



**A California Distinguished School 2009
Record-Breaking School API 848 in 2010-11
Golden Bell Award 2010
Newsweek Top 500 High School in U.S. 2011**



Students First: every day, every school, every classroom

Welcome to your College Handbook!
2011-2012

***** This was compiled to help students and parents navigate college admission. Every effort has been made for accuracy. It is not a substitute for your own investigation. If questions arise please see your counselor. Thank you. *****

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Adolfo Camarillo High School

College Counseling Handbook

Adolfo Camarillo High School
(College Board, ACT, or CEEB Code)

050-438

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Overview – Types of Colleges

Community Colleges in California

California is particularly fortunate in having many excellent state supported community colleges. There are 107 publicly supported community colleges located throughout the state of California. They offer low-cost education to more than 1.3 million students annually. To be eligible for admission to a community college, a student must be 18 years of age or a high school graduate. At the community college, students who plan to transfer to a four-year college as a junior will take regular lower division college classes, completing their general education requirements before beginning work in their major at the four-year institution. Students may also earn a terminal Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree, or complete a certificate program in vocational training. Several community colleges offer study abroad programs and Honors programs which enrich academic opportunities.

The Community College may be a good choice for you if:

- You plan on four years of college, but for financial or other reasons, you prefer to stay at home for the first two years.
- You plan on four years of college, but you haven't met the academic requirements to directly enter a four-year college.
- You know you want to attend college, but you are unsure of where to attend or what your career focus should be, so you want to complete your general education requirements first with fewer costs.
- You wish to attend a college which will train you in two years for a vocation.

California State University

Ranging from Humboldt near the Oregon border to San Diego near the Mexican border, there are currently 23 campuses in the California State University system with an enrollment exceeding 325,000 students. CSU is committed to enrolling the top third of California high school graduates who have met the CSU minimum eligibility requirements. Each campus has its own unique geographic and curricular character. All campuses offer undergraduate and graduate instruction for professional and occupational goals as well as broad liberal education.

Application filing period: October 1st - November 30th

Application deadline: November 30th

CSU web site: www.csumentor.edu

University of California

The University of California (UC) has ten campuses offering instruction in a wide range of fields. ELC (Eligibility in the Local Context) is granted to the top 9% of the rising senior class. The UC's evaluated the subject requirements and the GPA of the current juniors over the summer preceding senior year. ELC status is a guarantee admission into one of the UC's.

Admission to the University of California is quite competitive. The UC selects freshman applicants from the top 12 ½ percent of California's high school graduates. To be eligible for admission to the UC system as a freshman, you must meet the "A-G" Subject Requirement, the examination requirements, and the academic eligibility requirement. Meeting minimum requirements does not necessarily guarantee you a place at a campus or in the major of your choice. Because there are more applicants than there are spaces, admission is very selective. The campuses further screen applicants and generally admit students with higher qualifications than the minimums required.

Subject requirements are listed below. Standardized testing required: Scores on the ACT Assessment plus Writing or SAT Reasoning Test. Subject tests are no longer required but some students may choose to take a test to show competency in individual areas. Applicants will have to submit a personal statement. The prompts are:

- Describe the world you come from—for example, your family, community, or school—and tell us how your world has shaped your dreams and aspirations.
- Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about the quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?

Application filing period: November 1st – November 30th

Application deadline: November 30th

UC web site: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions

A – G Requirements for CSU and UC Universities

A grade of C or better in the following college preparatory course requirements, plus an acceptable standardized test score on the SAT or ACT is required in order to meet the *minimum* standard of admission to the CSUs and the UCs:

English	4 years
Mathematics	3 years, 4 recommended (Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra II)
US History/Government/World History	2 years
Science	2 years with lab (3 recommended)
Foreign Language	2 years of same language (3 recommended)
Visual and Performing Arts	1 year
Electives	1 year, selected from any of the following: English, advanced mathematics, social science, history, laboratory science, foreign language, or visual and performing arts.

Private Colleges and Universities

Among the 200 colleges and universities in the state of California, there are approximately 75 private schools. These colleges do not have direct financial support from and control by the state of California. This independence means that they have greater freedom in designing programs, defining admission criteria and procedures, and determining the focus and culture of the school. Because of this self-direction, you will find great diversity among the private colleges. They are large, medium, and small; nonsectarian and religious; greatly selective to very modestly selective; traditional to innovative; specialized and liberal arts. Some are for women only or men only. Some are nonprofit; some are for-profit businesses. Campuses vary widely in location, environment, goals, admission requirements, and programs and degrees offered.

There are four types of private, four-year colleges:

- **Research institutions** such as the University of Southern California or Stanford University.
- Small, **comprehensive universities** such as the University of the Pacific or Loyola Marymount University.
- Small **specialized schools** such as Harvey Mudd College and the California Institute of the Arts.
- Small **liberal arts colleges** such as the University of Redlands and Occidental College.

In addition to four-year institutions, there are **private two-year liberal arts colleges**, such as Marymount College in Rancho Palos Verdes, that award Associate (AA) degrees or offer transfer programs. There are also private career colleges that offer Associate or Bachelor Degrees or certificate programs.

Factors taken into account when applying to private colleges:

- Your high school record
- Your high school
- College admission tests
- Extracurricular activities
- Essay
- Recommendations
- Interview (not all schools require this)
- Special talents/achievements
- Personal background

Factors taken into account by all colleges:

- A sound college preparatory program
- Challenging course selection that requires critical thinking
- Participation in extracurricular activities
- Participation in community activities
- Good writing skills
- Indication of personal development (maturity, responsibility, ability to collaborate, decision-making skills, and flexibility)

The single most important thing you can do to improve your overall level of education is to read. Reading is the key to academic development, personal development, better standardized test scores, and wider knowledge.

Seven Myths About College Admissions

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

Fact: Private college admission officers read personal essays with great care (same for the UC, now that they have the Comprehensive Review of applications). Writing about yourself in a way that makes you unique is the one significant thing you can do to overcome lackluster test scores and a mediocre school record. Don't wait until just before the deadline to rush to write your essay just to get the application in the mail on time. UC's are looking for more information about you that may not have been demonstrated in the rest of the application. Use your space wisely.

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

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

Myth #3: It is important to have as many extra-curricular activities as possible to impress college admission people because it "looks good."

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

Myth #4: It is better to go to a big university that is well known than to a small college that few people have heard of.

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

Myth #5: The only private colleges worth applying to are the Ivy League colleges.

Fact: This is another cliché. The eight Ivy League colleges are among the most selective schools in the nation, but they may not offer what *you* want. Certainly the Ivy League is known for its academic quality, but it does *not* have a monopoly on academic quality.

Suggested reading: *Looking Beyond the Ivy League* by Loren Pope.

Myth #6: Colleges just don't have enough money to give families financial aid.

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

Myth #7: If I make the wrong decision about college, my life will be ruined.

Fact: While it is important to realize the significance of your college choice, take it seriously, and spend time on all the steps of the college process, you should remember to keep things in perspective. If you find, in spite of an informed choice, that you are not well suited to your college, you can transfer to another college. So be conscientious about the selection process.

Where to Start

The admissions process is an attempt by colleges and universities to select the most qualified students for their particular institution, carefully matching student and program. The basis of this selection is determined by an evaluation of the following:

Academic Information:

- 1) The transcript which includes:
 - a) Academic grades
 - b) Type and number of courses
 - c) Level of courses
 - d) Rank in class
 - e) Cumulative grade point average
- 2) Test results:
 - a) SAT or ACT
 - b) Subject Tests

Personal Information contained in:

- 1) Autobiographical essay/writing sample
- 2) Résumé of extracurricular activities:
 - a) Leadership roles
 - b) Activities and clubs
 - c) Sports participation
 - d) Work and travel experiences
 - e) Unique talents and interests
 - f) Volunteer service
- 3) School Recommendation
- 4) A personal interview
- 5) Letters of recommendation by teachers

Academic

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

Some Perspective from the College Board

In the College Board's Annual Survey of Colleges (April 2004), colleges indicate which admissions criteria are most important. In the latest figures, criteria rated "very important or important" by 1,841 four-year colleges were:

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

School achievement has been the single most important factor in the admissions decisions since The College Board began tracking this information in the early 1980's.

Develop Good Study Habits

If you are at a loss, and do not know where to begin to learn more effective study habits, try this website: <http://www.studygs.net/>. It is a compendium of study skills and test taking information. The site is authored, maintained, and revised by Joe Landsberger, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN.

Personal

Getting your academic house in order is the first rule for progress in the college application process. After that, it is time to find out who you are, what you are good at, and how adventuresome you are. Achievements outside the classroom are also a factor in admission of an applicant, and for many of the selective colleges, a student's non-academic record can allow him or her to be accepted before applicants with similar academic credentials. Colleges are not as interested in students who participate or dabble in a large number of activities as they are in applicants who have become sincerely involved in a few meaningful endeavors. Choose the activities that interest you most and make a real commitment to them. If possible, work toward a leadership position in your activity. Spend some time with yourself and notice what you think about, dream about, and perhaps want to try out. If you think you would be good at public speaking, take a class or become involved in student government. If you would like to develop artistic talent, take advantage of the excellent visual arts program at school or ask about weekend programs at art colleges. Though it is important that you learn about yourself and develop yourself as a person, it is also important in the college admissions process. Colleges are looking for interesting people. You will hear that they want people who have a passion. Perhaps some of your classmates have already found theirs, but maybe you are still looking. There are unlimited opportunities for exploration. If you get stuck, see your counselor for ideas about volunteering, interesting classes, or summer opportunities. A growth curve is important. Most colleges are looking for students who are growing steadily as a student and a person. Achieving just a satisfactory level of performance and staying there often indicates complacency and a lack of motivation. If you apply yourself daily and pursue real interests, you will enter the college application process with confidence and direction.

Where Do I Apply?

Let's start with a reality check: 3,350 of the 3,500 colleges in the nation DO NOT turn down more applicants than they accept. So does it make sense to limit yourself to the stressful, hardball game of highly selective college admissions? Only *you* can answer that. Ideally, you will have a range of colleges on your list, based not only upon selectivity, but also upon the important things: environment, programs, great teaching, opportunity to meet interesting people and perhaps lifelong friends, and the chance to be challenged both personally and academically. In the field of college counseling, we call this *the right match*. And there is no *perfect* college for you. There are a number of colleges that may be right for you. While it is true that there is undoubtedly a type of college which is more suited to your needs than another type, it is not wise to narrow your sights to only one or two colleges. A better plan is to investigate several possible options and you will discover that each one has its own advantages.

Step 1: Factors to Consider in Researching and Selecting a College

What Not To Do:

- Put any faith in *US News and World Report* or similar rankings

Just because a school is highly ranked doesn't mean that you will like it or that it will suit your needs. The rankings are based on factors that include things like faculty salaries, average spending per student, alumni giving rate, and the number of students who transfer. While these factors are important to the college, they have little or nothing to do with whether or not you will be happy there.

- Your best friend's boyfriend didn't like the school he attended.

Just because he didn't like the college doesn't mean that you won't. There might be a very specific reason that he was turned off by the school – a weird freshman year roommate or a professor with whom he didn't click. Those things can happen at any school. Be your own person in researching colleges.

- "I heard that . . ."

Very Dangerous words! Much of the information that floats around about particular colleges can be hearsay. Do your research. What are the social and academic realities *now*?

- I've never heard of it.

Many of the small, liberal arts colleges are actually some of the best colleges in the country, and they might be some of the best-kept secrets too. The average well-educated person can probably name only a small number of the almost 3,500 colleges and universities in the United States. These tend to be older Eastern schools, the large state universities, those with outstanding athletic teams, or those that happen to be near home. It is important to remember that a college which may be right for you may be one that is unknown to you now, while some of the universities you are most familiar with may not be appropriate choices.

Start by making a list of things you want in a college. Some suggestions for consideration:

- **Size:** Do I want the anonymity of a large school versus the personal attention from professors at a smaller school? Think about the learning environment in a lecture hall of 400, where you might be able to go through four years without being called on more than a few times; as opposed to the smaller **class size**, even seminar classes at small schools, where your participation is expected. It is much easier to have a big impact on life at a smaller school, since you will be better able to get to know the administration and many of the other campus leaders personally. At large schools, meetings will be announced, but unless you seek them out, clubs and organizations won't come to find you.
- **Weather:** Can I live through wind, snow, rain, and sleet – in a word: weather. We don't really have that in Southern California, so this is an important question if you are considering leaving the area or the state.
- **Location:** Have I visited a school in a suburban or rural area, so that I know what it means to distinguish between urban, suburban, or rural campuses?
- **Programs:** Am I looking for a specialized school? (engineering, music, fashion design)
- **Co-Curricular Activities:** Do I want to attend a school with a strong sense of campus community? Big-time sports can make you feel like you belong the minute football season begins. Do you like the tradition that goes along with big-time sports programs? Or are you trying to find a school with an orchestra, an award-winning student newspaper, political demonstrations, or important guest speakers?
- **Academic Atmosphere:** What environment suits me? Tense or relaxed, competitive or geared to individual progress, high or low academic expectations, opportunities for recreational and cultural activities to supplement academics, honor systems and academic discipline codes.
- **Graduation in 4 years:** Is it important to you to graduate in four years? You may not know that the norm for colleges to quote graduation statistics is now *six years*, as in "We graduate 65% of our students in 6 years." It is possible to graduate in four years. Be sure to find out how many students do that at the school you are considering.
- **Social Structure and Campus Lifestyle:** Is a residential campus important? This is an especially important question for students planning to attend out-of-state colleges. Weekend social life, on and off campus, types of entertainment favored by the students, fraternities and sororities, and system of student rules are all important factors in the daily life of a student.
- **Position in the incoming class:** Do you want to be one of the better students at the school, or do you want the challenge of working extra hard to keep up with the top 25%? Would you consider entering an Honors program at a somewhat less competitive school in order to get the best education possible at a large school in a smaller group experience? Think Arizona State University or U Mass–Amherst.
- **Calendar:** Is the school's calendar important to you – semesters or quarters?
- **Your Own Priorities:** Think about the dozens of other things that you as an individual might consider: athletics, performing arts, distance from home or relatives, cost, public/private, religious affiliation, specific programs or interdisciplinary majors, . . . add your own special considerations.

Step 2: Honestly Assess Your Profile

A realistic self-assessment will help you examine your academic and personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as your reasons for going to college and what you are seeking in a college education. The process involves a combination of looking back at your high school career and looking ahead to how a college education will prepare you for your post-collegiate years. Answer these questions in an honest and thoughtful manner. A self-evaluation will help you understand what to look for in your selection of prospective schools, and it can prepare you for statements you will be asked to make about yourself in essays and interviews when you apply.

Goals and Values

What is your main educational goal?

What values do you consider most important?

What kind of person would you like to become?

Which of your unique gifts and strengths would you like to develop?

What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

Education

What are your academic interests?

Which courses have been most satisfying for you?

What interests beyond daily class assignments have you pursued in research papers, through independent projects, and recreational reading?

How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues and exchange ideas?

What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?

In what academic areas do you feel confident? Inadequately prepared?

Are there outside distractions which have interfered with your academic performance?

Consider such things as family problems, health, after-school job responsibilities.

Activities and Interests

What activities outside of the daily school routine do you enjoy the most?

Which have meant the most to you?

Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence or contribution?

What do you do for fun and relaxation?

What distresses you most about the world around you?

What would you do if you could change certain aspects of your world?

Personality and Relationships with Others

Are you competitive? If so, to what extent?

What kind of a person are you?

What three adjectives would you use to describe yourself?

How would someone who knows you well describe you?

What are your finest qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings?

How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself ?

Step 3: Create a List of Colleges to Investigate

You might want to create a section of a notebook for keeping track of your research. Make notes initially about size, location, selectivity, and special features based upon some of the qualities/characteristics noted in Step 1. Be honest about the kind of student you are. In terms of grades and standardized test scores, what kind of student are you?

- A student with 2100-2400 on the SAT or 29-36 on the ACT can consider highly selective colleges.
- B student with 1800-2100 on the SAT or 22-27 on the ACT can consider very selective colleges.
- B- to C student with student with 1400-1800 on the SAT or 18-21 on the ACT can consider selective colleges.

Once you can be honest with yourself, you can begin to categorize colleges as *Reach*, *Realistic/Target*, and *Likely/Safety*.

Help in your research

- Talk with your counselor. Meet with the counselor and keep open lines of communication. Counselors are there to answer questions and make suggestions, but they are not there to do your work for you. Research is work.
- Also take advantage of some of the excellent guidebooks available for purchase or in the reference area of your public library, such as *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*, Princeton Review's *Best 351 Colleges*, or The College Board's *College Handbook*.
- You can do searches online through College Board, Princeton Review and California Colleges. These programs allow you to identify aspects of colleges, they will yield a list for you to research. Almost all colleges have websites to provide students with information. You can submit your name online to get on a particular college's mailing list. They will follow up with catalogs, view books, and applications.
- Don't forget the visits by college representatives to ACHS in the fall. These are great opportunities to meet with the person who will probably be reading your application.

A list of 20 or more colleges to research is reasonable. You need to begin narrowing your list down to a reasonable six to ten colleges. Narrowing down the list is a task made successful by good research. A good list will include some reach, target and safety schools.

Step 4: Visiting Colleges

Beyond all of your research, on the internet, in general reference materials and all the view books, video tapes, catalogues, and brochures from individual schools, there is nothing like visiting a campus and seeing for yourself what a school is like. You will want to visit the schools that especially interest you, and certainly the ones that accept you, once you have completed the application process. If you are lucky enough to be able to visit major cities with loads of colleges, like Boston or Philadelphia, then by all means, go and see as many schools as you can. If you are not, we recommend that you visit some campuses in Southern California. You can visit virtually any type of college right here within driving distance. Some of the area

colleges might approximate the size and setting of an out-of-state school that you may be considering. There is a list of suggested colleges in Southern California on page 39.

Before the Tour

- The timing of a visit can make a significant difference in your impressions and opinion of the school. Try to plan your visit when school is in session, if at all possible.
- Advance planning with the college's admission office is important to help you make the most of your visit. Most colleges encourage campus visits, and many publish special brochures to help you plan one. The admission office can assist you with travel information, driving directions, and scheduling your itinerary (distances/driving times to nearby schools, the feasibility of visiting their school and another on the same day, etc).
- Call the admissions office, and set up a day and time for a tour. If this is a serious visit, you might want to ask about staying overnight in a residence hall. Ask if they can make arrangements. If this is not possible, ask for assistance in finding lodging for the night, if you need a place to stay. Some offices have arrangements with hotels or motels in the area.
- During your visit, try to meet with someone from the admission office, attend an information session, and take a tour of the campus.
- Learn all you can and take notes. You will never be indifferent after a college visit. You will have strong impressions. Write them down, good or bad, and start learning about what you want in terms of size, type of school, people, dorms, activities, etc. You might want to make a comparison chart to take with you if you plan to see several schools at one time. If you do not make notes of some kind, you will find that your memory of specifics becomes vague after visiting several schools.
- Follow up with a thank you note to the admissions person who helped you arrange your tour, or who spent time with you on campus.

What to Look for on a Tour

- General appearance of the campus (poor maintenance, vandalism, campus pride)
- Student attire (J. Crew, Gap, very casual, sloppy)
- Friendliness (eye contact, offer to help, hello's)
- Student conversations (topic, tone, classes, papers, books, parties)
- Transportation (bikes, cars, foot, shuttles)
- Faculty presence (office hours posted, open doors, student interaction)
- Library (hours, easy access)
- Laboratory and computer facilities (hours, easy access)
- Fine arts facilities (studios, practice rooms, performances)
- Residence Halls (singles, doubles, suites, coed, substance free or wellness, guaranteed housing)

Questions to Ask Campus Representatives on a College Visit

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

Questions to Ask Students on a College Visit

Stop several students and ask them about the school and their programs. Watch for their facial expressions and any hesitation in their voice. Some sample questions you could ask:

- If they were choosing a college today would this college be their first choice?
- If there is anything about the school they could change? If so, what would it be?
- What are the school's strongest or most popular majors?
- Is housing guaranteed for freshmen?
- Will you need a car?
- Can you have a car on campus?
- Parking Costs?
- Is there public transportation to nearby destinations (shopping, museums, etc.)?

Also, ask questions about your own particular interests, such as internships in your field, fraternities/sororities, student organizations, intramural leagues and/or club sports, student government, and what campus life is like on the weekends.

Other Helpful Activities when you are on a Campus

- Look at school newspapers, kiosks, and bulletin boards for activities that interest you and give you insight into issues students care about.
- Eat in the dining hall (you might need permission from the admissions officer).
- Visit the student union.
- Talk to professors of classes or majors you may be interested in.
- Talk to coaches if you plan to play a sport.
- Visit the housing complexes.
- Visit the libraries.

Step 5: Meet with College Representatives on Our Campus and Attend College Fairs

You can take advantage of meeting admissions representatives right on your own campus. Listen for announcements in the bulletin. Juniors and Seniors may attend these workshops.

Each year, the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) hosts **The Ventura/Tri County National College Fair**. It will be held May 1, 2012 at the Ventura County Fairgrounds. Go online at www.nacac.com for more information. On that same website, see information regarding the **Visual and Performing Arts National College Fair**, a must for serious VPA students. The fair is held in the fall; location varies from year to year. Juniors should plan to attend.

Collegiate Choice Walking Tours has taken the official student-guided campus tours at more than 350 colleges – camcorder in hand – and it offers the tapes, about an hour long, for \$15 each. Visit www.collegiatechoice.com to learn more.

How Do I Apply?

Step 1: Get the College Applications

You know your sixth semester grades; you know your SAT or ACT scores (you might test again, but you have to go with what you know for this step); and you have done your research. You have your final list categorized by *Reach*, *Target* and *Safety*. Run the final list by your counselor for input and information that may be new to you and then get your applications. UC and CSU applications are online. More and more colleges are either asking you to apply online or giving you a downloadable version that you can print out. If you are on the mailing list already, schools may still send you paper versions. There is something called the *Common Application*. Look up the website at www.commonapp.org. See if two or more of the schools on your list are there. If so, you may want to fill out the *Common Application*, rather than the institutional applications to save repeating the same information over and over. If you use the *Common Application*, be sure to look for supplements required by many colleges. Stanford, for example may have specific requirements in submitting your application and secondary reports. ACHS is unable to electronically submit transcripts and letters of recommendations. You will have to print out the secondary report, sign them and give them to your counselor for each school applying. Remember to give 2 weeks notice to your counselor and supply properly STAMPED, ADDRESSED envelopes.

Organizational Note: Set up a filing system that works for you. Keep a separate file for each college to which you are applying.

Step 2: Keep a Log of Deadlines

Chart each application deadline, counselor/teacher recommendation(s) required, personal essay requirement, SAT/ACT test dates and scores, and date mailed. Applying to colleges can be a draining and time-consuming business. Organization of files and information will help alleviate some of the stress during this time.

Deadlines are critical. Given that deadlines are as varied for the 3,000+ colleges out there, keeping track of them is crucial. In California, we have very early deadlines for our state university systems. You may apply to the **California State University (CSU) from October 1 - November 30**, and to the **University of California (UC) from November 1 - November 30**. Note the other school's deadlines carefully, as well as any standardized testing deadlines if you plan to test in the fall.

Some highly competitive colleges have deadlines called **Early Decision (E.D.) and Early Action (E.A.)**. You won't find many fans of these application options among high school counselors. But E.D. and E.A. exist, so explore them if you wish, but always proceed with caution. They both carry risks. E.D. and E.A. deadlines are usually November 1st, with a promise of an early answer, usually December 15th.

Early Decision (E.D.): If you are admitted as an EARLY DECISION applicant, you must attend that college, and you must withdraw all other applications. This is a highly competitive applicant pool, but because the college can get the best applicants early out of this pool, they sometimes take students with *slightly* lower overall grades/test scores than it might in the regular application pool. The real issue for counselors, and hopefully for you too, is that you might change your mind between December and the universal May 1st decision date. If accepted, you will attend this school. There is no room for doubt - EARLY DECISION is a binding contract.

Early Action (E.A.) refers to a *non-binding* early admission program. Students admitted under this program are not committed in any way, and may, if they wish, file admissions applications to other colleges. Colleges that have “**Single Choice Early Action**” (S.C.E.A.) programs do not allow candidates to apply to other schools during the early-action period only. However, once they receive E.A. (Early Action) decisions (mid-December), then applicants are free to apply elsewhere, if they so choose. Students receiving deferral notifications will be reconsidered with the regular applicant pool. Early action pools are also very strong, so if you aren’t that strong, you might actually run the risk of being rejected outright. Talk it through with your counselor. There are issues concerning Financial Aid with both E.D. and E.A., so again, speak with your counselor regarding these early deadlines.

Finally, you should be aware that if you file an application as an Early Decision or Early Action applicant to a school and are denied admission, you may not apply again to the same school for the same admissions year as a regular admissions applicant.

Rolling Admissions: With rolling admissions, the admission application is reviewed as soon as the file is complete. The college notifies the student of its decision within a short time, usually four to six weeks. Due to the increasing competitiveness of college admissions, it is a good idea to apply early to these colleges.

Open Admissions: Some colleges do not practice selective admissions and offer admission to all students who apply. Generally, there are no admission deadlines for colleges that follow this policy. The community colleges are an example of this type of admission.

Step 3: Complete the Applications

Do not procrastinate. Do not treat the deadlines as though they are flexible. Be sure you mark your progress on your Deadlines Chart. Welcome your parents pestering you to stay on top of the deadlines, because this is serious business, and it is not just about you.

With the UC and CSU, as soon as the applications are available online, you may begin filling them out, but they will not be processed until either October 1 (for the CSU) or November 1 (for the UC). ***DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO FILE UC OR CSU APPLICATIONS.*** Computer systems have been known to crash due to overload.

Private school applications will generally require a **School Report** (found in the application itself) and one or more Teacher Recommendations (forms also found in the applications). As soon as you receive an application, tear out the appropriate forms, and fill in the top portion.

Organize a large file for all of your School Report forms. When you have all the reports together and filled out, give them to your counselor along with an envelope with two or three stamps for each (depending on envelope size.) Your counselor will then complete the School Reports, attach a transcript, a letter of recommendation (if required) and mail all the materials together.

If applying to private schools, write an autobiographical **résumé**. Most college applications will contain sections that ask for your activities and interests outside of the academic classroom setting. Completing these sections on several applications can be tedious and time consuming. Once you develop a résumé, you can include it with your application and bypass these sections on every form, noting “*See attached résumé.*” You may already have done this for a job, a summer experience, or for an English class assignment. A sample copy can be found on page 26 of this handbook. The résumé will be used by your counselor, teachers writing recommendations, admissions officers, and possibly a coach or interviewer.

Your résumé should include information such as:

- Personal data: full legal name, address, telephone number, and email address.
- Educational background: school(s) attended, the CEEB Code (ACHS Code: 050438).
- Extracurricular, personal, and volunteer activities you have done either in the summer or during the school year while in high school – community service; family activities; church, synagogue, or youth group projects or activities; school activities outside of class (sports, theatre, musical talents, art projects, cheerleading, scouting, student committees, etc); significant travel experiences; summer camps or special outdoor programs; independent projects you have completed.
- Include specific events, major accomplishments, special awards, or honors in any of these activities (musical instruments played, acceptance to a program by audition, elected offices held, varsity letters, workplace awards, etc.), and note any leadership roles you may have held.
- Indicate your level of involvement with each item (hours per week, weeks per year, or overall time involved). The length of time spent in each of your endeavors is not the most crucial factor since the type of venture or your level of responsibility may be more important. However, time spent reveals the degree of your commitment.
- Special interests and hobbies: This category usually includes activities that show great dedication and participation over a long period of time.
- Work experience: Not only should you list your job(s), but also the number of hours you worked during the period(s) of employments.

Note: Separate athletic, drama, music or other specialized résumés are very significant when applying for competitive programs. They should give a complete review of training, participation and performance as well as future intentions.

Limit your requests for **teacher recommendations** to one or two teachers. Colleges rarely ask for more than two teachers. It is important that you personally ask a teacher to complete the teacher recommendation form. The teacher you choose should know you well enough to give several specific examples describing your characteristics as a person and student, your written work, the degree and quality of class participation, and your interest in the subject. This is not necessarily the teacher who gave you an “A.” Recommendations should come from junior or senior level teachers. Here are some ways you can make this task easier for your teachers:

1. If recommendations are required, forms are usually inside the application. Tear out the teacher recommendation(s) and fill out the top of the form completely. ALWAYS waive your right to see the recommendation; otherwise the letter will have no weight in the application process. Just so you know: the federal law governing this aspect of your application states that you *only have the right to see the letter once you have been admitted and you actually attend that school*. Then you have the right to go to the admission office once you are on campus and read the letter. If you are rejected from a school, you have no right to see the letter at any time. Think about it - you sign away your right, and you are admitted - would you really *care* what the letter says - not likely. So sign the waiver.
2. For each college, address and stamp a plain business-sized envelope, leaving the return address blank. If applying to Stanford check their requirements.
3. Neatly organize a folder with your résumé, all the request forms for the various colleges, and their addressed, stamped envelopes. Attach a list of the colleges with deadlines clearly noted for each college. Keep a copy of that list for your records.
4. Give the folder to the teacher a *minimum of two weeks* before your first deadline.
5. Check with each teacher a week to 10 days before the application is due to be sure that the letter of recommendation has been sent.

NO LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION ARE REQUIRED OR PERMITTED
FOR UC OR CSU APPLICATIONS.

Letters of Recommendation: What Not To Do

- Assume that recommendations are quickly and easily prepared (they are not).
- Ask a teacher to write a recommendation on the day it is due – give them a *minimum* of two weeks notice (three weeks is even better).
- Drop off the form at the last minute as *you* leave for vacation.
- Ask more than two teachers to write recommendations for you unless special circumstances dictate. This is an inefficient use of teachers’ time and is considered to be an imposition on the third teacher when only one or two recommendations are needed.
- Neglect to thank the teacher for his or her help.
- Neglect to let the teacher know where you have been admitted, especially if they wrote and sent a letter of recommendation to a school where you have been accepted.

Writing Your Essays

There will be a prompt in the application if an essay is required. This can be anything from “Tell us something about yourself” to something off-the-wall that will enable the creative student to do his or her thing. Usually, prompts look something like this:

- Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
- Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
- Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
- Describe a character in fiction, an historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and describe that influence.
- Topic of your choice.

Essays are important, so do not leave this piece until the night before you mail the package. Write it (three or four rough drafts is the norm for writing a good essay), set it aside, revise it, have someone else edit it, and then finalize it when you know it really reflects who you are.

If you are short on ideas, one of these might help:

- Do you participate in class? Think of a time when something you said sparked an interesting discussion.
- Think of your best qualities: leadership, persistence, compassion, humor. Tell a story about a time when that quality exhibited itself in your life.
- Do you excel in some extracurricular activity? Do you play the tenor sax? Do you tear up the soccer field? Do you write so beautifully that it brings tears to eyes of the reader? Tell an anecdote from your life concerning your talent.
- Do you bring diversity to the (future) campus? If you have a different perspective to add to the student body at your hoped-for college, talk about it.
- Was there a time in your life when you failed at something, and now, looking back, you can see how much you learned from your failure/mistake?
- Did you gain insight after an experience, or after meeting someone special, that changed your outlook on a person, a group, or a situation? Talk about that personal growth.

Personal Statements (UC's not CSU'S): What To Do

- Respond to the prompts. Add information that the rest of the application has not covered.
- The admissions reader wants to know about you.
- Avoid generalities.
- Keep in mind the word limit.
- Have someone else read your essay and give suggestions. Your English teacher is a good resource.

Personal Statements and Essays: What Not To Do

- Try to write a funny essay if you are not a good comic writer.
- Repeat information from other parts of your application.
- Use your essay to list things you have done.
- Write about “last summer” unless it is really important to you.
- Write your essay for the admissions reader. Write it for yourself, but make it interesting for the people evaluating your essays.

You are responsible for sending **official test scores** to each college. If you coded colleges on your standardized test registration forms, then you have already sent official copies. If you didn't, contact the College Board www.collegeboard.com or ACT www.actstudent.org and send the scores immediately. There are charges for sending scores.

Interviews might be required for some colleges. If so, there should be a representative coming to the Ventura County area. You must call and schedule the interview according to the instructions given in the application. Sometimes interviews are optional. If you are a borderline student, you should try to interview. Once the interviewer sees that you are a great student who would be an asset to the school, the input from the interview just might tip the balance in your favor. Interviews are rarely make-or-break events, so *relax and be yourself*. Dress appropriately, speak well, make eye contact, and be confident that the interviewer will only ask you questions for which you know answers.

Step 4: Submit the Applications

Try very hard not to submit the applications the night before they are due. You will receive an acknowledgement via E-mail from each college confirming receipt of your applications.

Step 5: Mid-Year Reports

Most private colleges require your 7th semester (fall semester, senior year) grades. Private colleges often have a **Mid-Year Report** form in the application. Again, as with the School Reports, print out the form, fill out the top, and give all the Mid-Year reports to your counselor. These won't be mailed until February, once the 7th semester grades are finalized, but the work of organizing the mid-year reports should be done ahead of time. Please don't leave this task until the last minute.

Note: Transcripts are not submitted to the UC or CSU during the application process, nor do they accept mid-year reports; therefore you do not need to send transcripts to these schools. Only the final transcript is sent, once you have been admitted and graduated.

Step 6: Communicate Any Changes

Take responsibility for communicating with the college admissions office if anything should change *after* you file your application. For example, if you drop a class that you listed on your application, you must notify the college in writing that you have done so. If you stated that you planned to be on a team or club during the year and you decided later not to participate, you must notify the college in writing of this change. If you receive a “D” or an “F” in a college prep class first semester, you must also either write or call and discuss the impact this might have on your application with an admissions counselor. See your counselor to discuss anything that you have doubts about.

Sample Résumé

First Name, Last Name
Adolfo Camarillo High School
City, State of High School
Graduating Senior, Class of 2012

Academic Awards/ Achievements

Distinguished Student
CSF 4 semesters, 9th, 10th, 11th
Semifinalist – National Merit Scholarship Competition
Department Award – Biology 10th
Department Award – Chemistry 11th

Extracurricular Activities and Leadership Positions

Hero Club 10th, 11th, 12th grades
Basketball 9th – Freshman Team, 10th – Junior Varsity, 11th/12th – Varsity
10th – Captain, Voted MVP
11th – Voted Most Improved
12th – Elected Co-Captain
ASB Class Representative 9th, 10th
Class Vice-President 11th
Student Body Vice President 12th

Community or Volunteer Service

Habitat for Humanity Helped build houses 8 hours on seven Saturdays, 9/2010-12/2010
Hospital Volunteer Assist nurses and visited patients 4 hours per week, 9/2009 - Present

Talents/Special Honors

Stinger Editor in Chief 11th and 12th grades
Geo-Bowl Team Captain

Employment/Summer Activities

Courtesy Clerk Local grocery store, Summer 2010 25-35 hours per week
Foreign Language Program Spent two months with GAPP in Germany, Summer 2011

Testing

PSAT

The PSAT is offered one time each year in October. Juniors are strongly advised to take the test, and Sophomores are encouraged to take the test for practice. The test is normed to juniors, so it is a valid indicator of where an individual stands in relation to the other college-bound juniors all over the country. It is also considered a strong indicator of the anticipated range of scores you will earn on the SAT. For those juniors whose test results rank in the top 2% in the nation, this PSAT also functions as the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Sophomores are advised that there is geometry on the exam, so if you have had geometry, you will be familiar with most of the math on the test. If you are currently enrolled in geometry, your math score may not be as strong as it will be next year when you have completed a year of geometry. The Sophomore exam results are not valid in the college admissions process. The PSAT is only practice when taken by Sophomores.

The PSAT will be administered at VCOE in October 2011. Students will meet at ACHS and be transported to VCOE. Testing runs approximately 8:00am to 12:00pm. PSAT registration takes place in September. Cost is \$20. Field trip forms and payment are turned in to the ASB Bookkeeper at the Student Store.

SAT and Subject Tests

The majority of colleges require either the SAT (formerly the SAT I) or the ACT for admissions consideration. Some highly selective colleges also require Subject Tests (formerly called the SAT IIs). It is advisable for Juniors to take the SAT Reasoning Test by June of their Junior year, and two or three SAT Subject Tests, depending upon college admissions requirements.

Remember UC's are not requiring the subject tests but some privates may. Seniors have three test dates remaining for Fall admissions: October, November, and December. All SAT exams are administered on Saturdays at national test sites. ACHS is a SAT test site. **Registration is available online at www.collegeboard.com.** Make sure to observe registration deadlines.

The SAT Subject Tests are approximately one-hour in length, and it is possible to take three on one test date. It is not possible to take SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests on the same day. Two test dates are required if you plan to take both.

Test dates and Fees Change Every Year. Visit www.collegeboard.com for up-to-date information.

SAT Reasoning Test	<i>\$ 47 ~ See Website for details</i>
SAT Subject Tests	
(Add the \$21.00 Basic Registration Fee to the total fee for the Subject Tests):	
Language Tests with Listening	<i>add \$21 ~ See Website for details</i>
All other Subject Tests	<i>add \$10 ~ See Website for details</i>
Late Registration Fee	<i>\$ 24 ~ See Website for details</i>
Standby Testing Fee	<i>\$ 41 ~ See Website for details</i>
Change Test, Test Date, or Test Center Fee	<i>\$ 24 ~ See Website for details</i>
Scores by Web	<i>Free</i>

Scores by Phone
Extra Score Report to a College or Scholarship Program (in addition to four score reports included at no charge on the registration or Correction Form)

\$ 13 ~ See Website for details
~ See Website

Other fees apply for special services. See full details online at www.collegeboard.com.

ACT

The ACT is a “separate, but equal” college admissions test. This means that it is accepted in place of the SAT at almost all schools. For the UC System, it is possible for students to use the ACT with Writing plus the Subject Tests, rather than SAT and the Subject Tests for admissions. The ACT is administered on Saturdays, just as the SATs are, but never on conflicting dates. ACT is offered in September in the state of California, so this is an excellent advantage for students needing an early standardized test date. The ACT has four sections, each of which count as 25% of the composite score: Reading, English, Science Reasoning, and Math. The ACT will offer a Writing section for current Juniors, in order to make their test equivalent to the SAT. Registration is available online at www.act.org.

ACT General Information and Fees for 2011-12. Visit www.act.org for dates and times.

The Optional Writing Test is available for all test dates.

Basic registration fee (no writing)	\$ 33
Includes reports for you, your high school, and up to four colleges requested at registration.	
Each 5th and 6th college choices	add \$10
Requested as part of registration, refundable if you do not test. Find out how much it costs to send your scores after you've tested.	
Optional Writing Test	\$ 48
Late fee	\$ 21
Test date change	\$ 20
For different date if absent on original date. If you request a test date change after the regular deadline for the new date, a late fee also applies.	
Test center change	\$ 20
For the same date.	
Standby testing on test day	\$ 41
Telephone registration for repeat test-takers	\$ 12
Receive immediate confirmation of your test center.	
Viewing scores early	~ See Website
Test information release service	~ See Website
On selected national test dates, refundable if not available.	

Test Preparation

There are many excellent test preparation experts available. Test preparation is valuable if the student experiences test anxiety, if the student does not understand test-taking strategies, or if the student needs review of material studied several years ago (e.g., student took Algebra 1 in 8th grade, or geometry in 9th grade). Please consult your counselor for a list of reputable tutors or companies.

Financial Aid

The first smart step in the college application process is to apply to a college that is a financial safety college. Two-year community colleges or the CSU or UC systems might be the best choices available.

Who is most likely to get financial aid?

- Students with “A” averages who apply to schools where there are mostly “B” students. Another way to look at it is this - apply to colleges where academically you will be in the top 25% of the class, not the middle 50% or the lowest 25% of the class.
- Star athletes.
- Students whose family income is less than \$40,000.
- Underrepresented students (African Americans, Hispanics, or Native Americans) who apply to schools where they will be at least in the middle academic range for that college.

Next, apply for financial aid. Many colleges require that you apply even if you are interested only in a merit-based (versus need-based) scholarship or loan. To apply for financial aid, your parents will have to fill out one or more financial aid forms.

If you are hoping to get need-based financial aid, then study hard. The better your grades and test scores, the more likely you are to receive a generous package. As noted above, you are more likely to receive aid if you apply to a school where you will be in the top 25% of the applicants.

You must meet each college’s financial aid deadlines. Check with each college. For early decision and early action, deadlines can be as early as October of the Senior year.

There are three main financial aid forms. The most important one is the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. It is best to fill out this form as soon as possible after January 1st of your senior year; the deadline is March 2nd. If your parents’ tax returns are not finalized by that date, they must use estimates rather than miss the deadline. There is time to file an amendment if the estimates are way off – just don’t miss that deadline. The FAFSA form is available online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

The FAFSA is automatically reviewed for:

- **Federal Pell Grants:** Unlike a loan, a Federal Pell Grant does not have to be repaid. Generally, Pell Grants are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned a BA or professional degree. The maximum amount of the award is \$4,000 per year.
- **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG):** A FSEOG is for undergraduates with exceptional financial need and gives priority to students who receive Federal Pell Grants. The FSEOG does not have to be paid back. The maximum amount awarded is \$4,000 per year.
- **Federal Work-Study:** The Federal Work-Study Program provides jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money at a campus job to help pay education expenses. The total Federal Work-Study award depends on when you apply, your level of need, and the funding level of your school.
- **Federal Perkins Loan:** A Federal Perkins Loan is a low-interest loan for both undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. Your school is your lender, with

government funds, with a share contributed by the school. You must repay this loan to your school. The maximum loan amount is \$4,000 per year.

- **Federal Stafford Student Loan:** These loans may be subsidized or unsubsidized. Subsidized loans are awarded based on need, and interest does not accrue until after you have completed your studies. Unsubsidized loans are not based on needs and start accruing interest during your studies.
- **Federal PLUS Loan:** These are loans available to parents of dependent students.

Note: If you list a California college on your FAFSA form, then you will automatically be considered for a **Cal Grant**, which is state-funded money which is not repaid. However, in order to be considered, you must complete and submit a **GPA Verification Form** no later than the March 2 deadline. Our district electronically submits the GPA and must have the form processed before the due date. You can obtain this form from your counselor and it will be submitted electronically for a quicker response. Mr. Murphy, registrar, is who the forms are returned to.

Once you have filed your FAFSA form, it will be processed and a **Student Aid Report (SAR)** will be mailed to you. If there are corrections to be made, make them at once and return the form as instructed. Remember that accurate figures from completed income tax returns are necessary.

The third form you might be asked to fill out is the **CSS/Profile**. This is a financial form used in addition to the FAFSA by *some* private colleges. If the school you are applying to is listed on the CSS Profile registration form, then you must fill it out. Go to www.collegeboard.com to complete your personalized Profile application. Site opens October 1st. It is not free, so be sure to fill out the registration form and send in the correct payment well in advance of January 1st. Individual forms customized for each college will be sent to you so that you can file them during the same time period as the FAFSA.

For complete financial aid information, go to www.fineaid.org.

Be sure to attend ACHS's financial aid information nights in December. A professional college financial aid administrator will assist you with questions and updated information regarding financial aid changes.

Scholarships: Most students who receive large scholarships earn them from the institution they end up attending. There are however, thousands of outside scholarships that range from very small amounts (\$25) to very substantial (\$10,000). Most of these scholarship applications will ask for an essay.

Here are some ideas for researching scholarships:

- If your parents work for a large company, be sure they check with their Human Resources office to see if scholarships are offered to children of employees.
- The most reliable website for scholarships out there is www.fastweb.com. It is really difficult to get through the thousands of entries, but there is a search engine that can help you sift through some of it. It is not always realistic in its search results, but at least it will narrow the list of those you have to read.
- If you belong to an ethnic group with an active club, they likely will offer scholarships. Call and find out.

- Local chapters of civic organizations such as the Optimists, Rotarians, Eagles, Elks, etc. all offer some type of scholarship. Call the local offices and ask.
- Watch for announcements and advertisements in the local newspaper. It is amazing how many organizations decide to offer a scholarship and simply tell the local press.
- Check in the career center for scholarships and be sure to fill out the ACHS “general scholarship” application. Mrs. Prentice can help you with this.

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

Students with Learning Differences and/or ADHD

Many students with learning disorders or ADHD have received accommodations during high school. They might be tempted to “go it alone” in college, but there are dangers to doing so. First, it is important to make sure that accommodations are approved and in place, even if the student does not take advantage of them. Once the school term begins, there is very little time before midterms and major papers are due. Should the student discover that help would be needed, accommodations cannot begin immediately upon request. It can be a long period of time - a semester or a full academic year - before all paperwork and evaluations are in place. A second reason you do not want to avoid utilizing assistance at college is that students will be missing one of the most important lessons college has to offer: how to find and use help. This step toward becoming an independent learner is crucial to success in college, and students with learning differences would be well advised to get all the assistance available at the beginning of the college experience.

No college has the right to ask an applicant if he/she has a disability. However, there may be very good reasons to self-disclose, such as:

- Grades in classes such as math or English were consistently lower than other classes.
- The disability was identified at a certain point in high school and grades improved dramatically once the student began receiving accommodations.
- The student was unable to pursue a high level of study in a certain subject, such as foreign language, due to the disability.

There are three categories of assistance provided by colleges:

- **Structured Programs:** Colleges with structured programs offer specific programs for students with LD/ADHD that go well beyond mandated services. These services might include special admissions procedures, specialized and trained professionals, compensatory strategies, one-on-one tutoring, additional fees, compulsory participation, and monitoring.
- **Coordinated Services:** Colleges with coordinated services offer programs for students with LD/ADHD that might be somewhat involved with the admissions decisions and might include voluntary participation, services beyond those that are mandated, low or no fees, and less structure.
- **Basic Services:** Colleges with basic services comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, but rarely have specialized LD staff, do not have monitoring, and are totally dependent on student advocacy.

The student with LD/ADHD must take these steps when applying to college in order to be eligible for services:

- Self-disclose the LD or ADHD
- Request accommodations
- Submit current and appropriate documentation

The colleges will then exercise their right to independently examine the documentation and identify the services they feel are reasonable and appropriate.

Colleges highly recommended for students with Learning Differences or ADHD:

Curry College, MA
Hofstra University, NY
Landmark College, VT (Serves only LD/ADD population)
Linfield College, OR
Lynn University, FL
Mitchell College, CT
Regis University, CO
University of Arizona SALT Program, AZ
University of Denver, CO

Also very good colleges:

Arizona State University, AZ
Boston College, MA
Brigham Young University, UT
Brown University, RI
All California State University campuses
Catholic University, DI
Chapman University, CA
College of William and Mary, VA
Colorado State University
Cornell University, NY
DePaul University, IL
Dickinson College, PA
The George Washington University, DC
Georgetown University, DC
Green Mountain College, VT

Lake Forest College, IL
Menlo College, CA
Old Dominion University, VA
New York University, NY
All UC campuses
University of Colorado, Boulder
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Oregon
University of the Pacific, CA
University of Redlands, CA
University of Vermont
All Washington State Universities
Western Maryland College, MD
Whittier College, CA

**** IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ATHLETES ****

NCAA Clearinghouse Preview

The key features of the new Clearinghouse services include:

- **IMPORTANT!** New Eligibility Rules!
- You may access the Clearinghouse Home Page directly at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net or through links from the NCAA's Website at www.ncaa.org.
- From the NCAA Clearinghouse website, prospective student-athletes are able to access information needed to understand the Division I and Division II eligibility requirements, register with the Clearinghouse and access individual Clearinghouse records.
- Prospective Student-Athletes (Domestic) who are eligible for a waiver of the Initial-Eligibility Certification Fee may complete their Student Release Form (SRF) online. NOTE: to be eligible for a fee waiver, you must have already received a fee waiver (not state voucher) for the ACT or SAT. Your high school counselor will also be required to submit an electronic fee waiver verification on your behalf (high school counselors with PIN access may submit waivers for eligible students from the High School Administrator section of the Clearinghouse website).

General Information on the NCAA Clearinghouse Website:

- Links to the NCAA website.
- Core-course listings for high schools.
- Online version of NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete.
- Online information about Division I and Division II initial-eligibility requirements.
- Online Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Prospective Student-Athletes:

- Submit your Student Release Form (SRF) via the Web.
- Registered Students – Update your registration information (if necessary).
- Registered Students – Check your certification status.
- Home-School Students – Please click [here](#)

Clearinghouse Customer Services

- Clearinghouse mailing address:
NCAA Clearinghouse
301 ACT Drive
Box 4043
Iowa City, IA 52243-4043
- Clearinghouse customer service hours:
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday
- Toll Free phone numbers (domestic callers only):
Customer Service Line - 877/262-1492
- Phone numbers (international callers):
Customer Service Line - 319/337-1492 / Fax Number: 319/337-1556

Junior Checklist

September/October

- Register for the PSAT at the Student Store.
- September: Registration deadline for October SAT & Subject Tests.
- September: Registration deadline for the November SAT & Subject Tests (only test date for Language tests with Listening).
- Pay attention to college admission representative visits at ACHS. Sign up in advance if you want to attend and speak with the representative.
- Keep your schedule strong and work hard. The grades you earn this year will finalize the GPA with which you apply to college next fall.

November/December

- November: Registration deadline for the December SAT & Subject Tests.
- December: Registration deadline for the January SAT.

January/February

- January: Registration deadline for the February ACT.
- December: Registration deadline for the January SAT.
- Make your final exams count. This semester will finalize your 5th semester cumulative GPA. One more semester and you will know the GPA with which you apply to college in the fall.

March/April

- March: Registration deadline for the April ACT.
- March: Registration deadline for the May SAT & Subject Tests.

May/June

- April: Registration deadline for the June SAT & Subject Tests.
- May: Registration deadline for the June ACT.
- Take AP exams in May (results arrive in July).
- Make plans for summer college visits. If interviews are available, make an appointment. Be sure to follow visits/interviews with thank you notes.
- Start a file of brochures and applications for schools you like.
- Finalize plans for summer jobs, camps, and educational opportunities.
- Read your local newspaper to find out which civic, cultural, and service organizations in your area award scholarships to graduating seniors. Start a file.

Advice to Juniors

- The cumulative GPA you have by the end of your Junior year is the GPA you will put on your college application. Work hard now. It is harder to raise your GPA in the senior year than you think it will be.
- Start looking at colleges in the spring; start your essays over the summer.
- When visiting campuses, ask yourself, “Could I feel at home here?”
- Ask about the negatives when you visit colleges.
- Quick campus tours can help you narrow your list. Fully visit your final choices.
- Like your back-up schools – you may need them.
- Don’t just pick a school because your friend likes it.
- Don’t get hooked on just one school – you might not get in there.
- Your ideas about what you want will change over time.
- Don’t obsess over the college process – you still need to do well in school.
- Don’t just focus on school. Find something you love and make a difference.
- Don’t let the college process dictate what activities you do.
- Start forming good relationships with teachers now so you have people you can ask to write recommendations for you.
- Ask your teachers early to write letters for you so they have time.
- If you want to submit artwork with your applications or audition, talk to your art, drama, or music teachers now about what you will need to do.
- Look at some applications (paper and online) now to learn what they ask.
- Plan carefully to take your SATs and Subject Tests (where they are required) so you can fit them all in.
- Consider taking the ACT. Research ACT and SAT differences and similarities. You may find that you are better suited to one over the other. Current experts advise: pick one test and prepare for one test.
- Use the Common Application if at least two schools you are applying to use it.
- Save an excellent, highly graded writing sample from junior year.

Senior Checklist

August

- Be sure to finalize your schedule making certain that you have all the classes you need to graduate and to meet college entrance requirements.
- Registration for the September ACT.
- Begin to finalize your college list, request applications if they are not available online.

September/October

- Registration for the October SAT & Subject Tests.
- Registration for the November SAT & Subject Tests (including Language with Listening).
- Pay attention to the schedule of college visits to ACHS. Sign up in advance.
- Finalize your college essay.
- Finalize your college application list.
- Applications are accepted by the CSU campuses beginning October 1st. Go online to www.csumentor.edu. The final application filing deadline is November 30th.
- Attend CSU and/or UC application workshops given during lunch by the counselors.
- Give teachers and counselors at least two weeks notice to write letters of recommendation for you and provide them with a stamped envelope addressed to the school. No letters of recommendation are required or permitted for the CSU or UC systems.
- Begin filing applications. Turn in a transcript request form with the Secondary School Report to your counselor for each private school you are applying to.
- Registration for the December SAT & Subject Tests.

November/December

- Applications accepted by the UC System beginning November 1, deadline is November 30th. Go online to www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions. Attend UC application workshops at ACHS.
- Observe all college application deadlines.
- Be sure all applications are in sent before Winter Break. Remember, many colleges have a January 1 deadline. You will not be able to reach teachers or your counselor during the Winter Break if you have forgotten to request letters of recommendation or transcripts.
- Fill out the Cal Grant GPA Verification form that your counselors give to you in January.
- File the FAFSA on January 1st. Access via the web at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- If applying to private schools, find out whether they require the CSS PROFILE supplemental financial aid form. Fees are required for this application. Website: www.collegeboard.com or call 1-800-756-7346.

January/February

- Submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the processor as soon after January 1 as possible (but no later than the March 2nd deadline). Also complete the GPA Verification form. Return it to Mr. Murphy, registrar.
- Parents must get income tax forms prepared early; schools may request them to prove eligibility for financial aid.
- By the beginning of February, you should have submitted all 7th semester transcript requests for schools other than the UC.
- If you are still submitting applications, make certain it is filled out completely, accurately, and legibly. Submit applications online whenever possible.
- Rank your finalized list of colleges.

March/April

- Receive college admissions notifications.
- Plan time to discuss your options with family, teachers, and counselor.
- Carefully compare various financial aid packages. Helpful website: http://www.wiredscholar.com/deciding/award_comparison/ac_index.jsp
- If you are waitlisted, decide on your options.
- Return all paperwork on time, paying special attention to the **May 1 deadline** by which many colleges must have your decision and a deposit.
- If you have filed the FAFSA (by March 2 latest), look for the SAR within 4-6 weeks. Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-433-3243 if it is not received.
- Visit campuses of schools you have not seen if still in doubt about a final college decision.
- Continue to apply for private and independent scholarships.
- Notify other schools that you will not be attending.
- Community College representatives will be on campus to answer questions and help students with registration. Listen for announcements.

May/June

- It is still not too late to apply to colleges with rolling admissions (but don't expect financial aid). Seniors still looking for colleges after May 7th, visit this page for a list of colleges with space available for qualified students: <http://www.nacac.com>.
- Fill out and return all college papers regarding housing, student orientation registration, loan applications, etc.
- Make certain that your final transcript request has been filled out and returned to your counselor.
- Write polite letters of refusal to all colleges you will not attend, if you have not yet done so.
- Notify your counselor which school you have chosen to attend and any awards or scholarships you have received.

Suggested Colleges for Visiting in Southern California

Azusa Pacific University

www.apu.edu

admissions@apu.edu

901 E Alostia Ave

Azusa, CA 91702-7000

(626) 812-3016

California Lutheran University

www.clunet.edu

60 W Olsen Road

Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-2787

(805) 493-3135

California State Polytechnic University

www.csupomona.edu

cppadmit@csupomona.edu

3801 W Temple Avenue

Pomona, CA 91768-4019

(909) 468-5020

California State University Fullerton

www.fullerton.edu

(714) 278-2370

California State University Long Beach

www.csulb.edu

(562) 985-5471

California State University Northridge

www.csun.edu

admissions@csun.edu

(818) 677-3700

Chapman University

www.chapman.edu

admit@chapman.edu

One University Drive

Orange, CA 92866

(714) 997-6711

CLAREMONT COLLEGES *

***Claremont McKenna College**

www.claremontmckenna.edu

Email: admission@claremontmckenna.edu

890 Columbia Ave

Claremont, CA 91711-6425

***Harvey Mudd College**

www.hmc.edu

Email: admissions@hmc.edu

(909) 621-8011

301 E 12th Street

Claremont, CA 91711-5901

***Pitzer College**

www.pitzer.edu

admission@pitzer.edu

1050 N Mills Ave

Claremont, CA 91711-6101

(909) 621-8129

***Pomona College**

www.pomona.edu

Email: admissions@pomona.edu

(909) 621-8134

333 North College Way

Claremont, CA 91711-6312

***Scripps College (women only)**

www.scrippscollege.edu

Email: admission@scrippscollege.edu

(909) 621-8149

1030 N Columbia Ave

Claremont, CA 91711

UC Irvine

www.campustours.uci.edu

(949) 824-4636

University of La Verne

www.ulv.edu

admissions@ulv.edu

1950 Third Street

La Verne, CA 91750-4443

(909) 392-2800

UC Los Angeles

www.admissions.ucla.edu/tours

(310) 825-8764

tours@saonet.ucla.edu

Loyola Marymount University

www.lmu.edu
admissions@lmu.edu

One LMU Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90045-8350
(city of Westchester)
(310) 338-2750

Mount St. Mary's College (women only)

www.msmc.la.edu
admissions@msmc.la.edu

12001 Chalon Road
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(city of Brentwood)
(310) 954-4250

Occidental College

www.oxy.edu
admission@oxy.edu

1600 Campus Road
Los Angeles, CA 90041-3393
(city of Eagle Rock)

Pepperdine University

www.pepperdine.edu
Email: admission-seaver@pepperdine.edu

(310) 506-4392
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263-4392

University of Redlands

www.redlands.edu
admissions@redlands.edu

1200 E Colton Ave
Redlands, CA 92373-0999
(909) 335-4074

UC Riverside

Virtual Tour: [www.ucr.edu](http://www.ucr.edu/discover@pop.ucr.edu)
discover@pop.ucr.edu

(909) 787-3411

San Diego State University

www.sdsu.edu
Email: admissions@sdsu.edu

(619)594-7800

Soka University

www.soka.edu

1 University Drive
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
(949) 480-4150

UC San Diego

Virtual Visit www.ucsd.edu/visit
Campus tours: admissions.ucsd.edu/tours
(858) 822-1455

University of Southern California

www.usc.edu
Email: admitusc@usc.edu

(213) 740-1111

Whittier College

www.whittier.edu
admissions@whittier.edu

13406 E Philadelphia
Whittier, CA 90608-0634
(562) 907-4238

Suggested Online Resources

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

Colleges

www.collegeboard.com

Do a college search, research colleges in the United States and beyond, find National College Fairs and Visual and Performing Arts College Fairs.

www.collegenet.com

College search.

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/>

Explore campuses, file your UC application online.

www.csumentor.edu

Explore campuses, file your CSU application online.

www.uwaterloo.ca/canu

Canadian Colleges.

www.nacac.com

College fair information and general college information.

Testing

<http://www.actstudent.org>

Register for the ACT.

www.collegeboard.com

Register for the SAT. Use code 3594 to have test sent to all CSU's.

Study Skills

www.studygs.net

Study skills and test taking skills information.

Virtual Campus Tours

www.campustours.com

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

Athletics

www.ncaa.org

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

Financial Aid

www.fastweb.com

Comprehensive list of private scholarships; scholarship search.

www.finaid.org

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

www.csac.ca.gov

California Student Aid Commission – Information on Cal Grants. Assists in the search for state, federal, and institutional financial aid information for funding post-high school education.

www.fafsa.ed.gov

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

www.attheu.com

Offers free information on financial aid, test preparation, colleges, scholarships, campus news, and careers. Resources are geared toward high school students, college students, parents and friends, and borrowers.

www.wiredscholar.com/deciding/award_comparison/ac_index.jsp

An excellent tool with which you can enter and compare award information from each school.

Glossary

ACT: Abbreviation for the American College Test. This is an assessment in English, mathematics, social studies, reading comprehension, and science reasoning. Accepted by most colleges in lieu of the SAT.

Associate's Degree: An Associate of Arts (AA) degree is traditionally earned in two years at a community college.

Bachelor's Degree: BA – Bachelor of Arts, BS – Bachelor of Science. A diploma earned after successful completion (traditionally in four years) of required courses at a college or university.

Calendar: The system used by an institution to divide its year into instruction periods. The most common are semester, quarter, and 4-1-4.

- A **semester** system is a division of the school year into two parts, usually 18 weeks in length. Schools may have an additional 8-week summer session.
- A **quarter** system is a division of the school year into three quarters, usually 11 weeks in length. Students take three or four courses per quarter rather than the traditional five in a semester system.
- A **4-1-4** system consists of two terms of about 16 weeks each, separated by a one month intersession used for intensive study in one area, research, or internships.

Candidate Notification Date: The date by which colleges notify students of admission decisions.

Candidate Reply Date: The date by which students must reply to the colleges that admitted them. The universal date is May 1st.

CEEB: Abbreviation for the College Entrance Examination Board, which creates and supervises the administration of the SAT and the Subject Tests. The **CEEB code for ACHS is 050438**. You will need this number every time you register for an SAT, ACT, or apply to college.

College: The term commonly used to describe any institution of higher education. This is usually an institution that grants a Bachelor degree. A college may also be one part of a university. For example, undergraduates apply to Harvard College, not Harvard University. Columbia College is the undergraduate division of Columbia University.

Common Application: A form devised and accepted by 461 colleges as equal to their own institutional application. The Common Application makes things easier for the student who can fill out one application for many colleges, rather than repeat basic information over and over again. See www.commonapp.org for additional information and a list of colleges who accept the Common Application.

CSS/PROFILE: A financial aid form used by some private colleges and universities in addition to the FAFSA (see section on Financial Aid in this handbook).

Early Action: An admission plan whereby the student submits an application by November 1st and receives a decision by mid-December. If accepted, the student is not required to enroll, but is expected to notify the college about his/her decision by May 1st.

Early Decision: An admission plan whereby a student can apply to a first-choice college by November 1st and receive a decision by mid-December. Upon making the decision to apply early decision, the student agrees to enroll if accepted. Also, the student is expected to make no other application if accepted and withdraw all other applications already submitted.

ETS: An abbreviation for the Educational Testing Service, an organization utilized by the College Board to write and administer its tests (SAT and Subject Tests).

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (see more in the Financial Aid section).

General Education Requirements: Also called G.E.D., breadth, distribution, or core curriculum requirements, they are courses required by all candidates for the bachelor degree at a college.

Graduate School: Usually part of a university, graduate school is an institution for students who have already earned the bachelor degree.

Greeks or Greek Life: At a college campus, the collective term for members of sororities and fraternities. See www.GreekPages.com for information.

Ivy League: The term used to designate highly selective eastern colleges. Strictly speaking, however, it is an athletic league comprised of the following colleges: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale.

Legacy: An applicant who is the son or a daughter of an alumnus or alumna (or sometimes a more distant relative). Private colleges sometimes give special consideration to such candidates.

Liberal Arts: The studies in a college (such as language, history, mathematics, literature, and abstract science) intended to provide chiefly general knowledge and to develop the general intellectual capacities, such as reason and judgment, opposed to professional or vocational skills.

Major: The field of concentration or specialization for a college undergraduate. Usually students are asked to declare a major by the end of their sophomore year. A student normally spends one quarter to one third of their total undergraduate work in their major field.

Minor: A secondary area of academic concentration, but requiring fewer courses than a major, which may or may not be required by an institution.

NMSQT: The **National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test** is combined with the PSAT, taken in October of the Junior year. Scoring well on this test is the first requirement toward recognition in the National Merit Scholarship competition.

PSAT: The **Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test** is a scholastic assessment test administered to high school juniors. Scoring well on this test is the prerequisite towards

qualifying for the **National Merit Scholarship**. Scores are reported on a scale from 20-80 for verbal, quantitative aptitude, and writing skills. Sophomores take this test for practice only.

Rolling Admissions: A decision notification program whereby colleges inform applicants of admission decisions throughout the year on a “rolling” basis, rather than by a specified date. Students who apply to a college with a rolling admission program usually learn the admission decision within 4-6 weeks after the application is submitted.

SAT Reasoning Test: Formerly called the SAT I, this is a multiple choice test made up of Verbal, Math and Writing sections designed to measure skills that are related to college success. Students receive three SAT scores, **Verbal, Math & Writing**, each reported on a scale of 200 to 800.

SAT Subject Tests: Formerly called the SAT IIs, the Subject Tests are curricular-based tests that measure achievement in a particular subject. Each test is one hour in length and is scored on a scale from 200 to 800. It is advisable for students to take the Subject Test while studying or immediately upon completing study of the subject.

Scholarship: Money or aid awarded that does not have to be repaid. Some scholarships are based on need, but most are awarded for exceptional talent or achievement in academics, athletics, or for special characteristics. In addition to awards offered by the colleges, many scholarships are awarded by corporations, ethnic organizations, and religious groups. Each scholarship opportunity has different eligibility criteria.

Selectivity: A term used by admission offices to describe the ratio of admitted applicants to the total number of applicants at a given institution.

Seven Sisters: Refers to Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Radcliffe, Smith, Vassar, and Wellesley Colleges. Today all are women’s colleges except Vassar and Radcliffe.

Transcript: The complete official listing of a student’s academic record (courses, grades, credits). In the college admission process, this document is traditionally given the most weight.

Undergraduate: A college student who is a candidate for a Bachelor’s Degree or a program of study leading to a Bachelor’s Degree.

University: A public or private institution that has both undergraduate and graduate programs.

Yield: The number of students admitted to a college who ultimately attend that college. The yield is usually extremely high at selective colleges.

***** This was compiled to help students and parents navigate college admission. Every effort has been made for accuracy. It is not a substitute for your own investigation. If questions arise please see your counselor. Thank you. *****