



THE COLLEGE DEFERRAL DEFENSE GUIDE

How to Write a Standout LOCI and Build
a Strategy That Turns “Maybe” Into “Yes”

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YOU'RE DEFERRED, NOT DEFEATED

I'm Bethany Goldszer, founder of Stand Out College Prep. For more than 18 years, I've helped over 2,500 students navigate college admissions, financial aid, and scholarships. I've seen the full range of outcomes — from “dream school” denials to students who were deferred early and later admitted with scholarships.

In the 2025–2026 cycle, early application numbers are at record highs. At some colleges, 70–80% of Early Action and Early Decision applicants are deferred rather than admitted or denied outright. That means what you do after the deferral matters more than ever.

IN THIS GUIDE, YOU'LL LEARN:

- What a deferral really means (and doesn't mean)
- How to write a powerful Letter of Continued Interest (LOCI)
- Which updates actually move the needle
- How to leverage your school counselor
- How to protect your options and your mental health

Use this guide to move from panic to a clear, confident plan.

CHAPTER 01

WHAT A DEFERRAL REALLY MEANS

Understand why colleges defer, what this decision signals, and how to interpret your standing.

CHAPTER 02

YOUR 7-PART COLLEGE DEFERRAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

A seven-part plan to respond strategically instead of reacting in panic.

CHAPTER 03

HOW TO LEVERAGE YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Learn how your counselor can advocate for you behind the scenes and how to prepare for a high-impact conversation.

CHAPTER 04

HOW TO WRITE A STANDOUT LOCI

Structure, key elements, and what to say (and not say) in your Letter of Continued Interest.

CHAPTER 05

WHY A DEFERRAL STRATEGY MATTERS

See how timing, communication, and precision shape outcomes — and why families with a clear plan avoid the common mistakes deferred students make.

CHAPTER 06

1-ON-1 COLLEGE DEFERRAL STRATEGY MEETING

Discover how personalized guidance helps your family interpret the deferral, identify meaningful updates, and move forward.

WHAT'S INSIDE THE COLLEGE DEFERRAL DEFENSE GUIDE

WHAT A DEFERRAL REALLY MEANS

Being deferred from college means the admissions committee has postponed your decision until the regular decision round. It is not a rejection. Your file was strong enough to remain in the pool – they simply want to see:

- The full applicant pool
- Your senior-year performance
- Any new achievements or context

What a deferral does **NOT** mean:

- ✗ You did something “wrong”
- ✗ You’re not qualified
- ✗ Your chances are over

What a deferral **DOES** mean:

- ✓ You’re still under active consideration
- ✓ You have time to strengthen your application
- ✓ You can submit targeted updates and a powerful LOCI

This guide helps you treat the deferral as a second chance, not a verdict.





WHY COLLEGES DEFER — AND HOW YOU SHOULD RESPOND

Admissions offices defer students for strategic reasons:

- Early applications have surged 15–30%, while available spots haven't
- Deferrals allow comparison to the full applicant pool
- Colleges need to build a balanced class
- They may be waiting for fall grades, test scores, or achievements
- They may want to gauge demonstrated interest

The takeaway:

A deferral means the college sees potential. Your job is to clarify fit, share meaningful updates, and communicate strategically — without overwhelming the admissions office.

That's exactly what the **Deferral Defense Strategy** helps you do.

YOUR 7-PART COLLEGE DEFERRAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

Read & Respect the Rules

01

Carefully read your deferral letter and the college's policy page.

- Do they invite additional materials?
- Do they limit contact?
- Are there deadlines for updates?

Your strategy only works if it stays within guidelines.



02 Stabilize, Then Strategize

Give yourself 24–48 hours to feel disappointed — that's normal. Then:

- Meet with your school counselor
- Review your application honestly
- Clarify whether this school is still your top choice

You'll write a better LOCI when you're calm and thinking clearly.



Craft an Outstanding LOCI

03

Your LOCI is your most powerful tool. A strong LOCI should:

- Reaffirm the school is a top (or first) choice
- Highlight specific academic and community fit
- Share 2–4 meaningful updates
- (If true) State that you will enroll if admitted

Keep it to one polished, school-specific page.



Send Strategic Updates Only

04

Admissions offices want quality, not quantity. Send updates only when you have:

- New awards or leadership roles
- Major project or competition milestones
- Updated test scores in/above the middle 50%
- Strong fall grades

Aim for no more than one update per month.

Strengthen Your Academic Profile

05

Senior year matters more after a deferral. Focus on:

- Keeping grades high
- Maintaining rigor
- Avoiding “senior slide”

Mid-year reports often play a crucial role for deferred students.



06

Demonstrate Smart, Authentic Interest

If the school tracks interest:

- Attend virtual info sessions
- Visit campus if feasible
- Mention your engagement in your updates

Thoughtful interest helps; constant emails hurt you.



Build a Strong Plan B (and C)

07

Protect your future by:

- Completing strong applications to other schools
- Considering honors programs or merit scholarships
- Remaining open to schools that may be a better fit financially or academically

You are defending your whole future, not just one outcome.



HOW TO LEVERAGE YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR — THE MOST UNDERUSED DEFERRAL STRATEGY

Your school counselor is often your most powerful advocate. Admissions officers regularly rely on counselors for context, credibility, and insight that students simply cannot provide themselves.

Your counselor can:

- Send an updated recommendation
- Provide context for course rigor, grading, or school policies
- Share insights about your growth since applying
- Highlight meaningful updates in a professional way
- Contact your regional admissions representative when appropriate
- Reinforce your genuine interest in the school



COME PREPARED TO YOUR COUNSELOR MEETING

BRING:

- Your deferral letter
- Your draft LOCI
- A list of updates since applying
- Questions about the college's communication policies

A thoughtful counselor message can validate your updates, strengthen your narrative, and give your application the context it needs. When coordinated with your LOCI, this becomes a **high-impact, behind-the-scenes** advantage.

(And for families: knowing what to ask your counselor to say – and when – is something we map out in a Strategy Meeting.)

HOW TO WRITE A LOCI THAT STANDS OUT

A great Letter of Continued Interest is clear, specific, and strategic. It reinforces your fit for the school, highlights meaningful growth since you applied, and signals maturity, confidence, and genuine interest. Use the structure below to guide your letter.

Opening Paragraph

- State that you were deferred and that you remain very interested
- Thank the admissions committee for their continued consideration
- Name the specific school, college, or program within the university

Why This College

- Reference specific programs, professors, research, or opportunities
- Connect those details directly to your academic or career goals
- Show depth of knowledge that goes beyond the website
- Avoid language that could apply to multiple colleges

HOW TO WRITE A LOCI THAT STANDS OUT

Meaningful Updates

- Share 2-4 significant updates since you applied
- Briefly explain the importance of each update
- Show continued intellectual curiosity, leadership, or impact

Examples of strong updates:

- Awards or competitions
- Leadership roles
- Research, publications, or major projects
- Internships or work related to your intended field
- Significant academic improvement

Commitment & Fit

- If true, clearly state that you would enroll if admitted
- Reaffirm why this college is uniquely aligned with your goals
- Demonstrate that you understand the school's values and culture

HOW TO WRITE A LOCI THAT STANDS OUT

Closing Paragraph (2–3 sentences)

- Thank the committee again for their time and consideration
- Offer to provide any additional information if needed
- End with a calm, confident tone – not desperation

LOCI Best Practices

- If true, clearly state that you would enroll if admitted
- Reaffirm why this college is uniquely aligned with your goals
- Demonstrate that you understand the school's values and culture

LOCI Mistakes

- Sounding desperate or apologetic
- Complaining about the deferral
- Repeating your entire original application
- Using generic language
- Including minor or irrelevant updates
- Sending materials the school explicitly discouraged

SAMPLE LOCI #1: HIGHLY SELECTIVE UNIVERSITY

Context: Deferred Early Action, strong academics, research-focused student

Dear Admissions Committee,

Thank you for continuing to consider my application to the University of Chicago. I remain deeply interested in UChicago and would be honored to join the Class of 2030 if admitted.

Since applying, my conviction that UChicago is the right academic and intellectual environment for me has only strengthened. I am especially drawn to the interdisciplinary approach of the Economics program and the opportunity to pursue empirical research through the Becker Friedman Institute. The emphasis on inquiry-driven learning and discussion-centered classes is exactly the kind of environment in which I know I will thrive.

I would also like to share several meaningful updates since submitting my application. This fall, I earned first place in my state economics research competition for a paper analyzing income inequality and housing policy. I was also selected to serve as president of our school's Economics Club, where I now lead weekly discussions and coordinate guest speaker events. Academically, I finished the semester with straight A's in my most rigorous course load to date, including AP Calculus BC and AP Macroeconomics.

If admitted, I would enthusiastically enroll at the University of Chicago. I am excited by the prospect of contributing to classroom discussion, engaging in undergraduate research, and fully immersing myself in UChicago's distinctive academic culture.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I appreciate the opportunity to remain under review and look forward to your decision this spring.

Sincerely,
[Student Name - redacted]

SAMPLE LOCI #2: PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

Context: Deferred ED, community-focused student with leadership growth

Dear Admissions Officer,

Thank you for continuing to review my application to Fordham University. I remain extremely interested in Fordham and grateful for the opportunity to share updates since submitting my application.

Fordham continues to stand out to me for its strong emphasis on service, justice, and academic excellence within an urban environment. The Psychology program, along with the university's commitment to applied learning and community engagement, aligns closely with my long-term goal of working in youth mental health advocacy.

Since applying, I have taken on several new leadership and service roles. I was appointed senior captain of our varsity volleyball team, where I now mentor underclassmen and coordinate weekly leadership meetings. I also expanded my volunteer work at our local community center, helping to launch a peer tutoring initiative for middle school students. Academically, I completed the semester with a 4.0 GPA while maintaining a full honors and AP course load.

Fordham remains my first choice, and I would be honored to enroll if admitted. Thank you again for your time and continued consideration. I truly appreciate the opportunity to remain in the applicant pool.

Sincerely,

[Student Name - redacted]

YOUR DEFERRAL DEFENSE NOTES

Use this space to jot down:

- Key LOCI points
- New updates or achievements
- Questions for your counselor
- Backup school options

Note: *Your future doesn't depend on one school. Use this page to plan your strategy, not chase perfection.*

WHY A DEFERRAL STRATEGY MATTERS NOW (AND WHY GUESSING ISN'T ENOUGH)



Being deferred is not the end – but it is a moment where the next moves truly matter. Most families don't realize that colleges make final decisions by comparing deferred students to the full Regular Decision pool – thousands of applicants with new grades, new achievements, and new context. In that comparison, the students who rise are the ones who communicate strategically... not reactively.

Here's the truth that admissions officers won't say out loud:

- ✗ They send no updates.
- ✗ They write generic LOCI's.
- ✗ Their counselors don't advocate at the right moment.
- ✗ They assume their original application will "speak for itself."

And when decisions come out in April, they're crushed to learn that silence counted against them far more than the deferral itself.

But this is also why a strong deferral strategy works.

When you respond with clarity, focus, and the right updates — not random activity — you show the admissions committee exactly what they hoped to see when they deferred you: continued performance, intellectual maturity, genuine fit, and the discipline to follow through.

A calm, precise plan turns a deferral into a strategic advantage.

Guessing turns it into a missed opportunity.

This is why families choose to work with me during this window. Not to “game the system,” but to make sure they take the steps that actually matter — and skip the ones that quietly hurt their chances.

With the right strategy, this period becomes purposeful rather than paralyzing, and you move forward with confidence instead of fear.

1-ON-1 COLLEGE DEFERRAL STRATEGY MEETING

A **College Deferral Strategy Meeting** is a private, one-on-one session designed to bring clarity, structure, and confidence to this window of uncertainty. It's where we translate everything in this guide into a personalized, executable strategy for your student.

In your session, we will:

- Review the deferral letter and interpret what the school is truly signaling
- Clarify exactly how your student should position their Letter of Continued Interest
- Identify what updates are truly worth sending — and when
- Map out an appropriate counselor advocacy plan
- Strengthen your backup school options so one outcome doesn't determine everything

Replace uncertainty with a calm, step-by-step plan through March and April.

This is not a generic conversation. It is a focused strategy session built around your student's academic profile, goals, and college list.

Many families find that once they have a clear plan in place, the emotional weight of the deferral lifts. They can stop second-guessing, stop waiting, and start moving forward with confidence.

If you would like that clarity and structure for your family, I would be glad to support you. [Click here to set up your session.](#)



SCHEDULE YOUR COLLEGE DEFERRAL STRATEGY MEETING

Book your session here:

standoutcollegeprep.com/deferral

You don't need to have everything figured out before you book. That's what the session is for.