COLLEGE APPLICATION & ADMISSION

GUIDEBOOK

2026–2027

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guidebook is to provide you with information that will lead you along the exciting (and sometimes frustrating) college application and admission process. The majority of this process will occur through the fall of your senior year, but preparing ahead of time in your junior year is critical. Actually, planning for college starts as early as ninth grade, but it really ramps up starting second semester of junior year.

The single most important factor in choosing the right college is FIT! Your college counselors have and will continue to emphasize this a great deal. This element is more important than the prestige of a college, how fancy of a bumper sticker to put on the back of your car or how a college is ranked for a particular aspect. It is critically important for you to determine who you are and what you will need from a college before you even start committing to the college application process. If you do the self-exploration process well, the natural outflow of this will be your choosing the correct colleges to which you will apply. In the end, you should be happy with all of your college acceptance offers and then be able to make a valued decision based on what you, the student, want out of college and what the college is offering you (financial assistance, outcomes, etc.).

Staying organized and on task from now until the end of your senior year is also important. This guidebook will provide general information related to the college admission process, but you should keep your own "files" on the particular colleges you are looking at - timelines, deadlines, requirements, campus visit evaluations, etc.

Making your college dreams happen does not involve "luck." Your determination, hard work, and perseverance are required. Listening to God's will and being a good steward of the time, gifts, talents, and abilities He's given to you is what matters most. Remember, your job is to "do your job" and then let God open or close doors for you.

You cannot control the outcome of the admission decision of the college. God will do that for you and for your good.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

FROM PROSPECT TO ENROLLED

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE
MIND • BODY • SPIRIT

STUDENT'S ROLE

PLEASE NOTE

It is important that the student is clearly in the driver's seat as it relates to the college application and admissions process. Colleges want to speak with you primarily, not your counselor and not your parents. Parents and counselors do have roles to play, but your interaction with college admissions representatives is extremely important. Some colleges even track the number and type of interactions had with the student.

It's incredibly important that you keep your college application submission and decision statuses updated in MaiaLearning. This is the best way to help your counselor stay informed so they are better able to provide you with the most accurate guidance throughout this process. Of course, counselors enjoy hearing verbal updates and celebrating with students as well, but this should not replace the updates you provide in MaiaLearning.

You are welcome to share with the other college counselors or faculty members, but you cannot assume that person will relay information to your primary college counselor. That is YOUR responsibility. When there are significant details to share or discuss, you should make a formal appointment with your primary counselor. **This is the process you will follow at college in terms of academic advising, so this is great practice.**

YOUR ROLE

- Become familiar with **MaiaLearning** and regularly update your application progress and decisions to keep your counselor informed.
- Check your CCHS email weekly and take initiative to communicate with your primary college counselor.
- Come prepared for all advising sessions - individual and group.
- Request information from colleges and thoroughly research your options.
- Respond to email, questionnaires, and surveys sent to you by colleges (demonstrated interest).
- Talk with college reps at fairs and when they visit our CCHS campus.
- Continue to communicate in appropriate ways with college reps who recruit in your area (this may be alumni reps as well).
- Schedule campus visits and any required interviews or auditions.
- Make sure you request a "school excuse letter" during your campus visits and give it to your primary counselor so your absence may be marked as a college visit day. Remember you get four (4) excused absences with proper documentation of a formal campus tour.
- Make-up class work missed from campus visits in a timely manner.
- Make senior year course selections and finish strong/don't drop core courses mid-year. If you do, you must report schedule changes to each college.
- Register for ACT/SAT/CLT tests and send test scores to the colleges (work with your parents) and to any others requesting (e.g. NCAA).
- Decide where to apply (work with your parents) & submit all applications well before the deadlines.
- Keep track of online login information for applications, admissions status check portals, test scores, and Bright Futures.
- Come up with topics for and develop college essays.
- Complete applications (your parents may assist on demographics but you should complete the other areas). Make timely requests in advance of deadlines.
- Communicate your need for transcripts and letters of recommendations using your MaiaLearning account and/or email. All transcript requests go to the registrar.
- When asking for a recommendation, you must ask an academic core teacher in person. You MUST also complete the "Letter of Recommendation" survey found under the Surveys tab on your MaiaLearning dashboard. See the full 3-step process on pages 27–28.
- Complete FFAA (Florida Financial Aid Application) and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Sudent Aid) applications (Opens October 1).
- Apply for scholarships (parents can help you monitor timelines/ deadlines).
- Follow-up with colleges that accept you to let them know your final decision to enroll or not enroll.
- If you started an application at a college, but decided not to complete the process, you should notify the college of your plan not to move forward. You should also email your primary counselor to remove the school in MaiaLearning.

MaiaLearning

TIP: *Students consider creating a separate email address for all your college applications so that you have one place to do all communications.*

PARENT'S ROLE

At times, it may be difficult for parents to know how to help in this process. Without question, students should complete their own college applications and scholarships. However, there are many ways parents can assist students as they navigate the senior year. **Here are a few suggestions:**

- Resist the temptation to complete applications for your student. The application is their part of the journey to college readiness. Allow them to experience this and demonstrate to you that they are capable. This increases their self-confidence and independence.
- Suggest ways for the student to get organized for the year ahead. Create a College Binder with places to store college publications, visit information, important deadlines, admissions requirements, scholarships and financial aid information.
- Create a College Calendar and update with various deadlines (admissions, scholarships, financial aid, etc.) and other important dates (SAT/ACT/CLT test dates, registration dates, CCHS events, College Fairs, etc.)
- Set realistic expectations and use your resources. Admissions requirements have dramatically changed from when many of "us"went to college and can even change year-to-year. The college or university that used to be "easy" to get into may no longer be.
- Help your student keep an open mind concerning colleges. The key is finding the college that fits your child best (not necessarily the one with the best football team).
- Look at the upcoming year and schedule days for college visits. Schedule family getaways close to a college of interest and take a day to visit. Discuss with your student which characteristics of the college are attractive and which are not.
- With the student present, register your student for ACT/SAT/CLT tests.
- Help the student make time to prepare for their standardized tests.
- If a friend of yours has a current college student home for break, invite the family over and ask the college student to share his/her experiences.
- Dream with your student about what he could do to further explore a career interest (e.g. job shadow, volunteer), possible college majors, and even learn more about his or her own strengths.
- Look at the college's financial aid websites and complete the Net Price Calculators. Have honest conversations with your student about what you are able to realistically help with financially for college.
- Complete the FAFSA in a timely manner based on your tax information. Application opens up in fall of senior year. Both student and parent will need a FSA ID.
- Have your student sit beside and watch as you complete so he/she can learn about the process since your student will need to complete this process each year for continued financial aid. You may also need to complete the CSS Profile or institutional financial aid applications if the college requires these documents.
- During the senior year, "senioritis" is a real threat for even the best of students. Be careful to monitor your student's schedule and help him strategically carve out "white space" to relax and de-stress. Ask your student regularly how things are going. Review his/her grades together regularly and have conversations about any areas of need.
- Encourage your student to meet with teachers as needed. Students need to learn this skill well so they are comfortable approaching college professors on their own. Coach them on how to approach these types of meetings.

> ***Students are typcially watching how their parents model their faith in this process.***

COUNSELOR'S ROLE

Our mission is to provide students and parents with timely and accurate college planning information and advising to navigate the college decision process.

- Develop a collaborative relationship with students and parents to inform them about the college application process. Counselors will never tell students where they must or cannot apply or where they should enroll.
- Conduct college planning workshops throughout the fall of the senior year (Senior Group Counseling Sessions, Senior Parent Seminar, & Financial Aid Seminar).
- Meet individually with seniors and parents during first quarter. Seniors may request "re-meets" as needed throughout the year. Students are responsible to schedule appointments.
- Assist students with their college planning questions as they arise.
- Complete requested letters of recommendation and other counselor forms required by the colleges and scholarship programs if given adequate advanced notice (2–3 weeks before deadlines).
- Provide feedback on Florida Bright Futures status at appropriate times and give instructions regarding the application process.
- Help troubleshoot any issues related to the use of MaiaLearning.
- Forward information provided by colleges and scholarship organizations to students and share other valuable resources.
- Provide college fair information, host college fairs, and host individual admissions representatives either on our campus or virtually.
- Contact college admissions representatives as needed for students in a deferred status, deny appeals or other holds. The counselor will only do this after the student has contacted the admissions representative and may require the student to be present for the call.
- Will assist students in presenting their "best selves" to the colleges, but the student is reminded that it is the student's academic record as well as other factors that determines admission to the college.

COMMON FIT FACTORS

You Should Consider

Consider the following factors in your college research and determine how important they are to you as you start to narrow down your list. Doing so appropriately will help you determine the colleges that fit you and your needs best.

STUDENT ADMISSION & ENROLLMENT

- Total number of freshman applications; total number of spaces available to freshmen
- Percentage of applicants accepted / Percentage of those who enroll
- Minimum GPA & ACT/SAT/CLT for freshman admission; Middle 50% for GPA & ACT/SAT/CLT
- Percentage of students accepted from within and outside the institution's home state
- Size (total enrollment, number in the freshman class, percent of undergraduate & graduate students)
- Residential or commuter campus (percentage of students who live on campus or off campus)
- Diversity (background, geographic, ethnic, racial, male-female ratio, religious)
- Conservative or liberal (tolerance level for those from various ideologies)
- Retention rate (percentage of freshmen who complete the first year and return for the sophomore year)
- Graduation rate (ask for both four year and six year rates)

LOCATION

- Urban, suburban, rural areas
- Distance from home
- Climate
- Proximity to shopping, churches, hospital, etc.
- Attractiveness of the campus and surroundings
- Consider travel costs to and from home

FACULTY

- Percentage of faculty with terminal degree (this means the highest degree in their field)
- Student-to-faculty ratio
- Emphasis on teaching or research
- Faculty advisors or do they use professional advisors for academic advising (or both)
- Faculty involved in student life
- Amount of office hours required per week for faculty
- Openness of faculty to discussion of diverse thoughts and ideas
- Opportunities for undergraduate research with a professor
- Percent of classes taught by faculty vs. graduate assistants


GOODWIN DAVIS

COMMON FIT FACTORS

You Should Consider

ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

- Academic demands (workload, expectations)
- Strengths of various academic departments / majors
- Honors Programs
- Living-learning commuinities
- General education requirements
- Size of classes (lecture courses, seminars, upper-class courses)
- Student attitude towards learning
- Percentage of students admitted to graduate or professional schools (general or first choice)
- Job placement in field and career services (e.g. job fairs, internships, etc.)
- Average scores / pass rates on graduate entrance exams or career certification exams
- Study abroad & internship opportunities
- Quality of classroom technology, laboratories, and other major-related amenities
- Collaborative learning / project-based versus lecture hall
- Research opportunities (if relevant to major)

CAMPUS & STUDENT LIFE CULTURE

- Presence of campus ministries and para-church organizations
- Diversity and tolerance of differences
- Honor system used for student discipline
- Regulations
- Types of residence halls and residence hall programs
- Wellness and mental health clinics
- Meal Plans
- Greek life system
- Community Service opportunities
- Athletics & Fine/Performing Arts events
- Intramurals & club sports
- Student organizations and clubs
- Campus Safety (ask for statistics re: criminal activity on & off campus - especially in Greek housing areas; ask about any pending Title IX violations)
- Transportation (campus busing, parking, bike share, zip car rentals, etc.)

COST & FINANCIAL AID

- Total cost of attendance (including fees, books, and personal expenses)
- Average financial aid (not including parent loans)
- Type of financial aid offered to new freshmen
- Type of financial aid offered to returning students
- Other financial aid options
- Travel costs to and from home

SELECTIVITY

Selectivity is an important factor to understand. It simply means the percentage of applicants a college accepts. But, be aware that the selectivity number can be manipulated by simply increasing the application pool with unqualified applicants (so they can deny more students). Keep in mind that the majority of colleges and universities want you. If you do apply to a selective institution, please do not take it personally if you are not admitted. It's all an issue of numbers and what the college is looking for in that particular year. This is why it's so important to find your college fit and not get caught up in the hype of the handful of elite colleges.

Source:
lesshighschoolstress.com

> *Colleges don't want well-rounded students as much as they want well-rounded classes that meet their enrollment goals; both quantitatively and qualitatively.*

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

demonstrated academically they can do the work (all colleges look for these factors in varying degrees)

- Grades in college preparatory courses
- Strength of high school curriculum - Honors/AP/DC
- Standardized test scores - in combination with the high school transcript demonstrate how students will perform in first-year courses
- Overall grade point average as calculated by the college

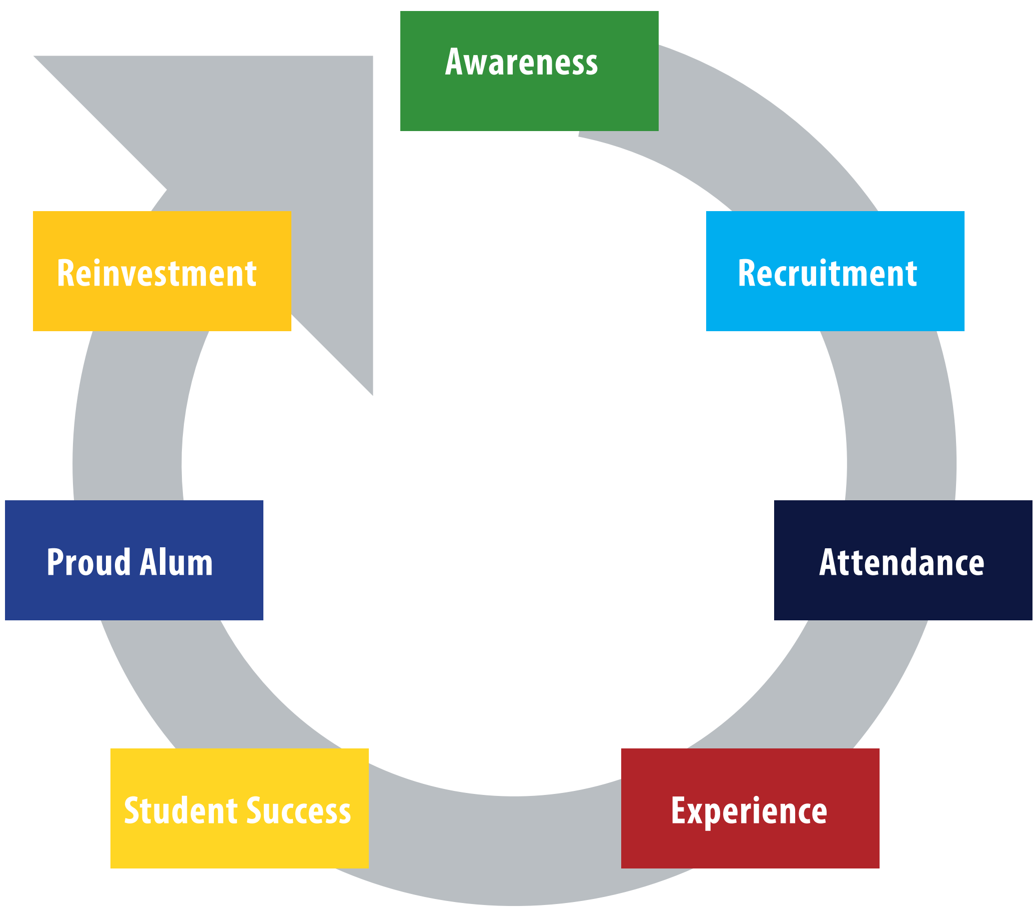
COMPETITIVE APPLICANTS

are qualified academically but ALSO bring something extra to the table the college is looking for in terms of shaping the enrolled class.

- Leadership, compassion, community involvement, global mindset
- Major: are you applying to a major that has enrollment restrictions (e.g. number of students in the major; ACT/SAT/CLT scores)?
- Athletic Talent
- Visual or Performing Arts talent
- Diversity - Ethnically, Geographically, and Socioeconomically
- First-generation college student
- Student demonstrated personal interest (e.g. campus visit)
- Students ability to pay (need-aware colleges) - full pay; potential donor family
- Active alumni family (time and/or money)

THE COLLEGE ENROLLMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

All 2,100 four-year colleges and universities in the United States make use of some form of recruitment, admission, and enrollment model. The goal in the end is to admit students who have the highest chance of retaining, graduating, and becoming happy alumni of the institution. Why? Because happy alumni are giving alumni (money, recommending other students attend, time given to various functions). Colleges have to limit their enrollment in the freshman class and every single enrollment management office knows the number of applications and the number of acceptances they need to reach that final enrollment goal. Understanding how the enrollment process of a particular college works can be a huge advantage to you.



TIMELINE & CHECKLIST FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Junior Year - Fall

- ☐ **Take a challenging course load that you are committed to do well in. Stay focused to keep your GPA up.**
- ☐ **Submit your community service to CCHS.**
- ☐ **Update your Experiences/Resume in MaiaLearning**
- ☐ **Take the PSAT (preliminary SAT) in October. This is the official National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.**
- ☐ **Attend the College Counseling Group Session #1- "Preparing for the College Search"**
- ☐ **Complete the Junior Game Plan Survey from College Counseling to communicate your "Fit Factors" to your counselor.**
- ☐ **Continue to research colleges and add/update your list of "Colleges Considering" in MaiaLearning**

    Focus on "Fit Factors"to find colleges that match your academically, financially, socially, and spiritually.

- ☐ **Plan a family discussion about college**
- ☐ **Schedule an individual meeting with your college counselor for planning in November, December, or January to assess your preparation for the college search and application process.**
- ☐ **Continue to be in prayer, ask God to guide you.**
- ☐ **Take advantage of college admissions visits on CCHS campus (published in bi-weekly College Connection newsletter and MaiaLearning: Events page).**
- ☐ **Continue to learn about colleges**

    MaiaLearning College Search, Visit college websites, Attend College Fairs and on-campus rep visits, and Tour campuses (you have 4 college visit days/excused absences to utilize).

- ☐ **Start thinking about paying for college**

    FAFSA Estimator: studentaid.gov/aid-estimator
    Investigate scholarship opportunities in MaiaLearning and CCHS website: https://www.cchs.us/academics/scholarships-and-financial-aid.cfm
    ** Do not use scholarship search engines that charge a fee

- ☐ **Take or plan to take ACT, SAT and/or CLT (CCHS recommends beginning to take ACT, SAT and CLT after you have completed geometry and at least one semester of Algebra II)**

    ACT: www.actstudent.org SAT: www.collegeboard.org
    CLT: cltexam.com

TIMELINE & CHECKLIST FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Junior Year - Winter

- ☐ Attend College Counseling Group Session #2- “Declaring your diploma type and college fit factors.”
- ☐ Complete your Diploma Type Declaration form and submit to your college counselor.
- ☐ Plan to take the ACT/SAT/CLT again in the Spring & Summer
- ☐ Begin targeted ACT/SAT/CLT Preparation
- ☐ Keep gathering information on colleges you would like to visit and continue to update MaiaLearning “Colleges Considering” list.
- ☐ Submit your community service hours to CCHS
- ☐ Explore career options
- ☐ Prospective student athletes should review the NCAA certification requirements and register with the Eligibility Center--Option 3 for Academic and Amateurism Certification.
- ☐ Job shadowing
- ☐ Take career exploration assessments in MaiaLearning
- ☐ Students interested in attending military academies should begin this process in the spring and contact their US Senators and Representatives.
- ☐ If you are considering military academies, consider their summer programs.

Junior Year - Spring

- ☐ Plan your senior schedule strategically. Will you be “college-ready”?
- ☐ Meet with your college counselor to assure you are meeting graduation and diploma requirements.
- ☐ Plan to take academic classes that will benefit you in college
- ☐ Consider retaking the ACT, SAT and/or CLT again if you want to raise your scores.
- ☐ Continue targeted SAT/ACT/CLT preparation
- ☐ Begin or continue visiting colleges
- ☐ School breaks are a great time to visit schools that are further away.
- ☐ Begin narrowing down your college list in MaiaLearning to your top 3-8 schools.
- ☐ Attend College Fairs
- ☐ If you’re considering enlisting in the military, talk to a recruiter.
- ☐ Arts Majors: inquire at your top colleges about portfolio or audition requirements and begin preparing.
- ☐ View College Counseling Group Session #3- “The College Essay”
- ☐ Attend College Counseling Group Session #4- “Beginning the College Application Process”
- ☐ Review Bright Futures requirements to assure you are on track to qualify to earn the scholarship
- ☐ Plan summer activities early
- ☐ Enrich yourself by volunteering, getting a job in a career field that you want to pursue, and travel

Junior Year - Summer

- ☐ Continue to visit colleges that require traveling
- ☐ Update your experiences/resume in MaiaLearning
- ☐ By the end of summer, finalize your 3-8 top colleges you plan to apply to and update in MaiaLearning.
- ☐ Review college admissions websites and know all the required pieces of information necessary to make your application complete (such as essay, transcript, STARS record, test scores, recommendations, resume, etc).
- ☐ Consider making a spreadsheet to keep yourself organized.
- ☐ Take the ACT or SAT or CLT to get the best score possible.
- ☐ Do you need to continue targeted SAT/ACT/CLT preparation?
- ☐ Create your Common App account and begin entering basic demographic information.
- ☐ Match your MaiaLearning and Common App accounts
- ☐ Finalize your community service and assure you submitted 100 hours to CCHS by the first day of senior year.
- ☐ Begin preparing your college essay. Common App prompts are posted online.
- ☐ Make a list of teachers that you plan to ask for recommendations (Junior year core teachers are best)
- ☐ Stay on top of any CCHS assigned summer work.
- ☐ Investigate scholarship opportunities in MaiaLearning and CCHS website: https://www.cchs.us/academics/scholarships-and-financial-aid.cfm
- ☐ Ensure any credit recovery is completed by the end of summer so it can be included on the transcript sent to colleges when applying.

TIMELINE & CHECKLIST FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Senior Year - Fall

- [ ] Begin working on your Common App and attend College Application Kickstart in August
- [ ] Attend Senior Parent Seminar and Senior Financial Aid Night
- [ ] Schedule a 1:1 meeting with your primary college counselor
- [ ] Edit & Update a college resume in MaiaLearning (if not already completed this summer)
- [ ] Have ready your list of colleges to TOP 3-8 colleges and updated in MaiaLearning (pray over those colleges)
- [ ] Review your college list with your counselor and family
- [ ] Make your own master calendar/spreadsheet of application deadlines, test dates, financial aid deadlines, etc.
- [ ] Set your deadline to have all applications submitted by November 1 (Unless the college has an earlier deadline).
- [ ] Attend Senior College Counseling Group Session #1
- [ ] Request recommendations early (give your recommenders at least two weeks to complete) - see pages 27–28
- [ ] Add finishing touches to your college essay (ask an English teacher or counselor to review)
- [ ] Begin completing the STARS record (if required by your college)
- [ ] Attend an STARS workshop, if needed
- [ ] Manage your time wisely related to class work and extracurricular activities. Your senior grades are important!
- [ ] Re-take the SAT/ACT/CLT in August-December (if needed)
- [ ] Finalize SAT/ACT/CLT scores for Fall applications
- [ ] Send super scores to the colleges you plan to apply to that require test scores--At least one must be sent to a Florida public institution to be added to your Bright Futures profile.
- [ ] Visit colleges as needed if you still have some visits to do. (You receive four (4) excused absences for official college visits)
- [ ] Take advantage of College Admissions Rep visits on CCHS campus (published in CCHS College Connection newsletter and MaiaLearning).
- [ ] Athletics: If you're hoping to be recruited athletically, you must register through the NCAA eligibility center (Tier 3 - Academic and Amateurism) or NAIA eligibility centers.
- [ ] Arts Majors: Compile and finalize your portfolio or prepare for auditions.
- [ ] Submit Florida Financial Aid Application (aka Bright Futures) which opens October 1
- [ ] Ask your colleges if they require the CSS (a financial aid profile in addition to the FAFSA)
- [ ] Continue the college application process.- November 1 Goal Deadline
- [ ] Start seeking out financial aid and scholarships. Make sure you understand deadlines.

Senior Year - Winter

- [ ] Get your applications in ON TIME!
- [ ] Continue praying about where God wants you to be!
- [ ] Contact the admissions offices or admissions online portals at the colleges and double check to make sure all pieces of your application have arrived.
- [ ] Continuing applying for private scholarships (see MaiaLearning and CCHS website- https://www.cchs.us/academics/scholarships-and-financial-aid.cfm)
- [ ] Check with your TOP picks student financial aid offices. Request institutional financial aid information if they have not already emailed to you.
- [ ] Stay on track in your academic courses and finish the first semester well- SAY NO TO SENIORITIS!
- [ ] Request Mid-Year Transcripts or update your STARS record if required by your colleges.
- [ ] Read thoroughly all communication from your college counselors and the colleges you have applied to.
- [ ] Submit FAFSA (free application for federal student aid)

Senior Year - Spring

- [ ] Send any additional information needed for deferred decisions to the admissions office.
- [ ] You may need to register for additional testing dates (you still have time to qualify for Bright Futures).
- [ ] Update your MaiaLearning account when you get an admissions decision!
- [ ] Keep up with your challenging courses. Don't drop academic core classes at semester break- the colleges will check.
- [ ] Continuing applying for private scholarships (see MaiaLearning and CCHS website).
- [ ] View Senior College Counseling Virtual Group Session #2 about Financial Aid and Enrollment
- [ ] Financial Aid award letters start arriving by mid-February.
- [ ] Consider attending an "Admitted Student" event at the college of your choice.
- [ ] Make your final decision about which college you will attend ON or BEFORE May 1. Submit intent to enroll form and deposit.
- [ ] Decline the other acceptances from the other schools. This is a courtesy so they may go to the waitlist earlier.
- [ ] Be aware of college summer orientation sessions and other paperwork needed by accepted students.
- [ ] Final Transcripts: Request for your final transcript to be sent to the college you have chosen. This is done in MaiaLearning.
- [ ] Attend Senior College Counseling Group #3 enrollment next steps and graduation.
- [ ] ENJOY Senior Festivities and Graduation
- [ ] Complete all enrollment next steps itemized on following pages.

Senior Year - Summer

- [ ] Enjoy your summer!
- [ ] Start preparing for college
- [ ] Attend college orientation
- [ ] Start packing if you're staying the dorms
- [ ] Set up a budget for spending while at college
- [ ] Research part-time jobs at your college if you need extra money

ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

Once you have been admitted, reviewed financial aid packages, and made your decision about where to attend college, your future interactions with that college are for enrollment purposes. Be sure to thoroughly follow "next steps" and deadlines provided by your college. Check your email regularly and review to-do lists in your accepted student packet so you don't miss any important steps.

ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

Items may include but are not limited to:

- [ ] **SUBMITTING AN "INTENT TO ENROLL" FORM AND DEPOSIT**

  This deposit is typically non-refundable but many colleges apply this payment towards your first tuition bill. Some schools are willing to waive the enrollment deposit for students with demonstrated financial need but this request must be made to the college/university admissions office.

- [ ] **APPLY FOR HOUSING**

  This may also include a housing fee/deposit (may or may not be refundable)

- [ ] **COMPLETE ANY HOUSING PREFERENCES AND BEHAVIORAL SURVEYS**

  this may be included with housing application or sent separately. This is what institutions use to match roommates. If you have a roommate request, you both must request each other on your housing applications.

- [ ] **ACTIVATE YOUR COLLEGE EMAIL ADDRESS**

  and student portal (if applicable)

- [ ] **REGULARLY MONITOR THIS COLLEGE EMAIL**

  and portal for updates and communication

- [ ] **ACCEPT OR DECLINE YOUR FINANCIAL AID OFFERS**

  which may include:

  - Scholarships (free money)
  - Grants (free money)
  - Federal Work Study (earned by working on campus)
  - Student or Parent Loans (money you must pay back)
  - Students who accept federal loans are required to complete an online Master Promissory Note training and agreement.

- [ ] **REGISTER FOR ORIENTATION**

  (you cannot miss graduation rehearsal to attend orientation so select dates carefully)

- [ ] **REGISTER FOR ANY REQUIRED PLACEMENT EXAMS**

- [ ] **ENTER YOUR "FINAL TRANSCRIPT" REQUEST IN MAIALEARNING**

  ONLY for the college to which you plan to enroll. **CCHS will send final, official transcripts in mid-June**

- [ ] **ALL STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED DUAL CREDIT COURSES**

  through SPC, BUF, or Cedarville are REQUIRED to submit these transcripts to your college/university of enrollment. **YOU (not college counselors) should request these transcripts directly with SPC, BUF, or CU after your final grade has posted.** (Be mindful that colleges will need these as soon as possible to create your first-semester schedule with these courses in mind. Occasionally student schedules are created prior to a college/university's receipt of dual credit transcripts. If this happens and you are scheduled into a course for which you have already earned dual credit, you will have to complete a schedule change with the college/university).

ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

☐ **STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED AP COURSES**

have the option to submit their AP exam scores to their college/university for potential college credit. Review your college/university's AP policy to determine if you have earned the required AP score for college credit. If you decide to submit AP scores to your college, you must login to your College Board account to send these official scores to your college. (As with dual credit, if these AP scores are received by the college have a first-semester schedule has been created for you, you may have to do a schedule change if you are placed into a course for which you have already earned AP credit.) Request a free AP transcript by mid-June to be sent in July to your college of intended enrollment.

☐ **COMPLETE AND SUBMIT ANY MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION FORMS**

required by the college/university prior to enrollment. This includes signing college's HIPPA form

☐ **STUDENT / PARENT DISCUSS & SIGN**

college's FERPA agreement.

☐ **PROVIDE PROOF OF HEALTH INSURANCE**

to the college/university OR sign up and pay for their institutional-provided health insurance.

There may be additional items required by your institution as well. Keep a close eye on communication from the college/university.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Details & How-To's

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE
MIND • BODY • SPIRIT

DOORS OF ENROLLMENT OPTIONS

STUDENTS

WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

NON-RESTRICTIVE APPLICATION PLANS			RESTRICTIVE APPLICATION PLANS	
REGULAR DECISION	**ROLLING ADMISSION**	**EARLY ACTION (EA)**	**EARLY DECISION (ED)**	**RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION (REA)** - not available at all colleges / universities
DEFINITION Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.	**DEFINITION** Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.	**DEFINITION** Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response cycle.	**DEFINITION** Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.	**DEFINITION** Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.
Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.			**Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.**	

NACAC National Association for College Admission Counseling

For an official copy of this flyer, please visit ***www.nacacnet.org***

NOTE: Students are only permitted to apply "ED" to ONE college / university and must ask their counselor to sign their ED agreement.

APPLICATION TYPES

We do recommend that you complete all applications by October 15 but no later than November 1. The earlier you can complete applications the more advantages you have. Colleges begin opening applications to the next class as early as August 1 (some even earlier).

COMMON APPLICATION

www.commonapp.org

The Common Application is an online application used by over 1,000 colleges and universities. Ideally, you should use the Common Application if several of your colleges are members. The Common Application process is very involved and detailed. If you plan to use it, we recommend you set up an account now and get familiar with all the moving pieces of this application form. You will also need to connect your Common Application account to your **MaiaLearning** account so we can send transcripts and recommendations for you. Once you match the two accounts, you are locked in to using the Common Application.

INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATIONS

(see various colleges' websites)

These are "in-house" applications that ask the specific questions an institution desires to review. Some colleges and universities only offer their in-house institutional application. Students can access these directly on the college admissions website.

See the College Counseling Resources page for additional application methods.

NOTE

You may only submit one application per institution.

Some colleges accept applications in multiple formats. They do not have a preference which application you use; just that you have only applied ONCE.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESSING

COLLEGE APPLICATION MANAGEMENT IN MAIALEARNING

1. Login to your [MaiaLearning] Account
2. Click on **Universities** from side Menu bar, then select Applying
3. Add to the list - select Add University
4. Search for the college, Select "Add" then Click "Select"
5. Select which **Application Type** you will use meaning Common App, Online App/Mail, or Other Application
6. Select which **Term** you will be applying for (Fall or Summer)
7. Select which **Application Plan** you will be using meaning Early Action, Early Decision, Regular Admission (Deadline should automatically populate)
8. Once you have submitted your application, **Mark As Applied**, select **Yes, I Have Applied** and enter the date you submitted your application.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESSING

ATTENTION COMMON APPLICATION USERS

If you are applying via the Common Application, you MUST follow these guidelines in order for your MaiaLearning account and your Common Application account to sync:

1. Go to www.commonapp.org and set up your account, **add at least one college,** and **sign the Common Application FERPA Release Authorization.**
2. Save your Common Application Username and Password (try to use the same username and password for all college needs).
3. Go back into **MaiaLearning,** click on your picture/icon in the top right corner of the screen, and select **Settings**. Locate the Common App box and select **Click to link your account**. Follow prompts to finalize matching your accounts.
4. Be sure to update the column in Colleges Applying - How are you applying? It should say “Common App.”

NOTE

If you do not complete the Common App Account Matching process, MaiaLearning will prevent CCHS from electronically submitting Common App school forms and transcripts for you.

REQUESTING THE INITIAL HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

MAIALEARNING

is what you use to request your official high school transcripts. Transcripts are submitted electronically or by postal mail to the colleges. After 1-2 weeks, you should return to your various colleges' application portals to check the status of the transcript. It is best to request transcripts AFTER submitting the college application. Do not wait until the day of the deadline to apply and request transcripts.

1. In MaiaLearning, go to the **UNIVERSITIES** screen.
2. Select **APPLYING**
3. Be sure the college you need a transcript for is in your list.
   » If you are applying via the Common Application, be sure you have completed the account matching process
4. Click **TRANSCRIPT REQUEST** (at the top right corner of each college listed)
5. This will send the request to your counselor's MaiaLearning account. **When your transcript has been sent, it will be marked as** SENT **so you will be able to keep track of your application materials. See** "SEND SUMMARY" **in the MaiaLearning Universities screen**
6. Give the college at least 2–3 weeks to show your transcript as being received on the college's website (under your student portal for the college)
7. **STARS NOTE** Most of the Florida public universities require students to self-report their transcript using the STARS record. UCF has their own self-reporting program called SPARK that applicants must complete after the application has been submitted. The SPARK is then completed in the UCF Future Knights portal.

   » You will need a copy of your UNOFFICIAL transcript, please email the Registrar for a copy.

NOTE *Some colleges may change their policies over the summer AFTER this guidebook is printed*

ADDITIONAL TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS

REQUESTING MID-YEAR TRANSCRIPTS
(AFTER THE END OF FIRST SEMESTER)

*There is no specific place in MaiaLearning where you can request a mid-year transcript to be sent.

The College Counseling office will automatically send your mid-year Common App report for any student who applied via the Common App.

If you need your mid-year transcript to sent to a non-Common App school, please notify your college counselor or the department coordinator.

REQUESTING FINAL TRANSCRIPTS
(FOR YOUR COLLEGE OF ENROLLMENT)

*There is no specific place in MaiaLearning where you can request your final transcript to be sent.

The College Counseling office will automatically send your final transcript to the college or university you have indicated you are attending upon graduation.

If you need your final transcript to sent to any other institution, please notify your college counselor or the department coordinator.

REQUESTING TRANSCRIPTS FOR NCAA/NAIA RECRUTING COACHES, OR SCHOLARSHIPS

- [ ] To send a copy of your transcript to these entities, please simply email the registrar with the specifics of your request
- [ ] All colleges to which you were accepted should appear as options. Select the ONE college to which you would like your final transcript to be sent. Note that final transcripts are sent

REQUESTING TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

INITIAL PROCESS

If you need Teacher Recommendations, you must **give your teachers two (2) weeks notice**. If you do not, the teacher is not obligated to meet your request and/or the quality of the recommendation could suffer. Select core course faculty who have taught you recently (think junior year).

1. You should know the minimum or maximum number of recommendations a particular college wants (or if at all, Florida publics will not accept any letters of recommendations). Do not go over that number. Be strategic in the teachers you select.
2. Ask the selected faculty in person if he/she will assist you.
3. You MUST complete the Letter of Recommendation Survey found under the MaiaLearning Surveys tab. Click on Surveys on the MaiaLearning Dashboard. This will assist the person in writing a quality recommendation for you. The more details a teacher or counselor can provide, the more it will assist the admissions committee in knowing if you are a good academic fit for their college.
4. Finally, submit your formal request using MaiaLearning.

*Counselor recommendation letters should be requested in person and **do not** need to be added in MaiaLearning.

Letters of recommendation from CCHS are confidential and students may not have access to view them. This strengthens your application since colleges prefer to receive recommendation letters in which they can be assured the faculty member has been able to be completely honest about your classroom abilities.

REQUESTING TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

MaiaLearning Process

- [ ] **Click on your UNIVERSITIES tab, then click "RECOMMENDATIONS"**
- [ ] **Locate the teacher from the list and click the box next to the teacher who has agreed to write your letter of recommendation (make sure you have personally asked this teacher prior to this request)**
- [ ] **Select at reasonable deadline (at least two weeks) for your teacher to have the letter of recommendation completed (the application materials deadline for each of your applications would be best)**
- [ ] **In the ENTER A NOTE FOR THE RECOMMENDER section, list the following:**

- Give the name of the institution/scholarship the recommendation is intended for
- Indicate if you are using Common App or another type of platform for completing the recommendation OR if the recommendation will need to be sent via snail mail
- Indicate the deadline for submission
- If it needs to be sent snail mail, let the teacher know you will give him any paper forms that need to be sent. You must also provide an addressed envelope that has been stamped for the teacher to use
- Add any additional notes to the teacher(s) as needed

- [ ] **Click SAVE**

- This will send an email to the teacher stating your request to the teacher's MaiaLearning account. It will also record that you have requested it in your MaiaLearning account. When the teacher has completed the Recommendation, they will mark it as completed and it will show in your MaiaLearning account so you can keep track of your application materials

SENDING ACT/SAT/CLT TEST SCORES

OFFICIAL TEST SCORES MUST BE REQUESTED BY THE STUDENTS DIRECTLY FROM THE TESTING AGENCY.

- Go to ***collegeboard.org*** or to ***act.org*** or to ***cltexam.com***
- Sign into your account and follow the steps
- Have your credit card handy for payment
- Student athletes would use this website for submitting test scores to NCAA. Use the **NCAA** code "**9999.**" For **NAIA** use code "**9876.**"

* Up to 4 score reports may be sent for free within certain time periods

* **SAT** During registration & 9 days after test date
* **ACT** During registration only
* **CLT** Always Free

SCORE REPORTING NUANCES

Note that students can request several score reports to be sent to up to four (4) colleges "for free" at the time of their test registrations. Scores requested at the time of registration will be sent directly to colleges at around the same time as the student receives them. Students who wish to view their scores before deciding if they will send "official" scores to colleges, will have to pay a fee per score report per college sent and should allow an additional 2-3 weeks for official scores to reach the college after they've been requested. Be mindful of college application completion deadlines when requesting official test scores to be sent. You may pay extra to have scores expedited if need be.

CCHS does not report SAT, ACT, or CLT scores to colleges & universities or print them on student transcripts. Colleges and universities only consider test scores to be "official" when they are sent directly from the testing agency. Students must login to the SAT/ACT/CLT portals to send official score reports.

Students should note the testing requirements and score-reporting policies for each institution by checking their admissions websites. Things to make note of when reviewing requirements:

1. CAN THE STUDENT SELF-REPORT THEIR TEST SCORES FOR THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Colleges and universities who aim to be "accessible" may allow students to self-report their test scores into their application. However, if a student is admitted and decides to enroll at a school to which they self-reported test scores, they will be required to pay to have all official scores that were initially self-reported sent to the institution. Students should also note that self-reporting their scores into their application may not fulfill the colleges requirement. Some applications (Common App) ask students to self-report their scores but the college may require official scores to be sent from the testing agency despite these self-reported scores. Thoroughly review test score submission policies for each institution. Note that self-reporting test scores to colleges does not meet Bright Futures qualifications.

2. DOES THE COLLEGE / UNIVERSITY SUPER-SCORE OR SUPER-AVERAGE TEST SCORES?

If so, that means you can send or report all your test scores and they'll use the section scores that most benefit the student.

3. IS THE ESSAY / WRITING PORTION OF THE TEST NEEDED?

If so, you will need to be sure you have taken the essay/writing potion of the ACT. The SAT is no longer offering an essay option.

4. IS THIS COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY TEST OPTIONAL?

Student can find a full list of over 1,000 test-optional colleges and universities at: ***https://fairtest.org/test-optional-list/***. Students should indicate on their application for admission that they intend to apply "test-optional" and should be sure they understand each institution's test-optional policy. An additional essay, interview or recommendation may be required of test-optional applicants. Occasionally, applying test-optional removes students from consideration of any merit-based scholarships.

DO'S & DON'TS FOR SENIORS

- **DO** know all of your application deadlines and requirements
- **DO** read your email from the colleges and from your CCHS college counselors
- **DO** get to know your primary college counselor and keep him/her informed
- **DO** create a separate email account just for your colleges to send you communication. Use this account for all college applications
- **DO** check your college application status check portals regularly for updates (email and online status)
- **DO** retake SAT or ACT or CLT THIS SUMMER & FALL (DEADLINES)
- **DO** diversify your college application portfolio - you should be happy to attend any of the colleges to which you apply
- **DO** tell your "story" in your application essay and resume. Create a clear picture of the person you are for admissions. Meet with your admissions representative when you can (on campus or when he/she visits our campus or our area)
- **DO** visit / re-visit the colleges you apply to - THIS IS A HUGE INVESTMENT - (REMEMBER FIT!)
- **DO** understand deadlines AFTER you are accepted for financial aid, housing, orientation sign-up, taking placement testing (PERT, Accuplacer, ALEKS, etc)
- If you are waitlisted, **DO** say "yes" to staying on the waitlist if the college is a good choice for you
- **DO** let your parents help but do so appropriately - they should not complete your college applications or scholarship applications for you
- **DO** have a conversation with your parents about cost / affordability NOW. Use Net Price Calculators on college websites
- **DON'T** slack off on your work (colleges will ask for mid-year grades and final grades)
- **DON'T** change your schedule in the middle of the year to make it less difficult
- **DON'T** earn less than a "B" in **ANY** dual credit courses you are taking.
- **DON'T** take a deny decision personally (let your college counselor know if you want to appeal)

FINANCIAL AID:

Funding Your Education

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE
MIND • BODY • SPIRIT

FUNDING YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION

WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID?

ANSWER

Financial Aid is basically money given or loaned to you to help you pay for college.

For you to be considered for financial aid, you must apply for it. The financial aid application process usually has its own forms, deadlines, and requirements apart from the college admissons process. In many cases, colleges have priority financial aid application deadlines in fall of your senior year.

The most common financial aid application is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Several selective colleges will also require you and your parents to complete the CSS Profile or an institutional aid form.

You do not have to wait until you are admitted to apply for financial aid, but the colleges will not give you an award letter unless you are accepted.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID?

- The federal government (the largest source)
- State government
- Colleges & universities
- Private organizations (companies, clubs, charities)

FINANCIAL AID TERMS TO KNOW

FAFSA - *The Free Application For Federal Student Aid*

www.fafsa.gov

This is the free online application that collects demographic and financial information about you and your family. FAFSA is used to calculate the Student Aid Index (SAI). The IRS allows parents to link their tax information directly to FAFSA.

FSA ID

An FSA ID consists of an account username and password that you can create in order to gain access to the U.S. Department of Education's online systems, including StudentAid.gov. An FSA ID can also serve as your legal signature when completing electronic documents.

You and your child each need to create your own FSA ID (Only one of a student's parents need to sign the student's FAFSA form, only one parent needs an FSA ID.) A save key, which your child needs, is a temporary password that lets you return to a partially completed FAFSA form.

SAI

Student Aid Index

The SAI is an index number that is used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. It is NOT the actual dollar amount your family will pay. SAI can also be used by states and colleges to determine if you qualify for need-based aid. Your SAI will be reported on your **Student Aid Report (SAR)** which will be sent to the student's email account. SAI is calculated from the results of financial information you and your family provides in the FAFSA.

COA

Cost Of Attendance

Cost of attendance is the estimated amount it will cost you to go to a specific college (usually a yearly figure). COA includes the following divided into two categories:

DIRECT COSTS

what the college will bill you for

- Tuition
- Course / Lab fees
- Room
- Board (meals)

INDIRECT COSTS

may not be charged by the college on your bill

- Books
- Supplies
- Transportation
- Loan Fees
- Miscellaneous personal expenses

NP

Net Price

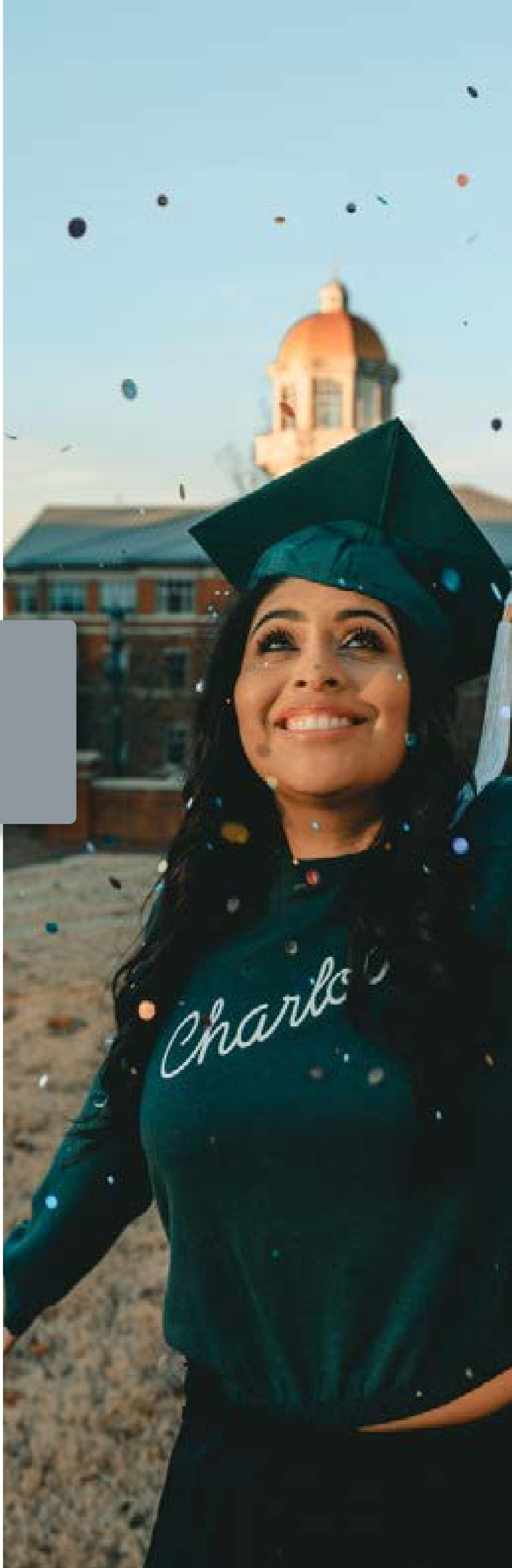
Net price is what you will pay after grants and scholarships are subtracted from the institution's cost of attendance. You do not pay back grants and scholarships - free money!

FUNDING YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION

NET PRICE CALCULATORS

By federal law, colleges and universities must provide a net price calculator on their financial aid websites. This will provide you with an estimated financial aid award based on your parents' and your financial information. Be sure to do this process with your parents. You will need their tax information. This gives you an early indication of what you may need to cover in either student loans or out-of-pocket funds.

STICKER PRICE
–GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS
(Free Money)
= NET PRICE



TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

- Grants (Gift Aid)
- Scholarships (Gift Aid)
- Federal Work Study Program (Self-Help Aid)
- Federal Loans (you must pay back)

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

General Scholarship Search (best search engine per financial aid directors):
www.fastweb.com
www.goingmerry.com

Bright Futures Information:
www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org

CSS Profile:
www.cssprofile.org

FAFSA:
www.fafsa.gov

College Counseling Resources:
www.cchs.us/academics/scholarships-and-financial-aid.cfm

FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES PROCESS

For Detailed Information, Please Go to
https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/SAPHOME/SAPHOME

APPLICATION PROCESS - FLORIDA FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION (FFAA)

INITIAL APPLICATION

- Students must APPLY for the scholarship by submitting the Florida Fincncial Aid Application (FFAA) beginning October 1 of their senior year and by no later than August 31 after high school graduation.
- After submitting your Florida Financial Aid Application, be sure to save a copy of the confirmation page. It includes your account login information.
- If a student does not apply for the scholarship by the deadline, a student cannot receive the scholarship! The application is valid for up to five (5) years after high school graduation, even if a student goes out-of-state initially for college. If a student transfers back to an in-state institution, a student can apply for reinstatement.
- All eligibility requirements must be met by high school graduation, but scores of ACT/SAT/CLT tests taken through August 31 are accepted for evaluation purposes.
- After submitting the FFAA, the student is responsible for tracking application and award status online and keeping the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) informed of any demographic or institutional changes.

NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

7th Semester

Postings may begin in March

- All students whose transcripts are submitted electronically to the FL DOE for an official early evaluation prior to January 31 will receive an eligibility or ineligibility determination, with the award status notification posted to their online account. CCHS will submit your courses, grades and community service hours.
- Students cannot lose an award based on early evaluation unless they fail to earn a standard Florida high school diploma from a Florida public or FDOE-registered private high school. Final Evaluations (8th Semester).
- Final postings may begin in July. All students whose final transcripts are submitted (following the student's last term in high school) will receive an award status notification (eligibility or ineligibility determination) posted to their online account.

FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES PROCESS

RENEWAL OF REWARD

The Bright Futures Scholarship will renew automatically each year (up to the scholarship limit) if the student maintains the required college GPA and earns the required credit hours.

AWARD CATEGORIES - FLORIDA ACADEMIC SCHOLARS (FAS) & FLORIDA MEDALLION SCHOLARS (FMS)

Florida high school students who wish to qualify for the Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) award or the Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) award must meet the following initial eligibility requirements:

- Graduate high school from a Florida high school wih a High School Standard Diploma
- Complete the required high school coursework
- Achieve the required minimum high school grade point average (GPA) based on 16 core courses
- Achieve the required minimum score on either the ACT or CLT or SAT college enrance exam; and
- Complete the required number of service hours

HIGH SCHOOL GPA

Evaluation for Bright Futures includes an unrounded weighted high school GPA (calculated to two decimal places) in the 16 college-preparatory credits. The following courses are weighted .25 per semester course or .50 per year course in the calculation of the GPA: Pre-AP, Advanced Placement (AP), Pre-International Baccalaureate (Pre-IB), International Baccalaureate (IB), Honors, Pre-Advanced International Certificate of Education (Pre-AICE), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) or academic Dual Enrollment. For example, whereas an 'A' equals 4 quality points for an un-weighted course, an 'A' would equal 4.5 quality points for a weighted course. If necessary, students may use two additional credits from courses in the above academic areas, or from AP, IB, or AICE fine arts courses to raise their GPA.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

- The ACT composite score is **the average of the best scores across the three subject area sections** from any test sitting: English, Math, and Reading. Science Reasoning is now optional and will not be counted in the composite score. Composite scores ending in 0.50 or higher will be rounded up to the next whole number (super-average)
- The SAT combined score is **the sum of the best Evidence-based Reading & Writing score and Math score** from any test sitting of the SAT (super score)
- The ACT/SAT/CLT exams may be taken an unlimited number of times through August 31 of the student's graduation year (or through January 31 for mid-year graduates)
- Request test scores be sent to one of Florida's twelve state universities or local state colleges (e.g. St. Petersburg College) when registering for the ACT/SAT/CLT so that test scores will be sent to the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) test repository.

SERVICE HOURS

Students must complete service hours during high school and by high school graduation. Each public school district and private school establishes approved activities and the process for documentation service hours. Bright Futures is now accepting work hours as well, but Calvary will only be accepting and reporting service hours

APPENDIX

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE
MIND • BODY • SPIRIT

RECRUITED STUDENT-ATHLETES

NCAA

www.eligibilitycenter.org

NAIA

www.playnaia.org

The **NCAA & NAIA** both recommend that student-athletes register at the **beginning of their junior year** of high school, but **many students register at the end of their junior year.** It is very advantageous to obtain **NCAA** (or **NAIA)** pre-certification at the end of the junior year. It makes you less of a risk for a coach who is recruiting you.

There is no registration deadline but students must have a certification account before they are permitted to do an official visit or sign their N.L.I. The **CCHS Registrar** will upload transcripts for all juniors with eligibility center accounts at the end of the junior year and again after graduation. ***Transfer students also need to contact their previous high school and ask them to upload a transcript to the Eligibility Center***.

NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT

Senior Year

The **NLI** is the ***formal binding agreement*** made between the college athletic department and the recruited student athlete. You may only sign **one (1) National Letter of Intent**. It is not uncommon for coaches to ask a student to sign the **NLI** prior to admission; ***however, the student-athlete must still complete all parts of the university admissions process and comply with NCAA or NAIA eligibility standards.*** Failure to do either one will result in the termination of the NLI. As a student, you can ask to be released from your NLI for various approved reasons. It is at the institution's discretion to do so.

FINAL AMATEURISM CERTIFICATION

April 1

If you are enrolling at a Division I or II school for the fall semester, you may request an amateurism certification decision from the **NCAA Eligibility Center** on or after **April 1** before your enrollment in college. If you are enrolling in college in the spring semester, you may request a final amateurism decision on or after **October 1** before your enrollment in college.

PLANNING A CAMPUS VISIT

Visiting a college campus helps you get a sense of what a college - and life on that campus - is like. This can help you decide whether the college is right for you. **It is one of the most important activities you and your parents can do in the college search process.** College is an appreciating value investment much like a house. Most people wouldn't buy a home without doing a "walk through," so why would you even apply to a college you had not visited yet?

When planning your campus visits, make sure to allow time to explore each college. While you're there, talk to as many people as possible. These can include college admission staff, professors, financial aid advisors, and current students. Below are some other things you can do while visiting. Note that some activities, such as meeting with an professor or staying overnight in a dorm, might need to be set up in advance.

HOW TO PICK A DATE

Here are some guidelines on when to visit. Plan your visit well ahead of time, so you can make sure that you see what you need to see and meet with the people who can tell you what you need to know. Most college websites will have a "visit campus" link on the Admissions homepage.

DURING THE WEEK

Mondays through Thursdays are ideal for visits since campuses are generally in full swing. Visiting on a Friday may not be as practical, as students, faculty and staff might be busy with social activities starting Friday afternoon. Although, some colleges will do special large events on Fridays and over the weekends, so look for these on their websites.

High school holidays that fall on Mondays are often great opportunities for making college visits. Many colleges are in session on these days - and you won't be missing any of your high school classes.

BEST TIME OF YEAR

The late summer and early September before senior year are convenient times to visit, since many colleges begin their fall semester as early as mid-August.

The spring of junior year is a the best time if you've already researched colleges. Spring break is also good considering applying under early action or early decision plans, which usually have application deadlines in November of senior year.

PLANNING A CAMPUS VISIT

AFTER YOU'VE BEEN ACCEPTED

Many colleges invite their accepted candidates to spend a day or two on campus before the May 1 enrollment confirmation date to encourage them to enroll. This is a good opportunity to make some in-depth comparisons between the colleges that have accepted you.

However, if you're planning to wait to visit colleges until after you've received acceptances, keep in mind that you may have only a few weeks to visit and make your decision. Most colleges send admissions decisions by late March, and the standard reply date is May 1.

WHEN NOT TO GO

Check specific dates with each college so you don't arrive when the campus is deserted. Call the college or look on the college's website for the academic calendar to find out when breaks, and exam periods are scheduled. Here are a few common "no-go" time periods:

- Thanksgiving Weekend
- Christmas Week
- Winter and Spring Breaks (Colleges')
- May Commencement Event
- Summer, unless there is a summer session

Most campus visits will include the following.

- An information session. An admission representative talks to you or your group about the college before the campus tour.
- A campus tour. These are usually led by current students. You'll see the main parts of the campus and have a chance to ask questions.
- Some campus tours include a tour of residence halls while others require that you schedule housing tours separately. Be sure to carefully review your scheduling options and times online.

At many colleges, you may also arrange to do the following (Call two weeks in advance):

- Attend a class
- Meet with a professor
- Meet with an admission officer
- Meet with a financial aid officer
- Attend a club meeting or a sports practice session
- Eat in the dining hall
- Tour specific academic departments
- Meet with personnel in Academic Support/Disability Services

GET READY

BEFORE YOUR VISIT, YOU SHOULD GET PREPARED:

- Explore the college's official website and review any materials the college has sent you. This will help you come up with questions specific to that college.
- Make a list of questions to ask both staff and students (see questions provided in the Appendix).
- Get a map of the college campus and check where the admissions office is. This will help ensure that you're on time for your visit.

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO GO, REMEMBER TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Pack a notebook and take photos so you can record your impressions.
- You'd be surprised at how easy it is to forget details after you've seen a few colleges.
- Make fair comparisons of the colleges you visit. Print out several copies of the Campus Visit Score Card.

EXCUSED CAMPUS VISIT POLICY

Seniors, Juniors, and Sophomores are permitted four (4) days per school year for college campus visits or for use to explore a career pathway. Freshmen are permitted two (2) days per school year for such activities.

COLLEGE VISIT DOCUMENTATION

In order to have the absence approved as a college campus visit, the student must submit proof of the official college visit tour experience to his/her primary college counselor within five (5) days of their return to school. The required proof is referred to by most college admissions offices as a "school excuse form" which is a letter on college/university letterhead stating the student's full name, date of the visit, and typically bears the signature of an admissions official. Colleges and universities are regularly asked for this document and should easily be able to provide it to visiting families. Admissions offices are typically only willing to provide this form if a student has registered for and participated in an information session or one:one counselor meeting and a campus tour. This proof of visit can also be submitted via email from the admissions representative directly to the CCHS college counselor. **The following items are NOT APPROVED as evidence of an official campus visit: photos of campus, brochures, or appointment confirmations.**

CAREER DAY DOCUMENTATION:

Students choosing to use one of their days to explore a possible career must first gain approval from their college counselor. The information provided to the counselor must make it clear that the opportunity is a legitimate organization, should outline the schedule for the day, and provide the name and contact information for the site visit supervisor. After the event, the student must provide a written evaluation of at least 250 words summarizing how the opportunity impacted his/her understanding of the career for the absence to be excused.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

College Admissions Representatives

INSTRUCTIONS

When it comes to posing questions to a college admission representative, the setting of your interaction with this person will determine the number and type of questions you can ask. At college fairs, you will not have much time, so ask your most urgent questions. If you make an appointment with your admissions representative during a campus visit, you will have much more time.

Below is a variety of most-asked questions. Remember, you may also find many of the answers by viewing the colleges' websites or printed materials.

- What are the application deadlines for admission?
- What are the most important admissions criteria? How are they ranked in order of importance to the committee?
- What percentage of your students graduate in 4 years?
- What is your freshman retention rate? What is the most frequent reason freshmen leave after their first year?
- What happens if I get deferred? Waitlisted? Denied? May I appeal?
- What is the average high school GPA of the entering freshman class?
- Is the ACT/SAT/CLT required?
- Is the CLT accepted?
- Do you accept Advanced Placement or Dual Credit courses? What are the average scores for accepted Freshmen?
- When must I choose a major?
- Do you offer early decision or early action?
- What high school courses should I take to prepare me for your college?
- Does your Engineering, Pharmacy, Nursing (or other majors) have separate admission requirements? If so, what are they?
- Do you require an interview for admissions?
- Is demonstrated interest a factor for admission?
- Is there a portfolio or audition required for arts majors?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

College Admissions Representatives

ACADEMICS

- How easy is it for freshmen to get classes they need?
- What's the size of the largest class on campus? The smallest?
- What are the most popular majors? Do you have those in which I am interested?
- Do you have to declare a major when you apply? Does it impact admission?
- What types of internships are available?
- Are there study abroad opportunities?
- How do you assign faculty advisors to students, especially those who are undecided about their majors?
- How do faculty members interact with students? Do they have a mentoring approach to students?
- How do professors respond to students who have a difference of opinion based on their Christian worldview?
- Some colleges believe that it is their mission to shape students into the form of their humanistic model. In such situations, earnest Christians are sometimes not welcome. Are those who take their Christian commitment seriously welcome here?
- Are there faculty members in your department who are evangelical Christians? Who are they? How could I get in touch with them?
- What percentage of classes are taught by professors? By graduate assistants or adjunct professors?
- Are there research opportunities for undergraduate students?
- What is the student to faculty ratio?
- What additional academic services are offered to students (tutoring, career counseling, study skills, writing lab, and math lab)?
- What is the rate of your job placement and acceptance into graduate school programs? (outcomes questions)

QUESTIONS TO ASK

College Admissions Representatives

FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

- When is the priority deadline for financial aid applications?
- What kind of financial aid is available?
- How many students received financial aid and how much on average do they receive?
- What is the average "gap" left for families to pay out of pocket? What types of scholarships are available?
- In general, how can you help me afford your college?
- (If an out of state college) Does your college accept Florida Prepaid?

CAMPUS LIFE

- How safe is campus? What about the surrounding area?
- What types of extra-curricular activities are there on campus?
- What organizations do you have that support people of faith?
- What is residence life like at your campus?
- What athletic events are popular on campus?
- How many intercollegiate sports are offered? If I want to be recruited to play, what is the best way to get noticed by the coach?
- Are there fraternities and sororities? How strong are they on campus?
- Is there transportation on and off campus? Is it easy to get to town and/or home? Can freshmen have cars? How much is a parking permit?
- What is the climate during the school year?
- What do students do in their free time?
- Are students required to live on campus?
- Is housing guaranteed? For how long?
- How are roommates selected?
- How does the meal plan work?

TIPS FOR WRITING THE PERSONAL ESSAY

ANSWER THE QUESTION

1. What is the question asking? Answer the prompt. Are there multiple questions?
2. What is the purpose of the prompt?
   - **a.** Do I defend? **b.** Do I support? **c.** Do I inform?

BRAINSTORM

- Reflect
- Write down all your ideas - don't edit!
- Narrow down/organize thoughts into groups
- Determine which of your ideas/stories best answers a particular prompt

OUTLINE

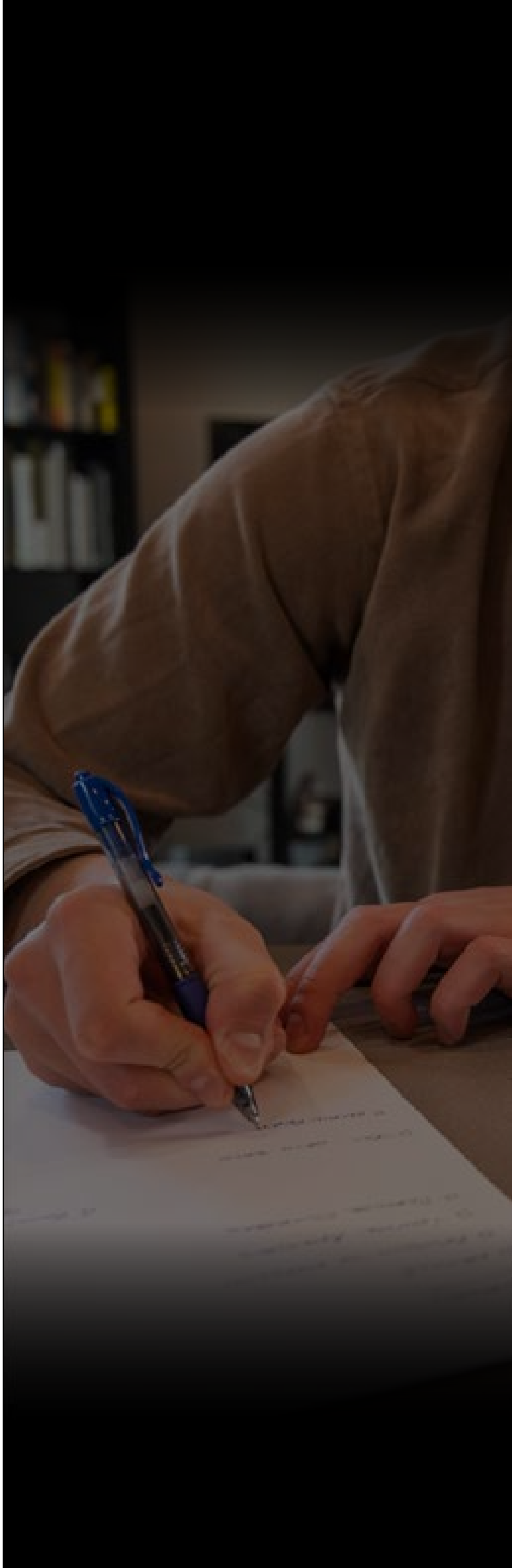
- Shape your story and the prompt into a beginning, middle, and end
- Strategize: how will I open the essay? Tone? What does the prompt dictate?
- Stick to your style!

TIME TO WRITE - FREE WRITE FIRST THEN EDIT - FIND YOUR VOICE

- Be authentically you. Your writing should sound like you wrote it.
- Don't be overly formal.
- It should not sound like anyone else wrote it.

KEEP YOUR ESSAY FOCUSED! *(Specific, Yourself, Concise)*

- This is not a research paper. Sound like **you**.



ESSAY WRITING HELP:

- CollegeEssayGuy.com
- CollegeEssayAdvisors.com
- WowWritingworkshop.com

NOT EVERYONE IS AN AMAZING WRITER, BUT EVERYONE CAN FOLLOW THE 5 C'S

- Clear
- Correct
- Concise
- Comprehensible
- Consistent

PROOFREAD!

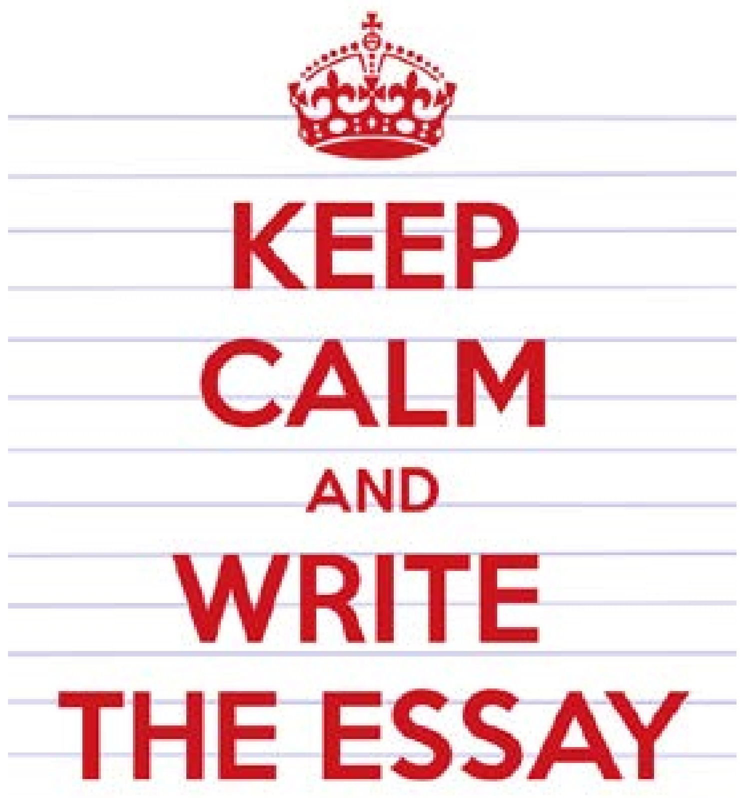
- Take your time
- Computer grammar/spell check is inadequate
- Have several others read your essay
- Read your essay backwards or out loud
- Check for consistency

REVISE

- Fix errors
- Refine wording to be sure to communicate well

POLISH

- Don't forget to add details that connect you to the college
- Include the necessary information
- Verify the school received it



THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

The Basics

FOR ADMISSIONS

The college admissions interview is a part of the college application process at many colleges - but not all of them. You may meet in person to talk with someone from the admission office, a current student or a graduate of the college. Or you may be able to take part in a video interview.

The interview is rarely the deciding factor in whether the college will accept you, but it can give a representative from the college a chance to get to know you better. And the interview gives you a chance to:

- Show your interest in the college
- Share information about yourself beyond what's listed on your transcript
- Bring up anything in your record that you'd like to explain, like a temporary drop in your grades
- Discuss your goals and the reasons you want to attend the college.
- Ask questions about the college.

FOR COMPETETIVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Often times these elite scholarshp programs require a separate application (and essay...). If you are selected for a competetive scholarship interview weekend, then you are typically in an elite group. Your application materials have been vetted and your file has been moved to the next step - interview with a selection committee. Many times, this committee will want to know many of the same things a college admission interview will try to uncover, but here are a few additional items this specific committee may be looking for:

- Leadership
- Initiative/Problem Solver/Critical Thinker
- Moral Character
- A sense of social responsibility & commitment to service
- Special talents/abilities that will benefit the campus community

WHAT TO EXPECT

For college admissions, you'll talk one-on-one with the interviewer. For competitive scholarship interviews, more than likely there will be a panel of college personnel *(faculty, deans, and honors/scholars program leaders).* If your parent comes with you, he or she won't be in the room during the interview but may get a chance to talk to the interviewer afterward.

Depending on the situation, remember the interviewer is wanting to get to know you beyond the "paper work" that has been presented already. Typically, this means that they will start off with some standard questions or questions based on your applications materials. Then, based on your responses, they could go off on tangential questions to probe your answers a bit more.

The interviewer will also ask if you have any questions. Asking questions shows the interviewer that you're interested in the college and or the scholarship program, and it allows you to get information you can't find on a website or in a brochure. If you're interested in a certain major, ask what the program is like. If you're planning to live on campus, ask about campus life. Just try to avoid asking questions that you can easily find answers to on the college's website.

HOW TO PREPARE

First, find out whether interviews are required, optional or not offered at all. If the college requires or offers interviews, look on the college's website or contact its admission office to find out what you have to do to set one up. If you have to travel to the college to interview, you may want to schedule a campus tour for the same trip.

After you've scheduled an interview, you can do several things to prepare. One important step is to research the college so you feel ready to talk about why the college is a good fit for you. Another good idea is to do practice interviews with family members and friends.

INTERVIEW TIPS

You can't pass or fail an interview, but you can make a good impression by doing the following:

1. BE PREPARED

a. Read over any material you have submitted so you remember what you said (e.g. application or admission, scholarship application, essays you wrote, etc.).

b. Be sure you understand the vision and mission of the college, the program of study you hope to be in, and the scholarshp program (for scholarshp interviews). You can usually find this under an "About Us" link of some sort on the main page of the college.

c. Then, be able to articulate how the mission of the college/ program is similar to yours.

d. Research the student life and academic pages to find legitimate ways you might get involved.

2. DRESS TO IMPRESS

a. It is recommended that you contact the person in charge of the scholarship weekend and verify what is appropriate for dress.

b. Wear something that makes you feel good.

3. BE ON TIME/GIVE YOURSELF TIME

for any issues that might arise (usually plan on arriving 10 minutes prior to the given time). Try to scope out the interview location ahead of time.

4. PAUSE IF NEEDED

before answering a scholarshp interview question. Be sure you are listening to the questions being asked and answer them in full. If you don't know, then don't bluff (they can tell). Just simply say "I don't have an answer for that at the moment," or "Can we come back to that question?"

5. BE CONFIDENT NOT COCKY IN YOUR RESPONSES

Again, listen and learn from your fellow students if you get a chance to interact (banquet, special sessions). These are great ways to make connections and share passions you all have. Be on your best behavior at all times. They could be "interviewing" you outside of the room.

6. SEND A THANK YOU NOTE

To the head of the scholarship program and / or the lead interviewer.

QUALITIES MOST COMMITTEES LOOK FOR

- Thoughtfulness and intellectual honesty/curiosity
- Good listener and can change course of thought with new information
- Authentic and eager to learn
- Humble; self-deprecating; humerous
- Bright, confident
- Able to admit failure & can say "I don't know"
- Evidence of intrinsic drive / motivation

FERPA

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act

THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of a student's education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's edcucation records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Student to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

  — School officials with legitimate educational interest;
  — Other schools to which a student is transferring;
  — Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
  — Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
  — Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
  —Accrediting organizations
  —To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
  —Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
  —State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, directory information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call 202-260-3887 (voice mail). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

Source: www.ed.gov

Glossary of Terms

A

accelerated program. A college program of study completed in less time than is usually required, most ofen by attending classes in the summer or by taking extra courses during the regular academic terms. Completion of a bachelor's degree program in three years is an example of acceleration.

accreditation. A process that ascertains that a college meets acceptable standards in its programs, facilities and services. Colleges are not required to seek accreditation but most do, and some are accredited by both regional and specialized accrediting bodies. Programs within a college, such as engineering or business, may be accredited as well. Accreditation alone is not a guarantee of high standards, but the lack of accreditation may be a warning that credits from that institution would not transfer to other institutions.

ACT Assessment. A college admission test given at test centers in the United States and other countries on specifed dates. Please visit the organization's Web site.

admit-deny. A policy whereby a college admits students through a need-blind process but denies fnancial aid to some students even though they qualify.

advanced placement. Admission or assignment of a first-year college student to an advanced course in a certain subject on the basis of evidence that he or she has already completed the equivalent of the college's course in that subject.

Advanced Placement Program® (AP®). A program of the College Board that provides high schools with course descriptions of 35 college subjects and end-of-course examinations in those subjects. High schools offer the courses and administer the examinations to interested students, who are then eligible for advanced placement, college credit or both on the basis of satisfactory grades. Most colleges and universities in the United States accept qualifying AP® Exam grades for credit, advanced placement or both.

articulation agreement. A formal agreement between two higher education institutions, stating specifc policies relating to transfer and recognition of academic achievement, to facilitate the successful transfer of students without duplication of course work.

associate degree. A degree granted by a college or university afer the satisfactory completion of a two-year full-time program of study or its part-time equivalent. In general, the associate of arts (A.A.) or associate of science (A.S.) degree is granted afer students complete a program of study similar to the frst two years of a four-year college curriculum. Te associate in applied science (A.A.S.) is awarded by many colleges on completion of technological or vocational programs of study.

award letter. A means of notifying admitted students of the fnancial aid being offered by the college or university. Te award letter provides information on the types and amounts of aid ofered, as well as specifc program information, students' responsibilities and the conditions that govern the awards. Generally, the award letter gives students the opportunity to accept or decline the aid ofered. Te letter includes a deadline by which to respond.

B

bachelor's degree. A degree received afer the satisfactory completion of a four- or fve-year full-time program of study (or its part-time equivalent) at a college or university. The bachelor of arts (B.A.) and the bachelor of science (B.S.) are the most common bachelor's degrees. In general, a program of study that results in a B.A. requires more liberal arts courses than one resulting in a B.S. College catalogs describe the types of degrees awarded in each major.

budget. Te estimated cost of attendance at a college or university. Te cost usually includes tuition and fees (including loan fees), books and supplies, room and board, personal expenses, and transportation. Other living expenses may be included.

C

campus-based programs. The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program, the Federal Perkins Loan Program, and the Federal Work-Study Program. These three programs are called "campus based" because the funds are administered directly by the college's fnancial aid ofce, which awards these funds to students using federal guidelines.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement. A College Board–sponsored arrangement under which the subscribing institutions will not require any applicants offered admission as first-year undergraduates to notify the college of their decision to attend (or to accept an ofer of fnancial aid) before May 1 of the year the applicants apply. The purpose of this agreement is to give applicants time to hear from all the colleges to which they have applied before having to make a commitment to any of them.

CB code. A four-digit College Board number that students use to designate colleges or scholarship programs to receive their SAT® score reports.

certificate. An award for completing a particular program or course of study, sometimes given by two-year colleges or vocational or technical schools.

church-related college. A private college that is financially supported and whose policies are infuenced to a degree by a church.

class rank. The relative numeric position of a student in his or her graduating class, as determined by the secondary school. Rank is calculated according to grade point average.

College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP®). A series of examinations in undergraduate courses that provides students of any age an opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement, thereby reducing costs and time to degree completion. The examinations, which are sponsored by the College Board, are administered at colleges year-round. All CLEP® exams are delivered on computer, providing test-takers instant score results.

combined bachelor's/graduate degree. A program in which students complete a bachelor's degree and a master's degree or first-professional degree in less than the usual amount of time. In most programs, students apply to undergraduate study and begin the graduate program in their fourth year of college. Successful completion results in awarding of both bachelor's and graduate degrees.

Common Application. The Common Application is a not-for-proft organization that serves students and member institutions by providing an admission application — online and in print — that students may submit to any of the organization's nearly 1000 members.

community/junior college. A college that offers only the first two years of undergraduate study. Community colleges are public institutions, whereas junior colleges are privately operated on a not-for-proft basis. Both usually offer both terminal (or "vocational") programs and transfer programs.

consortium. The joining of several colleges and universities within close geographical proximity. The advantages of attending a college that is a member of a consortium are that students have the resources of many libraries, they have the chance to take courses not available at their own college and they can take advantage of many combined cultural and educational opportunities.

cooperative education. A program that provides for alternative class attendance and employment in business, industry or government. Students are typically paid for their work. Under a cooperative plan, five years are normally required for completion of a bachelor's degree, but graduates have the advantage of about a year's practical work experience in addition to their studies.

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. Some colleges have both core curriculum requirements and general education requirements.

cost of attendance *(also known as cost of education or budget)*. A number of expenses, including tuition and fees, books and supplies, and student's living expenses while attending school. The cost of attendance is estimated by the school, within guidelines established by federal regulation. Te cost of attendance is compared with the student's expected family contribution to determine the student's need for financial aid.

credit by examination. Academic credit granted by a college to entering students who have demonstrated profciency in collegelevel studies through examinations such as those sponsored by the College Board's Advanced Placement Program and CollegeLevel Examination Program. It is a means of cutting college costs by reducing the number of courses needed to earn a degree.

cross-registration. Te practice, through agreements between colleges, of permitting students enrolled at one college or university to enroll in courses at another institution without formally applying for admission to the second institution. Also known as being a transient student.

CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®. A Web-based application service offered by the College Board and used by some colleges, universities, and private scholarship programs to award their private fnancial aid funds. Students register for and complete the PROFILE at the College Board Web site: www. collegeboard.com.

D

deferred admission. Postponing enrollment, usually for one year, after acceptance to college.

dependent student. For financial aid purposes, the status that includes students who are under the age of 24, attend an undergraduate program, are not married or have children of their own, or are not orphans, wards of the court, or veterans of the armed services. The term is used to define eligibility for certain financial aid programs, regardless of whether or not the student lives with a parent, receives financial support from a parent, or is claimed on a parent's tax return. If a student is defined as dependent according to the defnition, parental financial information must be supplied on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and institutional aid applications.

direct loan program. See William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program.

distance learning. An option for earning course credit of campus via cable television, the Internet, satellite classes, videotapes, correspondence courses or other means.

double major. Any program in which a student completes the requirements of two majors concurrently.

dual enrollment. Te practice in which a student enrolls in college courses while still in high school, earning both high school and college credit for their work.

E

Early Action. A program in which the student receives a decision earlier than the standard response date but is not required to accept the admissions offer or to make a deposit before May 1.

Early admission. The policy of some colleges of admitting certain students who have not completed high school — usually students of exceptional ability who have completed their junior year. These students are enrolled fulltime in college.

Early Decision. A program that commits participating students to enroll at the college if admitted and offered a satisfactory financial aid package. Application deadlines are usually in November or December, with a mid- to late-December notifcation date. Some colleges have two rounds of Early Decision.

elective. A course, not required for one's chosen major, that is selected to fulfll credit hours required for graduation.

F

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.

federal code number. A six-digit number (formerly known as the Title IV number) that identifes a specifc college to which students want their Free Application for Federal Student Aid form submitted.

Federal Family Education Loan Program. The subsidized and unsubsidized Federal Staford Loan, Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students, and Federal Loan Consolidation programs. Funds for these programs are provided by lenders, and the loans are guaranteed by the federal government.

Federal Methodology. The process of analyzing the student's household and financial information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to calculate an expected family contribution and eligibility for federal and state aid.

Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students. A program that permits parents of undergraduate students to borrow up to the full cost of education, less any other fnancial aid the student may have received. The interest rate is variable and is reset each July.

Federal Pell Grant Program. A federally sponsored and admi nistered program that provides need-based grants to undergraduate students. Congress annually sets the dollar range. As of 2025-26, a Pell Grant cannot exceed $7,395 per year. Eligibility for Pell Grants is based on a student's expected family contribution, the total cost of attendance at the college, and whether the student is attending the college full-time or part-time.

Federal Perkins Loan Program. A federally funded campus-based program that provides low-interest loans, based on need, for undergraduate study The combined cumulative total of loan funds available to an individual for undergraduate and graduate education is $27,500. Repayment need not begin until completion of the student's education, and may be deferred for limited periods of service in the military, Peace Corps or approved comparable organizations. The total debt may be forgiven by the federal government if the recipient enters a career of service as a public health nurse, law enforcement ofcer, public school teacher or social worker.

Federal Stafford Loan. A program that allows students to borrow money for educational expenses from banks and other lending institutions (and sometimes from the colleges themselves). Subsidized Stafford loans are offered by colleges based on need. The federal government pays the interest on subsidized loans while the borrower is in college. Unsubsidized Stafford loans are non-need based; anyone may apply for one regardless of ability to pay for college. The interest on unsubsidized loans begins accumulating immediately, so the amount borrowers repay after graduation will be more than what they originally borrowed. For both programs, the amounts that may be borrowed depend on the student's year in school, and the interest rates are variable.

Federal Work-Study Program. A form of financial assistance that allows students to work in on- or off-campus employment sites while attending school. The wages earned are used to help pay the student's educational costs for the academic year. Job opportunities vary from campus to campus. The time commitment is usually 10 to 15 hours a week.

financial aid application form. A form that collects information on the student, the student's income and assets, and (for dependent students) the parents' income and assets. All students must fle the FAFSA to apply for fnancial aid; some colleges and states also require the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE or their own institutional or state form financial need. The diference between the total cost of attending a college and a student's expected family contribution. Financial aid grants, loans and work-study will be offered by each college to fll the student's need.

free and reduced-price school meals program. A federal program that offers free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch to students who qualify based on income and other factors. Schools receive a letter and application that they are required to send to households to determine eligibility for the program.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid. A form completed by all applicants for federal student aid. The FAFSA is available on the Web at www.fafsa.ed.gov. In many states, completion of the FAFSA is also sufficient to establish eligibility for state-sponsored aid programs. There is no charge to students for completing the FAFSA. The FAFSA may be filed any time after October 1 of the senior year. (e.g., after Oct. 1, 2025, for the academic year 2025-26)

G

gapping. A practice by which a college does not meet the full financial need of an admitted student, leaving a gap that must be filled by the student's own fnancial resources.

general education requirements. Courses that give undergraduates a background in all major academic disciplines: natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics, literature and language, and fine arts. Most colleges have general education requirements — students usually take these courses in their first and second years, getting the chance to sample a wide range of courses before selecting a major. At some colleges, general education courses are referred to as the core curriculum; at others, a few courses within the general education requirements are core courses that all students must take.

gift aid. Scholarships and grants, which do not have to be repaid.

grade point average. A system used by many schools for evaluating the overall scholastic performance of students. Grade points are determined by first multiplying the number of hours given for a course by the numerical value of the grade and then dividing the sum of all grade points by the total number of hours carried. The most common system of numerical values for grades is **A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, and E or F = 0**.

grant. A financial aid award that is given to a student and does not have to be paid back. The terms "grant" and "scholarship" are often used interchangeably to refer to gift aid, but often grants are awarded solely on the basis of financial need, while scholarships may require the student to demonstrate merit.

H

HOPE education tax credit. A federal income tax credit of as much as $1,500 per dependent student annually. It is available to eligible taxpayers based on out-of-pocket tuition and fee expenditures, according to income eligibility guidelines.

I

independent student. For financial aid purposes, the status that generally includes students who are either at least 24 years old, married, a veteran, a foster child, an orphan or have legal dependents (not including spouse). Independent students do not need to provide parental information to be considered for federal financial aid programs. However, private institutions may require independent students to provide parental information on their institutional forms in order to be considered for nonfederal sources of funding.

Institutional Methodology. A need-analysis formula that takes into account family assets such as home equity to determine a family's expected contribution.

Institutional Student Information Record. A federal output record, sent to the school, that contains the expected family contribution and all the information provided by the student on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

internship. Any short-term, supervised work, usually related to a student's major, for which academic credit is earned. The work can be full- or part-time, on or of campus, paid or unpaid. Some majors require the student to complete an internship.

L

liberal arts. The study of the humanities (literature, the arts and philosophy), history, foreign languages, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences. Study of the liberal arts and humanities prepares students to develop general knowledge and reasoning ability rather than specifc skills.

Lifetime Learning tax credit. A federal income tax credit of as much as $1,000 per household annually. It is available to eligible taxpayers based on out-of-pocket tuition and fee expenditures according to income eligibility guidelines.

M

matriculation. The process whereby a student is accepted, pays fees and enrolls in classes, offcially becoming a student at the college. This term is applied only to first-year students and to a transfer student's first enrollment.

military academies. See U.S. Service academies.

N

National Hispanic Recognition Program. A College Board program that identifes outstanding Hispanic high school students and shares information about these academically well-prepared students with subscribing colleges and universities. In order to be considered, students must be at least onequarter Hispanic and take the PSAT/NMSQT in their junior year.

need analysis. The process of analyzing the student's household and financial information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to calculate the expected family contribution and student's eligibility for financial aid.

need-based financial aid. Financial aid (scholarships, grants, loans or work-study opportunities) given to students who have demonstrated financial need, calculated by subtracting the student's expected family contribution from a college's total costs. The SAI is derived from a need analysis of the family's overall financial circumstances, using either the Federal Methodology to determine a student's eligibility for federal student aid, or the Institutional Methodology to determine eligibility for nonfederal fnancial aid.

need blind. A college policy of determining admission without regard to a student's fnancial need or fnancial aid status. need conscious. A college policy that considers student need or fnancial aid status for at least some portion of its applicant pool in making admissions decisions.

need conscious/aware. A college policy that considers student need or financial aid status for at least some portion of its applicant pool in making admissions decisions.

O

open admissions. A college admissions policy of admitting high school graduates, and other adults generally, without regard to conventional academic qualifcations such as attainment of high school subjects, good high school grades and acceptable admissions test scores. Under open admissions, virtually all applicants with high school diplomas or their equivalent are accepted

P

parents' contribution. The amount a student's parents are expected to pay toward college costs from their income and assets. It is derived from need analysis of the parents' overall financial situation. The parents' contribution and the student's contribution together constitute the total expected family contribution.

Personal Identification Number. This number — sometimes determined by an institution, sometimes self-selected — is used to protect the student's personal and fnancial security when performing electronic transactions and completing electronic forms. The PIN acts as an electronic signature and therefore should not be shared with anyone. Both FAFSA and the National Collegiate Athletic Association Eligibility Center require students to have PINs before registering through their Web sites.

placement test. A battery of tests designed to assess a student's aptitude and level of achievement in various academic areas so that the student can select the most appropriate courses.

preferential packaging. A policy that awards financial aid based on a student's desirability. A more desirable student may receive a higher percentage of grants and scholarships in the financial aid package than another student who demonstrates the same fnancial need.

prerequisite. A requirement that must be met before a certain course can be taken.

private college/university. An institution of higher education not supported by taxes. The school or other public funds may be independent or church related.

proprietary college. A private institution operated by its owners as a proft-making enterprise.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test). A shorter version of the SAT, with a diagnostic component providing skills feedback. Administered by high schools to freshmen, sophomores and juniors each year in October, the PSAT/NMSQT aids high schools in the early guidance of students planning for college and serves as the qualifying test for scholarships awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

public college/university. An institution of higher education supported by taxes or other public funds.

Q

quarter. An academic calendar period of about 12 weeks. Four quarters make up an academic year, but at colleges using the quarter system, students make normal academic progress by attending three quarters each year. In some colleges, students can accelerate their progress by attending all four quarters in one or more years.

R

remedial course. A noncredit course taken to help students with weak backgrounds in a particular area. Te course prepares the student for a credit course in that area.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). Programs conducted by certain colleges in cooperation with the U.S. Air Force, Army and Navy. Naval ROTC includes the Marine Corps (the Coast Guard and Merchant Marine do not sponsor ROTC programs). Local recruiting offices of the services themselves can supply detailed information about these programs, as can participating colleges.

residency requirements. Requirements at most colleges and universities that a student spend a minimum number of terms taking courses on campus (as opposed to independent study, transfer credits from other colleges or credit by examination) to be eligible for graduation. Residency

requirements can also refer to the minimum amount of time a student is required to have lived in a state to be eligible for in-state tuition at a public (state-controlled) college or university.

rolling admissions. An admissions procedure by which the college considers each student's application as soon as all the required credentials, such as school record and test scores, have been received. The college usually notifies an applicant of its decision without delay. At many colleges, rolling admissions allows for early notifcation and works much like nonbinding Early Action programs.

S

SAT. The College Board's test of developed language skills and mathematical reasoning abilities, given on specified dates throughout the year at test centers in the United States and other countries. The SAT is required by many colleges and sponsors of financial aid programs.

SAT Question and Answer Service A service of the College Board that provides students with a copy of their SAT test, their answers and the correct answers, scoring instructions and information about the questions. The service is available only for certain test dates

Section 529 plans. State-sponsored college savings programs that are commonly referred to as "529 plans" after the section of the Internal Revenue Code that provides the plan's tax breaks.

self-help. Student financial aid, such as loans and jobs, that requires repayment or employment.

semester. A period of about 16 weeks. Colleges on a semester system offer two semesters of instruction a year; there may also be a summer session.

Services for Students with Disabilities. A College Board service that assists disabled students by providing services and reasonable accommodations appropriate to the student's disability and the purpose of the exam the student is taking. SSD provides Advanced Placement Program Exam, PSAT/NMSQT and SAT testing accommodations for students who have documented disabilities

Student Aid Report. A report produced by the U.S. Department of Education and sent to students in response to their having filed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The SAR contains information the student provided on the FAFSA as well as the federally calculated result, which the financial aid office will use in determining the student's eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant and other federal student aid programs.

student expense budget. A calculation of the annual cost of attending college that is used in determining the student's need. Student expense budgets usually include tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, personal expenses, and transportation. Sometimes additional expenses are included for students with special education needs, students who have a disability, or students who are married and/or have children.

student's contribution. The amount the student is expected to pay toward college costs from the student's income, assets and benefits. The amount is derived from need analysis of resources. The student's contribution and the parents' contribution constitute the total family contribution, which, when subtracted from the student budget, equals financial need. Generally, students are eligible for financial aid equal to their financial need.

study abroad. Any arrangement by which a student completes part of the college program — typically the third year, but sometimes only a semester or a summer — studying in another country. A college may operate a campus abroad, or it may have a cooperative agreement with another U.S. college or an institution of the host country.

subsidized loan. A loan awarded to a student on the basis of financial need. The federal government pays the borrower's accrued interest during some significant periods, such as during the time the student is in school, thereby subsidizing the loan.

T

taxable income. Income earned from wages, salaries, and tips, as well as interest income, dividends, alimony, estate or trust income, business or farm profits, and rental or property income.

Title IV number. See federal code number.

TOEFL. The Test of English as a Foreign Language, which helps students demonstrate their English language proficiency at the advanced level required for study in colleges in the United States. Many colleges require that their applicants from non-Englishspeaking countries take the test as part of the admissions process.

transcript. A copy of a student's official academic record, listing all courses taken and grades received.

transfer program. An option in a two-year college (or four-year college that offers associate degrees), primarily for students who plan to move to a four-year college or university.

trimester. An academic calendar period of about 15 weeks. Three trimesters make up one year. Students normally progress by attending two of the trimesters each year and in some colleges can accelerate their progress by attending all three trimesters in one or more years.

U

undocumented. Students whose parents are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents (green card holders).

unmet need. The difference between a student's total available resources and thetotal cost for the student's attendance at an academic institution.

unsubsidized loan. A loan that is not need based; the borrower is responsible for accrued interest throughout the life of the loan.

U.S. service academies. The Military Academy (West Point, N.Y.), the Naval Academy (Annapolis, Md.), the Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs) and the Coast Guard Academy (New London, Conn.). Students' tuition, books, board, and medical and dental care are all fully paid for all four years. Graduates receive a bachelor of science degree and a job as a junior officer in the military. There is a minimum service obligation of five years after graduation.

V

virtual university. A degree-granting, accredited institution wherein all courses are delivered by distance learning, with no physical campus.

W

wait list. A list of students who meet the admissions requirements but will be offered a place in the class only if space becomes available.

William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program. A program that allows participating schools to administer subsidized and unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans and Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students programs directly to student and parent borrowers. Direct loans have mostly the same terms and conditions as those under the Federal Family Education Loan Program loans. Funds for these programs are provided by the federal government.

work-study. An arrangement by which a student combines employment and college study. The employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education and internships) or simply a means of paying for college (as in the Federal Work-Study Program).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