

HALF HOLLOW HILLS HIGH SCHOOLS

COLLEGE INFORMATION GUIDEBOOK

2014 Edition



**HALF HOLLOW HILLS HS EAST
50 Vanderbilt Parkway
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**HALF HOLLOW HILLS HS WEST
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Dix Hills, New York 11746**

HALF HOLLOW HILLS HIGH SCHOOLS COLLEGE INFORMATION GUIDEBOOK

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We are pleased to present this edition of the College Information Guidebook for your use in the college exploration process. We believe it will provide you with important details on how to begin the college search, essay writing, interviewing, financial aid, and standardized testing. Information specific to students with disabilities is also included. We hope that this publication will provide you with a strong framework and timetable to follow during your college search.

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A college and career planning conference will be scheduled by your child's guidance counselor during the second half of their junior year of high school. This is a very important meeting which both student and parent(s) should attend. Parents can also reach their child's counselor at either Counseling office by calling the appropriate number listed above.

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HIGH SCHOOL TIMETABLE FOR POST-SECONDARY PLANNING

THINGS TO DO:

Grade 11:

- Focus on strong academic performance.
- **Remember that the Grade Point Average (GPA) you earn at the end of the junior year is what colleges will see on your high school transcript.**
- Meet regularly with your Guidance Counselor to discuss college, career, and personal issues.
- Begin a personal resume of extra-curricular activities in which you have participated.
- **Register to take the SAT I, SAT II, or the ACT in the spring.**
- Research various career opportunities and begin to plan your goals. (College, trade or technical school, possible jobs, etc.)
- Visit the College/Career Research Center in your school regularly.
- **Utilize NAVIANCE- the computer program for career planning and college research. (If you do not have your NAVIANCE password, see your Guidance Counselor.)**
- If you are interested in a Military Academy (West Point, Annapolis, Air Force, etc.) begin the application process in the early spring.
- Utilize the internet to research and request materials (college, career, employment).
- Attend College Fairs and Open House events.
- If you have a disability, present a positive self-image by stressing your strengths, while understanding the influence of your disability.
- Explore advantages and disadvantages of community colleges, four-year colleges, and vocational schools.
- Plan visits to colleges in the spring.

Summer between Grade 11 and Grade 12:

- Visit colleges you have identified for yourself.
- Have an interview with an admissions representative if possible. (Make appointments early, particularly at the competitive colleges, since their available appointments go quickly).
- Take advantage of the various summer experiences available for the eleventh graders conducted at colleges and other educational institutions. (See your counselor for more information.)
- Meet with a college faculty member to discuss the learning disability support services available, if applicable.

Grade 12

- Meet regularly with your counselor. Do not procrastinate.
- Create a resume of activities, clubs, and organizations in which you have participated.
- Maintain a solid, quality, academic program.
- **Colleges are very interested in your senior year program. Mid-year and 3rd quarter grades are often reviewed to determine admission.**
- Remember that **college acceptance for admission is provisional**, pending receipt of your final grades in June.
- Do not jeopardize your standing with colleges by slacking off during the senior year.
- Conduct research in the College/Career Research Center for the most up to date information.
- **Utilize NAVIANCE the computer program for college, career and financial aid information. (If you do not have your NAVIANCE password, see your Guidance Counselor.)**

- Create a Common Application online account! www.commonapp.org Prepare college applications and submit them to your counselor by mid November.
- Follow the application procedure outlined by the Counseling Center.
- Be aware of early application deadlines – especially for early decision and applications to special programs.
- Take the necessary tests required by the colleges that you are interested in attending (SAT I, SAT II, ACT).
- **It is your responsibility to have the scores officially sent to colleges by the testing companies (College Board & ACT).**
- Scholarship applications should be filed early – check the **NAVIANCE "Scholarship" Tab** regularly.
- Pay close attention to the announcements provided by the Guidance Department.
- Attend College Fairs and Open House events.
- Consider Early Decision only if you are convinced that a particular school is the 100% best match for you. You may only apply to one college as an Early Decision candidate and if accepted, you **must** attend.
- Attend **Financial Aid Night** workshop in January.
- Fill out necessary Financial Aid forms (**file the FAFSA after January 1**).
- For students with disabilities, contact a representative in the student services department, if applicable.
- Meet college representatives who visit the school.
- Inform your counselor when you have made a decision regarding what you will do after graduation (attend college, accept a job, enter the military, etc.).
- Not interested in college? Explore employment opportunities with your counselor. Visit local and state employment agencies. Complete a resume.
- Interested in the military? Visit and meet with your local military recruiters about school and career opportunities.

QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE YOURSELF AS YOU BEGIN THE COLLEGE SEARCH

YOUR GOALS AND VALUES

- What aspects of your high school years have you enjoyed the most? Have you missed anything during this time? If you could live this period over again would you do anything differently?
- What values are most important to you? What do you care about most? What concerns occupy most of your energy, effort and thoughts?
- How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
- What kind of person would you like to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths, which would you most like to develop? What would you most like to change about yourself? What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit the growth you would like to see?
- Is there anything you have secretly wanted to do or be? If you had a year to go anywhere and do whatever you wanted, how would you spend that year?
- What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

YOUR EDUCATION

- What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed the most? Which courses have been most difficult for you? Looking toward college: do your interests require any special facilities, programs or opportunities? Consider all your interests in terms of fields of study, activities, community and cultural opportunities. Are you more interested in career preparation, technical training or general knowledge and skills of inquiry thinking?

- What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own? Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments: Topics chosen for research papers, lab reports, independent projects, independent reading, school activities, job or volunteer work. What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
- How do you learn best? What methods and style of teaching engages your interest and effort the most?
- How would you describe your school? Has your school environment encouraged you to develop your interests, talents and abilities? Have you felt limited by your school environment in any way? What would you preserve or change about your school if you had the power and money to do so? Why?
- How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues and exchange ideas? What has been your most stimulating, intellectual experience in recent years?
- How well has your school prepared you for college? In what areas of skill or knowledge do you feel confident or inadequately prepared for college study? Have you been challenged by your courses?
- Have you worked up to your potential in high school? Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Are your SAT scores? If no, why not?
- Are there any outside circumstances (in your recent experience or background) which have interfered with your academic performance? Consider such factors as after-school job, home responsibilities or difficulties, excessive school activities, illness or emotional stress, parental pressure, English not spoken at home, problems with course scheduling or other factors that are unique to your recent experience or background.
- What satisfactions and frustrations do you expect to encounter in college? What are you looking forward to? What worries you most? What do you hope to gain from college?
- Why are you going to college? What do you want out of your college experience?

YOUR ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

- What activities do you most enjoy outside the daily routine of school and other responsibilities? Which activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices? Why? Which interests do you want to pursue in college?
- Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence or contribution?
- How would other describe your role in your school or home community? What do you consider your most significant contribution to your environment? Are you satisfied with your contribution to the organizations to which you belong?
- After a long hard day, what do you most enjoy doing? What do you do for fun? What do you do for relaxation?

THE WORLD AROUND YOU

- How would you describe your school, family and home town? How has your environment influenced your way of thinking? How have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by your school and home?
- What do your parents and friends expect of you? How have their expectations influenced the goals and standards you set for yourself? What pressures have you felt to conform?
- What has been the most controversial issue in your school or community? How does the issue concern you? What has been your reaction to the controversy? What is your opinion about the issue?

- Have you ever encountered people who thought and acted differently than you did? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
- What distresses you most about the world around you? Assuming the obligation and opportunity to change the world, where would you start?
- Do you have any current heroes or heroines? Any historical heroes? What books have you read which have changed your way of thinking?

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A COLLEGE?

1. School Programs: Do you want a diversified education in the liberal arts? Preparation for a particular career? Is the school known for any special programs? Are honors programs available? Is the college known for its English department or Chemistry department? What are its strengths? Are there pre-professional programs for business, education, engineering, fine arts, etc.? What degrees are offered? What majors offered in your areas of interest? What is the breadth and depth of courses offered in your areas of interest? Are interdisciplinary courses and majors available? Which are the strongest departments? What options are available for Independent Study? Individual tutorials? Seminars? Research opportunities? Field work? Internships? Exchange programs? Foreign Study? Joint degree programs? Cooperative work/study plan? Pre-professional programs? Accreditation? Degree requirements? Grading systems? Grading/Distribution? Honor system?

2. Admissions: Is the college most competitive, highly competitive, very competitive, competitive, less competitive or noncompetitive? Will applying early action or early decision increase your chances? How are applicants evaluated (rigor of program, GPA, testing etc.)? What are the realistic chances of getting in? What percentage of applicants offered admission? What is the average SAT/ACT scores of freshman? What percentage of freshman ranked in top 10% of high school class? Freshman class profile?

3. Location of the School: Is near home, one hour away, 300 miles away; or across the USA? How often do you want to be able to go home? How is the surrounding community?

4. Campus Setting: Is it rural, suburban, or urban? Is the school in the city, like the University of Pennsylvania or in the rural, New England countryside like Williams? What kinds of surroundings are essential to your well-being? Do you prefer a fast-paced environment with lots of things to do, or do you prefer things to be more serene and relaxed?

5. Size of the School: Do you want to spend four years at a small liberal arts college of 800 undergraduates? Or do you prefer to blend in at a large state university of 20,000+? Do you think you would find success in large classes, or do you require more individualized attention from your teachers?

6. State vs. Private Schools: Is the school a large state university with most of the student population from the state where it is located? Is it one of the "public ivy's?" Is the college public, private, or religiously affiliated?

7. Geographical Diversity: Is the college a regional one attracting student from the same state or region? Or is it a school, regardless of its size, which attracts students from all over the USA, or the world at large? Would you like an opportunity to meet students from different backgrounds or are you more comfortable with people whose interests and experiences are similar to your own?

8. Cost of College: What is the tuition? What are the living costs? What travel costs are there from home to campus? Are there hidden costs?

9. Financial Aid: With 93% of undergraduates at many private schools on financial aid of some type, where do you fit? What monies are available for the students at the school of your choice? Does the school offer merit-based aid? What about

tuition installment plans? Minimum-maximum total costs per year. What should students budget for tuition and fees/room and board/books and personal expenses/travel costs? What can your family pay toward college expenses?

10. Living Conditions: Is on-campus housing guaranteed for all four years? Are the dorms co-ed? Are there single sex dorms? Are alternatives in housing available? Are the rooms predominantly large dorms or housing clusters small houses? What is the availability of single rooms/doubles/suits/ multiple rooms? System of housing allocation/ roommate selection? Centralized/Decentralized dining? Alternative dining programs?

11. Safety on Campus: Are the dorms secure and locked? What is the safety system on the campus?

12. Core curriculum-Distribution Credits: Does the college require a specific number of credits in different academic disciplines for graduation? For example, would you have to take 6 credits in Philosophy before you graduate? Or would you design your own curriculum? What is the proportion of study to general education/concentration/student choice? Are there specific freshman courses or curriculum/distribution requirements?

13. Sophomore Standing: Does the school accept AP credits? Does it offer advanced standing in school? Or does the offer more in depth courses to AP students while retaining freshman status?

14. Study Abroad: Are there opportunities to study in foreign countries such as Italy, Japan or Australia, for example, while an undergraduate? What percentage of students study abroad?

15. Internships: Are there opportunities for “hands on experience” while in college? Which departments have formal internship opportunities?

16. Graduate School after College: What percentage of students goes onto graduate school immediately upon graduation, or within five years? What is the record of those who successfully get into the law, medical or business school of their choice? What career advising and information programs are available?

17. Placement after Graduation: Is there an office for job placement after college? Is there an alumni network that helps in job placement? What percentage of the students becomes employed following graduation?

18. Weekend School: Do the students remain on campus on weekends, or is it a “suitcase” (commuter) school?

19. Socialization vs. Academic Rigor: What balance of academic challenge, activities and social life suit you best? How interested are you in the substance of intellectual life: books, ideas, issues and discussion? Do you want an academic program where you must work and think hard? Or one where you can earn respectable grades without knocking yourself out? How important is it for you to perform at the top of your class or would you be satisfied to be in the middle or bottom of your college class? Is it a “grind” school--all work, work, work? Is it fraternity and sorority oriented? What are the facilities for socialization? Do you like a competitive environment or do you find success in a more relaxed learning setting? How is the presence of religious, ethnic or cultural groups on campus? Are there multi-cultural opportunities? How is the workload? What are the course expectations? What types of assignments are given? What is the level of academic pressure/competition? Can students design their own majors? What is the level of interest in political, social or world issues? How is the campus diversity and is there tolerance of differences? What is the importance of money/material possessions/social appearance on campus?

20. Minorities: What percentage of students are minorities? Consider racial, ethnic and religious minority roles in the school you are considering. How would you feel about going to college where the students are quite different from you? Imagine being Jewish at Providence College, for example--or Catholic at Brandeis? How do you respond to people who might look, think and act differently than you do?

21. Sports Facilities: Is there a swimming pool? Are there horse stables? Is there an ice hockey rink?

22. Athletic Programs: Is the ice hockey team a varsity sport? Does the lacrosse team play Division I or III? Is basketball strong? Do they have a women's squash team? How many students participate in intramural or intercollegiate sports?

23. Student Body: Are the students politically active? Are they professional in orientation? What percentage of the students graduate in 4-6 years? What is the male/female ratio? What is the total percentage of undergraduate students? Average freshman class size? What percentage of freshman who remain at the college and graduate? What is the Commuter/Resident percentage? What is the geographic origin of the student body?

24. Faculty: Are the classes taught by full professors? Are TA's (Teaching Assistants) the norm? What is the student to faculty ratio? Percentage with PhD's; Origin of degrees earned; Original faculty research/scholarship; Teaching course load; Expectations for teaching/scholarship/advising and other college service; Emphasis on undergraduate teaching and learning? Advising; Accessibility for conferences; Department clubs, colloquia, committees with student representatives; Class size; Classes under 20 students or over 50 students; Opportunities for discussion/student presentation

25. Facilities: What are the facilities on campus? Is the campus Wi-Fi enabled? Are there computer labs? What about the quality of the library? What are the library hours? Is it fully computerized? Is the campus library tied into a larger network? Are there new facilities being planned that will be available during your time there?

26. Special Talents: Recognize your special talents and discover what environment will encourage them to flourish. Oftentimes, a special talent becomes a "scale tipper" in the admissions process.

27. Legacy: Does your family have a history at a specific school? Are you interested in continuing the tradition?

28. Support Services: Are special support services available if you require them? How long the program has been in existence? How many students are accepted to the program annually? How many students are currently in the program? What types of support services are available? What curriculum modifications are available? What is the success rate of the program? Does the college charge an additional fee for support services? Is the program basic or comprehensive in design where students can be given remediation, alternative methodology, and tutorial services? Multi-sensory lesson presentations? Auditory, visual, tactile, kinesthetic presentations? Is the taping of lectures and textbooks for students with reading/visual problems allowed? Is there individualized instruction? learning plans? one-on-one tutoring? oral and extended time exams?

29. Philosophy and School Calendar: Is the campus traditional or progressive?; Scholarly or career oriented?; What is the academic calendar? Is it semesters, quarters, or trimesters?

30. Note Well- Final List: Be sure that the final list is a realistic one. It should include "stretches", "most probably" and "safeties." No matter which one your child gets into— it must fit!

THE PARENT CREDO

**THE RIGHT COLLEGE IS WHERE YOUR CHILD WILL FIT
SCHOLASTICALLY & SOCIALLY. BE REALISTIC IN YOUR
ASPIRATIONS AND SUPPORTIVE OF HIS/HER CHOICE.**

SUGGESTIONS:

- Telephone, write or e-mail the college admissions office to arrange for an interview
- Ask the counseling center secretary for an unofficial copy of your transcript several days before you leave for the interviews.
- Prepare for your visit by reading the catalog and having questions for your interviewer. In most cases, the purpose of an interview is for you to ask questions about the school and its programs rather than for the school to ask questions about you.
- What AP scores do you accept in order to grant credit?
- Do I have to take a foreign language?
- Are the classes composed of lectures, discussion groups or a combination of both?
- Do different majors have different admissions standards?

- Is it better that I apply “undecided” if I am unsure of my major?
- How difficult is it to change majors or departments?
- How many years of many years of math, science and foreign language are required?
- Do I need to complete a thesis or major presentation prior to graduating?
- How many credits are required to graduate? What percentage of these courses comes from requirements versus electives?
- How is a faculty advisor selected for a student?

SELECTING COLLEGES: REACH, MATCH AND SAFETY SCHOOLS

Junior year is the right time to begin researching schools of potential interest and to compile an initial list. Given today’s competitive admissions climate, experts suggest 6 to 16 “right fit” colleges (25% - reach, 50% - match, 25% - safety) based on your academic achievements and other factors.

Reach -Match -Safety

Selecting colleges and universities that appeal to you in all three categories is a sound combination strategy to manage your risk and maintain your upside. **Reach** schools are usually your top choice colleges, and those most difficult to get into. **Match** (or target) schools are those where you have a reasonable (typically better than 50-50) chance for admission. **Safety** schools are those where you typically are somewhat overqualified, where you will almost certainly gain admission.

When categorizing your list of colleges, it’s important to look candidly at your admissions profile and the selectivity of the college. **If the school’s admissions rate is under 30%, it’s probably not a true safety school for many applicants** -- even those with well above average scores and other strong factors. A number of the most selective schools turn down more students with perfect SAT scores than they admit.

Some students, especially those seeking admission to the most selective colleges, should consider adding additional gradations: high reach, low reach, likely, high safety, etc. A high reach might be a school where the candidate is in the 25th SAT and GPA percentiles and doesn’t have any really special activities or “hook”. If your qualifications put you in the “average pile”, maybe it’s prudent to consider the college as more of a semi-reach. In today’s competitive environment, to keep your expectations realistic, some counselors suggest you don’t use the term safety – since admissions is hardly ever a sure thing -- but name the category “**probable**” instead.

Insiders advise you to beware of the “**super stretch**” – **it’s important to know the difference between a legitimate reach school that is a bit of a stretch, and a school where it is just about impossible for you to get in.** They also advise you to make sure you like your safety (or probable) and match schools. Select them carefully as you may end up there. A final bit of advice is to try to manage your emotions vis-à-vis the reach colleges. You may have your heart set on attending but the admissions officers may decide otherwise – **make sure you have good back up options.** At the same time, don’t be afraid to reach for the top and don’t be shy about applying to a few additional schools – just in case.

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HOW DO COLLEGES CHOOSE AMONG APPLICANTS?

Before colleges decide whom they will admit, admissions directors and their committees consider the following:

- The student's High School academic record:
 - a. academic level of courses pursued (rigorous vs. general)
 - b. grade point average (GPA)
- Noticeable improvement in your scholastic achievement from year to year
- Letters of recommendation from the guidance counselor, teachers, administrators
- SAT I, SAT II, and/or ACT or other entrance examination scores (if required).
- Indication of special ability; art, music, or leadership
- Service to the school
- Service to the community
- Extracurricular activities; dramatics, sports, band, publications
- Attendance record and personal profile
- Neatness and accuracy of the application
- The PERSONAL INTERVIEW (if required)

Top Ten Tips for Writing a College Essay

Source: NACAC <http://www.nacacnet.org>

Start early. The more time you have, the less stress you'll have. You'll have plenty of time to give the essay your best effort.

Be yourself. Take a moment to think about what interests you, what you love to talk about, what makes you sit up and take notice if it's mentioned in class or on TV. Then write about it. One of the biggest mistakes students make is "writing what they think others want to hear, rather than about an issue, event, or person that really had significance for them," says an admission and financial aid official at a New York college. An essay like that is not just boring to write, it's boring to read.

Be honest. You're running late (see #1), you can't think of what to write, and someone e-mails you a heartwarming story. With just a tweak here and there, it could be a great essay, you think. It's what you would have written if you'd just had enough time. Don't be fooled! College admission officers have read hundreds, even thousands of essays. They are masters at discovering any form of plagiarism. Adapting an e-mail story, buying an essay from some Internet site, getting someone else to write your essay, admission people have seen it all. Don't risk your college career by taking the easy way out.

Take a risk. On the other hand, some risks can pay off. Don't settle for the essay that everyone else is writing. Imagine an admission officer up late, reading the fiftieth essay of the day, yours. Do you want that person to nod off because he or she has already read ten essays on that topic? "The danger lies not in writing bad essays but in writing common essays, the one that admission officers are going to read dozens of," says an associate director at a Pennsylvania high school. "My advice? Ask your friends what they are writing, and then don't write about that!"

Keep in focus. This is your chance to tell admission officers exactly why they should admit you. Unfortunately, some students try to list every single reason, their stellar academic record, their athletic prowess, their community service, all in a page or two. When that happens, the essay looks like a grocery list. Even though the Common Application main essay has only a suggested minimum of 250 words, and no upper limit, every admissions officer has a big stack to read every day; he or she expects to spend only a couple of minutes on the essay. If you go over 700 words, you are straining their patience, which no one should want to do. Instead, read the essay question carefully and jot down a few ideas. Then choose the one that looks like the most fun to write about. Stick to that main theme throughout the essay. You don't have to list all your

achievements, that's what the rest of the application is for. Use the essay in a creative way to help the admission officers get to know you as a person.

Write and rewrite. Don't try to write a masterpiece on your first try. It's not possible, and all that pressure is likely to give you writer's block. For your first draft, write anything that comes to mind about your topic. Don't worry too much about grammar or spelling. Just get it down on paper (or computer screen). Then let it "rest" for a few hours or a few days. When you come back to the draft, look for ways to make it more focused and better written. Some people are "fat" writers: they write long, wordy first drafts that need to be shortened later. Others are "skinny" writers: they write short and simple first drafts and then need to add details or examples to "flesh out" the skeleton. Either way, don't be afraid to make major changes at this stage. Are there details that don't really relate to the topic? Cut them. Do you need another example? Put it in.

Here are two other things to try, suggested by one college counselor.

- Remove the introductory and concluding paragraphs, and then see if your essay seems stronger. These paragraphs are often the most likely to have unnecessary detail.
- Go through the essay and cut out every "very" and every "many." Words like these are vague, and your writing is often stronger without them.

Get a second opinion. Even best-selling novelists ask other people to read their manuscripts before they're sent to the publisher. When you've rewritten the essay to your satisfaction, find someone who can give you advice on how to make it even better. Choose a person you respect and who knows something about writing, a favorite English teacher, a parent, or a friend who writes for the school paper. Ask them to tell you what they like best about your essay, and what you can do to improve it. Criticism of your writing can be tough to hear, but try to listen with an open mind. You don't have to make every change suggested, after all, it's your essay and no one else's, but you should seriously consider each suggestion.

Proofread. Finally, you're ready to send your essay. Not so fast! Read it over one more time, looking for those little errors that can creep in as you write or edit. If you're using a computer, also run a spell check. Sometimes, it can be difficult to catch minor typos—you've read the essay so many times that you see what should be there rather than what is there. To make sure you catch everything, try reading your essay out loud or having someone else read it out loud to you. Another strategy is to read the essay backward, from the last sentence to the first. That makes it just unfamiliar enough for errors to stand out.

Be accurate. Applying online is just as serious as applying "the old-fashioned way." It may feel like you're sending e-mail, but you're not. "One thing I've often seen is that students who apply online submit sub-par essays," says an Oregon director of admission. He has found that essays submitted online tend to be much shorter than those submitted on paper. In addition, students often use e-mail language, no capitalization, or abbreviations such as BTW or "thanx," which are not appropriate to a formal document. Make sure that you put as much effort into an online essay as you would if you were sending it snail mail.

Don't expect too much from an essay. The application essay is important, but it's not the only thing that is considered. "Can [the essay] make a difference in getting the 'thin versus thick' envelope? Absolutely," says the New York director. "But that is the exception rather than the rule." That's because admission officers look at the whole package, your academics, extracurricular activities, standardized tests, and other factors. A great essay rarely makes up for a weak academic record. On the other hand, a mediocre essay won't necessarily consign your application to the "deny" list. So make your essay as well-written as you can, but don't put so much pressure on yourself that the rest of the application fades in importance.

WRITING YOUR COLLEGE ADMISSION ESSAY: STEP-BY-STEP

It may be only 500 words, but the admission essay portion of a college application can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection. How you write your personal essay shows the admission committee why you are different from everybody else. It provides information about you that test scores, grades, and extracurricular pursuits simply cannot. You can use the essay to describe a favorite activity, to tell a story about yourself, or even a story about your dog, but make sure to really use it in a way that captures the reader's attention and shows that you are exceptional.

STEP ONE: BRAINSTORMING

You should expect to devote about one to two weeks simply thinking up possible essay subjects. From this process of brainstorming, you may find a topic you had not thought of at first. Here are some questions to consider:

What Are You Like?

- What is your strongest personality trait? Does any attribute, quality, or skill distinguish you from everyone else? How did you develop this attribute?
- How would your friends characterize you? What would they write about if they were writing your admission essay for you?
- Consider your favorite books, movies, works of art, etc. Have these influenced your life in a meaningful way? Why are they your favorites?
- Have you experienced a moment of epiphany, as if your eyes were opened to something to which you were previously blind?

What Have You Done?

- What are your major accomplishments, and why do you consider them accomplishments?
- What have you done outside of the classroom that demonstrates qualities sought after by universities? Of these, which means the most to you?
- Have you ever struggled mightily for something and succeeded?
- What made you successful? Have you ever struggled mightily for something and failed? How did you respond?
- What was the most difficult time in your life, and why? How did your perspective on life change as a result of the difficulty?

Where Do You Want to Go?

- Of everything in the world, what would you most like to be doing right now? Where would you most like to be? Whom, of everyone living and dead, would you most like to be with?
- What are your dreams of the future? When you look back on your life in thirty years, what would it take for you to consider your life successful?
- How does this particular university fit into your plans for the future? Why do you want to spend two to six years of your life at a particular school?

STEP TWO: SELECTING AN ESSAY TOPIC

As these thoughts start to solidify into an essay topic, think about execution. What sounded like a good idea might prove impossible in the writing. Most importantly, think of how you can make the subject matter original. Even seemingly boring essay topics can sound interesting if creatively approached. With an essay question in mind, think over the following questions:

- Will your topic only repeat information listed elsewhere on your application? If so, pick a new topic. Don't mention GPAs or standardized test scores in your essay. Can you offer vivid supporting paragraphs to your essay topic?

If you cannot easily think of supporting paragraphs with concrete examples, you should probably choose a different essay topic. Will an admission officer remember your topic after a day of reading hundreds of essays? What will the officer remember about your topic? What will the officer remember about you? What will your lasting impression be?

Choose a Story

The best essays tell a story about the applicant. The essay does not have to be the story of your whole life, but rather a small glimpse of it, one that is rich with meaning and alive with imagery. It often helps to think about the impact that past events have had on you. In one admission essay written by a student who was accepted to Harvard, Princeton, Dartmouth, and Stanford, an ordinary story is told in a unique and captivating way. In this narrative about hiking up a mountain, the student also conveys a deep appreciation for science, as well as a dedication to the hard work required to fully understand the universe:

Although the first few miles of the hike up Mt. Madison did not offer fantastic views, the vistas became spectacular once I climbed above the tree line. Immediately, I sensed that understanding the natural world parallels climbing a mountain. Much like every step while hiking leads the hiker nearer the mountain peak, all knowledge leads the scientist nearer total understanding.

Entitled "Hiking to Understanding," this essay tells the story of one hike, but at the same time, gives a complete idea of the author's values, interests, and philosophy. Thus, the essay presents run-of-the-mill subject matter in an out-of-the-ordinary way

STEP THREE: WRITING THE ESSAY

You must bear in mind your two goals: to persuade the admission officer that you are extremely worthy of admission and to make the admission officer aware that you are more than a GPA and a standardized score, that you are a real-life, intriguing personality. But before you can convince an admission officer of this, you must first grab his or her attention.

The Introduction

Most admission officers spend at most 2 minutes reading your essay. With this reality in mind, spend the most time on your introduction. One technique is to create mystery or intrigue in this first paragraph. At the very least, you should not give away the whole story right at the beginning. Give the admission officer a reason to keep reading. As an example, the first sentence of the "Hiking" essay reads as follows:

Surrounded by thousands of stars, complete silence, and spectacular mountains, I stood atop New Hampshire's Presidential Range awestruck by nature's beauty.

This first sentence sets the mood for the essay, it draws the reader into the scene, but it does not state the author's argument or even the plot of the story to follow. The reader has to continue reading in order to learn what happens next.

The Body

After the first paragraph has been perfected, you must ensure that the body paragraphs relate to the introduction. It helps to have a theme or phrase that runs throughout the entire essay.

In "Hiking to Understanding," the author uses the mountain as a unifying image:

Some people during their lives climb many small hills. However, to have the most accurate view of the world, I must be dedicated to climbing the biggest mountains I can find. Too often people simply hike across a flat valley without ascending because they content themselves with the scenery. The mountain showed me that I cannot content myself with the scenery.

Also, notice that the author uses simple language. Many students think that big words make good essays, but powerful ideas are often best expressed in simple and elegant prose. Another way to impress an admission officer is by using

specific examples and evocative touches of imagery that stay clear of cliché. The application essay lends itself to imagery, since the entire essay requires your experiences as supporting details. Successful essays stick to the mantra, “show, don’t tell.” Here’s one example from the “Hiking” essay:

When night fell upon the summit, I stared at the slowly appearing stars until they completely filled the night sky. Despite the windy conditions and below freezing temperatures, I could not tear myself away.

This passage shows how description of the stars and cold can make us both imagine the scenery and understand the author’s point of view. It tells us what the author feels and thinks, more so than if the author had spelled it out for us.

Finishing Up

The conclusion is your last chance to persuade the reader or impress upon them your qualifications. Expand upon the broader implications of your discussion. The “Hiking” essay does this successfully, both expanding on the description of the scene as well as on the scene’s meaning for the author:

When observing Saturn’s rising, the Milky Way Cloud, and the Perseid meteor shower, I simultaneously felt a great sense of insignificance and purpose. Obviously, earthly concerns are insignificant to the rest of the universe. However, I experienced the overriding need to understand the origins and causes of these phenomena.

Don’t be surprised if the writing process takes many days. Few writers can dash out a quality essay in just a few sittings. It takes awhile to find the perfect structure, wording, and imagery. If you have the time, spend a week away from your draft; when you return to it, you will read it with fresh eyes. Ask friends and family for help. Other readers will find small mistakes that your brain has ceased to recognize, and they will answer the essential question, ‘what makes this essay memorable?’

STEP FOUR: REVISE, REVISE, REVISE

You are allowed only so many words; use them wisely. If Thoreau could not write a good essay without revision, neither can you. Delete anything in the essay that does not relate to your main argument. Are your introduction and conclusion more than summaries? Did you find every single grammatical error?

Seek the Advice of Others

Get an objective opinion of your essay by asking others to read it. Here’s a checklist for them to keep in mind as they read:

- Have I answered my question?
- Does my introduction engage the reader? Does my conclusion provide closure?
- Do my introduction and conclusion avoid summary?
- Do I use concrete experiences as supporting details?
- Have I used active-voice verbs wherever possible?
- Is my sentence structure varied, or do I use all long or all short sentences?
- Are there any clichés? (i.e. “cutting edge” or “learned my lesson”)
- Do I use transition appropriately?
- What about the essay is memorable?
- What’s the worst part of the essay?
- What parts of the essay do not support my main argument?
- Is every single sentence crucial to the essay? This must be the case.
- What does the essay reveal about my personality?

Effective adjectives for college essays:

RELIABLE
SPONTANEOUS
HARDWORKING
ORIGINAL
AMBITIOUS
ARTICULATE
SECURE
QUIET
STRUCTURED
ASSERTIVE
PERSUASIVE
EMPATHETIC
COMPETITIVE
MOTIVATED
ADVENTUROUS

CURIOUS
INDIVIDUALISTIC
CAREFUL
STRONG
DELIBERATE
ATTENTIVE
FLEXIBLE
LIBERAL
ORGANIZED
ACADEMIC
VERSATILE
INTUITIVE
CONSERVATIVE
EAGER
SUPPORTIVE

ADAPTABLE
STABLE
PERSEVERING
RELAXED
LOGICAL
FORCEFUL
MODEST
CREATIVE
ANALYTICAL
INTROSPECTIVE
MATURE
GOAL-ORIENTED
INTELLECTUAL
RESOURCEFUL
IDEALISTIC

TOP TEN ADMISSION ESSAY TIPS

Unlike every other aspect of the application, you control your essay. Make sure that the glimpse you give the admission committee into your character, background, and writing ability is the very best possible. Keep the following in mind as you write:

1. **Do answer the question.** Many students try to turn a 500-word essay into a complete autobiography. Not surprisingly, they fail to answer the question. Make sure that every sentence in your essay exists solely to answer the question.
2. **Don't bore the reader.** Do be interesting. Admission officers have to read hundreds of essays, and they must often skim. They're not looking for a new way to view the world; they're looking for a new way to view you, the applicant.
3. **Use detailed and concrete experiences.** Specific, clear details provide strong support to your arguments. Too often, an essay with an interesting story will fizzle into a series of statements that *tell* rather than *show* the qualities of the writer.
4. **Do be concise.** Wordiness not only takes up valuable space, but it also can confuse the important ideas you're trying to convey. Short sentences are more forceful because they are direct and to the point.
5. **Don't "thesaurus-ize" your essay.** Do use your own voice. Admission officers can tell Roget from a high school senior. Big words, especially when misused, detract from the essay, inappropriately drawing the reader's attention and making the essay sound contrived.
6. **Don't use slang.** Write an essay, not an e-mail. Slang terms, clichés, contractions, and an excessively casual tone should be eliminated.
7. **Do vary your sentences and use transitions.** The best essays contain a variety of sentence lengths mixed within any given paragraph. Also, remember that transition is not limited to words like nevertheless, furthermore or consequently.

8. **Do use active-voice verbs.** Passive-voice expressions are verb phrases in which the subject receives the action expressed in the verb. Passive voice employs a form of the verb to be, such as was or were. Overuse of the passive voice makes prose seem flat and uninteresting.
9. **Conclude effectively.** Avoid summary. The conclusion is the last chance to persuade admission officers or impress upon them your qualifications.
10. Revise, revise, revise...

Essays That Worked @ Johns Hopkins University

<http://apply.jhu.edu/apply/essays>

What does the Admissions Committee look for in a successful essay? It's one of our most commonly asked questions.

Since the essay is an important part of the application process, the Admissions Committee has selected examples of essays that worked, written by members of the Johns Hopkins Class of 2017. These selections represent just a few examples of essays we found impressive and helpful during the past admissions cycle.

These "essays that worked" are distinct and unique to the individual writer; however, each of them assisted the admissions reader in learning more about the student beyond the transcripts and activity sheets. We hope these essays inspire you as you prepare to compose your own personal statements. The most important thing to remember is to be original and creative as you share your own story with us.

The Unathletic Department—Meghan

A blue seventh place athletic ribbon hangs from my mantel. Every day, as I walk into my living room, the award mockingly congratulates me as I smile. Ironically, the blue seventh place ribbon resembles the first place ribbon in color; so, if I just cover up the tip of the seven, I may convince myself that I championed the fourth heat. But, I never dare to wipe away the memory of my seventh place swim; I need that daily reminder of my imperfection. I need that seventh place.

Two years ago, I joined the no-cut swim team. That winter, my coach unexpectedly assigned me to swim the 500 freestyle. After stressing for hours about swimming 20 laps in a competition, I mounted the blocks, took my mark, and swam. Around lap 14, I looked around at the other lanes and did not see anyone. "I must be winning!" I thought to myself. However, as I finally completed my race and lifted my arms up in victory to the eager applause of the fans, I looked up at the score board. I had finished my race in last place. In fact, I left the pool two minutes after the second-to-last competitor, who now stood with her friends, wearing all her clothes.

The blue for the first loser went to me.

However, as I walked back to my team, carrying the seventh place blue, listening to the splash of the new event's swimmers, I could not help but smile. I could smile because despite my loss, life continued; the next event began. I realized that I could accept this failure, because I should not take everything in life so seriously. Why should I not laugh at the image of myself, raising my arms up in victory only to have finished last? I certainly did not challenge the school record, but that did not mean I could not enjoy the swim.

So, the blue seventh place ribbon sits there, on my mantel, for the world to see. I feel no shame in that. In fact, my memorable 20 laps mean more to me than an award because over time, the blue of the seventh place ribbon fades, and I become more colorful by embracing my imperfections and gaining resilience-but not athleticism.

"The first thing that stands out about this essay is the catchy title, which effectively sets up an essay that is charmingly self-deprecating. The author goes on to use subtle humor throughout the essay to highlight one of her weaknesses but at the same time reveals how she turned what some might have considered a negative event into a positive learning experience. Not only is this essay well-written and enjoyable to read, but it reveals some important personal qualities about the author that we might not have learned about her through other components of her application. We get a glimpse of how she constructively deals with challenge and failure, which is sure to be a useful life skill she will need in the real world, starting with her four years in college."

—*Senior Assistant Director Janice Heitsenrether*

The Musketeer in Me—Vikas

One fundamental rule of reincarnation is that you do not know your past life. Well, it seems as though I broke that rule. In fact, I am absolutely certain that my past reincarnation was none other than d'Artagnan, the fourth musketeer. Knowing that is a gift. It makes the arduous process of describing the entirety of my personality in 500 words or less, possible. I can simply toss Alexandre Dumas' biographical recount of my past life and say, "That's me," and those two words would mean everything. They make me that noble and heroic Gasconian that set out to Paris with nothing more than a yellow, hairless pony and a dream of grandeur.

Alas, times have changed. The Musketeers, dueling, and horses, they have all become relics of the past. A new era and new circumstances bring a different life. Now, I am a first generation, 17-year-old American living in Jersey. My yellow, hairless horse is an old, squeaky Toyota Camry: its modern equivalent. My stunning silver-gilded rapier and armour have been replaced by a BIC pen and legal pad.

However, all those changes are superficial. Inside, I still dream of the same grandeur. I dream, with every fiber of my body, that one day I will become a Newtonian giant holding a Nobel Prize. That one day I will support the innovation and ingenuity that fuels our evolving world. The only challenge is that there are millions of people that share the same dream as me, so what makes me different?

Well, even if the shell of who I am has changed, I am still d'Artagnan at heart. That means being young, foolish, and audacious all at the same time. With pride, I charge first and then think second, knowing that my intuition and passions will forge my path. With conviction, I duel my enemies under the slightest provocation (as long as you consider a pen a weapon). The result is that I've been beaten to the ground an ungodly number of times. But, from those moments, I learned the most. And, in those adventures, where I got bruised and battered, I had friends that brought to life "All for one and one for all."

Yet, the greatest part of being d'Artagnan that I believe in myself to the point that I believe in something larger than myself. I believe in the people around me, my community, my country, and even the world. And I believe every day is going to be better than the one before it. So, when times like these come, being d'Artagnan makes me strong. The following months are going to change everything. My town. My home. My friends. Everything is going to become college and that proposition is as equally frightening as it is exhilarating. Anyone who says otherwise is lying. Yet, with all those changes, being d'Artagnan is my constant. It is what is going to help me not only overcome the challenges brewing in the future, but also excel. And, if the past is any indication of the future, then the Nobel Prize already has my name written on it.

"This essay was clever, humorous, and gave insight into the writer's personality. He effectively used a fictional character as a way to talk about himself; this overcomes a common mistake I see in essays where applicants don't make a strong connection between themselves and the character they are writing about. From the essay, I was able to get a sense about how he handles challenges, his ambition, and how he is as a friend. These are all important aspects that we look for in an application. His voice was clear in his writing, gave me the sense that I knew him, and made the essay memorable."

—*Assistant Director Patrick Salmon*

Spy—Elana

Ten years ago, I was a spy. Secret identities, awesome spy gadgets and undercover operations consumed my imagination. This was serious business and I took training seriously.

My brother was Public Enemy No.1. He'd come home and I'd use Mission Impossible stealth moves to follow him everywhere. I'd pick his bedroom door with a nail file and steal his allowance. I'd climb the tree outside his window and take reconnaissance photos.

The proudest moment of my young espionage career was Operation Secret Crate. One Saturday afternoon, Mom drove up with my brother and his friends, who were coming over to play Grand Theft Auto, make stupid jokes and eat junk food. My mission: eavesdrop.

My high-tech tool was a plastic moving crate, two and a half feet square, forgotten behind the living room couch. It had eye-holes big enough for an intrepid spy.

I was small and flexible, but fitting inside that crate was a stretch. Still, the mission was on. Quick jumping jacks and toe touches to loosen the limbs. Squat, knees to chest, crate over head...

Slam! The boys banged through the front door and swarmed onto the couch. Peering out I saw tennis shoes and hairy ankles. My heart thumped so loud I worried it would overpower their excited voices and the hum of the X-Box. The smell of Pizza Hut cheese sticks was in the air.

The moment of truth. Would they notice the girl crouched in the crate inches away?

One minute. Five minutes. Ten minutes. They didn't notice! Fifteen minutes. Twenty minutes. Still safe. Thirty minutes. I realized the flaw in my plan. I might learn their secrets, but my body was so contorted and aching that soon I might never walk again.

Something had to be done. Something bold, drastic, unthinkable. ARGGHHAGHGHGHGHGHGHAHDHGHGHHGHGHG!!!!!! I shouted at the top of my lungs, flung the crate off me and jumped onto the couch. They all screamed. The cheese sticks went flying. The coke spilled. My brother, for once, had nothing to say.

Elana, girl of mystery, strikes, I said. Be warned. I strutted out of the living room.

Since those first spy trainings, I've never stopped preparing for a future clandestine career. I've cracked codes in computer science and cracked jokes with a CIA operative. I've slogged through 10k of mud at the Camp Pendleton mud run and four years of Chinese in high school. I've flown planes with the Civil Air Patrol in Santa Monica and beat drums with Sudanese refugees in Tel-Aviv. I have launched a rocket, administered CPR, operated ham radios, set a broken arm and helped a rescue team look for a downed plane.

I could end up as a spy, a diplomat, a soldier, an astronaut, or a fighter for a lost cause. I could end up famous or completely unknown. I know two things for sure: I won't be at a desk job, and I'll be good to have around when there's trouble.

"I like this essay because you really get to see the adventurous side of Elana, an intangible quality that cannot be seen in her transcript, test scores, or list of activities. By telling a story from her youth and connecting it to current activities and personal qualities, her sense of humor shines through and lets the reader know she is not afraid to take risks. After reading this essay, I saw her as someone who would make a difference on our campus, someone who wouldn't hesitate to get involved and try something new. She seemed like a great fit for Hopkins."

—Associate Director Shannon Miller

THE INTERVIEW

The following is a reprint from the *College Bound Newsletter*.

An admissions officer at a small mid-western school swears the following interviewing episode is factual:

The setting was not uncommon: Parents wait anxiously while son is interviewed in an upstairs admissions office. Suddenly, dad suffers a heart attack and is rushed to a hospital. Left undisturbed, the interview proceeds. Son and admissions officer emerge later and mom fills them in on what happened to dad. She then quickly implores – get this – “I trust this incident will not hurt my son’s chances of being admitted”.

Fact or folklore, this admissions tale underscores a need for perspective, especially in the case of interviews. First of all, only about 20 percent of all four-year colleges require admissions interviews. Most of all, with a few exceptions, the interview is a relatively minor component in the application process.

A handful of schools use the interview to sell themselves to desirable students. More common is the evaluative interview where you will be challenged with questions to determine your strengths as a candidate. Finally, there is the less formal (and less intimidating) information interview that you’ll find at schools like Denison in Ohio. “We ask the student to discuss his credentials and hopefully indicate some awareness of self,” says Admissions Director Richard Boyden. “At the same time, the student should use us as a resource for answering questions.” In this case, the interviewer may write up his general impressions of you as a candidate or commemorate your meeting with nothing more than a handshake.

Skyrocketing travel costs and overworked admissions staffs make it unfeasible for most schools to require an on-campus interview these days. Alumni do the job for some schools at a local level. Required or optional, most administrators agree that the interview is one more chance to sell yourself – not to be passed up if manageable. “This is the only student credential that is not just a piece of paper,” says Richard Skelton, Admission Director at Bucknell. “It can personalize the admissions process and help us see a candidate more clearly.”

How important is your interview? The smaller the institution the more vital it becomes. Says Lora Schilder, Associate Dean of Admissions at Hamilton College, “We want to learn how a student thinks, how he spends his spare time, what contributions he’ll make to keep this place exciting and interesting. Hamilton is a very personal, academic environment, so we take a very personal approach to admissions.”

A few colleges actually make admissions decisions following an interview. But in the vast majority of schools, grades, class rank, test scores and other references clearly take first priority, and the interview becomes important only as a “nudge factor”, says Denison’s Boyden. “If we have a large group of students with comparable academic qualifications, then the interview can help with small distinctions.”

As with other steps in the application process, you can call upon your school’s college counselors for help in preparing for an interview. Remember you’ll want to do most of the talking during your meeting with an admissions officer or alumni representative – about your accomplishments, personal strengths, talents and hobbies. Blow your own horn but not too hard. And get ready for the big question on why you want to attend the interviewer’s school.

Relax, be yourself and try to enjoy. Drop a note to your interviewer afterwards and you’ll stand tall (very few applicants ever get around to this important follow-up). Remember that the point of the interview is to help match the right student with the right school. It is not – do or die.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A PERSONAL INTERVIEW

In an interview, you naturally want to do all that you can to make a good impression on the interviewer. He/She can only know what you tell him/her about yourself, by the way you look, act and answer questions. Here is a brief summary of important reminders:

- **Dress neatly**, and try to choose clothing that suits the situation.
- **Be on time**. If you are late for an interview, the interviewer may decide that you are not really interested.
- **Know the college**. This will enable you to show interest and ask relevant questions.
- **Greet the receptionist** or person who will introduce you to the interviewer. Be pleasant. Say your name clearly, and tell this person the name of the interviewer, if you know it.
- **Wait patiently** if the interviewer is not ready for you.
- **Shake hands** if it seems appropriate when you meet the interviewer. Use a firm handshake but not an overpowering one. You should wait for the interviewer to ask you to sit down.
- **Maintain eye contact** with the interviewer during your time together. This is considered to be a sign of honesty and self-confidence. It is better not to wear sunglasses during an interview.
- **Control any nervous behavior**. Tapping your foot or clicking a ballpoint pen, for example, may annoy and distract the interviewer. Chewing gum is another thing you should not do during the interview.
- **Smoking is not a good idea**.
- **Choose your words carefully** and avoid slang or other special expressions that the interviewer may dislike or misunderstand.
- **Sit up in your chair**. If your posture is good, the interviewer will see that you are alert and interested in what is happening.
- **Talk about what you do well**. Often you will find that you can answer a question by mentioning certain talents, interests or skills. Mention test scores only if you are asked to do so. If you have done poorly on a test, avoid making excuses for your performance. Deal with it in an honest, straightforward fashion.
- **Be calm**. Try not to show disappointment or anger if you are not accepted, or if the interviewer does not make a decision immediately. He may have to see some other applicants before deciding.
- **Say "thank you"**. It is a good idea to **drop a note** to the interviewer thanking him/her for the opportunity to discuss your candidacy.



THE ADMISSION INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED:

- Why are you considering this college? (READ THE MATERIALS)
- What do you expect to be doing 10 years from now?
- If you were the principal of your school, what would you change? (Or any variation, such as president.)
- What do you have to bring to our school?
- What books not required in your courses have you read recently? (If it's trashy books, you might want to prepare something else – if it's science fiction or mysteries, admit it.)
- If you could speak with any person, past or present, whom would it be and why?
- What television shows do you watch? (Don't fake it – be yourself)
- What is the most important thing you've learned in high school?
- What events have changed your life?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What extra-curricular activities have you found the most satisfying?
- How do you spend the time after school?
- What do you expect to get from your college experience?

You may or may not be asked some of these things but it's a good idea to prepare. Role-play with a friend or parent acting as the interviewer, then reverse roles.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- How many students in last year's freshman class returned for their sophomore year?
- What procedures are used for class placement?
- What kind of additional academic services does your college offer at no additional cost to the student (e.g. tutoring, counseling, study skills workshops, improving reading speed, etc.)?
- What percent of the student body lives on campus?
- What are some of the activities planned for students on campus during weekends?
- How are roommates selected if no preference is listed?
- What are some of the rules and regulations that govern dorms? Are there co-ed halls?
- What percent of your students received financial aid? What percent received scholarships based on academics? What percent of a typical financial aid package is in the form of a loan?
- What is the typical size of a Freshman English class?

ARRANGE INTERVIEW APPOINTMENTS FAR IN ADVANCE OF THE DESIRED DATE. APPOINTMENTS ARE DIFFICULT TO GET, PARTICULARLY AT THE VERY COMPETITIVE COLLEGES. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IN SOME CASES, LOCAL ALUMNI WILL CONDUCT INTERVIEWS IN THE COMMUNITY.



SAT vs. ACT

(Source: The Princeton Review)

Colleges will accept either the SAT or ACT. So which should you take? It's all about the numbers. Some students end up scoring substantially higher on the SAT; others do better on the ACT.

To help you zero in on the right exam, here are seven key differences:

- ACT questions tend to be more straightforward.
- ACT questions are often easier to understand on a first read. On the SAT, you may need to spend time figuring out what you're being asked before you can start solving the problem. For example, here are sample questions from the SAT essay and the ACT writing test (their name for the essay):

SAT: What is your view of the claim that something unsuccessful can still have some value?

ACT: In your view, should high schools become more tolerant of cheating?

- The SAT has a stronger emphasis on vocabulary. If you're an ardent wordsmith, you'll love the SAT. If words aren't your thing, you may do better on the ACT.
- The ACT has a Science section, while the SAT does not. You don't need to know anything about amoebas or chemical reactions for the ACT Science section. It is meant to test your reading and reasoning skills based upon a given set of facts. But if you're a true science-phobe, the SAT might be a better fit.
- The ACT tests more advanced math concepts. In addition to basic arithmetic, algebra I and II, and geometry, the ACT tests your knowledge of trigonometry, too. That said, the ACT Math section is not necessarily harder, since many students find the questions to be more straightforward than those on the SAT.
- The ACT Writing Test is optional on test day, but required by many schools. The 25-minute SAT essay is required and is factored into your writing score. The 30-minute ACT writing test is optional. If you choose to take it, it is not included in your composite score — schools will see it listed separately. Many colleges require the writing section of the ACT, so be sure to check with the schools where you are applying before opting out.
- The SAT is broken up into more sections. On the ACT, you tackle each content area (English, Math, Reading and Science) in one big chunk, with the optional writing test at the end. On the SAT, the content areas (Critical Reading, Math and Writing) are broken up into 10 sections, with the required essay at the beginning. You do a little math, a little writing, a little critical reading, a little more math, etc. When choosing between the SAT and ACT, ask yourself if moving back and forth between content areas confuse you or keep you energized?
- The ACT is more of a "big picture" exam. College admissions officers care about how you did on each section of the SAT. On the ACT, they're most concerned with your composite score. So if you're weak in one content area but strong in others, you could still end up with a very good ACT score and thus make a strong impression with the admissions committee.

THE SAT & SAT II (Subject Tests)

SAT Reasoning Test

The SAT Reasoning Test is a measure of the critical thinking skills you'll need for academic success in college. The SAT assesses how well you analyze and solve problems—skills you learned in school that you will need in college. High school juniors and seniors predominantly take the SAT.

Each section of the SAT is scored on a scale of 200—800, with two writing subscores for multiple-choice and the essay. The SAT is administered seven times a year in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and U.S. Territories, and six times a year overseas.

SAT Question Types The SAT includes a **Critical Reading, Math and Writing** section, with a specific number of questions related to content.

TEST SECTIONS:

Critical Reading

Time	Content	Item Types	Score
70 min. (two 25-min. sections and one 20-min. section)	Critical reading and sentence-level reading	Reading comprehension, sentence completions, and paragraph-length critical reading	200-800

The critical reading section, formerly known as the verbal section, includes short reading passages along with the existing long reading passages. Analogies have been eliminated, but sentence-completion questions and passage-based reading questions remain.

Math

Time	Content	Item Types	Score
70 min. (two 25-min. sections and one 20-min. section)	Numbers and operations; algebra and functions; geometry; statistics, probability, and data analysis	Five-choice multiple-choice questions and student-produced responses	200-800

The SAT includes expanded math topics, such as exponential growth, absolute value, and functional notation, and places greater emphasis on other topics such as linear functions, manipulations with exponents, and properties of tangent lines. Important skills formerly measured in the quantitative comparison format, such as estimation and number sense, will continue to be measured through the multiple choice and student response (grid-in) questions.

Writing

Time	Content	Item Types	Score
60 min.	Grammar, usage, and word choice	Multiple choice questions (35 min.) and student-written essay (25 min.)	200-800

The writing section includes both multiple-choice questions and a direct writing measure in the form of an essay.

The Unscoed Section

In addition, there is one 25-minute unscored section, known as the variable or equating section. This unscored section may be a critical reading, math, or writing multiple-choice section. This unscored section does not count toward the final score, but is used to try out new questions for future editions of the SAT and to ensure that scores on new editions of the SAT are comparable to scores on earlier editions of the test.

Test Order

The 25-minute essay will always be the first section of the SAT, and the 10-minute multiple-choice writing section will always be the final section. The remaining six 25-minute sections can appear in any order, as can the two 20-minute sections. Test takers sitting next to each other in the same testing session may have test books with entirely different sections.

Subject Tests (formerly SAT II: Subject Tests) are designed to measure your knowledge and skills in particular subject areas, as well as your ability to apply that knowledge.

Students take the Subject Tests to demonstrate to colleges their mastery of specific subjects like English, history, mathematics, science, and language. The tests are independent of any particular textbook or method of instruction. The tests' content evolves to reflect current trends in high school curricula, but the types of questions change little from year to year.

- Many colleges use the Subject Tests for admission, for course placement, and to advise students about course selection. Used in combination with other background information (your high school record, scores from other tests like the SAT Reasoning Test, teacher recommendations, etc.), they provide a dependable measure of your academic achievement and are a good predictor of future performance.
- Some colleges specify the Subject Tests they require for admission or placement; others allow applicants to choose which tests to take.

Subject Tests fall into five general subject areas:

English

- Literature

History

- U.S. History
- World History

Mathematics

- Math Level I
- Math Level II

Science

- Biology E/M
- Chemistry
- Physics

Languages

- Chinese with Listening
- French
- French with Listening
- German
- German with Listening
- Spanish
- Spanish with Listening
- Modern Hebrew
- Italian
- Latin
- Japanese with Listening
- Korean with Listening

All Subject Tests are one-hour, multiple-choice tests. However, some of these tests have unique formats:

The Subject Test in **Biology E/M** contains a common core of 60 general-knowledge multiple-choice questions, followed by 20 multiple-choice questions that emphasize either ecological (Biology E) or molecular (Biology M) subject matter. After completing the core questions, test takers choose the section for which they feel most prepared.

The Subject Tests in **Mathematics (Level 1 and Level 2)** have some questions that require the use of at least a scientific or graphing calculator. Mathematics Subject Tests are developed with the expectation that most students will use a graphing calculator. There are no plans to discontinue or change the content of the Subject Tests in Mathematics Level 1 or Mathematics Level 2.

The Subject Tests in **Languages with Listening (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish)** consist of a listening section and a reading section. Students taking these tests are required to bring an acceptable CD player with earphones to the test center.

Which Subject Tests should you take?

Before deciding which tests to take, make a list of the colleges you're considering. Then review school catalogs, Internet College Search Engines, or College Handbooks to find out whether the schools require scores for admission and, if so, how many tests and in which subjects.

Use your list of colleges and their admission requirements to help plan your high school course schedule. You may want to adjust your schedule in light of colleges' requirements. For example, a college may require a score from a Subject Test in a language for admission, or the college might exempt you from a freshman course requirement if you do well on a language Subject Test.

Many colleges that don't require Subject Test scores will still review them since they can give a fuller picture of your academic background. If you're not sure which Subject Test to take from a subject area, talk to your teacher or school counselor and visit the SAT Subject Test Learning Center at www.collegeboard.com.

When should you take Subject Tests?

- Most students take Subject Tests toward the end of their junior year or at the beginning of their senior year.
- Take tests such as World History, Biology E/M, Chemistry, or Physics as soon as possible after completing the course in the subject, while the material is still fresh in your mind. For foreign language tests, you'll do better after at least two years of study.

(ACT) THE AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING PROGRAM

INCLUDES:

The ACT Assessment instrument consists of a battery of **four academic tests** taken under timed conditions. The ACT also includes a student Profile Section and Interest Inventory, which are completed when students register for the Assessment.

THE TEST:

The academic tests cover four subject matter areas: **English, Mathematics, Reading and Science reasoning**. These tests are designed to assess each student's general educational development and ability to complete college level work. The test items require that the student demonstrate knowledge and both problem-solving and reasoning ability.

SCORING:

A score is reported for each of the four tests along with a **composite score**. The raw score is the number of correct responses in a particular test section; these are converted to scale scores. The scale scores range from 1 (low) to 36 (high) for each of the four tests and the composite. **The composite is simply the average of the four test scores.** The standard scale scores are converted to national percentiles in order to facilitate student comparison.



THE ACT ASSESSMENT WRITING:

ACT added a 30-minute Writing Test as an **optional** component to the ACT Assessment beginning in February 2005 for students testing within the United States who are applying to college for the fall of 2006 or later. The ACT Writing Test complements the English Test. The combined information from both tests tells postsecondary institutions about students' understanding of the conventions of standard written English and their ability to produce a direct sample of writing.

Because postsecondary institutions have varying needs, the ACT Writing Test is an option:

- Postsecondary institutions are making their own decisions about whether to require the results from the ACT Writing Test for admissions and/or course placement purposes.
- Students will decide whether to take the Writing Test based on the requirements of the institutions they are considering.

Students are not required to take optional tests, as unnecessary expenses could incur. Certain institutions may require specific tests, however, so check the school's admissions requirements.

Websites for Standardized Exam Registration:

www.collegeboard.org

www.actstudent.org

THE SAT AND ACT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES & TEST MODIFICATIONS

Students who seek to take either the SAT or ACT with test modifications must be declared “ELIGIBLE” to take either exam by the sponsoring testing service. Such students should contact their guidance counselor for specific information and instructions. The SAT and ACT exam for students with test modifications will be given either on the same day as the National Test date, or on dates approved by the College Board or ACT. Students should check with the Guidance Department as to when specific exams will be available at the school.

Special testing registration will be conducted prior to each exam date. Applications to take the SAT or ACT with modifications should be processed through the guidance department to ensure proper registration. Students requesting test modifications should not mail any forms to the College Board or ACT unless instructed by the Guidance Department to do so.

The College Board, which sponsors the SAT, requires that all students seeking test modifications must be declared “eligible” four months prior to the requested testing date. Upon being declared “eligible”, students with test modifications must see their counselor 6-8 weeks prior to a test date to ensure test availability.

Requests to take the ACT with modifications must be processed through the Guidance Department 6-8 weeks prior to a test date, also.

READ THIS IMPORTANT MESSAGE!

The College Board and ACT determine which, if any, testing modifications will be provided for the SAT or ACT exam.

The College Board and ACT do not guarantee that all test modifications indicated on a student's I.E.P. or Section 504 Plan will be granted.

More information is available at:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/disable/students>

or

<http://www.act.org/aap/disab/index>

<i>ACT & NEW SAT SCORE COMPARISON CHART</i>		
<i>ACT</i>	<i>NEW SAT</i>	<i>OLD SAT</i>
<i>36</i>	<i>2400</i>	<i>1600</i>
<i>35</i>	<i>2340</i>	<i>1550</i>
<i>34</i>	<i>2260</i>	<i>1520</i>
<i>33</i>	<i>2190</i>	<i>1470</i>
<i>32</i>	<i>2130</i>	<i>1420</i>
<i>31</i>	<i>2040</i>	<i>1360</i>
<i>30</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>1340</i>
<i>29</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1300</i>
<i>28</i>	<i>1860</i>	<i>1260</i>
<i>27</i>	<i>1820</i>	<i>1220</i>
<i>26</i>	<i>1760</i>	<i>1180</i>
<i>25</i>	<i>1700</i>	<i>1140</i>
<i>24</i>	<i>1650</i>	<i>1110</i>
<i>23</i>	<i>1590</i>	<i>1070</i>
<i>22</i>	<i>1530</i>	<i>1030</i>
<i>21</i>	<i>1500</i>	<i>990</i>
<i>20</i>	<i>1410</i>	<i>950</i>
<i>19</i>	<i>1350</i>	<i>910</i>
<i>18</i>	<i>1290</i>	<i>870</i>
<i>17</i>	<i>1210</i>	<i>830</i>
<i>16</i>	<i>1140</i>	<i>790</i>
<i>15</i>	<i>1060</i>	<i>740</i>
<i>14</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>690</i>
<i>13</i>	<i>900</i>	<i>640</i>
<i>12</i>	<i>780</i>	<i>590</i>
<i>11</i>	<i>750</i>	<i>550</i>

FINANCIAL AID

WHAT IS IT?

Money is available to help you pay for college, so don't rule out any college you like just because of its cost. Financial aid comes in different forms, **grants and scholarships**, which don't have to be re-paid; **loans** which generally carry a low interest rate and are repaid after you graduate or leave school; and **employment**, usually 15 to 20 hours per week. Most students receive a combination or "package" made up of all three types of aid.

WHAT IS THE FAFSA? (FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID)

If you have any intention of applying to college, **no matter what your financial status is currently**, you need to complete the **FAFSA** (www.fafsa.ed.gov) each year that you plan to attend a college. The **FAFSA** is the "baseline" in determining what, if any, type of financial assistance you might be eligible for from the Federal Government, New York State (TAP), Work Study, etc.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

"Financial Need" is defined as the difference between the cost of attending college and your **EFC***: The EFC is the **Expected Family Contribution**, not just your parents' contribution. You and your parents share the responsibility for paying for college.

Cost of Attendance (COA) - Expected Family Contribution* (EFC) = Financial Need

Direct Educational Costs [MINUS] (You and Your Parents) [EQUALS] Package

Where can you find your EFC?

Once your **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is processed, you will receive a **Student Aid Report (SAR)** with your official EFC figure.

How is the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) used?

You're not the only one who receives your EFC information. The same information is also sent to the colleges you list on the FAFSA. The financial aid office will use your EFC to determine your financial need. Based on this information, the college financial aid office will prepare a financial aid package and craft a financial award letter.

Your EFC can differ from school to school

Your EFC may vary from one institution to another and is generally calculated using one or both of these nationally accepted **Federal EFC**

Methodology

- Based on a formula established by the federal government.
- Takes into account family income, assets, size of current household, and the number of family members currently attending college.
- Determines eligibility for federally-sponsored financial aid such as Pell Grants, Perkins and Stafford Loans, and Federal Work-Study Programs.

Institutional EFC Methodology

- Used by institutions and organizations to determine a student's eligibility for institutionally based, private aid programs.
- May vary from college to college.
- Additional factors in a family's financial situation are occasionally considered to determine a student's eligibility for institutional need-based aid.
- May be used instead of, or in addition to, the federal EFC to determine eligibility to receive financial aid from college or private funds administered by the college.

Go to: <http://www.collegeanswer.com/index.jsp> for more useful tips on understanding Financial Aid.

Income, family size, numbers of dependents in school at the same time, mortgages, emergency expenses, medical bills, etc. are all factors that influence a family's ability or inability to meet college costs. **DO NOT rule out financial aid based on income alone.**

FINANCIAL AID

SOURCES:

There are several different student aid programs which in turn have various criteria of eligibility. The major sources of financial aid are: (1) Federal Government & State Government (2) Educational Institutions, and (3) Special Aid Programs.

Listed below are the two types of Federal Student Aid Grants which do not have to be repaid:

What is a Federal Pell Grant?	What is a Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pell Grants are the foundation of federal student financial aid, to which aid from other federal and nonfederal sources might be added. Pell Grants are generally awarded only to undergraduate students- those who haven't earned a bachelor's or graduate degree. In some limited cases, however, you might receive a Pell Grant if you're enrolled in a post-baccalaureate teacher certificate program. Amounts can change yearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSEOGs are awarded to undergraduate students with exceptional financial need-those with the lowest Expected Family Contribution* (EFC) numbers. Federal Pell Grant recipients receive priority for FSEOG awards. FSEOG awards range from \$100 to \$4,000 a year. Do not have to be repaid
What's the difference between Federal Pell Grants and FSEOGs?	
Federal Pell Grants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you're eligible for a Pell Grant you'll receive the full amount you qualify for-each school participating in the program receives enough funds to pay the Pell amounts for all its eligible students. The amount of other student aid you might qualify for does not affect the amount of your Pell Grant. 	FSEOGs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlike Pell Grants, the amount of FSEOGs you receive depends not only on your financial need, but also on the amount of other aid you get and the availability of funds at your school. Receiving other aid might reduce the amount of your FSEOG award. Not all schools participate in the FSEOG program. The school's financial aid office decides how to award these funds. Each school participating in FSEOG receives a certain amount of FSEOG funds each year from the U.S. Department of Education. When all of those funds have been disbursed for that award year, no more FSEOG awards can be made for that year. This is why it's so important to apply early to be considered for these funds. Not everyone who qualifies for an FSEOG might get one.
How much financial aid money can I get?	
Pell Grant award amounts can change yearly. The maximum Pell Grant award for the 2013-14 year is \$5645 . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much grant aid you get depends on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your EFC (Estimated Family Contribution). Your cost of attendance.* Whether you're a full-time or part-time student. Whether you attend school for a full academic year* or less. You may receive only one Pell Grant in an award year. You may not receive Pell Grant funds from more than one school at a time. 	FSEOGs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can get between \$100 and \$4,000 a year, depending on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you apply. Your financial need. The funding level of the school you're attending. <p> www.fafsa.gov www.pin.ed.gov </p>
Can I receive a grant if I'm enrolled less than half-time?*	
Yes, if you're otherwise eligible. However, you will not receive as much as if you were attending full-time.	
Federal Grant Highlights:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are awarded based solely on financial aid Unlike loans, grants don't have to be repaid unless, for example, you are awarded funds incorrectly or you withdraw from school. The amount you receive depends on your financial need, cost of attendance, and enrollment status (full-time or part-time.) 	

FINANCIAL AID
2014-2015 FEDERAL STUDENT AID PROGRAMS
<http://www.HESC.ny.gov>

Program	Type of Aid	Program Details	Annual Amount
Federal Pell Grant	Grant: does not have to be repaid	Available almost exclusively to undergraduates; student may receive up to two consecutive maximum awards in a year if attending school year-round	Up to \$5,645 per year
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)	Grant: does not have to be repaid	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need; Federal Pell Grant recipients take priority; funds depend on availability at school	Up to \$4,000 per year
Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant	Grant: does not have to be repaid unless you fail to carry out the service obligation, in which case you must repay TEACH Grant as a Direct Unsubsidized Loan with interest accrued from the date the grant was disbursed	For undergraduate, post baccalaureate, and graduate students who are taking or will be taking course work necessary to become an elementary or secondary school teacher; recipient must sign an Agreement to Serve* promising to teach full-time in a high-need field for four complete academic years (within eight years of completing academic program for which the TEACH Grant was received) at a low income elementary or secondary school or educational service agency	Up to \$3,760 a year Undergraduate students: total amount may not exceed \$16,000 Graduate student: total amount may not exceed \$8,000
Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant	Grant: does not have to be repaid	For students who are not Pell-eligible; whose parent or guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after Sept. 11, 2001; and who, at the time of the parent's or guardian's death, were less than 24 years old or were enrolled at least part-time at an institution of higher education	Maximum is same as Pell maximum; payment adjusted for less-than-full-time study
Federal Work-Study	Money earned while attending school; does not have to be repaid	For undergraduate and graduate students; jobs can be on campus or off campus; students are paid at least federal minimum wage	Varies
Federal Perkins Loan	Loan: must be repaid	For undergraduate and graduate students; must be repaid to school that made the loan; interest 5%	Undergraduate students: up to \$5,500;
Subsidized Direct* or FFEL** Stafford Loan	Loan: must be repaid	Subsidized: The U.S. Department of Education pays interest while the borrower is in school and during grace and deferment periods; student must be attending at least half-time and have financial need	Up to \$5000
Unsubsidized Direct* or FFEL** Stafford Loan	Loan: must be repaid	Unsubsidized: The borrower is responsible for all interest; must be at least half-time; financial need not required	Amounts vary.
Direct* or FFEL** PLUS Loan	Loan: must be repaid	For parents of dependent undergraduate students and for graduate and professional students; students must be enrolled at least half-time; financial need not required; Borrower must not have adverse credit history; PLUS Loans are unsubsidized, the borrower is responsible for all interest	Maximum amount is cost of attendance minus any other financial aid student receives; no minimum amount

* This type of loan is from the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program. These loans are also known as Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, and Direct PLUS Loans.

** This type of loan is from the Federal Family Education Loan (FFELSM) Program. These loans are also known as Subsidized Federal Stafford Loans, Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans, and Federal PLUS Loans.

FINANCIAL AID

Who gets Federal Student Aid?

Eligibility for federal student aid programs is based on financial need and several other factors. Your eligibility is determined by the information you provide on the FAFSA.

Basic eligibility requirements:

- Demonstrate financial need.
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen with a valid Social Security number (SSN).
- Be working toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program.
- Show, by one of the following means, that you're qualified to obtain a postsecondary education:
 - Have a high school diploma or a General Education Development (GED) Certificate.
 - Pass an approved **ability-to-benefit*** (ATB) test (if you don't have a diploma or GED, a school can administer a test to determine whether you can benefit from the education offered at that school).
 - Meet other standards your state establishes that we have approved.
 - Complete a high school education in a home school setting approved under state law.
- Register (if you haven't already) with the Selective Service, if you're a male between the ages of 18 and 25.
- Maintain **satisfactory academic progress** once in school.

Applying for federal student aid is **FREE**; that's why the application is called the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*. If you need help completing the FAFSA, that help is free, too (www.fafsa.gov). You don't have to pay anyone for assistance.

Beware of scams and services that will search for financial aid money for you for a fee. The College Scholarship Fraud Protection Act protects you from this type of fraud.

What is federal student aid?

Federal student aid is financial assistance through the U.S. Department of Education that's available if you're enrolled in an **eligible program*** as a **regular student*** at a school participating in our federal student aid programs.

Federal student aid covers school expenses such as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies and transportation. This aid can also help you pay for a computer and dependent child-care expenses.

GRANTS: Funding for specific grants and scholarships are provided by college resources. Although financial need is the primary criteria for financial awards provided by colleges, a considerable amount of "gift" aid is awarded to students who have demonstrated superior academic achievement. The grants and scholarships vary in value and can cover a part of the entirety of one's tuition and even related costs. Still other types of institutionally sponsored gift aid are made available to students who have prowess in athletics or other areas of competition. **Applications for such grants should be made to the college.**

**FEDERAL STUDENT AID INFORMATION CENTER (FSAIC) HOTLINE:
1-800-4-FED-AID**

FINANCIAL AID

HOW TO APPLY FOR AID

- Almost all colleges, state aid agencies and other programs will ask you and your parents to submit financial information.
- It is important to prepare your income tax returns early (late January/early February) in the year(s) in which you seek and apply for financial aid.
- **The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available on-line only at www.fafsa.gov.** This application should be submitted as early as possible, but **no earlier than January** of the upcoming year.
- Additionally, several colleges require the **CSS/Financial Aid Profile**, which requires a fee. Registrations are accepted beginning in October.
- Many colleges have their own applications for financial aid. These financial aid applications are different from the admissions applications, and sometimes have different deadlines.

How do I apply for a Perkins or Stafford Loan?

As with all federal student financial aid, you apply for a Perkins or Stafford Loan by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). A separate loan application is not required. However, you'll need to sign a **promissory note***, which is a binding legal contract that says you agree to repay your loan according to the terms of the **promissory note***. Read this note carefully before signing it and save a copy for your records.

Can I cancel my student loan if I change my mind, even if I have signed the promissory note* agreeing to the terms of the loan?

Yes. Your school must notify you in writing whenever it credits your account with your loan funds.

- You may cancel all or a portion of your loan if you inform your school within **14 days** after the date your school sends you this notice, or by the first day of the payment period, whichever is later.
- Your school can tell you the first day of your payment period.
- If you receive your loan funds directly by check, you may refuse the funds by returning the check to the school.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Check the **Guidance Department website** at www.hhh.k12.ny.us for scholarship information. Open **NAVIANCE**, then click the "Scholarships" tab. Students can also visit the **College and Career Center** for scholarship information.

SPECIAL AID PROGRAMS

There are thousands of special assistance programs – public and private, local and national, large and small – that offer scholarships, grants and loans to students. You may qualify for one or more of these programs because of your: academic achievement, religious affiliation, ethnic or racial heritage, community activities, special hobbies or interests, parents' employers, organizational memberships, artistic talents, athletic ability, career plans or field of study. Most of the special programs consider your financial need when awarding aid, although other criteria are used too. The eligibility requirements, application procedures, and deadlines are different for each program.

FINANCIAL AID FOR NEW YORK STUDENTS ONLY

NEW YORK STATE FINANCIAL AID (<http://www.hesc.com/>)

The New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) helps eligible New York residents pay tuition at approved schools in New York State. Depending on the academic year in which you begin study, an annual TAP award can be up to **\$5,000**. Because TAP is a grant, it **does not** have to be paid back.

To be eligible for part-time TAP you must be a first-time freshman, have earned 12 credits or more in each of two consecutive semesters, and maintain a "C" average.

Who Is Eligible?

To be eligible for TAP, you must:

- Be a United States citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- Be a legal resident of New York State.
- Study at an approved postsecondary institution in New York State.
- Have graduated from high school, have a GED, or have passed a federally-approved exam that demonstrates the student can benefit from the education offered.
- Be enrolled as a fulltime student taking 12 or more credits per semester
- Be matriculated in an approved program of study and be in good academic standing.
- Have declared a major no later than within 30 days from the end of the add/drop period:
 - *In the first term of your sophomore year in an approved two-year program; or*
 - *In the first term of your junior year in an approved four-year program*
- Meet good academic standing requirements.
- Be charged at least \$200 tuition per year.
- Not be in default on a student loan guaranteed by HESC or on any repayment of state awards.
- Meet income eligibility limitations.

What Are The Income Limits for TAP?

- Dependent undergraduate students or students who are married or have tax dependents - \$80,000 NYS net taxable income.
- Single independent undergraduate students with no dependents - \$10,000 NYS net taxable income.

How to Apply for TAP?

1. Apply Online for Federal Aid

FAFSA Online (www.fafsa.gov)

- Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, you are required to apply for federal aid online.
- About 3 weeks after e-mailing your paper FAFSA, HESC will send you a postcard or e-mail prompting you to get a HescPIN and complete your TAP application online. Follow the online instructions.
- The TAP application process begins with the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. NYHESC will use the FAFSA as part of your online TAP application.

2. Complete Your Online TAP Application

- After completing your FAFSA, complete your online TAP application by linking to it directly from your FAFSA Confirmation Page, or by going to the quick link button, *Apply for TAP*, on the HESC Web site. (<http://www.hesc.com>)
- You will be prompted to get a HescPIN (Personal Identification Number). You will use your HescPIN to "sign" your TAP application, to keep track of your application information, or to make changes.
- Once you have your HescPIN, complete your online TAP application. Information from your FAFSA and your family's calculated NYS net taxable income will be pre-filled on your online TAP application. Follow the instructions provided.

FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIP WEBSITES:



www.fastweb.com
www.startheregetthere.org

www.nacacnet.org
www.collegeboard.com

www.finaid.org
www.review.com

www.freschinfo.com

www.scholarshipsforhispanics.com

www.fastaid.com

<http://financialaid.syr.edu/scholarships.htm>

www.ncaa.org

www.hesc.com

www.careersandcolleges.com

www.college-scholarships.com

www.carpedm.com

www.njsca.org/col/finaid.htm

www.collegenet.com/mach25

www.petersons.com/finaid

www.studentaid.ed.gov

www.college-scholarships.com



THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (SUNY)



WHAT IS SUNY?

The State University of New York is a coordinated network of sixty-four individual public institutions located in virtually every region of the state. A full spectrum of programs from short-term vocational-technical careers to extended post-doctoral studies is available to meet the education needs of the citizens of New York. There are four University Centers, thirteen colleges of Arts and Sciences, eight Technical Colleges, twenty-nine Community Colleges, seven specialized colleges and five centers for Health Sciences. (See attached for names and locations of the SUNY colleges.)

UNIVERSITY CENTERS:

Moderately large residential campuses (11,000 to 23,000 students), each university center includes an undergraduate college as well as a graduate school. In the undergraduate colleges, students undertake a four year program leading to a Bachelor's degree in liberal arts or sciences. The graduate schools offer specialized study towards a Master's degree (one to three years of study beyond a Bachelor's degree) or Doctoral degree (one to three years of intensive study beyond the Master's).

COLLEGE OF ARTS:

The four year colleges (3,000 to 11,500 students) are residential campuses, which offer liberal arts and science programs at both the Bachelor's and Master's level.

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES:

Program offerings are almost unlimited – from Business Administration to Nuclear Science Engineering, from Meteorology . . . to Marketing . . . to Music.

SPECIALIZED COLLEGES:

The seven specialized colleges, five of which are statutory colleges located on private university campuses, serve students with special educational or career goals. Programs lead to a Bachelor's degree and, in many instances, offer opportunities for students to pursue graduate study.

HEALTH SCIENCE CENTERS:

The five centers for the health sciences train professionals in a multitude of health related fields, from physical therapy to biochemical research and medicine. The Buffalo and Stony Brook Health Sciences Centers are integral parts of their respective university centers.

AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES:

The "Ag & Techs", which enroll between 2,600 to 4,000 students, except for Farmingdale with over 14,000 are residential colleges offering a variety of two-year Associate degree programs in liberal arts, agriculture, and the technologies. Four types of Associate degrees are awarded: Associate degrees in Arts and in Sciences are earned in programs which generally parallel the first two years of a liberal arts program at the four-year colleges; Associate degrees in Applied Science or Occupational Studies are earned through programs in fields such as business, industry, health and social services.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES:

Developed primarily to serve educational needs within specific localities, the 29 community colleges range in size from 1,400 to 23,000 students. The community colleges offer two-year Associate degrees and one-year Certificate programs in the liberal arts and various technical and occupational areas.

SUNY COSTS

The cost of attending college in the SUNY system may vary somewhat depending upon the college chosen, its location, where the student resides, whether attendance is full or part-time, the courses in which the student enrolls, the student's style of living and other individual factors. The following table shows "typical" student budgets for a nine-month academic year for full time undergraduates.

2013-14 Typical Expenses for Undergraduate Students at a SUNY College

State-Operated Campuses Baccalaureate Degree Programs			
	New York State Residents		Out-of-State Residents ²
	Living on Campus	Commuter	Living on Campus
Tuition	\$5870	\$5870	\$15320 ³
Student Fees ¹	\$1340	\$1350	\$1350
Room and Board	\$11770	\$3860	\$11770
Books and Supplies	\$1270	\$1270	\$1270
Personal Expenses	\$1450	\$1520	\$1450
Transportation	\$990	\$1770	\$990
TOTAL COST	\$22700	\$15640	\$32150

Community Colleges Associate Degree Programs		
	In State/In District ⁴	
	Commuter	Living on Campus
Tuition	\$3960	\$3960
Student Fees ¹	\$550	\$550
Room and Board	\$3770	\$9730
Books and Supplies	\$1310	\$1310
Personal Expenses	\$1160	\$1110
Transportation	\$1660	\$1280
TOTAL COST	\$12410	\$17940

¹This figure represents the average fee. Typically fees at the State-operated campuses range from \$1054 to \$2555.

²More information about [residency status](#).

³ Tuition rate for non-New York residents enrolled in a bachelor's degree program at University of Buffalo and Stony Brook University is \$17,810 and is \$16,190 at University at Albany and Binghamton University.

⁴ Community colleges generally double their in-state tuition for non-residents.

State-operated campuses include [University Centers](#), [University Colleges](#) and [Technology Colleges](#).

Financial aid is available to eligible students in the form of grants, loans and employment. Students are urged to apply for financial assistance if they have any doubt as to whether they can fully afford the cost of attending a SUNY institution.



COLLEGES & TECHNICAL SCHOOLS ON LONG ISLAND WITHIN COMMUTING DISTANCE

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY
SOUTH AVENUE
GARDEN CITY NY 11530
(800) ADELPHI
WWW.ADELPHI.EDU/

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NY (CUNY)
114 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
NEW YORK NY 10036
(800) CUNY YES
WWW.CUNY.EDU/

DOWLING COLLEGE
IDLE HOUR BOULEVARD
OAKDALE NY 11769-1999
(631)244-3030
WWW.DOWLING.EDU

FARMINGDALE STATE (SUNY)
ROUTE 110
2350 BROADHOLLOW ROAD
FARMINGDALE NY 11735
(631) 420-2400
WWW.FARMINGDALE.EDU/

FIVE TOWNS COLLEGE
305 NORTH SERVICE ROAD
DIX HILLS NY 11746
(631) 656-2110
WWW.FTC.EDU/

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY
100 HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY
HEMPSTEAD NY 11549
(516) 463-6700
WWW.HOFSTRA.EDU/

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY
720 NORTHERN BLVD.,
BROOKVILLE, NY 11548
WWW.CWPOST.LIU.EDU
(516) 229-2900

MOLLOY COLLEGE
1000 HEMPSTEAD AVENUE
ROCKVILLE CENTRE NY 11571-5002
(888) 4-MALLOY
WWW.MOLLOY.EDU/

NY INSTITUTE OF TECH
PO BOX 8000
OLD WESTBURY NY 11568-8000
(516) 686-1000
WWW.NYIT.EDU.

NY INSTITUTE OF TECH
PO BOX 9029
CENTRAL ISLIP NY 11722-9029
1-800-345 NYIT
WWW.NYIT.EDU

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY
8000 UTOPIA PARKWAY
JAMAICA NY 11439
(866) 812-0619
WWW.STJOHNS.EDU/

ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE
155 WEST ROE BOULEVARD
PATCHOGUE, NY 11772-2399
(631) 447-3200
WWW.SJCNY.ED/

SUNY @ OLD WESTBURY
PO BOX 210
OLD WESTBURY NY 11568-0210
(516) 876-3073
WWW.OLDWESTBURY.EDU

SUNY @ STONY BROOK
NICOLLS ROAD
STONYBROOK NY 11794
(631) 632-6868
WWW.SUNYSB.EDU/

SUFFOLK COMMUNITY COLLEGE
533 COLLEGE ROAD
SELDEN NY 11784-2899
(631)451-4000
WWW.SUNYSUFFOLK.EDU/

TOURO COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM
1700 UNION BLVD.
BAY SHORE, NEW YORK 11706

WILSON TECH CENTER
17 WESTMINSTER AVE
DIX HILLS, NY 11746
(631)667-6000
WWW.WILSONTECH.ORG/

BRIARCLIFFE COLLEGE
1055 STEWART AVENUE
BETHPAGE, NY 11714
www.briarcliffe.edu

KATHARINE GIBBS SCHOOL
320 SOUTH SERVICE RD
MELVILLE, NY 11747
WWW.GIBBSNY.EDU

WEBB INSTITUTE
298 CRESCENT BEACH ROAD
GLEN COVE NY 11542-1398
WWW.WEBB-INSTITUTE.EDU

NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1 EDUCATION DRIVE
GARDEN CITY NY 11530-6793
(516) 572-7345
WWW.NCC.EDU/

SELECTED COLLEGES WITH PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

CONNECTICUT

Southern Connecticut State University
New Haven, Connecticut 06515
Disability Resource Officer
www.scsu.ctstateu.edu

(203) 392-5644
Enrollment in Special Program: 600;
No Cost

University of Connecticut

Neag School of Education
Storrs, Connecticut 06269-3088
University Program for College Students with
Learning Disabilities (UPLD)
(860)486-3137

Enrollment in Special Program: 140-160;
No Cost

MARYLAND

Frostburg State University
Frostburg, Maryland 21532-1099
Disabilities Support Services
(301) 687-4483

Enrollment in Special program: 350;
No Cost

Western Maryland College

Westminster, Maryland 21157-4390
Academic Skills Center (ASC)
(410) 857-2504

Enrollment in Special program: 150;
Extra fee required

MAINE

Unity College
Unity, Maine 04988-9502
Learning Resource Center
www.unity.edu

(207) 948-3131
Enrollment in Special program: 50-60;
No Cost

WASHINGTON D.C.

The American University
Washington, DC 20016-8027
Learning Services Program
Enrollment in Special Program: 20-30;
Extra fee required

MASSACHUSETTS

American International College
Springfield, Massachusetts 01109
Supportive Learning Services
(413) 747-6426
Enrollment in Special program: 100;
Extra fee required

Boston University

Boston, Massachusetts 02215
Learning Disabilities Services
(617) 353-3658
Enrollment in Special program: 550;
Extra fee required

Curry College

Milton, Massachusetts 02186
Program for Advancement of Learning
www.curry.edu
(617) 333-2250
Enrollment in Special program: 340;
Extra fee required

Fitchburg State College

Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420
Disability Services
Enrollment in Special program: 200;
No Cost

Mount Ida College

Newton Centre, Massachusetts 02459
Learning Opportunities Program
(617) 928-4553
Enrollment in Special program: 80-110;
Extra fee required

Northeastern University

Boston, Massachusetts 02115
Learning Disabilities Program
www.neu.edu
(617) 373-2200
Enrollment in Special program: 300;
Extra fee required

Springfield College

Springfield, Massachusetts 01109
Student Support Services
(413) 748-3768
Enrollment in Special Program: 100;
No Cost

University of Massachusetts

Amherst, Massachusetts 01003-0620
Learning Disabilities Support Services
www.umass.edu
(413) 545-4602
Enrollment in Special Program: 650

NEW JERSEY

Farleigh Dickinson University
Teaneck, New Jersey 07666
Regional Center for College Students with
Learning Disabilities
www.fdu.edu
(201) 692-2087
Enrollment in Special Program: 120

Georgian Court College

Lakewood, New Jersey
The Learning Center
www.georgian.edu
(732) 364-2200
Enrollment in Special Program: 30;
No Cost

New Jersey City University

Jersey City, New Jersey 07305
Project Mentor
projmentor@njcu.edu
(201) 200-3141
Enrollment in Special Program: 65-70;
No Cost

NEW YORK

Adelphi University
Garden City, New York 11530
Learning Disabilities Program
ldprogram@adelphi.edu
(516) 877-4710
Enrollment in Special Program: 125;
Extra fee required

Canisius College

Buffalo, New York 14208
Disability Support Service
www.canisius.edu
(716) 888-3748
Enrollment in Special Program: 6;
Extra fee required

Concordia College

Bronxville, New York 10708
The Concordia Connection
www.concordia-ny.edu
(914) 337-9300
Enrollment in Special Program: 30;
Extra fee required

Hofstra University

Hempstead, New York 11549
Program for Academic Learning Skills
www.hofstra.edu
(516) 463-5059
Enrollment in Special Program: 140;
Extra fee required

Iona College

New Rochelle, New York 10801
College Assistance Program
www.iona.edu
(914) 633-2622
Enrollment in Special Program: 60;
Extra fee required

Long Island University/C.W Post Campus
Brookville, New York 11548
Academic Resource Center
Enrollment in Special Program: 130;
Extra fee required

Manhattan College
Riverdale, New York 10471
Learning Disabilities Program
www.manhattan.edu
(718)862-7200
Enrollment in Special Program: 50;
No Cost

Manhattanville College
Purchase, New York 10577
Higher Education Learning Program
www.manhattanville.edu
(914) 694-1732
Enrollment in Special Program: 34
Extra fee required

Marist College
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601
Learning Disabilities Support Program
specserv@marist.edu
(845) 575-3226
Enrollment in Special Program: 80;
Extra fee required

Marymount Manhattan College
New York, New York 10021
Program for Academic Success
(212) 774-0724
Enrollment in Special Program: 25;
Extra fee required

Molloy College
Rockville Centre, New York 11570
Disability Support Services
www.molloy.edu
(516) 678-5000
Enrollment in Special Program: 40;

New York Institute of Technology
Central Islip, New York 11722-9029
Vocational Independence Program
www.nyit.edu
(631) 348-3354
Enrollment in Special Program: 86;
Extra fee required

New York University
New York, New York 10012
Access to Learning
(212) 998-4980
Enrollment in Special Program: 220;
No Cost

Saint Thomas Aquinas College
Sparkill, New York 10976
(914) 398-4230
Enrollment in Special Program: 80;
Extra fee required

PENNSYLVANIA
College Misericordia
Dallas, Pennsylvania 18612
The Alternative Learners Project
www.misericordia.edu
(717) 674-6347
Enrollment in Special Program: 50;
No Cost

Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15282-0206
Learning Skills Center
www.duq.edu/LS/main.html
(412) 396-6636
Enrollment in Special Program: 415;
No Cost

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
Edinboro, Pennsylvania 16444-0001
Office for Students with Disabilities
(814) 732-2462
Enrollment in Special Program: 250;
Extra fee required

Gannon University
Erie, Pennsylvania 16541-0001
Program for Students with Learning Disabilities
lowrey@gannon.edu
(814) 871-5326
Enrollment in Special Program: 60;
Extra fee required

King's College
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18711
First Year Academic Studies Program
www.kings.edu
(717) 826-5800

Widener University
Chester, Pennsylvania 19013-5792
Enable Program
www.widener.edu
(610) 499-1270
Enrollment in Special Program: 150;
No Cost

RHODE ISLAND

Johnson and Wales University
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
Special Needs
(401) 589-4689
Enrollment in Special Program: 650;
No Cost

Salve Regina University
Newport, Rhode Island 02840
Academic Development Center
(401) 847-6650
Enrollment in Special Program: 150;
No Cos

RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN THE CAREER & COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The College and Career Center has information and material that will assist you in your research as you begin the decision making process regarding your post secondary plans. Here is what is available:

- **NAVIANCE** – College and career software program used to search for colleges and occupations with a personal password. Students can also obtain information about 4 year and 2 year colleges, technical schools and various careers. Naviance provides an extensive list of **up-to-date scholarship information**.
- **Current Up-To-Date Scholarship Offerings:** www.fastweb.com www.scholarships.com
www.naviancesucceed.com
- **All Standardized Test Materials** for the SAT, SAT II (Subject Test) and ACT.
- **Summer research opportunities and college experiences**
- **Part-time job opportunities**
- **Listed below are just a few of the Colleges and Universities that visit our school annually:**

Arcadia University
Arizona State University
Babson College
Bennington College
Bloomsburg University
Boston University
Brandeis University
Brown University
Case Western Reserve University
Cazenovia College
Colorado State University
Cooper Union
CUNY Baruch
Drew University
Duke University
Emory University
Franklin & Marshall College
George Washington Univ.
Hartwick College
Hofstra University
Indiana University

Iona College
Ithaca College
Lafayette College
Lehigh University
LIU/C.W. Post
Loyola University
Manhattan College
Manhattanville College
Mercy College
Muhlenberg College
Northeastern University
New York University
Ohio State University
Pace University
Princeton University
Quinnipiac University
Sacred Heart University
Siena College
St. John's University
St. Thomas Aquinas College
Stonehill College

SUNY @ Oneonta
Swarthmore College
Tulane University
Union College
Univ. Of Maryland – College Park
Univ. Of Pennsylvania
Univ. Of Southern California
University @ Buffalo
University Of Alabama
University Of Arizona
University Of Chicago
University Of Hartford
University Of New Hampshire
University Of Notre Dame
University Of Richmond
University Of Rochester
Vanderbilt University
Washington Univ. In St. Louis
Wesleyan University
Williams College
Yale University

GLOSSARY OF COLLEGE TERMS

The definitions given here are terms commonly used by colleges to describe their programs, admissions procedures and financial aid policies. Students should consult the college catalogs of specific institutions in order to get more detailed and up-to-date descriptions of the procedures, programs, and practices discussed.

Accelerated Programs: A college program of study completed in less than the time usually required, most often by attending in summer or by carrying extra courses during the regular academic terms.

Accreditation: Recognition by an accrediting organization or agency that a college meets certain acceptable standards in its education programs, services and facilities. Regional accreditation applies to a college as a whole and not to any particular program or course of study. Specialized accreditation of specific types of schools or professional programs is usually determined by a national organization.

Advanced Placement Program (AP): A service of the College Board that provides high schools with course description in college subjects and Advanced Placement Examinations on those subjects. High schools administer the examination to qualified students, who may then be eligible for advanced placement, college credit, or both, on the basis of satisfactory grades.

Associate's Degree: The degree given for completing college programs of at least two but less than four years of study, usually in a two year institution such as a community college.

Bachelor's Degree: The degree given for completing undergraduate college programs that normally takes four years.

Certificate: An award for completing a particular program or course of study, sometimes given by two-year colleges instead of, or in addition to, an associate's degree.

Class Rank: The approximate position of a student in his/her graduating class, figured according to grade average. It may be stated as a particular position, such as 75th (from the top) in a class of 350 students, or as some fraction of the class, such as the top third or the second fifth of the class.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP): A program of examinations in undergraduate college subjects and courses that provides students and other adults with an opportunity to show college-level achievement for which they have not previously received credit.

College Preparatory Subjects: A term used to describe admissions requirements or recommendations. It is usually understood to mean subjects from the fields of English, history/social studies, foreign language, mathematics and science.

College Scholarship Service (CSS): A service of the College Board that assists post secondary institutions, the federal government, state scholarship programs and other organizations in the equitable distribution of student financial aid funds. CSS measures a family's financial strength and analyzes the ability to contribute to college costs. CSS need analysis services offer a standardized method of determining a student's needs.

Consortium: A voluntary association of two or more college providing joint services and academic programs to students enrolled in member institutions. Typical consortiums are made up of neighboring colleges. Students at one campus are allowed to attend courses and use the facilities at other member campuses.

Cooperative Education: A college program in which a student alternates between periods of full time study and full time employment in a related field. Students are paid for their work at the prevailing rate. Typically, five years are required to complete a bachelor's degree under the cooperative plan, but graduates have the advantage of having completed about a year of practical work experience in addition to their studies. Some colleges refer to this sort of program as work-study, but it should not be confused with the federally sponsored College Work Study Program.

CSS Profile: A financial aid form to be filed through the College Scholarship Service for those students seeking any type of campus-based aid; such as grants, college-given loans, work study programs and scholarships. A filing fee is involved. This form is required by specific colleges and universities.

Deferred Admission: The practice of permitting students to postpone enrollment for one year after acceptance into the college.

Double Major: Any program of study in which a student completes the requirements of two majors concurrently.

Dual Enrollment: The practice of some colleges of allowing high school seniors to enroll in certain courses while completing their senior year. These students are not considered full time college students.

Early Action: A non-binding admission** plan offered by some colleges which allows students the comfort of a knowing that they have been accepted without the obligation of having to attend. Notification typically comes in early to mid-December. The student does not have to withdraw other applications and does not have to accept or refuse the EA offer of admission until May 1.

*(**Be aware that several colleges enforce a Single Choice Early Action or Restrictive Early Action plan that restrict a student's ability to apply Early Action or Early Decision to other colleges. Students should check with the Admissions Department at the colleges they are applying to for specific details.)*

Early Admission: The practice of some colleges which involves admitting certain high school students- usually **high school juniors** with exceptional ability. These students are enrolled full time in college.

Early Decision: A binding admission plan that requires an early application (typically October or November) and promises a reply by December or January. There are two types of ED plans: (1) Single Choice, in which the student is allowed to apply to only one college and (2) First Choice, in which the student may apply elsewhere but agrees to withdraw other applications if accepted by the ED school. This plan is recommended only if the applicant is absolutely sure of his or her college choice. **If accepted, the student is ethically obligated** to attend if sufficient financial aid is offered.

Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): A financial information collection document of the College Scholarship Service and the American College Testing Program used by parents of dependent students or independent students to supply information about their income, assets, expenses and liabilities. CSS and ACT use this information in estimating how much money a family is able to contribute to a student's expenses. FAFSA can be used to apply for all types of federal aid including the Pell Grant and Stafford Loans.

Honors Program: A special program which offers the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, acceleration, preferential scheduling, or some combination of these privileges.

Independent Study: An arrangement that allows students to complete some of their college program by studying independently instead of attending scheduled classes and completing group assignments. Typically, students plan programs of study in consultation with a faculty advisor or committee, to whom they may report periodically and submit a final report for evaluation.

Internships: Short-term, supervised work experiences, usually related to student's major field, for which the student earns academic credit. The work can be full or part time, on or off campus, paid or unpaid. Student teaching and apprenticeships are examples of internships.

Need Analysis Form: A financial information collection document used by parents of dependent students to supply information about their income, assets, expenses and liabilities. Independent students file these forms for themselves. The information is then used to estimate how much money a family or student is able to contribute to a student's college expenses. In many cases, a single need analysis form is the only document that students need to submit to be considered for all types of institutional, state and federal financial aid.

Open Admissions: The college admissions policy of admitting high school graduates or other adults generally without regard to conventional academic qualifications, such as high school subject, high school grades and admission test scores. Virtually all applicants with high school diplomas or their equivalent are accepted.

Pass/Fail Grading System: The practice of some colleges of rating student's quality of performance in their courses as either passing or failing instead of giving grades to indicate various levels of passing work.

Preadmission Summer Program: A special program in which a student attends college during the summer preceding the freshman year. The program may consist of remedial studies to strengthen preparation for freshman courses, or one or more of the regular freshman courses to enable the student to carry a light schedule in the freshman year.

PSAT/NMSQT: A shorter version of the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test administered by high schools each year in October. The PSAT/NMSQT aids high schools in the early guidance of students planning for college and serves as the qualifying test for scholarships awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC): Programs conducted by certain colleges in cooperation with the United States Air Force, Army and Navy. Local recruiting offices of the services themselves can supply detailed information about these programs, in addition to the participating colleges.

Rolling Admissions: An admissions procedure by which the college considers each student's application as soon as all the required credentials, such as school record and test scores, have been received. The college usually notifies application of its decision without delay.

Semester: A period of approximately 15 weeks which makes up half of the usual academic year in colleges and universities.

Student-Designed Major: An academic program that allows a student to construct a major field of study not formally offered by the college. Often, nontraditional and interdisciplinary in nature, the major is developed by the student with the approval of a designated college officer of committee.

Student Search Service:

A College Board Program designed to help colleges identify potential applicants with the particular academic or personal characteristics they want. Information is gathered about students who wish to participate through the Student Descriptive Questionnaire, the ACT and the biographical section of the PSAT/NMSQT. The College Board then supplies each participating college with the names and addresses of students who have the particular characteristics they specify. The service is free to students.

Study Abroad: Any arrangement by which a student completes part of the college program, typically the junior year but sometimes only a semester or a summer, studying in another country. A college may operate a campus abroad, or it may have a cooperative agreement with some other American colleges or an institution in another country.

Terminal Program: An education program designed to prepare students for immediate employment. These programs are usually completed in less than four years beyond high school and are available in many junior colleges, community colleges and vocational-technical institutes.

(TOEFL) Test Of English As A Foreign Language: Sponsored by the College Board and the Graduate Record Examinations Board, this test helps foreign language students demonstrate their English-Language proficiency at the advanced level required for study in college and universities in the United States. Many colleges require their foreign applicants to take the test as part of their admissions requirements for both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

3-2 Liberal Arts and Engineering Combination: A program in which a student completes three years of study in a liberal arts field followed by two years of professional/technical study (for example engineering, allied health, forestry), and at the end of which the student is rewarded the bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degrees.

Transfer Program: An education program in a two-year college that is offered primarily for students who plan to continue their studies in a four-year college or university.

Trimester: An academic calendar period of about 10 weeks. Three trimesters make up one year. Students make normal progress by attending two of the trimesters each year and in some colleges can accelerate their programs by attending all three trimesters in one or more years.

Upper Division College: A college offering bachelor's degree programs that begin with junior year. Entering students must have completed the freshman and sophomore years at other colleges.

Summary of Things to Remember From Your Junior Parent Conference

When you are doing your research, be sure to look for the following:

1. Student/Faculty ratio. Male/Female ratio. In state/Out of state ratio.
2. Freshman retention rate (how many return for their sophomore year?).
3. What is the percentage of students that graduate in four/five or six years?
4. What is the percentage of students getting accepted into medical/law/dental & graduate school?
5. What is the percentage of classes that are taught by graduate students?
6. What is the average class size? What are the largest and smallest class sizes?
7. What are the admissions requirements? Are there different requirements for different majors?
8. Does the school have several majors that interest you? How hard is it to change your major?
9. Are there opportunities for undergraduates to do research/teach/intern etc?
10. What is the percentage of students who receive financial aid? What is the average package? Is merit based aid available? What G.P.A. must be maintained to have your scholarship renewed?
11. Does the school have special programs for example: Honors programs, Guaranteed Medical School programs, Accelerated Bachelors/Masters program, General Studies programs and programs for students with learning disabilities etc? What are the requirements for these programs?
12. How many students applied and what percentage was accepted?
13. Is there any type of core curriculum that must be followed?

Steps You Should Be Taking Now!

1. Work very hard for the remainder of this year and senior year to bring up your grades. Colleges are looking for a progressively positive academic trend.
2. Prepare and register for the SAT I, ACT & SAT II exams. Take them again if you need to.
3. Research colleges: attend college fairs, view videos, conduct online research and take virtual campus tours. Be sure to visit the College Career Center to view college guides/catalogs and use Choices, Discover & Naviance to do college searches and get in depth information on colleges and careers.
4. Arrange college visits, preferably while school is in session.
5. Ask your teachers, coaches, camp counselors, employers, scout leaders or clergy for recommendations.
6. Complete a Resume of Activities and an Autobiographical Sketch for your counselor.
7. Write a personal statement to submit with your college applications.
8. Go online and look up the applications and essay questions required by the schools that interest you. Start completing these over the summer so you will be less overwhelmed in the fall.
9. If applicable, send letters of interest and athletic profiles to coaches.
10. You should be doing college research each week and forming a list of prospective colleges.
11. By September, you should have narrowed down a list of options that include "safety, range and reach schools."

Choosing a college is one of the most important decisions you will make. Start the process now. Do a little each day. Study hard. Do not rely on your parents to do the work for you. Research your options carefully and make good decisions. Make appointments to see your counselor as needed. Come prepared with questions.