CASADY’S COLLEGE COUNSELING MISSION:

TO PARTNER WITH FAMILIES TO DISCERN THE BEST COLLEGE FIT FOR EACH STUDENT
The College Counselor’s Role & Expectations in the College Process

The College Counselor “WILL’s”:

• The College Counselor will help discern the best Casady academic program for college readiness with the student’s advisor, department chairs, UD director, UD academic dean, and parents.

• The College Counselor will help to build a college list that is balanced, reasonable, and in sync with the student and parent’s preferences.

• The College Counselor will advocate on behalf of the student through the secondary school report (includes recommendation letter), national conferences, emails, phone calls, and campus visits.

• The College Counselor will help guide students and parents toward resources that will help educate both parties about the cost of colleges, the selectivity of colleges, the academic program of colleges, etc.

• The College Counselor will aspire to eliminate all surprises from the admission process for students and parents.

• The College Counselor will help aspiring intercollegiate student-athletes to understand eligibility and recruiting processes.

• The College Counselor will provide feedback on all college applications, including essays.

• The College Counselor will help students and parents provide summer enrichment or academic programs that align with student goals, passions, and college ambitions.

• The College Counselor will submit supporting documents (i.e. transcripts, recommendation letters, school profile) within an expedient manner upon proof of submission from the student.

• The College Counselor will support a student’s decision to apply Early Decision into a binding admission program IF ideally 1) the student and parents have done an early calculation of cost and understand their Expected Family Contribution, 2) visited the campus, and 3) discussed this option with their College Counselor.

• The College Counselor will help students and parents understand financial aid packages.

• The College Counselor will keep an open door policy for any students and parents who need an in-person consultation on any issue related to college admissions.

• The College Counselor will try and respond to any email or phone call within a 24-hour window of time (summer is the only exception).
The College Counselor “WILL NOT’s”:

- The College Counselor will NOT “broker deals” with the financial aid office.
- The College Counselor will NOT write the student’s essays for him or her.
- The College Counselor will NOT make a student apply to a minimum or maximum number of colleges.
- The College Counselor will NOT be an “Internet Concierge” (i.e. We will help you find information that you can not find through a simple Google search).
- The College Counselor will NOT “place” a student at any college that he or she does not want to matriculate to in the fall.
- The College Counselor will NOT get inappropriately enmeshed in college-related decisions that are between the student and his or her parents.
- The College Counselor will NOT pay for application fees, standardized score reports, financial aid documents, etc. unless the student and family have provided reasonable proof of financial need.

The Student’s Role & Expectations in the College Process

The Student “WILL’s”:

- The student will see every experience in the Upper Division as an opportunity to grow, develop, and improve through effort in the eyes of colleges!
- The student will take ownership of the college readiness plan!
- The student will ask questions when he or she needs help throughout the college process.
- The student will set academic, social, athletic, and spiritual goals with advisor based on college aspirations each year.
- The student will research and explore colleges to identify what fits and/or does not fit.
- The student will build a college list with his/her college counselor that reflects balance, reasonableness, and timeliness.
- The student will try to attend all scheduled college admission programs (i.e. 10th grade College Admission Game, 11th grade Dean’s Fly In, 12th grade College Application Boot Camp).
- The student will treat every college application as their 1st choice college.
- The student will discuss financial parameters with family and college counselor to understand what the family’s Expected Family Contribution will be in his/her college investment.
- The student will utilize Naviance to conduct research, build a college list, build a resume, self-reflect for the college counselor, and do ACT test prep.
• The student will partner with parents to pay for college application fees (unless in need of financial assistance), send official ACT or SAT 1 or SAT 2 score reports to all colleges.

• The student will proactively pursue opportunities to play intercollegiate athletics (DI, DII, DIII, NAIA) by completing the NCAA Clearinghouse, completing coach’s questionnaire, contacting coaches, etc.

• The student will demonstrate interest to colleges on his/her application list (i.e. email admission rep, visit campus, write the optional essay, meet with rep on Casady’s campus, etc.)

• The student will set a goal to take either the ACT or SAT 1 a total of 3 times between his or her sophomore and senior year.

• The student will utilize the free ACT Test Prep via Method Test Prep (25-28 hour program) to reach his/her potential on the standardized test.

The Parent’s Role & Expectations in the College Process

The Parent “WILL’S”:

• The parent will remember regularly that they are not going to college; their student is.

• The parent will focus on “best college fit” and not “best college” based purely on rankings and prestige alone. If used, the parent will use ranking materials as a guide and not the Bible.

• The parent will help their student build a college list based on the five categories of “college fit”: learning style, passions, affordability, admissibility, and individualized preferences.

• The parent will help discern what is the right fit in terms of course selection (year-by-year), extracurricular activity, and summer activity to ensure that their student 1) has a semi-normal childhood, 2) doesn’t forfeit their present for the future, and 3) does not create another “crispy college kid” (college admission term for college freshman who only wants take courses like Intro to Frisbee Golf).

• The parent will be honest with both the student and the college counseling office in terms of what “college affordability” means to them.

• The parent will encourage their student to be open to exploring colleges they may have never heard of before.

• The parent will try to encourage “5 first-choice colleges” for their student as opposed to one “first-choice college.”

• The parent will complete their survey on Naviance and meet at least once with the college counselor and student before the student applies to colleges in their senior year.

• The parent will remember only 1 in 12,000 student-athletes get a D-I athletic scholarship.

• The parent will remember that this is a process, and that the process is more important than the destination.
• The parent will keep the “big picture” in mind.

• The parent will help lower the anxiety level of their student instead of raise it.

• The parent will remember that once the “dots are up” the dots are up (aka The Dot Graph from 9th grade and 12th grade College Night).

• The parent will remember that the penultimate goal is to help their student discern the best plan/place for the next four years; the ultimate goal is to preserve their relationship with their child that will last the next 40+ years.

The Parent “WILL NOT’S”:
• The parent will not make their student do something because it will “look good” on a college application.

• The parent will not grossly embellish their student’s résumé on college applications.

• The parent will not compare their student to older siblings or other kids.

• The parent will not tell their student where other students are applying to college.

• The parent will not exasperate their student by forcing them to visit 20 colleges in a single summer.

• The parent will not make their student apply to 20 colleges to “trophy hunt”.

• The parent will not make their student apply to their alma mater.

• The parent will not write their student’s college essays.

• The parent will not email college reps pretending to be the student.

• The parent will not compare his/her test scores to his/her student’s test scores.

• The parent will not make every conversation the senior year about college...and if the parent does it means one less chore for the student or $1 a minute to discuss.

• The parent will not abuse their child by making them take the ACT or SAT six times each year.

• The parent will not broadcast their student’s college acceptances on Facebook.

• The parent will not ask the college counselor to “broker a financial deal” with the college of their choice (College Counselors are neither sports agents nor financial brokers).

• The parents will not ask random people to write recommendations for their student.
• The parent will not use the pronoun “we”... as in “We are taking another ACT,” or “We are hoping to get admitted into X college.”
• The parent will not take a Christmas family photo in October with the senior wearing the college sweatshirt that the parents hope their student will get admitted into in December.

• The parent will not freak out if a student says he/she wants to take a gap year, but will be open to that discussion with the college counselor.

• The parent will not sabotage this rite of passage experience for their student by micromanaging or helicopter parenting in such a way that eclipses the transition toward individuation & adulthood.

A Note About Independent Counselors

Some families may wonder if they should hire an independent counselor to assist with the college application process. We believe that most Casady students do no need such services. The professional experiences and training of our college counselors, combined with the support of the administration and faculty, ensure that our students are receiving personalized and accurate guidance. In other words, the resources provided by an independent counselor are already included in the Casady tuition. We can function in a way that independent counselors cannot:

• We have full access to school records, teachers and coaches.
• We are the ones contacted by a college when they have a question about the applicant.
• We write the recommendations that most colleges require.
• We understand Casady’s application history at a particular institution.
• We have professional relationships with college admission officers across the country.

If you decide that employing an independent counselor is the best option for your family, please let your Casady college counselor know. We don’t want the student to think they must keep it a secret or that it will hurt our feelings. We want our students to receive a unified message from all parties that are advising them in this process, so it is important for us to know if they are working with someone outside of our office.
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20 “COLLEGE READINESS” QUESTIONS TO ASK COLLEGE COUNSELORS
1. What do you mean by a “philosophy of best college fit”?
2. What courses do I need to take to be ready for selective or highly selective colleges?
3. How should I plan my schedule accordingly?
4. Which elective courses do you recommend?
5. What Honors, Pre-AP, and AP courses are available, and how many can I take each year?
6. What is the PSAT?
7. What are the differences between the SAT and ACT?
8. What are the SAT Subject Tests?
9. What should my “testing timeline” look like for the ACT, SAT, and SAT Subject Tests?
10. What college programming is offered 9th-12th grade?
11. What is Naviance? How do I access and utilize Naviance?
12. What should I be doing on campus, at home, and in the summers to get ready for college?
13. Are there any college fairs I can attend?
14. Where do other students from Casady attend college?
15. Can you put me in touch with a recent graduate who is going to a college on my exploration list?
16. What is the “pyramid of selectivity”?
17. If my colleges need a counselor recommendation, how can I help you know me better so it can be nuanced and personal?
18. How do I access scholarship information?
19. What is a school profile, and where can I find our profile?
20. How does Casady compare to other schools in terms of test scores and reputation?

9TH-10TH GRADE COLLEGE READINESS PLAN
• Begin mapping out your curriculum plan for all four years in the Upper School.
• Aim for Breath and Depth: four years in five core subjects, moving upward to the next level of rigor (English, math, science, history, and foreign language) [Selective colleges aren’t looking for passion on the transcript; they are looking for appropriate level of challenge + consistent performance).
• Become involved in leadership roles in your activities; take advantage of leadership opportunities available to you. (“To whom much is given much is required”).
• Work hard in all your courses. This will improve your ACT score. Read more. This will improve your PSAT and SAT scores.
• Take the PSAT in October (9th grade) for experience with standardized testing and to evaluate your progress.
• 10th graders: a handful will take 1st round of either the SAT or ACT in the late spring.
• Make good use of your summer; get a summer job (responsibility), go to camp, travel, take a course, etc. (What do you do when you don’t have to do anything?).
• Make use of family trips and vacations to take a first look at colleges. Aim for variety: small, liberal arts; mid-size private university; big, public university; specialty schools. (What did you learn about yourself while touring the school?).
• Begin in the spring using Casady’s Naviance program to explore colleges, search for those that seem to match your interests and abilities. Do the Learning Style module. Begin building your resume. Keep “Journal” notes about your freshman experience.
• Parents: begin financial planning for college now! Don’t wait! Investigate college costs, saving plans, etc. and begin saving now!
Parents: read from cover-to-cover the College Bound Field Guide located on our College Counseling web page.

11TH GRADE COLLEGE READINESS PLAN

- Visit the College Counseling office. Check out the “Wall of Acceptances”. Explore the various stickers on the College Bound Cyclone Map.
- Attend meeting with college representatives visiting Casady in September-November.
- Come with questions written in your cell phone that you can ask the college admission officer.
- Bear down academically. Expectations continue to grow and the pressure to perform will be greater. If you haven’t found your academic stride, it’s time to look for it! Colleges are eager to see how you respond as the “bar” is raised.
- Take the PSAT in October. Results will arrive at our school in December.
- If you are going to pursue test prep, now is the time to explore your options and register somewhere.
- Attend all 5 sessions of Junior Seminar during the winter/spring trimester.
- Register for and take the SAT in the winter and/or spring.
- Register for and take the ACT in the winter and/or spring.
- Set a goal to get 3 tests (either ACT or SAT) under your belt by summer.
- Take SAT Subject Tests in May or June if necessary (2-3 based on colleges interested in).
- Make preliminary college visits.
- Obtain a Social Security Number if you do not have one (required on many college applications).
- Students and Parents complete the College Questionnaire prior to college conference.
- Parents and students meet with their college counselor to discuss the college process and define the family’s individual search criteria.
- Research colleges of interest using Naviance and the Internet.
- Choose an appropriate course load for senior year: aim for 5 core in at least 4 courses that move upward in rigor and challenge.
- Contact coaches and schools of interest if you are a prospective athlete.
- Enroll in SAT/ACT preparation courses as needed.
- Take AP Examinations in May.
- Visit colleges, tour campuses and interview if possible.
- Narrow college list to 4-8 schools that include each category of selectivity (Reach, Target, and Likely).
- Register with NCAA if you are a prospective college athlete: https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/
- Develop a resume of activities, experiences, honors, and awards dating to the start of the 9th grade. Don’t worry about making it look professional. It will be a good reflective exercise that helps to prepare for you for applications and interviews.
- Prospective artists, musicians and stage performers should contact schools to schedule fall auditions and find out portfolio requirements.
- Be involved in community service, a job, summer programs or other productive activities.
- Become familiar with the application requirements for each college and orient yourself to the essays you will need to submit.
- Establish an account with the Common Application: https://apply.commonapp.org/createaccount
- Develop three timelines: a testing timeline (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, AP), application timeline (state schools, publics, “early”, and regular), and college visiting timeline (rule of thumb: visit when you can).
- Participate in the Common Application boot camp in August.
12th GRADE COLLEGE READINESS PLAN

- Prepare yourself for a high-octane year. The college application process will seem like another course on top of everything else in your schedule. Continue doing the things you love. Assume leadership roles where appropriate. Stay on top of your grades!
- By the end of August, you should 1) meet with the college counselor to finalize your college list (Reach, Target, and Likely), 2) meet with the teachers who will write letters of recommendation for you, 3) complete good drafts of essays, and 4) familiarize yourself with our procedures, deadlines, and application process (application receipts, folders, online submissions via eDocs).
- Attend meeting with college representatives visiting Casady School.
- Prepare supporting materials (portfolios, DVDs, CDs) that speak to your special talents.
- Plan an overnight visit at a college where you might apply Early Decision AND at another of your favorite colleges. Compare your impressions of each before completing any ED forms.
- Take the SAT or ACT at least once between September and December. Plan to take the SAT Subject Tests necessary (if you did not do so in May or June) to satisfy the requirements of colleges where you are applying.
- Send test scores to colleges for your final college list (www.act.org) or (www.collegeboard.com).
- Submit applications preferably two weeks before deadline. Notify college counselor and teachers of deadlines at least three weeks in advance to submit appropriate materials.
- Show your parents a list of deadlines on Naviance. Presumably, one of them will be providing the credit card to cover application fees.
- Parents will file the FASFA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as early as Oct 1 (http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/) and the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile if appropriate (https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/). The Profile is typically required by privately supported institutions to determine your eligibility for assistance.
- Attend arts and performance auditions as required.
- Contact coaches and schedule visits for prospective athletes.
- From early February through mid-March, consider returning to some of your favorite colleges to stay overnight and attend classes.
- Receive notification of decisions on college applications and financial aid/scholarships.
- Notify counselor of any college acceptances, deferrals, or denials and scholarship offers.
- Make last visits to colleges if you have not decided where to attend.
- Reply by May 1 to the college/university you plan to attend – you may submit an enrollment deposit to one school only!
- Reply to those colleges where you have been accepted, but do not plan to attend.
- Take AP Examinations in May.

“BEST FIT COLLEGE”: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Our overarching goal involves working proactively with each Casady student to find the right college fit.

What does “right fit” then mean?

By “fit” we mean the extent to which a college matches a student’s needs and wishes. Sometimes “fit” can be quantifiable: size, location, the existence of a particular program, TA’s teaching classes; other times “fit” is more subjective, depending on the chemistry between student and school, a feature of “fit” that is every bit as important as the quantifiable elements. A good college “fit” then is one that:

1. **Passions.** Offers a program of study and activities to match your interests and enthusiasms.
2. **Learning Style.** Provides a style of instruction to match the way you learn most effectively.
3. Preferences. Matches your “hierarchy of values”.
4. Affordable. Cost will serve both your short and long term goals.
5. Admissible + Competitive. Values you for what have to offer that they want.
In any event, “fit” as a feature of your child’s college will be much more important in the long run than any particular “name brand” or public perception of a school.

HOW DO I ASSESS THE BEST COLLEGE FOR ME?

1. I enjoy participating in many activities. Students at small colleges tend to have more opportunities to be involved in many activities. Fewer students means less competition for sports.
2. I would like to have a prominent place in my community. Student-council presidents and other would-be leaders take note: it is easier to be a big fish if you’re swimming in a small pond.
3. Individual attention from teachers is important to me. Small colleges generally offer more one-on-one with faculty in both the classroom and the laboratory.
4. I learn best when I can speak out in class and ask questions. Students who learn from interaction and participation would be well-advised to consider a small college.
5. I am undecided about what I will study. Small colleges generally offer more guidance and support to students who are undecided. The exception: students who are considering a pre-professional or highly specialized major.
6. I want to earn a PhD in my chosen field of study. A higher percentage of students at selective small colleges earn a PhD than those who attend large institutions of similar quality.
7. I learn best by listening and writing down what I hear. Students who prefer lecture courses will find more of them at large institutions.
8. I would like to be in a place where I can be anonymous if I choose. At a large university, the supply of new faces is never-ending. Students who have the initiative can always reinvent themselves.
9. I prefer devoting my time to one or two activities rather than many. Students who are passionate about one activity – say, writing for the college newspaper – will often find higher quality at a bigger school.
10. I want to attend a college that most people have heard of. Big schools have more name recognition because they’re bigger and have Division I athletic programs. Even the finest small colleges are relatively anonymous among the general public.
11. I am interested in a career-oriented major. More large institutions offer business, engineering, nursing, etc., though some excellent small institutions do so as well (depending on the field).
12. I like to be on my own. A higher percentage of students live off campus at large schools, which are more likely to be in urban areas than their smaller counterparts.
13. I prefer a college in a warm or hot climate. Keep in mind that the Southeast and the Southwest have far different personalities (not to mention humidity levels).
14. I prefer a college in a cool or cold climate. Consider the Midwest, where there are many fine schools that are notably less selective than those in the Northeast.
15. I want to be near the mountains. You’re probably thinking Colorado or Vermont, but don’t zero in too quickly. States from Maine to Georgia and Arkansas to Arizona have easy access to mountains.
16. I want to be near a lake or ocean. Oceans are only on the coasts, but keep in mind the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes, etc. Think about whether you want to be on the water or, say, within a two-hour drive.
17. I prefer to attend a college in a particular state or region. Geographical blinders limit options. Even if you think you want a certain area of the country, consider at least one college located elsewhere just to be sure.
18. I prefer to attend a college near my family. Unless you’re planning to live with Mom and Dad, it may not matter whether your college is a two-hour drive or a two-hour plane ride.

19. I want city life within walking distance of my campus. Check out the neighborhood(s) surrounding your campus. Urban campuses – even in the same city – can be wildly different.

20. I want city life within driving distance of my campus. Unless you’re a hardcore urban dweller, a suburban perch near a city may beat living in the thick of one. Does public transportation or a campus shuttle help students get around?

21. I want my campus to be surrounded by natural beauty. A college viewbook will take you only so far. To really know if you’ll fall in love with the campus, visiting is a must.

22. I like to be surrounded by people who are freethinkers and nonconformists. Plenty of schools cater specifically to students who buck the mainstream. Talk to your counselor or browse the Fiske Guide to Colleges to find some.

23. I like the idea of joining a fraternity or sorority. Greek life is strongest at mainstream and conservative-leaning schools. Find out if there is a split between Greeks and non-Greeks.

24. I like rubbing shoulders with people who are bright and talented. This is perhaps the best reason to aim for a highly selective institution, especially if you’re the type who rises to the level of the competition.

25. I like being one of the smartest people in my class. If so, maybe you should skip the highly selective rat race. Star students get the best a college has to offer.

26. I want to go to a prestigious college. There is nothing wrong with wanting prestige. Think honestly about how badly you want a big-name school and act accordingly.

27. I want to go to a college where I can get an excellent education. Throw out the U.S. News rankings and think about which colleges will best meet your needs as a student.

28. I want to try for an academic scholarship. Students in this category should consider less-selective alternatives. Scholarships are more likely if you rank high in the applicant pool.

29. I want a diverse college. All colleges pay lip service to diversity. To get the truth, see the campus for yourself and take a hard look at the student-body statistics in the Fiske Guide’s write-ups.

30. I want a college where students are serious about ideas. Don’t assume that a college necessarily attracts true intellectuals merely because it is highly selective. Some top schools are known for their intellectual climate – and others for their lack of it.

*Excerpt from Fiske Guide to Colleges 2018

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<td>Utilize Naviance resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet with admission officers</td>
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<td>Create “contact history” with admission officers</td>
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<td>Schedule campus visits</td>
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<td>Make arrangements for overnight visits</td>
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Schedule interview with college admission reps | x | x |
Make senior year course selections | x |
Register for ACT/SAT | x |
Send test scores to college | x |
Submit school profile, transcript, and recommendation letter | x |
Brainstorm essay topics | x | x | x |
Write essays | x |
Complete applications | x |
Pay application fees | x |
Make sure teachers who will write on your behalf know you | x |
Show up on time to local interviews dressed neatly, with resume in hand, ready to engage in a conversation | x |
Send follow-up emails to college reps and local interviewer | x |
Submit applications by deadline | x |
Submit scholarships by deadline | x |
Follow up with colleges that say “Yes” | x |
Follow up with colleges that say “Maybe” | x |
Sign up with the NCAA as prospective student-athlete | x |
Send audition materials (CDs and DVDs) | x |
Aim for best college fit! | x | x | x |

**HOW IMPORTANT IS ACADEMIC COURSE PLANNING?**
If there is a foundation for the entire college process, it lies in the planning of your course load from freshman through senior year. For each student, there is a delicate balance of challenge and mastery, interests and expectations. However you resolve those questions of balance, you should know this: Colleges expect that you take advantage of Casady in every academic way possible.

From Northwestern University’s admission website:
College Preparation: Recommended Course of Study
Regardless of the college or university you apply to, you will want to do everything you can to prepare yourself for the rigors of a college curriculum. The best way to prepare is to take the most challenging schedule possible for your ability level while in high school. If your high school offers AP, honors, accelerated, or advanced courses; you should take advantage of them. This is not to say you should take high-level courses only to have that notation on your transcript. You should be taking the courses that are most appropriate to your skill level.

Our counseling team encourages Casady students to academically plan in the following way:

Aim for five core classes (math, science, English, humanities, language) 9th-12th

Plan for a 4th and/or 5th year of language, especially if you plan to apply to highly selective schools.

Preserve “doubling up” in one subject area until the senior year (i.e. AB Calculus + AP Statistics, AB Biology + Honors Forensics, etc.).

Try to move to the next appropriate level of rigor in all five-subject areas.

Preserve the senior year for substituting out a class you don’t want to take for substituting in a class you do want to take.

**CASADY CURRICULUM MAPPING FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIBILITY**

Contextualization is key in college admissions that are holistic in nature. Therefore college admissions will evaluate Casady School students based ONLY on what Casady provides in terms of curriculum and how Casady School defines rigor.

Below is a BASIC template to use when advising students on course selections in relationship to their college goals. There are many nuances and variables in play in college admissions, especially at the top, that differentiate between “admissible” students versus “admitted” students (i.e. ability to pay, ethnicity, geography, gender, legacy, unrepresented academic major, recruited athlete, 1st generation, etc.).

**Most Highly Selective Colleges (5%-20%):** Ivies, New Ivies (Stanford, Duke, Vanderbilt, Washington University in St. Louis, Northwestern, U of Chicago, etc.), Some Small Ivies (Williams, Bowdoin, Pomona), & Public Ivies (UVA, UT-Austin, William & Mary, Michigan, UCLA, UC-Berkeley, UNC-Chapel Hill, U of Florida, Wisconsin-Madison)

- **20-22 Core Classes** in Math, Science, Humanities, English, and Language
- Honors Chemistry required
- Honors Physics highly recommended
- AP Language IV required & AP Language V optional
- AP US History required
- AP Government highly recommended
- AP Calculus level required
- AP Science level required *AP Chemistry or AP Physics highly recommended for STEM majors
**Highly Selective Colleges (20%-50%):** Some Small Ivies (Claremont McKenna, Tufts, Middlebury, W&L, etc.), Georgetown, NYU, USC, Rice, Emory, Tulane, UGA, SMU, Boston U, etc.

- **20-21 Core Classes** in Math, Science, Humanities, English, and Language
- Honors Chemistry required
- Physics or Pre-AP Physics recommended
- AP Language IV highly recommended
- AP US History required
- Another AP History highly recommended
- Pre-Calculus or AP Statistics required
- AP Science highly recommended

**Selective Colleges (50%-70%):** TCU, OU, Trinity, Tulsa, St. Olaf, Hendrix, DePauw, etc.

- **19-20 Core Classes** in Math, Science, Humanities, English, and Languages

**3 MAJOR MISTAKES STUDENTS MAKE IN THE COLLEGE PLANNING PROCESS**

Too often students become *spectators* in the college process. The goal is for students to become *participators*. Taking ownership of the process will ultimately lead to the most satisfying choices in the end. Satisfying outcomes will be largely dependent on the student’s ability to stay focused academically, while avoiding some of the common mistakes that doom otherwise very promising candidates. You need to make good choices, build relationships with colleges, and manage expectations.

**Mistake #1:** Many students assume they don’t have to worry about the admission process until they become formal applications.

**Reality:** Students become college applicants the day they become high school freshmen. Everything counts. In fact, every day presents opportunities for decision-making that will have a bearing on how you live the next day – and beyond.

**Remedy:** Make Good Choices

Key areas of choice involve academic preparedness, extracurricular engagement and the application process itself. While it is not healthy – or practical – to obsess on any of these, you need to understand your accountability for good decision-making. Choosing well at every turn strengthens your credentials and reduces the potential for discriminating admission committees to say “no.”

**Mistake #2:** Students don’t take advantage of opportunities to get on the “radar screens” of college admission officers before they submit their applications.

**Reality:** Admission officers are looking for evidence of engaged interest. In fact, they are keeping track of a student’s interest from his/her contact through the end of the admission process.

**Remedy:** Build Relationships with Colleges

It’s real simple: *if you like a college let them know that you like them.* If they visit Casady, come meet them, get their cards, find their contact info on Family Naviance Connection, and email them a thank you, highlighting one or two specific things you liked about their presentation. If you can, visit the campus. Many colleges have a “point system” for contacts. A campus visit garners the highest point value a prospective student can receive. If you can’t visit for whatever reason, then contact the admission officer, explain your reasoning why. Perhaps it’s distance. Or financial obstacles. Or conflicts in your schedule. Whatever the
deterrent, let the college know. This way they won’t subtract points, but in fact, add additional points for your willingness to express your interest in the school in spite of being unable to visit.

**Mistake #3:** Students assume that their grades/scores will “carry the day” and the more “reach” schools to which they apply, the better are the chances of getting into at least one.

**Reality:** It rarely works that way – especially if financial aid is needed. Not only is applying, somewhat arbitrarily, to a long list of schools likely to be an exercise in futility, it distracts students from giving quality attention to the applications they submit to colleges that represent the best fits for them.

**Remedy: Manage Expectations**
It is important to avoid confusing *admissibility* for *competitiveness* at a given college. The odds are that credentials put you in the top half – if not top quartile – of the admitted student profile from past entering classes. This will be an indicator that you are squarely on the “competitive playing field” at that school and you are more likely to be valued for what you have to offer academically.

* Excerpt from Peter Van Buskirk’s *The College Planning Workbook*

**WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY?**

**University**
A university is a complex institution that is typically comprised of different levels of study: undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral. Each level includes distinct colleges defined by a common curriculum (i.e. College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Engineering, etc.). The resources (faculty, libraries, labs) of each college are shared by the students at each level of study within it.

Some universities place great emphasis on advanced study and research. Their academic facilities are quite impressive and often include hospitals and grant supported research facilities. Other universities are defined as such due to the multiple layers of study that extend to the doctoral level.

When you apply for admission to a university, you need to indicate the specific undergraduate college in which you wish to study. A change in academic interests may result in the need to transfer from one college of the university to another.

**College**
Structurally, a college (independent of a university) is a relatively simple institution. It does not have multiple levels of study nor divisions within its program of study. A liberal arts college, for example, stands alone as a four-year undergraduate program. Its counterpart in the university, the College of Arts and Sciences, is a part of a larger, more complex structure.

When you apply to a college that stands apart – it is an institution unto itself – you are less likely to have to commit to a particular academic program. In fact, many liberal arts colleges will urge you to remain undeclared with regard to your major through your first two years.

**More Institutional Types:**
The following is a glossary of terms you will encounter as you learn more about your educational options:
Public institutions derive most of their support from state governments. The category includes both colleges and universities. Their missions are to provide educational opportunities to students within the state. Admission usually favors in-state applicants. Fees for out-of-state students are often higher by as much as 50%.

As the term would suggest, public flagship universities are the principal state-supported universities. Typically federal land-grant universities designed to serve as state centers for education and research, these institutions have benefited from strong state support to become large and highly complex. Undergraduate programs can tend to be overshadowed by graduate programs at public flagships.

Private institutions, both colleges and universities, are supported almost entirely by tuition, fees, and gifts from individual and corporate donors. They are not bound by a relationship with the state legislature and tend to have greater latitude in determining what the academic program and admission standards look like. Fees are the same for in-state and out-of-state students.

Research universities, both public and private, are best known for the strength of their well-funded research programs. Their reputation extends to undergraduate programs that often enjoy a popularity that is associated with the prestige of the research programs.

Technical institutes and specialty schools focus on the training and the development of specific skills. Both public and private, these programs offer limited opportunities in areas of general study.

Community and junior colleges are two-year programs that offer a range of curricula from liberal arts to certified programs. They are low cost, highly accessible options for students who seek technical training or want to prepare for entry into four-year programs.

WHAT ARE 10 TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE SEARCH?

1. **Know yourself.** Make sure you understand your strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes. Honest self-examination is critical at the outset and throughout the process. Your interests can and will change daily. Look for consistency – what traits, interests and passions have been with you over time? Reflect on your learning style as well as preferences regarding living environment.

2. **Cast your net broadly.** Early in the process, collect as much information as possible from and about colleges. It is easily accessible and won’t cost anything. Use Naviance - our online search program – to sort for colleges that meet your personal and academic criteria. Under Naviance, for example, there are a number of “Maps” that will show you visually where Casady students have applied and matriculated to the past six years. Come by the Casady college counseling office and check out the “Wall of Acceptances” and the College Bound Cyclone US Map to see where Casady students have matriculated.

3. **Treat “rankings” magazines as guides, not gospel.** It makes sense to have a college guidebook or two handy for easy reference. Understand what you are buying, however. Some “ranking” magazines present the facts – and just the facts. Others will attempt to seduce you with comparative ratings and/or subjective reviews. While ratings can be helpful in getting you started, it would be risky to make financial choices based on this type of information. There are no reliable short cuts in the college search process.

4. **Visit college campuses.** It is important to experience first-hand the campus culture of any college you are considering. Ethos matters. Take tours. Visit classes. Whenever an interview is offered, take it! Talk with students and faculty. Ask questions. You should be able to visualize yourself on that campus.
Visit the schools you really like two or three times. Mix up your agenda with each visit. It is never too early to visit. You should try to visit at least once before you apply.

5. **Talk with recent Casady graduates about their experience.** Current students and recent graduates are the best evidence of the return you will get on your investment in the educational experience at a given college. Put them to the test. Send them a Facebook message. Attend our alumni events. Ask them what they like and dislike. What were their most meaningful experiences?

6. **Examine Outcomes.** If you have ideas regarding a major and/or career track, find out how recent graduates fared in these areas. You will discover quickly that a lot of colleges have a little bit of “something for everybody.” The truth is in the outcomes. Ask for evidence of graduate school and job placements. How does a particular college perform in these areas? Make sure the information is valid. Some colleges will tell you that they place 90% of their applicants to medical school. That’s great if there is volume and substance to the program. On the other hand, nine out of ten placements over three years don’t cut it.

7. **Take an honest look at affordability.** Be prepared for sticker shock. The private college that cost $15,000 for your parents twenty-five years ago now carries a price tag of $55,000 today. This may or may not be an issue for them, but you need to find out. Ask you parents what they can or are willing to afford. It is better to know up front if there will be financial limitations on your college selections rather than finding out after you fall in love with a school that your family cannot afford.

8. **Resist the temptation to buy on impulse.** Start early as you look at colleges and shop late. First impressions often serve us well. Remember, though, that colleges spend hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to make that first impression a good one. Test it. Revisit when not expected. Sleep on your feelings. Make sure the fascination persists for the right reasons. “This would be a great school because it puts me close to my grandparents,” or “That’s a great view of the mountains and the lifts are only a quarter of a mile away!” are not good reasons to buy. They are amenities that may come with a good choice; they don’t make a choice good.

9. **Take note of how you are treated.** In the courtship between you and a college, the way an institution responds to you is a good indication of how that place will treat you once enrolled. Look past the fancy literature, the telemarketing and the staged visits. What happens when you write for specific information or call with a question? How are they treating you?

10. **Make sure you own the process.** Your parents are not going to college. They are very proud of you and want the best for you in college, but they’re staying home. This is your gig! The greater your involvement from start to finish, the more comfortable you will be with the outcomes.

*Excerpt taken from Peter Van Buskirk’s *The College Planning Workbook*

**HOW CAN I USE NAVIANCE FOR MY COLLEGE SEARCH?**

**College Search:** This application allows you to find colleges based on many selection criteria. This “traditional” college search allows you to identify colleges by location, size, program, selectivity, and more. Now that Naviance has partnered with Fiske, you are sure to get the best and most relevant information to help you begin to find college fits. When you get your results, click “pick” to add an institution to your “hand-picked list” to compare it to other institutions to your list of prospective colleges.

**College Match:** This application allows you to search for colleges using real data from Casady School. From Family Connection click College Match, specify search criteria, and click the Create Match list button. College Match is especially helpful if you are starting from scratch and want to get a sense of which schools might be within reach and which might be more of a stretch.
**College Compare:** This application is great if you have a few colleges in mind and want to get a quick “reality check” about potential admission. From Naviance Connection click College Compare, choose colleges, and click the Compare Colleges button. The table shows you how your test scores and GPA compare to others from Casady School who’ve been admitted. Green numbers indicate the current student is above average; red numbers indicate the student is below average.

**OTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS:**

**Explore Casady Profile Matriculations:** Every year Casady creates a school profile that we send out to colleges. This profile provides the necessary context by which admission officers can evaluate a Casady student’s application. On the profile, one will find the list of colleges that Casady students have matriculated to in the past three years. This is a great list to begin with, for a couple reasons: 1) because students of your ilk have deemed these schools a “great fit”, and 2) because these colleges have deemed Casady students a “great fit”.

*Casady’s profile can be located on college counseling web page

**Read the Real Reviews:** Go online and read students’ comments at sites like www.CollegeConfidential.com. These sites will allow you to see the “non-cosmetic, more acme-real” face of the college.

**Talk to Recent Graduates:** Find Casady alumni on Facebook. Ask them questions about their experiences at college. The goal then by this point is to gather as much information as you can before you visit the college. Specifically, you are trying to separate fact from fiction.

**Separate Fact from Fiction:** As you process the information you receive from colleges, be careful to separate fact from fiction. It is a rare college, for example, that will solicit its weakness to students it is trying to recruit. Most will do their best to either cleverly disguise – or ignore – their shortcomings. That said, you would be well served by a healthy dose of skepticism. Observe the following to make sure you know what you are getting after you take off the “wrapping”:

1. **Check the numbers.** You are bound to hear about small classes and impressive student to faculty ratios as you learn about schools. Make sure you know what these numbers mean. Ratios and averages are only useful in comparing schools if the methodologies for reporting them are the same across institutions. In reality, local interpretations are heavily nuanced, making it difficult to find good comparative data. A good question to ask is: “What percentage of the classes includes 20 or fewer students?” Or better yet, find out the percentage of undergraduate classes taught by tenured faculty.

2. **Who gets the perks?** Every institution wants to give the impression that its students have access to enhanced learning opportunities. Internships, independent study, study abroad, and research with faculty are examples of such activities. While these opportunities usually do exist, the question to ask is: “For whom?” Find out what is required in order to participate. What percent of students take advantage of such opportunities before they graduate? Ask to see lists of completed projects. If a perk sounds good in a college’s presentation, look for evidence that it can become a reality for you.

3. **Understand course availability.** Most undergraduate programs expect students to take 28 to 36 courses in order to graduate. Toward that end, colleges will attempt to impress you with the breadth of their curricula and the amazing range of academic experiences. Who gets served by this curriculum, however, is worth digging deeper to find out. For example, what will happen if you change your mind about a major? How easily can you move from one program or college to another? Will you lose ground in your progress toward graduation? How often are upper-level courses in your discipline taught? And how accessible are interesting courses that are taught outside of your major?
4. **Who graduates?** Look for evidence that schools will actively support your progress toward graduation. Who will notify if you have difficulty or need assistance? What is the availability of summer school? What are the graduation rates for students in four years? Five years? You need to factor this into your decision-making.

5. **Outcomes.** What happens when you graduate from college? You will hear lots of promising rhetoric. Make sure it is grounded in reality. Ask the career counselors how they prepare soon-to-be-graduates for the job market. Do they facilitate internships or provide alumni mentoring programs for their students? What support is there for applicants to medical or law school? What percentage of graduates is employed in six months? A year? What percentage of graduates goes on to graduate school in five years? And look at salaries of alumni by going to [www.PayScale.com](http://www.PayScale.com).

**WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL DATA CHECKLIST?**

As you begin to receive college materials, develop a spreadsheet to chart critical information for each college and university. Much of it can be found in the literature provided by the colleges or on their websites. List the following categories down the side of the page. Then, moving from left to right, create columns for each of the colleges in which you develop an interest.

1. **Application Fee/Deadline:** You don’t want to be late when competing for admission. Create separate lines for the fee and the deadline. Under what conditions might the application fee be waived?
2. **Application Type:** Does the college receive applications online? Is it a member of the Common Application or Universal Application groups?
3. **Interview:** Is it offered and where (on campus or off-campus with a staff member or alumnus)? Take advantage of an interview if it is offered.
4. **Required Tests:** Beyond the SAT and/or ACT which most schools require, know which other tests (SAT Subject Tests) you need to be prepared to take. Create at least three lines on which you can list the dates for the tests that are required.
5. **Test Optional:** More than 1,000 colleges and universities now welcome applications without testing. Go to [www.FairTest.org](http://www.FairTest.org) to find out if any of the schools you are considering have a test-optional admission policy.
6. **Location (city/state):** This will be helpful when you sort on preferred regions of the country.
7. **Placement of School (urban, suburban, rural):** There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Make sure you know the type of community in which the school is located.
8. **Size:** This may not seem important initially, but is often a determining factor after the data is collected and processed. Styles of instruction vary dramatically with size of institution.
9. **Type of support (public, private):** This is another factor that is often underestimated as it often speaks to institutional mission.
10. **Structure (college, university):** Schools vary in their complexity – and can offer programs that are similar in name only but feature styles of instruction as different as night and day. Again, there are advantages to each.
11. **Student/Professor Ratio:** These are important numbers that tell a lot about the accessibility of faculty. Make sure the ratio reflects undergraduates only as well as the professors who teach them.
12. **Program:** Record the availability of key majors or programs in which you are interested. You may choose to add a notation that reflects the relative strength of program.
13. **Ratio of Operating Budget to Student:** If you can get it, this ratio reveals a lot about the institution’s ability to support the undergraduate educational experience.
14. **Cost:** Sooner or later, you need to deal with issues of cost and affordability.
15. **Availability of Financial Assistance:** Know what you might expect in terms of need and merit-based assistance.
16. **Distance from Home (travel time):** Some want to get away; others want to stay close. Travel time is more relevant than “miles to be traveled” if considering great distances.

17. **Travel Costs:** Estimate round trip expenses. Make sure you know what it will cost to make the trip several times a year.

*Excerpt taken from Peter Van Buskirk’s *The College Planning Workbook*

**WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STANDARDIZED TESTING?**

Standardized tests were established generations ago to assist colleges in determining whether students had the necessary skills to perform at the college level. For many years, the students who had the benefit of the best educational opportunities were advantaged. With the advent of test prep, the advantage seems to rest with students for whom the test prep is accessible. You may be surprised to learn how and when colleges really pay attention to the results!

**PSAT**

The PSAT is a practice test administered by the Educational Testing Service through our faculty. Offered to students in the fall (normally October) to 9th and 11th graders, the results of the PSAT determine (in the 11th grade year only) the initial eligibility for National Merit distinction.

**ACT**

The American College Test (ACT) is a four-part test that measures a student’s general educational development in four subjects areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science. The optional Writing Test reveals your ability to plan and write a short essay. Composite scores range from 1-36 (36 is high). Every college in the country now accepts the ACT. Casady tends to be “ACT centric”.

**SAT**

The SAT tests a student’s development in three areas: reading, language and writing, and math. The essay portion is optional. Scores on each section range from 200-800 (800 is high). Students take the SAT at a test center (usually a local high school or college) of their choosing. Not all schools administer the test.

*Educational Testing Service (ETS) studies indicate there is little to be gained by taking the test more than three times.*

**SAT SUBJECT TESTS**

SAT Subject Tests are one-hour tests measuring knowledge and skill in particular subject areas. Students may take up to three tests on the same test date, but may not take the SAT and SAT Subject Tests on the same date. There are 20 SAT Subject Tests offered six times a year. To check out the Subject Tests and sign up go here: https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat-subject-tests

**SCORE CHOICE**

Both the ACT and the SAT offer test takers a “score choice” option. That means you can wait until after you have taken the exam to determine whether you want to forward (for a fee) the results of that exam to specific colleges. If, when you register to take the test, you indicate that you want your results forwarded (free) to up to four colleges you forfeit your Score Choice option at those schools. Whether you use Score Choice or not, most colleges will use the best ACT or the highest score for each section of the SAT to create a “super score” when evaluating your credentials. To see a list of schools that “super score” go here:

https://www.compassprep.com/superscore-and-score-choice/
SUMMARY
Despite questions regarding their perceived value as predictors of academic success, standardized tests are clearly an integral part of the admission domain as competitive credentials. You will want to sort through the rhetoric to find the reality of each admission situation in order to determine, how, if at all, your test results might be factored into the admission decision. Then, prepare accordingly.

Online SAT registration: www.collegeboard.com
Online ACT registration: www.act.org

More than 1,000 colleges and universities welcome candidates without test results. Test-optional schools prefer to focus on other criteria to make their decision. You can find a complete list of these schools at www.FairTest.org.

WHAT IS CASADY’S RECOMMENDED TESTING TIMELINE?

• PSAT – October of freshman and junior years. Casady registers all students for this exam. This is a practice SAT. Only scores from the junior year are used in the National Merit Scholarship search.
• Practice ACT – October of sophomore year. Casady registers all students for this exam. This is a practice ACT.
• SAT – first round in winter or spring of junior year. We recommend no more than three total rounds by the fall of senior year. The SAT is offered seven times each school year (August-June).
• SAT Subject Tests – we recommend students applying to highly selective schools take 2-3 Subject Tests at the end of their junior year; some exceptions apply in math at the end of the sophomore year.
• ACT – first round in winter or spring of junior year. We recommend three total rounds (with writing for at least one round) by the fall of senior year. The ACT is offered seven times each school year (September-July).
• AP Examination – For all students who have taken an Advanced Placement course.
• Students who require alternative testing should contact Lori Williams or Joanne Infantino.

* Student goal involves taking both SAT and ACT once. Then take either SAT or ACT a total of three times (4 in some cases).
* Students are solely responsible for sending test scores to colleges.

WHICH SAT SUBJECT TESTS SHOULD I TAKE AND WHEN?

1. Students terminating their study of a modern or classical language (minimum of 3 years of study) in the junior year should consider taking the subject test in that language in June.
2. Students who have done well in one-year terminating courses should consider taking the appropriate subject test in June (i.e. biology, chemistry and physics). Students should visit with their teachers for recommendations as to which subject tests are appropriate.
3. Students who terminate their study in math after completing the three-credit requirement (Honors Algebra II) should consider taking the Math Level 1 subject test in June. Students who continue beyond Honors Algebra II should get a recommendation from the math department whether to take Math Level 1C or Math Level II C (with calculator).
4. Juniors planning to apply Early Decision or Early Action to any college requiring three subject tests should try to complete as many such tests as possible by June. Consult the college counselor.
### 2019/20 ACT Test Dates

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### 2019/20 SAT Test Dates

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<td>April 3, 2020</td>
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<td>June 6, 2020</td>
<td>May 8, 2020</td>
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### WHAT IF I AM INTERESTED IN APPLYING TO US MILITARY ACADEMIES?

For a four-year college degree you may consider one of the five military academies:
- U.S. Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD)
- U.S. Military Academy (West Point, NY)
- U.S. Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, CO)
- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (Kings Point, NY)
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy (New London, CT)

Students who are interested in pursuing the academies should begin preparations as early as the sophomore year. This is not a decision to be made lightly as entrance to one of the academies requires a five-year military obligation (post-graduation) as an officer in the respective service. Some of the benefits include: A first-rate education, full-tuition scholarship, and a distinct college experience. Admission to a service academy is extremely competitive. Students must be in good academic standing with high grades and test scores, and advanced courses. Applicants must also be in good physical condition. All of the federal service academies, except the Coast Guard, require nomination primarily by a congressman. Most members of Congress do not accept requests for nomination after October of the senior year. Therefore, we encourage students to contact their congressmen in the spring of the junior year.

### Timeline for Military Applications:

#### Sophomore Year
- Contact a representative of the Academy to learn about the application requirements.

#### Junior Year
- Research the websites.
- Contact your congressional representatives and request a nomination to the academy or academies of your choosing.
- In the spring and summer, work on your Physical Aptitude Exam (PAE).
- In the spring and summer, take your medical exams.
- In the spring and summer, visit the academies.
- In the summer, work on applications.

#### Senior Year
- In the early fall, submit applications.
- Complete medical and physical aptitude tests if necessary.
- In November, interview for your congressional nomination.
WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COLLEGE VISITS?
Juniors and seniors are allowed a limited number of out of state college visits. Generally speaking, Casady juniors and seniors may have excused absences up to a total of **three class days** for the purpose of visiting college campuses for tours and interviews. Over and above this, the school reserves the right to withhold permission for such visits if it becomes apparent that they may be being abused or utilized frivolously. Students planning college visits during the regular school year must pick up a **College Visitation Permission** form from the college counseling office well in advance of the time that they plan to leave. This form must be signed by the Director of College Counseling, by all course teachers, by a parent and by the director of upper division, before any excused absence can be granted. Students are expected to arrange the make-up of any missed assignments with the teachers concerned.

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK ON A COLLEGE VISIT?
You won’t find much from just walking around looking at the buildings. Make the college trip worthwhile by asking questions. The lists below give you plenty to choose from.

**Questions to ask Students:**
1. Has going there turned out like you expected? Any surprises or disappointments?
2. What are the best reasons to go here?
3. What do students complain about?
4. I have to choose a dorm. What can you tell me about the choices?
5. How’s the food?
6. What kind of meal plan makes the most sense?
7. What is there to do off-campus? What can you tell me about the choices?
8. What do most students do for fun on weekends?
9. How often do students go home on weekends?
10. Where do most students hang out on campus?
11. Can you study in the dorms? If not, where do you go to study?
12. Do you use the library often? Is it easy to find what you need there?
13. How’s the bookstore? Can you find the books you need there? Is it easy to get used textbooks?
14. How is the campus network? Does it go down often?
15. I know it depends on your major, but in general, what’s the workload like?
16. How are the professors? Are they hard to reach outside of class?
17. What professor as a freshman do I have to study with?
18. How would you rate the courses you’ve taken so far?
19. Would you characterize this college as mostly liberal, conservative, or open-minded?
20. Do you get much help finding internships or jobs?
21. Do most students join fraternities? Or sororities?
22. Is there much of a drug scene?
23. Tell me about a couple cool traditions on campus?
24. Is the campus safe both during the day and night?
25. How would you describe the relationship between students and the administration?

**Questions to Ask the Tour Guide:**
1. How popular is the reaction/sports/fitness center? Is it crowded often?
2. Where do you do laundry? Is it convenient? Will I need to hoard quarters?
3. Is there any overcrowding in the dorms (three in a double, for example?)
4. Do many resident students have cars? Is there enough parking?
5. I’m thinking of majoring in _________? What relevant facilities should I see?
6. Where can you get something to eat after the cafeteria is closed?
7. How large are most classes? Do many take place in auditoriums?
8. What are the most popular extracurricular activities?
9. Are there many intramural or club sports?
10. Are there enough computers, printers, and copy machines available? What about at night?
11. Does student government play much of a role on campus?

Questions to ask at the admissions office:
1. When does registration take place for freshman? What is the registration procedure?
2. Do freshmen have to take any placement exams?
3. What sort of job placement or career counseling is available before graduation?
4. How much should I expect tuition to increase over the next four years?
5. Who should I speak to about financial aid?
6. Is there a course catalog I can take with me?

WHAT SHOULD BE ON MY COLLEGE VISIT CHECKLIST?
Visiting college campuses is important to help you determine what type of school you are looking for (i.e.: big school, small school, urban, or small town). Visiting can also occur at two other points in the process: when a student is trying to decide which school to apply to or when a student has been accepted to the institution. The visit is essentially to observe the school in motion and to determine how you fit there. Keep in mind this question: “Can I see myself here?”

Plan to visit colleges as early and often as possible. Talk with your parents about combining college visits with business trips, family gatherings and vacations. See as many places as possible early in your search. Even if a college does not appear on your list, spending time on its campus will give you valuable perspective for more informed decision-making later in the process. Besides, the things you discover at a previously unknown college may impress you. More than a few students have chosen colleges that emerged from such random visits.

Whenever you visit a college campus, make sure you sign in at the admission office. Complete the form. Fill out the card, even if it is the second or third time you visited. Do whatever it takes to make sure they know you were there. This is particularly true of visits prior to the time when admission decisions are made. Why? The best indicator to a college that you are a “high yield” prospect – that you are interested in matriculating – is the fact that you spent time on its campus.

Before you hop in the car, you will want to research the school as much as possible so that when you arrive, you can ask the questions that can’t be answered by a view book. In addition, you need to call the institution to schedule your visit. As soon as you know the date you would like to visit, phone the college and let them know you are coming. In turn, the college will send you a confirmation letter with directions, a campus map, and maybe even area hotels and local attractions.

While on campus:
Sit in on one or two classes, if possible.
Look at the dormitory rooms.
Check on dining facilities. Visit the library.
If you are interested in science, visit the laboratories.
Check on social, cultural, religious, and recreational facilities.
Talk informally with students.
Read the student handbook and the college newspaper.

The admissions officer will probably give you a frank evaluation of your chances for admission and tell you what you need to do, but do not try to pressure him (or let your parents do it) into making an immediate, on-the-spot decision.

**Individual interview:** If you find yourself in an interview or one-on-one situation with a member of the admission staff, be sure to tell your story.

**WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW?**
The college interview is another chance to tell your story directly. The interview’s notes will be added to your application file where they can provide valuable contextual understanding of your performance and perspectives. A face-to-face meeting also provides your interviewer with a better opportunity to put a name with a face – and to be your advocate later in the process.

In the INTERVIEW itself:

- **Take a resume to give the interviewer.**
- **Dress neatly and appropriately.** (Remember that this is a mutual selection process and you are on exhibit during the interview.)
- **Be friendly, relaxed, and courteous.** Talk freely about your accomplishments or talents, but don't brag about them.
- **Be prompt.** If your interview is scheduled for 10:00 AM, be there at that time or slightly earlier. But **don't be late!** If you find that you will be unavoidably delayed, telephone and apologize in advance.
- **Don't ask questions about things you could have learned by reading the website.** Your questions should show that you have done some serious thinking and reading about colleges in general and about that college in particular.
- **By all means take your parents, since they have a considerable interest in your choice also. But you should do most of the questioning and answering.** The admissions officers are evaluating you, not your parents.
- **Natural flow of conversation:** student > student + school > student + community > student + college

**WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE ON THE RESUME?**
At the Harvard Institute last summer, representatives from Harvard, Duke, Northwestern, Georgetown, and Penn concurred that the slick, high-octane, professionally-produced, “Mother Teresa-meet-Bono saintly activist” résumé’s from high schools students were indications that the students were being “packaged” and did not benefit the students’ applications. Students tend to come off, in their words, “embellished,” “disingenuous,” “cosmetically altered.”

What then are college admission officers looking for in the résumé? In a *USA Today* article, Pomona College dean of admission, Bruce Poch, noted that the “engaged student radiates excitement and connection to the greater world around her. When kids aren’t gaming the system, their personal résumé’s and statements will match the picture painted by counselors and teachers.” The goal then is that the résumé’ bleeds authenticity and passion. To many college admissions people, the real story in your résumé’ lies in how and what you achieved as well as your capacity to build upon that achievement. In other words, colleges are looking for thickness; evidence of substance. “One-year wonders” don’t cut it. Neither do the stretched thin “do-everythings.” The most important question then for you to answer is this one: What is your fire?
WHICH COLLEGES SHOULD I VISIT OVER SPRING BREAK?

Rocky Mountain

West
Oregon: Lewis & Clark, Willamette, Reed, U. of Oregon, and Oregon State
California: Stanford, Santa Clara, U. of San Francisco, Claremont Colleges, Whittier, Occidental, Loyola Marymount, Univ. of San Diego, U. of Southern California, U. of California system (esp. Berkeley, Santa Barbara, LA, & Santa Cruz), St. Mary’s, Redlands.

Southwest
U. of Arizona, Arizona State, U. of Northern Arizona, U. of New Mexico, New Mexico State, College of Santa Fe, St. John’s College
Texas & Louisiana: U. of Texas – Austin, Trinity, Southern Methodist, Rice, Texas Christian, Austin College, Southwestern, Loyola, Baylor, Tulane, Xavier (HBCU*), Dillard (HBCU*)

Northern Midwest
Montana: U. of Montana, Montana State
Minnesota: Carleton, Macalester, and St. Olaf
Wisconsin: U. of Wisconsin, Ripon, St. Lawrence University, and Beloit
Michigan: U. of Michigan, Michigan State, Hope, Kalamazoo

Midwest
Illinois: U. of Chicago, Northwestern, Lake Forest, Knox, Loyola, U of Illinois (Champaign)
Iowa: Cornell College, Grinnell, and Coe College
Nebraska: Creighton University, University of Nebraska
Ohio: Kenyon, Oberlin, Denison, Wittenberg, Xavier, Ohio Wesleyan, College of Wooster, Miami (Oxford), Hiram, Case Western
Indiana: Indiana U., Notre Dame, DePauw, Earlham, Butler, and U of Evansville
Missouri: Washington U., St. Louis U., U. of Missouri – Columbia, Westminster, William and Jewell
Kansas: U. of Kansas, Kansas State, Southwestern, University of Kansas City-Missouri

Mid-Atlantic
New Jersey: Princeton, Drew
Maryland: Johns Hopkins, Washington College, Goucher, and U of Maryland
Washington, DC: Georgetown, George Washington, American, Howard (HBCU*)

Northern New England
New Hampshire: Dartmouth, U. of New Hampshire, Keene State College, Colby Sawyer College
Vermont: U. of Vermont, Middlebury
Maine: Colby, Bates, Bowdoin
Southern New England
Boston Area: Boston College, Boston U., Tufts, Brandeis, Babson, Bentley, Emerson, Simmons (women), Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Wheaton, Wellesley (women), Northeastern
Western Massachusetts: Amherst, Hampshire, Williams, Smith (women), Clark, Holy Cross, Worcester Polytechnic
Connecticut: Trinity, Yale, Connecticut College, Fairfield University, U. Conn
Rhode Island: Brown, Rhode Island School of Design, Salve Regina, Roger Williams, U. of Rhode Island, Providence College, Bryant.

Southeast
Alabama: Auburn University, Alabama, Samford
Georgia: Emory, Spellman (HBCU*, women), Morehouse (HBCU*, men), Georgia Tech, UGA
Kentucky: Centre College
Tennessee: Vanderbilt, Belmont, U. of the South (Sewanee), Rhodes, U. of Tennessee
North Carolina: UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke, Wake Forest, Davidson, Guilford, Elon, UNC-Asheville
South Carolina: College of Charleston, U. of South Carolina, Furman, Wofford, Clemson, Presbyterian.
Florida: U. of Miami, Rollins, Eckerd, Flagler, U. of Florida, Florida State

*HBCU= Historically Black Colleges and Universities

HOW DO I FINALIZE MY COLLEGE LIST?
Once colleges have been researched and visited, it's time to make a final list of colleges to which a student will actually apply. Although there is no magic number of colleges, we do believe the expression “Eight is enough” is apropos here. Students in the past who took the “shotgun” approach, applying to 10-20 schools, had success at the schools they really invested themselves in, and had very little success at schools where they were merely a “ghost student” (student on paper; no contact history). Last year, Casady students averaged 4.5 applications. Over three quarters of Casady seniors were accepted to 75% of the schools they applied to. And 78% of Casady seniors were accepted to one of their first choice schools.

Our hope again is that seniors don’t have one first choice school, but five first choice schools. The key is to finalize a list of colleges where you can see yourself thriving and graduating in four years at any of those colleges.

Keep in mind that admissions decisions are often unpredictable, especially the higher up the “pyramid of selectivity” you aspire. Also keep in mind what Bill Fitzsimmons, Harvard’s dean of admission, said recently: “90% of the applicant pool was qualified for acceptance.” In other words, Harvard could have passed on every applicant they accepted and not skipped a beat. Also keep in mind that the “scattergram” feature of Naviance Family Connection, available to juniors, can help.
HOW DO I CALCULATE MY ODDS OF ADMISSION?
The following chart offers a rough approximation of your chances for getting into a college based on its selectivity and where your credentials fall on its profile. For the purposes of this discussion, assume that both your scores and your GPA fall at the same point on the admission profile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The College’s Selectivity</th>
<th>Where Your Credentials Fall on the Profile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Admits</td>
<td>Top 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6/8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that, at the top of the “Pyramid” among the most highly selective colleges, there really are no guarantees. Even the strongest candidates must compete against long odds to gain admission.

SAMPLE CREDENTIALS

Your Stats

The College’s Profile

Your best composite of ACT scores: Mid 50% of ACT scores reported by enrolled students at college:

- Above 30 25%
- 27-29 50%
- Below 27 25%

Your GPA is:

- 3.70 25%
- 3.3-3.7 Mid-50%
- Below 3.3 25%

The same credentials (27 ACT and 3.7 GPA) put this candidate in the ballpark. If these are your credentials and the college is admitting 50% of the applicants, then the odds that you will gain admission are 1:2. Being in the ballpark is not a guarantee that you will get in. It does mean that you have a fairly even chance of admission. You must still compete.

A Note about “Safety” Schools...

There was a long time ago, students, when your parents were in high school that certain colleges were considered “fallbacks” for more competitive schools and were referred to as “safeties.” We no longer use the term “safety,” and few schools do, because it under-accents a negative mindset and in today’s college admissions climate can lead to unpleasant surprises. Who wants to go a “safety” school, anyway?

SHOULD I APPLY EARLY?

Many selective and highly selective colleges offer options for Early Decision (ED) or Single Choice Early Action (SCEA) or Early Action (EA) in order to manage their enrollments more carefully. After all, as you have seen on the Doors of Enrollment, it is much easier to predict enrollment when the students themselves are prepared to make firm commitments if accepted.

Colleges’ tendencies with regard to Early Decision have changed dramatically over the years. Originally an application option extended by very selective colleges to their best candidates, Early Decision has become a perfect marriage for colleges that want to improve their admission statistics and students on the competitive
bubble who want to improve their chances of admission. Early Decision has become a “selectivity coupon” that students cash in for a greater chance at gaining admission.

As a result, the odds of admission statistically favor the Early Decision candidates. However, when it comes to Single Choice Early Action, it may be just the opposite. Single Choice Early Action allows students to apply early in a non-binding manner, hear back in December, and have until May to decide. However, schools that offer SCEA like Yale, Harvard, Stanford and Princeton tend to take a very conservative number of admitted students, defer or deny a vast majority, and usually only admit students that fit their institutional agendas. It’s not uncommon for prized athletes, under represented minorities, and legacy students to gain admission over other highly admissible students. So unless you have a clear “hook”, it is wise not to apply SCEA.

Most ED/SCEA/EA programs operate on deadlines well ahead of those established for regular decision, typically ranging from November 1 to December 15. Decisions are usually posted within 30-45 days of the deadline. Some colleges offer a second round of ED with a deadline that often falls between January 15 and February 15.

Early Decision applications are admitted, denied, or deferred. In the case of deferral, the application is set aside to be reviewed again with the regular decision candidates. A handful of colleges and universities offer Early Action as a similar, non-binding option for applicants who want to receive early notification of their admission status. Be sure to research your options carefully.

If you apply “early” somewhere, it makes sense to cover yourself by submitting regular applications to other colleges in the event that your ED application is unsuccessful. Keep in mind that, once admitted under an ED plan, you will be expected to withdraw all other applications and to enroll at the ED college. Do not entertain more than one Early Decision application at a time.

The availability of financial assistance for ED candidates will vary from school to school. If you are considering an Early Decision application and the availability of aid is a factor for your family, you might ask the college’s financial aid office to give you an “early estimate” of your likely financial obligation if you are admitted. Also, all schools are now required to provide a Financial Aid Cost Calculator so that students can forecast what they will be required to pay.

**Why Colleges and Universities Promote ED/RSC EA/EA Options:**

- Increased ED enrollments improve the overall yield on offers.
- The greater the number of ED enrollments, the fewer candidates needed through the regular decision process and, hence, the lower the admit ratio.
- Higher yields and lower admit ratios contribute to stronger institutional ratings in guidebooks.
- The higher the proportion of entering students who profess a first-choice interest in a college, the better the retention (% of students who come back for the second year) and graduation results.
- They want to give students the peace of mind associated with knowing the outcome of their first-choice applications.

**WHAT ARE THE DO’S AND DON’T OF EARLY DECISION (ED)?**

- **Do** visit multiple college campuses before choosing to apply ED. Stay overnight at several if you can. Immerse yourself in the life of each campus. Give yourself good perspective from which to choose appropriately before committing to the ED process.
- **Don’t** apply ED to more than one school at a time.
• Do ask for an “early estimate” of your financial aid application before you apply ED if you have any concerns about affording that college’s cost.

• Don’t apply ED if you feel it is important to compare financial aid offers.

• Do make sure that you are “in strong like” with a school before applying ED. It will be the place you call “home” for the next four years.

• Don’t apply ED simply to “beat the odds”. Chances are that you will get in – and then find yourself in an unsatisfying situation at a school that really isn’t for you.

• Do understand what the colleges’ rules are with regard to ED/SCEA/EA submissions.

• Don’t succumb to the temptation to let your other applications “ride” after you have been admitted ED somewhere. Not only is it unethical, the chances are that you will get busted – and lose all of your enrollment opportunities!

• Do immerse yourself in the life of the campus before committing to the ED process. Drink in the ethos.

Regular Decision (RD) involves a non-binding application deadline from January 1 to February 15, with most deadlines in January. Decisions are generally mailed in the spring, usually in late March or early April, and students have until May 1 to make a deposit at the college that they will be attending and to notify other colleges that have offered them acceptances that they will be attending elsewhere.

Rolling Admission (RA) involves a non-binding commitment, and allows students to apply between August and May. Typically large state universities like OU and OSU are rolling; however, sometimes admissions officers won’t begin reading applications in early October, and the applicant is notified a certain time after the application file is complete (generally 4 to 6 weeks). Again students have until May 1 to send in their deposit. Many times a computer will send out acceptance letters for students who automatically qualify for admission based on the universities criteria. OU, for example, will send out an automated letter to any students with over a 3.25 GPA and 25 ACT/1060 SAT. If your GPA or test scores do not meet the objective criteria, then the computer will spit out a deferral letter. Many times applications at public universities will not transfer into “human hands” until after Christmas.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WHAT IS CASADY’S CEEB CODE?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An applicant’s high school CEEB code is requested on most application materials. The Casady School code is: 372640</td>
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</table>

DOES CASADY CLASS RANK?
The Secondary School Report form typically requests that the school report an applicant’s rank in his or her class. This figure is intended to help colleges evaluate an applicant’s academic performance in the context of his or her classmates. Because Casady is a small, college preparatory school, we find that ranking is not appropriate for our students, as our selective admissions process results in a student body that is closely grouped in ability and achievement. The student whose official rank might be towards the bottom of the class could be an excellent candidate for many selective colleges. Therefore, Casady School, like the majority of schools in the Southwest Preparatory Conference, does not rank. Because we are well known nationally as a strong school with a rigorous academic institution, this policy does not put our students at a disadvantage. Colleges use other measuring sticks to assess our students – primarily the high school transcript that indicates what courses a student has taken and how he or she has performed in those courses. The College Board website notes that “according to a recent report by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), over half of all high schools no longer report student rankings”.
https://professionals.collegeboard.org/guidance/applications/rank
WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT THE PERSONAL ESSAY?
The best book out there on college essay writing, specifically the personal essay, is Janine Robinson’s short but very practical book, Escape Essay Hell.  
You can order her book here: https://www.amazon.com/Escape-Essay-Hell-Step-Step/dp/1492855391/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1503936253&sr=8-1&keywords=escape+essay+hell

What advice do you have for supplemental essays?  
The danger of the supplemental essay is to think of it as a supplemental essay. In other words, this essay is not that important to my application. College admission officers only really glance at this essay. They scrutinize the others. So I’ll just write a few breezy sentences and move on. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Many times colleges will use this essay as a winnowing fork to separate the wheat from the chaff – especially when there is a huge bundle in the middle. Rice’s Dean of Admission, Julie Browning, explains (paraphrase):

> Every year we admit the cream of the crop, eliminate the bottom stripe, and then get to work on the crushing volume in the middle. The primary way we eliminate those in the middle comes from reading the supplemental essay. Applicants who write very little often get the thin letter. Applicants that write informatively and specifically their reasons for wanting to attend Rice often get the thick letter.

Yield is always a burning issue in the back of college admission people’s minds. So the question, “Why do you want to attend X?” could be a deal maker or deal breaker. So your goal then is to write concretely and compellingly. Provide, for example, three specific things you love about the school. Don’t be vague or glib. It is vitally important that the college knows after they read the supplemental essay that 1) you know them, 2) you really like them, and 3) that you could see yourself as one of them.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM WAITLISTED?
You have no chance of being admitted from a Wait List if you don’t treat the situation aggressively. Make sure that the school knows it is your first choice. Visit. Send new grades. Give them new insight into your performance. Stay on their radar screen. If there had ever been a question about financial aid, be clear about what your family can afford. Your need of assistance could well be a determining factor.  
Here is what you need to know in order to give yourself a competitive edge:

• Colleges target their offers of admission from the Wait List. They don’t want to admit any more students than are absolutely necessary. Contrary to popular belief, most wait lists are not numerically ranked.
• Be sure to provide evidence of your potential hook. Colleges re-define their needs as they go to the wait list. They may have plenty of tuba players, but need an oboist. They may need to balance their gender mix. They may need students who won’t require financial assistance.
• Admission committees constantly search for new information upon which they can base acceptance. Provide new (and improved) grades, a letter of recommendation from a senior year teacher, new financial information, and evidence of recent accomplishments that might not have appeared on your initial application.
• Make sure they know you are available and ready to accept an offer of admission. Visit – again if necessary. Ask for an interview. Continue to show your interest. Be sincere. Keep interactions short and pointed. Don’t be a pest.
• Admission officers won’t admit it, but this point in the process tires them.
• Ask college counselor to follow up with an email or phone call.
WHAT DO I NEED TO KEEP IN MIND FOR MY SENIOR YEAR?
A lot of students enter the senior year with the knowledge that they “satisfied graduation requirements” in one or more of the major discipline areas. You’ve no doubt heard the talk among your friends:

“The junior year is the most difficult and important academically.”
“I’ve already had four years of language starting in eighth grade.”
“I’ve satisfied my math requirement for graduation.”
“Science in the senior year is a waste of time unless you want to be a doctor.”
“Colleges don’t really look at senior grades.”

Each is a preface to, “so I don’t have to push myself in my senior year.” Each of these statements reflects a choice the speaker is making. The choices you make say a lot about your passion for learning. As a result, they will also have a direct bearing on your “range of options” when the decision letters are delivered. At the end of your junior year, though, you are finally able to determine for yourself the courses you will take. It is in the planning for the senior year when students often ask, “Is it better to take an easier course where I know I can get an A or to take the harder course where I can probably do the work, but will be more likely to get a B or a C? The answer is three-fold. Take the course that makes sense (provides the appropriate challenge) for you, do as well as you can, and then choose colleges that will value you for your effort.

A good rule of thumb is: “The more selective the college, the more important the senior year performance is as the deciding credential.” Many colleges wait to make final decisions until first-trimester or mid-trimester grades are evaluated.

WHAT ARE THE TOP 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE?
Each college has its own set of rules and policies governing financial aid – how outside scholarships are treated, whether aid awards can be appealed – information that may or may not appear in their brochures. As you check out the colleges on your list, don’t forget to email, call or visit the financial aid office.

Here are 10 questions to get started:
1. Where on your website can I find your “college calculator” to estimate costs?
2. What’s the average total cost of attendance (tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, travel, and other personal expenses) for the first year?
3. By how much should I expect my costs to increase each year? How much have tuition, fees, room and board increased over the last three to five years?
4. Does the school offer need-based and merit-based financial aid? How is financial aid affected if I apply via an Early Decision or Early Action program?
5. What is the priority deadline to apply for financial aid?
6. When will I be notified about financial aid award decisions?
7. If the financial aid package isn’t enough, can I appeal? Under what conditions, if any, will the aid office reconsider the offer?
8. How will the aid package change from year to year? What will happen if my family’s financial situation changes? What will happen if my enrollment status changes?
9. Can I defer for a year and receive the same financial aid package?
10. What are the academic requirements or other conditions for the renewal of financial aid, including scholarships?

*Excerpt taken from Get It Together for College
WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID?
Financial aid for college education is available from a variety of sources. Awards are principally based upon need as determined by filing the FAFSA and CSS PROFILE. The person best qualified to give information and answer questions is the financial aid officer of the college to which you are applying. We strongly suggest that you establish a working relationship with the financial aid office at the college(s) in which you are most interested.

Financial aid usually comes in a variety of forms and may include:

**Grants:** “Free” money i.e., money that the student does not have to pay back. Typically awarded based on need.

**Loans:** Money that has to be paid back, but usually has a low interest rate and may not have to be repaid until after the student graduates.

**College Work-Study:** Campus employment under auspices of the student’s financial need.

**Scholarships:** Merit-based awards that do not have to be paid back.
- **General:** determined on the base of merit – high school record, standardized test scores, etc. These may emphasize leadership, community service or other specific areas of excellence.
- **Departmental:** determined on the basis of merit and academic record in certain fields.
- **Performance:** determined on the basis of merit and demonstrated talent in the area considered, e.g. band, art, theatre, etc. On-campus audition, audition DVD or a portfolio may be required.
- **Athletic:** determined on the basis of merit and demonstrated performance. NCAA Division I and II, and NAIA only.
- **Private/Corporate/Organizational:** determined on the basis of merit. Sponsored by private and public organizations outside of the university and may emphasize leadership, community service, minority status, etc.

WHAT ARE KEY FINANCIAL AID DEFINITIONS?

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** The Expected Family Contribution is a key to determining student’s eligibility for need based financial aid. Your EFC is determined by a formula that compares your family’s income and assets with your family’s cost of living. The difference is your “expected family contribution”. The FASFA and CSS PROFILE are forms most commonly used to determine the EFC.

**EFC (EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION) FORMULA**
Formula for Determining Expected Family Contribution
Family Income/Assets - Cost of Living Allowances = Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** The best way to estimate your eligibility for need-based financial aid and your family’s EFC (“Expected Family Contribution”) is to enter your information into the “FAFSA4caster,” a simplified version of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid available at [https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm?execution=e1s1](https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm?execution=e1s1). The “4caster” also provides guidance on the next steps for applying for federal student aid and paying for education beyond high school. The College Board provides an aid comparison calculator at [https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards/compare-aid-calculator](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards/compare-aid-calculator). For more information, go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
PRIOR-PRIOR: Beginning in October 2016 (for aid applications for the 2017-18 award year), the White House will allow students to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) using prior-prior year (PPY) tax data.

FAFSA vs. PROFILE: Both forms utilize methodologies (formulas) designed to reveal your EFC. While all colleges use the FAFSA to determine your eligibility for the government assistance they administer, most also use the FAFSA to determine your eligibility for institutional funding. Therefore, there is a good chance that the only form you will need to complete in applying for financial aid is the FAFSA, which, by the way, is now keyed to the Federal IRS tax returns for the custodial parent(s) and the student. In these cases, the need analysis will be fairly straightforward.

On the other hand, more than 400 private colleges and universities also utilize the CSS PROFILE to determine your eligibility for institutional funds. The PROFILE is a much more comprehensive survey of family income/assets that typically reports an EFC that is, on average, higher than that reported by the FAFSA by at least $5,000. If you are looking at private colleges, it is important to be attentive to filing deadlines for both forms and to be alert to the very real possibility that the methodologies might be used interchangeably depending on the institution’s agenda in admitting you.

Need Blind Admission: A time-honored notion that colleges should consider students for admission regardless of their families’ financial circumstances, “need blind” commentaries are bound to pop in college presentations. However noble the concept, it is difficult, if not impossible to deliver, let alone prove. The antithesis to “need blind,” “resource aware” admissions fits more practically with the agendas of colleges that seek to use their funds to attract the most desirable candidates.

Net Price Calculators (NPC): The federal government has mandated that, as of October 2011, each college must have on its website a mechanism that can be used by families to produce a close estimate of the out-of-pocket expense it should anticipate at that college. While the concept is well intended, don’t expect precision in the calculation. The need analyses are too subjective and, absent an assessment of the relative strength of your credentials in the overall applicant pool, it is impossible to know how the institution will choose to “package” your financial aid. Use the NPC, along with the FAFSA4caster, to develop a good idea of your cash outlay for college (your projected EFC). Be careful, though, about literal interpretations of the results in your college planning.

Financial Aid Award: Financial aid awards are notoriously complicated and difficult to interpret. In particular, they rarely provide clear answers with regard to EFC and cost of attendance. When it comes time to sorting out financial aid awards, don’t make assumptions. Contact the representative financial aid offices with questions. If something doesn’t look right, make an appeal with new and/or clarifying information. Financial aid officers are much more amenable to responding to reasonable appeals featuring new information than they are to negotiation sessions.

Renewal Criteria: Financial aid awards are made annually, based on the EFC as determined for your family for the year in question. Applications for the renewal of need-based aid must be submitted each year. Even if the need remains the same, the institution may change the composition of the financial aid award in subsequent years, so it is worth inquiring about that likelihood at the outset.

An often-overlooked factor in the renewal process is that the correspondence regarding renewal goes directly to the student (now in college) – not the parents. Late submission of required documentation can result in the loss of funding for a semester or two.
Loan/Indebtedness: Many students are averse to borrowing as they are understandably reluctant to find themselves in debt. Indeed, debt is a choice that a student and his/her family make in this process. Whereas most educators believe that a loan debt accrued to the student of $25,000-$28,000 over four years is not unreasonable and can, in fact, help to establish positive credit ratings, debt in much greater amounts is neither necessary nor healthy. Consequently, student loan debt in the US just surpassed $1 trillion!

Loans do indeed play an important role in helping families meet college expenses. If you receive a need-based financial aid award, it will likely include a loan. The federally guaranteed student loans (Stafford and Perkins Loans) are payment deferred – you don’t have to start paying them back until you complete your education. Students who do not demonstrate “need” may still qualify for unsubsidized Stafford loans. Currently, low interest rates make them attractive options.

Regardless of your eligibility for need-based aid, you may find that you and/or your parents still need to borrow money in order to support your payment of the family contribution. Low-interest PLUS loans are available to parents feeling the pinch. In addition, most colleges work with tuition payment plans that enable families to pay incrementally over the course of an academic year.

Institutionally Awarded Merit-Based Scholarships: Merit-based awards have become prevalent at many colleges and universities. Given regardless of demonstrated “need,” merit awards recognize a student’s achievement or talent that is extraordinary among the field of competitors for admission. Keep in mind that a talent that is considered exceptional and worthy of scholarship at one school may be regarded as ordinary at another.

Financial Aid and Early Decision: Students with financial need who are considering an Early Decision application are well advised to seek “early estimates” of the EFC directly from the financial aid office of the college in question. When you apply ED, it is assumed that you have resolved all matters financial and you will enroll if admitted.

WHERE CAN I FIND SCHOLARSHIPS ONLINE?
The following websites can be very useful in the financial aid process:

- [https://www.nasfaa.org/students_parents_counselors](https://www.nasfaa.org/students_parents_counselors) provides financial aid resources from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.
- [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) offers a free service by which a family can calculate its estimated “Expected Family Contribution” number. This is a good place to begin to determine if a family will qualify for need-based financial aid.
- [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) matches student profiles to a database containing over 600,000 scholarships. The site also alerts students to application deadlines or when new scholarships are added.
- [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) provides basic information about financial aid and the College Scholarship Service PROFILE forms, which can be downloaded or completed and submitted on-line. The site also connects student profiles to a database containing over 2,300 scholarships, internships and loans and provides a calculator for estimating a family’s “expected contribution” figure.
- [www.fastaid.com](http://www.fastaid.com), and [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com) offer free scholarship search engines.
- [www.simpletuition.com](http://www.simpletuition.com) enables borrowers to compare and apply for federal and private student loans online.
- [www.uncf.org](http://www.uncf.org) provides financial aid advice and a scholarship search from the United Negro College Fund.
• www.princetonreview.com is the Princeton Review website. It includes basic information about how the financial aid process works and explains what forms are needed and what types of aid are possible. There is a variety of other information at this site about the college process, as well.
• www.hispanicfund.org provides information about scholarships for Hispanic students.
• www.petersons.com practice standardized tests, financial aid information, college and scholarship search tools, and more at this site. The scholarship search provides access to more than 1.6 million scholarships, grants, and awards.
• www.collegeview.com a comprehensive college search tool, scholarship directory and search tool, and college and financial aid links.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 5 College Financial Aid Blunders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Not applying for aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Saving in a child’s name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Missing scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sending in forms too late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Paying financial planners to do it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*excerpt from Get Into College*
GLOSSARY OF COLLEGE TERMS

ACT – American College Tests. Phone 319-337-1270 and www.ACT.org

AP Tests – Advanced Placement Tests are given at the end of AP course work each spring. High scores should earn advanced standing in colleges, with or without college credit.

CALENDAR PLAN – This describes the number and length of terms per year: semester (2 terms), trimester (3 terms), quarter (4 terms), and various other plans such as “4-1-4” (a 4 month term, followed by a 1 month term, followed by a final 4 month term).

CANDIDATE’S REPLY DATE - A college may require an applicant to notify the college by this date as to the intentions of the applicant to enroll in that college. Common reply date is May 1.

CONSORTIUM – A group of institutions which have joint educational programs and which have joined together to promote their institutions.

DEFERRED – Candidate not accepted during Early Action or Early Decision Admission may be reconsidered along with the Regular Decision applicants.

EARLY ACTION – Initiated in 1976-1977 by the Ivy League colleges. This plan involves a non-binding commitment between the student and the college. The admission committee will review the student’s application earlier than those of students applying under regular decision, and will inform the student of its decision usually during December.

EARLY ACTION-SINGLE CHOICE – A recently developed plan and offered by only a few select colleges, Early Action-Single choice applicants enter a non-binding agreement similar to Early Action but agree not to file any other early action applications.

EARLY DECISION – This plan involves a binding commitment between the student and the college. The admission committee will review the student’s application earlier than those of students applying regular decision, and the committee will inform the student of its decision usually in December. In turn, the student, if accepted, is ethically committed to attending the college and to canceling (or not submitting) applications to any other colleges. College’s act on an Early Decision application in one of three ways: accept, defer, or deny. If an Early Decision student is deferred, he/she is no longer ethically committed to the particular institution.

ETS – Educational Testing Service. Phone: 609-921-9000. The center is in Princeton, NJ and handles all the registration and score reports for the College Board Tests – SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP Exams.

FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid. (Form used to apply for need-based financial aid from Federal Student financial aid programs offered by the U.S. Department of Education). The FAFSA form is available online at FAFSA.ed.gov. after October 1 of the student’s senior year.

PROFILE – The Financial Aid PROFILE Service (PROFILE for short) is offered by the College Scholarship Service (CSS). The CSS is the financial aid division of the College Board, a national, not-for-profit association of colleges, universities, high schools, state agencies, and educational associations. The college, universities, and scholarship programs that award their own private funds use the PROFILE Service.

REGULAR ADMISSION – Most colleges have a particular deadline for the receipt of applications which may be from January 1 on. In this type of admission plan, the college informs applicants about admissions on a specific date, anytime before April 15, and the student is asked to respond to an acceptance notification by May 1.

ROLLING ADMISSIONS (EARLY NOTIFICATION): Applications are considered as soon as all required materials (application form, fees, transcript recommendations, test scores) are received by the college. It is important not to apply too early if you feel that your fall test scores and/or your 1st trimester grades will place you in a better position for acceptance. Students are notified as soon as the decisions are made, usually from four to six weeks after completion of the application.

SAT – Phone: Toll free at 866-756-7346 or www.collegeboard.org

SAT Subject Test – The SAT Subject Tests of the College Board are subject matter tests. They are one hour tests; multiple choice. The tests include: Writing, Literature, US History, World History, Math Level IC, Math
Level IIC, Biology E/M, Chemistry, Physics, and various languages (reading only or reading and listening). Because colleges vary in the number they require and because you should keep as many options as possible, we recommend your taking a minimum of three. The best time to take subject tests is immediately after completion of the class.

**WAIT LIST** — The college admission committee has favorably considered your application but is over subscribed. Your application will be considered, likely in late spring or early summer, depending on space available. (Do not get your hopes up, especially at very selective colleges).

**WHAT IF I AM INTERESTED IN A GAP YEAR?**
Although taking a year off in between high school and college is not as prevalent here as it is in the UK and Europe, there are a number of excellent gap year programs in the US. It can be a very maturing experience, which often translates to an academic advantage. Check out these websites to learn more:

- [www.gap-year.com](http://www.gap-year.com)
- [www.leapnow.org](http://www.leapnow.org)
- [www.bunac.org](http://www.bunac.org)
- [www.interimprograms.com](http://www.interimprograms.com)

**IMPORTANT Q & A’s**

**Q:** What does “EFC” stand for?
**A:** “EFC” stands for Expected Family Contribution, and it is a formula used by colleges to determine how much money your family is expected to pay toward your college education for one year. To anticipate what your EFC will be for your student, go to [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) where you can calculate it. We encourage parents to find out their EFC during the freshman year.

**Q:** What does “gapping” mean?
**A:** Gapping is a financial aid term. A gap occurs when a college’s financial aid award does not meet the student’s financial need. When a student is gapped, the family is responsible for the EFC and the gap.

**Q:** Are "B"s in honors or Advanced Placement classes better than "A"s in less demanding ones?
**A:** "B"s in first-string classes are more impressive than "A"s in easier ones. Even an occasional "C" won’t rule out a career at a highly selective college (but tip-top applicants often have all or mostly "A"s in tip-top classes. We’re not trying to ruin your day, we just want you to know what your son or daughter may be up against). Yet, while the most competitive colleges do prefer the most competitive courses, there is room for fluctuation, and a second-level class in one or two weaker areas may work better for your child.

**Q:** What is the best strategy to build a college list – and how many schools should I approximate toward for my student’s final college list?
**A:** We encourage parents and students to take a three pronged approach: 1) choose colleges that seem like the “best fit” for the student (instead of “best college”); 2) put on the table schools that correspond reasonably to the student’s grades, test scores, and transcript’s rigor/or lack thereof; and 3) build your list from the ground up. Start with the “Likely” (75>% or better), then “Target” (50/50%), and end with “Reach” (<25% or less), and “Double Reaches” (<10% or less). A solid college list will have 2-3 Likely Schools, 3-4 Target, and 1-3 Reach. Aim for no more than 10 colleges. The key is not to have 1 First Choice School but 5-10 First Choice Schools!
Q: What is a “hook” in the application process?
A: A hook is an additional advantage to a college. A hook might include athletic ability, minority status, veteran status, alumni connections, special talent, underrepresented socioeconomic background, geography, gender, VIP status, and ability to pay full tuition.

Q: What is the difference between the ACT and SAT – and how often should my student take them?
A: The ACT is a five-test exam: English, Math, Reading, Science Reasoning, and Writing (optional – but we recommend doing it). The student will receive a score ranging from 1 to 36. There is no penalty for wrong answers.
The SAT tests a student’s development in three areas: reading, language and writing, and math. The essay portion is optional, but we recommend it. Scores on each section range from 200-800 (800 is high). There is no penalty for wrong answers.
We encourage students to take each test at least once. Then we suggest the student taking the test they performed better on two more times. Studies show that after a student takes a test three times, their score has hit its ceiling.

Q: What is an SAT Subject Test?
A: An SAT Subject Test is a one-hour, multiple-choice test on a specific subject. Many colleges use the Subject Tests for admission, for course placement, and to advise students about course selection. Used in combination with other background information (your high school record, scores from other tests like the SAT Reasoning Test, teacher recommendations, etc.), they provide a dependable measure of your academic achievement and are a good predictor of future performance. The Subject Tests fall into five categories: Math: Level I and II; English: Literature; History: US History and World History; Science: Biology, Chemistry, and Physics; Languages: Spanish, Latin, French, and Chinese. Most highly competitive colleges require 2 Subject Tests; some colleges require 3.

Q: Should my child schedule an interview?
A: Yes. Interviews offer a way to “put flesh” on an application. Sometimes it’s hard to provide a college a full-orbed picture of yourself on paper. Interviews allot for that chance for schools to see a different side of a student, to understand why certain choices were made, to appreciate the extent of a commitment. Interviews also communicate to the college Demonstrated Interest. That’s a good thing. Most college keep a close tab on every contact point a student makes. Keep in mind, though, that sometimes interviews are not weighed heavily in the decision-making.

Q: Should my student take the ACT/SAT prep courses?
A: Yes. No. Maybe. A recent study at the University of Chicago found that the best prep for tests is “teaching college-level skills throughout high school.” If you decide to pursue test prep options, then we would direct you to pages 51-52 of our Field Guide. You will find local tutorial, workshop/seminar, and online options.

Q: Are there any test optional colleges?
A: Yes. There are more than 1,000 test optional schools – and competitive ones like Wake Forest, Bates, Bowdoin, Sewanee, Furman, Sarah Lawrence, Franklin and Marshall. For a complete list of test optional schools go to www.fairtest.org

Q: What resources are helpful in learning more about the college landscape?
A: We recommend the following resources to jump-start your search. All of these resources are available in the college counseling office: The Princeton Review: The Best 368 Colleges, Peterson’s 440 Great Colleges for
Q: My daughter is trying to figure out which teachers to ask for letters of recommendation. Her favorite teacher was her 9th grade English teacher. Should she ask him for a recommendation or someone who has taught her more recently?
A: First, she should choose a teacher who is familiar with her most recent work. Often then we encourage a student to ask a junior/senior year teacher from a core course (English, History, Math, Science, and Language). That said, the teacher most likely to provide credible insight into your daughter’s growth and achievement as a student will be the one who challenged her most – who forced her out of her comfort zone and into new patterns of discovery. Such a teacher won’t always be the most popular but will be among the most widely respected.

Q: What is a good number of recommendations to submit?
A: The best answer here is “the number that the college requests.” The only exception to that rule would be the situation where a potential recommender is able to provide unusual insight into the student’s work habits, passion for learning, potential to grow, and ability to deal with setbacks. Letters from politicians, clergy, and important alumni simply add to the weight of the application.

Q: My son’s grades dipped in his [freshman, sophomore, junior] year. Is that going to be a problem?
A: It depends on how far the grades dipped, what he did to correct the problem, and where he thinks he wants to go to college. Whenever admission committees see irregularities in a student’s program or performance, they need to know why this has happened. If there is a valid reason (injury, extended illness, distractions at home, etc) – not an excuse – then he has a story to tell. The more selective the college, the more important it is that he demonstrates that he can rebound well from setbacks and makes sure that his story is told.

Q: When is the best time for my student to apply?
A: The best time to submit an application is during the two- to four-week window prior to the deadline. The point here is that your student should take precautions against having his credentials get caught in the last-minute avalanche that will engulf most admission offices. By getting things in slightly ahead of time, he beats the rush, reduces the likelihood that information will be lost or misfiled, and gives the folks who process his application a chance to notify him (in a timely manner) of any missing or incomplete materials.

Q: My student is applying to a number of universities that have similar but slightly different essay questions. Can’t she just use one of her better essays for each of the colleges?
A: She can do that, but it probably is not a good idea. When colleges create their applications, they often craft essay questions in order to elicit certain types of responses from students. When a student “repurposes” a good essay written for one college and submits it to another, she risks falling short in terms of producing the impact desired by the second college.

Q: How do colleges factor learning differences into a student’s performance? While my student has compensated well, he has still struggled at times and his grades show. Is this something that colleges want to know about?
A: I would err on the side of self-disclosure. If a college is otherwise interested in your student but is concerned about an erratic record, they want to know why the struggles have taken place. Absent an explanation, admission officers will have to guess. More often than not, they are not too charitable in their guessing. By self-disclosing, your student provides needed insight into his performance. If that becomes a
point of discrimination against him, then perhaps the college is doing him a favor. It probably would not have stepped forward to support him in times of struggle as an enrolled student.

Q: Casady is an insanely competitive high school where I work very hard to achieve a 3.2 GPA. I have friends at other schools where I know that I could probably get a 3.8 or 3.9 without working nearly as hard. Will colleges know this or am I going to be penalized for attending Casady?
A: You should be fine. Colleges, especially those that are very picky, go to great lengths to make sure they know the schools from which their applicants are coming. You can be sure they’ll know about Casady and how competitive it is.

Q: Are competitive colleges looking at how I challenge myself or are they more interested in the final grade that affects GPA and class rank?
A: Yes and yes. Colleges want to see how you challenge yourself – especially as you get to the higher-level courses. Remember, the more selective schools want to see what you do when you don’t have to take the challenge. Obviously, they’d like to see you do well. Getting high grades in easier courses, though, won’t impress any of the more selective schools. You should try to expose yourself to academic rigor that matches your level of ability – and then do well!

Q: What are some common traits, attributes, and habits between successful SAT- and ACT-takers:
A: First, they are readers. They internalize good language mechanics, have an expanded vocabulary, and know how to get through a passage and understand its main points. Second, they do not allow stress to affect the way they process information. Third, they are effective problem solvers. Fourth, they have the stamina to take a 4-hour test with only two 5-minute breaks. Fifth, they are reasonably good, if not excellent, students who are experienced writers and have had math through at least Algebra II.

IMPORTANT WEB LINKS
A website for first-generation college-bound students, the website “First in the Family” offers advice to students who are the first in their families to attend college: http://www.firstinthefamily.org.
Other suggested college search websites are:
- https://www.usnews.com/education
- www.ecampustours.com
- www.campusvisit.com
- www.collegeboard.org
- www.princetonreview.com
- www.petersons.com
- www.collegeview.com
- www.gocollege.com
- www.niche.com
- The University and College Accountability Network, provides profiles of 600 associate members in colorful charts: www.ucan-network.org
- The U.S. Department of Education has launched the College Navigator, which supplies government data on 7,000 public and private institutions. Colleges can be searched using 16 criteria, including campus setting and varsity sports: https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (NESSIE), based at Indiana University and USA Today, attempts to measure the value of the college experience, basing scores on what freshman and seniors
say about factors such as academic challenge, faculty interaction, and class participation. About 250 of participating colleges have agreed to make their results public: http://nsse.indiana.edu/

Additional Search Resources:

- www.CSCollegecenter.org is the website of the Center for Student Opportunity, “an online clearinghouse of college programs and admissions information serving first-generation, low-income, and minority student populations.”
- http://hbcuconnect.com provides information about and links to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- www.catholiccollegeonline.org is the website of the National Catholic College Admission Association.
- www.hillel.org is the website of Hillel – The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.
- http://bbyo.org is the website of the B’nai B’rith Youth Organization, which includes a college search engine designed for Jewish students.

Those interested in universities in the United Kingdom or Ireland can apply directly to the college of choice or can apply to more than one college on a single form from the national offices: the Universities and College Admissions Service in the U.K., at https://www.ucas.com/, or the Central Applications Office in the Republic of Ireland, at www.cao.ie. (It’s not possible, however, to apply to both Cambridge and Oxford in the same year.)

According to The New York Times, “Most foreign universities ask for a personal statement – usually an essay on why you want to attend the college or pursue a certain field – and an interview, either over the phone or someplace close to home. They accept the same forms of measurement – SAT and ACT, Advanced Placement – common in the United States.” Directions for applying are available on the university websites, including: Trinity – http://www.tcd.ie/, Utrecht – www.uu.nl, St. Andrews – www.st-andrews.ac.uk, Cambridge – www.cam.ac.uk, and Oxford – www.ox.ac.uk. Also useful for researching opportunities in the United Kingdom: https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/

COLLEGE LISTS

25 NEW IVIES (Newsweek 2011)

Boston College
Bowdoin College
Carnegie Mellon
Claremont Colleges: Harvey Mudd and Pomona
Colby College
Colgate University
Davidson College
Emory University
Kenyon College
Macalester College
University of Michigan
New York University
UNC-Chapel Hill
University of Notre Dame
Olin College of Engineering
Reed College
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rice University
University of Rochester
TOP COLLEGE LISTS
US News and World Report: College Edition has a section that includes lists for schools that get the nod for programs that help undergraduates thrive.

Here a few of those lists.

Internships (Schools voted into this category require or encourage students to apply what they're learning in the classroom out in the real world - through closely supervised internships or practicums, or through cooperative education, in which a period of study typically alternates with one of work.)

Belmont University
Berea College
Butler University
Cornell University
Creighton University
Drexel University
Elon University
Endicott College
Georgia Institute of Technology
Kettering University
MIT
Messiah College
Northeastern University
Purdue University
Rochester Institute of Technology
University of Cincinnati
University of Southern California
University of Tampa
Valparaiso University
Virginia Tech
Wagner College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Service Learning (In service-learning programs, such as those at the schools listed below, volunteering in the community is an instructional strategy – and a requirement of a student’s course work. The service relates to what happens in class, and in turn, the course work plays off of the volunteering.)

Belmont University
Berea College
Brown University
College of St Benedict
College of the Ozarks
Cornell University
Duke University
Elon University
Fairfield University
IUPUI
Michigan State University
Northeastern University
Portland State University
Rollins College
Seattle University
Stanford University
St John’s University
Tulane University
University of Maryland
University of Michigan
UNC – Chapel Hill
University of Notre Dame
University of Pennsylvania
University of Scranton
Valparaiso University
Wagner College
Warren Wilson College

**Study Abroad** *(Study abroad programs, such as those at the schools listed below, involve substantial academic work – a year or a semester, or an intensive experience equal to a course – and considerable interaction between the student and the culture.)*

Arcadia University
Beloit College
Boston University
Butler University
Carleton College
Central College
Centre College
Colby College
College of St Benedict
Dartmouth College
Dickinson College
Duke University
Elon University
Georgetown University
Gettysburg College
Goshen College
Goucher College
Indiana University
Kalamazoo College
Lewis & Clark College
Macalester College
Messiah College
Michigan State University
Middlebury College
New York University
Ohio State University
Pepperdine University
Skidmore College
Stanford University
St John’s University
St Olaf College
SUNY – Geneseo
Syracuse University
University of Evansville
University of Illinois
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Texas
University of Wisconsin
Valparaiso University
Wake Forest University

**Best Career Services (Princeton Review)**
Clemson University
Bentley University
Northeastern University
Emerson College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Pennsylvania State University
Wabash College
Illinois Wesleyan University
Webb Institute
Hollins University
Southwestern University
Elon University
University of Iowa
Scripps College
Kansas State University
University of New Haven
College of Charleston
High Point University
Clarkson University

**Most Accessible Professors (Princeton Review)**
College College
United States Military Academy
Whitman College
Wabash College
Webb Institute
Rhodes College
United States Coast Guard Academy
Wake Forest University
Harvey Mudd College
College of Wooster
Centre College
United States Naval Academy
St John’s College (MD)
Hillsdale College
Claremont McKenna College
St John’s College (NM)
Grinnell College
Carleton College
Randolph College
United States Air Force Academy

COLLEGES THAT CHANGE LIVES (www.ctcl.org)
Agnes Scott College
Allegheny College
Antioch College
Austin College
Beloit College
Birmingham-Southern College
Centre College
Clark University
Cornell College
Denison University
Earlham College
Eckerd College
Emory & Henry College
The Evergreen State College
Goucher College
Guilford College
Hampshire University
Hendrix College
Hillsdale College
Hiram College
Hope College
Juniata College
Kalamazoo College
Knox College
Lawrence University
Lynchburg College
McDaniel College
Marlboro College
Millsaps College
New College of Florida
Ohio Wesleyan University
University of Puget Sound
Reed College
Rhodes College
St John’s College (MD/NM)
St Mary’s College of California
St Olaf College
Southwestern University
Ursinus College
Wabash College
Wheaton College
Whitman College
Willamette University
College of Wooster

FISKE 2018 BEST BUYS
Private Schools
Brigham Young University
Centre College
The Cooper Union
Earlham College
Florida Southern College
Guilford College
McGill University
Mount Holyoke College
Oglethorpe University
Olin College of Engineering
Principia College
Rice University
University of St Andrews
St Olaf College
University of the South (Sewanee)
Warren Wilson College
Wheaton College
Xavier University of Louisiana

100 COLLEGES THAT ARE BETTER THAN YOU THINK
(Jay Mathew’s list in his book Harvard Schmarvard)
1. Elon University
2. Earlham College
3. Clark University
4. College of Wooster
5. Kalamazoo College
6. Rhodes College
7. Guilford College
8. Occidental College
9. Washington College
10. Illinois Wesleyan University
11. Trinity University
12. Kenyon College
13. Whitman College
14. Grinnell College
15. Wheaton College
16. Dickinson College
17. Christopher Newport University
18. Truman State University
19. Westminster College
20. Loyola Marymount University
21. Macalester College
22. Hartwick College
23. Goucher College
24. Hendrix College
25. Austin College
26. Berry College
27. St. Olaf College
28. Bates College
29. Allegheny College
30. Davidson College
31. Colorado College
32. Gettysburg College
33. Quinnipiac University
34. Millsaps College
35. Bard College
36. York College of Pennsylvania
37. Muhlenberg College
38. Keene State College
39. Ursinus College
40. University of Puget Sound
41. Spelman College
42. St. Lawrence University
43. St. John’s College
44. Savannah College of Art and Design
45. Wabash College
46. University of Tampa
47. Hope College
48. Evergreen State College
49. Centre College
50. Mary Washington College
51. Beloit College
52. Bucknell University
53. DePauw University
54. Flagler College
55. Ithaca College
56. Johnson & Wales University
57. Nazareth College of Rochester
58. Western Carolina University
59. University of Redlands
60. Paul Smith’s College
61. Saint Louis University
62. Santa Clara University
63. Western New England College
64. University of Tulsa
65. Lewis & Clark College
66. Manhattanville College
67. Willamette University
68. Texas Christian University
69. Birmingham-Southern College
70. College of St. Scholastica
71. University of the Pacific
72. Lawrence University
73. Agnes Scott College
74. Berea College
75. Augustana College
76. Bowling Green State University
77. Adelphi University
78. University of Denver
79. Hobart & William Smith Colleges
80. University of the South
81. Xavier University of Louisiana
82. St. Andrews Presbyterian University
83. Saint Joseph’s College of Maine
84. Seattle Pacific University
85. Western Washington University
86. Eckerd College
87. Drew University
88. Chapman University
89. Alfred University
90. Carroll College
91. Loyola College in Maryland
92. Knox College
93. Miami University
94. Samford University
95. University of Scranton
96. Randolph-Macon College
97. Siena College
98. Lambuth University
99. Ohio University
100. Dean College
NEED TEST PREP?
Casady students have a variety of test prep options to choose from ranging from one-on-one tutorial sessions, to group workshops, to free online interactive programs.

LOCAL/PRIVATE TUTOR(S):
Ashley Adams:
Ashley used to work for the Princeton Review as a tutoring specialist. She taught at Westminster for five years, and she offers both ACT and SAT individualized tutoring sessions. She can be reached by email: ashleya.tpr@gmail.com or phone: 479.806.3089.

Cathie Perry:
Cathie’s 31+ years of expertise and tutorial focus is on the English and Reading sections of the ACT. It is not unusual for her ACT clients to pass 30 on the English and/or Reading after working with her. Cathie can be reached at cperry@heritagehall.com or 405.990.6838. She books up fairly early, so call months in advance of the test.

Karl Francel is a recent graduate of Stanford University who has moved back into the OKC area and started his own test prep company called Olympia Prep. Coming with a wealth of experience, Karl has tutored students for the ACT/SAT through Kaplan and the Princeton Review. Olympia Prep offers highly affordable, flexible, and individualized test prep for the ACT and SAT. They also offer a group session rate. Olympia Prep can be reached at 405.283.8070 or ask@olympiaprep.com

Judy Davis:
Judy has 30+ years of tutoring and teaching experience. Judy has tutored many Casady students over the years in all subject areas, particularly math and science. Moreover, Judy has extensive experience working with students that have learning differences. Judy does most of her individualized tutoring on weekends at Heritage Hall. For private tutoring contact Judy at 405.816-7686.

Ann Oswalt:
Ann has 30+ years of tutoring and teaching experience. Many Casady students have also worked one-on-one with Ann in many different subjects. She works collaboratively with Judy Davis. For more information, Ann can be reached at 405.919.0209.

Sherry Howell:
Sherry has over 30+ years of helping students master the ACT. She offers workshops and tutorial sessions at a local church in South OKC. She can be reached at 405.692.0687.

Pam Mokhtari:
Pam works with students out of her house in The Village. Pam offers workshops and tutorial sessions for ACT, PSAT and SAT. Her course enrollments are limited to 10 students or less for workshops. Pam can be reached at 405.820.3486 or mastertutoringokc@yahoo.com.

Jenny Ferguson:
Jenny offers specialized tutoring for SAT and ACT math. Her email is jennyferguson@cox.net.

Tutor and Test Prep http://tutorandtestprep.com/TutorSite/Welcome.html
Provides qualified private tutors with the ability to assist in the ACT and SAT in your own home or in the location of your choice. Call or email their director, Ashley, for more information or to schedule an initial consultation today. 405.837.9797 or ttprep1@gmail.com
LOCAL WORKSHOP/SEMINAR(S):

Lau ACT Test Prep:
Alexander Lau, an instructor at Classen, provides a 30-hour ACT test course that meets 10 times that provides 5 proctored diagnostic tests, ACT textbook with 5 exams, and proven techniques/strategies. Alexander can be reached via email at AlexanderLau03@gmail.com.

Judy Davis and Ann Oswalt’s ACT/SAT Workshop:
In September, January, and April, Judy and Ann offer one-day intensive workshops for both the ACT and SAT. These workshops usually go from 9-4 pm on Saturday or Sunday. Judy and Ann come with 30+ years of tutoring and teaching experience on both the SAT and ACT. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Judy Davis 405.816.7686 or Ann Oswalt 405.919.0209.

Cathie Perry’s ACT Prep Workshop:
This course is 12 hrs and one of the best-priced ACT courses in town (~$290). Our student evaluations are impressive, even from kids who have attended other local courses. We are known for teaching content that is helpful beyond the test & carried back onto the classroom right away. We teach this course 5 times per year, using varied materials (in case we have repeat clients): Sept., Oct., Dec., April, and June. To sign up for the class or ask questions please contact Cathie at cperry@heritagehall.com or 405.990.6838.

Swales-Smith ACT/SAT Seminars http://actupsatup.com/
Linda’s seminar is conducted in three group sessions, over ten hours of instruction, this course reveals secrets of the ACT and SAT tests and identifies traps, exposing common mistakes, which can prevent even the strongest students from performing at an optimal level. For more information or to register call Linda Swales-Smith at 405.608.1909 or email at linda@actupsatup.com

Steve Bowlware’s ACT Seminar:
Steve offers a popular workshop the week before the ACT test that covers all four main sections of the ACT (excluding the writing). Historically his students average gains of about 4 points. The $90 fee for the class includes a large practice book and many handouts. Steve offers the workshop at Edmond Memorial High School. Most of his sessions are from 4:30-7:30 pm. Steve can be reached for questions or to sign up via email at steve.bowlware@gmail.com

METHOD TEST PREP (FREE ONLINE): Casady has invested in Method Test Prep for all our upper division students. This highly interactive online test prep offers students a cadre of exercises, lessons, tips, practice questions, quizzes, and full-length tests. There is a 20-week program that we encourage students to utilize. Students who utilize this program can expect on average a 3-point ACT bump and 150-point SAT bump on average. The program requires an hour of test prep a week. Our 11th grade students are introduced to Method Test Prep in the College Seminar. In addition, we offer a Method Test Prep workshop in the summer for students to intensively interact with the program.

Here is an example of a weekly set of exercises:
1. Take a warm up set of sentence completion questions (approximately 4 min.)
2. Take a warm up set of math questions (approx. 5 min.)
3. Take a warm up set of grammar questions (approx. 5 min.)
4. Take a warm up set of reading comprehension questions (approx. 4 min.)
5. General Things to Know About the SAT (approx. 15 min.)

Other Free Online Test Prep Options include the following:
• https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/full-length-practice-tests
• www.petersons.com
• www.number2.com
• https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/khan-academy
Anytime I mention "Helicopter Parent" to a parent of a high school kid, they are quick to deflect any possible affiliation with that label.

My response, I think that a parent who isn't a "helicopter parent" during the college process hurts their child.

Now let me first delineate between the two types of helicopter parents.

There is the helicopter parent who provides their child low ground cover.

And there is the helicopter parent who provides their child low ground control.

The former parent helps their student manage the stress that comes with the college process.

The latter parent contributes to their student's stress that comes with the college process.

And there will be inevitable stress.

Recently in The Chronicle of Higher Education, there was an article on how pets experience stress during the college process. The study revealed that their owners don’t pet pets enough during the waiting period, which as a result, heightens the pet’s stress level.

So if pets experience stress during this process, you can bet that parents will. And certainly the student.

Too often we forget that this is the first foray for many of these kids into the "adult world". This will be the first time they are critiqued, judged, evaluated, accepted, or rejected. In our hyper therapeutic, self-esteem culture, our kids have grown up being told how amazing they are. It's like the kid who sings in the living room to an audience of family members one day and the next day is standing in line to audition with 20,000 other living-room singers for American Idol.

It's one thing right to sing in front of Aunt Bethany and Uncle Fred and Grandpa Glenny. It's quite another thing when it's Steven Tyler, Jennifer Lopez, and Randy Jackson.

Two summers ago I had a chance to sit under the teaching of Dr. JoAnn Deak. Dr. Deak is the leading field researcher at The Ohio State University on adolescent brain development.

In her session on "Understanding the Adolescent Brain," she opened by saying point blank: "You are going against neurobiology. The adolescent brain is not equipped to handle the stresses and strains that 17-18 years old are put under, especially when it comes to the college process."

Dr. Deak explained how the Corpus collosum is under massive construction during the teenage years. Dr. Deaks compared the Corpus collosum to a 10-lane highway, like I-5 in LA. In order for teens to be able to think, organize, judge, and make morally sound, non-destructive decisions, "all lanes" on the Cc have to be open. What often happens though is that stress causes the Amygdala (feeling center) to swell, which then triggers a suppression of the Prefrontal cortex, which then causes the "highway to shut down". What ensues is a series of emotional, academic, and volitional "crashes".
This series of events often happens more in boys than girls. Ever wonder why your 17-year-old boy acts like a 5 year old? Now you know.

So what the new brain research shows is that adolescence is the worst time for organization. Many times kids are trying to juggle 10 balls with one hand and a finger.

This is then why we need to help create a flight plan that prevents our kids from crashing into a mountain.

So with that said, let's look at 6 ways we can help our kids navigate through the turbulence and around the mountains that are sure to come.

1. **Map out timeline(s).**

There are three timelines you want to help map out for your student.

**Standardized Test.** The goal is for the student to take both tests once, and one of the test a total of three times. Students applying to highly selective schools will want to take 2-3 SAT II Subject Tests in May or June.

**College Visits.** Map out dates/times during breaks that you can visit schools. Parents should take the lead on coordinating visits. College web sites have information regarding tour times. They also have info regarding state/school admission rep. For the "tourist season", you will want to catch a tour and try to schedule an informal meeting with our rep (email rep to schedule time). For the "buyers season", the colleges often contact you to try and get your student out for a "shopper's preview".

**College Application.** The key is to get down where the student will apply, when they will apply, and what kind of application they will submit. We encourage our students to apply to "rolling" schools (often public universities) in Sept/Oct, then focus on "Early" applications (whether Early Decision [ED], Early Action [EA], or SCEA [Single Choice Early Action]) in Oct./Nov., and then "ED2"/Regular admissions (2nd Early Decision round - schools like Vanderbilt, American, NYU, Davidson offer this).

### Admission Terms:

- **Rolling:** non-binding; public institutions; apply July-May; quick turnaround with results.
- **ED:** Early Decision; binding; public/private schools; usually Nov. 1 deadline; mid-Dec. results.
- **ED 2:** Early Decision; binding; usually a Jan. deadline; mid-March result.
- **SCEA:** Single Choice Early Action; non-binding; May 1 to decide; apply to only one school (public universities are excluded); Nov. 1/15 deadline; "bear trap" watch out! ("hook" students only).
- **EA:** Early Action; non-binding; May 1 to decide; usually a Nov./Dec. deadline.
- **Regular:** non-binding; May 1 to decide; usually a Dec-Jan deadline.

2. **Do your homework/have a plan for highly selective schools (25%-6% admit rate).**

It's important to do your homework before your student applies. Treat every application as a small research project. **Ferret out of the following information from each web site or the Fiske Guide (2015).**

- **Application requirements:** SAT Subject Tests - how many? required/or recommended? Teacher recommendations (1-2)? Peer recommendation? Interview?
- **Early vs. Regular admit statistics** (app. volume/accept %)
Colleges within University admit statistics (engineering vs. liberal arts)
- Mid-50% range for test scores (Early vs. Regular admission)
- Hook: What is my hook? (Legacy, athlete, underrepresented minority, 1st gen, underrepresented gender, early decision, full pay)

Application Type II: Early Action (EA)? Early Decision (ED)? Early Decision 2 (ED2)? Single Choice Early Action (SCEA)? Regular?
- Supplemental essays (research what essays were optional/required for 2012-2013 admission cycle to anticipate what the student will be asked to submit in the 2013-2014 cycle)

Have a plan:
Create Contact History with Admission Rep - email/visit non-binding (EA or SCEA) schools
- Apply to 3-4 schools other than ED 1 early (1-2 rolling; 1-2 early action). I compare this strategy to an archery target. If your "ED" school is the small bulls eye, then add a couple target rings that are easier to hit. That way your student gets a handful of "Yes" letters before or during the time they receive good or bad news on their "bulls eye school".

Additional recommendation letters (alumni, local dignitaries, youth pastors, people beyond school that can speak to character, leadership, excellence).

3. Be both a "cosmetic consultant" and "content consultant" on applications.

Examples of cosmetic consultant: grammar, punctuation, spelling, family information [employment, job title, email, name and year of college] on the application, etc. I have found that our texting, Twitter, and Facebook generation tends to slip into those modes of writing on applications. I can't tell you how many times I've had to "touch up" acme on the face of an application that is peppered with i's and u's.

Examples of content consultant: the overarching goal in revealing a student (not packaging) involves what I call the "framework work" in the application: this framework work involves narration (telling the student's story well), synthesis (connecting-the-dots of major themes, points of excellence, salient traits), and distinction (elevating that student from the pack; revealing points of excellence). This is never an easy task. And no student (or counselor) can create this framework without the parent's insights.

So what I encourage parents to do is help identify the major "spheres" of their child's life, and then help the student and counselor identify "narrative moments" that have a colorful "word picture" within that moment that we narrate. Winston Churchill once said, "The ear is 1/10th the organ of the eye." College admissions need more than reasons to accept a student. They need visions. We want to connect then not only with the admission officer's mind, but their imaginations. Too often we forget that the mind is not so much a debating hall as it is a picture gallery. So help think of key images, frozen "action moments", and metaphors that the student and counselor can pull into their essays, interviews, rec letters, etc.

4. Aim for 75/25. Modeled after the Harkness Table at Phillips Exeter Academy, we have days in my English class where the students dialogue about the text we are reading, and I chart the threads of conversation between them. What I've found is that our Harkness Table days are my best days as a teacher. And it is not so much because of what I'm saying or doing, but because of what I am not saying or doing. My silence isn't absence; it's presence. And in my silence my students can hear the words, "Take ownership of your education. Make it an extraordinary experience. Take the conversation in directions that challenge, fascinate, and energize us for going further up and further in."

So here is the point: The more your student can “own” the college experience, the more satisfied they will be with the journey and end destination.
Aim then to foster an environment where the student does 75% of the “college talking” – in meetings with college counselor or college reps, on tours, in info sessions, and in post-tour conversations.

Pre-Tour: Encourage student to research schools before they visit campus or visit with rep (on campus or at Casady).

Pre-Tour: Have your student write down 5 questions in their Phone to ask the tour guide.

Tour: Encourage students to jot down “Notes” on phone of major impressions, cool programs, and specifics.

Post Tour: Ask reflective questions:
- "What did you learn about yourself on this college visit?"
- "Why do you think this school may or may not be a good fit for you?"
- “What are one or two specific things you liked about this school?"

5. Help "lower the red line" (aka "stressed out big time"...aka "neurobiological crash"... aka "meltdown mode").

Senior Academic Schedule - consider allowing the senior to substitute out one class they don't look forward to taking in their senior year. Still aim for 5 core classes with upward traction rigor-wise in at least 4 of them.
*The exception to the rule: Ivies. At that level (5-9% acceptance rate), Ivies are looking for any reason NOT to admit the student. Taking an “easier” or “more fun” class will give the Ivy that reason.

College Application "Class" Schedule - help students think ahead and set aside a couple major blocks of time to work on college applications. It's amazing what a 3-4 hour, uninterrupted morning or afternoon sessions will do to help students get stuff done.

Create "Decompressor" Spaces - make sure to create time and space for “non-college” conversation and activities that are fun, relaxing, and stress relieving.

College Application Volume - You've heard the maxim: "Eight is enough." Try to cap the application volume at eight*. And aim for balance - 1-2 Reach Schools, 2-3 Target Schools, 1-2 Financial Likely Schools (these are getting tougher to find). *Casady seniors averaged 4.4 apps in 2013-2014.

6. If you place a premium value on affordability, then you need to consider "going merit-based", "going private", “going small” and "going high".

To "go merit" means you look at schools that are merit-based and not need-based. Most schools that are "highly ranked" and "highly selective" give only need-based aid.

To "go private" means you look primarily at private institutions where you will find more merit monies. State schools are not going to "show you the money" based on massive budget cuts. Most state schools will only give students money based on strict objective criteria (GPA; test scores).

To “go small” means to open up your search to excellent liberal arts colleges, especially beyond the first page of the US News magazine. This is where you will find excellent bargains (aka merit monies). Check out the Twitter Profile of “Libby and Art” @SmartColleges.

To "go high" means to look at schools where your student's academic credentials (GPA; test scores) are higher than most in application pool (top 25%).

In closing, parents who provide this kind of "low ground covering" will help this student make what is often the most difficult and challenging transition in their life.
From childhood to adulthood.

God knows I needed my parent's help when I went through this tumultuous transition.

And I'm so thankful that they were there to help navigate me through to a safe landing.