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MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, & GOALS

The Seattle Academy mission, printed below, informs the daily life and pedagogy of Seattle Academy. Few processes during your time at Seattle Academy, however, will depend on, or will grow directly from, the Seattle Academy mission as the college application process. The culminating event of the Culture of Performance, the college application process demands that students take action in a moment of vulnerability by sending their applications off to relatively unknown audiences. In doing so, students trust the identities and skills they have forged in Seattle Academy classrooms, playing fields, and stages. They trust the relationships with advisors and teachers who seek to give them the most accurate, honest, realistic feedback necessary for the process. The personal responsibility, integrity, grace, resilience, and empathy students demonstrate during months filled with mystery and ambiguity are all products of the Seattle Academy mission, and are signals of students' capacities for college and life success. While the Seattle Academy mission does not guarantee admission for all students to all colleges, students who graduate from Seattle Academy are generally vibrant people with interesting résumés and concrete academic and technical skills, all of which are desirable to colleges.

MISSION

Seattle Academy prepares students for college and life. Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences is an independent secondary school with a mission to prepare our students to participate effectively in modern society. We, therefore, seek a diversified student body and faculty. We offer a demanding college-preparatory curriculum integrating the arts and emphasizing a global perspective. We utilize the resources of our urban environment to extend our classrooms, to enhance our programs, and to engage our students in public service. Most of all, we seek to graduate motivated young men and women of talent and integrity who are prepared to contribute productively to a changing world.

PHILOSOPHY

- Seattle Academy conducts learning in a Culture of Performance. Students are challenged to take risks in front of a variety of audiences, combining disparate skills in moments of action in order to learn and communicate complex ideas. This method of teaching and learning fosters independence and integrity, the ability to collaborate and take risks, and the capacity to cope with change and ambiguity. Ultimately, the Culture of Performance develops a spirit of inquiry and engagement that results in an empathy for the human condition, an understanding of the meaning of excellence, and an opportunity to achieve academic, artistic, and athletic success.
- A Seattle Academy education is both timeless and contemporary. Students develop a foundation for the future through traditional areas of study, and those subjects are invigorated by an innovative curriculum. Teachers instill in their students global and entrepreneurial perspectives, foster creative and sustainable solutions to tangible real-world problems, infuse their classes with technology, and are always striving to perfect their craft.
- Seattle Academy is a community built on strong, trusting relationships. When faculty and staff know each student, effective mentoring relationships can grow and thrive. In this type of learning environment, students can stretch their imaginations and learn from their setbacks, and teachers are better able to respond to all students as individuals and to assess what is the right thing for each student in any given moment.
- Seattle Academy believes that a fundamental purpose of education is character development. Our aim is to encourage and allow students to grow "from the inside out," and the school's policies, goal-setting, and everyday decision-making are designed to further that goal. The school teaches and the community aspires to exemplify the four Core Values of trust, respect, responsibility, and integrity.

SCHOOL GOALS

- Seattle Academy promotes a Culture of Performance for all students in which performance is central to teaching, learning, and assessment in all departments and on all grade levels. Performance is expected of all and respected by all. It is the engine that drives the school and a source of energy that prompts further commitment to excellence.

- Seattle Academy provides a demanding and innovative college preparatory curriculum that encompasses a full range of academic subjects as well as artistic, athletic, and community service endeavors.
- Seattle Academy fosters a dynamic community through active involvement by students, parents, faculty, administration, and board members in order to shape the school and to promote its success. The school seeks to serve a diverse student body with a diverse faculty and staff.
- Seattle Academy provides students with opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom, that foster both personal growth (by developing inner resources and greater self-awareness) and a global perspective (by developing awareness of the connections linking people to each other and to their environments).
- Seattle Academy uses its urban environment to enrich the curriculum, to develop students' independence, and to build their understanding and respect for the diversity of people and cultures. The school offers a myriad of opportunities for students to participate in the world as responsible citizens.

Approved by the Board of Trustees, November 17, 2010

WELCOME TO SEATTLE ACADEMY COLLEGE ADVISING

In the context of Seattle Academy's mission and "culture of performance" – academic, artistic, and athletic performance preparing students for college and for life – applying for college is a natural culminating process. Juniors and seniors use the research, critical thinking, reading, speaking, and writing skills gained at Seattle Academy in a real-world venture: discovering and pursuing the next stage of their education. Some compare this discovery process to a modern American initiation, and Seattle Academy urges students to treat it as such. Students should take the primary role in this process.

Applying to college is, of course, a challenging undertaking, rich with self-assessment, competing goals and dreams, and deadlines to meet. Seattle Academy College Advising actively supports students in this undertaking. Each upper school student works with a dedicated college advisor as he or she evaluates, researches, selects and applies to colleges and universities. Seattle Academy College Advising is "home base" for college inquiry and pursuit.

While 9th through fall-term 11th graders participate in various college advising programs and take practice standardized tests, the college advising process begins in earnest in January of a student's junior year, with Junior College Night for students and their families. This is intentional, and aligned with cutting-edge research on adolescent brain development, the college search process, and the decision-making it requires. After Junior College Night, each student completes a detailed online self-assessment and schedules an appointment with his or her college advisor. To ensure advisors know the students well, students always first meet individually with their college advisors. This "student first" structure is similar to college interviews where the bulk of the conversation is between the student and his/her evaluator. Juniors receive advice and support as they plan visits to colleges, take standardized tests, and narrow their lists of colleges. During the busy fall of senior year, students follow a timetable of college-related activities, culminating in the submission of college applications with support and recommendations from College Advising and from Seattle Academy faculty.

Seattle Academy College Advising has a unique perspective on Seattle Academy students and engages with students in many aspects of their lives while at school. Melanie and Jason, for example, see students in the classroom, on the stage, and on the playing field. They understand students in their day-to-day settings. This viewpoint enables advisors to write a positive, vivid, and comprehensive letter of recommendation for each student, describing colorfully Seattle Academy itself, bringing the student to life for admission committees, interpreting the high school academic culture and context, detailing the student's special gifts and extracurricular activities, and explaining unusual factors in the student's high school experience. This letter, along with two teacher recommendations, goes to each college with the student's transcript and Seattle Academy Report to Colleges (school "profile"). Once students receive their colleges' decisions, their advisors consult with them as they make matriculation and wait-list decisions.

Typically, 100% of Seattle Academy graduates are admitted to college. A handful of admitted students do elect to take a gap year before matriculating in college the following year. The choice to defer enrollment in college by pursuing a "gap year" or "interim year" has gained popularity at our school and other college prep schools in recent years: graduates have chosen to study visual art in Europe, work on farms in South America, and fish commercially in Alaska, among other endeavors before enrolling in selective colleges the year after. Regardless of plans, all juniors and seniors undergo the college advising process with Seattle Academy as home base. A section on gap years follows in this handbook, and College Advising catalogs gap year resources on Naviance.

Seattle Academy strives to maximize the educational and developmental opportunities of the college admission process, and to minimize such counterproductive and distracting elements as status-seeking and excessive competition. College Advising gains insights and information from visits to college campuses, from attending regional and national conferences, from networking and conversations with a tightly knit and knowledgeable group of experts/colleagues/friends, and from hosting more than one hundred visiting college representatives on Seattle Academy's campus each year. Seattle Academy is committed to ethical and legal practices in college admission as defined by the NACAC Statement of Principles of Good Practice and the Family Education Right to Privacy Act.

Welcome to Seattle Academy College Advising.

Melanie Reed, Jason Gough, and Stacie Cone
College Advising Team

SEATTLE ACADEMY COLLEGE ADVISING: EXPECTATIONS, POLICIES, AND ETHICS

Applying to college is a complicated process, during which Seattle Academy College Advising, students and families adhere to the highest ethical standards.

Expected of College Advising:

- College Advising is available to students and parents to counsel and facilitate, but not to tell students where they can or cannot apply, or where they should enroll.
- College Advising arranges informative meetings for the school community.
- College Advising meets with each junior and his/her family for an extended conference during the spring of the student's junior year.
- College Advising schedules, publicizes, and participates in well over 100 college representatives' visits to Seattle Academy yearly.
- College Advising writes a positive, honest, vivid letter of recommendation, on behalf of Seattle Academy, for each senior.
- College Advising gathers together and sends the following school support materials to colleges, universities, special programs, and scholarship organizations designated by students: Seattle Academy Secondary School Report with counselor letter, teacher recommendations, Seattle Academy school profile, the student's most current transcript, a mid-year transcript, and other materials as arranged by student and advisor. College Advising is in a unique position to provide these documents as well as insight on each student within his/her Seattle Academy setting. (See additional services sheet, in handbook.)

Expected of Seattle Academy students:

- Students complete college office assignments and meet deadlines.
- When they can do so without jeopardizing their schoolwork, students meet with selected visiting college representatives from colleges that seriously interest them.
- Students ensure they know all of their colleges' deadlines and requirements.
- Students secure teacher recommendations by June 15, following springtime instructions from College Advising.
- For colleges with rolling admission and November or December deadlines, and for Early Action/Early Decision programs, students request mailing of school support materials at least two weeks ahead of the colleges' deadlines.
- Students submit a final college list to Naviance by College Advising's required deadlines (depending on application plans, October 1 or October 15, and again for everyone on December 1).
- Students locate and apply to at least one "probable" college where they are certain they will be admitted and where they could be happy as a student.
- Students are expected to complete the applications they include in their final list in Naviance, the complete list of which (including "probable" schools) is used by College Advising to help predict (but not guarantee) overall outcomes. Eliminating schools from the list without first consulting with College Advising renders moot College Advising's predictions. Students should delete an application only after first checking with College Advising.

- Students register for standardized tests and arrange to have scores sent to colleges.
- Students are responsible for confirmation of the receipt of each application roughly 4-6 weeks after application (earlier for Early Decision and for application processes with smaller windows). For most applications, checking a complete application earlier than four weeks is unproductive given the volume of mail in college admission offices.
- Students keep college advisors aware of developments in their college plans.
- Students are to be ethical in their application practices: the application should be the work of the student, and it should accurately reflect the student's life and work. Students should answer truthfully any questions about their school disciplinary record.

Expected of Seattle Academy families:

- Families support their student(s) in the college selection and application process, establish necessary collaborative dialogues with college advisors and teachers, and make college applications the student's project as much as possible.
- Families reinforce College Advising in its efforts to counsel Seattle Academy applicants.
- Families support an ethical approach to college admission.
- Families emphasize completing a Seattle Academy career with pride and a sense of accomplishment.

POLICIES

- No teacher, administrator, or staff person is to show any student a recommendation written about him or her, or about any other student. This policy gives Seattle Academy significant credibility with colleges. A college can trust us to be candid in our reflections on students, so that our praise carries more clout. Students can trust College Advising and teachers to be positive in their recommendations.
- Students are to do their own work on applications. Nothing is more disappointing to a college than work obviously completed by someone other than the student. In fact, at times this can be grounds for a denial. A student may fill out a photocopied rough draft, and enlist a typist to complete the final draft—but the typist should not make any alterations in the student's work. Students should, of course, ask teachers, parents, peers, or advisors to help proof-read an application.
- Seattle Academy will not support students in any unethical dealing with colleges: failing to comply with an Early Decision commitment, getting unethical help with an application, misrepresenting any aspect of the high school record (including the student's disciplinary record), double-depositing in May (officially enrolling in more than one college)—such actions and others like them may result in the school's official withdrawal of support for a student's candidacy for admission to college.

ETHICS

Any breach of the following ethical principles may result in a college's dismissal from the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC), of which Seattle Academy is a member. Please alert Seattle Academy College Advising if you notice any unethical college practice.

- When accepting a student, no college may require a deposit or commitment from the student before May 1, except in the case of binding Early Decision applicants. If a college states or implies that you must make a deposit or commitment in order to hold your place, make a request in writing for a deposit deferral until May 1.

- A college may not accept a student before the student has officially applied to the college.
- A college may not require a deposit or commitment from a student in order to retain a place on a waiting list.

Any breach of the following ethical principles by the applicant or by the enrollee, or by the secondary school, may result in a college's withdrawal of an offer of admission.

- A student must abide by the provisions of an Early Decision or Early Action plan.
- By May 1, a student must make or retain a deposit and promise to enroll at no more than one college. Students may retain a place on a wait list at another institution.
- Seattle Academy may have to report a change in status that has developed for a college admission candidate or admitted student. Occurrences that have qualified previously as "changes in status" include honor offenses, plagiarism, excessive absences, sharp drops in grades, significant changes in course enrollment (dropping a course or transferring to another core course, for example), significant disciplinary action, failure to qualify for graduation, behavior that suggests harm to the future college community, and convictions and other legal offenses. This ethical obligation continues through a student's senior year until after graduation.

In conclusion, College Advising's goal is for each student to:

- Complete applications to the colleges each student lists on his/her final list, unless admission to a college with an early program permits the student not to complete all applications.
- Adhere to the advice of College Advising, especially as pertains to the national admission landscape and admissibility within it. Following advice includes monitoring one's email and Naviance accounts, and keeping track of deadlines.
- Refine and communicate one's own identity honestly and vividly.
- Err on the side of healthy approaches to the process, rather than approaches borne of fear and pressure.
- Treat one's self, classmates, teachers, family members, and advisors positively and graciously throughout the process.
- Graduate from Seattle Academy with a sense of pride in one's academic and co-curricular résumé, in one's interpersonal relationships, and in the completed tasks related to applying to a diverse range of good-fit colleges.

SEATTLE ACADEMY COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Through its three college advising professionals, Seattle Academy College Advising fuses nearly twenty-five years of college admission and advising experience with deep knowledge of Seattle Academy and students' day-to-day life therein. As a result, one hundred percent of Seattle Academy's seniors enroll in four-year colleges, universities and conservatories within two years of graduation, as up to five percent elect to take a gap year prior to college matriculation. These colleges include the nation's most selective.

Melanie Reed, Director of College Advising (mreed@seattleacademy.org) and Jason Gough, Associate College Advisor (jgough@seattleacademy.org) both served on the fast-paced, selective college admission team at the University of Puget Sound. Together, they made tough admission decisions, formed policy, represented the college to demanding constituents, and worked directly and personally with families. In her role as Director of Freshman Admission at Puget Sound, Melanie supervised the admission counseling staff and developed a comprehensive knowledge of the admission profession. Following his years at Puget Sound, Jason pursued graduate school and taught at several selective independent schools nationwide. Reunited at Seattle Academy, Melanie and Jason work shoulder-to-shoulder with faculty who have direct knowledge of the academic and extra-curricular lives of kids. Stacie Cone (scone@seattleacademy.org) adds to the team exceptional organizational and technical skills, as well as excellent rapport with families and college representatives alike. This collective experience arms Seattle Academy and its families with real "college-side" experience, everyday understanding of students in Seattle Academy's own classrooms, myth-busting perspective, and informed, humane college advising pedagogy that cuts through mystifying media hype to organize and find the right destinations for kids.

Conversation

In Seattle Academy's dynamic college-preparatory setting, it's no surprise energetic conversations about college occur regularly and informally. Seattle Academy College Advising welcomes questions and conversation at any time. In eleventh grade, juniors and their families formally kick-off the college process, marking the official shift from College Advising's deep and intentional attention to the current senior class and its application processing, to the junior class and its needs. Melanie and Jason, however, meet with parents as a group during the spring of students' sophomore year and during the fall of students' junior year to set the foundation for the teamwork to come. The critical focus, however, is on the real foundation of students' college applications: the academic and co-curricular transcript. College Advising establishes this essential balance to maintain proper focus on the actual core of college advising success: not artificial and transparent packaging, but instead material shaped directly through Seattle Academy's Culture of Performance. The college search is the naturally culminating event of the Seattle Academy experience, and the practical application of the Culture of Performance. Each student discusses at length the college process with College Advising, both in scheduled meetings and in Seattle Academy's classrooms and hallways. The benefit of these on-site conversations is clear: Seattle Academy College Advising functions as part of a broader network of faculty and staff who know and advise each student, formally and informally.

Service, Education, and Representation

Seattle Academy College Advising stands at the intersection of students' and families' college-going desires and the reality of the national admission landscape as it:

- forms the organizational "home base" for each student's college search
- structures a college-seeking program customized to the individual student's needs and style
- evaluates each student's college needs via day-to-day interactions, official and unofficial conversations, detailed questionnaires, and College Advising assessments
- develops college lists and revises college lists
- stocks an up-to-date on-site college media center
- suggests and monitors travel plans to see colleges
- provides college interview practice and tips
- advises regarding test prep and test planning
- answers questions about necessary and unnecessary "a la carte" services for fee outside the Seattle Academy network
- advises about financial aid and scholarships
- helps each student translate his or her strengths to the applications themselves

- reviews and provides feedback on college essays and résumés (Melanie and Jason have read nearly fifteen thousand college essays in their combined years)
- sets due dates for completion of college tasks
- helps coordinate teacher recommendation writing
- writes each student's official "counselor letter," drawing on daily knowledge of the student
- arranges and submits thousands of Seattle Academy-specific materials for students (including the "counselor letter," the "secondary school report," teacher recommendations, context for Seattle Academy's policies on AP/honors classes and on disciplinary reporting, the "report to colleges" or school profile, the school transcript, an outline of the applicant's current academic course load and more)
- advocates directly with admission offices* where appropriate and where genuinely beneficial
- guides students in self-advocacy, critical to student success in college
- organizes and leads after-hours workshops for parents and students on such topics as college athletics and athletic recruitment, financial aid, learning differences and the college search, college essay writing, and transition to college
- helps sort through various admission decisions and possible college choices in the senior spring

Availability

Seattle Academy College Advising not only sees and knows students through College Advising appointments, but accompanies students on school retreats and events, attends students' artistic and athletic events, witnesses first-hand student successes, and has contact with students throughout the school day. College Advising truly knows Seattle Academy students. This personal, flexible, everyday approach complements College Advising's regularly scheduled appointments. "Working where students live" during the Seattle Academy school day, Seattle Academy College Advising meets each day with various Seattle Academy students and families, and with visiting college representatives. Additionally, students regularly take advantage of an informal "drop in" sessions where they ask quick questions, drop off forms, stop by for dedicated time and space to work on a college application project, or simply connect with College Advising. College Advising responds to email, phone, or fax inquiries with assistance for families.

Network

Melanie is a past board member of the Pacific Northwest Association of College Admission Counseling and assumes leadership roles in the National Association of College Admission Counseling. In her work as Director at University of Puget Sound, she traveled broadly, visiting colleges and establishing long-term professional relationships with other college deans and directors. Melanie increases her knowledge regularly through attendance at national and regional admission counseling conferences and through visits to colleges nationally. In the past year, Seattle Academy College Advising visited officially over fifty colleges nationally and internationally, many of them on tours reserved especially for college advisors based at high-schools, as well as the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) annual conference in St. Louis and the Clambake Institute at St. George's School in Newport, RI.

As the home base for students' college investigations, Seattle Academy hosts on-site well over one hundred college representatives yearly (more than the number of Seattle Academy graduates each year). These college representatives not only visit the school directly, they witness Seattle Academy students where they learn and live, and benefit from post-meeting face-to-face conversations with College Advising which puts into even greater context the students they just met and their academic environment. Visiting college representatives also host College Advising for dinner and conversation about the school itself and about the state of the profession.

Seattle Academy College Advising partners with its counterparts at Seattle's independent schools for conversation, shared experience, joint-presentations, and the organization of the fourth annual Seattle Area Independent Schools Fair in fall 2011, which will draw approximately 140 selective colleges and universities to Seattle to meet our students exclusively.

Community

Seattle Academy College Advising extends beyond the walls of Seattle Academy. Its partnership with Rainier Scholars results in consulting conversations between Seattle Academy College Advising, Seattle Academy's Rainier Scholars, and the Rainier Scholars staff, from one not-for-profit college advising office to another, to ensure the best in not-for-profit college advising for Seattle's kids, regardless of income. Regardless of home high school, Rainier Scholars students are invited to Seattle Academy College Advising workshops scheduled throughout the academic year.

* Note: Often, admission offices have policies where they communicate only with a College Advisor based at the high school.

College materials often request the following information:

CEEB/ACT Code: 481154

FAX: (206) 323-6618

PHONE: 206-323-6600

For guest access to a list of colleges visiting Seattle Academy between mid-September and mid-November, click: <http://connection.naviance.com/seattleacademy> and enter "saas" as the guest password.

BASIC FACTORS IN COLLEGE ADMISSION DECISIONS: AN OVERVIEW

To begin, what exactly do colleges seek in candidates? As they weigh the merits of applicants, college admission offices are in remarkable agreement about the relative importance of the following factors, listed below in descending order of importance. Melanie and Jason's experience as former members of admission committees confirms each item. (The interview may count heavily or not at all; read your colleges' materials carefully.)

1. **Most important factor: your secondary school record.** This evaluation involves course selection (how rigorous is the curriculum selected by the student?) and grades (GPA) earned in ninth through eleventh grades (for Early Decision/Early Action candidates) or in ninth through first trimester of twelfth grade (for Regular Admission candidates). In general, it's in colleges' best interest to know the grade profile and rigor of key high schools, and colleges understand Seattle Academy well. Colleges usually calculate their own grade point average for a candidate; it may or may not conform to the one Seattle Academy calculates. Some colleges "weight" grades in advanced or honors academic classes in this calculation; others do not. Most colleges ask to know a student's rank in class (position in a descending list of senior GPA's), but, like many small schools, Seattle Academy does not publish student rankings. Ranking is not particularly meaningful in an all-college-preparatory class of fewer than 100 students, and college advisors' comments place each student in the context of the school. Note that performance through the end of senior year is critical regardless of the application plan (Early Decision, Regular Admission), and colleges reserve the right to rescind admission offers after a significant change in academic performance.

2. **Standardized test scores.** Despite the debates and the disclaimers, a good number of colleges continue to rely on standardized test scores to predict student performance in college. The larger public universities may be bound to publicize formulae that weigh SAT or ACT scores relatively heavily, giving them less flexibility in their use of these tests. Private colleges and universities are less likely to be tied to formulae and may be able to take more time to weigh multiple factors of a student's high school record. As a general rule, private colleges are less likely to eliminate a student on test scores alone. www.fairtest.org supplies a list of the nearly 1000 colleges nationally with varying test-optional policies. The advent of College Board's "Score Choice" has created some confusion around testing (more on that in the testing section), but the general rule is to send all your test scores to all your colleges if you are indeed applying with scores (not test-optional).

3. **College advisor recommendation form and letter.** Your college advisor, speaking on behalf of Seattle Academy, writes a positive, comprehensive recommendation of each senior. The recommendation focuses on the student's records, personality, and activities, making the best case for the student without ignoring difficulties as they appear in the application materials. Though this recommendation cannot fully compensate for weaknesses in a student's transcript, it can bring the student to life for the admission committee, interpret Seattle Academy's academic culture and grading system, and explain extenuating circumstances in a student's life.

4. **Teacher recommendations and the depth of student's excellence in activities.** Seattle Academy's teachers write thorough, convincing recommendations for students they have taught and worked with outside of class. Like the college advisor's letters, these recommendations cannot compensate for weaknesses but can focus on the positive attributes and accomplishments of students specifically in their classrooms. Advice about asking teachers to write follows in this handbook.

Colleges are more interested in the quality (have you developed personally?) than the quantity of students' extracurricular activities. One or two clubs, sports, or other activities are more than enough if you have taken leadership roles, gained expertise, or worked hard on projects. Do not try to put together a long list of clubs in order to seem "active." An inauthentic, "constructed" application is transparent to colleges. Do what you love genuinely and lots of good "ammo" will follow.

5. **The essay.** Though the essay rarely gets a student into college or keeps a student out of college, it is your chance to distinguish yourself in the committee's eyes. You have an opportunity to make a good impression with your writing skills and your appealing story. In fact, if you think of your composite story, and of the other information your application already shares, how can your essay(s) provide information not otherwise divulged, explain a "red flag," or emphasize a punchline you especially want to stress? Find one or two knowledgeable advisors for this project (ignore all the others who are eager to tell you what to write), and use a good proof-reader! (See a good deal more information about college essay writing later in this handbook.)

6. **Employment, summer experiences, community service, exchange programs, and more** may get you some attention, depending on their various merits and your achievements in them as well as your thoughtfulness regarding how you developed relative to them. In college application terms, the activity itself often has less meaning than your reflection later on perspective gained from it and/or your application of new skills or insights afterward. For example, if you did service work abroad, was it a short-lived experience after which you never did service again? Or did you notice a need in your own neighborhood and then take action on it? How did you continue the effort?

SEATTLE ACADEMY'S GUIDE TO MATCHING YOURSELF TO COLLEGES

Before you can begin to research and select colleges, you must understand yourself in the context of your peers and understand colleges in the context of their peers. Melanie and Jason will ask you to complete a questionnaire online in Naviance before your first college appointment. Still more questions follow if you need or desire still more self-assessment. Use the online questionnaire and this worksheet to think about who you are, what you want, and what you need.

Who are you?

1. Do you like school? Do you love it?
2. If so, what specific things do you like about school? Do you thrive in a challenging academic atmosphere? Are you hungry to learn, or is your enjoyment of school more about the whole picture: the learning, the communal life, the array of opportunities, the fun, and so on?
3. If learning is a high priority for you, do you thrive in a challenging academic atmosphere? Do you relish a stimulating, fast-paced challenge: three long papers due in one week, a presentation for a famous professor, mid-year exams while you're playing the lead in a major college play? Are you stimulated by the thought of brainiac classmates? Do you have ambitions to get study grants, apply to be a Rhodes Scholar, be a research assistant for a famous lawyer? Also, do you crave the above, but does your transcript suggest otherwise? Why might that be? And how will you explain that to colleges?
4. If you thrive in a more nurturing academic atmosphere, is it because of a bit slower pace, and/or because the atmosphere is more collaborative than competitive, and/or because you are more confident you can succeed, because you want more balance in your life, or what? Would you feel better knowing that there's a highly accessible support system operating around you?
5. If you couldn't answer "yes" to the first question above (do you like school?), why not? Is school stressful for you? Why? Is school difficult for you? Why? Do you believe that the communal life of college will take some adjustments on your part? Do you have trouble setting priorities or balancing responsibilities? Are you feeling a little tentative about your ability to jump right into a fast academic and social scene; do you think you'd like to ease into it?
6. Would you rather be a big fish in a small pond, a small fish in a big pond, a small fish in a small pond, or a big fish in a big pond? Ask yourself why you answered the way you did.
7. Do you have some special challenges in your life: learning differences, physical differences, depression, substance issues, or other? Will the colleges you're considering support your work to meet these challenges? Will the city or community surrounding that college nurture or test these things?
8. When you think about college, are you thinking primarily about the social life? Will college be a time for you to explore and develop socially more than academically? If so, it's better to be honest with yourself as you select a college. Are you so socially oriented that you don't care as much about the academics of a school? Or are you someone who wants to have the opportunity to get serious about academics as college goes on and you sort out your social issues?
9. When you think about college, are you thinking primarily about your favorite extracurricular activities (drama, music, sports, etc.)? If so, again, it's better to be honest with yourself. You should pick a college where the academics will not be so challenging for you that you don't have time to pursue your foremost passions. But, again, do you feel that you will get more serious about academics as college goes on? Will the college you're considering offer you good education when that time comes?
10. Being honest with yourself, do you think you want a college where you can be anonymous and hide from your professors? Are you tired of the pressure of showing up prepared and being "on" for class every day? If so, are you sure that you want to take the easier, less personal route through college? If you're not sure, perhaps there is an intermediate style of college, where you can be anonymous for a while, then grow into a more active, engaged student.
11. Do you have theoretical or pragmatic goals for college? That is, do you hope to leave college ready to start a career, or do you want a general liberal arts education? Are you prepared to go to graduate school for your career?
12. Do you handle hustle and bustle well? Can you plan ahead and make arrangements and scout around about how to get things done? Is there already evidence of this in your life? If so, you can probably manage the logistics of a big university.

13. If your answers to the preceding questions are “no,” you might want to tackle one step at a time: a smaller college for undergraduate degree, a bigger university for graduate work. Think about what kind of college will offer you a challenge that you can manage. A smaller one? One that has a built-in smaller community for you? One with special programs or offices?
14. Do you feel that it is in your best interests to go relatively far from home to college? Do you sense that you need to break out of your family system for a while in order to grow up and assert your individuality? Or do you think that you would benefit more from staying close enough to visit home from time to time? Sometimes young people need a conversation with a professional counselor to answer this question. It’s hard to see what’s most beneficial when you’re operating within a family system.
15. If there is a boyfriend or girlfriend involved in your decision, how are you thinking about him or her? Are you so afraid of losing the relationship that you are choosing a college that’s not right for you? Are you using him or her as support for you as you face a frightening new life? Or is this a more benign situation: you and your friend would be going to the same college with or without each other?
16. If your parents are struggling with the idea of spending so much money on your college, how do you understand their financial situation? Are there details about which you might not know? Are they shell-shocked by the sticker price of colleges? Do they value education less than you do? Are you looking for a status bumper sticker, not the great education offered by this expensive college? Are your parents really going to have to sacrifice to send you to the expensive college? If not, it’s time to make your best case, to push them hard. If so, it’s time to be considerate and flexible; you must work together to figure out where you can afford to go to college.

Who is the college? Note: The answers to these questions can help evaluating the “Why this college?” question so often asked in college applications and so necessary in making your final choice.

1. Who are the students, and what is your gut reaction to them? Do they look interesting, appealing? Can you picture yourself living with these people for four or more years? Are they people you admire and respect in some ways? Would you like to be part of this community? If they seem to be extreme “party animals,” are you sure that you won’t get bored with them as you mature and begin to think about the future? If they seem safe and familiar, are you sure you won’t be bored with them as you gain confidence and become ready to think new ideas and do new things?
2. Do the students at the college seem happy and stimulated? Do they seem glad that they chose the college (for more reasons than a bumper sticker and parent approval)?
3. Are you pleased by the campus? If it’s quirky, does its quiriness appeal to you? If it’s a “country club,” are you pleased by the ivory-tower effect? If it’s not very attractive, do you find enough other aspects to be appealing that you can shrug off the campus look?
4. Does the college offer some of the academic/career programs you want? But if, as happens to most students, you change your mind about your major or career, will there be someplace to go at this college? Or would you have to transfer to another college?
5. Is this college high-maintenance logistically? Do you have to do lots of maneuvering to register for classes, get a parking sticker, get tickets to a concert, and so on? Or is it easy to manage, well designed? Is this issue important to you?
6. Do the professors seem friendly and accessible? Can you picture yourself knowing at least one or two well enough to ask for a graduate school recommendation letter? Do they put their email addresses on their syllabi?
7. From the impression you get walking around campus, is this a place where you could get lost, metaphorically speaking? If you were to get into emotional or physical trouble, would you have places to turn, people to help you?
8. What happens on weekends at this college? Is the campus empty? Where is everyone, and would you be with them off-campus or alone on-campus? If the campus is lively on weekends, what are the centers of activity? (The sorority or fraternity houses, the coffee houses, the residence halls, the bars near-by, or where?)
9. What seems to be the campus culture or group personality on this campus? Do the students dress up for class and look affluent? Do they dress down and look “crunchy” or “hippie”? Is there an array of styles? Do the students get most excited about the cars in the parking lot, the presence of a famous author on campus, the game coming up on Saturday, or what other things? Do students talk about their prep schools, their first-generation to college families, their kayak trips in Alaska,

the band they play in, daddy's new plane, the homeless shelter they worked in, their hardworking parents, their international perspective, their upcoming society debut in New York, the paper they're working on for English class – what? Which of these excitements do you share, which not?

10. If you're feeling that you love everything about the college but the weather – are you sure you want to disqualify a place because it's cold or rainy? REI has great all-weather clothes, college lasts only four 9-month seasons, and often you're home for winter break during the college's bleakest time.
11. Is the college what some would call an academic pressure-cooker? Do the students seem energized by competition?
12. On campus, do you generally feel that you are in a danger or comfort zone? If it's a danger zone for you, does it feel slightly, manageably dangerous or quite beyond you at this point in your life? If it's a comfort zone, do you think it will become boring, not challenging enough before your four years are over?
13. Think about what you heard about this college before visiting it – and about who told you these things. Are you being influenced more by what you heard, or by what you see and feel?
14. Does your family have ties to this college? If so, do you feel that the family interest in the college has acted as pressure on you to consider going there? Can you remove yourself from the pressure long enough to take a good look at the place with your own eyes? Would this be a good place for **YOU**? If so, what are the reasons? If not, it's time to speak up and assert yourself.
15. As you look at the colleges, are you sure that you want to go to college next year? Perhaps you would benefit by taking a "gap year": enrolling at a college but asking to defer attendance there for a year. There are many activities and programs that you could pursue in the one-year interim. Be sure and ask yourself if the consideration of time off stems from the desire for a recharge/something new/"practical" or life experiences, from fear of the collegiate unknown, or from something else.
16. If you have been admitted to an Ivy League or other highly selective college, are you having a sinking spell, feeling as if you can't handle a place like that? If so, you're like everyone else who got admitted there, most of whom feel that their letter of acceptance was an "admission mistake" or a form of "impostor syndrome." Probably it's just nerves. But if the feeling persists or becomes stronger, talk to someone. Maybe you should consider a gap year or a less high-pressure college.
17. What role do sports play at the college? Are you happier being a player or a spectator? If you prefer to be a player, can you do that at this college? Are you ready for the intense commitment required by college varsity sports, even in Division III? Or is it important to you to be a spectator at top-notch college sporting events? Do you like the noise, tail-gating parties, cheerleaders, and such?
18. If the campus has a strong Greek life, what effect does it have on campus? Whether or not you join a sorority or a fraternity, observe what roles they play in campus life. Is the Greek crowd the "in crowd," or are there several "in-crowds." Is there an active social scene beyond the fraternity and sorority houses? Do the fraternities have legendarily wild parties? Are there recurring accusations of acquaintance rape?
19. How socially enlightened is the campus? Are there incidents resulting from homophobia, racism, sexism, and more? Do the students take pride in their compassion or in their elite status? How do you *feel* about all of this?

In sum, is this a college where you can develop into your best self?

COLLEGE RESEARCH ONLINE

You now have a rough outline for what colleges seek in candidates and an idea of what you might seek in a college. This information, coupled with conversations with your college advisor, will help assess good college matches and the strength of your candidacy. Now, among these and other colleges, how to begin researching places you might like to apply? The Web is students' obvious destination for friendly, information-rich college exploration in advance of college tours and the application season. Below are a few websites to get you started.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, and more links appear in your Naviance account. Nonetheless, if your explorations yields other helpful sites, let us know and we'll include them!

WEBSITES: GENERAL COLLEGE ADMISSION RESOURCES

For Seattle Academy families, **Naviance** is the home base that collects and delivers vast amounts of college information. From there, families can access, at minimum, each college's details and link to each college's website. Juniors and seniors and their families with passwords can log-in and see more individualized information; guests can still explore the core site, at: <https://connection.naviance.com/fc/signin.php?hsid=seattleacademy>

In addition to **each college's individual site**, and others to follow in this guide (see each handbook topic for relevant websites), the following is a general overview of basic Internet research tools:

Careers and Colleges (www.careersandcolleges.com):
Categories: College Search, Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Center, Sports' Source, Parents' Corner.
College homepage and financial aid links.

College Board (www.collegeboard.com):
One of several commercial sites that offer a wide range of services, both free and for sale.

College Link Pages, American universities (www.clas.ufl.edu/CLAS/american-universities.html):
Direct links to the homepages of approximately 1100 American colleges.

CollegeNet (<http://collegenet.com>):
Database of colleges, scholarships, and other academic resources. Online application, scholarship and financial aid search engines (including "College BOT Explorer" that finds information in college catalogs).
Link to Barnes and Noble for discount purchase of books, software, and CDs.

Embark (www.embark.com):
Site with online applications, college matching, test preparation and financial aid.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (www.hbcu-central.com):
Site for access to historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), with links to services and supporting/sponsoring organizations. (Scroll to "Education." Select. Scroll to "Historically Black Colleges and Universities.")

Hillel, the Foundation for Jewish Campus Life (www.hillel.org):
Website for searching colleges with robust Jewish life.

NACAC (www.nacacnet.org):
National Association of College Admissions Counselors' (of which Melanie and Tom are members) Website contains information about college fair calendars, Statement of Principles of Good Practice (code of ethical conduct governing students and colleges in the admissions process), general advice, and a regularly updated list of useful web resources.

Students' Link to Government (www.students.gov):
US government's Website about higher education. Many links and resources ranging from pre-college activities to repayment of loans to how to register to vote to military service.

Again, far more links and resources are available on **Naviance** at:
<https://connection.naviance.com/fc/signin.php?hsid=seattleacademy>

HOW MANY COLLEGES? AND OF WHAT TYPES?

At Seattle Academy, we don't believe in finding one "right" college for each student. Too often, a student comes home from college tours disappointed because tiny factors at each visit did not match an impossible "dream school" in one's head. We believe instead in finding three to ten good college matches (the average number of applications last year by Seattle Academy seniors was between 7-8), of several sizes, styles, and levels of selectivity. Try to narrow your list to this number before you return senior year, partially so that you can concentrate on your schoolwork along with your work on applications, and partially so you can respect teachers' time by giving them plenty of notice before they submit your letters of support (recommendations). You are required to submit a preliminary list to Naviance by October 1 or 15 (depending on whether you're applying Early Decision), and you **must** have your final list ready by the December deadline to ensure timely pre-winter break submission of counselor recommendation, transcript, and so on.

Vary the selectivity of your college choices as follows:

- Apply to at least two "very accessible" schools, colleges to which you are fairly certain you'll be admitted.
- Apply to several "probable" schools, colleges where you have a solid chance of being admitted.
- Apply to a couple of "long shot" colleges, place you love but where you have only a small chance of being admitted. If you don't try, you'll always wonder.
- Do not plan to apply to all eight "Ivies," for example, to improve your odds of admission to one. Common wisdom is that students should not apply to more than three "long shot" (or "reach" or "stratosphere") schools, especially those schools with enormous applicant pools, far more qualified candidates than they can handle, and unpredictable (or, predictable... but not always advantageous) institutional priorities. Applications to these schools are especially time consuming, and increasing the number of long shot colleges does **not** increase the likelihood of admission.

Curious whether schools fall in the "accessible," "probably" and "long shot" categories?

- Work with your college advisor to vary the accessibility of schools on your list.
- Check your favorite schools against the data and scattergrams in Naviance to see into which category your schools fall.
- Compare your own labels with those of your college advisor to ensure your list has balance and variety.
- This exercise helps ensure that students have "homes" come fall at schools appealing to them.
- In November, you receive an official mailing from College Advising, confirming the schools to which you plan to apply, and offering in writing last feedback and suggestions. In the end, the college advisors will insist that your list includes at least a couple of schools where admission is highly probable.

Vary the size and style of your college choices as follows:

- If you're almost certain that you want a large public university, consider applying to one smaller one, perhaps a liberal arts college with a lively campus.
- If you're applying to engineering schools, consider applying to one liberal arts school with a good engineering department. Many liberal arts colleges now have dual-degree engineering arrangements with top engineering schools.
- If you're applying to small liberal arts colleges in New England, consider trying a small liberal arts college or a medium-sized university in the Midwest (you'd be surprised!).
- If you're worried about leaving home, try applying to one school in Chicago, just in case you feel braver in August! Or, if all of your choices are in New York City, apply to one college in or near San Francisco. Plans and needs change. And so on...

ADMISSION DEADLINE OPTIONS: REGULAR, ROLLING, ED, EA, EASC

There are different “plans” for when and how students apply to college, resulting in a murky alphabet soup for families. Here’s a glossary of the different terms to help make sense of it all:

Early Decision (ED)

Most colleges use this term (ED) to signify a binding early decision program. A student applies by an early date (usually in November) and agrees to enroll in the college if admitted in December or January provided the college meets the student’s demonstrated need (if applicable). Often there are two “rounds” of Early Decision (on, but not limited to, November 15 and December 15, for example – but check and know your deadlines!) with decisions issued roughly four weeks later. The committee makes a decision based on your record through junior year. Not recommended for students seeking significant financial aid (check in with your college advisor): you’ll receive only one financial aid package and won’t be able to shop around.

Early Decision II (ED II)

As mentioned above, often this is identical in policy to an “ED” application, just with a later deadline. For students desiring to apply Early Decision, sometimes ED II is timed well to capture students denied or released from the institution they applied in the first round of ED.

Early Action (EA)

Most colleges use this term to signify a non-binding early action program. A student applies by an early date (usually in November) but does not have to commit to enroll in the college if admitted in December and can continue to pursue other college options. Admission is based on the student’s record through junior year (though colleges always reserve the right to rescind offers if academic or disciplinary performance changes between the time of the offer and the time of enrollment). Rules about multiple EA applications vary (see below).

Early Action Single Choice (EASC)

The newer kid on the application block, Early Action Single Choice is now the plan of a small group of schools. A student cannot apply to any other early action or early decision plans at the same time one is under review at the “single choice” school. Think of it as non-binding early decision: early notification from the college without commitment on your part to attend.

Priority

If not applying under ED, EA, or EASC, this is still a great way to submit materials earlier. Students should apply, for example, to Washington State public colleges by Thanksgiving, even though the deadlines might look a little later. Note that University of Washington’s deadline creeps up: The new final deadline for UW is December 15.

Regular Decision

Rolling Admissions (Regular Decision): colleges notify applicants about admission as soon as they have received and reviewed all the candidate’s application materials. Apply early! This is usually a non-binding means of applying and is usually associated with state institutions. Just because the deadline sometimes looks later doesn’t mean you should apply later. In some cases, you could learn of a decision earlier, or have improved access to housing.

Common Notification Date (Regular Decision)

Colleges post a deadline for receipt of all applications, then make decisions from a perspective that includes the entire applicant pool. Notification of most candidates on a single date, usually in March or April (April 1 is common). Some of these institutions do have much earlier deadlines by which you should apply for scholarship consideration.

THE ART OF WALKING BACKWARD: SEATTLE ACADEMY'S COLLEGE VISIT GUIDE

Now that you have a rough overview of the process in your head, plan to visit a few colleges before or during your junior year and a few more before or during senior year. Visit when the college is in session (not critical, but helpful), but—if possible—when Seattle Academy is **not** in session (teacher workdays, teacher conference days, winter and spring breaks, and so on; see the calendars at the back of this handbook). You can visit a college with your parent(s), with your friend(s), or alone. You can visit a college for only a couple of hours, for a half or full day, for a spend-the-night (arrange it through the Office of Admission), or for a whole weekend. Visiting more than two colleges in one day can be overkill; try to avoid that. Beyond two, your head swims with details and great colleges can seem not-so-great. You can take virtual tours of colleges (a good strategy for weeding out or for getting to know colleges it's not possible for you to visit) at Websites listed at the close of this section.

Advice for visiting colleges:

- Several weeks before your visit, call the Admission Office and/or visit the college's Website for information about on-campus tours and information sessions. Usually a college holds two information sessions per weekday and one (or none) on weekends. If you want to arrange an overnight or a class visit, do it by telephone or special link from the Website. Take notes at the information sessions; they'll come in handy when you are preparing later for an interview, trying to differentiate one school from another after a long tour, or answering the ubiquitous "why do you want to attend College X?" question on applications.
- If you know of any Seattle Academy alumni currently at the college you're visiting, try to set up a time to get together. They can tell you and show you things from a uniquely Seattle Academy perspective. Take photos; you'll find that the colleges blur together after you've left the campuses.
- If possible, get a bit of face time with the admission counselor who conducts the information session or leads the campus tour. Remember the person's name; find out if s/he will read the applications from Seattle Academy. Ask if you may be in touch by email if you have any problems. Fill out any visitation cards offered you (most colleges keep track of who made a point to visit campus, and this is a good way to confirm you were there). Introduce yourself to admission counselors when appropriate. Send thank you notes (email is fine, but snail mail is a lost art! Go for it!) after your visit. Also, see the sports item, below.
- Consider sitting in on a class, an excellent way to see how students interact in the classroom. This would need to be arranged ahead of time. Be sensitive to receptionists in busy admission offices (always, yet particularly during harried "high seasons"). Receptionists sometimes have the ear of the admission committee, as do tourguides, janitors, the people who work in food service... don't be a jerk to anyone on a college campus during this process.
- Consider spending a night in the dorm, either through the college's ambassador program or with a friend or Seattle Academy graduate. This should be arranged ahead of time.
- If you plan to apply for a sports program, try to meet the coach of your sport. Offer to provide an athletics resume or to send responses to questions on an athletic page form. As always, if you have contact with a coach (or anyone with a position of influence on a college campus), send at least an email thank you afterward and perhaps even a snail-mail thank you. As with an admission officer, reference specifics of the conversation, mention a positive, vivid detail of your campus visit, and/or ask a question.
- If you have a personal, one-on-one interview, be sure to ask as many questions as you answer and try not to ask obvious questions you might have researched beforehand in the college's materials ("how many students go here?"). See suggestions in the campus visit section of this handbook.
- Fill out your research sheet (a copy of which follows a little further along in this handbook), so schools don't blur too much before you get home. Take a single tourguide or the weather on a given day with a grain of salt and be fair about how either influenced your impressions.

FIVE MINUTES, FIVE TIPS: THE CAMPUS VISIT

Melanie wrote a series of college visit tips for her former institution's website. The following is excerpted from that series.

1. **Find students engaged in research.** Many colleges fund independent student research in the sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities. While these students are understandably tucked away working on their projects, they're often your best resource for quick questions about campus life and about unique opportunities available to students.
2. **Check out bulletin boards.** Often, information about student projects and campus events is posted around campus. Fancy yourself a detective, and discover the essence of the place through posted advertisements for community events, the last issue of the campus newspaper (also available online, with letters to the editor from students – very helpful), and the texture of the surrounding neighborhood.
3. **Ask more questions than normal of the tour guide.** While you should always come prepared with your hot questions (I'm shocked sometimes at how few questions students often ask on tours! This is your chance!), don't hesitate to ask: "How would you describe the typical student at this college?" or "Describe for us a typical Wednesday during the academic year" or "Would a same-sex couple feel comfortable/respected holding hands publicly on this campus?" to discover what the traffic and atmosphere is like on any given weekday.
4. **Be a bit more leisurely.** So often, you're rushed to get from college A to college B and are unable to check out the "main streets," museums, community festivals, farmers' markets, coffee shops, independent movie theaters, waterfront areas, tourist attractions, and recreational opportunities that define the co-curricular lives of college students. Take an extra day, have fun, and discover the location of the town's open-mike night or new yoga studio before your future college friends.
5. **Plan to return.** Understandably, the true character of a campus is defined by its students and its faculty. For your favorite colleges, make arrangements to return again, either in advance of applying, or after you've been accepted, to make your final college decisions.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Is visiting a challenge given time, other commitments, money, or uncertainty of admission? Among other tools, these can help clarify pros/cons and help answer the "Why do you want to attend College X?" question you'll invariably answer.

Collegiate Choice (www.collegiatechoice.com):

Not authorized by the colleges themselves, these video tours provide a raw, inside look at all aspects of campus life, including some unflattering views. These are videotaped actual walking tours of many college campuses.

Campus Tours (www.campustours.com):

Great source for virtual college tours, webcams, campus maps, college videos, movies, and pictures. The college finder allows you to sort through thousands of colleges and universities to find schools that are right for you by having you answer questions in a survey in order to narrow down your search. Online applications available as well.

Unigo (<http://www.unigo.com/>):

College videos and reviews submitted by students. Do take these with a grain of salt, as it seems like the contributions (like many things) are from the absolutely most satisfied/dissatisfied.

ON- OR OFF-CAMPUS COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

Some colleges do not give individual interviews; others rely heavily on them. If a college stresses interviews, it is certainly to your advantage to arrange one. The interview offers you an opportunity not only to make the process more personal but also to learn more about the college.

Colleges offer several kinds of interviews: on-campus individual interview with an admission counselor or senior student (during your visit), on-campus group interview (usually six or so students with one admission counselor), off-campus with institutional rep in coffee shop or hotel lobby, off-campus individual interview with an alumna or alumnus, and (usually in competitive scholarship programs) on- or off-campus interview with a group of interviewers. You prepare in the same ways for all of these.

Preparation

- Read up on the college. Familiarize yourself with curriculum, campus life, and special features of the college. Why are you interested in going there?
- If nothing else, be able to answer two questions: “Why [College X]?” and “What lights your [intellectual/creative/curiosity] fire?” These shouldn’t be overly rehearsed, but then again, don’t arrive without thoughts whatsoever.
- Take stock of yourself; think about ways to talk about your strengths and weaknesses. For example, will the inevitable conversation about your transcript raise flags? When pushed to explain, what will you say? If weakness, what are specific plans for improvement? (Make sure you make good on those plans!)
- Make a list of questions you want to ask the interviewer. (See suggestions in the next section.)
- Arrange for a mock interview in the College Advising, if you wish. Remember also that informational meetings you had already with your Seattle Academy college advisor are very much like college interviews.

At the Interview

- Dress neatly. You do not need to dress formally, nor get a haircut, but some students do. A tie could seem like too much on some campuses, much like spaghetti straps (don’t show too much skin in any case) and flip-flops could seem like “too little” (really) on others. You want to be yourself, but also look as if you care about the impression. Reading the college’s atmosphere will help assess interview dress.
- Be prompt! Interviewers understand about traffic, but don’t be nonchalant about timing.
- Be friendly, relaxed, and courteous. You never know how information about student and parent behavior (on the phone or in person) travels around campuses and admission offices. This includes (perhaps most importantly) members of the support staff.
- Do not bring your family into the interview room unless/until the interviewer invites in your family afterward for further questions.
- Don’t ask questions that you could answer by looking superficially at the catalogue.
- Don’t be afraid to ask human interest questions (“What do students like, and not like, about the food?”). Definitely ask some questions with academic content as well.
- Try not to be too nervous, especially with alumni interviews. Many colleges do not weigh alumni interview reports very heavily. To find out how heavily the interview will be weighed, ask any interviewer, “Is this interview considered evaluative or informative?”

Relatively Standard Questions Asked by Interviewers

- Again: Why are you here? Why this college?
- Tell me a little about yourself.
- Tell me about Seattle Academy.

- What other colleges are on your list? What factors went into developing your list of schools?
- What are your academic passions?
- About what are you curious intellectually?
- What are you reading (in school, out of school)?
- What skills or talents will you bring to this college?
- Why should College X admit you?
- What is your greatest academic strength?
- What would you like to ask me about this college?
- What are you hoping to get out of college? How do you think college will change you?
- If you had to guess now, what will be your major?

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING ON- OR OFF-CAMPUS COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

As we mentioned, a sit down conversation with a student representative or a member of the admission staff will likely be casual, and might be evaluative. Always have questions prepared (you can bring them in a notebook – you can also use this to take notes to reference later in answering the inevitable “Why?” questions on your applications) for this situation. Even if you feel like you asked your questions already of five other people associated with College X, this is a new contact with his/her own perspective. As we said earlier, never ask a question you could answer by a brief look at the college’s materials: familiarize yourself with the college before an interview. Prepare some questions relating to your special interests (Is there a traveling club soccer team? How hard is it to make that team?). Then be ready with plenty of other questions—some suggestions follow. Ask these also of alumni representatives with whom you meet here in Seattle. Alumni and reps love to talk about their institutions, so give them a chance!

Academics

- How would you describe the nature of classes at this college? (Big? Small? Discussion? Lecture?)
- Are students taught more by professors or by teaching assistants? What are your impressions of the two different experiences?
- Are the professors/TAs accessible to students? How so?
- Are there any professors who stand out above the others? Why?
- Are students able to get most of the classes they want?
- How does academic advising work? What academic support services are available?
- In your opinion, what are the departments and programs at this college that get the most attention? Is that attention deserved? Why? Are there lesser-known departments you would regard as exceptional?
- How does grading work at the college? Is it hard to get good grades?
- How is students’ knowledge assessed? In written work? On tests?

Campus Life

- What are the best housing situations on campus? To whom are these available?
- How is the food? (And, if needed, can the college meet my specific dietary needs?)
- Is the campus most often busy or empty on the weekends?
- In your opinion, are the students more intense about work or play?
- How would you describe the campus culture: socially active, preppy, serious, sophisticated, relaxed—or...?
- Where do students’ social lives center, for the most part: the frat houses, the coffee houses, the pubs, the athletic events—or...?
- Are cultural events (lectures, concerts, speeches, etc.) frequent and well attended?
- Do people go off-campus much? What resources does the town/city offer?
- School spirit can be defined in various ways. How do students at your school demonstrate their school pride?

The College Experience

- In general, do students feel “known” by the institution and each other?
- Do you have any favorite rituals or traditions of this college?
- How do the college’s social, medical, and psychological support systems function?
- What do graduates of this college do immediately after college? Within five years?
- In what areas could the college improve? What are “hot” or controversial campus issues?
- What are its strongest areas?
- Would you say that the students love this college?
- What percentage of students return as sophomores? What percentage remains to graduate overall? How do its graduates demonstrate their enthusiasm?
- If any students choose to leave your college, what are the main reasons?

COLLEGE RESEARCH WORKSHEET

Need a format for assessing colleges you can photocopy and take with you on the road? Customize this form by adding questions specific to your needs at the bottom. Do as much research on the following as you can on your own and not during a college interview; asking these questions during an interview will often suggest you have not done your homework.

Name of college: _____

City or town: _____ Urban? "Neighborhoody?" Rural? _____

Other descriptors for location (close to restaurants, on the water, etc.) _____

Immediate impressions: _____

Names (if any) of contact persons: _____

Application fee: _____ Deadlines _____

Size: Undergraduates _____ Graduates _____ Avg. class size _____

Tests required for admission, including SAT IIs (if any) _____ Test optional? (y/n) _____

If test optional, what additional materials are required? _____

Mid-50% SAT range of accepted students: _____ Mid 50% ACT range _____

Accepted GPA avg.: _____ (take this with a grain of salt; can be misleading... also check Naviance.)

Recommendations (how many? Type?) _____ Interviews (Y/N) local _____ campus _____

Essays and specific topics? _____

Other unusual requirements, if any? _____

% out-of-state _____ % students of color _____ % international students: _____

Housing (required? Type? Appeal?) _____

Cars on campus? Parking? _____ Transportation to? _____

Food plans? _____ Athletic division? _____

% receiving aid: _____ Merit scholarships available? _____

(If applying for aid) FAFSA needed? _____ CSS/PROFILE needed? _____ Deadlines? _____

Describe academic calendar. Semester? Quarter? Block? Core or distribution requirements? None?

This college seemed different than others I visited because: _____

The "Why" question, again (useful for your apps later!): I specifically want to attend _____ because:

TESTING, TESTING... 1, 2, 3: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SAT/ACT

When should I take my first SAT or ACT?

Unless you have a good reason to begin earlier, take your first SAT and/or ACT in March, April, May, or June of your junior year. We have found very few instances where it helped students to test earlier (the only ones being if someone was going to be out of the country for a significant amount of spring or fall or had an unusual number of Saturday commitments). Unscientifically, the timing of testing in the spring of junior year is sometimes driven as much by students' Saturday morning commitments as by anything. Junior families, check your calendars and feel free to go online to register at www.actstudent.org or at www.collegeboard.com. If you have many weekend commitments in your junior spring (for sports or other activities), you may need to go ahead and take the ACT and/or SAT in January and February or double-up in the fall.

Studies show that young people, especially boys, benefit from as much maturing as possible before taking standardized tests. Remember that by the time you actually test, you'll have already had one practice ACT (in the form of the 9th grade PLAN test) and two practice SATs (in the form of 10th and 11th grade PSATs) --- and you can take plenty of unofficial practice SATs online or in books (which many students find as useful as more expensive group or individual test prep).

You have some choice in which scores you send to colleges, though this point is generally as many colleges often "superscore" the best sections/scores (let's face it: it makes their averages look better). Formerly, all SAT administrations and sections transmitted to colleges if a student elected to send SAT scores at all. Now, with the advent of College Board Score Choice, students have more control over which scores they send to colleges (this has always been the case with the ACT). The challenge is that all colleges will elect very different policies about whether they want to see all SAT attempts, for example, or allow students to pick and choose on their own. Given what we said above about colleges using the best sections of different tests on different administration dates (because it often makes their averages go up), it is our expectation at this time that students who do plan to apply to colleges that require standardized testing (some even quite selective places now permit test optional application processes) should send all their test sections for ACT and SAT and report all test administrations on applications. This can be a confusing point, and we'll continue to clarify it in individual and group meetings.

How many times should I take the SAT or ACT?

Twice for each test, for most people. Studies show that students' scores usually peak within three administrations, and testing energy is often better spent reinforcing the strength of one's transcript, so you should plan to take the test no more than three times. If you have a significant reason to believe that you can improve your score on a third try (a good test-prep experience, a recent qualification for extended time, or such), take the test a third time. If you want to use the principle of practice for improving (a very good plan), purchase *The Official SAT Study Guide* from the College Board and take one a week for about two months before the SAT administration (the book includes eight full-length tests). A good ACT prep book, like *The Real ACT Prep Guide* (includes three full-length tests) can serve the same purpose. If you score near the top on your first ACT or SAT, you may not need to re-test!

When should I take the SAT or ACT?

Many students take one or both in March, May or June of junior year, then retake one or both in September, October, or November of senior year. Senior year December and even January tests may meet a college's admission deadline, but they are less likely to meet scholarship deadlines. Some students use May or June of junior year for SAT Subject Tests or take subject tests in the senior year fall. You'll discuss subject tests specifically during an individual meeting with your college advisor as not everyone needs to take them.

Should I take the SAT Subject Tests?

Take SAT Subject Tests only if your colleges require them (see the Website at the close of this section to determine how many, which, or if they are required for your specific colleges). If you know that you can score well enough to help your candidacy, elect to take them to use in applying to colleges that deemphasize the SAT (see the FairTest Website at the

close of this section for a list). If you know that you will score well, take them to maximize your chances of placing out of certain subjects in college (you take the SAT Subject Test during your high school years of study, while you take the college's placement tests three to fifteen months after you finished studying the subjects). Some colleges use SAT IIs as de facto subject placement exams. Note that no matter how strong one's high school subject-area preparation, extremely specific information is included on the subject tests for which you must prepare in advance. Often the content is nit-picky memorization as opposed to the more global concepts emphasized at strong college prep high schools like Seattle Academy. See the table about timing in this handbook, and check with your teachers and college advisors.

Should I take the ACT as well as the SAT?

College Advising recommends both (as do most colleges, which often pick and choose sections off different tests to make their averages look better; see section on the previous page). Studies show that some students score better on one test than the other. Females and children of bilingual parents are believed to score higher, as a group, on the ACT than on the SAT. Those statistics offer no guarantees for individual testers, of course. All colleges now accept both tests, so you may wish to try both.

What is the best way to prepare for the SAT?

First, decide if you should do extra SAT prep. Does your PSAT or first SAT complement your GPA pretty well? (That is, is it about what your grades would predict or a little higher? The combination of high standardized test scores and low grades is not a desirable one.) Will that SAT qualify you for admission to the schools where you want to go? If your answers are both "yes," you probably don't need to do heroic SAT prep beyond reading through the free test booklet, practicing some sample questions, and getting a good night's sleep. If your answer to either question above is "no," and you know that you have the time and energy to engage in some test preparation, choose from the list below.

- An inexpensive and relatively simple – but highly effective – way to prepare for the ACT or SAT is to take sample tests, up to eight in the two months before the SAT administration. Purchase the College Board's book *The Official SAT Study Guide* or a good ACT prep book, set the kitchen timer, and work your way through the tests.
- Go to the Website of one of the test-prep companies (Kaplan, www.kaptest.com and Princeton Review, www.princetonreview.com) and select an online test-prep program. These companies offer interactive online prep courses in sizes small, medium, and large (to the tune of correlating costs). Or take a course in Seattle from one of these companies; these courses are expensive and time-consuming. The Websites also offer a number of helpful books and other products.
- Get in touch with a local tutor who has worked with Seattle Academy students. College Advising can supply names and phone numbers. While the test service will likely have you take a practice test, bring your PSAT score report with you to tutoring sessions to facilitate identification of your strengths and weaknesses. Betsy also retains PSAT test booklets for safekeeping.
- Attend an SAT or ACT prep workshop at one of the local colleges, schools, or libraries. College Advising will advertise these workshops if they cross our path, or check directly with local community colleges, public libraries, and public high schools.

A few other notes for selecting the timing of test prep:

- Your junior year PSAT results can help target your prep. Some students let PSAT results guide their need for prep. You can cover test prep with your college advisor at your first meeting.
- Other students take the first round of tests and then do test prep after those results. This prep occurs at the end of the summer, when not distracted with school, and in advance of fall tests or SAT IIs as appropriate.
- For test prep to be useful, students need to be able to focus on it, sometimes difficult amid many other school and co-curricular distracters.

What is Test-Optional Admission?

Even after spirited test prep, some students do not make significant gains; in fact, some scores go down. And some highly successful students simply do not test well. If you have this experience with test scores, check out the FairTest Website (<http://fairtest.org>) for information about the over 800 very credible colleges that deemphasize or ignore standardized test scores. Some of America's "best" colleges are on that list. And some non-American institutions of higher learning do not consider the SAT or ACT for admission. There IS life after high school for those who don't do well on standardized tests! (And remember, grades are generally more important than scores!) Note that beyond each college's listing on the FairTest site as deemphasizing test scores, often there are extra non-testing expectations for those colleges (portfolio, extra writing samples, extra recommendation, and so on). Use the next page to research these requirements for each of your test-optional schools and talk to your college advisor about whether applying test-optional is right for you.

JUNIOR COLLEGE NIGHT HANDOUT: REGISTERING FOR STANDARDIZED TESTING

SAT Registration Website: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/reg.html>

ACT Registration Website: <http://www.actstudent.org/>

College Advising recommends students register for the SAT and ACT with Writing early. You must register online. Registration deadlines appear below, in the online College Advising Handbook, and on our various paper calendars, but we also warn students and families not to wait until the registration deadlines (often students are forced to test somewhat far away because of limited Seattle-area test sites). Many students find it works well to complete the first part of the registration, and then bring their parents into the process when it's time to pay by credit card. Families often register immediately after Junior College Night if they have not done so already.

It is common for students to take at least one ACT and one SAT in the spring of junior year, and repeat each at least once in the fall of senior year. It is rarely beneficial to take any particular test earlier than spring, and then no more than two, perhaps three (if needed – not always the case), times total for each test. Often, students' and families' weekend and travel schedules dictate timing of these tests. Some, but not all, students will need to take SAT IIs (a.k.a. "subject tests"). More details about subject tests appear in the online College Advising Handbook, but in general, needing to schedule subject tests can "eat up" another Saturday in the late spring or fall (though students can take more than one subject test on the same day). One place to check for general subject test requirements is www.compassprep.com/admissions_req_subjects.aspx. If development of your college list over the summer means you make a decision about subject testing in the early fall, that's perfectly normal.

For testing in general, you will need to:

- Sign up for the ACT "with writing."
- Be consistent about your name. Try to use the name on record for your transcript and Naviance account (your name as it appears in Naviance is how your name appears on your transcript). This ensures better "matching" of materials at colleges.
- Establish a username and password for the sites above. Write these down in a safe place as you will need both later!
- Create a student profile by answering questions about yourself.
- Have a credit card ready to pay for the test.
- Ensure SAAS (school code #481154) receives a copy of your scores. We don't send scores to colleges (families do that), but we do need to receive scores for advising. Thanks!

College Board's Score Choice program is relatively new and, in theory, allows students to choose which test scores they share with colleges. Because policies on scores vary so widely from school to school, and because it's in the college's genuine best interest to use students' best score administrations, College Advising recommends students ignore Score Choice and "submit all." Unless you and your college advisor have strategized specifically about applying to largely "test optional" colleges (and there are now nearly 1000, listed on www.fairtest.org), share all your testing plans on your application. Six pages of comprehensive testing information and test prep services appear in the Seattle Academy College Advising Handbook, located in Naviance, under From My School / Document Library / Handbook and Application Tools.

If your family income is under approximately \$38,000 total for a family of four, please feel comfortable talking confidentially to Melanie about securing possible fee waivers or reductions for standardized test score fees and application fees.

Betsy MacKenzie has volunteered to help students who have additional questions about registration. If you run into bumps with the registration process, see Betsy at her desk during the school day, or email her anytime at bmackenzie@seattleacademy.org.

SPRING 2010 TEST DATES

*** DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THESE DEADLINES TO REGISTER!**

SAT

March 12 - Registration Deadline is Feb 11*

May 7 - Registration Deadline is April 8*

June 4 - Registration Deadline is May 6*

SAT II

May 7 - Registration Deadline is April 8*

June 4 - Registration Deadline is May 6*

ACT

April 9 - Registration Deadline is March 4*

June 11 - Registration Deadline is May 6*

Fall test registration TBD. Continue to check the websites at the top of this page regularly so you can schedule fall tests as soon as registration goes live and as soon as you have a rough idea of your Saturday fall commitments.

ARE MY COLLEGES “TEST-OPTIONAL”?

Because each student/family sends test scores directly from the testing agencies to colleges, it’s the student’s responsibility to confirm whether colleges on his/her list are “test optional.” Test optional can mean multiple things. It can mean “don’t send scores and don’t send anything in lieu of scores,” or it can mean “don’t send scores, but instead, send two graded papers, an extra recommendation, and so on.” A general list of over 800 colleges that now have some sort of test optional policy is listed at the bottom of this web page:

www.fairtest.org/university/optional

Scroll to the bottom, and click the downloadable pdf of over 800 schools that now have some sort of test optional policy. Do an audit to determine whether your schools are listed.

BUT DON’T STOP THERE! If you and your College Advisor think it might be advantageous for you to apply without submitting test scores, go to each of your favorite colleges’ admission home pages and search until you find the specific test optional application policy. Often, this policy seems like more legwork on the front end (extra items to submit), but can be worth it.

On the “Application Planning Grid” in the document library on Naviance, or on your own chart of each college’s requirements, note the specific tasks for applying “test optional” if you intend to do so for one or more schools. You can also note them below. (Note: You don’t have to apply to the number of colleges listed below; we arbitrarily picked the number of colleges at bottom. Use the back if you need more space.)

My Colleges	Test Optional	If So, Extra Requirements
1.	Y/N	List:
2.	Y/N	List:
3.	Y/N	List:
4.	Y/N	List:
5.	Y/N	List:
6.	Y/N	List:
7.	Y/N	List:
8.	Y/N	List:
9.	Y/N	List:

TESTING, TESTING... 1, 2, 3: REGISTRATION FOR THE SAT OR THE ACT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NOTE: See also the full testing handout from Junior College Night, included on page 27 of this handbook and saved on Naviance.

Register early for standardized testing to ensure your desired test administration date and location (not guaranteed). Often families register for standardized testing immediately after Junior College Night. Students and their families are responsible for registering for standardized tests and having their scores sent to colleges, scholarship committees, and the NCAA.

ONLINE: Go to www.collegeboard.com or www.actstudent.org

If you encounter struggles with registration, contact Betsy Fenton at bmackenzie@seattleacademy.org.

What is Seattle Academy's CEEB code, necessary for registration? 481154 (Definitely include this when you register.)

For which tests should the student sign up? Most students take the SAT and the ACT (WITH WRITING) once in the spring of junior year and again in the fall of senior year. Some, but not all, students need to take SAT II exams. See more details about this on the following page. The following link gives an overview of which colleges require SAT IIs, but check directly with each institution of interest as well: http://www.compassprep.com/admissions_req_subjects.aspx

I am/my child is a junior. To what colleges should we send these scores? Unless you already know where you'll go to college, don't send them anywhere. There will be opportunities later. You can send them with a later test (you get four free), order them by phone, send them online, or fill out a paper form in our office.

I am/my child is a senior. We've already sent scores to colleges, but this new score is higher. Will it automatically go to the colleges where we've sent scores before? Unfortunately, no. You will need to send the new ones.

The proctor at my/my child's SAT or ACT administration made some serious mistakes. What should we do?

You should report it immediately to the College Board or ACT. They need to know. Tell your Seattle Academy college advisor as well. Do not expect the testing companies to change your score, but they may offer you a free re-test.

Why didn't we get a score report?

If you have trouble getting one report but not another, chances are that you used slightly different names (Stanley Q. Seattle and S. Q. Seattle, for example) or that you registered with a social security number one time, a date of birth the other. Be consistent, and you won't have any trouble. The testing agencies sometimes get behind with a few scores, and you simply have to wait for them.

What are common pitfalls of test registration/score sending?

- 1) Waiting until the registration deadline to sign up for testing.
- 2) Not including Seattle Academy/school code (481154) when signing up for the test so Seattle Academy receives the scores.
- 3) Not sending scores early enough for applications to be considered under "early action" plans.
- 4) Not remembering to send scores to the colleges on the final college list.

Also, if the student is an athlete intending to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse (potential D1 or D2 athlete), the NCAA will need scores as part of the registration process. The student/family can list NCAA as a score destination when registering for the test(s).

I received / my child received his/her standardized test scores. Do we need to forward them to College Advising?
Provided the student listed Seattle Academy on the test registration, we generally receive all scores from the testing agencies and then upload them directly and privately to Naviance, so you don't need to email them to us as a matter of course. We'll use those sent to us by College Board and ACT to strategize, refine lists, and so on.

Where can I find a list of testing-related websites? Naviance features a comprehensive list of links.

TESTING, TESTING... 1, 2, 3: SAT SUBJECT TESTS (SAT II)

Should you take SAT subject tests?

Yes, but only if the college(s) where you're applying require them. Check at www.compassprep.com/admissions_req_subjects.aspx and scroll over the name of each school to see even more specifics on its testing requirements.

And yes, even if not required, if you are sure you can do well enough to help your candidacy. Check with your teachers about your chances of scoring well. These one-hour multiple choice tests are content-based, so your teachers should be able to tell you how the tests' content and your performance in class might intersect. If you are having trouble scoring well on the SAT and your colleges do not require Subject Tests, consider taking the ACT instead of Subject Tests. Some colleges accept them equally (a good thing!).

Which SAT Subject Tests should you take, and when?

Consult the college(s) where you plan to apply to see which tests (if any) they require (or check the handy Web address, above). Colleges that do require Subject Tests commonly require two tests in subjects of your choice. Only a few require three tests. If colleges have no specific subject requirements, test in your strongest subject(s). You can take up to three subject tests in one sitting (one morning administration). Be sure to check your colleges' Subject Test score reporting deadlines.

Should you prepare for the test(s)?

Absolutely. Check with your teachers and college advisor about if and how. The content of these tests often necessitates plain-old rote memorization, different from the critical and big-picture thinking SAAS very intentionally emphasizes.

SAT SUBJECT TEST	GENERAL MOST EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT TIME TO TAKE IT
Literature	May or June of junior year or Oct., Nov., Dec. of senior year. (This is essentially a test of reading skills; prep still required.)
Matt IIC	May or June after a year of study of Pre-Cal or during or after a year of Calculus. Preferences: Junior Spring or Senior Fall
Spanish Language	After a year of study at level 4; after or during levels 5 or 6. May or June of junior year or Oct., Nov., Dec. of senior year.
Spanish Listening	For students with strong speaking and listening skills. Check the SAT Website for specific dates of administration.
French Language	After a year of study at level 4; after or during levels 5 or 6. May or June of junior year or Oct., Nov., Dec. of senior year.
French Listening	For students with strong speaking and listening skills. Check the SAT Website for specific dates of administration.
Chemistry	Suggested for students who have taken Advanced Chemistry. Others: Check with your chemistry teacher.
Biology	After a year of study of biology. Check with your teacher for advice.
American History	After a year of American history. See your teacher for advice.
Physics	At the end of a year of study of physics. Usually N/A, as most SAAS students do not take physics until senior year.

TEST PREP AND TUTORING SERVICES

Seattle Academy offers the list below for reference only rather than for endorsement of any individual or company. Addresses, web information, and telephone numbers are all subject to change.

The Academic Institute, Inc.

13400 NE 20th St., Ste. 47
Bellevue, WA 98005
425-401-6844
www.academicinstitute.com

Asia Citro Tutoring

360-870-9988
asiacitrotutoring@gmail.com

Associates in Tutoring and Academic Consultation

1314 NE 43rd, Suite 209
Seattle, WA 98105
206-547-1818
www.atactutoring.com

Basic Skills Tutoring

2366 Eastlake Ave. East, #301
Seattle, WA 98102
206-322-1258
www.basicsskillstutoring.com

Julie Crockett

(upper level math and science)
14710 104th Ave NE
Bothell, WA 98011
Cell: 206-817-5172
tutoring@crocketts.org

Educational Academy 2

206-284-2300

Educational Resources

7834 SE 32nd Street, #103
Mercer Island, WA 98040
206-232-3991

Educational Tutoring & Consulting

8005 SE 28th Street
Mercer Island, WA 98040
206-236-1095
www.etcinc.org

Highline Community College

2400 S. 240th St.
MS 25-516
Des Moines, WA 98198
206-870-3740

Kaplan Test Prep

4216 University Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105
www.kaptest.com

Barbara and John Kenziorski

206-365-7578
twotutors@earthlink.net
Interests: math, science, writing,
social studies, literature, study skills

Kumon

2623 NE University Village #210
Seattle, WA 98112
206-524-0915
www.kumon.com

Mazor Test Prep

Lisa Mazor
P.O. Box 1614
Vashon Island, WA
206-632-8378
www.mazor.org

Alissa Mortensen

206-218-8860
alissa.moretenson@gmail.com

Newton Street Study Group

Seattle, WA
206-622-2598
www.blogs.law.harvard.edu/newtonstreet

Northwest Tutoring

Jonathan Shapiro (verbal)
206-940-0654
www.northwesttutoring.com

Primarily Writing

Jean Tarbox
206-860-1221
Jean.tarbox@comcast.net

The Princeton Review Seattle

4125 University Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105
206-548-1100
www.princetonreview.com

Sarah Ries

206-325-0248
sbrseattle@aol.com
SAT/ACT verbal prep,
available summer

Sandweiss Test Prep

4519 ½ University Way NE
Suite 205
Seattle, WA 98105
206-417-5050
www.sandweisstestprep.com

The Scholar's Choice, LLC

Megan Harney, Founder
414.687-7205
www.thescholarschoice.com

Score Prep

(in-home tutoring)
1-800-PREP-182
www.kaptest.com

Ellen Sieh

206-322-2113
ellensieh@earthlink.net

Sylvan Learning Center

Various locations around Seattle
www.sylvanlearning.com

University Tutoring Service

3232 NE 45th Street
Seattle, WA 98105
206-522-0109
www.universitytutoring.com

NCAA ATHLETICS REQUIREMENTS FOR DIVISION I AND DIVISION II

The NCAA establishes rules for eligibility, recruiting and financial aid for athletes, and its NCAA Clearinghouse processes online eligibility forms at http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.html.

Student athletes should take the SAT/ACT and begin the certification process in their junior year. Send SAT or ACT scores directly to the NCAA Clearinghouse by using the code number 9999 when you register to take the tests. See below for specific SAT/ACT scoring thresholds for eligible NCAA athletes.

Steps to attain NCAA eligibility:

- Complete the NCAA release form at http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.html. Once there, click “prospective students” and complete the form under “U.S. Students Register Here.”
- Complete the online Release of Records form.
- Read the long checklist of items that continue to the bottom of the page for “prospective students” and ensure you have completed the appropriate items in the appropriate grades.
- Ask your advisor to send in a copy of your transcript.
- At http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.html, you’ll also find a printout of a quick-reference sheet for NCAA Division I and Division II eligibility (GPA and scores), including an index of how minimum GPA and test score requirements vary for Division I.
- Receive notification of certification after the NCAA Clearinghouse received all your documents. Since paperwork with this organization is delayed frequently, phone NCAA directly with any questions.

WEB RESOURCES: ATHLETICS

Official site of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA):

www.ncaa.org

NCAA Clearinghouse site (mentioned above):

http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.html

NCAA Guide to the College Bound (downloadable guide for student athletes, featuring schedules, definitions, sport-by-sport recruiting rules and regulations and more):

http://www.ncaastudent.org/NCAA_Guide.pdf

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics:

www.naia.org

Free tool for Division III-focused student athletes:

www.collegestudentathletes.com

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

All Seattle Academy students will secure two academic teacher letters of recommendation in addition to perhaps one (not required) additional teacher recommendation from an appropriate arts area.

- For each academic teacher recommendation, generally select an 11th or 12th grade teacher who knows you well, probably in and out of the classroom.
- Select a teacher who appreciates your best qualities.
- Talk to the college advisors before asking. Your chosen teacher(s) may be so buried in recommendation requests that you would do better to ask a different teacher. Or if a teacher seems unsure about writing for you, consider selecting a different teacher.
- There is a system for asking teachers to write your recommendations, something College Advisors will go over with juniors in the spring. Generally, students talk to College Advising for teacher recommendation strategy, ask the teachers first in person, and then follow-up with a required official request through the Naviance system.
- **No later than your October 1 or October 15 list deadline, give your teacher a copy of your revised résumé. If you've completed the required teacher recommendation request properly in Naviance, and if your college list and deadlines are accurate (two things College Advising requires), your teacher recommenders will be able to see and write for the earliest deadline on your list with at least two weeks' advance notice (more generally preferred).**
- **Starting in the fall of 2010 for the Class of 2011, teachers will submit most recommendations electronically. Occasionally, some colleges may not accept electronically submitted recommendations, in which case College Advising will snail mail the completed teacher recommendations. More information about electronic recommendation submission will be available this spring from College Advising.**
- The teacher will take responsibility at that point, but it's a good idea to email your recommenders each time you submit an application.
- **Do, in each case, waive your rights to read your teacher recommendations.** You will be asked to do this on your various applications and at some point via a Naviance prompt. In fact, the teacher is not allowed, by school policy, to show you his or her recommendation. This policy builds Seattle Academy's credibility with colleges. Because colleges know our teachers are speaking candidly, a letter's praise carries more clout.
- After the teacher has mailed your letters of recommendation, write a thank-you note. Writing recommendations is a lot of hard work, and is not automatically assumed as one of teachers' many duties. Teachers are generous with their time in writing thoughtful, positive, honest recommendations, so show them that you appreciate them.
- If a college informs you that a teacher's recommendation has not arrived or is missing, inform both the teacher and your advisor immediately. Most of the time, the letter simply hasn't been downloaded/opened and documented in the admissions office, something we can view through our administrative Naviance account. Nonetheless, by Seattle Academy policy, we re-send the letter immediately upon hearing that it is not yet in your file at the college.

SUMMER PREVIEW: THINKING ABOUT THE ESSAY

1. Stop. (Yes, stop.) Don't write or revise anything yet. Instead, go straight to the Internet. (Yes, the Internet.) What are the essay topics for some schools to which you might apply? For some of your favorite schools? List some of the topics here.
2. What are the essay topics for the Common Application? For the University of Washington?

COMMON APPLICATION PERSONAL ESSAY

(NOTE: These are former topics, with a new application available each August. Topics generally do not change much. However, in early August, see the updated Common Application at www.commonapp.org.)

Please write an essay (250 words minimum) on a topic of your choice or on one of the options listed below. **Please indicate your topic by checking the appropriate box.** This personal essay helps us become acquainted with you as a person and student, apart from courses, grades, test scores, and other objective data. It will also demonstrate your ability to organize your thoughts and express yourself.

1. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
2. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
3. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
4. Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
5. A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
6. Topic of your choice.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON 2009-2010 PERSONAL STATEMENT*

Choose either 1 or 2. Recommended length, 500-650 words.

1. Discuss how your family's experience or cultural history enriched you or presented you with opportunities or challenges in pursuing your educational goals.**
2. Tell us a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.

* Personal statement and personal essay are generally synonymous.

** Every single one of you has experience, cultural history, opportunities and/or challenges. Really.

3. What essays have you already written for classes? Do any of them fit?
4. They do fit? COOL! (This is generally the case. See "topic of your choice" under Common Application, above.)
5. Stop. Before you send a for-class essay to your College Advisor, revise it. Your teacher already made comments. Did you fix that stuff before you sent your essay to Mel or Jason?
6. They don't fit? No worries! Take time to brainstorm possible stories, experiences, challenges, etc. For now, don't say 'no' to possible topics.
7. **Before you send your essays to your College Advisor, did you ask yourself the following? Does the essay I'm about to send to my college advisor:**
 - Teach the college something about me? Why?
 - Tell a story with Mel, Jason, or a favorite teacher as audience? (This is generally the right tone.)
 - Cover subject matter not appropriate for Mel, Jason, or a favorite teacher at SAAS? (Giant warning sign.)
 - Use 'I', 'me', or 'my' statements? (A good thing. Remember, this is a PERSONAL essay.)
 - SHOW what happened to you? Think about the stories you like to hear and tell.
 - SHOW what people or events mean?
 - Include vivid, specific details? (Read through your essay. Maybe find five places where you can get more specific or colorful.)
 - Answer this question: "Why? Why? Why?"
 - Represent something that might not be elsewhere in my future application?
 - Make a good impression? This sounds weird, but sometimes we respond to students, "What does this essay really say about you? How could you make the punchline more positive?"
 - Incorporate corrections teachers already made for class? Already benefit from a proofreader (not Spellcheck) or a read-aloud?

Most successful college essay writers claim it takes them a minimum of three weeks to brainstorm possible topics, reflect on those topics, write some stuff, leave that stuff, revise that stuff, discard some of that stuff, write more stuff, let that stuff sit, wrap up a possible draft, ask of that draft the questions above, and so on. COLLEGE ESSAY WRITING IS NOT A NIGHT-BEFORE-IT'S-DUE SORT OF THING. Think "marathon," not "sprint."

CONFESSIONS OF REFORMED COLLEGE ESSAY JUNKIE, MELANIE REED

I love writing. I even loved, for eleven years, reading thousands of college essays: the good, the bad, the one about... well, find me in College Advising sometime and ask me about it. That said, student writers encountered enough obvious pitfalls during my years reading for a selective liberal arts college that I compiled a list of questions and answers to separate the truly creative from another bad "football as life" analogy.

ESSAY FAQ

Does anyone actually read these things?

Absolutely. Particularly at small and/or selective colleges, admission counselors scrutinize many parts of the application--not just your grades and your test scores. In addition to such factors as classroom performance, course selection, extra-curricular and outside activities, counselor and teacher evaluations, and interviews, the essay offers a glimpse of applicant qualities often not found elsewhere in the application. While the volume of essays and of applications can sometimes overwhelm admission staff, paperwork is read in its entirety--all the more reason to ensure your essay sparkles and your application is completed carefully.

How many evaluators might read my essay?

Anywhere from one to ten. Often, the admission counselor responsible for Seattle reads your application first, and can decide whether to admit that candidate if their paperwork looks unusually strong. Typically, two to three admission counselors read the average file. If there are disagreements about the admission decision, or unusual circumstances, the application goes to the "admission committee," often a group of ten-or-so admission professionals who review the file as a group and make decisions at that point.

Who is my audience?

Am I writing for older or younger admission people? With what interests? When you write your college essay, you write for a number of ages, audiences, and interests. Often students write unnaturally formal essays, believing admission committees to be stuffy and serious. While admission counselors definitely take their jobs seriously, they are also interested in an accurate appraisal of a student--helped, in large part, by a funny essay, an offbeat essay, an honest essay, and so on. At most colleges, the staff is professional, with a great sense of humor, and includes recent college graduates (not much older than you!), alumni of the institution, and folks who attended or worked for other colleges previously. The tone for your essay should be friendly-professional. Think of your audience as that teacher at SAAS whom you respect, and with whom you can occasionally joke, but who also scares you (in a good way) just a little.

Why do students write essays anyway?

What are colleges looking for in the first place? On a basic level, whether you can write. Whether you can contribute uniquely to the place. Whether your values fit with the values of the school. Even at selective colleges, admission offices need to decide, on a very basic level, if you're capable of the writing load the college requires. Schools need to determine the difference between an applicant who may make a few errors, but who can reason through an argument competently, and someone who cannot connect a series of thoughts or arrive at an organized conclusion. Moreover, the colleges try to capture a snapshot of you, through the essay, which other parts of the application cannot produce. Often, students feel they need to demonstrate "superhuman" powers through the essay, and describe themselves as "super candidates." Equally, if not more, appealing are the essays where your voice is present, and where you're speaking directly to the committee--in a really straightforward, genuine way.

What kind of topics do most colleges require?

At some schools, the topic is wide open, and offers students the opportunity to think independently and creatively. Many schools allow students to write on whatever topics they wish, but also provide sample topics from which students can choose. Another college asks applicants to hand-write their essays (their entire application, for that matter), while yet another asks for a page out of the "middle" of a student's autobiography. At one point, The University of Chicago included an essay option in which applicants are asked to construct a theory linking Elvis Presley sightings to five of the following: the metric system, the Mall of America, the crash of the Hindenburg, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, lint, J.D. Salinger, and wax fruit. Another topic at University of Chicago asked students, "If you could be any kitchen implement, which would you be, and why?"

Do schools care if I write about something completely different?

Usually, the admission staff neither views you as less original if you use a topic from its list, nor as unable to follow directions if you write something creative. As long as the essay is well written and says something about you, our staff will not “freak out” if you choose a topic on your own. In fact, most students do. Certainly, if a college lists very specific essay topics, and does not allow the option of writing on an independent topic, follow that school’s instructions.

Should I automatically write about something serious if something serious happened to me?

Not necessarily. An occasional complaint among some students is that they don’t have a “brush with death” about which to write in their college essays. Such an encounter is not critical for a powerful writing sample (in fact, lacking a brush with death is probably a good thing). Often something seemingly small can be unusually moving--like the student who wrote one essay I read about collecting Pez dispensers with his dad. It was more about their relationship than about the Pez, and more moving than many essays I’ve read. If you feel, however, that a serious or traumatic event helped define you as a person, changed your opinion about life, or affected your academic record, it is definitely worthwhile to include as much information about that event as you’re comfortable sharing in your application.

What about a humorous essay? How “goofy” is too goofy?

I’m a fan of “funny” --and you’d be surprised how many admission professionals are, also. This is true, however, only if you’re comfortable with that voice in your essay and only if your humor isn’t juvenile or gross-out humor (check with Melanie). As a college-bound high school student with a good sense of humor, I was not entirely comfortable using humor in my essay. As a result, I wrote about a more serious topic. Your comfort level as a writer is a huge factor in a successful essay, and you might fall flat if you attempt to make a committee laugh when you’re not at ease with your sense of humor on paper. The more natural you sound, the better. If you, comfortably, can discuss Scooby Doo, or your summer working in a photo booth, or your “car which resembles a blue U.F.O.” (all very funny essays I read in my day), go for it!

What “original” topics do colleges see with surprising frequency?

Students write regularly about their mission and/or volunteer trips out of the country, on outdoor experiences they have, on sports injuries, and on domestic and international travels. While students are more than welcome to write on these topics, students should know that the writing sample should focus on a very specific experience associated with one of the above events, or should be particularly unusual. Knowing that admission offices see an outrageous (really, outrageous) number of essays on these topics, students may want to avoid these topics. At the very least, students should take pains to make essays about one of the above stand out.

Is there a “right answer” if a college asks, “Who belongs on a modern day Mt. Rushmore?”

Likely, no. A specific question does not necessarily have a specific answer. If one of your applications has an unusual question, brainstorm a list of possible answers, make a clear argument, and support your argument well. Again, this is another opportunity to show colleges who you are and what you care about.

When a college asks “Why would you like to attend our school?” - how should I proceed?

First, since this question appears regularly on different applications, avoid writing one response in which you insert the names of different colleges. A response which uses the formula, “I want to attend (insert name of college), because (insert name of college) is pretty and the students seem nice” will seem exactly that--formulaic and transparent. When I read responses to our “Why would you like to attend Puget Sound?” portion, I was most impressed by students who had done their homework. Nothing is more enticing to someone who talks about a college all day than hearing those messages “stuck” with students: “Puget Sound appeals to me because I want to attend a college where 75% of the students come from states outside of Washington. I’ve lived in Marysville my entire life, and I look forward to the perspectives of students from Kansas, and from Virginia, and from Alaska. Additionally, I see myself on a residential campus, in a cool neighborhood, with impressive medical school admission rates.” If you met someone--tour guide, admission counselor, current student, your uncle who is a graduate--who helped you decide to apply, drop their name casually in this “Why?” passage. It doesn’t hurt.

What if a school asks me to describe a significant experience?

Think “interesting,” not “significant” experiences. Sara Myers McGinty, author of *Writing Your College Application Essay*, notes that “the pressure to be ‘significant’ simply pushes writers toward vague, abstract topics like death and

divorce." While there is nothing wrong with either of those topics, the notion of "significant" puts pressure on a student to develop something weighty, when colleges are just as interested in comparatively "light" topics which still say something powerful about the applicant. You might write about one experience which changed your opinion or your viewpoint of something, made you regret your decision, or made you respect someone less.

How should I handle short answer questions?

With as much care as you put into the formal essay, as one college professional emphasized in a New York Times article, "The students polish their long essays, but lots of times they're off guard--and much more revealing--in responding to the short-answer questions." To admission counselors, the short answers can be refreshing, and often the most fun to read--they capture, in a quick blurb, how a student feels about a very specific question, or how the student feels about the college in a nutshell. I always liked reading short answers best because of their immediacy, but some students miss identifying them as an opportunity to draw a line between student strengths and the priorities of the college telegraphed by what they're asking in the short question. These short responses are sometimes limited to a clearly specified number of words or characters, so read instructions carefully.

Can I send extra writing samples? What should I send? Will someone actually read these?

Often, students feel as if creative writing, a graded paper, poetry, journal entries, or articles written for the school paper enhance the application and provide more details about their ability to write. Unless the application says otherwise, most colleges welcome additional samples and will read whatever you send. Know, however, that you need not scrounge up fifty pages of creative writing which does not already exist (nor should you send fifty pages of anything, period). If you have additional samples you like, if they're easily sent and not a pain to reproduce, and if the college has not advised you otherwise, send them along!

Is the essay the best place to explain any circumstances which affected me academically?

The essay can be a good place to explain in more detail why things look the way they do on your transcript, or why stumbles occurred in high school. You can, however, also write a separate letter explaining those circumstances (or address them in your college interview, if that's an option) if you'd like to write your essay on another topic. If you feel comfortable doing so, you should find a way to explain "bumps" in your academic record someplace in the application process. The optional section on the Common Application is a great place to upload a separate document explaining circumstances.

If I'm using the Common Application, how should I handle the essay portion?

Some students complete the actual Common Application writing sample, while some send along an additional essay or the essay they send to schools which don't accept the Common Application. Some schools require a supplement developed by the individual colleges. Check with each school regarding its policy on the Common Application. Don't forget that the basic part of the Common Application is truly common to all of your schools, hence the name. Customization for each college happens on the supplements.

Do I need to stick to the essay length suggested by the college?

Often, admission staffs have no problem if you write more than the rough guideline of 300-500 words, and admission counselors will read longer essays (for the sake of the reader, let's say absolutely no more than 900 words) in their entirety. That said, there is no need to send an essay which numbers twenty-five pages. Plain and simple, it's more work for you. Read instructions carefully; if a school specifically states "no more than" a certain number of words, follow their guidelines. Following directions is another, albeit oft-overlooked, part of the application process.

Should I just re-work something I've already used for a class assignment?

Sometimes, a piece of writing which originally served as "My Essay on The Great Gatsby" will sound like "My Re-Hashed Essay on The Great Gatsby which is Now My College Essay on How Much I Love The Great Gatsby." SAAS regularly assigns for class, however, personal essays that are obvious choices for future college essays. In general, save all writing, knowing that supposedly "finished" writing remains a work in progress, and you will often find snippets of old writing which are immediately useable, or which inspire college essays or essays for scholarship competitions. If you wrote your college essay as a class assignment, and you're happy with the product, revise appropriately and thoughtfully, and send it to as many schools as will accept it.

Can't I just print a pre-written essay off the Internet and save myself the hassle?

Er, nope. College folks are actually pretty savvy. When I worked on "the college side," colleagues and I read thousands of applications, every year, year after year. Most admission professionals are familiar with the content (or at least the tone) of essays discovered on-line. When a student's essay sounds little like the rest of the application (or, when it sounds like your mom wrote it, for that matter), colleges investigate, or request extra writing samples. In my final year at Puget Sound, a colleague of mine thought a student's essay about the Louvre sounded a little, well, professional. She searched on a single line, and low-and-behold, it was taken from the Louvre's Website. The student was not admitted, no matter how strong the rest of the application. More than anything, you don't want to put your application in jeopardy. And, you'll be expected to write in college, so do the work needed now. Not to mention, Seattle Academy ensures you have plenty of personal essays from which to draw.

Who, at home or at Seattle Academy, should read my essay before I mail it?

Several people (other than you) should read your essay. No matter how many times you read your own writing, or how many times you spell-check your work, you will miss small errors because you are so familiar (we hope) with your essay at that point. If possible, encourage a teacher or your college advisor to read your essay, as well as your parents and/or a friend. It's important to have several different people, with several different viewpoints and several possible reactions, scan your work for content, errors, and tone.

How can my college advisor help review writing? And what are her preferred means of receiving it?

Ideally, I would review each piece of writing two times each with two very different purposes: The first time can be a general scan to ensure the topic is on the right track. The student should still proof this draft before sending it to Melanie. The second time should be after the student has sent an even more proofed (try reading aloud for proofing—helps enormously) draft that s/he believes is "college-ready." I can then serve as a final check on that draft. This past fall alone, I read 400 pieces of writing. Having said that, students provide enough notice and not assume that writing sent along for a deadline later that day (or even week) will get read given the number of classmates trying to do exactly the same thing. I encourage sending me writing no later than one week before a deadline, via email, with the writing attached as a word document.

What are some other common pitfalls students encounter when they write essays?

Every once in a while, students write their college essays as "one huge paragraph." Your essay should resemble any other paper, where the rules of grammar still apply. Unless you are writing a chunk of text for visual effect, or you submit creative writing which may have no set form, the structure of your sample should look like any other writing you would submit for grades. Remember other laws of writing--avoid excessive use of exclamation points, be careful with commas, don't overuse capital letters, etc.

What should I do with my essay after I send it to the college?

Without question, save your college application essay, and save as much of your high school writing as possible until you are well into college. Again, you might find you can submit your essay (or a revised version) for scholarship consideration, and your essay might prove a decent jumping off point for more writing at the university level--where you'll be soon enough.

EXCERPTS FROM GOOD AND BAD COLLEGE ESSAYS (YOU BE THE JUDGE!)

Warning: Subject grows increasingly motivated when challenged. May erupt into spontaneous outbursts of community service, world travel, and cross-cultural experiences due to a desire to see the world and learn new things. Do not assume anything about subject. Assumptions, along with racism, closed-minds, and stereotypes drive subject insane and invoke motivation to change things... Current events and transmission of National Public Radio must be within close reach of subject at all times or subject will become frustrated due to lack of information. Subject finds motivation in the works of Maya Angelou, Julia Alvarez, and Ernest Hemingway... Subject responds best to the title of [student's name]. Don't say we didn't warn you.

Depression is like a bird stuck in a rain storm. You can't fly because the wind is blowing you in all directions. All you need is wind beneath your wings to help you be strong. The wind beneath my wings is my mother. She helps me fly high through my down moments. She is always there for me. Everything about her, I worship... Ever since I was potty trained, my mother has been my best friend. She has looked out for me like a mother bird looks out for her baby. She keeps me under her wing and protects me. (This essay included all the lyrics to "Wind Beneath My Wings" at its close.)

I would have to say that Miss Congeniality is the best movie ever made. Here are my reasons I feel that way. First of all, it is an action packed movie where Candice Bergen gets arrested at the end of the movie (I never liked her anyway). But most importantly, it helps Gracie Hart an FBI agent gain her self respect... I am known to be shy, and can identify with [the character] Cheryl in that aspect. Cheryl starts out as this nice woman trying not to make anyone mad at her. By the end of the movie though, she is not afraid, and is twirling flaming batons, and doing the "sexy" dance. That has inspired me to be a little more daring... And that is why I think that Miss Congeniality is the best movie ever made.

Before my junior year of high school, I lived in a small town right outside of Seattle and went to a school with two thousand, five hundred jocks and underachievers who believe football is the meaning of life. Every night, I would finish my homework in twenty minutes and play ping-pong with my friends for hours. I snowboarded every weekend during the winter and was in bed by nine thirty every night. When my mother announced that my family was going to move to New York so she could take a new job at Verizon, I had no idea what I was getting into... [discusses move to tough private high school]... I have friends in Seattle who only know how to have a good time, yet some of the people I meet here never do anything unless it is on the US News' list of "The 100 Things that Colleges Want You to Do." Neither extreme is healthy. I found a happy medium between work and play, can get my calculus problems done and still have time to play foosball with my brother before running off to play rehearsal. I want to attend [college X] so I can pursue my musical, dramatic, and athletic interests while receiving a first-rate education.

(And, from a student not admitted, in an angry response to an office of admission... not recommended): You threw me to the side of the rodeo [sic] like a balled up McDonalds wrapper and pen a cute little letter that says we're sorry that we can't help you in your educational pursuits. That's right, you can't. College can go to hell and [college X] can go with it.

APPLICATION NITTY-GRITTY: HOW TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT YOUR FORMS

You've chosen a list of schools, you've taken at least one of each standardized tests, and you've written at least one essay for a number of writing samples you'll produce. Now, it's time for the basics of the application itself.

For most schools, you'll apply online (there is no longer an advantage, one way or the other, to submitting a paper copy of an application and, in fact, nearly all schools expect you to apply electronically), either through the Common Application, which is accepted by roughly hundreds of colleges nationally, or using a school's own institutional online form. Some colleges allow you to open an application "account" and work on your application over a number of visits to the site, saving your work between visits and printing it out for proofreading.

Instructions

Read every word of the college's application materials. Note the following (a good place to record all this is your application planning grid, saved on Naviance, a draft of which is due in September to your college advisor):

- all deadlines, typically choosing for your use the earliest deadlines unless they are "binding" and you don't want to apply under "binding" admission...
- the college's test requirements and deadlines, including whether you are allowed to apply there "test optional" (something to discuss with your college advisor) and whether doing so requires any additional materials...
- any unusual teacher recommendation requirements and forms (if there are some)...
- the various additional short answers and/or "supplements"...

Teacher Recommendations/Forms

Seattle Academy recommends signing the waiver of your right to read your recommendation after matriculation; the college has more confidence in the recommendations. Naviance will also prompt you to "sign" (electronically) a waiver for exactly the same purpose (do so).

Counselor Forms

Like many other independent schools, Seattle Academy uses its own Counselor or Secondary School Form. You need not bring the college's form to your advisor. The exception to this is generally Pomona College which has a short additional form that is required in addition to the counselor form high schools already use.

Drafting

Complete your rough draft of the application form. (See "Writing your Application," next section.) Email the password of which to your college advisor, if you wish, for a strategy session (and to ensure we can access the application if there are problems with it), and go over it with a good proofreader before submitting.

How "Common" Is the Common App?

If your college accepts the Common Application, note that the basic part of the online form (name, activities, family history, etc.) is truly common for all schools. This is the "guts" of the application that does transmit in one form to each of your schools. This sounds obvious, but the occasional student makes the mistake of writing something college-specific on the general part of the Common Application (example: Writing "I just want you to know how much I love College X" in the general "optional" section on the main part of the Common App). The supplements, required by most colleges, are where you'll get school-specific and answer questions designed by each college with responses tailored to each college.

The Written Portions

Some seemingly minor sections of applications may offer you opportunities to distinguish yourself.

- In your answers to short questions on applications, use a natural, relaxed voice that shows your personality and intelligence, not those of some person you imagine the college wants. Pretend to be speaking to a respected teacher with whom you are comfortable and friendly. Don't sound pompous ("So that's how I got where I am today"). Imagine how admission offices might react to certain themes. Don't short-change these questions. In fact, use them to express the details you want to express by writing full, vivid, thorough

answers. Don't be afraid to provide more specific details if there is space (usually applicants include too few details versus too many). Edit carefully!

- Take care with even the two- to five-sentence answers.
 - o Be sure to answer the *exact* question.
 - o Use the same informal, easy (but correct) voice.
 - o Try to hook the reader's attention without being frivolous or melodramatic.
 - o Proof the short answers as carefully as you would an essay. This is often a place where colleges can assess true writing strength and attention to detail (or lack thereof) because students often treat the short answers more casually.

For the essay, see comprehensive essay section earlier in this handbook for advice.

Final drafts

Complete the final draft of your application. Fill out any other necessary school-specific forms, each of which may have its own deadlines: merit scholarship, financial aid, and so on. Write your name in the same format you've used for all your materials as well as your social security number or date of birth (use "DOB") at the top of any loose sheets of paper (if applicable). Note that many colleges participating in the Common Application require the main part of the Common App, supplements, and application fee completed/submitted before the application will show as "complete."

Paying the application fee

Generally, you'll pay application fees by credit card via the various online applications. If a written check is required, draft a check to the college for the amount of the application fee and write the applicant's name and DOB on the front of the check.

Reporting test scores

Order your test scores sent to the college. Typically, send and report all scores. This is the student/family's responsibility. Go to www.collegeboard.com for SAT orders and to www.actstudent.org for ACT orders. Most colleges do not accept Seattle Academy's sticker score reports as official (a batch high schools receive in the mail), and we do not receive a complete set for every student.

KEEPING A RECORD

Print out and save your entire completed application or save a copy online. Copy or save your "Submission Complete" electronic confirmation after each application submitted.

Following Up

- Inform your college advisor and your recommending teachers that you have applied.
- At around four weeks from the date you applied, if you have not received confirmation that your application is complete, confirm online or by phone or email that your part of the application has been received by the college. With the exception of Early Decision processes that tend to move along a little more quickly, it can take up to four weeks from the time your materials arrive until they are "filed" and appear in your record at the college. In the end, however, it is the student/family's responsibility to ensure all materials have arrived.

APPLYING TO SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ELSEWHERE

Occasionally, Seattle Academy students express interest in colleges abroad. In the end, most select domestic colleges and universities with strong study abroad programs to build on Seattle Academy (and sometimes non-Seattle Academy) international travel experience. In case you're curious, however, and want to read further:

WEB RESOURCES: UK SCHOOLS

Undergraduate section:

www.britishcouncil.org/usa-education-undergraduate-degree.htm

The British national common application website:

www.ucas.com/

Study in the UK (another helpful site!):

www.studyintheuk.org

Oxford, Cambridge, and the London School of Economics are not very realistic choices for American students, as their programs are not chronologically in synchrony with ours. Still better choices, and frequently popular with Seattle Academy graduates, are the Scottish colleges. The University of St. Andrews has the longest history of recruiting Americans and has by far the highest proportion of them in its undergraduate population. The Universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Stirling are other prominent names, and there are more, like Trinity in Dublin. Prices are about \$20,000 per year, with little financial aid available. Representatives from these schools regularly visit Seattle Academy, most often during fall semester. Melanie toured Scottish colleges at the invitation of St. Andrews in the spring of 2011 and can provide more specific details as necessary.

On the continent, the primary option is the network of American-style institutions such as the American Universities in Paris and Rome. There is a newer one in Bremen, Germany, with ties to Rice University in the U.S. and several places in Switzerland. Webster University in St. Louis has a number of campuses abroad. Most of these institutions are small, about 1,000 students, and not highly selective. The least expensive (and increasingly popular) place in the English-speaking world to get a degree is Australia, while many Seattle Academy students have considered and matriculated at excellent colleges in Canada.

SEATTLE ACADEMY'S GUIDE TO COLLEGE FINANCING: FINANCIAL AID TIMETABLE

College financing, both in the “when do we fill out forms again?” sense and the “how are we going to pay for this?” sense, adds extra stress to an already overwhelming time for families. To reduce anxieties, Seattle Academy College Advising hosts an evening workshop focusing on college financing in October. The calendar below provides a financial aid-specific overview of the year. Your college advisors are eager to help answer questions anytime about costs and financing.

August September	As you decide on the colleges to which you'll apply, research their financial aid pages/forms simultaneously. Some public schools in the west offer scholarships with varying requirements/processes through http://wue.wiche.edu/
October	Families of binding Early Decision/financial aid applicants should begin preparing an estimate of current year's taxes in order to use it in the Early Decision college's financial aid application (often the CSS Profile), due in November. Some Early Decision candidates are required to complete the CSS Profile to ensure application review. Families' estimates of taxes are also often surprisingly good. Still, this is extremely important, as you are committing to attend this Early Decision college if the financial aid package is acceptable. If it is not, you must have time to apply to other colleges before the January deadlines. Attend Seattle Academy financial aid session this month.
November	Early Decision candidates submit admissions and financial aid applications during this month (often individual institutional forms and/or the CSS Profile; see Web addresses)
January	January 1 – first day students and families can access and complete the FAFSA online. Note that some colleges have additional institutional forms they require, something students research school-by-school.
January February	Parents of regular decision candidates prepare income tax returns as early as possible so that you can submit the FAFSA and CSS Profile early in the new year. You will receive your Student Aid Report (SAR), which indicates your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC).
March	Admissions and financial aid awards begin arriving and continue into April.
April	Compare financial aid offers; evaluate your options. Only if the financial aid package will not work, call college(s) about additional funds (no guarantees, but worth a phone call if no other options) .
May	By May 1, make your decision, pay enrollment fee, and cooperate with your college's financial aid office. Complete loan applications.
June-July	Check with your college's financial aid office about final details.

To mark the box or not to mark the box?

One question families often have is whether students should mark the box on the application that they're applying for aid. Use one of the calculators here to see if you might be eligible for aid: <http://www.finaid.org/calculators/>

- If you're even close, or if it's certain you'll qualify, mark “yes.” If “yes,” absolutely follow through with all financial aid forms.
- If you decide later not to apply for aid, call each admission office on your list and tell them you would like the change the answer.
- Admission to a college is not a “yes/no” question based on whether you check this box. Sometimes, the relevance of your applying for aid is considered on more of a sliding scale relative to the needs of a particular institution, the strength of your application, and the relative amount of aid you need or don't need. What we're talking about here affects only a small percentage, truly on the margin anyway for admission at the schools in question.
- Bottom line, if you know you don't qualify based on the calculator above, mark “no.”
- If you think you might need aid, don't mess around with the box – mark “yes” and turn in your forms on time.

MORE FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

Naviance, in particular, features a good number of related websites and its own list of scholarships.

WEB RESOURCES: FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

**** Your colleges' own financial aid and scholarship sites:** Always check these first.

Black Excel: www.blackexcel.org
Scholarship service for African Americans.

College Answer: www.collegeanswer.com
A scholarship service.

College Scholarships and Grants:
<http://1collegescholarshipsgrantsloans.com>
Comprehensive site with many different helpful services and information systems.

CSS Profile:
<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>
The CSS Profile is often colleges' additional financial aid form, or is used instead of the FAFSA for early, tentative aid estimations for Early Decision or Early Action candidates (typically you need to submit the FAFSA after the first of the year regardless).

FAFSA Online: www.fafsa.edu.gov
This is the site for the FAFSA form and to submit data online. If you've never been, you receive a pin that allows confidential access to applications and data stored throughout the years of your college financing.

FastWeb: www.fastweb.com

Lots of help, offering financial aid information and personalized scholarship searches at no charge, including auto-e-mails that alert you to new scholarship opportunities. FastWeb (and www.finaid.org, below) also provides updated information on scholarship scams.

Federal Trade Commission: www.ftc.gov
Information about scholarship scams.

Financial Aid (General): www.finaid.org
Excellent homepage of links to many financial aid-related sites. The EFC (confidential self-test to estimate your eligibility for financial aid) is a highlight, but there are many other helpful resources, such as a calculator for loan repayment (which can be found at collegeboard.com as well).

Nellie Mae: www.nelliemae.org
Information on Nellie Mae college loans.

Sallie Mae: www.salliemae.org
Information on Sallie Mae college loans.

U.S. Department of Education:
<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp>
United States Department of Education resources on Financial Aid.

DECISION TIME

Excerpted from Melanie's former Web series on making college decisions

The good news? You were admitted to several great schools. The bad news? You were admitted to several great schools. With the clock ticking and the decision looming, how does one quiet the noise of two years of college investigating and get down to the real business of that final college choice?

- **Prioritize, prioritize, prioritize**
Beyond what the media says, and beyond the “name brand,” what are the fundamental qualities that need to exist at the college you pick? When it comes right down to it, is it access to faculty? Is it curious, interesting fellow students? Is it location in a region with everything to offer? Is it engagement with the local community and with the world at large?
- **See ‘em... again if you can**
For an investment this large, a second (or third) visit might confirm (or eliminate) one or more of your picks. At any of your colleges, if you were unable before to sit in on a class, meet again with a member of the admission counseling staff, spend the night, meet with professors, talk candidly to current students, or eat the food, it might be time for round two. If the calendar and the pocketbook don't permit, don't fear.
- **Seize each opportunity – especially if visiting campus is a challenge**
Did a professor, admission counselor, or current student phone and offer to answer questions? Take advantage of that captive caller. Even if you've asked all of the questions before, you've got on the phone a new contact and a new perspective. Pick his or her brain. Ask your questions anew. The time and attention offered by an office of admission during the college search is a good signal of resources and assistance available on campus. If a college where you have been admitted does not reach out to you, contact admission offices directly and ask to speak to a current student, especially if you can't visit.
- **Talk it out**
Is there someone who knows you well who can help rationalize your needs and concerns over your college pick? Someone with whom you can talk about each of the things you desire in a college and how those needs will be met? Seek out that person (usually, at Seattle Academy, one's college advisor, but often a trusted teacher, director, or coach), as well as those you know who considered colleges on your list. There's no replacement for this human resource in assessing what you truly want in a school.
- **Go with your gut**
Deep down, at least one of your schools made an impact. This might not be the lightning bolt some expect, but it's a hunch you have. Perhaps something subtle. A current student smiled at you as you walked the campus. A professor remembered your name. The research of current students sounded particularly compelling. An up-and-coming band you've always wanted to hear was playing an all-ages show in town the night before. While each of these, independently, may not form your choice, the combination might.
- **Make a pro-con list that includes subtle differences and features that are deal-breakers versus those that are milder likes/dislikes (see example below)**

STRONG PRO

WEAK PRO

STRONG CON

WEAK CON

TO REMAIN WAITLISTED OR NOT TO REMAIN WAITLISTED

Should you find yourself on a college wait-list, or even deferred from Early Decision/Action to Regular Decision, the tips below can help you determine how to proceed. Colleges use wait lists in a number of ways. Usually they explain their uses in the letter you receive placing you on the list. If you are wait-listed at a college, here are a few tips:

- Remain on waiting lists only if truly interested in that school.
- Do not stay on a wait list just to see if you get in. Stay only if you know you will attend the college if admitted.
- If you are interested in the college where you have been wait-listed or deferred, write a letter to the college immediately after receiving its decision. Make your commitment to the college very clear; promise to attend if you can do so honestly: "I will attend if admitted." Include any new honors, awards, or activities that might strengthen your candidacy.
- If you're really, really enthusiastic about the college, write another letter in a week or two.
- Be in touch with your college advisor, who may get a telephone call asking about your continued commitment to the college where you have been wait-listed. The advisor's answer could influence the college's decision.
- Do not count on admission from a wait list! For sanity and reality's sake, start focusing on other colleges and get on with your plans. Remaining attached to a place that wait-listed or deferred you can distract from other great colleges where you can make an admission commitment now and really thrive next year.

AFTER YOU AND THE COLLEGES HAVE DECIDED

Once a college has notified you of its decision, please enter that information in Naviance and inform College Advising so that the school's records will be accurate. **We also request you make a photocopy of each letter – acceptances and denials – and of each letter offering you merit scholarship money.** This information helps us advise students in future years.

As soon as you are certain of which college you will attend, you **MUST** write all other colleges to which you applied, withdrawing your candidacy to make room for other applicants. Do so in a courteous note (an email to your admission counselor or to the admission office is acceptable); see sample below.

You are ethically bound to respond to all the colleges where you are admitted by the Candidates' Reply Date of May 1. It is unethical to pay enrollment deposits and make promises to attend two colleges. If you have been placed on a waiting list, you may retain that place after making an enrollment deposit, but be honest if the college asks you.

EXAMPLE APPLICATION WITHDRAWAL LETTER

Admission Office
College/University
Address

Dear Office of Admission:

I am grateful for the consideration shown me and for the offer of admission. After careful thought, however, I have decided to attend _____ College/University. Therefore, I am withdrawing my application to your institution.

Sincerely,
Name, Social Security Number or Date of Birth, Address

And, just to keep it in perspective...

ON THE ADMISSION PROCESS AT HIGHLY SELECTIVE COLLEGES

Fred Hargadon, former Dean of Admission at Princeton

If people knew how random and circumstantial the admissions process is, in many ways, at these rarified levels, they would not feel so bad when denied nor so good when admitted. Here's how it worked at Princeton every year. We would get 15,000 applications for 1100 places; we knew that we would issue about 1500 invitations to enroll. Our first step was to rule out all the students who, though often impressive and compelling people, were not competitive applicants for one reason or another; they were off the mark in one of these areas that were important to us: grades, course selections, test scores, extracurricular passions and skills, work ethic, and integrity. This first step typically eliminated about 9,000 students.

We were left with 6,000 students who were not only admissible, but highly desirable: they had virtually no vulnerable places in their applications. To evaluate them, we posed the general question, "What will this student bring to our campus?" In order to cut the numbers from 6,000 to 1500, we started by looking at the different commitments and constituencies within the university: our commitments to national and international geographical diversity, to gender balance, to socioeconomic diversity, to ethnic and cultural diversity, and to our various programs on campus: the golf coach was asking for a strong player, the symphony was short on woodwinds, the philosophy department was hoping for more majors, or the humanities-science/math balance was a bit out of kilter. Then we looked at our high-profile candidates: the international chess champion, the fascinating Bosnian orphan, the daughter of a five-generation Princeton family with two buildings named for them, the movie star, the star athlete, and so on. These two steps usually filled about 1,000 of our 1500 available invitations, and we were left with 5,000 students competing for the remaining 500 places.

This part of the process was, frankly, random and circumstantial. To cut a list of terrific students from 5,000 to 500, we simply did our best to put together a group of personalities that we hoped would interact with each other in synergistic ways. We were human: we operated on hunches, instincts, and personal biases. In most cases we were meeting as a committee to sort out these finalists: we each advocated for our candidates, but we each knew that in the end, many of them would not get an invitation. All of us were greatly disappointed on numerous occasions when our candidates didn't make the cut.

In the end, we would finish with no time to spare with our final 500. But if we had argued for one more day, the set of 500 would have been different, because we could have filled our class at Princeton numerous times without undercutting the quality of the admitted students. And every year, after the letters went out and the telephone calls began ("Why didn't my son get in?"), I would pull a file and wonder, "How did we let this one get by?" The answer was always, "He was an excellent candidate who lost out, often for no good reason, in the final, circumstantial push and shove. Try not to take it personally, and go enjoy another wonderful college."

Transcribed and paraphrased by former Seattle Academy college advisor, Ann Tift, in Cambridge, MA, June 2005

FOR STILL MORE PERSPECTIVE...COLLEGE SELECTION MYTHS

Loren Pope, Author of *Colleges that Change Lives*

Pope says, “**don’t believe these!**” (And we agree.)

- The more selective, the better the college.
- Your college’s prestige will help you get into grad school.
- Eastern schools are best; southern or Midwestern schools are worst.
- A big university offers more opportunities.
- A college you’ve heard of is better (safer) than one you haven’t.
- What your friends say about a college is a good indicator.
- Your college ought to be bigger than your high school.
- Going more than 200 miles away means a costlier education.
- Choose your college because it has a good department in your major.
- If you take a year off, you are statistically unlikely to go back to college.

AFTER ALL THAT... NEED TO TAKE SOME TIME OFF?

Increasingly popular nationwide is the post-grad year at a prep school or a “gap year.” In the case of the post-grad year, students improve their college admissions possibilities by enrolling in a prep school for an additional year, improve college enrollment chances, and have a great year in the meantime. Other students get into college, defer matriculation for a year (most colleges will honor this with notice) and take what is called a “gap year.” During this time, students work, travel, volunteer, and gain more perspective for college. Sometimes, financial aid is available for gap year programs. Some of these programs are listed below, while others appear on Naviance. To get to the gap year list on Naviance, go to the Naviance home page, click on “colleges”, then click on “enrichment programs.”

You should complete at least your initial college search and application process while at Seattle Academy, working day-to-day with your college advisor. Don’t graduate and take a gap year without going through the process here at SAAS first; the college-seeking process is far easier while you’re a senior than in the year after you graduate. Decide once you have completed that process about your gap year options.

WEB RESOURCES: IDEAS FOR TAKING SOME TIME OFF

(note that some web addresses will change)

AmeriCorps (www.americorps.org)

The 10-12 month long program offers both a stipend and an education award. AmeriCorps gives students contact information on non-profit organizations and students contact them directly to create their own volunteer arrangements.

CityYear (www.cityyear.org)

Associated with AmeriCorps, City Year is based in a number of cities around the country and provides yearly and monthly stipends.

Dynamy Internship (www.dynamy.org)

The Dynamy Internship Year is an urban experimental education program offering an educational experience that takes place outside the traditional classroom.

Gap Year (www.gapyear.com)

A site out of Great Britain that helps students plan gap year travel.

Institute for International Cooperation and Development

(www.iicd-volunteer.org)

The Institute for International Cooperation and Development is a small, non-profit organization with a fee for training and placing young people in international volunteer positions.

National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)

(www.nols.edu)

The premier teacher of outdoor skills and leadership offers courses ranging from ten days to full semesters in the world’s most spectacular wilderness classrooms.

StudyAbroad.com (www.studyabroad.com)

A comprehensive study abroad information and planning site.

Time Out Associates (www.timeoutassociates.com)

Bob Gilpin is one such professional counselor who can help assess students’ needs and assemble constructive programs for the year off.

RECOMMENDED REFERENCES

Comprehensive College Reference Books

The College Handbook, College Board
Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges
Peterson's Guide to Competitive Colleges
Barron's Profiles of American Colleges

Narrative, Subjective College Guidebooks

The Fiske Guide to Colleges (Seattle Academy's pick)
The Best 345 Colleges, Princeton Review
The Insider's Guide to the Colleges, Yale Daily News
Choosing the Right College (William Bennett's conservative perspective)
Colleges that Change Lives, Loren Pope (profiles of 40 small colleges)
Looking Beyond the Ivy League, Loren Pope
The Public Ivys, Richard Moll
Hillel Guide to Jewish Life on Campus (also available at www.hillel.org)

Advice and Insider Information Books

The Fiske Guide to Getting Into the Right College, Fiske & Hammond
The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College, Jacques Steinberg
The College Admissions Mystique, Bill Mayher
The Insider's Guide to College Admissions, Thomas C. Hayden
100 Successful College Application Essays, The Harvard Independent
College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You, Antonoff & Friedemann
Campus Visits and College Interviews, College Board

List-Building Reference Books

The College-Finder, Steven Antonoff
The College Board Guide to 150 Popular College Majors
Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges, Frederick Rugg (available in the College Advising Library)

For When Kids Leave Home

Letting Go, Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger
The Launching Years, Laura Kastner and Jennifer Wyatt
Empty Nest... Full Heart, Andrea Van Steenhouse
When Your Kid Goes to College, Carol Barkin

Eccentric or Special-Interest Books

Colleges Unranked: Ending the College Admission Frenzy, Lloyd Thacker
Cool Colleges: For the Hyper-Intelligent, Self-Directed, Late-Blooming, and Just Plain Different, Donald Asher
Barron's Best Buys in College Education, Lucia Solorzano
Guide to Performing Arts Programs, Everett & Topaz, Princeton Review
Ivy League Programs at State School Prices, Sullivan & Randolph, Arco (out of print; try to get it!)
The K & W Guide to Colleges for the Learning Disabled, Kravets and Wax
The Multicultural Student's Guide to Colleges, Robert Mitchell
Professional Degree Programs in the Visual and Performing Arts, Peterson's Guides
Making a Difference: College and Graduate Guide, Miriam Weinstein (for the idealistic)
Top Colleges for Science, Peterson's Guides
The Complete Guide to American Film Schools, Ernest Pintoff
The Rolling Stone Guide to Colleges that Rock

FOR JUNIOR FAMILIES: OVERVIEW OF THE NEXT SIXTEEN MONTHS

NOTE: A MORE DETAILED CALENDAR MAILS BEFORE SUMMER.
MANDATORY COLLEGE ADVISING DEADLINES ARE IN BOLD.

January	<p>Jan. 17: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, no classes. Jan. 21: No classes. Jan. 22: SAT administration. Jan. 25: Junior College Night, 7 PM, Theater (MANDATORY) Sign up for standardized testing at www.actstudent.org or www.collegeboard.com. Jan. 28 and forward: Make individual appointments for student with Melanie only after completing first TBA college advising assignments and by emailing her your ABCDEFG schedule, followed by family appointments for parents with college advisor. <u>Assignments due in Naviance 3 days before student can schedule appt.</u> (more on this at Junior College Night).</p>
February	<p>Feb. 11: Registration deadline for March 12 SAT (don't wait this long to register, however) Feb. 12: ACT administration. Feb. 21 – 25: Mid-winter break. Consider visiting colleges.</p>
March	<p>Mar. 4: Registration deadline for April 10 ACT (don't wait this long to register, however) Mar. 12: SAT administration. Mar. 15: College Sports Night, open to all families, 7 PM, Theater. Mar. 26: PNACAC College Fair, noon-3 PM, Seattle University, Connolly Center.</p>
April	<p>Mar. 31 – Apr. 8: Spring Break. Consider visiting colleges. Apr. 8: Registration deadline for May 7 SAT (don't wait this long to register, however) Apr. 9: ACT administration. Apr. 19: Learning Differences and the College Search, 7 PM, Arts Center.</p>
May	<p>Receive mailing with late spring/summer assignments about essay writing/revision, Common Application (or other "favorite" application) completion, résumé creation/updating, "application planning grid" (listing short answer prompts, supplements, due dates, unique requirements for arts admission, test optional policies and the like). (Also distributed in individual spring meetings with students.)</p> <p>May 6: Registration deadline for June 4 SAT (don't wait this long to register, however) May 7: SAT administration. May 6: Registration deadline for June 11 ACT (don't wait this long to register, however) May 11 (before school, 7:45 AM, VB Conference): Summer Projects Overview (each of these meetings is identical) May 11 (after school, 3:15 PM, VB Conference): Summer Projects Overview (each of these meetings is identical) May 24: Senior Parents Speak Out: Advice to Junior Families for Managing Senior Year, 7 PM, Black Box. May 25 (before school, 7:45 AM, VB Conference): Summer Projects Overview (each of these meetings is identical) May 25 (after school, 3:15 PM, VB Conference): Summer Projects Overview (each of these meetings is identical)</p>
June	<p>June 4: SAT administration. June 11: ACT administration. June 15: DEADLINE to secure teacher recommendation writers BOTH in person and via Naviance.</p>
August	<p>Colleges that Change Lives Tour (date and time forthcoming). Emphasis on completion of summer tasks for Melanie's September due-date. Revise "application planning grid" as schools shift or change.</p>
September	<p>Sept. 6: NON-NEGOTIABLE DEADLINE: TO MELANIE AS ATTACHMENTS WHERE NEEDED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polished résumé (saved in My School / Document Library / Due in September to Melanie) • Draft of Common App personal statement or essay for favorite school (if non-Common App) • Application Planning Grid (saved in My School / Document Library / Due in September to Melanie) • Request back-to-school meeting by emailing Melanie your ABCDEFG class schedule • Completion of Naviance "Seniors in September" survey (live during the summer) • Common Application account set up at www.commonapp.org; username and password sent to Melanie <p>ACT administration, date forthcoming. Attend college rep visits to Seattle Academy through November.</p>

(continued on next page)

October	<p>By Saturday, Oct. 1: FINAL LIST DEADLINE #1: IF YOU HAVE A NOVEMBER 1 DEADLINE OF ANY TYPE, FINALIZE YOUR COLLEGE LIST IN NAVIANCE BY THIS DAY.</p> <p>By Saturday, Oct. 15: FINAL LIST DEADLINE #2: IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A NOVEMBER 1 DEADLINE OF ANY TYPE, FINALIZE YOUR COLLEGE LIST IN NAVIANCE BY THIS DAY</p> <p>TBA: 12th grade “college overview” family meeting (formerly 12th grade parent night), for students and families. SAT administration, date forthcoming. ACT administration, date forthcoming. Mid-October, date and time forthcoming: A Guide to College Financing with George Mills, Vice President for Enrollment, University of Puget Sound.</p>
November	<p>SAT administration, date forthcoming. Apply to Early Action and Early Decision colleges. Fill out college-specific paperwork for Early Decision schools (see websites). Regardless of deadline, plan to apply to all Washington and Oregon public schools, and all schools with “rolling” admission by Thanksgiving.</p>
December	<p>Dec. 1: FINAL LIST DEADLINE #3: Non-negotiable deadline for editing or changing your absolutely final college list in Naviance. No guaranteed mailing of materials by holidays (i.e. by January 1 deadlines) if deadline is not observed. ACT administration, date forthcoming. SAT administration, date forthcoming. Dec. 12: Last day to give Melanie long or short answers to review that have January 1 deadlines for proper turnaround. College Advising closed for Winter Break.</p>
January	<p>Jan 1: Complete FAFSA (financial aid) forms online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Many final college deadlines are this month. Apply to all schools by Feb. 1, even if deadlines appear later. Post-break: Help Week, otherwise known as college advising office hours for post-break questions!</p>
February	<p>Many financial aid deadlines are this month. Check all financial aid web pages carefully; processes and paperwork expectations can differ from school-to-school. All applications should be submitted by the start of this month, regardless of any later deadlines. Consider visiting colleges during mid-winter break.</p>
March	<p>Admissions decisions continue to come in.</p>
April	<p>Admissions decisions are complete by April. TBD: College for Students with Learning Differences, 7 PM, Black Box Make last college visit(s) if necessary.</p>
May	<p>May 1: National Candidates’ Reply Date – every senior has sent a deposit to only one college. TBA: Meeting/panel with Seattle Academy alumni home for break! TBA: Making the Transition to College: A Primer for Senior Families, 7 PM, Black Box</p>
June	<p>Final high school transcripts sent to colleges.</p>

THE BASICS: SEATTLE ACADEMY COLLEGE ADVISING CONTACT INFORMATION

Your colleges may require some of this information when you apply:

Mailing Address

Seattle Academy
College Advising
1201 E. Union St.
Seattle, WA 98122

College Advising Office

Jason Gough, Associate College Advisor
jgough@seattleacademy.org
(206) 323-6618 (fax – applications will sometimes ask for this)

Melanie Reed, Director of College Advising
mreed@seattleacademy.org (email is fastest way to get a response, especially during school day)
(206) 676-6805 (direct to desk)
(206) 323-6618 (fax – applications will sometimes ask for this)

Stacie Cone (for Naviance technical issues)
scone@seattleacademy.org

Websites

General Seattle Academy site:
www.seattleacademy.org

Direct to College Advising link from Seattle Academy site, including Naviance log-in:
www.seattleacademy.org/theprogram_academics_collegeadvising.html

Direct to Naviance log-in:
<https://connection.naviance.com/fc/signin.php?hsid=seattleacademy>

CEEB Code (otherwise known as “School Code”; needed for test registration and different applications):
481154

RÉSUMANIA!

Ideally, you would email to Melanie and Jason, or bring to your first meeting with College Advising, a résumé rough draft. Regardless, **a copy of a new or updated résumé is due to College Advising at the beginning of senior year.**

The résumé serves multiple purposes: College Advising draws from it for your counselor letter, you give a copy to your recommendation writers, you have a copy on which to draw for completing applications, and you have a copy for other purposes in your life (job search, Senior Project, etc.).

You may wish to find other formats online or in books; just be comfortable with the one you choose, and be sure not to make it too glitzy. Academic résumés should be straightforward and focused, not gimmicky. It may go over one page (unlike business résumés) if needed. At minimum, use this format versus the Naviance résumé-maker version. Thanks!

In bold (B): Your full name followed by (nickname)

Social security number or date of birth (B)

Your address (B)

Second line of address (B)

Phone number with area code (B)

Email address (B)

BACKGROUND: Tell some things about yourself that give you an identity beyond numbers. Be personal and lively. Mention all kinds of interests and/or your academic “specialties,” if appropriate. Say something, if you wish, about your history in Seattle or at Seattle Academy.

GPA [and (if appropriate) HONORS AND ADVANCED COURSES]:

List your Cumulative GPA this way: **3.25 (unweighted)**

(Your official GPA will be available August of 12th grade)

Courses you may wish to list as honors/advanced: Honors English 11& 12 and Honors American History 11, Honors American Government, Calculus 1 and Calculus 2, foreign language 4, 5, and/or 6; Physics, Advanced Chemistry, Biology with Honors. Don't worry if you don't have courses to list!

HONORS/AWARDS:

List any award you wish. Go backwards in chronological order; the top listing should be the most recent.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

List all clubs, sports (here at SAAS or through other organizations), arts activities (here or elsewhere), private studies. Go backwards. Save your hobbies and casual interests for that category.

COMMUNITY/CHURCH ACTIVITIES:

List community service with explanatory information. List church programs and youth service trips here. Go backwards.

EMPLOYMENT:

List this if applicable. Tell the name of your job and how many hours a week you work. Go backwards.

HOBBIES/INTERESTS:

Mention if not covered elsewhere in the résumé.

GOALS: It's fine to omit this, but if you have a preliminary study or career goal, write about it here.

(see next page for sample)

ADDENDUM: A SAMPLE RÉSUMÉ

Steven Stanton Seattle (Steve)

DOB 12/12/1993

1057 Whatever Street

Seattle, WA 98122

206-323-6618

steveseattle@seattleacademy.org

BACKGROUND:

I moved to the Seattle area in 1999 from Lebanon, New Hampshire. I am a retired army brat who gets edgy in long-term living situations. My strengths lie in history and English, and I'm a sucker for C. S. Lewis and John Irving. I am a confessed bookworm who is addicted to writing mediocre poetry. I go running every morning. My mother and father work very hard so that I can afford to go to this school.

GPA and HONORS / ADVANCED COURSES:

Cumulative GPA: 3.88 (unweighted)

Gifted English (9th grade in a New Hampshire public school, John Q. Adams)

Honors English 11 (Seattle Academy)

Honors English 12

Calculus 1, 12

Advanced Chemistry, 12

HONORS AND AWARDS:

Scholar-Athlete (Golf), 11

National Honor Society, 11, 12

Second Place, Bennington Creative Writing Competition, 10

First chair trumpet, King County Youth Orchestra performance, 10

Honor Roll, 9, 10, 11

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Varsity soccer, Seattle Academy, 10-12

Premier Soccer League, Seattle, 11

"Lieutenant Cable" in South Pacific, school production, 11

COMMUNITY / CHURCH ACTIVITIES:

Member of youth discussion group, University Unitarian Church, 11

Church mission trip to Costa Rica, summer between 10 and 11

Student tutor at T.T. Minor School, 10

EMPLOYMENT:

Deliveries, local florist, 12 hours per week

HOBBIES / INTERESTS:

Guitar lessons, 10, 11

Skiing, since age 8

GOALS:

I hope to study English and perhaps eventually go to law school. I am interested in taking courses in Creative Nonfiction writing.