

FINDING YOUR “FIT”

SELECTING SCHOOLS STRATEGICALLY

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The Two Questions

- Students ask:
 - Can I get in?
- Parents ask:
 - Can I afford it?

Better Question

- Students *and* parents should ask:
 - Does it fit?
- Answer:
 - Two-sided analysis – Student and School
 - Involves five key factors – The Five P's

Finding The Optimal Fit

- First, “Know Thyself”
- Then, Consider The Five P’s:
 1. Program
 2. Place
 3. People
 4. Price
 5. Priorities

Finding The Optimal Fit

- “Know Thyself” – Take a Personal Inventory:
 - Passions and interests (in and out of classroom)
 - Academic profile (grades/courses, test scores, class rank)
 - Personality and learning style
 - Strengths and challenge areas
 - Goals for college and thereafter
 - Limitations, if any
- Remain:
 - Open-minded
 - Realistic and honest
 - Willing to critique self

Finding The Optimal Fit

Program

Content

- Majors and Programs
- Distinctive Features
- Honors and Dual Degree Programs
- Co-ops and Internships
- Study Abroad
- Undergraduate Research

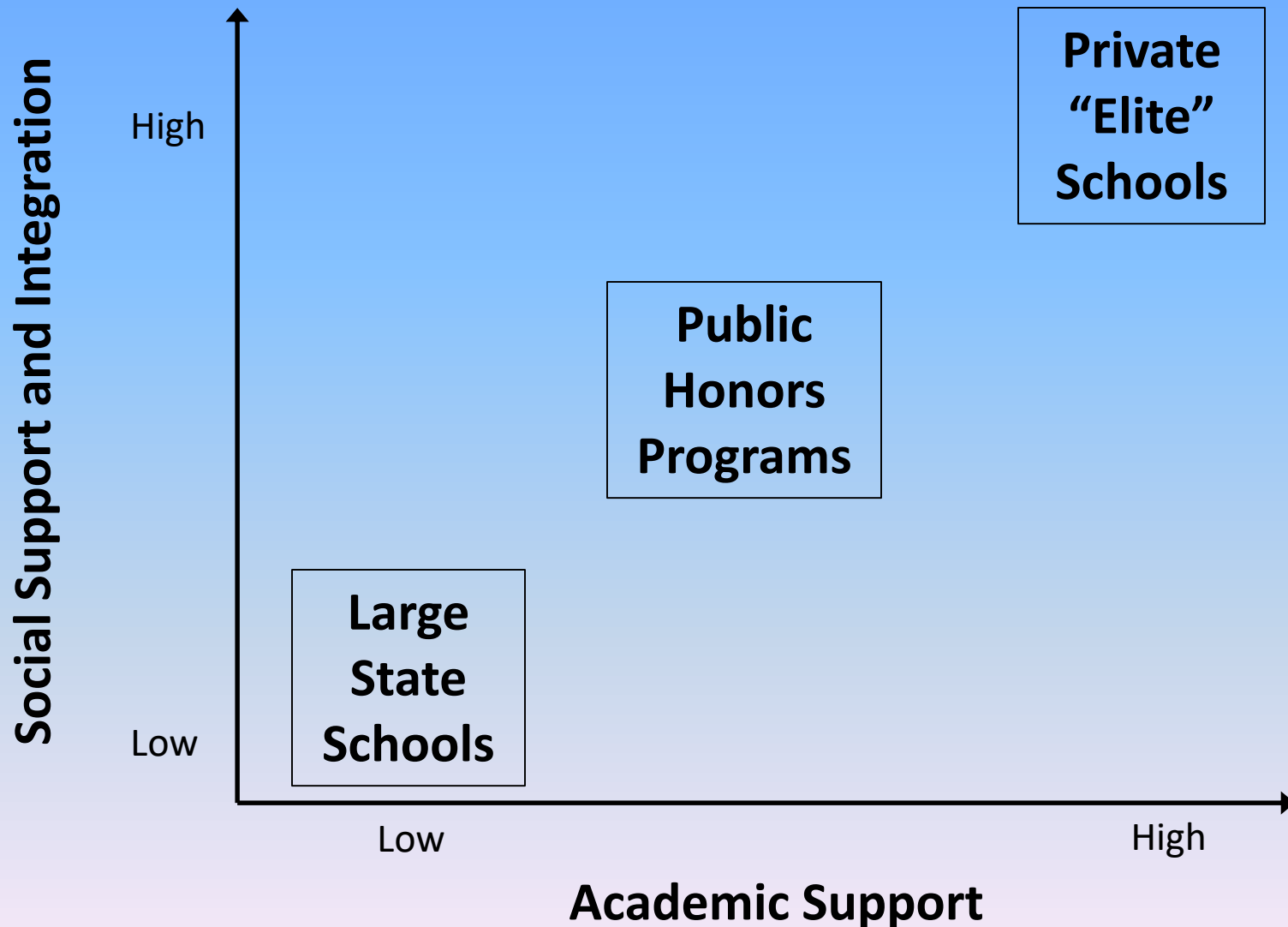
Learning Environment

- Class Sizes and Student-Teacher Ratios
- Faculty Access and Credentials
- Living-Learning Centers
- Service Learning
- Leadership Development
- Support Levels

Outcomes

- Retention Rate
- Graduation Rate
- Jobs and Graduate School Placement
- Loan Default Rate
- ROI – Return on Investment

Ask this Question: What Type of Support Does the Student Need to Thrive?



Finding The Optimal Fit

Place

- Public vs. private
- Size (campus size and student-body size)
- Location and distance from home
- Proximity to extended family (access to support)
- Climate
- Rural, suburban, or urban environment
- Well-bounded, distinct campus

Finding The Optimal Fit

People

- Student body background and diversity
- Academic profile of students (entrance difficulty)
- “Personality” of the school
- Campus life - activities and organizations
 - Athletic
 - Political
 - Cultural
 - Service
 - Greek Life
- Interaction between school and community

Finding The Optimal Fit

Price

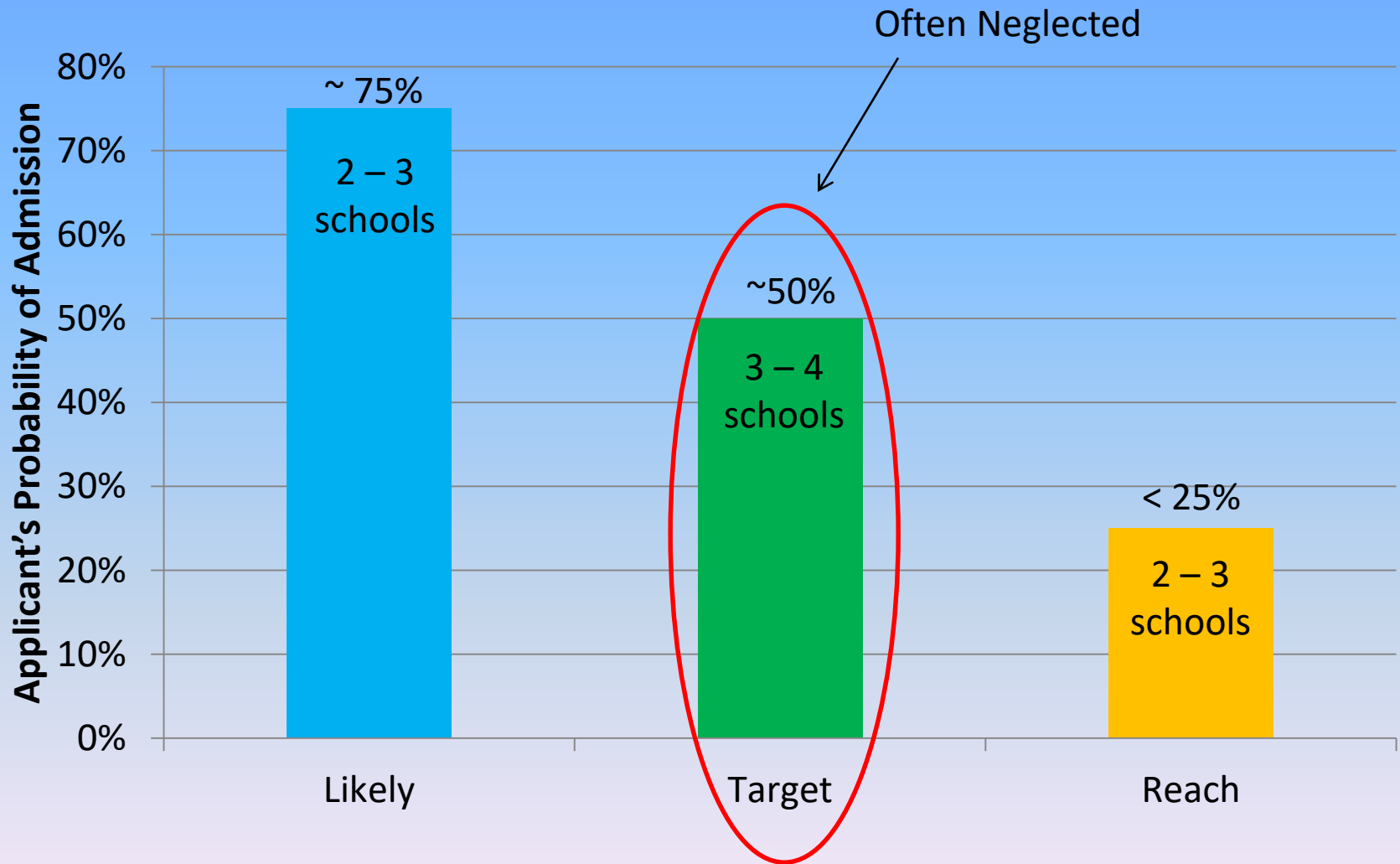
- Know your financial situation (frank family discussion).
 - Who is paying?
 - What are your family's financial resources for college?
 - Come up with a number your family can contribute.
 - Are you eligible for need and/or merit-based aid?
 - Are you and/or your parents willing to take loans?
 - Are you willing to be employed during school?
- Understand the cost of college.
 - College costs vary widely.
 - “Total Cost Of Attendance” has multiple elements (direct/indirect).
 - Families are expected to contribute to extent they are able.

Finding The Optimal Fit

Priorities



Goal: A Well-Balanced “Portfolio” of Schools



Websites and Tools for College Search

- PVSCollegeCounseling.com - Recommended Portal
- Quick Links Available From There Regarding:
 - College Search Engines and Guidebooks
 - Campus Visits and Virtual Tours
 - College Fairs and College Representative Visits
 - First Generation and Special Needs
 - NCAA Eligibility Considerations
 - Net Price Calculators and Loan Repayment Calculators
 - Financial Aid Planning
 - Scholarships and Loans
 - Gap Year, Military, and Other Alternatives

Key Take-Aways

- Goal is the best “fit,” not the best “name.”
- Know thyself and remember the Five P’s.
- Build a diversified, well balanced college list.
- Act with integrity.
- Leverage PVSCollegeCounseling.com site.
- Best “fit” analysis should take \$ into account.

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