

# **COLLEGE COUNSELING GUIDE**

## **SENIOR YEAR**



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# The College Search

The college search process can be daunting to say the least. There is so much information out there between the internet and the mail. Unfortunately, some seniors panic and get overwhelmed by the overall process. Don't let this happen to you.

In reality there are but six aspects to the college application process: the application itself; your essay or personal statement; teacher and counselor recommendations; an interview; extracurricular activities; and SAT/ACT scores.

You have already taken the first step. When you met with your college counselor in the spring you discussed your likes and dislikes, your interests, and some of you even had a major in mind. The list you started in the office last spring was your jumping off point. Hopefully over the summer you continued to refine your list to find your "best fit" college.

Continue to read available information and ask questions, such as:

1. Do they have my major? What kinds of special programs/activities are associated with my major?
2. What if I don't know my major or I have 3 different majors? Does the school give me time or flexibility in selecting a major later?
3. What kinds of sports, activities, etc.; am I interested in or want to continue in college? Do the schools I am interested in have these activities?
4. What kind of weather do I want to live in for the next 4 years?
5. Are there scholarship/financial aid opportunities available?
6. What kind of student body do I want to be a part of?
7. Do I want to look in state or out of state?

If you have your list set, great; if you don't – do not panic. You still have some time. Just remember to watch your deadlines. Some schools have an early deadline – **University of Maryland** has a **November 1 priority deadline** for example, while many other colleges have rolling deadlines.

Having a sense of where you might want to apply—but not being quite sure—is perfectly fine as well. A good rule to follow is to have your list finalized and applications started by Thanksgiving. That way you are well on your way to being completely finished before Christmas. Who wants to spend Christmas vacation filling out applications and writing essays?

## Testing Information

### SVPHS School Code: 210695

#### SAT Information 2013-2014

Test Dates	Tests Offered	Regular Registration Postmark Deadline	Late Registration Postmark Deadline
October 5, 2013	SAT & Subject Tests	September 6, 2013	September 20, 2013
November 2, 2013	SAT & Subject Tests	October 3, 2013	October 18 2013
December 7, 2013	SAT & Subject Tests	November 8, 2013	November 22, 2013
January 25	SAT & Subject Tests	December 27, 2013	January 10, 2014
March 8, 2014	SAT only	Feb. 7, 2014	February 21, 2014
May 3, 2014	SAT & Subject Tests	April 4, 2014	April 18, 2014
June 7, 2014	SAT & Subject Tests	May 9, 2014	May 23, 2014

To register go to: [sat.collegeboard.org/register](http://sat.collegeboard.org/register)

St. Vincent Pallotti SAT Test Center Code: 21348

Not every Subject Test is offered on every date, so check the College Board website for a list of dates to see when the test you're interested in is offered

#### ACT Information

Test Date	Regular Deadline	Late Deadline - Fee Required
September 21, 2013	August 23, 2013	Sept. 6, 2013
October 26, 2013	September 27, 2013	October 11, 2013
December 14, 2013	November 8, 2013	November 22, 2013
February 8, 2014	January 10 2014	January 24, 2014
April 12, 2014	March 7, 2014	March 21, 2014
June 14, 2014	May 9, 2014	May 23, 2014

To register, go to: [actstudent.org](http://actstudent.org)

St. Vincent Pallotti is not an ACT Test Center

\*Forwarding your test scores to your colleges of interest is not necessary during the spring, however test scores must be sent to your colleges of choice during the fall.

\*If you are seeking a nomination to a service academy, you must also forward scores to your congressperson or senator. They should provide a code for you to send them your test scores.

\*If you are a potential Division I or II athlete, you must register with the NCAA and have your scores forwarded to the NCAA. -- **\*The code for the NCAA is: 9999.**

# DEVELOPING YOUR CHECKLISTS AND ORGANIZING INFORMATION

There are many ways to get information on colleges.

1. Talk with your counselor about test schedules, college choices, scholarships, and financial aid.
2. When contacting the Office of Admissions to obtain applications and material, ask to speak with an admissions representative (preferably the one who handles our school or the state of Maryland), introduce yourself, and ask a few questions that are important to you.

An example would be “Hi, my name is Lilly Jones and I am a senior at St. Vincent Pallotti High in Laurel, Maryland. Can I ask you a few questions? Thanks.....” This can also work for email.

3. Try to visit each school to which you plan on applying. Nothing is more valuable than stepping on campus and experiencing the school environment. If you can, try to sit in on a class, meet with a coach/professor/student, stay overnight etc.
4. It is perfectly fine to apply to a school you have not yet visited. However, it is **strongly recommended** that you eventually visit every school you are considering attending next fall.
5. Try to attend a few college fairs/college-sponsored information programs. Ask questions and keep notes when speaking to representatives. Check the school web site for information on College Fairs and Open Houses (go to College Counseling on our school web site and look for the links).
6. **Get Organized.** Make a file for each college that you pursue. Keep all written and computer related correspondence in the file. **Make a copy of every application to keep in the file.**
7. Be proactive and request transcripts from your college counselor well in advance of the deadline. Ask teachers to write recommendations for you, and supply them with all required materials (see Appendix for Teacher Request Form).
8. Find out and remember all deadlines for test registration, admission, and financial aid applications.
9. Make sure your application and all other materials are your own work. You can have people review your essay and application, but they cannot complete them for you.

One important thing to remember is that getting into college is **your responsibility**. As your counselors, we are here to advise you in the process but picking colleges and applying to them lies solely with you. Thus, following the checklist, organizing information, and meeting deadlines is **your responsibility**. If you are successful with these tasks, you will save yourself a huge headache later on in the year.

# ACTIVITIES RESUME

An activities resume provides you an opportunity to show off a bit to the college. Admissions Officers want to know what activities you have been involved in during the past four years. Typically, the application will have a special section in which to write your activities. Additionally, applications might ask for a resume or activity sheet. Even if the school doesn't require a resume, the information about your extracurriculars is very important. It gives the admissions committee a more "well rounded" view of your talents and how you will fit into their institution. In the appendix, there is an example of a resume. There are usually two types of opportunities in the application process to explain and/or expand upon your opportunities.

- a. If the school has provided a **space for activities** on their application, print or type clearly and concisely in the space provided. Try to list the activities in order of importance. Be sure to follow directions. If the school says that you can use a separate sheet of paper to continue, then do so by providing your activities resume. If not, only use the space provided.
- b. If the school allows for an **activity resume** (practically all will), then complete one. Type the resume and go into detail about any special activities, awards, honors, or programs that are related to your high school experience. Listed below are some tips relevant to this section. They include:
  1. Don't go overboard in your activity resume. Colleges don't want to know what you did in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The admissions committee wants to look at current and important activities. Stick to your high school years.
  2. Explain any special language or verbiage in your resume. For example, if you just put KAIROS, the college officials reviewing your activities may not know what you mean.
  3. You do not have to describe in huge paragraphs every single activity or accomplishment that you have done. It is important to show that you have been involved and are well rounded, but going overboard with the descriptions will not help your application.
  4. Accomplishments outside of school (coaching, summer work, etc.) are things you want to include on your resume as well.
  5. Always type and proofread your resume. (A sample resume is included in the appendix).

# APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Once you have received your applications to fill out and mail (or submit electronically), there is a procedure that **you must follow** so that all information is correct and complete from you and the Pallotti College Counseling Office. The following steps will assist you greatly in this critical part of the college application process.

## A. Filling out your applications

1. The first thing to do is check deadlines for admissions applications, scholarships, etc. Make note of the following when looking over the application.
  - a. Are SAT – Subject Tests (SAT IIs) required? If so, which ones?
  - b. Which scores (SAT vs. ACT) will you send?
  - c. Is there a separate scholarship application?
  - d. Is there an SAT Optional application if you do not want to send your scores?
2. We **strongly** encourage you to use the Common Application ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)) to apply to schools. It will help greatly with making sure all of the other parts of your application (transcript, letters of rec.) are sent through the Naviance program.
3. When using the common application, make sure to check to see if they have a supplemental part to the application.
4. Many colleges/universities will also encourage you to use their online applications. Be sure to check to see if this is available and make sure you talk to your college counselor about this. When submitting a school application you should receive an acknowledgement within 24 hours. If you do not receive the acknowledgement, contact the admissions office to make sure your application was received.
5. Use black ink or go online (preferable) to complete your application. Long answers to questions in the application should be typed as well.
6. Make sure you give the necessary forms to the Counseling Office and your teachers well in advance. Remember: teachers are asked to write many letters; you can't expect them to write you a letter in one day. (The Transcript Request Form and Teacher Letter Request Form are located in the appendix).
7. Have your application and essay proofread by someone at home, your English teacher, or your counselor. You should stick to just one person who will proofread.
8. Make a copy of all applications (online apps as well) and put them in the corresponding folder that you made earlier in this process.
9. If you apply on-line, don't forget that your counselors and teachers still need the necessary materials to complete their parts.

10. After two weeks, contact the admissions office to insure your application and related material have been received.

## **B. Handing Required Information from the Application to the Counseling Office**

It's not necessary for your application (along with essays, resumes, etc.) to be sent by the counseling department. However, it *is* necessary that the counseling office send your **recommendation package** to your colleges.

The **package** consists of the counselor's recommendation, a counselor evaluation form, the school profile (with descriptions of courses offered at SVPHS), teacher letters of recommendation, and your transcript. The school profile is a fact sheet used to help college admissions counselors know our school better and aid them in evaluating the transcript.

Please remember we have no way of knowing you have applied to a school unless you tell us. In order to make sure your school package is sent in a timely fashion, please follow the following guidelines:

1. Fill out a Transcript Request Form. (These are always available in a bin outside Mrs. Marton's office.) On the form you must provide the following information:
  - Your name
  - The date you submitted the request
  - Application Deadline
  - The name of the School
  - The city and state where the school is located
  - Did you apply early action, regular decision, rolling admission
  - Is this a common application (this is important- there are special forms for the common app)
  - The names of the teachers who are writing your letters
  - Your signature (No transcripts will be sent without a signature)

Remember, the counseling office does not send standardized test scores. You must do that directly through [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) or [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org). **It is your responsibility to send the test scores directly to the school/NCAA/academy/etc.**



**Below are some important notes about the application procedure. Read these over carefully so that you can make this process stress-free.**

1. Read the application directions first. Some applications have special directions about the application procedures, so follow them carefully.
2. Be sure to give the application deadlines to your teachers for their recommendations.
3. Limit your outside letters of recommendation from people outside of academics to one or two. Admissions Committees like to have different points of view from which to draw from but overkill does not help the process or guarantee admission. Remember that outside letters of recommendation are not typically used by admissions offices and are only helpful if they add new and pertinent information.
4. Some applications have two parts; move through Part 1 quickly so that you will have plenty of time for Part 2. Within 10 working days of submitting Part 1, call the college to check that they have received Part 1.
5. All notices of college acceptances, denials, waitlists and withdrawals, and scholarships are to be reported to the College Counseling Department. This information is submitted in a report given to the Board of Directors. Student's names are not submitted in this report.
6. Please note that there will be a **charge of \$5.00** for each official transcript. Transcripts for scholarships will be sent without a charge.

### **C. College Athletics**

1. If you are a recruited athlete, you still have to apply by the required deadlines. Handing in your information in a timely manner to the admissions office shows that you are a dedicated student AND athlete. If you are being advised differently by a college coach or another individual, talk to your college counselor as soon as possible.
2. Make sure you follow all rules regarding the NCAA, official visits, and registration.
3. Please keep in mind that an athletic commitment does not mean you are admitted to the college/university. Even though coaches do have input into your admissions application, only the admissions office can officially admit you.
4. If you have not done so already, complete the FERPA release form located on your Naviance Family Connection Page. By checking the square box you are giving the school permission to send your transcript.
5. Please note that we do not send official transcripts and letters of recommendation to coaches. Only admissions offices receive these documents.

## D. Requesting Teacher's Letters of Recommendation

Many colleges and universities will require/recommend at least one teacher to write a letter of recommendation to support your application. Below are the steps you must follow in order to get a proper letter of recommendation. **SVPHS requires that you ask for two letters, one must be from an English teacher.**

1. Once you have thought about which teacher would be the best person to write about you, you should ask them immediately (if you have not already done so) if they would be able to complete a letter for you. (Use the Teacher Letter of Recommendation Request Form)
2. Letters of recommendation should come from a junior or senior year teacher.
3. Teacher recommendations are your responsibility to coordinate. **Your college counselor is not responsible for tracking down any letters of recommendation from a teacher.**
4. If you complete your application online, make sure you inform your teacher(s).

If you have any questions or concerns, speak with your college counselor.

## E. Types of College Deadlines/Candidate Reply Agreement/SVPHS Early Decision Policy

Colleges and Universities have their own deadlines for applications and notification dates in which they inform students of their decisions. Below is a complete list of the types of deadlines and requirements associated with them.

**REGULAR DECISION:** Usually, these application deadlines vary from school to school. Most deadlines fall on January 1st, January 10th, January 15th, or February 1st. The decision notification from the institution to you is typically April 1st – April 10th. You have until May 1st to notify the school if you are planning to attend or decline admission (**UNLESS** you have applied Early Decision).

**EARLY DECISION:** This is a process for students who have selected a particular college or university as a clear **first and only choice**. In most cases, the application deadline is November 1st, and all supporting recommendations are due at the same time. The action by the institution can come in three forms:  
*Acceptance* – By being accepted early, the student has two weeks (or less, depending upon the school) from the notification to inform the school that they are attending. By being admitted Early Decision, you are under contract to attend the school and must withdraw all other applications that are outstanding at that time; you cannot submit any other applications.

**NOTE: If you do not withdraw all other applications, you will jeopardize your standing with your early decision institution. Once accepted under an Early Decision agreement, the Counseling office will not forward your information to any other colleges.**

*Deferred* – the institution wants to see more supporting information and/or 1st semester senior grades to make a decision. At this point, the Early Decision agreement becomes void and you may apply to other institutions.

*Denial* – the institution has denied your application. You cannot reapply (although you can attempt to transfer after attending another institution).

**EARLY ACTION:** This is a program that requires submission of all application materials early in the senior year. Typically, the deadlines are November 1st or November 15th. Students will receive early notification of the school's decision. However, unlike the Early Decision process, the decision is not binding. If admission is offered, the student has until the common reply date (May 1) to accept the offer.

**“SINGLE CHOICE” OR “RESTRICTIVE” EARLY ACTION:** This process is very similar to Early Action, yet there is one key difference. A school can explicitly state that you can only apply to their school early and no one else. Some schools that use this program can make exceptions which they will explicitly state in their materials. If you are admitted, you are not bound to attend the school and you have until May 1st to make a decision. There only a few schools that are doing this and if you have questions or are thinking of applying to a school that states this policy in their literature, talk to your college counselor about it.

Within every “early” program, it is important to understand that colleges and universities vary. For example, some schools that utilize Early Action specifically state that you cannot apply to an Early Decision program.

**PRIORITY ADMISSION:** Basically, this insures that your application is read in the first round. **It is not a binding admissions agreement.** For schools that have priority admissions, you can still apply after this deadline. However, spaces become limited (The University of Maryland – College Park is an example of a school that uses priority admissions). Thus, a priority deadline **may** give you an added advantage for admission.

**ROLLING ADMISSION:** This is a process used by many colleges and universities where students are accepted on a “first come, first served” basis. The earlier a student applies, the sooner he will be admitted.

**CANDIDATE REPLY DATE AGREEMENT:** The school you plan to attend will require a deposit by May 1st. Members of the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) have agreed upon this date. SVPHS and practically all colleges and universities that you are applying to are members of NACAC.

When you have made your final selection of a college/university, please inform all other schools to which you have been accepted that you will not be attending their school. You must do this in writing, either by a form that they have supplied to you or a note that you mail. Do not use the telephone or email; most schools need this in writing. Please do this on or before the May 1st deadline.

**IMPORTANT:** Please know that you cannot “**double deposit**”. This is an unethical process that hinders schools in completing their freshman class, does not allow waitlisted students to gain admission, and puts SVPHS in a negative light. If you are still having trouble making a decision and it is close or on May 1st, talk to your college counselor.

# COLLEGE VISITS & COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE INTERVIEWS

There are many college admissions counselors who visit St. Vincent Pallotti every fall. All visits are listed on Naviance Family Connection. Students must go on their Family Connection page to sign up for the meetings. All visits are announced on WPHS.

Teachers have the right to refuse to release a student to attend a college meeting. Students must remember that academics are the most important thing in the application process.

Visiting a college campus is a great way to see what life would be like for you as a prospective student. Make sure you call the admissions office **at least two weeks in advance** of when you want to visit. By doing this, you have given the office more time to arrange any of the following that you might request:

- Interview with an Admissions Counselor
- Sitting in on a class
- Staying overnight in the residence halls
- A tour of the campus
- Meeting with a professor
- Meeting with students at the college
- Eating in the Cafeteria

Before you visit, take time to familiarize yourself with the campus; look over their website, viewbook, and other materials. Look at things like the school calendar, course requirements and descriptions (especially for your major), study abroad programs, internships, etc.

It's a good idea to take an unofficial copy of your transcript (which you may obtain from your counselor) and your activities resume so that you might discuss with an Admissions counselor your present situation at school, as well as accomplishments, classes, etc.

During the interview, always be honest, try to relax and be yourself. You are a great candidate. If THERE WERE ANY ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES THAT YOU ENCOUNTERED, BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN THEM. BE ABLE TO talk about why you want to attend the college and have a list of questions ready to ask the counselor.

After the interview, write a thank you note to every person that you met personally. That leaves a great impression to those individuals (some of them might be looking at your application later!). Be sure to record your feelings about the visit and the institution as a whole in a notebook or in the college file that you have organized.

After your interview, tell your counselor how it went.

# Scholarships/Financial Aid

Every year, many scholarships, grants, and other assistance (funded by both universities and private organizations) are available. Keep searching all throughout your senior year; many opportunities exist and can be found through internet searches and other resources listed below.

One of the confusing parts of scholarships and financial aid can be the terminology. It is crucial that you understand the difference between **non need-based aid** and **need-based aid**.

**NON NEED-BASED AID (i.e. merit scholarships)** is money that a college/university will award which the student does not need to repay (also, financial information is not considered). Usually this aid comes in a form of a scholarship (for academics, athletics, or other talents i.e. music, drama, etc.) or a *special* grant awarded for a variety of reasons. Non need-based aid can also come from a variety of outside sources.

**NEED-BASED AID** is money that a college/university (and/or the federal government) will award an accepted student that the student **may** have to repay. This aid is based on the need as determined by various financial aid forms. Some need-based aid is in the form of a **grant** (which does not need to be repaid), a **work-study job** (which the student works on campus), or a **federally subsidized loan** (the student must repay).

*Any scholarship information received in the counseling office will be available through your college counselor and on the school web site. If you are interested in any scholarship, be sure to talk with your counselor.*

Here are some other points of interest regarding scholarships:

1. Most colleges/universities offer a full range of merit and/or talent-based scholarships. Be sure that you check with each college/university that you have applied to for all/any of the scholarships offered. If there are minimum GPA, ACT/SAT scores, or other requirements, make sure that you and your family understand them.
2. Some scholarships require a counselor nomination or additional scholarship applications. Be sure to check with your counselor if there are any other additional requirements.
3. Some colleges automatically consider you for their scholarships, so no additional forms or nominations are required. Always check to make sure this is the case if you don't see any separate scholarship applications.
4. There are private scholarships that come from a variety of sources. One of your parents may work for a company that has special scholarships set aside for the children of employees. For example, Xerox and Giant Food each provide scholarship opportunities. Be sure to ask your parents to check with their human resources office to see if such a program is available at their workplace.
5. Other sources to consider for private scholarships are fraternal organizations (Elks Clubs, Kiwanis, Rotary), private foundations, corporations (Coca-Cola, Papa John's, McDonalds) or community organizations (churches, civic leagues, etc.).

To apply for **need-based aid**, you and your parents must complete and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (or **FAFSA**). This form is available online ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)) usually **after** Thanksgiving and is year-specific—so be sure to use the current year's form. The FAFSA can be filed on January 1, 2014. To apply for financial aid, all schools require this form. The CSS/Profile form is another type of financial aid form that you can complete anytime. Not all schools require this form. To obtain a current list of all colleges/universities that require

the CSS/Profile form (and to apply), log on to <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>. In addition, some colleges may also require the completion of an institutional form. Make sure you have completed all necessary forms in a timely manner. The later in the process, the less money a college/university might have to allocate.

Below are some tips that should help you and your family through the scholarship and financial aid process.

1. When the FAFSA or CSS/Profile is filed, your **demonstrated financial need** is determined using the income and tax information provided on the forms.
2. Each college or university will create their own **Financial Aid Award (FAA)** when they have determined your demonstrated need. This award will consist of scholarships, grants, work-study, and/or loans. Every college/university will create their own package, so there may be great differences ranging from college to college.
3. Your parent(s) may file the FAFSA prior to filing their taxes by making an **estimate** of the tax return and income. Make sure the family's estimate is as accurate as possible. If the tax return comes back and there is a sizeable gap between the estimate and the actual income, your financial aid will be affected.
4. When filing the FAFSA, make sure you and your parent each apply for a PIN code (which is your electronic signature). Everyone must have a PIN code or your FAFSA will not be processed. You can apply for the code at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)
5. When you talk to a financial aid officer, take notes on the discussion and write down names. You can refer to this information and ask for the same person again if you have an update or additional questions.
6. If you and your family decide to decline part of the financial aid package, a college/university reserves the right not to supplement the package with other aid. For example, if you decline taking the loan, the institution may not put any other aid in its place.
7. If you receive a FAA, remember it is not set in stone. You may appeal either by letter (preferable) or phone to request additional aid. There may be extenuating circumstances in your situation and an appeal is a great way to insure that your financial aid officer is aware of all information.
8. Student loans are usually federally subsidized loans that have a very low interest rate. Repayment of a student's loan usually begins 6 months after graduation. A loan may be deferred while a student pursues graduate or post-doctoral studies.
9. Work-study programs are excellent opportunities for students to assist with paying for college. Usually, these jobs are administrative help that may require a student to work approximately 10-20 hours on campus.
10. While work-study may be a part of your FAA, please know that you can still work on campus even if you aren't required to work. Some colleges/universities have employment opportunities for students.

**The College Counseling Department is here to help you. Please stop by whenever you have any questions.**

# Appendix

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## College application FAQs: Students ask, counselors answer

Two experienced college counselors provide answers to students' frequently asked questions about the college application process.

### **Do I have a better chance of getting in if I apply early?**

Nadine K. Maxwell: This can vary from school to school and year to year and may depend on the applicant pool at the school to which you are applying. Check to see what percentage of students in the previous graduating classes at your high school were admitted as Early Decision to a specific college. Are you qualified to apply for Early Decision? If you are, and this is a school you really wish to attend, then apply for Early Decision.

### **How much time should I give my teachers to write letters of recommendation for me?**

Mary Lee Hoganson: Teachers should always receive a minimum of two weeks' notice before the postmark date. Be sure to ask in a way that allows a teacher to decline comfortably if he or she does not have time to do an adequate job. For example: "Do you feel you know me well enough, and do you have enough time, to write a supportive letter of recommendation for me?" Give the teacher a stamped envelope addressed to the college, along with any recommendation form provided by the college.

### **How many times should I take the SAT®?**

Maxwell: Some students are satisfied with their SAT scores the first time they take the test. Students who have taken the PSAT/NMSQT® more than once may feel well prepared for the SAT and take it only once. Most students will take the SAT in the spring of their junior year and the fall of their senior year. Some students will take it three times.

### **My SAT scores are very low and my grades are very high. Will this affect my chances of admission?**

Maxwell: While SAT scores are an indicator of success in college, admissions staff look at many different factors when making a decision about whether to admit a student. One of the main things they are looking for is to see if your high school academic profile indicates that you have the potential for academic success on their campus. What kind of courses have you taken? Have you taken rigorous courses such as honors or AP® courses? Have you taken AP Exams so that there are scores to indicate how you may perform in a college-level course?



## College application FAQs: Students ask, counselors answer (page 2)

### **My parents don't make a lot of money—will colleges hold this against me?**

Hoganson: Colleges should tell you whether they have a “need-blind” admissions policy. Those that do never consider ability to pay as an admissions requirement. Other schools, which are “need conscious,” may consider ability to pay, but only for a very small proportion of the admitted group. My advice is always: Don't worry about this.

### **How can I improve my chances of getting in from the wait list?**

Hoganson: If a college is your first choice, let the college know that—although the college may not ask for this information. Write a letter to the director of admissions expressing your continuing strong interest and updating the admissions office with any new information that reflects well on you. In addition, you may wish to ask your counselor to make a call on your behalf. Many colleges keep track of these kinds of contacts, and students who are enthusiastic and persistent will get looked at first. Colleges want to admit students off the wait list who will accept the offer of admission.

### **Do colleges really care about your senior-year grades?**

Hoganson: Absolutely! Many colleges will not make a decision until receiving seventh-semester grades. They expect to see a performance that indicates you are ready for college-level work. The college at which you make your enrollment deposit will ask for a final transcript at the end of the senior year. (Admissions letters often say something like, “Your admission is contingent upon your continued successful performance.”) It is not at all rare for a college to withdraw an offer of admission when grades drop significantly over the course of the senior year. (I have a folder full of copies of these letters.)

**Mary Lee Hoganson was a college consultant for Homewood-Flossmoor High School, Illinois. Nadine K. Maxwell is a former coordinator of guidance services for Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia.**

*Source: The College Board*

## Tips for undertaking the application process

### Getting started

- Set up a folder for each application. Keep all material relevant to each college in its own folder.
- If you are filing online applications, be sure to save drafts to a disk.
- Review all application materials as they arrive. Set up a schedule for completing them. Completing applications is not much fun, and you may be inclined to put off this task as long as you can. Procrastination is risky. There is a lot to do, especially if you have several essays to write. You may not do the application (and yourself) justice if you leave it until the last minute. Remember: Leave enough time for correcting and revising.
- Make two or more copies of the whole application to use as rough drafts and extras in case you make a serious error and ruin the original.

### Completing the application process

- Review the application and its directions completely before you start to work on it.
- Work on your rough draft in pencil so that you can make changes easily.
- Be accurate, honest, and neat. Spell correctly and use correct grammar.
- It may be better to type the factual sections of your application form, though typing is not required. If you believe you can do a neat, legible, and accurate job completing it by hand, go ahead. Be sure to print legibly in ink. Black ink is preferred because it photocopied clearly.
- If possible, type your essay question responses.
- At your request, the College Board and ACT send the official records of your test scores directly to the colleges. Do not send a photocopy of your own test score report unless requested to do so. Sometimes, a college accepts a photocopy as a means of obtaining preliminary information, but it will need the official report to make an offer of admission.
- When you have completed your application, ask someone to review it and check it for errors. Keep a blank copy on hand in case you need to redo the application.
- If you are applying electronically, print a copy of the completed application before you send it. Your counselor will be happy to look it over before you push the “send” button.
- If you file an online application, be sure to tell your counselor when you have submitted the application and which materials the school needs to send to the college (such as recommendations or the transcript).

Handout 4B page 1 of 2

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## Tips for undertaking the application process (page 2)

### Tips for online applicants

- Make sure a person whose opinion you trust reviews the application for errors before you send it.
- Use standard spelling and grammar—not e-mail-ese: treat this like a paper application.
- Have your test scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying, if you haven't already.
- Print out a paper copy for your records.
- Do not apply electronically and send a paper copy in the mail: wait for confirmation that the electronic copy was received (you should get that within three or four days, if not sooner).
- Tell your counselor of every online application you send, so they can send transcripts and letters of recommendation.

*Source: Susan Stagers, Cary Academy, North Carolina*

**Handout 4B** page 2 of 2

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## Organizing Your Research Tips

Organization is the key to an effective school search. Try some of these suggestions for organizing your research:

### Create a Filing System

- Get a file cabinet, drawer, or basket—something that will keep file folders upright.
- Buy a package of file folders. You'll need at least one folder for each school. Clearly label the folder with the school's name.
- Store everything to do with a school in its own folder: catalogs, correspondence, forms, brochures, interview notes, and questions.
- If a folder starts getting too full, buy some accordion style or hanging folders. Designate one hanging folder for the school and break the contents up into specialized folders, such as "Correspondence," "Forms," "Brochures."

### Gather Supplies

Besides file folders, you may want to gather the following supplies:

- Colored markers
- Self-stick notes, also in different colors
- Good quality paper—you may need this later when you start applying
- Envelopes, in various sizes
- Stamps

### Get a Calendar

- Designate one calendar for all your scheduling and deadlines.
- Mark everything clearly.
- Use different colors for different schools.

### Create Contact Lists

- For each school, create a contact list with addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and URLs.
- Create a separate list of contact information for people you may want to use as references in the application process.

## Getting Recommendations

Two letters of recommendation are usually required for your application. Request recommendations from people who know your strengths. Teachers and counselors are usually the best choices. An employer or community leader can be another option if he or she knows you well and can emphasize your good qualities and achievements.

Ask for recommendations early so there is enough time to get them in comfortably before the deadline. It's considerate on your part. It's also smart—waiting until the last minute may not allow the recommender enough time to do you justice and will cause you both unnecessary stress.

**Here are some other tips for requesting recommendations:**

- Give your recommender a deadline, allowing at least two weeks to complete the letter.
- Provide the recommender with a stamped envelope addressed to the school.
- Provide a list of your activities and awards to facilitate the writing process.
- Send thank you notes to your recommenders.
- Let recommenders know your application results.

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### Notes

## Assessing your list of colleges

As you develop a list (mental or otherwise) of colleges that interest you, be sure you can answer these questions about them.

### The basics

- Where is the college? Can you locate it on a map? Is it too close to home? Is it too far? Is it too cold or too hot there?
- Have you taken the course work the college requires for admission?
- What size is the college? How many students are undergraduates?
- What is the college's selectivity ratio (what proportion of applicants were admitted last year)?
- Does the college offer majors that interest you?
- Is the college coed or single sex?
- What percentage of students live off campus?
- How many of the students graduate in four years? Five years? Six years?
- How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
- How much does the program cost? What is the total per-year expense?
- What type of financial aid is available?

### Where would you fit in?

- What are the college scores for the SAT<sup>®</sup> or ACT? Where does that place you?
- What were the high school GPAs of most of the freshmen last year?
- Are freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing? If not, where do they live?
- Are there extracurricular activities that interest you?

### Visit the colleges' Web sites, read the guidebooks, and look at their literature

- What are their strong academic programs? (Ask a college representative, students, graduates, and teachers.)
- What courses are required for graduation?
- Are the courses you need/want available each semester? At convenient times?
- Are there special programs that interest you (study abroad, internships, etc.)?
- What is the social life like? What percentage of students join fraternities or sororities?
- Do the pictures and the language the college uses to describe itself attract you?
- What is your general impression of the college?

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## Assessing your list of colleges (page 2)

- Is the school accredited?
- If professional certification is required for employment in the field that interests you, how many students enrolled in the school's program pass the certification exam?

### Admissions process

- When are applications due?
- Does the college accept the Common Application? If so, does it require supplemental forms?
- What does the application contain? Are essays required?
- Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
- When may you visit the college? What is its policy regarding campus visits?
- What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

### Now answer these questions

- Am I a strong candidate for admission to this college?
- If I am not a strong candidate, what are my chances?
- Do I want to visit this college?
- What additional information do I need?

**Source:** Susan Staggers, Cary Academy, North Carolina

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## Dos and don'ts on writing the college application essay

A great application essay will present a vivid, personal, and compelling view of you to the admissions staff. It will round out the rest of your application and help you stand out from other applicants. The essay is one of the only parts of your application over which you have complete control, so take the time to do a good job on it. Check out these tips before you begin.

### DOs

#### Keep your focus narrow and personal

Your essay must prove a single point or thesis. The reader should be able to find your main idea and follow it from beginning to end. Ask someone to read just your introduction to see what he or she thinks your essay is about.

Essays that attempt to be too comprehensive end up sounding watered down. Remember, it's not about telling the committee members what you've done—they can pick that up from your list of activities—but about showing them who you are.

#### Prove it

Develop your main idea with vivid, specific facts, events, quotations, examples, and reasons. There's a big difference between simply stating a point of view and letting an idea unfold in the details:

- **Okay:** I like to be surrounded by people with a variety of backgrounds and interests.
- **Better:** During that night, I sang the theme song from *Casablanca* with a baseball coach who thinks he's Bogie, discussed Marxism with a little old lady, and heard more than I ever wanted to know about some woman's gallbladder operation.

#### Be specific

To avoid clichéd, generic, and predictable writing, use vivid, specific details.

- **Okay:** I want to help people. I have gotten so much out of life through the love and guidance of my family, I feel that many individuals have not been as fortunate; therefore, I would like to expand the lives of others.
- **Better:** My mom and dad stood on plenty of sidelines until their shoes filled with water or their fingers started to freeze or somebody's golden retriever signed its name on their coats in mud. I think that kind of commitment is what I'd like to bring to working with fourth-graders.

Handout 6B page 1 of 2

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## Dos and don'ts on writing the college application essay (page 2)

### DON'Ts

#### **Don't tell your readers what you think they want to hear**

Most admissions officers read plenty of essays about the charms of their university, the evils of terrorism, and the personal commitment involved in being a doctor. Bring something new to the table, not just what you think they want to hear.

#### **Don't write a résumé**

Don't include information that is found elsewhere in the application. Your essay will end up sounding like an autobiography, travelogue, or laundry list. Yawn.

- **Overloaded:** During my junior year, I played first singles on the tennis team, served on the student council, maintained a B+ average, traveled to France, and worked at a cheese factory.

#### **Don't use 50 words when 5 will do**

Eliminate unnecessary words.

- **Okay:** Over the years, it has been pointed out to me by my parents, friends, and teachers—and I have even noticed this about myself, as well—that I am not the neatest person in the world.
- **Better:** I'm a slob.

#### **Don't forget to proofread**

Typos and spelling or grammatical errors can be interpreted as carelessness or just bad writing. Don't rely on your computer's spell-checker. It can miss spelling errors like the ones below.

- After I graduate **form** high school, I plan to work for a nonprofit organization during the summer.
- From that day on, Daniel was my best **fried**.

**Source:** *www.collegeboard.com*, based on information from *The College Application Essay, rev. ed.*, by Sarah Myers McGinty (New York: The College Board, 2004).

Handout 6B page 2 of 2

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# CREATING AN ACTIVITIES LIST (RESUME)

A good Activities List helps you attract the attention you deserve. Here are some tips.

1. Be sure to include at the top of the page your name, address and any other personal identification you wish to share, e.g. phone number, email address.
2. Work backward chronologically from your present grade to your freshman year. Only include activities before high school if they are a part of a lengthy history, e.g. “Ten years of flute playing,” “Six years of lacrosse,” etc.
3. Lead from your strength. Mention first the activity that is most important to you, e.g. “Community service.”
4. Format the document to showcase your involvements in the best light. If your activities are long-term and few in number, list them by category. If, on the other hand, you have many short-term activities, you might list them by year.
5. Keep this list on your computer so that you can use parts of it for your applications, and so you can update it at any time.
6. Consider adding your list to your application if the application does not provide adequate opportunity to list your activities.
7. To do this list correctly, you need to do some “bragging.” Ask your parents, your relatives, your friends to help you come up with things you might appropriately brag about. Don’t exaggerate, but don’t hold back.
8. Some categories to consider:
  - A. Community service
  - B. Athletics
  - C. Music/Art
  - D. Leadership
  - E. Clubs
  - F. Academic awards
  - G. Summer experiences
  - H. Hobbies
  - I. Travel
  - J. Work/Jobs – list last

# SAMPLE ACTIVITIES LIST

## **Polly Panther**

113 St. Mary's Place  
Laurel, MD 20707  
301-725-3228  
ppanther@aol.com

Objective: To complete secondary school with academic, extracurricular and athletic success and be admitted to a challenging college that will further prepare me to use my gifts for other people.

### **Education**

St. Vincent Pallotti High School – Laurel, MD 2007-2011

College preparatory curriculum including AP and Honors courses

GPA: 3.52 overall; 3.62 in 11<sup>th</sup> grade

Woodstock School – Berlin, Germany 2000-2006

My family lived in Germany these years while my father was stationed there with the U.S. Army.

### **Academic Honors**

Elected to the National Honor Society - 11<sup>th</sup> grade

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Class President 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>

Yearbook: sports editor – 12<sup>th</sup>

Choir: 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

Fellowship of Christian Athletes: 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

### **Athletics**

Soccer: 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>; varsity 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

Basketball: 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>; varsity 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>; All League–12<sup>th</sup>

### **Community Service**

Habitat for Humanity – projects in Laurel, Annapolis, and Odenton

I worked approximately 40 hours each year on these in 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

Christmas in April – aid to needy families in Prince Georges County

Worked one Saturday each year of high school

Participated in gathering clothes for annual clothing drive at St. Paul's

Church organized by the church youth group

### **Hobbies**

Knitting

Extreme Skateboarding

### **Work Experience**

For the past two summers, I have been a paid counselor in the Laurel Boys and Girls Club day camp

# CAMPUS VISIT CHECKLIST

## (COURTESY OF SALLIE MAE COLLEGEANSWER.COM)

Visits to schools beat pictures in brochures any day! If you have the opportunity, you should experience college life first-hand during your junior and senior years to be sure your home away from home will be the right one for you. Carefully plan each visit...and limit the number of visits to the schools that are most important to you.

### **Planning the Visit**

Get a map of the campus.

Plan at least a full day (and stay overnight, if possible) at each school.

Visit when school is in session.

Arrange an interview with an admissions officer or sign up for a group session, if available.

Prepare a list of questions you might have about the school.

Get a notebook to record the answers and your impressions.

### **What to Do**

Take a campus tour.

Talk with students and faculty.

Attend a sporting event, if possible.

### **What to Look For**

Watch how students spend their time: studying, partying, socializing, exercising.

Check out the size of the average dorm room and what the normal furniture is.

Look at what students have in their rooms and how they've arranged it (e.g., computers, TVs).

What's available off campus? Restaurants, theaters, museums, public libraries, job opportunities?

### **What to Ask**

Are there active fraternities and sororities on campus?

How good is the food in the dining facilities?

Can you stay in the dorm for more than freshman year? Can you have a single room or must you share? And if you're sharing, with how many others?

What intercollegiate and intramural teams are represented on campus?

What kinds of clubs and societies are represented on campus?

How well are the campus and its facilities maintained?

How safe is the campus? Where are the campus police located? Are there safety programs, such as escorts and emergency phone boxes, on campus?

# HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF A COLLEGE INTERVIEW (COURTESY COLLEGE COUNSELING SOURCEBOOK)

- The interview is primarily for you to learn about the college and to allow the interviewer to learn about you. The interview can have a positive effect on your admission.
- When you schedule an interview, check to see if it is evaluative (used as a factor in admissions decisions) or informational (used in helping an applicant to learn more about the college). Knowing the purpose will help you prepare for the interview. In most cases, even if the interview is evaluative, it is not one of the most important criteria used by the college. Relax and be yourself!
- Your interview will usually be with an admissions staff member, but it may be with a student, alumnus, or a professional interviewer. Keep this person's perspective in mind. Don't write off the college just because you think you had a bad interview. Interviewers have bad days, too.
- The interviewer is eager to get to know you and is almost always on your side. An experienced person knows that you may be new at interviewing and will try to put you at ease. The interviewer will answer your questions but will be more interested if you have helpful questions that show you've done some research on the college already.
- An important part of preparation is self-assessment. In what kind of environment do you work best? Would you take advantage of class discussions or would you rather learn by the lecture method? Know your rank, your test scores, your present areas of interest. If you are undecided about your career, feel free to say so (half of college students change their intended major). You should, however, recognize that you are going to college primarily to learn. Think through some areas you would like to explore, competencies you would like to develop, projects or situations that intrigue you.
- Do your homework about the school to get the obvious questions answered. You don't want to be silent when asked, "What would you like to know about our college?" Questions or comments like, "What if I can't decide between two majors?" "What kinds of internships are there, and how often do students take them?" or "I've liked art, but don't wish to major in it" show more maturity in your thinking than asking how many books are in the college library.
- Interviewers may ask questions about your interests, extracurricular activities/jobs, books you've read, meaningful experiences, reasons for applying to this college, life at school, and similar topics. Be ready to talk about these subjects.
- Be honest. Everyone has strong and weak points. College will help you with some of the latter and promote the former.
- Plan to have your interview alone. Most admissions officers prefer to speak with your parents after talking with you, rather than during the interview.
- Dress neatly and comfortably.
- When you return home, **write a thank-you note** to the person who interviewed you.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK THE COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE (COURTESY COLLEGE COUNSELING SOURCEBOOK)

College reps, as well as college students, admissions counselors, and faculty, genuinely enjoy talking to high school students. They like to share their ideas about their college, and they all appreciate students who have thought about the college and want to know more than is in the course catalog, in the viewbook, or on the Web site. They like thoughtful questions, and their answers can help you make a good college match. Ask questions of interest to you in the following categories.

## Students

- How would you characterize the majority of students?
- From what economic background are the majority of students?
- Are there clubs, activities, or housing that are minority related?
- What do students like most about the college? Like least?
- Has the student government made any real contribution to the school? How did the administration react? What was the resolution?

## Social life and campus activities

- What do students do for fun?
- What is the role of fraternities and sororities on campus? If I didn't want to join, could I have a satisfactory social life?
- What are the dominant social groups on campus? Do the groups get along with one another? Have there been any problems?
- What role do team sports play in the social life of the college? What happens on football or basketball weekends? If I didn't want to join in, would I find kindred spirits?
- Is there a good balance of academics, social life, and extracurricular activities?
- What were the social or cultural highlights last year?
- What is the role of the campus newspaper?
- Is there an alcohol problem and, if so, how is the college handling it? What is the incidence of binge drinking? Do students feel safe on campus?

## **Campus Facilities**

### *Housing and dining*

- Is there something I should know about housing that would help me in my choice?
- What are the types of food plans? All you can eat? Vegetarian? Kosher?

### *Activity centers and athletic and recreational facilities*

### *Health, career counseling, special student services, and security*

- Is there a doctor, nurse, psychologist, or career counselor on campus? What is the waiting period for appointments?
- Is the office for special services adequate to the demand?
- How good is the security on campus?

### *Library*

- What have been students' experiences with the library? Have there been complaints?
- Is the library well-equipped with computers and copy machines?

## **The community off campus**

- What is there to do in town? How would I get there?

## **Academics and faculty**

- What is distinctive about education here? What is the educational philosophy of the college? Has it changed much in recent years?
- Is the honor code working? How widespread is cheating?
- What is the most popular major on campus? Why?
- Do you think that students are generally enthusiastic about their classes? Do people talk about their courses outside of class?
- How would you characterize the academic pressure and workload?
- Are there research possibilities with the faculty? In what areas?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the advising system?
- What is the quality of student and faculty relationships? Is the faculty interested in and accessible to students after class? Do faculty members participate in student activities?
- Are curriculum changes in the works? How will that affect my college years?
- Are any departments being cut back or discontinued? If so, why?
- Are any new programs scheduled for the next four years?

# HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF A COLLEGE FAIR: TIPS FOR STUDENTS

## Reasons to attend

- Gain exposure to a variety of postsecondary institutions throughout the country.
- Ask questions about current admissions and financial aid information
- Pick up free brochures on colleges that you might want to consider
- Receive answers to specific questions
- Learn from experts in special-interest sessions

## Bring with you

- A large plastic bag for college brochures
- A pen and notepad

## Questions to ask the college representatives

- Do my GPA and test scores make me eligible for admission to your college? Would I get into the major I want?
- How could I explore my interests (academic, major, extracurricular)?
- What percentage of students receives financial aid? What is the average package?
- Is your college “need blind” in the admissions process-do you determine admission without regard to a student’s financial situation?
- Where do most students live? What is the focus of social life?
- What is unique about your campus?

## After the fair

- Don’t put the college materials in the back of your closet. Keep them nearby for when you’re ready to review them.
- Look through the materials, and your notes, within the week.
- Keep everything. Weed out colleges that aren’t a good fit.
- Research colleges that interest you. Explore web sites, request more information from admissions offices, and plan to visit.

*Source: Adapted from material prepared by the National Association for College Admission by Counseling College Counseling Sourcebook*



# CHECKLIST FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

1. Decide on what level (NCAA Division I, II, III) you can compete in college. Ask your high school coach for an evaluation of your ability. Be honest with yourself.
2. Remember all NCAA Division I and II players must be registered through the NCAA Clearinghouse. You may use the web site at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net) or use a link from the NCAA's web site at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org).
3. You do not have to go through the NCAA Clearinghouse to compete in Division III.
4. Be sure that you are familiar with the NCAA recruiting rules. They vary according to sport and your year in high school. It is **your responsibility** to know these rules.
5. Write or, if appropriate, email coaches. Personalize each letter. Form letters are not as likely to impress coaches.
6. Return any questionnaire a coach sends you as soon as possible. Delay suggests lack of interest on your part.
7. Make a sports videotape. Many colleges will request a video showing your athletic skill; however, don't send it before the college asks.
8. Send your high school schedule to the coaches. If you have a game in their area, be sure to highlight that game. Include an email address and/or telephone number as well as contact information for your coach so he/she can confirm information regarding you.
9. Follow up any coach's response in a timely way with a phone call or an email.
10. **Be clear regarding the details of the level of your courses (regular, honors, AP), your high school grades, your approximate class rank, and your SAT or ACT scores.**

**ST. VINCENT PALLOTTI HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE COUNSELING**  
**TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM**

**Fill out ONE FORM for EACH COLLEGE and give form and all documentation to Mrs. Marton THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE DUE DATE. Please include \$5.00 for each official transcript.**

**Read each item carefully and answer each.**

1. Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Application Deadline \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Date you submitted this request \_\_\_\_\_

4. Send transcript to \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

5. Application:  Sent online  Mailed 6. Is this a *Common Application*?

7.  Early Decision (binding)  Early (Priority) Action  Regular Decision  Rolling Admission

*NOTE: colleges require that SAT or ACT scores BE SENT FROM THE TESTING SERVICES DIRECTLY; Pallotti DOES NOT do this for you.*

8. SVPHS requires students to get two letters of recommendation. One letter must be from an English teacher. Copies of the letter are sent to all your colleges.

English Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

9. Your College Counselor, Mrs. Duckworth, Mrs. Hawse or Mrs. Marton will write a letter of recommendation for you. Be sure that you have attached your **ACTIVITIES LIST/RESUME** to your **first transcript request** for the counselor's use.

**IMPORTANT PRIVACY NOTICE:** Under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), you must grant permission to your school to send your academic records to the place/person named above, and after you matriculate you *will* have access to all recommendations and supporting documents submitted by you and on your behalf after matriculating, unless one of the following is true:

1. The institution does not save recommendations post-matriculation
2. You waive your right to access below, regardless of the institution to which it is sent.

Yes, I do waive my right to access, and I understand I will never see this form or any other recommendations done on my behalf.

No, I do not waive my right to access, and I may someday choose to see any recommendations submitted to the institution at which I'm enrolling, if that institution saves them after I matriculate.

\* I consent to the electronic submission of records through email when requested.

10. Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: your mid-year transcript will be automatically sent to every college to which you apply. You do not need to request this nor pay for it.**

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Cover Letter

Secondary School Report

Profile

School Recommendations

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Grades?

Transcript

Teacher Recommendations

Yes

School Seal

Postcard

No

rev. 9/13

**REQUEST for TEACHER RECOMMENDATION LETTER FORM**

NOTE: all blanks must be filled in except for colleges, and this form should be given to your teacher at least **TWO** weeks before the date needed.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

Does this recommendation ask that a FORM be completed for the school? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Is the FORM the **Common Application** form? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Date request given to teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date this letter is needed \_\_\_\_\_

What college(s) is this for (you must name at least one)?

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

The recommendation letter and form will be returned directly to the College Counseling office by the teacher and used for as many colleges as you apply to if appropriate.

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NOTE: all blanks must be filled in except for colleges, and this form should be given to your teacher at least **TWO** weeks before the date needed.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

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Is the FORM the **Common Application** form? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Date request given to teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date this letter is needed \_\_\_\_\_

What college(s) is this for (you must name at least one)?

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

The recommendation letter and form will be returned directly to the College Counseling office by the teacher and used for as many colleges as you apply to if appropriate.

# TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM FOR ATHLETES

College Coaches often call and request transcripts for prospective student athletes. By filling out and signing this form you agree that St. Vincent Pallotti can release your transcript and test scores to colleges. Please feel free to discuss the pros and cons with your parents and your coach. Return the completed form to the College Counseling Office.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sport(s):

_____	_____
_____	_____

**I authorize release of my academic records to colleges that express interest. I understand that transcripts will be faxed or emailed to coaches.**

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are under 18, please have your parent sign below

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# BOOKS USEFUL IN THE COLLEGE SEARCH & APPLICATION PROCESS

There are, of course, many other books that might be very helpful in the process; however these are the ones we use most here at Pallotti. The prices given are mostly from amazon.com in January 2010. You should always ask for the most recent edition. Most of these books can be bought at Barnes & Noble or Borders bookstores.

*The Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College*, The Cardinal Newman Society. Available at [www.thenewmanguide.com](http://www.thenewmanguide.com). (\$19.95)

*The Official Catholic College & University Guidebook*. The National Catholic College Admission Association. Available at [www.catholiccollegesonline.org](http://www.catholiccollegesonline.org) (\$24.95)

*Choosing the Right College (The Whole Truth about America's Top Schools)*, ISI Books. Intercollegiate Studies Institute. Available at [www.isibooks.org](http://www.isibooks.org) (\$22.40)

*All American Colleges (Top Schools for Conservatives, Old-Fashioned Liberals, and People of Faith)*, ISI Books. Available at [www.isibooks.org](http://www.isibooks.org) (\$17.60)

*College Handbook*. College Board. Available at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) at most chain bookstores. (\$20.00)

*Book of Majors*. College Board. Available at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) (\$18.00)

*Guide to Getting Financial Aid*. College Board. Available at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) (\$15.00)

*The Public Ivies (America's Flagship Public Universities)*. Howard Greene & Matthew Green, eds. Available at [www.harpercollins.com](http://www.harpercollins.com) (\$6.00)

*Colleges That Change Lives (40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think about Colleges)*. Loren Pope. Penguin Books. Available at most chain bookstores. (\$11.00)

*Thomson Peterson's Four-Year Colleges*. Available at most chain bookstores. (\$21.75)

*The Best 366 Colleges*. Princeton Review. Available at [www.PrincetonReview.com](http://www.PrincetonReview.com) (\$21.95)

*The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities*. Marybeth Kravets and Amy Wax; The Princeton Review. Available at [www.PrincetonReview.com](http://www.PrincetonReview.com) (\$20.00)

*America's Best Colleges for B Students. A College Guide for Students without Straight A's*. Tamara B. Orr. Available at [www.supercollege.com](http://www.supercollege.com) (\$14.96)

*Creative Colleges: A Guide for Student Actors, Artists, Dancers, Musicians and Writers.* Elaina Loveland.  
Available at [www.supercollege.com](http://www.supercollege.com) (\$14.96)

*Fiske Guide to Colleges.* Edward B. Fiske. Available at most chain bookstores. (\$16.00)

# THE PROCESS OF GIVING INFORMATION TO YOUR COUNSELOR

## Procedures for completing the FERPA (Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act) form

The FERPA form is a document that allows you (the applicant) to view any documents that were part of their admission application if you are admitted and in many instances, you enrolled. College and universities expect you to waive your rights, thinking that you have entrusted your teachers and counselors. If you have an issue with waiving your right, please talk to your college counselor.

1. Log into your Naviance account and click on the “My Colleges” tab. Click on the “colleges I’m applying to” link. The image below is what should pop up.

Colleges I'm Applying To Page 1 of 1

St. Vincent Pallotti High School Logged in as: Noah A. Ager (log out) Manage my account

colleges I'm applying to

**Common App Account Matching - Incomplete** Details

In order to match your Family Connection and Common App accounts, you need to do the following:

Step 1 - Create a Common App account on [Common App Online](#)

Step 2 - Sign the CA FERPA Waiver & Authorization on [Common App Online](#)

Common App Email Address:

Once you match accounts, your FERPA status can no longer be changed and you cannot unmatch your account.

Tips to successfully match accounts:  
Make sure you enter the email address that you chose for your Common App account.  
Make sure your last name matches on your Family Connection profile and your Common App account.  
Make sure your first name or date of birth matches on your Family Connection profile and your Common App account.

[view detailed status](#) | [logout me](#) [Not a file](#)

College	Type	Applying via Common App?	Submissions	Expected Difficulty*	Deadline?	Office Status	My App	Results	EXIT	LINKS	SHARE	HELP
College that I am attending												
N/A												
Teacher Recommendations												
No teachers currently listed												

\* Difficulty of admission specifically for you as estimated by your counselor  
† College information is provided by the colleges themselves. Costs, dates, policies, and programs are subject to change, so please confirm important facts with college admission personnel.

**St. Vincent Pallotti High School**  
113 St. Mary's Place  
Laurel MD 20701  
p. (301) 725-322

https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/colleges/application

9/10/2013

2. Make sure you complete this part. If you do not, we cannot send any application documents out for you.

3. If you are not using the common application for any applications click on the “Not Needed” link.

## **Procedures for Naviance/EDOCS system**

1. *We strongly encourage every student to use the Common Application when available.* Not every school uses the Common App. Below is a separate procedure for colleges/universities that do not use the Common Application.

**Step 1:** When you begin your account through the Common Application website, you **MUST add every school (which comes up in the My Colleges section)** so we can link the transcript, counselor letter, and teacher recs to your account.

**Step 2:** Please fill out a “Transcript Request Form” for every college/university to which you apply. Make sure you complete every part of the form. Be sure to sign the form.

**Step 3:** Turn in your form at least 3 weeks before the deadline date. Please double check your Naviance account to verify the list of colleges are the ones to which you are actually applying. Your teachers should also be linked into your account as well.

**IMPORTANT: If you change anything you put on your original Transcript Release Form (most importantly, if you are not using the Common App and have decided to use a different application), you must tell your college counselor personally. Your counselor will direct you if you need to correct your form or any other new procedure.**

## **Procedures if a college/university does not use The Common Application**

1. A transcript Request Form must still be completed along with the teacher’s names and your signature.
2. You must still adhere to 3 weeks prior to deadline dates for turning in the Transcript Release Form.
3. Once the form has been turned in, the College Counseling Office will link the college/university to your Naviance account.
4. Make sure you have completed your application. If you decide not to apply to the school or if anything changes, tell your college counselor immediately.