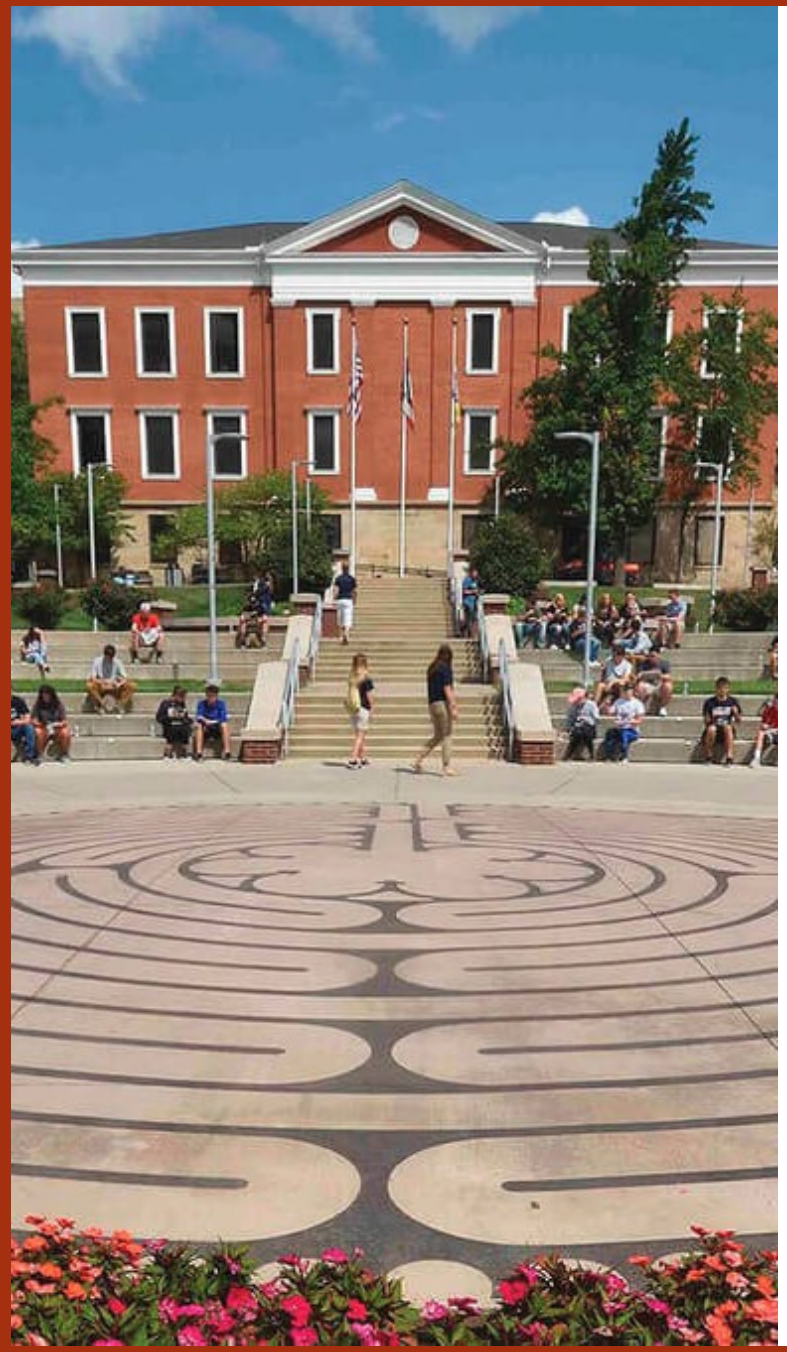
College Applications for Senior Parents

Mrs. Amy Runfola
College Counselor
arunfola@sjci.com

Mrs. Kristin Smith
School Counselor
ksmith@sjci.com

Mr. Mike Thoin
School Counselor
mthoin@sjci.com

Mrs. Carley Serra
School Counselor
cwserra@sjci.com



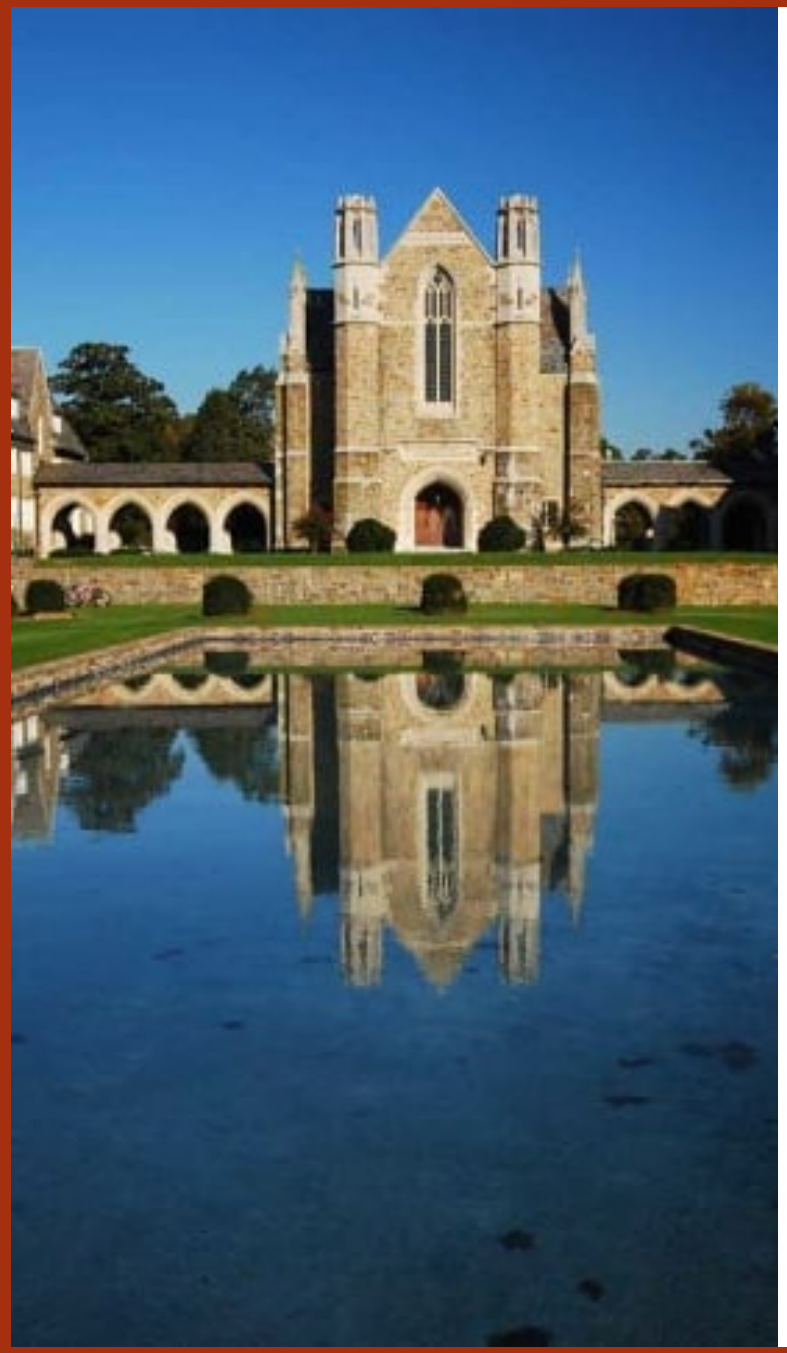
Student Responsibility

- Research!
  - College information, deadlines, requirements, visit opportunities
- Complete and submit applications
- Request transcripts and letters of recommendation
- Read emails from colleges they have applied to
- Keep track of their applicant portals and check them regularly
- Contact admissions offices if they have questions about their application

College Counselor Responsibility

- Discuss the college list and offer suggestions if needed or requested
- Assist with the application process
- Upload counselor recommendation and school report
- For certain applications, submit teacher and other recommendations
- Upload transcript
  - This could also include first quarter and mid-year grades
  - The earliest these will be sent is September 21 (may be later)
- Upload final report which includes final transcript



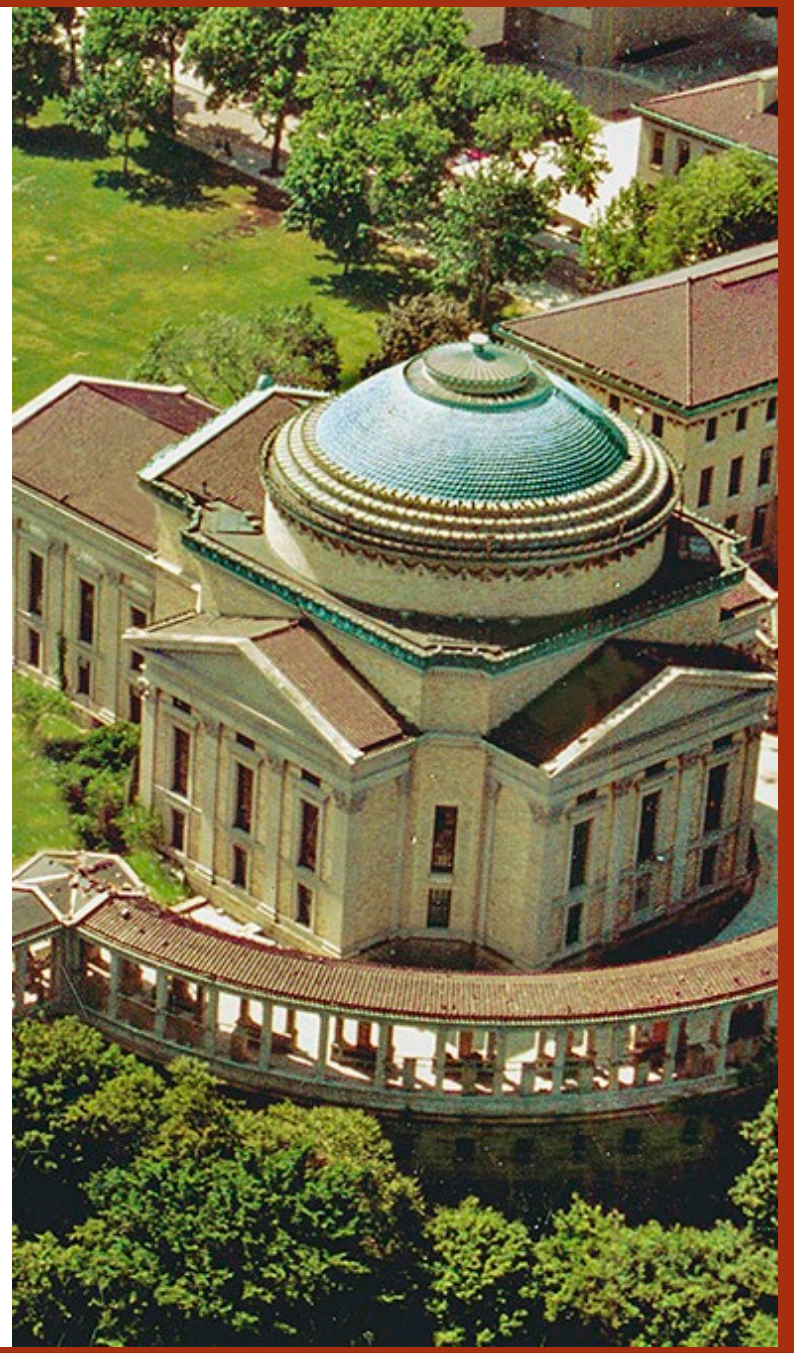


College Counselor Responsibility

- I will be meeting with each senior individually to discuss their applications over the next couple months
- I will give seniors an opportunity to sign up first if they don't want to wait
  - Sign-ups are in my office, or they can email me
  - Before and after school options available
- I will start randomly scheduling seniors later next week

Parent Responsibility

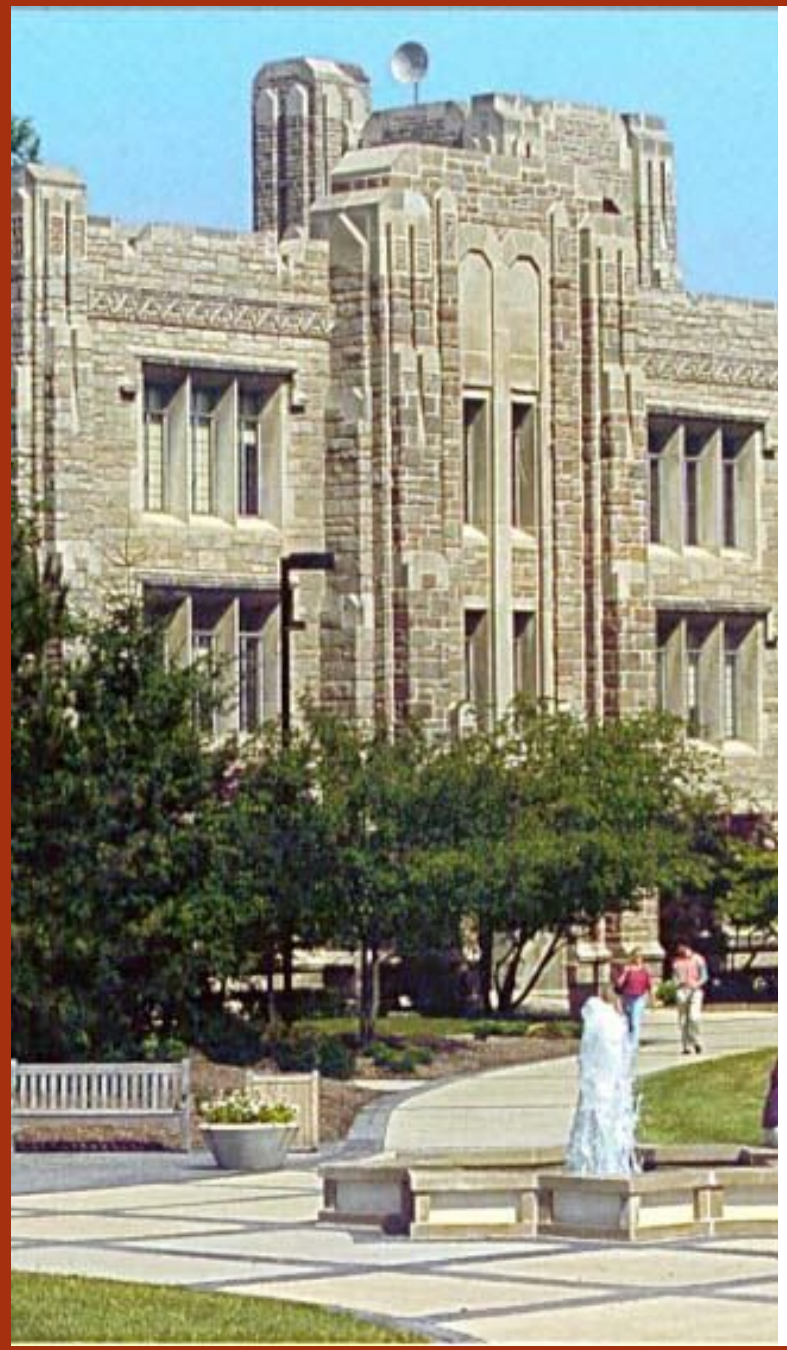
- Provide guidance
  - Location, cost, family questions on application
- Take your son on college visits
- Assist with the FAFSA
  - Students will not be able to complete this without you
- It is NOT your responsibility to complete the application, request transcripts, or contact admissions offices regarding your son's application





What's New?

- **SCOIR Integration**
- **Students MUST integrate their Common App with their SCOIR account**
- We're working on it in their Religion class next week



How is your son applying to college?

- **Common App**
- Individual college websites
- SCOIR application
- SUNY application – DO NOT USE

CommonApp

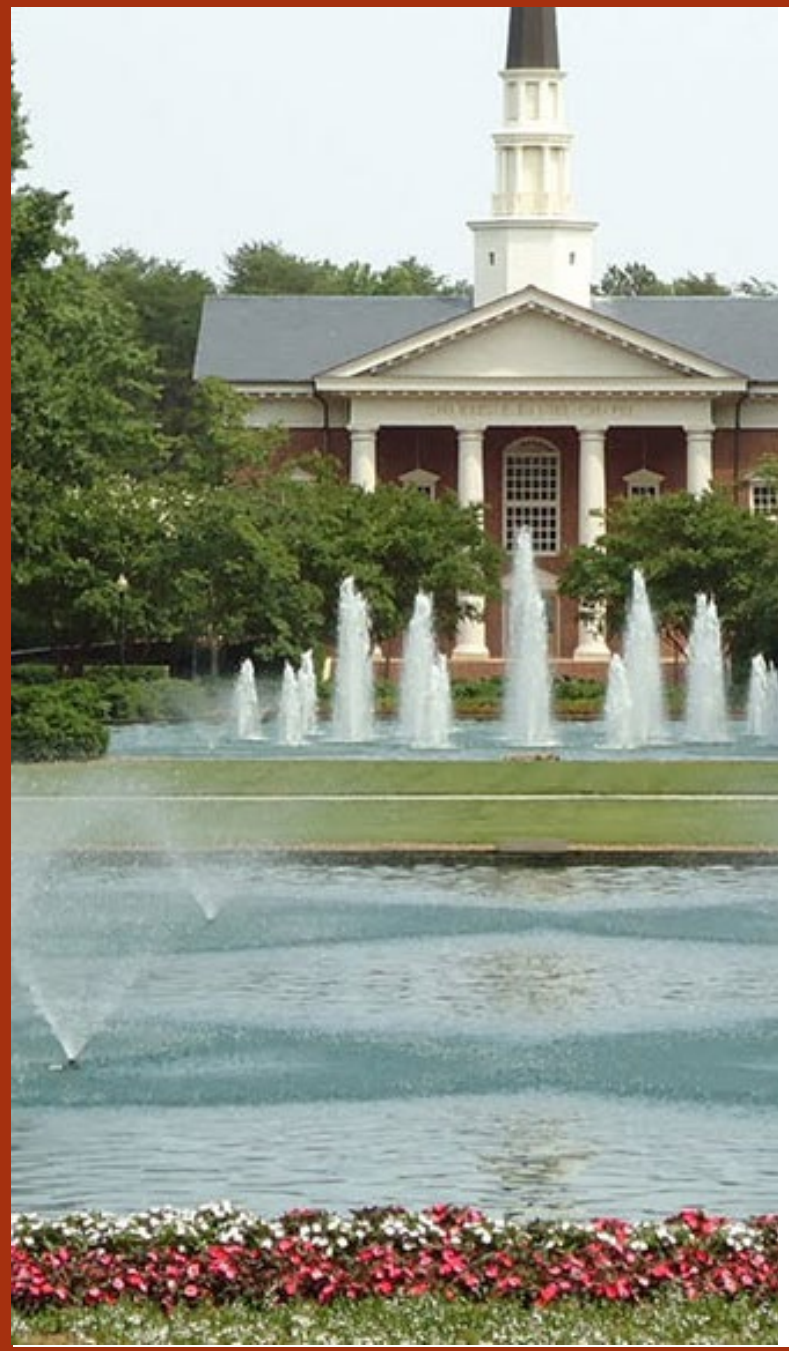
- Online application – students can apply up to 20 schools with one application
- Over 1,000 schools subscribe
- Some schools will require supplemental application – this should be included with the Common App, but may also be in their portal after the application is submitted
- Application fee varies by school



Individual college applications

- Some colleges have applications on their own websites. It is fine to use these applications, especially if a school is not on Common App or they offer a fee waiver specific to their application
- I am not notified when these are completed
  - Students need to update their SCOIR account and keep me updated with these applications so I can submit transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc.





Application Assistance

- Students can come to my office any time they need assistance, motivation, or space to work on their applications, including lunch, free periods, before, and after school
- We will start their applications in their Religion class next week

When are applications due?

- Deadlines vary by college and deadline type
- Your son should check deadlines for his specific colleges because they may require him to have his application completed soon
- The sooner the better! This way, we will not miss any deadlines
- **SUNY Free Week – October 19 – November 2**
  - Students can apply to up to 5 SUNY schools with the application fee waived



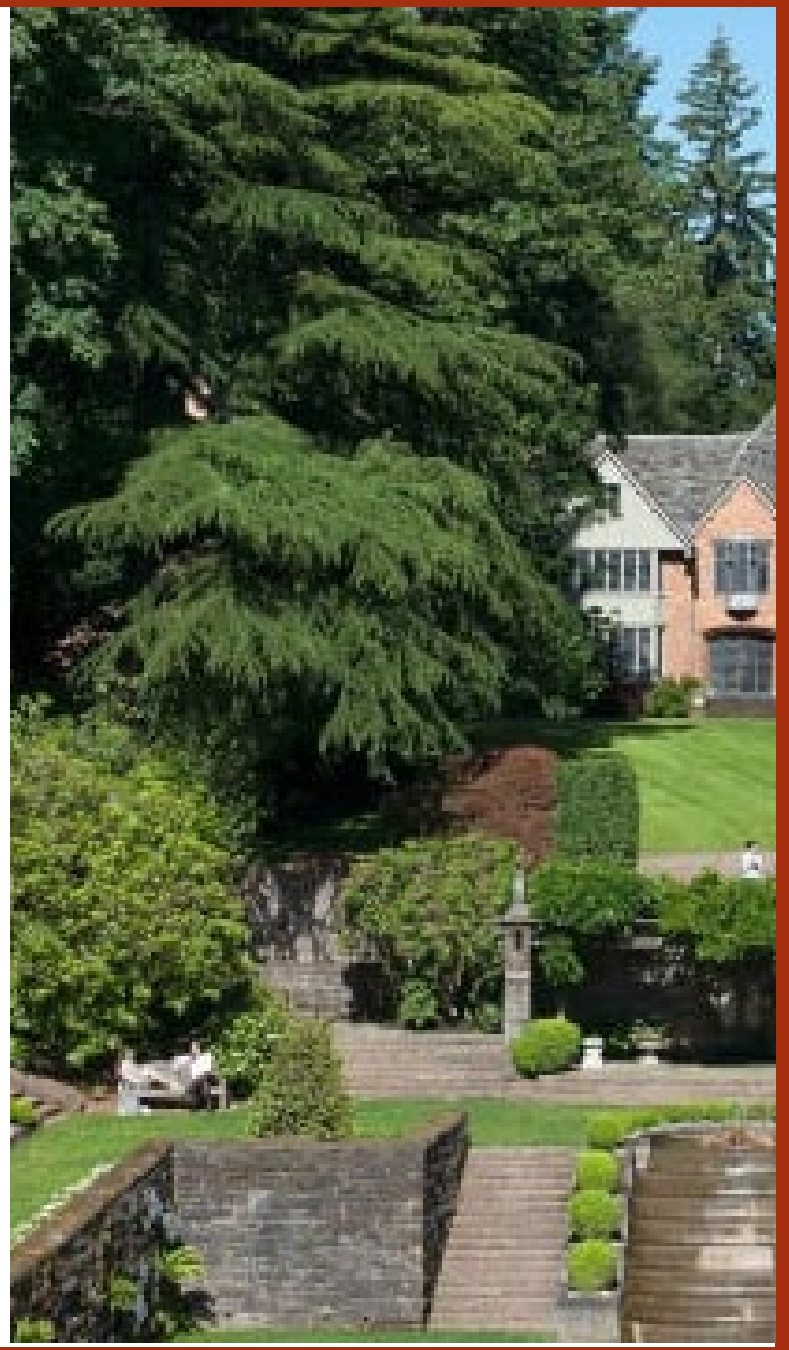


Regular Decision

- Many popular deadlines are January 2, January 15, or February 1
- These schools will send acceptance emails/letters out at one time
  - Usually, mid-end of March
- **Priority** deadlines are different than application deadlines
  - Priority will be given to those who complete their application by the specified date. Everyone who completes after will be reviewed on a space-available basis
  - This may also be a scholarship deadline. Your application will still be reviewed after this date, but you would not be considered for merit-based scholarships

Early Decision (ED)

- Binding agreement between the student and the college. If your son is accepted, he is committed to attend that school.
- If he is accepted, he will need to withdraw his applications from all other colleges.
- Students can only apply to 1 school ED and must be signed off by the parent and counselor.
- **Advantage:** You have an admission decision early, and may increase chances of getting accepted.
- **Disadvantage:** You don't always know your financial aid package, and you can't change your mind.
- Most ED deadlines are November 1st



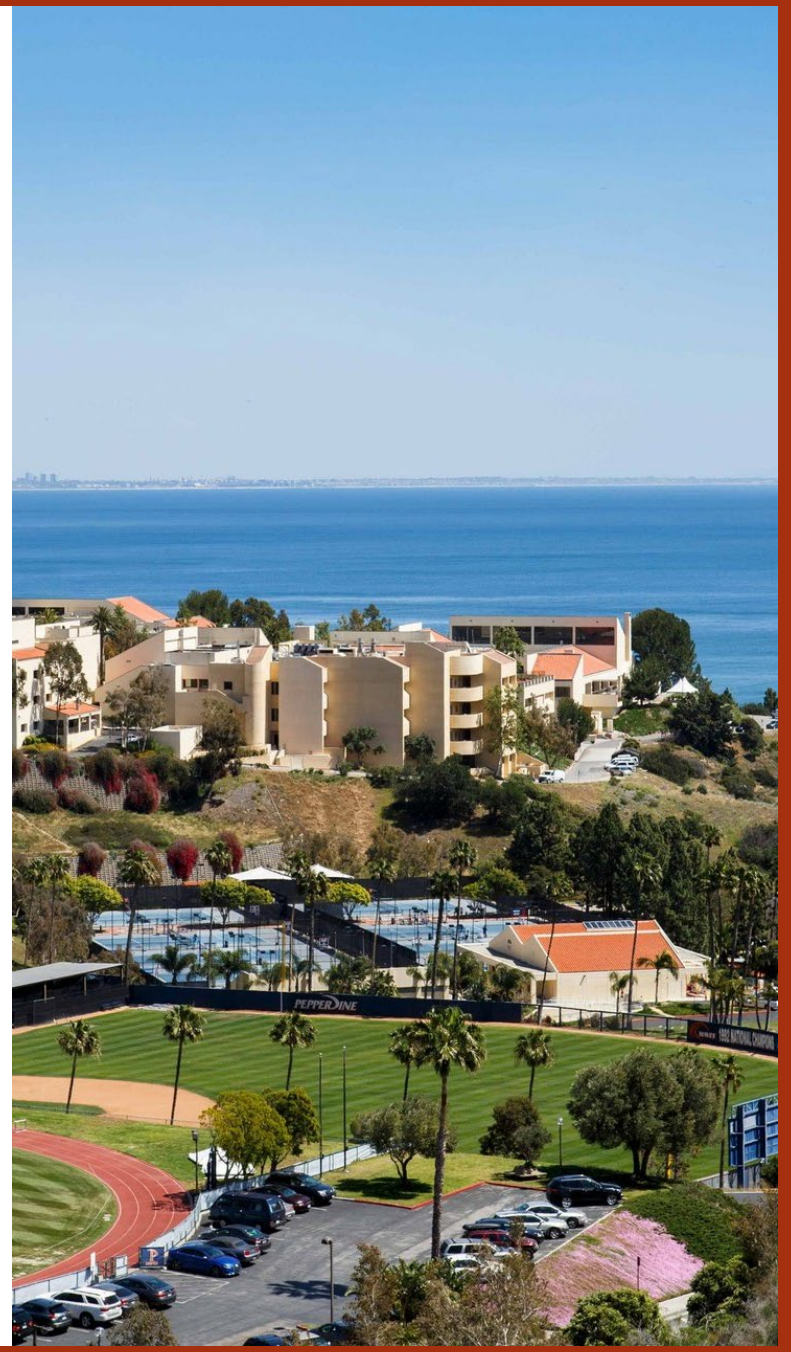


Early Action (EA)

- **Early Action**: Non-binding agreement that affords students the opportunity to get a decision earlier if they apply earlier
- **Restricted Early Action**: Restrictive Early Action programs vary, but they often limit what other schools the student can apply to EA
  - Usually this means students cannot apply ED to any other school, or apply to any other private institution EA
- I encourage Early Action whenever possible!
- Common deadlines are November 1st, November 15th, and December 1st
- Popular schools with October 15th deadlines:
  - Clemson, University of South Carolina, UNC Chapel Hill, UGA, Auburn, UCF

Rolling Admissions

- Schools read applications as they receive them and send acceptance letters on a regular basis
- Usually begins in October for most schools, but rolling admissions dates are different at each school. Check individual college websites for details
- Students are admitted on a space-available basis. Some may close on May 1; some may close the first day of classes in August
- Check for specific deadlines for scholarships, individual majors, portfolios, etc.





College Decision Deadline

- Students have until May 1st to commit to **one** college.
  - Students commit by accepting their offer of admission (in their portal) and/or paying their enrollment deposit.
- Colleges are pressuring students to commit earlier!
- The only exception to this is Early Decision. Students usually have about a month from acceptance to commit to that college.

Applicant Portal

- Most schools allow applicants to keep track of their application status online through the college website
- Your son should write down login and password information for each school
- Your son should check each portal regularly!
- Your son’s admission decision will most likely be sent to his portal
- Slate.org allows students to track some portals in one place





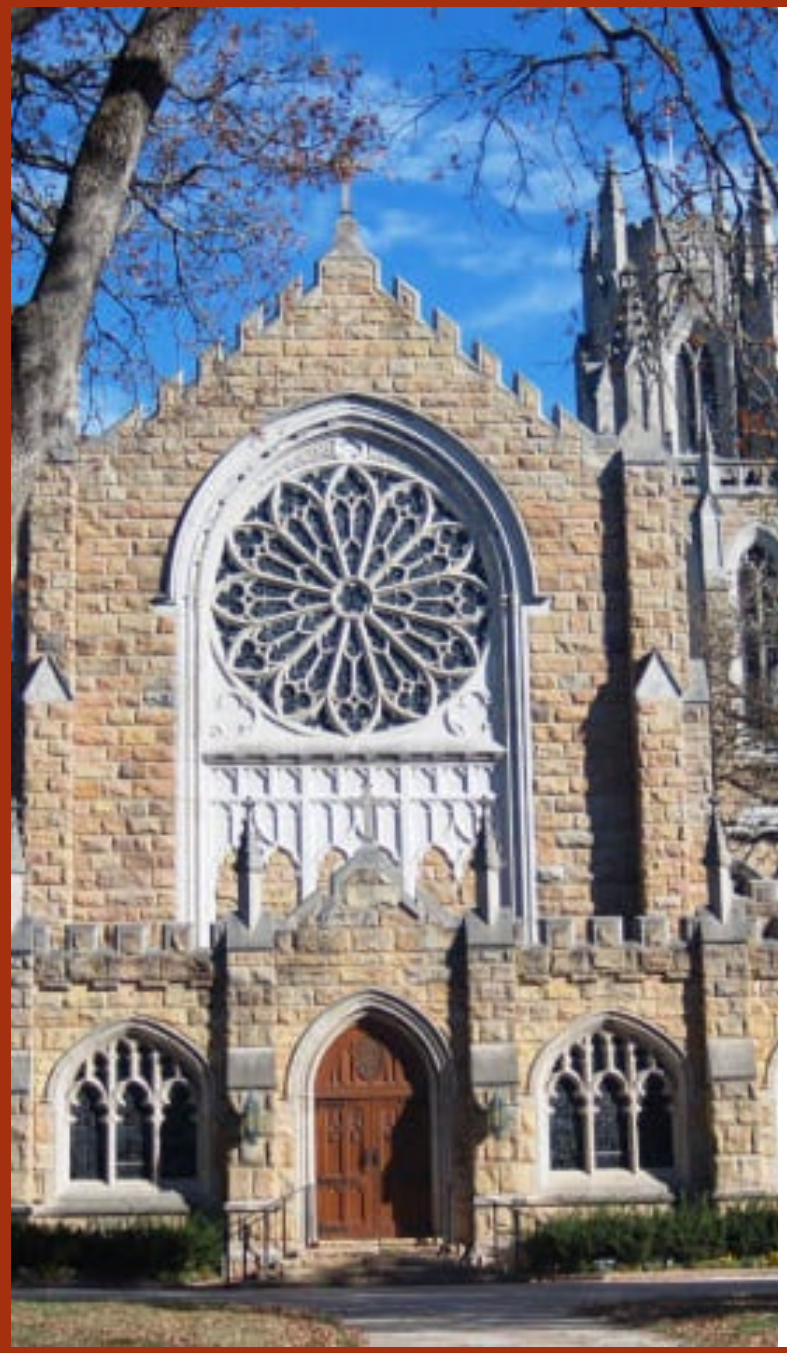
Local colleges

- We have some great colleges in our backyard!
- We hope that every student matriculates into their first choice, whether that is in Buffalo or out of town
- Students should apply to at least one local college *just in case*

Transcripts

- Most colleges require an official transcript sent directly from a counselor at SJCI (Mrs. Runfola)
- Many schools now require students to self-report their grades
  - STAR (most common)
  - Courses & Grades in Common App
  - Homegrown system
  - Your son will have to self-report his grades for those schools using the required reporting tool
  - This is a process that I will help with
- Colleges will review applications based on grades from 9th-11th
  - Students can send first quarter or first semester grades if they wish.
  - Some colleges may request senior year grades.





Entrance Exams

- SAT or ACT
- Students typically take the SAT or ACT during spring of junior year or fall of senior year
- SJCI CEEB code: **331095**
- Colleges will accept ACT and SAT as equal tests of standard knowledge
  - Schools may superscore the SAT and/or ACT

Test optional

- Most bachelor degree granting institutions are test optional or test free/blind. Students can submit scores to all schools, none, or on a case-by-case basis.
- Make sure you read any restrictions carefully when applying test optional.
- Check the college website for requirements and ranges.
- https://fairtest.org/ - to see a list of schools that are test optional
- Not submitting scores will NOT hurt an applicant (unless the college specifically tells you they are test-preferred)
- Do No Harm policy





Recommendations

- Typically, 1 teacher and 1 counselor OR administrator
  - Check requirements from each college carefully
- Students were told to make their requests last spring
- Teachers from junior or senior year are best choices
- Make all requests by the first week of October (earlier is better!) so that recommenders have time to complete letters
- ***Be sure that your son has confirmed with a recommender in person or via email before requesting them in SCOIR***
- ***Letters will not be uploaded until a brag sheet is completed AND the teacher is requested in SCOIR***
- ***Applications can be submitted before letters are uploaded in SCOIR***

Essay

- CommonApp & SUNY app have the same 7 essay prompts
- Students worked on this in their English class last year
- Make sure your son has someone proof-read for any spelling/grammar errors
- Essay should tell admissions counselors about the applicant outside of their transcript & activities section
- Supplemental essays are required for some individual colleges
  - These are sometimes considered more important than the Common App essay





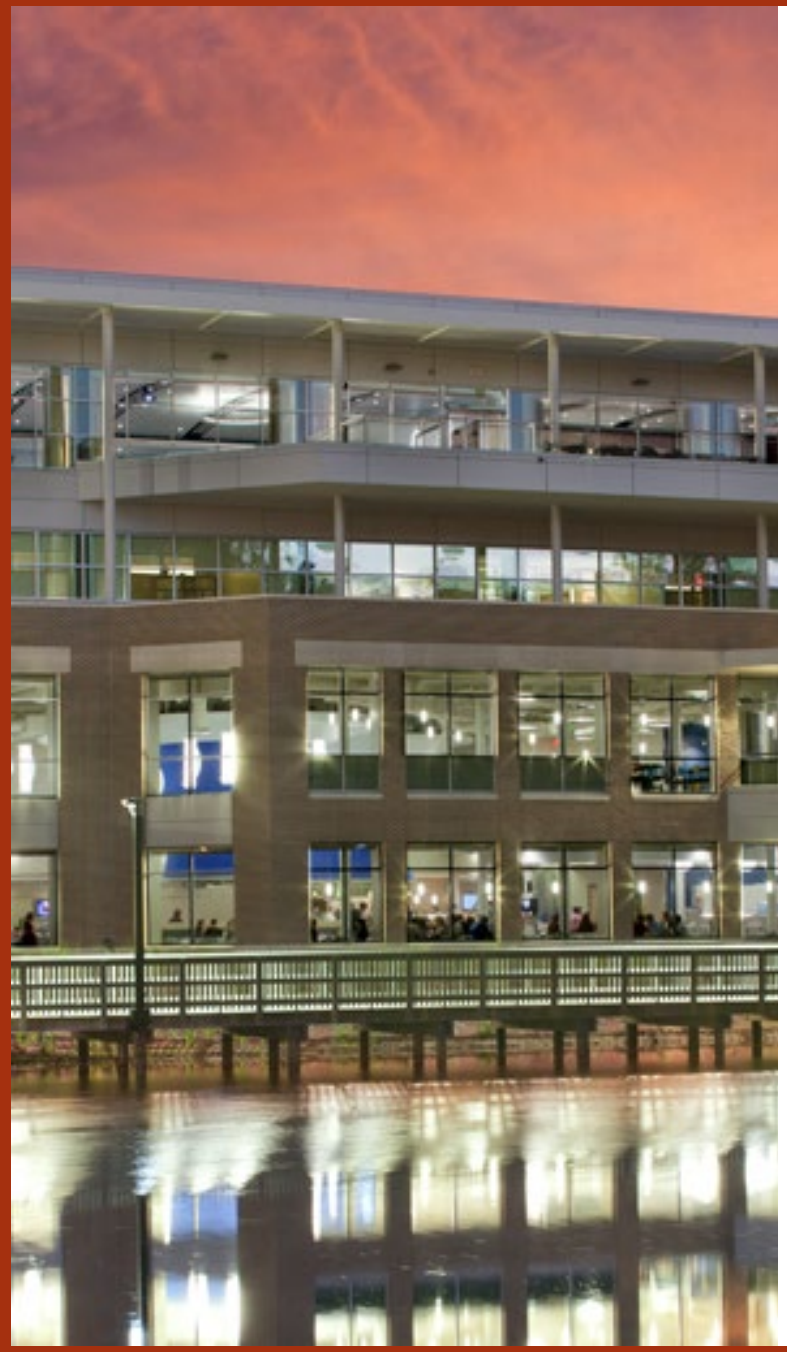
Activities

- Students can list up to 10 activities in this section
- They should be in order of either most passionate → least passionate or most involved → least involved
- Include everything not related to classroom academics
  - Sports, clubs, fine art activities, work, community service, family responsibilities, etc.
- Quality over quantity

Portfolios and Auditions

- Many art, music, theatre, and architecture majors require a portfolio or audition
- It is the student's responsibility to research the requirements & deadlines
- Check submission requirements as well





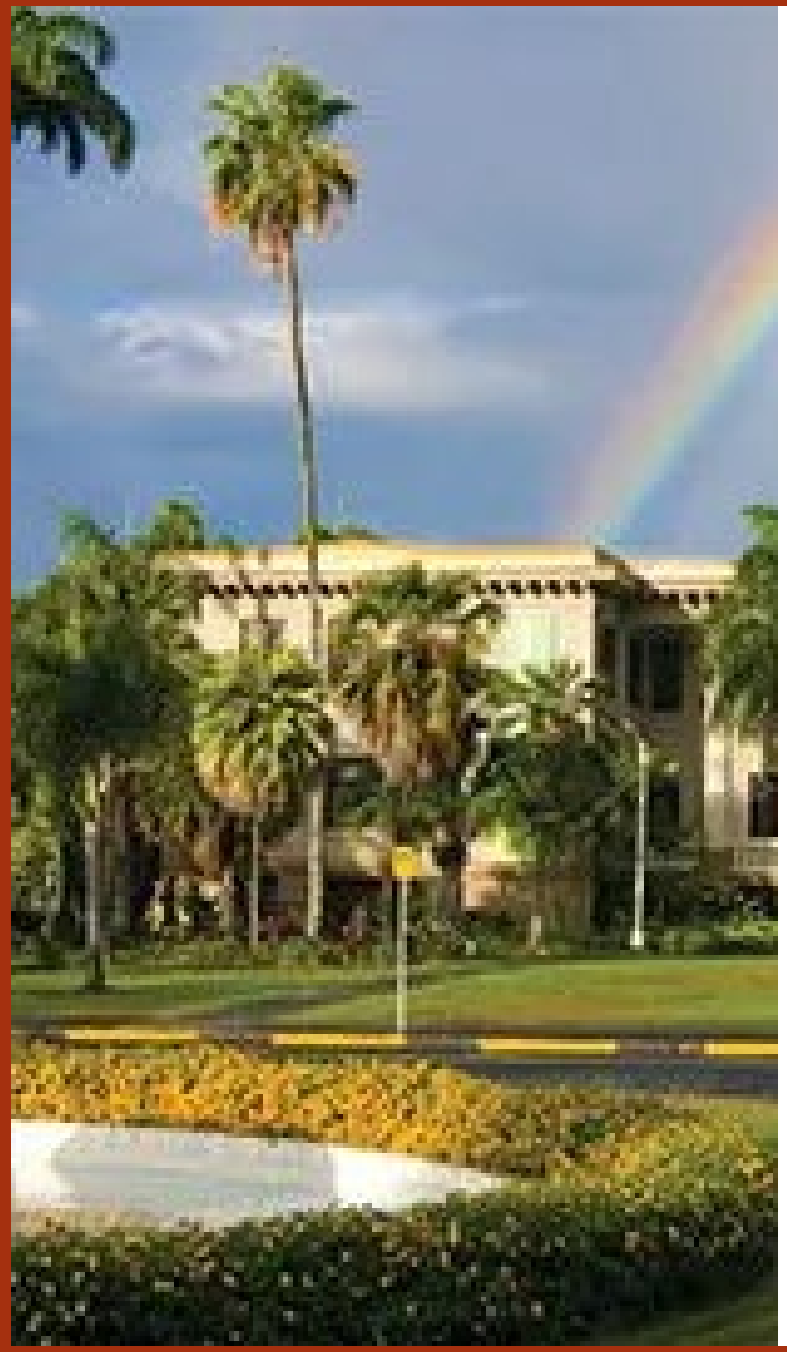
FAFSA

- www.studentaid.gov
- FAFSA is the federal government's free application for federal student aid
- Information is based on prior-prior tax information
  - For the college year 2027-2028, use **2025** tax information
- Even if you think you don't qualify for aid, a FAFSA should still be submitted
- SUNY is hosting virtual financial aid workshops this fall
  - You do not have to apply to a SUNY school to attend
  - https://www.suny.edu/attend/events/
- **FASA should open by October 1!!**
  - Create your FSA ID soon
  - Wait about a week to start the FAFSA
- **Utilize the Net Price Calculator on college websites to estimate cost**

CSS Profile

- www.collegeboard.org
- CSS Profiles is a more detailed financial aid form that some colleges require. You will only want to send this to schools that ask for it, as it is not a free service
- A complete list of participating colleges is posted on the college board website.
- Initial cost: $25 and an additional $16 for each additional school
- Some scholarship organizations also require this form
- This will be available starting October 1st, and can be done before the FAFSA
- Only do this if it is required by any of the colleges your son is applying to





Scholarships

- www.hesc.ny.gov

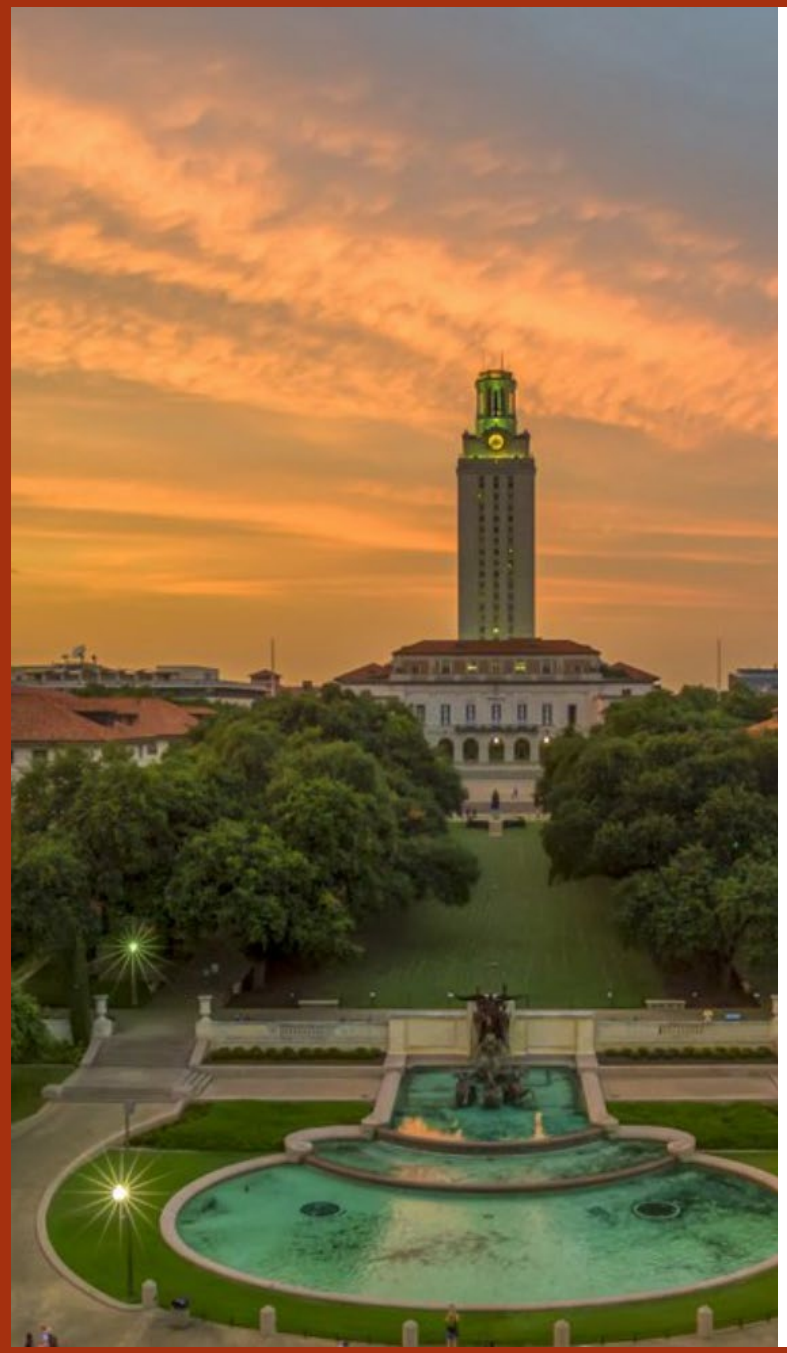
  New York State's website that offers free, non-commercial financial aid brochures. *This is also where you will find information about the Excelsior Scholarship & STEM Grant*

- Department of Education: www.studentaid.gov
- Fastweb: www.fastweb.com
- Check everywhere! Your bank, employer, Google, etc.
- Majority of scholarship money comes from the college itself
- More scholarship resources will be coming out soon
- Schoology or SCOIR group for students

SCOIR

- Enhanced use this year!
- Request letters of recommendation from teachers
- Connect to Common App
  - Transcripts & Letters of Recommendation are now sent through SCOIR
- Resume builder
- College Visit calendar
- College application tracker



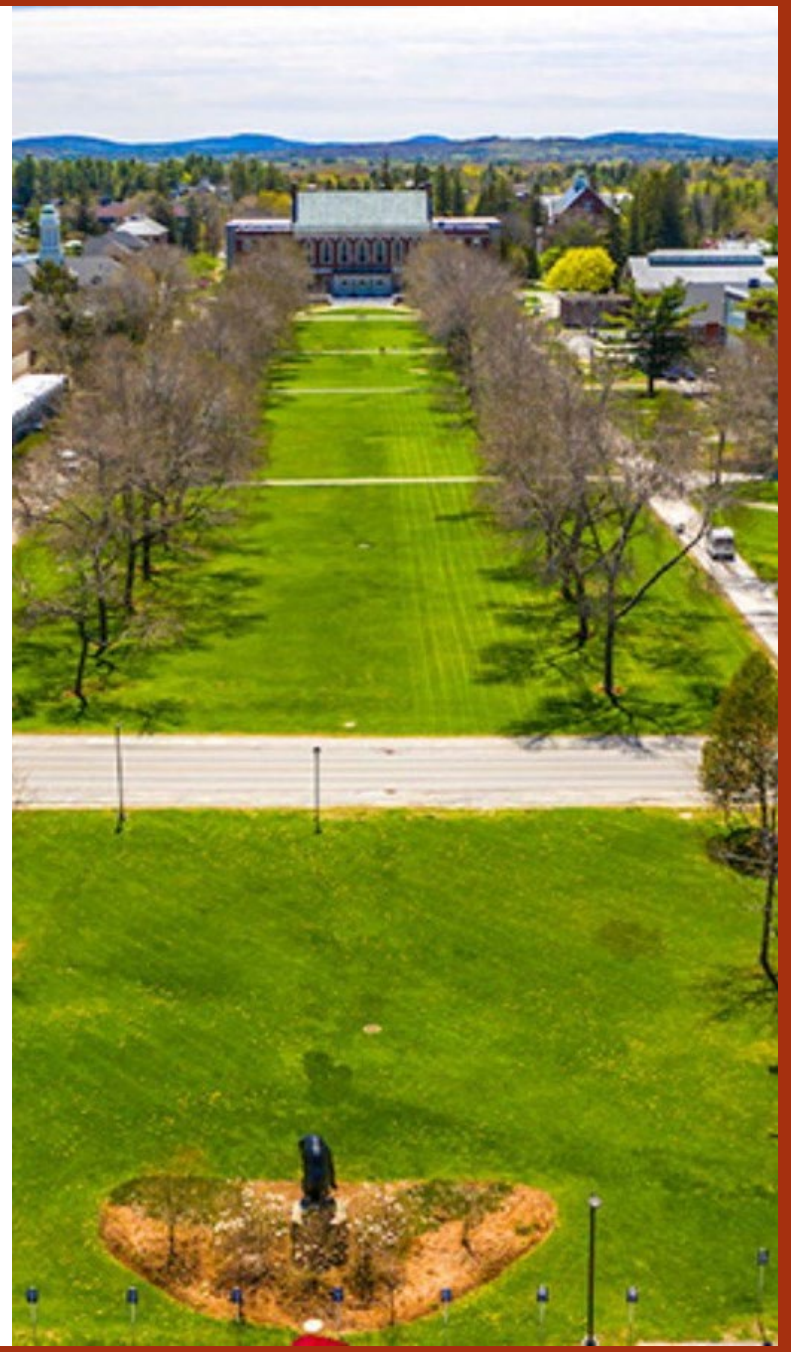


College rep visits at SJCI

- The most up to date information is located on SCOIR and the SJCI Calendar
- Students can sign up on SCOIR
- If students do not have a free period, they need teacher permission to miss class to see a college rep
- This is a great opportunity for students to meet college reps and ask questions, as well as use as a point of contact for schools
- These visits are for students only

College visitation policy

- Each senior will be allowed three (3) days for college visits that will not count against his attendance.
  - You **must** notify attendance@sjci.com that your son is missing school for a college visit at least one day prior to the visit.
  - Students will be listed as CV (College Visit) for attendance purposes
  - Students are encouraged to visit colleges on October 16
- Remember that your son is responsible for any work that he will miss on those days, and it is his responsibility to inform his teachers that he will be missing class.





College bound student athletes

- If your son is planning on playing DI or DII athletics in college, and he has not registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center, he should do so at www.eligibilitycenter.org
- Any registered student transcripts were uploaded this summer
- Your son should let Mrs. Smith or Mr. Thoin know if he has registered recently - they don't check their NCAA portal every day

College Rankings

- Don’t put too much weight into the rankings!
- Just because a school is “ranked” high does not mean it is the right fit for your son
- Read the fine print
- US News & World Report changed the way they rank colleges, so you may see big changes in how a school was ranked over the last couple of years
  - This does not mean the college has changed anything about their operations or their students
- “Rankings are someone’s opinion filtered through math” - Akil Bello, director of advocacy and advancement for the National Center for Fair and Open Testing (USA Today)



Common Data Set (CDS)

- Consistent and standardized data provided by all higher education institutions
- Google “XYZ college name Common Data Set”
- General Information, **Enrollment & Persistence, First-Time, First-Year (Freshman) Admission,** Transfer Admission, Academic Offerings & Policies, **Student Life, Annual Expenses, Financial Aid,** Instructional Faculty and Class Size, Degrees Conferred
- Download and put into AI system and ask it to summarize it for you!





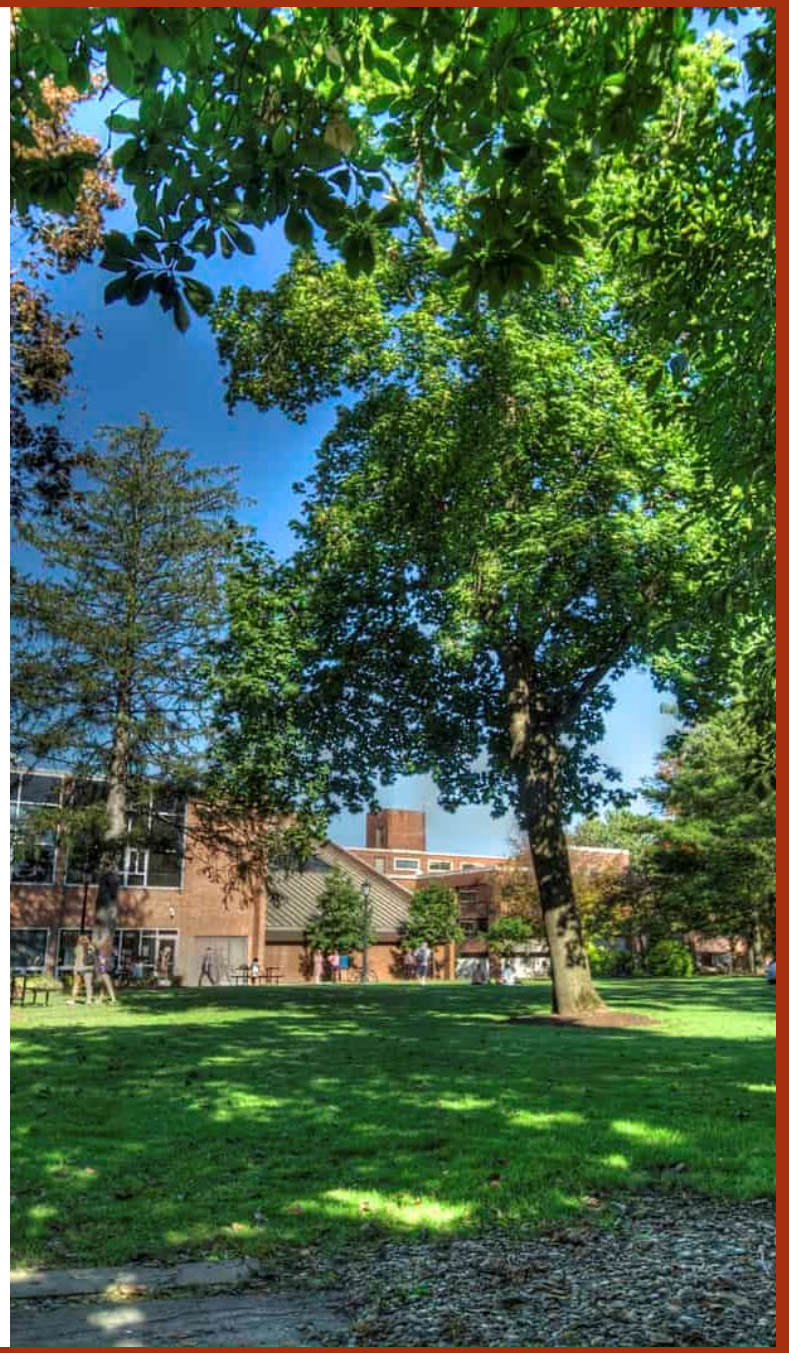
Military & Trade Schools

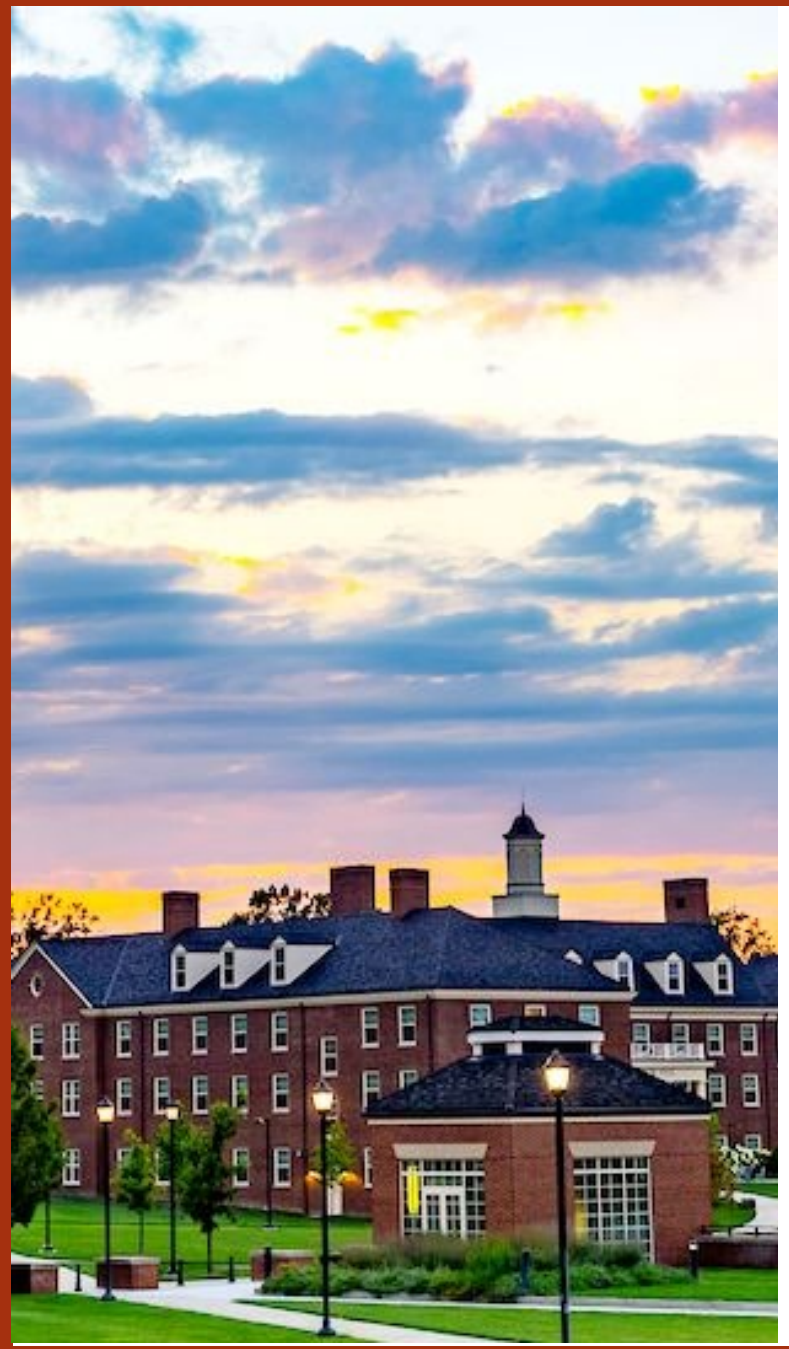
- Military (not academies!)
  - Contact a recruiter for the branch he is interested in
  - Check out the physical and health requirements
- Military Academies
  - Treated as a college application with a lot more steps
- Trade school
  - Apprenticeship programs
    - Through the local unions (the “local”) this is paid schooling and on the job training
    - Check local union websites for specific requirements and deadlines
  - Erie 1 BOCES
  - Northland Workforce Training Center through SUNY Alfred State & SUNY Erie

College Acceptance/Scholarship Letters

We keep track of **all** college acceptances and scholarships!

Please have your son email copies of his letters or bring in hard copies (photocopies are fine!) to Mrs. Runfola and/or Mrs. Manna as soon as he receives them.





College Fair

Wednesday, September 16th

6pm-7:30pm

St. Joe's Gym

Over 90 colleges attending!



QUESTIONS?