

College Planning Night

Christina Hamilton, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Sacred Heart University

What we will cover

- How to search for colleges
- How to visit colleges
- Questions to ask college representatives
- Admissions requirements
- Application review
- Testing
- Financial Aid
- National Reply Date, May 1st

Types of Colleges

- Liberal Arts
- Universities
- Fine Arts Colleges
- Community Colleges
- Single-Sex Schools
- Historically Ethnic Schools
- Military academies
- Religious affiliated schools
- Technical Schools
- Public (funded by local and state governments – instate tuition)
- Private (funded by tuition, fees, endowments, other private sources)

College Fairs and Internet Research

- College Fairs: Hartford National, NEACAC @ SHU
- College Board
- Naviance
- Importance of using school websites

What to look for

- Geographic location
- Environment
- Surrounding community
- Nearby cities
- Distance from home and transportation options
- Size
- Religious affiliation
- Academic strengths / Major options
- Campus personality / Atmosphere (go see for yourself!)

The College Visit

- Visit as many schools as you can
- Try to visit when school is in session
- Check in with Admissions
- Contact anyone you know
- Try the food
- Go rogue
- Hold your thoughts, families!

What to Do on Campus

- Attend an admissions related event, but do explore on your own
- If campus is closed, leave information at Admissions/Visitor's center
 - Find out follow up visit options (interview, meeting, Accepted Student Days, shadowing)
- Get counselor contact information
- Stop a student, ask them what they think
- Take pictures
- Observe the timing and the atmosphere
 - It is a ghost town on a Saturday morning?

What to ask a college rep

- Enrollment / Acceptance rate
- Type of student that enrolls
- Retention rate
- Internships/placement rate
- Accelerated degrees
- Best time to visit
- Interviews
- Merit awards
- Accreditations/accolades
- Class size
- Student to teacher ratio
- TAs
- Deadlines
- Best time to apply
- How GPA is calculated
- Point of contact in admissions
- Support services
- School traditions

Food for Thought on the Drive Home

- Could you see yourself there?
- What did you like?
- What did you not like?
- What made you nervous?
- How did it compare to other schools?
- What could you see yourself getting involved in?
- How about this ride home?

Demonstrated Interest

- Introduce yourself (handshake optional)
- Attend college fairs and college visits to high schools
- Visit the school (required for SHU)
- Interview at top three
- Write a thank-you note after
- Check application status (if applicable)
- Attend accepted student event
- Let the colleges know where they stand – open up a spot for someone

The List

- Safety Schools
 - Student meets or exceeds all admissions criteria
- Match Schools – the Perfect Fit!
 - Student meets all or most admissions criteria
- Reach Schools
 - Student meets some admissions criteria
 - Exceptions: Ivy League, highly competitive, small institutions

How Many schools?

Differentiating Schools

- Acceptance Rate and Criteria...do your research!
- Naviance Graph (specific to high school)
- Enrollment trends at the colleges
- FIT – not just a bumper sticker!
 - Where was the student happiest?
 - Most at home?

The List...Expanded

- Label your schools
- Add in the school's Admissions Requirements
- Add in Admissions Deadlines
- Add in Admissions contacts
- Make a college calendar (overview at end)
- Make a to-do list

Share the List with Guidance

- List of schools
- List of requirements for schools
- Deadlines for all schools and relevant decision plans
 - Guidance deadlines

Starting the Application: Common App

- What schools use the Common App?
- Register
- Add schools
- Begin filling out...save and continue
- Hit submit and WAIT until confirmed

Writing the College Essay

- Brainstorm
 - Common App Prompts →
 - Ask friends
 - Unique story (not sob story!)
- First draft
- Have 3-5 people revise
- Second draft
- Have someone else take a look

1. Story Central to Identity
2. Failure
3. Challenged a belief or idea
4. Environment where content
5. Childhood to adulthood

- Examples

Ways to Apply

- Early Decision (binding)
- Restricted Early Action (one school only)
- Early Action
- Rolling Admissions
- Regular Decision
- NLI Contracts

Testing

- SAT
- ACT
- Subject tests
- TOEFL or supplemental tests for ESL or special programs
- Test Prep
- Test Optional
 - Supplemental essay or recommendation?

SAT

- Math
- Reading
- Writing

- 800 on each, 2400 total
- Often colleges disregard Writing
- www.collegeboard.com
- Aptitude Test
- Testing Dates and Deadlines

ACT

- English
 - Reading
 - Math
 - Science
 - Writing (Optional)
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- 1-36 Score
 - Performance Test, women historically score higher than on SAT
 - www.actstudent.org

How Colleges Review the Application

- Order: application, transcript, scores, recommendations, supplemental items
- Disciplinary Action
- Transcript: all four years, applying weight
- Specific programs: Math and Science grades
- Recommendations: when they stand out

How Colleges Read the Essay

- Timing and mindset
- Introduction is everything
- Grammatical errors
- School naming
- Impression of student as moving onto transcript
- Usually reviewed and then re-reviewed by a committee

What I look for...

- Application: background of family, activities, academics, essay
- Disciplinary Action?
- Transcript: challenging yet successful
- Dip in grades or particular area of struggle
- Recommendations

Trends in College Admissions

- Health Professions

- More students than ever applying into Nursing, Physician's Assistant, Physical Therapy

- Theater essays

- "Bright lights..."

- Failure essays

- Be weary of sameness

- Less men applying to college

Do and Don't...

- Do create a college email account
- Don't have ring-back tones or crass voicemails
- Do proofread emails to colleges
- Don't spell their college or contact name wrong (Scared Heart)
- Do visit first-choice schools more than once
- Do dress the part for interviews
- Don't be the parent we know better than the student!

While I am reviewing...Financial Aid

- Forms – FAFSA, CSS Profile, NCP
 - www.fafsa.ed.gov
 - www.collegeboard.com
- Deadlines, add to calendar
- Direct Costs- Tuition, Fees, Room& Board
- Indirect Costs –Travel, books and program fees.
- Estimated Family Contribution EFC: based on info from financial aid documents
 - Assets: Checking or savings accounts
 - Income: 2014 Federal Tax Return and W2s
- Types of aid- Need or non-need based grants, academic/athletic scholarships, local/independent awards, loans, Work-Study Hours

Stay Organized: Calendar Overview

- **April – August:** Start College List, sign up for SAT/ACT, Junior Open Houses/Summer Tours
- **September– January:** research, visit, submit applications
- **January-February:** submit Financial Aid forms
- **March:** compare Financial Aid Packages
- **April:** prepare for decision
 - Investigate loan options, discuss realities
 - Monitor grades
 - Revisit Colleges (Shadow Days, Overnights, Accepted Student Days, auditions, professor meetings)
- **May 1st: National Deposit Deadline**

Stay Calm

- Trust the guidance counselor calendar and system
- Keep an eye on mail/email
- Don't be alarmed by indecisiveness

Christina Hamilton

Director of Undergraduate Admissions

Sacred Heart University