

MAKING THE RIGHT MATCH

A Guidebook on College Selection and Planning for Christian Students
and Their Families

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Old Dominion Church Schools

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MAKING THE RIGHT MATCH

The college selection process is often an overwhelming and anxiety producing time for students and their families. Trying to sort through over 3500 potential college choices and find good matches for yourself is a major decision! For many of you, this will be the **first** major decision you have ever made and it will be quite challenging. The process demands that you be able to:

- ◆ Research
- ◆ Wade through masses of material
- ◆ Meet deadlines
- ◆ Be accurate and attentive to detail
- ◆ Be responsible
- ◆ Not procrastinate
- ◆ Fill out a lot of paperwork
- ◆ Be a team player
- ◆ Take some tough exams
- ◆ Interview and be interviewed
- ◆ Write creatively
- ◆ Many other character building activities

Of course, you get to do all of this during the **busiest** year of your life!!

There are four other factors which make finding the right college matches even more important. Dr. Howard Hendricks, professor at Dallas Theological Seminary stated that the first three of these four decisions are the most important decisions a person **ever** makes.

- (1) College is a tremendous opportunity to really find out who will be the **master** of your life! Being away from home, your parents, and your church while at the same time, often being faced with professors, students and courses which challenge your beliefs is a real faith builder. You will be forced to decide if your faith in Christ is genuine and if Christ is the Lord of your life.
- (2) College is the time in your life when you will probably determine your **mission** in life - What does God want me to do with my life? In what role will I serve Him?
- (3) For many students, college is also a time where God helps them find the answer to, "Who will be **my mate** and lifelong companion?"
- (4) Finally, it is a very **expensive** decision! Room, board, tuition and fees for students attending colleges and universities today can run anywhere from about \$15,000 to over \$100,000! (And this does not even include spending money, telephone costs, books, etc.) These costs demand that you choose a good match carefully. Transferring to another college, if you are unhappy, or changing majors can even add to the costs.

Therefore, **think for yourself**. It is too major of a decision to just go where your friends are going. Work hard and enjoy the process and you will make that **right** match!

**STATEMENT OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
IN THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS ***

As the student making application to colleges and universities, you have both rights and responsibilities.

YOUR RIGHTS INCLUDE:

1. Receiving full information from colleges and universities about their admissions, financial aid and scholarship policies.
2. Not responding to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until you have heard from all colleges and universities to which you have applied or by **May 1**, whichever comes earlier.

If you think your rights have been denied, you should contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date. If you find the results of this step unsatisfactory, you should ask your counselor to notify the President of your State or Regional Association of College Admissions Counselors.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

1. Making sure you understand the admissions, financial aid and scholarship policies of the colleges and universities where you plan to apply. This includes being aware of deadlines, restrictions, etc.
Before you apply, you should understand each college or university's policies and procedures regarding application fees, financial aid and scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure you understand each college or university's policies about deposits you may be required to make before you enroll, and the policy about when refunds of those deposits are available.
2. Completing and submitting all material which is required for application and meeting all deadlines.
3. Following the application procedures of your high school.
4. Notifying each college or university which admits you whether you are accepting or rejecting their offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have heard from all the colleges where you applied, or by **May 1**, whichever is earlier.
5. Confirming your intention to enroll and submitting a deposit to only one college or university by its required notification date, usually **May 1**.

If you are put on a waiting list by a college and are later admitted by that college, you may accept the offer and send a deposit to that college. However, you must immediately notify any other college where you indicated your intention to enroll, of your change in plans.

* The above is taken from the National Association of College Admissions Counselors brochure, **Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities in the College Admissions Process** and is endorsed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTS TWENTY FOUR COMMON QUESTIONS

- 1. Do all colleges require SAT or ACT tests?** Although there are a few four-year institutions which do **NOT** require college entrance tests, most require either the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) or the ACT (American College Test).
- 2. Is either the SAT or ACT acceptable?** With few exceptions, almost every college in America will accept scores from either of these tests.
- 3. How important are my scores in the admission process?** VERY! Colleges use your SAT/ACT scores along with your class rank and high school courses taken or in progress to make admission decisions. Many colleges also look carefully at the number of advanced courses you have taken, your involvement in extracurricular activities, the quality of your teacher/counselor recommendations, personal essays, as well as your SAT/ACT scores.
- 4. What is the purpose of the tests?** Since high school courses, the quality of instruction, and GPA/Ranking systems vary from school to school, these tests allow colleges to have a standard of comparison between you and other students across the country.
- 5. Should I take BOTH the SAT & ACT and how often? YES!** Although most students' SAT & ACT scores tend to be about the same, there are a significant number who score higher on one than the other. Often times, it is this higher score which gets them into their first choice college. Therefore, it is in your best interest, if you are not certain of your admissibility, to take each test at least once and see which one you scored the best on. Please note: The **best** time to take the SAT/ACT is during the spring or summer of your Junior year. **Bethel students are encouraged to take the March and May or June SAT and the April and June ACT.** If your highest score meets the college's requirement, relax and enjoy your senior year! If your score is not high enough, or if it is a good score, but you are applying for an academic scholarship and/or admission to a highly selective college, retake the SAT or ACT in October of your senior year.
- 6. What is the highest score possible?** The ACT composite score ranges from 1 to 36, and the SAT I Verbal/Math scores range from 200 to 800 with 1600 being the highest combined score.
- 7. How will my scores be used?** The importance and use of SAT/ACT scores varies from college to college. Obviously, some institutions, primarily state universities, place more emphasis on these scores. However, a national poll of admission directors each year indicates that the **most** important factors for admission directors are the number of college preparatory courses taken and the grades in these courses. Admission directors expect that a student's SAT/ACT scores will only corroborate his/her high school record. Students who do not test well should work hard to maximize all other areas of their high school record (quality of courses, GPA, rank, recommendations, extracurricular, essays, interview etc.) Students who test very well, but whose academic performance is less than stellar, need to make some **serious** changes or be viewed by an admissions office as a bright, but lazy and unmotivated student.
- 8. Do I need to take a "prep course"?** Great controversy exists over whether or not SAT/ACT

preparation courses improve student scores. Bethel recommends that **ALL** students prepare as much as possible for these tests. Since admission to college, as well as scholarship opportunities often hinges on your scores, these tests should **NOT** be taken lightly. Most college students who are preparing for the CPA exam, the law, medical or graduate school exams prepare for their exams and so should high school students.

Preparation Options:

1. Take a course sponsored by a local SAT/ACT test preparation agency (Stan Kaplan, Princeton Review, The Study Hall, Karen Dillard). Use a private tutor to work on your areas of weakness.
2. Use a private tutor to work on your areas of weakness
3. Purchase a software program and tutor yourself.
4. Purchase a SAT/ACT preparation book from a local bookstore and look through it.
5. Use the free preparation materials and sample tests provided by both the SAT and ACT available in the College Counseling Office.

Remember: If you want to be a better pianist, ball player or mathematician, you practice. Well guess what? If you want a better test score...practice. It is a foolish person who continues to do the same thing expecting different results!

9. What is the SAT II? Some highly selective institutions require students to take SAT II tests as well as the SAT or ACT. These tests are offered in fifteen different subject areas and last one hour. The tests are similar to taking a "mini" final exam of the subject. You can take up to three tests on a given test date and you register for the tests using the same materials and process as the SAT I. The cost for the SAT II is \$13.00 plus \$5.00 to \$10.00 per subject test taken. Once you have made a preliminary list of colleges, check and see if they require SAT II. If they do, the **best** time to take the tests is as close to completion of the course you have taken at school in the same subject area as the SAT II. (e.g. If you are required to take a SAT II Chemistry test and complete chemistry in your Junior year, then take the test in June. However, if you will be taking more chemistry your Senior year, then wait and take it in November or December of your Senior year.) Note: SAT II scores can be "hidden," allowing you to first receive your scores and later releasing them to a college. Make **sure** you get them released early enough to meet all admission deadlines. "See SAT Registration Bulletin for specifics) Also, most colleges which require SATII tests use them in the admission process, so take a look at a sample test in the College Board's Official Guide to SAT II: Subject Tests and make certain you are prepared. If you are a little "rusty," seek help from a teacher.

10. How much do these tests cost and how do I sign up?

- A. The cost of the SAT is \$26.00 and the ACT is \$25.00.
- B. Registration deadlines range from four to five weeks prior to each test date. Both the ACT and SAT offer students a late registration deadline, however there is an additional late fee of \$20.00 for the ACT and \$15.00 for the SAT.
- C. Only the SAT allows you to test "standby if you miss **both** deadlines. You may "walk-into" an to an SAT test center and test, but only if they have room. Note: the cost for this is \$30.00 **plus** your basic \$21.50 test fee, so avoid this if at all possible!! Plan on arriving at 7:30 A.M. so you can be first on the wait list.
- E. Please choose a test center that is convenient for you. If you are given a center you have never been to, try and drive to it before the test date or get specific directions so you will not get lost.
- F. Registration materials are available in the College Counseling Office. Each time you register for an ACT, you must fill out the entire form. However, once you have registered for the SAT, additional tests may be registered for by telephone. This service is provided seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. You must have a credit card. (See the SAT bulletin for instructions.)

G. Students may also register for SAT/ACT on-line.

SAT: www.collegeboard.org ACT:<http://www.act.org>

- 11. What is a school code number?** You will be asked to provide your high school code number on almost every form you fill out related to the college process. Our school code number is _____. Be sure and write it down and put it in your wallet/purse so you will always have it.
- 12. Is it a good idea to “hide” my SAT/ACT scores until I see how I do?** When you register for the SAT/ACT you are given the opportunity to have your scores sent to four colleges (SAT)/three colleges (ACT) as part of your basic testing fee. Scores may be sent to more colleges at this same time for an additional fee. A common question asked by students is "Should I 'hide' or not report my scores until I know how I did?" The answer to this question is many times, **NO**. It is usually to your advantage to report scores to colleges of interest each time you register. Why? SAT - You **cannot** hide your SAT scores from a college! If you take it four times and go from 400 to 1600, and then report your fourth score of 1600, the college will see **ALL** your scores. ACT - You can "hide" your scores as ACT's policy is to only report the one you choose to send. Therefore, following the above scenario, you could choose only to send your 36 and that is the **only** score a college would see. However, again, **IT IS ALMOST ALWAYS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE TO REPORT YOUR SCORES!** Hint: Make sure, when you finally decide to which colleges you want to apply, they have your **highest** score. eg. If you took the SAT three times and your third score was your best, but you only reported your first and second scores to WeWata U., WeWanta U. does **NOT** have your highest score.
- 13. What do I do if the college I want to attend is not one of the schools to which I originally reported my scores?** SAT/ACT - Additional score reports may be requested for additional fees by filling out the proper form available in the College Counseling Office. Rush reporting is also available by phone for both the SAT and ACT. (See Registration Bulletins for details.)
- 14. Should I guess?** ACT - Yes, always! You are **not** penalized for guessing, so never leave **any** blank. SAT - Yes, but **only** if you can eliminate at least two or more of the answers as incorrect. Educated guessing is encouraged since only 1/4 or 1/3 of a point is subtracted for a wrong answer. **NEVER** randomly or haphazardly guess on the SAT. **Note:** It is better to leave an item unanswered because you are **NOT** graded off for questions left blank.
- 15. What type of identification do I need when I take these tests?** Students are always required to bring official **photo** ID (driver's license) with them to gain entrance to either the SAT or ACT. If you do **NOT** have a driver's license, you must check with your counselor **before** the test date to discuss other approved ID forms. They are also listed in SAT/ACT registration bulletins and on your admission ticket.
- 16. How will I know where I will be taking the test?** You will receive an admission ticket in the mail which tells you at which school you will be testing, what time to report, and where the test is located. If you have not received your admission ticket by the Wednesday preceding the Saturday test, contact your counselor immediately.
- 17. Can I use a Calculator?** ACT - Yes. SAT - Yes, any four function, scientific or graphing calculator is acceptable.
- 18. How long will it take to get back my scores?** It takes about three weeks to get your SAT/ACT scores. Colleges usually receive them about one week earlier. If you need your scores "rushed" to a college, the SAT does provide a rush grading service which cuts about two weeks off the normal time. Note: Your scores will **NOT** be given to you over the phone!
- 19. Can I see my test after I receive my scores?** SAT - Yes. ACT - Yes. For additional fees ranging from

\$10.00 - \$20.00, such service as the actual test questions, your answers and an answer key are available. See the SAT/ACT registration bulletins for specific information.

- 20. Can I change my test center or test date?** Yes! For specific details, see registration bulletins.
- 21. Can I switch from the SAT I to the SAT II?** Yes! By using the SAT's telephone registration service, you can do so, but it must be done two and one half weeks before the test date.
- 22. Can I get my ACT/SAT scores over the phone?** No, due to the need for confidentiality.
- 23. If I cannot afford to pay for the SAT/ACT, can I obtain financial help?** Yes, both testing agencies give fee waivers under certain conditions. A special form must be filled out - see your college counselor for details.
- 24. Can I cancel my SAT/ACT scores after I have already taken the test?** Yes! Either tell the center supervisor the day of the test you want to cancel your scores or notify the testing agency by the first Wednesday (SAT) (ACT) following your test. SAT requires the request in writing, ACT allows the request to be handled over the phone, but charges \$10.00. See Registration Bulletins for details.

The National 2003 - 2004 SAT Testing Calendar

TEST DATE	TEST	Registration Deadline	Late Registration
October 11, 2003	SAT I and SAT II	September 9, 2003	September 13, 2003
November 1, 2003	SAT I and SAT II	September 26, 2003	October 8, 2003
December 6, 2003	SAT I and SAT II	October 30, 2003	November 12, 2003
January 24, 2003	SAT I and SAT II	December 22, 2003	December 31, 2003
April 5, 2003	SAT I only	February 28, 2004	March 12, 2004
May 1, 2004	SAT I and SAT II	March 25, 2004	April 7, 2004
June 5, 2004	SAT I and SAT II	May 2, 2004	May 12, 2004

The National 2003 – 2004 ACT Testing Calendar

TEST DATE	Regular Registration Postmark Deadline	Late Registration Postmark Deadline
September 27, 2003	August 22, 2003	September 5, 2003
October 25, 2003	September 19, 2003	October 3, 2003
December 13, 2003	November 7, 2003	November 20, 2003

February 7, 2004	January 2, 2004	January 16, 2004
April 3, 2004	February 27, 2004	March 12, 2004
June 12, 2003	May 7, 2003	May 21, 2003

WHAT ARE COLLEGES REALLY LOOKING FOR?

1. College Prep Course Work

At Bethel, your course load required to graduate will meet the standards of selective colleges, but you will need to take all of the math, science and foreign language courses you can if applying to highly selective institution.

- Most colleges are well aware of the tradition of academic excellence at Bethel. If the college is not aware, we send a Bethel Christian School Profile with each transcript.
- Complete senior grades are not available for evaluation, but your course load is. Do not slack up during your senior year, either in grades or in the level of academic course load. Advanced or AP courses are taken seriously by colleges as an indication of your motivation.

2. Grades

Your junior and first semester senior grades are the most important. However, remember that your G.P.A. begins accumulating in ninth grade.

- Good grades in all subjects show a commitment to work, and an interest in a variety of subjects.
- A few poor grades should not be reason to lower your goals.
- Significant improvement in your performance, no matter how late, will have a positive effect on your chances of acceptance.

3. SATI, SATII or ACT Scores

A good way to determine if your scores are a good match is to determine the college's middle 50% range of scores. If you fall above or in this range your chances of acceptance are good.

4. Class Rank

Your class rank is an indication of how well you did academically in comparison to your classmates.

5. Counselor/Teacher Recommendations - (see recommendation section)

6. Extracurricular Activities - Committed and dedicated involvement in a few activities is usually better than a little involvement in numerous activities. Colleges know you only have so much time, so

find your niches and commit to them.

7. **Personal Interview** - Interviews are not required by most colleges. Where they are, they are usually given local alumnus. Be on time, be polite, relax and do not be afraid to be yourself. Come prepared to ask as well as answer questions.

Options that can help:

- 1.) Leadership activities are of interest to most colleges
- 2.) Significant community service activities are favorably looked upon.
- 3.) Develop a resume and mail it along with your application.
- 4.) If you are a gifted artist, writer, musician or athlete, let the appropriate college coach or professor know you applying. Send a cover letter along with your portfolio, video or cassette tape etc. to the professor or coach, **not**, the admissions director.
- 5.) **Cover letter** - Do not be afraid to write the Director of Admissions stating why you want to attend the college. Take this opportunity to explain anything in your record you believe he/she may be concerned about. Just make certain your letter is well written.
- 6.) Alumni connections - Your parents, siblings or close family friends.

Activities that can hurt:

- 1.) Blowing off your senior year and taking a light load.
- 2.) Continued lack of effort in your grades.
- 3.) Great test scores and low grades.
- 4.) Poor grooming, poor manners and/or an overall lack of interest in a college when visiting a campus.
- 5.) Poorly written essays or essays written in bad taste.
- 6.) Missing deadlines.
- 7.) Sloppy and illegible applications.

GENERAL TYPES OF COLLEGES, SERVICE ACADEMIES & ROTC PROGRAMS

One way to begin to narrow down college options is to think about the different types of colleges, and which type most matches your needs and interests. What do you think the pros and cons are of each of the following types of institutions?

The Private Liberal Arts College/University - Institutions in our area:

PROS	CONS
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8

The Christian Liberal Arts College/University -Institutions in our area or that alums have attended:

1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The Large Research University (Public or Private) - Institutions in our area:

PROS	CONS
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8

The State Regional University - Institutions in our area:

PROS	CONS
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4

Ivy League - Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia, Brown, Cornell, Penn, Dartmouth

PROS	CONS
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The Public Ivys - University of California at Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz; Miami University of Ohio; University of Michigan at Ann Arbor; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; University of Texas at Austin; University of Vermont at Burlington; University of Virginia at Charlottesville; William and Mary College of Virginia.

The Two-Year College (Public or Private) - Two year colleges in our area:

PROS	CONS
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6

Service Academies

Director of Cadet Admissions U. S. Air Force Academy Colorado Springs, Co 80840-5651 (719)-472-2520	Director of Admissions U. S. Coast Guard Academy New London, CT 06320 (213)-444-8500	Admissions Office U. S. Military Academy West Point, NY 10996-1797 (914)938-4041-1 (800)822-2769	U.S. Naval Acad. Attention: Candidate Guidance Office Annapolis, MD 21402-5018 (410) 267-4336 1(800)638-9156	Admissions Office U. S. Merchant Marine Acad. Kings Point, NY 11024 (516)753-5391 1(800)732-6267
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1. Service Academies prepare highly qualified young men and women for careers as professional officers in the military service.

2. Academy curriculum consists of academic, military, and athletic programs, as well as, extracurricular activities. Engineering and science topics are heavily stressed.
3. All tuition costs, room and board, medical and dental care are paid for by the government.
4. Each cadet or midshipman receives a monthly salary to pay for uniforms, textbooks, and personal expenses.
5. Obligation: Minimum 5 years of military service following graduation, depending on the academy and student's training.
6. To become a candidate for appointment, one must:
 - a. Have basic eligibility (U.S. citizen, between 17 and 26, etc.);
 - b. Qualify academically;
 - c. Obtain a nomination (Coast Guard Academy excluded) Note: Congressman and Senator may make ten nominations for each vacancy. He may have four cadets at each academy at any one time. The Vice-President also may make nominations.
 - d. Meet prescribed medical and physical standards (vision standards are usually rigorous, although waivers are available).
7. Students interested in a Service Academy should consult the guidance counselor ideally in January of their junior year and submit a Pre-candidate Questionnaire in the spring. An initial application for a Congressional (or other) nomination must be made in the spring of their junior year and returned to your nominator usually by November 1.

ROTC trains students to become officers in the United States Army. This instruction provides students the potential for choosing either a civilian or military career while pursuing a college education.

The ROTC Scholarship Program is an excellent way to receive substantial financial assistance while pursuing a college education.

Example: Army Scholarship Program

1. Army scholarships are offered in categories of 2, 3, and 4 years.
2. These scholarships pay for all tuition costs, books, fees, and provide \$100.00 monthly, and up to \$1,000 for each year the scholarship is in effect.
3. Arbitrary qualifications to become a scholarship finalist are:
 - a. Top 25% of class
 - b. Minimum SAT score of 1000 or ACT score of 23
 - c. Extracurricular, leadership, and athletic activities
4. All scholarship winners are granted a commission as a military officer upon graduation, and are obligated for four years of active duty upon graduation.
5. For a non-scholarship student, the first two years of Army ROTC have no obligation.

There are a variety of ROTC programs available to the college student. Brochures covering the complete ROTC programs are available in the College Resource Center. The Navy and Air Force have equivalent programs (NROTC and AFROTC), although not as many colleges as the Army. A list of colleges which have ROTC programs can be found in the College Resource Center.

U.S. Air Force U.S. Air Force ROTC (972) 931-5843 Application deadline: November	U.S. Army: U.S. Army Recruiting Office 409 E. Spring Valley Richardson, TX 75081 (972) 231-5191 Application deadline: August	U.S. Navy: Call to request <u>written</u> information only: 1-800-327-NAVY Call for <u>answers to ROTC questions:</u> District Recruiting Office 1565 W. Mockingbird Ln #500 Dallas, TX 75235(214) 688-0760 or 0762 Application deadline: September	U.S. Marines: Call for information & referral to other offices for specific information: 1-800-MARINES Application deadline: November
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SOUL SEARCHING

Before you begin to make a list of colleges, it is best to spend some quality time thinking truthfully about yourself. Rather than make a list of colleges you think you can get into or that will be acceptable to your friends, answer the following questions regarding what makes you unique, what your needs are, and about what **type** of environment brings out the best in you. Once you have a good feel for the type of college environment you are looking for, narrowing down your options and making a great match is much easier. If you skip this process, your odds of picking a good match are slim. **Think for yourself and pray for the Lord's leadership and realize that what is right for you may not at all be what is right for your friends or siblings.**

1. **Why** do you really want to go to college?
2. **How** academically competitive are you? Do you thrive under pressure? Do you choke? Are you not even academic? Are you self-motivated or do you need close personal attention?
3. **Do** you like "being known" or is there more freedom in being anonymous?
4. **Do** you function best in a place where everyone is "like you" or do you like diversity in a student body? How much diversity have you really experienced?
5. **Do** you know exactly what you want to major in? Do you have a strong sense of a calling in a specific area?
6. **If** your faith is important to you, would it be more exhilarating to be in a Christian or secular school? What type of environment would help you grow vs. failing in your Christian walk?
7. **Do** you like to have lots of options or does that only confuse you? Can you handle frustration and rejection? Can you persist without giving up?
8. **Do** you like the thought of being near family and friends or does being far away seem better to you?
9. **How** do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date?
10. **What** kind of person would you like to become? Which of your gifts and talents would you like to develop?
11. **What** would you most like to change about yourself? Why?
12. **What** values are truly important to you (spiritual, political, financial)? How will your college environment affect these values?
13. **Are** you worried about being homesick and/or making new friends?

NARROWING MY OPTIONS

You have just given some serious thought as to **why** you want to attend college and what "type" of overall college environment you think will bring out the best in you. You are now ready to address some more practical concerns which will continue to help you move to a **much** shorter list of good college options which meet your specific criteria. Please answer each of the following questions with the appropriate response or DM (Does not Matter).

QUESTIONS

YOUR RESPONSE

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Do you want to attend a 4-year or 2-year college? | _____ |
| 2. Do you want a co-ed or single-sex school? | _____ |
| 3. Do you want to attend a small (500-3000), medium (3001-10,000), or large (10,000-50,000) college or university? | _____ |
| 4. Do you want to attend college in the: N.E. - E. - S.E. - S. Central - Midwest - S.W. - W. - N.W. - DM | _____ |
| 5. Do you want to live away from home? Far away?
Not too far (1 day drive) Close (0-4 hours) | _____ |
| 6. Do you want to attend a college where most students are more like you, or one where there is a broad range of diversity? | _____ |
| 7. Where do you want your college to be located? (Suburban Campus in a large city, urban campus in a large city, medium size city, rural, small city, doesn't matter)? | _____ |
| 8. Do you want the college to have an outstanding program in a certain major? If so, in what major (ministry, engineering, etc.) | _____ |
| 9. Do you want to attend a private, state school or military school? | _____ |
| 10. How academically competitive should my college be? | _____ |
| 11. Do you want to attend a Christian liberal arts college? | _____ |
| 12. Is the cost of room, board, and tuition a major factor? | _____ |
| 13. What type of housing do you want -- co-ed, single sex, on campus, off campus? | _____ |
| 14. Is scholarship money or financial aid a necessity in order for you to attend college? | _____ |
| 15. Must the college you attend have an intercollegiate sports program in which you can participate? If so, which sport? | _____ |
| 16. Must the college you attend have an intercollegiate sports program of which you can be a spectator? If yes, which sports? | _____ |
| 17. How important is the social life on the campus? (extremely, very, | |

mildly, not a priority)? _____

18. Do you want the social life to revolve around the Greek system? _____

19. Must the college you attend have certain student activity groups on its campus? (e.g., fraternities, sororities, political groups, student government, Christian organizations, intramural, etc.) If yes, which one(s)? _____

20. Must there be a strong Bible teaching church for you to attend while at college? _____

21. Other priorities? (Study abroad, etc.) _____

YOUR RECORD

The third and final step in thinking through the types of colleges which best fit you is to realistically appraise your academic record. This in turn will help you look for colleges that are a good academic fit for you and that your chances of acceptance are good.

1. What is your cumulative grade point average? _____ (GPA)
What is your class rank? _____ (Rank)
2. What has been the level of difficulty of your high school preparation? (<u>rigorous</u> , <u>moderate</u> , <u>minimal</u>) _____
3. What are your <u>highest</u> college test scores? _____ (ACT)
_____ (SAT)
4. How active have you been in extracurricular activities? (<u>many/varied with much involvement</u> , <u>some involvement</u> , <u>little involvement</u>) _____
5. How strong can you expect your recommendations to be? (<u>very strong</u> , <u>good</u> , <u>average</u> , <u>poor</u>) _____

THE SEARCH BEGINS !

Now that you have thought through first, what kind of college atmosphere will bring out the best in you, second, what specific things you are looking for in a college, and third, how strong your overall academic record is, you are ready to begin the **exciting** part - searching for **great** matches! Going from over **3500** possibilities to a short list of 1-8 is really not as overwhelming as it sounds, especially if you have taken the time to work through the previous three exercises. The following steps will guide you through this process:

STEP 1 Pray - Commit your future to the Lord and ask Him throughout this whole process to guide you through His Holy Spirit, your counselor and most importantly your parents. Work closely with your parents and keep the communication lines open.

STEP 2 Making the Long List - Go to the College Resource Center and begin to search for colleges which meet your criteria. You can use any of these resources to help you make your long list.

A. Use the College Board's Index of Majors or the index to majors found in Peterson's or Barron's guides. These indexes will give you the names of which colleges have your major. List any that meet your criteria.

B. Use the Internet and computer software programs available in the College Resource Center to search for colleges that meet your criteria. **Note:** They are far from infallible so run them several times changing your emphases.

C. Use college ranking books to provide you with colleges listed under your major. **Note:** These books are often quite biased and many fine colleges are **NOT** listed and some that are may **NOT** be good choices, so, use these lists cautiously.

D. Use guidebooks which provide you with descriptions of certain types of colleges - Christian colleges, the most competitive colleges, colleges for students in the Arts, colleges with athletics, etc.

STEP 3 Shortening the Long List - Your list is probably much too long at this point. It would be impossible for you to visit, research and apply to all of these possibilities. Plus, many are probably **NOT** good matches for you either. Therefore, you must take your list and begin to look more critically at each college. Does it **REALLY** meet your criteria? Is it too far away, too expensive, too big, too small, too competitive etc.? Next, begin to look at guidebooks such as Fiske's, Princeton Review, Peterson's, Barron's, or the College Board and **read** more in depth about each college. Also, a college's viewbook and video can also be helpful. Remember that you are trying to **eliminate** colleges! **Note:** As you make your list, be sure you have at least one "safety" college and several "strong possibilities." Also, do not be afraid to have a "dream or stretch" college on your list. If you do not try, you will never have the opportunity!!!

STEP 4 Your Counselor - Make an appointment to go over your college criteria, which colleges you have eliminated and ask for suggestions of colleges you may have overlooked.

STEP 5 Request Information - Use the sample letter following this section to request materials from the colleges remaining on your list.

STEP 6 Visit - At this point, the only way to learn more is to visit the campus if at all possible. (See Campus Visit section).

STEP 7 Attend NCCSA's annual **College Day Fair Program** and meet with admissions counselors when they visit our campus. Attend local receptions and consider going to the special "Preview" programs many colleges offer.

STEP 8 The Final Visit - BE SURE you spend one or two nights in a dorm and visit classes for a day at the colleges on the top of your list. Often God will use this final visit to let you know if this is a good match for you.

GO FOR IT ! ! ! ! !

SAMPLE LETTER TO COLLEGE FOR ADMISSION INFORMATION
(It is preferred that correspondence be typed.)

Your Street Address
Your City, State & ZIP
Date

Director of Admission
Name of College
City, State & ZIP

Dear Admission Officer:

I am a senior at Bethel Christian School, and am interested in obtaining information about your Institution. I currently have a ____ cumulative G.P.A. and scored a ____ on my PSAT/SAT/ACT. My primary high school activities are:

I would appreciate your sending me the following:

- (1) An application for admission
- (2) Special information related to (your special interest)
- (3) A viewbook
- (4) Housing information
- (5) A video
- (6) Scholarship/financial aid information

Sincerely,

(your signature)

Your Name Typed

COLLEGE QUESTIONS

When visiting a college, remember, you are the customer and should expect to have your questions answered fully and accurately. Beware of "vague or general" answers to questions! Use the following questions when taking a tour, meeting with an admissions officer or a professor. Remember, be polite, but do not be afraid to ask hard and probing questions.

Name of Institution: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Toll Free #: _____

Type of Institution: Private or State _____ Co-ed: **Yes/No** Degrees Awarded: Bachelors _____

Masters _____ Doctorates _____ Regional Accreditation: _____

Departmental Accreditation: _____ Total Enrollment: _____ Undergraduate Enrollment: _____

% of Faculty with doctorates: _____ Do Graduate Assistants Teach? **Yes/No** If **yes**, which courses _____

Calendar (Sem./Qtr., etc.): _____ Setting: _____ Men: _____%

Women: _____% % of Minorities: _____ State Residents: _____% Acceptance Rate: _____%

% Accepted Who Enrolled: _____ Average Age of Student Body: _____

SAT Averages: _____ SAT Range: _____

% of Freshmen Who Return Soph. Year: _____ % Who Graduate _____ % of Graduates who go on to Grad. Sch.: _____ % Medical Sch.: _____ % Law School: _____

Entrance Requirements: High School Coursework - _____

Summer School/Conditional Acceptance?: _____

SAT Required? _____ ACT Required? _____ SAT II Tests? _____ If yes, which ones?: _____

Interview Required: **Yes/No** Level of Entrance Difficulty: _____ Application Deadline(s): _____

Early Decision: _____ Regular: _____ \$\$Expenses (Total Room, Board, Tuition): _____

Financial Aid: Financial Aid Application Deadline: _____ % Applying _____

% Receiving _____ Ave. Amt. Given: _____ Breakdown of Amt. Given: _____

Special Programs of Interest: Orientation Program? _____ Study Skills Program? _____

Writing Lab? _____ Tutoring? _____ Intramurals? _____ Advising System? _____ Other? _____

Housing: Are freshmen required to live on campus? **Yes/No** Is there an off-campus housing

office? _____ % of student body living on campus: _____ Dorm Options: _____
Are you a commuter campus? _____

Personal Safety: What security measures has your college taken to reduce crime? _____
Have you had any sexual assaults on your campus during the last 3 years? _____ Is it safe to
walk alone on campus after dark? _____

Campus Life: % of Students in Greek System: _____ Can freshmen have cars on campus? **Yes/No**
Is on-campus parking a problem? _____ Transportation Available: On Campus? _____
To/from Airport? _____ Nearest Large City: _____
Largest Lecture Class Size: _____ Average Size of Freshman Class: _____
Athletics: _____

Academics: Most Popular Majors: _____
Strongest Majors: _____ Weaker Majors: _____
Number of Majors: _____ Unique/Unusual Majors/programs: _____
Traditional majors which your institution does not offer: _____

Other: Are internships/experience based education programs available? _____
Are there any honors program? _____ If so, in what areas? _____
What is atmosphere/personality of campus? _____
What makes this college unique or special? _____

Students who apply at your college also apply at what other colleges/universities: _____
How would you describe the "typical" student on your campus? _____

Professor Questions:

If I declare this subject as my major, could you walk me through the major steps/requirements I
will go through from my freshman year to graduation? _____

How many seniors currently are in this major? _____ Of last year's seniors how
many are able to find a job in their area? _____ What does your college do to help
graduates find jobs? _____ Are there
major differences in how this major is taught at different colleges? _____ If yes, what

makes this college unique? _____

Tell me about your faculty - How many have a Ph.D.? _____ What % are full time? _____

Any unusual backgrounds or significant experiences? _____

Are you satisfied with your facilities? _____

Do you anticipate any changes in the major? _____

Questions to Ask College Students:

1. Has the college lived up to your expectations?
2. Was anything surprising to you?
3. What is distinctive about the college? What are its strengths/Weakness?
4. Are there any particular tensions on campus among students?
5. If you were to do it all over again, would you still choose this college?
6. Which dorms are good places to live in?
7. How easy is it for freshmen to get the classes they want? Sophomores?

HOW TO PLAN A CAMPUS VISIT

The campus visit is one of the most important activities in finding that **right match**. It is an absolute **MUST** to get out and visit colleges and you need to begin no later than the spring of your junior year. Most colleges provide campus tours for students and their families preceded or followed by a short information session on admission policies. Obviously, the **best** time to visit is when college is in session, especially if visiting a small private college. However, summers, too, are a great time. Many colleges offer special programs for students where you come on campus, stay in the dorm, meet students, professors and Deans etc. While these are wonderful opportunities, they are not as realistic as day to day life will be on that campus. Be sure and use your "**College Research Questions**" when visiting and do not be afraid to ask the tough questions.

Initial Visit - (Window Shopping)

- (1) Call and make an appointment for a tour - Do not just show up!
- (2) Request an information session with an admissions counselor following the tour to talk about your record and ask special questions about the college.
- (3) Request an appointment with a professor in a major in which you are interested.
- (4) Request appointments with any other campus officers from which you need information (Athletics, Housing, Financial Aid/Scholarships, Honors Programs, etc.).

Formal Visit - (Making the Purchase)

This type of visit usually comes during your senior year after you have narrowed down your choices. When you visit, you will want to spend one or two nights in the dorm, attend classes for a day and speak with students. "**Is this the best match for me**" is what you are trying to determine.

Bethel Christian School College Visitation Policy:

Juniors and seniors are allowed two excused absences each school year for college visits. However, he or she must follow certain procedures:

- (1) **One week before** the college visit, the student must bring a note from his or her parents concerning the visit. This note is given to the upper school secretary.
- (2) The **student** is **responsible** for bringing an office form to all of his teachers telling of his or her excused absence, and each teacher must sign the form.
- (3) The **student** is **responsible** for doing all homework and taking any tests before leaving for the college visit. The student is also expected to be caught up on all his work by the day he or she returns to class.
- (4) Your five grace days may be added as well for out of state trips.

HOW TO GO THROUGH THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Once you have narrowed your list down to your top four or five choices, you are now ready to formally make application. Remember, it is **YOUR** responsibility, not your parents or counselor, to apply for college. Be sure to meet with your counselor in the late spring of your junior year and early fall of the senior year to work through this process.

- (1) **Secure materials** - Start early! Write the institution's Admissions Office and request a video, viewbook, catalog, application, housing information, and other information of interest to you. Use the sample form letter provided for you in this section. **Note: Many colleges now provide their applications on computer discs!**
- (2) Upon receipt of materials, **READ** through the application instructions carefully and make a **"TO DO"** list of what must be done.

Check for:

- Teacher recommendation form
- Separate principal/counselor recommendation form
- Required essay(s)
 - Financial aid request form
 - Transcript

If the application is all one form, check to see if there are spaces or sections for the counselor to fill out.

- (3) **Request recommendations** - While you are working on your application, give proper forms or information required to those who will be completing them for you (teachers, counselor, etc.). Be sure to allow at least two to three weeks lead time in order to assure your recommendations will be done on time! (Follow the procedures given in the "Recommendation" section in this book.)
- (4) **Photocopy your application materials** - Use photocopies to practice filling out the application rough draft.
- (5) **Be attentive to detail** - Read carefully the directions for the entire form before filling out any of it!! Respond to each question in an appropriate manner. Be thorough, concise, accurate, and neat. If it says type, **type!** If it says use black ink, use **black!**
- (6) **Take time to reflect** - Do not fill out your application form in front of the TV set or late at night. Select a time and place which will be conducive and appropriate to the seriousness of the endeavor. After filling out the photocopy, let it "sit", review it, and only then, complete the original.
- (7) **Essay** - Spend a great amount of time on your essay, if your application requires essays. A good essay will not necessarily result in your acceptance, but a poor one could keep you out. Ask your recommenders to read your essay and tell you what they think.
- (8) **Seek advice** - Prior to filling out the original form, it would be in your best interest to submit your practice copy to the scrutiny of your parents, a teacher, or the guidance counselor. Errors and mistakes in judgment are most easily caught and corrected at this stage.
- (9) **Type your application** - It is in your best interest to present the admissions committee with a neat document. Remember, your application is speaking for you --and it cannot respond to questions.

Accordingly, make your presentation impressive.

- (10) **Observe etiquette** - Ask permission to use a person as a reference, allow sufficient time for all teachers and others to write your recommendations, and -- above all -- expect two to three week's delay from the time you turn in your transcript and recommendation requests to the office to the time when they are sent. A failure to give sufficient lead time will result in the school's portion possibly **NOT BEING SUBMITTED ON TIME**.
- (11) **Final photocopy** - Having completed your application, photocopy it in case it gets lost.
- (12) Mail your application along with all other required materials by "Certified Mail" with a "Return Request." The cost is well worth it in terms of knowing that your application has arrive safely.
- (13) **Transcript requests** - Once you have mailed your application(s), make sure you come by the Guidance Office and request your transcript(s) be sent to the colleges to which you have applied. A transcript cannot be sent unless you sign the release form.
- (14) **Mid-year reports** - Some colleges require a 7th semester, mid-senior year report to be filled out by the counselor. If the college you selected does, please drop this form off at the Guidance Office anytime before January 1. Your transcript and test scores will be automatically sent.
- (15) Once you have made your final decision, write thank-you letters to all those colleges which accepted you, letting them know you have decided to attend elsewhere.
- (16) Take time to thank those teachers and employers who wrote recommendations for you. They will be happy to hear about your final decision.
- (17) Complete the necessary form for the Guidance Office to make sure the office knows where your eighth semester transcript is to be sent. (Forms will be given to you in May, and eighth semester and final senior grades and certification of graduation will be sent in June to the college you plan to attend.

Please note: All colleges grant admission on the basis of your satisfactory completion of all high school course work. Colleges have been known to deny admission to students whose eighth semester grades indicate a serious lack of effort.

HOW TO GET GOOD COLLEGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Student Guidelines for Seeking College Recommendations:

Trinity provides an official school recommendation for each senior. It is the responsibility of the student to provide the College Counselor with the appropriate forms and other college-provided information well in advance of the deadline. Make sure you have turned in our "**Senior Questionnaire**" before requesting a counselor recommendation. Also, the student must read the portions of the form addressed to him, and follow the instructions carefully, including signing the Buckley Amendment. Trinity recommends you always sign the waiver so that you do not give a college a negative view of yourself.

In addition, you may be required to submit other recommendations. Choose a person who, not only knows about your ability and personal qualities, but someone who you really like and you feel likes you. Remember, a bad recommendation can really hurt, a generic "**He is a nice guy and a good student**" probably will not help, but a strong recommendation from someone who knows you well can make a positive difference. The following sources can be used for recommendations:

- A. Teachers from core subjects - English, math, history, science or foreign language should be your **primary** recommenders.
- B. Teachers in other subjects such as the Fine Arts. Note: If you are applying for an Arts scholarship then this teacher would be one of your primary recommenders.
- C. A coach or sponsor.
- D. An outside adult who has worked with you and supervised you in an activity, e.g., youth pastor, employer.
- E. A student at the college who knows you or an alumnus of the college who you or your parents know well.

Use the following guidelines when asking for a recommendation:

- A. Give the recommender **at least** five (5) working days of lead time.
- B. Provide a stamped envelope with the college address on it and a "post it" note reminding the recommender when it is due.
- C. If you have a resume, be sure and give it to the recommender.
- D. Be sure and let the recommender know if you will be requesting further letters so he/she can keep it on the computer.
- E. Follow-up with a thank-you note.
- F. **Politely** check back with them, before the deadline, to make sure your letter was mailed.

HOW TO USE A COLLEGE CATALOG

(Also known as the book most students never check out until it is too late!)

Once you enter college, most of you will become very familiar with your college's catalog. It tells you exactly what you must do to graduate - it is the "**rulebook**" the college must live by. You may be surprised to know that it also has great value for you **NOW** as you narrow your choices looking for the right match. Make **sure** the catalog is current! Note: Trinity's College Resource Center keeps current catalogs on 300 of the most popular colleges. Here are a few good ways to put it to use:

- _ Check out admission requirements and deadlines.
- _ Check out housing options, rules and regulations.
- _ Check out the majors in your areas of interest. Does the college even have your major? How is it described and what options are available?
- _ Check out how many professors are in your major; how many are full time have a Ph.D.? Look at their academic credentials.
- _ Check out how many and the types of courses are available in your major. **THIS IS CRITICAL!!** There can be significant differences in the number of courses offered between colleges. Also, even though two colleges may offer the same major (e.g., communications) one college's major might be much more experience "**hands on**" oriented versus a more "**theoretical textbook**" approach.
- _ Check out the college "Core Requirements". What does everyone who attends **have** to take to graduate. Will you **have** to take Trig/PreCal or Foreign Language?

These are the basics and there is much more! Do not be surprised - be a wise consumer and know what you are getting into **before** you enroll.

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY SURVIVE AN INTERVIEW

A few colleges require an interview as part of the admissions process. If the institution is not near your home, the admissions department will most likely arrange for you to be interviewed by an alumnus of the college who lives near you. If the institution requires an interview, it takes the interview seriously. It is an opportunity to "sell" one's self in person.

TIPS:

1. Arrange for the interview ahead of time and be on time. Do not try to "drop in".
2. Familiarize yourself with the college catalog.
3. Be aware of current events.
4. Be prepared to answer questions about your high school record, SAT/ACT scores and any discrepancies between the two. If there is a discrepancy, bring it up before they do!
5. Be prepared to explain why you feel the college might be suitable for you **and** how you might contribute to the college.
6. Be prepared to discuss your strengths and your weaknesses.
7. Be honest; do not pretend to know things you have no knowledge of.
8. Make sure you know your interviewer's name, and use proper etiquette in introducing yourself and your parents. If your name is different from your parents, make this clear in your introduction.
9. Write down your interviewer's name or ask for his business card.
10. Send a thank-you note to the interviewer
11. Use your "College Research Questions" sheet -- feel free to take your questionnaire in with you when you visit a college admissions office, are interviewed, or meet with a professor. Remember, the admissions process is a two-way process, and you should investigate an institution or program carefully and critically.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ASKED BY COLLEGE INTERVIEWERS

1. **Why** do you want a college education? What major field are you interested in? Why?
2. **What** is your class rank? GPA? Do you think it reflects your true abilities?
3. **What** books, not required by classroom teachers, have you read during the past year?
4. **Give** me three adjectives to describe yourself.
5. **Who** would be the three people, alive or dead, you would most like to dine with, and why?
6. **What** has been the greatest personal challenge in your life?

HOW TO SERVIVE - ENJOY YOUR FRESHMAN YEAR

Joyce Luy, Associate Director of Admissions at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California offers the following tips for making a successful transition from high school to college:

- (1) Contact your roommate over the summer and get together if at all possible. Share with each other your likes and dislikes, interests, daily schedule, etc. Commit to being open and honest with each other and confronting problems as they occur.
- (2) Adjusting to dorm life and living with a roommate is excellent preparation for life and marriage! Adults cannot just walk away from conflicts. They must learn to work through them properly and reach a resolution. College is a great time to hone this skill.
- (3) If you are unable to resolve a conflict, ask your Resident Assistant (RA) for help.
- (4) Remember, most freshmen come to college with tremendous expectations of what it is going to be like. However, **NO** place is perfect. Give yourself time to adjust and orient yourself to the college.
- (5) Living in a dorm requires learning to live in a community and being able to share and be flexible. If you have had your own room and controlled your own schedule, this change of life will take some getting used to.
- (6) If you have been the big man or woman on campus or someone who has been **VERY** involved and popular, realize that college requires **everyone** to start over. You will have to start over and build new relationships.
- (7) Colleges provide all kinds of student activities. You will be able to have something going on probably every night if you wish. But watch out; it is really easy to overextend yourself and come midterms, you will be in trouble. **Less** is really more! Dorm life alone will keep you busy socially.
- (8) Get involved in a good Bible Study and find a church home.
- (9) **Time management and solid study skills are your key to success in college** With the large blocks of open time college students have, they **must** learn to balance their social and academic interests. Begin now to use a calendar to manage your schedule.
- (10) If you have an area of academic weakness, consider taking a summer course at a community college to strengthen your skills.
- (11) Get to know your advisor well and work closely with him to plan your degree plan and course options.
- (12) Talk with your professors and let them know if you are totally confused. Most professors have times set aside each week to meet with students.
- (13) Honors programs in colleges are much more demanding than in most high schools. Do **NOT** sign up for more than one or two until you understand the demands.
- (14) It is not a bad idea for many students to only take 12-14 hours their first semester and get used to college life. You can easily catch up later.
- (15) If you have any **serious** health problems, inform your RA (Resident Assistant) and the College Clinic of your needs.
- (16) Many students get homesick - talk about it and you will find out others are experiencing it too.
- (17) If you are experiencing serious stressful problems, find the right person and let them know what is going on in your life or in your family. Do **NOT** keep it bottled up.
- (18) Know **exactly** what money the college expects you to pay before you come on campus.
- (19) If you do not already do so, learn to use a checking account, keep it balanced and in the black.
- (20) Work with your parents on your exact budget for miscellaneous spending and telephone bills.
- (21) Be **sure** you attend orientation with your parents. Get to know your roommate's parents as well.
- (22) Secure a copy of the Parent and Student Handbooks if possible before arriving on campus and read them.
- (23) Ask your parents to send **CARE** packages.
- (24) If going out of state, check into mailing clothes, etc. to the campus **before** you arrive.
- (25) Do **NOT** try and burn the candle at both ends. Being sick at college is **NO** fun, so take good care of yourself.
- (26) Do **NOT** be surprised if your first semester grades are lower than your high school grades!
- (27) Plan on studying at least two hours for every hour spent in class.
- (28) Get to know the staff in the Career/Placement office. They provide career testing to help you decide on a major and work with you closely in helping you find a job after graduation.
- (29) Begin the process of locating a person on campus to become your mentor. You have much to learn from those who have gone before you. Your mentor could be an upperclassman, faculty or staff member.

HOW TO TEST OUT OF COLLEGE COURSES--"CREDIT BY EXAMINATION"

Many students save time and money, are awarded college credit and take more upper division courses by taking and doing well on a variety of specific tests. By passing these exams, a student may choose to avoid basic freshman courses. Policies vary from college to college so ask for a Credit by Examination brochure from the college you plan to attend. These brochures will explain what tests are accepted and the necessary scores.

Options:

1. The **CLEP Exams** are \$42.00 each plus a \$8.00 test center charge. Students can usually take two exams a day unless the exam includes an essay. Each exam lasts 90 minutes and is multiple choice in structure. The tests are given only on selected days each year on specific college campuses throughout the country. The tests are graded "A", "B", "C", "D", etc., and students are penalized for guessing. It takes at least six weeks for the tests to be graded. Students should check with the colleges in which they are interested before taking a CLEP test, to determine which tests are acceptable and what credit will be given. For more information on CLEP, contact your counselor, the Credit by Examination Office at the college(s) you are applying to, or to get a free booklet, write:

CLEP
P.O. Box 6600
Princeton, New Jersey 10854-6601

2. **SAT II** - These tests are described in detail in the section on College Testing.
3. **College "In House" Exams** - many colleges have written their own placement exams which can be taken during orientation.
4. **SAT/ACT** - Some colleges will allow students to test out of required courses through high SAT/ACT scores.

<p>TIP: Make sure you clearly understand the college credit policies. You may only be approved to test out of a class, but not receive credit. However, you may be allowed to test out of the class plus receive credit and have a choice of receiving a letter grade for the course or just a Pass "P" grade.</p>

JUNIOR COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR

TIME	RESPONSIBILITIES
September	<p>Decide on the form for your name that you will use on all applications.</p> <p>Develop a filing system for college materials you are receiving.</p> <p>Throw nothing away until you have decided where you will be attending.</p> <p>Think about <u>why</u> you want to go to college, clarify your reasons and write them down.</p> <p>Identify college resources here at BBCS, such as your counselor, the College Resource Center, your teachers, the Jr./Sr. College News Board.</p> <p>Visit with college admission counselors who visit our campus.</p> <p>Obtain a social security number (if you do not already have one). Contact your local social security office for an application and instructions. Look under "U.S. Government" in the telephone book.</p>
October	<p>Take the PSAT/NMSQT</p>
December	<p>Carefully go over your PSAT/NMSQT scores this month and use the information in "Report of Student Answers" to interpret and understand your scores and to prepare for the SAT. See your counselor if you have questions or concerns.</p>
January	<p>Begin to use the sources of information about colleges that you have identified. Read publications carefully. Talk with your teachers, counselor, parents, and friends in high school and college about your thoughts and expectations.</p> <p>Start to develop a list of your interests, educational priorities, special talents and abilities, needs, preferences and personal qualities.</p>

<p>February-May</p>	<p>Meet with your counselor and parents to discuss the college selection process, your GPA, class rank and to develop a list of college options.</p> <p>Prepare for your upcoming ACT and SAT tests.</p> <p>Register for the SAT I and ACT. You should take each of them at twice sometime in March, April, May or June. If possible take the SAT I two times!</p> <p>Register to take any SAT II tests necessary while course materials are still fresh in your mind. Ask your counselor about registration information.</p> <p>Develop a preliminary list of colleges that interest you. Write for their viewbooks, catalogs and application forms citing your academic interests. You have over 3500 choices so use all resources available to begin to narrow your options.</p> <p>Start to plan how you will pay for college. Consult your counselor for helpful materials.</p> <p>Write to the "Director of Financial Aid" at colleges you are interested in and request information on scholarships and financial aid.</p> <p>Visit colleges - (1) Arrange for a campus tour, (2) Request information sessions with the admissions counselor responsible for your school, (3) Meet with a professor in the area(s) of interest to you, (4) Visit other campus offices of interest: Housing, Scholarship/Financial Aid, Athletics, Career Placement, Fine Arts, etc.</p> <p>Identify teachers, administrators, counselors and other adults (pastor or employer) who could give you good letters of recommendation. Ask yourself how well they know your work, personality and other characteristics.</p> <p>Attend the special Spring Campus Visitation Programs sponsored by many colleges. These programs provide you with opportunities to meet with members of faculty, deans and administrators and meet other students who are interested in the college.</p>
<p>June-August</p>	<p>Most colleges and families expect students to help pay for college cost. Use your summer to earn money for college and if possible, try to find a job related to your career interests. Consider doing an internship in a field related to your career interest.</p> <p>If your ACT/SAT scores are lower than you need, the summer is a good time to strengthen your skills.</p> <p>Consider attending a College Preparatory Summer Program offered by many colleges. See your counselor for details.</p> <p>Continue to visit colleges.</p>

SENIOR COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR

TIME	RESPONSIBILITIES
August	<p>If you have not taken the SAT/ACT or SATII (if required) or, if you desire to retake them, register immediately for the fall examinations. See your counselor for materials.</p>
September	<p>Go over the Senior Check List and make certain you have or are in the process of completing each step. Register to retake or take the October SATI ,SATII or ACT.</p> <p>Narrow your list of college choices to the 1-8 in which you are most interested.</p> <p>If you do not have videos, viewbooks, catalogs, applications, and financial aid/scholarship information from colleges that interest you, send off for these materials immediately.</p> <p>Analyze application instructions to see what information is required and all due dates. (e.g., SAT/ACT test scores, SATII scores, essays,, housing and financial aid deadlines, etc.) All students applying for federal monies will have to fill out the FAFSA.</p> <p>To receive financial aid, you must apply for it! Be sure and consult your counselor on the various sources of financial and/scholarships.</p> <p>Fill out your Student Activity Sheet completely and accurately and return it to your counselor. This will be used in putting together your counselor recommendation so please treat it seriously!</p> <p>Schedule a senior appointment with your counselor to discuss current plans and progress.</p>

<p>Oc October</p>	<p>f If you are planning on applying "Early Decision" at a college your application will be due by November 1st. Begin working this month on your application.</p> <p>f If the colleges you are interested in require an essay as part of your application, begin working on your essays this month. Share your essay with teachers and see what they think.</p> <p>f If you have not visited the colleges you are interested in or set up admissions interviews (if appropriate), do so immediately!</p> <p>W When you ask someone to write a recommendation, be sure to provide an addressed and stamped envelope with appropriate forms. Give your recommenders two or three weeks of time to complete your recommendation.</p> <p>Re Register to take or retake the November SATI, SATII, or the December ACT.</p> <p>N</p>
<p>No November</p>	<p>No November 1 -Early decision deadline for admission at many private colleges/universities. Students are usually notified by December 15.</p> <p>Co Continue to visit colleges</p>
<p>De December</p>	<p>Obtain the appropriate financial aid forms from your counselor (Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).</p> <p>Yo Your family should complete required financial aid forms this month for mailing on, or as close to January 1 as possible.</p> <p>Give your counselor or principal sufficient time to fill out the "Secondary School Report" section of the application (two weeks minimum).</p> <p>De December 15-February 1 - This is the usual regular decision deadline period to apply to many selective colleges. Be sure you apply on time to colleges you have selected.</p> <p>Co Continue to visit colleges</p>
<p>Ja January</p>	<p>a January 1: Mail your financial aid application as soon as possible after this date. Some states have special tuition assistance plans whose deadlines vary. Inquire from state education agencies. Make certain your forms are in by the stated deadlines of the colleges.</p>
<p>Fe February</p>	<p>M Men who are 18 years old or over must prove draft registration in order to receive Federal Financial Aid. Inquire at the local post office.</p> <p>Be Before you decide on your final choice - spend one or two nights in the dorm and attend classes for a day. This is absolutely critical!</p>

M	March	Application process should be completed
A	April	<p>Most selective colleges announce their decisions this month. If you are accepted at more than one college, you must decide early which one is best for you.</p> <p>If a college has requested a non-refundable deposit before you have heard from other colleges, ask your counselor for advice. You have the right to wait until May 1st to make your final choice regarding admission and financial aid.</p> <p>Students should write a polite note declining admission to colleges where they have been accepted but will not be attending.</p> <p>If you have been “wait listed” or rejected by your first choice college, consult your counselor to see if there is anything he/she may be able to do for you.</p> <p>If you are "wait-listed" by a college and intend to enroll if accepted, call, visit, or write to the Director of Admissions to state your intention and to see how you might strengthen your application.</p>
M	May-June	<p align="center">-- Graduation</p> <p>Please Note: This is a general timetable. Refer to the section on admissions tests for a more specific timetable of test dates. Students should draw up a timetable of deadlines recognizing his or her own school workload, senior activities, and the extra work, such as essays and references required by applications for more competitive colleges.</p>

ACHIEVE YOUR COLLEGE DREAM THROUGH FINANCIAL AID

by
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The information in the following article is correct as of August, 1995 and should be valid for the 1995-96 academic year. Because financial aid regulations and procedures change frequently, please consult with a financial aid administrator before using this information in subsequent years.

As you look at various college choices, the price tags may scare you a little. Remember that even though you and your family have the primary responsibility to meet colleges costs, you can obtain financial aid to attend almost anywhere. Do not let the cost of attendance stop you from considering any particular institution until you have gone through the entire process of seeking aid. Otherwise, you may needlessly limit your options and miss out on the college that is really right for you.

There are **three steps** in obtaining financial aid. **First**, look for scholarship sources early in your senior year. Businesses, clubs and other organizations give away millions of dollars each year. An early start in locating scholarships gives you time to apply before deadlines arrive. Your library or high school counselor will have books or computer software listing thousands of scholarships. Pay attention to scholarships awarded by organizations in your area such as your school, service clubs, church, where you work, and through your parents' employers. Contact organization directly to ask for information.

Another good place to find scholarships is from the colleges themselves. During the fall, contact admissions or financial aid offices to ask for scholarship information. If you hope to earn a performance scholarship in an area like music, drama, dance or athletics, also get in touch with the department chairperson or coach.

Many companies say they will find you scholarships if you pay them a fee. However, if you're motivated enough to do the research, you can locate plenty of scholarship sources on your own.

The **second** key to getting financial aid is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Almost all colleges use the FAFSA to figure out what aid you'll receive. Obtain a FAFSA from your counselor or any financial aid office. FAFSAs are usually available by December. If you plan to attend college in 2003-04, you should fill out a FAFSA in January of 2003. (Don't mail in the FAFSA until after January 1st!) Filing deadlines vary, but many institutions suggest that your FAFSA be mailed by February 15. Check with the colleges that you're considering. You can submit a FAFSA after the priority deadline, but you may not receive as much consideration for aid.

Do not assume that you are not eligible for federal financial aid! The rules of the game changed a few years ago and now almost everyone can get some help. As you fill out your FAFSA, read the instructions carefully. You will need your parents' cooperation to fill out the form. The FAFSA will ask for information about how much money you and your folks made last year and paid in federal taxes. Since you may not have your 2002 taxes done by January, remember that it is okay to carefully estimate figures on the FAFSA. It may be helpful to use 2001 tax returns to get accurate estimates. You can correct your figures later, but poor estimates can cause colleges to inaccurately offer you aid. If you're looking at more than one college, you can list up to six on the FAFSA. Each will then receive your FAFSA information and give you financial aid consideration.

Many colleges use another form in addition to the FAFSA to award aid. Be sure to ask each school for the forms you need. Some have developed their own forms for gathering additional information and others use the **C.S.S. Profile** in making an early estimate of your aid award. **However, FAFSA is the only form used to determine eligibility for Federal aid.**

The **third** step is to be sure to apply for admission! Most colleges will not offer you aid until you have applied for admission, and many require that you be accepted. Therefore, it is wise to mail your admission application in before the end of December. Some colleges have even earlier deadlines.

From the time you mail your FAFSA, it takes three to six weeks to process. Results will be sent to you and to each of up to six colleges and universities you list on the form. You will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) which summarizes the information you put on the FAFSA and gives you additional guidance. You don't need to do anything with the SAR unless you see that some information is incorrect. If corrections are necessary, the SAR provides you the opportunity to make them. If the SAR is accurate, keep it for future reference. About the time that you get your SAR, the colleges receive your data and will review your FAFSA information. They may request additional information (if necessary), and put together a financial aid "package" for you. You may be selected for a process called "Verification." If so, you will be asked to provide the financial aid office with signed copies of your previous year's federal tax forms, your parents' federal tax returns, a form called the Verification Worksheet, and perhaps other information. They use these items to confirm the accuracy of your FAFSA.

You should also receive a financial aid offer from the college at some point, if you have applied for admission and aid. Most schools will not send this to you until all requested items have been submitted. Remember that the offer is subject to change if funding levels fluctuate or the financial aid office gets new information on you. For instance, make sure the college knows about scholarships you've been awarded by other organizations. After you receive your award letter, you will probably need to sign and return a form accepting the college's offer of aid.

Communication is critical. Respond to every request for additional information! If you don't understand something that you're asked to do or if you don't agree with the financial aid office's decision on an issue, contact them. Let the financial aid office know about any unusual circumstances affecting your family's situation. Examples include loss of employment or income, large unreimbursed medical expenses, or private elementary or secondary school tuition to be paid. Sometimes the financial aid administrator may be able to obtain more aid for you due to special situations.

How is your information used to determine how much aid you are offered? The federal methodology used to calculate your eligibility is complex. It looks at the FAFSA to see your own earnings and assets, your parents' earnings and assets, the number of people in your family and how many are attending college at least half-time, and the age of the older parent, for example. The formula does exclude the value of the home you live in, retirement savings (such as IRAs), and the value of a family farm you live on. In addition, a significant portion of your parents' other assets usually are ignored in the federal formula. (Some schools will look at home value or other data in determining how much institutional aid you can receive.)

If your parents are divorced or separated, read the FAFSA instructions carefully. In most cases, you will fill out the FAFSA using information from the parent you lived with the most in the last twelve months. If this parent has remarried, you will **also** include data on your step-parent.

The federal calculations produce what is known as your EFC, or Expected Family Contribution. Students with low EFCs usually will receive more assistance than those with high EFCs. Another piece of the puzzle is your college's or university's Cost of Attendance (COA). The COA usually includes tuition, fees,

room, board, an allowance for books and supplies, personal expenses. It varies greatly from school to school, and can even be vary for different students at the same school. For instance, the COA at your local community college might be \$6500, while it is not unusual for costs at a private university to exceed \$20,000. Consider **all** your expenses as you look at college, rather than focusing entirely on tuition costs. The college's financial aid administrator will subtract your Expected Family Contribution from the school's Cost of Attendance to determine your "Need." He or she will then seek to meet as much of your Need as possible with financial aid. Obviously, your need can be quite different at different colleges (due to variations

in the Cost of Attendance) and you often will be offered more aid at more expensive institutions. If you do not demonstrate "Need" through this process, you will only be eligible for scholarships, the Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan or a PLUS loan.

Now that you know how to seek financial aid, take a look at the types of help available. **Scholarships**, of course, are free money that do not have to be repaid. They are awarded based primarily on merit or some personal talent. **Grants** also do not have to be repaid, but they are awarded on the basis of your financial need. The third aid category is **student loans**, which must be repaid. Repayment can generally be postponed (or "deferred") while you're in college. While no one *wants* to borrow, a reasonable amount of student loans can be an excellent investment in yourself. Finally, **student employment** gives you the opportunity to earn money while you're in college. Federal Work-Study, through which the federal government underwrites a portion of the student's paycheck, is the best known kind of student employment.

Here is a summary of some widely used types of financial aid within these four groupings.

Remember that federal aid is available only to United States citizens and eligible non-citizens and you must fill out a FAFSA to apply. Not all colleges have access to all types of federal and state aid.

Federal Pell Grants range in size from \$400 to \$2340 a year. They are awarded to the neediest students. An unlimited number of eligible students can receive Pell Grants each year. For 1995-96, you must have an Expected Family Contribution of \$2100 or less to qualify.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants are usually awarded to the **neediest** Pell Grant recipients. Each college has a different amount of FSEOG funds, so award levels vary and if you miss the priority filing deadline you may not get this grant even though you are otherwise eligible.

Federal Perkins Loans also can vary from campus to campus so it is important to fill out your FAFSA early. Perkins Loans are usually awarded only to students who demonstrate high levels of financial need. This is the most attractive kind of student loan because you borrow it directly through the college, there are no loan fees and interest is just 5%. While you are in college, you don't have to make any payments or pay any interest. Repayment begins nine months after you stop attending college at least half-time.

Federal Work-Study funds are earned and paid out as you complete your work. Most Work-Study jobs are on-campus. Even if you are not awarded Work-Study, there are usually other types of jobs available to help you pay for college. Each school will have different employment procedures, so be sure to ask for details.

Federal Stafford Loans form the largest student loan program. Freshmen can borrow a maximum of \$2625, but borrowing limits go up as you continue through college. Sophomores can borrow up to \$3500 per year; juniors, \$5500. There are two versions of Stafford: subsidized and unsubsidized. They are identical except that the Subsidized Stafford does not charge any interest (actually, the federal government pays it for you) or require any payments while you are in college at least half-time. Unsubsidized Staffords do charge you interest while you're in school. Repayment on both begins six months after you stop attending college at least half-time. For new borrowers, interest on Stafford Loans is variable, with a 8.25% cap. The current interest rate is already at that 8.25% maximum. You'll also be charged loan fees equal to 4% of whatever you borrow. Some schools are participating in the new Federal Direct Stafford Loan Program while others use the traditional Stafford Loan program. The interest, fees and repayment are essentially the same for both. The application process for either one starts with the FAFSA. If your school is in the traditional Stafford program, you will also fill out a Stafford Loan application, available from the financial aid office. The college completes its part of the loan application and sends it on to the lending institution you've chosen. After some processing steps are completed, checks will be mailed to the college for you. On the other hand, if your college is part of the Direct Stafford program, you will borrow directly through the school, rather than through a bank or credit union. The financial aid office will send you a promissory note to complete and return, then your loan proceeds will be put directly on your student account at the college.

Federal PLUS Loans often can be borrowed by your parents to help pay for your education. Some colleges will not offer you a PLUS Loan unless you request it. You do not have to demonstrate "Need" to take a PLUS Loan, nor do your parents have to show any particular income level in order to borrow, though they must not have a negative credit history. Borrowing limits depend on your financial need and the cost of

your college. Your parents may take a PLUS Loan for as much as the Cost of Attendance minus your other financial aid. Repayment on PLUS loans starts 60 days after the loan is made. For first-time borrowers, the variable interest rate, currently at 8.98%, is capped at 9%.

Alternative Loan Programs and Home Equity Loans can also help your family pay for college. Federal loan programs usually offer lower interest rates, but some alternate loan sources may have features that fit your situation well. State Aid is often available if you have significant financial need and attend a college in your home state. The programs vary widely and most require that you fill out a FAFSA to show that you're eligible. Some states will even allow you to use their grants to attend schools in neighboring states.

The world of financial aid can be kind of overwhelming. If you feel confused, you're not alone! College financial aid and admissions offices want to help you, but they can't anticipate every concern you'll have, so ask them questions. If you can't get the information you need from the financial aid office or your guidance counselor, you can call 1-800-4-FED-AID to ask specific questions about Federal aid programs.

If you have the ability to succeed in college and if you take the steps outlined here, financial aid can give you the opportunity to achieve your dream! Ben Franklin said, "An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest." Now is the time to start investing in your future by checking out all your financial aid options.