

# Junior College Info Night

11/29/23



# College Counseling Mission

To help each student identify, apply, and matriculate to colleges that fit their interests, abilities, and goals. We value the relationship between students and counselors and strive to know all students well so that we can best advise them and help them reach their post-secondary goals.

# Future Events

12/5/2023	SAT/ACT/Test Optional: How to Pick the Right Path for You
1/6/2024	Navigating the Digital SAT
1/29/2024	Student-Athlete Road Map to College Recruitment
4/4/2024	Spring College Event
Fall 2024	College Financing
Fall 2024	Coffee w/ Counselors

# How COVID has changed admissions

- More test optional schools
- Emphasis on more holistic review for many schools
- Higher demand for financial aid = increased importance of timely submission of forms
- MANY more options to interact online with schools
- Increase in number of applications per student

# Timeline

- Research- Spring Junior Year
- SAT/ACT- Winter/Spring Junior Year
- Apply- Fall/Winter Senior Year
- Decide- Spring Senior Year

# Tonight's Agenda

- Quick Poll
- Planning and Research
- Application Overview
- Navigating the Process

# Planning & Research

Where to begin...

# Finding Your Fit

Start thinking about what you want in a school:

- Location
- Large university versus small college
- Lecture versus small classes
- Student organizations
- Affordability
- Academic Fit

# Unwise Reasons To Add a School To Your List

- Where your significant other goes
- Where all of your friends are applying
- The name of the school
- Because the acceptance rate is high (unless you are actually interested in the school...)

# College Visits

*With a signed College Visit Form, students have 4 excused college visits per year for 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade*

- Visit when students will be on campus
- Use college websites for schedule of tours & information sessions
- Check-in with admissions
- Sit in on classes, go to lunch with students
- Re-visit schools after acceptances have been received
- Check in w/ campus safety, self-guided tour
- Discounts at local hotels, inns, etc.

# College Rep Visits at AMSA

- College reps visit AMSA to talk about their school
- Sign-up in Naviance
- Bring questions and be professional at these visits
  - Admission reps review your applications
- Make a positive, lasting impression!!!

# Other Opportunities

- Online info sessions
- Open houses
- College fairs
- Student panels
- Meet the faculty opportunities
- Online tours

# While You're Evaluating Colleges...

- Pay attention to how you *feel* on campus
- Speak to current students
- Be open-minded
- Try to meet with a faculty member in your program
- See if you can sit in on a class
- Spend some time “off the tour”

# Building Your College List

- Stay organized and be strategic
- Create a balanced list
  - Probable (*Admission & Financial*)
  - Target
  - Reach
  - Far Reach
- Your list should be YOUR list, which fits YOUR needs and is based on YOUR academic & financial profile

# Data to Use

- GPA
- Selectivity of Program
- Rigor of transcript
- Test Scores
- Acceptance Rate
  - Even if metrics match those of average accepted student, if the admit rate is below 40%, it is a reach for EVERYONE

# Tools

- Naviance
  - College Super Match
  - Scattergrams
- College Board
- New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE)'s Tuition Breaks for MA Residents
- Net Price Calculator

# Cost & College Search

Need = what the government and/or a college thinks you “need”

- Need Based Aid
- Merit Based Aid
- Public
- Private

Find out what you might qualify for NOW and use that info to your advantage.

# Consider...

Our students can be successful at a variety of environments. What determines success is the student and their choices.

Thinking realistically about both your student's level of academic achievement and your ability to pay for college during the college search process sets them up for success in the fall.



Our biggest piece of advice...

Don't fall in love...

And find a “Probable” school that you  
actually like

# Application Overview

What's in an application?

# Pieces of an Application

- Application Form (Common app or directly to the institution)
- Essay
- Supplemental Questions
- Letters of Recommendation (Teacher & Counselor)
- Transcript & AMSA Profile
- Test Scores (sent directly from testing institution or self reported, if allowed)
- Interview (if applicable)
- Portfolio (if applicable)

# Testing

- SAT
- ACT

Students should start testing in the spring of their junior year

Many colleges and universities are doing test optional but we recommend students test just in case (there are some schools that still require it)

*SAT Subject Tests- gone*

# Teacher Recommendation

- 2 core academic teachers
- Ask in-person preferably, then fill out the Teacher Recommendation Form
- Focus on student's academic performance
- Ask **spring** of grade 11
- Write a thank you note

# Counselor Recommendation

- Complete Counselor Recommendation Questionnaire in Google Classroom
- Complete Junior Meeting (Jan-April)
- Family Questionnaire (form sent out in the spring and due June 1)
- Focus on big picture
  - Academics
  - Co-Curricular and Community Involvement
  - Personal Characteristics

# Transcript & AMSA Profile

- Grades and course titles
- GPA (weighted only) on a 5.0 scale
  - Colleges may recalculate based on their own specs
- CP / Honors / AP / Accelerated
- AMSA School Profile (available online for reference) =  
Context
- We do not rank

# Application Types

- Early Decision (*binding*)
- Restrictive Early Action (*not binding, but limited*)
- Early Action (*apply and find out early*)
- Rolling (*decision in 6-8 weeks*)
- Regular (*review entire applicant pool*)
- “Priority” Deadline (*often connected to merit \$ and sometimes selective majors such as nursing*)

# Navigating the Process

So now that you're on information overload...

# Working Together

- Start where the student is
- Put the student in the driver's seat
- Support and empower the student
- Set reasonable expectations
- Help the *student* own the process
  - Student...
    - communicates with college reps
    - sets up interviews
    - reaches out to set up meetings with counselor
    - writes essay and fills out application

# How can families help?

- While your kid is driving, you're still in the car
- Be mindful of pressures of senior year
  - Social, Emotional, Academic
- Have realistic expectations
  - Wherever they get in, you'll be proud of them

# How can families help?

- Planning college visits, track virtual college events
- Manage financial aid process
  - What's affordable?
  - When are the deadlines, what forms are required
- Family Questionnaire
- Encourage student to have a shareable system to keep track of information (we suggest a Google Doc)

# How can families help?

- Help students register for standardized tests, transportation, supplies, sending scores
- Make sure students are aware of AMSA school policies and meeting deadlines
- Track decisions, help with supplementary materials (housing forms, additional info if on a waitlist)

# Counselor's Role

- Help students develop and hone their list
- Facilitate application process
- Act as a resource
- Write counselor letter
- Send materials
- Provide support in junior and senior seminar
- Counselors can do more with advance notice!

is not... to chase, badger, pressure, micromanage

# Junior Seminar Topics

- ❖ Class Overview, Junior Year Naviance How-To, Junior Questionnaire & Resume
- ❖ SAT/ACT Testing and Letters of Recommendation
- ❖ Finding Your Fit & Interest Survey
- ❖ College Search Tools & Building Your List
- ❖ Essays (Examples, Prompts, Do's and Don'ts)
- ❖ Other relevant topics as they arise

# Senior Seminar

- ❖ Senior Year Naviance How-To
- ❖ Components of the application, who is responsible for what
- ❖ Creating Common App Account / linking Naviance and Common App
- ❖ How and When to send ACT / SAT scores
- ❖ Financial Aid - FAFSA, FSA ID, CSS Profile
- ❖ Scholarships
- ❖ Time during the school day to work on applications
- ❖ Ask questions and have direct contact with a counselor on a regular basis
- ❖ Constant reminders from counselors on deadlines and how to pace yourself throughout the process

# Junior Year Focus

- Develop college list
- School work and strong grades
- Participate in meaningful activities
- Build relationships with teachers (preparing for letters of recommendation)
- Build relationship with your counselor
- Create a testing plan
- Create a resume
- Engage with counselor when picking classes



# Thank You

Chris Dugan (A - E)

[cdugan@amsacs.org](mailto:cdugan@amsacs.org)

Wylie Culhane (M-Pi)

[wculhane@amsacs.org](mailto:wculhane@amsacs.org)

Sarah Morrissey (PI - Z)

[smorrissey@amsacs.org](mailto:smorrissey@amsacs.org)

Lindsay Currallo (F-L)

[lcurrello@amsacs.org](mailto:lcurrello@amsacs.org)

Kate Driver (M-Pi)

[kdriver@amsacs.org](mailto:kdriver@amsacs.org)