

# TRINITY

*Challenging Minds • Changing Lives*

## COLLEGE PLANNING

### Handbook for Juniors *Class of 2020*

MRS. ELIZABETH MOSLEY

*College Counselor*

[emosley@trinitywildcats.com](mailto:emosley@trinitywildcats.com)

MRS. MICHELE MOORE

*Associate College Counselor*

[mmoore@trinitywildcats.com](mailto:mmoore@trinitywildcats.com)



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## From the College Counselors

To the Class of 2020:

Begin the journey! As we begin your junior year, it is important to remember that the journey through the college selection process is as important as finding the perfect college destination. Life at postsecondary institutions should be viewed as both an experience unto itself and as a tool for the development of the academic and social skills to succeed in life. The purpose of this handbook is to be a guide for students and parents during the college selection process.

Irish poet Yeats stated, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” We look forward to working with both juniors and parents through this significant time in your life.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Mosley  
*College Counselor*  
emosley@trinitywildcats.com

Michele Moore  
*Associate College Counselor*  
mmoore@trinitywildcats.com



# College Planning Calendar for Juniors

August 25	SAT Test Date
September 8	ACT Test Date
September 18	Trinity's College Day
September 25	Trinity's Financial Aid and Scholarship Night for Parents
September	Attend Fall Preview Days and visit college campuses Research college websites
October 6	SAT Test Date
October 8	Holiday and a great time to visit colleges
October 12	Trinity Homecoming
October 27	ACT Test Date
October	Attend Fall Preview Days and visit college campuses Research college websites
November 3	SAT Test Date
November 12	Holiday and a great time to visit college campuses
November 19-23	Thanksgiving holidays
November	Attend Fall Preview Days and visit college campuses Research college websites
December 1	SAT Test Date
December 8	ACT Test Date
December 14, 17-19	Fall Semester Exams—Study hard!
January 7	Trinity classes begin
January 21	Holiday and a great time to visit college campuses
January 28	Junior Class Parent Meeting
February 9	ACT Test Date
February 15	Weather Day
February 18	Holiday
March 9	SAT Test Date
March 15	Weather Day
March 18-22	Spring Break and a great time to visit college campuses
April 13	ACT Test Date
April 19	Holiday
April 22	Weather Day
May Date TBA	Mock College/Scholarship Interviews for Juniors
May 4	SAT Test Date
May 16, 17, 20-22	Second Semester Exams—Study hard!
June 1	SAT Test Date
June 8	ACT Test Date
July 13	ACT Test Date

# College Application Procedure @ Trinity

**CEEB Code: 011914**

(Students will be asked to supply this code throughout the college search and application process.)

Students should apply online to college institutions. Students should request to have the transcript sent electronically by the following steps:

1. Go to your Naviance account at [www.connection.naviance.com/trinitywildcats](http://www.connection.naviance.com/trinitywildcats)
  2. Click on the “colleges tab”
  3. Go to “colleges I’m applying to”
- A. Complete the Important Privacy Notice for Common Application: (check: yes, I do waive my right to access and check by completing this form, I authorize all schools, etc) This sets you up with a common application user name and password. The Common Application is available on-line at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org), which allows students to apply to hundreds of different college institutions with one application process. The participating colleges and universities are listed on-line.
- B. Click on +add colleges to this list. Enter the college you are applying to and request that a transcript be sent electronically. This is the only way a transcript request can be made! Please do not request a transcript until you have completed and submitted the application for admission.
- C. College institutions only accept ACT/SAT scores **directly from ACT/SAT**. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure the appropriate test score has been received with their college application.

When asking teachers and counselors for letters of recommendations, **students give them a current copy of their resume and should allow two weeks for the teacher or counselor to prepare the letter of recommendation**. It would be nice for students to follow-up with a thank you note to the teacher for the letter of recommendation.

## Criteria for Admission

Every college institution establishes their own criteria for admission. The most general criteria for admission are:

1. GPA
2. ACT/SAT

Some college institutions break down their criteria for admission into several criteria including:

1. **The rigor of the high school curriculum.** Colleges will closely examine all the courses a student has taken from the freshman year through the junior year. Colleges expect to see that students have challenged themselves by taking advantage of Advanced Placement (AP) and honors courses. Tougher classes will not only look better on a college application; they will better prepare you for college. Giving your best effort in more difficult classes shows colleges you are serious about facing and meeting academic challenges. Most college applications require a list of courses students are taking during their senior year.
2. Admission counselors will evaluate the actual grades students have made in their coursework. In some cases college institutions recalculate the student's GPA based solely on the core classes of English, history, science, math, and foreign languages.
3. Colleges require that students submit scores directly from either the ACT or the SAT. Solid scores on the ACT or SAT should be consistent with high school grades. High-test scores do not compensate for low grades.
4. Many college applications will require that you attach a copy of a resume which includes the student's extracurricular activities, leadership skills, and community service. Trinity students will be required to complete a resume in the junior and senior English classes. Depth, not breadth, of experience is most important. Colleges seek "angled" students with a passion, not "well-rounded" students. Substantive commitment to a few activities is preferable to participation in several mini activities—and more rewarding.
5. It is important to have out-of-school experiences, including summer activities, work, and hobbies that reflect responsibility, and dedication. Meaningful use of your free time is essential. Students should include these commitments on their resumes.
6. Students who go the extra mile to develop a special talent in sports, research, writing, the arts, or anything else will gain an edge. Students should consider sending a college evidence of anything that makes them stand out such as a portfolio of their creative writing, or send a link of demonstration of their talent.
7. Some colleges require letters of recommendation from the college counselor and several academic teachers. These letters help the college admission counselor gain further insight into the impact a student has had both inside and outside the classroom.

8. Essays are required by some college institutions. Essays are the highest ranked non-academic feature of an application and the only part of the college application over which the student has absolute control. The essay should reflect the student's personality and tell something about the student that is not on the application. A student's essay should show their ability to use language correctly and appropriately. It is imperative that the essay be proofed for errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Students should remember that they are writing their essay to a person, not for a class assignment. A good essay is not good because of the topic but because of the voice. Students need to know the difference between two simple concepts—that of showing and telling. A good essay always shows; a weak essay virtually always tells. The best essays are created not from a formula for success but by a voice that is practiced. Students who are willing to take a risk, to focus on that part of the world that matters to them, and to show the passion and the practice it takes to write about it well, will help their chances of admission through their essay.

### 2018-2019 Common Application Essay Prompts:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you have already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

### Suggestions for college essays:

- Subject: Write what you know.
- Begin with a blank piece of paper. Write down everything you want an admission counselor to know about you.
- The topic must be meaningful to you, something you are passionate about: personal explanations of motivation behind an activity or talent or event.
- Sometimes your essay will be read by someone who does not care about your topic. You can still write exceptionally well on a subject about which they would otherwise not be interested. Your passion, knowledge and genuine enthusiasm can make any topic interesting to a reader.

- Do not try to write what you think the college wants to hear. You might ask, “What is it about me that I want to be sure colleges know?”
  - Do not write your college essay about writing your college essay. Old idea.
  - Do not try to be funny if you are not. Can you laugh at yourself?
  - It is all right to take risks, but remember they are risks because sometimes they fail.
  - Be thoughtful. Take time to prepare your essay.
  - Answer the essay question. This is one of the most important points to remember. So many students write strong essays that do not answer the question. The most common essay topic is “Tell about someone who has had an influence on you and describe that influence.” So many students spend so much time describing their coach, or their mother, or their uncle or their cousin. They forget the second part of the question. What is their influence on you, the student? How are you different? What have you changed in your life, what is better or worse from having known this person?
  - Place the reader of your essay in the middle of an important event as it happens, then back up to give the context that led up to it, followed by your analysis of its importance.
  - You need to focus on yourself. This can be very hard to do. This is not selfish, this is not egotistical. This is an important part of this process.
  - Get help appropriately. Have your counselors, teachers, and parents read it.
  - Your essay must be a page turner!
  - Read your essay aloud.
  - Stick to the word limit. Do not obsess about this, unless you are using an online form, which may cut your essay off mid-sentence.
  - The secret is to proofread! Typos and grammar mistakes can ruin an otherwise strong essay!
9. It is important that the students have demonstrated enthusiasm for attending a university, as evidenced by campus visits, an interview, and ongoing contact with the admission office. Early in the college-planning process, students should schedule campus visits, including an information session, tour, and interview if available. They should stay in touch with admission representatives and attend local presentations.

## Types of Admission

1. Regular Decision is the application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction.
2. Rolling Admission is the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are completed and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction.
3. Early Action (EA) is the application process in which students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Students who are admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1. Under non-restrictive Early Action, a student may apply to other colleges.
4. Restrictive Early Action (REA) is the application process in which students make application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Institutions with Restrictive Early Action plans place restrictions on student applications to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate these restrictions in their Early Action policies and agreements with students. Students who are admitted under Restrictive Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1.
5. Early Decision (ED) is the application process in which students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. While pursuing admission under an Early Decision plan, students may apply to other institutions, but may have only one Early Decision application pending at any time. Should a student who applied for financial aid not be offered an award that makes attendance possible, the student may decline the offer of admission and be released from the Early Decision commitment. The institution must notify the applicant of the decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time after the Early Decision deadline. Usually, a nonrefundable deposit must be made well in advance of May 1. The institution will respond to an application for financial aid at or near the time of an offer of admission. Institutions with Early Decision plans may restrict students from applying to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate their specific policies in their Early Decision agreement.

*- Taken from the National Association for College Admission Counseling's  
Statement of Principles of Good Practice Interpretations of Mandatory Practices -*

# The College Interview

The purpose of a college interview is to help the college gather further information about your suitability as a candidate and to help the student to determine if this college is a good match. It can be one of the best ways for you to learn about what is really important to a college.

Before the interview evaluate yourself: identify your strengths, interests, and weaknesses. Compose a list of questions about this college and its admission process and/or available scholarships.

First impressions do count. Do not let how you are dressed get in the way of connection with your interviewer. You should dress appropriately. Girls should wear a modest suit or an appropriate dress with low heels. Boys should wear an oxford shirt, tie, khaki pants, and navy jacket. Dress very conservative and traditional.

Arrive 15 minutes early and try to relax. Allow enough time to find parking. At the beginning of the interview, shake hands with the interviewer(s); look the interviewer directly in the eye and smile; know the interviewer's name—ask him or her to repeat it if you did not hear it the first time.

The interview can be divided into six different parts:

1. **Personal Background:** Where you have grown up, your parent's occupation/interests, information about siblings and colleges attended by family members. The purpose is to put you at ease.
2. **Academic Background:** Information about Trinity and your curriculum. Why you have taken certain classes and any academic awards.
3. **Extracurricular:** What activities mean the most to you and why? Have you had any specific roles within an activity?
4. **Academic Interest:** What are you interested in studying and how have these interests developed? What are your future career goals?
5. **College Choice:** What are you looking for in a college/university? What expectations do you have in a school?
6. **Why this school:** What brings you to this particular college? How does this college fit into your criteria?

## Questions to expect at an interview:

- Tell me about yourself. What are you passionate about?
- Tell me about Trinity—what kind of environment does it have?
- What has been the most difficult course you have taken at Trinity?
- Is there a specific teacher or course that has really caught your interest? Can you explain why?
- What has been the most exciting academic project you have done at Trinity? What has been your most significant academic accomplishment?
- Tell me what you have read outside of school lately.
- How would you use your talents at our university?

- What has been the most significant personal challenge you have ever faced?
- What three adjectives would your teachers use to describe you?
- What three adjectives would your friends/peers use to describe you?
- What do you do for fun?
- What are your goals and plans for after college?
- What specific questions can I help you with?
- Who is the person you most admire? How have they influenced your life?
- Name three world leaders and explain the influence you think they have had in the world.
- What is on your bucket list?
- What is the most important thing you have learned at Trinity?
- What kind of roommate will you be?

Be honest and try to relax during the interview. You should talk 85% of the time in the interview. Do not cut answers too short. Articulate and communicate warmth! Smile! Minimize hand gestures.

Try to end the interview by asking the interviewer a well-researched question about the university. Keep in mind that the interview is not only a time for you to be asked questions; it is also a time for you to ask questions. This shows you are sincerely interested in attending this university. Some examples of questions are:

- Why would you recommend this school?
- How would you describe college life at this school?
- Do you have any advice for me?
- What percentage of students come back after the freshman year?
- Can you tell me some things about \_\_\_\_\_ program/major?
- What campus issues are students talking about this year?
- How involved are students in extracurricular activities? Do most students stay on campus during the weekends?
- What are some of the study abroad options?

After the interview be sure to thank the interviewer, shake hands, and say good-bye. Write a thank you note to the person who interviewed you. Many students do not take the time to write a thank you note. This will make you stand out as the wonderful, well-mannered student you are!

## College Day

Although college visits are the best way to learn more about a school you are really interested in, a college fair can be the next best option. It is a way to talk face-to-face with people from different colleges. A college visit is something you will not receive from a website, or a brochure. On **September 18**, Trinity will host our own College Day. The College Day is set up so that students and parents have an hour browse session to talk to college representatives and pick up information. Then students and parents have the opportunity to attend three different fifteen-minute college presentations in classrooms. This is invaluable for the college selection process and it is also important to remember the college representatives who attend our College Day are usually the representatives who evaluate our students' college applications to that particular institution. We encourage students and parents to use this time to establish a relationship with the college representative. The admission counselors will also be given a list of the students that attended their sessions at the College Day. The Montgomery Junior League will host a Career Fair on **September 17** and we also encourage students and parents to attend this program.

After the College Day, it would be helpful if students and parents sit down with all the information gathered at the College Day. Use the College Comparison Chart on pages 16-17 to organize your college search.

## College Visits

We encourage students and parents to visit colleges as a family. Many college institutions have preview days throughout the school year, or students can register online for individual college visits. These are very beneficial to attend. Students can register online to attend most of these programs. There is no substitute for visiting the student's potential alma mater, experiencing the size, the friendliness, the location, and the arrangement of the buildings.

Students are allowed three excused college days per year and must complete the College Day Request Form (page 14) and have official documentation of the college visit prior to taking the college day. Copies of the form are available in the college counselor's office. The proper procedure for completing the College Day Request Form is for the student to sign the form first. The parents must approve and sign the form second. It is important that Dann Cleveland, Dean of Upper School Students, approves and be the third signature on the request form. All of the teachers must approve and sign the form next. Please note that if students have a D or F in a course, the teacher will not approve or sign the College Day Request Form and the students will not be allowed to go on the college visit. Mrs. Mosley or Mrs. Moore must be the final signature and then the students need to make a copy of the completed College Day Request Form and turn the original copy into Mrs. Berney in the main office and a copy into Mrs. Mosley or Mrs. Moore prior to the college visit. If students fail to turn in the College Day Request Form prior to the college visit, it will be considered unexcused!

A list of suggested questions for College Search is available on page 15. This will be helpful for students as well as parents on their college visit. We also suggest that students complete the College Comparison Worksheet (pages 16-17).

It is important for students to challenge themselves to have a range of college institutions to include:

1. Double Reach — a selective college that would be a stretch for the student to be admitted
2. Reach — a selective college that would be somewhat hard to be accepted.
3. Safety — a college that has specific criteria for admission that the student has already met

Many college institutions come to Trinity for a scheduled visit during break or lunch in the school day. These visits are posted in the daily announcements as well as in Naviance. The meetings will only be for twenty minutes so the student will not miss an entire class period.

# College Day Request Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Visiting College \_\_\_\_\_

Please allow my son or daughter to be dismissed from classes for a college day to visit the campus of \_\_\_\_\_ . I will be accompanying my son or daughter on this college visit \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no. He/she has appointments set up with college personnel.

I understand that the student is responsible to both obtain assignments in advance and to turn in all make-up work according to the instructors' wishes. If a student has a D or F in a course, he/she may not be excused to take a college day. A student may not take a college day on the day that a major assignment is due. Failure to comply with the above may result in a student not being allowed to make-up or turn in any missed work, which may adversely affect the grade a student receives in a course.

*All of the student's teachers must sign below and if desired, add comments regarding student's academic performance, upcoming assignments/tests, etc.*

Signature:

Comments:

Period 1 _____	_____
Period 2 _____	_____
Period 3 _____	_____
Period 4 _____	_____
Period 5 _____	_____
Period 6 _____	_____
Period 7 _____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent Signature*

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_  
Dann Cleveland, Dean of Upper School Students

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_  
Elizabeth Mosley/Michele Moore, College Counselor

Make a copy of this completed form and attach official documentation of the college visit. Give the original form to Mrs. Berney in the Upper School office and the copy to Mrs. Mosley or Mrs. Moore prior to your college trip. If you forget to turn it in, it will be considered UNEXCUSED—NO EXCEPTIONS.

## Suggested Questions for College Search

- Cost - tuition and fees, room and board.
- Safety—lighting, residence hall security, access to security personnel, crime history at college.
- Are freshmen required to live on campus?
- If freshmen are not required to live on campus, what percentage of girls live on campus, and what percentage of boys live on campus?
- Can freshmen have cars on campus and where do freshmen park their cars on campus?
- What percentages of classes are taught by teacher assistants?
- What is the student/professor ratio?
- How many students are in the largest freshmen class and what is the name of this class?
- What percentages of girls are in sororities and what percentage of boys are in fraternities?
- Tell us about how your residence halls are set up. Are the residence halls co-ed?
- When is the cutoff date for applications for admission?
- What AP (Advanced Placement) credits do you honor?
- What GPA, ACT and SAT scores does a student need to qualify for academic scholarship?
- How do you apply for an academic scholarship and what is the deadline to apply?
- Are there any available departmental scholarships and how do you apply?
- What are the criteria for admission?
- What is your undergraduate enrollment?
- Tell us about your orientation process.
- Tell us about the town that surrounds your institution. What is its population?
- Do you have a study abroad program? What percentages of students participate in the program?
- What percentage of freshmen return after one year?
- What types of tutors or tutoring opportunities exist on campus?
- How do students receive help selecting classes?
- What types of internships are available and are they required to graduate?
- Are students given the opportunity to do research with faculty?
- What types of public transportation are available on campus or in the area?
- What opportunities are available for spiritual growth?

# College Comparison Worksheet

<b>COLLEGE NAME:</b>			
<b>LOCATION:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distance from home</li> <li>• Address</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Admissions office phone &amp; e-mail</li> <li>• Contact person</li> </ul>			
<b>SIZE:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment</li> <li>• Physical size of campus</li> </ul>			
<b>ENVIRONMENT:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of school</li> <li>• School setting (urban, rural)</li> <li>• Location &amp; size of nearest city</li> <li>• Religious affiliation</li> </ul>			
<b>ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline</li> <li>• Tests Required</li> <li>• Average scores</li> <li>• GPA</li> <li>• Recommendations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Essays</li> <li>• High school courses</li> <li>• Admit rates of previous year regular admission</li> <li>• Admit rate – early decision</li> </ul>			
<b>ACADEMICS:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your major offered</li> <li>• Student-faculty ratio</li> <li>• Typical class size</li> <li>• Tutorial Programs</li> </ul>			
<b>COLLEGE EXPENSES:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuition, room &amp; board</li> <li>• Estimated total budget</li> <li>• Application fee, deposits</li> </ul>			
<b>HOUSING:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freshmen required to live in residence hall</li> </ul>			

<b>(COLLEGE NAME continued:)</b>			
<b>FINANCIAL AID:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline</li> <li>• Required forms</li> <li>• % receiving aid</li> <li>• Scholarship deadlines</li> <li>• Departmental scholarships</li> <li>• Separate scholarship applications</li> </ul>			
<b>FACILITIES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic buildings</li> <li>• Recreational</li> <li>• Student center</li> </ul>			
<b>ACTIVITIES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clubs, organizations</li> <li>• Greek life</li> <li>• Athletics, intramurals</li> <li>• Weekends</li> <li>• Religious affiliations</li> <li>• Community service opportunities</li> </ul>			
<b>STUDENT BODY:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male/female ratio</li> <li>• Student/teacher ratio</li> <li>• % Minority</li> <li>• % International</li> <li>• % In-state</li> </ul>			
<b>SPECIAL PROGRAMS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % In study abroad programs</li> <li>• Summer internships</li> <li>• Honors programs</li> </ul>			
<b>PERSONAL OPINIONS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love/like/hate</li> <li>• Apply</li> <li>• Safety/target/ reach</li> </ul>			

# Scholarships

Students and parents should be aware that every college handles scholarships differently. Some college applications for admission automatically qualify you to be considered for a scholarship, while other colleges have a separate scholarship application. The scholarship office of each college is the best source of information concerning the scholarships available at that institution. Trinity Presbyterian School College Counseling Office receives only a limited number of scholarship notices from the colleges, which will be passed along to students in their Naviance accounts. Students should check the scholarship list in their Naviance account for updated scholarship information.

Merit scholarship types vary. Some of them are:

1. Academic
2. Leadership
3. Departmental
4. Talent
5. Athletic
6. External (includes any type of scholarship)—Many organizations offer scholarships including state and local governments, businesses, employers, clubs, civic groups, church and religious organizations, military associations, private foundations and charities.

Helpful guidelines to make your scholarship search successful:

- Strictly observe deadlines and strive to submit applications early.
- Be honest about grades, experiences, memberships, qualifications, family finances, and other information.
- Only apply if you meet the scholarship's minimum requirements.
- Carefully follow instructions.
- When submitting the application, only include items requested.
- Proofread your application carefully.
- Keep copies of everything you send in case your application is misplaced.

**Students should bring a copy of their scholarship awards to Mrs. Mosley or Mrs. Moore.**

Students are also encouraged to complete a free scholarship search at [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com).

# Financial Aid

Need Assistance is primarily based on the financial ability of the family to pay for college.

The financial aid process is:

- Apply for financial aid at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Parents must have complete tax information prior to filing the FAFSA on-line.
- October of the student's senior year is the priority deadline to submit the FAFSA to multiple colleges.
- Some colleges request that students and parents complete the CSS Profile.

## NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

Students interested in playing Division I or Division II varsity sports are required to complete the NCAA Clearinghouse application. This must be completed on-line at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). Request transcripts to be submitted electronically to NCAA from Mrs. Mosley or Mrs. Moore. Be sure to request to have final transcript upon graduation.

# Choosing a College

Choosing a college requires that you know yourself. Ask yourself the following questions and perhaps the best college fit for you is one that will match your responses to these questions:

1. What are your academic interests?
2. How would you describe your learning style? Do you like small or large classes; seminars or lectures; internships?
3. Did you take advanced placement classes at Trinity and do you want to continue to be challenged in a rigorous academic environment or do you want a less pressured academic environment?
4. How would you weigh the importance of social opportunities versus a focus on academics? Are you an adventurer or risk taker who enjoys a lot of change or do you prefer a stable, predictable environment?
5. Do you want to spend the next four years with people like you or do you want to meet people from cultures and backgrounds very different from your own?
6. What do you do well or care about deeply? What interests, talents or skills do you want to pursue while you are in college?

The “best college” and the “best fit” is the college that is right for you. It is not necessarily your parent’s college, or the one your friends will attend. It is the college that will best meet your needs. It fits! Make it a priority to try to find a college that matches your academic, spiritual, and personal interests. A good college fit is one that will:

1. Offer a program of study to match your interests and needs.
2. Provide a style of instruction that is well suited to the way you learn best.
3. Provide a level of academic rigor to match your ability.
4. Offer a community that feels like home to you.
5. Value you for what you do well.
6. Meets your spiritual needs.

## TYPES OF SCHOOLS

- **Colleges:** Colleges offer four-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees. College can be specialized or they can offer a broad curriculum such as the liberal arts which focus on the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Classes tend to be smaller than those in universities. This provides students with more personal attention and better access to the faculty.
- **Universities:** Universities can be quite large and usually include a liberal arts college, some professional colleges, and graduate programs. Universities offer a large course selection and have extensive resources. Class size varies, depending on the size of the university, the subject area, and the course level. University professors are usually involved in research. Some graduate students (teaching assistants or TAs), rather than professors, teach some of the classes.
- **Public Schools:** These schools are supported by the state’s taxpayers. Students pay 30% or less of the actual cost of education and the state covers the remainder of the cost. Because residents of the state already support the school through taxes, public schools charge in-state students less than out-of-state students.
- **Private Schools:** These schools provide their own funding and tend to be more expensive than public schools. Private schools tend to be more innovative in developing college financing plans.

# Corresponding with Colleges **via email**

## Using Proper Email Etiquette

- DO:** Remember that your e-mail messages may be added to your admissions file.
- DO:** Choose an appropriate e-mail address. You may want to rethink addresses like partygirl@hotmail.com or hatetostudy@yahoo.com.
- DO:** Give your full name, address, phone number, and high school on each message.
- DO:** Spell check your e-mail and use proper punctuation.
- DO:** Use salutations, e.g., Dear Admissions Officer.
- DO:** Be as polite and respectful in an e-mail as you would in a face-to-face meeting or telephone conversation.
- DO:** Check the e-mail address of the recipient before hitting the “send” button.
- DO:** Check the school’s website if you have several questions before sending an e-mail. If you still have specific questions, it is better to call the school and have a conversation.
- DON’T:** Use all lower-or-upper-case letters; all lower-case letters are difficult to read and upper case feels as if you are SHOUTING.
- DON’T:** Use “IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!!” or “Please read” as subjects for your e-mail. These are commonly used for “junk email” or viruses.
- DON’T:** Send anything confidential in an e-mail. E-mail is more like a postcard than like a letter in a sealed envelope.
- DON’T:** Send blanket e-mails to several schools at once. Do some research and then ask specific questions indicating genuine interest.

*(This advice originally appeared in a Washington University newsletter for counselors.)*

## Top Ten Facts You Should Know

### About the College Admission Process

- 1 You have the right to request information from colleges and universities without feeling high pressure tactics to persuade you to apply or enroll.
- 2 You have the right to accurate information about each institution's academic programs, facilities, and faculty, along with each institution's retention and graduation statistics.
- 3 You have the right to the names of all accrediting, certifying, or licensing organizations for each institution.
- 4 You have the right to complete information about all direct and miscellaneous expenses, the types of non need-based and need-based financial assistance provided, and the methods by which eligibility is determined.
- 5 You have the right to accurate information about all aspects of campus safety, including institutional crime statistics.
- 6 You have the responsibility to assure that all required items necessary for the completion of your application are received by each institution within the required timeframe.
- 7 Once admitted to a college or university, you have the right to wait until May 1 to respond to an offer of admission and financial aid (unless you have been admitted under a binding Early Decision program).
- 8 You have the right to request in writing an extension to May 1 without penalty if an institution requires an earlier commitment (unless you have been admitted under a binding Early Decision program). A sample request is on page 23.
- 9 You have the right to historical information about prior waiting list activity including the number wait-listed, the number ultimately admitted and the availability of housing and financial aid. Colleges and universities cannot require a deposit from you to maintain your place on a waiting list.
- 10 You have the responsibility to submit a deposit to only one institution—and upon submitting that deposit to withdraw from all other institutions to which you have been admitted.

- Taken from the New England Association for College Admission Counseling, [www.neacac.org](http://www.neacac.org) -

**EXTENSION FOR OFFERS OF ADMISSION, SCHOLARSHIP, OR FINANCIAL AID**

Colleges that solicit commitments to offers of admission, scholarship, and/or financial assistance prior to May 1 may do so provided those offers include a clear statement in the original offer that written requests for extensions and admission deposit refunds until May 1 will be granted, and that such requests will not jeopardize a student's status for admission or financial aid.

**Sample extension letter:**

*Date*

*To: Director of Admission  
Office of Admission  
(Name of college)*

*Dear Director:*

*Thank you for the letter of acceptance to your institution.*

*As an accepted first-year student to your institution, I am writing this formal request for an extension to May 1 — the National Candidate Reply Date. I understand that this request includes all commitments—admission, financial aid, scholarship, and housing.*

*Trinity Presbyterian School, as a member in good standing of both the National Association for College Admission Counseling and the Southern Association for College Admission Counseling, adheres to NACAC's Statement of Principles of Good Practice. Under the guidelines of this statement, I know that I am entitled to written approval from you of my request. If my final decision is made prior to May 1, I shall notify you in writing.*

*Thank you for your prompt attention.*

*Respectfully,*

*Student  
Address  
City, State, Zip  
Phone  
Email address*

**Please give Mrs. Mosley or Mrs. Moore a copy of your letter.**

## May 1 Important Date

**May 1** of the student's senior year is an **important date** to remember in that it is the National Candidate Reply Date.

### Sample letter of withdrawal of application from consideration:

*Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Date*

*Director of Admissions  
Name of University  
Address  
City, State, Zip*

*Dear (enter name of Director of Admissions),*

*Thank you for your offer of admission to (name of college). I have decided to pursue my education at another university and wish to withdraw my name from your prospective Class of (year).*

*I appreciate the interest that you showed in my application.*

*Sincerely,*

*Signature*



*Office of the College Counselors*

**TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL**

1700 East Trinity Boulevard | Montgomery, Alabama 36106

334.213.2137 | 334.277.6788 fax