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**Charles Wright’s School Code Number**

(for tests and applications):

481-368

Charles Wright Academy is a member of the National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC), The Pacific Northwest Association of Admissions Counseling (PNACAC) and the Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools (ACCIS). We endorse and adhere to the NACAC Statement of Principles of Good Practice.

In our education policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, athletic programs and any other school-administered programs, Charles Wright Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, national or ethnic origin, religion, personal handicaps, political beliefs, sexual orientation or any other unlawful basis.
Welcome to the College Counseling process at Charles Wright Academy! We are eager to support you in what will undoubtedly be an exciting and significant stage in your life’s journey if you are a student, a major family milestone if you are a parent. If you or your student is a junior or senior, we’ll be working closely together during the coming months. If you’re a student or parent of a sophomore or younger, please seek out our help if you have questions. We hope to be your partners in this process, to help boost your confidence and promote good decision making, to minimize stress and, ultimately, to help you reach a positive outcome: a college choice that suits you well.

In today’s competitive admissions environment, our orientation can quickly become so dominated by concerns about getting-in that we lose sight of what fills the four years to follow. We get so tangled up in winning the college admissions game that a ranking of “more selective” in a publication such as U.S. News is translated to “better quality” without a second thought, a risky misperception. Rather than blindly following rankings and trends, we should all look critically at the facts. To assess quality, compare academic offerings at schools of interest, ask about graduation rates, graduate school acceptance, and job placement trends, and check out facilities by visiting campuses. College admission is essentially a major research project that should begin with frank self-assessment. Knowing yourself and setting some realistic goals are the keys to finding a college that will be a good match.

College admissions brings to almost everyone - parents, students, and educators - a sense of vulnerability. To complicate matters, beneath all of the much-discussed activity related to choosing a college there looms the reality that students will soon leave home. Separating from family, friends, school, and all that is familiar signals the unsettling reality that the greater part of childhood (and parenting) is coming to a conclusion. This moment is loaded with emotions too little acknowledged. Perhaps more than anything else, this accounts for predictable disturbances to equanimity and behavior in both students and parents! Your constant eye on this may help you to maintain balance in the midst of possible turbulence ahead.

Some stress is inevitable within a process as busy, complex, and important as college admissions. But don’t fall into the trap of worrying unnecessarily about “getting in.” Although admission to the small group of ultra-prestigious colleges is more competitive than ever, with some popular schools reporting admit rates under 10%, the majority of American colleges and universities admit more students than they reject each year. Charles Wright students who have taken good advantage of the opportunities available here should feel confident about their chances of finding a college that matches their academic talents and fits their interests well.

The rest of this handbook looks at nuts-and-bolts practical matters. Given all that follows, our advice is to be early: start early, do the research early, and complete applications early. Please don’t hesitate to call, email, or make appointments with us. We look forward to getting to know you and count on your active partnership as we work together.

Katie Ryan and Noel Blyler
Advice for Ninth Graders

Although you’ve just begun high school, it’s not at all too early to start thinking about how to make the most of your Upper School experience, and how to plan ahead so you will be well prepared for the next step in life – going off to college. Here’s some general advice.

Each year, sign up for the most challenging set of courses of which you are realistically capable. Students should challenge themselves by taking our most advanced offerings in subjects in which they excel, and which they enjoy. Be open to trying new things, and to taking risks.

Get involved and be a contributor beyond the classroom; discover and pursue special interests: athletics, visual or performing arts, writing, a hobby, a school club, church/community service, a leadership role, etc. It doesn’t have to be conventional. One or two activities done well are better than many done superficially. Attempts to impress colleges with a fluffy résumé will be seen as such. It’s better to seek and pursue involvement that comes naturally, reflects genuine interest, and endures.

Cultivate “the life of your mind.” Follow current events, cultural offerings, quality movies and plays, contemporary issues, etc., according to your interests. Consider subscribing to a magazine such as Time or The Economist – or whatever sparks your interest. When your homework load permits, keep a good outside reading book going. Become increasingly informed and conversant about the world around you to develop your general fund of knowledge, to broaden the scope of your awareness, to develop personal interests, and to sharpen your skills of critical thinking. You don’t have to become a superstar, but tuning into your world will reap many rewards.

Be aware that the closer you get to senior year, the more difficult it will be to raise or lower your overall grade point average, although it’s never too late to overcome a stumble, make a leap into new territory and mark an upward trend. Freshman and sophomore years offer the best chance to ‘bank’ top grades; the going gets tougher during junior and senior years. Toward that end, develop the habit of getting extra help from teachers and classmates to get through periods of academic struggle. CWA has a wonderful Mentor Program—students helping students—for just this purpose. It is a sign of strength, not weakness, to reach out for help.

For those eager to begin some very early college investigating, please see the checklist for sophomores for more suggestions.
Checklist for Sophomores

- In October sophomores take the PSAT. Colleges do not see scores. The benefit is practice. Try not to get too worked up over numbers. The score is a baseline; high scores should not bring a false sense of security, and low scores do not signal doom, nor should they ignite a full-scale SAT-preparation campaign. Focus on day-to-day learning in classes. Target known weaknesses. Read!

- Attend CWA’s College Fair during October and the National College Fair in Seattle during November (and maybe the PNACAC College Fair at Seattle University later in the spring.)

- Use the internet to explore a career interest, try a college search, and check out a few colleges. See a counselor for help getting started.

- College visits at this stage are best done as a brief and easy drive-by or walkabout. Take the guided tour if you wish. See a range of local colleges which are representative of those most likely to have greatest appeal. Later you can plan a tour of actual prospects.

- Spring course choices for junior and senior year are the ones with real impact on who gets in where. It’s not the grades; it’s the quality of curriculum which gets the closest look in assessing capacity and work ethic. Don’t go for AP just for the label. Go for as much rigor and richness and stretch as truly match your capacity and interest.

- Summer is time for something interesting: being an assistant camp counselor, participating in an outdoor education or service program (Outward Bound, NOLS, mission work, trail crew), or other age-appropriate travel, self-made apprenticeship, a window-washing venture, or academic study. It sounds trite, but in addition to these there is no better advice than “Read, read, read.”
Checklist for Juniors

- Set up a personal calendar. Enter items and deadlines!

September-October-November

- Take the PSAT at school. Colleges do not see the scores, but high scorers may qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Competition.
- Sit in on a few information sessions with college representatives. Watch the bulletin board and your Family Connection account for the College Visit Schedule.
- Address areas of academic weakness early in junior year.
- Visit a few colleges (on CWA in-service days or when colleges host open houses.)
- Attend the CWA College Fair during October and the Seattle National College Fair at the Convention Center during November.
- Register on Family Connection, CWA's web-based college planning software. You will need an e-mail address and your personal registration code (provided during Experiential Ed. Week). Access the login page at http://connection.naviance.com/charleswright
- Register for the spring SAT (Consider using the Question & Answer Service option) www.collegeboard.com and/or the ACT www.actstudent.org You don’t need to send scores to colleges now; you can do that in senior year.

December

- Work on your Junior Questionnaire, accessed through your Family Connection Account, over the holiday break. Take time to think deeply about your responses and make this an honest self-assessment.

January-February

- Set aside time for an honest look inside: What is guiding your search? Whose values, goals and preferences? How clear are you about priorities and direction? What do you feel most needs sorting out? Make some notes. Talk about these with someone you trust. Don't hurry or skip this step!
- Schedule your first junior conference with your counselor (after January 1, and before the end of April!) A completed junior questionnaire is your “ticket” to this conference.
- Check your e-mail regularly for important college related announcements from your counselor.
- If you can, plan to visit colleges during spring break or summer. Try to visit a wide range during junior year to figure out what you want; you may return to a top choice school in senior year to narrow the list. Call ahead. Be sure to do the guided tours at each campus. You can also arrange to sit in on a class, interview, talk with professors or coaches, or stay overnight, depending on your interests and the policies of the college.

March-April

- Schedule your second junior conference. This is the time to build your exploratory college list.
- Register to take the May or June SAT at www.collegeboard.com and/or the April or June ACT www.actstudent.org.
- Plan your summer: a job, an internship, volunteer, work, travel, coursework, an adventure. Do something interesting!
- Use Family Connection online features to further your college search.
March-April, continued

- Explore colleges in several directories (*The Fiske Guide, Colleges That Change Lives*, etc.)

- Explore colleges on the internet using Family Connection hyperlinks to a college’s homepage. Especially, explore the student newspaper, lists of clubs & organizations, and the calendar of events.

- Contact colleges to request information packets and get on their mailing lists.

- If your target colleges require or recommend SAT Subject Tests, register to take the May or June exam at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). Many colleges accept ACT scores in lieu of SAT Subject Tests.

- Attend the spring PNACAC College Fair in Seattle if you need help getting jump-started.

- Carefully consider senior year course selection. Avoid a light load. Aim for “five solids.”

May

- Your junior conferences should be completed by graduation.

June-July-August

- Research colleges. Consider Early Decision only if a clear first choice emerges. Delete and add names to your list as you read about colleges. The more you do now, the lighter the load senior year. The Fiske Guide is a great resource [www.fiskeguide.com](http://www.fiskeguide.com).

- After August 1, create a personal account for the Common Application. Complete a practice application at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).

- Draft one or more practice essays. Get sample questions ahead of time, perhaps on college websites. Take it from those who have gone before: time spent now making a rough draft, with some August revisions, will pay off in a big way during the busy season ahead.

- Schedule a summer meeting with your counselor.

- Create a personal filing system. As you identify “keeper” colleges, visit their admissions website and carefully note: deadlines, fees, requirements for SAT subject tests, recommendations, essay questions, and other pertinent details. Enter deadlines on your calendar.

- Visit colleges.

- Attend CWA College Application Boot Camp.
Checklist for Seniors

August-September

- Talk with your counselor about what you’ve seen over the summer, your questions and plans.
- Early Application: Yes or No? (Includes Early Decision, Early Action, and early deadlines at certain schools.) Talk with your counselor for help in planning.
- Apply early to selective public universities (UW, U. California, U. Michigan, etc.)
- Confirm that your course load is not too light for the colleges you seek. Talk with your counselor or your advisor if you’re unsure.
- Check your e-mail regularly and stay in close communication with your counselor about your plans.
- Enter SAT/ACT test dates and deadlines on your calendar. Register early online! www.collegeboard.com and www.actstudent.org
- For financial aid, talk with your counselor about how to apply.
- Attend meetings with college representatives. Watch Family Connection for the schedule; sign up online. Make advance arrangements with teachers if you will miss classes.
- Ask teachers to write recommendations for you. Offer to meet to talk about your outlook and plans.

You must declare in writing by October 1st your plans to apply early (deadlines prior to the holidays).

October

- Update your “Colleges I’m Thinking About” list in your Family Connection file by October 1.
- Attend the CWA College Fair.
- Begin your applications and monitor your progress—what’s done and what’s still to do? Deadlines, fees, teacher recommendations, essay topic, etc.
- Enter teacher requests electronically on Family Connection (after you have asked and they have agreed to write for you). Check to see if any of your colleges require that recommendations and transcripts be sent by mail and provide forms, envelopes, and stamps to your teachers as needed.
- Register for the November or December SAT/ACT tests. www.collegeboard.com and www.actstudent.org
- It is your responsibility to arrange with the testing agency for score reports to be sent directly to each college to which you are applying.
- Using Family Connection, finalize your college list by November 1.
- Check your transcript for accuracy and completeness (see the Registrar for a copy).
- Revise your college essays. Proofread, then ask a friend, teacher, parent, or your counselor to give feedback.
- For financial aid applicants, attend CWA’s Financial Aid Night and preview the federal FAFSA website. Private colleges requiring the PROFILE aid application have a pre-registration process; aim to complete your registration by the end of November if possible. Register for PROFILE at www.collegeboard.com
November-December

- Use Family Connection to formally declare your plans and request a transcript for each application to college.
- For January 1 application deadlines, use Family Connection to request a transcript by November 20, and bring the school part of your application to your counselor if it is not a Common Application College.
- For January 15 deadlines, use Family Connection to request a transcript by December 1, and bring the school part of your application to your counselor if it is not a Common Application College.
- Continue working on applications, aiming to have all completed and submitted by holiday break.
- Early applications due Nov. 1-15. Make sure your essay is groomed and “presentation-quality.”
- Keep a copy of everything you send to colleges.

January & February

- Submit financial aid forms on January 2 (or soon after).
- Submit completed applications—most are due January 1 - February 15.
- Use Family Connection or www.fastweb.com to investigate scholarship opportunities.
- Look through two or three college course catalogues online, paying particular attention to freedom to choose courses, graduation requirements, and course descriptions. You’ll begin to see how differently your top choice colleges offer an education, which will help with your final choices.

April

- Work hard at this one: base your final choice on thinking about what you will actually do at college, not the name, the look, or location. Find the place that will best help develop your intelligence and qualities that you like most about yourself.
- The deadline for sending your deposit is May 1, the National Reply Date. Send a deposit to reserve a place at only one college you plan to attend. Do not “double-deposit”; holding spaces at two colleges unfairly harms wait-list students awaiting an opportunity to attend. We will send a final transcript to only one college. Inform all of your other colleges in writing that you will not attend.
- Use Family Connection to complete your “Graduation Survey” and “End of Year Survey.”

May

- Finish strong. Colleges do review final transcripts and may rescind an admissions offer if there is an unreasonable drop in achievement.
- Take AP Exams and send scores to the college you will attend.
- Make sure all fees are paid on time to ensure the release of your final transcript.

June

- Thank those who have supported you: your parents, and the teacher(s) who wrote recommendations in support of your applications.
How do I begin?

The most important step is to assess yourself - what do you want and need from the college you choose? Once you have a clear sense of your own goals and preferences, it’s time to look for colleges and universities that could be a good fit for you. Here are the common considerations, and remember, you decide which of these is most important, based on what you want:

1. **Setting:** Do you see yourself on an urban, rural, or suburban campus? Be careful of big city vs. small town perceptions. Some of the most esteemed colleges are on a rural hilltop, far from the distractions and attractions of a major city. Whitman College is an example. Such colleges provide loads of weekend activities on campus, with a full slate of entertainment, speakers, and off-campus trips. On the other hand, Walla Walla is not San Francisco or Boston! The cultural offerings of a major city or opportunities for internships are priorities for some students.

2. **Size:** Common wisdom says that small colleges typically offer close, personal connections and a sense of community where professors know your name and are easily available to talk with, while large universities offer great depth and breadth of offerings and facilities. Those perceptions are not true of all small colleges or large universities: some large universities succeed at providing high quality academic support for individual students, and some small colleges have a breadth of offerings and first-rate facilities to rival any large university. You’ll need to check out each school for yourself. Size is also relative; some people think 7,000 is too small, others think 5,000 is too big.

3. **Location:** Some students are eager to “get out of Dodge,” leave the Pacific Northwest, and see a new location. Others want to stay close to home. It’s worth some careful thought before limiting your list. Begin with an open mind, look at a wide selection (including some that stretch your comfort zone), then narrow your focus.

4. **Program & Philosophy:** Does this college have the academic offerings I want? Is there a strong department in my intended major? What about study abroad, internships, and flexibility in choosing courses? Do senior professors teach freshmen? What about St. John’s with its unique Great Books curriculum, or Colorado College with its “block” system of taking one course at a time?

Myth: If a college is really good, I would have heard of it before.

Fact: The average well-educated adult can probably name only a small portion of hundreds of excellent colleges, and these may be prominent for reasons not appropriate to your needs. It is important to remember that a college that may be ideal, which you have never heard of before, has thousands of graduates in successful careers who loved it then and still do.

Myth: I need to decide on my career or major before I choose a college.

Fact: The typical college student changes majors at least once, and experts predict that people now entering the work force switch careers four to six times; many will enter jobs not yet invented. Choose a college which prepares you to be solid and flexible.

5. **Academic Rigor:** How are academics valued at this college? How hard do I want to work? Do I want to be active in class discussions? What’s the workload? How about the tone and intellectual vitality: what kinds of conversations and people will I be surrounded by for four years, especially outside of classes?

6. **Extra-curricular activities:** Which activities and organizations play leading roles at this place? Can I play sports at the level I want, and how much will I actually play?
7. **Cost:** It can vary widely, particularly when comparing public and private or in-state and out-of-state institutions. Check out the realities before drawing conclusions about the affordability of a particular school (see the section on financial aid in What’s a Parent To Do?) Consider applying for financial aid which can equalize costs if you qualify. Most very expensive colleges have deep pockets and generous aid.

8. **Social Life:** What do students do on weekends? Do fraternities and sororities play a major role? Are students conservative, moderate, liberal, ...all of these? Are they politically active? What is the tone of the place - will I fit in and find myself at home in this environment?

You may choose other criteria that are important to you, and the importance of these characteristics is different for each student.

Next, research colleges on your list: in directories, on the internet, from talking to current students and alumni, viewbooks, course catalogues, etc. Be on the lookout for “overlap” schools, colleges to which many applicants at a particular college also apply. Add these to your list and read up on them.

Make notes as you do your research, about features and the pros and cons for each.:

- percent of applicants accepted
- enrollment size
- location: distance from home, from a major city
- academic program: majors, required courses
- freshman class profile: mid-50% SAT score ranges, class standing.
- application fee and deadline
- athletics and student life, including housing
- cost and financial aid information
- contact information: address, phone, e-mail
- general impressions: tone, academics, students, admissions
- overlap schools (close competitors commonly applied to)

**Food For Thought:**
Never apply to a school that you would not gladly attend

Many spend hours worrying over what should be their top few choices and only minutes selecting a “safety” school. Wrong! Spend as much time on your sixth choice as your first and second. Realistically, you might end up at a back-up school.

Selectivity does not mean quality - some of the best colleges are less selective than you might think.

At several of the most competitive colleges, selectivity is still increasing. If you apply to one or more of these, be realistic about the context and the likelihood of a deny decision - that’s what happens when a college faces 20,000 extraordinary candidates seeking to fill 1,500 places.

It is not the case that you can select any Washington state university as a safety choice. U.W. and Western Washington University are “Reach” schools for many CWA graduates. As costs increase, state universities receive more applications and become more selective. Do the research to assure a good match.

**Scaling Your List**

Use Family Connection (Colleges > Colleges I’m Thinking About > Compare Me) for graphs and tables showing how your academic scores compare, college by college, with those of recent CWA applicants admitted by each college. Place your personal profile alongside your list of colleges and see how you match.
Find where, for example, your 640 Verbal + 590 Math, and 3.1 GPA seem to fit in. This is your “Possible” range. A few steps up the list are “Reach” schools, and down the list are “Likely” schools.

The “balloon” list, made up entirely of lofty “Reach” schools, plus one backup, invites worry and disappointment, no matter how big one’s list. Aiming too low likewise brings a sense of “I wonder if I could have gotten more out of this.” Go for a list with a range of selectivity. Nobody knows better than college admissions professionals that your worth as a person cannot be reduced to a bunch of numbers; even the most selective schools seek, above all, qualities which can’t be measured.

Each year top colleges deny admission to applicants with “good numbers” who lack other qualities. But numbers do convey information: grading standards and the rigor of “Advanced Biology” vary so much from one high school to another that test scores help measure an applicant’s capacity against a standard scale.

**Visiting Colleges**

A well planned college visit is invaluable in answering the question “Can I picture myself here for four years of my life?” Once on campus, your time is best spent focusing not on selectivity and getting in, but on what the college offers and what it’s like to go to school there. Arrive early. Walk around. Read bulletin boards. Pick up a school newspaper and take it with you to read later on. Read posters, signs, and displays on dormitory room doors.

Two colleges per day is the norm. Allow plenty of time for travel between campuses. Call ahead (at least three weeks) to find out times for group information sessions and campus tours, and to ask about travel times to neighboring colleges. Also inquire about an overnight stay, attending class, or meeting with a member of a particular academic department or athletic coach. Read about the college ahead of time. By asking informed questions about requirements and programs, you’ll make best use of your visit and distinguish yourself as someone who is on the ball. Such preparation is assumed at selective colleges. Keep a journal. Although each college is distinctive, after several days of visiting they’ll start to run together in your memory. Write down your impressions, observations and questions each day to ensure you remember each visit, and you’ll get the most from your trip.

**Additional Opportunities**

The National College Fair, in mid-Fall at the Seattle Convention Center, offers the chance to talk with representatives and pick up information. Arrive early. Be patient; you’ll have to pick your way through the crowd. When it’s your turn, introduce yourself. You’d be surprised at the lasting favorable impression of a bright first greeting as you are one of thousands met by admissions officers. Mention that you attend Charles Wright, ask for materials, pose any questions you have. The more you know in advance about the colleges you will contact, the more favorable the exchange during this brief encounter. Many colleges team up to offer group information sessions in Seattle, usually at a hotel or restaurant in the evening. Each college presents a short slide show, followed by break-out sessions where, in small groups, you can meet with the individual representatives for informal question-answer time.

**Visitors to CWA.** You will find on Family Connection and on the bulletin board a schedule showing when representatives of some 90+ colleges will be here for small group sessions. Even if you are not interested in a college or have not heard its name before, consider coming. Why? First, these are by far the most personal and informal opportunities for a helpful exchange, and you will learn a lot about colleges and about your own direction. These sessions contribute to a solid decision. Here’s a great way to get jump-started if you’re having trouble moving forward. Many a student has happened into one of these sessions...
“by chance,” then ended up applying to and attending a college formerly unfamiliar. Click on “Sign up” in Family Connection to receive an automatic e-mail reminder for each session. Selective colleges to which you apply may question the seriousness of your intent if you miss a meeting with their representative on our campus. If you do miss a meeting due to circumstances beyond your control, come get the name of the college representative who visited and write that person a letter to demonstrate your interest. If you have a test, ask your teacher if you can leave class 5 minutes early “to meet the representative from Santa Clara,” then make-up that time later on. The answer will usually be “Sure, go ahead.” Always give advance notice to teachers when you attend one of these information sessions.

Talking with Visiting Reps

- What percentage of freshmen stay through graduation?
- What percentage go on to graduate school?
- What are considered the strongest departments? Most popular majors?
- Describe the opportunities for undergraduates to do research with professors.
- What about internships and study abroad?
- What is a typical course load for freshmen?
- Describe the student body: diversity, social values and attitudes.
- What kind of person would not be a good fit?
- Describe student housing. Theme houses? Off-campus housing?
- Describe the range of student organizations: Greeks, activities, student government?
- To what extent are admissions “need blind” with regard to a family’s financial situation? To what extent do you meet full demonstrated need?

An Admissions Interview used to be commonplace; now, some colleges encourage interviews while others do not extend this opportunity. The interview is not a trial; it’s a chance for friendly exchange of information in support of your decisions. Relax. Refer to your list of questions about this particular college (You’ve done your homework, so you can ask about the Freshman Seminar or the Washington Semester programs) Be prepared to talk about yourself, your goals, interests, and why you are considering this particular college. Write down the name of the person you talk with and send a thank-you note after you return.

Questions an interviewer might ask you:

- Why are you interested in this college?
- What might you be interested in studying in college?
- What academic subjects are most interesting to you?
- What is your favorite extracurricular activity and why?
- Tell me about your school, what do you like best? least?
- What is your favorite book? Or what have you read recently that you enjoyed?
- What current events/issues are you most interested in and why?
- Is there anything about your academic record that you would like to explain?

Questions you can ask in an interview:

- What’s most distinctive about this college?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college’s advising system?
- How are professors evaluated/given tenure? Emphasis on teaching vs. research?
- What is the college doing to address issues of diversity?
- What percent of full professors teach freshmen and sophomores? Are there TA’s?
- To what extent is the college “need blind” in its admissions.
- What flexibility will I have in planning courses and a major? Can I double-major?
- Any questions you have about admissions requirements or procedures.
What Colleges Look For

Admissions decisions are logical and very carefully concluded, based chiefly on academic factors. At the more selective institutions, admission depends upon personal character and accomplishments outside the classroom in addition to academic achievement. This section is offered to help you understand how colleges review applications, how they go about “crafting a class”.

1. Your high school transcript (the most important factor): The admissions officer who reads your application file will probably begin by reviewing your transcript. If he does not already know CWA well, he will review our School Profile, which accompanies each transcript and provides a wealth of information about our school, its courses, and grading policies. The profile includes a chart showing distribution of grades for the graduating class, so it will be very clear that CWA does not inflate grades. As your transcript is reviewed the reader will pay special attention to the following:

   The quality of the courses you have taken. Have you taken advantage of what’s offered at your school? Have you challenged yourself appropriately for your abilities? Gone beyond minimum requirements?

   Your classroom performance. (grades and class standing). Your GPA is not compared to applicants from other schools nor to some general standard. Evaluation of academic achievement is always done within the context of the high school and the strength of its curriculum.

2. Scores on standardized tests are generally used as a check against variation in school grading standards and as a confirmation of academic ability when considered along with the high school transcript. They are rarely the deciding factor in an admission decision. Colleges understand that many strong students who perform well daily do not “test well” on these three-hour exams, and thus your grades and your courses are most important. At some colleges, SAT/ACT scores are optional. The more selective the college, the more standardized test scores will matter. If your scores are within the middle 50% of admitted applicants to a highly selective college (a statistic that is easy to find on the college profile page in Family Connection or on their website), the college reader is likely to make a quick note of that and move on. If your scores are above that range, that’s a mark in your favor. If below, the reader may look to the rest of your file to see if you’ve compensated for this one weakness with strong grades, special talents, or compelling personal qualities.

3. Out-of-class involvement in school and community. Colleges are looking for people who will contribute positively to their communities. Consistent effort and commitment to activities beyond the classroom, leadership, and special talents make you a more desirable applicant.

The reader of your file will tend to find it is less impressive that you’ve been an undistinguished member of numerous clubs than if you are a person who has developed a talent (music, athletics, writing) or contributed as a leader (editor, class officer, captain) or achieved a special goal (Eagle Scout, 100-hour volunteer). If you have a special talent, you may choose to supply supplementary material in the form...
of slides of art work, audio or video tape clips, etc. These will be given to the appropriate department for evaluation. Athletes should contact the appropriate coach to express interest.

4. Self-presentation. Personal essays are an important part of the application. They help the admission officer to see you as a real person, not just as a bunch of numbers. See How Do I Apply Well for more on this.

5. Recommendations from teachers and your counselor, who write as advocates for you and do their best to present you positively. Recommendations, like your essays, help the college reader get to know you and to put your achievements in context. Do yourself a favor by meeting for a few minutes with each of your recommenders so that they have a fresh sense of your outlook and activities.

6. Level of demonstrated interest. Have you visited campus, if distance allows? Did you interview, if interviews are offered? Did you meet with the college representative who visited Charles Wright? Many colleges will consider how much the applicant wants to attend their institution as they make limited offers of admission from a highly qualified applicant pool. It’s always a good idea to make a case in your application for why the college to which you are applying is a good fit for you. Give some good thought to how you answer the application question, “Why are you applying?” It does matter.

Don’t
- take easy courses just for the grades - experts see through this
- spend hours on extra-curricular activities you don’t enjoy
- choose a college for prestige or to “get ahead”
- be afraid to take chances or make mistakes

Do
- take time to set priorities
- seek opportunities to mix with others from different backgrounds
- take care to enjoy the present
- keep your sense of humor handy

-William Fitzsimmons,
Dean of Admissions-Harvard
The Hook

It’s worth saying again: You are an individual, not a bundle of numbers, though it helps to have “good numbers” which reflect your achievement. Try to identify in your own mind something that will be your “point of excellence” or “hook” to catch the interest of admissions officers reading your file.

What quality or qualities most distinguish you from others at CWA and schools like ours? If you don’t yet have such a special talent or focus, it’s better to follow and develop one true interest than dabble in many and risk being seen as window dressing. If you have a long list of extra-curricular accomplishments, be sure to indicate which, among these, is your distinguishing strength or fond interest.

At the Ivy League colleges and other “most-selective” schools that admit fewer than 20% of applicants, in order to gain admission it is essential that applicants have a “hook,” in addition to academic credentials that place them among the top students in their high school class.

There are generally five categories which may constitute a hook:

1. **Academic talent:** This means notable achievement and intellectual passion that goes beyond good grades, a national contest winner perhaps, or someone who teachers say is “one of the best of my 30-year career.”

2. **Nonacademic talent:** Musical, Dramatic, Athletic, Artistic, etc.

3. **Member of an under-represented population:** First-generation in the family to attend college, an under-represented ethnic group, a woman planning to study engineering, etc.

4. **Connection** (child of an alumnus, record of family giving, affiliation with the university): This is often called a “legacy.”

5. **Well-rounded student with many demonstrated strengths.** Many colleges are not seeking a class of well-rounded individuals so much as a well-rounded class of “well lopsided” individuals. See *How Do I Apply Well?* for further information.

Those interested in learning more about how decisions are made at the most selective colleges will also find the book, *The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process at a Premier College*, by Jacques Steinberg (Penguin) of interest. With an exciting narrative that follows an admission officer from Wesleyan University over the course of an admissions recruiting and application-reading cycle, it offers the best “insider’s view” out there.
General Tips

Get Started Early!
The published deadline is not a target to aim for. It is the last acceptable date on which a college will accept your application! By setting your own deadlines 4-6 weeks ahead of this published date, you allow plenty of time for important proof-reading and editing, and you avoid last-minute “emergencies.” Colleges with “rolling admissions” read applications and offer acceptance decisions on a first-come, first-served basis. Be early!

Make a Plan
In your planner and on your bathroom mirror or other prominent place post a calendar of deadlines - YOUR deadlines - which you establish according to your own plan for being ahead of the published deadlines. Put a check box beside each item; you’ll feel better as you see these get checked off. Include dates when you will request recommendation from teachers, request transcripts from your counselor, etc.

Prepare a Master List of Biographical Information
Write down all vital statistics which will go into each of your applications: social security number, the Charles Wright Academy School Code (481-368), the dates you attended different schools, your activities at school and in the community, employment, summer activities, honors, awards and offices held, etc., etc.

How Many Apps?
We recommend 6 to 8 applications, depending on one’s aspirations. Preparing ten or more applications is expensive and time-consuming. It’s better to make a limited number of high-quality applications to a set of carefully-identified good matches in which you have serious interest. Go for balance: a couple of Reach (“dream shot”) schools, at least two Likely (“safety”) choices that you really like, and one or more Possible (“mid-range”) choices to round out the list.

Washington’s Public Universities
All of our state universities have their own online applications on their websites with information and instructions. It is a simple matter to research and familiarize yourself with requirements, create your personal account with login and password, and download appropriate files. Don’t hesitate to e-mail or call the college when questions arise.

The Common Application
This membership organization including hundreds of prominent colleges, allows the applicant to enter personal information a single time and have it sent to different participating colleges. Family Connection interfaces with the Common Application, allowing your transcripts and school recommendations to be sent electronically to your colleges, matching up with your application when it gets to the college. Access the application and create your own account at www.commonapp.org. Pay particular attention to completing all required Supplements, specified separately by each college—these are additional short-answer questions and are also found on the Common Application website. After completing your application online, be sure to “print preview” and edit before hitting “submit.” After you send your application, obtain confirmation from the college verifying that your application was received and is complete.

It is your responsibility to confirm with each college that your application is complete.
Applying Early

Offered by some colleges and universities, Early Decision and Early Action are special application procedures for students who have completed their search thoughtfully and determined early where they will apply.

Early Decision is binding: if admitted, the applicant is obligated to accept the offer and immediately withdraw applications at other colleges. Thus, committing to an Early Decision application requires certainty that this one college rises above all others as a best fit and, therefore, top choice. A senior may not apply Early Decision to more than one college.

Early Action is non-binding: there is no obligation to decide until the regular reply date on May 1. Except when prohibited by college policy (known as Restricted Early Action or Single Choice Early Action) seniors are welcome to file multiple early action applications.

Early Decision and Early Action deadlines are generally in November, although some colleges offer multiple rounds with later deadlines.

Should I Apply Early?

Recently, the media has drawn attention to many high-profile colleges that fill a significant percentage of their freshman classes from their Early Decision application pools and report higher admit rates for Early Decision applications than for those who apply at the regular deadline. This has led many to conclude that applying early is a strategy that should be employed by all.

In fact, while it can be advantageous for some, Early Decision is not for everyone. Because an Early Decision applicant has made a commitment to enroll if admitted, colleges do give them a marginal advantage in the applicant pool. Therefore, Early Decision is an appropriate and beneficial option for the applicant who is thoughtful, decisive, and prepared.

Early Decision applicants should be absolutely sure that the early college is their first choice; they should feel confident that their test scores and grades through the end of the junior year are competitive for that college; and they should be able to present an application that shows their best-quality work by the early deadline.

Students hoping for a boost to their GPA or test scores in the senior year, or who need more time to prepare the application are better off waiting for the regular deadline. Note: financial aid applicants considering an Early Decision application are advised to make use of the college’s net price calculator, available on the college website, to obtain an estimate of costs before committing. A financial aid application will need to be filed early, and an estimated award will accompany an acceptance to the college.

Because Early Action applications do not require a commitment to enroll, students who feel ready to apply – secure with grades and test scores through the end of junior year and able to do their best work on the application by the deadline – should feel free to consider this option. The advantages are getting several applications done early, and potentially learning you’ve been admitted to one or more colleges before winter break.

For those who do elect to apply early, there are important considerations for SAT testing. Many colleges require SAT Subject Tests in addition to the SAT. Since most applicants take the SAT several times, it is necessary to plan a testing schedule carefully. If a student wishes to take the SAT and SAT Subject Tests two times each, four test dates are required, two or three of which should occur during spring of junior year. Fall of senior year offers one, or perhaps two, final test administrations for early candidates.
The College Application

Each application comes with specific instructions. Read and follow them precisely! Make special note of deadlines, application fees, number of recommendations required and standardized testing requirements. All of these vary by college and it is your responsibility to know them.

Be sure to arrange for SAT and/or ACT score reports to be sent directly to the college by the testing agency. There are generally three parts to the application: your part, the teacher recommendation, and the school part, often called the Secondary School Report.

Your Part

This generally consists of personal information, a profile of academic coursework, a resume of extracurricular activities, and a personal essay. After completing your part of the application, you will submit it directly to the college. Be sure to save a copy in case the college does not receive it.

The Personal Essay

For most this is the most daunting part of the whole journey. Few things inspire as much procrastination. A whole industry springs up to help allay the fears. Summer camps in essay-writing are joined by books on “Essays That Work.”

The pressure drives students to write something they think will win a prize instead of simply helping the reader to hear and know the voice of the person who earned all of those grades, got involved in all of those activities, and has a life, too! We can’t tell you the number of times college people tell us about their eyes glazing over when they see one more essay that tries to be heady or clever. Keep the focus on something simple which can serve as a prism to reveal some of the rest of you. Obviously, you can’t reduce your whole self to 300 words. The idea is to present a glimpse, an offering of self-expression, not The Whole You in concentrated form. Writing about oneself is especially difficult. But that’s the assignment. How to proceed?

Colleges are looking to see how well you write and to find out more about you as a person. That’s all. This is not a Pulitzer contest. When selecting your topic, ask yourself how many of your classmates could submit the same essay. If the answer is more than a few, then you are writing about a group, not an individual. Go back to the drawing board. If you are writing about a person or event that affected you, be very sure to take the step of shifting the focus to how you were affected. Try to relax and be self-revealing.

Your audience is a real person, probably 20- or 30-something, not a panel of aged judges. This person probably is sitting at home, around 11:30 at night, with a cup of tea and a stack of 20 or 30 files to read tonight. This person likes kids your age and wants to know how you think and feel, what moves you. Clear, personal, and specific writing is easier to connect with than some lofty or convoluted statement about global warming or the marginalized urban poor, worthy as those topics are. This person has read too many dull or cosmic statements and is hoping for something fresh and “just you.” No matter what the assigned topic is, the real topic is you.

Live with your essay questions for a while before you begin writing. Make fragmentary notes. Let it all “compost” for a few days. You might even carry a small spiral pad and pencil in your pocket for these few weeks to capture the sudden idea or inspiration. As with all effective writing, plan to revise several times. Don’t let your inner critic’s voice dominate you in the early going. Simply begin to get words going onto your computer: first thoughts, just as they are. Then park all of it for 48 hours. Come back and do some tuning. When you feel satisfied with a first draft, ask a trusted friend (skilled in English) to give you some feedback. Pay attention to your opening lines. Your essay may get little more than a skimming at first glance, perhaps just the opening sentences and the
final paragraph. These should draw the reader in for more. Spelling and grammar matter! Spell-check and proofread carefully; then have someone else do the same. Speak and write directly from your personal experience. Make this personal. “Tell it,” in a voice that speaks of your own, unique “take” on things. Then “show it,” with details. What would the eye have seen, the ear have heard; what did the mind and heart experience? At school we have a resource binder of selected sample essays which may serve to help you gain a sense of what’s possible, the range of approaches you might consider.

The Teacher Part

You should ask for recommendations from teachers who have taught you in a core academic subject during your junior or senior year. Ask a teacher for whom you’ve done your best work (not necessarily your highest grade) and who you feel knows you well. Many colleges require two teacher recommendations; some, only one and some none. Have the same teacher(s) write recommendations to all of the colleges to which you apply.

After a teacher agrees to write for you, say thanks (she just committed to doing several hours of extra work on your behalf and is probably being asked to do the same thing by a dozen others), and offer to meet for ten minutes so that you can give a fresh update of your reflections on your journey through school, and a sense of your hopes and plans for the future.

Next, log into Family Connection to enter an electronic teacher request so your teacher will receive a reminder and be able to prepare and track your recommendation online. In a few cases where colleges do not accept electronic documents and where paper forms are required, noted with a stamp icon in your Family Connection list under the column marked “Delivery Method,” fill out the top of each form completely; add a stamped, addressed business-size envelope with no return address, and attach a note telling the teacher your requested deadline for mailing. For all teacher recommendations, check back with the teacher a few days before the deadline. (In case a busy teacher has forgotten, you save the day for both of you.) If for some reason a teacher must decline your request, see your counselor for help in choosing another teacher for a recommendation.

The School Part

Your act of using Family Connection to move a college from your Prospective List (“Colleges I’m Thinking About”) to your Active Applications List (“Colleges I’m Applying To”) is how you officially let us know you are applying to a college and want us to prepare and send a school report + transcript + recommendation in support of your application.

If a college application includes a section called the Secondary School Report, and requires that it be sent by mail, bring it to your counselor. For the Common Application you do not need to do this, as we send everything online via Family Connection, which interfaces with the Common Application.

The information we send in support of your application includes a Secondary School Report, an official copy of your transcript, a counselor’s recommendation, and a copy of our School Profile.

The Transcript is the official record of your academic achievement in Upper School. It is an outline of your high school career, including names of courses, grades, and career GPA.

The Counselor’s Statement, prepared with great care, seeks to advocate for you by presenting you in the best possible light. Comments are woven together from your permanent record, academic comments, informal jottings by faculty, Winterim evaluations, parent input, and a wealth of information from your own interviews, questionnaires, and impressions gleaned in passing around school.
There is truth to the idea, “You write your own recommendation by the way you live each day.” We simply get the pleasure of compiling the best and writing it in words. A confidential communique between high school and college offices, this statement focuses on particular strengths, academic work, extracurricular involvement, and personal qualities. We strive to be affirmative, candid, balanced and fair. Where weaknesses are noted, we are quick to report progress and positive development.

**Signing The Waiver**  Both the teacher recommendation form and the Secondary School Report generally ask you to sign a waiver.

While you have a legal right to review admissions papers once you are admitted to a college, we strongly urge you to sign this release. In waiving your rights—remember, you would read such recommendations only after being admitted anyway—you are essentially saying that you have nothing to hide and that you trust the recommender to candidly and fairly represent you.

To not sign such a waiver may disadvantage you by raising concern on the part of the reader: Is something wrong here? Is there something being hidden? It’s a good idea not to stand out in a potentially negative way.

**Disciplinary Policy**  As part of college admissions, many institutions ask whether an applicant has been subject to a disciplinary action at school. When asked, we report to colleges all disciplinary violations resulting in suspension or expulsion from Charles Wright, and we encourage students to do the same.

If a college does not ask specifically about discipline, we adhere to our own reporting policy: we reserve the right to report any serious Honor Code violation which occurs during senior year. If a student’s academic or citizenship standing changes substantially at anytime during the senior year, we will notify colleges. Our disciplinary reports to colleges are thorough and candid, including reference, as deemed appropriate, to a student’s record of citizenship before and after the infraction and an explanation of how the student responded to the event.
NCAA Athletics

Those interested in playing an intercollegiate sport in college need to begin making contact with college coaches early in their junior year. Let your counselor and your CWA or club/outside coach know of your intentions so that they can offer advice and support.

Scholar-athletes destined for NCAA Division I & II competition at college should come to the college office to pick up materials related to registering with the NCAA Clearinghouse. NCAA maintains an excellent and informative internet web page at www.NCAA.org.

Also check out the helpful book, The Winning Edge, the student athlete’s guide to college sports, Octameron Press.

Learning Disabilities

Students with a diagnosed learning style difference sometimes feel threatened by standardized testing requirements and fears about how their record of achievement may be misunderstood by colleges. Some of our brightest students require, and receive, extended time on a “nonstandard” administration of standardized tests.

We are eager to talk with students and families about particular plans for addressing learning differences in the college admissions process. Please contact us to arrange a time to talk. Ms. Coleman is also eager to participate in helping further your plans. You may also wish to consult The K & W Guide to Colleges for the Learning Disabled, Tenth Edition, by Kravets and Wax, Princeton Review, a helpful resource that we keep in our college counseling resource library.

The Arts

Students interested in pursuing a special program in the visual or performing arts, either at a college with a strong department in the chosen field or at a conservatory or specialty school, should also to talk about their plans and to look over some of the special directories we have available.

Our performing and visual arts teachers here at Charles Wright are a great resource when preparing for auditions or compiling portfolios.

Visual Arts students should also consider attending National Portfolio Day in Seattle www.portfolioday.net where admissions officers from art schools will give you feedback on your work.

International Students

Students who are not United States citizens often have additional application requirements. Look carefully on each college’s website for any special instructions for international applicants. Plan to submit a financial statement, provide visa information, and take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) www.toeflgoanywhere.org, as these are commonly required.

Many college admission offices have a person with special expertise in International Admissions. Direct your questions to this person if possible. The website www.edupass.org also has lots of useful information.

Transcripts

Students are responsible for requesting transcripts via Family Connection in advance college application deadlines on the following schedule:

- Early decision applications: one month prior to deadline
- January 1 applications: November 20
- January 15 applications: December 1
- All other applications: one month prior
SAT and ACT

Colleges routinely accept scores from either or both of these well-established national programs. We discuss with students which test seems most appropriate to their individual circumstances.

The ACT is an achievement test, based on school curriculum and designed to measure retained knowledge; it includes verbal, math, science and English-usage elements. Some students, especially those who “don’t test well,” find the ACT more user-friendly, its questions more straightforward and less tricky. The ACT includes a Science section, and there is no penalty for guessing.

The SAT is a reasoning test designed to measure native ability in critical reading, math and writing. For the SAT, students are encouraged to bring a 4-function scientific/graphing calculator, although questions can be answered without one. The Writing section asks students to compose a short essay that requires them to take a position on an issue and use examples to support their position. Questions are included to see how well students use standard written English. These questions are designed to measure your ability to recognize errors and improve sentences and paragraphs.

The SAT Subject Tests are one-hour events, three of which may be combined at one testing session, designed to measure achievement in particular skill areas such as mathematics, a lab science, history, or a foreign language. Only highly selective colleges require the SAT Subject Tests. Many colleges have become “Test Optional,” to help downplay undue stress on the role these tests play in admissions. They use other assessments, such as graded writing samples, essays and recommendations, as reliable indicators of future success.

Test taking is a learned skill which improves with experience. We counsel in favor of taking practice tests, not by taking the official test many times. Two official administrations are generally the norm. College Board studies show that the benefits of retesting decrease significantly after the third trial.

Please visit www.collegeboard.com for more information about the SAT, including online registration or www.actstudent.org for ACT information and registration. Charles Wright’s School Code is 481-368

Extended Time  Extended time is available for any qualified student whose learning difference is documented in advance by the school’s Learning Specialist. See Ms. Coleman for details.

Scores, Score Reports, and Score Choice

Your SAT and ACT scores are electronically recorded at the testing agency. Colleges require an official report, sent directly by the testing agency. Charles Wright does not report your test scores to colleges. There are two ways to have your scores sent: you can specify colleges at the time of registration for the test, and you can use mail/phone/internet to have additional score reports sent later.

For SAT takers, the College Board will send all scores on record to each college when a score report is requested, unless a student selects the “Score Choice” option. Colleges will use a student’s highest scores, in many cases the highest score from each subsection (Critical Reading, Math, Writing), even if they occurred on different dates. “Score Choice” allows students to send scores from selected test dates only. We advise students to use...
caution before selecting “Score Choice.” Many colleges require that all scores be sent. (Details about college policies are available on www.collegeboard.com); withholding scores from one test date may prevent colleges from seeing your highest score for a particular subsection; and waiting to review scores before sending will cost more and may delay your score reports. The bottom line is that colleges will use only your best scores, and you can trust them to do so. Therefore, using “Score Choice” only adds confusion and the possibility of error.

For the ACT, a score report sends only data from one specific test date (so you can pick your best.)

Test Preparation

The choice is yours. If in doubt, and if bound for a most-selective university, plan on doing some type of SAT prep. We recommend that, after thoughtfully considering one’s personal learning style, the following be considered:

When you take the SAT, opt for the Question & Answer Service which, for a nominal fee, delivers in addition to your score report a complete itemized printout of your answers, showing the correct answer for each item, plus all of the actual questions. A modest investment of time in studying your responses may significantly boost your understanding and skills in preparation for the next inning of the testing game. Consider hiring a tutor for target skills. Talk with your counselor about local resources and approaches best suited for your needs.

The Official SAT Study Guide, published by The College Board, contains tips on how to understand and answer questions from each section, and it contains several practice tests with answers.

If the steps above do not suit your style, if you benefit most from a no-distractions, sit-down-and-do-the-job approach, a test-prep course may be your best bet. Talk with your counselor about local course offerings.

Advanced Placement Tests

Administered by the College Board, these give students the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement while still in high school. This may enable advanced standing or credit when you get to college. The exams are administered at CWA in May and are usually taken by students who have completed a year-long AP course. Students may take any number of AP exams. Individual departments at each college determine what score qualifies a student to “test out” and thus satisfy a college credit requirement. Information about signing up for these tests is available in winter each year. Although not required for admission, successful exam scores (3 and higher) from junior year or earlier can be self-reported to colleges as part of the application. All scores are then reported to the college a student will attend at the end of the senior year, allowing for credit to be granted when applicable.

TOEFL

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is designed to measure proficiency in spoken and written English for foreign students (or students for whom English is not their first language). Colleges establish institutional requirements for entering freshmen. See Mr. Blyler, Ms. Ryan, or go to www.toeflgoanywhere.org.
How Do I Handle the News?

It is 100% certain that highly selective colleges must, and will, deny a vast number of highly qualified applicants. Being rejected isn’t the same as being a reject! When decision letters begin to arrive there will be inevitable disappointments and triumphs. Try to keep it all in perspective.

When disappointment comes in the form of a rejection letter, it’s best to take some time to allow the painful feelings to work through for awhile. Injured or misjudged as you may feel, in a week or two balance and perspective will return and you will be better able to move forward with plans for the college you will come to make your home for the next four years. It’s understandable to think “That was the perfect school for me;” the fact is that there are many fine settings for you. Research shows that where you go is far less significant than what you do while you are there.

Deposits and Final Transcripts

Keep in mind that college acceptances are provisional until the final transcript is received in late June, and colleges do rescind offers of admission in cases where there is an unreasonable drop in academic achievement. Finish strong.

In sending a deposit by May 1, you commit to attend a college and reserve a place in the freshman class. Do not send a deposit to more than one college! CWA will send one final transcript to the one college you commit to attend. “Double-depositing” is strictly prohibited because, in effect, it denies a place to another applicant. If there are special circumstances which complicate your ability to reach a decision by May 1, talk with your counselor. Many colleges are willing to grant an extension for legitimate reasons.

Waiting Lists

While most decisions from colleges arrive in the form of an acceptance or denial, some students every year will be placed on a waiting list at one or more of the colleges to which they apply.

Waiting lists are sometimes used, sometimes not used, and nobody can forecast the extent to which, in a given year, students will be pulled from them; it all depends on the choices of those already admitted.

Wait lists can be huge, as large as the freshman class itself, because it may happen that a large number of admitted applicants choose to attend another college. If a college is left with imbalances among certain categories (gender, ethnicity, academic talent, athletic talent, extracurricular talent, etc.) it seeks to have ample quality in its waiting list to compensate.

If you are placed on a wait list by a college you are sure you want to attend, write a letter telling the admissions office that this is your first choice college, update them on any new accomplishments of which they may not be aware, and tell them you will definitely attend if offered the opportunity. This alerts them that they can count on you, which may give you an advantage over someone who remains an uncertainty.

Colleges want to assure a full freshman class and your commitment may help cinch a place for you. Be sure to let your counselor know how you feel, too, so a phone call can be made emphasizing your strengths as a candidate.

At the same time, you must send a deposit to another college you plan to attend. If you are later pulled from a wait list, you forfeit the first deposit and notify the first college of your change in plans so that they may offer your place to someone on their wait list.
How Best to Help

Leaving home is the difficult and underlying great agenda which parents do well to keep in view through the entire process of college admissions.

There is a knack to taking the lead, gently, to help overcome inertia and natural reserve in the face of what is, for most, utterly frightening.... and then, gradually, dropping alongside, then a few paces behind, always supporting. Your son or daughter may be a go-getter right from the start, but it’s safe to say there are misgivings and fears not far beneath the surface.

Be patient, and a good listener. The changing relationship between parents and college-bound juniors and seniors is challenging. Even the most well-organized student can suffer an overload of anxiety. It is enough for a parent to listen and understand, without giving advice. Inquire, be interested, and send a message of trust in your child’s ability to navigate independently and make sensible plans. The early notions and choices you hear may contain some surprises.

Help your child come around to a place of clarity and balance. Part of arriving there is testing, trying out, eliminating- independently, so the choice is authentically one’s own - but you can and should certainly take an active role.

Become informed  Start exploring a few colleges online or purchase a reputable college directory. Top-rated among the many available is The Fiske Guide to Colleges, www.fiskeguide.com (be sure to get the most current edition.) You may also wish to purchase one of those thick, encyclopedic compendia of objective data such as The College Handbook, published by The College Board. Leave these out on a table where your college-bound junior can thumb through them.

Know the timeline  Read the checklist sections of this handbook and note important deadlines on your calendar. Yours is the support role. Being informed is enough, with the well-timed question offered as a backstop. “Have you registered for the SAT?” “Have you checked in with your college counselor?” “Have you submitted your application?”

College Tours  Shortly after College Night in junior year, you might suggest a few campus visits here in Washington. A more complete college tour, often done in pieces through junior year and senior year, can help solidify answers to questions about how colleges differently offer an education, both in and out of the classroom. Beyond getting a read on each particular college, what this is really all about is beginning to picture oneself living and getting along independently (and happily) in a setting which brings out and enhances all that has been planted at home, school and community. Gradually your daughter or son takes over the process, assumes the lead. Be patient. If you cannot afford to travel to a distant campus, call to get the names of current students who are from your area.

Encourage a Balanced College List  Beware of inflated expectations. The bad-risk “balloon” list consists of many Reach (“dream shot”) schools plus one Likely (“safety”) choice; it’s a formula for disappointment! At the most selective institutions an astonishing number of eminently qualified, admissible candidates must be turned away each year simply due to lack of space.

Where admit rates are below 40%, it is prudent to anticipate the likelihood, however unwelcome, of not being admitted. Thus, any list should include one or more Possible (“mid-range”) choices. As with the back-up school, these should be as carefully researched as the Reach schools. Please pick up the phone or come in to see us when concerns or questions arise.
Financial Aid

Financial aid is one of the most confusing, complex, and ever-changing parts of the admissions process. The good news is that most financial aid professionals are caring, expert, and willing to take time to help you understand the process. Each college has its own priorities and process, and so the best source of accurate and reliable information is the office of financial aid at each college.

Although neighbors, friends or relatives may suggest that it’s not worth the time to apply for financial aid, you should become informed about your options before making the decision not to apply. A good first step is to use a college’s “Net Price Calculator”, found on their website, which will estimate your cost of attending that institution with potential aid and scholarships taken into account.

For additional help, a Financial Aid Night is offered at CWA in early November. Resource books are available at our college office as well as from local colleges, banks and www.finaid.org.

Many families underestimate the substantial tuition discounts available through grants, scholarships, loans and other forms of financial aid. Don’t let the reported sticker price of private higher education discourage you from exploring the possibilities. In many cases financial aid awards reduce the cost substantially. In fact, the most expensive colleges tend to have the deepest pockets for both merit and need-based aid.

Also, consider “The Drop-down Principle.” Your chances of receiving sufficient aid are improved when you are among the strongest applicants in a college’s applicant pool. Include in your list several colleges which you select by “dropping down” in selectivity (not in quality), so that you are one of their stronger applicants. These will be among your Possible and Likely schools, not Reach schools. In the end, you may find that attending one of these schools with substantial financial assistance is your best choice.

Financial Aid Terms to Know

Total Cost: educational costs such as tuition, fees, books, supplies AND living expenses such as room and board, personal expenses, and travel.

Financial Aid or Financial Assistance includes loans, work-study job offerings, and grants or scholarships. Scholarships can be need-based or merit-based; some students receive both.

Demonstrated Need is, essentially, the difference between what a family can contribute (estimated family contribution), and cost of attending a college. Each college performs a needs analysis based on some combination of federal methodology and, in the case of independent colleges and universities, an “institutional methodology” to determine Expected Family Contribution. In order to treat students equitably colleges strive to reach a clear and candid picture of a student’s financial circumstances and resources: income, assets, debt, expenses (including other tuition payments and medical payments), family size, home equity, etc are all part of the evaluation.

The complexities make it inappropriate for further discussion here. Contact a financial aid officer and/or read one of the many resource books available at CWA’s college office. There is also a wealth of information on the internet at websites such as www.finaid.org and www.collegeboard.com. Both of these sites provide calculators which furnish an estimate of Expected Family Contribution if you apply for financial aid.

Need Blind Admissions is the practice of reviewing an applicant’s file and reaching a decision on admissibility without consideration of financial need. Colleges with abundant endowment income and other financial resources have been able to “meet full demonstrated need for every applicant admitted,” to the extent that available funds are not exhausted. With tuition rising faster than family incomes, demonstrated need has outstripped these resources, so that many
colleges are no longer able to be need-blind throughout the admissions season. As with everything else in financial aid, each college responds differently to this situation.

The Financial Aid Package
An “aid package” typically consists of three parts: loans, a work-study job, and grants or scholarships. A federal Stafford loan or Perkins loan is a form of financial aid. These are low-interest loans, the interest for which is often subsidized by the government during college, with repayment and interest accrual not beginning until six months after graduation.

Student loans may also be unsubsidized loans, which have earlier repayment and interest accrual. Aid packages may also include parent loans, such as the Plus Loan. Each college has its particular nuances to their aid packages, and for details you should consult with the college’s Office of Financial Aid.

Grants are either federally funded, such as the Pell Grant, or more often institutionally funded. Grants are aid that, unlike loans, do not need to be repaid.

Work Study jobs are jobs provided by the college to help students earn some of the money to pay for their college costs.

Total Cost is shown in the award letter, including books, travel expenses, and spending money for incidentals. To the extent that there is demonstrated need, the award letter will specify a combination of loans, student employment, and grants intended to make it possible for the student to meet the cost of attending.

Merit Scholarships
Based on achievement, merit scholarships are available not only from individual colleges but from a host of independent programs too numerous to mention. Sometimes a college will offer a President’s Scholarship or Trustee’s Scholarship, regardless of financial need, to a talented and accomplished scholar they seek to enroll.

Some colleges offer specified dollar-amount scholarships for entering freshmen who have earned a particular GPA in high school. Numerous other, usually smaller, competitive scholarships are offered by organizations and corporations.

Check Family Connection’s scholarship list. Institutional merit scholarships are available through the college’s admissions and financial aid offices. When you contact or visit a school, include an inquiry to the financial aid office whose staff is courteous and expert in helping you through the maze of questions and concerns attending this complex topic.

On Family Connection and at the college office we maintain a file of current scholarship announcements. We also purchase each year a reference copy of The Scholarship Handbook, a directory of listings.

Perhaps the most effective resource for scholarship searches is the following internet website: www.fastweb.com, which allows users to search for scholarships matching individual attributes. It is the responsibility of seniors and families to individually use these resources for research, and we are very glad to help you get started.

Note that some scholarships require the FAFSA application, regardless of a family’s financial status, in order to qualify for competition. Check the particular instructions for each scholarship program.

Beware commercial scholarship search organizations, particularly those advertising “millions go unclaimed....” Some of these are come-on’s, and many are “feel-good” rather than productive undertakings. Some are outright scams. You should never pay a fee to “learn about scholarship opportunities.”

All of this information is available at no cost from the above-named sources. To research, select, apply for and successfully win a merit scholarship takes diligent work, as the competition is keen and few are selected. By the same token, if you don’t try you cannot win.
FAFSA
The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is available online in early January at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA is the standard application form required as a foundation for virtually all financial aid from any institution. It determines your eligibility for federally funded financial aid (such as Stafford Loans and Pell grants). Colleges set their own deadlines by which you are expected to file the FAFSA. Pay close attention; if it is late, you could miss out. Help in completing the FAFSA is available from your college counselor and from college financial aid offices.

Three to five days after you submit the FAFSA, you will receive the Student Aid Report (SAR). You should review the data on the SAR, and if necessary you can make corrections to your record. At the top right of the SAR is the Estimated Family Contribution (EFC), which is the dollar amount the FAFSA formula estimates a family can afford for education. It is important to understand that many colleges use additional information to further refine the family contribution, so you cannot assume that the EFC on the SAR is what every college will expect you to pay.

If your family has unusual financial circumstances affecting the current year, such as excessive medical expenses, complications of divorce, or other condition, consider writing a letter to be sent to each college financial aid office explaining your situation. Such a letter should be mailed separately from the FAFSA.

Early Decision applicants follow a similar, earlier procedure explained in detail by the materials sent to you by the college. Be sure to request Early Decision financial aid materials at the same time you request Early Decision application forms.

The PROFILE Application for Financial Aid
Many private colleges ask for more detailed information than the FAFSA requires, and most use a form called PROFILE. The PROFILE incorporates essential questions plus those unique to particular colleges from which a candidate seeks aid. The PROFILE is completed on line with current version available on October 1.

For those who have identified colleges of choice by November, we recommend registering for, and completing, the PROFILE by the end of December. As with the FAFSA, be mindful of individual college deadlines. After the deadlines, financial aid budgets at some colleges may be expended. If you are on time with financial aid papers, colleges will usually be able to send you a financial aid award at the same time as the offer of admission. Go to www.profileonline.collegeboard.com to complete the PROFILE and to see the list of colleges that use it.

The Award Letter
If, after carefully and fairly reviewing your financial aid award letter, you feel that the college’s offer of financial assistance will not make it possible for your child to enroll, you may wish to write a letter of appeal, provided you are able to show cause in light of, say, unreported expenses or changed circumstances affecting your ability to contribute at the expected level. A tactful letter or call is welcome and considered helpful in reaching a fair, informed decision. In any case, please know that college admissions and financial aid professionals are generally people with strong integrity who work very hard to fairly meet the needs of their institution and the hundreds of families it serves. Those who act as if colleges are “the enemy” and who come on strong with a sense of entitlement to “more aid” are rarely successful in extracting additional support.
The following five essays are samples of successful writings from students of Milton Academy in Massachusetts, available to us thanks to Milton college counselor Susan Case. They represent a wide variety of styles and several kinds of essays that work.

Sample Essay #1: Share an experience that tells us something about you.

On summer mornings the sun doesn’t hit Broadway until about 9:30. In the cool morning light shopkeepers are relaxed and open their stores without the tension and nervous energy that comes with the sun and the influx of customers. Walking to work in the mornings this summer I became reacquainted with my neighborhood, and learned anew the rhythms of the early morning city.

Before I came to Milton, my brother and I walked ten blocks uptown to school every day at 7:45. Streets are less sophisticated in the morning, and each day we passed the shadows and remnants of hectic afternoons and loud evenings. Tired students emerged to buy their bagels, drunks slept on street corners, and passing busses seemed subdued by the quiet around them. There were certain constants to our journeys: Frank, our doorman, waging his own crusade against the trash that swept the sidewalk in front of our building; the crazy woman on 102nd, who read old newspapers out loud at the top of her voice; families working at the fruit markets on every corner. They were a part of our mornings, we were a part of theirs. The students, the families and some of the drunks would smile and wave as we passed.

From an early age I observed and absorbed events and people around me. At age six, much to my parents amusement (and dismay) I arrived home from school and announced that the local transvestite had a new skirt. At twelve I cried at the group of homeless men, who somehow bought candy to give to the passing children, and looks of positive revulsion on mothers’ faces as they drew their children away from the offering.

As I return home for vacations I look forward to walking the city’s streets. At times I feel as though I never left. The perennial Communist candidate still stares resolutely down from a lamppost and assures me that “Time is the best Democrat”. For his sake I hope that he really believes that, because he’s been running for the same office as long as I can remember.

It was hard to leave the city to go to Milton. Just before I left my father told that he was worried that I would become “too sheltered” at a New England prep school. I told him not to worry: I took enough of my neighborhood with me.

Sample Essay #2: Tell us about an activity that has been meaningful to you.

Black shoes with soft soles are neither visible nor audible. Black pants are snug to improve mobility. The cuffs of my black shirt are at my elbows so that they will not be torn on tree limbs. Black gloves enhance my grip and protect against rope burns.

Although each article of clothing is independent of the others, collectively they constitute my “theater blacks”. Except for the three production weeks, when they are essential because I wear them nightly backstage during the “running” of plays, I do not remove them from the back of my closet.

The only sound backstage is the on-stage voice of Bottom, the Weaver (Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream): “No more words: away! go away.” As the stage goes black, I make eye contact with Chris, signaling to him that the stage is clear, letting him know that I am ready. Smoothly and quickly, we fly in (lower from above) the two hundred pound main drape (curtain). We strike (remove off stage) the tree, the mound, and a flat. Quickly we set in (place and secure on stage in its assigned spot) another tree on top of the platform. We secure the backdrop and hurry cross-stage to the curtain, fifty feet away. Suddenly, backstage becomes black, the music begins, and we raise the curtain to the top of the proscenium arch.

Walking off stage, Chris raises his hand. A silent high five. Only two minutes ago, we were in the same place lowering the same curtain. At the beginning of the week, the shift took us seven minutes. This “time”, on opening night, counted. (We have used a stopwatch to “keep score”.) Under an appropriately
clear, black, and starless sky. Chris and I walk outside where the crew is preparing for the next two minute shift, ninety minutes away. Three months ago, we were a group of individuals with two similarities: some free time and a desire to build sets. Now, we are a cohesive unit, spending more time together than any other team at school. We have practices. We have “games”. We have uniforms - black. We are connected in black. Wearing black enhances the mystery. We have few “fans”. Mostly we stay in the dark.

Sample Essay #3: Identify a person who is a personal hero or heroine and articulate the influence this person or character has had on you.

I learn Spanish literature from a petite, sophisticated woman who has yet to appear in anything less than pearls, a well-cut suit and carefully scraped-back hair. Nevertheless, not one class has gone by without her eventually sitting cross-legged on her desk, eyes intent behind wire-rimmed glasses, hair slipping from her ponytail as if in agreement with her insistence that Spanish is exciting and all-encompassing, that Spanish literature is life reflected.

At first I thought she was a lunatic, ranting about “el simbulo”, “las metaforas”, and “el tema”. I spent the first week getting accustomed to her quick Iberian way of speaking, catching every other verb or noun, frantically trying to piece together what exactly she wanted from me. Each time she would veer her gaze in my direction, I would bend my head down to my note pad, furiously scribbling down some non-important point in the hopes that she wouldn’t call on me. However, as time went on, and we got deeper and deeper into Niebla, a Spanish novel about a man who awakens to life after thirty years under his mother’s protective wing, I began to actually understand what she was asking and could even answer a few of her questions. After each paper, and there were and still are quite a few, I would get back sheets with her distinctive red scrawling. Senora Colbert has either obviously never heard of the effects of red pen on anxious students or simply refuses to pull her punches.

She teaches with the determined belief that you have read and understand the work and, if not, are courageous and intelligent enough to ask questions. While sometimes it comes off as a sort of “tough love”, she gets and expects results. She has committed herself to helping us understand and appreciate Spanish literature and work at a college level. Sometimes her pressure is difficult to bear and one dreams of not having to do an hour and a half of homework each night, but Senora Colbert demands from me what she demands from herself: complete attention and focus. The level of exchange is relatively balanced, though sometimes we fall short of her expectations.

However, I have come to realize that she doesn’t work us for the sheer pleasure of it; she is truly a woman with a love, a passion—Spanish literature—and she has no qualms about expressing it. I sit, amazed by her un-flagging energy and patience. She has found something to live for in her worn versions of the crisp, new novels we cart into class. She has summoned in me the desire to find that same love and inspire the same curiosity and interest in others. It is because of her and the literature she has opened to me that I know what I want out of life: a passion that overcomes wage reductions and surly students, the courage to express that passion, even to an often times unworthy group of seventeen year olds, and the ability to catch someone’s eye, if only in the few minutes before the bell rings.
Sample Essay #4: Describe an object that is important to you and explain why.

My Kelty Redwing backpack is folded up in my closet. Cramped on a shelf next to a box of old textbooks and forgotten letters, my backpack, like me, would rather be elsewhere.

Gloomy New England is no place for an active pack such as mine. There, the pack’s buoyant purple, teal, and navy blue colors seem lost in shadow. Helpless, I do likewise, and watch my skin turn from a healthy tan to sickly white. We can hardly wait for the upcoming vacation. I take my pack to and from school with me. Holding up to 5600 cubic inches, my pack feels comfortable on my back even with sixty pounds of gear.

During winter vacation, I usually take a skiing trip to a cabin in the Washington State Wilderness. Loaded with everything from Monopoly to a waffle-iron my backpack shields me from snow dropped by evergreens. It never actually skiis, but my backpack wouldn’t dare miss a downhill ski trip in the Rockies of Idaho. I leave it in a lodge or hotel room to relax beside the fire because it’s too cumbersome for a ski-lift. While my friends and I pursue a game of contact snowball fighting on a frozen lake, I look up and see my backpack leaned up against a frosty window, undoubtedly watching us.

Winter vacation ends rapidly. Nylon straps get tangled, YKK zippers get stuck, and in resistance the Kelty seems to weigh more than usual, but I win the fight and return it to school as scheduled. Though a battle ensues in returning to school, departure from it is effortless. Stuffed to the brim, my Kelty finally migrates west at the end of the school season.

Summer is definitely our favorite part of the year: little confinement and every weekend off. A camping trip on the river and we bask in the sun as our natural colors return. My backpack approves when loaded with riverside litter, since wilderness is best appreciated in its clean, natural state. If I spot any imposing clear-cuts, my backpack will listen patiently while I rant. We hike in the mountains and now, I envy the pack, since it gets to sit outdoors all night and observe its surroundings, while I breathe rapidly at the bottom of my sleeping bag trying not to freeze to death. On three-day trips we’ll probably spend an afternoon on a ridge at thirteen thousand feet. We will lean against a slab of granite, listen to the wind whine, and watch the clouds fly by, both overhead and underneath us. Before descending I rummage through the pack once, hoping to find enough food to maybe stay out in the mountains for the rest of the summer. Despite its ample volume, my pack is never hiding an extra month’s worth of supplies. If we are lucky we may see a river trip before the summer dies. My pack will ride in a dry bag and I, in an inflatable kayak.

Sample Essay #5: Share a meaningful experience.

I have an interest in history, which is intensified by my interest in literature, because these two disciplines are made up of stories that people chose to tell about themselves. I believe that a family defines itself by the way it creates its own history in the form of a loving myth. I saw this process in action when my grandfather chose to celebrate his seventy-fifth birthday at the Alamo. No one in our family lives in San Antonio, or even nearby, but it seemed to him an appropriate place to reunite his scattered troops, and we were willing to come. Children and grandchildren flew from San Francisco, San Diego, Denver, Memphis, Boston, and Costa Rica. Grandma and Granddad drove over from Albuquerque. Twenty-three of us gathered for two days at the legendary national historical site that so significantly defines and shapes our American story, to celebrate his life, and to recreate, and in a sense redefine our own story together, our own personal, family history with its heroes and villains, its triumphs and disasters.

I am aware in the presence of my grandfather, especially on such important occasions as birthdays and anniversaries, that I am witness to, and part of, a great American life. There is, to me, something that speaks of great importance in almost every member of his brood. We recognize each other. We know and tell the same stories. On the occasion of my grandfather’s birthday we retold those stories, each of us taking a turn to be famous for something, or invoking the names of great uncles, great grandparents, brave people, funny people, hard-working people, becoming mythical in our midst. Great Uncle Rezon threw the cat in the fire. When he awoke to find it sleeping in his beard, he nursed it back to health and carried it everywhere thereafter.

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before taking a job with the B.I.A. on the Apache reservation. Uncle H.D. stole his mother’s egg money in rural Mississippi and ran away to join the flying circus in Florida, flying back into town in triumph two years later. When we remember my grandfather, it is to tell of his great skill as a timber estimator and his great fairness and humanity as a sheriff of a small town in a place and at a time when fairness and humanity were especially treasured. Women in our family bore and raised and lost children and maintained their optimism, escaped from burning houses, killed rattlesnakes with garden hoes, and poured boiling water on attacking mountain lions. Men rode far from home on horseback, and later in cars, trying to make a living and support their families, getting them past hard times, standing down bullies, imagining outrageous schemes. We shared these stories about our family’s past in the shadow of the Alamo, believing in them and enjoying them the way the people of Texas have believed in and enjoyed the heroism of Sam Houston and Davy Crockett. We know, as my great grandfather always said, that some of these people must have been horse thieves. As we walked through the shrine of the Alamo we knew, without any new research, that there was a more complicated story here than the one we usually tell. Courage at the Alamo was most certainly mixed with desperation, greed, fanaticism, and ulterior political motive. I thought without surprise that the myths of our family also mask some of the pain and conflict in the lives of the people they celebrate, but I was not disappointed. Retelling our family myths reaffirm our connection. To the extent that our past was brave and true we hope to be brave and true ourselves.
Online Resources

Logging onto Family Connection
This site is loaded with handy features, including college search and links to college websites.
www.connection.naviance.com/charleswright

Other Searching to Build Your List
This additional site likewise allows you to enter personal preferences and find a list of schools which match them.
www.collegeboard.com - The College Board.
Click on “Find a College”

Financial Aid
www.fastweb.com
The premier scholarship search software. Enter information about yourself and search for a match with appropriate merit scholarship opportunities.

www.finaid.org
The most reputable professionally-supported site on the topic. Here you will find more than you could ever want to know about all aspects of financial aid; includes a calculator for expected family contribution.

www.thewashboard.org
Create a profile. This website connects you with relevant scholarships.

www.fafsa.ed.gov
(CAUTION: use only .gov, not .com where a look-alike commercial interest awaits.) This is the home site for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

www.nasfaa.org
Homepage of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. Don’t be put off by the name. This site has a section for students and parents, with expert advice.

www.collegeplan.org
College Planning Network’s guide to Pacific NW scholarships.

www.nelliemae.org
Information on student and parent educational loans.

Computer-based College Applications
www.commonapp.org
This site allows you to download the Common Application, by which you fill-in standard application data only once, designate selected colleges, and submit completed applications to all of them, separately. Also presents useful tables of information on member colleges.

Print Resources

Most of these are available in bookstores or from Amazon.com - be sure to inquire about the latest edition; depending on the time of your order, the next year’s edition may be available.

General Guidebooks

This is widely considered to be the best directory to colleges. “If I could have only one, this would be it.”

Colleges that Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About Even If You’re Not a Straight-A Student by Loren Pope, paperback.


The College Finder, Steven R. Antonoff, Ph.D., Wintergreen Orchard House

The Best 368 Colleges, current edition, The Princeton Review

Good Books About the College Admissions Process

The College Admissions Mystique, Bill Mayher, Noonday Press. We have copies available for loan.

The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process at a Premier College, by Jacques Steinberg, Penguin

Colleges Unranked: Ending the College Admissions Frenzy, edited by Lloyd Thacker, The Education Conservancy
Guides to Financial Aid and Scholarships

Discounts and Deals at the Nation’s 360 Best Colleges, Bruce Hammond, St. Martin’s Griffin

Don’t Miss Out, the ambitious student’s guide to financial aid (revised annually), Octameron Press (703-836-5480)

The A’s and B’s of Academic Scholarships, Octameron Press (703-836-5480)

Meeting College Costs: What You Need to Know Before Your Child and Your Money Leave Home, a workbook designed to provide practical advice: actual costs, how to estimate financial aid, how to compare offers of aid, how to select loans, etc. The College Scholarship Service (703) 707-5565, or cssorders@prcnet.com

Specialty Guidebooks

The Winning Edge, the student athlete’s guide to college sports, Octameron Press (703-836-5480)


Visual and Performing Arts, Peterson’s

Especially for Parents

I’m going to college – Not You! Surviving the College Search with your Child; Jennifer Delahunty, St. Martin’s Griffin; this is a terrific collection of essays. We have several copies for loan.

Letting Go, A Parent’s Guide to Today’s College Experience; Coburn and Treeger, Alder & Alder, 1997 We keep copies available for loan.
