

# Navigating the College Search Process

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# Engaging the process- Advice for Students

- Be Informed
- Do not let your parents take over
- Communicate and Listen to advice
- Avoid the transfer phenomenon



A black and white cartoon by B. Smith. A woman sits at a desk on the left, looking at a book. A man sits at a desk on the right, looking at a book. The man's desk has a sign that says "COLLEGE TESTING" above it. The woman's desk has a sign that says "YOUR FUTURE" above it. The man is wearing a striped shirt and a tie. The woman is wearing a sweater. The background is simple with some scribbles.

B. Smith

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- Public vs. Private
  - Suburban vs. Urban vs. Rural
  - Religious vs. Secular
  - Research, Comprehensive, Professional  
or Liberal Arts
  - Large vs. Medium vs. Small
  - Distance from home
  - Prominent Faculty and Alumni
  - National Rankings- U.S. News and World Report
  - College/University that changes lives



# Admissions Requirements: used by most major universities

- Quality of grades 9-12
- Rigorous senior year schedule
- GPA
- SAT or ACT scores; essay required
- Grade trends –GPA should improve as time goes on
- Activities, community service, leadership
- Cultural awareness & contributions
- Exceptional artistic talent
- Educational or economic disadvantage
- Overcoming personal adversity
- Writing quality of the personal statement

# % of Colleges Attributing “Considerable Importance” to These Factors

- **79% Grades in Prep courses**
- **60% Strength of curriculum**
- **60% Grades in all classes**
- **53% SAT or ACT scores**
- **22.1% Essay**
- **17.3% Recommendations**
- **16.9% Demonstrated Interest**
- **14% Class Rank**
- **5.6% Extracurricular Activities**

Source: 2015 NACAC State of Admissions



# Admissions Language to Know

Early Decision – apply early, get accepted early. This decision is binding

Early Action – same as early decision but is not binding

Rolling Admission – applications are reviewed as they are received; applicants who apply early are notified early


Pooled Admission – all applications are analyzed during the same general time; Students find out later if they are accepted (Feb - Apr)

Honors Programs and those wanting to be considered for top scholarships need to apply early, usually October 15, Nov 1, Nov 15<sup>th</sup> or Dec 1<sup>st</sup>. Check with each college. Honors Program students are usually accepted at an earlier date

# Old SAT vs. New SAT

	Old SAT	New SAT
Scoring	600 - 2400	400 - 1600 Subscore and Cross-test Scores available
Timing	3 Hours 45 Minutes	3 Hours (+50 minute optional essay)
Sections	Critical Reading: 200-800Writing: 200-800 Math: 200-800Essay (included in Writing score)	<u>Evidence-Based Reading</u> and <u>Writing</u> : 200-800 <u>Math</u> : 200-800 <u>Optional Essay</u> (separately scored)
Guessing Penalty	1 / 4 guessing penalty	no guessing penalty
Format	Available in print	Available in print or on computer






What should you be doing now to prepare?

# The Process of Applying.....

## Junior year

1. Analyze interests, passions, values.
2. Determine the field(s) of study you are interested in pursuing
3. Research Colleges on the websites or catalogs: compare academic programs
4. Review factors to consider when choosing a college
5. Narrow down your choices of colleges (3-8)
6. Take the SAT / ACT test in the spring



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7. Organize college material in folders; Develop a resume including activities, leadership roles, community service and awards earned
  8. Attend Spring College Fairs
  9. Intercollegiate athletics: register with NCAA the summer after your junior year ([www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org))
  10. Military academy appointments: start in April of junior year; lengthy process
  11. Visit the top 2-3 colleges you are considering; they have tours and special weekends


# Senior Year


1. Complete each application and send it electronically in most cases (Oct-Dec)

Write essays as requested

2. Order official transcripts from the Counseling Department (Oct)
3. Have your SAT or ACT test scores sent to the colleges you are applying to. (Oct-Dec)
4. Visit with College Reps and attend College Fairs



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5. Complete the FAFSA online (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and submit it electronically. Also check the colleges you applied to and complete any additional supplemental forms required for financial aid (Jan-Feb).
  6. Visit the campuses of your top 2-3 schools (if you have not already done so)
  7. Many families will want to compare financial aid packages offered by schools before making the final choice (Feb-Apr)

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8. Apply for housing immediately after making your decision, if appropriate (Feb-Apr)
  9. Put in writing your acceptance to the college of your choice ASAP. May 1<sup>st</sup> is the National Reply Date Deadline
  10. Apply for scholarships (Oct-May of senior year)



# Classes are Important - may vary

- 4 years of English
- 4 years of Math
- 3 years of Social Studies
- 3 Science classes; USG in 2012 will require a fourth year
- 2 years of the same Foreign Language

# College Essay

- Do
  - Keep Your Focus Narrow and Personal – it's not about what you have done, it's about showing who you are.
  - Prove it - Develop your main idea with vivid and specific facts, events, quotations, examples, and reasons.
  - Be Specific – Avoid clichéd, generic and predictable writing
- Don't
  - Tell Them What You Think They Want to Hear
  - Write a Resume
  - Forget to Proofread

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"I read your college application essay. First of all the word 'COLLEGE' has two 'L's."

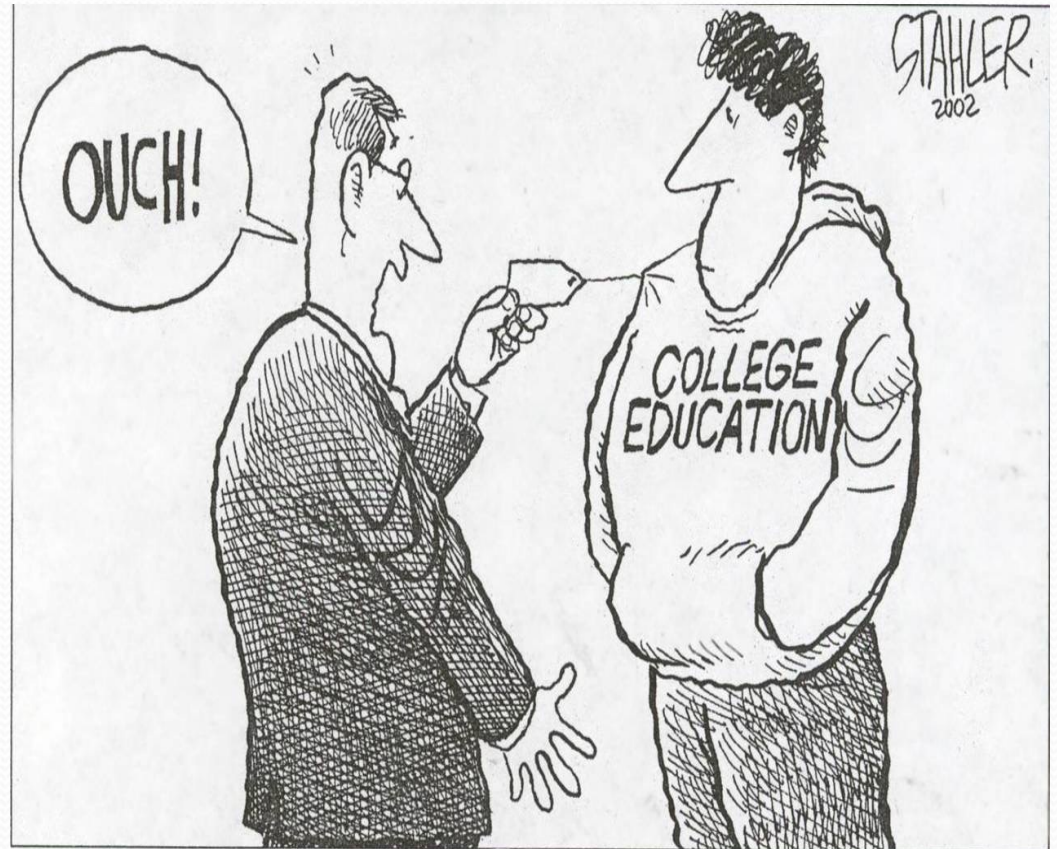


# Common Mistakes in Applying

- Failure to read application directions; disorganized
- Incomplete applications and sloppy responses on apps and essays.
- Lack of adequate research on colleges and pre-admission requirements
- Failure to pay attention to deadlines for college application and scholarships
- Not visiting colleges; lack of understanding the culture of the chosen college
- Applying to only one 4-year school
- Lack of rigor in courses chosen senior year
- Dropping classes after 1<sup>st</sup> semester senior year and/or low grades can result in your admission being revoked

# Financing Your Education

- FAFSA
- CSS Profile (private)
- HOPE Scholarship
- Outside Scholarship
  - Fast web
  - Scholarships.com



By Jeff Stahl (jstahler@cincypost.com), The Cincinnati Post, for USA TODAY



# College Search Sites

- [College board.org](https://collegeboard.org): One of the best college planning websites
- [CollegeView.com](https://CollegeView.com): excellent search engine for colleges and scholarships
- [College data.com](https://College data.com): predicts your chances of getting admitted
- [Nces.ed.gov / college navigator](https://nces.ed.gov/college navigator): statistics + financial aid offered by the colleges
- [Petersons.com](https://Petersons.com): user friendly; will give you lots of info+ names of similar schools you might like
- [www.ctcl.org](https://www.ctcl.org) – Colleges That Change Lives
- [College Prowler](https://College Prowler): student reviews and polls