

COLLEGE PLANNING HANDBOOK

Prepared by the Guidance Department of Covington Latin School

INTRODUCTION

Covington Latin School encourages each student to seek a college or university that will challenge him/her intellectually and emotionally. We are primarily concerned that each graduate be admitted to a quality school which will best suit his/her needs. In conjunction with this goal, we are providing each junior parent with this College Planning Handbook to be shared with the junior level student as they complete their last two years at CLS. We know that this will be a valuable resource in college preparation so please take the time to read it thoroughly and familiarize yourself with the information it contains.

The college application process can be intense and lengthy. It can also be confusing and anxiety-ridden. It is a time when you are asked to evaluate yourself in ways you may not have done before. It is a time when you will be making important life decisions.

The decision where to attend college is a personal one. Though the final decision involves your parents, the work involved is YOUR responsibility. This manual was prepared to provide you with answers to questions you might have as you face this process. The more you know, the better you are able to take control and the greater likelihood that you will make informed and appropriate decisions.

College counseling is guidance in preparing for and learning about college, making appropriate college choices, applying for admission and financial aid, deciding among options, and making the transition to college life. It takes place throughout high school.

At Covington Latin, we use individual counseling, group guidance, and a variety of resource materials. We are attentive to individual differences. Throughout the process we are dependent on family involvement.

In making college choices we encourage our students to seek the greatest challenge, select the best opportunities, explore new horizons, and look for the right "fit."

While you ultimately make these decisions, remember that there are people at Covington Latin ready and willing to assist and guide you. Covington Latin has a proud tradition of 100% college admittance. We look to you to continue this tradition.

JUNIOR YEAR

- Check the *Monthly Items of Interest* and the CLS website about Open House sessions and week-end visits to college campuses.
- Continue to improve your study skills and academic performance.
- Continue to develop your extracurricular involvement and responsibilities.

September

- Prepare for the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT). This test will be used to determine the National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists and Commended students. It is also a good preparation and predictor for the SAT.
- Use the resources of the CLS College Counseling Center.

October

- Attend the local Annual National College Fair. This fair is sponsored by the National Association of College Admissions Counselors and usually attracts more than 200 institutions. Date and time will be announced.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT. Date and time to be announced.

November

- Meet with your counselor to review your record and identify any areas of concern.

December

- You must maintain your grades or improve them if necessary. Grades from junior year and first semester of the senior year are a better predictor of how well you will perform in college than grades from the freshman year. In fact, some colleges are most interested in the direction and trends of your grades through the first three years.
- Results of PSAT are returned to students and parents and analyzed by guidance counselor.

January

- National Merit Semi-Finalists are identified.

February

- Continue to work on attaining the highest GPA possible by June.

April

- The best way to learn about a college and consider it as an option is to visit. Families are encouraged to include college visits as part of any Easter (or spring) vacation travel plans. Call ahead and find out when the college offers campus tours. Ask to meet with an

admissions counselor, sit in on a freshman class, speak with a faculty member or a coach, and eat in the dining halls. Be sure to talk to students before you leave the campus.

- If you wish to learn more about the opportunities at a U.S. Service Academy (West Point, Annapolis, or the Air Force Academy) or if you are considering ROTC in college, then now is the time to begin calling and writing for information regarding admission and scholarships. Also, write three letters requesting a nomination, one to each of your senators and one to your congressperson. (See guidance counselor for sample letter).
- Check to see if SAT II Subject Tests are required at the college to which you may be applying.
- Attend the CLS Annual College Fair usually held in April.

May

- If you plan to apply for an ROTC Scholarship, fill out the application for the Air Force, Army, and/or Navy, and turn it in to your college counselor before summer vacation begins.
- Sign-up for the CLS ACT Prep Class if you want extra help in preparing for the College Boards.

Pre-Senior Summer: June-July-August

- Take the College Boards (ACT/SAT) on the first two Saturdays in June.
- Look through college guidebooks, profiles and catalogues (see page 10 for a listing of college guides available in the CLS College Center) and especially the internet. There are also valuable "nuts and bolts" guides and several excellent publications from the College Board, Woodburn Press, and Octameron Associates, Inc. that offer valuable insight into the college admissions process.
- Combine your summer vacation with college prospecting. Call or write for an admissions appointment, meet with a counselor, and take a campus tour. If your travel schedule is indefinite, stop at the campus and see if perhaps someone in the Admissions Office will be able to talk with you. Talk to the admissions counselor about your chances of being admitted in light of the academic record and test scores you are able to provide.
- Read carefully the pamphlets and brochures that you receive in the mail or in the admissions office. They are much more meaningful after you have been on campus.

SENIOR YEAR

September - October

- Applying to colleges is the single most important thing you will do this fall. The paperwork to be completed must be done on time and in good order. Either type your applications for mailing or apply on line. Start your application essays early. Give the first draft of your essay to your counselor, teacher, parent, and/or friend to critique. Rewrite again and again if necessary.
- Parents should complete the *Confidential College Planning Questionnaire/ Parent's Evaluation Form* and the *Confidential Parent Recommendation Form* (both forms provided by the CLS counseling office) for their child and return to the guidance counselor before the end of September. Parent input is very helpful in writing the School Recommendation.
- Seniors complete the *Senior Questionnaire* and return to guidance counselor.
- Seniors will be administered the *Kuder Career Search Assessment* to assist in selecting a possible college major.
- Seniors who are possibly planning in participating in Division I or II athletics in college must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Registration information and forms are available in the College Counseling Center.
- The application for any college to which you have decided to apply under an Early Decision or Early Admission plan should be completed during October.
- Although your GPA will not improve significantly, a strong seventh semester is always important. Many colleges will wait for these grades before making a decision. Likewise, this is the year to show leadership in extra-curriculars and sports.
- Register to retake the SAT, ACT or SAT II (Subject Tests). Nearly three fourths of the students will improve the second time around.
- Complete your senior resume. Give this careful thought and attention. Much of the information you include can be incorporated in the School Recommendation. Give a copy to your counselor.
- Schedule a meeting with your college counselor.
- Meet with the college reps from any school in which you are interested when they visit CLS. Sign up sheets will be posted on the counselor's bulletin board several days in advance. (Remember, teacher permission is necessary to be out of class). Schools visiting will be listed in the *Monthly Items of Interest*, on the CLS website, and in the daily announcements.
- Two schools--Thomas More College and Xavier University--will meet with all seniors during the first half of a tutorial period. Dates and times will be announced.
- Attend the NASSAC College Fair. More than 200 institutions will have representatives on hand to answer questions and distribute information.
- Schedule an appointment to visit several of the colleges where you will be applying. Try to visit during one of our off-days. However, you are permitted to miss two school days to make visits. Approval must be obtained at least two days in advance from the Headmaster. See the guidance counselor for the appropriate form.

November

- Dedicate yourself to your college applications. All applications should be completed this month and turned into the CRC. Get all of your applications done by Thanksgiving break if possible.
- If you apply on-line, remember to notify the counselor about forwarding of your Transcript of Credit to the appropriate institution.

December

- Do the preliminary work on any financial aid applications this month. Plan to mail them as early in January as possible.
- Attend the CLS Financial Aid Workshop conducted by a local college financial aid officer and the CLS guidance counselor.

January

- Complete and file online or mail your *FAFSA* and perhaps the *CSS Profile*. Note: you can file the *FAFSA* and *CSS Profile* before you file your tax forms with the IRS. If there are any significant changes to be made, a supplementary form can be filed at a later date.
- Complete any applications which you still intend to submit. Although a college may have a later deadline or a rolling admissions policy, an early filing will often result in an earlier notification and more time to work through decisions. Expect to be contacted for an alumni interview by some colleges.

February-March

- Respond quickly to any requests from either admissions or financial aid offices for additional information.
- Be patient and wait; admissions offices are very busy, but if something significant develops which can enhance your chances for admission then let them know.

April

- Review all your acceptances and financial aid awards. Call the financial aid offices if you need clarification of your award or need to discuss the amount of your aid package.
- If you have any doubts about your decision, visit the colleges which have offered acceptances, stay overnight, go to class, talk to students and professors, and get a feel for the campuses.
- By May 1, notify all colleges who have accepted you that you will or will not be enrolling. In most cases, your enrollment deposit must also be paid by May 1 to the college you plan to attend. At most schools, the earlier you deposit the higher priority your campus housing application receives. Deposit at only one school.

May

- May 1 is the deadline date for deposits for admission to most colleges. Keep grades strong and do well on final exams!
- Complete all requirements for your Senior Year!
- Graduation!
- Final transcripts are sent to the colleges. (Don't forget that all offers of admission are contingent upon your successfully completing your final semester.)
- Final transcript sent to NCAA Clearinghouse for Division I or II intra-collegiate athletic competition eligibility.

COLLEGE SELECTION CRITERIA

The following factors should be considered in narrowing your focus of colleges to which you plan on applying:

Size

- Large -- usually classified as having more than 8,000 undergraduate students. Typically offer more majors, activities, books in their libraries, computers on campus, and students in each class. Obviously, more students are competing for usage of labs and computers and leadership positions in extra-curriculars.
- Medium -- usually classified as having 3,000 to 8,000 undergraduate students. Offer combination of small and large school strengths and weaknesses.
- Small -- usually classified as having less than 3,000 undergraduate students. Usually offer small classes, more personal attention, fewer majors and activities, smaller libraries and computer centers, and greater opportunity for participation in student activities and/or sports.

Geography

- In what area of the country do you want to be? What type of climate do you prefer?
- Do you want to be in a city, suburb, or small town/rural area?

Personality

- Do you want a campus with liberal or conservative leanings? Do you want your campus to be politically active?
- Do you want a lot of diversity among the student population? Do you want your campus to be a very friendly place?
- "Fit" Do you feel comfortable here? Will you for four years?

Level of Selectivity

- You are going to college to be intellectually challenged. Make sure that the students around you are as intelligent as you. What type of student are you? Compare your GPA to the average GPA of students at schools you are considering (understand that this is not always reported 100% accurately).
- Strength of curriculum is as important as grades you receive. Will the college's academic reputation help you in the future with graduate school applications and job hunting?

Major

The vast majority of students enter college without having declared a major. This is not a problem for two reasons. Most colleges offer a wide array of majors from which to choose. And, most colleges do not require you to declare a major until the end of your sophomore year. If you are certain of a major you wish to pursue, then major should be a factor in your decision making; if you are not certain, you can make an informed decision and find a good fit without considering a major.

COLLEGE INFORMATION RESOURCES

The College Counseling Center contains a large number of resource materials which are available to students to assist them in gathering information about colleges.

Printed Materials

- College Catalogs, View books, and Applications
- Standardized testing information and registration materials
- Scholarship and Financial Aid information and applications
- College Guides, including:
 - *Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges*
 - *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*
 - *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*
 - *The College Handbook*
 - *The Insider's Guide to the Colleges*
 - *Getting In!*
 - *Career Briefs*

Videos and DVD's

- Videos from over 50 colleges and universities are available to view.
- DVD's are becoming increasingly popular with colleges and universities and availability grows every year.

WEB RESOURCES

College Searches and Additional Information:

www.ecampustours.com

www.collegeboard.com

www.collegeedge.com

www.mycollegeguide.org

www.collegenet.com

www.collegeview.com

www.careersandcolleges.com

www.petersons.com

www.princetonreview.com

www.gocollege.com

www.kaplan.com

www.usnews.com/sections/education

www.collegeplan.org

www.mapping-your-future.org

www.collegelink.com

www.c3apply.org

www.act.org

www.gohigherky.org

www.jobweb.org

www.ets.org

Special Groups

www.wku.edu/gifted

www.nd.edu/-ccaa

www.liberalarts.org

www.SSRN.com/bschool

www.nassp.org

www.weapply.com

www.tip.duke.edu

www.csocollegecenter.org

Financial Aid and Scholarships

www.fafsa.ed.gov

www.studentservices.com/fastweb

www.collegeboard.org

www.collegefundingco.com

www.finaid.org

www.ed.gov

www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline

www.peterson.com/resources/finance.html

www.studentservices.com

www.salliemae.com

www.kaploan.com

www.kheaa.com

www.regents.state.oh.us/sgs

www.cashe.com

www.gcaasf.com

www.gcuc.org

www.studentloanpeople.com

www.edfinancial.com

www.hsf.net

www.hispanicfund.org

www.cincinnati-scholarship-foundation.org

www.scholarshipamerica.org

www.westinghouse.com

www.scholarships.com

www.executivewomen.org

www.girlsgoingplaces.com

www.guideposts.org

www.aynrand.org

www.axa.achievement.com

www.amnh.org

www.usip.org

Standardized Testing

www.collegeboard.com

www.nationalmerit.org

www.nationalmerit.org

www.planstudent.org

www.ets.org

www.petersonstestprep.com

www.kaplan.com

www.review.com

www.powerprep.com

www.actstudent.org

www.apcentralcollegeboard.com

www.gocollege.com

Study Skills:

www.adprima.com/studyout.htm

www.educate.com

www.woodburnpress.com

www.studygs.net

Career:

www.workforce.ky.gov

www.pages.prodigy.com

www.jobweb.org

www.mapping-your-future.org

www.amsa.org/premed

www.princetonreview.com/law

www.all-animals.net/be_a_vet.html

www.princetonreview.com/dentistry

www.myfuture.com

www.acinet.org

QUESTIONS TO ASK COLLEGE REPS

Characteristics

- Where is the campus located?
- What is the surrounding community like? Does it support the school?
- Is the college public, private, or church affiliated?
- What is the current student enrollment?
- Does the college have a core requirement? What is it?

Academics

- What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest?
- What percent of freshmen return for the sophomore year?
- What is the average GPA of incoming freshmen?
- How are faculty advisors assigned?
- What services are available for undeclared/undecided students?
- What percent of students graduate in four years?
- Are classes taught by professors, graduate assistants, or both?
- Is there an honors program? What are the requirements?

Students/Social

- Where do most students come from?
- Do most students live on campus or commute? Is housing guaranteed?
- What student activities are offered? Most popular?
- Is there a Greek life on campus? What percent of students participate?
- In what division are your athletics? What sports are offered?
- What is the male to female ratio?
- What percent of students live on campus?
- Are residence halls coed or single sex?
- What do most students do on the weekend?
- Do most of the students stay on campus over the weekend, or do they go home?

Admission

- What standardized tests are required? What scores are acceptable?
- Is a certain GPA required?
- How important are extracurriculars?
- Do you require an essay?
- Are personal interviews required?
- Are letters of recommendation required?
- Is there any early action or decision plan?
- On what basis are applicants accepted?
- What percent of applicants are accepted?
- Do certain majors have special admission requirements?
- What is the application deadline?

Cost/Financial Aid

- What are the costs for tuition? Room and board? Other fees?
- What percent of students receive need based financial aid?
- What percent receive academic scholarships?
- What would a typical freshman's financial aid package be?
- What percent of financial need do you meet?
- What financial aid applications are required? What are your deadlines?
- When are award letters received?
- Is there a tuition payment plan?
- Are campus jobs available to those who do not receive work study?

THE CAMPUS VISIT

The single best way to learn about a college is to visit its campus. Much can be learned from a campus tour, attending a couple classes, and talking to current students and faculty. The more colleges you visit, the easier it will be to compare and contrast.

The best visits occur when school is in session. This is not to suggest that visiting outside the regular school year is invaluable. But certainly more resources are available to you when everyone is on campus. Visits should start in your sophomore year.

Campus visits are typically scheduled by calling the admission office. A two-week advance notice is preferred. The campus tours are typically led by current students. This provides a great opportunity to ask questions that you may not wish to ask an admission counselor. Students can give you the best perspective on social life, community, academic difficulties, availability of professors, types of help available, etc. Most colleges will provide opportunities for overnight visits also.

You should be certain to do more than just a campus tour when you visit. Attend classes and talk with professors in your chosen field of study, if possible. Be sure to visit the library, bookstore, science labs, computer centers, and especially the student center, as well as other student gathering places.

While on tour be certain that you see a typical freshman residence hall. Notice any posters and flyers posted around the campus, and see what types of events they are advertising. Find a student newspaper, and read it. Take note of special issues on the campus. Ask to go by the career placement center, and pick up any interesting literature.

Outside the tour you should also make an effort to talk to other students. They are a great resource, and most will be very happy to answer your questions. What do they like and dislike about the school? How is their relationship with their professors? Talk to professors in your area of interest or coaches of your sport. Try to have a meal on campus.

These contacts are easiest to achieve if you let the admission office know before you arrive that you would like to speak with these people. It is not necessary to visit every school in which you are interested. But before you decide to attend a particular institution it is **critical** that you have visited.

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

The application form is the initial step in applying to college. Requested on the application form are biographical information and answers to questions concerning your extracurricular activities, work experience, future plans, and academic interests. The form will ask for your social security number, your school code (180540), and an application fee. Most colleges will ask you to write a personal statement or essay which will be read for content, spelling, and organization.

Completing your applications may take a great deal of time and energy. Colleges want your applications to reflect your interests and values, how you think, and how you write. You need to make the best representation of yourself possible without being too boastful. It is important to be honest, thorough, concise, neat, and attentive to directions. Type your applications. Make a copy of the application and use it for a rough draft. Make a copy of your completed application and keep it for your own records.

When you have completed your portion of the college application you should obtain a "Transcript Request" form from the guidance counselor. Complete the form, attach it to your application, and return it to the College Counseling Center (CCC). Your application and transcript will be mailed to the college by your college counselor. Your counselor will also complete the Secondary School Report or similar sections, and attach a [CLS School Profile](#) for colleges not familiar with the strong CLS academic program.

Colleges will often request that one or more of your teachers and a counselor write a recommendation. It is important to select a teacher who knows you well and will write a positive recommendation about you. You may want to discuss your selection with your counselor. Discuss the recommendation with your teacher at least three weeks before the due date. You may want to provide the teacher a high school resume. Your teacher may return the recommendation to the CCC, and your counselor will mail it with the rest of your application. If your teacher plans to mail it directly to the college, you should provide him or her with an addressed and stamped envelope. Inform your recommendation writers about admissions decisions.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Covington Latin School's ACT/CEEB Code is 180540

During your junior year you will take the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (**PSAT**), the Scholastic Assessment Test (**SAT**) and the American College Test (**ACT**). The **PSAT** will be taken by all juniors in October at CLS. The **PSAT** offers a preview for the **SAT** and an opportunity to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship competition, the largest scholarship program in the country. We will register the students for this test and pay the test fee. The **SAT** and **ACT** should be taken the following spring (April is good, June is probably better). Separate registration forms and test fees must be sent in for each test. Information on this will also be included in our monthly newsletter. You may register for the **ACT** or **SAT** on line (see p.13 for Internet address).

Even though these tests have been widely criticized, they remain a key factor in college admission and scholarship decisions. Failure to recognize and act on this fact can and has resulted in missed opportunities. As admission to the best colleges continues to become more selective and winning scholarships becomes more competitive, our students need to have more

test-savvy. You need to be aware that you are being compared to students who have taken the **SAT** and **ACT** two or three times and have been involved in extensive test preparation.

Evidence shows that repeated testing (up to a point) and thorough preparation produce positive results. The test companies readily admit that students who are more familiar with the tests will have more accurate results. It is becoming clear that students who have not spent time preparing are at a definite disadvantage.

Here are the recommended steps to follow before you take the **PSAT** and again before you take the **SAT** and **ACT**:

- Carefully review the information distributed by the test company with the registration. This prep booklet or newspaper includes a full-length practice test. The **PSAT** newspaper will be passed out to juniors in early September. (Reading this material and taking the practice test is an absolute minimum. Plan on 6-10 hours spread over a couple of weeks.)
- Obtain a book or computer software which will give additional opportunity to take sample tests and review testing techniques. There are several publishers and software producers who have come up with good products. Look for one that includes full-length tests. (We strongly recommend making the commitment to this type of preparation. Plan on 20-30 hours spread over a month.)
- Take a preparation course. Courses typically involve 20-40 hours of class time and vary greatly in price. Costs generally equate with class size and individual attention. CLS offers an **ACT** prep session in May for any junior interested. Sign-up information usually comes out in April. The classes are very small and include full-length testing sessions. (We recommend taking a prep course because of the testing techniques and insight which they offer).

The **SAT II: Subject Tests** are administered by the College Board and are given on the same dates as the **SAT I**. The registration process is the same as the **SAT I**. You can take up to three Subject Tests at one administration. These tests are designed to measure your knowledge or skill in a particular subject area and your ability to apply that knowledge. The tests are curriculum-based; thus, they are much easier to study for than the **SAT I**. Many of the more selective colleges require their applicants to take up to three Subject Tests.

Subject Tests are offered in the following areas: Literature, Mathematics (Levels I, IC and II-C), Biology, Chemistry, Physics, American History and Social Studies, World History, French Reading, French Listening,, Spanish Reading, Spanish Listening, German Reading, German Listening, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Chinese Listening, Japanese Listening, and English Proficiency. Each test takes one hour and consists of multiple-choice questions.

Scores for the Subject Tests are similar to those on the **SAT I**, a scale of 200 - 800. Some colleges use the scores as part of their admission criteria, others claim they use them for

placement purposes for accepted students. When registering for the Subject Tests you have the option of withholding your scores. By doing so, you are keeping any college from seeing the score until you give permission for that score to be released. Withheld scores will not appear on the **SAT** reports that the colleges receive. When and if you decide to release certain Subject Test scores, they will then become part of your permanent record. This process is described in more detail in the registration booklet.

AP (Advanced Placement) Exams are also administered by the College Board and are designed to be taken upon completion of an **AP** course. Depending on the score you receive on the exam (scale of 1 - 5) and the schools you are accepted by, you may be able to receive college credit or advanced standing based on your results. Because most **AP Exams** are not taken until the end of senior year, they are not typically considered in the admission process. **AP** registration takes place in March, and actual testing begins in early May.

THE ESSAY

A scintillating essay can make your application stand out from the rest of the pile on an admissions counselor's desk. Writing such an essay will take a lot of work, but the payoff is a letter of acceptance from a college you really want to attend. Plan to revise your essay a number of times. Have an English teacher critique it before you print a final draft.

The best essays are written about something a student truly cares about. It is smart to avoid topics that many other students are sure to write about. But imagination and enthusiasm can make a familiar topic work if written well. Be sincere and be yourself. Admissions counselors are looking for a student with potential for growth whose personality fits their population. They are also looking for someone who will contribute to the quality of life on their campus as a leader, an artist, or even as a good friend.

There are four elements to a good personal statement. Know that your story is interesting. Relate the events to the greater human experience, a common moment that most of us have experienced. Tell the story artfully. Establish why the story is important. The reader must get your idea and be able to follow your thoughts. Write so that the reader is there with you. Use quotes and be descriptive.

When choosing a topic and writing your essay keep in mind what colleges are looking for---ability, creativity, motivation, self-discipline, growth potential, organization, integrity, maturity, enthusiasm, etc.

THE INTERVIEW

Whether conducted on campus or in your own home area, the interview is an important facet of the information-gathering process between you and the college. In the interview, you have the opportunity to present interesting personal qualities which help the college evaluate you as an applicant. Additionally, the questions you ask in the interview will help you make a good decision about the college.

Following are guidelines to a successful interview, questions which you should be prepared to answer, and questions you should ask:

- Be on time for your appointment.
- Be neat. Dress conservatively and appropriately.
- Be well prepared. Read the college catalog prior to your interview and prepare questions based on what you read. Let your interviewer know you are applying for specific reasons. Know what the college has to offer and how you might fit in.
- Answer questions to the best of your knowledge and ability. Do not be afraid to admit you don't know something.
- Be ready to volunteer information. Know your GPA, standardized test scores, latest grades in the courses you are currently taking, and in which extracurricular activities you are involved.
- Be yourself. Do not pretend to be something or someone you are not. The interviewer is interested in finding out as much as possible about you. Be honest about your weaknesses as well as your strengths. The interviewer will likely know if you are bluffing or simply trying to make an impression.
- RELAX! Interviews are meant to be informative for everyone involved.

Questions to expect:

- What do you hope to gain from the college experience?
- Have you given any thought to why you are going to college? Are there skills you hope to acquire or improve? Admitting your weaknesses can make you interesting and believable.
- Which characteristics of this college are especially appealing to you?
- Have you researched the institution and found that it has elements of special interest to you? Have people whose opinion you respect recommended it to you? Do your homework.
- What do you hope to do at college outside of the classroom?
- What contributions do you hope to make to student life at the college of your choice? What characteristics make you special or unique?
- How would your teachers describe you?
- Ask a teacher or two before you interview.
- What are your concerns about the college selection process?
- Admissions officers want to help you make the best decision.

Questions to ask:

- What percent of your freshmen return for the sophomore year, and why do students leave before graduation?
- Does the institution live up to its promises?
- Which departments are most popular?
- Do they have the breadth and depth of courses in your areas of special interest? Are there dominant departments or is there a sense of balance? Are research opportunities and internships available?
- What are the current student issues on campus? Which are the most active extracurricular clubs and organizations?
- How involved and interested are the students? How do various groups interact?

- What do your students tend to do immediately after graduation? (Apart from celebrate.)
- Are they getting the help they need to reach their post-graduate goals? What types of jobs are they taking? What are the professional and graduate school opportunities available to them?
- Is this college a good match for me?
- Do my academic and personal credentials fit within the range and scope of this college's student body?

A few colleges have developed elaborate alumni networks and use them as interviewers of applicants. If you are not able to get on campus, an alumni interview may take the place of a campus interview. Check with the admissions office to determine whether or not an alumni interview is required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher recommendations tend to be required by all colleges. Most will ask for only one; some will ask for up to three. Selecting a teacher to write on your behalf is important. The teacher must be someone who knows you well both inside and outside the classroom. They should be from subject areas where you excel. You need to give your teacher three weeks' time to prepare a letter for you. You should use the same teacher for each college to which you are applying. Ask the teacher if they would mind writing a recommendation on your behalf and if they feel they could write a positive recommendation about you. If they agree, take some time to let them know of your motivations for applying to each school. While most of their comments will revolve around your ability, motivation, participation, and behavior in the classroom, it's important to let them get to know more about yourself outside the classroom. Be sure to thank them; this is not a requirement of their job.

With each transcript sent to a college your college counselor will also send a letter of recommendation on your behalf, if required. Be certain that you have taken enough time to talk with your counselor before your application materials are due so that he can write a specific, comprehensive, and informed letter about you. You will have to take the initiative in arranging these meetings. Expect the conversation to be relaxed and to be asked questions about yourself and your interests. These meetings are separate from and take place after the meetings in which college choices, etc., are discussed.

Many colleges ask that you have your counselor complete and submit a Counselor Report Form or a Secondary School Report. Before submitting these forms to the College Counseling Center, be sure that you have completed any biographical information required at the top of the form.

December and January get very busy in the CCC with many applications being processed. While you must be attentive to the application deadlines of the schools to which you are applying, you must also be aware of the internal deadlines set by the College Counseling office since they occur earlier than those of the colleges. Determine your earliest application deadline and observe the office deadlines to be sure your application materials are sent and reach the colleges on time.

- For Early Decision, Early Action, and other Fall deadlines, all forms must be submitted to the CCC **three weeks before** the college's application deadline.

- For deadlines between December 15 and January 15, all forms must be submitted to the CCC **before Thanksgiving break.**
- For all deadlines between January 16 and February 1, all forms must be submitted to the CCC **before Christmas break.**
- For any deadlines thereafter, you must submit your forms two weeks in advance.

SAMPLE RESUME

Joseph Q. Senior

1234 Anystreet

Covington, Ky. 41011

(606) 451-1997

SS# 123-45-6789

Extra-Curricular Resume

Volunteers

2 hours/week

12 - God's Pantry, food-distribution center. Sorted food and served meals

11 - St. Mary's School. Tutored inner-city elementary school students

Cross Country

16-18 hours/week, August-November

12 - Member, Varsity Team. All-Academic recognition by the Covington City League

11 - Member, Varsity Team

10 - Member, Junior Varsity Team

National Honor Society

1 hour/week

12 - President. Assisted at school functions including open houses, plays, liturgies, etc.

11 - Member. Peer Tutor

Spring Musical – The Sound of Music

18 hours/week, January-April 12

12 – played role as Captain Von Trapp

Student Council

3 hours/week

12 - Chairman, Prom Committee

11 - Class Representative

10 - Class President

The Leader – School Newspaper

2 hours/week

12 - Staff writer

11 - Staff writer

Soccer

10 hours/week, July - October

FINANCIAL AID

With the total cost of many private colleges now exceeding \$25,000 per year, financial aid is a topic on the minds of an increasing number of people. Perhaps most important to keep in mind regarding financial aid is: You will not know whether or not you qualify for assistance, and you will not receive any aid, if you do not apply. There are two different types of financial assistance offered by colleges: need-based and merit-based. Need-based is more frequent.

Most schools will require that you submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid in order to be considered for student aid. FAFSA forms are usually available in the CCC at the end of November but cannot be submitted before January 1. You are strongly encouraged to apply electronically by using FAFSA Express (see p. 12 for Internet address). Many schools will also ask you to complete the CSS/Financial Aid Profile (see page 12 for Profile website), a second form available in the early fall which requires a processing fee. Both forms are submitted to processors who then calculate your expected family contribution (EFC) and forward that information to you and any schools you have designated. The FAFSA calculations are based on federally legislated methodology. The Profile calculations take additional discretionary information into account. Some schools will also require that you complete their own institutional form. Pay close attention to each school's deadlines.

The Financial Aid Office at each institution will take the information provided by the form processor and put together a financial aid package which will include some combination of grant, scholarship, loan, and work study. Unfortunately, an increasing number of schools are unable to meet 100% of the demonstrated need of their applicants. That means there might be a gap between what you can afford and what the college can provide you in assistance.

Grants and scholarships are free monies: they do not have to be repaid. The Pell for 08/09 is up to \$4731 and determination is made based on information in your *FAFSA*. The Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) is another federal program for students with exceptional need. Awards range from \$200 to \$4000.

Loans are monies that must be repaid. The Federal Stafford Loan is a long-term, low interest loan and is available for students who file a *FAFSA* and enroll at least half-time. Students who demonstrate need, according to the federal need analysis formula, may qualify for a *subsidized* Stafford Loan. Students who do not qualify for a *subsidized* Stafford Loan may be eligible for an *unsubsidized* Stafford Loan. A *subsidized* Stafford loan is interest free until six months after the student graduates. Interest on *unsubsidized* loans is charged from day one. The repayment period for both is up to ten years after graduation. Freshman may borrow up to \$3,500, and as of July 1, 2008, students can borrow an additional \$2,000 in an *unsubsidized* loan. Amounts are increased for upperclassmen. Perkins Loans of up to \$4000 per year is another federal program. They too are need-based. The interest rate varies. The interest rate at present is 5% and interest is not charged until nine months after graduation. Parent Loans to Undergraduate Students (PLUS) and Supplemental Loans to Students (SLS) are also not based on financial need. Interest rates are tied to the 52-week

T –Bill rate. Interest accumulates while you are a student, but payment can be deferred until after graduation. The repayment periods are five to ten years.

College work study is employment which you must take while in school, earning a salary which you are expected to contribute toward your expenses. The program is administered by the colleges. The Financial Aid Office will help you find an on-campus job which qualifies. The average work-study job is 10- 12 hours per week.

A growing number of colleges are making available scholarship money which is awarded not on the basis of need but for some outstanding quality of accomplishment demonstrated by the student. The only way to learn of these awards is to check the literature that you receive from schools to which you are applying.

Many privately funded scholarships are also awarded each year. As information *on these awards is received, they are noted in Monthly Items of Interest, on the CLS website, and/or daily announcements, and kept on file in the CCC.*

BEWARE of individuals and firms which claim to be able to uncover hidden riches. If you are wondering about whether or not to take advantage of one of these services, contact your college counselor. There are extensive and **FREE** scholarship searches available on the World Wide Web. (Links noted on page 12 of this handbook.)

SUGGESTED LETTER OF INQUIRY FOR ATHLETES

(date)

Dear Coach,

My name is (). I am a (class year) at Covington Latin School in Covington, Ky.

I have been playing (sport) for () years and have been a member of the varsity team at Covington Latin for () years. I play (position). I have begun doing some research into college, and your school and program are of interest to me.

(ATHLETIC)

I am (height) and (weight). This year I (scored, ran, blah, blah, blah). I was named (honors and awards). Our team record was ().

(ACADEMIC)

CLS is a college-prep high school. I have a () GPA. My (standardized test) scores are ().

(CONCLUSION)

I believe I could make a contribution to your team. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call me or my coach(s). My coach at CLS is (coach's name). He can be reached at (phone number). I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(full name)

(address)

(phone number)

NCAA INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY CLEARINGHOUSE

Any student-athlete wishing to participate in college athletics at the NCAA Division I or Division II level must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse for determination of initial eligibility. Student-athletes should register with the Clearinghouse at the end of their junior year in high school. The preferred method of registration is online. Go to: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net, select **Prospective Student-Athletes** and click on **Domestic Release Form**. Complete the *SRF* form online, and include your credit or debit card information to pay the fee. Print a copy of your completed registration form and both Copy I and Copy 2 of the transcript release form. Sign the transcript release forms, and give both to your guidance counselor. CLS will then mail a copy of your present *Transcript of Credit* to the Clearinghouse. At the conclusion of your senior year, and upon graduation, CLS will mail a final copy of your *Transcript of Credit* to the Clearinghouse.

Each year, CLS receives a limited number of *Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete* booklets which contain the paper registration forms. These booklets are available for those students who do not wish to apply online, and can be obtained in the college center from the guidance counselor.

The NCAA employs a sliding scale of Core GPA and Standardized Test Scores for Division I participation that the potential athlete **MUST** meet. This scale is listed on the NCAA Clearinghouse website and in the current *Guide for the College-Bound Athlete* booklet. There is no sliding scale for Division II participation.

There is no NCAA Clearinghouse requirement for participation in Division III Intra-Collegiate athletic competition.

The CLS course of study exceeds the minimum number of core courses required by the NCAA for participation in both Division I and Division II athletics.

GLOSSARY

ACT

American College Test. A college entrance exam for upperclassmen required by many institutions as part of the admission process. Consists of tests in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning, along with an optional Writing section. Each section is scored on a 1 - 36 point basis. Scores from each section are averaged to give a Composite score.

AP

Advanced Placement. Tests available to all students but particularly applicable to those students who have taken AP courses in high school. College credit may be awarded by an institution of higher education dependent upon scores. Scores are based on a 1 - 5 scale (5 is high).

Application

A formal document acquired from a specific institution which must be completed by the student, signed, and returned by a specific deadline in order to gain admission. A *Transcript of Credit* with Standardized Test Scores usually accompanies.

Candidate Notification Date

The date by which a college notifies a student of the admission decision.

Candidate Reply Date

The date by which the student must notify the college of his enrollment intention (May 1 at most institutions).

CEEB

College Entrance Examination Board. Part of the College Board. Group that administers the SAT.

CEEB Code

Six-digit number used to identify each high school. Our code is 180540.

Class Rank

A measure of academic performance determined by grade point average as compared to other members of the entire class.

COA

Cost of Attendance. Total cost for an academic year of study including direct and indirect costs (includes transportation, etc.).

Deferral

A college may postpone its admission decision pending more information on the student or a clearer differentiation among applicants.

Early Action

An admission plan whereby a student can submit an application by a particular deadline earlier than the college's regular deadline and receive a decision much earlier also. The early action student, if accepted, is not bound to enroll. Students accepted by early action still have until May 1 to determine and notify the school of their enrollment status.

Early Decision

An admission plan whereby a student can submit an application to his first choice school by a particular deadline earlier than the college's regular deadline and receive a decision much earlier also. The early decision student agrees to enroll if accepted and to withdraw any applications to other colleges. A student may only apply to one college as an early decision applicant. Students not admitted under early decision are usually reconsidered with the regular decision applicants.

EFC

Estimated Family Contribution. The amount of money your family can afford to contribute toward your college education for the next academic year. This amount is determined by completing the FAFSA.

FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid form. Required by most institutions of higher learning. The application is completed by the student and his/her parents and sent to the federal government for processing. Form should be completed as soon as practical after January 1st each year.

Financial Aid Package

Financial aid award to a student in the form of a combination of scholarships, grants, work study, and loans.

GPA

Grade Point Average. Calculated by multiplying number grade (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) by amount of credit in each class and dividing that by total number of credits attempted.

PLAN

Preliminary ACT. This test is given to all sophomores at CLS. It also includes an interest inventory.

Profile

Financial aid form used by a small number of institutions to provide information in addition to that which is provided by the FAFSA. A processing fee is charged.

PSAT/NMSQT

PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Slightly easier and shorter version of the SAT with an added section on Writing Skills. CLS students take this test as sophomores and as juniors. Junior test results are considered for possible National Merit/National Achievement Scholarship consideration.

Rolling Admission

Colleges with this procedure make a decision on the student's application as soon as it is received. Notification of the college's decision usually takes four to six weeks.

SAT

A college entrance exam for upperclassmen that a particular institution may require as part of the admission process. Consists of Verbal, Mathematics and Writing sections. Each section is scored on a 200 - 800 point basis.

Work Study

A federal program providing on campus jobs for students who demonstrate financial need. The award amount depends on the family's financial status and is part of the financial aid package. Payment received is credited to tuition, room and board, fees, etc. Hours vary, but generally are in the 10 to 15 hours per week range.