

SENIOR YEAR COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS IN 20 STEPS

1. Narrow college choices to approximately 5-8 schools. Consider location, size, majors, cost and extracurricular opportunities.
2. Put choices in Naviance.
3. Retake SAT and/or ACT in October if you would like to improve your scores.
4. Meet with School Counselor and discuss schools to which you are applying, as well as the best application to use for applying (e.g. Common App, SUNY App). Counselors will schedule an individual meeting with every senior.
5. Request teacher letters of recommendation in person first, then formally through Naviance.
6. Write your college essay and have your English teacher check it for you.
7. Check college application deadlines and make yourself a calendar or to-do list.
8. Go to www.commonapp.org, www.suny.edu/applysuny or the individual colleges' websites (click on Admissions/Undergraduate Admissions) to complete applications online.
9. Request official scores from College Board and/or ACT Student (if applicable). Division I or II athletes, send official scores to NCAA Clearinghouse.
10. When you have finished applications, fill out a College Application Checklist form for each school and give to your School Counselor to send required documentation. This form is mandatory!!
11. Look for scholarships offered through the colleges to which you are applying. Some may be automatically offered based on your GPA; others you may need to apply for.
12. Go to FAFSA.ed.gov and create a PIN number (usually done in early fall).
13. After October 1st, you will have access to complete your FAFSA online.
14. Go through the Scholarships list in Naviance and apply to any for which you are qualified.
15. Wait for notification from colleges. Check your e-mail frequently and use each college's status checker system for information.
16. If colleges send emails or letters saying items are missing, call the admissions offices to double check. If items are still missing, see your school counselor.
17. Receive admission or denial letters from colleges.
18. Complete college housing applications if necessary.
19. Send in "Intent to Register" notification to colleges by May 1 along with housing deposit.
20. Throughout the year, maintain strong effort in all of your courses. Your colleges will see your final grades, and acceptance can be rescinded if you've allowed yourself to slip.

The College Search and Application Process: What You Should Know

Can I Really Go To College?

Yes! Anyone with the desire to learn and work hard can go to college. There are many financial aid options and programs to help cover costs, and colleges have varying academic admissions requirements. So if going to college is your goal, start working toward it now!

Academics and High School Course Selection

Colleges and universities want to see that students challenged themselves in high school and took rigorous courses whenever possible. Students planning on attending a four-year college should plan on taking at least 3-4 units of math, 3-4 units of science, and 3-4 units of foreign language. If you have the ability to take enriched, college-level or AP courses, you should do so; just don't take on more than you can handle successfully. How well you do in the course makes a difference. The strength of your transcript is based on types of courses, final grades and exam grades and is a key piece in the college admission process.

The Importance of SAT, SAT II, and ACT Scores

Nearly all four-year colleges and universities require SAT or ACT scores for admission. Most college admissions representatives recommend that students take the SATs *and* ACTs in the spring of their junior year, and again in the fall of senior year. This gives the student the best chance for a strong score. SAT Prep courses are available at AHS and through Cayuga Community College in the fall and early spring each year.

Searching For the Right College

Take the time to do your research! Sit down with your parents/guardians and decide what type of college environment and activities you are looking for: large, small, urban, rural, Christian, public, private, ROTC, Division 1 soccer, etc... Then find out which colleges have your intended major *and* the characteristics you'd like. Utilize the college search programs in Naviance and at www.collegeboard.com. Your school counselor can help you with this! Be sure you and your parents agree on which colleges are viable options for your family financially. Finally, visit, visit, VISIT!

Dealing with Deadlines

Deadlines are crucial for the college admissions process. Be sure you know exactly what each college's deadlines are for early decision/early action, regular admission, and financial aid. Also, certain majors (i.e. nursing) may have a different deadline than the main college. Plan to have all application materials completed at least *two weeks* prior to a deadline, as rushing at the last minute may lead to errors and does not give your counselor time to complete his or her portion. Make sure to tell your recommendation writers about your deadlines as well.

The College Essay

The essay is perhaps the best way to let college admissions representations get to know you on a more personal level. Choose an essay topic that you are passionate about, that lets the reader know about your dreams and aspirations, your personal strengths and struggles, and what makes you the person that you are. Make absolutely sure that your essay is free of any grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors; DO NOT rely on spell-check for this! All seniors will complete a college essay assignment in English class, so have your teacher help you fine-tune your essay before you submit it.

Recommendation Letters

Most colleges require at least one teacher recommendation and one counselor recommendation; be sure you know the requirements of each college to which you are applying. Ask teachers *in person* that you've preferably had within the last year or two and who know you well, and provide them with a copy of your activity sheet and senior questionnaire. The person should be able to comment on your character and strengths as well as your academics. You may also be able to submit letters from coaches, clergy, or employers. Finally,

make sure that your school counselor has gotten to know you well enough to write a comprehensive recommendation...don't be a stranger!

Campus Visits and Interviews

As stated earlier, campus visits are key in making your college choice. Visiting a campus gives you the chance to see what the day-to-day college experience is really like. Will you like the dorms, the food, the social atmosphere, the academic opportunities, and the extracurricular activities? Do you feel comfortable there? Take every opportunity to attend campus open houses or tours for the best visit experience.

If the college offers interviews, consider taking advantage of that opportunity. If an admissions representative can meet with you one-on-one to ask and answer questions, this may work in your favor at decision time. Be sure to dress, act and speak appropriately...first impressions carry a lot of weight. Afterwards, send a note to the interviewer(s) thanking them for their time.

The Importance of Community Service and Leadership

College representatives will of course look at your academic record, but they are also looking for students who enriched their high school experience through community service and leadership activities. They want students who will be successful both in and out of the classroom, and who will be a positive addition to their campus community. This is why we stress to 9th graders to get involved! Long-term commitment to a few activities is generally better than working an hour here and an hour there at a number of different things. Talk to your school counselor about how to build your résumé!

What Colleges Are Seeking in Students

Remember that colleges and universities are businesses, and that their reputation is heavily influenced by the success and behavior of their student body. Many colleges even look at applicants' Facebook pages to see if the content is appropriate or not. That said, colleges are looking for students who are mature, hard-working, active in campus life and of strong character. Consider this: future employers are looking for the same characteristics!

Admission for Athletes

Although athletes may initially work with a college coach during the recruiting process, it is important to realize that athletes must still meet academic standards for admission and follow the same admissions process. If you plan to play a NCAA Division I or II sport in college, you must work with your high school counselor to be sure you meet NCAA eligibility requirements.

HEOP/EOP Program Requirements

Generally speaking, HEOP and EOP are programs designed to help students who do not meet academic standards for admission but show strong potential for college work, *and* meet the income guidelines indicating financial need. If you believe you would be eligible for such a program, see your school counselor or contact college admissions offices directly for more information.

Setting Your Application Above the Rest

Follow the steps above! Give the admissions representatives every opportunity to get to know you beyond what is on paper. Send thank you notes after interviews. Write a strong college essay. Follow each college's admission requirements to the letter. Meet your deadlines!

The College Application Process

Student Role

- Be sure to use the same exact e-mail address for college applications, SchoolTool and Naviance
- Identify colleges/majors of interest (utilize Naviance and other search engines)
- Attend College Kick-Off (August) and College Fair (October) for information
- Research college admissions requirements and deadlines
- Visit colleges and determine the ones to which you will apply
- Put list of colleges in Naviance
- Register to retake October SATs and/or ACTs (by early September deadline) if needed
- Read Senior Newsletters and check e-mail/text Remind frequently for important college and scholarship information
- Complete activity sheet and student questionnaire
- Ask for letters of recommendation in person, then electronically in Naviance; provide recommenders with copies of activity sheet and student questionnaire
- Complete college essay
- Complete college applications; work with career aide/counselor if needed
- If you took college courses in high school through CCC, Syracuse, RIT or MST, arrange for your official transcripts to be sent to colleges to which you've applied
- Send official AP scores to colleges through The College Board if applicable
- Provide school counselor with College Application Checklist for *each* school once application has been submitted
- Have SAT/ACT scores sent to colleges directly from the College Board and ACT testing companies.
- Athletes – register with NCAA Clearinghouse for Division I or II athletics and have SAT/ACT scores sent directly from the testing company
- Search for scholarships and apply
- Regularly check e-mail for college correspondence
- Request Mid-Year Reports and transcripts for scholarship applications
- Contact college admissions offices with questions or concerns
- Maintain good senior year academics and attendance
- Once admissions decisions have been received, choose your college
- Complete that college's requirements for paperwork, housing, health info, etc...
- Complete Senior Survey in June, to ensure that your final transcript is sent to the correct college

Parent/Guardian Role

- Assist student with college searches, decision-making and visits if possible
- Attend College Kick-Off, College Fair and Financial Aid programs for information
- Assist with payment of application and testing fees
- Together with student, complete FAFSA online for financial aid after October 1st
- Assist student athletes with NCAA Clearinghouse registration and correspondence with coaches, etc...
- Activate parent Naviance account
- Help student stay on top of deadlines
- Help student maintain good attendance and work habits

- Read Parent Newsletters for important information
- Check over college applications prior to submission
- Encourage student to apply for scholarships
- Assist student with meeting important college deadlines and requirements regarding housing, required paperwork, health information/physicals, etc...

School Counselor Role

- Assist students with decision-making, if needed, in regard to choice of major, types of colleges to apply to, etc...
- Provide students and families with general college and admissions information
- Remind students of SAT/ACT and scholarship deadlines
- Counsel students on which applications to use
- Help students create a to-do list
- Provide guidance on college essay writing
- Provide assistance with application completion if needed
- Assist eligible students with application or testing fee waivers
- Assist HEOP/EOP candidates with admissions requirements
- Check transcripts for accuracy
- Write letters of recommendation when applicable
- Upon receipt of College Application Checklists, prepare and send transcripts and supporting documents to colleges
- Maintain student files with recommendation letters, application checklists, and other forms as needed
- Send transcripts to NCAA Clearinghouse for Division I and II athletes
- Support students in maintaining good grades and completing graduation requirements
- Contact colleges on behalf of students when applicable
- Encourage students to apply for scholarships
- Send final transcripts upon receipt of senior surveys

Student Questions for Recommendation Letters

Student: _____ Recommender: _____

PLEASE TAKE YOUR TIME AND GIVE DETAILED RESPONSES. THIS WILL HELP YOUR RECOMMENDERS WRITE A STRONG LETTER.

1. What are your academic plans and goals over the next five years? _____

2. What are your strengths as a student, and in what areas can you continue to improve? _____

3. What hobby or activity are you most passionate about? Why? _____

4. What accomplishment or experience from your high school years are you most proud of? _____

5. How would your best friends describe you? _____

6. What is the most important thing about you that I should know? _____

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Academic Awards:

	<u>Grade:</u>
University of Rochester Bausch and Lomb Science Award	11
LeMoyne College Heights Award	11
High Honor Roll	9, 10, 11, 12
National Honor Society	10, 11, 12
Spanish Honor Society	10, 11, 12

Athletic Activities/Awards:

Varsity Basketball	9, 10, 11, 12
Varsity Soccer	9, 10, 11, 12
Varsity Softball	9, 10, 11, 12
Basketball Academic All-American	10, 11
Soccer CNYCL All League Honorable Mention	11, 12
Softball All League First Team	10, 11

School Activities

Character Education Club	9, 10, 11, 12
Varsity Club	9, 10, 11, 12
SADD Club	9, 10, 11, 12
Student Government	10, 11, 12
Yearbook Club	9, 10, 11, 12
Marching Band	9, 10, 11, 12

Leadership Activities

Character Education Club Secretary	9
Character Education Club President	10, 11, 12
Varsity Club President	12
SADD Club Treasurer	10, 11, 12
Yearbook Editor	12
Varsity Basketball Captain	12
Varsity Softball Captain	12

Community Service

Red Cross Blood Drive Volunteer (4 Drives per year)	9, 10, 11, 12
Westminster Manor Adult Home Bingo Calling (once a month)	9, 10, 11, 12
Y-Pals (Mentor younger student once a week/one hour)	9, 10, 11, 12
St. Francis Church altar server (once a week)	9, 10, 11, 12

Work Experience

Wegman's (12-15 hours a week)	10, 11, 12
Babysitter	9, 10, 11, 12