

College Application Process

Helping My Child through the College Research and Application Process

'Get Involved: Knowledge is Power'

A Suggested College Research Timeline

Second Semester Junior Year - Summer

Student should begin researching colleges. Suggested ways to research prospective institutions:

- ~The Internet (most colleges and universities have their own websites)
- ~The Guidance Office
- ~College Guide Books (Petersons, Barons, US News and World Report...)
- ~Campus Visits and Information Sessions (Spring Break/Summer)
- ~Family members and friends who attended/attending an institution of interest

End of the Summer beginning of Senior Year

Student should have a solidified list of 5-10 institutions to which he/she wishes to apply. The list should be reviewed by parents and the student's counselor to ensure that it includes safety schools as well as reach schools. Students should also request recommendation letters from 2-3 teachers that can speak on behalf of their academic performance. This should be done early on in the year as to allow teachers enough time to produce a quality letter.

Fall of Senior Year (September to November)

Student and parents should attempt to visit schools on the list if not done so at this point. Most colleges and universities have Open Houses throughout the fall months. However, if an on site visit is not possible, most institutions offer online, virtual tours, and open houses.

First Semester Senior Year

Student should request an application packet from each school to which he/she intends on applying if not done so by this time.

What should you be doing during the Research Process?

- Get involved! Visit schools with your son/daughter and ask questions
- Discuss your student's interests and possible course of study
- Question your son/daughter about their college picks. Why have they chosen a particular school? Does it offer their major?
- Serve as a constant reminder

The College Application Process

Applying to an Institution

Applying to an institution can usually be done one (1) of three (3) ways:

- An institution's own application
- The Common Application (Not all institutions accept this method)
- Apply online through the institution's website

The Essay:

- Most institutions require an essay. Some will give a specific topic while others may offer a choice of a few topics
- Proofread your student's essay, or have your student ask a teacher to do so. A well-written essay speaks volumes!

Letter of Recommendations:

- Most institutions require one (1) teacher and one (1) counselor recommendation. This may vary from institution to institution.

Supplemental Information (optional):

- A resume (if not required already by the institution)
- Newspaper articles highlighting achievement
- One or two supplements should suffice

An Interview/Audition:

Some institutions require an interview/audition as part of the application process. Be sure to set up an appointment in a timely manner (the student should make appointments as it expresses maturity and interest)

Deadlines:

Please be aware of the application deadline (both student and parents). Make sure that you give the Guidance Office enough time to process your transcript and compile the application packet (approx. 2 weeks).

Topics to consider:

- Early Decision (deadline varies by institution)
- Early Action (deadline varies by institution)
- Regular Decision (deadline varies by institution)

~Rolling Admissions

Students should take ownership of the entire application process. This process will be a great lesson in responsibility, independence, and self-advocacy, which are three attributes of successful college students

What should you be doing during the Application Process?

- ~Get Involved! Continually follow-up with your son/daughter to make sure that he/she is on top of the process.
- ~Proofread your son/daughter's essay(s) and application
- ~Know the schools to which your son/daughter is applying. Know the application requirements for each institution.
- ~Serve as a constant reminder

Financial Aid

As the cost of higher education increases the need for financial assistance has become greater. Financial assistance can come in many forms, such as:

- ~Academic Scholarship
- ~Performance Scholarship (Athletic, dramatic, musical, art, community service)
- ~Loans (Unsubsidized, Subsidized, ParentPlus...)
- ~Independent Scholarships (posted throughout the year in the Guidance Office)
- ~Tuition Assistance Program (TAP; **New York State Only**)
- ~Grants

A Financial Aid Timeline for Parents

The Summer Prior to Senior Year

If your son or daughter plans on playing a sport at a NCAA Division I or a Division II institution, he or she must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. A registration form can be filled out online (www.ncaaclearinghouse.net). Your child's coach can be a great source of information about the NCAA Clearinghouse, as well as any prospective institution's Athletic Department.

Throughout Senior Year

- The Guidance Office posts independent scholarships throughout the year. Please remind your son or daughter to stop in and check out the bulletin board.

- Scholarships are announced twice a month at the beginning of English class. Be sure to listen for them!
- Be sure to inquire about scholarships that your company may offer to the children of its employees.
- Research independent scholarships on-line. (Keep in mind that you should never pay money to receive scholarship information...there are a lot of scams out there...)
- Remind your son or daughter of scholarship deadlines. Make sure he/she meets all the requirements of the scholarship, and that the application is filled out completely. If there is an essay involved, please proofread.
- Contact Financial Aid Offices of prospective institutions to find out what is required in order to gain financial assistance.

January of Senior Year

- File the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) starting on January 1. This can be done by filling out the paper application and sending it through the mail or by applying on-line (www.fafsa.ed.gov). A paper application can be picked up in the Guidance Office.
- Inquire whether prospective institutions require the CSS Profile (College Scholarship Search Profile). You can request a paper form from the institution that requires it, or you can apply online (www.profileonline.collegeboard.com)
- Have your son or daughter inquire about any other scholarships that a prospective institution may offer (community service, art, music etc...)

Spring of Senior Year

- Compare Financial Aid Packages from all prospective institutions.
- Continue to remind your son or daughter to stop by the Guidance Office to check scholarship bulletin board.
- Look for the Senior Scholarship Packet sent home around Spring Break. It provides information about local scholarships.
- Take note of the Deposit Deadlines (deposit to ensure a place for your son or daughter in the fall class) for each institution (Early Decision Deposit Deadlines are earlier than those of Regular Decision...May 1st is usually the Regular Decision Deposit Deadline for most institutions).

****Helpful Tip****

Call Admission Offices or Financial Aid Offices roughly about a week after the Deposit Deadline. Inquire about the possibility of receiving more money!

Resources for Parents

- Guidance Counselors
- College Guide Books
- Admission Offices, Financial Aid Offices, Athletic Departments
- The Internet