



# Post-Secondary Planning

## Prepared by the Mountain View Guidance/Counseling Department

This guide was prepared specifically for Mountain View High School students and their parents to assist them in the process of applying to colleges, universities, and other post-secondary institutions. It is our hope that most of your concerns and questions will be addressed in this guide; however, we know that each student has unique circumstances and each school or college has specific requirements, so we encourage you to meet individually with your counselor.

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## **Possible Post-Secondary Education and Training Options**

### **Trade and Vocational Schools**

**Description:** Privately owned schools specializing in trades or specific vocations. They are skill-oriented and apply directly to the work place.

**Length of Study:** Programs vary from a few weeks (Certificate) to two years (Associate Degree)

**Characteristics and Benefits:** Generally, open admission. Instruction is directed towards a specific job or acquiring specific skills, and learning is primarily “hands-on”. Program and institutional accreditation may distinguish between institutions.

### **Technical Colleges**

**Description:** Similar to trade and vocational schools, these prepare individuals for specific occupations. They may be either private or publicly operated and are usually accredited and degree granting. Enrollment for many programs may be competitive rather than open admission.

**Length of Study:** Unlike trade schools, technical colleges generally have longer programs lasting one to four years. Completed programs general result in an Associates or Bachelors degree.

**Characteristics and Benefits:** Technical colleges offer highly skilled programs that are often as marketable, if not more marketable than traditional college and university programs. The learning is generally “hands-on” and the academics more applied learning.

**Web Site:** <http://www.accsc.org/directory/>

### **Community Colleges**

#### **Description:**

Community colleges are two-year public institutions that specialize in college transfer programs, technical programs, or both. The closest to Mountain View are Luzerne County Community College (Nanticoke) and SUNY Broome (Binghamton).

**Length of Study:** Varies from three months to two years, depending on the program. Programs usually lead to associates degrees or certificates.

**Characteristics and Benefits:** Open admission, although some programs (such as nursing) may have additional admission requirements. Community colleges are excellent “buys” because of the state funding. Students pursuing a four-year degree often elect to complete the first two years at a community college because of the cost, small class size, and proximity to home.

**Web Sites:** <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/pages/ccfinder.aspx>

Luzerne Co. Comm. College: <http://www.luzerne.edu/index.jsp>

SUNY Broome: <http://www.sunybroome.edu/>

### **Bible Colleges**

**Description:** The primary objective is to provide a faith-based learning experience. Some have traditional majors, but often the educational goal is mission work, education, or Bible study.

**Length of Study:** Most are one to four years and include a mission or service component.

**Characteristic and Benefits:** Bible colleges offer individuals with similar convictions the opportunity to study in an educational atmosphere supportive of their beliefs.

**Web Site:** <http://www.christiancolleges.com/>

### **Arts Colleges**

**Description:** These are private institutions that focus on either visual or performing arts. Admission is based more on auditions and portfolio than straight academics.

**Length of Study:** Programs range from six months to four years.

**Characteristics and Benefits:** Individuals attending these institutions need to have a passion for the field because majors focus on the arts. Competition may also be very high (ex. Music performance at Julliard)

## **Colleges and Universities (general)**

**Description:** This is the traditional view of higher education with a wide range of programs leading to many careers.

**Length of Study:** Primarily leading to a bachelor's degree.

**Characteristics and Benefits:** They generally offer a well-rounded education in a variety of frameworks (large or small, single sex or coed, public, private). Students usually have little difficulty changing majors and may also combine or individualize majors.

**Public Colleges/Universities** receive some public funds, so individuals attending in-state institutions receive discounted tuition rates. Although they offer a wide range of majors, many state universities were originally developed as teacher preparation colleges. State related universities (Lincoln, Penn State, Temple, Pitt) also receive some public monies.

Web Site: <http://www.passhe.edu/Pages/map.aspx>

**Private Colleges/Universities** were founded originally by a specific group or religion. They tend to be smaller in size and are often liberal arts institutions. Funding comes primarily from private sources, endowments, or grants. Costs are equal for in-state or out-of-state students.

## **Apprenticeship Programs**

**Description:** This is a formalized system of occupational preparation that includes class studies and on-the-job supervised training. It is most commonly available for jobs fields in the trades.

**Length of Study:** Most run two to five years.

**Characteristics and Benefits:** This combines well-paid job training with relevant college-level instruction. Individuals are immediately working in their field of choice.

Web Site: <http://www.apprentice.org/>

## **Military Options (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy)**

**Description:** The Armed Forces offer a several combinations of military service, occupational training, and education. Enlistees must meet physical and ASVAB testing standards. Requirements for specific job titles, branches, and programs may vary.

Web Site: <http://www.careersinthemilitary.com/>

**Military Academies** include West Point (Army), Annapolis (Navy), and the Air Force, Merchant Marine, and Coast Guard Academies. The college education is free, but there is a required service commitment after college.

Web Site: <https://www.usa.gov/military-colleges>

**ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps)** provides college scholarships at more than 1,000 colleges and universities in the United States. Qualified individuals are trained to become officers in the military upon graduation from college.

Web Site: <http://www.military.com/rotc>

## **Steps in Selecting a Post-Secondary School**

### **Self-evaluation**

1. What are your academic abilities and how well have you used them?  
This includes courses chosen (level of challenge-AP, academic, or general), grades and class rank, PSAT, SAT, ACT, and DAT (career and ability test taken in 9<sup>th</sup> grade) testing
2. What is your work ethic? Are you motivated by a desire to learn, a competitive need for good grades? How much are you willing to study?
3. How certain are you in a major? Are you definite about a career area or would you still like to explore a range of fields?

4. Do you mind receiving average grades or do you need to make Honors' List?
5. What are your extracurricular interests and how important are they?
6. How much time are you willing to invest in attending college? Are you anxious to get out into the work force? Would you be willing to go on for a graduate or professional degree?
7. How far away from home would you be comfortable attending school?

### Factors to Consider in Selection

1. **College Type and Philosophy** – two or four-year, state/private, religious affiliation, single sex or coed.
2. **Programs and Majors** – Program(s) of interest as well as range of majors and minors, accreditation of programs, transferability of credits
3. **Special Study Opportunities** – study abroad opportunities, internships, co-op, individualized majors, etc...
4. **Admissions Requirements** – testing requirements, deadlines, percentage of applicants accepted, admissions priorities, academic rigor
5. **Location and Setting**- geographic region, setting, distance from home
6. **Student Enrollment** – total number of students, male/female ratio, faculty/student ratio, retention rate, diversity of population, undergraduate vs. graduate numbers
7. **Housing Facilities** – On-campus housing? What types? Guaranteed for four years?
8. **Campus Life** –types of activities, weekend programming
9. **Costs and Financial Aid** – average financial aid awards, availability of aid. What is the maximum cost you can afford?

## Evaluating Post-Secondary Prospects Realistically

Most students apply to three to five colleges/post-secondary programs including, at least one “safety” school where admission is a nearly 100% chance.

<u>Barron's College Selectivity</u>	<u>High School Class Rank</u>	<u>Percent Admitted</u>
Most Competitive	top 10%-20%	<33%
Highly Competitive	top 20-35%	33%-50%
Very Competitive	top 35-50%	50-75%
Competitive	top 50%-65%	75%-85%
Less Competitive	top 65%	>85%
Noncompetitive	all with diploma or GED	>98%

My PSAT Scores Writing and Language \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_  
 My SAT Scores Writing and Language \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_ ACT Composite \_\_\_\_\_  
 My Grade Point Average \_\_\_\_\_  
 My Class Rank \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_

Check on websites such as Big Future at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search> for individual college admission standards. How do your scores compare with the colleges/schools of your choice?

## **What Do Colleges Look for in an Applicant?**

When making admission decisions, colleges look at many factors.

**Classes-** Rigor and relevance of course selections

**Grades-** performance level and trend of grades throughout high school including senior year

**Standardized Test Scores-** an avenue to compare schools and may be used for scholarship selection

**Extracurricular Activities-** leadership and depth of commitment over number of activities.

**Application Essay**

**Letters of Recommendation**

## **Testing (PSAT, SAT I, SAT Subject tests, Placement tests, AP tests)**

The SAT I and ACT are the two standard admissions test for most post-secondary institutions.

Most four-year and many two-year institutions require one or the other. Some use the scores as a selection tool (who gets in), and others use them as a placement tool (what level of math or English to start a student). Some school combine best scores from several dates. Others consider the best scores from a single date. **Annual test dates are available through testing websites or on the mvsd.net website – through the High School Guidance web page**

**Fee waivers are available** for individuals who qualify for free and reduced lunch. They may be picked up in the Guidance Office.

504 or IEP students may receive accommodations if they have completed a registration form and been approved by the College Board.

**PSAT** The PSAT is a shortened (and less expensive) version of the SAT and is used as a preparation tool. It is offered to sophomores and juniors once a year in October. Juniors who take the PSAT are also automatically entered into a few scholarship competitions, most notable the National Merit Program.

### **SAT Information**

The College Board manages SAT. It tests two areas- Writing and Language and Math, Essay is optional. Scores run 200-800 on each section. On-line registration at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

### **ACT Information**

American College Testing manages ACT. Registration is on-line at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org). It test four areas- Math, English, Science, Reading and gives a Composite Score (1-36). Essay is optional.

### **Preparing for the SAT**

The best place to start is <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice>

**Preparing for the ACT** A good place to start is

<http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation.html>

**SAT Subject Tests** SAT subject tests are a requirement of some four-year colleges/universities. They measure an individual's knowledge in a specific subject.

## ACT vs SAT: Key differences between the ACT and SAT – StudyPoint.com

SAT	vs.	ACT
content-based test	<b>Type of Test</b>	content-based test
Reading: 1, 65-min section; Math: 1, 25-min section (no calculator) & 1, 55-min section (w/ calculator); Writing & Language: 1, 35-min section; Essay: 1, 50-min section (optional)	<b>Test Format</b>	English: 1, 45-min section; Math: 1, 60-min section; Reading: 1, 35-min section; Science: 1, 35-min section; Writing: 1, 40-min essay (optional)
reading, relevant words in context, math, grammar & usage, analytical writing (optional)	<b>Content Covered</b>	grammar & usage, math, reading, science reasoning, and writing (optional)
questions are evidence and context-based in an effort to focus on real-world situations and multi-step problem-solving	<b>Test Style</b>	straightforward, questions may be long but are usually less difficult to decipher
Math and Evidence-Based Reading & Writing are each scored on a scale of 200-800. Composite SAT score is the sum of the two section scores and ranged from 400-1600.	<b>Scoring</b>	English, Math, Reading, and Science scores will each range between 1-36. Composite ACT score is the average of your scores on the four sections; ranges between 1-36
no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers	<b>Penalty for Wrong Answers?</b>	no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers
yes – you can choose which set(s) of SAT scores to submit to colleges	<b>Score Choice?</b>	yes – you can choose which set(s) of ACT scores to submit to colleges
questions increase in difficulty level as you move through that question type in a section (except reading passage questions, which progress chronologically through the passage)	<b>Difficulty Levels</b>	difficulty level of the questions is random
arithmetic, problem-solving & data analysis, heart of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry; formulas provided.	<b>Math Levels</b>	arithmetic, algebra I and II, functions, geometry, trigonometry; no formulas are provided
with private schools and schools on the east and west coasts; however, every four-year college in the US accepts SAT scores	<b>Tends to be more popular?</b>	with public schools and schools in the Midwest and south; however, every four-year college in the US accepts ACT scores

seven times per year: January, March or April, May, June, October, November, December	<b>Offered when?</b>	six times per year: February, April, June, September, October, December (note that some states offer the ACT as part of their state testing requirements; these tests are not administered on the national test dates)
typically about four weeks before the test date	<b>Registration deadline?</b>	typically about five to six weeks before the test date
<a href="http://www.collegeboard.com">www.collegeboard.com</a>	<b>More Information</b>	<a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a>

**Placement Tests** Placement tests are conducted by individual post-secondary schools and are designed to provide input as to what level an incoming freshman should be placed in specific subjects- usually math and English.

**AP Exams** Advanced Placement courses are standardized college-level courses scored on a scale of one to five. AP courses on your transcript indicate to a college you have taken a rigorous level of course work.

Many colleges offer credit for a good score on an AP exam- usually a four or five, although occasionally a level of three. This could mean either placing out of an introductory course or obtaining course credit.

## Campus Visits

It is nearly impossible to get a complete picture of campus life from college promotional materials and nothing can replace a first-hand account of a campus. Listed below are guidelines for arranging visits.

1. Call ahead to schedule a visit. To do this, **call the school and ask to be connected to the Admissions Office**. Depending on the school, you may make arrangements for any or all of the following:
  - Tour the campus.
  - Interview with an admissions counselor. (Small colleges will encourage an individual interview. Larger colleges will more likely schedule you for a group session.
  - Arrange to sit in on a class or talk with a department's professor, coach (see NCAA guidelines in athletics section of this booklet), etc...
2. Decide whether a weekend or weekday visit best meets your needs, as they give different perspectives. Open Houses are often helpful because they are comprehensive and faculty may be available.
3. When visiting, dress neatly and appropriately (no jeans, shorts, t-shirts, tank tops).
4. Take an unofficial copy of your high school transcript with you on an individual interview. You can obtain this through the Guidance Office Secretary.
5. Jot down notes from each visit- things you liked or dislikes. Preferences are clear on a visit and then quickly fade. Take photos to keep images clear in your mind.
  - Write down contacts, so you can send a note or email of appreciation or follow-up questions.

6. Weekday visits provide an opportunity to get a feel for the pace of the campus and offer the opportunity to sit in on classes.

- . Browse the bookstore.
- . Scan bulletin boards, papers, and flyers to see what is going on there.
- . Read for a little while in the library and see what it is like.
- . Drive around the surrounding community to get a feel for the campus setting.

7. Visit no more than two colleges in a day, so your impressions do not blend together.

8. Talk to students. Students often give a more honest appraisal or at least a different viewpoint

## **Questions to Ask on a Visit**

### **Academic Reputation / Information (questions for Admissions or a Department Head)**

1. Is the college accredited? If so, by whom? Is your major accredited?
2. What is the faculty/student ratio?
3. What are the average SAT, ACT, GPA scores of students who attend?
4. What high school courses are required? Level of math? Years of foreign language?
5. Are SAT Subject Tests required?
6. Do you accept Advanced Placement classes for credit? If so, at what scoring level?
7. How flexible is your college?
  - a. Are there double majors or self-designed majors?
  - b. Are there minors?
  - c. Is it possible to change majors?
  - d. What are the core requirements?
  - e. Are there co-op opportunities or internships? Where?
  - f. Are there study abroad programs? Where?
  - g. Are there transfer agreements with other colleges?
8. What % of students finish in four years (baccalaureate program) or two (associate program)?
9. How many credits do a student usually take each term?
10. How is the school calendar laid out? (semesters, trimesters, 4-1-4, condensed year-round)
11. What is the average class size?
12. What can you tell me about the faculty?
  - a. What percent of classes do professors teach? What percent taught by graduate students?
  - b. Do they have office hours?
  - c. Are they available outside of the classroom?
  - d. Are they required to publish or do research?
13. What services are available to students if academic difficulties arise?
14. What services are available to learning support students or students who are physically challenged?
15. Are placement test required?
16. What are the most popular majors? Why?
17. What departments are considered the strongest? Why?
18. Which majors have the best placement?
19. Is it hard to get the classes you want?

### **Facilities**

1. How up-to-date are the facilities in the various departments?
2. What types of housing are available? Is it guaranteed for all four years?
3. Do you have to live on campus?

4. How large is the library?
5. What types of computer/technology support is available to students? Where?
6. Are there career placement services available?
7. What types of food services are there?
8. Do I need a computer?

### **Student Life**

1. Do you have dorms with special themes? (sports, quiet, by major)
2. What is the safety record of the college? Crime statistics of the campus.
3. What is the male/female ratio?
4. How important are fraternities and sororities on campus?
5. How culturally diverse is the campus?
6. How are roommates chosen, and what is the process if you want to change roommates?
7. What clubs, sports, activities are available?
8. Are cars allowed on campus?
9. What percent of students leave campus on weekends?
10. Is there school spirit?
11. What is there to do on weekends if you stay on campus?
12. How are the arts represented? (art shows, theater, music)
13. How is the food on campus? Are there several food options?
14. What health services are available?
15. What counseling services are available?

### **Financial Concerns**

1. How much does your school cost? Does this include room, board, and other fees?
2. Are there different meal plans?
3. Can I get a job on campus? How do I go about doing this?
4. What scholarships do you have available and how can I apply for them?
5. What is your job placement percentage following graduation?

### **Dos and Don'ts for Interviews**

**Do-** Go prepared with a transcript and other information about you  
Go prepared with some background knowledge about the school  
Dress appropriately and be on time  
Make eye contact. Speak clearly and with enthusiasm  
Go prepared with intelligent, relevant questions  
Highlight your strengths and unique talents  
Follow up with a note or email of appreciation

**Don't-** Get to an interview late without calling  
Come on too strong or seem over anxious  
Give only one-word answers  
Try to extend the interview unnecessarily  
Judge the college by the interview only

## Comparison of Colleges Check what is important to you and record observations

Selection Factors	Imp?	College #1	College #2	College #3
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>				
Enrollment				
Tests Required?				
Admissions Deadline				
<b>COSTS</b>				
Tuition				
Room/Board				
Meal Plans				
Fees				
Scholarships				
Additional Items Included				
<b>FACILITIES</b>				
Well-Quipped?				
Well-Maintained?				
Housing Options				
Setting				
Library – Study?				
Research Assistance?				
<b>PROGRAM OF STUDY</b>				
Range of Majors				
Program Accreditation				
Classrooms and Labs				
Student/Faculty Ratio				
Faculty teaching Reputation				
Use of Teaching Assistants				
Opportunities for Indep. Study				
Opportunities for Internships				
Program Completion (4 yrs?)				
Accessibility of Faculty				
<b>CAREER ASSISTANCE</b>				
Career Counseling				
Career Resources				
Placement Services				
<b>OTHER SERVICES</b>				
Counseling Services				
Health Services				
Tutoring Services				
Learning Support Assistance				
Writing Center				
Computer Accessibility/Services				
<b>CAMPUS OPPORTUNITIES</b>				
Cultural Programs				
Intercollegiate Sports				
Intramural Sports				
Clubs				
Sororities/Fraternities				
Weekend Activities				
Other				

# **College Application Process**

**(preferably to be completed by Thanksgiving, but definitely by December break)**

## **Apply on the college/postsecondary school website.**

This is usually found on the Admissions page of the website. When you set up an account, keep track of passwords!

## **Identify Required Components**

These include essays, letters of recommendation, counselor sections, etc...

If there are letters of recommendation, ask teachers, coaches, etc... immediately.

Start on the essay as soon as possible. This is usually the most time-consuming component for most students to complete. Be sure to provide all required information.

## **Complete the Application Main Text.**

Application fees may be waived if you complete the application on-line or visit the school.

If you had fee waiver for SAT or ACT, you are eligible for application fee waivers.

**Special Web Sites** for completing more than one application

Common Application (many private colleges accept this application)

<http://www.commonapp.org/>

PA State System of Higher Education ("Universities"). This connects to all 14 state universities.

<http://www.passhe.edu/Pages/map.aspx>

## **General Information about completing applications**

Make certain that there are no spelling errors and no sections left incomplete.

"Optional Statement" sections should usually be completed. This is your opportunity to include relevant information about yourself that would not otherwise come through in your application. This may include special circumstances or experiences.

Make sure you leave enough time to have letters of recommendation and essays completed before a deadline date.

When the application asks you to list courses you are taking during the senior year, lead off with your core or more rigorous subjects.

If there is a limited space for activities on the application, select only significant activities in which you have invested time and energy. You may also attach a separate sheet or resume.

Suggestion: Keep a running list of any recognitions you received or activities in which you were involved including the number of years of participation and any leadership positions. This will make it much easier to complete your application if the information is readily available.

## **Collect all Application Materials and Give them to the Guidance Secretary**

Complete a "request for transcript" which both gives your permission for us to send your records and notifies us when your application has been completed online. This form is available on the Guidance Secretary's desk. Please allow one week for processing of the application, as your transcript needs to be constructed, and information compiled.

\*If you took Dual Enrollment classes, you must contact the college to send your transcript.

**Check on the college's website for your application status.** Make sure that all pieces of your application have reached the Admissions Office.

## Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation allow the college to see another perspective of an individual. They are an integral component of the admissions process for a small college or institution. Large universities, on the other hand, will usually not take the time to review letters. The only exception would be if there were particularly unusual circumstances of which the college should be aware. Recommendations may be done in letter format or on special forms. The Common Application provides a general teacher evaluation form. Copies of this form are available in the Guidance Office.

Applications usually indicate how many letters are required and/or by whom they should specifically be written. If it is not stated, then a general rule of thumb is two or three letters from adults who are not related to you. Persons who teach in your proposed major or are alumni of the intended school may be particularly valuable. Base the choice on who knows you the best and can positively reflect on your abilities and work ethic. Choosing your favorite teacher may not be the best decision.

Always ask a person if he/she would be comfortable writing a positive reference. Provide the recommender with information about yourself, what the letter is for, where it should be submitted, and the deadline. It is respectful to give the individual advance warning of no less than two or three weeks. Remember to thank them for their assistance. Forms are available in the Guidance Office or on the Guidance page of the Mountain View web site.

## The Admissions Essay

Many post-secondary schools require an essay, personal statement, or both. The essay is an opportunity for the school to evaluate your writing and communication skills. Admissions officers look for knowledge of essay construction, clarity of thought, and a personal voice. Topics may either be assigned, chosen from a list, or free choice. The most important consideration is that you choose a subject about which you are interested or passionate. It is extremely difficult to write a good essay on a topic in which you have no personal investment. Also, do not think that your piece will be better received if you dazzle them with high-level vocabulary, important names, or complicated facts. Make certain the essay is well written and says what you want it to say. Proofread it, and have another individual proofread it, too.

Some general suggestions:

- . Be aware of a specific school's requirements for the essay.
- . Brainstorm ideas before you begin writing. Think broadly.
- . Organize ideas and write an outline and then rough draft.
- . Look at sample essays to get a feel for what schools are looking for in an essay.  
(Books are available in the Guidance Office)
- . When responding to the question, look for ways to distinguish you from others.
- . Don't repeat information already included in the transcript.
- . Be sure you fully understand the question before you start.
- . Put your voice into the essay. It should reflect your personality and beliefs.

# Student Resume

## Admissions Resumes (from [educationplanner.org](http://educationplanner.org))

### Tips for Getting Noticed by an Admissions Representative

When you must compete against hundreds of other applicants for limited seats in a degree program, it is essential that your resume quickly convey the academic abilities, passionate interests, and real-world experiences you can bring to the program. Below are general strategies for providing what admissions directors seek in application resumes. Be advised that it's always wise to check with the targeted school first for more specific guidelines that will help you create the most compelling resume possible.

### Resumes for College Admissions

Typically, college applicants are about 18 years old and have only limited experience to discuss on a resume. For this reason, resumes for college admissions should be held strictly to a one-page limit; busy admissions officers may even consider a longer resume a sign of arrogance. If your resume is more than one page long, it is likely that you can condense it into a single page by formatting it more efficiently.

For the most part, college admissions resumes are meant only to be informational; while a business school applicant might present significant professional accomplishments in support of her candidacy, college applicants are simply summarizing all relevant information from the application on a single piece of paper. Still, it is possible for a high school student to craft a more powerful document, one that can go a long way toward producing an image of a mature, "professional" student.

Here are some strategies for optimizing each section of your college admissions resume:

1. **Opening Summary**

This should provide the admissions officer with a snapshot of you as a candidate, highlighting your most relevant accomplishment or qualification. The goal is to demonstrate both your past achievements and your potential for future success.

2. **Education**

In addition to your high school name and location, include any honors, awards, or significant club memberships.

3. **Volunteer Work**

List first any volunteer work that coincides with your future goals

4. **Hobbies**

Your list of hobbies and personal interests on your resume should begin with activities that relate to your goals.

An excellent resume can positively influence the admissions process.

## Auditions and Portfolios

### **Visual Arts**

If you decide to pursue a career in the visual arts, a portfolio will most likely be an admissions requirement. The portfolio is a comprehensive and organized presentation of your art ability and experience. Each art institution has its own criteria (pieces to include, presentation format, etc...), so it is important to contact schools well ahead of time so that you have the opportunity to best showcase your strengths.

### **Auditions**

High school students who wish to pursue a degree in music, whether it is choral, instrumental, or dance typically must audition. Generally, schools like to see two pieces of varying styles prepared. Scales and sight-reading may also be part of the audition. Check with the individual school to see what is required.

Dance auditions may be structured a little differently. At many four-year colleges, an open class is held the day before the audition. A performance piece that combines improvisation, styles, and rhythm is taught and then must be performed.

The majority of liberal arts programs do not require an audition for theater. Exception may be those with a BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) program or specialized theater school. If you must audition, make certain that your selection is suitable for your age and one that brings out your strengths.

## Information for Students with Special Needs ( from eCampusTours.com)

<http://www.ecampustours.com/campuslife/studyhabitsandtimemanagement/succeedingincollegewithlearningdisability.htm>

**Succeeding in College with a Learning Disability** Although college can be especially challenging for students with learning disabilities, success is still an option.

**Make sure you are eligible for college services.** In order to be eligible for the services provided to learning disabled students, you must provide documentation to your college showing that you are, in fact, learning disabled. Make sure the documentation is current (usually within three to five years), or you may have to be reevaluated in order to be eligible for services.

**Utilize the services offered.** Colleges provide academic accommodations to students with learning disabilities. Check with your college to see what services are offered. Accommodations may include:

- Textbooks on tape
- Use of tape recorders
- Note takers
- Extended time for taking tests
- Alternative test formats
- Test setting with few distractions
- Test reader
- Tutoring

**Select an appropriate set of courses.** When registering for courses, be sure to pick less demanding classes along with your more demanding classes. Having a good balance of courses will keep you from feeling overwhelmed.

**Attend all classes.** If you know that you are not going to wake up in time for that 8am biology lecture, then don't register for that time slot. As a learning disabled student, it is crucial for you to try to attend every class so you don't fall behind in your studies.

**Stay organized.** Organization is key in being successful at college. The combination of classes, assignments, study time, social events, club meetings, work, etc. makes it crucial for you to stay organized. Create a weekly calendar of your schedule, assignment due dates, test dates, project deadlines, etc., and make sure to review the calendar on an everyday basis. Create a filing system for important papers, and make sure to keep an organized desk free from unwanted clutter.

**Be aware of your learning differences and limits.** As a learning disabled student, you may find that it takes you longer to complete assignments than your classmates. Therefore, you may have to start working on projects and homework assignments before they do. Be sure to set aside a time period for working on projects, studying, etc. that is convenient for *you*. You need to know yourself.

**Stay in contact with your professors.** At the beginning of each semester, get in contact with your professors and let them know that you may need help along the way, such as note takers, alternative test formats, etc. Be sure to ask if tape recorders are allowed in their classrooms. If you find that you are having trouble with assignments/tests, ask for their assistance right away.

**Join or start a support group.** The best way of coping and working with your learning disability is to find people who share the same disability. Getting involved with a support group is a great way to share ideas, feelings, learning techniques, etc.

Pennsylvania Secondary Transition Guide

<http://www.secondarytransition.org/resources/english>

Colleges with exceptional response to students with disabilities

<http://www.bestcollegesonline.com/blog/20-incredible-colleges-for-special-needs-students/>

## **Information for Athletes** (see [educationplanner.org](http://educationplanner.org))

Intercollegiate athletics can be a wonderful experience for a disciplined, organized student. Think out carefully before you commit, though. Seasons extend longer than high school seasons and travel distances are farther for events, and practices last longer. Can you handle the sports commitment and academics? If not, you may instead want to consider intramural sports.

Most college athletic programs are under the jurisdiction of the **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**, which has three divisions of membership. There are specific scholastic regulations and conditions that apply to participation, and the guidelines regarding eligibility, recruiting, and financial compensation, including scholarship, vary by division. You must apply through the NCAA Clearinghouse.

As a student athlete, you need to prepare for college as soon as you start high school:

**Get good grades**—To be eligible to play sports at the college level, you'll need to get good grades in high school. You'll improve your chances even more by having a high class rank and scoring well on the ACT<sup>1</sup> or SAT<sup>2</sup> test. (You'll qualify for more student aid, too!)

**Get noticed**—Despite what you may see in the movies, college coaches will probably not be banging on your door. It's up to you to reach out to them, not vice versa. Contact some college coaches and invite them to come observe you.

**Investigate colleges**—Depending on your sport, there may be a limited number of colleges from which you can choose. Narrow down your decision by looking at everything each school has to offer, including academics and social opportunities.

Suggested questions include the following:

1. What is the recruiter's role? How much authority does he/she actually have?
2. How knowledgeable is the recruiter about the college programs available?
3. What division does the school play at in that sport?
4. Is there tutoring available?
5. What are the details about the athletic scholarships?
6. What are the coach's expectations of the athletes?
7. What if you get injured or are on academic probation?

A major source of information is [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)

## **Overview of the Financial Aid Information**

### **Need vs. Non-Need Financial Assistance**

#### **-Need-Based**

FAFSA (Free initial, required application for all federal and state monies)

Cannot be filled in before October 1<sup>st</sup> of senior year

Includes grants, loans, work study

One form for all colleges- <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

Computes expected family contribution

CSS Profile (used by some private colleges)

College's Individual Financial Aid Form

#### **-Non-Need Based (Scholarships)**

Local Scholarships (Posted through Guidance Office during February of senior year)

Individual College Scholarships

May be based on academics, test scores, athletics, service, leadership, or other criteria

Application is usually through your application, interview, or special competition

Community Scholarships

Offered through organizations or places of employment

#### **Resources**

##### Web Addresses

<http://www.fastweb.com>

<http://www.finaid.org>

<http://www.phea.org>

<http://www.salliemae.com>

<http://www.collegboard.com>  
<http://www.educationplanner.com> (section on paying)

## **Admissions Terminology**

### **ACT (The American College Testing program)**

A standardized college entrance test offered on a number of dates (see your guidance counselor for testing calendar) and consisting of four parts: English, math, reading, science reasoning, and an optional writing section. Most colleges accept either the ACT or SAT. Note which colleges require "writing".

### **Advanced Placement (AP)**

A series of exams offered in classroom subject areas in May each year. Many high schools offer AP courses in many subject areas. Students may earn from one to five college credits depending on the score earned on the test. The colleges determine what credit will be given for specific scores.

### **CEEB Code**

This is a standard code for a school. Mountain View's CEEB code is 391-635.

### **College Representative or Admission Officer**

Many colleges send admission officers to high schools to promote their schools and introduce their programs to prospective students.

### **Combined Studies Program or Dual Degree Program**

These terms designate programs in which a student combines academic interests from more than one area; or a degree program where students complete 3 years at one college and 2 years at another. The student usually graduates with two degrees

### **Common Application**

The Common Application is a form that can be used to apply to over 250 private colleges; college applicants need to fill out only one form. Duplicates of the form serve as applications to participating colleges.

### **Co-op Program**

In a cooperative education program between a college and a corporation, studio, or lab, the student attends classes and then works off-campus, for pay, at the business site in the student's career field.

### **Credits**

The unit of educational measurement based on periods per class, per week, throughout a term. Most undergraduate programs require an accumulation of approximately 120 credit hours to graduate.

### **Deferred Enrollment**

A process by which seniors apply for and are accepted for admission to colleges during their senior year of high school, but choose to enter as freshmen after a one-year absence from school. A deferred admission is a commitment on the part of the college to take the student; a deferred acceptance is a commitment on the part of the student to attend after one year.

### **Deposit**

An amount of money that a student must send to schools, once he or she has been accepted. The deposit indicates that the student accepts the college's offer and will enroll. The enrollment deposit is nonrefundable.

### **Early Action**

This is a decision plan allowing students to apply to college(s) early and in return, the college(s) respond with an

admission decision early in the cycle. It differs from [Early Decision](#) because Early Action is nonbinding. Check with the schools to which you are applying to see which decision plans they offer.

**Early Admission**

Many colleges have a program under which a student may apply for admission during the junior year of high school. Early Admission at most colleges is reserved for truly exceptional individuals whose academic preparation, achievement level, and maturity level are sufficient for early entrance to college.

**Early Decision (ED)**

This is an early application process that involves a binding agreement on the part of the student. If a student is admitted under ED, he or she agrees to enroll at a particular college and to withdraw all other applications in process at other schools. This option is a good plan for students who have a clear first choice.

**GPA**

The Grade Point Average is an average of high school grades. Some colleges consider only the GPA of core courses.

**Greek Life**

Fraternities and sororities associated with a college or university, including their sponsored activities.

**Liberal Arts**

A broad undergraduate program of education stressing the core courses; pre-professional training is often also available.

**Major**

A subject of academic study chosen as a field of specialization.

**Merit Scholarships or No-need Scholarships**

Money given to students to cover college expenses without regard to financial need; e.g., athletic scholarships, academic scholarships, music scholarships, etc.

**Minor**

A subject of academic study requiring less intense specialization than a major.

**Prerequisite**

A course required before taking another course (i.e., French I would normally be required before taking French II).

**Provisional Admission**

Admission to the college requires special conditions such as a pre-session during the summer, limited credit loads, or a first semester required grade point average before full admission status is offered.

**PSAT**

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test is offered to students in October of the sophomore or junior year.

**Regular Decision**

This is the most common admission program. Applications for admission are due sometime between January 1 and January 15 at most selective colleges; applicants are notified of their admission status between April 1 and April 15.

**Residential Campus**

A college that provides or requires on-campus housing for most or all students. Many colleges require all first-year students (freshmen) to live in college housing; this is usually referred to as guaranteed housing.

**Rolling Admission**

This means that as soon as applications arrive at a college, the admission office starts reading them and making decisions—often within three or four weeks. Usually, if you are accepted under this plan, you will not have to commit yourself until May 1, but be sure to read the fine print. Most, but not all, state universities operate with Rolling Admission; the earlier you apply, the better the chance for acceptance at most colleges using this plan.

**SAT**

The abbreviation for the standardized college entrance test offered by the [College Board](#). The Scholastic Aptitude Test is offered on a number of dates and consists of three parts; critical reading, math, and writing (20-minute essay exercise). Each section is scored on a scale of 200-800.

**3-2 Programs**

A dual two degrees. Please see [Combined Studies](#).

**TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)**

A test offered to assess knowledge of English for students whose native language is not English.

**Transcripts**

The official record from a school showing the student's grade records, list of courses taken, cumulative [Grade Point Average](#), and class rank (if the school ranks its students). An official transcript, sent directly from the high school to the college admission office, is always required for a student to be admitted.

**Wait List or Alternate List**

Qualified candidates at a selective college who initially receive neither a letter of acceptance nor a letter of denial but may be offered a place later if the class is not full. Some colleges may go to the Wait List as late as July or even August. Students who receive a Wait List letter may be asked if they want to remain on it

## **Financial Aid Terminology**

**Aid Package**

A combination of financial aid (scholarships, grants, work study, and/or loans) offered by a school.

**Cost of Attendance**

The total cost of attending an institution for an academic year. It usually includes tuition, fees, room, board, supplies, transportation, and personal expenses.

**Default**

Failure to repay a loan according to agreed-upon terms

**Dependent Student**

A student who, for financial aid purposes, must report parental financial information

**Expected Family Contribution**

The amount of money the student and parent(s) are expected to pay towards education.

**FAFSA Form (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)**

The main form used to determine postsecondary financial aid

**Federal Direct Loan Program**

A loan program where Stafford and PLUS loans are available directly from the federal government rather than through a commercial lender.

**Grants**

Need-based financial aid that does not need to be repaid.

**Independent Student**

A student who is married, 24 years of age or older, enrolled in a graduate or professional program, has legal dependants, an orphan or ward of the court, or a veteran of the US Armed Forces.

**Lender**

An institution that provides money for loans

**Master Promissory Note (MPN)**

The legal agreement a borrower signs under which the borrower agrees to repay loan under specific terms/conditions

**Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS Loan)**

Federally guaranteed loans for parent to fund a dependent child's education.

**Pell Grant Program**

The largest federal grant program- based on need

**Perkins Loan**

Loans funded by the federal government and awarded by the school to students with great need

**PROFILE**

The form used by the [College Scholarship Service \(CSS\)](#) to assess a family's ability to pay for a college education.

**Scholarship**

A financial aid award, based on skills or merit that does not need to be repaid

**Stafford Loans**

Loans made available to students that can either be subsidized (need-based) or unsubsidized (non need-based) and are insured by the federal government

## Guidance Office Transcript Request Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Request for: (check all that apply)

Official Transcript

Letters of Recommendation

Transcript to be sent to: (name all colleges; if you would like your transcript sent to more than one)

College Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ grant the Mountain View School Guidance Department permission to release my high school transcript and/or other supporting documents to the College/University listed above.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Mailed/Faxed: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

### **Sample Form Letter “Requesting Information from a College”**

Your address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Director of Admissions  
Name of the School  
Address of the School

Dear Director of Admissions:

I am presently a senior at Mountain View High School in Kingsley, Pennsylvania. I am interested in the \_\_\_\_\_ program in your college. Please send me information about your school (catalogue/view book), application materials, and any financial forms or additional materials that I may need for the application process. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Sample Form Letter “Following Up on an Interview”**

Your address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Representative with whom you met  
Name of the School  
Address of the School

Dear “Name of School Representative”:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me when I visited “name of college” on Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup>. Because of my interest in biology, I was particularly interested in the science facilities. It is wonderful to see the up-to-date labs, and I am very excited about the opportunities that your school offers in regard to study abroad opportunities. I also appreciated your input on relevant high school course preparation.

Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Sample Form Letter “Withdrawing an Application”**

Your address\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Director of Admissions  
Name of the School  
Address of the School

Dear Director of Admissions:

I am a senior at Mountain View High School in Kingsley, Pennsylvania. My application is on file with your school. Due to a change in my plans, I would like to withdraw my application. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Sample Form Letter “Declining an Offer of Admission”**

Your address\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Director of Admissions  
Name of the School  
Address of the School

Dear Director of Admissions:

I am a senior at Mountain View High School in Kingsley, Pennsylvania. I recently received notice of my acceptance from \_\_\_\_\_(name of school). Since the time of my application, though, my plans have changed. I appreciate your offer of admission, but I will not be attending your school. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

## Suggested College and Career Information Websites

1. **College Navigator**. (<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>) Federal website with great deal college data.
2. **College Results Online** ([www.collegeresults.org](http://www.collegeresults.org)) This great website provides graduation rates of schools. What I also like about College Results Online is that it breaks down graduation rates by gender and ethnicity.
3. **Cappex** ([cappex.com](http://cappex.com)) This site borrowed ideas from Facebook. For instance, a student can create profiles that goes beyond test scores and grade-point averages that can be shared with schools.
4. **CollegeMajors101** ([www.collegemajors101.com](http://www.collegemajors101.com)) and **My Majors** (<http://www.mymajors.com>) These help match up majors and tell what you can expect academically if you pursue these majors.
5. **College Insight** (<http://college-insight.org/>) for College Access and Success) Info including college affordability, graduation rates, and college diversity of students and professors.
6. **College Board** ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)) This includes the academic profile of a college's freshman class, financial aid and merit aid stats, available majors, and financial aid, testing, and college searches.
7. **Unigo**. ([www.unigo.com](http://www.unigo.com)) This site gives student opinions and rankings. Unigo urges college students to share their take on their own schools through comments, photos, and videos.
8. **Fastweb** ([www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)) and **Scholarships.com** ([www.scholarship.com](http://www.scholarship.com)) are scholarship search engines.
9. **Colleges That Change Lives** ([ctcl.org](http://ctcl.org)) Colleges That Change Lives, Inc. (CTCL) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement and support of a student-centered college search process.
10. **Careers in the Military**- <http://www.careersinthemilitary.com/>
11. **College Confidential** (<http://www.collegeconfidential.com/>) College forum with match-ups and information.
12. **O\*Net Online** ([www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)) This provides current career information.
13. **Choices360** ([www.choices360.com](http://www.choices360.com)) This is the program we use at MV and requires a password. It includes career, college, and scholarship information.
14. **Education Planner** ([www.educationplanner.org](http://www.educationplanner.org)) This is a PHEAA (PA Higher Education Assistance Agency) that provides info on careers, college, and financial aid.
15. **College Express** ([collegexpress.com/#](http://collegexpress.com/#)) College, financial aid, and other info are included.
16. **PASSHE** ([www.passhe.edu](http://www.passhe.edu)) All Pennsylvania state universities are included and have links.
17. **STEM (Science, technology, engineering, math)**- Career information as well as a quiz to match you up to STEM career fields.

## **Eleventh Grade Timeline**

### **Fall**

- Meet with your counselor to review the courses you've taken, and see what you still need to take.
- Check your class rank. Even if your grades haven't been that good so far, it's never too late to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend.
- Sign up for and take the PSAT/NMSQT.
- Take a long, hard look at why you want to continue your education after high school so you will be able to choose the best college or university for your needs.
- Make a list of colleges that meet your most important criteria (size, location, distance from home, majors, academic rigor, housing, and cost). Weigh each of the factors according to their importance to you.
- Continue visiting college fairs.
- Speak to college representatives who visit your high school.
- If you want to participate in Division I or Division II sports in college, start the certification process. Check with your counselor to make sure you are taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements.

### **Winter**

- Collect information about colleges.
- Begin narrowing down college choices. Find out what tests are required for admission.
- Begin preparing for the tests you've decided to take.
- Have a discussion with your parents about the colleges in which you are interested. Examine financial resources, and gather information about financial aid.
- Set up a filing system with individual folders for each college's correspondence and printed materials.
- Register for the SAT I, ACT, or Subject Tests (if needed).

### **Spring**

- Meet with your counselor to review senior-year course selection and graduation requirements.
- Review SAT and/or ACT scores.
- Discuss the college essay with your guidance counselor or English teacher.
- Stay involved with your extracurricular activities. Colleges look for consistency and depth in activities.
- Visit colleges either by attending an "Open House" or through an individual visit. If it is on a school day, remember to use an Educational Field Trip Form.
- Request applications from schools you're interested in by mail or via the Internet.

### **Summer**

- Visit the campuses of your top-five college choices.
- After each college interview, send a thank-you letter to the interviewer.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Develop a financial aid application plan, including a list of the aid sources, requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines.

## Twelfth Grade Timeline

### September

- Meet with your counselor at school to discuss plans and receive assistance.
- Get started on your applications.
- Start working on essays if your selected colleges require them.
- Update your resume
- Sign up for October SAT test.

### October

- Early decision or early action applicants who are applying for financial aid usually have to fill out a supplemental aid application using estimated income figures.
- CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE Online is available beginning October for early decision and early action applicants. Some private colleges use PROFILE forms.
- Request letters of recommendation from teachers, counselors, coaches if application requires them.
- Identify clubs, organizations, places of employment with which you and/or parents are affiliated to see if there are any scholarships available.
- Take the SAT's and make sure results are sent directly to your colleges.

### November

- Submit early decision and early action applications on time.
- Complete essays. Proofread them.
- Follow up on letters of recommendation.
- Mail applications as soon as possible
- Parent and student should apply for a federal pin number at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) to use when completing the FAFSA (financial aid form) online.

### December

- Attend **Financial Information Night** at the high school.
- Start gathering identity and financial documents necessary to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form.
- Early decision and early action responses should arrive this month. Read the award letter carefully regarding specifics related to financial aid and acceptance deadlines.

### January through March

- Submit the FAFSA form as soon as possible after January 1<sup>st</sup>. Four-year colleges usually have a deadline of approximately February 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Don't forget to complete the college's institutional financial application.
- Keep responses from colleges organized and be aware of deadlines for submitting responses and fees.

Apply to local scholarships in March.

## **Alternatives That Help Pay for College**

### **34 Ways to Reduce College Costs from Student Aid on the Web**

[https://studentaid2.ed.gov/getmoney/pay\\_for\\_college/cost\\_35.html](https://studentaid2.ed.gov/getmoney/pay_for_college/cost_35.html)

1. Most colleges and universities offer merit or non-need-based scholarships to academically talented students. Students should check with each school in which they're interested for the criteria for merit scholarships.
2. The National Merit Scholarship Program awards scholarships to students based upon academic merit. The awards can be applied to any college or university to meet educational expenses at that school.
3. Many states offer scholarship assistance to academically talented students. Students should obtain the eligibility criteria from their state's education office.
4. Many schools offer scholarships to athletically talented students. Parents and students should be careful, however, to weigh the benefits of an athletic scholarship against the demands of this type of award.
5. Some colleges and universities offer special grants or scholarships to students with particular talents. Music, journalism, and drama are a few categories for which these awards are made.
6. A state college or university charges lower fees to state residents. Since public institutions are subsidized by state revenues, their tuition costs are lower than private schools' costs. The college selection process should include consideration of a state school. Although cost should be a consideration, students should not base their choice of a school only on cost.
7. Some students choose to attend a community college for 1 or 2 years, and then transfer to a 4-year school. Tuition costs are substantially lower at community colleges than at 4-year institutions.
8. Some parents may be financially able to purchase a house while their child is in school. If other students rent rooms in the house, the income may offset monthly mortgage payments. Families should make certain, however, that the property they purchase meets all of the requirements of rental property. If you have any questions, consult a tax professional.
9. Commuting is another way for students to reduce college costs. A student living at home can save as much as \$6,000 per year.
10. Many schools provide lists of housing opportunities that provide free room and board to students in exchange for a certain number of hours of work each week.
11. Cooperative education programs allow students to alternate between working full time and studying full time. This type of employment program is not based upon financial need, and students can earn as much as \$7,000 per year.
12. Another way to reduce college costs is to take fewer credits. Students should find out their school's policy regarding the Advanced Placement Program (APP), the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), and the Provenience Examination Program (PEP). Under these programs, a student takes an examination in a particular subject and, if the score is high enough, receives college credit.

13. Some colleges give credit for life experiences, thereby reducing the number of credits needed for graduation. Students should check with the college for further information. You can also write to Distance Education and Training Council at 1601 18th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009, or call (202) 234-5100.
14. Most schools charge one price for a specific number of credits taken in a semester. If academically possible, students should take the maximum number of credits allowed. This strategy reduces the amount of time needed to graduate.
15. In many cases, summer college courses can be taken at a less expensive school and the credits transferred to the full-time school. Students should check with their academic advisor, however, to be certain that any course taken at another school is transferable.
16. Most schools have placement offices that help students find employment, and all schools have personnel offices that hire students to work on campus. These employment programs are not based upon financial need, and working is an excellent way to meet college expenses.
17. Most colleges and universities offer their employees a tuition reduction plan or tuition waiver program. Under this type of arrangement, the school employee and family members can attend classes at a reduced cost or no cost at all. This type of program is based not upon financial need, but rather on college employment.
18. Most colleges and universities sponsor resident advisor programs that offer financial assistance to students in the form of reduced tuition or reduced room and board costs in exchange for work in resident halls.
19. The Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Scholarship Program pays all tuition fees, and textbook costs, as well as providing a monthly living stipend. Students should be certain, however, that they want this type of program before signing up because there is a service commitment after graduation.
20. Service Academy Scholarships are offered each year to qualified students to attend the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, or the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. The scholarships are competitive and are based upon a number of factors, including high school grades, SAT or ACT scores, leadership qualities, and athletic ability. Students receive their undergraduate education at one of the service academies. They pay no tuition or fees, but there is a service commitment after graduation.
21. One of the most obvious ways of reducing college costs is to attend a low-cost school, either public or private. There are many colleges and universities with affordable tuition and generous financial assistance. Students should investigate all schools that meet their academic and financial needs.
22. Some schools offer combined degree programs or 3-year programs that allow students to take all of the courses needed for graduation in 3 years, instead of 4, thereby eliminating 1 year's educational expenses.
23. Partial tuition remission for the children of alumni is a common practice. Parents and students should investigate their alma mater's tuition discount policy for graduates.
24. Some colleges and universities offer special discounts if more than one child from the same family is enrolled.
25. Some companies offer tuition assistance to the children of employees. Parents and students should check with the personnel office for information.

