



THE ROAD TO COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

PART II

2018-2019

*Written and Produced by
O'Dea High School
Counseling Department*



Dear Students and Families,

One of the primary goals of O'Dea High School is to support and encourage each student's personal and intellectual growth. The culmination of this process is matriculation in college. The entire process of applying to college serves as a beginning in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Matriculation in college is recognized in our society as a rite of passage into adult life and therefore the application process is considered to be critically important for each student.

Applying to college is a process. Inherent in this is the fact that it cannot, nor should it be done quickly. The process begins in the freshman year and ends with enrollment in a college. There are steps that must be taken throughout all four years. These steps must be taken in a careful and methodical manner, keeping in mind that you cannot complete your college applications in a day, a week, or even a month. Plan ahead and do not procrastinate.

Applying to college is a family decision since the entire family is impacted by this transition. Both the student and his parents must be involved in the discussion of all aspects of the college selection process. Financial considerations are of primary concern to the family as a whole. Frank and in-depth communication among family members is vital to the success of this transition.

Applying to college is a process during which the student finds the right college for him. There is no one universal, absolutely perfect college that would be perfect for every student. Each student must be realistic and reflect on his personal goals and needs in college. Each student's perfect college can be very different from that of his peers.

One of the first steps in this process is to become very familiar with all of the components of the [Naviance Student](#) website. One of the integral components of this program is the ease of communication that it allows. You will receive emails from the counselors with information that is crucial in the process. The Family Connection program is outlined in detail in the College Application Procedures at O'Dea section of this book.

College advising at O'Dea aims to demystify the college application process and as a consequence instill in the student a sense of accomplishment and success. We invite parents to work with us in preparing their sons for this exciting time in their lives.

Every junior had the opportunity to make an appointment to meet one on one with Dr. Eulberg or Mr. Kight to begin the discussion about the college admission process. Junior year is extremely important and it is the beginning of the student's search for the right college for him. The counselors are here to help you in any way she can during this search. Please contact her whenever you need any assistance at all.

Sincerely,

The O'Dea Counseling Department

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COLLEGES and UNIVERSITIES

In this section, we will explore several different areas relating to the investigation and application to different types of colleges and universities. Please be sure to also re-read the Colleges and Universities section in Part I for additional information.

PUBLIC COLLEGES IN WASHINGTON

The public colleges/universities in the state of Washington are: University of Washington, Washington State University, Western Washington University, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, University of Washington at Bothell, University of Washington at Tacoma and The Evergreen State College.

Washington state law requires The Higher Education Coordinating Board of Washington to establish minimum requirements for admission to Washington's public four-year universities and college. In December of 2011, the Board adopted revised minimum requirements for freshman admission.

The Board's minimum requirements for regular freshman admission are designed to increase the probability that students will be successful in college. These requirements include grade point average, pre-college test scores (SAT/ACT) and a distribution of college preparatory high school core course requirements. Meeting the minimum college admission standards does NOT guarantee admission to a public baccalaureate institution. Therefore, students are encouraged to go beyond meeting minimum college admission standards to improve their chances for gaining entry to a public university.

• COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Currently, each of the public baccalaureate institutions employs a comprehensive or holistic review process for at least a portion of their applicants. Holistic review is an additional means of ensuring student access. In cases where students do not meet the minimum college admission standards, the policy provides for alternative admission policies which may be more appropriate for certain students. Each student is encouraged to contact the admissions office of the institution they wish to attend if they have questions.

MINIMUM COLLEGE ACADEMIC DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS

State law requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board to establish minimum requirements for freshman admission to Washington's public four-year universities and college. To be admitted as freshmen, high school students must complete the following **minimum** core course requirements:

- ❑ Four years of English, including three years of literature and composition
- ❑ Three years of mathematics, including algebra, geometry and advanced mathematics. A math-based quantitative course must be taken during the senior year
- ❑ Three years of social science
- ❑ Two years of laboratory science (the equivalent of biology, chemistry, physics, or principles of technology)
- ❑ Two years of the same world language, Native American language, or American Sign language
- ❑ 1 additional credit in other CADR subject area or 1 credit in fine, visual or performing arts

THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The University of Washington admissions committee reads every application in its entirety. In addition, the University of Washington does not require initial transcripts. The student will report in his application the classes he completed and the grades he earned in those classes. In order to complete this section of the application, Mrs. Eulberg will give you an unofficial transcript that you can use to grid in the classes that you

took at O’Dea High School. They also will not accept any letters of recommendation so what you write in your personal statements is very important.

◆ **UW-Seattle**

The application due date for the University of Washington-Seattle is November 15th. The UW uses the Regular Admission process. Students receive notification of the admission decision in mid March. Students apply to the UW Seattle using the Coalition Application. The application will open on September 1st..

The University of Washington does not accept any letters of recommendation so the answers that you compose for their essay questions are the only way that you will have to convey to the Admissions Committee who you are as a person. These essays are extremely important in all applications but they have a significant value in the U of Washington process. Even though some of the questions may say that they are optional, you should answer all of the questions on the University of Washington application.

The University of Washington requires the SAT Test or the ACT test. The writing portion of both tests is NOT required. They do not require any of the SAT Subject Tests. You must have your test scores sent from the testing company to the University of Washington or your application will not be complete.

If you are accepted to the University of Washington and choose to attend there, we will send a final transcript to them. At that time, your application is verified by cross-checking with your final transcript. Any dishonesty in reporting grades will result in the offer of admission being rescinded. You will receive that notification during the summer and it will not allow time for you to re-apply to any other college so complete the information on the application with great care.

There is an additional application process when you are applying to the Honors program at the University of Washington. They do require letters of recommendation and an initial transcript. Admission to this program is highly competitive. **The application due date for the Honors Program is November 15th.**

◆ **UW Bothell, UW Tacoma**

The UW Bothell and the UW Tacoma are separate campuses in the University of Washington system. They are not branch campuses of the UW Seattle; they are completely separate universities. You cannot attend one of these colleges and think that you can automatically transfer to the UW Seattle for your sophomore year. You would have to apply as a transfer student and the UW Seattle rarely accepts a transfer from one of the other universities in the UW system.

The application process is different from the UW Seattle. They use a different application format. But, they are similar in that they do not accept transcripts or letters of recommendation. The deadline for fall applications is January 15th.

SPECIAL COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

◆ UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMIES

US Air Force Academy
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80840
949-380-5808
www.usafa.af.mil

US Naval Academy
Annapolis, Maryland 21402
800-327-6289
www.usna.edu

US Military Academy
West Point
606 Thayer Road
West Point, NY 10996
914-938-4041
<http://admissions.usma.edu>

Coast Guard Academy
15 Mohegan Lane
New London, Ct. 06320
516-773-5000
www.cga.edu

US Merchant Marine Academy
300 Steamboat Road
Kings Point, NY 11024
800-444-8501
www.usmma.edu

The application procedures for The United States Military Academies differ among the academies but these general guidelines should assist you with the admission process. The entire process is much more involved and should begin in the spring of your junior year. Your first step should be to go to the websites and request information. This will notify the Academy of your interest and you will be included in their mailing list. The application process should be started in spring of your junior year. You must request a nomination from your State Senators and from the Congressional Representative for your district for all of the academies except the Coast Guard Academy.

If you receive an academy appointment, you will receive a full scholarship for tuition, room & board, and any fees. You will also receive a stipend each month to meet the expenses of books, supplies, clothing and personal expenses. In exchange, you will have a military obligation after graduation from the academy. If you are seriously interested in applying to any of the academies, you should investigate the summer programs for high school students that are available on each academy's campus. If you have an interest in attending any of the military academies, please see Dr. Eulberg in the Counseling Office for further information.

◆ THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

In order to be competitive, students must go beyond meeting all of the minimum requirements. An O'Dea student meets all of the minimum required courses (these are called the a-g requirements). To go beyond the minimum requirements, a student needs to take the most rigorous curriculum at O'Dea (4 years of International Language; 4 years of science, 4 years of math) and it is assumed that the student has taken all of the honors level courses that are offered. Please see Dr. Eulberg for more information if you are interested in pursuing these options.

Students should list their religion courses on the application so that the reader will know that you have taken a full load of classes but those courses will not be used in the GPA calculation. The final section in the application asks you to add any additional comments. Since the readers are not familiar with the O'Dea curriculum and they do not accept one of our academic profiles, you should put the following statement from our profile in the additional comments. This will tell the reader about the requirements and curriculum at O'Dea. You can use as much of this statement as you like but the more information that you can give, the better the reader will understand our high school and the curriculum you have taken.

The statement is:

O’Dea High School has a rigorous, structured college preparatory curriculum. 56 credits are required for graduation (1 credit=1semester).

<i>English</i>	<i>8 credits (4 years)</i>
<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>8 credits (4years)</i>
<i>Social Studies</i>	<i>6 credits (3 years)</i>
<i>Science</i>	<i>6 credits (3 years)</i>
<i>Religion</i>	<i>8 credits (4 years)</i>
<i>International Language</i>	<i>4 credits (2 years of same language)</i>
<i>Physical Education</i>	<i>2 credits (1 year)</i>
<i>Health</i>	<i>2 credits (2 semesters)</i>
<i>Art</i>	<i>2 credits (2 semesters)</i>
<i>Electives</i>	<i>10 credits</i>

College in the High School Courses:

***Poverty In America Honors** is a course that is taught in conjunction with the Mateo Ricci College of Seattle University. This course is a social science course that explores the perspectives of sociology, economics, political science and philosophy in relationship to the causes, consequences and solutions to the problem of poverty.*

***English 12 Honors** is a course that is taught in conjunction with the Mateo Ricci College of Seattle University.*

Advanced Placement Courses:

Placement in the Advanced Placement courses is selective and is based on a student’s grades, standardized test scores and recommendation by each department. O’Dea has the following Advanced Placement courses available:

- AP Calculus AB*
- AP English Literature*
- AP Spanish Language*
- AP Japanese Language*
- AP Biology*
- AP Chemistry*
- AP Physics I*
- AP Computer Science Principles*
- AP US History*
- AP US Government and Politics*

Honors Courses:

Placement in the Honors courses is selective and is based on a student’s grades, standardized test scores and recommendation by each department. O’Dea has the following Honors courses available:

- English 9 Honors*
- English 12 Honors*
- English 11 Honors*
- English 12 Honors*
- Spanish III, Honors*
- Japanese III, IV Honors*
- Algebra II Honors*
- Geometry Honors*
- Pre-Calculus Honors*
- Biology Honors*
- Chemistry Honors*
- Physics Honors*

World History Honors
Poverty In America Honors
The United States Legal System Honors
Persuasive Communication Honors

The University of California schools do not require or accept a transcript. You self-report on their application the courses you have taken and the grades you earned. Your cumulative GPA is determined from the required core courses only. They do require a final transcript if they offer acceptance and you choose to go to one of the UC schools. At that time, your application is verified by cross-checking with your final transcript. Any dishonesty in reporting grades will result in the offer of admission being rescinded. You will receive that notification during the summer and it will not allow time for you to re-apply to any other college so complete the information on the application with great care.

In addition to your cumulative GPA, another important component is standardized test scores. The UC universities require the SAT Test or the ACT with writing. You must have the testing companies send your scores directly to the UC system.

Another common question is whether the UC system accepts letters of recommendation. The answer is that they DO NOT accept letters of recommendation. They will simply discard any letters they receive. They depend on your answers to the essay questions on the application.

For complete information about the University of California colleges and the application process go to: www.universityofcalifornia.edu

The preferred method of application is online at:

http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/undergrad_adm/apply/apply_online.html

Applications are due November 30, 2016. You can apply to all of the University of California schools through this common application.

◆ **CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITIES**

Students who are considering submitting applications to any of the California State Universities should be aware that California law gives a substantial preference to residents of California. It is very difficult for out-of-state residents to receive admittance to these universities.

Twenty-three colleges make up this group of California public universities. Again, these colleges are difficult for out-of-state students to gain admission. There is a common application process for these schools called CSU Mentor. The application is due by November 30, 2016. It is expected that you will complete this application online at: <http://www.csumentor.edu/> The CSU system colleges have the same minimum course requirements (a-g courses) as the UC system but they do not use the writing score of the SAT Test or ACT Test and they do not require SAT Subject tests. You will meet all of the minimum course requirements except the year of Visual and Performing Arts.

The CSU system does not need or accept transcripts or letters of recommendation. The CSU system requires that you self-report on their application, the courses you have taken and the grades you earned. Your cumulative GPA is determined from the required core courses only. They do require a final transcript if they offer acceptance and you choose to go to one of the CSU schools. At that time, your application is verified by cross-checking with your final transcript. Any dishonesty in reporting grades will result in the offer of admission being rescinded. You will receive that notification during the summer and it will not allow time for you to re-apply to any other college so complete the information on the application with great care. The CSU system does not accept letters of recommendation. They will simply discard any letters they receive. They depend on your answers to the essay questions on the application to enlighten them on your character, personality and interests.

COLLEGE VISITS

◆ COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES AT O'DEA

Every year we are very fortunate to have many college representatives from colleges all over the United States travel to O'Dea to speak with our juniors and seniors. Students learn about these visits in Naviance Student, daily announcements, posted weekly calendars of the visits, O'Dea Family newsletters, and posters from the colleges on the bulletin board outside the Counseling Department. A student must register for these visits in Naviance Student in the Colleges section, then go to Research Colleges and select College Visits. You can then scroll through the list of colleges that will visit O'Dea and sign up. You will receive an email through Naviance Student to remind you of the date and time of the visit. You must then have the teacher for the class that you will miss, sign a permission form (these are in the lobby of Counseling). After the form is completed, you return it to the Counseling office. **All of this must be completed by the end of school the day before the scheduled visit.** Attendance at these meetings is a privilege so it is always dependent on final approval from the Counseling Department.

If you are interested in a school, it is very important that you attend the meeting with the college representative when he/she comes to O'Dea. Not only do they frequently record who attended the meeting, but they are often the first people who will review your application folder. These meetings should be taken very seriously and the college representative should be treated with utmost respect. You should come prepared with any questions concerning the college, as the college representatives are a wealth of information.

◆ STUDENT VISITS TO COLLEGE CAMPUSES

It is important for every student to visit college campuses as he begins his search for the perfect college for him. We are fortunate that we live in an area where there are many different types of colleges available for the student to explore, even if he is not interested in attending that particular college. By exploring the different campuses, the student will be able to determine some of the basic factors in his selection process. For example, the size of the college or university is a key component that often differentiates colleges. Students should visit the large University of Washington to get an idea of what a large public research university is like. They can visit a medium sized, private, Catholic university at Seattle University. And, they can visit a small, private, liberal arts college at the University of Puget Sound. This initial investigation will allow the student to visualize other similar colleges or universities as he begins his research.

It is imperative that students visit the campuses of all of the colleges to which they are serious about applying. All of the guidebooks, websites and other materials that the colleges send you will all have smiling, happy students from diverse cultural backgrounds, sitting on a green lawn in front of a striking college building with the sun streaming behind it. Of course, this is not the reality every day at any college campus. The only way that you can discern the diversity of the student body, the condition of the buildings, the social life on campus and many more aspects of campus life is to actually step onto the campus. Students tell us that they could tell immediately, even before they spoke to anyone, if the college was right or not right for them. They may not be able to pinpoint or verbalize what made them feel that way but they speak of some intangible feelings that made the decision for them.

Visits to the college campuses to which you are applying offer an immeasurable source of valuable information. Not only will it increase your knowledge of the college or university, but it will also allow the admission committee to become acquainted with you as a person. You should check in with the admissions office even if you are just visiting the college on your own. Most admissions offices keep track of every contact they have with a student, whether it is by mail, by phone, by email or a visit. Every one of those contacts expresses interest in their college. So, if you are not going to take an official tour but just wander on your own, you still want to check in so that they know you were there.

The most important thing to do to make your visit successful is to plan ahead. The student is the person who will make the ultimate decision about each college so he should be the person who calls or emails the admissions office at each college to arrange the campus visit and interview. If the family is taking a trip to visit many colleges, you should not schedule any more than two colleges each day. If you want to visit

specific academic departments or attend certain classes, meet a coach or have an overnight visit you must make those arrangements with the admissions office long before you plan to come to campus.

The guided tours are usually led by handpicked students who are trained to present the best qualities of the campus. They are not going to mislead you with false information but they may not readily offer the “downside” of the campus either. It is important that you come to campus prepared to ask questions. If an issue is not addressed in the tour, be sure to ask the guide. When asked, the guide will usually be honest and knowledgeable. You should develop your own list of questions that are important issues for you but some of the questions that you could ask are:

- “Who teaches the freshmen classes?” At a large public research university, the teacher may be a graduate student with the full professor only teaching the higher-level courses.
- “How large are the freshmen classes?” It may be that the teacher to student ratio is low but that could be misleading as some higher-level courses have very few students but the freshmen classes are large, lecture classes with hundreds of students.
- “What do you like most about your college? What do you like least?” These questions should give you an idea about the ability of the guide to fully disclose their honest opinions.

Another way to really get a feel for campus life is to stay overnight in the dorms. If the college offers this option, you would arrange this through the admissions office. You could also stay with an O’Dea alum who goes to the college. You will be able to meet many other students and see what happens spontaneously outside of class. If you stay on a Friday night, you will be able to see some of the events that happen on a weekend night on or off campus.

In order to keep track of your impressions about each campus, it is a good idea to develop a written form that has all of the important issues listed. You should fill one of these out for each campus as soon after you visit as you can. If you don’t, you will forget things or the colleges all tend to blend together so that it is harder for you to distinguish one from the other. If you have a small notebook, you can jot down notes for yourself during the tour that you can enter into your form later.

Some of the areas of each campus that you should investigate include the dorms, the dining halls, the library, the student center, the health center, the student fitness center, athletic facilities, and classrooms. All of these areas on campus will give you more information about the community on campus. For example, if most of the classrooms are large lecture halls, you can expect that your classes will have many students. If the buildings seem to need a lot of renovation, the college may have financial difficulties and cannot afford to make needed repairs. On the other hand, if you see new construction on campus, you can be assured that the college has a solid financial base. You will learn a lot about campus life in the student center. The bulletin boards, posters and the college newspaper are rich with “nuggets” of information about the social life of the students who make up the campus community. You should make a note about the location of the different buildings on campus. Are the dorms close to the dining facilities and the classrooms? Is there adequate lighting on campus so that you feel safe walking at night? If you plan on bringing a car is there parking close to the dorm?

It is also important to look at the area surrounding the campus because you will want to leave campus on some occasions. Observe the immediate neighborhood and the city in which the college is located. Are there places to go for food, entertainment and shopping? Does the area seem safe? Are the locals friendly toward the students when they come to town?

The more information that you can get on each college visit, the easier it will be to determine which colleges meet your criteria. You will then be able to develop a list of colleges to which you will apply in the fall of senior year. After colleges accept you, you may want to re-visit some of those colleges before you make your final decision.

◆ **O'DEA POLICY ON CAMPUS VISITS**

It is important for students and families to visit college campuses. By visiting the campuses and speaking with students and admission personnel, the student will get a “feel” for college life at the school. O’Dea High School recognizes the importance of these visits and encourages families to plan trips during our school vacations. Absences from school for these visits are not encouraged and may negatively impact the student. Obviously, any time spent away from the classroom will have an effect on the education that a student missed while away. It is important to carefully plan your college visit trips so that those trips do not negatively impact your son’s academic performance.

Students who are planning a college visit trip should follow the **Anticipated Absence** policy in the handbook. According to the O’Dea Handbook:

“Whenever an absence is anticipated, the parent/guardian is asked to notify the Dean of Students in advance. The student will be given a **Pre-Planned Absence** form to present to teachers to request work for the school time missed. The form will show the reason for the absence, the dates and work assigned and any comments a teacher has regarding the absence. The form must be submitted to teachers at least one week prior to the absence. Failure by the student to meet the deadline will remove the obligation for teachers to provide assignments. It should be noted that ALL absences, with the exception of those for school business, will count toward the total for the quarter. More than six absences in a quarter are considered excessive and may result in the lowering of a grade or failure of the class. Students accumulating six absences in a quarter are placed on **Attendance Probation.**”

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process is very time consuming but if it is done in an organized, step-by-step manner it can be a very rewarding experience. The most important thing to remember is that the entire process cannot be done in a short period of time or at a single “sitting”. You must complete it in several very specific steps that require varying amounts of time to accomplish. One of the most crucial details of the application process is to learn and observe the due dates of the colleges to which you are applying. **In addition, O’Dea requires that the senior student complete all of the required procedures for his college applications, by December 1.** Colleges determine their application deadlines according to the number of applications they receive and the type of admissions procedures they utilize. The standard admission processes are Rolling, Regular, Early Action, Single Choice Early Action and Early Decision.

ADMISSION PROCESSES

◆ ROLLING ADMISSION PROCESS

If a college uses a Rolling Admission Process, the admission office begins accepting applications after a specific date, which is usually in October or November. They begin reviewing these applications immediately and make admission decisions at that time. This continues until their final application deadline or until their freshman class is filled. In this process, there is a continual flow of applications and admission decisions made over the course of several months. In this process, it is important to submit applications as early as possible. Admission to the freshman class is on a first come-first served basis. Washington State University uses the Rolling Admission process.

◆ REGULAR ADMISSION PROCESS

The Regular Admission Process differs from the Rolling process in that admission committees do not review any applications until the final deadline has passed. After the final deadline, all the applications are reviewed and the acceptance or denial letters are all sent at one time. The deadline for applications in this process is usually late December to February 1st, with applicants being notified in early April. The University of Notre Dame is an example of a college that uses the Regular Admission process.

◆ EARLY ACTION/RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION/EARLY DECISION

The Early Action/Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision processes are usually practiced only at highly selective private colleges and universities. All of these colleges also have a regular admission process. The deadline for a student’s completed application is usually early November. The advantage of this option is that an applicant can affirm his strong desire to matriculate at a particular college by applying early. Admissions committees understand that applicants who apply early have decided that their college is the applicant’s first choice school. Applicants should be confident that their application is strong in all aspects, especially test scores and grades. If you have any question about the strength of your application, you should see Mrs. Eulberg and discuss the possibility of this option. Decision letters in this process are mailed in late December or early January. A student who applies using any of the Early plans, must also apply to other colleges in case he is not accepted or is deferred to the regular admission pool. Most colleges do not have Early Action, Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision or Early Decision. There are distinct differences between Early Action, Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision and Early Decision. **You must notify Mrs. Eulberg if you are applying Early Action/Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision as soon as you have made that decision.**

□ **Early Action**

Early Action (EA) is non-binding, which means if an applicant is accepted, he has until May 1st to decide if he will enroll in that college. A student can apply to more than one college as an Early Action candidate. He is able to also apply to any number of colleges using either rolling or regular admission processes. The University of Notre Dame has an Early Action program.

❑ **Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision**

Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision is exactly the same as Early Action **except** a student may apply to only that one college/university as a Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision candidate. He may submit as many other applications as wants using Rolling Admissions or Regular Admissions but he can only apply to that one college early if it utilizes Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision. Stanford University has a Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision program.

❑ **Early Decision**

Early Decision (ED) is a *binding* contract with one college. This means that if a student applies to a college using the Early Decision procedure and the college accepts the student, he must immediately accept the offer of admission. He is required to withdraw all other college applications. Because this is a binding contract, you may only apply to one college as an Early Decision applicant. **We recommend that only the very strongest candidates, both academically and financially, apply to a school under the Early Decision process.** The University of Puget Sound is an example of a college that uses the early decision process.

❑ **DEFERRED PROCESS**

Colleges can defer your application from their Early Action or Early Decision pool to the Regular decision group. This means that your application will be considered with all of the other applications the college receives by its due date. You will receive notification from the college in late December or early January that they have decided to defer you to the regular pool. After evaluation in the regular pool, you will receive the college's decision in late March or early April along with the other candidates in the Regular pool.

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

Each year, more than a million students use some form of a computer-generated application. With the push of a single key, you can submit the entire application electronically. Though computers have revolutionized the college application process, the top priority continues to be to present the best “package” possible. The application must be as close to error-free as is humanly possible. Typos, misspelling and generally sloppy work is unacceptable. Once again, pay close attention to the due dates for your applications and allow plenty of time to complete your application so that you can eliminate errors before the application is submitted in paper or online formats. No matter which format you use, **make copies of everything before you submit them.** Make sure your name is on everything that you send to the colleges, especially your essays, activity resumes and personal statements. Submit the applications early!!

No matter which format you use, you must be very careful entering your demographic information. Your name, address, and telephone number are very important in the application process and must be absolutely correct. Colleges may also require an e-mail address. Be sure that your email address is appropriate for such an important “business” transaction. **Never** use an offensive, vulgar or rude e-mail address or your application may be immediately rejected. Every time you communicate with the admissions offices by telephone, in person, by letter or by email, you must remember to be “professional”. Every contact with the admissions office is noted and is a reflection of who you are. Always use proper English, spelling and grammar. Never email in “text message speak” or in poorly worded/spelled language.

◆ **APPLICATION FORMS**

❑ **Online Applications**

Online applications are the preferred mode by most colleges and universities. You can download applications from the college website and then use them as a paper application. Students can also download the applications and use them as worksheets in preparation for entering the data online.

You can also complete your applications online. Students access the online application by creating an account with a username and password. You will then logon to the college website using your username and password each time you add to or revise your application. The student is able to save his work and complete the application in sections, at several different times. Because you will apply to several colleges, you will create several different accounts on college websites. It is crucial that you write down the many usernames and passwords that you create so that you can quickly access that information when you need to get into the accounts. We recommend that you devise a system that allows you to find the information for each college easily. This may be creating folders for each college or a binder for each college or any other system that assists you in keeping all of the college materials organized. This will save you a tremendous amount of time throughout the process. Computers make it easy for applicants to create a crisp application no matter what their typing skills may be, but the ease of this may create new problems. Students must resist the urge to send their application electronically before it has been proofread and revised. “A sloppy application is the quickest way to take you out of the running at a highly selective college,” declares Richard Steele of Bowdoin College. They should complete the essays and personal statements in a word processing program where it can be printed and revised easily. They can then be “copied and pasted” into the online application when they are perfect. Frequently, students must either print out a signature page and mail it with a check for the application fee or submit credit card numbers online in payment of the fees.

❑ **Common Application**

Over 775 colleges, including some highly selective colleges, accept the Common Application in lieu of their own application forms. By endorsing and becoming members of the Common Application organization, colleges vouch for the fact that the Common Application will not be evaluated or valued any differently than their own individual applications. The Common Application is available online at www.commonapp.org. From this website, you can download an application, complete and submit an application, download or submit supplemental forms.

Students complete one application and then they can submit that application to every Common Application college to which they wish to apply. In addition, colleges may have some questions that are specific to their college, which the student must complete as a Supplement. It is vital that you check for any Supplements for each college that you will send the common application.

The Common Application and Family Connection are linked together. In order to link the Common Application to the student’s Family Connection account, the student must enter his Common Application username and password in the specified area in the Colleges section-Colleges I am Applying To. Once a student completes this, we are able to submit the student’s transcript, the teacher recommendation forms and the Secondary School Report electronically to all of the Common Application colleges on the student’s Applying To list.

❑ **Coalition Application**

The Coalition provides a single platform of online tools to assist in the experience of applying to college. With the Coalition platform, you can find out more about Coalition schools, share your locker with counselors, teachers, and mentors and submit your applications with ease. The Coalition is designed to be convenient, strait forward and easy to use. Over 90 selective colleges are members of the Coalition for Access, Affordability and Success. They have developed a new application platform for their application process. For the most up to date information on this new platform, please go to: <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/students.html>

You can only use the Coalition Application for colleges and universities that have this application as their only format. This application is not compatible with Naviance Student so we cannot submit any of the student documents to the Coalition Application. We will not process any application materials if you use this format when another option is available and your application will be incomplete. **The only colleges that are exclusively Coalition Application institutions are: The University of Washington, the University of Florida and the University of Maryland.**

❑ **Universal Application**

The Universal Application is another membership application whereby students can fill out one application and submit it to several colleges. **We do not recommend that you use this application process as it is not supported by Naviance Student.** All of the colleges that are members of the Universal Application are also members of the Common Application, which is linked to Family Connection. Therefore, it is to your advantage to use the Common Application instead of the Universal Application so that we can submit your supporting materials (transcript, teacher letters of recommendation and counselor letters) in a timely fashion.

◆ **HOW MANY COLLEGES SHOULD I APPLY TO?**

After doing research on the colleges that have met the student’s criteria, the student should narrow his initial list of possible colleges to around ten by the end of summer after junior year. By the time a student is ready to complete applications in his senior year, the list should be further narrowed to about six or seven colleges. Included in this list should be three classifications of schools: Reach, competitive and “likely” schools. The purpose is to apply to varying degrees of selectivity in order to maximize your chances for success.

❑ **Reach Schools**

These are the student’s ideal, dream school where the odds of his admission are long. One or at most two schools on the list could be from this category.

❑ **Competitive Schools**

These are schools where the odds of admission are much better and in this applicant pool, the student matches up with others very well. Four to five schools on the list should be in this category.

❑ **“Likely” Schools**

Schools where the student would be happy to attend and he is reasonably certain he will be granted admission. One or two schools should be in this category and at least one should be a state school where financial considerations would weigh less heavily.

Although, students tend to focus most of their attention on the Reach schools, careful consideration of the “likely” schools is more important. It is vital that students examine carefully the “likely” schools so that they would really be happy and successful if those are the only options that they have.

Some students react to the stress of the college application process by applying to more than twelve schools. We strongly recommend against such activity. The overload of completing so many applications often takes its toll both emotionally, academically and financially. If the family starts the college application process early in high school, the final list of colleges will be a well thought out, organized, insightful decision that was reached after a thorough step-by-step investigation.

INSIDE THE ADMISSION PROCESS

What happens to an application once it arrives at the college Admissions Office? In the following sections, we will examine some aspects of the process as it occurs at a highly selective university. While the very elite universities may be inundated with applications, keep in mind that the majority of the 2500 four-year colleges and universities are working very hard to fill their freshman classes. These schools also offer excellent academic

programs but may not be as “well-known” as the highly selective schools. The process undertaken by the Admissions Committee is similar in both instances.

❑ ADMISSION SELECTIVITY

Webster’s Dictionary defines selectivity as the property of being selective, discriminating. In the college application arena, selectivity refers to the percentage of applicants that are offered admission. The lower the percentage of the total applicant pool that is admitted, the higher the selectivity. The level of selectivity is often mentioned in the many college guidebooks available in the counseling office, libraries and bookstores.

Every year when magazines rank colleges, selectivity is one of the key components used to determine each college’s rank. While these rankings may indicate a general idea about the colleges, students should not use these rankings to determine which college to attend. Often the information in these articles is misleading and inaccurate. Every college and university has its own unique academic programs, faculty and students. To compare these schools with one another is often like comparing apples and oranges.

❑ APPLICATION FOLDER

When a student applies to college, many different pieces of information are collected and comprise the Application Folder. Included in the folder are the Application, the Academic Record (transcript), Standardized Test Scores, Teacher and Counselor Recommendations, high school academic profile, student Activity Resume and the Personal Statement/Essay. The Application is completed by the student and includes demographic information along with an essay, if required. The Academic Record will show the courses taken and the strength of the subjects. O’Dea does use a weighted 5.0 grading scale whereby Honors and Advanced Placement courses receive extra weight. For example, if a student earns an A in a non-Honors/AP course he would earn a 4.0000 but in an Honors/AP course he would earn a 5.0000. This gives recognition to the added work and effort that is required in these courses.

Class Rank is another question that frequently is asked on applications. **O’Dea does rank our students.** Ranking in the student’s grade level is based on cumulative GPA.

The high school academic profile is a document that describes, in detail, the history and academic particulars of our high school that make it unique as compared to other high schools in the country. In this document, we explain our curriculum and grading system so that the colleges can easily interpret the transcript. This is a very important piece of the application folder, especially for colleges that are not as familiar with us. An academic profile is given to each college representative that comes to O’Dea and one is included with each transcript that we send for the students.

❑ ADMISSION CRITERIA

Colleges will use the information in the Application Folder to determine whether or not to accept an applicant for their next freshman class. Individual colleges differ in the “value” that they place on the different components of the Application Folder. For example, one college may place more importance on the standardized test scores while another places more emphasis on the cumulative GPA. Each is trying to assemble a freshman class that has the best chance to succeed in its environment. All colleges strive to have a well-rounded, diverse, and involved student body yet each college campus reflects its own unique value system, social system and academic system.

- **Cumulative GPA**

Colleges evaluate the grades you earned for each semester of your freshman year through your senior year not only for the actual grade point earned but also for the quality of the courses that you have taken. More emphasis is placed on the grades earned in the academic subjects, especially if those classes were Honors classes. Admission committees expect that you have taken the most challenging academic courses that you can complete successfully. An impressive transcript usually reflects a student who was enrolled in a rigorous curriculum and earned good grades. Your transcript is typically the single most important component of your application.

You must send transcripts to each college to which you are applying. You request transcripts in Naviance Student. You can do this in the Colleges section of Naviance Student. We will automatically send 7th semester transcripts to all of the colleges in the Applying To section in your account in Naviance Student. There is no fee for transcripts while you are a student at O’Dea. If you have transferred into O’Dea from another high school, you must also send transcripts from your first high school. O’Dea will send all transcripts either electronically or by mail. O’Dea will not give official transcripts to the student or the family.

- **Test Scores**

Four-year colleges require SAT Test scores or ACT scores, and some require SAT Subject Test scores also. You must take the required tests well before the college application deadline! You want to give yourself the opportunity to re-take the test before the college due dates. While test scores are very important, admission committees recognize that sometimes they do not accurately reflect an applicant’s potential. Therefore, some committees do not place as much emphasis on test scores as they do on your transcript. Sometimes admission committees use a formula to combine these two factors into a single admissions index number. **You must have your test scores sent to each college directly from the testing company.**

- **Class Rank**

Students are ranked in their senior class according to their cumulative Grade Point Average. O’Dea uses a 5.000 scale which gives extra “weight” to Honors and AP courses.

- **Counselor Recommendation/Secondary School Report**

It is your counselor’s responsibility to provide a summary of your academic and extracurricular achievement. In addition to this type of data, the counselor recommendation is also an opportunity to convey your unique qualities, character, and promise of future personal and intellectual growth. The Student and Parent Questionnaires in Naviance Student are important ways that you can give information that your counselor can refer to when writing the Counselor recommendation. You should also spend some time with him or her discussing your endeavors, what you have learned, and what you still desire to discover. Forming a personal relationship with your counselor will invariably help you in all aspects of the application process.

Some college applications will require the counselor to complete a Secondary School Report (SSR). Your counselor will complete this form and add it to your application packet which will be submitted electronically or mailed directly to the college. It frequently asks for information about O’Dea in general and you in particular.

Another form that may be included in your applications is the Mid-Year/7th Semester Report. This form will frequently resemble the SSR form but it is a form that the colleges use to “update” the student’s record to include the first semester of senior year. Some colleges do not have forms but request that you send another transcript that includes your 7th semester (1st semester of senior year) grades. We will automatically send 7th semester transcripts to all of the colleges in the Applying To section in your account in Naviance Student. We will send the forms and transcripts directly to the colleges that you have listed.

- **Teacher Recommendation**

Choosing a teacher who knows you and who you feel will represent you in the best light is essential in providing the admissions committee with your academic and personal qualities. There are some important points to remember when asking for a recommendation from a teacher:

- be polite when asking for a recommendation
- teachers are not obligated to write a letter of recommendation for you. If a teacher feels that he/she cannot write a positive letter or if he/she feels that they do not know you well, they may ask you to speak with another teacher.
- complete the Resume in Naviance Student

- you must speak to the teacher in person before you officially request a teacher recommendation
 - if the teacher agrees to write a letter of recommendation for you, have him/her sign the Teacher Request form, then return the form your counselor so he/she can enter them you're your Naviance Student account
 - you must have a list of colleges in your Applying To section before a teacher can write your letters
 - you must complete a Questionnaire for Teacher Recommendations for each teacher (located in the About Me section)—they will not write your letters until this is done
 - you must also have a comprehensive, complete activity list in your Resume before a teacher will write your letters
 - follow up with the teachers—they can be very busy during recommendation season and are usually thankful for a reminder
 - do not forget to say thank you!
 - after you have made your final decision, send a thank you note to your counselor and the teacher/s who wrote letters for you
- **Co-Curricular Experiences, Work, Awards & Honors (Activity Resume)**

You must enter the activities you have done at O'Dea and outside of O'Dea in the Resume section in Naviance Student. All colleges will require a listing on their applications of your involvements and the teachers/counselors will not complete your letters of recommendation until you have completed the Resume. It is a good idea to update this area and keep it as thorough as possible.

The activities that you choose to participate in during high school reflect some of your personal characteristics. Your activities represent what is meaningful in your life; how you decided to prioritize your commitments outside of the school day; the skills you have developed (athletic, musical, intellectual, responsibility, commitment, etc.). All of these co-curricular experiences help to form you as a unique individual. Activities are very important to admissions committees because they allow the committee to see you as a distinctive person. When you are asked to list your activities on your applications, always use the format that the college requests. Always list your activities beginning with the most important ones.

Working to earn money tells the admission committee that you share the responsibility of financial burdens. Working also indicates that you are able to be responsible and reliable.

Awards and honors are a means to demonstrate that you have accomplished something special, but they are not absolutely necessary for admissions to college. Your co-curricular activities can be a valuable resource from which interesting and revealing aspects about your values, interests and personality can be drawn.

- **Interview**

The college interview can be the one piece of the application process that students fear and dread the most. Yet, it is an area that the students can really show the admissions committee who they are as people. Admissions counselors report that the interview is never the most important part of a student's application but for an applicant who is in the "gray" or borderline pool of candidates, it can be the factor that "tips the scale" for the student. Students should approach the interview as an opportunity to put their best foot forward. The student should view it as an opportunity for him to learn more about the college to determine if it is a good fit for him.

There are usually two types of interviews: evaluative and informative. In the evaluative interview, the interviewer assesses the student and he adds a report of the interview to the student's file. In the informative interview, the primary purpose is to enlighten the student about the college. Admissions counselors, alumnae or college students can conduct interviews with the student. The formal

interview is usually 30-60 minutes. Regardless of who the interviewer is, the student must approach the interview with the same degree of professionalism. If it is feasible for your family, it is always preferable to go to the campus and interview with an admissions committee member. The summer after junior year is the best time to interview because the admissions personnel have more time to spend with you than they do during the busy admission season of senior year. It is also a much less stressful time for you because in the fall you will need to focus on your college applications.

You should consider any verbal contact with the admissions department as a form of interview, whether that is a phone call, a campus tour, or a college representative visit to O’Dea High School. They are all opportunities for you to become a person who they remember when they review your folder. You want to stand out as a personality, not just a GPA or test score.

The value of the college interview and the importance that it holds in the college application varies greatly from college to college. The interview is optional or not required at most colleges and universities. The colleges that do require them are usually highly selective but even in those situations, it is only one of many factors that go into evaluating a student’s application.

You should always approach an interview with a positive, professional outlook. You must prepare for each interview ahead of time. You should research each college and come with several questions that are not easily found in a college view book or on the college’s website. An example of a poor question is: “How many undergraduates are at your college?” The questions should concern issues that you really care about when making your college choice. These could include questions about diversity, possible majors, student government, the social life on and off campus, athletics and many more. It is always best to ask questions about things that you sincerely want to learn more about.

Approach the interview as a conversation. In a conversation, each person has input and each person listens. It is important that you listen carefully and answer the questions from the interviewer openly and honestly. It is OK to take a few seconds to think about your answers before speaking. The interviewer could ask some of the following questions:

- What is your favorite book? What is the last book you read?
- Why do you want to go to our college?
- What are your most important activities?
- What will you add to our campus community?

You should always be professional in each interview. You should wear dress slacks, a collared shirt (tucked in), a belt, dress shoes and socks. If you want to wear a tie, you can but it is not required. Always be polite and greet the interviewer with a firm handshake and good eye contact. Never chew gum during an interview. Arrange your schedule so that you arrive for the interview at least 10-15 minutes early. This is your opportunity to sell yourself so be sure to use proper grammar and language—no slang or profanity. All of the above come together to form a first impression and first impressions set the tone in the interviewer’s mind. You want that first impression to be positive and lay the foundation for a great interview.

The most important thing in the entire interview process is to be YOU. Don’t try to be someone you are not. The best presentation will be an honest, open representation of the real you. If you are not a funny guy, don’t try to be a comedian during your interview. The interviewers are not trying to trick you into making a mistake. They are not asking any trick questions. They want to get to know you as an individual.

Before the interview, prepare a strong closing statement that will add a final impact to your interview. This should be something very specific about the college, whether this is a personal experience you had on a campus visit, a particular field of study or any other aspect about the college that has impressed you. Thank the interviewer for spending this time with you. Then send a written thank you note within the following week.

- **Personal Statement and Essay**

These sections of the student’s application are perhaps the most important and the most difficult. The admissions committee expects to discover who you are through your thoughts, as well as your ability to think and write clearly. To further explain the weight of the personal statement, the following has been quoted from the University of California—Berkeley application guidelines:

“The personal statement gives you the opportunity to tell the admission office about circumstances in your background that may not be evident in other parts of the application...Reviewed together, your academic record and your personal statement, along with your list of accomplishments and activities, helps us gain insight into your level of academic, personal and extracurricular achievement. We look for the following personal characteristics: creativity; intellectual curiosity and achievement; exceptional personal or academic recognition; unusual talent or ability; initiative; motivation; leadership; persistence; service to others; special potential; substantial experience with other cultures; and your ability to overcome or manage unusual circumstances, challenges or hardships. Your personal statement helps us to discover a sense of you as an individual and to envision the contributions you might make...”

To write the most effective essay, it is important to start early. It is very time consuming to write an effective personal statement/essay and you must do it in an organized, logical progression. In order to begin you must read the question for the personal statement/essay very carefully. It is important to understand exactly what the college is asking the student to address in the essay. Some of the applications may ask for essays that seem very similar but some will be totally different. Students should not write one “generic” essay and automatically send it to all of the colleges to which they are applying. If the essay does not match the question, the Admission Committee will quickly note it as a negative.

In most cases, determining the topic for the essay is the most difficult step in the process. Keep in mind that the reason that colleges ask for these essays is not to test your knowledge on an obscure topic but rather to learn more about you as a person. This is your only opportunity to express who you are as a unique person. Those who will read your personal statement/essay are looking to learn more than what is already in your application. For example, to simply re-state your activity resume adds nothing to the reader’s knowledge about you. But to expand on a significant incident that happened during one of your activities can tell them a lot. They also are interested in finding out how and why the events that you are relating helped to shape who you are, especially who you may be as a vital, contributing member of their college community.

As with almost everything involved in the college application, writing the personal statement/essay is a process. By approaching it in the following step by step manner we hope that you will be able to produce an essay that portrays the real you to the admissions committees. We have adopted the approach that the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Educational Partnerships for writing the Personal Statement. The Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP) in the Division of Student Affairs, is the primary unit charged with developing and implementing programs and strategies to improve academic preparation, expand educational opportunities, and ensure access to higher education and to the University of California for low-income and educationally-disadvantaged students from the Bay Area.

It is a three-pronged process involving:

1. Getting Started
2. Essay Structure
3. The Writing Process

* GETTING STARTED

1. The characteristics of a good personal statement/essay are:

- Thoughtful and honest. The biggest mistake students make is writing what they *think* the admissions counselor wants to know. If you do that, you are destined to miss the mark. The essay should tell the reader what he or she should know about you—a vivid picture of you.
- Strives for depth, not breadth. A good essay is not a list of activities or accomplishments. The reader wants to know how one experience impacted or formed the essence of who you are.
- Follows the conventions of good writing. While the readers are not looking for an in-depth dissertation or treatise on a world problem, they are looking for the appropriate grammar and syntax, vivid language and no spelling errors. A word of caution about the words you choose: Speak to the reader in your own words. Using the thesaurus to create an essay full of flamboyant and obscure verbiage does not impress the reader. Once again remember, they want to know the real YOU.
- Conforms to guidelines. If the instructions tell you the size of the essay follow these instructions very carefully. Less is not more, and more is not better.
- Answers the question! A good essay addresses the question precisely.
- Benefits from several drafts and revisions. Revisions allow the essay to come together in a cohesive, organized manner. Revising is not editing. Revising is expanding a thought, adding to or deleting, changing words to create a more vivid thought. Feedback from others helps to identify parts of the essay that work well and those parts that don't quite work.
- Contains a striking introduction. This type of writing is different from almost any other writing you will ever do. It is important to realize that the reader of this work will be reading hundreds of similar essays during this application season. It is important that you have an opening that grabs them right away and keeps their interest. Something that is mundane and predictable will certainly not be memorable.
- Transforms blemishes into positives. Not everyone is the perfect, model student in every aspect of his life. The personal statement/essay is your chance to explain any of your shortcomings and most importantly, to express to the reader the growth you gained from those experiences. They don't want to hear you complain about the teacher that gave you a D but rather they want to hear how you went the extra mile to work harder to learn the material. They want you to acknowledge your part and then to explain how you have grown and become a better person from that D.
- Demonstrates your knowledge of the college. You are not expected to know everything about each college or university to which you are applying but if you can let the reader know that you have done your homework about their particular campus it weighs positively with the reader. For example, if your essay concerns your love of architecture and how you have always known that is what you want to be, and the university does not have a college of architecture you will show them that you really do not know much about their school.
- Exudes confidence. That is not to say that you should brag or boast about yourself or your accomplishments. You should portray a sense of quiet confidence that is revealed in your descriptions of interests, commitments and perseverance.

2. College Essay Blunders

- The essay repeats information contained elsewhere in the application packet. The reader gains no more insight into what motivates you and who you are. Remember that the reader already knows that you played football for four years and that you got a D in Geometry. If you merely re-state these things it adds nothing. Relating a significant incident that occurred during football practice and how it changed you, adds a great deal. A word of caution about athletic essays. Don't write

about the big game and how wonderful it was to win Metro—again the test is always what additional information the reader has gained about **YOU**. Winning Metro tells them that the O’Dea football team did well and it was exciting but nothing special about you. Everyone feels great after winning the big game—that is not unique or interesting. It is better to take a smaller event and relate it specifically and uniquely to you.

- The writer complains about his circumstances rather than explains them. Remember the reader wants to know how you have overcome hardships and learned from difficulties. They really don’t want to hear excuses for any shortcoming. For example, they don’t want to hear that you got a D in algebra because the teacher didn’t like you.
- The writer discusses money or a college’s ranking as a motivating factor for applying to their college/university. To state that you want to go to college or that you have chosen a certain major to make more money is a mistake. Everyone wants to go to the most prestigious college/university possible. They want to hear that you want to go to their college or study that major because you love to learn.
- The essay relies on gimmicks rather than substance. Don’t be a comedienne if you are not naturally witty and funny. It will come across as awkward and usually not funny. Don’t write in limericks or poetry just because it is different. Be yourself.
- The writer makes claims in the essay that are not backed up by the application. The personal statement/essay is a part of the entire application packet and is read in that context. An essay that portrays you as the top student at O’Dea must be supported by your transcript. If it cannot, then don’t say it! This applies to your co-curricular activities also. If your essay is about your passion for solving the plight of the homeless yet your Resume does not list a single volunteer event, it is unlikely the reader will believe you have that passion.
- The essay contains the wrong school name. This can easily happen if you are using the essay for more than one college. For example if you are applying to College A but in your essay you mention how badly you want to attend College B, it is unlikely that College A will be very impressed with your passion for their school. Proofread carefully—this is a huge mistake.
- The essay contains mechanical errors of usage, clichés, or meaningless prose. Although this is not a graded work, if the essay is poorly written it tells the reader that you either don’t have the academic skills to be a good writer or that you did not put enough time or effort into the writing of this essay. Either way, you are not projecting a memorable, positive image.
- The essay is too long or too short. Show that you are able to follow directions.

3. Brainstorming

This is the first phase of writing your personal statement/essay. It is the process of gathering all of your ideas. Do not edit your ideas, this should be a time of free flowing, random thoughts that you put on paper. Brainstorming is not an outline, not a first draft and definitely not an essay. It is ideas, thoughts, and possibilities. It is being totally honest with your thoughts. Again, this is not writing what you think the admissions officer wants to read. Start a brainstorm sheet by asking yourself the following questions and writing down all of your thoughts on these issues:

- What are my strengths?
- What are my weaknesses?
- What is special about me?
- What kind of person am I?
- What do I care about?
- Why is (BLANK) more important to me than (BLANK)? (Fill in the blanks)
- What is it like growing up in (BLANK)?

- What is like going to school at O’Dea High School?

4. Gathering Information and Developing a Theme

After completing the brainstorming, you must then go through everything that you wrote and identify the ONE area that you want to pursue in detail. Look for areas that might be interesting and unique to the reader. Remember that it is the quality of an experience, not the quantity of experiences that is important.

- **Step One** Begin to focus your thoughts by examining your actual experiences as they relate to the one area that you will pursue in your essay. Some examples might be:
 - ◆ An achievement
 - ◆ Something you struggled to overcome
 - ◆ An event or experience that taught you something special
 - ◆ A negative experience that you had to get past
 - ◆ Someone’s act of strength or courage that affected you
 - ◆ A family experience that influenced you
 - ◆ A lesson, class project, activity or job that had an impact on your academic or career goals
 - ◆ A time that you blew it, failed, made bad choices and how you learned and grew from it
 - ◆ Some memorable event or advice involving an older person
 - ◆ An event that helped to define you
- **Step Two** Choose one or two of your best responses from Step One or combine a couple of responses. Check to make sure your written description answers the following three questions:
 - ◆ What were the key moments and details of the event?
 - ◆ What did I learn from the event?
 - ◆ What aspect of this event stays with me the most?
- **Step Three** Decide on a theme for your essay. Taking the experience you wrote about in Step Two, write your answers to the following questions. Your theme will be revealed by the answers to these questions.
 - ◆ What does this event reveal about me?
 - ◆ What makes it special or significant?
 - ◆ How does this event make me special or make me stand out?
 - ◆ What truth about me is revealed through this event?

* **ESSAY STRUCTURE**

1. The Introduction

The introduction is where the tone of your personal statement/essay is established. You set the scene, define its theme and generally hook your reader by sparking interest. It is important to avoid meaningless prose that is wordy and full of clichés. Get to the point. Be sure your language is clear, precise and your own. Sometimes, the introduction is the last portion of your essay to be completed. It provides a snapshot of the entire essay and so it should show what the essay will expand upon and develop.

2. The Body

Body paragraphs are the heart of your personal statement/essay and therefore they are the most important parts of your essay. In the body, you will expand upon and provide support for the theme you introduced in the opening paragraph. You will provide details and examples that will move the theme along. There will be 2-4 body paragraphs in a personal statement/essay. Each paragraph contains:

- A topic sentence that expands your theme and makes a transition from the previous paragraph
- Development of ideas that support your essay's theme
- An ending sentence that wraps up the paragraph and helps to transition into the next paragraph

3. The Conclusion

The conclusion is your chance to extend your essay's parameters and to demonstrate the significance of your experience in a larger context. A conclusion is not a repeat or summary of ideas presented previously in the essay or application. Instead, it should re-affirm the validity of your theme. An example of a **poor** conclusion is:

I hope that this has helped you see me more as an individual. Whatever challenge is handed to me I give it my best effort. If my goals are a little far from my reach, I push harder. I know that if I don't reach my destination, I will understand. I will never quit and never think negatively. My hopes and dreams may be similar to others, but how I go about reaching my goals are different. This difference between us all is what determines our individuality.

This type of conclusion relies on predictable language about goals and dreams and does not seem to be connected to any theme. In fact, this conclusion could be tacked on to the end of just about any college essay, which means it is not particularly significant to the essay to which it belongs.

* THE WRITING PROCESS

The personal statement/essay is very difficult to write because you have never had to compose anything like it before. We are rarely asked to write exclusively about our thoughts, feelings, and aspirations. And to do this for people we don't know is even more intimidating. Added to that stress is the importance that this document seems to hold for your future and the task can seem insurmountable. That is why we are trying to help alleviate some of these stressors by presenting a strategy for showing yourself in the best possible way. This process will require a considerable investment by you in personal reflection, thought and time. It is vital that you realize that there is no right or wrong way to do this. The best way to really get in touch with all of these emotions is by writing down your thoughts and exploring all aspects of your life. It is not our intention or the colleges' intention to make "busy work" for you. If you approach this endeavor as a chance for self-discovery it can truly be a rewarding experience. Every year college admissions officers read some amazing essays that have expressed some very honest and open human emotions and experiences. They are also many, many essays that are boring and easily forgotten. Be receptive to the idea of opening yourself up and you will be amazed at how rewarding it can be to produce a document that is a true reflection of YOU!

• Drafting and Revising

A draft is a work in progress. A good writer revises his work several times and the more important the essay, the more times it is revised. Composing an essay involves a process of planning, formulating ideas, organizing and editing. The first draft attempts to capture the essence of the theme of the essay. It usually is the bare bones of the finished product; often it is hard to recognize the final essay from the first draft. In revising, it is important to try to understand it from the reader's viewpoint.

You should examine the essay as a whole—is it clear that you have an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion? Does the essay flow from paragraph to paragraph and have you remained focused on the theme? A really good way to accomplish these tasks is to make an outline. The outline should include:

- I. The theme as stated in the introduction
- II. Topic sentence from the first body paragraph-example that supports the theme in this paragraph
- III. Topic sentence from the second body paragraph-example that supports the theme in this paragraph
- IV. Continue for each body paragraph
- V. Conclusion

VI.

Revise the draft for focus, clarity and depth. Be sure to use examples to fully develop your thoughts.

- **Tips on Style**

- ✓ Always use a simpler word in place of a longer or more obscure word.
- ✓ Make sure every word you use means what you think it means
- ✓ Be yourself!
- ✓ Avoid empty words and phrases such as “basically”, “really”, “goals and dreams”
- ✓ Use active verbs whenever possible. Go through the essay and circle every form of the verb “to be” (is, was, were etc.). Substitute more active verbs. For example, instead of saying “I was inspired by my grandmother to play the piano.” Say, “My grandmother inspired me to play the piano.”
- ✓ Avoid predictable and stereotypical college essay phrases such as “I learned a lot”, “I learned to work with others”, “It was a fun and challenging experience” “I learned that everyone is different”
- ✓ Avoid using clichés and proverbs or other over-used phrases from literary sources. They detract from the “you-ness” of your essay.
- ✓ Use a normal 10-12 point font to type your essay. Don’t type in all italics, or in bold, or in an unusual font, or in all capitals.

- **Proofreading**

Leave plenty of time for you and others to proofread your essay. Put it aside for awhile and then come back and look at it critically. Avoid fragment sentences, redundancy, spelling errors, slang.

We have included a sample essay provided by the University of California, Berkeley website. This sample essay also has comments included that demonstrate some of the key points from above.

Introduction :

Seventeen years ago, I came bounding into a world of love and laughter. I was the first child, the first grandchild, the first niece, and the primary focus of my entire extended family. Although they were not married, my parents were young and energetic and had every good intention for their new baby girl. I grew up with opportunities for intellectual and spiritual growth, secure in the knowledge that I was loved, free from fear, and confident that my world was close to perfect. And I was the center of a world that had meaning only in terms of its effect on me-- what I could see from a height of three feet and what I could comprehend with the intellect and emotions of a child. This state of innocence persisted through my early teens, but changed dramatically in the spring of my sophomore year of high school. My beloved father was dying of AIDS.

First Body Paragraph

Topic/Transition Sentence:

From the moment my parents told me, I confronted emotions and issues that many adults have never faced.

Development of ideas related to the topic sentence (Signpost question addressed: values and philosophies):

Death of a parent, and AIDS specifically, forced my view of the world and my sense of responsibility to take a dramatic turn. I had already accepted my father's homosexuality and had watched through the years as he experienced both prejudice and acceptance related to his sexual preference. However, in this

case I did not have the benefit of time to understand my father's illness since he decided not to tell me until he had developed full-blown AIDS. My role in the relationship was suddenly reversed.

End Sentence:

Where I had once been the only child of my single father, I was now the parent to the debilitated child.

Second Body Paragraph

Topic/Transition Sentence:

By the summer of my junior year, I had rearranged the structure of my life; as my father's illness progressed and he became increasingly incapacitated, he depended on me a great deal.

Development of ideas related to the topic sentence (Signpost question addressed: evidence of responsibility):

Each morning before school I took him to the hospital where he received blood transfusions or chemotherapy to treat the lymphoma that was destroying his body. After school, I raced home to complete my homework so that I could later go to his apartment. There I cooked meals, cleaned up, and administered his oral and intravenous medications. Working with IVs became second nature to me. I found myself familiar with the names of drugs like Cytovene, used to treat CMV, Neupogen, to raise one's white blood cell count, and literally countless others. I came home each night after midnight, yet the fatigue I felt hardly touched me; I was no longer seeing through my own eyes, but through my dad's. I felt his pain when he was too sick to get out of bed. And I hurt for him when people stared at his bald head, a result of chemotherapy, or the pencil-thin legs that held up his 6'5" frame. I saw the end he was facing, the gradual debilitation the disease caused, the disappointment he endured when people were cruel and the joy he experienced when others were kind.

End sentence:

I saw his fear, and it entered my life.

Third Body Paragraph

Topic/Transition sentence:

My father died on July 28, 1995.

Development of ideas related to the topic sentence (Signpost question addressed: accomplishment):

In the last year of his life, I was given the greatest gift I will ever receive: the gift of deep experience. I am now able to recognize the adversity that accompanies any good in life. My father taught me about loyalty, love and strength. But most importantly, he gave me the opportunity to see through his eyes, triggering a compassion in me and a sense of responsibility to those I love and the world around me that I might not have otherwise discovered.

End sentence:

Not a day will ever go by when I won't miss my father, but I am so grateful for the blessing of his life.

Conclusion

Widen the lens beyond the topic at hand and tie up the essay:

With this compassion and experience comes an even greater responsibility. Luke 12:48 tell us "To whom much is given, of him will much be required." As I move forward in my life, it is my hope that I can begin to see other people from two vantage points: theirs and mine. By doing this, I will begin to understand that with my every position or emotion there may be someone else standing at an equally valid, yet possibly opposite point. And that life, for them, has a different hue.

□ ADMISSION COMMITTEE

Typically, admissions officers tend to be young, friendly, outgoing and idealistic. They enjoy working with high school students. Frequently, the admissions representatives that travel to the high schools are recent college graduates and are often alumni of the college that they represent. They usually stay in the profession two to three years and then go to graduate or professional school.

The professional responsibilities of admission officers include recruiting, interviewing and evaluation of the Application Folders of the applicants. Most officers are assigned specific regions of the country and travel to the high schools in their region from September through November. From January through April the evaluation of the applications is done seven days per week, 12-14 hours per day. The grueling pace of these months and the rigorous travel schedule are two of the reasons that the admissions field has such a high rate of turnover.

Although admissions offices are formed in a committee structure, much of the work is done individually. Most colleges divide the Application Folders according to the geographic regional responsibilities of each admission officer. This officer then is the first “reader” of the Application Folder. At this initial reading, the folder is read an average of ten minutes. Many schools use a two-part evaluation system that is divided into 1) academic and 2) non-academic factors. For example, the academic scale may go from a high of 1 to a low of 5 and the non-academic from a high of A to a low of E. The first reader then assigns a rating to each folder. The intellectual, high achieving student who does not participate in any co-curricular activities could have a score of 1E. After this initial reading, most application folders are read and scored again by another admissions officer. If the verdict is a clear-cut admit or deny, the application will probably be sent to the Dean of Admission for final action. If the scores from the first two readers are widely divergent, a third evaluation of the Folder may then occur and referral to the full committee is the usual outcome.

Many admission committees include university faculty. Sometimes they are full voting members but most often they act as expert evaluators in their fields. This is often the case when the applicant is applying to the arts. Musical, dramatic and art skills are evaluated by professors in those departments. The colleges of engineering, architecture and business also may have direct input concerning admission to their departments.

The borderline cases are re-evaluated by the full committee. The input of the regional representative who is possibly the only person who has actually met the applicant becomes of paramount importance in these cases. At O’Dea, we are very fortunate to have many college representatives come to our high school. Several of these representatives are the Deans of Admissions at their colleges so their advocacy for you is priceless.

THE WAITING GAME

Now that all you have submitted all of your applications, the waiting begins. This is probably the most difficult time for the entire family. If any of your applications were to schools that use the Rolling application process, you may get the results before April 1, 2015. However, if the school uses the Regular admission process, all of the admission letters will be sent at the same time, which is usually from mid-March to early April.

❑ FAT vs. THIN ENVELOPES

Unfortunately, the “urban myth” about thin letters from colleges bearing bad news is usually TRUE. These letters are always “very sorry to inform you that there was intense competition for very few places in their freshman class.” This may be the first time that your son has experienced rejection and disappointment.

He needs support and encouragement from family and friends. Disappointment is something that everyone will experience and although as parents we want to protect our children from this experience, we need to realize that our children can and will grow from this also. It is important to emphasize to the student that this is not a reflection of his worth as a person.

❑ APPEALING A DENIAL

In most cases, appeal of a denial is not recommended. But if you genuinely feel that a mistake has been made you can inquire as to the reasons for the denial. Occasionally, transcripts, letters of recommendation or other pieces of the application can be lost or misinterpreted. You can get the name of the college’s admissions representative that comes to O’Dea from Mrs. Eulberg if you wish to write and detail the reasons that you feel that their school is the right school for you. Your appeal will have more influence if you can

include new information about your accomplishments or motivation. About a week after you mail the letter, call the admissions officer to state your case. No matter how strongly you feel about admission to the college, you must always be polite and respectful. Ranting, cursing, or belligerence by you or your parents will guarantee that you will not be admitted. The odds of successfully appealing your denial are very slim but there are rare instances when a denial is reversed.

□ **WAITLIST**

Most colleges will compile a waitlist, which they use in case they are unable to fill their freshman class from the students that they accepted. The size of the waitlist will vary from college to college as will the number of those students who are accepted from the waitlist. The size and number of students admitted from the waitlist will also vary within one college from year to year.

If you are on a waitlist you must first send a deposit to one college from those that accepted you. It is not necessary to inform the school that you are on a waitlist at a different college. All of the colleges know that a percentage of those students who send in deposits are on waitlists and may not ultimately attend their school in September.

Next, you must consider whether pursuing the waitlist is worth the effort and the “waiting” again that will be involved in this process. Though most students who are on the waitlist will be notified of their final status by the end of May, some are not informed until the end of summer.

To be successful on the waitlist you must not be passive. The initial step involves the completion of the procedures that the college included which notifies them of your interest in maintaining your position on their waitlist. You should also consider doing all of the following:

- Send a letter ASAP to the admissions director emphasizing your desire to attend their college. State the exact reasons why you feel that the college is the best one for you.
- Call and see if you can arrange an interview on campus.
- Send examples of work that you feel are well done. This is especially important if you have a special talent.
- Ask a teacher to write a recommendation highlighting your recent achievements. Ask teachers who wrote letters for you before, to send updates.

Unfortunately, the ability to pay becomes an issue for students on the waitlist. Most colleges will have little or no financial aid remaining when they admit students from the waitlist; as a result, few students who have high financial need are able to attend. Those with little or no need have the best chance and your chances will improve if you can assure the college that you plan on attending with or without aid.

As with every contact that you have with the admissions office, you must be courteous and polite. You will accomplish nothing by using pressure, threats or rudeness. Colleges will only accept those students from the waitlist who are the ideal fit for their school and who have demonstrated the qualities that they desire in a freshman.

□ **DEPOSITS**

Almost every reputable university in the United States is a member of the National Association of College Admission Counseling. All members of NACAC agree, via a “Statement of Principles of Good Practice” or SPGP, to allow students to consider all offers of admission and financial aid without penalty until May 1 of senior year. Of most importance is the provision that says you cannot be forced to submit a non-refundable deposit before May 1, unless you have specifically applied under a plan in which you waive those rights. (Of course, you are free to deposit early if you have made your final decision, but no college can force you to do so early.) If you are being told that you must deposit prior to May 1 to hold your admission or a scholarship, you can call the Director of Admissions and ask him or her whether or not they abide by the SPGP. You can ask whether or not a deposit is refundable until May 1. These are your rights, plain and simple, and we want you to be aware of them, and to have the language necessary to navigate through this important time.

After you have chosen the one college that you wish to attend, you must carefully read all of the materials that the college sent to you with your acceptance letter and with your financial aid award letter. Pay close attention to all deadlines and make sure you submit the required paperwork in a timely manner. You may send deposit money to only ONE college. You may not “Double Deposit” at multiple colleges that accepted you. By sending a deposit to a college, you are committing to attend that school in the fall. If you have accepted a place on a college’s waitlist, you must send a deposit to a college that you will attend if you are not admitted from the waitlist. If you send deposits to multiple schools, you are misleading the colleges who assume that you will attend in the fall. This then does not allow another student who is on their waitlist the opportunity to attend the college. We will send a Final Transcript to only one college.

□ DEALING WITH REJECTION

If your first-choice college has denied you admission, it probably feels like one of the worst things that could happen to you. It is important for you to look at the “big picture” and realize that this is not a personal rejection. Every year colleges must deny admission to students who are qualified and could be very successful at their school. They receive many applications and unfortunately, cannot accept all of those who are qualified.

If you have been denied, think about the colleges that accepted you. Chances are they will offer as many opportunities both academically and socially as your number one choice. Your ultimate success will hinge less on which college you choose and more on what you make of your total college experience. The value of college lies in what it does for you as a person. The next four years will be some of the most exciting, invigorating and stimulating years of your life. Make the most of what you have ahead of you and don’t waste those years agonizing over the rejection from your first choice school. Remember, when one door closes, another one opens!

SPECIALIZED POST SECONDARY SITUATIONS

Some students may find themselves in unique situations while they are considering their options after high school graduation. This section focuses on several of the more common ones that may be relevant to some O’Dea students.

STUDENT ATHLETES

College offers the opportunity to continue participation in athletics at many different levels. Colleges have a wide variety of avenues for student-athletes to develop their skills, from well-known Division I teams to campus intramural teams. Intramural and club sports can be the most athletic fun a student will ever have. Participation in athletics during college can be a very rewarding and satisfying experience. By carefully evaluating their abilities and potential level of participation, athletes can determine the most appropriate type of team sport and level of competition. To help the student and his family sort through the many different options, we are presenting some topics for your consideration.

◆ **FUNDAMENTALS**

“Choose the school, not the team” is advice that we strongly support. It is easy to be dazzled by an exciting sports program or a “great” coach. However, remember the ultimate reason that you are attending college is for the academic programs. Why academics?? Consider what remains if a career-ending injury occurs, the “great” coach leaves, or the exciting team is a bad fit. Academic programs remain constant. A good strategy for student-athletes is to consider the sport as just one aspect in their college search.

Student Athletes who are being recruited to play in college will have two groups of colleges that they will be considering. The first is the group of colleges that are pursuing him to play a sport on their campus. The coaches of the sport control this group and the student has very little control. If a coach is interested in the student, the college is on the list but when the coach no longer has the student on his list of recruits, the college is off the list. The second group of colleges is totally in the control of the student. This list of colleges is one that has colleges that the student is interested in attending even if he is not going to play the sport. Some of these schools may also be on the Coach-controlled list but these schools will remain even if the coach “drops” the student. Some athletes do not develop this second group of colleges and find themselves without a college to attend because they have been dropped by all of the colleges that initially recruited them. It is crucial that O’Dea athletes follow all of the required procedures and apply to colleges that they would be happy to attend even if they are not recruited to play their sport on the campus. Students can always try to walk-on to a team at a college they love but only if they have applied and been accepted. Don’t count on “the full ride scholarship” to play your sport and then end up without a college to attend.

One of the most important factors in assessing the student’s college athletic options is to honestly evaluate his skills and interests. Athletes who overrate their abilities may be set up for disappointment. The coach of the O’Dea team or the select team coach may be able to help determine which division best reflects the student’s abilities. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has the following divisions:

Division I is the most competitive, has the highest profile and offers athletic scholarships. The University of Washington and Washington State University are Division I schools.

Division II is the second tier of schools and has an above average level of competition, a somewhat lower athletic profile and fewer scholarship opportunities. Examples of Division II schools are Central Washington University and Western Washington University.

Division III is made up of smaller colleges, which range from division powerhouses to no-cut teams. Athletes in this division are students first, athletes second. There are no athletic scholarships. Pacific Lutheran University and the University of Puget Sound are Division III schools.

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) is another athletic association. It began as a men's basketball organization but has grown to include both men's and women's teams in many different sports. They do offer athletic scholarships. Examples of NAIA colleges include Carroll College and The Evergreen State College

◆ **NCAA REGULATIONS**

Athletes who are considering Division I or II schools must fulfill all of the NCAA requirements by the time of graduation from O'Dea. The NCAA requires that athletes have completed a core curriculum of 16 core courses with a minimum grade point average (GPA) and a minimum SAT or ACT score. Athletes who do not meet these requirements may not be eligible to compete. There are many other NCAA regulations that are also involved in the recruiting process. These rules apply to both the student-athlete and to the colleges. It is imperative that the student and his family become knowledgeable about these rules as any transgression may jeopardize the student's participation on the college team. All of this information is available on the NCAA Eligibility Center website: <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>

You should print a copy of the Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete which is located on the NCAA website. It will give you specific information about the minimum high school academic requirements and the regulations that you must follow during the recruiting process. All high school athletes who hope to compete at a Division I or II college program must submit a NCAA Initial Eligibility form in the spring of junior year. You must submit the data online at: <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>. During the process of completing the Eligibility form, it will ask you to list the email address of your counselor. We will then get an email requesting transcripts for you which we will send directly to the NCAA. You must also have the SAT or ACT send your test scores directly to the Eligibility Center.

◆ **QUESTIONS**

Each division offers its own advantages and disadvantages. Some of the questions that should be answered for the student and his family are:

- How much time will the sport take, in-season and out of season?
- What percentage of the athletes graduate and how long does it take them to graduate?
- Where do academics fit in, from the viewpoint of the coach?
- Are student-athletes free to major in any subject?
- Are athletes able to get extra academic support during the season if they miss classes to travel with the team?
- Will athletes continue on scholarship, if they are injured and cannot continue to play?
-

LEARNING DISABILITIES/ADHD

Students with learning disabilities (LD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) who will need special services in college, must begin the investigative process very early in their college search. Some academic accommodations are available at every college or university that receives federal funding, but the amount and quality of these services varies from college to college.

Students who have received special accommodations during high school, will find that they must assume most of the responsibility for obtaining service in college. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Services and identify the services that they need. Beyond that, it will also be necessary for the student to disclose his needs to each professor. The Disability Office does not contact the professors for you—you must arrange with each instructor for the accommodations that you will require for the class. If you do not go to the Disability Office or the professor, no one will seek you out to make sure that you get the accommodations for which you have qualified. It is up to you to advocate for yourself.

During the admission process, one of the first decisions you must make is whether you want to disclose your disability. Colleges are mandated to not discriminate against students based on their learning disability. However, a student must be qualified like every other applicant—the college admissions committees are not going to “cut you some slack” because of your disability. This means that the admissions committees will still evaluate the LD/ADHD student’s curriculum, grades and test scores. If the student has not completed all of the required course work or has poor grades/test scores, the admissions committees are not obligated to accept the LD/ADHD student. It is important to research all of the admissions requirements for each college you are considering.

The student must have current and comprehensive documentation of his disability **before** he matriculates. Documentation is usually considered current if it has been issued within three years, but this can vary from college to college. Documentation is a key component because all of a student’s academic accommodations are based on the findings and recommendations in the evaluation. The documentation that you provide must have the following components:

- The qualifications of the evaluator
- The date of the evaluation
- Appropriate clinical testing and documentation to substantiate the learning disability
- Evidence to establish a rationale supporting the need for accommodation

The Association for Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) established the guidelines for the documentation of ADHD in 1997. This has created a more consistent reporting and documenting of a student’s disability and the specificity of the services required for the student. Prior to this, the colleges received documentation that varied tremendously in the quality of the evaluation that had been conducted. All of the documentation must be obtained at the student’s expense. The Disability Offices do not provide any testing services for the purpose of documentation.

Once you have completed your evaluation you will know which academic accommodations the evaluator recommends for you. Just because your evaluation has a recommendation for academic supports, each college may not be required to provide all of the suggested services. Colleges are required by law to provide the following mandated services:

- Extra time on tests
- Permit tests to be individually proctored, read only, dictated or typed
- Note takers
- Provision of adaptive technology
- Opportunity to register to vote
- Provision of material in alternate media

Many colleges also offer additional services such as tutoring, study skills courses, pre-college summer workshops and many more. There can be additional fees for some of these “extras”. Therefore, it is vital that the student learns about all of the services offered at each individual college, as there can be a vast difference between schools.

Students must be able to express the exact nature of their disability and the academic support they need. Most students with learning disabilities will require more than four years to complete their degree requirements. Students must not assume that any of the course requirements for a specific major will be waived because of their disability. For example, if you choose a major that has an international language requirement and your evaluation specifically reports a deficiency in the ability to learn such a course, you will still be required to successfully complete international language courses for that major. So, major selection and course selection should be guided by the knowledge of the limitations of your disability.

There are several good college guidebooks for students with LD/ADHD. The K & W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities classifies colleges according to the academic support service provided. The following are the descriptions for each classification from this book:

- **Structured Programs** offer the most comprehensive services. The disability offices are staffed with professional who are trained and certified. These are usually fully staffed departments that offer well organized programs for students.
- **Coordinated Services** are not as comprehensive as the structured programs and the staffing is not as complete. These departments have at least one certified specialist and may provide many consulting/advising services for the students.
- **Services** are colleges that provide the minimum mandated accommodations.

It is important for the student to begin the search for the best fit for college early. A thorough investigation and visits to colleges and their Disability Offices is mandatory for students with learning disabilities.

VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS

Students who are interested in majors in the visual and performing arts must begin the college search process very early as there are some extra considerations and requirements involved. Students must determine if they are interested in a specialized school, a liberal arts college or a university. The specialized school will focus exclusively on its area of expertise with very few options in the non-art, non-theatre areas. These schools are only for those students who have a total commitment to the specific major. If a student has any doubt he should consider attending a liberal arts college or a university that has a strong department in the area of interest. This allows for the possibility of changing majors if a student finds a different focus.

◆ VISUAL ARTS

The field of visual arts has undergone monumental changes due to the technology of the computer. Visual Arts are no longer restricted to painting and sculpting but have expanded to areas of film, television, advertising, graphic design, interior design and many more.

As stated in the introductory paragraph, the first decision a student must make is the type of school he is interested in attending. At an independent art college, every aspect of the school environment is devoted to the development of the student as a professional artist. These schools are usually small with the faculty and students working very closely together. The independent art college offers a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree.

Liberal arts college and university art programs are integrated within the framework of a broader community of students and faculty. The liberal arts college or the university offers a Bachelors of Fine Arts or a Bachelors of Arts degree. The liberal arts college or a university offers many social opportunities beyond the student's specific field of study.

□ **Special Admissions Requirements**

Each program will require a portfolio of your work. This, obviously, cannot be done in a short period of time so you should obtain knowledge of the specific requirements for each school as soon as possible. There are several National Portfolio Days sponsored each year in many different cities across the United States. For more information, visit the website of the National Portfolio Day Association at: <https://nationalportfolioday.org/> On this site you will not only find a listing of the Portfolio Days but information and tips on developing and presenting your portfolio. Every admission committee considers your portfolio but it holds the most importance in your evaluation at the independent art colleges. At liberal arts colleges and universities, members of the faculty from the art department evaluate the portfolios. At the independent art colleges, the faculty are looking for a display of extraordinary talent.

The Fiske Guide to Getting into the Right College has the following listing of art colleges. It is imperative that the student research and find the right fit for him.

❑ Top Schools of Art & Design

Art Center College of Design	California Institute of the Arts	Cooper Union
Maryland Institute, College of Art	Massachusetts College of Art	Moore College of Art & Design
North Carolina School of the Arts	Otis Institute of Art & Design	Parsons School of Design
Pratt Institute	Rhode Island School of Design	School of the Art Institute of Chicago

❑ Major Universities, Strong in Art & Design

Boston University	Carnegie Mellon University	University of Cincinnati
Cornell University	Harvard University	University of Michigan
New York University	University of Pennsylvania	University of Rochester
Washington University, St. Louis	University of Washington	

❑ Small Colleges, Strong in Art & Design

Alfred University	Bard College	Brown University
Furman University	Hollins University	Kenyon College
Lake Forest College	Manhattanville College	State U. of New York, Purchase
U. of North Carolina-Greensboro	Scripps College	Skidmore College
Smith College	Williams College	

◆ PERFORMING ARTS-MUSIC & DRAMA

If a student is considering a major in the performing arts, it is crucial that he has a realistic assessment of his ability. In this application process, the student must begin early. Students must make decisions about the type of school and the specific programs; they must schedule auditions; and they must prepare for the auditions.

The types of colleges for those students who are interested in the performing arts are: conservatory, Liberal Arts College and university. The conservatory programs focus intensely on the specific area of the performing arts that you designate. Frequently in these programs, your ability and skill level in performances are of the highest priority in the admissions process. Some of these intense programs commit to a student for only one year. Sometime during the year you will either be asked to return or you will not be offered a place in the next year's class. Since these schools have such demanding programs, if a student successfully completes the degree requirements, he has the best chance for a career in his chosen field. The various conservatories also have specialties and strengths within their schools. For example, one conservatory may be very strong in string instruments whereas another specializes in piano. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly research each program. The graduating student will receive a Bachelors of Fine Arts, a Bachelors of Music, or a Bachelors of Music Education from a conservatory.

A student who is interested in a full college experience or one who is not as confident of his ability, may be better suited to a liberal arts college or a university. The drama and music departments at these schools can also offer outstanding curriculums and experiences in the performing arts. In some of these schools, students must apply to both the college/university **and** to the drama/music department in a separate application process. Be sure that you have completed all of the components of the application that are required by each college. Students who complete a major at these schools can receive either a Bachelors of Arts or a Bachelors of Fine Arts.

The National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) hosts annual Performing Arts and Visual Arts College Fairs in locations across the country. Colleges present their programs in the visual and performing arts at these events. Students have the opportunity to meet with the college representatives from both the colleges and the conservatories in which he is interested. For more

information about these college fairs call NACAC at 800-622-6285 or visit the website at <https://www.nacacnet.org>.

□ **Music**

If you are interested in a career in music, the first decision you must make is the type of degree you will pursue. Most conservatories will offer a Bachelor of Music (BM) or a Bachelor of Music Education (BME) degree. These are also offered at liberal arts colleges and at universities along with the Bachelor of Art (BA) degree. There appears to be a more significant difference in the music field than in drama between the programs offered in a BM or BA tract. Music students in a BA program may not even major in music but continue to study music through private lessons. These students frequently pursue a graduate degree in music.

In music, the instrument you play may also influence your choice of degree programs. Singers often get BA degrees but pianists and violinists most often enroll in BM programs. It is imperative that you thoroughly investigate your options before you commit to one course of action.

Conservatories are preparing musicians for a professional career. The faculty at these institutions are often professional, performing musicians who teach part-time at the conservatory. At liberal arts colleges and at universities the faculty are full-time employees of the institution and therefore may be more accessible to the students. No matter which type of school you choose, all of the faculty are extremely well trained in both performance and theory.

* **Auditions**

The music audition is an integral part of the application process. Conservatories place a tremendous amount of emphasis on your audition. Liberal arts colleges and universities differ in the weight each individual school places on the audition but they place more emphasis on the academic components of the application than the conservatories do.

The ideal situation for an audition is for the student to audition on campus during the school's designated audition times. These on-campus auditions are done before the faculty who specialize in your instrument. There can be from three to sixteen people on your audition "jury". You will have anywhere from five to thirty minutes depending on the selectivity of the school.

Another option for your audition is a regional audition. These auditions are in multiple cities in the United States and in international countries. Usually only one person from the school is present at these auditions. He or she then tapes or videotapes your performance. The faculty at the school then reviews the tapes later.

Some schools are also asking for tapes or videotapes before they schedule you for an audition. This adds another layer to the audition process—prescreening. Because the colleges know that you can re-start if you make a mistake during the taped performance, you must submit your absolute best work. The experts recommend that you rent the best equipment that you can afford but it is not necessary or even preferred that you rent a studio and have a professional engineer produce your tape.

Before you audition, you must research the repertoire that each school expects you to perform. You will usually be required to choose two or three selections. It is imperative that you practice these selections so that they are second nature to you. As with any high stress, high anxiety situation, nervous apprehension is common. The more secure you are in your confidence to perform well, the better your ability and talent will showcase.

For musical auditions, you should wear slacks, a shirt and tie, a blazer/sport coat and dress shoes. Appearance and professionalism are more important in musical auditions than in drama auditions.

The following is a list of things that you should not do at auditions. It is from the Arco Performing Arts Major's College Guide:

What NOT to Do at a Music Audition

- Dress inappropriately
- Arrive late or forget to cancel
- Chew gum
- Forget to introduce yourself
- Cry
- Start playing before you are asked to begin
- Try to talk with a particular faculty member in the audition room
- Try to listen to other applicants' auditions
- Make excuses for any slip you may have or curse out loud if this happens to you
- Tell your life story in answer to a simple question intended to help you relax
- Have to leave in the middle of the audition. If you have a tendency towards dryness, particularly as a singer or wind player, bring a plastic glass of water into the audition room with you, and be sure you have gone to the bathroom before the audition.

□ **Drama**

Drama programs include not only actors but also those students who are interested in careers in directing, costume designing, lighting designing, theatrical production, technical directing, scene designing, and stage management. Students are not required to have extensive training in any of these areas as they are in dance and music. But it is expected that they have had many different kinds of experiences in drama during their high school years. During the application process for students interested in drama, there may be some unique requirements that the student should be prepared to produce. Below we will briefly discuss some of those but the student must be sure he is submitting all of the required components, in the format requested by each school.

★ **Auditions**

Auditions are usually only about five minutes long. There is at least one, sometimes two monologues required, and the college will specify the type of monologue that you will present. Some programs will send you a list of suggested monologues and others will be specific about the exact type of monologue (classical vs. contemporary) but they will allow you to choose the monologue you will perform. In either case, it is important for you to be comfortable with the monologue and to be familiar with the entire play from which the monologue is taken so that you can perform it in context. There are books available that have lists of monologues that you could use during your audition. The Arco Performing Arts Major's College Guide lists many monologues for men based on the type of monologue. Members of the faculty from the drama department judge the auditions. Auditions are commonly held on the school's campus but some schools do offer regional off-campus auditions. You must investigate the requirements and register for your audition as soon as possible.

★ **Resumes**

Most drama programs require a resume that is specific for your experiences in drama. You should list all of the high school productions that you participated in, the summer plays, any professional activities, workshops and master classes. The demographic information should include: Name, Address, Phone, Height Weight, Eye & Hair Color, Voice Range if applicable.

Here is a sample resume that you could submit for both a music or drama application. This is from the Arco Performing Arts Major's College Guide:

MARCIA SMITH

123 4th Avenue
 New York, New York 10003
 212-123-4567

Height: 5'4"
 Weight: 120
 Hair: Brown
 Eyes: Brown

Theater

<i>Thank you Amy</i>	<i>Amy</i>	<i>Theater in the Square</i>
<i>The Dining Room</i>	<i>Ensemble</i>	<i>Tisch School of the Arts</i>
<i>No Comment Cabaret</i>	<i>Sandy</i>	<i>Tisch School of the Arts</i>
<i>Vestless Attire</i>	<i>Ensemble</i>	<i>The Gas Station</i>
<i>Cinderella</i>	<i>Cinderella</i>	<i>Boston Children's Theater</i>
<i>Ludlow Fair</i>	<i>Rachel</i>	<i>Directing Project- Williamstown Theater Festival</i>
<i>Parlour Games</i>	<i>Ensemble</i>	<i>Massachusetts College of Art</i>
<i>Third Rail</i>	<i>Cathy</i>	<i>Emerson College</i>

Television And Film

<i>Rap Around</i>	<i>Jessica</i>	<i>WBZ-TV(Four Segments)</i>
<i>Public Service Announcements</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<i>WBZ-TV</i>
<i>Children and Divorce</i>		<i>WNEV-TV</i>
<i>Sidewalk</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Tisch School of the Arts</i>

Summer

<i>Institute Member</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>National Shakespeare Cons.</i>
<i>Apprentice</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>Williamstown Theater Festival</i>
<i>Young Critic's Institute</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>Huntington Theater</i>

Training

Classes: Lyric Stage, Wheelock Family Theater, Boston Children's Theater, Oberlin Theater Institute
Participant: Oberlin Theater Institute, Circle in the Square Theater School
Currently attending the Tisch School of the Arts/New York University

Awards

National Foundation for the Advancement in the Arts:
Arts Recognition and Talent Search Awardee, 1993
National Endowment for the Humanitarians Scholar:
Young Critic's Institute-Huntington Theater

POSTGRADUATE YEAR

Each year a number of high school seniors determine that they need more preparation before they matriculate at a four-year college or university. Some of these students attend local community colleges and take remedial courses in English and math to supplement their high school courses. A small percentage of students choose to attend a private boarding school full time to strengthen their academic, athletic and standardized testing skills. Most of these postgraduate boarding schools are located in the Northeast but there are a few located in other areas of the United States. For a complete listing of boarding schools that offer a postgraduate year go to: www.boardingschoolreview.com/pg_boarding_schools.php or www.schools.com (click on advanced search)

All of these schools offer a full program of high school academic courses that may strengthen a student's academic profile. They usually incorporate intensive SAT preparation into their curriculums also. Along

with the focus on academics, some of these schools have highly competitive athletic programs that can enhance a student's chances for participation in collegiate athletics.

Students must complete applications for admission to these schools and most schools require the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT). Admission to these postgraduate schools can be very competitive. In addition, tuition is expensive and can be comparable to that at a private four-year college.

◆ **GAP YEAR/INTERIM YEAR**

A gap year or interim year is a planned, structured time that a student spends between high school and college. This time can be from six months to two years. This is a time for students to take some time off from formal education to travel, work, study or volunteer. Most students in the United States who take a gap year express some level of "burn-out" with formal education. They want to experience something new, develop or expand on a passionate interest or explore themselves and the world. A gap year is NOT a time spent "sitting on the couch, playing video games." It is a well thought-out, organized agenda that the student formulates and then completes.

A gap year experience is not common in the United States but in England and other United Kingdom (UK) countries over 40% of high school graduates pursue gap year programs. Several prestigious, highly selective universities (Harvard, Georgetown, Princeton) encourage students in their letters of acceptance to consider deferring their matriculation. Mr. William Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions at Harvard published an essay in 2002 entitled "Time Out or Burn Out for the Next Generation." In this essay, he emphasizes the pressures that young people experience from very young ages in academic and co-curricular activities. The explosion of stressed-out college students with severe emotional/psychological impairments has become a focus of concern for all college campuses. Less dramatic but much more prevalent is the problem of binge drinking to excess, drug use and other dangerous activities on campuses. Taking a gap year has proven to add a level of maturity and independence to a student.

□ **Advantages of a Gap Year**

Dean Fitzsimmons of Harvard stated that taking time-out is "a time to step back and reflect, to gain perspective on personal values and goals, or to gain needed life experience in a setting separate from and independent of one's accustomed pressures and experiences." Students choose this route for many different reasons but at the core of all of the reasons is a desire to experience something different before they continue their formal education in college.

Students and parents report many expected and unexpected benefits from a gap year experience. Students gain **confidence** through planning and then executing that plan. They learn through the "ups" and "downs" how to manage difficult situations, utilizing resources within themselves that they did not even know they had. This in turn fosters an **independence** that becomes a life-long strength. They learn the **discipline** to follow through on a planned course of action. Students report that they find a sense of **learning** in all aspects of the experience, from the planning through the re-entry into their former lives. They express a passion for learning for learning's sake, which is refreshing after their quest in high school for high GPAs and test scores. Many students push themselves out of their comfort zones and spend their time getting a **new perspective** on life. They see people who struggle to achieve the basic necessities and the students **mature** because of this new perspective.

In order to have a successful experience, students must develop **organizational skills** in the planning and execution of their programs. They learn how to budget, plan their travel, arrange housing, and many more life skills. Finally, they learn how to be **flexible** and prioritize the components of their lives. They have seen and experienced a life very different from most other freshmen on their college campus.

The following website gives a great overview of the options that are available for a Gap Year:

<http://info.uncollege.org/college-2.0>

□ Options

Again, a gap year is not a ‘goofing off’ year. It is a planned, organized experience with goals in mind! Most students will do a combination of two or more of these options and they all can be done in the United States or abroad.

The options include:

- Travel
- Work/Internship
- Volunteer/Community Service
- Study

• **Travel**

Students can choose to travel in the United States and explore areas of the country that offer challenge and interest such as the Grand Canyon, the islands of Hawaii, Alaska and many more. Other students will pursue travel abroad and may immerse themselves in the culture of a country or countries. Some useful websites are:

For travel in the United States:

National Park Service	www.nps.gov
Outward Bound	http://www.outwardbound.org
Trailplace	www.trailplace.com

For International Travel:

British Exploring Society	http://www.britisheexploring.org/
Earthwatch Institute	www.earthwatch.org
Madventurer	www.madventurer.com
Where There Be Dragons	www.wheretherebedragons.com

• **Work/Internships**

Students may work in the United States during part of their time off in order to fund other aspects of their gap year. Students and parents should be aware that the option of working abroad is not feasible. Students will not be able to get a required work permit and they will therefore NOT be able to work. Therefore, if it is necessary for a student to work in order to fund his travels abroad, he must do so in the United States before he leaves.

Internships are opportunities to work with professionals in careers that may be of interest to the student. Internships are available in the United States and abroad.

Useful websites for work/internship websites in the USA are:

Dynamy Internship Year	www.dynamy.org
Environmental Careers Organization	www.eco.org
Group Workcamps Foundation	www.groupworkcamps.com
JobMonkey	www.jobmonkey.com
Monster	www.monster.com
Northwest Youth Corps	www.nwyouthcorps.org
United States Public Interest Research Group	www.uspirg.org
Young Service America	www.ysa.org

Useful websites for work/internship websites abroad are:

BUNAC	www.bunac.org
Transitions Abroad	www.transitionsabroad.com
Foundation for Sustainable Development	www.fsdinternational.org
Go Abroad	www.goabroad.com
InterExchange	www.interexchange.org
International Cooperative Education	www.icemenlo.com
Travellers Worldwide	www.travellersworldwide.com

- **Volunteer/Community Service**

There are many different volunteer opportunities both in the United States and abroad. Each offers a wide range of possible experiences. Some community service opportunities abroad will offer not only service experiences but also total immersion in the culture and living situations of the international community.

The following is a list of websites for volunteer opportunities in the United States:

American Red Cross	www.redcross.org
AmeriCorps	http://www.americorps.gov/
City Year	www.cityyear.org
Habitat for Humanity International	www.habitat.org
Public Allies	www.publicallies.org
The Student Conservation Association	www.thesca.org
World Volunteer Web	www.worldvolunteerweb.org

The following is a list of websites for International volunteer opportunities:

AFS Intercultural Programs, Inc.	www.afs.org
Alliance Abroad Group	www.allianceabroad.com
AmeriSpan	www.amerispan.com
Blue Ventures	www.blueventures.org
Cross-Cultural Solutions	www.crossculturalsolutions.org
Doctors Without Borders	www.doctorswithoutborders.org
Global Citizens Network	www.globalcitizens.org
Global Crossroad	http://www.globalcrossroad.com/
Global Routes	www.globalroutes.org
Global Service Corps	www.globalservicecorps.org
Global Vision International	www.gvi.co.uk
i-to-i	www.i-to-i.com
The International Partnership for Service Learning and Leadership	www.ipsl.org
International Volunteer Programs Association	www.volunteerinternational.org
Madventurer	www.madventurer.com
Operation Crossroads Africa	www.operationcrossroadsafrica.org
Projects Abroad	www.projects-abroad.org
Restless Development	http://www.restlessdevelopment.org/
VentureCo Worldwide	www.ventureco-worldwide.com
Volunteers for Peace	www.vfp.org
WorldTeach	www.worldteach.org
World Volunteer Web	www.worldvolunteerweb.org
World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms	www.wwoof.org

- ◆ **Study**

While this may seem to be antagonistic to the concept of taking time off from formal education during a gap year, it really can offer a chance for the student to investigate a field of study that he would not pursue in a traditional college environment. For example, a student may take courses in the culinary arts or gardening or an international language. A student could choose to do this in the United States or abroad. He may or may not earn college credit for these courses.

The following is a list of websites for opportunities to study in the United States:

National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)	www.nols.edu
Tom Brown, Jr.'s Tracker School	www.trackerschool.com

The following is a list of websites for opportunities in International study:

ACCENT International	www.accentintl.com
Council on International Educational Exchange	www.ciee.org
Flying Fish	www.flyingfishonline.com
The Institute for Central American Development Studies	www.icads.org
International Cooperative Education (ICE)	www.icemenlo.com/index.shtml
ITHAKA (immersion in Greek culture)	http://www.ithaka.org/
LEAPNow (Lifelong Education Alternatives and Programs)	www.leapnow.org
Nacel Open Door	www.nacelopendoor.org
Semester at Sea	www.seamster.com
The WorldSmart Leadership Program	www.upwithpeople.org
Youth for Understanding	www.yfu-usa.org

□ Plan

A crucial element of any gap year experience is to develop a comprehensive Plan. In order for the gap year to reap all of the expected advantages and benefits, a great deal of planning and research must be done long before the student is engaged in any gap year activity. The planning process will be unique for each student but there are some steps that must be completed for every plan.

□ Family

As with every major choice in a student's life, this decision is actually a family determination. Students should discuss with their parents, the idea of a gap year experience as soon as possible. Since this is not the "usual" path for the year after high school, the first reaction from parents could be negative. If a student has done some initial research and can articulate his reasons for wanting to do this, he will be prepared to discuss and defend his position.

The student may also need financial support and so the parents and student must be able to communicate and develop a realistic budget for the gap year.

Parents are also frequently involved in helping the student remain organized so that all deadlines are met and the necessary documents are submitted.

□ College

One of the primary fears parents express is that their son will never go to college if they take time off. While this may be true in a few cases, the vast majority of students do go to college after a gap year. Most students apply to college during senior year and then defer their admission to the college they chose. Deferring admission to a college is not automatic. The student must request this from the university or college. Each college has their own policy on deferral. Most will require a non-refundable deposit to hold the student's place in the subsequent freshman class. Other colleges do not defer admissions; the University of Washington does not defer.

When a student is requesting a deferral, he must have a well-developed plan for his time-off. He must be able to articulate this to the college or university. Again, they want this to be a productive year of personal growth for the student.

Senior year in high school is always very stressful and busy for every student. For the student who is considering a gap year, it is even more complicated. He must not only have a successful final year in high school, he must apply to colleges AND develop his plan for his gap year experiences. In order to successfully accomplish all of these tasks, the student must be motivated and organized. Careful planning and time management is essential.

❑ Programs

Most of the activities that a student would consider for his gap year activities will have some kind of application process. It is crucial that the student completes these in a timely manner so that his chances of acceptance into his top choices are enhanced.

There are private consulting companies that can help the student and his family with all of the pre-planning details and for some families this is a great option. All of these companies charge a fee for their service. Some of these national companies are:

The Center for Interim Programs, LLC
Taking Off
Where Are You Headed

www.interimprograms.com

www.takingoff.net

www.whereyouheaded.com

❑ Travel

Travel arrangements always require careful planning and usually involve checking and re-checking the various fare options. In addition to the basic travel plans for every trip, if a student is going abroad he must research the additional requirements for each country he will visit.

Passports are now also required for travel to and from Mexico and Canada. To obtain a passport go to: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html Another credential that will save the student money with discounts on housing and travel while abroad is the International Student Exchange ID card. For more information on this card go to: www.isecard.com The student should make sure that his driver's license and credit cards do not expire while he is planning to be gone. In addition, some countries require that the expiration of your passport is from six months to one year after you enter their country.

Some travel to international countries will require specific immunizations. Some of these immunizations are actually a series of injections that must be given over specific time frames. Be sure that you begin the process well before your departure date. For more information on immunization requirements, go to the Center for Disease Control website at: www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm

Another important consideration for international travel is health insurance. Usually, the health insurance the family has in the United States does not cover illness or injury in other countries. The US Department of State has a section for students who travel abroad at: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>

❑ Finances

The funding of the student's gap year experience requires careful planning and research. The family should develop a budget that includes both the expenses and how those expenses will be paid. Students often work to fund some or all of the costs. Another possibility is some form of fundraising. As with every aspect of the gap year, planning and executing the plan well ahead of the scheduled activity is crucial.

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURES AT O'DEA

Juniors should be visiting the colleges' websites and registering with each college in which they are interested. By doing this, they will be on a mailing list and should receive application materials. Applications are usually available in late summer online, so it is a good idea to check the websites frequently. You could even start looking at the essays and personal statements for colleges in which you are interested.

Every student should have all of his college applications completed and submitted before the Christmas vacation begins. In order to do that the student must be very organized. He must determine a timeline that will allow plenty of time to complete the respective components of the application packet. The teachers and counselor must have at least four weeks to complete their letters of recommendation. This means that the student must be aware of the due dates and get the required materials to them well before they are due. It is important to note that in order to accomplish the goal of completing all of the college applications before Christmas, the student must have everything done much earlier than the start of Christmas break.

Early in the fall of senior year, the counselors will have a meeting with all of the seniors to help them begin the actual application process and to orient them to the requirements that are specific to O'Dea High School. They will reinforce the importance of the web based program called **Naviance Student** the students will use throughout the college application process. This is an exciting program for O'Dea High School that enables the students, parents, teachers and counselors to manage each student's college application procedures in a very organized manner. It allows for a great means of communication from the counseling department to the students and their families.

Naviance Student facilitates many aspects of the college search and application process for the student and his family. Students can perform extensive college searches and there are links to each college's website so that the student can view each site easily. He can then access the admission materials and information directly from each college.

Last year over 95% of all college applications were submitted online. This has been a steadily increasing trend over the past five years. Because of this, it is anticipated that within another five years, every part of a college application will be completed online, including teacher letters of recommendation, counselor letters of recommendation and transcripts. The Naviance Student/Counselor Workspace allows teachers and counselors to complete the recommendation forms and letters online. And if the college is a member of the Common Application, these recommendations and transcripts can be sent electronically through this program.

In addition to the student accounts in Naviance Student, each parent can create an account so that they can be actively involved in this process. Parents can monitor the student's account but the student is the only person who can actually enter information into his account.

MEET WITH YOUR COUNSELOR

Mr. Beck, Mr. Kight, Mr. Michels and Ms. Soldato are the counselors. Dr. Eulberg is the Assistant Principal for Student Services and she oversees the Counseling Department. It is a great idea to meet with your Counselor as soon as possible. Here are the Counselor assignments:

Ms. Soldato	Students with last names A-E
Mr. Beck	Students with last names F-M
Mr. Michels	Students with last names N-Z
Mr. Kight	Designated Students (You will be notified if you are one of Mr. Kight's counselees)

Dr. Eulberg and Mr. Kight met with every junior in January or February who scheduled and kept his appointment. They discussed Naviance Student, standardized testing and the college search process. If you did not keep your appointment with Dr. Eulberg or Mr. Kight, please make an appointment with your Counselor and really get to know him or her. Our goal, as a department, is to help each student find the right college for him. The better we know you, the better we can help and advise you.

We always emphasize the importance of discussing which colleges each student is considering. Each student should narrow his list of colleges to four to eight schools during the fall of senior year. At least one or two should be **likely** schools, which are colleges that the senior is pretty sure would accept him and that the family is able to afford. Also on this list should be four to five colleges that the student is very **competitive** with others who are applying. Lastly, he should have one to two schools that would be considered a “**reach**” for him. Students should be getting online and ordering application materials and looking at the websites for each college on their list. You can do this easily through Naviance Student.

PROCEDURES AT O’DEA USING FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Naviance Student along with the Counselor Workspace (counselor part of the program) allows the student and counseling department to work together to attain the ultimate goal of matriculation at the college that is the best fit for the student. In Naviance Student, the student will investigate colleges that interest him, learn about careers and majors, find possible activities for summer, request letters of recommendation from teachers and request transcripts.

Naviance Student is a web-based program that can easily be accessed from any computer. There is a link to the website on the O’Dea website. The web address is: <https://student.naviance.com/odeahs> After logging onto the site, you will be on the Main Page. On the white center portion of this page, the Counseling Department will post various communications from in the Latest News section. You should be sure to open and read all of these. After you have read the Latest News, you should select an area that is listed at the top of the opening page. These will be the areas where you will do most of your investigations and application process work. While you will accomplish many of the application requirements (requesting letters of recommendation and requesting transcripts) in Family Connection, you will not complete the actual applications there. The applications are on the colleges’ websites or if they are members of the Common Application, you will complete the Common Application on that website. In the following sections, we will describe, in detail, most of the areas of the Family Connections website that you will use in the next year.

ABOUT ME

MyAccount

The first thing each student must do after he opens his account is to check and update the information in the Account section of Naviance Student, This section contains the basic information about the student and his parents. Please make sure to make any changes to your phone numbers, address and email address in this area so that we have the most up to date information.

My Stuff

- **My Surveys**

- College Questionnaire-Student
- Teacher Questionnaires

- **Resume**

You must complete this section of Naviance Student, before a teacher or counselor will write a letter of recommendation for you. You should include every activity you do at O’Dea and every activity that you do outside of O’Dea. You should constantly update this list as you add new activities, new leadership roles, and new employment. Your resume should detail your life in

high school from freshman through senior year. If you constantly update it throughout high school, by the time you are a senior it will be a complete record. Every college application will ask you for this same information so once you complete this section you will have also completed a part of your college applications. You can use the information on this resume to complete the colleges' activity lists but be sure to list the activities in the format that each college uses.

The activities that you choose to participate in during high school reflect some of your personal characteristics. Your activities represent what is meaningful in your life; how you decided to prioritize your commitments outside of the school day; the skills you have developed (athletic, musical, intellectual, responsibility, commitment, etc.). All of these co-curricular experiences help to form you as a unique individual. Activities are very important to admissions committees because they allow the committee to see you as a distinctive person. When you are asked to list your activities on your applications, always use the format that the college requests. **Always list your activities beginning with the most important.**

Colleges are also looking for ways that you have demonstrated leadership in your activities. Leadership is obvious when you have been elected an officer in a club or organization. However, you can also show leadership in many other ways. For example, if you have a part-time job and the manager asks you to orient a new employee that is leadership. You would add "train new employees" to the activity resume. You should think carefully about your activities and determine where you have assumed leadership. Then, you should volunteer for any new leadership opportunities that may occur in the future.

Add new entries to your resume by selecting a type of entry from the drop-down menu. If you are not sure what information to provide, you can select an entry type and read the tips displayed. When printing your resume, you can choose which entries you want to display, so we encourage you to add as much information as possible. After you have added entries, you can click on the Customize Your Printable Resumes tab and create Resumes that you can print out.

You can and should add to your resume as you remember activities. If you want to add more information to an activity that you have listed, you can select Edit to revise the content. You want this to be as complete as possible. Teachers and your counselor will use the information in your activity resume to write their letters of recommendation. And, every college application that you complete will have a section that requires this information also. So, if you have kept your activity resume in Family Connections up to date, it will be much easier to complete those sections in your college applications. This will save a great deal of time.

Your test scores are automatically downloaded from our data base if you list O'Dea's school code (481130) when you registered for the SAT or ACT. Students cannot add to or change these scores but you can go to this area to look up your scores if you need them for your college applications.

- **Test Scores**
This is where all of your standardized test scores will be entered by the Registrar.
- **Portfolio**
All of your information will be collected by Naviance Student into this area
- **Documents Shared with Me**
- **Journal**
You can keep a Journal of everything that is important to you here

My Assessments

- Do What You Are
- MI Advantage
- Learning Style Inventory
- Strengths Explorer
- Career Interest Profiler
- Career Cluster Finder

My Surveys

This area tells you what surveys are in progress, completed and not started

Post Secondary Plans

COLLEGES

The Colleges Tab includes several sections: Colleges I'm Thinking About, Colleges I'm Applying to, Search Tools, Research Colleges, Apply to College, Scholarships and Money.

Colleges I am Thinking About

This is the list of colleges that you will create after you have begun your research. This list could be very large by the end of junior year. Once you have entered a college into this list, you can learn more about the college by clicking on the name of the college. This will then bring up all of the information that the college has given to Family Connection. In this area, you can click on several tabs—General Info, Admissions, Financial Aid, Majors and Degrees and Student Life. In each of these areas you will find details that are specific to that college. If you want to go to the college's website, you can click on Visit Website and you will automatically be connected. There is historical and comparative statistics (Overlap, School Stats, Graph) at the top of the page that will give you information about how you compare with past students who have applied to the college.

You should select the level of interest you have in each college by selecting the appropriate level in the dropdown by the college name. You can adjust this level as you research the college by clicking on Change Interest at the bottom of the list.

Colleges I am Applying To

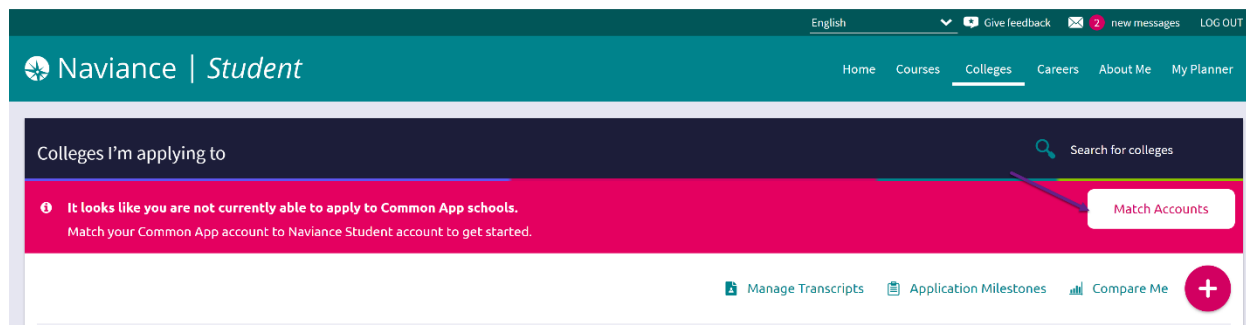
In the fall of senior year, you will complete a form that will list all of the colleges that you have determined you will apply to. Your counselor will then enter these into your Applying To account in Naviance Student. This is also where you will match your Common Application account to your Naviance Student account. You need to do this so that your counselor can submit all of your documents electronically to the Common App schools to which you are applying. If you decide to add any colleges at a later time, you must complete another form and submit it to your counselor. That is the only way we are aware that you are applying to a college. We cannot submit any supporting documents until we have the forms and your applications will be incomplete without those documents.

* **Common Application Privacy Waiver**

Colleges want to be sure that the letters of recommendation that we submit are our true assessment and that they are not being screened or edited by the student or his family. Students must waive their rights to view the recommendation forms and letters we write for them or we will not write letters of recommendation. Waiving your rights is really just a legal technicality as the only application materials that you would be able to view if you don't waive your rights are those at colleges who

accepted you. So, you must click on the Yes, I do waive my rights in the Common Application.

The second part of this section asks for you to enter the email address that you used in the Common Application. You must do this in order to link Naviance Student and the Common Application so that your counselor can submit all of your supporting materials electronically to the Common Application. In addition, you must list all of your common application colleges both in Family Connections and the Common Application before she can submit electronically.



A student is eligible to complete the Common App Account Matching process if they have:

- Created a Common App account on Common App.
- Added at least one college on Common App.
- Signed the Common App FERPA Release Authorization on Common App.

When the student submits the form, the date, time and IP address will be logged for recordkeeping purposes.

Note: If a student has not completed the Common App Account Matching process, Naviance prevents you from electronically submitting Common App school forms for that student. You will still have the option to print the form and mail it; however, if you do submit the form through the mail, the student will need to sign the FERPA waiver on the printed form.

* COALITION APPLICATION

The Coalition for Access, Affordability and Success is a group of 116 colleges and universities who share a single college application. **You should only use the Coalition Application for the University of Washington, the University of Florida and the University of Maryland;** These three colleges only use the Coalition Application. For all other colleges, you **MUST** use the Common Application or the institution's application if they are not members of the Common Application. We cannot submit your supporting documents through Family Connection directly to the Coalition Application so this makes the processing very difficult.

Here is the link to information on the UW Coalition Application:

<https://admit.washington.edu/Admission/Coalition>

PLEASE NOTE: WE WILL ONLY PROCESS THE COALITION APPLICATION FOR THE U OF WASHINGTON. USE THE COMMON APPLICATION OR THE COLLEGES OWN APPLICATION FOR ANY OTHER COALITION MEMBER COLLEGE.

□ SEARCH TOOLS

◆ College Search

This area allows you to enter different parameters into the program and based on your specific entries, the system will generate a list of colleges that match those requirements. You should start with the most important aspect of college for you and then you can narrow that list by adding more parameters. For example, if it is important that you go to a college with a major in landscape architecture, you would go to Advanced Search and click on majors and type in landscape architecture. This search will yield a list of

colleges with that major. If you only want to go to colleges in a large city on the west coast, you would then click on location and select those features. A new list of colleges that meet those parameters will appear. In addition, with each new parameter you select, this list will narrow further. After you have narrowed the list, you can investigate each college individually.

◆ **College Lookup**

From this area, you can look up specific colleges. You can also see a list of colleges in a particular state. A family could use this area to develop a list of colleges they might want to visit if they are vacationing in a certain state.

◆ **SuperMatch™ College Search**

This is a Search engine that allows a student to enter different criteria as he researches colleges that may be a good fit for him. There are several tabs that you can select to begin narrowing down the options of colleges that fit your criteria. After you have entered information into all of the tabs, you will end up with a list of colleges that match the parameters you selected. You can then research, in depth, each of the colleges listed.

Big Future is another College Search website that is excellent. It is not part of Naviance Student so you will go to the following website to access it: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org> This is a great website that is very easy to navigate and is full of information about the entire college application process. I highly recommend using this website.

□ **RESEARCH COLLEGES**

◆ **College Visits**

Junior and Senior students can view and sign up for college visits in this section. Dr. Eulberg posts the complete list of the College Representative visits that are coming to O’Dea. She constantly revises this list as colleges call and schedule throughout the fall so students should check this list constantly. Calendars of the college visits are posted in the Contemporary Problems classes, in the junior math classes, on the bulletin board outside of Counseling and they are in the daily announcements. Students must submit a Teacher Permission form from the teacher whose class they will miss by the end of the school day the day prior to the scheduled visit. These forms are available on the table in the lobby of the Counseling Offices. **If a student does not sign up in Naviance Student and has not submitted the teacher permission form to Mrs. Eulberg by the end of school the day before the visit is schedule, he will not be allowed to attend**

When a student signs up for a college visit, we expect that he will attend that session. If he is unable to attend, he must go back into this area and cancel his registration. We will then be aware of exactly who we should expect at the meeting. It is important that we have an exact list of students before the actual meeting takes place so please come to all of the meetings for which you register. If there is a pattern of signing up and then not attending, you will no longer have the privilege of attending any college visits. Students should always know which meetings they have registered for because after a student signs up for a college visit, he will receive a reminder email about the visit.

◆ **College Maps**

There are many different listings of maps that are available in this area. Some examples include Jesuit Colleges, US Catholic colleges, Common Application colleges and many more.

◆ **Scattergrams**

Scattergrams will graph the acceptance of O’Dea students at particular colleges

◆ **College Match**

At this location, you can see what colleges accepted former students from O’Dea with similar qualifications to yours.

◆ **College Compare**

This section allows you to select several colleges and compare the averages from students from O’Dea that have been accepted to that particular college.

◆ **Acceptance History**

This section reflects the history of O’Dea students who have been accepted to a particular college.

◆ **Enrichment Programs**

The Counseling Department receives notifications about different summer activities and then lists them in this section of Family Connection. These activities can include academic experiences on a college campus, camps, employment and volunteer opportunities. All of the students are encouraged to check this area frequently as we update it constantly.

□ **SCHOLARSHIPS & MONEY**

Most of the scholarship information will be used during Senior year but there are some scholarships that are available for juniors.

◆ **Scholarship Match**

This is an area that will scan the requirements for scholarships listed in the Scholarship List and determine if you meet them.

◆ **Scholarship List**

This is a list of all of the scholarship information that Mrs. Eulberg receives. You can click on the name of the scholarship to get complete information. The hard copies of some of the scholarships are in the file cabinet in the lobby of counseling.

◆ **Scholarship Search**

This is a national search engine available through Family Connections that will have you enter specific information. It will then scan to find scholarships for which you may be a match. You can then determine if you want to complete the applications for the scholarships.

CAREERS

□ **CAREERS**

Careers I ‘m Thinking About

□ **EXPLORE CAREERS**

This section has a wealth of information about many different careers that you may be interested in pursuing. Each career will have a description along with a video and much information about the required areas of study.

□ **WHAT ARE MY INTERESTS**

In this section, you will be asked a series of questions about your interests and then you will be given a list of careers that might match those interests. You can then go to the Explore Careers section and investigate some of these suggestions.

□ **ROAD TRIP NATION**

- o This section includes interviews with 687 leaders from many different fields.

FINANCIAL AID PROCESS

Paying for college becomes an enormous concern when the college applications are beginning to stack up on the desk. While the primary responsibility for paying for college is the family's, there are many different options available for the funding of your student's education.

Any overview of Financial Aid must include a discussion of the costs of college, types of financial aid, application for financial aid, useful websites and finally the financial aid award package. We will briefly discuss all of these topics, but this is only a cursory examination. For in-depth, detailed information, the family should consult a professional such as a financial aid administrator, your accountant, a financial planner or an attorney.

COSTS OF COLLEGE

The costs of attending college are a combination of the obvious, predictable expenses and the less obvious, and often fluctuating, expenses. Colleges determine the predictable and usually "billable" expenses of tuition and fees; both the family and financial aid office know them. The less predictable expenses include room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses and transportation. Room and board are the costs of housing and meal plans. Both can vary depending on the type of housing and meal plan a student chooses. For example, if a student chooses a single room and a comprehensive meal plan, he will pay more than a student in a double or triple room with only two meals per day. Likewise, books and supplies can vary not only from student to student but also from major to major, semester to semester. Personal expenses and transportation are dependent on many factors that can be controlled and decided by the student and his family. The Financial Aid Administrator has a formula or average that he/she uses when figuring these expenses but obviously, it is only an average and may not be close to the actual expenses for an individual student.

TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

The Types of Financial Aid are categorized as Scholarship Aid, Grant Aid, Federal Work-Study, Campus Based Loans, Tax Credits, Federal Loans and Washington State Financial Aid.

□ **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Scholarships are by definition "Free" or "Gift" aid. These monies are awarded and require no repayment by the student or his family. The awarding of scholarship money can be from special interest groups with which the student or his family is affiliated. There is a listing in Family Connection of all of the scholarship opportunities that send us information. We also keep the hard copies of this information for students and parents in the lobby of the Counseling Department in a file cabinet. The students should look through this list of scholarships regularly as we are constantly receiving new information and applications.

Students earn **Merit Scholarships** based on their accomplishments in a specific area whether academic, athletic or talent based.

A unique source of scholarship money is the **Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)**. Several branches of the military services offer these funds to students. There is no required repayment of money but there is a commitment to military service following graduation. There is also an obligation of training and service while in school. For certain students, this is an excellent option when considering the funding for a college education. Students must apply for these scholarships. Each branch of the military has a separate application process for their ROTC scholarship. Students should go to the websites for more information. Students need to begin the process during the summer after junior year. The web addresses are:

Navy ROTC

<http://www.navy.com/careers/nrotc>

Army ROTC

<http://www.goarmy.com/rotc/scholarships.html>

❑ **WUE (Western Undergraduate Exchange) PROGRAM**

The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) is a program of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Students who are residents of WICHE states may enroll at participating two- and four-year college programs *outside of their home state* at a reduced tuition rate. WICHE states include: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. For more information go to: <http://wue.wiche.edu>

❑ **GRANTS**

Grants are also considered “gift” aid, as there is no repayment required. Sources of grant money are federal and state governments, colleges, and private organizations. The Federal government is the largest single source of financial assistance for students and their families. The two forms of federal grant money are the Federal Pell Grants and the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG).

Federal Pell Grants make up the largest source of need-based financial aid. The maximum amount of the grants will be \$5920 in the academic year of 2017-2018. The maximum amount does vary each academic year. The size of the award is based on the family’s need and the cost of the college. The student must attend the college at least half time.

The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants or SEOG are campus based grants, meaning that although the source of the funding is federal, the college financial aid office is responsible for the distribution of the money to students. These grants are intended for exceptionally needy students and priority is given to Federal Pell Grant recipients. The minimum award is \$100 per academic year and the maximum is \$4000.

The TEACH Grant provides up to \$4000 a year to students who are completing or plan to complete course work needed to begin a career in teaching. As a condition for receiving a TEACH Grant you must sign an agreement to serve in a high-need field, in a school that served students from low income families and work for at least four complete academic years.

Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant is a grant for children who had a parent who was a member of the US armed forces and died as a result of military service performed in Iraq or Afghanistan after the events of 9/11. The amount of the award is the same as the Pell Grant.

❑ **FEDERAL WORK-STUDY**

Federal Work-Study is a campus based federal program that provides job opportunities for students who are enrolled in either undergraduate or graduate studies. The students are usually employed on campus and often in their major area of concentration. Off-campus employment is possible but usually it must be community service or a special area related to the student’s major. There must be a written agreement between the college and the off-campus employer. Students must be paid at least once per month and must receive at least the minimum wage.

❑ **CAMPUS BASED LOANS**

Campus Based Loans are financial aid that is administered by the college but the source of the money is federal. As is implied by the name, these monies must be repaid with interest. The interest rates and repayment schedule varies from loan to loan. **The Federal Perkins Loans** carry the lowest interest rate of any educational loan. It is currently at a rate of 5%. Repayment is deferred until a student graduates or leaves school. Payments begin nine months after a student leaves school and payments can be made over a 10-year period. Students may be eligible to borrow up to \$5500 per academic year. Priority is given to students with exceptional financial need as defined by each college. Some colleges do not participate in this loan program.

❑ **FEDERAL LOAN PROGRAM**

The Federal Loan Program is composed of two different programs, the **Federal Family Educational Loan (FFEL)** program and the **Federal Direct Loan Program (FDLP)**. The FFEL and the FDLP programs are

the largest source of long term, low interest loans for undergraduates, graduates and professional students and the parents of dependent students. The determination of subsidy of a loan is based on the presence or absence of demonstrated need. If a student had demonstrated need his loan is subsidized; if there is no need the loan is unsubsidized.

- **Direct Subsidized Loans** are available to students with demonstrated financial need. Repayment of these loans is deferred until six months after a student leaves school. The rate is calculated annually with the maximum allowable rate of 8.25%.; for loans disbursed beginning July 1, 2016 the interest rate was fixed at 4.45%. Federal funds pay for the interest subsidies. There is also an origination fee of up to 1.069% of the premium and a federal default fee of up to 1%. Annual loan limits are \$3500 for freshman year, \$4500 for sophomore year, \$5500 per year for the remainder of the undergraduate program with a maximum undergraduate debt load of \$31,000.
- **Direct Unsubsidized Loans** are NOT based on need. A borrower may receive a Subsidized and an Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, although the combined total cannot exceed the maximum Federal Stafford Loan limits (see above). Undergraduates are eligible to borrow a total of \$5500-7500 per year in an unsubsidized loan. The interest level is currently fixed at 4.45% with the same 1.069% origination and default fees. The important difference is that repayment of the loan begins as soon as the funds are disbursed. A student may defer payments until after graduation but interest charges are still accrued from the time the funds are disbursed.
- **The Federal Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students or PLUS loans** are available to the parents of eligible students to assist in financing college education. They are not based on financial need, and the amount borrowed may be the cost of attending college minus the estimated financial aid award. There is no aggregate loan limit. The current interest rate is fixed at 7.00%. There is a 4.276% loan origination fee and default fee. To qualify, parents must not have an adverse credit history. These loans are available only to citizens of the United States. Repayment begins immediately after the disbursement of funds. There is no federal subsidy for these loans.

◆ **EDUCATION TAX CREDITS**

Education Tax Credits are amounts that families are allowed to subtract from what you owe in taxes. When you pay college costs, you can subtract a certain amount from you tax bill. There are two different tuition tax credit programs. The amount varies depending on which credit you use. Your family may not claim more than one credit for the same student in any one year.

- ❑ **American Opportunity Tax Credit** of up to \$2500 per year for each eligible family member during four years of undergraduate study. The student must be enrolled at least half time and must be claimed as a dependent by the taxpayer. The amount of the credit depends on the family income and the credit is phased out for single taxpayers with annual incomes over \$90,000 and for married taxpayers over \$180,000.
- ❑ **The Lifetime Learning Tax Credit** is a tax credit that is based on the entire family's tuition and fees. This credit can be up to a maximum of \$2000 per year per student. To be eligible, a student must be claimed as a dependent but the student does not necessarily have to be enrolled in a degree program or be enrolled half time. The amount of the credit depends on the family income and the credit is phased out for single taxpayers with annual incomes over \$65,000 and for married taxpayers over \$131,000.

◆ WASHINGTON STATE FINANCIAL AID

- ❑ **State Pre-Paid Tuition Plans (529 Plans): The Guaranteed Educational Tuition (GET)** program is a prepaid college tuition payment program in the state of Washington. This program allows Washington residents to purchase college tuition units in advance. Tuition units are purchased at the current price and then redeemed in the future at no additional cost. You can use your GET account at nearly any university or technical school in the country. The value of your account is determined by the cost of resident, undergraduate tuition at Washington's most expensive public university (usually the U of Washington or Washington State U). Because GET is a state 529 Plan, the after tax money you put in will grow tax-free. And, when your child is ready for college, the money you withdraw will be tax-free also as long as you use it for qualified higher education expenses.
- ❑ **The Washington Scholars Program** was established to recognize and honor the accomplishments of three seniors from each legislative district. High school principals nominate the top 1% of their graduating senior class. From these nominations, three students from each legislative district are chosen. The legislature has not allotted any monetary award for this program.
- ❑ **The Washington Principals' Scholars Program** is an opportunity to recognize students from the top 5% of the seniors who have led their class in academic achievement, community service and student leadership. The legislature has not allotted any monetary award for this program.
- ❑ **The American Indian Endowed Scholarship** program provides scholarships to students who have close cultural and social ties to an American Indian tribe and/or American Indian community in Washington State. This endowment fund is comprised of monies contributed by the state and matched by private donors. There are fifteen scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$2000. Students are eligible to receive scholarships for up to five years.
- ❑ **State Work-Study (SWS)** provides financial assistance to eligible students through part-time employment. This program is designed to enhance the student's academic pursuits and career goals by matching their SWS employment to these goals. Application for this program is automatic when the student applies for financial aid at the college.
- ❑ **The State Need Grant program** assists needy or disadvantaged Washington residents who enroll at one of the public or independent two or four year colleges in the state of Washington. State appropriations and federal matching funds provide funding. Filing a FAFSA is the only application required to be considered for this program.
- ❑ **Western Undergraduate Exchange** Undergraduate students can enroll at participating two- and four-year colleges and universities. Students pay 150 percent of the receiving school's resident tuition, a significant savings over nonresident tuition. Washington residents can enroll in eligible programs in 14 western states at reduced tuition rates. Participating states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Applying for financial aid can appear to be an overwhelming process. Completing the applications for Financial Aid can be complicated and time consuming but if approached in a logical, step-by-step and organized manner it can be financially rewarding. Attention to all of the details involved is vital. This process cannot be done in a short period of time. You must allow enough time to gather the information and pertinent data, input the data, and file the forms.

◆ FAFSA

The cornerstone of all financial aid applications is the FAFSA form. Every family should complete a FAFSA. FAFSA is an acronym for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. All colleges and universities require that students and their families complete the FAFSA form for federal student aid. Students may not submit the FAFSA before October 1, 2018 but we recommend that you complete and submit the form as soon after October 1, 2018 as possible. **You will use your 2017 Income Tax form as the foundation for completing the FAFSA.** The FAFSA is used for all federal aid, some state aid and by some schools for awarding their own aid. Students may list up to ten schools to which they want their data sent.

□ **How to File the FAFSA**

FAFSA on the Web, which is available in both English and Spanish, is the preferred method for filing. The online format allows students and their parents to complete the FAFSA faster and easier than the paper application. By completing it on the internet, the application is filed directly with the Central Processing System (CPS) of the FAFSA. The online version also offers detailed online help for each question as well as live online one-on-one communication with a customer service representative. Because it is so much easier, almost 100% of all FAFSA applications are done on the Web. The address for FAFSA on the Web is: www.fafsa.ed.gov

Another word of caution-when you are trying to access the FAFSA website: be sure you have the exact web address because there are websites that have similar addresses that try to charge a fee to complete the FAFSA. For example, if you type in www.fafsa.com you will be directed to a site that charges a fee to complete the FAFSA for you. **The correct website address for the FAFSA is: www.fafsa.ed.gov**

□ **Student Aid Report**

When the student and his parents submit the information on the internet, a confirmation page appears with the Student Aid Report (SAR), which will detail the data you provided and includes the government's *estimated* Expected Family Contribution (EFC) for the student. The student will receive the official EFC by e-mail or in the mail. It is important to check the SAR and make sure that all the information is correct. If there is an error, you can go back into the system and make the proper corrections.

□ **Student Login**

You can create an FSA ID when logging into certain ED websites, including this one. [Create an FSA ID now.](#)

The FSA ID process consists of three main steps:

1. [Click here](#) for the FSA ID site.
2. Enter your log-in information.
 - Provide your e-mail address, a unique username, and password, and verify that you are at least 13 years old.
3. Enter your personal information.
 - Provide your Social Security number, name, and date of birth.
 - Include your mailing address, e-mail address, telephone number, and language preference.
 - For security purposes, provide answers to five challenge questions.
4. Submit your FSA ID information.
 - Agree to the terms and conditions.
 - Verify your e-mail address. (This is optional, but helpful. By verifying your e-mail address, you can use your e-mail address as your username when logging into certain ED websites. This verification also allows you to retrieve your username or reset your password without answering challenge questions.)

You must reapply for federal student aid for each year that you enroll in college. In order to do that you will use the same login. You will use this same login if you go to graduate school also. Therefore, it is very important that you keep your login in a safe place so that you will be able to find it each year. Eligibility is determined for one award year at a time. The results of a 2018-2019 FAFSA are good only for the 2018-2019 school year and any summer terms that a college considers part of that award year.

❑ Useful Website to Assist with the FAFSA

A very useful website has been developed with great information for students and their families concerning many aspects of financial aid at www.studentaid.ed.gov. At this site you will find more information on federal student aid and you can also access sources for non-federal aid. For free help completing the FAFSA you can go to: www.studentaid.ed.gov/completefafsa or call the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243). When you call (FSAIC) they can assist you in information about completing the FAFSA, federal student aid programs, making corrections to your Student Aid Report (SAR), and much more. **You should never pay a fee to anyone for help to complete the FAFSA.**

❑ Deadlines

It is important to note that while the FAFSA has a deadline of June 30th for filing, most colleges/universities have a much earlier deadline. Most colleges will have financial aid deadlines in February or March so it is always advisable to file the FAFSA by January 31 at the latest..

❑ Special Circumstances

In unusual or special circumstances, the financial aid administrator at the college/university can determine that your situation requires an adjustment. If there will be a substantial change in your income that will not be reflected in your income taxes, your dependency situation is complicated, your parents are divorcing, etc. you should contact the financial aid administrator at each college/university to explain the particulars. The financial aid administrators have the ability to change your status but will not do it unless they are aware of the situation. They will require rigorous documentation to make any adjustments.

❑ Student Dependency Status

The issue of a student's dependency/independency is always a question that comes up during the student financial aid process. The FAFSA form asks a series of questions that determine whether a student is considered dependent or independent. Dependent students **must** report their parents' income and assets as well as their own on the FAFSA. The federal government aid programs are based on the premise that a dependent student's parents have the primary responsibility to pay for their child's education. Willingness or unwillingness to pay is not considered when determining Dependency status of a student. Independent students report only their income (and that of their spouse if married). The mere fact that a student does not live with his parents or that his parents do not claim him on their income tax form does not make a student independent. In addition, the fact that a parent refuses to pay for college has no bearing on whether a student is independent. Once, again in special circumstances the financial aid administrator can change the dependency status of student if documentation is provided. The following questions determine the dependency status. If you answer Yes to any of the questions, then for federal aid purposes you are considered independent. If you answer NO to all of these questions, you are considered a dependent student.

- Were you born before January 1, 1996?
- Are you married as of the day you file the FAFSA (or separated but not divorced)?
- At the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, graduate certificate, etc)??

- Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training? (If you are a National Guard or Reserves enlistee, are you on active duty for other than state or training purposes?)
- Are you a veteran of the US Armed Forces?
- Do you now have—or will you have—children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019?
- Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2019?
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in *foster care*, or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
- Has it been determined by a court in your state of legal residence that you are an emancipated minor or that someone other than your parent or stepparent has legal guardianship of you? (You also should answer “Yes” if you are now an adult but were in legal guardianship immediately before you reached the age of being an adult in your state. Answer “No” if the court papers say “custody” rather than “guardianship”)
- At any time on or after July 1, 2017, were you determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless, as determined by (a) your high school or district homeless liaison, (b) the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or (c) the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program?

◆ **CSS PROFILE**

Some schools, especially private colleges, use the CSS (College Scholarship Search) Profile to collect data to award their own funds. The CollegeBoard distributes and processes the Profile. One major difference between the Profile and the FAFSA is that the Profile charges a fee for each school to which its data is sent. For 2018-2019, there is a \$25.00 fee for the application and one college report. Additional reports to colleges are \$16.00 for each college that you have them send your information. There are also differences in the data that the Profile collects. You can do the initial registration for the Profile beginning October 1, 2018. The Profile must be submitted online at: (<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp>).

◆ **COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID FORMS**

Families should also be aware that some colleges and universities have their own financial aid application forms. You should always investigate each individual college’s application process carefully so that no piece of the puzzle is inadvertently skipped.

◆ **DETERMINATION OF FINANCIAL NEED**

When the FAFSA and CSS Profile are submitted, the data is evaluated and the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is calculated. The EFC is the amount of money that the family is required to pay at any college the student attends. The EFC amount is the same for each college to which the student applies. The cost of attending each college is different and so it is the cost of college that varies for each Financial Aid Award package. On several of the websites listed below there are EFC estimators/calculators that allow the family to submit their data and get a rough estimate of your EFC. Financial Aid administrators at the colleges determine financial need by subtracting the EFC from the cost of attending their college. It is important to find out from each college whether they will fulfill all or just part of the determined financial need for the student. Financial Need is based on your family’s ability to pay; not on your family’s willingness to pay.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Cost of College} \\
 \text{-EFC} \\
 \hline
 \text{=Financial Need}
 \end{array}$$

DEADLINES, DEADLINES, DEADLINES

As with every step in the College Admission process, **deadlines are of utmost importance**. They are not to be ignored or to be considered as loose “guidelines”. Deadlines are especially important in the financial aid arena as funds are limited and the “early bird definitely does get the worm”!! The funds for financial aid at every college or university are an absolute amount and when the “well” runs dry, it is gone. Late applications are given consideration but there may no longer be the resources available to fulfill the need.

The Profile is available starting on October 1st. The FAFSA must be filed as soon after October 1st as possible but it cannot be filed before October 1st. It must be filed at least four weeks before the earliest financial aid deadline of the colleges to which the student is applying.

USEFUL FINANCIAL AID WEBSITES

The following are very useful websites containing a wealth of information concerning financial aid. Some are very specific and are directed exclusively toward financial aid and scholarships. Other sites, such as the College Board site, address many different issues in the college application process including excellent sections on financial aid.

Be wary of companies offering to find scholarships for your student. They usually charge a substantial amount of money for this service. **NEVER** pay for a scholarship search. The Federal Trade Commission cautions students to look for these telltale phrases: “The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back;” “You can’t get this information anywhere else;” “I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship;” “You’ve been selected by a ‘national foundation’ to receive a scholarship;” or “You’re a finalist” in a contest you never entered. For more information on possible fraud or scams call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) or go to the FTC website at www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams.

Many companies make the statement that millions of scholarship dollars go unclaimed each year and they will search their data banks for these scholarships for a nominal fee. You can do the same thing that these companies do utilizing the following websites:

<http://studentaid.ed.gov>
www.finaid.org

www.collegeboard.com
www.fastweb.com

www.act.org
www.theWashBoard.org

The following are also useful websites in the financial aid process:

www.fafsa.ed.gov
www.nacac.com

www.edonline.com/cq/hbcu
www.uncf.org

<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0082-scholarship-and-financial-aid-scams>

FINANCIAL AID AWARD PACKAGE

◆ COMPONENTS OF THE AWARD PACKAGE

Once your child has been accepted to the college/colleges to which he applied, you will receive a Financial Aid Award Package letter. Included in this package is the total financial aid award, which will be made up from a combination of both gift aid (grants and scholarships) and self-help aid (loans and work-study).

◆ COMPARISON OF AWARD PACKAGES

Unfortunately, there is no standard format by which the colleges present the packages to you. It is imperative that you are able to compare the packages in a logical manner. An excellent source to assist families in the comparison of individual award packages is the College Board website (http://apps.collegeboard.com/fincalc/compare_aid.jsp). In the section, Pay for College, there is an area that explains the comparison process and provides an outstanding worksheet that allows for a side-by-side comparison of the colleges' award packages. The O’Dea Counseling department has also developed a

worksheet that you can use if you would rather have a paper format to compare the financial aid award packages. This worksheet is included immediately after this section..

You should compare the percentage of Grants versus Loans. In general, the higher the percentage of grant aid to loan aid, the more attractive the package. Students will graduate with fewer debts to repay.

You should also examine the percentage of self-help versus grant aid. Self-help includes the EFC, loans and work-study. Some families feel that the package is better if the amount of work-study is limited.

Also, it is very important to carefully consider the terms of the loans that you have been granted. Student loans based on financial need with low interest rates and no repayments until after graduation are more desirable than the unsubsidized loans.

Another important consideration is a process called "Gapping". This term refers to the situation when a portion of the cost of attendance is left unfulfilled. Any gap in the package must be paid for by the family in addition to the EFC. It is important to compare the proportion of unmet need between the different colleges.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Cost of Attendance} \\ \text{-EFC} \\ \hline \text{=Financial Need} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Financial Need} \\ \text{-Aid Package} \\ \hline \text{=Gap (Unmet Need)} \end{array}$$

As an incoming freshman, it is often difficult to look beyond the initial year but it is important before the family commits to enrollment at a specific college that the issue of Aid Renewal is addressed. It will be important to verify which parts of the Award package are renewable and the specific terms for renewal. Often there is an academic minimum that is required. Both the student and the family should be aware of any renewal requirements.

◆ APPEAL OF AWARD PACKAGES

After you have carefully reviewed and compared the Financial Aid Award Packages, you may think that your expected contribution is not correct. Remember that the primary responsibility for funding your child's post-secondary education is yours and your child's. The financial aid office at all colleges and universities has limited resources and strive to allocate those funds in the most equitable way possible. They all have strict guidelines and written policies concerning the distribution of funds.

If you do decide to appeal your package, you should first contact the financial aid office directly to determine their process in reviewing financial aid awards. You must come prepared with data to support any special circumstances or changes in income that have occurred since you filed the original data. College financial aid administrators do not bargain as they are guided by very firm and strict criteria for the disbursement of funds.

◆ RESPONSE DEADLINES

Do not ignore response deadlines for financial aid packages or the funding that was allocated to you may be awarded to another student. Once again deadlines are very important and are not to be taken lightly.

COMPARING AWARD PACKAGES

Name of College _____
 Due Date _____

Grants & Scholarships—Gift Aid

Federal Pell _____
 Federal SEOG _____
 State Grant _____
 College _____
 Other _____
 Total Grants & Scholarships _____

Percent of Package-Scholarship & Grants _____ % _____ % _____ % _____ %

Work-Study \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____

Loans

Fed. Stafford-Direct \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____
 Fed. Perkins \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____
 Other \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____
 Total Loans \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____

Percent of Package-Work-Study & Loans _____ % _____ % _____ % _____ %

Total Financial Aid

Grants & Scholarships + Work Study & Loans \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____

NET COST TO FAMILY TO ATTEND

A. Total Cost of Attendance \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____
B. Total Financial Aid Award \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____
C. Net Cost to Attend (A- B = C) \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____

USEFUL WEBSITES

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

ACT	www.act.org
College Board	www.collegeboard.com
Common Application	www.commonapp.org
HBCU	www.edonline.com/cq/hbcu
HBCU Common Application	http://www.eduinonline.com/
NACAC (National Assoc. of College Admissions Counselors)	www.nacacnet.org

STANDARDIZED TESTING

College Board	www.collegeboard.com
ACT	www.act.org
Mazor Test Prep	www.mazor.org

FINANCIAL AID

FAFSA	www.fafsa.ed.gov
FSA ID	https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm
Student Aid Info	www.studentaid.ed.gov
Air Force ROTC	www.afrotc.com
Army ROTC	http://www.goarmy.com/rotc/scholarships.html
Navy ROTC	http://www.navy.com/careers/nrotc
United Negro College Fund	www.uncf.org
Scholarship Search	www.fastweb.com
Scholarship Search for Washington Residents	www.theWashBoard.org
Scholarship Search	www.finaid.org
Scholarship Scam Info	https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/financialaid

ATHLETIC RECRUITING

NCAA Sports	www.ncaa.com
NCAA Eligibility Center	https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/
NAIA Sports	http://naia.cstv.com
NAIA Eligibility Center	http://www.playnaia.org

GLOSSARY

ACCREDITATION: Recognition of a college or university by any of the regional or national accrediting bodies, indicating that the institution as a whole has been judged to be meeting its objectives.

ACT (AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING): A standardized test administered by ACT (American College Testing) and required or recommended by most colleges as part of the admission process. The tests measure educational development in English, mathematics, reading, and science.

ADMISSION INDEX (AI): Some universities in Washington state use an index scale based on a student's cumulative GPA and standardized test scores to make admissions decisions.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT: Granting of credit and/or assignment to an advanced course on the basis of evidence that the student has mastered the equivalent of an introductory course.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Most colleges have a specific date by which applications must be filed. In some cases the colleges will state that the application must be postmarked by that date. For some colleges the application must be received by the due date. Check your applications carefully and be sure you know the specifics concerning the due dates for each college.

CANDIDATE'S REPLY DATE: A policy among subscribing institutions that permits students to wait until May 1st to choose, without penalty, among offers of admission/financial aid.

CEEB (COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BOARD) CODE: Identification number for individual high school and colleges. **O'Dea High School's CEEB code is: 481-130**

COALITION APPLICATION is an application that is specifically for the 90 highly selective colleges and universities that members. Some of these colleges will use this platform exclusively and others will also allow students to apply using other application platforms. The UW is a Coalition only university.

COLLEGE BOARD: The company that provides many different services in the college search process. Most notably, they provide college entrance testing (SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests, PSAT, AP Tests) through their testing division, ETS (Educational Testing Service).

COMMON APPLICATION is an application that allows a student to complete one main application that can then be submitted to any of the more than 600 colleges who are members.

CSS (COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP SERVICE) PROFILE: Financial aid form used by many colleges and universities to help them award non-federal student aid funds.

DEFERRED ADMISSION: The practice of some colleges to allow an accepted student to postpone enrollment for one year.

EARLY ACTION (EA): An application process that permits students to make application to colleges of preference and receive decisions in December, well before the normal response dates in the spring. The candidate is not committed to enroll at these particular colleges. The student may apply to more than one college using the Early Action process.

EARLY DECISION (ED): An application process in which the student makes a commitment to the institution that, if admitted, the student would enroll. Students who can make a deliberate and well-reasoned final decision are the only ones who should consider applying Early Decision because this is considered a binding contract.

FINANCIAL NEED: The difference between the cost of education and the expected family contribution (EFC).

FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE: A combination of aid (possibly including a scholarship, grant, loan and work) determined by a college financial aid office.

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA): The application required for students to be considered for federal student financial aid. The FAFSA is processed free of charge and most state agencies and colleges use its data.

FRESHMAN ADMISSION REVIEW: Some of the state universities use an admissions index scale to make an admission decision. The freshman review is a process by which applicants who were not admitted solely on the basis of their admission index number are reviewed in greater depth. Academic and personal qualities are considered, and the personal essay becomes influential in determining the admission decision.

GRANTS: Scholarships or awards based on financial need that do not require repayment. Grants are available through the federal government, state agencies and educational institutions.

HBCU: Historically Black Colleges and Universities

HONORS PROGRAM: Any program offering the opportunity for superior students to enrich their educational experience through independent, advanced or accelerated study.

LD: Learning Disability

MAJOR: The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize in a series of related courses, usually taken in the junior and senior years of college.

MID-YEAR GRADE REPORT FORM: Some colleges require applicants to submit their grades through the first semester of their senior year. Admissions committees use these grades to ascertain students' potential for "slacking off." This form will be returned to colleges in early February. Mrs. Eulberg will explain the procedure for these forms after first semester grades have been posted.

NAVIANCE: The company that developed the web-based program for managing the college application process.

NAVIANCE STUDENT The web-based program that O'Dea students and their parents use to navigate the college application process.

OPEN ADMISSIONS: The policy of some colleges of admitting virtually all high school graduates, regardless of academic qualifications.

PROFILE: see CSS Profile.

REGULAR ADMISSION: An admission procedure whereby admissions committees do not begin to review applications until after the due date. All applicants are then notified by mail at the same time, usually around April 1.

RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION An application process that permits students to make application to a college of preference and receive a decision in December, well before the normal response dates in the spring. The candidate is not committed to enroll at that particular college. The student may apply to only one college using the Restrictive Early Action process.

ROLLING ADMISSION: An admission procedure by which the college considers each application as soon as all required materials have been received. The college then notifies each applicant of acceptance or rejection as soon as possible.

SAT REASONING TEST: A test of critical reading, writing and mathematical abilities given by the College Board, which is required or recommended by many colleges as part of the admission process.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS: Tests on numerous specific subjects given by the College Board, any two to three of which may be required by some highly competitive colleges.

SCHOLARSHIPS: Monetary awards to students based on athletic ability, merit, and/or need. These awards do not need to be repaid.

SCHOOL CODE: The specific number used for identification of each individual high school. **O’Dea’s High School Code is: 481-130**

SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT (SSR): This form is part of the application packet that is completed by the counselors and often requires information such as: GPA, transcript, letter of recommendation.

TRANSCRIPT: The official record of high school or college course grades, generally required as part of the college application.

WAIT LIST: A term used by colleges to describe a process in which they delay offering admission. Colleges may offer admission to wait list candidates if insufficient numbers of regularly admitted candidates accept their offers of admission.

WASHBOARD.ORG The Washington Scholarship Coalition (WSC) is a public/private partnership that includes nine organizations committed to increasing access to scholarships and financial aid for Washington students.

WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS: Jobs that allow students to earn money toward their education while they are enrolled in school.

WUE (Western Undergraduate Exchange) PROGRAM: Tuition agreement program between states whereby participating colleges/universities agree to charge qualified out-of-state students tuition at a rate of 1.5 that of their in-state student

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