

COLLEGE COUNSELING GUIDEBOOK



OAK HALL SCHOOL
SCHOLARSHIP · LEADERSHIP · SERVICE

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Dear Oak Hall Families,

Oak Hall's College Counseling program supports students and their families through the process of college selection and application. Oak Hall is a college preparatory school, and as such, it has a very strong college preparatory culture. All students here have a heightened awareness of the college process; however, students view the college process in different ways. There is the student who asks: Is there really a college for everyone? How does one possibly complete the daunting task of finding such a place?

As we look to find answers to these and countless other questions, this guide was created with you in mind, with both the journey and the destination in mind. We have compiled this handbook, written for juniors, seniors and their parents, with the intent to minimize the confusion created by the college application process. This "how to" guide is not meant to be entirely inclusive, and some of the generalizations may not apply to each college or situation. However, these statements are based on personal experience as well as on substantiated and published data. We hope this publication will serve as a good reference guide for your family during this process. While there is much information on the college admissions process here, we hope you will use this information to guide, and not necessarily dictate, the choices you make in regard to your college selection.

The goal of Oak Hall's College Counseling program is to help students understand the college admissions experience, to evaluate accurately one's own achievements and aspirations, to gather information about specific college selections, and, finally, to make informed rather than arbitrary college choices. Throughout the process the emphasis is on you, the student, as an individual. Most counseling occurs in formal meetings which a student has with me as their college counselor. During the senior year, the college search will become more of a day-to-day reality and you will receive a steady stream of nuts-and-bolts information from our office.

It is our primary responsibility to serve as each student's advocate throughout the process and to help them present the strongest possible application. Each year, the College Counseling Office hosts visits from admissions representatives from colleges and universities. The purpose of these visits is to promote Oak Hall School to college admissions offices, strengthen our relationships with these institutions, advocate on behalf of our students and to provide our students with opportunities to meet with college representatives during the school day.

Above all, the key to a successful college process rests on good communication between the four parties involved: the student, the parents, the college, and the College Counseling Office. We all must remain focused on the task at hand, remembering to approach this process with realistic expectations and an open mind. If you are ever in doubt or have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. Our doors are always open for help or encouragement.

Sincerely,

Kim Wilkins
Director of College Counseling

Kat Webb
Assistant Director of College Counseling

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COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR

FRESHMAN & SOPHOMORE YEARS:

- Take the PSAT 8/9 in 9th grade, the PSAT/NMSQT in 10th grade in October, and the Pre-ACT in May. (required).
- Study hard and earn strong grades; your academic record at Oak Hall begins with the 9th grade year.
- Get involved in a select number of extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, SGA, off-campus organizations, volunteer agencies) and seek leadership opportunities when available. Note: the colleges do not have preferred activities; a student's involvement can take many forms.
- Attend grade specific meetings hosted by the College Counseling Department.
- Speak with your assigned college counselor (parents too!) early and often about summer opportunities (academic programs, leadership seminars, employment) about the potential admissions implications of course selection and particular extracurricular engagement.
- Visit colleges campuses. Important Suggestion: At this point *any* college visit is worthwhile. In other words, in the course of a summer road trip, choose two convenient colleges to visit. These may or may not be places of genuine interest at this point but they should include a large public university and a smaller private college as representative institutions. This experience may help you determine what scale of college best suits you at this early point in your journey.

JUNIOR YEAR, FALL:

- Maintain a strong academic record. Enroll in the academic courses that are most appropriate for you.
- Continue your involvement in extracurricular activities. Consider leadership opportunities. Keep a record of your extracurricular, volunteer, and community service hours.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October (required).
- Begin to login to your Naviance account and use the Naviance program to research colleges and universities.
- Attend meetings with college representatives from schools you might be interested in.
- Attend College Fair at Santa Fe College.
- Attend Introduction to the College Process for Juniors and Families in November
- Throughout your junior year, you should read for pleasure (newspapers, magazines, novels, biographies -- anything that interests you) at least 30 minutes a day. More than anything else you can do, this will help improve your verbal skills, help you in your English and humanities classes, and help improve your SAT/ACT scores.

JUNIOR YEAR, WINTER/SPRING:

- Review PSAT/NMSQT results with your College Counselor or test preparation agency.
- Begin assembling your preliminary list of colleges. (Your goal should be to be reasonably well informed about 20 colleges you might be interested in.)
- Register with [Naviance](#) and:
 - Fill out Student Questionnaire.
 - Prepare an activity resume of your school and community activities.
 - Parents fill out Parent Brag Sheet/Survey Form.
- Meet with College Counselor and/or your adviser when signing up for courses for next year. Review Oak Hall School graduation requirements, Bright Futures Scholarship requirements, and college admission requirements.
- Take the SAT Reasoning Test or ACT, and SAT Subject Tests (if required by the colleges you are considering). If required, you should take subject tests in two subjects. Take the SAT Subject Test in US History if you are enrolled in AP US History.
- With College Counseling guidance, ask your teachers for letters of recommendation.
- Plan your summer activities: employment, college visits, reading, volunteer work, travel. Ask teachers for letters of recommendation if you are applying to a summer academic program.
- If you are interested in applying for an ROTC scholarship or a service academy, start the application process.
- If you are considering playing a sport at a Division I or II college or university, you should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. (See p. 22)

SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR:

- Engage in significant summer activities (volunteer, college programs, work, travel).
- Consider attending the summer essay program hosted by Oak Hall
- Narrow down your college list.
- Attend the Oak Hall “Navigating the College Process” Program offered just before school starts
- During the "Navigating the College Process program, we will help you to create accounts for the Common Application. Begin to research the essay prompts and brainstorm potential essay topics if you haven't already.

SENIOR YEAR, FALL:

- Attend "Senior Kickoff to College" program with your parents held early senior year
- Read ALL your email from College Counseling and follow the directives regarding appointments. ALL students should meet with their assigned College Counselor in late August or early September to establish a timeline
- Review and update your activity resume, which will go out with all your college applications.
- Attend meetings with college representatives.
- Register for the FAFSA and CSS Profile after October 1st if you plan to apply for financial aid, <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> and <https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>
- Attend College Fair at Santa Fe College in August and/or the NACAC National College Fairs in Jacksonville or Orlando in October.
- Register for and take the SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Tests. Make sure to send your test scores to the schools where you plan to apply.
- Meet with your College Counselor to narrow down and finalize your list. You should have a balanced list with "reach", "possible," and "likely" choices.
- Complete early decision applications (if applicable) and turn them in to your College Counselor by mid-October.
- Get a copy of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Family Financial Statement (FFS) if you expect to apply for financial aid.
- **ALL APPLICATION CHECKLISTS MUST** be turned in to your College Counselor prior to Midterm Exams. **Because of the tremendous number of applications we have to process in December, we cannot guarantee application checklists turned in after this deadline with an early January deadline will be processed by the deadline.**

SENIOR YEAR, WINTER AND SPRING:

- Make sure your College Counselor has all mid-year reports which are submitted to colleges in mid-January.
- February – April: Decisions begin to arrive. All admission decisions should be received by April 1.
- May 1 is National Candidates Reply Day: Colleges will give you until May 1 to make a decision unless you have been wait listed. Notify ALL colleges where you have been accepted of your decision.
- ***NOTE: All acceptances are CONDITIONAL. An appropriate level of academic work and good citizenship must be maintained through graduation if acceptance is to become final. Unless you have been wait listed at a college, we will only send out one final transcript.***

COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS

When you are ready to think about characteristics in a college that are important to you, you will want to consider the following items:

A. COLLEGE DESCRIPTION

1. Location:
 - a. State or region of the country (Going away to college can be a good opportunity to experience a different part of the country.)
 - b. Proximity to other colleges, cities, transportation, and cultural opportunities
2. College Type and Philosophy:
 - a. Two or four year
 - b. Church, state, or private control
 - c. Coed or single sex
 - d. Academic environment/pressure (intense, moderate, relaxed)
 - e. Liberal, middle of the road, conservative
3. Size and Student Enrollment:
 - a. Number of undergraduate students
 - b. Size of the freshman class
 - c. Male/female ratio
 - d. Percentage of commuter/resident students (A high percentage of commuter students generally means fewer student organizations and weekend activities.)
 - e. Diversity of students: political, ethnic, cultural, racial, geographical
4. Admission:
 - a. Secondary school course requirements
 - b. SAT's or ACT's required.
 - c. Admission Selectivity - Percentage of applicants offered admission. Comparison of the college's median test scores and GPA to yours. Percentage of freshmen in top 10% of high school class.
5. Costs and Financial Aid:
 - a. Minimum-maximum total cost of attendance per year
 - b. Family resources
 - c. Financial aid/merit aid awards
 - d. Application for financial aid - Deadlines. FAFSA, College Scholarship Service (CSS)/state/college forms required.
6. Residence Halls:
 - a. Location with respect to classes and dining rooms
 - b. Coed? If so, are they organized by floor, suite or room?
 - c. Other residence hall distinctions: language, honors, special interest, athletic
 - d. Rules? Are there enforced quiet hours?

- e. Where do freshmen live? Are they grouped together and what kind of residence assistance program is there? Is dorm residence required?
- f. Are there sufficient rooms for all students who wish to live on campus?
- g. Are most rooms singles, doubles, triples, or suites?
- h. How are rooms assigned?

7. Laboratories:

- a. Foreign language?
- b. In science, what are the lab set-ups like and are they available to undergraduates?

B. EXTRA-CURRICULAR FACILITIES

1. Theater:

- a. Quality and reputation of the program?
- b. Facilities?
- c. Open to non-theater majors for participation?
- d. Student directors?
- e. Is there a permanent repertory company?
- f. How many performances yearly?
- g. What kinds of performances?
- h. Guest professionals?

2. Athletics:

- a. What are the facilities for women? For men?
- b. How important are they to campus life?
- c. What intercollegiate and intramural sports are offered?
- d. What opportunities are there for personal development outside organized sports?

3. Special facilities:

- a. Are there music studios, practice rooms?
- b. Are there art studios and museums?
- c. Are there dance studios?
- d. Is there an astronomical observatory?
- e. What are the facilities like in the student center?

4. Fraternities, Sororities, Eating Clubs?

- a. Do they exist and in what number and variety?
- b. What effect do they have on campus life?
- c. What percentage of the student body participates?
- d. Are they coed?
- e. Is the social life of the school organized around their activities?
- f. What pressure is there to join?

C. SCHOOL LIFE

1. Calendar organization (quarter or semester)
 - a. Is there a special winter or spring program?
 - b. Are summer programs available or required?
 - c. How many courses do students usually take per term?

2. Alternative study program:
 - a. Are there exchange programs with other colleges for a term or for a year?
 - b. Are foreign study programs available and encouraged?
 - c. Are there internship programs?
 - d. Is there a co-operative learning program?

3. Academic policies (usually described in the catalogue):
 - a. What courses are required?
 - b. What does the honors program look like?
 - c. How many courses are needed to graduate?
 - d. When must a student declare a major?
 - e. Are interdisciplinary majors available?
 - f. What unusual undergraduate majors are available?
 - g. How difficult is it to get the courses you need?
 - h. What are the policies for giving credit and advanced placement for AP courses?

4. Academic issues:
 - a. What are class sizes like in various subjects? ("Average class size" means nothing since you will probably never be in an "average" class.) What differences in size exist between introductory and advanced classes?
 - b. What opportunities are there for independent study/research?
 - c. What departments are particularly distinguished?
 - d. In large classes, what types of tests and papers are there and who grades them? (In most large state universities, graduate students, called "teaching assistants," frequently grade papers and tests assigned by the professor.)
 - e. Do the "academic stars" teach undergraduates? (Frequently, the nationally or internationally recognized professors only teach graduate students or they are engaged in research and don't teach at all.)
 - f. What characterizes the academic atmosphere? (competitive, energetic, relaxed, apathetic, helpful, etc.)
 - g. How difficult is it to get the courses you need?
 - h. What percent of the students are able to graduate in four years?

5. What is the attrition rate? (How many leave?)
 - a. For freshmen?
 - b. By the end of the senior year?
 - c. Is there a difference in the rates for men and women?

6. What percentage of graduating seniors go on to graduate schools? In what areas of study?

7. Is there an active career counseling service which helps students find jobs both during the time they are in college and after they have graduated?

You now know something about yourself and you have identified specific characteristics that are important to you in a college. You, along with your counselor, are ready to generate a preliminary list of schools that match your personality and meet your interests.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

You will find the following sources of information helpful in answering the questions in the previous section and to produce a preliminary list of colleges:

A. GENERAL COLLEGE HANDBOOKS

These guidebooks are a good place to begin the college search process. They contain brief descriptions and statistical information on such topics as freshman admission, enrollment patterns, graduation requirements, expenses and financial aid, majors, special programs, housing, campus life, social atmosphere, student services and organizations, athletics, and graduate career data. Several guidebooks are available in the College Counseling Room and the school library. They are also readily available in bookstores. (For a complete list, see p. 25).

B. WEB SITES

Every college in which you are interested will have an extensive web site. Be sure to take advantage of this valuable, free resource.

C. VIRTUAL TOURS

Almost all colleges now have virtual tours available on their websites. Take advantage of these! YouSearch and CampusVisits are also great virtual resources.

D. COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Admissions representatives from colleges and universities can help you learn a lot about their schools. Check Naviance for an up-to-date schedule of visits to our campus by college representatives. This early contact may be significant if you apply to the college, so it's important to make a good impression.

E. CAMPUS VISITS

Visits to college campuses are the best way to find out what a particular school is like. It's best to schedule your visit when school is in session, and if possible, you should make it an overnight stay. Many colleges have regular campus tours conducted by students and will arrange for you to stay in student housing if you call in advance.

F. COLLEGE STUDENTS AND RECENT ALUMNI

These people are a good source of information about what college is like. You can see them when they are home on vacation. If you are unable to visit a school, you might contact the admission or alumni office for names of current students or recent graduates who live in the area.

G. ADVISER AND FACULTY

Your adviser and teachers know you well. Many of them have taught numerous students and have followed their progress in college. Often they can recommend colleges which have strong majors in their disciplines. Don't ignore their knowledge and experience.

H. FAMILY AND FRIENDS

According to one group of college-bound students, family and friends are one of the best sources of information about colleges. Discuss the colleges you are considering with your parents and your friends. Be sure your parents are willing and able to support your choices.

OAK HALL SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

ENGLISH	4
HISTORY	3 (American Government, World History, U.S. History)
MATH	4 (including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II)
SCIENCE	3 (including Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	2 (in the same language in the Upper School)
FINE ARTS	1
HEALTH/PE	1
ELECTIVES	6
COMMUNITY SERVICE	40 hours*

In addition you must take and successfully earn a minimum of six credits (including four academic classes) every year in the Upper School.

* Students who are entering their 9th grade year (starting with the 2018-19 school year) will be expected to have the following breakdown of their service hours:

- A minimum of half of the service hours (20 of the 40 hours) must come from service with a nonprofit organization.

- Ex: volunteering your time at Habitat for Humanity, Humane Society, “Volunteer,” Grace Marketplace, Keep Alachua County Beautiful, etc.
- The other half of the required hours (up to 20 hours) may come from Oak Hall related activities.
 - Ex: helping at the track meet or with football, being a student ambassador, setting up for a band concert or art show, or helping a teacher.

BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Type	16 High School Course Credits ¹	High School Weighted GPA	College Entrance Exams (ACT/SAT)	Service Hours
FAS	4 – English <i>(three must include substantial writing)</i> 4 - Mathematics <i>(at or above the Algebra I level)</i>	3.50	29 / 1290	100 hours
FMS	3 – Natural Science <i>(two must have substantial laboratory)</i> 3 – Social Science 2 – World Language <i>(sequential, in same language)</i>	3.00	26 / 1170 ²	75 hours

1. The required coursework aligns with the State University System admission requirements found in regulation 6.002

2 Home-educated students without official transcripts must score a 27 / 1220 to meet the FMS award requirement.

NOTE: For purposes of calculating your Bright Futures GPA, plus and minus grades are not used per the Bright Futures website (<http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf/firstapp.htm>). All AP and Honors courses are weighted, but differ from Oak Hall’s list. No foreign language honors classes are weighted.

*May use up to three additional credits from courses in the academic areas listed above and/or AP fine arts courses to raise the GPA

(<http://nwrdc.fsu.edu/fnbpcm02>)

<http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/PDF/BFHandbookChapter1.pdf>

WHAT COLLEGES ARE LOOKING FOR

Colleges and universities decide whom to admit to their incoming freshman class using a number of criteria, including the following:

A. GRADES

At most college and universities, **your high school transcript is the single most important factor** in the admission process. Colleges want to see sustained effort throughout your high school campaign as this is the best indicator of perseverance, a necessary quality for success in higher education. If your transcript shows a trend in your grades, it is obviously important that your grades are getting better over time. As a general rule, junior year grades are the most important. This is especially true if you are applying ED or EA; in which case, your application will be submitted in October or November of your senior year. Students whose aptitudes are high (ACT/SAT scores) but whose achievement is low (grades) may not be the most attractive candidates for admission.

B. QUALITY OF COURSES

Ranked right up there with grades is the quality of your courses. Admission officers want to see rigorous upper level courses: honors sections and AP classes. A third year of a foreign language is more impressive than only two, for example. If you are applying to a selective college, you should plan to take courses in the five core subjects (English, history, math, science and foreign language) every year you are in the Upper School.

C. STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

The SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests or ACT scores are important factors at most schools. They are objective measurements of aptitude and achievement that all college applicants take. They are a way colleges compare you to other applicants from schools all across the country and in some cases foreign nations as well. As a general rule, very large universities rely more heavily on test scores than do smaller schools.

D. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Genuine involvement in a few activities outside of class is an important factor in the selection process. Quality experience over several years including leadership positions (team captain, club or class officer) is much more impressive than belonging to many organizations but having minimal involvement in any of them. Colleges want to see engaged students, those who have been active in school clubs and other organizations in their communities. Don't forget to spend your summers wisely. Work related to your career interests is a good idea. If you can't find a paying job, consider volunteering. Other worthy options include community service or volunteer work, significant travel (not two weeks at the beach), outdoor education programs, or academic coursework at a school or college.

E. GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Most colleges ask on their applications if you have ever been convicted of a crime or if you have ever been suspended, placed on probation or expelled from school. If you have, you must answer truthfully, and you will have to provide an explanation. Oak Hall is a member of the National Association for College Admission Counseling and as such subscribes to its Statement of Principles of Good Practice: Code of Ethics and Professional Practices. Accordingly, the School will provide colleges to which a student has applied whatever information the College Counseling Office believes is appropriate and/or is requested concerning that student. This also applies to any change in your status between the time of application and graduation. It includes, but is not restricted to, a major drop in grades, honor violations, probation, suspension, and dismissal. In addition, Oak Hall expects its students to honor NACAC's "Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities." (see p.24)

F. ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Most schools require written personal statements. These instruments offer the admissions committee a window into the applicant beyond a mere set of test scores, GPA, or volunteer hours. These are important pieces of the application and your college counselor is available to help students generate ideas and critique their drafts.

G. RECOMMENDATIONS

The school's counselor recommendation letter written by your college counselor and teacher recommendations will help support your application. (See p. 18 for more information on recommendations.)

H. DIVERSITY

Many schools want their student bodies to represent a mix of races, ethnic groups and cultures, social classes, and geographical regions. All other factors being equal, you might be more competitive at a college in Oregon than a similar school in Florida or Georgia.

I. ALUMNI CHILDREN

Many colleges give some preference in the selection process to "legacies," the sons and daughters of alumni.

J. DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

At selective colleges, **all** applicants have good grades, high scores, extracurricular involvement, and positive recommendations. Do you have a special talent, an unusual, highly developed interest, or a special achievement? Anything that truly sets you apart from other applicants can be helpful.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT STANDARDIZED TESTS

PSAT/NMSQT – The PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is a two hour and forty-five minute exam designed to prepare students for the New SAT exam. It contains one sixty minute Reading and Writing Test, one thirty-five minute Writing and Language Test, and two Math sections (twenty-five minutes with no calculator, forty-five minutes with calculator). The score range for combined sections is 320-1520. Freshman and Sophomores take the PSAT for practice while Junior year scores are used to determine eligibility for National Merit Awards. All PSAT exams are given in October. Please visit the College Board site devoted to the new PSAT (<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10>) for detailed information on the exam where you will also find a full practice exam with answers.

SAT REASONING TEST – This is a three-hour and fifty minute exam that measures the following skills: reading (sixty-five minutes), writing and language (thirty-five minutes), mathematics (eighty minutes), and essay writing (fifty minutes). The essay portion is optional; however, **we strongly**

encourage all students to take this portion as nearly all colleges will require it and our students are well-prepared to frame strong prose work. The score range for combined sections is 400-1600. Colleges will factor your best score performance to determine admissibility and, in many cases, schools will “superscore” your results. In other words, they will combine your best discrete section scores from different administrations to create your highest possible composite score. Please visit the College Board site devoted to the new SAT (<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>) for detailed information on the exam where you will also find full practice exams with answers.

The SAT should be taken two or three times, in the winter and again in the spring of the junior year and once more in the fall of the senior year. Students may take the SAT on additional test dates. The University of Florida is a test center for the SAT. The SAT is also given on an extended time basis to certain students. If you think you may qualify, see Ms. Gehler.

ACT - The ACT measures knowledge, understanding, and skills gained during the past several years you have been in school. The ACT differs from the SAT in that it attempts to measure both aptitude and achievement. It is also different in that it includes four different tests: English (including an optional writing section), math, reading comprehension, and science reasoning. Scores range from 1 to 36 on the individual tests. The composite score is the average of the four individual tests. The ACT web site is www.act.org.

The ACT is given at the University of Florida. It may also be given on an extended time basis. Because it is a different type of test from the SAT, about one third of the students who take both ACT and SAT score higher on the ACT.

Both the SAT and the ACT have extensive test prep materials available on their web sites. **Be sure to check them out and use them.**

TOEFL - The Test of English as a Foreign Language is designed for students for whom English is not their native language. Many colleges require the TOEFL of foreign-born or foreign-speaking students and will use it in place of or in addition to the SAT Reading score when making admissions decisions. The TOEFL is given in Gainesville at the Sylvan Learning Center and it is also accessible on-line. See your counselor if you are interested.

AP – In general, Advanced Placement exams are not a part of the college admission picture, except that colleges are very aware of which students are enrolled in AP classes. These exams are given in May and cover the equivalent of college level material in a specific course. AP exams require academic preparation that is much more extensive than is found in a normal, high school course. They are graded on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). Scores of 3 - 5 frequently earn credit or advanced standing in college.

CLEP - The College Level Examination Program consists of general and subject examinations. The exams are given at test centers once a month and registration is made with those test centers. The CLEP examinations cover material that is taught in introductory-level courses at many colleges and universities. Schools differ in the examinations they accept; therefore, it is to your benefit to take the CLEP after deciding on your final college choice.

COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES AT OAK HALL SCHOOL

Admissions representatives from colleges and universities visit our campus throughout the year, especially in the fall. Information about these visits is announced in assembly and posted on the Oak Hall web site and on the college counseling bulletin board. Plan in advance the questions you want answered. **If seeing a representative requires you to miss a class, you are required to get your teacher's permission in advance.**

THE CAMPUS VISIT

As mentioned earlier, you should plan to visit some colleges during spring vacation of your junior year, the summer after the eleventh grade, or the fall of your senior year. That said you are strongly encouraged to visit schools as early as the summer between your freshman and sophomore years. Nothing launches the family “college discussion” more effectively than a genuine campus visit!

Most colleges allow for electronic reservations through their admissions websites. **Whatever you do, contact the admission office far in advance (at least two weeks) to arrange an appointment.** College visit appointments fill quickly once school opens in the fall. When you contact the college, indicate your status (freshman, sophomore, etc.), get information on a campus tour, and ask for an interview if the school offers them.

If you are thinking about trying out for a varsity team, be sure to visit with a coach of that sport. The person you speak with in the admission office can help you with these arrangements.

Go for a visit and interview even though you may have visited unofficially before, and go under circumstances other than for a football game or a party weekend. In other words, you want to see the college on a “typical day” of scheduled classes, rather than as it is on a special occasion.

While on your visit, talk to people -- around campus, in a residence hall, in the student center, in the town. Ask the college people what they think about the town; ask people in the town what they think about the school. Ask people at the college what they think about the college. You'll probably get some honest responses that will help you clarify your thoughts about the school and colleges in general.

Here are some other points to consider:

1. While in the admission office, verify admission requirements to make sure you have taken all the required courses and admission tests.
2. Check out the bulletin boards.
3. Pick up copies of student newspapers. *This can be one of your most valuable resources.*
4. Try to look at the most recent yearbook, usually found in admission offices.
5. Eat a meal where the students do.
6. If you are not able to spend the night, look at the residence halls. Ask to see the worst one. You may end up living there.
7. What are the regulations for student behavior? Is there an active honor code?
8. Sit in on a class or two to get an idea of class size and academic atmosphere.
9. Try to meet with some faculty in areas of interest to you.
10. Visit the library; you will probably be spending a lot of time there.
11. If you are interested in science, visit the laboratories.
12. **Be sure to keep a journal of your impressions.**

THE INTERVIEW

The purpose of a college interview is for you to gain knowledge about the school and for the school to find out something about you. The interview also gives you the opportunity to present yourself as a real person, something other than cold numbers or statistics. While many state universities do not grant interviews due to the large number of applicants and small staffs, interviews can be an important element in the admission process at smaller private schools. If a college gives a personal interview, it is certainly to your advantage to arrange for one.

There are three types of interviews:

- A. **GROUP INFORMATION SESSIONS** – These take place on campus and its purpose is simply to provide prospective students information about the school. Questions of a general nature can be asked. Group information sessions are not used to evaluate applicants.
- B. **PERSONAL INTERVIEW** - This is a direct one-on-one interview lasting 20 to 30 minutes. It is used for evaluation purposes.
- C. **OFF-CAMPUS INTERVIEW** - This type of interview is frequently conducted by an alumna/us in the Gainesville area. It also is used to evaluate applicants.

NOTE: Visits to Oak Hall School by admission representatives are not really considered interviews. In many cases, however, impressions you make in these sessions are important in evaluating you as a prospective candidate. You should treat these sessions accordingly!

For your personal or off-campus interview:

1. Be prompt. Try to arrive ten minutes early and relax. If you find you will be unavoidably delayed, telephone in advance and apologize.
2. Dress appropriately (good school dress suggested).
3. Sit up straight; don't slouch down in the chair.
4. Be an active participant in the interview. Be a good listener, but do not be passive.
5. You will be asked some questions. Think before you answer. Avoid nervous habits and verbal pauses ("aahs & umms"). Be confident and positive, but be yourself. Read over a news magazine and the newspaper for several days before the interview so you can comment intelligently on current events. If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it. Don't try to fake it.
6. Above all, be yourself. If you are a funny person, it's all right to be funny, but if you're not a naturally funny person, don't try to be one. You probably won't be able to bring it off.
7. You will also be asked if you have any questions, so be prepared. Familiarize yourself with particular areas of interest ("I noticed on-line that the labs are not open for freshman research. Are there any exceptions to this rule?"). Ask questions that reveal your interests. Have some questions prepared in advance. Don't be afraid to write them down; most people, in fact, will be impressed with that degree of preparation. It also gives you a chance to control the direction of the interview and to gain some useful information.

Some questions you may be asked:

What sparked your interest in this college?

What criteria are you using to identify the colleges to which you are applying?

How have you prepared yourself for college?

What majors are you considering?

What do you think you will be doing five (ten) years from now?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What have you liked (disliked) about your present school?

If you were headmaster of your school for a day, what would you change?

What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school or community?

What is the most important thing you have learned in high school?

What books (not required by your courses) have you read recently?

What newspapers and magazines do you read?

What television shows do you watch?

How do you use your free time?

Do you see yourself pursuing these activities in college?

What did you do last summer?

What historical event do you feel has had the greatest impact on the 20th Century?

What is the biggest problem facing your generation?

How do you feel about (some contemporary issue or current event)?

These are all questions that have been used by college interviewers. Preparation for this type of question will help give you the self-confidence to handle the interview effectively.

Questions for you to ask:

- How many of the top faculty teach undergraduates?
- How many of the top faculty teach freshmen?
- How much of the teaching load is carried by graduate or teaching assistants?
- How large are classes for freshmen?
- How many of the faculty are involved in research? If so, are students involved in these research projects?
- How many students are involved in off-campus or foreign study?
- Are these programs generally successful?
- How difficult is it to transfer from one major to another?
- How often is it done?
- What issues are important to students on campus now?
- How important a role do fraternities/sororities play in the social life on campus?
- Is housing guaranteed for full-time students?
- What alternatives are available?
- What social activities are available outside of the fraternity/sorority system?
- Do large numbers of students leave campus on the weekends?
- Where do they go?
- How would you describe the atmosphere/personality of the campus?
- When considering this college in comparison to other similar schools, what unique features should I consider?
- What kind of attrition rate is there from the freshman to the sophomore year?
- What advice would you give me to help me in making my college choice?

After the interview, when you get home or back to school, **don't forget to send a prompt thank you note to your interviewer.**

IF YOUR RECORD IS NOT A STRONG ONE

If you are one of many students who does not have particularly high SAT/ACT scores, (say an SAT score below 1100, or an ACT composite score below 19), don't get discouraged. The best defense against low scores is high grades. You have more control over your grades than you do your standardized test scores. If you have to have low grades or low scores, you're better off with low scores. Remember colleges pay more attention to your grades and the difficulty of your courses than your SAT/ACT scores.

You can probably improve your test scores somewhat by reading more and utilizing the aforementioned College Board prep sites. Additionally, there are myriad prep books available and Barron's is perhaps the most comprehensive. Ask your college counselor about the test prep approach that is best suited for your needs.

If your combined SAT Critical Reading and Math score is below 1000 (or your ACT composite is below 18), and your GPA is below a 2.0 "C", you will still have options. No matter where you go, there will be more opportunities offered than you have previously experienced. Two-year community colleges often provide the support and confidence necessary to finish at a four year college. Like anything else, you will get out of your college education exactly what you put into it. Find a school that will accept you or one that offers you greater opportunity for success; work hard and make good grades, and then transfer after a year or two if you wish. In most cases, grades of "C" or better are transferable.

NARROWING YOUR CHOICES

You started the college search process by looking at yourself and by considering the characteristics in a college that are important to you. You have read guidebooks and catalogues, talked to college representatives when they have visited the school, visited campuses on your own, talked to your parents and friends about colleges, and consulted with your college counselor and recent alumni. Now it is time to narrow down your preliminary list schools to which you will actually apply. As mentioned earlier, you should apply to a "reach" or two, that is, a school you would really like to go to, but one which you may not be admitted.

You should also apply to a couple of schools that would be satisfactory substitutes for your long shots, and to which you are more likely to be qualified as an applicant. Finally, you should have at least one "likely" choice, a school for which you are clearly qualified, and for which there seems to be little doubt as to your acceptance. Reaches and back-ups obviously vary from student to student. You should do just as much research into secure choices and be just as comfortable with them as with your reaches. **While there is no limit to the number of schools where you can apply, your final list of schools should reflect a balanced list.**

How do you decide what schools to take off your list and what ones to leave on? You might begin by reviewing the college characteristics mentioned earlier in this guidebook to see which ones match your personality, interests, and goals. Focus on such factors as size, location, kind and quality of community, cost (including travel expenses), selectivity, and special programs. If you consider the following factors, they should play a much less significant part in your decision-making process: who has the best basketball team, climate (warm or cold), where your friends are going, and where your parents went.

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

Rule #1: Do not apply to a college unless you would attend if offered a chance. Doing so is a waste of your time, energy, and money; it might also take the place another applicant for whom that college is a place of genuine interest.

There main platforms utilized by many colleges and universities is The Common Application. Students may apply to almost any college via The Common Application through their website. More than 900 colleges now accept The Common Application (www.commonapp.org). Colleges that accept the Common Application do not prefer one application platform versus another. Please note: many colleges that accept The Common Application also require students to complete their unique Supplemental Applications. These schools are indicated on The Common Application website and these supplements require students to answer additional questions and frame an extra essay or two.

Once you determine which application method to pursue, complete all sections (**treat recommended sections at required, particularly essays**), check your work for accuracy, enter your credit card payment data, and press the “submit” button. You have just completed the student portion of the application. We recommend you complete this process AT LEAST ONCE with your college counselor.

In addition, many colleges require that you electronically submit all of your standardized test scores through the College Board (SAT) or ACT to the colleges where you’ve made applications. Many applications may ask for self-reported test scores and you can use this method for the admissions process. Your college counselor will help you decide what to do.

In order for the college to evaluate your credentials for admission, the admissions office must also receive materials from Oak Hall school: official transcript, school’s counselor recommendation letter (if required), teacher recommendations (if required), Profile, secondary school report. **It is the responsibility of the student to inform the Oak Hall College Counseling office that he/she has submitted an application.** This is accomplished in two ways. One: Go to your [Naviance](#) account and access the “colleges I’m applying to” page. Check the box of the school to which you have applied and then click on the “transcript request” link. Our office is then electronically notified of your application. Two: Work with your college counselor individually to submit your applications (**RECOMMENDED**). These steps must be completed so that our counseling office can submit the aforementioned essential institutional materials in a timely fashion for

If you have any questions about any of these application protocols, please see your assigned college counselor.

ADMISSION PLANS

In an attempt to make the college admission process less confusing to students, the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) has worked with admission offices across the country to agree on a common nomenclature to describe the various options offered by colleges. The following descriptions of admission terms are taken in part from guidelines drawn up by NACAC.

A. REGULAR ADMISSION

Regular admission describes the application procedure in which most candidates are required to complete their applications before a deadline and are notified of decisions at a time specified by the college, usually during the first two weeks in April. Students offered admission have until May 1st to accept and to send in a deposit. If they do not reply by then, they may lose their place.

B. ROLLING ADMISSION

A large number of colleges now make decisions on applications within four to six weeks after the folder is complete. You can accept immediately, wait until you have heard from all your schools, or wait until May 1st. The catalogue will tell you if a college is on rolling admission. It is obviously to your advantage to apply early to colleges that use this plan, since the more freshmen admitted, the harder it is to get in.

C. EARLY DECISION

Early Decision is a formal understanding between a student and the college that, if admitted, the student will enroll. Only those persons who can make a deliberate first choice decision should even consider applying Early Decision to a school. The deadline for Early Decision applications is usually mid- to late-October. These applications are either accepted, deferred to the regular admission applicant pool, or rejected. You may apply to only one college Early Decision. There are two advantages to applying Early Decision. If you get accepted, the college application process is over by December. If you get deferred, you have somewhat of an advantage over the regular applicants because the college knows that is your first choice and if accepted you will undoubtedly show up. There is a disadvantage, however. If accepted, you are committed. (The only exception is if you are applying for financial aid and the award is insufficient, you are not bound to enroll). Immediately after your acceptance, you will be required to withdraw all other applications, if you have made any. Read the Early Decision agreement carefully in the catalogue or on the application. **Oak Hall will not support your application to other schools once you have been accepted Early Decision to a college. If you are interested in Early Decision, make an appointment with your counselor as early as possible in your senior year (August or early September) to discuss the possibility.**

D. EARLY ACTION

Early Action allows you to apply to a college and receive a decision well before spring of the senior year; however, you are not committed to enroll at that particular college. You should limit to two or three the number of EA applications you file, and you may apply ED to one other college. The college may request a deposit before 1 May but must indicate that you can request an extension in writing until that date. Under non-restrictive Early Action, a student may apply to other colleges.

E. RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION

This plan allows students to apply early and receive notification early as in regular Early Action plans. Colleges utilizing restrictive Early Action, however, usually restrict applications to other early plans. Students accepted to a college through one of these plans are not obligated to accept the offer of admission or pay a deposit until 1 May.

F. WAIT LIST

As an insurance policy against too small a freshman class, most colleges place some applicants on a Wait List. This means that one is clearly qualified for admission, but maybe his extracurricular activities (or some other factor) are not quite as strong as other candidates offered acceptance. Students on the Wait List are accepted later if a large number of applicants offered acceptance turned the college down and it needs more students to fill up its freshman class. A decision usually comes in May or June, but may come as late as July. If a candidate accepts an invitation from the Wait List, he forfeits the deposit made at another college.

AFTER COLLEGES HAVE MADE THEIR DECISIONS

Once a college has notified you of a decision, update your [Naviance](#) account and inform your counselor so that the school records will be accurate. If you are wait listed or receive a denial letter, notify him promptly, especially if additional applications need to be considered.

If you are in the fortunate position of having several colleges to choose from, you may wish to visit one or two of your choices to help you make your final decisions. Some colleges invite admitted students for special campus visits on weekends late in April.

When you are certain which college you will attend, notify the admission office and send in any required deposit and other forms. You must also contact (via email) all other schools to which you have been admitted or those from which you have not heard and withdraw your application so the space can be offered to someone else. **The candidates' reply date by which you must have notified all schools of your decision is May 1. Oak Hall discourages sending in more than one deposit, a practice known as "double depositing." Double depositing is unfair to the colleges and is needlessly costly to you. Unless there is a compelling reason for sending in more than one deposit, we will notify your schools if you do so. Moreover, we will not release a final transcript for you in June to more than one college unless you have been wait listed.** (Refer to the Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WAIT LISTED

If the school to which you have been wait listed is your first choice, the first thing you should do is tell your College Counselor. If you decide to remain on the wait-list, you must inform the college of that decision or you will be dropped from the wait-list. Courtesy and respect for your current and future classmates demands that you remove your name from any wait-list you don't want. Those who have decided to pursue the wait-list option should stay in constant touch with your guidance counselor about keeping the admissions office(s) aware of your interest and your recent achievements. Then contact an admission officer at the college and tell him/her of your interest. Explain why you believe the college is the perfect match for you, for your learning style, and for your educational goals. You will need information from the college in order to figure out what to do next. Ask the following questions: Do you regularly use your wait list? Did you use it last year? If so, how many students did you take off the list? Are applicants ranked on the wait list? Is there one list for the entire university, or is it divided by majors, departments, or colleges? Will there be an opportunity for mid-year or transfer admission if I am not offered a place in the fall?

If you are seriously interested in attending this college, you may be able to at the beginning of the second semester. We will send a final transcript to the school that has wait listed you. If you received any academic or athletic awards at the end of the year, be sure to tell the college. Some schools actually keep track of contacts from wait listed students. The more interest you show, the greater are your chances of getting in. **Finally, always keep your counselor informed.**

THE SERVICE ACADEMIES

Admission to the five federal service academies (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine, and Navy) is extremely selective. To qualify, you must have very high grades and test scores. You must be in excellent physical condition, have demonstrated leadership ability and have a spotless citizenship record. You also need to have participated on several varsity athletic teams. Finally, unless you are applying to the Coast Guard Academy, you must receive a nomination from your U.S. Senator or Congressional Representative. The application process is long and complicated, and you need to get started in the spring of your junior year. Applications are submitted to the academies early in the senior year. Final decisions are usually made in April.

ROTC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Air Force, Army, and Navy Scholarship programs are open to men and women. The popularity of these programs has increased in recent years, and they offer great financial benefits, particularly for students who think they might be interested in a military career. To be considered for these programs, a student must have a high GPA, strong academic record and strong SAT/ACT scores. These programs offer a student an opportunity to study in almost any field, funds to cover tuition and books, a monthly allowance, a commission as an officer, and thus, an assured job at a good salary upon graduation. Deadline date for receipt of completed applications is usually December 1, so interested students should contact your counselor and begin the application procedure as soon as school opens in September. Students may apply to all three services if they wish.

NCAA ELIGIBILITY

If you are planning to attend a Division I or Division II college and hope to play a varsity sport, you will have to meet certain requirements and be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center.

To be approved by the clearinghouse, you must graduate from high school, earn at least a 2.0/4.0 grade point average (2.3/4.0 gpa avg. beginning August, 2016) in sixteen (16) core courses, and earn a certain minimum SAT or ACT score on a sliding scale based on your GPA. You must go to the NCAA web site: www.eligibilitycenter.org and complete the application. You must also request an official transcript by either sending an electronic request from your NCAA account or print the transcript release page. This authorizes Oak Hall to submit your transcript to the NCAA clearinghouse for initial certification. If you have attended other secondary schools, you must request to have an official copy of their transcript sent to NCAA also for official certification. Your completed application also allows the clearinghouse to send information about you to the colleges you list in case they ask for it. **You should fill out the clearinghouse forms in the spring of your junior year or very early in your senior year.**

FINANCIAL AID

College costs have risen dramatically every year during at least the past 25 years. Students, no matter what their financial status, must be aware of the great cost differences from one school to another. Information about financial aid and some specific scholarships is available on the college's website and in the College Counseling Room. Your counselor will be glad to discuss financial aid with you and your parents. Colleges award most financial aid on the basis of need. Institutional need-based aid is accessed through the College Scholarship Service's Profile form. These forms are available in the College Counseling Room in the early fall and should be sent to CSS Profile as early as possible. Federal financial aid is accessed through the U. S. Department of Education's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); in the past, this form could not be filed until after January 1 because you must use tax data for the previous year. **Students are able to submit the FAFSA as early as October 1st, reporting income information from an earlier tax year. This earlier submission date is a permanent change.** Both forms require detailed information about family income, assets, expenses and indebtedness.

Financial aid usually takes a combination of three forms: grants or scholarships are gifts which are considered gifts and do not have to be repaid, loans which must be paid back, and work-study in which students earn college money by working on campus or with an approved off-campus employer.

If you think you will be applying for financial aid, be sure to ask for information when you request an application and catalogue. Read the catalogues carefully for particular requirements for assistance and any additional forms that might be required. The Financial Aid Office at the schools you are applying to will outline the steps you should follow. Catalogues of independent colleges also frequently list special scholarships (many of which are not need-based) for which you may qualify.

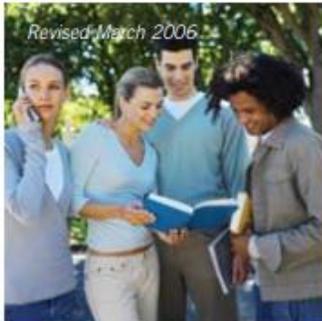
Florida and many other states offer grants to students attending independent colleges. Here the program is called the Florida Resident Access Grant and its amount depends on the level of funding and the number of eligible students.

In addition, many universities have co-operative education programs in which students periodically take a semester away from school to work at a job related to their major or career interest. While this usually stretches out your college education, you earn good money and your work experience makes you a much more attractive candidate when you hit the job market. Moreover, students frequently receive a job offer at the company where they had their co-op experience.

There are other sources of money outside the financial aid office. Corporations, labor unions, clubs, churches, patriotic groups, foundations, and other organizations frequently give out scholarships. Have your parents check their places of employment and other affiliations to see what might be available.

Be sure to turn in all financial forms as early as possible, well ahead of deadlines. This is especially true of the FAFSA. There is a finite amount of financial aid to give out, and once it's gone, it's gone.

The U. S. Department of Education has recently created a new tool to help families get an early estimate of how much financial aid they may qualify for. It is available at: www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov. Also consult the Net Price Calculator tools available on all college admissions websites. These yield a reasonably accurate preliminary figure for the "estimated family contribution."



STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

in the College Admission Process

An outgrowth of NACAC's Statement of Principles of Good Practice, the Students' Rights Statement makes clear to entering college students those "rights" that are only alluded to by the Principles of Good Practice. It also spells out the responsibilities students have in the admission process.

When You Apply to Colleges and Universities, You Have

RIGHTS

Before You Apply:

- You have the right to receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices and packaging policies, and housing policies. If you consider applying under an early admission plan, you have the right to complete information from the college about its process and policies.
- You have the right to be free from high-pressure sales tactics.

When You Are Offered Admission:

- You have the right to wait until May 1 to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid.
- Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1 must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. They must grant you this extension and your request may not jeopardize your status for admission and/or financial aid.
- Candidates admitted under early decision programs are a recognized exception to the May 1 deadline.

If You Are Placed on a Wait/Alternate List:

- The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on the wait list, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing.
- Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a wait list.
- Colleges are expected to notify you of the resolution of your wait list status by August 1 at the latest.



National Association for
College Admission Counseling

When You Apply to Colleges and Universities, You Have

RESPONSIBILITIES

Before You Apply:

- You have a responsibility to research, and to understand and comply with the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure you understand the policies of each college or university regarding deposits you may be required to make before you enroll.

As You Apply:

- You must complete all material required for application and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications.
- You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications.
- It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

After You Receive Your Admission Decisions:

- You must notify each college or university that accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision as to the college you wish to attend, but no later than May 1. It is understood that May 1 will be the postmark date.
- You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a wait list by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify a college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll.
- If you are accepted under an early decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.

If you think your rights have been denied, you should contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date. In addition, you should ask your counselor to notify the president of the state or regional affiliate of the National Association for College Admission Counseling in your area. If you need further assistance, send a copy of any correspondence you have had with the college or university and a copy of your letter of admission to:

FOR FURTHER READING

They are also available in public libraries and most bookstores.

A. COLLEGE HANDBOOKS (See p. 8 for a description)

- Barron's *Profiles of American Colleges*
- Cass and Birnbaum, *Comparative Guide to American Colleges*
- The College Board, *The College Handbook*
- Fiske, *Guide to Colleges*
- Lovejoy, *College Guide*
- *Peterson's Guide to Four-year Colleges*
- *Peterson's Guide to Two-year Colleges*
- *US News Ultimate College Directory*

B. SPECIALIZED COLLEGE HANDBOOKS

- Cernea, Ruth Fredman, *Hillel Guide to Jewish Life on Campus* (gives data and advice on enrollment and student organizations)
- Everett, Carole J., *The Performing Arts Major's College Guide* (helps students through the process of searching and applying to schools with auditions.)
- Fiske, *Selective Guide to Colleges* (descriptions of "the 295 colleges you are most likely to consider" by the former Education Editor of *The New York Times*)
- *Insiders' Guide to Colleges* (compiled by the staff of *The Yale Daily News* based on students' reports of approximately 100 colleges; discusses the admission process including suggestions for applications and interviews; interesting but subjective)
- *K & W Guide to Colleges for the Learning Disabled* (a must for students with learning disabilities)
- Moll, *The Public Ivys* (in-depth descriptions of 24 of the top public universities in the country written by the former Director of Admission at Bowdoin, Vassar, and the University of California - Santa Cruz; "reveals how to get an Ivy League education without paying an Ivy League price")
- *Peterson's Choose a Christian College* (describes schools that are committed to a Christ-centered campus life)
- Pope, *Colleges That Change Lives* (excellent descriptions of colleges with an emphasis on service and character building)

- Sherrill and Hardesty, *The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students' Guide to Colleges, Universities, and Graduate Schools*
- Sykes and Miner, eds., *The National Review College Guide* (brief and incisive descriptions of "America's 50 Top Liberal Arts Schools")
- Wilson, *The 100 Best Colleges for African-American Students* (thorough descriptions of predominately white colleges and historically black colleges where African-American students are most likely to find academic and social success)
- www.collegesofdistinction.com (an on-line guide that focuses on colleges that feature engaged students, great teaching, vibrant communities, and successful outcomes; highly recommended)

C. FINANCIAL AID

- Cassidy and Alves, *The Scholarship Book* (an extensive list of grants and loans available to undergraduates from the private sector)
- The College Board, *College Costs & Financial Aid Handbook* (general presentation on financial aid; current listings of college costs and up-to-date financial aid facts)
- Deutschman, *Winning Money For College* (a comprehensive guide to over 30 million dollars worth of scholarships awarded each year by privately sponsored contests)
- Kalman, *Paying for College Without Going Broke* (much good information on the Financial aid process including strategies for comparing college aid offers)
- *Peterson's College Money Handbook* (information on expenses, undergraduate financial aid, need-based and non-need based freshman awards, money saving options, and instructions on applying for aid at the colleges listed in *Peterson's Guide*)
- www.fastweb.com (an outstanding, free, Internet scholarship search)
- www.finaid.org (probably the best financial aid web site; provides need estimates, aid sources, and strategies for obtaining financial assistance; you can get an estimate on financial aid eligibility at this site)
- www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org (all the information you ever wanted to know about Florida's Bright Futures and other state scholarship programs)

D. TEST PREPARATION

- Arco, Barrons, the College Board and Peterson all publish study guides for SAT I, SAT II, the PSAT and AP test. . The best source for information on the ACT is *The Real ACT Prep Guide*. The web sites for The College Board, ACT, and collegenet.com all provide online test preparation
- www.fairtest.org (this website includes a list of all the colleges and universities where submitting standardized test scores is optional)

E. CAREER PLANNING

- Moses, *Career Intelligence: The 12 New Rules for Work and Life Success* (describes the essential new rules for success in the workplace and beyond; instruction on how to become a “career activist” and achieve ongoing success in the world of work)
- U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (describes the nature of the work, working conditions, training and other qualifications needed, earnings, and job outlook for over 200 occupations)

F. OTHER

- The College Board, *Index of Majors* (complete listing of undergraduate and graduate degree programs at America's colleges and universities)
- Bruni, “*Where You Go is Not Who You’ll Be. An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania.*” (New York Times columnist, Frank Bruni argues persuasively that it is not “where” one goes to college, but “how” one goes to college that matters)
- Coburn and Freeger, *Letting Go* (tells parents what college is like today and how it is different from when they went to school; students will find this interesting too)
- Farrar, *College 101* (directed to college-bound freshmen; "indispensable in helping to make the most of their freshman year"; very helpful)
- Green and Minton, *Scaling the Ivy Wall* (describes the entire process from entrance test to the letter of admission; amusing anecdotes and interesting statistics presented in a very readable style)
- Levine and May, *Getting In* (an entertaining, often helpful "guide to acceptance at the college of your choice")
- McGarry, *A New Beginning: A Survival Guide for parents of College Freshmen* (advice and inspiration for parents about to send a son or daughter off to college; good discussion about academics, finances, and values written by a parent of four college-educated children who is also an educational consultant)

- Pasick, *Almost Grown: Launching Your Child from High School to College* (a book about psychology, college-planning, and mid-life relationships; personal and entertaining)
- Pope, *Looking Beyond the Ivy League* (a step-by-step guide through the application process from a college counselor with over 35 years of experience; excellent information on many less well-known colleges that may be best for you; highly recommended)
- Rubenstone and Dalby, *College Admissions: A Crash Course for Panicked Parents* (two seasoned admission professionals take parents through the college search and application process from beginning to end)
- www.act.org (online information about all the ACT's programs; register for the ACT)
- www.collegeboard.com (online information about all the College Board's program; register for SAT and SAT Subject Tests online here; search for colleges)
- www.collegenet.com (online test preparation for ACT and SAT; search for and apply to college over the web)
- www.commonapp.org (Use this web site to download the Common Application which can be used at more than 500 colleges in the U.S.)
- www.facts.org (a state-supported web site containing admission and financial aid information as well as general information about all the state colleges in Florida)
- www.nacac.org (the web site for the National Association for College Admission Counseling)
- <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator> (site sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education that allows the use to compare costs and financial aid data at American colleges)