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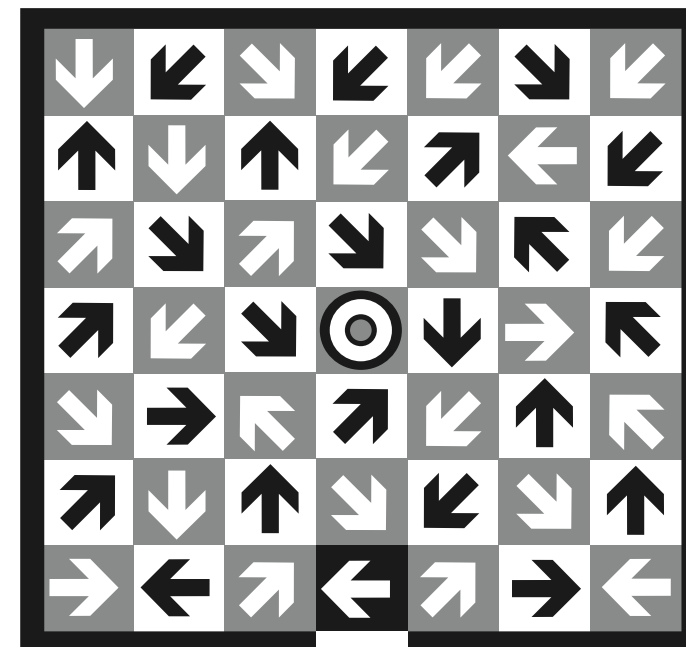
is to prepare students with promise for higher education and lifelong learning and to enhance their intellectual, physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and artistic growth so that they may realize their power for good as citizens of local and world communities.



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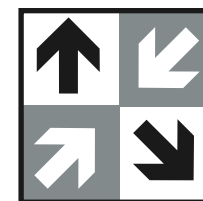
OREGON EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

**COLLEGE
ADMISSIONS
HANDBOOK**

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Cynthia Kersten Doran
Director of College Counseling



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Ninth Printing, 2007
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Foreword

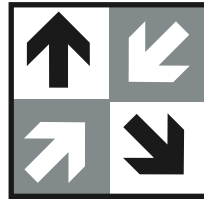
Members of the college counseling profession are particularly generous. Colleagues from institutions all over the United States—at workshops, in mailings, over the phone, over coffee—routinely share their best ideas and work and encourage others to use them. They are more than happy to assist young people in making the transition from high school to college, wherever they may be. Parts of this revised handbook, particularly sections of the Appendix, were inspired by and are the direct result of such sharing. I am indebted to many generous colleagues. Although they are far too numerous to name, I would be remiss in not mentioning my gratitude to them here.

This book describes the system of college counseling and the application process that has evolved at OES—a system enriched by support from trustees, administrators and faculty. It has been designed in the hope that it will clarify for OES students and parents—particularly those approaching college admissions for the first time—a process that is multifaceted but hardly mysterious.

Cynthia Kersten Doran
January 2007

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chapter one

Establishing Your Priorities

At its best, the college search and application process can be an experience in self-discovery. By attempting to match yourself with one of the more than 3,000 colleges in this country, you can wind up asking yourself difficult questions about your goals, values, philosophy of education and interests. Such self-evaluation is not easily done, but 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. In the Appendix, you will find a series of questions about your goals and values, your education, your activities and interests, the world around you and your personality and relationships with others. They are offered to help you with this process of self-evaluation.

USING THE OES COLLEGE COUNSELING HOME PAGE

There is an abundance of resources available on the OES College Counseling homepage. All students and parents should become familiar with it. (You will find it by going to the OES homepage, clicking on “Academics” on the top, then “College Counseling” on the left, and then “Useful Links” on the right. There are sections on College Searches, Pre-College Testing, Majors and Fields of Study, Athletics, On-Line Applications, Financial Aid and Scholarships, Taking a Year Off before College, and the Parents’ Corner. College searches can be particularly useful for purposes of establishing priorities. Naviance, the school’s College Counseling website, also includes a search option.

CHOOSING A MAJOR

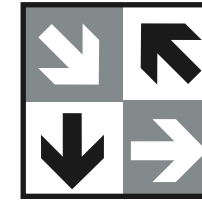
Although the pressure and temptations are great at age 17 to commit yourself to a major and a career, you should not feel rushed into making such a decision. “Undecided” is an acceptable major. Only technical courses such as engineering or architecture begin at the freshman level. College students change their majors an average of three times.

DEFERRING AND/OR ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGE

Moving right on to college is not necessarily the best option for every high school graduate, even at a college preparatory school like OES. You might doubt the efficacy of higher education for yourself altogether, or perhaps you just want to take “a breather” for a while. A job might provide the change of pace you are looking for and also produce some funds for traveling before you enroll in college at a later date.

If you want to defer attending college for only a year, you should still go through the college application process as a senior. After you receive your acceptances and have decided which college you want to attend, write and ask for a deferral. Colleges will want to know how you intend to spend the year. Most colleges are very receptive to such proposals.

If you are looking for a structured way to spend an alternative year, several options are available to you. Organizations such as The Experiment in International Living have programs that take you abroad. The Grassroots Project in Vermont emphasizes a “back to basics” approach (some of which is transferable as college credit). And Dynamy is a year-long values clarification and internship program. Your options are limited only by your imagination (and your pocketbook). Check out the “Taking a Year Off before College” section on the OES College Counseling homepage.



chapter two

Testing

Testing is certainly not the most important component in college admissions, but because it involves a specific date early in the sophomore year, it may well be the first of many activities that make up the college admissions process. (On pages 22-23, you will find a calendar for college planning, i.e. what you should be doing when.)

PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC ASSESSMENT TEST (PSAT)

The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) is given the third Saturday in October at OES. As the name suggests, it is a modified, shortened version of the SAT Reasoning Test and will give you some sense of your test score range on that test. Scores range from 20 (low) to 80 (high), which is comparable to the SAT 200 to 800 range. (The average scores are typically 50.) The PSAT writing section differs from the SAT is that it contains only multiple-choice questions designed to test your knowledge of good written English. It does not include an essay. Your junior year PSAT scores are used as the qualifier for the National Merit Scholarship competition. The Selection Index for the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST) is the sum of your critical reading, math and writing scores. All juniors and sophomores are expected to take the PSAT.

TEST PREPARATION PROGRAMS

An after-school test preparation course is generally offered at OES for a nominal fee. Community colleges, Saturday Academy and commercial businesses also offer courses. The courses offered by for profit businesses generally provide a ten-week course and cost several hundred dollars. The test-taking skills they emphasize are ones that students can develop on their own if they are sufficiently motivated. Students can also find all sorts of test-taking resources on the Internet. Those who require an imposed regimen may wish to consider a structured test prep course. Check “testing” on the homepage for some options.

REGISTRATION

All pre-college tests, with the exception of the PSAT, are registered for on an individual basis. SAT Registration Booklets, which include the necessary forms, are available on the shelves outside the OES College Counseling Office, but online registration is definitely recommended (www.collegeboard.com). You can also register by phone. It is your responsibility to get yourself registered. (The SAT is not administered at OES.) Use your full legal name and Social Security number when you register, and be consistent every time you register for the tests. For online registration, you will also need a credit card. The OES Code number that should be used is 380915. Application deadlines are approximately one month before the tests. Be organized and avoid late fees and disappointment!

THE SAT REASONING TEST

The SAT Reasoning Test is the most common college admissions test. It is intended to measure in high school students some of the skills and thinking processes habitually used by those who have been successful in college. The test emphasizes reading, writing and math. For the writing section, students will be asked to write an essay and answer multiple-choice questions. Probably 90 percent of the colleges in the country require the SAT for admission (if one excludes community colleges). The College Board distributes a free explanatory booklet called *SAT Preparation Booklet*; it includes a sample test for practice purposes. It is also available on-line.

OES juniors should plan to take the SAT Reasoning Test in the spring. This will provide you with scores early on for planning purposes and allow you to apply for Early Decision (explained on page 14). You will also avoid the problem of having too much at stake during senior year tests.

THE SAT SUBJECT TESTS

Another set of tests that juniors often wish to include in their schedules is the SAT Subject Tests. Unlike the SAT Reasoning Test which is designed to test your learning skills and reasoning abilities, the SAT Subject Tests measure the level of achievement you have attained in certain subject areas. Two or three tests, all of which can be taken in one sitting, are generally required or recommended by the highly selective colleges (the Ivy League, Stanford, etc.), so if they are an option you are considering, you should plan to take Subject Tests. You should note any stipulations that particular colleges give you with regard to which tests they require. Tests offered include:

- Literature
- Mathematics Level 1, Mathematics Level 2
- United States History, World History
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics
- French, German, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Spanish

Another option is the SAT Foreign Language Tests with Listening (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean and Spanish). These are offered once a year on the November test date. This is your only opportunity to take the forms of these tests that have a 20-minute listening component.

Copies of the *SAT Subject Tests Preparation Booklet* are available in the OES College Counseling Office or online. This booklet includes sample questions from all tests and will offer you a basis for deciding which of the tests you should take. (The actual choice does not have to be made when you register.) If you are trying to decide among several tests, choose the subject in which you think you will score the highest. OES teachers are always willing to provide advice about where your testing strengths lie.

TESTS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students whose native language is not English should also plan to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). This is a computerized or internet test that is offered throughout the week, i.e., there are no specific test dates. You can choose your own test day (if you schedule well in advance), and you must register individually. To ease this process, OES will determine one test date in the spring and one in the fall when international students will be registered and bused to the test center as a group. The TOEFL is an expensive test, and if you change your test date, an extra fee applies. So register carefully! Please list the OES code number, 9615, when you take the test so we will get an official copy of your score.

GENERAL SCHEDULE

Although specific test dates vary from year to year, the general pattern of the testing schedule is as follows:

Sophomore Year

- Third Saturday in October
PSAT
All OES sophomores take this test at OES. The scores are generally available by the end of December.
- First Saturday in June
SAT Subject Test
Honors Chemistry students sometimes take this test on this date.

Junior Year

- Third Saturday in October
PSAT
All OES juniors take this test at OES. The scores are generally available by Christmas.
- Last Saturday in January
SAT Reasoning Test
Take advantage of this date if you have conflicts that complicate later dates.
- Late March/Early April
SAT Reasoning Test
Sometimes conflicts with OES spring vacation.
- First Saturday in May
SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests
Most OES juniors take this Reasoning Test
- First Saturday in June
SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests
Good Subject Test date for courses just completed.

Senior Year

- Second Saturday in October
SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests
First test date of the year. Could still work for Early Decision (see page 14).
- First Saturday in November
SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests
Last acceptable date for University of California system. The Foreign Language Tests with Listening are offered only on this date.
- First Saturday in December
SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests
Last chance for colleges with January 1 deadlines.
- Last Saturday in January
SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests
Last chance for seniors to complete testing (too late for some colleges).

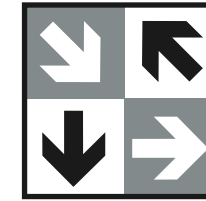
When you take the SAT, part of what you pay for is having your scores sent to four colleges. Score Choice, which is being introduced in March of 2009, will allow you to eliminate some of your sittings (i.e. test dates) for the Reasoning Test, or individual Subject Tests from the reports that are sent to colleges. There is certainly no harm, however, in sending all of your scores to colleges. Many colleges will want to see all of them, and most will automatically consider your best scores. (As a junior, you might take advantage of having the College Board send your scores for free to up to four colleges. Then, if you are satisfied and decide there is no necessity to retake tests as a senior, you will not have to pay for ordering them.)



ACRONYMS

The acronyms or abbreviations that have grown out of college admissions testing can be confusing to professionals, let alone students. The following list offers a handy reference:

- **COLLEGE BOARD** – A non-profit organization governed by college and secondary school members that is the overseeing agency for many tests and services connected with the college admissions process.
- **ETS** – Educational Testing Service: A non-profit agency employed by the College Board to produce its tests.
- **PSAT/NMSQT** – Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test and the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.
- **SAT Reasoning Test** – formerly called SAT I
- **SAT Subject Tests** – used by highly selective colleges (formerly called SAT II).
- **ACT** – The American College Testing Program.
- **AP** – Advanced Placement Tests.
- **TOEFL** – Test of English as a Foreign Language



THE AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST (ACT)

Although the College Board (with the SAT) is the most familiar testing agency in the West, the American College Testing (ACT) Program also offers a college admissions test battery. The ACT has four parts: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science Reasoning. There is also an optional essay section. Most colleges will accept either the SAT or the ACT. Some OES students have found the ACT more “user-friendly” and prefer it to the SAT. Over the past few years, students who have taken both tests (only a couple of dozen) are evenly divided; some do better on the SAT, some do better on the ACT. Some colleges will accept the ACT in place of the SAT Reasoning Test and Subject Tests. Always check the requirements of individual colleges.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

A word should be included here about the Advanced Placement (AP) exams—tests through which college credits can be earned. These are generally taken upon completion of an AP course in the junior or senior year. AP tests are given at school during the first weeks in May. In recent years, OES students have taken AP tests in English Literature and Composition, English Language and Composition, United States History, French Language, French Literature, Spanish Language, Spanish Literature, Computer Science, Statistics, Calculus AB and BC, Biology, Physics and Chemistry. In May 2007, a Japanese test will be offered for the first time. Scores range from a low of 1 to a high of 5. Most colleges give credit for grades of 3 and above, although some highly competitive colleges require 4s. All colleges appreciate students who take AP classes and tests.

DON'T FORGET THE OES CODE NUMBER:

→ 380915 ←

chapter three

Gathering Information About Colleges

Once you have begun to have some sense of your priorities for college, you can begin to collect information about colleges that might interest you. The first step doesn't have to be completed before the second begins, since in comparing and contrasting colleges, you often get a better sense of exactly what you are looking for. An early and easy source of information about colleges is the Student Search, an automatic mailing program that you can sign up for when you take the PSAT or SAT. If you like getting mail or e-mail, this is a simple way to have lots of brochures to read.

HANDBOOKS

Handbooks are a convenient source of information about almost all of the colleges in the country. Currently as many as a couple of dozen are available. They tend to fall into two categories: 1) objective, factual handbooks such as *The College Handbook* and *Peterson's 4 Year Colleges*, and 2) more subjective accounts such as the *Fiske Guide to Colleges* and *The Insider's Guide to Colleges*. A word of caution: Although the latter give you a good sense of the ambiance of campuses, some of their methodologies have been criticized. They should never be used as the sole source of information about a college. A resource guide to books available in the OES College Counseling Office is included in the Appendix.

COLLEGE HOMEPAGES

All colleges have homepages. You can use these to do any number of tasks from accessing the catalogue to checking out campus security.

CORRESPONDING WITH COLLEGES

At some point, you will want to write to or e-mail colleges for specific information or applications. If you choose to be part of Student Search, the leaflets mailed to you will probably include a postcard that you can return. You may use these if you want. If you'd like to write a letter or send an e-mail, tell the colleges something about yourself. Although they probably won't file your letter, they can serve you more effectively if they know of your high school and priorities.

If your interest in a college continues, do not hesitate to write again. Questions can be as specific as you want them to be. Students often ask colleges to send them lists of local alumni and currently enrolled students. The latter are a particularly good source of information. Nowadays, many colleges even have toll-free numbers to encourage this flow of information.

COLLEGE FAIRS

Various college fairs routinely come to the Portland metropolitan area. The largest and most popular is the one sponsored by the National Association for College Admission Counseling. It is usually held sometime in October. A list of the colleges that will attend can always be found on the NACAC website. The fair is a good opportunity, particularly for those just beginning the process, to talk with several admissions officers. More than 200 colleges

usually attend. The Appendix includes a list of questions that you might want to ask college representatives, either at the fair or when you meet them at school. The Pacific Northwest Association for College Admission Counseling also traditionally sponsors a fair in the spring.

COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES ON CAMPUS

In spite of the relatively small size of OES, in any given year more than 80 colleges send representatives to our campus. Their visits provide an excellent opportunity for juniors and seniors to learn more about particular colleges. Seniors have also been known to make personal impressions during these sessions, which have had an impact on the admissions decision.

Most representatives travel in the autumn, but depending upon when they meet you, their expectations will differ. Representatives expect seniors who are serious applicants to know much about their colleges. Your questions should show a familiarity with their printed materials. If, on the other hand, you are a junior, they will appreciate the fact that you are still in the “shopping around” stage and will not expect you to be familiar with their colleges.

The schedule for college representatives’ visits is posted outside the College Counseling Office and is available through Naviance. Meetings are routinely announced in Gathering. Seniors whose priorities match the college will be encouraged to attend, but everyone is welcome. If you are interested in or curious about a college, take advantage of the opportunity. You must check with your teacher in advance about being absent from class and arrange to make up the material missed. Sign up through Naviance, and you will receive an email reminder.

EVENING MEETINGS

Evening college meetings are scheduled for many reasons. When college representatives cannot visit high schools in the Portland area, evening meetings are sometimes arranged. Local alumni want to share their enthusiasm for their alma mater with prospective applicants. A professor from the college is in town to talk to alumni, and applicants are invited as well.

Although such meetings are less personal than the school visits, these occasions offer you the opportunity to meet alumni and your contemporaries from other Oregon high schools who might be considering the same college. (They could well become your classmates!) Such meetings also often include slides or lectures that can give you an additional sense of the college as a place.

THE COLLEGE VISIT

A visit is the best way to assure yourself that a college is what you think it is. Such trips can be time-consuming and expensive, but considering the cost of higher education today, you should make the trip if at all possible. Colleges in other sections of the country are as varied as those in the West, so a visit will help you appreciate their distinctive qualities.

The best time to visit a college is when it is in session. Give the admissions offices plenty of notice (at least two weeks), so that college representatives can plan a good visit for you. If you have a friend you can spend the night with in the dormitory, you can certainly work that out for yourself. The admissions office, however, can arrange for a night in the dormitory, an interview, free meals, attending classes and whatever else you would like to include in your visit.

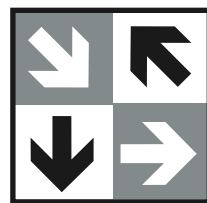
If visiting colleges necessitates your missing school, be sure to check with the Upper School Office and your teachers well in advance. You will need to make appropriate arrangements for making up the work you will miss. Keep in mind that it doesn’t make sense to visit colleges if your academic record will suffer and preclude the possibility of your being a competitive candidate for the colleges under consideration.

A visit even when school isn’t in session is still worthwhile. You can get a good sense of the setting and the facilities, and the tour guides are always currently enrolled students. Be sure to ask them plenty of questions! If you plan to visit colleges on the Eastern Seaboard during the summer and want to be interviewed, you should be aware that interview slots are often filled weeks in advance.

Currently two times seem to be the most popular for visiting college campuses. The first is when you are in the “shopping around” stage. This can be spring or summer of your junior year or early fall of your senior year. This time frame has the advantage of helping you decide which colleges truly interest you. A second popular time for visiting is in the spring of your senior year after you have received your acceptances. Limiting yourself to the two or three colleges that you are trying to choose among can be simpler than visiting a half dozen. You also avoid the experience of visiting a college, falling in love with it, and then not being accepted. Some colleges also plan special programs for accepted candidates in April.

ORGANIZING YOUR INFORMATION

You can use many different criteria to compare and select colleges. (See one list in the Appendix.) When you begin to collect and organize information about colleges, you will probably want to be able to make comparisons of the criteria that are important to you. Charts can be very helpful in this regard. Create a format that works for you or use the one in the Appendix. This will help keep you organized and help you appreciate differences between colleges (and your own priorities).



chapter four

Admission Requirements: Finding your Range

In selecting the colleges to which you will apply, one of the criteria you need to consider is the competitiveness of each institution. One of the hard, cold facts of college admissions is that some institutions are much more difficult to get into than others. Even if you are a top student, it is foolhardy to apply only to highly selective institutions. Come April, the month by which colleges will notify you, you could be left “high and dry.”

This is not to discourage anyone from applying to highly selective institutions. On the contrary, as an educational institution, OES encourages students to stretch themselves and opt for the most challenging academic environment. But while you try for Princeton, make sure you are also applying to other institutions where the competition for admission is not quite so keen.

Admission requirements vary from institution to institution. Public colleges (which have to deal quickly with large numbers of applicants) are much more arbitrary than private institutions. If you have fulfilled the OES graduation requirements and taken five solid subjects each year, you will have fulfilled the course requirements for almost any college in the country. Colleges will, of course, have test and cumulative grade point average requirements as well.

Students and their parents often ask how many college applications should be submitted. The answer to that question depends on which institutions interest you. If your first choice is the University of Oregon, and you have the GPA and test scores to assure your entrance, you need apply to only one school. A more common pattern would be to apply to five or six colleges: one or two “long shots” (where your chances of admission are one or two out of 10), two schools where acceptance is a distinct possibility (your chances are three or four out of 10), one or two where acceptance is likely (about seven in 10 odds), and one where entrance seems assured. Make sure that schools in the latter two categories are ones that you would be truly satisfied to attend. Check the scattergrams on the Naviance program to help you assess your chances for admission.

The following information may help you develop some range in your choices.

PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Although competition for entrance to many private colleges can be keen, even highly selective institutions pride themselves on not being arbitrary about entrance requirements. They have the staff to consider each applicant individually, and only occasionally talk in terms of a minimum grade point average (GPA) or required courses. The stronger your high school program is the better you will fare among the more than 20,000 applicants who are competing for 1,700 spaces at Stanford. This is when it becomes particularly important to have taken the most challenging curriculum (including at least five solid academic subjects each year), and to be working on interesting projects independently. Test scores can also take on an exaggerated importance in this context. Although highly selective colleges are reluctant to say so, if you have SAT scores in the 400s, you have little or no chance of being accepted. For them, scores in the 700-800 range are the norm. However, scores in the 400s are the average at many private colleges.

IN-STATE PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The University of Oregon and Oregon State University

The two oldest institutions in the state system have traditionally looked for a 3.25 (U of O) or 3.0 (OSU) GPA for automatic admission but recently have moved toward a more “holistic” approach. Essays, strength of program, SAT scores and teacher recommendations are also part of the process. Students with lower GPAs should not assume that they will be denied. See the OES college counselors for advice and recommendations. The application deadline is January 15.

Because of enrollment pressure, the Architecture and Interior Architecture departments at the University of Oregon have December 15 deadlines. Students applying for admission to these programs will receive specific instructions from the department concerned when their official application form is received by the admissions office.

Other Oregon State System Universities and Colleges

Southern Oregon University and Western Oregon University require a 2.75 GPA for admission; Portland State University, Eastern Oregon, and the Oregon Institute of Technology require a 3.00 GPA. Some of these institutions also have alternate plans of admissions, about which OES college counselors have more information.

Community Colleges

With a high school diploma, you are generally eligible for admission at any of the state’s community colleges. These institutions offer two-year terminal degrees or transfer programs. Some programs have enrollment limitations, so check carefully for these.

OUT-OF-STATE PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Requirements for out-of-state public universities vary widely, and the receptivity to applicants who are not state citizens fluctuates from year to year. The following are some trends and general requirements of neighboring states:

Washington

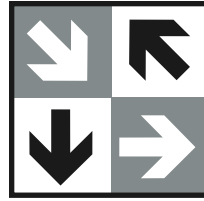
- University of Washington: This institution has moved from an admissions index based on GPA and SAT scores to a more holistic approach. Preference is definitely given to Washington state residents. UW is a selective institution; only a select group of OES students who were not Washington residents have secured admission.
- Washington State University: This institution has traditionally been less selective than UW.

California

- The University of California: Requirements for admission to the University of California campuses are rigorous for non-resident students and generally include a 3.4 GPA or better, strong SAT Reasoning Test scores and two Subject Tests (Math Level 2, and one other). Of the eight undergraduate campuses (Davis, Irvine, Santa Barbara, Riverside, Santa Cruz, San Diego, Los Angeles and Berkeley) UCLA and Berkeley are the most competitive. Applications must be submitted by November 30.
- California State Colleges and Universities: Although not nearly as competitive as UC, the state system still has higher entrance requirements for non-residents than for California residents.

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

If you’re interested in enrolling in a foreign university as a freshman, you will be expected to follow the application procedures, testing and course work, prescribed by a particular country. These procedures are always evolving (guidebooks quickly become obsolete) and can vary considerably from country to country. (They are often remarkably different from American standards.) You will need to work closely with your college counselor and spend lots of time on the Internet.



chapter five

Preparing Applications

Once you have decided which colleges seriously interest you, begin preparing your applications; like most writing, your work will be better if it is done in an unhurried fashion. (You will also not have to devote your winter vacation to completing application forms.) You have much to gain from being organized; keep track of the deadlines and the various parts of the application. Some students even keep an application flow chart or checklist. (See a sample in the Appendix.)

As a student applying to colleges, you have both rights and responsibilities. These have been set down in a statement adopted by the National Association for College Admission Counseling. It is wise to familiarize yourself with these rights and responsibilities. A copy of the official statement is included in the Appendix.

TIMING

Early Decision and Early Action: For a few, the college search yields a favored school that is without a doubt the student's first choice. If you find yourself in this position, you may want to consider an Early Decision application. Most private colleges have some sort of a plan whereby you can apply in the fall of your senior year and be notified early of your acceptance.

Generally, the application deadline for Early Decision falls on November 1, although it can vary. Check the specific date for your college. All admissions testing must be completed by that date, which usually means you submit your junior SAT scores.

A word of caution: Do not apply for Early Decision unless you are sure of your first-choice college. Generally, you have to commit yourself to attending the college if it accepts you. Students are often tempted by Early Decision because they hope to avoid an agonizing spring of waiting to hear from several colleges. However, it is important to remember that for some, that agony, and the sorting out of priorities that goes along with it, can be an important part of the college decision process. Another aspect of Early Decision to consider is how you would weather being rejected in December when you might be comparatively alone, while in April, you will generally have some company.

A few colleges offer an Early Action option. Yale and Stanford employ Early Action/ Single Application, a system wherein you pledge that you are filing only one application. Other colleges using Early Action allow you to apply to other colleges. In both cases you find out in December if you are admitted, but need neither commit nor reply to the college until May 1.

Deadlines: The first regular application deadline is November 30 for the University of California. Although only a few OES students typically apply to UC, this is a good date to finalize college choices. If you procrastinate and then decide in mid-January to apply to UC, it is really too late.

By mid-November, OES college counselors will expect you to supply them with a list of the colleges to which you intend to apply.

Stanford's deadline is December 16, and January 1 deadlines are used by the Ivy League (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, MIT, Penn., Princeton and Yale). Other Eastern colleges tend to use January 15. Deadlines for many Western colleges fall around February 1.

Applying On-Line: Most seniors apply on-line rather than completing hard copy applications. Colleges will accept either; however, they prefer electronic applications. Some will waive the application fee if you apply on-line.

The Common Application: The Common Application can be a big time-saver in applying to colleges. More than 200 colleges have agreed that they will accept one uniform application. If you are applying to five colleges, all of which accept the Common Application, you can simply complete one form, and transmit copies to all five colleges. (Please note: Most colleges will also require supplements specific to them. Your application will not be considered complete until that supplement is received.) Although some of these colleges have retained their own application form, they have signed a pledge indicating that they will not give preference to candidates who use it rather than the Common Application. (The experience of OES candidates corroborates this.) OES college counselors always have hard copies of the Common Application, if you prefer that to doing it online.

YOUR PART OF THE APPLICATION

The central part of any application is the portion you complete. Read the directions carefully and follow them exactly. Legibility is very important. Although the candidate's portion of the application varies in form, it usually has three parts:

- **Biographical Data:** This consists of fill-in-the-blanks questions, which are easy to answer but can sometimes seem like an invasion of privacy (i.e., race, religious affiliation, etc.). All colleges are interested in assembling a varied class, so generally the point of these questions is to give the admissions officers a sense of your uniqueness.
- **Brief Lists or Essays:** Often, applications include a section where you list your extracurricular activities or how you spend your time in a typical week. If colleges ask you to write a short essay on these topics, make it brief but worthwhile. Don't worry if you can't list several extracurricular activities. (OES, after all, does not have all of the clubs of a large high school.) Colleges are really more interested in quality than quantity. What few activities have you found to be really worthwhile? (Keep in mind that extracurricular activities are never as important for college entrance as your academic performance in high school.)
- **Major Essay: *It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this portion of the application.*** Here, allowing yourself plenty of time to write and rewrite can really make a difference. And do not make the mistake of trying to write the essay you think the admissions officers want to read. For this to be an effective essay, you have to be yourself. English teachers, the college counselors and probably your parents are more than willing to give you suggestions, but the writing has to be yours. (Admissions officers are expert at spotting parent essays.) Triple check for grammar or spelling errors.

For practice, here are some sample essay assignments:

- Evaluate a significant experience, achievement or risk that you have taken and its impact on you. (Common Application)
- If you were to write a book this year, what would its title be? Describe its contents.
- You are shipwrecked and alone on a desert island. Serendipity allows you to select the companionship of a work of art or intellect (a book, painting, piece of music, film, etc.). What do you choose and why?

TEST SCORES

It is your responsibility to have your scores reported to the colleges to which you apply. (They are no longer sent by OES.) Starting in March of 2009, you will be able to select which scores you send to colleges by sitting (test date) for the SAT and by individual test for the SAT Subject Tests. This optional feature, Score Choice, will be available on the SAT Website. Scores from an entire SAT test (critical reading, writing and mathematics sections) will be sent—scores of individual sections from different sittings cannot be selected independently for sending. Please note that many colleges will still want to see all of your scores, and you shouldn't be reluctant to send them all, since most colleges consider a student's best scores. The College Board will have available on their SAT Website the different score-reporting requirements of each college. Remember that when you indicate which colleges you want your scores sent to when registering (and up to nine days after the test), the first four reports are free. If you order them after that time, there is an additional charge.

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT AND YOUR TRANSCRIPT

Beginning in the fall of 2006, the College Counseling Office will use the Naviance system to track the application materials that we send to colleges. Seniors should log onto Naviance and note their intentions of applying to particular colleges. "Request transcript" will direct us to send your school material to particular schools. Please note that for January 1 deadlines, you will need to log onto Naviance by December 1.

The Secondary School Report Form

Over the last several years, OES has developed its own School Report form. It is this form, rather than forms from particular colleges, that is used when we send off information about you to the colleges to which you have applied. (It is not necessary to hand in specific School Report forms; we always use OES forms.) On the OES form, you will be asked if you wish to have access to the form if you enroll at that institution (a right commonly referred to as the "Buckley Amendment"). The experience of OES students suggests that how you respond to this question will not have a bearing on how your application is received.

OES college counselors routinely participate in junior and/or senior year teacher-parent conferences. On the basis of notes taken at these sessions, a thorough reading of your records folder (including all of your teachers' comments), and information secured from you, the counselors write your School Report. This Report is read and edited by the college counselors, the Head of Upper School and your advisor. It attempts to give an overall view of your years at OES and includes material on academics, extracurricular activities, service learning, residence life (where applicable) and special events such as the junior and senior trips. The profile is not called a recommendation because it attempts to give a comprehensive picture of your years at OES. It speaks to your weaknesses as well as your strengths, although more space is obviously devoted to the latter. Colleges generally tell us that they find the OES School Reports extremely helpful. Completed Reports are kept on file in the College Counseling Office and students and parents may read them there.

Please be advised that it is an OES policy to notify colleges of serious disciplinary infractions. The colleges will be informed of the student's disciplinary record, if any, in the counselor's letter of recommendation. If you have been subject to serious disciplinary action while a student at OES, you should speak with the college counselors to discuss how best to address this in your college applications.

In the event that a serious disciplinary matter arises after the college application has been sent, the OES college counselors will notify the colleges to which a student has applied, informing the admissions office that the infraction has occurred. It is then the student's responsibility to write to the colleges and provide further information. The Counseling Office recommends that you take this opportunity to explain the underlying infraction, as well as what lessons you have learned.

Transcripts

A copy of your transcript is routinely sent to the colleges to which you apply along with a copy of the school profile (a sheet giving brief information and statistics about OES). If an application requires a GPA, final grades are used according to the following scale:

A = 4.0	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D+ = 1.33
A- = 3.67	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	D = 1.00
	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	D- = 0.67

Although OES does not rank its classes, a sheet showing the distribution of grades earned by a class during its junior year is sent to colleges.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Another standard part of the college application is a letter of recommendation, usually from a teacher. Requirements for such letters vary, so note each college's instructions carefully. Often, public institutions require no letters because their system of admission is based solely on GPA and test scores.

Generally the best policy is to ask one teacher (or two if necessary) to write a recommendation that can then be used for all colleges to which you apply. Don't make the mistake of thinking that because you are applying to five colleges, you need to ask five teachers to write recommendations for you. This is not a good use of their time and it would not be to your advantage. Even if you have five different forms, give all of them to the same teacher(s) along with the OES Teacher Recommendation form. He or she will peruse the questions on the forms and write a formal letter that responds to them. This letter can then be sent to all of the colleges to which you apply. It is not essential that the short answer forms be completed, although teachers will usually staple them to their letters. College admissions officers say that the short answer questions on the form are designed for teachers who do not take the time to write such letters.

You will have to decide which teacher or teachers at OES can write the best letter(s) of recommendation for you. This varies from student to student. Consider the teachers who know you well, the teachers for whom you have done significant work, and the teachers who will be able to write well about you. If you find it difficult to judge the writing ability of your teachers, think about the suggestions and comments they have made on your papers and the comments they have written at grading periods. These are always clues to their recommendation-writing ability.

Teachers at OES will not agree to write a recommendation for you unless they believe it will enhance your candidacy. This can mean that occasionally you will be turned down by a teacher. If being the subject of a letter makes you uneasy, you may want to ask the teacher if you could see your recommendation (since you will eventually probably have access to your admissions file). Some teachers even volunteer to share the letter with you. (You should not assume, however, that you can judge the worthiness of the letter, and then decide whether it should be sent. Any teacher who has taken the time to write a recommendation will naturally expect you to make use of it.) Other teachers may prefer to write a letter that they will not share with you. Admittedly, this will allow them to be more frank about you, but they will also feel more comfortable in comparing you favorably with your classmates. Give some thought as to whether it is important to you to see the recommendations that teachers write for you.

Be sure you supply the teachers with stamped, addressed envelopes, and inform them of the deadlines. Give them as much notice as possible. If you become concerned that a teacher has not met the deadline, speak to the college counselors. They can look into this for you. Remember to be appreciative of your teachers' efforts; they often spend several hours writing a single recommendation, and these letters can make a real impact on the admissions decision.

THE INTERVIEW

When you visit a college, the admissions office will probably encourage you to be interviewed. In spite of all the written materials that they assemble about you, a personal impression always adds something. Actually an “exchange of information” might be a better term to use here, since it more accurately describes the situation and makes you feel less “on the spot.”

Some colleges require an interview as part of the application process. If you can’t come to the college or meet with an admissions officer when he/she is visiting Portland, colleges have local alumni who will interview you. Do not think it is to your disadvantage to be interviewed by alumni. In many ways they can seem less formidable, and often they can become advocates on your behalf.

If you plan to interview during your visits to Eastern colleges, be warned that appointments fill up months in advance. Plan your trips early if this is important to you. Stanford does not interview (i.e., it is not part of their procedure).

Applicants often approach an interview feeling as if they will be measured against some standard. They assume that the college is looking for a certain type of person. Although it’s true that colleges want relatively intelligent individuals (after all, they are academic institutions), they are in fact looking for a mix of people. This is how their campuses have become interesting places. Remember then, in your interview, as in your essay, to be yourself. If you try to project some sort of false image, you are reducing your chances of being admitted.

Of course, a certain amount of nervousness always goes along with this type of situation. The interviewers realize this, too. Try to overcome those initial “butterflies,” feel comfortable talking about yourself and get on to learning what you want to know about the college. Admissions officers want some shy students in the class too, but you have to be able to look them in the eye and tell them something about yourself.

In preparing for the interview, give some thought to how you will answer some commonly asked questions. “What book have you enjoyed reading?” “How did you spend last summer?” Again, there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, but be able to speak about the book articulately. Summers can be used in all sorts of ways; be able to explain persuasively why it was important for you to do what you did.

Also come prepared to the interview with questions about the college. Admissions officers want this to be an occasion when you can obtain information, too. Representatives who come to OES often comment on how much they enjoy meeting and talking with the students here. This suggests that you handle yourselves well in interview situations. Good luck!

THE CONCLUSION OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Once colleges have your applications, your testing is completed and your first semester grades are submitted, what many consider one of the hardest parts of the college admissions process begins — the waiting. For those who have applied to colleges that use rolling admissions, this is not an extended period. Applications are acted on as they are completed, and generally you can hope to hear in about a month. For those who have applied to colleges that will not notify candidates until April, the wait is much longer.

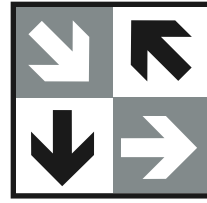
As suggested earlier, however, this can be an important time for continuing to gather information and deciding on a first-choice college. It is also a strategic time for warding off the “senioritis” epidemic that sweeps the country this time of the year. Continue to be the interesting, motivated student you are, and get the most out of your last few months of high school. And remember — all college acceptances are conditional upon your finishing your senior year in a manner consistent with the rest of your record. Directors of admissions have been known to withdraw offers of admission after final grades are submitted. Even OES students have received such letters.

In mid-April, when all the college acceptances (and, alas, rejections) are in hand, you need to decide which college you want to attend. You will have until May 1. For most, this decision is easily made; for others, it is one they agonize over. Certainly solicit advice, but, remember, ultimately the choice has to be yours. It is important that you attend a college because you want to be there, not because someone else thought it was a good idea.

Each year during this period, a few students find themselves in the especially difficult position of being on a college waiting list. Directors of admissions, of course, have no way of knowing how many of the applicants they accept will actually come, so the waitlist provides them with a group of qualified applicants who continue to be interested. If you are notified that you have been waitlisted, you should let the college and the OES college counselors know whether you want your name to remain on the waitlist. The problem is that by May 1, you will have to make a deposit at another college to hold your space there. If, however, you are willing to risk losing that money, there is always the chance that your preferred college will admit you at a later date. You may, however, decide that you would rather commit yourself to a college in May and not be in a state of limbo for several months.

When you have decided which college you will attend from those that have accepted you, be sure to let the others know that you plan to go elsewhere. This is particularly important because other candidates on the waitlist (perhaps even an OES classmate) would like that spot.

SENIORITIS *n.* A psychological disease easily caught by “burned out” seniors who have exhausted themselves accumulating a record to present for college admissions. Those afflicted often lose sight of the principal goal of their schooling (i.e., acquiring an education) and are easily recognized by their lethargy and failure to hand in assignments.



chapter six

Financing a College Education

Higher education requires a significant family and personal financial commitment, and like any other investment, it requires considerable research and planning. In the Appendix you will find questions that families can ask colleges about financing your education. Again, a considerable amount of worthwhile information is available on the Internet.

FINANCIAL AID

Those who have used financial aid services during the time they have been at OES will already be familiar with them. But because higher education can be considerably more expensive than secondary, many more families must, at this point, investigate financial aid for college.

If you are unsure whether your family will qualify for financial aid based on need, you should check out the estimator on the College Counseling homepage. This can give you a sense of whether it will be worth your while to fill out the necessary forms. Although it can be a tedious job—a little like doing your income tax—completing the form is also a way to qualify for low-interest loans.

The FAFSA, or Free Application for Federal Student Aid, is the form that all families who want to be considered for financial aid and Stafford loans (low-interest and possibly “subsidized”) must complete. This form should be completed online, but to do so, you will need a personal identification number (PIN) number. PINs can be secured early, and it is a good idea to do this in November of the senior year. Then, in January, when your income tax information is available, you will be ready to complete the form. (Use an estimated tax if necessary.) Printed copies of the FAFSA are available in the OES College Counseling Office, but doing it this way is a much more cumbersome and inefficient.

The methodology involved in the FAFSA is as follows: Working with the information you submit—and taking into account such factors as family size, number of children in college, and parents’ ages—the central processing agency estimates the amount you and your parents should be able to contribute to the cost of your college education. You will be informed of this estimated contribution, as will the colleges to which you have the information released. The college financial aid offices, in their turn, if you do have financial need, will attempt to put together a financial aid package which will enable you to attend their institutions. Packages usually consist of three parts: outright grants, loans and work/study opportunities (jobs).

Because the FAFSA is a form created by the government, college financial aid offices sometimes need additional information. Colleges use a system called Profile to collect that information as efficiently as possible. The Profile questionnaire can also be completed online. Although a cost is involved, the Profile cuts down on the multiplicity of forms that you have to complete. You can initiate this process as early as October 15; this earlier time-line will be particularly useful for Early Decision candidates.

The point to emphasize in all of this is that financial aid can equalize the costs of attending different types of institutions. Complete the FAFSA and the Profile, and when your letters of acceptance and financial aid packages are in, you can estimate how much each institution will actually cost.

MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

Students who do not qualify for need-based financial aid often look for other ways to finance their collegiate experience.

Besides listening for scholarship announcements here at school, take advantage of internet scholarship search services. FastWeb (www.fastweb.com) not only allows you to do a search, but will e-mail you later if a scholarship that matches your qualifications comes up. Be aware, however, that FastWeb may sell your name to vendors.

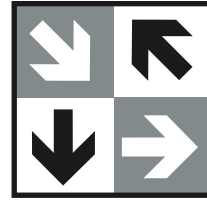
Most merit scholarships are awarded by colleges. A recent College Board survey estimated that 86 percent of colleges in the United States award some academic scholarships (in addition to aid based on financial need). Generally, however, highly selective colleges (e.g., the Ivy league, the little Ivies, Stanford) do not award merit scholarships.

OTHER OPTIONS

Besides government loans, metropolitan banks often have trust funds specifically earmarked for low interest college loans. Some colleges also have parental loan programs or installment payment plans.

Another option that has academic and financial benefits is Cooperative Work-Study programs. Under this system you combine employment and academic endeavors. You not only reduce costs, but also gain valuable on-the-job experience and a possible head start in local permanent employment.

You and your parents can probably measure your enthusiasm for a particular collegiate experience by assessing your willingness to contribute to it yourself. Summer earnings should be earmarked for college, and you should be willing to work 10–13 hours a week during the school year as well. Studies have shown that students who contribute toward the cost of their own education by working at a part-time job do better.



Calendar for College Planning

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Fall

- October.** Take the PSAT.
- Autumn.** Attend the College Fair.
- Autumn.** Attend college meetings at OES during free periods.

Winter

- December.** Review your PSAT scores with your parents.

Spring

- June.** Honors Chemistry students might consider the SAT Subject Test in Chemistry.

JUNIOR YEAR

Fall

- September.** Participate in the College Decisions Program.
- October.** Take the PSAT.
- Autumn.** Attend the College Fair again if you found it useful.
- Autumn.** Attend college meetings at OES.
- Autumn.** Begin to establish college priorities.

Winter

- December.** Review your PSAT scores with your parents.
- Winter.** Schedule the SAT Reasoning Test.
- Winter.** Consider taking the SAT Subject Tests.
- Winter.** Attend the annual College Admissions Panel.
- February/March.** Schedule a family conference with the college counselors.

Spring

- Spring break.** Consider taking a college tour.
- Spring.** Take the spring SAT tests.
- Spring/Summer.** Correspond with colleges. Visit colleges.
- Summer.** Get an early start on applications, essays, etc.

SENIOR YEAR

Fall

- September.** Register for the SAT tests.
- September.** Meet with the college counselors to indicate college choices.
- Autumn.** Visit colleges if possible.
- September.** Decide if you'll apply Early Decision/Action.
- Autumn.** Continue working on your college applications.
- Autumn.** Take the autumn SAT tests if necessary.
- Autumn.** Request School Reports be sent to colleges two weeks before due dates.
- Autumn.** Meet with college reps when they visit OES.
- Autumn.** Attend evening informational meetings for colleges.
- Autumn.** Ask teachers for recommendations at least two weeks before due dates.
- November.** Get your FAFSA PIN.
- November.** Finalize the list of colleges to which you will apply.
- November.** Initiate the financial aid Profile, especially if applying Early Decision.
- Autumn/Winter.** Check announcements of merit scholarships.

Winter

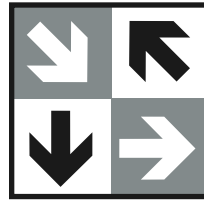
- December.** Complete your part of the college applications.
- December.** Complete the financial aid Profile.
- January.** Complete the FAFSA before the end of the month.
- Winter.** Apply for Merit Scholarships.

Spring

- March.** Register for Advanced Placement Tests.
- April.** Review your acceptance and financial aid offers.
- April.** Consider visiting colleges to assist you in making your decision.
- May.** By the first of this month, notify all colleges that accepted you of your plans.
- May.** Take Advanced Placement Tests.

Summer

- June.** Have your final transcript sent to the college of your choice.



APPENDIX

Self-Evaluation Questions

YOUR GOALS AND VALUES

1. What aspects of your high school/OES years have you enjoyed the most? Have you missed anything during this time? If you could live this period over again, would you do it differently?
2. What values are most important to you? What concerns occupy most of your energy, effort and thoughts?
3. How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
4. What kind of person would you like to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths, which would you most like to develop? What would you most like to change about yourself?
5. Is there anything you have ever secretly wanted to do or be? If you had a year to go anywhere and do whatever you wanted, how would you spend that year?
6. What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

YOUR EDUCATION

7. What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed the most? Which courses have been most difficult for you?
8. What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own? Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments: Topics chosen for research papers, lab reports, independent projects, independent reading, school activities, job or volunteer work. What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
9. How do you learn best? What methods of teaching and style of teaching engage your interest and effort the most?
10. Has OES encouraged you to develop your interests, talents and abilities? Have you felt limited by the school environment here in any way? What would you preserve or change about OES if you had the power and money to do so?
11. How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues and exchange ideas? What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?
12. How well has OES prepared you for college? In what areas of skill or knowledge do you feel confident? In what areas of skill or knowledge do you feel inadequately prepared for college study? Have you been challenged by your courses?
13. Have you worked up to your potential in high school? Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Are your PSAT/SAT scores an accurate measure of your ability and potential? What do you consider the best measures of your potential for college work?

14. Have any outside circumstances (in your recent experience or background) interfered with your academic performance? Consider such factors as: after-school job, home responsibilities or difficulties, excessive school activities, illness or emotional stress, parental pressure, English not spoken at home, problems of course scheduling or other factors that are unique to your recent experience or background.

YOUR ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

15. Which activities do you most enjoy outside the daily routine of school and other responsibilities? Which activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices?
16. Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence or contribution?
17. How would others describe your role in your school or home community? What do you consider your most significant contribution?
18. After a long, hard day, what do you most enjoy doing? What do you do for fun? What do you do for relaxation?

THE WORLD AROUND YOU

19. How would you describe your school, family and home town? How has your environment influenced your way of thinking? How have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by your school or home?
20. What do your parents and friends expect of you? How have their expectations influenced the goals and standards you set for yourself? What pressures have you felt to conform?
21. What has been the most controversial issue in your school or community? How does the issue concern you? What has been your reaction to the controversy? What is your opinion about the issue?
22. Have you ever encountered people who thought and acted differently than you did? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
23. What distresses you most about the world around you? Assuming the obligation and opportunity to change the world, where would you start?
24. Do you have any current or historical heroes or heroines?
25. Have you read any books that have changed your way of thinking?

YOUR PERSONALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

26. How would someone who knows you well describe you? Your finest qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings? Would you agree with his or her assessment? How have you grown or changed during your high school years?
27. Which relationships are most important to you and why? Describe the people whom you consider your best friends, your best critics and your best advocates. In what ways are they similar to or different from you?
28. What kind of people do you associate with and admire? Generally, how do you respond to people who think and act differently than you do?
29. How are you influenced by others who are important to you? What pressures have you felt to conform? How important to you are approval, rewards and recognition? How do you respond to pressure, competition or challenge? How do you react to failure, disappointment or criticism?
30. How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself? What are the best decisions you have made recently. How much do you rely on direction, advice or guidance from others? Have you ever chosen anything because it was new or interesting?

Resource Guide

Most of the following books are available in the OES College Counseling Office collection, or you may wish to purchase your own copy at a bookstore.

OBJECTIVE COLLEGE HANDBOOKS

Cass & Birnbaum's *Comparative Guide to American Colleges* (includes selectivity index)
College Entrance Examination Board, *The College Handbook*
College Entrance Examination Board, *The International Student Handbook of U.S. Colleges*
College Entrance Examination Board, *Index of Majors and Graduate Degrees*
Maclean's Guide to Canadian Universities
The Official Catholic College & University Guidebook
Orchard House, *College Admissions Data Handbook*
Peterson's 4 Year Colleges
The Princeton Review, *African American Student's Guide to College*
The Princeton Review, *The Complete Book of Colleges, Student Advantage Guide*

SUBJECTIVE COLLEGE HANDBOOKS

Trent Anderson and Seppy Basil, *The Unofficial Biased Guide to the 328 Most Interesting Colleges*
Steven Antonoff, *The College Finder*
Donald Asher, *Cool Colleges for the Hyper-Intelligent, Self-Directed, Late Blooming, and Just Plain Different*
Barron's Guide to the Most Competitive Colleges
The Fiske Guide to Colleges (by the former education columnist for *The New York Times*)
Howard Greene and Matthew Greene, *The Public Ivies*
Peterson's Competitive Colleges
The Princeton Review, *The Best 361 Colleges*
The Princeton Review, *America's Elite Colleges*
Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges
Jan-Mitchell Sherrill and Craig A. Hardesty, *The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students' Guide to Colleges, Universities, and Graduate Schools*
The Yale Daily News, *The Insider's Guide to College* (candid student assessments)

GUIDES TO COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Harry Bauld, *On Writing the College Application Essay*
Thomas C. Hayden, *Handbook for College Admission*
Michele A. Hernandez, *A is for Admission*
Marybeth Kravets and Imy F. Wax, *The K&W Guide to Colleges for the Learning Disabled*
Sandra F. MacGowan and Sarah M. McGinty, *50 College Admission Directors Speak to Parents*
Jay Matthews, *Harvard Schmarvard, Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College That Is Best for You*
Sarah M. McGinty, *Writing Your College Application Essay*
Bill Mayher, *The College Admissions Mystique*
Richard W. Moll, *Playing the Selective College Admission Game*

Richard Montauk and Krista Klein, *How to Get into the Top Colleges*
George Dennis O'Brien, *What to Expect from College*
Loren Pope, *Forty Colleges that Change Lives*
Loren Pope, *Looking Beyond the Ivy League*
The Princeton Review, *Cracking the System*
Zola Dincin Schneider, *Campus Visits and College Interviews*
Janet Spencer and Sandra Maleson, *Visiting College Campuses*
Jacques Steinberg, *The Gatekeepers*
Lloyd Thacker, ed., *College Unranked*

CAREERS

Joyce Slayton Mitchell, *College to Career, The Guide to Job Opportunities*
Occupational Outlook Handbook (U.S. Dept. of Labor)

FINANCIAL AID/MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

Robert Leider, *Don't Miss Out, The Ambitious Student's Guide to Financial Aid*
Robert Leider, *The A's and B's of Academic Scholarships*
The American Legion, *Need a Lift?*
The College Board, *The College Costs and Financial Aid Handbook*
The College Board Scholarship Handbook
The Princeton Review, *Scholarship Advisor*

THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

Mark W. Bernstein and Yadin Kaufman, ed., *How to Survive your Freshman Year*
Ernest Boyer, *Smart Parents Guide to College*
Karen Coburn and Madge Treeger, *Letting Go, A Parents' Guide to Today's College Experience*
Melenie and Joseph Sponholz, *College Companion*

Questions for Students to Ask College Representatives

TESTING

- What role do tests play in your decision making?
- Which tests do you value most?
- What is the range of SAT scores of your accepted students?
- How many times should I take the same test?

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- What are the most important classes to complete in high school?
- When would you encourage an applicant to apply Early Decision or Early Action?
- Will you look at late applicants?
- What kind of decision-making process do you use in determining your freshman class?
- Do you admit on a “need blind” basis?
- How do you use an interview in your decision-making process?
- What role do special interests play in the decision process?

STUDENT BODY

- Where do the majority of your students come from?
- Is diversity an important part of your campus?
- What kinds of activities are available to students?
- What are the various types of dormitory facilities? Are dormitories supervised?
- Rules? Security? How are roommates selected?
- Are you a commuter campus? Do students stay on campus during the weekends?
- What do students do during “break times”?
- Do undergraduates have opportunities to interact with administration?
- What impact do groups such as sororities/fraternities have on campus?
- Are athletics a major part of the social life on weekends?
- Are museums, concerts, theaters and lectures easily and cheaply available to all students either on campus or in the community?

ACADEMICS

- What is the average class size? The smallest class? The largest class? Who teaches freshmen?
- What percentage are full professors?
- How adequate is the library for the number of students using it?
- What percentage of students who begin at your college complete a degree at your college?
- What percentage of your students go on to graduate work?
- What do the majority of your students do after graduation?
- What are the most challenging courses at your institution?
- What is the registration process like?
- What are the most popular majors at your institution?
- What laboratory facilities are available for science majors or language majors?
- Can you transfer from one major to another with ease?
- Do you encourage study abroad?

Criteria for Comparing and Selecting Colleges

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Enrollment

- Total
- Percentage of Undergraduate students
- Freshman class size

Retention

- Percentage of freshmen who return as sophomores/who graduate

Background

- Male/female ratio
- Percentage of commuter/resident
- Geographic origin
- Percentage of Minority
- Percentage of students receiving aid

LOCATION & SURROUNDINGS

Location

- Geographic region
- Distance from home
- Travel costs and convenience

Setting

- Urban/rural
- Weather
- Nearest city or countryside
- Recreational opportunities

Facilities

- Library
- Laboratories
- Studies & practice room
- Sports
- Student center

COLLEGE TYPE & PHILOSOPHY

Type

- 2/4 year
- Church/state/private control
- College/university

Purpose

- Liberal arts
- Pre-professional for business, education, engineering, fine arts, etc.
- Technical or vocational institute

- Degrees offered

Philosophy

- Traditional/progressive
- Deeply scholarly/career-oriented
- Comprehensive

Calendar

- Semester/trimester/quarter
- Inter-term program
- Acceleration

CURRICULUM

Academic requirements

- Proportion of study in general education/concentration/student choice
- Required freshman courses or curriculum/distribution requirements in curricular area/elective curriculum

Academic offerings

- Majors offered in your areas of interest
- Breadth and depth of courses offered in your areas of interest
- Interdisciplinary courses and majors
- Strong departments
- Independent Study
- Individual tutorials
- Seminars
- Research opportunities
- Special Study Programs
- Field work
- Internships
- Exchange programs
- Foreign study
- Joint degree programs
- Cooperative work/study plan
- Pre-professional programs

Standards

- Accreditation
- Degree requirements
- Grading systems
- Grading/distribution
- Honor system

Course descriptions

- Sequential/open order
- Introductory/advanced/ specialized courses
- Courses for majors/non-majors
- Number of courses required for major

ADMISSIONS

Deadlines

- Application
- Notification of decision
- Reply to offer of admission

Application requirements

- Fee
- Information forms
- Specific H.S. courses
- Transcript
- Secondary School Report
- Recommendations
- Interview
- Other

Tests Required

- SAT, ACT or TOEFL
- Which SAT Subject Test examinations?

Admissions Selectivity

- Percentage of applicants offered admission
- SAT/ACT range of scores for freshmen
- Percentage of freshmen ranked in top 10 percent of H.S. class
- Freshman class profile

ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Faculty

- Percentage with Ph. D.'s
- Origin of degrees earned
- Original faculty research/scholarship
- Teaching course load
- Expectations for teaching/scholarship/advising and other college service
- Emphasis on undergraduate teaching and learning

Faculty-Student Relationships

- Faculty-student ratio
- Advising
- Accessibility for conferences, assistance
- Departmental clubs, colloquia, committees with student representatives
- Average class size
- Classes under 20 students/over 50 students
- Opportunities for discussion/ student presentation/exchange of ideas

Academic Demands

- Workload
- Course expectations
- Type of assignments
- Academic pressure/ competition
- Intellectual Vitality
- Student attitude toward learning
- Flexibility/structure for study
- Exchange of ideas
- Interest in political, social or world issues

Career Preparation

- Pre-professional programs
- Career advising and information programs
- Percentage number who go to graduate school
- Graduate school and job placement

CAMPUS & STUDENT LIFE

Types of students

- Diversity and tolerance of differences
- Typical/off-beat
- Importance of money/material possessions/ social appearances

Community Type

- Homogeneous/Pluralistic/Cohesive/ Fragmented
- Liberal/directive/restrictive social regulations
- School spirit
- Controversial campus issues

Living arrangements

- Predominantly large dorms/housing clusters/ small houses
- Availability of single rooms/doubles/ suites/ multiple rooms

- System of housing allocation/roommate selection
- Single sex/coed dorms
- Coed by floor/coed by room
- Centralized/decentralized dining
- Alternative dining programs

Campus activities

- Activities related to your interests
- Emphasis on social life, fraternities, sports or other dominant interests
- Clubs and organizations, traditional/creative/ competitive/issue-oriented
- Presence of religious, ethnic or cultural groups
- Cultural opportunities on campus or in community
- Focus of social life on campus/fraternities/ community/other college campus/home

COSTS & FINANCIAL AID

Costs

- Minimum-maximum total costs per year
- Student budget for tuition and fees/room and board/books and personal expenses/travel costs
- Admission and enrollment fees

Family Resources

- Family contribution
- Your earnings and savings

Awards

- Range of awards
- Average award

Financial Aid

- Based on need, merit or funds available
- Loan and job expectations

Application

- FAFSA/Profile forms required
- Deadlines

College Comparison Worksheet

COMPARATIVE CRITERIA	COLLEGE A	COLLEGE B	COLLEGE C
BASIC FACTS			
1. Enrollment			
2. Location			
3. Cost			
4. Admissions Selectivity			
5. Deadline			

YOUR COLLEGE CRITERIA

1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

YOUR EVALUATION OF COLLEGE

1. Positive Impressions			
2. Negative Impressions			
3. Parent/Counselor Opinion			
4. Your Order of Preference			
5. Your Chances of Admission			

Checklist for Application Preparation

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES	COLLEGE A	COLLEGE B	COLLEGE C
COLLEGE INFORMATION			
Telephone Number:			
Representative's Name:			
Email Address:			
Information Requested on:			
Campus Visit Planned on:			
Info. Session Scheduled:			
DEADLINES			
Application:			
Transcript & School Report:			
Financial Aid:			
Last Test Dates Accepted:			
Early Decision/Early Action:			
TESTING			
SAT or ACT Required?			
SAT Subject Tests Required?			
Writing?			
Test Scores Sent to Colleges?			
INTERVIEW			
Required?			
Campus Appointment on:			
at:			
Alumni Interview on:			
at:			
APPLICATION FORMS			
Application Sent:			
School Report Requested:			
Mailed on:			
1st Recommendation given on:			
To:			
Mailed on:			
2nd Recommendation given on:			
To:			
Mailed on:			
FAFSA Completed:			
Profile Initiated on:			
Completed:			
CONCLUSION			
Letters of Accept./Denial on:			
Letters Notifying of Your Plans:			

Financing College: Questions for Families to Ask Colleges

1. What are the average costs for tuition/fees, books/supplies, room/board, transportation, and personal expenses?
2. How does financial need affect admissions decisions at a particular institution?
3. What types of financial aid programs does the institution offer?
4. Does the institution offer merit scholarships that do not include consideration of financial need?
5. How and when should students apply for need-based and merit aid?
6. What forms are required to complete the financial aid process, and what is the priority deadline for applying for aid?
7. Does the institution use preferential packaging or gapping?
8. When will families be notified about the financial aid decisions?
9. Are there any other costs that the student should plan for that are not accounted for in the aid offer, e.g. books, transportation and personal needs?
10. If parents cannot meet the financial responsibilities from current income or assets, what financing options are available to help pay their share?
11. Will the aid office provide each family with an explanation of the award package and how the expected family contribution is determined?
12. If financial aid is insufficient to make it possible for our child to attend this institution, under what condition, if any, will the aid office reconsider its offer?
13. What terms and conditions of the financial aid program is included in our child's aid package (e.g., treatment of outside scholarships, renewal criteria, etc.)?
14. When can we expect to receive bills from the institution?
15. How many times a year will we be billed?
16. Are penalties assessed if the bill is not paid by the deadline?
16. Does the institution accept payment via credit card?
18. Is there an option to pay monthly?
19. Is all financial aid credited to our child's account, or will our child receive checks for some of the financial aid awarded?
20. Can financial aid be used to pay for books and supplies?
21. How much money will our child need during the first week of school for such things as books, parking permit, etc?
22. Can books and supplies be charged to our child's account?
23. What are the typical out-of-pocket incidental expenses incurred during the year by most students?
24. Are banking services available on or near campus with fee-free ATM and/or check cashing?
25. Does your institution provide information to students regarding budgeting resources, money management and establishment of good credit?

26. What will happen to the financial aid award in the event of a significant change in family financial circumstances or in our child or sibling's enrollment status?
27. How are jobs assigned in student employment including federal work-study?
28. How many hours per week will our child be expected/allowed to work?
29. What are the academic requirements for the renewal of financial aid, including scholarships?
30. How often and in what manner will earnings be paid?
31. How will our child's aid package change from year to year?
32. How will cost increases impact the aid package?
33. What amount of student loan indebtedness from student loan programs does the typical student borrower have upon graduation?

Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities

IN THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

(Adapted from a revision by the National Association for College Admission Counseling in September, 2002)

WHEN YOU APPLY TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, YOU HAVE RIGHTS

Before You Apply:

- You have the right to receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices and packaging policies, and housing policies.

When You Are Offered Admission:

- You have the right to wait to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until May 1.
- Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1 must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. They must grant you this extension, and your request may not jeopardize your status for admission and/or financial aid.
- Candidates admitted under Early Decision programs are a recognized exception to the May 1 deadline.

If You Are Placed on A Wait List or Alternate List:

- The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on the wait list, the number offered admission and the availability of financial aid and housing.
- Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a wait list.
- Colleges are expected to notify you of the resolution of your wait list status by August 1 at the latest.

WHEN YOU APPLY TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Before You Apply:

- You have a responsibility to research and understand the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships and housing. You should also be sure that you understand the policies of each college or university regarding deposits that you may be required to make before you enroll.

As You Apply:

- You must complete all material that is required for application and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications.
- You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications.
- It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

After You Receive Your Admissions Decisions:

- You must notify each college or university that accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision as to the college you that you wish attend, but no later than May 1. It is understood that May 1 will be the postmark date.
- You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a wait list by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify a college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll.
- If you are accepted under an Early Decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications. If you are an Early Decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.

If you think that your rights have been denied, you should contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date. In addition, you should ask your counselor to notify the president of the state or regional affiliate of the National Association for College Admission Counseling. If you need further assistance, send a copy of any correspondence you have had with the college or university and a copy of your letter of admission to: NACAC, 1631 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2818.