

Timeline

January –

- ✓ Turn in your college/career counseling request form to your guidance counselor
- ✓ Complete your activity sheet
- ✓ Register for the March SAT if you are planning on taking Subject Tests in May or June.
- ✓ Practice for the SAT using free materials on www.collegeboard.com.
- ✓ Practice for the ACT using free materials on www.actstudent.org

February

- ✓ Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss and create your preliminary list of colleges. Your parents are invited to attend this meeting.
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- ✓ Be sure your parents attend the College Planning Night on February 11
- ✓ Begin visiting college campuses
- ✓ Apply for available scholarships
- ✓ Continue practicing for the SAT using free materials on www.collegeboard.com.
- ✓ Continue practicing for the ACT using free materials on www.actstudent.org

March

- ✓ Continue to
 - research colleges
 - visit college campuses
 - prepare for ACT/SAT
 - apply for scholarships
- ✓ Register for the April ACT (WHS not a test site) if you are unable to take the June ACT at WHS
- ✓ Register for the May SAT or the SAT Subject Tests
- ✓ Register for AP tests in the guidance office
- ✓ Choose a competitive schedule for senior year. You will meet with your guidance counselor individually to create your schedule.
- ✓ Start looking for a summer job, volunteer opportunity or summer program to attend. Colleges like to see you do something with your free time!

April

- ✓ Continue to
 - research colleges
 - visit college campuses
 - prepare for ACT/SAT
 - apply for scholarships
 - look for summer opportunities

- ✓ Register for the June SAT and/or ACT

May/June

- ✓ Continue to
 - research colleges
 - visit college campuses
 - prepare for ACT/SAT
 - apply for scholarships
 - look for summer opportunities

- ✓ Ask two teachers for a letter of recommendation, give them your Activity Sheet

Summer

- ✓ Continue college visits
- ✓ Start your Common Application after August 1st www.commonapp.org
- ✓ There will be a Common Application workshop in August for seniors
- ✓ Begin your college essay
- ✓ Narrow your list of colleges to 5 – 7 schools

CAMPUS VISITS

Nothing can replace an in-person visit to the college you are considering. You may have researched the school thoroughly, but a visit allows you to get the “feel” of an institution in a way that books, hearsay or videos cannot. If possible, it is best to visit when students are on campus. College students usually begin school earlier than we do, making late August or very early September the best time to do summer visits. A visit in midsummer, when most students are away, is better than no visit at all; however, if you like the school, you may be able to visit again later when classes are in session.

How to arrange a visit

Students can register online by visiting the college’s admissions page. Look for the open house link and register for a day that is best for you. If you do not see a link on the admissions website, you can call the admissions office directly.

What to do when you visit

First, do your *research*. Know the basic facts about the college – size, majors and so on – so that you can ask more substantive questions during your visit. Take a *tour*. These are student-led, and usually last about an hour. Typically they go out several times a day on weekdays, and sometimes on Saturdays. If you are also interviewing, try to arrange to go on the tour before the interview (questions will arise which you can then discuss in the interview). The student guide is a good source of information, so ply him/her with questions. If you do NOT hit it off with the tour guide, try not to judge the entire institution negatively – try to talk with as many other students as possible.

Have an *interview*, if available and recommended by the college. (This is often best left for a second visit to the schools you liked best, unless the school is at a great distance.)

Talk to *students* other than the tour guide. Ask people walking around or eating lunch why they chose that school, what they like and what they would change about it.

Pick up the *student newspaper* (usually in the student union/dining hall). This will give you an idea of what’s happening on the campus, what the issues of concern to students are.

Eat a *meal* in one of the dining halls. This allows you not only to sample the food but to “people watch,” peruse bulletin boards, etc.

Drive or walk around the *town*. You’ll want to leave campus sometimes. What is there for students to do nearby?

Make sure that you have given *your name* to the admissions office, so that they have a record of your visit to campus. (Usually there will be a card for you to fill out. If not, ask.)

If time allows (requires prior arrangements with admissions office)

Attend a *class*. How big is it? Who is in it: freshmen, majors in that subject? Are students asking questions or just taking notes?

Meet with a *coach* in a sport you would like to play. He/she can give you an idea of your chances of playing on that school’s team.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN VISITING A COLLEGE

ABOUT THE COLLEGE:

- Does it have general education or course distribution requirements? What are they?
- What is the academic calendar (semesters, quarters)? Is there an “interim” or short term, and what do students do with that time?
- What are the pros and cons of the surrounding community? What is the weather generally like?
- What special or unique programs are offered?
- If the college is church-affiliated, how does that affect students’ lives?
- How is campus security assured?
- What are the available medical facilities?

ACADEMICS:

- What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest?
- Who teaches the courses: graduate students or professors? Are the teachers accessible to students?
- Are there opportunities for undergraduates to work on special projects with professors?
- How many students in last year's freshman class returned for their sophomore year? If low, what is the college's explanation?
- What was the grade point average for last year's freshman class?
- What is the college's procedure for student orientation, class placement and scheduling
- Are classes guaranteed?
- How is a faculty advisor assigned to students?
- How many students complete a degree?
- How many students graduate in four years?
- What are the most popular majors? Are they also the "strongest" majors?
- What is the library like? What are its policies and hours? Are you able to get the books you need when you want them?
- What kinds of study abroad programs are available? What percentage of students study abroad?
- Is there a foreign language requirement?
- How competitive is the student body? Do students work primarily for grades? What is the attitude toward working hard?
- What types of additional services are provided by the school at no additional cost to the student (i.e. tutoring, career & personal counseling, study skills workshops)?

STUDENT BODY:

- Where do students come from? Is this a diverse community?
- What percentage of students live on-campus? Is housing guaranteed for 4 years?
- What are the residence halls like? Are there "quiet" or "chemical-free" housing options?
- What type of student activities are available?
- Are there sororities/fraternities on campus? What impact do they have?
- What athletic programs are available? What impact do athletics have here?
- Are students politically active/aware?

SOCIAL LIFE:

- What are weekends like? Are there alternatives to the typical party scene? How prevalent is drug/alcohol use?
- What is the average age of the student body?
- How are roommates selected?
- What are some of the rules that govern campus and dorm life? Describe the resident assistant system.

COSTS & FINANCIAL AID:

- Is the college "need-blind" in admissions (i.e., are admissions decisions made without regard to financial aid status)?
- What percentage of need does the college typically meet?
- How do financial aid awards in subsequent years compare to those awarded in the student's first year? Will aid be adjusted if need increases?
- Is a tuition payment plan offered? What is the total cost
- Are there campus jobs available? Off-campus jobs?

POST-COLLEGE:

- What percent of students attend graduate school?
- What kind of career or placement services does the college offer?

GENERAL:

- What do you like best about your experience and education here?
- If you could attend another college now, where would you go, and why?
- Why did you choose this school? What others did you apply to?
- What kinds of kids do you think are happiest here? Which ones are least happy?

