

GUIDE TO: **College**
Admissions

PREPARED BY THE GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT AT LAURALTON HALL

Lauralton Hall

Connecticut's First Catholic College-Prep School for Girls

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Timeline for Applying

TIMELINE FOR APPLYING

LAURALTON HALL COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CALENDAR CHECKLIST

MARCH

- SAT**
- Registration for ACT
- Junior Parent Meetings with Guidance Counselor
- Begin research into college options
- Registration for SAT & SAT Subject Tests

APRIL

- ACT**
- Registration for SAT
- Visit colleges and inquire about possible interviews
- Develop resume in Guidance class

MAY

- SAT and SAT Subject Tests**
- Registration for June ACT
- Request teacher recommendations through Naviance
- Continue college research

JUNE

- SAT and SAT Subject Tests**
- ACT**
- Continue research
- Lauralton Hall Summer Essay Writing Workshop

JULY and AUGUST

- Visit colleges and universities
- Continue research and visit web sites
- Set up interview appointments for the fall if offered
- Use Naviance for college comparisons (graphs for Lauralton data)
- Register for September and/or October ACT and October SAT

SEPTEMBER

- Student meets with Guidance Counselor (meetings will continue throughout the fall)
- Finalize resume in Guidance class - should already have a rough draft
- Finalize college essay(s) - should already have a rough draft
- Finalize requests for teacher recommendations
- Early decision candidates negotiate time schedule with counselor
- Registration for October SAT /SAT Subject Tests
- NCAA eligibility forms submitted to Clearinghouse
- ACT**

OCTOBER

- Registration for November SAT
- SAT /SAT Subject Tests***
- ACT**
- Outline of college choices and application deadlines
- Continue to consult with Guidance Counselors
- Continue college visits and interviews
- Request transcripts through Naviance at least ten days prior to application deadlines.
* Be aware of EA/ED deadlines!
- Complete CSS **PROFILE** Registration (Financial Aid)
- Register for December SAT /SAT Subject Tests
- College Admissions Panel

NOVEMBER

- SAT /SAT Subject Tests ***
- Make final decisions for applications
- Check progress of teacher recommendations
- Consult with Guidance Counselors
- Work on completing all applications
- Financial Aid Night at Lauralton Hall

DECEMBER

- SAT /SAT Subject Tests ***
- ACT**
- Register for January SAT/SAT Subject Tests
- For colleges with deadlines between mid-December and mid-January, transcripts should be requested two weeks before Christmas break.

JANUARY

- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA-Financial Aid)
- Submit financial aid forms to colleges
- Keep working on grades
- SAT /SAT Subject Tests***
- Record admissions decisions in Naviance

FEBRUARY

- Keep working and wait for decisions
- ACT**

MARCH and APRIL

- You will hear all decisions by early April- Begin to make your final decision
- SAT /SAT Subject Tests ***
- ACT**

MAY and June

- Submit your deposit to the college you will be attending- Advise Guidance
- Department and complete a release of final transcript form.
- SAT /SAT Subject Tests***
- ACT**

*** SAT /SAT Subject test dates TBD. Check the Lauralton Hall school calendar online for the exact testing dates.**

The Search

STARTING THE SEARCH

GUIDANCE SEMINARS, INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

The junior year is when the counseling department at Lauralton Hall begins focusing specifically on the college selection process. Throughout the Freshman and Sophomore years counselors work with students to help them develop a better understanding of themselves and to help them learn to be responsible. Developing the characteristics of self-understanding and responsibility, will be important as students proceed through the college selection process. It is important for counselors and students to continue developing a close working relationship and individual guidance meetings are the vehicle for this. These meetings and guidance seminars focus on the following:

REVIEW TRANSCRIPT - early in the second semester of junior year students meet individually with their counselors to review their transcript focusing on their grades, level of classes, average and to choose their senior schedule.

TESTING SCHEDULE - SAT/SAT Subject and ACT tests. Counselors will go over SAT registration procedures, help students decide on testing dates and test centers and determine if SAT Subject Tests are needed.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION - discuss family's financial parameters.

NAVIANCE- web-based college search engine for students to research different colleges based on location, size, cost, major. "Do What You Are" Interest Inventory test to be administered prior to individual junior/parent meetings. In addition, college information may be obtained through the career center, books, websites, college representatives visiting LH, alumnae, college fairs, ranking magazines, and friends.

CHOOSING A COLLEGE

THE INITIAL COLLEGE LIST

PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Interests
- Career plans
- Scholastic aptitude
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Financial

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Size: from very small (1,000 students) to very large (over 10,000)
- Location: area of U.S. (in other words, how far from home....)
- Size of college community from city to small town
- Religious affiliation
- Athletics: Division I, II, III teams, club-level sports, intramurals
- Diversity: students of varied backgrounds
- Social scene: Greek life, weekend life, dorms, proximity to city life

CLASSIFICATIONS

- Public or state universities and colleges (in-state and out-of-state tuitions)
- Private colleges and universities
- Technical
- Military Academies

LIBERAL ARTS VS. SPECIALIZED DEGREES e.g. engineering, joint degree

- Liberal arts colleges – professors focus on teaching, class sizes small
- Universities – large institutions that offer many academic choices and research opportunities, graduate programs – larger classes – specialized degrees
- **ACADEMIC QUALITY**
- Freshman attrition rate (how many leave after 1 year)
- Graduation rate (how many graduate in 5 years)
- Average class size
- Credentials of professors
- How many classes taught by teaching assistants
- Average SAT's / ACT's of incoming freshman

COMPETITIVENESS OR SELECTIVITY: How hard it is to gain acceptance?

To determine a college's acceptance rate, a student should check the grade point averages and SAT/ ACT scores of accepted students on Naviance's Family Connection. There are also many guidebooks available in the Center for Guidance and College Planning.

Most Selective – acceptance rate around 9-20%. Most applicants have everything college requires and are still not accepted. Every aspect of application evaluated. Average SAT's (in critical reading and math) between 650 - 800, ACT's 30-36.

Examples: Harvard, Yale, MIT, Stanford, Duke, Georgetown

Highly Selective – acceptance rate around 20-40%. Require very strong course loads, A average in honors and impressive extracurriculars. Average SAT's (in critical reading and math) are 600 and up, ACT's 28.

Examples: Villanova, Connecticut College, Skidmore, George Washington, Providence

Very Selective – acceptance rate around 40-60%. Strong college prep course load with A/B average. SAT's (in critical reading and math) above 1,100 ACT's 24-26.

Examples: University of Scranton, University of Vermont, University of Connecticut

Selective – acceptance rate around 75%. B/C+ average (no D's). Extracurriculars are still important. SAT's (in critical reading and math) 1,000 ACT's 21-23.

Examples: Assumption, Quinnipiac, University of North Carolina — Greensboro

Less Selective – acceptance rate around 90%. C or below average. SAT (in critical reading and math) below 1,000, or ACT's 20 or below considered,

Examples: Johnson and Wales, Mitchell College, Franklin Pierce

COST

The cost of attending a particular college is one of the most important factors today for most families. It can greatly influence college choices. It is important to remember that "on paper" state universities are less expensive, but often a private institution can compete with these publicly funded colleges by offering generous financial aid packages.

VISITING COLLEGES

WHY VISIT?

The college search process comes alive in the college visit. All the advice from books and counselors is made meaningful when a prospective student visits a college campus. Colleges will gain and lose favor based on what happens during your visit. You can get a good sense of the student body by eating in the cafeteria and watching the students go by. Do they seem happy? Or stressed? Are they friendly and pleased with their school? Try to attend a class if the school permits.

TIMETABLE

Start visiting in the spring of junior year. Using a map, plan your trip to visit 2 colleges per day. You may want to do a "drive through" of other colleges in the area that are not on your list if only to help compare your choices.

GROUP INFORMATION SESSION

Arrange visits by calling the admissions office, checking the school policy on interviewing and working out a realistic travel schedule based on the times of the sessions and tours.

CAMPUS TOURS

Tour guides will be able to tell you which departments rank high, if students are really competitive with each other, do they stick around on the weekends, how the dorm life is, etc.

INDIVIDUAL EXPEDITIONS

Many students may choose to visit campuses with friends or to stay with an older graduate of LH. It is important in the case of all campus visits that the student registers with the Admissions Office. Many admissions decisions are influenced by whether the student had visited the campus or not.

STUDENT OVERNIGHTS

School's policies differ on overnights. Some colleges are very willing to have potential applicants spend the night in a dorm and will arrange this if you indicate an interest. Some colleges only have overnights for accepted students who are mulling over their decision in the spring.

SAFETY

This is the perfect opportunity to question campus safety. Ask to see statistics and get explanations of their security system.

ATTENDING CLASSES

Visiting classes and lectures is a valuable way to assess the academic quality of an institution. Observe the students. Are they interested? Is the professor easy to hear? Are the students exchanging ideas and participating? Ask the Admissions Office when you call if it is permitted to attend a class.

VISIT THE LIBRARY

Listen for a pleasant hum. How many students are using the facilities? Are they working in groups or alone or both? Would you feel comfortable here?

Application Process

WHAT DO COLLEGES LOOK FOR IN YOU?

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL

HIGH SCHOOL RECORD

Most Important-

- Specific course requirements of your high school
- Grades
- Level of classes: AP, Honors, College Prep
- Grade Point Average
- SAT/ ACT scores

Other Considerations-

- Letters of recommendation
- Essay(s)
- Extracurricular activities
- Honors and Awards
- Volunteer and paid work experience
- The interview
- Personal factors: cultural background, religious, ethnicity, where you live
- The major or field you want to study
- Relationship with alumni of the school (legacy)
- Your family's ability to pay
- Deadlines for application
- Deadlines for financial aid

RECOMMENDATIONS (know how many colleges require!)

Counselor statement: Colleges look to the counselor to give an overall impression of the student both in and out of the classroom. This is also a good opportunity for the counselor to answer questions the admissions committee might have on certain grades – was there an illness, death in the family, for instance, that might have affected a student's grades. Parents will be contributing to this by completing a parent questionnaire.

Teachers: Most colleges will require a letter of recommendation from at least one teacher so we have the juniors request letters from two teachers through Naviance. Teachers from junior year are recommended as they can attest to your most recent academic work.

Others: A pastor, youth minister, employer or alumna may write a letter, but they must know you very well and be willing to write a substantial letter. These letters are not necessary in the application process as you will include these activities in your resume.

RESUME

In the spring of junior year students will develop a resume. In the fall they will update this resume to possibly send to college and to give to teachers writing their recommendations.

Athletes may want to include a videotape or separate sports resume.

Artists will work on portfolios of their work in the fall of senior year in Senior Art Workshop. These slides or pictures will be submitted as a part of their applications. Generally the portfolios may be submitted after applications are sent usually in the month of January of senior year. Almost all colleges request that these be sent electronically.

ESSAY

From The Common Application:

The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores?

Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. Remember: 650 words is your limit, not your goal. Use the full range if you need it, but don't feel obligated to do so. (The application won't accept a response shorter than 250 words.)

- Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?
- Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
- Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there, and why is it meaningful to you?
- Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Schools not using The Common Application may ask similar questions.

* Lauralton's annual "Summer Essay Writing Workshop" will be held again in June. You'll be receiving an email to register for the class.

Important tips:

- Focus on the positive – even if you have experienced adversity or even tragedy, it is important to show how you have grown from this event.
- Feel free to describe a disappointment and what you learned from it e.g. the time I was cut from the soccer team.
- When the question is "What would you bring to the University of", be specific about what you can give to the school and what the college can do for you.
- Stay away from general, impersonal topics like the nuclear arms race or the war in Afghanistan – the college wants to know something about you.
- Take a small risk by including humor or creativity — the admissions committee has to read thousands of essays and if you don't bore them they might look more favorably on your application!

SCORES ON REQUIRED COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTS

SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test): 2 parts: Evidence Based Reading and Writing 200-800. Math 200-800. Essay optional (but strongly recommended).

ACT (American College Test): 4 parts: verbal, math, science and reading. There is an optional writing section for which you must register.

SAT Subject Tests: Less than 1% of four-year colleges (the most competitive) require these one-hour exams that cover 22 subjects – foreign languages, mathematics, sciences, history and literature. They are generally taken in addition to the SAT's. Many colleges will accept the ACT in place of SAT Subject Tests (e.g. Yale University).

INTERVIEWS

In general, colleges have been trending away from using interviews as part of the selection process. Whether you will be required to interview depends on the type of school you are applying to. At highly selective schools they may be given by alumni, but many feel they do not have much weight in the admissions process. At smaller schools interviews are usually required and may be critical. It is important to note that many individual meetings with an admissions person is not an "interview" but simply an informational session for you.

TIPS FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Arrive a bit early dressed in a manner which you feel represents your "best foot forward".
- Don't hesitate to bring Mom and Dad along. They probably won't sit in on the interview, but they, too, may have questions and concerns which may be answered on campus.
- Prepare yourself. Do a question/answer session with a friend or family member so you are ready and comfortable as you answer.
- Review your background and experience. An opening question may be "Tell me something about yourself."
- Be yourself. As you talk, try not to sound different from who you are. Be appropriate and real.
- Watch for excessive hand gestures and the "ums", "uh-huh" and "likes" when speaking.
- Be prepared to tell why you have chosen this particular college. Research the college and have some good questions to ask about the academics and extracurricular life of the school. Don't ask questions that can be readily answered by reading the catalog.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why have you selected this particular college?
- In what academic areas are you interested?
- What kind of things are you most interested in outside of school?
- What type of reading material do you enjoy?
- How have you been employed during your summers?
- How much traveling have you done?
- What subject do you dislike the most?
- On what subject have you written a term paper?
- What are your SAT's and grade point average? What level classes are you taking?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT A COLLEGE

- What are the strongest departments?
- What is the size of the largest class?
- What percentage of students stay on campus on the weekends?
- Are sports available for the average player?
- What percentage of students participate in intramurals?
- What percent of students have jobs upon graduation?
- Do many students study abroad?
- Does your college have their own programs abroad?
- Is housing available for all 4 years?
- What clubs or organizations does your college support?

PERSONAL STATEMENT

If there is something special about your educational or personal life that you think should be shared this may be the time to share it. Consider using this opportunity to communicate and explain any factors, especially those that have impacted your grades e.g. a death in the family, illness, etc. (You may also cover this in a personal statement in addition to your essay).

ALUMNI INTERVIEWS

After your application is received, some of the more competitive colleges may assign an alumnus/a to interview you. You must often call and set up the appointment, which is usually held in his or her place of business or they may suggest coming to your home. Have a copy of your resume at hand and follow suggestions for college interviews.

Submitting Applications

PUTTING PEN TO PAPER

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

ONLINE APPLICATIONS

All college websites may be accessed through Naviance's Family Connection and nearly all colleges now have applications on their websites. The majority of students submit their applications electronically. Fees are sometimes reduced or waived for online applications. **It is important to print and save a copy of the application for your records.**

COMMON APPLICATION - www.commonapp.org

What it is

A generic form used by more than 400 colleges including prestigious schools such as Harvard and Boston College (neither of these schools has an application other than the Common Application). If a school accepts both its own form and the Common Application, both are equally appropriate for you to submit.

How to get it

1. Go to the Common Application web site (www.commonapp.org). Create a password, then you can access your account at any time from any computer. Students send the application electronically to the colleges.
2. Create a password.
3. Send applications electronically

What is a supplement? Does my application need one?

Many schools require additional information, called a 'supplement'. These supplements usually ask for additional biographical information, another essay or recommendation, housing requests or financial aid information. Supplements are available on the Common Application website. Not all colleges require supplements.

All transcript requests should be submitted through Naviance ten days before the application due date.

REQUESTING TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

In the spring, juniors email their teachers through Naviance to request a letter of recommendation.

ADMISSIONS OPTIONS

Schools vary widely as to the deadlines and plans by which a student is expected to submit applications. IT IS TO THE STUDENT'S ADVANTAGE TO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS BEFORE THE DUE DATE, PARTICULARLY FOR STATE SCHOOLS AND THOSE WITH ROLLING ADMISSIONS.

EARLY DECISION: A student applies to a college by a fixed early date and receives an answer from the college within four to six weeks. If a student is admitted, she **must** withdraw any other applications she has submitted. This is a **binding decision**; if accepted, the student **must attend**.

EARLY ACTION: These plans require that students apply by an **early date, but do not require applicants to withdraw other applications and make a commitment to attend**. Students hear from the colleges within **four to six weeks**. This plan seems to benefit the student who has good junior year grades and can get her application and recommendations organized on time.

RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION: Restrictive Early Action is a **non-binding program** for students who view a school as their **first choice**. Generally, a student applying to a school that has a binding **Early Decision** program **may not apply Restrictive Early Action**; however check with each school for more detailed information.

ROLLING ADMISSIONS: Many public universities and less selective colleges operate under a rolling admission policy, giving a student a decision within a month after receiving the application. These schools will continue to accept students until the class is filled. Admissions decisions in the early round are either 'admit' or 'defer.' In the latter case, the college will review the candidacy again when more students have applied and mid-year grades are sent.

OPEN ADMISSIONS: Many public and community colleges operate under an open admissions policy. Generally, there are no cut-off dates for applying. Students who have received a high school diploma or G.E.D. will be admitted to the college. Admission to the college, however, does not guarantee admission to a specific program (e.g. nursing, radiation technology).

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

STUDENT SENDS:

- Completed application
- Supplements and additional essay
- Fee (Credit Card)
- Request for transcripts, through Naviance

COUNSELOR SENDS:

- Lauralton Hall High School Profile
- Official Transcript
- Counselor Statement
- Any completed "School Report" forms
- Teacher Recommendations

A small number of schools require documents by mail. Please check with your counselor to review this process.

****IMPORTANT NOTE****

ALL APPLICATION SUPPORT DOCUMENTS ARE SENT ELECTRONICALLY FROM LH GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT WITH ALL OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED ITEMS.

IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR COLLEGES TO NOTIFY YOU THAT PARTS OF YOUR APPLICATION ARE MISSING.

THE APPLICANT SHOULD USE THIS EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO CONTACT THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR READING HER FILE AND CONFIRM HER APPLICATION IS COMPLETE. THIS CAN BE DONE VIA EMAIL OR TELEPHONE.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING

The Lauralton Hall Guidance Department recommends that students plan to take both SAT and ACT tests.

**School Code (CEEB)
070415**

SAT's: Most students take them twice. There are 3 opportunities in the spring of junior year - March, May and June - 3 more in the fall of senior year - October, November and December. College Board statistics show that scores do not improve significantly after the second time (but we certainly have seen improvement on the third try!)

ACT's: There are 4 sections - English, Math, Reading, and Science. Some students particularly strong readers prefer the ACT. **Students should take the optional writing section.**

SAT Subject tests: The highly selective schools that require these exams will want the Math test (Ic or IIc), and one (or two) others of your choice. Many of these selective schools will accept the ACT with writing in place of SAT and SAT Subject Tests. **It is the applicant's responsibility to determine which of her schools require that she take the SAT Subject Tests.**

HOW TO REGISTER

- We advise you to register on-line at www.collegeboard.org and ACT at www.actstudent.org
OR You may call the SAT at 1-800-SAT-SCORE or ACT at 319-337-1270 to register with a credit card.
- Approximate fees: SAT: \$51.00, ACT (w/ writing): \$52.50

SAT/ ACT PREPARATION - Do I need an SAT/ ACT course?

There has been a great deal of controversy about these courses. They generally range in price from \$500 to \$1500. LH offers a course by First Choice College Placement in the spring of junior year. Most counselors feel that they can be beneficial if the student puts the time and effort into doing the homework and studying the course requires. For more information about First Choice College Placement go to www.firstchoicecollege.com or call 203-878-7998.

Students can also prepare by working with computer programs or from The College Board website, ACT website or by taking practice tests in books available at any bookstore.

SCORE REPORTING

IT IS THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO SEND OFFICIAL SCORE REPORTS TO EACH SCHOOL.

SAT or ACT score reports may be sent to colleges in the following ways:

- 1.** Each time a student takes either the SAT or ACT they can send their scores to four colleges free of charge. They indicate these college's codes at the time of registration - these codes are provided on the websites.
- 2.** Score reports may also be sent after the test, BUT there is a fee of \$10 charged per college. This can be done online: collegeboard.org - actstudent.org or by phone to the College Board (SAT) (609/771-7600) or the American College Testing Program (ACT) (319/337-1313)
- 3.** Score Choice - Score Choice gives you the option to choose which scores (by test date for the SAT and by individual test for SAT Subject Tests) you send to colleges- at no additional cost. You can choose scores from one, several or all SAT test dates.

FREE SAT/ACT TEST PREPARATION WEBSITES

www.number2.com

www.khanacademy.org/sat

www.collegeboard.org

www.princetonreview.com

www.majortests.com/sat

www.sparknotes.com/testprep

FEE BASED SITES Costs vary considerably. Please see websites for specifics.

www.testpreview.com

www.actstudent.org/onlineprep/index.html

www.tamingthesat.org

www.grockit.com/sat

www.petersons.com/college-search/sat-course.aspx

www.prepme.com

Paying For College

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

The premise behind "Financial Aid" is that families are expected to pay, to the extent which they are able. Assistance is made available to make up the difference between what families can afford and the total cost of education

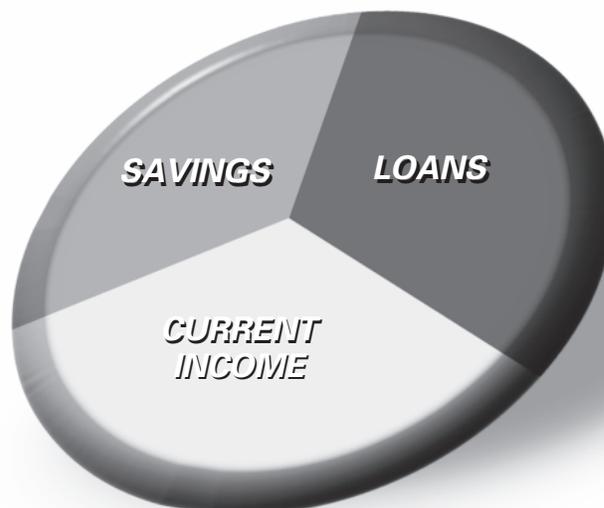
DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Total cost of attendance (including tuition & fees, books/supplies, transportation, misc. expenses, room/board)
— Family contribution
<hr/>
NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

Determining the parents' contribution

- Major determinant: income
- Assets (will range from 2% to 6%)
No more than 6% of the parents' assets are included
- Contribution from assets - parents (2% to 6%) students (35%)

HOW FAMILIES FINANCE THEIR CONTRIBUTION



BASIC TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

Grants and scholarships don't need to be repaid or maintained by a job. Grants are usually based on financial need alone, while scholarships are given to students who have met some criteria, such as academic or athletic merit, regardless of whether the student needs the money to help pay for college.

Loans are the most widely available sources of financial aid. You must repay them someday, but the interest rates for student loans are often lower than for commercial loans, and payments are deferred until after the student has completed college.

Work-study students work 10-15 hours per week on or off campus to earn money for expenses

FINANCIAL AID

Essentially attempts to provide the difference between what the family can afford and what the tuition and room/board costs are

- Combination of the three varieties of aid listed above.
- Aid comes from federal and state governments and institutional funds
- Financial aid packages will vary widely between schools

BE WARY OF

Financial aid planners who promise to:

Reduce college costs by 50% or more, preserve your assets and save you from \$5,000 to \$15,000 each year and/or learn how to position yourself to receive a variety of grants

Scholarship searches who claim that:

Millions of dollars in financial aid is going unused each year, every student is eligible for scholarships which can be found for you and/or service is guaranteed, or your money is refunded

HOW FINANCIAL AID WORKS

Financial aid criteria changes somewhat from year to year. Demonstrating need is still the essential part of the process.

The following are the financial aid forms:

THE FREE APPLICATION FOR STUDENT AID (FAFSA) must be filled out by all students who are applying for ANY student aid. **WWW.FAFSA.ED.GOV**

THE CSS PROFILE: only some colleges require this additional financial aid form. There is a charge for processing this form. You may file it on line or by phone. Once the PROFILE registration is filed, CSS will mail a customized PROFILE application directly to the student. CSS will accept the PROFILE Registration as early as late September. **WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.ORG**

* CSS Profile is not optional for some colleges - part of application

TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE FINANCIAL AID PROCESS

- Attend financial aid workshops offered at Luralton, individual colleges, other community resources.
- Remember that at many colleges, applications must be received by December 1st to be considered for Presidential Scholarships.
- Check with your employer about educational benefits for dependents including incentive plans and scholarships. Many employers, community organizations, labor unions and non-profit organizations give scholarships.
- Know your deadlines and meet them ahead of time.
- File the CSS PROFILE form as early as possible, even if only one school requires it.
- Make copies of all forms that you are sending out.
- Review the acknowledgements from the FAFSA and PROFILE and respond to any discrepancies immediately
- When in doubt, make an appointment to consult with the aid administrator at the colleges under consideration. This can be done over the phone or during a campus visit.
- Connecticut Higher Education Trust — CHET

FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES AND SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

The best resources for finding scholarship money are websites. Luralton Hall also receives some national and local scholarships opportunities which are posted on Naviance's Family Connection under "Scholarships". The following resources have been helpful to other applicants seeking information about financial aid and scholarships.

Don't Miss Out / Octameron

Paying for College / The Princeton Review

The A's and B's of Academic Scholarships / Octameron

The Scholarship Book / Prentice Hall

College Cost & Financial Aid Handbook / The College Board

Kaplan Scholarships / Simon & Schuster

The Complete Scholarship Book / Sourcebooks, Inc.

Meeting College Costs / The College Board

College Money Handbook / Peterson's

The Big Book of Minority Opportunities / Garrett Park Press

Scholarships, Grants and Prizes / Peterson's

More FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION AND SCHOLARSHIP SEARCHES

www.fastweb.com

www.studentaid.ed.gov

www.salliemae.com

www.finaid.org

www.ne-epc.com/aid.htm

www.cashe.com

www.fafsa.ed.gov

- FAFSA on the web

www.ed.gov/inits/hope

- Hope Scholarship & Lifetime Learning Credit Info

www.collegeboard.com

www.scholarships.com

www.NASFAA.org

Tip: if you are interested in additional Web sites, COLLEGE.EDU by Octameron is an entire book of college information Web sites.

www.parentsandcolleges.com

- list of need blind schools

www.tutioncoach.com

- tips on the financial aid process

Additional Information

TALENTS & SPECIAL NEEDS

VISUAL ARTS

Students interested in studying visual arts can do so in divisions of universities or at stand-alone art institutes. Art Institutes grant a bachelor of fine arts (BFA) and most of the course-work is art related. For those who enjoy art but want to study other disciplines as well, it may be wise to consider less restrictive art programs at liberal arts colleges. A portfolio will have to be submitted for either type of program. Generally, LH students put a portfolio of 12 pieces together in the fall of senior year in Senior Art Workshop for submission.

Factors to consider when choosing an institution:

- Availability of studio space
- Size of studio classes
- Availability and status of instructors
- Cost of materials
- Condition of equipment
- Career placement and internship opportunities
- A portfolio can influence a student's admission status, whether or not they are planning to major in art.

PERFORMING ARTS, MUSIC, DANCE

Like visual artists, the student who wishes to pursue a career in performing arts, dance or music has the option of attending a conservatory or majoring/minoring in the art at a university or liberal arts college. Again, it depends on the level of the student's interest in the discipline and her enjoyment of the traditional liberal arts courses such as literature, science, etc.

Candidates for music, drama and dance programs are expected to audition live or submit a video and/or audio tape. Appointments for auditions should be made upon submission of applications in late fall.

An audition can influence an admissions decision. Colleges take great pride in their orchestras and choral groups so the strength of an audition can truly help admission into any division of the University.

ATHLETES

NCAA Eligibility Form:

In the second semester of your junior year, student athletes should register at www.ncaa.org with the NCAA Eligibility Center and complete the amateurism questionnaire. Online registration is the only method to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Select "Prospective Student-Athlete" and then register as a U.S. or international student. Complete the Student Release Form online and include your credit or debit card information to pay the fee. Then follow instructions to complete the transaction and then follow the directions to request the transcript. Go to Naviance and add the NCAA Eligibility Center to "List of colleges I am applying to" and request transcript. Transcripts are sent through Naviance.

Varsity players at LH can consider playing on the college level. There are three divisions in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Division I schools are the most athletically competitive and award athletic scholarships. Division II colleges are also able to offer scholarships but generally are less competitive academically. Division III does not award athletic scholarships.

Athletes should talk to their coaches about opportunities to compete at the college level. Discuss and consider what level of competition would be best for the student. When visiting campuses, try to arrange a meeting with the coach of your sport at the college. This has two purposes: you can assess the personality of the coach and she/he will connect with you, which is obviously valuable as they put together their recruits.

Develop a sports resume and, when appropriate, a 5-minute videotape. For team sports some footage of the whole team, some of the individual player.

Obtain an unofficial transcript from the guidance office to share with coaches. They will be interested in your grades and SAT/ ACT's. You can submit this to the coaches on your own or have the guidance office fax or send one for the schools that are showing interest in you.

It is no secret that a talent in a sport can tilt an admissions decision favorably. Though Division III schools cannot give money, many coaches at this level are given a certain number of "accepts" by the Admissions Committee (as long as the athlete is close to the standards of the school). But BEWARE.....coaches may promise the world but on many occasions that "extra flag" they were going to put on your application just doesn't materialize.

SPECIAL NEEDS

No student may be discriminated against in the admissions process because of a learning or physical disability (which includes ADD and ADHD). Every college receiving government money must provide services for these students, but services vary widely among institutions.

If you are a student who has a specific learning disability, the college admission process may mean that you will need to provide information to colleges about your particular history and experiences.

If you make the college aware of your learning disability, the college will expect you to be able to tell them exactly what kind of disability you have, what resources you have used to compensate, and what services you will need from them.

On the other hand, some students do not choose to share with the colleges the fact that they have a learning disability. In either case, your counselor will respect your decision and handle your case accordingly. You and your family should discuss this with your counselor when you meet to plan your college search.

Finding the best fit is best accomplished by visiting colleges and universities. Check their actual facilities, talk to the teachers and students so you have a good feel for the services.

Check on what documentation is needed to be accepted into a college's special education program. In order to qualify for special accommodations (usually extended time) on the SATs, a professional Assessment must be made within three years by a clinical psychologist, learning specialist or physician.

The guidance department submits this information on a special form to the College Board which grants the accommodations (or not). If a student has a Lauralton Hall Accommodation Plan, the decision for extended time will be reviewed by the College Board.

ADVICE

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

The college admission process is a time to learn about yourself. As students examine different options they analyze their own needs, interests and values. It is important that some confusion and frustration exists in order for this learning to take place.

There is not one perfect college for anyone. The process of finding the “right” college is very much like falling in and out of love. Like people, colleges have strengths and weaknesses, pluses and minuses. The goal is to find the best match. Usually, there is no perfect match.

The “right” college may not be the one with the most prestigious name. There are over 3,600 four-year colleges in the United States which offer an excellent education to students. Students should look for colleges that will challenge them but also offer a chance to be highly successful. Students should graduate from college feeling confident, educated and ready to face new challenges ahead.

Greater expense does not make a college better. Because a college is a state school, subsidized by tax dollars, does not mean there is something inferior about it. Lower costs, as well as a diversity of students and programs, make these colleges and universities very attractive.

THE STRESS FACTOR

This is an incredibly stressful time for families. The media has come to focus on the college process, annual editions of top magazines rate colleges, the Wall Street Journal has lead articles on early decision vs. regular decision. Party conversation and bumper stickers on cars determine a family’s feeling of well-being about their daughter’s college decisions. **Step away from all the hype and myths and focus on what is truly the right and realistic fit for your daughter and this can be a fun and stimulating time for the family.**

WHERE THE FAMILY (PARENTS ESPECIALLY) FIT IN

The college selection process should be an exciting time when students have an opportunity to take a close look at themselves and plan a future that will be valuable, challenging and productive. Unfortunately too often family tensions develop as members feel pressures relating to finding the “right school”, deadlines, preparing applications and social concerns.

The following suggestions are offered to students and family members to keep the college selection process in perspective.

- Use the process as a tool to learn more about each other and build new bridges of communication while developing a more mature relationship.
- Delegate responsibilities in the process. For example, parents can lend a hand in organization details—separating forms, checking deadlines, etc.

- Parents should begin to talk about college topics with, “How can I help?”, not by telling students what has to be done or what they should be doing.
- Let home be as stress free as possible especially when friends and relatives are present.

If either parent or student feels that communication is breaking down, please call for an appointment with the guidance counselor.

PRIVACY

You have the right to keep life decisions and information to yourself. Grade point average, SAT/ ACT scores and colleges considered often become competitive, stressful issues for everyone. We encourage families to treat this information as confidential. Maintaining privacy can reduce the competitiveness, sometimes felt during this time.

Be assured that it is all right to say that the family wishes not to discuss the college topic with those that approach family members with inappropriate, sometimes intrusive remarks and questions.

HONESTY

Parents and students must work at talking openly and honestly about concerns, fears, hopes and other feelings as they go through the college process.

Family financial concerns must be discussed. It is vitally important that the student is clear on her family's financial situation before applying to colleges.

LISTENING

— *Listening is the key to effective communication*

Listen to each other without interrupting with opinions, judgments or criticism.

Parents have much to contribute, but how and when they choose to do so will determine how much of an impact they have.

COLLEGE JARGON

Every activity has its own vocabulary. Here are some terms you will use frequently in the college search.

ALUMNUS: Masculine graduate of a specific college (plural masculine – alumni).

ALUMNA: Feminine graduate of a specific college (plural female – alumnae).

AP: Advanced Placement courses leading to exams in spring for college credits. Monitored by CEEB (College Entrance Examination Board).

ACT: There are four subject areas – English, Math, Social Studies and Natural Science. The scores are between 1 and 36, 18 is the median.

CEEB: College Entrance Examination Board.

CEEB CODE NUMBER – Academy of Our Lady of Mercy Luralton Hall (official name): 070-415

COLLEGE BOARD: See CEEB

COMMON APPLICATION: A standardized application form used by a consortium of colleges for admission. Available via web at www.commonapp.org.

CO-OP PROGRAM: College sponsored work/internship program.

CSS/ PROFILE: (In addition to FAFSA) Required by some private colleges.

EARLY ACTION: (Early Notification) System used by some top level colleges—applications must be submitted in early November or December. Non-binding decision given by mid- January.

EARLY DECISION: System whereby a college notifies student of decision by mid-January – involves a binding commitment on the part of the student.

ETS: Education Testing Service, part of Princeton conglomerate.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid, The College Board's college Scholarship Services application form – required for applicants applying for financial aid. Not available until October of student's senior year. (Available on the Web – www.fafsa.ed.gov)

GPA: Grade Point Average – Scholastic average since 9th grade.

GREEK SYSTEM: Fraternities and sororities (using Greek letters).

LIBERAL ARTS/ARTS & SCIENCE: This term covers a broad range of academic subjects usually related to humanities or social sciences.

L.D.: Learning disabled or learning disability.

NAVIANCE: Web-based college application and search engine allowing students to track applications, contact college admissions, research college websites, etc.

PELL GRANT: Federal grant for undergraduate education.

PERKINS LOAN: Low interest loan to students.

P.L.U.S.: Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students; non-income based loan to parents for college.

PSAT/NMSQT: Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Given in October of sophomore and junior year – helpful tool in early evaluation of student’s college desirability, part of student record. The National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test only counts on the PSAT given junior year.

ROLLING ADMISSIONS: Almost immediate notification of admissions decision once application is deemed complete by the college.

R.O.T.C.: Reserve Officer Training Corps – military training on some college campuses; can be financially helpful.

SCHOOL CODE NUMBER: CEEB Code Number, high school or college I.D. Code No. (070-415)

STAFFORD LOAN: Low interest loans to students (formerly called GSL, Guaranteed Student Loans).

SUBJECT TESTS: Subject test of the College Board – 22 subjects, not required by all colleges.

TEST CENTER CODE: Code given to schools (generally high schools) who offer their campus as a SAT/ACT testing site.

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language, given by the College Board generally to international students to prove their ability to read and write English.

WAIS-R: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Test-Revised; an I.Q. test given by licensed diagnostician or psychologist, usually recommended for L.D. students.

WORK/STUDY PROGRAM: Part of financial aid package at most colleges – the College Financial Aid office arranges local jobs.

NAVIANCE & FAMILY CONNECTION

Using Naviance, a web-based college application and search engine, students are able to track their college applications, contact college admissions offices personally, receive information on specific college deadlines and other updates, complete the Myer's- Briggs "Do What You Are" Personality Indicator test, and access current PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP scores.

Students and their parents will receive separate registration codes allowing them to access "Family Connection" through Lauralton's Naviance site <http://connection.naviance.com/aolm>. Students and parents will each have their own "personal" webpage. Students will be working during guidance curriculum periods to compile specific information necessary for future individual meetings with their counselors.

Lauralton Hall

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