

College Advising Handbook
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SEATTLE ACADEMY
COLLEGE ADVISING

Seattle Academy College Handbook

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Welcome to Seattle Academy College Advising

In the context of Seattle Academy's "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 meet individually with the assigned advisor (Melanie or Tom) after which families join the conversation. 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 Seattle Academy's college advisors.

Seattle Academy's college advisors have a unique perspective on Seattle Academy students and engage with students in many aspects of their lives while at school. Advisors see students in the classroom, on 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 one or two teacher recommendations when appropriate, goes to each college with the student's transcript and Seattle Academy Report to Colleges (school "profile"). Once students receive their colleges' decisions, their advisor consults with them as they make matriculation and wait-list decisions.

By the end of senior year, ninety-five per cent of Seattle Academy graduates enroll in a four-year college, and the remaining five per cent enroll within one year. The choice to defer enrollment in college by pursuing a "gap year" or "interim year" has gained popularity at our school in recent years: graduates have chosen to play sports in Europe, teach children in India, and enroll in one-year theater and visual art programs, among other endeavors. A section on gap years follows in this handbook, and College Advising catalogs gap year programs 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 advisors gain insights and information from visits to college campuses, from attending regional and national conferences 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
Director of College Advising

Tom Hajduk
Associate College Advisor
Chair of English

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:

- ✓ Advisors are 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.
- ✓ Advisors arrange informative meetings for the school community.
- ✓ Advisors meet with each junior and his/her family for an extended conference during the spring of the student's junior year.
- ✓ Advisors schedule, publicize, and participate in roughly 100 college representatives' visits to Seattle Academy yearly.
- ✓ Advisors write a positive, honest, vivid letter of recommendation, on behalf of Seattle Academy, for each senior.
- ✓ Advisors gather together and mail the following school support materials to colleges, universities, special programs, and scholarship organizations designated by students: Seattle Academy Secondary School Report with counselor letter, Seattle Academy school profile ("Report to Colleges"), the student's most current 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.

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 inform themselves of all their colleges' deadlines and requirements.
- ✓ 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 its recommended early November deadline and at the latest by the final early December deadline.
- ✓ Students register for standardized tests and have scores sent to colleges.
- ✓ Students keep college advisors aware of developments in their college plans.
- ✓ 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 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 their college advisors 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 hire a typist to complete the final draft—but the typist should not make any alterations in the student's work. Students may, 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 may qualify as "changes in status" include honor offenses, 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, and convictions and other legal offenses. This ethical obligation continues through a student's senior year until after graduation.

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's experience as former director of freshman admission 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). 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) you choose 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.
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 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."
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. 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.*

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 Tom 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?
- 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 challenges? Will the colleges you're considering support your work to meet these challenges?
- 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? 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 they just shell-shocked by the sticker price of colleges? Do they value education less than you do? Are you just

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?

- 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 kayak trips in Alaska, the band they play in, daddy's new plane, the homeless shelter they worked in, 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, and college lasts only four 9-month seasons.
- 11) Is the college what some would call an academic pressure-cooker? Do the students seem energized by competition? If so, does that turn you off or turn you on?
- 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.
- 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." 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 selective 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 Web sites to get you started.

WEB SITES: GENERAL COLLEGE ADMISSION RESOURCES

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

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

College Home Pages: www.mit.edu:8001/people/cdemello/N.html A site developed at MIT providing links to thousands of college and university home pages worldwide.

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.

College Express: www.collegexpress.com Categories: College Search, Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Center, Sports' Source, Parents' Corner. College homepage and financial aid links.

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.")

NACAC: www.nacacnet.org National Association of College Admissions Counselors' (of which Melanie and Tom are members) Web site 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 Web site 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.

How Many Colleges?

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 as early in the fall as possible, so that you can concentrate on your schoolwork along with your work on applications. It is best if you enter a preliminary list into Naviance by the November deadline, and you must have your final list ready by the December deadline to ensure timely pre-winter break mailing. Consider using the Common Application to help with the paper load.

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 and where you know you'll be happy.
- ✓ 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.

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 ("accessible," "probable," and so on) 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 your college advisor, confirming the schools to which you plan to apply, and offering in writing last feedback and suggestions.

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

Increasingly, 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 out:

Regular Decision

Rolling Admissions: 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.

Common Notification Date: 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).

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: you’ll receive only one financial aid package and won’t be able to shop around.

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 newish 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.

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) at Web sites 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 Web site 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 Web site. Take notes at the information sessions; they'll come in handy when you are preparing later for an interview or trying to differentiate one school from another after a long tour.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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, and 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.
- ✓ 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 later in 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.

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

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.

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.

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" to discover what the traffic and atmosphere is like on any given weekday.

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, and have fun!

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.

WEB SITES: COLLEGE VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND TOURS

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 over 3200 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.

College Visits: www.college-visits.com Explore Robert Rummerfield's tour schedule to colleges in various geographic areas. Affordable and helpful. Phone 843-853-8149 or 800-944-2798 as well.

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 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?
- ✓ Take stock of yourself; think about ways to talk about your strengths and weaknesses.
- ✓ 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

- ✓ 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?
- ✓ 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) for this situation. 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.

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?

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?

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: _____

Tuition: _____ Room and board: _____ Fees? _____

Application fee: _____ Deadlines _____

Size: Undergraduates _____ Graduates _____ Avg. class size _____

Tests required for admission (and their deadlines), including SAT IIs (if any) _____

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

Accepted GPA avg.: _____ (Check Naviance and with Melanie and Tom for Seattle Academy comparisons.)

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:

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. 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 moot as colleges often take the best sections (because 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 should send all their test sections for ACT and SAT as they did formerly. 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 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 particular 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 again. If you want to use the principle of practice for improving (a very good plan), purchase *10 REAL SATs* from the College Board and take one a week for about two months before the SAT administration. A good ACT prep book 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 if your colleges require them (see the Web site 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 Web site 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, 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.

If I decide to take SAT Subject Tests, which ones should I take, and when?

See the table in this handbook, and check with your teachers and college advisors.

Frequently Asked Questions about the SAT/ACT (continued)

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 *10 Real SATs* or a good ACT prep book, set the kitchen timer, and work your way through the tests.
- ✓ Go to the Web site 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 Web sites 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. Take your PSAT score report and test booklet with you to tutoring sessions to facilitate identification of your strengths and weaknesses
- ✓ Attend an SAT or ACT prep workshop at one of the local colleges, schools, or libraries. College Advising will advertise these workshops as they come along.

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.

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 are unlucky in test scores, check out the FairTest Web site (<http://fairtest.org>) for information about the nearly 800 colleges that deemphasize or ignore standardized test scores. Some of America's "best" colleges are on that list. And few if any non-American institutions of higher learning 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). 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.

Testing, Testing... 1, 2, 3: Registration for the SAT or the ACT

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 bfenton@seattleacademy.org.

What is Seattle Academy's CEEB code, necessary for registration? 481154

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.

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, so you don't need to email them to us as a matter of course. Students, share the details with us, if you like, during our planning meetings and we'll use them to strategize, refine lists, and so on.

WEB SITES: TESTING

ACT Online: www.actstudent.org

College Board Online: www.collegeboard.com Many services and links.

Educational Testing Service: www.ets.org Mostly information about the SAT, but helpful and interesting.

Fair Test: <http://fairtest.org> The National Center for Fair and Open Testing is an advocacy organization working to end the abuses and flaws of standardized testing and to ensure that the evaluations of students are fair and educationally sound. Also offers a list of the 730+ colleges that have eliminated or minimized the importance of the SAT as an admissions requirement.

Kaplan SAT Review: www.kaptest.com Excellent site with many offerings, from an interactive \$350 test prep program to less expensive programs and products.

Peterson's Education: www.petersons.com A for-profit site with some free resources.

The Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com Many good products and services—but not associated with Princeton University.

Testing, Testing... 1, 2, 3: SAT Subject Tests (SAT IIs)

Should you take SAT subject tests?

Yes, 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)?

Yes, in most cases. Check with your teachers and college advisor about if and how.

| 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.) |
| Math IIC | May or June after a year of study of Pre-Cal or during or after a year of Calculus. Preferences: jr. spring or sr. 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 Web site 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 Web site 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. |

Testing, Testing... 1, 2, 3: Myths and Truths about the SAT

Adapted from Getting In, by Katherine Cohen

Now that you've reviewed the procedures by which you register for and take standardized tests, let's review what they do, what they don't do, what they reveal, and what they don't reveal.

TRUTHS:

- ✓ The SAT is described by its designers as a test of reasoning ability, now with writing.
- ✓ The SAT Subject Tests are described as tests of achievement in various subjects.
- ✓ The ACT describes itself as an achievement test in reading, math, and science.
- ✓ Increasing numbers of colleges deemphasize the SAT by allowing Subject Tests and/or the ACT instead of the SAT, or by ignoring standardized tests of all kinds.
- ✓ Many colleges still use standardized test scores in determining admission.

MYTH: A high score on the SAT guarantees me a spot in a top college.

TRUTH: There are no guarantees in college admission. Your transcript is more important than your SAT score. The SAT score is part of a larger picture in which all pieces of your application fit together. A high SAT score combined with lower grades, for example, can be a negative factor.

MYTH: A straight-A student should have no trouble getting a high SAT score.

TRUTH: Your classroom ability does not necessarily correlate to your standardized-test-taking ability.

MYTH: I should keep preparing for and taking the SAT until I am happy with my scores.

TRUTH: Studies have shown that a student's SAT scores tend to peak during three tries, so your chances of improving your score begin to go down after that. But if you have good reasons to think you'll improve, or you are trying to hit a certain score for a scholarship, try it a fourth time.

MYTH: Even if a school does not require the SAT Subject Tests, I should take at least one to show that I am committed to learning.

TRUTH: If a school does not require the SAT Subject Test(s), take the test(s) only if you believe you will do quite well, and send your scores only if they are better than the grades on your transcript would predict.

MYTH: I should take as many SAT Subject Tests as possible; it's the quantity of the test results that counts.

TRUTH: Take the required SAT Subject Tests and beyond them, take only tests in subjects in which you excel. Take the exams at the end of a year of study of the subject, if possible, or plan to spend time preparing and reviewing.



SEATTLE ACADEMY

COLLEGE ADVISING

Test Prep and Tutoring Services

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

Academic Advantage
Yurij Rudensky, SAAS '03
206-351-9515
<http://web.mac.com/academicadvantage>

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.atatutoring.com

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

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

Educational Academy 2
206-284-2300

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

Educational Tutoring and 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
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Mazor Test Prep
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P.O. Box 1614
Vashon Island, WA
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www.mazor.org

Alissa Mortensen
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Newton Street Study Group
Seattle, WA
206-622-2598
www.blogs.law.harvard.edu/newtonstreet

Northwest Tutoring
Jonathan Shapiro (verbal)
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www.northwesttutoring.com

Primarily Writing
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The Princeton Review Seattle
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Seattle, WA 98105
206-548-1100
www.princetonreview.com

Sarah Reis
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sbrseattle@aol.com
SAT/ACT verbal prep, available summer

Sandweiss Test Prep
4519 1/2 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
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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 www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

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 www.clearinghouse.net. 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 on that page and ensure you have completed the appropriate items in the appropriate grades.
- ✓ Ask your advisor to send in a copy of your transcript.
- ✓ On the wall in College Advising, you'll 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. This is also available by clicking www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.
- ✓ Receive notification of certification after the NCAA Clearinghouse received all your documents. Since paperwork with this organization is delayed frequently, phone 319.338.3003 with any questions.

WEB RESOURCES: ATHLETICS

www.ncaa.org, the official site of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

www.ncaaclearinghouse.net, mentioned above, the NCAA Clearinghouse site.

http://www.ncaastudent.org/NCAA_Guide.pdf is the downloadable NCAA Guide to the College Bound student athlete, featuring schedules, definitions, sport-by-sport recruiting rules and regulations and more.

www.naia.org, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics home page.

www.collegestudentathletes.com, free tool for Division III-focused student athletes.

Teacher Recommendations

Many colleges—but not all—ask for teacher recommendations of applicants. If you discover that you need one or two, see some advice and information below.

- ✓ Make sure you that you need a teacher recommendation. If so, do you need more than one? Inform yourself carefully before you ask any teacher to write for you. Generally, it's wise to line up two people to write your letters, but a check of what you need in advance is respectful of teachers' time.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Ask early; teachers get tired as the semester wears on. Remember that the deadline for asking a teacher to write for you is in early October of senior year.
- ✓ **No later than the October deadline, give your teacher a copy of your résumé and a list of the colleges' deadlines you know at this time. No later than a month before the first deadline, take a stamped, addressed letter and teacher recommendation form (when applicable) for each college to your recommending teacher(s). Fill out the top of each form. Comply with the early December deadline for taking your final list and set of envelopes to teachers.**
- ✓ The teacher will take responsibility from then on, but it's a good idea to email your recommenders each time you submit an application.
- ✓ The teacher is not allowed, by school policy, to show you the recommendation. This policy builds Seattle Academy's credibility with colleges. Because they know our teachers are speaking candidly, a letter's praise carries more clout.
- ✓ After the teacher has mailed your letters of recommendation, write a brief thank-you note. Writing recommendations is a lot of hard work!
- ✓ 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 opened and documented in the admissions office, but by Seattle Academy policy, we re-send the letter immediately upon hearing that it is not yet in your file at the college.

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.

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.

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. 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 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, although one college professional said in a 1995 *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. Know, however, that you're usually not limited to the space provided (unless the school says otherwise--read the 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. 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.

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 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*." That said, save all writing, knowing that supposedly "finished" writing remains a work in progress, and you will often find snippets of old writing 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. For one, college folks are 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 last 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 Web site. 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.

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.

What are some other common pitfalls students encounter when they write essays? Commonly, 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 be come 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 rode [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 standardized tests, and you've written your essay. 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), either through the Common Application, which is accepted by roughly 300 colleges nationally, or using a school's own institutional 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; others require you to fill out the application, pay the application fee, and submit all of it in one sitting.

Instructions

Read every word of the college's application materials. Notice. . .

- ✓ all deadlines,
- ✓ the college's test requirements and deadlines,
- ✓ the teacher recommendation requirements and forms (if there are some).

One helpful way to organize what's due when, and what's required at each school, is to make a spreadsheet capturing that information. College Advising has developed a sample for you that you can save to your computer and modify any way you like. Go to:

- ✓ Naviance
- ✓ From Your School (left-hand navigation bar)
- ✓ Document Library
- ✓ Application Tools
- ✓ Application Planning Grid (view and save this)

Teacher Recommendation Forms

Complete the top sections of the Teacher Recommendation Forms (if there are such forms included in the application). Seattle Academy recommends signing the waiver of your right to read your recommendation after matriculation; the college has more confidence in the recommendations. Take these forms to your teachers as soon as possible and no later than the October deadline (for rolling, Early Action/Decision, December deadlines) or the December deadline (all others). See the more specific teacher recommendation section in this handbook.

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.

Drafting

Complete your rough draft of the application form. (See "Writing your Application," next section.) Bring it to your college advisor, if you wish, for a strategy session, 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. The supplements, required by most colleges, are where you'll get school-specific.

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"). Don't boast, but do show yourself in your best light. Don't short-change these questions; write full, vivid, thorough answers. Edit carefully!
- ✓ Take care with even the two- to five-sentence answers.
 - Be sure to answer the exact question.
 - Use the same informal, easy (but correct) voice.
 - Try to hook the reader's attention without being frivolous or melodramatic.
 - 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.

The most challenging writing assignment in any application is the essay. See the "Confessions... Essay" section earlier in this handbook for advice.

Final drafts

Complete the final draft of your application. Fill out any other necessary forms: merit scholarship, financial aid, and so on. Write your name and social security number or date of birth (use "DOB") at the top of any loose sheets of paper.

Paying the application fee

Write a check to the college for the amount of the application fee (write the applicant's name and social security number/DOB on the front of the check) or charge the fee online to a credit card.

Reporting test scores

Order your test scores sent to the college. This is the student's responsibility. Call 1-800-SAT-SCOR or 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 three weeks from the date you applied, confirm online or by phone or email that your part of the application has been received by the college.

A Guide for Students Applying to the University of California System

Occasionally, Seattle Academy students express interest in applying to the University of California (UC) System. This process can be detailed, overwhelming and at times frustrating for applicants from outside California (see “uphill battle” below). Find below key information to guide your application.

General Information

The University of California system comprises nine undergraduate campuses, 200,000 students, and over 700 programs and majors. An applicant begins with a common application to the system, selecting one or more individual universities. After making the original common application, the applicant interacts further with the individual chosen campuses.

As recently as 2005-6, and made more challenging by the economy and state budget shortfalls, the UC system received over 87,000 applications; 90% of those admitted were California residents. Though 6,200 out-of-state students were admitted in 2006, UC admissions personnel describe an out-of-state applicant’s candidacy as an **“uphill battle.”**

If a student is determined to apply to a UC, usually he or she applies to more than one (but not all ten), listed here in approximate order of selectivity: UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC San Diego, UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, UC Irvine, UC Merced, UC Riverside, and UC Santa Cruz.

Dates and Deadlines

- ✓ Students must **apply to the UC system between November 1 and November 30**. Do not wait until the last few days, as the server always has operational problems toward the end of November. The application becomes visible online in late October, though not yet open for business.
- ✓ **Notification of admission decisions occurs online between March 1 and March 30**, with the more highly selective colleges posting notification toward the end of that time. The UC schools do not use waitlists, so the decision will be “admit” or “deny.”
- ✓ Students must **send a Statement of Intent and fee to enroll at one UC school by May 1**.
- ✓ Your **final official high school transcript is due to the college by July 15**. The grades you self-reported on your application must conform to those on your final official transcript.
- ✓ Admission to a UC school is provisional and can be rescinded for academic or behavioral reasons.

Eligibility for Admission

For an out-of-state applicant, gaining “eligibility for admission” is often only the first step toward admission to a UC school. If you qualify for “Eligibility,” you may move into a “Selection” process, in which the school(s) you have chosen evaluate you comprehensively, according to 14 criteria listed on the website. You might be admitted to some schools and not others, to all of your schools, or to none of your schools.

Out-of-state applicants can achieve eligibility status by UC Score *or* by Examination. As of 2007, only some of the UC colleges use comprehensive review (a look at 14 factors beyond grades and scores), but because all the schools are increasingly selective, every applicant should apply as if a comprehensive review will take place. Different schools emphasize different ones of the 14 criteria, but all the schools place highest importance on academic achievement (which encompasses strength of courses, special talents and projects, accomplishments in light of life experiences and special circumstances, and trends in grades). The personal statement is an appropriate venue for students to address the 14 criteria of comprehensive review, but applicants should not send transcripts, letters of recommendation, portfolios, or videos.

All the UC campuses have “impacted majors,” or majors that draw fewer than desired applicants. A student may gain a short-term admission advantage by applying to such a major, but transferring later on from an impacted major to a less-impacted major can be difficult. A better choice for transferring to a desired major in the UC schools is to attend a community college in California; California community college transfers get top priority in the admissions process. Several community colleges have especially strong programs and good transfer cultures on campus: Santa Monica City Community College has the highest transfer rate in the state; Diablo Valley,

Santa Barbara City College, and San Francisco City College are quite good as well. After a year at one of these community colleges, a student qualifies for California resident status.

Eligibility by UC Score

To achieve eligibility by UC Score, an applicant must meet three requirements: the subject requirement, the exam requirement, and the scholarship requirement. To meet the subject requirement, a student must have successfully completed the "A-G" courses outlined online: 4 English courses, 3 math courses, 2 history or social science courses, 2 lab sciences, 2 years of study of world languages, 1 college prep elective (could be a course in speech, debate, ceramics, and others as well as traditional subject areas), and 1 year of study of one of four disciplines in the Visual and Performing Arts (drama/theatre, dance, music, visual arts). To fulfill the VPA (visual and performing arts) requirement, an applicant must have studied the same discipline (theatre, dance, painting, etc.) for the equivalent of a full year, but parts of the study may take place in different years (at Seattle Academy, the same medium, but different trimesters different years), and some parts may be undertaken in a non-high school setting (dance school or company, community college classes, etc.). See www.assist.org for guidelines on such study. Students who hope to earn admission to the more selective UC schools should take more than the minimum requirements in courses in A-G.

For the second (exam) requirement for admission by UC Score, a student must earn qualifying scores on standardized tests: the ACT-Plus-Writing *or* the SAT, *and* two SAT Subject Tests in different disciplines. The system accepts scores earned through the December administration of an applicant's senior year. The ACT is not accepted in lieu of SAT Subject Tests.

For the third (scholarship) requirement for admission by UC Score, an out-of-state student must earn a minimum cumulative weighted GPA of 3.4 in the required A-G courses. The more selective the UC school of your choice, the higher (above 3.4) your GPA will need to be.

Calculating your UC Score

As of fall 2007, GPAs and SAT/ACT scores are converted to a new UC Score on a 0-100 scale. An online calculator is available to help you determine your own UC Score along with other details about eligibility at:

http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/undergrad_adm/paths_to_adm/freshman.html

To use the calculator, you will need to have the following:

- ✓ A list of your grades in the approved A-G courses in 10th and 11th grades.
- ✓ Knowledge of which grades qualify to be "weighted."
- ✓ Your SAT or ACT-Plus-Writing Score.
- ✓ Your score in two SAT Subject Tests from different disciplines.

WEB RESOURCES: THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SYSTEM

UC online Common Application: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply

Approved high school course lists and "A-G" online update websites: www.ucop.edu/doorways

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

<http://www.hobsons.uk.com/home/what-we-do/study-uk-web.html> - general information. You'll probably find that most colleges require at least a high school diploma, a minimum of 600 on each of the CR and Math sections of the SAT, and 2 or 3 SAT Subject Tests with a minimum of 600 on each.

www.britishcouncil.org/usa-education-undergraduate-degree.htm Visit the undergraduate section.

www.ucas.com/ The British national common application website.

www.studyintheuk.org – another helpful site

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 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.

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 place in the English-speaking world to get a degree is Australia, but the Australian institutions do not equal those of the UK in reputation or selectivity.

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. |
| 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. 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. |
| 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. Try to negotiate with your favorite college, if needed. Please negotiate only if the current package <i>will not work</i> . |
| 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.
- 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

In an effort to “green” scholarship cataloging at Seattle Academy, starting in January 2009, we will enter scholarships about which we hear to the scholarship section on Naviance rather than catalog paper copies of scholarship applications.

WEB RESOURCES: FINANCIAL AID AND 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 May college loans.

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

U.S. Department of Education: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp> U.S. 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), 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.

To Remain Waitlisted or Not to Remain Waitlisted

Should you find yourself on a college wait-list, 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, 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! Start focusing on other colleges and get on with your plans.

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 ask you to 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.

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 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 we record others about which we hear 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

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.

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

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

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

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.

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.

www.studyabroad.com A comprehensive study abroad information and planning site.

www.timeoutassociates.com Bob Gilpin, who spoke last year at Seattle Academy, 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, 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

POST THIS ON YOUR FRIDGE.

College Advising *Eleventh* Grade Overview

Class of 2010 schedule for the remainder of 2009)

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| January 21, 2009 | Junior College Night, 7 PM, Theater. MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW. This is a required meeting for all juniors. It is appropriate (and recommended) that parents/guardians attend. Please gain permission in advance from Melanie if you believe you have a conflict with this meeting. |
| January 22, 2009 | Official individual meetings with your college advisor begin. Completion of survey assigned at Junior College Night required before first meeting. |
| January 23, 2009 | Teacher Day, mid-term, no school |
| January 27 and 28, 2009 | After school online testing registration help with Betsy and Melanie. Two dates on which we can help you register for SAT or ACT. Bring your computer and a credit card you can use to register. In the VB Conference Room. |
| February 7, 2009 | ACT administration (see note above on January 6) |
| February 10, 2009 | Last day registration for March SAT without late fees (please register much earlier)* |
| February 16-20, 2009 | Presidents' Day, no classes this week |
| February 27, 2009 | Last day registration for April ACT without late fees (please register much earlier)* |
| March 14, 2009 | SAT administration |
| <i>March 21, 2009</i> | <i>PNACAC (Pacific Northwest Association of College Admission Counseling) College Fair, noon-3 PM, Seattle University, no registration required. List of colleges generally available at www.pnacac.org as the event nears.</i> |
| March 30-April 1, 2009 | Spring Days – local college visits coordinated through College Advising |
| March 31, 2009 | Registration for May SAT without late fees (please register much earlier)* |
| April 2-10, 2009 | Spring Break, College Advising closed during this time |
| April 4, 2009 | ACT administration |
| April 21, 2009 | Learning Differences and the College Search, 7 PM, Black Box |
| May 2, 2009 | SAT and SAT Subject Test administration |
| May 4, 2009 | Mid-term, regular classes as normal |
| May 5, 2009 | Registration for June SAT without late fees (please register much earlier)* |
| May 8, 2009 | Registration for June ACT without late fees (please register much earlier)* |
| May 19, 2009 | Senior Parent Speak-Out: Advice for Managing Senior Year, 7 PM, Black Box (senior parents talk to junior families about the year ahead) |
| May 25, 2009 | Memorial Day, no classes |
| May, TBD | Fall SAT registration goes live and we host a "sign up" party after school |
| June 6, 2009 | SAT and SAT Subject Test administration |
| June 13, 2009 | ACT administration |
| Mid-June, 2009 | Receive mailing with summer assignments: College essay, summer survey, résumé and Common Application |

* Check and register at www.collegeboard.com (SAT) and www.actstudent.org (ACT) well ahead of these dates for best/nearest testing locations.

POST THIS ON YOUR FRIDGE.

College Advising Senior Overview

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| August 1, 2009: | Colleges that Change Lives information session and fair, Meydenbauer Center 10 AM – 12 PM; pre-registration not required |
| August 7, 2009: | Deadline for September ACT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register) |
| September 1, 2009 | On campus – orientations happening |
| September 2, 2009 | Classes begin. |
| September 7, 2009 | Labor Day (no classes) |
| September 8, 2009 | <i>Deadline on summer projects. Complete "Seniors in September" survey on Naviance. Send your college advisor a draft of your essay and a polished résumé. Attempt to complete a Common Application at www.commonapp.org or another application that's meaningful to you. Sign up for a "back to school" meeting to re-review list and set deadlines for fall.</i> |
| September 9, 2009 | Deadline for October SAT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register) |
| <i>September 10, 2009</i> | <i>College visits and information sessions begin this date, continue through Thanksgiving. Posted on the wall in College Advising and on Naviance. Individual reminders sent through Naviance.</i> |
| September 12, 2009 | ACT administration |
| September 13, 2009 | All School Picnic at Seward Park |
| September 18, 2009 | Deadline for October ACT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register) |
| September 19, 2009 | Rosh Hashanah |
| September 28, 2009 | Yom Kippur, no classes |
| October 1, 2009 | Last day to request a teacher recommendation. Based on back-to-school meeting with college advisor, submit Naviance online survey if you're planning to apply anywhere (Early Decision, Early Action, or rolling admission) by November 15 or earlier (so we can coordinate mailings). |
| October 1, 2009 | Deadline for November SAT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register) |
| October 7, 2009 | 12 th grade parent meeting, largely college-related |
| October 10, 2009 | SAT and SAT Subject Test administration date |
| October 16, 2009 | General College Barometer Check with Melanie and Tom, 11 AM, Fishbowl; also day off from school |
| October 18, 2009 | National (NACAC) College Fair, Washington State Convention & Trade Center, 12 PM – 4 PM. No registration required. College reps unable to interview during fair. |
| October 19, 2009 | National (NACAC) College Fair, Washington State Convention & Trade Center, 9 AM – 12 PM. No registration required. College reps unable to interview during fair. |
| October 20, 2009 | Guide to College Financing with George Mills, Vice President for Enrollment, University of Puget Sound, 8 PM, Arts Center. NOTE: Unusual start time because of 9 th grade parent night. |
| October 22, 2009 | Seattle Performing and Visual Arts Fair, 7-9 PM, Fisher Pavilion at Seattle Center |
| October 24, 2009 | ACT administration |
| October 24, 2009 | Seattle Area Independent School Fair, Bush School, 1 PM – 4 PM, for juniors, seniors, and families. www.bush.edu/home/news-detail.asp?pageaction=ViewSinglePublic&LinkID=2180&ModuleID=55 |
| October 30, 2009 | Deadline for December SAT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register) |
| October 30, 2009 | Final college list due in Naviance. (Under "my colleges" in Naviance, check those to "move to application list." These are the places you plan to apply.) Upper School Conferences, no classes, no college rep visits |
| November 6, 2009 | Deadline for December ACT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register) |
| November 7, 2009 | SAT and SAT II subject test administration |

There's more on the back. Please flip this over. **POST THIS ON YOUR FRIDGE.**

College Advising Senior Overview (Continued)

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| November 11, 2009 | Veterans' Day, no classes |
| November 23-25, 2009 | Finals |
| November 25, 2009 | Noon dismissal |
| November 26-27, 2009 | Thanksgiving Break |
| December 1, 2009 | <i>Schools to which you'll apply MUST appear under "APPLICATION LIST" (moved from "my colleges") in Naviance by this date. Mailing by winter break guaranteed only if listed by this date.</i> |
| December 5, 2009 | SAT and SAT subject test administration |
| December 12, 2009 | ACT administration |
| December 15, 2009 | Deadline for January SAT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register) |
| December 15-18, 2009 | Melanie and Tom mailing Seattle Academy-specific materials in support of seniors' applications before break. |
| December 18, 2009 | Noon dismissal, winter break begins |
| January 1-3, 2010 | Winter break continues |
| January 4-8, 2010 | <i>Back from break: Help week! This is an open-door, unscheduled office hours week for all seniors. See Melanie's office if you have questions.</i> |
| January 5, 2010 | <i>Deadline for February ACT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register)</i> |
| January 9, 2010 | National Portfolio Day, Cornish College of the Arts; see www.portfolioday.net |
| January 18, 2010 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no school |
| January 22, 2010 | Teacher mid-term day, no school |
| January 23, 2010 | SAT and SAT II administration |
| February 4, 2010 | Deadline for March SAT registration without late fee (don't wait this long to register) |
| February 6, 2010 | ACT administration |
| February 13-21, 2010 | Mid-winter break |
| March 6, 2010 | PNACAC College Fair, Connolly Center, Seattle University, noon-3 PM |
| March 9-11, 2010 | Exams |
| March 12, 2010 | Teacher day, no classes |
| March 13, 2010 | SAT administration |
| March 18-19, 2010 | Senior retreat: Tom and Melanie join seniors on retreat |
| March 23, 2010 | College Sports Night, 7 PM |
| March 29-31, 2010 | Spring Days |
| April 1-11, 2010 | Spring Break, College Advising closed during this time |
| Post-Spring Break 2010 | Senior Help Day: Generally the first Monday back from Spring Break, Alaska, etc. A good chance to check in during open-door, unscheduled office hours in Melanie's office. |
| April 20, 2010 | Learning Differences and the College Search, 7 PM, Black Box |
| April 29-30, 2010 | Senior Help Days: All-day office-hours in Melanie's office to celebrate, answer last questions, sort out the unexpected, etc. |

May 1, 2010

National Candidates' Reply Date (does fall on a Saturday this year; plan to postmark your college choice by this date unless your college(s) instruct you otherwise)

May 3, 2010

Mid-term, regular classes as normal

May, 2010

AP Calculus test – date TBD

May 27, 2010

Senior Transition to College Night, 7 PM, Theater – A night not to be missed! We've requested again last year's star guest speaker, Houston Dougharty, Vice President for Student Affairs at Grinnell College in Iowa. As of this printing (6/3/09), Houston will speak to parents in the evening and to seniors the following morning. More as we confirm plans with Houston!

May 31, 2010

Memorial Day, no classes

June 9-11, 2010

Exams

June 15, 2010

Graduation

Seattle Academy College Advising Contact Information

Mailing Address

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

College Advisors

Melanie Reed, Director of College Advising
Tom Hajduk, Associate College Advisor, Chair of English

Phone Numbers

Melanie: 206.676.6805
Tom: 206.323.6600

Email Addresses

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Web Site

www.seattleacademy.org

CEEB Code

481154



SEATTLE ACADEMY

COLLEGE ADVISING

Résumé: Some Suggestions

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 worksheet 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.

A sample résumé:

Steven Stanton Seattle (Steve)
DOB 12/12/1990
1057 Whatever Street
Seattle, WA 98122
206-323-6618
steveseattle@seattleacademy.org

BACKGROUND: I moved to the Seattle area in 1998 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.