



African Leadership Academy

Developing the next generation of African leaders

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PARENT AND GUARDIAN ROLE IN THE UNIVERSITY ADMISSION SEARCH

Your role in your students college and university search has a crucial part in the whole process. African Leadership Academy strongly encourages our students to take pride in what they do and we ask parents to support them along the way. As we do our part to transform Africa, we hope to have you do the same as you help your child through this important stage of the journey. A number of African faculty and staff at ALA have similar stories about their university search vs. Parent expectations and below are a few words of advice we and our parents gained after our successful and very happy undergraduate careers!

We ask you to be:

A mentor: Help your child learn who he or she is and realize what he or she does well. Encourage them to grow and to take advantage of opportunities. Work hard to maintain a balance between optimism and realism. Keep the lines of communication open. Listen more than you talk.

A counselor: Ask questions, gently challenge assumptions, and always put the emphasis on the child, not on the name and prestige of the university. Probing is very important. Who says it would be better to go to University A than University B? Assess several factors. Which is more important to your child: to enjoy the tertiary experience or to be a student? Would he or she do better in a class of 30 or 300? Will he or she truly be happy working for the next 20-30 years as a?

An honest information source: Even though your child should be in charge of the process, a university choice affects the whole family. Have a frank talk about expectations early on. Your student should know what you can afford, any reservations you have about prospective institutions locations or religious affiliation, and even your perceptions about certain schools. Don't hesitate to question your own ideas and assumptions, just as you encourage your child to do so. We have worked to inform your child over the past few months and will be able to help answer your concerns.

We ask you not to be:

A crutch: Let your child do the work and step in only when they ask for your help. This is an important opportunity for them to demonstrate their leadership skills.

An added source of pressure: Remember that going to college or university is not about what you can tell the other parents at the office, store or market centre. Do not define the range of what schools are acceptable to you, or equate your worth as a parent with where your children get accepted. The more anxious the parents are, the more anxious the student is bound to be.

A roadblock: Though students should do much of the work of getting themselves admitted, you should help with activities only you can perform. This means everything from being available to send all material they need to complete financial aid forms, etc.

The ALA counselling team welcomes any questions you may have about the process, but we strongly encourage the students to research their options and be fully committed to their university search. Please be open with your child about limitations for their university search, but also keep an open mind for



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your child and yourself. There are thousands of excellent universities around the world. It is only natural for you to encounter many universities unknown to you.

By focusing on only recognizable names, you will surely miss out on a wealth of great options for your child. It is our sincere hope that students, with their families support and dedication to making this next step, will have a solid selection of schools to pick from next year.