



College Counseling Handbook

Class of 2019

Maryvale's Mission

Maryvale, a Catholic independent girls' school serving grades six through 12, affiliated with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, provides an environment in which each student can reach her academic, spiritual, physical and civic potential in a loving, supportive and diverse community. Building upon its unique and special heritage, Maryvale's mission is to provide an exceptional education that responds to change and prepares young women for life.

To the members of the Class of 2019,

Managing the college application process is your job. We will help you, but your return on effort in this process is critical for maximizing your options.

Determine which colleges are the best **matches for you**. College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won.

While I will do everything possible to facilitate, each of you holds the key to your own success in this process.

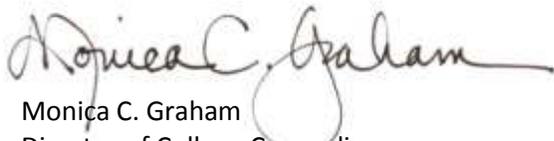
Since you cannot be in the room when an admissions committee is making a decision, the application must do the talking - show them, through words, what makes you great.

The best way to dazzle college admissions offices is not to **appear** impressive but to **be** impressive.

A love of learning is evidenced not just by attaining strong grades, but also by showing enthusiasm for the learning process - delve deeper, think bigger, explore, and question.

Do more than the minimum rather than going with the status quo.

Now, it's time to begin ...



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Junior Year Timeline

FROM DAY ONE ... use your MARYVALE EMAIL

Why? Colleges need to *easily* determine where you attend school and who you are without trying to decipher your personal email address (*prettyinpink@yahoo.com* or *ilovelax@gmail.com* just do NOT make a good impression).

Winter (December - February)

- Schedule a college counseling meeting for you and your parents with your counselor.
- Use the SuperMatch survey in Naviance. Consider size, location, degrees offered, reputation, selectivity, family connections, majors, and extracurricular offerings. After completing one survey, *save & begin another*, using different parameters.
- Investigate college summer programs of interest, internships, jobs, service, or other activities.
- Begin entering colleges of interest into your Naviance account under “Colleges I’m Thinking About”
- Continue preparing for the ACT/SAT. Visit www.collegeboard.com AND/OR www.actstudent.org to establish a personal account so you can register for tests. Both sites have A LOT of information about the test and test prep questions. Create a Khan Academy account on the College Board site – you can create a personalized SAT study plan.

Spring (March-May)

- Register for your senior year classes.
- Plan visits to colleges over spring break.
- Attend the AIMS College Fair or Junior Open House events.
- Request teachers to complete recommendations for you; ask them in person before entering them into your Naviance account. Consider faculty who are knowledgeable about your academic AND personal strengths. Think about the subject areas of importance to particular colleges, especially if you are applying for a specific major, program or discipline.
- Investigate college summer programs, internships, jobs, service, or other activities.

Pre-Senior Summer (June-August)

- Workshops will be held in June (resume), July (essay) and August (application).
- Complete your student survey in Naviance (under “about me”) – and parents need to complete a survey in their Naviance account.
- Refine your list of prospective colleges. Keep college list in Naviance up-to-date.
- Continue to work on your essay draft.
- Attend college summer enrichment programs.
- Visit college campuses.
- If you feel retesting for the SAT/ACT is important, consider: register for August or October SAT – OR September or October ACT.

Senior Year Timeline

Fall (September-December)

- ASK FOR HELP – don’t flounder, get frustrated or not make progress – ASK!
- Review college choices, application process, and application deadlines
- DOUBLE CHECK EARLY DECISION/EARLY ACTION APPLICATIONS DEADLINES - some Early Decision deadlines are as early as October 15!
- Request test scores be sent to your college choices – don’t wait until you apply (it takes weeks for the scores to be sent).
- See teachers who are writing your letters of recommendation; provide any requested information (questionnaire, activities résumé, etc.)
- Complete and submit applications.
- Meet with college representatives who visit Maryvale – see visit calendar in Naviance.
- Explore financial aid and scholarship opportunities, recognizing the importance of meeting deadlines.
- FAFSA – the site opens October 1 – COMPLETE IT EARLY. Visit www.fafsa.ed.gov
- CSS Profile –<https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile> - do any of your colleges use this form for aid consideration?

Winter (January-March)

- Finish and submit any/all final college applications.
- Personally thank teachers who have written you letters of recommendation.
- Mid-year grade reports are submitted to the colleges to which students have applied.
- Submit a copy of any offers of admission, merit-based scholarships and financial aid/grants you’ve received to the College Counseling office; we are responsible for reporting this information to the school’s administration & Board of Trustees.

Spring (April-June)

- Consider revisiting the colleges – attend welcome events. Attend classes, stay overnight in a residence hall, eat in the dining hall, and meet current students and professors.
- Notify colleges of your decision to attend or not by May 1st, the Common Reply Date.
- Submit a copy of any offers of admission, merit-based scholarships and financial aid/grants you’ve received to the College Counseling office.

Understanding College Admissions Vocabulary

Coalition Application

Beginning Fall 2017, 132 colleges/universities accept the Coalition Application. Some colleges use it exclusively; others accept it as well as the Common Application. FYI – University of MD College Park ONLY accepts the Coalition Application.

Common Application

The standard, go-to on-line application - widely accepted by over 750 participating institutions.

Early Action (EA)

EA permits students to apply to a college or university and receive a decision early in the senior year (usually before Christmas). You are *not* committed to attend and may still apply to other colleges and consider offers received.

Single Choice Early Action or Restricted Early Action

The above definition applies, but students are given priority consideration though not committed to enroll if admitted. Restricted Early Action requires that a student may not submit an ED application to any school (which would override the EA offer).

Early Decision (ED)

ED is recommended for students who have completed a thorough college search and find that *one school* stands above and beyond the others. ED requires you affirm to a college or university at the time of application that, if admitted, you *will* enroll. Upon admission, the institution will require a nonrefundable deposit (usually by January 1). An ED offer requires that a student withdraw all submitted applications to other colleges.

Rolling Admission – Under this application process, an institution reviews applications as they are received and offers decisions to students soon after review. For these colleges, admission consideration is a continuous process. Notification is usually made within 2 to 3 weeks, yet commitment is not required until spring.

Priority Application

Some colleges are offering students priority applications,

Wait List

This term is used by institutions to specify in which they may initially delay offering or denying admission, but rather extend the possibility of admission in the future. If you want to ensure a good chance of receiving an offer from the wait list, you must: 1. Notify the college that you wish to remain on the WL (ASAP after receiving the letter); 2. Contact the regional rep to say you have asked for WL consideration & ask what else could help your application; 3. You will need to make a deposit at another school as WL offers aren't made until after the May 1 commitment date.

Deferred Decision

Students who are deferred under an Early Action process will have their application considered under Regular Decision. Thus, their application will be reviewed with the full regular decision applicant pool.

Superscore Testing

When colleges receive your SAT/ACT scores, it is usually from several test dates. The majority of colleges will take the highest subset score from any testing. In other words, colleges will *superscore* your test results, giving you the highest possible composite score, no matter when each section's highest score was recorded.

Common App/Coalition Essay

Part of Common App and Coalition App is an essay responding to one of several prompts. Students will choose one of the prompts and prepare an essay with a maximum word count of 650. The essay will be uploaded into a designated space on the application.

Supplemental Essays

Some colleges required additional essays - some short-answer, some longer in length. These extra essay requirements will be included in the application.

Test Optional

Some colleges do not request SAT/ACT results as part of the admissions requirements. These schools will review your results if you send them, but don't require them. There is often an additional requirement in lieu of testing – an additional essay; submission of a graded paper from an English or Literature class; a specific GPA or higher.

Demonstrated Interest

Meeting with the college representative when he/she visits our school campus, registering for a campus tour so you have another checkmark next to your name, emailing the regional representative with "Nice to meet you", "Thanks for coming", "Thanks for answering my questions", "I'm really interested in your XX Program" questions or to share additional information once your application has been submitted ... are these valuable in the process? YES. Many colleges make final decisions based on how interested you seem to be in enrolling. The colleges want 'yes' answers to their offers of admission.

Criteria Colleges Use for Determining Eligibility

Academic Record

A strong academic record in challenging courses throughout high school will be the factor most likely to influence an admission decision in your favor. The breadth and difficulty of the courses on your transcript are regarded as the best predictor of the kind of success you are likely to have in college. Students are responsible for ensuring they take *at least* the minimum courses required for application by the colleges. The academic transcript that will be submitted to colleges will reflect marks from 9th grade through 11th grade, as well as listing the courses taken in 12th grade.

College Admission Standardized Test Scores (ACT, SAT and SAT Subject Tests)

As a rule, admission tests scores alone are not likely to result in either your acceptance or rejection. Admission officers usually view scores as a “snapshot” of the more complete person. One exception is the large university that uses test scores to reduce large numbers of applications down to a manageable number. Test scores may also be used for placement in freshman classes. Most of the highly selective colleges require two or three SAT Subject Tests. Students should have a plan for taking these standardized tests so opportunities are not missed.

Extracurricular Activities and Work Experience

These experiences present a picture of the student outside of the classroom. Activities are important not only for your application, but also for your own personal development. *Colleges are not looking at the number of activities in which you participate, but rather that you are participating.*

Teacher and Counselor Recommendations

These first-hand observations by educators who have worked with you during Upper School emphasize your abilities, aptitudes and interests. They often present information about your personality, character and motivation for learning.

Essays

The essay is the one place you can sell yourself to the reader. Strong admission essays result from adequate time for thoughtful expression, editing and rethinking. It is an opportunity to share something about you that isn't reflected in grades or numbers. It is also your chance to explain a situation that affected your performance, giving the reader an honest explanation instead of her/him wondering why.

Interview

Some colleges require or recommend an interview. Even if it is optional, do it! The staff member or alumni representative conducting the interview will prepare a report that becomes an official part of the admission folder. Additionally, it is a chance for you to have the interviewer answer your questions and sell YOU on their school. Just as the interviewer knows about you, YOU should research the person with whom you will interview. Your source ... Google or Facebook.

Special Talents and Characteristics

A particular talent can be influential in gaining admission to a college. You will need to present those special skills to the appropriate people at the college level. Portfolios, video or audio tapes, and résumés are just a few ways to effectively showcase and share your talents. Colleges may also give added consideration to children of alumni or individuals with other characteristics or skills they hope to attract.

Naviance

Tools in Naviance

- Explore new colleges matches based on GPA and ACT/SAT scores, region
- Manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges
- See which colleges are coming to meet Maryvale students – and register to attend those sessions
- Manage personal prospective college list

To Access Naviance

<https://connection.naviance.com/maryvale>

General Instructions

Besides the obvious search tools, Naviance has a wealth of information for students and parents. Explore the site – push buttons – compare – lookup – search – discover yourself – research and SAVE searches!

Student Login

Username: Maryvale Email Address

Password: lastnamefirstinitial (once logged in, you may change your password)

If you forget your password, contact your counselor.

Parent Login

Username: Personal Email Address

Password: Beginning of Personal Email (before the @)

Your password can be reset once you register.

“About Me” heading

Interesting Things About Me

Counselor Information Form – a questionnaire you complete that helps me know you better; it is a valuable tool for me in writing a letter of recommendation for you

Game Plan – complete goals after high school, career and college interests

Strengths Explorer -

Career Interest Profiler – complete the survey to help you discover what careers/jobs match your interests

“Colleges” heading

SuperMatch College Search

Use this tool to define/refine the colleges that best match your specific interests and needs (save EACH search you complete – you never know when you might want to refer back to a school not on your newest search)

Colleges I’m Thinking About

When you find schools on your SuperMatch results list that spark your interest and may be worth further research, click on “Add to Colleges I’m Thinking About” – all them to that list.

Colleges I’m Applying To

Once you create a Common App account (in August before senior year), you will be shown how to match your Common App to Naviance. Once that is completed, any college you add to your Common App account will automatically be added to Naviance. Colleges not using the Common App can be manually entered on the list.

College Resources & College Search Engines

There are 4,000+ four-year colleges in the US from which you have the opportunity of choosing one to attend.

College Search Engines

College search engines can be a very useful tool to help in exploring your college options. Try not to narrow your criteria too much, especially in the first few searches. The purpose of search engines is to expand your awareness about the numerous institutions that may be of interest to you.

Naviance – <http://connection.naviance.com/maryvale>

College Board – www.collegeboard.com

College Mailing Lists

As you identify colleges that interest you, consider registering on the college’s website as a prospective student. The profile you create will provide the college with information about you and, in turn, the college can provide you with information specific to your needs and interests. By email or mail you may receive information about your potential major, notification of open houses or other events, scholarship opportunities or new programs.

After taking any of these tests test (PSAT, SAT, ACT), you will begin to receive mailings and email notification – yes, the colleges buy those lists from College Board & ACT, as do other for-profit organizations. Look and read – but don’t leap YET.

Admissions representatives often contact prospective students alerting them to the timing of their visits to your school or to events in your area. Even if you do not intend to join the event, let the rep know you received the notification.

Important Factors to Consider for College Exploration

Students should begin the exploration process by identifying their individual educational needs.

About You

Know yourself!

Achievements Aptitudes

Interests Personality traits

Values and goals

Academics

Academic fit should be your number one criteria in selection of a college. Place yourself in an environment where you will be challenged academically, yet where you are also able to meet that challenge.

About the Institution

School Type

- Public, Private
- Religious Affiliation
- Co-Ed, Single-Sex
- Urban, Suburban, Rural

Location/Region

- New England
- Middle Atlantic
- Midwest
- Southeast
- West
- Southwest
- OR you can choose specific states

Undergraduate Enrollment

- Small (less than 2,000)
- Medium (2,000-7,500)
- Large (more than 7,500)

Selectivity

Selectivity or competitiveness of an institution is usually noted by the percentage of applicants offered admission.

Extra-Curricular Involvement

- Athletics
- Service opportunity
- Activities – clubs and organizations
- Study abroad programs

Majors/Minors/Specific Professional Programs

If you are pursuing a specific major, such as nursing, education or engineering, this may drive your search and will limit possible colleges/universities. Look into whether these programs are 'direct entry' or you apply after freshmen or sophomore year.

Cost of Attendance (COA)

- In-state tuition, out-of-state tuition
- Room & board, books, transportation, other costs/fees
- Need-based aid, merit-based aid

College Visits

Start Local

The Mid-Atlantic area has numerous colleges and universities that meet every criterion and can be reached in an hour or two. Check out some of the schools in our area and discover what you "like" and what you "dislike" before you travel long distances. You may find you don't want to visit that school in Idaho after all. Refine your list before a long college trip.

Plan Ahead

Look at upcoming holiday breaks or three-day weekends and plan accordingly! Make sure to visit when college students are on campus.

Register online to visit a college. The college websites have registration information with time slots. Register early, especially if you're visiting at busy times of the year. If an interview is part of the college's application process, schedule an interview, if possible, when you're there to visit.

Research the College Before You Visit

It is important to have some background information prior to visiting any college/university. Visits begin with a check-in at the Admissions Office. An information session and tour are the standard expectation for a college visit.

Go on a Scheduled Tour

Don't forego a tour. Student-led tours allow you to see the cafeteria, library, residence halls, and classrooms. It also provides an opportunity to ask questions of a current student.

Send a Follow-Up Email

When you return home, send a short email to your admissions representative or the director (or anyone else with whom you had significant interaction, e.g., the presenter at the information session, a coach or a professor). Mention something specific about the college that impressed you or matched your needs.

Questions to Ask on the College Visit

- Be sure to take notes and photos during each visit! You will forget & get the schools mixed up!

Questions to ask college student guides

- What are the more popular extracurricular activities (or “Do you have ...” a specific activity)
- Where do students study? What are the Library hours?
- Are there socializing areas/living rooms in the residence halls?
- Does the social life revolve around the campus, or do many students go home or away on weekends?
- How available are the professors to talk to outside of class?
- Are campus jobs available?
- Were you able to register for all the classes you wanted?
- If you were to do it again, would you choose this college?
- What is the social life like at this school? Does the college provide planned cultural and social activities?
- How important are fraternities and sororities to social life? Would you call this a “Greek school?”
- What do you think is the best thing about your school?

Questions to ask an Admissions Officer

- What are your most popular/distinguished programs?
- How many students will be in my first year courses? Are those courses taught by professors or by graduate assistants?
- Describe the college's resources for first-year students (freshman intro classes; advisors; orientation).
- What percentage of students receives financial aid and what does the typical package provide?
- Are there academic/talent scholarships available?
- Is housing guaranteed? Freshman year? All four years? If not, is there a department on campus to help?
- What are the building/expansion plans for the next few years?

Questions to ask yourself on campus

- Could I live in one of the residence halls I visit?
- Are the buildings on campus in good shape? How are the facilities that support my interests? (i.e., art studios, science labs, athletic facilities)
- Are common areas of residence halls comfortable, and do the facilities meet demand?
- Are the grounds attractive? What is the general condition of campus?
- Is the campus close enough - or far enough away - from the city for me?
- How is it getting around campus? Can I walk to class or do I need a bike or shuttle?

Questions to ask yourself in the classroom

- Do students appear to be interested in the material?
- Do students participate in discussion?
- Do the students seem to have a relationship with the professor?
- Would I feel comfortable as a student in this setting?

College Admissions Testing

Timelines • Registering • Reporting • Non-Report Options

PSAT - Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test – This test is an abbreviated form of the SAT Reasoning Test and is designed to give students an opportunity to practice taking a test which is similar but shorter than the SAT Reasoning. It also gives students a chance to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) scholarship programs. It is administered in October and results become available in December. See <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>

ACT – A college entrance exam *accepted by ALL colleges and universities* that measures students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The test covers English, mathematics, reading, and science with an optional writing test. The ACT with Writing takes 3 hours and 25 minutes to complete. See <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/>

SAT Test – The SAT measures skills in two areas: math and evidence-based reading & an optional essay. It takes 3 hours & 50 minutes with the essay. The SAT Reasoning Test may be taken in place of or in addition to the ACT. See www.collegeboard.com

SAT Subject Tests – The SAT Subject Tests are one-hour, mostly multiple-choice tests in specific subjects, measuring knowledge of particular subjects and the ability to apply that knowledge. Many colleges require or recommend one or more of these tests for admission

or placement purposes. These tests are offered in subjects such as English, foreign languages, science, history, and mathematics. See www.collegeboard.com

College Admissions Testing Timelines

Sophomore Year

- The PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test) is given in the fall of sophomore year. This test is only given once a year. **The PSAT is not used for college admissions.**

Junior Year

- The PSAT is given the fall of junior year. The junior score is the basis for selection for the National Merit and several other scholarships. **The PSAT is not used for college admissions.**
- The ACT, SAT Reasoning, and SAT Subject Tests are administered spring of junior year and summer before senior year. It is important for students to take all tests at the time when they are most prepared.

Senior Year

- Seniors may retake the ACT, SAT Reasoning, and/or SAT Subject Tests in late summer and early fall of her senior year. (Note: You cannot take the SAT Reasoning and the SAT Subject Tests on the same day. *Plan ahead!*)

Registering for Tests

- *Use your full, legal name when registering for all tests!* You will need to show a formal ID when you arrive to test – AND IF THAT NAME DOESN'T MATCH WHAT IS ON YOUR REGISTRATION, you will not be permitted to test!
- It is the responsibility of the student to register for the appropriate tests and to submit their scores to the necessary colleges by the application deadlines.

Reporting Scores to Colleges

- Students are responsible for reporting their scores directly to the colleges – Maryvale cannot provide test scores for you.
- Test scores do not appear on the transcript.
- Note: IF TAKING AN OCTOBER TEST IN SENIOR YEAR, be sure and put the EA schools on your online registration form OR the scores may not be received in time for EA consideration.

Testing Optional

Over 700 four-year colleges and universities deemphasize the use of standardized tests in making admissions decisions. Some schools do not require standardized testing for any students, whereas others exempt those students meeting a particular GPA or expect scores for scholarship consideration. Always check with the universities of interest to learn their policies.

Constructing Your College List

Each student is encouraged to begin constructing her college list in the spring of her junior year. Based on the information gathered through college exploration, students should have a preliminary list of colleges and universities that match her desired interests.

Students will use Naviance to construct and maintain their list. Students should only keep colleges on the list that they are really interested in attending.

Foundation Schools are colleges where you *easily reach or exceed* the standards for admission to that college. Likelihood of admission is 70%-100%.

Competitive Schools are colleges where you will find yourself *very competitive* in the admission pool. Your SAT/ACT scores and GPA are within the mid-50% scores from previous applicants. Likelihood of admission is 40%-70%.

Reach Schools are schools where your GPA and standardized scores may be less than most other applicants. These are also schools that accept a small percentage of its applicants. At a highly competitive college, many qualified applicants are denied or waitlisted even when they meet the admissions standards. Likelihood of admission is 1%-40%.

- It is recommended that students *diversify* their list of colleges, applying to schools ranging from most likely to be accepted to those that are a reach.
- Every college to which you apply should be a place *where you want to go and is a good match*. Applying “just to see if I get in” is discouraged.
- Statistics from the previous year’s admission pool for that college are good measures to compare your credentials. (i.e., average SAT/ACT scores, average GPA, percentage of applicants admitted)
- Whenever possible, visit those colleges and universities on your college list before applying to assess whether it is a good fit.
- Be sure to demonstrate interest in those schools to which you apply and would like to enroll. Communicate your interest in a school through campus visits, tours, interviews, overnights, and correspondence with admissions representatives.

Application Options and Deadlines

Early Decision (ED) - Phase I and Phase II

- ED programs are recommended for students who have completed a thorough college search and find that **one school** stands above and beyond others. Applying ED may limit aid and/or scholarship so ASK before doing this. You won't be able to change your mind.
- ED policy requires a student to commit to a college or university at the time of application that, if admitted, the student **will** enroll.
- Students **MAY NOT** apply to more than one college under the Early Decision plan.
- The deadlines for completing Early Decision applications are in the fall of your senior year, usually no later than November 15. The college will usually notify you of its decision before December 15.

Early Action (EA)

- EA permits students to apply to a college or university and receive a decision early in the senior year, well in advance of the normal spring response dates.
- Though students will hear earlier regarding your admission, they are not committed to attend and may apply to other colleges. If denied admission through early action, you may not reapply through regular decision.
- **Restrictive Early Action (REA)** - Students may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions, but are not committed to enroll if admitted.

Rolling Admission

- Colleges that offer rolling admission continuously evaluate applicants and notify the applicants regarding acceptance on an ongoing basis.

Regular Admissions

- Most colleges require that applications for regular admissions be received BY late Dec/early Jan. Check the web sites of the specific colleges you select to obtain their deadlines.
- Most colleges will inform you of their decision by April 1 and require that you make your decision about whether to matriculate by May 1.

College Application Checklist

Senior Student Responsibilities

- Create AND maintain your account in Naviance
- Create, complete AND submit your applications (on-line; Coalition App; Common App)
- Once you have taken your final SAT/ACT, you must go into the testing websites and request your test scores sent to the colleges/universities to which you are applying (you are charged for each transfer of scores; be prepared with a credit card in hand). Colleges require that the scores come to them directly from the testing agency.
- Develop an activities résumé
- Essay – write, rewrite, edit, refine ... a well-crafted essay could mean a 'yes' instead of 'no'
- In person, request recommendations from 2 teachers from academic subject areas who taught you junior year & input in Naviance
- Provide teacher with helpful information about you (résumé) - follow-up, reminding them of deadlines.
- Thank them!! (candy doesn't hurt!)
- Keep track of (and write) any supplemental essays required by the college (particularly when using the Common Application)
- Complete all financial aid forms (FAFSA and CSS Profile)
- Are an interview, portfolio, or audition required? If so, schedule it.
- Investigate if scholarship applications are required OR is your application for admission sufficient for scholarship consideration
- Please provide the Counseling Office with copies of every letter YOU receive from a college

Maryvale's College Counseling Office Responsibilities

College Counseling Office will provide the following documents to each of your college choices:

- Create a Secondary School Report for each student
- Upload student's official transcript (as of June of junior year; includes senior year classes)
- Upload student's résumé into Naviance
- Write a counselor letter of recommendation
- Ensure that teacher letters of recommendation are uploaded before sending records
- Submit first quarter and first semester report cards to colleges
- Submit final transcript/graduation confirmation to the college where a student has enrolled

Recommendations & Résumés

Counselor Recommendations and Teacher Recommendations

A recommendation is an extremely important part of your application. College admissions counselors value a teacher's perspective and enjoy reading what type of student you are and what you contribute to a classroom. It is vital that you give teachers enough time to generate a great letter that reflects all of the wonderful qualities you have to offer.

Ask Early – ask teachers in the spring of your Junior Year

When a teacher agrees to write a letter for you, provide the teacher with the following information:

- Due dates for the application(s), if known
- Any specific requirements for the letter
- A copy of your résumé

You must go into your Naviance account and add these faculty to your recommendations list, thus allowing the teacher to upload a letter into your file. THANK THE TEACHERS PLEASE.

Résumés

On college applications, students will need to indicate the extracurricular, volunteer, and work-related activities that they have participated in throughout their high school experience. In addition to indicating this information on the application, colleges often ask students to submit a résumé. This is one more opportunity to showcase your talents, honors, awards, and participation in activities.

Keep in mind that the resume should reflect your strengths!

Consider these categories as a guide to writing your résumé:

- Academic Activities, Honors, Awards, and Achievements
- Extracurricular Activities
- Work Experience
- Volunteer Experience

Within each category describe the activity, position you held, and length of time of participation.

The Dreaded Essay

Like most other admission criteria, the weight given to the essay will vary from institution to institution. However, if the college requires an essay, use it as an opportunity to strengthen your application for admission.

While the essay is first a measure of your writing abilities, it also provides insight into your intelligence, expressiveness, and thinking skills. Like the interview, the essay provides you with an opportunity to answer unasked questions and to communicate directly with the educators and officials who have a voice in your admission.

Where do I begin?

There is no book, no instruction manual, no 'do this' for a college essay. For the first time in your life, you will need to write about YOU. The college essay is a story of you; a story that is quite personal. It is difficult to write and takes time to perfect, so leave time to do it well.

The best advice for a good essay? SHOW, don't tell. Put yourself in the seat of the reader. IT IS POSSIBLE ... but ...

How do you do that??

Begin by reviewing the essay questions. Read them - jot down anything that comes to mind - anything. You may have several ideas for one question, or none for one or two. SAVE THE FILE!

You can't edit until the words are out of your brain – so write, write, write. Expect to write twice as much as you need – it can be whittled down more easily than it is to express it initially.

As you revisit the question or two that you think could develop into an essay, continue to write. Delete nothing – *absolutely nothing* – the thought from a week ago may become the essay. One of them can develop into an interesting read. HIT SAVE!

When you remember a key idea, fact, whatever about one of the topics – write it on the napkin! Don't lose the thought. Don't expect this essay to develop overnight – give yourself time!

Financial Aid Forms

CSS Profile

The PROFILE is the financial aid application service of the College Board. Many of the member colleges, universities, graduate and professional schools, and scholarship programs use the information collected on PROFILE to help them award nonfederal student aid funds.

Visit www.collegeboard.com for more information, a list of participating colleges and universities, and important deadlines.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

Use this application to apply for federal student grants, work-study aid, and loans. The FAFSA is available for completion earlier in Fall 2016 – October. For complete information, visit www.fafsa.ed.gov for more information.

Interviews

A college interview provides students with the opportunity to learn more about the college, while the college learns more about the students. An interview may last anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour. The person conducting the interview may be an admission officer, a student, or an alumnus. A less formal interview may be conducted in a group setting. Use these tips to assist you with the interview process.

- Be yourself!
- Start and end your interview with a firm handshake. Make eye contact.
- Bring information to share (i.e., transcript, résumé)
- Dress appropriately.
- Arrive ten minutes early.
- Research the institution before the interview and come prepared to ASK questions.
- Ask a question or two that shows you've visited the college's website, attended an information session and/or taken a tour.
- Be positive about yourself!

Questions an admissions representative might ask you:

Academic

- What classes are you taking? What subjects interest you most?
- What's your favorite book? Who's your favorite author?
- Are you pleased with your high school record?
- What do you enjoy outside of school? What do you do in your spare time?
- If you could change any aspect of your high school, what would it be and why?
- What is your favorite/least favorite class? Why?
- What is your strongest quality? Weakest?
- How has your high school experience prepared you for college?
- What is the most important thing about yourself that you would like me to report to the admissions committee?

Extracurricular

- What activities are you involved in?
- What are your other interests?
- What have you learned/gained from participation in these activities?

Questions YOU may/should ask an admission representative:

Academic

- How large are your classes? Do you have teaching assistants?
- Is there an advising system? Career counseling? When do both begin?
- Do you have a required core curriculum?

Other Questions

- What are your housing options?
- How do you match roommates?
- What are the student graduation rates?
- What types of safety and security do you have?
- What services are available to students if sick or in need of counseling?
- How many students come from in state vs. out of state?
- How many students are international?
- What do students have to do on weekends? Do students stay on campus?
- How has this college changed in the last five years?

College Admissions Status & Making the “Final Decision

Withdrawing your Application

If a student has decided NOT to apply to a college but has already submitted the application and/or transcript request, she should contact the college or university via email as soon as possible. The email or letter should include name, address, school, college admissions number, contact information and one sentence stating the request to withdraw the application.

Deferred or Waitlisted

Read the deferral or waitlist letter very carefully. Follow their directions and deadlines.

Is there a chance? Roughly one-third of colleges and universities use wait lists. The most "selective" colleges (defined as accepting fewer than 50% of applicants) use wait lists at a much higher rate than those that admit more than half of their applicants. The number of colleges using wait lists has remained relatively steady over the past ten years, but the number of students placed on wait lists has increased. On average, nine percent of students who apply to institutions that use a wait list are placed on the list.

Get the scoop. To assess your chances of acceptance from the wait list, call the college's admission office SOON AFTER you receive the decision. Ask what your position is on the list (if the list is ranked at all; most are not – sometimes it is first-call/first-off). Another important piece of information is the percentage of students that have been accepted from the wait list in recent years. If a college hardly ever uses its wait list or accepted only a few wait-listed applicants last year, that trend is unlikely to change this year. The goal in contacting the college/university is to determine your chances of eventually being accepted AND show demonstrated interest should the wait list be considered.

Confirm your interest. If the college is still your #1 choice, make sure you state your definite interest! *It is important that you contact the college rather than have a parent or college counselor make the contact.* In a letter and/or an email, state your interest and provide the college with any new, additional, and/or pertinent information.

Mid-year grades are important. We will submit your mid-year grades. Make sure you notify your counselor of any recent additions to your résumé!

Restate your interest! In early March, it is important to once again contact the colleges to restate your interest. In a letter and/or an email, emphasize your desire to attend that college. Be detailed, but do not repeat prior information.

Decision Made! What Now?

Notifying Colleges of your Final Decision

It is very important to notify colleges of your final decision (accepting or declining) by the stated deadline.

- Notify each college that offers you admission whether you are accepting or rejecting the offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision, but no later than May 1.
- You should confirm your intention to enroll and submit a deposit to only one college or university.
- If you are put on a wait list by one or more colleges, contact the college to let them know if you want to remain on their wait list or not. If you do not let the college know you want to remain active on the wait list, you will most likely *not* be considered for admission. If you are later admitted to an institution off the wait list, you may accept the offer and send a deposit. You must, however, immediately notify your first college to inform that college of your intention not to enroll (recognizing that the deposit will not be refunded).
- If you are accepted under an early decision plan, promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and submit no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.