

The Application Process

What Are Colleges Looking At?

- ❖ **Grade Point Average** – provides a quick indicator of how a student has done in high school and is a predictor of a student's success as a college freshman. Your GPA will be considered along with the CHS school profile in order to be able to compare you with other applicants.
- ❖ **Difficulty of Curriculum** - Selection committees are looking for rigorous courses – honors classes, AP classes and other accelerated courses. They look closely at the core academic subjects of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, but foreign language, computer classes, and technology are important too! If you did not start out academically strong as a freshman, an upward trend in grades speaks well for your continuing maturity, motivation, and acquisition of skills. Though grades will only be considered through the junior year for most college acceptance decisions, the rigor of registered senior coursework is very important as are the mid-year and final transcript reports from senior year.
- ❖ **Test Scores** – The importance of test scores in the admission process varies from college to college and depends on an institution's admission approach and policies. In general, admission tests apply a common standard to everyone and help colleges evaluate and compare the preparation of students who go to different high schools. It is important to remember that test scores are just one part of the college application.
- ❖ **Extracurricular Activities** – are an important part of an application. Selection committees want to know that students have interests and involvements outside of the classroom and are looking more for commitment in your pursuits rather than a huge number of activities. Your contributions to the world around you as well as examples of leadership roles you've taken are strongly considered. Think quality rather than quantity.
- ❖ **Recommendations** – if part of the application, are an important part in the selection process. Make sure that you ask people who know you well, and that you give them enough time to do a good job for you. Plan well for your recommendations by first selecting teachers in one of your 4 core academic subject areas who are familiar with your character and work. Well-written letters of recommendation can add depth to your application as well as explain inconsistencies or trends that may appear on your transcript.
- ❖ **Essays or Personal Statements** – For colleges that require them, they are looking for something unique...something that sets you apart from the hundreds of other essays that are being read. Most importantly, be genuine...the essay adds depth to your application by giving the admission committee a snapshot of you who are as a person (see specific writing tips and ideas included in this booklet).
- ❖ **Demonstrated Interest** – In general, colleges want to extend offers of admission to students who are sincerely interested in attending. Taking a campus tour, interviewing, or contacting your admissions representative can sometimes improve your chances of being accepted. Be genuine in your interest and reach out with a purpose of learning something meaningful about the academic program, student experience, or application process.
- ❖ **Interviews** - are sometimes a part of the admission decision. Be prepared, be positive, and be ready to “sell yourself”. This is your time to shine.
- ❖ **Overall, do your best on your application** – Make it neat, readable and complete. If someone on a committee sees that you have put the time and effort into your application, they will come away with a more favorable impression of who you are as a student and a potential member of their freshman class!

Campus Visit Checklist

When you visit a campus, it is important that you ask the right types of questions:

Look at Equipment and School Facilities

- Are the facilities and equipment up-to-date and operating?
- Is the equipment similar to what you will be using on the job?
- Is the library good for studying and research?
- How large are the dorm rooms? What types of furniture are provided/allowed?
- Are the dorm rooms quiet enough for studying?
- What is the cafeteria like?
- Are there plenty of computer labs?
- Do students get free e-mail and Internet access?

Sit In on a Class or Two

- Do the instructors seem knowledgeable?
- Are the students participating in classroom activities?
- What kinds of work are the students doing?
- How large/small are the classes?

Talk with Current Students in the Program

- How long have they been in school?
- Are they learning what they need to know to get a job?
- What is their opinion of the instructors? Are instructors available outside of class?
- Do the instructors spend time with them to be sure they understand the material?
- How much time is needed for studying and other work outside class?
- Have they had any problems with the school, the instructors or the classes?
- What do they like most/least about the school/program?
- How do they spend their free time?
- What are the other students like?

Talk with Instructors in the Program

- What are the academic requirements in the program?
- What kinds of courses are offered? How often are they offered?
- How many students are in the program? How many are accepted into the program each year?
- How long does it take most students to complete the program?
- How long have they taught at the school? Do they teach full time or part time?
- What background do they have in the field? How does it relate to the courses they teach?
- What types of activities are they involved in that relate to the field of study?

Talk with an Admissions Counselor

- Has the institution and its programs been accredited by a recognized accrediting association?
- What are the admissions requirements for the college or for a specific program?
- How do you apply and which forms do you fill out?
- When are the important deadlines for admissions?
- Will your family's ability to pay for college be a factor in the admissions process?
- What are the housing requirements and parking rules?
- What types of extracurricular activities are available?
- Can credits be earned online or transferred from other colleges?
- What percentage of first-year students return the following year?
- What percentage of graduates are employed within one year?

Talk with a Financial Aid Counselor

- How much does it cost to attend the college (including tuition, room and board, fees, etc.)?
- What financial aid options are available?
- Does the school participate in federal and state aid programs? (Not all schools are eligible.)
- What percentage of undergraduates receive aid? How much do they receive on average?
- Which financial aid forms do you need to fill out and what are the deadlines?
- Does the college offer scholarships? Who is most likely to receive them? How do you apply?
- Will private/non-government scholarships reduce the amount of need-based aid you receive?
- How is financial aid paid out? When will you receive it?