

Decatur Heritage Christian Academy

2010-2011

**College Admissions
Handbook**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Seniors are about to embark on a very critical stage in career development. Listen to the counsel of parents, teachers, and other resources available to help you make informed decisions. The counselor, teachers, and administrators at Decatur Heritage are here to assist you on your journey. You are always welcome to come by Mrs. Ross's office to discuss any concerns you might have regarding college admission, financial aid, scholarships, or career choice.

This notebook is designed to help you make the choices that best meet your needs. Monthly and weekly announcements and bulletins will be available that list current scholarships. Many college catalogs, videos, CDs, and other resource guides can be found in the counseling office.

Your junior year is a good time to begin making plans for your future. During your senior year you will begin to make concrete plans that affect where you will go to school and what you will major in. It is time to take stock of yourself. What kind of student are you? What are your goals? Consider your interests and the things you enjoy doing. Are your talents such that you can build a career around them? Do you work well with others? Do you prefer working with people or things? Have you had a part-time job or engaged in volunteer work that stimulates a career interest—such as hospital work, camp counseling, auto repair, or tutoring? Discuss your interests and learning abilities with your counselor, your teachers, and your parents—not so they can tell you what to do, but so that you can express your ideas and get a variety of viewpoints and suggestions.

The following suggestions are made to help you prepare for your education beyond high school:

1. SEEK GOD'S WILL

God has a perfect plan for your life. Ask God to show you who He wants you to be, where He wants you to go, and what He wants you to do. Talk with your minister, youth minister, etc.

2. KNOW YOURSELF

Interest, abilities, achievement, and ambitions are important factors to be considered in setting your goals. **THESE CAN BE DISCUSSED WITH YOUR COUNSELORS, FRIENDS AND PARENTS.**

3. STUDY OCCUPATIONS

Find out as much as possible about various occupations that interest you. If possible, get some experience in these occupations. Consult with people in these fields. Shadow for a day during the summer or a school holiday.

4. PLAN YOUR HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Certain courses are required for entrance to college. College bulletins are a good source of evaluation of what is needed. Consult your counselor.

5. GOOD STUDY HABITS

Develop good study habits including how to take notes from lectures and research materials. Strive to improve your study habits as you progress through high school.

6. MAKE GOOD GRADES

Grades of “B” are considered recommended grades. Good grades are important. While some colleges will accept students with grades below the recommended ones, a student’s chances for admission to college are better when the academic record is strong.

7. INVEST YOUR TIME IN MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

Use your “free time” to develop hobbies and other interests. Involve yourself in school, community, and church activities. In particular, seek out ways that you can work in community service and in service to others in need of your skills and talents. Broaden your interests through reading, travel, and contact with knowledgeable people. Above all, remember that the quality and not the quantity of these activities is most important to colleges reviewing your application.

8. SELECT YOUR COLLEGE OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Investigate the institutions or training programs that offer the types of programs you desire. Consult with people who have attended these institutions such as friends, relatives, or college representatives. Learn about the projected demands in your selected vocational field. Attend college information programs conducted by admissions representatives from all types of schools.

9. VISIT COLLEGES

Call or register online for an appointment and a campus tour. Spend time visiting classes, dormitories, cafeteria; check out the library and special facilities. Find out what life is like both on weekends and weekdays. Can you picture yourself at this college? Each senior is allowed two (2) days for college visits during the school year. See Mrs. Ross for a college visit permission form.

10. LEARN ABOUT COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE

Talk with the college admission counselor or consult brochures and websites to learn about the requirements of various colleges. Become familiar with the application procedures and deadlines established by the college.

10. PLAN YOUR FINANCES

Parents and students should become knowledgeable about financing a college education. Consideration should be given to federal, state, and local sources of financial assistance. Be sure the sources used are current and up-to-date. Investigate your eligibility for need-based aid. EVERY senior is encouraged to fill out the FAFSA in January.

11. PREPARE FOR APPLICATION PROCEDURES EARLY

Get references, transcripts, applications, and other materials early. Application for admission should be completed well before deadlines. The Scholarship deadlines come before the admission deadlines. Scholarship applications or related material should be completed prior to deadlines. Request a transcript from Mrs. Ross, two weeks in advance.

Please make use of the information and resources in this booklet. Begin to explore, but if you cannot decide exactly what college major or career you want to pursue, don’t panic. You have time to try various jobs, make mistakes, change your mind, and grow out of one career and into another. All the events will be used for your good because they will help you make better decisions later. Average Americans change careers five times in a lifetime.

II. CALENDAR FOR SENIORS

A. SENIORS – CLASS OF 2010

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

- Narrow your list of college selections
- Request online or write to your college(s) for catalogs and applications
- Do a career interest inventory if you have not already done so
- Search for scholarships (fastweb.com is a good source)
- Fine tune your resume (see example in section III C)
- Make an appointment with Mrs. Ross to discuss your college/career plans (see list of websites)
- Fill out the Senior Information Form for Mrs. Ross (at the front of this folder)
- Select teachers to write recommendations that you might need
- Request your transcripts from Mrs. Ross at least 2 weeks before a deadline
- Work on your essays if needed for applications and scholarships
- Attend all meetings with college representatives that visit DHCA
- Plan college visits. Meet with college admissions representatives
- Attend regional college fairs (There is one at Calhoun & one in Birmingham – dates TBA)

OCTOBER

- October 1—Submit materials needed to meet November college application deadlines
- Complete a transcript request form from Mrs. Ross at least 2 weeks before deadlines
- Provide completed resumes and stamped envelopes to teachers who are writing recommendations
- Complete final revision of required essays
- Make copies of all completed applications before mailing!
- October -Take the ACT or SAT
- Meet with college admissions representatives visiting DHCA
- Send applications to schools with rolling admissions; finish Early Action/Early Decision applications that are due between November 1 and December 1
- Maintain grades!!!
- Attend regional college fairs

NOVEMBER

- November – Take the ACT or SAT
- November 1-15—Test scores and applications due for “early application” decisions.
- Investigate all sources of potential financial aid and complete scholarship applications
- Continue to submit applications to schools with rolling admissions
- Write or call colleges for applications and catalogs

DECEMBER

- December 1—Submit materials needed to meet February 1 application deadlines. Don't forget to request transcripts from Mrs. Ross at least 2 weeks in advance of deadline.
- December -Take the SAT or ACT
- Study for exams
- Finalize college admissions process
- December 1-15—These are often the application deadlines for selective colleges
- Enjoy the holidays!!!

JANUARY

- Keep focused on grades – they still count!
- Fill out the FAFSA (financial aid from the government)
- January – Take the ACT or SAT
- Continue to investigate scholarship opportunities
- Young men who are 18 years old must register with the Selective Service
- Register to vote if you are 18

FEBRUARY/MARCH

- February – Take the ACT or SAT
- Fill out the FAFSA (Financial aid from the government)
- Monitor applications to be sure that all materials are sent and received on time
- Call your selected colleges to see if your file is complete
- Study college catalogs and keep the one for the year you enter that school
- Military: Stay in contact with recruiter/admissions officer for details of enlistment and responsibilities
- Interview someone employed in your career field
- Don't catch "senioritis!"

APRIL

- Take the ACT
- Selective college acceptance decisions are due
- Submit housing/tuition deposits as required
- If accepted by several colleges, make your selection and send notification letters to all others
- If you are put on a wait list, call, visit, or write directors of admissions regarding any recent academic or other achievements
- Registration deadline for the June ACT or SAT

MAY

- May - Take the SAT (ACT in June)
- Senior Exams
- Senior Trip
- May 20—summer; Request that FINAL transcript be mailed to college of choice
- Graduation practice
- GRADUATION

College Planning Calendar for Juniors

Fall

- Keep your grades up – the next two years are very important!
- Stay involved in extra-curricular activities and community service.
- Register for the ACT or SAT.
- Learn about colleges. Look at the web sites. Talk to friends, family, teachers, and recent grads of your school now in college.
- Take the PSAT in October.
- Make a file system (or purchase an expandable file system) to organize all the information you will receive.
- Visit colleges you are interested in.

Winter

- You will receive your senior handbook.
- Register for the ACT or SAT.
- Talk with graduates who are home from college.
- Continue to visit colleges.
- Keep those grades up and study hard for semester exams.

Spring

- Visit colleges and get a feel for each one.
- Develop a list of colleges that interest you. Request view books and information about scholarships, financial aid, and academic programs.
- Explore and research career possibilities and shadow when possible.
- Register for the ACT or SAT.
- Begin developing a resume.
- Consider your summer opportunities.

Summer

- Review for the ACT or SAT.
- Keep extracurricular and community services going.
- Update your resume.
- Visit colleges.
- Request applications from colleges to which you will apply.

III. SELF-EVALUATION

A. SELF AWARENESS

The questions which follow can help you focus on future choices and on you as an individual. The most important thing is to find and believe in your unique God given abilities and desires. The following questions are designed to help you find the college and career choices that God has for you, to help you evaluate where you are now mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, and to find the path you need to choose. If you wish to discuss your thoughts or feelings with Mrs. Ross, please do not hesitate to do so.

Your Goals

1. Who does God want you to be? How do you feel about who you are? What do you think about who you are?
2. What do you care most about? What occupies most of your energy, effort, and/or thoughts?
3. How do you define success? How or where did you learn the definition? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
4. What are your unique God given gifts or strengths? What would you most like to change about yourself?
5. Do you have a strong heartfelt desire?
6. What positive experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking? What negative experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

Your Education

1. What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed the most? Which courses have been the most difficult for you? Why?
2. What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own? Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments: topics chosen for research papers, lab reports, independent projects; independent reading; school activities; or volunteer work. What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
3. How do you learn best? What methods of teaching style engage your interest the most?
4. How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues, and exchange ideas? What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?
5. How would you describe your school? Are learning and academic success respected? Has the school's environment encouraged you to develop your interests, talents, and abilities? Have you felt limited in any way? What would you preserve or change about the school if you were able to do so?
6. How well has your school prepared you for college? In what areas of skills or knowledge do you feel most confident or least confident? Have you been challenged by your courses?
7. Have you worked up to your potential? Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Are your ACT or SAT scores an accurate measure? What do you consider the best measure of your potential for college work?
8. Are there any outside circumstances (in your recent experience or background) which have interfered with your academic performance? Consider such factors as: after-school jobs, home responsibilities or difficulties, excessive school activities, illness or emotional stress, parental influences, or other factors which are unique to your background.

Your Activities and Interests

1. What activities do you most enjoy outside the daily routine of classes and other responsibilities?
2. Which activities mean the most to you?
3. Looking back, would you have made different choices?
4. Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence or contribution to other individuals, your family, or school?
5. How would others describe your role in school or your home community?
6. How would you describe your role?
7. After a long, hard day what do you most enjoy doing?
8. What is fun or relaxing for you?

The World Around You

1. How would you describe your family and home? How have they influenced your way of thinking? How have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by them?
2. What do your parents and friends expect of you? How have their expectations influenced the goals and standard you set for yourself? To what pressures have you felt it necessary to conform?
3. What is the most controversial issue you have encountered in recent years? Why does the issue concern you? What is your reaction to the controversy? What is your opinion about the issue?
4. Have you ever encountered people who think an act differently from you? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
What concerns you most about the world around you?
6. Do you have any current or historical heroes or heroines? Who are they and why?
9. What books have you read which have changed your way of thinking? Who are some of your favorite writers? Why?

Your Personality and Relationships with Others

1. How would someone who knows you well describe you? Your best qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings? Would you agree with their assessment? How have you grown or changed during your high school years?
2. Which relationships are most important to you and why? Describe the people whom you consider your best friends; your best critics; your best advocates. In what ways are they similar to or different from you?
3. Describe the students at your school. Which ones do you feel you are close to? Do you feel alienated from any? What kind of people do you admire most? Generally, how do you respond to people who think and act differently from what you expect? How do you feel about your teachers?
4. How are you influenced by others who are important to you? How important to you are approval, rewards, and recognition? How do you respond to pressure, competition, or challenge? How do you react to failure, disappointment, or criticism?
5. How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself? What are the best decisions you have made recently? How much do you rely on direction, advice, or guidance from others? Have you ever chosen anything because it was new or interesting? How important are fads and fashions?

B. CAREER AWARENESS AND EXPLORATION

1. Evaluate yourself – your abilities, values, and interests. Ask yourself the following questions: How do I feel about work? What work experience do I have? What courses did I like in school? Do I like sports? What are my overall likes and dislikes? What are my hobbies? What kind of life-style do I want? Do I like to work with numbers, people, or things? What kind of job would I like to have in order to earn enough money? What has my high school experience prepared me to do?
2. Use available career resources to search out specific information about your possible career choice – any necessary training, expected earnings, advancement possibilities, projected employment outlook, and personal qualifications. If your career plans require college, make appropriate plans.
3. Arrange to spend time with people involved in your field of interest to watch them at work (“shadowing”) and to interview them.
4. Obtain a part-time job that will help you explore a career field and give you experience and training that will be useful in obtaining full-time employment after graduation.
5. For assistance in locating full-time employment after high school graduation, contact local business and industry representatives who visit many high schools annually with specific job opening requirements and interview schedules.
6. Find out where to seek employment. Check newspaper, trade magazines, placement agencies, government (state-local) employment services, training centers, school work programs, and civil service jobs posted in your local post office. Also check bulletins, announcements, and your local church. Talk with your parents, relatives, and friends about possible job openings. Some of the most lucrative jobs may be found right in your own backyard.
7. Prepare a resume and practice filling out job applications.
8. Counselors and teachers may be used as references, if asked.

C. GETTING A JOB

How Americans Look For and Find Work

- a. Apply directly to employers
- b. Ask friends
- c. Ask Relatives
- d. Answer newspaper ads
- e. Private employment agencies
- f. State employment services
- g. Civil service tests
- h. School placement offices

Prepare for each interview

- a. Find out all you can about the company, policies, and product.
- b. Be confident.
- c. Bring your resume or send one ahead if requested.
- d. Be prepared; answer questions simply and quickly; itemize your work experiences.
- e. Dress appropriately; use common sense and taste.
- f. Arrive for the interview early. You may be asked to wait, but it will make an excellent first impression.
- g. If your interview is out of town, check mode of transportation to be used and weather conditions for the day.

At the interview

- a. When you are introduced, remember the interviewer's name.
- b. If requested to fill out additional papers or forms, be brief and simple. Use your resume or notes for reference.
- c. Be sure-footed, ask questions, talk about your goals, and sell your skills and training.
- d. Relax, be yourself, honest, and tactful
- e. Be alive, indicate you know the company, business, etc., their product, their people, process, and potential growth.
- f. Don't evade questions; answer them honestly and simply, look at your interviewer while talking.
- g. Your posture is important. Don't slouch or chew gum.
- h. When questions are asked to which you do not know the answer, don't fake it; simply answer the questions as honestly as you can.
- i. The interviewer wants to talk to you. Do not bring anyone with you to a job interview.
- j. By all means talk about your past work experience; try not to brag or exaggerate.
- k. Try not to conceal previous work records (even though they may have poor experiences) or complain about past employers or supervisors. If you were serious about your education while in high school, you should do very well.
- l. **BE POSITIVE!**
- m. Conclude the interview with an arrangement for finding out the prospective employer's decision on hiring. As a follow-up, write a note thanking the person who interviewed you for his/her time and consideration.
- n. Do not become discouraged if, during your first interview, you become nervous or fail to present yourself favorably. You will improve with time.

Job Interview

1. Make notes on the interview as soon as possible after the appointment
 - a. Likes
 - b. Dislikes
 - c. Important points to remember
 - d. Name and title of the interviewer
2. Write a letter of appreciation
 - a. This shows thoughtfulness, courtesy, and maturity.
 - b. It reinforces the interviewer's memory of you as an individual.

Sample Resume

John W. Student
120 Elm Street
Decatur, AL 35601
(256)772-1122

EDUCATION

Graduating in May 2006, from Decatur Heritage Christian Academy, 2014 Sandlin Road P.O. Box 5659, Decatur, AL 35601. Advanced Diploma including honors classes: Honors English 9, Honors English 10, Honors English 11, Geometry, Honors Algebra II, Honors World History. Diploma also includes Chemistry I & II, Physics, AP United States History, Spanish I, II, III, Computer Applications, Programming I, Supercomputing, Math Team.

Current Classes: Advanced Placement Government, Honors English 12, AP English Literature and Composition, AP Computer Science, Honors Physics.

GPA: 3.98 out of 4.0

ACT: Total Composite 35

SAT I: Verbal 630; Math 780; Total 1410

SAT II: American History 680 Physics 600 Math I 780

SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

Honors & Awards

National Merit Semifinalist (2005)

University of Alabama Award for Scholastic Achievement (2005)

Alabama Boys' State Delegate; Supreme Court Justice (2005)

Who's Who Among American High School Students (2003-2005)

Honorary Organizations

Beta Club (2004-2005)

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (School Related)

Honors & Awards

Georgia Tech's Pre-college Engineering Program (2004)

UAB's Orientation to Engineering Summer Honors Program (2003)

National Youth Leadership Conference (2004)

Madison County 4-H Club Driving Competition, First Place (2001)

Offices & Positions of Leadership

Junior Achievement Vice President (2000)

Habitat for Humanity Activities Chairman (2000, 2001)

Science Club Vice President (2001)

Member of Organizations

Science Club (2000, 2001)
Junior Civitan (1999, 2000))
Future Business Leaders of America (2002)

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (Non-School Related)

Honors & Awards

Mountainside Church Youth Choir Perfect Attendance (1999-2000)
Mountainside Church Youth Choir Who's Who Most Dependable (2001)
Mountainside Church Weight-Lifting Competition Winner (2002)
Huntsville Country Club Junior Golf Championship, Third Place (2000, 2002)
Huntsville Bike Classic 25 place our of a field of 183 (2002)

Offices & Positions of Leadership

Mountainside Church Youth Choir secretary (2001)

Member of Organization

Mountainside Church Youth Choir
Mountainside Church Youth Group
Huntsville Bicycle Club (1999-2002)

Work Experience

Self-Initiated Tutoring Business (2001)
Mountainside Church, Basketball Referee (2001, 2002)
Habitat for Humanity (1999-2003))
Mountainside Church Mission Projects (1999, 2002)

IV. CHOOSING A COLLEGE

A. COLLEGE TERMINOLOGY

Accreditation: Recognition of a college or university by any of the regional or national accrediting bodies, indicating that the institution as a whole has been judged to be meeting its objectives

ACT (American College Testing Program): This is a college admissions test accepted by all colleges in the state of Alabama and many colleges outside of this state. The test measures educational development in English, mathematics, reading, and science. You can register online or through the mail. Most of our students take the exam at Decatur High School, but the test is given at several locations through out the state. The test is offered in Alabama 5 times a year. Be aware of the registration deadlines – you must register at least a month in advance. An optional writing component has been added. Check with the college you are interested in to see if they require the writing component. ACT scores range from 1-36.

Aid Package: A combination of aid (possibly including a scholarship, grant, loan, and work) determined by a college financial aid office.

Application Deadline: The date by which applications, including transcripts and SAT or ACT scores are due at a college. Deadlines vary by college. Check each college for the deadline.

Class Rank and Credits: Decatur Heritage does not rank our graduating seniors. Credits are the number of courses passed.

College Calendar: The calendar explains the basic method used to divide the academic year (for instance, semester, trimester, quarter term) and lists all pertinent dates for beginning terms, holidays, vacations, exams, etc.

Common Application Form: A standardized application accepted by many private colleges. Students may apply online at www.commonapp.org.

Concentration: Usually referred to as a major, particular subject or area in which a student specializes. Usually most of the courses taken in the junior and senior year of college are in the major field.

Consortium: Several colleges and universities within close proximity of each other that allow students to take classes at a member institution.

Credit hour: A unit of academic credit that often represents one hour of class time per week for a period of study (semester, quarter, etc.)

Deferred Admission: The practice of some colleges of allowing an accepted student to postpone enrollment for one year.

Early Decision: This is an admission plan used by some colleges. Under this plan, a student who has excellent grades, test scores, recommendations and activities may apply on an early basis (during the spring of junior year, or the summer before the senior year). By satisfactorily fulfilling the admission requirements, the qualified student may be admitted to the college early in their senior year. Under this plan, one would have to take the ACT or SAT during their junior year. Also, a commitment is made by the student to the institution that, if admitted, the student will enroll. Often, you will be asked to withdraw all other college applications and you must submit a nonrefundable deposit.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): The application required for students to be considered for federal student financial aid. Obtain a FAFSA form or electronic filing information from the high school or college for the appropriate year (usually available in December). The FAFSA is processed free of charge, and it is used by most colleges. The FAFSA may be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You will be required to get an online pin number before you fill out the FAFSA online.

Freshman Profile: A document published by a college that includes a summary of the GPA's and SAT or ACT scores of the previous freshman class. It can give you a sense of where you stand in relation to other students.

Grade Point Average (GPA): The cumulative average of all your grades. The GPA is calculated at the end of each year. The GPA is computed by multiplying the number of grade points earned in each course (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) times the number of course hours/credit hours, then dividing the sum by the total number of course hours/credit hours carried.

Grants: Awards based on financial need that do not require repayment. Grants are available through the federal government, state agencies,

Honors Program: Any program offering opportunity for superior student to enrich their educational experience through independent, advanced, or accelerated study.

Major: The subject of study in which a student chooses to specialize; a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years.

Rolling Admissions: A "first come, first served" process. A decision is made on the application as soon as the admissions folder is complete.

SAT 1: A test of verbal and mathematical abilities given by the College Entrance Examination Board at specified test centers throughout the year and required or recommended by many colleges as part of the admission process. The SAT 11 subject tests are sometimes required in addition to the SAT score. Check with the individual college to see what they require for admissions.

Semester System: Academic school calendar where the academic year is divided into two parts.

Student Aid Report (SAR): The information you will receive approximately 3-6 weeks after your FAFSA has been processed. It will report the information from your application and, if there are no questions or problems with your application, and your SAR will report you Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Transcript: The student's academic record that is sent by the high school to the college where the student is applying. This includes courses taken, final grades and cumulative GPA.

Waiting List: A term used by institutions to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering admissions or deny admission. Rather, the institution extends the possibility of admission in the future. Colleges offer admission to wait list candidates if insufficient numbers of regularly admitted candidates accept their offers of admissions. To find out exactly what the waiting list status means at a particular school, students should contact the admissions office.

B. HOW TO CHOOSE A COLLEGE

Choosing the right college can seem like the most important decision you'll ever make. After all, your college education will affect the rest of your life. What if I make the wrong choice? What if I am not happy there? What if I don't learn anything? What if I don't get in?

Relax. First, there is no one magic choice. There are likely to be many institutions at which you would be happy. Second, if you do find that you are unhappy during the first year, you can always transfer to another college for your sophomore or junior year. Your first year's experiences will aid you in making a more informed choice this time. Third, the principal reason for the unhappiness during the first year at college is difficulties in getting along with one's roommate. If this is the case, try to find solutions through resident assistants, counselors, and other helpers in your dorm or at the college. If you are still unhappy, you can change roommates. However, freshman roommates often remain friends for life. Last, the only poor college choices are uninformed choices, those made without enough information.

An excellent source of information is your high school Guidance Department. Mrs. Ross will have a variety of handbooks with descriptions of colleges. If you are not sure what you want to do, your counselor can help you clarify what your interests and talents are.

At some point, you will be answering six questions:

- What kind of college do I want to attend? A liberal arts school, a pre-professional school, a community college, etc.
- What size school do I want? For example, one with 10,000 students or more or one with as few as several hundred.
- Where do I want to be? Close to home or far away? Some people find being far away too lonely; other enjoy the freedom. Sometimes staying close eliminates the problem of adjusting to a new environment; sometimes being too close keeps you in old ruts.
- What location do I want? Urban or rural? Tulane University, UAB and Emory University, for example are in the middle of big cities that could be fun or a distraction. Rural colleges offer lovely, quiet campuses and for some people, they are the best places to study. Small towns are not the best choice for everyone.
- What life style do I want? There are conservative schools, liberal schools, fraternity/sorority oriented schools, gung-ho football schools, religiously oriented schools. One can obtain an education at any of these schools. Consider the kind of education you want, as well as what you want surrounding you when you are not studying.
- What special programs or services do I want? Try to identify colleges offering activities and resources in which you are interested.

Questions and Answers

One of the questions asked most frequently is, “What should my final list of colleges include?” Inherent in this question are two considerations: first, to how many schools should I apply and second, what range of schools should be included with regard to admissions competition?

We discourage students from adopting the shotgun approach of applying to a multitude of schools. We also discourage students, regardless of academic ability to put all of their eggs in one basket by applying to only one institution or one level of college. As a general rule, we advise students to apply to approximately three to six schools which vary in terms of selectivity but which have the most important features desired by the students. As long as a student does not overly limit himself/herself geographically, finding such a group of schools is not that difficult a task when we consider the large number of colleges and universities found in the United States.

Generally, we recommend that a student’s final list include schools from each of the following categories:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Reach | A student’s top choice schools. It is fine to include a couple of long shots in this group. Let our southern location work for you. Schools in a different region of the country love to boast that they have students from a variety of areas. |
| Realistic | Schools that possess the significant features a student desires and at which the probability of admission is slightly better than even. These are categorized as “realistic” schools. |
| Safety | Schools that have most of the features a student desires and at which the probability of admission is “highly likely” to “certain.” We refer to schools in this category as a student’s “safety school.” |

While there is no hard and fast rule, students usually include two or three schools from categories one and two and at least one or two schools from category three. Obviously, those schools that qualify as “reach,” realistic,” or safety,” vary tremendously from student to student. Each student has an individual academic profile and should select schools accordingly, making sure that choices range through all three categories. We would like to emphasize that students are continually encouraged to apply to more than one “realistic” and/or “safety” school. This will insure two or more acceptances and provide each student with some choices.

A few points of caution:

1. Many students spend hours deciding on their few top choices and five minutes selecting one or two safer institutions. We strongly advise that you spend as much time and consideration selecting your fifth choice institution. While it may not be as selective and prestigious as the top choice, you should insure that it has what you are looking for and is an institution where you stand a good chance of being happy and successful. If your few top choices are small, selective liberal arts colleges, it does not make a great deal of sense to include a large, multi-dimensional university as a safety choice. If you want a small, liberal arts college, you should spend the necessary time finding a school of similar type that will qualify as a safe choice.
2. Many students feel that simply because a particular institution falls into the “Realistic” category as opposed to the “Reach” category, it does not offer programs of equal quality. Such an assumption is, in many instances, incorrect. The selectivity of any institution is dependent on the size of its applicant pool which, in turn, may be affected as much by geographic location, popularity, and reputation as by actual academic quality. Many schools, for a variety of reasons, may be “Realistic” schools from admissions perspective yet offer programs equal in quality to the student’s few top choices.

3. We would like to dispel the notion that if you want to go to a good college or university, you must look at an Eastern school. There are many good schools throughout the country, and we encourage you to investigate all options. Such a regional approach can, in some instances, limit your ability to attain admission to the quality schools you desire.
4. While the applicant pools at some colleges and universities may be declining, this is not the case at many of the institutions that students identify as top choices. At most of the so-called “prestige colleges” the number of applications are continuing to increase, and competition for admission remains exceptionally good.
5. Many students and parents still feel that they can select any one of the various state universities as a safety choice. This is no longer the case—if, in fact, it ever was. Students and parents must realize that state universities are becoming more and more competitive, both for in-state and out-of-state applicants. Many state universities have established quotas governing the number of out-of-state students admitted, thereby creating competition for a limited number of places.
6. Beware of publications which attempt to rank or compare schools based on “objective” criteria. All students must make their own personal decisions, and a magazine or guide cannot include your personal needs in their rankings. Colleges with high average SAT’s and ACT’s or low acceptance percentages are not necessarily the best of you.

C. KINDS OF SCHOOLS

Colleges and Universities

College: An institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a two-year or four-year program.

External Degree Program: a college or university sponsored program that students can pursue at home and at their own pace.

Junior College: A two-year institution of higher learning which provides career and vocational training and academic curricula (terminal and transfer). Community colleges are also two-year colleges.

Terminal Program: An academic program that is complete unto itself. A student who completes it may not be admitted to a four-year college for further study without completing additional course requirements.

Transfer Program: an academic program that is designed to lead into a four-year program at another college or university. The two-year graduate transfers as a junior to the four-year institution. However, many students transfer as sophomores.

Liberal Arts College: A four-year institution that emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education. Pre-professional or professional training may be available but is not stressed.

University: An academic institution, which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and which supports at least two degree-granting professional schools that are not exclusively technological (such as medicine or journalism). It is composed of a number of “schools” or colleges,” each of which encompasses a general field of study.

Career Related Schools

Business School: Business Schools fall into two categories. At some colleges it is possible to specialize in business administration or in a two-year secretarial course in conjunction with supplementary liberal arts courses. Other institutions offer business or secretarial courses primarily and may not be regionally accredited.

Engineering or Technological College: Independent professional schools that provide four-year training programs in the field of engineering and the physical science. They are often known as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes.

Military Schools: Federal military academies prepare officers for the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Merchant Marines. These institutions (West Point, Annapolis, The Air Force Academy, and Kings Point) require recommendations and nominations by U.S. Senators or U.S. Representatives. Private and state-supported military institutions, however, operate on a college application basis, as does the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. They all offer degree programs in engineering and technology with concentration in various aspects of military services.

Nursing School: There are several kinds of nursing schools. At schools affiliated with hospitals, students receive an R.N. diploma upon successful completion of training and an examination. At schools affiliated with four-year colleges, students receive both a BS degree and an R.N. diploma. Junior colleges and community colleges may offer a two-year nursing program. These schools confer an AS degree in nursing.

Professional School: Professional schools offer specialized study in areas such as art, music, drama, dance photography, etc.

Technical School: A two-year institution, which offers terminal occupation programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in fields related to engineering and the physical sciences. These schools may also offer one-year certificate programs in certain crafts and clerical skills.

Trade School: Trade Schools offer specialized training in specific work fields such as cosmetology, computer technology, medical or dental technology, culinary arts, or drafting.

D. FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE

College Characteristics

Academics

More than anything else, you go to college to get an education. The type of academic atmosphere and variety of courses studied should be considered when choosing a college.

Colleges can be ranked according to the selectivity of their admissions. For example, some colleges only take students with a 3.2+ grade point average and very high (1200+) SAT scores. These institutions are considered very selective in their admissions. Other colleges simply require graduation from high school, or lower SAT/ACT scores. These colleges have lower selectivity and some have open admissions.

You should try to match your academic abilities to the college's selectivity. If you are a very good student, then a more selective college may offer you the right amount of challenge and stimulation. If your record has been weak, a less selective college may best fit your needs during the first year.

Also, colleges offer a variety of majors, or courses of study. If you are fairly sure you want to major in business, for example, you should check the business department of colleges you are considering. If you are unsure of what your major will be, then look for an institution that has a wide variety of majors, usually called a liberal arts college.

Size

Colleges range in size from 150 to 80,000 students. There is a great difference between attending a small institution (1,000-2,000), usually referred to as a college, and a large one (30,000-50,000), usually referred to as a university. Small colleges offer you more personal involvement, a community atmosphere, and small classes (from 5 to 50 students). Large universities tend to be more impersonal, allow you to be more anonymous, and offer class sizes of anywhere from 20 to 350 students.

You should ask yourself:

- Will I feel closed in and trapped at a small college?
- Will I welcome the personal, friendly atmosphere a small college affords?
- Will I feel lost and overwhelmed at a large institution?
- Will I feel more independent and free at a large university?
- Will I want large or small classes? Would I like to have a good deal of interaction with my instructors during class or would I prefer a large, more impersonal style of institution?
- Are the athletic facilities important to me? Generally, the larger the universities offer the greatest range of athletic sports and facilities.

Atmosphere

Colleges, just like any group of people working and living together, create their own atmosphere. Each college has a particular atmosphere or environment that affects the performance and satisfaction of each student there. Some factors that go into creating a college's atmosphere are:

- personal or impersonal handling of student questions, concerns, and scheduling;
- an academic or less serious mood among the students and their approach to responsibilities;
- and whether the school is single-sex or coeducational.

The type of atmosphere a college offers can best be discovered by reading the catalog carefully, and of course, by visiting the campus and talking to as many people as you can.

Cost

Obviously, a major factor to be considered is the cost of attending a college. The total cost for a year, as computed by the college financial aid office, includes tuition, fees, room and board, books, supplies, transportation, and personal expenses. Total costs do vary widely.

While cost is undoubtedly very important, don't limit your choice of colleges to only those you can afford without financial assistance. Many of the more expensive private schools have solid financial aid programs, which may cover anywhere from 20% to the full cost, depending on your determined financial need. A good plan would be to choose several colleges, including one you can afford and several for which you need aid. Although financial aid may seem uncertain at times, limiting prospective colleges on a cost basis alone may exclude some excellent colleges from your list. The true cost of attending a particular college can only be known after the financial aid award letter has arrived.

Location of the College

There are many reasons why the location of the college may be important to you. You should always consider the expense of travel, the need for independence versus the desire to stay near your family, and the effects of living in a particular climate.

When considering the location of a college, think about the campus setting. The physical environment of the college you go to may be very important to you. Some people prefer the social, cultural, and economic activities of a large city or metropolitan environment. Others would be unhappy if they could not be near the ocean, mountains, or countryside. A major metropolitan area can offer many benefits, but a student must adjust to the life-style of a big city. A college or university that is located in the heart of a city is often comprised of multi-storied classroom buildings and high-rise dormitories. There are also many colleges and universities that are in rural settings with widespread campuses located many miles from the nearest metropolitan areas. In addition, many institutions are located close to, but not in, large cities. The decision of a location and campus setting for your college should ultimately include those institutions where you will be most comfortable living for the next two to four years of your life.

Specific Characteristics to Consider When Choosing a Career, Vocational/Business School

Many students will find that a specialized school (vocation, business, technical, or career) fulfills their needs much better than a two-year college. Investigation of job opportunities will reveal that many hundreds, and even thousands, of occupations require training that may be obtained through forms of learning such as career training.

Students interested in a particular type of career-oriented education should consult their counselor about schools to explore, write for catalogs where there is an interest, and follow through with a visit to the school.

Specialized schools generally do not always require an examination like the SAT or the ACT. Many will recommend that a test be taken at the school for placement purposes only.

All career-focused schools require a transcript of the student's record, and often want teacher and counselor recommendations.

Exploring Career-Related Schools

The following steps may be helpful in assisting you to find the many career-related schools and job training programs that are available to prepare you for skilled occupations. Be sure to review the occupational outlook in your chosen field.

1. Check career school catalogs for lists of schools where you can study your chosen career.
2. Write to several training programs for descriptive information. You may find information regarding these programs in the guidance office. There are three kinds of career-related educational programs: State-supported technical colleges and regional vocational/technical post-secondary graduate programs, which are usually inexpensive.

Things to Consider

1. Where is the college/school located? How will you get there?
2. If the college/school is not within commuting distance, what are the living arrangements?
3. What are the total expenses to complete the program? Remember supplies, material, and travel are part of the expenses.
4. Are SAT's, ACT's or other forms of entrance tests required?
5. Are there any special course requirements needed in addition to a high school diploma (i.e., two years of college preparatory mathematics, etc.)?
6. What kind of financial aid is available? Only government approved schools are eligible for government aid.
7. Is the school accredited? This means that when you complete the program you are eligible to take a licensing examination if one is required, or receive a certificate granting you the right to practice your chosen career. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.**
8. Does the school have a shop set-up that duplicates real work environment? This hands-on-training enables you to get practical experience.
9. Does the school have a good Placement Office? Check this out with recent graduates. A good placement officer will have established relationships with local businesses, which rely on the school to provide candidates for entry-level jobs.
10. Check with recent graduates and/or current students to assess the quality of the programs offered.
11. If at all possible, visit the school to look at the facilities, and talk to the director of admissions and students in the program
12. Talk to prospective employers about the school's reputation within the company and their past experience with hiring graduates from the school.

Ask Yourself These 10 Questions to Evaluate Your College Preferences:

1. What satisfactions and frustrations do you expect to encounter in college? What are you looking forward to? What worries you most? What do you hope to gain from college? What is the overriding consideration in your choice of college?
2. Why do you want an education? Why are you going to college?
3. How do you want to grow and change in the next few years? What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit the growth you would like to see?
4. What interests do you want to pursue in college? Do your interests require any special facilities, programs, or opportunities? Consider all your interests in terms of fields of study, activities, community and cultural opportunities? Are you more interested in career preparation, technical training, or general knowledge and skills?

5. What degree of academic challenge is best for you? What balance of study, activities, and social life do you prefer? Do you want an academic program where you must work hard and use critical thinking skills, or one where you can make respectable grades without knocking yourself out? How important is it to you to perform at the top of your class, or would you be satisfied in the middle or bottom of your college class? How well do you respond to academic pressure and competition from others?
6. How would you feel about going to a college where you were rarely told what to do? How much structure and direction do you need?
7. How would you enjoy living in a different part of the country? How often do you want to be able to go home? What kind of change in your lifestyle and perspective might be exciting, or distressing and overwhelming?
8. What kind of surroundings is essential to your well-being? Are there certain places, activities, climate or pace of life, which make you happy? Do you prefer a fast-paced environment where something is happening most of the time or an organized environment?
9. How would you feel about going to a college where the other students were quite different from you? How would you react? Would you find a college with cultural diversity an exciting or intimidating environment? Would you prefer to be with people who share your viewpoints and lifestyles?
10. How free do you feel to make your own college decisions? Do you and your parents agree about your plans for college? How important are the opinions of your parents, teachers, and friends. Are issues of familiarity, prestige, or reputation in your community a consideration in your decision?

Filling Out the Application

Your applications represent you. Read the instruction carefully and complete them as requested. Be sure your writing is legible and that the spelling is correct. Use black pen or type the application as per instructions. Always make a copy of your completed application for your files.

E. MILITARY CAREER OPTIONS

Should I go into the Armed Services?

The Armed Services remain one of the major employers in the nation. It is also a major source of educational training and preparation for entry-level jobs. There are numerous job training opportunities in the military for both men and women. Representatives from all the services are available to give you information about career training and/or educational opportunities. If you are concerned about the information that you are receiving or contacts that are being made by your recruiter, see your guidance counselor.

Enlisted Personnel

1. Recruiting officers of all branches of the Armed Services visit the high schools regularly. If you are interested, speak with your counselor to set up an appointment. You can also seek additional information from the recruiting offices in your area or the College & Career Advisor's office.
2. Seniors should consider learning about specific abilities that they have by taking the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). This test is administered by appointment during the school year by military personnel in each high school. There is no cost to either the student or district, and taking the test does not obligate the student to enlist.
3. Special opportunities for job training are offered to enlisted personnel who meet the testing requirements for specific jobs that may be useful in later civilian life as well. Additional courses are paid for when needed, and the credits earned are an asset in future planning.
4. All branches of the service offer educational assistance programs.

The ASVAB is a test used by the services to help with career counseling and job placement. Here are some of the most commonly asked questions about the ASVAB.

1. What is the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery? The ASVAB is a group of twelve tests, which measure your aptitude in five separate career field areas and provides an indication of your academic ability.
2. Why should I take the ASVAB? The ASVAB is the result of more than 35 years of military service research. It was specifically designed to identify individual aptitudes. If you are a senior trying to decide what to do after high school, your test scores can help identify fields worth exploring. No matter what your age or inclination, the ASVAB can be valuable to you because it can tell you more about yourself. The ASVAB is not a “PASS” or “FAIL” test. Your scores will only show how well you did in comparison to a representative sample of other students in the United States who took the same test. You have a lot to gain and nothing to lose when you take the ASVAB.
3. Do I incur any military obligation by taking the ASVAB? No! Taking the ASVAB does not obligate you to the military in any way. You are free to use your test results in whatever manner you wish. You have an option to sign a statement authorizing release of your test scores to representatives of all the military services; and, like the majority of high school students, if you are an upperclassman, you will probably be contacted by a service representative sometime before you graduate. You should expect this whether or not you ever take the ASVAB.

F. SERVICE ACADEMIES AND ROTC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

While all juniors should begin exploring possible educational programs following graduation, those interested in the Service Academies and the ROTC scholarship programs must begin as soon as possible to insure that they receive full consideration.

The first step in securing an appointment to one of the academies is to write and ask for a Pre-Candidate Questionnaire. Addresses are as follows:

Admissions Office	Admission Office
U.S. Military Academy	U.S. Air Force Academy
West Point, NY 10996	USAF Academy, CO 80840

Admission Office	Admission Office
U.S. Naval Academy	U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
Annapolis, MD 21402	Kings Point, NY 10024

The second step is writing to each of your senators and your congressmen and asking that they consider you as one of their nominees. In this letter you should indicate your first, second, third, and fourth choices of academies as well as

Name, address, and telephone number
Date of birth
Social security number
High School name and year of graduation
Names of your parents

The Coast Guard Academy has an admissions procedure similar to other highly competitive colleges. There is no nomination process involved. Write directly for an application to the following:

Admissions Office
U.S. Coast Guard Academy
New London, CT 96320

ROTC scholarship programs involve a competitive application process as well. In addition to the written application, candidates must undergo a physical examination, formal interview, and a physical abilities test. The first step in the process is to write for an application to one or all of the following:

Air Force ROTC/RRUF
Maxwell Air Force Base
Montgomery, AL 36112-6663

Army ROTC
Box 9000
Clifton, NJ 07015

Navy ROTC
Box 3060
Hyattsville, MD 30784

V. TESTING FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

A. Test Dates

<i>ACT Test Dates</i> <i>Register at www.act.org</i> <i>High School code 010861</i>	<i>Registration Deadlines</i>
September 11, 2010	August 6, 2010 (Late August 20, 2010)
October 23, 2010	September 17, 2010 (Late October 1, 2010)
December 11, 2010	November 5, 2010 (Late November 19, 2010)
February 12, 2011	January 7, 2011 (Late January 21, 2011)
April 9, 2011	March 4, 2011 (Late March 18, 2011)
June 11, 2011	May 6, 2011 (Late May 20, 2011)

<i>SAT Test Dates</i> <i>Register at www.collegeboard.com</i> <i>High School code 010861</i>	<i>Registration Deadlines</i>
October 19, 2010	September 10, 2010 (Late September 24, 2010)
November 6, 2010	October 8, 2010 (Late October 22, 2010)
December 4, 2010	November 5, 2010 (Late November 19, 2010)
January 22, 2011	December 23, 2010 (Late January 7, 2011)
March 12, 2011	February 11, 2011 (Late February 25, 2011)
May 7, 2011	April 8, 2011 (Late April 22, 2011)
June 4, 2011	May 6, 2011 (Late May 20, 2011)

PREPARING FOR THE SAT/ACT

B. KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

In many ways, you have been preparing for the SAT and ACT during your entire school career. Doing well on the SAT and ACT is a natural result of hard work in academic courses in school and a strong interest in reading and other mentally challenging activities. If you are reading this, chances are that you are seriously considering going to college. For many students, taking the SAT and ACT is one of the first steps in the college admission process; and, logically, you want to do your best when you take the test. Getting ready for the SAT and ACT should be only one part of your overall plan to gain admission to college.

Surveys by major national educational organizations show that most colleges are likely to view your high school record (the courses you have taken and your rank in class or grade point average) as the most important criteria for admission. Usually this record is viewed along with your SAT and ACT scores. Indications of personal qualities such as motivation, initiative, and leadership ability may also influence colleges' decisions.

Even though SAT I and ACT scores are seldom the most important factor in admissions decisions, they do carry weight, in varying degrees, with many colleges. The majority of scholarship money that a college awards is based on your GPA and ACT or SAT scores. For that reason, you should be as well prepared as possible to show your skills when you take the SAT I and ACT.

C. YOU CAN PREPARE FOR THE SAT I AND ACT - HERE IS HOW

Over the long term, a good selection of solid academic courses, extensive reading, and consistent hard work in your studies are the best strategies. In the short run, you should be sure that you know the format of the test:

- How it is organized
- The kind of questions it asks
- The terms and concepts it uses
- How it is timed and how it is scored

You should also know some basic rules of test-taking strategy, including when and why to guess, how to pace yourself, and so on. If you do not have this information you may be at a disadvantage in taking the test. Taking the SAT and the ACT provides this information. Students who have read this material carefully and take practice tests have reported greater confidence, less anxiety, and more familiarity with the test than students who did not prepare for the test.

Just how much practice you may need to feel comfortable is a decision you must make. For those who want to practice with more than one sample SAT and ACT, the College Board and ACT publish several books of sample tests. Remember, though, that practice is not likely to improve your scores dramatically. If you are nervous about taking tests, it can help you relax. But simply drilling on hundreds of questions can not do much to help you develop the skills in verbal and mathematical reasoning that the tests measure.

D. WHAT ABOUT SAT/ACT PREP COURSES?

There is a bewildering array of courses, books, and computer software programs available to help you prepare for the SAT and ACT. Some of them do no more than provide the familiarization and practice that is described in the previous section. Others are intended to help you develop your mathematical and verbal skills. These are often called "coaching" or "prep" courses, and I am frequently asked whether or not they work.

Should I take a prep course? That depends on your particular needs. It makes sense to approach the test with a confident and positive attitude. To develop such an attitude, most students need only to familiarize themselves with the test and with basic test-taking techniques, review the test directions, and try some sample questions. Others, including many academically able students, may benefit from the reassurance that comes from systematic preparation. Some students are able to prepare for a test like the SAT or ACT on their own, while others need a more structured approach. It is basically a matter of temperament, motivation, time, and personal learning style. Follow your own instincts.

Some students do improve their scores by taking these courses; others do not. Unfortunately, despite decades of research, it is still not possible to predict ahead of time who will improve and by how much, and who will not. It cannot be said that prep courses do not work. There is simply no guarantee as to whether or not a particular program or activity will work for you.

First, how much time should you devote to this activity? Your SAT and ACT scores may help distinguish you from other applicants. But so may success in an especially rigorous course, involvement in school or community activities, or demonstrating an outstanding special talent. It is important to know that most students who take the SAT and ACT a second time have not been coached. Yet, most of these students show growth the second time. NOTE: Appleton Learning in Madison, Decatur City Schools and Sylvan Learning Center all offer test prep courses: Watch for information to come home during the school year. Also, several of our students have improved their ACT scores by working with a private tutor. See Mrs. Ross for more information.

E. The New SAT and ACT Plus Writing

The New SAT will test skills in critical reading, math, and writing. The critical reading section is heavy on passage based reading that measures reasoning, comprehension, and vocabulary. Analogies will no longer be tested. The math section will test skills from Algebra I and II, Geometry, Statistics, Probability, and Data Analysis. The writing test will contain multiple-choice questions to identify writing errors, and students will have 25 minutes to write an essay on a given prompt.

The ACT will test skills in math, reading, science, English, and an optional writing portion. The chart below lists which colleges require, recommend, or do not need the writing portion. Double check with the colleges you are considering to determine if they will require the writing portion. The ACT math test will cover Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry. The Reading Test measures reading comprehension. The Science test measures interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in natural sciences. The English Test measures understanding of the conventions of standard written English and rhetorical skills. If you register for the ACT Plus Writing, you will take a 30 minute essay test that measures writing skills.

Alabama A & M	Recommended		Troy University	Recommended
Alabama Southern Community College	Not needed		Southern Union	Not needed
Alabama State University	Recommended		UAB	Not needed
Auburn Univ.	Required		UAH	Not needed
Birmingham Southern	Recommended		Union Univ. (TN)	Recommended
Bryan College (TN)	Required		University of Alabama	Required
Calhoun Community	Not needed		Univ. of Mobile	Not needed
Covenant College (TN)	Required		UNA	Not needed
Mississippi State	Not needed		Univ. of South AL.	Not needed
Montevallo	Not needed		Univ. of West AL.	Not needed
Samford Univ.	Recommended			

F. The SAT Subject Tests: Do I need to take them?

Unless the college or university you are applying for requires you to take the SAT subject tests, you do not need to take them. You will only need to take the SAT Reasoning Test.

VI. THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

A. COURSE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SENIOR YEAR Many students are tempted to take it easy during their senior year—to avoid the difficult courses in math and science. Admissions officers like to see that students are taking difficult courses their senior year. We will encourage all of our seniors to continue to taking challenging courses during their senior year.

B. STEPS IN APPLYING FOR COLLEGE

1. Narrow down your list of college choices and begin the application process.

C. DEADLINE DATES AND ADMISSION POLICIES

It is time to begin the task of supplying the information the colleges need. It is advisable to limit the number of applications. An application fee of \$10 to \$50 is usually required for each application, and this is not refundable even if your application is rejected.

Seniors should watch deadline dates specified by each college. However, in most instances, college applications should be sent as soon as possible. On occasion, deadline dates for applying are no more than a guideline; a college may actually cut off applications earlier than its final date if it fills its class or particular program before then or it may continue to accept applications beyond that date if it still has room for more students.

D. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

College application forms may vary significantly. Without a formal application, colleges will not consider you.

A college or university typically collects five different types of information about its applicants:

- a. The Application - This serves the purpose of identifying the student to the college (name, address, high school, etc.), as well as manifesting the student's personality (personal statement). It is recommended that you apply online to most colleges.
- b. SAT and ACT Scores - These are sent directly to colleges if students so request when they take the exams. Colleges only accept scores reported to them through the testing agency. Some colleges will accept the scores as reported on the high school's official transcript.
- c. The Transcript - courses taken in grades 9-12 are supplied to colleges. In addition to a record of grades through four years of high school, the transcript shows the student's rank in class and scores on standardized tests (SAT's or ACT's). You need to request a transcript in Mrs. Ross's office located in the high school office. The request should be made two (2) weeks in advance.
- d. The School Recommendation Statement – While it is true that for admission purposes colleges place great emphasis on a student's academic record through four years of high school, it is also true that other factors are important, particularly when admissions officers are trying to distinguish among hundreds of students with quite similar grade point averages, SAT and ACT score, and extracurricular activities. The letters of recommendation from teachers and counselors can be very meaningful and decisive.

- e. Letter of Recommendation - Some colleges request that the classroom teacher assess the ability of an applicant. If a college does not ask for these, students need not feel obliged to send them. Recommendations may also come from others (community leaders, influential friends) depending upon the college's request. Always follow specific directions.

E. THE COLLEGE ESSAY IN 10 EASY STEPS

Most college-bound students approach the task of writing a personal essay for college admissions with some trepidation and a few questions: How important is the essay? What do colleges look for? How is it used? Who reads it? If you are such a student, a few facts and tips may put the essay into perspective and help you produce your best effort.

First of all, the essay is important—to you and to the college. According to one admissions director, “It makes the facts in the student’s folder come alive for us. Because it is the student’s personal statement, no single piece of admissions evidence gets as much attention and provokes as much discussion.”

The essay is your opportunity to take charge of the information the college receives about you and to provide information that does not appear in grades, test scores, and other materials. It allows you to reveal your intelligence, talent, sense of humor, enthusiasm, maturity, creativity, expressiveness, sincerity, and writing ability—traits that count in the admission evaluation.

F. WHAT DO COLLEGES LOOK FOR?

Generally speaking, the admission staff will evaluate your application essay on three levels:

Level 1: Your ability to use standard written English that is correctly written (preferably typed) unless otherwise indicated, punctuated, and contains correct grammar, usage, and syntax.

Level 2: Content, substance, and depth of insight, reflecting your ability to think about yourself and to convey your true feelings or opinions about a topic.

Level 3: Creativity and originality. “It is at this level,” according to one dean of admissions, “that students can position themselves as unique—as individuals who would bring a freshness of vision and viewpoint to the college that will enhance the quality of its academic and social life.”

In its essay directions, a college may ask you to do one or more of the following:

DESCRIBE your uniqueness as a person, or tell something about yourself that can’t be learned from other information in your application. Whatever the topic, the care and attention you give it will express the level of your motivation and how much you care about college.

DISCUSS something that has contributed significantly to your growth

COMMENT on your goals and aspirations and tell how you expect the college to help meet them.

EXPRESS your imagination, originality, opinions, or feelings on a specific topic.

Essay Writing Tips

Here are a few tips for developing an essay that conveys your personal qualities:

1. Plan your essays during the summer before your senior year, if you can, or early in your senior year. Allow yourself enough time for all the steps below and write an individual essay for each college.
2. Be sure you understand the college's topics, directions, and deadlines and look in its catalog or guidebook for descriptions on the personal qualities it is looking for. One selective college, for example, seeks "candidates whose qualities of intellect, initiative, and energy demonstrate desire for both intellectual and personal fulfillment." An essay for that college should demonstrate to and persuade the institution that you have those qualities.
3. Before you start your essay, jot down your aspirations and how you think college will help you meet them. Then develop a personal inventory. Make lists of your civic and school activities, your travels, awards, honors, other accomplishments, work experiences, any academic or personal shortcomings you are trying to overcome, and the personality traits you value about yourself. To focus your essay, develop a one-sentence theme from your inventory.
4. Think about the form you might use to convey your information. Straight prose is fine, but if your theme lends itself to another approach, try it.
5. Now write a draft. Set the draft aside for 24 hours, then read it to spot clichés, triteness, vagueness, dullness, grammatical errors, and misspellings. Is your essay focused on your theme, or does it ramble? Is it confusing, or boring? Does the introduction "grab" the reader?
6. Rewrite your essay based on this evaluation and repeat item 5 as often as necessary to sharpen your essay.
7. Ask someone whose opinions you respect to read your essay and give you his or her candid impressions. Ask for specifics but do not let this person rewrite your essay. "Tell me what you think I'm trying to say. How do I come across as a person? What parts confuse you? Where do you need more details? What parts bore you? Tell me the parts you like best."
8. If necessary, go back to steps 3, 4, or 5. If this draft is the best you can do, polish it by checking again for spelling and grammatical errors, awkward phrasing, inaccurate usage, unnecessary words, or anything else that does not sound right to you. Read your essay orally to locate the rough spots.
9. Type your essay—unless the college requires a handwritten version—and proofread it to catch typographical errors and any other errors you may have missed.
10. Mail your essay on time and relax. If you have done all the above, you can be relatively sure your efforts will be noted.

SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTION

Samford University

Please attach to your application a personal statement reflecting your values, experiences and goals. With these in mind, what role would Samford play in your future? This personal statement helps Samford become acquainted with you as an individual in ways different from courses, grades, test scores and other objective data. In addition, it provides a measure of your writing ability and critical-thinking skills. This personal statement will be used in conjunction with objective data when determining admission status.

VII. THE COLLEGE VISIT AND INTERVIEW

A. SUGGESTIONS FOR COLLEGE VISITS

Some colleges require an interview as part of the admission process, but most do not. It is still important for you to visit the college at which you may spend four years of your life. The visit or interview may help you in your selection of a college or to verify your choice.

When making an appointment for a college visit, keep the following suggestions in mind:

1. If possible, plan time when high school is not in session, but college is.
2. In your inquiry, request a definite date and time.
3. Request an alternate time if this is inconvenient for the admissions office.
4. Unavoidable delays require a telephone call to the admissions office. If it is at all possible, make arrangements to stay overnight in the dormitory. You can get a good sense of the student body by eating in the college snack bar or cafeteria. Attending several classes is also an excellent idea. **BE SURE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS IN ADVANCE.** Avoid a nonscheduled “drop in” to an admissions office, but if it turns out that an opportunity to visit a college at the last minute presents itself, be courteous and understanding about what the admission staff is able to do for you. Sometimes you are able to join a tour. Rarely, you may find that an interview time is available due to a cancellation. However, “dropping in” is discouraged and is not a productive way to visit a college.

B. TIMETABLE FOR COLLEGE VISITS

1. Start visiting colleges early.
2. Return to those schools of interest for a day of visiting classes, talking with students, staying overnight, etc. Students are allowed two college visit days during the senior year. See Mrs. Ross for the required form. Your visit must be approved by Mr. Mayo, and all work must be made up in advance.
3. Using a map, plan your trip roughly to visit two colleges per day.
4. In order for you to have the best choices, a good rule of thumb is to call 4-6 weeks ahead of time if you plan to visit in June. For every month after that, add two weeks; for example, 6-8 weeks for July, 8-10 weeks for August, etc. College interview and tour spots fill up very quickly. The more popular colleges are full through January (they stop scheduling interviews by August).
5. It is always nice to visit when a college is in session, but the demands of the fall semester of the senior year do not always make that practical or possible. A summer visit is generally more relaxed. Both you and the admission staff will have more time. Save the return, comprehensive, overnight visit in the fall for your very few favorites. While overnight lodging and class visits are being offered at more colleges, not all do so. Do not assume that this is available.
6. If you would like to see a coach or faculty member in an area of interest, mention that when you call. Colleges do their best to accommodate you.

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK AT THE COLLEGE VISIT

Plan your college visit so that you will be able to talk not only with the admission officer but also with the students who attend the college.

Some questions you might wish to have answered:

1. What are the strongest departments at the college?
2. What size is a typical class? For Freshmen? For Upperclassmen?
3. How do I compare academically with students already attending this school?
4. What do students do after they graduate? Do they go to postgraduate studies? What percentage is employed upon graduation?
5. What kinds of cultural, sports, literary activities are offered on campus?
6. Must one join specific organizations to be a part of campus life or are there other ways to be included?
7. How many students received financial aid last year?
8. What percentage of students remains on campus during weekends?
9. What are the options for living accommodations? Dorms: Foreign language houses? Private apartments? What percentage of students lives in each?
10. Can freshmen select their own roommates?
11. Are sports available for the average player? Ask about specific activities, which interest you.
12. What kind of student is generally the most successful/happy at this college?
13. What percentage of students receives financial aid?
14. How much importance is placed on social activities and other extracurricular activities?
15. What is the institutional policy for reporting security incidents?
16. How large is the library? How many libraries are on campus? What are its special features or resources?
17. What support services are available to students? General counseling? Psychotherapy? Postgraduation planning? Free health care? Tutoring if needed? Help finding off-campus employment during the school year and during the summer? Junior year abroad or at another U.S. institution?
18. Are cultural facilities such as musical instruments, movie or video camera, magazines, and so forth easily available on a relatively informal basis to undergraduates?
19. What is the institutional policy and commitment to ethnic/cultural diversity?

C. THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

1. Learn as much as possible about the college before your visit. Be prepared both to answer and ask questions.
2. Give some advance thought to the things you want to look for and ask about. Having a list of questions with you is acceptable.
3. Go alone rather than with a friend or a gang. Mom and dad go along for the drive, but they do not participate in the admissions interview. Parents are sometimes invited to speak with the officer following the interview.
4. Arrive on time or a few minutes early.
5. Be yourself at all times—be honest, sincere, interested.
6. Know your background and experience. Be prepared to present it in an orderly manner. An opening question may be “Tell me about yourself.”
7. Be prepared to tell why you have chosen this particular college and what you expect to get out of four years there.
8. Be ready to answer questions about your SAT and/or ACT scores, rank in class, latest grades, and courses you have taken.
9. Smile! Speak distinctly. Look at the interviewer when you are speaking.
10. State and defend opinions only if asked. Do not be argumentative. If you don’t know something, admit it. Don’t try to bluff.
11. APPEARANCE: Dress neatly and attractively.
12. Relax! Interviews are meant to be informative to both parties. Try to get as much out of the interview as you put into it.
13. Thank your interviewer for his/her time and consideration.

D. QUESTIONS THAT STUDENTS OFTEN ARE ASKED AT A COLLEGE INTERVIEW

1. How did you first hear about this college?
2. What are your career goals—long range and short range?
3. Why subject is your major field of interest?
4. What kinds of things do you do outside of school?

5. What accomplishments have you achieved or activities have you participated in that have had a particular effect on you and your life?
6. What might you be interested in as a future profession?
7. What are your academic strengths and weaknesses?
8. How familiar are you with this college and its programs?
9. Which one of your activities has given you the most satisfaction?
10. If you had high school to do over again, would you do anything differently?
11. What particular “life goals” are you seeking to achieve or pursue?
12. What are your priorities in selecting a college?
13. How would you describe your high school and how would you change it?
14. Where do you see yourself in four years?
15. Discuss your most stimulating intellectual experience.
16. Tell me about something you have really wanted which you had to go after on your own.
17. What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?
18. What books or articles have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking? Have you read deeply into any one author or field?
19. Have you ever thought of not going to college? What would you do?

F. INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP

1. Make notes on the interview and the college as soon as possible after the appointment
 - a. Likes
 - b. Dislikes
 - c. Important points to remember
 - d. Name and title of the interviewer
2. Write a letter of appreciation.
 - a. This shows thoughtfulness, courtesy, and maturity.
 - b. It reinforces the admissions officer’s memory of you as an individual.

VIII. THE DECISION

Colleges and admissions have varying admission practices. Information pertaining to the policy of a prospective school will be found in its publications. Some of the more frequently mentioned practices are:

- A. **Early Decision:** Students who have demonstrated sound academic ability apply for admission to their first choice college during the summer or very early in their senior year. Notification of admission is given usually in December or January (sometimes early fall) of their senior year. Restrictive policies vary with each school and must be checked carefully to see if early decision works to the individual's advantage. Generally, if you apply Early Decision, you must also sign a commitment to attend if accepted and to withdraw any applications submitted to other colleges.
- B. **Rolling Admission:** As soon as an application is complete (meaning that the forms, the fee, and all required credentials have been received and processed), a decision on that application is made and the student is notified. It is generally advantageous for students to apply well in advance of the posted deadline because it is impossible to know how quickly the available spaces are being filled.
- C. **Regular Decision:** The process whereby a college accepts applications from prospective students and delays the admission decision until all applications from the entire applicant pool have been received and evaluated. Decision letters are mailed to applicants, all at once, traditionally in March or April.
- D. **Deferred Admission:** Students who have alternate plans for the year following high school may apply to many colleges for deferred admission. The application process and timetable remain the same as for regular admission, but students should indicate that they do not intend to matriculate until the following year. An explanation of how the student plans to spend the year, and the benefits the student expects to derive from it is usually required by the college.
- E. **Open Enrollment:** A term now used by an institution that publishes a set of admission standards and pledges to admit any student whose credentials equal or exceed them. Most often used by community colleges.
- F. **Wait List:** The process used by selective colleges who do not initially offer or deny admission, but extend the possibility of admission at a later date (usually May through July). Students should accept another college's offer since waiting list acceptances are very inconsistent. Second semester grades can be critical to your acceptance.

IX. FINANCIAL AID

Many families are understandably concerned about meeting rising college costs. Any candidate for admission to college should apply for financial aid if his or her family feels that they may not be able to pay the entire cost. Early in the senior year students should be sure to check the financial aid deadlines and the forms required by each college they are considering. Students should pursue all sources of financial aid; counselors and college financial aid officers can offer important suggestions and advice.

Students interested in applying for financial aid should acquire a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from either the college they are attending or go to www.fafsa.ed.gov; complete it with his/her parents, and submit it. Many colleges require that their own application be completed and that families submit complete copies of their federal income tax return.

A. DEFINITION OF NEED

Colleges review the information you provide to determine your family contribution and financial need. The family contribution includes a parent's contribution, student income contribution, and student contribution from assets and/or benefits. This figure is the estimated family contribution (EFC). Your family's income, assets, debts, family size and extenuating circumstances are considered when determining the family contribution. Parents with special or unusual circumstances should discuss their situation with the financial aid officer at the colleges to which their sons/daughters are applying.

Financial aid is the difference between what it will cost a student to attend a college and the family contribution. After your financial need has been determined, most colleges will award financial aid as a "package." The package may include a combination of scholarship or grant (money that does not have to be paid back), loan (to be paid back after the student leaves college), and campus employment (money earned while in school and sometimes related to the student's field of study).

One important point to remember is that financial need will usually increase as college costs increase. You should compare the types of financial aid offered by the colleges you are considering.

The following is an example of how financial need may be determined for a family with an "estimated family contribution" (EFC) of \$3,420:

	<u>College A</u> Resident Student 4-Year Private	<u>College B</u> Resident Student 4-Year Public Out of State	<u>College C</u> Resident Student 4-Year Public In State
Total Cost of College	\$18,000	\$10,000	\$6,000
Family Contribution	3,420	3,420	3,420
Estimated Financial Need	\$14,580	\$ 6,580	\$2,580

B. SOURCES AND PURPOSES OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

There are two types of financial aid: need-based and merit. Need-based forms of financial aid are the major portions of assistance available for postsecondary education. Eligibility for need-based aid is determined by the difference between the cost of attendance and the family contribution. Merit-based is generally given to students in recognition of special skills, talent and/or academic ability.

There are two type of need-based assistance: grant aid and self-help. Grant aid does not have to be repaid and does not require a service commitment. Self-help assistance includes loans (which require repayment) and employment (a part time job usually within the institution). There are primarily four sources of grant aid and self-help: federal, state, institutional, and private.

The federal government is the largest single source of student financial aid funds. The programs include Federal Pell Grants, Federal Stafford Student Loans/Federal Direct Loans, Federal Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students/Federal Direct Parent Loans for Undergraduate students. Other sources include three campus-based programs: Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG), Federal Perkins Loans (formerly National direct Student Loans), and Federal Work-Study. Institutions are allocated funds for each of the campus-based programs. Congress determines the amount of funds for the Pell Grant and campus-based programs annually.

State sources of aid are usually administered through a state agency and include grant/scholarships, loans, and work. The regulations and application procedures vary for each state. Ask your college admission counselor for information about your state's program.

Institutional sources of aid are provided and controlled by the institution. They may include grant/scholarships, loans, and campus employment.

Private sources of aid are derived from community organizations, foundations, professional associations, corporations, community lending institutions, and parents' employers. Need is usually considered, but other factors may be considered when determining your eligibility. A separate application is usually required for these programs. Check with your college advisor for information concerning these scholarships.

Many colleges also provide a variety of payment plans and loan option for parents. You parent should consult with the financial aid office of the school to which you are applying for details

X. SCHOLARSHIPS

A. WHAT ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS?

Most scholarships are obtained directly from the Office of Financial Aid of the college or university at which the student has been accepted. Mrs. Ross will assist students in locating the appropriate applications for college and other opportunities available. **However, it is the student's responsibility to secure and implement the application process.**

Notification of local scholarships are handled through the College Connection newsletters. Specific questions about local scholarships should be directed to Mrs. Ross. Copies of local scholarship applications are placed in a file in the guidance office and students may pick up any number of the applications if they fit the specific criteria. You can apply to most scholarships online. The majority of scholarships acquired by DHCA students come from specific departments or the financial aid office of a particular college or university.

IMPORTANT!! Every year students have questions concerning deadlines for accepting scholarships. A student has the right to request an extension on a decision deadline set by a school, which offers a scholarship. Generally, May 1 is as long as any college must give to accept their offer. An example of a letter requesting additional time to make a decision is as follows:

Dear Financial Aid Officer:

I would like to request an extension of the deadline for acceptance of the scholarship that was offered to me this year. I will need until May 1 to make my decision.

Sincerely,

May B. Coed

REMEMBER You must take the initiative to apply to any scholarship to which you qualify. Some scholarships require a lot of work i.e. letters of reference, an application, and an essay. It will be worth your time and effort to apply. The more scholarships you apply for the better chance you have at being awarded one.

XI. PRESSURES AND OPTIONS

A. STRESS - WATCH OUT FOR IT!

Your senior year may be a time of stress for many reasons, not the least of which is the pressure to get into someone's idea of the "right" college. Your parents may have goals for you, which are not the same as the ones you have set for yourself. Your friends may also have expectations of you. Your teachers may see you in a way that you think is inconsistent with your own goals. Finally, you may be piling the pressure on yourself with too many activities and too much work and not enough time to get it all done. Watch for these warning signals:

1. Are you constantly tired or do you feel bad without a good cause?
2. Are your grades beginning to drop after a long record of high achievement?
3. Are you having run-ins with your parents or teacher for no good reason?
4. Do you find that you are putting things off for longer and longer periods of time? Do you find it almost impossible to get down to filling out your college applications?
5. Have you begun to gain or lose weight?
6. Is your feeling toward the world in general best described as "depressed"?

All six of these conditions are symptoms of stress. It is important not only that you find ways to deal with your stress but also that you understand what is causing these feelings. You need to identify the source of the problem. Then you can deal with it in some effective way. Even if your feeling is so vague that you have trouble talking about it, a general discussion with a helpful adult can lead you to understand your anxieties. Just facing the unknown of college creates a certain amount of uneasiness in most successful students.

This is not the time to let the pressure overwhelm you. It is a time when you need to be "together." You may only need a different perspective to make it more manageable. This is not to minimize the demands being put upon you. Every year, more and more students are experiencing these pressures. Be sure to find ways to cope with your pressure that are productive and not destructive. Talk to a teacher, counselor, or anyone who will help you to understand your situation.

XII. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. WHEN YOU APPLY TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES YOU HAVE RIGHTS.

Before you apply:

You have the right to receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices and packaging policies, and housing policies. If you consider applying under an early admission, early action decision plan, you have a right to complete information from the college about its processes and policies.

When you are offered admission:

You have the right to wait to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until May 1.

Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1, must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. They must grant you this extension and your request may not jeopardize your status for admission and/or financial aid. (This right does not apply to candidates admitted under an early decision program.)

If you are placed on a wait list or alternate list:

The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on the wait list, the number offered admission, and availability of financial aid and housing.

Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a wait list.

Colleges are expected to notify you of the resolution of your wait list status by August 1 at the latest.

B. WHEN YOU APPLY TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Before you apply:

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

As you apply:

You must complete all material that is required for application, and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications.

You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications.

It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

After you receive your admission decisions:

You must notify each college or university which accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. Make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision regarding the college that you wish to attend, but no later than May 1. It is understood that May 1 will be the postmark date.

You must confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a wait list by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify a college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll.

If you are accepted under an early decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.

XIII. Websites

College Information

Alabama Mentor	http://www.alabamamentor.org
C3Apply	http://www.c3apply.org/
Campus Tours	http://www.campustours.com/
College Board	www.collegeboard.org
College is Possible	www.CollegeIsPossible.org
College Net	http://www.collegenet.com/
College Search	http://www.gocollege.com/
College Xpress	http://www.collegexpress.com/
Colleges Alphabetical	http://www.mit.edu:8001/people/cdemello/univ.html
Colleges—By State	http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state/
Collegeview Search	http://www.collegeview.com/
Common Application	www.commonapp.org
Great Resource	http://www.collegiatechoice.com/
National College Admission Counseling Newsletter	www.nacacnet.org

Peterson's Guide	www.petersons.com/ugrad
Princeton Review	www.review.com
Sally Mae	www.collegeanswer.com

Career Sites

Career Cruising	www.careercruising.com Username: Decatur Password: academy
Career Guidance	http://www.schoolsintheusa.com/
Keirseey Temperament Sorter	www.keirseey.com/
Mapping Future	www.mapping/your/future.org
US Dept. of Labor	www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm

Scholarships/Financial Aid

FAFSA	www.ed.gov
Fastweb	www.fastweb.com
Federal Employee Money	www.feea.org
Federal Grants	http://www.fedmone.org/
Federal Loans	www.ed.gov/DirectLoan
Financial Aid Organization	www.finaid.org

Athletic Information

Awards	www.collegesportsscholarships.com
NCAA Clearinghouse	http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net/
Military Academies	
Air Force	www.usafa.af.mil
Army	http://www.usma.edu/
Coast Guard	www.cga.edu
Navy	www.nadn.navy.mil
Military Aid	
Military College aid	www.military.com
Military Scholarships	www.fisherhouse.org
Testing	
ACT	www.act.org
College Board	http://www.collegeboard.com/testing/
Test Prep	www.princetonreview.com
Test Prep tips	http://www.number2.com/index.cfm