to my failsafe: the library. After reserving rooms, I found the perfect place to conduct these interviews. In the end, I utilized these spaces to help construct my research paper and add an interesting first-hand perspective on the topic.

The last portion of my research project was compiling my findings into a multimedia presentation. I became comfortable with the research process by the time my paper was completed. Navigating databases, flipping through JSTOR articles, you name it. The real

challenge came with this multimedia presentation, but as a result that is where the library helped the most. I decided to create a narrated video in which I presented my research in easily-digested slides with my explanation overdubbed. Coming up with an idea was easy enough, but executing it on my subpar computer was difficult. So, I came crawling back to the library and once again it did not fail me. I was able to check out equipment (along with a friend who was completing a similar project). The microphones turned a simple project into a professional-quality one. On top of that, I used the far superior library monitors to help create the presentation itself on something besides my small screen. This lifted the quality from a simple powerpoint to something that I was truly proud to put my name on.

By the time the project finished and I went home for winter break, I realized that I could not have executed a single step in my research without the library. To learn where to begin to research, I went to the librarians. To do the research itself, I went to library databases and physical books. Then, I used library spaces to help conduct interviews that were integral in the paper itself. Lastly, the final part of my project would not have been possible without library technologies. I even printed my paper in a library printer. I think the most valuable resource of all was that I learned specific inquiry methods that will aid my future endeavors. I gained a better understanding of the research process which will not only help for any classes with writing, but any class I take. That is something I am beyond grateful for. I look forward to returning to campus so that I can return to my true home, Hesburgh library.