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FOR GIRLS

# Guide to College Admissions

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## HOW TO START THINKING ABOUT THE PROCESS

It is likely that you have heard something about the college process. In the past ten years, the process of applying to colleges has changed dramatically. With heightened media attention on increasing competition at selective schools and rising tuition costs, it is difficult to know where to begin. It is not unusual to feel overwhelmed or confused at the beginning of this journey.

As you begin this journey, it is important to get in the right frame of mind:

### **WHY COLLEGE?**

The first step in this process is assessing why you want to go to college. In essence you are assessing your goals and what you want out of the college experience. A couple of questions to consider when doing this are: Why do you want to go to College? What do you hope to attain through your years of undergraduate education? What are your career goals? In your best estimation, is graduate school in your future?

Many students go to college because they have an idea of what they want to do with their lives, such as attending medical school or pursuing a law degree. However, many students go to college because it is the next step in their life, and they want to broaden their education. By assessing your goals, you want to evaluate the situation and make sure you are going to college for the right reasons. Be sure you are doing it for the betterment of yourself. Rest assured that going to college as an undecided major is **ACCEPTABLE**. You do not need to know exactly what you want to do for the rest of your life, because odds are that you will change your mind during your time in college.

**You are in the driver's seat.** Although you will get input from parents, friends, relatives, guidance counselors, admissions officers and likely every person you will meet, remember that **YOU** are the one going to college. Stay focused on your interests, goals and needs.

**Keep an open mind and be an informed customer.** Do not jump to conclusions based on any single source of information. Try not to be tempted by a person who loves or hates a school or by the number of stars next to a college in a guidebook. This is an individualized process-what may be appropriate for your friends may not be appropriate for you. Stay focused on yourself and keep a sense of what this process is about: finding the right match for you!

**The college process begins with self-evaluation.** Until you've carefully considered your needs (academic, social, personal), you are not ready to decide whether a particular school is the right match for you. To choose a college wisely you need to pull together some information about yourself. In your first meeting with your counselor many of these questions will be discussed. Your thoughts beforehand will also help you prepare.

### ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

- What activities do you enjoy most? Why?
- How would you describe your role in school, your home, and your community?
- What do you do for fun? Relaxation?

### THE COMMUNITY AROUND YOU

- How do you describe Mount de Sales Academy, your family, and your hometown? How has your environment influenced your way of thinking?
- What distresses you most about the world around you? What will you do about it?
- How are you influenced by others? Do you ever feel pressure to conform?
- How do you think others would describe you? What would others say are your strengths? Your weaknesses?
- What do others expect of you?
- How do you react when your beliefs are challenged?
- How do you make decisions?

### GOALS & VALUES

- What values are important to you? Why?
- What relationships are important to you?
- How do you define success? What do you expect of yourself?
- What kind of person do you hope to become?
- How has your background helped to shape who you are today?
- How would you like a college to challenge you?
- What do you expect from your college experience academically? Socially?

### SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

- Have you met your potential in high school?
- How rigorous are your courses?
- Are you interested in a wide range of courses or a narrow group? Why?

An honest and thoughtful self-evaluation can reveal the qualities you should look for in colleges. It will also prepare you for questions you will be asked in essays and interviews during the admissions process. If you are willing to look seriously at yourself, you can find the colleges that are right for you and present yourself effectively to them.

## ***TIMETABLE FOR STUDENTS***

### WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR FRESHMEN:

#### AT THE BEGINNING:

Get off to a good start with your high school academic record. To maximize your college options as a graduating senior, you will need a strong four-year academic record. **Course selection and grades are the primary criteria used by colleges in making admission decisions.** Read, read, read! Reading improves many skills including vocabulary and critical thinking. So make sure to take the time to read outside of class.

#### CHALLENGE YOURSELF:

- Build strong academic, language, mathematics, and critical thinking skills by taking challenging courses.
- Study hard and work toward the best grades you can earn.
- Become involved and begin building your portfolio of activities, service, awards, and accomplishments. Do not limit yourself by first impression likes and dislikes. Stretch yourself, apply yourself, surprise yourself!
- Take the PSAT in mid-October for practice. The PSAT for freshmen, sophomores and juniors is administered on the same day. It is imperative that you take this test seriously as it is great preparation for future standardized tests.
- Start a folder in which you can place an inventory report of your activities, accomplishments, strengths, and positive qualities. This information will be useful in completing college applications, preparing for campus visits and college interviews, and providing background material for those who write your letters of recommendation.
- Strengthen your vocabulary by increasing your reading. An easy way to do this is by reading the front section of the newspaper (online is fine) or reading one non-assigned book a month.
- Research the academic requirements for admission at colleges at which you may be interested in attending. Make sure you are selecting your high school courses wisely based upon this information.
- If you are an athlete, learn about the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) or the NAIA requirements for eligibility [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org).

#### IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT A SELECTIVE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY:

- Talk with your parents about it.
- Share your ideas with a guidance counselor.
- Talk with your counselor and develop a master course schedule that will enable you to achieve this goal.

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR SOPHOMORES:

Maintain the strongest possible academic record by enrolling in the most challenging courses appropriate for you. Work hard on your academics. Make good grades. Read, read, read! Reading improves many skills including vocabulary and critical thinking. So make sure to take the time to read outside of class.

### FALL SEMESTER:

- Continue getting involved and building your portfolio of activities, service, awards, and accomplishments. Keep **STRETCHING** and **PUSHING** yourselves.
- Add to your folder in which you are placing a record of your activities, service, accomplishments, strengths, and positive qualities. This information will be useful in completing college applications, preparing for campus visits and college interviews, and providing background material for those who write your letters of recommendation.
- Take the PSAT in mid-October for practice. The PSAT for freshmen, sophomores and juniors is administered on the same day. It is imperative that you take this test seriously as it is great preparation for future standardized tests.
- Make sure you are 'on top' of your academic work. If needed, meet with your teachers for additional help.
- Begin to research colleges by attending local college nights in September and October and talking with college representatives who visit Mount de Sales Academy.
- Save your best work in academic courses and the arts for your portfolio.
- In December you will receive your PSAT scores. You will receive both the score report and the actual test that you completed so that you may see where you excelled and where you need improvement.

### WINTER/SPRING SEMESTER:

- Keep Studying!
- Look for volunteer and school activities to develop your interests.
- Select courses for your junior year that will meet your academic needs and the requirements for college admission.
- Explore summer enrichment opportunities. Make your summer productive.
- **READ-READ-READ!**

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR JUNIORS:

Realize that this will most likely be your toughest year academically. Commit to excellence in the classroom. Maintain the strongest possible academic record by enrolling in the most challenging courses appropriate for you. Work hard on your academics and make good grades. **Read, read, read!** Reading improves many skills including vocabulary and critical thinking. So make sure to take the time to read outside of class.

### FALL SEMESTER:

- Add to your folder in which you are placing a record of your activities, service, accomplishments, strengths, and positive qualities. This information will be useful in completing college applications, preparing for campus visits and college interviews, and providing background material for those who write your letters of recommendation.
- Begin the college selection process. Attend college fairs and parent and student meetings. Learn as much as you can about the college admission process.
- Take advantage of college fairs and visits by admission counselors both at Mount de Sales Academy and in the Baltimore community.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October. (This is an important test and it is IMPORTANT that you put this date on your calendar and come to school prepared to take this test.) Prepare by spending time reviewing the PSAT Student Bulletin and taking the sample test. This is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program.
- Become proactive with your college search. Request information from colleges that have caught your initial interest and plan visits to college campuses. Use the internet to secure information from colleges. All schools will have web pages.
- Attend the MDSA/MSJ college fair and Baltimore NACAC College Fair in October.

### WINTER/SPRING SEMESTER:

- In December you will receive your PSAT scores. You will receive both the score report and the actual test that you completed so that you may see where you excelled and where you need improvement.
- Take the SAT or ACT, **after registering on Naviance and getting your PSAT scores**. Remember registration dates are typically about 4 weeks before the testing date. You must register on your own and you may pick up registration forms in the Guidance Office or register on-line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for the SAT or [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for the ACT. Test scores are important factors in helping your College Counselor assist you in identifying appropriate college choices for you.

***Mount de Sales Academy requires all rising seniors to have at least one test score, either ACT or SAT on their transcript when they return in August of their senior year.***

- **Parents must attend Parent Meetings scheduled by the Guidance Office.**
- **You will be assigned a date for your meeting to discuss your college plan.**
- Schedule classes your senior year that will meet your academic needs and the requirements for admission to the schools where you are planning on applying.

- Continue developing portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talents required for college admission and/or scholarships.
- Take AP exams in May for all Advanced Placement classes in which you are enrolled.
- Take SAT Subject Tests if they are required by schools to which you are applying.
- During spring and summer breaks visit as many colleges from your initial list as possible and keep a record of your impressions.
- Keep an ongoing journal of your activities and record possible ideas for college essays.
- Complete the College Questionnaire, Reflection Paper and Personal Resume. This information will be used by persons writing your recommendations. These are due for the first time before you leave for the summer.
- Student/Athletes planning on playing an NCAA Division I or II sport or playing a sport at an NAIA college must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) no later than October 1st of their senior year or at [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org) for NAIA schools. After you register, print out, sign, and turn the in to your Guidance Counselor Copy 1 and Copy 2 of the Transcript Release Form.
- Approach teachers for recommendations for your college applications. Giving your teachers more time to complete the recommendations is to YOUR benefit.

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR SENIORS:

Your senior year record is the MOST important. RESIST the temptation to alter your senior schedule in any way that will reduce its rigor or reduce the number of core courses (English, foreign language, science, math, history/social science, religion). **Strength of curriculum and performance in it is the most important factor in college admission decisions.** Read, read, read! Reading improves many skills including vocabulary and critical thinking. So make sure to take the time to read outside of class.

### AUGUST/SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER:

- Add to your folder (which should have been started freshmen year) in which you are placing a record of your activities, service, accomplishments, strengths, and positive qualities. This information will be useful in completing college applications, preparing for campus visits and college interviews, and providing background material for those who write your letters of recommendation.
- Secure applications and the proper forms for admission, scholarships, and financial aid from the colleges to which you plan to apply. Most schools accept applications (and prefer them be sent) on the web. If you apply online, be sure to download forms that must be completed by your Counselors or Teachers and submit these when you request to have your transcript sent.
- Check the Mount de Sales Academy and Naviance webpages at least twice a week to check for information on events, deadlines, scholarships, financial aid, testing, and any other information pertinent to your college search and selection process. MAKE THIS A HABIT!
- Take time to visit with College Admission representatives who visit Mount de Sales Academy. Remember that these people are often the ones who will be presenting your application to an admissions committee. Even if you have visited a college campus and had an interview, stop by to say “hello” to these representatives.
- Make your own chart/calendar with all deadlines for your applications for admission, scholarships, and financial aid. Be sure that you meet these deadlines.
- Student/Athletes planning on playing an NCAA Division I or II sport play a sport at an NAIA college must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) no later than October 1st of their senior year or at [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org) for NAIA schools. After you register, print out, sign, and turn the in to your College Counselor Copy 1 and Copy 2 of the Transcript Release Form.
- Be sure that you have an updated resume and responses to the Reflection Paper questions on file in the Guidance Office. **These are due by September 15 of your senior year. If you do not complete these forms, the office will NOT complete any paperwork for your college process.**
- Register for the SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Tests (if necessary) in October, November, and December. Remember registration dates are typically about 4 weeks before the testing date. You must register on your own and you may pick up registration forms in the Guidance Office or register on-line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for the SAT or [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for the ACT.

### SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER:

- Finalize the list of schools to which you will apply.
- Visit college campuses if at all possible. (Review the College Visitation Policy in the Mount de Sales Academy Handbook.)

- Attend college nights, college open houses, college fairs, and other special events.
- Check Naviance and the Guidance webpage for current information.
- Finalize your list of teacher recommendations for the applications that require them. Be sure these are reflected on your Naviance webpage and you have asked them by September 15 of your senior year. Provide these teachers with forms that have been correctly filled out by you and if requested, a stamped enveloped, addressed to where the recommendation is to be sent. Do not expect teachers to fill in your name, birth date, intended major, social security number, etc.
- Write, proofread, and revise your application essays; get feedback from others.
- For private and some public colleges, complete your section of the Secondary School Report Form for each application, sign the waiver, and submit it to your Counselor.
- We suggest you have all of your applications completed and ready to go before you go trick-or-treating. **This means every piece of your application should be submitted by November 1<sup>st</sup>.** Keep in mind that the earliest deadline colleges are allowed to set is October 15 – College of Charleston is an example of a college with this early deadline.
- Be aware of any independent scholarship deadlines for which you are applying.
- Be sure that your parents attend a Financial Aid Workshop in late fall. FAFSA forms will be available at these meetings.

#### JANUARY:

- Keep your Guidance Counselor advised of both the admission decisions and scholarship offers regardless of your desire to accept these offers. Be sure to know the exact names of the scholarships you have been awarded and the amount of the awards.
- FAFSA forms should be submitted as soon after January 1<sup>st</sup> as possible at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) and preferably before February 15.
- Complete any applications due this month. Be aware of any independent scholarship deadlines for which you are applying.

Once your semester exams are scored and fall grades are computed, Mount de Sales Academy will send an updated transcript with your seventh semester grades included to every school that has already received an official transcript from the Guidance Office. This includes all schools that have already accepted you. Every school that has received your application will receive an update. It is in your best interest to maintain the quality of your academic work through your senior year. “TAKING IT EASY” is something best saved for the summer months. ***Remember that all offers of admission are contingent upon the successful completion of your high school career.*** Final transcripts will be sent in June.

#### FEBRUARY/MARCH/APRIL/MAY:

- Visit schools to which you have applied and been admitted so that you may see them from a new perspective.

- Mail a written acceptance to your first-choice school. Notify all other schools to which you have been admitted that you will not be attending. *(If you have paid a refundable deposit, make sure to ask for this deposit back.)*
- Respond to financial aid and scholarship offers.
- **Notify all colleges that accepted you of your final decision NO LATER than MAY 1st, which is the Universal Decision Date.** Make your final decision before this date and send a deposit to the school you wish to attend.
- Provide your Guidance counselor with information regarding the scholarships you have received and the amounts of these scholarships. Let your counselors know where you want your final transcript sent. This can all be completed in Naviance. You must bring a paper copy of the acceptance letters to your counselor.
- Write Thank You notes to all those teachers and admission people that assisted you during this process.
- Sign up for orientation at the school to which you are attending.

## BEGINNING YOUR RESEARCH: INVESTIGATING YOUR OPTIONS FOR AFTER MDSA

Choosing where to apply begins with asking one basic question: what are the characteristics of my ideal college? Is it big or small? Public or private? East coast, West coast, or in between? Abroad? Liberal Arts or Pre-Professional? Is it close to home or far away? Is the setting urban, suburban, or rural? What is the climate? What is the atmosphere - challenging, intense, relaxed, or supportive? What kind of curriculum best suits my needs and goals? What kind of environment makes me happy both academically and personally?

Once you have identified some of the factors and criteria that are important to you, develop a preliminary list of colleges to investigate. At the end of your junior year, you may have a list of as many as 30 colleges. That's OK. At this early stage of the process, it is good to cast your net as wide as possible and keep options open. Using the information you have collected, draw up a list of specifications about the colleges that match your characteristics and interests. Then contact these colleges and get on their mailing lists. Follow up with some investigative legwork, including reading brochures with a critical eye, visiting campuses (in real life or via virtual tour at a college's website), watching videos, and talking to current students and alumnae.

As you research colleges, you will find that there are many colleges and universities that are good matches for you. You should apply to a range of schools that best match your own needs, interests, and abilities, and those that present you with appropriate challenges. If you decide to use a guidebook or any other sources, remember to view that source as you would a source for a research paper. (1) What institutions are included or excluded from the publication? (2) What is the primary focus, point of view, or objective of the comparison or rating? (3) What special expertise qualifies the author or publisher for the guide? (4) When was the guide published? Is the information still relevant? (5) Does the publication use the same standards to measure all institutions, or do some institutions receive special treatment? (6) Is the publication a serious attempt to inform and help in the college admission process – or was it written primarily to entertain or present offbeat or humorous aspects of the various institutions?

### INTERNET RESOURCES & SEARCHES

Mount de Sales Academy is pleased to be able to offer Naviance Family Connect as an online tool to help you establish preferences, research colleges and build college lists. The Guidance Office will provide students and their parents with passwords to register for Family Connect.

Today, students have limitless resources at their disposal to assist in the college selection process. The Internet is an excellent resource to the college and financial aid search process. Most colleges and universities maintain websites complete with school photographs, maps, beginning your research: investigating your options, video clips, and even virtual reality tours. They also provide up-to-date information about programs, faculty, and facilities. In addition, students can use on line tools to identify colleges and universities that fit their criteria and locate scholarship and financial aid opportunities. Most institutions now accept electronic applications. (See the Appendix for a list of recommended Internet resources.)

### COLLEGE CATALOGS

One of the most reliable sources of written information about any college or university is its catalog. The catalog is usually published annually and contains a great deal of information about entrance requirements, academic departments, study abroad programs, graduation requirements, scholarships, and much more. The Guidance Office has a large collection of college catalogs that may be used by students and parents. If you wish to have your own copy of a catalog, request one directly from the college that interests you or visit the school's website.

### COLLEGE GUIDEBOOKS

Different guidebooks have varying degrees of subjectivity. Most objective guidebooks provide only statistical information, enrollment figures, degrees offered, etc. Subjective guidebooks offer the opinion of the reviewers or even students who are attending the institution. Each book creates a distinctive perspective on the institutions represented within its covers: some publications are better researched and more responsibly constructed than others. You and your family should know that these publications have limited value and should be used only as a supplement to other sources of information. Always keep in mind that the best institution is the one that is right for you, not necessarily the one that appears on a list or in a guidebook.

### WEBSITES, VIDEOS, DVDS

Websites, videos, and DVDs, and can serve as wonderful resources, and while they cannot replace an actual campus visit, they can offer an introduction to a campus that you have never visited. DVDs and videos are becoming increasingly rare. Every college now has a website that you can use to explore their college. Most are extensive, sophisticated and allow you to explore the college in depth. Most now have student-to-student portals, Facebook and Twitter pages, and virtual tours.

### COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Representatives from over 100 colleges and universities will visit Mount de Sales Academy during the school year. A representative is usually a member of the admissions staff or a graduate of the college or university – often they are the first reader of your application. Meeting with a representative here on our campus is a priceless opportunity to gain more information about the colleges that interest you or learn about new ones. Even if you have seen a school and have had an interview there, it is wise to come just to let the representative be aware of your continued interest.

### VISITING CAMPUSES

There are lots of ways to learn about a college, from brochures to websites, but there is no substitute for seeing a college in person! Visiting when school is in session is particularly useful since it gives you the experience of the collegiate atmosphere with its variety of people and activities. It is not necessary to visit a school before submitting an application. However, we highly recommend that you visit a college while it is in session, before you commit to enroll there.

Note: Campus life rarely comes alive before noon on Saturdays and Sundays. Therefore, do not plan an early morning visit on weekends if you want to see students.

### COLLEGE FAIRS

College fairs, in which many colleges are represented, are frequently held in the Baltimore/Washington area. Information about these fairs will be posted in the College Counseling Office and on Naviance. They are often invaluable sources for gathering comparative information and establishing communication with college admissions officers. The National Performing Arts Fair and National Portfolio Day for Visual Artists take place in the early fall, our joint college fair with Mount St. Joseph's in fall and the AIMS College Fair in the spring.

## SUCCESSFUL CAMPUS VISITS

### HOW TO PREPARE

- Appointments for information sessions, tours, interviews, and overnight stays can fill up quickly so call the admissions office as far in advance of your visit as possible. Be prepared to tell them the date and time of day you would like to visit. If you want to stay overnight in a residence hall, ask if arrangements can be made.
- Read the college's printed materials prior to your visit. Write down any specific questions you may have.

- Check with the Guidance Office to see if any MDSA graduates are attending the college. You may know one of these students and want to talk with her while on the campus. Alumnae are always eager to host visitors to their colleges!
- As a family, set the ground rules for college visits. Parents and students will not necessarily have the same thoughts, feelings, and impressions of the college. Students may be more interested in “how the campus feels” as a prospective new home base. Parents may be more focused on evaluating issues of campus safety and security and on issues of affordability. Communicate to one another what you hope to accomplish. Open communication will help reduce tension while visiting campuses.
- During your junior year college visits generally will not include an interview or an overnight stay. (Many colleges only offer overnight programs to seniors and juniors are sometimes less able to formulate answers to interview questions.) If, however, the distance you are traveling is great, this may be your only opportunity for an interview. Review your high school record so that you can answer specific questions about your course of study, test scores, and activities if asked. In this case, talk with your counselor about a mock interview.
- Try to avoid visiting more than two schools in a given day. Though blistering schedules may sound time-efficient, it is usually very difficult to get a sense of a campus in such a short amount of time. Your frustration with the schedule may negatively impact your assessment of the colleges. In addition, make sure you leave ample driving time between colleges.
- As you are planning your college visits, try to include a college located in the area that is not on your list. Students and parents are often pleasantly surprised by what they find.

#### DURING THE VISIT

When visiting a college campus, try to imagine living, learning, and making friends there. Families should take a student-conducted tour and ask questions that will give them a sense of campus life.

- Be a keen observer of all aspects of campus life. Visit the school dining hall, the college student center, specific departments’ student and faculty offices, the bookstore, the campus library, student housing, and as many other “gathering places” for students and faculty as possible. Also, see the buildings, theaters or labs that are associated with your special interests as well as the town or city where the school is located.
- Visit classes. Obtain permission from the Admissions Office.
- Contact someone in the department of your interest.
- Talk to as many students as you can.
- When you take the tour, stay near the front of the tour group. If you are far away from the guide the tour will seem less personal and you will miss the opportunity to hear from a current undergraduate.
- Wear comfortable clothing and sensible shoes. You will do a lot of walking, and tours run even in inclement weather.

#### AFTER THE VISIT

- Send a thank-you note to the people who assisted you. The school may add the note to your file.
- Make notes or keep a small, informal journal of your college visits. Later, these notes will be invaluable as you evaluate schools and make decisions. Whether you visit colleges alone, with your family, or with friends, you should not try to evaluate everything about a college “right on the spot.” Once you are home, compare notes and have a good family discussion. Some students even take photographs to help them remember specifics.

### **Helpful Hints on a Successful College Visit:**

- 1) Check the Mount de Sales Academy Handbook for the College Visit Day procedures.
- 2) Inquire about the opportunity to meet with a member of the faculty in your desired area of study, if so desired. If you meet with a member of the faculty, make sure you are well prepared with questions to ask about their program and what it can offer you as a prospective student.
- 3) If you are an athlete, you may want to inquire about meeting with the coach of your chosen sport. Make sure you are well prepared with questions to ask about their program and what it can offer you as a prospective student/athlete.
- 4) Make sure you have adequate directions and arrive in plenty of time to find the admissions office. You should inquire about parking before arriving.
- 5) Once you have set up a tentative itinerary, call the school and ask for written confirmation of your appointment and for any current materials if you don't already have them.
- 6) Dress appropriately. If you have questions about what is appropriate, please see Ms. Ewing
- 7) BE PUNCTUAL!!!! If you know you are going to arrive late, call the admissions office to let them know of your situation.
- 8) Because the campus visit is so important, and in some cases can play a role in the admission decision, make sure the school makes record of your visit.
- 9) Compile a list of questions. This is particularly important if you have an interview scheduled or a meeting with the department you are interested in. Make sure you ask the same questions at each school.
- 10) Take good notes. Schools can seem similar after the first few visits so it is important that you remember your impressions of each.
- 11) While visiting, it is important to keep in mind that you are interviewing the school as much as it is interviewing you. Make sure you ask questions, but remember that the questions you ask describe you and your interests as well. Be thoughtful and articulate.
- 12) Pick up a school newspaper and read the events that are going on campus at any kiosks you may pass. This will give you a good idea as to the hot topics on campus.
- 13) Make an allowance for free time. (1) During this free time make sure to talk to students on your own without admission professionals around. The students are more likely to be completely candid with you in this environment. (2) Also, you may want to have a meal to check out the food services (Remember, it is never going to be as good as mom's cookin'.) (3) And finally, if you did not visit a dorm during the tour, make sure you see a few before you leave campus.
- 14) Take note of whether or not you can see yourself there. How comfortable are you?
- 15) ALWAYS FOLLOW UP! Make sure you take note of any admissions professionals you spoke with during your visit. You should write a handwritten Thank You letter to whoever was your main contact during the visit.

### **Questions to Ask your Tour Guide:**

- 1) How large are your classes? What has been the size of your largest class? Smallest class?
- 2) What is the percentage of professors teaching your undergraduate courses? (as compared to teaching assistants or graduate students) Have you had any teaching assistants as teachers? If so, how often?
- 3) How adequate is the library?
- 4) How adequate are the computer facilities?
- 5) When do you have to declare a major?
- 6) Is each student assigned an advisor to help lead them through the process of scheduling and eventually choosing a major?
- 7) How are the dorm rooms? Are the dorm rooms wired? How many students live off campus?
- 8) How competitive are the classes? Are students competing with one another?
- 9) How available are your professors?
- 10) What are some of the hot issues on campus right now?
- 11) How politically active is the student body?
- 12) What kind of faith community exists here for Catholic students? Is there a convenient church where I can attend mass?
- 13) How popular is studying abroad? What kinds of programs are available for students?
- 14) Are there fraternities and sororities? If so, how large of a role do they play on campus?
- 15) Describe a typical weekend? Are there alternatives to the typical party scene?
- 16) How active is the student government? Does the administration listen to student input?
- 17) What are other popular activities to become involved in?
- 18) What do you hear students complaining about?
- 19) If you could change something about the school, what would it be and why?
- 20) How are the performing fine arts? May I audition for something even though I may not be majoring in theatre or art?
- 21) What have you enjoyed most about your experience so far?
- 22) How diverse is the community?
- 23) If you had it to do over again, would you do it the same way? If not, where do you think you would have gone?
- 24) What other schools did you apply to? And, what was the determining factor in you attending this school?

## DEVELOPING A LIST OF COLLEGES: RESEARCH, REVIEW & REFINE

In choosing where to apply, you must eventually face the toughest question of all: will the college choose you? Assessing your record, your strengths, and your weaknesses, and examining the college's reputation and statistics will give you some idea about your chance of acceptance. Knowing who a college has admitted or denied from Mount de Sales Academy in the past is also good information to consider, but it's dangerous to generalize too much from past decisions. Admissions can change dramatically from one year to the next. The student who is admitted with grades lower than yours may have had unusually strong recommendations or special talents, or she may have been a child of an alumna/us.

Once you begin to define the characteristics you are seeking in a college and have researched a variety of institutions, you and your counselor will begin to divide the schools into three categories:

- REACHES comprise your first group. They will be the "most competitive" schools and should be chosen carefully.
- 50/50's represents schools at which you have a 50% chance of being offered admission. Each choice should possess the characteristics identified as desirable in the most selective group.
- LIKELIES are schools where you have a solid chance of being offered admission. These schools should be researched as thoughtfully as your "realistic challenge" colleges.

**Do not apply to any college or university that you do not want to attend.**

An application to a "likely" college is meaningless if you do not intend to go there under any circumstances. You may find yourself admitted only to these colleges. Therefore you want to be certain that they meet criteria similar to those in categories one and two. Keep in mind that an institution's reputation is important, but not as important as the educational, geographical, and social criteria you have established for yourself.

### **Developing a College List:**

Our goal for you is to start talking in detail about colleges after our Junior Parent meeting and your individual meeting with your Counselor in the spring of your junior year. When you have your meeting with one of the counselors, hopefully you will have some ideas about schools. However, that meeting between the student, parents, and Counselor will be the time when a preliminary college list is put on paper. Coming into the meeting, we hope that you have thought about characteristics that you find important in a school. Some things to consider are these: location, distance from home, quality of academic or extracurricular programs, etc. Throughout the coming months your list will be updated frequently and the college counselors are here to help you talk through any adjustments that may be made to your list of colleges.

\*It is important to remember that there are over 4,000 schools in the country and there are multiple schools in which you could be happy attending. We do not recommend that you put all your hopes for college on acceptance to only one school. We want you to come up with a list of four to six schools at which you could go and enjoy your four, or more, years.

### **Factors to Consider in Compiling Your College List:**

This is a valuable tool for discussion during the initial phase of developing your list of colleges. Check those categories that will be important to you when deciding on schools. Please make any notes on the line provided.

**General**

\_\_\_\_\_ Campus Atmosphere (diversity, school spirit, relaxed, competitive) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Distance from home \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Cost (financial aid, merit scholarships) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Size (small = less than 2,000; medium = 2,000-10,000; large = more than 10,000) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Location (urban, suburban, rural) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Region (Northeast, Southeast, West, Midwest) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Social Life (fraternities & sororities, outdoor activities, off-campus life) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Housing (dormitories, off-campus housing, suites, on-campus apartments) \_\_\_\_\_

**Academics**

\_\_\_\_\_ Academic Reputation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Liberal arts college or university \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Flexibility of curriculum (core, no requirements, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Specific programs (engineering, architecture, business, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Strength in specific academic areas (science, performing arts, math, English, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Class size \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Availability of Professors \_\_\_\_\_

**Activities**

\_\_\_\_\_ Athletics (club, varsity, intramural) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Community service \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Performing Arts (music, dance, theatre) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Visual or Graphic Art \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Speech/Debate \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Religious Groups \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Summarize here those qualities which emerged as important to you from the above list. Include any other which may not be listed above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# COMPONENTS OF THE ADMISSIONS FOLDER

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS FOLDER

Even though there are differences among colleges, the same general criteria are used by all schools to create a well-rounded class.

### BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES - STUDENT RESUME

- Level of community involvement (school, neighborhood, place of worship)
- Summer activities
- Employment

### ESSAY

#### ACADEMIC RECORD

- Quality and range of courses (AP/Honors, electives that are important to you)
- Consistency of performance
- Improvement of performance
- Student performance and classroom participation
- Student's positive impact on the school

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers
- Counselor
- Employer

#### TESTING PROFILE

- SAT Reasoning Test
- SAT Subject Tests
- ACT

#### OTHER

- Demonstrated academic talent or scholarly achievement
- Member of an under-represented racial, ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic group
- Daughter of alumnus or/alumna
- Musician, performer, artist, athlete
- Outstanding social contribution
- Unusual background
- Leadership experience

Schools may differ in how they weigh the various aspects of an application. However, most colleges consider the following, in order of importance:

1. Academic record
2. Personal qualities and co-curricular record as revealed in your application and essay
3. SAT Reasoning test scores, SAT Subject test scores, and/or ACT scores
4. Required recommendations
5. Interview
6. Extra letters of recommendation

Schools are looking for more than just qualified candidates. At the most selective schools, many well-qualified applicants are not admitted. Factors beyond the control of the individual applicant come into play in an institution's final admission decision. Always keep in mind that 70% of all colleges and universities in the United States admit most of the students who apply.

- Over-enrollment in the previous class may cause a school to accept a smaller class for the upcoming year.
- A dramatic increase in the number of applications may cause a school to become even more selective.
- Each institution has enrollment goals or institutional priorities that it hopes to meet. A school may be in search of a replacement for the horn section of the orchestra, a goalie for the soccer team, or a female scientist for its chemistry program. The school may also be trying to achieve a racially, socio-economically, religiously, and geographically diverse community.
- The Early Action/Early Decision policy varies from one institution to the next. At some schools, the admission rate of early applicants is indeed higher than the overall admission rate. At many the opposite is true – the EA and/or ED pools are more competitive. In general, a candidate who would not otherwise be admitted through the regular process will not be offered admission simply because she has applied Early Decision.

### *A CLOSER LOOK AT THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS FOLDER*

#### THE HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

Your high-school transcript is an integral part of the college application. The transcript details academic performance as well as academic and school honors and awards.

The Guidance Office mails student transcripts to colleges at three different times: when you first apply to a college, immediately after the first semester of the senior year, and after graduation. Mount de Sales Academy does not send quarter grades to colleges unless specifically requested in Early Decision applications.

The following items are included on the transcript:

- Semester grades, cumulative GPA
- Honors and AP-level course designations

Because the information on student transcripts is so important, Mount de Sales Academy will ask juniors to proofread their individual transcripts in the junior year. You and your parents also have access to the transcript at any time. Should you need to view, request, or send your transcript, please give the Guidance Office 24 hours' notice.

#### LETTERS OF REFERENCE

Recommendations from teachers, the school, volunteer directors, and employers are a vital part of applying to college. Colleges require references from teachers and the school. Other references are optional. Each kind of reference is explained below.

- **Teacher Reference**

Colleges ask teachers to comment on your classroom performance in a particular subject or discipline. Typically students should expect to use references from the eleventh grade. Most of the time, you will be asked to submit two teacher references. You should choose the teachers who know you the best as students, will address your strengths as a student, and your academic accomplishments, and can give

specific examples of your abilities in class. You do not need to choose one teacher from the humanities and one teacher from the sciences. The Guidance Office will help you choose references during the junior-year conferences. You should request references from those teachers immediately after these conferences. The Guidance Office will be glad to answer any questions families or students have about teacher references.

- **School/Counselor Reference**

Mount de Sales Academy is proud of each and every student and her individual accomplishments. The counselor recommendation includes information on your academic and extracurricular activities, your responsibilities and commitments outside of school, and any personal circumstances that may need clarification. Faculty and family input is solicited to build a full and complete picture of your academic, social, and personal progress. The recommendation is kept confidential.

- **Other References**

There are often questions regarding additional references from alumni of the college, employers, volunteer directors, and the like. These are not required references. In fact, these letters should be added only if the recommender knows you well and can provide information not already detailed elsewhere in the application. The difficulty is that too much additional information can cause an admissions officer to skim the documents. Any positive impact of the additional letter is therefore reduced. You should consult your Counselor if you have any questions.

### THE COLLEGE ESSAY

Your essay is a significant part of your college application folder. It provides you with an opportunity to individualize your application and to reveal yourself in your own voice – more than grades, test scores, and even the most considered recommendations can do. Choosing an essay topic is not easy.. These topics may be reused as college essays, as long as they address the questions asked on the application. Both English teachers and Counselors are happy to read and react to essays and provide assistance.

- Limit your essays in most cases to one page single-spaced. (Some schools require shorter or longer essays. You should not exceed the specified length.) They are read quickly by individuals more interested in quality and depth than in length.
- Answer the essay question that is asked. It is fine to try to use an essay for multiple colleges, as long as the essay provides the information asked.
- **Optional Essay?** Do it – this is your chance to stand up and be counted.
- Keep the following advice in mind: it is appropriate to ask a teacher or counselor or parent to react to an essay. However, Fred Hargadon, a former Dean of Admission at Princeton states, “I can’t emphasize enough that the style, flavor, and substance of your essay needs to be your own and to look your own and to sound like you. In a word, your essay (in fact, your entire application) should smell authentic.”

### COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING

Scores on standardized tests are one part of your application and are reviewed together with the academic record, essay, and interview. You should consider applying to colleges that weigh many factors and that have testing ranges into which you will fit comfortably. A growing number of great colleges are choosing to become “score optional.” **Please see Section IX for more information on standardized testing.**

## THE COLLEGE CANDIDATE INTERVIEW

College interviews offer you an opportunity beyond the essay to personalize the college application process. Interviews help students evaluate whether a particular college is a good fit, both academically and personally. Interviews are treated differently by each college. For many years, the interview was a major part of the admissions decision for many institutions. The emphasis on interviews has decreased over the past few years, so it is important to inquire about the policy on interviews at schools you are considering.

Examples of some different policies include:

- Interviews are not a part of the admissions process, and therefore only group information sessions are offered.
- Interviews are given weight in the admissions process, but they are conducted by area alumni/ae.
- Interviews are encouraged and do become a part of the student's application folder.
- Interviews are encouraged only after an application is filed.

Interviews can take place either on campus with admissions professionals and current undergraduates or in Baltimore with an alumna/us of the school. Regardless of the location, you have a good measure of control over the interview. The goal of the interview is to have a conversation where you and the interviewer learn about each other. **Please see section VIII for more information about interviews.**

## COLLEGE APPLICATION: GENERAL TIPS

Admission to private colleges, particularly the more selective ones, is a complex, subjective, and unpredictable process. Decisions are generally based upon a committee's evaluation and discussion of a candidate's folder. When a student applies to college, the admissions office collects a number of pieces of information as it makes a decision about an applicant. The application that you fill out is one way your character and personality can emerge to the reader, and it is the one part of the application over which you exercise full control. A careful, thoughtful job on your application can make a difference. College admissions officers often comment on how a poor application has hurt someone's chances and how a thoughtful well-presented application has pushed a borderline candidate into the admitted group.

TIPS:

- Consider your audience.

Does the admissions office really want to wade through a dozen extra sheets detailing your every activity or honor since seventh grade? Does he or she want to strain to read impossible handwriting or 6-point font? Of course not. Consider the time constraints of your audience. During reading season, admission officers may have a daily quota of 30 files. Given the 24-hour day and simple math, you can expect each file to be given about 20 minutes. You have 20 minutes of an admission officer's attention to make a memorable impression!

- Do not overdo it.

It is tempting to tell the Admissions Office everything you have ever done or have been interested in doing. The assumption is that more is better. Try to resist this temptation to pad the application with trivial activities or long-neglected interests. Concentrate on a few quality pursuits and avoid manufacturing quantity.

- Answer the questions they ask.

In your eagerness to write about what you want to write about, do not ignore the question.

- Do not attach extra papers unless it is absolutely necessary.

Try to fit all of the information requested into the space provided. When using paper, the cut and paste method works well here, especially if you can use different fonts and margin widths to make your response fit into the space provided. If you include essays on separate sheets, be sure to include your name and the question being answered.

- Be yourself.

This is easier said than done. You will drive yourself crazy trying to figure out what you think a college wants to read. There is seldom a right or wrong answer to a question on an application. The committee wants a clear, honest, and reflective answer that will tell them something about you as a person.

- Give yourself plenty of time.

Try to manage this process as you would any in-depth school project. Be sure to do the following: have primary materials and research completed early; leave sufficient time to do a rough draft; fill out all forms completely, accurately; and according to the specific guidelines provided by the college, and submit everything on time. Last minute jobs usually read like last minute jobs.

- Do not be shy.

Submit evidence of your scholarly and creative endeavors if you feel such supplemental information will aid the college admissions offices in gaining a more vivid picture of you and your potential.

- Make a copy.

After you have completed your application be sure to print a copy of it before you hit the send button.

- If you are submitting your application electronically:

- ✓ Don't hurry – be careful and precise
- ✓ Proof read, proof read, proof read before hitting SEND
- ✓ Make a hard copy for your files
- ✓ Be on the look out for confirmation of receipt. Print it out once you have received it and save for your files. If you have not heard from the college within 3 weeks, call to confirm that they received your application

#### INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED WHEN COMPLETING APPLICATIONS:

##### **Mailing Address**

Mount de Sales Academy  
700 Academy Road  
Catonsville, MD 21228  
Telephone: 410-744-8498  
Fax: 410-747-5105

**CEEB Number**  
**210335**

##### **Director of College Counseling**

Ms. Jen Ewing

##### **Director of Guidance**

Mrs. Karen Fuchs

##### **Guidance Counselor**

Mrs. Janet Gers

##### **Guidance Counselor**

Mrs. Victoria Glose

##### **Guidance Office Administrative Assistant**

Mrs. Dottie Watkins

## SPECIAL TALENTS

### PROSPECTIVE STUDENT/ATHLETES:

If you are thinking about possibly playing athletics at the next level, you will want to pay close attention to the next few pages.

The Counselors feel that two things should happen when considering playing a sport at the college level.

- 1) Self-Assessment: Take the time to be honest with yourself about your abilities and potential. If you have never been a starter at Mount de Sales Academy in your sport, can you really play on the college level? How good is the program at the schools at which you are looking? Do they welcome all to the program, with potential for development, or only those they recruit?
- 2) Talk with others: Talk to your coach at Mount de Sales Academy, your counselors, or former Mount de Sales Academy students who were similar to you in ability. Ask for their help in your self-assessment.

After you have completed these steps and you feel you may be of some interest to college coaches, we recommend you do the following:

- 1) Check on the NCAA Clearinghouse website to see their prospective student-athlete timeline.
- 2) Talk to your coach at Mount de Sales Academy about the kinds of schools you are considering. Discuss other programs that might be of interest to you. Ask if he or she will contact these schools on your behalf. If you are in a sport where college coaches request videos or film of your play, start to discuss what you might send.
- 3) When communicating with the admission offices at these colleges, be sure to inform them that you are a varsity athlete and the sport(s) you play **and** that you are planning to play at the collegiate level. They will often pass this information on to the respective coach(es).
- 4) Contact the college coaches directly. Let them know of your interest in applying to their school and in your intention to participate in their program. You should send an athletic resume (see Mr. Williams or Mrs. Audy for an example) and set up a visit to meet with the coach. Many coaches may also ask for video tapes. *These do not have to be professionally produced.* Talk with your Mount de Sales Academy coach or one of the counselors about the kind of tape a college needs.

To reiterate, it is very important that you are realistic in your self-assessment of your athletic ability and the teams on which you are most likely to play. It is also important to remember to be realistic when considering schools based on admission standards. If you have any questions about this, please talk to the college counselors.

Watch out for coaches' tactics. Remember that your interests and a coach's interests don't always overlap to your advantage. A coach's goal is to build the best team possible. Typically, a coach is allowed to present to the admissions committee a list of his or her most desired candidates from among the applicant pool. There is no guarantee that the admissions committee will admit all candidates on a coach's list nor follow his order of preference. Academic and personal factors have to be taken into consideration. For this reason, coaches often create their lists by striking a balance between an applicant's athletic ability and academic credentials, while factoring in a student's enthusiasm (or lack of interest) in attending that college.

A coach's promises should almost always be taken with a heavy dose of skepticism. Coaches who guarantee you admission are probably overstepping their bounds. *The Admissions Committee makes admissions decisions, not the coaches.* A coach may lead you to believe that you will make his or her list, but there are never any guarantees. You could be bumped from a list at the last minute if the coach finds a better athlete or an equivalent or even a somewhat less talented athlete with stronger academic credentials who is more likely to

make it through the admissions process. We have seen cases where promises have been made by a coach only to see the promises broken during the process.

It is not unusual for a coach to ask you to state which college is your first choice. After all, in choosing which athletes to support in the admission process, a coach does not want to waste energy or a high position on his or her list on a candidate who is not likely to enroll. Your personal integrity is key here. We do not want you to lie to coaches, nor do we want your honesty to put you at a disadvantage in the admissions process. If coaches start asking you to commit, it is of critical importance that you discuss this with your College Counselor, your coach at Mount de Sales Academy, and your parents before responding.

It is of utmost importance that you keep the lines of communication open between yourself, your coach(es), and your college counselors throughout the entire process. This will help ensure that all parties are on the same page.

### **NCAA and NAIA CLEARINGHOUSE:**

The NCAA has established a Clearinghouse for both recruiting and eligibility purposes for student-athletes in Division I and II. THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO DIVISION III APPLICANTS. All students with an interest in Division I or II programs must complete the Clearinghouse forms no later than October 1 of their senior year. The forms may be found at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). NAIA schools may also require you to complete a clearinghouse form. Visit [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org) for more information. Upon completion of the forms online, you will need to bring in both signature pages to the college counseling office and request that your transcript be sent to the NCAA or NAIA. You will also need to request that your test scores be sent directly to the clearinghouse from the testing agency.

The initial letter you receive from the NCAA will say that the student is ineligible. This is ok. You will not be fully eligible until we send your final transcript.

Note: Division III schools cannot give you an athletic scholarship, so if there is a Division III coach offering you money or admission, please see your counselor immediately.

## **Performing and Visual Arts**

### **THEATRE/DRAMA:**

For students interested in pursuing a major in theatre, please pay close attention to the following points. If you have any questions, make sure to see Mrs. Kelly Cardall, Director of the Mount de Sales Academy Theatre Department.

1. Each college/university has different requirements. Start checking college websites during your junior year so that you do not miss any requirements (i.e. audition dates and audition requirements).
2. It is best to make a list of the schools you are interested in, what each school requires, and then pay attention to any crossover material.
3. When going to an audition, prepare more material than is required.
4. When creating a resume, be careful not to embellish your credentials as many auditioners may ask you to perform something from a past performance.
5. Be prepared! Be over-prepared!
6. Students interested in Technical Theatre: Keep a good visual (photos) record of all the work that you do.

### **MUSIC:**

#### **Music Majors:**

Students planning on majoring in music should focus on certain classes depending on the specific emphasis the student desires.

### **Instrumental Music:**

Instrumental music majors should take band for four years. They should take private lessons for four years on their applied instrument and a year of private lessons on piano. Band reinforces the fundamental aspects of instrumental music necessary and required by state and private universities, and liberal arts colleges.

### **Music Performance:**

Music performance majors should take and participate in everything the instrumental major does. They should take one hour of private lessons, and they should also focus on making All-State or All-County, which is an honor band comprised of the best students in the state, as well as participating in a youth symphony if possible.

### **VOCAL PERFORMANCE:**

Vocal performance majors should take chorus for at least three years. They should take private voice lessons for four years as well. At least one year of private piano instruction is recommended. A course in music theory would enhance and support the work done in private lessons and in choral rehearsals. Vocal majors should participate in All-State and All-County Choruses. They should also consider other opportunities to get further training and experience by participating in recitals as well as in events such as the Christmas and Spring concerts.

### **VISUAL ARTS:**

The following suggestions are intended for any students who are highly considering majoring in the visual arts in college. If you have done a significant amount of visual art work during your career at Mount de Sales Academy, it is highly recommended that you create a portfolio of your best work as part of your college application, regardless of whether you intend to pursue your art work in college. **If you are considering pursuing the visual arts, you MUST participate in a Portfolio Day at a college.** Please see Mrs. Clements or Mrs. Lanciotti for more information about this process.

#### FORMAT

- Colleges may differ, but most will be looking for digital copies documenting your work. Usually no more than twenty samples of work are submitted.
- Each sample of work should be labeled with your name and a number which corresponds to a typed list accompanying your digital copies. The list should have a title for each sample, identification of the media, an indication of size, and a brief description of the project or work.
- You should also include a brief (half page, typed) artist's statement which describes your interests and investment in the visual arts.
- Other formats are possible, and may in some cases be advisable, depending on the scope and type of your work and the college you are considering. Consult your Counselor, your art teacher, and the admissions offices of your target colleges.

#### PROCEDURE

- Start off on the right path. As a freshman consider enrolling in Line and Color.
- Sophomore year enroll in another art course.
- Assuming you have been successful in those two courses, use advice from your art instructors as to which class to enroll in next.
- Of course you will want to mix in a few of the other art electives (see course handbook for descriptions).
- Collect all of your work from these courses including sketchbooks, finished pieces, and things you may have done outside of your coursework at Mount de Sales Academy.
- Before creating your portfolio, review your collected works with an art faculty member. The goal of this is to identify the most important and most representative works you have created. You should select about twice the number of pieces that you may finally include in your portfolio.
- Be sure to know the preferred format in which your chosen colleges want you to submit your portfolio.

## The College Interview

As stated before, the interviews may be an important part of the college application process. As an applicant, it is imperative that you check into what role an interview may play in your application process.

### *How to Prepare:*

- ✓ Read all available material on the college beforehand. DO NOT ask questions that are answered in published material.
- ✓ Be prepared to comment on particular programs that combine your talents and interests.
- ✓ Have a few questions prepared for the interviewer.
- ✓ Be prepared to talk about yourself, your interests, and what you are looking for in a college. Know what your strengths are and a “positive weakness”. Please meet with your counselor to come up with these and to practice for the interview.
- ✓ Remember that the primary objective of speaking to someone in the Admissions Office is to “get yourself off the paper” and add another dimension to your file.

### *The Day of the Interview:*

- ✓ BE ON TIME.
- ✓ Dress neatly and comfortably. No jeans! Nice pants or a knee-length skirt are acceptable.
- ✓ Know your interviewer’s name and use it during the interview. Ask for the interviewer’s business card.
- ✓ Be polite, show interest, and keep eye contact. Also, try to avoid the use of “like” and “um”.
- ✓ **Remember to be yourself.** There are not any wrong or right answers. Colleges are looking for individuals, not types; the only convincing person that you can be is yourself.
- ✓ Interviews will most likely begin with pleasantries: the weather, hometown, finding out about the college. Then the interviewer will ask you a number of open-ended questions. Be candid and positive. Focus on your strengths.
- ✓ Remember to ask questions about the college. You should show the interviewer that you have “done your homework” by reading the materials from the college admissions office. Example: “I noticed in the course catalog that biology majors take...”
- ✓ Be candid, not generic. First impressions last a long time, make sure the interviewer will remember you.

### *After the Interview:*

- ✓ **SEND A THANK YOU NOTE.** This is an easy, personal way to both thank the interviewer for their time and show your interest in the school. Include a reaction you had to the college.

### *Possible Questions:*

- 1) Have you enjoyed Mount de Sales Academy? Is there anything you’d like to change about your school?
- 2) What is it like going to an all-girls school?
- 3) How would your teachers describe you as a student? As a person?
- 4) Talk about the contributions you’ve made to your school community.
- 5) Why are you considering this school?
- 6) Talk about your goals – personal and career – for the future.
- 7) What is your role in the school community?
- 8) What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?
- 9) Which classes have you enjoyed the most? Why?
- 10) Which teachers have you enjoyed the most? Why?
- 11) What are you thinking about studying in college?
- 12) Are there any books or particular authors who have made an impression on you? If so how?
- 13) What would make you a good fit for this school?
- 14) Tell us something about your family.
- 15) Tell me about a character from a book to whom you have related.
- 16) What events, if any, would you deem critical in your life thus far? What has most influenced you?
- 17) How have you spent your summers?

- 18) How do you feel about the current events going on in the country and throughout the world?
- 19) How do you spend your free time?
- 20) Is there someone you like or dislike? Why do you feel that way?
- 21) What's the most recent book you have read for pleasure?
- 22) How would your best friend describe you?
- 23) What is the most important decision you've had to make?
- 24) How did you first hear about our institution?
- 25) Where else are you applying? What is your first choice? (You may answer this question generally, saying you are still looking and evaluating.)
- 26) Tell me about the characteristics that you feel set you apart from others.

*Questions you may want to ask*

- 1) One of the aspects I have loved about MDSA is \_\_\_\_\_ (ie: school spirit) Does your university have \_\_\_\_\_ (ie: school spirit)?
- 2) Is it difficult to reintegrate into the school after a year abroad?
- 3) Are the arts/athletics facilities available to students who are not majoring in those fields?
- 4) What were some of the most significant issues affecting students on campus last year?
- 5) What are some of the most significant changes you have experienced during your time at the college? How have those changes affected student life and study at the college?
- 6) How did attending \_\_\_\_\_ University change you?

## Standardized Testing: When, Where, How

### Mount de Sales Academy Testing Code: 210335

Standardized testing is an important factor in the college admission process. We want our students to understand the importance of standardized testing, but more importantly we want all of the students to keep testing in perspective. Students' academic achievements in the classroom (grades and curriculum) are definitely the most important part of a student's complete academic record. **Disclaimer: Extracurricular activities are extremely important, however, they WILL NEVER supersede your performance in the classroom and on standardized tests.** We have found that students who enroll in the most challenging curriculum appropriate for their abilities, and those who plan and carefully familiarize themselves with the test format through the use of practice materials, are able to attain scores which accurately reflect their school performance.

#### TESTING OVERVIEW:

All Mount de Sales Academy students must have at least one test score (ACT or SAT Reasoning Test) on record to return as a senior! We advise our students to begin taking the exams after Christmas of their junior year in hopes that they will have a score they are happy with by the end of that year. In reality, many students will take either or both tests again in the fall of their senior year, which is recommended. The number of times a student takes these tests will vary depending upon the student's level of satisfaction with their scores. Statistics show that the most improvement takes place between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> testing and between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> testing. Students should rest assured that most, if not all, admission offices will focus on the student's top score, whether that be on the ACT or SAT. You will be able to, in most cases, 'superscore' your SAT or ACT score so that the colleges are taking the highest score in each category into account for their decision.

#### SAT vs. ACT:

We advise students to attempt each test at least one time and then concentrate on the test in which a higher score was received. The differences between the two tests are as follows:

**SAT Reasoning Test:** The SAT Reasoning Test is an aptitude test. It differs from an assessment in that critical thinking and problem solving skills are more significant to success on this test.

- 3 Sections: Critical Reading, Math, and Writing
- Each section is scored on a 200-800 point scale
- The website is [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

**ACT:** The ACT tests what a student knows.

- 4 Sections: English, Math, Reading, and Science
- There is now an optional writing section that may be required by some colleges
- 36 points are possible in each section
- Sections are averaged together to get a Composite Score (the writing score is not averaged into the composite score)
- The website is [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

#### Sending Scores to Mount de Sales Academy and Colleges:

**Mount de Sales Academy's school code (210335) must be included on the test registration form. This will ensure that we will receive your test score. We keep each test score on file. Because all application**

information on our students will be transmitted electronically this year and Mount de Sales Academy will not be able to transmit test scores, every senior will need to have their test scores sent directly from the testing agency (ACT or SAT) to the college where he/she is applying. This will be necessary in order for the application for admission to be complete. This can be done by contacting ACT at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) or The College Board for SAT at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

**SAT II (Subject Tests):**

The SAT II Subject Tests are tests in specific subject areas such as Biology, US History, and Math. Not all colleges require SAT II Subject Tests. Typically, only selective schools require these tests. When registering for the SAT II, if it is required by a school to which you have applied to, be absolutely positive which tests are required or recommended. When choosing which SAT II tests to take, look no further than the curriculum in which you have immersed yourself throughout high school. Only take tests in which you know you have a solid grasp of the subject. For more in-depth information on the SAT II Subject Tests please visit: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

**Non-Standardized Testing:**

Non-Standardized testing is helpful to those who have a diagnosed and properly documented learning disability or physical handicap. The ACT and College Board (SAT) offer extended time or untimed testing for those who qualify. If you believe you will qualify for non-standardized testing, you **MUST** meet with Mrs. Glose for specific information about registration and testing plans **before the start of your junior year**.

**Test Preparation:**

This is very important because just like practicing shooting a free throw can increase your shooting percentage; practice for standardized testing can improve your score. Getting started is easy. As sophomores and juniors, all students take the PSAT. These tests are helpful in multiple ways. First, they help students learn the format of the tests and how they will be administered. Second, they can be good indicators of how the students will perform when they take the official ACT and SAT. Students will also receive a detailed score report with the correct answers to all of the questions. Students may also pick up study guides from places like Barnes & Noble. These study guides offer in-depth test taking skill hints as well as full-length practice tests, answers, and explanations. If students would like additional help, they need to meet with either college counselor for some other possibilities.

Mount de Sales Academy High School offers a test preparation class on varied weekends each semester. This class is available to sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Please see your counselor for more information.

**Fee Waivers:**

Fee waivers are possible for students who are receiving financial aid. If you have questions about this, please contact the college counselors.

**Mount de Sales Academy**  
**Testing Code:**  
**210335**

## COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The first thing you must accomplish is obtaining applications. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways:

- 1) When possible, use The Common Application. This is an application used by 415 mostly private universities. It is highly compatible with the system we use to electronically submit transcripts. You may access this form at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).
- 2) If The Common Application is not an option, complete the application for admission online via the college's webpage.
- 3) A paper application that you download from the college's website or retrieve from the college counseling office.

Colleges do not give priority to one type of application over another. But there are a few things for which to look:

- 1) A college may have a preferred way for you to apply. If this is the case, you may want to make the extra effort to apply in that particular fashion. Many schools prefer you submit the online application.
- 2) Some schools may offer a FREE Application via the internet. Be sure to check!

### **WHAT IS THE GUIDANCE OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR?**

The Guidance Office is responsible for the submission of the following items to colleges and universities on behalf of Mount de Sales Academy students:

- ✓ Transcripts (from any institution that the student has attended in high school)
- ✓ School Profile
- ✓ Counselor Recommendation
- ✓ Secondary School Report Form
- ✓ Mid-Year School Report Form
- ✓ Final Report Form and Transcript

### **WHAT ARE TEACHERS RESPONSIBLE FOR?**

All teachers will forward letters of recommendation directly to colleges unless stated otherwise on application. Teachers have been instructed to maintain copies of recommendations in the event that they are needed at a later date.

- 1) The student will ask the teacher if they would be willing to write a letter of recommendation. The **deadline** for securing recommendations is **September 15<sup>th</sup>** of your senior year **OR** three weeks before the first deadline, whichever is earlier.
- 2) The student will allow a minimum of three weeks for the teacher to prepare the letter.
- 3) The student will add the teacher to their Naviance page which will alert the Office and the teacher that a recommendation is due.
- 4) The letter will be based upon the student's performance in the teacher's class and the teacher's association with the student.
- 5) The student will provide the teacher with a copy of her resume and/or her reflection paper.
- 6) If a Teacher Report Form is part of the student's application, the student will provide this form for the teacher to use.

The student will provide each teacher with a **College Recommendation Request Form**. This tells the teachers in another form beyond Naviance how many applications and their deadlines. **Students should write a thank you note to all teachers who write a recommendation for her. Teachers also appreciate hearing from the student about college acceptances.**

## **WHAT ARE STUDENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR?**

- ✓ **Application**
- ✓ **Transcript Requests**
- ✓ **Test Scores**
- ✓ **Providing stamped, addressed envelopes to the Guidance Office for each non-electronic application that is being sent.**

### Application

Each student is responsible for **sending the student portion of the application materials** including biographical information, essay, and appropriate application fees unless otherwise stated on the application. **If you are filing an electronic application, make sure that you receive confirmation of receipt from the Admissions Office. In addition, print out a hard copy of your application for your files.**

### Transcript Requests:

Every college/university to which you apply will require you to send an Official Transcript documenting your school work and test scores during your time at Mount de Sales Academy. To request that your transcript be sent, you must:

- 1) Request a transcript online via Naviance. If you need help with this, see your counselor.
- 2) Provide the College Counselors **at least TWO weeks** to process this request.
- 3) Follow up with the college/university to make sure your transcript and any supporting documents arrived safely.

### Test Scores

It is the responsibility of the student to determine which colleges require which test scores and to request that scores be sent directly from the Educational Testing Service and/or ACT to college. Official Standardized Test Scores do not appear on the Mount de Sales Academy transcript. The scores you see on your transcript are unofficial.

## **COLLEGE COUNSELING DUE DATES TO REMEMBER**

### September 15:

Seniors must submit their resumes and college information sheets to their guidance counselors. **Failure to turn these forms in will suspend the counselor completing any forms or recommendations for the student.**

### October 1:

Students must submit Secondary School Reports and Transcript Requests for Early Decision/Early Action programs with an October 15, November 1, November 15 or December 1 deadline to the Guidance Office. This includes **University of Maryland Priority Application!**

### November 30

Students must submit **ALL** remaining transcript requests to the Guidance Office via Naviance.

## FINANCIAL AID

The best advice that can be given with regard to financial aid is PLAN AHEAD! Finances will obviously come into play at some point during your college application/admission/selection process. Make sure you have requested and read all financial aid materials from colleges you are considering. NOTE AND MEET ALL DEADLINES!

### Questions to ask when visiting a college:

- 1) Is the school 'need-blind' in its admissions policy? \*\*A college that is 'need-blind' makes admission decisions without regard to the student's ability to pay. What this means is that admissions decisions are made by the committee prior to viewing the student's financial circumstances.
- 2) Do you meet 100% of demonstrated need? \*\*To be eligible for financial aid a student (parent) completes several forms (discussed below) and a determination is made regarding a family's economic need. Some schools meet 100% of your demonstrated need with an aid package that includes grants (scholarships), student loans, and work-study.
- 3) What is your 'packaging policy'? \*\*Most schools give an aid package that includes grant money (scholarships), loans, and/or work study. Ask the following questions:
  - A) What percentage of your aid packages are grant vs. self-help (loans/work study)?
  - B) How does an aid package change over four years? Some colleges entice freshmen with large grants for the first year and then switch to a much heavier self-help burden (loans/work study) in subsequent years. An increase in loans is normal, however you want to avoid a complete 'bait and switch' situation.
  - C) Do you have a 'preferential packaging' policy? i.e. If two students have equal demonstrated financial need, do they give more grant aid (or better overall aid packaging) to the student who has a stronger academic profile? Are students entering certain fields given better aid packages? Are students who apply under early deadlines as compared to regular deadlines given any special consideration?
- 4) What is your policy regarding outside scholarships? \*\*Some schools deduct money earned in outside scholarships from your financial aid package. Some schools reduce your loan burden, but other schools reduce your grant money.
- 5) How much debt can you expect after four years?
- 6) Are there any tuition payment plans that will allow you and your parents to spread out your payments over a period of months?

### **Things to think about:**

- 1) Your list of schools should include at least one economically safe school - that means a school that meets your academic needs and is affordable.
- 2) **Watch out for scams!** The Mount de Sales Academy Guidance Office highly encourages you to be aware of services that charge you to do scholarship searches for you. Check with your college counselors before you pay for any such service. Naviance and [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) are great resources for **free** scholarship searches.
- 3) Watch out for websites that may try to trick you. For example, [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) is the correct website for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, whereas, [www.fafsa.com](http://www.fafsa.com) is a website that will try to get your information and then sell it.
- 4) You may wish to schedule an appointment with a financial aid officer at one or two schools so that he or she can advise you on special programs, tuition plans, loan or payment programs that might be beneficial to you. Make sure you have prepared your questions ahead of time. Summer and Fall visits are more ideal for financial aid officers as Spring is their busiest season.

**Financial Aid Forms:**

**Parents:** It will be imperative that you are familiar with the Financial Aid forms and which forms are required by the schools to which your daughters have applied. Please pay attention to filing deadlines!

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):**

All colleges require this form. The FAFSA's purpose is to determine your eligibility for all forms of federal aid. In the fall and winter, the Guidance office will send out information about Financial Aid Workshops where you will learn about the FAFSA from a financial aid officer from one of our wonderful local universities. The FAFSA must be mailed after January 1<sup>st</sup> and before your first financial aid deadline.

**INTERNET FILING the FAFSA:** You can file a FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). The turnaround time with online filing is often faster than mailing the forms. First you and your student must obtain a PIN number which may be done through the FAFSA website.

**CSS/Financial Aid Profile:**

Many private colleges (along with some private scholarship programs and public colleges) require this form. Most of your questions about the PROFILE can be answered at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

**INTERNET FILING the CSS/Financial Aid Profile:** You can file the PROFILE at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

**Institutional Forms:**

Many colleges have their own aid forms in addition to the ones above. Check with each college and follow their instructions.

**Additional Information:**

If your family has a special financial need or financial circumstances that are not covered on any of the forms above, write a letter describing your situation and send it to the Financial Aid offices of the colleges to which you are applying. DO NOT attach letters or tax forms, etc. to the CSS PROFILE or FAFSA.

**KEEP A COPY OF ALL THE FORMS FOR YOUR RECORDS!!!**

If you have any questions about your financial aid award or the package that is sent to you in the spring, call the college and ask to speak with a financial aid administrator. The key here is not to panic or get angry. Be patient and polite with whomever you speak. Financial aid officers are usually very helpful. Review any special circumstances you feel may have been overlooked. It is possible that the financial aid officer can adjust your award based on new information. Be prepared to offer concrete information that will allow financial aid officers to review your award. Most colleges do not negotiate or match offers from other schools. Each institution has different priorities and policies that govern how its financial aid is distributed.

If a school is your first choice but has not offered you enough money for you to attend, it is ok to call the financial aid office and tell your counselor this information. In some cases they may be able to find some more money for you. However, sometimes they have exhausted their entire pool of money for the year and will not be able to give you anything further. At that point you will need to get creative or reevaluate your options.

## GLOSSARY

**Academic Solid/Major courses:** Usually refers to a traditional discipline of English, mathematics, foreign language, science or social science

**ACT (American College Test):** This is an achievement test for college bound students. It consists of math, science reasoning, reading, English, and an optional writing section. Scores in each section are out of a possible 36. Your composite score is the average of your scores in math, science reasoning, reading and English. The ACT website is [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

**AP (Advanced Placement):** Administered nationally in May, AP tests measure a student's mastery of advanced placement material. Scores range from 1-5. A student receiving a 3, 4, or 5 may receive college credit for their work depending on the specific credit requirements of the college where he or she matriculates.

**Bachelor's Degree:** The degree earned after the successful completion of required undergraduate courses at a university or college.

**CEEB Code:** Mount de Sales Academy's code number is 210335. This code will be used on the SAT test, the ACT test, and applications for admission and financial aid.

**Class rank:** Where you fit in numerically based solely on your GPA with your class. It is the policy of the Mount de Sales Academy Guidance office to NOT rank our students. We do not complete this information on forms nor will we give it to individuals. We can compute the quartile if it is absolutely vital to your college application process.

**College:** An individual institution that offers undergraduate education, or an educational division of a larger university, such as the College of Arts and Sciences.

**College Board:** Membership organization consisting of representatives from college admissions and financial aid offices and secondary school guidance personnel which contracts with the ETS to create and administer its programs (ie: SAT, PSAT and AP)

**CSS/Financial Aid Profile (College Scholarship Service):** Provided through the College Scholarship Service and the College Board. Some colleges and scholarship programs require the CSS PROFILE to help them award nonfederal student aid funds. Students may submit the PROFILE as early as September 15<sup>th</sup> of the senior year. The CSS PROFILE may be submitted through a hard copy, which is available in the College Counseling office, or via the Internet (recommended), at [www.collegeboard.com/profile](http://www.collegeboard.com/profile)

**Common Application:** An application used by as many as 415 colleges and universities across the country. The student completes one common application online and can send through the common application website to whichever colleges he or she chooses from the list of participating schools. Supplements are often required by each school, so make sure to check the website: [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).

**Defer:** This is a decision that a college may make if they want more information on a student before they either admit, deny, or waitlist him or her. Keep in mind that typically all the school wants is the student's latest grades or new test scores.

**Deferred Admission:** Many colleges will allow students to postpone enrollment (defer admission) for one year after acceptance.

**Double Deposit:** This term describes the unethical practice of submitting two or more enrollment deposits, signaling a student's intent to attend more than one college. The College Counseling office frowns on this practice.

**Early Action (EA):** Under an Early Action deadline, a student will receive an admission decision from an institution sometime before January 31<sup>st</sup>, but will not have to inform the college of his/her own decision until May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Early Decision (ED):** Early Decision offers the students the opportunity to apply to their first-choice institution with the understanding that, if they are admitted, they will attend. A student should not enter into Early Decision lightly; it represents a moral commitment to a college.

ED I – refers to deadlines before December 1<sup>st</sup>.

ED II – refers to deadlines around January 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Educational Testing Service (ETS):** This organization is responsible for producing and administering a variety of standardized tests, among them are the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests.

**EFC (Expected Family Contribution):** The EFC is the amount that FAFSA or CSS Profile ultimately determine that a family can pay after assessing the family's financial need.

**Enrollment Deposit OR Matriculation Fee:** deposit required of accepted students at many colleges and universities to reserve a space in the incoming class.

**FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid):** One of the two forms used by colleges to determine a student's financial need. The FAFSA may be obtained from the College Counseling office in late November/early December, but it may not be submitted until after January 1<sup>st</sup>. The FAFSA may also be filed on the internet at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Filing online is the suggested method.

**Financial Aid Package:** This term refers to the amount of aid that the student receives from a particular college. The Financial Aid Package may contain federal and nonfederal aid, such as loans, grants, work study, or any combination to meet the student's need.

**Grant:** Refers to the part of the student's financial aid package that does not need to be repaid.

**Legacy:** an applicant who is the child of an alumnus/a

**Mid-Year Report Form:** Many colleges ask that a mid-year report form be sent for every student with an active file after completion of the first semester of their senior year. In place of sending this form, the Mount de Sales Guidance Office sends first semester transcripts to each school to which the student has applied.

**National Merit Scholarship:** scholarships given based on students' junior PSAT/NMSQT scores and other criteria.

**NCAA Clearinghouse:** The NCAA Clearinghouse processes academic qualifications for all prospective NCAA Division I and Division II student/athletes and determines whether they are eligible to compete.

**PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test):** Administered in October of the sophomore and junior years, the PSAT is a practice test to better prepare you for the SAT Reasoning Test. Your scores from your junior year are used to determine eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship competition. Although teachers may use this as a diagnostic tool to determine a student's strengths and weaknesses, your scores will not be used in the college admission process.

**Pell Grant:** This is a need-based federal grant which students apply for when completing the FAFSA. Even if a student does not qualify for the grant, the Student Aid Index Number which every applicant receives can open other financial aid possibilities.

**Perkins Loan:** A federal loan program based on need. Loan applications are made through the college financial aid offices.

**PLUS Loans:** These are not need-based loans. They are low interest loans, made to help the parents. The college financial aid office or the state guarantee agency can help you find a lender.

**Profile:** description of the characteristics of a college's enrolling class; description of the secondary school that accompanies each senior's transcript when it is sent to a college.

**Rolling Admission:** A number of colleges, mainly state schools and many non-selective schools, will process and evaluate a student's application as soon as all the required credentials have been received and will then notify the student of the decision without delay. Colleges following this practice may make and announce their admission decisions continuously over several months as opposed to colleges with fixed deadlines and reply dates. You will typically hear a decision from the school within four to six weeks.

**SAT Reasoning Test:** This is an aptitude standardized test for college-bound students. The test consists of sections in Critical Reading, formerly known as the verbal section, Math, and Writing. Scores in each section are out of a possible 800.

**SAT Subject Tests:** These tests are one hour tests in specific subject areas, such as languages, math, sciences, and history. Students may choose which tests they would like to take. NOT ALL COLLEGES REQUIRE SAT II's, so be sure to check with the schools to which you are applying for their standardized testing requirements.

**Secondary School Report Form (may also be called Counselor Report Form):** Many colleges have a form such as this. This is the part of the application that the College Counseling office will fill out. The student will have to fill in a few lines of personal information at the top of this form and must then, upon request of their transcript, turn in the form to be completed by the College Counseling office.

**Selectivity:** the ration of admitted students to total applicants at a given institution.

**Stafford Loans:** Low interest loans made by a bank, credit union, or similar institution. The college financial aid office or the state guarantee agency can help you find a lender.

**SAR (Student Aid Report):** A student will receive the SAR from the processing center roughly 3-5 weeks after submitting the FAFSA. The SAR will be received sooner if it is completed online. The SAR contains all the information the student provides on the FAFSA. The SAR gives the student an opportunity to correct any information, to present any special or extenuating circumstances, or to have the information sent to up to six additional colleges.

**TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language):** This test is recommended for students for whom English is not a first language. Some colleges may require it of all international students from non-English speaking countries.

**Transcript:** This is an official document that contains all of the student's classes and grades starting from their freshman year and ending with their senior year. The transcript also includes all of the student's standardized testing scores.

**Waiting List:** A state of limbo between admission to a school and rejection for highly qualified students who rank slightly lower than those accepted. The number of students taken off the waitlist varies widely from year to year; predictions are hard to make. Some students on the waiting list may not know their fate until July.

**Work Study:** A part-time job funded by the government and administered by the college. Jobs are awarded on the basis of need and are factored into the aid package.

**Yield:** percentage of students admitted to a college who ultimately attend that school.

## INFORMATION, RESOURCES & GUIDEBOOKS

Libraries and bookstores are excellent places to begin gathering information about colleges.

You will also want to check each college's web site and either write or send an e-mail to the colleges you are interested in to request viewbooks, CD-ROMs, and application materials. The Mount de Sales Academy Library also has a reserved shelf of selected college related books.

Following is a list of guidebooks and web sites. Some of the guides are stronger on presenting the academic and curricular sides of colleges; others are better for gaining a sense of general campus life and environment. Do your research well. Balance what you read. Consult as many of these recommended resources as you can.

### GUIDEBOOKS

- College Guidebooks

Key: (O) = Objective, (S) = Subjective

#### *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*

State-by-state listings of more than 1,650 accredited four-year colleges. (O)

#### *The College Handbook*

Detailed listings of more than 3,200 two and four-year colleges in the U.S. and Canada. (O)

#### *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*

Descriptions of over 300 public and private U.S. schools with ratings of academics, social life, and overall quality of living. (S)

#### *Index of Majors and Graduate Degrees*

Descriptions of more than 600 majors, listing nearly 3,000 schools offering them. (O)

#### *Insider's Guide to the Colleges*

Student's-eye views of more than 300 colleges in the U.S. and Canada. (S)

#### *The Neuman Guide to choosing a Catholic College*

A free resource provided by the Cardinal Neuman Society which helps families to choose a faithful Catholic college. (S)

#### *Peterson's Colleges with Programs for Students with Learning Disabilities*

Descriptions of more than 800 programs for learning-disabled students with two-year and four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada. (O)

#### *Peterson's Four-Year Colleges*

Comprehensive descriptions of more than 2,000 U.S., Canadian, and U.S. accredited foreign colleges and universities. (O)

#### *Peterson's Professional Degree Programs in the Visual and Performing Arts*

Comprehensive descriptions of more than 1,000 professional programs in art, dance, music, and theater. (O)

#### *Peterson's Sports Scholarships & College Athletic Programs*

College-by-college information on athletic programs at over 1,700 two and four-year schools. (O)

#### *Princeton Review The Best 357 Colleges*

Two-page descriptions of the selected schools based on surveys from over 50,000 students enrolled at the institutions. (S)

*Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges*

List of 1,035 colleges and universities sorted by major/occupation

*Making a Difference College Guide - Education to Shape a New World*

definitive career-oriented guide for idealists and students who dance to a different drum.

- College Admission Testing

*10 Real SAT Reasoning Tests*

Contains ten actual SAT Reasoning Tests, sample questions from the PSAT/NMSQT, and 80 practice questions with answers carefully explained.

*Real SAT Subject Tests*

Contains actual recent tests in 18 subjects; explains how each test is graded and provides the best strategies for various questions.

- Financial Aid and Scholarships

*College Cost and Financial Aid Handbook*

Explains the financial aid system, how to apply, how to determine what the student must pay, and how to make the most of available resources.

*College Money Handbook*

One-stop information source on financial aid at more than 1,800 four-year colleges.

*The Complete Scholarship Book*

Alphabetical compendium lists more than 5,000 financial aid sources, both college-specific and general.

*Student Guide to Higher Education & Financial Aid in Maryland*

- General

*College Admissions Mystique*

By Bill Mayher - An overview of the admission process in plain language.

*Colleges that Change Lives, 40 Schools You Should Know About Even If You're Not a Straight-A Student*

By Loren Pope - 40 schools you may not have heard of that develop potential in a wide range of students.

*Looking Beyond the Ivy League, Finding the College That's Right for You*

By Loren Pope - Practical advice on how and why to look beyond well-known schools to choose the best college for you.

*The Smart Girl's Guide to College*

Cristina Page (ed.) - A guide to the college admission process written just for young women.

*The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College*

By Jacques Steinberg - An intimate in-depth look at one college's admission cycle.

*Harvard Schmarvard*

By Jay Matthews - Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the college that is best for you

*College Unranked; Ending the College Admission Frenzy The Education Conservancy*

Edited by Lloyd Thacker - A collection of essays by top admissions professionals

- Just for Parents

*Almost Grown, Launching Your Child from High School to College*

By Patricia Pasick - A guide through the final years of high school and the first years of college.

*College Admissions: A Crash Course for Panicked Parents*

By Sally Rubenstone and Sidonia Dalby - A no-nonsense book that gives parents a quick overview of the admissions process.

*50 College Admission Directors Speak to Parents*

By Sandra MacGowan and Sarah McGinty - Advice from seasoned admission professionals.

*Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Understanding the College Years*

By Karen Levin Coburn - Provides practical information and advice about the physical and emotional challenges of "letting go."

#### WEBSITES

- General Advice and Counseling

[www.allaboutcollege.com/colleges/united\\_states/usa.htm](http://www.allaboutcollege.com/colleges/united_states/usa.htm)

[www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

A search engine that finds colleges, community and technical schools, using criteria such as geographic region, size of enrollment, majors offered, and intercollegiate sports

[www.collegenight.com](http://www.collegenight.com)

A guide and college information website list

[www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)

Profiles of over 3,500 colleges and universities, electronic application forms, career planning tools, and virtual tours of over 200 colleges; college search

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

In addition to testing information, this site includes college information for students, parents, and counselors

[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

Valuable resources on schools from K-12 through graduate study and information on distance learning

[www.review.com](http://www.review.com)

advice on colleges, careers, and graduate schools, with a yearly ranking of colleges as determined by college students themselves

[www.theneumanguide.com](http://www.theneumanguide.com)

The online version of the Neuman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College.

- Financial Aid Advice and Counseling

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

Financial aid searches with a database of over 180,000 private scholarships

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

A comprehensive and independent guide to student financial aid sources and services

[http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch\\_ss/welcome.jsp](http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp)

Provides access to FundFinder, a free scholarship search engine

[www.princeton.edu/pr/aid/estim.shtml](http://www.princeton.edu/pr/aid/estim.shtml)  
An estimator for the CSS Profile

[www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)  
Information on education loans; tips on shopping for financial aid

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)  
FAFSA on the web

<http://profileonline.collegeboard.com>  
CSS Profile on line

[www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/scholarship](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/scholarship)  
Scholarship Scams

[www.nacac.com/w\\_finaid.html](http://www.nacac.com/w_finaid.html)  
Links to scholarship opportunities

[www.wiredscholar.com](http://www.wiredscholar.com)  
Scholarship search sponsored by Sallie Mae

[www.BlackExcel.org/link4.htm](http://www.BlackExcel.org/link4.htm)  
Scholarship gateway for minority students

[www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org](http://www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org)  
[www.omhrc.gov/OMH/WhatsNew/2pgwhatsnew/funding130.htm](http://www.omhrc.gov/OMH/WhatsNew/2pgwhatsnew/funding130.htm)  
Hispanic scholarships

[www.fastaid.com](http://www.fastaid.com)

[www.ncaa.org/about/scholarships.html](http://www.ncaa.org/about/scholarships.html)  
Sports-related scholarships

[www.college-scholarships.com](http://www.college-scholarships.com)

[www.carpedm.com](http://www.carpedm.com)  
A guide to scholarship resources and websites

[www.eduprep.com/scholarship.asp](http://www.eduprep.com/scholarship.asp)

[www.petersons.com/finaid/](http://www.petersons.com/finaid/)

- College Admissions Testing

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)  
ACT web site

[www.act.org/aap/testprep/index.html](http://www.act.org/aap/testprep/index.html)  
ACT test-taking strategies

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

College Board Online – register for SAT, send scores, SAT Learning Center

- Gap Year aka Deferring College and/or Summer Opportunities

[www.nols.edu](http://www.nols.edu)  
National Outdoor Leadership School

[www.sca-inc.org](http://www.sca-inc.org)  
Student Conservation Association

[www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)  
[www.cityyear.org](http://www.cityyear.org)  
A corps of 17 to 24 year olds who work in low-income neighborhoods tutoring kids, running after-school programs, helping to revitalize communities

[www.getonthebus.org](http://www.getonthebus.org)  
Through the Audubon Expedition Institute, students travel across the country in a yellow bus and learn by doing

[www.stint.com](http://www.stint.com)  
Offers Christian highschool students a chance to travel to Guatemala or the Dominican Republic to do ministry work

[www.studyoverseas.com](http://www.studyoverseas.com)

[www.gquest.org](http://www.gquest.org)  
Global Quest program in Thailand and Ecuador

- Art

[www.petersons.com/vpa/select/artse.html](http://www.petersons.com/vpa/select/artse.html)  
A starting point for students interested in the visual arts, the site lists schools with programs in various areas

[www.petersons.com/vpa/select/dancese.htm](http://www.petersons.com/vpa/select/dancese.htm)  
A starting point for students interested in dance, the site lists schools with academic programs in dance

- Athletics

[www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)  
A general summary of college athletic eligibility criteria and recruiting regulations

[www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org)  
National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics

- Applying Online

[www.universalapp.org](http://www.universalapp.org)

[www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)  
An application that is accepted by over 300 institution

- Special Interest Sites

[www.jbhe.com/features/38\\_leading\\_colleges.html](http://www.jbhe.com/features/38_leading_colleges.html)

The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education ranks major universities in integrating African American students

[www.sdbp.com/hbcu.html](http://www.sdbp.com/hbcu.html)

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

[www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAcollege.html](http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAcollege.html)

Native American college resources on the Internet

[www.catholiccollegesonline.org](http://www.catholiccollegesonline.org)

Catholic colleges

[www.cccu.org](http://www.cccu.org)

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

[www.venturescholar.org](http://www.venturescholar.org)

Website dedicated to the historically under-represented in medicine and related health professions, engineering and other sciences, and math-based careers

[www.kidsource.com/Heath/gr.html](http://www.kidsource.com/Heath/gr.html)

College planning for students with learning differences

[www.collegemotion.com](http://www.collegemotion.com)

Free video virtual tour and video information about colleges, generated, run, and maintained by students.

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Whalen, P. and D. Williams (2011). Guide to College Admissions at Bryn Mawr School.

Wilkinson, S. and C. Jones. (2010). College Counseling Handbook at Father Ryan High School.