



SAINT LOUIS SCHOOL
COLLEGE HANDBOOK 2011-2012

-Be part of the story-

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Saint Louis School

College Counseling Handbook

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Welcome to your College Handbook!

Your counselors are looking forward to working with you as you begin your journey on college selection and admissions. Our goal is to make this process manageable and understandable for you and your family.

Use this handbook as a starting place and a reference guide. Meet with your counselor to individualize the search so that your college list reflects your career interests and goals.

Saint Louis School Code Number

120-110

(College Board, SAT, ACT, or CEEB Code)

Naviance and Family Connection

Your counseling office is delighted to offer a comprehensive website that you can use to help in making decisions about colleges and careers. With the use of Family Connection you will be able to:

Keep track of the process

- Maintain a list of colleges you are thinking about
- Manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about
- Search for Colleges and discern careers
- Build a resume

Research colleges

- Compare GPA scores
- Compare SAT scores
- Compare colleges and other statistics
- Keep a track of colleges of interest, deadlines and scholarships

Sign up for college visits

- Find out which colleges are visiting Saint Louis School and research them prior to the visit
- Sign up to attend the sessions that are of interest to you

Test Preparation

- Study for the PSAT/SAT

Family Connection lets us share information with you about upcoming meetings and events, local and mainland scholarship opportunities, and other Web resources for college and career information. You can use the site to send your counselor an email message.

We have provided you with a personal access code and instructions for accessing Family Connection. We hope that you will find this resource helpful. If you have further questions about Family Connection, please contact your counselor.

**Go to: <http://www.naviance.com/> or sign in on your Saint Louis account at:
<https://connection.naviance.com/fc/signin.php?hsid=stls>**

INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Every Saint Louis School graduate has the opportunity to seek higher studies at the college and university level. College admissions are based primarily on: your cumulative high school average through the end of your junior year and your 1st semester or senior year grades, the degree to which you have challenged yourself academically in high school (very selective colleges will want to see that students have taken AP courses), standardized test scores on exams, recommendations, extracurricular activities, any noteworthy talent(s) or achievement(s), geographic distribution, a personal essay, and an interview (where offered).

The College Counselor encourages you to explore and research a wide variety of colleges. Seek out colleges that are likely to be a good “fit” for you, colleges having the kind of academic and social climate that you envision for your college experience. Your final list of college choices should include a range of schools based on the probability that they would offer admission to Saint Louis School students with GPAs and SAT scores comparable to yours. Please log in to “**Naviance**” from the Saint Louis School homepage and click on “**College Match**” or “**scatter grams**” to view prior years’ college admissions data. Your high school average is based on **all course grades, except those for physical education**, through the end of your junior year.

College Admissions Offices favorably note **Advanced Placement** and other challenging classes taken in high school. Choose a senior year program that is challenging, especially in the subject areas of interest to you. However, we want to caution you against taking a program that is too challenging for you to be successful. You need to be able to demonstrate an ability to succeed in your program.

Second semester senior year grades and certification of graduation are reported to the college you are planning to attend. **In some cases colleges request and evaluate your report card grades from the first or second marking period of your 2nd semester senior year to assist in making a final decision. Remember: All colleges reserve the right to rescind your acceptance if your academic performance during your senior year does not meet its standards.**

**TIMETABLE FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTS SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST
(SAT) I & II**

Registration is online - website: <http://www.collegeboard.org/>

Test Date	Regular Registration	Late Registration
November 5, 2011	October 7, 2011	October 21, 2011
Dec 3, 2011	November 8, 2011	November 20, 2011
January 28, 2012	December 30, 2011	January 13, 2012
March 10, 2012**	February 10, 2012	February 24, 2012
May 5, 2012	April 6, 2012	April 20, 2012
June 2, 2012	May 8, 2012	May 22, 2012

**On this date, only the SAT I is offered

Test Fee for SAT Reasoning Test - \$49.00

Basic Registration Fee \$22.00

For additional fees please turn to website: www.collegeboard.com

Recommended test taking timetable:

First SAT March or May of junior year,
SAT II (if necessary) May or June of junior year
Second SAT October of senior year
Additional SAT II's –November of senior year

ACT TEST

Registration is online- website: <http://www.act.org/>

Consult the websites for test dates and location of test centers – you must register early to obtain a seat at the testing site of your choice.

Test Date	Regular Registration	Late Registration
October 22, 2011	September 16, 2011	September 30, 2011
December 10, 2011	November 4, 2011	November 18, 2011
February 11, 2012	January 13, 2012	January 20, 2012
April 14, 2012	March 9, 2012	March 23, 2012
June 9, 2012	May 4, 2012	May 18, 2012

The College Board strongly recommends students to register online rather than by mail.

TIMETABLE FOR COLLEGE

Junior Year

September - January

- Take the PSAT (Practice SAT/Qualifying Test for National Merit and National Achievement Scholarship Competition).
- Attend college nights and college fairs.
- Research and get involved in after-school and week-end programs in your school or community. Look at internships at a corporation or non-profit organization. Note these opportunities have deadlines.
- Continue college/career exploration and community service and extracurricular activities.
- Plan to take the SAT this year in March. Start preparation for SAT's in January
- Register for the SAT or ACT online
- If you choose to take the ACT, Start prep in February for the April test

February

- Spend time becoming familiar with the resources in the College Counselor's Office. Look for colleges or professional schools offering your program choice(s) and find out admissions requirements. Determine your priorities.
- Think about which 2 teachers you would like to ask to write your recommendations (ideally one Math/Science and one Humanities teacher).
- Begin to research summer programs and jobs. Colleges pay close attention to how you spend the summer before senior year so make sure to choose an activity that you will grow from and enjoy. Note deadline for applying for admission to summer programs, internships and jobs.
- Meet with College Counselor with your parents.

March- April

- **Decide** which 2 teachers should be your recommenders and present them with information about yourself.
- **Plan ahead** to take SAT II's in strong subjects in which study is being terminated – especially if you are taking an advanced course. Many selective colleges require SAT II's which are subject-based exams. Check to see if the colleges you are interested in require

them. We suggest the following: science, math – after 3 years of math or at the end of pre-calculus or calculus, foreign language.

- If desired, register for the ACT (an optional exam) to be taken at the end of the junior year.
- Discuss college options and finances with your family.
- Visit college campuses during spring break.

May - June

- Be sure you have completed and updated your Junior search on Naviance, Personal Essay draft, Resume, Teacher recommendations, and any other recommendations from extracurricular activities (jobs, volunteer work, internships) to the College Counselor's Office
- Take SAT I or II if you haven't done so.

Summer

- Participate in a summer program, internship, youth employment or volunteer work.
- Visit campuses of prospective college choices. Call selective colleges early regarding personal interviews. Write to colleges for catalogs, applications and financial aid information. Look at college web sites and download applications.
- Update your resume.
- Continue to work on essay drafts and downloaded applications which are available in August.
- If the colleges and programs you will be applying to require a portfolio or an audition, use this summer to prepare.

TIMETABLE FOR COLLEGE

Senior Year

September

- Continue to explore college choices. Register for October and/or November SAT I or SAT II. Prepare a calendar of test registration deadlines, test dates, and college application deadlines.
- Prep for the November SAT starts in September
- Polish essays for college applications
- Speak to representatives from colleges who come to visit in the College Counselor's Office. Check NAVIANCE for their schedules
- ***READ SENIOR NEWSLETTER AND THE WEEKLY BULLETINS FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION***
- Check to see if any of the colleges you will be applying to require the CSS/PROFILE, a private school financial aid application (see www.collegeboard.com). If so, begin filing in October

October

- Complete applications for Early Decision/Early Action and schools with early/preferred deadlines. Submit envelopes to College Counselor by October 1st
- Go to College Fairs to speak to representatives and pick up information. Continue to review list of colleges
- Register for December SAT I or SAT II if necessary.
- Check for scholarships online and in the College Counselor's Office
- Begin filing the CSS/PROFILE if your college requires it
- Apply for a financial aid PIN at www.pin.ed.gov (one parent, one student)

November

- Early Decision/Early Action application deadline. Continue to review list of selected colleges.
- **Keep a copy of everything you send out! If something should get lost in the mail, it can quickly be re-sent.**

- Be aware of the fees and expenses. All colleges charge an application processing fee.
Remember to ask about fee waivers. An application will not be processed without this fee unless you are eligible for and have a fee waiver.
- Attend the Financial Aid Workshop held at Saint Louis either in November or December.

December

- FAFSA worksheets will be available in the middle of the month in the College Counselor's Office. Explore FAFSA on line and file for PIN Number. If you haven't already done so, check for scholarships online and in the College Counselor's Office.
- **Enter into Naviance your admit, deny or waitlist status**

January

- File FAFSA application for financial aid

February - March - April

- Any student who has not as yet filed a college application should come to the College Counselor's Office. Check for scholarships online or in the College Counselor's Office
- Fill out the FAFSA online by February 15. Some schools have a February 1st deadline.
- College acceptances/denials/wait lists, scholarship letters will be sent by colleges. Update NAVIANCE to reflect your outcomes.
- Review financial aid offers, enter information onto NAVIANCE, and confer with College Counselor.
- **Let the College Counselor's Office know about your admit, deny or waitlist status by entering it on NAVIANCE**

May

- May 1st is **the last date** to notify colleges if you are accepting their offer of admission and to send a deposit for dormitory rooms.
- **Notify** colleges if you are declining their offers of admissions.
- **UPDATE NAVIANCE TO REFLECT YOUR FINAL DECISION.**
- All colleges require a tuition/room and board deposit upon acceptance.
- Complete and submit the **Final Decision Form** on NAVIANCE. Bring stamped, preaddressed (to the school you will be attending) envelope to the college Office.
- **GRADUATION** -Congratulations and good luck to all of our graduates!

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

A college will use many factors in determining whether or not to accept an applicant. Individual colleges may use information in different ways. Most schools place a great deal of importance on a student's G.P.A. Below is a list of the most common factors colleges will consider when determining admissions. In addition, there are many other factors which may be considered: the school's desire for geographic, ethnic and gender diversity; special talents. Relatives of alumni as well as a student's financial need can play a role in the selection process.

Transcript

Your cumulative average and the degree to which you have challenged yourself in high school are typically the two most important factors colleges consider when evaluating candidates for admission. "Did the student take advantage of challenging courses offered at Saint Louis School?" is one of the first questions an admissions committee considers when evaluating a candidate. Colleges are interested in both the courses you have taken and the grades you have received. They will take into account the difficulty of your academic program as well as how successful you have been in your courses. They also look at trends in your grades; **a transcript that reflects steady growth is definitely a plus!** If something during your high school career has caused you to be less successful than you might have been otherwise, (you may want to speak to your Guidance Counselor, who can mention "extenuating circumstances" in his or her SSR letter of recommendation.)

Transcripts are issued by the Guidance Office each year. It is **your** responsibility to carefully read your transcript to ensure that it is correct. If there are any errors on your transcript make it a priority to get it corrected.

Standardized Tests

Your scores on standardized exams such as the **SAT I Reasoning Test, SAT II Subject Tests,** and the **ACT Plus Writing** are important not just for admissions but also for being awarded **merit scholarships** at some colleges. Plan your test taking schedule carefully. You cannot take the SAT I Reasoning Test and SAT II Subject Tests on the same day; we strongly recommend that you do not take more than two SAT II Subject Tests on the same day.

Essay

Your essay(s) is a very important part of your college application. The essay affords you an opportunity to express your individuality; it will help to differentiate you from other candidates with similar averages and test scores. You may write about your special interests, talents, and influential experiences and people. If your only extracurricular activity is a job, you might write about how your job has been meaningful to you and/or your family. The general rule is “The essay should be something only you could write”—it should be as specific as possible, avoid generalities, and be in your voice. It might be helpful to look at one of the many guides available regarding writing the successful college essay. Remember that college admissions officers have also read these guides. It goes without saying that **you should only submit original work!**

Work on your essays carefully. Allow yourself enough time to write the essay and to revise it. **Never submit your first draft; put it aside and read it again on another day. Ask friends, parents, or a teacher to read what you’ve written.** On the other hand, don’t worry about “polishing” your essay too much—it may lose spontaneity and authenticity.

Your essays should address the question(s) posed in each college’s application; don’t attempt to write one or two extremely general essays and then use them for all of your college applications. Pay attention to the length of your essay; college admissions officers read hundreds, in some cases thousands, of essays and do not want to receive a five-page essay if a one-page essay is requested.

Recommendations

Most colleges require two teacher recommendations. Other significant adults who have supervised you in activities such as research, community service, employment, the arts, athletics, etc. may also write letters in support of your application. These supplementary letters of recommendation should specifically address your exceptional achievements in that specific field.

Senior Grades

Your senior year grades are looked at very closely by the colleges, as is your senior year academic program! A challenging program (including A. P. courses) is necessary for the most selective colleges. If you are an Early Decision/Early Action applicant, the college(s) you apply to may request your 1st and/or 2nd quarter grades in their evaluation of your candidacy. In addition, colleges often review the courses you are taking 2nd semester senior year to make sure that you are continuing to meet their standards of academic rigor.*****Please Know: Colleges have withdrawn acceptances after receiving senior year grades.*****

Shown Interest

Generally speaking, colleges want to see that students have shown an interest in them, particularly small to medium sized colleges. The more interest a student shows in a specific college(s) could help a student's chances for admission. This means visiting the campus, going on a tour and attending an information session at the college's Admissions Office, meeting with Admissions Representatives during their visits to Saint Louis School, attending open houses (information sessions) that the colleges often hold in the Honolulu area, registering on the colleges' websites as a Prospective Applicant/joining the colleges' mailing lists, and seeking out the opportunity to interview with an Admissions Officer and/or an alumnus(a) of the college. On the other hand, very large colleges tend to be interested mostly in data such as grades and test scores when reviewing candidates for admission.

Points to Remember:

1. The appearance of your college application is important! The application is often a school's only opportunity to find out about you.
2. Make photocopies of any materials that you mail to the colleges; documents can be misplaced.
3. Most colleges are now requiring students to apply online. Many use the Common Application (commonapp.org). Make sure your online application is thorough and detailed.
4. Only click **submit** when you are absolutely certain that the information on your application is accurate, complete and you are comfortable with an admission officer reading it. Once you click **SUBMIT** it will be submitted....

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

As part of the application process, many colleges offer you the opportunity to have an interview with either an admissions officer or one of its alumni. The College Counselor's Office encourages you to seek out interviews in order to enhance your candidacy. Once you are given the date, time, and place of the interview, the interviewer's name and title, and the interviewer's telephone number, make sure you know how to get to the location of the interview and how long the trip will take.

First impressions are important, so remember to dress appropriately for your interview. You should arrive to the interview ten to fifteen minutes early.

Before each interview, spend some time thinking about why you are interested in the specific college. Research special programs! Review the college's website and any other materials the college has sent you. Know what the college's mission or philosophy is. During your interview, show an interest in the college and its academic and extra-curricular programs. Although there is no way to know exactly what you will be asked in an interview, you should be prepared to discuss such topics as

- Why do I want to go to this particular college?
- What could I contribute to the college community?
- What are my goals?
- What am I interested in (academics as well as interests outside of the classroom)?
- What do I expect to gain from my college experience?
- What are my/do I have career plans?
- What did I do last summer and what did it mean to me?
- What was the last book you read for pleasure?

When you meet the interviewer, shake hands. Try to maintain eye contact and not to answer questions with one word or yes/no answers. **Do not be afraid to say that you are undecided about your major or future plans.** Show the interviewer that you are a mature, confident, intelligent, and independent young adult. Finally, **be polite.** Thank the interviewer as you leave. You should send a Thank You note to the interviewer and express your appreciation (make sure you know his/her full name and title). We know from past experience that your conduct in the interview can have a **positive or negative** effect on your candidacy.

Some Perspective from the College Board

More than anything else, strong academic credentials build the foundation for college admissions. These credentials include your scholastic record and standardized test results. While scores on the SAT and ACT can be significant, the most important criteria will be performance shown by your four year classroom record. Admissions officers place a high value on students with consistent academic success in demanding programs. A simple rule of thumb for courses and grades: Take the hardest schedule you can handle without getting a “C”. “C’s” are acceptable in college admissions; but “acceptable” doesn’t mean “desirable.” Of course, you should always do the best you can, and sometimes a “C” is doing the best you can. If the best you can do is a “C” in a high level class you are going to have to be very realistic about your chances at selective colleges/universities. Colleges do not accept courses in which you earn “D’s” or “F’s”. “D’s” or “F’s” must be made up in summer school, if available, or repeated during the school year if there is room in your schedule.

College Board surveys colleges annually to find out which admissions criteria are most important. The following criteria was rated “very important or important” by 1,841 four-year colleges:

- School Achievement 93%
- Test Scores 87%
- Recommendations 49%
- Essay 42%
- Interview 34%
- Activities 30%

Where Do I Apply?

Let's start with a reality check: Does it make sense to limit your college search to only highly selective colleges? Only *you* can answer that. Ideally, you will have a range of colleges on your list, based not only upon selectivity, but also upon other important considerations: environment, programs, majors, sports, and the chance to be challenged both personally and academically. In the field of college counseling, we call this *the right match*. And there is no *perfect* college for you. There are a number of colleges that may be right for you. While it is true that there is undoubtedly a type of college which is more suited to your needs than another type, it is not wise to narrow your sights to only one or two colleges. A better plan is to investigate several possible options and you will discover that each one has its own advantages.

COLLEGE SELECTIVITY

Compare your profile with the requirements of the colleges you are considering. Colleges are listed in most guidebooks as:

Most Competitive: Even superior students will encounter a great deal of competition for admission to the colleges in this category. In general, these colleges require high school rank in the top 1% to 10% and grade averages of 93+. Median freshman test scores at these colleges are generally between 1350 and 1600 on the SAT (Critical Reading and Math) and above 28 on the ACT. In addition, many of these colleges admit only a small percentage of those who apply -- usually less than one-third.

Highly Competitive: Colleges in this group look for students with grade averages of 88+ and accept most of their students from the top 10% to 15% of your high school class. Median freshman test scores at these colleges range from 1200 to 1350 (Critical Reading and Math) on the SAT and from 26 to 27 on the ACT. These schools generally accept between one-third and one-half of their applicants.

Very Competitive: The colleges in this category admit students whose averages are no less than 85+ and who rank in the top 15% to 25% of their graduating class. They report median freshman test scores in the 1100 to 1200 range on the SAT (Critical Reading and Math) and from 23 to 25 on the ACT. The schools in this category generally accept between one-half and three quarters of their applicants.

Competitive: This category is a very broad one, covering colleges that generally have median freshman test scores between 950 and 1100 on the SAT (Critical Reading and Math) and between 19 and 22 on the ACT. Some of these colleges require that students have high school averages of 85 or better, although others state a minimum of 80 - 85. Generally, these colleges prefer students in the top 50% to 65% of the graduating class and accept between 75% and 85% of their applicants.

Less Competitive: Included in this category are colleges with median freshman test scores below 950 on the SAT and below 19 on the ACT; and colleges that admit students with averages below 75 who rank in the top 65% of the graduating class. These colleges usually admit 85% or more of their applicants.

Non-Competitive: The colleges in this category generally only require evidence of graduation from an accredited high school (although they may also require the completion of a certain number of high school units). Some require that entrance examinations be taken for placement purposes only, or only by graduates of unaccredited high schools or only by out-of-state students. In some cases, insufficient capacity may compel a college in this category to limit the number of students that are accepted; generally, however, if a college accepts all its applicants, it automatically falls in this category. Colleges are rated noncompetitive if they admit all state residents, but have some requirements for nonresidents. Remember, these selectivity terms are based on the number of applications per seat a school will receive. A school with a national or international draw will most likely receive more applications per seat than a school that recruits primarily from a more local area.

Seven Myths About College Admissions

Myth #1: Colleges receive so many personal essays they probably only glance at them.

Fact: Private college admission officers read personal essays with great care (same for the UC, now that they have the Comprehensive Review of applications). Writing about yourself in a way that makes you unique is the one significant thing you can do to overcome lackluster test scores and a mediocre school record. Don't wait until just before the deadline to rush to write your essay just to get the application in the mail on time. Even at the UC, a well-written essay can tip the scales in your favor; the personal essay *can make a difference*.

Myth #2: Colleges don't look at the senior year grades.

Fact: Private college admissions committees analyze not only senior year grades in the first semester, but also the degree of difficulty of the senior year course of study. As for the second semester grades, if there is a significant change (decline) in academic performance from February to June (spring semester), the college that originally accepted you might require summer school work, put you on probation for the first semester of college, or *rescind* your acceptance on the grounds that you are not the same strong student they originally admitted. The University of California will not officially accept you until they see your final transcript. Since that arrives in July or August after high school graduation, there are serious consequences for you if your admission offer is rescinded one month before the fall term begins.

Myth #3: The only private colleges worth applying to are the Ivy League colleges.

Fact: This is another myth. The eight Ivy League colleges are among the most selective schools in the nation, but they may not offer what *you* want. Besides, did you know that the "Ivy League" is simply an athletic league like the Big 10 or the Pac 10? Certainly the Ivy League is known for its academic quality, but it does *not* have a monopoly on academic quality.

Myth #4: Colleges just don't have enough money to give families financial aid.

Fact: Financial aid continues to be more readily available than you might think in the forms of grants, loans, work-study, and merit scholarships. Read the financial aid section in this handbook, attend the Financial Aid Workshop at Saint Louis in December, and investigate websites such as www.fastweb.com or www.finaid.org.

Myth #5: It is better to go to a big university that is well known than to a small college that few people have heard of.

Fact: This generalization about large versus small schools is quite misleading. While a large university with wide name recognition (such as UCLA) may be ideal for many students, others may perform better in a smaller, more personalized environment (such as the University of the Pacific). Just because your next door neighbor hasn't heard of a particular college doesn't mean the school is not prestigious or that you won't get a fine education there. Graduate schools and employers make it their business to know which colleges turn out the brightest and most capable graduates. The size of the school has very little to do with it. It is important to define the things *you* want in a college – to understand yourself, not to be unduly influenced by the opinions of others.

Myth #6: If I make the wrong decision about college, my life will be ruined.

Fact: You need to remember to keep things in perspective. There are many colleges that will be a good match for you. Every experience, whether positive or negative, provides you with a learning opportunity to grow and improve. As a lifelong learner, you will continue to take classes throughout your life time. It is important to realize the significance of your college choice, to take the college exploration process seriously, and to be conscientious about the college selection process. You will make many decisions throughout your lifetime which will impact you in different ways. Remember, there is more than one college that will be a good match for you

Myth #7: It is important to have as many extracurricular activities as possible to impress college admission people because it “looks good.”

Fact: Colleges are “looking” for *quality* of involvement, not simply *quantity*. They want a well-rounded student body made up of students who are passionately interested in particular activities; those who haven't spread themselves so thin that their extracurricular commitments are superficial. Colleges prefer, for example, the student solely dedicated to being the yearbook editor over the student who has some participation in 10 different activities. This is what is called “productive follow through.”

FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN SELECTING A COLLEGE

The questions below are designed to help you evaluate many of the factors you should consider when choosing colleges to which you might apply. Your first task is to assign priorities to each of these factors. While it is unlikely that any school will meet all of your needs, assigning priorities to these factors will help you find a number of colleges where you are most likely to be happy. As you research various colleges and perhaps visit some college campuses, keep notes and/or record your impressions of the school. You are very likely to spend 4 years at a particular college; doing some research and making informed choices only makes sense.

Your Interests:

1. What fields and subjects interest you the most? If you are unsure about your academic interests, it might be best to look for colleges that offer a wide range of programs.
2. Why do you really want to go to college? What do you expect to gain from the experience?
3. Based on your academic history, what do you feel are your strengths?

Location:

1. Do you prefer a school in a large city, a college town close to a city, or a rural setting far from a major city?
2. Do you prefer a school close to home where you will be able to visit home easily for a weekend or Thanksgiving break?
3. Perhaps a school where it will be easy and financially feasible for your family to visit you?
4. What is the weather like?

Academics:

1. Does the college offer the program(s) in which you are interested?
2. Is the college known for a particular program?
3. What are the school's policies regarding course requirements, selecting a major, double majoring, and cross registering at neighboring schools?
4. What are the strengths or weaknesses of the program(s) in which you are interested?
5. What is the student-to-teacher ratio? How many students are there in atypical class?

6. Are most classes taught by full-time professors, or are many taught by graduate students?
7. How accessible are the college's professors? Do undergraduates have the opportunity to assist professors in their research?
8. Is there a core curriculum? Are there distribution requirements? Are decisions on curriculum left largely up to the student?
9. Will the academic work challenge me? Will it be too demanding and not allow time for extracurricular activities and socializing?
10. What grade average and standardized test scores will I need to be considered a strong applicant?
11. Does the school accept Advanced Placement credit? Is there a minimum score needed?
12. Is there an honors program available at the school? Who is eligible to participate?
13. Does the college offer/encourage study abroad or at another U.S. campus?
14. What percentage of freshmen return for the sophomore year?
15. Do most of the graduates go on to graduate school immediately upon graduation? What is the rate of acceptance at medical, law, or business schools?
16. How many graduates go right into the marketplace? Is there a career services office that assists students with finding summer internships and jobs after graduation? Which firms recruit on campus?
17. Are there opportunities for hands-on work experiences while students are in college? Do any of these pay a salary or stipend?

Size and Student Population:

Smaller schools may be more nurturing and supportive whereas larger schools may offer greater diversity, both academically and socially. Some small colleges belong to consortia that enable them to offer greater resources while maintaining their supportive atmospheres.

1. Is the college small (fewer than 1000 students), medium-size, or large (more than 15,000)? Does enrollment matter to you? Does the college have graduate students?
2. Is the college ethnically/racially/culturally diverse?
3. Does the college attract students from all over the United States and the world or are the majority of students from the immediate region?
4. What are the students like? Will I fit in? Will I be able to make friends?

5. What kinds of student organizations are active on campus (political groups, college newspaper, student government, volunteer/mentoring groups, etc.)?
6. What is the male/female ratio?
7. What kind of religious life exists on campus?
8. Can the school meet my special needs (dietary/religious/ medical)?
9. Do students primarily live on campus, off-campus, or do most students commute from home?
10. What is social life on campus like? How important are fraternities and sororities?
Varsity sports?
11. Do I want the relative anonymity of a large school versus the personal attention from professors at a smaller school?

Financial Factors:

1. How much will it cost to attend this school (including tuition, fees, room and board, books, travel to and from campus, and spending money)?
2. Will I qualify for financial aid? Is the amount of financial aid offered negotiable? Does the college offer academic merit scholarships (as opposed to colleges that offer scholarships solely based on the family's "Financial Need")?
3. Will I go on to graduate school? Will this affect how much I can spend on my undergraduate education?

Facilities:

1. How are the college's libraries and computer facilities?
2. Does the college/university provide technology?
3. Are there adequate sports and recreational facilities (e.g., a swimming pool, athletic fields for non-varsity players, music practice rooms)?
4. Is a wide variety of intercollegiate and intramural sports programs available?

Living Conditions/ Safety:

1. Is campus housing readily available? Is on-campus housing guaranteed for all four years? Are alternative housing arrangements available?
2. Are the dorms coed? Are there bathrooms? Are single sex dorms available?
3. How safe is the campus? How does the college ensure safety on campus?
4. How accessible is the college to public transportation?

Honestly Assess Your Profile

A realistic self assessment will help you examine your academic and personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as your reasons for going to college and what you are seeking in a college education. The process involves a combination of looking back at your high school career and looking ahead to how a college education will prepare you for your post collegiate years.

Answer these questions in an honest and thoughtful manner. A self evaluation will help you understand what to look for in your selection of prospective schools, and it can prepare you for statements you will be asked to make about yourself in essays and interviews when you apply.

Goals and Values

- What is your main educational goal?
- What values do you consider most important?
- What kind of person would you like to become?
- Which of your unique gifts and strengths would you like to develop?
- What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

Education

- What are your academic interests?
- Which courses have been most satisfying for you?
- What interests beyond daily class assignments have you pursued in research papers, through
through
- Independent projects, and recreational reading?
- How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues and exchange ideas?
- What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?
- In what academic areas do you feel confident? Inadequately prepared?
- Are there outside distractions which have interfered with your academic performance?
- Consider such things as family problems, health, afterschool
- Job responsibilities.

Activities and Interests

- What activities outside of the daily school routine do you enjoy the most?
- Which have meant the most to you?
- Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence or contribution?
- What do you do for fun and relaxation?
- What concerns you most about the world around you?
- What would you do if you could change certain aspects of your world?

Personality and Relationships with Others

- Are you competitive? If so, to what extent?
- What kind of a person are you?
- What three adjectives would you use to describe yourself?
- How would someone who knows you well describe you?
- What are your finest qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings?
- How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself?

Questions to Ask College Talk Representatives:

- What percent of applicants are accepted?
- What percent of first year students return as sophomores?
- What percent of entering students actually graduate?
- In how many years? Can I double major?
- How much flexibility will I have in my curriculum?
- Is a core curriculum required?
- What is the average class size? What is the faculty/student ratio?
- Will I be taught by graduate assistants?
- What percentage of the faculty teach first and second year students?
- How many credits/classes do students usually take in one term?
- What percent of graduates who apply to law school are admitted? Medical school?
- MBA programs?
- Honors programs?
- Financial Aid?

APPLICATION OPTIONS

Early Decision (BINDING)

Under the Early Decision (ED) plan, some colleges allow the student to apply to his or her first choice college early in the fall term (usually by November 1 or 15) and receive an admissions decision in mid-December. This program is desirable for students who have strong academic credentials and a very strong preference for one particular college. Because the student is clearly indicating to the college that it is his or her 1st choice and that he or she will attend if accepted, **in some cases**, applying Early Decision can increase a student's chance of admission. If accepted under an Early Decision plan, **the student is not permitted to apply to any other colleges.** **Before applying ED, the student and family should discuss how important it is to them to have the opportunity to compare financial aid packages offered by colleges to which the student might have been accepted as a Regular Decision applicant.** If a student is not accepted under the Early Decision Plan and is "deferred," the student will be reconsidered later in the year with the regular application pool. However, a student may also be not accepted in December. **A student may apply to only one school under the Early Decision Plan.** Check colleges' websites to see if Early Decision is offered (this can usually be found by navigating to the college's "Admissions" page). **It is important to plan ahead** so you can complete all of the required SAT I Reasoning and SAT II Subject tests (and/or ACT plus Writing) by October of your senior year.

Early Action (NOT BINDING)

The Early Action (EA) plan follows the same application and notification timetable as the Early Decision Plan but allows the accepted candidates until May 1 to accept or decline the offer of admission. In other words, if offered admission as an EA applicant, the student is not obligated to attend his or her EA college. If a student is not accepted under the Early Action Plan and is "deferred," the student will be reconsidered later in the year with the regular applicant pool. However, a student may also not be accepted in December.

Note: Because of the colleges' very early deadlines for Early Decision and Early Action, students must be prepared to inform the College Counselor's Office of their intentions early in their senior year by entering their Early Decision/Early Action college choice(s) online by logging into their "Naviance" account.

Rolling Admissions (NO SET DEADLINE-FIRST COME FIRST SERVE)

A Rolling Admissions procedure means that the college's Admissions Office will review an applicant's file which can include: the student's application, high school transcript, SAT I Reasoning Test and SAT II Subject tests (and/or ACT plus Writing), and teacher recommendations as soon as possible after the completed application is received. It is in the student's best interest to submit his or her application as early as possible before degree programs fill up. Decisions are issued within a few weeks after they are made. Students should consult college websites for priority filing dates that, if met, often make students eligible for additional scholarships. Many state universities as well as some private colleges use the rolling admissions process. **In many cases your chances of admission are improved considerably by applying as early as possible before academic programs are filled to capacity.** There is no implied commitment on your part to attend.

Deferred Admission

At some colleges, students who have been admitted to the school may elect to delay enrollment for a year or a semester. Students might choose this option to earn money for college or to pursue special programs. A deposit is often required by the college to hold a place in the next entering class, and it is the college's right to expect the student to be able to account for the time spent between graduation from high school and actual matriculation at the college. The student who defers admission cannot attend another college during the time off without the approval of the college that defers admission.

PSAT

The PSAT is offered one time each year in October and is taken by the entire Freshmen, Sophomore and Junior class at Saint Louis. The test is normed to juniors, so it is a valid indicator of where an individual stands in relation to the other college bound juniors all over the country. It is also considered a strong indicator of the anticipated range of scores you will earn on the SAT. For those juniors whose test results rank in the top 2% in the nation, the PSAT also functions as the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

SAT and Subject Tests

The majority of colleges require either the SAT or the ACT with writing for admissions consideration. Some highly selective colleges also require Subject Tests. It is advisable for Juniors to have taken the SAT and two or three SAT Subject Tests by June of their junior year. Seniors should continue to work on improving their test scores by taking the test at least once more. All SAT exams are administered on Saturdays at national test sites. **Registration is available online at <http://www.collegeboard.org/>.** Make sure to observe registration deadlines. Students who need special accommodations need to be approved well in advance (at least six weeks for appeal process). See your counselor for details.

The SAT Subject Tests are approximately one-hour in length. You can take up to 3 subject tests on one test date. It is not possible to take SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests on the same day. Two test dates are required if you plan to take both. Students can still choose to submit their scores for consideration as part of their application, just as they do now with AP scores. The Subject Tests may also be recommended for certain majors.

ACT

The ACT is a “separate, but equal” college admissions test. This means that it is accepted in place of the SAT at almost all schools. The ACT is administered on Saturdays, just as the SATs are, but never on conflicting dates. ACT is offered early in the state of Hawaii, so this is an excellent advantage for students needing an early standardized test date. The ACT has four sections, each of which count as 25% of the composite score: Reading, English, Science, and Math. The ACT offers a Writing section in order to make their test equivalent to the SAT. Registration is available online at <http://www.act.org/>

FINANCIAL AID/COLLEGE EXPENSES

Financial Aid is help for meeting the costs of your college education. How much financial aid you are offered may be a large factor in determining which college you attend. This section will give you an overview of what Financial Aid means and how you apply for it, but please remember, this is only a brief outline. Refer to <http://www.fafsa.com/> or contact the College Counselor's Office for additional information.

The required applications are lengthy and detailed and could take hours to complete. It is important that your family's tax forms and monetary records are up to date. If you are applying for financial aid, you and your parents should try to complete your taxes as early as possible (early February of your senior year). There are **numerous, crucial financial aid deadlines** set by the colleges. It is imperative to carefully read the financial aid requirements of all the colleges to which you are applying. Generally speaking, the earlier you and your family complete all required financial aid forms, the more aid a student can expect to receive. **Financial aid forms have to be filled out every year you attend college.**

Often, the financial aid offered by colleges is based on a family's "financial need" rather than the student's academic merit. "Financial Need" is defined as the difference between what it costs to attend a particular college (tuition, room, board...) and what you and your family are expected to pay towards your college education.

Your yearly **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)** is determined by completing the **FAFSA** form (visit fafsa.ed.gov), in many cases the CSS Profile form (visit collegeboard.com for more information regarding the CSS Profile), and in some cases the specific college's own financial aid form(s). In determining a family's Expected Family Contribution (EFC), colleges consider a number of factors including: income, assets, the number of people in the family, and in many cases the value of the family's home (if the family owns a home).

When you begin your college search, you should not rule out any school because of cost. Many colleges offer individual students a tremendous amount of financial aid.

However, your final list of college choices should include financial (as well as academic) "safety" schools.

Some types of financial aid are given to the student in the form of **grants** or **scholarships** (money that does not need to be repaid by the student/family). Other financial aid comes in the form of **loans** that need to be repaid and/or **work study**.

Once the Financial Aid Offices at each college to which you have been accepted have reviewed your family's financial information, each will send you a financial aid **award letter**. The award letter will indicate the types of financial aid you will be receiving and the amounts of each type of aid. Please know that different colleges might offer very different amounts of financial aid. If for any reason you feel that your aid award is insufficient, or if your family's income has recently decreased for some reason, please contact the individual colleges' Financial Aid Offices. Be sure to meet each college's financial aid deadlines. Check with each college. For early decision and early action, deadlines can be as early as October of the senior year.

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

Grants and Scholarships: Money that you do not repay.

1. College scholarships

- Varies, based on financial need. Some awards are based on academic merit.
- Complete the FAFSA and, in some cases, the CSS Profile and/or the college's own financial aid application.

2. Federal Pell Grant

- Amount varies, based on financial need.
- Complete the FAFSA.

3. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

- Amount varies, based on financial need.
- Complete the FAFSA

4. National Merit & National Achievement Scholarships

- Amount varies. Take the PSAT exam.
- Visit www.nationalmerit.org for more information.

5. ROTC Scholarships

- (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps)
- Pays for tuition, books, fees, and other expenses.
- Please visit www.rotc.com

6. Various private Scholarships

- The amount varies and may be based on various different factors. Apply directly to community agencies, corporations, unions, foundations, religious organizations, clubs, civic, and cultural groups. Check with the College Counselor's Office frequently.
- **The Ho'oulu Hawaiian Data Center** creates a comprehensive database of the Hawaiian population to support planning for lifelong learning in the Hawaiian Community. One of the Data Center's primary roles is to verify Hawaiian ancestry of applicants to Kamehameha Schools programs who wish to be considered under their preference policy. Through the Hawaiian Ancestry Registry:
 - Applicants who wish to be considered under Kamehameha Schools' preference policy can verify ancestry immediately and do not have to wait until the open-enrollment period for a particular program.
 - Applicants who wish to be considered under Kamehameha Schools' preference policy for KS programs will have to apply for Hawaiian ancestry verification one time only. Once Hawaiian ancestry has been verified, the applicant will not have to submit ancestry information to any subsequent Kamehameha Schools' program to which he or she applies.
 - For more information go to: <http://www.ksbe.edu/datacenter/> or contact the Counseling Office
- **Liko A'e Native Hawaiian Scholarship:** Liko A'e NHSP began in 2003 with funding from the US Department of Education, Native Hawaiian Education Act. The program is based at UH Maui College with satellite centers at Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Leeward Community Colleges. The program has successfully funded thousands of Native Hawaiian students throughout the country from associate to professional degree programs. The goal of Liko A'e is to sustain and provide support to Hawaiian students in higher education.
- For more information go to: <https://likoae.org/> or contact the Counseling Office

Scholarships: Most students who receive large scholarships earn them from the institution they end up attending. There are, however, thousands of outside scholarships that range from very small amounts (\$25) to very substantial amounts (\$15,000). Most of these scholarship applications will ask for an essay. Here are some ideas for researching scholarships:

- If your parents work for a large company, be sure they check with their Human Resources office to see if scholarships are offered to children of employees.
- The most reliable website for scholarships out there is www.fastweb.com. It is really difficult to get through the thousands of entries, but there is a search engine that can help you sift through some of it. It is not always realistic in its search results, but at least it will narrow the list of those you have to read.
- If you belong to an ethnic group with an active club, they will likely offer scholarships. Call and find out.
- Local chapters of civic organizations such as the Optimists/Soroptimists, Rotarians, Elks, etc. all offer some type of scholarship. Call the local offices and ask.
- Watch for announcements and advertisements in the local newspaper. It is amazing how many organizations decide to offer a scholarship and simply tell the local press.
- View the scholarship list on Family Connection/Naviance.
- Talk to your College counselor. When a scholarship comes up you want to be first in line.

Note: Whatever you do, **stay away from the scholarship scam artists**. You will receive very official looking envelopes that offer to do the scholarship search for you. If you have to spend money, then it is a scam. If they promise to find money for you that no one else can find, then it is a scam. There is no scholarship out there that a scam artist can find for you that you cannot find for yourself. Do not fall for their promises. Let your counselor know about these organizations if you are not sure about something you receive in the mail. It is imperative that they are reported to the Federal Trade Commission, who attempts to prosecute the worst of them.

Loans: Money that you must repay.

1. Federal Perkins Loan (for students)

- Students borrow money to help pay for college. Please visit studentaid.ed.gov for more information. Click on the link “Federal Student Aid Programs”.
- Complete the FAFSA.
- Your college’s Financial Aid Office can help you through the Perkins Loan application process.

2. Federal Stafford Loan (for students)

- Students borrow money to help pay for college.
- Please visit studentaid.ed.gov for more information. Click on the link “Federal Student Aid Programs”.
- Complete the FAFSA.
- Your college’s Financial Aid Office can help you through the Stafford Loan application process.

3. Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)

- Parents borrow money to help pay for college.
- Please visit studentaid.ed.gov for more information. Click on the link “Federal Student Aid Programs”.
- Complete the FAFSA.
- Your college’s Financial Aid Office can help you through the PLUS Loan application process.

4. Private Student Loans, sometimes called Supplemental Loans or Alternative Loans.

- With the soaring costs of a four year college education, some students might choose to seek loans in addition to the loans discussed above.
- Be a smart consumer; look for loans with the lowest interest rates and best repayment options!
- Seek out help from your college’s Financial Aid Office but also from experienced, trusted financial advisors known to you and/or your family.

Once you have filed your FAFSA form, it will be processed and a **Student Aid Report (SAR)** will be mailed to you. If there are corrections to be made, make them at once and return the form as instructed. Remember that accurate figures from completed income tax returns are necessary. The third form you might be asked to fill out is the **CSS/Profile**. This is a financial form used in addition to the FAFSA by *some* private colleges. If the school you are applying to is listed on the CSS Profile registration form, then you must fill it out. Go to www.collegeboard.com to complete your personalized Profile application. Site opens October 1st. It is not free, so be sure to fill out the registration form and send in the correct payment well in advance of January 1st. Individual forms customized for each college will be sent to you so that you can file them during the same time period as the FAFSA, available on line at: <http://www.fafsa.com/>. Be sure to attend the Saint Louis School **FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP**. A professional financial aid administrator will assist you with questions and updated information regarding financial aid changes.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ATHLETES

NCAA Eligibility Center: www.eligibilitycenter.org

General Information on the Eligibility Center Web site

- Register and update information for the eligibility center.
- Link to an information and resource page for prospective student athletes and parents.
- Online version of the NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete.
- Core course listings for high schools.
- Home school information.
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Information for students with education impacting disabilities
- Division I and II initial eligibility standards (**including Division I sliding scale**)
- Division I & II worksheet

Fee Waiver

U.S. student athletes are eligible for a fee waiver if they have already received a fee waiver (not state voucher) for the ACT or SAT. The high school counselor will also be required to submit electronic fee waiver verification on their behalf (high school counselors with PIN access may submit waivers for eligible students from the high school administrator section of the eligibility center Web site).

Eligibility Center Services

NCAA Eligibility Center

P.O. Box 7136

Indianapolis, IN 46207

Customer service hours: 8: 30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Eastern time Monday through Friday.

Customer service toll free line: (877) 262-1492

Fax number: (317) 968-5100

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics website: <http://naia.cstv.com> Information about athletic offerings at small colleges.

There are extensive resources available on the Internet for you to collect information on colleges and universities. Try some of these favorites.

Colleges

1. **<http://www.naviance.com/>**
Family Connection/NAVIANCE
2. **www.collegeboard.com**
Do a college search, research colleges in the United States and beyond, find National College Fairs and Visual and Performing Arts College Fairs.
3. **www.californiacolleges.edu**
Information about all colleges in California.
4. **www.nacacnet.org**
The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) has over 1200 member colleges who report space available at member colleges on May 5.
5. **www.commonapp.org**
One application for 414 colleges.
6. **www.ctcl.com**
Colleges That Change Lives. Different perspectives on choosing a college.
7. **www.collegesofdistinction.com**
A college guide with a unique approach asking about what really matters: which colleges are the best places to learn, grow and succeed?
8. **www.gustavus.edu/oncampus/careercenter/planning/majors/**
Allows students & parents to see the practical application of college majors.
9. **www.wiche.edu/sep/wue**
Western Undergraduate Exchange is a program which allows students in western states to enroll with a tuition reduction.

Vocational Schools

10. **<http://www.rwm.org/rwm/>**
Good source of information on private career schools which offer vocational training.
Organized by state and job skill involved.

Virtual Campus Tours

11. www.campustours.com

Virtual college tours, web cams, interactive college maps, college videos, movies, and pictures.

Athletics

12. www.eligibilitycenter.org

Information for high school athletes regarding Division I, II, or III sports in college and NCAA Eligibility Center.

13. <http://naia.cstv.com>

Information about athletic offerings at small colleges.

Financial Aid

14. www.fastweb.com

Comprehensive list of private scholarships; scholarship search.

15. www.finaid.org

Reliable information about financial aid, estimating family contribution, scholarship scams.

16. www.fafsa.ed.gov

Guide to applying for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Provides eligibility requirements and guidelines for those applying for federal student loans and aid.

17. www.questbridge.org

Quest Bridge prepares outstanding low income high school juniors to apply for admission to leading colleges across the country. College Prep Scholarship allows students to access many opportunities through one application including:

- 10 full scholarships to college summer programs at Emory, Harvard, Notre Dame, Penn, Stanford and Yale
- 40 awards of college admissions counseling provided by QuestBridge staff
- 1,000 invitations to Quest Bridge College Admissions Conferences at Stanford and Yale
- 100 all expense paid campus visits to selective colleges

18. www.collegeanswer.com

Solid base of information on costs by college along with a list of thousands of sources of financial aid.

Glossary

- **ACT:** Abbreviation for the American College Test. This is an assessment in English, mathematics, reading, and science; writing is optional. Accepted by most colleges in lieu of the SAT.
- **Associate's Degree:** An Associate of Arts (AA) degree is traditionally earned in two years at a community college.
- **Bachelor's Degree:** BA – Bachelor of Arts, BS – Bachelor of Science. A diploma earned after successful completion (traditionally in four years) of required courses at a college or university.
- **Calendar:** The system used by an institution to divide its year into instruction periods. The most common are semester, quarter, and 414.
- A **semester** system is a division of the school year into two parts, usually 18 weeks in length. Schools may have an additional 8week summer session.
- A **quarter** system is a division of the school year into three quarters, usually 11 weeks in length. Students take three or four courses per quarter rather than the traditional five in a semester system.
- A **414** system consists of two terms of about 16 weeks each, separated by a one month intersession used for intensive study in one area, research, or internships.
- **Candidate Notification Date:** The date by which colleges notify students of admission decisions.
- **Candidate Reply Date:** The date by which students must reply to the colleges that admitted them. The universal date is May 1st.
- **CEEB:** Abbreviation for the College Entrance Examination Board, which creates and supervises the administration of the SAT and the Subject Tests. The **CEEB code for Saint Louis School is 120-110**. You will need this number every time you register for an SAT, ACT, or apply to college.
- **College:** The term commonly used to describe any institution of higher education. This is usually an institution that grants a Bachelor degree. A college may also be one part of a university. For example, undergraduates apply to Harvard College, not Harvard University.
- **Common Application:** A form devised and accepted by 414 colleges as equal to their own institutional application. The Common Application makes things easier for the student who

can fill out one application for many colleges, rather than repeat basic information over and over again. See www.commonapp.org for additional information and a list of colleges who accept the Common Application.

- **CSS/PROFILE:** A financial aid form used by some private colleges and universities in addition to the FAFSA (see section on Financial Aid in this handbook).
- **ETS:** An abbreviation for the Educational Testing Service, an organization utilized by the College Board to write and administer its tests (SAT and Subject Tests).
- **FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid (see more in the Financial Aid section).
- **General Education Requirements:** Courses required by all candidates for the bachelor degree at a college.
- **Graduate School:** Usually part of a university, graduate school is an institution for students who have already earned the bachelor degree.
- **Greeks or Greek Life:** At a college campus, the collective term for members of sororities and fraternities. See www.GreekPages.com for information.
- **Ivy League:** The term used to designate highly selective eastern colleges. Strictly speaking, however, it is an athletic league comprised of the following colleges: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale.
- **Legacy:** An applicant who is the son or a daughter of an alumnus or alumna (or sometimes a more distant relative). Private colleges sometimes give special consideration to such candidates.
- **Liberal Arts:** The studies in a college (such as language, history, mathematics, literature, and science) intended to provide chiefly general knowledge and to develop the general intellectual capacities, such as reason and judgment, as opposed to professional or vocational skills.
- **Major:** The field of concentration or specialization for a college undergraduate. Usually students are asked to declare a major by the end of their sophomore year. A student normally spends one quarter to one third of their total undergraduate work in their major field. **Minor:** A secondary area of academic concentration, but requiring fewer courses than a major, which may or may not be required by an institution.
- **Need Aware:** Means the college is likely to admit applicants who are willing to pay the full sticker price.

- **Need Blind:** Means colleges have made the commitment to take in all eligible students, regardless of ability to pay.
- **NMSQT:** The **National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test** is combined with the PSAT, taken in October of the Junior year. Scoring well on this test is the first requirement toward recognition in the National Merit Scholarship competition.
- **PSAT:** The **Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test** is a scholastic assessment test administered to high school juniors. Scoring well on this test is the prerequisite towards qualifying for the **National Merit Scholarship**. Scores are reported on a scale from 2080 for verbal, quantitative aptitude, and writing skills.
- **SAR:** Student Aid Report, mailed to you after you complete the FAFSA application.
- **SAT Reasoning Test:** This is a multiple choice test made up of Verbal, Math and Writing sections designed to measure skills that are related to college success. Students receive three SAT scores, **Verbal, Math & Writing**, each reported on a scale of 200 to 800.
- **SAT Subject Tests:** Curricular based tests that measure achievement in a particular subject. Each test is one hour in length and is scored on a scale from 200 to 800. It is advisable for students to take the Subject Test while studying or immediately upon completing study of the subject.
- **Undergraduate:** A college student who is a candidate for a Bachelor's Degree or a program of study leading to a Bachelor's Degree.
- **University:** A public or private institution that has both undergraduate and graduate programs.
- **WUE:** The Western Undergraduate Exchange is a program which allows students in Western states to enroll in participating two-year and four-year public college programs at a reduced tuition level: up to 150 percent of the institution's regular resident tuition. Resident students from the following states may participate, if they meet eligibility requirements: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington & Wyoming. To learn of the wide array of programs available, go to: www.wiche.edu/sep/wue
- **Yield:** The number of students admitted to a college who ultimately attend that college. The yield is usually extremely high at selective colleges.