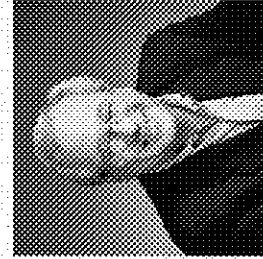


SCOUTING YOUR WAY TO THE BEST COLLEGES

When "Eagling-out" leads to "Eagling-in"

David F. Smith, Ph.D.



David F. Smith, PhD earned his Eagle Scout rank in 1971. He graduated in 1979 from Harvard College with a bachelor's degree in economics. He assists high school seniors by interviewing for admissions to Harvard. When David participates in Eagle Boards of Review, he is amazed by how great these youth are. However, he rarely has a Harvard candidate energetically use Eagle Scout rank as an asset for consideration for admission. He wrote this book to change that.

The college admissions environment today is as competitive as it has ever been. At the center of the admissions process are people making definitive decisions about whether you will get into their college. Your job is to sell those people on your character, your capacity to learn, and your abilities as a leader.

For the fortunate few of you who are Eagle Scouts, this is an easy sale. Earning your Eagle Scout rank required outstanding personal values, intellectual curiosity and originality, and tons of being led and leading others. Unfortunately, there is little help available to assist you in turning those wonderful Scouting experiences into a sales portfolio.

Scouting Your Way to the Best Colleges fills that vacuum. This book will lead you through a proven sales process. You will gather your Scouting memories and achievements to build the case that you are worthy to be chosen. You will exemplify why people have such high regard for Eagle Scouts such as Neil Armstrong, James Brody, and Gerald Ford. You will win that coveted place at your chosen college.



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One year in Italy with their eyes open would be worth more than three at Oxford; and six months in the fields with a platyscopic lens would teach them strange things about the world around them that all the long terms at Harrow and Winchester have failed to discover to them. But that would involve some trouble to the teacher.

What a misfortune it is that we should thus be compelled to let our boys' schooling interfere with their education!

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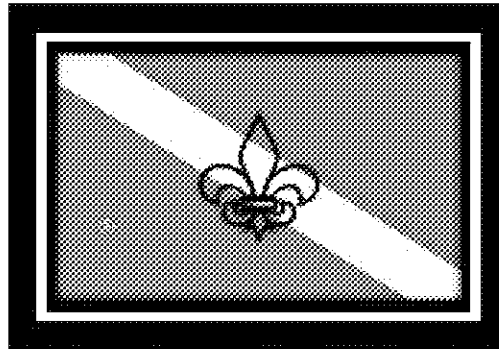
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SCOUTING YOUR WAY TO THE BEST COLLEGES
When “Tagging out” leads to “Tagging in”

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supporting leadership in many ways.*



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*Dedicated to Doctor Anna Smith.
Thanks for everything, always, Mrs. Smith.*

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

Mark Twain

The goal of this book is to assist Eagle Scouts in getting accepted to great colleges. The book does this by showing Scouts how to bring forward the wonderful experiences a Scout has had on the Trail to Eagle, including side trips and beyond. These experiences are building blocks that can increase the chances a letter of acceptance will soon be in the mail. The book explains what to think about, demonstrates how to capture the experiences, guides you in using these to highlight your best qualities, and makes it possible for you to put these into your effort to capture the spot you want. Some of your application processes are written, some in person, and some in tactics. The book will support all three parts not in a "how to" method that requires standardized responses from you, but in an educating way so you grasp the reasoning behind the ideas presented. In this way, you own the process and can build on what is in this book as contingencies arise. You will be prepared to move the application through to acceptance.

I must confess, I really don't care for the term "Eagling out" as it implies an end of something. However, I use the term in the book title to convey what I do believe, earning your Eagle Rank is a step on a journey to the next adventure. This book is for you if the next adventure is college, but of course there are many next adventures. I don't want to come off as thinking college is the automatic choice for everyone. If it's not for you, go for what is. However, if you know that college is your next big step, then I'm writing this for you, so you can Be Prepared and use your Scouting experience to earn a place at the college of your choice. I can't guarantee that by following the plan set forth in this book you will be accepted, but I can guarantee that you will be exceptional in the eyes of your admissions officer. The term

”Eagling-in” is used because it implies a forward motion to the next adventure based on all the fun work you have put into your Scouting career.

The Eagle Scout Rank is Special

You have done plenty more than most college candidates. I don’t know if you realize that. Sure, there are many other qualified applicants, but let’s look at some numbers for comparison. Based on the Department of Education’s figures, there are 36,000 high schools in the U.S. This means:

- 180,000 students in the top 5 of their class
- 180,000 student body officers in each class
- 72,000 Presidents and Vice Presidents of Key Club (or similar)
- 144,000 top athletes (one per major sport in school)
- Etc. You get the idea.

Compare this to only 55,000 new Eagle Scouts each year.

And as an Eagle Scout, you have so much more to describe to your admissions officer about who you are and why you deserve a spot at their school than top academic students, class and club officers, and the athletes. Scouting is a diverse experience and if through applying what you learn here, you package this broad experience up with the Eagle Ribbon and a bow on top of everything else you are, you will be viewed as an exceptional candidate with unique experiences and qualities. And this is a good thing when it comes to applying to college, as you will see.

Background

One day recently, I read an article about an Eagle Scout who earned his way into the college of his choice by providing a video of his Eagle project in his application package. Of course, that’s not the only reason he was accepted, but the admissions officer did say it made a significant difference. And a differentiator is what you need. My experience as a current interviewer for Harvard College candidates reminds me every year that there are many excellent high school seniors and how fortunate there are plenty of opportunities at wonderful schools for them. However, if an elite school is your choice, you must play the odds. Flashing back more than forty years, I was accepted to Harvard in the Class of ’79. I am positive my Scouting experience, including earning Eagle Rank, Lodge Chief in the Order of the Arrow, serving on the OA Service Corps at a National Jamboree, attending National OA Conferences, being on Camp McLoughlin Staff, and more, differentiated me from the ninety-five

percent of applicants who were not accepted to Harvard. However, only because the difference between me and other candidates was made obvious by including these experiences in the application process through essays, interviews, and cover letters. Rarely when interviewing candidates to Harvard College, do I see “Eagle Scout” on their accomplishments.

Since my own experience of applying to Harvard and my current interviewing indicate to me the importance Scouting can be for successful applications, it was easy to decide I wanted to help Scouts get into the college of their choice. Since I am not a professional guidance counselor, I had to find a way that fit my skills: my Certified Financial Planner® career is selling financial services and products, and my passion is using my PhD work in Leadership to develop programs for leaders. Combining these two, I decided to help Scouts sell themselves to college admissions officers focusing on the leadership development that Scouting brings to the dance. Each year I interview candidates for Harvard and see about thirty each year; rarely is Scouting (Boy or Girl) or other programs such as Adventure Guides mentioned except maybe in a list of activities. When I see “Eagle Scout” I have lots to talk about with my candidate! Using this book you will be able to sell your admissions officer on how Scouting prepared you to lead in college and beyond.

Why should you read this book?

Why? First, because there is no other like this book. I checked. There are articles, blogs, discussion groups, and some books that include Scouting as a differentiator, but none that will explain each part of Scouting I know is important. I know how to make Scouting fit, so it will make a difference for your application. Someone should write about Girl Scouts, Adventure Guides, and other organizations that applicants participate in, but I don’t have first-hand experience. I imagine this book could help those competitors for your spot as well.

I repeat, the goal of this book is to bring forward the great experiences a Scout has had on the Trail to Eagle, including side trips and beyond. The book explains what to think about, demonstrates how to capture the experiences, guides you in using these to highlight your best qualities, and makes it possible for you to put these into your effort to capture the spot you want. Some of your application processes are written, some in person, and some in tactics. The book will support all three parts not in a “how to” method that requires standardized responses from you, but in an educating way so you grasp the reasoning behind the ideas presented. In this way, you own the process and can build on what is in this book as contingencies arise.

I do not mean to denigrate or otherwise minimize the importance or value of non-Scouting success. I do mean to show you how to make Scouting an important differentiator. If you have Scouting as part of your experience, are Student Body President, have a 5.0 GPA with 8 AP classes, President (two terms) Physics Club, debate champion, and on and on, great! Scouting just might be the difference between acceptance or not. I hope there are some readers of this book who aren't even in Scouts and maybe they will join up and have the same exciting time you had, so they can also get in the college of their choice.

Young women will soon join the ranks of Eagle Scouts! This book is for them, too, of course. No time like the present to start thinking about how earning Eagle Rank will really be different for a time for female college applicants!

Summary

Read the book through once to get a feel for the work ahead of you. The work is not hard as it is mostly you remembering the great Scouting experiences and formatting them for consumption by your admissions officer. Once you have read the book through, then read it again and complete the exercises. You will inventory and describe your Scout life focusing on the important character building, leadership lessons, and subjects explored noted for each. Think back on your Eagle Board of Review. I sit on these now, and each time when we ask, "What was your favorite memory in Scouting?" the Eagle candidate smiles and has a tough time picking just one! You will see what to do with these exercises as you read the book. The next chapter hints at this as it provides you with a description of what the admissions people at colleges are looking for beyond grade points, AP coursework, athletic awards, and SAT/ACT scores. Keep on climbing!