

How POM College Consulting helped the Clark family *navigate* the college selection and admission process, *understand* their financial options, and get their daughter into her *top choice school*



“POM helped us with every aspect of the college process – from finding colleges that matched with my daughter’s interests, applying to schools, filling out the FAFSA paperwork, and helping us understand our options for paying for it all. My daughter was able to go to her #1 choice school and POM helped her get there.”

Terri Teeter-Clark

When the Clark family first discovered POM College Consulting, they knew they were in need of some major guidance and support in the college admissions process.

Roughly 40 years had passed since parents Brian and Terri Clark had had their own college experience, and they knew the college landscape looked entirely different now.

With so many schools to choose from, an application process that’s highly

complicated and competitive, and financial realities that make most parents’ heads spin, the Clarks realized that the information they were being given by their daughter’s highschool guidance counselor – while good – was not going to be enough to help them navigate through the process in the way they truly wanted.

As a gifted and dedicated student, their daughter Ashley wanted to go to a great school – and as parents, Brian and Terri

wanted to do whatever they could to help her get into her top school choice.

They just didn't know how — as well as how they'd find the time.

“We're older parents and the current college process didn't exist when I went to school,” Terri said. “We just applied to a college, got in, and that was that. I knew I needed to set my daughter up for success but not only did I not know what to do, I also knew I didn't have the time to figure it out. My job is very demanding and my daughter had very demanding classes as well. We definitely needed some help.”

So, the Clarks went to a meeting conducted by POM College Consulting in the spring of 2019.

At that time, Ashley was a highschool sophomore and knew that she had a passion for computer science, game design, animation, and coding — but beyond that, **finding the right school to help her explore and expand those skill sets was a mystery.**

Terri said that the informational meeting they attended with POM laid out the college process for them, as well as showed them that the guidance and the help they needed was available.

“We were thrilled that there were different avenues of help that we could get from POM, like career development, college admission, and financial services,” Terri said. **“I also thought that the price was realistic,** especially given how much assistance they were going to give us throughout the whole college process.”

After signing on as a POM client, Terri said that **POM's Co-Director of Student Services conducted an online session with Ashley** where they discussed her interests and strengths, as well as what she was hoping for in a college experience.

Terri said that that first session alone was tremendously valuable.



“After my daughter got off that first call, everything that we needed to confirm was confirmed,” Terri said. “We saw that we were on the right track in wanting to find colleges with great programs in computer science, game design, and animation — and my daughter was excited about the process and the support she was getting from POM. She could see where we were headed, how we were going to get there, and what she needed to do to find the right college. All of that was so helpful and really made us feel that we were starting the process on a firm foundation.”

With the initial call complete, POM began to send over colleges that were a good match for Ashley’s interests and personality, and the Clarks started making appointments to go see the schools.

Terri said that POM provided them with resources that were helpful in evaluating each college they visited

— as well as provided the followup necessary to keep the process moving.

“POM had a college checklist that we used each time we visited a college,” Terri said. “It helped us focus on the features of each school that Ashley liked and didn’t like so that we could start to narrow down the schools and find the best fit.

“POM was also great about following up with us to keep us on task. They kept us updated on the process and next steps.”

Terri said that, because of Ashley’s interest in computer science and animation, they ended up shortlisting four schools, with Clemson University being her top choice. POM then helped them with every aspect of the application process.

“They helped us with everything we needed to apply to each school,” Terri said. **“POM let us know the specific requirements each school had about essays, test scores, and the grades needed for acceptance.** They wanted to make sure you’re completely aware of what is needed to get into the schools



you're interested in so that you're not wasting time or heading in the wrong direction."

POM also completed the FAFSA paperwork, provided a list of scholarships that Ashley could apply for, and provided them with an overview of what each school would require of them financially.

When the acceptance letters came in, Terri said POM's financial guidance was impressive.

"POM customized everything to our situation," Terri said. "They showed us in black-and-white what it would look like financially if we chose each school — including what we had saved, what scholarships Ashley received, and what we would need to come up with if there was a shortfall.

"They also provided us ideas, options, and strategies for ways we could bridge that gap."

Terri said one thing that surprised her about the financial portion of the process was that they could try to negotiate with a university in the



hopes of getting more money — an effort that POM provided guidance.

"Since Clemson was Ashley's top choice — and also the school we got the least amount of financial support from — POM helped us go back to them three times to ask for more money," Terri said. "We wrote a letter and they reviewed it for us, and then they guided us on what departments to submit it to, like the financial aid department, the scholarship department, and the hardship department. I had no idea you could do that. And POM knew the contacts in each department to reach out to, which was great."

Terri said that another bonus of POM's expertise was how they helped Ashley take stock of the AP classes she'd taken so she could take advantage of the dual credits they provided toward both highschool and college requirements.

“Because of her credits, Ashley was admitted as a sophomore,” Terri said. “That’s saved me an entire year in college expenses, and because she chose to go to Clemson that’s a \$52,000 savings.”

Terri said that POM was with them through the entire college process until Ashley accepted her offer from Clemson – and that they were just as thrilled as they were that Ashley was heading to her top choice school.

She also said that it was made all the better because she had the guidance that she needed – as well as the structure and support – to help her daughter get in successfully.

“POM had such a great structure for helping us get through the college process,” Terri said. **“I can’t even imagine if I had to do this on my own. It would’ve been a challenge and things would’ve fallen through the cracks,** and I don’t think my daughter would’ve been as on board as she was.

“It helped tremendously that someone else was in charge and talking to

Ashley about it instead of me.”

Terri said that POM’s college consulting services have been well worth the investment – and should be considered by every parent with a college-ready child.

“POM really does set you and your child up for success,” Terri said. “They navigate the process for you, keep you on track, and customize everything to your child’s situation, as well as your own financial situation.

“A guidance counselor at a public school can’t provide that type of support. Ashley had a great guidance counselor and they had a great relationship, but she was overseeing 500-600 students. They can’t give one-on-one guidance because they don’t have time. POM gives you that guidance – and they handle so much of the process for you.

“Working with POM was well worth the investment. My daughter was able to go to her #1 choice school and POM helped her get there.”



To learn more about how POM College Consulting can help you and your child navigate the college admissions process, [click here](#).