



"TODAY SHOW" TRANSCRIPT

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Profile: Today's Classroom; Barbara Kantrowitz of Newsweek and Seppy Basili of Kaplan discuss alternatives to ivy league schools

LESTER HOLT, co-host: This morning on TODAY'S CLASSROOM, the new ivies. A generation ago, it used to be just those eight schools in the Northeast that were the Holy Grail of college admissions, but now the number of college-bound students has sky-rocketed and so has the number of world-class schools. Here's one student's story. Adam Goodman grew up in a Yale family. His father graduated from Yale in 1945. Adam's Father: Here I am as a freshman at Yale University. And, of course, I was a dedicated Yale alumnus and supported the school through the years.

HOLT: His brother graduated from there last year. The annual Harvard-Yale football game is a family tradition. It seemed Adam would follow in the family footsteps, he had the academic record, and SAT scores to get into Yale, but he wasn't accepted.

Mr. ADAM GOODMAN: I mean, at the time, it definitely hurt. I mean, it's rejection.

HOLT: To cope with that rejection, he made a video. (Clip of video) Adam's Father: Well, it was a disappointment. I considered myself a Yale family.

HOLT: But in the back of his mind, Adam never thought he'd end up at Yale. He had his eye on Emory University in Atlanta. It didn't have the ivy league brand, but it did have an excellent reputation.

Mr. GOODMAN: And the second I got there, the campus is one of the most beautiful places I'd ever been. Maybe for politics Yale would be better, but I'm interested in business, and there's no place better than Atlanta for business.

HOLT: Emory accepted Adam. And in his freshman year, he made the dean's list.

Mr. GOODMAN: I find the work challenging, but I'm doing well. Better than I would have expected.

HOLT: His mother is happy Adam has found his own way.

Adam's Mother: Well, I'm very happy with the fact that Adam chose Emory. And I think it was a--he was very wise about choosing the right school for him.

Adam's Father: I'm a supporter of Emory now.

HOLT: Emory University is just one of the 25 schools listed as the new ivies in the current issue of Newsweek magazine, and revealed exclusively this morning on TODAY. Barbara Kantrowitz is a senior editor at Newsweek and Seppy Basili is a senior vice president of the educational and test prep company Kaplan. And good morning to both of you. Thanks for being here.

Ms. BARBARA KANTROWITZ (Newsweek Magazine): You're welcome.

Mr. SEPPY BASILI (Vice President, Kaplan Test Prep & Admissions): Thank you.

HOLT: Well, since we're going to reveal an exclusive, let me go through the list of the new ivies, and then we'll find out about some of the issues this raises. Bowdoin, Colby, Tufts, Boston College, Colgate, University of Rochester, New York University, Skidmore, University of Virginia, Carnegie-Mellon, Emory, Vanderbilt, Davidson, Kenyon, Macalaster, Notre Dame, Washington University in St. Louis, Reed, Pomona and Harvey Mudd, UCLA, University of Michigan Honors College, Rice, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Olin College of Engineering, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. That's quite a list. And you can hear a few people in the crowd like, 'Oh, I know that school.' Barbara, how did these schools make the list? Who do you call them the new ivies?

Ms. KANTROWITZ: Well, they're schools that 15 or 20 years ago attracted a regional or specialized pool of applicants. And now they're really known to kids all over the country. They've really made their mark. And I--part of it is because they're better known because students can research on the Internet. And part of it is just word of mouth.

HOLT: It's becoming kind of an open secret that these schools are in that league.
Ms. KANTROWITZ: That's right.

HOLT: Let me walk through--we can't go through all of them, but let's look at a few of the highlights. First of all, the new ivies, Pomona and Harvey Mudd, that's part of the--an accordance consortium there east of LA.

Ms. KANTROWITZ: Yeah, they're part of the Claremont colleges. And I think they really are wonderful schools. You--Harvey Mudd is a science and engineering school, Pomona is a liberal arts college, and you get them within the context of this group of schools, so you get the benefits of a small school and a larger sort of university context.

HOLT: Wanted to ask you about Washington University in St. Louis. Why is that school's reputation on the rise?

Ms. KANTROWITZ: Well, they've done a great job of selling themselves. They've made themselves known to the students at all the best schools around the country, best high schools. And they have terrific programs that students are turning down some other schools for. For example, they have a great art program, a great engineering program, a business program, they have a medical school. So that, as an undergraduate, you can be exposed to that. And I think students turn down ivy league schools for Wash U all the time now.

HOLT: And New York University is on the list. And usually when you think of a prestigious university in Manhattan, Columbia gets a lot of press.

Ms. KANTROWITZ: Yeah. I think for a long time NYU was sort of the poor relation in New York. But they've had some terrific administrators. They had a lot of publicity after the show "Felicity."

HOLT: Right.

Ms. KANTROWITZ: And a lot of students want to be in New York. New York's a great place to go to school.

HOLT: Yeah. And, Seppy, let me ask you, do the--we talk about these other schools now, does an ivy league education, though, still count for something in terms of your future?

Mr. BASILI: You know, there's no question that the networking that comes from an ivy league education is still really strong. I work with folks who get a Princeton e-mail list once a week, they're still very, very connected. But in reality, these schools, and schools like these schools, the networking that comes and the education that you get...

HOLT: Education measures up?

Mr. BASILI: It really does. In some cases it's even better. You know, there have been studies around national student engagement, and you get better attention from professors and often much smaller classes at some of these other schools that we highlighted.

HOLT: Anxiety level for getting into college is, I think it's fair to say, is at an all-time high. Does a list called "The New Ivies" ratchet up that anxiety, or does it make kids perhaps relax and broaden their horizons a bit?

Mr. BASILI: I think it's precisely that. I think it does broaden students' horizons. You know, it's really important for families to be aware that college is going to stay competitive for the next 10 years or so, and they've got to cast a wider net and look at some different programs.

HOLT: Well, it's nice to know there are a lot of great choices for top colleges. Thanks to both of you, Barbara Kantrowitz and Seppy Basili, appreciate you being here.

Mr. BASILI: Thank you, Lester.

HOLT: For more information on the 2007 edition of the Newsweek Kaplan "How to Get Into College Guide," it'll be on the newsstands August 21st. And we'll be back with a lot more of TODAY right after this.