



**Saddlebrook Preparatory School**  
5700 Saddlebrook Way  
Wesley Chapel, FL. 33543  
Tel: (813) 907-4516 Fax: (813) 991-4713  
Website: [www.saddlebrookprep.com](http://www.saddlebrookprep.com)

## COLLEGE PLANNING HANDBOOK

2015-2016

Expanding the Mind, Building the Body, Shaping the Character



*Home of the Spartans*

**College Entrance Examination Board:** CEEB SAT/ACT: 101-810

### COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

#### MISSION - BELIEFS - PHILOSOPHY:

Saddlebrook Preparatory School offers students a challenging environment that encourages creativity, curiosity and healthy competitiveness in a safe, supportive community. Our academic program, encompassing elementary through high school, offers small classes and innovative instruction in a college preparatory curriculum. Our school works in unison with rigorous tennis and golf programs to develop responsible citizens and promote a commitment to lifelong learning. Our student body assures a learning environment enriched by multicultural experiences that encourages students to exchange ideas and gain an understanding of different ways of life.

#### VISION:

Saddlebrook Preparatory School will be a dynamic educational community that inspires optimal student achievement and lifelong learning. Our school's efforts to expand the mind, build the body, and shape the character will prepare our students to meet the daunting challenges and high expectations of the twenty-first century. They will become responsible and competent world-wide leaders who make a positive difference in their communities.

#### TEN CORE VALUES STATEMENT:

The Saddlebrook Preparatory School educational community shares the following values and will create an environment in which students will:

1. Be inspired and motivated to achieve success at the highest possible level in appropriately differentiated instruction.
2. Be encouraged and inspired to train at their highest possible level in order to perform well in competition.
3. Develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes from research-based instruction measured against state and national standards.
4. Develop responsibility and ethics in the use of twenty-first century technology and communication skills.
5. Respect cultural and ethnic differences and demonstrate respect for themselves and their school community.
6. Develop a positive work ethic by being self-directed, self-disciplined, and responsible.
7. Demonstrate organizational, logical, and higher level thinking skills.
8. Learn and appreciate the value of their service to others.
9. Learn how to cope with adversity in a positive manner in the classroom, in the athletic environment, and in their daily lives.
10. Develop positive self-esteem from experiencing success in learning.

## LETTER 1

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Dear High School Students and Parents:

We look forward to working with you during the high school years. The venture ahead of you is a partnership in which each of us plays a vital role. This College Planning Handbook has been prepared to outline each of our roles and delineate the way guidance services can assist you through the college search, selection, application, and admission process.

Remember, your junior and senior years are the springboard to your future. The grades you earn, the activities in which you are involved, and your foresight in planning ahead will have the greatest impact on being accepted at the colleges of your choice.

We hope that you will be an active participant in this process. Please let us know if we can be of any service to you. If you would like a conference, please call or e-mail for an appointment. We are excited about working with you as you focus on your plans for the future.

Sincerely,

Saddlebrook Preparatory School  
Guidance Counselor/College Adviser

## LETTER 2

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian and Student,

It is with pleasure and enthusiasm that we officially begin the college search process with you and your child. Saddlebrook Preparatory School Guidance Department has prepared this handbook as a resource for you and your child to use during the process of applying to Colleges or Universities. We hope this handbook becomes a valuable resource throughout your child's secondary school education at Saddlebrook Preparatory School. This handbook should be utilized as a guide referring to the appropriate sections as you and your child go through the process of investigating schools, gathering additional information, interviewing, writing essays and resumes, filing applications, etc., and finally deciding the appropriate college or university for your child to gain admission.

For many students, the phrase "college preparation" conjures up images of campus visits, college visits, college applications, SAT's and ACT's. Indeed, preparing for college in today's world involves much more. College-bound high school students have a great deal of work to do, starting in their freshman year.

Over four years of high school, a student will have many teachers, activity leaders, mentors, coaches, etc. and he/she will encounter great effort being placed along the process of exploring his or her academic and career endeavors. As a result, to ensure that the picture is a complete one – one that will assist a student into selecting the appropriate college or university that meets his or her criteria – there exist a variety of activities that need to be performed.

Selecting a college today is not an easy under-taking. There are more than 3,000 accredited colleges and universities in the United States, and you and your child will find that each one has pros and cons relative to a student's likes and dislikes.

It is now time for students to assess their interests as well as their strengths and weaknesses and to discuss their plans with parents/guardians, counselor and teachers. This is the beginning of an exciting phase of a high school senior's life; the choices he or she makes in the next several months will play a major role in shaping the years to come. On the one hand, if the approach towards the college selection process is performed in a thorough and thoughtful manner, the student will go off to a college or university with peace of mind, knowing that he or she has made an informed decision based on a careful analysis of all of his or her options. We look forward to working with you in this endeavor. On the other hand, if the approach is conducted with haste and without proper planning or effort, the student will not gain any ownership or empowerment in the college planning process. As a result, he or she will have minimal insight on how to make an informed decision, to meet crucial deadlines, to organize information and resources, to analyze information and data, to prioritize needs, and think critically, but optimistically on choices being selected.

Respectfully Yours,

The Guidance Department

## LETTER 3

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Dear Saddlebrook Preparatory School Parents:

Thank you for giving Saddlebrook Preparatory School the opportunity in assisting to further your child's academic education. It is important to note that while your child is attending Saddlebrook Preparatory School, he or she will be following a curriculum that is based upon the Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. These standards have been developed in order to ensure that every student has met all academic requirements and has successfully completed all the necessary course work, before receiving a Standard High School Diploma that would assist him or her to gain admission in an accredited College or University.

In an attempt to ensure that your child is provided with the appropriate course work needed to satisfy his or her secondary school academic requirements towards obtaining a Standard High School Diploma, and to provide him or her with initial eligibility certification as a prospective student-athlete wishing to compete as a freshmen at NCAA member institutions offering Division I or II athletics, there are several documents that are required to be submitted to the Office of Admissions of Saddlebrook Preparatory School (5700 Saddlebrook Way Wesley Chapel, Florida 33543-4499).

### **Out-of –State Students-Athletes must submit:**

- Official transcripts from all educational institutions the student has attended. Please make a list of all schools and contact the Office of Admissions, Registrars, or Records in each of the school.
- Transcripts should display official signatures and seal of the submitting school.
- Each Secondary – School Course that the student has taken must have the course name, the course hours or minutes, and course credit achieved.
- Transcripts must also indicate State and/or School Standardized Examinations that the student has taken.

### **Foreign (International) Student-Athletes must submit:**

- Original academic records (or certified [attested] copies of the original documents) and certified, literal English translations for records not originally in English sent (not faxed). Please note that detailed and complete records are required: Official records from all secondary and/or middle school attended. This includes any secondary and/or middle school coursework completed.
- Academic records should show individual subjects studied, title of the subject (no course code or abbreviation), course hours and/or student hours achieved or completed in each course or subject, and the grades or marks received. Please note that if middle school or secondary school academic records do not clearly indicate the course or subject studied or their content, school syllabi of courses or descriptions of the curriculum must accompany the records, as well as official student attendance records with corresponding student schedules. In addition, any standardized examinations that the student has taken must also be submitted.
- Literal English Translation Required: If the academic record is not in English, translation must be sent in addition to, not in lieu of (not in place of), the original record. The translation should be a literal translation, not an interpretive translation. Any transcripts, certificates, translations, or examinations results that appear to have been altered or are irregular will be forwarded to the appropriate country's school authorities or examination board for verification.
- All international student documents should be sent to the Office of Admissions of Saddlebrook Preparatory School by regular surface or airmail.

#### Acceptable Photocopy Procedures:

If your original academic record is difficult to replace, the registrar, or other record keeping school official from the original issuing institution should make a photocopy of the student's record and certify that it is the true copy of the original. This is done by placing the institution's official seal or stamp and the signature of the certifying official on the document after photocopying it (Please do not send difficult-to-replace original documents). Records certified by lecturers, professors, tutors, or any other school official who does not hold primary responsibility for maintaining the academic records will not be accepted.

In order for your child to study in the United States as an international student you must document that you have sufficient financial resources for your child to complete his or hers course of study. You must prove that you have enough funds to cover all the costs associated with your child's first year of full-time study. This budget includes registration fees, housing, books, other living expenses, and miscellaneous costs. You can find the amount for most of your child's colleges or universities that have been selected on each specific college or university website.

As an international student your child will need to have your financial institution provide a certification that you have at least the amount required available, or that funds are available from a reliable source. International students should not expect to work to cover the cost of their education.

Federal/state financial aid is not available in most universities and colleges for international students. Campus or private scholarships may be available for international students at certain colleges or universities but nothing sufficient to cover all expenses.

In addition to the provided information that needs to be completed, you must provide an original and a copy of the following:

1. A letter written by you that you will be willing and able to financially support in his or her college or university of choice (A letter for each of the college or university that your child will be applying). – To verify your financial ability to support your child, you must submit have the letter NOTARIZED and the following:
  - A. NOTARIZED CURRENT Original Bank Statement, verified by a bank official with specific amount and date account was established.
  - B. NOTARIZED Original Employer Statement stating length of employment and yearly salary.
  - C. NOTARIZED Other sources of income. Please specify and send notarized originals.
2. Please note, that The Immigration and Naturalization Service of the United States requires prospective students to provide proof of their ability to pay for their studies and living expenses while in the United States. Financial statements must be in the English language and they must be notarized. You must indicate exact US Dollar amounts of available funds.

## STUDENT, PARENT & GUIDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important to understand your role and your counselor's role in the college admissions process so that you can do what is necessary to enable your counselor to be the most helpful to you. There are many resources available to help you choose the best college, but you must take the initiative to use them. It is your future! First and foremost, your counselor is your advocate who hopes to see you often during your senior year. Your counselor wants to work closely with you to help you assess your strengths and weaknesses, set realistic goals and plan carefully for life after high school. It is to your advantage to participate actively in this cooperative venture. Your counselor will rely on you to complete a number of tasks efficiently and punctually. Therefore, it is important for you to understand your responsibilities.

Seniors are encouraged to visit schools and have admissions interviews at colleges in which they are most interested. The Guidance Office is an excellent resource for students searching for the right college. Students are encouraged to refine their search using a variety of criteria, including college major, school size, location, sports and extracurricular activities, etc. There are many programs available that provide direct links to college and university web sites. We especially recommend that students use [www.CollegeBoard.com](http://www.CollegeBoard.com). This internet connection offers access to just about every college and university in the United States. You can obtain on-line applications, scholarship information and explore majors and careers. If you prefer to examine various local and out-of-state college catalogs, the Guidance Office has an up-dated collection. In addition, in the months to come there will be College Resource Fairs which will be scheduled by representatives from various colleges and universities. These representatives will be able to explain to interested students the opportunities available at their respective institutions and provide them with applications and acceptance criteria.

Students are responsible for sending their own college applications and teacher letters of recommendation to colleges. Some teachers prefer to mail their recommendations directly to the college themselves. If this is the case, as a courtesy, please provide that teacher with a stamped envelope addressed to the college and indicate the application deadline. (Please remind teachers to provide the Guidance Department with copies of all recommendations. These will be used for scholarship applications in the spring.) The Guidance Department will assist with the process. Feel free to utilize the department in applying to your top 5 college or university choices.

Many colleges are now encouraging applications to be sent on-line and/or for students to use the Common Application. [www.commonapp.com](http://www.commonapp.com). Each year, more and more schools are using these formats and we advise you to review this list before you begin.

Deadlines are an important part of the college application process. You want to be careful that you do not eliminate any college opportunities because you missed a college application deadline. Each counselor has many duties and counselees, with responsibilities to underclassmen as well. They are not always able to remind you of deadlines and check to see if you are following admissions procedures correctly. YOU must take responsibility and follow all of the necessary steps in the college admissions process. YOU must be mindful of application deadlines. The guidance department is more than willing to answer any questions, but please do not assume that the guidance department is aware of every detail concerning YOUR applications, especially those completed on-line. When in doubt, please ask. Each student must be aware that although he or she may function in society as an individual, he or she is also a member of team that must do his or her individual part, in order for the goal or objective to be achieved.

When your teacher, coach and counselor writes your school recommendation, he or she wants to put you in the best possible light to enhance your chances of acceptance. Your counselor wants to be your advocate and can best assist you when he or she is well informed of your future plans and career goals. Please complete the enclosed Student Questionnaire (For Letter of Recommendation) and return to the Guidance office in early September. This will enable your counselor to write a strong letter of recommendation for you. It is imperative that your counselor be informed of all of your in-school and out-of-school activities. Colleges like to know how you spend your time outside of the classroom and if your guidance counselor is well informed about your extracurricular activities, the information can be placed in the letter. We also recommend that you use this information as a reference that you may want to place in your resume, when you submit your college or university application.

On occasion, teachers have asked to see a list of your activities. Although it is fine for a teacher to refer to what you do outside of the classroom, colleges really want to read about what the teacher has to say about you in the classroom. For this reason, we ask you to ask your teacher to base your recommendation on what you have accomplished in class. Please give your teachers a copy of the enclosed Teacher Evaluation Form to be used as a guide.

Every college will require a copy of your transcript, first quarter grades, semester grades and final grades. In order to share this confidential information about you, we need a waiver signed by either you (if 18 years of age) or your parent or guardian. The “College Transcript Release Form” only needs to be filled out one time. Please find this form at the end of this booklet.

During the fall, the Guidance Office will process over 1,000 duplicated and/or unduplicated transcripts in a six-week period of time. It is important that your requests for your transcript and/or a counselor letter of recommendation be brought to the Guidance Office a minimum of two weeks before the deadline date.

### **SADDLEBROOK PREPARATORY SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:**

You will need to complete the following graduation requirements in order to officially participate in the graduation ceremonies. However, it should be noted that the purpose of these graduation requirements is to recognize academic achievement in high school. You will find that colleges do not place an emphasis on only the following graduation requirements, but also, require you to meet their own admission requirements. You are advised to consult college catalogues closely for admission requirements.

## **GRADUATION PROGRAMS CLASS OF 2011**

### **RECOMMENDED GRADUATION PLAN**

English .....	4 credit(s)
English 9, English 10, English 11, and English 12	
Mathematics.....	3 credit(s)
Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Pre-Calculus or Calculus	
Science.....	3 credit(s)
Physical Science, Biology, or Physics	
Social Studies.....	3 credit(s)
World History, American History, and Government/Economics	
Personal Fitness .....	½ credit(s)
Physical Education (Individual Golf or Tennis) .....	½ credit(s)
Electives.....	10 credit(s)
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>24 credit(s)</b>

## **WHAT DO COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES DESIRE?**

It is a student's final years in high school, and the storm has arrived in full force. Students are contemplating colleges and universities, agonizing over essays and resumes, stressing over the SAT and/or ACT, and trying to improve or maintain athletic ranking or statistics. It seems that every student is scrambling to be accepted by the college or university of his or her dream. This is a time when parents and guidance counselors hear the perennial refrain: "Do you think I will be accepted? What are colleges looking for?"

Much like each student, the colleges or universities desire to succeed, as well. Colleges succeed when they recruit, admit, retain, and graduate students who are an appropriate match for what they offer. Just as each student has unique qualities and characteristics, each college or university is special and different in some way. First and foremost, colleges are looking for students who will thrive in the particular environment. Similarly, each student should look for an institution where they truly fit academically, socially, athletically, artistically, or according to whatever dimension is important. If a student is visiting or applying to their first-choice school, the admissions office at that particular school is probably interested in knowing this.

It is important to note that because colleges are multidimensional, they tend to want students who are, too. If a student has a specific talent or has had some unusual experience, it is important and encouraged that this information is shared with admissions committee.

Indeed, it is no secret and no surprise that most colleges and universities place a high emphasis on academic ability. They will weigh a student's performance in high school most heavily because this is (statistically) the strongest predictor of academic success in college. Admissions committees will look for rank in class, the type (academic and college preparatory vs. vocational and activity-oriented) and depth (honors, accelerated, advanced vs. remedial) of courses taken, and the overall pattern of grades.

A high school transcript communicates a wealth of information about a particular student, but a thoughtful letter of recommendation can help an admissions committee see the whole person. A number of colleges ask applicants for letters of recommendation to assist them make decisions when many candidates have similar academic credentials.

Many admissions committees like to see evidence of a student's writing ability, and they may require an essay. A thoughtful and well-prepared essay will also give the college an impression of the student as a unique individual. The student must be aware that colleges do look at the little (often overlooked) details such as the neatness and accuracy of the essay or paper application and the student's ability to follow instructions.

The results of a standardized college entrance examination, such as the SAT or ACT, are often considered by college admissions officers, in conjunction with the candidate's other credentials, as the school makes its decisions. Very selective colleges may also request that the student take Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, as well.

What do colleges really want? They want to make admissions decisions that result in a win-win situation. They want to select the students who have the best chance of succeeding in order that both they and their students thrive.



## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

As you look ahead to life after high school, it is nice to have a plan to follow from early on in your high school years. This guide has been prepared to serve as a guide to assist you year to year in your planning for college athletics (tennis and/or golf). Hopefully, by the time a choice is made about enrollment in a college, a student-athlete would have gathered all necessary information to make a sound decision.

I am not asking you to have chosen the college or university you want to attend by your Freshman or Sophomore Year in high school, but you need to be working on developing a resume of educational and athletic (tennis and/or golf) experiences.

Please do not wait until your Senior Year in high school to be worried about your grades and a good athletic (tennis and/or golf) history. You must start immediately. As a freshman, you need to be concerned about developing a good class ranking, a good grade point average, and a good athletic (tennis and/or golf) resume. Keep a complete record of your competitive tournaments (tennis and/or golf) or experiences, including all sanctioned match play and high school level play, especially noting important successes. Try to achieve a ranking. Whether it be sectional, state, national, or international. A ranking is probably one of the only gauge or measurement that a college or university coach has in order to evaluate an individual athlete's performance. Remember that you are *competing* for attention with other players who are trying to play for the same school. Although you have faced competition in matches or tournaments, there is also another form of competition, the competition of recognition and acceptance where there are so many other athletes to choose from. The question should always be, how can I stand out amongst the many? How can I seem or appear important in a coach's eyes? The answer is a difficult one. But, it always lies with one's unique power of self-expression and confidence. How one carries him or herself on and off the court, field, green, pitch, etc., is as important as how one performs in school. Character, humility, and perseverance are the keys to success. Each coach takes into account these qualities, because of the impact they have on their team's success.

Make visits to different colleges or universities when you travel with your parents. If you are vacationing near a college or university, take some time to visit or at least drive through the community.

Attempt to go to a college or university athletic (tennis and/or golf) match or tournament if one is held near your area. Talk to players or students, if you have an opportunity. Maybe you will want to cheer on your team of choice. At the very least, you will get to see the atmosphere in which the teams compete .

### **FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN SELECTING A COLLEGE**

#### *Deciding On A College or University As An Athlete*

Since colleges vary appreciably, you need to investigate them carefully and not presume that the college that meets your friend's needs is a good one for you. Some of the most important factors to consider are:

#### I. College – University Factors:

1. Geographical Location and Climate --- Atlantic, Central, East Coast, Mid-Atlantic, Mid-west, Pacific, West Coast, Southwest, Southeast, Great Lakes, Mountain, Ivy League, etc...
2. Size --- small (under 2,000), medium (under 8,000) or large (over 10,000 students)
3. Co-ed, Men's, Women's
4. Setting --- urban, suburban, or rural
5. Majors or areas of interest
6. Selectivity or academic intensity – Academic Advisors and Tutorial Services
7. Type: Liberal Arts, Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, Business, Technical
8. Public, private or religious affiliation
9. Cost – Athletic Scholarship Money Available
10. Safety and Security – Condition of Sports and Training Facilities
11. Diversity of students
12. Division the Athletics Compete In: NCAA Division I, II, III, NAIA, or NJCAA
13. Dormitories and living Conditions
14. Food Service
15. Community Life – Social Activities – Recreational Activities

## II. Coaching Staff and Team Factors:

1. Coach and Team Personality
2. Coach's Win and Loss Record
3. Team's Ranking and Win and Loss Record
4. Coaching Philosophy
5. Organization of Team Practice and Training Sessions
6. Team Clothing and Equipment Contracts

## III. Coach and Player responsibilities Factors:

1. Player:
  - a. make a contract with a coach
  - b. provide state, national, and international rankings
  - c. provide player record
  - d. provide player recommendations from coaches and trainers
  - e. complete eligibility requirements for NCAA Clearinghouse
  - f. meet all academic requirements
  - g. visit campus and facilities
2. College or University Coach:
  - a. to respond to a student's contract
  - b. to send students a media guide and all college or university information and an application
  - c. to provide information on training and coaching philosophy
  - d. to provide information on scholarship money available
  - e. to organize a recruiting visit for a student once he or she has met all athletic and academic requirements and cleared the NCAA Clearinghouse.

## IV. Follow-up:

- a. it is important that the students continue to communicate with the college or university coach. Communication by the student, the coach, the high school coach and trainer, and the guidance counselor is important throughout the college selection and recruiting process.

## THE COLLEGE LIST

List a minimum of five colleges in each of the three levels below. To do this, use one or more of the many resources available to you in the Guidance Department, such as school catalogs, *The College Handbook*, *Index of Majors*, *Mass Mentor* and the Internet. Be sure to review this list with your counselor.

In order to assess the likelihood of acceptance, compare your academic and personal qualifications to the students typically admitted to the schools where you want to apply. Research the SAT scores, GPA and the class rank of the students who attend the colleges of interest to you.

**LEVEL ONE: THE REACH OR LONG SHOT**

**(less than 50% chance of acceptance)**

**LEVEL TWO: THE MID-RANGE**

**(about 50% chance of acceptance)**

**LEVEL THREE: SAFETY**

**(99% chance of acceptance)**

As there are over 3,200 colleges in this country, this can be a daunting task. Consider first the factors that are most important to you --- size, location, cost, etc. and begin there. **Remember to put just as much time into researching your safety schools as you do the others. Your safety schools should be ones that you would be happy to attend for four years.** Most students apply to one or two reaches, three to four mid range schools and two to three safeties. Every student is different though. Some students apply to three colleges while others apply to twelve! The average is five to six schools.

## **CHOOSING A MAJOR**

Contrary to popular belief, colleges do not look unfavorably upon students who are “undecided” about their college major. Colleges realize that seventeen and eighteen year old students are often unsure what area they would like to study because of their limited experience or exposure to a particular field. Colleges also know that students, on average, change their major twice while in college.

For an “undecided” high school senior, a college that offers a variety of areas (arts and sciences, business, engineering, education and nursing) may be a good starting point.

### **The following questions may also help clarify your interests:**

1. Is there one class, job or activity that I have particularly enjoyed? What do I find most satisfying about it? Why?
2. What are my favorite subjects in school? (This does not necessarily mean the subjects in which you have received the best grades.)
3. Why do I enjoy these subjects?
4. What are my best subjects? Why?
5. What are my favorite activities? Why?
6. Whom do I most admire? Why?
7. What careers seem interesting? Why?

### **Then ask yourself:**

1. What are my least favorite subjects in school? Why?
2. What are my worst subjects? Why?
3. What are my least favorite activities? Why?
4. Whom do I least admire? Why?
5. What careers do I know that I won't enjoy? Why?

Another good resource is college handbooks or catalogs. These books, published by every college, list the for each major and describe individual courses. Review the requirements and courses and ask yourself if the particular major is something you would be interested in studying. You should also research the job market regarding the future demand of the careers that interest you. This may be a significant factor on whether or not you wish to pursue a particular major in college.

It is well-known that many people enter a career based upon their awareness, interest, ability and experience. In many cases though, people enter careers by “accident” or “luck” – being in the right place at the right time. We recommend that students take a proactive approach and pursue internships or job shadow experiences in the areas of interest to them.

## **FRESHMAN YEAR**

### **Fall**

1. Arrange to meet with your counselor to discuss your college plans. Review your schedule with him or her to make sure you are enrolled in challenging classes that will help you prepare for college. Colleges prefer four years of English, Social Science, Math, Science, and Foreign Language.
2. Use College Search to find out required courses and tests of colleges that you might be interested in attending.
3. Start a calendar with important dates and deadlines.
4. Sign up for the PSAT/NMSQT, which is given in October. More information is offered at the Guidance Office.
5. Attempt to be more involved with extracurricular and community service activities.
6. Attend several college fairs in your area, in order to gain valuable insight with the college admission process.
7. Plan a strategy to meet college entrance requirements.

## **Winter**

1. Use your PSAT/NMSQT Score Report and [www.collegeboard.com/psatextra](http://www.collegeboard.com/psatextra) to prepare for the SAT.
2. Sign up for the Plan ACT, which is given in January. More information is offered at the Guidance Office.
3. Learn about college costs and how financial aid works.
4. Visit colleges while they are in session.
5. Talk to your counselor and teachers about taking SAT Subject Tests in subjects this spring. Take Subject Tests such as World History, Biology E/M, Chemistry, etc., while the material is still fresh in your mind.
6. Find out about college firsthand from college friends who are home for the winter-break (holidays).
7. Plan a strategy to meet college entrance requirements.

## **Spring**

1. Sign up for college preparatory courses. Consider AP – Advanced Placement Courses.
2. Look for a great summer opportunity – job, internship, or volunteer possibilities
3. Check with your counselor and search online for summer school programs for high school students at colleges.
4. Study for May AP – Advanced Placement Examinations.
5. Continue to attend college fairs in your area for valuable insight and information.
6. Plan a strategy to meet college entrance requirements.

## **Summer**

1. Start a summer reading list. Ask your teachers to recommend books.
2. Plan to visit college campuses to get a feel for your options. Start with colleges near you.
3. Plan a strategy to meet college entrance requirements.
4. Finalize your summer plans.

## **Other Freshman Activities:**

- A. Develop athletic resume (Player Record); keep records.
- B. Work on ranking.
- C. Record high school (tennis) results.
- D. Visit college or university campuses (when available).
- E. Attend college or university athletic matches or tournaments (tennis and/or golf) – where available.
- F. Strive for a good GPA and class rank.

## **SOPHOMORE YEAR**

### **Fall**

1. Arrange to meet with your counselor to discuss your college plans. Review your schedule with him or her to make sure you are enrolled in challenging classes that will help you prepare for college. Colleges prefer four years of English, History, Math, Science, and Foreign Language.
2. Use College Search to find out required courses and tests of colleges that you might be interested in attending.
3. Start a calendar with important dates and deadlines.
4. Sign up for the PSAT/NMSQT, which is given in October. More information is offered at the Guidance Office.
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### **Winter**

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7. Plan a strategy to meet college entrance requirements.

### **Spring**

1. Sign up for college preparatory courses. Consider AP – Advanced Placement Courses.
2. Look for a great summer opportunity – job, internship, or volunteer possibilities
3. Check with your counselor and search online for summer school programs for high school students at colleges.
4. Study for May AP – Advanced Placement Examinations.
5. Continue to attend college fairs in your area for valuable insight and information.
6. Plan a strategy to meet college entrance requirements.

## **Summer**

1. Start a summer reading list. Ask your teachers to recommend books.
2. Plan to visit college campuses to get a feel for your options. Start with colleges near you.
3. Plan a strategy to meet college entrance requirements.
  2. Finalize your summer plans.

## **Other Sophomore Activities:**

- A. Continue to develop athletic resume (Player Record); keep records.
- B. Continue to Work on ranking.
- C. Continue to record high school (tennis and/or golf) results.
- D. Continue to visit college or university campuses (when available).
- E. Continue to attend college or university athletic matches or tournaments (tennis and/or golf) – where available.
- F. Continue to strive for a good GPA and class rank.
- G. Begin looking up college or university information (internet, library, handbooks, etc.).

## **JUNIOR YEAR**

*The Junior Year is the most important year of all.* You must start doing the research on schools that you are interested in attending. Talk with your parents, friends, teachers, counselors, and coaches and instructors.

*Make a list of colleges and/or universities you might be interested in learning more about.* List of choices may vary in size, depending on each student. Please note that the list should be narrowed. By the senior year, the Top Five colleges or universities must be identified. Contact the colleges and/or universities identified on the list.

*Prepare a letter to send out to coaches letting them know that you have some interest in their school.* The letter should include a resume of your academic and athletic (tennis and/or golf) accomplishments.

The summer after your Junior Year in high school is extremely important if you want to play Division I athletics (tennis and/or golf). Coaches will be watching players at all levels of play, including your local district events, sectional events, and all national events. Keep in mind that coaches can not only watch you in person but also can watch you on the Internet. Coaches regularly view all tournament results on the Internet and will see your name in print regularly.

Beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> coaches can make contact with players. They can call you at home once a week.

## **Fall**

As a junior, there are important steps you can take now to get ready for college. Planning for college may seem overwhelming at times, but it doesn't have to be hard if you take it one step at a time.

1. Review course plan with guidance counselor and plan senior schedule.
2. At school, sign up early to take the PSAT/NMSQT in October. Additional information is offered at the Guidance Office.
3. Explore your college options. Start with you: Make lists of your abilities, preferences, and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college. Jumpstart your college planning by reading about majors and careers.
4. Start thinking about financial aid. Talk to your counselor about your college plans and attend college fairs.

## **Winter**

1. Plan your spring testing schedule. You can take either the SAT Reasoning Test –or- up to three SAT Subject Tests on one test day. Plan your testing schedule carefully if you want to take both types of SAT. Plan for the ACT, if recommended by your college or university of choice.
2. Sign up for the Plan ACT, which is given in January. More information is offered at the Guidance Office.
3. Get ready for the SAT and/or ACT. Be prepared. Enroll in study groups or SAT Tutorial Programs.
4. Your PSAT/NMSQT Score Report arrives in December. Use it as a baseline or gauge, in order to improve your skills and prepare for the SAT. Practice at [www.collegeboard.com/psatextra](http://www.collegeboard.com/psatextra).

## **Spring**

1. Explore colleges. Start visiting local colleges near your area: large, small, public, and private, get a feel for what works for you. Develop a preliminary list of 15 – 20 colleges or universities that interest you.
2. Prepare for Advanced Placement Examinations (usually scheduled in May). Do well on AP exams and receive credit or placement at most colleges or universities.
3. Plan ahead with an eye on college. Review your senior class schedule with your counselor. Challenge yourself with honors and Advanced Placement classes and follow the sequences you have begun, in the languages, for example. Please note that not all high schools will have all desired AP courses that you may desire.
4. Plan summer activities early. Enrich yourself by volunteering, getting an interesting job or internship, or signing up for special summer learning programs. Always inspire yourself to read and write. Try to improve on areas of minimal academic performance. There is always room for improvement in any area.

## **Summer**

1. Keep your momentum up this summer. Visit colleges and universities that are on top of your list. Take campus tours and at colleges and universities you are serious about, schedule interviews with admission counselors.
2. Request applications from colleges and universities to which you have a strong desire to apply. Check for important deadline dates. Please note that some college or universities have early dates or rolling admissions.
3. Begin to think about your essay and resume of achievements.

### **Other Junior Activities:**

- A. Type Player Record.
- B. Make a list of colleges or universities you are interested in.
- C. Contact colleges or universities and request a catalog from each.
- D. Prepare a letter to send to college or university coaches (Letter of Introduction).
- E. Plan your match or tournament (tennis and/or golf) schedule for maximum visibility.

## SENIOR YEAR

### Overview:

Try to shorten your list of colleges and/or universities to something manageable. The Top Five is strongly recommended. Identify criteria that is important to you such as location, quality of the academics, specific course of study you are interested in, size of the school, quality of the athletic (tennis and/or golf) program(s), the coach, the team members, the quality of life in the campus and the surrounding community, etc. List your criteria by priority.

Early in your Senior Year you must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse (September), if you plan on attending a NCAA Division I or Division II college and/or university. For enrollment papers or procedures to the NCAA Clearinghouse, contact the Guidance Department. The NCAA Clearinghouse guides your eligibility into any NCAA Division I or Division II college and/or university. All coaches have to first make sure that a prospective student-athlete is registered and accepted by the NCAA Clearinghouse before pursuing a relationship.

In the fall of your senior year try to schedule visits to the Top Five colleges and/or universities of your choice. These can either be official (paid for by the college and/or university) or unofficial visit (paid for on your own) visits. The NCAA allows a maximum of 5 paid visits per athlete (and only 1 paid visit per college and/or university per athlete). Students may make unlimited unofficial visits to any college and/or university. Before making any visits, be sure that the college and/or university has a record of your most recent test scores (ACT and/or SAT) on file. Remember, college or university coaches are trying to sell their program and themselves. Try to look at the whole picture. The athletic (tennis and/or golf) experience will only be one portion of your college or university experience.

When you visit a college and/or university, you must be prepared. You should have already (at the very least) read about the college or university, the athletic program (tennis and/or golf), and the coach. Prepare a list of questions that you have. An example of some questions are:

1. Describe a typical practice session.
2. The facility itself – is there indoor and outdoor available?
3. The schedule – full fall and spring schedule available?
4. How far do you usually travel to matches or tournaments?
5. What means of transportation is used (van, bus, airplane?)
6. Will the coach work with players individually?
7. Does the college or university allow players to play non-collegiate tournaments during the school year? If so, who pays?
8. What sport equipment does the school supply?
9. If a scholarship is being offered, what all does it include? Be specific.
10. Will I be able to play in the starting line-up on this team?

During your visit, be sure to present an image that the coach is looking for. Dress appropriately, listen when the coach speaks, and speak up when it is your turn to talk. All coaches are looking for “team players” – they want to know that you can get along with others, and make good choices that would influence, in a positive manner, the success of the team as a whole.

Once you have made all of your visits, take at least one week to make your decision. Make a list of all the positives and negatives for every school that you are considering. The list should reflect your original list of priorities. (Keep in mind at this point that your list of priorities may have changed. That is fine. It is a normal response. It only means that you have learned more about yourself and the college or university athletics, during this whole process.)

National Letters of Intent are sent out two times a year – November and April. (The exact dates vary from sport to sport). If a student-athlete is unsure of what college or university to attend, then it is recommended that the student wait until the April signing period. If a college or university really wants you, they will hold the scholarship for you until April. Most coaches do have their top choices, and they try desperately to sign these in November.

The highest percentage of student - athletes sign in April. Any signing of a National Letter of Intent needs to be thoroughly discussed with family members. *Remember, once you sign you are committed to attend that college or university.*

College or University applications can seem overwhelming at first glance for students entering their senior year in high school. What needs to be done, and when? Use this calendar to obtain a bird’s eye view of the college or university application process.



## Summer Before Senior Year

1. Visit colleges or universities that interest you. Call ahead for the campus tour schedule. Schedule an on-campus interview with an admissions representative.
2. Finalize your lists of colleges and/or universities. Be sure your list includes “safe” schools, as well as “reach” and “realistic” schools. Request college applications and informational packets. Organize materials into separate files by college.
3. Keep a college calendar of all admission deadlines.
4. If you plan on competing in Division I or Division II college sports and want to be eligible to be recruited by colleges, you must register with the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse.
5. If you took the AP (Advanced Placement) Examination in May, you will receive your AP Grade Reports in July.
6. Register early for fall SAT’s and/or ACT’s.
7. Register early for fall TOEFL (Test English as a Foreign Language) – if applicable.

## Fall

### **I. Pulling Your Application Together**

1. Narrow your list of colleges to between 5 and 10. Then begin to eliminate and narrow your selection to the top 5 colleges or universities that satisfy your geographic, demographic, academic, athletic, and financial requirements. Please note that although you may have a desire to attend certain colleges or universities, you must satisfy their own individual admission requirements. You must do the research on each of the top 5 colleges or universities you have selected, prior to beginning the first stage of applying for admissions.

Please note the deadlines for Early Decision, Early Action, and Regular Registration for each college or university (dates are usually the same, but never assume the obvious. Always do the research), usually by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

3. Make a master calendar or college application checklist and note:
  - A. Test dates, fees, and deadlines
  - B. College application due dates
  - C. Required financial aid applications and their deadlines
  - D. Recommendations, transcripts, and other necessary materials
  - E. Your high school’s deadlines for application requests
4. Ask for recommendations from teachers, coaches, employers, and community leaders.
5. Write application essays and ask teachers, coaches, parents, and friends to read first drafts.

### **II. Applying Early Action or Early Decision?**

Please Note:

*The Differences and Similarities Between Early Decision and Early Action:*

**Early decisions plans** allow you to apply early (usually November 1: for early admissions, colleges or universities may require SAT and/or ACT Test scores and applications in early November.) and get an admission decision from the college well in advance of the usual notification date. **But there is a catch.** Early decision plans are “**binding,**” meaning if you apply as an early decision candidate - you agree to attend the college if it accepts you and offers an adequate financial aid package. Although you can apply to only one college for early decision, you may apply to other colleges under regular admission. If you have been accepted by your first choice college or university, you must withdraw all other applications. Usually, colleges or universities insist on a nonrefundable deposit well before May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Early action plans** are similar to early decision plans in that you can learn early in the admission cycle (usually in January or February) whether a college or university has accepted you unlike early decision, most early action plans are not binding, meaning you do not have to commit to a college to which you have applied for early action. Under these plans you may apply to other colleges. Usually, you can let the college know of your decision in the late spring or whenever you have decided.

### **Single-Choice Early Action**

Some colleges or universities have begun offering a new admissions option called single-choice action. This plan works the same way as other early action plans, but with single-choice candidates may not apply early (either early action or early decision) to any other school. You can still apply to other schools regular decision and are not required to give your final answer of acceptance until the regular decision deadline. This allows you to compare offers of financial aid in the spring before making a commitment.

**Please Note:** You should apply under early decision or early action plans only if you are very sure of the college you want to attend. These plans make sense if one college is your clear preference and if your profile closely matches that of the students at that college or university. Do not apply under an early decision or action plan if you plan to weigh offers and financial aid packages from several colleges or universities later in the spring. Also, you should not apply early if it is to your advantage to have more of your senior year work to show or present a college or university. If your plan is to spark interest from an admission office on your excellent grades this year, you may want to wait until after the semester ends to apply to colleges or universities.

### **III. Obtaining Financial Aid Information**

Ask if your colleges or universities offer an early estimate of financial aid eligibility. Try to attend financial aid information events in your area. Financial Aid websites have been provided for you at the end of the College Planning Handbook.

### **IV. Other Senior Activities: By Fall**

- A. Finalize your player record;
- B. Shorten your list of colleges or universities you are interested in to the Top Five;
- C. Register with NCAA Eligibility Center -Clearinghouse;
- D. Schedule official or unofficial visits to colleges or universities of choice;
- E. Make application(s) to college(s) or university(ies) of choice.

### **Application Details**

Most College and University Regular Applications are due later in the fall and winter; keep copies of everything you send to colleges or universities.

Have your high school send your transcript to your chosen colleges or universities.

Contact the colleges or universities to make certain that they have received all application materials.

### **Financial Aid**

You and your family should save pay stubs covering the past years, in order to estimate income on aid forms that you will file in early in the year. Submit FAFSA as soon after January 1<sup>st</sup> as possible.

Many priority financial aid deadlines fall in February. To get the most attractive package, apply by the priority date. Keep copies of everything you send.

### **When College or University Letters Arrive**

You should get acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April.

Compare your financial aid awards from different colleges or universities. Talk to financial aid officers.

If you have not already, visit your final college before accepting. Make sure that it is the right one for you.

## **May 1<sup>st</sup>: Making Your Final Choice**

You must inform every college or university of your acceptance or rejection of offers of admissions or financial aid by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Send a deposit to the college or university you have decided to attend.

Wait-listed - If you will enroll if accepted, tell the admissions director your intentions. Ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask if funds are available, if you are accepted.

## **Next Steps – The Road Ahead**

Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your college or university of choice.

Start preparing for the year ahead:

1. Make travel plans. Try to book or reserve early for the best prices.
2. Finalize your housing plans.
3. Shop for items you will need in college.
4. Make sure to sign up for first-year orientation.
5. Plan your first-semester college courses with an eye towards eventually selecting your college major.

## **SUMMARY**

### **COLLEGE SELECTION AND ADMISSIONS TIMETABLE**

#### **Getting Started in your Junior Year**

##### **• Fall**

- Settle into solid academic year;
- Get involved in extracurricular and community service activities;
- Attend local college night;
- Take PSAT (October);
- Make the best possible grades - Students in top ten percent of the class are automatically accepted to state colleges.

##### **• Winter**

- Review PSAT results with your counselor;
- Develop long list of colleges of interest;
- Write to them for information;
- Talk to college students home for the holidays;
- Take *Plan* ACT (January).

##### **• Spring**

- Visit as many colleges as possible;
- Register/take SAT Reasoning Test;
- Register/take ACT;
- Determine if SAT Subject tests are needed; take them if any college of interest requires them;
- Pre-register for senior courses that meet requirements for high school graduation and college admissions.

##### **• Summer**

- Write to colleges for information;
- Visit as many colleges as possible;
- Have formal interviews at those colleges that emphasize and encourage them;
- Read as much and as widely as you can;
- Begin writing college essays;
- Work if you can (most colleges expect students to help pay for college costs);
- Review high school mathematics to strengthen the skills that will help you succeed in college.

## **Overview of Senior Year**

### **• Sept-Oct**

- Narrow long list of colleges;
- Submit applications to colleges;
- Ask teachers, counselor, and other adults for letters of recommendation you might need;
- Take or retake ACT/SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject tests;
- Make campus visits;
- Meet with visiting college representatives.

### **• November**

- Submit all early decision/action applications for those with early January deadlines by the end of the month for processing. Keep in close touch with your counselor about secondary school reports/recommendations.
- Attend local college night.

### **• Winter**

- File FAFSA, financial aid form;
- Forward mid-year reports to your counselor if applicable;
- Request mid-year transcripts.

### **• Spring**

- Decide which college you will attend;
- Take advanced placements tests if applicable;
- Request final transcripts;
- Write thank you notes to adults who wrote letters of recommendation on your behalf.

## MYTHS ABOUT THE COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS

Learning about colleges is an arduous task, one to which many students simply do not allocate sufficient time and thought. The beginning of the college selection process has many myths and misconceptions. The most common myths are:

**Myth #1** *“There is only one perfect college for me.”*

Perfect colleges rarely exist. All colleges have good and bad points and all vary in terms of their attractiveness for any individual student. Your goal is not necessarily to find the perfect college; rather your goal is to research and find those several colleges that best meet your needs.

**Myth #2** *“Colleges are either good or bad.”*

Nonsense: By what criterion is a college good or bad? In whose eyes is a college good or bad? Academic quality is not easily assessed. And while it is true that some colleges are better known than others, it is not true that a small few are good and the rest are bad. The key question is not, “Is X a good college?” Rather, the question is, “Is X a good college for me?” Look for colleges appropriate to your educational background, your ability, and your personality.

**Myth #3** *“Test scores are the most important criterion in college admissions.”*

Not true. Colleges, now more than ever, are using a wide variety of criteria in choosing students. The quality of courses you’ve taken in high school and your grades in those courses are the most important. In addition, your co-curricular activities and your responses to college essays are important. Interviews, while not as important as they once were in the selection process, are still utilized at some colleges. Also significant are any special qualities you might bring to the college campus. Decisions are never made on the basis of only one element like test scores; rather, decisions are made using many different factors.

**Myth #4** *“Future employers and graduate schools give an edge to those who have degrees from prestigious universities.”*

Not necessarily. As the general level of quality in colleges has risen over the last several decades, and more and more colleges have distinguished themselves, employers and graduate school admission staffs can no longer rely on the name of the college as the most important selection factor. What is important is your success in college. As a result, wise students are matching themselves to colleges within which they have the potential to earn good grades and contribute positively to campus life. Such students, with distinguished records in college, are highly sought by company recruiters, graduate schools and professional schools.

**Myth #5** *“Cost is really important in determining where I can go to college, so I will likely have to attend a local school.”*

Again: not necessarily. Millions of dollars are given to students and families annually to help defray - or in some cases completely pay for – a college education. The federal government, states, individual colleges and thousands of public and private organizations make funds available to college students. Again: research is the important strategy. Investigate financial aid carefully.

## **WHOSE JOB IS IT?**

### **We Expect That You Will:**

1. Engage in thoughtful, honest reflection and analysis of your aspirations, goals, hopes, strengths, and weaknesses and apply this knowledge of yourself.
2. Do the best academic work of your secondary career.
3. Do the research it takes to find and apply to a variety of colleges you'd be happy to attend.
4. Take control of the process rather than be dragged or coerced through it.
5. Complete applications with care. Write the required essays with thought and honesty.
6. Be aware of all deadlines without constant reminders.
7. Keep your counselor informed as your interests and priorities change.

In summary, the responsibility for applying to college is YOURS. Delaying or avoiding it will only make things worse.

### **As Parents We Hope You Will:**

1. Listen to your son or daughter.
2. Convince your son or daughter of his/her worth, independent of any college's decision regarding admission.
3. Encourage your son/daughter to explore a variety of options in terms of type, size, location, and selectivity of schools.
4. Inform your child's counselor of the concerns, fears, interests, misgivings which may affect you.
5. Participate in some of the college research with your son/daughter. Visit the colleges when you can; perhaps you will notice something he/she didn't.
6. Allow your son/daughter to do his/her own work in the process, yet be available for support when needed. (This is much harder to do than to state.)
7. Trust us. We most assuredly don't know all the answers, but will do our best to get you the appropriate information. We will be honest with you and ask the same in return.

### **As Your Counselors We Will**

1. Get to know you well enough to be able to advise you as to colleges and programs which might be suitable for you;
2. Present your transcript and official high school recommendations to the colleges;
3. Act as your advocate to the extent that your credentials allow;
4. Keep our website up to date with important deadlines and opportunities;
5. Offer counsel, advise, tissue, and TLC from now through the completion of the college process.

In addition to these specifics, we will devote our full energy to aiding you in any possible ethical way we can.

## Common Mistakes Made in the College Selection Process

### Being Passive

- Letting the choice just happen instead of taking charge of the process.
- Following the lead of your friends.
- Accepting any suggestion that comes to you without studying it.
- Letting someone else decide for you.
- Applying to many colleges indiscriminately so you can postpone thinking about which one to attend.

### Pleasing Others

- Applying to colleges you aren't really interested in just to please someone else or to impress them.

### Losing Sight of Your Main Reason for Going to College

- Take some time to examine both **head** and **heart**. Think about who you are, what you like, and don't like. Then set out and find the "right" match!

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

Admissions tests are considered by many scholars to be an integral part of the admissions process. They are thought to "level the playing field". A single test taken by students from across the nation gives the college comparative data to use in evaluating students from different high schools.

### A. College Entrance Tests

1. **ACT- American College Testing Program-** A three hour and thirty minute test measuring understanding and ability in English usage, writing, mathematical usage, reading comprehension, and science reasoning. Students usually take the ACT in the spring of their junior year, and often repeat the test in the fall of their senior year.
2. **SAT Reasoning Test-** A three hour and forty-five minute test measuring students' critical reading, writing, and mathematical abilities. Testing is usually done in the spring of the junior year and is often repeated in the fall of the senior year.
3. **SAT Subject Tests-** These one-hour subject matter tests, formerly called Achievement Tests, are required by selective colleges. These tests are taken in the junior year or senior year. Students considering applying early decision to selective schools must complete these tests no later than the November testing date in their senior year. It is wise to take the tests at the completion of your study of a subject if you will not be continuing in that area.
4. **TOEFL -** The TOEFL test measures the ability of non-native speakers of English to use and understand English as it is spoken, written and heard in college and university settings.

#### Who uses the TOEFL:

- Students who want to study further: For non-native speakers who hold degrees or diplomas from post-secondary institutions in English speaking countries.
- Academic institutions: To determine academic readiness and make admissions decisions for international applicants. Individuals who are applying for professional licensure or certification; and
- Many government, licensing and certification agencies, as well as exchange and scholarship programs also use TOEFL scores as a decision-making tool.

### B. Advanced Placement Tests

These are exams taken at the conclusion of study in an Advanced Placement courses. See Saddlebrook Preparatory School Profile for AP course options.

## TESTING DATES

2011/2012

**SAT**, our school code no. 101810, register online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Regular Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration Deadline</u>
October 1, 2011	September 9, 2011	September 21, 2011
November 5, 2011	October 7, 2011	October 21, 2011
December 3, 2011	November 8, 2011	November 20, 2011
January 28, 2012	December 30, 2011	January 13, 2012
March 10, 2012	February 10, 2012	February 24, 2012
May 5, 2012	April 6, 2012	April 20, 2012
June 2, 2012	May 8, 2012	May 22, 2012

Test will be administered at Wesley Chapel HS, Wiregrass HS and/or Wharton High School

**ACT – Plus Writing**, our school code no. 101810, register online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Regular Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration Deadline</u>
September 10, 2011	August 12, 2011	August 26, 2011
October 22, 2011	September 16, 2011	September 30, 2011
December 10, 2011	November 4, 2011	November 18, 2011
February 11, 2012	January 13, 2012	January 20, 2012
April 14, 2012	March 9, 2012	March 23, 2012
June 9, 2012	May 4, 2012	May 18, 2012

Test will be administered at Wesley Chapel HS, Wiregrass HS and/or Wharton HS, Freedom HS, or Hillsborough HS.

Advanced Placement Tests: Dates to be determined. Call SPS Guidance Counselor at 813-907-4516 for information.



## SAT & ACT Differences

### SAT

No science section

No trigonometry section

Vocabulary emphasized

Non multiple-choice questions included

Guessing penalty

Writing required

Math accounts for 50% of your score

Questions go from easy to hard in most sections

All your SAT scores reported to colleges

### ACT

Science reasoning section

Math sections include trigonometry

Vocabulary less important

Entire multiple choice

No guessing penalty

Writing optional

Math accounts for 25% of your score

Easy and hard questions mixed within sections

Report scores only from the test dates you choose

*NEW ACT/SAT Score Conversion Charts*

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**New SAT & ACT Score Comparison**

<b>ACT</b> <i>If you scored...</i>	<b>OLD SAT</b> <i>or a...</i>	<b>NEW SAT</b> <i>It's about the same as a...</i>
36	1600	2400
35	1560-1590	2340
34	1510-1550	2260
33	1460-1500	2190
32	1410-1450	2130
31	1360-1400	2040
30	1320-1350	1980
29	1280-1310	1920
28	1240-1270	1860
27	1210-1230	1820
26	1170-1200	1760
25	1130-1160	1700
24	1090-1120	1650
23	1060-1080	1590
22	1020-1050	1530
21	980-1010	1500
20	940-970	1410
19	900-930	1350
18	860-890	1290
17	810-850	1210
16	760-800	1140
15	710-750	1060
14	660-700	1000
13	590-650	900
12	520-580	780
11	500-510	750

Source: <http://www.princetonreview.com/>

## THREE SIMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What schools should I explore?  
This process involves self-exploration and discovery of who you are and what you want and expect in your college experience. Once you know what you are looking for and expecting in your post-secondary education, the college search and exploration begins in earnest.
2. Where should I apply?  
This question will be answered naturally as you explore colleges, eliminating some as you go and finding financial satisfaction and excitement with others. The final list of colleges to which you will apply will include one or more colleges that might be considered a stretch, several where you will be competitive and admission is very possible, and at least one college or university where you will be a likely admit which might be considered a backup.
3. Where should I go?  
You will answer this question in April of your senior year after you are informed of the admission decision of each of the colleges and universities to which you apply.

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT YOURSELF

The questions grouped in two sections on this page are meant to stimulate you to think about who you are as a person. Prior to beginning the college search and selection process, it will be helpful for you to spend some time thinking about yourself – how you learn, how you are motivated, what you value, where you “draw the line,” etc.

### Check as many as apply:

- I would like to be surrounded by thousands of busy people.
- It is important for me to know my professors and them to know me.
- I cannot tolerate organizations with extensive bureaucratic structures where I am dealt with as a social security number.
- Privacy and being anonymous are important to me.
- It is important to me that I am in small classes with more discussion and fewer lectures.
- I would like learning in large lecture halls with more than 100 students in many of my classes.
- It is important to me that I meet students and faculty from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- I am interested in fraternity or sorority life.
- When in a high school classroom, usually I participate in classroom discussion and learn the most from discussing the material with the teacher and other students.
- I like high school classes where I can become actively involved in more than just listening and talking – classes like laboratory days in science class.

### Think about these questions

1. What do I enjoy?
2. What am I good at?
3. What do I want out of life?
4. What’s the price?
5. Am I willing to pay the price?

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN COMPILING YOUR COLLEGE LIST

This can be a valuable tool for discussion during the initial phase of developing your *long list* of colleges. Check the categories that will be of importance to you and your family in your selection process. You may check as many as you like.

### General

- \_\_\_ 1. Reputation. Campus atmosphere? (strong school spirit, traditional, diverse, strong athletic programs, nonconformist, intellectual, religious, strong sense of community)
- \_\_\_ 2. Distance from home. Location? (Midwest, South, West, New England)
- \_\_\_ 3. Cost. Public? Private? Merit Scholarship? Ability of college to meet full need?
- \_\_\_ 4. Need for access. Church? Museum? Lessons? Training? Airports? Relatives? Medical? City? Small town?
- \_\_\_ 5. Size. Small (1,000-3,000)? Medium (5,000-12,000)? Large (20,000+)?

### Academic program

- \_\_\_ 1. Degrees offered. Liberal arts? Engineering? Nursing? Business? Fine arts? Teaching certification?
- \_\_\_ 2. Curriculum choices. Language requirement? Core requirement? Grading options? No requirement.
- \_\_\_ 3. Special programs. Junior year abroad? College exchange? Internships? Cooperative education?
- \_\_\_ 4. Academic calendar. Semesters? Quarters? January term? Exam schedule?
- \_\_\_ 5. Teaching. By professors? Graduate students? Student/teacher ratio? Lecture? Discussion?
- \_\_\_ 6. Availability of courses. Ease of access to arts courses or other popular classes? Ability to graduate in 4 years?
- \_\_\_ 7. Support service. Writing center? Computer facilities? Math labs? Study skills center?
- \_\_\_ 8. Academic reputation. Excellence all around? Specific to major? Relaxed? Stressful? Challenging?
- \_\_\_ 9. Availability of faculty. Percentage of women faculty? Teaching oriented? Research driven?
- \_\_\_ 10. Quality of faculty. PhDs? Tenured? Published? Involvement in students' lives? Reputation for good teaching? Involved in research?
- \_\_\_ 11. Class size. Introductory classes? Advanced classes? How many classes over 50?

**Student Body**

- \_\_\_1. Level of academic quality. Interest in academic life? Commitment to Learning?
- \_\_\_2. Goals. Professional? Graduate school bound? Grade conscious? Commitment to the public good?
- \_\_\_3. Diversity. Geographic? International? Culture? Socioeconomic? Male to female ratio? Gay/Lesbian?
- \_\_\_4. Level of school involvement. Students actively involved in activities? Fraternity/sorority driven? Popularity of particular activities?
- \_\_\_5. Social life. On campus? Off Campus? Options?

**Campus Service**

- \_\_\_1. Safety. Well-lit walkways? Escort service? Availability of security? Access to residence halls? Locked doors? Surrounding neighborhood?
- \_\_\_2. Health facilities. Medical care? Counseling? Dental? Hospital?
- \_\_\_3. Career center. Job placement? Graduate school counseling?
- \_\_\_4. Library. Adequate? Dependent upon other libraries? Social or study atmosphere?
- \_\_\_5. Residence facilities. Dorm options? Off campus? Single sex? Quiet dorms? Substance free? Special interest living? Condition? Presence of adults or advisors?
- \_\_\_6. Dining facilities. Choices? Quality of food? Ability to respond to restrictions? Options on number of meals per week?
- \_\_\_7. Orientation. Summer Programs? Early fall? Adequate?
- \_\_\_8. Academic advising. By department? Assigned? Student's choice? Easily available? Reputation?
- \_\_\_9. Athletics facilities. For athletes only? Non-varsity athletic facilities? Condition? Quality? Use?
- \_\_\_10. Religious services. On campus? Nearby? Actively attended?
- \_\_\_11. Art. Dance? Ceramics? Sculpture? Printmaking? Drawing? Painting?
- \_\_\_12. Music. Singing groups? Orchestra? Jazz? Informal groups? Non-majors? Availability of lessons? Practice rooms?
- \_\_\_13. Internships. When? How arranged? Easily available?
- \_\_\_14. Community service organizations. Well run? How active? Supported general population?

Summarize here those qualities that emerged as important to you, from the above list. Include any others that may not have been listed.

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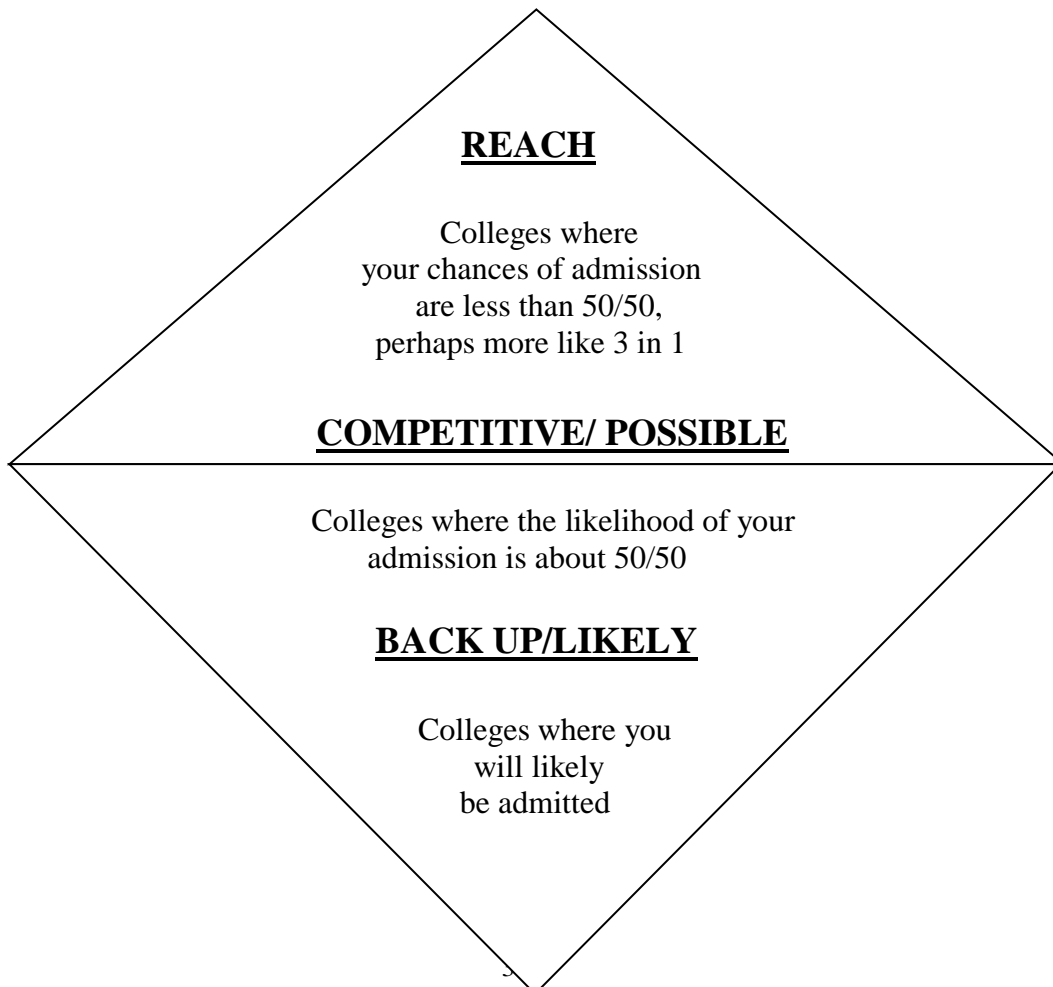
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## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS COMPETITIVENESS

ADMISSION POLICY	SUMMARY	SAT Total	
		Critical Read + Math	ACT Composite
Most Difficult	Majority of accepted students are from top 10% of class	1220-1400	28-36
Very Difficult	Majority of accepted students are from top 25% of class	1030-1220	22-27
Moderately Difficult	Majority of accepted students are from top half of class	950-1070	20-23
Minimally Difficult	Some students accepted from lower half of class	870-990	18-21
Open Admission	All high school graduates accepted to capacity	790-950	17-20

### HOW MANY COLLEGE APPLICATIONS SHOULD I SUBMIT?

Counselors work with students to assure that the student's applications are to a variety of colleges and include at least one college where the student is likely to be admitted. A good spread of applications would be to submit 1-2 applications in each of the following categories:



**MY INITIAL COLLEGE LIST**

<b>Important Criteria</b>	
1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____
5. _____	10. _____

**Begin your initial long list here.**

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Label each college with an **R** for reach, a **C** for competitive, or a **B** for backup.

Remember this is only your first list. It will grow! It will shrink! It's alive! It will change as you look more intensely at schools and learn what criteria are most important to you.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK AS YOU EXPLORE COLLEGES

The purpose of this set of questions is to help you organize your college exploration. Remember, there is no one college for you and there are many at which you can be happy and meet your educational goals. Look for learning climates which you feel will challenge you and fit your style.

Talk with many students as well as admissions staff members. Would you talk to just one freshman, for example, and expect to get a picture of Saddlebrook Preparatory School?

### The Academic Environment

1. What areas of study are emphasized, and how do they fit your field of interest and ability? Is the college strong in science, fine arts, the humanities, your areas? How many students are in your areas of interest, and how does this number compare with other fields?
2. What courses are included in a typical freshman program? What are the sizes of these classes? Do students select all their courses or are there distribution requirements?
3. How many students do not return after their freshman year?
4. How intense is the academic atmosphere (average hours spent studying, library full on weekends, average SAT, ACT scores, etc)?
5. What are the library's hours? Would you want to spend much time there? Where do most students study?
6. Are members of the faculty and administration easily accessible to students?
7. Do students study abroad? What percent go on to graduate school?
8. Would high school credits in some advanced course qualify you for advanced placement? What scores are needed for credit? Do they vary in departments?

### The Students

1. What were some initial reactions of freshmen when they first came to campus? What do juniors say are the strengths and problems of the college?
2. What special interest groups – clubs, publications, teams: are active on the campus?
3. What is the ethnic, religious, racial make-up of the student body? Where is the location of a church/synagogue of your choice?
4. What social and academic benefits would you receive from membership in a fraternity or sorority or living in a cooperative house? What percentages of students belong?
5. What percentages of students are from other states? Countries?

### The Campus

1. Is the college a part of the surrounding community or set apart from it as a self-contained unit? If this is a rural area, how far is the nearest town and how do students get there?
2. What method of transportation would you use to get around campus? Walking? Car? Bus? Bike? What regulation determines freshmen use of these?

### Housing

1. What percentages of students live in dorms? Co-ed dorms? Co-ed floors? Do all freshmen live in dorms? What dorms are popular with freshmen?
2. Is housing guaranteed to all freshmen?
3. How are roommates assigned? How many are assigned to a room?
4. What percentages of students go home on weekends?

### Your Individual Questions

1. Sports, activities, travel, work programs, summer programs, etc?



## QUESTIONS TO ASK COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Students and parents should compile a list of priorities before meeting with college representatives. In order to make a realistic assessment and selection of a college or university, the following factors need to be considered: (1) admission requirements, (2) location, (3) public or private, (4) enrollment, (5) cost, (6) majors offered, (7) nature of the student body. Bring a pen or pencil. Many representatives will ask you to complete a contact card so they can send you additional information. Bring a notebook so you can write down details about each school you investigate. Develop your own list of questions to ask college representatives by using the suggested topics below as a guide.

### Questions on Admission Policies

1. What high school courses are required for admission?
2. Are entrance tests required? Which ones? What range of scores is accepted?
3. Does the college require a certain grade point average or rank in class?
4. Will activities and involvement in school be considered?
5. What weight is placed on the essay?
6. Is there an early action plan?
7. On what basis are applicants accepted?
8. Are personal interviews or letters of recommendation required?
9. Are there special requirements for certain majors?
10. What percent of applicants are accepted?
11. Can admission denials be appealed?
12. What is the application filing date?

### Questions on the College

1. Where is the colleges located (city, suburb, small town, rural)?
2. What is the surrounding community like?
3. Is the college public or private, church affiliated?
4. What is the current undergraduate student enrollment?
5. What special or unique programs are offered?
6. Does the college have general education or course distribution requirements?
7. Does the college have special programs for transfer students?
8. What is the academic calendar (semester, quarters)?

### Questions on the Student Population

1. Where do the majority of students come from?
2. Do most of the students commute or live on campus?
3. What types of student groups are active on campus?
4. Are there fraternities and sororities on campus?
5. What athletic programs are available?
6. Is the surrounding community supportive of the college?
7. Does the college have a campus visitation program?
8. Is housing available/guaranteed for freshman? Is it available all four years?

### Questions on Academics

1. What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest?
2. How many students in last year's freshmen class returned for their sophomore year?
3. What was the grade point average for the freshman class last year?
4. What is the college's procedure for student orientation, class placement, and scheduling? Are classes guaranteed?
5. How are academic advisors assigned?
6. What services does the school offer for a student who is undecided about a major?
7. What percentage of students graduate within four years? In five years?
8. What are the most popular majors on campus?
9. Are students taught by full-time professors, graduate assistants, or a combination of the two?
10. What types of additional services are provided at no cost to the student (e.g. tutoring, career and personal counseling, developmental reading and study skills workshops, job placement)?
11. Is there an honors program? What are the qualifications for entry?

### **Questions on Social Life**

1. What is the average age of the student body?
2. What is the male to female ratio?
3. What percent of students reside on campus?
4. Is this considered a “suitcase campus” where all students leave on weekends?
5. Are the resident halls coed? Is there a substance free residence option?
6. What are the procedures of selecting a roommate?
7. What are some of the rules and regulations that govern campus and residence hall life?

### **Questions on College Costs**

1. What is the cost of tuition? Room and board? Are there other fees?
2. How much did costs increase from last year to this year?
3. Are accepted students required to make deposits for orientation and/or housing? Are these deposits fully refundable until May 1?
4. Are deposits required each year for returning students?
5. When do bills have to be paid?

### **Questions on Financial Aid**

1. What percent of students receive need-based financial aid?
2. What percent of students receive scholarships based on merit?
3. What would a typical freshman financial aid package look like?
4. What percent of those who apply for financial aid receive it?
5. Will financial aid be adjusted if need increases?
6. What application(s) need(s) to be filed to apply for financial aid?
7. Is a tuition plan available?
8. Are there campus jobs available? Are there nearby off-campus jobs?

## **HELPFUL HINTS FOR MAKING GOOD USE OF A CAMPUS VISIT**

On most campuses the tour guide is a student selected by the college for his or her ability to project an acceptable image of the institution to the prospective candidate. Some are a bit short on candor, and somewhat hesitant to contradict the catalog or admissions officer. Others are very honest and open about their experiences.

Remember, a guide may be “down” on a particular program or college because of some immediate and personal issue that has nothing to do with the overall college or university. If you have a negative experience, try to meet other students before leaving campus. Visit the student center, the athletic fields or the lobby of a residence hall.

Some questions you might ask your campus guide:

1. What’s the largest class you’ve had here? How large are you classes now?
2. Who teaches you in these courses? (Graduate assistants or professors?)
3. Does the school have a required core curriculum? How restrictive is it? Is there a foreign language requirement?
4. How adequate is the library? Are you able to get the books you need when you want them?
5. When do you have to declare your major? What are the most popular majors?
6. Tell me about housing. Are some dorms much better than others? Do many students live off-campus? Is so, why?
7. How competitive is the student body? Do students seem to work primarily for grades? What is the attitude toward working hard?
8. Have you been in any faculty homes since you’ve been here? How available are your professors?
9. Can you tell me anything first-hand about the (French, English, History) department?
10. What’s the biggest issue in local campus politics?
11. What are the biggest issues in national and international politics? Are students politically active? Aware?

12. What percentage of students study abroad at some time?
13. What impact do fraternities have here? Athletics?
14. What are weekends like? Do many students leave campus on the weekend? Are there alternatives to the typical party scene?
15. How active is the student government? What activities are popular?
16. Are the arts supported here? Which areas are strong? Are the courses oversubscribed?
17. What do you think is the greatest shortcoming of this college? What do students complain about?
18. What do you like the best about your experience and education here?
19. Is this a diverse community? Where do students come from?
20. If you could attend another college now, where would you go? Why?
21. Why did you choose this school? To what others did you apply?
22. What kind of students do you think are happiest here? Which ones are least happy?

Other suggestions:

1. Spend the night in a residence hall and sit in on several classes.
2. Pick up a copy of the latest campus newspaper.
3. Read the course catalog and check out the list of faculty, their degrees, and the courses they teach.
4. Meet a coach if you are interested in a sport.
5. Meet the head of an activity/interest you want to pursue in college.
6. Find a professor and get his/her perspective.
7. Go to the financial aid office and ask questions.
8. Find out about the quality of the career services office.

Recording your impressions:

1. Take a camera to take a visual record of the college, what you saw, what you did, etc.
2. Write down who your tour guide was – it can help later to recall parts of the campus and experiences.
3. Write down highlights or low points of the visit.
4. What residence hall did you visit? Would you want to live there? What other residence halls did you learn about? Write these things down.
5. Write down what you would tell your friends if they were planning to visit here.
6. Record your thoughts on being a student at this school. How did walking around campus make you feel?
7. Develop your own rating system – Is this a ★ ★★ ★★★★★?

### College Days

You are allowed four college days each year. Call the Office of Admission and make an appointment. Have your parents submit a letter to your Guidance Counselor at least a week prior to your college day. Bring verification of your visit to your Guidance Counselor upon your return. If this procedure is followed, college days will not count against exemptions.

## College Interviews

The emphasis on college interviews has decreased during the past few years so you will need to inquire about the interviewing policy of each school. The policy will probably be one of the following:

1. No interviews – group information sessions only
2. Alumni interviews only – held in DFW area
3. Interviews are optional and informational only
4. Interviews are encouraged and do become a part of the student’s application folder

If the college does offer an on-campus interview and you are able to visit, please take advantage of the opportunity. It may be very helpful to you. Don’t be surprised if the interviewer spends much of the time selling you on his or her school. Interviews are, in part, a marketing device.

### **The Interview**

1. The interview is primarily for you to learn about the college and what life would be like for you as a student on campus. Use it as a tool to assist in your college selection. The interview can have a positive effect on your admissions – rarely a negative one.
2. Your interview will usually be with an admissions staff member, but it may be with a student, alumnus, or a professional interviewer. Keep this person’s prospective in mind. Don’t write off the college just because you think you had a bad interview! Interviewers have had bad days too!
3. The interviewer is eager to get to know you and is almost always on your side. An experienced person is well aware that you may be inexperienced at interviewing and will try to put you at ease. The interviewer will want to answer your questions but will be more interested in you if your homework about the school is completed. (See *Sample Questions to Ask As You Explore Colleges*)
4. **KNOW YOURSELF.** An important part of preparation is your own self assessment. In what kind of environment do you work best? Would you take advantage of talking to professors or would you rather learn by the lecture method? Know your rank, your test scores, and your present areas of interest. If you are undecided about your career, feel free to say so. Seventy percent of college students change their intended majors. It is important, however, to recognize that you are going to college primarily to learn. Think through some areas you would like to explore, competencies you would like to develop, projects or situations that intrigue you.
5. Don’t go unprepared! Do your homework about the school to get the obvious questions answered. You don’t want to be silent when asked “What would you like to know about our college?” Questions like “What if I can’t decide between two majors?” “What do students here say about \_\_\_\_\_?” “What kind of internships are there and how often do students take them?” or “I’ve liked art, but don’t wish to major in it . . .” – these kinds of questions or concerns show more maturity in your thinking than asking the size of the student body.
6. Some interviewers, as they try to learn about you, may ask questions about your interests, extra-curricular activities, job, books you’ve read, meaningful experiences, why you’re interested in this particular college, life at Saddlebrook Preparatory School, etc. (See *Questions You Might Be Asked in an Interview*).
7. Be honest! Everyone has strong and weak points. Hopefully, college will help you with some of the latter and promote the former.
8. If your parent or friend accompanies you to the college, plan to have your interview alone. Most admissions officers prefer to talk with your parents after talking with you rather than during the interview.
9. Dress neatly and comfortably.
10. After you return home, write a thank you note. (Spelling and neatness are obviously important!)

## QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT BE ASKED IN AN INTERVIEW

These are samples of the kinds of questions you might be asked by an interviewer. Think about how you would answer them. Even if you are not asked any of these questions, if you have thought about them you will be better prepared for whatever you encounter in your interview.

1. How do you like Saddlebrook Preparatory School? What has been the most positive experience you have had? The most negative? What would you like to change about Saddlebrook Preparatory School?
2. What is your role in the community? What would your teachers say are your greatest strengths as a person – as a student – likewise, what about your shortcomings and weaknesses?
3. What is the most significant contribution you've made to Saddlebrook Preparatory School?
4. What are you looking for in your choice of a college? How did you become interested in this college?
5. What are some of your goals – personal and career – for the future?
6. Tell me about a particular class or assignment in which you found yourself most stimulated intellectually.
7. What is your reason for participating in athletics, student council, newspaper, etc.? What are the satisfactions?
8. Since you are interested in science and math, why are you interested in a liberal arts college rather than a more technical institution?
9. How and in what ways do you expect, plan, or hope to transfer your secondary school contributions, achievements, activities to the college level?
10. What has been your favorite subject in high school?
11. What might you study in college? Why?
12. What books or authors have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking? Have you read deeply into any one author or field?
13. What events, if any, would you deem critical in your life thus far? Who has most influenced you?
14. What pressures do you feel operating on you in society to conform? Describe ways in which you “go your own way.”
15. How have you spent your summers?
16. What are your reactions to current events, ex. AIDS, September 11?
17. Describe something that you have really become indignant about over the past year.
18. How would you describe yourself as a person?
19. Have you ever thought of not going to college? What would you do?
20. How do you spend your free time?
21. Why do you think you are a good match for this college?
22. Many qualified students apply to our school. What characteristics separate you from others?
23. Do you have any questions?

## RESOURCES FOR YOUR COLLEGE EXPLORATION

### **Comprehensive, College Reference Books (Objective):**

*Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*; Barron's Educational Series, Hauppauge, NY.  
*The College Handbook*; College Board, New York, NY.  
*Lovejoy's College Guide*; Lovejoy's Educational Guides, Monarch Press, NY, NY.  
*Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges*; Peterson's Guides, Princeton, NJ.  
*Comparative Guide to American Colleges*; Cass & Birnbaum, Harper Books, NY, NY

### **College Rating, Recommendation Books (Subjective):**

*The Fiske Guide to Colleges*; Edward B. Fiske, Times Books, NY, NY.  
*The Insider's Guide to the Colleges*; Yale Daily News, St. Martin's Press, NY, NY.  
*Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges*; Frederick E. Rugg, Sarasota, FL.  
*The Gourman Report*, Jack Gourman, NES.

### **Supplementary College Reference Books:**

*Colleges That Change Lives*, Loren Pope, Penguin Books.  
*100 Colleges Where Average Students Can Excel*, Joe Anne Adler, Arco Books.  
*Honor Roll for Character Building Colleges*, John Templeton Foundations.  
*Making a Difference College Guide*, Miriam Weinstein, Sage Press, San Anselmo, CA.

### **Computer Software:**

*Peterson's College Quest* , , Peterson's Guides, Inc., Princeton, NJ.

### **College Visitations / Travel Books:**

*How to Get to the College of your Choice: By Road, Plane or Train*; Kraus International Publications, Millwood, NY.  
*The Complete Guide to College Visits; A Citadel Press Book*, NY, NY.

### **Specifically for Parents:**

*50 College Admissions Directors Speak to Parents*; Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Publishers, NY, NY.  
*Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Today's College Experience*; Adler and Adler Publishers, Bethesda, MD.  
*Don't Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money*, Helen Johnson & Christina Schelhas-Miller.  
*Tuition Without Tears*, Michael Franzblau.

## FACTORS IN COMPETITIVE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

From admissions officers everywhere, the advice is virtually the same. Here is what counts to them.

**Secondary School Record** – How have you done in the courses taken? Colleges would much rather see you taking a tough and challenging load that is in line with your ability than improving your grade point average by taking “easy” courses. Develop your interest to be sure, but don’t neglect a solid foundation in English, math, science, history and foreign language. Even though you may have finished the math and science requirements for graduation, you should consider staying with them in the senior year if that is appropriate for your ability.

**ACT/SAT Scores** – Scores on the SAT Reasoning Test and the ACT (American College Test) are used by admissions committees as one measure to compare students from different schools. Scores on SAT Subject Tests are often considered more important as they come closer to testing actual knowledge learned in a particular course. Standardized test results ultimately reflect the student’s ability to take timed, multiple-choice tests and, as such, cannot represent the individual student’s cognitive abilities. Many able students have low-test scores. A combination of high grades and low test scores can be explained by many factors. HOWEVER, high scores and low grades are the worst possible combination, since it almost always describes an able person who does not work productively and is therefore perceived by admissions officers as a greater risk.

**The Essay and the Application** – The essay is often the most overlooked aspect of college admissions by students. Students are expected to spend a considerable amount of time in the preparation of the essay. It is a chance to become more than a name for the admissions staff. The choice of topic for the essay is far less important than its presentation. It should be personal and honest, thoughtfully and carefully written, and discuss something of personal importance. Unless it says otherwise, TYPE the essay (and that means YOU, not a parent or secretary). Neatness counts. A hastily completed, sloppy, hard-to-read application form will not win you points; an imperfect but genuine effort will.

**The Counselor Statement** – The school’s recommendation for a student is written by that student’s counselor. The counselor will attempt to present an assessment which is fair and accurate and which emphasizes achievements and talents. He/she won’t ignore major difficulties as reflected on the transcript, but will tell the story to reflect positively.

**Teacher Recommendations** – Each college has its own specific requirements for teacher recommendations, but in most cases two are requested: one from a history, English or foreign language teacher, and the other from a math or science teacher. In some instances colleges are very specific, asking for recommendations from current English and math teachers, whereas in other instances they may give a choice or require none at all. A particular strength in the arts or athletics or any extracurricular activity, may be enhanced by a teacher or coach, but in all other instances, do not give the colleges more than they ask for. Read the application forms carefully.

Teacher recommendations speak to abilities and accomplishments as a student and need to be positive. Thus, choose carefully the teachers asked and be sure they feel comfortable writing a recommendation. Don’t assume that the chosen teacher will automatically accept the request. Have back-ups in mind, be sure they are teachers worked with in the junior or senior year, and finally, remember to phrase the request as a request, and not as a demand.

**Extracurricular Activities and Work Experience** – Involvement in activities does not carry as much weight as the transcript unless talent or skill is exceptional. An accomplished musician may impress a committee in the audition, especially if a bassoonist is needed for next year’s orchestra. As one of the nation’s best high school hockey goalies, a 2.8 grade point average may be overlooked. For the majority of students the list of high school activities indicates a high level of involvement; only rarely is it exceptional. College people see capable involvement as a good thing if it means something other than simply compiling a list of activities, and if the time commitment does not detract from academic record.

**Geographic Distribution and Legacy Status** – In addition to ethnic and racial diversity, each college has an interest in creating a geographically diverse student body. Hence, when applying to colleges far away from home, a student may have a slight advantage over equally qualified candidates. It is also in a college’s own interest to encourage generations of family to attend the college, since these families are usually among their most loyal (and generous) supporters. For that reason, if applying to the undergraduate college one parent attended, a slight advantage may occur over equally qualified candidates, but it hardly makes admission “a sure thing.” The amount that either of these factors affects admission cannot be quantified or predicted. As an alum legacy, chances for admission are certainly enhanced, but if the college is disliked, what’s the point?

Above all else, don’t try to fool the colleges! **BE YOURSELF!**

## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS POLICIES

Colleges and universities have varying admission practices. Information pertinent to the policy of a prospective school will be found in its publications. Some of the more frequently mentioned practices are:

- A. **Early Admission:** Some colleges accept exceptional students applying for entrance directly after their junior year, usually without completing the requirements for the high school diploma.
- B. **Early Decision:** Students who have demonstrated sound academic ability apply for admission to their first choice college during the summer or very early in their senior year. Notification of admission is given usually in December or January. Restrictive policies vary with each school and must be checked carefully to see if early decision works to the individual's advantage. Generally, Early Decision, requires a commitment to attend if accepted and to withdraw any applications submitted to other colleges.
- C. **Early Action:** This plan allows students to indicate a first choice college and receive a decision in the senior year well in advance of the normal response date in the spring. Students are not committed to enroll if accepted. It is usually not good protocol to apply to more than one college on this plan.
- D. **Rolling Admission:** As soon as an application is complete (meaning that the form, the fee and all required credentials have been received and processed), a decision on that application is made and the student is notified. It is generally advantageous for students to apply well in advance of the posted deadline because it is impossible to know how quickly the available spaces are being filled.
- E. **Regular Decision:** This is the process whereby a college accepts applications from prospective students and delays the admission decision until all applications from the entire applicant pool have been received. Decision letters are mailed to applicants, all at once, traditionally in March or April. The most selective colleges mail their decision letters in early to mid-April.
- F. **Deferred Admission:** Students who have alternate plans for the year following high school may apply to many colleges for deferred admission. The application process and timetable remain the same as for regular admission, but students should indicate that they do not intend to matriculate until the following year. An explanation of how the student plans to spend the year and the benefits the student expects to derive from it is usually required by the college.
- G. **Open Enrollment:** A term now used by an institution that publishes a set of admission standards and pledges to admit any student whose credentials equal or exceed them. Most often used by community colleges.
- H. **Wait List:** The process used by selective colleges who do not initially offer or deny admission, but extend the possibility of admission to a later date (usually late May through July). Students should accept another college's offer since waiting list acceptances are very inconsistent. (Discuss all wait list situations with a counselor. Second semester grades and method of reply can be critical to your acceptance.)

Note: Students planning early action/early decisions are usually required to take SAT Subject Tests in the spring of the junior year.



## TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Often, when someone says they are planning for college, they merely mean that they expect to continue their formal education at some sort of post-secondary institution. That institution may be a college or university, a junior college, a community college, a vocational-technical school, or a specialized institute.

**COLLEGE:** An institution of higher education that offers a curriculum leading to a four year bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree.

**UNIVERSITY:** A university usually has a liberal arts college as well as several specialized colleges and graduate programs in such fields as business, engineering, agriculture, law and medicine.

**LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE:** A four-year institution which emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education. It offers exposure to science, history, philosophy, poetry, music and art. Pre-professional and professional training may be available but not stressed.

**JUNIOR COLLEGE/COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** Generally, a junior or community college is a transfer institution which provides courses to parallel the freshman and sophomore offerings at four-year colleges and universities. In addition to transfer programs, community colleges may offer associate degree programs and career-oriented certificate programs for students primarily concerned with finding a job

**ENGINEERING OR TECHNICAL COLLEGE:** Independent professional schools which provide four or five-year training programs in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences. They are often known as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes.

**VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL SCHOOL:** These schools are similar to community colleges in that they offer career-oriented programs that may last from a few months to a couple of years. Specialized institutes usually offer an intense program in one very specific skill area.

**NURSING SCHOOL:** There are two kinds of nursing schools. At schools affiliated with hospitals, students receive R.N. degrees upon completion of their training. At schools affiliated with four years colleges, students receive both a B.S. degree and an R.N. and have possibilities of entering the field of nursing administration.

**MILITARY SCHOOL:** Federal military academies prepare officers for the Army, Navy and Air Force. These institutions (West Point, Naval Academy, and the Air Force Academy) require recommendation and appointment by members of Congress. Private and state supported military institutes and the Coast Guard Academy, however, operate on a college application basis. They all offer degree programs in engineering and technology with concentration in various aspects of military science.

**BUSINESS SCHOOL:** Business schools fall into two categories. At some colleges it is possible to specialize in business administration or in a two-year secretarial course in conjunction with supplementary liberal arts courses. Other institutions offer predominately business or secretarial courses and may or may not be regionally accredited.

## FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

Financial aid is money for education that comes from sources other than family. It is meant to supplement what the family can contribute to the total costs involved in attending a college or university.

The primary responsibility for paying a student's educational expenses belongs to the family. However, the choice of a college should not be determined by family finances alone. A student and family should proceed through the college search process with information based not only on finances, but on the student's desire and ability to attend the college.

1. **Merit-Based** aid is given to students in the form of grants and scholarships. These are often granted to students who excel in academics, sports, leadership, music, art or dance.
2. **Need-Based** aid is made available to families that cannot pay for all of the postsecondary education costs on their own. The demand for student aid exceeds the supply of dollars available. Therefore, most financial aid programs limit their awards to students who have demonstrated that they have need, based on submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students, who graduate on the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement plan and have financial need, may qualify for a State Grant (Florida Bright Futures).

All families' financial circumstances are evaluated in a consistent and equitable manner via the FAFSA. As you complete the FAFSA you will be asked to enter actual data about your family, your income and your assets. To be sure all families are treated equally; there are some figures that will be automatically computed according to standardized charts. Using both your actual figures and the figures on the charts, an estimated family contribution will be calculated. Use [www.fafsa4caster.com](http://www.fafsa4caster.com).

## NCAA REQUIREMENTS

If you are planning to enroll in college as a freshman and you wish to participate in Division I or II intercollegiate athletics, your initial-eligibility status must normally be determined by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

### DIVISION I AFTER 2008

If you enroll in a Division I college after 2008 and want to participate in athletics or receive an athletics scholarship, you must meet the following standards:

- Graduate from high school;
- Complete the 16 core courses listed below;
- Earn a minimum required grade-point average in your core courses; and
- Earn a combined SAT or ACT sum score that matches your core-course grade-point average and test score sliding scale which is available online.

### 16 Required Core Courses

- Four years of English;
- Three years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher level);
- Two years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science);
- One year of additional English, mathematics or science;
- Two years of social science; and
- Four years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language, non-doctrinal religion, or philosophy).

**You will be a non-qualifier** if you do not meet the academic requirements listed above. As a non-qualifier, you:

- May not participate in athletics competition or practice during your first year in college;
- May receive financial aid based only on need (not athletics-based financial aid) in your first year in college; and
- May play only three seasons (to earn a fourth season you must graduate before your fifth year of college).

*Important:* The clearinghouse certifies your eligibility to compete as a student-athlete, but your college must accept you as a student.

The clearinghouse evaluates your academic record to determine if you are eligible to participate at a Division I or II college as a freshman student-athlete. (The clearinghouse is not the NCAA, but an organization that performs services relative to initial eligibility for the NCAA.)

## Eligibility Center Services

### Mailing Address:

NCAA Eligibility Center  
P.O. Box 7136  
Indianapolis, IN 46207

### Web Address:

<http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net>

### Clearinghouse customer service

Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

U.S. callers (toll-free) 877/262-1492

Fax: 319/968-5100

### **CLEARINGHOUSE (ELIGIBILITY) CENTER REGISTRATION: send transcripts at the end of junior year and after graduation.**

To register with the clearinghouse you must complete and sign the Transcript Release Form (SRF) and send it to the clearinghouse along with \$50 – 75 registration fee. (Please note that currently all student-athletes can register online). This form does two things:

- It authorizes each high school attended to send the clearinghouse your transcript, test scores, proof of graduation and other necessary academic information.
- It authorizes the clearinghouse to send academic information to all colleges that request your eligibility status.

Go online to [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net). Select **Prospective Student-Athletes** and click on **Transcript Form for US Students**. Print the Transcript Release Form, sign it, and give to your counselor.

**Fee Waiver:** Student-athletes are eligible for a fee waiver if they have already received a fee waiver for the ACT or SAT. The high school counselor will also be required to submit an electronic fee waiver on their behalf.

Be sure to enter “9999” code when registering for the ACT or SAT, which requests your official test scores to be sent directly to the eligibility center.

## **QUESTIONS FOR ATHLETES TO ASK DURING A VISIT**

Before you decide to make your first visit, it’s a good idea to think carefully about the kind of information you are going to need to eventually make a decision. Once you do, you’ll be able to ask the right kinds of questions. Following are some good notes to get you started.

Ask the recruiter:

1. What position (event) do you want me to play (perform), and how many others are you recruiting for the same position?
2. What is your philosophy of offense? Defense? Are you considering any changes?
3. Will I be red-shirted?
4. If I need a fifth year, will you finance it?
5. What happens to my scholarship if I am injured or ineligible?
6. Who do I see if I have academic problems?
7. Has drug abuse been an issue at your school? In the athletic program?  
Are all injuries handled by a team insurance policy?
8. If injured, may I use my family doctor? Who determines my fitness to compete after an injury?
9. What is expected of players during the off-season?

Ask the Players:

1. What does your typical daily schedule look like? In-season? Off-season?
2. Approximately how many hours a night do you study?
3. What generally are the attitudes of professors in different fields of study? In my field of study? Towards athletes?
4. How do you like the living arrangements?
5. Do you have an academic advisor? Is he/she any good?
6. Are the coaches available to help if you have academic problems?

## SERVICE ACADEMIES AND ROTC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

While all juniors should begin exploring possible educational programs following graduation, if you are interested in the service academies and the ROTC scholarship programs you must begin as soon as possible to insure that you receive full consideration.

**The first step** in securing an appointment to one of the academies is to write and ask for a pre-candidate questionnaire. Addresses follow:

Admissions Office  
U.S. Military Academy  
West Point, N.Y. 10996

Admissions Office  
U.S. Air Force Academy  
U.S.A.F. Academy, CO 80840

Admissions Office  
U.S. Naval Academy  
Annapolis, MD 21402

Admissions Office  
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy  
Kings Point, NY 10024

**The second step** is to write to each of your senators and your congressman and ask that they consider you as one of their nominees. In this letter you should indicate your first, second, third and fourth choices for academies as well as:

Name, address, and telephone number  
Date of Birth  
Social Security number  
High school name and year of graduation  
Names of your parents

The Coast Guard Academy has an admissions procedure similar to the other highly competitive colleges. There is no nomination process involved. Write directly for an application:

Admissions Office  
U.S. Coast Guard Academy  
New London, CT 06320

ROTC scholarship programs involve a competitive application process as well. In addition to the written application, candidates must undergo a physical examination, formal interview, and a physical abilities test. The first step in the process is to write for an application:

Air Force ROTC  
Maxwell Air Force Base  
Alabama 36112-6663

Army ROTC  
Box 9000  
Clifton, NJ 07015

Navy ROTC  
Box 3060  
Hyattsville, MD 20784

## **SAMPLE LETTER FOR ADMISSIONS INFORMATION**

**(Edit to meet your needs)**

Your Street Address

Date

Director of Admissions (Use name if possible)

Name of College

Address of College

City, State, Zip

Dear Director (Use name if possible):

I am currently a junior at Saddlebrook Preparatory School, and am interested in applying for admission to (name of institution). I would appreciate having the following information sent to me:

1. A general bulletin explaining the entrance requirements, a college handbook, an application for admission, college costs, and facilities available. My areas of interest are in (name curriculum or departmental interest if possible).
2. Financial aid and scholarship information, deadlines, and application and instructions for applying for financial aid.
3. Information concerning (name of activity or sport). I would also appreciate the name of the (advisor, coach, bandmaster, etc.) to contact.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Your Name

(Typed in full with middle initial)

**ALL LETTERS SHOULD BE NEATLY HANDWRITTEN OR  
TYPED.**

## **ORGANIZATIONS THAT GOVERN COLLEGE ATHLETICS**

### **The NCAA**

The NCAA is the National Collegiate Athletic Association. It is the largest organization in the United States that governs athletics in colleges and universities. The NCAA establishes rules and regulations in all college sports programs, both men's and women's.

The NCAA is divided into three divisions, Division I, Division II, and Division III.

**Division I:** Division I colleges or universities compete at the top college level. Most Division I schools offer scholarships; however, there are some that do not.

**Division II:** Division II colleges or universities compete at this level based on criteria such as the size of their college or universities, their facilities, or how much emphasis they choose to place on the particular athletic or sports program.

**Division III:** More colleges or universities compete in the Division III level than any other level. Division III offers no scholarships based on athletics. They do, however, offer financial aid or assistance based on need and academics.

### **The NAIAA**

The NAIA is the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. This organization is yet another governing body for college or university athletics in the United States. The NAIA colleges or universities are usually comparable to NCAA Division III schools in size and commitment to athletics.

### **The NJCAA**

The NJCAA is the National Junior College Athletic Association. This organization is the governing body of junior college athletics.

### **THE NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE (ELIGIBILITY CENTER)**

#### **What is the NCAA Clearinghouse? And, How does it work?**

As the governing body of most college sports, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Clearinghouse is the first place students must go to receive athletic scholarships if they are interested in playing Division I or Division II level sports. Athletes who want to compete at the college level must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse to find out if they are eligible to play. The registration form is available online at the NCAA website [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net).

The first thing to consider is whether or not the student is truly and naturally talented, in top physical form, and has athletic abilities that surpass most others they have competed with in high school sports across the country. The second thing students should consider is the background of each school they are interested in attending and its sports programs. Each college and university regulated by the NCAA has established rules on eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid, and falls into one of the three membership divisions (Division I, II, and III). Divisions are based on school size and the scope of their athletic programs and scholarships. Collegiate sports are very intensely competitive that the NCAA advises students to consider this factor.

The best way for students to prepare for a future in college athletics is to take appropriate coursework. Indeed, more students fail to qualify to play NCAA sports because of lack of appropriate coursework than for low-test scores. Potential student-athletes should not only focus on the athletic details of the institutions they are applying to, but also they must find out if they are on track to meet academic eligibility and core-course requirements (of each respective school). Investigate what the graduation rate of each athletic program of each college or university you are applying, and research if the athletes in their sport are at or have been selected from the colleges in which they are interested. Ask what academic support services are available and how academic progress is tracked.

## **Initial Eligibility of College Freshman Athletes for Division I and II**

**Please Note:** NCAA requirements have recently changed and the class of 2008 will be required to take 16 core curriculum courses, instead of 14 courses.

All students who plan on being intercollegiate student-athletes in Division I and II must be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse ([www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)). To do so, incoming freshman must meet the provisions of NCAA Bylaw 14.3, also called the “freshman eligibility rule,” which are different for each division and based on GPA and standardized test scores (SAT/ACT). Minimum scores are set annually, but have generally gravitated around a GPA of 2.0 with a core curriculum of 14 academic subjects (16 for class of 2008), a minimum ACT sum score totaling between 68, and a minimum SAT (combined verbal and math only) score of 820. (Please also check the academic requirements of each of the college or university for which you are applying, for comparison.) Eligibility is determined exclusively by the Clearinghouse and not by the college or university the student hopes to attend. Complete one or the other of the registration form (paper or on-line registration). You must choose the type of method in which you want to apply and pay a one-time fee. Students must then send the Clearinghouse all registration materials, including the student release form, processing fee, and official transcript. Upon registration, the Clearinghouse determines each student’s eligibility for practice as well as eligibility to receive athletic scholarships that have been offered by a college or university coach.

### **Eligibility of Division III Athletes**

NCAA Clearinghouse eligibility requirements differ for this division. Students’ eligibility for practice and competition for Division III student-athletes are determined by institutional, conference, and other NCAA regulations.

The NCAA recommends that high school students interested in Divisions I, II, III register with the clearinghouse after completion of their junior year. A complete transcript along with SAT or ACT test scores should be forwarded directly to the clearinghouse as soon as they are available. At the end of the school year, the school guidance counselor will submit to NCAA Clearinghouse the final transcript of each student.

For more information regarding NCAA eligibility, visit the NCAA website at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org).

## **THE ATHLETIC LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND RESUME**

The following is a brief summary of what should be included in an student-athlete or athletic resume. Keep in mind that there are no standards for an athletic resume, but you should take the time and invest in putting it together in a manner which demonstrates a serious effort.

The Athletic Resume plays an important part in the recruiting process. Time and care should be exercised in the preparation of these documents. The purpose of the resume is to highlight the student-athletes accomplishments and goals and to peak a college or university coach’s interest. This is generally the first contact that a coach might have with the student-athlete.

A typical athletic resume should consist of the following items, usually 1 page per item:

1. Letter of Introduction
2. Athletic Profile
3. Athletic Accomplishments and Honors
4. Academic and Extra-Curricular Profile
5. Current High School or Club Game, Match, or Tournament Schedule
6. Letters of references from Coaches and Trainers

**Item 1** – Should consist of a one page letter introducing the athlete to the college or university coach. Address the coach by using his or her name not “Dear Coach.” Use the school name instead of saying “I’d like to find out more about your school...” The letter should be from the athlete NOT the parents. Give specific information about yourself: your name, high school, year of graduation, club teams, coaches’ names, addresses and phone number. Also include a brief description, height, weight, skill level or ability/mastery. Mention your GPA and your college or university goals and major interests. Remember this letter is an introduction, not a detailed summary of your abilities.

**Item 2** – Include an athletic profile and on this page, give more specifics about you and your sport: height, weight, abilities in skill areas, mastery in techniques, hand preference, high school coaches, current age, birth date, running speed, vertical jump, averages, other sports participated, current GPA, and class ranking. If available, include SAT, ACT, and TOEFL scores. This page is a “free format” page, one on which you can list the data in an eye appealing format. Please do not make it all a text or narrative. This is also a good page to include a color photo of yourself. Once the page has been typed, attach a color photo then take the page to a copy shop and have them photostat it in color. This way the picture becomes part of the page. On a second, page you may want to include your current or previous season statistics or records.

**Item 3** – Include athletic accomplishments and high school year, list all your athletic awards, most improved, mvp, athlete of the year, scholar athlete, captain and/or all around team selection. Include records held and any other athletic honor received.

**Item 4** – Include academic/extra-curricular profile. People tend to build up only their athletic background. Coaches want to know about you, the person, also. List your academic accomplishments, honor roll, student offices, national honor society, and club offices. Try to list community service activities, church, hospitals, retirement homes, shelters, etc. This shows that you are well rounded and can succeed and continue to be involved with other social activities. Many high school athletes fail to become involved in areas like these, but it is really a benefit to be able to add to your resume.

**Item 5** – Include current high school tournament or match schedule. No explanation is needed, but suggest a time the coach time in order that he or she might be able to see you in action. If you do not have this available, send the information to him or her in the follow-up letter as soon as you receive the schedule from your coach.

**Item 6** – include letters of references from coaches and trainers. Do not over do it. 1 or 2 will be sufficient.

This is only a brief overview of an athletic resume, but it should give you an idea on how to start it. As stated in the beginning, this is a sample of what an athletic resume should include. This is not only one format available, but it is outlined for you in order to offer you an idea of what to include on your athletic resume. There are no set rules as to how in-depth you should go or even what to include. This is your chance to catch the coach’s interest and to obtain a immediate response from him or her. In short, your athletic resume should tell the college or university coach:

1. Who are you?
2. What you are?
3. What have you done?
4. What would you like to do?
5. What can you do for the college or university you have chosen to apply?



## **SAMPLE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO A COLLEGE COACH:**

### Letter of Introduction

Please Note: When writing a Letter of Introduction to a college or university tennis and/or golf coach, try to take the time to do a little research about the school, the team, and the coach. This effort on your part will show the coach that you are truly interested in his or her school and program. Personalize your letter by using the coach's name. Compliment the coach on his or her program. Do not send a generic form letter to every coach. The sample letter (below) is just that – a sample. Write your own letter, one that reflects your own personality and ideas. You should enclose your athletic resume (see sample) with your letter of introduction. A strong resume will get coaches' attention and will generate responses. College or university coaches recruit strong players with good academic records. Please note that obtaining a college or university athletic scholarship is extremely competitive.

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Coach: Mr. John Doe – Director or Head Men’s or Women’s Tennis or Golf Coach  
Department of Intercollegiate Athletics – Tennis or Golf

Name of College or University  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Postal Code

Dear Mr. John Doe:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am currently a senior at Saddlebrook Preparatory  
Student’s Full Name

School located in Wesley Chapel, Florida. I am interested in attending the University of \_\_\_\_\_  
Indicate College Name  
and being an active participant(member) on your team. Currently, I want to major in \_\_\_\_\_  
Indicate Your Major / Area of Interest  
and through my research, I have discovered that your college or university is appropriate (fits) to my needs. I am  
also looking for a tennis and/or golf program where the schedule and program will allow me continued growth  
and development of my tennis and/or golf skills (abilities and performance).

Mr. John Doe, I am currently ranked \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ section/state/region and I am ranked \_\_\_\_\_  
nationally. I recently, have reached the \_\_\_\_\_ round of the \_\_\_\_\_ tournament. I finished in  
\_\_\_\_\_ place. I believe my level of play will fit in well with your current players. My grade point average is  
\_\_\_\_\_. And I have achieved a score of \_\_\_\_\_ on my SAT and/or ACT. Enclosed you will find my  
academic resume indicating a detailed description of my athletic and academic accomplishments. Please feel free to  
review and offer any advice, if necessary. I am always open to communication and feedback that will enhance my  
athletic and academic abilities.

Mr. John Doe, if you are interested in me and have a position open on your team, I would be interested in hearing  
from you. I would also be very interested in making a visit to your school. Please send me any additional  
information about the team and a schedule, if you have any available. I have researched the college or university  
website and catalog. I am familiar with the application process, but I need to know the type of athletic and/or  
academic scholarship opportunities that might be available for me. Thank you for your consideration. I hope to hear  
from you in the near future and to arrange an appointment where we can meet at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Remember to sign your name.

# John Doe

5700 Saddlebrook Way  
Wesley Chapel, FL 33543 - 4499  
813-000-0000  
johndoe@student.net

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Coach's Name  
University of Where-ever  
123 College Blvd  
University Town, State, 12345

Dear [Address to a specific person, do your research to find the name and address of the coach: look at the website, and contact admissions and get names and addresses, check each year, they change often.]:

I am very interested (*explain that you are interested in participating in an intercollegiate athletic program*) at the University of Whereever. (*Mention the school and something specific about their athletic program. Coaches will pay more attention to a personalized letter.*) Basically, the cover letter should briefly explain who you are and why you would make a good student-athlete.

I am sending you a copy of my athletic profile/resume and a game schedule. (*if it is not ready yet, mention that you will send it when it is out.*)

I've been playing Division I tennis or golf, (your sport) for the past 5 years (your time). Mention briefly who you've been playing with, and a few details of the team (just 4 or 5 sentences). Mention if you will be playing a tournament or exhibition game. You could include your team's website here.

Sincerely,

John Doe

**Other notes:** Cover Letter should introduce athlete. Let the resume detail the specifics. Keep the cover letter brief, and include at least one fact or quality that the resume doesn't cover.

- Use action verbs. Using sentences that start with “I communicated” or “I provided leadership” are much more effective than using “I did” or “I was”.
- Note any camps or clinics you will be attending off season.
- Note that a schedule is enclosed, if it is tentative, say so and still include it.
- Personalize by mentioning the college and few reasons the school fits your needs, academically and athletically.
- Some coaches prefer a letter written by your coach to introduce you. You could use this as a cover letter.

**SAMPLE ATHLETIC RESUME**  
Format Example of: Athletic Resume

Title:

Current Date:

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**Objective:** Why are you writing this athletic resume? What do you want to achieve by writing this athletic resume? What is the purpose? You want to come across as a student-athlete with unique qualities who stands out above your competitors.

**I. PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Student Full Name:

John/Jane Doe

Address:

5700 Saddlebrook Way

Hometown:

Wesley Chapel, Florida 33543 - 4499

Date of Birth:

February 01, 1987

Height: 5' 9"    Weight: (optional)

Hair Color: (optional)

Eye Color: (optional)

Nationality or country of residence (if not in the United States)

Tampa, Florida USA

Name of School:

Saddlebrook Preparatory School

Address:

5700 Saddlebrook Way

Wesley Chapel, Florida 33543 - 4499

Phone:

(813) 973 - 1111 / (813) 907 -4516

**II. ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

Month and Year of Graduation:

June 2006

Grade Point Average:

3.45

Class Rank:

47 of 250

SAT I Score: Verbal: \_\_\_\_ Math: \_\_\_\_ Writing: \_\_\_\_ or ACT Score: \_\_\_\_

SAT II (if applicable)

Student Academic Interest: (Identify areas in college that you would want to major or pursue (study) in.)

Academic Honors And Awards: (Scholar Athlete, National Honors Society, Dean's or Principal's List, etc.)

Name of Counselor

Counselor's School Phone#:

(813) 907 - 4516

School Fax #:

(813) 991 - 4713

**III. WORK AND/OR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

(Include a list of any work experience that you may have. You may also include community service involvement and volunteer work that you have performed. Please list in chronological order.)

**IV. ATHLETIC INFORMATION**

Name of High School Coach:

(Include his or her name, as well as trainers)

Phone Numbers and E-mail address

Skills Analysis: (Include athletic averages or statistics and performances – level of mastery - on each of your skills in your designated sport – tennis and/or golf. Identify areas of strengths and areas that might need improvement. Athletic skill assessment and improvement plan to reach skill objective.)

Competition Results and Highlights:

Note: You may want to make a section like this for each year or include several years under each heading.

*Coaches want to know your scores and the level of competition (include rating and ranking).*

Date:	High School Tournaments	Finish and Division	Scores
Date:	Local Tournaments	Finish and Division	Scores
Date:	State Tournaments	Finish and Divisions	Scores

**SAMPLE RESUME # 2**

**Your Name**  
**Your Address**  
**Your Telephone**  
**Your email address**

*Student at Saddlebrook Preparatory School – Class of 2011*  
*98.5 GPA - Ranked 26 in class of 536*

**Academic Honors:**

**Leadership Activities:**

**Athletic Accomplishments:**

**Volunteer Activities:**

**Community Involvement:**

**Work Activities:**

**Outside Activities:**

**Summary Statement:**

Participating in the activities listed above has helped me develop responsibility and maturity to be successful in college. I have learned the importance of working together with others toward a common goal. I have also learned that in order to be successful and happy, I must sometimes say “no” in an effort to maintain balance in my life.

*(These are sample categories you might use in developing your list of activities to include with college applications next year. Create your own categories; those that are most appropriate for you to showcase your list of activities. Your summary statement should be a reflection of you. Be original.)*

## COLLEGE APPLICATION PACKET

When you have finalized your list of schools to which you will apply, you must be sure that all of the following information is received by these schools in the time frame requested. This is necessary for them to make a decision regarding your candidacy.

At each college/school, your application folder must include the following before it can be reviewed:

1. Completed application, including all essays and required signatures
2. Application Fee (check)
3. Transcript to include most recent class rank and first term grades from senior year
4. Counselor recommendation (if required). This is an additional worksheet usually filled out by a counselor or principal and mailed under separate cover.
5. Secondary School Report (if required).
6. An additional worksheet, as part of some applications.
7. Teacher Recommendations (if required)
8. Other recommendations (coach, employer, if required)
9. Supplementary materials if applicable (portfolios, tapes, slides)College Application

Requirements:

## PARTS OF AN APPLICATION

Applications vary from college to college or university to university, but most require some or all of the following parts:

**A. Application Form:** In the old days, you had one application option, a handwritten or typed form.

Today you can apply online, entering your information only once. Indeed, applying to college used to be an easy process, submitted an application form, and the school notified you if you were admitted. But things have changed. These days, application requirements vary, but most schools require that you submit more than only a form. The supporting documents assist the admissions committee to decide if you and the school are a good fit.

Most colleges and universities have at least two ways to complete the application form: paper format or online version. Some schools allow you to submit the Common Application. The Common Application is an application you complete once and submit to several schools. Information about this form and the schools that accept it is available at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). The information on your form will help the committee match materials to the correct person, so make sure the information is correct and legible.

**B. Application Fee:** The average college application fee is around \$25.00. (Some colleges charge up to \$60.00 or \$100.00, while others do not have an application fee at all.) The fee is usually nonrefundable, even if you are not offered admission. Many colleges or universities offer fee waivers for applicants from low-income families. If you need a fee waiver, call the college's or university's admission office for more information.

**C. High School Transcript:** This form is filled out by an official of your high school. If it comes with your admission materials, you should give it to the guidance office to complete as early as possible. Some colleges or universities send this form directly to your school after receiving your application.

You must request copies of your high school transcripts to be sent directly to the colleges or universities to which you apply. The transcripts should show classes taken and grades earned. Committees will look at your overall grade and the progress you have made.

**D. Admission (Standardized) Test Scores:** At many colleges and universities, you have to submit SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Test, or ACT Test Scores. Test scores are standard way of measuring a student's ability to do college-level work. Test scores help admission committees measure your probable success in college. Some college or universities take your highest composite score, while others take the best combination of scores from different sections. Contact each school to which you are applying to see how they consider scores. It may determine whether or not you take the SAT or ACT and how many times you take the standardized test.

**E. Letters of Recommendation:** Many private and/or public colleges or universities ask you to submit one or more letters of recommendation from a teacher, athletic coach and trainer, counselor, and/or adult who knows you well. When asking someone to write such a letter, be sure to do so well before the college's deadline.

Please make the attempt to provide the instructions well in advance of the application deadline. The letter should include your full name, in what capacity he or she knows you, and the length of time he or she has known you.

The person should attest to your capabilities and character. Solicit recommendations politely and appreciatively.

Last minute letters of recommendations are not done with thought. No one wants to be rushed, in order to write a recommendation that will capture all of the positive attribute of a student. A letter of recommendation to be written in an appropriate manner that it deserves must be given to the teacher, coach and/or trainer, counselor, or any other adult in a timely manner. You must make an attempt on a regular basis to follow-up with each individual that you are requesting a letter from.

Provide relevant information, in order that the recommendation will be specifically about you and your qualifications. Indicate the purpose of the recommendation. If it is to accompany your college or university application, provide the college's or university's name and background information, in order that the recommender can discuss how you are an appropriate candidate. If it is for a scholarship, provide a copy of the application or a description of the scholarship and the sponsoring organization's mission. Supply a copy of your resume listing your GPA, activities, leadership roles, awards, community service, employment experience, special skills, and athletic statistics, tournament participations, and ranking.



Indicate the person to whom a recommendation letter should be addressed. If you do not know the name, the letter may begin "Dear Selection Committee." Offer an addressed, stamped envelope with each request. If the recommendation has to be mailed in an official envelope from the recommender's institution, supply a postage stamp. A letter that is to be submitted with the application should be returned to you in a sealed envelope.

Have your recommenders save their letter if you are applying to several colleges or universities, or several scholarships. Although each recommendation should be tailored to the application at hand, the original passage contains basically what the recommender wants to share about you. Revising an original recommendation is more convenient than writing a new one.

Thank your recommender – preferably in writing. Surprisingly, few students express their appreciation for recommendations. Expressing your gratitude is appropriate and advisable. If you were not appreciative the first time, the recommender may be reluctant to assist you when you ask for another recommendation. If you receive the acceptance or the award, thank the recommender again, for contributing to your success.

**F. Essay:** If you are applying to public or private colleges or universities, your essay often plays a very important role. Whether you are writing an autobiographical statement or an essay on a specific theme, take the opportunity to express your individuality in a way that sets you apart from other applicants.

Writing a personal essay may be the toughest and most time consuming document to put together. It is important to find your voice because this is the chance for the committee to get to know you beyond the academic grades, numbers, and statistics. Read the questions carefully and follow directions. You will want to brainstorm ideas, create rough drafts, and have others read your essay. Certain characteristics are true for a number of students; therefore, talk about what makes you special. It is not enough to only say you have lived in an interesting place or had a unique experience. You need to elaborate on what you learned or how you have changed because of this experience. Most importantly, proofread your essay for grammatical and spelling errors.

**G. Interview:** This is required or recommended by some colleges or universities. Even if it is not required, it is a good idea to set up an interview because it gives you a chance to make a personal connection with someone who will have a voice in deciding whether or not you will be offered admission. If you are too far away for an on-campus interview, try to arrange to meet with an alumnus in your community. Please note that yes/no answers in an interview will make the interview quite boring and uninteresting. Therefore be able to elaborate on answers and to have a real conversation with the other person. The admission representative may ask you if you have any questions. It is best to have a few questions prepared.

**H. Athletic Screening Try-Out (Recruiting Purposes):** If you are applying for an athletic program, you may have to document prior tournament statistics in on your accomplishment and performance section of your resume: master levels, ranks, areas of strengths and weaknesses, etc.. You may want to work or develop a videotape that will market or showcase your talents in a certain area of expertise (Must follow NCAA Division I and II policies and procedures pertaining to activities of recruitment and scouting).

**I. Audition / Portfolio / Video Recording DVD Application:** If you are applying for a program such as music, art, or design, you may have to document prior work by auditioning on campus or submitting a audiotape, slides, videotape, or some other sample of your work to demonstrate your ability.

**J. The Sum of the Parts:** Your entire application should create a consistent portrait of who you are and what you will bring to the college or university. The more the pieces of the puzzle support one impression, the more confident the admission committee will be in admitting you. If the essay or interview contradicts information you gave on the other forms, you may cause them to have doubts about accepting you.

If all the parts of your application are filled out honestly and carefully, with an attention to your conviction that each school is a good match for you, you will come across in the best light possible.

**Deadlines:** Make sure you meet all application deadlines. In most cases, you need to have a completed application file by the deadline, which means that all documents must be submitted by that date. Applications that are postmarked by the deadline may be acceptable by the college or university, but you will want to contact the school to find out what their policy is. Remember that each college and university is different. Communication is key.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING ADMISSION DECISIONS

While standards of admission vary greatly from less selective colleges to highly selective colleges, the criteria on which admission is based are generally the same. They are:

1. Grades
2. Class Rank
3. Standardized Test Scores (SAT I/II/s or ACT)
4. Quality and level of academic courses
5. Counselor recommendation
6. Teacher recommendations
7. Extracurricular activities, interests, special talents
8. Essay/writing sample
9. Interview
10. Special considerations: family ties to college, alumni affiliation, minority status, etc.

### Advice and Comments on the Application Process:

“Think of applying to college as though you are taking another class. Carve out time on a weekly basis to work on researching and applying to colleges.”

“You can’t quickly dash off ten or twelve effective college applications. You *can* manage, however, to apply in a thoughtful and thorough manner to five or six schools ... the more control you take (of the application process), the less panic you will experience...”

“Applications submitted just before the deadline usually appear to have been hurriedly completed and assembled and are generally not as good as those in which the applicant started early and invested considerable time, thought and effort.”

“In selecting a college, do not allow the rankings that appear in publications such as *U.S. News and World Report* to limit your range of schools to consider. Look beyond the select few choices at the top of the rankings and the well-known colleges to find those schools that fit your personal needs.”

“Think back on the many changes that have occurred from your freshman year of high school to the present. Realize that many more changes will occur during your four years of college. Think about how and in what direction you would like to grow and how the particular school’s environment can foster that growth.”

“There are very few decisions that are made between the ages of 16 and 18 which cannot be remedied, improved upon or changed during the rest of your life.”

“Applying to college is like applying for a job. Not all adults get every job for which they apply. Similarly, your goal should not be to get into every college to which you apply. Don’t consider a denial a negative judgment on you or as a failure. The reality is simply that there are more candidates than there are spots.”

From Stewart, Mark A. & Muchnick, Cynthia C. (1997) *The Best College Admission Essays*, New York: Macmillan/Arco.

## THE APPLICATION ESSAY

### What role does the essay play in college admission process?

Today, with the increasing college-bound student population, a majority of colleges and universities consider the essay to be a key factor in determining which academically qualified students they would choose. A student must consider that when all else is equal between competing applicants – grades, scores, rank, activities – a compelling essay can make the difference. A powerful, well-written personal statement can also assist the average applicant who otherwise would not necessarily have been admitted in a particular college or university on grades and test scores alone.

One reason the essay has become an important factor in the admissions decision-making process is because those 300 – 500 words have the ability to reveal qualities about a candidate (interests, values, thought processes) that grades, class rank, test scores, courses, athletic, extracurricular activities, etc. do not.

### What are colleges looking for in an essay?

College admission officers look to the essay for evidence that a student can write well and support his or her ideas with logical argument. They also want to know something about the personality of the student. If you are like most students, you see the college essay as another obstacle to being accepted to college. In fact, the essay is not a hurdle, but a rare *opportunity*; it is a chance for you to “talk” directly to the college’s admissions committee and to help them “see” you as, thinking and feeling person, rather than simply a set of impersonal statistics. Except for the interview, it is your only chance to share your thoughts, insights and opinions, to highlight your accomplishments, and to convey your maturity and outlook on life. If you see the college essay in this way – as an opportunity, rather than an obstacle – then it is clearly worth the effort to put the extra time, thought and energy into writing it.

### The College Essay Is Important For Three Reasons:

1. It enables the college admissions office to evaluate your communication skills. Through your essay, they can assess the clarity of your thinking and your ability to convey your thoughts in written form.
2. It enables the admissions office to learn more about you as a person, beyond what grades and SAT scores can tell them.
3. For the more selective colleges, the essay is extremely important. It allows admissions officers to make final distinctions between similarly qualified applicants. The essay is also often the deciding factor.

### Choosing a Topic

College essay questions are designed to be open-ended; there are no “right” answers. Most colleges have similar types of questions they ask of their applicants. The following are essay questions from the Common Application, which is accepted by more than 160 colleges in the U.S.

Please write an essay (250 – 500 words) on a topic of your choice or one of the options listed below.

1. Evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you.
2. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national or international concern and its importance to you.
3. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you and describe that influence.

Most students have a difficult time thinking of a topic. The following suggestions might help you get started:

1. Family history – your feelings toward your ancestors, heritage, parents
2. Something you have learned that you found interesting and why
3. Any jobs that you have had that you think were helpful in your development.
4. Which careers you are considering and why you think you’d like to pursue them
5. What you think your good points are and some things you’d like to improve about yourself
6. Events or people that have been important to you and why
7. Your interests, hobbies and any favorite activities such as sports or music
8. Why going to college is important to you and what you hope to gain from it
9. What you like about high school including courses and extracurricular activities
10. An obstacle you’ve had to overcome in your life and how you dealt with that

## Preparing to Write

Before actually sitting down to write a first draft of your essay, spend some time organizing your thoughts. Let the topic of your essay “simmer” in your mind. You’ll find that ideas, insights and structural issues will occur while you’re doing activities such as driving or exercising. In fact, the best writing often occurs when doing these types of activities and not when you’re forcing yourself to put pen to paper. So make sure you write these thoughts and ideas down! It is also a good idea to read college essays written by other students. Read the compilation books (i.e. *Essays That Worked*, *The Best College Admission Essays* etc.) available at bookstores, in the library, or in the Guidance Office.

## Writing the Essay

You do not have to get it right the first time! Instead, write the first draft of your essay with the main focus on content – communicating your thoughts. Then set it aside for a day or two, re-read it with a new perspective and make any necessary changes. This is also the point at which you should consider matters of organization, style, grammar, spelling and tone. Once you have rewritten your first draft, you should show it to your family, friends, English teacher and guidance counselor. While the final product and “voice” should be yours, they may be able to offer helpful suggestions for improvement.

## Essay-Writing Tips for Students

A great or acceptable application essay presents a vivid, personal, and compelling view of the student to the admissions committee. It will round out the rest of the student’s application and assist the student to stand out from other applicants. The essay is one of the only parts of the application over which the student has complete control.

- Write simply.
- Keep your focus narrow and personal.
- Provide specific evidence (facts, events, and quotations, are some examples) to support your main idea.
- Use vivid, compelling details (show, do not tell).
- Address the topic squarely. Provide a straightforward response
- Exclude information that is found elsewhere in the application, such as listing courses or extracurricular activities.
- Write about something unique and different – not only what you think the admissions officer wants to hear (they read many essays about the charms of their college or university, for example).
- Apply principles of good composition (e.g., organize the essay with a beginning, middle, and end).
- Structure writing in a way that allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusions.
- Revise and proofread to make sure there are no typographical, spelling, or grammatical errors.

## DO’s

- Do think small and write about something that you know about.
- Do reveal yourself in your writing.
- Do show rather than tell. By giving examples & illustrating your topic, you help bring your essay to life.
- Do write in your own “voice” and style.
- Do write lean. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences. The simple sentence in itself is active, moving from subject through verb to object.
- Do start early. Leave time to revise, reword, and rewrite. You can improve on your presentation.
- Do read the directions carefully. You will want to answer the question as directly as possible, and you will want to follow word limits exactly. Express yourself as briefly and as clearly as you can.
- Do tell the truth about yourself. The admission committee is anonymous to you; you are completely unknown to it. Even if you run into a committee member in the future, he or she will have no way of connecting your essay (out of the thousands he or she has read) to you.
- Do focus on an aspect of yourself that will show your best side. You might have overcome some adversity, worked through a difficult project, or profited from a specific incident. A narrow focus is more interesting than are broad-based generalizations.
- Do consider using the three Common Application form topics as early practice possibilities:
  - (1) evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you;
  - (2) discuss some issue of personal, local, or national concern and its importance to you;
  - (3) indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence

- ❑ Do feel comfortable in expressing anxieties. Everybody has them, and it is good to know that an applicant can see them and face them.
- ❑ Do speak positively. Negatives tend to turn people off.
- ❑ Do write about your greatest assets and achievements. You should be proud of them.

### **DON'Ts**

- ❑ Do not write what you think others want to read.
- ❑ Do not exaggerate or write to impress.
- ❑ Do not use a flowery, inflated or pretentious style.
- ❑ Do not ramble or digress from the topic.
- ❑ Do not repeat information given elsewhere on your application. The committee has already seen it – and it looks as though you have nothing better to say.
- ❑ Do not write on general, impersonal topics – like the nuclear arms race or the importance of good management in business. This is not a debate on world or economic issues. The college or university wants to know about you
- ❑ Do not sacrifice the essay to excuse your shortcomings unless you intend it to be a natural and integral part of your topic. If it is a question of underachievement, you should find a place somewhere else in the application (or use a separate sheet of paper) to explain why you had not been working to your ability.
- ❑ Do not use clichés.
- ❑ Do not go to extremes: too witty, too opinionated, or too intellectual.

### **Remember:**

The personal statement is yours. A gimmick essay rarely goes anywhere. The committee is amused, but unimpressed with your candidacy.

Always write a serious essay, from the bottom of your heart, in the most mature manner possible.

### **The Essay Checklist**

Before sending the finished essay, review this checklist:

- ❑ Typed?
- ❑ Clean and neat?
- ❑ Interesting?
- ❑ Easy to read?
  - Am I saying this in plain English?
  - Are these words I usually use?
- ❑ Free of errors in:
 

Typing?	Grammar?	Spelling?	Punctuation?
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### **What Are The Different Types Of Essays?**

#### **I. The “You” Question**

Many colleges ask for an essay that boils down to “tell us about yourself.” The school only wants to know the student better and see how she or he will introduce him or herself.

Intervention: Guide students to realize that this type of a direct question offers them a chance to reveal something about themselves other than grades, test scores, etc. On the other hand, warn students that the open-ended nature of these types of questions can lead to an essay that is all over the place. Focus on only a few things and avoid the urge to spill everything. This is really “tell us a story” question. Students should tell a story that only they (the student) can tell. It helps to advise students NOT to write their resume in paragraph form but to develop one small event/person/place/feeling/etc. with more narrative and specific information. A student’s resume should only be utilized as a reference document where a student can extract important events and visually see the sequence or timeline of these events in his or her life.

## II. The “Why Us” Question

Some schools ask for an essay about a student’s choice of a school or career. They are looking for information about the applicant’s goals, and about how serious his or her commitment is to this particular school.

Intervention: Point out to the students that the “Why Us” type of question provides a focus for their essay – why they choose this school path. Hopefully, the answer to this type of question should be pretty clear to the students, since they probably went through some kind of selection process. Students should be absolutely sure they know their subjects well. The upside to this question is that the student might find out he or she is NOT a match for the college.

## III. The “Creative” Question

The goal of the “Creative” question is to evaluate a candidate’s ability to think and write creatively and to assess his or her scope of his or her knowledge and education.

Intervention: Recognize that the “Creative” question provides an opportunity for them to show themselves and their real views. Emphasize the importance of writing an informed essay. For example, they should not write about a fantasy meeting with a famous artist and get the titles of the paintings wrong. Also, when considering how creative to get, students should use common sense. Being creative to the point of dull or obtuse is a risk student’s should not take. Students should not be fearful about writing about ordinary life – that ordinary life is acceptable for an essay. Finally, students should avoid writing about high-minded topics of exotic locales. Instead, they should select an essay topic that they know about. Please note that the high-minded essay often fails to reveal the unique character of the writer, because it’s focus is on impressing the audience or reader, and it is not intended to inspire.

## ADVICE FROM ADMISSION OFFICERS

### On Essays:

“People generally write best when writing about topics that are of personal interest or that have real personal meaning...it is a mistake to format your essay as though you are writing a term paper...it is difficult to bring personal meaning to a rigidly-structured essay...many successful essays read like long conversations with a good friend...”

“Some bright students write poor admission essays that demonstrate to us that they are either careless, sloppy or overly confident -that they are certain their grades and other accomplishments will be enough to get them admitted.”

“Once you know you’ll be applying to a particular school, look very carefully and as early as possible at the school’s essay topic.”

“It is impossible through your essay to reveal your entire life, all of your personality traits or your deepest thoughts...instead give us a little peek into the unique way you think, relate or experience life...”

“Try to figure out what is essential that we should know about you and that we might not learn from other areas of the application...”

“The ‘Why our College?’ question is a way for the admissions office to determine if the applicant really has an understanding of why our institution is an appropriate choice.”

## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher recommendations should be honest appraisals of a student’s academic performance and intellectual promise. Coach recommendations should be assessments of a student-athlete’s athletic abilities, areas of mastery and deficiencies in a certain skill, and future growth and development in the given sport. But they are both much more than that. Colleges need assistance in deciding if a student has the character and ability to function successfully in the competitive environment at their institution. With the information provided through teacher and coach (if applicable) recommendations, colleges have one more piece of valuable information to make informed decisions.

### The Student’s Part in the Recommendations Process

In order for teachers to effectively write recommendations using a personal approach, they need to have the most information possible. You should be able to provide your teacher with the following:

1. Your student resume and a cover letter (letter of introduction and need).
2. A brief synopsis of your goals and interests.
3. A list of colleges to which you will be applying, along with deadlines and any other appropriate forms.

## THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

### Three Important Points to Remember About The College Interview:

1. Be yourself. Don't pretend to be someone you are not in order to impress the interviewer.
2. An interview is a two way street. The college representative wants to learn as much about you as you want to learn about the college
3. Be prepared for different interview arrangements. You may have an individual session, be part of a group of two to three students or be with a large group of students.

### Some Questions You May Want To Ask:

1. What is the student/faculty ratio? What is the average class size?
2. Do graduate students teach major classes?
3. What is the academic profile of the typical student admitted to your school?
4. How do students spend their spare time? Is there a lot of participation in extracurricular activities?
5. How diverse is the student body? Do most students come from the area in which the college is located?
6. What kind of special programs do you offer? Are there exchange programs with other schools?  
Junior-Year Abroad? Cooperative - Education opportunities? Internships?
7. How many students take time off from college? How many complete the four years without interruption?  
What is the retention rate?
8. What support services do you offer first year students?
9. What types of housing are available to freshmen? Is housing guaranteed?
10. What courses are required of freshmen?
11. How much financial aid do you offer students?

### Be Prepared To Answer Some Of The Following Questions:

1. How did you hear about this college? Why are you interested in this college?
2. How would you describe yourself as a student?
3. What courses are you taking? What is your strongest subject? Weakest? Favorite?
4. What extracurricular activities are you involved in?
5. How will you contribute to our college?
6. What are your academic interests? Long-term educational goals?
7. What books have you recently read?

***REMEMBER: PREPARE YOUR ANSWERS BEFOREHAND, BE ON TIME & DRESS APPROPRIATELY!***

## Apply To The Common Application Freshman Admission

You are encouraged to complete this application online at: [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

A majority of public universities and some private schools use the Common Application. The application can be completed on paper or online

These are some suggestions for applicants:

1. Apply early
2. Spend time on the essays
3. Submit a detailed resume
4. Take it seriously and package it well
5. Hit each college application and SAT/ACT submittal deadlines

Listed below are the essays and Part II of the Common Application to help in your planning.

### **Essays:**

Institutions do not require all four essays. See “General Application Information” on pages ii through iv to determine if you are required to write an essay or essays as part of your application for admission. Unless otherwise specified, your essay(s) should be typed and be no longer than one page (8 ½” by 11”). Put your name and Social Security number at the top of each page.

**Topic A.** Write an essay in which you tell us about someone who has made an impact on your life and explain how and why this person is important to you.

**Topic B.** Choose an issue of importance to you – the issue could be personal, school related, local, political, or international in scope – and write an essay in which you explain how & why this person is important to you.

**Topic C.** There may be personal information that you want considered as part of your admissions application. Write an essay describing that information. You might include exceptional hardships, challenges, or opportunities that have shaped or impacted your abilities or academic credentials, personal responsibilities, exceptional achievements or talents, educational goals, or ways in which you might contribute to an institution committed to creating a diverse learning environment.



## Responding to Essay Questions

### **Be honest; be yourself**

It would be nice (maybe) if every college and university were filled with heroic leaders who had all been dramatically influenced by all of their academic subjects and extracurricular activities, but it's not, and we don't expect it to be anytime soon. Instead, it is made up of a host of interesting, unique individuals who have made a wide range of contributions to their families, their schools, or their communities and attained many different kinds of levels of achievement. If we are "looking for" anything in these essays, we are looking for YOU – the unique individual that stands behind all those numbers and grades and test scores. These essays are an opportunity for you to introduce yourself to us.

### **Think about:**

**What distinguishes YOU as an individual candidate?**

**What has been YOUR classroom experience?**

**What are YOUR ideas about the topic?**

**Write in a voice that is natural and clear.**

There are very few seventeenth-century scholars left in the world; don't write as if you are one (unless, of course, you ARE one, in which case you are an extremely unique individual). Don't be overly informal. You're writing for a committee of adults, not your best friend.

Write to convey your ideas clearly and easily; don't write to "impress."

Write about what's specific to you; not what you think we want to hear.

Express yourself; could your parents pick out your essay from a pile of 50 others?

Every good story has a beginning, middle, and an end.

After you've thought about what you want to say, think about how you want to say it. There are as many ways to present your ideas and responses as there are ideas and responses themselves. In general, though, you want to present your response in an organized, coherent fashion. An essay is a kind of exploration, but you want to make sure that the reader knows where you're going at all times.

**Don't just repeat the question, introduce your idea.**

**Illustrate your points with specific examples and interesting details.**

**Bring the reader to some conclusion; don't just repeat what you've already said.**

## SCORING GUIDE

### **Score of 6**

An essay in this category demonstrates clear and consistent competence though it may have occasional errors. Such an essay:

- Effectively and insightfully addresses the writing task.
- Is well organized and fully developed, using clearly appropriate examples to support ideas.
- Displays consistent facility in the use of language, demonstrating variety in sentence structure and range of vocabulary.

### **Score of 5**

An essay in this category demonstrates reasonable consistent competence though it will have occasional errors or lapses in quality. Such an essay:

- Effectively addresses the writing task.
- Is generally well organized and adequately developed, using appropriate examples to support ideas.
- Displays facility in the use of language, demonstrating some syntactic variety and range of vocabulary.

### **Score of 4**

An essay in this category demonstrates adequate competence with occasional errors and lapses in quality. Such an essay:

- Addresses the writing task.
- Is organized and somewhat developed, using examples to support ideas.
- Presents minimal sentence variety.

### **Score of 3**

An essay in this category demonstrates developing competence. Such an essay may contain one or more of the following weaknesses:

- Inadequate organization or development
- Inappropriate or insufficient details to support ideas
- An accumulation of awkward expressions

### **Score of 2**

An essay in this category demonstrates some incompetence; such an essay is flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:

- Poor organization
- Thin development
- Little or inappropriate details to support ideas
- Frequent awkward expressions

### **Score of 1**

An essay in this category demonstrates incompetence. Such an essay is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:

- Very poor organization
- Very thin development
- Expressions so awkward that the meaning is somewhat obscured

### **Personal Achievement:**

Don't forget that this is an important part of the application! Colleges want to know what you have participated in besides going to school, taking the SAT or ACT, and earning grades.

There are two ways that you can let a college and university know what you have been participating in:

1. The Common Application, Activities Section. Follow the directions and examples given in this section.  
OR
2. Personal resume. Sometimes the Common Application does not have enough room to list all the activities you participated in so a personal resume is the best choice OR perhaps you feel that the admissions committee can understand your participation better in the form of a resume.

If you make your own resume here are some suggestions on what to include in it:

- Extracurricular activities
- Employment/Internships/Summer Activities
- Talents/Awards/Honors
- Community Service

Remember the following items when making your own resume:

- Include the hours that you participated in each activity. This helps put a student's schedule in perspective. For example if you play soccer you might put 10 hours a week for 16 weeks or 10/16.
- Indicate what grade you participated in the activity. We are only looking for involvement from 9<sup>th</sup> grade until 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Do not be bashful; this is your time to BRAG!
- If you are in a club that is unique to your school, let us know what that club is in a short description (not a paragraph but a one sentence summary of the club).
- IMPORTANT: Let us know if you are a leader in your functions. Are you Student Council President, Captain of the Football team, Drum Major? Were you elected to these positions?
- Don't forget to include special circumstances in your application such as the inability to participate in extracurricular activities because you have to support the family with an after school job.

**Can you answer any of these questions? If so, make sure you let us know!!!!**

Have you met any challenges? Have you pursued opportunities in school, work, sports, etc? Have you shown an interest in activities outside the classroom?

### **SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS**

From Newsweek - Kaplan "How to Get Into College"

For years, students' desire to finance their education has been fodder for those who would take advantage of people with trusting natures. Financial aid personnel at colleges and universities have been aware of such unethical approaches for some time and recently, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued a warning about these "scholarship scams."

Among the telltale signs you should look for – and then stay away from – are:

- "We guarantee you'll get financial aid or your money back." In reality, almost every financial aid applicant is eligible for something. A guarantee like this is, therefore, worth nothing.
- "You can't get this information anywhere else." Nonsense. We live in an information-rich society. Any legitimate source of financial aid will make information widely available through a number of means and media. Don't pay a premium for what is free or readily available.
- "Credit card or bank account number required to hold scholarship." Don't even think about it. Legitimate scholarship providers do not require this information as a condition for receiving funds.
- "We'll do all the work." Okay, this one is tempting. We all feel that we can't possibly find the time to do this kind of research. But there is only one person who is going to benefit from the kind of work that this entails, and that is you. No one will be more motivated to do the research than you.
- "The scholarship will cost you some money." This one hardly deserves comment. There is a strong preconception in this country that, as a general rule, you need to spend money to make money. While this may be true on Wall Street, it doesn't apply here. The investment you are making is in your education, and the best resource you can invest is your time.
- "You are a finalist" or "have been selected" in a competition you never entered. This is absurd. Of course, it's flattering to think that some organization pored through the records of every person in the country to find that you are the most qualified to receive their generous award – and you didn't even apply! But if it seems too good to be true, it is.

# INTERNET SITES

## *College and Test Preparation Searches on the Web*

### **College and University Home Pages:**

<http://www.tamu.edu> Texas A&M University for example

### **College Board Online**

<http://www.collegeboard.org/csearch/html/ch00.html>

### **College Edge**

<http://www.collegeedge.com>

### **College Net**

<http://www.collegenet.com>

### **College View**

<http://www.collegeview.com>

### **College Express**

<http://www.collegexpress.com>

### **Peterson's Education Center**

<http://www.petersons.com>

### **The Princeton Review**

<http://www.princetonreview.com>

### **Sites that can help you with your Choice:**

<http://www.kaplan.com>

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/prepare>

### **Schools in the USA**

<http://www.schoolsintheusa.com>

### **ACT**

<http://www.actstudent.org>

### **Test Preparation**

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

[www.kaplan.com](http://www.kaplan.com)

[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)

[www.testprep.com](http://www.testprep.com)

SAT On-Line Registration/Information

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

ACT On-Line Registration/Information

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

TOEFL On-Line Registration/Information

[www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl)

## Financial Aid Information

**Not for Profit Organizations College Board's Savings Advisor**

<http://www.collegeboard.org/css/html/save.htm>

**National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators**

<http://www.nasfaa.org>

**Financial Aid, The Financial Aid Information Page**

<http://www.finaid.org>

### Financial Aid Information

### SFA/Student Guide

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/index.html>

<http://www.easi.ed.gov/index.html>

[http://www.ed.gov/prog\\_info/SFA/StudentGuide](http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide)

<http://www.fafsa4caster.gov>

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

<http://www.mapping-your-future.org>

The largest provider of financial aid, the federal government has a great deal of information on student financial aid on its web.

**College Bound**

<http://www.collegebound.com>

**Peterson's Education Center**

<http://www.petersons.com/resources/finance.html>

**Don't Miss Out: The Student's Guide to Financial Aid:**

<http://jerome.signet.com/collegemoney/toc1.html>

**The College Money Planner:**

<http://www.collegeboard.org/ccs/html/planform.html>

**Sallie Mae**

<http://www.salliemae.com>

**Financial Aid Calculation**

[www.adventuresineducation.org/cac/cac72C142start.html](http://www.adventuresineducation.org/cac/cac72C142start.html)

**Tuition Without Tears**

<http://www.tuitionwithouttears.com>

## **Financial Aid:**

Financial Aid Information Page [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

This web site contains an enormous amount of financial aid information. Choose “mark’s picks” and complete a worksheet to get an estimate of your EFC (expected family contribution).

Yahoo Financial Aid Information [www.yahoo.com/education/financial\\_aid/](http://www.yahoo.com/education/financial_aid/)

Nellie Mae [www.nelliemae.org](http://www.nelliemae.org)

Sallie Mae [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)

Student Financial Aid Assistance Program [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)

FAFSA [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Mass Educational Financing Authority [www.mefa.org](http://www.mefa.org)

Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) [www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org](http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org)

Florida Student Assistance Grant Program (FSAG)

U.S. Department of Education [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

Qualified Tuition Programs [www.futurescholar.com](http://www.futurescholar.com)

## **Scholarships**

### **Fast Web**

<http://studentservices.com/fastweb>

### **College Board’s Fund Finder**

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

### **Mansfield ISD**

[http:// www.mansfieldisd.org](http://www.mansfieldisd.org)

### **Scholarship Scam Prevention Site**

<http://www.ftc.gov/www/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship/index.html>

### **NCAA Scholarship Search**

<http://www.ncaa.org/about/scholarships.html>

### **Adventures in Education**

<http://www.adventuresineducation.org/sbase/index.cfm>

### **The United Negro College Fund**

<http://www.uncf.org/scholarships/index.asp>

### **Peterson’s Scholarship Search**

[www.petersons.com/ss/code/prompt.asp?ppcse+looksmart](http://www.petersons.com/ss/code/prompt.asp?ppcse+looksmart)

### **Student Awards**

[www.studentawards.com](http://www.studentawards.com)

### **Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Programs**

[www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf)

## **Scholarship Information**

FastWeb/Scholarship Search Program:

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)  
[www.college-scholarship.com](http://www.college-scholarship.com)  
[www.Guaranteed-Scholarships.com](http://www.Guaranteed-Scholarships.com)

## **Suspicious of a Scholarship Program or Service:**

FTC Consumer Response Center: –

[www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) or call 202-FTC-HELP

National Fraud Info Center: -

[www.Fraud.org](http://www.Fraud.org)

Better Business Bureau: -

[www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)

## **COLLEGE AND CAREERS**

### **Colleges:**

The College Board

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

CollegeNet

[www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

College View

[www.collegview.com](http://www.collegview.com)

CollegeXpress

[www.collegexpress.com](http://www.collegexpress.com)

Peterson's Education Center

[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

The Princeton Review

[www.review.com/underg](http://www.review.com/underg)

NCAA Clearinghouse

[www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)

NCAA Website

[www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

Study Abroad

[www.studyabroad.com](http://www.studyabroad.com)

[www.collegesmart.com](http://www.collegesmart.com)

[www.universities.com](http://www.universities.com)

[www.keycolleges.com](http://www.keycolleges.com)

[www.college.com](http://www.college.com)

### **Careers:**

The Monster Board

[www.Monster.com](http://www.Monster.com)

Career Web

[www.cweb.com](http://www.cweb.com)

[www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)

[www.careermag.com](http://www.careermag.com)

[www.careermosaic.com](http://www.careermosaic.com)

America's Job Bank

[www.ajb.dni.us/](http://www.ajb.dni.us/)

Kids and Jobs

[www.pbs.org/jobs/](http://www.pbs.org/jobs/)

[www.jobweb.com](http://www.jobweb.com)

My Future

[www.myfuture.com](http://www.myfuture.com)

Career Resource Center

[www.careers.org](http://www.careers.org)

Occupational Outlook Handbook

[www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco)

[www.self-directed-search.com](http://www.self-directed-search.com)

[www.readyminds.com](http://www.readyminds.com)

[www.coolworks.com](http://www.coolworks.com)

Career Interest Inventory

[www.mymajors.com](http://www.mymajors.com)

## GLOSSARY

**Accreditation** – This amounts to a stamp of approval by an educational or professional organization stating that the college meets the regulations determined by this group. Each section of the country has its own accrediting organization: Southern, Middle Atlantic, New England, Midwestern, Northeastern and Western.

**Advisor** – A member of the teaching faculty who advises students on course selections and curriculum concerns.

**Application Fee** - The cost to apply to a college or university

**Audit** – Attend a class without getting credit for it.

**Baccalaureate Degree** – the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science or any other bachelor's degree granted by a college or university for a program that typically requires four years of full-time study.

**Calendar** – The system by which an institution divides its year into shorter periods for instruction. The most common calendars are semesters and quarters.

**Candidate's Reply Date Agreement** – This agreement established a common date, May 1, as the earliest date a college or university may require an accepted applicant to say whether he or she plans to attend. Early Decision applications are exempt from this agreement.

**Carnegie Unit** – One Carnegie unit is given for successful completion of one year's study of one college preparatory or academic subject in a high school. Some colleges refer to these as "academic units." The name comes from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

**Church-related college** – A private college that is financially supported and whose policies are influenced to a degree by a church

**Class rank** – A student's standing based on his or her academic record as compared with that of the other members of the class. In a class of 100, the highest ranking student would be number 1; the lowest, number 100.

**Core Curriculum** – A group of courses in varied areas of the arts and sciences, designated by a college as one of the requirements for a degree.

**Consortium** – A voluntary association of two or more colleges providing joint services and academic programs to students enrolled in member institutions. Students at one campus are allowed to attend courses and use the facilities at other member campuses.

**Cooperative Education** – A program integrating classroom study and work experience while offering credit and salary.

**Course Load** – The number of hours taken in a given semester or quarter, a typical load is 15-18 semester hours or 15-17 quarter hours.



**Honors Program** – A plan designed to encourage superior students to engage in a more challenging program than is required. Students who succeed in meeting requirements of an honors program are usually granted “honor” degrees.

**Humanities** – These refer to the cultural world. The humanities are usually classified as art, the classics, dramatic art, English, general and comparative literature, journalism, music philosophy, religion and language. Many colleges divide their offerings into three divisions: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

**Internships** – Short-term, supervised work experience, usually related to a student’s major, for which the students earn academic credit. The work can be full or part-time, on or off campus, paid or unpaid.

**Liberal Arts** – A broad course of instruction comprising the arts, natural sciences, languages, literature, philosophy, religion, and the classics. The Latin origin of the term, *artes liberales*, literally means “the arts that free” (the mind and spirit).

**Matriculation** – The process whereby a student is accepted, pays the fees, and enrolls in classes – officially becoming a student at the college. This term is only applied to freshmen or to a transfer student’s first enrollment.

**Needs Analysis** – the process used to evaluate an applicant’s financial situation to determine how much financial aid a student would be eligible for to meet post – secondary educational expenses.

**Placement tests** – A battery of tests designed to assess a student’s aptitude and level of achievement in various academic areas so that he/she may be advised to enroll in the appropriate level classes.

**Private college and university** – An educational institution of higher education that is not supported by public taxes. Private colleges may be independent or church-related.

**Public College/University** – An educational institution supported by public taxes.

**Registration** – A process at the beginning of each semester or quarter whereby the student selects the courses he or she will enroll in, pays the appropriate fees, and sets up a class schedule for the semester or term.

**Rush Week** – A period set aside with the approval of the college for fraternities and sororities to issue invitation to prospective members. “Delayed Rush” usually indicates this week is held during second semester.

**Seminar** – A course in which a small group of students, headed by a professional, engage in research and discussion.

**Transcript** – The official record of a student’s academic performance from the time of entrance in a given institution to the end of the last semester.

**Tuition** – The charge for instruction. Generally designated for a year or semester for a full-time student; for part-time students it is often designated by the credit hour of a course.

