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OVERVIEW

This Manual
This manual provides a complete run-down of serving as an Alumni Admissions Interviewer for the Schreyer Honors College, including the why, how, who, when, where, and “help!”

Purpose of the Interview
Interviews of potential Schreyer Scholars have three central goals:
1. To assess an applicant’s interpersonal and communication skills;
2. To promote the Schreyer Honors College and Penn State University; and
3. To actively engage alumni with the Schreyer Honors College and Penn State.

Who Interviews?
All alumni of the Schreyer Honors College (including the University Scholars Program) are eligible to conduct interviews, with a few notable exceptions outlined on page 6 in this manual, in our training video, and on the registration page on the Schreyer Honors College website. Exceptions to participation in/eligibility may be made at the discretion of the program administrator in the Schreyer Honors College.

Admissions interviews are OPTIONAL and are matched on a first-come, first-served basis for both alumni interviewers and prospective Schreyer Scholars. We cannot guarantee that each interview session will be filled or that every prospective Scholar seeking an interview will be offered one.

Interviews are conducted approximately one year ahead of potential entry to the College. Interviews in the fall of 2019 are for students who will begin as first-year Scholars in August 2020.

For the entering class of Fall 2019, 235 interviewers completed 1,086 interviews among 1,800 eligible applicants! Admission was offered to 700 applicants among a pool of nearly 3,600 total applications!

All interview evaluations are read!

While interview evaluations often align with the holistic review (see the next section), admissions interviews were THE determining factor for 180 decisions for Fall 2019!

Since the beginning of the program in 2013, over 800 unique alumni volunteers have conducted over 9,000 interviews.

When?

- August 1, 2019: Application for admission opens
- Early September: Alumni can enter availability for interview window
- October 1: Applicants with completed applications may begin requesting interviews, continuing on a rolling basis through the fall
• November 1: Priority deadline for application to the College and applicant eligibility to request an interview; first day to host an interview!
• December 4: Final application deadline for applicants
• December 7: Regional hosted events
• December 17: Last day to host an interview
• January 13, 2020: Deadline to submit evaluations

Registration and Matching
Registration and matching is done online at https://www.shc.psu.edu/alumni/involved/interview.cfm.

When matched, you will be notified via e-mail. Review your match to determine that there is no potential conflict of interest (ex: member of a Scout Troop you lead, a student at your school, your younger sibling’s best friend, etc.) where you could not give an impartial evaluation.

You will be provided with the applicant’s name and e-mail address, as well as their short-answer essay questions. You will not have access to the applicant’s academic transcript, long essay responses, or letters of recommendation.

Reach out to the applicant, introduce yourself, cc’ing SHCAAIP@psu.edu, and confirm the interview time, date, and location.

The Interview
Interviews generally take approximately 45-minutes:
  • 30-minutes of interview time
    ▪ 20-25 minutes for interview questions
    ▪ 5-10 minute for applicant questions
  • Approximately 15 minutes afterward to make notes for the evaluation.
• The actual interview should be more of a conversation, not a stressful encounter.
  • This is not a job or internship interview!
  • Dos and don’ts are listed on page 10.
• See the recommended questions on page 16. This is not an exhaustive list, just some suggestions for the purpose of getting to know the applicant and giving them an opportunity to demonstrate their communication skills.
• You are welcome to share your business card or personal contact information at the conclusion of the interview if you’d like; this is not a requirement, simply left to your good judgment.

Summary: Make sure you are eligible to interview, register, watch the training videos found here and review suggested questions on page 16 of this manual.
ABOUT THE ALUMNI ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW PROGRAM

Purpose of the Interview

Intelligence and talent are important but are strengthened even further by the ability to communicate effectively. The interview helps evaluate how the candidates present themselves, articulate their ideas, and engage in conversation. All these skills are required of Schreyer Scholars in the classroom and in co- and extra-curricular activities and as they prepare for their life after Penn State.

The interview also provides an ideal opportunity for the alumni interviewers to promote Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College. Applicants to the SHC are likely considering other top universities in the country. The conversation that takes place during the interview invites the interviewer to share their passion for Penn State, provide insight into their personal experiences and the power of the Penn State and Schreyer Honors College network.

Finally, an admissions interview program provides an excellent opportunity to engage alumni, who can provide insight into the experience of being a Scholar at Penn State. Alumni enjoy providing a meaningful service to the college, and participating in the selection of future Schreyer Scholars from an increasingly competitive applicant pool.

Evaluating the Interview: How we use the interview results

Even for well-established interview processes at other institutions, interview assessments are usually not determinative of outcomes: as one admissions office told us, an interview generally “won’t sink a star, or raise the dead.” Interview results are often like teacher recommendations, which generally support the assessment made of the transcript and the rest of the application, but sometimes provide useful insights in either direction.

Interview results have been used to resolve applications to the Schreyer Honors College, both positively and negatively. In the past, when interview results were not available, we often had to ask a third faculty reader to help resolve the decision, so the addition of the interview provides significant insight into the applicant we did not have before, as well as a more efficient decision-making process. In 2019, 180 interview evaluations were the determining factor – a record for the program!

It is important to keep in mind that the interview results are only one element of the application review. The academic background and full application assessment will continue to weigh heavily in the final decision.
BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Eligibility & Expectation

Confidentiality Statement

The Schreyer Honors College appreciates the time and effort committed by its alumni to conduct admissions interviews. All alumni interviewers will have access to each applicant’s admissions information for the purpose of conducting the interview. Please remember to respect the confidentiality of this information. Likewise, interviewer evaluations and interview rankings will not be shared with applicants for any reason.

Code of Conduct

Volunteers must answer Yes/No to the following questions or statements when signing up for the program.

I am a/an:

- Admissions officer at a post-secondary institution
- College counselor
- Immediate family member of a current college applicant to any institution
- College preparation consultant
- A member of the faculty review/selection committee.

If you said yes to any of the above, please contact the Development and Alumni Relations team at ScholarAlumni@psu.edu, or call at (814) 865-4258.

During the admissions interview process, I agree to the following:

- I will review the training materials provided to prepare myself for interviewing.
- I will strive to create a mutually respectful environment and interaction for all applicants.
- I will treat all information provided by the Schreyer Honors College about the admissions process and the applicants I interview as confidential.
- I will not create any impressions or expectations, positive or negative, about the student's probability of admission.
- I will ensure that interactions occur in a safe, accessible and neutral location; at a time that is agreed upon by both parties; and that respects the volunteer’s and the student’s commitments to school, work, activities, and family obligations.
- I will avoid any conflict of interest by not interviewing applicants with whom there is an existing personal, familial, or professional connection.
- I will not initiate conversation that may make a candidate uncomfortable or that is overly personal, whether with regard to the candidate or the volunteer. This includes, but is not limited to, using inappropriate language, making disparaging comparisons of secondary or post-secondary institutions, or asking the student what other institutions he or she is applying to.
And that I will not make racist, sexist, or culturally insensitive statements.

If you disagree with any of the above, please contact the alumni relations office at ScholarAlumni@psu.edu, or call at (814) 865-4258.

Scheduling Your Availability
All relevant information on the applicant including the final evaluation form will be provided through the Schreyer Interviewer Portal. Therefore, interviewers will be asked to bring their own web-enabled electronic device to their interview (PC, laptop, tablet, etc.). You may take notes with pen & paper, but all matching is done, and all evaluations will be submitted, electronically.

Interviewers will commit to either Schreyer hosted, independent, or videochat interviews at their choice of date, time, and location (or, in the case of videochat interviews, mediums). These interview appointments will be available to applicants beginning November 1 and throughout the interview season into December as options are added.

Interviewers should complete at least 3 interviews in total. An average amount runs between 4 and 6, and the upper bound is around 10 interviews.

Hosted Days
For those interviewing on a Schreyer hosted interview day (Boston, Philadelphia, Morristown (NJ), University Park, and Washington, DC), the date, time and location will be pre-filled and interviewers can choose to occupy these appointments. We recommend doing no more than 2-3 consecutive slots before taking a break!

Independent Interviews
For those completing an independent interview, the interviewer will input the date, time and location of their availability for each interview offering. For example, an interviewer would input: Saturday, November 2, 10 am, Starbucks, 2030 N. Atherton St. - State College, PA 16803. Interviews should take place in a safe, convenient, and accessible location and at a reasonable time. Examples of appropriate locations include a public office building, public library, or local coffee shop. Each time slot and location will be displayed to applicants, who will choose to an interview convenient to them.

Be sure to enter the address of the interview site, NOT your address.

Pro-tip: You can host interviews in multiple cities over the window if you are travelling – just be sure to enter each interview based on where you will be at!

Pro-tip: Add the times you enter to your calendar so you do not double book yourself!

Videochat Interviews
For videochat interviews, interviewers input a time, time zone, and select specific videochat mediums (i.e. FaceTime, Google Hangout, Skype). When a student books an interview, the alumni interviewer is
notified via email and can log in to see the student information corresponding to the appointment he/she has booked.

_Pro-tip: If you can no longer host an interview during a specific time, contact the Schreyer staff at ScholarAlumni@psu.edu to edit or remove the availability._

Matching

Once an applicant chooses your interview slot, you will receive a confirmation email. Please reach out to your assigned student(s) via email to confirm your mutually agreeable location, date, and time to meet. For security purposes, please cc the Schreyer staff when communicating with prospective students (SHCAAIP@psu.edu). It is also recommended that you obtain a cell phone number of the student in case you need to make a last-minute change to the interview. If you need to contact a student, or vice versa, due to a last minute snag, such as traffic, please connect directly and provide a copy of the correspondence to SHCAAIP@psu.edu at your earliest convenience.

If you are not able to connect with your assigned student(s) after multiple attempts, please contact the Schreyer Honors College at scholaralumni@psu.edu or 814-865-4258.

Application Information

Interviewers will be able to review the information about each applicant prior to the actual interview. By clicking on the evaluation button, interviewers will be taken to the applicant’s information and short answer questions to review prior to the interview.

Regardless of the medium you choose (in-person or online) you should adequately prepare for the interview by reading about the applicant’s background and short essay answers under the evaluation section of the website. When completing your evaluation of the student(s), we will ask you to identify the type of interview you chose to conduct.

Each applicant’s information is divided into three tabs:

1. **General Tab** - includes applicant’s high school, PSU college and major as listed on their admissions application

2. **Application Tab** - lists the short-answer essay questions and answers from the SHC application. These questions will tell you more about the applicant’s interests, activities and leadership
   a. _Please list any college courses which you have taken for credit (NOT including AP or other college-in-high-school courses)_
   b. _Please tell us about a book that’s influenced you, from any point in your life_
   c. _Please list the most important scholastic distinctions or honors you have received, including any special programs in which you have participated, such as international study, summer enrichment programs, internships, or research experiences._
   d. _Please give us some information about your principal extracurricular, community, and family activities, work experiences, voluntary service, and hobbies, in the order of their interest to you. For each, be sure to include any major accomplishment such as leadership positions, varsity letters, awards, etc._
Please write a brief paragraph about your most significant activity out of those listed above, and its importance to you.

3. Evaluation Tab – provides the evaluation to complete at the end of each interview. Since you are evaluating the applicant’s interpersonal and communication skills, each question is related specifically to these two areas. You are asked to include comments to support your ratings; include facts and observations from the interview. Please note that you are not being asked to recommend/not recommend an applicant for admission. You are only being asked to assess their interpersonal skills during your interview. You should save the evaluation form so you can go back and review your comments. Once the form is submitted, you will not be able to retrieve it.

4. Essays – Applicant essays are not part of the interview process. However, for your information, this year’s essay questions were:
   a. Describe a typical day in your life in 2050. Consider what your professional life will look like, what technologies you might use, and how you will interact with your personal network (friends, family, etc.) and the world at large. (Critical thinking)
   b. Describe a situation in which you moved outside your comfort zone, interacting with people whose experiences and/or beliefs are different from your own. What was your initial response and how did you adapt? Walk us through the situation and explain what impact it had on you. (Global Perspective)
   c. “A picture is worth a thousand words” refers to the notion that a complex idea can be conveyed with just a single picture. If you could submit a selfie from anywhere in the world that would tell us about your beliefs and passion, where would you take this photo? What insight would this photo provide about you? (Personal Passion)

Interviewers will not have access to the applicant’s academic transcript, long essay responses, or letters of recommendation. Interviewers may certainly let the applicants know what they do and do not have access to their admissions applications.

What if we need to re-schedule?
If you have to re-schedule, work with the applicant directly to find a new, mutually agreeable time and date prior to the close of the interview window (ccing SHCAAIP@psu.edu, of course). If the time and date are “wrong” in the portal, that is okay. That will not impact the evaluation whatsoever. If there is no mutually agreeable time, then please contact the Schreyer staff so they can assist both you and the applicant to find new matches if available.

Expectations of Interviewers
As a result of the interview program implementation the past few years, we have compiled a list of advice for interviewers:
DO

• reach out to the applicant in advance to introduce yourself, so the applicant is able to better understand who you are and your background with Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College.
  o Pro-tip: Sending a link to your LinkedIn Profile in advance of the interview is a great way to introduce yourself!
  o You must copy SHCAAIIP@psu.edu on your communications with applicants for compliance purposes.
• maintain an informal tone and remain educational in spirit, rather than evaluative.
• be aware of how your language, tone, and other nonverbal cues may be interpreted by anxious high school students.
• treat each student with respect, patience, and kindness.
• ask more open-ended questions, rather than ones with a single ‘right’ answer.
• be conscious of the limits of your knowledge about Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College. Remember that it is absolutely fine to refer applicants to contact the Schreyer Honors College admissions office with any questions.

DO NOT

• treat the admissions interview exactly like a job interview! Remember that we are not looking for a single, perfect, fully-formed applicant, but a group of applicants who will grow to enrich the Schreyer Honors College overall.
• make any promises or predictions regarding the student’s admission to the Schreyer Honors College or Penn State.
• ask about or compare Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College to other postsecondary institutions the applicant is considering.
• feel obliged to ask every applicant the very same questions in the same order. Overall, though, your questions should have a similar degree of challenge.
• rely on your first impression of the applicant, good or bad. Students are told to dress casually for the interview so please do not judge the applicant based on their appearance.
• place too much weight on one particularly excellent or foolish answer.
• ask about application elements that were not provided to you by the Schreyer Honors College (i.e. high schools grades, test scores).
• ask about personal questions about the applicant’s identities.
THE INTERVIEW

45-minutes is ample time for each interview: 20-25 minutes for the actual interview, 5-10 minutes for the applicant to ask questions, and 15 minutes for the evaluation. The actual interview should be more of a conversation, and not a stressful encounter. Included are some recommended questions to ask each applicant for the purpose of getting to know the applicant and give them an opportunity to demonstrate their communication skills.

First, be sure to arrive early and get settled in, especially in a busy location like a coffee shop, or to check your technology and internet connection for a videochat interview!

Get your materials settled for note taking – whether that is your laptop or a pen and paper or perhaps your phone. Any of these are acceptable!

When your applicant arrives, greet them and introduce yourself. Let the applicants introduce themselves and ask for a photo ID to confirm it is in fact the applicant you are matched with. For video-chat interviews, look for anything odd off-screen, such as someone coaching them.

Parents are allowed to wait nearby within line-of-sight but they can’t sit in on the interview. Gently ask any parents to politely wait nearby as the interview is to be a one-to-one experience. Videochat interviews should not have anyone coaching them off screen!

Explain to the applicant the format – you are an alumnus of the Schreyer Honors College and will have about 20 minutes of questions for them, and then about 10 minutes at the end for them to ask questions of you. You may explain that their interview is one piece of the admissions application.

Conduct the interview accordingly with some of the provided questions on page 16. It is a good idea to select a couple of questions that you will ask every applicant to give you a common baseline from which to assess. Other questions can be tailored to the specific applicant and topics that come up throughout the course of the interview. Feel free to ask follow-up questions if an answer prompts a deeper dive, such as “Tell me more about that.”

The interview is meant to be an assessment of the applicant’s motivations and communication skills – it is not a job or internship interview. For many applicants, it may be their first interview of any kind! It’s also an opportunity for the applicant to learn more about both Schreyer and Penn State. You may be the first person affiliated with either or both that they have interacted with! In this instance, you are an ambassador on behalf of both Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College.

For their questions, answer them about your own experience, on which you are the expert. It is okay and recommended that you pass off technical questions about deadlines, policies, or other items you may not know the answer to. That’s what we are here for. Politely let them know that you do not have an answer and they should contact the Admissions staff (Scholars@psu.edu) for the best answer.

No matter when you graduated, whether the University Scholars Program in 1983 or the Schreyer Honors College in 2019, the core of the honors experience at Penn State remains the same and is
valuable for our applicants to hear about your experience. The greatest changes over time are the support and opportunities available to Scholars have greatly expanded, but the mission, and the values, remain the same.

Be sure to be positive about your experience and focus the interview on Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College. Neither you nor the applicant should bring up other institutions!

Not every interview needs to have the exact same questions - if an interview runs short, don’t feel the need to ask additional questions. If a follow-up question for clarity is needed, such as, “Could you tell me more about that?” ask it!

Be sure to maintain the focus on their experiences and yours – don’t ask questions about their identities. Diversity and inclusion are a core value of both the Schreyer Honors College and Penn State, and all applicants and interviewers should be treated with dignity and respect.

Take note of their answers and their communication skills. Are they thoughtful in their responses? Are they asking good questions?

PRO-TIP: WE RECOMMEND WRITING YOUR NOTES IN AN EXTERNAL WORD PROCESSING PROGRAM (WORD, GOOGLE DOCS, ETC.) AND ONLY ENTERING THEM IN THE EVALUATION PAGE ON YOUR INTERVIEWER PORTAL WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED WRITING YOUR EVALUATION AND READY TO SUBMIT.

The applicants are not judged on their appearance - so do not hold attire against them. Not everyone can afford dress apparel or have the cultural capital to understand interview dress etiquette. Or, they may have just come from an athletic practice or a theater rehearsal! We tend to have involved students applying for admission who run from one activity to the next.

If you are unsure of the best way to answer a student’s questions, please encourage them to contact the admissions office at the Schreyer Honors College at scholars@psu.edu or 814-865-2060.

Interviewers should leave at least 5-10 minutes at the end of each interview to permit the applicant to ask any questions they may have. Interviewers may respond to the questions to the best of their ability. However, alumni should not feel compelled to be “experts” in all areas of Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College. In the case where an answer is not known, please refer the question to a member of the SHC staff who will follow up directly with the applicant. We only expect interviewers to be experts on their own experience - whether in the 1980s or just last year! Remember that one of the primary purposes of the interview is to promote the university and the honors college, so please use this opportunity to do so!

At the conclusion of the interview, thank the applicant for their time and wish them luck in their college search process! Do not make any promises or assurances of their status.
**AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

What should I do after the interview? Complete the evaluation form for each applicant on the online evaluation form no later than January 13, 2020. *Remember – your best bet is to type these outside of the Schreyer interviewer portal until you are ready to submit!*

Please contact the Schreyer Honors College at scholaralumni@psu.edu or 814-865-4258 with any additional questions.

The criteria and makeup of the evaluation form are modeled below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal Skills (non-verbal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Attitude and disposition during interview</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous, poor eye contact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments to support your ratings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. <strong>Enthusiasm/ energy</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displayed no energy in responses; apathetic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments to support your ratings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Verbal Skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke too quickly/softly hesitated in responses; distracting speech (use of “like”, “um”, “you know”);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments to support your ratings:

2. Clarity and depth of responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gave no examples; shallow; asked no questions</td>
<td>Some explanation and good examples; asked some questions</td>
<td>Asked good questions; thorough and evidence of depth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments to support your ratings:

Motivation

1. Motivation and drive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source of motivation unclear; Primarily motivated by external sources</td>
<td>Mixed motivation: some internal/external drive</td>
<td>Self-motivated; Strong internal sources of motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments to support your ratings:

Summary Ranking, Observations and Comments

Overall Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not a good candidate</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Excellent candidate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How do you determine which students are interviewed?
A: All students who apply to the Schreyer Honors College through the November 1 deadline will be given the opportunity to interview with an alumns/a on a first-come, first-served basis. For students living in areas with no alumni volunteers, interviews via videochat will be offered. In situations where no workable solution is available, the student may not be interviewed. This will not impact their admissions decision.

Q: What is the difference between Schreyer hosted interview days versus independent interviews?
A: We hold Schreyer hosted interviews in our major markets, which include Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Morristown (NJ), University Park, and Washington, DC. Students from those areas will be able to interview on set weekend dates in December, in addition to available independent interviews. The College hosts these interviews in a central location, and alumni and students meet for their interview at that site. For independent interviews, students and alumni will set up mutually convenient times and locations for the interviews.

Q: What is the benefit of participating in this program?
A: As an interviewer, you have the opportunity to promote the Schreyer Honors College and help recruit many bright and talented prospective Schreyer Scholars who participate in the interview program. You will be able to share your first-hand experiences as a student and Scholar at Penn State.

Q: When and how will I be trained to interview prospective Scholars?
A: Reading this training manual and watching the provided video training modules, which last approximately 25 minutes.

Q: If I participated in this program as an interviewer in the past, do I need to complete the training again?
A: Yes. We've condensed the training and made it easily accessible through short YouTube video clips and revised this manual!

Q: When will interviews take place?
A: Interviews, both group and independent, will begin November 1, 2019 and conclude December 17, 2019.

Q: How can I get more information about this program?
A: If you are interested in being an alumni interviewer, or if you would like more information, please contact ScholarAlumni@psu.edu. You can review the job description for information on the program's goals, volunteer responsibilities, and services the Schreyer Honors College will provide to you throughout the program.

Q: If a student completes an interview, will the interview evaluation be used in the admission decision?
A: Yes, a student’s interview evaluation will be used in their admissions decision if they complete an interview.
Q: If a student does not complete an interview, will the admission decision be negatively affected?
A: There is no penalty for not participating in the interview component. Students who do not interview will be evaluated solely on the other portions of their application and will not be negatively affected by not participating in an interview.

Q: Who will interview a student?
A: We rely on Scholar alumni volunteers to conduct interviews to help evaluate applicants' interpersonal communication skills. These interviews are beneficial to the applicant, because they can hear first-hand about their interviewer's Penn State and University Scholars Program/Schreyer Honors College experiences.

Appendix B: Suggested Interview Questions

Because each interview should be more of a conversation, and may be different based on the applicant, we have listed a sampling of interview questions.

1. What initially attracted you to apply to Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College?
2. What are you looking for in a college experience?
3. What are you interested in studying in college and why?
4. What would you expect from a college honors class?
5. What kind of activities are you interested in pursuing in college?
6. What do you see yourself doing after college?
7. Where do you see yourself after your first year in college? In the next 5 years? In the next 10 years?
8. Who, or what, is your source of motivation/inspiration?
9. Who has been a good role model for you?
10. Give me your best example of when you demonstrated the characteristics of a good leader.
11. What has been your favorite high school class? Why?
12. What accomplishment are you most proud of, to date?
13. What has been the biggest challenge you've had to overcome?
14. What goal or objective were you unable to achieve in high school? What did you learn from this experience?
15. If I had the opportunity to talk to your closest friend, how would he/she describe you?
16. Have you had a defining moment/experience in your life that has had significant impact on the person you are today?
17. Is there anything we have not talked about that is not in your application that you’d like to address before we finish?
Appendix C: SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The current selection process for Schreyer Scholars focuses on two independent parts: 1) the academic review, and 2) the holistic review. The academic review is completed by Schreyer staff, as it often relies on comparative information from the school's other transcripts (sometimes over a period of several years) and can require follow-up with high school counselors. The transcripts are rated on a one-to-five scale:

5 Truly exceptional accomplishment even by the high standards of the SHC applicant pool; someone who would be recognized as an academic star by any college or university.

4 The higher side of what we can reasonably expect in our eventual class of 300 Scholars—someone who’s done everything that a top student typically does at the high school, but nothing to mark that student as exceptional within that top group.

3 The lower side of what we can reasonably expect in our eventual class of 300 Scholars—a very solid record but some margin for better courses and/or grades within the context of the high school; or a top student at a school with very limited enrichment opportunities.

2 Too close to a standard-good Penn State applicant’s transcript to have a strong academic claim on being a Schreyer Scholar, but someone we might be willing to consider if the holistic review assesses them to be exceptional.

1 An applicant who might be standard-good University Park material, or occasionally even worse than that, but not someone we could consider for the SHC except in very exceptional circumstances.

All complete applications are given a full, holistic review by the Faculty Selection Committee (see below), even those applications whose transcript ratings make them unlikely-to-impossible to admit. The transcript rating is one of three elements of the rubric behind most SHC admission decisions, the others being the two Faculty Selection Committee readers’ ratings.

The holistic review for each application is conducted by two randomly selected members of the Faculty Selection Committee, which is composed of SHC-involved faculty (and the occasional staff adviser) from across the University. While reviewers have access to the transcript, they do not have access to the in-house transcript assessment and we encourage reviewers to reference the transcript only as part of their holistic review, or only to understand the context for the student’s interests and extracurricular involvements.

Reviewers do not assess each part of the application (essays, short answers, teacher and counselor recommendations, activity listings) separately, but rather take the application holistically to assess various applicant qualities such as intellectual ability and leadership. Reviewers award each applicant a summary rating (also on a 1 to 5 scale, as for transcripts, but with different definitions), and the SHC mandates a somewhat linear distribution of ratings over the entire scale to improve the reliability and usefulness of ratings.
The two reviewer ratings and the transcript rating are run through a rubric, which translates these inputs into one of four outcomes: accept, reject, bubble, or disparity. The first two outcomes correspond to uniformly high or uniformly low inputs, e.g. 5-5-5 and similarly high combinations are accepted, while 1-1-1 and similarly low combinations are rejected. Bubble cases are those in which one or more inputs are towards the middle, and since we don’t know precisely how many offers we will be in a position to make, nor do we know in advance what the distribution of transcript ratings will be (or FSC ratings, within the flexibility we permit), we are conservative in pre-programming accept and reject combinations. In other words, the bubble territory is fairly wide and that makes the interview process potentially very relevant. Disparity is the initial outcome for applications that (a) have meaningfully divergent FSC ratings, or (b) have significant differences between the FSC and transcript ratings. In both cases, SHC staff review the application and resolve the outcome into one of the other three categories.